



Class and politics in twenty-first century Norway: a homology of positions and position-taking

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ABSTRACT

This article draws on Pierre Bourdieu's rethinking of social class to investigate the connection between class and politics in contemporary society. We introduce a new class scheme that incorporates an often neglected hallmark of Bourdieu's approach, namely the distinction between class fractions based on the preponderance of economic or cultural capital possessed. By relating our two-dimensional concept of class to a two-dimensional political space, we will show that the relationship between class and politics is homological – the systems of class divisions and political divisions exhibit a corresponding structure. The hierarchical dimension of class is associated with the divide between liberal and anti-liberal views on what is sometimes dubbed 'new' politics, whereas the capital composition dimension is connected with the classical left vs. right divide in terms of issues of redistribution, social spending and government interventions in the economy. We conclude by discussing whether political attitudes should be seen as a form of taste and as such on par with cultural tastes.

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Debates about the death of class were partly fuelled by the confusion surrounding the contemporary relationship between class and politics. If at some point the relationship seemed straightforward – lower positions in the social hierarchy were associated with left-wing politics, and higher ones with the right-wing – that neat order of things was disrupted by a differentiation of class relationships as well as the political landscape. Rather than splitting society to an ever greater extent into 'two great classes directly facing each other' (Marx and Engels 2002 [1888]: 219–20), the twentieth century produced a complex kaleidoscope of positions

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and position-taking. The old-style politics of life chances now coexists with what has been dubbed 'new' or life politics, concerned with 'how we should live in a world where everything that used to be natural (or traditional) now has in some sense to be chosen, or decided about' (Giddens 1994: 90–1). According to one powerful account, this does not mean that class is dead but that it has been buried alive by 'cultural voting' for life politics (van der Waal *et al.* 2007).

In terms of class analysis, how should the connection between class and politics be understood today? Debates about the very nature of contemporary class divisions also seem warranted. Several scholars have maintained that class continues to account for attitudes and/or voting along the classical economic left vs. right divide (at least to some extent). Life politics (or 'new politics', 'postmaterialism' or 'liberal vs. anti-liberal'), however, requires an explanatory variable of its own. Often, level of education is seen as the appropriate measure (see Houtman 2001), but Goldthorpe has argued that status should be used (Chan and Goldthorpe 2007). Implicit in these approaches is the view that not only is class a purely economic phenomenon; it should also be construed and analysed as a principle independent of cultural factors.

We follow Harrits *et al.* (2010) in applying Pierre Bourdieu's multidimensional understanding of social class to the political landscape of late modernity. Although the influence of Bourdieu is widespread, applications of his specific conceptualisation of social class have been in remarkably short supply. While maintaining that class is fundamentally shaped by the economic structures of capitalism, Bourdieu regarded social class divisions as irrevocably social and cultural. A hallmark of his understanding is that social class divisions are manifested in a multidimensional distribution of forms of capital. Crucial to his model was division by the composition of capital, denoting the difference in the relative weight of cultural to economic capital (Bourdieu 1984). Remarkably, that division is absent from the most extensive follow-up of Bourdieu's *Distinction* (Bennett *et al.* 2009), as well as the recent 'new model of social class' inspired by Bourdieu (Savage *et al.* 2013).

Harrits *et al.* drew on Rosenlund's interpretation of Bourdieu's homology thesis (2009) in constructing two analytically independent spaces: one of political attitudes, the other of social class divisions. They found their two-dimensional political space corresponded to their two-dimensional space of class divisions. In line with *Distinction* (Bourdieu 1984: 451–3), left-wing economic views were inversely related to the actors' volume of capital, but positively correlated with the relative

preponderance of cultural capital. Expanding upon *Distinction*, Harrits *et al.* found libertarian views of life politics to be positively associated with the volume of capital, and especially cultural capital (Harrits *et al.* 2010: 18–19). We follow a similar strategy but measure social space by using a new class scheme which distinguishes classes and class fractions by both the volume and composition of capital (Hansen *et al.* 2009).

Our empirical case is Norway. Due to a variant of the ‘frozen’ five-party model, an influential labour movement and a social democratic party that has dominated post-war governments, Norwegian politics shares many basic characteristics with that of its Nordic neighbours (Lipset and Rokkan 1967; Berglund and Lindström 1978; Demker 2006). Arguably, however, due to the establishment of a socialist green and a populist right-wing party in the 1960s and 1970s, ‘new politics’ has restructured the political space of Norway much in line with a Western European pattern (see esp. Kriesi *et al.* 2006). Although the Norwegian party system is arguably dominated by three major parties – Labour, the Conservatives and the Progress Party – it also accommodates several smaller parties – the Christian Democrats, the Liberal Party, the Centre Party (former the Farmers’ Party), the red-green Socialist Left Party and the socialist/communist party ‘Red!’ (formerly the Red Election Alliance).¹

1. Debates about class and politics

For some time, the nexus of class and politics was conceived of as fairly straightforward. The less well-to-do would opt for the redistribution of wealth and social welfare of the Left, whereas the better-off would deem their interests best served by the Right. According to Lipset’s classical formulation: ‘More than anything else, the party struggle is a conflict among classes’: as the parties were essentially seen as vehicles for class interests, the link between class and politics could be explained by the ‘simple economic self-interest’ of voters (Lipset 1960: 223, 229)

