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Economic foundations of sociocultural politics:

How new left and radical right voters think about inequality

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Abstract

Opposition between the far right and the new left has transformed West European politics, mainly through increasing sociocultural conflicts. We ask what the new cleavage articulated by these parties implies for the politicization of inequalities in advanced knowledge societies. We contrast two diverging expectations in existing literature: A first, more rational-choice-based perspective expects a trade-off, with new left voters "privileged" by economic transformations emphasizing sociocultural inequalities over socioeconomic ones–and vice versa for "disadvantaged" far right voters. A second, more sociological perspective, predicts attitudes on inequalities to be aligned along a single dimension from new left "universalists" being inequality-averse to right-wing "particularists" being more inequality-tolerant. Our evidence based on original survey data from Germany supports the second perspective. Studying the structural (educational, class, etc.) foundations of inequality aversion suggests that even the transformed (new) left electorate is more sensitive to all dimensions of inequality than voters on the (far) right.

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1 Introduction

Opposition between the far right and the new left – primarily over sociocultural conflicts, matters of identity, and the boundaries of community – has transformed the politics of advanced democracies. The divide mobilized by these parties is often viewed as having displaced more traditional conflict over economic inequality. Yet, the electoral successes of the far right and its antagonism with the new left are intrinsically linked to manifold inequalities in advanced knowledge societies. There is ample and still growing evidence that the rise of this political divide is linked to socio-structural electoral constituencies that mirror the development of opportunities and threats in the knowledge society: education is one of the strongest predictors of new left versus radical right voting (e.g. Kriesi et al., 2008; Bornschier, 2010; Hooghe and Marks, 2018; Hobolt and de Vries, 2020), individual perceptions of economic prospects and opportunities relate directly to support for these two party families (Häusermann, Kurer, and Zollinger, 2022; Kurer, 2020), and the voters of new left and radical right parties even self-identify with terms associated with the increasing redistribution and re-evaluation of both economic and cultural sources of status and capital (Bornschier et al., 2021; Zollinger, 2022).

This paper asks how the new cleavage articulated by the far right versus the new left relates to the contested importance and legitimacy of inequality on various dimensions. (New) "identity politics" are sometimes seen to have displaced (old) "class politics", but the key question is whether and how a new cleavage inflects or incorporates the politicization of different types of inequalities. Which inequalities are relevant in the eyes of far right versus new left voters? Does the universalism-particularism cleavage also entail conflict over which inequalities societies should address, or does it encompass a more fundamental divide over accepting versus rejecting social hierarchies and stratification more generally?

These questions are all the more important because, in advanced democracies, inequalities and/or their politicization have increased tremendously along several dimensions. On the

one hand, knowledge societies are characterized by increasing demand for a highly skilled workforce in the growing service sector (e.g. Powell and Snellman, 2004; Hall, 2022; Wren, 2013; Garritzmann et al., 2021). Skill- and task-biased technological change, as well as liberalizing reforms have lead to a massive increase in income and wealth inequality, especially at the top end of the distribution (e.g. Piketty and Saez, 2014; Huber, Huo, and Stephens, 2019). Economic inequality has become a mega-topic in both scholarly and political debate and many suggested the emergence of the radical right might be interpreted as a backlash against the formation of economic, social, and cultural elites in a context of increasing inequality (e.g. Piketty, 2020; Burgoon et al., 2019; Engler and Weisstanner, 2021; Baccaro, Blyth, and Pontusson, 2022; Hopkin and Voss, 2022). However, inequalities have also become politicized along other dimensions than income and wealth (and more overtly so in far right versus new left opposition): structural sociocultural inequalities based on gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, race, or migration status have become important topics of electoral contention, both in parties' discourse and in voters' concerns (e.g. Kriesi et al., 2012; Norris and Inglehart, 2019; Gidron and Hall, 2017).

Against this backdrop, we contrast two perspectives on what the rise of a new cleavage implies for the politicization of inequality. On the one hand, some claims in the literature and public debate suggest that the emerging cleavage between the new left and the radical right may indeed coincide with a divide over the perception of relevant inequalities: the constituencies of new left and green parties (highly educated voters, middle-class, well-endowed with economic and cultural capital, etc.) supposedly emphasize the political relevance of social inequalities (gender, migration, sexual orientation) more strongly, while the constituencies of the radical right (lower-educated voters, working class, etc.) discount social inequalities and care relatively more about economic ones (e.g. Manow, 2018; Mudge, 2018; Berman, 2006, 2019; Piketty, 2020). Such a divergence in perceptions could indeed imply that sociocultural inequalities "crowd out" economic ones politically, at the expense of voters from lower social strata. In

part, this is a rational-choice-based view on who can supposedly "afford" to be concerned with sociocultural inequalities.

However, we so far have no empirical evidence on whether there is indeed such a trade-off in the relative importance attributed to different types of inequalities by far right and new left voters. Indeed, there is a competing theoretical view on how a new cleavage relates to inequality perceptions. This alternative, more political-sociological approach conversely suggests that the politicization of inequalities relates to a single ideological dimension between universalistic values on the one hand, reflecting a generalized inequality-aversion, as opposed to more particularistic values on the other hand, which are more accepting of stratification and inequalities along communitarian lines (e.g. Kitschelt, 1994; Bornschier, 2010; Häusermann, 2010; Beramendi et al., 2015; Frega, 2021). In such an alternative scenario, we would expect voters of the new left to hold more inequality-averse attitudes on every dimension of stratification, whereas voters of the radical right would be more accepting of inequalities and hierarchies, be it in socioeconomic or sociocultural aspects. In other words: we would not observe a crowding out of different types of inequalities, but rather an alignment of perceptions across very distinct types of inequality.

In this article, we put these competing hypotheses to an empirical test using original survey data collected in Germany in 2022—oversampling the key constituencies of high and lower-educated respondents—and measuring respondents' attitudes on the prevalence and problematization of both economic (income, education, class background) and sociocultural (sexual orientation, gender, and migration background) dimensions of inequality. Our results show that new left voters are generally more aware of differences due to socioeconomic and sociocultural factors and think of these as more problematic than their far right-party leaning counterparts. These findings mostly confirm the expectations of the universalist-particularist framework suggesting the alignment of both socioeconomic and sociocultural inequality concerns: progressive,

left voters are more concerned about all types of inequality than conservative and especially radical-right constituencies. Our results point to a polarization of not only economic and social opportunities in the knowledge economy accompanied by the emergence of (new) parties representing these electorates, but also to a polarization of public perceptions of which divides in society are worth addressing.

Studying the structural foundations of these inequality perceptions further highlights that even a transformed and realigned - i.e. more highly educated, middle class, professional - left electorate (cf. Kitschelt, 1994; Gingrich and Häusermann, 2015; Oesch and Rennwald, 2018) is still most sensitive to inequality, in all its forms, than right-wing electorates. For the (new) left, this confirms previous findings that there does not seem to be an electoral trade-off between adopting economically redistributive and culturally progressive programmatic positions—quite the contrary (Abou-Chadi and Hix, 2021; Abou-Chadi et al., 2022; Breyer, Palmtag, and Zollinger, 2023). We also find no evidence that far right voters care strongly about economic inequalities, despite this party family's disproportionate success among lower-educated workers. This suggests that a particularist far right is highly unlikely to emerge as a champion for inequality, even on economic dimensions narrowly defined.

2 The Politicization of Inequalities in the Knowledge Economy

The last decades have seen the simultaneous rise of economic inequalities between "winners" and "losers" of the knowledge economy, on the one hand, and of so-called "culture wars" over sociocultural inequalities, on the other. However, the theorization and study of different types of inequalities, their economic foundation and political mobilization have remained surprisingly separated in different strands of literature. In this section, we discuss both the literature on increasing economic inequality, as well as the literature on the sociocultural political conflicts of the knowledge society. Combining them provides us with two competing hypotheses about the

relationship between political divides and inequality politicization that we can then test against each other: the first hypothesis suggests a trade-off between the types of inequalities considered to be problematic by different parts of the electorate, the other suggests that inequalities are politicized along a single dimension of inequality aversion versus tolerance.

2.1 A trade-off perspective on the politicization of inequalities

Political economic studies on the "great U-turn" (e.g. Alderson and Nielsen, 2002) in the development of inequalities (i.e. the reversal of the declining trend to a growth of inequality after the 1970s) have launched a massive research agenda on the re-emergence of income, wealth, occupational, educational and risk inequalities in Western economies since the 1990s (e.g. Acemoglu and Autor, 2011; Emmenegger et al., 2012; Huber, Huo, and Stephens, 2019; Weisstanner and Armingeon, 2020; Rehm, 2016; Häusermann, 2020). Inequality research has come to worldwide prominence not least with the publications by Piketty and his co-authors (e.g. Piketty and Saez, 2014). The data produced show how changing demand for skilled labor, economic-financial liberalization, globalization, and political reforms have fuelled the increasingly unequal distribution of material resources and economic opportunities in societies (Chetty et al., 2017; Dreher and Gaston, 2008; Helpman, Itskhoki, and Redding, 2010).

One manifestation of this trend is, of course, the decoupling in terms of wealth and resources of the "top 1 percent" from the broader public. However - and more relevant for the politicization of inequality in mass politics - in the knowledge society, economic, social and cultural resources more generally seem to bundle in the hands of a quite large and expanding educated middle class (Iversen and Soskice, 2019). On the other hand, citizens with lower levels of human capital, with obsolete skills in a deindustrializing economy, in more remote places, and without access to institutions of higher education seem to fall behind in the distribution of material security and opportunities (Autor, Dorn, and Hanson, 2013; Rodríguez-Pose, 2018;

Broz, Frieden, and Weymouth, 2021). In some countries, political reforms have even fuelled the increase of inequality "at the bottom" of the income distribution by deliberately creating a low-wage sector of employment and deregulating labor markets (Emmenegger et al., 2012).

Given such deepening economic inequalities between groups who benefit from a shift towards a knowledge-based economy and those who are disadvantaged by it, the weakness of politicized class conflict is a source of puzzlement from a more rational choice-based perspective on electoral politics. A straightforward translation of shifting economic trends into the politicization of inequality would have us expect knowledge economy "winners" - with high human and economic capital - to defend liberal markets, to legitimize the unequal distribution of income and opportunities and to oppose redistribution. On the other hand, one would expect knowledge economy "losers" to fight for regulation and redistribution. In short: one might have expected a re-emergence of a relatively blunt left-right class conflict between an upper class right and a working class left. This is not what we have seen over the past years, of course.

The absence of renewed, large-scale left-right class conflict at the level of partisan politics has been explained mainly with elite-driven factors (e.g. Mudge, 2018; Evans and Tilley, 2017; Piketty and Saez, 2014). These authors argue that the focus of the New Left on inequalities other than economic ones (such as gender, migration or sexual orientation) has distracted left parties and left voters from the fight against economic inequality, and - moreover - has relegated lower educated voters to those parties contesting such a focus on sociocultural inequalities, in particular parties of the Radical Right. Electoral realignment, from this perspective, is largely a consequence of left parties increasingly catering to highly educated middle classes with culturally liberal appeals, thereby making the far right an attractive harbor for more conservative working classes, worried about the erosion of traditional values and their economic grievances and deprivation. In short, the literature on rising economic inequality tends to suggest that the politicization of "alternative" inequalities has crowded out attention to and politicization of

material-economic inequality, and obfuscates the underlying class conflict between lower and higher social strata over economic-material inequality.

