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Political Trust and Job Insecurity in 18 European Polities

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Political Trust and Job Insecurity in 18 European Polities

Abstract: Several decades of trust research has confirmed that difficult national economic conditions help explain citizens' low levels of political trust. But research points to a much less important role for personal economic factors. The latter finding, it is argued, is a result of flawed survey questions and model misspecification. We actually know very little about the precise economic concerns that may generate low levels of trust and about the mechanisms via which they do so, resulting in a rather thin causal story. This paper seeks to address this lacuna, focusing on an issue of increasing importance in advanced economies: job insecurity.

Using individual-level data from 18 European polities at two different time points, the paper finds that job insecurity generates lower levels of trust in politicians, political parties and political institutions and lower levels of satisfaction with democratic performance. Importantly, job insecurity's effect does not diminish as one moves from specific to more diffuse objects of political trust, as previous research suggests it should. The paper also finds that the effect of job insecurity is exacerbated if citizens have negative perceptions of the performance of the wider economy. Finally, and drawing on the occupational psychology literature, the paper proposes a novel causal mechanism to link job insecurity to political trust. The intuition is that job insecurity violates a 'psychological-democratic' trust contract between workers and the state. The mechanism is consistent with the observed results. The paper thus contributes to both the empirical and theoretical debates on the linkages between political trust and economic performance.

Political Trust and Job Insecurity in 18 European Polities

Survey data suggest strongly that the relationship between citizens and government is fraught. Only 38 percent of the 30,000 citizens surveyed in 25 countries in Edelman's 2012 Trust Barometer said they trusted government to do what is right, an 11-point decline on the previous year. Forty six percent reported that they do not trust government leaders to tell the truth at all. In an even larger study by Gallup in 2005, only 13 percent of the 50,000 respondents across 68 countries said they trusted politicians. Political distrust is a worldwide phenomenon, found in mature democracies, emerging democracies and non-democracies alike. It is also a phenomenon that holds across genders, generations, races, religions and socio-economic groups (Edelman 2012; Gallup polls 2006-07; Hibbing and Theiss-Morse 2001; Norris 1999; Nye, Zelikow and King 1997; Pharr and Putnam 2000).

One of the key hypotheses posited by researchers to explain citizens' distrust of politicians, government and the state apparatus is that it is driven by the poor performance of political institutions, including legislatures (Feldman 1983; Hibbing and Theiss-Morse 1995; Keele 2007), executives (Citrin and Green 1986; Hetherington 1998; Keele 2005) and political parties (Dionne 1991; King 1997; Miller 1974a and b).

A related but narrower hypothesis is that low trust is driven by *economic* underperformance. This can be theorized and measured as actual, objective performance and/or perceptions of performance. While objective performance and perceptions both matter, the research base demonstrates that perceptions of economic performance are generally more important than objective performance criteria when seeking to explain differing levels of political trust across individuals (Dalton 2004:

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2
3 64-5, 75, 114-16; Lawrence 1997: 112-13; McAllister 1999). One reason why
4
5 perceptions may matter more is that they are very sensitive to minor shifts in
6
7 aggregate indicators such as growth rates and inflation and personal ones such as
8
9 changes in income (Dalton 2004: 115-16).
10

11 Performance can also be theorized and measured on narrow, personal or
12
13 egotistical criteria and/or on more general, national or sociotropic criteria. Previous
14
15 research again demonstrates that both matter, but not equally. Negative egotistical and
16
17 sociotropic economic evaluations both generate lower levels of political trust (Citrin
18
19 and Green 1986; Hetherington 1998; Mishler and Rose 2001), but perceptions of the
20
21 performance of the national economy are generally regarded as more important than
22
23 perceptions of one's personal financial situation (Dalton 2004: 116-18; Mishler and
24
25 Rose 2001).
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29 One problem with the conclusion that personal economic factors are, at best,
30
31 only moderately important predictors of political trust is that it based in large part on a
32
33 survey question long known to be a poor measure of individuals' changing economic
34
35 situation. Rosenstone and colleagues convincingly demonstrated that 'pinpointing the
36
37 connection between economic circumstance and political preference' by asking
38
39 respondents whether they and their families are 'financially...better off or worse off
40
41 than you were a year ago' is a 'perilous enterprise' because the question constraints
42
43 the response variance (1986: 177). The discipline's reliance on this and similar
44
45 questions should encourage scepticism about the robustness of empirical results that
46
47 downplay personal economic factors.
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51 A second problem regards the theoretical linkages between trust and personal
52
53 economic factors. Even if we could be confident that personal economic factors do, at
54
55 least to some extent, predict political trust, we do not know what factors people
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3 prioritize or even what criteria they employ when assessing their financial situation in
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5 response to a prompt by a survey question. Do they think about their level of income,
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7 changes in income, or income versus expenditure? Perhaps they think about the cost
8
9 of living, or houses they couldn't afford to buy, or changes at work that put their
10
11 employment and income at risk. We simply do not know. And because we don't, we
12
13 are left with a rather thin and unsatisfying theoretical understanding of the
14
15 relationship between the economy and trust. The discipline's broad survey questions
16
17 make it difficult to identify and test the mechanisms linking the two phenomena,
18
19 which are critical to developing a rich causal theory (Hedstrom 2008).
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23 Third, and most importantly, the failure of personal factors to do much heavy
24
25 lifting in our trust equations may simply be a consequence of model misspecification.
26
27 In other words, analysts may not have included in their models the financial and
28
29 economic factors that are of greatest concern to citizens. In the context of the ongoing
30
31 effects of the global financial crisis, Hacker and his colleagues (2012, 2013) have
32
33 made a persuasive call for researchers to reconsider the roll of personal economic
34
35 experiences and attitudes, and particularly economic insecurity, in shaping political
36
37 behaviour. They show that these experiences and attitudes, when properly
38
39 conceptualised and measured, play a significant role in determining citizens' attitudes
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41 towards the role of government.
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45 Other research, albeit limited in volume, supports Hacker's findings on the
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47 importance of insecurity. We know, for example, that in some cases the rise of
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49 populist political parties, especially on the right, is in part underpinned by increasing
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51 job insecurity. Populist political parties critique mainstream parties for ignoring
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53 workers' concerns about the deleterious effects of international economic integration,
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55 and the insecure respond by giving these parties their electoral support (Mughan,
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3 Bean and McAllister 2004; Mughan and Lacy 2002). Insecurity is also associated with
4
5 the size of, and support for, the welfare state. Countries that are most exposed to
6
7 international trade have bigger governments, probably because citizens demand
8
9 increased social insurance in response to the increased risk posed by economic
10
11 integration (Rodrik 1998). Most studies show that this holds at the individual level,
12
13 with citizens most exposed to insecurity most supportive of the welfare state (Hacker
14
15 et al 2013; Rehm 2009, 2010; Rehm, Hacker and Schlesinger 2012; but see Mughan
16
17 2007). Insecurity may even be one of the factors determining the changing pattern of
18
19 partisan attachment in the United States and in turn be responsible for the polarization
20
21 of American politics (Rehm 2010).
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25 In sum, the research base, although quite limited in volume, demonstrates that
26
27 economic insecurity, and particularly job insecurity, plays an important, and perhaps
28
29 increasingly important, role in structuring political attitudes and behaviour across a
30
31 range of polities. Scholarship also points to an important relationship between
32
33 economic underperformance and low levels of political trust. However, little extant
34
35 work has linked these two research agendas and explored the association between job
36
37 insecurity and political trust, despite important micro and macro economic
38
39 developments that have diminished workers' security (Iversen and Cusack 2000;
40
41 Rehm 2010; Rodrik 1998; Scheve and Slaughter 2001; Standing 2011) and evidence
42
43 that insecurity is at the forefront of employees' minds (OECD 1997: 129-160;
44
45 Pennycook et al 2013). The present paper seeks to address this omission. It tests the
46
47 proposition that job insecurity is associated with low levels of political trust, and finds
48
49 a statistically significant relationship. In a challenge to our existing understanding of
50
51 the economy-trust relationship, the empirical analysis further demonstrates that the
52
53 effect of insecurity on trust does not diminish as the objects of trust become less
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3 specific and more diffuse (Norris 1999). A final finding is that insecurity's effect is
4
5 exacerbated if citizens also have negative perceptions of the performance of the wider
6
7 economy. Building on the work of occupational psychologists, it also proposes a
8
9 novel causal mechanism to link job insecurity and political trust. The basic idea is that
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11 insecurity violates a psychological-democratic contract in which workers trust
12
13 political actors and institutions and support the democratic process and in return
14
15 expect security in employment. The mechanism is consistent with the observed
16
17 results. The paper thus contributes to the empirical and theoretical debates on the
18
19 linkages between political trust and economic performance.
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22
23 The paper proceeds in the following stages. First, it set outs what is meant by
24
25 job insecurity and political trust and introduces the causal mechanism linking the two.
26
27 It then discusses the data and methods that will be employed, before presenting the
28
29 results of the data analysis. It concludes with a discussion of the implications and
30
31 limitations of the main findings.
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33

