Labor Union Membership and Voting Across Nations[*]

Patrick Flavin[†]
Assistant Professor
Department of Political Science
Baylor University
Patrick_J_Flavin@baylor.edu

Benjamin Radcliff
Professor
Department of Political Science
University of Notre Dame
radcliff.1@nd.edu

[†] Corresponding author. Baylor University, Department of Political Science, One Bear Place #97276,

Waco, TX 76798. Phone: (254) 710-7418.

Abstract

Despite a large literature on voter turnout around the world, our understanding of the role of labor union membership remains muddled. In this paper, we examine the relationship between union membership and voting. Using individual level International Social Science Program (ISSP) data from thirty-two countries, we find that union members are more likely to vote and that the substantive effect rivals that of other common predictors of voting. This relationship is also largely invariant across an array of demographic factors, indicating that unions tend to be "equal opportunity mobilizers." We also find that unions have "spillover" effects: controlling for a variety of other factors, even non-union members are more likely to turn out to vote in countries with higher union densities. In sum, we find that labor unions have a consistent political influence across a wide set of countries.

Keywords: Voter turnout, labor unions, union density, political equality

1. Introduction

Voting is the most important and most studied form of political participation. The rate of voter participation has been used to judge the legitimacy of democratic institutions (Piven and Cloward 1988) and numerous studies have demonstrated that voting has important political implications by influencing the behavior of elected officials and the tone and direction of public policy (Hill and Leighley 1992; Hicks and Misra 1993; Martin 2003; Griffin and Newman 2005). It is no surprise, then, that political scientists have devoted significant attention to explaining the determinants of voter turnout at both the individual (Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980; Rosenstone and Hanson 1993; Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995) and aggregate levels (Abramson and Aldrich 1982; Powell 1986; Jackman 1987; Jackman and Miller 1995; Franklin 1999).

Yet even with this large body of literature, the relationship between belonging to a labor union and turning out to vote remains unclear. Given the historical role that organized labor has played in influencing government policy and mobilizing its members to engage in the political process, this shortcoming is quite surprising. Though scholars have tended to conclude that being a member of a labor union increases one's likelihood of voting in the United States (Delaney, Masters, and Schwochau 1988; Asher et al. 2001; Radcliff 2001; Leighley and Nagler 2007; but see Sousa 1993), no study to date examines whether this relationship holds across a larger set of countries. Instead, turnout scholars have tended to focus on aggregated levels of union membership (i.e. union density) and aggregated levels of turnout across countries, finding that countries with higher unionization rates tend to have higher levels of voter turnout (Gray and Caul 2000; Radcliff and Davis 2000; Gray and Kittilson 2005; but see Franklin 2004). We

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argue, however, that deciding to vote or not to vote is an individual level phenomena that requires analysis of individual level data

In this short paper, we examine the relationship between union membership and voting across thirty-two countries.[1] Using individual level data from the International Social Science Program (ISSP), we find that union members are more likely to vote and that the substantive effect rivals that of other common predictors of voting. The relationship is largely invariant across an array of demographic factors that might be expected to moderate it. We also find that unions have "spillover" effects: controlling for a variety of other factors, even non-union members are more likely to turn out to vote in countries with higher levels of unionization. In sum, we find that labor unions have a consistent political influence across a wide set of countries.

2. The Political Implications of Labor Unions

Why citizens do or do not turn out to vote is one of the most studied questions in political science. Standard models of voter turnout usually emphasize individual level characteristics and how they relate to a citizen's analysis of the costs and benefits of voting (Downs 1957; Riker and Ordeshook 1968). Citizens with higher levels of income and education have greater resources to overcome the costs of voting and, thus, are predicted to vote at higher rates (Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980; Leighley and Nagler 1992; Rosenstone and Hanson 1993; Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995). This socioeconomic effect on turnout leads to an upward bias in the socioeconomic status of actual voters (Hill and Leighley 1992). Labor unions, whose members traditionally are drawn from the working class, can potentially offset this socioeconomic bias if

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[1] To our knowledge, this represents a substantial increase in the number of countries included in an analysis of the individual level determinates of voting (e.g., Nadeau, Niemi, and Yoshinaka 2002).

they are successful in mobilizing workers with lower socioeconomic status (Leighley and Nagler 2007). So, any relationship between union membership and voting may have a direct impact on the level of political equality within a democracy (Lijphart 1997).