A crowing-out of economic inequalities by sociocultural ones may, in principle, be collateral or intentional. The rather rational choice-based perspective that follows from this literature suggests that, as voters of the New Left on average tend to belong to the winners of the knowledge society, they have an explicit or implicit interest in downplaying matters of economic distribution politically. A cynical view suggests that it serves these voters–often discussed as "educational elites"–to distract from their economic advantage. Another, somewhat milder version simply suggests that middle class new left voters can "afford" to care about sociocultural inequalities and disregard or underestimate economic inequalities, while (relatively) deprived far right voters discount the importance of these same sociocultural inequalities. Accordingly, far right voters are viewed as being concerned first and foremost with "hard" material inequalities, which become manifest, for instance in self-interested welfare chauvinist positions.

Table 1 summarizes this trade-off hypothesis: supporters of new left/green parties are expected to perceive sociocultural inequalities as more problematic than socioeconomic ones, and vice versa for far right voters. The rise of new sociocultural issues is viewed as having intensified a trade-off or difference in emphasis on economics versus culture among voters on the left and on the right, compared to traditional disagreement between mainstream left and mainstream right voters over economic inequality and redistribution. Under traditional forms of class conflict (still represented today by mainstream parties), economic inequalities are *generally* more prominent in political competition, but a divergence in the *types* of inequalities considered problematic by the left and the right is not a central feature of political contestation. This is why we place mainstream right and mainstream left electorates in the off-diagonal compared to new left and far right voters.

socio

		Economic Inequality Concern	
		high	low
Sociocultural Inequality Concern	high	Mainstream Left	*New Left/Green*
	low	*Radical Right*	Mainstream Right

TABLE 1
Party Support and Inequality Perceptions: trade-off hypothesis

2.2 A universalist-particularist perspective on the politicization of inequalities

The rival theoretical approach takes a more political-historical and sociological perspective on how the socio-structural transformation of the knowledge society relates to the politicization of different types of inequality. This literature shares a strong focus on structural changes in the economy, but theorizes these in a broader sense, beyond increasing income and wealth inequality, including the socio-structural implications of the educational expansion, changing occupational structures and the ensuing expansion of the educated middle classes (e.g. Esping-Andersen, 1999; Oesch, 2006*a*; Beramendi et al., 2015). Indeed, the expansion of the educated middle classes, predominantly via job growth in the skilled service sector and in occupations with strong female labor market participation, has contributed to the growth and transformation of the new core electorate of left-wing parties since the 1980s (e.g. Kitschelt, 1994; Oesch, 2008; Gingrich and Häusermann, 2015). In the wake of the mobilization of new social movements fighting for gender equality, international solidarity and peace, environmental protection and minority rights, these new groups of voters early on joined and transformed the left across Western European democracies (e.g. Kriesi et al., 1995; Kriesi, 1998). By doing so, they not only expanded the programmatic agenda and priorities of the Left from a focus on economic redistribution to sociocultural policies, but they more generally transformed the notion of equality and universalism in the entire "left field" of partisan politics (e.g. Kitschelt and Häusermann, 2022).

In such a perspective, the emergence of sociocultural dimensions of inequality on the political agenda has not necessarily crowded out economic inequality, but has extended the

"egalitarian" programme of the "new left" to novel constituencies and beneficiaries. At the same time, as is well known, a new national-conservative pole of radical right parties has emerged across Western Europe as a counter-reaction to this new left program, defending existing social hierarchies, stratification and norms of social dominance in the realms of family, social order, nationality the labor market, and even the welfare state (e.g. Ignazi, 1992; Bornschier, 2010; Norris and Inglehart, 2019; Häusermann, 2020; Rathgeb, 2021). Over time, these radical right parties managed to win ever larger shares of (predominantly male) voters among the lower educated and working class, who take issue with the broadened understanding of egalitarian universalism the new left advocates (e.g. Rydgren, 2013). And while, on aggregate, they may be cross-pressured by the left appeals to economic redistribution and the radical right appeals to sociocultural particularism, working class voters over time seem to have sorted into these two political camps, with left voting working class members sharing the universalistic-egalitarian agenda of the new left and right voting working class members sharing the particularistic criticism of egalitarian policies (e.g. Oesch and Rennwald, 2018).

Adding to this, in times of greater economic and fiscal constraints, supposedly cultural conflicts (such as those related to gender or immigration) have become more openly charged in distributive economic terms. Inversely, fundamentally distributive questions (e.g. over providing access to the welfare state or where to channel public spending) are increasingly viewed through a lens of dominant sociocultural conflicts. This means that the main "economic" and "cultural" dimensions of political conflict in Western politics have become blurred (Häusermann and Kriesi, 2015). The terms "universalism" versus "particularism" (as opposed to other labels for the conflict underpinning new left versus far right opposition, such as liberal-authoritarian, GAL-TAN, etc.) specifically take this amalgamation into account (Beramendi et al., 2015). So do conceptualizations of a new sociocultural divide as a fully fledged "cleavage" with roots in socioeconomic change (Bornschier et al., 2021; Zollinger, 2022). Much in contrast to the trade-off

hypothesis, this work suggests that solidarity with lower social strata, distancing oneself from educational and income elites, as well as a self-perception as "socially minded" are actually part and parcel of new left voters' social identities.

In terms of individual-level mechanisms, explanations for why new left voters might be generally inequality averse and receptive to universalist political appeals lie largely in their socialization experiences, especially through education and at the work place. Higher education, especially in cultural and communicative fields, is typically associated with more universalist values, openness to diversity, experience with flat hierarchies, and sensibility to various dimensions of inequality (Stubager, 2008; Hooghe, Marks, and Kamphorst, 2022; Iversen and Soskice, 2019). Employment in the social or education sectors and working in client-interactive settings (i.e. "sociocultural" occupations in teaching, care, etc.) further exposes individuals to less privileged groups, tending to instill and train empathy (Kitschelt, 1994; Oesch, 2006*a*). Research suggests that these experiences in younger years and later life reinforce selection effects and socializing experiences in the parental home. Today's left-wing voters often come from working class backgrounds, even if they themselves experienced upward mobility (Ares and van Ditmars, 2022).

What is more, although the language of "knowledge economy winners" evokes elites, a large body of literature on new and changing social risks highlights that highly-skilled middle class workers may also be sensitive to inequality because they themselves experience vulnerability. Besides potentially facing discrimination based on gender or minority status, economic risks and disadvantages stemming from irregular, part-time, or fixed-term employment often affect even the highly-educated (especially younger women) (Bonoli, 2005; Häusermann, Kurer, and Schwander, 2015). By contrast, far right voters on average belong to historically relatively advantaged groups, clearly so in terms of gender or ethnicity, but as "typical workers" also in terms of labor market protection (which was historically designed around the male breadwin-

ner model and standard employment in an era of industrial production) (Häusermann, 2020). In contrast to what simple "winner/loser" dichotomies suggest, this literature often discusses conservative-authoritarian voters as being "a few rungs up" from the bottom of the social ladder, with last-place-aversion in fact making them prone to emphasizing and legitimizing hierarchies of various types towards the lowest-placed (income, ethnic, etc.) groups in society (Bornschier, 2010; Lamont, 2000; Hochschild, 2016; Damhuis, 2019; Engler and Weisstanner, 2021) This again runs counter to a trade-off hypothesis and points towards mechanisms that might make the typical far right voter rather inequality-tolerant, and accepting of social stratification in general.

Table 2.2 summarizes our universalism-particularism hypothesis: It posits that inequalities are politicized along a single dimension, with (new) left voters being more inequality averse and (far) right voters being more inequality tolerant. We would expect Left and Green party voters - irrespective of their own on average more advantaged socio-demographic profile - to share heightened perceptions of prevalence and problematization of both socioeconomic and sociocultural inequalities. By contrast, we would expect voters of mainstream and radical right parties to share a more particularistic vision of society, defending existing patterns of social stratification and hierarchies. The contrast regarding sociocultural inequalities should be particularly pronounced for the green/left-libertarian as opposed to far right parties, but stretch to more traditionally defined socioeconomic inequalities.

		Economic Inequality Concern	
		high	low
Sociocultural Inequality Concern	high	*Left and Green*	
	low		*Mainstream and Radical Right*

TABLE 2
Party Support and Inequality Perceptions: universalism-particularism hypothesis

3 Research Design

To assess how different party electorates perceive and evaluate inequalities, we field an original survey with new questions regarding six different dimensions of inequality between May and July 2022 in Germany. As an advanced knowledge economy with a conservative welfare state (Iversen and Soskice, 2019), Germany is characterized by relatively high levels of inequality compared to other Western European countries. Importantly, this concerns various dimensions of inequality: On the one hand, income inequality has increased, particularly as Germany has experienced an expansion of the low-wage sector (Palier and Thelen, 2010). On the other, the conservative status-preserving features of the labor market and welfare state continue to disadvantage women and privilege native Germans, making Germany a case of conservative stratification (Manow, Palier, and Schwander, 2018).

A total of 5.108 respondents answered the online survey. We implement representative quotas for region, gender and age, but restrict the age range of respondents between 18 and 57. By limiting the age range we can observe the perceptions of three generations (Generation X, Millenials and Generation Z) that are and will be decisive for politics. We oversample high and less educated respondents as we are particularly interested in the inequality perceptions of (highly educated) winners and (less educated) losers of the knowledge economy. The low educated group includes all respondents without any formal education, those with primary education and unfinished high school degree, as well as respondents with a high school diploma. The highly educated category includes everyone with a Bachelors or any other higher University degree. Table 3 in the Appendix shows the characteristics of our sample. A relatively large share of respondents lives in urban areas and the overwhelming majority has no migration background.

3.1 Inequality Perceptions

As we study attitudes on the unequal distribution of different kinds of resources and advantages in relation to their political relevance, we conceptualize inequality perceptions both with regard to how strongly citizens think these resources and advantages matter for shaping people's well-being, as well as with regard to the extent to which they problematize the unequal distribution of these resources. Perceptions and problematization of inequalities are an essential part of people's view of how societies work. They encompass an individual's understanding of how resources and opportunities are distributed in society and whether this distribution is acceptable or problematic. People evaluate inequalities against (latent) values and fairness concerns. The evaluation and subsequent problematization of inequalities is, arguably, a necessary condition to demand change and support government interventions to curb (dis)advantages due to income, education, gender, sexual orientation or migration background. In contrast, a topic that is neither recognized nor deemed troublesome does not warrant political intervention. Our hypotheses apply to both dimensions of inequality - their perceived prevalence and their evaluation - and they are both relevant to understand how much different citizens care about inequalities.

We measure *perceptions of inequality* by asking respondents to indicate how important they think income, education, social origin, gender, sexual orientation, and migration background are for having advantages or disadvantages in our society. We loosely categorize the first three dimensions as "socioceonomic" and the last three as "sociocultural". Socioeconomic inequalities involve for example differences in income, wealth, education, and employment, they are also often classified as acquired inequalities. Sociocultural inequalities on the other hand are predominantly ascribed and pertain to disparities related to race, ethnicity, gender, religion, language, or nationality. While our first three dimensions (income, education, and social origin) are typically associated with socioeconomic inequalities, and the last three (gender, sexual orientation, and migration background) with sociocultural inequalities, it's important to

acknowledge that sociocultural inequalities do have material aspects, and socioeconomic inequalities are influenced by cultural resources. Therefore, these two categories only provide a very broad framework for classification.

