

Intergenerational Social Mobility and Support for Democracy: A Multilevel and Cross-National Analysis

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“CULTURAL AND ECONOMIC CHANGES UNDER CROSS-NATIONAL PERSPECTIVE”

ST. PETERSBURG – 10-14 NOVEMBER 2014

Background

Social mobility literature

- Normative concerns
- What about the consequences?

Existing research

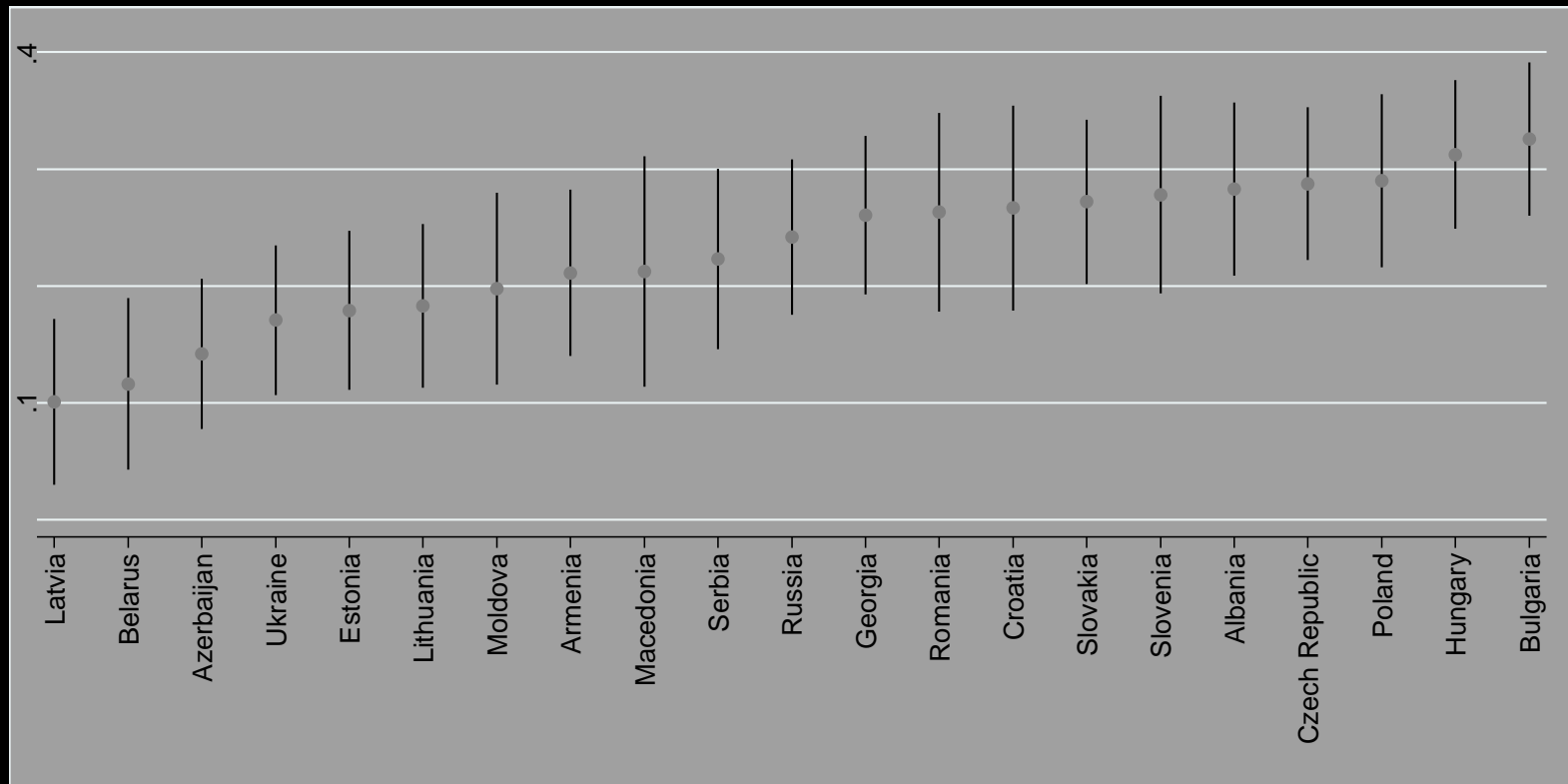
- Redistribution
- Delinquency, etc

Support for democracy literature

- Income inequality



Intergenerational ISEI associations in post-socialism



Mobility => democracy?

- Regimes deriving their legitimacy from social mobility
- Mobility can facilitate social moderation and integration
- Autocracies could employ “equality of opportunities”
- Process of democratization

Research questions

Micro-level

- Are there any differences in attitudes toward existing political system between mobile and non-mobile individuals?

Macro-level

- Is the role of social mobility in attitudes toward political system conditioned by contextual differences between countries?

Determinants of political attitudes

Economic theory (Downs 1957)

Expressive theory (Heath et al. 1985)

Social disruption generated by the mobility process

- Mobile are minority
- Conflicting worldviews form origin and destination classes
- Downwardly mobile are less keen to accept new identity

Existing evidence

Blau and Duncan (1967)

