Populism as a Problem of Social Integration

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Abstract

Building on an ethnographic literature suggesting that populism has strong appeal for people who feel 'left behind' by recent developments, we argue that support for parties of the radical right and left can usefully be understood as a problem of social integration – an approach that can bring together economic and cultural explanations for populism. With comparative survey data across European democracies, we assess whether the discontent motivating support for parties of the radical right and left is associated with feelings of social marginalization. Using a measure of subjective social status, we find that people who feel more socially-marginal, because they lack strong attachment to the normative order, social engagement or a sense of social respect, are more likely to be alienated from mainstream politics and to support radical parties. We also find an association between indicators for recent economic and cultural developments often said to depress social status and feelings of social marginalization, especially among people with low incomes or limited educational attainment. We conclude that support for radical parties is linked to problems of social integration and that those problems deserve more attention from scholars of comparative political behavior.

The recent surge in support for parties of the radical right and left across the developed democracies is one of the most important political phenomena of our time. Many of these parties campaign on populist appeals, posing a moral opposition between a corrupt or incompetent elite and a virtuous but ignored populace (Rooduijn and Akkerman 2017; Aslandis 2016; Müller 2016; Bonikowski and Gidron 2016a; Mudde and Kaltwasser 2017; cf. Rydgren 2017). Radical parties have doubled their share of the parliamentary vote in Europe to about 20% since 1980, and the electoral victories of populist candidates have changed the course of history in several countries (Heino 2018). But, even where they do not win elections, the strength of radical parties is precipitating changes in the policies of mainstream parties and making it more difficult for countries to assemble cohesive governing coalitions capable of coping with contemporary challenges.

We focus here on parties of the radical right and left. The former often run on populist platforms mixed with ethno-nationalist appeals, and the latter offer serious challenges to mainstream policies, even if they are not always overtly populist in their appeals. There is widespread agreement that support for these parties reflects deep discontent with the status quo and a protest against established elites (Bergh 2004; Berger 2017). However, there is less agreement about the character and sources of that discontent – the issue we address here.

There is a large and illuminating literature about the sources of support for radical parties, but much of it bifurcates into a debate about whether economic or cultural developments are most responsible for that support.[1] On one side are scholars who suggest that support for candidates of the radical right or left is strongest among people facing adverse economic circumstances, whether rooted in rising rates of income inequality, high levels of unemployment or job displacement attributable to skill-biased technological change and the movement of manufacturing jobs abroad (Autor *et al*. 2016;

Algan *et al*. 2017; Colantone and Stanig 2017; Rovny and Rovny 2017; Ballard-Rosa *et al*. 2017; Kurer 2018; Burgoon *et al*. 2018). On the other side are scholars who argue that shifting cultural frameworks, which led social and political elites to embrace post-materialist and multi-cultural values, have inspired a counter-reaction from voters attached to more traditional or authoritarian attitudes associated with opposition to immigration and greater racial or gender equality (Ivarsflaten 2008; Oesch 2008; Inglehart and Norris 2017; Kaufmann 2017; Mutz 2018).

There is something to be said for each side of this debate. Good evidence documents the impact of both economic and cultural developments. But, precisely for that reason, this debate may be missing the larger picture. Social scientists often see economic and cultural accounts as mutually-exclusive explanations of a phenomenon; but the political power of populist appeals may well flow from how they exploit both economic and cultural resentments. Therefore, instead of debating whether economic or cultural developments matter most, we need better frameworks for understanding how they might combine to generate the discontent underpinning support for radical parties.

The objective of this article is to advance one such framework and provide some initial evidence for it. We see support for radical parties as the reflection of problems in social integration, defined as the social relations that link individuals and promote their sense of being valued members of society. Our core contention is that much of the discontent fueling support for radical parties is rooted in feelings of social marginalization – namely, the sense some people have that they have been pushed to the fringes of their national community and deprived of the roles and respect normally accorded full members of it.

In the next sections, we elucidate what we mean by social integration and how we measure it, situate our argument within wider literatures on social integration, and provide a theoretical rationale both for why problems of social integration should bear on support for radical parties and for why recent economic and cultural developments may have intensified such problems. We then assess the propositions that emerge from this discussion against cross-national survey evidence from twenty-five European nations.

Support for radical parties as a problem of social integration

The inspiration for our approach comes from an ethnographic literature that delves deeply into the lives and attitudes of some of the social groups most open to populist appeals (Eribon 2013; Gest 2016; Cramer 2016; Hochschild 2016; Köpping 2018; Wuthnow 2018). Across a diversity of national settings, this literature reports that important segments of the population feel 'left behind' – relegated to vulnerable economic and social positions, increasingly alienated from the values prominent in elite discourse, and lacking the respect accorded valued members of society. Summarizing his study of British and American workers, Gest (2016: 15) observes that, "across the postindustrial regions of Western Europe and North America – white working class people sense that they have been demoted from the center of their country's consciousness to its fringe." Of the Louisiana residents she interviewed, Hochschild (2016: 144) says "You are a stranger in your own land. You do not recognize yourself in how others see you. It is a struggle to feel seen and honored…through no fault of your own, and in ways that are hidden, you are slipping backward." Considering why the voters of Reims have turned to the National Front, Eribon (2013: 131) observes that "whole sectors of the most severely disadvantaged would…shift over to the only party that seemed to care about them." These are reports of social marginalization.

The subjects in these studies do not simply refer to personal economic distress but to their dismay at the direction of society as a whole. Gest *et al*. (2017) find that supporters of the radical right in Britain and the U.S. express a sense of 'nostalgic deprivation' rooted in the belief that social conditions were better for everyone in the past and are likely to be worse in the future. 58% of Britons who voted to leave the European Union in 2016 declared life worse today than it was thirty years ago (compared to 27% of those voting to remain in the EU), and 61% thought life would be worse for their children (Ashcroft 2016). Sociotropic concerns such as these are classic indicators of problems in social integration. They reflect discontent based not simply on the economic position of the individual but on concerns about the character of society more generally (see also Elchardus and Spruyt 2016; Spruyt *et al*. 2016).[2]

Conceptualizing social integration

A deep vein of research in sociology considers issues of social integration. The *locus classicus* lies in the work of Émile Durkheim (1984[1892]), who argued that the division of labor in market economies would yield social solidarity only if it provided people with occupations they deemed appropriate and if those people participated in a collective consciousness composed of shared norms, values and beliefs. Absent such shared norms, society would be in a state of anomie. Emphasizing this point, Blau (1960: 545) argued that participation in the normative order depends on processes of social interaction whereby people are attracted to one another and acquire "acceptance as peers", foreshadowing later work on the importance of engagement with family, friends and the community as the vehicles for social acceptance and the foundation of a common normative order (Bellah *et al*. 1996; Etzioni 1996; Berkman *et al*. 2000; Putnam 2000). In sum, this literature identifies social integration – at both the macro-level reflecting how well integrated a society is and at the micro-level reflecting how well integrated into

society each individual is – as a multidimensional phenomenon based on i. the degree to which individuals see themselves as part of a *shared normative order*, ii. their levels of *social interaction* with others, and iii. the extent to which they feel *recognized* or respected by others in society.

Since we are most directly interested here in individual-level behavior, namely, in why people might vote for radical parties, we focus on social integration at the individual level, where what matters are people's feelings about whether they are part of mainstream society and well-respected by it. Although we look at several indicators for that, we make particular use of a synthetic concept, which is the *subjective social status* of citizens – defined as their beliefs about where they stand relative to others in society.

It is important to note that subjective social status is conceptually and empirically distinct from the familiar concepts of social class and objective social status. As Weber (1968[1918]) argued long ago, a person's social class is generally defined by the position the individual occupies within the economic system, and objective social status refers to the rank a person enjoys within the hierarchy of prestige characteristic of all societies. In modern societies, people derive much of their objective social status from their income, educational attainment and occupation – the standard markers of 'socioeconomic status' (Blau and Duncan 1967; Ridgeway and Walker 1995). Subjective social status is related to these objective conditions because those conditions usually influence people's beliefs about their own status. But those beliefs are analytically and empirically distinct from the objective markers of socioeconomic status because they embody subjective feelings about where one stands relative to others in society that are sensitive to a wide range of factors (Singh-Manoux, Alder and Marmot 2005; Miyakawa *et al*. 2012).

