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# Populist Manipulation or Personal Beliefs? A Study of the Divergent Perceptions of the Social Order in Switzerland

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Abstract

Because of an important consistency in the prestige ratings of occupations from respondents across various social groups, countries and over time, the roots of divergent perceptions of the social order have attracted little attention. Yet structural changes in modern economies, brought by rapid globalization and technological change, and the rise of populism might have triggered a growing contestation of the foundations of the social order. We contribute to this important question by analyzing a unique data set in Switzerland based on a survey of adults' perception of the social prestige of occupations. As our results indicate, identification with major or minor right-wing populist parties does not significantly influence one's view of the social world. Rather, a radicalization of individual belief systems is the cause of the lower impact of the educational requirements and salience in autonomy of occupations on their perceived social prestige.

1. Introduction

The social prestige of occupations, through the symbolic power and deference it produces, has been argued to play a key role in the stability of the political and economic systems (Bourdieu 1985; Weber 1946; see also Corneo and Grüner 2002, for a test of the effect of the prestige of income categories on attitudes towards redistribution, and Cutler 1973, for the influence of the perceived social prestige of older individuals on the political support for the aged). As Weber (1946) suggested, social prestige may be "the basis of political or economic power, and very frequently has been" (p. 180).

Research on occupational prestige ranking culminated with the well-known consensus that prestige ratings are highly consistent across social groups and have remained so over time (Blau and Duncan 1967; Balkwell, Bates and Garbin 1980; Hodge, Siegel and Rossi 1964; Hodge, Treiman and Rossi 1966; Treiman 1977). Against this background, one was left to wonder whether prestige ratings are simply "peculiarly collective perceptions of social reality rather than expressions of personal values," as stated by Treiman (1977:59). More recent developments, however, indicate some notable individual differences in occupational prestige ranking. More particularly, respondents who are the furthest from the centers of power because of their education, ethnicity or gender, are less consistent in their ratings and less likely to acknowledge the rational bases of the social order that are the knowledge and authority components of occupations (Guppy and Goyder 1984; Lynn and Ellerbach 2017; Zhou 2005). The causal mechanism linking the distance to the centers of power and the cognitive mapping of occupations according to their social prestige remains, however, vague.

The growing influence of populist parties on the political life in many developed countries has been shown to pose a threat to the legitimacy of liberal democratic institutions (e.g. Foa and Mounk 2017). Challenging the legitimacy of these institutions could in turn undermine the basis of the social prestige of occupations and further contribute to the political instability

observed. In addition, political attitudes might well be an important determinant of the perception of the prestige of occupations (Villemez 1976; Young and Willmott 1956). Through the formation of political attitudes, individuals learn to value occupations according to criteria linked to their personal belief system (Boltanski and Thévenot 1983; Lamont 2012). Accordingly, this paper addresses the question whether alternative views of the social world are the direct result of the political manipulation of the social reality by populist representatives or whether they are predominantly influenced by the inherent belief systems of individuals.

To answer this important question, we analyze a unique data set from an original survey of educational preferences and occupational prestige ranking in Switzerland. Switzerland is generally characterised by an anti-elitist political culture that finds its sources both in the particularities of its political system, notably in the form of direct democracy, and in the emergence and pre-eminence of the Swiss People's Party (SVP), the populist right-wing party (PRWP) with the most seats in the national parliament. The polarization of Swiss politics, in particular the rise in power of the SVP and their anti-elitist stance, has led to a political climate where the usual consociational view of the social world is increasingly being challenged by conflictual opinions (Afonso and Papadopoulos 2015; Bornschier 2015; Häusermann, Mach and Papadopoulos 2004; Vatter 2016).

Against this background, we test in this paper whether an anti-elitist political climate can lead to a lower likelihood of recognition of the rational bases of the traditional social order or whether deviant occupational prestige rankings are rather caused by radical or extreme political belief systems. To do so, we first review the corresponding literature, before, in a second stage, introducing our data and the methodology. We then present descriptive statistics in a third part and discuss our statistical analyses in a fourth section. Finally, in the fifth and last section, we conclude and discuss the implications of our findings as well as the limits of our study.

2. Theory

2.1. Consensus vs. dissensus in occupational prestige ranking

An important strand in the early sociological literature argued that prestige ratings of occupations remained consistent across social groups, countries and over time (Blau and Duncan 1967; Balkwell, Bates and Garbin 1980; Hodge, Siegel and Rossi 1964; Hodge, Treiman and Rossi 1966; Treiman 1977). Because of this consensus, perceptions of the social order deviating from the norm were mostly ignored. As a result, we still know little about the formation of divergent perceptions of the social prestige of occupations. As Lamont notes (2012), the logics of valuation and evaluation of the social world are numerous and greatly influence the cognitive lens through which individuals perceive the social order and prestige of occupations.

Research has repeatedly provided evidence of a lower consistency in the prestige ratings of lower strata groups, such as low-educated individuals, blue-collar workers and minority groups (Guppy and Goyder 1984; Lynn and Ellerbach 2017; Zhou 2005). According to Guppy and Goyder (1984:721), the main reason lies in the "cross-pressures of reconciling economic reality with the need to protect ego" that result from competing ideologies in industrial and post-industrial societies. Accordingly, unless the dominant ideology is pervasive enough to achieve complete indoctrination, lower strata individuals are less likely to exhibit consistency in their ratings (Guppy and Goyder 1982). Following a lack of exposure to strongly socializing institutions, lower strata individuals might turn to competing ideologies to resolve the aforementioned cross-pressures and provide them with alternative explanations to the harshness of the economic reality they experience. As argued, for instance, by Lamont (2012), "a less highly institutionalized field will be less consistent in providing clear rules and in socializing newcomers (as compared with, say, a higher education system that trains newcomers for several years)" (p. 212). Instead of recognizing the science and authority components or training intensiveness of occupations as the natural bases of the social order as are doing highly educated workers, lower strata groups thus rely on other schemata than the ones provided through the education

system. As we posit next, the lack of socializing context could, in turn, be at the root of a radicalization of the belief system of individuals that leads them to develop alternative views of the social world.

2.2. Belief system and political orientation

As highlighted by Young and Willmott (1956), and later Villemez (1976), respondents exhibiting a deviant logic of occupational prestige ranking from the dominant view were also characterized by distinct political attitudes and distributive beliefs. A more precise account of the causal mechanisms involved in the context of one's confrontation with the categorization of the social world is given by Boltanski and Thévenot (1983). As the authors argue, the ranking of occupations other than one's own occupation is realized simultaneously to one's own positioning in the social order in relation to the other external categories. Respondents thus never remain neutral or passive in the process of occupational prestige ranking. More importantly, their relation to the dominant view will differ depending on their own position: "the dominant representation may be familiar, and recognised as dominant, but need not nevertheless be accepted as "accurate", or it may become the object of complex strategies containing a mixture of recognition and refusal, acceptance and rejection" (Boltanski and Thévenot 1983:651). In other words, conformity to the dominant view will occur only in those cases when individuals "themselves occupy a dominant position within the category […] or when they are completely outside the category and do not feel personally implicated in the task they are asked to perform" (Boltanski and Thévenot 1983:651). By contrast, a subordinated position is likely to lead to a rejection of the dominant view, as individuals become aware of it. As such, all individuals express their relation to the dominant view of the social order depending on the perception of their position in it. This stand can be moral (e.g. in the distinction between the public and private sector) or reflect more complex belief systems among individuals.