- The stability of American democracy is *'undoubtedly related to the superior chances of upward mobility in this country'* (p.439)

Most studies find small or no effect of social mobility

Wrong dependent variables?

- Votes cast for the right or left
- Political party preferences
- Life satisfaction

Micro-level hypothesis

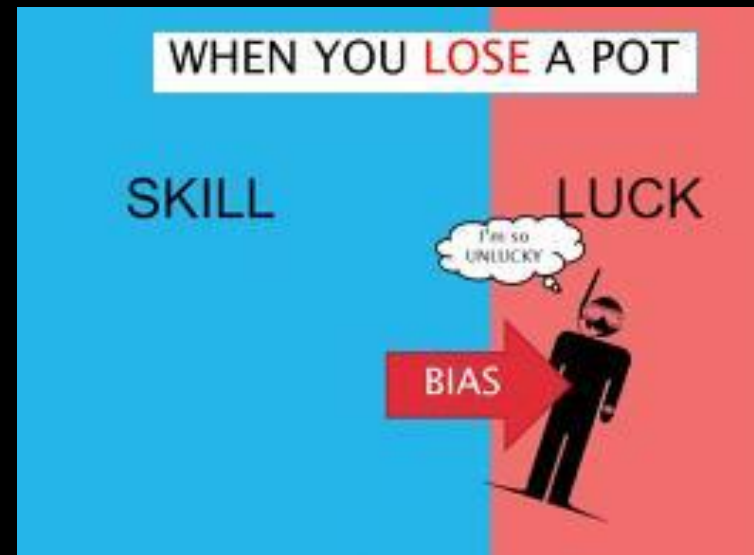
Causal attribution

- The process by which social perceivers arrive at causal explanations for their own, as well as others' behaviours'

Success attributed to controlled factors



Failure attributed to uncontrolled factors



Micro-level hypothesis

Self-serving bias and mobility

- Upwardly mobile individuals tend to overestimate individuals' role
- Democracy almost by definition implies more opportunities and individual choice

Bias, mobility and democracy

- Macro-structural models
- More reason to support or oppose political system

H1: Upward (downward) social mobility positively (negatively) associates with support for democratic political order

Macro-level hypothesis

Mobile individuals may experience strong attachment to pre-existing political order

- Success is associated with the existing system—no matter how democratic
- Attachment to the society not to abstract political concept

Macro-level hypothesis

H2: Support for democracy among upwardly mobile individuals in comparison to non-mobile group is stronger in countries with higher levels of democratic development