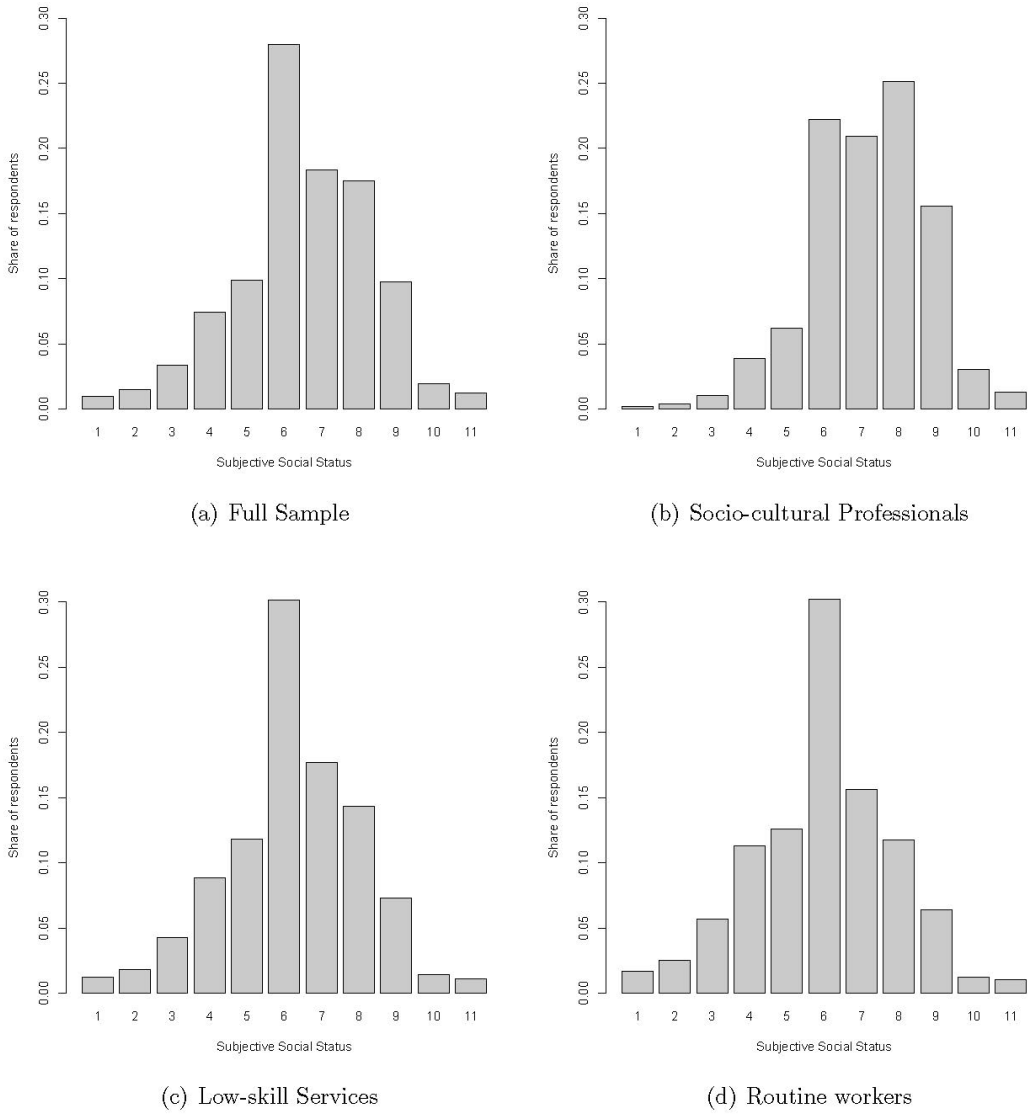
To measure subjective social status, we use responses to a question asking people to place themselves on an 11-point social ladder after being told that 'There are people who tend to be towards the top of our society and people who tend to be towards the bottom'. Figure One (panel a) displays the distribution of this variable in the 25 countries included in this analysis. If this is a good measure for whether people see themselves as mainstream members of society, we would expect most people to place themselves in the middle of this social ladder, and they do. But significant numbers of people also report lower levels of subjective social status, and our premise is that those who place themselves on lower rungs of this ladder believe that they have a more marginal social position, i.e. one accorded less social recognition, than those located higher up on it.

Although rarely used in political science, this type of question is often employed in social epidemiology where it is widely accepted as a valid measure of subjective social status with good test-retest reliability (Operario, Adler and Williams 2004; Evans and Kelley 2004; Lindemann and Saar 2014). Studies showing that lower scores on it are correlated with more negative social emotions such as anger and resentment are consistent with our view that this measure taps into the discontent associated with feeling one is not accorded adequate social respect (Adler and Stewart 2007).

The role of economic and cultural developments

Once the discontent behind support for radical parties is seen as a problem of social integration, it becomes possible to move beyond debates about whether the roots of that discontent are predominantly economic or cultural. It opens up avenues for understanding how economic and cultural developments might operate together to generate such support, because feelings of social marginalization can follow either from the loss of a valued economic position or from the perception that cultural elites no

Figure One: The distribution of subjective social status across the full sample and by occupational class



(a) Full Sample (b) Socio-cultural Professionals

(c) Low-skill Services (d) Routine workers

Source: ESS Round 6

longer attach value to one's views. At the aggregate level, this means that social marginalization may be engendered by the adverse effects of economic developments or by shifts in dominant cultural frameworks. When the same groups of people are affected by both types of developments, the corresponding discontent can be especially deep.

There are several mechanisms through which recent economic or cultural developments may have left some people in the developed democracies feeling pushed to the sidelines of their society. Three sets of economic developments are especially pertinent: increasing income inequality, the global outsourcing of manufacturing, and skill-biased technological change. The Gini index for income inequality increased by ten percent across the OECD countries between the mid-1980s and the early-2000s. When evaluating their social position, people typically compare their own situations to those of others.[3] Thus, as their incomes stagnate relative to others, some people may feel their social position has been eroded (Frank 2007; Andersen and Curtis 2012; Lindemann and Saar 2014; Layte and Whelan 2014; Schneider 2017).[4] Burgoon *et al*. (2018) find that this type of 'positional deprivation' is associated with stronger support for the radical right (see also Han 2016).

At the same time, most developed economies have lost well-paid manufacturing jobs to global out-sourcing and skill-biased technological change, with dramatic effects on people with modest skill levels, many of whom have been forced into less-remunerative or insecure employment (Oesch 2013; Goos, Manning and Salomons 2014). Rovny and Rovny (2017) find that these labor market 'outsiders' are more likely than 'insiders' to vote for radical parties; and people in the regions or sectors most exposed to these developments are turning to more radical political candidates (Autor *et al*. 2016; Mayer *et al.* 2016; Colantone and Stanig 2017; Ballard-Rosa *et al*. 2017). Of course, this political reaction may follow from straightforward discontent with one's economic circumstances but, since studies show that people use the quality of their job to evaluate their social standing, these experiences may also generate feelings of social marginalization (Hout 2008).

Shifts in cultural frameworks over recent decades are also likely to have left some people feeling socially-marginalized. The most notable of these shifts has been the rising prominence, within elite discourse and the mainstream media, of cultural frameworks promoting secular values, gender rights, multiculturalism, and LGBTQ rights. Inglehart and Welzel (2005) found that, in seven of nine European countries where materialists outnumbered post-materialists in 1970, a majority of citizens espoused post-materialist values by the turn of the century. Banting and Kymlicka (2013) report that, in fourteen of the sixteen European countries they examine, multicultural policies are now stronger than they were in 1980; and Bromley (2009) finds that school textbooks in North America and Europe now speak much more favorably of ethnic diversity than they did during the 1970s.

As a result, most developed democracies are now more inclusive than they once were in terms that are advantageous for women, ethnic minorities and people with diverse gender identities. But these steps toward inclusion have been double-sided: people who hold more traditional values no longer see their values reflected in elite discourse, and this gap can lead individuals to feel marginalized vis-à-vis the mainstream society. People who depended on traditional gender or ethnic hierarchies to bolster their own sense of social status may be especially prone to feeling that shifting cultural frameworks have undermined their social standing (Pateman 1988; Mutz 2018). In sum, both the economic and cultural developments of recent years have the potential to lead some people to feel they have been relegated to the sidelines of society.

The relevance for politics

Although scholars of comparative electoral behavior have not devoted much attention to subjective social status (but see McClendon 2018), there are grounds for expecting it to

have political effects.[5] Research in sociology and psychology identifies the quest for social esteem as a crucial motivation for action (Weber 1968; Ridgeway and Walker 1995; de Botton 2004). Summarizing an extensive body of work, Ridgeway (2014: 2) observes that "people care about status quite as intensely as they do about money and power". Social esteem is important to individuals because it is closely-tied to the self-esteem vital to many dimensions of well-being (Marmot 2004; Fisk 2010). Thus, it is reasonable to think that concerns about a loss of social standing might influence people's voting behavior just as considerations of material loss do.

Moreover, precisely because populism is not politics as usual, anxieties about social status are especially relevant to it. Feeling that one is not accorded much respect by society is likely to inspire resentment against the elites of that society; and radical parties exploit precisely this type of resentment with claims to speak for ordinary people who have been ignored by elites whom they describe as corrupt or incompetent (see Rooduijn and Akkerman 2017).

The rhetoric of politicians on both the radical right and left is often aimed directly at status concerns. Many adopt the plain-spoken language of the common man, self-consciously repudiating the sophisticated formulations of political elites. Radical politicians on the left evoke the virtues of working people, while those on the right emphasize themes of national greatness, which seem to have special appeal for people who rely on claims to national membership for a social status they otherwise lack (Shayo 2009). The 'take back control' and 'make America great again' slogans of the Brexit and Trump campaigns were perfectly pitched for such purposes. These efforts to celebrate the social standing of ordinary people often evoke deeply-emotional responses. Hochschild (2016: 225) reports that, in the presence of their candidate, Trump supporters

who "have been in mourning for a lost way of life…now feel hopeful, joyous, elated" (see also Spruyt *et al*. 2016; Steenvoorden and Harteveld 2017).

Individuals who feel socially marginal may be drawn to radical parties for more complex psychological reasons as well. There is evidence that people who are on the lower rungs of the social ladder are susceptible to a 'fear of falling' even farther down it. This leads them to draw sharp social boundaries between 'respectable' people like themselves and others to whom less social standing can be ascribed; and immigrants are prime targets for such boundary work (Ehrenreich 1990; Kefalas 2003; Peugny 2009; Kuziemko *et al*. 2014). Thus, low levels of subjective social status may be conducive to the anti-immigrant attitudes on which the radical right bases much of its appeal (Ivarsflaten 2008). In pioneering studies, Lipset (1955, 1959) found that status anxiety promotes support for the radical right; and recent research in psychology confirms that people who believe their social status is threatened are likely to develop hostility to out-groups, such as immigrants, especially if they can be associated with the status threat (Tajfel and Turner 1979; Riek, Mania and Gaertner 2006; Leach and Spears 2008; Küpper, Wolf and Zick 2010).