34 35 36 **Defining Political Trust**

37
38 Political trust has been defined and measured in many different ways (Citrin and
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40 Muste 1999; Cook and Gronke 2005; see Hardin 2013 and Mollering 2013 for a
41
42 recent controversy and Levi and Stoker 2000 for a review). One influential definition
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44 conceives political trust as 'the degree to which people perceive that government is
45
46 producing outcomes consistent with their expectations' (Hetherington 2005: 9), but
47
48 survey respondents may have something else in mind when asked about the extent to
49
50 which they trust a particular political actor (Levi and Stoker 2000: 498-499).
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53
54 It is also important to recognize that trust is a multi-dimensional concept,
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56 which can be helpfully disaggregated into its component parts, such as trust in
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1
2
3 politicians, political parties and various political institutions. Other aspects include
4
5 satisfaction with democratic performance and support for democratic principles.
6
7 These various ‘objects of trust’ can then be arrayed on a dimension from the specific
8
9 to the diffuse (Easton 1965, 1975; Norris 1999). Previous work suggests that the
10
11 effects of economic factors—and, by implication, job insecurity—on political trust
12
13 atrophies as the object of support becomes more diffuse (Dalton 2004: 117-19). This
14
15 may be because the more specific measures tap how things are going now, which
16
17 citizens evaluate via the prism of economic performance generally (Cook and Gronke
18
19 2005: 795-6).
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21
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23 Distinguishing between the different objects of trust and support is also
24
25 important for the ‘so what?’ question (Citrin and Luks 2001). Generally speaking,
26
27 trust in politicians, political parties and institutions is low in most western
28
29 democracies, but support for regime principles and the political community is
30
31 considerably higher. Scholars have suggested that low levels of political trust in
32
33 politicians can be viewed with some degree of sanguinity, because voters can always
34
35 ‘throw the rascals out’ (Citrin 1974; Citrin and Green 1986). Low levels of support for
36
37 regime performance and principles, in contrast, would be a cause of greater concern
38
39 because it may threaten the foundations of democratic societies. Yet throwing the
40
41 rascals out has done little to increase trust in politicians, institutions or democratic
42
43 performance, and Miller’s (1974a and b) argument that distrust is more systemic and
44
45 worrisome looks increasingly pertinent.
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52 **Defining Job Insecurity**

53
54 As with political trust, there are many different definitions and measures of job
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56 security. Most have been developed by occupational psychologists who have
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2
3 documented its effects on workers' well-being (for overviews and definitional
4 discussions, see De Witte 1999, 2005 and Sverke et al 2002, 2006). But, at its core,
5 job insecurity refers to the threat of losing one's job (De Witte 2005: 1). It is not the
6 same as actual job loss, which is immediate and concrete. Most scholars regard it as a
7 subjective and perceptual phenomenon because different people may interpret the
8 same objective level of insecurity differently (Sverke et al 2006: 7). Some researchers
9 also incorporate affective, involuntary and qualitative aspects of job loss in their
10 definitions, but doing so poses problems of measurement operationalization (see
11 Ashford et al 1989 for an example).
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Instead, we follow Davy et al (1997: 323) and define job insecurity simply as
'one's expectations about continuity in a job situation' (see also De Witte 1999;
Heaney et al 1994; Mohr 2000; and Roskies et al 1993). This captures the cognitive
and subjective experience of the perceived insecurity of one's job—and it can thus be
theorized as an egocentric judgement—but note that it does not encompass the extent
to which people fear the prospect of losing their job or the extent of concern about
future employment prospects. Ideally, the definition and measurement of job
insecurity would tap such affective concerns, because insecurity is likely to have more
significant behavioural consequences when fear and concern are high, *ceteris paribus*.
However, and again, the available data do not facilitate the operationalization of these
aspects of insecurity.

Linking Job Insecurity and Political Trust

However job insecurity is defined and operationalized, research clearly demonstrates
that it matters. Some political consequences of job insecurity were noted in the
introduction, but it has also been shown to have important consequences for workers

1
2
3 and firms. It causes stress inside and outside the workplace and has important
4
5 negative effects on workers' job satisfaction, physical and mental health, general well-
6
7 being and life satisfaction (De Witte 2005; Sverke et al 2002; Sverke et al 2006). It
8
9 has important behavioural consequences for organizations, with insecure workers
10
11 performing worse and more likely to leave. Attitudinal consequences include lower
12
13 levels of commitment to, and trust in, employers (Sverke et al 2002). Ashford et al
14
15 (1989: table 3) identified a correlation of .5 ($p < .01$) between workers' job insecurity
16
17 and trust in their employer.¹ Sverke et al's meta-analysis identified a similar sized
18
19 effect for job insecurity on workers' trust in their firm and its managers (2002: tables
20
21 2 and 3). Indeed, job insecurity's effect on organizational trust was larger than on all
22
23 seven other identified outcomes.²
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27
28 This effect is particularly intriguing for the present study. Occupational
29
30 psychologists have suggested that job insecurity generates distrust in the firm because
31
32 it breaches the psychological contract between employee and employer. Psychological
33
34 contract theory identifies employees' perceptions of what they owe their employers
35
36 and what their employers in turn are perceived to owe them (Robinson 1996: 574;
37
38 Rousseau 1989). A key aspect in this perceived mutual obligation is that workers offer
39
40 firms their loyalty and expect to receive job security in return. Job insecurity thus
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47 ¹ Trust in the 'employing organization' was measured using a two-item scale, based
48
49 on responses to the following two questions: 'I trust this organization to look out for
50
51 my best interests' and 'I believe in the top management of this organization' (Ashford
52
53 et al 1989: 813).

54 ² They examined job security's effect on job satisfaction, job involvement,
55
56 organizational commitment, physical health, mental health, performance and turnover
57
58 intention, in addition to trust.
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3 violates the psychological contract, and workers respond by reducing their loyalty and
4
5 commitment to, and trust in, the firm (De Witte 2005: 3-4).
6

7
8 It is possible that a similar mechanism operates when workers think about
9
10 political affairs. Our intuition is that (at least some) workers perceive a
11
12 ‘psychological-democratic contract’ between themselves and the state, one aspect of
13
14 which is that they trust political actors and institutions and support democratic values
15
16 and expect job security in return. In this thinking, job insecurity violates the
17
18 psychological-democratic contract, and workers respond by reducing their political
19
20 trust. There are other types of insecurity (Hacker 2008), but job insecurity may be
21
22 particularly important to the psychological-democratic contract because work is
23
24 central to individuals’ perception of their self and their place and role in society.
25
26