Research design

Dataset

European Values Study (EVS) 2008

Western welfare democracies

- AT, BE, CY, DK, FI, FR, DE, GR, IS, IR, IT, LU, MT, NE, NO, PO, ES, SE, CH, GB, and NIR

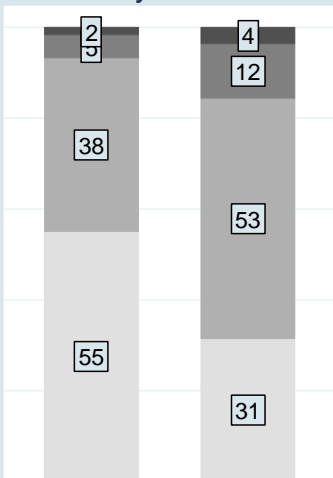
Post-socialist societies

- AL, AZ, AR, BH, BG, BY, CR, CZ, ES, GE, HU, LT, LI, MD, MO, PO, RO, RU, SE, SK, SL, UA, MA, and KS

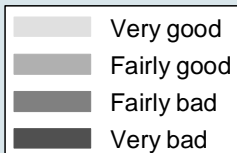
About 1,500 respondents per country

EVS questions on democracy

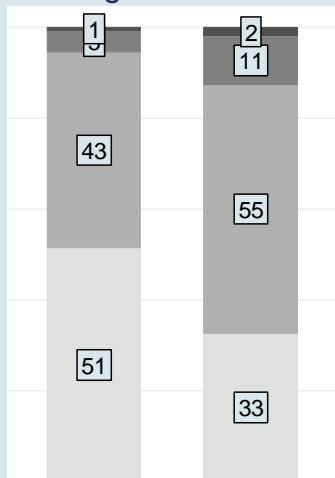
Having a democratic political system



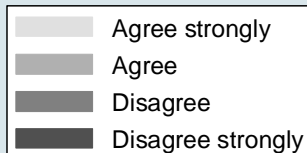
Established Democracies Post-socialist societies



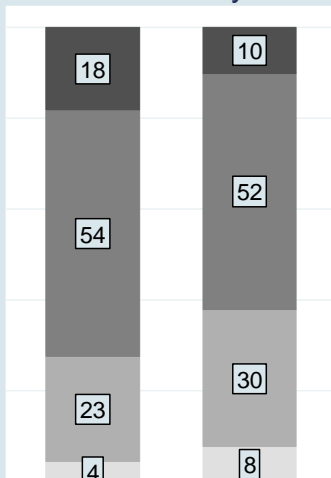
Democracy is better than any other form of government



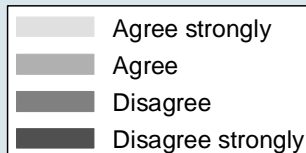
Established Democracies Post-socialist societies



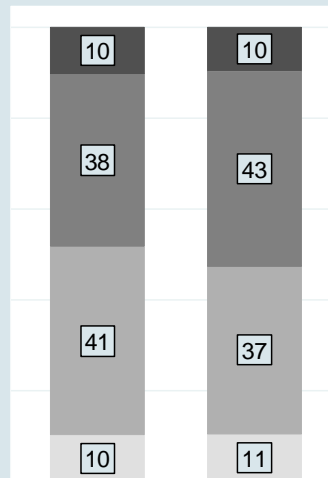
In democracy, the economic system runs badly



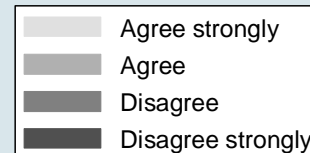
Established Democracies Post-socialist societies



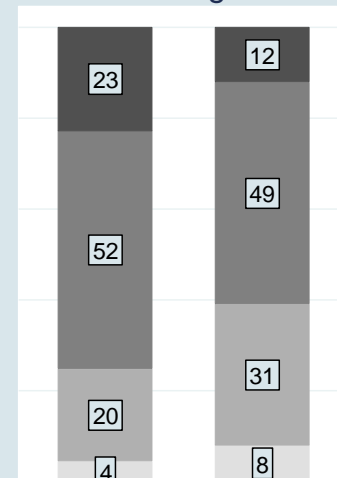
Democracies are indecisive and have too much