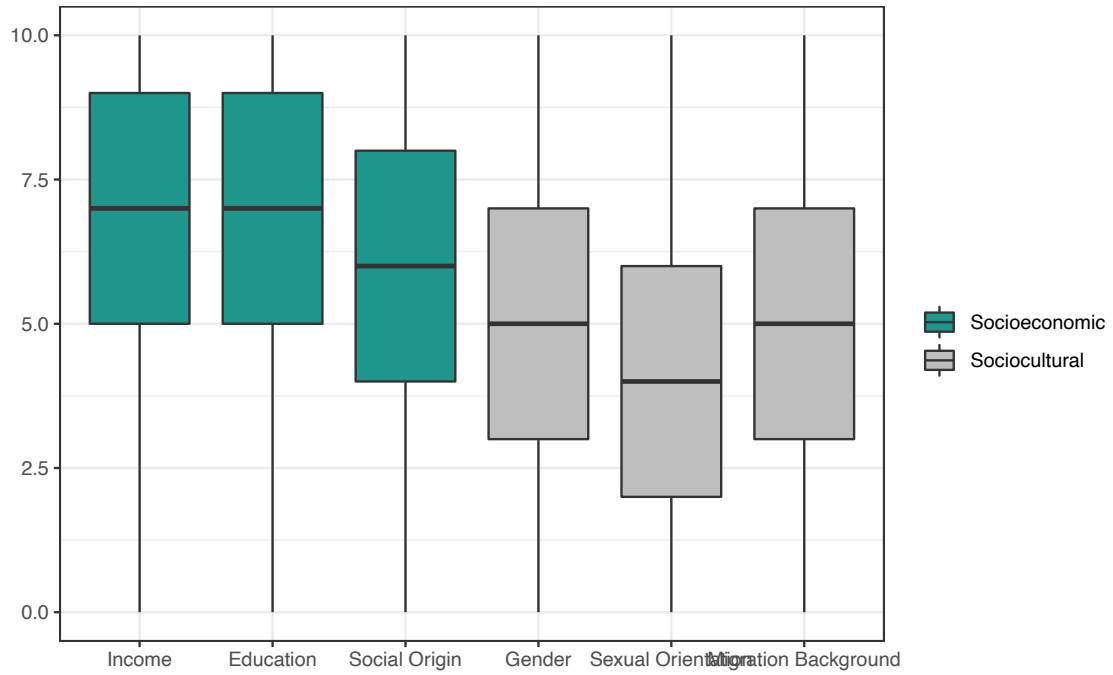

FIGURE 1
Perceived Importance of Inequalities

We chose the wording "having advantages or disadvantages in society" to make the abstract concept of "inequality" more accessible. In addition, mentioning both advantages and disadvantages in the item should allow respondents to not only express their perception of the more often discussed downside of these inequalities. Last, we chose to avoid the term "inequality" itself to prevent conveying any preconceived notions of judgement regarding the differences queried here.

The answers are recorded on a scale from 0 to 10. Zero indicates that the aspect is perceived as not important at all for having advantages or disadvantages in society, while 10 means that this facet is very important. Figure 1 shows that all socioeconomic inequalities are on average perceived as more important than the three sociocultural inequalities, related to

gender, sexual orientation and migration background. Respondents indicate that income and education are most important when it comes to having (dis)advantages in our society.

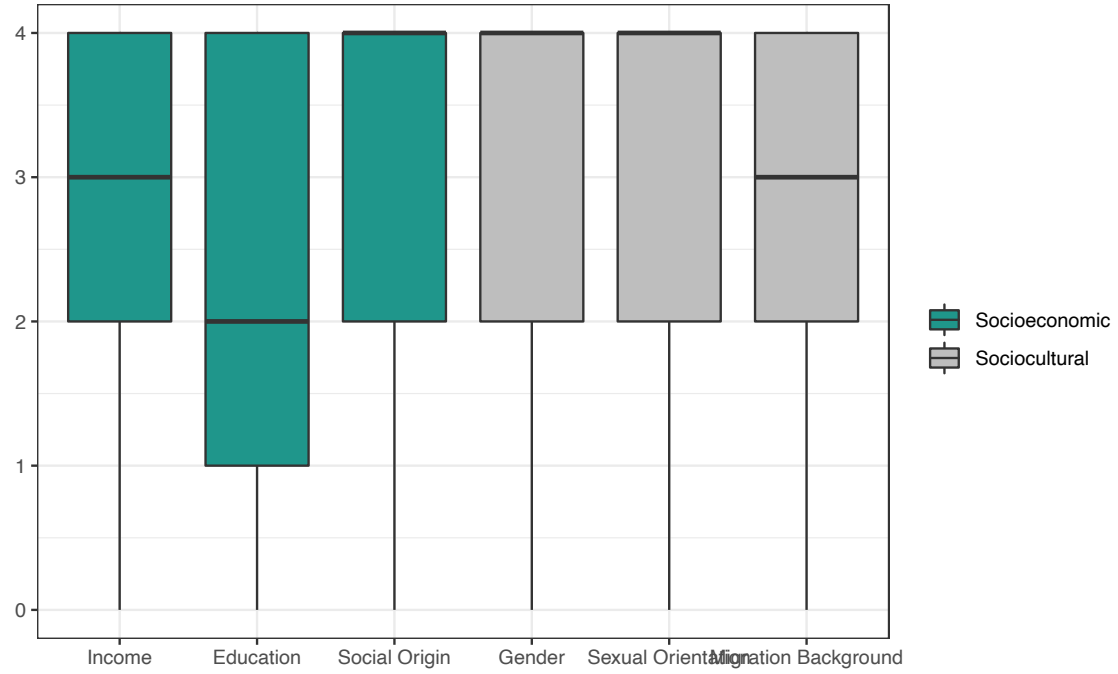

FIGURE 2
Problematization of Inequalities

A second set of questions concerns the *evaluation* of these inequalities: Are existing differences seen as problematic or acceptable by the public? Being agnostic about the underlying criteria for the evaluation, we ask respondents to indicate whether they think that having (dis)advantages due to income, education, social origin, gender, sexual orientation and migration background is acceptable or not. The scale for this item ranges from 0 ("perfectly fine") to 4 ("not at all OK"). Again, we refrain from using the word "inequality" to allow respondents to indicate that some differences may be evaluated as perfectly fine or acceptable. Differences due to social origin, gender, and sexual orientation are perceived as most problematic by our sample (see Figure 2). Among the different types of inequalities, respondents are more accepting of differences due to education (average 2.36).

3.2 Electoral groups: new Left and radical right

To construct the electoral groups onto which we map inequality perceptions, we use a question that measures the individual propensity to vote for the different parties represented in the German parliament. The items measure the likelihood of ever voting for one of the six parties (SPD, CDU/CSU, Bündnis90/Die Grünen, FDP, AfD, Die Linke) from 0 (highly unlikely) to 10 (very likely). All respondents who report a higher probability of voting for a party than five are coded as being part of the electorate of the respective party (see Figure 6, Appendix). Using the propensities to vote as a variable delimiting the electorates (as opposed to past or intended vote choice) not only has the advantages of higher numbers of observations, but also provides a more heterogeneous composition of the electorates, and thereby a more conservative test of our hypotheses. Alternatively, we define electoral groups according to individual vote choice in the previous federal elections. Results from this alternative operationalization are presented in the Appendix A.3.

3.3 Structural foundations: knowledge society "winners" and "losers"

We explore the structural foundations of these perceptions from multiple angles, based on the existing literature. We draw on four different ways of operationalizing the knowledge economy "winners" and "losers" typically associated with new left versus far right support:

First, we distinguish winners and losers of this structural transformation based on their level of education. With knowledge economies reliant on skilled and educated labor input to sustain growth, the importance of education for economic success in the labor market has increased (Iversen and Soskice, 2019). Higher education has emerged as the main indicator of coveted skills, resulting in a growing tertiary wage premium. Therefore, we use individuals‘ level of education to classify respondents into a broad categories of winners, everyone who has completed a tertiary education. Respondents without a tertiary degree are classified as

knowledge economy losers.

Second, we rely on the framework by Kitschelt and Rehm (2022) that divides the electorate in knowledge economies into four distinct groups based on income and education. They predict that the high-education/high-income group should oppose redistribution and endorse libertarian sociocultural policies. The growing group of highly educated individuals with low income should equally support progressive sociocultural politics but take more pro redistributive positions, making them the core constituency of the new left. Individuals with low education, respectively, share their support of authoritarian policies on noneconomic issues. However, they are divided along the lines of income, with the high income group opposing redistributive policies and becoming a core constituency of right parties, whereas the low educated/low income group emerges as supporters of progressive economic policies. Again, all respondents with completed tertiary education are coded as highly educated and classified into the high income group if their household income is at or above the 68th percentile (Kitschelt and Rehm, 2022).

Our third way of exploring the structural foundations of inequality perceptions in society also emphasizes education as the crucial factor determining one's opportunities in society, but suggests that a key divide is between individuals in fields aligned with industrial capitalism (such as business, engineering, applied science, and informatics) and those educated in fields focused on social values (such as humanities, arts, and some social sciences) (Hooghe, Marks, and Kamphorst, 2022). The latter fields prioritize intellectual pursuits over economic efficiency and are skeptical of profit-driven motives for social progress. As a result, respondents who received their education in those fields often have less bargaining power in the job market and are more likely to support green or new left parties. We use the "CECT" score (van de Werfhorst and Kraaykamp, 2001; Hooghe, Marks, and Kamphorst, 2022), which indicates the extent to which a specific field is cultural, economic, communicative, and technical. We assign individual CECT measures, the ratio of communicative and cultural skills in comparison to all

four fields, to respondent's reported area of education. We differentiate the problematization of inequality perceptions for those at or below the 25th percentile, i.e. individuals with transport, telecommunications, or engineering as fields of education, from those with a CECT score in the upper percentile of the distribution, educated in fields such as humanities or social studies. While the new left electorate should be composed of individuals educated in more cultural-communicative fields, constituencies of the radical right are supposedly more often educated in economic-technical fields.

Last, we assess the structural underpinning of inequality perceptions in society by distinguishing different occupational classes (Oesch, 2008). The literature on class voting suggest that the structural root of political realignment can be found in the divide between high-skilled individuals involved in interpersonal work environments, who tend to embrace progressive, libertarian values, and low-skilled workers engaged in object-related tasks, who tend to support more authoritarian policies. We would therefore expect the group of production workers in knowledge economies to be stern supporters of radical right parties, whereas those involved in high-skilled, interpersonal occupations to represent the core constituency of the new left. We classify respondents into the occupational classes described by Oesch (2006*b*) according to the ISCO code of their reported occupation.

4 Results

4.1 Party electorates and inequality perceptions

Our core theoretical interest is in whether there is a conflict over *which* inequalities need addressing between party electorates, and especially between the electorates of the far right and the new left. We hence start by looking at how problematic the supporters of different parties (measured in terms of propensity to vote) deem societal (dis)advantages linked to different socioeconomic and sociocultural factors. Figure 4.1 shows the expected values of models re-

gressing the problematization of each type of inequality (ranging from "perfectly fine" to "not at all ok") on having a high propensity to vote for each party represented in the German parliament (type of residence, gender, education, income, migration background, and age are held constant).

