Populism as a Problem of Social Integration

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Abstract

Building on an important ethnographic literature which suggests that supporters of populist parties often feel 'left behind' by contemporary socioeconomic developments, we use comparative survey data across European democracies to assess whether support for parties on the radical right and left is associated with feelings of social marginalization. Using a measure of subjective social status to tap each individual's sense of social integration, 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, to abstain from voting, and to support radical parties. We also find an association between two key dimensions of recent economic developments – higher levels of income inequality and tertiary enrollment at the national level – and lower levels of subjective social status among people with limited income or educational attainment. We conclude that support for parties of the radical right and left reflects issues of social integration that deserve more attention from scholars of comparative political behavior.

The recent surge in support for parties of the radical right and left in the developed democracies is one of the most important political phenomena of our time. The electoral successes of such causes and candidates have recently changed the course of history in the US, UK, Hungary and Poland. But, even where they do not win elections, radical parties are taking a much larger share of the vote than they did two decades ago – precipitating changes in the policy positions of mainstream parties and making it more difficult for countries to assemble cohesive governing coalitions capable of coping with contemporary challenges.[1]

For standard analyses of electoral behavior, rising support for radical parties is a puzzling phenomenon. Theories that expect citizens to vote their material interest have difficulty explaining why so many working-class voters support parties of the radical right when there are grounds for thinking that left parties are more likely to advance their material interests. Analyses that expect voters to swing between the mainstream left or right based on a diffuse policy mood are ill-equipped to explain why so many voters have moved beyond the mainstream to the fringes of the political spectrum.

In recent years, many efforts to explain increasing support for radical parties have pointed to the populist character of these parties' appeals, defined as appeals constructing a moral opposition between corrupt and ill-intentioned elites and a virtuous yet ignored populace (Rooduijn and Akkerman 2017; on the definition, see Aslandis 2016; Müller 2016; Mudde and Kaltwasser 2017; Bonikowski and Gidron 2016a; for a critical perspective on this emphasis on populism, see Rydgren 2017). To some extent, this approach follows from changes in the parties themselves. Radical right parties that were once anti-tax, small-state movements appealing mainly to small employers, or

fringe groups operating on a virulent racism, have been transformed into or replaced by parties mounting much broader claims to speak for a wide swath of people neglected by corrupt political elites said to be devoted to cosmopolitan values and global initiatives at the expense of ordinary people. Those claims are generally accompanied by ethno-nationalist calls to action against foreign threats, including those posed by immigrants and people of other races or religions (Rydgren 2005). Right populism of this kind is a phenomenon of growing importance in the contemporary world (for recent reviews, see Golder 2017; Mudde 2017). On the radical left, parties that were once closely associated with communism have mutated into or been eclipsed by parties espousing more eclectic ideologies that remain anti-capitalist in tone but focus more directly on issues of social inequality and economic austerity, seeking alternatives to the neoliberal policies of the past thirty years (Gomez *et al*. 2016).

A good deal of this recent discussion about populism centers on a debate about whether its appeal is rooted in adverse economic circumstances or in shifting cultural frameworks that have generated a counter-reaction from voters holding traditional values. There is something to be said for each side of this debate. On the one hand, good evidence suggests that support for candidates on the radical right and left is stronger in regions that are experiencing higher levels of unemployment or lower wages, often associated with the movement of manufacturing jobs abroad (Autor *et al*. 2016; Algan *et al*. 2017; Colantone and Stanig 2017; Ballard-Rosa *et al*. 2017). On the other hand, there is an inextricably-cultural dimension to support for right populist candidates: they attract large numbers of voters with attitudes at odds with the post-materialist and

multicultural values dominating elite discourse (Ivarsflaten 2008; Oesch 2008; Inglehart and Norris 2017; Kaufmann 2017).

Precisely because there seem to be both economic and cultural sides to support for populism, however, we think this debate is misplaced. The greater need is for synthetic accounts that can explain how economic and cultural developments might operate together to increase support for populism; and the objective of this article is to provide such an account. *Our key contention is that populist politics reflects problems of social integration. That is to say, support for radical parties is likely to be especially high among people who feel they have been socially marginalized*, i.e. deprived of the roles and respect normally accorded members of mainstream society. From this perspective, the sources of social marginalization may lie in economic or cultural developments and in how they combine.

Of course, we are not claiming to be able to explain every vote for radical parties. Where radical candidates and causes win elections, they depend on diverse and multiply-motivated coalitions; and, across countries, some factors may be more important than others in generating those coalitions (Kitschelt 1997; Antonucci *et al*. 2017; Clarke, Goodwin and Whiteley 2017; Rooduijn 2017; Rodrik 2017). However, we think that populism has an especially strong appeal to people who feel socially-marginalized. More generally, we make the case that by bringing issues of social integration and social status back into the study of comparative political behavior, we can illuminate features of electoral politics that have been neglected for some time but are again important in the contemporary era.

We proceed as follows. In the next section, we elaborate the theoretical underpinnings of an approach that associates support for populism with levels of social integration, by defining social integration and explaining why it may be relevant to electoral behavior. We then turn to empirical assessment of this view, introducing our measure of subjective social status and establishing that it is a good indicator for the extent to which an individual is integrated into mainstream society. We then examine the relationship at the individual level between social integration, political alienation and support for radical parties on both the left and right. In the penultimate section, we use multi-level models to explore whether recent economic and cultural developments may have affected levels of social integration in the developed democracies. We conclude by considering the implications of the analysis for the study of comparative political behavior and how rising support for populism might be addressed.

Populism as a problem of social integration

The inspiration for our approach comes from an ethnographic literature that delves deeply into the life situations and attitudes of some of the social groups most likely to support populist parties (Eribon 2013; Gest 2016; Cramer 2016; Hochschild 2016). Across a diversity of national settings, this literature reports similar findings. Important segments of the population are said to feel 'left behind' – relegated to vulnerable economic and social positions, increasingly alienated from the values prominent in elite discourse, and sensing that they are no longer recognized as 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."

It is notable that the subjects in these studies and voters for populist causes more generally do not simply refer to personal economic distress but to their devalued position within society and to their dismay at the direction of society as a whole (Spruyt *et al*. 2016).[2] Sociotropic concerns such as these indicate issues of social integration. Among supporters of the populist right, Gest *et al*. (2017) find a sense of 'nostalgic deprivation' rooted in the belief that social conditions were better for everyone in the past and a corresponding pessimism about the future of their societies. Of Britons who voted to leave the European Union in June 2016, 58% said that life in Britain today is worse than it was thirty years ago (compared to 27% of those voting to remain in the EU), and 61% thought that life would be worse for their children (Ashcroft 2016; Elchardus and Spruyt 2016).

The implication of these findings is that the social contract which underpins flourishing democracy is fraying at its edges, as recent economic and cultural developments have severed the connections that usually bind people to their society. Political protest of the sort that manifests itself in support for parties mounting populist appeals may have its origins in failures of social integration.

Conceptualizing social integration

A deep vein of research in sociology considers such issues. That literature construes social integration in terms of three dimensions. The *locus classicus* lies in the studies of Émile Durkheim (1984[1892]), who saw social integration in modern societies as the product of interdependence engendered by the division of labor in market economies, but argued that this division of labor would yield solidarity only if it provided people with occupations they deemed appropriate and if individuals participated in a collective consciousness composed of shared norms, values and beliefs. Absent such shared norms, society would be in a state of anomie (cf. Herzog 2018).

Developing this approach, 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". Associating the integration of individuals into society with the attainment of a certain social status, this account foreshadows later work on the importance of social networks as vehicles for social acceptance and well-being (Berkman *et al*. 2000; Putnam 2000). On this view, the levels of social recognition that people acquire by virtue of social interaction are central to social integration. Subsequent studies build on these formulations to stress how engagement with family, friends and the community encourages the acceptance of common normative frameworks (Bellah *et al*. 1996; Etzioni 1996). In sum, this literature identifies three dimensions of social integration. The first is the degree to which people join in a *shared normative order*. The second is their level of *social interaction* with others; and the third is the extent to which they feel *recognized* or respected by others.

At the individual level, social integration is a relational concept: it turns on people's relationship to others in society. Thus, a good measure for how socially-integrated people feel is the 'subjective social status' that a person assigns himself. Defined in classical terms by Weber (1968[1918]), social status refers to the rank a person enjoys within the hierarchy of social prestige characteristic of all societies. This 'objective' social status is based on widely-shared beliefs about what types or categories of people deserve the esteem of others; and, in modern societies, it is closely associated with a person's income, level of educational attainment and occupation – the standard markers of 'socioeconomic status' (Ridgeway 2014: 3; Blau and Duncan 1967; cf. Savage 2015).