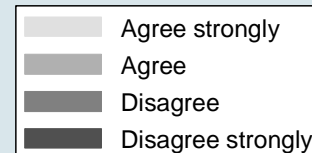
Established Democracies Post-socialist societies



Democracies aren't good at maintaining order



Established Democracies Post-socialist societies



Dependent variables

Factor analysis

- 2 questions - Alpha of .64 in West and .57 in East
- 3 questions – 2nd factor (Alpha=.75 and .78)

Factor 1 and Factor 2 (Easton 1975)

- Diffuse support (a general and long-term evaluation)
- Specific support (an immediate and short-term evaluation)

Independent variables

Socio-Economic Index of Occupational Status (ISEI)

- Parents= 39.1 (West) and 37.0 (East)
- Respondents = 43.2 (West) and 42.3 (East)

Social mobility = Respondents ISEI – Parental ISEI

- Mean mobility=4.5 (W) and 6.5 (E)

Controlling for social origin and destination

- 5-class Erikson-Goldthorpe (EGP) schema
- Education (ISCED 0-2, 3-4, and 5-6)

Controls

Main controls

- Gender
- Age
- Marital status
- The size of settlement
- Religious denomination
- Labor market status

Robustness checks

- + Monthly household incomes
- + Religiosity

Contextual variables

The democracy index of the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU)

- Varies from 0 to 10
- W=8.8 and E=6.4

Further macro variables

- Economic development – GDP per capita PPP
- Income inequality – Net Gini coefficients from SWIID

Methods

Multilevel mixed-effects linear regressions

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Support for democracy}_{ij} = & \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{ Intergenerational change in ISEI}_{ij} + \chi \text{ Social origin}_{ij} \\ & + \lambda \text{ Destination}_{ij} + \gamma \text{ Socio-demographic and economic controls}_{ij} \\ & + U_{0j} + U_{1j} \text{ Intergenerational change in ISEI}_{ij} + \varepsilon_{ij} \end{aligned} \quad (\text{I})$$

+ Contextual variables and interactions

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Support for democracy}_{ij} = & \overbrace{\text{Model I}} + \varphi_1 \text{ democracy}_j + \varphi_2 \text{ economic development}_j \\ & + \varphi_3 \text{ inequality}_j \\ & + \sum_{l=1}^3 \eta_l (\text{Intergenerational change in ISEI}_{ij} * [\gamma_1 \text{ econ. development}_j \\ & + \gamma_2 \text{ inequality}_j + \gamma_3 \text{ democracy}_j]) \end{aligned} \quad (\text{II})$$