For these reasons, we expect people who report lower levels of subjective social status to be more alienated from mainstream politics than those with higher subjective social status and more supportive of radical parties challenging the established elites. This association should hold for radical parties of either the right or the left. While the anti-immigrant platforms of the radical right may be especially appealing to people who are a few rungs up the social ladder, a person does not have to be in an underprivileged labor market position to feel a relative lack of social respect. Lower levels of subjective social status might incline people in any occupational group toward radical parties (Bornschier 2010; Antonucci *et al*. 2017).

Although it is beyond the objective of this article to inquire deeply into why people who vote for radical parties choose the radical right or left, we will examine two broad propositions that emerge from a growing literature on this. The first is that ideology matters: voters with egalitarian attitudes that attach high value to redistribution and respect for human rights tend to prefer radical left parties that echo such views, while those who hold strongly Euroskeptical or anti-immigrant attitudes generally prefer radical right parties emphasizing these issues (Visser *et al*. 2014; Rooduijn et al. 2017; van Hauwaert and van Kessel 2018). Since education is a key determinant of such views, the corollary is that low levels of educational achievement should be conducive to radical-right voting, while high levels should promote radical-left voting (Weakliem 2002; Hainmueller and Hiscox 2007).

The second proposition is that people in the most disadvantaged labor-market positions, such as those who are unemployed or in especially low-paid and insecure jobs tend to prefer radical left parties, presumably because they offer such groups more direct relief in the form of social benefits, while workers in routine manual or service positions a few steps up the economic ladder gravitate toward the radical right, especially if their jobs seem threatened by outsourcing or automation (Finseraas 2009; Gomez *et al*. 2016; Ramiro 2016; Rovny and Rovny 2017; Mayer *et al.* 2017; Oesch and Rennwald 2018). We will ask whether our results correspond to these propositions.

In the sections that follow, we assess the empirical implications of this approach for understanding support for radical parties. It should be apparent that our objective is not to claim that feelings of social marginalization trump all other explanations for the radical vote. Where radical parties do well, they are elected by coalitions of diverse and multiply-motivated voters; and contingent events, such as surges of immigration in northern Europe or austerity in southern Europe, can increase support for such parties

(Podobnik *et al*. 2017; Rodrik 2017). The electoral strategies of radical candidates and their opponents also matter (Rydgren 2005; Arzheimer 2017; Guiso *et al*. 2017). However, our intuition is that electoral strategies take advantage of – and contingent events amplify – reservoirs of discontent that have been building up for some time. The limited objective of this study is to show that social marginalization, reflecting failures of social integration, contributes to these reservoirs of discontent culminating in votes for radical parties. There is good ethnographic evidence for this proposition but few statistical analyses of it at the cross-national level.[6] With that in mind, we turn to the empirics.

Empirical Analysis

For this analysis, we employ data drawn from Round 6 of the European Social Survey, which is based on hour-long in-person interviews conducted on representative samples of all adults over the age of fifteen in 25 European countries during 2012-13.[7] Since questions tapping subjective social status are rarely included in cross-national surveys, this is the only one we have found covering an adequate number of countries with the relevant political variables. However, the ESS is widely recognized as a high-quality survey; and our sample includes approximately 35,000 respondents.

Subjective social status as a measure of social integration

As noted, we measure subjective social status with a question that asks respondents to place themselves on an 11-rung social ladder. In order to establish that subjective social status is not simply a proxy for social class or objective socioeconomic status, we begin by assessing the relationship between it and standard markers for SES. In Table One, model 1 reports the results of an ordinary least squares regression with country fixed

Table One: Predictors of Subjective Social Status

	Dependent variable: Subjective Social Status		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Income decile	0.163***	0.090***	0.155***
	(0.009)	(0.006)	(0.007)
Income: Coping		−0.456***	
		(0.034)	
Income: Difficult		−0.948***	
		(0.062)	
Income: Very difficult		−1.710***	
		(0.108)	
LGBT Opposition			−0.063***
			(0.017)
Occupation: Managers	0.022	0.029	0.034
	(0.042)	(0.038)	(0.039)
Occupation: Clerks	−0.242***	−0.192***	−0.211***
	(0.061)	(0.058)	(0.056)
Occupation: Low skill services	−0.435***	−0.337***	−0.398***
	(0.043)	(0.042)	(0.038)
Occupation: Technicians	−0.161***	−0.164***	−0.174***
	(0.047)	(0.043)	(0.040)
Occupation: Routine workers	−0.504***	−0.419***	−0.469***
	(0.045)	(0.042)	(0.035)
Female=1		−0.043*	−0.081***
		(0.024)	(0.029)
Age		−0.0001	0.002
		(0.002)	(0.002)
Union membership=1		0.063*	0.044
		(0.037)	(0.043)
Church attendance=1		0.174***	0.236***
		(0.067)	(0.072)
Higher education=1	0.209***	0.198***	0.220***
	(0.049)	(0.037)	(0.042)
Unemployed=1		−0.057	−0.290***
		(0.059)	(0.073)
Rural-urban: Suburbs		−0.011	−0.015
		(0.056)	(0.063)
Rural-urban: Small city		−0.056	−0.054
		(0.044)	(0.047)
Rural-urban: Country village		−0.065	−0.051
		(0.050)	(0.055)
Rural-urban: Farm and countryside		−0.064	−0.037
		(0.048)	(0.053)
Foreign born=1		−0.083**	−0.125***
		(0.039)	(0.042)
Constant	6.899***	8.086***	7.132***
	(0.060)	(0.124)	(0.119)
Observations	33,699	32,065	31,037
R^2	0.247	0.295	0.239
Note:			*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

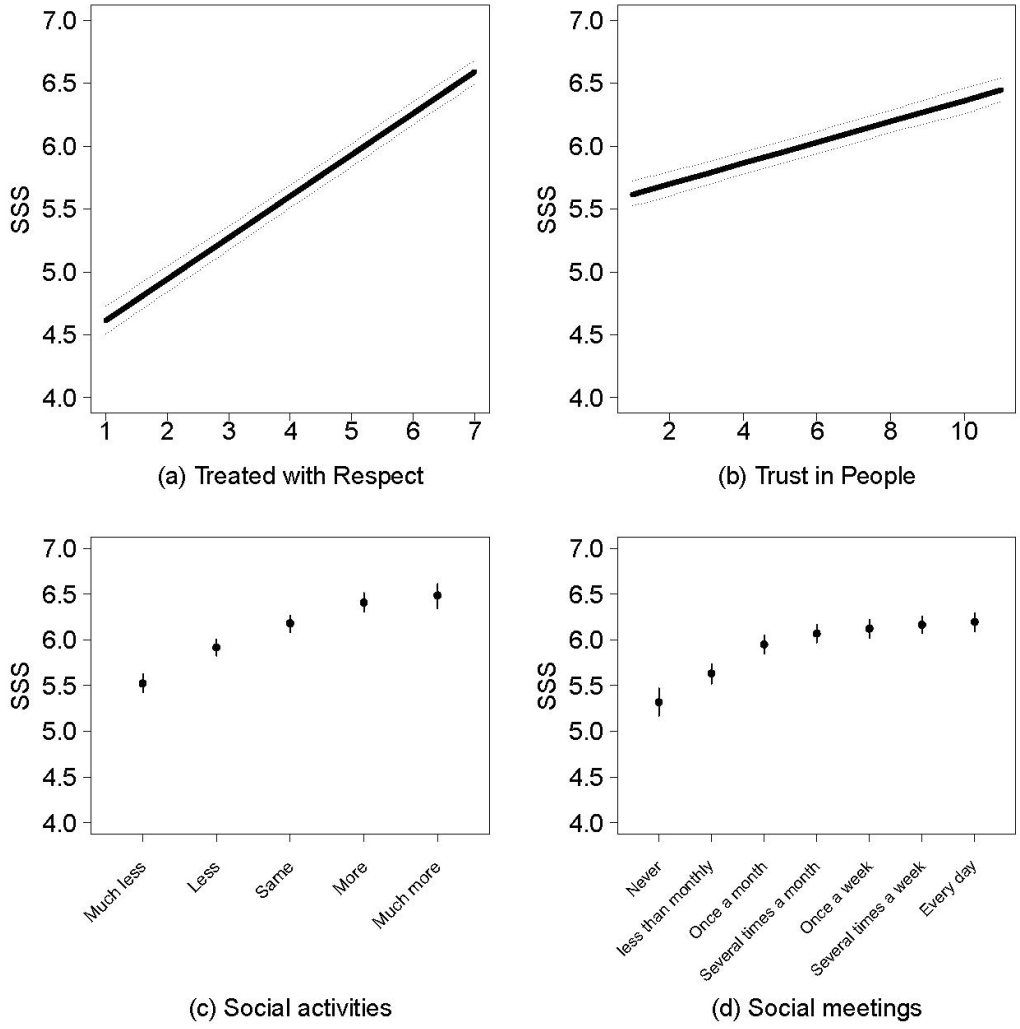
Note: OLS regressions with country fixed effects and robust clustered standard errors. Reference group for occupations is 'socio-cultural professionals'. Reference group for rural-urban is big cities. Reference group for income is 'living comfortably on present income'.

effects in which the dependent variable is our measure of subjective social status and the explanatory variables are the respondent's income decile, level of educational achievement and occupational class.[8] The results indicate that together these three standard components of socioeconomic status explain only about a quarter of the variance in subjective social status. The important corollary is that, although levels of subjective social status are generally lower among people in manual or low-skill positions, even individuals within other occupational groups, such as sociocultural professionals or managers, can feel that they are accorded more or less social respect, as the other panels of Figure One indicate. Although social class plays a role in radical politics, subjective social status is not a proxy for it and has effects of its own.

