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# **SCANDINAVIAN EGALITARIANISM**

UNDERSTANDING ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE LEVEL OF  
WAGE INEQUALITY IN SCANDINAVIA

BY  
**ANDREAS PIHL KJÆRSGÅRD**

DISSERTATION SUBMITTED 2015



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Andreas Pihl Kjærsgård



**AALBORG UNIVERSITY**  
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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Andreas Pihl Kjærsgård received his Master's degree in Political Science and Administration (Cand. Scient. Adm., Cum Laude) from Aalborg University in 2011. In his position as elite master student, he has been affiliated with the Centre for Comparative Welfare Studies (CCWS) at the Department of Political Science at the University since 2009. During the same period he was also a research apprentice for one semester in 2010, a student research assistant working on among other things the collection, preparation and coding of the Danish ISSP 2008 and 2009 datasets, and for several years he worked as a tutor in statistics, quantitative methods and macro economics. In addition to the subject of the dissertation, he has a research interest in social trust. Besides his involvement in teaching and research, the author has tried to disseminate his knowledge as much as possible during his period as a Ph.D. fellow. This has taken various forms: lectures and presentations at foreign universities, educational associations and political youth organisations, commentaries and analyses in newspapers and even a telephone interview on a government website for science dissemination.

# ENGLISH SUMMARY

The Scandinavian countries are well known for their egalitarian political economies which are constituted institutionally of their social democratic welfare (state) regime and industrial relations system(s). Before this dissertation, it was still an open question how this macro context influences Scandinavian attitudes towards the level of inequality in gross wages, from a comparative perspective. In its attempt to answer it, the dissertation uses a variety of data. First, survey-data from the Social Inequality Module of the International Social Survey Program was extensively analysed. Second, data from a survey experiment conducted by the author was analysed. Third, a media study was conducted analysing content from Danish and Swedish newspapers quantitatively and qualitatively. The dissertation finds that, compared to people in other western countries, the Scandinavians were exceptionally egalitarian in the period from 1992 to 2009. This Scandinavian egalitarianism seems constituted mostly of an aversion to top-level excess, rather than a wish to spoil the bottom of the labour market excessively. This egalitarianism cannot be ascribed to mainstream non-contextual explanations within the field, but instead rests on a perceived nexus of legitimated harmonic egalitarian societies. The attitudinal patterns of Danes and Swedes are however quite different. These differences are in congruence with the historical differences in the two countries' political economies, and with differences in how the media in the two countries still represent "the rich": The Swedish legacy of the ideological but peaceful class-society has evolved into representations of the rich as a class distinct from the middle class, and into attitudes divided by class and income. The Danish legacy of consensus democracy on the other hand has evolved into representations of the rich as part of the very wide perceived middle class, and very similar attitudinal patterns across class and other potential cleavages.

# DANSK RESUME

De skandinaviske lande er berømte for deres egalitære politiske økonomier, institutionelt bestående af det socialdemokratiske velfærds(stats)regime og de skandinaviske arbejdsmarkedssystemer. Denne afhandling undersøger, hvordan denne makroniveaus kontekst påvirker Skandinavernes holdninger til ulighedsgraden i bruttolønninger, i et komparativt perspektiv. Afhandlingen bruger flere former for data. For det første er surveydata fra modulet om social ulighed fra International Social Survey Program grundigt analyseret, for det andet bliver data fra et surveyeksperiment analyseret og for det tredje analyseres indhold fra danske og svenske dagblade kvantitativt og kvalitativt i et mediestudie. Afhandlingen finder, at sammenlignet med folk i andre vestlige lande, er skandinaverne exceptionelt egalitære, i perioden fra 1992 til 2009. Denne egalitarianisme synes mest at være forbundet med en aversion mod meget høje toplønninger. Egalitarianismen kan ikke tilskrives mainstream ikke-kontekstuelle forklaringer i forskningsfeltet, men hviler i stedet på en perciperet nexus af legitime harmoniske egalitære samfund. De danske og svenske holdningsmønstre er også ret forskellige. Forskellene kongruerer med de historiske forskelle i de to lands politiske økonomier, og forskellene i, hvordan medierne i de to lande præsenterer 'de rige'. Den svenske arv som værende et ideologisk, men fredeligt klassesamfund transcenderer til konstruktioner af "de rige" som en klasse distinkt fra middelklassen, og holdninger delt på klasse og indkomst. Den danske arv som konsensusdemokratiet transcenderer til konstruktioner af de rige som en af mange grupper i den brede middelklasse, og meget ens holdningsmønstre på tværs af klasser og andre potentielle skillelinjer.





# PREFACE

The present Ph.D. dissertation was written in the period from December 2011 to December 2014. The project was financed by a Sapere Aude grant given by the Danish ministry for Education and Research to my supervisor Professor Christian Albrekt Larsen for the research project “The Nordic Model and its Contemporary Inhabitants” (<http://surveyanalyse.dk/>). The dissertation constitutes one part of this overall research project. During this entire period I was enrolled at the Department for Political Science at Aalborg University ([www.dps.aau.dk](http://www.dps.aau.dk)) and affiliated especially with the Centre for Comparative Welfare Studies (CCWS) (<http://www.ccws.aau.dk/>) but also with the Centre for Opinions and Analysis (COPAN) (<http://www.dps.aau.dk/forskningsenheder/copan/>). It should be mentioned that earlier versions of most of the analyses in Section 5.1 can also be found in a previously uploaded working paper (Kjærsgård, 2012b), a substantial part of the analyses of Chapter 6 can be found in another working paper (Kjærsgård, 2012a) and finally preliminary versions of the media analyses of Chapter 7 was presented at the ESPAnet conference in Poznan (September 7, 2013) and again at a seminar at the Swedish Institute for Social Research in Stockholm (March 18, 2014).

Many people have supported me in the process of writing this dissertation, but a few stand out from the crowd. First and foremost, I would like to show my appreciation to my supervisor Professor Christian Albrekt Larsen. As a supervisor, I would claim Christian is a master of walking the thin line of guiding without leading, of making the tasks ahead seem easy, concrete and reachable, but all the while prompting them to up the pace. Most important of all, Christian has continuously shown a genuine interest in the project – an endeavour taking many detours, myriads of regressions into newspaper articles and fifty-year-old books on industrial relations – and finally, in our discussions of how to fit it all together, also ontologically and epistemologically. It is almost a cliché, but writing this thesis has been as much of an educational and even philosophical journey for me, as it has been the job of producing the printed dissertation.

My fellow traveller on the ‘Sapere Aude’ Ph.D. journey, Troels Fage Hedegaard, also deserves much appreciation. In many ways, Troels and I are quite different, at least when it comes to the style of how we conduct and think about research. This contrast and his frequent constructive feedback helped my progress on the thesis tremendously. Besides being a good friend, Troels academically insists on keeping thoughts, ideas and what is written down concrete, grounded and to the point. It is probably no wonder to the reader that Troels’ ‘bullshit barometer’ has been a crucial asset in finishing the dissertation in a reasonably consistent form.

In addition to these individuals, Christian and Troels, I would also like to thank the critical, but professional and helpful critique and advice given by the research communities with which I have been affiliated during this period. These include the small 'Sapere Aude' group, the somewhat larger communities of CCWS and COPAN, but also other staff members at the Department of Political Science. In contrast to the myths about working in academia, I have always felt a warm and welcoming working environment. Everyone – the administrative staff, senior researchers and especially the other junior researchers at the department – have made my work there over the last three years, not just academically, but also socially fulfilling and enjoyable.

As supportive and friendly as my colleagues may be, there is only one person to whom I can mainly attribute the completion of this dissertation. My lovely wife Martina has never ceased believing in me and my ability to bring the dissertation to a successful closure by supporting me every step of the way. Without Martina's support, I probably would not now be writing this preface.

Any remaining mistakes and errors are obviously my responsibility alone. Enjoy the reading!

Andreas Pihl Kjærsgård  
Copenhagen, December 2014

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# CHAPTER 1. SCANDINAVIAN EGALITARIANISM

The purpose of this dissertation is to investigate the Scandinavian's relationship to economic equality. I will not research Scandinavian attitudes towards redistribution, but focus on Scandinavian attitudes towards the level of inequality in gross wages. As will be shown in sections 1.1 and 1.2, Scandinavian attitudes towards the level of inequality in gross wages are both very relevant as a topic of investigation and at the same time remarkably ill-investigated in existing research. Throughout the dissertation I define Scandinavians as Danes, Norwegians and Swedes and not in the broader Nordic sense including Finns, Icelanders, Greenlanders, Faeroese and the Ålanders. The overall research question (RQ) I seek to answer in the dissertation is:

*What attitudes do Scandinavians express towards the level of inequality in gross wages, how do these attitudes develop over time and why do the Scandinavians express these attitudes?*

The dissertation distinguishes itself from three or maybe even four classic ways of understanding (Scandinavian) attitudes to gross wages, but in many ways also borrows from all of them, taking up a form of middle position inspired by the ontology of Critical Realism (CR). Below I will give a brief summary of some key concepts and the position of the dissertation. There will be more about the concepts' assumed relations, how and why they fit ontologically, and the consequences for the research design in Chapter 2.

First, it has been argued that generations of Scandinavians have a remarkable 'passion for equality' (Andersen, 1983; Graubard, 1986; Svendsen, Svendsen, & Graeff, 2012). Scandinavian egalitarianism in this literature has thus been understood basically as a stable *cultural trait*. The second position is the *material, structuralist* position of some neo-Marxist literature, and some interpretations of Marx's and especially Engels' original writings. In very simple terms, here the material conditions of society and the related ownership structure of the means of production determines which social class dominates the macro-level superstructure of society. The superstructure hereafter imposes a micro-level 'false consciousness' on the working strata of society (Esping-Andersen, 1980; Hay, 2006; Marx & Engels, 1968; Marx, 1972). The third position is pure *rational choice*-inspired approaches to attitudes. Here attitudes to the level of inequality in gross wages are seen as an outcome of the economic utility-function of the individual. In some accounts, the atomistic utility-maximising actors have no structural constraints imposed. In others, structures are part of the equations, but take the form only of formal institutions affecting the incentive structure in the individual's utility-functions (North, 1990; Rothstein, 2000). The *fourth* position is more an approach

than a position, but is important to mention. Much of the existing literature on the attitudes to the level of inequality in gross wages is regression-focussed articles. It is not that there is anything wrong with applying the method of regression analysis, but implicit in its design is often a rather naïve positivist search for linear effects relevant across contexts and time. The simple view of causality underlining this search seems rather naïve given the contextual and complex understanding of causality in the critical realist ontology of the dissertation (more in Chapter 2).

The dissertation distinguishes itself from the first and second position in emphasizing that attitudes cannot just be reduced to macro-level structures, that is, either a culture of equality or the superstructure of society. Instead, values and attitudes need to be reproduced, and in the process of reproduction, individuals have a reflexive potential allowing change in the attitudinal reproduction processes. This on the other hand does not mean that structures do not exist, are not relevant for attitudes, or that they are constituted only by the formal institutions of society, as in the third position.

The monograph will operate with the term *political economy* (PE) to denote the key macro-level structures of society influencing the attitudinal formation at the micro level. There is not one agreed-upon definition of political economy, and the term has been used to refer to many quite different subfields. Mostly these studies are interdisciplinary and deal with the relation and interplay between especially the economic and political system (Weingast & Wittman, 2008). Following this broad demarcation, the term is to be understood equally broadly in the dissertation as the interplay between the economic and political spheres of society. The main institutions governing the two spheres – the industrial relations system (IRS) and the welfare (state) regime – are key concepts of the programmatic institutions constituting the political economy. Operating within these institutional spheres, the key actors in the focus of the dissertation are the labour/trade union movement, the corresponding organisations on the employer's side and the strength and character of the traditional left wing of the political spectrum. The foundations behind these institutions and actors are argued to be the economic structures of society and especially the developing social class structures.

The concept of PE has two sides in the dissertation. First, as may be revealed in the term *economy*, the PE is constituted by a formal and material side reflected in the programmatic institutions, economic structures and class cleavages in society. Just as importantly, the PE has a *political* side also. The outcome of the political fight between the key actors in the PE is not just the programmatic institutions established and the economic structures of society. Politics can be viewed as to a large extent a struggle over which 'subjective worldviews' shall dominate, and crucially 'who' collectively is defined as 'the others' (de Swaan, 1995; Rothstein, 2000). Even as the struggle over subjective worldviews continues, these also become entrenched historically. Rothstein (2000) uses the term 'collective memory' to describe the outcome of this historical process. I think the term in itself is illogical, since a memory by definition is an individual-level phenomenon. I

therefore prefer the term ‘historically constructed normative institutions’ (HCNI) to denote basically the same phenomenon, which is: a particular representation of the past, a representation that in myths, presentations and stereotypes defines: ‘who the others are’ and in a sense also ‘who we are’.<sup>1</sup>

A multiplicity of ‘others’ exists in the circles of social identification for a certain individual at a certain time (de Swaan, 1995). The concept of HCNI is related to the widest social identification circle where, according to de Swaan (1995), notions such as class and nation dominate. Even in this circle and therefore in the HCNI, several ‘others’ can exist in a given society at a given time, which depends for example on whether class or nation is emphasized as the social identification marker of interest. The level of inequality in gross wages can be viewed as attitudes towards the (class?) gap between the top and middle strata of society, and the relevant ‘others’ in the dissertation are therefore the top strata of society or, in a social constructivist sense, ‘the perceived rich’. It is argued that we should be able to get a sense of the background of the HCNI by reviewing the politico-economic history of the Scandinavian countries. Furthermore, to see traces of the myths, representations and stereotypes therein of how the Scandinavian media treats the subject of ‘the rich’.

‘The dissertation analytically distinguishes between two levels. The *aggregated* perspective follows a long line of comparative research comparing the Scandinavian countries *externally* to other especially western countries. The *disaggregated* perspective investigates the *internal* similarities and differences within this Scandinavian model.’<sup>2</sup>

The dissertation argues that in the *aggregated* perspective the Scandinavians indeed do express a remarkable desire for a low degree of inequality in gross wages and an

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<sup>1</sup> Besides the concept of ‘collective memory’, several related but not necessarily synonymous concepts can also be found variously in the literature, also concerning Scandinavia. These include: ‘Stories of Peoplehood’ (Smith, 2003), ‘Imagined communities’ (Anderson, 1991), ‘National Identity’ (Østergård, 1992), ‘National Ideas’ (Larsen, 2008) and ‘National Models’ (Kettunen & Eskola, 1997). Like the idea of a Scandinavian ‘passion for equality’, these concepts often lean towards the stable cultural trait tradition. The concept of HCNI in contrast emphasises that such macro-level narratives are, firstly, a contested terrain and, furthermore, need to be reproduced and can therefore change over time.

<sup>2</sup> The premise of the dissertation is that it makes sense theoretically and empirically to speak of a Scandinavian model in international comparisons and apply analyses on what here has been termed the aggregated perspective, comparing the Scandinavian countries *externally* to other (groups of) countries. The internal differences between the Scandinavian countries render disaggregated analyses very relevant also. See also Knudsen & Rothstein (1994) for a similar argument for, why it makes sense to speak of both ‘the Scandinavian model’ in the aggregated perspective, as well as a ‘West- and East Nordic’ model epitomised in in Denmark and Sweden respectively.

aversion to top excess. In spite of rather remarkable changes in especially the IRS and the global economy, Scandinavian egalitarianism is still strong and persistent. This egalitarianism is furthermore not explained by the dominant explanations from existing research. Scandinavia does not have some special egalitarian social cleavage structure, display some form of a distinct egalitarian justice belief culture, or socialise the still many trade union members to be extraordinarily egalitarian. Instead of these linear, law-like and mono-causal explanations, the aggregated results seem to suggest a Scandinavian nexus of legitimacy in which a perceived low degree of inequality in gross wages leads the Scandinavians to the following: First, to see their society as quite harmonic without major conflicts between social groups, and secondly and more importantly, this leads even the higher strata Scandinavians to be extraordinarily egalitarian – in comparative perspective.

The *disaggregated* analyses investigating the internal differences between the Scandinavian countries reveal noteworthy differences especially between Denmark and Sweden. Furthermore, the results of these analyses suggest a high degree of consistency between attitudes, media content and the legacy of the differences in the political economies of Denmark and Sweden. The Swedish political economy was historically and until quite recently to a much higher extent than Denmark characterised by significant and politicised, ideological class cleavages. In recent decades, the compositional differences between Denmark and Sweden have disappeared to a high extent however. In terms of *attitudinal patterns*, significant between-group differences in attitudes and especially differences between social classes exist and have remained quite stable over time in Sweden. At the same time the intra-group differences remain small from 1992–2009. In Denmark and Norway, the attitudinal differences between social classes and other groups are small, whereas the intra-group differences skyrocket in 2009 for a majority of the groups investigated.

The *media* studies investigates how ‘the rich’ have been portrayed in major newspapers in Denmark and Sweden from 1996 – 2013. In Denmark, qualitative analyses revealed that even during and after the financial crisis ‘the rich’ or rich individuals are almost never constructed as being really distinct from the middle class and the rest of society. In contrast, a large part of all the Swedish references explicitly refer to ‘the rich’ as a group or rich individuals distinct from the middle class and the rest of society. By representing the society as dominated by at least two social groups – the majority and the rich, Swedish media reproduce the image of the historical political economy of Sweden as a class society. The Danish media in contrast, by not representing the rich as distinct from the majority at all, reproduce an image of a ‘consensus-society’ without major social cleavages. It is important to emphasise the importance of perspective in these seemingly contradictory conclusions. Zoomed in on the disaggregated perspective, Denmark and Sweden clearly portray differences. In the aggregated perspective these internal Scandinavian differences dwarves compared to the differences between the Scandinavian countries and other western countries.



Through this short presentation of key results, it should be clear that the dissertation mainly points to a rather high degree of *stability* over time in Scandinavian attitudes towards the level of inequality in gross wages. Some cracks in the Scandinavian egalitarian equilibrium have appeared along the way though. Firstly, the standard deviations of the various measures of attitudes towards gross wages for especially Denmark and Norway increased dramatically from 1999 to 2009. Some of this increase in standard deviations is likely to be caused by the shock of the financial crisis and subsequent debates, and it was furthermore not possible to subscribe these increased standard deviations to any consistent new social cleavage emerging. In spite of this, the increased variability in attitudes could possibly lead to a changed average or median level of egalitarianism over time. In addition, in contrast to the qualitative media analyses of Swedish newspapers, the corresponding quantitative media analyses revealed quite substantial changes. From 2006 and onwards the Swedish outputs look more and more like the corresponding Danish outputs. The total number of articles about ‘the rich’ declines dramatically, the quantitative differences between the various newspapers more or less disappear and the proportion of articles presenting ‘the rich’ in a positive light increases greatly. Lastly, one should not forget the significant changes happening in the Scandinavian political economies and especially in the Swedish IRS. It is not inconceivable that these tendencies could indicate a dynamic that is leading to a *change* in the Scandinavian egalitarianism(s) in the future.

Some of the wider perspectives and contributions of the dissertation are also worth commenting on. The results of the dissertation clearly subscribes to the growing literature emphasising the power of *social constructions*. Two obvious results point in this direction. First, it is clear that the perceived level of inequality in actual gross wages constitutes a crucial ‘mental anchor’ for people’s attitude to the just level of the same. Even if the actual Scandinavian gross wage gap levels are approaching the size of similar gaps in at least some other western countries, Scandinavians still perceive lower levels of inequality in gross wages than people in all other western countries in the ISSP 2009 dataset. Second, it seems mostly to be past and not current characteristics of the Scandinavian political economies that drive the differences in attitudinal patterns and media output of Denmark and Sweden. The actual differences in the political economies and social class structures of contemporary Denmark and Sweden are not large.

On the other hand, this dissertation does not implicate a radical social constructivist view of society – reality still matters. Even if the actual wage gaps in Scandinavia have increased and approach the level of other western countries, they are still small in comparative perspective. As Larsen (2013) puts it, even if there is no one-to-one relationship between ‘real’ changes in society and citizens’ perception of these changes, there are obviously interplays. This should come as no surprise given the well-known limiting cognitive factors:

‘... the human inability to understand the world in its complexity, the human tendency to build identity based on in-group/out-group

mechanisms, the limited interaction between citizens within a large ‘imagined community’ as a nation state, the simplifications (and sometimes distortions) made by mass media and political elites, and others’ (Larsen, 2013, p. 7).

A straightforward consequence is therefore that, if the size of the wage gaps continues to increase in Scandinavia, it is likely – with a time lag – to have wider consequences. First, it is likely to change the presentations and stereotypes of society produced by the media. Ultimately, Scandinavians’ perceptions of both the size of the wage gaps, the character of society and their normative attitudes hereto must therefore be affected. As Homans (1961) states:

‘The rule of distributive justice is a statement of what ought to be, and what people say ought to be is determined, in the long run, and with some lag, by what they find in fact to be the case’

Changed perceptions are furthermore likely to lead to other consequences besides changed normative attitudes. As stated in the famous Thomas theorem: ‘If men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences’. Scandinavian egalitarianism rests on a *perceived reproducing nexus* of just, successful and egalitarian societies. Changes in the actual reality, the media presentations and stereotypes, as well as Scandinavians’ perceptions of any of these three factors are the biggest threat to Scandinavian egalitarianism.

This dissertation therefore also contributes to an emerging literature emphasising institutional feedback processes. The classic path dependency literature and rational choice (new)-institutionalism taught us that there are strong vested interests and many veto points embedded in existing *programmatic institutions*, making change difficult and costly. The institutional feedback processes emphasised in this dissertation and elsewhere could be conceived as a more sociological version of path dependency. Here perceptions, ideas of normality, norms of what is fair and just, and myths and presentations of virtuous or vicious circles drive the reproduction or dismantling of the *normative institutions* of society. As hinted above the normative institutions of society are inert, but changeable. They help individuals find meaning and identity, they shape their behaviour and ultimately they help form the background or context behind which voters and policy-makers guide the future development of the Scandinavian model.

The first chapter will introduce the concept of the ‘Scandinavian welfare triangle’ and the importance of investigating the public legitimacy underpinning the three legs of this rather unique societal model. Attitudes to the level of inequality in gross wages can be conceived as constituting a central part of one of these legs of the Scandinavian welfare triangle – the market. The *second* section will make the not-so-obvious argument that these attitudes are as important to investigate as attitudes to the state and redistribution as well as attitudes to gender roles, the family and work-life balance. The *third* section will argue that this endeavour is both under-

researched and yet accessible. The *fourth* section builds on the arguments of the third section, trying to specify that investigating attitudes to the level of inequality in gross wages can be conceived as focussing on the relationship between the perceived top and middle of society. In contrast to the relationship between the perceived bottom and middle of society, very little is known about how Scandinavians and Scandinavian media relate to and treat this topic. The short *fifth* section briefly returns to the question why the three Scandinavian countries have been selected as cases and not all five Nordic countries. Finally, the outline of the dissertation will be described in the *last* section.

## 1.1. THE EXCEPTIONAL SCANDINAVIAN WELFARE TRIANGLE AND ITS PUBLIC LEGITIMACY

In general, viewed through the big aggregated comparative lens, the Scandinavian countries Denmark, Norway and Sweden are in the existing literature often seen as being quite exceptional countries. On quantitative measures of what could be equated with societal success, e.g. GDP/per capita, social and institutional trust, levels of happiness, corruption and social mobility, the Scandinavian countries consistently rank among the world elite (Ervasti, 2008; Larsen, 2013). The background to these results – for ‘why the bumblebee can fly’ (Dølvik, 2013; Lykketoft, 2006), have often been traced to some peculiar societal arrangements and quite exceptional institutional settings in the Scandinavian countries: the universal/social democratic welfare (state) regime, the Industrial Relations System (IRS), and the high level of economic equality these institutions are argued to produce (Addison & Schnabel, 2003; Christiansen, Petersen, Edling, & Haave, 2005; Dølvik, 2013; Ervasti, 2008; Esping-Andersen, 1990; Esping-Andersen, 1999; Goul Andersen, 2012b; Larsen, 2006; Svallfors, 2004; Svallfors, 1997).<sup>3</sup>

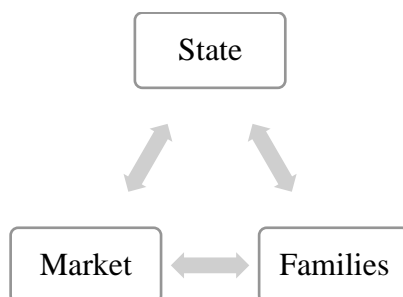
Central in introducing the Scandinavian societies as something quite unique in international comparisons were two seminal books by Gösta Esping-Andersen (1990; 1999). The three Scandinavian countries were here seen as epitomising the social-democratic welfare (state) regime. Esping-Andersen (1999)’s regime concept prompt the idea that welfare in a given country can be produced by the state, the market or the family or any combination hereof. This insight is encapsulated in the ‘welfare triangle’ below, and has later been central to the ‘welfare mix’ literature.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> The Danish flexicurity model is for example a well-known modern description of the Danish labour-market triangle of a flexible labour market, generous social benefits and active labour-market policy (Jørgensen & Madsen, 2007; Wilthagen & Tros, 2004).

<sup>4</sup> This literature has expanded the triangle into a ‘diamond’ including voluntary organisations and even more comprehensive ‘welfare diamond/governance’ models. These include forms between pure state-, market-, family- or voluntary sector-produced welfare. A good way of categorising these blurry in-between forms includes distinguishing between who is *financing*, *deciding* and *delivering* a given welfare service (Goul Andersen, 2012b; Powell & Barrientos, 2004).

Figure 1-1 The Welfare Triangle



Source: Goul Andersen (2012b, p. 14)

Scandinavians' attitudes to two of the three sides of the welfare triangle constitute well-established research fields. This is first attitudes to the size, role and scope of the welfare *state* (including redistribution). Secondly, it is attitudes to *family*, gender roles and work-life balance. Often the relevance of studying these two fields within attitudinal research seems so obvious that they are not even mentioned – especially for what concerns attitudes to the welfare *state*. In any case, the explicit or implicit assumption is that of course citizens' attitudes to the welfare state are important to investigate. We live in democratic societies and citizens elect politicians as representatives of their values and attitudes, and expect them to implement policies in accordance with these (Blekesaune & Quadagno, 2003; Blekesaune, 2007; Hedegaard & Larsen, 2014; Kumlin, 2004; Kumlin, 2007; Larsen, 2006; Linos & West, 2003; Rothstein, 1998; Svallfors, 2003; Svallfors, 1997; Svallfors, 2012).<sup>5</sup> If we therefore want to understand, which path the welfare state is- and will be following, changes in the attitudes of the citizens hereto are therefore an important factor to take into consideration (Easton, 1965a; Easton, 1965b; Wlezien & Soroka, 2007).

In addition, Scandinavians' attitudes to *family*, gender roles and work-life balance are found quite obviously relevant to investigate. In feminist literature, these attitudes are seen as a measure to what extent males and females still live under the influence of a patriarchal hegemony. They can therefore be seen as a yardstick for the degree of emancipation of women in society (Borchorst, 2012; Lewis, 1992; Lewis, 2006). In terms that are more economic, these attitudes have all been seen as important in influencing the level of female labour supply. The dual-breadwinner model of the Scandinavian countries is often seen as a yardstick (Ellingsæter, 1998; Esping-Andersen & Saskia, 2005; Lewis, 1992), but in many other EU countries,

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<sup>5</sup> The 'policy responsiveness' literature investigates to what extent the reality functions like that (Burstein, 1998; Burstein, 2003; Page & Shapiro, 1983).

and for the EU commission, increasing female labour supply is seen as a key tool for dealing with the ageing populations of coming years.<sup>6</sup>

Except for a long tradition of investigating the degree of work orientation of not just women, but all other groups on the labour market (Atchley, 1971; Day & Bedeian, 1991; De Vaus & McAllister, 1991; Mitchell, Ortiz, & Mitchell, 1987; Mowbray, Bybee, Harris, & McCrohan, 1995), Scandinavians' attitudes to the third – market – leg of the triangle, and especially attitudes to the level of inequality in gross wages, are, as I will document below, not very well investigated. This could be because – in contrast to attitudes to the welfare state and redistribution, as well as towards family and gender roles – it is at first glance maybe not so obvious why these attitudes are relevant to investigate at all.

## 1.2. WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO INVESTIGATE?

This subsection will delve into why the level of inequality in gross wages earned on the labour market often has been seen as a non-issue – also theoretically. The assumptions behind such arguments will hereafter be questioned. First, I will present some of the classic arguments and positions concerning the issue of just wages. Thereafter I delve more deeply into some special features of the Scandinavian case(s) that make this issue even more relevant in this context.

A narrative rooted in laissez-faire liberalism and in later neo-liberalism and neo-classical economics, for a number of reasons suggest that there are no reasons to worry about people's attitudes to the wages produced on an unregulated labour market. The basic narrative goes as follows. The invisible hand of the market will automatically insure equilibrium between the demand for and supply of workforce. The competition on the labour market will therefore insure that the wage-earners will always get the wage they deserve. This is because a fair wage in this narrative is defined by the individual worker's productivity, i.e. its worth on the market. Some wage-earners' productivity is higher than others, and it can often be increased by upgrading skills, further education and training. The differences in productivity between the wage-earners thus explain both why differences in wages exist, and why they should exist. Furthermore, because the free market is assumed to be always the most efficient allocation-mechanism securing a pareto-optimal condition, any attempts to interfere or regulate will lead to a loss of total welfare (Esping-Andersen, 1990, 41-44; Kerr, 2011). The narrative sometimes leans more towards pragmatically/analytical arguments (e.g. Hayek, 1948). Sometimes moral or philosophical arguments are at the forefront (e.g. Nozick, 1974; Rand, 1964). Wages for different groups on the labour market, as well as the level of wage

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<sup>6</sup> When EU leaders met in March 2000 the Lisbon European Council considered that the overall target was to raise the employment rate for women to more than 60% by 2010. The 'Lisbon Agenda' was based on a partnership between the Commission and the Member-States (European Commission, 2010).

disparity is therefore per se just, as long as it is left to the free unregulated market to sort out the levels.

Most people and indeed social scientists would not subscribe fully to the narrative just described, which some might even claim is also a bit caricatured. In spite of that I would claim the realm of gross wages somehow seems implicitly perceived, by attitudinal researchers at large, to belong mostly to the realm of market forces. Market forces, globalization and so forth are often viewed as external factors or pressures outside or on the edge of political control (for an introductory discussion: Esping-Andersen & Saskia, 2005). Another argument could also be that attitudes are not as important in this case as in others, because everybody basically just wants to maximize their own wages (Mau, 2003; Svallfors, 2006; Svallfors, 2007) (for more elaboration on this classic argument see Chapter 5). Personal economic utility and, maybe, bargaining power are what really matters, not individual attitudes. If these claims are not wrong, it could explain why attitudes to the level of gross wages is such a relatively under-researched subject. There are theoretical as well as empirical arguments however for why ruling out attitudes to wages as irrelevant can be criticized.

First of all, the laissez-faire narrative above is by no means uncontroversial theoretically. The classic definition of politics by Lasswell (1936) – ‘who gets what, when and how’ – indicates that the question of wages and the distribution of incomes at large are by no means apolitical but rather a fundamentally political topic, with a long theoretical history connected. Both the notions that *firstly*, wages levels and wages disparity rates per se are just, when left to the free market to sort out; and *secondly* that wages are basically an apolitical matter, are not undisputed or shared by other traditions. Attitudes to wage levels and wage disparities are therefore not irrelevant to investigate.

Already in classical Marxism, the question of what wages the workers earn on the market was central, and Marxism was highly critical of the narrative of laissez-faire liberalism above. The wages the working class (the proletariat) earned on the market were, *firstly*, not seen as just at all. On the contrary, the workers were considered to be exploited by the capitalists (the bourgeoisie) who owned the means of production. Furthermore, the theory predicted that those wages would even become more unjust over time. The prediction was that competition between the capitalists spurs centralisation of capital and a steadily worsening economic cleavage between the increasingly fewer and richer capitalists, and the increasingly impoverished working class. The theory predicts that competition on the labour market will bring the wages of the workers in time to the minimum subsistence level (Marx & Engels, 1968; Marx, 1972).

*Secondly*, the question of wages was therefore not viewed as an apolitical matter at all. In the Marxian framework, the socialist or communist movement’s prime task was to break the circle of exploitation of the working class by the capitalists. The only way to do this was argued to be to radically transform society through a

revolution, since the exploitation was inherent in the capitalist mode of production. The socialist/communist movement had a tough adversary in the ruling capitalist class though. The superstructure of capitalist society – that is, state, culture, institutions and rituals – was argued to reflect the interests of the ruling capitalist class and seek to impose on the workers a ‘false consciousness’ that would prevent them from realizing their true objective economic interests – until class-consciousness was achieved. Then the working class would cease being just a class ‘in itself’ – that is a class having the same *objective* class interests, to being a class ‘for itself’ that is a class with members *subjectively* aware of their common interests in changing the capitalist mode of production. The working class are therefore predicted to overthrow the ruling capitalist class in the proletarian revolution and substitute the capitalist with a socialist mode of production (Marx & Engels, 1968; Marx, 1972).

Although Marxism may have been a forerunner in formulating a theoretical critique of the justness of outcomes achieved by leaving wage-determination solely to the market, neither theoretically nor empirically did the critique remain solely Marxist for long. The non-revolutionary trade/labour unions of western countries historically found a solution to insure, in their view, fairer wages for workers without having to resort to revolution. By sticking together and organizing themselves into trade/labour unions, the workers were able to offset the unequal balance of power with the capitalists, get more bargaining power and contribute to securing higher wages for the workers (Addison & Schnabel, 2003; Van Gyes, 2001).

In the Scandinavian countries, this led to the formation, by international comparison, of a rather unique IRS. I will describe the characteristics, formation, development and changes in the Scandinavian IRS(s) thoroughly in Chapter 3. In this section, I feature selected arguments as to why attitudes to wage levels and disparities are maybe even more important to investigate in a Scandinavian context than in that of most other places.

*First* of all, as in other western countries, the trade/labour unions have always justified their existence precisely as a counterbalance to offset the unequal power of the employers against individual employees. They therefore clearly do not subscribe to the neo-liberal/classical narrative of wages being just when left solely to the market. *Secondly*, the state has and earlier had a prominent role in the Scandinavian IRS – though this is often overlooked (Dølvik, 2013).<sup>7</sup> Since the characteristics of the regulations and interventions of the state depend on parliamentary power of different political parties and ultimately votes at elections; attitudes to wage levels and disparities are worth investigating because they can

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<sup>7</sup> As will be described in detail below in Chapter 2, this role of the state was not always as formalised as in the major continental European countries, and the form and scope of state influence varied a lot between the three Scandinavian countries.

influence future voting patterns on elections. This corresponds to the implicit assumptions underlying research into attitudes to the welfare state described above.

*Thirdly*, most importantly and the most uniquely Scandinavian, the political game of negotiating and striking deals is not restricted to the parliamentary sphere. The Scandinavian IRS(s) historically crowded out a great deal of the determination of wage levels and wage disparity levels from the market into a quasi-political sphere of (centralised) collective bargaining negotiations. Two factors are important to mention concerning collective bargaining in Scandinavia.

First, according to Åberg (1984), a symbiotic relationship exists between centralized collective bargaining and egalitarian attitudes of wage-earners, promoting a narrow wage dispersion rate between different occupations. The argument is basically that centralisation changes the focal point for wage-earners from the employers to other groups of wage-earners. In a centralised trade union movement, if a group of wage-earners demands more pay, they no longer merely have to have this claim accepted by the employers, but also legitimized by other groups of wage-earners. This shift in the focus leads to a need for more neutral criteria for evaluating what constitutes fair salaries than labour market strength or value among the different wage-earner groups. Åberg (1984) labels these more neutral criteria ‘non-market criteria’<sup>8</sup> and claims that when the wage-earner groups eventually subscribe to these criteria, it becomes difficult to legitimise certain groups’ earning much more or much less than others – thereby promoting a high degree of equality in wage levels. If Åberg (1984) is right, centralisation in effect tends to crowd out the narrow, personal, utility-based view of wages in favour of attitudes and arguments of ‘fairness’. Attitudes – and not just personal economic utility or interests – therefore become important.

Second, the outcome of negotiations in the form of collective bargaining agreements set the terms for different sectors of the labour market for 2–4 years and covered virtually all wage-earner groups – something that was and is unique in international comparisons. The attitudes of the individual trade union members – or the members of the employers’ federation for that matter – were and are furthermore quite important in this process. A collective agreement is in the Danish and Norwegian IRS is not enacted before being sanctioned by a ballot among the trade union members and the employer members of their respective organisations. In the Swedish IRS the members elect their representatives who then have the authority to approve collective agreements (Elvander, 2002; Galenson, 1952; Ibsen, Høgedahl, & Scheuer, 2011; Stokke, 2002; Åberg, 1984). In this way – and even more in the heyday of centralised collective bargaining – the development of wage levels for different occupations as well as the level of wage disparity in society was

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<sup>8</sup> According to Åberg (1984), these include a company’s financial capabilities in giving pay raises, the company’s market situation and future developments, the nature of the work, how dangerous it is and the education level of certain groups of workers.



a fundamental and salient political issue. Here the attitudes of trade union members and employers, at least in principle, and more so in Denmark and Norway than in Sweden, mattered in a much more direct way than in ordinary parliamentary politics. The system still exists today, but the coverage of the collective agreements of at least the traditional trade/labour unions is shrinking with the trade union density rates and the abandonment of centralised collective bargaining negotiations (Ibsen et al., 2011; OECD, 2004).

As indicated above, big changes have taken place in the IRS(s) since the heyday of centralised collective bargaining negotiations around 1980, although features such as the trade union density rate, the level of coordination, cooperation and governability are still by international comparison very high (Dølvik, 2013; Erixon, 2010; OECD, 2004). The effects of these changes make the issue of attitudes to the level of inequality in gross wages not less interesting to investigate.

### **1.3. AN UNDER-RESEARCHED AND YET ACCESSIBLE FIELD OF RESEARCH**

In this section, existing literature will be reviewed and it will be argued that research into Scandinavian attitudes towards the level of inequality in gross wages does exist. For several reasons this literature could be supplemented however. The review refers mainly to contributions which have used the following survey question, as basis for creating their dependent variables:

*What do you think people in these jobs ought to be paid, regardless of what they actually get?*

The survey question stems from the Social Inequality modules I-IV (1987, 1992, 1999 and 2009) of the International Social Survey program (ISSP). This will also be the approach in much of the survey-oriented analyses of this dissertation, and this selection will be discussed extensively in Chapter 4.

The *first* reason for supplementing this literature is that, a substantial part of it seems conceptually, methodologically and empirically to some extent to conflate attitudes to the gross level of inequality in wages with attitudes to redistribution (Evans & Kelley, 2007; Gijsberts, 2002; Miller & Ortiz, 1995; Svallfors, 1995; Svallfors, 1997). Although the two concepts both deal with economic inequality and are therefore obviously related, they should, as mentioned above, be clearly separated as different concepts (Janmaat, 2013). Redistribution is maybe one of the absolute key outcome-components of the (welfare) state, as shown in the 'welfare triangle' (Figure 1-1). The institutions of the welfare state are the key factors affecting the level of redistribution in a society, and hence, if citizens want to change the level of redistribution in society, they should direct their attention and attitudes to the government, the parliament and the political parties within it.

The gross level of inequality in wages on the other hand, at least in principle, belongs to the realm of the (labour) market in Figure 1-1. Citizens' attention should therefore be directed mainly at the IRS – the institutions governing the development of wage levels – and to the key actors within the system. Another instance of the difference between redistribution and the gross level of inequality is the different measures used to evaluate their levels. Redistribution is often evaluated by the net Gini-coefficient, whereas the latter can be evaluated by gross Gini-coefficients, or better yet, gross decile wage ratios. The Scandinavian development in terms of these figures in a comparative perspective will be presented in Chapter 3.

The *second* justification is that among the rather scarce existing literature on the subject, an even smaller part has much to say about the Scandinavian countries. One reason for this is that only Svallfors (2004; 1993; 1995; 1997; 2006) and Larsen (2006) have actually focussed on the Scandinavian attitudes towards the level of inequality in gross wage levels in a comparative perspective (Knudsen (2001) analyses only Norway in his article). In other research in the field, the Scandinavian countries are often not even included, or if they are, they are surely not the focus of attention (Arts, Hermkens, & van Wijck, 1995; Austen, 1999; Austen, 2002; Blanchflower & Freeman, 1997; Evans & Kelley, 2007; Gijsberts, 2002; Headey, 1991; Kelley & Zagorski, 2004; Kelley & Evans, 1993; Kerr, 2011; Kluegel & Miyano, 1995; Mason, 1995; McCall, 2013; Miller & Ortiz, 1995; Pettersson, 1995; Szirmai, 1986; Szirmai, 1991; Verba & Orren, 1985). Osberg and Smeeding (2006) include Norway in their analyses and identify peculiar patterns for this country. Their mission is to identify and explain American exceptionalism, not Scandinavian exceptionalism, so they do not make much of the Norwegian results. With few exceptions, the analyses mentioned above are also performed on a rather aggregated level (Exceptions to the rule: Gijsberts, 2002; Headey, 1991; Kelley & Evans, 1993; McCall, 2013; Osberg & Smeeding, 2006; Szirmai, 1986; Verba & Orren, 1985). Important results often hide in aggregated analyses. To supplement this field of research, this dissertation will therefore conduct analyses on both the aggregated- and disaggregated level.

*Thirdly*, it is perhaps apparent that many of the above-mentioned sources are hardly up to date and do not explore trends through time (Janmaat, 2013). As will be elaborated in Chapter 5, the majority of empirical analyses conducted in this dissertation are analyses of survey-data and in particular, of all four Social Inequality modules of the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) from 1987, 1992, 1999 and 2009.

Data from the ISSP's fourth round of the Social Inequality module of 2009 including 38 countries with 53,155 respondents is especially important (ISSP Research Group, 2011). Data was collected in the immediate repercussions of the financial crisis triggered by the collapse of Lehman Brothers on September 15<sup>th</sup> 2008. The financial crisis made questions about wage levels – especially top wage levels – a very salient issue in Scandinavia as well as in other western countries. The ISSP has become a standard data source for comparative attitudinal research,

and the ISSP 2009 dataset clearly forms the most solid and comprehensive basis available for cross-national analyses of comparable data on attitudes towards wage gaps between occupations. In spite of this, utilizing this dataset to investigate attitudes towards the level of inequality in gross wages has, as far as the author is aware, not yet been done. Attitudes towards the level of inequality in gross wages therefore seems important to investigate, but – how can this notion be conceptualised? That is the topic of the next section.

#### 1.4. PUTTING THE RICH BACK INTO FOCUS

Already at this early stage, it is important to delimit and elaborate the central concept of investigation in the monograph - the level of inequality in gross wages. This will be done by relating it to the broader concept of economic inequality. I claim that in principle the current state of economic inequality in society constitutes of three different, but surely interrelated phenomena. These three phenomena exist both in a factual, but just as important, a social constructivist sense. They can therefore all individually or collectively be the focus of institutional, media and public attention and ultimately of political action. These phenomena are:

*First*, the overall level of income inequality is of course a subject for media and public attention, but also for institutional effort in itself. Research also indicates that the overall level is important for society in itself (Clark, Frijters, & Shields, 2008; Wilkinson & Pickett, 2010). The debates often following developments in the official Gini-coefficient statistics are good examples of debates addressing the overall distribution in itself.

The *second* phenomenon is the bottom-to-middle relationship in society. It is by now empirically and theoretically well established in existing literature that in a comparative sense there continues to be a comprehensive *institutional* effort (Esping-Andersen, 1990; 1999; Goul Andersen, 2012a; Larsen, 2007; Rothstein & Stolle, 2001; 2007; Rothstein, 1998), a positive *media* focus (Dejgaard & Larsen, 2009; Larsen, 2006; Larsen & Dejgaard, 2013; Lundström, 2011; Van Oorschot, 2000; van Oorschot, 2006), and continued *attitudinal* legitimacy in trying to lift people from the under- or working class into the middle class in the Scandinavian countries (Hedegaard & Larsen, 2014; Hedegaard, 2014a; Hedegaard, 2014b; Larsen, 2013; Svallfors, 2006; Svallfors, 2007).

The *third* phenomenon is the top-to-middle relationship in society. A low degree of overall economic inequality – measured for instance by a low Gini-coefficient – rests as much on the proportion of the total wealth in society owned by the wealthiest, as on the proportion owned by the poorest (Bellù & Liberati, 2006; Farris, 2010).<sup>9</sup> In spite of this, existing research is to a large extent silent in regards

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<sup>9</sup> This is often used as a critique of the Gini-coefficient. In response, so-called *generalised- or higher-order Ginis* have been developed. These weight differently incomes in different

to empirically and theoretically investigating the *institutional effort* or lack thereof restraining or enhancing wealth growth among the wealthiest in Scandinavian societies, in what light the *media* portrays ‘the rich’ in the Scandinavian countries, and the *legitimacy* among the Scandinavian populace of the level of earnings at the top of society. Internationally there seems to be a new spark of interest in public and media perceptions and presentations of the rich. Especially the literature about the ‘undeserving rich’ is a good example of this (Bamfield & Horton, 2009; McCall, 2013; Rowlingson & Connor, 2011).

This monograph will take up the challenge of trying to fill in the Scandinavian void by focussing on the top-middle relation. The main dependent variable in the dissertation measures attitudes to the just wage-level ratio of unskilled factory workers and shop assistants to that of chairmen of large national corporations. The two first-mentioned occupations are hardly among the high-status or well-paid occupations on today’s labour markets. In spite of this, people in these occupations are still on the labour market and earning a regular market income. They can therefore hardly be conceived as the bottom of society, but maybe rather the lower middle- or working class.<sup>10</sup> Scandinavians’ attitudes towards the level of inequality in gross wages can therefore be conceived as attitudes towards the top-middle gap. Besides attitudes, the media portrayal of the rich and its relation to popular perceptions and attitudes over time in the Scandinavian countries will therefore be investigated.

The original social-democratic ideology dominating the creation of welfare states in Scandinavia at least had a legacy which indeed was critical of those at the top of society, or in other words, ‘the rich’. In the original Marxist version from which reformed socialists/social democrats owe their origins,<sup>11</sup> the bourgeoisie (the capitalists or the rich) is the enemy of the proletariat (the working class, i.e. the majority), for the capitalists exploit the working class. The superstructure of society (i.e. culture, media, institutions and more) furthermore promote and reflects the values of the bourgeoisie, preventing the proletariat from realising their true objective class-interest in overthrowing bourgeois rule in the ‘proletarian revolution’ (Marx & Engels, 1968).

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parts of the income distribution, thereby making the proportion of the poor count more in the calculation than the proportion of the rich, for example. The standard Gini used in most instances does not use this kind of weighting (Bellù & Liberati, 2006; Farris, 2010).

<sup>10</sup> In the European Socio-economic Classification schema or ESeC, which can be conceived as a modern version of an occupational class ranking scheme, these occupations are ranked as ‘routine workers’ and ‘lower sales and service’ (Harrison & Rose, 2006; Rose & Harrison, 2007). See more in Section 5.2.2.2.

<sup>11</sup> See for example: (Bernstein, 1899 [1993]; Kautsky, 1932). Esping-Andersen (1980) clearly underscores this point in actually labelling social democracy ‘revisionist Marxism’ (p. 1).

This idea that the power of the capitalists was dangerous did not die out quickly when the majority in the workers' movement gradually embraced representative democracy and the idea of a gradual transformation into a socialist society. The reformed socialists and the main social democratic political parties in Scandinavia for most of the last century kept some notions of the class struggle against the bourgeoisie as the 'class-enemy' at least in their official and highly ideological policy agenda programs (Esping-Andersen, 1980; Green-Pedersen, 2011; Nygård, 2006; Socialdemokratiet). It is always a matter of discussion how much selected ideological statements from the official policy agenda programs or a few politicians on special occasions actually meant for the actual policy goals the social democrats strived to achieve. No matter what, it is clear that a certain degree of scepticism over the work, earnings and profits of 'the rich' is a part of the ideological legacy of social democrats in Scandinavia. This legacy at first glance probably was even more prominent before and during the 'golden age of welfare capitalism' (Flora, 1986) when the social democratic actors helped shape the social democratic welfare regime.

The idea of possible scepticism towards the rich does not rest solely on ideology. In a social constructivist sense there are good reasons to suspect that people have stereotypes about 'the rich', and that the media use these and deservingness criteria in presentations of them in the same way they do in presentations of 'the poor'.

Fiske, Cuddy and Glick (2007) claim that there are two universal dimensions of social cognition: warmth and competence. In other words they claim that all people, when dealing with an unknown 'other', evaluate whether the other has good or bad intentions towards you (warmth) and whether 'the other' has the ability to enact the perceived intentions (competence). Empirically investigating how Americans evaluate different groups on these two dimensions, they perhaps unsurprisingly find that groups such as the homeless, welfare recipients and poor blacks score low on both dimensions and stimulate both negative emotions and behaviour in the respondents. The opposite applies to groups such as middle-class Americans, Christians and housewives. Other 'poor' groups such as the elderly, retarded and disabled are viewed as warm but incompetent. They therefore prompt ambivalent, but more positive emotions and behaviour than the other poor groups. These results should come as no surprise following the deservingness literature (van Oorschot, 2000; van Oorschot, 2006). What is interesting in our case is that 'the rich' – together with Asian people, Jewish people, female and minority professionals – are claimed also to stimulate ambivalent emotions and behaviour among the respondents. These groups score high on competence but low on warmth. Because of this mix, these groups are on the one hand appreciated and envied for their competence, but at the same time their low 'warmth' score makes the respondents judge their intentions as not to be trusted.

The use of negative stereotypes of 'the poor' and deservingness criteria, tapping into different marginalized groups' moral character in media representations of these groups is well known in the existing literature. Stereotypes are classical

subject material for media to build stories on (Gilens, 2000; Gilens, 1996; Larsen, 2013; Larsen & Dejgaard, 2013). Similarly to the description above it is analogically likely that representations and stereotypes of the correspondingly deserving- or undeserving rich (McCall, 2013; Rowlingson & Connor, 2011) also exist in media output. An important prerequisite here is that ‘the rich’ must be considered to be a distinct group of ‘others’ separate from the ‘us’ of the middle class, in the HCNI of society. This means that – by investigating whether and how the media represents ‘the rich’ – traces of the myths, representations and stereotypes in Scandinavian HCNI should emerge.

This dissertation will thus fill the gap in knowledge about the relationship between the perceived top and the middle strata of society by investigating both the Scandinavian’s attitudes to the earnings at the top of society, the relationship between top and middle, the media’s presentation of the same issues as well as the background in the Scandinavian PEs. A longitudinal perspective is applied in all cases to allow for the possibility of capturing changes either of these empirical fields.<sup>12</sup>

## **1.5. THE SELECTION OF THE SCANDINAVIAN COUNTRIES AS CASES**

Though an investigation of the current legitimacy behind the market leg of ‘the Nordic model’ could entail all five Nordic countries – Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland and Iceland<sup>13</sup> – the focus of this monograph will be on only the three Scandinavian countries – Denmark, Norway and Sweden. There are a number of reasons for this case selection.

*First*, there are empirical considerations. Finland and Iceland participated in only the last round of the ISSP Social Inequality module in 2009. The various rounds of this module are the main source of attitudinal data used in this monograph. The Scandinavian countries also participated in earlier rounds of the module, allowing for a longitudinal perspective. *Second*, though the often-used concept is the Nordic model, it is clear from a range of analyses that three Scandinavian countries are somehow more ‘core-Nordic’ than the other two. Finland and Iceland do not have the same tradition of a corporative IRS in which labour market regulations are mainly decided by compromises between the trade/labour unions and the

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<sup>12</sup> Although we are mainly interested in the current state of affairs, in the analyses that follow we will try to maintain a longitudinal perspective – utilising, among other sources, time-series survey data and newspaper articles from a period of years. This *cross-time* comparative perspective helps us to know what is high and low, what constitutes a significant change, and what not (Svallfors, 1995).

<sup>13</sup> One could also separate the semi-independent, self-governing parts of the Danish Kingdom: Greenland and the Faeroe Islands and the autonomous Region of Finland: the Åland Islands.

employers' federations. In addition, their social democratic parties have not had the parliamentary and cabinet power as they do in the Scandinavian countries (Alestalo, Hort, & Kuhnle, 2009). Another example of the 'core-Nordic' focus of the Scandinavian countries is that data from only the three Scandinavian countries were used by Esping-Andersen (1990) in his original classification of the social democratic welfare-state regime. Also in later works Sweden and sometimes Denmark and Norway are most often seen as epitomising the Nordic model. This is not the case for Finland or Iceland. The Finnish welfare regime actually shares many characteristics with the conservative welfare regime, and in other aspects the Finns were much later to build the comprehensive welfare institutions for which the Scandinavian countries are famous. Iceland led the economic boom of the last couple of decades and followed with a range of neo-liberal reforms, fundamentally changing the Icelandic welfare regime in the liberal direction (Alestalo et al., 2009; Dølvik, 2013; Ebbinghaus, 2012). As will be apparent in the aggregated analyses in Chapter 5, also on the attitudinal side, the Finns and Icelanders do not follow their co-Nordics in the Scandinavian countries.

Knudsen & Rothstein (1994) furthermore argue that Denmark and Sweden constitute the most important Nordic cases to investigate, epitomising the 'West- and East Nordic' model respectively. They argue that only Denmark and Sweden have undergone an independent state-building process. In contrast, Iceland, Finland and Norway for most of their history were subordinate 'receiver-countries' to the realms of Denmark and Sweden. The disaggregated context descriptions and analyses of chapters 3, 6 and 7 will therefore focus on the differences between Denmark and Sweden.