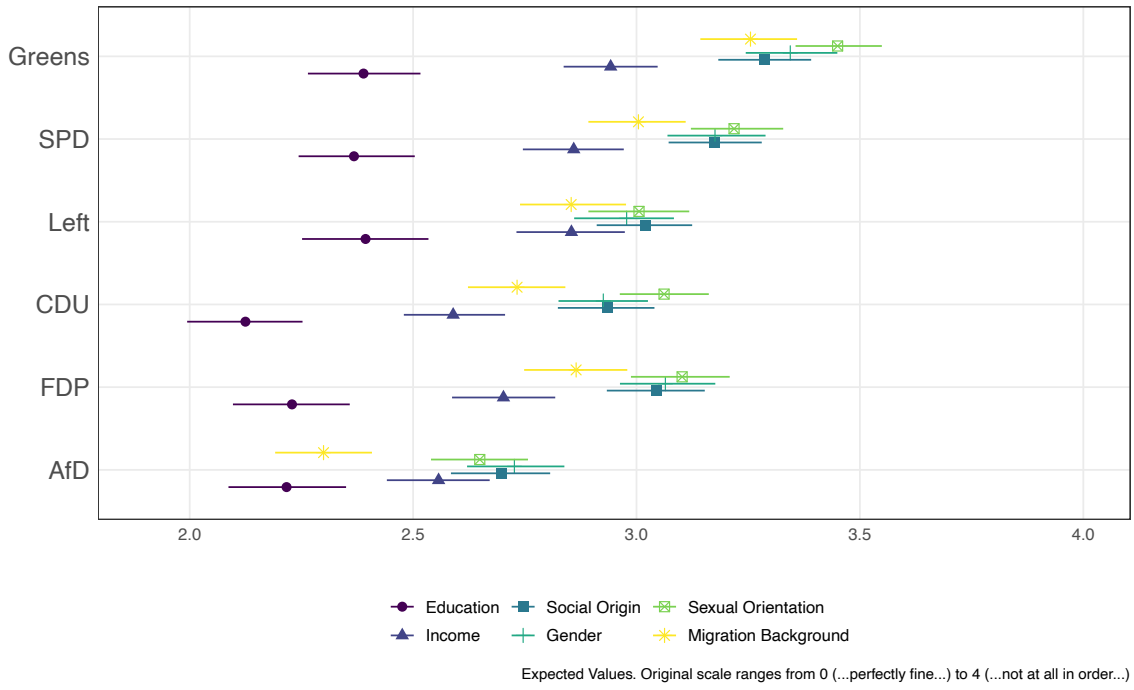

FIGURE 3
Inequality Problematization and PtV (Expected Values)

What stands out is that the Green electorate by far shows the strongest inequality aversion overall, and certainly for sexual orientation, gender, migration background, and social origin. Green voters find inequalities of income and education relatively less problematic, but still belong to the electorates that find these inequalities least acceptable (along with other left-wing parties). The Radical Right (AfD) electorate on the other hand appears to be comparatively inequality accepting, especially regarding the sociocultural inequalities. On these dimensions, the values for the AfD are distinctly lower than for all other electorates. For (dis)advantages based on migration background, AfD supporters' evaluation is around one point lower (more

accepting on a 5-point scale) than Green supporters.[1]

Important with respect to our competing hypotheses is that we see no real reversal of the rank-order of inequalities deemed problematic if we contrast new left and far right electorates. In other words, it is not the case that new left voters downplay economic inequalities (based on income, education, and social origin) compared to more sociocultural ones while far right voters do the opposite. Inequalities based on gender, sexual orientation, or social origin are considered most problematic by both electorates, but at very different levels, while inequalities based on education face less opposition by both groups. *Relative* to their assessments of other dimensions, inequality based on income seems less problematic to new left voters, but they still clearly consider income-based (dis)advantages more of a problem than far right voters.

Focusing on the two electorates of primary interest already points towards greater inequality aversion on the left and greater tolerance of hierarchy on the right, and looking at the remaining electorates strengthens the impression that are looking at a single dimension of inequality politicization. A high propensity to vote for the Social Democratic Party (SPD), is similarly, yet not to the same extent as for the Greens, associated with a comparatively high problematization across all types of inequality. In particular, SPD sympathizers view (dis)advantages due to income, social origin, gender, sexual orientation and migration background as more problematic than all other party supporters, except for the electorate of the Green party). The picture is somewhat different for the (smaller) Left party: Respondents who indicated a high likelihood to vote for "die Linke" in the coming elections appear to be more accepting of inequalities due to sociocultural factors (gender, sexual orientation, migration background) than is the case for the Green, SPD (and to some extent even the FDP) electorate. The electorate of the Left displays a rather coherent, for a radical left-wing party rather unexpected inequality-accepting, evaluation of all types of differences, especially sociocultural ones. In terms of their evaluation of educational and income inequalities, they display the same position as the supporters of the

[1] Constructing electoral groups from previous vote choice in the federal elections provides the same results.

other left-wing parties. Drawing on the alternative operationalization of electorates based on vote choice, the actual voters of the left in 2021 are more inequality averse than those who merely consider voting for the party (see A.3, Appendix). This applies both to socioeconomic inequalities and to sociocultural ones. Voters of the Left are in this case also more inequality averse than those who indicated that they voted for the SPD in 2021. In contrast to the group of respondents who indicate that they consider voting for the SPD, the subset of actual voters are slightly more inequality accepting across all types of inequalities. This pattern also applies to the two different operationalizations of the electorates of the CDU/CSU and the FDP. However, the differences in expected values between the two operationalizations are always marginal (not exceeding a 0.3 difference on the 4 point scale).

Acceptance of inequalities increases progressively as we move towards the right of the political spectrum: CDU and FDP sympathizers evaluate sociocultural inequalities in ways similar to the electorate of "die Linke", but they are clearly more tolerant of societal (dis)advantages based on education and income. Their assessments on these latter dimensions are comparable to those of AfD sympathizers, while they are clearly less willing to accept inequalities based on migration background, social origin, sexual orientation, or gender than far right voters. Generally, relatively less concerned evaluations of educational inequalities among CDU and FDP supporters indicate a potentially powerful meritocratic narrative amongst these electorates.

Figure 4 shows what this picture looks like when we consider not only the degree to which various aspects of inequality are problematized but also how strongly they are perceived in the first place. The outcome variable in the underlying regressions weights the inequality problematization of a specific inequality (that is, the outcome used in Figure) 4.1 by the perceived importance of that same inequality.

Although the rankings within electorates are more spread out from this perspective, the most important point for our overarching research question is that the conclusions with regard

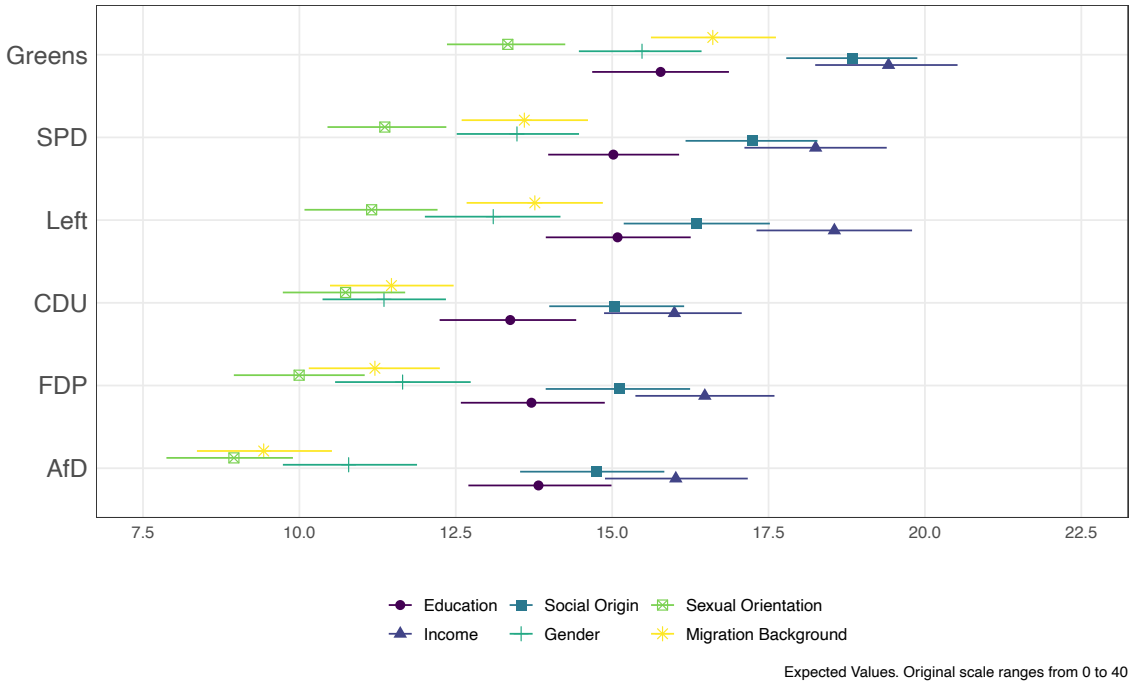

FIGURE 4
Perceived Societal Importance * Problematization of Inequality and PtV (Expected Values)

to the comparison of the far right and the new left do not change: On all considered inequality dimensions, without exception, the Greens have higher values (perception of importance times problematization) than AfD supporters. The same can generally be said about left-wing parties as compared to right-wing parties. This continues to point towards a single dimension of inequality aversion versus tolerance of hierarchy, where the far right and the new left are situated at the poles.

Figure 7 in the Appendix shows results for perceived importance of inequalities alone, i.e. isolating the second component of the dependent variable in Figure 4. Differences between electorates are smaller here, which explains the greater spread of values within electorates moving from Figure 4.1 to 4, as well as the reversal in the general hierarchy of inequalities across these two figures: overall, those inequalities perceived to be most consequential (income and education), are typically those that are considered least problematic. Income and education

might be seen as "achieved" or within the power of individuals to change, as opposed to factors like gender or sexual orientation. Across all electorates, inequalities of education and income are judged to be most relevant for societal (dis)advantages, followed by social origin, migration background, and gender, and lastly, sexual orientation. There are some specific interesting differences: For example, Green sympathizers perceive gender to be a more important factor than right-wing parties. However, generally limited variation between party supporters in their perceptions of which factors matter for getting ahead in society leads to a more drawn-out picture in 4 than in 4.1. Ultimately, this highlights the need to consider problematization separately from perceptions of inequalities alone, as problematization is relevant to the politicization of inequality we are interested in.

4.2 Structural foundations of inequality perceptions

What are the structural underpinnings of these inequality perceptions described above? As outlined we follow the literature and present the perceived problematization of socioeconomic and sociocultural inequalities for different socio-structural groups which arguably underpin the new electoral cleavage between radical right and new left/Green parties. Figure 5 displays the results of linear regression models, where inequality problematization, i. e. respondent assessment of how problematic (dis)advantages in society due to one of the six types of inequality are, is regressed on whether the respondent is a knowledge-economy winner or loser - holding gender, sexual orientation, migration background, age, and whether or not a respondent lives in an urban area, constant.

Drawing on education as the decisive structural divide underpinning public perceptions of inequalities shows clear differences in the perceptions of highly educated knowledge economy winners and low educated losers regarding inequalities due to social origin, gender, sexual orientation and migration background, the highly educated evaluate the distribution of

(dis)advantages due to these factors as more problematic than the lower educated (Table 10, Appendix). Differences due to education and income are seen as less problematic by both high- and low-educated groups. While income inequality aversion of high and low educated respondents does not differ significantly, (dis)advantages due to education are the only inequality that is significantly more acceptable to highly educated knowledge economy winners than to their less educated counterparts. The highly educated‘s acceptance of education inequality potentially signals their strong belief in meritocratic narratives, implying a notion of having earned one‘s station due to own efforts in a fair process (Sandel, 2020). These results add nuance to our findings: While socioeconomic inequality concerns are not crowded out by a preoccupation with differences due to gender, sexual orientation, or migration background for the structurally advantaged, the highly educated "winners of the knowledge economy" indeed think of sociocultural inequalities as more problematic than the less educated.