Is our measure for subjective social status a good indicator for the social integration or marginalization of individuals? In order to assess this, we examine the relationship between our measure and indicators that tap into the three dimensions the sociological literature associates with social integration, namely, the extent to which respondents express trust in other people, which we take as an indicator for the extent to which they feel part of a shared normative order; how often respondents meet others and engage in social activities with them, which is an indicator for social interaction; and responses to a question asking respondents to what extent they feel other people treat them with respect, a good indicator for social recognition. For this purpose, we again use ordinary least squares estimations with country fixed effects and condition on a wide range of other variables that might affect subjective social status (the full estimations are in Table A1 in the online supplementary materials).[9]

Figure Two displays the relationships between these variables and subjective social status when the other attributes of individuals are held at their median levels in the UK, a country where average levels of subjective social status are close to the median for

Figure Two: The relationship between subjective social status and indicators for social integration



Note: Based on the estimations in Table A1 with other variables held at their means and country held constant on the United Kingdom.

the entire sample.[10] It shows that, even when conditioning on many other factors, subjective social status is positively associated with all three indicators for social integration. The most variance is explained by people's feelings about whether others treat them with respect. These results suggest that our measure for subjective social status

taps well into the extent to which people feel integrated into or marginalized from society.

The relevance of economic and cultural developments

Are the economic and cultural developments that we have identified as potential sources of social marginalization likely to be having such effects? Since panel data with appropriate questions for an appropriate number of countries does not exist, we cannot causally identify such effects. However, we can use our cross-sectional data to conduct some preliminary assessments of the plausibility of these propositions.

Within the round 6 ESS survey, respondents were asked how they feel about their household's present income and given the opportunity to say they are: living comfortably on it, coping, finding it difficult to live on it or finding it very difficult to live on their present income. It seems reasonable to assume that people who have suffered the most adverse effects of the economic developments we have outlined, such as job loss or degradation from outsourcing or technological change, are more likely to have difficulty coping on their income. Accordingly, we expect people who report more such difficulty to express lower levels of subjective social status.

We assess this proposition with an ordinary least squares regression on the full sample with country fixed effects. We condition the estimation on a wide range of other variables that might affect subjective social status. The results in Model 2 of Table One report a strong relationship. Compared to those who are 'living comfortably' on their current income (the reference category), people who express ascending levels of difficulty report successively lower levels of subjective social status. These findings are congruent with other studies which find that subjective social status is sensitive to

people's satisfaction with their material situation (Singh-Manoux, Alder and Marmot 2003; Miyakawa *et al*. 2012).

Capturing the effects of shifts in cultural frameworks is even more challenging, but we attempt to do so using a question that asks respondents to what extent they agree or disagree that 'gay men and lesbians should be free to live their own life as they wish'. In recent decades, elites have shown increasing support for this kind of tolerance (Andersen and Fetner 2008; Welzel 2013: 99). Thus, negative responses to this question provide a rough indicator for the extent to which a gap has opened up between the respondent's attitudes and the values now prominent in mainstream elite discourse. Our premise is that, if shifts in cultural frameworks have led some people to feel socially-marginalized because their views now diverge from those of mainstream elites, disagreement with the statement in this question should be associated with lower levels of subjective social status.

Once again, we include country fixed effects and condition the estimation on a wide range of other sociodemographic variables that might affect subjective social status to ensure we are not picking up confounding effects, for instance, from level of education or income. The results are reported in Model 3 of Table One. There is a strong and statistically-significant relationship indicating that people who are opposed to LGBT rights are more likely to express lower levels of subjective social status than those who are supportive of such rights. This is consistent with the proposition that shifts in dominant cultural frameworks may be leading some people with discordant attitudes to feel more marginal to society.

We can also leverage the cross-national variation in this dataset to look more closely at the ways in which two key economic developments, namely, rising income

inequality and skill-biased technological change, might be increasing feelings of social marginalization among some groups of people. These are indirect tests and caution must be exercised in extrapolating from cross-national variation to longitudinal effects.

Table Two: Estimates from hierarchical linear models predicting subjective social status

	Dependent variable: Subjective social status					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Individual-level covariates	+	+	+	+	+	+
GDP			0.00001**			0.00002***
			(0.00000)			(0.00000)
Income * Top 10		0.004**	0.004**			
		(0.002)	(0.002)			
Top 10	−0.144**	−0.160***	−0.119**			
	(0.052)	(0.052)	(0.047)			
Higher ed. * Tertiary enroll.					0.026***	0.026***
					(0.003)	(0.003)
Tertiary enrollment				−0.017	−0.029	0.004
				(0.022)	(0.022)	(0.015)
Constant	8.991***	9.383***	7.931***	6.029***	6.426***	4.444***
	(1.255)	(1.267)	(1.208)	(0.762)	(0.765)	(0.583)
Observations	29,717	29,717	29,717	30,568	30,568	30,568
Log Likelihood	−59,151.820	−59,149.190	−59,145.720	−59,765.770	−59,734.040	−59,723.520
Note:						*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Note: GDP per capita data from ESS Round 6 dataset; income inequality data from the World Bank; enrollment data from Eurostat.

However, if these two economic developments have led people to feel more socially-marginal, subjective social status should be lower in countries where these developments have proceeded the farthest; and the decline should be steepest for people with lower levels of income and skill on whom the most adverse impacts of such developments fall.

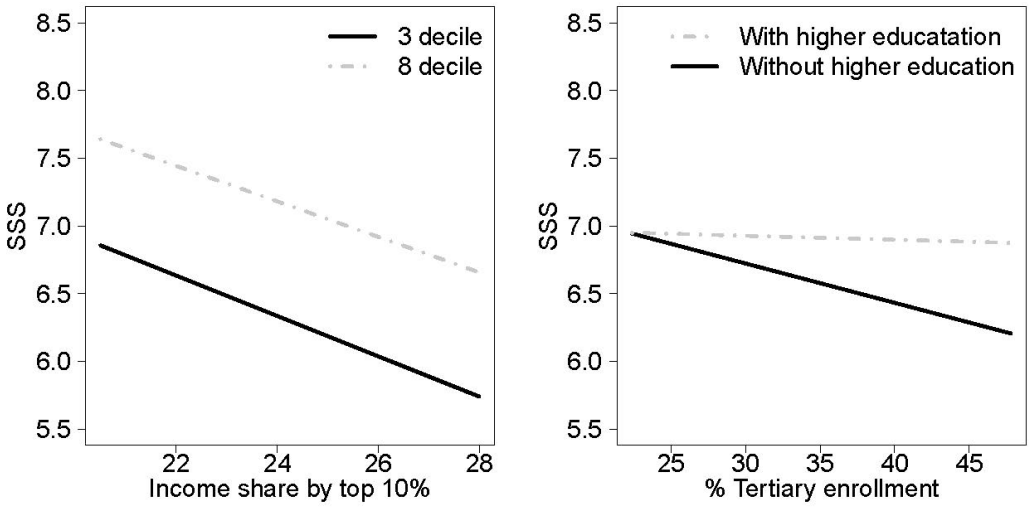
We begin by comparing countries where recent increases in income inequality have been higher to countries where they have been lower. To conduct this assessment, we use hierarchical linear models with random intercepts in which observations at the lower (individual) level are nested in higher order units (countries). This allows us to condition on other variables that might be affecting subjective social status.[11] Our dependent variable is subjective social status.[12] Our measure of income inequality is the

proportion of income going to the most affluent ten percent of income earners, and we compare countries with a model that includes the individual-level correlates of subjective social status used in the prior estimations. The key results (without individual-level coefficients) are reported in Table Two. Model 1 indicates that the average subjective social status of the population declines considerably across countries as the top ten percent share of income increases; and the interaction term in model 2 indicates that subjective social status declines the most among people with lower incomes (for the full estimations see Table A3 in the online appendix).[13]

Model 3 in Table Two shows that these results are robust when the estimation is conditioned on GDP per capita, which may affect average subjective social status (Lindemann and Saar 2014; Poppitz 2016). Using the top 20 percent of income as the measure for income inequality yields similar results (models 4-6 in Table A3). Panel (a) in Figure Three displays the decline in subjective social status of people at the third and eighth income deciles as income inequality increases, holding the other attributes of individuals at their means. In short, although associations of this sort do not establish causality, to the extent that this cross-national variation can be extrapolated to variation over time, these results are consistent with the contention that recent increases in income inequality are depressing subjective social status with slightly stronger effects on people at low incomes.

We explore the impact of skill-biased technological change by comparing countries based on enrollments in tertiary education.[14] Since tertiary enrollments generally rise as firms increase their demand for skills in response to skill-biased technological change, we take enrollments as an indicator for the extent of such change. We expect them to depress the subjective social status of people with low levels of skill

Figure Three: How subjective social status changes as income inequality and tertiary enrollments increase at the national level



Panel (a) **Panel (b)**

Note: Multilevel interactions based on models 2 and 8 in Table A3 with other attributes of individuals held at their means.

through two channels. First, the subjective social status of people with low skill levels may decline because of the losses in income or economic security that follow from lower demand for their services. Second, this might also be an instance in which economic developments set in motion parallel changes in cultural frameworks that multiply their effects. As the demand for higher skills and corresponding tertiary enrollments rise, the social prestige accorded people who have only a secondary education may decline, leading them to feel more socially marginalized.