27
28 Of course, the idea of contract between citizen and state is not new, and can be
29
30 traced back through Rawls, Kant, Rousseau, Locke and Hobbes, among others. But
31
32 discussion of the ‘social contract’ among political philosophers has focused largely on
33
34 questions of consent and obligation, and very little on the content of the contract,
35
36 especially as perceived by individual citizens. The social contract broadly defined
37
38 lacks analytical purchase when seeking to explain political trust, above and beyond
39
40 the idea that citizens are morally entitled to have certain expectations of the state and
41
42 have some obligations in return. The psychological-democratic contract, in contrast,
43
44 identifies one aspect of citizens’ expectations (security) and what happens when the
45
46 state is perceived to have failed (distrust). The psychological-democratic contract is
47
48 breached when citizens perceive their jobs to be insecure and perceive the state to be
49
50 at fault. The argument as to whether the state is actually able in a globalized economy
51
52 to protect citizens’ job security is to some extent moot; what matters is citizens’
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54 expectations of the state, not the state’s capacity to fulfil them.
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3 Psychological contract theory is additionally appealing because it can be
4 mapped onto existing broad-brush theoretical insights into the economy-trust nexus to
5 render a more fine-grained explanation. Previously, the main mechanism posited in
6 the literature between economics and political trust has been based on the following
7 logic: Democratic theory requires citizens to hold governments to account for their
8 performance, and economic management is a key performance criterion. At the
9 individual-level, economically-challenged citizens should have lower levels of
10 political trust because they blame government and other political authorities and
11 institutions for their (perceived) predicament. And at the aggregate level, political
12 trust will be low and/or decline when economic performance is poor (Clarke, Dutt and
13 Kornberg 1993: 1001; Keele 2007: 242). The additional insight of psychological
14 contract theory, or psychological-democratic contract theory as proposed here for the
15 first time, is that it grounds the breach of the democratic contract specifically in
16 workers' perceptions of their insecurity.
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34 One important detail, though, is left hanging. It is pertinent to ask what part of
35 the state will citizens blame if they feel their job is at risk? A priori, one intuition is
36 that it will differ across individuals and political systems. Management theorists and
37 occupational psychologists recognize that big firms are very complex organizations
38 with many divisions and layers of management, some crossing national boundaries
39 and even continents. Different employees may construct different micro psychological
40 contracts with different parts of the firm while striking a meta contract with the whole
41 (Anderson and Schalk 1998; Cullinane and Dundon 2006). A similar contract
42 structure may operate at the level of the political system. Within a single system—a
43 federal presidential system, say—some insecure citizens may blame the legislature
44 and others the executive, while other may blame state-level institutions. Parliamentary
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3 systems may encourage a different division of blame. And there will likely be
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5 differences even across parliamentary systems, as party systems, voting rules and
6
7 political cultures influence the attribution of blame for perceived contract breaches.
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10 Additional empirical work is required to address these questions, but extant
11
12 research at least suggests that perceived job insecurity, because it is an egotistical
13
14 assessment of one aspect of a citizen's financial situation, would likely have a larger
15
16 effect on the more specific political objects, such as trust in politicians and political
17
18 parties (Clarke and Kornberg 1989; Cook and Gronke 2005; Dalton 2004; McAllister
19
20 1999; Norris 1999). In this thinking, insecure workers should blame political
21
22 incumbents, their parties and possibly the political institutions they staff for their
23
24 predicament. Their insecurity should not, though, lead them to question their support
25
26 for the operation of democracy or other more diffuse objects of political support. On
27
28 the other hand, we know from the work of Kahneman and Tversky (1979) that
29
30 humans are loss averse; insecurity thus poses a significant threat to the basic human
31
32 instinct to preserve the status quo. A breach of the psychological-democratic contract
33
34 may therefore be regarded by some citizens as so serious as to merit system-level
35
36 consequences. If so, there are, then, good theoretical reasons to suppose that job
37
38 insecurity's effect will not atrophy as the object of political support moves from the
39
40 specific to the diffuse. This effect would, if observed, challenge our traditional
41
42 understanding of the economy-trust relationship.
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47 While this modified version of psychological contract theory posits an
48
49 intuitive connection between low political trust and job insecurity, it is impossible
50
51 given the existing data to observe and test the mechanism directly, and this paper does
52
53 not purport to do so. The aim here is, rather, to sketch out the mechanism and to offer
54
55 a plausible causal story, which future research may seek to develop theoretically and
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1
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3 test empirically. The best we can do is test whether the mechanism is compatible with
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5 the results generated by the analysis. The next section turns its attention to the
6
7 empirical correlation between job insecurity and political trust.
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10 11 **Insecurity and Trust: Explaining Individual-Level Differences**

12
13
14 To recap, we have two key hypotheses. The first is that job insecurity reduces
15
16 individuals' political trust. We test this across a range of objects of political trust. The
17
18 second, which is based on the proposed psychological-democratic contract
19
20 mechanism and poses a challenge to the conventional wisdom, is that the effect of
21
22 insecurity will not diminish as the object of political trust becomes more diffuse.
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27 Data and Variables

28
29 This study's data sources are Round 2 (2004) and Round 5 (2010) of the multinational
30
31 European Social Survey. The two data sets contain information about respondents'
32
33 job security and political trust. To facilitate comparisons between the two time points,
34
35 the data analysis is restricted to countries that appear in both ESS rounds, yielding a
36
37 total of eighteen nations: Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France,
38
39 Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Slovakia,
40
41 Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.³
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43
44

45 The countries range from the economically advanced old democracies of north
46
47 western Europe, through the relatively new Mediterranean democracies to very new
48
49 democracies of the old Eastern bloc. Some are geographically small while others are
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51 vast. Some have tiny populations and others large ones. Many are very wealthy but
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56 ³ Estonia and Portugal featured in both rounds but were excluded from the analysis
57
58 because of missing data.
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3 some are struggling. Some have been relatively sheltered against recent economic
4 upheavals in Europe while others are desperately exposed. Some have extensive
5 welfare safety nets while others provide only the most basic protections against want,
6 disease, ignorance, squalor and idleness, as Beveridge famously described the ‘giant
7 evils’ of modern society. The wide cross-national focus and the two time points allow
8 us to make broad and robust generalizations about individual-level relationships.
9 These results are not sui generis, specific to one or a few nations, but reveal important
10 individual-level relationships that operate across different economies, cultures and
11 political systems over time.
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23 Because political trust is a multi-dimensional phenomenon, we follow Norris
24 (1999) and utilize five separate dependent variables to measure citizens’ trust. From
25 the specific to the diffuse, the five are trust in politicians, political parties, parliament
26 and the legal system, and satisfaction with the way democracy works. Unfortunately,
27 the ESS surveys do not include questions about Norris’s two most diffuse objects of
28 political support—regime principles (such as support for the democratic values) and
29 the political community (pride in nation and national identity)—but the variables
30 included here can nonetheless be distinguished by the extent of their diffuseness and
31 permit the two hypotheses to be tested.
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43 All the dependent variables are scored on 11-point scales with 0 representing
44 no trust at all or extremely dissatisfied and 10 meaning complete trust or extremely
45 satisfied.⁴ The equations were estimated with both OLS and ordinal regressions, but
46 for ease of interpretation and presentation only the former are reported here.⁵
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52 ⁴ ‘Please tell me on a score of 0-10 how much you personally trust each of the
53 institutions I read out. 0 means you do not trust an institution at all, and 10 means that
54 you have complete trust: the [country’s] parliament; the legal system; politicians;
55 political parties.’ ‘And on the whole, how satisfied are you with the way democracy
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3 Job insecurity, defined above as ‘one’s expectations about continuity in a job
4 situation’ (Davy et al 1997: 323), is measured using a question that asks respondents
5 whether the statement that ‘my job is secure’ is not at all true, a little bit true, quite
6 true or very true. The variable is scored on a four-point scale, with low scores
7 representing lower levels of job security. This simple, single-item operationalization
8 of job insecurity draws on previous work in psychology (De Witte 1999; Mohr 2000;
9 Roskies et al 1993; Wanous et al 1997) and political science (Mughan 2007; Mughan,
10 Bean and McAllister 2004: 628-9; Mughan and Lacy 2002; Scheve and Slaughter
11 2004). It is worth noting, however, that single-item measures are less likely to deliver
12 strong correlations than multi-item scales (Sverke et al 2002: 247, 257), but it is not
13 possible to construct a comprehensive multi-item measure using ESS data.
14
15 Operationalizing job security using a single-item measure is inherently conservative,
16 at risk of a type II rather than type I error, but in consequence we can be more
17 confident that the forthcoming analysis will not generate false positives.

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34 The analysis also includes a number of control variables. While some trust
35 scholars play down the effect of income on political trust (Dalton 2004: 64-5, 75, 114-

36 works in [your country]?’ where 0 means extremely dissatisfied and 10 extremely
37 satisfied.

