

The Politics of Income Inequality

Policy Polarisation, Representation, and the Decline of Social Democracy

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Abstract

Rising income inequality is one of the greatest challenges facing democracies today. And while income inequality has been steadily increasing in most of the world, the primary means of combating it in the form of redistribution has declined. This thesis investigates the paradox of redistribution and examines in detail the negative effects that inequality can exert on political behaviour, and how these can be mitigated by the actions of political parties. In doing so, it reframes previous approaches to the study of inequality and political behaviour and introduces novel frameworks to better understand the cross-temporal and cross-national dynamics. The thesis takes the format of a compilation comprising four quantitative empirical articles examining the politics of income inequality, via time series cross-sectional analysis, from 1965-2019. In the first two papers, it finds party offerings on redistribution to be a key mechanism moderating inequality and turnout. Paper 1 finds at the aggregate level that income inequality has a negative impact on turnout, especially in depolarised party systems, but as party system polarisation increases the negative impact is mitigated. Paper 2 examines the individual level, finding that higher levels of income inequality significantly reduce turnout, while widening the turnout gap between rich and poor. However, it also finds that when party systems are more polarised in times of inequality, low-income earners are mobilised the most, resulting in a significantly reduced income gap in turnout. The final two papers focus on the decline of social democracy and rise of challenger parties. Paper 3 finds that rightward economic movements of social democratic parties significantly reduce their vote share under higher levels of income inequality, or when they are combined with rightward socio-cultural movements. Paper 4 expands on this work by examining who benefits from this moderation strategy. Ultimately, the thesis sheds greater light onto the issues of political inequality that persist throughout the West and point to a distinct lack of representation in the policy space. The findings demonstrate that the policy choices presented to the electorate substantially matter for parties and for political behaviour, especially so in this age of increasing inequality.

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Chapter 1: Introduction and Literature Review

I. Introduction

Income inequality is viewed as one of the greatest challenges facing democracies today. According to the world's largest annual study on democracy, the Democracy Perception Index (DPI), economic inequality was by far the biggest perceived threat to democracy in 2021: 64 percent of the over 50,000 respondents viewed economic inequality as threatening democracy in their respective country. People in democratic countries are just as worried as people in less democratic countries. The perception of economic inequality as a threat to democracy is very strongly correlated with the sense that "government is acting in the interest of a minority of people" (Alliance of Democracies 2021). Consequently, it is the purpose of this thesis to shed greater light onto these issues of political inequality that persist throughout the West. It does so by examining the extent of effective representation in the economic policy space, in this age of rising inequality.

Within the inequality literature an enduring and essential feature is that income inequality has been steadily increasing in many parts of the world, while simultaneously the primary means of combating it in the form of redistribution has decreased. This has occurred despite the prominent place that the theory of 'redistributive democracy' has held in modern times. As democracy is predicated on the ideal of equality in the distribution of power in a society, it was thought that the extension of the franchise and political voice to the lower classes would allow them to enhance their well-being, through demands for increased governmental redistribution (Kelly and Enns 2010: 868). Thus, a vital question centred around this puzzle is – why in the face of rising income inequality do lower-income individuals not act in their rational economic self-interest by challenging inequality through their political behaviour? It has been established that high socio-economic status individuals tend to act in their economic self-interest by being comparably accepting of inequality and

opposing redistributive policies (Jensen and Van Kersbergen 2017: 122). However, the data does not clearly support the corresponding economic self-interest predictions for lower socio-economic status individuals.

Consequently, scholars have long pointed to the pronounced influence of political ideology in shaping re-distributional preferences (Brown-Iannuzzi et al. 2017), including values, "especially those related to religiosity, ethnicity, and nationalism" (Tavits and Potter 2015: 744). Parties on the right tend to make ethnic and nationalist-based appeals to the electorate by exploiting increasing voter animosity towards immigrants. This can lead low-income citizens to turn their attention away from their economic interests, or to even alter their preferences for redistribution, as populist parties tend to claim that immigrants are underserving of redistribution and a burden on the welfare state (Tavits and Potter 2015). These nationalist-based appeals can resonate in societies that have witnessed an extensive amount of recent immigration and in countries where income inequality is particularly high (Magni 2020; Steele 2016).

Recent evidence also finds that lower-income earners tend to take policy less into consideration when making an electoral choice than richer citizens (Rosset and Kurella 2020). Most studies also reveal that low-income earners are on average less interested and knowledgeable about politics than the rich (Bartels 2008). Education and income are highly correlated determinants of political attitudes and people with low levels of general political knowledge are only weakly able to connect their class attitudes with support for redistribution. As they lack the awareness about how redistributive policies benefit different social groups (Macdonald 2020a).

Compounding these political inequalities, however, is the key notion that the redistributional policy space is simply not covered effectively by political parties. This creates a supply gap, particularly for poorer citizens. Low-income earners tend to be more culturally conservative than the more affluent and are substantially more in favour of redistribution (Houtman et al. 2008). Yet most party systems do not offer an effective option in this political space, as illustrated by Rosset and Kurella (2020) in Figure 1.1. Thus, leftauthoritarians are cross-pressured into choosing between a party that is either economically leftist, or culturally rightist. Whereas left-libertarians are served by green and social democratic parties, right-authoritarians by conservative and far right parties, and rightlibertarians by liberal parties. Possibly owing to this supply gap, Hillen and Steiner (2020) find that left-authoritarians are less likely to vote, less satisfied with democracy, and have lower levels of political trust. Consequently, low-income earners are much less effectively represented by political parties.



Figure 1.1: Two-Dimensional Preferences and Party System Congruence

economic dimension

Source: Rosset and Kurella 2020, 4.

Therefore, this thesis builds on the political inequality literature by introducing new approaches and reframing previous approaches and frameworks through an examination of the effects of income inequality on political behaviour. In doing so, it contributes to the study of policy offerings as a key mechanism moderating income inequality and voting, as well as helping us to better understand the paradox of redistribution.

The thesis takes the format of a compilation comprising four quantitative empirical articles examining the politics of income inequality, via time series cross-sectional analysis, from 1965–2019. Examining the differences across countries and changes over time are especially valuable in searching for explanations into the consequences of rising income inequality, as country-specific factors exert a powerful influence on the distribution of income in a society. Hence, this thesis offers a comparative perspective, by examining income inequality both longitudinally and cross-nationally, amongst the advanced economies of the West. This country grouping was chosen because its members share relatively similar levels of economic development; are advanced democracies where their citizens experience equality of vote; and have the best data available on income inequality.

Paper 1 builds on the mixed results of past research investigating income inequality and voter turnout, by introducing supply-side logic into a relationship that has, heretofore, been investigated only through demand-side mechanisms. By examining the policy space of party systems, a more direct test of conflict theory (Meltzer and Richard 1981) can be undertaken. In doing so, it contributes to the study of policy offerings as a key mechanism moderating inequality and turnout. It finds in an aggregate-level analysis of 30 established democracies from 1965–2017, covering 300 elections, that inequality has a negative impact on turnout, especially in depolarised party systems, but as party system polarisation increases the negative impact of inequality is mitigated. The results provide an important answer as to why evidence is rarely found in support of conflict theory. This is because latent conflict within the electorate over rising inequality has no means to express itself, unless parties take distinctive policy positions on matters of redistribution, so citizens respond by abstaining. However, when party systems are more polarised, conflict can be expressed at the ballot box, which generates higher turnout.

Paper 2 builds on this discovery by focusing on the individual level, to identify the income groups that are most affected in the relationship. It does so on a Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES) sample of 180,490 individuals, surveyed after 102 elections, across 30 advanced democracies, from 1996–2016. In line with relative power theory (Goodin and Dryzek 1980), it finds that income inequality is associated with lower turnout and a larger income gap in turnout. However, it finds that when party systems are more polarised, the income gap in turnout is significantly reduced, as it is low-income earners that have the most to lose relatively from rising inequality, who are then mobilised to a greater extent than everyone else. Hence it provides a novel explanation as to why inequality is related to greater turnout inequality by highlighting a key causal mechanism in the relationship. Namely, higher income inequality increases the saliency of redistribution for rich and poor alike, but it is lower-income earners who have the most to lose relatively, and who are then mobilised the largest extent via greater economic policy choice. This stems from a lack of effective economic policy representation for low-income earners, who are typically much less likely to vote. Increasingly so, under higher levels of inequality.

Paper 3 probes further, by focusing on the party family that is traditionally expected to: 1) best represent individuals in the bottom half of the income distribution, and 2) combat income inequality. As it tests whether social democratic parties are effectively representing their traditional base through their policy offerings, by providing a counter-availing force to rising inequality. It does so through analysing aggregate-level election results and individuallevel survey responses on a sample of 22 advanced democracies, over 336 elections, from 1965–2019. The study fills important gaps in the literature. As there exists no comparative work linking income inequality to both electoral behaviour and social democratic party positions; nor has the socio-cultural dimension been investigated simultaneously alongside the economic state-market dimension in determining social democratic electoral decline. The results reveal that rightward economic movements of social democrats significantly reduce their vote share under higher levels of income inequality, *or* when it is combined with rightward socio-cultural movements.

The findings point to a key interplay between inequality and the social democratic party family. As equality was a founding principle of social democracy (Bartolini 2000; Mudge 2018) and protection of the welfare state has historically been a strong means of mobilisation for social democrats (Bélanger and Meguid 2008), the party family's turn away from these traditions, while inequality rises across the West, has been detrimental to their fortunes. When social democrats offer less redistribution, they appear to be alienating both their traditional base and much of the middle class, so they significantly lose vote share. The brand dilution suffered from engaging in reforms that conflict with the party family's traditional brand as welfare protectors, do not appear to compensate via gains from progressive movement on the second dimension, or from laying claim to acquiring economic and fiscal responsibility. Thus, the results again indicate a failure in effective representation in the economic policy space of party systems.

As changes in the ideological positions of parties can cause voters to switch parties from one election to another (Ferland and Dassonneville 2021), Paper 4 expands on Paper 3, by investigating who benefits from social democratic party positioning. It does so via an examination of aggregate-level election results from 1965–2019 and retrospective voting from the CSES. In line with spatial logic (Downs 1957), Paper 4 finds that the socialist left tends to benefit the most when the parties adopt rightward economic positions, which is then magnified when combined with social democratic rightward positioning on the socio-cultural dimension. This predominantly occurs because left-leaning voters migrate over to the socialist left. The results suggest that social democrats are facing increasing competition from challenger parties, most prominently on their left flank. The party family's 'Third Way' rebranding has likely led to brand dilution, which is reducing the party family's credibility in the eyes of many voters and created an opportunity for challenger parties on the left.

Taken together, the four papers contribute to our understanding of income inequality, political representation, and political behaviour. The first two papers investigate the relationship between income inequality and turnout, while Papers 3 and 4, focus on the relationship between social democracy and income inequality, and social democracy and the rise of challenger parties. Throughout, the common linkage is the policy offerings of political parties moderating each relationship. Each empirical work provides a thorough and detailed examination of how different policy offerings during times of inequality influence how people participate in the political process, whether they vote or not, and how these dynamics have influenced support for mainstream and challenger parties over time.

The thesis thus makes a broad contribution to study of political inequality, and also more specific contributions to the study of voter turnout and party system change and realignment. The remainder of this chapter sets out the broad theoretical background that informs and drives the main research questions in this thesis. It begins with a discussion of the importance of income inequality and why it is currently a topic that receives so much attention. It then outlines the meaning, measurement, and extent of income inequality, and how this has changed over time. This is followed by an examination of the structural and institutional causes of income inequality, as well as an exploration into the primary negative outcomes that stem from it, with a specific focus on the relationship between income inequality and political behaviour.

II. The Political Significance of Income Inequality

Income inequality has recently come to be viewed as one of the greatest challenges facing the West today. In recent years, the topic has dominated the agenda of the World Economic Forum (WEF), where the world's top political and business leaders attend. Their global risks report, drawn from over 700 experts in attendance, pronounced inequality to be the greatest threat to the world economy in 2017 (Elliott 2017). Likewise, the past decade has seen leading global figures such as former American President Barack Obama, Pope Francis, Chinese President Xi Jinping, and the former head of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Christine Lagarde, all undertake speeches on the gravity of income inequality and the need to address its rise.

Although income inequality has decreased in the world as a whole because of the considerable economic growth that the largest developing countries such as China and India have achieved in recent decades, it has risen substantially within countries and across advanced Western countries. Income inequality has risen both in countries that have traditionally had high levels of inequality and in countries where it has traditionally been low. The extent of the increase also varies considerably between countries, especially between the Anglo-Saxon economies and continental Europe.

The general dynamics of income inequality include a tendency to rise slowly and fluctuate over time. For instance, Japan had one of the highest rates in the world prior to the Second World War and the United States (US) one of the lowest, which has since completely reversed for both. The United Kingdom (UK) was also the second most equitable large European country in the 1970s but is now the most inequitable (Dorling 2018: 27–28). High rates of inequality are rarely sustained for long periods because they tend to lead to or become punctuated by man-made disasters that lead to a levelling out. Scheidel (2017) posits that there in fact exists a violent 'Four Horseman of Leveling' (mass mobilisation warfare, transformation revolutions, state collapse, and lethal pandemics) for inequality, which have at times dramatically reduced inequalities because they can lead to the alteration of existing power structures or wipe out the wealth of elites and redistribute their resources. For instance, the pronounced shocks of the two world wars led to the 'Great Compression' of income throughout the West in the post-war years. There is already some evidence that the current global pandemic caused by the novel Coronavirus, has led to greater aversion to income inequality (Asaria et al. 2021; Wiwad et al. 2021).

The Great Compression gave way in the 1980s to the 'Great U-Turn,' which comprises the current extended period of slow growth and rising inequality. This dissimilar environment prompted economist Thomas Piketty (2014) in his bestseller *Capital in the 21st Century*, to advance the theory that the income return from capital is greater than the annual increase in income deriving from economic growth (ibid: 25). In slow growing economies (endemic throughout the West in recent years), past wealth also takes on greater importance and it becomes inevitable that inherited wealth dominates income derived from a lifetime of labour (ibid: 26). He also argues that as the spread between the return on capital and growth widens, a greater concentration of the total capital stock will also accrue in fewer hands. The intensifying combination of a greater share of national income going to capital, that is itself becoming more concentrated at the top, leads to a divergence of income and significantly more income inequality (Bruenig 2014). Thus, Piketty's theory on income distribution is inextricably linked with wealth inequality.

Although they are linked and often discussed together, wealth inequality differs from income inequality in that it refers to the differences in the total stock of wealth owned at a given point in time, which have been accumulated over time. Large amounts of wealth allow for greater investment opportunities that generate ever greater income by compounding over time, which allow for ever greater accumulations of wealth. Therefore, the distribution of wealth in a society is normally even more unequal than income. For example, the very richest one percent have seen staggering gains in both income and wealth in recent years, so much so, that the international charity Oxfam recently reported that just eight billionaires own as much wealth as the poorest half of the world's population (Dorling 2017: 229). The richest one percent also received 82 percent of all the global wealth generated in 2017, whereas the bottom half experienced no increase in wealth (Oxfam 2018: 8).

This thesis focuses specifically on income inequality because wealth is notoriously difficult to track and evaluate properly. This is owing to the intangible nature of many assets, indirect ownership through foundations and trusts, and the development of a massive offshore wealth industry designed to avoid taxes (Zucman 2015). Whereas high quality income data is available for most Western countries from the 1960s and 1970s. Income inequality has also been the primary object of public and policy discussion about inequality.

Measuring Income Inequality

There are many ways to measure income inequality but the most widely used measure has long been the Gini coefficient. The Gini coefficient is based on the Lorenz curve, which plots the proportion of the total income of a population that is cumulatively earned by the bottom percent of the population. It is a summary income indicator ranging between 0 and 1, where 0 represents complete equality, and 1 complete inequality. The primary measurements of the Gini are via market income and adjusted after-tax income, which adjusts market income for household income taxes and income transfers. It is preferable to employ the adjusted after-tax Gini because the mechanisms leading inequality to affect political behaviour are likely to operate via an individual's disposable income after taxes and transfers, rather than their market income (Stockemer and Scruggs 2012: 767). The primary strength of the Gini is that it responds to all changes in the distribution of income but tends to be more responsive to changes in the middle distribution, which can understate tail-end changes at the very top or bottom (Heisz 2016: 78–79).

In practice, the Gini varies roughly from 0.3 to 0.5 in the distribution of market income and from 0.2 to 0.4 in adjusted after tax income (Piketty 2014: 266). The average Gini coefficient for Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) members, stood at 0.275 during the mid-1980s, but has since increased by over 10 percent to 0.306. Figure 1.2 illustrates this trend, as 20 of the 25 OECD countries where long time-series data is available, experienced substantial increases in their Gini between 1985 and 2018. For example, an already high inequality country such as the US, experienced one of the largest increases from 0.33 to 0.38, while only France, Greece, Ireland, Portugal, and Switzerland experienced rises under 0.01.



Figure 1.2: Gini Coefficients, 1985 and 2018

Source: Data on gini coefficients from Standardized World Income Inequality Database (SWIID) (Solt 2020).

III. Causes of Income Inequality

Broadly speaking, explanations for the increase in income inequality throughout the West have largely been classified as either structural or institutional. Historically, economists emphasised structural causes of increasing income inequality, with globalisation and technological change at the forefront. However, in recent years opinion has shifted to emphasise more institutional political factors to do with the adoption of neoliberal reforms such as privatisation, deregulation, and tax and welfare reductions since the early 1980s. They were first embraced and most heavily championed by the US and UK, spreading globally later, and which provide the crucial catalysts of rising income inequality (Atkinson 2015; Brown 2017; Piketty 2020; Stiglitz 2013). In this section I briefly discuss each of these factors in turn.

Globalisation

One of the earliest, and most prominent explanations for the rise of income inequality emphasised the role of globalisation (Borjas et al. 1992; Revenga 1992). Globalisation has led to the offshoring of many goods and services that used to be produced or completed domestically in the West, which has created downward pressures on the wages of lower skilled workers. According to the 'market forces hypothesis,' increasing inequality is a response to the rising demand for skills at the top, in which the spread of globalisation and technological progress have been facilitated through reduced barriers to trade and movement.

Proponents of globalisation as the leading cause of inequality have argued that globalisation has constrained domestic state choices and left governments collectively powerless to address inequality. Detractors admit that globalisation has indeed had deep structural effects on Western economies but its impact on the degree of agency available to domestic governments has been mediated by individual policy choices (Thomas 2016: 346). A key problem with attributing the cause of inequality to globalisation, is that the extent of the inequality increase has varied considerably across countries, even though they have all been exposed to the same effects of globalisation. The US also has the highest inequality amongst rich countries, but it is less reliant on international trade than most other developed countries (Brown 2017: 56). Moreover, a recent meta-analysis by Heimberger (2020) found that globalisation has a "small-to-moderate" inequality-increasing effect, with financial globalisation displaying the largest impact.

Technology

A related explanation for inequality draws attention to the impact of technology specifically. The advent of the digital age has placed a higher premium on the skills needed for non-routine work and reduced the value placed on lower-skilled routine work, as it has enabled machines to replace jobs that could be routinised. This skill-biased technological change (SBTC) has led to major changes in the organisation of work, as many full-time permanent jobs with benefits have given way to part-time flexible work without benefits, that are often centred around the completion of short 'gigs' such as a car journey or food delivery. For instance, the OECD estimated in 2015 that since the 1990s, roughly 60 percent of all job creation has been in the form of non-standard work due to technological changes and that those employed in such jobs are more likely to be poor (Brown 2017: 60).

Relatedly, a prevailing doctrine in economics is 'marginal productivity theory,' which holds that people with greater productivity levels will earn higher incomes. This is due to the belief that a person's productivity is equated to their societal contribution (Stiglitz 2013: 37). As technology is a leading determinant in the productivity of different skills and SBTC has led to increased productivity, it has also become a justification for inequality. However, it is very difficult to separate any one person's contribution to society from that of others, as even the most successful businessperson owes their success to the rule of law, good infrastructure, and a state educated workforce (Stiglitz 2013: 97–98).

Further criticisms of the SBTC explanation, are that there was still substantial SBTC when inequality first fell dramatically and then stabilised in the period from 1930–1980, and it has failed to explain the perpetuation of both the gender and racial wage gap, "or the dramatic rise in education-related wage gaps for younger versus older workers" (Brown 2017: 67). Although it is difficult to decouple globalisation and technology, as they each have compounding tendencies, it is most likely that globalisation and technology are important explanatory factors for inequality, but predominantly facilitate and underlie the following more determinant institutional factors that happen to be already present, such as reduced tax progressivity, rising executive pay, and union decline. It is to these factors that I now turn.

Tax Policy

Taxes overwhelming comprise the primary source of revenue that governments can use for redistribution, which is fundamental to alleviating income inequality. Redistribution is defended on economic grounds because the marginal utility of money declines as income rises, meaning that the benefit derived from extra income is much higher for the poor than the rich. However, since the late 1970s, a major rethinking surrounding redistributive policy occurred. This precipitated 'trickle-down economics' theory achieving prominence amongst American and British policymakers, whereby the benefits from tax cuts on the wealthy would trickle-down to everyone. Subsequently, expert opinion has determined that tax cuts do not actually spur economic growth (CBPP 2017).

Personal income tax progressivity has declined sharply in the West, as the average top income tax rate for OECD members fell from 62 percent in 1981, to 35 percent in 2015 (IMF

2017: 11). However, the decline has been most pronounced in the UK and the US, which had top rates of around 90 percent in the 1960s and 70s. Corporate tax rates have also plummeted by roughly one half across the OECD since 1980 (Shaxson 2015: 4). Recent IMF research found that between 1985 and 1995, redistribution through the tax system had offset 60 percent of the increase in market inequality but has since failed to respond to the continuing increase in inequality (IMF 2017). Moreover, in a sample of 18 OECD countries encompassing 50 years, Hope and Limberg (2020) found that tax reforms even significantly increased pre-tax income inequality, while having no significant effect on economic growth.

This decline in tax progressivity has been a leading cause of rising income inequality, which has been compounded by the growing problem of tax avoidance. A complex global web of shell corporations has been constructed by international brokers in offshore tax havens that is able to keep wealth hidden from tax collectors. The total hidden amount in tax havens is estimated to be \$7.6 trillion US dollars and rising, or roughly 8 percent of total global household wealth (Zucman 2015: 36). As recent research has revealed that tax havens are overwhelming used by the immensely rich (Alstadsæter et al. 2019), taxing this wealth would substantially reduce income inequality and increase revenue available for redistribution. The massive reduction in income tax progressivity in the Anglo world, after it had been amongst its leaders in the post-war years, also "probably explains much of the increase in the very highest earned incomes" since 1980 (Piketty 2014: 495–496).

Executive Pay

The enormous rising pay of executives since the 1980s, has also fuelled income inequality and more specifically the gap between executives and their employees. For example, the gap between Chief Executive Officers (CEO) and their workers at the 500 leading US companies in 2016, was 335 times, which is nearly ten times larger than in 1980. It is a similar story in the UK, with a pay ratio of 131 for large British firms, which has also risen markedly since 1980 (Dorling 2016: 112–113).

Piketty posits that the dramatic reduction in top income tax has had an amplifying effect on top executives pay since it provides them with much greater incentive to seek larger remuneration, as far less is then taken in tax (2014: 335). It is difficult to objectively measure an individual's contribution to a company and with the onset of trickle-down economics and accompanying business-friendly climate since the 1980s, top executives have found it relatively easy to convince boards of their monetary worth (Gabaix and Landier 2008).

The rise in executive pay in both the UK and US, is far larger than the rest of the OECD. This may partially be explained by the English-speaking 'superstar' theory, whereby the global market demand for top CEOs is much higher for native English speakers due to English being the prime language of the global economy (Deaton 2013: 210). Saez and Veall (2005) provide support for the theory in a study of the top one percent of speakers from the Canadian province of Quebec, which showed that English speakers were able to increase their income share over twice as much as their French-speaking counterparts from 1980 to 2000. This upsurge of income at the top of the labour market has been accompanied by stagnation or diminishing returns for the middle and lower parts of the labour market, which has been affected by the dramatic decline of union influence throughout the West.

Union Decline

Trade unions have typically been viewed as an important force for moderating income inequality. They "contribute to wage compression by restricting wage decline among lowwage earners" and restrain wage surges among high-wage earners (Checchi and Visser 2009: 249). The mere presence of unions can also drive up the wages of non-union employees in similar industries, as employers tend to give in to wage demands to keep unions out. Union density has also been proven to be strongly associated with higher redistribution both directly and indirectly, through its influence on left party governments (Haddow 2013: 403).

There had broadly existed a 'social contract' between labour and business, whereby collective bargaining establishes a wage structure in many industries. However, this contract was abandoned by corporate America in the mid-1970s when large-scale corporate donations influenced policymakers to oppose pro-union reform of labour law, leading to political defeats for unions (Hacker and Pierson 2010: 58–59). The crackdown of strikes culminating in the momentous Air Traffic Controllers' strike (1981) in the US and coal miner's strike (1984–85) in the UK, caused labour to become de-politicised, which was self-reinforcing, because as their political power dispersed, policymakers had fewer incentives to protect or strengthen union regulations (Rosenfeld and Western 2011). Consequently, US union density has plummeted from around a third of the workforce in 1960, down to 11.9 percent last decade, with the steepest decline occurring in the 1980s (Stiglitz 2013: 81).

Although the decline in union density is not as steep cross-nationally, the pattern is still similar. Baccaro and Howell (2011) found that on average the unionisation rate decreased by 0.39 percent a year since 1974 for the 15 OECD members they surveyed (ibid: 529). Increasingly, the decline in the fortunes of labour is being linked with the increase in inequality and the sharpest increases in income inequality have occurred in the two countries with the largest falls in union density – the UK and US. Recent studies have found that the weakening of organised unions accounts for between a third and a fifth of the total rise in income inequality in the US (Rosenfeld and Western 2011), and nearly one half of the increase in both the Gini rate and the top ten percent's income share amongst OECD members (Jaumotte and Buitron 2015).

To illustrate the changing relationship between inequality and unionisation, Figure 1.3 displays a local polynomial smoother scatter plot of union density by income inequality, for

23 OECD countries, 1980–2018. They are negatively correlated, as countries with higher union density have much lower levels of income inequality. Figure 1.4 further plots the time trends of both. Income inequality has climbed over 0.02 percentage points on average in these countries since 1980, which is roughly one-tenth. Whereas union density has fallen on average from 44 to 35 percentage points, which is over one-fifth.



Figure 1.3: Gini Coefficient by Union Density, OECD 1980 to 2018

Sources: Data on gini coefficients from SWIID (Solt 2020); data on union density from ICTWSS Database (Visser 2019).



Figure 1.4: Gini Coefficient by Union Density, 1980 to 2018

Sources: Data on gini coefficients from SWIID (Solt 2020); data on union density from ICTWSS Database (Visser 2019).

In sum, income inequality is multifaceted and is not the inevitable outcome of irresistible structural forces such as globalisation or technological development. Instead, it has largely been driven by a multitude of political choices. Tridico (2018) finds that the increases in inequality from 1990–2013 in 26 OECD countries, was largely owing to increased financialisation, deepening labour flexibility, the weakening of trade unions, and welfare state retrenchment. While Huber et al. (2019) recently reveals that top income shares are unrelated to economic growth and knowledge-intensive production, but is closely related to political and policy changes surrounding union density, government partisanship, top income tax rates, and educational investment. Lastly, Hager's (2020) recent meta-analysis concludes that the "empirical record consistently shows that government policy plays a pivotal role" in shaping income inequality.

These preventable causes that have given rise to inequality have created social, economic, and political challenges, due to the demonstrably negative outcomes that inequality engenders. What follows is a detailed analysis of the significant mechanisms that income inequality induces, which lead to harmful outcomes.

IV. Consequences of Income Inequality

Escalating income inequality has been linked with numerous negative outcomes. On the economic front, negative results transpire beyond the obvious poverty and material deprivation that is often associated with low incomes. As income inequality has also been shown to reduce growth, innovation, and investment. On the social front, Wilkinson and Pickett's ground-breaking *The Spirit Level* (2009), found that societies that are more unequal have worse social outcomes on average than more egalitarian societies. They summarised an extensive body of research from the previous thirty years to create an Index of Health and Social Problems, which revealed a host of different health and social problems (measuring life expectancy, infant mortality, obesity, trust, imprisonment, homicide, drug abuse, mental health, social mobility, childhood education, and teenage pregnancy) as being positively correlated with the level of income inequality across rich nations and across states within the US. Figure 1.5 displays the cross-national findings via a sample of 21 OECD countries.



Figure 1.5: Index of Health and Social Problems by Gini Coefficient

Sources: Data on health and social problems index from The Equality Trust 2018; data on gini coefficients from OECD 2018.

Economic

Income inequality is predominantly an economic subject. Therefore, it is understandable that it can engender pervasive economic outcomes. Foremost economically speaking, it has been linked with reduced growth, investment, and innovation. Leading international organisations such as the IMF, World Bank, and OECD, pushed for neoliberal reforms beginning in the 1980s, although they have recently started to substantially temper their views due to their own research into inequality. A 2016 study by IMF economists, noted that neoliberal policies have delivered benefits through the expansion of global trade and transfers of technology, but the resulting increases in inequality "itself undercut growth, the very thing that the neo-liberal agenda is intent on boosting" (Ostry et al. 2016: 41). Cingano's (2014) OECD cross-national study, found that once a country's income inequality reaches a certain level it reduces growth.

As the growth rate in these countries would have been one-fifth higher had income inequality not increased, while the greater equality of the other countries included in the study helped to increase their growth rates.

Consumer spending is good for economic growth but rising income inequality shifts more money to the top of the income distribution, where higher-income individuals have a much smaller propensity to consume than lower-income individuals. The wealthy save roughly 15 to 25 percent of their income, whereas low-income individuals spend their entire income on consumer goods and services (Stiglitz 2013: 106). Therefore, greater inequality reduces demand in an economy and is a major contributor to the 'secular stagnation' (persistent insufficient demand relative to aggregate private savings) that the largest Western economies have been experiencing since the financial crisis. Inequality also increases the level of debt, as lower-income individuals borrow more to maintain their standard of living, especially in a climate of low interest rates. Combined with deregulation, greater debt increases instability and "was a major contributor to, if not the underlying cause of, the 2008 financial crash" (Brown 2017: 35–36).

Another key economic effect of income inequality is that it leads to reduced welfare spending and public investment. As a greater share of the income distribution is earned by the very wealthy, governments have less income available to fund education, public amenities, and other services that the poor rely heavily on. This creates social separation, whereby the wealthy opt out in publicly funding services because their private equivalents are of better quality. This causes a cycle of increasing income inequality that is likely to eventually lead to a situation of "private affluence and public squalor" (Marmot 2015: 39).

Lastly, it has been proven that economic instability is a by-product of increasing inequality, which harms innovation. Both countries and American states with the highest inequality have been found to be the least innovative in terms of the amount of Intellectual

Property (IP) patents they produce (Dorling 2018: 129–130). Although income inequality is predominantly an economic subject, its effects are so pervasive that it has also been linked to a host of negative health and societal outcomes.

Physical Health

Wilkinson and Pickett found key associations between income inequality for both physical and mental health. For example, they discovered that on average the life expectancy gap is more than four years between the least and most equitable richest nations (Japan and the US). Since their revelations, overall life expectancy has been reported to be declining in the US (Case and Deaton 2020). It has held or declined every year since 2014, which has led to a cumulative drop of 1.13 years (Andrasfay and Goldman 2021). Marmot (2015) has provided evidence that there exists a social gradient whereby differences in affluence translate into increasing health inequalities, which can be shown even down to the neighbourhood level, as more affluent areas have higher life expectancy on average than deprived areas, and a clear gradient appears where life expectancy increases in line with affluence.

These findings back up the 'absolute income hypothesis,' which predicts that health gains from an extra unit of income diminish as an individual's income rises (Leigh et al. 2009). A mean preserving transfer from a richer to poorer individual raises the health of the poorer individual more than it lowers the health of the richer person. This occurs because there is an optimum threshold of income required to maintain good health. Thus, when holding total income constant, a more equal distribution of income should improve overall population health. This pattern also applies at the country-wide level, as the "effect of income on health appears substantial as countries move from about \$15,000 to \$25,000 US dollars per capita," but appears non-existent beyond that point (Leigh et al. 2009: 386–387).

Moreover, Marmot's infamous Whitehall studies, which were large-scale longitudinal studies of Whitehall employees of UK central government, found an inverse-relationship between salary grade and ill-health, whereby low-grade workers were four times as likely as high-grade workers to suffer from ill-health (2015: 11). Health also steadily improved with rank and the correlation was little affected by lifestyle controls such as tobacco and alcohol usage. However, the leading factor that seemed to make the most difference in ill-health was job stress and a person's sense of control over their work, including the variety of work and the use and development of skills (Schrecker and Bambra 2015: 54–55).

Mental Health

'Psychosocial stresses,' like those appearing in the Whitehall studies, have been found to be more common and frequent amongst low-income individuals, beyond just the workplace (Jensen and van Kersbergen 2017: 24). Wilkinson and Pickett (2019) posit that greater income inequality engenders low self-esteem, chronic stress, and depression, stemming from status anxiety. This occurs because more importance is placed on where people fit in a hierarchy with greater inequality. For evidence, they outline a clear relationship of a much higher percentage of the population suffering from mental illness in more unequal countries. Meticulous research has shown that huge inequalities in income result in the poor having feelings of shame across a range of environments. Furthermore, a 2005 meta-analysis of 208 studies found that stress-hormone (cortisol) levels were raised particularly "when people felt that others were making negative judgements about them" (Rowlingson 2011: 24).

These effects on mental health can be best explained via the 'relative income hypothesis,' which posits that when an individual's income is held constant, the relative income of others can affect a person's health depending on how they view themselves in comparison to those above them (Leigh et al. 2009: 386–387). This pattern also holds when

income inequality increases at the societal level, because if such changes lead to increases in chronic stress, it can increase ill-health nationally.

Income inequality also impacts happiness and wellbeing, as the happiest nations are routinely the ones with low inequality, such as Denmark and Norway. Happiness has been proven to be affected by the law of diminishing returns in economics. It states that higher income incrementally improves happiness but only up to a certain point, as any individual income earned beyond roughly \$70,000 US dollars, does not bring about greater happiness (Deaton 2013: 53). The negative physical and mental health outcomes that income inequality provoke, also impact key societal areas such as crime, social mobility, and education.

Social

Crime rates are lower in more equal countries. This is largely because they have less poverty, which leads to less people being desperate about their situation, as lower-income individuals have been shown to commit more crime. The wealthy in more equal countries are also less likely to exploit others and commit fraud or exhibit other anti-social behaviour, partly because they feel less of a need to cut corners to get ahead, or to make money (Dorling 2017: 152–153). Homicides also tend to rise with inequality. Daly (2016) reveals that inequality predicts homicide rates better than any other variable and accounts for around half of the variance in murder rates between countries and American states. As 90 percent of American homicides are committed by men, and since the majority of homicides occur over status, inequality raises the stakes of disputes over status amongst men.

Studies have also shown that there is a marked negative relationship between income inequality and social mobility. Corak (2013) first outlined this 'Great Gatsby Curve' for 22 countries using Intergenerational Earnings Elasticity. I expand on this in Figure 1.6 to include all 36 OECD members, utilising the WEF's inaugural 2020 Social Mobility Index.



Figure 1.6: Index of Social Mobility by Gini Coefficient

Sources: Data on social mobility index from World Economic Forum 2020; data on gini coefficients from SWIID (Solt 2020).

A primary driver for the negative relationship between inequality and social mobility, derives from the availability of resources during early childhood. As life chances have been shown to be determined in early childhood to a disproportionately large extent (Jensen and van Kersbergen 2017: 29). Children in more equitable regions such as Scandinavia, have better access to resources, as they go to similar schools, receive similar educational opportunities, and have access to a wider range of career options. Whereas in the UK and US, a greater number of jobs at the top are closed off to those at the bottom and affluent parents are far more likely to send their children to private schools and fund other 'child enrichment' goods and services (Dorling 2017: 26). Therefore, as income inequality rises, there is a greater disparity in the resources that rich and poor parents can invest in their children's

education, which has been shown to substantially affect "cognitive development and school achievement" (Brown 2017: 33–34).

Negative societal outcomes are just one dimension of the multifaceted phenomenon that is income inequality. However, in recent years there has been a branching out towards an increased focus on the relationship between politics and income inequality, which is the subject of the next section of the chapter.

