

Political space among young Swedish upper secondary pupils

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Introduction

Declining interest in politics among citizens in Western societies has been identified as a potential risk to the political systems; losing its legitimacy, undermining key relationships between citizens and the state, many of which are sustained by political parties. Of much concern is young citizens' decline in joining political parties and becoming involved in their local political communities¹. After decades of a silence, the research field on political socialization is undergoing a somewhat revitalization. However, in much research youth is considered more or less as a homogenous group, differentiated only by age, whereas the comparisons mainly focus on differences between adolescents, youth and adults. Hand in hand with the trend of decline in political party membership and party activism, contemporary research recognize; the rise of relatively new forms of political participation, having their origins in wider social and technological changes². The basic argument is that in many countries consumer participation has become an increasingly important feature of politics. In European democracies, for example, large numbers of individuals participate by buying or boycotting goods for political or ethical reasons. Such consumer participation and the rise of social forums global justice campaign change the landscape of possible acts, offering new arenas and alternatives to traditional forms like campaigning or joining a political party. There has been a trend since the late 20th century to pay more attention towards value differences and differences in life style than to difference in social background. Over time social class is claimed to lose its analytic strength in explaining changes in political attitude, voting behavior and party loyalties³. However there are a few attempts to investigate social differences and differences in political participation, engagement and preferences⁴. Recent research on the emerging global – social – justice movements even shed some light on differences in educational background within the group of young participants, with main focus on educational level⁵. *The aim of our project is twofold; on the one hand to understand the relationship between political interests, opinions and attitudes and, on the other hand, to examine the correspondence between the space of interests, opinions and attitudes and educational position – schools, educational program – and social origin.*

Data and Method

In this paper we will focus on Geometric Data Analysis, especially bi-weighted Principal Component Analysis (PCA), constructing a space of political interests, opinions and values, examining how various attributes (variable values) are related and how subgroups of individuals are related within this space. Educational and social characteristics of the respondents are projected onto the constructed space of political opinions and values in order to examine how the political space of young people is related to educational and social characteristics. First we need to give some information on the set of data.

¹ Michelletti 2003, Amnå 2008.

² Ingelhart 1971, 1987, Flanagan 1987.

³ Ingelhart 1971, 1997, Lipset et al 1993.

⁴ Bartles 2008, Oskarsson 2009, Harrits et al 2009.

⁵ Wennerhag et al 2006.

The set of data

The empirical data set stems from a survey carried out in 2008 and 2009 among third grade pupils in upper secondary schools in two different municipalities – the university town of Uppsala and the mining districts – in Sweden. In total the entire population comprise of 1524 individuals, divided into two cohorts (Uppsala and the mining districts). The analysis presented in this paper is based on the cohort of respondents from Uppsala, in total 792⁶ individuals from different schools attending different programs at the upper secondary education, in third grade.

The survey was conducted by questionnaire, comprising questions of gender, age, school, educational program, school merits, parents' occupation, parents' educational background and level of education, life conditions and cultural practices and questions on political issues such as interests in politics, opinions, values, confidence and trust towards democratic institutions and institutions in society, and sympathies toward political parties.

Method

SCA and MCA are very fit methods to employ when dealing with large datasets with multiple responses and a wide range of variables in order to interpret and analyze the underlying structures. When confronted with the type of data that the survey under hand consists, such as measures of attitudes, one often finds, using the MCA, what has been labeled the “Guttman effect”, which more or less reveals an underlying uni-dimensional structure in the response-set.⁷ Such analysis are if not trivial, however true, they are insufficient, when the aim is to grasp and understand the underlying mechanisms that constitute the space of political interests, opinions and values since all the respondents are grouped into three pools (positive, negative, and disinterest/no opinion). One solution to this problem is to use the recoding method of Doubling-Technique where responses on each question are dichotomized into positive and negative responses where the initial response is converted into a position on both the positive and the negative scale.⁸ By doing this, the actual response of the individual is not forced into either agreeing or disagreeing.

The statistical procedure applied, as mentioned, to construct the political space is SCA with the underlying principles of a bi-weighted PCA (because of the doubling technique). The advantage of using bi-weighted PCA instead of MCA is that the relative weights of modalities are no longer of (crucial) importance to the construction of the space. We apply it to an $I \times K$ table (K being numerical variables since we have recoded the (Q) questions into positive and negative scales). The doubling technique implies that the means of the rows will be identical.⁹

When the space has been constructed and the relevant interpretations have been made the next step is to perform a structured data analysis. This step consist of two different ways of analyzing

⁶ The initial data contains 1024 Uppsala based respondents. We have narrowed it down to 792 based on number of blank responses on crucial questions.

⁷ Le Roux & Rouanet, 2004, s. 220.

⁸ The terms positive and negative are referring both to the way the questions were asked and the way they have been labeled in the factorial plane. For example the variable “refugees_+” is referring to disagreeing with the statement “allow fewer refugees into Sweden”.

⁹ LeRoux & Rouanet, 2004, s. 132ff.

the space: interpreting the sub-clouds derived from analytical categories such as social background and educational background; and by Euclidian classification. The former will create clusters based on premade categories of interest, whereas the latter creates empirically based clusters in the sense that they only take response patterns (coordinates) into consideration. The clusters derived from hierarchical tree clustering can then be analyzed by the relative frequencies of the premade analytical categories in each cluster (cloud).¹⁰

The construction of a political space – active variables and related themes

In order to construct a space of political opinions, values and interest employing geometric data analysis – in specific; bi-weighted – we have selected 25 questions referring to 5 different themes, consisting of 63 modalities. The themes are constructed in order to serve as an aid in interpretation.

Liberal economy

Q: "What is your opinion"¹¹:

Lower the taxes on high income
Avoid privatizing hospitals.
Decrease income inequality.

Q: "How interested are you in"¹².

National economy.
Labour market.

Cultural pluralism / Ethnocentrism:

Q: "What is your opinion on":

Allow less refugees;
Increase economic support to immigrants cultural practice;
Increase support immigrants' development of native language.

Q: "How interested are you in".

International peace & conflict;
Foreign labour rights.

Environment, and animal rights:

Q: "What is your opinion ?"

Increase the gas taxes for the sake of environmental improvement;
Stop private cars in the cities.

Q: "How interested are you in."

Environment;
Animal rights.

Supra-nationality:

Q: "What is your opinion ?

Swe should become member of EMU;
Swe should terminate EU-membership;
Develop EU into European united states;
Swe should apply for NATO membership.

Q: "How interested are you in".

Questions related to the European union.

Trust/confidence in established society and its authorities

Q: "How much trust do you have in the work of the following institutions".

¹⁰ LeRoux & Rouanet, 2004, s. 106f.

¹¹ The variables on opinion questions are: totally agree – do not agree at all.

¹² The variables on interest question are: very interested – not at all interested.

Government;
Parliament;
City council;
EU-parliament;
Political parties.