Why would being a member of a labor union increase a person's propensity to turn out and vote? First, unions are inherently political organizations. Previous research has shown that participation in organizations (Nie, Powell, and Prewitt 1969; Elden 1981; Putnam 2000), and unions in particular (Denney 1979), increases political sophistication and interest (Elden 1981; Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995). Belonging to a labor union means one is involved, at least on some level, in union and workplace affairs. Selecting members for leadership positions and voting on proposed wages and contracts are both examples of political participation in the workplace. We expect that the use of these political skills translates beyond just the workplace and increases a member's likelihood of becoming involved in the political process and, ultimately, voting.

Belonging to a labor union should also foster greater electoral participation by increasing consumption benefits or changing the subjective perception that one's vote may matter. Uhlaner (1989) makes precisely this point and argues for the role of organizations such as unions in building the kind of group solidarity that makes voting more sensible. This is much the same point made in a somewhat different way by Verba and Nie (1972), who suggest that participation may have a collective or communal aspect: one votes not simply to see a particular candidate win or to support the system in abstract, but because it is part of one's identity as a member of a community.

Unions themselves also notoriously encourage their members to turn out and vote for union supported candidates, which reduces the time and effort costs to members who are seeking

political information. For example, in the United States the AFL-CIO (through its Committee on

Political Education) has devoted enormous resources to voter information, registration, and

turnout drives (Sorauf 1988). More broadly, Verba, Nie and Kim (1978) demonstrate in their

classic seven nation study of political participation that labor unions play a key role in

mobilizing members to the polls. For union members, these organized efforts may serve as their

primary source of political information and mobilization before an election.

Thus, we expect that unions will elevate turnout among their members. But, there are

also reasons to expect that the electoral effects of unions will "spillover" to non-members. As

Radcliff and Davis (2000) stress, unions as organizations have both the incentives and the

resources to mobilize not only members but a wider constituency of the poor, minorities, and the

working class – precisely the "peripheral" voters argued to drive cross-national variation in voter

turnout. This mobilization occurs through two distinct mechanisms. One mechanism is a direct

effect described above, whereby unions organize and fund their own voter registration and get-

out-the-vote drives or provide volunteers and activists to parties and candidates for similar

purposes. These union-initiated mobilization drives typically include canvassing or phone bank

operations that contact both union members and non-members alike. So, in an area where

organized labor has a stronger presence in general, these mobilization efforts are more likely to

be effective in increasing turnout.

The other mechanism is an indirect effect that occurs through the ability of unions to

affect the ideological position of parties so as to create an alternative that is appealing to

peripheral voters. As Radcliff and Davis (2000, 133-134) put it:

> Unions indirectly encourage turnout through their traditional role as advocates for the
> interests of low- and middle-income citizens. ... Because unions have typically defined
> their political agendas in class terms, they are widely agreed to be the most important
> political advocate for working people, since they serve as the only truly important

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political "voice" of lower- and middle-status people. ... Unions may compel or enable a party to champion the sorts of policies that benefit working people. The obvious implication is that it is rational for more people to participate, because it is likely that one of the parties will represent their interests. The stronger the unions, the greater this consistency between party policy and the union agenda is likely to be, and thus the greater the benefits of turning out to vote for that party.

Gray and Caul (2000, 1103) make a similar point:

Trade unions are not only an independent mobilizing force but also play an important role in the linkage of party to citizen. ... Trade unions have historically acted as facilitating organizations in unison with labor parties to achieve reforms and social justice through the potential electoral capital provided by the working class vote. Although it is debatable whether increased turnout actually benefits leftist parties, socialist parties have accepted this hypothesis and therefore design their election strategies and party activities with the intention of mobilizing the voting reserves. … Thus, the combined effect of strong unions and strong labor parties creates the greatest incentives and effectiveness of working class mobilization.