The nature of belief systems can vary strongly, whether across countries, for instance because of value differences (e.g., MacKinnon and Langford 1994), across social strata as a result of different socialization processes (see, e.g., Lauer 1974, for differences between Catholic and public school pupils), or following changes in the character of central objects in a belief system (Converse 2006). As aptly put by Converse (2006:10-11), these objects "shift from the remote, generic, and abstract to the increasingly simple, concrete, or "close to home." Where potential political objects are concerned, this progression tends to be from abstract, "ideological" principles to the more obviously recognizable social groupings or charismatic leaders and finally to such objects of immediate experience as family, job, and immediate associates." At the political level, lower social strata are, accordingly, more likely to rely on concrete thinking since political subjects that are not directly relatable are perceived as too remote or abstract.

Yet it would be wrong to reduce ideology to political sophistication, as the left-right dimension has been shown to be pervasive in many life domains and to result from various psychological needs, motives and constraints (Jost, Nosek and Gosing 2008). In addition, according to Sartori (1969:400), ideology "indicates a particular state, or structure, of political belief systems". Core beliefs and values about society have indeed been shown to be embodied in the political orientation of individuals (Caprara et al. 2006; Feldman 1988; Goren 2001; Knutsen 1995). Thus, the political orientation of individuals might alter their view of the social world through the understanding of the concept of social prestige and the perception of the desirability and the value of each occupation for society. More precisely, moving away from the centre of the political spectrum toward either extreme is expected to lead to a lower likelihood of acknowledging the rational bases of the social order. This is because individuals subject to a radicalization of political views are more likely to have adopted political belief systems that reject the dominant view and its institutional foundations.

As has been shown in other studies of occupational prestige ranking, the educational requirements or the training intensiveness of occupations is determinant for their perceived social prestige (Abrassart and Wolter *forthcoming*; Lynn and Ellerbach 2017; Zhou 2005). In Switzerland, the educational system is the main foundation of the social order because of its highly stratified feature and its strong link to the labour market that generate important social boundaries at the occupational level (Buchmann et al. 2016; Buchmann and Sacchi 1998). Against this background, we can put our first hypothesis forward:

H1: the further from the centre of the political spectrum one is, the lower the likelihood of attributing a higher social prestige to occupations requiring a higher level of education to be performed, all other things being equal.

By contrast, we posit that the political distance to the dominant view is associated with a lower likelihood of attributing occupations salient in physical/manual and routine tasks a lower social prestige. As explained beforehand, lower social strata are expected to rely more on concrete thinking while assessing political objects. As we argue here, the same reasoning can be applied to the perception of the social prestige of occupations. The purpose of occupations, when abstract, is therefore probably less intelligible for lower social strata whose belief system is rather built on concrete cognition than theoretical concepts. Depending on their orientation, whether left or right, they might, however, do so because of different reasons. At the far left, the dignity of manual labour should be at the centre of respondents' values and beliefs. According for instance to Penn (1975:356-357) comparing the value systems of Czechoslovakia, Poland and the U.S. to understand cross-country differences in the attribution of social prestige, the Czechoslovakian respondents had "internalized the values of socialism with its special emphasis on the dignity and worthiness of manual work which is based upon the underlying Marxist philosophical assumption that the industrial proletariat are the universal, revolutionary class

that will destroy bourgeois capitalist society and build a new, liberated communist social structure". At the far right, manual labour conveying more conservative values such as hard work and traditionalism will be at the core of their belief system.

H2a: the further from the centre of the political spectrum one is, the lower the likelihood of attributing a lower social prestige to occupations salient in manual and knowledge-poor tasks, all other things being equal.

Finally, job autonomy is expected to be valued differently depending on individuals' political preferences. First, job autonomy appears to be highly valued by social and cultural specialists who are more likely to find the cultural progressivism of the New Left attractive and therefore position themselves at the centre-left (Güveli, Need and de Graaf 2007). Second, we expect respondents at the centre-right of the political spectrum to also value autonomy at the workplace. This is because they should be traditionally attached to work values that emphasize individual freedom and responsibility while rejecting constraining collective security arrangements (Jansen 2016). At both extremes of the political spectrum, however, the picture appears less clear. At the far left, despite the lack of autonomy at work contributing to individuals' dehumanization and objectification and being thus regarded as detrimental according to the Marxist tradition (Volpato, Andrighetto and Baldissarri 2017), we expect social conformity, as opposed to personal autonomy, to prevail and to be seen as more important for the societal well-being. At the far right, social conformity, which is understood as the exclusion of specific groups and manifests itself in a lack of tolerance for diversity and individual autonomy, should also be predominant (Feldman 2003; Kitschelt and Rehm 2014). Against this background, we put the following hypothesis forward:

H2b: the further from the centre of the political spectrum one is, the lower the likelihood of attributing a higher social prestige to occupations salient in autonomy, all other things being equal.

2.3. Political representation

As argued by Bourdieu (1985), it is essentially at the political level that the struggle for power and domination takes place, and in turn influences the structure of the status order and the nature of the social world through the various social categories created by the political power. The political level is thereby the central challenging site of the symbolic production of the social world based on the representation of the occupational field of the dominated. More precisely, political representation occurs through organized bodies that operate mostly through symbolism and the creation of distinctions using language. As Bourdieu (1985) claims, "The spokesperson, in speaking of a group, on behalf of a group, surreptitiously posits the existence of the group in question, institutes the group, through the magical operation that is inherent in any act of naming" (p. 741). Adhering to the political discourse of a given representational body is a sign of acceptance and incorporation of the distinctions and groups that were created through that said discourse. Thereby, expressing one's preferences for a given body will likely shape the perception of the social prestige of the occupations that are represented and targeted, positively or negatively, in the political discourse.

The recent rise of populism in many liberal democracies is, in that regard, particularly worrisome, as the associated political discourse is likely to change the perception of the social world for those who adhere to it. Because of the presence of antagonistic schemas dividing society between the people and the elite on the discursive and symbolic level, political representation of populist views is therefore expected to lead to a challenging of the social structure in place (Katsambekis 2017). Instead of realizing a transformation of the social world by en-

couraging and supporting social change among its constituency, populists rather act on the perception of the social status of the people they represent (Mudde 2004)[1].

This symbolic contestation of the social order on the political level often contrasts with the more technocratic exercise of power from governing parties that tend to lose their ideological stance and experience a convergence in the policies they defend and implement. Whereas populism stresses "the centrality of a putative will of the people in guiding political action", technocracy insists on "the centrality of rational speculation in identifying both the goals of a society and the means to implement them" (Carmani 2017: p. 54). As further noted by Caramani (2017: p. 62), populism and technocracy differ from party government in that they don't consider the plurality of interests for the elaboration and implementation of policies, but "rely on other mechanisms for the identification of the objective and comprehensive interest of society". While technocracy emphasizes the role of education, knowledge and expertise for the decision-making process, the proximity between the representatives and the represented and the absence of a clear hierarchization of the social world predominate in the populist view, whereby one belongs to the people or is excluded from it (Caramani 2017; Jagers and Walgrave 2007). The anti-elitist or anti-establishment characteristic of populism is not only targeted towards the political elites, but also the media, the state, intellectuals or economic powers (Jagers and Walgrave 2007).

This anti-elitist stance is particularly acute among the major PRWP in Switzerland, the SVP (Ernst, Engesser and Esser 2017), although the kind of populism they endorse is rather cultural than economic in comparison to other PRWPs (Bernhard 2017). Because the SVP takes an explicitly anti-elitist stance, we expect people expressing a preference for this party to be less likely to attribute a higher social prestige to occupations requiring academic higher education. Furthermore, because other more radical PRWPs in Switzerland are much less liberal with regards to economic issues in addition to the cultural aspect, respondents expressing a preference for these parties should even further reject the main foundations of the social order.