Subjective social status is slightly different: it refers to people's own beliefs about where they stand relative to others within this status hierarchy. Since a person's judgments about that are invariably conditioned by the views of others, subjective social status is likely to be affected by the standard markers of objective status that person possesses; but research shows that it is also sensitive to a range of other factors, such as people's satisfaction with their lives and material situations (Singh-Manoux, Alder and Marmot 2003; Miyakawa *et al*. 2012). Thus, subjective social status should be conditioned both by people's material situation and by their beliefs about what society values.

In the empirics that follow, we measure subjective social status with responses to a question in which people are told 'There are people who tend to be towards the top of our society and people who tend to be towards the bottom' and asked to position themselves on an 11-point scale to indicate where they would place themselves on this

social ladder. This type of question 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 show that lower scores on it are also associated with higher levels of negative social emotions, such as anger and resentment, consistent with our view that it taps into people's sense of whether they are accorded social recognition and respect (Adler and Stewart 2007).

The relevance to politics

Although studies of comparative electoral behavior have devoted considerable attention to the impact of citizens' values or material interests on their vote, relatively few have considered how subjective social status might condition political preferences.[3] The most closely-related literature explores parallel political effects but defines subjective social status in terms of the class category a respondent assigns himself or herself, thereby tapping into rather into dimensions associated with class politics different from the ones in which we are interested (Jackman and Jackman 1973; Sosnaud, Brady and Frenk 2013). Another literature examines the effects of 'status inconsistency' on political attitudes, but focuses on the impact of incongruities in objective status rather than on subjective social status (Lenski 1954; cf. Runciman and Bagley 1969). The work closest to ours, from which we draw inspiration, is a set of pioneering studies by Lipset (1955, 1959) that associate social isolation and status anxiety with support for the radical right.

We are also influenced by a large body of research in sociology and psychology that identifies the quest for social esteem as a crucial motivation for social action (Weber 1968; Ridgeway and Walker 1995; de Botton 2004). Summarizing extensive

research, 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-linked to the self-esteem on which their mental and physical health depends (Marmot 2004; Fisk 2010). Thus, it is reasonable to think that people's concerns about their social standing might influence the political decisions they make.

We are interested here in whether such concerns might condition people's support for parties of the radical left and right. Both types of parties challenge the conventional political order often based on populist appeals (Rooduijn and Akkerman 2017); and two types of considerations might lead people concerned about their social standing to vote for them. Some might support radical parties for *instrumental reasons*. Just as individuals sometimes vote retrospectively to punish an incumbent government for its failure to improve their material situation, so people might vote for the radical left or populist right to hold mainstream parties accountable for a failure to sustain or improve their social standing. Alternatively, people might vote prospectively for such a party on the grounds that it would be more likely to advance their social standing than a victory by mainstream parties would.

Indeed, the populist rhetoric of radical left and right politicians is often aimed directly at such status concerns. They frequently adopt the plain-spoken language of the common man, self-consciously repudiating the politically-correct or technocratic language of the political elites. Radical politicians on the left evoke the virtues of 'working people' while those on the right emphasize themes of national greatness, which may have special appeal for people dependent on claims to national membership for social status they might otherwise lack (Shayo 2009). The slogans of the Brexit

campaign – 'take back control' – and Donald Trump – 'make America great again' – were perfectly pitched for this purpose. 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).

Alternatively, voters with status concerns might also support such parties for more *affective reasons*. A large literature in psychology observes that, when people feel their social status is threatened, they are likely to develop feelings of hostility to outgroups, especially when those outgroups are associated with the status threat (Tajfel 1978; Riek, Mania and Gaertner 2006; Leach and Spears 2008; Küpper, Wolf and Zick 2010). Since individuals of low subjective status are more vulnerable to status threats, they may be especially susceptible to the ethno-nationalist appeals often mounted by politicians on the populist right.

On these logics, we expect lower levels of subjective social status to be associated with voting for the radical right and left. Why might some voters gravitate to radical parties of the right and others to the left? On this issue, Rooduijn *et al*. (2017) offer important insights. They argue that the choice is mainly a matter of ideology, i.e. voters inclined to protest select a radical party based on the congruence between its position on key issues and their own. Thus, voters with status concerns but universalistic values that incline them against ethno-nationalist appeals should be drawn to the radical left rather than the populist right. Because universalistic values are more often found among sociocultural professionals and people with higher levels of education, we should expect voters in those social groups to lean toward the radical left

(Kitschelt and Rehm 2014). Since radical left parties promise redistribution in larger measure than populist right parties, they should also be more attractive to voters who favor redistribution (Rovny 2012).

Thus, the choice between radical right and left should *turn on the balance in voters' concerns between recognition and redistribution* (cf. Fraser and Honneth 2004). By claiming to speak for 'the people' or 'working people', all of these parties offer recognition to those who feel they are denied it. But people with more intense concerns about redistribution should be drawn to the radical left, while those concerned primarily with recognition should gravitate toward the populist right.

In sum, building on an ethnographic literature,, we argue that people who feel socially marginalized will be especially susceptible to populist appeals from the radical right and left. In this respect, rising support for such parties reflects problems of social integration. Although these ethnographic studies are deeply evocative, it is hard to know how representative they are of wider populations. Accordingly, we explore these issues further with survey data based on representative samples of citizens in a wide range of developed democracies. Of course, there are disadvantages to survey data: the restricted range of questions they ask provides only limited insight into how people think. But we think that cross-national survey analysis can be an important adjunct to ethnographic data for assessing the generality of such perspectives and we turn now to that task.

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.[4] The ESS is widely recognized as a high-quality survey and, because questions about subjective social status are rarely included in such surveys, it is the only one we have found covering an adequate number of countries with the relevant political variables. The sample includes approximately 45,000 respondents.

Subjective social status as a measure of social integration

To measure subjective social status, our key explanatory variable, we use responses to a question asking people to place themselves on an 11-point social ladder after being told that 'There ae people who tend to be towards the top of our society and people who tend to be towards the bottom'. Figure One 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 there are also significant numbers of people reporting lower levels of subjective social status.

Since a person's sense of their own status is likely to be affected by where they stand on the markers conventionally used to ascribe status in modern societies, we expect to find that people's subjective social status is related to their income, occupation and level of educational attainment, and Table One confirms this.[5] It reports the results of ordinary least squares regressions with country fixed effects in which the dependent variable is our measure of subjective social status. Model One in the table indicates that these three standard determinants of social status explain about a quarter of the variance in subjective social status. Model Two confirms that a further set of attributes, including

gender, age, employment and immigration status are also associated with subjective social status in directions anticipated by the literature (Blau and Duncan 1967: Marmot 2004). However, these models also reveal that variation in a person's sense of their social status is not fully determined by these standard markers, but susceptible to a range of other influences. As a test of that, Model Three explores the association between subjective social status and responses to a question asking individual about how much economic difficulty they are facing.[6] Even in an estimation that conditions on the many other factors that might affect subjective social status, compared to those who say they are 'living comfortably' on their current household income (the reference category), people who express ascending levels of difficulty doing so report successively lower levels of subjective social status. Subjective social status varies with a number of conditions beyond those conventionally associated with objective social status.

Following the sociological literature, we have conceptualized social integration 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. Therefore, to confirm whether the variable we use to assess subjective social status is a good measure of social integration, in Table A1 of Appendix Two, we examine the relationship between it and several indicators that tap into these dimensions, namely, the extent to which respondents express trust in other people, which we take as a reflection of the extent to which they participate in a shared normative order, how often they meet others and engages in social activities with them, and responses to a question asking to

what extent they feel other people treat them with respect. 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. Figure Two displays these relationships when the other variables are held at their median levels and the country variable is fixed on the UK, a country where average levels of subjective social status are close to the median for the entire sample.[7] The Figure shows that, even when conditioning on many other factors, all of these indicators for social integration are positively associated with subjective social status. The most variance is explained by people's feelings about whether others treat them with respect. These findings support our contention that subjective social status is a good indicator for the extent to which a person feels integrated into society.