For both studies cited above, the key to the power of organized labor is density, meaning the share of the workforce that is organized. While other conditions, such as centralization, are surely important aspects of a given labor market regime, it is widely agreed that density is the single most important factor determining the political importance of labor unions (Goldfield 1986; Delaney, Firoito, and Masters 1988). Accordingly, high density means that unions have a large membership that is itself more likely to vote and that unions will have the resources to mobilize other citizens as well.

A final reason we expect higher union density to spillover to non-members is a contagion effect: union members interact with other individuals and, through that interaction, may mobilize others. The most common example is the immediate family of the union member, but members likely play a similar role through interpersonal communication networks outside the family as well. For all of these reasons, we expect that individuals will be more likely to vote in countries with higher union density even if they are not a union member themselves.

3. Data and Method

To analyze the relationship between labor union membership and voting among individuals, we use survey data from the 2006 (Role of Government IV) wave of the International Social Science Program (ISSP) which includes respondents from thirty-two countries.[2] Across the over 30,000 respondents in the data, the average number of respondents from a given country is 1,150 with a low of 497 and a high of 2,336. These data are especially useful for our analysis because they contain indicators for union membership, voter turnout, common demographic indicators, and political attitudes and opinions.

Our main dependent variable of interest is whether a respondent reported having voted in the most recent election. This variable is coded 1 if they voted and 0 if they did not vote.[3] Our

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[2] The countries included in our analysis are Australia, Canada, Chile, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Japan, Latvia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Russia, Slovenia, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan, United States, Uruguay, and Venezuela.

[3] An obvious concern with any survey that uses self-reported turnout to measure voting is that respondents tend to misreport (or lie) by saying they voted when, in truth, they did not. This would be a potential problem for our study only if (1) labor union members were systematically more likely to misreport voting than non-members or (2) the potential for over-reporting voting varied in a systematic fashion across the countries we analyze. The ISSP does not contain validated vote data, which makes any systematic analysis impossible and also reflects the relative lack of attention this issue has received in the cross-national study of voter turnout. However, the available evidence we are able to bring to bear on this concern does not suggest that a major problem is likely. First, we turned to data from the American National Election Studies (ANES). The ANES validated voter turnout in 1964, 1976, 1978, 1980, 1984, 1986, 1988, and 1990 by examining precinct polling records to determine if they matched the

independent variable of interest is membership in a labor union. The ISSP item on union

membership asks respondents whether they are currently a member of a trade union.[4]

Respondents are then grouped into three categories: (1) currently a union member, (2) once a

union member but not now, and (3) never a union member. For our analysis, we code only those

people who responded that they are *currently* in a union as union members (coded 1), while

everyone else is coded as a non-member (coded 0).[5] We do so because we are interested in the

direct impact of unions on voter turnout, and not past influences. In our sample, 18.9% of

respondents reported themselves as current union members.

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respondents' self-reported turnout. Pooling data across these years, we find no evidence that union

members are more likely to over-report voting than non-members. Second, the limited previous studies

that have examined international variations in over-reporting of voting find little evidence of substantial

variation across countries. Granberg and Holmberg (1991) compared voters in the United States and

Sweden and found no significant difference between voters in the two countries in their propensity to

over-report voting. Andersson and Granberg (1997) reach similar results when comparing the United

States, Sweden, and the United Kingdom and find little difference in over-reporting of voting. Because

over-reporting of voting does not significantly differ across countries that do differ greatly in both the rate

of unionization and the overall rate of voter turnout, we believe there is little reason to fear that our results

are being affected by some systematic variation in over-reporting of voting across the countries in our

sample.

[4] The question wordings differ slightly across countries. They can be viewed at

http://zacat.gesis.org/webview/index.jsp?object=http://zacat.gesis.org/obj/fStudy/ZA4700.

[5] The coding scheme and a detailed description for all variables used in our analysis are included in the

Appendix.