H3a: Respondents choosing the Swiss People's Party are less likely to attribute a higher social prestige to occupations requiring a higher level of education to be performed than centrist parties, all other things being equal.

H3b: Respondents choosing other, more radical PRWPs are less likely to attribute a higher social prestige to occupations requiring a higher level of education to be performed than the SVP and centrist parties, all other things being equal.

3. Data and methods

3.1. Presentation of the data

We contribute to the literature by analyzing a unique data set in Switzerland based on an original survey (2015) of 6,262 adult residents' perception of the social prestige of occupations[2]. In this survey, four random samples of almost equal size and similar composition were presented with ten occupations that were chosen based on their representativeness and their educational requirements in older surveys in terms of ranking. They were then asked to rank a list of occupations according to their social prestige as follows:

"10 distinct occupations are listed below. How do you assess the social prestige of these occupations? Rank to this end the listed occupations from 1 (= this occupation has the highest social prestige) to 10 (= this occupation has the lowest prestige)."

By contrast to other studies investigating prestige ratings in place of ranking, as we do here, respondents are forced to compare occupations against one another based on specific pre-established dimensions, instead of comparing all items "against an external set of criteria (e.g., originality, significance)" (Lamont 2012:211). As such, respondents need to carefully establish

a hierarchy and assess the relative prestige occupations, rather than the absolute prestige. The ranking, therefore, reflects more the perception of the social order than the intrinsic perceived value of each individual occupation.

The list of occupations presented to respondents differed according to the sample (Table 1). As compared to the first sample, occupations with lower educational requirements (up to 16 years of education in average, highlighted in grey) were replaced by five alternative occupations with similar educational requirements in the second sample; the five occupations requiring higher levels of education to be performed (from 16 to 22 years of education, in white) remaining the same. Conversely, the third sample differed from the first in that the five occupations with higher educational requirements were replaced by five alternative occupations with similar educational requirements, whereas the five occupations requiring lower levels of education were the same in both samples. Finally, the fourth sample combines the five alternative occupations requiring lower levels of education from the second sample and the five alternative occupations requiring higher levels of education from the third sample. Because the differences in the framing of the list of occupations across the samples are of no interest for our research questions, the four samples were pooled and controlled for in the analysis.

[Table 1 here]

Because some respondents assigned the same ranking to distinct occupations more than once, we run the main analyses after dropping the cases where the same rank was given more than once to several occupations. After the plausibility analysis and the exclusion of missings in our independent variables, a maximum of 5,030 respondents remained in our main sample, each one ranking ten distinct occupations (ties were excluded)[3].

3.2. Specification of the statistical model

We apply a rank-ordered logit model (also known as exploded logit model) by maximum likelihood estimation to analyze variation in our dependent variable. The rank-ordered logit model applied to our data estimates the likelihood of attributing an occupation i the rank j, conditional on a set of variables at the occupational level. The basic model assumes that all respondents have the same probability distribution of occupation preferences and that individual variation in the ranking only results from random variation (Allison and Christakis 1994). By interacting variables at the occupational and individual level (cross-level interactions), we test whether some of the heterogeneity in the ranking across respondents can be attributable to measured variables.

Following Allison and Christakis (1994), the model can be formally expressed as follows:

$$\mu_{ij} = \beta_j x_i + \gamma z_j + \theta w_{ij}$$

where μ_{ij} is the rank assigned by respondent i to occupation j; x_i, z_j, and w_{ij} are column vectors of the observed variables, respectively, at the individual level, occupational level, and across levels; and β_j, γ and θ are row vectors of the coefficients we wish to estimate. In the specification where only occupation-level variables are introduced, the model is simplified:

$$\mu_{ij} = \gamma z_j$$

where z_j stands for the variables that vary across occupations but remain identical for all respondents. Only a maximum of nineteen (20 occupations $-$ 1) can be included in the model to avoid linear dependence. In our specification of the model, building on the previous one, we add interactions between the occupation-level variables and covariates at the level of the respondents:

$$\mu_{ij} = \gamma z_j + \theta w_{ij}$$

where, here, the w_{ij} vector stands for the interactions between the x_i and the z_j variables.

At the occupational level, our first independent variable consists of the educational requirements of an occupation, or its training intensiveness, that we measure through the average years of education of the workers in each occupational group[4]. This factor has been shown in various studies to be one of the most important bases of the perception of the social order, although important individual variation in the effect of this variable exists (Lynn and Ellerbach 2017; Zhou 2005). The level of the educational qualifications required partially reflects the training intensiveness of occupations, especially in Switzerland where the link between the education system and labor market is strong (Buchmann and Sacchi 1998; Buchmann et al. 2016). The maximum number of years required to graduate for occupations accessed through vocational education was retrieved from the State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation professional register. This was done in order to avoid including respondents in an occupational group that had higher qualifications than the nationally defined value.

Other independent variables include a set of indicators on skill content at the EU-15 and US level (ISCO-08 2-digit). These indices were retrieved from Eurofound (2016) and constructed from variables included in the 2010 European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS), PIAAC, and Occupational Information Network data set data that were standardized and used to extract scores for each occupation–sector combination[5]. Next, we assigned the resulting indices obtained for each category of the ISCO-08 2-digit[6] classification to the occupations included in the present analysis[7]. We selected, more particularly, the following indices of skill demand and content based on their relevance for our research question:

- strength: task involving the exertion of energy and strength;

- problem-solving: finding solutions to complex and new issues;

- autonomy: self-direction and latitude.

Control variables at the occupational level include the standard errors of the average

years of education, the size of the occupational group as the number of workers in thousands (including a quadratic term to consider the non-linear effect), and the proportion of migrants and women in each occupational group (also as a non-linear effect). The previous control variables at the occupational level were generated using the Swiss Labour Force Survey and sampling weights[8]. Here, these variables are mostly used to account for the effect of social closure, in the sense of Weeden (2002), on occupational prestige ranking, whereby the size, composition (both in terms of average level and homogeneity) of the various occupational groups are expected to positively influence the ranking of occupations according to their social prestige (see Table A1 in the appendix for descriptive statistics).

At the individual level, our independent variables encompass:

- the political orientation: 1-10 (1 being far left, 10 being far right);

- the political party respondents would most likely vote for at the next election (see Tables A2-3 for descriptive statistics).

Party preference was recoded so that the original categories, that is, all parties then represented in the Swiss parliament, were simplified and better adapted to our research question. The four categories of the recoded variable are now:

a) The left and centre-right, including the Social Democrats (SP), the Greens (Grüne), the Christian Democrats (CVP/EVP), the Liberals (FDP), the Green Liberals (GLP), and the Conservatives (BDP). This simplification is justified by the fact that these parties, despite representing very distinct political interests, are in comparison to the SVP and other PRWPs not populist in the anti-elitist sense of the term (although they might exhibit some people-centrism, see, e.g., Bernhard [2017] or Ernst et al. [2017]) and less likely to contest the social order according to the educational requirements of occupations[9]. Furthermore, a more detailed operationalization, whereby each party was included individually in the model, did not affect our main findings (results available upon request).

b) SVP.

c) Other PRWPs.

d) Other parties.

In the statistical models, party preference was not included when the variable of interest was the political orientation to avoid any bad control issues. However, when party preference was included as our variable of interest, we controlled for political orientation. Different specifications were tested but yielded very similar results (available upon request).