Supplementary variables

The trend to give less attention within studies on political participation, engagement and attitudes to social class and pay more attention to differences in life style and value difference has its arguments in basic trends in the political culture; on the one hand a transformation and change of the political landscape whereas dominating issues relate less to economic interests of social classes, re-distribution of material welfare, and more to post-material values differences and differences in life styles¹³ and on the other hand that traditional hierarchies are weakened challenged by emerging new social differences¹⁴. From a Scandinavian point of view social parameters (social-economy and level of education) has kept a prominent place in studies on voting behavior and in election studies¹⁵. Research on global justice movement's claim that participation in these new social movements gathers members of the new middle classes and people with higher level of education than the population at large¹⁶. Our point of departure is that social division is conceptualized as multidimensional and that we need to shed some light on social differences related to political opinions and attitudes whereas not only the volume of capital but also its composition of economic and cultural capital is of crucial interest¹⁷.

Social origin is here represented by the occupational position of the father. This obviously means that there are less sons and daughters of preschool teachers and nurses and more of construction workers. In order to get statistically useful categories we have made a classification of the initial 36 possible responses (34 occupational categories, 1 stay-at-home category, 1 no answer category) into 14 categories. This classification is based on educational background and sector affiliation (public or private) in such way that occupations sharing similar profiles in terms of educational background and sector affiliation will be grouped together, unless the occupation has a large weight or there are strong dissimilarities concerning the occupational practice between two or more occupations sharing similar educational profiles and sector affiliations. We have for instance grouped professors with scientists and physicians because of their high share of post-graduate education.

Another important classification is the educational background of each pupil in the set. We will focus on the school and educational program. The reason for a classification of these variables is once again of statistical concern (a manageable distribution of weights) but also of sociological concern. The common way to classify secondary education in Sweden is the dichotomous classification of vocational and preparatory (preparing for higher education) programs. We have reason to believe though, that there are important differences that will not let themselves be

¹³ Inglehart 1997.

¹⁴ Lipset et al 1991.

¹⁵ Holmberg & Oscarsson 2004, Oscarsson 2005, Oscarsson 2009.

¹⁶ Melucci 1989, Norris 2002, Wennerhag 2006.

¹⁷ Bourdieu 1984.

uncovered using such rough categories. It is reasonable to believe that the analysis will benefit from a classification that pays attention to the possibility that “natural science students” are not a homogenous group when it comes to political attitudes, but that there are differences connected to both educational program and school in such a way that it is not the same thing to be a natural science student at Fyris or at Katedral. Differences stemming from the entire logic of the secondary school system in the particular educational setting that is Uppsala. That point is that we, due to earlier studies, know that different schools attracts individuals from different social backgrounds and families with different educational backgrounds’. We have therefore combined the school variable with the educational program variable in order to construct categories such as “natural science at Fyrissskolan” etcetera (cf. table 1).

Table 1. *The distribution of individuals on different educational programs and schools*

Educational program	Label (prog_school)	Frequency	Percent
No reply	NR	7	0,9
Electric and construction combined at Boland	El_Constr_Boland	82	10,4
Aesthetics at Boland	Aesthet_Boland	53	6,7
Vehicle program at Boland	Vehicle_Boland	45	5,7
Healthcare program at Lundellska	Healthcare_Lundell	26	3,3
Media at GUC	Media_GUC	59	7,4
Commercial program at Linné	commerc_Lin	18	2,3
Food, handicraft, tourism, hotel and restaurant programmes at Ekeby and Linné	other_Eke_Lin	55	6,9
Natural science at Fyris	Nv_Fyris	38	4,8
Natural science at Katedral	Nv_Kat	21	2,7
Natural science at Lundellska	Nv_Lundell	61	7,7
Natural science at Rosendahl	Nv_Rosen	38	4,8
Technology at Fyris	Te_Fyris	15	1,9
Social science at Katedral	Sp_Kate	27	3,4
Social science at Linné	Sp_Lin	69	8,7
Social science at Lundellska	Sp_Lundell	58	7,3
Social science at Fyris	Sp_Fyris	22	2,8
Social science/International at Boland	Sp_Int_Bol	39	4,9
Social science/International at Rosendahl	Sp_Int_Rosen	51	6,4
International Baccalureate at Katedral	IB	8	1
	Total	792	100

Analys I: The space of opinions, attitudes and interests – total population

The following analysis is based on responses to the 25 questions on political opinions, attitudes and interests presented above, whereas the GDA allow an empirical construction of a space of opinions, attitudes and interests consisting of a number of dimensions of which the first axis explain more of the total variance than the second axis, the second axis more than the third and so forth. Table 1 shows eigenvalues and the rates, or in other words the relative importance, of

the axis. The first axis' relatively high rate means that there is a very strong underlying trait explaining a large proportion of the total variance. In the following we will interpret the political space constructed in axis 1 and 2.

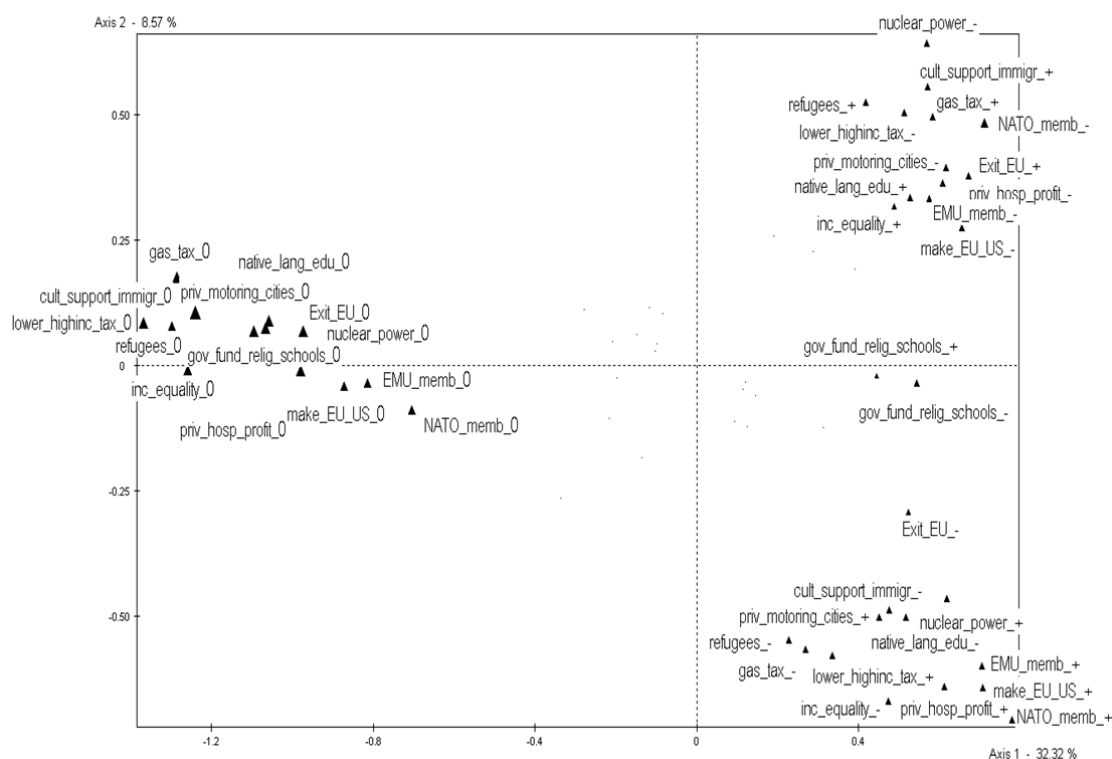
Opposition between opinion and non-opinion

The modalities that dominate the first axis are (no-)opinion and dis-interest modalities. As can be seen in figure 1 the visual interpretation of the first axis is the obvious opposition between having opinions and not having opinions. The first axis explains as much as 32,3 percent of the total variance, the second axis 8,6 percent and the third axis explains 5,5 percent of the total variance.

