

Political Position-takings. The Case of Young Citizens in a Swedish Rural Mining District

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“Which social issue do you find most important today?” The question was asked in a questionnaire on political opinions conducted among upper secondary school students in the university town of Uppsala and the rural mining district of Bergslagen – two socially and geographically distinct places in Sweden. It is perhaps no surprise that the political issues that dominate among young people in the rural mining district differ from those in a relatively large university city. The respondents in Bergslagen were more inclined to specify issues within topics such as economics, equality, and migration than the respondents in Uppsala, who more frequently brought up justice, war and peace, and educational issues. It is how differences within the group of young citizens and their political orientation can be understood that is of central concern in this article. Studies of young citizens have had a tendency to focus on the younger generation’s different political orientation and their differing political acts.

It has become commonplace to argue that ‘post-materialist’ values have taken on greater importance in contemporary societies. A body of work in political science and sociology reveals how, first and foremost, younger generations in advanced industrial societies are acting in pursuit of goals that no longer have any direct relationship to economic security or prosperity, relating instead to the importance of affinity and aesthetic and intellectual needs (Inglehart 1971: 991-992, 1990: 66). The rising interest in human rights, animal rights, environmental and LGBT matters is meeting new demands that relate less to economic class conflicts than to socio-cultural identity and knowledge-related conflicts (Inglehart 1971, 1997, 2000: 221). While political conflicts are considered more concerned with the cultural sphere, socialization and issues other than economic scarcity/security, the relationship between social class and political attitudes and voting has become blurred (Flanagan 1987, Lipset & Clark 1991: 397, 403, Lipset et al 1994, Haber-

mas 1987: 391-396, 1997: 366-379). While some argue that social class has diminished as an explanatory factor for political orientation over the latter part of 20th century (Clark et al, 1993), others suggest that social class is still of vital concern to understanding the formation of individuals political party orientations and voting behavior in contemporary society. From a historical perspective Swedish political parties and left-right ideology in general have been rooted in social divisions in society (Hout et al. 1993, Holmberg & Oscarsson 2004: 141-162, Oscarsson 2005: 87, Svallfors 2006). A couple of recent studies from a Bourdieusian approach have revealed the correspondence between social position and political opinions and attitudes (Harrits et al, 2010; Enelo 2010, 2013).

This article *seeks to locate individuals in a space of political attitudes, interest, and opinions and analyze how different interests, opinions, and attitudes relate to one another*. What issues divide young citizens in the rural mining districts of Bergslagen and to what extent, and how, does the structure of related opinions, attitudes, and interests differ compared to the university town of Uppsala? We will argue that while socio-geographical conditions play a part in shaping political position-takings, the results discussed here also show that the space of position-takings displays a homology with social space – here indicated as social origin and educational position. By comparing the results of this study on political opinions in the rural mining district of Bergslagen with a similar study in the university town of Uppsala, we actually shed some light on the social conditions of political formations embedded in local contexts in a kind of detailed analysis that is given short shrift in international cross country value analysis.

What then characterizes Bergslagen as a region socially and geographically distinct from Uppsala? To begin with, we are dealing with rural versus urban. Uppsala is the fourth-largest city in Sweden and has a

strong academic tradition with its university founded in the 15th century, while Bergslagen is a region historically characterized by its mining industries. This becomes apparent when looking at the occupational composition of the labor markets in the two places. While there is an equal proportion of managerial positions in both Uppsala and Bergslagen, the proportion of the population in professional occupations such as physicians, dentists, teachers, etc., is more than twice as large in Uppsala as in Bergslagen. The inverse relationship prevails when it comes to manual labor occupations, especially the category of plant and machine operators, which is four times more common in Bergslagen than in Uppsala. In contrast to Uppsala, Bergslagen can thus be characterized by the high prevalence of working class occupations and the absence of professional occupations.

Taking these social conditions into account, the space of position-takings that will be constructed for Bergslagen reflects not only different spaces in a geographical perspective, but different spaces in terms of social strata. It is important to emphasize that the aim here is not primarily to investigate party choice but the space of consistent and conflicting position-takings – regardless of partisanship. Before constructing this space, a few words on the theoretical point of departure may be useful.

As stated above, this analysis is based on the sociology developed by French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu. There are two main conceptual tools or ways of thinking about the social world that are significant to this article: the multidimensionality of the social world and the notion of political opinions and position-takings as position-takings in a space of *possible, thinkable, doable* position-takings; that is, the marketplace where the field of opinion-production meets the space of social positions. An individual's political opinion is, from this perspective, not a personal opinion but a product of the relationship between a specific political competence and a space of possible political position-takings. Bourdieu goes so far as to talk about these position-takings, especially in the form of political surveys, as a situation of supply and demand. The supply side here being the field of ideological production and the demand side being the social agents, equipped with a certain amount of political competence. This political competence gives the individual a sense of orientation in the field of possible political position-takings. Bourdieu defines this competence as a "capacity to recognize a political question as political and to treat it as such by responding to it politically, i.e., on the basis of specifically political principles" (Bourdieu, 1984: 399).

This article will not directly deal with the "field of ideological production," although the concept of field will form and frame the conditions for analysis. Since we are concerned with upper secondary school students, there will be a different take on these students' positions in the space of social class relations. The usual indicator positioning social class is occupational affinity, however since students do not yet have an occupation, social class is instead indicated by occupational affinity of their parents. In other words, what we are relating to here is more of an indicator of social origin than a social position. It is instead students' educational programs that function as an indicator of the students' present position in the social space. The system of Swedish upper secondary education is to a large extent characterized by social differences in recruitment to different schools and educational programs. In short, the choices of educational programs by children of different social origins takes on a structure resembling a triangle, with children of working class origin at the base and children of physicians, university teachers, and comparable occupations at the tip. Gender differences with regard to choice of educational program are largest among children of working class origin who are overrepresented in vocational programs, in effect creating a male pool and female pool of distant vocational programs. These differences diminish as one moves from the bottom base to the top point of the triangle where preparatory programs and natural science in particular position themselves and gender differences in recruitment have diminished (Broady & Börjesson, 2008; Lidégran, 2009).