Control variables otherwise included the respondent's highest level of educational attained (below upper secondary education [ISCED 2], apprenticeship or equivalent [ISCED 35], general upper secondary education [ISCED 34], vocational tertiary education [ISCED 65], and general tertiary education [ISCED 64 and more], number of books in the childhood home (less than 10, 11-25, 26-100, 101-200, 201-500, more than 500), age (continuous), gender (female, male), immigration status (Swiss native, first generation immigrant, second generation immigrant with one parent born abroad, second generation immigrant with both parents born abroad), linguistic region of residence (German, French, Italian), if the respondents live in an urban area (urban, rural), and the sample the respondent belongs to (1st sample, 2nd sample, 3rd sample, 4th sample). Information on the respondents' occupation was not available in the data set, and although egocentrism in occupational prestige ranking could be present, the individual's occupational attainment remains a direct consequence of their level of education and should, therefore, partly be controlled for. Sensitivity analyses were performed, whereby the labor market situation, sector of occupation and income category of respondents were introduced as controls (see Table A6 in the appendix for detailed results).

4. Findings

4.1. Main models

The results of our first analysis are presented in Figure 4. As can be observed, all other things being equal, the effect of the educational requirements of occupations on their rank is always negative, meaning that the average rank assigned to occupations is improved when they require more years of education in average to be performed, but vary at the same time strongly along the political orientation of individuals. More particularly, a strong and statistically significant polarization is visible in Figure 1, whereby the further respondents are from the middle of the political spectrum, the lower the effect of educational requirements on their perception of the social prestige of occupations. Our first hypothesis is therefore confirmed.

[Figure 1 here]

In order to test the validity of H2a and H2b, we estimated the effect of various dimensions of the skill content of occupations on occupational prestige ranking depending on the political orientation of individuals. The results are presented in Table 2. In Models 1-3, interaction effects between the dimensions of the skill content of occupations and the political orientation of respondents are introduced separately, whereas they are included simultaneously in Model 1. According to Models 2-3, both the salience in problem-solving and in autonomy affect the prestige rank of occupations in a convex manner depending on the political orientation of individuals. In other words, the effect of both dimensions along the political orientation of respondents is similar to the one of educational requirements, whereby the further one is from the middle of the political spectrum, the less likely one will be influenced by the occupational attribute in question. By contrast, the strength dimension of an occupation will influence occupational prestige ranking in a concave manner depending on the political orientation of individuals (Model 1). Thus, the negative effect of the strength component on the perceived social prestige of occupations should be lower in the case of respondents at both extremes of the political spectrum. When we now include all variables simultaneously (Model 4), however, only the

interaction effect involving the autonomy component of occupations and the political orientation remains significant.

[Table 2 here]

Looking more closely at the effect of the salience in autonomy on the prestige rank of occupations along the political orientation of individuals (Figure 2), we can observe a convex relationship, albeit mostly present on the left side of the political spectrum. In other words, the autonomy component of occupations is less likely to be valued among radicalized leftist respondents for occupational prestige ranking. Therefore, hypothesis H2b is only partly verified here.

[Figure 2 here]

Figure 3 displays the effect of educational requirements on occupational prestige ranking by party preference. Here, it appears clearly that the effect of choosing or preferring a PRWP does not significantly alleviate the influence of the educational requirements of occupations on the perception of the social order. Based on these results, one can therefore affirm that adhering to the political program or discourse of a PRWP does not influence the view of the social world, hence invalidating both H3a and H3b. Interestingly, however, it appears that respondents choosing the category "other party" are less likely to recognize the training intensiveness of occupations as an important criteria for the prestige of occupations. In other words, individuals adhering to parties other than the main parties represented in Parliament in Switzerland are less likely to accept the rational bases of the social order, all other things, especially the political orientation, being equal. Therefore, the contestation of the social order remains very marginal at the representational level.

[Figure 3 here]

It is possible to conclude from these findings that distinct views of the social world are not influenced by populist parties but result from the adoption of radicalized political belief systems at the margins. These beliefs systems lead to a lower likelihood of acknowledging the foundations of the social order and a higher likelihood of valuing occupations because of the autonomy they allow at the workplace, all other things being equal.

5. Discussion

In this paper, we have tested whether the presence of a major PRWP can affect the way individuals perceive the social order or whether divergent perceptions are the result of radicalized political belief systems. As our results indicate, expressing a preference for a PRWP for the next election does not moderate the effect of the educational requirements of occupations on their prestige ranking, all other things being equal. Rather, and unsurprisingly, minor parties that are not necessarily represented in national political institutions appear to be the source of a very marginal contestation of the social order at the representational level. More interestingly, expressing views that correspond to either extreme of the political spectrum leads to a lower importance of educational requirements and autonomy at the workplace for the perception of the social prestige of occupations.

The increasing complexity of modern societies and labour markets in knowledge economies might therefore have triggered a strong reaction from the losers and potential losers of these developments who, in turn, adopted radicalized belief systems in order to cope with these changes. A quick look at the likelihood of radicalization in Switzerland using our data shows however different patterns depending on the direction of radicalization (Figure 7). A left radicalization is indeed more likely to happen among female individuals living in urban areas of

the French-speaking regions, whereas right radicals are more likely to be older male workers with either low levels of educational qualifications or vocational training at the upper secondary or tertiary level. In both cases, however, the result is a lower acceptance of the institutional foundations of the social order.

[Figure 4 here]

We derive two main implications from these findings. First, populist parties, while undoubtedly constituting a serious threat to specific groups of individuals, do not appear to undermine support for the foundations of the social order from their electorate despite the explicit anti-elitism that characterizes these parties. Second, radicalized individuals might choose, deliberately or not, to view the social world in a different manner to cope with their disadvantage or fear of the societal transformations that could harm them. This, in turn, is likely to further contribute to their exclusion from the predominant societal norms and reproduce their disadvantage intergenerationally. More importantly, the main threat for liberal democracies rather stems from the transformations in the political belief systems of individuals that probably result from structural changes than from the manipulation of the social reality through the political discourse. The observed divergent perceptions of the social order, because they are not driven by preferences for PRWPs, therefore rather manifest themselves in an informal manner, whereby political struggles at the representational level only very marginally affect how individuals view the social world. Yet the threat of populism is not to be underestimated. In a world where radicalized individuals manage to take control over or bypass major parties to take on important roles at either the legislative or executive level, such as the Tea Party and Donald Trump in the recent history of the U.S., the liberal democracies as we know them are without a doubt under great pressure. In order to face the populist threat, liberal democracies first need to

better understand and take the radicalization processes at the societal level seriously before hoping to win at the representational level.

Endnotes

[1] In modern societies, the mass media have also, by sharing with populist parties issues in a similar tone, contributed to the expansion of their domination in the political discourse (Mudde 2013).

[2] We would like to thank the Swiss Leading House on Economics of Education, a research program of the Swiss State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation and a joint project between the University of Bern and University of Zurich, for developing the survey and granting us access to the data. We are also very thankful to Maria A. Cattaneo and Stefan Denzler for the elaboration of the questions. This survey was conducted by the LINK Institute.

[3] Additional analyses were also conducted by retaining, instead of excluding, those respondents who gave the same rank twice to different occupations, and replacing, alternatively, one of both redundant ranks by the one missing among the ten that should have been assigned. This resulted in two additional distinct samples that were then used to test for the robustness of our results. Whether we used the original sample or one of both additional samples, the results remained similar (results available upon request).