Table 2. Eigenvalues, rates and cumulated rates for the first 5 axes.

Number	Eigenvalue	Percentage	Cumulated Percentage
1	0,3345	32,32	32,32
2	0,0887	8,57	40,89
3	0,0565	5,46	46,35
4	0,0452	4,37	50,72
5	0,0329	3,18	53,90

Figure 1; axis 1 and 2



The first axis is, as mentioned, dominated by the no-opinion-opinion modalities. On the left hand side of the graph are modalities reflecting no-opinion and dis-interest in political issues and modalities reflecting distrust in political institutions and political parties on the opposite, right hand side, in the graph are modalities reflecting different opinions and interests in different political issues and different attitudes to political institutions and parties. These differences in political opinion, attitudes and interests, on the right hand side of graph, represent the variance of axis 2. On the upper right hand side we find modalities that reflect a disagreement with political opinions such as “lower taxes on high income”, “privatizing hospitals”, a negative attitude toward “EMU membership”, “develop EU and unite its nations” and agreement toward opinions such as “increase equality”, “native language education for immigrants”. On the lower right hand side we find modalities that reflect disagreement with the political opinions “increase equality”, “native language education for immigrants” and agreement toward the opinions “lower taxes on high income”, “privatize hospitals”, and a positive attitude toward modalities reflecting a supra-nationality; “EMU membership” and “develop EU and unite its nations”.

This triangular shape, where the points of clouds appear to be scattered within a triangle reflects a common result of evaluation questionnaires, with poles corresponding; “agree”, “disagree” and “don’t know”¹⁸. Since the first axis simply separates those who have an opinion from those who does not, the content of this dimension is somewhat (socio-)logical trivial. However, keeping in mind that the opposition at hand reflects a distinction between those who “produce” a political opinion and “have” interest in politics on the one hand and on the other hand those silent, not producing an opinion, and lack of interest in political issues. From the point of view of political theory the distribution of variance, with a clear cut distinction between the position of dis-interest, no-opinion and “don’t know” responses and the positions of opinions and interests, is of course of crucial interest. 18 percent of the entire population is related to the no opinion/dis-interest modalities and reflect a democratic deficit; which is reason to ask what characterize these respondents and their positions in the political space? In order to examine what characterize the construction of the first two dimensions of the political space in terms of educational background and social origin, the supplementary variables are analyzed in a cluster analysis.

Cluster analysis – the entire population

In a cluster analysis, patterns of answers that are close to one and another create “clusters” of answers receiving homogenous groups within the political space. These clusters don’t tell anything but the fact that they are parted; more or less distanced, more or less overlapping. The questions in focus are what characterize these clusters? To what extent are the supplementary variables represented in respectively each cluster and to what extent is each cluster characterized by the supplementary variables?

Figure 2, below, show a cluster analysis of the construction of the political space in the first two dimensions. The cluster analysis is based on the first five dimensions of the political space of opinions, using four clusters. To begin with cluster 4 and 3 are separated from cluster 1 and 2 illustrating the opposition between modalities reflecting no-opinion answers’ on political

¹⁸ Le Roux and Rouanet 2004, p 219

questions, a lack of interest in political issues and modalities reflecting different opinions on political questions, having interests in political issues. Cluster 1 and 2 are parted and to some extent overlapping characterized by modalities that reflect different opinions on political questions, different attitudes to political issues and different political interests. Since the first axis is dominated by this opposition and also explain over 30% of the variance within the political space we will interpret to what extent the supplementary variables characterize the cluster of individuals in these opposite clusters and only briefly elaborate on differences between cluster 1 and 2, 3 and 4.

Figure 2.