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44⁵ Formally, as the dependent variable is ordinal rather than cardinal, an ordinal
45 regression procedure such as ordered probit is more appropriate than OLS. We thus
46 compared the base model (with no interactions) from an OLS and from an ordered
47 probit and found, first, that the relative size and significance of all coefficients was
48 similar in both models and, second and more importantly, the estimated thresholds
49 were spaced equally, suggesting any inconsistencies with OLS would be very small.
50 We thus decided to retain the OLS model as this facilitates the easy use and
51 interpretation of interaction terms, which are problematic to operationalize in non-
52 linear models.
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3 6; McAllister 1999), it is necessary to include it here because income is likely to
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5 moderate the effect of insecurity on trust, with higher earners more secure in their
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7 employment and better insulated against the negative consequences of job loss than
8
9 lower earners (Rehm 2009, 2010; Rehm, Hacker and Schlesinger 2012; Sverke et al
10
11 2006: 10). The model includes a measure of each household's total net income (after
12
13 tax and compulsory deductions) from all sources. To address the problem of differing
14
15 income levels across nations, the variable divides each household's income into one
16
17 of ten country-specific deciles. The poorest ten percent in Slovakia are coded the
18
19 same as the poorest ten percent in Norway and Germany, even though their objective
20
21 income levels differ dramatically.
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24
25 It is common when modelling determinants of political support to control for
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27 education, and it is particularly important in this case because skill levels rise with
28
29 years of education, and skills, *ceteris paribus*, offer protection against and
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31 opportunities in the internationalized economy (Walter 2010; Sverke et al 2006: 10).
32
33 The better educated should face lower levels of job insecurity, and will thus have
34
35 higher levels of political trust than those with less education. Moreover, it is important
36
37 to control for education to guard against a spurious relationship between trust and
38
39 insecurity, because education is likely to have independent direct effects on both
40
41 political support and job insecurity. Education is measured by years of full-time
42
43 education completed.
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47 The model also includes a variable that measures respondents' perceptions of
48
49 the wider economy, which are statistically significant in most existing trust research.
50
51 And, of course, it is important to include sociotropic evaluations as a control to avoid
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53 the job insecurity variable being contaminated by concerns about the perceived
54
55 performance of the wider economy. The variable measures the extent to which
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3 respondents are satisfied with the present state of the economy in their country on an
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5 11-point scale, with low scores representing dissatisfaction.
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7 While income, education and sociotropic economic evaluations are included as
8 controls, it was suggested above that the effect of job insecurity may be conditional on
9 the level of each of these variables. The consequences of losing one's job are likely to
10 be more severe for the poorly educated and the poor and when the wider economy is
11 performing poorly. The ill-educated and the indigent are particularly exposed to the
12 vagaries of the modern, internationalized labour market, because many of their jobs
13 have been outsourced or are in some way threatened, while a poorly performing
14 national economy makes it more difficult to find a good new job. To accommodate
15 these possible conditional effects, the model is rerun with three additional variables
16 that explore the potential interactions between job insecurity and income, education
17 and the wider economy. The details are set out below.
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32 Controls for age and gender are also included in the models. The data are
33 weighted to ensure that each country's sample is a true representative sample of its
34 wider population. The data are also weighted to account for population size. This is
35 important when analyzing multiple countries simultaneously. Failing to weight for
36 size would result in skewed estimates, with smaller countries over-represented.⁶
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44 ⁶ The unweighted sample sizes for each country in 2004 are: Belgium 1,778; Czech
45 Republic 3,026; Demark 1,487; Finland 2,022; France 1,806; Germany 2,870; Greece
46 2,406; Hungary 1,498; Ireland 2,286; Netherlands 1,881; Norway 1,760; Poland
47 1,716; Slovakia 1,512; Slovenia 1,442; Spain 1,663; Sweden 1,948; Switzerland
48 2,141; and United Kingdom 1,897. And for 2010: Belgium 1,704; Czech Republic
49 2,386; Demark 1,576; Finland 1,878; France 1,728; Germany 3,032; Greece 2,715;
50 Hungary 1,561; Ireland 2,576; Netherlands 1,829; Norway 1,549; Poland 1,751;
51 Slovakia 1,856; Slovenia 1,403; Spain 1,885; Sweden 1,497; Switzerland 1,506; and
52 United Kingdom 2,422.
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Analysis

a. Descriptive Statistics

Before proceeding to the multivariate analysis, it is instructive to examine the mean levels of political support for each of the five dependent variables by country and collectively. Table 1 reports the relevant statistics for 2004 and 2010. Reflecting Norris's (1999) findings, the weighted averages in the last rows show that political trust generally increases as one moves from specific to more diffuse objects. Politicians and political parties, the most political of Norris's regime institutions, are the least trusted. Parliaments are more highly trusted. Legal systems, the least political of Norris's regime institutions, are the most trusted. Finally, more people than not are satisfied with the operation of democracy across the 18 nations at both time points.

[Table 1 about here]

The mean of the means columns provide an easy way to compare political trust across countries and are used to rank each nation. The Nordic countries of Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden generally top the trust league in 2004 and 2010. The other old democracies of north western Europe (Belgium, France, Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands, Switzerland and the United Kingdom) are in the middle of the league, although Switzerland stands out as a high trusting country within this group. The Mediterranean polities of Spain and Greece, both suffering economic privation and themselves not long out of dictatorship, join the former Eastern bloc countries (Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia) at the bottom.

Comparing the two time points, political trust has on average fallen slightly on four of the five dimensions (and increased only in legal systems), although this

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3 conceals some notable increases in support in Poland, Sweden, Norway and the
4 Netherlands, and some substantial falls in Greece, Spain and Ireland (see final column
5 in the 2010 results in table 1 for change in mean scores over time). Unsurprisingly,
6 given the economic and political turmoil wrought by its sovereign debt crisis and the
7 austerity that followed, the collapse in political trust in Greece is particularly steep,
8 declining by 50 percent from 4.67 points to 2.31 points (on an 11-point scale) and
9 catapulting it from a mid-table position to last in the league.

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18 *b. Multivariate Base Model*

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20 Table 2 reports the results of the initial multivariate analysis on the 2004 and 2010
21 data. The model includes job insecurity and five control variables. It is run ten times,
22 once for each of the five measures of political trust at both time points. The coding of
23 these variables is described above and summarized in the table. The model is a fixed
24 effects model and includes 17 dummy variables, one for each of the countries
25 included in the analysis, with Germany excluded as the reference.⁷ The dummies
26 control for unobserved country-specific factors—such as macroeconomic conditions
27 and political culture—that may be correlated with the variables in regression. The
28 coefficients and statistics for job security and the control variables thus measure
29 individual-level within-country variation and not differences between countries.⁸ For

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44 ⁷ Multilevel modelling is neither necessary nor appropriate in this case. It is not
45 necessary because the fixed effects model generates robust estimates for reasons
46 stated in the main text and accompanying footnotes. It is not appropriate because
47 econometric analysis suggests strongly that at least 50 level 2 (country) observations
48 are required (Maas and Hox 2005; Clarke et al 2010 provide an excellent discussion
49 of the relative merits and demerits of fixed effects and multilevel approaches), and
50 also because the analysis seeks to control cross-national heterogeneity, not explain it.