V. Politics and Income Inequality

Politics is largely about the distribution of power, namely who gets what, when, and how (Lasswell 1936). Accordingly, democracy is predicated on the ideal of equality, as one person equals one vote, irrespective of income or resources available. Therefore, each person is believed to have equal influence in the political process. However, political inequality can occur when the preferences of some are systematically afforded more weight in the political process than others. Thus, when groups such as low-income earners do not participate in, or have much influence over the political process, then political power becomes highly concentrated amongst groups like the affluent, which can threaten democracy. Of the many different inequalities that exist in political participation, the relationship between income and political engagement comprises the most consistent finding of empirical work in the area (Dacombe and Parvin 2021).

The process whereby political inequality can arise and on which this section will focus, includes a three-step causal chain. The first is preference formation, whereby the redistributive policy preferences of individuals are formulated. The second is preference articulation, which is the degree that individuals participate and engage in the political process through demonstrations or voting in elections (Jensen and Van Kersbergen 2017). Preference formation and articulation are both inputs into the political process, whereas the final step, preference aggregation, is an output that entails the responsiveness of policymakers to the preferences of citizens. In each causal step, the preferences of rich and poor have been found to differ and income inequality can also incur dissimilar effects on each. The subsequent section investigates the key literature surrounding the effects of income inequality on political behaviour and begins by examining the relationship between income inequality and redistribution.

Redistribution

At the heart of discussion about politics and inequality is the issue of redistribution. Transfers via social spending and taxes comprise the leading avenue to combat income inequality. There are no economic laws that prevent greater redistribution, as policy choices determine the extent of its progressivity, which in a democracy should be predicated on the preferences of voters. The most straightforward determinant of attitudes towards redistribution is individual self-interest, providing the motivation for the seminal median voter theoretical model associated with Romer (1975) and Meltzer and Richard (1981), whereby escalating inequality leads to greater political demands for redistribution, due to the median voter being made worse off from more inequality.

Yet, evidence for the Romer-Meltzer-Richard (RMR) theory is very patchy because in practice redistribution is higher in more equal than in unequal countries, a phenomenon often described as the 'Robin Hood' paradox (Lindert 2004), and public opposition to rising income inequality is often surprisingly underwhelming (Kenworthy and McCall 2008). Figure 1.7 illustrates the Robin Hood paradox by plotting the redistributive effect (percentage-wise) of taxes and transfers against the Gini coefficient of 32 OECD members in 2014. There is a strong negative correlation as high inequality countries such as the US and Chile redistribute much less than low inequality regions such as Scandinavia.



Figure 1.7: Redistributive Effect of Taxes and Transfers by Gini Coefficient, 2014

Sources: Data on redistributive effect from OECD (Causa and Hermansen 2017); data on gini coefficients from SWIID (Solt 2020).

Therefore, scholars have not yet adequately addressed the crucial question: why does more income inequality not lead to greater redistribution? The Robin Hood paradox has led to numerous explanations attempting to solve the conundrum, including social identity, media framing, beliefs in meritocracy, and institutional factors.

Income inequality can affect redistribution by exacerbating social identity tendencies. For example, income inequality can make the world appear to be more zero-sum, therefore, 'self-enhancement bias' could occur, whereby people overestimate their own income position relative to others (Gimpelson and Treisman 2018). Similarly, 'social rivalry' thesis posits that middle-income earners oppose redistribution for fear that it will enable the poor to gain access to middle-class neighbourhoods and social networks that could undermine their own relative status position (Lupu and Pontusson 2011: 319). Another possible social identity explanation lies with the 'social affinity' thesis. It suggests that members of a majority group are less likely to support redistribution when racial or ethnic minorities comprise a significant proportion of low-income earners, due to the increased social segregation that tends to occur with widening income differentials.

Kelly and Enns (2010) find that all income groups become more conservative in response to income inequality due to elite framing of distribution outcomes in the media that give "rise to a form of false consciousness amongst the poor" (ibid: 869). People rely on the media to make sense of complex issues. On related issues to inequality, news framing has been shown to significantly shape American public opinion on tax cuts (Bell and Entman 2011) and wealth taxes (Chomsky 2018), German opinion of political parties (Dewenter et al. 2019), and Canadian opinion of healthcare spending (Blidook 2008). While poverty typically receives much news attention, a persistent absentee in its coverage is the role of structural inequalities and income inequality itself (Harkins and Lugo-Ocando 2017; Kendall 2011; Petrova 2008). Similarly, McCall (2013) finds that US newsprint reporting of income inequality was extremely limited from 1980 to 2010, despite considerable increases in inequality. Meanwhile experiments show that cumulated media coverage of inequality has a significant negative impact on concerns about the economic situation of society (Diermeier et al. 2017). American media has also been shown to present class-biased economic news towards the wealthy (Jacobs et al. 2021) and afford more positive coverage to corporations (Kollmeyer (2004). This bias and reduced scrutiny of income inequality is likely due to the corporate-owned and increasingly concentrated mass media. An ownership structure that is particularly acute in higher inequality countries such as the UK and US.

Another reason why some people do not question inequality, lies with system justification theory. System justification is a subconscious impetus to avoid the discomfort
that can arise from believing "that one's social system is unfair or illegitimate" (Trump 2018: 5). Trump's (2018) 'adjustment hypothesis,' extended this theory to inequality via four laboratory experiments that were conducted in the US and Sweden. She found that participants adjusted their perceptions of inequality by attributing legitimacy to it, due to inherent motivations to believe that their social system is fair. Similarly, 'American Dream' ideology (McCall et al. 2017), provides another type of system justification for inequality. Since its inception, the national ethos and ideal of the US has been the American Dream, whereby it has been promulgated and believed that the country is a world leader in offering the best upward social mobility despite all evidence to the contrary (Davidai and Gilovich 2015: 67). An extension of the American Dream ideology is provided by the 'Prospect of Upward Mobility' (POUM) hypothesis, which suggests that lower-income earners might not support redistribution because they believe that their children might be able to move up the income ladder, due to the tendency of people to have unrealistic expectations of their upward social mobility (Engelhardt and Wagener 2014).

This belief in meritocracy is a key tenet held throughout the West, asserting that anyone can achieve monetary success if they try hard enough and are talented enough. Even though, as global inequality expert Branko Milanovic has calculated, a person's birth location and the social status of their parents account for between 80 to 90 percent of the variability in total global income (Reid-Henry 2015: 109). Robert Frank's bestseller *Success and Luck* (2016), points out that people tend not to equate success with luck, which can lead to greater acceptance of inequality. Mijs (2019) has shown that the more unequal a society, the more likely its citizens are to believe in meritocracy and explain success in meritocratic terms, which is suggestive of environmental factors shaping inequality views. Furthermore, in an exhaustive worldwide historical study of inequality over the past 10,000 years, Bowles et al. (2010) argue from an anthological perspective, that although inequality has always existed, rising inequality is not inevitable, genetic, or due to population and environmental pressures. Instead, it normally increases when new forms of 'social logic,' such as meritocracy, achieve enough prominence to be able to justify and amplify its rise.

The persistence of meritocratic myths has contributed to mounting evidence that the perceptions that people hold about the true extent of income inequality are largely incorrect and underestimated, often by substantial amounts, which can then impact support for redistribution (Engelhardt and Wagener 2014: 2). Misperceptions about inequality and redistribution can also occur due to the complicated nature of both subjects, as income inequality itself is an abstract concept that is difficult to comprehend without the aid of graphs, numbers, or long explanations, and the Gini coefficient is not easily understood. People are also generally unaware of the long-term consequences of major re-distributional policy such as tax cuts. For instance, low-income earners were supportive of the George Bush tax cuts of 2001 and 2003 in America, which disproportionately benefitted the wealthy and would predictably lead to regressive tax increases and spending cuts in programs for low-income earners (Franko and Witko 2018: 105).

Nevertheless, inequality misperceptions vary cross-nationally, as Americans typically underestimate actual levels and changes over time much more so than Europeans, with Norwegians proving to be relatively accurate (Hauser and Norton 2017). Although the elevated Norwegian accuracy most likely stems from regulations outlining public disclosure of income tax returns. In fact, it appears that there exists an "inverse correlation between trends in inequality and perceptions of inequality and fairness" (Stiglitz 2013: 185). However, when people are informed of the true extent of income inequality, their demand for redistribution is typically much greater, so much so, that the inequality rankings of countries can change (Gründler and Köllner 2017: 950). Moreover, people's ideal levels of inequality are also far more equal than their perceptions of inequality, as Norton and Ariel (2011) found that Americans overwhelmingly favour Swedish levels of inequality when asked to construct ideal income distributions.

Lastly, institutional factors can impact support for redistribution. Countries with lower inequality have greater institutionalised support and advocacy in place (such as unions) for redistributive polices (Korpi 1983; Loveless 2016). Proportional electoral systems redistribute more, partially because they provide better representation for low-income earners by better facilitating alliances between the working-class and middle-class (Iversen and Soskice 2006). Three recent meta-analyses (Bandau and Ahrens 2019; Potrafke 2017; Zohlnhöfer et al. 2018) also indicate that leftist government control has a positive relationship to redistribution, even though it has declined in recent decades. Income inequality itself weakens trust in government institutions (Macdonald 2020b), especially among low-income earners (Gallego 2016), and countries with high inequality tend to have lower trust in government (Goubin and Hooghe 2020). Consequently, Kuziemko et al. (2015) have found that decreasing trust in government has a causal effect on diminishing support for redistribution. Correspondingly, higher government corruption, bureaucratic inefficiency, and ineffective enforcement of the rule of law, are associated with lower levels of support for redistribution, due to lost faith and trust in government (Holland 2018; Petrova 2020).

Understanding the relationship between inequality and redistribution is essential for examining the effects of inequality on political behaviour. Preferences for redistribution influence motivations for political engagement, including voting, which I explore next.

Voter Turnout and Inequality

Voter turnout in general elections has declined steadily downwards from 82 percent in the 1970s to 72 percent across Western democracies (Schäfer and Streeck 2013: 11). The trend is nearly universal, as only Luxembourg and Spain have not witnessed declines. This decline in

turnout is particularly steep in Switzerland and three Anglo-Saxon countries (UK, US, and Canada). While declining turnout has many correlates, such as declining youth participation and socioeconomic factors, many have now pointed to income inequality (Anderson and Beramendi 2008; Galbraith and Hale 2008; Jaime-Castillo 2009; Jensen and Jespersen 2017; Lancee and Van de Werfhorst 2012; Schäfer 2013; Schäfer and Schwander 2019; Solt 2008, 2010; Steinbrecher and Seeber 2011; Szewczyk and Crowder-Meyer 2020; Wilford 2020). These academics have developed three principal theories attempting to explain the effects of income inequality on voting, namely 'relative power theory,' 'resource theory,' and 'conflict theory,' which follow below.

Relative power theory predicts that income inequality has a negative effect on turnout and that the turnout of all income groups is expected to decline. This occurs due to inequality generating a greater concentration of wealth into the hands of high-income individuals, who then translate that increased wealth into more political power, as policy makers respond to their interests over the poor (Goodin and Dryzek 1980). Consequently, low-income earners become disengaged from the political process as they "conclude that politics is simply not a game a worth playing" (Solt 2008: 57). Eventually, the turnout of high-income individuals also declines (although not to the same extent), as less engagement is then required to maintain their dominant position in the political process (Steinbrecher and Seeber 2011).

Solt (2008) finds evidence in support of relative power theory both cross-nationally and at the US state level (2010). He has produced the most pronounced results, whereby political participation is lower in countries with above average income inequality, particularly among those on low incomes. Similarly, Galbraith and Hale (2008) find that higher US statelevel income inequality leads to lower turnout in presidential elections in their study covering 1980–2004. Beyond the US context, Steinbrecher and Seeber (2011) find in a round four European Social Survey (ESS) sample of 27 countries, that income inequality lowers turnout at the individual level but also reduces the income gap in turnout. Most recently, Schäfer and Schwander (2019) confirm and expand on Solt's cross-national results in a comprehensive study of 21 OECD countries over 30 years. They find a 7 to 15 percentage point difference in turnout between the most equal to the least egalitarian countries (Schäfer and Schwander 2019: 13). Lastly, in a 1996–2009 CSES cross-national study, Gallego (2015) finds that higher gross income inequality increases the income gap in turnout but also that net income inequality reduces turnout equally for all income groups.

In contrast to relative power theory, conflict theory predicts the opposite effect on turnout. It builds on Meltzer and Richard's (1981) median voter model, by predicting that higher income inequality will lead to a more conflictive politics because increasing income inequality stimulates more engagement in the political process for all income groups. This occurs because low-income individuals will start to push for more redistribution, due to being made worse off from increased inequality. This in turn becomes costlier for the rich, who then become more politically engaged so that they can counter the adoption of redistributive policies (Stockemer and Parent 2014).

Evidence for conflict theory is sparse. Leighley and Nagler (2014) find some support via the first study of turnout inequality to include party choices. They examine both the perceived policy difference and alienation in a case study of US presidential elections from 1972–2008. They find that turnout inequality has not increased over the period analysed. They also find that people who perceive greater policy differences are more likely to vote and that the poor are less likely to perceive policy differences than the wealthy. However, the study concentrates on perceived rather than actual policy differences, does not incorporate aggregate-level inequality, or focus on the policies that are most closely related to inequality. Most recently, utilising the 2012 and 2016 American National Election Studies, Szewczyk and Crowder-Meyer (2020) find evidence that community-level inequality increases various forms of political participation, although predominantly for the affluent.

Lastly, power resource theory posits that an individual's participation in the political process depends on the extent of resources available to them (Verba et al. 1995). Greater income inequality typically results in less resources for lower class citizens and more for upper-class citizens. Thus, the greater the amount of income inequality in a society, the less politically active the poor become, as opposed to the wealthy, who increase their political engagement. More equal societies should also have a more equal system for provisioning services to all members of society and make it easier for the lower classes to participate in civic life (Lancee and Van de Werfhorst 2012). It is possible that overall turnout can still rise with increased inequality because if all income groups are getting richer in absolute terms, then they will still have more resources available to participate in politics, even though the poorest are getting poorer in relative terms (Jaime-Castillo 2009). However, the theory generally predicts that greater inequality is positively related for high-income earners and negatively related for low-income earners (Solt 2008). This tends to lead to overall declining turnout, as well as greater turnout inequality.

Cross-national support for power resource theory can be found in a couple studies. Anderson and Beramendi (2008) find in a World Values Study from 1999–2001, that inequality suppresses turnout across national contexts because individuals living in more unequal countries are less likely to vote, with a consistent linear pattern for all income groups. Using data from the 2006 wave of the European Social Survey, Lancee and Van de Werfhorst (2012: 1176) demonstrate that "inequality seems to isolate low-income individuals from civic and social life," while simultaneously promoting "the social integration of the rich." In sum, the results are still mixed from over a decade of work examining inequality as a factor in declining turnout. It has been established in the literature that voting is positively associated with income and countries with higher inequality tend to vote less. A key reason for these mixed results may have to do with the contingent nature of inequality on turnout, which plausibly depends upon the nature of the policy options that parties present to the electorate. Thus, in Papers 1 and 2 of the thesis, it is tested whether the effect of income inequality on turnout is conditioned by the policy programs of political parties. Since greater demand for redistribution engendered via increased income inequality, will only spur mobilisation if appropriate economic policy choice is offered. Accordingly, it is low-income earners who are typically much less likely to vote and who receive the least political representation. An effect where some evidence has shown to be even more marked in contexts of higher income inequality. Therefore, low-income earners should be mobilised the greatest extent via greater economic policy choice in the context of higher inequality.

The next section expands on this analysis by specifically focusing on the party family that is traditionally expected to best represent these individuals in the bottom half of the income distribution, especially so in the context of rising income inequality.

Social Democratic Decline

Equality was a founding principle of social democracy (Bartolini 2000; Mudge 2018). Traditionally, social democratic parties were the primary actors actively promoting policies that favour labour and the lower classes through state development and redistribution. In contrast, business and center-right parties tend to promote marketisation and income concentration at the top, while opposing redistribution (Huber et al. 2019). Consequently, both the working class and labour unions have traditionally been a strong base of support for social democrats, as their vote shares were higher in countries with high levels of union and party membership in the post-war era (Hopkin 2020). Social democrats were able to establish issue ownership over the welfare state and it became a large part of their brand identity (Schumacher et al. 2013). It has been shown that the party family also tends to benefit if welfare state issues are salient during electoral campaigns (Bélanger and Meguid 2008). However, in the late 1980s and 1990s, the party family moved rightwards by embracing neoliberalism (Mudge 2018). This 'Third Way' was designed to foster the image of being a strong steward of the economy to become a 'catch-all' party that could offset the decline of their traditional working-class base, which was occurring through globalisation and deindustrialisation.

Initially, the Third Way strategy was successful in the late 1990s and early 2000s, as social democratic parties swept into power by expanding their voter base through the acquisition of more centrist voters. However, since then, the parties have typically been shut out of power and have experienced substantially diminishing vote shares across much of the West (most especially in France, Germany, Greece, Italy, and The Netherlands). Karreth et al. (2012) have shown that catch-all policy moderation turned into 'catch-and-release,' as core social democratic voters were at first willing to accept policy moderation to strategically attain power, but later become alienated with the rebrand and gradually drifted away from the parties. At the same time, social democrats were unable to hold on to the newly acquired centrist voters who were more fickle and less attached to the parties.

Kraft (2017) demonstrates that embracing austerity is a lose-lose situation for social democrats. Despite continued social democratic efforts to appear austere, the mainstream right has been able to maintain issue ownership over budget cuts in the minds of swing voters. Nor has the embrace of austerity prevented left-leaning voters from leaving the social democrats. Horn (2020) expands on this research to find that social democratic losses from embracing austerity largely become permanent, which leaves a tragedy of social democratic

responsibility behind, in contrast to the mainstream right who can maintain issue ownership. Schwander and Manow (2017) find that the prominent Hartz welfare reform laws of 2003 to 2005, initiated by the German Social Democratic (SPD) party, substantially contributed to the party's decline, with many voters either abstaining, or moving over to a new socialist party (*Die Linke*).

Despite social democratic rightwards economic movement, recent evidence shows that voters do indeed listen to parties and understand their policy messages, especially on the issue of redistribution (Somer-Topcu et al. 2020). As Rueda and Stegmueller (2019: 187) demonstrate using ESS data, the poor are "uniformly in favour of redistribution and therefore more likely to vote for redistributive parties." Rueda (2018) also finds that individuals with high redistribution preferences are 70 percent more likely to vote for leftist parties. Consequently, rising income inequality should increase support for social democratic parties if they offer more redistribution. Therefore, Paper 3 of the thesis tests this assumption. However, economic policy offerings do not occur in a vacuum as they are accompanied by offerings on the socio-cultural second dimension.

Social democratic policy movement has also created an opportunity for the far right to attract the working-class base of social democrats. They have done so by strategically focusing on immigration, moral traditionalism, and effectively blurring their economic positions (Rovny 2013) to tap into the nativist and socio-cultural conservativism of the working class (Houtman et al. 2008). This has prompted a debate as to whether social democrats would benefit from moving rightwards on the second dimension by offering more restrictive immigration. Spoon and Klüver (2020) provide cross-national evidence that such an accommodation strategy does significantly benefit the mainstream left. Hjorth and Larsen (2020) find in a Danish survey experiment that accommodation does attract anti-immigration voters and repel pro-immigration voters, but that the latter tend to defect to other parties on

the left, thereby increasing the overall vote share on the left and the likelihood of a social democratic-led coalition government forming.

Others have challenged the merits of accommodation by introducing economic scoping conditions into the analysis. Abou-Chadi and Wagner (2019) find that social democrats can gain vote share if they offer leftist socio-cultural positions combined with greater investment-oriented positions on the investment–consumption growth strategy spectrum, or if unions are limited in their capacity to mobilise against such shifts. Loxbo et al. (2019) find that social democratic parties only really lose votes from rightward turns on the second dimension, when combined with low levels of welfare generosity. Therefore, Paper 3 also examines the effect of social democratic policy offerings on both dimensions. As social democratic decline could be owing to brand dilution that is magnified when the party family simultaneously moves rightwards on both dimensions.

Paper 4 of the thesis then investigates the three challenger party families that could be benefitting from social democratic party supply induced decline (De Vries and Hobolt 2020). Firstly, social democrats have never had a monopoly on the left side of the political spectrum. In most countries, the social democrats have historically faced a challenge from the socialist left, which is an old party family with a well-established electoral presence in most democracies. Second, in many countries the green party family emerged in the 1980s in the left of centre policy space (Grant and Tilley 2019). Hence, three of the largest party families typically exist on the left, whereas only two exist on the right, with the liberals in the middle (although typically right-leaning on the economic dimension). Third, the radical right has made substantial inroads among the declining working-class base of social democracy in recent years (Rydgren 2013), with the core composition of social democrats now comprising the middle class (Piketty 2020). Thus, the socialist left, greens, and radical right could all be benefitting from social democratic decline. In line with the Downsian (1957) spatial logic of party competition, Paper 4 also examines whether it is left-leaning voters that are abandoning the social democrats due to their rightward policy movements, which could be magnified from increased discontent generated from the financial crisis, austerity, and rising inequality. These voters are likely abandoning the social democrats due to a lack of effective representation, to which a burgeoning literature has now become focused.

Conclusion: Unequal Responsiveness

A defining characteristic of democracy is "the continuing responsiveness of the government to the preferences of its citizens, considered as political equals" (Dahl 1971). Thus, for a complete understanding of the effect of income inequality on politics, it is essential to examine the policy responsiveness of government to citizen preferences. The literature in this field has so far been heavily concentrated on the US, due to its high levels of income inequality and outsized prevalence of money in its political system. Adherents to this theory of 'unequal democracy,' argue that income inequality has profound implications for political inequality by creating a pronounced feedback cycle, whereby:

increasing economic inequality may produce increasing inequality in political responsiveness, which in turn produces public policies that are increasingly detrimental to the interests of poor citizens, which in turn produces even greater economic inequality (Bartels 2008: 286).

This perspective is based on the theory of 'redistributive democracy,' which assumes that the preferences for redistribution and interests of the rich and poor differ markedly. Mounting evidence for this perspective has appeared from a growing list of American academics in recent years (Bartels 2008; Bowman 2020; Epp 2018; Gilens 2012; Hacker and Pierson 2010; Hayes 2013; Page et al. 2013).

For instance, Martin Gilens in *Affluence and Influence*, collected hundreds of thousands of individual public opinion-poll responses, regarding an assortment of

government policies and found that subsequent government policy decisions were strongly tilted towards the most affluent and that "the preferences of the vast majority of Americans appear to have essentially no impact" on policy (2012: 1). The preferences of low-income earners also appear to only be taken into consideration if they happened to share the same attitudes of the affluent. Similarly, both Hayes (2013) and Bartels (2008), examined the voting behaviour of US Senators and discovered that the opinions of low-income earners exhibited little to no relationship with their voting behaviour, whereas the opinions of high-income earners strongly predicted voting behaviour.

Various mechanisms allow the wealthy to achieve influence over policy responsiveness. One key process lies with the fact that politicians are increasingly wealthy and tend to come from the business world (Franko and Witko 2018: 139). This has led to a 'revolving door' whereby large companies hire former government officials and politicians to gain access and influence over government policy. Members of the working class and people with low education have also all but disappeared from the ranks of parliamentarians (O'Grady 2019), which has led to greater voter abstention over time for these groups (Heath 2018). Political donation is a further key mechanism, as it has been well established that highincome earners and the groups that represent their interests are more likely to donate to political campaigns than low-income earners (Flavin and Franko 2017: 659). For example, the 2016 US election cycle has been estimated to have cost \$7 billion in advertising. Political donations do not have to be declared in the US either. As Jane Mayer has documented the opaque nature of American political finance, whereby billions of dollars of Dark Money (2016), stemming from a small network of extremely wealthy conservatives has bought enormous influence over the Republican party and their supportive infrastructure. On the few occasions when governments attempt to introduce policies that go against corporate interests, they are almost always subject to immense pressure from lobbyists to reverse such policies

(Stilwell 2019). An interview from former US President Jimmy Carter provides a cogent summation of this process, as he characterises the American political system as essentially "an oligarchy with unlimited political bribery being the essence of getting the nominations for president or being elected president" (Collins 2018: 19).

Outside of the US, studies confirming unequal responsiveness based on income, have recently appeared in multiple European countries and cross-nationally. In a comprehensive study of legislative reform proposals in Germany from 1980–2013, Elsasser et al. (2020) find that irrespective of partisanship or policy type, decisions are skewed towards upper occupational and educational groups. Similarly, Schakel (2019) finds in a Dutch study linking public opinion surveys to policy from 1979–2012, that policy responsiveness is much stronger for high incomes than for everyone else. Lefkofridi and Giger (2020) find that that the poor are systematically under-represented by EU institutions. Lastly, in the most comprehensive work yet, analysing 92,000 elite and 3.9 million citizen observations across 565 country-years, Lupu and Warner (2021) find that legislator preferences are consistently more congruent with those of affluent citizens than everyone else on economic issues.

Scholars have also found that income inequality can exacerbate this unequal responsiveness. Using CSES data, Rosset et al. (2013) finds that party systems represent the preferences of poor citizens worse in more equal societies. Epp and Borgetto (2021) expand on this analysis to find in the US and five European countries, from 1981–2012, that there is a distinct migration in legislative attention away from issues dealing with the social safety-net in the policy process, as elites act as gatekeepers early in the policy process.

In sum, intense and widespread evidence in favour of unequal economic responsiveness through various outlined mechanisms, produces profound ramifications in the policy process. Most importantly, they suggest that income stratification shapes policymaking so that redistribution designed to combat rising income inequality is much less likely to be implemented.

This review chapter has shown that market forces are not beyond the control of governments and that policymakers can affect distributional outcomes and income inequality through public policy. As income inequality does not result exclusively from efficient market forces but arises out of a set of rules that is shaped by those with political power. The chapter has also reviewed the key literature surrounding income inequality, including the measurements and mechanisms involved, the harmful consequences it engenders that are not explicable solely by material deprivation, and the pervasive and preventable causes that give rise to it. It has articulated the causal chain that allows for political inequality to arise through preference formation, articulation, and aggregation, and it has outlined the effects that income inequality can have on preferences for redistribution, political participation, political parties, and policy responsiveness.

The thesis will proceed in the format of a compilation comprising four empirical articles investigating the impact of income inequality on political behaviour. The next chapter on methodology, will first outline and provide a critical analysis of the data and methods utilised throughout. Four empirical articles will then follow in turn, beginning with an analysis into the relationship between income inequality and voter turnout, followed by an investigation into the decline of social democratic parties and inequality. Throughout, the common linkage is the policy offerings of political parties moderating each relationship.

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Chapter 2: Data and Methodology

This thesis takes the format of a compilation comprising four quantitative empirical articles investigating the impact of income inequality on political behaviour across the OECD. It largely relies on the same data sources throughout, which maintains a high level of consistency. This chapter provides an overview of the data and methodology utilised for the thesis. While greater detail that is unique to each paper is included within the specific data and methodology sections of each paper, which follow on from this chapter.

I. Case Selection

Case selection is based on a country's level of democracy and economic development, as the hypotheses apply specifically to established democracies where the policy offerings of parties are perceived to matter to voters. Evidence shows that perceptions of electoral integrity are positively associated with both a propensity to vote (Birch 2010), and confidence in electoral institutions (Norris 2014). Thus, where electoral integrity is lacking, a key disconnect emerges between voters and parties, as parties lose their accountability and voters become doubtful that policy offerings will be properly implemented. Freedom House provides a 7-point composite political rights and civil liberties score where (1 = "Most free" to 7 = "Least free"). Therefore, any election that fails to attain a 1 or 2 are excluded from the sample, as any scores above 3 are defined as being not fully free by Freedom House (2021).¹ The key economic criterion for inclusion is OECD membership, which is the world's leading intergovernmental economic organisation.

¹ Countries with a "rating of 1 enjoy a wide range of political rights, including free and fair elections. Candidates who are elected actually rule, political parties are competitive, the opposition plays an important role and enjoys real power, and the interests of minority groups are well represented in politics and government." (Freedom House 2021). By contrast, countries with a rating of 2 have slightly weaker political rights than those with a rating of 1 "because of such factors as political corruption, limits on the functioning of political parties and opposition groups, and flawed electoral processes." Countries with a rating of 3 are beset by the same problems affecting countries with a rating of 2, only to a greater extent and are classified as not fully free.

This criterion generates a sample of 31 countries.² As the final two paper's focus on social democracy, a further requirement is then introduced, which is a party system containing a longstanding history of a dominant social democratic party on the center-left.³ This leaves the social democratic analysis with 22 countries. For the final paper examining party families, the US is left out, due to the unique two-party nature of the American system.

II. Data

The thesis relies on both individual- and aggregate-level data. The policy offerings of political parties are central to the hypotheses for each paper. Therefore, following previous research, policy positions are estimated utilising party manifesto data (Ezrow and Xenokasis 2011). This data provides an appropriate indication of party positions since they represent the choices that the electorate faces before each election. The data is drawn from the Comparative Manifesto Project (MARPOR) (Volkens et al 2021), which is the most widely used source for estimating party policy positions (Gemenis 2013). As the content of party programs often comes out of intense intraparty debate, the MARPOR estimates are reliable and accurate statements about parties' positions at the time of elections. These measures are generally consistent with those from other party positions, and parliamentary voting analyses, which provides additional confidence in the validity and reliability of these estimates (Laver et al. 2003). The MARPOR measures are based on content analyses of the programs of the main political parties at every post-war election. The policy statements in each ('quasi-') sentence are classified into 56 policy categories over 7 policy domains.

² Countries included: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg (not in CSES), Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States.

³ Eastern Europe is excluded due to the instability of the region's party system – particularly on the left.

It should be noted that the research validity of MARPOR has been questioned (see Laver 2014 for a review). However, the criticisms tend to focus on inter-coder reliability, or the additive general Left-Right 'RILE' position measure, while this thesis primarily focuses on party positions on matters of redistribution. In addition, after thoroughly examining the original hand-annotated and coded manifesto text (newly digitised) for German and American parties from 2002 to 2014, Horn et al. (2017: 412) find that "the items do measure what they are supposed to measure: emphasis on equality and welfare state expansion," which are the most relevant items for this study.

Income inequality is another key explanatory variable. Here, the most widely used measure is the *Gini* coefficient. To aid in interpretation, the Gini Index ranging from 0 to 100 (low to high) is employed. Gini rates are included from the commonly used Standardized World Income Inequality Database (SWIID), which maximizes accuracy and coverage (Solt 2020).⁴ The adjusted after-tax Gini is employed because the main mechanisms leading inequality to affect turnout are most likely to operate via a person's disposable income after taxes and transfers, rather than their market income (Stockemer and Scruggs 2012: 767).

MARPOR and SWIID data are merged with various socio-economic and political data at the aggregate level for each paper. Many of these variables are drawn from the Comparative Political Data Set (CPDS) (Armingeon et al. 2019). Variables not available in the CPDS are taken from leading international organisations such as the IMF (Mauro et al. 2015), OECD (2020), and World Bank (2021), or commonly used datasets measuring labour unions – ICTWSS (Visser 2019); globalisation – KOF (Dreher et al. 2006; Gygli et al. 2019); and political parties – ParlGov (Doring and Manow 2020).

⁴ Version 9.0 of the SWIID is used. The dataset includes 100 separate imputations of the inequality data, which allows for any uncertainty in the estimates. For reasons of parsimony, the average estimate of these 100 imputed variables is taken from the *gini_disp* variable, which is an estimate of the Gini index of inequality in equivalised household market income.

The individual-level data is all drawn from the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES). The CSES is the leading international comparative project combining questions from national post-election surveys across numerous countries since 1996. The second paper from the thesis relies on the integrated four-wave CSES (CSES 2019) and the third and fourth papers supplement this by adding the wave 5 preliminary release (CSES 2020). The second paper includes 180,490 individuals in 102 elections, from 1996–2016. The third paper comprises 158,822 individuals in 85 elections, from 1996–2018, and the final paper utilising retrospective social democratic voters, relies on 25,259 individuals from 62 elections within this sample.

III. Variables

Dependent Variables

The dependent variable for the first paper is aggregate *turnout* and for the second paper it is individual reported turnout, which is a dichotomous measure of whether a survey respondent reported voting in their recent national election. For the third paper, the aggregate-level dependent variable is social democratic vote share (*SD vote*), operationalised as the percentage of votes cast by the registered electorate for a mainstream social democratic party. Similarly, at the individual level, a dummy *SD voted* variable measures whether a survey respondent voted in their recent national election for a social democratic party. In the last paper, the dependent variable is the percentage of votes cast by the registered for one of six party families: socialist left, mainstream left, green, liberal, conservative, and radical right. Vote shares derive from ParlGov (Döring and Manow 2020) and party families are coded according to ParlGov and cross-validated against MARPOR.⁵ Similarly, at the

⁵ ParlGov's classification is adjusted in a handful of cases largely following Kriesi and Schulte-Cloos (2020). The True Finns, New Zealand First Party, and Swiss People's Party are re-assigned to the radical right, the Danish Socialist People's Party is re-assigned to the socialist left, and Italy's Five Star Movement is re-assigned to 'other' since its left-right positioning is highly ambiguous.

individual level, a dummy variable measures the party that a respondent voted for in their recent national election.

Policy Variables

A key independent variable for the first two papers is policy polarisation, which is the degree of economic policy spread for a party system in an election. To measure policy polarisation, I follow Lowe et al. (2011), as this method takes better account of the proportional changes on the left–right scale than the traditional Laver/Budge methodology. MARPOR position computations assume that the marginal effect of an additional sentence is constant. However, a shift from zero to one would matter more for a policy position than a shift from 9 to 10 due to the diminishing impact of repeated emphasis. Hence, Lowe's (2011) logged method addresses this by applying a ratio approach to the raw number of sentences, so that the relative balance and proportion of change on the left-right scale are accounted for, rather than just the quantity of sentences (Prosser 2014).

The left–right policy scores of the various parties is calculated by summing up the logged percentages of all the sentences in the left-leaning category and subtracting their total from the sum of the logged percentages of the sentences in the right-leaning category. A *policy polarisation* variable is then constructed utilising the weighted by vote share policy dispersion of the party system, which is the standard deviations of all the parties' positions on redistribution for each election (Alvarez and Nagler 2004; Ezrow 2007). This measure captures the spread of policies available to the electorate, by taking account how competitive are each of the parties (Dalton 2008). Thus, if a relatively minor party adopts a strong leftwing position, this does not affect the index as much as if a major party does. This captures the political reality that voters face at election time, since if competitive parties do not offer any meaningful policy difference, then it matters less which party wins. To measure the

political center of gravity, the weighted mean of the party positions (*mean policy position*) is calculated for each election. The equation for the weighted party system polarisation measure is:

Weighted Polarisation =

$$\sqrt{\sum_{j=1} VS_j \left(P_{jk} - \overline{P_k}\right)^2}$$

Where \overline{P}_k signifies the weighted mean of all the parties' economic positions in country k; P_{jk} indicates the economic position of party j in country k; and VS_j is the vote share for party j.

The final two papers rely on the positions of social democratic parties in both the economic and socio-cultural dimensions. To construct these variables, a similar procedure to the policy polarisation construction is performed. An *SD economic position* variable is created based on the logged party score involving 15 relevant categories (left–right from -100 to 100) of the historically largest by vote share party on the center-left, for each election. Similarly, an *SD culture position* is included, involving 17 relevant socio-cultural categories, which includes positions on the environment, equality, internationalism, law and order, minorities, multiculturalism, nationalism, and traditional morality. The same economic components are utilised in generating the policy polarisation variables. Table 1 outlines the composition of the two dimensions, which are the recommended indicators provided by MARPOR for best capturing the economic (state-market) and socio-cultural (progressive-conservative) dimensions.⁶

⁶ MARPOR dimension construction: <u>https://manifesto-project.wzb.eu/information/documents/visualizations</u>.

| Economic (State-Market) Dimension | | | |
|--|------------------------------------|-------------------|------------------------------------|
| Left-Wing | | Right-Wing | |
| per403 | Market Regulation | per401 | Free Market Economy |
| per404 | Economic Planning | per402 | Incentives: Positive |
| per405 | Corporatism/Mixed Economy | per407 | Protectionism: Negative |
| per406 | Protectionism: Positive | per414 | Economic Orthodoxy |
| per409 | Keynesian Demand Management | per505 | Welfare State Limitation |
| per412 | Controlled Economy | | |
| per413 | Nationalisation | | |
| per415 | Marxist Analysis | | |
| per416 | Anti-Growth Economy: Positive | | |
| per504 | Welfare State Expansion | | |
| | | | |
| Society (Progressive-Conservative) Dimension | | | |
| Left-Wing | | Right-Wing | |
| per105 | Military: Negative | per104 | Military: Positive |
| per106 | Peace | per109 | Internationalism: Negative |
| per107 | Internationalism: Positive | per110 | European Community/Union: Negative |
| per108 | European Community/Union: Positive | per601 | National Way of Life: Positive |
| per501 | Environmental Protection | per603 | Traditional Morality: Positive |
| per503 | Equality: Positive | per605 | Law and Order: Positive |
| per602 | National Way of Life: Negative | per608 | Multiculturalism: Negative |
| per604 | Traditional Morality: Negative | | |
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Table 1: Coding Policy Variables

The party/bloc chosen for each election is readily discernible, as they remain the same for each country included in the dataset. The primary social democratic party/bloc position is chosen as opposed to the entire spectrum of parties on the left in a party system (Abou-Chadi and Wagner 2019; Pontusson and Rueda 2010) because small parties located on the fringes are unlikely to be considered by most voters, and the largest social democratic party is likely to represent the most attractive option for lower income voters. Thus, this measure more accurately captures the ideological positioning and strength of parties (most notably left party strength) within the party system (Wilford 2019).

per705

Underprivileged Minority Groups

Party System Variables

A wide range of party system controls are included. A different set of controls is largely utilised in the turnout papers compared to the social democratic voting papers. However, each of the aggregate-level analyses utilise lagged dependent variables to account for serial autocorrelation (Keele and Kelly 2006: 203). The inclusion of a lagged dependent variable and fixed effects can potentially introduce bias into the estimates (Nickell 1981). Therefore, robustness tests are performed on the aggregate-level estimations in each of the papers.