Political Spaces and Geometric Spaces

The use of factorial techniques to analyze political survey data is fairly well established. The method has for instance been used by sociologist Ronald Inglehart to analyze the shift from materialistic to post-materialistic lines of conflict (Inglehart, 1971). In this article, the theory and methods of Geometric Data Analysis (GDA) are employed. GDA and related methods including Correspondence Analysis (CA) are sometimes considered part of the family of factorial analysis, but GDA differs significantly in its emphasis on the geometric representation of data and the explanatory power confined within this geometric space; that is, the relations between the active elements.

GDA can be an appropriate set of tools to analyze political opinions and attitudes, as shown in a recent publication by Gitte Sommer Harrits et al (2010) where Multiple Correspondence Analysis (MCA) was used to analyze class as a structuring factor of politi-

cal opinions and attitudes. But the tendency to use questions in a Likert scale format in political surveys can sometimes make the MCA less suitable since it produces a Guttman-effect, resulting in a one-dimensional representation of the opinions. A solution to this problem is to use doubled rates: recoding the

variables in a doubling technique that results in positive and negative variables. This technique was used by Brigitte Le Roux and Pascal Perrineau in their analysis of voting behavior in France (Le Roux & Perrineau, 2011). An example of the recoding is given in table 3 below.

Table 1. An example of recoding of variables using doubling technique

Raw responses	Doubled (recoded) variables	
How interested are you in environmental issues?	InterestedInEnvironmentalIssues_-	InterestedInEnvironmentalIssues_+
Very interested	0	4
Interested	1	3
Moderately interested	2	2
Not that interested	3	1
Not interested at all	4	0

The CA results in two clouds of points: one cloud for the rows and one cloud for the columns. In this particular case, where CA is applied to a table consisting of individuals \times variables with a doubling of variables, the procedure generates two clouds similar to the MCA procedure, with a cloud of individuals and a space of variables respectively. By employing the doubling technique, each row is given equal mass, thus providing meaning to the geometric concepts used to define and interpret the constructed space (Le Roux & Rouanet, 2004: 173-178).

Data and method

The data stem from a survey conducted among third-year pupils in upper secondary schools in Uppsala and Bergslagen in 2008. In total, there were 402 respondents from Bergslagen. A substantial part of the survey consisted of items concerning political attitudes, opinions, and practices from which a selection will form the basis of the construction of the space of position-takings.

Out of a total of 93 questions measuring political attitudes, opinions, and interests 24 questions were

selected based on their content and contribution to the constructed political space. These 24 questions are categorized in five thematically different subgroups covering the main topics of the contemporary political debate in Sweden (see table below). These questions also reflect some of the dimensions that have been identified or analyzed in the previous works on politics cited in this article (Ingelhart 1997, 2000, Holmberg & Oscarsson 2004). As evident, these questions do not reflect value priorities such as materialistic or post-materialistic, but are instead more focused on political matters. Moreover, the results of the analysis of these questions will not be directly comparable with Ingelhart's studies, although they should provide some scope for a comparative discussion. The same questions are used to analyze both the Uppsala and the Bergslagen cohort. However the selected questions are not particularly related to local issues, rather general questions discussed in contemporary public debate and recurring issue in national surveys (Bergström & Dalberg 2013).

Table 2. Questions used as active variables

Topic	What is your opinion on...?	How interested are you in...?
Liberal economy	Lowering the income tax Avoiding privatizing hospitals. Decreasing income inequality.	National economy Household economy
Cultural pluralism / Ethnocentrism	Accepting fewer refugees; Increasing economic support of cultural practices of immigrants Increasing support of native language development among immigrants	Foreign labor rights.
Environmental issues	Increasing fuel taxes to improve the environment Banning the private use of cars in cities Preserving nuclear power after 2010	Environmental issues Animal rights
Supra-nationality	Whether Sweden should join the EMU Whether Sweden should withdraw from the EU Whether the EU should be developed into a United States of Europe Whether Sweden should apply for NATO membership	Questions related to the EU
<i>How much do you trust the work of the following institutions?</i>		
Trust/confidence in established society and institutions	Government. Parliament. City Council. EU Parliament. Political parties.	

A sub-population was selected for the Correspondence Analysis (CA) on an individual × variables table. The sub-population was selected based on the rate of no-opinion responses to the active questions. When this selection is not performed first, the principal axis is completely determined by the rate of no-opinion responses to the active questions. The selection criterion is motivated by the fact that the aim of CA is to investigate patterns of opinions and not whether or not the respondents have opinions. But this is more than a technical criterion: it can inherently be a sociological analysis of the propensity to produce an opinion. As shown in this issue by Bergström (2012) and Laurison (2012) respectively, this propensity varies with social origin and educational position (cf Bergström & Dalberg, 2013). But there is no linear relationship between social origin and response rate, which can be seen in the distribution in 11 different social groups before and after the selection of the sub-population. Table 5 shows that the distribution is relatively unchanged between the two populations. By using a somewhat different classification scheme for social groups in Table 2 compared to that used by

Statistics Sweden, the prevalence of working class occupations becomes even more distinct, with the majority originating from working class households.

The Space of Political Position-takings in Bergslagen

Starting with an analysis of our pre-constructed categories of questions and their contribution to the variance of the first three axes of the CA, it can be seen that, thematically, the first axis is dominated by questions on cultural pluralism/ethnocentrism and environmental issues. The second axis is dominated by questions on supra-nationality and trust in established institutions, and the third axis is dominated by questions on supra-nationality but also shows just-above-expected contributions from all other themes except trust in established institutions. The axes could also be analyzed by the type of questions contributing most. Position-takings on opinion questions dominate all three axes whereas position-takings on political interest questions contribute above average to axis 1 and 3 and position-takings on trust questions contribute above average on axis 2.