Social integration and political alienation

Populism is not politics as usual. Populist parties do not simply seek seats at the legislative table, but typically challenge the operation of the political system as a whole, labeling it corrupt or incompetent, in the name of people said to be forgotten by the current political elites (Mudde and Kaltwasser 2016; Müller 2016; Bonikowski and Gidron 2016a,b). In this respect, radical right and left parties bear a resemblance to what Sartori (1976) once called 'anti-system parties'. They mobilize people on the basis of appeals to deep dissatisfaction with the political system. Therefore, if support for these parties is linked to failures of social integration, we should expect people who feel socially-marginalized to be politically-alienated; and social marginalization should also be associated with the kind of political marginalization that manifests itself in non-voting (Guiso *et al*. 2017).

To assess these contentions, we explore the relationship between people's subjective social status and their attitudes to the existing political system, using 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. To take into account the other features of a person's life situation that might affect such attitudes, we condition the estimations on a variety of controls using ordinary least squares with fixed country effects. The full least squares regressions are in Table A2. Figure Three shows the relationship for people in the UK with the other variables in the estimation held constant as in Figure Two. People with lower levels of subjective social status are more likely to be dissatisfied with the operation of democracy in their country and more distrustful of its politicians and parliament. The relationship is remarkably consistent across all three measures of political alienation. Model Four in Table A2 presents the results of a linear probability model with a binary outcome (1=non-vote), which indicates that, as subjective social status declines, individuals are also less likely to vote, even when conditioning on many other factors associated with political participation. In short, the more marginal people feel to society, the more likely they are to be alienated from its political system, providing a reservoir of support for political parties critical of that system.

Social integration and partisan political support

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).[8] 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 such ethno-nationalist appeals but challenge central pillars of the capitalist order in the name of a socialism deemed well to the left of social democracy (March 2011; Gomez *et al*. 2016).

To explore this issue, we use estimations based on linear probability models, country fixed effects, and standard errors corrected for heteroscedasticity, where the dependent variable indicates whether the respondent voted for the relevant radical party instead of a non-radical mainstream party in the last national election (excluding those who did not vote).[9] We consider the relationship between the vote and subjective social status, our principal explanatory variable of interest, as well as a series of other variables often found to affect a person's vote. These include income, measured in deciles, level of educational attainment measured by whether the respondent has a tertiary education, and 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. We are interested in whether subjective social status is associated with voting for radical parties even when conditioning on these other factors. The full estimations are in Table A3 of Appendix Two.

The upper sections of Figure Four display the predicted change in the outcome of interest—voting for the radical right in panel (a), and for the radical left in panel (b)—when moving (1) across the range of the higher education variable (from not having to having an academic degree), (2) across the full range of the income deciles variable, and (3) across the full range of the subjective social status variable (and

confidence intervals for p = .05).[10] The lower section shows the changes in the outcome of interest associated with movement in occupation from that of socio-cultural professionals to those of routine workers or low-skill service employees. The Figure builds on models 1 and 4 in Table A3.

In keeping with familiar findings, we find that support for the radical right is associated with lower levels of educational attainment and having a lower-level occupation, but the association with income does not quite reach significant levels (cf. Antonucci *et al*. 2017). However, the finding of importance for our account is that, even when we condition on many other factors, lower levels of subjective social status are associated with voting for the radical right: movement from the highest to the lowest level of status is associated with a 6% increase in the probability of voting for the radical right (twice as great as the increased probability in support associated with movement from having a college education to not having one).

Panel (b) of Figure Four indicates that lower levels of subjective social status are also associated with voting for a radical left party, even when we condition on many other factors that might affect that vote. Lower levels of income are strongly associated with voting for the radical left, as one might expect, but it is notable that people in lower occupational classes are less supportive of the radical left than sociocultural professionals; and voting for the radical left is positively, if weakly, associated with higher levels of education. Radical left parties seem to appeal especially strongly to relatively well-placed segments of the citizenry who may nonetheless feel that they are not receiving the level of income or social respect they deserve.

We explore the factors distinguishing people who vote for the populist right from those who vote for the radical left more fully in estimations reported in Figure Five. We have argued that a voter's choice between these two types of radical parties will turn, not only on education and occupational position as the preceding results indicate, but on the balance between an individual's concerns about redistribution versus recognition. To assess this contention, while conditioning on other variables that may influence the vote, we compare the association between voting for radical parties rather than a mainstream party with (i) a measure for concern about redistribution (the extent to which the individual agrees that governments should take steps to reduce income differentials) and (ii) a measure for concern about recognition (the extent to which the individual feels others treat him with respect). The results reported in Figure Five are consistent with our argument (full estimations in Table A3, models 2 and 5). While people who feel they are treated with less respect support both types of parties, voters for the radical left are also strongly supportive of redistribution while voters for the populist right are not.

A significant literature observes that support for the radical right is often strongest, not among people suffering the greatest economic distress, but among people who are somewhat better-off if still facing economic difficulties (Bornschier 2010; Antonucci *et al*. 2017). People in these positions a few rungs up the socioeconomic ladder are susceptible to 'last place aversion', namely, a fear of falling even farther down it; and they often erect social boundaries separating 'respectable' people like themselves from others seen as lower down on that social ladder. Thus, the anti-immigrant and anti-ethnic appeals of populist right parties may be especially attractive

to them, because they emphasize such boundaries (Ehrenreich 1990; Lamont 2000; Kafalas 2003; Kuziemko *et al*. 2011; Kurer 2017).

To assess whether our results are congruent with these observations, we examine the relationship between voting for radical parties and responses to a question that asks how well people are managing on their current household income, where the reference category is people who say they are 'living comfortably' on that income. The key findings are presented in the lower-half of Figure Five (full estimations in Table A3, models 3 and 6). As might be 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 among those who report that it is 'difficult' to live on their current income but insignificant among those who are finding it 'very difficult' to live on that income. This suggests that, while people facing the most difficult economic circumstances are more likely to vote for the radical left, support for the radical right is strongest among those slightly better off.

In sum, although support for the radical right and left is multiply-determined and estimations of this sort cannot fully establish causal relationships, the evidence we have presented is consistent with the contention that issues of social integration figure into the political success of such parties. Even when many other variables are included in the analyses, there is a consistent association between levels of subjective social status and voting for parties of the populist right and radical left. The more socially-marginalized people feel, the more likely they are to gravitate toward the fringes of the political spectrum.

Factors of social disintegration

Can these results tell us anything about why support for radical parties has recently risen in the developed democracies? On this point, caution is required because longitudinal data for assessing social integration is scarce. Moreover, increasing support for radial parties and candidates might be attributable to factors on the 'supply side' of party competition, born of discontent with convergence in mainstream party platforms and the success with which populist political entrepreneurs have tapped into that discontent (Kitschelt 1997; Golder 2016; Rooduijn *et al*. 2016; Guiso *et al*. 2017). Recent economic or immigration shocks of the sort experienced in Southern Europe and Germany have also provided sparks for this tinder (Rodrik 2017). However, a number of developments may have affected levels of social integration in the developed democracies over the past thirty years, intensifying the feelings of social marginalization on which populism feeds.

Two economic processes are especially relevant: increasing inequality of incomes and skill-biased technological change. Between the mid-1980s and the early-2000s, the Gini index for income inequality increased by 10 percent on average in OECD countries. When evaluating their own social position, people typically compare themselves to the situation of others.[11] Thus, as rising rates of income inequality make other social groups richer, some people may feel that their own social position has been eroded (Frank 2007; Andersen and Curtis 2012; Lindemann and Saar 2014; Layte and Whelan 2014).

At the same time, well-paid manufacturing jobs have been lost to global out-sourcing and skill-biased technological change has made it difficult to for people with low levels of skill to find alternative employment (Oesch 2013; Goos, Manning and Salomons 2014). The OECD unemployment rate for adults with less than secondary education is currently more than 12% compared to less than 5% for those with tertiary education; and there is evidence that people in the sectors and regions suffering most from these effects are turning toward more radical political candidates (Autor *et al*. 2016; Mayer *et al.* 2016; Colantone and Stanig 2017; Ballard-Rosa *et al*. 2017). Although it is difficult to know whether this reaction reflects feelings of social marginalization in addition to political discontent generated for other reasons, several studies suggest that people in declining regions and rural areas feel forgotten by mainstream elites (Eribon 2013; Cramer 2016). And relative to average levels in the population, the subjective social status reported by men without a college education has declined since the late 1980s in eleven of the twelve developed democracies for which data is available (Gidron and Hall 2017).