For the aggregate-level turnout paper, electoral competitiveness is added, as measured by the electoral victory *margin*, which is the difference in total votes between the first- and second-place parties. The variable is expected to have a negative association with turnout, as uncompetitive elections reduce the incentive to vote (Cancela and Geys 2016). The effective number of parties (*ENP*) is controlled for, and across most studies is negatively associated with turnout (Cancela and Geys 2016), even though theory might predict a positive association (Blais 2006).⁷ As the multilevel models from the second paper do not control for institutional factors, *compulsory voting* and electoral system are added, since *majoritarian* and non-compulsory systems experience lower turnout (Blais 2006; Cancela and Geys 2016).

For the social democratic voting papers, a social democrat *incumbency* dummy is added. A measure of electoral *disproportionality* is introduced in the form of the Gallagher index, which is the difference between the percentage of votes and seats each party receives in an election.⁸ As cross-national evidence finds that the representation of low-income individuals is crucially dependent on the proportionality of electoral systems (Bernauer et al. 2015; Jusko 2017). Turnout is added, as higher *turnout* has been found to increase the vote

⁷ *ENP* is calculated by first squaring the vote share of each party individually, then adding the sum of the individual parties together and finally dividing 1 by the new total sum.

⁸ Gallagher index is calculated by taking the square root of half the sum of the squares of difference between the vote percentage and seat percentage for each political party, in the two most recent elections.

share of leftist parties (Bartolini 2000; Pacek and Radcliff 1995). Party competition is controlled for differently in papers three and four. The strength of both *left competitors e-1* and *radical right competitors e-1* is controlled for in paper three, as left parties have been shown to negatively impact vote shares of social democratic parties (Bale et al. 2010; Iversen and Soskice 2006), and populist right parties have made inroads with the social democratic working-class base (Afonso and Rennwald 2018; Mosimann et al. 2019; Rydgren 2013). Whereas in paper four, the dependent variable involves party family voting. Therefore, the *mean economic* and *mean culture* positions of the entire party system are added, along with the economic and culture position of the largest party in each family, when estimating the predicted vote share for a respective party family.

Socio-Economic Variables

A variety of socio-economic controls are included. Turnout has been linked to the level of a country's economic development (Blais 2006). Therefore, a logged yearly measure of Gross Domestic Product (*GDP*) per capita is added in the turnout papers. Union density, due to the substantial influence of unions in generating support for social democratic parties is added throughout the thesis (Kerrissey and Schofer 2018). Key measures of the economy, such as *GDP growth, unemployment*, and government spending are also included throughout. To account for retrospective economic voting – as voters are typically backward looking with a memory of roughly one year when evaluating changes and impacts of the economy – the economic variables (including *Gini*) are all given a one-year lag (Lewis-Beck and Stegmaier 2013). As the last paper expands on social democratic voting to include other party family voting, two more controls are added. Globalisation has been linked to the decline of social democracy's working-class base (Gingrich 2017; Häusermann et al. 2013) and immigration

has been linked with far-right voting (Kriesi and Schulte-Cloos 2020). Therefore, *globalisation* and *foreigner share* percentage variables are included in paper four.

Individual-Level Variables

The standard socio-demographic controls that have been shown to be relevant predictors of turnout and party voting are included throughout. They include age, education, gender, income, union status, religiosity, and place of residence. *Education* and *income* are positively correlated with turnout (Blais 2000; Smets and van Ham 2013). The likelihood of voting also increases with *age* until citizens at an older age start to withdraw from social life (Smets and van Ham 2013). Previous research has also shown that men typically vote more than women, however, the gender gap has receded in recent years (Kostelka et al. 2019). Voting is also negatively related to urbanisation and positively related to unionisation (Smets and van Ham 2013). Union members and females have been shown to be significantly associated with voting for mainstream left parties (Iversen and Rosenbluth 2006), and conservative voting has been linked with rural living and religiosity (Jennings and Stoker 2016).

As for variable composition. *Age* is a continuous variable. *Female*, *union*, and *rural* are binary dummies. *Education* is measured as a categorical variable ranging from 0 to 4, and household *income* is in quintiles (both low to high). Lastly, in the social democratic voting papers, *political ideology* is included because it is amongst the strongest and most consistent predictors of political preferences (Jost 2006). It is measured on a 0–10 left–right scale.

IV. Methodology

This thesis undertakes two primary quantitative methodologies at the aggregate and individual level. The first paper relies exclusively on aggregate-level analysis, which is also
employed in the final two papers. The final three papers each contain individual-level data, thus multilevel models are employed.

Each of the three aggregate-level analyses rely on time-series cross-sectional (TSCS) data. Thus, country-level fixed effects with robust standard errors are estimated to ensure that unobserved differences between countries do not bias the findings (Green et al. 2001) and because the hypotheses focus primarily on intra-country over-time variation in the dependent variables, rather than cross-sectional variation. By deriving estimates from variation within the same countries, a wide range of unobservables that vary across countries but do not change much (such as institutions), is also controlled for.

For the individual-level analyses, the CSES data contains individuals nested within countries over time, therefore, multilevel mixed-effects models are estimated, which include both fixed and random effects. This is owing to the small number of elections per country or year in the CSES required to identify election-level variance. As it is unsuitable to include random effects for both levels (Bryan and Jenkins 2016; Park 2019). Thus, observations are clustered at the year-level to isolate the potential effects of time-specific factors on voting, with country fixed effects, since the hypotheses for the second and third papers primarily rely on changes over time. I also cluster observations at the country-level with year fixed effects as a robustness check for the second and third papers, and as the primary method in the final paper, since the hypotheses do not primarily focus on time changes. Moreover, due to the minimum degrees of freedom needed for the higher level in multilevel models, only the controls that were significant for any one party at the aggregate level are included (Bryan and Jenkins 2016). Lastly, the dependent variables measuring voting are dichotomous throughout, thus, logistic models are estimated.

The final paper analyses retrospective voting in the CSES to probe the individuallevel determinants of social democratic voters. This is undertaken to examine where these voters moved to. Hence, in this instance, I undertake binomial logistic regressions with two-

way fixed effects for country and year. I do so for the five largest party families, as well as

abstention, versus the social democrats.

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Chapter 3: Policy Polarization, Income Inequality and Turnout

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Chapter 6: Losing the Left

Consequences of the Social Democratic March to the Middle

Abstract

Social democratic parties have experienced considerable electoral decline in recent years, which has often been attributed to their rightwards policy movement. This paper advances this work by examining who benefits from this moderation strategy. It does so by analyzing aggregate-level election results and individual-level Comparative Study of Electoral Systems data, on a sample of 21 advanced democracies, over 327 elections, from 1965–2019. In agreement with the spatial theory of party competition, results reveal that the socialist left significantly benefit from social democratic economic rightward positions, which is magnified when combined with rightwards socio-cultural positions. This predominantly occurs because left-leaning voters migrate to the socialist left. The findings provide notable ramifications for party strategy and contribute to explanations for the rise of challenger parties, at the expense of mainstream parties.

1. Introduction

Party systems in advanced democracies have been transformed over the past generation. There has been a sharp decline in support for mainstream parties and a rise in support for challenger parties from across the political spectrum (De Vries and Hobolt 2020; Hobolt and Tilley 2016). Explanations for the decline of the mainstream right tend to focus on the emergence of a 'new politics' centred on the socio-cultural dimension, whereby new competitors on their right flank have been able to increasingly mobilize support (Beramendi et al. 2015; Kriesi and Schulte-Cloos 2020; Norris and Inglehart 2019). By contrast, explanations for the electoral decline of the once ascendent social democratic party family have tended to emphasize socio-economic structural changes, such as the decline of their working-class base stemming from de-industrialization and globalization (Benedetto et al. 2020; Beramendi et al. 2015; Gingrich and Häusermann 2015; Kitschelt 1994), and policy changes, such as the rightwards movement of their economic policies since the 1990s (Arndt 2013; Horn 2020; Karreth et al. 2012; Loxbo et al. 2021; Piketty 2020; Polacko 2021; Schwander and Manow 2017; Snegovaya 2021).

Previous research indicates that the emergence of the populist radical right has had a negative impact on the vote share of the mainstream right (Abou-Chadi et al. 2021), who formerly had a virtual monopoly on the right side of the political spectrum. However, social democrats have never had a monopoly on the left side of the political spectrum. In most countries, the social democrats have historically faced a challenge from the socialist left, which is an old party family with a well-established electoral presence in most democracies. And similarly, in many countries the green party family emerged in the 1980s in the left of centre policy space (Grant and Tilley 2019). Hence, three of the largest party families typically exist on the left, whereas only two exist on the right, with the liberals in the middle (albeit being typically right-leaning on the economic dimension).

However, despite suffering a reduced vote share the mainstream right has largely been able to maintain power in most countries over the past decade. Bergman and Flatt (2021) suggest that one reason for this is that the mainstream right benefits from broad-based appeals, which is not the case for the mainstream left. As the decline of the mainstream right has not been nearly as precipitous as that of their mainstream left rival, this paper examines how the policy offerings of political parties have impacted social democratic decline and the rise of challenger parties. The analysis focuses on the two dominant spheres of political conflict - the economic and socio-cultural dimensions. Following Downs's (1957) seminal spatial theory of party competition, I undertake two main lines of analysis. First, I test the causal mechanism at the individual level utilizing retrospective voting data from the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES). I show that a variety of voters are abandoning the social democrats - most notably the young, rural living, and low-income earners, which has substantially accelerated since the financial crisis. Social democrat parties tend to lose voters to parties closest to them ideologically, as left-leaning voters are significantly migrating to the greens, and most especially to the socialist left. Second, I find at the aggregate level on a sample of 21 advanced democracies,¹ over 327 elections, from 1965-2019, that it is the socialist left party family that benefits the most when social democrats adopt right-wing positions. The benefits arise via social democratic rightward economic positions but are substantially augmented when simultaneously combined with rightward socio-cultural positions.

The analysis contributes to a burgeoning literature examining the transformation of Western politics, as well as the electoral behavior literature on party programmatic shifts, party competition, and vote choice. Previous work on social democratic decline has been too

¹ Countries included: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Luxembourg (not in CSES), Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom

narrowly focused on Northern and Central Europe. The decline of social democracy and its socio-structural and party supply origins are not limited to these regions, nor has it been pinpointed prominently as a European Union issue. Therefore, the inclusion of the Anglosphere and Mediterranean region in this study, broadens our geographic and comparative scope.

The paper proceeds as follow. I first provide a review of the literature, along with the key hypotheses in the next section. In the third section I outline the research design. I then analyze the patterns of social democratic vote switching at the individual level, followed by a test of the hypotheses at both the individual- and aggregate-levels. In the final section, I conclude with a discussion of the key implications and potential avenues for future research.

2. Social Democratic Positions and Brand Dilution

Spatial Theory and Issue Ownership

A fundamental mechanism at work in the logic of party behavior, is that through their programmatic policy offers, parties can attract voters that best fit their interests and ideology. Anthony Downs (1957) first introduced the seminal spatial argument, whereby in two-party systems such as the United States, parties can maximize their vote shares by converging on the middle (medium voter theorem) since this is where the majority of voters are located. However, this can have negative consequences in multi-party systems. Downs (ibid: 141) posited that in multi-party systems, parties should aim for "ideological product differentiation by maintaining purity of doctrine." Hence, by distinguishing themselves from their competitors and building their own brand, parties can achieve greater electoral success (Kitschelt 1994). This is because branding provides voters with a useful heuristic that can enable them to better determine issue positions and differentiate between political parties. For example, the environment and immigration are key brands for the greens and populist radical right, respectively. When parties moderate their positions and no longer offer much differentiation, voters are less able to distinguish party offers. This can lead to the loss of their brand appeal, which in turn causes voters to turn to other parties that offer clearer and more proximate policy positions (Downs 1957).

Economic Moderation

Historically, social democratic parties promoted equality and embraced and expanded the welfare state, offering greater redistributive policies designed to temper capitalism's more dangerous socio-economic outcomes. They were able to establish issue ownership in this realm and it became a large part of their brand identity (Schumacher et al. 2013). However, in the late 1980s and 1990s, the party family moderated their policies by embracing neoliberalism (Mudge 2018). This 'Third Way' was designed to foster the image of being a strong steward of the economy to become a 'catch-all' party that could offset the decline of their traditional working-class base, which was occurring through globalization and de-industrialization.

Initially, the Third Way strategy was successful in the late 1990s and early 2000s, as social democratic parties swept into power by expanding their voter base through the acquisition of more centrist voters. However, since then, the parties have typically been shut out of power and have experienced substantially diminishing vote shares across much of the West (most especially in France, Germany, Greece, Italy, and The Netherlands). Karreth et al. (2012) have shown that catch-all policy moderation turned into 'catch-and-release,' as core social democratic voters were at first willing to accept policy moderation to strategically attain power, but later become alienated with the rebrand and gradually drifted away from the

parties. At the same time, social democrats were unable to hold on to the newly acquired centrist voters who were more fickle and less attached to the parties.

Lupu (2014) has shown that once dominant parties in Latin America have lost their appeal through implementing policies that are inconsistent with their brand. This brand dilution can even lead to replacement or 'Pasokification,' which is what appears to have occurred in Greece in the aftermath of the financial crisis. The once-dominant social democratic *PASOK* party imploded after implementing unpopular and off-brand austerity policies. This in turn precipitated its replacement by a new challenger party on the left – *Syriza*. Lupu himself makes this point, as the likelihood of reduced party support and replacement increases when brand dilution is combined with continued poor economic performance. This is precisely what occurred when the financial crisis struck in 2008, as social democrats were in power in many countries at the time and were subsequently voted out afterwards. However, in the ensuing years, social democrats have suffered further reductions in support, and some have pointed to their continued embrace of neoliberalism and austerity measures.

Kraft (2017) demonstrates that embracing austerity is a lose-lose situation for social democrats, because despite continued social democratic efforts to appear austere, the mainstream right has been able to maintain issue ownership over budget cuts in the minds of swing voters. Nor has the embrace of austerity prevented left-leaning voters from leaving the social democrats. Horn (2020) expands on this research to find that social democratic losses from embracing austerity largely become permanent, which leaves a tragedy of social democratic responsibility behind, in contrast to the mainstream right who are able to maintain issue ownership. Schwander and Manow (2017) find that the prominent Hartz welfare reform laws of 2003 to 2005, initiated by the German Social Democratic (SPD) party, substantially

contributed to the party's decline, with many voters either abstaining, or moving over to a new socialist party (*Die Linke*).

Accommodation Theory

Social democratic rebranding has also created an opportunity for the far right to attract the working-class base of social democrats. They have done so by strategically focusing on immigration, moral traditionalism, and effectively blurring their economic positions (Rovny 2013) to tap into the nativist and socio-cultural conservativism of the working class (Houtman et al. 2008). This has prompted a debate as to whether social democrats would benefit from moving rightwards on the second dimension by offering more restrictive immigration. Spoon and Klüver (2020) provide recent cross-national evidence that such an accommodation strategy does significantly benefit the mainstream left. Although the sample size is limited to just six countries over 15 elections.

However, accommodation can come with a trade-off, as there is recent evidence from Germany that it can attract back radical right voters but alienates social democratic voters, resulting in a net vote loss for the party family (Chou et al. 2021). Similarly, Hjorth and Larsen (2020) find in a Danish survey experiment that accommodation does attract antiimmigration voters and repel pro-immigration voters, but that the latter tend to defect to other parties on the left, thereby increasing the overall vote share on the left and the likelihood of a social democratic-led coalition government forming. Thus, accommodation could be context dependent on a party system with multiple parties on the left that can form coalition government together, which is not always the case.

Scholars have also challenged the merits of accommodation strategy through the introduction of various economic scoping conditions. Abou-Chadi and Wagner (2019) find that social democrats can gain vote share if they offer leftist socio-cultural positions

combined with greater investment-oriented positions on the investment–consumption growth strategy spectrum, or if unions are limited in their capacity to mobilize against such shifts. Loxbo et al. (2021) find that social democratic parties only really lose votes from rightward turns on the second dimension, when combined with low levels of welfare generosity. Similarly, Polacko (2021) finds that social democrats only lose votes when they adopt rightward economic positions under higher inequality, or via rightward positioning simultaneously on both dimensions.

Following this literature, I test four hypotheses related to social democratic policy positioning and voting. Focusing on both the economic and cultural dimensions, I examine whether social democratic positioning influences whether their voters abandon the party. I then test which parties benefit from social democratic positioning, under different contexts.

3. Hypotheses

Across the West over the past generation, social democrats have joined their mainstream rivals in embracing a neoliberal market society focused on deregulation, financialization, and privatization. A direct consequence of this mainstream policy convergence is that it leads to 'cartel politics' (Hopkin 2020). This convergence has benefitted the mainstream right since it has occurred on their turf, and who benefit more from broad-based appeals to the electorate (Bergman and Flatt 2021). When one model reigns supreme, mainstream parties also become limited in their ability to respond effectively to growing crises such as climate change and rising income inequality. Hence, voters abandon the mainstream left and either abstain from voting or turn to challenger parties that more clearly delineate positions on these issues.

Correspondingly, social democrats have also moved rightwards over time on the second dimension and have been under pressure by some quarters to embrace accommodation theory. They have moved rightwards on the cultural dimension nearly as

much as on the economic dimension (see Appendix A9). Therefore, the first hypothesis tests whether social democratic voters do indeed abandon the party family, when it adopts rightward positions in these differing contexts:

H1: Social democratic voters are more likely to abandon the party when the party family adopts rightward positions on the economic dimension (H1a), socio-cultural dimension (H1b), or simultaneously on both dimensions (H1c).

The remaining hypotheses test the benefactors of social democratic positioning in each context from H1. Following Down's spatial theory of party competition, I hypothesize that the socialist left party family benefits the most from social democratic rightward positioning on the economic dimension. This is owing to the socialist left long having been closely affiliated with economic issues in public debate (March 2011). The modus operandi of the socialist left has been a distinctly critical view of neoliberalism and market-oriented policies that is rooted in the communist/socialist tradition. Hence, the party family promotes economic equality, labor issues, and welfare above all else. The party family conceivably stands to benefit the most electorally then, by acting as issue entrepreneurs underlining the relevance of these issues, which have been neglected from social democrats:

H2: When social democratic parties adopt rightward positions on the economic dimension, the socialist left gains the greatest vote share.

However, I expect a different benefactor to arise from social democratic positioning on the socio-cultural dimension. Hence, once again following spatial logic, I hypothesize that the green party family benefits the most electorally when social democrats adopt rightward positions on the socio-cultural dimension. As the green party family predominantly aims to mobilize support from the second dimension (Grant and Tilley 2019), whereas the socialists are much more focussed on economic policies. Indeed, by estimating the policy positions of each party family since 1965, this article finds that the greens are by far the most socioculturally leftist party family (See Appendix A4). Therefore, the green family should be able to benefit from a spatial policy gap left behind by a mainstream left adopting rightward positions on the second dimension.

H3: When social democratic parties adopt rightward positions on the socio-cultural dimension, the greens gain the greatest vote share.

Finally, again according to spatial logic, the party families traditionally to the left of the social democrats on both dimensions, stand to benefit when social democrats adopt rightward positions on both dimensions. Although the socialists focus on the economic dimension, their average positioning is to the left of the social democrats on both dimensions. Similarly, although the greens focus primarily on the second dimension, their average positioning is also to the left of the social democrats on both dimensions. In both cases, the gap between the social democrats and their rivals is much wider on each rival's primary dimension, but nevertheless the socialists and the greens are on average to the left of social democrats on both dimension since 1965 (see Appendix A4). Thus, it will be tested whether the socialist left and or the greens, are the largest electoral benefactors from the adoption of twin-dimensional social democratic rightward positions:

H4: When social democratic parties adopt rightward positions simultaneously on both dimensions, the a) socialist left and or the b) greens gain the greatest vote share.

4. Data and Methods

To test these hypotheses, I draw on data from a variety of different sources at the individual level, aggregate level, and party level. The hypotheses specifically apply to established democracies where party policy offerings are perceived to matter to voters. Hence, case selection is based on a country's level of economic and democratic development (OECD membership; Freedom House rating of 1 or 2 on their 7-point scale), as well as having a

longstanding history of a dominant social democratic party on the center-left of a country's party system.²

Individual Level

At the individual level I rely on data from the CSES. The CSES is chosen because it provides the most reliable comparative election survey data and covers the key period of social democratic decline, beginning in the 1990s. The CSES provides survey responses to party voting in the most recent national election and in the previous election, which importantly allows for the analysis of vote-switching, to determine where previous social democratic voters moved too. As CSES Module 1 does not include the retrospective voting question, I rely exclusively on surveys from Modules 2–5, which leaves a sample of 62 elections from 20 countries.

The main variable of interest is a binary variable measuring whether social democratic voters in the previous election left the party in the most recent election. For the second set of estimations, the dependent variables measure whether a previous social democratic voter stayed with the party or whether they moved to another party or abstained. The variables are binary whereby social democrats = 0; and other families/abstention = 1.

Political ideology comprises the key independent variable and is measured on a 0–10 left–right scale. I include the standard socio-demographic controls that have been shown to be relevant predictors of party voting, such as age, education, gender, income, union status, and place of residence. *Age* is a continuous variable. *Female, union* status, and *rural* residence are binary dummy variables. *Education* is measured as a categorical variable ranging from 0 to 4, and *income* is measured in quintiles (both low to high).

² Eastern Europe is excluded due to the instability of the region's party system.

Aggregate Level

The dependent variable is the percentage of votes cast by the registered electorate for a party family. The six major party families are coded: socialist left, mainstream left, green, liberal, conservative, radical right, as well as an 'other' category, which largely encompasses single-issue and regionalist parties such as the Scottish National Party (see Appendices A2–A3 for party list). Vote shares derive from ParlGov (Döring and Manow 2020) and party families are coded according to ParlGov and cross-validated against the Comparative Manifesto Project (MARPOR) (Volkens et al. 2020).³

The key party position variables measure social democratic positions on the economic and socio-cultural domains. Ideological scores are tabulated from the most popular data for the study of political manifestos – MARPOR, which offers reliable estimates correlating highly with expert and mass surveys (Benoit and Laver 2006). MARPOR relies on party manifesto statements classified into 56 policy categories over seven domains. To measure a party's position, I follow Lowe et al. (2011). This method takes better account of the proportional changes on the left–right scale than the traditional Laver/Budge methodology. The left–right score of the parties is calculated by summing up the logged percentages of all the sentences in the left category and subtracting their total from the sum of the logged percentages of the sentences in the right category. ⁴ An *SD economic position* and *SD culture position* variable is then constructed based on this score involving the relevant categories (left–right from -100 to 100) of the historically largest by vote share party on the center-left, for each election. The economic dimension involves 15 categories encompassing key aspects

³ ParlGov's classification is adjusted in a handful of cases largely following Kriesi and Schulte-Cloos (2020). The True Finns, New Zealand First Party, and Swiss People's Party are re-assigned to the radical right, the Danish Socialist People's Party is re-assigned to the socialist left, and Italy's Five Star Movement is re-assigned to 'other' since its left-right positioning is highly ambiguous.

⁴ MARPOR position computations assume that the marginal effect of an additional sentence is constant. However, a shift from zero to one would matter more for a policy position than a shift from 9 to 10 due to the diminishing impact of repeated emphasis. Hence, Lowe's (2011) logged method addresses this by applying a ratio approach to the raw number of sentences, so that the relative balance and proportion of change on the leftright scale are accounted for, rather than just the quantity of sentences.

of the economy and the second dimension involves 17 socio-cultural categories, including: the environment, equality, internationalism, law and order, minorities, multiculturalism, nationalism, and traditional morality. Appendix A5 outlines the composition of each, which are the recommended indicators provided by MARPOR for best capturing the economic (state-market) and socio-cultural (progressive-conservative) dimensions.⁵

A variety of party system controls are included. To account for serial autocorrelation, I include a lagged dependent variable, which is the vote share in the previous election. The inclusion of a lagged dependent variable and fixed effects can potentially introduce bias into the estimates (Nickell 1981). Therefore, the aggregate-level estimations are re-run excluding: 1) decade fixed effects; 2) all fixed effects; 3) the lagged dependent variable. The main results hold for all three specifications (see Appendix A7). The position of the entire party system is controlled for, via the construction of unweighted mean economic position and *mean culture position* variables.⁶ The economic and culture position of the largest party in each family is also included when estimating the predicted vote share for a respective party family. I control for incumbency effects, which is a dummy *incumbent* variable coded as 1 when the mainstream left controls government. Turnout is added, as it has been found to be positively related to left party voting (Bartolini 2000; Pacek and Radcliff 1995). A measure of electoral *disproportionality* is also introduced in the form of the Gallagher index, which is the difference between the percentage of votes and seats each party receives in an election and is positively related to left voting (Jusko 2017).⁷ The party system variables derive from MARPOR and the Comparative Political Data Set (CPDS) (Armingeon et al. 2019).

⁵ MARPOR dimension construction: <u>https://manifesto-project.wzb.eu/information/documents/visualizations</u> (Volkens et al 2020).

⁶ An unweighted measure is utilized due to the problem of endogeneity, as it is impossible to discern whether shifts in a party system position index are due to changes in voting weights or in ideological distance (Evans 2002). Therefore, as a compromise to utilizing weights, only parties that attain a vote share threshold of five percent are included in calculating the mean positions.

⁷ Gallagher index is calculated by taking the square root of half the sum of the squares of difference between the vote percentage and seat percentage for each political party, in the two most recent elections.

A wide range of socio-economic controls are included. *Union density*, due to the substantial influence of unions in generating support for social democratic parties is added (Rennwald and Pontusson 2021).⁸ I control for the level of *globalization*, as it has been linked to the decline of social democracy's working-class base (Gingrich 2017; Häusermann et al. 2013).⁹ Income inequality and immigration have been linked with far-right voting (Han 2016; Kriesi and Schulte-Cloos 2020). Therefore, the adjusted after-tax *Gini* Index,¹⁰ and the *foreigner share* percentage are respectively added.¹¹ Key measures of the economy, such as *GDP growth, unemployment*, and *government spending* are also included from the CPDS.¹² To account for retrospective economic voting – as voters are typically backward looking with a memory of roughly one year when evaluating changes and impacts of the economy – the economic variables are all given a one-year lag (Lewis-Beck and Stegmaier 2013).

5. Descriptive Trends

Firstly, party voting trends are compared. Figure 1 plots the 2-year average vote share of each party family since 1965, in the sample of 21 countries. Both mainstream party families have suffered declining vote shares from their average of roughly 33 percent, which has accelerated since the turn of the century. The social democrats have declined to a much greater extent, as the mainstream right's share has declined roughly 5 percent, compared to 11 percent for the mainstream left. The centrist liberal party family has also suffered a couple

⁸ Union density derives from ICTWSS version 6.1 (Visser 2019) and is taken from the OECD (2020) or interpolated in the roughly 10 percent of missing cases.

⁹ A *globalization* index is obtained from the KOF database. The index measures the three main dimensions of globalization: economic, social, and political, by combining 43 relevant variables (Dreher 2006; Gygli et al. 2019).

¹⁰ Version 9.0 of the Standardized World Income Inequality Database (Solt 2020) is used. It includes 100 separate imputations of inequality data, which allows for any uncertainty in estimations. For reasons of parsimony, the average estimate of these 100 imputed variables is taken from the *gini_disp* variable, which is an estimate of the Gini index in equivalized household market income.

¹¹ *Foreigner share* is taken from the World Bank (2021) and calculated by subtracting the number of foreigners by the total population.

¹² Government spending is calculated as a percentage of Gross Domestic Product (GDP). It is added from the CPDS and supplemented with International Monetary Fund (2015) data.

percentage point decline to roughly 15 percent. The three challenger party families have substantially increased their vote shares over time, with the far right seeing the biggest increase from 3 to 11 percent. The greens did not emerge in most countries until the 1980s and since they have climbed to roughly 5 percent. The socialist left ranged from 5 to 8 percent until the financial crisis, having since climbed substantially to roughly 11 percent.





Party family vote share percentages (rolling two-year average).

Notably, the combined vote share of the left-leaning social democratic, green, and socialist families has largely remained stable at around 40 to 45 percent, while social democratic parties specifically have greatly lost vote share (Gingrich 2017). Hence, electoral decline is specific to social democratic parties, rather than being a crisis of 'the Left' overall. Figure 2 illustrates this trend further by plotting the average social democratic vote (left) compared to the combined challenger party vote (right), via a local polynomial smoother. Combined, the three main challenger party families have recently surpassed the social democrats, having increased their vote shares dramatically from roughly 11 to 25 percent.



Figure 2: Social Democratic vs Challenger Families Vote Share %, 1965-2019

Local polynomial smoothing vote share of social democrats (left) and challenger families (right).

Furthermore, social democrats have moved rightwards on both policy dimensions. They have moved rightwards roughly 1 point on the left–right (0 to 100) scale over the entire period on each dimension, which is roughly one-third of a standard deviation for each (see Appendix A9). The party family has also been more right-wing on the economic than the socio-cultural dimension, averaging roughly 4 points more when comparing trend lines.

6. Who's Abandoning the Social Democrats?

Utilizing the retrospective voting question that is available from 2001 onwards in the CSES, I begin by analyzing who previous social democratic voters cast their ballot for in the most recent election. Firstly, social democratic parties retained 63.8 percent of their voters. This is 3.6 percent lower than the mainstream right and lower than the far right, but higher than the other party families. Social democrats have higher rates of voter abstention (25.6 percent) than the greens and socialists but lower than the other party families. They tend to lose voters to the parties closest to them ideologically and especially so when accounting for the relative sizes of the party families.

Figure 3 shows that although social democrats lost the greatest share of their previous supporters to the mainstream right, it is much lower proportionally to the amount of votes the mainstream right received overall in the sample (18.3 vs 29.3 percent). Whereas socialist, liberal, and green party families attracted 41.6 percent of previous social democratic voters, despite having less than one-third of the overall vote share (32.7 percent). The far right does not gain many voters from the social democrats and the losses roughly match proportionally their overall totals. However, there is some evidence that many far-right voters first transition through the mainstream right from social democrats (Evans and Mellon 2016).



Figure 3: Vote Switching from Social Democrats, 2001–2019

Party vote switching with total voter flow away from social democrats spotlighted.

Turning to the time trends, by splitting our period evenly into two decades, we can determine a few notable findings. Social democrats have retained dramatically less voters in recent years, including 9.1 percentage points less in the 2010s, compared to the 2000s. The far right has increasingly lured social democratic voters away in the decade since the financial crisis, climbing nearly a third from 6.6 to 9.4 percent. When we examine the net overall flow to and from social democrats with the other party families, we can see in Figure 4 that they have lost more voters than they have gained from every party family. They have lost the most to the socialist left and they did so in both decades, but by a much wider margin

in the 2010s, via a doubling of their net gains. Social democrats have lost the least number of voters to the mainstream right and in the 2010s, they picked up a handful overall from them. In the 2000s, they lost voters roughly equally to the liberals, greens, and far right, but in the 2010s they increasingly lost out to the far right, and less so to the greens. Social democrats were also more likely to gain abstainers, than to lose voters to abstention (hence the net positive ratings in the righthand column), although at a substantially reduced rate in the 2010s. However, all the party families, except the conservatives, gained more abstainers than they lost to abstention. These descriptive insights show that the social democrats are facing increasing competition from challenger parties, most especially on their left flank. In the following, I empirically test the role that party programmatic shifts play in social democratic party competition.



Figure 4: Vote Switching Net Loss/Gain for Social Democrats, 2001–2019

Vote switching net loss (left) and net gain (right) totals to other party families for the social democrats.

Next, we investigate the impact of social democratic policy positions on voters abandoning the party. The first set of analyses estimate party switching at the individual level to examine what kinds of social democratic voters are abandoning the party family. I do this by first limiting the sample to respondents who specified voting for the social democrats in the previous election. The CSES data contains individuals nested within countries over time, therefore, multilevel mixed-effects models are estimated, which include both fixed and random effects. This is owing to the small number of elections per country or year in the CSES required to identify election-level variance. As it is unsuitable to include random effects for both levels, observations are clustered at the year-level to isolate the potential effects of time-specific factors on voting, with country fixed effects, since the hypotheses primarily rely on changes over time (Park 2019). Due to the minimum degrees of freedom needed for the higher level in multilevel models, only the controls that were significant for any one party at the aggregate level are included (Bryan and Jenkins 2016).

Table 1 presents the results from multilevel mixed effects logistic regressions clustered by country, with year fixed effects. Whereby voting social democrat = 0; and voting for another party or abstention = 1. Model 1 is a baseline model with each of the individuallevel controls. Model 2 introduces the aggregate-level variables and Model 3 includes an interaction between the two key social democratic policy variables.