[4] Because only the level of education was available in the SLFS data set, each level had first to be transformed into the corresponding years of education based on official sources (retrieved from: http://www.edk.ch/dyn/11586.php).

[5] For more information on the exact methodology, see Eurofound (2016).

[6] Unfortunately, information at a more detailed level of occupational grouping was not available in the EWCS and PIAAC databases.

[7] Since Switzerland did not participate in PIAAC and did not include enough observations at the occupational level to conduct the appropriate analyses, we were unable to derive indices only for Switzerland. This should however not be a problem, as Taylor et al. (2008) have shown that the skill content of tasks is rated similarly across countries.

[8] Some occupations from the ranking list in our main data set were not present in the SLFS data as such because of a less detailed variable in the latter. As a result, in some cases, more general categories were used to compute the needed variables.

[9] While left parties are expected to question the redistribution of wealth, this should not have any influence on their perception of the social order depending on the educational requirements of occupations, only on the allocation of labor market resources.

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Tables

Table 1. List of occupations to rank depending on the sample

1st sample	2nd sample	3rd sample	4th sample
Retail employee	Commercial employee (EFZ)	Retail employee	Commercial employee (EFZ)
Mechanical Engineer (ETH)	Mechanical Engineer (ETH)	Physicist	Physicist
Electrician	Health professional	Electrician	Health professional
Sociologist	Sociologist	Biochemist	Biochemist
Hairdresser	Goldsmith	Hairdresser	Goldsmith
Actuary	Actuary	Judge	Judge
Carpenter	Graphic designer	Carpenter	Graphic designer
Primary school teacher	Primary school teacher	High school teacher	High school teacher
Care professional	Polymechanic	Care professional	Polymechanic
Lawyer	Lawyer	Pediatrician	Pediatrician

Note: occupations with lower educational requirements are highlighted in grey, occupations requiring higher levels of education to be performed in white.

Table 2. Impact of the skill content on occupational prestige ranking by political orientation

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Strength	-0.00730*			-0.0643***
	(0.00441)			(0.00618)
Strength x political orientation	0.00213**			-0.00115
	(0.00106)			(0.00144)
Strength x political orientation^2	-0.000203**			6.19e-05
	(9.97e-05)			(0.000133)
Problem-solving		-0.0129		0.0778***
		(0.0101)		(0.0142)
Problem-solving x political orientation		-0.00509**		-0.000557
		(0.00222)		(0.00326)
Problem-solving x political orientation^2		0.000499**		0.000127
		(0.000212)		(0.000308)
Autonomy			-0.0558***	-0.340***
			(0.00754)	(0.0132)
Autonomy x political orientation			-0.00625***	-0.00736***
			(0.00163)	(0.00275)
Autonomy x political orientation^2			0.000530***	0.000545**
			(0.000154)	(0.000259)
Average years of education	-0.247***	-0.192***	-0.165***	-0.132***
	(0.0316)	(0.0270)	(0.0312)	(0.0318)
Average years of education x political orientation	-0.0175**	-0.0133**	-0.0112	-0.0111
	(0.00767)	(0.00678)	(0.00773)	(0.00729)
Average years of education x political orientation^2	0.00190***	0.00148**	0.00144**	0.00138**
	(0.000724)	(0.000645)	(0.000732)	(0.000696)
Observations	50,300	50,300	50,300	50,300
Number of groups	5,030	5,030	5,030	5,030

Robust standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Note: Only the interaction effects of interest are shown here.

Figures

Figure 1. Impact of the educational requirements on occupational prestige ranking by political orientation
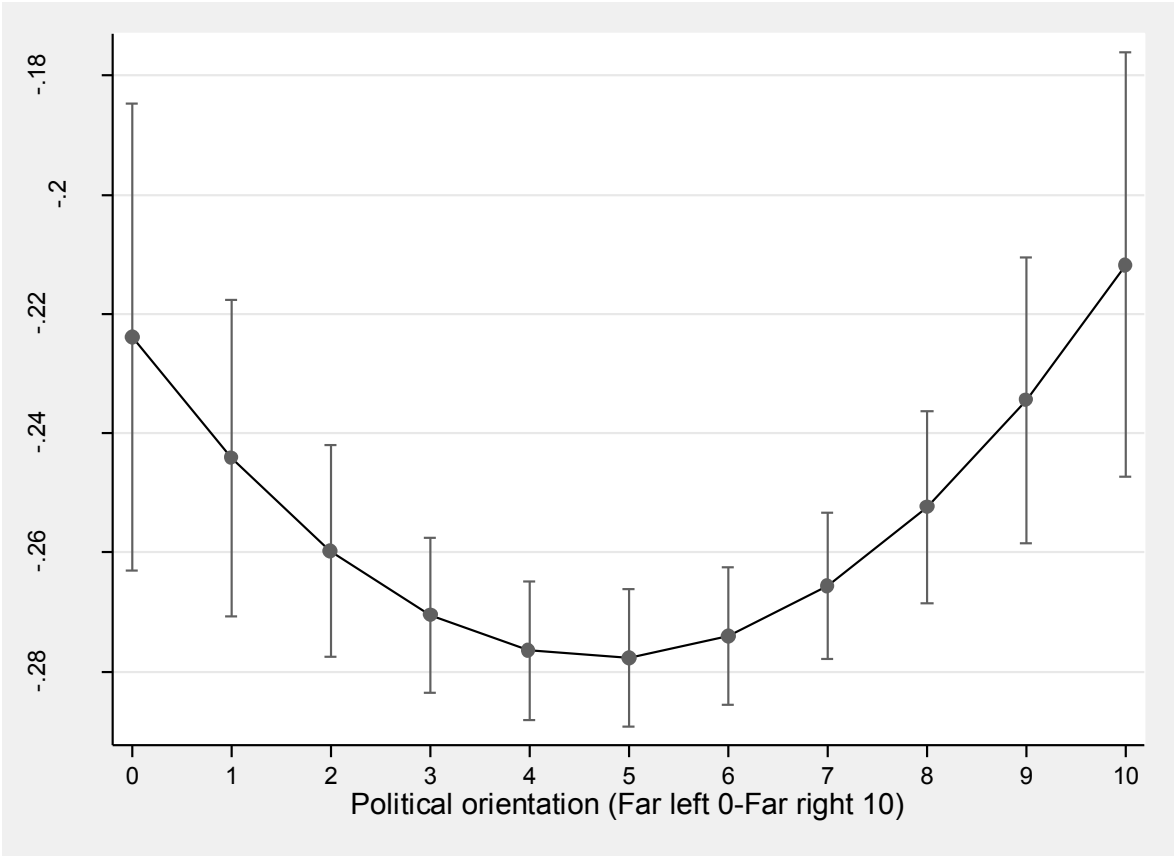
Note: See Table A4 (Model 1) in appendix for the full estimates of the model.