Changes in cultural frameworks over the same period may also be leading people who hold traditional social attitudes to feel socially-marginalized as a result of incongruence between their values and the discourse of mainstream elites. The growing prominence of cultural frameworks promoting gender equality, multiculturalism, secular values and LGBTQ rights is the most notable of such changes. Inglehart and Wetzel (2005) found that, in seven of nine European countries where materialists outnumbered post-materialists in 1970, by the turn of the century, a majority of citizens espoused post-materialist values. Banting and Kymlicka (2013) report that multicultural

policies are now stronger than they were in 1980 in fourteen of the sixteen European countries they examine; and Bromley (2009) finds that school textbooks in North America and Europe now emphasize the appreciation of ethnic diversity to a much greater extent than they did in the 1970s. As a result, most Western societies are now more inclusive in terms that are advantageous for women, ethnic minorities and people with diverse gender identities. However, steps toward inclusion are double-sided: they can lead people who hold more traditional values to feel marginalized vis-à-vis the main-currents of society.

In the absence of adequate longitudinal data, we cannot conduct direct tests of the proposition that these economic and cultural developments have increased feelings of marginalization among some social groups. However, we can leverage the cross-national variation in this dataset to assess some of these effects indirectly. If these developments have led people with lower levels of income and skill to feel more socially-marginal, the subjective social status of these people should be lower in countries where the relevant developments have proceeded the farthest.

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). 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.

The dependent variable in these estimations is subjective social status. Examination of the intra-class correlation in the null model shows that about ten percent of the variance in it occurs between countries, a figure that rises only slightly when we include the individual-level variables known to affect subjective status. We begin by assessing the proposition that recent increases in income inequality may have depressed the subjective social status of some people. For this purpose, we compare countries based on the proportion of income going to the most affluent ten percent of income earners, 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, where model 1 indicates that, across countries, the average subjective social status of the population declines considerably as the share of income going to the top ten percent of earners increases. Even more important, the interaction term in model 2 indicates that subjective social status declines the most among people with lower incomes (full estimation results in Table A4 in Appendix Two).[12]

Model 3 shows that these results are robust when the estimation is conditioned on GDP per capita, which is widely believed to affect average subjective social status (Lindemann and Saar 2014; Poppitz 2016). Models 5-7 in Table A4 indicate that using the top 20 percent of income as the measure for income inequality yields similar results. Holding other attributes of individuals at their means, panel (a) in Figure Six compares the decline in subjective social status of people at the third and eighth deciles of the

income distribution, as income inequality increases. 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, they are consistent with the notion that recent increases in income inequality may be depressing average subjective social status and exerting slightly stronger effects on people with low incomes.

We consider the potential impact of skill-biased technological change by comparing the prevalence of tertiary education across countries, measured as the number of students enrolled in tertiary education as a percentage of the country's population between 20 and 24 years of age. Our expectation is that, in countries where tertiary education is more prevalent, people without such an education will feel more socially-marginal. To the extent that tertiary enrollments reflect the demand for skill, such feelings may follow directly from the economic effects of lower levels of demand for people without a tertiary education. However, this relationship might be magnified by a corresponding shift in cultural frameworks, i.e. as tertiary enrollments rise, the social prestige accorded people with only a secondary education may also decline.

Our estimations are specified as before and the results reported in Table Two. Model 4 in the table indicates that the size of tertiary enrollments is not associated with average levels of subjective social status; but the significance of the interaction term in model 5 suggests that, where the prevalence of tertiary education is higher, the subjective social status of people without an academic degree is lower. That is evident in panel (b) of Figure Six which indicates how the subjective social status of people with and without higher education changes as tertiary enrollments increase across countries, holding the other attributes of those 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 increase in tandem with the demands of a changing economy, people without higher education come to see themselves as more socially-marginalized.

In sum, although support for radical parties and populist causes or candidates is multiply-determined, processes of social disintegration, rooted in disruptive economic developments and related shifts in cultural frameworks are likely to be contributing to recent increases in such support. Radical parties appeal especially strongly to people who feel they are on the margins of society, and national conditions indicative of these processes are associated with feelings of marginalization, notably among people with lower incomes and modest levels of education.

Conclusion

Taking seriously the ethnographic observation that many supporters of populist causes and candidates feel 'left behind' by their societies, we have assessed that contention in a cross-national comparison of European democracies. The results suggest that increased support for radical parties is related to social integration. We have found that people who believe they are more marginal to contemporary society, typically because they are less engaged in its social activities, less trusting of others, or feel less social respect, 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 social developments, such as increases in income inequality and tertiary enrollments, may increase feelings of social marginalization

among people with relatively-low levels of income or education. Although problems of social integration do not fully explain the support that radical parties are now receiving, we think there is value in considering the roles they might play in it.

In more general terms, these results also argue for taking issues of social integration more seriously in studies of comparative political behavior. Such issues figured prominently in the work of an earlier era, when political scientists were seeking explanations for the collapse of Weimar democracy and the radical right movements of the 1950s, but they fell out of fashion as decades of prosperity seemed to cement social integration (cf. Lipset 1955, 1959; Bell 1964). At the current moment, when mainstream political parties are losing supporters, electoral volatility has increased, political trust is declining, and radical parties are taking increasing shares of the vote, it may be time to consider whether contemporary political changes are connected to problems of social integration. An important step in this direction would be to include more questions about social integration in electoral surveys.

Our findings also have implications for how populism, whether seen as a threat to democracy or as a sign of its health, might be addressed (cf. Mudde and Kaltwasser 2016; Müller 2016). To some extent, this is a discursive challenge for politicians, since 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 can condition people's conceptions of self-worth (Bouchard 2017). There is symbolic work to be done here. However, it should be apparent from our analysis that the challenge is as much an economic as a symbolic one.

One prominent view associates rising support for populism with a failure to provide adequate levels of economic compensation to people on whom international trade has imposed concentrated losses (Asatryan *et al*., 2014; Roubini 2016; Obstfeld 2016). There is likely some truth in this: support for radical candidates is especially strong among people in sectors and regions most exposed to the strains of globalization. If compensation is construed as social benefits, however, our analysis suggests that this may not be enough to assuage supporters of radical right parties.[13] Voters for radical right parties are not especially strong supporters of redistribution. What distinguishes them from voters for mainstream parties is the feeling that they have not been treated with respect – a sense that they are not fully valued by society. They care as much about recognition as about redistribution.

And social recognition is directly related to having a decent job. Subjective social status, our indicator for people's feelings about how well-integrated they are into mainstream society, is heavily dependent on people's employment status, the quality of their jobs, their incomes and the economic circumstances of their households. One implication is that people who feel socially-marginalized may want decent well-paid jobs more than they want social benefits or social reassurance. Gainful employment has always been central to effective social integration, and there are no symbolic substitutes for it. Of course, amidst technological change, it is not easy to create such jobs, but that fact should not blind us to the complexion or magnitude of the challenge.

Expressed in the broadest terms, our findings call for renewed attention to the social contract, along with the symbolic and material parameters that define it. There is substantial evidence that people who feel socially-marginalized are likely to support

parties mounting populist appeals, and one of the first steps toward an effective response is to recognize that the success of those parties reflects problems of social integration that must be addressed as such.

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Table One: Predictors of subjective social status

	Dependent variable: SSS		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Income decile	0.163***	0.158***	0.090***
	(0.003)	(0.004)	(0.004)
Income: Coping			−0.456***
			(0.023)
Income: Difficult			−0.948***
			(0.031)
Income: Very difficult			−1.710***
			(0.042)
Occupation: Managers	0.022	0.031	0.030
	(0.033)	(0.034)	(0.033)
Occupation: Technicians	−0.161***	−0.176***	−0.164***
	(0.039)	(0.041)	(0.040)
Occupation: Clerks	−0.242***	−0.215***	−0.192***
	(0.039)	(0.040)	(0.039)
Occupation: Low skill services	−0.435***	−0.411***	−0.340***
	(0.032)	(0.032)	(0.032)
Occupation: Routine workers	−0.504***	−0.500***	−0.420***
	(0.032)	(0.034)	(0.033)
Female=1		−0.072***	−0.042**
		(0.019)	(0.019)
Age		−0.0002	−0.0005*
		(0.0003)	(0.0002)
Union membership=1		0.047*	0.063***
		(0.025)	(0.024)
Church attendance=1		0.191***	0.176***
		(0.028)	(0.028)
Higher education=1	0.209***	0.219***	0.195***
	(0.020)	(0.021)	(0.020)
Unemployed=1		−0.309***	−0.061
		(0.038)	(0.038)
Rural-urban: Suburbs		−0.021	−0.011
		(0.033)	(0.032)
Rural-urban: Small city		−0.048*	−0.055**
		(0.025)	(0.025)
Rural-urban: Country village		−0.054**	−0.064**
		(0.026)	(0.025)
Rural-urban: Farm and countryside		−0.043	−0.063
		(0.041)	(0.040)
Foreign born=1		−0.153***	−0.085***
		(0.032)	(0.031)
Constant	6.899***	6.988***	8.103***
	(0.063)	(0.069)	(0.073)
Observations	33,699	32,136	32,102
R^2	0.247	0.255	0.295

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Note: OLS regressions with country fixed effects. Reference group for occupation is socioeconomic professionals. Reference group for rural-urban is big cities. Reference group for income is “living comfortably on present income”.