Model 1 reveals that the young, non-*union* members, and right-leaning social democratic voters are significantly more likely to abandon the party at (p<0.001). *Rural*, lower *income*, and highly educated social democratic voters also have a greater propensity to leave. The aggregate-level variables are introduced in Model 2 to test whether social democratic voters are more likely to abandon the party, if the party adopts rightward positions on either the economic (H1a), or socio-cultural dimension (H1b). We can see that when *turnout* is lower, social democrats are in power, or when the party system is

economically left-wing, then social democratic voters are significantly likely to leave at (p<0.001). Social democratic voters are more likely to stay if the party adopts rightward cultural positions, although the effect size is small. Most importantly, when social democrats adopt rightward positions on the economic dimension, their voters are significantly more likely to leave at (p<0.05). Thus, we find no support for H1b, but some support for H1a.

| | | SD Leaving | | | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------|----------------------|--|--|--|
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | | | |
| Age | -0.019*** | -0.020*** | -0.020*** | | | |
| | (0.001) | (0.001) | (0.001) | | | |
| Female | -0.007 | -0.000 | 0.004 | | | |
| | (0.035) | (0.035) | (0.035) | | | |
| Education | 0.029+ | 0.020 | 0.017 | | | |
| | (0.017) | (0.018) | (0.018) | | | |
| Income | -0.018 | -0.022 | -0.025+ | | | |
| | (0.014) | (0.014) | (0.014) | | | |
| Rural | 0.087* | 0.103* | 0.087^{+} | | | |
| | (0.044) | (0.044) | (0.045) | | | |
| Union | -0.191*** | -0.191*** | -0.188*** | | | |
| | (0.041) | (0.041) | (0.041) | | | |
| Political Ideology | 0.162*** | 0.163*** | 0.163*** | | | |
| | (0.009) | (0.009) | (0.009) | | | |
| SD Econ Position | , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , | 0.060^{*} | 0.258*** | | | |
| | | (0.024) | (0.033) | | | |
| SD Culture Position | | -0.018 | 0.119*** | | | |
| | | (0.020) | (0.025) | | | |
| SD Econ x SD Culture | | () | 0.059*** | | | |
| | | | (0.006) | | | |
| Mean Econ Position | | -0.158*** | -0.002 | | | |
| | | (0.046) | (0.051) | | | |
| Mean Culture Position | | 0.062^{*} | -0.099*** | | | |
| | | (0.030) | (0.035) | | | |
| Gini t-1 | | 0.042 | 0.087 | | | |
| | | (0.063) | (0.073) | | | |
| Government Spend t-1 | | -0.015 | -0.001 | | | |
| | | (0.009) | (0.010) | | | |
| Unemployment t-1 | | 0.018 | 0.031 | | | |
| | | (0.022) | (0.023) | | | |
| Union Density | | 0.019 | 0.071*** | | | |
| • | | (0.013) | (0.019) | | | |
| Incumbent | | 0.706*** | 1.045*** | | | |
| | | (0.135) | (0.146) | | | |
| Turnout | | -0.123*** | -0.149*** | | | |
| | | (0.012) | (0.013) | | | |
| Disproportionality | | -0.061* | -0.129*** | | | |
| | | (0.026) | (0.028) | | | |
| Foreign Share | | -0.014 | 0.144 ^{***} | | | |
| C | | (0.026) | (0.035) | | | |
| Constant | 0.067 | 7.948** | 4.297 | | | |
| | (0.208) | (2.836) | (3.172) | | | |
| | (= = = =) | ()==) | (- · · =) | | | |

Table 1: Individual-Level Regression Results Predicting SD Voters Leaving the Party

| Variance | 0.481** | 1.567** | 4.091* |
|--------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| | (0.174) | (0.600) | (1.767) |
| Log Likelihood | -9711.455 | -9710.522 | -9663.378 |
| AIC | 19763.92 | 19495.04 | 19402.75 |
| BIC | 19956.6 | 19780.2 | 19695.62 |
| Year Fixed Effects | YES | YES | YES |
| Countries | 18 | 18 | 18 |
| Ν | 16,433 | 16,433 | 16,433 |

Note: beta coefficients from a mixed-effects regression with clustered standard errors in parentheses. p < 0.10, p < 0.05, p < 0.05, p < 0.01, p < 0.01

Model 3 tests for Hypothesis 1c – that social democratic voters are more likely to abandon the party if the party adopts rightward positions on both dimensions simultaneously – via an interaction between *SD economic position* and *SD culture position*. The interaction is positive and statistically significant at (p<0.001). Figure 5 displays the average marginal effects of *SD economic position* by *SD culture position* on social democrats leaving the party. To aid in interpretation of the substantive magnitude of the interaction, I standardize both variables so that they have a mean of 0 and a standard deviation of 1. We can see that the effect is roughly zero when social democrats are at their economic mean. When the party family is 1 standard deviation left-wing of their mean on both dimensions, they are roughly 0.5 percentage points more likely to retain their voters. But when the party family is 1 standard deviation right-wing of their mean on both dimensions, they are roughly 0.7 percentage points more likely to lose their voters. Overall, simultaneously moving rightwards on both dimensions by 2 standard deviations, is associated with roughly a 1.2 percentage point decrease in likelihood of retaining their voters. Although the magnitude is not strong, I find support for H1c.



Figure 5: Average Marginal Effects of SD Culture Position by SD Economic Position for Leaving Social Democrats with 95% C.I.

7. Where are Social Democrats Migrating?

Individual-level Estimations

Next, we probe the individual-level determinants of former social democratic voters and examine where they moved to. Therefore, I undertake binomial logistic regressions with two-way fixed effects for country and year. I do so for each party family, as well as for abstention, versus the social democrats. Whereby social democrats = 0; and other families/abstention = 1. The results are presented in Table 2 below.

Extraordinarily, social democrats are significantly losing their younger voters to every party family, as well as to abstention (p<0.001). The failure to retain younger voters likely has major ramifications for the party family going forward, as generational replacement takes

hold. As expected, social democrats are maintaining strong support with *union* members and only have a small likelihood of losing them to one party – the socialist left.

Social democrats have a significantly high propensity of losing their *female* voters to the greens, and a roughly equal propensity of losing their male voters to the far right. The greens also have a high propensity of attaining highly educated and urban social democratic voters. Social democrats are also significantly losing their *rural*, less educated, and lower *income* voters to the far right and abstention, while they tend to do less well with their urban, higher income, and educated voters, versus the liberals and conservatives. The *rural* results complement the earlier finding that rural social democratic voters are significantly abandoning the family and it appears that they are overwhelmingly moving to the far right. France's recent widespread *gilets jaunes* movement provides an illustrative example.

| SD = 0; Other = 1 | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) |
|--------------------|-----------|---------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|
| | Socialist | Green | Liberal | Con | Far Right | Abstain |
| Age | -0.022*** | -0.024*** | -0.018*** | -0.015*** | -0.015*** | -0.024*** |
| | (0.002) | (0.003) | (0.003) | (0.002) | (0.003) | (0.002) |
| Female | 0.020 | 0.317^{***} | -0.010 | -0.002 | -0.391*** | -0.089 |
| | (0.070) | (0.080) | (0.084) | (0.068) | (0.098) | (0.066) |
| Education | 0.028 | 0.352*** | 0.126** | 0.065^{+} | -0.167*** | -0.169*** |
| | (0.035) | (0.043) | (0.042) | (0.034) | (0.049) | (0.034) |
| Income | -0.013 | 0.042 | 0.114^{***} | 0.097^{***} | -0.073^{+} | -0.191*** |
| | (0.029) | (0.031) | (0.034) | (0.027) | (0.040) | (0.028) |
| Rural | -0.023 | -0.237* | 0.136 | 0.124 | 0.308^{**} | 0.151^{+} |
| | (0.087) | (0.113) | (0.102) | (0.086) | (0.113) | (0.079) |
| Union | 0.103 | -0.151^{+} | -0.523*** | -0.301*** | -0.062 | -0.378*** |
| | (0.083) | (0.090) | (0.100) | (0.079) | (0.111) | (0.082) |
| Political Ideology | -0.203*** | -0.116*** | 0.312*** | 0.487^{***} | 0.394*** | 0.158^{***} |
| | (0.020) | (0.023) | (0.022) | (0.018) | (0.025) | (0.017) |
| Constant | -17.416 | -3.188*** | -4.801*** | -3.420*** | -4.227*** | -2.179*** |
| | (758.395) | (0.459) | (0.454) | (0.292) | (0.464) | (0.399) |
| Pseudo R^2 | 0.22 | 0.14 | 0.25 | 0.17 | 0.18 | 0.12 |
| Ν | 11,798 | 11,460 | 11,491 | 11,855 | 11,215 | 11,840 |

 Table 2: Individual-Level Regression Results Predicting Social Democratic Voters Recent

 Party Family Voting

Note: beta coefficients from a two-way fixed regression with standard errors in parentheses. p < 0.10, p < 0.05, p < 0.01, p < 0.0

Turning to *political ideology*, conservatives and the far right are the party families

gaining the most right-leaning social democratic voters. Leftist social democrats have a high

propensity for abandoning the family to both the socialists and greens, as *political ideology* is negative and statistically significant at (p<0.001), although the effect is nearly twice as strong for the socialists. While social democrats are losing their right-leaning voters to the other parties and abstention. Given that social democratic voters average 3.95 (sample average 5.15) on the 0-10 ideology scale, and over 58 percent identify as left-wing (0-4), the earlier evidence for H1 – that the party family is substantially losing voters due to rightwards policy positions - likely provides an important explanation as to why it appears the socialists are significantly benefitting electorally. The socialist model also has the second highest explanatory power ($R^2=0.22$) and beyond *age*, *political ideology* is the only statistically significant variable in the model. Whereas nearly all variables are significant for each of the other party family models. This lends further support to the key role that ideology and policy moderation is likely playing in the migration of social democratic voters. Although it appears that social democrats are losing different kinds of voters to different parties, in line with recent research investigating the policy offerings of social democratic parties, I find that the socialist left, tends to benefit the most when the parties adopt rightward economic positions (Bischof and Kurer 2021; Polk and Karreth 2021; Schwander and Manow 2017). In the next section, I delve further into the benefactors of social democratic decline, by undertaking aggregate-level analysis.

Aggregate-level Estimations

In a second step, I rely on time-series cross-sectional (TSCS) data for the aggregate-level analysis. I estimate using Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) and country-level fixed effects with robust standard errors to ensure that unobserved differences between countries do not bias the findings (Green et al. 2001) and because the hypotheses focus primarily on intra-country over-time variation in the dependent variables, rather than cross-sectional variation. By

deriving estimates from variation within the same countries, a wide range of unobservables that vary across countries but do not change much (such as institutions), is also controlled for. Additionally, to ensure consistency of results temporally, decade fixed effects are estimated.

Here the findings are not driven by any one country, as they remain highly stable to using a jackknife analysis, whereby one country is excluded at a time (see Appendix A8). Table 3 presents the aggregate vote share results for each main party family with full controls. The socialist model has by far the highest explanatory power ($R^2=0.67$), which is nearly a third higher than the next highest model at $R^2=0.48$ (social democrats). Few of the controls are significant, except for the socialist left and social democratic models. However, the social democrats tend to significantly gain votes under better economic conditions, while the socialists significantly lose votes. As lower *unemployment* and greater *government spending* benefit the social democrats, which is the reverse for the socialists. When the party system is more socio-culturally right-wing, the conservatives significantly lose votes, while the far right gains votes. This is in line with recent research finding that mainstream accommodation lends legitimization and credibility to the far right, while increasing the saliency of immigration and nationalism issues, which the party family's success is known to hinge on (Arzheimer and Carter 2006; Dahlström and Sundell 2012; Down and Han 2020; Krause et al. 2021).

| Party Vote Share | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) |
|-----------------------|---------------|----------|-------------|-------------|---------------|-------------|
| | Socialist | SD | Green | Liberal | Con | Far Right |
| DV e-1 | 0.480^{***} | 0.352*** | 0.253^{+} | 0.333^{*} | 0.414^{***} | 0.242^{*} |
| | (0.094) | (0.065) | (0.141) | (0.119) | (0.067) | (0.114) |
| SD Econ Position | 0.358^{+} | 0.064 | -0.073 | -0.404 | -0.027 | 0.238 |
| | (0.172) | (0.224) | (0.072) | (0.295) | (0.207) | (0.179) |
| SD Culture Position | 0.160 | -0.164 | 0.043 | 0.097 | -0.126 | -0.147 |
| | (0.198) | (0.221) | (0.085) | (0.212) | (0.226) | (0.240) |
| Mean Econ Position | -0.236 | 0.137 | -0.232 | 0.324 | 0.180 | 0.006 |
| | (0.167) | (0.211) | (0.173) | (0.384) | (0.264) | (0.377) |
| Mean Culture Position | -0.023 | 0.257 | -0.118 | -0.688 | -0.646^{+} | 1.054^{*} |
| | (0.241) | (0.357) | (0.116) | (0.466) | (0.360) | (0.423) |

Table 3: Aggregate-Level Regression Results Predicting Party Family Vote Share

| Family Econ Position | -0.140 | | -0.014 | -0.261 | -0.188 | 0.058 |
|-------------------------|---------------|----------|--------------|-------------|-------------|----------|
| - | (0.188) | | (0.096) | (0.211) | (0.194) | (0.221) |
| Family Culture Position | 0.023 | | 0.077 | 0.620^{*} | 0.072 | 0.016 |
| - | (0.158) | | (0.048) | (0.224) | (0.193) | (0.117) |
| Gini t-1 | -0.793** | 0.077 | -0.052 | 0.263 | 0.029 | -0.046 |
| | (0.222) | (0.337) | (0.298) | (0.427) | (0.261) | (0.377) |
| Government Spend t-1 | -0.348* | 0.272* | -0.123* | -0.115 | 0.215^{+} | -0.100 |
| - | (0.148) | (0.129) | (0.056) | (0.126) | (0.119) | (0.227) |
| GDP Growth t-1 | -0.162 | 0.085 | -0.109 | -0.096 | 0.046 | 0.097 |
| | (0.222) | (0.164) | (0.065) | (0.238) | (0.179) | (0.363) |
| Unemployment t-1 | 0.801^{***} | -0.746* | 0.022 | -0.163 | -0.034 | -0.258 |
| | (0.165) | (0.265) | (0.141) | (0.170) | (0.179) | (0.214) |
| Union Density | 0.032 | -0.099 | 0.105^{+} | 0.238 | -0.062 | -0.004 |
| | (0.079) | (0.091) | (0.050) | (0.140) | (0.066) | (0.101) |
| SD Incumbent | -1.936** | -0.839 | -0.442 | 1.382 | 1.503^{+} | -0.727 |
| | (0.648) | (0.848) | (0.491) | (1.435) | (0.795) | (1.307) |
| Turnout | -0.110 | 0.090 | -0.150^{*} | -0.069 | 0.196^{+} | -0.065 |
| | (0.081) | (0.118) | (0.067) | (0.145) | (0.111) | (0.125) |
| Disproportionality | 0.086 | -0.300* | -0.045 | 0.307 | -0.175 | 0.095 |
| | (0.247) | (0.134) | (0.152) | (0.206) | (0.123) | (0.243) |
| Globalization t-1 | 0.095 | -0.061 | 0.138 | 0.083 | -0.152 | 0.174 |
| | (0.122) | (0.163) | (0.106) | (0.357) | (0.162) | (0.268) |
| Foreigners Share | 0.323^{+} | -0.071 | 0.316 | -0.553 | -0.051 | -0.031 |
| | (0.181) | (0.194) | (0.211) | (0.333) | (0.261) | (0.272) |
| Constant | 34.522** | 10.743 | 3.884 | 8.075 | 7.591 | 9.437 |
| | (11.189) | (22.501) | (17.208) | (31.358) | (16.103) | (28.775) |
| R^2 within | 0.67 | 0.48 | 0.47 | 0.31 | 0.38 | 0.39 |
| Countries | 17 | 21 | 18 | 21 | 21 | 18 |
| N | 171 | 254 | 135 | 193 | 252 | 145 |
| T . 1 | 01.0 | • • • • | | | | |

Note: beta coefficients from a OLS regression with standard errors in parentheses. * p < 0.10, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001

The second hypothesis tests whether the socialists benefit from the adoption of rightward social democratic economic positions. Here we find some support for H2, as the socialists significantly gain vote share when social democrats adopt economically rightward positions at (p<0.1). The liberals substantially lose vote share as their issue space gets crowded, and social democrats, greens, and conservatives see little effect. While the far right gain vote share, it is to a lower extent than the socialists and non-significant. Figure 6 displays graphically the findings for H2 (results in Appendix A6). It shows the predicted mean vote share for the socialists by social democratic economic position. We can see when moving from the most leftist to rightist *SD economic position*, that the socialists roughly double their vote share from 7 to 14 percent. Overall, the policy offering results are largely in

line with spatial logic and when the social democratic policy variables are interacted, we see more substantial effects.



Figure 6: Effects of SD Economic Position on Predicted Socialist Vote Share with 95% C.I.

The third hypothesis tests whether it is the greens who benefit most from the adoption of rightward social democratic cultural positions. Here we find little support for H3. The greens do gain votes on their more salient second dimension from this strategy, but the effect size is minor and even smaller than the socialist left and liberals. Social democrats, conservatives, and the far right lose votes from social democratic rightward positioning on the second dimension by roughly equal amounts.

To test the fourth hypothesis – that a) socialist parties; and or b) green parties benefit from the adoption of rightward social democratic positions on both dimensions – an interaction is estimated between *SD economic position* x *SD culture position* for each party family. Figure 7 presents the average marginal effect of the interaction for each party family. The social democrats significantly lose vote share when they adopt rightward positions on both dimensions. The greens also lose vote share, while the liberals and conservatives see effects next to zero. The benefactors are the far left and right, but the interaction is stronger, and only statistically significant for the far left. Thus, we find support for H4a but not H4b.

Figure 7: Average Marginal Effects of SD Culture Position by SD Economic Position on Party Family Vote Shares with 95% C.I.



Figure 8 displays the average marginal effects of *SD economic position* by *SD culture position* on the socialist party family's vote share. It shows that the effect of social democratic left-wing offerings on both dimensions, negatively impacts socialist vote shares, but that their vote share substantially increases the more right-wing social democrats become on both dimensions. The substantive effect is slightly above zero when social democrats are at their economic mean. However, at 1 standard deviation below the economic mean, a 1 standard deviation rightward socio-cultural dimension movement is associated with a roughly
1 percentage point decrease in socialist vote share. Whereas, at a right-wing economic position, 1 standard deviation above the mean, a 1 standard deviation rightward socio-cultural dimension movement is associated with a roughly 1.5 percentage point increase in socialist vote share. These effect sizes are slightly stronger than the equivalent interaction for the social democrats, but it appears that a roughly equal transfer of votes from the social democrats to the socialist left occurs from simultaneous social democratic rightward positioning on the two dimensions.

Figure 8: Average Marginal Effects of SD Culture Position by SD Economic Position on Socialist Vote Share with 95% C.I.



8. Conclusion

Social democratic parties have experienced substantial electoral decline in recent years, which has often been attributed to the rightward movement of their policies. This paper advances this work by investigating how the party supply side of electoral politics has impacted social democratic decline, to ascertain who benefits from this development. Based on aggregate-level election results and CSES data for 21 countries between 1965–2019 and through application of the spatial theory of party competition and accommodation theory, I find that the socialist left significantly benefits from the adoption of rightward social democratic economic positions, which is magnified when combined with rightward sociocultural positions. This predominantly occurs because left-leaning voters migrate over to the socialist left.

The first set of results suggest that a variety of voters are abandoning the social democrats, most especially the young. This finding likely has long-term detrimental consequences for the sustainability of the party family. Younger voters are consistently in favour of more leftist policies on both dimensions, and they are still being socialized in their partisan identifications. Hence, social democrats are at risk of permanently losing a large portion of the newly emerging politicized generation. I also find that when the party family adopts rightward positions on the economic dimension, they suffer a significantly higher propensity of losing voters. However, when they adopt rightward positions simultaneously on both dimensions, the effect is magnified.

The second set of results suggest that social democrats are facing increasing competition from challenger parties, most prominently on their left flank. They are particularly losing low income and rural voters, who are significantly deserting the party for the far right and abstention. They are also losing their right-leaning voters to the conservatives and far right, while left-leaning voters are substantially deserting the party to the greens, and most especially to the socialists. Since the majority of social democratic voters are left leaning, the sheer scale generates a significant influx into the socialist left, which likely accounts for much of the recent success of *Podemos* (Spain), *Sinn Féin* (Ireland), and *Syriza* (Greece). Thus, in line with spatial logic, the combined results from the retrospective voting analysis reveal that social democrats significantly lose leftist voters to the socialists when they adopt rightward positions on the economic dimension, which is magnified when combined with equivalent positioning on the socio-cultural dimension.

The aggregate-level results suggest that challenger parties stand to see some gain from worsening economic conditions, but this is outweighed by the impact from party positioning. Social democratic rightward economic positions are associated with increased electoral support for the socialists, which is again magnified when combined with socio-cultural rightward positions. This dynamic does not appear to be at work when social democrats attempt accommodation on the socio-cultural dimension. As they do not significantly lose voters, or vote share, and there does not appear to be any specific benefactors.

Overall, the findings provide notable ramifications for party strategy and contribute to explanations for the rise of challenger parties, at the expense of mainstream parties (De Vries and Hobolt 2020; Hobolt and Tilley 2016). Equality was a founding principle of social democracy, whereby support for the welfare state was for the longest time fundamental to the social democratic brand (Bartolini 2000; Mudge 2018). However, it appears that social democratic moderation has led to brand dilution for the party family and is likely reducing their credibility in the eyes of many voters. Third Way rebranding created an opportunity for challenger parties on both the left and far right to attract social democratic voters, although it appears the socialist left has benefitted the most. The gains received from this strategy, do not appear to be compensating for the losses inflicted from the policy positioning long-term, which is likely contributing to the party family's recent pronounced decline.

An important limitation of this study is that the CSES only provides retrospective voting for one prior election. Therefore, future research may better examine the long-term consequences from party moderation over multiple elections. The recent expansion of panel surveys in many western countries, likely provides a fruitful path forward here for party

scholars.

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Chapter 7: Conclusion

Democracy is a political system that is designed to provide popular control over decisionmaking and policy formulation. Thus, it is assumed by its very nature that democracy should reduce income inequality because the majority stand to benefit from its reduction (Meltzer and Richard 1981). However, despite widespread concern over rising inequality and supermajorities continually in favour of greater redistribution, democracy does not automatically reduce inequality.

Freedom House (2021) reports that democracy has been on the decline worldwide for 15 straight years and countries experiencing deterioration outnumbered those with improvements last year by the largest margin recorded since the negative trend began. Accordingly, the world's largest annual study on democracy, the Democracy Perception Index (DPI), recently reported that economic inequality was by far the biggest perceived threat to democracy in 2021. Therefore, scholars have started to examine the self-reinforcing feedback loop between inequality and democracy in recent years, but they have not yet managed to solve the paradox of redistribution that is central to the inequality and democracy story. Building on recent work, this thesis has examined the politics of income inequality via time series cross-sectional analysis from 1965–2019. It has contributed to the existing political inequality literature by introducing new approaches and reframing previous approaches and frameworks which outline the negative effects that inequality can exert on political behaviour.

The first two empirical articles analyse the relationship between income inequality and voter turnout. Paper 1 builds on the mixed results of past research by introducing supplyside logic to a relationship that has previously only been only investigated through demandside mechanisms. In doing so, it contributes to the study of policy offerings as a key mechanism moderating inequality and turnout. It finds that inequality has a negative impact on turnout, especially in depolarised party systems, but as party system polarisation increases the negative impact of inequality is mitigated. The results provide an important answer as to why evidence is rarely found in support of conflict theory (Meltzer and Richard 1981). This is because latent conflict within the electorate over rising inequality has no means to express itself, unless parties take distinctive policy positions on matters of redistribution, so citizens respond by abstaining. However, when party systems are more polarised, conflict can be expressed at the ballot box, which generates higher turnout.

One key limitation to the analysis in Paper 1, is that it only focuses on the aggregate level and is, therefore, unable to identify the income groups that are most affected in the relationship. Thus, Paper 2 builds on this discovery by focusing on the individual level. Like Paper 1, it finds that higher levels of income inequality are associated with reduced turnout. However, in line with Solt (2008, 2010), it also finds that income inequality is associated with a larger income gap in turnout. Most importantly, it finds that when party systems are more polarised, the income gap in turnout is significantly reduced, as it is low-income earners that have the most to lose relatively from rising inequality, who are then mobilised to a greater extent than everyone else. These results provide a novel explanation as to why inequality is related to greater turnout inequality by highlighting a key causal mechanism in the relationship. Namely, higher income inequality increases the saliency of redistribution for rich and poor alike, but it is lower-income earners who have the most to lose relatively, and who are then mobilised the largest extent via greater economic policy choice. This stems from a lack of effective economic policy representation for low-income earners, who are typically much less likely to vote. Increasingly so, under higher levels of inequality.

Paper 3 probes further, by focusing on the party family that is traditionally expected to: 1) best represent individuals in the bottom half of the income distribution, and 2) combat income inequality. As it novelly tests whether social democratic parties are effectively representing their traditional base through their policy offerings, by providing a counteravailing force to rising inequality. The results reveal that rightward economic movement of social democrats significantly reduce their vote share under higher levels of income inequality, or when it is combined with rightward socio-cultural movements. Thus, the findings point to a key interplay between inequality and the social democratic party family. As equality was a founding principle of social democracy (Bartolini 2000; Mudge 2018) and protection of the welfare state has historically been a strong means of mobilisation for social democrats (Bélanger and Meguid 2008), the party family's turn away from these traditions, while inequality rises across the West, has been detrimental to their fortunes. When social democrats offer less redistribution, they appear to be alienating both their traditional base and much of the middle class, so they significantly lose vote share. The brand dilution suffered from engaging in reforms that conflict with the party family's traditional brand as welfare protectors, do not appear to compensate via gains from progressive movement on the second dimension, or from laying claim to acquiring economic and fiscal responsibility. Overall, and similarly to Papers 1 and 2, the results indicate a failure in effective representation in the economic policy space of party systems.

Finally, Paper 4 expands on Paper 3, by investigating who benefits from social democratic party movements. A large amount of public and political debate has focused on how social democratic parties can affect their electoral fate. However, there is little empirical work that directly examines vote switching of social democrat voters and how the party family's programmatic positioning can impact this. In line with spatial logic (Downs 1957),

Paper 4 finds that the socialist left tends to benefit the most when the parties adopt rightward economic positions, which is then magnified when combined with social democratic rightward positioning on the socio-cultural dimension. This predominantly occurs because left-leaning voters migrate to the socialist left. The results suggest that social democrats are facing increasing competition from challenger parties, most prominently on their left flank. The party family's 'Third Way' rebranding has likely led to brand dilution, which is reducing the party family's credibility in the eyes of many voters and created an opportunity for challenger parties, most especially on the left.

Linking these results with Paper 2's findings on lower income earners voter abstention due to ineffective representation in the economic policy space, there is a common narrative in public discourse that social democracy is in electoral decline, due to its lowerclass base deserting the party family for the far right (Goodhart 2017). The empirical evidence from Paper 4 reveals that this story is much more complicated. Paper 4 shows that social democratic voters tend to abandon the party for ideologically proximate parties. By far the greatest net gain in transfers between social democrats and the other main party families has benefitted the socialist left, which has increased substantially in recent years. The social democrats are losing different kinds of voters to different parties. They are losing low income and rural voters, who are significantly deserting the party for the far right and abstention, and they are haemorrhaging young voters to all parties. This finding likely has long-term detrimental consequences for the sustainability of the party family, as generational replacement takes hold. Young voters are consistently in favour of more leftist policies on both dimensions, and they are still being socialised in their partisan identifications. Hence, social democrats are also at risk of permanently losing a large portion of the newly emerging politicised generation. Additionally, social democrats are losing their right-leaning voters to the conservatives and far right, while left-leaning voters are significantly deserting the party

to the greens, and most especially to the socialists. Since the majority of social democratic voters are left leaning, the sheer scale generates a significant influx into the socialist left, which likely accounts for much of the recent success of *Podemos* (Spain), *Sinn Féin* (Ireland), and *Syriza* (Greece).

Taken together, the four papers contribute to our understanding of income inequality, political behaviour, and political representation. The first two papers investigate the relationship between income inequality and voter turnout, while the final two papers, focus on the relationship between social democracy and income inequality, and social democracy and the rise of challenger parties. Throughout, the common linkage is the policy offerings of political parties moderating each relationship. The first two papers offer a thorough examination at both the aggregate and individual level, of how different policy offerings during times of inequality influence how people participate in the political process, and whether they vote or not. While the final two papers build upon this work by focusing specifically on social democracy, to investigate how these dynamics have influenced support for mainstream and challenger parties over time.

These findings have profound implications for party strategy. Abou-Chadi et al. (2021) and Häusermann (2021) posit that to attain electoral success, there are primarily four ideal-type policy strategies that social democratic parties can pursue: centrist, left-nationalist, new left, and old left. Each comes with trade-offs, as attempts to appeal to new voters can potentially alienate old ones. Accordingly, this thesis provides important insights into what is likely the most effective strategy that social democrats can pursue.

Paper 3 finds that the centrist strategy of policy moderation on both dimensions, (especially economic), which has largely been pursued by the party family over the previous generation, has been detrimental to their electoral fortunes. Paper 4 shows that this approach is unlikely to win over lost voters or attain many new ones, as the party family has not been losing voters proportionately to the mainstream right or losing many centrist voters. Therefore, a renewed Third Way approach is unlikely to attain success with the coveted median voter, especially with electorates that are increasingly demanding greater policy choice and becoming more polarised (Iyengar 2019; Reiljan 2020).

A left-nationalist approach calls for economic leftism but places a much stronger emphasis on advancing socio-culturally conservative issues, especially with regards to immigration and multiculturalism. This approach is intuitively appealing to win back the more nationalistic and culturally conservative white working class, which has been drifting towards right-wing parties (Hildebrandt and Jäckle 2021; Zingher 2020). In contexts with a high degree of cultural conservatism and rural populations, this strategy would appear to have some merit, since it would appeal to groups that are indeed abandoning the social democrats. However, Paper 4 finds only partial evidence for the notion that social democratic voters are deserting the party family for the far right. Adopting rightward socio-cultural positions will likely also turn off many of the party family's current core supporters, including a large portion of the culturally progressive middle class. Moreover, the strategy is also likely to repel younger voters that the party family increasingly needs, due to the rapidly greying of its core supporters; and trends show that most populaces are becoming increasingly culturally progressive due to socialised change and intergenerational replacement (Inglehart 2018).

In contrast to the left-nationalist strategy, is a new left approach. It too calls for leftist economic policy and places greater emphasis on the second dimension. However, it advocates taking up progressive stances on the second dimension. The advantage of this strategy is that, as Paper 4 shows, social democrats are losing many voters to the greens, including younger, urban, and female voters that are more culturally progressive. It is also likely to resonate in contexts with rising green parties, such as in Germany. Yet Paper 3 finds that social democrats only suffer reduced vote shares when they combine culturally rightward positions with rightward economic positions, and Paper 4 finds that social democratic voters are unlikely to abandon the party family over the second dimension, but rather only over rightward economic positions. Thus, new leftism holds some promise for social democrats, but the findings from this thesis show that the optimal strategy is an old left approach.

The old left strategy offers leftist policy on both dimensions but prioritises the economic dimension, most especially through strengthening of the welfare state. This strategy resembles a return to the traditional leftist policies of the post-war golden age of social democracy. Pursuing this strategy allows social democrats to capitalise on their traditional brand that they have neglected in recent years, which is the promotion of equality, labour issues, and the welfare state. Supermajorities across the West are in favour of greater redistribution, and higher taxes on the rich and corporations, which can be used to rebuild atrophying welfare states (OECD 2019). The saliency of these issues is also likely to only increase while income inequality rises. Paper 3 finds that rightward economic movements of social democrats significantly reduce their support under higher levels of income inequality, or when it is combined with rightward socio-cultural movements. Moreover, Paper 4 finds that is the socialist left that significantly benefits from the adoption of these rightward economic positions, which is then magnified when combined with rightward socio-cultural positions. This predominantly occurs because left-leaning voters migrate over to the socialist left. Thus, an old left strategy would very likely appeal to these voters and target key demographic groups that have been deserting the party - such as females, the young, and low-income earners.

A potential trade-off of the old left approach is that it will surely repel antiredistribution and socially conservative voters, although they comprise dwindling portions of the electorate, a small share of the party family's constituency, and have been shown to be unlikely to vote for social democrats anyways, given the consistently strong appeals from the right on these issues (Abou-Chadi et al. 2021). The strategy also may not be as effective in contexts with lower income inequality and strong welfare states, such as in Scandinavia, but is most suitable in high inequality countries such as the UK and US, and in countries with weaker welfare systems, such as Greece, Italy, and Spain.

By gauging the potential trade-offs of different programmatic strategies, a path forward can potentially be determined to arrest the decline of social democracy throughout the West. As this thesis has shown, this is because political parties are not just the victims of long-term macro-structural trends but instead possess a great deal of agency to position themselves in transforming political spaces. They can also shape and form new electoral coalitions designed to appeal to different voter segments. The weakening of social democratic class voting has not only been a question of structural changes with workers representing a declining share of the electorate, as is commonly depicted (Benedetto et al. 2020; Beramendi et al. 2015). But importantly, the effect of structural change on social democracy has clearly also been reinforced by a weakening of working-class support, especially through electoral de-mobilisation and abstention.

Utilising European Social Survey data, Rennwald (2020) finds that the working class now participates in elections much less than in the past. For example, in the 2010s, when compared to the previous decade, the ratio of working-class turnout to the overall average fell substantially in all six Northwestern European countries analysed. Class is unavailable in the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES 2019, 2020), but Paper 4 does find that lowincome social democratic voters are twice as likely as their high-income counterparts to abstain from voting. Correspondingly, Elff and Roßteutscher (2017) show that this high degree of social democratic vote abstention for its working-class base in Germany, is linked to the party family's mobilisation efforts switching to the middle class, whereas the mainstream right party (Christian Democratic Union) has been unaffected by the same mobilisation problems with its religious base. Thus, a decline in the class voting cleavage can be linked to an erosion in electoral mobilisation. This thesis builds upon this party supply aspect of cleavage voting to add that the policy offerings of social democratic parties also play a crucial role in cleavage voting.

Further probing in Paper 4 finds that social democratic voters with low political efficacy were more than twice as likely to abstain compared to their high efficacy counterparts, and a full 10 percentage points less likely to vote for the party again.¹³ Combined with analysis from Paper 2, which showed that political efficacy is significantly positively related to turnout, this suggests that declining voter turnout is partially owing to a lack of effective representation provided by social democrats towards their traditional base.

Moreover, Paper 3 shows that increasing inequality, combined with rightward economic social democratic positions, reduces the party family's vote share. Although lowerincome earners do not experience a comparatively significant reduction in likelihood to vote for social democrats under higher inequality, the results from Paper 2 shows that increased income inequality leads to lower turnout particularly among low-income individuals, which is magnified under lower economic political polarisation. However, when party systems offer greater economic choice under higher inequality, than the income gap in turnout is significantly reduced via greater participation of low-income earners. This can likely partially account for the sizable increase in voting disaffection that has occurred across the West in recent years.

The biggest culprit of party system clustering on the economic dimension, appear to be the social democrats, who through their embrace of neoliberalism and globalisation, moved the party rightwards over the past generation. This converged the economic dimension

¹³ Political efficacy is measured on a scale of 1 (low) to 5 (high).

of party systems around a neoliberal pro-market center. Much evidence shows that party systems clustering around the center, can lead to increased voter indifference and reduced turnout (Callander and Wilson 2007). Therefore, social democratic moderation, has largely left the lower classes vulnerable to the negative impacts of neoliberalism (including rising income inequality), and without effective mainstream representation. The dramatic turn away from addressing the preferences of the traditional base of social democratic parties, signals to these voters that their preferences and voices do not matter, which has likely contributed to the increased disengagement from politics of the lower classes.

In sum, political parties can substantially shape distributional outcomes through policy. This is because – as the extensive literature surveyed in Chapter 1 shows – inequality does not result exclusively from efficient market forces. The findings in this thesis demonstrate that the policy choices presented to the electorate substantially matter for parties and for political behaviour, especially so in this age of increasing inequality. The findings also shed light on the lack of economic policy choice provided by political parties, which is dampening turnout and increasing political inequality. This perpetuates a vicious cycle of economic marginalisation that depresses the participation of different groups, which then leads to even greater representation of the wealthy and less public effort to combat inequality. It is also likely increasing the pool of disenfranchised voters, which can then form an attractive prospective reservoir of support for populists and authoritarians to draw from – especially on the radical right (Engler and Weisstanner 2021).

Investigating whether rising inequality and a lack of effective representation in the policy space is a factor in the increasingly strong performances of fringe candidates and parties throughout the West in recent years, is a likely fruitful path of further research.

Especially if this can be pursued via analysis of long-term panel data that contains

retrospective voting choices over multiple elections.