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56 ⁸ The fixed effects model is also robust to the issue that unobserved factors may be
57 correlated strongly within countries. Failure to control for this potential correlation
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3 presentational reasons, the country dummies' coefficients and statistics are not
4
5 included in the tables, but are available on request. As noted above, the equations
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7 were estimated using both OLS and ordinal regression, but for ease of interpretation
8
9 and presentational clarity only the OLS results are reported and discussed here.
10

11 [Table 2 about here]
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14 The results confirm the first hypothesis. Job insecurity is statistically
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16 significant in all five 2004 equations, and the coefficients are correctly signed.
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18 Individuals with higher levels of perceived job security are more trusting of
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20 politicians, political parties, parliament and the legal system and more satisfied with
21
22 the operation of democracy than individuals who think their job is at risk. Job
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24 insecurity is also statistically significant and correctly signed in four of the five 2010
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26 equations. It is correctly signed in the trust in parliament equation but falls outside
27
28 generally recognized bounds of significance.
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32 But what of the size of job insecurity's effect across the different objects
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34 political trust? Contrary to expectations generated by previous research, but
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36 confirming the second hypothesis, its effect does not diminish as one moves from
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38 specific to more diffuse support. Indeed, in 2004 its effect is largest on trust in legal
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40 systems, theorized here as the least political regime institution. And in 2010 its effect
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42 is largest on satisfaction with the operation of democracy, our most diffuse object of
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44 support. This finding offers tentative support for the idea that job insecurity violates a
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46 psychological-democratic contract in which workers trust political actors and
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48 institutions and have faith in the democratic system so long as they deliver adequate
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50 security in return.
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55 could bias the estimates of the standard errors, even if these unobserved factors are
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57 uncorrelated with any of the regressors.
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3 More broadly, the size of job insecurity's effect does not change markedly
4 across the different measures and objects of political trust and both time points,
5 hovering around .05 on average. In other words, a one unit increase on the four-point
6 job insecurity scale would produce a .05 unit increase on the eleven point political
7 trust scales.
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14 Education and sociotropic economic evaluations are statistically significant (at
15 $p < .001$) and correctly signed in all ten equations across the two time points, with
16 better educated individuals and those more positive about the wider economy having
17 higher levels of political trust. Income is correctly signed and statistically significant
18 in three of the 2004 equations and four of the 2010 equations. When it comes to the
19 size of the effects, most notable is the contribution of perceptions of the wider
20 economy to political trust. Because both sociotropic evaluations and political support
21 are scored on 11-point scales, the unstandardized B coefficients are easily
22 interpretable. If everyone in the 18 countries moved from being completely
23 dissatisfied with their nation's economic performance to completely satisfied in 2010,
24 trust in politicians would have been 41 percentage points higher and satisfaction with
25 democratic performance 47 points higher, averaging across the range of the other
26 variables. Sociotropic evaluations are by far the most important factor determining
27 political trust in this model.
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45 Still, the importance of the sociotropic evaluations does not undermine the fact
46 that job insecurity is also statistically significant. Across a wide range of political
47 systems and cultures and two time points, citizens who perceive their jobs to be
48 insecure exhibit lower levels of political trust than those who are more confident
49 about their job security. Moreover, the effect of insecurity does not diminish as one
50 moves from specific to more diffuse trust objects.
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3 *c. Base Model plus Interaction Terms*
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5 The coefficients and statistics for job insecurity in the multivariate base model
6 represent its average effect across the average levels of the other independent
7 variables. However, job insecurity's effect may vary across the levels of the other
8 variables. As discussed above, there is good reason to suppose that it may be
9 conditional on citizens' level of income, education and sociotropic economic
10 evaluations. Job insecurity is likely to hit the lower paid and less educated harder than
11 the better paid and educated, and those who are pessimistic about the wider
12 economy's performance may worry about job security more than those who are
13 positive about the economy. The base model was thus rerun with three interaction
14 terms to capture the extent to which income, education and the wider economy
15 condition the effect of job insecurity on political trust.⁹
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29 [Table 3 about here]
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32 The relevant statistics for the interaction model are recorded in table 3. The
33 data analysis returns 30 interaction coefficients across the three variables, five
34 equations, and two time points. Only one coefficient (job security x education in the
35 democracy equation) is statistically significant ($p=.034$) in the 2004 data. In this case,
36 the slope of political support on job security will decrease by .011 for every additional
37 year in education. In other words, job insecurity is less important as a predictor of
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48 ⁹ The three interaction terms were constructed using mean-centred variables. The
49 coefficients represent simple conditional effects, not main or average effects as per the
50 base model. See Brambor, Clark and Golder (2005) and Jaccard and Turrisi (2003) for
51 discussions about variable coding and coefficient interpretation in interaction models.
52 The base model above was run separately to the interaction term model in order to
53 first facilitate a clear interpretation of job insecurity's average effects, before
54 proceeding to explore the product terms' effects.
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3 political support when education is high and more important when it is low. The
4
5 inference is that education helps guard against the risks associated with job insecurity.
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8 In the 2010 data, education significantly moderates the effect of job insecurity
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10 in the parties equation and income is a statistically significant moderator in the
11
12 democracy equation, but these moderators are otherwise insignificant. A much clearer
13
14 pattern emerges with sociotropic economic evaluations. The job security x economic
15
16 evaluations interaction term is statistically significant in the politicians, parties,
17
18 parliament and democracy equations. The negative signs on the coefficients reveal
19
20 that perceptions of job insecurity increase in importance as a predictor of political
21
22 trust as evaluations of the wider economy worsen. And the coefficients themselves
23
24 estimate the change in the slope of political trust on job insecurity given a unit
25
26 increase in evaluations of the wider economy. For example, the slopes of both trust in
27
28 parliament and satisfaction with the operation of democracy on job insecurity are
29
30 estimated to decrease by .029 when sociotropic economic evaluations increase by one
31
32 unit.
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36 [Figure 1 about here]
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39 However, it is important to note that this effect pertains only when economic
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41 evaluations and the other control variables are at their means. To calculate the change
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43 in the slope of political trust on job insecurity at other levels of economic evaluations,
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45 the regression equation is rerun with evaluations centred at appropriate levels of
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47 interest—here at the maximum and minimum values and at one standard deviation
48
49 above and below the mean (see Jaccard and Turrisi 2003: 31-32). Figure 1 displays
50
51 the marginal effects of job insecurity on political trust at different levels of economic
52
53 evaluations. The regression lines are positive (and statistically significant—see
54
55 appendix for details) when people are dissatisfied with the wider economy but flatten
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3 out as economic perceptions improve and, relatedly, the vertical distance between the
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5 regression lines is narrower at higher levels of job security and wider at lower levels.
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7 This means that job insecurity matters more as a predictor of political trust when
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9 people are both insecure about their employment and simultaneously feel negatively
10
11 about the wider economy.
12