Figure 2. Impact of the salience in autonomy on occupational prestige ranking by political orientation
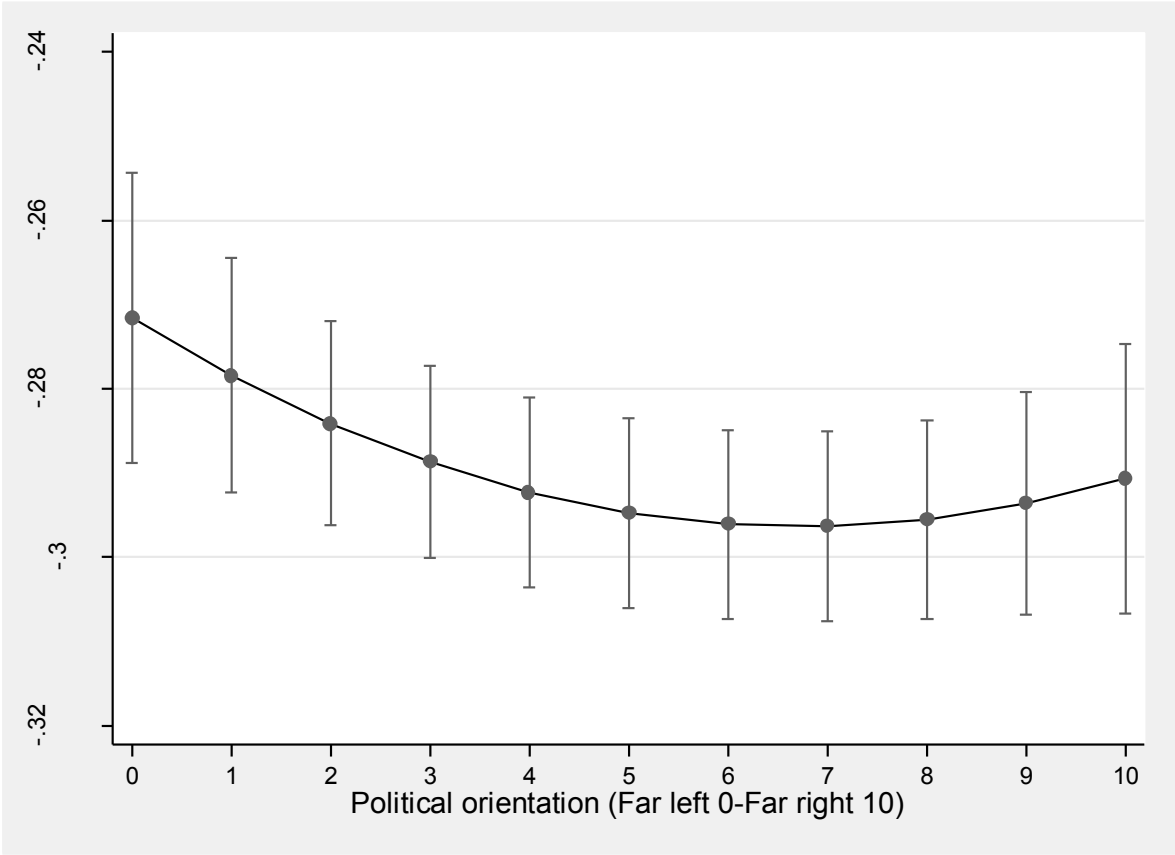
Figure 3. Impact of the educational requirements on occupational prestige ranking by party preference
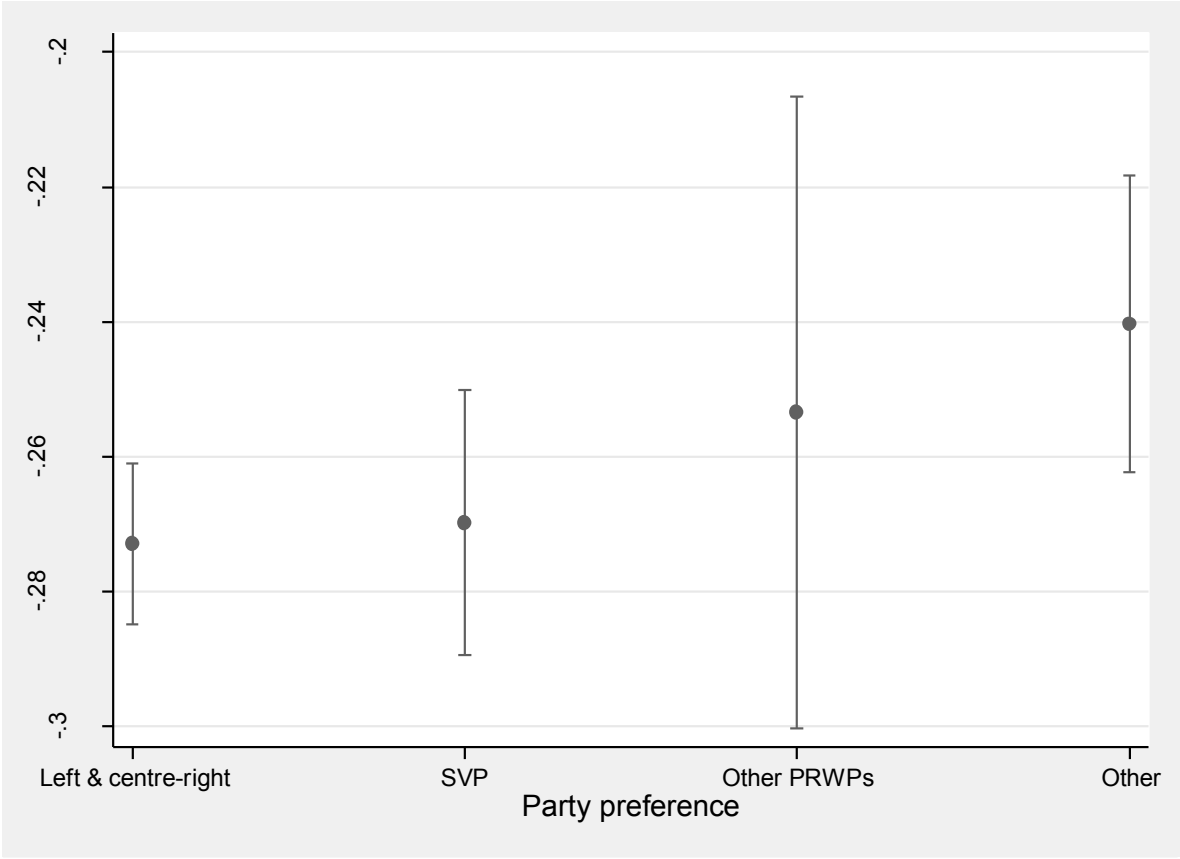
Note: See Table A4 (Model 2) in appendix for the full estimates of the model.