That neat state of things was fractured by two parallel processes: the rise of the ‘new’ middle classes and the plethora of new political questions in the post-war period. Parkin’s (1968) pioneering study of middle-class radicalism within the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament underlined that such radicalism was in fact quite distinct from the bread-and-butter politics of the labour movement. Environmental concerns, the

¹Since the data used in this paper were collected, the Green Party has grown and its electoral popularity is comparable to that of the other small parties.

threat of nuclear war, gay rights, racism and xenophobia and other issues of a more 'non-material' nature redrew the political landscape. The advent of 'post-materialist' politics (Inglehart 1990) and the politics of lifestyle, as opposed to that of life chances (Giddens 1994), were seen as either supplanting or supplementing the old-fashioned clash between socialism and laissez-faire economic liberalism. Many scholars have thus argued that political attitudes should be understood two-dimensionally, as involving a classical economic left-right axis and a 'post-materialist', 'new-political' value dimension (Borre 1995; Clark and Lipset 1991; Flanagan 1982). This was accompanied by a marked decline in traditional class voting patterns in the post-war decades (Lipset 1981; Nieuwbeerta and De Graaf 1999; Nieuwbeerta 2001; Evans 1999).

For much of the twentieth century, sociologists were content to conceive of class divisions as dichotomous. Among the non-Marxists, this took the form of the divide between manual and non-manual labour (see the brilliant, if scathing, review in Parkin 1978). If this view was ever satisfactory, it gradually became less so. The 'new middle class(es)' emerged from key developments in twentieth century capitalism. The rise of joint-stock ownership paved the way for much larger organisations with more complex divisions of labour. This intersected with technological developments requiring greater expertise, but also with the expansion of the public sector as an employer, creating 'structural demand' for new types of white-collar workers. This development was common to capitalist societies, but there was considerable variation in the specific form and extent (Giddens 1973: 177–97). Particularly crucial is the burgeoning category of various managers, experts and professionals that Goldthorpe regarded as constituting a 'service class' (Goldthorpe 1982). This triggered an urge to devise more complex class schemes (Goldthorpe *et al.* 1980; Wright 1985; Wright 1997).

Most accounts of the decline in class voting were premised on the increasingly unsatisfactory view of class and politics as dichotomous: socialist vs. laissez-faire and manual vs. non-manual (Goldthorpe 1996). One diverse group of scholars interpreted these changes as the outcome of processes of individualisation (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002), the 'hyper differentiation of lifestyles' (Pakulski and Waters 1996) and a 'culture shift' (Inglehart 1990). For these thinkers, political leanings were 'less organised by class and more by other loyalties' (Clark and Lipset 1991: 408)

According to Clark and Lipset, this meant that existing theorisations of class were 'in need of substantial reformulation' (1991: 397). Arguably,

this was accomplished to some extent by the emerging Bourdieusian approach to class (Rosenlund 2009; Harrits *et al.* 2010; Faber *et al.* 2012; Atkinson and Rosenlund 2013; Savage 2000; Savage *et al.* 2005; Devine *et al.* 2005; Bennett *et al.* 2009; Savage *et al.* 2013; Skeggs 1997). To some extent, these contributions make common cause with ongoing work in sociology and political science that contributes to reconceptualising class and the methods traditionally used to measure it (Evans 1999; Manza and Brooks 1999; Oesch 2006, 2008; Kriesi 2010). The Bourdieusian approach, however, is distinct in regarding social class as not limited to the economic sphere, but as also shaped by the workings of various fields (which, under the label of *situs*, was seen by Clark and Lipset as undermining class divisions). In this approach, it makes little sense to contrast the explanatory power of education and cultural capital with that of social class (contra Stubager 2010; Houtman 2001; Sullivan 2001) as the former plays a crucial role in constituting the latter.

2. Data and methods

Our analytical strategy consists of constructing a space of political position-taking and then studying its interconnection with the structure of social space, measured using an adapted version of the Oslo Register Data Class scheme, a class scheme inspired by Bourdieu's model of social space. We use the fourth round of the European Social Survey (ESS), conducted in 2008, as it asked questions about 'old' and 'new' politics. The ESS is a random probability sample of all persons aged 15 and over. We use only the data for Norway and restrict our sample to the working population aged 18–67 ($n = 1112$). Post-stratification weights, developed by the ESS team, are applied in all analyses to correct for selection bias as well as sample skew in terms of sex, age, education and region. Data and documentation are available from <http://www.europeansocialsurvey.org/>.

To construct the space of position-taking, we use Multiple Correspondence Analysis (MCA). MCA works bottom-up, building a model from the distributions observed, as opposed to testing a pre-defined model against the observations (Le Roux and Rouanet 2010; Greenacre 2007). We run the MCA on an 'individuals x categories' matrix, with the rows representing individuals and the columns all categories of the questions. This procedure simultaneously calculates distances between individuals based on how different or similar they are in their response profiles, and distances between the categories based on how different or similar

they are in the ‘composition’ of individuals. This creates a cloud of individuals and a cloud of categories, both pertaining to the same analysis (Le Roux and Rouanet 2010). In the former, individuals are found more closely together the more similar their responses are. In the latter, categories appear more closely the more often they are selected by the same individuals.