Previous research has shown that the propensity to turn out and vote is also impacted by a variety of other individual demographic characteristics (Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980; Rosenstone and Hanson 1993). Accordingly, we control for a host of other factors in our models of voter turnout. Because individuals with higher socioeconomic status are more likely to vote (Rosenstone and Hanson 1993; Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995), we include measures of respondents' reported level of educational attainment along with dummy variables for whether a respondent is unemployed, not a member of the workforce (student, house wife/husband, permanently disabled, or retired), a public sector employee, or a private sector employee (leaving respondents who are self-employed as the reference category). As a proxy for life stability and residential mobility, we include a dummy for marital status. With the expectation that the relationship between age and turnout is curvilinear (turnout increases with age to a point and then falls), we include both an unsquared and squared term for age. To detect gender differences in turnout, we include a dummy for whether a respondent is male.

Because we want to know the impact of labor union membership above and beyond a citizen's existing interest and engagement in politics, we control for (1) whether the respondent identifies with a political party, (2) a respondent's sense of internal (Niemi, Craig, and Mattei 1991) and external political efficacy (Abramson and Aldrich 1982; Finkel 1985, 1987),[6] and (3) a respondent's self-reported interest in politics. To control for the degree to which a respondent is embedded within their community (Putnam 2000), we include a measure for church attendance and a self-reported measure of trust in others. Finally, to control for country level effects and the

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[6] Internal political efficacy is a person's belief they have the capacity to engage in meaningful political action. External political efficacy is the belief that elected officials will listen to "people like me."

fact that some nations simply have higher turnout in general than others, we include a dummy variable for each country in the analysis (i.e. fixed effects), omitting one as a reference category.

We are also interested in the effects of union organizational strength on voter mobilization. That is, above and beyond whether an individual is a union member or not, does living in a country with higher union density increase the probability of voting? This also allows us to examine whether unions have spillover effects and lead to greater voter turnout even among citizens who are not a member of a labor union. To assess this possibility, we model turnout with the same individual level covariates described above plus a country level measure of union density and controls for a country's gross domestic product, level of democratization (Polity score), and whether a country has a mandatory voting law or not. In these models, we do not use country dummy variables because they are perfectly collinear with the country level measures.

4. Union Membership, Union Density, and Voter Turnout

To begin, we model voting as a function of union membership and only the demographic covariates described above (along with the country dummy variables).[7] This reduced form model specification that does not include any "political" variables reports the upper limit of the possible impact of union membership on voting. The results of this analysis are reported in

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[7] Because our dependent variable of interest is dichotomous (voted or not), we use probit regression in all analyses. Because of the pooled structure of our data (respondents clustered within country), we report Huber-White robust standard errors clustered on each country. This procedure yields estimates that are robust to both between-country heteroskedasticity and within-country correlation (i.e. robust to error terms being neither identically distributed nor independent).

Table 1, Column 1.[8] We find a positive and statistically significant relationship between

belonging to a labor union and turning out to vote. Next, we add in a control for whether a

respondent reports affiliating with a political party. The coefficient for union member remains

positive and statistically significant (see Table 1, Column 2). Finally, we control for the

explicitly political factors described above that may predict both the decision to join a labor

union and turn out to vote. These variables include a respondent's sense of internal and external

political efficacy, interest in politics, frequency of church attendance, and trust in others. After

including this additional set of covariates, the coefficient for union member again remains

positive and statistically significant and only declines slightly in magnitude compared to the

reduced form models (see Table 1, Column 3). We also find a positive relationship for other

common predictors of voting including education, marital status, political efficacy and interest,

and church attendance. Interestingly, public sector employees are more likely to vote while

those who report not being a member of the workforce are less likely to vote. But, to return to

our main finding, union members are more likely to vote than non-members and this relationship

holds up to a litany of possible confounding factors.

[Table 1 about here]

To further assess the robustness of the relationship between labor union membership and

voting, we performed several additional empirical tests. First, we used a "jackknife" procedure

whereby one at a time we removed a country from the sample and re-ran the analysis reported in

Table 1, Column 3. The results were unchanged. We also experimented with running the model

with different sets of countries including OECD countries vs. not, countries below vs. above the

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[8] For the sake of space, we do not include the coefficient estimates for the 31 country dummy variables in

the tables we report.

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mean GDP for the sample, and countries below vs. above the mean democracy (Polity) score for our sample of countries. The coefficient for union member remains positive and bounded above zero for the analyses of all of these sub-samples, indicating that the relationship between union membership and voting is not contingent on a country's wealth or level of democratization.