Figure 4. Individual determinants of political radicalization in Switzerland
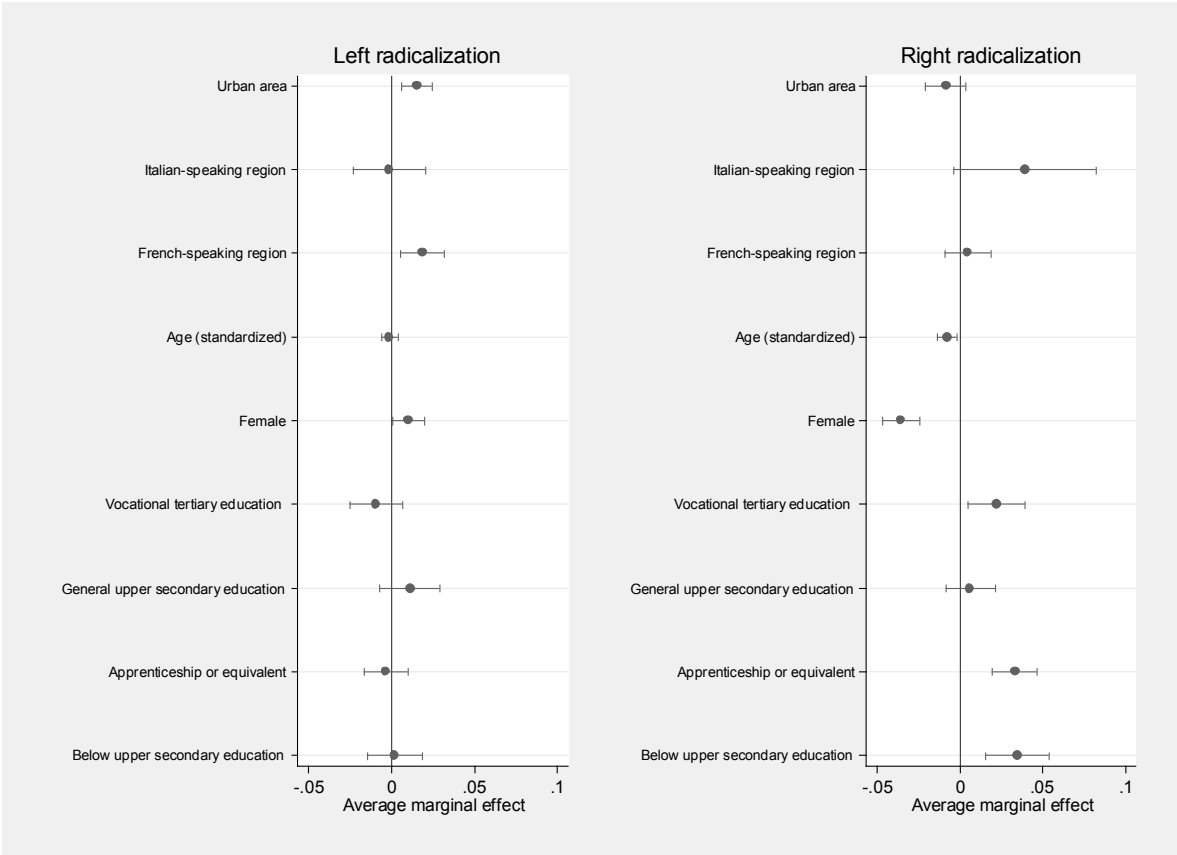
Note: A left radicalization is defined as having a political orientation lower than 2, a right radicalization a political orientation greater than 8. Average marginal effects were obtained after logistic regressions. The reference categories for the variables shown are: general tertiary education (education), male (gender), German-speaking region (linguistic region), rural (area of residence). Control variables include the number of books at home, the immigration status, and the sample of the respondent. See Table A5 in the appendix for the full estimates of the models.

Technical Appendix

1. Descriptive statistics

Table A1. Mean value of the occupational attributes

	Rank	Strength	Problem-solving	Autonomy	Years of education	SE of years of education	Proportion of women	Proportion of immigrants	Size
Lawyer	3.06	12	67.8	70.5	20.53	0.13	37%	28%	16 260
Paediatrician	3.40	29	68.8	58	21.67	0.21	54%	57%	14 683
Judge	3.44	12	67.8	70.5	19.28	0.38	22%	30%	5 499
Mechanical engineer	3.70	10	71.4	71.2	18.96	0.16	10%	44%	20 990
Physicist	4.20	10	71.4	71.2	21.29	0.44	29%	76%	4 739
Biochemist	4.67	10	71.4	71.2	20.46	0.37	25%	53%	9 751
Primary school teacher	4.96	17.3	66.8	56.4	16.75	0.09	86%	14%	56 022
High school teacher	4.97	17.3	66.8	56.4	19.42	0.12	53%	24%	28 091
Sociologist	5.26	10	71.4	70.5	19.97	0.41	19%	38%	3 374
Actuary	5.26	12	67.8	71.2	20.35	0.34	39%	43%	4 242
Care professional	6.05	37.4	55.3	51.3	13.01	0.05	90%	37%	121 968
Electrician	6.10	35.3	61.8	60.8	14.74	0.12	8%	26%	8 244
Health professional	6.41	32.3	59	52.2	13.84	0.02	83%	26%	234 639
Clerk	6.41	13.9	52.0	56.5	13.70	0.17	86%	36%	3 973
Carpenter	6.45	44	55.1	55.2	14.37	0.16	3%	22%	27 486
Graphic designer	6.50	10	71.4	71.2	14.57	0.24	31%	24%	9 103
Goldsmith	6.69	31.5	55	57.2	15.00	0.00	49%	37%	1 355
Polymechanic	6.80	38.6	55.3	50.2	14.55	0.06	4%	35%	78 659
Retail employee	7.55	29.2	51.6	53.6	13.49	0.04	68%	35%	169 024
Hairdresser	8.10	32.5	50.1	53	13.86	0.06	85%	38%	16 002

Table A2. Descriptive statistics of the political orientation of respondents

Political orientation	N	Percent
0	580	1.09
1	1,100	2.07
2	4,160	7.82
3	5,370	10.1
4	5,780	10.87
5	16,010	30.11
6	6,150	11.56
7	6,800	12.79
8	5,000	9.4
9	1,470	2.76
10	760	1.43
Total	53,180	100

Table A3. Descriptive statistics of the party preference

Party preference	N	Percent
Social democrats (SP)	9,080	17.08
Greens (Grüne)	3,260	6.13
Christian democrats (CVP/EVP)	5,440	10.23
Liberals (FDP)	8,620	16.21
Green liberals (GLP)	3,810	7.17
Conservatives (BDP)	3,740	7.03
Right-wing populists (SVP)	11,290	21.23
Other right-wing populists	1,710	3.22
Other	6,220	11.7
Total	53,170	100

2. Estimates

Table A4. Full estimates of the main models

	(1)	(2)
Main occupational attributes and interactions		
Average years of education	-0.212***	-0.215***
	(0.0314)	(0.0313)
Average years of education x political orientation	-0.0227***	-0.0244***
	(0.00781)	(0.00786)
Average years of education x political orientation^2	0.00239***	0.00254***
	(0.000737)	(0.000762)
Average years of education x left and centre-right parties	_Reference category_	
Average years of education x SVP		0.00313
		(0.0112)
Average years of education x other RRWPPs		0.0195
		(0.0244)
Average years of education x other		0.0326***
		(0.0119)
Control variables		
Average years of education x below upper secondary education	0.0601***	0.0558***
	(0.0137)	(0.0139)
Average years of education x apprenticeship or equivalent	0.0357***	0.0332***
	(0.0119)	(0.0120)
Average years of education x general upper secondary education	0.00491	0.00502
	(0.0154)	(0.0155)
Average years of education x vocational tertiary education	0.0212	0.0196
	(0.0145)	(0.0146)
Average years of education x general tertiary education	_Reference category_	
Average years of education x less than 10 books	_Reference category_	
Average years of education x 11-25 books	-0.0284**	-0.0284**
	(0.0140)	(0.0140)
Average years of education x 26-100 books	-0.0435***	-0.0433***
	(0.0138)	(0.0138)
Average years of education x 101-200	-0.0339**	-0.0336**
	(0.0166)	(0.0165)
Average years of education x 201-500	-0.0425**	-0.0413**
	(0.0190)	(0.0190)
Average years of education x more than 500	-0.0638***	-0.0622***
	(0.0232)	(0.0232)
Average years of education x Swiss native	_Reference category_	
Average years of education x first generation immigrant	0.0230	0.0220
	(0.0143)	(0.0143)
Average years of education x second generation immigrant with one parent born abroad	0.0136	0.0129
	(0.0129)	(0.0128)
Average years of education x second generation immigrant with both parents born abroad	0.0249	0.0232
	(0.0199)	(0.0199)
Average years of education x female	_Reference category_	