13 14 15 16 **Discussion**

17
18 At a time of great economic transition, scholars are only just beginning to scratch the
19
20 surface of the political effects of job insecurity. This paper is one of the first to
21
22 explore one aspect of this relationship—that is, job insecurity’s effects on political
23
24 trust—in an empirical manner and comparative perspective. It has tested the effect of
25
26 job insecurity across different objects of political trust, two time points and eighteen
27
28 countries. That job insecurity was significant across all objects of trust and time points
29
30 in the aggregated country analysis suggests that the causal connection is pretty robust.
31
32 We can say with some confidence that job insecurity causes individuals to be less
33
34 trusting of politicians, political parties, parliament and the legal system across a wide
35
36 variety of polities.
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40 Job insecurity also leads people to be less satisfied with the operation of the
41
42 democracy. This finding challenges previous work (Clarke and Kornberg 1989; Cook
43
44 and Gronke 2005; Dalton 2004; McAllister 1999; Norris 1999) that suggests that the
45
46 effects of personal economic dislocation should dissipate as the object of political
47
48 trust becomes more diffuse and less obviously political.
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51 The paper provides some first tentative support to the idea that (at least some)
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53 workers enter into a psychological contract not just with their employers (De Witte
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55 2005: 3-4; Robinson 1996: 574) but with the state, in which the state is expected to
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3 provide job security and is rewarded with political trust. When the state is perceived
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5 to have reneged on that contract, trust declines. While the empirical results are
6
7 consistent with this interpretation of the mechanism linking perceived insecurity to
8
9 political trust, this process could not be observed directly. Of course, this is not
10
11 unusual in the social sciences, wherein causal mechanisms are frequently theorised
12
13 but rarely observed (Hedstrom 2008). Future work could perhaps utilize experimental
14
15 methods as a way to reveal some of the undoubtedly complex causal processes linking
16
17 job insecurity and other likely predictors to low levels of political trust, thus enriching
18
19 our understanding of these important relationships.
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23 That job insecurity has a significant effect on workers' evaluations of the
24
25 operation of democracy should prick the ears of politicians and political scientists.
26
27 Absent any serious efforts to protect workers and their families—perhaps in the form
28
29 of expanded welfare safety nets, greater protection against arbitrary dismissal or
30
31 concerted attempts to up-skill vulnerable workers—the early years of the twenty-first
32
33 century could witness a further decline in political support, not just in trust in
34
35 politicians and political and non-political institutions but also in satisfaction with the
36
37 way democracy functions. It raises the spectre that a contemporary downturn in job
38
39 security could possibly threaten the democratic foundations of post-industrial
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41 societies. Consider again the results of the interaction model. The interaction of job
42
43 insecurity and perceptions of the wider economy was not statistically significant in
44
45 any of the five 2004 models, a time when most European economies were performing
46
47 quite well. In 2010, as these same economies struggled with sovereign debt crises,
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49 stagnant or shrinking economies, high unemployment and austerity policies, the same
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51 product term was statistically significant across four objects of political trust,
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53 including the operation of democracy.
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3 To be sure, the analysis could not test the impact of insecurity on Norris's
4 most diffuse objects of political support. The requisite data are not available. Further
5 efforts at data collection may wish to address this, because the potential consequences
6 are important. We now know that job insecurity is having a negative effect on
7 citizens' evaluations of politicians and institutions and how well democracy is
8 working, but it could possibly also threaten their commitment to democratic values
9 and the wider political community.
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18 Further globalization, deindustrialization, technological change and de-
19 unionization will all likely increase the labour market insecurity of some individuals
20 (Iversen and Cusack 2000; Rehm 2010; Rodrik 1998; Scheve and Slaughter 2001;
21 Standing 2011) and therefore lead directly to a further decline in aggregate levels of
22 political trust. And the effects of job insecurity will likely be even greater in poorly
23 performing economies because of the interaction between insecurity and perceptions
24 of the health of the national economy.¹⁰ Until now, it is possible that the negative
25 effects of job insecurity on political trust may have been mitigated to some extent by
26 global economic growth, with insecurity traded off against increased wealth. But that
27 equilibrium may no longer hold. Political trust is at the mercy of job insecurity,
28 economic performance and their interaction. Exhibit A is of course Greece, but
29 similar trends can be observed in Spain and Ireland (see table 1), and possibly
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45 ¹⁰ According to ESS data, job security declined between 2004 and 2010 by 23
46 percentage points in Ireland and, from a lower base, 18 points in Greece and Portugal.
47 But it is likely that job insecurity has grown and political trust fallen since the ESS
48 collected its data in 2010. The Eurozone crisis peaked in mid 2012. The huge IMF and
49 ECB loans taken on by Greece, Spain, Portugal, Ireland, Italy and others and the
50 accompanying austerity programs have exacerbated already difficult economic
51 conditions (Peston 2013).
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3 Portugal, Italy and elsewhere, where economic retrenchment continues and even
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5 worsens in response to the global financial crisis.
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8 One question left hanging in the present paper is whether job insecurity can
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10 help explain fluctuations in political trust over time. The empirical analysis found that
11
12 individual-level differences in insecurity translate into different levels of political trust
13
14 across individuals, but could the increase in insecurity that many analysts argue has
15
16 accompanied the global integration of national economies be responsible for the
17
18 decline in political trust that appears to have affected most democratic polities? The
19
20 trust literature has demonstrated that subjective perceptions—and objective indicators
21
22 to a lesser extent—of personal and general economic performance are statistically
23
24 significant predictors of over-time trends in trust. However, the size of the effects
25
26 were often found to be modest. In part, this is because the economy has an
27
28 asymmetrical relation to trust. When economic times are bad, trust takes a big hit, but
29
30 it does not recover when times are good (Clarke and Kornberg 1989: 262-3;
31
32 Hetherington and Rudolph 2008). Following this logic, increasing job insecurity,
33
34 especially if accompanied by worsening sociotropic economic conditions, may drive
35
36 political trust down, but improving job security and economic conditions may not help
37
38 trust recover. However, it is very difficult to test such a proposition. It is outside of the
39
40 remit of this short paper and future research may be constrained by the lack of good
41
42 data. Cross-sectional surveys frequently provide a wide range of variables to enable
43
44 analysts to explore individual-level differences in detail, but the same variables are
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46 rarely available over a longer time period. It is even rarer that the same people are
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48 asked the same questions over time, even though such panel studies are one of the
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50 best ways to explore change over time and to make robust causal inferences. And it is
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3 rarer still that the panels are cross-national in character. Given the importance of the
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5 questions at hand, better data are clearly required.
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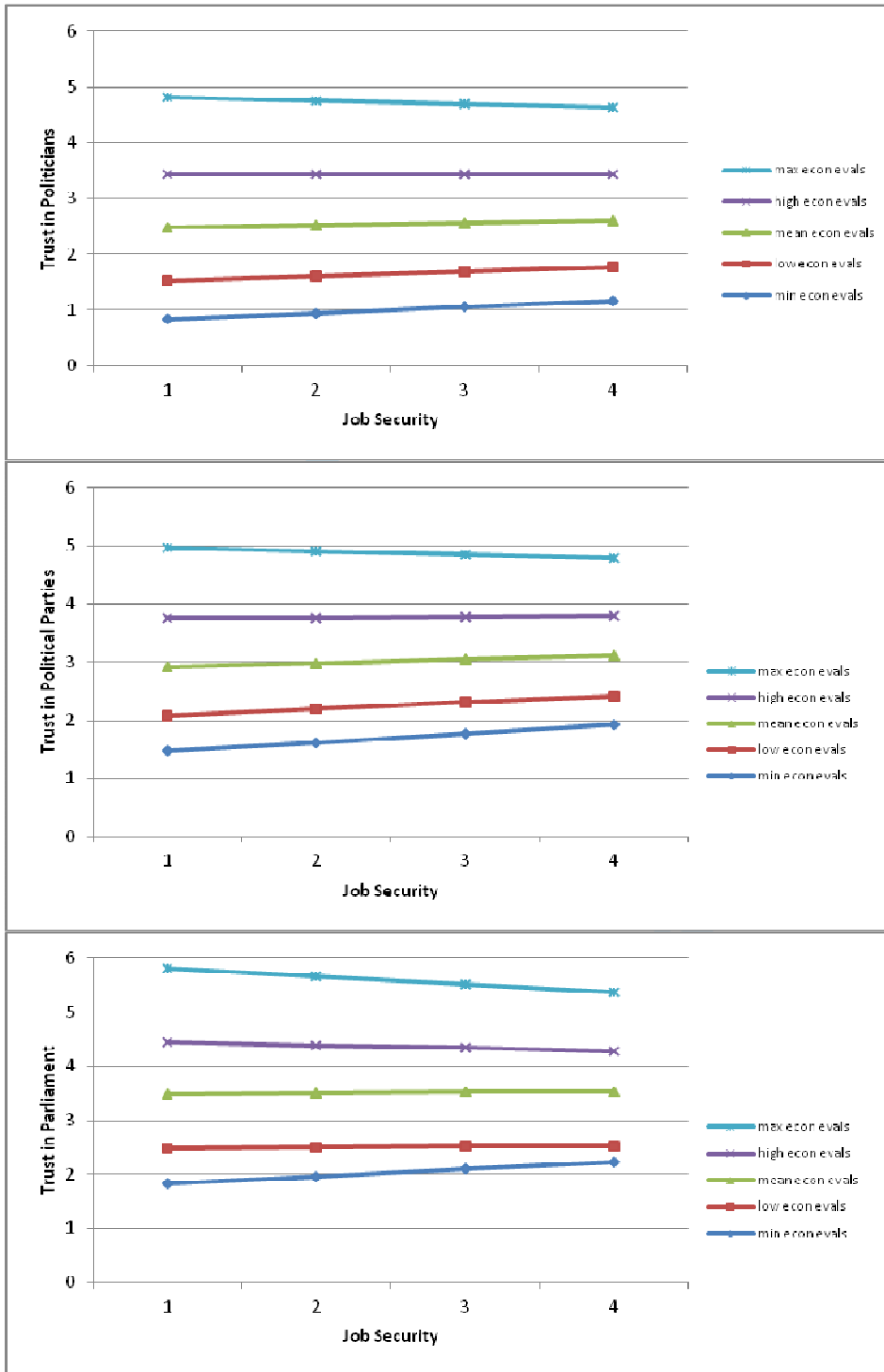
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Appendix

Marginal Effects: Job Security on Political Trust at Various Levels of Sociotropic Economic Evaluations