Next, we ask: What is the magnitude of the effect for labor union membership on voting and how does it compare with other traditional predictors of voter turnout? To answer this question, in the first row of Table 2 we present the predicted percentage point increase in the probability of voting between a union member and non-member while holding all other variables in the model at their mean values.[9] We find that union members are 2.4 percentage points *more likely* to turn out to vote than non-members. As a comparison, we also report the marginal effects when varying other common predictors of voter turnout including level of education, marital status, feelings of internal and external political efficacy, political interest, and church attendance. For example, we find that moving from the 25th to the 75th percentile of educational attainment increases the probability of voting by 3.6 percentage points. In general, we find that the substantive effect of union membership on voting rivals other common predictors of voter turnout.

[Table 2 about here]

From a political equality standpoint (Lijphart 1997; Kittilson 2005), the most important aspect of the relationship between union membership and voting is that it has the potential to increase turnout among all members, not just those with greater resources who may have been more disposed and had a greater propensity to participate in the political arena in the first place.

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[9] We generate the predicted probabilities using CLARIFY (King, Tomz, and Wittenberg 2000) and the coefficients from the model reported in Table 1, Column 3.

But is this assumption accurate? In other words, are the mobilization effects of union membership equal across all citizens? To test this proposition, we ran a series of models with interaction terms. Specifically, we added an interaction term for union membership multiplied by each explanatory variable in the model presented in Table 1, Column 3 and ran a separate model for each term. The resulting coefficients of these interaction terms tell us whether the relationship between union membership and voting systematically varies with that particular demographic characteristic or political attitude. For example, if the *union member x education* interaction term is positive and statistically significant, that tells us the impact of union membership on voting is larger among the highly educated compared to the less educated. We do this for each independent variable in the model, for a total of fifteen different models.

In the interest of space, we summarize the results of the interaction analysis. Across the models that interact union membership with (separately) education, occupational status, marital status, age, gender, partisanship, internal efficacy, external efficacy, political interest, church attendance, and interpersonal trust, there is only a differential relationship for external political efficacy. Specifically, the positive effect of labor union membership on voting is heightened among respondents who believe that "people like them" have a say in what the government does. Across the other analyses, however, none of the interaction terms nears statistical significance. We interpret this as evidence that the impact of labor union membership on the decision to vote is largely *invariant* across common demographic characteristics and (with the exception of external efficacy) across varying levels of psychological engagement in the political arena. In terms of impacting an individual's propensity to vote, we find that labor unions are equal opportunity mobilizers.

Next, we assess the relationship between aggregate union membership (i.e. union density) and an individual's decision to vote. First, in Table 3, Column 1, we model turnout as a function of the same individual level covariates as before plus country level measures of union density, GDP, democratization (Polity score), and whether a country has a mandatory voting law or not.[10] To separate out individual and country level effects, we center all individual level variables around their country mean value and because of the nested structure of the data we again report Huber-White robust standard errors clustered by country. Using these country level measures in the place of the country dummy variables yields very similar results as before. The coefficient for union membership is still positive and significant, and slightly larger in magnitude than before. We also find a positive relationship between union density and voting: respondents who live in nations with a higher percentage of workers who belong to labor unions are more likely to turn out to vote controlling for both individual and country level predictors of voting.[11] Furthermore, citizens in countries with a mandatory voting law are, as expected, more likely to vote.

[Table 3 about here]

To test whether unionization has spillover effects, we run the same analysis as before but split up the sample into union members and non-members. We find a positive effect for union density for both union members (Column 2) and non-members (Column 3). Holding all other variables at their respective mean values, a non-union member living in a nation at the 75th

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[10] Data for union density were unavailable for Croatia, Israel, Russia, and South Africa. The results reported in Table 3 are from an analysis of the other 28 countries in our sample.

[11] The results we report in Table 3 are substantively similar when we use the same model specification and employ a multi-level (hierarchical) modeling strategy.

percentile of union density is 2.8 percentage points more likely to vote than a non-union member living in a nation at the 25th percentile of union density.[12] Consistent with our expectations, the organizational strength of labor within a country has an important mobilizing effect on union members and non-members alike.