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Chapter 4 Appendix

Inequality, Policy Polarization and the Income Gap in Turnout

Appendix

- A1 List of Countries and Elections
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| Country | Elections | Number of Elections |
|----------------|------------------------------|---------------------|
| Australia | 1996, 2004, 2007, 2013 | 4 |
| Austria | 2008, 2013 | 2 |
| Belgium | 1999, 2003 | 2 |
| Canada | 1997, 2004, 2008, 2011, 2015 | 5 |
| Czech Republic | 1996, 2002, 2006, 2010, 2013 | 5 |
| Denmark | 1998, 2001, 2007 | 3 |
| Estonia | 2011 | 1 |
| Finland | 2003, 2007, 2011 | 3 |
| France | 2002, 2007, 2012 | 3 |
| Germany | 1998, 2002, 2005, 2009, 2013 | 5 |
| Greece | 2009 | 1 |
| Hungary | 1998, 2002 | 2 |
| Iceland | 1999, 2003, 2007, 2009, 2013 | 5 |
| Israel | 1996, 2003, 2006, 2013 | 4 |
| Ireland | 2002, 2007, 2011 | 3 |
| Italy | 2006 | 1 |
| Japan | 1996 | 1 |
| Netherlands | 1998, 2002, 2006, 2010 | 4 |
| New Zealand | 1996, 2002, 2008, 2011, 2014 | 5 |
| Norway | 1997, 2001, 2005, 2009, 2013 | 5 |
| Poland | 1997, 2001, 2005, 2007, 2011 | 5 |
| Portugal | 2002, 2005, 2009, 2015 | 4 |
| Slovakia | 2010, 2016 | 2 |
| Slovenia | 1996, 2004, 2008, 2011 | 4 |
| South Korea | 2000, 2004, 2008, 2012 | 4 |
| Spain | 1996, 2000, 2004, 2008 | 4 |
| Sweden | 1998, 2002, 2006, 2014 | 4 |
| Switzerland | 1999, 2003, 2007, 2011 | 4 |
| United Kingdom | 1997, 2005, 2015 | 3 |
| United States | 1996, 2004, 2008, 2012 | 4 |

A1 List of Countries and Elections

A2 Descriptive Statistics

| Variable | Observations | Mean | Std. Dev. | Min. | Max. |
|----------------------------|--------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------|
| Voted | 176,366 | 0.8343558 | 0.371762 | 0 | 1 |
| Age | 179,194 | 48.18281 | 17.23681 | 16 | 115 |
| Female | 180,176 | 0.4758569 | 0.4994182 | 0 | 1 |
| Education | 176,557 | 2.210804 | 1.171832 | 0 | 4 |
| Income | 145,313 | 2.949179 | 1.386183 | 1 | 5 |
| Rural | 150,991 | 0.2423389 | 0.4284997 | 0 | 1 |
| GINI t-1 | 180,490 | 29.19002 | 3.780056 | 21.48356 | 37.63623 |
| GDP Per Capita t-1 (log) | 180,490 | 34060.66 | 18904.83 | 4140.983 | 101668.2 |
| Union Density | 180,490 | 31.62493 | 20.78501 | 6.88847 | 95.16304 |
| Majoritarian | 180,490 | 0.232916 | 0.4226903 | 0 | 1 |
| Compulsory Voting | 180,490 | 0.2835116 | 0.8619105 | 0 | 3 |
| ENP | 180,490 | 4.737516 | 1.714738 | 2.116739 | 12.84043 |
| Margin | 180,490 | 7.433351 | 6.114502 | 0.0209999 | 28.357 |
| Policy Polarization | 177,170 | 8.320231 | 4.078689 | 1.15779 | 19.51175 |
| Married | 172,233 | 0.6322075 | 0.4822059 | 0 | 1 |
| Employed | 173,725 | 0.4370989 | 0.4960291 | 0 | 1 |
| Union | 161,600 | 0.2388552 | 0.4263854 | 0 | 1 |
| Vote Income Gap | 99 | 10.78384 | 8.562528 | -7.2 | 29.3 |
| Policy Polarization (CHES) | 57,462 | 2.010846 | 0.4002725 | 0.6046531 | 2.823069 |

A3 Coding Policy Polarization Variable

Economic policy positions for the policy polarization variable were constructed using the state-market dimension, which comprises the following components from the Comparative Manifesto Project:

| | Left-Wing | | Right-Wing |
|--------|-------------------------------|--------|--------------------------|
| per403 | Market Regulation | per401 | Free Market Economy |
| per404 | Economic Planning | per402 | Incentives: Positive |
| per405 | Corporatism/Mixed Economy | per407 | Protectionism: Negative |
| per406 | Protectionism: Positive | per414 | Economic Orthodoxy |
| per409 | Keynesian Demand Management | per505 | Welfare State Limitation |
| per412 | Controlled Economy | | |
| per413 | Nationalisation | | |
| per415 | Marxist Analysis | | |
| per416 | Anti-Growth Economy: Positive | | |
| per504 | Welfare State Expansion | | |

A4 Demographic Controls Robustness Check

Additional demographic variables such as being *married*, full-time *employed*, and having *union* membership, have been found to impact on turnout probabilities. The dummy variables were not included in the main models due to substantial missing elections and values, *union density*'s inclusion at the aggregate level, and weaker theoretical relevance (Smets and van Ham 2013). When added, *married* and *union* are positively related to turnout and significant, whereas *employed* is non-significant. The main results all hold, except the three-way interaction does not reach statistical significance, likely owing to the high statistical power required in three-way interactions, which is constrained here due to the lower sample size. However, the pattern of substantive differing effects between bottom and top income quintiles largely remains (Figure A4 below), and the results are presented below in Tables A4a and A4b.

| | Model 7 | Model 8 | Model 9 | Model 10 |
|--------------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Age | 0.026*** | 0.026^{***} | 0.026^{***} | 0.026^{***} |
| | (0.001) | (0.001) | (0.001) | (0.001) |
| Female | 0.084^{***} | 0.084^{***} | 0.084^{***} | 0.084^{***} |
| | (0.019) | (0.019) | (0.019) | (0.019) |
| Education | 0.322*** | 0.323*** | 0.323*** | 0.324*** |
| | (0.010) | (0.010) | (0.010) | (0.010) |
| Income | 0.170^{***} | 0.272^{***} | 0.170^{***} | 0.186 |
| | (0.008) | (0.057) | (0.008) | (0.140) |
| Rural | 0.030 | 0.030 | 0.030 | 0.030 |
| | (0.021) | (0.021) | (0.021) | (0.021) |
| Married | 0.273*** | 0.272^{***} | 0.273*** | 0.270^{***} |
| | (0.020) | (0.020) | (0.020) | (0.020) |
| Employed | -0.025 | -0.025 | -0.024 | -0.026 |
| | (0.021) | (0.021) | (0.021) | (0.021) |
| Union | 0.298^{***} | 0.297^{***} | 0.299*** | 0.297^{***} |
| | (0.027) | (0.027) | (0.027) | (0.027) |
| Gini t-1 | -0.146*** | -0.137*** | -0.187*** | -0.186*** |
| | (0.019) | (0.020) | (0.024) | (0.027) |
| Income # Gini t-1 | | -0.004^{+} | | -0.000 |
| | **** | (0.002) | + + + + + | (0.005) |
| GDP Per Capita t-1 (log) | 0.658*** | 0.658*** | 0.657*** | 0.657*** |
| | (0.114) | (0.114) | (0.115) | (0.115) |
| Union Density | -0.004 | -0.004 | -0.006 | -0.006 |
| | (0.004) | (0.004) | (0.004) | (0.004) |
| Majoritarian | -0.517 | -0.514 | -0.524 | -0.521 |
| | (0.381) | (0.382) | (0.391) | (0.392) |
| Compulsory Voting | 0.697*** | 0.696*** | 0.668** | 0.667** |
| | (0.211) | (0.211) | (0.217) | (0.217) |
| ENP | -0.227*** | -0.227*** | -0.239*** | -0.239*** |
| | (0.023) | (0.023) | (0.024) | (0.024) |
| Margin | -0.014 | -0.014 | -0.014 | -0.014 |
| | (0.002) | (0.002) | (0.002) | (0.002) |
| Policy Polarization | -0.002 | -0.002 | -0.123 | -0.152 |
| | (0.005) | (0.005) | (0.042) | (0.060) |
| Policy Polarization # Gini t-1 | | | 0.004 | 0.006 |

 Table A4a: Mixed-Effects Logistic Regression Predicting Propensity to Vote (with Additional Demographic Variables

| | | | (0.002) | (0.002) |
|---|-----------|-----------|---------------|-----------|
| Policy Polarization # Income | | | | 0.011 |
| | | | | (0.016) |
| Policy Polarization # Gini t-1 # Income | | | | -0.000 |
| | | | | (0.001) |
| Constant | -2.426 | -2.678 | -1.102 | -1.142 |
| | (1.388) | (1.396) | (1.473) | (1.516) |
| Variance | 0.511*** | 0.512*** | 0.540^{***} | 0.541*** |
| | (0.145) | (0.145) | (0.153) | (0.154) |
| Log Likelihood | -39518.59 | -39516.97 | -39514.27 | -39512.38 |
| AIČ | 79113.17 | 79111.94 | 79106.55 | 79108.76 |
| BIC | 79476.34 | 79484.66 | 79479.27 | 79510.15 |
| Year Fixed-effects | YES | YES | YES | YES |
| Countries | 28 | 28 | 28 | 28 |
| N | 104,503 | 104,503 | 104,503 | 104,503 |

Note: beta coefficients from a mixed-effects logistic regression with clustered standard errors in parentheses. p < 0.1, p < 0.05, p < 0.01, p < 0.001.

| | Model 11a | Model 12a | Model 11b | Model 12b |
|--------------------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|
| | Income | Quintile 1 | Income Q | Quintile 5 |
| Age | 0.021*** | 0.021*** | 0.025*** | 0.025^{***} |
| | (0.001) | (0.001) | (0.002) | (0.002) |
| Female | 0.059 | 0.060 | 0.097 | 0.096 |
| | (0.039) | (0.039) | (0.052) | (0.052) |
| Education | 0.362*** | 0.365*** | 0.302*** | 0.302^{***} |
| | (0.024) | (0.024) | (0.024) | (0.024) |
| Rural | 0.015 | 0.017 | 0.027 | 0.028 |
| | (0.043) | (0.043) | (0.062) | (0.062) |
| Married | 0.209^{***} | 0.203*** | 0.305^{***} | 0.305^{***} |
| | (0.044) | (0.044) | (0.064) | (0.064) |
| Employed | 0.085 | 0.085 | -0.056 | -0.054 |
| | (0.053) | (0.053) | (0.059) | (0.059) |
| Union | 0.348*** | 0.345*** | 0.220^{**} | 0.221** |
| | (0.063) | (0.063) | (0.068) | (0.068) |
| Gini t-1 | -0.146*** | -0.242*** | -0.096** | -0.123* |
| | (0.033) | (0.045) | (0.036) | (0.052) |
| GDP Per Capita t-1 (log) | 0.565^{**} | 0.526^{**} | 0.739^{***} | 0.745^{***} |
| | (0.187) | (0.192) | (0.212) | (0.215) |
| Union Density | -0.003 | -0.006 | -0.002 | -0.003 |
| | (0.006) | (0.006) | (0.007) | (0.007) |
| Majoritarian | -0.421 | -0.374 | -0.938* | -0.942* |
| | (0.421) | (0.440) | (0.420) | (0.427) |
| Compulsory Voting | 0.715^{**} | 0.636** | 0.717^{**} | 0.693** |
| | (0.224) | (0.235) | (0.219) | (0.224) |
| ENP | -0.199*** | -0.225*** | -0.253*** | -0.267*** |
| | (0.044) | (0.045) | (0.059) | (0.062) |
| Margin | -0.010* | -0.013** | -0.018** | -0.018** |
| | (0.004) | (0.005) | (0.006) | (0.007) |
| Policy Polarization | -0.013 | -0.290*** | -0.015 | -0.102 |
| | (0.010) | (0.086) | (0.014) | (0.114) |

Table A4b: Mixed-Effects Logistic Regression Predicting Propensity to Vote for Top and Bottom Income Quintiles (with Additional Demographic Variables) (Sub-Sample Models)

| Policy Polarization # Gini t-1 | | 0.010^{**} | | 0.003 |
|--------------------------------|--------------|--------------|-----------|--------------|
| | | (0.003) | | (0.004) |
| Constant | -1.393 | 1.902 | -3.737 | -2.901 |
| | (2.252) | (2.541) | (2.479) | (2.736) |
| Variance | 0.540^{**} | 0.596** | 0.453** | 0.468^{**} |
| | (0.170) | (0.190) | (0.155) | (0.163) |
| Log Likelihood | -10536.82 | -10528.8 | -6215.798 | -6215.133 |
| AIC | 21141.63 | 21127.61 | 12499.6 | 12500.27 |
| BIC | 21415.17 | 21409.19 | 12770.58 | 12779.22 |
| Year Fixed-effects | YES | YES | YES | YES |
| Countries | 28 | 28 | 28 | 28 |
| Ν | 19,443 | 19,443 | 19,185 | 19,185 |

Note: beta coefficients from a mixed-effects logistic regression with clustered standard errors in parentheses. * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001.





A5 Income Multiple Imputation Robustness Check

A prominent problem with surveys of household income is non-response. Roughly one-fifth of respondents failed to provide an income response in the CSES. Therefore, robustness checks on the missing *income* values are undertaken to ensure the dataset does not contain bias. As *income* is a categorical variable, the ordered logistic regression imputation method is utilized to impute the missing *income* values for five datasets. This increases the sample size substantially by roughly 25,000 and the results are very similar to the main models for each dataset, except the three-way interaction is stronger and statistically significant now at (p<0.001) (see Tables A5a and A5b for the first dataset). Thus, the pattern of substantive differing effects between the bottom and top income quintiles is even more pronounced and the bottom quintile substantially surpasses the top quintile in turnout likelihood at very high levels of polarization and inequality. The stronger effect is likely partially owing to the increased sample size.

| | Model 13 | Model 14 | Model 15 | Model 16 |
|---|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Age | 0.027*** | 0.027^{***} | 0.027^{***} | 0.027^{***} |
| | (0.000) | (0.000) | (0.000) | (0.000) |
| Female | 0.104^{***} | 0.104^{***} | 0.104^{***} | 0.104^{***} |
| | (0.015) | (0.015) | (0.015) | (0.015) |
| Education | 0.325*** | 0.326*** | 0.326*** | 0.326*** |
| | (0.008) | (0.008) | (0.008) | (0.008) |
| Income | 0.163*** | 0.313*** | 0.163*** | -0.047 |
| | (0.006) | (0.046) | (0.006) | (0.115) |
| Rural | 0.040^{*} | 0.039^{*} | 0.040^{*} | 0.039^{*} |
| | (0.017) | (0.017) | (0.017) | (0.017) |
| Gini t-1 | -0.140*** | -0.127*** | -0.195*** | -0.214*** |
| | (0.016) | (0.017) | (0.021) | (0.023) |
| Income # Gini t-1 | | -0.005** | | 0.002^{+} |
| | | (0.002) | | (0.005) |
| GDP Per Capita t-1 (log) | 0.425*** | 0.426^{***} | 0.406^{***} | 0.412^{***} |
| | (0.102) | (0.102) | (0.103) | (0.103) |
| Union Density | -0.017*** | -0.018*** | -0.021*** | -0.021*** |
| | (0.004) | (0.004) | (0.004) | (0.004) |
| Majoritarian | -0.489 | -0.485 | -0.480 | -0.479 |
| | (0.412) | (0.413) | (0.437) | (0.437) |
| Compulsory Voting | 0.658^{**} | 0.657** | 0.631* | 0.630^{*} |
| | (0.231) | (0.231) | (0.245) | (0.245) |
| ENP | -0.214*** | -0.214*** | -0.230*** | -0.230*** |
| | (0.019) | (0.019) | (0.020) | (0.020) |
| Margin | -0.016*** | -0.016*** | -0.016*** | -0.016*** |
| | (0.002) | (0.002) | (0.002) | (0.002) |
| Policy Polarization | -0.000 | -0.000 | -0.151*** | -0.272*** |
| | (0.004) | (0.004) | (0.035) | (0.050) |
| Policy Polarization # Gini t-1 | | | 0.005^{***} | 0.010^{***} |
| | | | (0.001) | (0.002) |
| Policy Polarization # Income | | | | 0.045^{***} |
| | | | | (0.013) |
| Policy Polarization # Gini t-1 # Income | | | | -0.002*** |
| | | | | (0.000) |

 Table A5a: Mixed-Effects Logistic Regression Predicting Propensity to Vote (with Income Multiple Imputation)

| Constant | 0.155 | -0.244 | 2.089 | 2.599 |
|--------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------|
| | (1.236) | (1.242) | (1.331) | (1.363) |
| Variance | 0.618*** | 0.619*** | 0.699*** | 0.698*** |
| | (0.178) | (0.178) | (0.203) | (0.203) |
| Log Likelihood | -57167.07 | -57161.68 | -57157.58 | -57146.5 |
| AIC | 114404.1 | 114395.4 | 114387.2 | 114371 |
| BIC | 114749.7 | 114750.8 | 114742.6 | 114756.1 |
| Year Fixed-effects | YES | YES | YES | YES |
| Countries | 28 | 28 | 28 | 28 |
| N | 143,358 | 143,358 | 143,358 | 143,358 |

Note: beta coefficients from a mixed-effects logistic regression with clustered standard errors in parentheses. p < 0.1, p < 0.05, p < 0.01, p < 0.001

| Table A5b: Mixed-Effects Logistic Regression Predicting Propensity to Vote (with Incom | ıe |
|--|----|
| Multiple Imputation) (Sub-Sample Models) | |

| | Model 17a | Model 18a | Model 17b | Model 18b |
|--------------------------------|-----------|---------------|--------------|---------------|
| | Income | Quintile 1 | Income Q | Quintile 5 |
| Age | 0.021*** | 0.021*** | 0.028*** | 0.028^{***} |
| | (0.001) | (0.001) | (0.001) | (0.001) |
| Female | 0.091** | 0.092^{**} | 0.104** | 0.104^{**} |
| | (0.032) | (0.032) | (0.040) | (0.040) |
| Education | 0.350*** | 0.352^{***} | 0.349*** | 0.349*** |
| | (0.018) | (0.018) | (0.019) | (0.019) |
| Rural | 0.038 | 0.039 | 0.051 | 0.051 |
| | (0.036) | (0.036) | (0.049) | (0.049) |
| Gini t-1 | -0.150*** | -0.262*** | -0.082* | -0.100^{*} |
| | (0.029) | (0.039) | (0.034) | (0.046) |
| GDP Per Capita t-1 (log) | 0.560*** | 0.525** | 0.639** | 0.640^{**} |
| | (0.169) | (0.176) | (0.196) | (0.197) |
| Union Density | -0.014* | -0.020** | 0.001 | 0.001 |
| | (0.006) | (0.007) | (0.006) | (0.007) |
| Majoritarian | -0.476 | -0.449 | -0.635 | -0.634 |
| | (0.425) | (0.466) | (0.429) | (0.432) |
| Compulsory Voting | 0.672** | 0.601^{*} | 0.650^{**} | 0.638^{**} |
| | (0.229) | (0.253) | (0.229) | (0.232) |
| ENP | -0.172*** | -0.202*** | -0.266*** | -0.273*** |
| | (0.037) | (0.038) | (0.050) | (0.051) |
| Margin | -0.015*** | -0.016*** | -0.017*** | -0.017*** |
| | (0.004) | (0.004) | (0.005) | (0.005) |
| Policy Polarization | -0.006 | -0.325*** | -0.005 | -0.060 |
| | (0.009) | (0.070) | (0.012) | (0.095) |
| Policy Polarization # Gini t-1 | | 0.012^{***} | | 0.002 |
| | | (0.003) | | (0.003) |
| Constant | -1.015 | 2.851 | -3.177 | -2.626 |
| | (2.048) | (2.314) | (2.352) | (2.547) |
| Variance | 0.585*** | 0.717^{**} | 0.544** | 0.552** |
| | (0.177) | (0.226) | (0.166) | (0.170) |
| Log Likelihood | -12949.5 | -12938.91 | -8383.833 | -8383.665 |
| AIC | 25967 | 25947.82 | 16835.67 | 16837.33 |
| BIC | 26247.05 | 26236.11 | 17113.05 | 17122.87 |
| Year Fixed-effects | YES | YES | YES | YES |
| Countries | 28 | 28 | 28 | 28 |
| Ν | 27,914 | 27,914 | 25,808 | 25,808 |

Note: beta coefficients from a mixed-effects logistic regression with clustered standard errors in parentheses. * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001





A6 Income Categorization Robustness Check (Terciles)

To guard against the results being affected by the categorization of income, the models are rerun with income as terciles, instead of quintiles. Income quintiles 1 and 2 are grouped into the bottom tercile, with quintiles 4 and 5 grouped into the top tercile. When the estimations are re-run with terciles, the results all hold and the *income* x *gini t-1* interaction effect is stronger and statistically significant now at (p<0.001) (see Tables A6a and A6b below).

| | Model 19 | Model 20 | Model 21 | Model 22 |
|---|-----------|-----------|---------------------|---------------|
| Age | 0.028*** | 0.028*** | 0.028*** | 0.028*** |
| | (0.001) | (0.001) | (0.001) | (0.001) |
| Female | 0.094*** | 0.094*** | 0.094*** | 0.093*** |
| | (0.017) | (0.017) | (0.017) | (0.017) |
| Education | 0.317*** | 0.319*** | 0.318*** | 0.319*** |
| | (0.009) | (0.009) | (0.009) | (0.009) |
| Income | 0.302*** | 0.583*** | 0.302*** | 0.192 |
| | (0.010) | (0.084) | (0.010) | (0.210) |
| Rural | 0.032 | 0.030 | 0.031 | 0.030 |
| | (0.020) | (0.020) | (0.020) | (0.020) |
| Gini t-1 | -0.140*** | -0.123*** | -0.184*** | -0.189*** |
| | (0.018) | (0.019) | (0.023) | (0.026) |
| Income # Gini t-1 | × , | -0.010*** | | 0.002 |
| | | (0.003) | | (0.005) |
| GDP Per Capita t-1 (log) | 0.544*** | 0.546*** | 0.535*** | 0.540*** |
| | (0.107) | (0.107) | (0.109) | (0.109) |
| Union Density | -0.007+ | -0.007 | -0.009 [*] | -0.009* |
| | (0.004) | (0.004) | (0.004) | (0.004) |
| Majoritarian | -0.475 | -0.469 | -0.476 | -0.472 |
| | (0.359) | (0.360) | (0.373) | (0.374) |
| Compulsory Voting | 0.700*** | 0.697*** | 0.672** | 0.670** |
| | (0.199) | (0.199) | (0.207) | (0.208) |
| ENP | -0.202*** | -0.202*** | -0.216*** | -0.216*** |
| | (0.022) | (0.022) | (0.022) | (0.022) |
| Margin | -0.013*** | -0.013*** | -0.014*** | -0.014*** |
| | (0.002) | (0.002) | (0.002) | (0.002) |
| Policy Polarization | -0.007 | -0.007 | -0.135*** | -0.218*** |
| | (0.005) | (0.005) | (0.039) | (0.058) |
| Policy Polarization # Gini t-1 | | | 0.005^{***} | 0.007^{***} |
| | | | (0.001) | (0.002) |
| Policy Polarization # Income | | | | 0.048^* |
| | | | | (0.024) |
| Policy Polarization # Gini t-1 # Income | | | | -0.002^{+} |
| | | | | (0.001) |
| Constant | -1.422 | -1.921 | 0.086 | 0.213 |
| | (1.316) | (1.326) | (1.410) | (1.455) |
| Variance | 0.454*** | 0.456*** | 0.494*** | 0.495*** |
| | (0.128) | (0.129) | (0.141) | (0.141) |
| Log Likelihood | -45082.77 | -45077.1 | -45077.16 | -45069.7 |
| AIC | 90235.53 | 90226.2 | 90226.32 | 90217.4 |
| BIC | 90574.54 | 90574.9 | 90575.02 | 90595.15 |
| Year Fixed-effects | YES | YES | YES | YES |

Table A6a: Mixed-Effects Logistic Regression Predicting Propensity to Vote (with Income Terciles)

| Countries | 28 | 28 | 28 | 28 |
|-----------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| N | 118,890 | 118,890 | 118,890 | 118,890 |

Note: beta coefficients from a mixed-effects logistic regression with clustered standard errors in parentheses. p < 0.1, p < 0.05, p < 0.01, p < 0.01.

| Table A6b: Mixed-Effects Logistic Regression Predicting Propensity to V | 'ote (with | Income |
|---|------------|--------|
| Terciles) (Sub-Sample Models) | | |

| | Model 23a | Model 24a | Model 23b | Model 24b |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|---------------|-------------------|---------------|
| | Income Quintile 1 | | Income Quintile 3 | |
| Age | 0.025*** | 0.025^{***} | 0.031*** | 0.031*** |
| | (0.001) | (0.001) | (0.001) | (0.001) |
| Female | 0.108^{***} | 0.107^{***} | 0.036 | 0.036 |
| | (0.025) | (0.025) | (0.031) | (0.031) |
| Education | 0.351*** | 0.353*** | 0.313*** | 0.313*** |
| | (0.015) | (0.015) | (0.015) | (0.015) |
| Rural | 0.022 | 0.022 | 0.038 | 0.038 |
| | (0.028) | (0.028) | (0.037) | (0.037) |
| Gini t-1 | -0.133*** | -0.203*** | -0.107*** | -0.106** |
| | (0.025) | (0.031) | (0.028) | (0.037) |
| GDP Per Capita t-1 (log) | 0.547*** | 0.538*** | 0.637*** | 0.637*** |
| | (0.140) | (0.143) | (0.162) | (0.162) |
| Union Density | -0.005 | -0.008 | 0.000 | 0.000 |
| | (0.005) | (0.005) | (0.005) | (0.005) |
| Majoritarian | -0.431 | -0.430^{+} | -0.674 | -0.674^{+} |
| | (0.368) | (0.388) | (0.381) | (0.381) |
| Compulsory Voting | 0.677^{***} | 0.628^{**} | 0.745^{***} | 0.745^{***} |
| | (0.200) | (0.212) | (0.206) | (0.206) |
| ENP | -0.196*** | -0.218*** | -0.233*** | -0.233*** |
| | (0.030) | (0.031) | (0.038) | (0.039) |
| Margin | -0.011*** | -0.012*** | -0.018*** | -0.018*** |
| | (0.003) | (0.003) | (0.004) | (0.004) |
| Policy Polarization | -0.008 | -0.215*** | -0.007 | -0.006 |
| | (0.007) | (0.055) | (0.009) | (0.072) |
| Policy Polarization # Gini t-1 | | 0.008^{***} | | -0.000 |
| | | (0.002) | | (0.003) |
| Constant | -0.923 | 1.370 | -2.777 | -2.787 |
| | (1.709) | (1.857) | (1.959) | (2.091) |
| Variance | 0.448^{***} | 0.504^{***} | 0.450^{***} | 0.450^{***} |
| | (0.131) | (0.151) | (0.131) | (0.131) |
| Log Likelihood | -20867.82 | -20860.65 | -14204.86 | -14204.86 |
| AIC | 41803.65 | 41791.29 | 28477.72 | 28479.72 |
| BIC | 42101.97 | 42098.4 | 28774.15 | 28784.87 |
| Year Fixed-effects | YES | YES | YES | YES |
| Countries | 28 | 28 | 28 | 28 |
| N | 47,781 | 47,781 | 45,193 | 45,193 |

Note: beta coefficients from a mixed-effects logistic regression with clustered standard errors in parentheses. p < 0.1, p < 0.05, p < 0.01, p < 0.001.

A7 Turnout Income Gap (Rich/Poor) Dependent Variable Robustness Checks (Aggregate Level)

An aggregate analysis is undertaken utilizing the turnout income gap between the top and bottom quintiles as the dependent variable. A Hausman test (Green 2008) reveals that a random effects model is the best specification for this panel data. Model 25 from Appendix Table A7 shows that both *gini t-1* and *policy polarization* increase the turnout income gap. However, when interacted, higher levels of polarization and inequality are negatively associated with the turnout income gap (see Model 26). Due to the small sample size, the interaction is statistically significant at (p<0.1). Figure A7 displays the marginal effects of inequality on the income turnout gap. In substantive terms, it reveals that relatively low levels of policy polarization are associated with roughly a 2.5 percentage point increase in the turnout income gap. Whereas relatively high levels of policy polarization are associated with roughly a 0.5 percentage point decrease in the turnout income gap.

| | Model 25 | Model 26 |
|--------------------------------|---------------|--------------|
| Gini t-1 | 0.164 | 0.984 |
| | (0.395) | (0.633) |
| GDP Per Capita t-1 (log) | 1.740 | 2.094 |
| | (1.432) | (1.434) |
| Union Density | -0.028 | -0.040 |
| - | (0.067) | (0.067) |
| Majoritarian | 2.093 | 1.319 |
| - | (4.006) | (3.996) |
| Compulsory Voting | -10.220^{+} | -8.944 |
| | (5.919) | (5.914) |
| ENP | 0.376 | 0.563 |
| | (0.714) | (0.716) |
| Margin | -0.074 | -0.095 |
| - | (0.120) | (0.119) |
| Policy Polarization | 0.123 | 2.953^{+} |
| | (0.215) | (1.728) |
| Policy Polarization # Gini t-1 | | -0.101^{+} |
| | | (0.061) |
| Constant | -13.304 | -40.507 |
| | (18.914) | (24.943) |
| R^2 overall | 0.06 | 0.09 |
| Ν | 96 | 96 |

Table A7: Aggregate-Level Regression Predicting Turnout Income Gap for Top and Bottom Quintiles

Note: beta coefficients from a random effects regression with robust standard errors in parentheses. $p^{+} p < 0.1$, $p^{*} < 0.05$, $p^{**} p < 0.01$, $p^{**} p < 0.01$



Figure A7: Average Marginal Effects of Inequality by Polarization on Turnout Income Gap between Top and Bottom Quintiles with 95% C.I. (Model 26)

A8 Country Fixed Effects Clustered by Year Robustness Checks

A robustness test is also undertaken to examine whether within-country movements in inequality and polarization are correlated with the income gap in turnout. Estimations re-run with country fixed effects clustered by year, largely mirror the main Models 1–6 (see Tables A8a and A8b below).

| | Model 27 | Model 28 | Model 29 | Model 30 |
|---|-----------|-----------|---------------|---------------|
| Age | 0.028*** | 0.028*** | 0.028*** | 0.028^{***} |
| | (0.001) | (0.001) | (0.001) | (0.001) |
| Female | 0.084*** | 0.084*** | 0.084*** | 0.084*** |
| | (0.017) | (0.017) | (0.017) | (0.017) |
| Education | 0.305*** | 0.306*** | 0.306*** | 0.307*** |
| | (0.009) | (0.009) | (0.009) | (0.009) |
| Income | 0.214*** | 0.362*** | 0.214*** | 0.151 |
| | (0.007) | (0.055) | (0.007) | (0.136) |
| Rural | 0.034+ | 0.033+ | 0.034^{+} | 0.033+ |
| | (0.020) | (0.020) | (0.020) | (0.020) |
| Gini t-1 | -0.149*** | -0.137*** | -0.200*** | -0.206*** |
| | (0.019) | (0.020) | (0.024) | (0.027) |
| Income # Gini t-1 | × , | -0.005** | × , | 0.002 |
| | | (0.002) | | (0.005) |
| GDP Per Capita t-1 (log) | 0.432*** | 0.433*** | 0.401^{***} | 0.405*** |
| | (0.112) | (0.112) | (0.113) | (0.113) |
| Union Density | -0.008 | -0.008 | -0.012* | -0.011* |
| 5 | (0.004) | (0.004) | (0.005) | (0.005) |
| Majoritarian | -0.144 | -0.125 | -0.019 | -0.007 |
| 5 | (0.203) | (0.203) | (0.206) | (0.206) |
| Compulsory Voting | 0.915*** | 0.915*** | 0.971*** | 0.969*** |
| 1 7 8 | (0.081) | (0.081) | (0.082) | (0.082) |
| ENP | -0.214*** | -0.214*** | -0.230*** | -0.230*** |
| | (0.022) | (0.022) | (0.022) | (0.022) |
| Margin | -0.014*** | -0.014*** | -0.014*** | -0.014*** |
| | (0.002) | (0.002) | (0.002) | (0.002) |
| Policy Polarization | -0.006 | -0.006 | -0.152*** | -0.221*** |
| | (0.005) | (0.005) | (0.039) | (0.057) |
| Policy Polarization # Gini t-1 | | | 0.005^{***} | 0.008^{***} |
| | | | (0.001) | (0.002) |
| Policy Polarization # Income | | | | 0.026^{+} |
| | | | | (0.016) |
| Policy Polarization # Gini t-1 # Income | | | | -0.001^+ |
| | | | | (0.001) |
| Constant | -0.539 | -0.918 | 1.287 | 1.416 |
| | (1.372) | (1.379) | (1.461) | (1.502) |
| Variance | 0.126** | 0.126** | 0.129** | 0.129** |
| | (0.043) | (0.043) | (0.044) | (0.044) |
| Log Likelihood | -44971.4 | -44967.7 | -44964.27 | -44959.26 |
| AIC | 90022.8 | 90017.4 | 90010.54 | 90006.52 |
| BIC | 90410.24 | 90414.53 | 90407.66 | 90432.71 |
| Country Fixed-effects | YES | YES | YES | YES |
| Countries | 28 | 28 | 28 | 28 |

 Table A8a: Mixed-Effects Logistic Regression Predicting Propensity to Vote (with Country Fixed Effects)

| Ν | 118,890 | 118,890 | 118,890 | 118,890 | |
|--|--------------------|---------|---------|---------|--|
| Note: beta coefficients from a mixed-effects logistic regression with clustered standard errors in | | | | | |
| parentheses. $p < 0.1, p < 0.05, p < 0.01, p $ | **** $p < 0.001$. | | | | |

| | Model 31a | Model 32a | Model 31b | Model 32b |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------|-------------------|---------------|
| | Income Quintile 1 | | Income Quintile 5 | |
| Age | 0.021*** | 0.021*** | 0.031*** | 0.031*** |
| | (0.001) | (0.001) | (0.002) | (0.002) |
| Female | 0.094^{**} | 0.094^{**} | 0.036 | 0.036 |
| | (0.036) | (0.036) | (0.048) | (0.048) |
| Education | 0.341*** | 0.342^{***} | 0.307^{***} | 0.307^{***} |
| | (0.021) | (0.021) | (0.023) | (0.023) |
| Rural | 0.030 | 0.032 | 0.062 | 0.062 |
| | (0.040) | (0.040) | (0.059) | (0.059) |
| Gini t-1 | -0.159*** | -0.278*** | -0.101 | -0.177** |
| | (0.036) | (0.045) | (0.052) | (0.068) |
| GDP Per Capita t-1 (log) | 0.193 | 0.069 | 0.700^{**} | 0.668^{**} |
| | (0.168) | (0.170) | (0.229) | (0.231) |
| Union Density | -0.000 | -0.010 | 0.004 | -0.002 |
| | (0.009) | (0.009) | (0.012) | (0.013) |
| Majoritarian | -0.192 | 0.115 | -0.405 | -0.229 |
| | (0.376) | (0.382) | (0.541) | (0.551) |
| Compulsory Voting | 0.817^{***} | 0.924^{***} | 0.828^{***} | 0.904^{***} |
| | (0.151) | (0.157) | (0.210) | (0.216) |
| ENP | -0.212*** | -0.245*** | -0.311*** | -0.340*** |
| | (0.039) | (0.040) | (0.057) | (0.060) |
| Margin | -0.015*** | -0.017*** | -0.021*** | -0.023*** |
| | (0.004) | (0.004) | (0.006) | (0.006) |
| Policy Polarization | -0.018 | -0.364*** | -0.006 | -0.210 |
| | (0.010) | (0.078) | (0.014) | (0.116) |
| Policy Polarization # Gini t-1 | | 0.013*** | | 0.007 |
| | | (0.003) | | (0.004) |
| Constant | 2.833 | 7.561*** | -3.544 | -0.884 |
| | (1.988) | (2.250) | (2.866) | (3.250) |
| Variance | 0.071^{*} | 0.072^{*} | 0.147^{*} | 0.150^{*} |
| | (0.036) | (0.036) | (0.069) | (0.069) |
| Log Likelihood | -10508.62 | -10528.8 | -6195.521 | -6193.96 |
| AIC | 21095.24 | 21077 | 12469.04 | 12467.92 |
| BIC | 21409.01 | 21398.81 | 12779.88 | 12786.72 |
| Country Fixed-effects | YES | YES | YES | YES |
| Countries | 28 | 28 | 28 | 28 |
| N | 23,049 | 23,049 | 21,378 | 21,378 |

Table A8b: Mixed-Effects Logistic Regression Predicting Propensity to Vote for Top and Bottom Income Quintiles (with Country Fixed Effects) (Sub-Sample Models)

Note: beta coefficients from a mixed-effects logistic regression with clustered standard errors in parentheses. * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001.