1. Job Security on Trust in Politicians					
Economic Evaluations	Intercept	B1 Job Security (SE)	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Minimum	.725	.110 (.034)	.001	.044	.176
Low (1SD < mean)	1.455	.081 (.024)	.001	.034	.128
Average (at mean)	2.444	.041 (.019)	.027	.005	.078
High (1SD > mean)	3.434	.001 (.027)	.959	-.051	.054
Maximum	4.868	-.056 (.048)	.244	-.151	.038
2. Job Security on Trust in Political Parties					
Economic Evaluations	Intercept	B1 Job Security (SE)	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Minimum	1.317	.150 (.033)	.000	.084	.215
Low (1SD < mean)	1.969	.113 (.024)	.000	.066	.160
Average (at mean)	2.853	.064 (.018)	.001	.027	.100
High (1SD > mean)	3.737	.014 (.027)	.598	-.038	.066
Maximum	5.017	-.058 (.048)	.226	-.151	.036
3. Job Security on Trust in Parliament					
Economic Evaluations	Intercept	B1 Job Security (SE)	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Minimum	1.693	.135 (.036)	.000	.064	.205
Low (1SD < mean)	2.456	.018 (.007)	.014	.003	.032
Average (at mean)	3.468	.016 (.020)	.417	-.023	.055
High (1SD > mean)	4.490	-.052 (.029)	.069	-.108	.004
Maximum	5.971	-.151 (.051)	.003	-.252	-.050
4. Job Security on Trust in Legal System					
Economic Evaluations	Intercept	B1 Job Security (SE)	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Minimum	3.759	.078 (.037)	.037	.005	.151
Low (1SD < mean)	4.407	.058 (.027)	.029	.006	.111
Average (at mean)	5.286	.031 (.021)	.128	-.009	.072
High (1SD > mean)	6.165	.005 (.030)	.874	-.054	.063
Maximum	7.438	-.034 (.053)	.524	-.139	.071
5. Job Security on Satisfaction with Operation of Democracy					
Economic Evaluations	Intercept	B1 Job Security (SE)	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Minimum	2.421	.157 (.036)	.000	.086	.227
Low (1SD < mean)	3.278	.106 (.026)	.000	.055	.156
Average (at mean)	4.440	.037 (.020)	.066	-.002	.076
High (1SD > mean)	5.603	-.032 (.029)	.263	-.089	.024
Maximum	7.288	-.132 (.052)	.011	-.234	-.031

Figure 1. Marginal effect of job security on political trust at different levels of sociotropic economic evaluations, 2010 data



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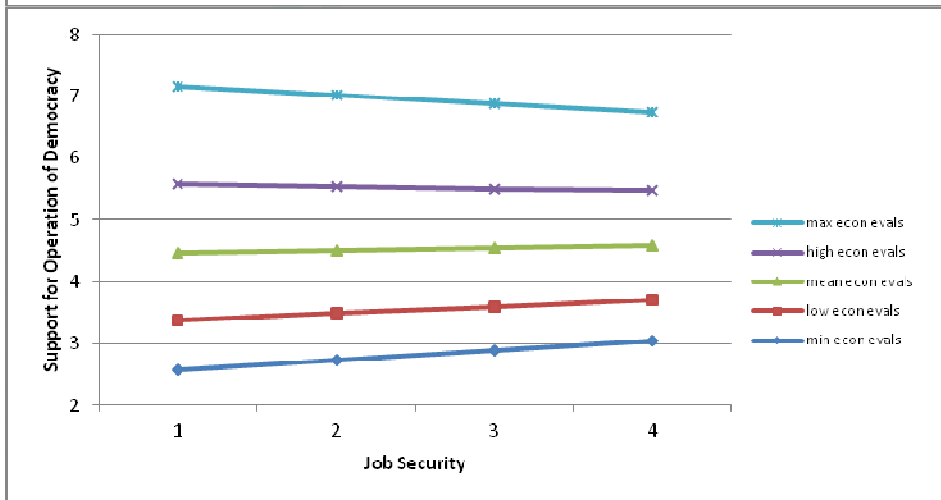
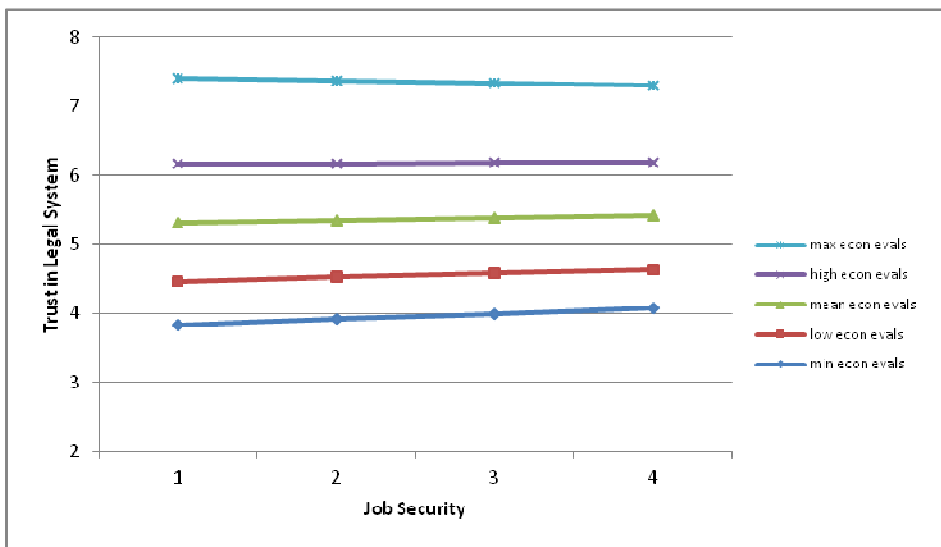


Table 1. Political Trust Mean Scores, 2004 and 2010, Ranked by Mean of the Means

2004	Politicians	Political Parties	Parliament	Legal System	Op. of Dem.	Mean of the Means
1. Denmark	5.59	5.65	6.29	7.21	7.31	6.41
2. Finland	4.88	5.00	6.01	6.90	6.70	5.90
3. Switzerland	4.77	4.64	5.52	6.14	6.39	5.49
4. Norway	4.24	4.34	5.42	6.35	6.23	5.32
5. Sweden	4.19	4.40	5.35	5.77	5.91	5.12
6. Netherlands	4.69	4.80	4.67	5.50	5.66	5.06
7. Belgium	4.24	4.29	4.68	4.83	5.56	4.72
8. Ireland	3.92	3.97	4.71	5.21	5.73	4.70
9. Greece	3.59	3.51	4.69	5.38	6.19	4.67
10. Spain	3.68	3.67	5.09	4.72	6.07	4.65
11. UK	3.59	3.68	4.29	5.12	5.14	4.36
12. Germany	3.23	3.18	4.21	5.54	5.28	4.29
13. France	3.51	3.39	4.27	4.76	4.85	4.16
14. Slovenia	3.10	3.21	4.13	3.85	4.54	3.76
15. Hungary	2.68	2.71	3.63	4.43	4.10	3.51
16. Czech Rep.	2.73	2.74	3.19	3.72	4.63	3.40
17. Slovakia	2.53	2.66	3.05	3.58	3.84	3.13
18. Poland	1.92	1.89	2.40	3.01	3.70	2.58
Weighted Average	3.43	3.43	4.26	4.94	5.20	4.25

2010	Politicians	Political Parties	Parliament	Legal System	Op. of Dem.	Mean of the Means	Change '04→'10
1. Denmark	5.04	5.17	5.83	7.35	6.94	6.07	-.34
2. Sweden	5.04	5.11	6.28	6.53	6.75	5.94	.82
3. Norway	4.94	4.93	6.02	6.85	6.93	5.93	.61
4. Switzerland	5.01	4.81	5.80	6.28	7.07	5.79	.30
5. Netherlands	5.25	5.26	5.37	5.89	6.18	5.59	.53
6. Finland	4.43	4.54	5.38	6.91	6.26	5.50	-.40
7. Belgium	3.86	3.85	4.46	4.93	5.20	4.46	-.26
8. Germany	3.37	3.36	4.31	5.68	5.31	4.41	.12
9. UK	3.43	3.52	4.11	5.24	4.97	4.25	-.11
10. Ireland	3.11	3.07	3.68	5.10	4.94	3.98	-.72
11. France	3.21	3.09	4.15	4.94	4.24	3.93	-.23
12. Hungary	3.12	3.15	4.22	4.64	4.42	3.91	.40
13. Spain	2.74	2.71	4.29	4.41	5.10	3.85	-.80
14. Poland	2.66	2.55	3.44	4.26	5.04	3.59	1.01
15. Czech Rep	2.62	2.69	3.28	4.14	4.85	3.52	.12
16. Slovakia	2.78	2.71	3.20	3.52	4.17	3.28	.15
17. Slovenia	2.25	2.24	2.98	3.08	3.20	2.75	-1.01
18. Greece	1.35	1.37	2.04	3.83	2.98	2.31	-2.36
Weighted Average	3.33	3.31	4.22	5.11	5.06	4.21	-.04