5. Conclusion

To date, our understanding of the link between labor union membership and voter turnout around the world has been muddled and inconclusive. Using individual level data, we show that union members are more likely to turn out to vote than non-members, and that the magnitude of this effect exceeds that of other common predictors of voting. Unions are also "equal opportunity mobilizers" in that the relationship between union membership and turnout is invariant across a host of demographic predictors of voting. Because labor unions are commonly viewed as the most consequential social organization and mobilizing force for the working class, that membership increases turnout among everyone and not simply those who are already politically engaged has important normative implications. Given the well documented upper class bias in voter turnout (Leighley and Nagler 1992; Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995), labor unions may help to promote greater political equality through their informational and mobilization efforts (Leighley and Nagler 2007; but see Kittilson 2005).

We also find that the organizational strength of labor unions within a country has a mobilizing effect on union members and non-members alike, which augments previous research

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[12] The 95% confidence interval for this estimated marginal effect is 2.3. to 3.2. By comparison, all else equal, a person living in a country with a mandatory voting law is 16.8 percentage points [15.9 to 17.6] more likely to vote than a person living in a country without a mandatory voting law.

that has demonstrated a positive link between a country's union density and aggregate voter turnout (Radcliff and Davis 2000). Given the importance of voter turnout for a government's legitimacy, unions continue to play an important democratic role by encouraging electoral participation among both their immediate members and citizens more generally. While most research to date has focused on how legal/electoral rules and political institutions increase or dampen voter turnout (e.g., Jackman 1987), in this study we confirm that labor unions also play an important role in mobilizing democratic citizens.

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Table 1: Labor Union Membership and Voting

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Union Member	0.134[*]	0.109[*]	0.110[*]
	[0.0316]	[0.0268]	[0.0275]
Unemployed	-0.0272	-0.0417	-0.0472
	[0.113]	[0.0998]	[0.0855]
Not in Workforce	-0.0970	-0.109[*]	-0.114[*]
	[0.0535]	[0.0507]	[0.0511]
Public Sector Employee	0.0958[*]	0.0953[*]	0.0872[*]
	[0.0316]	[0.0302]	[0.0328]
Private Sector Employee	-0.0565	-0.0588	-0.0440
	[0.0380]	[0.0364]	[0.0309]
Education	0.105[*]	0.0905[*]	0.0520[*]
	[0.0262]	[0.0244]	[0.0214]
Married	0.149[*]	0.148[*]	0.138[*]
	[0.0318]	[0.0291]	[0.0282]
Age	0.0727[*]	0.0727[*]	0.0712[*]
	[0.00813]	[0.00817]	[0.00855]
Age²	-0.000531[*]	-0.000533[*]	-0.000527[*]
	[0.0000790]	[0.0000794]	[0.0000820]
Male	-0.00540	-0.0592[*]	-0.0916[*]
	[0.0258]	[0.0254]	[0.0278]
Partisan	--	0.954[*]	0.861[*]
		[0.128]	[0.137]
Internal Efficacy	--	--	0.0439[*]
			[0.0127]
External Efficacy	--	--	0.0630[*]
			[0.0101]
Political Interest	--	--	0.150[*]
			[0.0208]
Church Attendance	--	--	0.0428[*]
			[0.00800]
Trust in Others	--	--	-0.00110
			[0.00892]
Constant	-0.869[*]	-1.382[*]	-2.015[*]
	[0.136]	[0.145]	[0.151]
Pseudo R²	.14	.20	.22
N	39,246	39,246	34,999

Dependent variable: Did respondent vote in most recent election? (0 = No, 1 = Yes)

Cell entries are probit coefficients, country clustered standard errors for 32 countries reported underneath in brackets.

31 country dummy variables are included in the model but not reported.

[*] denotes $p < .05$. Two-tailed test.