## 1.6. OUTLINE OF THE DISSERTATION

The remaining parts of the dissertation are divided into seven chapters and a conclusion. First, *Chapter 2* of the dissertation will delve more deeply into the metatheoretical considerations underlying many of the claims in the sections above. Among other things, concepts' assumed relations, how and why they fit ontologically, and the consequences for the research design will be elaborated. *Chapter 3* of the dissertation will describe the developing contexts – the Scandinavian PEs – of Scandinavian attitudes to the level of inequality in gross wages. The overall purpose of this chapter is to develop hypotheses on what patterns can be expected in the development of Scandinavian attitudes to the level of inequality in gross wages – in the aggregated and disaggregated perspective. *Chapter 4* theoretically and empirically treats the methodological question of how to measure attitudes to the level of inequality in gross wages. *Chapter 5* is the first analysis chapter in the dissertation dealing with the aggregated level. In two separate analysis sections, the chapter deals with the question whether a Scandinavian egalitarianism is identifiable empirically. First investigating, which attitudes Scandinavians express towards the level of inequality in gross wages compared to people of other western countries, and how they have developed over

time. The second section turns to trying to explain the Scandinavian egalitarianism in attitudes towards the level of inequality in gross wages. *Chapter 6* concentrates on the disaggregated level and investigates whether the three Scandinavian countries portray similar or different patterns of attitudes towards the level of inequality in gross wages. *Chapter 7* is a study of the representations of ‘the rich’ in major Danish and Swedish newspapers from 1996 – 2013. Finally, the last chapter sums up and concludes.



## CHAPTER 2. METATHEORETICAL REFLECTIONS

This dissertation aims at contributing to existing knowledge on both the empirical and theoretical fronts. *Empirically* the aim is testing the claim whether – and if so – how and why Scandinavians have a ‘passion for equality’ (Andersen, 1983; Graubard, 1986).<sup>14</sup> As was hinted at in section 1.3 (and will further be documented in Chapter 3), this is a widely held claim emerging from different scientific traditions. In spite of this, the assertion has not really been substantiated with empirical investigations into the actual attitudes of the Scandinavians, and certainly not with respect to how they develop over time. Instead, this ‘passion’ is often deduced theoretically, or for example by inferring the attitudes from the form and character of the existing institutional structure. Such arguments presuppose a direct link between the attitudes of citizens and the existing institutional structure in a given context at a specific time. As indicated above, both the empirical results, but also the ontology of the dissertation question or rather modifies these simple assumptions.

*Theoretically*, this dissertation aims to contribute to answering the call of Korpi & Palme (1998): ‘the empirical testing of the *macro-micro-links* among institutions and the formation of interest and coalitions provides a major challenge for social scientists’ (p. 682). In trying to answer such a question, it is important to reflect on issues as to how the macro- and micro-level actually are linked, what they are constituted of, how one can investigate such links, and what validity and scope one can claim from the outcomes of such an endeavour. What are needed are, in other words, metatheoretical reflections.

The dissertation is, as mentioned above, much inspired by the ontological position of Critical Realism (CR) and (what I hold to be related though more restricted in scope) the Social Mechanisms approach (SM) (Bhaskar, 2013; Hedström & Swedberg, 1998; Hedström & Ylikoski, 2010; Ingemann, 2013; Wuisman, 2005). The basic ontological model of CR will therefore be presented briefly below. The various constituents of this model will then be discussed in relations to the subject of the dissertation. The outcome of this discussion should make it possible to, firstly, outline the components of the dissertation and their assumed relations and therefore, secondly, comment on the questions posed above: the macro-micro links, the methods and approach of investigation, and the scope of the findings.

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<sup>14</sup> And as indicated in the research questions above, the aim is to answer the question in a more complex way than by simply testing the claim. If it exists, it is also investigated what constitutes it, and whether the answer to this is different among the three Scandinavian countries, or in different periods of time, and, why it exists.

## 2.1. CRITICAL REALISM AND SOCIAL MECHANISMS

The basic ontological model of CR with social reality separated into three strata is presented in Figure 2-1 below:

*Figure 2-1 The three strata of social reality in Critical Realism*

<b>Real</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Empirical</b>
Deep structures and social mechanisms	Events and tendencies	Observable experiences

*Source:* author's elaboration

Critical realism is, as the name implies, an *ontologically* realist position. The social world therefore exists independently of the observer. However, as the figure above obviously implies, this reality is assumed to be more *complex* than – for example – critical rationalist positions assume. Events in the actual stratum are generated causally by (social) mechanisms in the real stratum. In contrast to the mono-causal universal laws in what some have termed the ‘covering law-account’ or ‘naïve positivism’, the real strata consists of a myriad of social mechanisms (causal potentials). The impact of these social mechanisms in a concrete situation depends on the interplay between these various social mechanisms unique for that context. Again, in contrast to naïve positivism, the social reality is therefore assumed to be *contextual*. Deeper structures are assumed in CR to condition the interplay of mechanisms in a concrete situation. In the social world these are to be understood as historically conditioned power structures and institutions – although the structures often seem conflated with the mechanisms in CR (Bhaskar, 2013; Ingemann, 2013; Kemp & Holmwood, 2003; Wuisman, 2005).

The distinctive ontological assumptions obviously have *epistemological* consequences as well. The complexity of the social world and the limitations of human cognition make it impossible for an observer (a researcher) to comprehend or digest all the events and tendencies of the actual stratum. The empirical stratum, which is the observations or measurements conducted by the researcher, is thus only able to capture a part the actual stratum. The mechanisms and the deeper structures of the real stratum are furthermore not observable at all, but abstract phenomena.<sup>15</sup> To mitigate the ontological complexities and the argued weaknesses of the inductive and deductive approach to conducting scientific investigation, an iterative, abductive research process is often recommended in CR. In very simple terms, this involves a dynamic interplay between data collection and interpretation as well as theoretical abstraction. It should be mentioned that there is great debate

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<sup>15</sup> To which we as humans – in contrast to the structures in natural sciences – may have an ‘internal mode of interpretive access’. As with many epistemological claims, and claims about how in practice to translate the ontological complexities into practical research which still provides trustworthy ‘realist’ results, this is highly debated in CR (Kemp & Holmwood, 2003; Sayer, 1992).

as to, firstly, what these abstract recommendations actually mean for how to conduct critical realist research in practice, and secondly, for how different this would be from the ‘standard’ practice of much existing research in social sciences (Kemp & Holmwood, 2003; Wuisman, 2005).

There seems to be agreement however that the focus and scope must be on narrowly identifying the social mechanisms at play in the given situation and the contextual or structural underpinnings conditioning them. The outcome of the scientific process in CR and SM is therefore unsurprisingly not law-like formulations as in other realist/positivist traditions, but instead a myriad of context-restricted *middle-range theories* (Hedström & Swedberg, 1998; Hedström & Ylikoski, 2010). Even then, there is a stochastic element connected with any social mechanism, or in other words, causality in the social world. The same mechanism can produce different outcomes in different situations (Bhaskar, 2013; Hedström & Ylikoski, 2010; Ingemann, 2013; Wuisman, 2005). Wuisman (2005) elegantly describes this point:

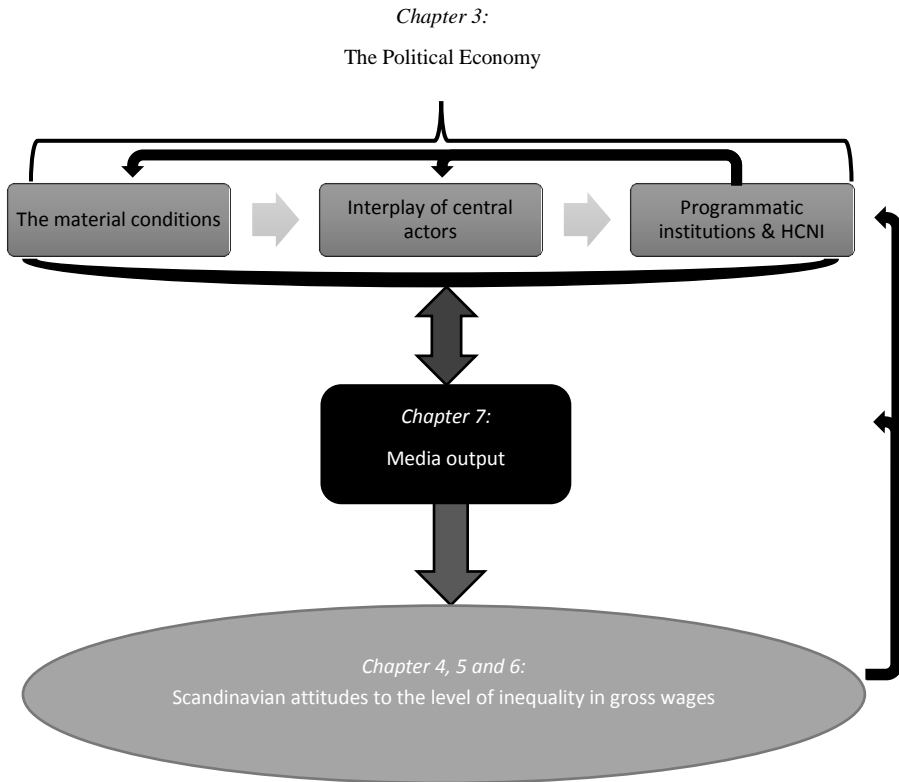
‘The validity of scientific explanation or understanding being conjectured is not determined in terms of true or untrue, but in terms of right or wrong and to what extent. The explanation and understanding are always partial and based on the selection by substantive abstraction of specific aspects or elements from reality.’ (p. 388).

A consequence of these epistemological arguments is furthermore that future development or change is not deterministically decided by the mechanisms identified in a present context. Structures and relations can be stable and certain mechanisms can have prominence in a certain period in a certain context. However, the structures conditioning the social mechanisms are a product of human interaction, and as humans in CR are viewed as being intentional beings with a reflective potential, structural change is surely possible. The contextual limitations of the scope of social studies are therefore both in space and in time (Bhaskar, 2013; Hedström & Ylikoski, 2010; Ingemann, 2013; Wuisman, 2005). The concept of external validity is not ruled out totally though. Literature on CR and SM do emphasise however that in spite the contingent nature of context-bound structures, social mechanisms identified in one context probably also apply to many others (Hedström & Ylikoski, 2010; Kemp & Holmwood, 2003).

## 2.2. THE CONCEPTUAL MODEL OF THE DISSERTATION

Building on this rather short and simplified presentation of central arguments from the critical realism and social mechanisms traditions, the following paragraphs will seek to describe how this is implemented in and adapted to the dissertation. The discussion will be based on Figure 2-2 below.

Figure 2-1 The Basic Conceptual Model of the Dissertation



Source: Author's creation.

The first thing to notice about Figure 2-2 is that the dissertation is obviously interested in the macro-micro links, or what the SM and CR literature has dubbed *situational social mechanisms*, and which elsewhere has been labelled *institutional feedback mechanisms* (Edlund, 2007; Larsen, 2006; Larsen, 2013; Svallfors, 2007).

As stated already in the very first section, the relevant macro-level structures in the dissertation are defined in terms of the two-sided *political economy* (PE). The PE was defined broadly as the interplay between the economic and political spheres of society, and the central constituent parts thereof: the material conditions, actors as well as programmatic institutions and HCNI were defined in the introduction. The arrows within the PE ‘hat’ in Figure 2-2 signify that the interplay between the central actors of the political economy at any given time, and importantly in the historical formation of the PE, is conditioned by the prevailing economic structures, which in turn condition the formation of the programmatic- and normative institutions. The prevailing institutions then obviously affect both the interplay of the actors at a later time, but also the economic structures of society. Note that the definition of structures in CR, presented above as ‘historically conditioned power structures and institutions’, fits nicely with the definition of PE – at least if the institutions are viewed as being both programmatic and normative.

Once again it is important to notice the dual aspect of the PE. Besides the more or less material, programmatic institutions, the PE is also constituted of historically constructed normative institutions (HCNI). These are defined above as a particular representation of the past, a representation that in myths, representations and stereotypes define ‘who the others are’ and in a sense also ‘who we are’. Some literature suggests that the HCNI are rather stable over time – especially when we are dealing with their effects on attitudes in which ‘group-thinking’ dominates, as is probably the case here (see Chapter 4 below).

The arrows and boxes within the PE ‘hat’ do not seem controversial, and it will be clear in the next chapter, which seeks to describe the development in the Scandinavian political economies, how prevalent this often implicit overall model is – at least when it relates to the material, programmatic institutions. Furthermore, the dissertation does not focus on aiming to settle possible issues of causality within the ‘hat’ of PE. Referring to the critical realist ontology described above, the PE is to be understood as consisting of central structures in the real strata of the dissertation. Even though the PE has a material side, the mechanisms within the PE and between the PE and the micro-level attitudes of the Scandinavians are to be understood as causal potentials. It is exactly the contingent, complex and contextual nature of the CR ontology which would render such an ambition futile.

The focus of the dissertation is therefore contextually and theoretically restricted in space and time. The focus is to investigate how the political economy, and which parts of it, influences Scandinavian attitudes to the level of inequality in gross wages in recent decades. Referring to Figure 1-2, the focus and interest is not on the arrows within the PE ‘hat’, but instead on the larger vertical arrows - the situational

social or institutional feedback mechanisms - linking PE at the macro-level with attitudes at the micro-level. Chapter 3 relies on existing literature to describe the development in these macro-level phenomena of the Scandinavian political economy(ies).

### 2.2.1. THE MEDIATING MEDIA

As apparent in the name, a central *mediating* variable linking the macro- to the micro-level is the *media* output. It is very important to note that this view applies a different perspective than either side of the long causal discussion of whether the media content causally drives attitude formation, or whether attitudes drive media content. In other terms, these positions correspond to seeing the media content either as the main explanatory, or as the dependent variable (Baumberg et al., 2012; Baumberg, Bell, & Gaffney, 2013).

In the dissertation it is assumed that, on the one hand, humans have a reflective potential and are thus not passive receivers of media content; they actively demand and search for information fitting their needs (Baumberg et al., 2013). The purpose of the information and images received through the media for the individual is not least to provide clear clues to the social identifications of the individuals – images and stereotypes of who and how ‘the others’ are, and hence of who and how ‘we’ are (de Swaan, 1995; Rothstein, 2000). As described in section 1.4, this means that in this way the media output – even if not just fed to a passive audience – must rely on the myths, representations and stereotypes of the HCNI to construct their stories. In our case the HCNI of relevance are the possible perceived deserving or undeserving rich (Fiske et al., 2007; Fiske, 2011; Gilens, 2000; Gilens, 1996; Larsen, 2013; Larsen & Dejgaard, 2013; McCall, 2013; Rowlingson & Connor, 2011).

Investigating media content could thus be used as a way to more-or-less directly, empirically investigate the actual substance of these otherwise abstract and slippery macro-level phenomena of HCNI in a given context at a given time (Larsen, 2013). This view contrasts the two classic ‘causal views’ above somewhat, because it is not the media content in itself which forms the attitudes of the Scandinavians. The situational social mechanisms actually influencing these attitudes stem from complex interactions in the real strata – that is, the PE. The media output is only an expression thereof, and only in this capacity do media contents influence the attitudes. In order to identify differences between the HCNI of the Scandinavian countries, Chapter 7 will investigate how major Danish and Swedish newspapers in the period 1996–2013 present the issue of ‘the rich’. As argued in section 1.4 above, the issue of ‘the rich’ is among other things a strangely forgotten aspect of the overall images of society produced by the media.

Besides the central vertical arrows linking the PE to the media and the attitudes in Figure 2-2, there is also a thin arrow pointing from attitudes back to the media. This

of course signifies that humans are not passive receivers of media content, but actively demand and search for media that fulfil their demands. Because of this property, the potentially reflective and changing demand can lead to changes in the content of the media. This leads conveniently to a discussion how the relationship between the macro and micro level is seen in the dissertation.

### 2.2.2. THE RESTRICTED SCOPE OF THE DISSERTATION

In spite of some modifications; Figure 2-2 and the description above seems mostly to signify a *structuralist* ontology, which suggests that the dissertation ‘puts on the structuralist hat’ by claiming everything is structure and nothing is caused by individual reflection and action. As claimed in the introduction, this is a false characterization. Here it was argued that the dissertation deviated from two classic ‘structuralist’ ways of understanding Scandinavian attitudes to the level of inequality in gross wages. These were, first, the position understanding Scandinavian egalitarianism as a stable cultural trait, and second the materialist, structuralist account of some Marxist/neo-Marxist literature.

The mostly structuralist appearance of Figure 2-2 is to be understood as mainly conceptual and as a convenient way to delimit the scope of the dissertation. To repeat: the recommendations of CR and SM are conceptually limited research projects designed to identify the workings of particular social mechanisms in particular contexts. Limiting the scope of the dissertation to trying to understand Scandinavian attitudes towards the level of inequality in gross wages, and therefore how the macro-level PE influences these, are therefore well in line with these recommendations.

The SM approach also operates with two other forms of social mechanisms: the ‘action formation mechanisms’ (micro-micro links), which explains how attitudes and perceptions influence behaviour and actions of humans, as well as ‘transformational mechanisms’ explaining how the actions and behaviour of humans influence the institutions and structures of society (micro-macro links) (Hedström & Swedberg, 1998; Hedström & Ylikoski, 2010).<sup>16</sup> Existing institutions and structures in CR are thus products of human interaction. Therefore, as was argued in sections 1.1–1.3, the relevance of studying Scandinavian attitudes to the level of inequality in gross wages is exactly because these are argued to be important to future developments in the Scandinavian model(s). The HCNI of society help individuals find meaning and identity, shape their behaviour, and ultimately help form the background or context behind which voters and policy-makers guide the future development of the Scandinavian model. This said, and with the cognitive and material constraints and opportunities offered by the existing programmatic and historically constructed normative institutional structure, it is still the citizens and policy-makers of Scandinavia who are the prime vessels for the re-

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<sup>16</sup> This overall model is inspired by Coleman’s (1990) bathtub model.

or reproductions of the normative and programmatic institutions underlying the Scandinavian model(s). This is signified in Figure 2-2 by the thin arrow pointing from attitudes back to the PE 'hat'.<sup>17</sup>

### 2.2.3. THE COMPLEX HUMAN NATURE

Conditioning all arguments about how the media functions, what social mechanisms are possible etc., is fundamentally an ontological view of human nature. A key point in critical realism is that the social world is complex and contextual. This means human nature is also complex, and as the SM literature emphasises, it makes little sense to assume certain social mechanisms at play beforehand, but rather, it makes sense to develop ideas about their nature and investigate these empirically (Hedström & Swedberg, 1998; Hedström & Ylikoski, 2010). To quote March & Olsen (2006):

‘...a theory of purposeful human behaviour must take into consideration the diversity of human motivations and modes of behaviour and account for the relationship and interaction between different logics in different institutional settings. A beginning is to explore behavioural logics as complementary, rather than to assume a single dominant behavioural logic.’ (p. 720).

What are March & Olsen (2006) actually trying to unify here? Several different and often simplified ‘men’ have been proposed and discussed in order to indicate the core of human nature in various settings, or simply to be used as heuristic approaches to simplify model- and theory-building.

A classic model and straw man is the *economic man* of Rational Choice, also mentioned in the introduction as representing the third classic position towards understanding Scandinavian attitudes to the level of inequality in gross wages. The economic man strives to maximize utility. Sometimes utility is defined very narrowly as mere personal economic utility, sometimes it more widely encompasses any goal imaginable. Sometimes the economic man is seen atomistically as under no structural constraints, sometimes formal institutions are seen as having an influence on the incentive structure in the individual’s utility-functions (Coleman,

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<sup>17</sup> External factors such as globalisation, decrees and directives of the EU, UN and others, as well as intended or unintended tendencies of institutional change in the forms of displacement, layering, drift, conversion and exhaustion, surely affect the development in the political economy as well (Mahoney & Thelen, 2010; Streeck & Thelen, 2005). These are all ‘complications’ in the processes of production or reproduction of the macro-level structures and phenomena of society (Giddens, 1986). It seems likely however that in the long term the Scandinavian model is only likely to endure if the Scandinavians have egalitarian attitudes to the level of inequality in gross wages more or less matching the institutional setup of the model.



1990; North, 1990; Pierson, 2000; Rothstein, 2000).<sup>18</sup> The widely defined economic man borders closely on the *issue-voting political man* of election research (Borre, 2001) – acting rationally on convictions. There are also other men, such as the *psychological man* acting on impulse, and the *sociological man*, motivated by and acting on a logic of appropriateness in order to gain recognition, meaning and a feeling of self-worth and identity (March & Olsen, 2006). Besides the rather simplified ‘men’ described above, attempts have also been made to develop more complex and realistic ‘men’. The *reflective political man* for example also acts rationally on convictions. However, his attitudes are not externally given, but internally created and revised in the light of new information or arguments from other actors or sources (Borre & Goul Andersen, 2003; Larsen, 2006; Shamshiri-Petersen, 2010).

Following the quote of March & Olsen (2006) and all the different ‘men’ proposed must obviously lead to the conclusion that the issue of human nature is complex and, realistically, people are probably composed a little bit of all the different heuristics described above – although maybe of some more than others. Unfortunately this does not help us much to make sense of the social world. After all the main reason people have proposed and discussed – the various ‘men’ – is to simplify complexity and allow at least imperfect explanations of observable social outcomes.

A potentially fruitful way out of this mess is to stick to the emphasis that humans have a reflective *potential* in CR. The word ‘institutions’ signifies at least some degree of stability over a certain amount of time. The only reason we therefore can claim that such things as normative institutions exist, is that people do not go around reflecting on and questioning everything all the time. This everyday unreflectiveness does not on the other hand mean that the potential for reflection is never utilized. The question of when the reflective potential of individuals is activated is probably hard to answer definitely, and it most certainly varies a lot between the various strata of a population.

Nevertheless, if the focus is restricted to periods when a significant part of the population activate their reflective potential – if such periods exist – it is likely they are associated with periods of great transformation or upheaval coupled with a

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<sup>18</sup> Another perspective on this difference is the argued difference between *methodological*- and *structural individualism*. The first label could indicate that this tradition is merely empirically interested in micro-level actions and motivations. However, the term is often associated with the view that social phenomena can only be understood by examining how they result from the motivations and actions of individual agents, and therefore leaning towards the atomistic version of rational choice without structural constraints. The term *structural individualism* instead claims that actors indeed are under structural constraints, and structures are in principle explicable in terms of the individual’s properties – such as values and attitudes, actions and relations (Hedström & Swedberg, 1998; Hedström & Ylikoski, 2010).

high degree of media exposure. These periods are often retrospectively labelled critical junctures. Critical junctures are often associated with such events as economic crises and/or great changes in the paradigmatic institutions of society (Hall, 2010; Hall, 1993; Pierson, 2000). Possible great upheavals in the PEs and/or economic crises in the Scandinavian countries should be identifiable in the descriptions of the recent history of the political economies of the Scandinavian countries in Chapter 3.

How can Scandinavians be assumed to react attitudinally to situations of great upheaval then? Exactly because we can assume nothing simpler than a multi-heuristics approach, we cannot deduce *ex post* how Scandinavians react to changes in their political economies. What is possible is to develop different overall scenarios. At a very general level, there are two overall scenarios. The first is what is known in existing literature on attitudes to the level of inequality as the 'reaction-hypothesis'. The opposite, 'adaption-hypothesis' assumes that people will not react, but adapt their attitudes towards the just level of inequality to the reality they perceive (Austen, 1999; Austen, 2002; Blanchflower & Freeman, 1997; Gijsberts, 2002; Homans, 1961; Kelley & Evans, 1993; Kerr, 2011; Knudsen, 2001; Miller & Ortiz, 1995).

It seems easiest to describe different mechanisms underlying the so-called 'reaction-hypothesis'. Following the *homo economicus* ontology, it is easy to assume that certain key actors will resist change, because they have strong vested interests in the existing order (Pierson, 2000; Pierson, 1993). If we follow the classic political, *issue-voting man*, if the attitudes of most Scandinavians are egalitarian, then we quite simply assume they will react in some kind of way in order to change major perceived threads in the egalitarian nature of society. This reaction could surely come in the form of votes in elections, but between the elections people can also react in different ways. They can affect media discourses, sign petitions, contact politicians or even participate in local democracy or civic society events in order to influence the situation.<sup>19</sup> One could furthermore supplement this with arguments grounded in the *sociological man* heuristic and assume the main reason people will react in this situation is that signs of inequality threaten their HCNI of an egalitarian and just society (Larsen, 2013; Larsen, 2008; Rothstein, 2000).

The various versions of scenarios following the reaction-hypothesis do not assume that people change their initial interests or values. However, because Scandinavians are here assumed be able to activate their reflective potential, this could also change their initial propositions, and in accordance with the 'adaption hypothesis' they adapt their initial attitudes to the new reality. Obviously, the idea of a *reflective political man* seems to have captured some of the consequences of such assumptions about human nature. People are here assumed to be reflective and to

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<sup>19</sup> See also the policy-responsiveness literature (Burstein, 1998; Burstein, 2003).

largely form their attitudes internally in the process. They could thus be assumed to listen to arguments from policy-makers or others and possibly change initially critical attitudes to the changes happening (Borre & Goul Andersen, 2003; Larsen, 2006; Shamshiri-Petersen, 2010). The mechanism behind adaption to changes could also be much less reflective though. One obvious source is the *social psychological* ‘belief-in-a-just-world’ theory. Here humans are assumed to have a fundamental need to believe in a world that is just, organized and predictable. They therefore go to great lengths to uphold this belief. In this context this means that Scandinavians adapt their values, attitudes and perceptions of society and equality to a new reality and re-legitimise it as just (e.g. Lerner, 1980).

### 2.3. CONSEQUENCES FOR DESIGN

The multi-heuristics view of human nature means we are not able in advance to predict Scandinavian attitudes towards the level of inequality in gross wages; thus it is the key empirical task of this dissertation to investigate them. From the discussion above it is possible to make a number of crucial distinctions. First, it is likely that although Scandinavians have a reflective potential, it is not utilized all the time. Periods of great upheaval in the PE and/or economic crisis are, secondly, crucial, because these can spur the activation of the reflective potential of a significant number of people. In such situations, Scandinavians have two options. They can either react to the changes if they do not fancy them, or they can adapt their attitudes to a new reality – both of these processes can occur more or less reflected.

The first step in the endeavour of the dissertation is to try to identify the likely HCNI of interest in the Scandinavian countries. That is how the past of the PE is presented. What representations in myths, presentations and stereotypes that could define: ‘who the others are’, and in a sense also ‘who we are’, are likely to be the result? Also, building on the past, can ‘critical junctures’ to the PE then be identified? Great upheavals in the PE and/economic crises could have possibly led a significant number of Scandinavians to re-evaluate and change the HCNI, and in turn their attitudes to the level of inequality in gross wages. All of this will be the topic of the next chapter. Regardless, central questions are which ‘others’ society is perceived to be constituted of, and hence whether the attitudes of the Scandinavians are in accord with the present characteristics of the PE, or alternatively, whether they are still more influenced by the historical representations of the PE. As indicated above, probably neither is fully true, and a certain lag can probably be expected.

There is also a second important consequence for the design induced by the critical realist ontology which is important to mention at this point. As was touched upon above, the complex contextual understanding of causality in critical realism obviously makes futile the attempts to find mono-causal, linear effects explaining the variation in attitudes towards the level of inequality in gross wages across

countries and time. Instead, contextual interaction effects might rather be located by applying regression methodology. In order to do justice to existing literature and methodology in the field, we will nevertheless try to explain Scandinavian attitudes to the level of inequality in gross wages by operationalising and testing standard linear explanations in the field by applying a rather standard multilevel regression approach. In order to do justice to the CR ontology, we will also extensively test contextual Scandinavian effects using cross-level interaction terms.

# CHAPTER 3. THE DEVELOPING SCANDINAVIAN POLITICAL ECONOMIES AND EQUALITY

This chapter will seek to describe in comparative and longitudinal perspective the development of the Scandinavian political economies will be sought described in comparative and longitudinal perspective. The political economy – the programmatic and normative institutional background, the actual level and character of inequality in gross wages, and the interplay of central actors in the Scandinavian countries in comparative and longitudinal perspective, constitute the context in which the Scandinavians' attitudes to the issue form. If we want to understand how and why Scandinavian attitudes to the level of inequality in gross wages form we need first to get an understanding of the macro-level structures – the development of the dual-sided Scandinavian PEs in comparative and longitudinal perspective.<sup>20</sup>

The next four sections will explore the assumptions made in existing literature on normative foundations, the historical interplay of central actors behind these state and labour-market institutions' egalitarian character, and the relation between these institutions and the attitudes to the level of economic inequality of the Scandinavians. A fifth and sixth section will investigate how the actual level and character of inequality in labour-market incomes have developed in the Scandinavian countries in comparative perspective. Whereas sections 3.1–3.4 deal mostly with the middle and right box in the political economy 'hat' of Figure 2-2, sections 3.5–3.6 deal with the left box. The overall purpose of this chapter is to develop hypotheses on which patterns can be expected in the development in Scandinavian attitudes towards the level of inequality in gross wages – in the aggregated and disaggregated perspective.

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<sup>20</sup> It is a matter of discussion how far back in history one ought to look for the unique historical circumstances underpinning normative and programmatic institutions today. Knudsen & Rothstein (1994) argue that the timing and interaction of two great revolutions constitute crucial historical time points. First, the national revolution introducing liberty, democracy and political mass mobilisation, and second, the industrial revolution, fundamentally altering the basic structure of society and introducing crucial new players – the working class and the capitalist class. Even if Knudsen & Rothstein (1994) themselves go even further back in time in their article, the choice has here been to follow this lead. 'The democratic class struggle' (Korpi, 1983), between workers and capitalists, are crucial for our story, and the descriptions accordingly take their point of departure in the latter half of the nineteenth century.

The third section switches from the aggregated perspective of the first two sections to the disaggregated perspective, describing the historical as well as recent differences existing between Denmark and Sweden. The obvious question is: what about Norway? While Denmark and Sweden in many ways are quite different, Norway has on the other hand borrowed from both countries, not least concerning the characteristics of their political economy, as will also be hinted at in various places below. Denmark and Sweden have always been the two versions of the Scandinavian ideal type, which will also be apparent in much of the literature described below. Focussing on the two Scandinavian poles – Denmark and Sweden – therefore also lessens the task of creating clear scenarios of difference, the purpose of this chapter. The position of being between Denmark and Sweden will reveal itself in the attitudinal pattern of Norway. As was Esping-Andersen in 1980, we are forced by a limited amount of time to narrow the focus just to Sweden and Denmark. If we later have an extra five years, we could include the other Scandinavian countries, as Esping-Andersen himself managed five years later (1985).

Concerning the institutions dealt with in the first four sections, it should be mentioned that it is a matter of debate whether the institutional spheres of the state and labour market should really be described as distinct entities, as the presentation below and much welfare-regime and IRS/employment models literature seems to suggest. This could also be a good reason to use the broader term of PE, as in this dissertation. Barth & Moene (2009) argue that in general a so-called equality multiplier exists, where state and labour-market spheres in effect spill over and enhance efforts in each sphere. They argue that a generous welfare state empowers weaker groups on the labour market and therefore in effect promotes wage equality. Conversely, wage equality increases welfare-state generosity. The argument is here that, when there is a high level of wage inequality, a large chunk of the poorer voters are concerned about their immediate consumption possibilities and therefore prefer low tax rates over much less direct effects via tax-financed welfare programs.

In his effort to define ‘the Nordic model’, Dølvik (2013) also argues that a triangle of cooperation, risk sharing and coordination between the macro-economic/industrial policies, the welfare (state) regime and the IRS are really the central features of the model. According to Dølvik (2013) this triangle enabled trust-creating decision-making processes between actors with opposing interests. The outcome was, besides trust between central societal actors, a unique connection between resources committed, policies enacted and goals strived for as well as a long-term focus on developing human capital. In spite the great extent of coordination between the state and the central actors in the IRS, these two institutional spheres will be described rather separately below, at least in the two first sections.

These first two sections will follow the aggregated perspective and in turn describe common Scandinavian characteristics in terms of the welfare (state) regime and the IRS. The two descriptions given here can largely be conceived as classic and mostly

historical descriptions of ‘the Scandinavian (Nordic) models’ and the emphasis on economic equality in these. It will be argued though that little has been investigated as to the Scandinavians’ attitudes to the level of inequality in gross wages in these classic works. Because the subject of the dissertation is wages, the IRS will be treated in more detail than the welfare (state) regime. The third section will switch to the disaggregated perspective and describe the historical as well as recent differences existing between especially Denmark and Sweden. Traces of the historically divergent paths can also be found in more recent developments in the two political economies.

### **3.1. THE SOCIAL-DEMOCRATIC SCANDINAVIAN WELFARE (STATE) REGIME AND NET INCOME EQUALITY**

Here, first, the Scandinavian welfare (state) regime institutions and their relations to economic inequality will be described. The ‘Nordic model’<sup>21</sup> is, according to Alestalo, Hort & Kuhnle (2009), in comparative perspective characterised by three distinct features: stateness, universalism and equality. Whereas the former two refer respectively to the dominant role of the state in welfare arrangements and the character of the social rights supplied mainly by the state, the latter – equality – refers not to attitudes, but to a measure of outcomes secured in the form of ‘fairly small class, income, and gender differences’ (Alestalo et al., 2009, p. 3). Graubard (1986) famously claimed that people have a special ‘passion for equality’ in the Nordic countries. Substantiating this claim, he refers mainly to the character, quality and extent of the welfare-state arrangements and social rights in the Nordic countries (see also, Andersen, 1983). Whether the Scandinavians actually possess a ‘passion for equality’ is therefore not directly substantiated empirically. The heavy emphasis on equality is also apparent in the seminal work which more than any other sparked the interest in the Scandinavian welfare (state) model: the ‘Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism’ by Gösta Esping-Andersen (1990).

When Esping-Andersen (1990; 1999) labelled his three ideal-typical welfare (state) regimes the liberal, the conservative and the social-democratic regime, these terms were explicitly meant to reflect the ideologies and ideas of the political actors who, according to Esping-Andersen (1990; 1999), historically had been able to dominate during the building-up of the welfare institutions of the various western nations. Actors promoting the social-democratic ideology and ideas accordingly heavily influenced the welfare institutions in the Scandinavian countries – which are the countries closest to the social-democratic ideal type.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> And a range of other acronyms: ‘social democratic welfare regime’, ‘Nordic welfare regime’, ‘Nordic welfare state’, ‘universal welfare state’, ‘institutional welfare state’ and in the Nordic settings simply ‘the welfare state’ (Larsen, 2013).

<sup>22</sup> There is a wide range of literature concerning the historical roots of the western welfare states. A general conclusion is here that in an aggregated perspective the social democratic

According to Esping-Andersen (1990; 1999) the social-democratic ideology dominating the social-democratic regime is mainly a subscription to the value of equality. The understanding or definition of equality is furthermore very encompassing in the social-democratic regime. Equality is also a central value in the liberal regime. However, equality here mainly signifies equality of opportunity. In the social-democratic countries the definition is wider encompassing not just equality of opportunity, but also a goal of a high degree of actual equality of outcomes – among which is the distribution of income in society (Esping-Andersen, 1990; Esping-Andersen, 1999; Kildal & Kuhnle, 2005; Larsen, 2013; McCall & Kenworthy, 2009). As the case above, Esping-Andersen (1990; 1999) does not provide direct evidence of the attitudes of the Scandinavians towards the level of economic equality. Instead he refers to the social-democratic goals and struggles of key political actors historically and their effects on current welfare arrangements. Elsewhere he claims that exiting welfare arrangements and outcomes can have second-order electoral feedback effects on attitudes, but again this is not substantiated empirically (Esping-Andersen, 1978; Esping-Andersen, 1980).

### **3.2. THE INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS SYSTEM IN SCANDINAVIA AND GROSS INCOME EQUALITY**

The description above documents that people have argued that securing a high degree of income equality was from the start a central value embedded in, at least, the programmatic institutions of the social-democratic welfare states in the Scandinavian countries. The final ratio of net income inequality is not solely the result of the redistributive effects of welfare arrangements however. Obviously it also depends on the initial rate of gross income inequality. The rate of gross income inequality is at least in principle more dependent on the range of programmatic and normative institutions encapsulated in the concept of the IRS, and not on the welfare state institutions. As will be documented below, a range of authors within this field of research have argued, directly or indirectly, that the IRSs in the Scandinavian countries have also been uniquely committed to and successful in securing a high degree of gross income equality.

A majority of the labour movement and thus the trade unions were, in Scandinavia as well as in other western countries, founded on what has been called an

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actors in Scandinavia – that is, the representatives of the working class, especially the trade unions and the social democratic parties – often engaged in compromises with the representatives of the peasants. These class-compromises are here argued to be quite special for Scandinavia (Baldwin, 1990; Esping-Andersen, 1990; Esping-Andersen, 1999; Korpi, 1983). This narrative can be supplemented by adding that the encompassing social democratic policies were made possible by low levels of corruption in the state apparatus prior to the welfare reforms in the Scandinavian countries (Jensen, 2013; Rothstein, 1998). In spite of this, the roots of welfare-state development are of course debated. Goul Andersen (2012b) identifies structural/functional, power-resource, ideational and institutional explanations behind welfare-state formation and change.



egalitarian ideology, with roots in Marxism, socialism and social democracy (McConnell, Brue, & Macpherson, 2009). Historically, several interrelated factors made the Scandinavian trade union movements more effective in gaining egalitarian outcomes. Also, to a greater extent than in many countries, they actually fought for equality overall and not just for economic improvements for certain groups of people.

Above all the Scandinavian trade union movements have historically and in comparative perspective been very powerful and thus better able than trade union movements in other western countries to press their claims successfully against their employer adversaries, who at times were supported by the state. There are at least two reasons for why the Scandinavian trade union movements have been so powerful. First, as Figure 3-1 shows, they have been able, in especially Denmark and Sweden and to a somewhat lesser extent in Norway, to consistently secure very high trade union density rates (Visser, 1996b; Visser, 2006).<sup>23</sup> Second, and just as importantly, the Scandinavian trade union movements have managed from very early on to retain a high degree of unity. The background to the high degree of unity is, first, that ideologically competing trade unions have been clearly marginalised, at least until recently (Jensen, 2007; Streeck & Hassel, 2003).<sup>24</sup> Secondly, the individual trade unions were to a great extent – especially in Sweden and Norway – based on the principal of *industrial unionism* instead of *craft unionism*.<sup>25</sup> It is straightforward to see that while the former should promote class-solidarity among workers, the latter should promote inter-craft competition. Industrial unionism therefore both increases the power of the unions to press claims by securing a high degree of unity supporting their goals, but also unity in fighting for overall goals benefitting the wage-earners as a whole, and more ideological ones such as equality, instead of narrow craft or occupational interests (Esping-Andersen, 1980; Visser, 1996a). This difference in the IRS of Denmark and Sweden is crucial and will be given more attention in the next section.

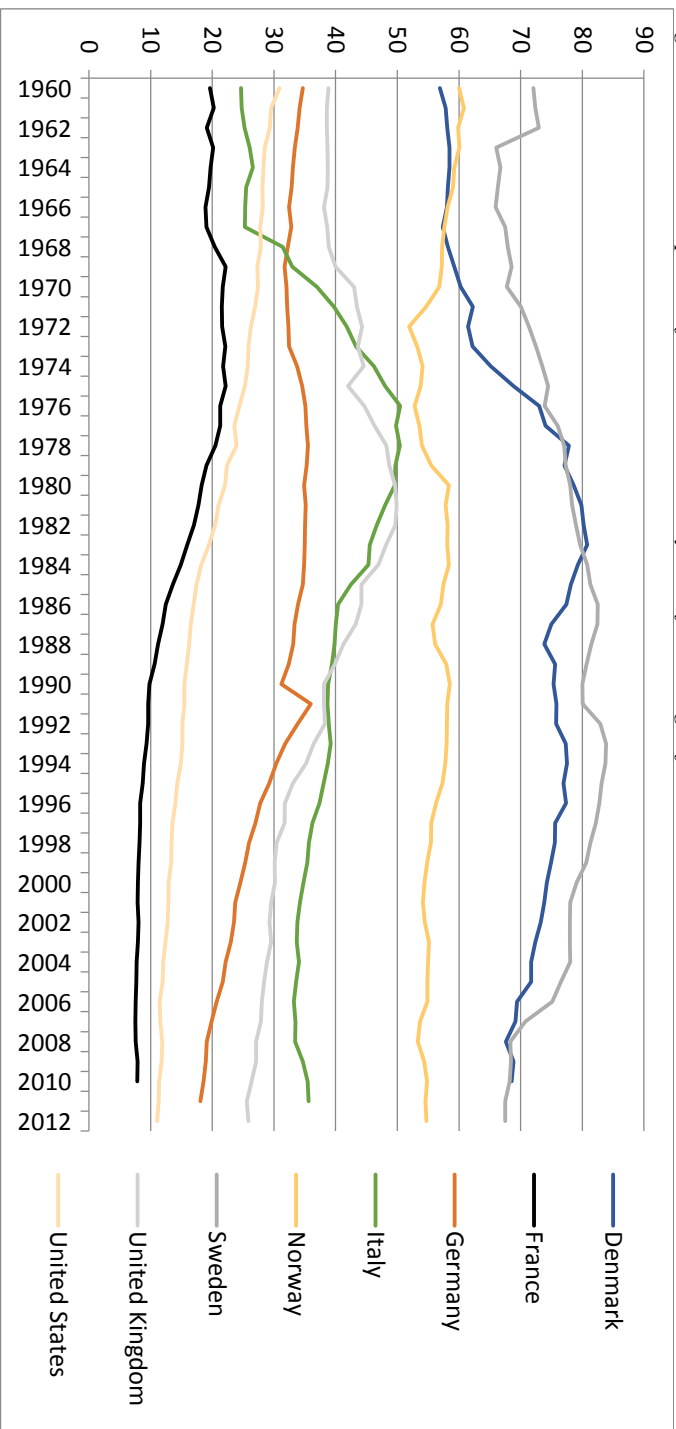
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<sup>23</sup> The dominant explanation for this Scandinavian discrepancy is that Norway abandoned the Ghent-system in 1938, while Denmark and Sweden retained the system (Due & Madsen, 2008). The following countries have been included in Figure 3-1 as well as in corresponding figures in the next sections: Denmark, Norway and Sweden (the Scandinavian countries), Great Britain and USA (prime Anglo-Saxon countries), Germany and France (main continental European countries) and Italy (a large Mediterranean country).

<sup>24</sup> Instead the Scandinavian trade-union movements in general emerged as part of a wider social democratic labour movement incorporating among other things football clubs, breweries and of course the main social democratic political parties in the three countries.

<sup>25</sup> Members are in the former case organised according to industry – e.g. glass, wood, metal, shipbuilding, and in the latter case members are organised according to craft, skill or profession e.g. carpenters, fitters, plumbers and chefs (Visser, 1996a).

Figure 3-1 The development of trade union density rates for a range of western countries 1960–2012



Notes: Trade union density is the ratio of wage- and salary-earners that are trade union members, divided by the total number of wage- and salary-earners (OECD, 2014b).

Source: [www.stats.oecd.org](http://www.stats.oecd.org). Data can be found under the menus Labour → Trade Union → Trade Union Density. Data accessed on 01 February 2014.

The employer organisations from quite early on also recognised certain rights of the trade union movements, such as the right of representation and the right to strike. This ultimately led to a very defining feature of the Scandinavian IRS in international comparisons – highly corporatist, centralised collective bargaining. In this bargaining the trade union confederation, the employers’ federation and sometimes the state arranged how the overall development in wages, working hours and other working conditions were to be on the labour market for a period of 2–4 years (Elvander, 2002; Flanagan, 2003; Lund, 1981; Visser, 1996a; Visser, 1996b).

A number of factors are interesting concerning how the centralized collective bargaining system was argued to help promote economic equality. First, the much-centralised overall labour-market nature of the negotiations meant that issues and interests were at stake other than those which were usual in more decentralised collective bargaining negotiations. In sectorial-, craft- or firm-level negotiations the trade unions, as mentioned, fight to secure the interests of their members in only their sector, craft or firm. Because the trade union confederations represent many different crafts, sectors and firms in centralized collective bargaining negotiations, their interests are in promoting the conditions on the labour market in general via issues such as the profit/pay ratio or how much wages in general are to rise in a given period. However, this also meant that issues such as the inflation rate, overall economic development and the stability of the economy could not be ignored either. To improve conditions for wage-earners in general, these macro-economic issues are just as important as for example the profit/wage ratio (Flanagan, 2003; Visser, 1996a).<sup>26</sup>

As mentioned in Chapter 1, Åberg (1984) argues that the extraordinarily centralised Swedish labour market system by itself promoted equality more than other countries’ systems promoted equality and changed how its members perceived ‘fair’ salaries. Centralization in Åberg’s (1984) view therefore not only promoted a high degree of equality in wage levels on the labour market, but also instilled extraordinarily egalitarian attitudes among the Swedish wage-earners towards the wage gaps between occupations. One can see for example, in the so-called ‘solidary wage funds’ established in all three Scandinavian countries with an extra ‘lump sum reserved for the lowest paid’, an expression of egalitarianism put into practice (Dølvik, 2013; Lund, 1981, p. 466).

This idea of a high degree of working class unity, especially in Sweden, as having a potentially transformative effect, is a tradition that not only Åberg (1980) represents (Esping-Andersen, 1980; Esping-Andersen, 1985; Korpi, 1978). There will be much more about these arguments in the next section. In spite of the assumptions of

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<sup>26</sup> The famous Swedish Rehn-Meidner model is maybe the best example of consciously intervening to improve wages and other conditions on the labour market in general, while at the same time securing low inflation, productivity and a stable macroeconomic development (Erixon, 2010; Flanagan, 2003; Jensen, 1989a; Jensen, 1989b; Visser, 1996a).

inter-class unity and egalitarianism in this literature, the industrial relations studies mentioned again do not seem to back these claims up with empirical investigations of Scandinavian attitudes.

In spite of this lack of empirical evidence, the two institutional spheres of the Scandinavian PEs have been argued to be – at least in their heyday – very committed to securing a high degree of gross and net income equality. If this historical legacy persists and has parallels with the micro-level attitudes of the Scandinavians, they must be assumed to be more egalitarian-minded than are people of most other countries.

### 3.3. DENMARK VERSUS SWEDEN

The description above is largely a classic description of the Scandinavian welfare (state) regime and IRS and their emphasis on economic equality as compared to the institutions of other western countries. The descriptions therefore fit best with the heyday of these models. This is reflected in the dates of some of the literature described above, but also many newer sources largely stick mainly to these classic descriptions. One reason for this is that – as emphasized before – perspective matters. In the *aggregated* perspective, the Scandinavian IRSs are still, for example, characterized by a very high degrees of coordination, cooperation, governability and trade union density rates (Dølvik, 2013; Erixon, 2010; OECD, 2004).

On the other hand, there are two main modifications due in the above picture. In this section, it will be documented, firstly, that substantial differences exist and existed between the political economies of especially Denmark and Sweden. These differences existed historically, but also leave traces today. The second modification to the picture above is that the events of the 1980s in many ways seem to be a crucial historical turning point or a critical juncture which at least for Sweden seems to have functioned also as a punctuated equilibrium, to use the *lingua* of the path-dependency literature (Baumgartner & Jones, 1993; Pierson, 2004). The different paths that especially the Danish and Swedish political economies took following these events could thus be crucial for influencing intra-Scandinavian differences in attitudes to the level of gross wages also today.

If one were to put a single headline over the differences in the development of the political economies of Denmark and Sweden over the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it would sound like this: Class cooperation and consensus-seeking in Denmark versus ideological class struggle in Sweden. These historical differences between Denmark and Sweden will be presented in the first two subsections. A third and fourth subsection will follow the paths from what seems to be transformative events in the 1980s until today.

### 3.3.1. CLASS COOPERATION AND CONSENSUS-SEEKING IN DENMARK

Galenson (1952) is often credited as the first non-Scandinavian researcher to notice that there was something unique about the Danish IRS. He argued that the Danish system of labour relations was uniquely successful in handling labour conflicts and securing industrial peace, also compared to Norway or Sweden. According to Galenson (1952) this was, after the ‘September Agreement’ of 1899, achieved by a commitment by the employers’ organizations and trade unions to establish and respect institutions governing labour conflict. The result was argued to be ‘the most detailed and complete system of collective bargaining in existence.’ (Galenson, 1952, p. 1).

Galenson (1952) also claims that the social parties in Denmark were mindful of the interests of their adversaries. The federation of labour unions (LO) as well social democratic governments consistently took into consideration what he calls a broad social view of the economic and industrial situation. While fighting to improve conditions for the workers’, their representatives consistently considered the interests of their adversaries.<sup>27</sup>

Industrialization started decades earlier in Denmark than in Sweden and Norway, and the guild monopolies were abolished in Denmark as late as 1862. This was just a decade before industrialization began, and it is argued to be a shorter interval than in any other country (Esping-Andersen, 1980; Galenson, 1952). Thereupon Galenson (1952) claims that one of the main reasons why the unique IRS came into existence in Denmark, and not elsewhere, is that ‘the corporate spirit of the guilds continued to permeate the labour market.’ (p. 2). Cooperation, not labour war, was in Galenson’s (1952) view therefore from the early days of Danish industrialisation the natural way to solve labour conflicts.

Another effect, at least partly caused by the guild legacy, is as mentioned above that the trade union movement to a much greater extent than in Sweden and Norway is organised according to craft instead of by industry (Esping-Andersen, 1980; Galenson, 1952; Knudsen & Rothstein, 1994). In much of his early writing Esping-Andersen (1978; 1980; 1985) puts great emphasis on this difference. Danish class structure, from the start of industrialisation until the early days of the emerging service (and welfare) economy of the 1960s and 70s, was argued to consist of a

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<sup>27</sup> These arguments resemble some the arguments put forward by the functioning of the Swedish industrial relations system. These are Åberg’s (1984) ‘non-market criteria’, focussed on the competitiveness of businesses, as well as some of the principles underlying the Rehn-Meidner model (Erixon, 2010; Flanagan, 2003; Jensen, 1989a; Jensen, 1989b; Visser, 1996a). In the aggregated perspective, in which these sources write, this also seems true. When disaggregating and focussing on the differences between Denmark and Sweden, as will be documented, consensus-seeking clearly seems to be more a Danish than a Swedish tradition.

large rural and urban petit bourgeoisie, a high proportion of skilled to unskilled workers and low degree of capital concentration.<sup>28</sup> According to Esping-Andersen (1978; 1980; 1985) this caused a weak and steadily fragmented and decomposed working class and social democratic party. In contrast to the situation in Sweden, Esping-Andersen (1978; 1980; 1985) but also Korpi (1978) with good reason saw the Danish fragmented class and also working-class structure as problematic for achieving class unity behind a transformation of the society to socialism. Galenson (1952) on the other hand could be thought to see the high proportion of craft-organised skilled workers in Denmark as part of a special advantage it enjoyed. The corporate guild spirit of the crafts in his view makes it natural for various groups to cooperate, compromise and seek consensus.

Elvander (2002) and Due & Madsen (2008) use a more functionalistic argument to reach similar conclusions as Galenson (1952). They argue that in the long run it was and is in the interest of neither capitalists nor workers having a chaotic, uncoordinated and un-peaceful labour market. When transforming to industrial societies every country therefore in time sets up some form of programmatic institutions regulating especially labour market conflict – an industrial relation system. There was much variety in how this was done though. Elvander (2002) and Due & Madsen (2008) argue that when the labour movement was rather weak and fragmented, as in the pluralist/liberal IR regime, the state often had to take action and regulated via rather detailed labour market legislation. Within the boundaries set by the state legislation of for example a minimum wage, the determination of wages was left to non-centralised collective bargaining between the social partners at a sectorial-, craft- or firm level. When the social partners in contrast were strong and highly centralised as the case earlier was in Sweden, the state could leave the governance of the labour market more or less solely to the unions and employers to regulate. In the corporatist IR regime the regulation of the labour market was often decided by formalised corporatist coordination between the social partners and the state.

The Danish IRS is, according to Due & Madsen (2008), a special hybrid. There is close interaction – albeit chiefly ad hoc – between the social partners and the state, especially in regards to labour-market policy as in the corporatist system. However, at the same time the basic issues of working conditions and wage levels are to a great extent ‘self-regulated’ in the collective agreements. One could speculate that in spite of the fragmented class structure and craft-organisation which Galenson (1952) describes, it is the ability of the social parties to reach a consensus, voluntarily build up and support an extensive institutional framework handling labour conflicts and maintaining labour-market peace, which has allowed the Danish IRS to retain a relatively high degree of independence from state regulation.

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<sup>28</sup> This will be described in much more detail in the next section.

### 3.3.2. IDEOLOGICAL CLASS STRUGGLE IN SWEDEN

The peculiarities of the Danish IRS and broader political economy only really become clear by contrasting them with the history of the Swedish IRS and political economy.<sup>29</sup> The Swedish labour movement in many ways has been historically more ideological than its Danish counterpart.

Following the power-resource tradition, this does not seem strange (Elvander, 2002; Esping-Andersen, 1980; Korpi, 1978; Korpi, 1983). Esping-Andersen (1980) documents that, in contrast to Denmark, when Sweden, decades later than Denmark, finally started the transition to an industrial society, the outcome was a quite different class structure. In contrast to Denmark, a strong class of independent farmers – a rural *petit-bourgeoisie* – did not exist in democratic Sweden. Instead, the agricultural sector was to a large extent outmatched in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century by cheap grain from the USA and Russia as well as cheap, high-quality meat and dairy products from, among other countries, Denmark. Within a few decades, this led a majority of the Swedes employed in agriculture either to have migrated or to have found jobs in the emerging industrial sector, but also in the booming mining and forestry sector. The majority of people in this new working class were thus, in contrast to Denmark, unskilled workers. Also in contrast to Denmark, many of these unskilled workers did not work in small businesses, having a personal relationship to the boss. Instead, they worked in large enterprises in mining, forestry and, in time, increasingly in factories. The capitalist class in Sweden therefore also emerged as much more concentrated than in Denmark. At the beginning of the industrial age a few major capitalists, having great impact on the policies of the still not fully democratic state, dominated it, and later the owners of the same enterprises would be dominant in the early days of the Swedish Employers' Federation (SAF). Finally, and in contrast to Denmark, the urban *petit-bourgeoisie*, mainly in the form of small independent shop owners, was also much more marginal in Sweden. Instead, a vast majority of, for example, grocery shops, were owned by cooperatives.