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A9 Voting Weighted Robustness Checks

A common problem with surveys measuring turnout is that there is normally a large degree of vote over-reporting due to 'social desirability bias' and the difficulty in reaching low-income groups that tend to be transient or lack fixed addresses. However, research has shown that models at the individual level relying on either reported or validated voting produce very similar estimates (Clarke et al. 2004). Moreover, Solt (2010: 291) has shown that over-reporting is positively correlated with income inequality, which should "obscure rather than magnify any negative effect of income inequality on electoral participation." Nevertheless, to account for turnout over-reporting, weights are added for voting in each of the models. The *gini t-1* effect is not as strong but most importantly, is still statistically significant when interacted with *policy polarization* overall and for income quintile 1. In the sub-sample we again see that both inequality and the interaction is only significant for the bottom quintile. Thus, the main results largely hold (see Tables A9a and A9b).

| | Model 33 | Model 34 | Model 35 | Model 36 |
|---|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Age | 0.028*** | 0.028^{***} | 0.028^{***} | 0.028^{***} |
| | (0.002) | (0.002) | (0.002) | (0.002) |
| Female | 0.061 | 0.061 | 0.060 | 0.061 |
| | (0.046) | (0.045) | (0.046) | (0.046) |
| Education | 0.279^{***} | 0.281*** | 0.281^{***} | 0.282^{***} |
| | (0.028) | (0.028) | (0.028) | (0.028) |
| Income | 0.224*** | 0.432*** | 0.225^{***} | 0.246 |
| | (0.017) | (0.124) | (0.017) | (0.271) |
| Rural | 0.027 | 0.026 | 0.028 | 0.027 |
| | (0.045) | (0.046) | (0.046) | (0.046) |
| Gini t-1 | -0.088^{+} | -0.070 | -0.152** | -0.151** |
| | (0.050) | (0.046) | (0.054) | (0.052) |
| Income # Gini t-1 | | -0.007^{+} | | -0.001 |
| | | (0.004) | | (0.009) |
| GDP Per Capita t-1 (log) | 0.175 | 0.178 | 0.157 | 0.162 |
| | (0.287) | (0.288) | (0.306) | (0.307) |
| Union Density | 0.002 | 0.002 | -0.002 | -0.002 |
| | (0.008) | (0.008) | (0.007) | (0.007) |
| Majoritarian | -0.216 | -0.211 | -0.209 | -0.205 |
| | (0.293) | (0.294) | (0.290) | (0.292) |
| Compulsory Voting | 0.795*** | 0.792*** | 0.751*** | 0.748*** |
| | (0.133) | (0.133) | (0.127) | (0.128) |
| ENP | -0.094 | -0.094 | -0.114+ | -0.113+ |
| | (0.062) | (0.062) | (0.067) | (0.066) |
| Margin | 0.001 | 0.001 | 0.001 | 0.001 |
| | (0.008) | (0.008) | (0.007) | (0.007) |
| Policy Polarization | -0.002 | -0.002 | -0.197* | -0.258+ |
| | (0.014) | (0.014) | (0.096) | (0.132) |
| Policy Polarization # Gini t-1 | | | 0.007^{*} | 0.009^{+} |
| | | | (0.004) | (0.005) |
| Policy Polarization # Income | | | | 0.023 |
| - | | | | (0.033) |
| Policy Polarization # Gini t-1 # Income | | | | -0.001 |
| | | | | (0.001) |

Table A9a: Mixed-Effects Logistic Regression Predicting Propensity to Vote (with Voting Weights)
| Constant | -0.258 | -0.813 | 1.954 | 1.863 |
|--------------------|-----------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| | (3.583) | (3.514) | (3.846) | (3.648) |
| Variance | 0.165* | 0.168^{*} | 0.205^{*} | 0.207^{*} |
| | (0.071) | (0.073) | (0.087) | (0.088) |
| Log Likelihood | -67892.82 | -67881.6 | -67872.03 | -67859.12 |
| AIC | 135839.6 | 135819.2 | 135798.1 | 135772.2 |
| BIC | 136101.2 | 136090.4 | 136059.6 | 136033.8 |
| Year Fixed-effects | YES | YES | YES | YES |
| Countries | 28 | 28 | 28 | 28 |
| N | 118,890 | 118,890 | 118,890 | 118,890 |

Note: beta coefficients from a mixed-effects logistic regression with clustered standard errors in parentheses. p < 0.1, p < 0.05, p < 0.01, p < 0.01, p < 0.001

| Table A9b: Mixed-Effects Logistic Regression Predicting Propensity to Vote for | r Top | and |
|--|-------|-----|
| Bottom Income Quintiles (with Voting Weights) (Sub-Sample Models) |) | |

| | Model 37a | Model 38a | Model 37b | Model 38b |
|--------------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| | Income | Quintile 1 | Income (| Quintile 5 |
| Age | 0.021*** | 0.021*** | 0.031*** | 0.031*** |
| | (0.002) | (0.002) | (0.003) | (0.003) |
| Female | 0.071 | 0.071 | 0.020 | 0.021 |
| | (0.075) | (0.075) | (0.078) | (0.078) |
| Education | 0.299^{***} | 0.303*** | 0.282^{***} | 0.283*** |
| | (0.037) | (0.038) | (0.021) | (0.021) |
| Rural | 0.040 | 0.045 | 0.062 | 0.063 |
| | (0.060) | (0.062) | (0.075) | (0.075) |
| Gini t-1 | -0.067^{*} | -0.169*** | -0.047 | -0.101 |
| | (0.032) | (0.042) | (0.038) | (0.067) |
| GDP Per Capita t-1 (log) | 0.173 | 0.136 | 0.319 | 0.322 |
| | (0.184) | (0.226) | (0.254) | (0.264) |
| Union Density | 0.005 | 0.003 | 0.010 | 0.010 |
| | (0.006) | (0.006) | (0.007) | (0.007) |
| Majoritarian | -0.225 | -0.174 | -0.464 | -0.458 |
| | (0.286) | (0.286) | (0.316) | (0.314) |
| Compulsory Voting | 0.768^{***} | 0.672^{***} | 0.852*** | 0.797^{***} |
| | (0.138) | (0.124) | (0.186) | (0.189) |
| ENP | -0.094 | -0.124 | -0.147* | -0.171* |
| | (0.068) | (0.073) | (0.065) | (0.073) |
| Margin | -0.001 | -0.002 | -0.003 | -0.004 |
| | (0.011) | (0.009) | (0.010) | (0.009) |
| Policy Polarization | -0.004 | -0.344*** | -0.004 | -0.194 |
| | (0.016) | (0.084) | (0.023) | (0.145) |
| Policy Polarization # Gini t-1 | | 0.012^{***} | | 0.007 |
| | | (0.003) | | (0.006) |
| Constant | -0.386 | 3.145 | -2.128 | -0.398 |
| | (2.104) | (2.790) | (2.633) | (3.660) |
| Variance | 0.181*** | 0.217^{**} | 0.156* | 0.172^{*} |
| | (0.044) | (0.066) | (0.064) | (0.077) |
| Log Likelihood | -15855.8 | -15839.56 | -9542.562 | -9539.902 |
| AIČ | 31765.6 | 31733.13 | 19139.12 | 19133.8 |
| BIC | 31982.83 | 31950.35 | 19354.32 | 19349 |
| Year Fixed-effects | YES | YES | YES | YES |
| Countries | 28 | 28 | 28 | 28 |

| N | 23,049 | 23,049 | 21,378 | 21,378 | |
|--|--------|--------|--------|--------|--|
| Note: beta coefficients from a mixed-effects logistic regression with clustered standard errors in | | | | | |

Note: beta coefficients from a mixed-effects logistic regression with clustered standard errors in parentheses. * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001

A10 Chapel Hill Election Survey Data Robustness Checks

An external validity of the *policy polarization* measure derived from the CMP is also performed using an equivalent measure of redistribution from the Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES). The measure is available for European countries from 2002–2014 and overlaps with 36 CSES elections and 18 countries in this study. The CHES *policy polarization* variable correlates (r=0.36) with the CMP economic policy variable and robustness checks are performed for each of the models. The main results display a similar pattern despite the nearly two-third reduced sample size (see Tables A10a and A10b).

| | Model 39 | Model 40 | Model 41 | Model 42 |
|---|-----------|-------------|-----------|-------------|
| Age | 0.026*** | 0.026*** | 0.026*** | 0.026*** |
| | (0.001) | (0.001) | (0.001) | (0.001) |
| Female | 0.014 | 0.015 | 0.014 | 0.015 |
| | (0.029) | (0.029) | (0.029) | (0.029) |
| Education | 0.311*** | 0.313*** | 0.308*** | 0.310*** |
| | (0.017) | (0.017) | (0.017) | (0.017) |
| Income | 0.241*** | 0.395*** | 0.242*** | 0.279 |
| | (0.012) | (0.103) | (0.012) | (0.475) |
| Rural | 0.157*** | 0.156*** | 0.159*** | 0.157*** |
| | (0.035) | (0.035) | (0.035) | (0.035) |
| Gini t-1 | -0.228*** | -0.215*** | -0.701*** | -0.694*** |
| | (0.054) | (0.055) | (0.160) | (0.166) |
| Income # Gini t-1 | · · · · | -0.006 | | -0.002 |
| | | (0.004) | | (0.017) |
| GDP Per Capita t-1 (log) | 1.336*** | 1.341*** | 1.395*** | 1.397*** |
| | (0.264) | (0.265) | (0.269) | (0.270) |
| Union Density | -0.008 | -0.008 | -0.005 | -0.005 |
| | (0.008) | (0.008) | (0.008) | (0.008) |
| ENP | -0.188** | -0.190** | -0.006 | -0.009 |
| | (0.059) | (0.059) | (0.085) | (0.085) |
| Margin | -0.011+ | -0.011+ | 0.006 | 0.006 |
| | (0.006) | (0.006) | (0.009) | (0.009) |
| Policy Polarization | -0.216 | -0.219 | -8.209** | -8.308** |
| | (0.151) | (0.151) | (2.499) | (2.563) |
| Policy Polarization # Gini t-1 | | | 0.293** | 0.296** |
| | | | (0.092) | (0.094) |
| Policy Polarization # Income | | | | 0.053 |
| | | | | (0.236) |
| Policy Polarization # Gini t-1 # Income | | | | -0.002 |
| | | | | (0.009) |
| Constant | -5.278 | -5.698 | 5.586 | 5.420 |
| | (3.121) | (3.139) | (4.545) | (4.702) |
| Variance | 0.463* | 0.466^{*} | 0.484^* | 0.482^{*} |
| | (0.186) | (0.188) | (0.205) | (0.204) |
| Log Likelihood | -15832.06 | -15830.92 | -15825.66 | -15824.46 |
| AIC | 31714.11 | 31713.83 | 31703.32 | 31706.91 |
| BIC | 31930.4 | 31938.77 | 31928.25 | 31957.8 |
| Year Fixed-effects | YES | YES | YES | YES |
| Countries | 18 | 18 | 18 | 18 |
| N | 42.249 | 42.249 | 42.249 | 42.249 |

Table A10a: Mixed-Effects Logistic Regression Predicting Propensity to Vote (with CHES Manifesto Data)

Note: beta coefficients from a mixed-effects logistic regression with clustered standard errors in parentheses. p < 0.1, p < 0.05, p < 0.01, p < 0.01, p < 0.001

| | Model 43a | Model 44a | Model 43b | Model 44b |
|--------------------------------|--------------|---------------|-----------|-------------|
| | Income (| Quintile 1 | Income Q | Quintile 5 |
| Age | 0.021*** | 0.021*** | 0.030*** | 0.030*** |
| | (0.002) | (0.002) | (0.003) | (0.003) |
| Female | 0.006 | 0.005 | 0.075 | 0.073 |
| | (0.060) | (0.060) | (0.087) | (0.087) |
| Education | 0.391*** | 0.389^{***} | 0.266*** | 0.265*** |
| | (0.039) | (0.039) | (0.042) | (0.042) |
| Rural | 0.210^{**} | 0.209^{**} | 0.036 | 0.037 |
| | (0.071) | (0.071) | (0.107) | (0.107) |
| Gini t-1 | -0.159** | -0.512** | -0.104+ | -0.300 |
| | (0.057) | (0.174) | (0.053) | (0.187) |
| GDP Per Capita t-1 (log) | 1.166*** | 1.188*** | 0.561+ | 0.592* |
| | (0.316) | (0.296) | (0.304) | (0.293) |
| Union Density | -0.010 | -0.008 | 0.008 | 0.009 |
| | (0.009) | (0.009) | (0.009) | (0.009) |
| ENP | -0.173+ | -0.121 | -0.127 | -0.120 |
| | (0.094) | (0.097) | (0.109) | (0.108) |
| Margin | -0.023* | -0.013 | -0.020 | -0.017 |
| | (0.011) | (0.012) | (0.016) | (0.016) |
| Policy Polarization | -0.194 | -5.662* | 0.191 | -2.704 |
| | (0.262) | (2.556) | (0.283) | (2.675) |
| Policy Polarization # Gini t-1 | | 0.200^{*} | | 0.105 |
| | | (0.092) | | (0.096) |
| Constant | -5.250 | 3.586 | -1.253 | 3.692 |
| | (3.414) | (5.099) | (3.364) | (5.576) |
| Variance | 0.379* | 0.306^{*} | 0.256* | 0.228^{*} |
| | (0.163) | (0.135) | (0.116) | (0.112) |
| Log Likelihood | -3861.311 | -3859.044 | -1926.481 | -1925.916 |
| AIČ | 7770.622 | 7768.087 | 3900.962 | 3901.833 |
| BIC | 7939.365 | 7943.862 | 4065.188 | 4072.902 |
| Year Fixed-effects | YES | YES | YES | YES |
| Countries | 18 | 18 | 18 | 18 |
| Ν | 8,358 | 8,358 | 6,924 | 6,924 |

| Table A10b: Mixed-Effects Logistic Regression Predicting Propensity to Vote for Top and | nd |
|---|----|
| Bottom Income Quintiles (with CHES Manifesto Data) (Sub-Sample Models) | |

Note: beta coefficients from a mixed-effects logistic regression with clustered standard errors in parentheses. p < 0.1, p < 0.05, p < 0.01, p < 0.001

A11 Income Quintiles 2–4 Results (From Models 5–6)

Table A11 reports the sub-sample results for the middle-income quintiles (2–4) from the main Models 5 and 6. Income inequality has a negative and statistically significant effect for each quintile but when interacted with policy polarization the effects are much smaller compared to the lowest quintile and the interaction is not significant for any of the middle quintiles.

| | Model 5c | Model 6c | Model 5d | Model 6d | Model 5e | Model 6e |
|--------------------------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| | Income (| Quintile 2 | Income (| Quintile 3 | Income (| Quintile 4 |
| Age | 0.030*** | 0.030*** | 0.034*** | 0.034*** | 0.032*** | 0.032*** |
| | (0.001) | (0.001) | (0.001) | (0.001) | (0.001) | (0.001) |
| Female | 0.069^{+} | 0.069^{+} | 0.107^{**} | 0.107^{**} | 0.026 | 0.026 |
| | (0.036) | (0.036) | (0.036) | (0.036) | (0.041) | (0.041) |
| Education | 0.329*** | 0.330*** | 0.276*** | 0.277^{***} | 0.295*** | 0.294*** |
| | (0.021) | (0.021) | (0.020) | (0.020) | (0.022) | (0.022) |
| Rural | 0.017 | 0.016 | 0.056 | 0.056 | 0.030 | 0.030 |
| | (0.040) | (0.040) | (0.042) | (0.042) | (0.049) | (0.049) |
| Gini t-1 | -0.081** | -0.108** | -0.095** | -0.134** | -0.101** | -0.080^{+} |
| | (0.029) | (0.038) | (0.031) | (0.041) | (0.032) | (0.042) |
| GDP Per Capita t-1 (log) | 0.455** | 0.452^{**} | 0.564^{**} | 0.566^{**} | 0.464^{*} | 0.466^{**} |
| | (0.169) | (0.170) | (0.176) | (0.178) | (0.180) | (0.180) |
| Union Density | 0.004 | 0.003 | -0.004 | -0.005 | 0.002 | 0.003 |
| | (0.006) | (0.006) | (0.006) | (0.006) | (0.006) | (0.006) |
| Majoritarian | -0.403 | -0.399 | -0.523 | -0.512 | -0.424 | -0.429 |
| | (0.345) | (0.349) | (0.363) | (0.369) | (0.369) | (0.368) |
| Compulsory Voting | 0.606^{***} | 0.586^{**} | 0.663*** | 0.636** | 0.745*** | 0.762^{***} |
| | (0.183) | (0.185) | (0.195) | (0.199) | (0.199) | (0.200) |
| ENP | -0.210*** | -0.221*** | -0.171*** | -0.185*** | -0.178*** | -0.170*** |
| | (0.041) | (0.043) | (0.043) | (0.044) | (0.045) | (0.047) |
| Margin | -0.007^{+} | -0.008^{+} | -0.014** | -0.015*** | -0.017** | -0.017** |
| | (0.004) | (0.004) | (0.004) | (0.004) | (0.005) | (0.005) |
| Policy Polarization | -0.008 | -0.094 | -0.015 | -0.139+ | -0.002 | 0.066 |
| | (0.010) | (0.078) | (0.010) | (0.083) | (0.011) | (0.093) |
| Policy Polarization # Gini t-1 | | 0.003 | | 0.004 | | -0.002 |
| | | (0.003) | | (0.003) | | (0.003) |
| Constant | -0.949 | -0.058 | -2.813 | -1.612 | -1.683 | -2.371 |
| | (2.057) | (2.221) | (2.124) | (2.292) | (2.188) | (2.374) |
| Variance | 0.348^{**} | 0.357^{**} | 0.388^{**} | 0.403^{**} | 0.378^{***} | 0.376*** |
| | (0.107) | (0.111) | (0.121) | (0.128) | (0.112) | (0.111) |
| Log Likelihood | -10256.16 | -10255.53 | -9950.562 | -9949.399 | -7978.275 | -7978.006 |
| AIC | 20580.33 | 20581.06 | 19969.12 | 19968.8 | 16024.55 | 16026.01 |
| BIC | 20856.27 | 20865.12 | 20246.65 | 20254.49 | 16299.2 | 16308.74 |
| Year Fixed-effects | YES | YES | YES | YES | YES | YES |
| Countries | 28 | 28 | 28 | 28 | 28 | 28 |
| N | 24,732 | 24,732 | 25,916 | 25,916 | 23,815 | 23,815 |

| Table A11: Mixed-Effects Logistic Regression Predicting Propensity to Vote for Middle |
|---|
| Income Quintiles 2–4 |

Note: beta coefficients from a mixed-effects logistic regression with clustered standard errors in parentheses. p < 0.1, p < 0.05, p < 0.01, p < 0.01, p < 0.001

A12 Income Gap in Turnout Time Trend

To estimate the income gap time trend annually, a local polynomial smoothing regression is performed. This method is utilized due to the uneven election distribution points by year. As the annual number of elections varies from 1 to 9 in the sample, with a few years only having 1 or 2 elections. Figure A13 shows that the income gap in turnout increases over time, albeit somewhat slightly from roughly 10.4 to 11.8 percentage points between 1996 and 2016.





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Chapter 5 Appendix

The Rightward Shift and Electoral Decline of Social Democratic Parties Under Increasing Inequality

Appendix

- A1a List of Countries and Elections (Aggregate Level)
- A1b List of Countries and Elections (Individual Level)
- A2 List of Social Democratic Parties
- A3 Descriptive Statistics
- A4 Coding Policy Variables
- A5 Mainstream Right Economic Position Variable Robustness Check
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- A7a Excluding Decade Fixed Effects Robustness Check
- A7b Aggregate-level Excluding Any Fixed Effects Robustness Check
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- A8 Alternative Inequality Measure (Palma Ratio) Robustness Check
- A9 Country Outliers Robustness Check
- A10 Year Fixed Effects Clustered by Country Robustness Check
- A11 Redistribution Preferences
- A12 Income Inequality Disaggregated by Country Over Time
- A13 Mean Social Democrat Party Positions Over Time

| Country | Start and End Date | Number of Elections |
|----------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Australia | 1966 - 2016 | 20 |
| Austria | 1966 – 2019 | 17 |
| Belgium | 1965 - 2014 | 16 |
| Canada | 1965 - 2015 | 16 |
| Denmark | 1966 – 2019 | 20 |
| Finland | 1966 – 2019 | 15 |
| France | 1967 - 2017 | 13 |
| Germany | 1965 - 2017 | 15 |
| Greece | 1974 - 2015 | 17 |
| Ireland | 1965 - 2016 | 15 |
| Israel | 1965 - 2015 | 15 |
| Italy | 1968 - 2018 | 14 |
| Luxembourg | 1968 – 2013 | 10 |
| Netherlands | 1967 - 2017 | 16 |
| New Zealand | 1966 – 2017 | 18 |
| Norway | 1965 - 2017 | 14 |
| Portugal | 1975 - 2015 | 15 |
| Spain | 1977 - 2019 | 14 |
| Sweden | 1968 – 2018 | 16 |
| Switzerland | 1967 – 2015 | 13 |
| United Kingdom | 1966 – 2017 | 14 |
| United States | 1968 – 2016 | 13 |

A1a List of Countries and Elections (Aggregate Level)

| Country | Elections | Number of Elections |
|----------------|------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Australia | 1996, 2004, 2007, 2013 | 4 |
| Austria | 2008, 2013, 2017 | 3 |
| Belgium | 1999, 2003 | 2 |
| Canada | 1997, 2004, 2008, 2011, 2015 | 5 |
| Denmark | 1998, 2001, 2007 | 3 |
| Finland | 2003, 2007, 2011, 2015 | 4 |
| France | 2002, 2007, 2012, 2017 | 4 |
| Germany | 1998, 2002, 2005, 2009, 2013, 2017 | 6 |
| Greece | 2009, 2012, 2015, 2015 | 4 |
| Ireland | 2002, 2007, 2011, 2016 | 4 |
| Israel | 1996, 2003, 2006, 2013 | 4 |
| Italy | 2006, 2018 | 2 |
| Netherlands | 1998, 2002, 2006, 2010 | 4 |
| New Zealand | 1996, 2002, 2008, 2011, 2014, 2017 | 6 |
| Norway | 1997, 2001, 2005, 2009, 2013, 2017 | 6 |
| Portugal | 2002, 2005, 2009, 2015 | 4 |
| Spain | 1996, 2000, 2004, 2008 | 4 |
| Sweden | 1998, 2002, 2006, 2014 | 4 |
| Switzerland | 1999, 2003, 2007, 2011 | 4 |
| United Kingdom | 1997, 2005, 2015 | 3 |
| United States | 1996, 2004, 2008, 2012, 2016 | 5 |

A1b List of Countries and Elections (Individual Level)

| Country | Social Democrat Party/Bloc | Abbreviation |
|----------------|--|----------------|
| Australia | Australian Labor Party | ALP |
| Austria | Austrian Social Democratic Party | SPÖ |
| Belgium | Belgian Socialist Party > Flemish/Francophone Socialist Party | BSP > sp.a/PS |
| Canada | New Democratic Party | NDP |
| Denmark | Social Democratic Party | SD |
| Finland | Finnish Social Democrats | SSDP |
| France | Socialist Party | PS |
| Germany | Social Democratic Party of Germany | SPD |
| Greece | Panhellenic Socialist Movement | PASOK |
| Ireland | Labour Party | Labour |
| Israel | Israeli Labor Party | HaAvoda |
| Italy | Italian Communist Party > Democrats of the Left > Democratic Party | PCI > PDS > PD |
| Luxembourg | Luxembourg Socialist Workers' Party | LSAP |
| Netherlands | Labour Party | PvdA |
| New Zealand | New Zealand Labour Party | Labour |
| Norway | Norwegian Labour Party | DnA |
| Portugal | Socialist Party | PS |
| Spain | Spanish Socialist Workers' Party | PSOE |
| Sweden | Social Democratic Labour Party | SAP |
| Switzerland | Social Democratic Party of Switzerland | SPS/PSS |
| United Kingdom | Labour Party | Labour |
| United States | Democratic Party | Democrats |

A2 List of Social Democratic Parties

A3 Descriptive Statistics

| Variable | Observations | Mean | Std. Dev. | Min. | Max. |
|-------------------------------------|--------------|-----------|-----------|------------|----------|
| SD Voted | 123,123 | 0.3001876 | 0.4583413 | 0 | 1 |
| Age | 156,720 | 48.91115 | 17.31708 | 16 | 115 |
| Female | 157,805 | 0.483318 | 0.4997232 | 0 | 1 |
| Education | 154,500 | 2.344939 | 1.171671 | 0 | 4 |
| Income | 131,656 | 2.949679 | 1.38637 | 1 | 5 |
| Rural | 125,406 | 0.2340717 | 0.4234189 | 0 | 1 |
| Union | 140,502 | 0.2357974 | 0.4244976 | 0 | 1 |
| Political Ideology | 133,675 | 5.191734 | 2.326184 | 0 | 10 |
| SD Vote | 336 | 31.02506 | 11.26148 | 4.573 | 56.668 |
| SD Economic Position | 335 | -1.306501 | 3.274177 | -10.51697 | 9.319901 |
| SD Culture Position | 336 | -4.451149 | 3.730954 | -14.59629 | 5.21253 |
| Gini t-1 | 288 | 29.05144 | 4.111755 | 20.27872 | 38.15172 |
| Government Spending t-1 | 304 | 44.07261 | 8.074082 | 23.12152 | 68.54779 |
| GDP Growth t-1 | 325 | 2.679351 | 2.764199 | -9.169651 | 25.48517 |
| Unemployment t-1 | 326 | 6.356359 | 4.342868 | 0 | 26.5 |
| Union Density | 330 | 40.71785 | 19.70553 | 8.5 | 97.17 |
| Turnout | 336 | 77.84857 | 12.47364 | 42.2 | 95.8 |
| SD Vote e-1 | 332 | 31.73524 | 11.21227 | 4.573 | 57.71 |
| Incumbent | 336 | 0.3541667 | 0.4789733 | 0 | 1 |
| Disproportionality | 336 | 5.52204 | 4.791182 | 0.41833 | 24.61331 |
| Left Competitors e-1 (log) | 333 | 1.584439 | 1.127834 | -0.8915981 | 3.710641 |
| Radical Right Competitors e-1 (log) | 333 | 0.7828231 | 1.11647 | -0.0833816 | 3.363842 |
| Income Quintile 1 | 131,656 | 0.1995048 | 0.3996296 | 0 | 1 |
| Pro-Redistribution | 42,556 | 0.6245888 | 0.4842346 | 0 | 1 |
| CR Economic Position | 329 | 3.644283 | 3.452184 | -8.381349 | 13.18232 |
| Globalization t-1 | 301 | 75.55262 | 9.698405 | 50.02024 | 91.01247 |
| Palma Ratio t-1 | 257 | 2.270377 | 0.7478547 | 1.008223 | 5.525486 |

A4 Coding Policy Variables

Economic and socio-cultural policy positions were constructed using the state-market (economic) and (progressive-conservative) society dimensions, which comprise the following components from MARPOR (Volkens et al. 2020):

| Economic (State-Market) Dimension | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------|------------------------------------|--|
| | Left-Wing | Right-Wing | | |
| per403 | Market Regulation | per401 | Free Market Economy | |
| per404 | Economic Planning | per402 | Incentives: Positive | |
| per405 | Corporatism/Mixed Economy | per407 | Protectionism: Negative | |
| per406 | Protectionism: Positive | per414 | Economic Orthodoxy | |
| per409 | Keynesian Demand Management | per505 | Welfare State Limitation | |
| per412 | Controlled Economy | | | |
| per413 | Nationalisation | | | |
| per415 | Marxist Analysis | | | |
| per416 | Anti-Growth Economy: Positive | | | |
| per504 | Welfare State Expansion | | | |
| | | | | |
| | Society (Progressive- | Conservat | ive) Dimension | |
| | Left-Wing | | Right-Wing | |
| per105 | Military: Negative | per104 | Military: Positive | |
| per106 | Peace | per109 | Internationalism: Negative | |
| per107 | Internationalism: Positive | per110 | European Community/Union: Negative | |
| per108 | European Community/Union: Positive | per601 | National Way of Life: Positive | |
| per501 | Environmental Protection | per603 | Traditional Morality: Positive | |
| per503 | Equality: Positive | per605 | Law and Order: Positive | |
| per602 | National Way of Life: Negative | per608 | Multiculturalism: Negative | |
| per604 | Traditional Morality: Negative | | | |
| per607 | Multiculturalism: Positive | | | |
| per705 | Underprivileged Minority Groups | | | |

A5 Mainstream Right Economic Position Variable Robustness Check

Following Abou-Chadi and Wagner (2019) and Benedetto et al. (2020), the economic position of the mainstream right party is added to each of the models at the aggregate-level, as these parties are typically the strongest competitors to attaining office. The *CR economic position* is taken from the most leftist positioned mainstream right party in an election, as some party systems have multiple mainstream center-right parties. We see that the more economically right-wing the closest mainstream competitor is to the mainstream center-left party, the greater vote share Social Democrats receive. However, the variable is not statistically significant, and the main results all hold (see Table A5).

| | Model 4 | Model 5 | Model 6 |
|--|--------------|----------|----------|
| SD Economic Position | 0.059 | 2.199* | -0.288 |
| | (0.171) | (0.821) | (0.259) |
| SD Culture Position | -0.009 | 0.011 | -0.103 |
| | (0.146) | (0.140) | (0.156) |
| Gini t-1 | 0.195 | 0.107 | 0.231 |
| | (0.253) | (0.241) | (0.268) |
| SD Economic Position # Gini t-1 | | -0.075* | |
| | | (0.029) | |
| SD Economic Position # SD Culture Position | | | -0.075* |
| | | | (0.031) |
| Government Spending t-1 | 0.135 | 0.116 | 0.133 |
| | (0.141) | (0.134) | (0.142) |
| GDP Growth t-1 | -0.016 | -0.036 | -0.046 |
| | (0.168) | (0.158) | (0.155) |
| Unemployment t-1 | -0.660^{*} | -0.626** | -0.642** |
| | (0.240) | (0.217) | (0.224) |
| Union Density | -0.078 | -0.109 | -0.090 |
| | (0.092) | (0.090) | (0.090) |
| Turnout | 0.081 | 0.105 | 0.120 |
| | (0.091) | (0.091) | (0.089) |
| SD Vote e-1 | 0.392*** | 0.392*** | 0.383*** |
| | (0.079) | (0.077) | (0.075) |
| Incumbent | -0.674 | -0.718 | -0.620 |
| | (0.806) | (0.824) | (0.755) |
| Disproportionality | -0.262* | -0.216 | -0.246 |
| | (0.110) | (0.112) | (0.119) |
| Left Competitors e-1 | -0.983 | -1.061 | -0.959 |
| | (0.801) | (0.807) | (0.821) |
| Radical Right Competitors e-1 | 0.393 | 0.492 | 0.315 |
| | (0.571) | (0.537) | (0.560) |
| CR Economic Position | 0.158 | 0.147 | 0.172 |
| | (0.095) | (0.099) | (0.098) |
| Constant | 6.908 | 9.371 | 3.208 |
| | (12.501) | (11.916) | (13.366) |
| R^2 within | 0.50 | 0.51 | 0.51 |
| R^2 adjusted | 0.80 | 0.80 | 0.80 |
| N | 274 | 274 | 274 |

 Table A5: Aggregate-Level Regression Results Predicting Social Democratic Vote (with CR

 Economic Position

Note: beta coefficients from a OLS regression with standard errors in parentheses.

A6 Globalization Index Variable Robustness Check

I control for the level of globalization, as it has been linked to the decline of Social Democrats working-class base (Gingrich 2017; Häusermann et al. 2013). A lagged *globalization* index is obtained from the KOF database, which combines 43 relevant socioeconomic and political variables (Dreher 2006; Gygli et al. 2019). It was originally left out of the estimations due to its measurement not being available until the 1970s. When added at the aggregate level, Model 7 shows a negative but non-significant effect, and the main results hold (see Table A6).

| | Model 7 | Model 8 | Model 9 |
|--|--------------|----------|----------|
| SD Economic Position | 0.072 | 2.225** | -0.253 |
| | (0.191) | (0.709) | (0.278) |
| SD Culture Position | -0.032 | -0.002 | -0.117 |
| | (0.141) | (0.137) | (0.145) |
| Gini t-1 | 0.024 | -0.068 | 0.023 |
| | (0.287) | (0.271) | (0.288) |
| SD Economic Position # Gini t-1 | | -0.075** | |
| | | (0.026) | |
| SD Economic Position # SD Culture Position | | | -0.073* |
| | | | (0.032) |
| Government Spending t-1 | 0.259 | 0.240 | 0.246 |
| | (0.128) | (0.119) | (0.121) |
| GDP Growth t-1 | 0.033 | 0.011 | -0.009 |
| | (0.153) | (0.141) | (0.137) |
| Unemployment t-1 | -0.689* | -0.638** | -0.670** |
| | (0.246) | (0.223) | (0.234) |
| Union Density | -0.103 | -0.133 | -0.112 |
| - | (0.087) | (0.086) | (0.086) |
| Turnout | 0.058 | 0.083 | 0.099 |
| | (0.118) | (0.119) | (0.112) |
| SD Vote e-1 | 0.330*** | 0.344*** | 0.323*** |
| | (0.062) | (0.057) | (0.061) |
| Incumbent | -0.326 | -0.377 | -0.284 |
| | (0.753) | (0.756) | (0.705) |
| Disproportionality | -0.278^{*} | -0.236* | -0.268* |
| | (0.103) | (0.106) | (0.109) |
| Left Competitors e-1 | -0.754 | -0.725 | -0.684 |
| | (0.839) | (0.840) | (0.879) |
| Radical Right Competitors e-1 | -0.138 | -0.032 | -0.216 |
| | (0.721) | (0.677) | (0.740) |
| Globalization t-1 | -0.144 | -0.156 | -0.126 |
| | (0.148) | (0.148) | (0.147) |
| Constant | 23.923 | 26.639 | 20.039 |
| | (16.986) | (15.912) | (17.592) |
| R^2 within | 0.48 | 0.49 | 0.49 |
| R^2 adjusted | 0.80 | 0.80 | 0.80 |
| Ν | 262 | 262 | 262 |

 Table A6: Aggregate-Level Regression Results Predicting Social Democratic Vote (with Globalization)

Note: beta coefficients from a OLS regression with standard errors in parentheses.

A7a Excluding Decade Fixed Effects Robustness Check

Three alternative model specifications are undertaken at the aggregate-level. Including a lagged dependent variable (*SD vote e-1*) with fixed effects can potentially introduce bias and inconsistent estimations (Nickell 1981). Therefore, the aggregate-level estimations are re-run excluding: 1) decade fixed effects; 2) all fixed effects; 3) the lagged dependent variable. The main results hold for all three specifications, except the policy interaction does not retain statistical significance without the inclusion of any fixed effects. However, it still displays a similar negative effect (see Tables A7a–A7c).

| | Model 10 | Model 11 | Model 12 |
|--|----------|-------------|-------------|
| SD Economic Position | 0.228 | 2.436^{*} | -0.087 |
| | (0.150) | (0.888) | (0.237) |
| SD Culture Position | -0.095 | -0.067 | -0.185 |
| | (0.137) | (0.135) | (0.153) |
| Gini t-1 | -0.062 | -0.163 | -0.027 |
| | (0.281) | (0.258) | (0.291) |
| SD Economic Position # Gini t-1 | | -0.077* | |
| | | (0.031) | |
| SD Economic Position # SD Culture Position | | . , | -0.072* |
| | | | (0.034) |
| Government Spending t-1 | 0.064 | 0.035 | 0.060 |
| | (0.132) | (0.119) | (0.129) |
| GDP Growth t-1 | -0.044 | -0.074 | -0.073 |
| | (0.184) | (0.169) | (0.177) |
| Unemployment t-1 | -0.543 | -0.506* | -0.533* |
| | (0.263) | (0.234) | (0.247) |
| Union Density | -0.022 | -0.050 | -0.037 |
| | (0.082) | (0.079) | (0.082) |
| Turnout | 0.153 | 0.182^{*} | 0.189^{*} |
| | (0.088) | (0.085) | (0.083) |
| SD Vote e-1 | 0.434*** | 0.445*** | 0.425*** |
| | (0.071) | (0.066) | (0.060) |
| Incumbent | -0.847 | -0.925 | -0.778 |
| | (0.851) | (0.867) | (0.790) |
| Disproportionality | -0.325** | -0.286** | -0.309** |
| | (0.091) | (0.096) | (0.100) |
| Left Competitors e-1 | -1.364 | -1.390 | -1.336 |
| | (0.751) | (0.759) | (0.776) |
| Radical Right Competitors e-1 | -0.194 | -0.085 | -0.268 |
| | (0.646) | (0.596) | (0.631) |
| Constant | 13.539 | 15.936 | 10.454 |
| | (13.556) | (12.577) | (14.121) |
| Decade fixed effects | NO | NO | NO |
| R^2 within | 0.45 | 0.46 | 0.46 |
| R^2 adjusted | 0.79 | 0.79 | 0.79 |
| N | 280 | 280 | 280 |

Table A7a: Aggregate-Level Regression Results Predicting Social Democratic Vote (no decade fixed effects

Note: beta coefficients from a OLS regression with standard errors in parentheses.