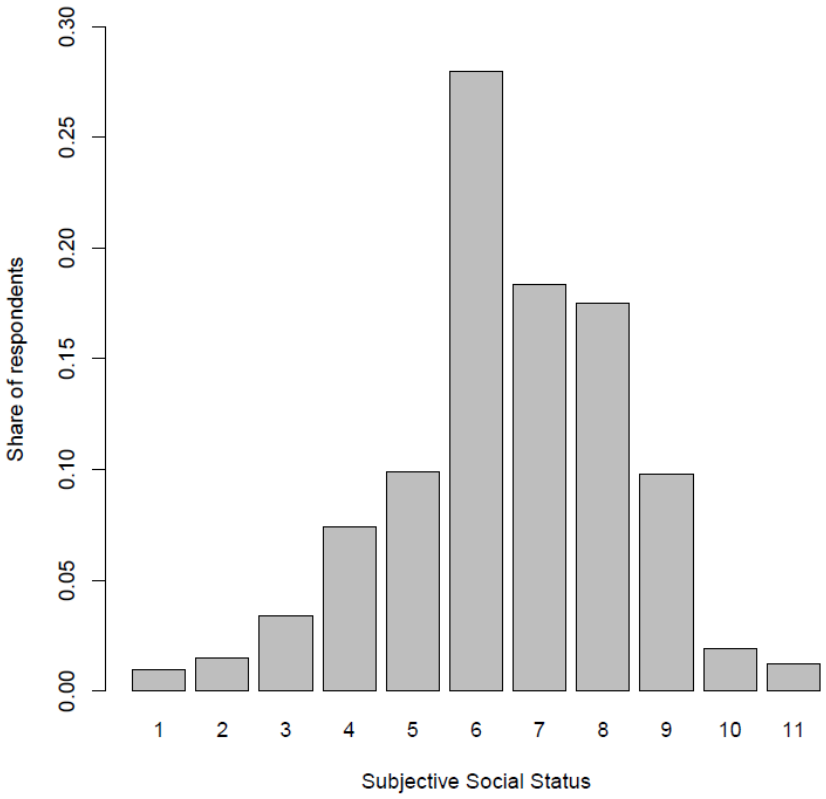
Table Two: Estimates from hierarchical linear models predicting subjective social status

	Dependent variable: SSS					
	(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	−0.143**	−0.159***	−0.119**			
	(0.051)	(0.052)	(0.047)			
Higher education * Tertiary enrollmen					0.026***	0.025***
					(0.003)	(0.003)
Tertiary enrollment				−0.017	−0.029	0.004
				(0.022)	(0.022)	(0.015)
Constant	9.234***	9.619***	8.173***	6.266***	6.658***	4.691***
	(1.243)	(1.255)	(1.195)	(0.758)	(0.761)	(0.581)
Observations	29,753	29,753	29,753	30,596	30,596	30,596
Log Likelihood	−59,245.580	−59,243.050	−59,239.550	−59,843.540	−59,813.040	−59,802.590

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

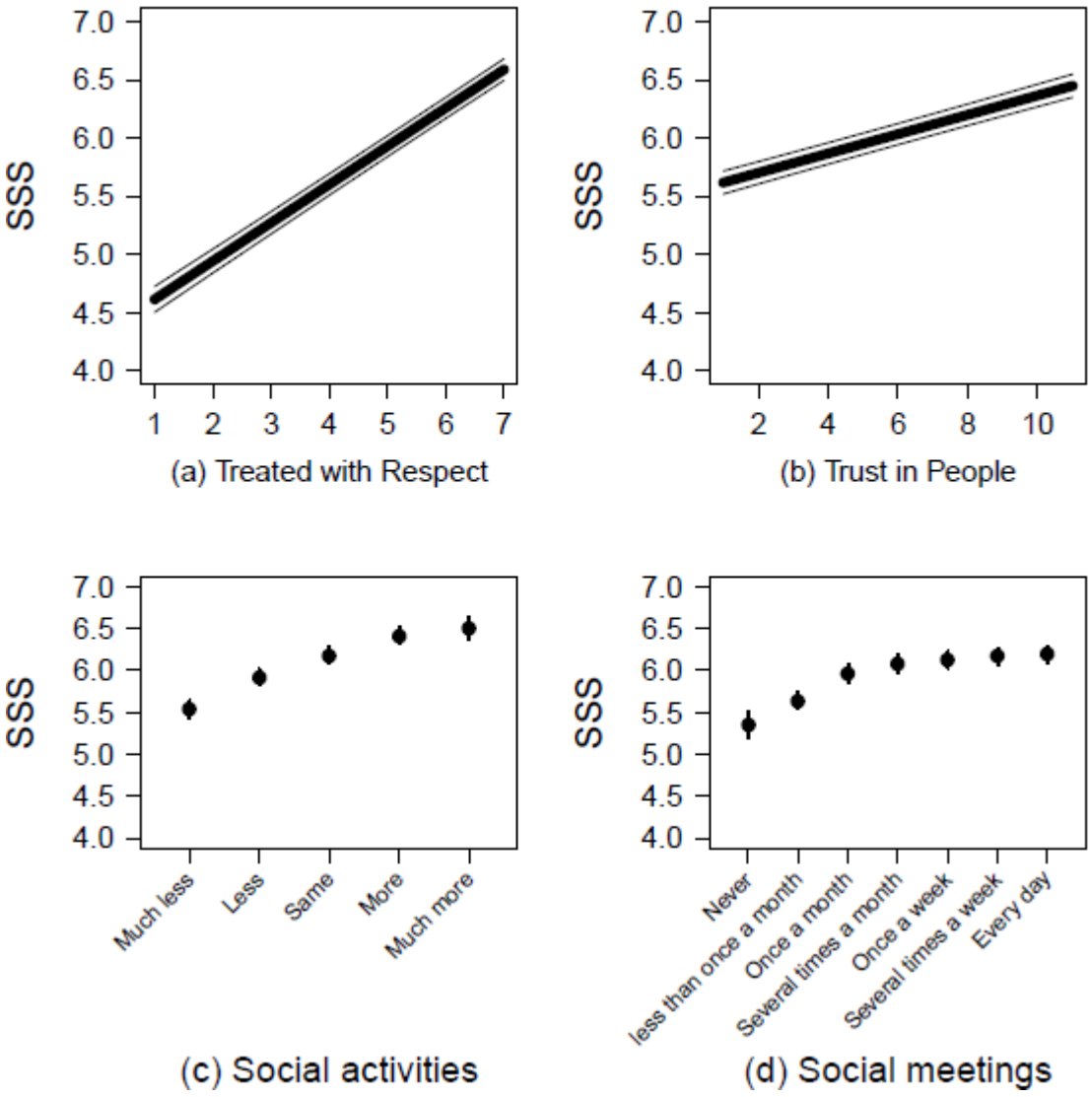
*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Figure One: The distribution of subjective social status across the sample