Sweden turned fully democratic in 1921. Nevertheless, as this transition happened they were, as described above, left with a class structure quite different from Denmark's. The large, mainly unskilled working class was mobilized in the Social Democratic party and within a few decades was able to secure almost uninterrupted parliamentary majorities lasting decades with support of only the small Peasants Party (*Bondepartiet*). Except for the occasional quite strong communist parties, the Swedish non-social democratic left wing was much more marginal compared to that of Denmark into the early 1990s (see Figures 3-2 and 3-3 below). In contrast to Denmark, the Social Democrats in Sweden were thus to a greater extent able to remain ideological and, with a firm grasp on the government, pursue the class

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<sup>29</sup> See also Elvander (2002, pp. 210-213) for a similar short description and conclusion regarding the intra-Scandinavian differences in IRSs.

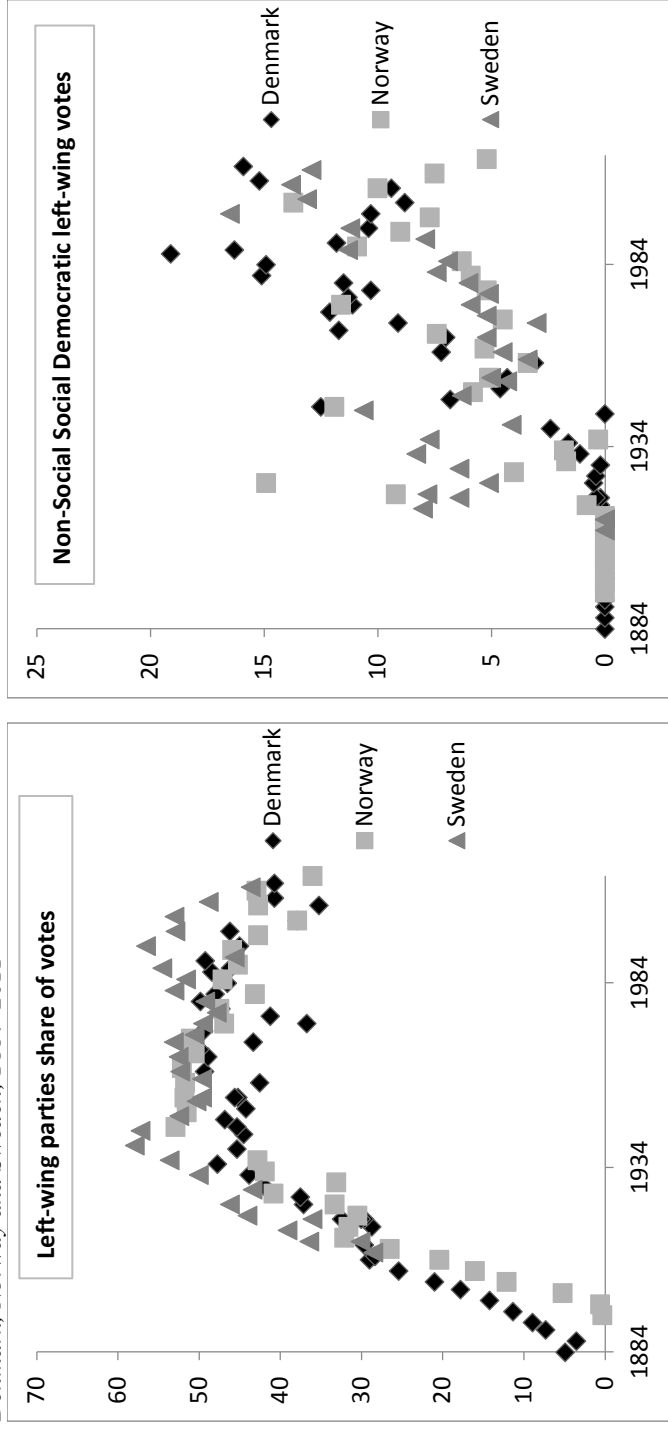
interests of the mainly unskilled factory workers whom they represented (Esping-Andersen, 1978; Esping-Andersen, 1980; Esping-Andersen, 1985; Korpi, 1978; Nygård, 2006).

In order to gain enough votes to become the prime cabinet-holding party from 1929 and onwards, the Danish Social Democrats, in contrast to their Swedish counterparts, rhetorically became a 'party for all the people' instead of a 'party for the workers'. In practice this meant they wooed not only the votes of all groups within the rather fragmented working class – unskilled and skilled of many crafts – but also on the votes of the farm workers who continued to exist in substantial numbers in the important agricultural sector, and to some extent the urban petit-bourgeoisie also. In spite of this vote-seeking strategy, much wider than that of their Swedish counterparts, the Danish Social Democrats were only in the election of 1935 ever close to having a majority themselves. In the elections from the 1960s onwards the social democrats had to share a steadily larger part of the substantial portion of left-wing votes with a number of smaller left-wing parties (see Figures 3-2 and 3-3 below). From the very first social democratic cabinets, they had to rely on the support of the Social Liberal Party (det Radikale Venstre) representing farm smallholders, schoolteachers and academics. Even then, the Social Democrats mostly held minority governments. As Galenson (1952) described in relation to the IRS, this prompted or maybe rather forced the Social Democrats in Denmark to be masters of compromise and consensus-building – not class war. A Danish tradition of broad settlements evolved, whereby the four major 'old' parties, after receiving at least some concessions, always voted for the yearly state budget, but also in many cases other major reforms in Danish society. Another indication of the consensus-seeking nature of the Danish Social Democrats is that their various cabinets were mindful of not only the competitiveness of the industrial sector as in Sweden, but also very much of the agricultural sector (Esping-Andersen, 1980; Galenson, 1952; Nygård, 2006).

It should probably be emphasized that the left-wing voter share of around 50%, which the left-wing parties taken together in all three Scandinavian countries managed to maintain more or less uninterruptedly until the 1990s, is very high in the aggregated perspective. The eventual social democratic decline in Denmark and Sweden more or less coincided with a rise in support for other left-wing parties. Although the Left therefore clearly remained strong in the Scandinavian countries, the tendencies towards decomposition and fragmentation observed and discussed by Esping-Andersen (1978; 1980; 1985) and Korpi (1978) are clearly real enough.



Figure 3-1 Share of votes for left-wing parties in total, and non-social democratic left-wing parties, at general elections in Denmark, Norway and Sweden, 1884–2011



Sources: (Folkeingets Oplysning, 2014; Statistics Sweden, 2014; Tvedt, 2013). Data accessed on August 12, 2014.

The Swedish IRS emerging from this class structure, as hinted above, was influenced by the more dichotomous class structure with many unskilled workers and a concentrated capitalist class. Since the Saltsjöbaden agreement of 1938, the Swedish IRS was very peaceful by international comparison, while in contrast to Denmark only once having the state intervene to resolve a labour dispute (in 1971) (Blyth, 2001; Elvander, 2002; Erixon, 2010; Korpi, 1978). For Elvander (2002) the fundamental condition for this Swedish labour-market model was that a small number of strong, centralized and encompassing peak organisations – the Trade Union Federation (LO) and SAF – represented the labour-market parties. This strong centralisation on both the employers' and employees' side was only possible because of the dominant dichotomous class structure. From the very early days of Swedish industrialisation SAF was dominated by the major capitalists described above, while the unskilled workers in the factories and mines of these capitalists came to dominate the LO (Esping-Andersen, 1980; Korpi, 1978). Swedish centralisation also contrasted with Danish decentralisation in another crucial way: In accordance the principles of representative democracy in Sweden and most other western countries, a collective bargaining agreement is enacted when the representatives of the employers and employees can agree. In very simple terms this meant that whenever the representatives of SAF and LO could agree, industrial peace prevailed (Elvander, 2002).

In Denmark, a myriad of potential labour conflicts between the quite different groups of skilled and unskilled workers and various types and sizes of employers always existed. This led the LO and the Employers' Federation (DA) to voluntarily set up the comprehensive institutions described by Galenson (1952) for handling these inevitable labour conflicts, including the famous labour courts and a clear tradition of state legislation if a mediation bid in collective bargaining negotiations is rejected. In contrast to Sweden and most other western countries, all collective agreement proposals and even the mediation proposal by the state mediator, are subject to a direct referendum among the union- and employer members in question in Denmark (and in Norway). In contrast to Sweden, in Denmark direct, not representative democracy thus rules the enactment of collective bargaining agreements. Only in the case when the state resorts to elevates the mediator's proposal to legislation to resolve an often-prolonged labour conflict, does members' influence on the outcome cease. It could be seen as a testament to the consensus orientation of the parties in the Danish IRS that, in spite of the myriad of potential labour conflicts and the exceptionally democratic rules for enacting collective bargaining agreements, as of 2002 the Danish state has only had to intervene and resolve conflicts with legislation in a dozen cases. In Norway, the corresponding figure was 130 cases (Elvander, 2002).

Entering the economic crises of the 1970s while at the same time having embarked on a transition from industrial into post-industrial societies, Denmark and Sweden inherited quite different political economies. The class structures had emerged differently and the characteristics of the programmatic institutions of the IRSs as well as the nature of class politics within the parliamentary sphere had followed

different paths. Denmark was the *consensus-democracy* with a tradition of broad settlements and ‘class cooperation’ in the parliamentary sphere, guided by a Social Democratic party claiming to represent the whole population and not just the (fragmented) working class. The IRS also secured industrial peace by a comprehensive system for handling labour conflicts and a willingness on the part of the social partners and their members to reach conclusions to everybody’s satisfaction.

Sweden on the other hand inherited a political economy dominated by an *ideological* Social Democratic party, the main architect of the Swedish welfare society ‘Folkehemmet’. The Swedish Social Democrats to a great extent had kept representing the working class and their interests, but through a more or less strict application of the Rehn-Meidner model this was achieved while remaining mindful of Swedish industrial competitiveness (Berglund & Esser, 2014; Erixon, 2010). In the IRS, stable cooperation and compromise between representatives of big business and the working class (LO and SAF) reached its peak with centralised collective bargaining. While during the whole period benefitting from stability and the economic boom, the ideological differences between the two parties remained and could as we shall see be reviewed into open class conflict.

In the aggregated perspective, the historical legacy of the political economies of Denmark and Sweden seems quite alike. As documented in sections 3.1-3.2, both the welfare-state institutions and the IRS institutions have been very committed to securing a high degree of gross and net income equality. This heritage, as argued above, could induce Scandinavians to be more egalitarian-minded than people in most other countries. In the disaggregated perspective, the historical legacies of the political economies of Denmark and Sweden are clearly quite different. Analogue to the above, if these historical differences persist and the micro-level attitudes of the Danes and Swedes parallel them, Danish attitudes to the level of inequality in gross wages might be consensual across social classes, and the corresponding Swedish attitudes more dominated by ideological differences in attitudes broadly reflecting the social classes of that society.

### **3.3.3. TRANSFORMATIVE YEARS IN SWEDEN: THE 1980S AND BEYOND**

The works of Korpi (1978) and Esping-Andersen (1978; 1980; 1985) in many ways describe a crucial historical tipping point, although they quite obviously make some wrong interpretations of the changes they saw. They notice that the workers’ movement in Sweden – to a rather large extent supported by the Social Democrats – in the period leading up to 1980, qualitatively changed its approach to capitalism. The Social Democratic Party and LO founded a joint commission on the idea of increased ‘economic democracy’ (ED). While renewing their official policy agenda program in 1975, the Social Democrats also emphasised that after having been architects of the welfare society, their goal now was progressing to a socialist

society through democratic revolution. LO and the Social Democrats therefore started to support different initiatives under the label of ED which, formulated nicely, were suggestions to increase democratic control over the economy. The initiatives included, first, suggestions of ‘co-determination’ in work i.e. a higher degree of shared authority at the individual workplace by the employer and the workers. Secondly they included a proposal for setting up a fund controlled by the labour unions. The fund’s revenues should stem from imposing a 20% profit tax on corporations. The purpose of the fund should then be to buy stocks and gain a shareholding majority in major Swedish corporations. These initiatives meant challenging the owners’ right to manage their companies and (in their words) their property rights (Berglund & Esser, 2014; Blyth, 2001; Erixon, 2010; Esping-Andersen, 1980; Korpi, 1978).

Esping-Andersen (1978; 1980; 1985) interpreted these emerging developments as if the Swedish social democrats were actually taking the next logical step in pursuing a gradual democratic transformation into socialism via *de-commodified politics*, which he defined as:

‘...state policy which negates the exchange value principle with respect to consumption as well as production.’ (Esping-Andersen, 1980, p. 25).

This is somewhat different from his later, famous definition of *de-commodification*, wherein the exchange value principle is only meant to be negated in terms of consumption, but not production:

‘de-commodification ... refers to the degree to which individuals, or families, can uphold a socially acceptable standard of living independently of market participation.’ (Esping-Andersen, 1990, p. 37).

Esping-Andersen (1978; 1980; 1985) furthermore claims that the ability and willingness to pursue these policies was what enabled the Swedish Social Democrats, in stark contrast to the corresponding Danish party, to gain a majority of the votes of new lower-skilled white-collar workers appearing in the emerging transition to a post-industrial society. Esping-Andersen (1978; 1980; 1985) argues that this important emerging social class was not satisfied with the traditional ‘bread-and-butter’ policies sufficient for gaining the support of the traditional unskilled blue-collar workers. Instead, they wanted no less than self-determination in their working environment.

Whereas Korpi (1978) and Esping-Andersen (1978; 1980; 1985) seem to predict the ultimate success of Swedish social democracy – or ‘revisionist Marxism’ (Esping-Andersen, 1980, p. 1) – in actually leading a democratic transition to socialism in the near future – the actual development proved to be quite different.

According to Blyth (2001) and Erixon (2010) SAF was the key actor who mobilised their substantial resources to counter the development towards ED and socialism.

First, they tried the traditional employers' weapon: In 1980, SAF enforced a lockout of three million workers. After the lockout, SAF felt that this weapon was too costly without having much effect, and they therefore switched to other means, namely to actively and openly undermine the centralised collective bargaining institution. In 1983 the Metal Workers Union made a collective agreement with the Engineering Employers' Federation outside the framework of centralised collective bargaining. Already before that SAF had openly said that their aim was to undermine the institutions of centralised bargaining and work for company-wide agreements instead. During the 1980s SAF also gradually withdrew from other cooperative institutions. This process was completed by 1991 (Notermans, 1999).

The second weapon SAF used very offensively was to put great effort into trying actively to promote 'new' neoliberal/neo-classical ideas. According to Blyth (2001) SAF's spending on this issue rose from 15 to 25 percent of their annual expenses in the late 70s. In 1982 SAF spend as much as 55–60 million Swedish krona just on advertising against the wage-earner funds. By comparison, in the parliamentary election in the same year all five political parties combined spent 69 million krona and by 1988 SAF's annual expenditure on advertising its ideas had risen to 200 million krona. Among other things, SAF supported think tanks such as the Centre for Business and Policy Studies (SNS) and 'Timbro' that actively promoted neoliberal ideas.

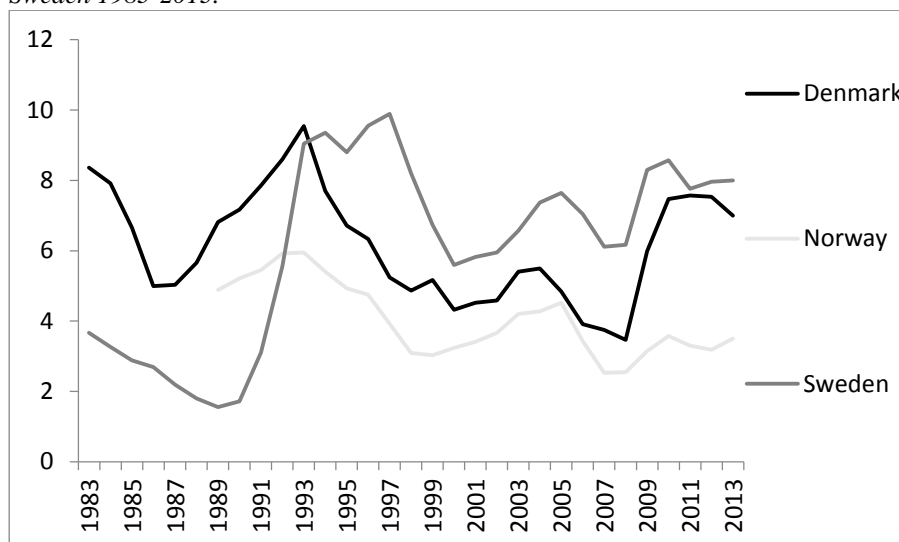
Boréus (1997) argues that one measure of the success SAF, SNS and Timbro had in bringing neoliberal ideas to wider audiences and arenas can be seen in the output of the broadsheet newspapers. The proportion of opinion pieces referring to 'new liberal ideas' in the conservative broadsheet *Svenska Dagbladet* increased from 30 to 70 percent of the opinion pieces on economic and ideological issues from 1975 to 1989. In the more liberal broadsheet *Dagens Nyheter*, the increase from 1971 to 1989 was from 15 to 30 percent (see more below). As in other countries, ideas like concern for the 'natural equilibrium rate of unemployment' (NAIRU) also started to appear in ministerial reports, and by the time a bourgeois coalition took office in 1991, these ideas under labels as 'normpolitik' was openly guiding the economic policies of the coalition government (Blyth, 2001; Erixon, 2010).

The fierce attack by SAF and allies was not uncontested. During the 1980s the conservative party (Moderaterna) allied with SAF, SNS and Timbro, and openly started questioning the economic sustainability of the welfare state. The Social Democrats, the 'Left Party' and to some extent the 'Centre Party' in their election programs on the other hand kept advocating positive welfare-state expansion – although the idea of a democratic revolution to socialism was soon abandoned (Nygård, 2006). As hinted above, this ideological struggle was also very alive in the comment sections of the largest serious newspapers. Boréus (1997) shows that ideological pieces in the period of 1969–77 in *Svenska Dagbladet* and *Dagens Nyheter* clearly leaned towards left-wing ideas, as for example in positive attitudes towards the public sector and distributive justice. After 1980 by contrast a vivid debate engulfed proponents supporting the welfare state and its positive effects and

opponents arguing against it. Boréus' (1997) analysis includes only the liberal newspaper *Dagens Nyheter* and the conservative *Svenska Dagbladet*. It is therefore likely that the opposition to neoliberal ideas was even more ferocious in traditionally Social Democratic newspapers such as *Aftonbladet*.

In spite of the initial fierce opposition to the neo-liberal ideas, the Social Democrats in turn adapted their ideas to the steadily more dominant neo-liberal discourse. Applying the concept of 'the third way', the Social Democrats in the 1990s started using some of the neo-liberal critiques in their election programs and statements in debates. They now argued that reforms and adaptation of the welfare state was necessary to insure the sustainability of the welfare state. The welfare state was now seen as a tool for strengthening Swedish competitiveness on a globalised competitive market. Competitiveness was furthermore seen as essential to maintaining the current level of welfare level. These chains of events were of course influenced by the severe economic crisis Sweden experienced from 1990/91 to 1993, but still it was quite significant how differently the Social Democrats now legitimised the welfare state compared to only a few years before. The Swedish crisis in the early nineties has been argued to be caused by a cocktail of more or less simultaneous events in the global economy and on the global and especially European financial markets. In addition, a number of policy failures undertaken by Swedish governments of the 1980s and early 1990s worsened the problems (Boréus, 1997; Notermans, 1999; Nygård, 2006; Tranøy, 1999; Tranøy, 2001). No matter what the causes were, the crisis was severe (see Figure 3-3 below), and as argued above such a crisis, with associated rapidly rising unemployment rates, can have significant effects on attitudes to the level of inequality in gross wages, by enabling the reflective potential of in this case the Swedes:

Figure 3-2 Annual Harmonised Unemployment Rates for Denmark, Norway and Sweden 1983-2013.



Notes: Calculated as percentage of Working Age Population 15-64 for Denmark, Norway and Sweden 1983-2011.

Source: [www.stats.oecd.org](http://www.stats.oecd.org). Data can be found under the menus Labour → Labour Force Statistics → Short Term Statistics → Short Term Labour Market Statistics → Harmonised Unemployment Rates (HURs). Data retained at November 25<sup>th</sup> 2014.

In contrast to the situation in Denmark, the traditional Swedish industrial relations institutions were, as described above, dependent on strong centralised peak organisations being able to reach compromises without the interference of the state. Traditionally, state mediation in this process was voluntary and of mostly of a consulting nature. Following the functionalistic model described above, the Swedish IRS was therefore in an unstable, uncontrollable and in the long run unsustainable state following the breakdown of centralised collective bargaining in the 1980s (Berghlund & Esser, 2014; Due & Madsen, 2008; Elvander, 2002).

Just as the economic crisis intensified in 1990, the breakdown of wage coordination at the same time exposed Sweden to a wage drift and inflation spiral twice as high as the OECD average. This situation led the government to appoint a special group of mediators – the Rehnberg Group. Under its direction, a ‘Stabilisation Drive’ was implemented. This ‘drive’ was more or less voluntarily negotiated with and accepted by 110 labour-union and employer organisations. In the bargaining round of 1993, the Rehnberg Group again took the initiative by issuing a declaration of the need for wage restraint for the sake of the Swedish economy before starting the actual negotiations. In 1995 on the other hand the negotiation process was again not very well coordinated and the outcome was again wage increases and inflation above the norm from 1991–95 as well as the European norm in 1995. In 1996, the government therefore finally urged the social partners to start drafting a reform of

the wage bargaining system. After much debate and disagreement, the result finally emerged as the 'Industrial Agreement of March 1997'. This was renewed with the 'Industrial Agreement of 2012' (Berglund & Esser, 2014; Elvander, 2002).

During this whole process SAF, as described above, consciously relinquished its reins over conducting and coordinating collective bargaining. A good indication hereof is that the institution changed its old name to 'Svenskt Näringsliv' (SN) in 2001. Whereas SAF translates to the 'Swedish Employers' Federation', SN translates directly to 'Swedish Business' (although they officially label themselves the 'Confederation of Swedish Enterprise' in English). This change of name signifies the much narrower scope of the institution than it had before. This is because, first, the focus is now on business and not employers in general. Second, some would maybe even claim that the organisation has reduced its traditional scope inasmuch as it now functions mainly as a lobbying organisation for business. The Swedish state, as indicated, has instead taken over a much more active coordinating role, pushing for the creation of new institutions in the Swedish IRS, and insisting that the sectors most exposed to international competition should be setting the Swedish wage trend, which other sectors should follow (Berglund & Esser, 2014; Svensk Näringsliv, 2013).

Much can be said about the specifics of these reforms; of crucial importance in this case are two things. The negotiations now had to meet the same deadlines as in the Danish collective bargaining system. Three months before the expiration of the previous agreement, the negotiations for a new agreement have to start, and one month before an old agreement expires, a new, powerful and impartial mediator intervenes. This new regime was first restricted to negotiations within the industrial sector, but quickly spread into other sectors after being broadly hailed as a success. It is important to note the conspicuous similarities with the 'old' Danish model described already by Galenson (1952).

### **3.3.4. CONTINUITY AND GRADUAL CHANGE IN DENMARK: THE 1980S AND BEYOND**

It seems quite clear that the political economy of Sweden went through some rather substantial struggles and changes from the 1970's crisis up to the beginning of the new millennium. In many ways, Denmark did not follow Sweden's path. In the Danish parliamentary sphere, the magnitude of the rhetorical struggle, and in the differences between the policies that left- and right-wing governments actually conducted, seem substantially smaller than Sweden's.

Starting with the parliamentary sphere, Nygård (2006) argues that in most cases the Conservatives, Liberals (Venstre) and Social Liberals (Radikale Venstre) quite defensively argued for reductions in social expenditures made necessary by the strain of the 1980's economic recession. Though they did not openly advocate welfare-state expansion as did the Social Democrats and the Socialist People's



Party (SF), this was in most cases a much more hesitant approach than that which the conservatives used in Sweden. In addition, Nygård (2006) in some ways actually seems more or less to replicate a central argument of Esping-Andersen (1978; 1980; 1985) though applied to more recent times: that the relatively weak Social Democrats have not been able to pursue class interests in the same way as their Swedish counterparts. At the same time, the Danish Right is argued to have been consistently influenced by or at least to have not challenged Social Democratic welfare ideas. Nygård (2006) also argues that even at periods in the 1980s when public sentiment seemed to be supportive of lowering public expenditures, the Conservative government hesitated to attack the welfare state due for fear of being punished by the electorate. The Danish political climate throughout the 1980s but also somewhat in the 1990s remained much more consensual than that of Sweden.

Much the same slowly changing path-dependent developments can be found in the Danish IRS. Due & Madsen (2008) argue that although the centralised collective bargaining negotiations between LO and DA, as in Sweden, ceased in the 1980s, this transition was much less conflictual and in practice meant much less change than in Sweden. What followed was a change in what Due & Madsen (2008) label ‘centralised decentralisation’. On the one hand, bargaining rights were delegated down to the firm level. The sectorial-level organisations also took over running the decisive collective bargaining negotiations from the central organisations. These are clear signs of decentralisation and they could spark de-coordination. The Danish IRS throughout the period have in practice remained highly coordinated though. First, the now crucial sectorial organisations have merged – or in other in other words ‘centralised’ – which has lessened the possibilities for coordination. Taking over the negotiations from the central organisations DA and LO, the agreement between the key sectorial organisations – the Confederation of Danish Industry (DI) and the Central Organisation of Industrial Employees in Denmark (CO-industri) – now functions openly as a trendsetter for collective bargaining negotiations, which the rest of the labour market follows. The agreements between DI and CO-industry are less detailed however and now function rather to give a framework for negotiations in other sectors and at the firm level (hence the delegation mentioned). Besides having other functions, the central organisations LO and DA now play a key role in coordinating the various collective bargaining negotiations for LO/DA areas not covered by the DI/CO-industry agreements.

Due & Madsen (2008) suspect that the Danish IRS – under the triple pressure of the EU, the national political system, and parties at the firm level – could be transforming into a new ‘multilevel regulation’ phase. Here the guiding role of the sectorial organisations could be challenged, and top-down control supplanted by bottom-up initiatives. The question is of course whether coherence and coordination can be maintained within such a system, and obviously also whether this is really the direction the IRS is taking. In accordance with the ontology of critical realism, the complex interplay of structures and various social mechanisms in a given context makes the future hard to predict.

While Sweden had its crisis in the early 1990s, then as it can be seen in Figure 3-3 above, Denmark was hit much harder by the financial crisis in 2008 than Sweden was (Goul Andersen, 2013). The financial crisis in Denmark could therefore constitute the same kind of reality or reflective shock elaborated in chapter 2.<sup>30</sup>

The histories of the recent decades of the Danish and Swedish political economies are in some ways path-dependent on their historical legacies. On the other hand especially Sweden's political economy seems to have undergone some rather radical changes. Crucially both the Swedish IRS and the interplay between central actors in the parliamentary sphere over time seem to move more and more in the Danish direction. This means fewer ideological differences in the parliamentary sphere concerning the management of the economy and the distribution of resources in society, as well as a more decentralised, yet highly institutionalised and coordinated IRS. If these more recent developments, with some lag, influence the micro-level attitudes of the Danes and Swedes, Swedish attitudes should gradually become consensual across social classes. In Denmark, the tendency as time passes seems to be one of steadily and gradually ever more blurred ideological class differences.

### **3.4. THE PASSION FOR EQUALITY IN SCANDINAVIA IN THE AGGREGATED AND DISAGGREGATED PERSPECTIVE**

Many have claimed that income equality seems to be a central feature of the Scandinavian countries, in the *aggregated* perspective. Their arguments are, *first*, that various characteristics of the IRS produced both a high degree of unity in fighting for egalitarian goals of wage-earners in general instead of craft or sectorial interests, as well as the power and the institutions to achieve these goals to a great extent. Interestingly, the unique centralised collective bargaining negotiations in Scandinavia were not only argued to produce an egalitarian wage distribution between occupations, but also to instill egalitarian attitudes among wage-earners. *Secondly*, a high degree of net equality is also largely argued to be the result of the welfare arrangements in Scandinavian countries. The rather unique welfare arrangements are supposedly the result of the strong equality, and social-democratically oriented political actors in the past. This triangle – outcomes, welfare arrangements and past political struggles – have led people to claim that Scandinavians have per se a passion for equality. Neither the welfare (state) regime, nor the IRS traditions substantiate these claims of egalitarianism empirically however.

In the *disaggregated* perspective, significant historical differences were argued to have existed between the paths of the Danish and Swedish political economies from the transition to industrial societies until today. In the *parliamentary* sphere it is

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<sup>30</sup> In section 4.3 below, the effect of such a shock will be sought modelled in a survey experiment.

argued that the nature of social democracy in Denmark historically was heavily influenced by a large rural and urban petit bourgeoisie, a high proportion of skilled workers and low degree of capital concentration, causing a weaker, more fragmented and decomposed working class and social democratic party than in Sweden. In Denmark, the Social Democrats therefore early on became masters of compromise, and rhetorically presented itself positively as a ‘consensus-democracy’. In Sweden, the Social Democrats also had to compromise and ally with the Peasants Party (Bondepartiet). The power structure was more unequal than in Denmark though, and the Social Democrats with an almost uninterrupted grasp on government were able to a much greater extent to pursue the class interests of the mainly unskilled factory workers whom they represented historically.

The *IRSs* of Denmark and Sweden also historically seem to have been heavily influenced by these legacies. In Denmark a very comprehensive IRS developed. In spite the fragmented and craft-organised nature of the labour unions and few large dominating businesses, this allowed extraordinarily peaceful labour relations and a high degree of independence from state interference. The traditional Swedish IRS was maybe even freer of state intervention. In addition, this system for decades managed to secure a high degree of labour peace. In contrast to Denmark, this was the result of a high degree of centralisation of power and authority within both LO and SAF, and of the centralised collective bargaining between the two peak organisations.

The *1970s and 80s* seem to have constituted a *crucial historical turning point*. In *Sweden* the virtual social democratic monopoly of the cabinet was broken, and the centralised collective bargaining institution collapsed with the ferocious struggles between SAF and its allies versus LO and the social democratic party pressing for ED and socialism. After the collapse of centralised bargaining and years of wage drift and ad hoc attempts to curb it, the Swedish IRS in the late 1990s emerged as seemingly copying central features of the ‘old’ Danish industrial relations model. The former, very ideological Social Democratic party also moderated its ideological stance considerably during the 1990s. ‘The third way’, competitiveness and the sustainability of the welfare state were now on the agenda, not transition to socialism.

While the Swedish political economy until the late 1990s thus was characterised by great upheaval and ideological struggle, the *Danish* seemed to follow a rather slow-changing path of adaptation based on a rather high degree of consensus. In some ways, the Danish IRS has changed quite a lot. Centralised bargaining has ceased and much has been decentralised and delegated to the sectorial and firm level. On the other hand, the Danish IRS in the ‘centralised decentralisation’ phase is still highly coordinated, following the trend set by the key collective agreements between DI and CO-industry, and the guidelines set by the political system. In the political sphere no bourgeois governments have seriously challenged the legitimacy of the welfare state, while the social democratic-led cabinets on the other hand have been very keen on being fiscally responsible and securing a competitive economy.

The Danish tradition of broad settlements has also been largely maintained. The Danish consensus democracy therefore still seems vital, although possible future threats of a ‘multilevel regulated’ IRS seem real.

Danish and Swedish micro-level attitudes to the level of inequality in gross wages form within the context of the changing conditions of the political economies of Denmark and Sweden. The key empirical issues are, as described above, whether they parallel the respective political economies of the two countries. If so, a subsequent question is, whether changes in the political economies translate directly into changed attitudinal patterns, or whether there is a substantial lag ‘from macro to micro’. This obviously provokes the question whether Swedish attitudinal patterns, after the changes in their PE of the last couple of decades, in recent surveys may have started to resemble the corresponding Danish patterns.

Scandinavian attitudes to the level of inequality in gross wages do not form in a vacuum. The context in which they form constitutes the political economies of the three countries in comparative and longitudinal perspective. Besides the programmatic and normative institutions of the welfare (state) regime and the IRS, and the interplay of central actors, the actual levels and character of economic inequality in the three countries are for obvious reasons also important. The next section will delve more deeply into the factual developments.

### **3.5. CLASS STRUCTURES, GROSS WAGE INEQUALITIES AND TOP INCOME SHARE**

The previous sections dealt with the historical developments of the Scandinavian political economies and their focus on economic equality. These sections therefore dealt mostly with the middle and right box in the political economy ‘hat’ of Figure 2-2. Missing is still the left box however. The Scandinavian context for forming attitudes towards the level of inequality in gross wages also obviously includes the factual level and developments in the level of wage- and economic inequality in Scandinavian societies.

These ‘facts’ as mentioned above are obviously outcomes of the institutions described above. On the other hand, the arrow of causality not only flows from institutions to the level and character of economic inequality. The equality multiplier is a good theoretical example of such mechanisms running in the opposite direction (Barth & Moene, 2009). Here a low degree of net inequality is argued to empower weaker groups on the labour market, giving them the strength to secure higher wage levels and therefore a lower degree of gross or wage inequality. Also a low degree of wage inequality supposedly allows even the low-paid on the labour market to be concerned with more abstract, tax-financed welfare programmes, instead of their immediate consumption possibilities via tax cuts (this is illustrated by the arrows in both directions in Figure 2-2).

While the mechanism proposed to be driving the first effect is basically that of power resources, the second effect is more interesting for the purpose here. Here the idea in fact is that a low degree of wage inequality changes the preferences, or in other words, the attitudes of the lowest-paid strata on the labour market, towards welfare programs. While this may be true, it is clear that in order to understand the background to Scandinavians' attitudes to the level of inequality in gross wages, it is imperative to investigate on what level of economic inequality the Scandinavians actually live, and its character, in comparative and longitudinal perspective.

This section therefore progresses in the following order. The standard measure of economic inequality is the Gini-coefficient. The first graph to be shown therefore portrays gross Gini-coefficients calculated for the working-age (18–65 years) population. The graph is therefore an expression of an attempt to adapt the standard measure of economic inequality to form a proxy for a measure of the actual level of inequality in gross wages. Because of its deviance in this respect, it will be portrayed together with a direct measure of the overall wage dispersion level: the 9<sup>th</sup>/1<sup>st</sup> deciles gross earnings ratio.

As was hinted in the introduction and in the description of the Scandinavian political economies above, the overall level of inequality is not only relevant in itself. The descriptions of the political economies of Denmark and Sweden above hinted that a crucial variable could be whether the society is perceived as dominated by conflicting classes with very different interests, or instead a myriad of crafts and professions, each with special interests needing to be reconciled. These questions might depend furthermore on the economic distance or relationship between the median earner and the top and bottom earner respectively. The overall measure of wage dispersion will therefore be disaggregated on the 9<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> deciles as well as the 5<sup>th</sup>/1<sup>st</sup> deciles (Aaberge & Atkinson, 2013).

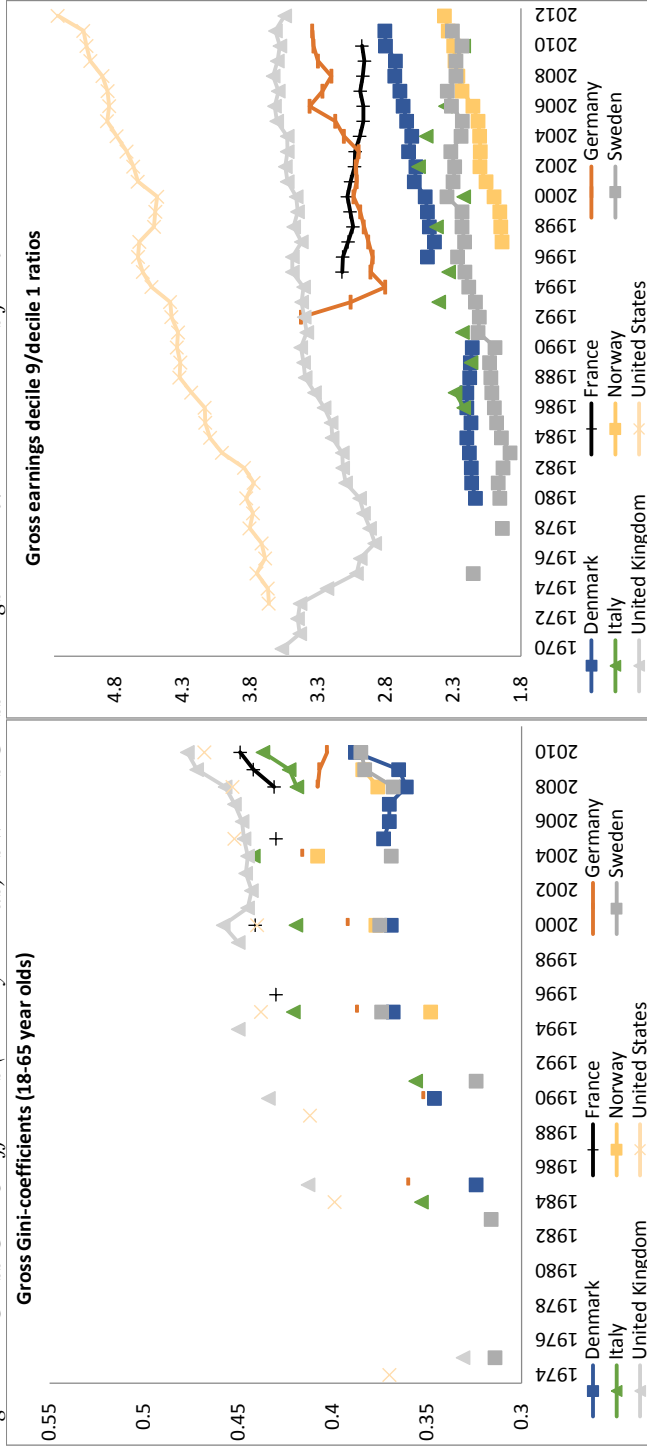
The issue of 'the rich' follows directly from the issue of the perceived strata making up the society. A subsection will therefore, by using data from the World Top Incomes Database or WTID, look at how rich the Scandinavian rich actually are in comparative and longitudinal perspective (Alvaredo, Atkinson, Piketty, & Saez, 2014; Atkinson & Piketty, 2007; Atkinson & Piketty, 2010).

This section finishes with a discussion of the development in the actual class structures of the Scandinavian countries. As seen above, several authors have emphasised the quite different roots the Danish and Swedish class structures had when they became industrial societies, and the effects of this on the class structures in this period. The section above is silent as to what happened to the Scandinavian class structures entering the post-industrial society though.

### **3.5.1. THE AGGREGATED DEVELOPMENTS IN THE LEVEL OF INEQUALITY IN GROSS WAGES**

Studies on the level of inequality in society often use the net Gini-coefficient as a benchmark. Figure 3-4 below portrays the results of an attempt to modify the Gini-coefficients to make them more or less able to measure the gross level of wage dispersion. The modified form shown here are gross Gini-coefficients calculated among the working age populations of 18–65 years. It is not a perfect measure of the gross level of wage dispersion. On the positive side, the ‘welfare-state effect’ of public benefits and transfers, as well as the ‘whole population view’ of the commonly shown net Gini-coefficient country rankings have been excluded. On the negative side, there are still a lot of students included in age groups below 30, having no or very low labour-market earnings. The same is true on the upper end of the age-scale, where many retired and especially people on early retirement benefits are present. In addition, none- labour-market or wage-related earnings like capital income or self-employed income are also included. In sum, the figure portrays a somewhat blurry approximation of the level of gross wage dispersion. Also shown below in Figure 3-5 is therefore a direct measure of wage dispersion levels in the form of the 9<sup>th</sup>/1<sup>st</sup> deciles gross earnings ratios. These are calculated on the gross earnings of full-time dependent employees (‘dependent’ means non-self-employed employees). In both cases, the same countries are included as in Figure 3-1 above.

Figure 3-3 Gross Gini-Coefficients (18-65 year olds) as well as Gross Earnings Decile 9/ Decile 1 Ratios for 1970-2012



Notes: the gross Gini-coefficients are calculated on equivalised disposable household income. It therefore includes other forms of income than earnings on the labour market. These sources include capital income and self-employed income. See 'Metadata on OECD database on income distribution and poverty'. The LFS – Decile ratios of gross earnings - dataset contains three earnings-dispersion measures: the ratio of 9<sup>th</sup>-to-1<sup>st</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>-to-5<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>-to-1<sup>st</sup>, where the ninth, fifth (or median) and first deciles are upper earnings decile limits, unless otherwise indicated, of gross earnings of full-time dependent employees (OECD, 2014a).  
 Source: www.stats.oecd.org. The data can be found under the menu Labour → Earnings → Decile Ratios of Gross Earnings as well as The OECD income distribution database (IDD) under income distribution and poverty. Data accessed February 3<sup>rd</sup> 2014.

With the reservations described above concerning the gross Gini-coefficients, it actually seems to be possible to see the proposed egalitarian effect of the IRS in Scandinavia compared to other western countries. No country in the left part of Figure 3-4 rivals the three Scandinavian countries after 1991, and among the other OECD countries not shown, only Switzerland and Iceland seem to rival the three Scandinavian countries after the year 2000, with coefficients markedly below 0.4. Going further back in time, holes in the data-series make direct comparisons difficult. In spite of this, the three Scandinavian countries are clearly among the very lowest as far back as we can trace them. Going back to 1990 and before, the Scandinavian coefficients even seemed quite a lot lower than now – around 0.3.

The direct measure of the wage dispersion levels portrayed in the right part of Figure 3-4 largely portrays a similar picture the left part. There are some significant differences though. Norway and Sweden are in recent data the two countries with the lowest ratio, around 2.3, and hence almost equal wage dispersion levels. Denmark is third lowest in the figure with a ratio of 2.8, but though they are not shown in the figure, Finland and Belgium actually have markedly lower ratios for recent years than Denmark. Denmark's ratio is therefore clearly still low, but at more or less the same level as New Zealand, Iceland, France and Greece. Actually Denmark and Norway's ratios have since the mid-1990s been rising steadily (the starting point of Norway in 1997 was as low as 1.9). The ratio in Sweden on the other hand has been quite stable since the mid-1990s. Because of these developments only Norway and Sweden can be said to have in recent years very low wage-dispersion levels in a western perspective, whereas Denmark no longer does. If we go back to the mid-1990s and before, then even if we are again troubled with gaps in the data-series, and can only make tentative conclusions, all three Scandinavian countries seemed to have exceptionally low ratios in a western perspective.

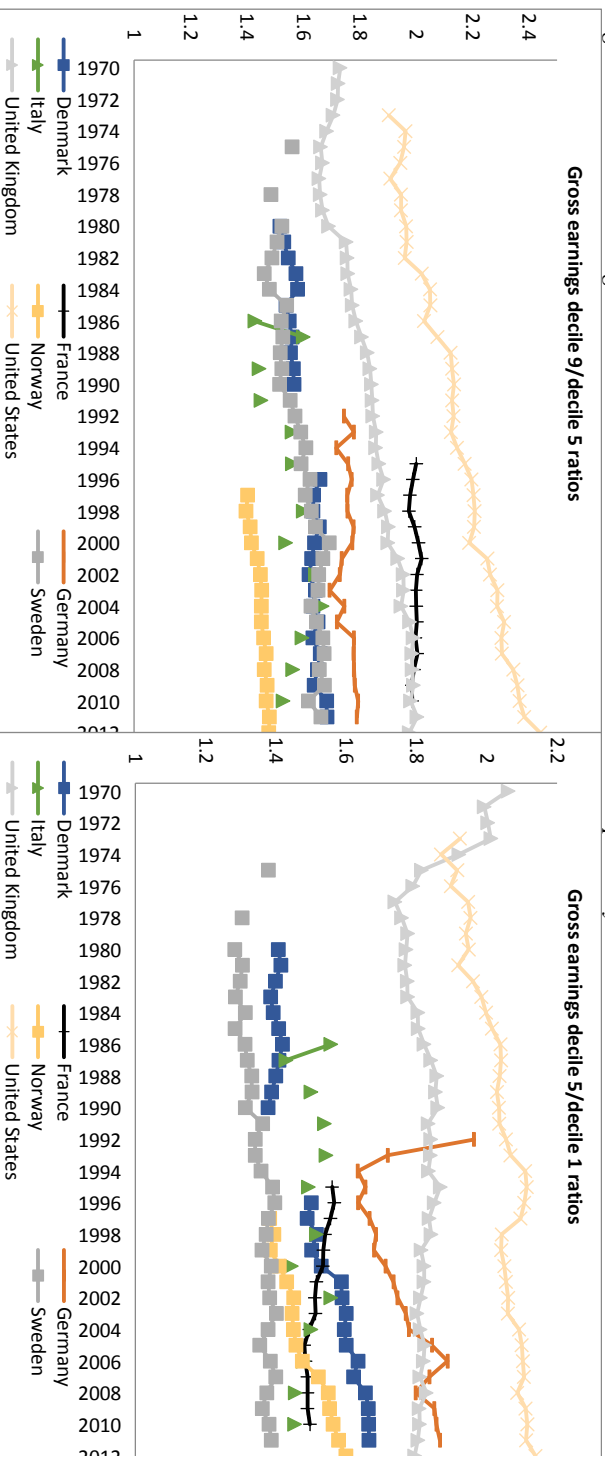
Without making staunch conclusions, the results seem to suggest that the Scandinavian industrial relations system at its peak actually seemed to produce exceptionally egalitarian overall wage-dispersion levels. The gross Gini-coefficients calculated for the working-age part of the population was around 0.3. With the gradual decline of the system, the exceptional wage-dispersion levels seemed to follow somewhat. The current coefficients below 0.4 are still very low in western comparison. As for the direct measure of wage-dispersion levels, the right side of Figure 3-4 reveals that Denmark seems to have left its egalitarian position somewhat. Especially in Denmark, but in time also in Norway, it seems the diminishing trade union density rates and the diminishing coverage of collective bargaining agreements correlate with less exceptional and less egalitarian wage-dispersion levels.



### **3.5.2. THE DISAGGREGATED DEVELOPMENTS IN THE LEVEL OF INEQUALITY IN GROSS WAGES**

In this subsection, the wage-dispersion levels will be disaggregated on the relationship between the median earner and the top and bottom decile respectively. It is important to investigate whether the rising overall tendencies in Norway and especially Denmark are caused by the richer strata increasing their earnings dramatically or conversely, whether the poorer strata left behind, and also obviously how this compares to the development in other western countries. These questions obviously state something about the ability of the Scandinavian IRS to maintain their historically egalitarian character. Together with the development in the political economies described above, these factual developments should form a reservoir from which stereotypes, narratives and perceptions of the social constitutions can form in the minds of the Scandinavians and hence influence their attitudes towards the level of inequality in gross wages.

Figure 3-4 Gross Earnings Decile Ratios. The 9/5- and 5/1 Decile Ratios respectively in 1970-2012



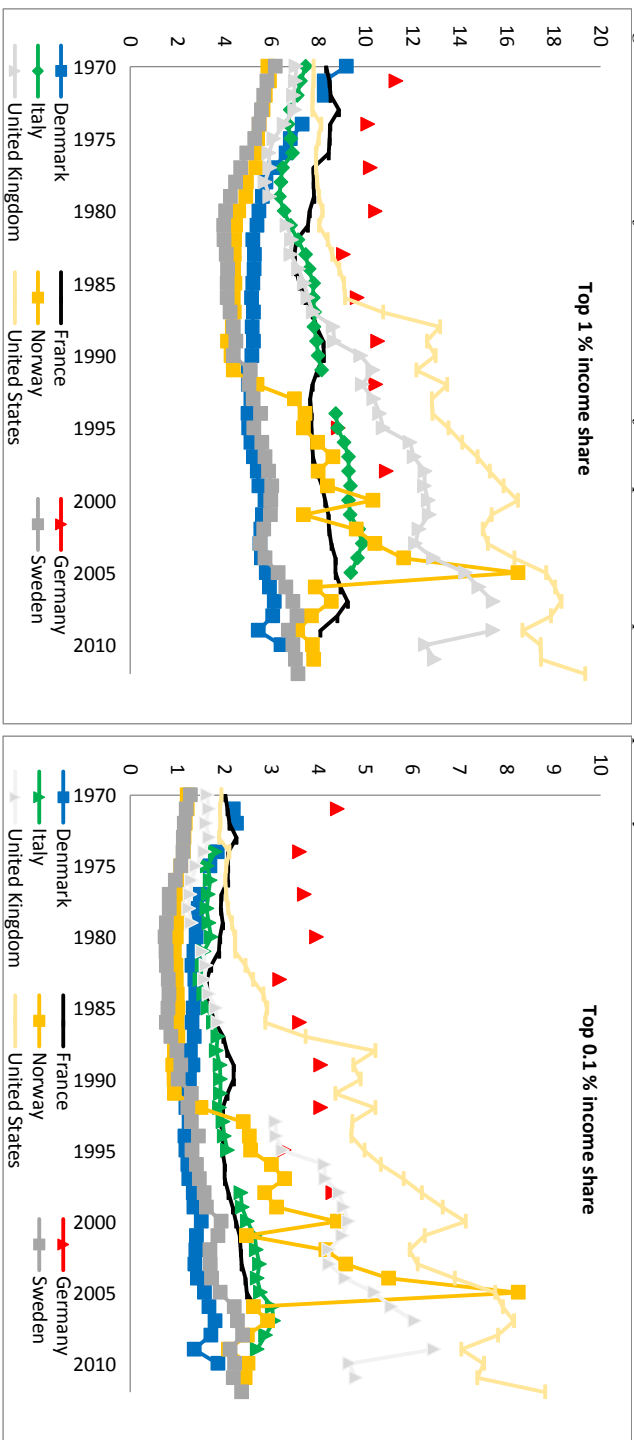
Notes: The LFS – Decile ratios of gross earnings – dataset contains three earnings-dispersion measures: ratios of 9<sup>th</sup>-to-1<sup>st</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>-to-5<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>-to-1<sup>st</sup>, where the ninth, fifth (or median) and first deciles are upper-earnings decile limits, unless otherwise indicated, of gross earnings of full-time dependent employees (OECD, 2014a).  
 Source: www.stats.oecd.org. Data can be found under the menus Labour → Earnings → Decile Ratios of Gross Earnings. Data accessed on February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2014.

The disaggregated Figure 3-5 portrays very interesting results. On the left side we see that the distance between the median and top decile earnings in Scandinavia are still markedly smaller than any other country in the table than Italy. Norway is even quite a lot more egalitarian than Denmark and Sweden throughout the period. This is rather surprising given the rather high gross Gini-coefficient obtained by Norway in 2004. Probably this difference signifies that forms of income other than labour-market income mattered more in Norway than elsewhere in the first years of the new millennium.

The right side of the figure shows that Norway and especially Denmark are less capable of keeping the cohesion between the median and bottom deciles in the last one or two decades, and the tendency is that the gap continues to grow. Both France and Italy, but surely also Sweden, portray the opposite tendency by maintaining smaller gaps. In Figures 3-4 to 3-5, the United Kingdom and especially the United States unsurprisingly show much higher degrees of inequality than all other countries portrayed.

While the increasing inequality in gross wages in Norway and especially Denmark seems to be caused more by an increased distance between the bottom and the middle, rather than an accelerating top, it remains to be seen what has happened to the really rich in society. Using data from WTID, Figure 3-5 below will portray the developments in income shares of the top 1% and top 0.1% in society.

Figure 3-5 Shares of National Income for Top 1% and Top 0.1% respectively in 1970-2012



Notes: There are several sources of biases and errors in the data above making them not 100% comparable. One of the more significant is that the definition of income and the unit of observation (the individual vs. the family) varies across countries, making comparability of levels across countries more difficult. The editors of the dataset argue that the data are fairly homogenous and comparatively comparable, though (Atkinson, Piketty, & Saez, 2011).

Source: (Alvaredo et al., 2014). Data can be found under the menu 'the database'. Data accessed on August 4<sup>th</sup>, 2014.

Taken at face value, Figure 3-6 shows again that the United Kingdom and especially United States from around 1990 clearly leave all other countries behind, with the richest 0.1% earning almost 10% of the national income in the US in 2012. The three Scandinavian countries are clearly still at the bottom except for an explosive Norwegian detour from 1993 to 2006. This detour has indeed been noticed in the existing literature. The general conclusion is that Norway in the early 1990s experienced a mix of self-reinforcing coincidences. Norway entered an economic boom around 1992. The boom was coupled with decreasing interest rates and drastically increased gains on the stock market (both dividends and capital gains in general). Furthermore, regulation of the financial markets was substantially liberalised in the period, and credit rationing was abolished. In addition, a major tax reform in 1992 significantly reduced taxes on capital incomes (Aaberge & Atkinson, 2008). The spikes of 2000 and 2005 were mainly caused by the payment of extraordinary dividends in these two years in anticipation of the pre-announced increases in the dividend tax to be implemented in 2001 and 2006 respectively (Aaberge, Atkinson, & Modalsli, 2013).

Compared to the two other Scandinavian countries, the Norwegian development from 1993 to 2005 at face value seems extraordinary. There are also some modifications to this picture, though. Aaberge & Atkinson (2008) emphasise and show that the estimated top shares inevitably differ across countries also because of differences in data sources and methods of calculation. The Swedish data from at least 1980 to 2005 do not incorporate income from capital gains as do the Norwegian. If these are added, the Swedish pattern to a greater extent resembles the Norwegian. The rise in top income shares is still markedly higher in Norway though. Capital gains are included in all Danish data in Figure 3-6, and even though the share of capital income in comparison to wage income gains for this group has clearly increased substantially, the overall income share is surprisingly stable compared to all other countries (Atkinson & Sjøgaard, 2013; Det Økonomiske Råd, 2011).