Following Kitschelt and Rehm (2022), we further disaggregate these two broad educational groups according to their income (Table 11, Appendix). The low education/low income group, growing in size with the transformation to advanced knowledge economies, accepts more inequality than those with similar educational levels but higher income, regarding all sociocultural inequalities and differences associated with one‘s social origin. The problematization of inequalities by the shrinking group of low education/high income voters, who should be the most committed supporters of the right party camp, is more in line with that of the highly educated/low income group, supposedly the supporters of the new left. Yet, with regards to their views on how problematic different inequalities in society are, these two groups, supposedly underpinning the new electoral divide in society according to Kitschelt and Rehm (2022), display largely similarly levels of inequality aversion regarding both economic-material inequalities and sociocultural inequalities. The group that stands out as most inequality-averse are highly educated citizens with high incomes. The exception here concerns educational inequalities, which

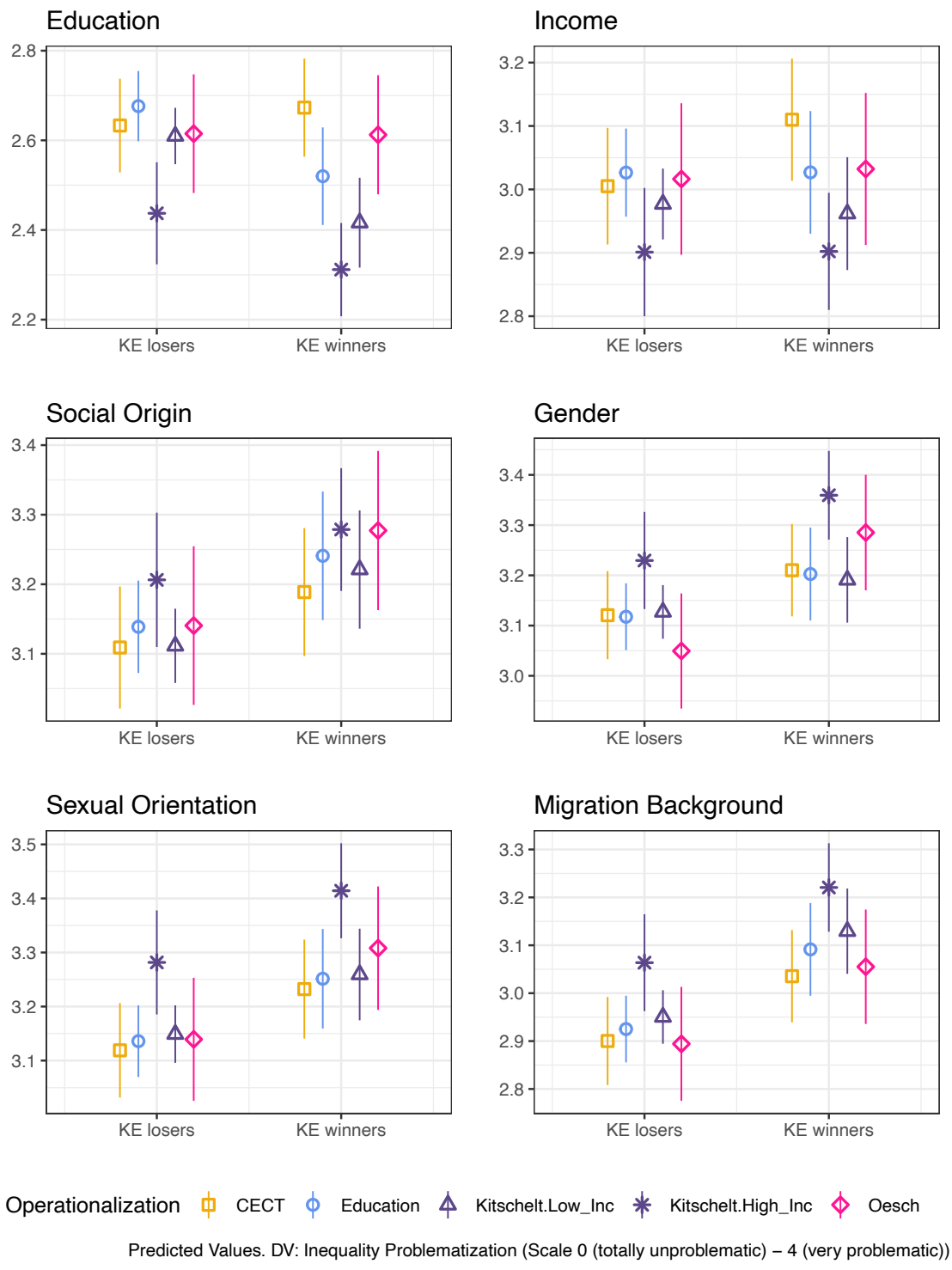

FIGURE 5
Problematization of Inequalities by KE winner / KE loser status (Expected Values)

they are most accepting of, and income differences, on which their perceptions largely overlap with all other groups. Across all other types of inequalities, they are the most concerned and

universalist in their perceptions.

Figure 5 also displays the different perceptions of inequality of individuals educated in fields with a high ratio of cultural/communicative skills on the left-hand side of each panel and those with comparatively low cultural/communicate skills required in their field on the right-hand side (Table 12, Appendix). Across the six different types of inequality, including education, respondents educated in more cultural/communicative fields are more inequality averse. However, the difference to those educated in fields which are more reliant on economic/technical skills is not significant for the problematization of educational inequality. These results reemphasize the importance of education and, in particular, the field of education as structural underpinnings of electoral realignments which are reflected in the inequality perceptions of these two structural groups.

The two occupational classes exemplary of the electoral realignment in knowledge economies, production workers and sociocultural professionals, mainly differ in their problematization of sociocultural inequalities and (dis)advantages due to one's social origin (Table 13, Appendix). Whereas production workers are more accepting of inequalities due to social origin, gender, sexual orientation and migration background, they display the same extent of acceptance with regards to (dis)advantages due to education or income. This confirms that sociocultural professionals' concerns about socioeconomic inequality are not crowded out by their focus on "newer" inequalities relating to gender or sexual orientation. However, the two occupational groups problematize education and income inequality to the same extent, showcasing their shared concern for economic/material inequalities, politicizing both typical voter groups of the new left and radical right.

Overall, these structural factors relate to the problematization of inequalities largely as we would expect based on a more sociological (rather than instrumental) understanding of how people come to interpret the world, developing values through socialization experiences

and embeddedness in certain social milieus. The most sociologically defined operationalizations of knowledge society "winners" (e.g. Oesch's sociocultural professionals or high CECT scores versus e.g., high income/high education à la Kitschelt and Rehm or education level alone) are most representative of the pattern we would expect based on the universalism-particularism hypothesis supported by the previous section: high concern for all dimensions of inequality—at least as high as among their counterparts on the losing side. Certainly, we see little evidence for the trade-off hypothesis, which would imply that knowledge society "winners" are unconcerned about economic inequalities: only when we look at educational inequalities do we see instances of knowledge society "losers" expressing greater concern than the "winners", and only with regard to the less sociological definitions following Kitschelt and Rehm or when looking at education level alone. Generally, there are less clear-cut patterns from this structural perspective compared to the last section that considered electorates, and this also points to the role of politics in bundling, articulating, and activating people's inequality perceptions into more coherent worldviews.

5 Conclusion

The economic, social and electoral landscape of advanced democracies has undergone profound transformations in recent decades. With this paper we set out to fruitfully combine different strand of the knowledge economy literature, the studies on the emergence of a new electoral cleavage and the growing literature on perceptions and politicization of inequalities. None of these processes can be thought of or conceptualized as happening in a vacuum, rather they are connected, influence, and reinforce each other. Therefore, we ask whether and how the new electoral cleavage between radical right and new left integrates the politicization of different types of inequality and examine the structural foundations underpinning public concerns about inequalities in society.

Drawing on these different literatures we develop two stylized hypotheses which we put to an empirical test with newly collected survey data from Germany that originally covers different dimensions of inequality perceptions - pertaining to both evaluation and awareness - of six different types of inequalities. On the one hand, we trace theoretical arguments that predict a trade-off scenario, suggesting that there is a divergence in perceptions of different types of inequalities between the constituencies of the new left and the radical right, with the former prioritizing social inequalities at the expense of economic differences and the latter prioritizing these economic inequalities. The alternative view, more grounded in the historical development of electoral politics, suggests that the politicization of inequalities relates to a single ideological/value dimension, with the new left holding more universalist/inequality-averse attitudes on every dimension of stratification and the radical right being more particularlist/inequality-accepting.

The empirical evidence from our original survey including detailed questions on public perceptions of six different types of inequalities fielded in Germany provides support for the second, universalist-particularist framework. It challenges the notion that the new left/Green electorate exclusively emphasizes sociocultural factors like gender or sexual orientation, while overlooking economic-material inequalities within society. On the other side of public perceptions of societal divides are the constituents of the radical right, who are, as could be expected, more inequality-accepting regarding sociocultural inequalities on which these voters have often been politicized. However, supporters of the radical right (and other constituents of the right party camp) are also more accepting of economic inequalities. This contradicting the narrative that the new right nowadays emerges as the true champion or last defender of a materially deprived working class, whose primary concerns revolve around combating income and education-related disadvantages and who have been abandoned in this fight by left parties catering to a "woke", upper-middle class constituency.

The exploration of the structural underpinnings of the universalist-particularist divide in public perceptions of inequality affirms that education plays a crucial role in driving the divide and is reflected in the electoral shifts in knowledge economies. Highly educated winners of this structural transformation are more likely to voice concerns about inequalities, especially with regards to sociocultural stratification along the lines of gender or sexual orientation. However, these winners are not less concerned than the low educated, typically portrayed as threatened or left behind in knowledge-intensive economies, about differences due to material factors such as income or social origin, with the exception of education inequality. This is the only inequality, where the highly educated winners are more accepting of differences than the less educated losers, pointing to underlying understandings and narratives about "earned", legitimate differences. Different operationalizations of knowledge economy winners and losers relying on field of education and occupational class confirm the structural underpinnings of inequality perceptions in society. Socio-cultural professional, educated in fields requiring more cultural-communicative skills, core constituents of the new left/Green parties, are more inequality-averse than production workers or those with an education background in more technical-economic fields.

Last, our findings on public inequality perceptions can provide us with valuable insights on electoral politics in the 21st century. On the one hand, the strength of the universalism-particularism divide regarding all types of inequality implies a positive message for the prospects of progressive politics. The overwhelming majority of the left electorate is clearly egalitarian across sociocultural, as well as socioeconomic issues. Progressive politics that can be attractive for progressive voters has to balance both the pursuit of more equality in the area of economic disparities in society, and the deepened commitment to progressive policies that enhance the position of women, LGBTQ+ people and those with a migration background. On the other hand, we see a more ambivalent consequence of our findings regarding the politicization of

economic class inequalities. While there is widespread agreement across the electorates that differences in income and education and social origin are highly consequential for life chances, they are on average least problematized in the electorate. In addition, the problematization is much less divisive and polarized than the perceived problematization of sociocultural types of inequality. Taken together, this pattern implies only weak incentives of political parties on either side of the spectrum to prioritize these inequalities in their programs, as they are likely to have a weaker mobilizing effect politically. Hence, while we do not see a crowding out of different types of inequalities on either the left or the right, the lower problematization and divisiveness of economic inequalities may entail a certain crowding-out of economic inequalities at the benefit of sociocultural inequalities at the systemic level of the party system. Both the New Left and the Radical Right may rationally have better chances to stand out and mobilize voters with appeals to sociocultural inequalities (either positive or skeptical appeals) than with appeals to income and education inequalities. If the Left in particular were to bring back economic inequalities to the forefront of electoral politics (for ideological, historical or normative reasons), a framing strategy that ties them to a joint agenda of universalism, involving both sociocultural and socioeconomic inequalities, might thus be more promising than a sole focus on economic inequalities.