Table 3. Initial analyses of the first three axes of the CA

Theme	Axis 1	Axis 2	Axis 3	Type of question	Axis 1	Axis 2	Axis 3
Liberal economy	10.66	17.74	22.18	Interests	34.72	4.66	40.56
Cultural pluralism--ethnocentrism	33.25	1.16	23.24	Opinions	53.72	59.49	58.29
Environmental issues	36.98	6.65	22.95	Trust	11.57	35.85	1.15
Supra-nationality	7.54	38.60	30.49				
Trust in established institutions	11.57	35.85	1.15				
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	Total	100.00	100.00	100.00

While interpreting the space of position-takings it is important to emphasize that the positions are not absolute but relative to one another. The positions of the modalities for and against increased fuel tax are, for example, separated in space along the first axis, while those that cluster on the left in the figure are more inclined to be in favor of rather than opposed to an increased fuel tax. Keeping this in mind, the first principal axis, shown in figure 1, reveals the following oppositions: the left part gathers those who express interest in issues regarding the EU, environmental issues, animal rights, and foreign labor rights. It also gathers those who take a more positive position towards cultural pluralism – supporting mother tongue tuition and other kinds of cultural support to immigrant groups along with negative attitudes towards limits on refugee immigration. The left hand side also gathers those who are more negative to nuclear power and more negative towards lowering the income tax. This set of position-takings on different issues is opposed to that on the right hand side of figure 1, where all the opposing position-takings to those on the left side are positioned: i.e. positive attitudes towards a lowering income taxes and positive attitudes towards nuclear power; less interest in issues regarding the EU, environment, animal rights, and foreign labor rights; more positive to accepting fewer refugees and more negative towards cultural support to immigrants and mother tongue tuition.

The single most important variable on the first axis is whether or not the fuel tax should be increased. This indicates two things: firstly that this is an important issue in Bergslagen and secondly that this issue is controversial. However, the fuel tax issue unfolds a number of current meanings; from one point of view, access to reasonably priced gasoline or other fuels is more or less a prerequisite for rural living, from another it is first and foremost an environmental issue. The following quotation from an interview conducted in connection with the implementation of the survey, discloses the importance given to the issue of fuel taxes and to some extent also reveals the in-

trinsic tension involving environmental considerations and socioeconomic conditions.

Q: Which questions caught your attention? Can you explain in a bit more detail?

A: Yes, it's these job issues. Will I ever get a job? And if I do, under what conditions...under what conditions I will work, what salary and so forth. Then there is my mom too, she has to travel a far distance to work. She's a nurse and works nights sometimes. It's expensive to drive back and forth to work and she doesn't earn that much... Of course I'm aware of this concern with the environment and so on, it is easy to raise prices on gas and diesel, but then it affects us who have no other alternative and it still wouldn't solve the climate issue, no one could make me believe that. For me, the car is... the freedom to go to work, to shop wherever you want, being able to go visit friends, not having to adjust to a schedule, to the local bus schedule ... Being able to drive is a human right too, ...at least for us who live here in the countryside, not in Stockholm or other big cities. That's an issue that concerns me. (Male student, Vehicle program, VBU)

In summary the primary polarities on the first axis, juxtaposed to the opposition to higher fuel taxes, are characterized by antagonism between ethnocentrism and cultural pluralism combined with environmental issues. While traditional "old" political issues of economic redistribution are absent (except for the opposing standpoints on high income taxes and to some extent the question of fuel tax, which could be interpreted as an economic issue as well as an environmental one), the 'new' socio-cultural political issues divide the space of political orientation in antagonistic distant positions. A position against immigration, tax-funded mother tongue tuition and related negative attitudes to immigrants' cultural support is distant to more liberal and egalitarian attitudes towards ethnocultural pluralism. The further question is how it is possible to understand this formation of standpoints.

Figure 1. The space of political position-takings. Cloud of active variables. The plane of axis 1 and 2. Variables contributing over average to the first axis.