In the aggregated perspective, the three Scandinavian countries in the period from the early 1980s until today still have the lowest share of their national incomes owned by the top 1% and top 0.1% of society. The position is waning though, and countries such as France and Italy are more or less at Scandinavian levels. In the disaggregated perspective only Denmark seems to not have experienced rather sharp, but temporary, increased top income shares caused by high capital gains for a selected group of people. The temporality of these gains suggests the question whether the impact could be a perception in Scandinavian minds of a new class of emerging rich financiers, or whether conversely nothing much has actually changed in a social constructivist sense. On the other hand, the gains in time turn into inheritance, and as Munk et al. (2015) describe, this effect in Denmark is (maybe) unsurprisingly half the size of the corresponding Swedish one.

### 3.6. THE FACTUAL CLASS STRUCTURES DEVELOPING IN SCANDINAVIA

In the aggregated perspective, Figures 3-4 to 3-6 above portray the Scandinavian countries consistently maintaining a low degree of inequality in actual gross wage levels. If the overall measure of gross wage inequality is disaggregated, the Scandinavian countries furthermore reveal themselves to have consistently among the lowest gross income gaps between both the 9<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> income decile and between the 5<sup>th</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> income decile. In addition, the income share of the top 1% or 0.1% was consistently among the lowest in the Scandinavian countries.

A closer look at the figures reveals trends towards gradual declines in positions of having extraordinary high degrees of gross income equality. In addition, even if the Scandinavian countries in the aggregated perspective followed roughly the same trend, there were differences also. Denmark and to some extent Norway since the 1980s have experienced rather rapidly rising gross wage dispersion levels, caused especially by a greater gap between the 5<sup>th</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> decile. The Danish 5<sup>th</sup>/1<sup>st</sup> gross income decile ratios are in recent two decades at the same level as a number of other western countries' corresponding ratios. The income share of the top in Denmark and possibly Sweden on the other hand remains extraordinarily low and almost constant. Sweden has also managed to keep the 5<sup>th</sup>/1<sup>st</sup> gross income decile ratios extraordinarily low and almost constant since the mid-1990s. It should also be mentioned that Norway during the whole period had much lower 9<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> income decile ratios than any other country.

In contrast to the analyses above, Table 3-1 below shows that the above extensively described historical differences in the occupational class structures between especially Denmark and Sweden seem to have almost disappeared in recent decades. In transitioning from industrial to welfare, service and knowledge economies, the class structures of Denmark and Sweden have largely converged. Table 3-1 hides a fact often overlooked even in recent literature applying a class perspective. The introduction and expansion of the welfare state in especially the social democratic welfare states in Scandinavia fundamentally altered the class structure. A large proportion of the workforce in Scandinavia is now employed in different parts of the public sector. Furthermore, if a household perspective on class is applied, a clear majority of working households has at least one member employed in the public sector. For a large part of the workforce, their employers and adversaries in for example collective bargaining negotiations are now not anymore capitalists or the management and a board representing shareholders. Instead, it is a municipality, a region or the state. It is obvious that this

fundamentally changes the nature of the struggle over for example wage increases, because the ones who have to pay are other citizens via their tax bills.<sup>31</sup>

To sum up, it seems that if the patterns in the attitudes in Denmark and Sweden towards the level of inequality in gross wages are found in the present data to be very different, these differences cannot stem from differences in actual class structures in the present day. Building on the description of the development in the various components of the Scandinavian political economies described above, a number of scenarios will be deduced. These scenarios creates assumptions on which patterns can be expected to emerge in Scandinavian attitudes towards the level of inequality in gross wages and towards the presentation of ‘the rich’ in Danish and Swedish newspapers.

*Table 3-1 Economically Active Population According to Present Socio-Economic Position in the Nordic Countries, 2006*

	Denmark	Norway	Sweden
Present socio-economic position (%)			
Managers, professionals and upper white-collar workers	27	17	23
Lower white-collar workers	39	53	49
Small entrepreneurs and managers of small enterprises	3	2	1
Blue-collar workers	28	25	25
Farmers and other agricultural producers	3	3	2
Total	100	100	100
(N)	1418	1672	1783

*Source:* (Alestalo et al., 2009, table 2) European Social Survey 2006. Note: Includes only civilian employees, population over 15 years of age.

<http://www.europeansocialsurvey.org/> (February 18, 2009).

Classification (ISCO 88): Managers ... (1000-1239, 2000-3000, 3142-3144); Lower ... (3100-3141, 3145-5220); Small ... (1300, 1310, 1312, 1319); Blue-collar ... (6000, 6100, 6140-9330); Farmers ... (1311, 6110-6130).

### 3.7. SCENARIOS

This last section of Chapter 3 will, as promised, try to deduce some scenarios of how Scandinavian attitudes to the level of inequality in gross wages can be affected by the development in the various components of the Scandinavian political economy(ies). Because the media output, as argued in Chapter 2 in the dissertation,

<sup>31</sup> This can have some of the same consequences as Åberg (1984) as described above claimed demands for wage increased can have in an industrial relations system dominated by centralised collective bargaining. Wage increases for a given occupation are here judged relatively to the wage development of other occupations, which are paying relatively by lower wage increases themselves. In the case of the public sector, the payment is even more direct. Everybody pays for the wage increases of an occupation primarily employed in the public sector via their tax bill.

is seen as a way to tap the contents of the HCNI, different scenarios of how 'the rich' are likely to be presented in Danish and Swedish newspapers is therefore also crucial. As above, the section will distinguish conceptually between the aggregated and disaggregated perspective.

As described in Chapter 2, historically constructed *normative* institutions (HCNI) of the political economy are defined as a particular representation of the past, a representation that in myths, presentations and stereotypes defines 'who the others are' and in a sense also 'who we are'. They are therefore by definition inert and, although the material side of the political economy influences them through history, the myths, presentations and stereotypes concerning for example 'the rich' and the class structure of society should largely be based on a historical representation of them. They are therefore not just an unbiased description of the current social stratification of society.

The *programmatic* institutions, the material, economic conditions of society and the power and influence of central actors on the other hand do change progressively. In very simple terms, this leads to two overall scenarios. First, Scandinavians react attitudinally to the changes in the *material* aspects of the political economy. The nature of this reaction obviously depends on other factors such as the values of the Scandinavians, which is the topic of Chapter 4). The key point is that changes in the material aspects of the political economy should be traceable to the Scandinavians' attitudes. Second, if the more immaterial HCNI really is what conditions Scandinavian attitudes, then changes in the material political economy should not necessarily matter – at least in the short term. Both of these scenarios seem overly simplified though. As discussed in Chapter 2, the normative institutions of the political economy are obviously conditioned by the development in the programmatic institutions, the material conditions and the power of the influence of central actors historically. A probably more realistic version of the second scenario is therefore as follows. Although Scandinavian attitudes are seen as a function of mainly the HCNI, because these are affected by, and change slowly with the changing material side of the political economy, empirically various time lags seem likely. The first of these time lags, between the changing material aspects of the political economy, the second, between the HCNI and hence how the media represents the social stratification of society and the rich, and finally between all these changes and the actual attitudes of the Scandinavians. On the basis of these premises, scenarios that are more specific will be developed below concerning the development in Scandinavian attitudes towards the level of inequality in gross wages. There will be a distinction made between the aggregated and disaggregated perspective, and furthermore between the level and the trend. Obviously, hints of all of this are found in the final paragraphs of the various sections above.

In the *aggregated* perspective, the key assumption must be that the overall *level* of Scandinavians' attitudes to the level of inequality in gross wages must be rather egalitarian. The classic descriptions of Scandinavian political economy emphasise the 'passion for equality' characterising its institutions that are committed to a high



degree of gross and net equality. If we take the components one at a time, starting first with the institutions of the IRS, then, in spite the changes described, the institutions of the Scandinavian IRS are still characterised by a very high degrees of coordination, cooperation, governability and trade-union density rates. Second, the Scandinavian left-wings and trade-union movements – although increasingly weakened and fragmented – are still, in a comparative perspective, quite strong. Third, the Scandinavian wage-dispersion rates, and the share of national income earned by the rich, are still small in a comparative perspective. So if the historical and current legacy of the PE persists and parallels the micro-level attitudes of the Scandinavians, they must be assumed to be more egalitarian-minded than people in most other countries.

If we turn from the level to the *trend*, some changes can possibly be expected: First, the trade-union density rates are clearly declining, there is a rise in ideologically competing unions and the days of centralised collective bargaining negotiations are long gone. Second, the virtual monopoly of the Social Democrats on the cabinet has surely disappeared, and the traditional trade-union movement is struggling to maintain its influence after the collapse of formal and informal cooperative institutions. Third, the traditional working class is much reduced in size and significance, as elsewhere in the western world. In Denmark and Norway, but less in Sweden, the trend is also clearly towards wage-dispersion rates steadily closer to the OECD average. On the assumption that that Scandinavians react more directly to changes in the more material aspects of the political economy, as the first overall scenario describes, then these changes should influence Scandinavian attitudes also. It could be that they are becoming less egalitarian over time. It could also be that the Scandinavian attitudinal patterns will become less aligned to class, because the class-based organisations have also weakened.

The above chapter is also very much focussed on the *disaggregated* perspective, and especially on the differences between Denmark and Sweden. As was elaborated above, historically the PEs of Denmark and Sweden developed quite differently. The history of the *Danish* political economy in both the spheres of industrial relations and in the parliamentary sphere was one of institutionalised class compromise and consensus, maybe best described by the expression ‘consensus-democracy’. Even recent developments in the Danish PE do not seem to change this picture dramatically – except by blurring the ideological class cleavages even further. This consensual development should surely affect the presentations of the rich in the Danish HCNI. The idea of the consensus-democracy is basically that the society is not constituted of a few social classes with diverging interests, but instead of a great number of sectorial groups, each with their interests to be bridged in compromises. As was hinted in sections 1.4 and 2.2 and will be elaborated further in Chapter 7, this legacy – and very recent heritage – should lead the Danish media to not present the rich as a very distinct group at all, but rather as part of the broad range of groups making up the middle class. If all of this translates into Danish attitudes towards the level of inequality in gross wages, they should to a great extent be consensual across social classes. Therefore even if Danish attitudes

towards the level of inequality in gross wages are mostly conditioned by the present and more material changes in the political economy, an egalitarian, but non-cleavaged attitudinal pattern is to be expected.

In *Sweden* the situation is quite different. The historical legacy of the political economy in Sweden is to a greater extent than in Denmark one of ideological class struggles in the IRS as well as in the parliamentary sphere. While the events of especially the 1980s can be seen as a revival of an even more open class struggle, the outcome in the last couple of decades are maybe signs of a divergence from the ideological, class-struggle path. Crucially, both the Swedish IRS and the interplay between central actors in the parliamentary sphere over time seem to move more and more in the Danish direction. This means, first, fewer ideological differences in the parliamentary sphere concerning the management of the economy and welfare state, as well as the distribution of resources in society. It secondly means a more decentralised, yet highly institutionalised and coordinated IRS. Both the media output, but also Swedish attitudes are therefore to a greater extent at a watershed than they are in Denmark. The Swedish HCNI could still be influenced by the still quite recent legacy of a quite vivid class struggle. It therefore seems likely that the Swedish media might still be influenced by this overall societal image in presenting the social stratification of society and the place of the rich in it. Because of the lag described above, it is more an empirical question, whether Swedish attitudes to the level of inequality in gross wages will be mostly influenced by the historical ideological class legacy, or by the more recent developments. If Swedish attitudes, in accordance with the second overall scenario, are still mostly dominated by the HCNI, they could be still more dominated by ideological differences in attitudes, broadly following the 'old' social classes of society. If they instead – in accordance with the first overall scenario – start with some lag to parallel the more recent developments in the Swedish PE, Swedish attitudes should to an ever greater extent gradually become consensual across social classes, as the corresponding Danish attitudes is assumed to be.

It should be mentioned that there is also a third possibility: that attitudes towards the level of inequality in gross wages somehow stem directly from the changes in actual wage-dispersion levels and actual class structures. However, as argued already above, the Scandinavian levels do not seem that different on the various measures in Figures 3-4 to 3-6 and Table 3.1, although the trend is somewhat different. It therefore seems that, if the patterns of attitudes in Denmark and Sweden towards the level of inequality in gross wages are found in the present data to be very different, these differences cannot stem from differences in actual class structures in the present day.

Chapter 3 dealt with the key issue of the political economies of Scandinavia, and how they can be expected to influence Scandinavian attitudes to the level of inequality in gross wages. This corresponds to the 'hat' and the arrows leading from the hat to the media rectangle and from there to the attitudinal ellipse in the bottom of Figure 2-2. The next logical step is then to focus on the contents of this ellipse

and ask questions such as: How can we measure attitudes to the level of inequality in gross wages? What are then the properties of the measure we end up with, and what should we take into consideration when interpreting the results? The topic of Chapter 4 is therefore theoretically and empirically to seek answers to these key methodological questions concerning the dependent variable of the dissertation.

# CHAPTER 4. MEASURING ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE LEVEL OF INEQUALITY IN GROSS WAGES

This chapter will deal with the most central methodological issue of the dissertation – how can we measure attitudes towards the level of inequality in gross wages? What are then the properties of the measure we do end up with, and what should we take into consideration when interpreting the results? The section starts out theoretically by reviewing existing literature on the relationship between values, attitudes and opinions expressed in surveys. In this section, a number of claims concerning the measure derived will be made. In the second part of this section, it is tried empirically both to test some of the claims made in the theoretical review and also more generally to investigate the properties of two possible measures of our main dependent variable. Finally, in the third part, the crucial relationship between factual views or perception of an average wage level for a given occupation, and the normative opinions and attitudes towards the same will be investigated.

The general argument of the chapter is that no quantitative measures of attitudes towards the level of inequality in gross wages can be viewed as completely absolute, in the sense that they measure exactly the same across countries and time. This should come as no surprise, because of the CR-inspired complex and contextual ontology of the dissertation described in Chapter 2. The attitudinal patterns thus form and are influenced by the characteristics of the relevant macro-level structures prevailing in a given context at a given time. It will be argued that what is later labelled the more *absolute* measure suits our purpose better than what will be labelled the *relative measure*, in being, as the label implies, more absolute. The experimental results of section 4.3 show that even for this more absolute measure, respondents' answers depend greatly on their perceptions of the actual levels of inequality in gross wages. These perceptions therefore form a crucial 'mental anchor' which can be manipulated by the researcher in experiments. In the real world they depend on the influence of the macro-level structures of the dual-functioning political economy described in Chapter 2-3. The experimental results will also show that even if respondents' expressed attitudes towards the level of inequality in gross wages depend on their perceptions of the actual level of inequality in gross wages, they do not simply extrapolate from what people 'do earn' to what they 'should earn'. Instead, and especially when provoked or given surprising information, respondents seem to reflect and take a clear attitudinal stand on the issue of just wages. This fits well with the notion of humans having a reflective potential which can be activated, but is not utilised in every situation, as described in Chapter 2. In more detail, the first section deals with the existing literature on values, attitudes and opinions expressed in surveys. It will be argued

that the central dependent variable at the same time features two important and at first glance contradictory properties. First, it is suited to measuring norms at the macro (societal and group) level, and second, it can be expected to be more volatile over time than stable fundamental values the individual is supposed to internalise by the socialisation of primary and secondary socialisation agents, after which these should remain rather stable through time. This last property is crucial in order to be able to identify cracks or changes in the supposedly egalitarian normative foundation of the Scandinavian populaces that legitimises the Scandinavian model. If a variable that measures stable, fundamental values was used, then in principle changes should be expected between generations, but this is too long a period to encapsulate much effect from the changes in the PEs over the last couple of decades, as described in Chapter 3. Some analyses in Chapter 6 will disaggregate attitudes towards the level of inequality in gross wages between generations to test for this possibility, though.

The second section is mainly empirical. To measure attitudes towards the level of inequality in gross wages, a specific set of items from the Social Inequality Module of the International Social Survey Program (ISSP - 1987, 1992, 1999 and 2009) was recoded and used as the dependent variables throughout most survey-oriented analyses of the dissertation. With such a rather narrow selection of dependent variable, it was found crucial already at this early stage of the dissertation to thoroughly discuss and empirically investigate the consequences of choosing this measure, its relation to other measures and concepts, as well as to conduct robustness checks to validate the results. The third section, investigating the relationship to the factual views or perceptions of the level of inequality in gross wages, can be seen to be perhaps the most central of the robustness checks of the dependent variable.

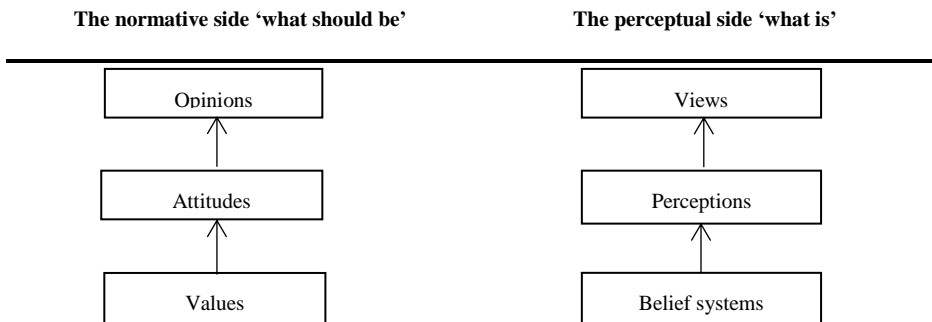
#### **4.1. VALUES, ATTITUDES, OPINIONS AND GROUP THINKING**

The dissertation investigates attitudes, or rather opinions, expressed in surveys. A great deal of literature deals with the relation between, at the highest or most abstract level, belief systems and fundamental values, and then, perceptions and attitudes, and finally, views and opinions expressed by individuals in surveys. Notice also that on each level there is a clear distinction between *norms* and *perceptions*. At the highest abstract level, *belief systems* for example signify an individual-level ontology or assumptions about *what* the reality consists of, while *fundamental values* signify fundamental ideas of what the individual *wishes* the reality should consist of (Shamshiri-Petersen, 2010). According to Shamshiri-Petersen (2010), many attitudinal researchers fail to distinguish these concepts or to draw the right conclusions concerning the level of internal and external validity that a given empirical investigation based on such a distinction has. The following section will therefore first try to keep this dissertation from falling into this conceptual trap. The section will, secondly, try to develop ideas on how we can

interpret our dependent variables and the empirical results later in the dissertation, and suggest how we can test some of these ideas methodologically.

Three overall arguments will be put forward in this section. First, the concepts above are not synonyms for the same thing. Even if the lines between the concepts are blurred and it is debatable whether you can measure values, attitudes or even just opinions in surveys, there is at least in principle a clear distinction and a hierarchy between the concepts. Second, for a number of reasons, it is not the hope to measure abstract values, but ‘only’ attitudes in this dissertation. Lastly, even if it is claimed that the more volatile attitudes, instead of the very stable values are being measured, a similar claim is that the main dependent variable is well suited for measuring norms at the group level where they are very much influenced by opinion leaders. The section starts out with a few demarcations of some of the concepts introduced above. As mentioned, at least at an ideal-typical level the existing literature describes a hierarchical relationship between the concepts mentioned above in relation to the level of abstraction and stability over time:

*Figure 4-1 The Ideal-Typical Relationship between Values, Attitudes and Opinions as well as Belief Systems, Perceptions and Views*



Sources: Modified, but inspired by: (Olsen, 2008, p. 51; Shamshiri-Petersen, 2010, p. 48)

There seems to be agreement that the lines between the different levels of the two hierarchies as well as between norms and perceptions are blurred. However, in maintaining the conceptual demarcations, what is important in our case are the differences in the formation and stability of the norms and perceptions at the various levels.

At the most abstract level, values and belief systems are supposed to share two important characteristics. Firstly, they are often viewed as formed mainly in the *primary* and *secondary* socialisation processes of childhood. The most important socialisation agents are therefore the family as well as pre-school and primary school institutions. After the primary and secondary socialisation processes are

over, values and belief systems are, secondly, argued to remain quite stable at the individual level through time (Shamshiri-Petersen, 2010). Value- and belief-system *change* therefore can be expected to be very slow and occur basically between generations. Value- and belief-system *variation* can be expected between cultures and societies or subcultures within a society that experience different primary and secondary socialisation processes.

Attitudes and perceptions – on the second level of abstraction – are, as the arrows indicate, influenced by abstract values and belief systems. They are however also to a great extent argued to be influenced by *tertiary* socialisation agents, as for example the images the media produce as well as new personal experiences or the experiences of people proximate to you. Another way of putting this is that attitudes and perceptions are steadily reproduced, and as indicated in the research question of the dissertation, changes in the reproduction pattern of attitudes are in principle likely. *Changes* in attitudes and perception are therefore in principle expected to be much more frequent than value-changes. *Variation* can be expected on many levels, but obviously people exposed to different media outputs, opinion leaders, experiences and experiences of people proximate to them can be expected to have varied attitudes and perceptions to a given object or subject (Baumberg et al., 2013; Hedegaard, 2014a; Hedegaard, 2014b; Shamshiri-Petersen, 2010). This point will be qualified and elaborated below. A return to the lowest level of abstraction – opinions and views expressed in surveys and their relation to the other concepts – will also be made here. Before that, another conceptual hierarchy will be introduced.

Kumlin (2007) introduces the following hierarchy of abstraction levels in attitudes to redistribution and the welfare state. One can further separate each level into different dimensions, objects and aspects:

1. General welfare-state support
2. Specific policy preferences about various aspects or parts of the welfare state
3. Specific evaluations of welfare-state performance

Kumlin's (2007) conceptual hierarchy is based on a review of existing studies on the subject of welfare-state and redistribution attitudes. Therefore the inspiration seems mainly to be the actual empirical results of existing studies and the various types of survey measures actually applied in existing international surveys. Another way of putting it is that Kumlin's (2007) model is an empirical and practical construct, while the model presented in Figure 4-1 above was mainly a theoretical one.

Much research has been conducted on abstract questions of 'general welfare-state support'. Taking the results as face value the general finding is that there is a surprisingly consistently stable, high degree of general welfare state support in western countries over time. Within the countries, trends and variations correlate

most with changes in the economic cycle and the ideological positions of respondents respectively (Kumlin, 2007; Svallfors, 2010). The relatively high level of stability over time seems to be in accordance with what was expected of the abstract values and belief systems in Figure 4-1 above.

These ‘face value’ interpretations have been and can be easily criticised though. A hint of this is that even if the overall differences in levels of the various measures have been rather stable through time in the western countries, the results have appeared somewhat mysterious. For example, dimensions that were expected to correlate do not correlate at all – and various attempts to explain the patterns in consistent ways have not been overly convincing (Kumlin, 2007; Svallfors, 2010).<sup>32</sup>

Two overall interpretations can be made of these results. First, as Svallfors (2010), one can claim there is something wrong in the way our investigations are handled. Our theorising and operationalising of both independent and dependent variables are not good enough; or, our methods and data are not good enough, and so forth. These arguments surely cannot just be dismissed, but there is maybe also a problem in using survey measures as abstract as the ones used in this tradition.

It is an often-heard critique of the survey method in social sciences that the respondents’ answers to some extent reflect the norms of society, and not their actual personal attitudes. Acting according to a logic of appropriateness, the respondents seek to please the interviewer by giving *satisficing* answers that match the norms and values of the society. Experimental results suggest that this ‘social desirability bias’ is especially prominent regarding very general and abstract questions, such as the ones under scrutiny here (Goul Andersen & Nielsen, 2006; Lolle & Goul Andersen, 2013; Olsen, 1998; Szirmai, 1991).

As Kumlin (2007) rather implicitly seems to suggest, to understand welfare-state attitudes and especially attitudes relevant to actual policies, there are clearly advantages moving down the latter of abstraction. Because the subject in the dissertation is not attitudes to the welfare state, the ‘specific policy preferences’ will not concern aspects or parts of the welfare state, but rather specific preferences for the level of inequality in gross wages.

If the two conceptual hierarchies above are somewhat equated, the second abstraction-level concept of specific preferences for the level of inequality in gross wages should also share the properties of attitudes and perceptions described above. Attitudes should be more volatile because they are steadily produced and

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<sup>32</sup> For example, testing whether different material or objective cleavage structures in the different welfare regimes, which should manifest themselves in differences in attitudinal structures, could explain the patterns (Kumlin, 2007; Svallfors, 2003; Svallfors, 1997; Svallfors, 2010).



reproduced by tertiary socialisation agents such as the media and opinion leaders as well as personal experiences and experiences of proximate people.

There are also reasons to modify the assumptions of individual volatility in this particular case though. Existing research suggest that on issues related to the distribution of incomes, social cleavages and social class in society, people's attitudes often reflect less volatile 'group-thinking', than the case is on attitudes to other issues where individual reflections on the inputs described above play a larger role (Kumlin, 2007; Svallfors, 2010).

The obvious question is then who and what are driving the groups' thinking then? Existing studies suggest that the historical articulation of social cleavages in a given context (HCNI) as well as the existing institutional character of the welfare state, and we could add the whole of the political economy, serves a double function. First, it affects the extent to which opinion leaders or the elite-level class think about and politicise issues related to social cleavages, social class and redistribution at all. Second, the historical and contextual background then forms a basis or a reservoir of narratives (the HCNI), from which opinion leaders or the elite-level class to varying extents can articulate and politicise these issues (Kumlin, 2007; Svallfors, 2010). In addition:

'...such interests may be articulated and disseminated by political attentive 'opinion leaders' within social groups, rather than being calculated separately by each individual, based on independently gathered information' (Kumlin, 2007, p. 370).

Obvious candidates for 'opinion leaders' driving attitudes towards the level of inequality in gross wages are political leaders and leaders of trade unions. It also seems crucial how they express themselves concerning these issues in the media. As discussed in section 2.2.1, the media therefore mediates the influence between the macro-level structures and especially the HCNI and the micro-level attitudes of the Scandinavians. Obviously the various opinion leaders just mentioned are key actors in this process, as well as in the reciprocal process from micro to macro indicated in Figure 2-2.

Therefore there are good reasons to believe that measures of specific preferences for the level of inequality in gross wages are suitable for two things. First, measuring norms and perceptions at the group level, and second, they can be expected to be more volatile over time than stable fundamental values and belief systems the individual is supposed to internalise by way of the primary and secondary socialization agents, after which they should remain rather stable over time.

In the section below we will try to empirically and methodologically investigate some of the forecasts of this section. One of the often-used dependent variables in the tradition of *general welfare-state support*, measuring attitudes towards the level

of economic inequality in society, will first be investigated. This measure – which will later be called the *relative measure* – is exactly such an abstract and general question. In the following subsection, it will be argued and shown that this measure is affected by many of the problems implicit above. These deliver counter-intuitive results and exhibit a social desirability bias. In addition, the intra-country variation forms a clear and reliable factor with other classical questions on the economic right-left scale of politics of the role of government towards unemployed and poor as well as questions about tax levels. The measure therefore largely seems to reflect respondents' general ideologico-economic standpoint and socially desirable norms, instead of 'independent' attitudes to redistribution – whatever that means. It should be mentioned that obviously these characteristics are not necessarily negative per se. Depending on what the aim of a given research project is, these disadvantages can be advantages in other instances. The results do suggest though that it is important to be more cautious, when interpreting patterns of this variable, than has usually been the case in research having this measure as the key dependent variable.

For sure, respondents' answers to the *relative* measure do not reflect their attitudes to the gross level of economic inequality in society, the subject of the dissertation. With another, more *absolute* measure that we introduce, on the other hand, the respondent can be 'tricked' to give his/her opinion on a quite general and abstract concept, answering a very concrete question. Again, following the suggestions of this section, we will investigate whether this less abstract measure is less hampered by the disadvantages that the relative measure has in our case. Also, by using data from survey-experiments as well as different survey items in regular ISSP surveys, the relation between norms and perceptions of the gross level of economic inequality in society – and how it is actually possible to interpret respondents' answers to these survey-items – will be investigated.

## **4.2. INTRODUCING TWO POSSIBLE DEPENDENT VARIABLES**

The ISSP has become a standard data source for comparative attitudinal research, and the ISSP 2009 dataset forms the most recent, comprehensive and yet unexplored basis available for the cross-national analysis of comparable data on attitudes towards gross wages. Data from the ISSP's Social Inequality module I–IV from 1987, 1992, 1999 and 2009 will therefore be used in the remaining quantitative analyses of the dissertation.

As Osberg & Smeeding (2006) argue the most straightforward way to investigate people's attitudes towards income- or wage-inequality is asking them directly. Often the right questions are not present in the surveys, researchers then use proxies or try indirectly to measure a concept, but this is actually not the case here. In the Social Inequality module of ISSP as well as numerous other surveys, the statement

is proposed: *'Differences in income in <country> are too large'*.<sup>33</sup> The result is an ordinal scaled variable with the answer categories 'Strongly agree, Agree, Neither agree nor disagree, Disagree and Strongly disagree'. This means the higher you score, the less egalitarian in principle you are. Table 4-1 below ranks the western countries participating in the various Social Inequality Modules of ISSP on the measure, which we henceforth call the *relative* measure.

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<sup>33</sup> The question is also posed in the 'Role of Government' modules of ISSP as well as a number of Eurobarometer surveys (Larsen 2006, p. 35).

Table 4-1 Country Mean Scores and Standard Deviations in Brackets on the Relative Measure: 'Differences in income in <country> are too large' in ISSP 1987, 1992, 1999 and 2009

	1987	1992	1999	2009
Australia	2.48 (1.01)	<b>2.40 (1.14)</b>	<b>2.49 (1.39)</b>	<b>2.48 (0.97)</b>
USA	2.47 (1.04)	2.38 (1.02)	2.35 (0.85)	<b>2.40 (1.26)</b>
Netherlands	2.38 (1.07)	<b>2.25 (1.02)</b>	2.24 (1.03)	2.31 (1.01)
Switzerland	2.27 (0.93)	2.19 (1.00)	2.24 (0.89)	2.27 (1.11)
Germany	2.12 (0.95)	2.11 (1.01)	2.24 (1.07)	2.24 (1.12)
Great Britain	2.10 (0.96)	2.08 (0.96)	2.23 (0.86)	2.14 (0.97)
Hungary	1.96 (1.05)	1.95 (0.98)	<b>2.21 (0.98)</b>	2.12 (1.03)
Poland	1.85 (1.03)	1.93 (0.84)	2.15 (0.88)	2.09 (0.95)
Italy	1.76 (0.85)	1.92 (0.92)	<b>2.13 (1.00)</b>	<b>2.07 (1.00)</b>
Austria	1.69 (0.81)	1.91 (0.91)	New Zealand	Great Britain
		1.82 (0.91)	Spain	Spain
		1.80 (0.94)	Poland	Switzerland
		1.74 (0.92)	Austria	Switzerland
		1.63 (0.95)	Slovenia	Czech Rep.
		1.62 (0.79)	East Germany	Iceland
		1.43 (0.57)	Czech Rep.	Poland
		1.22 (0.62)	France	Austria
			Latvia	Switzerland
			Hungary	Poland
			Slovakia	Czech Rep.
			Russia	Austria
			Portugal	Switzerland
			Bulgaria	Switzerland
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In spite of the presence of this item in numerous surveys and the fact that it seems the most direct measure of the concept of attitudes towards redistribution or net income-inequality (not necessarily the level of inequality in gross wages), good arguments exist of why not to use it in the analyses of this dissertation. A main critique of this ordinal-scaled item is that it has a *relative* bias. It is clearly less obvious for a person to give a confirmatory answer to the question in the Scandinavian countries than in most other countries. Here the actual level of net income-inequality is, as we have seen in section 3.5, very low by comparative standards (Gordon Marshall, Swift, Routh, & Burgoyne, 1999; Larsen, 2006; Osberg & Smeeding, 2006; Svallfors, 2006). Because higher scores in Table 4-2 above mean less egalitarian attitudes, then as we can see, the Scandinavian attitudes measured by this question therefore often seem surprisingly anti-egalitarian compared to other western countries (Evans, 1996; Larsen, 2006; Lübker, 2004; Osberg & Smeeding, 2006). This can also be seen as an example of a counterintuitive result argued to be widespread in abstract measures of ‘general welfare-state support’ in the section above: it just seems unlikely that Scandinavians, living in equality-enhancing institutional contexts, in absolute terms, dislike economic inequality less than people in most other western countries do.

The measure mentioned above: ‘*What do you think people in these jobs ought to be paid, regardless of what they actually get...?*’, can be argued, though not to the same degree, to have this relative bias. The question is posed for a number of different occupations in the different Social Inequality modules of ISSP.<sup>34</sup> It can be transformed into a more *absolute* measure of attitudes towards the level of inequality in gross wages. Many of the factors influencing the *relative* measure can thus be argued to be kept more constant (Larsen, 2006; Osberg & Smeeding, 2006).

The first of these factors is, that the effect of the actual level of income-inequality in a country, which hampers the relative measure, is kept quite constant. A respondent’s opinion on what an unskilled factory worker ought to earn is not at the outset connected to the actual level or development of income-inequality in the respondent’s country. This does not mean that contextual factors, and especially the perceived level of wages for the same occupations, are not important influences on the attitudes reported in the more absolute measure.

A *second*, related advantage is that the welfare state is more out of the picture in the more absolute measure. The reason is that the question concerns attitudes towards gross wages and not attitudes towards the net distribution of income. The *relative* measure on the contrary could be interpreted as a proxy for an ideological position

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<sup>34</sup> In Social Inequality module round I and II from 1987 and 1992, the question was posed regarding eleven different occupations that varied marginally between the rounds. In the third round from 1999, the number of occupations was reduced to nine. In the recent fourth round from 2009, the number of professions was further reduced to five (ISSP Research Group, 2002; ISSP Research Group, 2011; Osberg & Smeeding, 2006).

on the economic right-left scale of politics, heavily influenced by one's views on the role of government (Kumlin, 2007; Larsen, 2006). A confirmatory answer to the question can thus also be interpreted as a proxy for a political or ideological statement, also correlating with positive attitudes towards the welfare state, taxes and redistribution in general.

The results of a factor-analysis and reliability test in Table 5-8 in section 5.2.2.2 below seems to confirm this assumption. This analysis shows that all six items of the batteries of Q6 and Q7a-b<sup>35</sup> in the ISSP 2009 source questionnaire correlate strongly in a factor analysis and reliability test (ISSP Research Group, 2011). They form a clear and reliable factor with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.637. These items all tap classical questions on the economic right-left scale of politics about the role of government towards unemployed and poor as well as questions about the tax level.

Thus in accordance with Kumlin's (2007) review, this indicates that when respondents answer answering the more relative question, the underlying basis is to a great extent their ideological position on the economic right-left scale, and maybe especially in regard to the role of government. This again relates to the argument made above that the relative measure is hampered by its abstractness. Moving down the ladder of abstraction, using the more *absolute* measure on the other hand, the respondent is 'tricked' into giving his/her opinion on a quite general and abstract concept in answer to a very concrete question. As Szirmai (1991) points out, the risk of 'socially desirable responses' is clearly minimised by using the more absolute measure. Again it should be emphasised that the disadvantages mentioned here concerning the relative measure could be advantages in other research projects. Researchers have to be aware of this and careful how they interpret the results therefore.

*Finally*, the absolute measure is very versatile. It can be manipulated and adapted in many ways – all giving insight into different aspects of attitudes towards wages (Svallfors, 2004, p. 82). The analyses below will make good use of this advantage and adapt the measure to be able to tap four distinct dimensions of attitudes towards wages: *levels of gross wages for different occupations, the level of inequality in gross wages and degree of justice in levels of gross wages for different occupations, and consensus*. The main emphasis is of course on the second dimension: *the level of inequality in gross wages*. Only for the operationalisation of the dimension – the degree of justice in levels of gross wages for different occupations – will another survey item also be used. This resembles the more absolute measure, only '*should earn*' is switched to '*actually earn*'.

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<sup>35</sup> When referring to specific questions in the ISSP 2009 survey. See the source questionnaire in Appendix C (ISSP Research Group, 2011).

#### 4.2.1. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE RELATIVE AND ABSOLUTE MEASURE AT THE MICRO AND MACRO LEVELS

In spite of the arguments for what above is called the more absolute measure, it is relevant to investigate its connection to the relative measure. In Table 4-2 below, the more absolute measure has been used to create a measure of attitudes to the level of inequality in gross wages. This absolute measure will be the most often used as dependent variable in the survey-analyses of the dissertation. The general idea is that, because the respondents are asked their opinion about a number of different occupations, we can get measures of how much more they think some professions should earn beyond what others should earn. In this version we measure how much more the respondents think chairmen of large national corporations should earn than shop assistants or unskilled factory workers. In the table below, we simply correlate it with the relative measure at the individual or micro level.

*Table 4-2 The Individual Level (Micro) Correlation between the Relative Measure of Attitudes to Income Inequality and our suggestion of a more Absolute Measure of Attitudes to the Level of Inequality in Gross Wages in ISSP 1987, 1992, 1999 and 2009*

		Correlation (unstandardized)	Pearson's r	Standard error
1987	All countries	0.971***	0.133	0.068
1992	All countries	1.006***	0.057	0.127
	NO	0.329***	0.264	0.033
	SE	0.507***	0.376	0.050
1999	All countries	0.399***	0.035	0.059
	DK	0.286***	0.183	0.041
	NO	0.135***	0.128	0.024
	SE	0.981***	0.311	0.068
2009	All countries	0.818***	0.017	0.234
	DK	0.293	0.031	0.261
	NO	0.311	0.044	0.194
	SE	0.757***	0.136	0.176

*Notes.* The index of the more absolute measure are created by taking the individual-level statements of how much the respondent thinks a chairman of a large national corporation should earn. This score is then divided by the average of the score of the lower-level occupation: a shop assistant and an unskilled factory worker. In 1992 the shop assistant is not in the index, because there was no question regarding this occupation in Sweden that year. In general, people do not seem to distinguish much between these two occupations. The measure and results for 1992 should therefore be comparable to the other years. All values for this variable over 1000 have been set as missing.

\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ . 1987: N (national level) = 9, n (individual level) = 11,404. 1992: N (national level) = 17, n (individual level) = 19,088. 1999: N (national level) = 27, n (individual level) = 36,655. 2009: N (national level) = 38, n (individual level) = 43,646. Author's own calculations.

*Sources:* the Social Inequality Module (I-IV – 1987, 1992, 1999 and 2009) of the International Social Survey Program (ISSP).

Table 4-2 shows that the relative and the more absolute measures of attitudes towards the level of inequality in gross wages, in general as well as in the Scandinavian countries, correlate at the individual level in the four datasets. All correlations are also positive, which is the expected direction. It means that the more people disagree that the income differences in the respondent's country are too large, the more on average people will also tend to accept bigger wage gaps between chairmen of large national corporations and unskilled factory workers/shop assistants. The size of the correlations as measured by Pearson's  $r$  is in most cases not overwhelmingly strong though, and the correlations of Denmark and Norway in 2009 are not even significant, which seems to be caused mostly by high standard errors.

The results seem to suggest that, as expected, we are dealing with two distinctly different measures. It is worth noticing that the strength of the correlation is not the same in all instances. Especially the Swedish correlations are quite strong in 1992, 1999 and 2009, whereas the Danish and Norwegian correlations in general are weaker than the overall inter-country correlations. As we will return to below, this could be because one effect of politicising the matter of wages is a stronger correlation with the relative measure, signifying a respondent's economic, political position.

The same kind of positive correlation at the macro- or country level is not expected though. This is because the relative measure was argued above to have a stronger relative 'bias', from the existing level of income inequality. In Table 4-3 below, this thesis is investigated by aggregating the means of the two variables of Table 4-2 and correlating them.



*Table 4-3 The Country Level (Macro) Correlation between the Relative Measure of Attitudes to Income Inequality and our suggestion of a more Absolute Measure of Attitudes to the Level of Inequality in Gross Wages in ISSP 1987, 1992, 1999 and 2009*

		Correlation (unstandardized)	Pearson's r	Standard error
1987	All countries	4.216***	0.480	0.061
1992	All countries	-0.802***	-0.098	0.054
1999	All countries	-2.089***	-0.244	0.038
2009	All countries	-1.233***	-0.030	0.179

*Notes.* The index of the more absolute measure are created by taking the individual-level statements of how much the respondent thinks a chairman of a large national corporation should earn. This score is then divided by the average of the score of the lower-level occupation: a shop assistant and an unskilled worker in a factory. For 1992 the shop assistant is not in the index because there was no question regarding this occupation in Sweden that year. In general, people do not seem to distinguish much between these two occupations. The measure and results of 1992 should therefore be comparable to the other years. All values on this variable over 1000 have been set as missing before aggregating.

The means of the relative and the more absolute measure have been aggregated.

\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ . 1987: N (national level) = 10, n (individual level) = 15,982. 1992: N (national level) = 18, n (individual level) = 22,876. 1999: N (national level) = 29, n (individual level) = 46,607. 2009: N (national level) = 38, n (individual level) = 53,155. Author's own calculations.

*Sources:* the Social Inequality Module (I-IV – 1987, 1992, 1999 and 2009) of the International Social Survey Program (ISSP).

With the exception of 1987, and with the strength of the correlations varying quite a lot in the other three surveys, we find the inverse relationship between the relative and the more absolute measure on the macro level in Table 4-3, from what we found in the micro-level analysis of Table 4-2.<sup>36</sup> A closer look at the corresponding scatterplots actually reveals that three clear outliers among the 10 countries, in this dataset, actually cause the positive correlation in 1987 (USA, Hungary and Poland). If those are left out of the analysis, the tendency among the remaining seven countries is clearly a negative correlation. The same is to some extent true for 1992, creating a weaker negative correlation than it could have been. For 1999 and 2009 there are also outliers and for 2009, some are very large. The amount of countries in these datasets is large enough for them not to affect the trend-line dramatically, though the extreme outliers for 2009 do manage to make the correlation for 2009 much weaker than for 1999.

This result clearly seems to confirm the idea of a stronger relative bias existing in the relative measure than in the more absolute measure. While the relative measure might still be good at capturing variation in attitudes towards net income inequality between individuals within a country – attitudes which are strongly correlated with attitudes to the role of government – the relative bias seems so strong that the

<sup>36</sup> The results could therefore be seen as an example of the phenomenon known as the atomistic/ecological fallacy phenomenon, which concerns having data at one level – micro or macro – and making conclusions at another level – again micro or macro – which could obviously be misleading (Hox, 2010, p. 3).

measure seems quite poor at validly capturing between-country variations in attitudes to the same.<sup>37</sup>

To sum up: *First*, it is an obvious ascertainment that the relative measure conceptually should not measure attitudes to the level of inequality in gross wages, but rather attitudes to net income inequality in general, and is therefore not suitable for the dissertation. *Second*, the empirical results in the section above suggest that there are other good reasons to use a more absolute measure, instead of the relative measure, in the forthcoming analyses of the dissertation: First, the relative measure clearly seems to be more ‘biased’ by the existing level of income inequality in the countries. The Scandinavians therefore appear quite anti-egalitarian in Table 4-1, but this does not mean that they wish in *absolute* terms for a less narrow level of inequality in gross wages than many of the South- or East-European countries at the bottom of the table. Second, the relative measure correlates suspiciously strongly with items measuring the extent and role of government responsibility. This suggests that by using the relative measure we are at best measuring individual-level attitudes to the level of net inequality, heavily influenced by the redistributive efforts of the welfare state, instead of the level of gross inequality in wages, as we seek to do here. The abstractness of the question also means that the measure, at the same time, probably has a substantial ‘social desirability bias’.

The more absolute measure should be less biased by both the existing level of income inequality in the country and less influenced by attitudes to the welfare state. In addition, the absolute measure has a methodological advantage in being very concrete instead of abstract. According to existing survey-methodological studies, this should lead to less ‘social desirability’ bias in the survey responses because, firstly, it is less clear what the socially desirable answer to the question actually could be. In addition, it is sufficiently concrete for the respondent to actually feel that he/she has a qualified opinion on the matter.

As argued in the previous, more theoretical section, moving down on the ladder of abstraction from the relative to the absolute measure also enables us to capture rather volatile attitudes instead of the more stable values. Because of this volatility, and because attitudes are supposed to be constantly reproduced mainly in tertiary socialisation processes, this allows an identification of cracks in the legitimacy of the supposedly egalitarian Scandinavian model. Still, the review also suggests that

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<sup>37</sup> The relationship between the relative measure and attitudes to the justness of the perceived wage levels of a chairman of a large national corporation and an unskilled factory worker has also been investigated. Again, the variables in general correlate in the expected direction. The egalitarian respondents on the relative measure also have a tendency to wish for higher wage levels for unskilled factory workers and lower wage levels for chairmen of large national corporations. As the case was above, the correlations are not overwhelmingly strong and some are even insignificant. These results again point to the fact that the measures are clearly distinct and probably on different levels of abstraction in Kumlin’s hierarchy (Kumlin, 2007).

people's attitudes to the absolute measure to a large extent should be characterised by 'group-thinking', and possibly even 'class-thinking', rather than by individual reflection, with opinion leaders using 'historical articulations of particular social cleavages' or HCNIIs (Svallfors, 2010, p. 245) as a reservoir from which to draw narratives and hence to form attitudes. This surely also signifies that the respondent's interpretation of the more absolute measure is dependent on the context of the macro-level structures in which he/she lives. Even the more absolute measure is therefore not perfectly absolute.

The absolute measure is also very versatile, as seen in the two examples in the previous subsection, and this advantage will be utilised to investigate different aspects or dimensions of attitudes to wages below. Finally, the relative and absolute measures do correlate at the individual level. The relative measure is after all an often-used and -tested measure of attitudes to income inequality, so seeing these correlations enhances the validity of the new absolute measures introduced. Probably because of the stronger relative 'bias' of the existing level of income inequality on the relative measure, the opposite correlation is found at the macro level, though. The next step is to investigate the relation between the left and right side of Figure 4-1 – the relationship between attitudes: 'what should be', and perceptions: 'what is'.

### 4.3. TOP OF THE MIND

The purpose of this section is to try to investigate what is on 'top of the mind' (Zaller, 1992) when respondents answer how much a chairman of a large national corporation, a shop assistant or an unskilled factory worker ought to earn. Obviously, the best candidate is the respondents' view on how much they think typical persons in these occupations actually earn usually – especially because the 'do earn' question is asked right before the 'should earn' question in the Social Inequality questionnaires. The 'do-earn' question therefore form a 'mental anchor' for the 'should-earn' question (Tversky & Kahneman, 1974). We will discuss below whether this is an advantage or not. As promised above, we are therefore also finally returning to the lowest level of abstraction in Figure 3.1 – normative opinions, and factual views expressed in surveys. To investigate the relations between normative opinions and factual views, the two data sources will be used: First, items from the Social Inequality module of ISSP on normative opinions and factual views will be correlated. Secondly, results from a survey experiment trying to manipulate the respondents' 'top of the mind' will be presented.

Throughout this section we therefore touch upon methodological and theoretical questions that, though strongly related, are separate. First, to what extent does the 'do-earn' question function as a 'mental anchor' for the 'should-earn' answers, and what are the consequences thereof? Second, how strong do the normative opinions and factual views actually correlate, and if they correlate strongly, can we then claim that respondents present independent normative opinions on 'just earnings',

or do they simply extrapolate from ‘do’ to ‘should earn’? Third, what can we say about the causal direction? Does it run from factual views to normative opinions, the other way around, or both? Fourth, earnings from what occupation do the respondents actually have in mind when answering the question – a chairman or a CEO of a large national corporation?

One of the main claims in the existing literature is the argument that, in any context, a person’s attitudes to the level of inequality in society is very dependent on the actual level of inequality in the given society in a given time. As early as 1961, Homans stated:

‘The rule of distributive justice is a statement of what ought to be, and what people say ought to be is determined, in the long run, and with some lag, by what they find in fact to be the case.’

Homans’ (1974) statement elegantly describes the *adaption hypothesis*, which assumes that people’s attitudes will adapt and in time find the perceived level of inequality – or specifically, differences in wage-levels between occupations – legitimate (Austen, 1999; Austen, 2002; Blanchflower & Freeman, 1997; Homans, 1961; Kelley & Evans, 1993; Kerr, 2011; Knudsen, 2001; McCall, 2013; Miller & Ortiz, 1995). In this literature the actual or rather perceived level of inequality in gross wages in society at a given point in time is an independent variable influencing the dependent variable – people’s attitudes to the just level of inequality in gross wages in society. The question is whether we can trust this assumption concerning the causal direction. We first see how the two concepts correlate in the Social Inequality data:

*Table 4-4 The Correlation between Perceptions of and Attitudes to the Just Level of Inequality in Gross Wages in ISSP 1987, 1992, 1999 and 2009*

		Correlation (unstandardized)	Pearson's r	Standard error
1987	All countries	0.534***	0.771	0.004
1992	All countries	0.399***	0.520	0.005
	NO	0.547***	0.709	0.015
	SE	0.629***	0.756	0.022
1999	All countries	0.196***	0.447	0.002
	DK	0.551***	0.727	0.014
	NO	0.565***	0.697	0.017
	SE	0.277***	0.542	0.010
2009	All countries	0.278***	0.564	0.002
	DK	0.273***	0.448	0.015
	NO	0.137***	0.386	0.009
	SE	0.216***	0.599	0.009

*Notes:* The two indexes are created by taking the individual-level statements of how much the respondent thinks a chairman of a large national corporation actually earns and should earn, respectively. These two scores are then divided by similar averages for lower-level occupations – how much a shop assistant and an unskilled worker in a factory actually earn and should earn, respectively.

\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ . 1987: N (national level) = 9, n (individual level) = 11,410. 1992: N (national level) = 17, n (individual level) = 19,156. 1999: N (national level) = 27, n (individual level) = 34,099. 2009: N (national level) = 38, n (individual level) = 41,894. Author's own calculations.

*Sources:* the Social Inequality Module (I-IV – 1987, 1992, 1999 and 2009) of the International Social Survey Program (ISSP).

Table 4-4 shows that the correlation between perceptions of and norms regarding the level of inequality in gross wages is, both within the Scandinavian countries and in the countries overall, strong and highly significant. The obvious question is then whether the correlation is an instance of multicollinearity, i.e. the two variables are really part of the same underlying concept. The correlations are quite far from perfect though (Pearson's  $r = 1.0$ ), which would be likely if respondents just took the 'do earn' statement, which they are asked about first, and extrapolated it to 'should earn' (For a similar argument: Szirmai, 1986). It should be mentioned that the final multilevel models in Chapter 5 also control for the effect of perceived level of actual inequality in gross wages (PLI). In addition, here the conclusion is that a substantial part of the variance on the dependent variable is explained.

To qualify whether respondents simply extrapolate from 'do earn', or, do in fact separate the concepts, a survey experiment was conducted among a slightly non-representative panel drawn from respondents participating in various other Danish surveys.<sup>38</sup> The basic design of our survey experiment was therefore as follows. The

<sup>38</sup> The panel for example oversamples the proportion of youth respondents, because 'Ungdomsvalget 2011' (the youth election 2011 ed.) was a survey conducted among students in upper secondary education in 2011 (Department of Political Science at Aalborg

panel participants were first randomly assigned to one of four groups. The first group is the control group. Panel participants in this group are only asked the central question used to create the main dependent variables in the dissertation: *'What do you think people in these jobs ought to be paid, regardless of what they actually get...?'* The occupations mentioned are: a chairman of a large national corporation, a CEO of a large national corporation, and an unskilled factory worker. There is thus a dependent variable created for each of these occupations.

Groups 1 to 3 get different kinds of 'treatments' before answering the items for the dependent variables. Differences in scores on the dependent variables of the control group and any of the three experiment groups must therefore be due in principle to the effect of the treatment, or in other words, the intervention. The logic of this design is shown in Figure 4-2 below. Below the figure, the questions for the dependent variables and the various interventions are presented:

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University, 2011). The frequencies attained in the panel cannot therefore be generalised with usual confidence intervals to the population of Danes. Furthermore, as the case is with any panel, respondents actually agreeing to be members of a panel and thus participating in a number of surveys, can be expected to be markedly more politically interested and with a higher degree of political knowledge than the average population. This bias – a form of panel attrition – can also be expected to increase over time (Anhøj & Kjærsgård, 2013). Fortunately the generalisability of the panel to the population of Danes is not that crucial an issue in our case. In accordance with the logics of classic experimental designs, we aim to isolate the effect of our intervention by randomly assigning the panel participants to the control and experimental groups. In principle, as long as a given panel participant has the same probability of belonging to either of these groups, and as long as other factors are kept constant, a given systematic variation can be subscribed to the intervention (Druckman, Green, Kuklinski, & Lupia, 2011; Gaines, Kuklinski, & Quirk, 2007).

*Figure 4-2 The Design of the Survey-Experiment*

	<i>Intervention</i>	<i>Dependent variable</i>
<i>Control group</i>		Dep. Var. 'should'
<i>Exp. Gr. 1</i>	'Do earn'	Dep. Var. 'should'
<i>Exp. Gr. 2</i>	Info: the correct amount	Dep. Var. 'should'
<i>Exp. Gr. 3</i>	Info: the correct amount*3	Dep. Var. 'should'

*Notes:*

- **Dependent variable 'should':** Next, what do you think people in these jobs ought to be paid. How much do you think they should earn regardless of what they actually get per year before taxes...(translated from Danish).

- **'Do earn':** We would like to know what you think people in these jobs actually earn. Please write in how much you think they usually earn each year before taxes. Many people are not exactly sure about this, but your best guess will be close enough. This may be difficult, but it is very important. So please try...(translated from Danish).

- **Info: the correct amount:** A CEO of a large Danish corporation on average earned 6.7 million Danish kroner per year before taxes in 2011. A large Danish corporation is here understood as a corporation with a turnover of 0.5 million Danish kroner or more. An unskilled factory worker on average earns 300.000 kr. per year before taxes...(translated from Danish).

- **Info: the correct amount multiplied by 3:** A CEO of a large Danish corporation on average earned 20.1 million Danish kroner per year before taxes in 2011. A large Danish corporation is here understood as a corporation with a turnover of 0.5 million kroner or more. An unskilled factory worker on average earns 300.000 kr. per year before taxes...(translated from Danish).