Preliminary results

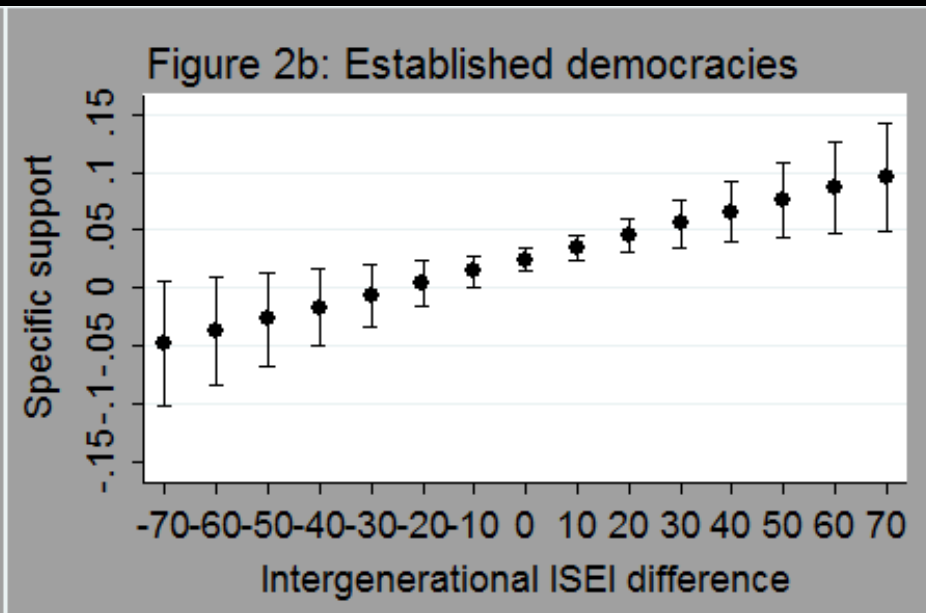
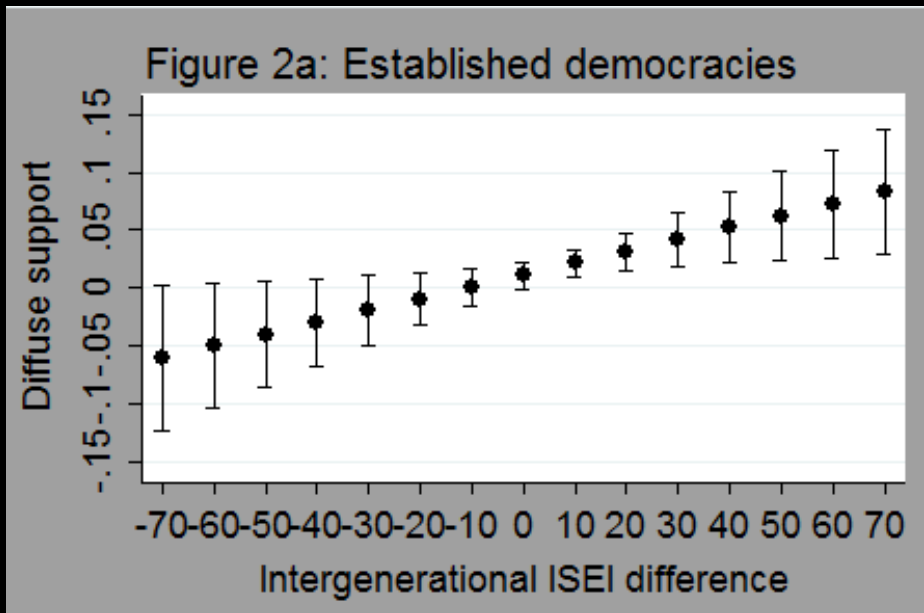
Mixed-effect regressions for Western democracies

	Diffuse support		Specific support	
	Model 1a	Model 2a	Model 1b	Model 2b
Intergenerational change in ISEI	0.0020***	0.0012***	0.0020***	0.0010***
Respondent's education				
Primary education	–	–0.0937***	–	–0.0606***
Tertiary education	–	0.1603***	–	0.1549***
Respondent's social class				
White-collar	–	–0.0121	–	0.0257
Petty bourgeoisie	–	–0.0870**	–	–0.0237
Skilled workers	–	–0.1071***	–	–0.0513*
Non-skilled workers	–	–0.0778**	–	–0.0405
Origin + other controls	–	++	–	++
Random-effects				
Intercept	0.2380	0.2107	0.1958	0.1783
Statistics				
ICC*100	9.599	7.808	8.652	7.690
N of observations/countries	16,556/21	14,857/20	16,556/21	14,857/20