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A Appendix

Contents

A.1 Descriptives

		N	Percent
Household Income	high income	1495	29.27
	medium income	2088	40.88
	low income	1428	27.96
Education	high education	2011	39.37
	middle education	1071	20.97
	low education	2026	39.66
Social Origin	upper class	2361	46.22
	middle class	1578	30.89
	working class	1158	22.67
Employed	employed	3800	74.39
	without employment	1308	25.61
Gender	male	2463	48.22
	female	2610	51.10
	nonbinary	35	0.69
Sexual Orientation	heterosexual	4261	83.42
	homosexual or other	506	9.91
Migration Background	no	4916	96.24
	yes	192	3.76
Residence	big city	2160	42.29
	suburb/small city	1707	33.42
	countryside	1233	24.14
Age	18-27	1069	20.93
	28-37	1274	24.94
	38-47	1181	23.12
	48-57	1584	31.01
	All	5108	100.00

TABLE 3
Sample characteristics

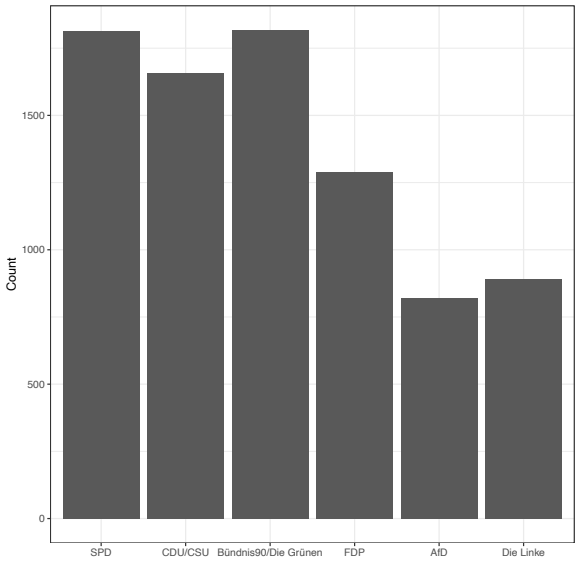

FIGURE 6
Number of respondents with PtV > 5

A.2 Party electorates and inequality perceptions

	Dependent variable:					
	Education	Income	Social.Origin	Gender	Sex.Orient.	Migr.Backgr
PtV.SPD	−0.04	−0.03	−0.01	−0.002	−0.02	0.03
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.04)
PtV.CDU	−0.28***	−0.30***	−0.25***	−0.25***	−0.17***	−0.24***
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.04)
PtV.Greens	−0.01	0.05	0.10***	0.17***	0.21***	0.28***
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.04)
PtV.AfD	−0.19***	−0.33***	−0.49***	−0.45***	−0.59***	−0.68***
	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
PtV.FDP	−0.17***	−0.19***	−0.14***	−0.11***	−0.13***	−0.11***
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
PtV.Left	−0.01	−0.04	−0.17***	−0.20***	−0.23***	−0.12***
	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Urban	−0.08**	−0.16***	−0.10***	−0.12***	−0.05	−0.10***
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Male	−0.29***	−0.32***	−0.31***	−0.36***	−0.35***	−0.28***
	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Medium.Educ	−0.08*	0.02	0.15***	0.14***	0.15***	0.09**
	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
High.Educ	−0.25***	−0.08*	0.07**	0.05	0.06	0.06*
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Medium.Inc	−0.11**	−0.05	−0.01	0.04	0.03	0.08**
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
High.Inc	−0.17***	−0.06	0.09**	0.17***	0.15***	0.16***
	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Migr.Backgr	−0.05	−0.01	−0.07*	−0.11***	−0.17***	−0.002
	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Age	0.01***	0.01***	0.003**	0.003**	0.001	−0.002
	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Constant	2.54***	3.05***	3.33***	3.36***	3.43***	3.27***
	(0.08)	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.07)
Observations	5,010	5,010	5,010	5,010	5,010	5,010

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

TABLE 4
Problematization of Inequalities and PtV

	Dependent variable:					
	Education	Income	Social.Origin	Gender	Sex.Orient.	Migr.Backgr
PtV.SPD	0.31	0.32	0.83**	0.82**	0.70**	1.05***
	(0.35)	(0.37)	(0.36)	(0.33)	(0.31)	(0.34)
PtV.CDU	−1.34***	−1.95***	−1.36***	−1.34***	0.06	−1.09***
	(0.36)	(0.38)	(0.36)	(0.33)	(0.32)	(0.34)
PtV.Greens	1.05***	1.48***	2.42***	2.80***	2.65***	4.10***
	(0.36)	(0.38)	(0.37)	(0.34)	(0.32)	(0.34)
PtV.AfD	−0.91**	−1.92***	−1.69***	−1.89***	−1.78***	−3.11***
	(0.43)	(0.46)	(0.44)	(0.40)	(0.38)	(0.42)
PtV.FDP	−0.97**	−1.51***	−1.31***	−1.03***	−0.70**	−1.35***
	(0.38)	(0.40)	(0.39)	(0.36)	(0.34)	(0.37)
PtV.Left	0.38	0.59	−0.10	0.42	0.46	1.25***
	(0.43)	(0.45)	(0.43)	(0.40)	(0.38)	(0.41)
Urban	−0.48	−0.83**	−0.05	0.17	0.16	−0.32
	(0.37)	(0.39)	(0.37)	(0.34)	(0.33)	(0.35)
Male	−2.77***	−3.26***	−2.72***	−3.96***	−2.45***	−3.01***
	(0.32)	(0.34)	(0.32)	(0.30)	(0.28)	(0.30)
Medium.Educ	0.52	1.09**	1.57***	1.22***	−0.10	1.38***
	(0.42)	(0.45)	(0.43)	(0.39)	(0.37)	(0.40)
High.Educ	−0.70*	0.91**	1.83***	1.58***	−0.48	2.24***
	(0.38)	(0.40)	(0.39)	(0.36)	(0.34)	(0.36)
Medium.Inc	−0.60	−0.66	−0.21	0.01	0.37	0.27
	(0.38)	(0.41)	(0.39)	(0.36)	(0.34)	(0.37)
High.Inc	−0.63	−0.70	−0.26	0.38	0.14	1.19***
	(0.44)	(0.46)	(0.45)	(0.41)	(0.39)	(0.42)
Migr.Backgr	−0.04	−0.14	−0.34	−0.39	−0.15	0.54
	(0.39)	(0.42)	(0.40)	(0.37)	(0.35)	(0.38)
Age	0.13***	0.11***	0.09***	0.02	−0.02*	0.0000
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Constant	13.01***	17.21***	14.28***	14.48***	13.59***	14.20***
	(0.70)	(0.74)	(0.72)	(0.66)	(0.62)	(0.67)
Observations	5,010	5,010	5,010	5,010	5,010	5,010

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

TABLE 5
Perceived Societal Importance * Problematization of Inequalities and PtV

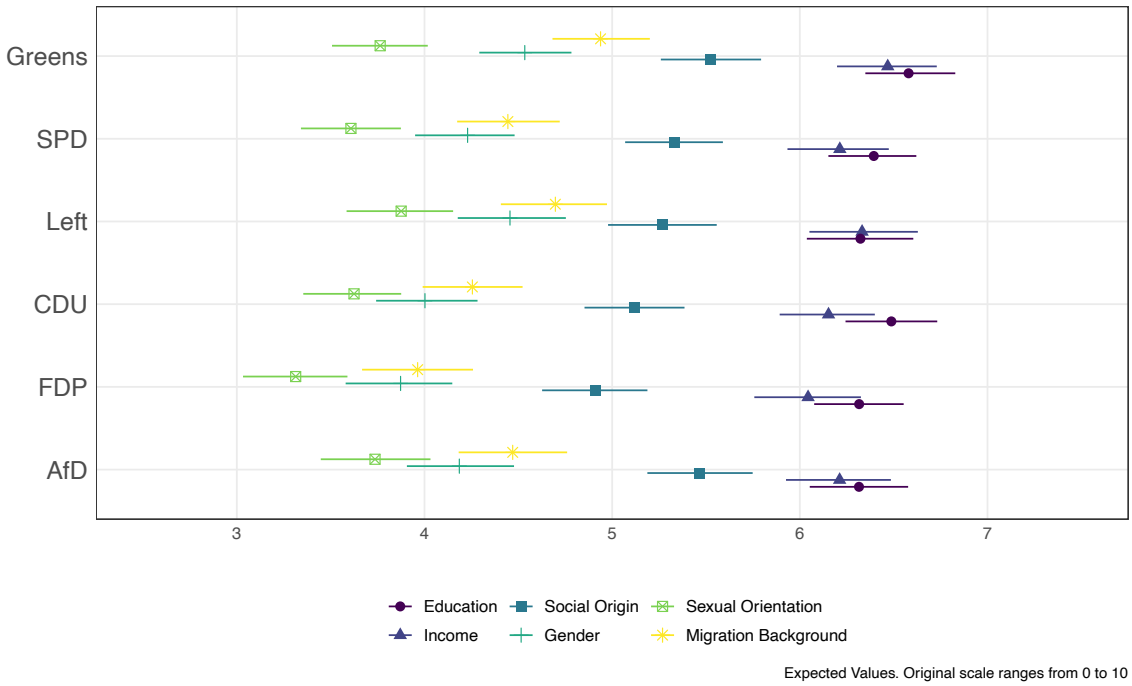

FIGURE 7
Perceived Societal Importance of Inequality and PtV (Expected Values)