Table 2: Substantive Effects on Predicted Probability of Voting

Explanatory variable	Predicted percentage point increase in the probability of voting
Union Member	2.4
Non-member → Member	[1.2, 3.5]
Education	3.6
25th Percentile → 75th Percentile	[2.6, 4.6]
Married	3.2
Not Married → Married	[2.3, 4.0]
Internal Political Efficacy	2.0
25th Percentile → 75th Percentile	[1.2, 2.9]
External Political Efficacy	2.8
25th Percentile → 75th Percentile	[2.1, 3.5]
Political Interest	6.7
25th Percentile → 75th Percentile	[5.9, 7.4]
Church Attendance	3.8
25th Percentile → 75th Percentile	[3.0, 4.6]

Cell entries are the predicted percentage point increase in the probability of voting (using CLARIFY and the model specification in Table 1, Column 3) when manipulating the variable of interest as noted and holding all other variables at their respective mean values.

95% confidence interval for the estimated increase in the probability of voting reported beneath the estimate in brackets.

Table 3: Country Level Union Density and Voting

	(1) *All Respondents*	(2) *Only Union Members*	(3) *Only Non-Members*
Individual Level			
Union Member	**0.116***	--	--
	[0.0274]		
Unemployed	-0.190*	-0.298*	-0.180*
	[0.0546]	[0.107]	[0.0608]
Not in Workforce	-0.100*	0.129	-0.123*
	[0.0470]	[0.117]	[0.0484]
Public Sector Employee	0.0875*	0.0255	0.123*
	[0.0381]	[0.0807]	[0.0472]
Private Sector Employee	-0.0896	-0.0508	-0.0981
	[0.0474]	[0.0809]	[0.0532]
Education	0.0616*	0.0501	0.0632*
	[0.0211]	[0.0303]	[0.0216]
Married	0.154*	0.195*	0.148*
	[0.0213]	[0.0522]	[0.0246]
Age	0.0654*	0.0832*	0.0644*
	[0.00842]	[0.0120]	[0.00934]
Age²	-0.000491*	-0.000706*	-0.000476*
	[0.0000795]	[0.000121]	[0.0000882]
Male	-0.0772*	-0.114	-0.0765*
	[0.0284]	[0.0589]	[0.0299]
Partisan	0.787*	0.868*	0.774*
	[0.132]	[0.186]	[0.142]
Internal Efficacy	0.0504*	-0.0311	0.0632*
	[0.0138]	[0.0291]	[0.0146]
External Efficacy	0.0590*	0.0948*	0.0528*
	[0.00937]	[0.0182]	[0.0113]
Political Interest	0.166*	0.252*	0.152*
	[0.0218]	[0.0283]	[0.0241]
Church Attendance	0.0397*	0.0239	0.0419*
	[0.00918]	[0.0127]	[0.00980]
Trust in Others	-0.00508	-0.00403	-0.00644
	[0.00867]	[0.0138]	[0.0104]
Country Level			
Union Density	**0.0109***	**0.00732***	**0.0108***
	[0.00312]	**[0.00298]**	**[0.00323]**
GDP	0.00105	0.0177*	-0.00125
	[0.00664]	[0.00816]	[0.00642]
Polity	0.0120	-0.0586	0.0190
	[0.0436]	[0.0744]	[0.0438]
Mandatory Voting	0.998*	0.987*	0.995*
	[0.0761]	[0.0909]	[0.0792]
Constant	0.489	1.046	0.449
	[0.360]	[0.643]	[0.366]
Pseudo R²	.20	.20	.19
N	29,477	5,902	23,575

Dependent variable: Did respondent vote in most recent election? (0 = No, 1 = Yes).

All individual level variables are centered around their country mean value.

Cell entries are probit coefficients, country clustered standard errors for 28 countries reported underneath in brackets.

* denotes p< .05. Two-tailed test.