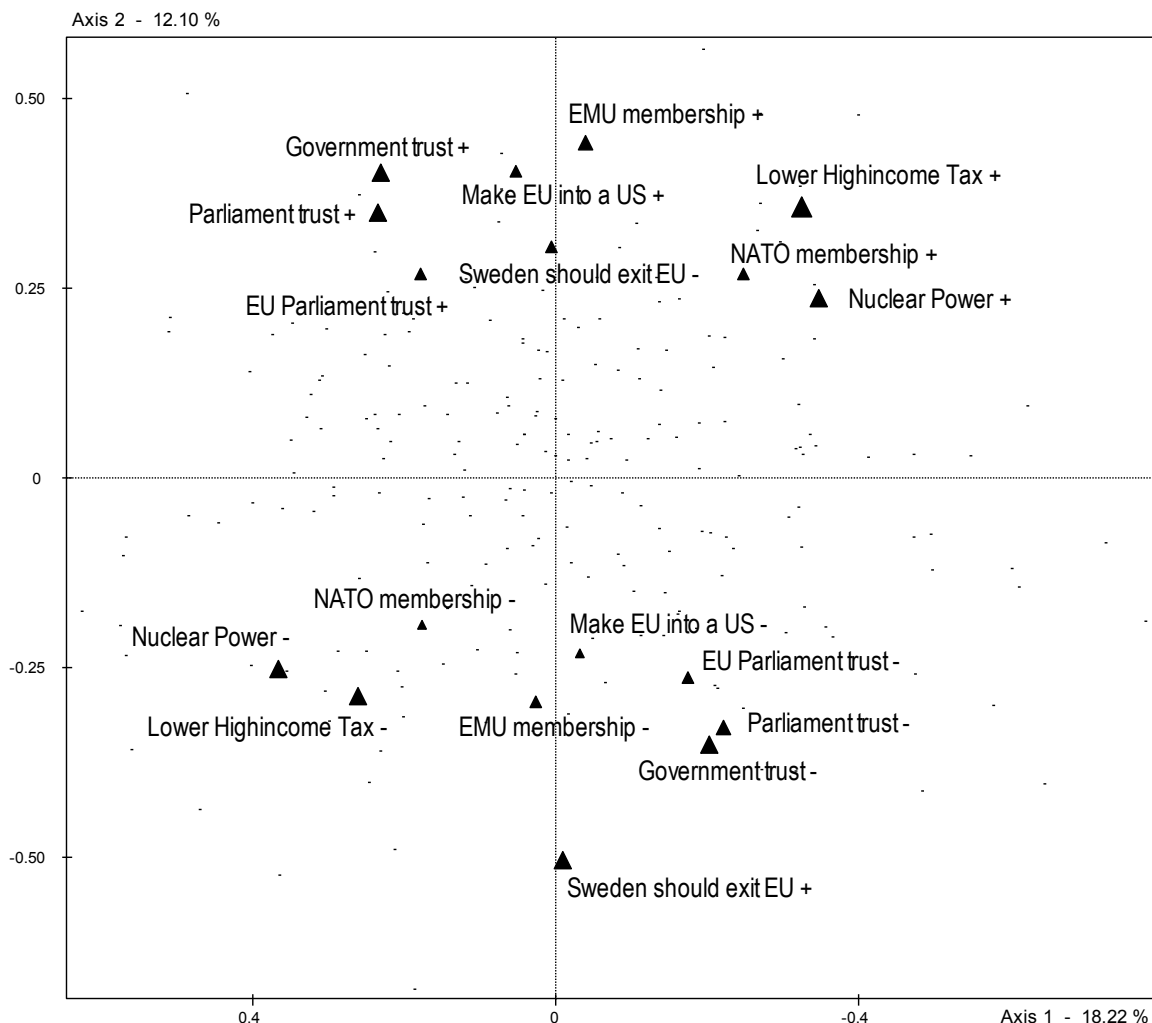


The second axis, as noted above, is primarily structured around themes of trust and supra-nationality. As shown in figure 2, the postures towards these issues are closely related. For instance, trust in established institutions such as parliament or government corresponds to more positive positions towards membership in the EU, EMU, and NATO. Such trustful dispositions towards political institutions are positioned in the upper part of figure 2, where one also finds, apart from those modalities already mentioned, trust in the EU Parliament, a positive attitude towards making EU into a United States of Europe as well as positive position-taking towards nuclear power and lowering high income tax (modalities also important on the first axis).

In the lower part of figure 2, we can recognize the opposing positions towards those in the upper part. Here, a less trustful disposition towards government, parliament and the EU Parliament is coupled with more negative positions towards the EU, membership in the EMU and NATO, as well as more negative position-takings on nuclear power and lowering the income tax rate.

The close correspondence between trust and dispositions towards supra-nationality indicates that these are intertwined issues; obviously distrust in national and European political institutions is closely related to reluctance towards the EU and developed European integration and resistance towards the EMU.

Figure 2. The space of political position-takings. Cloud of active variables. The plane of axis 1 and 2. Variables contributing over average to the second axis.



The third axis is more or less a combination of axis 1 and 2 and will not be subjected to a detailed analysis. Instead it is the complete space of position-takings that will be discussed. The combination of figure 1 and figure 2 constructs the most important aspects of this space of position-takings (cf. figure 3). This is a space that reflects a number of things. Above all, it is a representation of relations between different position-takings among upper secondary students in the Bergslagen mining district. The issues creating polarities on axis one and two constitutes the space of position-takings. The way they are organized according to proximities and distances points to the conclusion that some positions and dispositions are indeed incompatible. It would, for instance, considering the space of political opinions in Bergslagen, be a rather conflict-

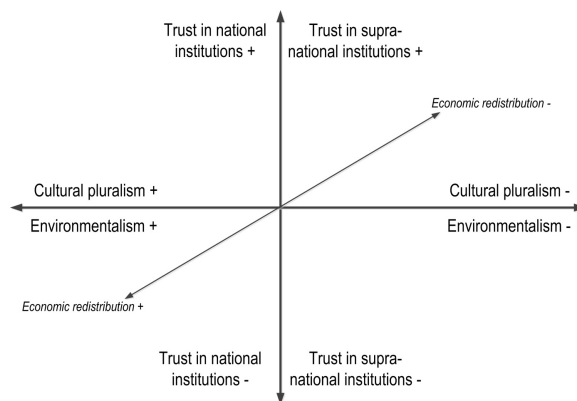
ing combination of political postures to take a position against cultural pluralism on the one hand and a position for an environmentalist approach, on the other.

Secondly, this space of position-takings, by virtue of its empirical object, is obviously a particular case. However, by treating it as a *particular case of possible* position takings among young Swedish citizens using a comparative method: a particular place at a particular time, under particular social conditions, and using a particular survey with a particular set of questions, the singularity of the object does not preclude drawing on some general propositions. It can be argued that the opinions, attitudes, and interests presented in the political space are in fact indicators of what kind of issues are being debated in contempo-

rary Swedish political discourse. It could even be argued that this constructed space is a phenomenological construction of the space of political position-takings as it appears to those entering this space. Whether or not there has been a shift in some general public opinion or of political conflict lines, as has been the focus in previous studies by Inglehart and the body of work referred to as the world value survey, the constructed political space reveals a pattern of political opinions and interests that is structured by both old traditional and new political dimensions (cf Harrits et al 2010: 10-12, Bergström & Dalgren 2013). Regardless of any shift, the space constructed is still a space of different conflict lines and positions relative to one another as perceived by those who are in the space.

Thirdly, the language used to describe the constructed space of position-takings, using words of probabilistic nature rather than absolutes, derives from the possibility that this space is not just a representation of different position-takings but a representation of different dispositions in Bourdieu's sense of the term. It is perhaps more accurate to speak of positions in the left hand part of the space as dispositions towards position-takings more related to those positions, than to simply speak of different position-takings. And as dispositions are related to positions in the social space, the next section will analyze the relation between political dispositions and social and educational positions of the students. This will be done with the use of hierarchical clustering on the geometrically constructed space.

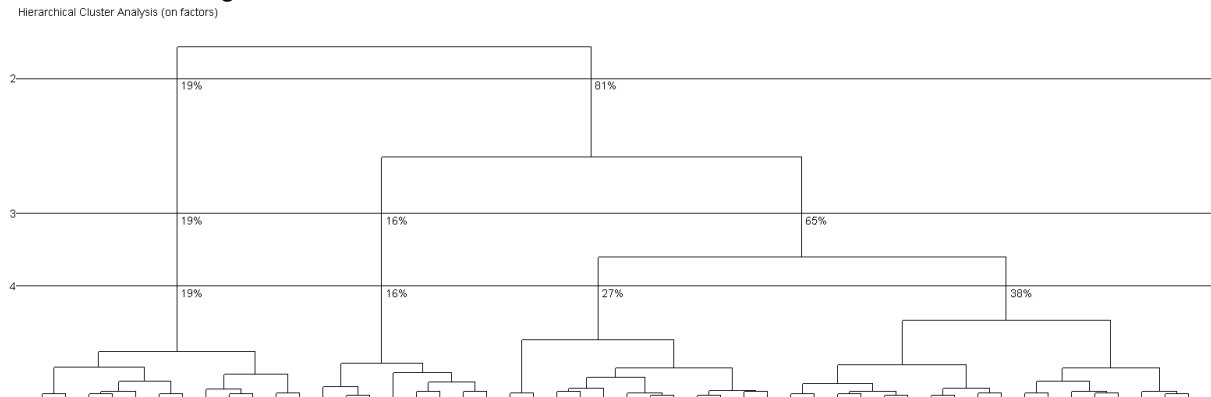
Figure 3. Diagram of the space of position-takings in Bergslagen



Euclidean clustering of the space of political position-takings

Using an ascending hierarchical clustering of the individual coordinates on the first three axes, a hierarchical system of partitions into clusters is the result of agglomerating individuals geometrically close to one another. The clustering process starts from the bottom, so to speak, by grouping the individuals closest to one another in pairs and continues until all individuals are in the same cluster. But when interpreting this hierarchical nesting of clusters we start from the top and the first partition into two clusters. As one follows the cluster tree from the top to the bottom the within-variance decreases and the between-variance increases, meaning that the amount of variance attributable to differences between clusters rises.