MCA allows for the use of supplementary variables for structured data analysis. Supplementary variables do not affect the structure of the solution as they are given no weight in the calculation of the distances. In our case, the structure of the space is determined by the relationship between political attitudes and our variable measuring social class is thus supplementary. This allows us to inspect the mean point and dispersion of each class category in the political space. The position of each social class category is thus in a sense a function of its members’ political views; this can to some extent be likened to a visual regression analysis (Lebart *et al.* 1984).

2.1. A methodology for homology

Bourdieu’s arguments about a homology between class conditions and lifestyles have proven controversial. Commentators interpret it as implying a ‘one-to-one correspondence’ of one’s social position and lifestyle (Coulangeon and Lemel 2009: 48) so ‘that social stratification [...] and cultural stratification map onto each other very closely’ (Chan and Goldthorpe 2005: 194).²

It may seem more reasonable to expect a looser correspondence. Homologies emerge through the mediation of the habitus – the generative formulae ‘which underlie each of the classes of practices and properties’ (Bourdieu 1984: 126). Habitus is the internal structure of actors. Political position-taking, as well as lifestyle practices, are products of the intersection of habitus, field and capital, expressed in the somewhat confusing formula: ‘[(habitus) (capital)] + field = practice’ (Bourdieu 1984: 101). The habitus is crucially – but not exclusively – shaped by early experiences (and hence, social origin). Widespread social mobility (in absolute terms) means that any region of social space will be populated by a mix of people who originated from that class as well as people from other backgrounds, implying some heterogeneity of habitus and, accordingly, of practices. In

²We adhere to Bourdieu in considering political attitudes as analytically analogous to lifestyles, both considered forms of position-taking in various fields.

other words, this essentially historical mediation arguably implies that there can be no perfect congruence between positions and forms of position-taking via dispositions.

Bourdieu's intention was that homology should refer to the relationship between different universes or structures. Therefore, our research design should be geared towards comparing structures. In this respect, we have been inspired by the trail-blazing work of Lennart Rosenlund (2009). Rosenlund constructed one space of lifestyles and one space of social positions through two, independent correspondence analyses. Once both spaces had been constructed, Rosenlund could compare their structures by projecting coordinates from one space onto the other. We follow the same principle here: our space of position-taking is constructed independently of our class scheme, and we investigate the homology by projecting our 'social space classes' onto the political space once its structure has been established.

2.2. Indicators of position-taking

To measure attitudes to both 'old' and 'new' politics, 13 questions have been analysed (see Table 1). Most of them are direct questions about positions in terms of political issues – such as whether one thinks it is the responsibility of the government to ensure full employment. However, to measure attitudes to environmentalism, we have used an item asking respondents whether someone who thinks caring for the environment is important is similar to them. We have assumed that people who support 'green' politics would answer 'like me' or 'very like me'.

Previous experience has demonstrated that an MCA conducted on Likert-scale questions produces a separate axis which distinguishes those who position themselves at the far end of the scales (very strongly agree, very strongly disagree) from those who place themselves more closely to the centre (agree or disagree). This may be interpreted as demonstrating an intensity of opinion but it may also be an artefact. In this analysis, we have avoided this problem by recoding all Likert-scale questions, grouping the categories for 'strongly agree' with plain 'agree' and the same for '(strongly) disagree'.

2.3. A two-dimensional class scheme

Following Bourdieu, we conceive of class as structured two-dimensionally. To operationalise this, we use the Oslo Register Data Class

Table 1. Active questions of the political space. Marginal distributions in weighted percentages. Missing (including 'not applicable', 'refuse', 'don't know') not shown.

Question	Original coding/weighted percentage
For fair society, differences in standard of living should be small	Likert
(Strongly) Agree	55.7
Neither	21.5
(Strongly) Disagree	22.5
Total	99.6
Government should reduce differences in income levels	Likert
(Strongly) Agree	60.4
Neither	21.2
(Strongly) Disagree	18.3
Total	99.9
Large differences in income acceptable to reward talents and efforts	Likert
(Strongly) Agree	53.4
Neither	23.9
(Strongly) Disagree	22.7
Total	100.0
Taxation for higher versus lower earners	As is
Flat taxes	44.9
Progressive tax	48.2
Same sum tax (supplementary)	5.7
Total	98.7
Job for everyone, governments' responsibility	10 point scale
Agree (7–10)	45.8
Partly (4–6)	38.9
Disagree (0–3)	15.3
Total	100.0
Government decrease/increase taxes and social spending	10-point scale
Increase (7–10)	29.4
Neither (4–6)	61.0
Decrease taxes, social spending (0–3)	8.4
Total	98.8
Gays and lesbians free to live life as they wish	Likert
(Strongly) Agree	79.4
Neither	11.6
(Strongly) Disagree	8.8
Total	99.8
Ban political parties that wish overthrow democracy	Likert
(Strongly) Agree	49.8
Neither	16.7
(Strongly) Disagree	32.9
Total	99.4
Women should be prepared to cut down on paid work for sake of family	Likert
(Strongly) Agree	14.9
Neither	17.4
(Strongly) Disagree	67.8
Total	99.8
Schools teach children obey authority	Likert
(Strongly) Agree	72.4
Neither	15.4
(Strongly) Disagree	12.1
Total	100.0
People who break the law much harsher sentences	Likert

(Continued)

Table 1. Continued.