	Dependent variable:					
	Education	Income	Social.Origin	Gender	Sex.Orient.	Migr.Backgr
PtV.SPD	0.23***	0.17**	0.38***	0.34***	0.37***	0.36***
	(0.08)	(0.09)	(0.09)	(0.09)	(0.09)	(0.09)
PtV.CDU	0.32***	0.11	0.16*	0.11	0.39***	0.18**
	(0.08)	(0.09)	(0.09)	(0.09)	(0.09)	(0.09)
PtV.Greens	0.42***	0.43***	0.57***	0.65***	0.53***	0.86***
	(0.08)	(0.09)	(0.09)	(0.09)	(0.09)	(0.09)
PtV.AfD	0.15	0.17	0.51***	0.30***	0.50***	0.39***
	(0.10)	(0.11)	(0.11)	(0.11)	(0.11)	(0.11)
PtV.FDP	0.15*	0.001	−0.04	−0.02	0.07	−0.12
	(0.09)	(0.09)	(0.10)	(0.09)	(0.09)	(0.10)
PtV.Left	0.16*	0.30***	0.31***	0.57***	0.64***	0.61***
	(0.10)	(0.10)	(0.11)	(0.10)	(0.10)	(0.11)
Urban	0.06	0.06	0.17*	0.26***	0.17*	0.06
	(0.08)	(0.09)	(0.09)	(0.09)	(0.09)	(0.09)
Male	−0.31***	−0.41***	−0.30***	−0.60***	−0.22***	−0.46***
	(0.07)	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.08)
Medium.Educ	0.39***	0.28***	0.19*	0.12	−0.24**	0.24**
	(0.10)	(0.10)	(0.11)	(0.10)	(0.10)	(0.11)
High.Educ	0.47***	0.49***	0.49***	0.37***	−0.14	0.59***
	(0.09)	(0.09)	(0.09)	(0.09)	(0.09)	(0.10)
Medium.Inc	0.07	−0.07	−0.08	−0.09	0.05	−0.05
	(0.09)	(0.09)	(0.10)	(0.09)	(0.09)	(0.10)
High.Inc	0.28***	0.02	−0.22**	−0.14	−0.14	0.10
	(0.10)	(0.11)	(0.11)	(0.11)	(0.11)	(0.11)
Migr.Backgr	0.19**	0.04	0.05	0.08	0.22**	0.25**
	(0.09)	(0.10)	(0.10)	(0.10)	(0.10)	(0.10)
Age	0.02***	0.02***	0.02***	−0.0003	−0.01***	−0.0004
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)
Constant	5.13***	5.53***	4.24***	4.20***	3.87***	4.31***
	(0.16)	(0.17)	(0.18)	(0.17)	(0.17)	(0.18)
Observations	5,010	5,010	5,010	5,010	5,010	5,010
Note:						*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

TABLE 6
Perceived Societal Importance of Inequality and PtV

A.3 Vote choice and inequality perceptions

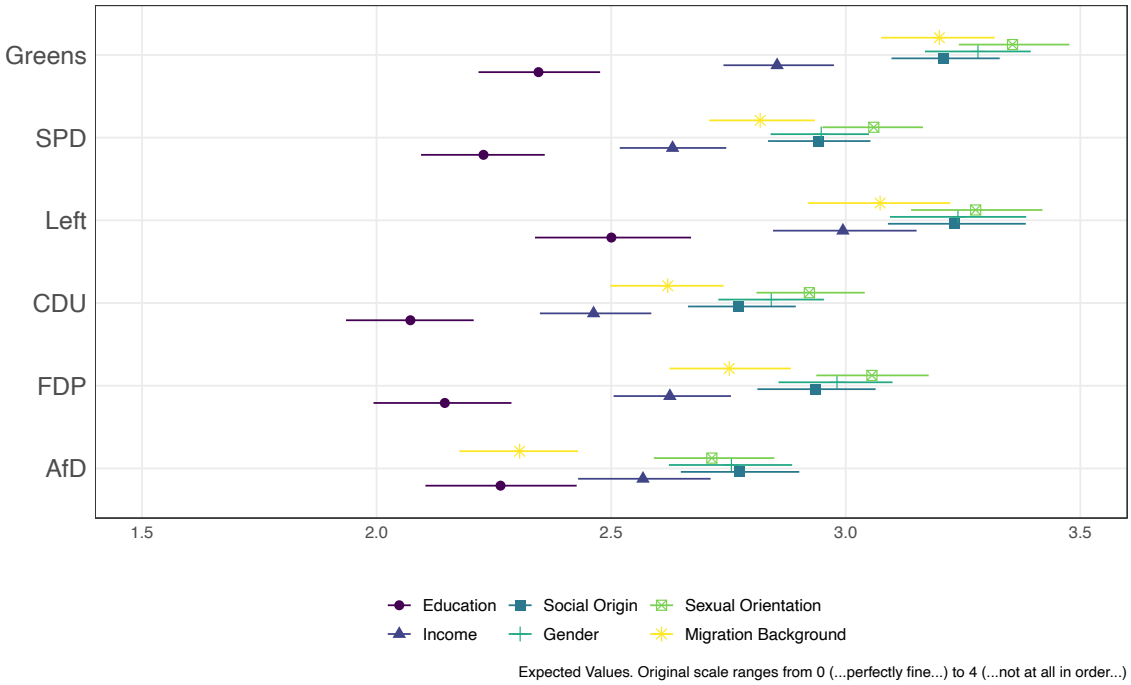

FIGURE 8
Inequality Problematization and Vote Chocie (Expected Values)

	Dependent variable:					
	Education	Income	Social.Origin	Gender	Sex.Orient.	Migr.Backgr
FDP (ref. AfD)	−0.12	0.06	0.16**	0.22***	0.34***	0.45***
	(0.08)	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.07)
CDU	−0.20***	−0.11	0.002	0.08	0.21***	0.32***
	(0.08)	(0.07)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.07)
Left	0.24**	0.43***	0.46***	0.48***	0.56***	0.77***
	(0.10)	(0.09)	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.08)
SPD	−0.03	0.06	0.17***	0.19***	0.35***	0.51***
	(0.07)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)
Greens	0.08	0.29***	0.44***	0.52***	0.64***	0.89***
	(0.08)	(0.07)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.07)
Urban	−0.08	−0.21***	−0.14***	−0.18***	−0.08*	−0.13***
	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Male	−0.29***	−0.35***	−0.35***	−0.38***	−0.38***	−0.31***
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Medium.Educ	−0.07	0.01	0.15***	0.13***	0.14***	0.06
	(0.06)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)
High.Educ	−0.27***	−0.13***	0.04	0.02	0.04	0.04
	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Medium.Inc	−0.11**	−0.02	0.002	0.02	0.04	0.07
	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.05)
High.Inc	−0.23***	−0.08	0.08	0.13***	0.14***	0.14***
	(0.06)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)
Migr.Backgr	−0.01	0.04	−0.01	−0.10**	−0.11**	0.04
	(0.06)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)
Age	0.01***	0.01***	0.01***	0.01***	0.004***	0.001
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)
Constant	2.32***	2.65***	2.83***	2.90***	2.81***	2.55***
	(0.11)	(0.10)	(0.09)	(0.09)	(0.09)	(0.09)
Observations	3,869	3,869	3,869	3,869	3,869	3,869

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

TABLE 7
Inequality Problematization and Vote Choice

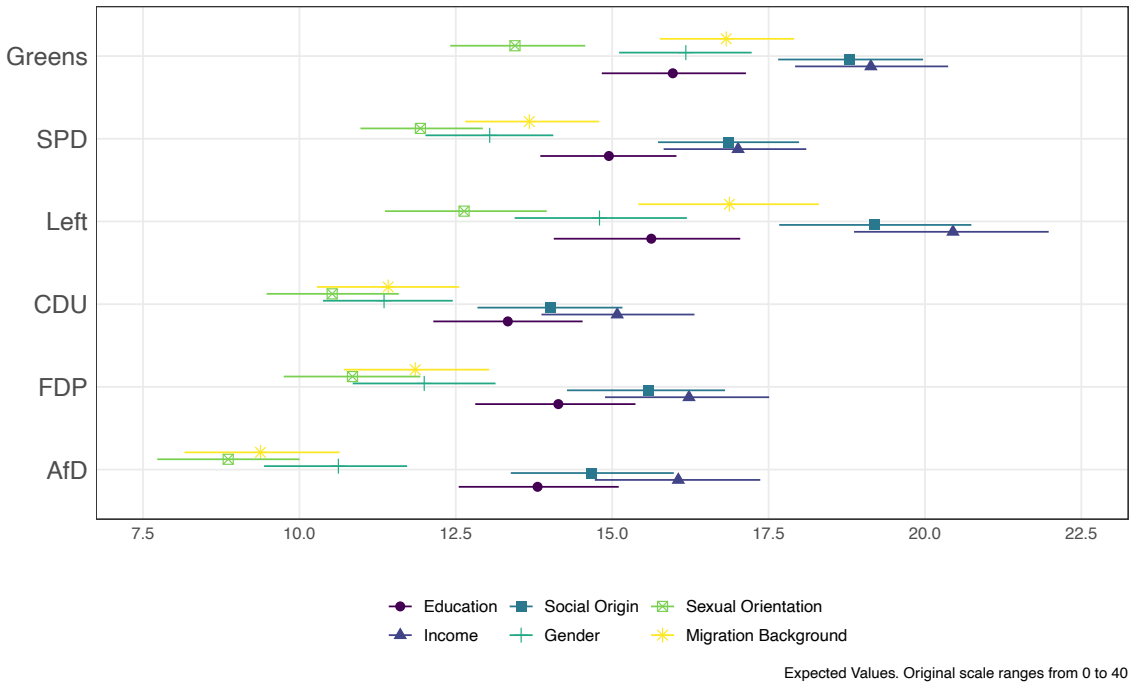

FIGURE 9
Perceived Societal Importance * Problematization and Vote Chocie (Expected Values)

	Dependent variable:					
	Education	Income	Social.Origin	Gender	Sex.Orient.	Migr.Backgr
FDP (ref. AfD)	0.33	0.14	0.92	1.37**	2.01***	2.44***
	(0.69)	(0.72)	(0.70)	(0.64)	(0.62)	(0.67)
CDU	−0.56	−0.99	−0.66	0.75	1.67***	2.03***
	(0.64)	(0.67)	(0.65)	(0.60)	(0.58)	(0.63)
Left	1.84**	4.40***	4.55***	4.16***	3.78***	7.49***
	(0.81)	(0.85)	(0.82)	(0.75)	(0.73)	(0.79)
SPD	1.16*	0.94	2.25***	2.43***	3.10***	4.28***
	(0.61)	(0.64)	(0.62)	(0.57)	(0.55)	(0.60)
Greens	2.15***	3.03***	4.16***	5.52***	4.57***	7.43***
	(0.64)	(0.68)	(0.65)	(0.60)	(0.58)	(0.63)
Urban	−0.35	−1.07**	−0.07	0.10	0.03	−0.36
	(0.42)	(0.44)	(0.43)	(0.39)	(0.37)	(0.41)
Male	−2.81***	−3.60***	−3.09***	−4.04***	−2.68***	−3.12***
	(0.36)	(0.37)	(0.36)	(0.33)	(0.32)	(0.35)
Medium.Educ	0.49	0.69	1.20**	1.02**	−0.30	0.99**
	(0.48)	(0.50)	(0.49)	(0.45)	(0.43)	(0.47)
High.Educ	−0.82*	0.51	1.55***	1.39***	−0.46	2.16***
	(0.43)	(0.45)	(0.43)	(0.40)	(0.38)	(0.42)
Medium.Inc	−0.68	−0.58	0.01	−0.39	0.27	0.07
	(0.45)	(0.47)	(0.46)	(0.42)	(0.40)	(0.44)
High.Inc	−1.21**	−0.93*	−0.09	−0.09	0.08	0.89*
	(0.50)	(0.52)	(0.50)	(0.46)	(0.44)	(0.48)
Migr.Backgr	−0.18	0.17	0.23	−0.39	0.16	0.82*
	(0.49)	(0.51)	(0.50)	(0.46)	(0.44)	(0.48)
Age	0.14***	0.14***	0.11***	0.03**	−0.01	0.02
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.02)
Constant	11.44***	15.09***	12.29***	12.56***	12.07***	11.13***
	(0.91)	(0.96)	(0.93)	(0.85)	(0.82)	(0.89)
Observations	3,869	3,869	3,869	3,869	3,869	3,869