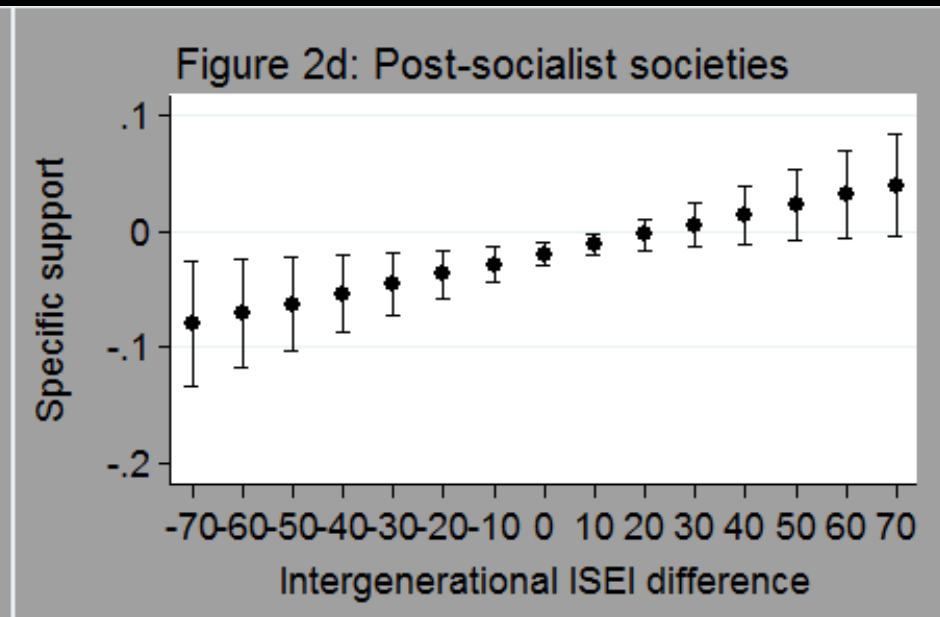
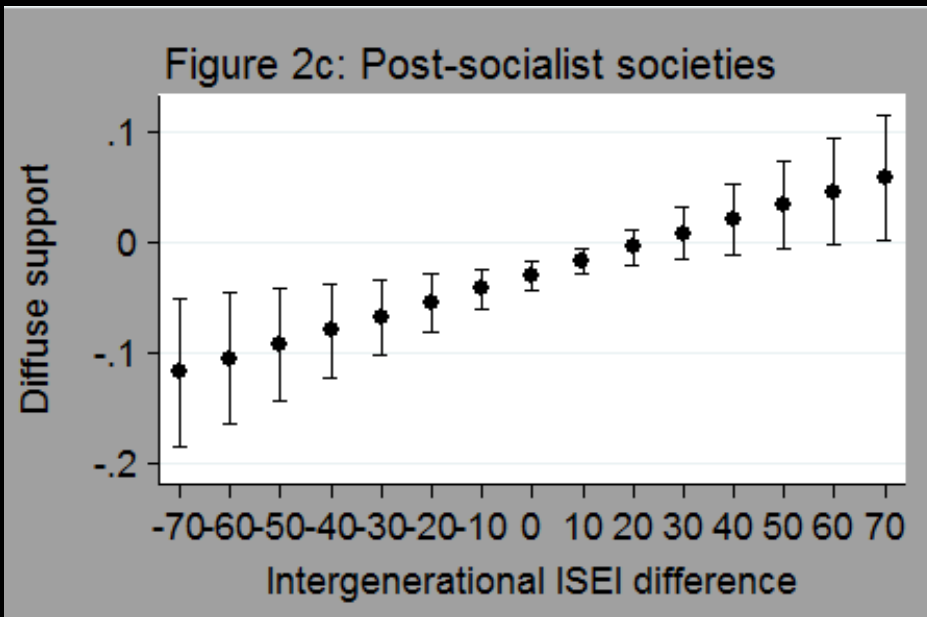
Mixed-effect regression for post-socialist societies