Question	Original coding/weighted percentage
(Strongly) Agree	62.4
Neither	22.4
(Strongly) Disagree	14.9
Total	99.7
Immigrants make country worse or better place to live	(10 point scale)
Better	29.5
Neither	51.7
Worse	18.1
Total	99.3
A person who thinks it's important to care for nature and environment is	(As is, except Very important + Important)
(Very) like me	47.7
Somewhat like me	23.6
A little like me	12.3
Not like me	5.1
Total	88.7

Scheme (ORDC) (Hansen *et al.* 2009). The main classes are differentiated hierarchically based on their total amount of capital, whereas the middle and upper classes are seen as cross-cut into fractions by the type of predominant capital. This produces a basic 11 class scheme constructed based on occupations, ‘generally a good and economical indicator of [one’s] position in social space’ (Bourdieu 1987: 4). For the economic middle-class fractions, we use household income to differentiate between the higher and lower groups.³

Although ORDC was devised for the unique Norwegian register data, the version applied here is adapted to survey data. This means we have had to collapse the elite and the upper-middle class groups. The resulting scheme is shown in [Figure 1](#).

3. The space of political position-taking

Three axes have been retained for interpretation. The first axis accounts for 56.41% of the variance in the active questions, the second for 28.33% and the third for 9.79%.⁴ In the following, axes have been flipped visually to enhance the interpretation but this involves no tampering with the analysis. The cloud of individuals – positions of all active cases – is shown in planes 1–2 and 1–3 in [Figure 2](#).

³This is slightly problematic as occupational codes refer to the individual, whereas household income does not. The data, however, left us with no other option.

⁴This refers to rates of modified eigenvalues as raw eigenvalues in MCA become unduly small (Le Roux and Rouanet 2010: 39–40).

Cultural upper middle (4,3 %)	Symmetric upper middle (12,5 %)	Economic upper middle (5,7 %)
Professors, executives in publishing, teachers with BA, lecturers, journalists.	Doctors, judges, consultants, special nurses, physiotherapists	Executives, managers, financial brokers, accountants... top 20 % earners
Cultural lower middle (5,9 %)	Symmetric lower middle (10,1 %)	Economic lower middle (6,5 %)
Teachers, primary school teachers, social workers	Nurses, authorized social educators, chefs, machinists	Executives, managers, financial brokers, accountants... 0-80 % earners
Skilled workers (24,9 %)		
Auxiliary nurse, milieu therapist (somewhat similar to social workers), electricians		
Unskilled workers (28,1 %)		
Assistants, cleaners, private security officers, janitors, drivers, waiters		
Primary sector (1,9 %)		
Farmers, foresters, agricultural workers		

Figure 1. The adapted ORDC scheme with examples of occupations. Percentages are weighted.

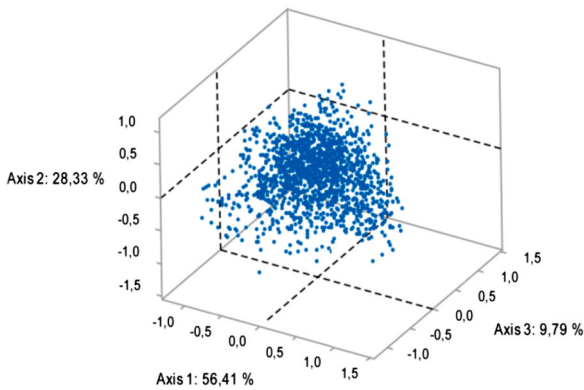


Figure 2. The cloud of individuals.