Appendix: Detailed Description of Variables

Individual Level Variables

Vote
- Did respondent report voting in the most recent election? (ISSP: VOTE_LE).
- 0 = No, 1 = Yes
- Mean = .78

Union Member
- Is respondent *currently* a member of a labor union? (ISSP: UNION).
- 0 = No, 1 = Yes
- Mean = .19

Unemployed
- Is respondent currently unemployed? (constructed from ISSP: WRKST)
- 0 = No, 1 = Yes
- Mean = .07

Not in Workforce
- Is respondent not currently a member of the workforce? (student, house wife/husband, permanently disabled, or retired; constructed from ISSP: WRKST)
- 0 = No, 1 = Yes
- Mean = .36

Public Sector Employee
- Is respondent a public sector employee? (constructed from ISSP: WRKST)
- 0 = No, 1 = Yes
- Mean = .14

Private Sector Employee
- Is respondent a private sector employee? (constructed from ISSP: WRKST)
- 0 = No, 1 = Yes
- Mean = .30

Education
- Highest level of education attained (ISSP: DEGREE).
- 0 = No formal qualification or incomplete primary, 1 = Lowest formal qualification attainable, 2= Above lowest qualification (qualifications which are above the lowest

qualification, but below the usual entry requirement for universities), 3 = Higher secondary completed (usually entry requirement for universities), 4 = Above higher secondary level, other qualification (qualifications which are above the higher secondary level, but below a full university degree), 5 = University degree completed.

- Mean = 2.65, SD = 1.57

Married

- Is the respondent married? (ISSP: MARITAL)
- 0 = No (widowed, divorced, separated never married, single), 1 = Married
- Mean = .55

Age (and Age²)

- Respondent's age (ISSP: AGE)
- Mean = 46.4, SD = 17.4

Male

- Respondent's gender (ISSP: SEX)
- 0 = Female, 1 = Male
- Mean = .46

Partisan

- Whether a respondent reports an affiliation with a particular political party, constructed from left/right party affiliation variable (ISSP: PARTY_LR).
- 0 = No partisan affiliation reported, 1 = Partisan affiliation reported
- Mean = .57

Internal Political Efficacy

- "I feel that I have a pretty good understanding of the important political issues facing our country" (ISSP: V47).
- 1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither agree nor disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly agree
- Mean = 3.19, SD = 1.09

External Political Efficacy

- "People like me don't have any say about what the government does" (ISSP: VAR 45)
- 1 = Strongly agree, 2 = Agree, 3 = Neither agree nor disagree, 4 = Disagree, 5 = Strongly disagree
- Mean = 2.57, SD = 1.26

Political Interest
- "How interested would you say you personally are in politics?" (ISSP: VAR 44)
- 1 = Not at all interested, 2 = Not very interested, 3 = Somewhat interested, 4 = Fairly interested, 5 = Very interested
- Mean = 2.77, SD = 1.19

Church Attendance
- How often does the respondent attend church? (ISSP: ATTEND)
- 1 = Never, 2 = Less frequently (than once a year), 3 = Once a year, 4 = Several times a year, 5 = Once a month, 6 = Two or three times a month, 7 = Once a week, 8 = Several times a week
- Mean = 3.67, SD = 2.32

Trust in Others
- "There are only a few people I can trust completely" (ISSP: V54)
- 1 = Strongly agree, 2 = Agree, 3 = Neither agree nor disagree, 4 = Disagree, 5 = Strongly disagree
- Mean = 2.14, SD = 1.09

Country Level Variables

Union Density
- Union density calculated as percentage of union members out of total number of workers in the non-agricultural workforce in a country. Data for 2005 from: Lucio Baccaro and Diego Rei (2007), "Institutional Determinants of Unemployment in OECD Countries: Does the Deregulatory View Hold Water?" *International Organization* 61: 527-569.
- Data unavailable for Croatia, Israel, Russia, and South Africa.
- Mean = 27.9, SD = 19.6

Gross Domestic Product
- Real GDP in 1000s of United States dollars (using purchasing power parity method) for 2004, from Penn World Tables.
- Mean = 20.3, SD = 8.1

Polity Score (Level of Democratization)
- Polity IV score for 2006 ranging from -10 to +10 (larger number indicates more democratic).
- Mean = 9.3, SD = 1.1

Mandatory Voting

- Whether a nation has a mandatory voting law on the books or not. Data taken from the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) website (http://www.idea.int/vt/compulsory_voting.cfm).
- 0 = No mandatory voting law, 1 = Mandatory voting law (Australia, Chile, and Uruguay)
- Mean = .09