Figure 4. Clustering tree with partitions 1, 2, and 3 into 2, 3, and 4 clusters, respectively represented by the horizontal lines in the figure

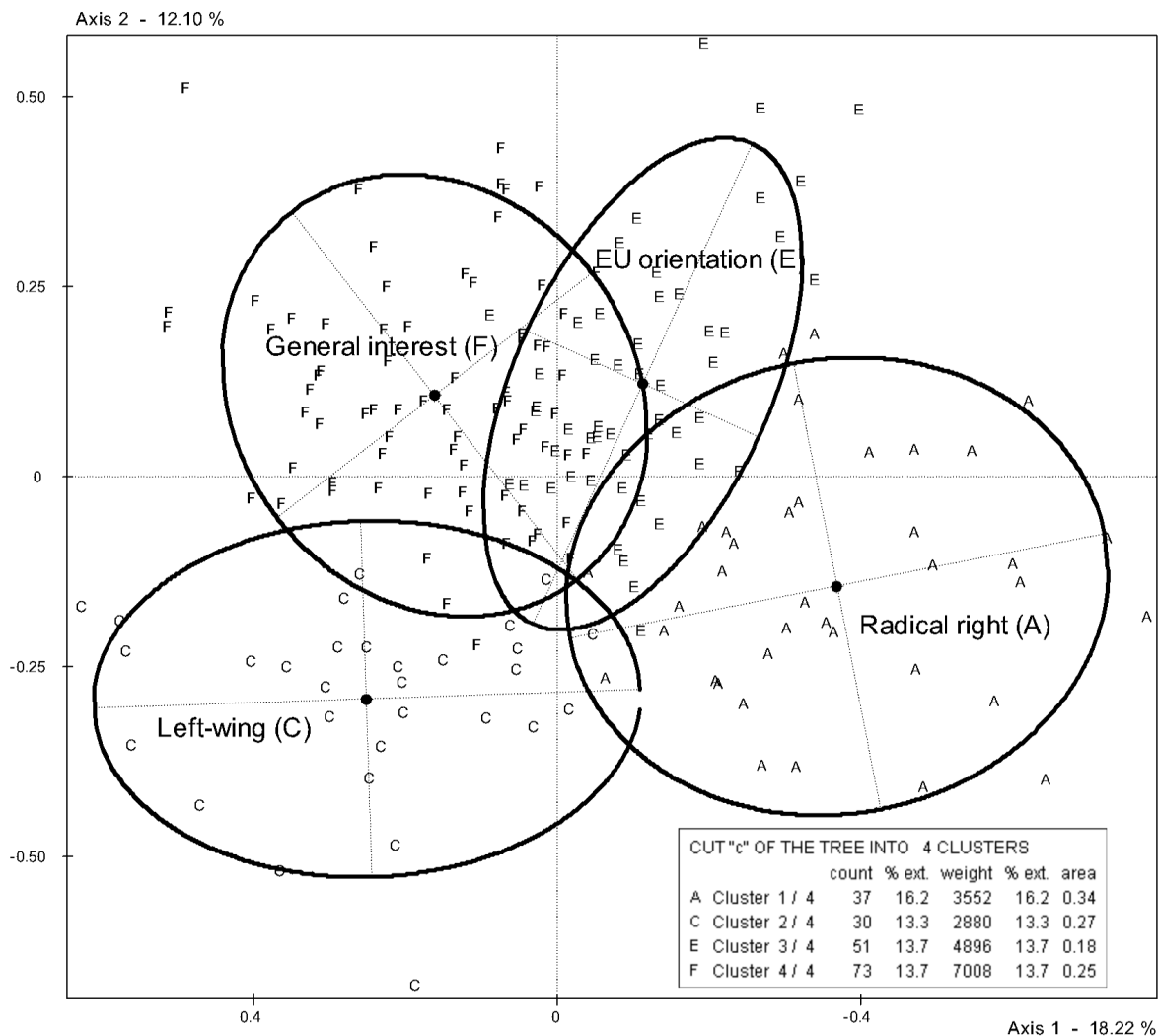


The third partition into four clusters A, C, E, and F, is the retained solution of the cluster analysis for two reasons. Firstly, it is the first partition where the between-variance exceeds the within-variance. Of the variance of the cloud of individuals on axes 1, 2 and 3, 55 percent is attributable to the between-variance between the four clusters (cf. Le Roux & Rouanet, 2004: : 114-115). Secondly, the solution proves to be sociologically interpretable with four distinct orientations in the space of position-takings. These four clusters can be said, in relation to the analysis of the space in the preceding section, to represent four (broad) sets of dispositions regarding political position-takings. This illustrates the multidimensional character of the space in that the multidimensional

structure is present both in the space as a whole and in each cluster. Cluster A, for instance, is characterized by its location relative to other clusters in several dimensions. Based on their respective orientations, the clusters may be labeled as follows:

- Radical-right, distrust in political institutions (cluster A);
- Left-wing orientation, affirming cultural pluralism (cluster C);
- EU orientation (cluster E);
- General interest in political issues, and trust in political institutions (cluster F).