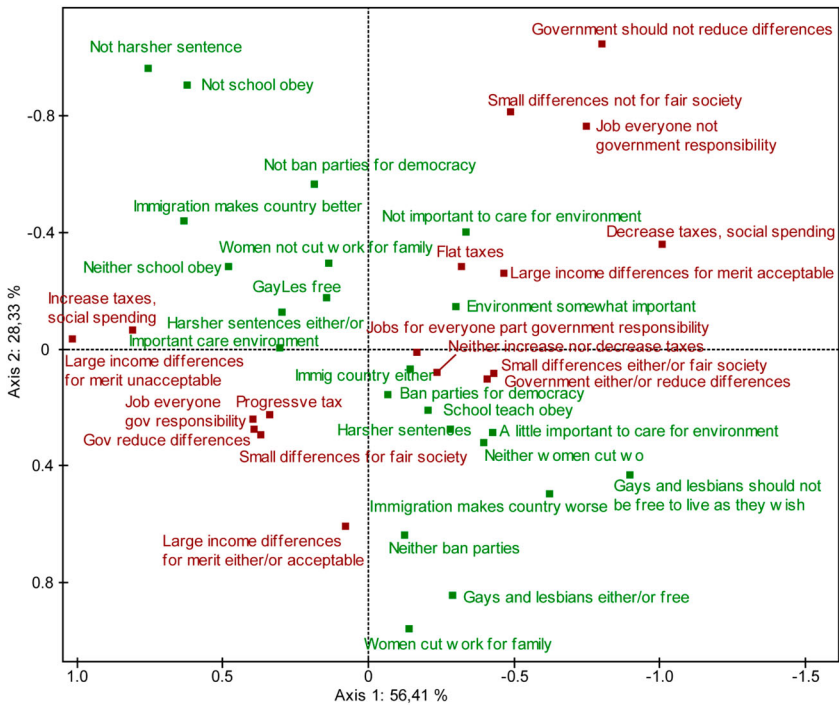


Figure 3. Cloud of categories, plane 1–2.

The space of categories for planes 1–2 is shown in [Figure 3](#). We interpret the axis as reflecting primarily an old-fashioned (socialist) left vs. (laissez-faire) right.⁵ On the left side of the map there is support for economic equality (large inequalities are unacceptable even if they promote merit and effort, the government should reduce inequalities, support for progressive taxation, small differences regarded as favourable), support for increased taxation and social spending and the view that jobs for everyone is a governmental responsibility. On the right side of the map there are the opposites of these views.

Although economic issues are most salient in shaping this axis, several other issues are also distributed across the first dimension. For instance, this is the case with the view that immigration makes the country a better place to live in and opposition to harsher prison sentencing. On the right, there is support for harsher prison sentencing, the view that immigration makes the country worse, the view that gays and lesbians

⁵For this we use ‘explaining points’: categories with above average contributions to the axis in question. It is these we comment on here.

should not be free to live as they wish and the ‘neither’ position on whether the government should reduce inequalities,

The second axis appears to represent a liberal vs. anti-liberal dimension or it might reflect attitudes to ‘new’ politics. At the top of the map, there is opposition to the following issues: schools should teach children to obey authority; harsher sentences; women should work less for the sake of the family and support for immigration. At the bottom, there are above average contributions from the categories indicating mixed views as to whether homosexuals should be free to live as they choose, whether women should work less for the sake of the family, whether immigration makes the country worse and whether there is support for harsher sentencing.

However, some economic issues also emerge as important. On the top, there is the view that the government should not aim to reduce inequalities; that small inequalities are not favourable; and that full employment is not the government’s responsibility. At the bottom, there is support for small inequalities and that the government should aim to reduce them.

The interpretation of planes 1–2 seems relatively clear. The upper-left quadrant consists of seemingly left liberal views: a mix of liberal values and support for increased taxation. The lower-left quadrant resembles the ‘traditional’ left-wing; leftist or socialist positions on economic issues are pronounced. The upper-right quadrant appears to be right-wing liberal, with an emphasis on opposition to the economic policies of the Left. The lower-right quadrant seems to be right-wing and anti-liberal, characterised by opposition to liberal values.

The oppositions captured by our two principal dimensions, recognisable from earlier research into these issues, are complicated by a third axis. Plane 1–3 is shown in [Figure 4](#). We interpret the third axis, shown vertically, as representing a division between those with ‘either/or’ views on several issues, particularly ‘new politics’, vs. those with more distinct views on such matters. At the bottom of the map there are the ‘neithers’ on a range of questions about both old and new politics. This contrasts with the top of the map where there are distinct views of a number of issues.⁶

The Norwegian multi-party system allows for many nuanced political positions to be expressed at the ballot box. Our interpretation of the structure of the space can be corroborated by inspecting the distribution of ‘the

⁶The analysis appears stable in that the general structure of the space is not very sensitive to changing specific questions. We have also found the same structure in other analyses and with other data.

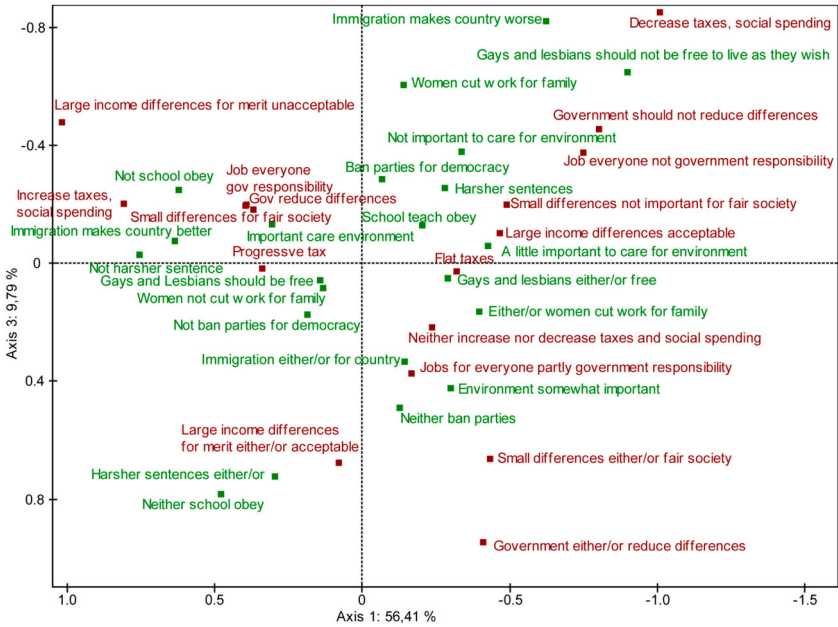


Figure 4. Cloud of categories, plane 1–3.