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

TABLE 8
Perceived Societal Importance * Problematization and Vote Choice

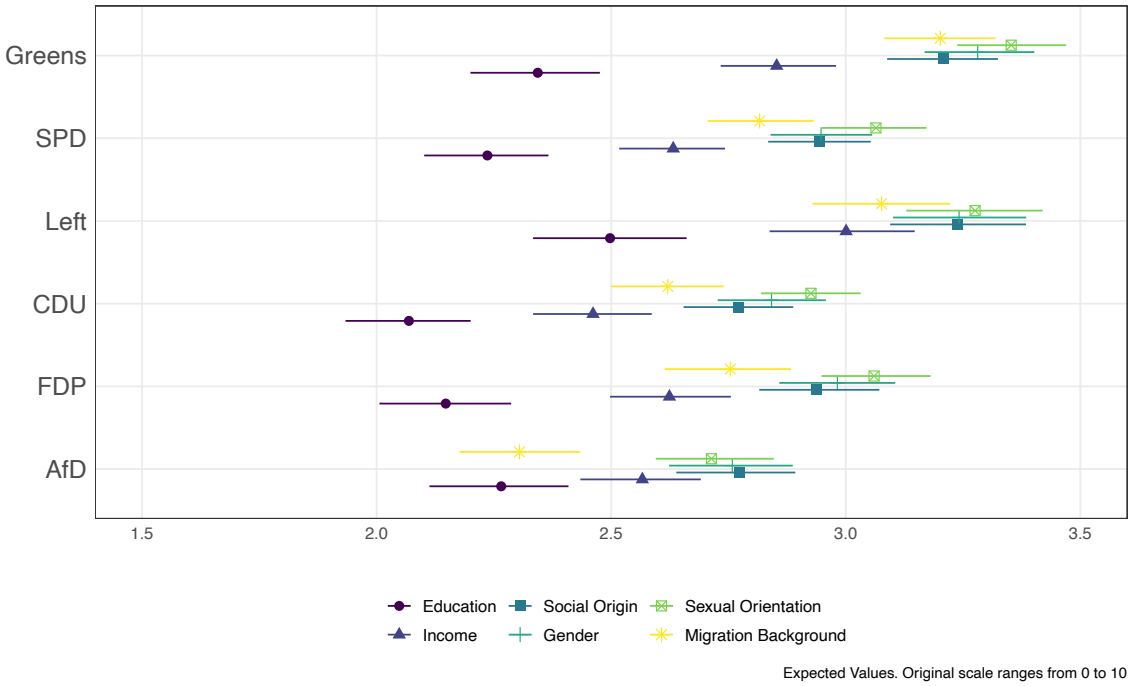

FIGURE 10
Perceived Societal Importance of Inequality and Vote Chocie (Expected Values)

	Dependent variable:					
	Education	Income	Social.Origin	Gender	Sex.Orient.	Migr.Backgr
FDP (ref. AfD)	−0.12	0.06	0.16**	0.22***	0.34***	0.45***
	(0.08)	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.07)
CDU	−0.20***	−0.11	0.002	0.08	0.21***	0.32***
	(0.08)	(0.07)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.07)
Left	0.24**	0.43***	0.46***	0.48***	0.56***	0.77***
	(0.10)	(0.09)	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.08)
SPD	−0.03	0.06	0.17***	0.19***	0.35***	0.51***
	(0.07)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)
Greens	0.08	0.29***	0.44***	0.52***	0.64***	0.89***
	(0.08)	(0.07)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.07)
Urban	−0.08	−0.21***	−0.14***	−0.18***	−0.08*	−0.13***
	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Male	−0.29***	−0.35***	−0.35***	−0.38***	−0.38***	−0.31***
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Medium.Educ	−0.07	0.01	0.15***	0.13***	0.14***	0.06
	(0.06)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)
High.Educ	−0.27***	−0.13***	0.04	0.02	0.04	0.04
	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Medium.Inc	−0.11**	−0.02	0.002	0.02	0.04	0.07
	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.05)
High.Inc	−0.23***	−0.08	0.08	0.13***	0.14***	0.14***
	(0.06)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)
Migr.Backgr	−0.01	0.04	−0.01	−0.10**	−0.11**	0.04
	(0.06)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)
Age	0.01***	0.01***	0.01***	0.01***	0.004***	0.001
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)
Constant	2.32***	2.65***	2.83***	2.90***	2.81***	2.55***
	(0.11)	(0.10)	(0.09)	(0.09)	(0.09)	(0.09)
Observations	3,869	3,869	3,869	3,869	3,869	3,869
Note:						*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

TABLE 9
Perceived Societal Importance of Inequality and Vote Choice

A.4 Structural foundations of inequality perceptions

	Dependent variable:					
	Education	Income	Social.Origin	Gender	Sex.Orient.	Migr.Backgr
High.educ.	−0.16***	0.0004	0.10***	0.09**	0.12***	0.17***
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Middle.income	−0.13***	−0.09**	−0.04	0.01	0.02	0.05
	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
High.income	−0.22***	−0.13***	0.05	0.14***	0.16***	0.13***
	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.05)
Middle.class.backgr.	−0.16***	−0.04	−0.002	0.03	0.01	−0.05
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
High.class backgr.	−0.33***	−0.32***	−0.23***	−0.18***	−0.22***	−0.23***
	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)
Male	−0.33***	−0.36***	−0.37***	−0.43***	−0.44***	−0.36***
	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Hetero	−0.10	−0.02	−0.004	0.02	−0.09*	0.01
	(0.06)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)
No.migr.backgr.	−0.04	0.01	−0.06	−0.12***	−0.17***	−0.01
	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Urban	−0.08*	−0.14***	−0.08**	−0.11***	−0.04	−0.07*
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Age	0.01***	0.01***	0.003*	0.003*	0.001	−0.003**
	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Constant	2.57***	3.01***	3.29***	3.31***	3.48***	3.26***
	(0.10)	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.08)
Observations	4,747	4,747	4,747	4,747	4,747	4,747

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

TABLE 10
Problematization of Inequalities. KE Operationalization: Education

	Dependent variable:					
	Education	Income	Social.Origin	Gender	Sex.Orient.	Migr.Backgr
Low.ed/High.inc	−0.17***	−0.08	0.09*	0.10**	0.13***	0.11**
	(0.06)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)
High.ed/Low.inc	−0.19***	−0.02	0.11**	0.06	0.11**	0.18***
	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.05)
High.ed/High.inc	−0.30***	−0.07	0.17***	0.23***	0.27***	0.27***
	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)
Middle.class.backgr.	−0.16***	−0.05	−0.005	0.03	0.01	−0.05
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
High.class.backgr.	−0.34***	−0.32***	−0.23***	−0.18***	−0.22***	−0.22***
	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)
Male	−0.33***	−0.36***	−0.37***	−0.43***	−0.44***	−0.36***
	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Hetero	−0.11*	−0.02	−0.01	0.02	−0.09*	0.02
	(0.06)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)
No.migr.backgr.	−0.04	0.01	−0.06	−0.12***	−0.17***	−0.01
	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Urban	−0.07	−0.14***	−0.08**	−0.11***	−0.04	−0.08**
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Age	0.01***	0.01***	0.003*	0.003*	0.001	−0.003**
	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Constant	2.51***	2.96***	3.26***	3.32***	3.49***	3.29***
	(0.09)	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.08)
Observations	4,747	4,747	4,747	4,747	4,747	4,747

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

TABLE 11
Problematization of Inequalities. KE Operationalization: Kitschelt

	Dependent variable:					
	Education	Income	Social.Origin	Gender	Sex.Orient.	Migr.Backgr
CECT	0.07	0.20***	0.17***	0.20***	0.23***	0.24***
	(0.07)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)
High.educ	−0.14***	−0.02	0.09**	0.06*	0.09**	0.15***
	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Middle.income	−0.15***	−0.10**	−0.07*	−0.01	−0.004	0.03
	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
High.income	−0.24***	−0.15***	0.01	0.11**	0.13***	0.11**
	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)
Middle.class.backgr.	−0.17***	−0.07*	−0.01	−0.001	−0.002	−0.07*
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
High.class.backgr.	−0.35***	−0.35***	−0.26***	−0.22***	−0.25***	−0.25***
	(0.06)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)
Male	−0.31***	−0.32***	−0.35***	−0.40***	−0.40***	−0.34***
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.04)
Hetero	−0.08	−0.0005	0.01	0.03	−0.07	0.05
	(0.07)	(0.06)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.06)
No.migr.backgr.	−0.03	−0.003	−0.07*	−0.13***	−0.19***	−0.01
	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Urban	−0.08	−0.15***	−0.09**	−0.13***	−0.04	−0.08**
	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Age	0.01***	0.01***	0.004***	0.004**	0.001	−0.002
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.002)
Constant	2.47***	2.91***	3.21***	3.26***	3.37***	3.15***
	(0.11)	(0.10)	(0.09)	(0.09)	(0.09)	(0.10)
Observations	4,303	4,303	4,303	4,303	4,303	4,303
Note:						*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

TABLE 12
Problematization of Inequalities. KE Operationalization: CECT (numeric)

	Dependent variable:					
	Education	Income	Social.Origin	Gender	Sex.Orient.	Migr.Backgr
Self-employed profess.	0.24*	0.28**	0.19*	0.28**	0.15	0.26**
	(0.13)	(0.12)	(0.12)	(0.12)	(0.11)	(0.12)
Small business owner	−0.31***	−0.09	−0.06	0.10	0.03	−0.002
	(0.12)	(0.11)	(0.10)	(0.10)	(0.10)	(0.11)
Technical profess.	−0.02	0.001	0.01	0.07	−0.02	−0.06
	(0.09)	(0.08)	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.08)
Managers	−0.19***	−0.14**	−0.20***	−0.11*	−0.13**	−0.14**
	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.07)
Clerks	0.22	0.20	−0.01	−0.06	0.09	0.06
	(0.28)	(0.25)	(0.24)	(0.24)	(0.24)	(0.25)
Sociocultural profess.	−0.002	0.02	0.14**	0.24***	0.17***	0.16**
	(0.07)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)
Service workers	−0.21	−0.23*	−0.26*	−0.17	−0.25*	−0.30**
	(0.16)	(0.14)	(0.14)	(0.14)	(0.14)	(0.14)
Middle income	−0.08	−0.09	−0.05	0.01	0.02	0.09*
	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.06)
High income	−0.13*	−0.10	0.12**	0.20***	0.22***	0.28***
	(0.07)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)
Middle class backgr.	−0.19***	−0.04	0.02	0.05	0.02	−0.03
	(0.06)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)
High class backgr.	−0.45***	−0.31***	−0.20***	−0.19***	−0.22***	−0.16***
	(0.07)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)
Male	−0.31***	−0.35***	−0.32***	−0.37***	−0.35***	−0.30***
	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.05)
Hetero	−0.08	0.04	0.03	0.06	−0.02	0.05
	(0.08)	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.07)
No migr.backgr.	0.04	0.05	0.03	−0.08	−0.13**	0.06
	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.05)	(0.06)
Urban	−0.06	−0.09*	−0.08	−0.08	−0.01	−0.04
	(0.06)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)
Age	0.01***	0.01***	0.002	0.002	−0.002	−0.01**
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)
Constant	2.51***	2.87***	3.24***	3.19***	3.42***	3.22***
	(0.13)	(0.12)	(0.12)	(0.12)	(0.12)	(0.12)
Observations	2,613	2,613	2,613	2,613	2,613	2,613

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

TABLE 13
Problematization of Inequalities. KE Operationalization: Oesch Classes