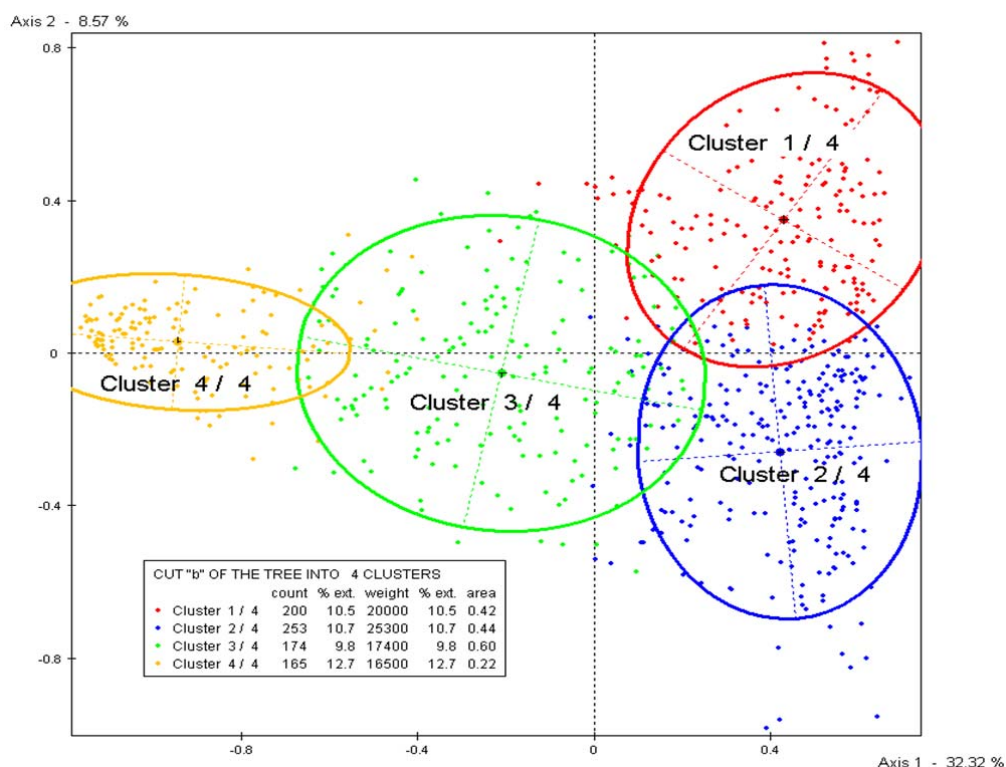


Table 3 contain necessary information on cluster characterization discussed in the following. On the left hand side of graph, cluster 4 and 3 are parted in such way that in cluster 4 we find individuals who resembles in no-opinion attitudes towards questions on immigrants and refugees and income taxes and equality issues in specific, whereas cluster 3 gather individuals who share an no-opinion towards issues concerning supra-nationality in specific. In cluster 4 we find an overrepresentation of individuals who attend the vehicle program, electric and construction program at Boland and health care program at Lundellska. We also find an overrepresentation of individuals whose fathers are industrial workers, farmers and workers in transportation industry. In cluster 3 there is a tendency that individuals at Aesthetic program at Boland are overrepresented, along with individuals attending the Media program at GUC. Cluster 3 shares the character of cluster 4; overrepresentation of individuals whose fathers' occupation are industrial workers, farmers, workers in the transportation industry. Cluster 1, in the upper right hand side of the graph is characterized by modalities reflecting opinions and attitudes in

disagreement with supra-nationality; and a disagreement with liberal economy opinions suggesting a decrease of taxes on high income, privatizing hospitals and a greater concern for “increased income equality”. Cluster 2 in the lower region of the right hand side of the graph is characterized by the opposite opinions and attitudes in comparison with cluster 1; a positive attitude towards supra-nationality together with a positive attitude towards privatizing hospitals has a strong impact on the character of cluster 2. However a negative attitude toward increased income equality tends to play a greater role in characterizing cluster 2 than the positive attitude towards increased income equality does to characterized cluster 1. Cluster 1 is also to a stronger extent characterized by an egalitarian view regarding immigrants. In Cluster 1 we find individuals attending Social science program at Rosendahl, Social science program at Katedral, Natural Science program at Rosendahl and Social Science program at Boland. Social Science program at Rosendahl represents 6.4% of the total population and 18 % of cluster 1, the fact that 70.6% of all the individuals attending Social Science program at Rosendahl is gathered in cluster 1 further illustrate that cluster 1 is strongly characterized by individuals attending Rosendahl. Individuals in cluster 2 do share with cluster 1 the fact that it is characterized by individuals that attend Social science and Natural science programs. However, in cluster 2 there is an overrepresentation of individuals attending Lundellska whereas Rosendahl, on the other hand is underrepresented in cluster 2 in a similar vein as Lundellska is underrepresented in cluster 1. Cluster 1 and 2 gather individuals attending similar educational programs but different schools. Clusters 1 and 2, on the right hand side of the graph, is characterized by students attending educational programs that prepare for higher education and university studies, where Social Science program at Rosendahl holds a distinctive position in cluster 1 accompanied by Natural science students at Katedral. Natural science and Social science students at Lundellska holds, not as strong, but still distinctive position in cluster 2. When we take fathers occupation into account; cluster 1 is characterized by individuals whose fathers’ professions are found within the category; university lecturers, scientist or physicians’, professions that are related to higher and extensive education. Cluster 2 is characterized by individuals whose fathers’ professions are Chief executive or managing director and, at least to some extent, by individuals whose fathers are teachers, journalists and a religious profession of different kinds.

Table 3. Clusters characterization: supplementary variables.

Variable label	Characteristic categories	% of category in group	% of category in set	% of group in category	Weight (n*100)
<i>Group: Cluster 1 / 4 (Count: 20000 - Percentage: 25.25)</i>					
Educational Program	Sp_Int_Rosen	18,0	6,4	70,6	5100
Father's profession	LectSciePhysi	23,0	13,6	42,6	10800
Educational Program	Sp_Kate	8,0	3,4	59,3	2700
Father's profession	CulturalProd	4,5	2,0	56,3	1600
Educational Program	Nv_Rosen	8,0	4,8	42,1	3800
Educational Program	Sp_Int_Bol	7,0	4,9	35,9	3900
<i>Group: Cluster 2 / 4 (Count: 25300 - Percentage: 31.94)</i>					
Educational Program	Nv_Lundell	12,6	7,7	52,5	6100
Educational Program	Sp_Lundell	11,5	7,3	50,0	5800
Father's profession	CEO	9,9	6,4	49,0	5100
Educational Program	Sp_Lin	12,3	8,7	44,9	6900

Father's profession	TeachJournRelig	6,3	4,3	47,1	3400
Father's profession	LectSciePhysi	16,6	13,6	38,9	10800
<i>Group: Cluster 3 / 4 (Count: 17400 - Percentage: 21.97)</i>					
Educational Program	Aesthet_Boland	10,9	6,7	35,8	5300
Father's profession	IndLogFarmShop	20,7	15,3	29,8	12100
Father's profession	SupervShopManag	8,6	5,4	34,9	4300
Educational Program	Media_GUC	10,3	7,4	30,5	5900
Educational Program	commerc_Lin	3,4	2,3	33,3	1800
Educational Program	Sp_Fyris	4,0	2,8	31,8	2200
<i>Group: Cluster 4 / 4 (Count: 16500 - Percentage: 20.83)</i>					
Educational Program	Vehicle_Boland	14,5	5,7	53,3	4500
Educational Program	El_Constr_Boland	18,2	10,4	36,6	8200
Educational Program	Healthcare_Lundell	7,3	3,3	46,2	2600
Educational Program	commerc_Lin	5,5	2,3	50,0	1800
Educational Program	other_Eke_Lin	10,9	6,9	32,7	5500
Father's profession	IndLogFarmShop	20,6	15,3	28,1	12100

The interpretation is that we have a right hand side of the graph scattered by individuals who take an active stand on political question characterized by acquired as well as, more and somewhat less, inherited educational assets, and a left hand side of the graph with individuals that are passive in relation to political questions and issues, attending vocational programs and with none or less acquired or inherited educational capital. In table 4 the respondents degree of answers on the political questions in the questionnaire are related to fathers occupation, displaying fathers occupation to the left, ranked in relation to the first column lapses analysis, null losses. The categories teacher, journalist and religion are ranked in top followed by university lecturers, scientists and physicians, and Law men, Civil engineers, high officials, they are over-represented among respondents with no loss of answers: the first column. These categories are found to characterize clusters 3 and 4 on the left hand side of the graph. Categories ranked at the bottom of table 4 characterize the cluster of individuals at the left hand side of the graph in figure 2.

Table 4. Attraction-matrix illustrating the relation between fathers' occupation and number of no opinion-answers.