The treatment or intervention for experimental group 1 is therefore a few seconds of extra reflection over the actual wage level – a mental anchor, before respondents answer the item on just wage levels – just as it is in the original Social Inequality surveys. The interventions for experimental group 2 and 3 actively try to model the respondents' 'top of the mind' regarding actual earnings, especially at the top of the occupational hierarchy. The 'info' language was on purpose written in a very objective and neutral manner in order to make it seem trustworthy to the panel participants. In spite of this, we cannot be sure that everybody believed the information and thereby adjusted their attitudes accordingly. The results of the dependent variables for all four groups are presented in Table 4-5 below:

*Table 4-5 Survey-Experiment Results*

		A chairman of a large Danish Corporation	A CEO of a large Danish corporation	An unskilled factory worker
Control group	N valid	135	133	137
	N missing	623	625	621
	Mean	732,729	1,876,140	252,220
	Median	500,000	1,000,000	250,000
	Stand.	923,416	2,600,028	278,854
Experiment group 1	N valid	154	154	154
	N missing	604	604	604
	Mean	1,020,473	2,003,083	410,140
	Median	600,000	1,200,000	290,000
	Stand.	1,277,161	2,428,106	788,177
Experiment group 2	N valid		163	160
	N missing		595	598
	Mean		4,181,520	353,988
	Median		3,000,000	300,000
	Stand.		7,612,923	483,726
Experiment group 3	N valid		157	159
	N missing		601	599
	Mean		64,604,807	288,891
	Median		4,000,000	300,000
	Stand.		469,458,000	163,180

Source: Folkepanelet\* (Department of Political Science at Aalborg University, 2013). N=685.

As we saw above and will see in later analyses there are many large outliers in the results of Table 4-5 above. This is reflected in the high standard deviations and in skewed means. We will therefore use and interpret medians as measures of central tendency.

*Experimental group 1* is, as described above, given a few seconds priming or reflection over the actual wages in the three occupations. Compared to the control group, this has the effect in all three cases of increasing both the medians and standard deviations. Concerning the unskilled factory workers, the standard deviation is actually more than doubled. There clearly seems therefore to be an



effect of the ‘reflection-intervention’, or in other words, priming a mental anchor ‘at the top of the mind’ of panel participants about the occupations’ actual earnings. This is an interesting methodological conclusion which could suggest some form of ‘response set’ bias or rather un-reflected randomness existing in the raw control group answers. I believe it speaks to the credit of the drafting teams behind the Social Inequality surveys that they have primed this reflection into the questionnaire by asking about views of actual earnings before opinions about just earnings, and thereby presumably gotten less biased, more reflected and ‘true’ attitudes to just wages from the respondents. In addition, the results are a clear reminder of the argument behind Figure 4-1: that there are clearly certain biases in opinions and views expressed in surveys, and that these have to be considered when extrapolating attitudes and perceptions from these responses.

*Experimental group 2* got correct, factual information on how the wage levels of the two occupations actually were in 2011. The intervention can therefore be seen as testing the effect of correct information, although it is obviously debatable how to define a large Danish corporation (cf. notes beneath Figure 4-2). The result of the ‘reality-intervention’ is a markedly higher median score and standard deviation for the CEOs, than in both the control group and in the first experimental group, where panel participants were subjected to the ‘reflection-intervention’. For the unskilled workers the median score also rises to 300,000 kroner, which is in accord with the real median wage level revealed to these panel participants. *Experimental group 3* received exaggerated information on how much top CEOs earn in Denmark. The effect on the CEO median scores is ‘only’ a rise to 4 million kroner. The standard deviations on the other hand have exploded, compared to the other groups. A closer look at the distribution reveals that more than 50 % maintains that CEOs should earn ‘only’ up to 4 million kroner. At the same time, approximately 1/3 now indicate that top CEOs should earn 10 million and in some cases much more. In the second ‘reality-intervention’ experimental group, only 15 % of subjects claimed top CEOs should earn more than 5 million kroner.

How can the results of experimental group 2 and 3 be interpreted? Firstly, in accordance with the *adaption hypothesis*, panel participants on average clearly adapt their just-earnings opinions in the direction of the information on actual earnings they receive – and especially at the top. The larger variation or flexibility regarding the top occupations is in accordance with results from existing research (Knudsen, 2001; Osberg & Smeeding, 2006). The medians of both experimental groups 2 and 3 are much larger than the corresponding control group medians. It is at the same time clear that this is not an expression of un-reflected extrapolation from ‘do earn’ to ‘should earn’. Especially for the top occupations, we see dramatically increased standard deviations, comparing experiment group 2 and especially 3 with the control group. People therefore clearly take a stand on the information received and most find the just top-earnings to be lower than the information about ‘actual earnings’. Especially in experimental group 3, many panel participants clearly seem provoked, taking a clear stand, which to a high degree polarises the distribution. This polarisation effect – on subjects becoming

salient and politicised – is also found in the literature on survey response patterns (Hedegaard, 2014b; Taber & Lodge, 2006). As was noted above, these patterns also fit well with the idea that people, if provoked or in some way pushed, activate their reflective potential and take a clear stand on normative issues reflected in survey questions. It is on the other hand by no means given that they do so all the time.

There is also a last thing worth noticing in Table 4-5: The control group and experimental group 1 were asked about the just earnings of two top occupations – a chairman of a large Danish corporation, as in the Social Inequality questionnaires, as well as a CEO of a large Danish corporation. This is obviously to investigate whether people thought about the same top occupation when answering the question. Both the supposedly more un-reflected, control-group results, and the more reflected results of experimental group 1, clearly suggest that people do not think of the same occupation, because the CEO medians in both cases are twice the size of the chairman medians. In the Danish version of ISSP 2009, the median response of the chairman-variable is actually 500,000 Danish kroner, which is in accordance with what we see in Table 4-5.

It is often the CEO compensation rates, which are discussed in the media, so it seems a bit unfortunate that the chairman is the occupation chosen to represent top occupations in the private sector in the Social Inequality questionnaires. In spite of this bias, there are reasons to believe that attitudes to the just earnings of chairmen of large national corporations is still a reasonably good comparative measure of attitudes to top earnings. Among western countries it is only in the US that the same person generally holds the two occupations at the same time (Lorsch & Zelleke, 2005). There should thus be a reasonable degree of comparability, except with the US, between western countries on this measure in the Social Inequality modules.

A final issue is the causal direction from factual views to normative opinions on the earnings of various occupations. In spite the strong assumptions encapsulated in the adaption hypothesis, the results above seem to suggest that it is not so simple. Even if respondents use their factual views as a mental anchor for their normative opinions, they do not just extrapolate from ‘do earn’ to ‘should earn’ in the ISSP surveys, or in the survey experiment. To do justice to Homans’ (1961) original claim of ‘... *in the long run, and with some lag*’, these results do not rule out that the normative opinions in time will adjust to the factual views. The problem is that the suggested causal mechanisms – for example that people need to justify and believe that the reality they perceive is just, if they are not able in the short term to do anything successful to adjust it (Bénabou & Tirole, 2006; Lerner, 1980) – at least at first glance seem to become more speculative then.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> It should be mentioned that an analysis which is not shown, indicate that the relative measure functions as a moderator on the relation between the perceived level of actual inequality in gross wages and attitudes to the level of inequality in gross wages. The results seem to suggest that egalitarian respondents, as measured by the relative measure, also have

It therefore seems more fruitful to assume a kind of reciprocal causality between the two. This reciprocal causality is also in good accordance with the critical realism expressed ontologically in the above conceptual model of the dissertation (Figure 2-1). In *theoretical terms*, this means that people's perception of the actual level of inequality in gross wages in society influences their attitudes to the same through feedback processes – pointing in the same causal direction between the two variables as in the adaption hypothesis. On the other hand it is obvious that in democratic countries the level of actual inequality in society should also hopefully be influenced by the desires of the citizens and key social actors historically as described above – pointing in the reversed causal direction. The mainly American policy-responsiveness literature also argues that this often the case at least in that context (Burstein, 1998; Burstein, 2003; Page & Shapiro, 1983; Stimson, MacKuen, & Erikson, 1995). The results above therefore seem to indicate that it makes sense to separate the concepts of factual views and normative opinions *analytically* – something that will also be practiced in various analyses throughout the dissertation. In *theoretical* and empirical terms, the two are closely related. This *conceptual* dualism will be maintained throughout the monograph. The interpretation of this relation or concept is crucial to the overall theoretical and critical realist stance of the monograph.

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a stronger tendency than inegalitarian respondents do (measured by the relative measure), to separate the questions of actual and just earnings. Further research could follow up on this lead.

# CHAPTER 5. AGGREGATED SURVEY RESULTS

The four chapters above have laid the foundation for finally starting to empirically investigate the research question of the dissertation: *What attitudes do Scandinavians express towards the level of inequality in gross wages, how do these attitudes develop over time and why do the Scandinavians express these attitudes?*

In this first analysis chapter the focus will be on aggregated comparisons. This means the Scandinavians' attitudes will be compared to similar attitudes of people in a rather large number of mainly western countries participating in the various rounds of the Social Inequality Module of ISSP. The chapter will furthermore be subdivided into two overall sections.

First, explorative and descriptive analyses will be conducted investigating what attitudes Scandinavians express towards the level of inequality in gross wages compared to people in other western countries, and how these have developed over time. Utilising the versatility of the more absolute measure (Svallfors, 2004), the scope of these descriptive analyses will also be broadened to investigate four different dimensions of attitudes to gross wages.

Second, after actually revealing a Scandinavian egalitarianism in different dimensions of attitudes towards gross wages in the first overall section, the second overall section turns to the third, *why*-part of the research question, and tries to explain the Scandinavian egalitarianism in attitudes towards the level of inequality in gross wages. This will be done via operationalising and testing the explanations for variation in attitudes towards the level of inequality in gross wages, which can be identified in existing literature. Methodologically multilevel analyses will be used in this overall section to try to do this. The primary focus in this overall section is therefore on explaining aggregate, which also can be called the macro level or cross-country variations – and especially a significant Scandinavian dummy variable. It can maybe seem strange that in spite the differences between especially Denmark and Sweden identified in chapter 3 and somewhat in chapter 4, all of these are all of a sudden lumped in a common Scandinavian dummy. Once again, it should be emphasised that this do make sense though. In the aggregated perspective, the Scandinavian countries should appear quite similar. This does on the other hand not mean that the Scandinavian dummy does not hide differences between the countries. These differences will be investigated in the analyses of chapter 6 following the disaggregated perspective.

Multilevel analysis allows simultaneous controlling for differences in attitudinal structures in the various countries, as well as composition effects and their effect on

the overall variation between countries. Lastly, cross-level interactions testing for varying effects of covariates at the individual level between countries will also be tested here. Even if these analyses reveal interesting and substantive results in their own right, it is at the same time clear that, first, the explanations found in existing literature and their operationalisation, and second, the rather aggregated level of analysis, provoke further investigations. The subsequent analysis chapter will therefore first switch to a more disaggregated level of analysis, and second, broaden the methodological and data-scope of the analysis. Before all this, the first overall section starts out with the explorative, descriptive investigations of Scandinavians' attitudes towards four different dimensions of gross wages, in comparative perspective.

## **5.1. SCANDINAVIAN EGALITARIANISM DESCRIPTIVELY REVEALED**

The purpose of this overall section is to examine in depth the Scandinavians' attitudes towards gross wages in comparative perspective. Do they stand out from those held by people in other western countries, and in that case, in what way and how does this develop over time?

The overall section is mainly explorative in its nature. The subject is basically to investigate whether Scandinavians have – or rather still have – exceptionally egalitarian attitudes towards gross wages in a comparative perspective, as is claimed they do in the existing literature. Conversely, have declining trade union density rates and the decentralisation of the collective bargaining systems since the 1980s, for example, led to an erosion of egalitarian attitudes? Is the combined effect of globalisation, individualisation and the weakened trade union-movements such that the attitudes towards gross wages of present-day Scandinavians no longer stand out in western comparisons? In addition, if they still stand out, in what ways, what have been the trends over time, and what does this tell us?

Besides these rather generic questions, no other testable hypothesis will be presented regarding Scandinavian attitudes towards gross wages. The purpose of the overall section is instead to identify and describe the multifaceted concept of the Scandinavian attitudes towards wages in a two-way comparative perspective – across time and space. In this process, it is of course imperative to be mindful of the contextual influence on the interpretations of the results below. Svallfors (1997) recommends that because of the contextual 'biases' in interpretations and connotations of survey items across countries, researchers should not focus on small differences in gross percentages, even if these are statistically significant, but instead, focus on larger patterns and on how group patterns in attitudes differ between countries. Investigating differences in group patterns within the Scandinavian countries will be the primary focus of Chapter 6. It should also be mentioned that most of the analyses of this overall section was previously published in a working paper (Kjærsgård, 2012b).

### 5.1.1. HOW TO MEASURE ATTITUDES TOWARDS GROSS WAGES?

Attitudes towards gross wages is a rather broad topic to investigate. As will be clear below, this concept is multidimensional, and for at least one of the dimensions several possibilities exist for how to measure the dimension. The actual measure or measures chosen must therefore be able to encompass these different dimensions.

Fortunately, the above-mentioned, more absolute measure from the Social Inequality Module (I-IV) of the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) conducted in 1987, 1992, 1999 and 2009 is such a measure. ISSP is one of the biggest international comparative survey projects existing. It today comprises 48 countries (including the Scandinavian countries) (GESIS - Leibniz-Institute for the Social Sciences, 2013). To recap, the more absolute measure is the survey question: *'What do you think people in these jobs ought to be paid, regardless of what they actually get...?'*. The question is posed for a number of different occupations in the various rounds of the Social Inequality Module.<sup>40</sup>

Below will be, firstly, discussed how the measure has been used in existing research. It is argued that existing research has not used the potential of this measure fully because the focus is almost exclusively on the dimension of *attitudes towards the level of inequality in gross wages*. Inspired by the few studies actually utilising the versatility of the measure, a section defining, operationalising and analysing four distinct dimensions of attitudes towards gross wages will be presented.

If we review the literature that uses the more absolute measure to create dependent variables, it becomes apparent that scientific contributions so far have focused mostly on what can be equated with one dimension of attitudes towards gross wages: Attitudes towards *the level of inequality in gross wages*. Despite the fact that only somewhat more than a dozen studies actually seem to be using the measure, the dimension is measured in several different ways. Typically an index is constructed on the basis of a ratio of legitimate wage level responses for a number of higher-level occupations to the corresponding responses for lower-level occupations (Austen, 1999; Austen, 2002; Blanchflower & Freeman, 1997; Evans & Kelley, 2007; Gijsberts, 2002; Kelley & Zagorski, 2004; Kelley & Evans, 1993; Kerr, 2011; Kluegel & Miyano, 1995; Miller & Ortiz, 1995; Svallfors, 1995; Svallfors, 1997; Svallfors, 2004; Svallfors, 2006; Szirmai, 1986). A different approach compares the ratio of a single occupation either to one another, or to

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<sup>40</sup> As mentioned above, in the Social Inequality module's round I and II from 1987 and 1992 the question was posed regarding eleven different occupations that varied marginally between the rounds. In the third round from 1999, the number of occupations was reduced to nine. In the recent fourth round from 2009, the number of professions was further reduced to five (GESIS - Leibniz-Institute for the Social Sciences, 2013; ISSP Research Group, 2011; Osberg & Smeeding, 2006, p. 459).

groups of other occupations (Arts et al., 1995; Larsen, 2006; Mason, 1995; Mason, 1995; Svallfors, 1993; Svallfors, 1995; Svallfors, 1997; Svallfors, 2004; Svallfors, 2006; Verba & Orren, 1985). Knudsen (2001) alone creates a measure, which focusses only on the high-paid occupations. His argument for this is that, while there is a high degree of consensus concerning what wage level is just for the low-paid occupations, the variation is much larger at the top and therefore more interesting to investigate.

In some contrast to other research contributions using the measure, Osberg & Smeeding (2006), Szirmai (1986; 1991) and McCall (2013) also try to include the measures for the perception of what the same occupations are actually paid on average, in a combined measure. These measures then show how much the respondents' ideal of a fair degree of wage inequality deviates from their perception of what the actual degree of wage inequality is (Osberg & Smeeding 2006, p. 460 and Szirmai 1991, p. 231).

Kelley & Evans (2007) also develop a measure of 'the ideal level of earnings inequality' as above. However, they use a unique item from ISSP 1999. In contrast to the studies described above, their measure is based on what the respondents think people in their own occupation ought to earn. The ratio of these amounts and the actual average earnings of unskilled factory workers is then calculated. Because they furthermore assume the country samples are representative of the earnings distributions within the countries, they claim their measure is a quite accurate representation of the ideal or just level of earnings inequality within the countries.

While Osberg & Smeeding (2006), Szirmai (1986; 1991), McCall (2013) and Kelley & Evans (2007) have an approach somewhat different to the other research contributions, the focus is still on, firstly, creating and using a form of measure of attitudes towards the level of inequality in gross wages. Secondly, the four contributions show to some extent a general trend in the contributions in trying to create merely one measure based on the survey question posed for a number of occupations.

A possible explanation of why this is often the case, is that the contributions often seem to be focused on conducting regression analysis. There is of course nothing wrong with writing scientific articles applying regression analysis, but to conserve space and meet the page-number limitations of scientific journals, authors have probably often been forced to limit their preliminary descriptive analyses. The purpose of the preliminary descriptive analysis in these sources thus seems to be to create and present one measure that can be used as the dependent variable for the focal point of the article. This is a regression model seeking to explain variance within and between countries (see especially Szirmai 1991; Svallfors 1995; Svallfors 1997; Svallfors 2004; Austen 1999 and Austen 2002).

Three clear exceptions to the rule above also have to be mentioned. Somewhat in line with Knudsen's (2001) approach, Arts, Hermkens & van Wijck (1995) focus on

the upper and the lower end of the wage distribution in two separate measures. The upper end is defined by the occupation 'managing director', while the occupation 'unskilled factory worker' defines the lower. Instead of just reporting their median just wages, as for example Headey (1991) does, Arts et al. (1995) divides the just earnings of each of these two professions in turn by the sum of the just earnings of the managing director and the unskilled factory-worker occupations.

Szirmai (1986), Verba & Orren (1985) and Headey (1991) have an innovative and informative approach comparing the just, perceived and actual wage levels. They each use only national samples – a Dutch, American and Australian respectively. Headey (1991) for example uses an Australian sample and does not try to develop on or a few alternative measures of attitudes towards the level of inequality in gross wages. Instead, throughout the paper, he focuses on the 12 occupations mentioned in his Australian sample separately. He compares the mean scores for 'perceived' and 'legitimate incomes' for the 12 occupations in his survey, with their actual mean incomes in Australia. He investigates how the respondents' answers concerning the 12 occupations correlate, and what effect the respondent's own occupational status has on these answers. Especially, actually finding figures for the actual mean incomes of each of the 12 occupations is impressive. Szirmai (1986), Verba & Orren (1985) and Headey's (1991) approach is therefore, although innovative and informative, probably only possible if, as they do, the focus is put on a single or a few countries.

Even though she does not make a big issue of it, McCall (2013) innovatively develops measures of the justness of the perceived wages of unskilled workers and chairmen of large American corporations by dividing the respondents' answers on *desired* wage levels for each of the two occupations by the *perceived* wage level of the same occupation.

Headey (1991) and McCall (2013) thus answer Svallfors' (2004) call by utilising the versatility of the more absolute measure. This overall section will follow this path. The focus is not on creating one dependent variable, but on making in-depth descriptive investigations of different dimensions of attitudes towards gross wages. Therefore the analyses below will not be restricted to one dimension or not even necessarily one measure per dimension, as the trend certainly is in the existing contributions.

Methodological considerations, which are more practical, are also important. Larsen (2006) wisely emphasises two important aspects of how to treat the data. *Firstly*, one is wise to use the median instead of the – regularly used – mean as a measure of central tendency. One can create many measures based on the survey items mentioned, but all seem to be infected by the presence of extreme outliers influencing the mean a lot. The median is not to the same extent affected by these outliers, which is why it is a more obvious choice for a measure of central tendency. *Secondly*, as with all aggregated measures, the measures in the existing research conceal important information in the data. A high degree of tolerance towards the



level of inequality in gross wages can thus be caused by both tolerance towards top-excess, and acceptance of very low salaries for the less skilled parts of the workforce, or both. By disaggregating and using ‘skilled factory worker’ as a middle category, Larsen (2006) finds interesting differences between countries that are not possible to detect with the aggregated measures of attitudes towards the level of inequality in gross wages (pp. 37-43).<sup>41</sup>

If we review the existing research on the field, it becomes apparent that there seem room for improvement – a quest that this dissertation seeks to undertake. *Firstly*, a very concrete and practical methodological improvement is using medians instead of means as the measure of central tendency. *Secondly*, as quoted above Svallfors (2004, p. 82) correctly pinpoints the great versatility of the measure. The existing research seems not to take full advantage of this. As a starting point the measures will be disaggregated much more than what is usual in the existing research. *Thirdly* and most importantly, the versatility allows using the measure to investigate a number of other relevant aspects or dimensions of attitudes towards gross wages, instead of only focussing on attitudes towards the level of inequality in gross wages, as in most existing studies.

Below, four such dimensions of *attitudes towards gross wages* will be identified, operationalised and analysed. These are:

- *The levels of gross wages for different occupations*
- *The level of inequality in gross wages*
- *The degree of justice in the levels of gross wages for different occupations*
- *Consensus*

### **5.1.2. OPERATIONALISATION AND ANALYSES OF FOUR DIMENSIONS OF ATTITUDES TOWARDS GROSS WAGES**

In the sections below, the four dimensions will be operationalised and analysed in turn. The focus in all sections is on the Scandinavian countries. For each of the dimensions data and tables from both ISSP 1999 and ISSP 2009 will be presented. In this way, it is possible to investigate the development over a 10-year time span. A certain measure of attitudes to the level of inequality in gross wages is selected and will be used as a dependent variable in the survey-oriented analyses in the later parts of the dissertation. Because of its centrality, for this particular measure the distributions of the western countries for all four rounds of the Social Inequality module will be presented. The comparative approach of this overall section is therefore not just cross-country, but also longitudinal. Because the number of

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<sup>41</sup> As mentioned, Knudsen (2001) and Osberg & Smeeding (2006) find that the respondents disagree much more about the salaries of the better-paid occupations than about those of the lower-paid ones. These results appear in disaggregated analyses, and confirm the value of doing so.

occupations was reduced from nine to five from ISSP 1999 to ISSP 2009, it has not been possible to replicate all analyses. The occupation ‘skilled factory worker’ was removed, making it impossible to follow the approach of Larsen (2006) and disaggregate the general measures of attitudes towards the level of inequality in gross wages on ISSP 2009 data.

### **5.1.2.1 Attitudes towards the Levels of Gross Wages for Different Occupations – the rather ordinary Scandinavians?**

Building on Headey’s (1991) approach, the first dimension – *attitudes towards the levels of gross wages for different occupations* – simply treats the question of how much the respondents in the different countries generally think the various occupations should earn. As such it should be the first very simple descriptive measure presented, giving a quick overview of the data. Straightforwardly, the medians for the different occupations in the different countries should be sufficient to measure this dimension. Unfortunately, it is not that simple, and one could suspect the difficulties in acquiring comparable measures are one of the reasons; others have not ventured into this task, at least comparatively. Kelley & Evans (1993) note the *first difficulty*:

‘Cross-cultural comparisons are difficult because the original answers are in local currencies – dollars, pounds, forints, and so forth’ (p. 85).

To overcome this and set a common standard, all indications of wage levels have been recalculated to ‘purchasing power parity’– (PPP) corrected US dollars.<sup>42</sup> In principle, it should thereby be possible to compare directly how much a person can actually buy for the wage level indicated:

‘The PPP currency values reflect the number of units of a country’s currency required to buy the same quantity of comparable goods and services in the local market as one U.S. dollar would buy in an average country.’ (World Resources Institute, 1996, box 7.2).<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> The wage-level indications have also been recalculated to Euros. See Tables 8-2 and 8-4 in Appendix A.

<sup>43</sup> There is also a difficulty with the 1999 data for the countries who were then members of the Eurozone. In a non-physical form, the Euro was introduced on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 1999, but the physical currency of the countries was still local until the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2002. This means that, while the respondents in these countries are asked to give their statements in French francs, German marks and Austrian schilling etc., the PPP-conversion rates for the same countries in 1999 assume that their currency is the Euro. Therefore it was necessary to firstly recalculate the local currency statements to Euros for the then-members of the Eurozone (also Slovenia), and then to PPP-corrected USD. The original members of the Eurozone were: Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Netherlands, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Monaco, Portugal, San Marino, Spain, the Vatican State and Austria. Therefore

The *second difficulty*, which Kelley & Evans (1993) did not face, is that it has been up to the individual countries to decide certain specifics of the question in 1999 and 2009 (but not in 1987 and 1992). The instruction in 1999 and 2009 was merely that the specifics had to match the traditions in the country.<sup>44</sup> The result was a great deal of variation in how the question was posed in the various countries. Firstly, it varies as to whether the respondents are asked to give their opinion on monthly or yearly wages. Secondly, it also varies as to whether the respondents are asked about gross or net wages. The tables below are obviously recalculated to portray yearly gross wages (while the corresponding tables for net wages can be found in Tables 8-1 and 8-3 in Appendix A).<sup>45</sup>

After all these corrections and recalculations it is possible to present simple descriptive tables describing what the median respondent in the various western countries thinks the various occupations should earn gross per year in PPP corrected USD in 1999 and 2009. In the table for 2009, all the five available occupations are

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recalculations from local currencies to Euros were made for: France, Portugal, Spain, West-Germany, East-Germany and Austria. Furthermore the same recalculations were made for Slovenia in 1999. Even if this country was not one of the original Eurozone-members (they joined in 2004) their PPP-conversion rate clearly assumes that Slovenia had Euros in 1999. The same is not the case for Cyprus, though they became Eurozone-members in 2008.

<sup>44</sup> See the source questionnaires in appendix C and (ISSP Research Group, 2011).

<sup>45</sup> The monthly indications are easily recalculated to yearly wages by multiplying by 12. The second variation causes bigger problems, though. To make cross-validation possible, it was decided to recalculate all the respondents' statements into both net and gross wages whenever possible. Income tax regimes are by default difficult to compare. It was therefore necessary to choose a specific conversion factor and live with the biases the selection inevitably causes. Using the OECD statistics for 'Taxing Wages', the conversion factor 'average rate of income tax and employee social security contributions (%)' for 'single persons at 100 % of average earnings, no child' was chosen (OECD, 2014c). The recalculations from net to gross wages were done by using the following formula:  $Gross\ wages = (Net\ wages) / (1 - income\ tax\ rate)$ . In the opposite recalculation, from gross to net wages (to make the Tables 8-1 and 8-3 in the Appendix), the following formula was used:  $Netwages = Grosswages * (1 - income\ tax\ rate)$ . In both instances the income tax rate is measured in proportions. Surely, this choice of a tax conversion factor has some limitations. In recalculating there are probably often some deviations from the actual income tax a given occupation ought to pay in a certain country. On the other hand, it is difficult to find a better general conversion rate. The OECD database does not include tax regime data for all the western countries present in the two datasets. By choosing to present gross wages, the numbers of countries in the following tables are therefore a little bit lower than if net wages had been presented.

In addition it should be mentioned that obviously the different price levels in the countries affect the PPP conversion rates a lot. Furthermore, especially for the countries with high income taxes (including social contributions), there is a big difference between net and gross wages. For the sake of comparison two alternative tables for each dataset have thus been calculated. These are firstly recalculations to net wages and secondly to Euros instead of PPP corrected USD (see Tables 8-1 – 8-4 Appendix A).

presented. In the table for 1999, the same five occupations as well as 'skilled factory worker' are listed. The result is shown below.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> To conserve space in the tables below, which are already very big, abbreviations for the countries have been used. In Table 8-11 in Appendix A, a list of these country abbreviations can be found.

Table 5-1 Attitudes towards the Levels of Yearly Gross Wages for six Occupations in ISSP 1999, country medians

	a cabinet minister in the <national>-government	a chairman of a large national corporation	a doctor in general practice	A skilled worker in a factory	a shop assistant	an unskilled worker in a factory	Country averages
FR	81,378	FR 135,630	USA 100,000	USA 35,500	NO 28,245	NO 26,900	USA 60,083
AUS	77,942	CDN 121,951	CDN 84,104	CDN 35,324	DK 25,940	CDN 25,231	FR 59,225
AT	76,499	GB 115,207	AUS 77,942	NO 33,625	CDN 25,231	USA 25,000	CDN 59,153
USA	75,000	USA 100,000	FR 67,815	AUS 31,177	USA 25,000	DK 24,761	GB 52,227
WD	74,664	WD 93,330	NO 67,249	DK 29,478	AUS 23,383	FR 21,701	AUS 51,307
GB	72,197	IL 82,306	WD 62,220	WD 27,999	WD 21,777	ES 19,505	WD 49,776
CDN	63,078	AUS 77,942	GB 61,444	GB 27,650	FR 21,701	AUS 19,456	NO 46,178
ED	62,220	SLO 76,936	DK 58,955	FR 27,126	ES 19,505	AT 19,125	AT 45,422
IL	61,069	AT 76,499	AT 57,375	ED 24,888	AT 19,125	WD 18,666	DK 42,448
DK	58,955	NO 67,249	NZ 52,356	ES 24,706	ED 18,666	SE 18,587	IL 39,842
SLO	57,702	NZ 65,445	ED 49,776	AT 23,906	SE 18,587	GB 18,433	ED 38,888
PT	57,373	ED 62,220	IL 40,713	NZ 22,906	GB 18,433	NZ 16,361	NZ 37,631
NO	53,800	PT 57,343	SE 37,175	SE 22,615	IL 18,321	IL 16,285	SLO 36,865
NZ	52,356	DK 56,597	SLO 38,468	IL 20,356	SLO 17,311	ED 15,555	SE 30,618
ES	52,012	ES 52,012	PT 34,406	SLO 17,311	NZ 16,361	SLO 13,464	ES 19,591
PL	46,452	PL 46,452	ES 33,808	PT 17,203	PT 13,762	PT 11,469	PT 31,926
SE	43,371	SE 43,371	PL 23,226	PL 13,936	PL 9,290	PL 9,290	PL 24,774
CZ	37,686	CZ 41,873	HU 17,845	CZ 10,887	CZ 8,375	HU 7,138	CZ 20,451
HU	35,691	HU 35,691	CZ 16,749	HU 9,518	HU 8,328	CZ 6,700	HU 19,035

Notes: See footnote on the following page. Source: Social Inequality Module III (1999) of the International Social Survey Program (ISSP).

Table 5-1<sup>47</sup> shows that, in comparative perspective, the Danish and Norwegian respondents do seem to envision rather high gross wages for the three lowest paid occupations. For the three remaining, more highly paid occupations, the median Danes and Norwegians are quite average, and for all occupations – except that of cabinet minister – Norway scores a little bit higher than Denmark. Sweden in each case scores a median substantially lower than the corresponding Danish and Norwegian. The Scandinavian medians show a rising tendency from the left to the right in the table.

If the gross figures above are compared with the net figures in Table 8-1 in Appendix A, the Scandinavian countries in general score lower on net wages for the occupations than on gross wages. This is not surprising since the high income taxes pull the net wages scores down in the Scandinavian, but also Continental European countries. Not surprisingly, the tax rate matters more in these countries than it does in other western countries. Secondly, one could speculate that high staple goods prices in the Scandinavian countries pull down the score of the PPP-corrected USD of Table 5-1 and Table 8-1 in Appendix A somewhat. The Scandinavian positions are surely higher in the alternative table displaying non-corrected net Euro wages in Table 8-2 in Appendix A, than in the net PPP-corrected USD.

If we turn to the general pattern in the countries, the respondents seem to agree on a hierarchy of the occupations. The highly paid occupations of the first three columns score above the country averages in all instances, while the lower paid occupations

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<sup>47</sup> Shown are Country Medians in PPP Corrected USD.

The following countries asked about yearly salaries: Denmark, Norway, USA, United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand and Canada. The remaining countries asked about monthly salaries. The recalculation to yearly salaries for these was made by multiplying by 12 (cf. the national questionnaires are downloadable at: (ISSP Research Group, 2011)).

The following countries asked about net salaries: Slovenia, Israel, Spain, Latvia, France and Portugal. In Poland, Bulgaria and Russia it was unspecified whether the respondents should think about gross or net salaries. The statements from these countries are assumed to be reflecting net salaries. The remaining countries asked about gross salaries (cf. the national questionnaires are downloadable at: (ISSP Research Group, 2011)).

The PPP-conversion rates for the years 1999 and 2009 were taken from the 2010 version of World Economic Outlook. Because the rates are defined as: 'National currency per current international dollar', the recalculations were made by dividing the national currency statements by the current PPP-conversion rate (International Monetary Fund (IMF), 2011).

For the following countries preliminary recalculations from local currency to Euro were made – followed by another recalculation to PPP-corrected USD: France, Portugal, Spain, West- and East Germany, Austria and Slovenia. The reason for this is that the PPP-conversion rates for these countries prescribes that the local currency be Euro, also for 1999.

The Australian, Slovenian, Spanish and Portuguese statements furthermore were multiplied by 1000, because the respondents here were asked to answer in whole thousands of their local currency (cf. the national questionnaires are downloadable at: (ISSP Research Group, 2011)).

in the three last columns score below. This is in accordance with findings in existing literature (Janmaat, 2013). Also the poorer countries/the ones with lowest wage levels – especially Central- and Eastern-European countries – have a tendency to be placed in the lower half of the columns, while the opposite is the case for the richer countries. Even if correcting with PPP rates, the actual context in a country thus seem to matter a lot for the median scores. As argued in the ‘top of the mind’ section above, this is probably because someone’s assessment of what people *should earn* in general takes the departure in an assessment of *do actually earn* in the context where they are. In other words, the perceived wage levels form a mental anchor for the attitudes towards just wage levels for the individual.

Other groups of countries do not follow the same rising pattern from left to right in the table as the Scandinavian countries. The Continental European countries portray the exact opposite pattern of a declining tendency from left to right in the table. The Anglo-Saxon countries with the exception of Great Britain and New Zealand are generally at the top of the table, while the post-Communist countries are consistently at the bottom.

Neither the Scandinavian positions nor country averages are in general very special in a comparative perspective – except maybe the Danish and Norwegian medians for the two lowest-paid occupations. The pattern of the positions in the table on the other hand does not seem to be replicated by other groups of countries. In Table 5-2 below will be investigated whether a similar tendency can be found for 2009. The table is a replication of Table 5-1 with newer data, except that the fourth column, with the ‘skilled factory worker’ occupation, is missing:

*Table 5-2 Attitudes towards the Levels of Yearly Gross Wages for five Occupations in ISSP 2009*

a cabinet minister in the <national> government	a chairman of a large national corporation	a doctor in general practice	a shop assistant	an unskilled worker in a factory	Country averages
CH 167,280	AUS 204,360	USA 150,000	CH 37,638	FL 35,037	USA 102,000
CY 128,859	USA 200,000	CY 128,859	<b>DK</b> 35,465	CH 33,456	CH 101,204
DE 112,676	CH 167,280	AUS 122,616	FL 35,037	<b>DK</b> 33,101	AUS 96,730
FR 109,344	FR 182,240	GB 102,134	<b>NO</b> 31,723	<b>NO</b> 31,723	FR 87,840
AUS 102,180	GB 152,439	CH 100,368	USA 30,000	USA 30,000	GB 78,963
USA 100,000	DE 140,845	FR 91,120	IS 29,197	IS 29,197	DE 77,746
FL 93,432	FI 125,261	DE 84,507	FR 29,158	<b>SE</b> 28,454	FR 74,738
GB 91,463	FL 113,286	<b>DK</b> 82,752	DE 28,169	FR 27,336	FL 71,709
NZ 91,218	AT 112,808	FL 81,753	AUS 27,248	AUS 27,248	AT 63,243
<b>DK</b> 88,663	SLO 112,015	NZ 80,396	<b>SE</b> 27,161	ES 25,066	NZ 62,771
AT 84,606	NZ 98,949	<b>NO</b> 74,019	AT 25,382	FI 25,052	SLO 62,728
SLO 84,011	PT 89,126	AT 70,505	SLO 25,203	GB 24,390	FI 62,630
PL 81,338	PL 81,338	SLO 70,009	FI 25,052	IL 23,354	<b>DK</b> 59,818
IS 77,858	CY 80,537	IS 68,126	GB 24,390	AT 22,914	<b>NO</b> 58,158
IL 77,848	<b>NO</b> 79,306	FI 62,630	IL 23,354	DE 22,535	IS 56,447
FI 75,157	IS 77,858	<b>SE</b> 58,202	ES 23,138	SLO 22,403	IL 50,601
<b>NO</b> 74,019	IL 77,848	PT 55,704	NZ 21,645	NZ 21,645	PT 49,242
HU 67,661	ES 77,127	IL 50,601	PT 17,825	CY 19,329	<b>SE</b> 48,631
PT 66,844	EE 72,523	ES 48,204	PL 16,268	PT 16,711	PL 47,176
<b>SE</b> 64,669	HU 67,661	PL 40,669	EE 16,116	PL 16,268	ES 46,276
EE 64,464	<b>SE</b> 64,669	TR 35,447	CY 16,107	EE 16,116	EE 40,290
ES 57,845	<b>DK</b> 59,109	CZ 33,487	TR 14,179	TR 14,179	HU 38,059
TR 56,715	CZ 50,230	EE 32,232	SK 13,796	SK 13,796	TR 32,611
SK 55,167	SK 45,987	HU 29,602	HU 12,686	HU 12,686	SK 31,268
CZ 41,859	TR 42,536	SK 27,592	CZ 12,558	CZ 12,558	CZ 30,138
BG 25,210	BG 31,933	BG 20,168	BG 8,403	BG 8,403	BG 18,823



Table 5-2<sup>48</sup> generally repeats the patterns of Table 5-1 (the same applies to the alternative Tables 8-3 and 8-4 in Appendix A). The country averages of Denmark and Norway are still in the middle of the table, while Sweden places somewhat lower. A rising tendency from left to right in the table for the three Scandinavian countries is displayed. Going more into detail, Denmark and Norway are surpassed at the top concerning the two lowest-paid occupations by the newly included countries Switzerland and Flanders, and the Danes now want to pay the cabinet ministers substantially more than the Norwegians and Swedes. As was the case in 1999, the Scandinavian countries place lower with a re-calculation to net yearly wages, but higher on non-corrected yearly net wages in Euros (see Tables 8-3 and 8-4 in Appendix A).

In addition, the other groupings of countries more or less repeat the pattern of 1999. The post-Communist countries in general still place at the bottom of Table 5-2. Countries such as Slovenia and Poland now have medians resembling the Mediterranean countries though. The Anglo-Saxon countries are still at the top of the table, while the Continental European countries still display a declining tendency from left to right in the table.

Several newly included western countries are present in ISSP 2009. Among these are the Nordic countries Iceland and Finland. Iceland more or less follows the pattern of the other Scandinavian countries; the same is not the case for Finland. Finland's medians for the two lowest-paid occupations are substantially lower than the Scandinavian levels, while the Finnish median for the Chairman occupation is substantially higher.

In sum, the Scandinavian attitudes towards the levels of gross wages for different occupations at first glance do not seem particularly exceptional, compared to those

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<sup>48</sup> *Notes:* Shown are country medians in PPP corrected USD.

The following countries asked about yearly wages: Denmark, Norway, United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand. The remaining countries asked about monthly wages. The recalculation to yearly wages for these was made by multiplying by 12.

The following countries asked about gross wages: Australia, Austria, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Finland, Hungary, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, Denmark and United Kingdom. In Spain, it was unspecified whether the respondents should think about gross or net wages. The statements from these countries are assumed to be in net wages, because this was specified in 1999. The remaining countries asked about net wages (cf. the national questionnaires are downloadable at: (ISSP Research Group, 2011)).

The PPP-conversion rates for the years 1999 and 2009 were taken from the 2010 version of World Economic Outlook. Because the rates are defined as: 'National currency per current international dollar', the recalculations were made by dividing the national currency statements by the current PPP-conversion rate (International Monetary Fund (IMF), 2011).

*Source:* Social Inequality Module IV (2009) of the International Social Survey Program (ISSP).

from other western countries, but a closer look changes this impression. The Scandinavian country-averages in 1999 and 2009 place in the middle of the tables. Furthermore, the Scandinavian medians for the individual occupations are 'only' in the case of Denmark and Norway, for the two lowest-paid occupations, positioned at the very top of the table. If one looks at the patterns across the occupations of different groups of countries in the two tables, the Scandinavian countries do seem exceptional by displaying a rising pattern from left to right in both tables. This is, firstly, contrary to the Anglo-Saxon and the post-Communist countries that are consistently placed at the top and the bottom of the tables respectively. Secondly, it is contrary to the Continental European countries (plus Finland) who display a general declining tendency from left to right in both tables. Scandinavian egalitarianism therefore, thus far, seems to be mostly characterised by a wish for rather small differences in gross wages, rather than wanting very high gross wages for the top or very low gross wages for the bottom, in comparative perspective. In the section below this subject will be more thoroughly investigated by looking into the attitudes to the level of inequality in gross wages.

#### **5.1.2.2 Attitudes towards the Level of Inequality in Gross Wages – the egalitarian Scandinavians**

The second dimension – the level of inequality in gross wages – deals with respondents' thinking about how much some professions should earn *more* than others. As described above, the existing studies have mostly focused on this dimension and different measures of this concept. The existing studies often use just one measure. In contrast to that approach, and by making use of the described versatility (Svallfors, 2004), competing measures will be constructed in Table 5-3 – 5-5 below. *First*, in Table 5-3 and 5-4, three different measures of attitudes towards the general level of inequality in gross wages will be constructed. The first of these includes all five occupations present in both ISSP 1999 and 2009. It is a highly aggregated measure, indicating how much more the respondents think ministers, chairmen or general practitioners should earn than shop assistants or unskilled factory workers.

Though highly aggregated measures are often used in existing studies, such measures could be argued to have certain biases compared to other measures, which can be constructed by using the occupations available in both ISSP 1999 and 2009. As mentioned above, clear indications exist of a bigger variation concerning the highly paid occupations than the lower paid ones (Knudsen, 2001; Osberg & Smeeding, 2006). This could be caused partly by the inclusion of 'general practitioners' in the top group. Larsen (2006) argues that in several countries doctors' wages are not top level, but closer to medium level (p. 40). A second and less aggregated measure will thus be created by excluding doctors from the top group.

A third and even less aggregated measure will be created by also excluding ‘cabinet ministers in the national government’ from the top group. There are a number of arguments for this. First, a respondent’s view on how much a minister ought to earn could possibly be influenced by his/her level of sympathy felt for the current government (Kelley & Evans, 1993, p. 85). Furthermore, the same could also be the case regarding the general level of political and institutional trust in the country. In countries where these are low, as for example in post-Communist countries, Mediterranean countries and the US, the respondents are probably not willing to pay high salaries to ministers. Secondly and most importantly, the index, in which only ‘chairmen of large national corporations’ represent the top group, to a greater extent reflects the conditions on the private labour market or, in other terms, a classical worker-capital dichotomy. General practitioners and cabinet ministers are employed by or at least funded or subsidised by government institutions. The wages or profits of these groups are therefore also to a great extent a political matter, rather than mainly a subject of negotiation among labour market actors.

In addition, as the case is with all aggregated measures, information is lost by aggregating (Larsen, 2006). Following the approach of Larsen (2006), the general 1999 measures will be disaggregated. To tap the top-middle ratio, two competing measures are created. The first indicates how much the respondents think ministers, chairmen or general practitioners should earn more than a skilled factory worker. The second follows the arguments above and merely calculates a chairman vs skilled factory worker ratio. To tap the middle-bottom (of the labour market) ratio just one measure will be constructed. This indicates how much the respondents think a skilled factory worker should earn more than a shop assistant or an unskilled factory worker. Because the occupation ‘skilled factory worker’ is excluded from the occupational question battery in ISSP 2009, these disaggregated measures can only be constructed with 1999 data. The results are displayed in Table 5-3 and 5-4 below:

Table 5-3 Attitudes towards the Level of Inequality in Gross Wages for Six Occupations in ISSP 1999, country medians

<sup>A</sup> Wage dispersion index	<sup>B</sup> High- vs. Low paid occ.	<sup>C</sup> Chairmen vs. Low paid occ.	<sup>D</sup> High paid occ. Vs. Skilled	<sup>E</sup> Chairmen vs. Skilled worker	<sup>F</sup> Skilled worker vs. Low paid	
RUS	4.67	RUS 6.00	FR 6.25	FR 4.17	FR 5.00	RUS 1.85
FR	4.52	PL 5.19	RUS 5.71	RUS 4.08	SLO 3.75	LV 1.60
GB	4.36	CZ 5.00	GB 5.56	PL 3.83	HU 3.75	BG 1.50
PL	4.33	LV 5.00	LV 5.36	HU 3.75	GB 3.71	USA 1.45
AUS	4.18	FR 5.00	CZ 5.00	CZ 3.67	CZ 3.50	GB 1.43
CZ	4.17	GB 4.90	PL 4.67	SLO 3.50	LV 3.33	CDN 1.40
USA	4.09	HU 4.57	HU 4.61	PT 3.42	PT 3.33	CZ 1.36
PT	4.00	PT 4.50	CDN 4.47	GB 3.33	PL 3.33	CY 1.33
LV	3.93	WD 4.29	USA 4.44	WD 3.25	WD 3.33	AUS 1.33
NZ	3.89	ED 4.15	NZ 4.44	AT 3.17	NZ 3.33	ED 1.33
HU	3.89	SLO 4.08	SLO 4.44	NZ 3.00	AUS 3.33	PL 1.33
WD	3.84	USA 4.00	WD 4.44	ED 3.00	USA 3.25	NZ 1.33
CDN	3.77	NZ 4.00	PT 4.35	IL 3.00	AT 3.20	PT 1.30
ED	3.73	AT 3.89	ED 4.08	LV 3.00	CDN 3.20	WD 1.29
AT	3.64	AUS 3.75	AT 4.00	AUS 2.92	ED 3.00	AT 1.25
SLO	3.64	CDN 3.63	AUS 4.00	USA 2.86	RUS 3.00	ES 1.24
CY	3.30	CY 3.50	IL 3.64	CY 2.67	IL 3.00	FR 1.21
IL	3.30	IL 3.44	BG 2.86	CDN 2.50	CY 2.39	HU 1.20
BG	2.79	BG 3.11	CY 2.83	ES 2.08	ES 2.00	IL 1.20
<b>DK</b>	<b>2.33</b>	ES 2.57	ES 2.50	BG 2.00	BG 1.80	<b>NO 1.20</b>
ES	2.31	<b>DK 2.25</b>	<b>NO 2.13</b>	<b>DK 2.00</b>	<b>SE 1.78</b>	<b>SE 1.17</b>
<b>SE</b>	<b>2.10</b>	<b>SE 2.21</b>	<b>SE 2.08</b>	<b>SE 1.88</b>	<b>NO 1.75</b>	<b>DK 1.15</b>
<b>NO</b>	<b>2.02</b>	<b>NO 2.00</b>	<b>DK 2.00</b>	<b>NO 1.67</b>	<b>DK 1.67</b>	SLO 1.14
Average	3.60	3.96	4.08	2.99	3.03	1.33
Scand.	2.15	2.15	2.07	1.85	1.73	1.17
Others	3.82	4.23	4.38	3.16	3.05	1.35

Notes: <sup>A</sup>The wage dispersion index is calculated by summarising the statements for the three occupations: chairman of a large national corporation, minister in the national government, and general practitioner and afterwards dividing this figure by three. Hereafter the statements of the two occupations: shop assistant and unskilled factory worker are summarised and divided by two. Lastly, the first index is then divided by the second.

<sup>B</sup>This index is calculated the same way as the wage dispersion index, but the occupation general practitioner is withdrawn from the index of the top group.

<sup>C</sup>In the index of the third column the occupation minister in the national government is also withdrawn in the same way.

<sup>D</sup>The index of the fourth column is constructed by dividing the index of the average statements of the top occupations (chairman of a large national corporation, minister in the national government, and general practitioner), by the statements for a skilled factory worker.

<sup>E</sup>This index taps the chairmen vs skilled worker wage ratio.

<sup>F</sup>This index is the ratio of a skilled worker to the average of the two low-paid occupations – shop assistant and unskilled worker in a factory.

Source: Social Inequality Module III (1999) of the International Social Survey Program (ISSP).

Table 5-3 clearly shows that the Scandinavian countries are exceptionally egalitarian in 1999. This is true no matter which of the three general measures are used (column 1-3), or after disaggregating in top-middle/middle-bottom ratios (column 4-6). The bottom of the table displays averages of the country medians. They show that Scandinavians only want the top occupations to earn around two times more than the bottom occupations, while the average of the medians in the remaining countries is approximately four times more. It is also worth noticing in the disaggregated measures of column 4-6 that the Scandinavian medians most clearly stand out from the remaining countries if we look at the top-medium relationship of column 4-5. As suggested above, this again suggests that Scandinavian egalitarianism is mostly characterised by an aversion to top excess, rather than a wish to spoil the bottom of the labour market.

The extraordinary Scandinavian results are not the only result of interest in Table 5-3. *Firstly*, it is clear that subtracting the occupations ‘general practitioner’ and ‘minister’ in column 2 and 3 respectively actually makes a big difference in the country rankings. Withdrawing the general practitioner occupation, the scores of many post-Communist countries are increased notably. When subtracting the minister occupation, a similar but somewhat smaller effect can be seen for the Anglo-Saxon countries. The explanation of these results can be found in Table 5-1. The median should-earn wage of doctors in most post-Communist countries is thus markedly lower than the corresponding ‘minister’ and ‘chairman’ wages. This is in line with Larsen’s (2006) arguments, but not the case in general in other countries. In the Anglo-Saxon countries it is often the ministers who, according to the respondents, are not supposed to earn as much as the chairmen and doctors.

*Secondly*, these results also indicate that many of the post-Communist countries apparently have accepted the greater wage dispersion rates followed by the transitions to market economy. This attitudinal transition is also noticed in some of the exiting studies that mainly use earlier data from 1987 and 1992 (Arts et al., 1995; Austen, 1999; Austen, 2002; Blanchflower & Freeman, 1997; Gijsberts, 2002; Janmaat, 2013; Kelley & Evans, 1993; Mason, 1995).<sup>49</sup>

*Thirdly*, the conclusion of Larsen (2006) seems to blur when including the post-Communist countries (column 4-5). Of the Continental European countries only France seems to be a real top-outlier, together with some post-Communist countries not included in Larsen’s analysis. There is not much difference between the remaining Anglo-Saxon and Continental European countries though. In column 6,

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<sup>49</sup> Results of the next subsection indicate by contrast that the attitudinal transition is not finished yet. Even if the median values of differences the level of inequality in gross wages have increased in many post-Communist countries, the respondents want to increase the actual wage levels of the low-paid occupations and by contrast reduce the wage levels of the high-paid occupations considerably.

the Anglo-Saxon countries are, as Larsen (2006) states, placed higher than the continental European countries, but this result is again 'overruled' by the score of many post-Communist countries (pp. 39-41). Table 5-4 below will replicate the analysis above, albeit with 2009 data. The absent occupation 'skilled factory worker' prevents the replication of column 4-6 of Table 5-3:

*Table 5-4 Attitudes towards the Level of Inequality in Gross Wages for Five Occupations in ISSP 2009, country medians*

<sup>A</sup> Wage dispersion index		<sup>B</sup> High- vs. Low paid occ.		<sup>C</sup> Chairmen vs. Low paid occ.	
CY	6.47	CY	6.28	AUS	8.00
AUS	5.81	AUS	6.15	FR	6.67
CZ	5.74	AT	5.37	USA	6.49
USA	5.51	FR	5.36	NZ	6.01
FR	4.77	DE	5.05	DE	5.45
GB	4.61	USA	5.00	GB	5.26
DE	4.56	PL	5.00	HU	5.00
PT	4.36	HU	5.00	PL	5.00
NZ	4.33	RUS	5.00	PT	5.00
CH	4.17	CH	4.78	RUS	5.00
HU	4.17	GB	4.67	AT	4.83
PL	4.13	PT	4.62	EE	4.67
AT	4.05	EE	4.50	CY	4.57
RUS	4.00	NZ	4.33	CH	4.44
ES	3.92	SLO	4.08	SLO	4.44
EE	3.91	CZ	3.87	FIN	4.17
TR	3.33	PT	3.85	CZ	4.00
FIN	3.33	FIN	3.75	IL	3.64
SLK	3.30	TR	3.60	SLK	3.53
HR	3.00	UA	3.33	HR	3.51
SLO	2.89	HR	3.30	UA	3.33
BG	2.87	IL	3.25	TR	3.20
IL	2.86	BG	3.00	BG	3.08
UA	2.79	LV	3.00	LV	3.00
FL	2.67	FL	2.83	ES	2.86
LV	2.67	ES	2.83	FL	2.84
IS	2.53	IS	2.60	IS	2.67
<b>DK</b>	<b>2.53</b>	<b>DK</b>	<b>2.50</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>2.33</b>
<b>NO</b>	<b>2.32</b>	<b>SE</b>	<b>2.38</b>	<b>SE</b>	<b>2.22</b>
<b>SE</b>	<b>2.30</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>2.27</b>	<b>DK</b>	<b>2.00</b>
Average	3.80		4.05		4.24
Skand.	2.38		2.38		2.18
Others	3.95		4.24		4.47

*Notes:* <sup>A</sup>The wage dispersion index is calculated by summarising the statements for the three occupations: chairman of a large national corporation, minister in the national government and general practitioner and afterwards dividing this figure by three. Thereafter the statements of the two occupations: shop assistant and unskilled factory worker are summarised and divided by two. Lastly, the first index is then divided by the second.

<sup>B</sup>This index is calculated the same way as the wage dispersion index, but the occupation general practitioner is withdrawn from the index of the top group.