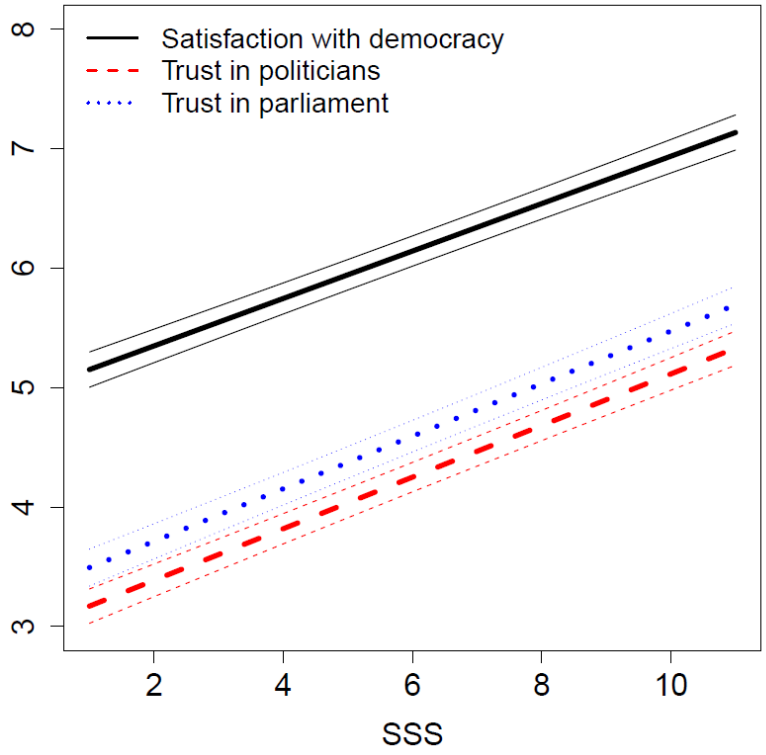
Source: ESS Wave 6

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



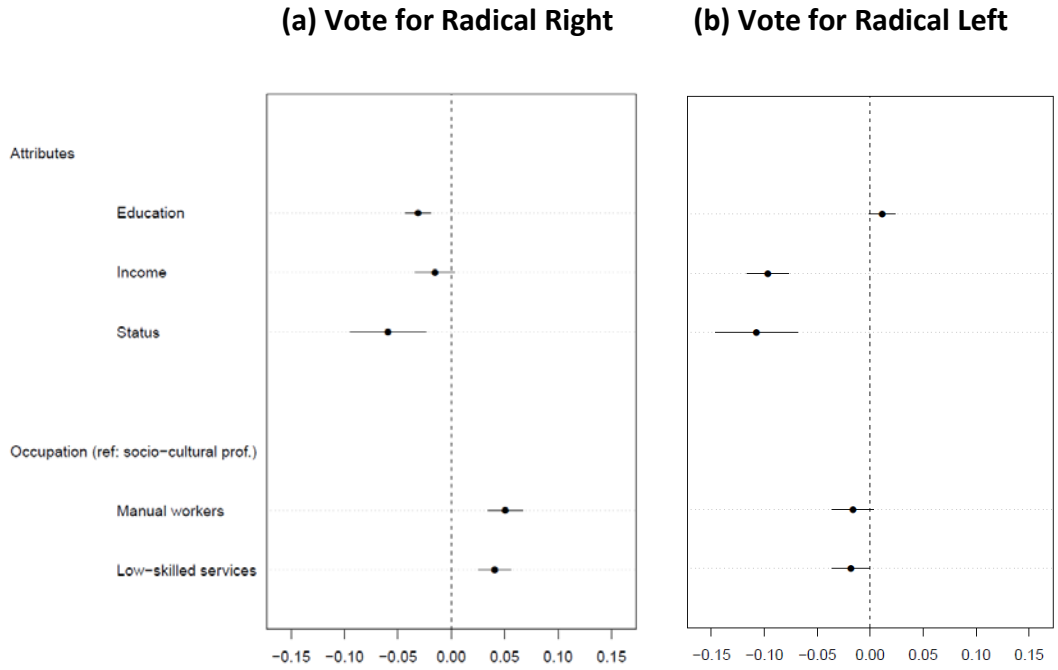
Note: Based on the estimations in Table A1 with other variables held at their means and country held constant on the United Kingdom. See note 8.

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



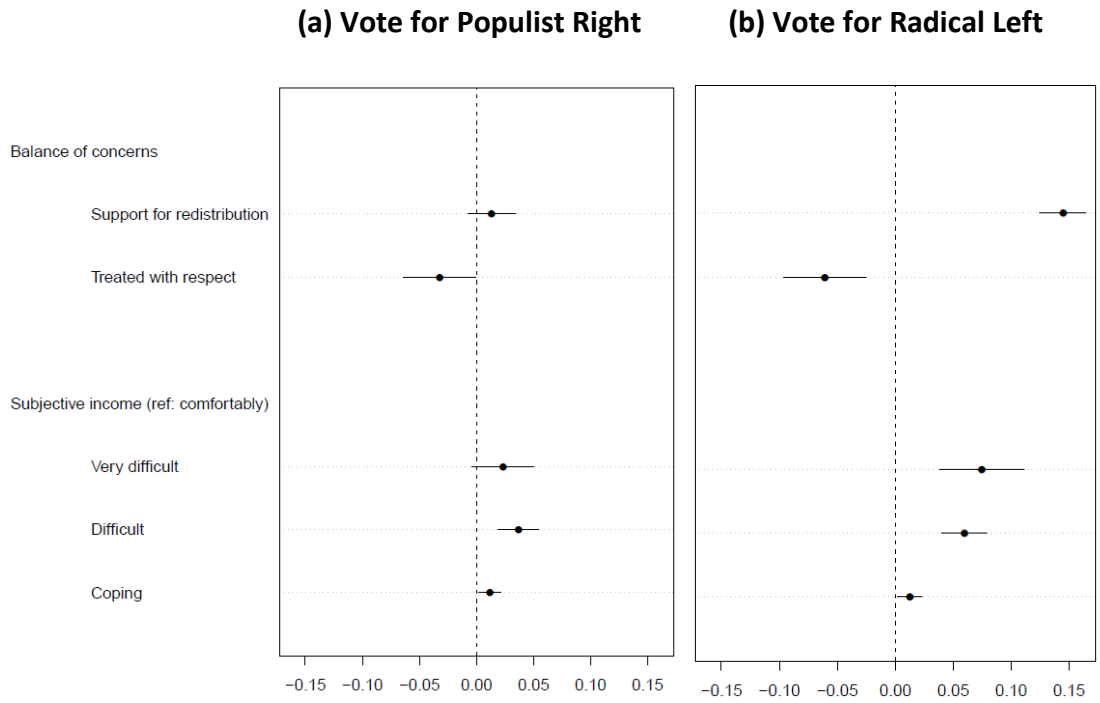
Note: Based on the estimations in Table A2 with other variables held constant (as in Figure Two) and country held constant on the United Kingdom.

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



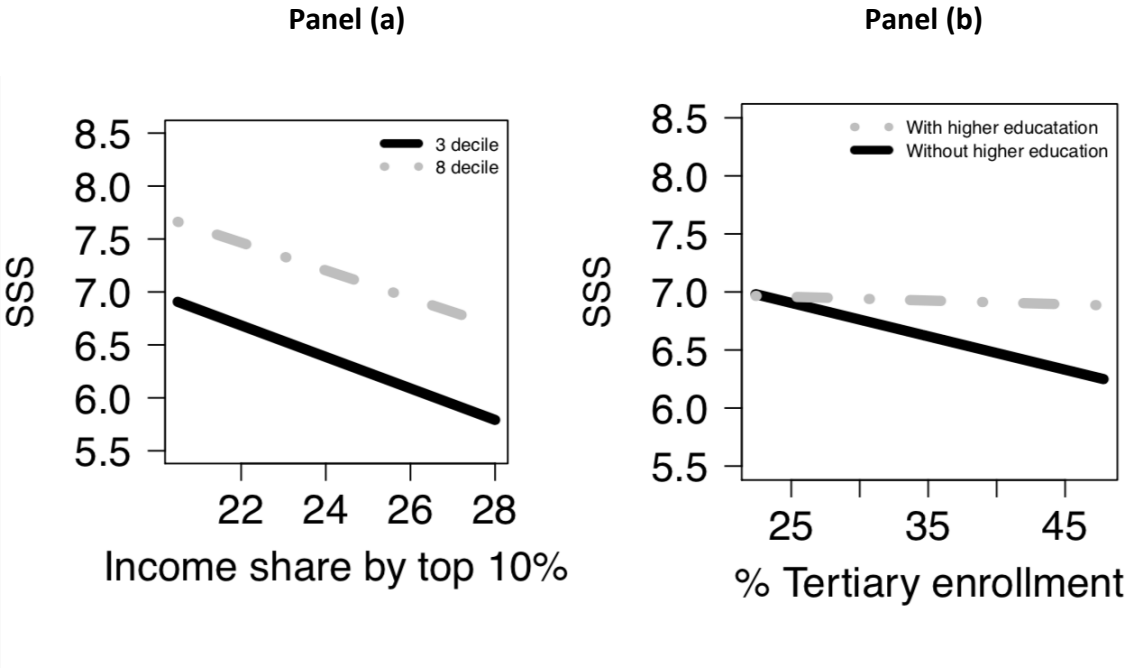
Note: Based on the estimations in Table A3.

Figure Five: The relationship between voters' concerns and voting for the radical right and radical left



Note: Based on the estimations in Table A3.