Our estimations are specified as before and the key results reported in Table Two. Model 4 indicates that average levels of subjective social status do not change with the size of tertiary enrollments; but, as the interaction term in model 5 indicates, when tertiary enrollments rise, the subjective social status of people without a tertiary education declines. Panel (b) in Figure Three shows how the subjective social status of people with

and without higher education changes as tertiary enrollments increase, holding the other attributes of individuals at their means. Once again, caution must be exercised in extrapolating from this cross-national variation, but these results are consistent with the view that, as tertiary enrollments rise in response to skill-biased technological change, people without higher education come to see themselves as more socially-marginal.

In sum, although we cannot prove the point with existing data, the patterns in our results are consistent with the contention that recent economic developments and shifts in cultural frameworks are leading some citizens to feel socially marginalized. Moreover, people with lower levels of education are most exposed to both sets of developments. On the one hand, they are more likely to be affected adversely by economic processes such as skill-biased technological change and global outsourcing (Autor *et al.* 2016; Colantone and Stanig 2017). On the other hand, because education tends to influence a person's values, people with lower levels of education are more likely to hold the traditional attitudes that are increasingly at odds with those endorsed by mainstream elites (Weakliem 2002; Andersen and Fetner 2008). Economic and cultural developments may be reinforcing one another to generate the feelings of social marginalization that many people without a college education experience. If this is correct, we should see recent declines in the subjective social status of the group most likely to be affected by these twin sets of developments – men with no more than a secondary education – and, using data from the International Social Survey Program, Gidron and Hall (2017) show that between 1987 and 2014 this has been the case (see also Kurer 2018).[15]

Social integration and political outcomes

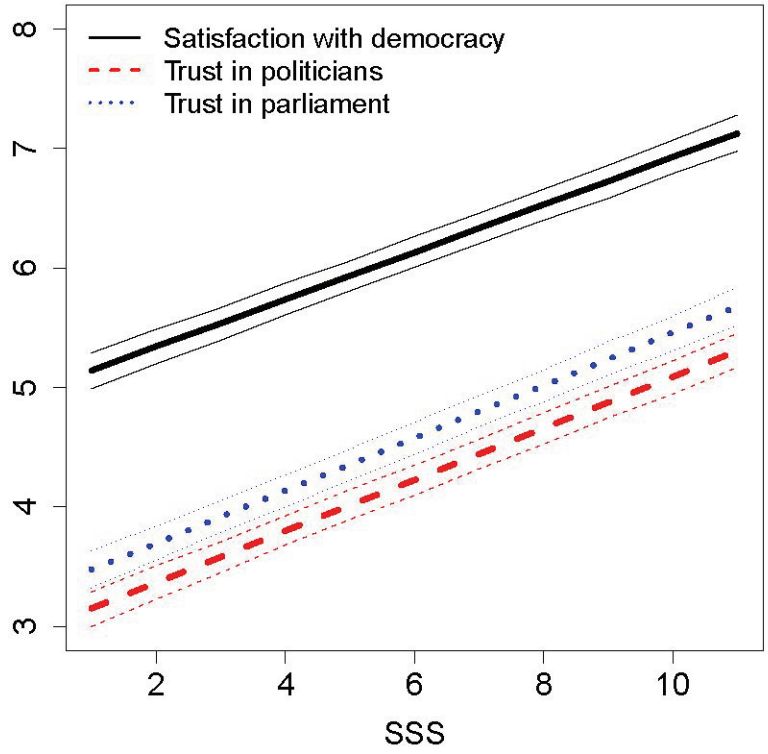
Following the ethnographic literature, we have argued that social marginalization is likely to be a source of political discontent. Is it? Are lower levels of subjective social status

associated with higher levels of political alienation? To assess this, we use least squares regressions to examine the relationship between subjective social status and attitudes to the existing political system, based on questions that ask respondents to indicate on 11-point scales how satisfied they are with the operation of democracy in their country and how much trust they have in politicians and in their parliament. We condition the estimation on other variables that might affect such attitudes and country fixed effects. The results (in Table A2) show that, as subjective social status declines, people are substantially more likely to be dissatisfied with the operation of democracy in their country and more distrustful of its politicians and parliament. Figure Four indicates that this relationship is remarkably consistent across all three measures of political alienation.[16] In sum, the more marginal people feel to society, the more likely they are to feel alienated from its political system – providing a reservoir of support for radical parties.

Are feelings of social marginalization associated with voting for radical parties? For this analysis, we employ the categorization of parties commonly used in the literature (Rooduijn and Burgoon 2017; Mudde 2007; Van Kessel 2015).[17] Radical right parties are ones claiming to speak for the people against a corrupt or incompetent elite and mounting ethno-nationalist appeals based on hostility to foreigners or people of other ethnicities and religions. Radical left parties usually eschew ethno-nationalist appeals but challenge the inequality of the capitalist order in the name of a socialism deemed well to the left of social democracy (March 2011; Gomez *et al*. 2016).[18]

To explore the issue, we use estimations based on linear probability models, where the dependent variable indicates whether the respondent voted for the relevant

Figure Four: The relationship between subjective social status and indicators for political alienation



Note: Based on the estimations in Table A2 with other variables held constant at their means and country held constant on the United Kingdom.

radical party instead of a mainstream party in the last national election (excluding those who did not vote).[19] Regressing the vote on subjective social status alone reveals a strong and statistically-significant negative association between status and a vote for radical parties of the right and of the left (models 1 and 5 in Table Three). To ensure that the relevant relationship can be attributed to subjective social status, rather than to other variables correlated with it and the vote, we condition further estimations on a wide range of other variables often said to affect a person's vote. These include: income measured in deciles, level of educational attainment measured by whether the respondent has some tertiary education, occupation measured using the categories of Oesch (2006), the age of

the respondent, gender, employment status, birthplace, residential location and whether the respondent belongs to a trade union or attends church regularly.

Even when conditioning on these variables, we find a statistically-significant negative relationship between subjective social status and voting for parties of the radical right and left (models 2 and 6 in Table Three). The magnitude of these associations is substantial. Even when conditioning on many other attributes of the individual, movement from the highest to the lowest level of status increases the probability of voting for the radical right by six full percentage points – twice as great, for instance, as the effect of moving from having a college education to not having one and more than three times as great as the effects Guiso *et al*. (2017: 25) find for being exposed to the impact of globalization or becoming fearful of immigrants. Moreover, because the estimations in models 2 and 6 are conditioned on several attributes, including income, occupation and level of education, which usually influence a person's subjective social status, the coefficients on subjective social status are capturing the association with only a portion of the full variation in feelings about social status, namely, the segment not associated with these background social attributes.[20]

Although our principal objective is not to explain the choice people make between voting for the radical left or radical right, we can explore whether the main factors emphasized in the literature about this – namely, ideology and economic situation – condition whether the citizens in our dataset turn to parties of the radical right or left. To assess whether ideology matters, following Rooduijn *et al*. (2017), we include in our estimations on vote choice indicators for two of the most pertinent facets of contemporary ideological debate, namely, support for redistribution and opposition to immigration. We measure support for redistribution with a question asking whether governments should take measures to reduce differences in income levels and opposition

to immigration with a question asking whether respondents favor admitting more or fewer immigrants of a different race/ethnicity into their country.[21] Our expectations are that voters who are strongly opposed to immigration should move toward the radical right, while voters who strongly favor redistribution and are more supportive of immigration should gravitate toward the radical left. Again, we control for a variety of factors that might also condition the vote. The coefficients on these terms conform to our expectations (models 3 and 7 in Table Three): opposition to immigration is associated at a statistically-significant level with voting for the radical right, while support for redistribution and acceptance of immigrants is associated with voting for the radical left.

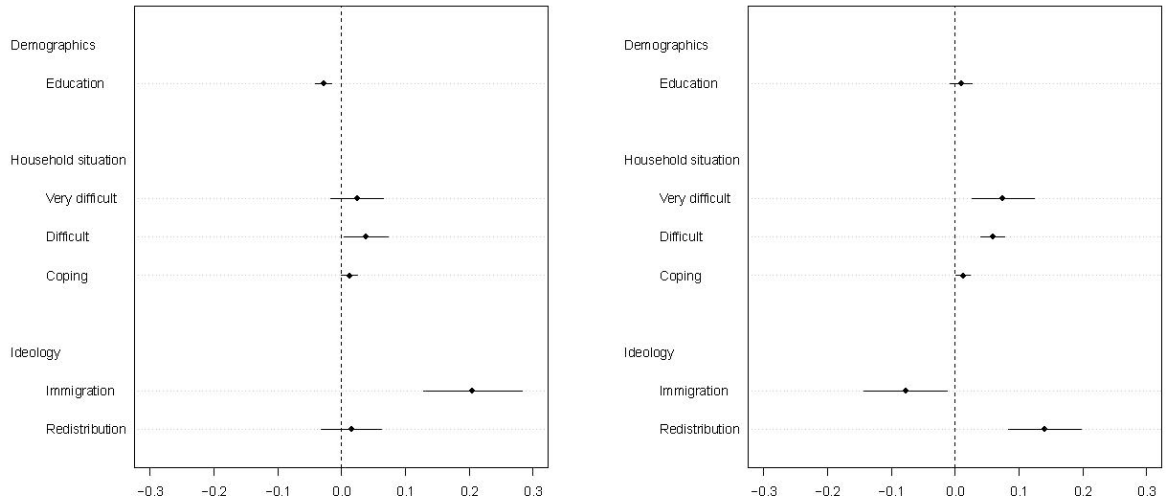
Since attitudes to immigration are strongly conditioned by education, we should also expect to see a relationship between level of education and radical party vote choice, and we do: having less than a tertiary education is associated with voting for the radical right at a statistically significant level, while having a tertiary education is associated with voting for the radical left, albeit at a level that lacks statistical significance (models 2 and 6 in Table Three). Figure Five displays the predicted change in the outcomes of interest – voting for the radical right in panel (a) and for the radical left in panel (b) – when moving across the full range of (1) support for redistribution, (2) opposition to immigrants, and (3) the education variable (from not having to having an academic degree) when other variables are held at their means (as well as confidence intervals for p = .05).