party one voted for’ projected as supplementary points in the space. The position of the parties is plotted in Figure 5 so that the party one voted for is ‘predicted’ by attitude profiles. In the liberal left quadrant, there are the Red Election Alliance and the Socialist Left Party (green socialists). The Conservative Party is found among right-wing liberals. The Progress

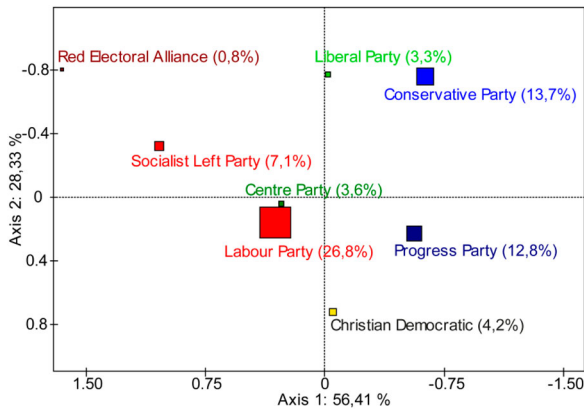


Figure 5. Party voted for as supplementary points in plane 1–2. Percentages are weighted and refer to ‘valid percentage’, i.e. excluding missing.

Party is found among the anti-liberal right. The Labour party is slightly left of centre and close to the middle of axis 2, where the Centre Party is also found. The Liberal Party is located at the top of the map but at the centre of axis 1, with the Christian Democrats representing their counterparts at the bottom of the map.

4. The homology of position and position-taking

The crux of our analysis is the relation between the space of political position-taking and the social space. To study this relation, we use the ORDC categories as supplementary points in the political space. This can be thought of as a ‘visual regression analysis’, where the space is the independent variable and the class categories are dependent. The results are shown in Figure 6.

When inspecting the mean points of classes in the political space, it is striking that the class categories align in exactly the same pattern as in Figure 1. At the top of the map there are the upper classes, with the working classes at the bottom. To the left there are the cultural capital fractions, whereas to the right there are the economic capital fractions.

Accordingly, the first, horizontal axis, contrasting socialist with laissez-faire views, corresponds to the capital composition axis of the social space. The second, vertical axis, separating liberal from anti-liberal views, corresponds to the capital volume axis of the social space. The pattern identified here is consistent with the homology thesis: the structure of the political space corresponds to that of the social space.

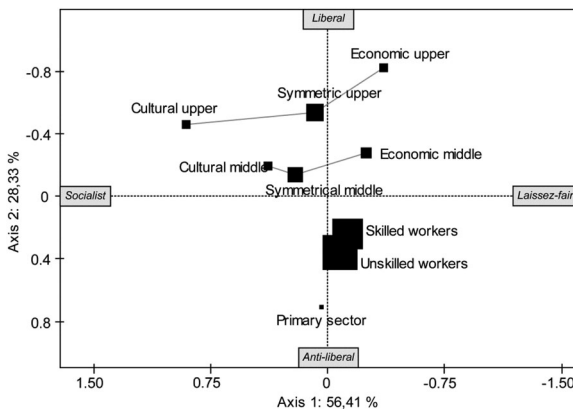


Figure 6. ORDC class as supplementary points in plane 1–2.

The distances between class categories are mostly large enough to be notable and some of them should even be considered large (Le Roux and Rouanet 2010: 71–2).⁷ As for the lower-middle class, the differences are not quite as striking – neither among its fractions nor vis-à-vis other classes. This, however, is as should be expected:

the principles of differentiation which are objectively the most powerful, like economic and cultural capital, produce clear-cut differences between agents situated at extreme ends of the distributions, they are evidently less effective in the intermediate zones of the space in question. It is in these intermediate or middle positions of the social space that the indeterminacy and the fuzziness of the relationship between practices and positions are the greatest. (Bourdieu 1987: 12)

But how strong is the correspondence between the two spaces? To assess this more systematically, a simple cross-tabulation has been drawn up. We have created clusters from our political space, producing groups of individuals as similar as possible in their attitudes expressed.⁸ This means that individuals are grouped together into clusters based on the similarity of their positions in the space. We use only the first three dimensions for our clustering.⁹

Our software indicates that 4, 5 or 7 clusters are optimal to account for the variance in the cloud. We have opted for 5 so as to strike a balance between detail and simplicity. Figure 7 shows our 5 clusters in planes 1–2. We have given them rather heuristic names: the ‘New left’ cluster is distinguished by support for liberal values and leftist views of economic issues. The ‘Old left’ is clearly economically leftist but rather anti-liberal in terms of values. The ‘right-wing liberals’ combine support for laissez-faire economic policies and liberal values. The ‘New right’ fuses anti-liberal views with economically right-wing views, but with some preponderance of the former. The ‘Neithers’ have vague opinion profiles and are distinct in opting for the either/or alternative. This cluster stands out on the third axis which singles out this very phenomenon.¹⁰

Table 2 provides a cross-tabulation of the social space classes with the clusters from the political space. Given the finding above, it is unsurprising that the overall association in the table is low, indicating a 21.9%

⁷Le Roux and Rouanet suggest that distances above 0.5 standard deviations should be regarded as notable and above 1 as large.