Average years of education x male	-0.0297***	-0.0306***
	(0.00803)	(0.00802)
Average years of education x age	-5.05e-05	5.85e-05
	(0.000286)	(0.000290)
Average years of education x German-speaking region	*Reference category*	
Average years of education x French-speaking region	0.0293***	0.0272***
	(0.00951)	(0.00956)
Average years of education x Italian-speaking region	0.0492**	0.0441*
	(0.0226)	(0.0238)
Average years of education x rural	*Reference category*	
Average years of education x urban	-0.0163*	-0.0170**
	(0.00861)	(0.00861)
Average years of education x 1st sample	*Reference category*	
Average years of education x 2nd sample	0.0746***	0.0745***
	(0.0112)	(0.0112)
Average years of education x 3rd sample	-0.0382***	-0.0383***
	(0.0123)	(0.0123)
Average years of education x 4th sample	0.0161	0.0156
	(0.0120)	(0.0120)
SE of average years of education	0.388***	0.388***
	(0.0651)	(0.0652)
Size in thousands	-0.000478	-0.000456
	(0.000352)	(0.000352)
Size in thousands^2	3.69e-07	2.55e-07
	(1.52e-06)	(1.52e-06)
Proportion of women in %	0.0184***	0.0184***
	(0.000924)	(0.000925)
Proportion of women in %^{2}	-0.000210***	-0.000210***
	(1.02e-05)	(1.02e-05)
Proportion of immigrants in %	-0.000534	-0.000529
	(0.00130)	(0.00130)
Proportion of immigrants in %^{2}	0.000107***	0.000107***
	(1.55e-05)	(1.55e-05)
Observations	50,300	50,260
Number of groups	5,030	5,026

Robust standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table A5. Estimates of the likelihood of left or right radicalization depending on individual attributes

	(1) Left radicalization	(2) Right radicalization
Below upper secondary education	0.0652	1.046***
	(0.269)	(0.285)
Apprenticeship or equivalent	-0.111	1.013***
	(0.232)	(0.251)
General upper secondary education	0.315	0.277
	(0.254)	(0.328)

Vocational tertiary education	-0.364	0.760**
	(0.332)	(0.296)
General tertiary education	*Reference category*	*Reference category*
Less than 10	*Reference category*	*Reference category*
11-25 books	-0.310	-0.280
	(0.302)	(0.228)
26-100 books	-0.302	-0.461**
	(0.290)	(0.226)
101-200 books	-0.258	-0.368
	(0.337)	(0.273)
201-500 books	0.249	-0.368
	(0.341)	(0.320)
More than 500 books	0.700*	-0.994*
	(0.371)	(0.550)
Swiss native	*Reference category*	*Reference category*
First generation immigrant	-0.405	-0.357
	(0.324)	(0.289)
Second generation immigrant (one parent)	0.262	-0.151
	(0.227)	(0.235)
Second generation immigrant (both parents)	0.116	-1.861***
	(0.362)	(0.720)
Male	*Reference category*	*Reference category*
Female	0.340**	-0.930***
	(0.164)	(0.150)
Age (standardized)	-0.0347	-0.200***
	(0.0865)	(0.0753)
German-speaking region	*Reference category*	*Reference category*
French-speaking region	0.534***	0.121
	(0.176)	(0.174)
Italian-speaking region	-0.0410	0.745**
	(0.434)	(0.321)
Rural area	*Reference category*	*Reference category*
Urban area	0.581***	-0.215
	(0.204)	(0.148)
First sample	*Reference category*	*Reference category*
Second sample	-0.133	0.224
	(0.222)	(0.192)
Third sample	-0.0974	0.0627
	(0.219)	(0.200)
Fourth sample	-0.140	-0.00501
	(0.222)	(0.202)
Constant	-3.967***	-3.058***
	(0.395)	(0.346)
Observations	5,318	5,318

Standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

3. Sensitivity analysis

The effect of the political orientation and party preference on occupational prestige ranking might, however, not be exogeneous as the labour market situation and, more precisely, the occupation of respondents could affect both sides of the equation simultaneously. Unfortunately, our data set at the individual level does not provide information on the occupation of respondents but includes several categorical variables on the labour market situation (self-employed, salaried, in training, househusband/-wife, out of employment), the sector of employment (20 categories, details available upon request), and the individual monthly income (less than CHF 6,000, between CHF 6,001 and CHF 10,000, and more than CHF 10,000). These variables were introduced in the previously discussed models in addition to the other variables. The results are visible in Table A6, in which Models 1 and 2 are the base models, models 3 and 4 new estimation of the base models including the labour market situation, and models 5 and 6 new estimation of the base models including the labour market situation, the sector of employment and the income. Despite a loss in statistical significance in the case of the interaction effects between the educational requirements of occupations and the political orientation of individuals in Models 4 and 6 (the lack of significance in the latter model being due to the much smaller sample excluding individuals without employment), the main results remain similar across the different specifications. Our main findings appear therefore to be reliable and not prone to any endogenous bias resulting from the omission of important controls.

Table A6. Sensitivity analyses

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Indpendent variables and interactions						
Average years of education	-0.215***	-0.132***	-0.211***	-0.116***	-0.0920	-0.0902
	(0.0313)	(0.0318)	(0.0349)	(0.0349)	(0.0664)	(0.0618)
Average years of education x political orientation	-0.0244***	-0.0111	-0.0242***	-0.0114	-0.0325***	-0.0150
	(0.00786)	(0.00729)	(0.00799)	(0.00739)	(0.0111)	(0.0107)
Average years of education x political orientation^2	0.00254***	0.00138**	0.00254***	0.00140**	0.00329***	0.00135
	(0.000762)	(0.000696)	(0.000771)	(0.000703)	(0.00107)	(0.00101)
Average years of education x left and centre-right parties	*Reference category*		*Reference category*		*Reference category*	
Average years of education x SVP	0.00313		0.00302		-0.0128	
	(0.0112)		(0.0113)		(0.0168)	
Average years of education x other PRWPs	0.0195		0.0213		0.0226	
	(0.0244)		(0.0246)		(0.0394)	
Average years of education x other	0.0326***		0.0332***		0.0472***	
	(0.0119)		(0.0120)		(0.0177)	
Strength		-0.0643***		-0.0599***		-0.0519***
		(0.00618)		(0.00695)		(0.0118)
Strength x political orientation		-0.00115		-0.00107		0.00198
		(0.00144)		(0.00146)		(0.00209)
Strength x political orientation^2		6.19e-05		4.97e-05		-0.000234
		(0.000133)		(0.000135)		(0.000192)
Problem-solving		0.0778***		0.0736***		0.102***
		(0.0142)		(0.0155)		(0.0261)
Problem-solving x political orientation		-0.000557		-0.000823		0.00377
		(0.00326)		(0.00328)		(0.00454)
Problem-solving x political orientation^2		0.000127		0.000151		-0.000337
		(0.000308)		(0.000310)		(0.000424)
Autonomy		-0.340***		-0.337***		-0.317***
		(0.0132)		(0.0142)		(0.0252)
Autonomy x political orientation		-0.00736***		-0.00663**		-0.00939**

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
		(0.00275)		(0.00278)		(0.00422)
Autonomy x political orientation^2		0.000545**		0.000486*		0.000901**
		(0.000259)		(0.000262)		(0.000391)
Additional controls at the individual level						
Labour market situation			X	X	X	X
Sector					X	X
Income					X	X
Observations	50,260	50,300	49,730	49,770	24,410	24,430
Number of groups	5,026	5,030	4,973	4,977	2,441	2,443

Robust standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Note: Only the interaction effects of interest are shown here.