Table Three: Subjective social status, ideology, hardship and voting for radical parties

	Radical right				*Radical left*			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
SSS	−0.011***	−0.006**	−0.005**	−0.006**	−0.011***	−0.011***	−0.008***	−0.009***
	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)
Redistribution			0.004				0.035***	
			(0.006)				(0.007)	
Immigration			0.051***				−0.019**	
			(0.010)				(0.008)	
Income: Coping				0.013*				0.013**
				(0.007)				(0.005)
Income: Difficult				0.039**				0.059***
				(0.018)				(0.010)
Income: Very difficult				0.024				0.075***
				(0.021)				(0.025)
Income decile		−0.002	−0.001			−0.007***	−0.005***	
		(0.001)	(0.001)			(0.001)	(0.001)	
Occupation: Managers		0.008	0.003	0.002		−0.035**	−0.027**	−0.041***
		(0.008)	(0.007)	(0.009)		(0.014)	(0.013)	(0.015)
Occupation: Clerks		0.019***	0.009	0.016**		−0.030**	−0.023**	−0.034**
		(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.007)		(0.013)	(0.011)	(0.014)
Occupation: Low skill services		0.039***	0.023**	0.030***		−0.018*	−0.012	−0.019*
		(0.011)	(0.010)	(0.011)		(0.010)	(0.009)	(0.011)
Occupation: Technicians		0.021**	0.014	0.021***		−0.007	0.002	−0.011
		(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.007)		(0.014)	(0.013)	(0.014)
Occupation: Routine workers		0.051***	0.033**	0.044***		−0.017	−0.010	−0.018
		(0.015)	(0.014)	(0.014)		(0.015)	(0.013)	(0.019)
Female=1		−0.023***	−0.024***	−0.021**		−0.002	−0.007	−0.001
		(0.008)	(0.009)	(0.009)		(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)
Age		−0.0003	−0.001**	−0.0001		−0.00004	−0.0002	0.0002
		(0.0003)	(0.0003)	(0.0003)		(0.0003)	(0.0003)	(0.0003)
Union membership=1		0.009	0.013	0.009		0.025***	0.020***	0.023***
		(0.011)	(0.009)	(0.011)		(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.007)
Church attendance=1		0.019	0.021	0.025		−0.045***	−0.041***	−0.040***
		(0.044)	(0.043)	(0.047)		(0.008)	(0.007)	(0.008)
Higher education=1		−0.034***	−0.028***	−0.032***		0.011	0.010	0.012
		(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.007)		(0.009)	(0.009)	(0.009)
Unemployed=1		−0.008	−0.007	−0.009		0.015	0.018	0.008
		(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.016)		(0.021)	(0.022)	(0.018)
Rural-urban: Suburbs		−0.001	0.0001	0.001		−0.019	−0.017	−0.019
		(0.009)	(0.009)	(0.010)		(0.014)	(0.012)	(0.015)
Rural-urban: Small city		−0.007	−0.010	−0.007		−0.005	−0.003	−0.007
		(0.009)	(0.008)	(0.009)		(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.013)
Rural-urban: Country village		0.013	0.009	0.015		−0.014	−0.013	−0.021*
		(0.012)	(0.010)	(0.012)		(0.012)	(0.011)	(0.011)
Rural-urban: Farm and countryside		0.033**	0.027*	0.038**		−0.026	−0.024	−0.033**
		(0.016)	(0.016)	(0.015)		(0.016)	(0.017)	(0.017)
Foreign born=1		−0.055***	−0.051***	−0.058***		−0.020*	−0.024**	−0.025**
		(0.015)	(0.013)	(0.016)		(0.010)	(0.012)	(0.010)
Constant	0.110***	0.105***	−0.020	0.072***	0.175***	0.264***	0.163***	0.167***
	(0.017)	(0.021)	(0.036)	(0.017)	(0.021)	(0.021)	(0.026)	(0.026)
Observations	18,452	15,004	14,632	16,813	17,427	12,273	12,009	14,387
R^2	0.157	0.174	0.194	0.185	0.024	0.040	0.061	0.041
Note:								*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Note: OLS regressions with country fixed effects and robust clustered standard errors. Reference group for occupations is socio-cultural professionals. Reference group for rural-urban is big cities. Reference group for income is 'living comfortably on present income'.

Figure Five: Factors associated with voting for the radical right and radical left



(a) Radical right **(b) Radical left**

Note: Based on the estimations in Table Three. Reference group for income is 'living comfortably on present income'.

To explore whether a person's economic situation is associated with this vote choice, we use the question asking whether people are 'living comfortably', merely 'coping', finding it 'difficult' or 'very difficult' to live on their present household income, as a rough proxy for differences in the economic situations of labor-market 'insiders' and 'outsiders'. Our premise is that people finding it 'very difficult' to live on their income are in the worst economic position, of the sort that labor-market 'outsiders' often experience, while those who report that it is 'difficult' to do so are somewhat better-off but still conscious of threats to their economic well-being as some 'insiders' may be. Based on the literature, our expectation is that people in the most economic difficulty will gravitate toward the radical left, while support for the radical right is likely to be strongest among those in a somewhat better but still difficult economic position.

We evaluate these propositions with estimations that condition again on a variety of variables likely to affect the vote (models 4 and 8 in Table Three). The results are also displayed in Figure Five. As expected, the more difficulty people report living on their

current income, the more likely they are to vote for radical left parties. But the relationship with voting for the radical right is not monotonic. Support for the radical right is strongest and statistically-significant (at $p = .05$) only among those who report it is 'difficult' to live on their current income. This suggests that people facing the most difficult economic circumstance are most likely to vote for the radical left but support for the radical right is strongest among those whose economic situation is slightly better. As the literature predicts, ideology and economic situation seem to condition whether people who are discontent turn toward the radical left or right.

Conclusion

We have used a cross-national comparison of European democracies to provide a statistical assessment of the key observation from many ethnographic studies, namely, that people are more likely to vote for radical parties when they feel 'left behind' by society. Although such support is multiply-determined and our estimations cannot fully establish causal relationships, the evidence we have presented is consistent with the contention that support for radical parties is related to failures of social integration. We have found that people who believe they are more marginal to society, typically because they feel less social respect, have less trust in others or are less engaged in social activities, are more likely than others to be alienated from mainstream politics and to vote for parties of the radical right or left. We have also presented evidence consistent with the proposition that recent economic and cultural developments may have increased feelings of social marginalization, especially among people with relatively-low levels of income or skills. Although problems of social integration do not fully explain rising support for radical parties, these results suggest there is value in considering how they contribute to it.

In more general terms, our analysis indicates that studies of comparative political behavior might benefit from taking issues of social integration more seriously. These types of issues figured prominently in the works of an earlier era, when political scientists were seeking explanations for the collapse of Weimar democracy and the radical right of the 1950s, but they receded from view as decades of prosperity seemed to cement social integration (Lipset 1955, 1959; Bell 1964). However, at a time when support for populist candidates is again increasing, mainstream parties are losing supporters, and political trust is declining, it is worth reconsidering how issues of social integration impinge on contemporary political challenges. One concrete step in that direction would be to include more questions tapping subjective social status in national and cross-national opinion surveys.

Our findings also have implications for how populism might be addressed. On the one hand, there is symbolic work to be done here and politics is a symbolic as well as material enterprise (Edelman 1985). Politicians fashion narratives that tell people who is central to the national community and who is not, inspiring feelings of inclusiveness or rejection that condition people's conceptions of social standing (Bouchard 2017). On the other hand, it is apparent from our analysis that the challenge is as much economic as symbolic. People's subjective social status is closely associated with their employment status, their skill level and the quality of their jobs. A decent job has always been central to effective social integration and there are no symbolic substitutes for it.

Accordingly, there may be limits to proposals to cope with populism by providing more compensation to people on whom international trade has imposed concentrated losses (Asatryan *et al*., 2014). There is a rationale for this: support for radical candidates is especially prevalent in the regions and sectors most exposed to the strains of globalization. However, if compensation comes in the form of social benefits,

our analysis suggests that this may not be enough to assuage voters drawn to radical parties. Radical right voters are not especially strong supporters of redistribution. What distinguishes them from voters for mainstream parties are concerns about recognition – the feeling that they have been pushed from the mainstream to the margins of society – and having a decent job is central to being in that mainstream. We suspect that many people want well-paid jobs and a secure place in vibrant communities more than they want social benefits or social reassurance. Of course, amidst rapid technological change, it is not easy to create such jobs or to revive communities; but those facts should not blind us to the complexion of the challenge. An initial step forward would be to recognize that rising support for radical parties reflects problems of social integration.