N No Opinion	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	Tot.
TeachJournRelig	0,9	-1,0	0,8	0,1	-0,2	-1,0	0,5	-0,1	-1,0	-1,0	-1,0	-1,0	-1,0	0,8	-0,4	34
LectSciePhysi	0,2	1,0	-0,4	0,7	0,4	-0,5	-0,8	-0,4	-0,5	-0,5	-0,7	-0,7	-0,7	-0,4	-0,6	108
LawCivEngiHighOffici	0,2	0,2	0,2	-0,2	0,2	0,1	0,1	0,7	-1,0	-0,4	0,0	-0,2	-0,6	-0,7	-0,3	91
CulturalProd	0,1	-0,4	1,9	0,5	-1,0	-1,0	-1,0	-1,0	-1,0	-1,0	1,0	3,3	1,2	0,9	-1,0	16
CEO	0,0	0,2	-0,4	0,5	0,1	2,5	-1,0	-0,4	0,2	-0,4	-0,4	-0,3	-0,3	-0,4	-0,4	51
Construction	0,0	-0,3	0,0	-0,7	-0,5	0,4	-0,5	0,0	0,6	0,0	0,0	0,5	1,2	0,3	0,5	92
PoliceNurse	-0,1	-0,3	2,0	-1,0	-0,1	-1,0	0,7	-1,0	-1,0	1,0	-1,0	1,3	1,3	1,0	-0,3	15
PreSchoolCaringServi	-0,1	-0,8	-0,7	-0,2	0,6	0,1	-0,5	-0,3	0,3	0,3	0,4	2,1	-0,2	0,4	0,4	45
NR	-0,2	-0,6	0,2	0,5	0,1	-1,0	1,0	-1,0	-1,0	1,3	0,3	0,4	-1,0	-1,0	1,1	25

MidOffOthMili	-0,2	0,0	0,8	-0,5	0,2	0,1	0,8	-0,6	-0,1	1,6	-0,1	-0,5	-1,0	-0,1	-0,1	68
IndLogFarmShop	-0,2	-0,3	-0,5	0,1	-0,3	-0,2	0,6	0,3	0,5	0,2	0,6	0,1	0,1	0,5	0,4	121
SupervShopManag	-0,3	-0,8	0,4	-0,1	0,0	0,2	0,2	0,4	1,0	0,4	0,5	-1,0	0,6	-0,3	0,7	43
Technician	-0,3	0,6	0,0	0,0	-0,1	-0,6	0,2	0,4	1,3	-0,5	0,0	-0,5	1,2	0,0	0,0	64
StayAtHome	-0,4	1,1	-1,0	0,3	-0,3	0,3	0,3	2,2	-1,0	-1,0	0,7	0,8	0,8	0,6	-0,5	19
OVERALL	224	79	52	64	56	31	32	26	27	27	25	23	23	26	77	792

Thus far one might argue that the cluster analysis of the political space constructed in axis 1 and 2 indicate that differences in axis 1 relate to capital volume, degree of active responses, whereas high and low degree of active responses correspond with large and small volumes of educational capital. The interpretation is that there is tendency that differences on axis 2, differences in the individuals orientation in responses on political questions, first and fore mots play a part in the construction of the political space and that this structure correspond with differences in educational orientation. However this tendency is the reason to further probe the mechanisms that construct the political space of attitudes and opinions, in the following we have selected a case of active respondents from the total population.

Analys II The space of opinions, attitudes and interest – selected case

The presence of a large number of individuals responding with no opinion in the first analysis becomes a distortion when it comes to constructing a space of actual opinions and attitudes. We have therefore refined our selection of individuals in a second analysis to minimize the distortion. We have based this selection on thresholds within each theme of questions.¹⁹ The number of individuals at our disposal for this second analysis is 533. We then perform the same analysis as used above, with the exception of one small change: the question about government-funded religious schools was dropped from the analysis because of its low contribution in general except on one axis which was completely determined by attitudes towards government-funded religious schools.

Table 5. Eigenvalues, rates and cumulated rates for the first 5 axes.

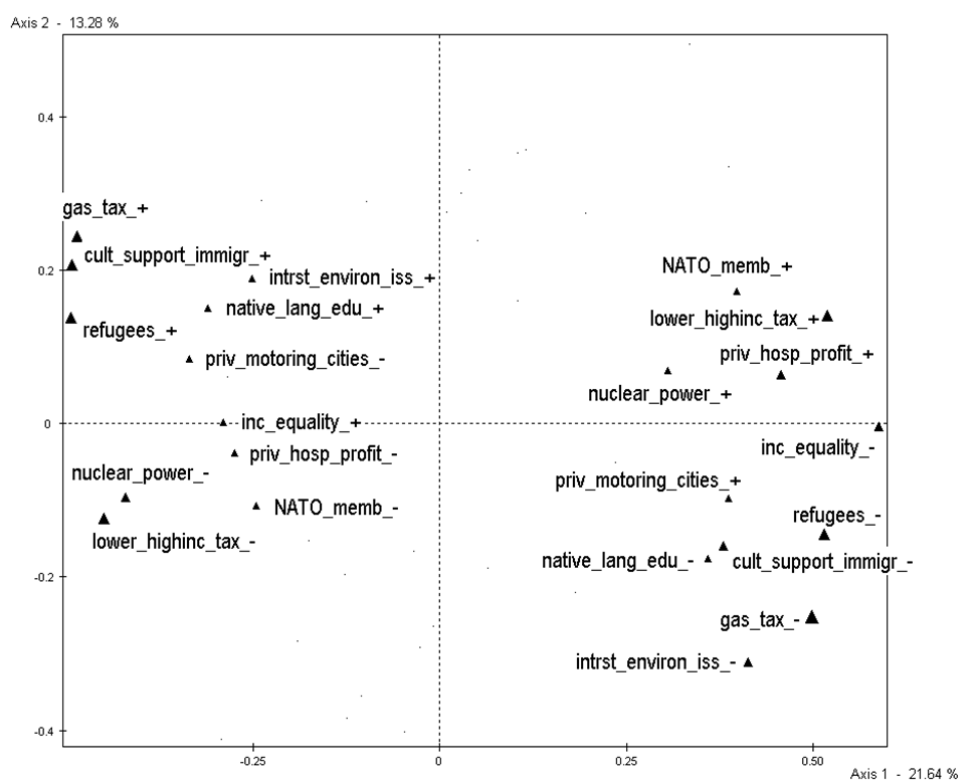
Number	Eigenvalue	Percentage	Cumulated Percentage
1	0,0890	21,64	21,64
2	0,0546	13,28	34,92
3	0,0351	8,54	43,46
4	0,0253	6,15	49,61
5	0,0220	5,36	54,96

Axis 1: Left vs. right wing politics

¹⁹ Individuals having answered no opinion on all questions within any thematic question subset were rejected from the analysis. Those who are not rejected, but have answered no opinion on some questions are recoded into the middle of the scale.

The interpretation is that the first axis 1 is characterized by oppositions concerning redistribution of resources (income equality, lower high-income tax, private hospital profit) which could be considered traditional conflict between left wing politics vs. right wing politics over material distribution. What is more striking is that environmental issues, here represented by attitudes towards nuclear power, gas tax and private motoring in cities and also by a general (dis)interest in environmental issues, seems to be corresponding to the leftwing-rightwing opposition on welfare issues.

Figure 3a. Active modalities contributing above average to axis 1.