<sup>C</sup>In the index of the third column, the occupation minister in the national government is also withdrawn in the same way.

*Source:* Social Inequality Module IV (2009) of the International Social Survey Program (ISSP).

Table 5-4 shows that the Scandinavian countries are still clearly the most egalitarian in 2009, no matter which of the three measures are used. The Scandinavian egalitarianism in attitudes towards the level of inequality in gross wages is thus clear and consistent in a comparative perspective. However, the Scandinavians have maybe become slightly less egalitarian. The Scandinavian median-averages of approximately 2.38 are thus a little bit higher than the 2.15 value for 1999. This possible anti-egalitarian move is still dwarfed by the comparison with the development in countries like Cyprus, Australia, as well as several post-Communist countries. As the case was in Table 5-2, the Icelandic medians are actually closer to a Scandinavian level, while the Finns have much higher medians.

The most notable development in a comparison of Table 5-4 with Table 5-3 is furthermore that the Anglo-Saxon countries have climbed up the table, surpassing most post-Communist countries. The Anglo-Saxon countries are followed closely by Continental European countries such as Germany and France, while Flanders by contrast has values closely resembling the Scandinavian.

For the reasons argued above the third measure in Table 5-3 and 5-4, called 'Chairmen vs Low-paid Occupations' will be used as the central dependent variable in the survey-oriented analyses in the remaining chapters of the dissertation. It should be clearly stated here that, in spite the concerns raised in Chapter 4 above, concerning the contextual dependency and hence comparability of the chairman occupation in different countries, the low Scandinavian scores on all indexes constructed signifies that the Scandinavians really seem very egalitarian in comparative perspective. Because of the centrality of the 'Chairmen vs Low-paid Occupations' measure, it has been found relevant to display the results of all the four rounds of the Social Inequality module (1987, 1992, 1999 and 2009) in a single table, which can be seen below:



Table 5-5 Attitudes towards the Level of Inequality in Gross Wages for Three Occupations in ISSP 1987, 1992, 1999 and 2009, country medians

1987		1992		1999		2009	
AT	5.00	GB	5.56	FR	6.25	AUS	8.00
USA	5.00	USA	5.33	RUS	5.71	FR	6.67
GB	5.00	RUS	5.00	GB	5.56	USA	6.49
WD	4.00	CDN	4.57	LV	5.36	NZ	6.01
NL	4.00	WD	4.29	<sup>B</sup> CZ	5.00	DE	5.45
AUS	3.36	ED	4.14	PL	4.67	GB	5.26
CH	2.86	SLO	3.85	HU	4.61	H	5.00
HU	2.50	NZ	3.65	CDN	4.47	PL	5.00
PL	2.33	AUS	3.55	USA	4.44	PT	5.00
		PL	3.50	NZ	4.44	RUS	5.00
		<sup>B</sup> CZ	3.33	SLO	4.44	AT	4.83
		HU	3.20	WD	4.44	EE	4.67
		IT	2.76	PT	4.35	CY	4.57
		BG	2.67	ED	4.08	CH	4.44
		<b>NO</b>	<b>2.00</b>	AT	4.00	SLO	4.44
		<b>SE</b>	<b>1.92</b>	AUS	4.00	FIN	4.17
				IL	3.64	<sup>B</sup> CZ	4.00
				BG	2.86	IL	3.64
				CY	2.83	SLK	3.53
				ES	2.50	HR	3.51
				<b>NO</b>	<b>2.13</b>	UA	3.33
				<b>SE</b>	<b>2.08</b>	TR	3.20
				<b>DK</b>	<b>2.00</b>	BG	3.08
						LV	3.00
						E	2.86
						FL	2.84
						IS	2.67
						<b>NO</b>	<b>2.33</b>
						<b>SE</b>	<b>2.22</b>
						<b>DK</b>	<b>2.00</b>
Average	3.78		3.71		4.08		4.24
Skand.	-		1.96		2.07		2.18
Others	-		3.96		4.38		4.47

Notes: The statements of the chairman of a large national corporation-variable are divided with an index constructed from an average of the statements for two lowest-paid occupations. Concerning the last part: the statements for the two lowest-paid occupations - a shop assistant and unskilled factory worker - are summarised and divided by two.

<sup>B</sup>CZ signifies Czechoslovakia in 1992, but the Czech Republic in 1999 and 2009

Sources: Social Inequality Modules I-IV (1987, 1992, 1999 and 2009) of the International Social Survey Program (ISSP).

Much of what is interesting about Table 5-5 is already mentioned above. Denmark did not participate in ISSP 1992 and none of the Scandinavian countries participated in 1987. In 1992, Norway and Sweden are again found at the very bottom of the table. Sweden this time even has a median value below 2.0, although as described above such minute differences should not necessarily be deemed significant. As far back as we have data therefore, Scandinavian egalitarianism seems clear.

Two other things are maybe also important to notice concerning Table 5-5. First, the overall average of the non-Scandinavian medians continues to rise throughout the period covered by the four surveys. This is of course not a trend in all countries, and the strength of the trend varies a lot. It is remarkable that a country such as Australia for example starts out with a quite low median, in the comparative sense, of 3.36 in 1987 and ends up with a median of 8.00 in 2009. Also, as existing literature has described, the post-Communist countries seem to start out with a legacy of almost Scandinavian median levels: in several cases below 3, and certainly below 4 in 1987 and 1992. In 1999 and 2009 many of the same countries score almost double this median value. The varying trend over time identified by McCall (2013) for the USA, also by using other measures, can be seen in the table too.

### **5.1.2.3 Attitudes towards the Degree of Justice in Levels of Gross Wages for Different Occupations – the unjust Salaries of Chairmen in Scandinavia**

The analysis of the third dimension – *attitudes towards the degree of justice in levels of gross wages for different occupations* – also incorporates data from the items asking how much the respondents think the people in different occupations actually earn usually. The disaggregated measures created below are inspired by Osberg & Smeeding's (2006) aggregated measure of:

‘...how much the respondents own personal estimate of the actual degree of inequality in pay among a range of occupations diverges from his or her own estimate of ‘fair’ inequality within this range of occupations.’ (p. 460).

But instead of pooling all occupations into one overall measure as done by Osberg & Smeeding (2006) and Szirmai (1986; 1991), and more in line with McCall's (2013) approach, the measures below will look at each occupation separately.

A *first step* in creating these measures is, for each respondent, subtracting how much he/she thinks a certain occupation should earn, from the same respondents' perception of how much the same occupation actually earns usually. A positive figure on this measure indicates that the respondent thinks a person holding the occupation should earn more than he/she is perceived to do usually. As the case was concerning the analysis of the first dimension, the problem with this preliminary

measure is that it is in local currency. Also, it varies again as to whether the respondents refer to a net or a gross sum, and to monthly or yearly salaries.

To be able to compare the country median values in this case also, a *second step* is thus to standardise the preliminary first measure. This is done simply by dividing the preliminary measure by the ‘actually earns usually’ statement of the respondent for the same occupation. In this way, a standardised measure is created. The measure denotes by how big a proportion of the perceived wage level of a certain occupation the respondent would want the wage level to increase or decrease. The results of 1999 and 2009 are displayed below in Table 5-6 and 5-7:

*Table 5-6 Degree of Justice in Levels of Pay for Six Occupations in ISSP 1999, country medians*

	a cabinet minister in the <national> government	a chairman of a large national corporation	a doctor in general practice	A skilled worker in a factory	a shop assistant	an unskilled worker in a factory
BG	0.00	BG	RUS	RUS	RUS	RUS
NO	<b>-0.02</b>	LV	LV	LV	LV	LV
DK	<b>-0.08</b>	ES	BG	BG	BG	BG
USA	-0.17	CY	HU	PL	PL	HU
SE	<b>-0.20</b>	PL	PL	HU	HU	PL
GB	-0.20	IL	CZ	HU	CZ	PL
AUS	-0.20	DK	SLO	SLO	CZ	SLO
CDN	-0.20	SLO	IL	IL	PT	PT
HU	-0.22	WD	DK	PT	GB	IL
NZ	-0.25	AT	SE	FR	FR	CZ
FR	-0.25	NO	NO	ES	FR	FR
PT	-0.25	CZ	USA	USA	ES	ES
CY	-0.25	HU	GB	GB	CY	CY
IL	-0.25	PT	AUS	AUS	IL	USA
LV	-0.25	ED	NZ	ED	ED	GB
WD	-0.28	USA	CDN	ED	USA	AUS
ES	-0.29	SE	WD	NZ	AT	NZ
PL	-0.30	AUS	AT	AT	SE	NZ
CZ	-0.30	NZ	FR	SE	DK	AT
AT	-0.33	CDN	ES	NO	AUS	ED
SLO	-0.33	GB	PT	CY	NZ	CDN
ED	-0.38	FR	ED	WD	CDN	WD
RUS	-0.40	RUS	CY	DK	WD	NO
Average	-0.23			CDN	NO	RUS
Skand.	-0.10			0.00	0.18	SE
Others	-0.26			0.35	0.38	0.10
				0.11	0.20	0.11
				0.38	0.41	0.43

The Scandinavian countries in the analysis of Table 5-6<sup>50</sup> also stand out somewhat in 1999. For all other occupations than the chairmen occupation, the Scandinavian median values are quite close to zero in a comparative perspective. This means that the wages the occupations are perceived to earn usually seems more or less at a legitimate level in Scandinavia. The clearest example of this is that the Scandinavians only want to increase the perceived wages of unskilled workers by 11 %, while the median average in the remaining countries is 43 %. The median Russian wants to increase wages by even as much as 150 %.

A notable difference between Norway and Denmark versus Sweden is seen in the minister column. The very low Danish and Norwegian scores of minus 2 % and 8 % could possibly be seen as an effect of the relatively high level of political trust in these countries, in comparative perspective. The somewhat higher Swedish median of minus 20 % could be an effect of the economic and political crisis that Sweden faced in the early nineties – something Norway and Denmark did not face to the same extent in that period (cf. Chapter 3).

Concerning the chairmen column, the Scandinavian medians are more in line with those of the other countries. The Scandinavian countries' median average does not stand out from the remaining ones, but this average hides a big variation between the Swedish median of minus 32 % and the Danish minus 17 %. In a Scandinavian perspective, this overall result translates into quite a big dissatisfaction with the chairmen's perceived wages in 1999 – especially in Sweden. The aversion to top-level excess appears in a very clear form in Table 5-5 and is restricted mainly to the chairman occupation. The results thus suggest that the wage levels of chairmen are perceived to have increased too much beyond the country median wage level to be considered just.

The Scandinavian medians are not the only results of interest. *Firstly*, the respondents in general do want wage levels to change, often quite a lot. At the same time, it is still quite clear, as argued many times above, that most respondents probably take as their point of departure their perception of the actual wage level of an occupation, when deciding on the just level. *Secondly*, the pattern of median attitudes across countries is quite similar: the two often best-paid occupations – government ministers and chairmen – ought to have their wages reduced; doctors

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<sup>50</sup> *Notes:* Calculated for each occupation by subtracting what the respondents in the various countries think that the occupations usually 'actually earn' from what the occupations should earn. This figure is then standardised by dividing it by the amount of the 'actually-earns' statement of the respondent.

*Source:* Social Inequality Module III (1999) of the International Social Survey Program (ISSP).

wages are generally seen as just, while the remaining lower-paid occupations ought to have their wages increased, according to the respondents.

*Thirdly*, of course interesting intra-country variations in this pattern exist. Maybe most remarkably, the post-Communist respondents are in general not satisfied with the perceived wages of general practitioners, but want to increase these quite a lot. This could possibly be caused by the low wage levels of the publicly employed, including doctors, in these countries. Doctors require a long and hard education and perform a crucial task in the society. This would probably lead many to think a quite high wage for this occupation to be deserved or fair. *Fourthly*, although the post-Communist countries have accepted the transition to market economy somewhat (see above), this table clearly indicates a socialist legacy (Arts et al., 1995; Austen, 1999; Austen, 2002; Blanchflower & Freeman, 1997; Gijsberts, 2002; Janmaat, 2013; Kelley & Evans, 1993; Mason, 1995). Table 5-6 show that post-Communist respondents clearly wish for a more compressed wage structure. Their medians indicate that they want to see government ministers' wages reduced by as much as 40 %, and chairmen's wages reduced by as much as 60 %. It is even more outstanding that they want to see wage raises for the remaining occupations by more than 100 % in some instances. The post-Communist countries portray great internal variations in patterns though. Table 5-7 below will replicate the analysis of Table 5-6 with data from 2009 (minus the column 'skilled factory worker'):

Table 5-7 Degree of Justice in Levels of Pay for Five Occupations in ISSP 2009, country medians

a cabinet minister in the <national> government	a chairman of a large national corporation	a doctor in general practice	a shop assistant	an unskilled worker in a factory					
CH	0.00	BG	0.00	UA	1.50	UA	1.00	UA	1.00
<b>NO</b>	<b>-0.07</b>	TR	0.00	RUS	0.67	TR	0.75	TR	0.82
<b>DK</b>	<b>-0.11</b>	CY	-0.08	H	0.33	HR	0.67	RUS	0.67
IS	-0.11	EE	-0.17	IL	0.25	PL	0.67	SLO	0.60
NZ	-0.17	UA	-0.20	EE	0.25	H	0.64	HR	0.60
CY	-0.17	IL	-0.25	HR	0.25	RUS	0.60	H	0.54
AUS	-0.20	FL	-0.25	LV	0.14	BG	0.60	PL	0.50
EE	-0.20	NZ	-0.29	TR	0.11	EE	0.60	BG	0.50
<b>SE</b>	<b>-0.25</b>	SLK	-0.29	AT	0.00	LV	0.58	PT	0.50
GB	-0.26	HR	-0.33	AUS	0.00	SLO	0.56	EE	0.43
USA	-0.28	CZ	-0.33	FL	0.00	PT	0.50	LV	0.39
FIN	-0.30	LV	-0.33	BG	0.00	SLK	0.43	IL	0.38
BG	-0.33	<b>DK</b>	<b>-0.33</b>	<b>SE</b>	<b>0.00</b>	CZ	0.43	FR	0.36
FL	-0.33	PL	-0.36	<b>DK</b>	<b>0.00</b>	E	0.38	IS	0.33
DE	-0.33	IS	-0.38	FIN	0.00	FR	0.33	SLK	0.33
FR	-0.33	FIN	-0.38	IS	0.00	IS	0.32	CZ	0.33
PT	-0.33	<b>SE</b>	<b>-0.38</b>	FR	0.00	DE	0.25	E	0.33
SLO	-0.33	<b>NO</b>	<b>-0.40</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>0.00</b>	GB	0.25	DE	0.25
IL	-0.38	E	-0.40	NZ	0.00	AT	0.25	AT	0.25
TR	-0.38	GB	-0.40	PL	0.00	CY	0.25	GB	0.25
HR	-0.40	CH	-0.40	PT	0.00	IL	0.25	CH	0.22
PL	-0.40	PT	-0.44	SLK	0.00	FIN	0.25	AUS	0.20
SLK	-0.42	SLO	-0.44	USA	0.00	CH	0.25	FL	0.20
AT	-0.44	DE	-0.50	SLO	0.00	AUS	0.22	USA	0.20
E	-0.44	FR	-0.50	E	0.00	USA	0.20	CY	0.18
CZ	-0.47	H	-0.50	CZ	0.00	FL	0.20	NZ	0.17
H	-0.50	AT	-0.50	CH	0.00	<b>DK</b>	<b>0.20</b>	FIN	0.10
RUS	-0.50	RUS	-0.50	DE	0.00	NZ	0.19	<b>SE</b>	<b>0.09</b>
LV	-0.60	USA	-0.60	GB	0.00	<b>NO</b>	<b>0.19</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>0.09</b>
UA	-0.67	AUS	-0.67	CY	-0.13	<b>SE</b>	<b>0.19</b>	<b>DK</b>	<b>0.09</b>
Average	-0.32		-0.35		0.11		0.41		0.36
Skand.	-0.14		-0.37		0.00		0.19		0.09
Others	-0.34		-0.35		0.12		0.43		0.39

Notes: Calculated for each occupation by subtracting what the respondents in the various countries think that the occupations usually 'actually earn' from what the occupations should earn. This figure is then standardised by dividing it by the amount of the 'actually-earns' statement of the respondent.

Source: Social Inequality Module IV (2009) of the International Social Survey Program (ISSP).

Table 5-7 reconfirms the same pattern in Scandinavian median attitudes in 2009 as in 1999: The perceived wage levels of all occupations – without the chairmen-occupation – are seen as, comparatively speaking, very just in Scandinavia (Sweden also still lags behind Denmark and Norway concerning the minister occupation, and even more than in 1999). The biggest intra-Scandinavian change in the 10-year period is clearly an increased degree of dissatisfaction with the chairmen's perceived wage levels. The Scandinavian median average for this occupation increased from -0.24 to -0.37. This increase mirrors a general increase in dissatisfaction with perceived top wage levels in the countries in general, also seen in the ministers' wage levels. Denmark and Norway therefore do not fully follow suit with this trend.

The two other Nordic countries, each in their own way, resemble and differ from the Scandinavian countries. The Finnish respondents are more dissatisfied with ministers' perceived wage levels and, to a lesser extent, with the shop assistants' wages, than the Danish, Norwegian and Swedish respondents are. The patterns of the remaining occupations are quite similar. The Icelandic pattern is the same as the Scandinavian countries' pattern in the three first columns. Concerning the two lower-paid occupations, the median Icelandic respondent wants significantly bigger wage increases than the corresponding respondent in the three Scandinavian countries.

Besides the Nordic results, Table 5-7 reconfirms the general pattern of respondents' wishing higher wages for the lower-paid occupations, lower wages for the higher-paid occupations, and finding the perceived wage level of general practitioners fair. Some post-Communist countries are still among the most extreme in the columns. The transition to market economy is thus yet to become legitimate, as seen by this measure.

Countries like the US and Australia seem to have experienced a rather dramatic attitudinal effect from the financial crisis in respondents' wish for drastically lower wages for chairmen. As described above, most respondents in the US probably think of a CEO of a large national corporation, when answering the question about just wages for the chairman occupation (Lorsch & Zelleke, 2005). In spite of this difference between the US and other countries, the Americans do not seem to wish for radically different wage level ratios for the lower-paid occupations (Tables 5-3 – 5-5).

#### **5.1.2.4 Degree of Consensus in Attitudes towards Gross Wages – the increasingly divided Scandinavians**

The *consensus* dimension concerns to what extent the respondents in the different countries agree or differ about the measures presented above. Dispersion measures like the standard deviation would normally be presented together with measures of central tendencies, as Tables 5-1 – 5-7 above display. This standard approach was



not followed, though. The tables above are big tables taking up a lot of space and containing a lot of information already. Graphically it was difficult to incorporate the dispersion measures in some of the tables. The tables furthermore already contained many countries and as much as six different measures per table. Extra information in the form of dispersion measures could easily have led to more confusion instead of clarification.

If dispersion tables for all measures presented above were presented below, six new tables would be needed. To conserve space, just the results of these tables will be presented below. The tables are Tables 8-5–8-10 in Appendix A.<sup>51</sup>

Tables 8-5–8-10 in Appendix A display a quite remarkable tendency: the degree of consensus in the Scandinavian countries generally becomes smaller from 1999 to 2009.

Going into more detail, *Tables 8-5–8-6* show that especially the Norwegians and Danes disagree more about what the occupations ought to earn in 2009 than in 1999. The Swedes have only slightly larger CoVs in 2009 than in 1999. This result can be found both by looking at the actual CoVs of the countries and by comparing their positions in the tables to those of other countries. The CoVs of Denmark and Norway on average rise significantly from 0.026 and 0.008 to 0.151 and 0.199 respectively. For Norway this means that while the average deviation from the median was approximately 1 % from the median in 1999, it increased to approximately 20 % in 2009. Especially Norway moves from the bottom of the columns in 1999 to the upper-middle of the table. This Norwegian result is

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<sup>51</sup> To measure the degrees of consensus, the classic standard deviation will in general be used. Concerning *the levels of gross wages for different occupations* measures of Tables 5-1 – 5-2, the standard deviation will not be used as the dispersion measure to be interpreted though. Even though the national currency statements are recalculated to PPP-corrected USD in Tables 5-1 – 5-2, there are still quite big differences in the countries' overall levels. The standard deviation can be roughly interpreted as the average distance from the average. Interpreting a standard deviation is therefore relative to which scale the measure of central tendency has. The consequence is that it is not possible to directly compare the standard deviations of countries which are quite different. To give an example, a standard deviation of 1,000 PPP-corrected USD is quite small, if the median/average is 75,000 PPP-corrected USD. If the median/average instead is 7,500 PPP-corrected USD a standard deviation of 1,000 PPP-corrected USD denotes a significant dispersion of the respondents' statements. What is needed is therefore a standardised version of the standard deviation, i.e. setting the standard deviation values relative to the measures of central tendency and specifically its size. The 'Coefficient of Variation' (CoV) is exactly such a measure, which is why it is used in these two cases. The formula for calculating the coefficient of variation is normally:  $C_v = \sigma/\mu$ , but because the median is consistently used in the article as the measure of central tendency, a slightly modified version of the CoV is also used here:  $C_v = \sigma/M$  ( $\sigma$  = standard deviation,  $M$  = median and  $\mu$  = mean).

furthermore in accordance with the remarkable degree of consensus Osberg & Smeeding (2006) finds for Norway, albeit with a slightly different measure.

*Tables 8-7–8-8* confirm this tendency even more clearly. For 1999 the Scandinavian countries are in general at the bottom of the columns, with very low standard deviations in a comparative perspective. The exception is the two first columns for Norway, at the very top of the table. This drops drastically after excluding the minister occupation in the third columns though. For 2009 Denmark, Norway and Sweden move from the bottom to the middle of the columns. Most of the standard deviations also increase quite significantly from below 0.1 to around 0.2.

*Tables 8-9–8-10* again confirm the tendency. The Scandinavian countries are generally in the lower half of the columns in 1999, with standard deviations below 0.025. The exception is again Norway, which in 1999 has statistics for the chairmen and doctor columns which do not make any sense on the ‘proportion scales’ on which the measures of the justice dimension operates. These results thus serve as a textbook example of how much outliers can influence average, and hence standard deviation measures. If we ignore the Norwegian results the Scandinavian countries clearly move from the lower half to the top of the table from 1999-2009. Sweden is again the only country ‘left behind’, but this time only in the three last columns.

The two other Nordic countries, Iceland and Finland, are not ‘as Scandinavian’ when measured on some of the other dimensions. Iceland, in all the 2009 tables, displays a very high degree of consensus not mirrored in the Scandinavian countries. Finland is less special in this respect, but also shows a higher degree of consensus than the Scandinavian countries in general.

To sum up, the Scandinavians clearly show less consensus about the attitudes towards gross wages in 2009 than in 1999, but Sweden does so less than Denmark and Norway. This difference will be of crucial importance in Chapters 6–7. This result can be found in all Tables 8-5–8-10, but is of course more apparent in some than in others.

### 5.1.3. SUMMARY

The purpose of this section was in a two-way comparative perspective to examine if and how the Scandinavians’ attitudes towards gross wages stand out from those inhabited by people in other western countries and how the development have been from mainly 1999 to 2009. Four dimensions of this concept was operationalised and analysed:

- *The levels of gross wages for different occupations*
- *The level of inequality in gross wages*
- *The degree of justice in the levels of gross wages for different occupations*
- *Consensus*

The analysis of the four operationalised dimensions of attitudes towards gross wages clearly showed that the Scandinavian attitudes of both 1999 and 2009 (and 1992) were in fact quite exceptional. The double comparative design – that is, comparative in both space and time – and in-depth analyses of four dimensions of the concept, furthermore contributes to a more complex, but also potentially dynamic understanding, of how the attitudes of the Scandinavians might be expected to develop in the future. This is in contrast to much of the existing research in the field.

The Scandinavian countries most clearly and consistently stood out from the other western countries in investigations of the dimension of *attitudes towards the level of inequality in gross wages*: No matter which of the three aggregated, or the three disaggregated measures are used, the Scandinavians want very small levels of inequality in gross wages in 1992–2009. As argued above, these results can also be seen as a confirmation of reliability of the central dependent variable in the subsequent analyses, in spite the unavoidable ‘bias’ of contextuality in the responses (see Tables 5-3 – 5-5).

The analyses of other dimensions furthermore substantiated that this egalitarianism seems mostly an effect of an aversion to top-level excess, rather than a wish to spoil the bottom of the labour market excessively. In the analyses of the dimension of *attitudes towards levels of gross wages for different occupations*, it was thus *firstly* made clear, and in time increasingly appeared to be consistent, that the Scandinavians want quite low salaries for the higher-paid occupations, compared to most other rich western countries. Contrasting the Anglo-Saxon, the Continental European and post-Communist countries, the Scandinavian countries displayed a rising tendency from left to right in both the Tables of 1999 and 2009 (see Tables 5-1 – 5-2, as well as Tables 8-1 – 8-4 in Appendix A).

*Secondly*, the aversion towards top excess seemed even clearer in the analysis of the dimension of *attitudes towards degree of justice in levels of gross wages for different occupations*. Scandinavians in general find the perceived wage levels of the occupations quite just in a comparative perspective. The two lower-paid occupations thus ought to have their wages increased by a maximum of 20 % according to Scandinavians in both 1999 and 2009, which in a comparative perspective is very little. The only real exception to this pattern was the chairman occupation. From a Scandinavian perspective thus, the wages of chairmen in 2009 need to be reduced by 33–40 % (Tables 5-6 – 5-7).

To sum up, in accordance with Åberg’s (1984), Graubard’s (1986) and Andersen’s (1983) assumptions in the 1980s, Scandinavians do in fact seem consistently to be exceptionally egalitarian, compared to citizens of other western countries’ in 1992, 1999 and 2009. This egalitarianism furthermore seems clearly related mostly to an aversion to top-level excess, rather than to a wish to spoil the bottom of the labour market excessively. In the analysis of the last dimension: *Degree of consensus in attitudes towards gross wages for different occupations*, clear indications are found

of cracks in the Scandinavian egalitarianism. Although clearer in some tables than in others, a clear tendency of a decreased degree of consensus, measured by various dispersion measures, can be seen. In 1999 the Scandinavian countries were among those with the lowest standard deviations and Coefficients of Variation. But by 2009, the Scandinavian countries had crawled upwards to the centre or even the top of the tables. The Scandinavians are thus clearly more polarised on these issues in 2009 than in 1999 – Sweden less so than Denmark and Norway. This tendency could indicate a dynamic trend towards a change in Scandinavian egalitarianism in the future – in one direction or another.

A final remark about the choice of focus is also in order. The two other Nordic countries Iceland and Finland are both present in the 2009 dataset. As described above, often the Scandinavian countries are not in themselves a focus of analysis in the social sciences. Instead, the Nordic countries and the Nordic model are often described as being special. In spite of this, the result shows that the Scandinavian, or maybe ‘core-Nordic’, attitudes towards gross wages clearly deviate from those of the Finnish and Icelandic respondents.

The *Icelandic* attitudes in several aspects actually resemble the Scandinavian ones. This is not the case in the level of consensus and justice though. The Icelanders thus maintain a very high degree of consensus also in 2009. On the other hand a much higher level of Icelandic dissatisfaction (than that of the Scandinavian countries) with the wages of the lower-paid occupations, can be seen in Table 5-7. The *Finnish* attitudes were even less similar to the Scandinavian. Only in the analysis of the justice dimension do the Finns in general resemble the Scandinavians. The Finnish attitudes in fact more clearly resemble those of some Continental European countries, than the Scandinavian ones.

## 5.2. EXPLAINING SCANDINAVIAN EGALITARIANISM?

The analyses above focussed on the first two parts of the research question: *What attitudes do Scandinavians express towards the level of inequality in gross wages, how do these attitudes develop over time and why do the Scandinavians express these attitudes?* This second overall section will start delving into the third part. As mentioned above, the analysis of this overall section will still be conducted at the most aggregated level, with the three Scandinavian as well as 35 other countries included in the analysis. The main scope of the analysis here is accordingly to try to see whether the Scandinavian egalitarianism that appears in the descriptive analyses above can be explained by explanations identified in existing literature on the subject.

Since Chapters 1–2 emphasise the main goal of the dissertation as identifying the macro-micro links driving the formation of Scandinavians’ attitudes to the level of inequality in gross wages, a method and hypotheses actually able to link the macro to the micro level are preferable. First, in each of the theoretical approaches

identified in existing literature as possible explanations for micro- and macro-level variations in attitudes to the level of inequality in gross wages – except the one labelled ‘social cleavages’ – there will be a theoretical and analytical distinction between their possible macro- and micro-level effects, as well as a discussion of possible interactions between the two.

Second, with these meta-theoretical and theoretical demands, multilevel analyses (MLA)<sup>52</sup> was the obvious choice as the method applied in the analysis below. Multilevel analyses explicitly allows simultaneous control for differences in attitudinal structures in the various countries as well as composition effects, and their combined effects on the overall variation between countries. Lastly, cross-level interactions testing for varying effects of covariates at the individual level between countries will also be tested here. Obviously the primary focus of these manoeuvres is still on explaining the aggregated – which also can be called the macro-level or between-country variations – and especially a significant Scandinavian dummy.

It should also be mentioned that because of the contextual and complex ontology described in Chapter 2 that induces context-dependent effects and mechanisms, these cross-level interaction terms seem crucial if we are to understand and explain attitudinal patterns within a context such as the Scandinavian, exactly because they allow the identification of context-specific patterns of correlations. At the same time this also means the cross-country main-effect hypotheses dominating the existing literature is unlikely to explain much of the Scandinavian egalitarianism statistically.

It should therefore also not come as a surprise that even if these analyses reveal interesting and substantive results in their own right, it is at the same time clear that first, the explanations found in existing literature and their operationalisation, and secondly the rather aggregated level of analysis, induce further investigations. The subsequent chapters will therefore both switch to a more disaggregated level of analysis and broaden the methodological and data-wise scope of the analysis.

### 5.2.1. THEORY

As described in Chapter 2, the dissertation will apply an open ontological approach as to which social mechanisms can possibly influence Scandinavians’ and others’ attitudes to the level of inequality in gross wages (Hedström & Swedberg, 1998; Hedström & Ylikoski, 2010; March & Olsen, 2006). This means a rather large variety of theories relevant to explaining attitudes towards the level of inequality in gross wages can be identified in the existing literature. This overall section distinguishes between four main approaches that overlap somewhat and each of

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<sup>52</sup> This class of statistical analysis goes by many names, such as hierarchical linear models, nested models, mixed models, random coefficient, random-effects models, random parameter models, or split-plot designs.

which entails different traditions or sub-approaches. Except for the first approach – denoted ‘social cleavages’ – there will also be an analytical distinction between possible micro- and macro-level effects of the same approach, as well as possibilities for interactions between these levels.

Two further points are worth emphasising at this point. First, some of the existing literature is in fact very much focussed on the effect of the unique context in which attitudes to the level of inequality in gross wages form. This seems more or less to be one of the main theoretical ideas behind the International Social Justice Project (ISJP) and the corresponding book (Kluegel, Mason, & Wegener, 1995). Mason (1995) for example uses the unique contextual development in each of the emerging capitalist states in Eastern Europe as an explanation of the differences in attitudinal patterns seen in these countries. The emphasis of the dissertation, as well as of the underlying ontology is obviously also to a great extent on the unique contextual effects on attitudes towards the level of inequality in gross wages. This interest is not in the special contextual effects in each of the 38 countries in the ISSP 2009 dataset, but only the three Scandinavian countries.

This is not to say that macro-level effects will not be taken seriously or not investigated. On the contrary, the MLA approach allows the introduction of both macro- and micro-level variables into the regression equations. The macro-level variables entered with this form of multi-country analysis need to take a more general and formalised form in order to be possibly able to explain statistically the Scandinavian dummy – why Scandinavians are highly egalitarian. Another contribution in the above-mentioned ISJP leads us somewhat in this direction by distinguishing between countries oriented towards respectively the state, the market, and the corresponding principles dominating these spheres, as the crucial macro-level variable explaining the overall differences in attitudes between the countries (Arts et al., 1995).

The approach below is, secondly, very much inspired by the ambitious and extensive approach of Szirmai (1986; 1991). Having had the advantage of being able to create and collect his own very expansive Dutch survey, he develops and tests elaborate path models with numerous micro-level independent variables operationalised from numerous theoretical traditions – economy, political science, (macro) sociology and social psychology. In contrast, we have to make do with the variables available in the ISSP 2009 dataset, as will be elaborated below. This is not as bad as it sounds though, for in addition, the purpose of the analyses of this section is not really on understanding the paths and relations of relevant attitudes and individual characteristics linked to attitudes towards the level of inequality in gross wages in a given context. Instead, the aim is to see whether the explanations of the existing literature enable us to statistically explain Scandinavian egalitarianism. All of this means that the theoretical and operationalisational work of Szirmai (1986, 1991) is very useful here. The elaborate path models though are not necessary, nor possible to replicate.

This also leads to one final and at first glance preposterous claim. In general, the various modules from the ISSP, such as the Social Inequality Module, are focused on presenting items relevant to just the module's theme. This is contrary to other cross-national survey programs e.g. the World Values Survey (WVS), the European Social Survey (ESS) and the Eurobarometer, which make items in their various rounds cover a range of different topics. All items from the ISSP 2009 dataset are theoretically thought to be connected to the theme of social inequality and thus relevant as explanatory variables in the multivariate models below. As will be made clear below, all of the attitudinal variables apparent in the ISSP 2009 dataset are in principle connected to the different justice beliefs and their sub-dimensions, while the various other variables fit with the other three overall approaches.

### 5.2.1.1 Social Cleavages – Rational Choice and Sociological Extensions

Two forms of non-contextual, explanatory models have dominated the existing non-Scandinavian studies on the subject. The *first* of these is an often straightforward, rational choice-inspired model emphasising social cleavages and often just the marginal economic utility of the individual. Many elaborate theoretical models and arguments have been proposed in this tradition, but the central assumption is that individual attitudes to the level of inequality in gross wages will reflect whether a given individual would benefit economically from an increased or decreased level of inequality in gross wages in the country. It can therefore also be assumed that clear cleavages exist in countries, reflecting different social groups or classes in society (Arts et al., 1995; Austen, 1999; Austen, 2002; Evans & Kelley, 2007; Kelley & Evans, 1993; Kluegel & Miyano, 1995; Mason, 1995; Svallfors, 1997; Szirmai, 1986; Szirmai, 1991).

It should be stressed that not all existing studies emphasising social cleavages highlight just the economic marginal utility of the individual. Szirmai (1986; 1991) emphasises the importance of class-/group-based benefits and interest in increasing status as important attitudinal drivers at the individual level. Knudsen (2001) also does not share the utility-maximising ontology. The position in the social structure is thus seen as important for attitudes because it affects how individuals can ascribe meaning and find identity in their given situation.

No matter what the ontological differences may be, the central explanatory variables deduced from this tradition are the 'structural controls' (Austen, 2002). To be more specific, this overall model assumes that people belonging to the lower strata of society will be in favour of a more egalitarian distribution of gross wages, because it is in their economic, class or status interest. Strata are here defined and operationalised by for example *educational level*, *type of employment (or non-, or self-employment)*, *the level of income* and *supervision of others at work*. In the analyses below all of these variables mentioned will be tested, as well as a composite measure for 'objective' social class location in the form of the European Socio-economic Classification schema (ESeC) (Harrison & Rose, 2006; Rose &

Harrison, 2007), and a measure of 'subjective' social class location. The emphasis on status and identity enhancement as possible motivational factors also suggests that variables such as political and even religious and ethnic affiliation could be important for individuals' attitudes to the distribution of gross wages in society. The same obviously applies to such variables as *gender*, *age* and *urbanisation*.

In the dataset, the *political affiliation* of the respondent can be measured by the items Q6a-d and Q7a-b (When referring to specific questions in the ISSP 2009 survey. See the source questionnaire in Appendix C (ISSP Research Group, 2011)). Besides the above-treated 'relative measure', these items include questions about the role of government regarding the unemployed, the poor, income distribution, as well as questions of income taxes. All of these tap classic questions on the economic policy dimension. Obviously, if respondents subscribe to the 'left-wing statements' in these items, the hypothesis must be that they also have a tendency to be egalitarian.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Furthermore Szirmai (1986; 1991), as mentioned, also follows the non-RCT approach a bit further. He proposes and tests numerous hypotheses of possible factors influencing the individual's attitudes towards the level of inequality in gross wages deduced from, among other sources, social psychology. Not surprisingly, the content of the current dataset clearly restricts which of the hypotheses can be tested here. Some of the central ones are possible to test, though. The results were more than meagre. The social-psychological variables do not correlate very strongly or significantly for that matter, and in the cases where they do, it is often not in the direction the hypotheses forecast. Furthermore, even if the theory above predicted that the effects of these variables could not be directly equated with the social background of the respondent, much of the effect these variables do portray would probably disappear upon controlling for variables such as income, educational level and social class. In the subsequent multivariate analyses, these variables are therefore dropped altogether. For the sake of clarity, the formulation of hypothesis following this tradition was reshuffled to the long footnote presented here.

Szirmai (1986; 1991) uses theories of *relative deprivation* to suggest that individuals should want to change the income distribution in society if they feel there is a discrepancy between what they earn and what they think they should earn. Simply put, the greater the discrepancy—positive or negative—the more the individual wants to change the income distribution. It is possible to test this directly via questions Q3 and Q13 from the ISSP 2009 dataset. These questions ask the respondent respectively whether he or she earns more or less than he or she deserves, as well as whether the pay he or she earns is too high or too low to be just. *Relative deprivation* can be operationalised in the following way. Q3 and Q13 basically measure the same thing, and unsurprisingly they correlate very strongly (Person's  $r=.709$ ,  $p>.001$ ). It therefore seems safe to merge them in an index. The idea is that individuals should want to change the income distribution in society if they feel there is a discrepancy between what they earn and what they think they should earn. This means scoring on either the high end or the low end of an additive index between the two variables. The contrasts are the ones exactly in the middle, who are satisfied with their wage level. An additive index has therefore been created between by the two variables. The values of this index do not make sense in categorical terms because different combinations of the two original variables can cause a given score. It therefore only makes sense to treat the index as continuous in the regressions. The hypothesis is not linear, but U-shaped. In order to test this,



However, in spite of all these elaborate hypotheses, it seems quite unlikely that the existence of extraordinary social cleavages should be able to explain Scandinavian egalitarianism – if we follow the cross-country main effects argument underlying the hypotheses above. If that were the case, the Scandinavian countries should contain a bigger share of respondents with a clear interest in a greater degree of income equalisation, or a group of people feeling relatively deprived that is larger than generally the case in other countries in the dataset. This seems highly unlikely given the aforementioned rather low degree of income inequality and low degree of poverty in the Scandinavian countries. No matter what, it seems a reasonable idea to apply standard ‘structural controls’ to the other correlations of interest to minimise bias caused by possible compositional effects.

### 5.2.1.2 Justice Beliefs – Consistency in Beliefs or Embeddedness in Culture

*The second form* of a non-contextual, explanatory model dominating existing studies on the subject is rooted in theories about justice beliefs. Operationalised justice beliefs are basically attitudinal variables and not background variables as most of the above are. Methodologically it is therefore difficult to validly determine which way the arrow of causality points between a given justice belief-variable correlating with the dependent variable. Theoretically, the not always very explicit argument in the justice belief-literature seems to be that the justice beliefs constitute

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a quadratic and a cubic term of the relative deprivation index was tested to no vain. Also, if the individual has earlier had positive experiences, for example, reaching a higher status than their family of origin had, then this will, according to Szirmai (1986; 1991), dampen the feeling of relative deprivation. This could be called *perceived social mobility*. Q10a-b measures, respectively, where the respondent feels he or she is on a scale of 1–10 in society, and where the family he or she grew up in fits on the same scale. By subtracting the second from the first statement, a perceived social mobility scale results. This can be seen as an operationalisation of the dampening effect that positive experiences have on the level of relative deprivation. Q11 asks the respondent directly if her or his current job has a higher status than the job their father had when they were in their mid-teens. Q11 is therefore a direct measure of this thesis. Lastly, a proxy for measuring *cognitive dissonance* can be constructed in the same manner as the measure of perceived social mobility. By subtracting Q14b from Q14a, a measure is obtained of how much the ideal society of the respondent deviates from the society the respondent perceives. Even if the images portrayed in these items could be argued to form two nominally scaled variables, there seems to be a clear progression, with type A (category 1) being the least egalitarian image of society and type E (category 5), the most egalitarian. On this ordinal linearity argument it seems reasonable to subtract the variables.

more fundamental values and therefore guide more specific attitudes in accordance with the argumentation underlying Figure 4-1 above. However, as already noticed then, this is at best a contested statement, especially when both are measured in the same cross-sectional survey-dataset. Furthermore, as will be clear below, quite a lot of potential ‘explanatory’ justice belief-driven variables can be deduced from the justice belief literature and operationalised in the dataset. As will be described in the methodological section below, various steps will therefore be taken to ensure that this advantage does not drown in models severely hampered by multicollinearity and respondent dropouts.

The theories of justice beliefs fundamentally deal with the normative question of whether the distribution of resources and income in society should reflect the principle of *equality, need, or equity* in order to be considered just (Arts et al., 1995; Kelley & Evans, 1993; Kluegel & Miyano, 1995; Petterson, 1995; Szirmai, 1986; Szirmai, 1991). These three overall justice beliefs are disaggregated and operationalised in different ways. Kluegel and Miyano (1995) fruitfully disaggregate the *equity-belief* in two sub-dimensions. The *first sub-dimension*, the concept of *success ideology*, thus denotes whether:

‘Opportunity is widely and equally available, and that individuals therefore are personally responsible for their own economic fates.’  
(Kluegel and Miyano, 1995, p. 85).

This concept can thus be seen as an individual ontological statement – or maybe an expression of an individual’s belief system. Conversely, the *second sub-dimension*, the concept of *market justice*, denotes the normative side of the belief in equity: that rewards should be proportional to effort (Kelley and Evans, 1993; Kluegel and Miyano, 1995).

In contrast to this disaggregation of the equity dimension, Kluegel & Miyano (1995) combine the *equality and need* dimensions in one egalitarianism index in their operationalisation. This seems a bit too superfluous given, for example, the very clear distinction between social benefits and services distributed according to the principles of citizenship (equality), need and merit in the social policy literature (Esping-Andersen, 1999; Goul Andersen, 2012a; Rothstein, 1998). Possibly, because of this lack of focus on the equality dimension, then with exactly the exception of the equality justice belief, there are quite good opportunities for operationalising the various dimensions of the justice belief concepts derived above.

Starting with the *need dimension*, the items Q12c-d indicate attitudes to whether a person who has children or a family to support should be entitled to higher earnings because of this need. The other items in the same battery Q12a-b and e-f signify that either responsibility at work, education, hard work or how well a person does at their job, should be crucial for deciding the wage level. These are all different manifestations of the normative side of the merit or *equity* dimension, denoted

*market justice* above. In addition, Q8a-b, measuring attitudes towards what extent it is fair that people with higher incomes can buy better health care or education for their children, can be seen as a quite indirect proxy for this concept. Q8a-b could also be seen as something quite different though. See more below under the heading ‘adaption hypothesis’.

The sub-dimension best captured by the dataset seems to be the *success ideology*, as well as possible different *limitations* to the success ideology belief in the various items of Q1 and Q2. Pure success ideology statements appear in Q1d-e, where the respondents indicate whether having ambition and working hard is sufficient to ‘get ahead’. The remaining items in Q1 and Q2 indicate possible limitations to the success ideology. Q1f-g and Q2a ask whether the society is corrupt and you need nepotistic connections to get ahead. The importance of having the right social background is captured in Q1a-b, the importance of possible discriminating factors such as race, religion and gender in Q1i-k, and finally Q2b-d captures the questions of the same kinds of barriers to entering university.

What could be labelled the between-country, micro-level, main-effect hypotheses concerning all these variables is straightforward. Egalitarian respondents can be thought to subscribe more to the need (and if it could be measured properly, the equality dimension), than the equity dimension. Concerning the sub-dimensions of the equity dimension, the egalitarians should not subscribe to the normative market justice concepts that say rewards should follow achievement; they should not believe in the success ideology that ‘opportunity is widely and equally available’, and instead, perceive numerous limitations to this ideal which for most people is probably normatively positive.

Stretching the concept a bit, justice beliefs could be argued to function as either or both micro- or macro-level ‘explanatory’ variables. In the literature, justice beliefs are usually understood as micro-level effects, the idea being that individuals differ in attitudes which are internally consistent – and as mentioned, these attitudes are assumed derived from the overall justice beliefs. As *macro*-level explanations, the effects of culture in embedding the attitudes of the individuals of a society are emphasised. The thesis of American exceptionalism offers the most obvious example. According to this national narrative, the American culture subscribes to both the principles of success ideology and market justice. This leads to an acceptance of greater differences in wage levels than elsewhere (Alesina, Di Tella, & MacCulloch, 2004; Bendix & Lipset, 1959; Bénabou & Tirole, 2006; McCall, 2013; Osberg & Smeeding, 2006).

If both a significant micro- and macro-level effect of the same justice beliefs appear in the same analysis, it has the following interpretation. In countries with a high degree of aggregated ‘equity culture’ – as for example the proposed American one – this culture spills over to the non-equity-oriented respondents in that country to also become less egalitarian, than corresponding respondents in countries where the equity orientation is not as strong in general (Hox, 2010; Lolle, 2004).

In the Scandinavian context, the aforementioned claim of a Scandinavian ‘passion for equality’ could likewise be seen as a special Scandinavian variant of a possible culture influencing the Scandinavians to be egalitarians in general (Andersen, 1983; Graubard, 1986; Svendsen et al., 2012). One might therefore assume that the background for Scandinavian egalitarianism is an embeddedness of the individuals in a unique justice belief culture. This could assume the opposite form of American exceptionalism: Scandinavians ought then to subscribe to the opposite of success ideology and market justice, rendering them hostile towards a broad dispersion of wages. Again, there could be a spillover from the macro level to the micro level, so that even the equity-oriented Scandinavians become more egalitarian than similar respondents elsewhere do. In statistical terms, this thesis could be termed a between-country main effect thesis at both the micro and macro level.

There is also the possibility that it is not as simple as the Scandinavians basically being the ‘opposite’ of the Americans. First, maybe subscribing to success-ideology and even market justice does not correlate with the respondents’ attitudes to the level of inequality in gross wages to the same extent in Scandinavia as elsewhere. Second, it is also relevant to keep the aforementioned limitations of the ISSP 2009 dataset in mind. The dataset is not very well suited to capturing citizenship or pure egalitarian justice beliefs. Even if a Scandinavian justice-belief culture does exist, we cannot be sure to capture it with the existing data. Many such theses can be tested however by cross-level interactions between variables measuring justice beliefs at the micro level, and the macro-level Scandinavian dummy. The various main-effect theses at the micro and macro level will be tested using hierarchical model building.

### 5.2.1.3 Modelling Scandinavian Uniqueness

The existing research focusing on attitudes towards the level of gross wage dispersion has mainly focused on the forms of explanation presented above plus the contextual explanations of especially the ISJP. In industrial relations research, however, a discussion has addressed how the industrial relations system influences the interests and attitudes of wage-earners and other groups in society. The hypotheses below can thus perhaps to a greater extent than the two sections above try to model a form of known Scandinavian uniqueness as explanatory factors.

As also described above, Åberg (1984) e.g. argued that the extraordinarily centralised Swedish labour-market system had changed how its members perceived ‘fair’ salaries. The argument is that centralisation changes the focal point for wage-earners from the employers to other groups of wage-earners. In a centralised trade union movement, if a group of wage-earners raises demands for wage raises, they no longer merely have to have this claim accepted or legitimised by the employers, but also by other groups of wage-earners. This shift in the focus leads to a need for criteria to evaluate what constitutes fair salaries that are more neutral than labour-market strength or value among the different wage-earner groups. Åberg (1984) labels these more neutral criteria ‘non-market criteria’<sup>54</sup> and claims that when the wage-earner groups subscribe to these criteria, it becomes difficult to legitimise the fact that certain groups earn much more or much less than the others. Centralisation therefore instilled extraordinarily egalitarian attitudes among the Swedish wage-earners towards wage gaps between occupations (Andersen, 1983; Dølvik, 2013; Graubard, 1986; Lund, 1981; Åberg, 1984).

As described in Chapter 1 and 3 things have surely changed since 1984 in Scandinavia, but the trade-union density rates in the Scandinavian countries remain very high compared to those of other countries, and the collective bargaining agreements between the large and influential trade unions and employers’ associations remain important and receive considerable attention. This is all reflected in the scores on bargaining coordination and governability (Erixon, 2010; OECD, 2004). The effects Åberg (1984) proposes could therefore remain valid today and thus offer a potential explanation of Scandinavian egalitarianism.

A number of distinctions are relevant when we operationalise the arguments above. An extremely high trade-union density characterised Åberg’s (1984) context, where almost all wage-earners were union members. Åberg (1984) is therefore unclear about whether the impact on attitudes just affects the trade-union members (a micro effect) or society in general (a macro effect). If the effect is understood as a *micro*-level effect, only the wage-earning union members are socialised or influenced to adopt egalitarian attitudes towards the level of inequality in gross wages. In this

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<sup>54</sup> According to Åberg (1984), these include a company’s financial capability to give pay raises, the company’s market situation and future development, the nature of the work, how dangerous it is and the educational level of certain groups of workers.

narrative, Scandinavian egalitarianism would then be explained by a greater proportion of respondents who are trade-union members (or were) than is the case in other countries. If the effect is instead understood as a *macro*-level effect, the strength of a strong trade-union movement instead lies in its discursive, institutional, and structural impact on society as a whole. In this case, the individual union member (or former member) will not necessarily be more egalitarian than a non-member. However, countries with high trade-union density rates will have a tendency to lower median attitudes towards wage gaps.

Two versions of an *interaction* hypothesis based on the argument above are also deducible. As such, one interpretation of the effect of the shift towards non-market criteria could be that the relationship between social class or educational level (as the supposedly crucial social cleavage in late-modern society) and the dependent variable varies with either trade-union density rates (macro) or trade-union membership (micro). The examples of non-market criteria mentioned by Åberg (1984) all seem to suggest that people take ‘the bigger picture’ into consideration when evaluating what constitutes fair wages (see the footnote on the last page as well as the classic descriptions the Danish and Swedish industrial relations models in Chapter 3). This proposed egalitarian effect of education also goes under the name of the ‘enlightenment hypothesis’ elsewhere in the literature (Kelley & Evans, 1993; Szirmai, 1986). This argument means that social cleavage structures in attitudes towards the level of inequality in gross wages could be dampened in countries with high trade-union density rates (macro) or among trade-union members (micro). The argument is that the privileged, well-educated strata of society will look beyond their narrow self-interest and consider other criteria when determining their attitudes towards the level of inequality in gross wages.

An almost contrary but related hypothesis goes under the heading of ‘system blaming’. The hypothesis goes that people who perceive that the society, among other things, is dominated by antagonistic class relations or social conflict, will be more inclined to be egalitarian than others (Szirmai, 1986; Szirmai, 1991). Maybe the social democratic legacy in the welfare state and the highly organised labour markets has left an imprint on the Scandinavians as societies actually dominated by *perceived social conflict* and antagonistic class relations. The low level of actual inequality speaks against this thesis, but on the other hand, the results of Svallfors (2004; 2006) and Svallfors & Brooks (2010) could actually speak for such a thesis. In the question battery Q9, four different versions of items measuring whether the respondents actually view the society as dominated by antagonistic struggles between key social groups can be found.

#### **5.2.1.4 Post-Rationalization and Justification of the Reality Experienced**

Finally, this last explanatory section deals with the issue treated in the ‘top of the mind’ section above: the relation between perceived wage levels (‘do earn’) and just wage levels (‘should earn’). The results of that section showed that there is a

strong correlation between the two, but on the other hand, it was quite clear that respondents do not simply extrapolate from ‘do earn’ to ‘should earn’. Instead, ‘do earn’ seems to form a mental anchor from which respondents take a considered stand on ‘should earn’.

To summarise the more theoretical background: it is a standard argument within social psychology that how the context is perceived is important for attitudes. It affects how individuals form meaning and find identity in their situation (Knudsen, 2001). Moreover, social psychology theory emphasises that people will go to great lengths to uphold the belief that they live in a just world. As such, they will post-rationalise and attempt to justify the reality they experience, including the distribution of gross incomes, in order to make it fit the dictum that the world in which they live is actually just (Bénabou & Tirole, 2006; Lerner, 1980).

In this light, it seems obvious that the *actual* degree of differences in levels of inequality in gross wages between occupations—and maybe more importantly the *perception* of the size of this difference—should be crucial for attitudes as to how big the differences *should* be for an individual in this country. In addition, the items Q8a-b could be seen as a test for the adaption hypothesis. If a respondent lives in a society where people perceive the level of inequality in gross wages to be high, then the adaption mechanism could be assumed to lead to two outcomes. First, as already mentioned, people need to legitimise the level of inequality in itself, and second, it is likely that they also need to legitimise some of the likely outcomes of living in an unequal society. Two such likely outcomes are that the richer strata can buy better healthcare and education for their children, than most people in society can.

In any case the question is obviously still whether the Scandinavian egalitarianism disappears upon controlling for the perceived level of inequality in gross wages, or do Scandinavians want an even more egalitarian gross wage distribution than they perceive. The first scenario would surely still be an interesting result since, as was seen in the introduction, the actual wage distributions in Scandinavia are not so exceptionally egalitarian in comparative perspective anymore. How and why these views of the actual level of inequality in gross wages vary between countries and respondents will be a focus in later sections focussing on the three Scandinavian countries and in particular, on their media output.