A7b Aggregate-level Excluding Any Fixed Effects Robustness Check

| | Model 13 | Model 14 | Model 15 |
|--|---------------------|---------------------|----------|
| SD Economic Position | 0.206 | 2.029** | 0.033 |
| | (0.121) | (0.777) | (0.259) |
| SD Culture Position | -0.060 | -0.028 | -0.110 |
| | (0.115) | (0.110) | (0.133) |
| Gini t-1 | 0.141 | 0.087 | 0.152 |
| | (0.174) | (0.157) | (0.177) |
| SD Economic Position # Gini t-1 | | -0.064* | |
| | | (0.027) | |
| SD Economic Position # SD Culture Position | | | -0.038 |
| | | | (0.041) |
| Government Spending t-1 | -0.099 | -0.112 | -0.103 |
| | (0.076) | (0.074) | (0.075) |
| GDP Growth t-1 | -0.156 | -0.153 | -0.164 |
| | (0.237) | (0.235) | (0.236) |
| Unemployment t-1 | -0.234 | -0.225 | -0.241 |
| | (0.163) | (0.147) | (0.166) |
| Union Density | 0.009 | 0.003 | 0.007 |
| - | (0.030) | (0.028) | (0.030) |
| Turnout | 0.059 | 0.061 | 0.063 |
| | (0.036) | (0.039) | (0.037) |
| SD Vote e-1 | 0.824*** | 0.836*** | 0.823*** |
| | (0.041) | (0.043) | (0.042) |
| Incumbent | -1.619 [*] | -1.761 [*] | -1.619* |
| | (0.825) | (0.842) | (0.811) |
| Disproportionality | -0.064 | -0.049 | -0.044 |
| | (0.062) | (0.067) | (0.063) |
| Left Competitors e-1 | -0.270 | -0.296 | -0.258 |
| - | (0.343) | (0.341) | (0.351) |
| Radical Right Competitors e-1 | -0.156 | 0.056 | -0.131 |
| | (0.423) | (0.402) | (0.420) |
| Constant | 3.782 | 5.524 | 3.267 |
| | (7.687) | (7.230) | (7.728) |
| Decade fixed effects | NO | NO | NO |
| Fixed effects | NO | NO | NO |
| R^2 within | 0.38 | 0.39 | 0.38 |
| R^2 adjusted | 0.79 | 0.79 | 0.79 |
| N | 280 | 280 | 280 |

Table A7b: Aggregate-Level Regression Results Predicting Social Democratic Vote (no fixed effects)

Note: beta coefficients from a OLS regression with standard errors in parentheses. * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001

Excluding Lagged Dependent Variable Robustness Check A7c

Table A7c: Aggregate-Level Regression Results Predicting Social Democratic Vote (no SD *Vote e-1*)

| | Model 16 | Model 17 | Model 18 |
|--|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| SD Economic Position | 0.103 | 1.962^{*} | -0.285 |
| | (0.221) | (0.811) | (0.303) |
| SD Culture Position | 0.029 | 0.050 | -0.083 |
| | (0.152) | (0.148) | (0.146) |
| Gini t-1 | -0.089 | -0.163 | -0.049 |
| | (0.311) | (0.314) | (0.329) |
| SD Economic Position # Gini t-1 | | -0.064* | |
| | | (0.030) | |
| SD Economic Position # SD Culture Position | | | -0.086^{*} |
| | | | (0.034) |
| Government Spending t-1 | 0.180 | 0.168 | 0.174 |
| | (0.163) | (0.154) | (0.163) |
| GDP Growth t-1 | -0.026 | -0.045 | -0.067 |
| | (0.127) | (0.121) | (0.123) |
| Unemployment t-1 | -0.711* | -0.680^{*} | -0.684* |
| | (0.280) | (0.262) | (0.260) |
| Union Density | -0.138 | -0.163 | -0.150 |
| | (0.098) | (0.100) | (0.097) |
| Turnout | 0.110 | 0.131 | 0.156 |
| | (0.129) | (0.129) | (0.124) |
| Incumbent | 1.274 | 1.252 | 1.300 |
| | (0.630) | (0.657) | (0.627) |
| Disproportionality | -0.336* | -0.297* | -0.317* |
| | (0.121) | (0.120) | (0.130) |
| Left Competitors e-1 | -1.980^{*} | -1.990* | -1.928^{*} |
| | (0.921) | (0.927) | (0.903) |
| Radical Right Competitors e-1 | -0.394 | -0.295 | -0.465 |
| | (0.763) | (0.732) | (0.717) |
| Constant | 28.071 | 29.559 | 23.553 |
| 2 | (16.806) | (16.452) | (16.762) |
| R^2 within | 0.41 | 0.42 | 0.43 |
| R^2 adjusted | 0.77 | 0.77 | 0.77 |
| N | 280 | 280 | 280 |

Note: beta coefficients from a OLS regression with standard errors in parentheses. * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001

A8 Alternative Inequality Measure (Palma Ratio) Robustness Check

The *Palma Ratio* is utilized as an alternative measure of income inequality. The Palma Ratio is a newer income inequality measurement that addresses the Gini's over-sensitivity to changes in the middle of the distribution and insensitivity to changes at the top and bottom. This is accomplished through a ratio calculation of the national income share of the top 10 percent divided by the bottom 40 percent and is available from the World Inequality Database (wid.world). Unfortunately, it is only available as pre-tax income and only for Europe beyond 1980, while this paper's temporal range begins in 1965. Nevertheless, I have added it to each of the main models as the measure of inequality in section 5. Palma Ratio correlates highly with Gini (r=0.72) and the results largely mirror the effects with the Gini (see Table A8).

| | Model 19 | Model 20 | Model 21 |
|--|---------------|-------------|--------------|
| SD Economic Position | 0.126 | 0.774^{*} | -0.221 |
| | (0.212) | (0.302) | (0.315) |
| SD Culture Position | -0.024 | -0.015 | -0.120 |
| | (0.141) | (0.143) | (0.145) |
| Palma Ratio t-1 | 0.909 | 0.696 | 0.903 |
| | (1.545) | (1.461) | (1.433) |
| SD Economic Position # Palma Ratio t-1 | | -0.305* | |
| | | (0.122) | |
| SD Economic Position # SD Culture Position | | | -0.078^{*} |
| | | | (0.035) |
| Government Spending t-1 | 0.164 | 0.167 | 0.151 |
| | (0.130) | (0.126) | (0.125) |
| GDP Growth t-1 | -0.006 | 0.001 | -0.042 |
| | (0.161) | (0.159) | (0.141) |
| Unemployment t-1 | -0.704** | -0.663** | -0.677** |
| | (0.243) | (0.232) | (0.227) |
| Union Density | -0.006 | -0.011 | -0.012 |
| | (0.095) | (0.091) | (0.089) |
| Turnout | 0.119 | 0.136 | 0.170 |
| | (0.091) | (0.089) | (0.086) |
| SD Vote e-1 | 0.348^{***} | 0.363*** | 0.334*** |
| | (0.080) | (0.080) | (0.079) |
| Incumbent | -1.016 | -1.083 | -0.872 |
| | (0.790) | (0.806) | (0.742) |
| Disproportionality | -0.255 | -0.242* | -0.247 |
| | (0.123) | (0.115) | (0.130) |
| Left Competitors e-1 | -0.651 | -0.546 | -0.617 |
| | (0.966) | (0.995) | (0.989) |
| Radical Right Competitors e-1 | -0.038 | -0.027 | -0.087 |
| | (0.680) | (0.681) | (0.700) |
| Constant | 6.569 | 4.786 | 3.535 |
| | (7.964) | (8.174) | (8.625) |
| R^2 within | 0.51 | 0.52 | 0.52 |
| R^2 adjusted | 0.80 | 0.80 | 0.80 |
| N | 247 | 247 | 247 |

 Table A8: Aggregate-Level Regression Results Predicting Social Democratic Vote (with Palma Ratio)

Note: beta coefficients from a OLS regression with standard errors in parentheses.

A9 Country Outliers Robustness Check

To ensure that the results are not driven by the inclusion of any one country, a jackknife analysis is undertaken at both the aggregate and individual level for each main interaction. The results of these additional analyses indicate that the estimated interactions are stable and not driven by a single outlier country in the dataset. The estimations are very stable at the aggregate level for both the SD economic position x gini t-1 interaction and the SD economic position x SD culture position interaction (Figures A9a and A9b). Only Greece is somewhat of an outlier and Portugal a slight outlier for both interactions, although both regressions excluding each country remains statistically significant. The interactions are not as stable at the individual level, likely owing to a much smaller number of elections for each country, varying from two to six, as compared to 10 and 20 at the aggregate level. Figure 9c displays the SD economic position x gini t-1 interaction. We can see that the most notable outliers (Finland, Israel, and New Zealand) somewhat suppress the results and when excluded the negative effect is much stronger. Figure 9d below reveals that the party positions interaction contains more countries that display a variance when excluded one at a time. However, the coefficient is never more than .004 points lower than the mean of .0185 and remains statistically significant for reach regression.



Figure A9a: Aggregate-level Jackknife Estimates for Model 2 Interaction

Note: Estimates from 22 different regression models, replicating Model 2 in Table 1 excluding 1 country at a time. Excluded country is indicated on the y-axis. Estimates and 90% confidence intervals are plotted.



Figure A9b: Aggregate-level Jackknife Estimates for Model 3 Interaction

Note: Estimates from 22 different regression models, replicating Model 3 in Table 1 excluding 1 country at a time. Excluded country is indicated on the y-axis. Estimates and 90% confidence intervals are plotted.

Australia -Austria -Belgium -Canada Denmark Finland France Germany Greece Ireland -Israel -Italy Netherlands New Zealand Norway Portugal -Spain Sweden Switzerland -United Kingdom-United States -.02 -.015 -.01 -.005 0 SD Economic Position x Gini

Figure A9c: Individual-level Jackknife Estimates for Model 2 Interaction

Note: Estimates from 21 different regression models, replicating Model 2 in Table 2 excluding 1 country at a time. Excluded country is indicated on the y-axis. Estimates and 90% confidence intervals are plotted.



Figure A9d: Individual -level Jackknife Estimates for Model 3 Interaction

Note: Estimates from 21 different regression models, replicating Model 3 in Table 2 excluding 1 country at a time. Excluded country is indicated on the y-axis. Estimates and 90% confidence intervals are plotted.

A10 Year Fixed Effects Clustered by Country Robustness Check

The individual-level analysis is re-run with country fixed effects clustered by year instead of the reverse. Once again, we see the same results (see Table A9).

| | Model 5 | Model 6 | Model 7 | Model 8 |
|--|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Age | 0.006*** | 0.006*** | 0.006*** | 0.006*** |
| 5 | (0.001) | (0.001) | (0.001) | (0.001) |
| Female | -0.032 | -0.032 | -0.033 | -0.032 |
| | (0.018) | (0.018) | (0.018) | (0.018) |
| Education | -0.141*** | -0.141*** | -0.141*** | -0.141*** |
| | (0.009) | (0.009) | (0.009) | (0.009) |
| Income | -0.023*** | -0.024*** | -0.022** | -0.027*** |
| | (0.007) | (0.007) | (0.007) | (0.007) |
| Rural | -0.179*** | -0.180*** | -0.175*** | -0.179*** |
| | (0.022) | (0.022) | (0.022) | (0.022) |
| Union | 0.369*** | 0.371*** | 0.371*** | 0.370*** |
| | (0.021) | (0.021) | (0.021) | (0.021) |
| Political Ideology | -0.322*** | -0.322*** | -0.322*** | -0.321*** |
| | (0.004) | (0.004) | (0.004) | (0.004) |
| SD Economic Position | 0.023** | 0.234*** | -0.045*** | 0.031** |
| | (0.008) | (0.054) | (0.012) | (0.010) |
| SD Economic Position # Income | | | | -0.003 |
| | | | | (0.002) |
| SD Culture Position | 0.040^{***} | 0.043*** | 0.015 | 0.041^{***} |
| | (0.007) | (0.008) | (0.008) | (0.007) |
| SD Economic Position # SD Culture Position | | | -0.020*** | |
| | | | (0.003) | |
| Gini t-1 | -0.029 | -0.023 | 0.004 | -0.030 |
| | (0.021) | (0.022) | (0.022) | (0.021) |
| SD Economic Position # Gini t-1 | | -0.007*** | | |
| | | (0.002) | | |
| GDP Growth t-1 | 0.047^{***} | 0.061^{***} | 0.058^{***} | 0.047^{***} |
| | (0.009) | (0.010) | (0.009) | (0.009) |
| Unemployment t-1 | -0.022** | -0.018^{*} | -0.046*** | -0.022** |
| | (0.008) | (0.008) | (0.008) | (0.008) |
| Union Density | -0.015** | -0.022*** | -0.019*** | -0.015*** |
| | (0.005) | (0.006) | (0.006) | (0.005) |
| Turnout | 0.030^{***} | 0.030*** | 0.031*** | 0.030*** |
| | (0.004) | (0.004) | (0.004) | (0.004) |
| Disproportionality | 0.041*** | 0.059^{***} | 0.069*** | 0.041*** |
| | (0.010) | (0.011) | (0.011) | (0.010) |
| Left Competitors e-1 | -0.195*** | -0.269*** | -0.285*** | -0.196*** |
| | (0.034) | (0.041) | (0.038) | (0.034) |
| Radical Right Competitors e-1 | -0.088** | -0.023 | 0.022 | -0.087** |
| | (0.028) | (0.033) | (0.032) | (0.028) |
| Constant | -0.037 | -0.135 | -1.036 | 0.001 |
| | (0.798) | (0.820) | (0.837) | (0.798) |
| Variance | 0.466** | 0.619** | 0.629** | 0.466** |
| | (0.155) | (0.222) | (0.220) | (0.155) |
| Log Likelihood | -38857.18 | -38849.03 | -38827.44 | -38856.38 |

Table A10: Mixed-Effects Logistic Regression Predicting Social Democratic Vote (clustered by Country)

| AIC | 77794.36 | 77780.06 | 77736.87 | 77794.76 |
|--------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| BIC | 78162.44 | 78157.34 | 78114.16 | 78172.04 |
| Year fixed effects | YES | YES | YES | YES |
| N | 73,281 | 73,281 | 73,281 | 73,281 |

Note: beta coefficients from a mixed-effects logistic regression with standard errors in parentheses. * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001

A11 Redistribution Preferences

Rueda and Stegmueller (2019: 187), demonstrate using European Social Survey data, that the poor are "uniformly in favour of redistribution and therefore more likely to vote for redistributive parties." Rueda (2018) also finds that individuals with high redistribution preferences are 70 percent more likely to vote for leftist parties. As a robustness check I also run separate analyses to determine if Social Democratic voters and lower income earners support redistribution. Modules 4 and 5 of the CSES include for the first time a question measuring redistribution by asking respondents the extent they agree that: "the government should take measures to reduce differences in income levels." It is available for 17 different countries included in this study and 42,556 respondents. I recoded the 5-point question into a binary variable measuring if someone is pro-redistribution or not.

Firstly, T-tests were performed comparing Social Democratic voters with the voters of other parties. Social Democratic voters are significantly more likely to be pro-redistributive (66.1% to 60%) and people who are pro-redistribution are significantly more likely to vote Social Democratic over other parties (31.2 to 25.9%). Secondly, we compare people in the bottom income quintile with everyone else. Low-income earners are significantly more pro-redistribution (69.6% to 60.5%) and low-income earners who are pro-redistribution are significantly more likely to vote Social Democratic (22.4% to 16.3%).

Next, I replicate Model 1 at the individual level with the addition of *pro-redistribution*. Since our redistribution sample only runs from 2011 to 2018 but includes 17 countries, observations are clustered at the country-level. Table A11 presents the results. We can see that people who support redistribution are significantly more likely to vote Social Democratic at (p<0.001), even when controlling for left–right *political ideology* and the variable has nearly the same effect as *political ideology*. Lastly, I then run the same regression, except I swap *SD voted* with *pro redistribution* as the dependent variable. Table A11 shows that Social Democratic voters and low-income earners are significantly more likely to support redistribution at (p<0.001), and when low *income* is coded as a binary variable, it displays the strongest effect of any demographic variable.

| | SD Voted | Pro Redistribution |
|----------------------------|---------------|--------------------|
| SD Voted | | 0.215*** |
| | | (0.038) |
| Age | 0.004^{***} | 0.007^{***} |
| | (0.001) | (0.001) |
| Female | 0.028 | -0.069^{*} |
| | (0.032) | (0.031) |
| Education | -0.064*** | -0.143*** |
| | (0.017) | (0.016) |
| Income (5 categories) | -0.027* | |
| | (0.013) | |
| Income Quintile 1 (binary) | | 0.483*** |
| | | (0.044) |
| Rural | -0.065 | -0.107** |
| | (0.040) | (0.038) |
| Union | 0.278^{***} | 0.236*** |
| | (0.041) | (0.040) |

| Table A11: Individual-Level Regression Res | sults Predicting So | ocial Democratic V | Vote (left) and |
|--|---------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| Pro-Redis | tribution (right) | | |

| Political Ideology | -0.236*** | -0.277*** |
|-------------------------------|-----------|---------------|
| | (0.008) | (0.008) |
| Pro Redistribution | 0.215*** | |
| | (0.038) | |
| SD Economic Position | 0.220** | -0.056 |
| | (0.068) | (0.083) |
| SD Culture Position | 0.221*** | 0.084* |
| | (0.038) | (0.043) |
| Gini t-1 | 0.005 | -0.008 |
| | (0.085) | (0.104) |
| GDP Growth t-1 | 0.258*** | 0.227^{***} |
| | (0.048) | (0.054) |
| Unemployment t-1 | -0.029 | -0.009 |
| | (0.044) | (0.054) |
| Union Density | 0.020 | 0.007 |
| - | (0.016) | (0.019) |
| Turnout | -0.064*** | 0.002 |
| | (0.018) | (0.022) |
| Disproportionality | 0.017 | -0.027 |
| | (0.034) | (0.041) |
| Left Competitors e-1 | 0.176 | 0.503 |
| - | (0.257) | (0.315) |
| Radical Right Competitors e-1 | 0.004 | -0.121 |
| | (0.103) | (0.124) |
| Constant | 4.974 | 0.909 |
| | (3.938) | (4.826) |
| Variance | 0.229* | 0.350** |
| | (0.093) | (0.134) |
| Log Likelihood | -11611.11 | -12472.77 |
| AIC | 23274.22 | 24997.54 |
| BIC | 23482.17 | 25205.49 |
| Year fixed effects | YES | YES |
| N | 21,983 | 21,983 |

Note: beta coefficients from a mixed-effects logistic regression with standard errors in parentheses. * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, **** p < 0.001

A12 Income Inequality Disaggregated by Country Over Time

Income inequality (Gini index) over time disaggregated by country. Calculated from the Standardized World Income Inequality Database (Solt 2020).





A13 Mean Social Democrat Party Positions Over Time

Average Social Democrat economic and socio-cultural positions (left-right) over time, with trend lines. Calculated from MARPOR (Volkens et al. 2020).



Figure A13a: Average SD Economic Position, 1965–2019

Figure A13b: Average SD Culture Position, 1965–2019



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Chapter 6 Appendix

Losing the Left: Consequences of the Social Democratic March to the Middle

Appendix

- A1a List of Countries and Elections (Aggregate Level)
- A1b List of Countries and Elections (Individual Level)
- A2 List of Social Democratic Parties
- A3 Classification of Party Families
- A4 Descriptive Statistics
- A5 Coding Policy Variables
- A6 Aggregate-Level Interaction Results (Models 7–12)
- A7ab Excluding Decade Fixed Effects Robustness Check
- A7cd Excluding Fixed Effects Robustness Check
- A7ef Excluding Lagged Dependent Variable Robustness Check
- A8 Country Outliers Robustness Check
- A9 Mean Social Democrat Party Positions Over Time

| Country | Start and End Date | Number of Elections |
|----------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Australia | 1966 - 2016 | 20 |
| Austria | 1966 – 2019 | 17 |
| Belgium | 1965 - 2014 | 16 |
| Canada | 1965 - 2015 | 16 |
| Denmark | 1966 - 2019 | 20 |
| Finland | 1966 – 2019 | 15 |
| France | 1967 – 2017 | 13 |
| Germany | 1965 – 2017 | 15 |
| Greece | 1974 - 2015 | 17 |
| Ireland | 1965 - 2016 | 15 |
| Israel | 1965 - 2015 | 15 |
| Italy | 1968 - 2018 | 14 |
| Luxembourg | 1968 – 2013 | 10 |
| Netherlands | 1967 – 2017 | 16 |
| New Zealand | 1966 – 2017 | 18 |
| Norway | 1965 - 2017 | 14 |
| Portugal | 1975 - 2015 | 15 |
| Spain | 1977 – 2019 | 14 |
| Sweden | 1968 - 2018 | 16 |
| Switzerland | 1967 – 2015 | 13 |
| United Kingdom | 1966 – 2017 | 14 |

A1a List of Countries and Elections (Aggregate Level)

| Country | Elections | Number of Elections | |
|----------------|------------------------------|---------------------|--|
| Australia | 2004, 2007, 2013, 2019 | 4 | |
| Austria | 2013, 2017 | 2 | |
| Belgium | 2003 | 1 | |
| Canada | 2008, 2011, 2015 | 3 | |
| Denmark | 2001, 2007 | 2 | |
| Finland | 2003, 2007, 2011, 2015 | 4 | |
| France | 2002, 2012, 2017 | 3 | |
| Germany | 2002, 2005, 2009, 2013, 2017 | 5 | |
| Greece | 2009, 2012, 2015, 2015 | 4 | |
| Ireland | 2002, 2007, 2011, 2016 | 4 | |
| Israel | 2003, 2006, 2013 | 3 | |
| Italy | 2006, 2018 | 2 | |
| Netherlands | 2002, 2006, 2010 | 3 | |
| New Zealand | 2002, 2008, 2011, 2014, 2017 | 5 | |
| Norway | 2001, 2005, 2009, 2013, 2017 | 5 | |
| Portugal | 2002, 2005, 2015 | 3 | |
| Spain | 2004 | 1 | |
| Sweden | 2002, 2006, 2014 | 3 | |
| Switzerland | 2003, 2007, 2011 | 3 | |
| United Kingdom | 2005, 2015 | 2 | |

A1b List of Countries and Elections (Individual Level)

| Country | Social Democrat Party/Bloc | Abbreviation |
|---------------------|--|----------------|
| Australia | Australian Labor Party | ALP |
| Austria | Austrian Social Democratic Party | SPÖ |
| Belgium | Belgian Socialist Party > Flemish/Francophone Socialist Party | BSP > sp.a/PS |
| Canada | New Democratic Party | NDP |
| Denmark | Social Democratic Party | SD |
| Finland | Finnish Social Democrats | SSDP |
| France | Socialist Party | PS |
| Germany | Social Democratic Party of Germany | SPD |
| Greece | Panhellenic Socialist Movement | PASOK |
| Ireland | Labour Party | Labour |
| Israel | Israeli Labor Party | HaAvoda |
| Italy ¹⁴ | Italian Communist Party > Democrats of the Left > Democratic Party | PCI > PDS > PD |
| Luxembourg | Luxembourg Socialist Workers' Party | LSAP |
| Netherlands | Labour Party | PvdA |
| New Zealand | New Zealand Labour Party | Labour |
| Norway | Norwegian Labour Party | DnA |
| Portugal | Socialist Party | PS |
| Spain | Spanish Socialist Workers' Party | PSOE |
| Sweden | Social Democratic Labour Party | SAP |
| Switzerland | Social Democratic Party of Switzerland | SPS/PSS |
| United Kingdom | Labour Party | Labour |

A2 List of Social Democratic Parties

¹⁴ The Italian Communist Party (PCI) gradually moved away from Moscow, largely becoming a social democratic party in the late 1960s (Urban 1986). The party then evolved into the Democrats of the Left (PDS) in the early 1990s, and then into the Democratic Party (PD) ahead of the 2008 election.

A3 Classification of Party Families

| Country | Socialist Left | Green | Liberal | Conservative | Far Right |
|-----------|--|--|---|--|---|
| Australia | Democratic Labour Party Australian Democrats | Australian Greens | Australia Party Country Liberal Party Liberal National Party of Queensland Nick Xenophon Team Palmer United Party | Christian Democratic Party Liberal Party of Australia Family First Party | National Party of Australia One Nation Party |
| Austria | Communist Party of Austria The Citizens' Forum Austria | Alternative List Austria United Greens Austria The Greens The Green Alternative JETZT / Pilz List | Liberal Forum NEOS - The New Austria | • Austrian People's Party | Freedom Party of Austria Democratic Progressive Party Alliance for the Future of Austria |
| Belgium | Communist Party Workers' Party of Belgium | Ecolo Agalev / Green | Liberal Party Francophone Democratic Front Party of Liberty and Progress Flemish Liberals and Democrats Liberal Reformist Party Alive Reformist Movement List Dedecker | Francophone Christian Social Party Flemish Christian People's Party New Flemish Alliance People's Party | People's Union Respect for Labour Flemish Block National Front Belgians, Rise Up! |
| Canada | | Green Party of Canada | Liberal Party of Canada | Progressive Conservative Party of Canada Reform Party of Canada Conservative Party of Canada | |
| Denmark | Communist Party of Denmark Left Socialists Common Course Red-Green Alliance | Socialist Peoples PartyGreensThe Alternative | Danish Social Liberal Party Liberal Party Justice Party Liberal Centre Independents Party New-Liberal Alliance | Christian People's Party Conservatives Centre Democrats | Progress Party Danish Peoples Party Hard Line The New Right |

| Finland | Left Alliance Social Democratic League of Workers and Smallholders Communist Party of Finland Pirate Party Finland | Green League Ecological Party | Centre Party National Progressive Party Swedish People's Party Young Finns Movement Now | Christian Democrats National Coalition Party Constitutional People's Party Finnish People's Unity Party | Finnish Party / True Finns Blue Reform |
|---------|---|--|---|--|--|
| France | French Communist Party Unified Socialist Party Radical Party of the Left Workers' Struggle Party of Presidential Majority Citizens' Movement Revolutionary Communist League Unbowed France | Greens Ecology Generation | New Centre Centrist Alliance The Republic Onwards! | Democratic Centre Centre Democracy and Progress Reformers Movement Centre of Social Democrats Gaullists Independent Republicans Radical Socialist Party Rally for the Republic Union for French Democracy Movement for France The Republicans Rally for France Union of Democrats and Independents Republic Arise | National Front National Republican Movement |
| Germany | German Peace Union PDS / The Left German Pirate Party | Alliance 90 - Greens | Free Democratic Party | Christian Social Union Christian Democratic Union Free Voters | National Democratic Party The Republicans German People's Union Alternative for Germany |
| Greece | Communist Party of Greece Coalition of the Left Democratic Social Movement | Alternative Ecologists Ecologist Greens | Union of the Democratic Centre Party of New Liberals Action / Liberal Alliance Democratic Alliance | New Democracy National Alignment Progressive Party Democratic Renewal Political Spring | National Democratic Union Popular Orthodox Rally Peoples Association / Golden Dawn |

| | Front of the Greek Anticapitalist Left Democratic Left The River Dot / Apostolos Gkletsos Movement of Democratic Socialists Popular Unity | | • Union of Centrists | Recreate Greece | Independent Greeks |
|---------|---|---|--|---|---|
| Ireland | Sinn Fein Democratic Socialist Party Democratic Left Socialist Party People Before Profit Alliance Independents 4 Change Social Democrats | • Green Party | Fianna Fail Progressive Democrats | Fine Gael National Party Renua Ireland | |
| Israel | This World / New Force New Communist List / Democratic Front Communist Party / Moked / Sheli Israeli Workers List United Workers Party Movement for Civil Rights and Peace Progressive List for Peace Energy One Nation Meimad | Green Leaf The Greens | Independent Liberals Free Centre Democratic Movement for Change Change Courage Together (Yahad) Israel for Immigration The Third Way Centre Party Forward There is a Future The Movement All of Us Blue and White Bridge | The Consolidation National List Peace / Zion Movement for the Heritage of Israel Revival Sfarad's guards of the Torah Homeland Banner of the Torah United Torah Judaism | National Religious Party Flatto / Sharon Thus Crossroads Israel is Our Home Herut / The National Movement National Union / Tkuma Strength to Israel Together (Yachad) Zehut Right |
| Italy | Italian Democratic Socialist Party Italian Socialist Party | Green Lists Federation of the Greens | Republican Party Italian Liberal Party Liberal Democratic Pole | Christian Democrats Movement for Democracy / The Net | Italian Social Movement North League Southern Action League |
| | Socialist Party of Proletarian Unity Radicals List for Trieste Sardinian Action Party Communist Refoundation Party Democratic Alliance Dini List / Italian Renewal Popular Party for Prodi New PSI The Union / Prodi Left | | Democratic Union of the Centre Democracy is Freedom / The Daisy Italy of Values Autonomy Liberty Democracy Civic Choice Stop the Decline Democratic Centre More Europe | Italian People's Party Social Christians European Democracy Union of Democrats for Europe Union / Centre Movement for Autonomy Italian Democratic Party of Monarchist Unity National Alliance Go Italy / The People of Freedom Centre Right Brothers of Italy / National Centre-right South American Union Italian Emigrants | • Fiamma Tricolore |
|-------------|---|--|---|---|--|
| Luxembourg | Communist Party of Luxembourg Social Democratic Party Jean Gremling List / Independent Socialists The Left | The Greens Green Left Ecological Initiative | Democratic Party | Christian Social People's Party Alternative Democratic Reform Party Party for Full Democracy | National Movement |
| Netherlands | Communist Party of the Netherlands Pacifist Socialist Party Democratic Socialists 70 Socialist Party | Radical Political Party GreenLeft | People's Party for Freedom and Democracy Democrats 66 50PLUS | Anti-Revolutionary Party Christian Historical Union Catholic Peoples Party Christian Democratic Appeal Reformatory Political Federation Christian Union Reformed Political League Farmers Party Middle Party Forum for Democracy | Centre Party Centre Democrats Livable Netherlands Fortuyn List Party for Freedom |

| New Zealand | New Labour Party Alliance Progressive Party | Values Party Green Party | New Zealand Party ACT New Zealand United Future New Zealand The Opportunities Party | Christian Heritage Party of New Zealand National Party United New Zealand Conservative Party of New Zealand | New Zealand First Party |
|----------------|---|--|--|--|-------------------------|
| Norway | Communist Party of Norway Socialist People's Party Socialist Left Party Red Electoral Alliance | Green Party | Liberal Party of Norway Liberal People's Party | Christian Democratic Party Conservative Party Coastal Party | Progress Party |
| Portugal | Democratic Movement Popular Democratic Union People's Socialist Front Portuguese Communist Party Movement of Socialist Left Reformists United People Alliance Workers Party of Socialist Unity Leftwing Union for the Socialist Democracy Independent Social Democrats Revolutionary Socialist Party Unified Democratic Coalition Democratic Intervention Communist Party of the Portuguese Workers Bloc of the Left Livre | Ecology Party / Greens Party for Animals and Nature | Social Democratic Party Democratic Alliance Liberal Initiative Alliance | Democratic and Social Centre / People's Party | • Enough |

| Spain | Communist Party / United Left People's Socialist Party Basque Left Party of Labour of Spain Andalusian Party Workers' Party of Spain / Communist Unity We Can (Podemos) En Masse / Common Group of the Left In Common We Can Compromise / A la valenciana | | Union of the Democratic Centre Union, Progress and Democracy Citizens / Party of the Citizenry | Basque Nationalist Party Electoral Coalition of Christian Democratic Team Union of Centre and Christian Democracy of Catalonia Democratic and Social Centre Convergence and Union People's Alliance Party Democratic Convergence / Together for Catalonia Sum Navarre | National Union Voice (Vox) |
|-------------------|--|---|--|--|---|
| Sweden | Left Party (Communists) Pirate Party | • Greens | People's PartyCentre Party | Christian Democrats Moderate Party Citizens Coalition | New DemocracySweden Democrats |
| Switzerland | Swiss Party of Labour Democratic Group Progressive Organisations of Switzerland Autonomous Socialist Party Solidarity | Greens Feminists and Green / Alternative Groups Green Liberal Party | Liberal Party of Switzerland Radical Democratic Party | Catholic Conservative / Christian Democratic Peoples Party Protestant Peoples Party Christian Social Party Federal Democratic Union of Switzerland Conservative Democratic Party of Switzerland | Swiss People's Party Republican Movement National Action / Swiss Democrats Automobile Party / Freedom Party of Switzerland Ticino League Geneva Citizens' Movement |
| United Kingdom | Republican Labour Party Social Democratic and Labour Party Respect / The Unity Coalition | • Green Party | Liberals Alliance Party of Northern Ireland | Conservatives Ulster Unionist Party Democratic Unionist Party | National Front United Kingdom Independence Party British National Party Brexit Party |

A4 Descriptive Statistics

| Variable | Observations | Mean | Std. Dev. | Min. | Max. |
|-------------------------------|--------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------|
| SD Leave | 25,259 | 0.3617799 | 0.4805251 | 0 | 1 |
| Socialist Voted | 17,434 | 0.0785821 | 0.2690931 | 0 | 1 |
| Green Voted | 17,207 | 0.0664265 | 0.2490333 | 0 | 1 |
| Liberal Voted | 17,348 | 0.0740143 | 0.2618017 | 0 | 1 |
| Conservative Voted | 17,730 | 0.093965 | 0.2917883 | 0 | 1 |
| Far Right Voted | 16,789 | 0.043183 | 0.203275 | 0 | 1 |
| Abstain | 18,392 | 0.1265768 | 0.3325073 | 0 | 1 |
| Age | 24,971 | 52.48568 | 15.82118 | 20 | 102 |
| Female | 25,087 | 0.5173994 | 0.4997071 | 0 | 1 |
| Education | 24,530 | 2.424582 | 1.21017 | 0 | 4 |
| Income | 21,129 | 2.913247 | 1.349583 | 1 | 5 |
| Rural | 21,336 | 0.2089426 | 0.4065629 | 0 | 1 |
| Union | 23,299 | 0.317181 | 0.4653886 | 0 | 1 |
| Political Ideology | 22,406 | 4.034455 | 2.022098 | 0 | 10 |
| SD Vote | 327 | 30.14869 | 10.81434 | 4.429288 | 51.028 |
| Socialist Vote | 327 | 7.217829 | 7.68269 | 0 | 52.09 |
| Green Vote | 327 | 3.208502 | 4.02491 | 0 | 21.32 |
| Liberal Vote | 327 | 16.65434 | 14.24627 | 0 | 56 |
| Conservative Vote | 327 | 32.11459 | 11.20946 | 0 | 58.8 |
| Far Right Vote | 327 | 6.317309 | 7.155925 | 0 | 30.71 |
| SD Vote e-1 | 323 | 30.89615 | 10.66795 | 4.573 | 51.028 |
| Socialist Vote e-1 | 327 | 7.029327 | 7.482282 | 0 | 52.09 |
| Green Vote e-1 | 327 | 2.814251 | 3.771976 | 0 | 15.9 |
| Liberal Vote e-1 | 327 | 16.37076 | 14.41139 | 0 | 56 |
| Conservative Vote e-1 | 327 | 32.26254 | 11.7218 | 0 | 62.7 |
| Far Right Vote e-1 | 327 | 5.786605 | 6.968173 | 0 | 30.71 |
| SD Economic Position | 326 | -1.454081 | 3.294687 | -10.51697 | 9.319901 |
| SD Culture Position | 327 | -4.497253 | 3.75588 | -14.59629 | 5.21253 |
| Mean Economic Position | 327 | 1.21344 | 2.432847 | -5.50631 | 9.152488 |
| Mean Culture Position | 327 | -2.173659 | 2.91409 | -11.90565 | 7.176226 |
| Left Economic Position | 207 | -3.188048 | 3.758462 | -10.90536 | 7.427739 |
| Left Culture Position | 207 | -4.963918 | 4.812747 | -18.73507 | 6.900627 |
| Green Economic Position | 145 | -2.517612 | 2.691847 | -9.072273 | 3.554683 |
| Green Culture Position | 145 | -8.099323 | 3.614334 | -17.68828 | 1.274877 |
| Liberal Economic Position | 248 | 3.268672 | 3.884169 | -8.381349 | 13.70267 |
| Liberal Culture Position | 248 | -2.263651 | 4.078004 | -13.92603 | 11.31275 |
| Conservative Econ Position | 325 | 4.168511 | 3.443 | -6.260617 | 13.76316 |
| Conservative Culture Position | 325 | 0.1186334 | 3.819833 | -9.833445 | 11.24646 |
| Far Right Economic Position | 178 | 3.705071 | 3.881967 | -7.082054 | 12.79898 |
| Far Right Culture Position | 178 | 4.746179 | 5.676466 | -8.913645 | 17.20502 |
| Gini t-1 | 278 | 28.85179 | 4.01105 | 20.27872 | 37.74593 |
| Government Spending t-1 | 294 | 44.35573 | 8.062504 | 23.12152 | 68.54779 |

| GDP Growth t-1 | 316 | 2.672466 | 2.791434 | -9.169651 | 25.48517 |
|--------------------|-----|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------|
| Unemployment t-1 | 317 | 6.342817 | 4.395574 | 0 | 26.5 |
| Union Density | 321 | 41.41442 | 19.50313 | 8.5 | 97.17 |
| Incumbent | 327 | 0.3455657 | 0.4762812 | 0 | 1 |
| Turnout | 327 | 75.75933 | 11.6185 | 34.94 | 95.43 |
| Disproportionality | 327 | 5.571011 | 4.870128 | 0.41833 | 24.61331 |
| Globalization t-1 | 295 | 75.93802 | 9.735029 | 50.02024 | 91.01247 |
| Foreigner Share | 320 | 11.98745 | 8.887716 | 0.704124 | 50.37776 |