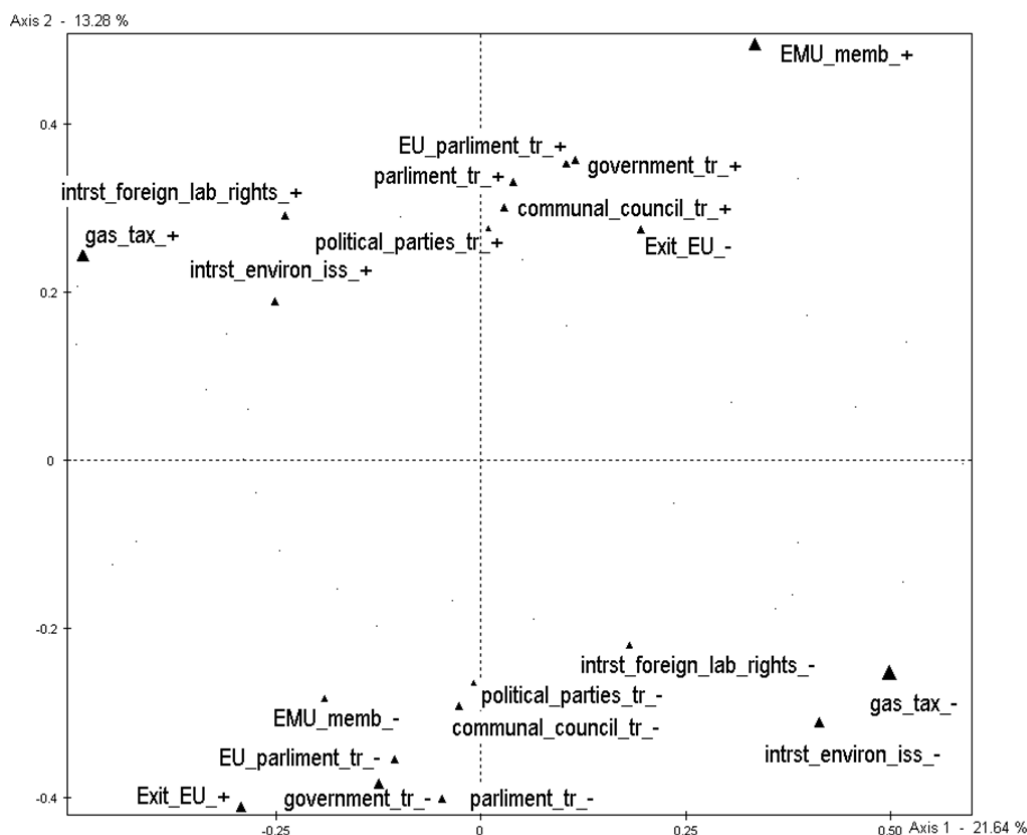
Moreover, there is also a clear difference in what could be summed up as attitudes toward cultural pluralism/ethnocentrism where, on the right-wing, we find a restrictive attitude toward refugees, cultural support to immigrants, and native language education (for non-swedish pupils) and on the leftwing more egalitarian attitudes regarding immigrants.

Axis 2: Trust vs. dis-trust and opposition in transnational orientation

On the second axis we get an opposition between trust and distrust in political parties and institutions, social institutions and transnational organizations – openness towards the international issues foreign affairs (labour rights) in the north of Figure 3b and the opposite dis-interest in foreign labour rights in the south. This opposition corresponds with the opposition

between having trust, in the north region of the graph, and not having trust, the south region of the graph, in local as well as transnational political and social institutions.

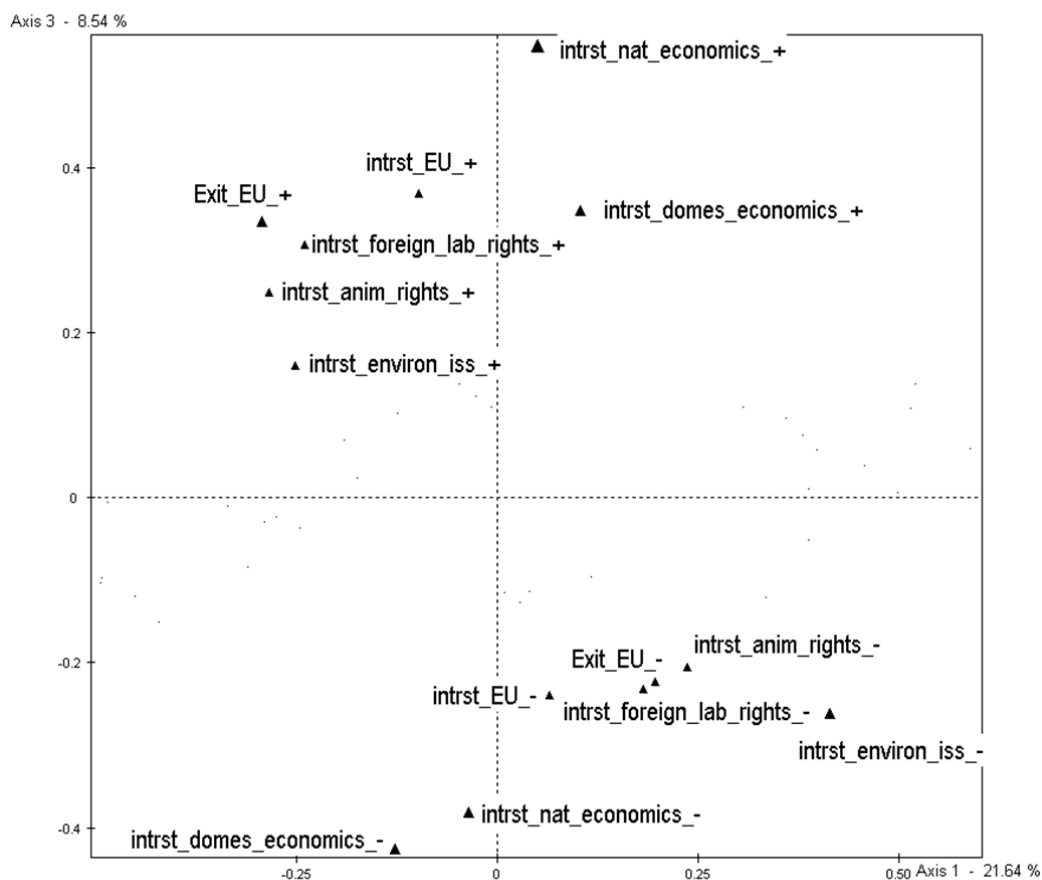
Figure 3b. Active modalities contributing above average to axis 2.



Axis 3: Interest vs. dis-interest

On the third principal axis we find the opposition between being and not being interested in different political issues. The political issues in this case represents questions concerning the European Union, whether or not Sweden should exit its EU membership, and questions concerning animal rights, environmental issues, foreign labour rights, national and domestic economy, issues that pretty much engage youth social movements and represent post-material values in comparison to questions and issues at stake on axis 1. There is clear difference between having an interest animal rights, environmental issues, foreign labour rights, national and domestic economy and finding these issues dis-interesting even in this selected case of active responding individuals.