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ONLINE SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS

Appendix One: Countries and classification of parties included in the analysis

Radical left	***Countries***	***Populist right***
	Albania	
	Belgium	Vlaams Belang Front National
	Bulgaria	PP Ataka
	Switzerland	Swiss People's Party Swiss Democrats
	Cyprus	
KSCM	Czech Republic	
Die Linke	Germany	Republikaner, NPD
The Red-Green Alliance, Socialist People's Party	Denmark	Danish People's Party
	Estonia	
Izquierda Unida	Spain	
Left Alliance	Finland	True Finns
Lutte Ouvri, Nouveau Parti Anti-Capitaliste	France	Front National
	United Kingdom	
	Hungary	Fidesz Jobbik
Sinn Fein	Ireland	
	Iceland	
	Italy	
	Lithuania	
Socialist Party	Netherlands	PVV
The Party Red, Socialist Left Party	Norway	Progress Party
	Poland	Law and Justice, Congress of the New Right
Bloco de Esquerda	Portugal	
Left Party	Sweden	Swedish Democrats
	Slovenia	
	Slovakia	

Appendix Two – Online Supplementary Results

Table A1: Subjective social status and social integration

	Dependent variable: Subjective social status			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Treated with respect	0.329***			
	(0.023)			
Trust people		0.083***		
		(0.010)		
Social activities: less than most			0.398***	
			(0.051)	
Social activities: About the same			0.661***	
			(0.057)	
Social activities: More than most			0.889***	
			(0.058)	
Social activities: Much more than most			0.970***	
			(0.073)	
Social meetings: Less than once a month				0.314**
				(0.128)
Social meetings: Once a month				0.635***
				(0.107)
Social meetings: Several times a month				0.753***
				(0.107)
Social meetings: Once a week				0.808***
				(0.112)
Social meetings: Several times a week				0.849***
				(0.107)
Social meetings: Every day				0.882***
				(0.111)
Income decile	0.145***	0.153***	0.149***	0.156***
	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.008)
Occupation: Managers	0.050	0.044	0.037	0.034
	(0.038)	(0.042)	(0.041)	(0.040)
Occupation: Clerks	−0.172***	−0.189***	−0.197***	−0.205***
	(0.058)	(0.058)	(0.059)	(0.059)
Occupation: Services	−0.346***	−0.361***	−0.364***	−0.383***
	(0.038)	(0.038)	(0.041)	(0.039)
Occupation: Technicians	−0.126***	−0.158***	−0.138***	−0.151***
	(0.043)	(0.040)	(0.044)	(0.044)
Occupation: Routine workers	−0.430***	−0.455***	−0.440***	−0.470***
	(0.039)	(0.039)	(0.042)	(0.041)
Female=1	−0.090***	−0.066**	−0.050*	−0.064**
	(0.027)	(0.029)	(0.026)	(0.026)
Age	−0.001	0.001	0.002	0.003
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)
Union membership=1	0.041	0.047	0.033	0.049
	(0.038)	(0.042)	(0.040)	(0.042)
Church attendance=1	0.131*	0.174**	0.152**	0.167**
	(0.070)	(0.076)	(0.072)	(0.073)
Higher education=1	0.203***	0.198***	0.203***	0.221***
	(0.039)	(0.045)	(0.041)	(0.041)
Unemployed=1	−0.222***	−0.283***	−0.286***	−0.292***
	(0.067)	(0.070)	(0.068)	(0.070)
Rural-urban: Suburbs	−0.032	−0.015	−0.031	−0.011
	(0.059)	(0.060)	(0.061)	(0.062)
Rural-urban: Small city	−0.066	−0.039	−0.047	−0.044
	(0.041)	(0.049)	(0.048)	(0.051)
Rural-urban: Country village	−0.098*	−0.053	−0.052	−0.053
	(0.052)	(0.056)	(0.057)	(0.058)
Rural-urban: Farm and countryside	−0.105**	−0.046	−0.029	−0.031
	(0.050)	(0.053)	(0.049)	(0.056)
Foreign born=1	−0.156***	−0.135***	−0.120***	−0.122***
	(0.040)	(0.044)	(0.040)	(0.045)
Constant	5.119***	6.603***	6.461***	6.129***
	(0.128)	(0.113)	(0.109)	(0.141)
Observations	31,749	32,039	31,620	32,025
R^2	0.291	0.264	0.271	0.264
Note:				*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Note: OLS regressions with country fixed effects and robust clustered standard errors. Reference group for occupations is socio-cultural professionals. Reference group for rural-urban is big cities. Reference group for social activities is 'much less than most'. Reference group for social meetings is 'never'.

Table A2: Subjective social status and political alienation

	Dependent variable:			
	Sat. with democracy	Trust in politicians	Trust in parliament	No vote
SSS	0.198***	0.216***	0.220***	−0.014***
	(0.023)	(0.018)	(0.018)	(0.002)
Income decile	0.061***	0.020*	0.039***	−0.012***
	(0.010)	(0.011)	(0.012)	(0.002)
Occupation: Managers	−0.114*	−0.129**	−0.125**	−0.010
	(0.060)	(0.065)	(0.053)	(0.008)
Occupation: Clerks	−0.035	−0.188***	−0.217***	0.009
	(0.074)	(0.069)	(0.068)	(0.011)
Occupation: Low skill services	−0.217***	−0.258***	−0.377***	0.040***
	(0.061)	(0.043)	(0.041)	(0.010)
Occupation: Technicians	−0.044	−0.179***	−0.194***	0.003
	(0.065)	(0.054)	(0.046)	(0.008)
Occupation: Routine workers	−0.181**	−0.296***	−0.453***	0.048***
	(0.076)	(0.057)	(0.063)	(0.014)
Female=1	−0.137***	0.063**	−0.130***	0.006
	(0.031)	(0.028)	(0.034)	(0.007)
Age	0.002	0.004**	0.002	−0.005***
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.0004)
Union membership=1	−0.025	−0.031	0.004	−0.056***
	(0.050)	(0.043)	(0.045)	(0.008)
Church attendance=1	0.219***	0.342***	0.388***	−0.050***
	(0.081)	(0.062)	(0.080)	(0.014)
Higher education=1	0.111**	0.123***	0.264***	−0.073***
	(0.051)	(0.039)	(0.050)	(0.008)
Unemployed=1	−0.171***	−0.117*	−0.161*	0.034**
	(0.066)	(0.064)	(0.083)	(0.015)
Rural-urban: Suburbs	−0.032	−0.037	−0.039	−0.027**
	(0.071)	(0.071)	(0.074)	(0.013)
Rural-urban: Small city	−0.122	−0.061	−0.140**	−0.018*
	(0.080)	(0.078)	(0.070)	(0.010)
Rural-urban: Country village	−0.078	−0.087	−0.179**	−0.036**
	(0.085)	(0.068)	(0.080)	(0.016)
Rural-urban: Farm and countryside	−0.207**	−0.135	−0.254***	−0.035***
	(0.103)	(0.083)	(0.081)	(0.013)
Foreign born=1	0.419***	0.311***	0.353***	0.179***
	(0.159)	(0.100)	(0.136)	(0.027)
Constant	2.891***	1.198***	2.392***	0.491***
	(0.205)	(0.110)	(0.135)	(0.032)
Observations	31,409	31,770	31,636	30,500
R^2	0.270	0.249	0.273	0.126
Note:				*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Note: OLS regressions with country fixed effects and robust clustered standard errors. Reference group for occupations is socio-cultural professionals. Reference group for rural-urban is big cities.