A5 Coding Policy Variables

Economic and socio-cultural policy positions were constructed using the state-market (economic) and (progressive-conservative) society dimensions, which comprise the following components from MARPOR (Volkens et al. 2020):

| | Economic (State-Market) Dimension | | | | | | |
|--|------------------------------------|--------|------------------------------------|--|--|--|--|
| | Left-Wing | | Right-Wing | | | | |
| per403 | Market Regulation | per401 | Free Market Economy | | | | |
| per404 | Economic Planning | per402 | Incentives: Positive | | | | |
| per405 | Corporatism/Mixed Economy | per407 | Protectionism: Negative | | | | |
| per406 | Protectionism: Positive | per414 | Economic Orthodoxy | | | | |
| per409 | Keynesian Demand Management | per505 | Welfare State Limitation | | | | |
| per412 | Controlled Economy | | | | | | |
| per413 | Nationalisation | | | | | | |
| per415 | Marxist Analysis | | | | | | |
| per416 | Anti-Growth Economy: Positive | | | | | | |
| per504 | Welfare State Expansion | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |
| Society (Progressive-Conservative) Dimension | | | | | | | |
| | Left-Wing | | Right-Wing | | | | |
| per105 | Military: Negative | per104 | Military: Positive | | | | |
| per106 | Peace | per109 | Internationalism: Negative | | | | |
| per107 | Internationalism: Positive | per110 | European Community/Union: Negative | | | | |
| per108 | European Community/Union: Positive | per601 | National Way of Life: Positive | | | | |
| per501 | Environmental Protection | per603 | Traditional Morality: Positive | | | | |
| per503 | Equality: Positive | per605 | Law and Order: Positive | | | | |
| per602 | National Way of Life: Negative | per608 | Multiculturalism: Negative | | | | |
| per604 | Traditional Morality: Negative | | | | | | |
| per607 | Multiculturalism: Positive | | | | | | |
| per705 | Underprivileged Minority Groups | | | | | | |

Aggregate-Level Interaction Results (Models 7–12) **A6**

| Party Vote Share | (7) | (8) | (9) | (10) | (11) | (12) |
|-------------------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|----------|--------------|-----------|
| Turty Vote Share | Socialist | SD | Green | Liberal | Con | Far Right |
| DV e-1 | 0.449*** | 0.351*** | 0.220 | 0.332* | 0.415*** | 0.254* |
| | (0.102) | (0.068) | (0.133) | (0.129) | (0.070) | (0.119) |
| SD Econ Position | 0.831*** | -0.272 | -0.256+ | -0.431 | -0.036 | 0.484 |
| | (0.177) | (0.289) | (0.136) | (0.525) | (0.240) | (0.289) |
| SD Culture Position | 0.194 | -0.264 | 0.017 | 0.090 | -0.129 | -0.100 |
| | (0.188) | (0.206) | (0.096) | (0.224) | (0.255) | (0.238) |
| SD Econ # SD Culture | 0.103* | -0.072* | -0.040^{+} | -0.005 | -0.002 | 0.058 |
| | (0.036) | (0.029) | (0.022) | (0.056) | (0.043) | (0.036) |
| Mean Econ Position | -0.306 | 0.191 | -0.216 | 0.334 | 0.181 | -0.005 |
| | (0.202) | (0.211) | (0.178) | (0.446) | (0.262) | (0.371) |
| Mean Culture Position | 0.071 | 0.237 | -0.091 | -0.692 | -0.646^{+} | 1.033* |
| | (0.236) | (0.364) | (0.119) | (0.455) | (0.358) | (0.414) |
| Family Econ Position | -0.110 | | 0.022 | -0.267 | -0.187 | 0.046 |
| | (0.188) | | (0.090) | (0.201) | (0.201) | (0.210) |
| Family Culture Position | 0.023 | | 0.056 | 0.623** | 0.072 | 0.003 |
| | (0.149) | | (0.047) | (0.218) | (0.195) | (0.118) |
| Gini t-1 | -0.827** | 0.105 | -0.061 | 0.265 | 0.030 | -0.012 |
| | (0.227) | (0.332) | (0.296) | (0.441) | (0.271) | (0.396) |
| Government Spend t-1 | -0.330* | 0.260^{*} | -0.134* | -0.114 | 0.215^{+} | -0.087 |
| | (0.135) | (0.121) | (0.059) | (0.125) | (0.120) | (0.237) |
| GDP Growth t-1 | -0.123 | 0.043 | -0.121^{+} | -0.098 | 0.045 | 0.145 |
| | (0.208) | (0.149) | (0.066) | (0.237) | (0.179) | (0.373) |
| Unemployment t-1 | 0.845^{***} | -0.738** | -0.002 | -0.164 | -0.034 | -0.258 |
| | (0.174) | (0.257) | (0.130) | (0.170) | (0.180) | (0.199) |
| Union Density | 0.039 | -0.105 | 0.115^{+} | 0.236 | -0.063 | 0.017 |
| | (0.072) | (0.087) | (0.056) | (0.147) | (0.068) | (0.101) |
| SD Incumbent | -1.705* | -0.851 | -0.550 | 1.374 | 1.502^{+} | -0.668 |
| | (0.617) | (0.822) | (0.491) | (1.396) | (0.802) | (1.313) |
| Turnout | -0.108 | 0.106 | -0.127 | -0.065 | 0.196 | -0.089 |
| | (0.084) | (0.114) | (0.075) | (0.143) | (0.115) | (0.128) |
| Disproportionality | 0.138 | -0.297^{*} | -0.055 | 0.310 | -0.174 | 0.101 |
| | (0.230) | (0.124) | (0.163) | (0.201) | (0.126) | (0.233) |
| Globalization t-1 | 0.056 | -0.053 | 0.175 | 0.084 | -0.152 | 0.131 |
| | (0.126) | (0.165) | (0.128) | (0.355) | (0.162) | (0.286) |
| Foreigners Share | 0.221 | -0.005 | 0.380 | -0.553 | -0.049 | 0.003 |
| | (0.183) | (0.201) | (0.236) | (0.333) | (0.263) | (0.270) |
| Constant | 38.748** | 7.587 | -1.127 | 7.621 | 7.494 | 11.950 |
| - | (11.941) | (22.377) | (18.546) | (30.275) | (17.064) | (28.309) |
| R^2 within | 0.69 | 0.50 | 0.49 | 0.31 | 0.38 | 0.40 |
| Countries | 17 | 21 | 18 | 21 | 21 | 18 |
| Ν | 171 | 254 | 135 | 193 | 252 | 145 |

Table A6: Aggregate-Level Regression Results Predicting Party Family Vote Share (SD Economic Position x SD Culture Position)

Note: beta coefficients from a OLS regression with standard errors in parentheses. ${}^{+}p < 0.10$, ${}^{*}p < 0.05$, ${}^{**}p < 0.01$, ${}^{***}p < 0.001$

A7ab Excluding Decade Fixed Effects Robustness Check

Three alternative model specifications are undertaken at the aggregate-level. Including a lagged dependent variable with fixed effects can potentially introduce bias and inconsistent estimations (Nickell 1981). Therefore, the aggregate-level estimations are re-run excluding: 1) decade fixed effects; 2) fixed effects; 3) the lagged dependent variable. The main results hold for all three specifications (see Tables A7a–A7f). We also see slightly stronger effects when social democrats move rightwards on the economic dimension, and when they move rightwards simultaneously on both dimensions. In each case a higher level of statistically significance is reached except when no fixed effects are estimated for the interaction (A7d).

| Party Vote Share | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) |
|-------------------------|---------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|-----------|
| Turty vote blidle | Socialist | SD | Green | Liberal | Con | Far Right |
| DV e-1 | 0.496*** | 0.383*** | 0.245 | 0.337* | 0.412*** | 0.269* |
| _ · • • | (0.089) | (0.062) | (0.146) | (0.122) | (0.066) | (0.105) |
| SD Econ Position | 0.299* | 0.108 | -0.085 | -0.365 | -0.049 | 0.204 |
| | (0.133) | (0.201) | (0.073) | (0.289) | (0.195) | (0.164) |
| SD Culture Position | 0.104 | -0.142 | 0.046 | 0.073 | -0.080 | -0.141 |
| | (0.186) | (0.243) | (0.086) | (0.225) | (0.233) | (0.256) |
| Mean Econ Position | -0.321 | 0.361 | -0.205 | 0.229 | 0.266 | -0.097 |
| | (0.186) | (0.259) | (0.153) | (0.386) | (0.288) | (0.395) |
| Mean Culture Position | 0.022 | 0.130 | -0.167 | -0.609 | -0.714+ | 1.030* |
| | (0.248) | (0.381) | (0.099) | (0.483) | (0.360) | (0.426) |
| Family Econ Position | -0.153 | . , | 0.011 | -0.232 | -0.204 | 0.062 |
| - | (0.189) | | (0.075) | (0.211) | (0.193) | (0.200) |
| Family Culture Position | 0.163 | | 0.059 | 0.592* | 0.115 | 0.018 |
| - | (0.152) | | (0.047) | (0.215) | (0.198) | (0.115) |
| Gini t-1 | -0.703** | 0.006 | -0.113 | 0.371 | -0.075 | 0.067 |
| | (0.192) | (0.331) | (0.247) | (0.387) | (0.283) | (0.370) |
| Government Spend t-1 | -0.349* | 0.261^{+} | -0.098 | -0.131 | 0.157 | 0.028 |
| | (0.145) | (0.140) | (0.058) | (0.105) | (0.133) | (0.246) |
| GDP Growth t-1 | -0.152 | 0.135 | -0.086 | -0.111 | -0.007 | 0.080 |
| | (0.226) | (0.202) | (0.054) | (0.194) | (0.175) | (0.336) |
| Unemployment t-1 | 0.818^{***} | -0.751* | 0.046 | -0.209 | -0.093 | -0.248 |
| | (0.177) | (0.270) | (0.127) | (0.126) | (0.166) | (0.225) |
| Union Density | 0.034 | -0.092 | 0.090^* | 0.247^{+} | -0.062 | -0.019 |
| | (0.079) | (0.091) | (0.042) | (0.136) | (0.074) | (0.097) |
| SD Incumbent | -1.957** | -0.844 | -0.557 | 1.408 | 1.478^{+} | -0.369 |
| | (0.653) | (0.901) | (0.400) | (1.395) | (0.815) | (1.360) |
| Turnout | -0.139 | 0.114 | -0.150^{*} | -0.082 | 0.231* | -0.091 |
| | (0.083) | (0.123) | (0.062) | (0.147) | (0.104) | (0.128) |
| Disproportionality | 0.071 | -0.357* | 0.001 | 0.331 | -0.188^{+} | 0.107 |
| | (0.253) | (0.126) | (0.132) | (0.224) | (0.107) | (0.219) |
| Globalization t-1 | -0.131 | -0.038 | 0.036 | 0.158 | 0.020 | 0.077 |
| | (0.084) | (0.092) | (0.052) | (0.222) | (0.117) | (0.187) |
| Foreigners Share | 0.221 | -0.387 | 0.217 | -0.389 | -0.063 | 0.040 |
| | (0.178) | (0.236) | (0.177) | (0.352) | (0.260) | (0.223) |
| Constant | 54.279*** | 15.347 | 14.825 | -2.929 | -2.371 | 8.546 |
| | (10.379) | (23.385) | (10.779) | (25.324) | (16.753) | (24.183) |
| Decade fixed effects | NO | NO | NO | NO | NO | NO |
| R^2 within | 0.65 | 0.46 | 0.44 | 0.30 | 0.36 | 0.38 |
| Countries | 17 | 21 | 18 | 21 | 21 | 18 |

 Table A7a: Aggregate-Level Regression Results Predicting Party Family Vote Share (no decade fixed effects)

| N | 171 | 254 | 135 | 193 | 252 | 145 |
|------------------------------|-----------------|----------------|------------------|--------------|-----|-----|
| Note: beta coefficients from | m a OLS regress | ion with stand | dard errors in p | parentheses. | | |

 $^{+}p < 0.10, *p < 0.05, **p < 0.01, ***p < 0.001$

| Table A7b: Aggregate-Level Regression Results Predicting Pa | arty Family Vote Share with |
|---|-----------------------------|
| Interaction (no decade fixed effects | s) |

| Party Vote Share | (7) | (8) | (9) | (10) | (11) | (12) |
|-------------------------|-----------|-------------|----------|----------|----------|-------------|
| | Socialist | SD | Green | Liberal | Con | Far Right |
| DV e-1 | 0.464*** | 0.384*** | 0.219 | 0.336* | 0.412*** | 0.280^{*} |
| | (0.099) | (0.064) | (0.142) | (0.131) | (0.070) | (0.110) |
| SD Econ Position | 0.798*** | -0.181 | -0.230+ | -0.380 | -0.049 | 0.433 |
| | (0.186) | (0.291) | (0.121) | (0.538) | (0.236) | (0.269) |
| SD Culture Position | 0.142 | -0.228 | 0.027 | 0.070 | -0.080 | -0.094 |
| | (0.175) | (0.226) | (0.088) | (0.243) | (0.262) | (0.256) |
| SD Econ. # SD Cult. | 0.107* | -0.062+ | -0.033+ | -0.003 | 0.000 | 0.057 |
| | (0.037) | (0.032) | (0.018) | (0.059) | (0.042) | (0.035) |
| Mean Econ Position | -0.414+ | 0.415 | -0.190 | 0.235 | 0.266 | -0.104 |
| | (0.202) | (0.260) | (0.161) | (0.460) | (0.287) | (0.388) |
| Mean Culture Position | 0.132 | 0.109 | -0.149 | -0.611 | -0.714+ | 1.006* |
| | (0.231) | (0.387) | (0.089) | (0.473) | (0.357) | (0.420) |
| Family Econ Position | -0.122 | | 0.044 | -0.235 | -0.204 | 0.043 |
| - | (0.187) | | (0.074) | (0.204) | (0.198) | (0.192) |
| Family Culture Position | 0.153 | | 0.041 | 0.593* | 0.115 | 0.005 |
| | (0.140) | | (0.042) | (0.211) | (0.200) | (0.116) |
| Gini t-1 | -0.731** | 0.024 | -0.136 | 0.373 | -0.075 | 0.095 |
| | (0.220) | (0.325) | (0.254) | (0.403) | (0.288) | (0.392) |
| Government Spend t-1 | -0.334* | 0.249^{+} | -0.107+ | -0.130 | 0.157 | 0.038 |
| • | (0.131) | (0.133) | (0.056) | (0.106) | (0.134) | (0.249) |
| GDP Growth t-1 | -0.116 | 0.102 | -0.095+ | -0.113 | -0.007 | 0.109 |
| | (0.212) | (0.188) | (0.051) | (0.194) | (0.173) | (0.337) |
| Unemployment t-1 | 0.865*** | -0.744* | 0.029 | -0.210 | -0.093 | -0.250 |
| | (0.186) | (0.263) | (0.118) | (0.123) | (0.167) | (0.211) |
| Union Density | 0.040 | -0.096 | 0.100* | 0.246 | -0.062 | 0.004 |
| - | (0.074) | (0.087) | (0.045) | (0.143) | (0.076) | (0.096) |
| SD Incumbent | -1.773* | -0.855 | -0.655 | 1.405 | 1.478+ | -0.306 |
| | (0.634) | (0.884) | (0.392) | (1.370) | (0.817) | (1.352) |
| Turnout | -0.141 | 0.128 | -0.137+ | -0.080 | 0.231* | -0.110 |
| | (0.083) | (0.120) | (0.066) | (0.146) | (0.109) | (0.129) |
| Disproportionality | 0.139 | -0.360** | -0.004 | 0.333 | -0.188+ | 0.112 |
| | (0.232) | (0.121) | (0.142) | (0.221) | (0.107) | (0.210) |
| Globalization t-1 | -0.141 | -0.037 | 0.062 | 0.159 | 0.020 | 0.049 |
| | (0.082) | (0.091) | (0.063) | (0.211) | (0.117) | (0.199) |
| Foreigners Share | 0.158 | -0.352 | 0.246 | -0.389 | -0.063 | 0.092 |
| C | (0.171) | (0.242) | (0.182) | (0.351) | (0.257) | (0.227) |
| Constant | 55.499*** | 13.627 | 12.379 | -3.212 | -2.369 | 9.416 |
| | (10.649) | (22.976) | (11.171) | (23.503) | (17.117) | (23.876) |
| Decade Fixed Effects | NO | NO | NO | NO | NO | NO |
| R^2 within | 0.68 | 0.47 | 0.45 | 0.30 | 0.36 | 0.39 |
| Ν | 171 | 254 | 135 | 193 | 252 | 145 |

Note: beta coefficients from a OLS regression with standard errors in parentheses. ${}^{+}p < 0.10, {}^{*}p < 0.05, {}^{**}p < 0.01, {}^{***}p < 0.001$

A7cd Excluding Fixed Effects Robustness Check

| Douter Voto Store | (1) | (2) | (2) | (A) | (5) | (6) |
|-------------------------|------------------|-----------|---------|------------------|--------------|------------------|
| Party vote Share | (1) Seci-1:-4 | (2) SD | (3) | (4) Tiha1 | (3) | (0) Een Dista |
| DV - 1 | | SD | Green | | Con | Far Right |
| Dv e-1 | (0.050) | 0.700 | 0.035 | (0.773) | 0.723 | 0.441 |
| SD Econ Desition | (0.039) | (0.051) | (0.079) | (0.039) | (0.073) | (0.060) |
| SD Econ Position | 0.288 | (0.104) | -0.062 | -0.403° | 0.008 | (0.172) |
| SD Caltana Davidian | (0.143) | (0.209) | (0.060) | (0.229) | (0.191) | (0.173) |
| SD Culture Position | (0.12) | -0.132 | 0.026 | 0.362 | -0.241 | -0.236 |
| | (0.128) | (0.1/8) | (0.065) | (0.235) | (0.240) | (0.1/6) |
| Mean Econ Position | -0.199 | 0.211 | -0.226 | 0.421 | -0.027 | -0.183 |
| | (0.166) | (0.303) | (0.175) | (0.4/3) | (0.291) | (0.266) |
| Mean Culture Position | -0.103 | 0.235 | -0.004 | -1.008 | -0.508 | 0.831 |
| | (0.1/8) | (0.229) | (0.103) | (0.447) | (0.297) | (0.253) |
| Family Econ Position | 0.011 | | -0.0/1 | -0.215 | -0.105 | 0.020 |
| | (0.182) | | (0.088) | (0.220) | (0.1/8) | (0.160) |
| Family Culture Position | 0.205 | | -0.001 | 0.545 | 0.225 | -0.076 |
| <u> </u> | (0.109) | 0.110 | (0.056) | (0.182) | (0.156) | (0.100) |
| Gini t-1 | -0.102 | -0.110 | -0.129 | 0.302 | 0.048 | -0.039 |
| | (0.161) | (0.225) | (0.145) | (0.292) | (0.178) | (0.162) |
| Government Spend t-1 | -0.018 | -0.131 | 0.001 | 0.122 | 0.049 | 0.162 |
| | (0.102) | (0.115) | (0.049) | (0.140) | (0.079) | (0.094) |
| GDP Growth t-1 | -0.060 | -0.135 | -0.029 | 0.182 | -0.071 | -0.061 |
| | (0.227) | (0.235) | (0.039) | (0.156) | (0.135) | (0.247) |
| Unemployment t-1 | 0.296+ | -0.246 | -0.113 | 0.080 | 0.054 | -0.237+ |
| | (0.162) | (0.189) | (0.096) | (0.215) | (0.095) | (0.141) |
| Union Density | -0.005 | -0.035 | 0.008 | 0.028 | -0.025 | -0.009 |
| | (0.033) | (0.041) | (0.021) | (0.056) | (0.034) | (0.032) |
| SD Incumbent | -1.501* | -1.875* | -0.104 | 1.955 | 2.028^{*} | 0.307 |
| | (0.640) | (0.846) | (0.414) | (1.362) | (0.825) | (1.251) |
| Turnout | -0.034 | 0.103 | 0.015 | -0.078 | 0.110^{*} | -0.134** |
| | (0.035) | (0.059) | (0.025) | (0.066) | (0.048) | (0.042) |
| Disproportionality | 0.130 | -0.020 | -0.011 | 0.073 | 0.151^{+} | -0.155 |
| | (0.140) | (0.072) | (0.060) | (0.143) | (0.088) | (0.113) |
| Globalization t-1 | 0.020 | -0.051 | 0.054 | -0.049 | -0.079 | 0.110 |
| | (0.069) | (0.105) | (0.064) | (0.219) | (0.117) | (0.089) |
| Foreigners Share | -0.010 | -0.134 | 0.090 | -0.042 | 0.209^{**} | 0.135 |
| | (0.054) | (0.083) | (0.055) | (0.086) | (0.068) | (0.082) |
| Constant | 8.759 | 16.574 | -0.589 | -1.709 | -3.754 | 3.017 |
| | (9.686) | (12.349) | (9.769) | (26.180) | (12.610) | (11.949) |
| Fixed effects | NO | NO | NO | NO | NO | NO |
| R^2 within | 0.60 | 0.39 | 0.32 | 0.21 | 0.33 | 0.33 |
| Countries | 17 | 21 | 18 | 21 | 21 | 18 |
| N | 171 | 254 | 135 | 193 | 252 | 145 |

Table A7c: Aggregate-Level Regression Results Predicting Party Family Vote Share (no fixed effects)

Note: beta coefficients from a OLS regression with standard errors in parentheses. ${}^{+}p < 0.10$, ${}^{*}p < 0.05$, ${}^{**}p < 0.01$, ${}^{***}p < 0.001$

| Party Vote Share | (7) | (8) | (9) | (10) | (11) | (12) |
|-------------------------|---------------|---------------|----------|--------------|---------------|---------------|
| | Socialist | SD | Green | Liberal | Con | Far Right |
| DV e-1 | 0.675^{***} | 0.766^{***} | 0.631*** | 0.773*** | 0.722^{***} | 0.442^{***} |
| | (0.070) | (0.051) | (0.081) | (0.038) | (0.074) | (0.064) |
| SD Econ Position | 0.678^{***} | -0.157 | -0.141 | -0.373 | -0.137 | 0.418 |
| | (0.162) | (0.368) | (0.101) | (0.324) | (0.240) | (0.285) |
| SD Culture Position | 0.179 | -0.213 | 0.010 | 0.370 | -0.286 | -0.168 |
| | (0.126) | (0.155) | (0.063) | (0.250) | (0.263) | (0.185) |
| SD Econ. # SD Cult. | 0.077^* | -0.053 | -0.018 | 0.006 | -0.030 | 0.078^{*} |
| | (0.037) | (0.049) | (0.016) | (0.047) | (0.038) | (0.038) |
| Mean Econ Position | -0.270 | 0.248 | -0.220 | 0.411 | -0.015 | -0.155 |
| | (0.179) | (0.303) | (0.175) | (0.490) | (0.285) | (0.274) |
| Mean Culture Position | -0.109 | 0.256 | 0.020 | -1.006^{*} | -0.495 | 0.782^{**} |
| | (0.185) | (0.232) | (0.108) | (0.443) | (0.305) | (0.268) |
| Family Econ Position | 0.031 | | -0.060 | -0.211 | -0.095 | -0.022 |
| | (0.173) | | (0.088) | (0.229) | (0.176) | (0.154) |
| Family Culture Position | 0.198^{+} | | -0.007 | 0.541^{**} | 0.225 | -0.079 |
| | (0.106) | | (0.059) | (0.178) | (0.154) | (0.098) |
| Gini t-1 | -0.119 | -0.103 | -0.123 | 0.301 | 0.051 | -0.042 |
| | (0.162) | (0.226) | (0.142) | (0.290) | (0.178) | (0.157) |
| Government Spend t-1 | -0.000 | -0.142 | -0.006 | 0.123 | 0.043 | 0.202^{*} |
| | (0.102) | (0.116) | (0.048) | (0.141) | (0.082) | (0.101) |
| GDP Growth t-1 | -0.049 | -0.156 | -0.033 | 0.184 | -0.083 | -0.018 |
| | (0.221) | (0.227) | (0.036) | (0.162) | (0.141) | (0.232) |
| Unemployment t-1 | 0.322^{+} | -0.246 | -0.118 | 0.081 | 0.053 | -0.249^{+} |
| | (0.173) | (0.188) | (0.097) | (0.214) | (0.095) | (0.131) |
| Union Density | 0.003 | -0.039 | 0.007 | 0.029 | -0.028 | -0.007 |
| | (0.033) | (0.042) | (0.021) | (0.058) | (0.035) | (0.028) |
| SD Incumbent | -1.246* | -1.952* | -0.207 | 1.969 | 1.976^{*} | 0.509 |
| | (0.599) | (0.790) | (0.447) | (1.378) | (0.858) | (1.264) |
| Turnout | -0.035 | 0.107^{+} | 0.018 | -0.078 | 0.113* | -0.149*** |
| | (0.038) | (0.061) | (0.026) | (0.066) | (0.049) | (0.041) |
| Disproportionality | 0.115 | -0.003 | -0.012 | 0.072 | 0.160^{+} | -0.162 |
| | (0.143) | (0.077) | (0.060) | (0.145) | (0.091) | (0.102) |
| Globalization t-1 | -0.021 | -0.042 | 0.062 | -0.049 | -0.073 | 0.061 |
| | (0.072) | (0.107) | (0.065) | (0.219) | (0.116) | (0.091) |
| Foreigners Share | -0.011 | -0.134 | 0.087 | -0.041 | 0.209^{**} | 0.133 |
| | (0.059) | (0.085) | (0.055) | (0.088) | (0.067) | (0.081) |
| Constant | 12.070 | 15.548 | -1.233 | -1.724 | -4.375 | 6.809 |
| | (9.792) | (12.333) | (9.735) | (26.171) | (12.573) | (11.633) |
| Fixed Effects | NO | NO | NO | NO | NO | NO |
| R^2 within | 0.62 | 0.40 | 0.33 | 0.21 | 0.33 | 0.34 |
| N | 171 | 254 | 135 | 193 | 252 | 145 |

 Table A7d: Aggregate-Level Regression Results Predicting Party Family Vote Share with Interaction (no fixed effects)

Note: beta coefficients from a OLS regression with standard errors in parentheses. *p < 0.10, *p < 0.05, **p < 0.01, ***p < 0.001

A7ef Excluding Lagged Dependent Variable Robustness Check

| Party Vote Share | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) |
|-------------------------|-----------|--------------|----------|--------------|-------------|-------------|
| | Socialist | SD | Green | Liberal | Con | Far Right |
| SD Econ Position | 0.657*** | 0.077 | -0.091 | -0.396 | -0.173 | 0.243 |
| | (0.143) | (0.255) | (0.089) | (0.352) | (0.232) | (0.188) |
| SD Culture Position | -0.074 | -0.008 | 0.051 | 0.005 | -0.062 | -0.207 |
| | (0.249) | (0.217) | (0.082) | (0.212) | (0.194) | (0.262) |
| Mean Econ Position | -0.531* | 0.121 | -0.199 | 0.171 | 0.343 | 0.141 |
| | (0.200) | (0.233) | (0.213) | (0.371) | (0.316) | (0.396) |
| Mean Culture Position | 0.277 | -0.016 | -0.120 | -0.400 | -0.911* | 1.220^{*} |
| | (0.350) | (0.359) | (0.126) | (0.458) | (0.398) | (0.515) |
| Family Econ Position | -0.202 | | 0.003 | -0.388 | -0.258 | 0.031 |
| | (0.177) | | (0.105) | (0.243) | (0.190) | (0.258) |
| Family Culture Position | 0.002 | | 0.051 | 0.570^{*} | -0.029 | 0.025 |
| | (0.210) | | (0.050) | (0.244) | (0.262) | (0.150) |
| Gini t-1 | -1.073** | -0.079 | 0.009 | 0.562 | 0.135 | -0.224 |
| | (0.319) | (0.408) | (0.337) | (0.437) | (0.394) | (0.411) |
| Government Spend t-1 | -0.571** | 0.384^{*} | -0.133+ | 0.004 | 0.283^{+} | -0.226 |
| | (0.156) | (0.156) | (0.064) | (0.144) | (0.157) | (0.241) |
| GDP Growth t-1 | -0.237 | 0.144 | -0.120 | -0.120 | 0.183 | -0.016 |
| | (0.215) | (0.169) | (0.074) | (0.316) | (0.253) | (0.360) |
| Unemployment t-1 | 1.249*** | -0.948* | 0.072 | -0.289 | -0.098 | -0.162 |
| | (0.297) | (0.335) | (0.151) | (0.231) | (0.251) | (0.279) |
| Union Density | 0.028 | -0.103 | 0.100 | 0.199 | 0.018 | -0.025 |
| | (0.121) | (0.111) | (0.062) | (0.150) | (0.074) | (0.124) |
| SD Incumbent | -2.755** | 1.179 | -0.626 | 0.715 | 0.867 | -1.338 |
| | (0.827) | (0.910) | (0.524) | (1.583) | (1.077) | (1.461) |
| Turnout | -0.107 | 0.106 | -0.161* | -0.027 | 0.247^{+} | -0.040 |
| | (0.153) | (0.144) | (0.070) | (0.195) | (0.130) | (0.132) |
| Disproportionality | -0.019 | -0.288^{+} | -0.028 | 0.505^{+} | -0.251 | 0.101 |
| | (0.275) | (0.161) | (0.143) | (0.269) | (0.176) | (0.230) |
| Globalization t-1 | 0.074 | -0.034 | 0.105 | -0.027 | -0.058 | 0.208 |
| | (0.149) | (0.220) | (0.092) | (0.356) | (0.217) | (0.281) |
| Foreigners Share | 0.370 | 0.015 | 0.369 | -0.802^{*} | 0.088 | 0.020 |
| | (0.301) | (0.272) | (0.258) | (0.369) | (0.305) | (0.323) |
| Constant | 56.212** | 16.047 | 7.115 | 12.109 | -1.422 | 18.527 |
| | (16.874) | (27.829) | (15.712) | (34.962) | (18.225) | (31.950) |
| R^2 within | 0.54 | 0.42 | 0.43 | 0.23 | 0.24 | 0.35 |
| Countries | 17 | 21 | 18 | 21 | 21 | 18 |
| N | 171 | 254 | 135 | 193 | 252 | 145 |

Table A7e: Aggregate-Level Regression Results Predicting Party Family Vote Share (no lagged DVs)

Note: beta coefficients from a OLS regression with standard errors in parentheses. * p < 0.10, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001

| Party Vote Share | (7) | (8) | (9) | (10) | (11) | (12) |
|-------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| | Socialist | SD | Green | Liberal | Con | Far Right |
| SD Econ Position | 1.244*** | -0.268 | -0.315+ | -0.561 | -0.081 | 0.431 |
| | (0.186) | (0.294) | (0.170) | (0.591) | (0.294) | (0.295) |
| SD Culture Position | -0.011 | -0.111 | 0.017 | -0.033 | -0.035 | -0.173 |
| | (0.239) | (0.198) | (0.099) | (0.226) | (0.221) | (0.263) |
| SD Econ. # SD Cult. | 0.133** | -0.073* | -0.050^{+} | -0.032 | 0.020 | 0.044 |
| | (0.041) | (0.027) | (0.026) | (0.061) | (0.049) | (0.036) |
| Mean Econ Position | -0.597^{*} | 0.176 | -0.185 | 0.236 | 0.331 | 0.138 |
| | (0.241) | (0.234) | (0.214) | (0.449) | (0.322) | (0.392) |
| Mean Culture Position | 0.373 | -0.036 | -0.087 | -0.430 | -0.906* | 1.211^{*} |
| | (0.336) | (0.368) | (0.136) | (0.438) | (0.392) | (0.510) |
| Family Econ Position | -0.158 | | 0.045 | -0.419 | -0.263 | 0.020 |
| | (0.173) | | (0.090) | (0.225) | (0.202) | (0.251) |
| Family Culture Position | 0.004 | | 0.029 | 0.590^{*} | -0.031 | 0.015 |
| | (0.194) | | (0.049) | (0.234) | (0.262) | (0.152) |
| Gini t-1 | -1.094** | -0.049 | -0.012 | 0.573 | 0.125 | -0.206 |
| | (0.289) | (0.407) | (0.330) | (0.433) | (0.409) | (0.425) |
| Government Spend t-1 | -0.529** | 0.371^{*} | -0.145* | 0.008 | 0.286^{+} | -0.221 |
| | (0.143) | (0.149) | (0.066) | (0.137) | (0.158) | (0.247) |
| GDP Growth t-1 | -0.180 | 0.101 | -0.134^{+} | -0.132 | 0.193 | 0.017 |
| | (0.199) | (0.159) | (0.073) | (0.313) | (0.250) | (0.370) |
| Unemployment t-1 | 1.270*** | -0.939** | 0.033 | -0.289 | -0.101 | -0.159 |
| | (0.289) | (0.326) | (0.134) | (0.235) | (0.251) | (0.272) |
| Union Density | 0.037 | -0.110 | 0.114 | 0.191 | 0.020 | -0.009 |
| | (0.108) | (0.106) | (0.066) | (0.157) | (0.076) | (0.126) |
| SD Incumbent | -2.390* | 1.158 | -0.730 | 0.683 | 0.878 | -1.317 |
| | (0.843) | (0.896) | (0.552) | (1.548) | (1.089) | (1.465) |
| Turnout | -0.106 | 0.122 | -0.131 | -0.003 | 0.243^{+} | -0.057 |
| | (0.154) | (0.140) | (0.076) | (0.182) | (0.132) | (0.135) |
| Disproportionality | 0.057 | -0.285^{+} | -0.043 | 0.521^{*} | -0.252 | 0.106 |
| | (0.243) | (0.153) | (0.157) | (0.241) | (0.176) | (0.222) |
| Globalization t-1 | 0.026 | -0.027 | 0.157 | -0.018 | -0.058 | 0.177 |
| | (0.162) | (0.222) | (0.123) | (0.352) | (0.216) | (0.293) |
| Foreigners Share | 0.234 | 0.083 | 0.440 | -0.797* | 0.063 | 0.049 |
| | (0.300) | (0.279) | (0.277) | (0.362) | (0.306) | (0.322) |
| Constant | 59.904** | 12.789 | 0.345 | 9.257 | -0.413 | 20.814 |
| | (17.008) | (27.701) | (17.706) | (33.274) | (19.476) | (31.975) |
| R ² within | 0.58 | 0.43 | 0.46 | 0.23 | 0.24 | 0.36 |
| N | 171 | 254 | 135 | 193 | 252 | 145 |

Table A7f: Aggregate-Level Regression Results Predicting Party Family Vote Share with Interaction (no lagged DVs)

Note: beta coefficients from a OLS regression with standard errors in parentheses. * p < 0.10, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001

A8 Country Outliers Robustness Check

To ensure that the results are not driven by the inclusion of any one country, a jackknife analysis is undertaken for the two statistically significant hypotheses at the aggregate level where the socialist left benefit from the adoption of social democratic rightward economic (H2) and both dimension (H4a) positions. The results of these additional analyses indicate that the estimated coefficients are highly stable for each model and not driven by a single outlier country in the dataset.



Figure A8a: Aggregate-level Jackknife Estimates for Socialist Left Vote (Model 1)

Note: Estimates from 21 different regression models, replicating Model 1 in Table 3 excluding 1 country at a time. Excluded country is indicated on the y-axis. Estimates and 90% confidence intervals are plotted.



Figure A8b: Aggregate-level Jackknife Estimates for Socialist Left Vote (Model 7)

Note: Estimates from 21 different regression models, replicating Model 7 in Figure 7 excluding 1 country at a time. Excluded country is indicated on the y-axis. Estimates and 90% confidence intervals are plotted.

A9 Mean Social Democrat Party Positions Over Time

Average social democrat economic and socio-cultural positions (left-right) over time, with trend lines. Calculated from MARPOR (Volkens et al. 2020).



Figure A9a: Average SD Economic Position, 1965–2019

Figure A9b: Average SD Culture Position, 1965–2019



Appendix References

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