Figure 4. The space of political position-takings. Cloud of individuals. The plane of axis 1 and 2. Projection of the third partition into four clusters



To begin with, the radical-right cluster is located in the lower right part of the space of position-takings. Low interest in political issues combined with low trust in established institutions is one of the main features. There is also strong approval of the opinion that Sweden should limit the numbers of refugees as well as a strong inclination to defend the preservation of nuclear power. Coupled with negative attitudes towards the EU, EMU, and NATO, this cluster of position-takings is characterized by a tendency to advocate a Swedish exit from the EU. There is also a strong position against income equality, along with position-takings affirming lower taxes on high income and against a ban on privatizing hospitals.

These four clusters are not only representations of different orientations in the space of position-takings; they also reflect different social positions. In this case, the radical-right cluster (A) is characterized by an overrepresentation of male students in vocational study programs of working class origin. In grouping different social origins a distinction was made between the relatively large group of industrial workers on the one hand and other working class professions such as construction workers, transportation workers, etc. This distinction does not only stem from the composition in our population. It also reflects differences in organizations where, on the one hand, we have industrial workers in large industrial companies where employees now and historically are organized in unions and, on the other hand, occupations that are known to be organized in self-employment, small businesses, and what one might call entrepreneurial organizations. This distinction relates to different dispositions towards the space of possible political position-takings, as for instance the overrepresentation of sons of construction and transportation workers in the radical right cluster, characterized by antipathy towards immigrants, resistance to redistribution of common goods, income equality, and support for lower taxes on high income. Empirical research clearly indicates that workers and the old middle classes are overrepresented among radical right supporters (Lubbers et al 2002: 364, Invarsfalten 2005: 465, Norris 2005: 139). Social marginality has become more important over time to explain voter support of the populist Sweden Democrats party and the established radical right populist parties in Sweden (Rydgren & Ruth 2011: 217, 222-223, Oscarsson & Demker 2012: 177-189). However, several researchers emphasize that the formation of radical-right political orientation is not adequately understood in terms of social class structures, emphasizing instead a lack of higher education (Oscarsson & Demker 2012,

Rydgren & Ruth 2011: 208, Rydgren 2012: 1-3, cf Evans 2005). Such conclusions tend to forget or fail to recognize that differences in educational level and or educational career at a given moment are the scholastic translation of differences in social origin (Bourdieu 1984: 421). The choice of educational path, the choice of educational program, discipline, and career express the ambitions that are available to individuals with a given social origin and academic heritage. The cluster of radical right position-takings is overrepresented among sons of working class origin, young men in vocational programs, such as automotive, construction, and electrician programs. These are social groups dispossessed in terms of educational assets and preparing for a challenging (local) labor market, a work sector that is shrinking and/or exposed to competition in the global market.

The (egalitarian) left-wing oriented cluster C, located in the lower left part of the space of position-takings, is characterized by positive attitudes towards economic redistribution, expressed by a generally favorable stance on income equality, antipathy towards private, for-profit operation of hospitals, and strong overrepresentation of position-takings against lowering high income taxes. This is also a cluster of positions affirming cultural support of immigrant groups, opposing limits on refugees, interest in foreign labor rights and environmental issues, resistance towards private use of cars cities, advocating higher fuel taxes, and opposing nuclear power. This economic redistribution and orientation, intertwined with egalitarian positions towards immigrant groups and interest in environmental issues is combined with lack of trust in established national and transnational institutions. This left-wing cluster of position-takings (C) includes an overrepresentation of female students in preparatory educational programs of working class and cultural middle class origin. The cultural middle class consists mostly of (sons and) daughters of teachers.

The EU-oriented cluster (E) is characterized by a marked resistance towards increased connectedness among the European states, and lack of interest in foreign labor rights. This cluster also includes positions affirming for-profit provision of social and health services, ambivalent trust in national and international political institutions coupled with distrust of the local community council. Within this cluster of position-takings, sons of industrial workers and sons of cultural middle class origin are overrepresented. Neither preparatory nor vocational programs are overrepresented.

The cluster of general political interest has a weak orientation towards post-materialist issues and gathers interest in animal rights and environmental issues. This cluster also leans slightly towards an EU-orientation as well as a left-wing orientation located in the upper left-hand side of the political space of position-takings. Gathered in this cluster (F) we recognize an overrepresentation of women, students in preparatory study programs, and economic and cultural middle class origin.

These clusters of position-takings unveil a quite distinct gender division. On the left-hand side, women are overrepresented in clusters of left-wing oriented position-takings and clusters of general interest in politics, most significantly in post-materialist issues in the upper left hand corner, and environmental issues and animal rights and, in the lower left-hand corner, foreign labor rights. On the opposite right-hand side, the radical-right cluster in the lower corner gathers an overrepresentation of men of working class origin.

Finally, the left-wing cluster F resembles to some extent the emphasis on redistribution found in cluster C. But this cluster of position-takings differs in the sense that there is a much broader or 'general' interest in political issues and gathers those who have trust in national and transnational political institutions. Although cluster E and F resemble each other, the economic redistribution and environmentalist orientation are not distinguished position-takings represented in cluster E.

Conclusions

By reviewing the composition regarding different social properties in each cluster, it is obvious that the radical right cluster (A) stands in stark contrast to almost everything from the other three clusters of position-takings. While this is a reasonable conclusion given that cluster A resulted from the first partition, it is striking that this cluster shows such deviance, on the social attributes as well. The clustering was, after all, performed on basis of response patterns on political opinions and not on social attributes. This simultaneous appearance of deviance in two conceptually distinct spaces – the space of position-takings and the space of social attributes – leads to an interpretation of the space of position-takings as follows: the different sets of position-takings, or even dispositions, make up the differentiating principles in the space of position-takings; coincidentally these differentiating principles exist because this space is homologous to the space of social properties, hence evoking the homology thesis of Pierre Bourdieu (2010/1979, pp. 171ff). The basic conclusion of this article is that

social origin and educational positions – social class – structure political position-takings and interest, although in complex ways. Class structures and structures of political conflicts are changing; however complexities in the political landscape seem to be underpinned by a complexity in social structure.