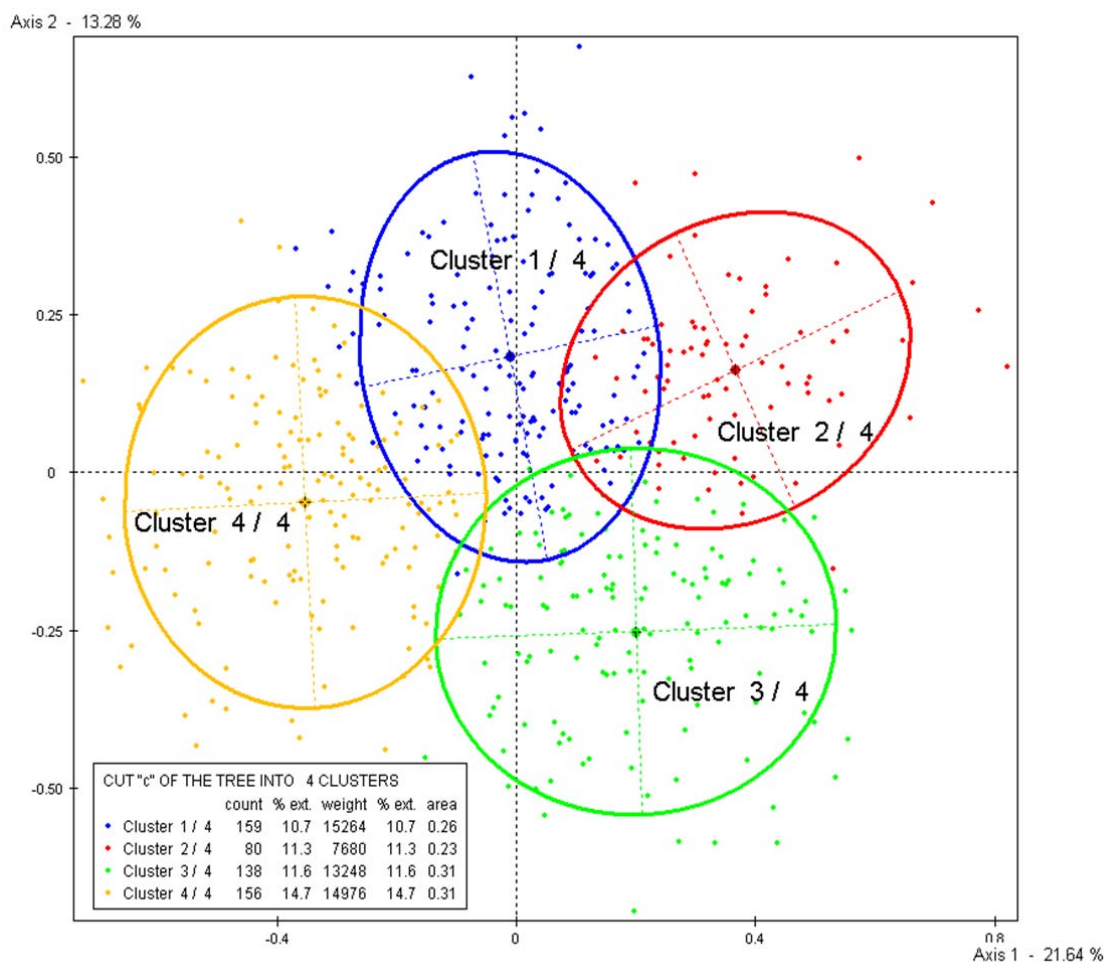
Figure 3c. Active modalities contributing above average to axis 3.



Cluster analysis

To what extent do the supplementary variables adhere to different positions in the political space, when the space of opinions and attitudes is constructed solely on those individuals that actively responded to the political questions? In our first analysis, comprehending the total population, it was obvious that educational capital in terms of volume corresponded with different positions in the space of political opinions and attitudes (the opposition between cluster 1 and 2 and cluster 3 and 4 – producing and not producing a political opinion). In the second section of our paper we are concerned with how differences in the construct space of political opinions are related to the supplementary variables educational background and fathers occupation. In axis 1 through 3 we have identified three main oppositions and the question in focus is what characterizes different positions in the political space of opinions and attitudes? In the following we have used a cluster analysis based on the five first axes, displayed in the plane of the first and second axis, cut into four clusters.

Figure 4. Clusters based on coordinates on the first 5 axes.



The cluster analysis give at hand two right wing oriented clusters (2 and 3), one left-wing oriented cluster (4) and one cluster oriented towards supra-nationality (1).

A cluster of individuals resembles on a specific set of modalities and can in fact be parted to due to other modalities. Cluster 1, thus, gather individuals who resembles in that they are positive towards supra-nationality, individuals that are fairly trust full towards local as well as transnational political institutions, interested in foreign labour rights and ready to support immigrants' cultural heritage. Cluster 2 gather individuals who share traditional right-wing political values; that is an orientation towards liberal economy. Here we find those who disagree to increased equality, find lower taxes on high income and privatizing hospitals worthy. The group of individuals who are negative towards supporting immigrants' cultural heritage and those who do not want to allow more refugees into the country are also overrepresented in cluster 2. In cluster 2 individuals that are positive towards supra- nationality are as well overrepresented. In cluster 3 we find individuals who share the opinion that gas taxes need to be lower, a dis-interest in environmental issues and foreign labour rights. Cluster 3 is also overrepresented by individuals who have a negative attitude toward immigrants' education in native language and support to immigrants' cultural heritage. Cluster 4 gather individuals with an egalitarian view regarding immigrants, who share a welfare

orientation; positive attitude towards increased equality and in disagreement with the opinion that we should lower the taxes on high income.

Table 6. Clusters characterization: supplementary variables.