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



Note: Multilevel interactions based on models 2 and 8 in Table A4 with other attributes of individuals at their means.

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	Slovene National Party
	Slovakia	

Appendix Two: Supplementary results.
Table A1: Subjective social status and social integration

	Dependent variable: SSS			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Treated with respect	0.329***			
	(0.008)			
Trust people		0.083***		
		(0.004)		
Social activities: less than most			0.387***	
			(0.031)	
Social activities: About the same			0.649***	
			(0.029)	
Social activities: More than most			0.883***	
			(0.036)	
Social activities: Much more than most			0.965***	
			(0.059)	
Social meetings: Less than once a month				0.297***
				(0.069)
Social meetings: Once a month				0.615***
				(0.068)
Social meetings: Several times a month				0.731***
				(0.066)
Social meetings: Once a week				0.782***
				(0.067)
Social meetings: Several times a week				0.815***
				(0.066)
Social meetings: Every day				0.841***
				(0.068)
Income decile	0.145***	0.152***	0.146***	0.153***
	(0.003)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)
Occupation: Managers	0.050	0.045	0.040	0.037
	(0.033)	(0.034)	(0.033)	(0.034)
Occupation: Clerks	−0.171***	−0.191***	−0.201***	−0.211***
	(0.039)	(0.040)	(0.040)	(0.040)
Occupation: Services	−0.345***	−0.368***	−0.378***	−0.402***
	(0.032)	(0.032)	(0.032)	(0.032)
Occupation: Technicians	−0.126***	−0.158***	−0.138***	−0.152***
	(0.040)	(0.041)	(0.041)	(0.041)
Occupation: Routine workers	−0.430***	−0.459***	−0.448***	−0.482***
	(0.033)	(0.034)	(0.034)	(0.034)
Female=1	−0.090***	−0.065***	−0.048**	−0.062***
	(0.019)	(0.019)	(0.019)	(0.019)
Age	−0.001**	−0.0003	0.00003	0.0001
	(0.0002)	(0.0003)	(0.0003)	(0.0003)
Union membership=1	0.041*	0.047*	0.032	0.048*
	(0.024)	(0.024)	(0.024)	(0.025)
Church attendance=1	0.130***	0.180***	0.164***	0.183***
	(0.028)	(0.028)	(0.028)	(0.028)
Higher education=1	0.205***	0.191***	0.188***	0.202***
	(0.020)	(0.021)	(0.020)	(0.021)
Unemployed=1	−0.220***	−0.294***	−0.310***	−0.321***
	(0.037)	(0.038)	(0.038)	(0.038)
Rural-urban: Suburbs	−0.032	−0.014	−0.028	−0.009
	(0.032)	(0.033)	(0.033)	(0.033)
Rural-urban: Small city	−0.067***	−0.038	−0.044*	−0.041
	(0.025)	(0.025)	(0.025)	(0.025)
Rural-urban: Country village	−0.097***	−0.051**	−0.049*	−0.049*
	(0.025)	(0.026)	(0.026)	(0.026)
Rural-urban: Farm and countryside	−0.106***	−0.044	−0.023	−0.025
	(0.040)	(0.041)	(0.041)	(0.041)
Foreign born=1	−0.156***	−0.138***	−0.126***	−0.129***
	(0.031)	(0.032)	(0.032)	(0.032)
Constant	5.107***	6.652***	6.573***	6.290***
	(0.080)	(0.070)	(0.071)	(0.093)
Observations	31,786	32,076	31,655	32,062
R^2	0.291	0.264	0.270	0.263

Note: OLS regressions with country fixed effects. See Note to Table One for reference groups.

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table A2: Subjective social status and political alienation

	Dependent variable:			
	Sat. with democracy	Trust in politicians	Trust in parliament	No vote
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
SSS	0.198***	0.216***	0.220***	−0.014***
	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.002)
Income decile	0.060***	0.016***	0.039***	−0.007***
	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.001)
Occupation: Managers	−0.112**	−0.125***	−0.126***	−0.012
	(0.046)	(0.045)	(0.049)	(0.008)
Occupation: Clerks	−0.037	−0.194***	−0.216***	0.017*
	(0.055)	(0.054)	(0.058)	(0.010)
Occupation: Low skill services	−0.222***	−0.282***	−0.382***	0.064***
	(0.044)	(0.044)	(0.047)	(0.009)
Occupation: Technicians	−0.042	−0.178***	−0.192***	0.005
	(0.056)	(0.055)	(0.059)	(0.010)
Occupation: Routine workers	−0.181***	−0.306***	−0.449***	0.063***
	(0.046)	(0.046)	(0.049)	(0.009)
Female=1	−0.135***	0.066***	−0.127***	0.003
	(0.026)	(0.026)	(0.028)	(0.006)
Age	0.001***	0.001***	0.001***	−0.001***
	(0.0003)	(0.0004)	(0.0004)	(0.0002)
Union membership=1	−0.025	−0.032	0.003	−0.048***
	(0.034)	(0.033)	(0.036)	(0.006)
Church attendance=1	0.226***	0.360***	0.388***	−0.071***
	(0.039)	(0.038)	(0.041)	(0.008)
Higher education=1	0.105***	0.099***	0.261***	−0.041***
	(0.028)	(0.028)	(0.030)	(0.006)
Unemployed=1	−0.183***	−0.156***	−0.168***	0.079***
	(0.052)	(0.051)	(0.055)	(0.014)
Rural-urban: Suburbs	−0.032	−0.031	−0.038	−0.033***
	(0.045)	(0.044)	(0.048)	(0.009)
Rural-urban: Small city	−0.120***	−0.054	−0.134***	−0.024***
	(0.035)	(0.034)	(0.037)	(0.008)
Rural-urban: Country village	−0.078**	−0.083**	−0.179***	−0.040***
	(0.036)	(0.035)	(0.038)	(0.008)
Rural-urban: Farm and countryside	−0.207***	−0.128**	−0.254***	−0.043***
	(0.056)	(0.055)	(0.060)	(0.011)
Foreign born=1	0.417***	0.305***	0.352***	0.184***
	(0.044)	(0.043)	(0.047)	(0.012)
Constant	2.950***	1.376***	2.445***	0.290***
	(0.108)	(0.107)	(0.115)	(0.024)
Observations	31,446	31,804	31,670	30,536
R^2	0.270	0.248	0.273	0.103

Note: OLS regressions with country fixed effects. See Table One for reference groups.

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table A3: Subjective social status and voting for radical parties

	Dependent variable:					
	Radical right			Radical left		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
SSS	−0.006***		−0.006***	−0.011***		−0.009***
	(0.002)		(0.002)	(0.002)		(0.002)
Treated with respect		−0.005**			−0.010***	
		(0.003)			(0.003)	
Support redistribution		0.003			0.036***	
		(0.003)			(0.003)	
Income decile	−0.002	−0.002**		−0.007***	−0.006***	
	(0.001)	(0.001)		(0.001)	(0.001)	
Income: Coping			0.012**			0.012**
			(0.005)			(0.005)
Income: Difficult			0.037***			0.060***
			(0.009)			(0.010)
Income: Very difficult			0.023*			0.075***
			(0.014)			(0.019)
Occupation: Managers	0.008	0.008	0.002	−0.035***	−0.029***	−0.041***
	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.006)	(0.008)	(0.009)	(0.008)
Occupation: Clerks	0.020**	0.021**	0.016*	−0.029***	−0.024**	−0.033***
	(0.009)	(0.009)	(0.009)	(0.011)	(0.011)	(0.010)
Occupation: Low skill services	0.041***	0.042***	0.030***	−0.018*	−0.015*	−0.019**
	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.007)	(0.009)	(0.009)	(0.009)
Occupation: Technicians	0.020**	0.021**	0.020**	−0.007	0.00003	−0.011
	(0.009)	(0.009)	(0.009)	(0.011)	(0.011)	(0.010)
Occupation: Routine workers	0.051***	0.052***	0.043***	−0.016*	−0.013	−0.018**
	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.009)
Female=1	−0.023***	−0.022***	−0.022***	−0.002	−0.008	−0.001
	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.005)
Age	−0.0001	−0.0001	0.00002	−0.00001	−0.0001	0.0001
	(0.0002)	(0.0002)	(0.0001)	(0.0001)	(0.0001)	(0.0001)
Union membership=1	0.010*	0.009	0.009	0.025***	0.021***	0.023***
	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)
Church attendance=1	0.016*	0.014*	0.022***	−0.045***	−0.042***	−0.039***
	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.009)	(0.009)	(0.007)
Higher education=1	−0.031***	−0.032***	−0.030***	0.011*	0.015**	0.011*
	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)
Unemployed=1	−0.005	−0.0001	−0.006	0.015	0.019	0.007
	(0.013)	(0.013)	(0.012)	(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.013)
Rural-urban: Suburbs	−0.003	−0.002	−0.001	−0.019**	−0.016*	−0.018**
	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.009)	(0.009)	(0.009)
Rural-urban: Small city	−0.009	−0.008	−0.008	−0.005	−0.004	−0.007
	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.007)
Rural-urban: Country village	0.010	0.012*	0.013*	−0.013	−0.013	−0.020***
	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.007)
Rural-urban: Farm and countryside	0.031**	0.033***	0.035***	−0.026**	−0.025**	−0.032***
	(0.013)	(0.013)	(0.012)	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.010)
Foreign born=1	−0.053***	−0.051***	−0.057***	−0.020**	−0.020**	−0.025***
	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.009)	(0.009)	(0.008)
Constant	0.092***	0.069***	0.065***	0.262***	0.098***	0.172***
	(0.021)	(0.025)	(0.019)	(0.024)	(0.025)	(0.022)
Observations	15,633	15,547	17,584	12,283	12,221	14,403
R^2	0.175	0.177	0.187	0.040	0.057	0.042