	Diffuse support		Specific support	
	Model 3a	Model 4a	Model 3b	Model 4b
Intergenerational change in ISEI	0.0010***	0.0009**	0.0014***	0.0009**
Respondent's education				
Primary education	–	–0.0522**	–	–0.0628***
Tertiary education	–	0.1184***	–	0.0736***
Respondent's social class				
White-collar	–	0.0550*	–	–0.0147
Petty bourgeoisie	–	0.0655*	–	–0.0412
Skilled workers	–	0.0382	–	–0.0599**
Non-skilled workers	–	0.0096	–	–0.0720***
Origin + other controls	–	++	–	++
Random-effects				
Intercept	0.2281	0.2125	0.1416	0.1379
Statistics				
ICC*100	7.916	7.192	5.236	5.083
N of observations/countries	15,531/ 24	15,056/ 24	15,531/24	15,056/24

Linear predictions in Western democracies



Linear predictions in post-socialist societies



Robustness checks

- Controls +
- More conservative samples
- ‘Ceiling’ and ‘floor’ effects
- Only downward / only upward
- Specific trajectories – quartiles of origin and destination

Conclusions

- Intergenerational social mobility associates with support for democracy
- The effect is small but statistically significant

Caveats

- Theoretical framework
- Descriptive findings
- The small scale of the effect
- European societies might be selected?

Further steps

- Theoretical framework further elaborated
- Using also data on subjective social mobility
- Causal links explored in longitudinal panel data (SOEP, POLPAN?)
- Looking on the trends in other context (with ISSP data?)

P.S.: Testing macro-level hypothesis

H2: Support for democracy among upwardly mobile individuals in comparison to non-mobile group is stronger in countries with higher levels of democratic development

Contextual factors in Western welfare democracies

	Model 5a	Model 6a	Model 7a	Model 5b	Model 6b	Model 7b
Fixed effects						
Contextual factors						
EIU dem index	0.0893**	–	–	0.0225	–	–
GDP ppp per capita	–	0.0072	–	–	0.0351	–
Net Gini coefficient	–	–	–0.0811*	–	–	–0.0478
Interaction effects						
ISEI change * Dem	0.0001	–	–	0.0003	–	–
ISEI change * GDP	–	0.0003	–	–	0.0004	–
ISEI change * Gini	–	–	–0.0006	–	–	–0.0005
Random effects						
Intercept	0.1955	0.2143	0.1974	0.1779	0.1756	0.1720
Change in ISEI	0.0014	0.0014	0.0012	0.0007	0.0007	0.0006
Percent explained	2.1%	2.9%	13.5%	1.64%	9.97%	22.03%
Statistics						
ICC*100	6.798	8.058	6.927	7.675	7.493	7.209
Deviance	32,393	32,397	32,392	27,681	27,680	27,678
O/countries	14,743/19	14,743/19	14,743/19	14,743/19	14,743/19	14,743/19

Contextual factors in post-socialist societies

	Model 5a	Model 6a	Model 7a	Model 5b	Model 6b	Model 7b
Fixed effects						
Contextual factors						
EIU dem index	-0.0740*	–	–	-0.0184	–	–
GDP ppp per capita	–	-0.0688	–	–	-0.0528*	–
Net Gini coefficient	–	–	0.0333	–	–	0.0371
Interaction effects						
ISEI change * Dem	0.0004	–	–	0.0005**	–	–
ISEI change * GDP	–	-0.0001	–	–	0.0002	–
ISEI change * Gini	–	–	-0.0002	–	–	-0.0005**
Random effects						
Intercept	0.1820	0.2018	0.1922	0.1379	0.1287	0.1337
Change in ISEI	0.0004	0.0005	0.0005	5.78e-07	0.0004	5.50e-06
Percent explained	22.69%	1.73%	3.34%	99.87%	8.36%	98.73%
Statistics						
ICC*100	6.798	8.058	6.927	7.675	7.493	7.209
Deviance	32,393	32,397	32,392	27,681	27,680	27,678
Obse/countries	14,743/19	14,743/19	14,743/19	14,743/19	14,743/19	14,743/19

Democracy, inequality and specific support for democracy