Table A3: Full multi-level models

	Dependent variable: Subjective social status								
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Income decile	0.170***	0.083**	0.082**	0.170***	0.076	0.074	0.175***	0.174***	0.174***
	(0.004)	(0.038)	(0.038)	(0.004)	(0.053)	(0.053)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)
Occupation: Managers	0.077**	0.075**	0.075**	0.077**	0.075**	0.075**	0.097***	0.095***	0.095***
	(0.035)	(0.035)	(0.035)	(0.035)	(0.035)	(0.035)	(0.033)	(0.033)	(0.033)
Occupation: Clerks	−0.132***	−0.133***	−0.133***	−0.132***	−0.133***	−0.133***	−0.173***	−0.174***	−0.173***
	(0.042)	(0.042)	(0.042)	(0.042)	(0.042)	(0.042)	(0.040)	(0.040)	(0.040)
Occupation: Low skill services	−0.334***	−0.335***	−0.335***	−0.334***	−0.335***	−0.335***	−0.369***	−0.373***	−0.372***
	(0.034)	(0.034)	(0.034)	(0.034)	(0.034)	(0.034)	(0.033)	(0.033)	(0.033)
Occupation: Technicians	−0.113**	−0.113**	−0.113**	−0.113**	−0.113**	−0.113**	−0.137***	−0.134***	−0.134***
	(0.044)	(0.044)	(0.044)	(0.044)	(0.044)	(0.044)	(0.041)	(0.041)	(0.041)
Occupation: Routine workers	−0.372***	−0.373***	−0.372***	−0.372***	−0.373***	−0.372***	−0.415***	−0.411***	−0.410***
	(0.035)	(0.035)	(0.035)	(0.035)	(0.035)	(0.035)	(0.034)	(0.034)	(0.034)
Female=1	0.002	0.002	0.003	0.002	0.002	0.003	−0.009	−0.009	−0.008
	(0.021)	(0.021)	(0.021)	(0.021)	(0.021)	(0.021)	(0.020)	(0.020)	(0.020)
Age	0.003***	0.003***	0.003***	0.003***	0.003***	0.003***	0.004***	0.004***	0.004***
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Union membership=1	0.041	0.042	0.040	0.041	0.041	0.040	0.038	0.042	0.041
	(0.028)	(0.028)	(0.028)	(0.028)	(0.028)	(0.028)	(0.027)	(0.027)	(0.027)
Church attendance=1	0.095***	0.096***	0.096***	0.095***	0.096***	0.096***	0.113***	0.116***	0.117***
	(0.029)	(0.029)	(0.029)	(0.029)	(0.029)	(0.029)	(0.029)	(0.029)	(0.029)
Higher education=1	0.339***	0.339***	0.339***	0.339***	0.339***	0.339***	0.302***	−0.578***	−0.574***
	(0.023)	(0.023)	(0.023)	(0.023)	(0.023)	(0.023)	(0.022)	(0.113)	(0.113)
Unemployed=1	−0.671***	−0.673***	−0.672***	−0.671***	−0.673***	−0.672***	−0.816***	−0.810***	−0.809***
	(0.040)	(0.040)	(0.040)	(0.040)	(0.040)	(0.040)	(0.041)	(0.041)	(0.041)
Rural-urban: Suburbs	0.063*	0.064*	0.063*	0.063*	0.064*	0.063*	0.064*	0.071**	0.071**
	(0.036)	(0.036)	(0.036)	(0.036)	(0.036)	(0.036)	(0.035)	(0.035)	(0.035)
Rural-urban: Small city	0.116***	0.117***	0.116***	0.116***	0.117***	0.116***	0.111***	0.117***	0.118***
	(0.026)	(0.026)	(0.026)	(0.026)	(0.026)	(0.026)	(0.026)	(0.026)	(0.026)
Rural-urban: Country village	0.028	0.032	0.031	0.028	0.031	0.031	0.050*	0.058**	0.058**
	(0.028)	(0.028)	(0.028)	(0.028)	(0.028)	(0.028)	(0.027)	(0.027)	(0.027)
Rural-urban: Farm, countryside	0.086*	0.087*	0.085*	0.086*	0.087*	0.085*	0.097**	0.106**	0.104**
	(0.047)	(0.047)	(0.047)	(0.047)	(0.047)	(0.047)	(0.045)	(0.045)	(0.045)
Foreign born=1	−0.108***	−0.106***	−0.108***	−0.108***	−0.107***	−0.108***	−0.105***	−0.095***	−0.096***
	(0.038)	(0.038)	(0.038)	(0.038)	(0.038)	(0.038)	(0.035)	(0.035)	(0.035)
GDP			0.00001**			0.00001**			0.00002***
			(0.00000)			(0.00000)			(0.00000)
Income * Top 10		0.004**	0.004**						
		(0.002)	(0.002)						
Top 10	−0.144**	−0.160***	−0.119**						
	(0.052)	(0.052)	(0.047)						
Income * Top 20					0.002*	0.002*			
					(0.001)	(0.001)			
Top 20				−0.129***	−0.140***	−0.103**			
				(0.045)	(0.045)	(0.042)			
Higher educ. * Tertiary enroll.								0.026***	0.026***
								(0.003)	(0.003)
Tertiary enroll.							−0.017	−0.029	0.004
							(0.022)	(0.022)	(0.015)
Constant	8.991***	9.383***	7.931***	10.526***	10.956***	9.074***	6.029***	6.426***	4.444***
	(1.255)	(1.267)	(1.208)	(1.753)	(1.770)	(1.678)	(0.762)	(0.765)	(0.583)
Observations	29,717	29,717	29,717	29,717	29,717	29,717	30,568	30,568	30,568
Log Likelihood	−59,151.820	−59,149.190	−59,145.720	−59,151.640	−59,150.050	−59,146.690	−59,765.770	−59,734.040	−59,723.520

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Appendix Three: Measures used in the analysis

Individual-level variables:

- HINCTNTA: income decile
- HINCFEL: coping with income; answers to the question 'which of the descriptions on this card comes closest to describing how you feel about your household's income nowadays?' range across 'living comfortably', 'coping', 'finding it difficult on present income' to 'finding it very difficult on present income'
- ISCO08: occupations are coded using the and based on Oesch 2006 (Table A1)
- GNDR: gender
- AGEA: age
- MBTRU: union membership; equals 1 for respondents who replied "yes, currently".
- RLGATND: church attendance; equals 1 for respondents who replied "every day", "more than once a week" or once a week to the question "Apart from special occasions such as weddings and funerals, about how often do you attend religious services nowadays?"
- EDUYRS: higher education; equals 1 for those with 13-30 years of education
- UEMPLA: unemployed
- DOMICIL: rural-urban
- TRTRSP: treated with respect; answers to the question "please tell me the extent you feel that people treat you with respect?" range from "not at all" (1) and "a great deal" (7)
- GINCDIF: support redistribution; answers to the question "The government should take measures to reduce differences in income levels" range from "disagree strongly" (1) to "agree strongly" (5).
- STFECO: satisfaction with the economy; answers to the question "On the whole how satisfied are you with the present state of the economy in [country]?" range from "extremely dissatisfied" (1) to "extremely satisfied" (11)
- PPLTRST: trust people; answers to the question "would you say that most people can be trusted, or that you can't be too careful in dealing with people?" range from "you can't be too careful" (1) to "most people can be trusted" (11).
- SCLACT: social activities; answers to the question "Compared to other people of your age, how often would you say you take part in social activities?" range from "much less than most" to "much more than most".
- SCLMEET: social meetings; answers to the question "how often do you meet socially with friends, relatives or work colleagues" range from "never" to "every day".
- STFDEM: satisfaction with democracy; answers to the question "how satisfied are you with the way democracy works in [country]?" range from "extremely dissatisfied" (1) to "extremely satisfied" (11).

- TRSTPLT: trust in politicians; answers range from “no trust at all” (1) to “complete trust (11).
- PPLTRST: trust in parliament; answers range from “no trust at all” (1) to “complete trust (11).
- IMDFETN: Country should allow many/few immigrants of different race/ethnic group from majority; answers range across “allow none,” “allow a few,” “allow some,” and “allow many to come and live here.”

Country-level variables

- GDP: GDP per capita, based on World Bank data
- Top 10: Income share held by highest 10%, based on World Bank data
- Top 20: Income share held by highest 20%, based on World Bank data
- Tertiary enrollment: Students in tertiary education - as % of 20-24 years old in the population, based on Eurostat data

Notes GidronHallDec2018

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[1] We focus here on sources of discontent exogenous to partisan competition. However, the appeals of populist parties can intensify that discontent. See Kitschelt 1997; Rooduijn *et al*. 2016.

[2] For an analogous argument emphasizing feelings of relative deprivation, see Elchardus and Spruyt (2012).

[3] In modern societies national frames usually provide the reference groups for these social comparisons. See Passas (1997) and Merton (1968: 353-59).

[4] On relative deprivation, see the classic work by Runciman (1966) and recent reviews in Walker and Smith 2002.

[5] A small literature explores the political effects of subjective social status but defined in terms of self-assigned class category, thereby tapping into class politics and a rather different set of issues. Cf. Jackman and Jackman 1973; Sosnaud, Brady and Frenk 2013.

[6] The most closely related works are by Elchardus and Spruyt (2012) who explore how feelings of relative deprivation relate to support for radical parties, Gest *et al*. (2017) focused on 'nostalgic deprivation', and Burgoon *et al*. (2018) on 'positional deprivation'. Kurer (2018) also reports changes in subjective social status.

[7] For the countries included see online Appendix One. To confine the analysis to stable European democracies, we dropped Russia, Ukraine, Kosovo and Israel.

[8] Level of education is measured by whether the respondent has some tertiary education (1) or not (0) and for occupational class we use the influential categories of Oesch 2006.

[9] In addition to income, education and occupation as previously defined, these estimations include: age, gender, employment status, foreign birth, residential location, union membership and church attendance.

[10] Individual-level covariates are held constant at their median (for numerical variables) and at the following values: female routine worker, age of 49, 5th income decile, not a union member, not a regular church attendant, without a higher education degree, not unemployed, living in a town or a small city, not foreign born.

[11] There is debate about the number of country cases required for such estimations. In general, the coefficients in such models should be unbiased, but the standard errors, especially on cross-level interaction terms, may be biased downward. Bryan and Jenkins (2015) recommend using such models only if there are about 25 cases, where the standard errors should be biased by less than 2%; but Elff et al. (2016) argue that unbiased estimates are available from considerably fewer country cases (cf. Stegmueller 2013). We have an N of 22 to 25 country cases but, in line with these concerns, the results should be treated with caution.

[12] Examination of the intra-class correlation in the null model shows that about ten percent of the variance in subjective social status occurs between countries.

[13] In a comparable study, Schneider (2017) finds that higher levels of income inequality reduce life satisfaction along with subjective social status.

[14] Our measure is the number of students enrolled in tertiary education as a percentage of the country's population between 20 and 24 years of age.

[15] The subjective social status of women, even without a college education, did not decline over this period, probably because they benefited from rising rates of labor force participation and shifts toward cultural frameworks attaching more value to gender equality.

[16] The other variables in this estimation are held constant as in Figure Two. As subjective social status declines, people are also less likely to vote (see model 4 in Table A2).

[17] For the list of parties, see online Appendix One.

[18] See also Rooduijn *et al.* (2017) but note that Gomez *et al.* (2016) find some differences in the appeals and support base of different types of radical left parties that we do not explore here.

[19] In these estimations, vote for a radical party is coded as 1 and vote for a mainstream party is coded as 0. Of course, the estimations cover only those countries in which there is such a party.

[20] We considered using structural equation models to parse out the paths among these variables, but it is impractical to estimate these paths without dropping the country fixed effects; and doing so would introduce enough omitted variable bias into the estimations to render the accuracy of the coefficients questionable (cf. Bullock et al. 2010).

[21] For question wording see Appendix Three. Higher scores on the two measures indicate support for redistribution and opposition to immigration.