The results presented in this article are similar to those found in the study of upper secondary students in Uppsala, but there are also differences. Issues of economic redistribution contribute far less to the differentiation in the political space of Bergslagen than in Uppsala, and conversely environmental issues contribute much more to the differentiation in Bergslagen than in Uppsala. We must keep in mind that in comparison with Uppsala, a relatively larger number of respondents in Bergslagen specified the economy as the most important social issue. Although the economy is identified as an important issue it does not divide young people's political position-takings in any striking way. In Bergslagen, which is by nature an industrial society, there is quite a strong awareness, for instance, of the impact of the global economy on local industries, but it is more an awareness shared among young people in Bergslagen than an issue that divides social groups of young people. Bergslagen differs from Uppsala in the sense that Uppsala is characterized by a higher degree of social differentiation than Bergslagen. Social groups with a relatively high amount of cultural capital and those with a relatively high amount of economic capital are more or less absent in Bergslagen. These groups were overrepresented in opposing positions on redistribution issues in Uppsala. The dominating distribution of difference in Bergslagen is revealed in relation to issues on cultural pluralism, dispositions towards refugees and immigrant groups with a corresponding gender division, separating students in preparatory educational programs from students in vocational educational programs and students with a working class origin from students with a cultural middle class social origin. Taking the changing structure of the political landscape into account, it is interesting to note that it is along new political dimensions, identity politics and socio-cultural issues, that we discern a proletarianization of the radical right-wing orientation.

In summary, the spaces of position-takings in Bergslagen and Uppsala represent two slightly different parts of a much wider space of position-takings. As outlined in figure 5 below, if we project the political space of young citizens in Bergslagen onto the space of political position-takings in Uppsala, or vice versa, the center of the space of Bergslagen is posi-

tioned slightly below the center of the space of Uppsala. The positions and compositions of social attributes in each space relative to one another suggests that we are dealing with a space characterized by the working classes and a space characterized by the middle and upper middle classes, respectively.

A sizeable proportion of young people in Bergslagen have a positive attitude towards the EU, simultaneously harboring antipathy towards more extensive collaboration among EU Member States. Bergslagen might differ from Uppsala in the sense that EU policy and related issues have more tangible everyday political consequences and are possibly also more apparent in local policy in Bergslagen than in Uppsala. Since the late 1980s the rural communities in Bergslagen have been challenged by structural transformation as the economic crises forced the steel and forestry industries to institute substantial efficiency measures. This transformation of Bergslagen has been and remains heavily dependent on ‘structural funds,’ financed initially by the Swedish state and subsequently by the EU.¹ Young students’ orientation towards the EU is reasonably related to local experience and the sense of dependence on government and EU funding.

Despite the rather different compositions of social attributes in the two spaces, the structural similarity is obvious. The attempted explanation to this structural similarity is hypothetical and introduces the concept of field. It is our belief that the structures of political position-takings are so similar in two very distinct geographical places because what we call ‘political’ and ‘political issues’ are not a production of the individual subjects’ considerations, but have already been produced in a hypothetical field of ideological production. The space constructed in this article is merely a market for the appropriation of political ‘goods,’ that is, available or possible standpoints. The structural similarity between two rather different settings could be an indication that this “marketplace” is homologous to a field of ideological production. □

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Abstract

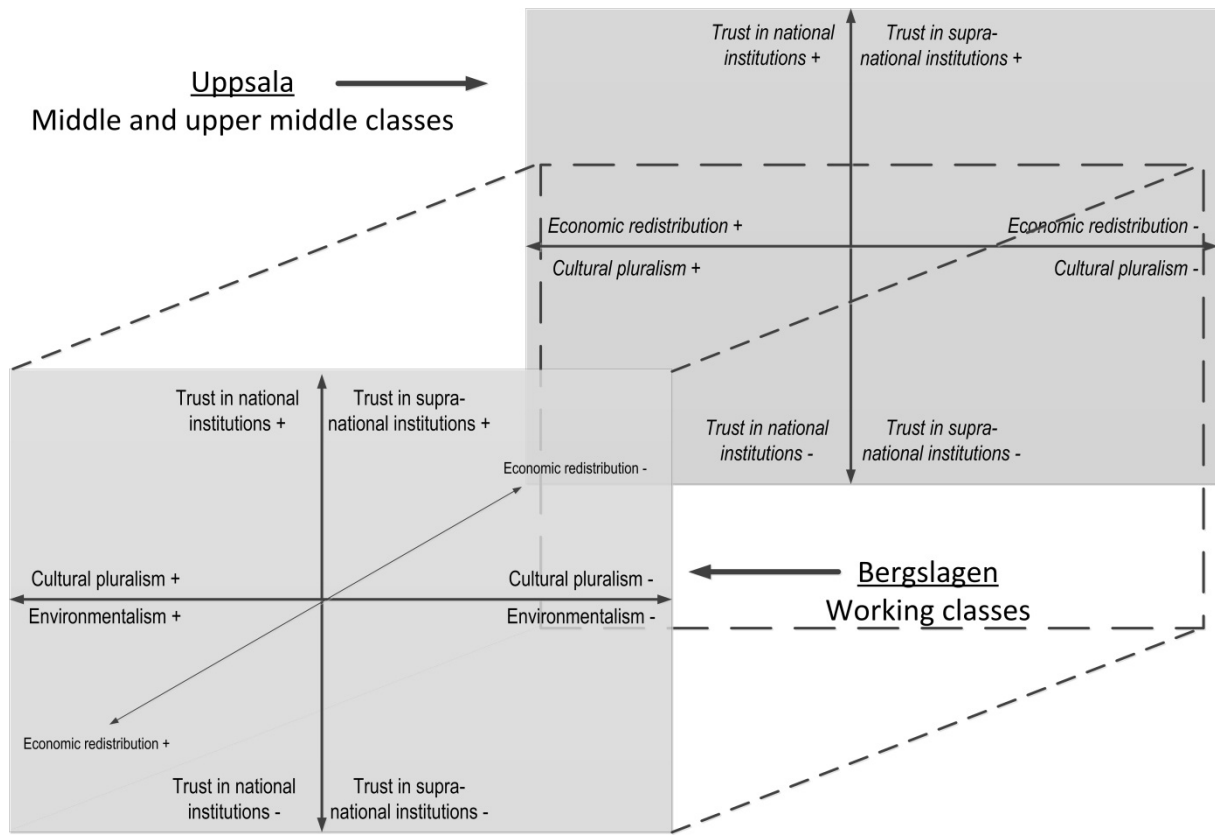
The aim of this article is to explore and understand young rural citizens’ political position-takings. By employing a Bourdieusian approach to class and politics, we are able to show class still offers an important tool for understanding differing political position-takings. By comparing this study carried out on a population from a rural mining district with an equivalent study on young citizens in the city of Uppsala we find both similarities and differences as regards the spaces of position-takings. Both spaces are structured by oppositions regarding redistribution issues, environmental issues, cultural pluralism issues and trust in established institutions, but these different issues are of different importance in each geographical setting. In summary, the spaces of position-takings in Bergslagen and Uppsala represent two slightly different parts of a much wider space of position-takings. The positions and compositions of social attributes in each space relative to one another suggests that we are dealing with one space, the rural mining district, characterized by the working classes and one space, the city of Uppsala, characterized by the middle and upper middle classes, respectively.