Variable label	Characteristic categories	% of category in group	% of category in set	% of group in category	Weight(n*96)
<i>Group: Cluster 1 / 4 (Count: 15264 - Percentage: 29.83)</i>					
skol_prog	Nv_Lundell	15,7233	8,44278	55,5556	4320
skol_prog	Healthcare_Lundell	4,40252	2,25141	58,3333	1152
skol_prog	Nv_Fyris	8,80503	5,62852	46,6667	2880
skol_prog	Nv_Kat	5,03145	3,37711	44,4444	1728
<i>Group: Cluster 2 / 4 (Count: 7680 - Percentage: 15.01)</i>					
skol_prog	Sp_Lundell	20	9,19325	32,6531	4704
skol_prog	Sp_Lin	16,25	8,81801	27,6596	4512
Rec_far_korr_yrke	LawCivEngiHighOffici	21,25	13,5084	23,6111	6912
skol_prog	Te_Fyris	6,25	2,62664	35,7143	1344
skol_prog	Sp_Fyris	6,25	2,81426	33,3333	1440
Rec_far_korr_yrke	CEO	11,25	7,12946	23,6842	3648
Rec_far_korr_yrke	Technician	11,25	7,31707	23,0769	3744
<i>Group: Cluster 3 / 4 (Count: 13248 - Percentage: 25.89)</i>					
skol_prog	Vehicle_Boland	10,1449	3,18949	82,3529	1632
Rec_far_korr_yrke	IndLogFarmShop	22,4638	11,6323	50	5952
skol_prog	other_Eke_Lin	12,3188	5,62852	56,6667	2880
skol_prog	El_Constr_Boland	15,2174	7,69231	51,2195	3936
Rec_far_korr_yrke	Construction	15,2174	10,3189	38,1818	5280
skol_prog	Te_Fyris	4,34783	2,62664	42,8571	1344
<i>Group: Cluster 4 / 4 (Count: 14976 - Percentage: 29.27)</i>					
skol_prog	Sp_Int_Rosen	19,2308	7,87992	71,4286	4032
skol_prog	Sp_Kate	7,69231	3,93996	57,1429	2016
skol_prog	Aesthet_Boland	11,5385	6,75422	50	3456
Rec_far_korr_yrke	LectSciePhysi	23,0769	16,8856	40	8640
skol_prog	Sp_Int_Bol	7,69231	4,69043	48	2400
Rec_far_korr_yrke	CulturalProd	3,84615	2,06379	54,5455	1056
Rec_far_korr_yrke	PreSchoolCaringServi	7,69231	5,25328	42,8571	2688
skol_prog	Nv_Rosen	8,97436	6,5666	40	3360

The two right-wing oriented cluster 2 and 3 are characterized by individuals with markedly different backgrounds. In cluster 2 we find individuals who attend social science program at Lundellska, Linné and Fyris, and individuals attending technology at Fyris. Cluster 2 is also characterized by individuals whose fathers are Lawmen, Civil Engineers or High Officials, individuals whose fathers are Chief executive officer. Cluster 3, which gather individual that resemble in a political orientation towards ethnocentrism and a care for lower gas taxes, is characterized by individuals attending vehicle program at Boland, electricity and construction program at Boland, vocational programs at Ekeby and Linné. Individuals attending technology program at Fyris is also overrepresented in cluster 3. When we taken fathers occupation into

account we find an overrepresentation of individuals whose fathers are industrial workers, farmers and working within the logging industry and fathers working in construction.

Cluster 1 is characterized by individuals who attend natural science program at Lundellska, Katedral and Fyris, and health-Care program at Lundellska. Cluster 1 is also characterized, to some extent by individuals whose fathers' works as technicians, merely 36% of all individuals with a father working as technician is positioned in cluster 1. In cluster 1 we also find a overrepresentation of individuals whose fathers are university lectures, scientists or physicians, however this group is more strongly represented in cluster 4 where technicians are under-represented.

Cluster 4 is characterized by individuals that attend social science program (international orientation) at Rosendahl and Boland social science at Katedral and natural science at Rosendahl. Cluster 4 is also characterized by an overrepresentation of individuals whose fathers work as university lectures, scientists or physicians, individuals whose fathers work in cultural production and as preschool teachers, in service and care giving.

It seems a fair conclusion that different positions in the space of political opinions and attitudes corresponds with difference in educational background and, as far as our study is carried out, social background where fathers occupation is used to indicate social background.

Conclusion

The first section of our paper reveals a correspondence between the degrees of active responses to questions on political opinion and attitudes and large and small amount of educational assets, whereas the group of individuals with a low degree of responses – a group of individuals with no-opinions – are characterized as persons that attend vocational programs, whose fathers working class professions also are characterized by less educational investments. The opposite groups of individuals who produce active responses on political opinion and attitude questions are to a greater extent characterized as persons that attend educational programs that prepare for higher education and university studies, and whose fathers to a larger extent are characterized by larger educational investments. The indication is that political socialization have educational as well as and social dimensions. It is not obvious but an arguable reflection upon the distribution of no-opinion answers on the political questions to some extent reveals the social and educational preconditions of political opinion formation. Bourdieu (1984, p 397-465) argued that the political discourse, public will formation and formation of opinions presuppose immersion, experience and possible some formal know-how, or know-what. However this is not only a matter of competence, it is equally related to barriers set at the level of belonging. Whereas the status of the middle classes in Bourdieus (1984) analysis entails a feeling of both the right and duty to “produce” an opinion. The status of the working class entails a different “ethos”, less conducive to “dis-interested” opinion debates (questionnaires), (compare with table 4). There is reason to return to this point with regards to the cluster analysis in section II.

In the second section of our paper the cluster analysis, based on a selected case of active respondents, indicates differences in political orientation between educational programs, school, and coupled with social background.

The immediate interpretation is that individuals that attend vehicle program at Boland tend to resemble individuals on electricity and construction programs at the same school. Thus they seem to share a political dis-interest in issues that can be related to those post-material values and a rather ethnocentric value orientation. Their resemblance can of course be related to the fact that they not only share an every-day school practice but also an affinity in social background whereas their fathers' occupations, to a large extent, are found among industrial workers, farmers, and workers in the logging industry.

In similar vein individuals that attend social science program at Rosendahl, Katedral and natural science program at Rosendahl tend to resemble in political attitudes, interests and opinions. Rosendahl and Katedral tend to attract individuals from family backgrounds with a large amount of educational capital, in our study individuals whose fathers' occupation is characterized by fairly large educational investments. However one should notice that individuals that attend natural science program at Katedral tend to a larger extent resemble in political orientation with individuals at natural science program at Lundellska and Fyris (rather than Rosendahl).

Cluster 4 in our cluster analysis gather individuals with a fairly large amount of acquired educational assessments and large amount of inherited educational investments and simultaneously individuals with somewhat less inherited educational investments. The tendency, the orientation towards left-wing policy, does not follow from increased educational assets but may be more related to the composition of capital.

A probable sociological interpretation is that the construction of the political space in the selected case reflects the social preconditions of political opinion formation. Cluster 3 is characterized by a working class, who share a dis-interest in the so-called new social movement issues, issues that are removed from every-day interests (eg the state of environment, foreign labour rights) while they produce opinions on more immediate every-day and material interests, such as gas taxes, and produce an active stance on immigrants native language education, and cultural support. Along with growing unemployment rates the negative opinion towards immigrants could be interpret as questions more immediately related to the every-day experience of a working class. Cluster 1 on the other hand gather individuals who share the fact that they have produce active responses to questions that presuppose, in Bourdieus (1984, 2000) wordings, the luxury to stand back from immediate experience and "enjoy" the luxury to indulge in abstraction, such issues as those labeled supra- nationality. Questions regarding whether Sweden as a nation should exit its EU membership, whether Sweden as nation should join EMU, whether the European Union ought develop into a united nations exemplify issues that are more abstract and distant from immediate lived experience. The status of middle classes, or the experienced status of middle classes, entails a felt sense of entitlement and duty to produce opinions on general issues.

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