### 5.2.2. DATA AND METHODS

In order to be able to test the different forms of explanatory models presented above, different linear multilevel models (MLA)—random intercept (RI) as well as random slope (RS)—will be estimated in the following analyses. The notorious ‘small-N problem’ also affects these analyses. This problem is enhanced somewhat by the inevitable respondent dropouts in multiple regression analyses. The number of countries included thus drops from 38 to 31 in the analysis below. The number of respondents in the ISSP 2009 dataset on the other hand enables us to create models

with many individual-level variables simultaneously. However, very big models are hardly parsimonious, and would anyway create models severely hampered by multicollinearity. Before running the multivariate models, a number of steps will thus be conducted to minimise the number of explanatory variables and extract the central ones to be included in the multivariate analyses. The methodological problems will be discussed along the way. Notwithstanding these weaknesses, however, a clear conclusion can be drawn based on the combined results of the analyses.

### 5.2.2.1 Dependent Variable

In the analyses that follow, the ‘Chairmen vs. Low paid occupations’ index is for the reasons elaborated above used as the dependent variable. The index has been logarithmically transformed in order to remedy the effects of the extreme outliers in the data.

### 5.2.2.2 Explanatory Variables – Reducing the Risk of Multicollinearity

One possible reason for the focus on social cleavages and justice beliefs in the existing research is, as mentioned, that the variables present in the datasets of the social inequality module are well suited to testing these theoretical models. *Firstly*, the well developed — and in time increasingly comprehensive — ISSP background module allows a thorough testing of the social cleavage model. Moreover, the variable denoting those who are, have been, or never were trade-union members forms the basis of the test of the effect of trade-union movements. Trade-union density is estimated simply by aggregating a dummy for current/former trade-union membership.

*Secondly*, as demonstrated above, basically all of the attitudinal variables apparent in the ISSP 2009 dataset are connected to the different justice beliefs and their sub-dimensions. In the analyses below, they are therefore in principle all relevant as possible explanatory variables for Scandinavian egalitarianism. *Thirdly*, to measure the effect of the perceived level of inequality in gross wages, a measure equivalent to the dependent variable is thus created by use of the items indicating what the respondents believe the same occupations *actually earn* on average.

As also mentioned, it is clear that it is imperative to deal somehow with this maze of possible explanatory variables before we enter them into the actual MLA regression equations. This will be done in a number of ways. In order to simplify the following analysis, minimise the likelihood of estimating models with severe multicollinearity, and enhance the validity of the concepts, the first step is therefore merging the 33 attitudinal variables into a number of additive indexes (Agresti & Finlay, 2009). This process is the subject of the subsequent sub-section. Forming these indexes, the variables are joined into factors via a factor analysis. The reliability of these factors is then tested in reliability tests. On this basis the factors are corrected before creating the final indexes.



A shorter subsection will thereafter finally deal with a few variables from the social cleavage model that deserve special attention. This is first and foremost the creation of useful variables for household and personal income on the basis of the national income variables in the ISSP 2009 dataset, and secondly, it is the creation of a variable measuring the ‘objective’ social class position of the respondent.

### **Identification of Common Factors underlying the Attitudinal Variables in ISSP 2009**

The attitudinal variables in ISSP 2009 are all ordinal-scaled and all – except the four items of Q9 – have exactly five categories. It is therefore possible to include all attitudinal variables except the four items of Q9 in the same factor analysis. A separate analysis of the items of Q9 will be also conducted. The results of this large factor analysis can be seen in Table 5-8 below.

Table 5-8 Factor Analysis of all Five-Category Ordinal-Scaled Variables in ISSP 2009

	Component								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Q1a Getting ahead: How important is coming from a wealthy family?	.476	-.017	-.022	-.018	.109	<b>.517</b>	.066	.059	-.080
Q1b Getting ahead: How important is having well-educated parents?	.181	.043	-.067	.065	.122	<b>.743</b>	.041	.038	-.049
Q1c Getting ahead: How important is having a good education yourself?	-.034	-.009	.027	.014	.041	<b>.664</b>	-.013	.003	.371
Q1d Getting ahead: How important is having ambition?	.053	.018	.058	-.086	-.051	.131	-.053	.047	<b>.761</b>
Q1e Getting ahead: How important is hard work?	-.079	-.048	.130	-.023	-.025	.045	.007	.027	<b>.799</b>
Q1f Getting ahead: How important is knowing the right people?	<b>.642</b>	-.051	.043	.062	-.087	.161	.018	-.005	.158
Q1g Getting ahead: How important is having political connections?	<b>.791</b>	.024	.015	.046	-.088	.104	-.020	.084	-.008
Q1h Getting ahead: How important is giving bribes?	<b>.732</b>	.020	.032	-.029	.069	.171	.005	.171	-.109
Q1i Getting ahead: How important is a person's race?	.134	-.006	-.002	-.052	-.021	-.028	-.026	<b>.809</b>	.022
Q1j Getting ahead: How important is a person's religion?	-.063	-.007	-.033	.058	.005	-.039	.028	<b>.839</b>	.016
Q1k Getting ahead: How important is being born a man or a woman?	<b>.441</b>	-.028	.010	-.046	.041	-.008	-.027	-.064	.023
Q2a Getting ahead: To get all the way to the top in <R>country> today, you have to	<b>.441</b>	-.095	.032	.002	<b>.442</b>	-.159	-.027	-.064	-.042
Q2b Getting ahead: In <R>country> only students from the best secondary schools	.001	-.081	-.027	.114	<b>.725</b>	.085	.092	.076	.031
Q2c Getting ahead: In <R>country> only the rich can afford the costs of attending	.028	-.164	-.001	.059	<b>.761</b>	.042	.053	.005	.047
Q2d Getting ahead: In <R>country> people have the same chances to enter	.107	-.051	-.081	.153	<b>.546</b>	-.107	.202	-.041	.178
Q6a Differences in income in <R>country> are too large.	.024	<b>.657</b>	.035	.004	.162	-.041	.007	-.012	.070
Q6b It is the responsibility of the government to reduce the differences in income	.012	<b>.685</b>	-.037	.137	.119	-.008	-.041	.023	.008
Q6c The government should provide a decent standard of living for the unemployed.	-.099	<b>.677</b>	-.011	.099	-.107	.139	.048	.120	-.104
Q6d The government should spend less on benefits for the poor.	.038	<b>.366</b>	-.144	.195	.257	-.184	.148	.040	.212
Q7a Tax: Do you think people with high incomes should pay a larger share of their	.022	<b>.469</b>	.044	-.026	.035	-.074	.003	-.022	.054
Q7b Tax: Generally, how would you describe taxes in <R>country> today for those	-.155	.007	.035	-.086	-.037	.138	.174	.165	-.046
Q8a Just or unjust - that people with higher incomes can buy better health care than	-.002	.016	.021	-.071	-.007	.012	<b>.936</b>	.007	-.055
Q8b Just or unjust - that people with higher incomes can buy better education for	-.014	.016	<b>.715</b>	-.067	.025	.107	<b>.952</b>	-.022	-.026
Q12a Important for pay: How much responsibility goes with the job?	-.052	.013	<b>.412</b>	.307	.001	.284	.045	.049	-.068
Q12b Important for pay: the number of years spent in education and training?	-.007	-.043	.029	<b>.894</b>	.018	.018	-.071	-.016	-.041
Q12c Important for pay: what is needed to support a family?	.050	-.053	.025	<b>.891</b>	-.014	-.015	-.075	.008	-.064
Q12d Important for pay: whether the person has children to support?	.063	.011	<b>.807</b>	-.004	.005	-.143	-.008	-.012	.099
Q12e Important for pay: how well he or she does the job?	.047	-.005	<b>.750</b>	.099	.011	-.168	.011	.015	.157

Notes: Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization. KMO and Bartlett's test=0.773\*\*\*.

Variables forming a factor are marked in bold. Author's own calculations.

Source: Social Inequality Module IV (2009) of the International Social Survey Program (ISSP).

The overall results of Table 5-8 are that nine factors can be identified which are based on the 29 attitudinal variables originally entered into the model. The high and significant KMO value also indicates that the variables clearly correlate and clump into factors.

*The first factor*, containing Q1f-g and Q2a, contains one of the possible *limitations* of the success ideology identified above, namely, whether one believes society is corrupt and one needs nepotistic connections in order to advance.

*The second factor* contains all items of Q6 and Q7. As described above, these constitute an alternative and less direct measure of *political affiliation*. All these tap into classic questions of the economic dimension of politics. Because of its centrality, the relative measure of Q6a will be subtracted from the combined measure of Q6 and Q7, though.

*The third factor* contains the items Q12a, b, e and f. These items tap as described above into the *market justice* norms, which say that rewards should be proportional to effort. Effort is here defined as: responsibility, education and training as well as hard work and doing well on the job.

*The fourth factor* measures the *need* justice belief. It therefore measures whether a person's wage level should be influenced by whether he or she has children or a family to support. The items are Q12 c and d.

*The fifth factor* is once again in the category of *limitations* to believing in the success ideology. It contains the items Q2b, c and d and deals with whether the respondents believe that equal opportunities exist for people to enter university.

*The sixth factor* also seems to concern *limitations* to believing in the success ideology and contains the items Q1a, b and c. The items ask whether having rich or well-educated parents, or having a good education yourself, is crucial to getting ahead.

*The seventh factor* contains the two items from Q8 asking whether it is fair that people with high incomes can buy better healthcare or education for their children than others can. This was above operationalised as an alternative operationalisation of the *market justice* norms also found in the items of the third factor.

*The eighth factor* – as do factors 1, 5 and 6 – deals with *limitations* to believing in the success ideology. The items Q1i, j and k capture different kinds of discrimination according to race, religion or gender.

Finally, the *ninth factor* as described above measures the pure *success ideology* statements – that ambition and hard work are crucial to getting ahead (Q1d and e).

The factors revealed by the analysis matched surprisingly well the expectations from the theoretical section above. One thing that is perhaps a bit surprising is that so many different factors appeared. As many as four different factors for limitations to success ideology appeared. It could have been expected that these items would clump into fewer factors.

The correlation matrix below also clearly shows that the four items of Q9 measuring *perceived social conflict* clearly form a factor as well.

*Table 5-9 Correlation Matrix of the Four Items of Q9 in ISSP 2009*

	Q9a	Q9b	Q9c	Q9d
Q9a Conflicts: between poor people and rich people?	1.000	.580	.521	.668
Q9b Conflicts: between the working class and the middle class?	.580	1.000	.514	.466
Q9c Conflicts: between management and workers?	.521	.514	1.000	.564
Q9d Conflicts: between people at the top and people at the bottom?	.668	.466	.564	1.000

*Notes:* KMO and Bartlett's test=0.769\*\*\*.

*Source:* Social Inequality Module IV (2009) of the International Social Survey Program (ISSP).

The 10 factors identified in Tables 5-8 and 5-9 were in the following procedures gathered into indexes. A number of variables in this process were 'turned around' in order to create meaningful additive indexes. Reliability tests of these preliminary indexes were then conducted. On the basis of these tests the indexes were corrected. The reliability tests of the 10 factors in overall terms show that the factors function well as indexes, although in four cases an item was removed from the initial factors.<sup>55</sup> In the variable description in Table 8-14 in Appendix A, information can

<sup>55</sup> The statistical reliability measured by Cronbach's alpha can be increased in four of the factors by subtracting a variable from the indexes. Firstly, Cronbach's alpha can be increased by as much as 0.1 by subtracting a variable from factor 1 and 5. *In factor 1*, the item Q2a is subtracted. This also makes conceptual sense since, where items Q1f-g measure views about nepotism, Q2a more generally measures views about whether the society is corrupt. *In factor 5*, the item Q2d is removed. It measures discrimination barriers for entering university, instead of social background barriers of Q2b-c, so also this makes some conceptual sense. Concerning factor 3 and 6, Cronbach's alpha only increases minimally by removing a variable, therefore a conceptual discussion must surely be the determining factor. *In factor 3*, the reliability is increased slightly by removing Q12b. This item measures achievements in the form of education, and not responsibility, hard work or doing well as the other three items in the factor. This is maybe a slightly more elitist conceptualisation of achievements than the other three. This conceptual difference prompts the removal of also this item. *In factor 6*, the factor to be removed is the effect of your own education in getting ahead (Q1c). This is clearly conceptually different from the two other items – having wealthy or well-educated parents. The item is therefore removed before creating the final index.

be found on the construction of these 10 final indexes, as well as on all other constructed or recoded variables.

### **Operationalising Income and Social Class**

For each country there is a variable denoting household income and one denoting personal income. These are continuous and given in national currencies. As the case was in the descriptive analyses above, one cannot therefore just merge the national variables into two cross-country income variables – the scores for each country would be on very different scales. It is therefore imperative to standardise the national scores before merging. For both the household and personal income variables, the process has therefore proceeded in two identical steps. For each nation and for both household and personal income, a standardised national income variable has first to be constructed. This is done by dividing the respondent's income score by his/her country's median income score, as calculated on the same variable in the dataset. These national variables then denote how big a proportion of the country's median income the respondent earns in household or personal income. These new standardised national income variables are therefore on the same scale, and secondly, they are merged into a cross-national household income variable and a cross-national personal income variable.

As mentioned above, the variable for 'objective' class location – the European Socio-economic Classification schema or ESeC) – is constructed according to the recoding algorithms provided by the ESeC consortium (Harrison & Rose, 2006; Rose & Harrison, 2007). Since the days of Karl Marx and Max Weber, social class has been a key concept in sociology and the social sciences in general. Who belongs to different classes, which classes actually exist, and how we can precisely define and measure social classes, have always been matters of controversy (Erikson & Goldthorpe, 1992; Ganzeboom & Treiman, 1996; Ganzeboom & Treiman, 2003; Harrison & Rose, 2006; Harrits, 2013; Rose & Harrison, 2007; Svallfors, 2004; Svallfors, 2006). Although this discussion will probably continue, the European Statistical Office has, as a part of their 'Statistical Harmonization Programme' and upon the recommendations of an appointed group of experts, created a common European Socio-economic Classification scheme (ESeC). The classification is a categorisation based on the concept of employment relations as well as the most widely used social class scheme – The Erikson-Goldthorpe-Portocarero scheme (Erikson & Goldthorpe, 1992; Rose & Harrison, 2007). The ESeC comes in a 10-, 6-, 5- and 3-class model.<sup>56</sup> The dilemma in actual analyses using the ESeC on survey data is obviously the trade-off between using a class model with many classes, gaining precision and richness of information in measuring many logically distinct classes, but at the same time sacrificing statistical significance in having especially higher-ranked classes with very few respondents. In this dissertation, a compromise solution has been chosen by using the 6-class

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<sup>56</sup> See Tables 8-12 and 8-13 in Appendix A for what the different classes more precisely entail and how the different class models are related.

version. This also secures continuity with, for example, Svallfors (2004; 2006), who also uses a 6-class model, albeit a slightly different one.

In creating the 6-class composite measure, information from four different variables in the ISSP 2009 dataset is used. The information is:

- 1) whether the respondent is self-employed and if so, the number of employees he/she has (NEMPLOY);
- 2) if the respondent is not self-employed, then which sector he/she works in, or, whether he/she has never worked (WRKTYPE);
- 3) whether the respondent supervises others at work (WRKSUP);
- 4) finally, the occupation of the respondent expressed in ISCO-codes (ISCO-88).

In the bivariate analyses below, both the composite measure and the three original variables will be investigated. In this way, it is possible to gain a glimpse of the possible sources of attitudinal class differences. To prevent multicollinearity in the multivariate regression models, only the composite objective class measure will be used there though.

### **5.2.2.3 Bivariate Correlations with the Dependent Variable**

The purpose of the subsequent subsection is twofold. Primarily it constitutes the second step to selecting the relevant variables for the multilevel analyses below. This is done by investigating the bivariate correlations between the potential explanatory variables identified above and the dependent variable. This ‘minimisation’ effort should increase both the parsimony of the following models as well as minimise respondent dropouts and the risk of multicollinearity. Secondly, as described above the variable for ‘objective’ class status was created from four original variables in the dataset. Even if the composite measure is used in the subsequent multivariate analyses, it is relevant to investigate from which of the original variables stems a possible variation on the composite measure on attitudes to the level of inequality in gross wages. The variables will be introduced in blocks more or less matching their operationalisation in the theoretical sections above, starting with the social cleavage model:

*Table 5-10 Bivariate Associations between Various Possible Explanatory Variables for Self-Interest, Social Class, Political Identity and other Background Variables and the Dependent Variable: Attitudes to the Level of Inequality in Gross Wages in ISSP 2009*

Self-interest		Social class, political identity and attitudes	
Level of education		Social Class	
- No formal qualification	-.307*** (.039)	- Salarial	.263*** (.183***)
- Lowest formal qual.	-.246*** (-.067)	- Intermediate empl.	.134*** (.099)
- Above low. Formal qual.	-.222***(-.256***)	- Small employers/self-empl.	.144*** (.006)
- Higher sec. compl.	-.156*** (-.077)	- Lower sales & service	-.007 (.068)
- Above higher sec.	-.098*** (-.105*)	- Lower technical	.062* (-.000)
- University degree (ref.)	-	- Routine (ref.)	-
Public vs. private sector		Subjective social class	
- Government	-.033 (-.151**)	- Lower class	-.321*** (-.029)
- Publ. owned firm	-.032 (-.206**)	- Working class	-.295*** (-.214***)
- Private	-.041* (-.048)	- Lower middle class	-.232*** (-.141*)
- Self-empl. (ref.)	-	- Middle class	-.145*** (-.110**)
		- Upper mid./upper class (ref.)	-
		Self-placement 10 pt. scale	.044*** (.028**)
Supervise others at work		Vote on last election	
- Yes	.186*** (.073*)	- Yes	.103*** (-.029)
- No (ref.)	-	- No (ref.)	-
Work status		Party affiliation	
- Employed full time	.014 (-.011)	- Far left	-.105 (-.073)
- Employed part time	-.151*** (-.056)	- Left, centre left	-.006 (.105)
- Employed less than part time	-.064 (-.079)	- Centre, liberal	.075 (.274**)
- Helping family member	.080 (.377)	- Right, conservative	.185*** (.292***)
- Student	-.111* (.292***)	- Far right (ref.)	-
- Outside the labour force (ref.)	-	Political affiliation index	.128*** (.198***)
		The relative measure	.073*** (.119***)
Household income	.042*** (-.004)	Trade union membership	
Personal income	.005*** (-.005)	- Member	.037* (-.104*)
Years of education	.020*** (.014**)	- Once member	.070*** (-.017)
Number of employees	.000 (.001)	- Never member (ref.)	-
Other background variables			
Urbanisation		Marital status	
- Urban, big city	.151*** (.213***)	- Married	.096*** (-.086*)
- Suburb	.115** (.119*)	- Widowed	.079** (-.091)
- Town/small city	.080* (.142**)	- Divorced	.016 (-.160**)
- Country village	.058 (.047)	- Separated	.004 (-.218)
- Home in the country (ref.)	-	- Never married (ref.)	-
Gender		Persons in household	
- Male	.185*** (.099**)		-.009* (.008)
- Female (ref.)	-	Hours worked weekly	
			.003*** (.001)
		Age	
			.004*** (-.02*)

*Notes:* Fixed effects models. Shown are between-Country Unstandardised Regression Coefficients, with Scandinavian Coefficients in Brackets. *Source:* Social Inequality Module IV (2009) of the International Social Survey Program (ISSP).

Table 5-10 shows, unsurprisingly, that it is possible to identify social cleavages in attitudes to the level of inequality in gross wages in Scandinavia and elsewhere. In many cases though, there are quite big differences between the Scandinavian coefficients and the overall coefficients of the remaining countries. In general, the classic social cleavages seem to matter less for attitudes to the level of inequality in gross wages in Scandinavia than they do elsewhere. This can be seen in variables measuring income, objective and subjective social class and level of education. On the other hand, the sector of employment, as well as the political affiliation of the respondent seems to matter more in Scandinavia than elsewhere. The effect of objective social class in Scandinavia therefore to a greater extent than elsewhere seems to be driven by the sector employing the respondent. The other background variables show quite strong effects of urbanisation, gender and age. It is impossible to include all these variables in the subsequent multivariate analyses, for if done so the models would suffer from massive multicollinearity and the respondent dropout would leave us with a very small and not very representative sample. Only the following variables will be retained and included in the subsequent analyses:

- *Household income*
- *Social class*
- *Subjective social class*
- *Level of education*
- *Trade-union membership*
- *The relative measure*
- *Age*
- *Gender*

Besides the overall arguments mentioned above that it is imperative to minimise the number of variables in the multivariate analyses below, there are also more specific theoretical as well as empirical arguments for retaining exactly these variables.

Empirically, they are all among the variables correlating most strongly in the bivariate analyses above. Variables such as party- and political affiliation also correlate strongly, but unfortunately the dropout is severe including these variables in the models. In addition, the relative measure should, as argued above, capture most of the political affiliation of the respondent, which is directed at the level of inequality in society and is therefore obviously here the most theoretically important variable. Urbanisation also correlates quite strongly with the dependent variable, but upon controlling for income, educational level and social class, the effect of this variable unsurprisingly disappears altogether. Income, social class and education should quite validly capture the relevant social background of the respondent. The subjective class measure should capture the less objective 'identity' side of the social background of the respondent. The objective and subjective social background should correlate, but they are not necessarily alike. Trade-union membership is for obvious reasons retained even though it does not correlate very strongly. Age and gender correlate quite strongly and are retained as



standard controls. Before the multivariate analyses, the attitudinal indexes created above are correlated with the dependent variable:

*Table 5-11 Bivariate Correlations between Various Indexes Connected to Justice Beliefs and System Blaming and the Dependent Variable: Attitudes to the Level of Inequality in Gross Wages in ISSP 2009*

	<b>The Need justice belief</b>	<b>The Equity justice belief - Market justice</b>
Need index (4)	.098*** (.059***)	Mark: Just – just deserves index (3) -.056*** (-.131***)
		Mark: Just – money should buy index (7) -.082*** (-.103***)
	<b>Equity justice belief – Success ideology</b>	<b>Limitations to success ideology</b>
Success ideology index (9)	-.036*** (-.118***)	Limitations – corruption index (1) -.006 (-.007)
	<b>System Blaming</b>	Limitations – entering university index (5) .054*** (.041*)
Social conflicts index (10)	.103*** (.087**)	Limitations – social background index (6) -.021*** (-.073***)
		Limitations – discrimination index (8) .013 (.011)

Notes: Fixed effects models. Shown are between-country unstandardized regression coefficients, with Scandinavian coefficients in brackets.

Source: Social Inequality Module IV (2009) of the International Social Survey Program (ISSP).

All attitudinal indexes except two correlate quite strongly and significantly with the dependent variable in Scandinavia and elsewhere. Indexes 3, 6, 7 and 9 actually have a stronger effect in Scandinavia than in the other countries in general. This is somewhat in line with the indications above: that Scandinavians' attitudes to the level of inequality in gross wages to a greater extent than elsewhere seem to be connected with political affiliation and other attitudes of the respondent but, to a lesser extent, to classic social cleavages. These speculations and others will be dealt with in the subsequent multivariate analyses that try to explain Scandinavian egalitarianism statistically.

### 5.2.3. ANALYSES

After the two steps taken above to restrict the number of explanatory variables to the most relevant, we are now ready to proceed with building the multivariate models designed to attempt statistically to explain Scandinavian egalitarianism using the explanatory variables deduced from the above-cited existing literature.

#### 5.2.3.1 Building a General Model: the Effects of Social Cleavages and Justice Beliefs at the Individual Level

*Firstly*, we investigate the effect of individual-level variables selected above. The analysis will be built hierarchically, with the variables entered in blocks as above. To calculate validly the explained variance in MLA, it is crucial that the same cases are present in all models. Explained variance is then calculated on a comparison of the remaining variance at, respectively, the macro and the micro levels, and the variance at the same levels in the so-called zero model. This is an 'empty model' containing only the dependent variable, but the same cases as the other models (Hox, 2010; Lolle, 2004). The final, individual-level RI-model (model 5) forms the basis on which all the later models (Tables 5-12 – 5-15) will be built:

Table 5-12 Individual-Level Explanations of the Variation in Attitudes to the Level of Inequality in Gross Wages in ISSP 2009

	Model 0	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
<b>Fixed effects</b>						
<u>National-level variables</u>						
Scandinavian		-0.77*	-0.82*	-0.86*	-0.86**	-0.88**
<u>Individual-level variables</u>						
Gender (male)			0.17***	0.17***	0.16***	0.16***
Age (cov.)			0.01***	0.01***	0.01***	0.01***
Household income (cov.)			0.01***	0.01**	0.01*	0.01*
<u>Social Class</u>						
- Salaried			0.17***	0.14***	0.12***	0.12***
- Intermediate employee			0.13***	0.11***	0.10***	0.10***
- Small employers/self-employed			0.13***	0.10**	0.08*	0.08*
- Lower Sales & Service			0.06*	0.05	0.04	0.04
- Lower Technical			0.03	0.02	0.02	0.02
- Routine (ref.)			-	-	-	-
<u>Education</u>						
- No formal qualification			-0.22***	-0.19***	-0.17***	-0.15**
- Lowest formal qualification			-0.17***	-0.13***	-0.11**	-0.09**
- Above lowest formal qualification			-0.16***	-0.11***	-0.09**	-0.08**
- Upper secondary complete			-0.07**	-0.04	-0.03	-0.02
- Above upper secondary level			-0.05*	-0.03	-0.02	-0.01
- University degree complete (ref.)			-	-	-	-
<u>Subjective social class</u>						
- Lower class				-0.15***	-0.12**	-0.11**
- Working class				-0.15***	-0.11***	-0.10**
- Lower middle class				-0.11***	-0.07**	-0.07*
- Middle class				-0.07**	-0.05	-0.05
- Upper middle/upper class (ref.)				-	-	-
<u>Trade union membership</u>						
- Member				-0.04	-0.03	-0.03
- Once member				0.01	0.01	0.01
- Never member (ref.)				-	-	-
<i>The relative measure (cov.)</i>				0.07***	0.05***	0.04***
<i>Need ind. 1-5 (cov.)</i>					0.06***	0.06***
<i>Mark. Just. - Just deserts ind. 1-5 (cov.)</i>					-0.08***	-0.08***
<i>Mark. Just. - Mon. sh. buy ind. 1-5</i>					-0.05***	-0.05***
<i>Succ. Ideo. Ind. 1-5 (cov.)</i>					-0.02	-0.02
<i>Lim. - Soc. Backg. Ind. 1-5 (cov.)</i>						-0.03**
<i>Lim. - Ent. Uni. Ind. 1-5 (cov.)</i>						0.04***
<i>Perc. Soc. Confl. Ind. 1-5 (cov.)</i>						0.02
<b>Random effects</b>						
Variance at individual level	0.944***	0.944***	0.924***	0.917***	0.909***	0.907***
Variance at national level	0.312***	0.268***	0.265***	0.262***	0.248***	0.253***
Intra-class correlation (country)	0.25	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22
Explained variance at individual level	-	0%	2%	3%	4%	4%
Explained variance at national level	-	14%	16%	16%	21%	19%

Notes: Multilevel analysis (random intercept models). Unstandardised regression coefficients and random effects. The dependent variable is created by taking, for each respondent, the natural logarithm of the ratio between the chairman of a large national corporation and an average of the statements for a shop assistant and an unskilled factory worker. Because the covariates and factors in the models have not been logarithmically transformed, they denote an estimated percentage difference regarding the dependent variable. For a factor, this is between a certain group and the reference group. For a covariate, it is the estimated percentage effect of rising one step on the covariate scale. Model 0 is an empty model; Model 1 only contains the Scandinavian dummy; in Model 2, variables indicating the social and compositional background of the respondents variables are added; in Model 3, variables indicating subjective social class, trade union membership and political affiliation are added; in Model 4 the selected justice belief indexes are added and finally in model 5 the indexes indicating limitations to success ideology and perceived social conflicts are added. \* p < 0.05, \*\* p < 0.01, \*\*\* p < 0.001, N (national level) = 31, n (individual level) = 18,149.

Source: Social Inequality Module IV (2009) of the International Social Survey Program (ISSP).

In Table 5-12, the Scandinavian dummy remains practically unchanged from Model 1 to Model 5. Scandinavians are on average estimated to score slightly more than 80 per cent lower on the dependent variable than an average respondent from the other countries. If anything the Scandinavian egalitarianism is not explained, but rather suppressed by the variables entered in the models above. This was already indicated in Table 5-11 by the slightly stronger coefficients of some of the justice belief indexes in Scandinavia than elsewhere. The Scandinavian egalitarianism therefore does not appear to be explained by social cleavages, justice beliefs or simple main effects of high trade-union density rates. While the effects of the variables denoting social cleavages in Models 2 and 3 were expected theoretically, it was maybe surprising that Scandinavian justice beliefs hardly seem exceptional. Were this the case, the Scandinavian dummy would either be increased or explained. It should also be emphasised that this is not due to the variables not being associated with the dependent variable. As seen in Tables 5-10 – 5-11, all variables in the models do bivariately correlate quite strongly with the dependent variable.<sup>57</sup>

There are also some other results of Table 5-12 worth noticing. First of all, and maybe somewhat surprisingly, almost all explanatory variables entered in the models above appear as clear independent effects remaining mostly unchanged across the models. This seems to make the elaborate path-model approach of Szirmai (1986; 1991), which we decided not to follow, redundant anyway. The rule applies to the various variables measuring objective as well as more subjective social cleavages in models 2 and 3, and to the justice beliefs, the limitations and the perceived social conflict indexes in models 4 and 5. The effect of subjective class position is therefore, as above indicated, also not the same as the objective social background of the individual.

The notable exceptions are obviously the bivariate main-effects of trade-union membership apparently captured by the social cleavage variables. Alternative models excluding the two other variables of model 3, and including them in turn, were also tested. It is apparent that the effect of trade union-membership is more or less unchanged when the objective cleavages in model 2 are controlled for. It disappears after including these two more subjective variables in model 3 though. This seems to be somewhat in accordance with the theses above. The effect of trade-union membership is not a proxy for labour-market position as a social cleavage. Instead, its effect could be political – changing attitudes of the members. This does on the other hand not rule out self-selection effects of applying for trade-

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<sup>57</sup> Drawing the conclusion, it is important to recall that the variables in the ISSP 2009 dataset were ill-equipped to measure citizenship-based equality justice beliefs. We therefore cannot be sure that Scandinavian egalitarianism would not to a somewhat greater extent be explained statistically, if such variables were present.

union membership. The other two exceptions are the ‘success ideology’ and the ‘perceived social conflicts’ indexes.

The coefficients displayed in Table 5-12 are overall between-country main effects. It is thus important to keep in mind that the RI-models above make the rather unlikely assumption of similar average effects of factors and covariates across countries. As proposed above, it is therefore in theory possible that the RI-models of Table 5-12 hide the fact that the justice beliefs correlate differently with the dependent variable in the Scandinavian countries than elsewhere. In fact, the existence of crucial between-country main effects explaining Scandinavian egalitarianism is ontologically at odds with the complex and contextual ontology elaborated in Chapter 2.

Statistically, Scandinavian contextual effects of justice beliefs that are markedly different from elsewhere have been hard to locate, though. In the RS-models below the effect of each of the significant justice belief indexes has in turn been allowed to vary between countries. This means that in separate models, each in which the effect of a particular justice belief index were allowed to vary between countries, a cross level interaction between the Scandinavian dummy and that particular justice belief index were constructed. The result is that in the few cases where a significant variation in the effect of a given justice belief covariate can actually be found (statistically speaking this is a significant variance parameter between the slopes), in neither case has the cross-level interaction explained any of this variance. This means the justice belief indexes do not have a statistically significant different effect on attitudes to the level of inequality in gross wages in the Scandinavian countries from elsewhere. Again, this does not mean that citizenship-based equality justice beliefs should not have a stronger statistical effect on attitudes to the level of inequality in gross wages in Scandinavia than elsewhere. With the ISSP 2009 dataset, it is unfortunately not possible to test such a hypothesis. With not much gained from the possible micro-level effects of justice beliefs in explaining the Scandinavian egalitarianism, we will turn to the possible macro-level effects of justice-belief cultures below.

### **5.2.3.2 Country-Level Explanations of Scandinavian Egalitarianism**

The following analysis of national-level explanations suffers somewhat from ‘the small-N problem’. Thirty-one countries remain after fixating the individual-level explanations in Model 5 above. Hox (2010) recommends having at least 30 cases at the macro level to be able to trust the estimated effects of the covariates. Since we are only just meeting these requirements, the effect of only one national-level covariate at a time, in addition to the Scandinavian dummy, will therefore be tested in each of the following models. In addition, coefficients significant at a borderline 0.1 will also be shown in the table.

In the following analysis, nine alternative models with eight different country-level covariates in addition to the Scandinavian dummy will be presented. *Firstly*, the national means of the significant justice belief indexes from Table 5-12 will be aggregated to test whether Scandinavian egalitarianism is really not associated with subscription to a specific measurable justice belief on the average—interpreted as an expression of a justice-belief culture. An aggregated version of the social conflicts index is also presented. In contrast to other insignificant indexes at the micro level, this index actually seems to have some macro-level effect.

*Secondly*, the trade-union density in the countries will be estimated and tested. In Table 5-12, union membership does not appear significant on the micro level, regardless of whether it is placed in the model in its original triadic form, or a dummy created merging the first two categories. In the bivariate correlations of table 5-10, it does though. To test the macro-level impact of trade-union movements, a proxy for union density will be estimated by aggregating the mean of the dummy for member/former member vs non-member.

*Table 5-13 Country-Level Explanations of the Variation in Attitudes to the Level of Inequality in Gross Wages in ISSP 2009*

	Model 0	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8
<b>Fixed effects</b>									
<i>Scandinavian</i>		-1.07**	-0.89*	-0.78*	-0.84*	-0.67(*)	-0.94*	-0.75*	-0.64(*)
<i>Aggr. Need index 1-5 (cov.)</i>		0.27							
<i>Aggr. Market justice – Just deserts index 1-5 (cov.)</i>			0.05						
<i>Aggr. Market justice – Money should buy index 1-5 (cov.)</i>				-0.39*					
<i>Aggr. Limitations – Social background index 1-5 (cov.)</i>					-0.08				
<i>Aggr. Limitations – Entering university index 1-5 (cov.)</i>						-0.22			
<i>Aggr. The relative measure 1-5 (cov.)</i>							0.11		
<i>Aggr. Perceived social conflicts index 1-5 (cov.)</i>								-0.62*	
<i>Estimated trade union density 0-1 (cov.)</i>									-0.61
<b>Random effects</b>									
Variance at national level	0.312***	0.253***	0.262***	0.224***	0.262***	0.255***	0.261***	0.223***	0.243***
Intra-class correlation (country)	0.25	0.22	0.23	0.20	0.23	0.22	0.23	0.20	0.21
Explained variance at national level	–	19%	16%	28%	16%	18%	16%	29%	22%

*Notes:* : Multilevel analysis (random intercept models). Unstandardised regression coefficients and random effects. The dependent variable is created by taking, for each respondent, the natural logarithm of the ratio between the chairman national corporation and an average of the statements for a shop assistant and an unskilled factory worker. Because the covariates and factors in the models have not been logarithmically transformed, they denote an estimated percentage difference regarding the dependent variable. For a factor, this is between a certain group and the reference group. For a covariate, it is the estimated percentage effect of rising one step on the covariate scale. Model 0 is an empty model. Models 1-8 are alternative models, each containing one extra national-level covariate in addition to the Scandinavian of a large dummy. Models 1-8 are controlled for the effects of the significant individual variables from Model 5 in Table 5-12. (\*), P < 0.10, \*\* P < 0.05, \*\*\* P < 0.01, \*\*\*\* P < 0.001. N (national level) = 31, n (individual level) = 18,149.

*Source:* Social Inequality Module IV (2009) of the International Social Survey Program (ISSP).



Table 5-13 shows that among the significant justice belief indexes in Table 5-12, only the ‘Market justice – money should buy’ index appears to have some macro-level or cultural effect on attitudes to the level of inequality in gross wages that cannot merely be ascribed to the individual-level effect controlled for in the model. Furthermore, the aggregated index for ‘social conflicts’ also appears to have some macro-level effect—but no micro-level effect. In contrast to the hypothesis, countries in which people on average perceive a low degree of conflict between social groups therefore also have more egalitarian tendencies than in countries where this is not the case. As in Table 5-12, these indexes are mostly unable to account for Scandinavian egalitarianism. Taken at face value they do explain approximately 15 percent of the Scandinavian dummy each. As the justice belief indexes are now tested as individual-level variables in both RI and RS-modes and in an aggregated macro-level form, Scandinavian egalitarianism clearly does not appear to be connected to a special justice belief culture in general – at least in the form of the dimensions it is possible to measure with the ISSP 2009 dataset.

The estimated trade-union density in Model 8 explains approximately one-quarter of the Scandinavian dummy, even if the covariate is not significant. This is hardly surprising, since as we saw above the Scandinavian countries, despite the decline over the last 20–25 years, still exhibit extraordinarily high trade-union density rates in international comparisons. In an ordinary bivariate OLS-regression analysis,  $R^2$  is as high as 0.4 between the Scandinavian dummy and the estimated trade-union density. The association can therefore be seen as an expression of collinearity, for which reason it is not surprising that trade-union density is insignificant in a model with the Scandinavian dummy. In fact, trade-union density has a very strong and highly significant effect when the Scandinavian dummy is not included in the model.

### **5.2.3.3 Do Social Background or Perceived Social Conflicts have a Special Effect in Scandinavia or other Union-dense Countries?**

In order to test the hypothesis from the section on ‘modelling Scandinavian egalitarianism’ we will turn to RS-models. This is necessary, because it was proposed in Section 5.2.1.3 that a contingent effect of social background is connected with a subscription to non-market criteria in countries with high trade-union density rates (macro) or with trade-union membership (micro) (Åberg, 1984).

To test these ideas the models in Table 5-14 below follow a stepwise approach. Firstly, the effect of social class or educational level varying between countries will be confirmed by a display of significant variance parameters between the slopes of the countries (Model 1, 5). It will thereafter be investigated in three alternative models whether the effect of social class or education is contingent upon the fact of a country being Scandinavian or not (Model 2, 6), the trade-union density (macro) (Model 3, 7) or trade-union membership (micro) (Model 4, 8). Thereafter the

perceived social conflicts index, which appeared significant in an aggregated version above, will be put through the same treatment.

To an even greater extent than above, the ‘small-N problem’ constrains the analysis in estimating RS-models. Hox (2010) thus recommends a minimum of 50 cases on the country level if one is interested in cross-level interactions, and a minimum of 100 cases on the country level for reliable variance estimates. The following analyses, with just 31 cases on the country level, are therefore quite limited, and the results must be seen as somewhat provisional. With these constraints, it has only been possible to allow the effect of one covariate to vary between cases on the macro level and to build only one interaction term per model. The models simply cannot be estimated otherwise. In addition, the expanded level of significance of 0.1 from above has been maintained.

*Table 5-14 An RS-Approach to Explaining Scandinavian Egalitarianism in ISSP 2009*

	Model 0	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8	Model 9	Model 10	Model 11	Model 12
<i>Scandinavian</i>	-0.777*	-0.955**											
<i>Est. trade union density 0-1 (cov.)</i>													
<i>Union membership (current/former)</i>			-1.04**										
<i>Social Class 1-6 (cov.)</i>													
<i>Level of education 1-6 (cov.)</i>													
<i>Perc. social conflicts index 1-5 (cov.)</i>													
<i>Scand*Soc.Cl.</i>													
<i>Est. union density* Soc.Cl.</i>				0.02 (*)									
<i>Union membership* Soc.Cl.</i>					0.00								
<i>Scand*educ.</i>													
<i>Est. union density* educ.</i>													
<i>Union membership* educ.</i>													
<i>Scand*perc.soc.confl.</i>													
<i>Est. union density* perc.soc.confl.</i>													
<i>Union membership* perc.soc.confl.</i>													
Variance on slope	-	0.000*	0.000*	0.000*	0.000*	0.004**	0.004**	0.003**	0.004**	0.004(*)	0.003(*)	0.004(*)	0.004(*)
Variance at individual level	0.944***	0.905***	0.905***	0.905***	0.905***	0.900***	0.900***	0.900***	0.900***	0.906***	0.906***	0.906***	0.906***
Expl. var. on indiv. Level	-	4%	4%	4%	4%	5%	5%	5%	5%	4%	4%	4%	4%

*Notes:* Multilevel analysis (random slope models). Unstandardised regression coefficients and random effects. Model 0 is an empty model. The remaining models are controlled for the effects of the significant individual variables from Model 5 in Table 5-12. 'Level of education' and 'social class' are used as covariates despite being used as factors in Table 5-12 and 5-13. These variables are ordinal-scaled variables with six categories. Despite not meeting the formal demands of a covariate to be interval-scaled, they do seem to display approximately linear effects, however. Because of their obvious significance, they have been put into the models as covariates. The dependent variable and effects of the covariates are to be understood as in the models above. (\*)  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ . N (national level) = 31, n (individual level) = 18,149.

*Source:* Social Inequality Module IV (2009) of the International Social Survey Program (ISSP).

Tables 5-12 and 5-13 were largely unsuccessful in explaining Scandinavian egalitarianism by either social cleavages or justice beliefs at the micro level, nor by cultural effects of the same at the macro level. All the models in Table 5-14 display significant variance parameters between the slopes. This means the effect of household income, social class, educational level or perceived social conflicts on attitudes to the level of inequality in gross wages actually varies between the countries. These variance parameters are largely unexplained by whether a country is Scandinavian or not (models 2, 6 and 10), the level of trade-union density (models 3, 7 and 11) or whether a respondent is a member/former member of a trade union or not (models 4, 8 and 12). Table 5-14 therefore seems to repeat the more or less unsuccessful pattern of the two previous tables.

As with the macro-level effect of perceived social conflicts in model 8 of Table 5-13, important results hide in the detail. In model 2, a borderline significant interaction term appears between social class and the Scandinavian dummy. Firstly, this coefficient is at the same level as the estimated main effect of objective social class position. This means that in contrast to the countries in general, there is in general no effect of social class on attitudes to the level of inequality in gross wages in Scandinavia. Taking this varying effect of social class between countries into consideration, Scandinavian egalitarianism is also estimated to be clearer than in the RI-models above. A Scandinavian is now estimated to score 94 per cent lower on the dependent variable than an average respondent from the other countries. Secondly, because the variance parameter between the slopes in this case is so tiny, it only seems the cross-level interaction does not explain this variation at all. In fact, this parameter drops from 0.000231 to 0.000210, and so the 'adverse' effects of class in Scandinavia actually explain around 9 percent of the variation between the slopes. Since the three Scandinavian countries only constitute 9.7% of the total amount of countries in the sample, and 13.3% of the total amount of valid respondents in the analysis, this must be seen as a significant effect.

Also in model 7 a more clearly significant cross-level interaction between estimated trade-union density and the level of education of the respondent appears. In addition, the coefficients more or less cancel themselves out. Here around 13 per cent of the variance parameter is explained. Finally, in model 10, tentative suggestions also appear that the macro-level effect of the social conflicts index identified in Table 5-13, which was in the opposite direction to the hypothesis, actually to a large extent could be a Scandinavian effect. The main-effect coefficient is positive and borderline significant, while the interaction term is negative, strong, and significant. Again, the Scandinavian dummy is now not significant. This could suggest that the Scandinavian dummy in this model is explained to such an extent that it does not appear significant anymore, although the statistical limitations described above means that this must be seen as a somewhat tentative conclusion.

Although tentative, these results do seem to repeat the pattern of the bivariate analyses of Tables 5-10 – 5-11 above. Objective class differences or cleavages

seem to matter less for attitudes to the level of inequality in gross wages in Scandinavia than elsewhere. In addition, Åberg's (1984) thesis seems to gain some credence if interpreted as a macro-level explanation. In countries where trade-union density is high, the highly educated to a greater extent than elsewhere seems to take 'the bigger picture' into consideration and support lower levels of inequality in wage levels, than highly educated elsewhere. Lastly, the effects of perceiving the society to be characterised by social conflicts between different groups of society seem to be different and stronger in Scandinavia than in other comparable countries. A crucial question is what happens to these tentative results upon control for the crucial 'mental anchor' dealt with above – the perceived level of inequality in gross wages.

#### **5.2.3.4 The Self-Legitimising Low Degree of Perceived Level of Inequality in Gross Wages**

This final analysis investigates the effect of the perceived level of inequality in gross wages (PLI) in several aspects. Most importantly of course is the effect on explaining the Scandinavian dummy and the general variation at the micro and macro levels. This will be tested both with the PLI as an individual-level variable as well as in an aggregated form as a country-level variable (Models 1–3). Thereafter the three tentative effects identified in models 2, 7 and 10 in Table 5-14 above, as well as the aggregated effect of the social conflicts index identified in Table 5-13, will be controlled for the effect of PLI in models 4-7 below. Lastly, in Models 8–11, random slope models with the PLI will investigate whether the effect of this covariate varies between countries, and whether this is conditioned by trade-union density or by a country being Scandinavian or not. In addition, it will be investigated whether the relative measure somehow conditions the relations between perceived and just levels of inequality in gross wages.

*Table 5-15 The Effect of the Perceived Level of Inequality in Gross Wages on Attitudes to the Level of Inequality in Gross Wages in ISSP 2009*

	Model 0	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8	Model 9	Model 10	Model 11
<i>Scandinavian</i>		-0.35*	-0.23	-0.23	-0.34*	-0.38*	-0.18	-0.40***	-0.50***	-0.57***		
<i>Perc. lev. of ineq. in gross wages</i>		0.55***	0.70***	0.55***	0.55***	0.55***	0.55***	0.50***	0.49***	0.51***	0.41***	
<i>Aggr. Perc. lev. of ineq. in gross wages</i>				0.12(*)	-0.04							
<i>Aggr. Perc. Soc. Conf. Index</i>												
<i>Estimated trade union density</i>							-0.27				-0.25	
<i>Social Class</i>						-0.01***						
<i>The relative measure</i>								0.02*				-0.01
<i>perc.soc.conf/index</i>												
<i>Scand*Soc. Cl.</i>						0.01(*)						
<i>Est. union dens.*educ.</i>							-0.03					
<i>Scand*perc.soc.conf.</i>								-0.06(*)		0.08		-0.03
<i>Scand*Perc. lev. of ineq. in gross wages</i>												0.05***
<i>Est. tr. un. den.*Perc. lev. of ineq. in gross wages</i>												
<i>The rel. meas.*Perc. lev. of ineq. in gross wages</i>												
<i>Variance on slope</i>								0.015***	0.015**	0.016**	0.013***	
<i>Variance at individual level</i>	0.944***	0.547***	0.907***	0.547***	0.547***	0.547***	0.547***	0.529***	0.529***	0.529***	0.526***	
<i>Variance at national level</i>	0.312***	0.054***	0.054***	0.049***	0.056***	0.054***	0.057***	0.054***				
<i>ICC (country)</i>	0.25	0.09	0.06	0.08	0.09	0.09	0.09	0.09				
<i>Expl. var. on indiv. level</i>		42%	4%	42%	42%	42%	42%	42%	44%	44%	44%	44%
<i>Expl. var. on national level</i>		83%	82%	84%	82%	83%	82%	82%				

*Notes:* Multilevel analysis (random intercept and random slope models). Unstandardised regression coefficients and random effects. Model 0 is an empty model. The remaining models are controlled for the effects of the significant individual variables from Model 5 in Table 5-12. Models 0-7 are random intercept models. Models 8-11 are random slope models, where the covariate for the perceived level of inequality in gross wages (PLL) is allowed to vary between countries. The dependent variable is to be understood as in the tables above. Because the main independent variable *Perc. lev. of ineq. in gross wages* is also logarithmically transformed, the interpretation of correlations with the dependent variable is to be understood in per cent-wise terms for both variables. That is, the coefficients indicate how many per cent the dependent variable is estimated to change due to a one per cent increase in the covariate. \*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ , N (national level) = 31, N (individual level) = 18,149 (except Model 7).  
*Source:* Social Inequality Module IV (2009) of the International Social Survey Program (ISSP).

Table 5-15 in many ways presents remarkable results. *Firstly*, also after controlling for the variables fixated from model 5 in Table 5-12 and onwards, the PLI unsurprisingly still matters a lot to attitudes to the level of inequality in gross wages in Scandinavia and elsewhere. Roughly 60 percent of the Scandinavian dummy is thus explained in Model 1 after controlling for the micro-level PLI covariate. This is far more than in any of the models above. On the other hand, it is worthwhile noticing that the Scandinavian dummy is still significant and negative. Scandinavians are on average still estimated to score 35 per cent lower on the dependent variable than an average respondent from the other countries. This means Scandinavian egalitarianism is not solely the result of Scandinavians perceiving smaller differences in gross wage levels than elsewhere.

If we turn to the overall variation between respondents and countries,  $42\% - 4\% = 38\%$  extra variance on the individual level, and  $83\% - 19\% = 64\%$  of the variance on the country level is explained after controlling for the covariate. Model 3 also shows that the effect is mainly an individual-level effect as opposed to a country-level effect. If one trusts the borderline significant macro-level covariate in model 3 however, the interpretation is that in countries where the respondents in general perceive large wage differences, then even the respondents within these countries who do not perceive large wage differences, have a tendency to find larger wage differences just, than do similar respondents in other countries. Because these are continuous variables, this ‘regression towards the mean’ effect also works the other way. In countries perceived as egalitarian – such as the Scandinavian countries – respondents who perceive large differences in wage levels also have a tendency to be more egalitarian than similar respondents in other countries do.

*Secondly*, the interesting significant effects identified in Table 5-13 and 5-14 above are controlled for the effect of PLI in models 4-7. Firstly, the effect of the aggregated index of the existence of conflicts between social groups in Model 7 in Table 5-13 is explained by controlling for the PLI in model 4. This is in line with Kerr’s (2011) results. He argues that when societies become more unequal, the sense of conflict between social groups increases. This also suggests a reversed causal direction from Szirmai’s (1986; 1991) system-blaming hypothesis: It is the equality in Scandinavia which explain the low feeling of social conflict – not the other way around. The interaction between trade-union density and level of education in model 6 also appears, after control for PLI, not significant at all. In model 5 on the other hand, even after controlling for PLI, there is a borderline-significant interaction effect between social class and the Scandinavian dummy. In addition, the coefficients of the interaction term and the social class main effect are still exactly alike. In contrast to other countries, objective social class therefore does not seem to have any independent effect on attitudes to the level of inequality in gross wages in Scandinavia.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> As we will see in Chapter 6, this aggregated result hides disaggregated differences. Class does matter in Sweden, but not in Denmark and Norway.

*Thirdly*, the clearly significant variance parameter for the slopes in Models 8–11 further indicate that the strength of the correlation between PLI and the dependent variable at the micro level varies between countries. The clearly non-significant, cross-level interactions in Models 9 and 10 at the same time show that this is not related to whether a country is Scandinavian or not, nor whether it has a high trade-union density. The clearest pattern that can be deduced by regressing the PLI covariate and the dependent variable for each country individually is that the correlation appears to be weaker in the Eastern-European countries than in the countries in general.

A rather remarkable cross-level interaction with the relative measure does seem to appear in model 11. The cross-level interaction does manage to explain some of the variance between the slopes of the PLI, but not any extra variance on the Scandinavian dummy. The interaction can be interpreted in two ways: Firstly, one could take a point of departure in the PLI. In this case, the bigger the differences in wage levels the respondent perceives, the stronger the correlation between their attitudes to the level of inequality in just wages and their more political views on the overall income distribution in society. The background for this first interpretation is mostly methodological. The items on perceived wages appear before the items on just wages, which again comes before the item on the relative measure in the ISSP 2009 questionnaire. The perceived-earnings items therefore function not just as a mental anchor for the just-earnings questions. They could be argued to prime the consciousness of the respondents when they answer the statement forming the relative measure. On the other hand, this is not totally in opposition to Kerr's (2011) results just mentioned above. To repeat, he argues that when societies become more unequal, the sense of conflict between social groups increases. It is not so far-fetched an idea that if people sense a high degree of conflict between social groups, their abstract political attention in the form of the relative measure, as well their concrete attitudes to the wage levels of these social groups, will be highly correlated.

The second interpretation is based on the assumption that respondents in general have consistent attitudes when answering questionnaires. Theoretically, the idea is in line with the justice belief tradition, and the tradition distinguishing between values and attitudes. The relative measure could be seen as measuring values to the level of inequality in society, which are more abstract and from which the respondents more concrete attitudes and perceptions of the level of inequality in gross wages to a large extent stem. Therefore, the interpretation goes as follows. Economically neo-liberalistic respondents to a high extent disagrees that the differences in income in society are too high (this means they score high on the relative measure). Because the market 'clears itself', and the actual wages levels therefore per definition equals the just wage levels, there should a very high correlation between PLI and the dependent variable among these respondents.



### 5.3. SUMMARY AND PERSPECTIVE ON CHAPTER 5

Åberg (1984), Graubard (1986) and Andersen (1983) in the 1980s claimed that the Scandinavians were extraordinarily egalitarian. The empirical findings above suggest that the extraordinarily egalitarian attitudes to the level of inequality in gross wages in Scandinavia persist today.

The findings also indicate that this generally cannot be credited to most mainstream non-contextual explanations in the existing studies. These are the marginal economic utility of the individual and social cleavages in general, individual convictions regarding justice and their connection to national narratives/cultural justice beliefs – at least the ones possible to operationalise in the dataset. These explanations do explain some of the differences between individuals as well as between countries, but not Scandinavian egalitarianism (cf. Tables 5-12 and 5-13).

Probing more deeply, significant results seem to appear. *Firstly*, while both a micro- or macro-level main-effect of trade-union membership as suggested by Åberg (1984) is difficult to locate, borderline-significant interaction effects describing a diminishing effect of educational level in countries with rising trade-union density rates appears in Table 5-14. This is one possibility of what could be expected following Åberg's (1984) thesis concerning a shift towards non-market criteria in societies with high trade-union density rates. Unfortunately, this borderline effect disappears altogether after control for the perceived level of inequality in gross wages in Table 5-15. Theoretically, this is a very surprising result, as the effect of trade-union densities, in contrast to the effect of social cleavages and justice beliefs, actually could be seen as an attempt to model something, which at least was uniquely Scandinavian. Because of the much aggregated nature of these analyses, much could still be hidden. In the following disaggregated analyses focussing only on the two Scandinavian countries, the effect of trade union membership will be investigated once more in a strictly Scandinavian context.