Keywords

Young citizens, Politics, Position-takings, Class, Geometric Data Analysis

¹ EU structural funds and the first ‘Bergslagen Mission’ aimed at business innovation and entrepreneurship (30%), education (8.6%) and communications (7%), cultural projects (4%). (The Västerbergslagen package was primary intended for educational interventions and cultural projects)

Figure 5. Uppsala and Bergslagen spaces of position-takings synchronized



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Appendix – tables

Table 1. Which societal issue do you find most important today? Open-ended answers categorized. Relative frequencies in Bergslagen and Uppsala respectively.

	Bergslagen (N=402)	Uppsala (N=1097)
Economy	13,7	8,1
Equality	7,5	3,9
Environment	20,6	22,8
Justice	0,7	2,8
Peace & conflict	1,2	3,1
Migration	6,5	4,9
Education	1,0	2,1
Healthcare	1,5	0,7
Law & Justice	1,2	1,8
Rights	2,7	2,3
Other Issues	5,7	3,8
Don't know and no response	37,6	43,6
Total	100,0	100,0

Table 2. Distribution in different occupations in Uppsala and Bergslagen 2010. ISCO-88 groups. Source: Statistics Sweden (SCB).

ISCO-88 Groups	Bergslagen (N=20 462)	Uppsala
Managers	5,2	5,4
Professionals	12,0	25,4
Technicians and associate professionals	15,7	19,3
Clerical support workers	5,4	7,3
Service and sales workers	19,4	20,6
Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers	0,9	0,7
Craft and related trades workers	11,5	7,2
Plant and machine operators, and assemblers	20,1	4,9
Elementary occupations	6,1	5,2
Armed forces occupations/NA	3,7	3,9
Total	100,0	100,0

Table 3. Social origin in the Bergslagen population and sub-population selected for Correspondence Analysis (CA).

Bergslagen	Population		CA-population	
	N	%	n	%
11 professional groups, extracted from household				
Civil engineers	8	2,0	3	1,6
Physicians	0	0,0	0	0,0
Professors, upper secondary teachers	2	0,5	2	1,0
CEOs	2	0,5	2	1,0
Senior officials	4	1,0	1	0,5
Technicians	24	6,0	15	7,9
Compulsory school teachers	17	4,2	10	5,2
Art producers	1	0,2	1	0,5
Officials	31	7,7	15	7,9
Small entrepreneurs	38	9,5	22	11,5
Workers	226	56,2	105	55,0
N/A	49	12,2	15	7,9
Total	402	100,0	191	100,0

Table 4. Characterizing modalities for clusters in partition 1 to 3.²

Partition (percent between-variance) Variable label Cluster label		Characterizing modalities							
		Partition 1 (26,3)		Partition 2 (44,4)			Partition 3 (55,0)		
		A	B	A	C	D	A	C	E
Income equality	--	++	--	++	+-	--	++	+-	+
Interest in domestic economics	--	+-	--	+-	+	--	+-	-	+
Interest in national economics	--	+	--	+-	+	--	+-	-	+
Lower high income tax	+	-	+	-	+-	+	-	+-	+-
Ban private hospital profit	--	+	--	++	+-	--	++	--	+
Cultural support to immigrants	-	+-	-	+	+-	-	+	-	+-
Interest in foreign labor rights	--	+-	--	++	+-	--	++	--	+-
Accept fewer refugees	++	-	++	-	+	++	-	+	+
Support to mother tongue tuition	-	+	-	--	+	-	--	+-	+
Increase taxes on fuel	-	+-	-	+	+-	-	+	-	+
Interest in animal rights	--	+	--	++	+	--	++	-	+
Interest in environmental issues	--	+	--	++	+	--	++	+-	+
Preserve nuclear power	++	-	++	-	+-	++	-	--	-
Stop private motoring in cities	--	++	--	++	+-	--	++	-	+
EMU membership	-	++	-	-	++	-	-	+-	--
Interest in EU issues	--	+-	--	-	+-	--	-	-	+-
Make EU into a United States	-	+-	-	-	+-	-	-	--	+
NATO membership	--	+-	--	-	+-	--	-	+-	+-
Sweden should exit EU	++	-	++	+	-	++	+	-	-
Trust in communal council	--	+	--	+-	+	--	+-	-	+
Trust in EU parliament	--	+	--	-	+	--	-	+-	+
Trust in political parties	--	+-	--	-	+-	--	-	+-	+
Trust in Swedish government	--	+-	--	-	+	--	-	+-	+
Trust in Swedish parliament	--	+-	--	-	+	--	-	+-	+

Table 5. Distribution of gender, educational position and social origin in four clusters (partition 3).

	N	Clusters (%)				Total
		A	C	E	F	
<i>Gender</i>						
Women	95	27,0	63,3	40,0	61,6	49,5
Men	96	73,0	36,7	60,0	38,4	50,5
Total	190 ³	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0
<i>Educational program</i>						
Preparatory	127	29,7	76,7	68,6	79,5	66,5
Vocational	64	70,3	23,3	31,4	20,5	33,5
Total	191	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0
<i>Social Origin</i>						
Industrial workers	51	29,7	26,7	33,3	20,5	26,7
Other working class occupations	54	35,1	30,0	23,5	27,4	28,3
Economic middle class	37	16,2	16,7	15,7	24,7	19,4
Cultural middle class	34	8,1	20,0	19,6	20,5	17,8
Unemployed/NA	15	10,8	6,7	7,8	6,8	7,9
Total	191	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0

² Usually one uses the mean for comparisons when dealing with ratings or doubled rates. But for a Likert scale transformed into doubled ratings with 4 points it is not reasonable to make a comparison of means based on standard deviations. It is then better to characterize the clusters by characterizing modalities.

³ One respondent did not state gender.