⁸This amounts to hierarchical agglomerative clustering of the cloud of individuals (Le Roux and Rouanet, 2004: 106–14).

⁹Using the full dimensionality of the MCA solution produces a number of clusters reflecting minor subdivisions among the anti-liberal rightists based single questions, like attitudes to environmental care.

¹⁰This interpretation is guided by t-tests of the 5 clusters of the active questions from the MCA.

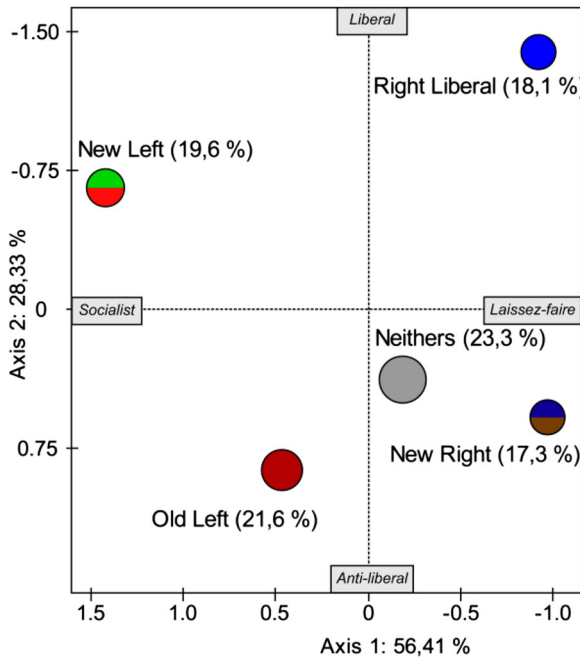


Figure 7. Five clusters in plane 1–2 with their weighted percentages.

Table 2. Social classes and clusters of political space. Row percentages and adjusted standardised residuals.

	New left	Right liberal	Old left	New right	Neither
Cultural upper	57.8% 6.6	15.6% -5	11.1% -1.8	2.2% -2.7	13.3% -1.6
Symmetric upper	27.7% 2.5	26.2% 2.5	9.2% -3.7	11.5% -1.9	25.4% .6
Economic upper	20.3% .1	52.5% 7.1	6.8% -2.9	8.5% -1.9	11.9% -2.1
Cultural middle	27.9% 1.7	13.1% -1.0	18.0% -7	11.5% -1.2	29.5% 1.2
Symmetrical middle	28.3% 2.4	14.2% -1.1	21.7% .0	14.2% -9	21.7% -4
Economic middle	17.4% -5	31.9% 3.1	13.0% -1.8	8.7% -2.0	29.0% 1.2
Skilled workers	13.1% -3.1	17.7% -2	26.9% 2.4	18.8% .7	23.5% .1
Unskilled workers	11.9% -3.9	8.5% -5.0	29.3% 3.7	26.2% 4.7	24.1% .4
Primary sector	15.0% -5	5.0% -1.5	30.0% .9	30.0% 1.5	20.0% -4

Notes: Cramers $V = 0.219$. Grey shaded cells indicate positive associations, black cells indicate negative association. Pearson Chi-square $asympt.sig = 0.000$.

correspondence between the two spaces. The Pearson chi-square shows this to be statistically significant. As the associations may be expected to be most pronounced at the extreme ends of the spaces, we use adjusted standardised residuals to assess to which cells – i.e. between which social space classes and political space clusters – a statistically significant relationship pertains. Values above 2 indicate a significant positive association, whereas values below -2 indicate a significant negative association (Agresti 2002: 80–2).

This supports the view that associations are most pronounced at the edges. The cultural upper-middle class is very strongly associated with the ‘New left’, with close to 60% of them in that cluster. Correspondingly, this class fraction is disassociated with the ‘New right’. The symmetric upper-middle class is positively associated with both variants of liberal views – more than a quarter of them in the ‘New left’ and the ‘Right liberal’ clusters alike, and disassociated from the ‘Old left’. The economic upper-middle class is strongly associated with the ‘Right liberal’ cluster, with 52.5% of them in it, disassociated from the ‘Old left’ and the ‘Neithers’.

Skilled workers are positively associated with the ‘Old left’, with more than a quarter of them in this category, disassociated from the ‘New left’. Unskilled workers are even more pronounced, positively associated with both the ‘Old left’ and ‘New right’, but also disassociated from the ‘New left’ and the ‘Right liberals’. As the lower-middle class fractions exhibit less clear profiles, the expectation that the relationship should be more pronounced at the edges is unequivocally supported.