Political trust mean scores scored on 0-10 scale, with zero representing no trust at all (in politicians, political parties, parliament and the legal system) or extremely dissatisfied (with the operation of democracy) and ten representing complete trust or extremely satisfied. Ns vary by country and object of political support

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Table 2. Explaining Political Trust Across 18 European Countries, 2004 and 2010

	Politicians		Political Parties		Parliament		Legal System		Operation of Democracy	
	2004	2010	2004	2010	2004	2010	2004	2010	2004	2010
	B (St. Err.)	B (St. Err.)	B (St. Err.)	B (St. Err.)	B (St. Err.)	B (St. Err.)	B (St. Err.)	B (St. Err.)	B (St. Err.)	B (St. Err.)
Constant	.733 (.133) ^{***}	.100 (.126)	1.304 (.132) ^{***}	.880 (.125) ^{***}	1.074 (.142) ^{***}	.599 (.135) ^{***}	2.908 (.150) ^{***}	2.739 (.140) ^{***}	2.467 (.139) ^{***}	1.546 (.136) ^{***}
Age (in years)	.005 (.002) ^{**}	.006 (.002) ^{***}	-.002 (.002)	-.001 (.002)	.010 (.002) ^{***}	.005 (.002) ^{**}	.003 (.002)	.001 (.002)	.001 (.002)	.002 (.002)
Gender (Female=1)	.060 (.037)	.084 (.036) [*]	.051 (.037)	.068 (.035)	-.083 (.040) [*]	-.070 (.038)	.010 (.042)	-.019 (.040)	-.005 (.039)	-.021 (.038)
Education (in years)	.031 (.006) ^{***}	.032 (.005) ^{***}	.022 (.006) ^{***}	.018 (.005) ^{***}	.075 (.006) ^{***}	.055 (.006) ^{***}	.062 (.006) ^{***}	.058 (.006) ^{***}	.041 (.006) ^{***}	.032 (.006) ^{***}
Household income (low to high in deciles)	.019 (.010)	.016 (.008) [*]	.009 (.010)	.004 (.008)	.033 (.011) ^{**}	.057 (.008) ^{***}	.037 (.012) ^{***}	.028 (.009) ^{***}	.037 (.011) ^{***}	.050 (.008) ^{***}
Job security (low to high, 4 pt scale)	.069 (.018) ^{***}	.044 (.018) [*]	.057 (.018) ^{***}	.061 (.017) ^{***}	.050 (.019) ^{**}	.023 (.019)	.074 (.020) ^{***}	.045 (.019) [*]	.050 (.019) ^{**}	.064 (.019) ^{***}
Sociotropic economic evaluations (dissatisfied to satisfied, 11 pt scale)	.422 (.010) ^{***}	.414 (.009) ^{***}	.394 (.009) ^{***}	.369 (.009) ^{***}	.429 (.010) ^{***}	.427 (.010) ^{***}	.364 (.011) ^{***}	.367 (.010) ^{***}	.521 (.010) ^{***}	.485 (.010) ^{***}
Adjusted R ²	.276	.272	.272	.262	.297	.258	.254	.221	.326	.291
N	10,310	11,612	10,268	11,604	10,270	11,575	10,301	11,609	10,260	11,583

***p<.001, **p<.01, *p<.05 (2-tail tests)

B cell entries are unstandardized OLS regression coefficients in a fixed effects model (seventeen country dummies included in model, but not shown, with Germany excluded as reference). Standard errors in parentheses. Dependent variables scored on 0-10 scale with zero representing no trust at all and ten representing complete trust, except for operation of democracy where zero represents extremely dissatisfied and ten represents extremely satisfied. See main text for question wording for all variables

Table 3. Explaining Political Trust Across 18 European Countries, 2004 and 2010, Including Interaction Terms

	Politicians		Political Parties		Parliament		Legal System		Operation of Democracy	
	2004	2010	2004	2010	2004	2010	2004	2010	2004	2010
	B (St. Err.)	B (St. Err.)	B (St. Err.)	B (St. Err.)	B (St. Err.)	B (St. Err.)	B (St. Err.)	B (St. Err.)	B (St. Err.)	B (St. Err.)
Constant	3.234 (.087)***	2.444 (.081)***	3.488 (.86)***	2.853 (.081)***	4.169 (.092)***	3.468 (.087)***	5.665 (.098)***	5.286 (.091)***	5.570 (.091)***	4.440 (.088)***
Age (in years)	.005 (.002)**	.006 (.002)**	-.002 (.002)	-.001 (.002)	.010 (.002)***	.005 (.002)**	.003 (.002)	.001 (.002)	.001 (.002)	.002 (.002)
Gender (Female=1)	.060 (.037)	.081 (.036)*	.052 (.037)	.064 (.035)	-.082 (.040)*	-.074 (.038)	.011 (.042)	-.020 (.040)	-.005 (.039)	-.024 (.038)
Education (in years)	.031 (.006)***	.032 (.005)***	.022 (.006)***	.018 (.005)***	.076 (.006)***	.055 (.006)***	.063 (.006)***	.057 (.006)***	.042 (.006)***	.031 (.006)***
Household income (low to high in deciles)	.019 (.010)	.016 (.008)*	.009 (.010)	.005 (.008)	.033 (.011)**	.058 (.008)***	.037 (.012)***	.028 (.009)***	.036 (.011)***	.050 (.008)***
Job security (low to high, 4 pt scale)	.074 (.019)***	.041 (.019)*	.063 (.019)***	.064 (.018)***	.060 (.020)**	.016 (.020)	.081 (.022)***	.031 (.021)	.063 (.020)**	.037 (.020)
Sociotropic economic evaluations (dissatisfied to satisfied, 11 pt scale)	.422 (.010)***	.414 (.009)***	.394 (.009)***	.370 (.009)***	.429 (.010)***	.428 (.010)***	.363 (.011)***	.368 (.010)***	.520 (.010)***	.487 (.010)***
Job security x Education	.001 (.005)	-.005 (.005)	.000 (.005)	-.011 (.005)*	-.007 (.005)	-.004 (.005)	-.003 (.006)	.005 (.005)	-.011 (.005)*	.009 (.005)
Job security x Income	-.010 (.008)	.007 (.007)	-.009 (.008)	.009 (.007)	-.005 (.008)	.009 (.007)	-.008 (.009)	.009 (.008)	-.002 (.008)	.018 (.008)*
Job security x Socio economic evaluations	.005 (.008)	-.017 (.007)*	.000 (.008)	-.021 (.007)**	-.004 (.009)	-.029 (.008)***	-.010 (.009)	-.011 (.008)	-.005 (.008)	-.029 (.008)***
Adjusted R ²	.276	.272	.272	.262	.297	.258	.254	.221	.326	.292
N	10,310	11,612	10,268	11,604	10,270	11,575	10,301	11,609	10,260	11,583

***p<.001, **p<.01, *p<.05 (2-tail tests)

B cell entries are unstandardized OLS regression coefficients in a fixed effects model (seventeen country dummies included in model, but not shown, with Germany excluded as reference). Standard errors in parentheses. Dependent variables scored on 0-10 scale with zero representing no trust at all and ten representing complete trust, except for operation of democracy where zero represents extremely dissatisfied and ten represents extremely satisfied. See main text for question wording for all variables. Education, income, job security and sociotropic economic evaluations are mean centered. See main text for question wording for all variables