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

Note: Linear probability model with country fixed effects. Standard errors corrected for heteroscedasticity. Reference groups as in Table One.

Table A4: Full multi-level models

	Dependent variable: SSS								
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Income decile	0.164***	0.079**	0.078**	0.164***	0.073	0.071	0.169***	0.169***	0.169***
	(0.004)	(0.038)	(0.038)	(0.004)	(0.053)	(0.053)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)
Occupation: Managers	0.077**	0.076**	0.076**	0.077**	0.076**	0.076**	0.101***	0.099***	0.099***
	(0.035)	(0.035)	(0.035)	(0.035)	(0.035)	(0.035)	(0.033)	(0.033)	(0.033)
Occupation: Clerks	−0.146***	−0.147***	−0.147***	−0.146***	−0.147***	−0.147***	−0.187***	−0.187***	−0.186***
	(0.042)	(0.042)	(0.042)	(0.042)	(0.042)	(0.042)	(0.040)	(0.040)	(0.040)
Occupation: Low skill services	−0.362***	−0.363***	−0.363***	−0.362***	−0.363***	−0.363***	−0.394***	−0.398***	−0.398***
	(0.033)	(0.033)	(0.033)	(0.033)	(0.033)	(0.033)	(0.032)	(0.032)	(0.032)
Occupation: Technicians	−0.119***	−0.119***	−0.120***	−0.119***	−0.119***	−0.119***	−0.139***	−0.136***	−0.136***
	(0.044)	(0.044)	(0.044)	(0.044)	(0.044)	(0.044)	(0.041)	(0.041)	(0.041)
Occupation: Routine workers	−0.393***	−0.393***	−0.393***	−0.393***	−0.393***	−0.393***	−0.433***	−0.429***	−0.428***
	(0.035)	(0.035)	(0.035)	(0.035)	(0.035)	(0.035)	(0.034)	(0.034)	(0.034)
Female=1	−0.002	−0.002	−0.002	−0.002	−0.002	−0.002	−0.010	−0.010	−0.010
	(0.021)	(0.021)	(0.021)	(0.021)	(0.021)	(0.021)	(0.020)	(0.020)	(0.020)
Age	−0.0004*	−0.0004*	−0.0004*	−0.0004*	−0.0004*	−0.0004*	0.0002	0.0002	0.0002
	(0.0002)	(0.0002)	(0.0002)	(0.0002)	(0.0002)	(0.0002)	(0.0003)	(0.0003)	(0.0003)
Union membership=1	0.031	0.032	0.030	0.031	0.031	0.030	0.029	0.033	0.032
	(0.028)	(0.028)	(0.028)	(0.028)	(0.028)	(0.028)	(0.027)	(0.027)	(0.027)
Church attendance=1	0.114***	0.115***	0.115***	0.114***	0.115***	0.115***	0.136***	0.139***	0.140***
	(0.029)	(0.029)	(0.029)	(0.029)	(0.029)	(0.029)	(0.029)	(0.029)	(0.029)
Higher education=1	0.313***	0.312***	0.312***	0.313***	0.312***	0.312***	0.276***	−0.587***	−0.583***
	(0.022)	(0.022)	(0.022)	(0.022)	(0.022)	(0.022)	(0.022)	(0.113)	(0.113)
Unemployed=1	−0.721***	−0.722***	−0.722***	−0.721***	−0.722***	−0.722***	−0.869***	−0.863***	−0.863***
	(0.039)	(0.039)	(0.039)	(0.039)	(0.039)	(0.039)	(0.040)	(0.040)	(0.040)
Rural-urban: Suburbs	0.061*	0.062*	0.061*	0.061*	0.062*	0.061*	0.070**	0.077**	0.077**
	(0.036)	(0.036)	(0.036)	(0.036)	(0.036)	(0.036)	(0.035)	(0.035)	(0.035)
Rural-urban: Small city	0.122***	0.123***	0.122***	0.122***	0.123***	0.122***	0.118***	0.125***	0.125***
	(0.026)	(0.026)	(0.026)	(0.026)	(0.026)	(0.026)	(0.026)	(0.026)	(0.026)
Rural-urban: Country village	0.034	0.037	0.037	0.034	0.037	0.036	0.057**	0.065**	0.064**
	(0.028)	(0.028)	(0.028)	(0.028)	(0.028)	(0.028)	(0.027)	(0.027)	(0.027)
Rural-urban: Farm and countryside	0.095**	0.096**	0.094**	0.095**	0.096**	0.094**	0.109**	0.117***	0.115**
	(0.047)	(0.047)	(0.047)	(0.047)	(0.047)	(0.047)	(0.045)	(0.045)	(0.045)
Foreign born=1	−0.116***	−0.115***	−0.116***	−0.116***	−0.115***	−0.116***	−0.114***	−0.105***	−0.106***
	(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	−0.143**	−0.159***	−0.119**						
	(0.051)	(0.052)	(0.047)						
Income * Top 20					0.002*	0.002*			
					(0.001)	(0.001)			
Top 20				−0.128***	−0.139***	−0.103**			
				(0.045)	(0.045)	(0.041)			
Higher education * Tertiary enrollment								0.026***	0.025***
								(0.003)	(0.003)
Tertiary enrollment							−0.017	−0.029	0.004
							(0.022)	(0.022)	(0.015)
Constant	9.234***	9.619***	8.173***	10.769***	11.185***	9.312***	6.266***	6.658***	4.691***
	(1.243)	(1.255)	(1.195)	(1.736)	(1.753)	(1.660)	(0.758)	(0.761)	(0.581)
Observations	29,753	29,753	29,753	29,753	29,753	29,753	30,596	30,596	30,596
Log Likelihood	−59,245.580	−59,243.050	−59,239.550	−59,245.400	−59,243.900	−59,240.510	−59,843.540	−59,813.040	−59,802.590

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).

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

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[1] Since 1980, the share of the vote taken by right populist parties in European parliamentary elections has increased from less than 2% to more than 12% (Heino 2017) and support for the radical left is also rising (Rodrik 2017).

[2] For an argument emphasizing feelings of relative deprivation, somewhat analogous to our concept of social integration, see Elchardus and Spruyt (2012).

[3] For one exception, see Brown-Iannuzzi et al. 2014

[4] For a list of the countries included, see Appendix One. In order to confine the survey to stable European democracies, we dropped Russia, Ukraine, and Kosovo and Israel from the total number surveyed.

[5] In these estimations, people with some tertiary education are categorized as having higher education and respondents have been assigned to the occupational categories developed in the influential analysis of Oesch (2006: Table A1) to reflect the contemporary class structure.

[6] For question wordings, see Appendix Three.

[7] 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.

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

[9] 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.

[10] For occupation, this Figure reports the coefficients for the two kinds of occupations normally deemed to be of lowest status, namely, routine manual workers and low-skill service employees, and the reference category is that of sociocultural professionals.

[11] Although people sometimes use local or membership groups for such comparisons, multiple scholars suggest that in modern societies marked by egalitarian values, social mobility and mass advertising, national frames provide the reference groups for such social comparisons. See Passas (1997) and Merton (1968: 353-59).

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

[13] Rodrik (2017: 14) makes a parallel point when he observes that "what arouses popular opposition is not inequality per se, but perceived unfairness."