5. Concluding discussion

Our results indicate that a homology does indeed apply to the relationship between the space of political position-taking and the social space of positions. Strikingly, our class categories aligned in exactly the same pattern in the political space as in the theoretical scheme. We have found quite similar patterns before, with different data, within the Norwegian middle class (Author A) as well as the population at large (Author B). Our results largely resemble the findings of Harrits *et al.* (2010) and De Keere’s paper in this special issue. We think this strengthens the argument for a Bourdieusian approach to understanding social class today, seeing social class divisions as manifesting themselves in the interplay between different forms of capital. More specifically, our results suggest that the often overlooked second dimension of social space, the composition of

capital, is essential to account for the way in which contemporary politics remains *classed*.

However, in the papers of Harrits and De Keere, the social space classes followed the diagonals of their political space (Harrits *et al.* 2010: 18, De Keere fig. 8). The same ‘diagonal homology’ was revealed in a Danish analysis of the space of lifestyles (Faber *et al.* 2012). Does this reveal a different nexus between class and politics in different countries? Two circumstances may imply that the difference could be assigned to the differences in research design. First, our constructions of political space may differ as they rely on different questions. However, considering the Danish case, this *seems* not to be the case, as the distributions of the political parties in the political space are similar in both analyses (Harrits *et al.* 2010: 20) and Norway and Denmark have quite similar party political systems (see Arter 2008 for an account of the Scandinavian party system model).¹¹ Second, we have constructed the social space differently. The Danish study relied on an MCA of indicators of capital, whereas we model it through occupational classifications. However, the difference in results is probably not attributable to that. Jakob Skjøtt-Larsen, a co-author of the Danish study, cooperated with us in projecting our ORDC classes onto their political space. This revealed the same patterns as in their original analysis. This may indicate that Norway, the UK and Denmark may in fact be different in this respect. This should be further investigated through a systematic comparison.

Our results are also in line with the expectations suggested by the research into the matter of liberal vs. anti-liberal, where the conventional understanding is that liberal views accompany high education and/or social position. Those following Kohn (1969) explain this in terms of people’s employment: workers are less liberal because of their lack of self-direction. Others follow Lipset (1959) in explaining liberal attitudes in line with one’s level of education, claiming that high education produces liberal attitudes and low or no education the opposite (Svallfors 2006: 121–43; Houtman 2003: 24–65).

It is surprising, however, that the classical economic left vs. right dimension relates solely to the capital composition dimension and not to the volume of capital. Both working-class categories appear just slightly right of centre, far from the radicalism of cultural capital. It is, of course, unsurprising that the economic capital fractions hold *laissez-faire* views but the absence of an association between the volume of capital and

¹¹Such a comparison cannot readily be made with the British case.

economic left-right views is at odds with the received wisdom about the link between class and politics. Two provisos must be offered here, however: the working-class groups are clearly much bigger than the middle-class fractions in the present study. Obviously, the larger the category, the more it will gravitate towards the average. Moreover, we should note a significant conceptual qualification: our notion of hierarchy is synthetically composed of the total volume of capital, whereas the conventional understanding of class politics makes more sense if one restricts it to an economic hierarchy (as class politics was understood to be a conflict of economic interests).

However, our working-class groups were divided (Table 2). Both groups have considerable left-leaning contingents and the unskilled workers in particular exhibited a positive association with *both* 'Old left-wing' and 'New right-wing' politics. This indicates that the Norwegian working class is politically split which raises the question of how this internal heterogeneity can be accounted for sociologically. This topic calls for further work.

Bourdieu pointed out a peculiar political alignment between the cultural fraction of the dominant class and the workers (both leaning left). Our analysis indicates that this must be substantially qualified. It is true that the cultural upper fraction is markedly leftist and can in this regard thus be seen as aligning with what might be a left-leaning fraction of the unskilled working class. The working class is markedly separated from their potential bedfellows by their lack of enthusiasm for, and in some cases outright dismissal, of liberal views. Judging from the heated controversies generated by questions of immigration and gender equality, this is not likely to be a gap easily bridged.

This raises the question of whether, and how, radical politics are integrated in upper-middle class culture and how an aversion to it might be built into working-class culture. We would claim that political attitudes can be seen as a political taste, on par with broader cultural tastes. Vegard Jarness has shown how the economic middle-class fractions rich in capital and the working class are united in their contempt for the intellectual radicalism-cum-liberalism and *besserwisser* attitude of the cultural capital fractions, as if they always know better about everything from literature to climate change. Conversely, the culturally liberal politics, involving what might be seen as 'tolerant' attitudes, of the cultural capital fractions in no way precluded them from issuing harsh dismissals of other groups, employing aesthetic and political criteria. In their eyes, working-class Progress Party supporters were seen as tacky philistines

and racist homophobes: undistinguished cultural tastes and undistinguished political tastes were widely seen as two sides of the same coin (Jarness 2014; Jarness 2015; Jarness 2013).

To some extent, 'New left' views could be understood as part of the culture of the class fractions richest in cultural capital. Just as their tastes for cultural and material goods distinguish them from both the working class and the fractions rich in economic capital, so too do their political views. Moreover, economic leftism, aimed at diminishing economic inequalities and limiting the power of money, challenges economic capital. Conversely, right-wing parties in Norway promote a politics that limits social spending and restricts funding for cultural institutions and grants to artists and so forth – this can be seen as amounting to an attack on the power and autonomy of cultural capital.

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No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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