In general, the analyses testing existing explanations therefore portrayed many 'non-findings'. There were also important findings though. Unsurprisingly much of the untamable micro- and macro-level variation was finally explained by introducing the perceived level of inequality in gross wages (PLI) as a covariate. As the case was also in the 'top of the mind' section above, the conclusion is that individuals' perceptions of the actual level inequality in gross wages in their country appear to be crucial for their attitudes to the just levels of the same. The comparatively quite low actual or rather perceived degree of differences in gross wage levels between occupations in Scandinavia therefore seems self-legitimising. Furthermore, two other effects in Table 5-15 also point in the same direction. First, the effect of the aggregated index for the existence of conflicts between social groups found in 5-13 was completely explained after control for the perceived level of inequality in gross wages (PLI). Secondly, even after control for PLI, a

significant cross-level interaction, with the same size of coefficient as the main effect, between the Scandinavian dummy and the objective social class measure, remained.

The various empirical results could suggest a Scandinavian nexus, where a perceived – rather than an actual – low degree of inequality in gross wages leads the Scandinavians to the following: *Firstly*, to see their society as quite harmonic without major conflicts between social groups; and *secondly* and more importantly, this leads to small attitudinal class differences – and even the higher strata of Scandinavians – to be egalitarian, in comparative perspective.

This does not mean that the Scandinavian nexus is a forever-stable equilibrium though. Even if the descriptive analyses seem to reveal a Scandinavian egalitarian equilibrium at an aggregated level as having been stable since 1992, the analyses of the consensus dimension reveal a potential for big changes. The Scandinavians in 2009, to a much greater extent than in 1992 and 1999, disagree about just gross wage levels for various occupations. A key subject in the coming analysis sections is therefore to focus on unravelling the matter of, which are the groups that change their attitudes, and in which of the countries.

On a more general ontological level, the results so far seem to confirm that the attitudes of individuals are contingent and possibly changeable over time. This statement seems obvious. However, several of the theoretical models presented suggest otherwise. The social cleavage model in its simplest forms indicates static attitudes directly mirroring the economic interests of individuals. These very strict RCT assumptions are obviously softened by, for example, Knudsen (2001) and Szirmai (1986; 1991), but the emphasis on static social cleavages remains. Both the micro and macro versions of the justice belief model actually emphasise the same kind of static attitudes. In the macro versions, individuals are culturally ‘doped’ and have a tendency to adopt the values of, for example, American exceptionalism (the same could be said about the cultural orientations of countries in the International Social Justice Project). In the micro version, individuals are thought to have very clear-cut and consistent attitudes that differ only between individuals instead of countries or cultures.

The results oppose this static view. The results of Table 5-15 suggest that the reality people perceive matters for their attitudes. One interpretation is that Scandinavian citizens express a positive nexus of consistent positive attitudes towards the current state of matters in Scandinavia. This positive nexus could also be labelled a self-reinforcing feedback mechanism. Scandinavians express a perception of their societies as dominated by low perceived levels of inequality in gross wages, and to be living in quite harmonic societies without major conflicts between social groups. This nexus is so positive that it leads even the higher-strata Scandinavians to be unusually egalitarian. Alternatively, the effects of the reality people perceive could also function as something due to a psychological need to post-rationalise and justify the reality perceived to fit the picture of living in a world (a society) that is

largely just. In this picture, Scandinavians are exceptionally egalitarian because they must justify the very equal distribution of wages they perceive. The experimental results of Chapter 4 seems to suggest that most people, at least when provoked, take a reflective stand on the issue of just wages. This points more in the direction of the first, rather than the second scenario, and is in line with the view of human nature described in Chapter 2.

In any case, the results of Chapters 4-5 indicate that even if Scandinavian egalitarianism currently seems stable, it is not necessarily stable or based on an unchangeable 'passion for equality'. Instead, it is contingent and depends especially on the development of the context in which the Scandinavians live and therefore, on all of the factors and parts of the political economy described in Chapter 3. Chapter 6 will delve more deeply into the issues of what the descriptions of the developing political economies in Chapter 3 mostly focussed on – the differences between Denmark and Sweden.

## CHAPTER 6. DISAGGREGATING SCANDINAVIAN EGALITARIANISM

Chapter 6 changes focus from the aggregated to the disaggregated perspective. The analyses of Chapter 5 followed a long line of comparative research comparing the Scandinavian countries *externally* to other especially Western countries. In Chapter 6, the focus will, instead, be on the *internal* similarities and differences within the Scandinavian block: both the differences between Denmark and Sweden, but also the attitudinal patterns of various social groups within the two countries. There are both good empirical and theoretical reasons for making this change of perspective. The description of the development of the Scandinavian political economies (PEs) in Chapter 3 actually focussed primarily on the differences between Denmark and Sweden.

The basic empirical approach of the chapter is to investigate the relationship between the medians of various social groups, as well as the standard errors of the same groups. The logic behind this approach is central, and will therefore be explained before turning to formulating hypotheses for Denmark and Sweden, respectively. If, to a great extent, attitudes towards the level of inequality in gross wages are structured by a given cleavage in society — e.g. social class — then consistent differences in the median levels of the various social classes can be expected. At the same time, the standard errors for each of the social classes should remain low. This second part is, at first glance, maybe a bit less intuitive, but really, the idea is rather simple. A low standard error for a given class signifies little variation in how that particular class relates attitudinally to the dependent variable. A situation with rather large differences in the medians of, for instance, the social classes, but at the same time, small standard errors for each of these classes signifies that attitudes towards the level of inequality in gross wages to a high extent are divided according to social class. In such a situation, social class can also be labelled as forming a significant and consistent attitudinal cleavage. In the situation where social class does not structure attitudes to the level of inequality in gross wages, there will not be much consistent difference in the median levels of various social classes. At the same time, intra-group variation, and hence standard errors of the various classes, will be higher. As described above and below, a significant rise in standard errors can be associated with a reflective shock induced by an economic crisis.

In Section 3.7 different scenarios on how the changing PEs of Denmark and Sweden, could affect the attitudinal patterns of the countries' citizens were deduced. The first of these of these scenarios is the possibility that the expected attitudinal patterns of Denmark and Sweden should not be that different at all, in according to recent data. This scenario stems from the idea that attitudes towards the level of inequality in gross wages, in both Denmark and Sweden, somehow

stem directly from the changes in actual wage dispersion levels and actual class structures, where Denmark and Sweden, as seen in the analysis of Section 3.5, are not that different anymore. However, this ‘Scandinavian similarity scenario’, despite a superficial reading of the results of Chapter 5, does not seem that realistic. Section 5.2, and especially the analysis of Subsection 5.2.2.3, indicated that Scandinavians’ attitudes towards the level of inequality in gross wages seem, to a higher extent than elsewhere, to be connected to the political affiliation and other attitudes of the respondent, but to classic social cleavages to a lesser extent, as the Scandinavian similarity scenario presumes.

Starting with *Denmark*, it was argued in Chapter 3 that both the historical legacy, and hence the historically constructed normative institutions (HCNI), as well as the more recent programmatic and material developments in Denmark, were dominated by institutionalised class-compromises and consensus. Recent developments in the Danish PE do not seem to change this picture dramatically, except perhaps blurring potential ideological class divisions even further. The scenario deduced was, therefore, that if all of this translates into Danish attitudes towards the level of inequality in gross wages, they should to a great extent, be consensual with small differences in medians — across social classes. Therefore, even if Danish attitudes towards the level of inequality in gross wages are conditioned mostly by the present and more material changes in the political economy, an egalitarian, but non-cleaved attitudinal pattern is to be expected.

The analyses of Subsection 5.1.2.4 also revealed that while the Danish and Norwegian standard deviations rose tremendously with regard to most measures of attitudes towards gross wages from 1999 to 2009, the corresponding Swedish standard deviations were quite stable. The rise in standard deviations could potentially signify a transition underway in Norway and Denmark in particular. As described in Chapter 3, the rise in standard deviations is probably mostly related to the financial crisis in the short term. Norway and especially Denmark were hit harder by the financial crisis in 2008 than Sweden was (Goul Andersen, 2013). The financial crisis could therefore constitute exactly the kind of reality or reflective shock modelled experimentally in Section 4.3. The results from applying these interventions showed dramatically higher standard deviations in this instance.

The development in *Sweden*, on the other hand, does not, seem to be path-dependent to the same extent as in Denmark. The historical legacy of the PE of Sweden is one of ideological class struggles in the IRS, as well as in the parliamentary sphere, to a greater extent than in Denmark. While the events of the 1980s in particular can be seen as a revival of an even more open class struggle, the outcome in the last couple of decades has perhaps resulted in signs of a divergence from the ideological, class-struggle path. Crucially, both the Swedish IRS and the interplay between central actors in the parliamentary sphere over time seem to be moving more and more in the Danish direction. Swedish attitudes are therefore at a more noticeable watershed than Danish ones. It is an empirical question as to whether Swedish attitudes towards the level of inequality in gross wages will be

influenced mostly by the historical ideological class legacy, or by more recent developments. If Swedish attitudes are still dominated mainly by the HCNI, they could be more dominated median-wise by ideological differences in attitudes, following broadly the 'old' social classes of society. If, instead, with some lag, they start to parallel more recent developments in the Swedish PE, then Swedish attitudes should increasingly become consensual across social classes, like the corresponding Danish attitudes.

Sweden suffered less from the financial crisis in 2008 than Norway and especially Denmark (Goul Andersen, 2013). The Swedish standard errors in 2009 are therefore not expected to increase considerably from 1999 to 2009. Instead, Sweden, as described in Chapter 3, had its own severe financial and economic crisis in the early to mid-1990s. Following the same logic as concerning Denmark, inflated Swedish standard errors could thus be expected in 1992 and 1999, not 2009. In fact, the results of Subsection 5.2.3.4 do not seem to suggest high Swedish standard deviations in 1992, 1999 or 2009. There is therefore also another possibility. The class legacy of the Swedish HCNI was probably still quite strong in the 1990s. The reality or reflective shock of the crisis in the 1990s, in Sweden, could have increased the dispersion of attitudes to wages, in the same way as happened to Norway and Denmark in 2009. However, in contrast to these two countries, the Swedes might have separated according to the politicised and salient social class divisions. This would not necessarily stir up the overall standard errors measures, but clear attitudinal cleavages should be identifiable, following more or less the classic social classes.<sup>59</sup>

Based on the elaboration of the Danish and Swedish scenarios above, the analyses of Chapter 6 will, like Chapter 3, focus on the differences between Denmark and Sweden. The Norwegian case for our purpose again seems less interesting theoretically and empirically than the corresponding Danish and Swedish cases. An analysis of the Norwegian data, applying the same methods and approach as in this

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<sup>59</sup> It should be mentioned that there are also other empirical results, which in different ways point to a higher degree of politicisation of the issue of wages in Sweden in the 1990s, than in other Scandinavian countries. First, a stronger correlation appears between the relative and the more absolute measure in Sweden than in the other Scandinavian countries in 1992 and 1999 (see Table 4-2). Second, the correlation between perceptions of the actual level of gross wage inequality and attitudes towards the level of inequality in gross wages is also somewhat weaker in 1999, than it is in other Scandinavian countries. As indicated above, these results could signify a politicisation of the issue of wages, because people firstly connect the question of wages to their stance on the economic, political left-right scale; hence the stronger correlations in Table 4-2. Secondly, people also take a clear stance and separate the issues of perceived and just gross wage levels; hence the weaker correlation in Table 4-4. Lastly, the Swedes were also found to be much more critical to the perceived wage levels of chairmen in 1999 (Table 5-6) than their Scandinavian neighbours.

chapter, has however also been conducted. The results are, to a remarkable extent, similar to the Danish, but not to the Swedish results. In addition, the Norwegian 1992 results also largely mirror the 1999 results. For the sake of brevity, the Norwegian disaggregated analysis has been cut out. Interested readers can find the complete analysis in a downloadable working paper (Kjærsgård, 2012a).

## 6.1. APPROACH AND METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

To investigate the possible scenarios described above, a number of methodological considerations are necessary. First, the descriptions of the developing PEs in Scandinavia and the above-summarised deduced scenarios are focussed on primarily: whether attitudes towards the level of inequality in gross wages can be expected to be divided according to social classes. In spite of the theoretical centrality of social classes, this is not the only likely or interesting attitudinal cleavage to investigate.

It seems relevant to investigate how the various *generations* in Scandinavia relate to the issue of the level of inequality in gross wages, and whether this changes over time. Older generations were brought up during the heyday of classic Scandinavian political economies. Their identity as belonging to a *social class* might adhere more to these experiences than is the case for younger generations. Thus the class identity of older Swedish generations is likely to be stronger than that of corresponding Danish older generations (cf. Chapters 3 & 4). Obviously, a generational perspective is also important to try to detect change in the seemingly stable Scandinavian attitudinal patterns revealed in Chapter 5. While older generations might retain social class as a central part of their identity, younger generations might follow other divisions. A good candidate could, for example, be *educational groups*. These have been suggested to supplant social class as the dominating cleavage in late-modern societies (Harrits, 2013). Another possibility is the old, but still relevant cleavage between *urban* and *rural* areas of society (Zielinski, 2002). Esping-Andersen (1990) argues that the central (future) conflict in the Social Democratic Welfare State regime is the fight between the large public sector, employing mostly women, and the private sector, employing the majority of employed men. In short, Esping-Andersen (1990) predicts Scandinavian attitudes to be divided along the lines of *gender* and *sector of employment*, which also is interesting to investigate. Yet another obvious possible compartmentalisation, correlated with both class and education, is *income*. Attitudes towards wages are as described in Subsection 5.2.1.1 obviously argued to be influenced by the respondents' own income. Furthermore, because of its contextual and theoretical centrality, we will return to the issue of *trade union membership*. The analyses of Chapter 5 failed to produce significant effects of trade union membership or trade union density. The question to be investigated below is whether at least the Scandinavian countries do not portray different patterns on this central variable.

Lastly, the issue of just wage levels is, as argued in Chapters 1 and 3, also a political question. The results of Subsection 5.2.2.3 even seemed to suggest that the issue of just wage differences was connected to the political attitudes of the respondent in Scandinavia to a higher extent than elsewhere. Following the scenario described above, maybe Danes do not deviate in attitudes towards the level of inequality in gross wages along the lines of social class. This does not mean that the *political affiliation*, as described in Chapter 4, does not play a major role in the belief system of the respondent (Goul Andersen, Andersen, Borre, Møller Hansen, & Nielsen, 2007; Shamshiri-Petersen, 2010). In addition, political affiliation was not measured directly in the analyses of Chapter 5. The reason is that political party affiliation is measured in national variables in the ISSP 2009 dataset, as was the case with income. In contrast to income, it is debatable whether you can merge very different national political party cleavages into something other than a very crude, and ultimately misleading, left–right scale-variable, which is probably why GESIS – Leibniz-Institute for the Social Sciences have chosen not to create a cross-country variable in the 2009 dataset.<sup>60</sup> Dealing with only two countries, we can retain and use the national party lines reflected in the national political affiliation variables.

The analyses below will take all of these potential cleavages seriously. There are several ways to structure disaggregated comparisons. Since the focus is on identifying how the Scandinavian countries differ or are similar, the choice here has been to analyse one country at a time: first Denmark, then Sweden. The analyses will proceed by disaggregating the scores of each of the two countries on the various social groups/cleavages or in other words, the variables mentioned in the last paragraph. The structure of each of the three country analyses sections will follow more or less how ‘natural’ or unchangeable the following various background variables are:

- *Age groups* (trying to distinguish between generation, age, and periodic effects)
- *Gender*
- *Urbanisation*
- *Education*
- *Objective social class*
- *Household income*
- *Employment status*
- *Trade union membership*
- *Political affiliation*
- *Subjective social class*

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<sup>60</sup> In the ISSP 1987 and 1999 datasets these are merged into a variable with five categories, from far left to far right. In the 1992 dataset, respondents were simply asked about their political affiliation from the far left to the far right on a 10-point scale.



It is important to emphasise that the logic of this chapter is on identifying possible cleavages in Denmark and Sweden and is thus highly descriptive. This is quite different from the ‘control logic’ of the multilevel regression analyses of Section 5.2. The potential cleavages signified in the variables above are likely to be strongly correlated, although this is not crucial for the division logic. A compartmentalisation between, for example, urban and rural respondents, does exist, no matter if it is caused by differences in educational status or not. Before concluding the chapter, a split hierarchical regression analysis will be conducted for Denmark and Sweden, using the 2009 dataset and the variables in the list above. The purpose is to accommodate the control logic, and the obvious question of where the divisions identified in the descriptive analyses of the following pages stem from.

The analyses below will focus on just one measure of just one of the dimensions investigated in Section 5.1. For the same reason, as retaining it as the dependent variable in Section 5.2, the ‘chairmen vs. low-paid occupations’ index will be the measure of focus in this chapter. The analyses below are, therefore, more restricted than the analyses of Chapter 5: first, the focus is just on one dependent variable, instead of a whole range of dependent variables, as in Section 5.1; second, only two Scandinavian countries will be investigated, instead of the 19–38 countries in Chapter 5. The analyses below are wide-ranging in other ways though.

The analyses below will widen the time span of the analyses and thus incorporate the Swedish 1992 data only used previously in Table 5-5. This data stems from ISSP’s Social Inequality module II of 1992. As already mentioned, unfortunately, only Norway and Sweden, but not Denmark, participated in this second round of the Social Inequality module, and none of the three countries participated in the first round in 1987 (ISSP Research Group, 2011), which prevents the possibility of an even longer time span. Furthermore, the Swedes were not asked about the salaries of shop assistants, which is why a slightly reversed dependent variable is created and used in the 1992 dataset. This reflects only the chairman to unskilled factory worker gross wage ratio. It does not make much difference though. As can be seen in the analyses of Subsection 5.1.2.1, people in general hardly distinguish between the salaries of unskilled factory workers and shop assistants. Testing the Norwegian results of 1992, with the commonly used dependent variable, also yields almost identical results (not shown).

In each of these analyses, the medians of each ‘social group’ and the standard errors of the same will be presented.<sup>61</sup> For both the medians and standard errors of the various social groups compared, there will be a focus on both how the general *level* between the groups is, and how the *development* over time is. This is necessary in order to investigate the effect of the various factors in the scenarios described for

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<sup>61</sup> For comparison, the same scale will be used in each instance: 1.5–3.5 in medians; 0–1.5 in standard errors.

Denmark and Sweden above.<sup>62</sup> For some of the variables below, issues arise of how to operationalise them. These will be dealt with along the way.

## 6.2. ANALYSES

As elaborated above, the analyses will proceed with one country at a time, starting with Denmark. In very short, the expected scenario for Denmark states that we should see a high degree of consensus, as measured by medians. This means that the median levels of various social groups — and especially social classes — should not be far apart in either 1999 or 2009. The shock of the financial crisis in 2008 should, on the other hand, lead to increased standard errors for the various social groups in 2009, as compared to 1999.

### 6.2.1. DENMARK

As elaborated above, the first section investigates the effect of generation on attitudes towards the level of inequality in gross wages in Denmark. For all Danish analyses, data is restricted to 1999 and 2009, as mentioned above.

#### 6.2.1.1 Generations

Before embarking on the empirical results, a classic demarcation, important when investigating respondents belonging to different age groups, will be presented. The presentation will be based on Hellevik (1991, pp. 378-386). Firstly, *age group* divisions can be understood as an effect linked to the respondents being in a

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<sup>62</sup> It is also important to mention that there are certain data-wise limitations and complications for 1992 and 1999, which we did not need to face in the analyses of the 2009 dataset, in Section 5.2. The Danish dataset was not included in the integrated dataset of 1999. Even if a separate Danish dataset were available, the background variables are not always alike, which of course has consequences. The Danish dataset does not contain any urbanisation variables, and the education of the respondent is measured in a different and more sophisticated way in Denmark, using two questions, both with numerous categories. However, these two variables are almost similar to the Danish educational questions of ISSP 2009. It was possible to create a Danish degree variable also for 1999, using a slightly modified version of the syntax used to create the Danish degree variable of 2009. The Danish variable for household income in 1999 is categorical and not continuous, like the Swedish and Norwegian variables. As will be evident below, this of course has consequences when creating comparable measures, and it is not possible to copy the rather elaborate procedure for constructing income variables, described in Subsection 5.2.2.2. Furthermore, the Swedish data of 1992 is also clearly not as comprehensive as the corresponding Norwegian data. No Swedish data of 1992 is available concerning employment status, household income, trade union membership and subjective social class variable, which is why this cannot be investigated either. In neither of the two countries was it possible to construct the European Socio-economic Classification Scheme (ESeC) variable for objective social class. In spite of the limitations mentioned, in most cases, reasonable comparative measures for the countries have been created, working over quite a long time span.

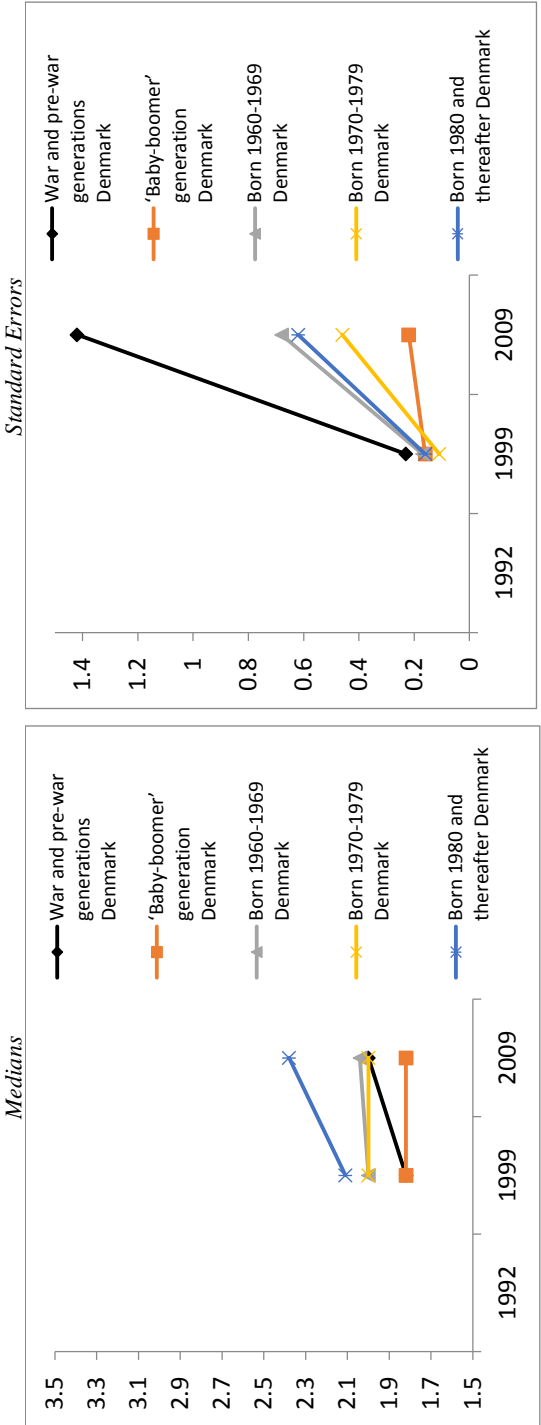
specific age interval, or a certain part of their life cycle. This means a certain homogeneity in attitudes can be expected within persons of a specific age span, because they share concerns and life experiences; i.e. most of the 25–34 year olds share the experience of finding their first real full-time job, being a parent etc. From this viewpoint, the formation of an individual's values is assumed to be heavily influenced by near-present experiences of the individual, common interests or a gradual socialization process. Secondly, *generation effects* are very different, in that they put a heavy influence on the formative experiences in childhood and early youth. Values from this perspective are seen as very static over time at the individual level, influenced heavily by the primary socialization process in the family, but also secondary socialization processes at school and with friends, plus maybe formative political experiences in youth. This tradition argues that people growing up in a specific period of history share a common frame of reference, sharing the experience of formative 'mega events' during their upbringing. This branch of sociology has, at a basic level, penetrated to everyday discussions of common people. In academic sociology, on the other hand, a great deal of effort has been put into trying to define, for example, what actually *is* a formative experience, constituting the reference point for a generation? This discussion surely also entails a disagreement on what a generation is, which generations exist and where to draw the boundaries between them (Corsten, 1999; Roche, 2003). Not trying to resolve this discussion, our demarcation of generations below follows a very pragmatic approach:

- *Born before 1945: war and pre-war generations*
- *Born 1945–1959: often labelled the 'baby-boomer' generation*
- *Born 1960–1969*
- *Born 1970–1979*
- *Born 1980 and thereafter*

This demarcation will be used for both of the two countries. Thirdly, the literature on generations and age groups also emphasise the importance of *periodic effects*. Periodic effects are caused by different kinds of events or developments present at the time of the investigation one conducts, or in the period leading up to that. In our case, it is the development of various parts of the Scandinavian political economies and economic crises, which forms the background for the possible period effects identified. These periodic effects potentially affect all respondents, independent of generation or life-cycle effects. To make matters even more complicated, it is quite possible that periodic effects do not affect all age groups in the same way. To use statistical terminology, different interaction effects between various generations or respondents in a certain age interval and a periodic effect can thus be expected. Since the reality often appears to be a mix of various effects, then even when a time series is available — as in our case — these effects are often hard to distinguish in actual analyses. Lastly, it is also worth keeping in mind that the composition of especially the youngest and oldest generation changes over the surveys. First, new respondents are added in the youngest generation, as they turn eighteen and can

participate in the survey. Second, many members of the oldest cohorts die between the surveys, and therefore the composition of the oldest generation also changes somewhat. Nevertheless, the basic demarcations are useful tools when interpreting outcomes. Keeping these considerations in mind, we will now turn to the empirical analyses.

Figure 6-1 Attitudes towards the Level of Inequality in Gross Wages for different Generations in Denmark in ISSP 1999 and 2009, medians and standard errors



Notes: The statements of the chairman of a large national corporation variable are divided by an index constructed from an average of the two lowest paid occupations; that is, the statements of the two occupations: shop assistant and unskilled factory worker are summarised and divided by two. Lastly, the chairman statements are then divided by the low-paid occupations index.  
 N (1999): War and pre-war generations=292, the baby-boomer generation=457, Born 1960-1969=339, Born 1970-1979=271 and Born 1980 and thereafter=59.  
 N (2009): War and pre-war generations=236, the baby-boomer generation=385, Born 1960-1969=287, Born 1970-1979=205 and Born 1980 and thereafter=190.  
 Sources: The Social Inequality Modules (III-IV: 1999 and 2009) of the International Social Survey Program (ISSP).

Looking at the medians in general, there seems to be no clear divide between different generations in either 1999 or 2009. Among all generations, except the youngest and the baby-boomer generation, the medians were, in practice, unanimous in 2009. The median of the youngest groups rose somewhat between 1999 and 2009.<sup>63</sup> The baby-boomer generation<sup>64</sup> also kept its low median of 1999 in 2009. The picture could indicate possible age-cleavage emerging among these three groups; something that only future data will reveal. Turning to the level of intra-age group consensus: in 1999, all generations had very small and almost similar standard errors; in 2009, on the other, hand all groups, except perhaps the baby boomers, portrayed radically increased standard errors. Interestingly, it was especially the oldest respondents, followed by the youngest respondents, who showed the largest standard errors: the 65–74 year olds were off the charts, with a standard error of 1.9 in 2009.

If we are to elaborate on the results based on the demarcation between life-circle-, generation- and periodic effects, the baby boomers' development seems to correspond with a quite clear generation effect. Their median level and standard error remains low and practically unchanged from 1999 to 2009. The attitudinal mark imprinted in this generation's youth persists through time, and the mark has furthermore been quite equal across the generation's members, indicated by the persistently low standard errors. The results of the other generations can best be explained because of a periodic effect, generally leading the majority of the respondent in each group towards a common median or equilibrium in 2009.<sup>65</sup> This periodic mark is not as strong or consistent as the mark put on the baby boomers in their youth, reflected in the markedly risen standard errors of 2009. The somewhat deviant result of the youngest generation could indicate both a generation-, a life-circle effect and as mentioned the entrance of younger less egalitarian cohorts in the generation in 2009. Only future data will show.

The Danish generational pattern therefore also seems to conform to the scenarios described above quite well. First, Danish age groups were extraordinarily consensual in both 1999 and 2009, with some signs of an emerging division between the youngest generation and the baby boomers in 2009. This could suggest that something other than the classic consensual Danish HCNI was affecting the youngest generation, and therefore indicates change in the consensual Danish model. Second, the financial crisis, as expected, seemed to influence the standard errors of all generations tremendously, except the baby boomers, although the longer-term effects of this reality and reflective shock remains to be seen. How and

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<sup>63</sup> It does not matter, whether we call them 18–24 year olds, or born 1980 and after (see Figure 8-1 in Appendix B).

<sup>64</sup> In the Danish political debate, this generation, known as the 'sixty-eighters', is often described as having special political views and orientations.

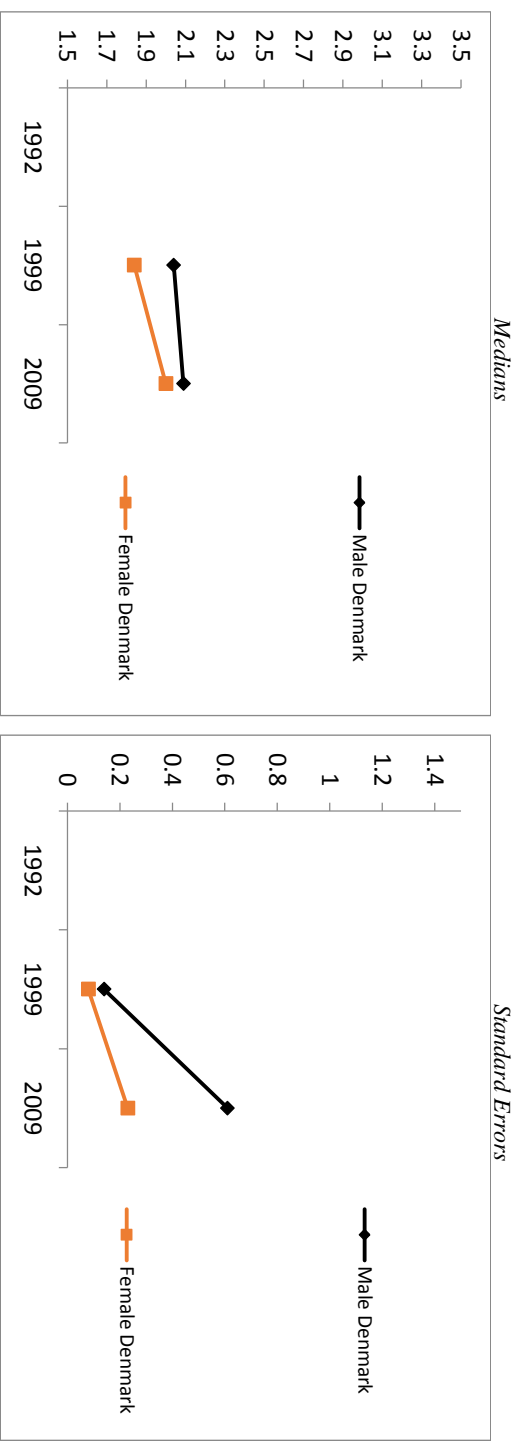
<sup>65</sup> This is even clearer in Figure 8-1 in Appendix B, following respondents of specific age intervals.

for how long the media react to the financial crisis is probably important for judging whether the Danes, in accordance with a thermostat logic, go back to normal attitudinally (Soroka & Wlezien, 2005), or whether the crisis has induced sustained path departure in the patterns of Danish attitudes towards the level of inequality in gross wages.

### **6.2.1.2 Gender**

Figure 6-2 below investigates whether attitudinal cleavages linked to gender can be identified in Denmark in 1999 or 2009.

Figure 6-2 Attitudes towards the Level of Inequality in Gross Wages for Males and Females in Denmark in ISSP 1999 and 2009, medians and standard errors



Notes: The statements of the chairman of a large national corporation variable are divided with an index constructed from an average of the two lowest paid occupations; that is, the statements of the two occupations: shop assistant and unskilled factory worker are summarised and divided by two. Lastly, the chairman statements are then divided by the low-paid occupations index.

N (1999): Male=757, Female=661. N (2009): Male=646, Female=657.

Sources: The Social Inequality Modules (III-IV: 1999 and 2009) of the International Social Survey Program (ISSP).

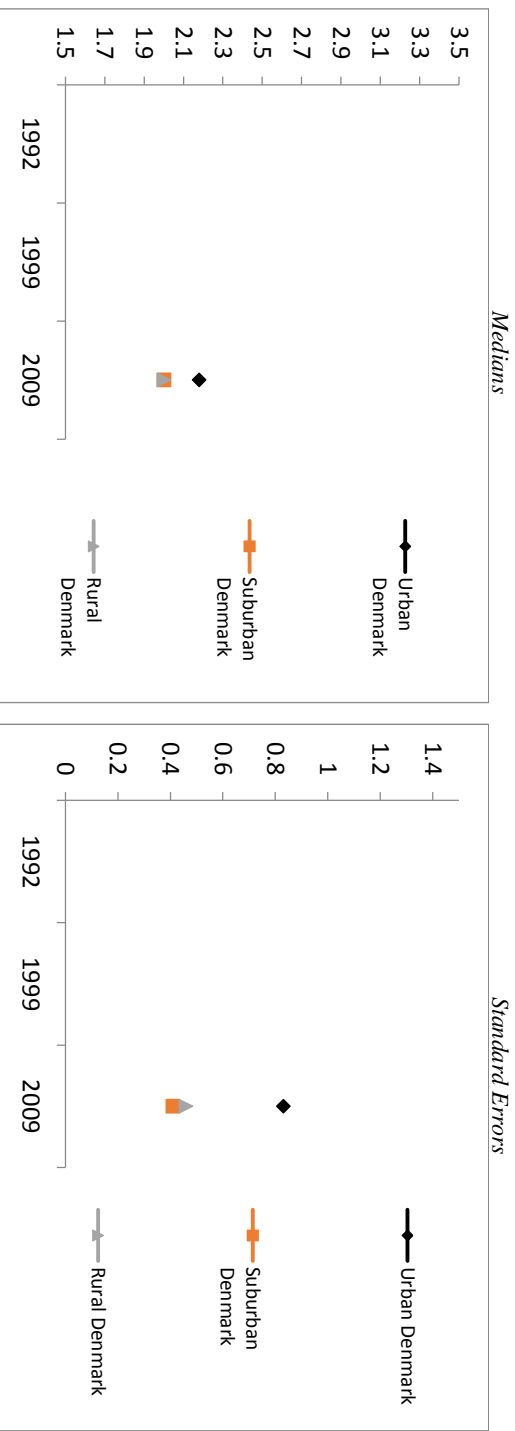


What we see is that the male median levels in both years are very similar. Gender is clearly not a dominating divide in Denmark, concerning attitudes towards the level of inequality in gross wages. However, within each gender, the disagreement clearly rises from 1999–2009, as, in particular, males in Denmark seem to move towards polarisation. This is not surprising, because the two genders entail all generations, so the tendency to rapidly rising standard errors is much less outspoken, but still present in Figure 6-2 than in Figure 6-1.

### **6.2.1.3 Urbanisation**

Figure 6-3 below investigates whether attitudinal divisions linked to urbanisation can be identified in Denmark. As mentioned above, unfortunately there is no urbanisation variable in the Danish version of ISSP 1999, so only 2009 results can be shown.

Figure 6-3 Attitudes towards the Level of Inequality in Gross Wages for Respondents from Areas with Different Degrees of Urbanisation in Denmark in ISSP 2009, medians and standard errors



*Notes:* The statements of the chairman of a large national corporation variable are divided with an index constructed from an average of the two lowest paid occupations; that is, the statements of the two occupations: shop assistant and unskilled factory worker are summarised and divided by two. Lastly, the chairman statements are then divided by the low-paid occupations index.

N (2009): Urban=272, Suburban=267, Rural=751.

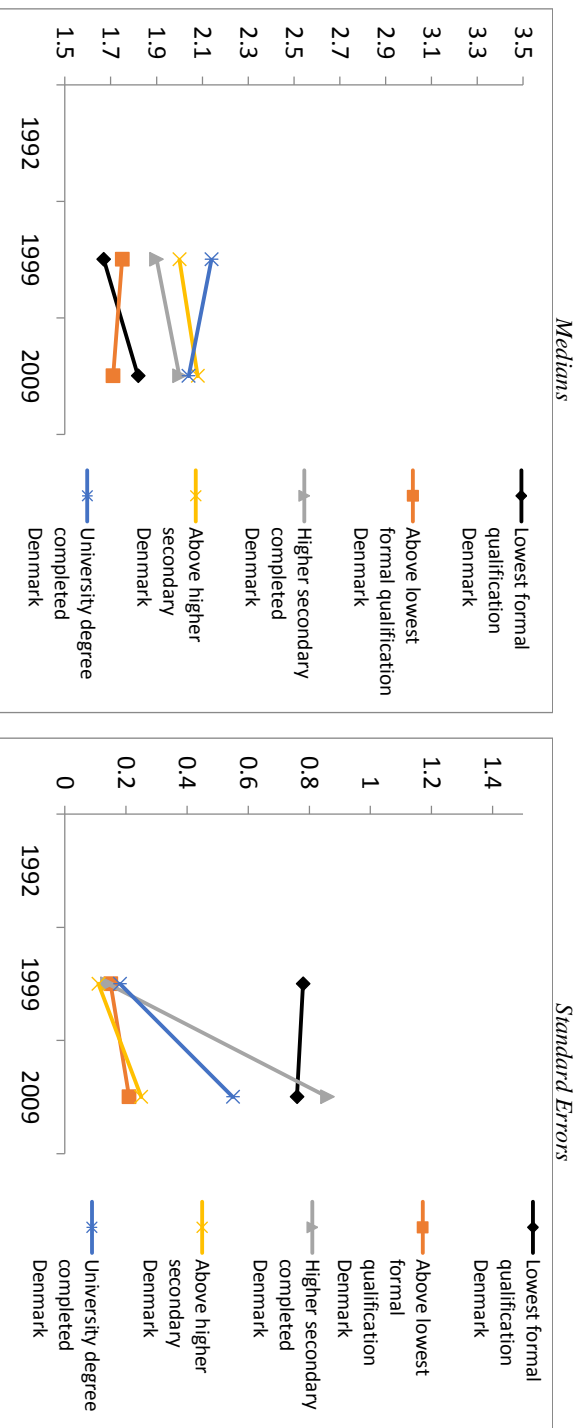
*Sources:* The Social Inequality Modules (III–IV: 1999 and 2009) of the International Social Survey Program (ISSP).

Although there is not much to tell when there are only data from 2009, the results again seem to repeat the patterns above. There is almost no difference in the medians, while the standard error of the urban group is markedly higher than the two other groups. However, the urban standard error of 0.83 is not at the level of the older groups of above.

#### **6.2.1.4 Education**

Education is, as previously mentioned, argued to be the most prominent cleavage existing in late-modern societies. Figure 6-4 below investigates whether cleavages linked to education can be identified in Denmark.

Figure 6-4 Attitudes towards the Level of Inequality in Gross Wages for Different Educational Groups in Denmark in ISSP 1999 and 2009, medians and standard errors



Notes: The statements of the chairman of a large national corporation variable are divided with an index constructed from an average of the two lowest paid occupations; that is, the statements of the two occupations: shop assistant and unskilled factory worker are summarised and divided by two. Lastly, the chairman statements are then divided by the low-paid occupations index.

N (1999): Lowest formal qualification=48; above lowest formal qualification=85; higher secondary completed=651; above higher secondary=422; university degree completed=186.

N (2009): Lowest formal qualification=51; above lowest formal qualification=73; higher secondary completed=449; above higher secondary=519; university degree completed=184.

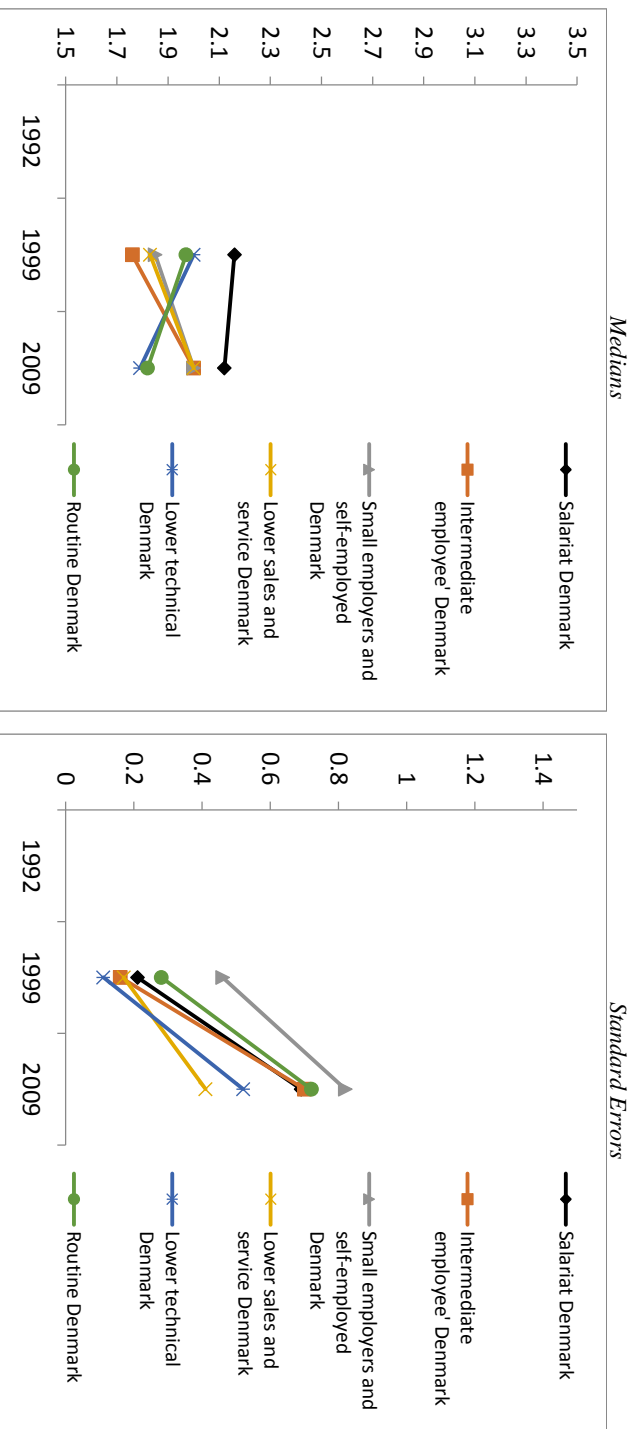
Sources: The Social Inequality Modules (III-IV: 1999 and 2009) of the International Social Survey Program (ISSP).

Median-wise, Denmark, in 1999, had an almost linear effect of education, where higher education meant more tolerance for inequality. In 2009, there is a slight tendency of a gap appearing between 'lowest formal' and 'above lowest formal', versus the other educational groups. There is thus, in general, a rising tendency, not followed by 'university degree completed' and 'above lowest formal'. The differences still seem very small, but are as notable as the generational differences seen above. Turning to the standard errors of the various educational groups, we see clear polarisation tendencies. While respondents with the lowest formal qualifications consistently show large standard errors, and above lowest, plus above higher secondary education show consistent low standard errors, university degree completed and higher secondary complete portray a clear rising trend, in accordance with the above. The analysis thus more or less replicates what is found above: in 1999, there are very low standard errors for almost all groups. In 2009, on the other hand, the standard errors have exploded for a majority of the groups investigated. Although there are differences between the groups, deeming education to be a significant divide in attitudes towards the level of inequality in gross wages Denmark is clearly not substantiated.

#### **6.2.1.5 Social Class**

In the analysis below the same 6-class version of the ESeC, as used in Chapter 5, will be used to measure social class. The Danish results are portrayed in Figure 6-5 below.

Figure 6-5 Attitudes towards the Level of Inequality in Gross Wages for 6 Different Social Classes (ESec) in Denmark in ISSP 1999 and 2009, medians and standard errors



Notes: The statements of the chairman of a large national corporation variable are divided with an index constructed from an average of the two lowest paid occupations; that is the statements of the two occupations: shop assistant and unskilled factory worker are summarised and divided by two. Lastly, the chairman statements are then divided by the low-paid occupations index.

N (1999): Salaried=405; Intermediate employee=230; Small employers and self-employed=55; Lower sales and service=110; lower technical=95; Routine=126.

N (2009): Salaried=512; Intermediate employee=268; Small employers and self-employed=59; Lower sales and service=148; lower technical=68; Routine=158.

Sources: The Social Inequality Modules (III-IV: 1999 and 2009) of the International Social Survey Program (ISSP).

Although median differences between the highest class — the salariat — and the two lowest classes emerges in 2009, the differences are, as above small, and probably, in most cases, insignificant. The medium-level classes, in between the two extremes, are not surprisingly, also placed in between the two extremes in 2009. The pattern of 1999 is stranger however. Turning to the standard errors, the pattern of above with drastically risen standard errors in 2009 is very clear here. If one trusts the demarcation, not much class-consciousness seems to be present in Denmark in 2009; at least, class-consciousness as measured with the ESeC.

### 6.2.1.6 Household Income

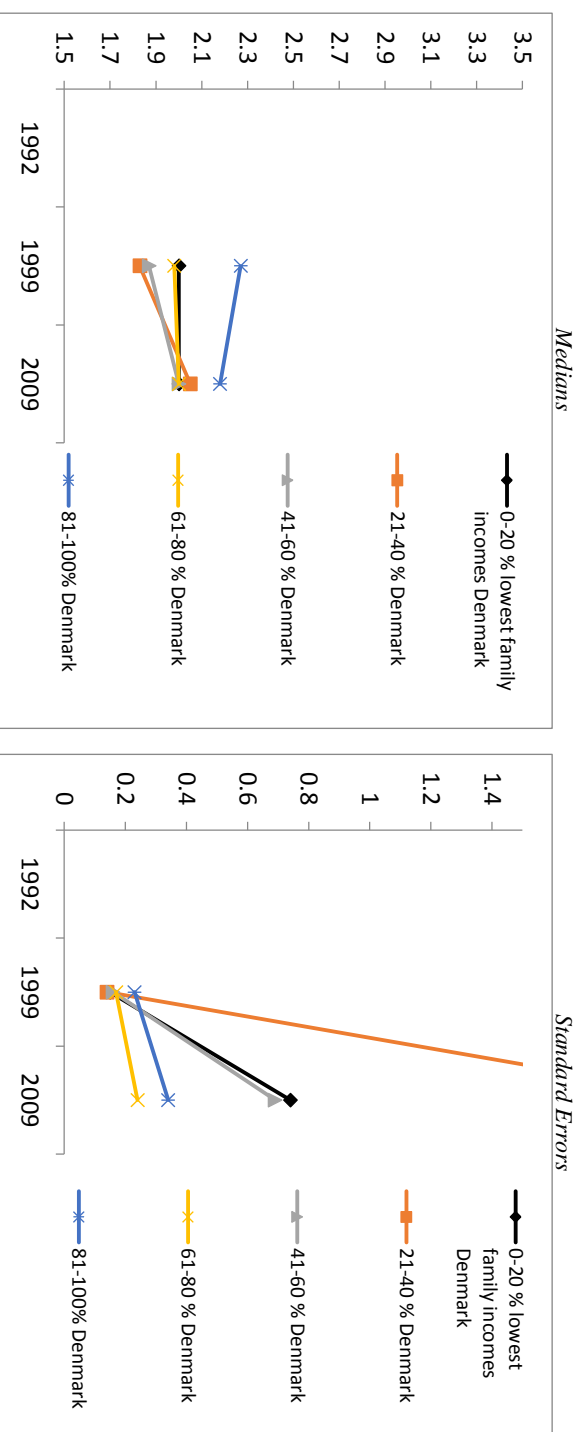
The analyses above tap into quite stable attitudinal cleavages often thought to have their base in the socialization processes of childhood or youth. We now move to a more experience- or interest-based and volatile view on attitudes, by investigating which effect a person's household income has on his/her attitudes. Unfortunately, the variables measuring the household income of the three countries differ a lot in the three datasets, which is why comparison has been difficult. As mentioned, the Danish variable for household income in 1999 is categorical and not continuous, unlike the Swedish and Norwegian variables. The 1992 dataset only contains a Norwegian and not a Swedish household income variable, and even for the continuous variables, the scales vary.<sup>66</sup> All of this, of course, has consequences in creating comparable measures, and it is not possible to copy the rather elaborate procedure constructing income variables described in Subsection 5.2.2.2. To solve this dilemma, a very pragmatic approach has been followed. In each case, it has been tried as precisely as possible to divide the three samples into five groups: the poorest 20 % of the samples' households; the 20–40 %, 40–60 %; 60–80 %; and the richest 20 %. Although the groups in each case do not exactly match 20 % of the respondents, especially not when categorical recordings have been used, the results should be fairly accurate.<sup>67</sup> Figure 6-6 below investigates whether divisions linked to household income can be identified in Denmark.

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<sup>66</sup> The Norwegians and Danes were asked about gross yearly salaries in their national currency, while the Swedes were asked about gross monthly salaries in their national currency (ISSP Research Group, 2011). Of course, the general tendency for inflation in all countries also makes the value of a certain amount of Danish, Norwegian or Swedish kroner change between the three datasets.

<sup>67</sup> See N for the various groups in the notes below Figure 6-6.

Figure 6-6 Attitudes towards the Level of Inequality in Gross Wages for Different Household Income Groups in Denmark in ISSP 1999 and 2009, medians and standard errors



Notes: The statements of the chairman of a large national corporation variable are divided with an index constructed from an average of the two lowest paid occupations; that is, the statements of the two occupations: shop assistant and unskilled factory worker are summarised divided by two. Lastly, the chairmen statements are then divided by the low-paid occupations index.

N (1999): 0-20 % lowest family incomes=182; 21-40 %=207; 41-60 %=439; 61-80 %=219; 81-100 %=317.  
 N (2009): 0-20 % lowest family incomes=180; 21-40 %=150; 41-60 %=272; 61-80 %=306; 81-100 %=356.

Sources: The Social Inequality Modules (III-IV: 1999 and 2009) of the International Social Survey Program (ISSP).

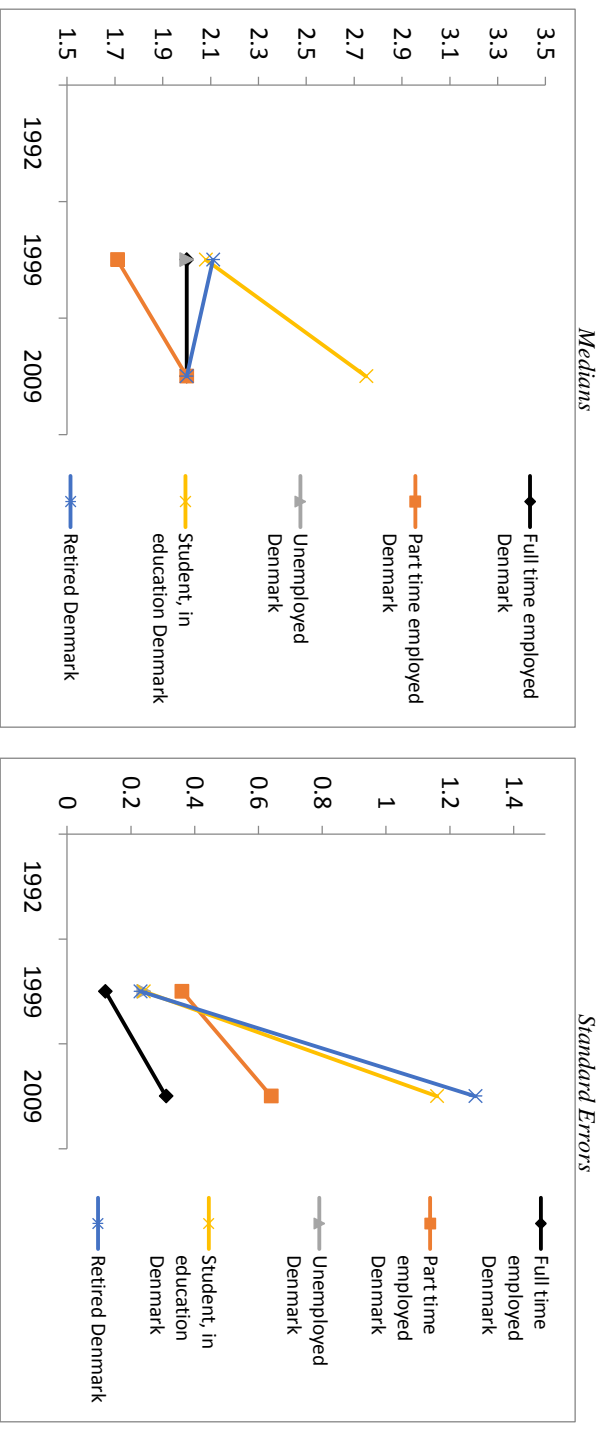


Income was found to matter less for the variation in attitudes to the level of inequality in gross wages in Scandinavia than elsewhere in the analyses of Chapter 5. The patterns of the figures of Chapter 6 so far, again unsurprisingly, seem to repeat. The group medians move closer from 1999 to 2009. Only the richest 20 % of the respondents stand out a bit from the rest, although the difference is very small. The standard errors of the various groups also replicate the above patterns. A clear rising tendency can generally be subscribed to the groups: the 21–40 % group's standard error reached a value of 2.17 in 2009. Only the richest 39 % of the sampled Danish respondents portrayed more or less stable low standard errors in both 1999 and 2009.

### **6.2.1.7 Employment Status**

In Figure 6-7 below it will be investigated which effect a Danish respondent's current employment status has on their attitudes towards the level of inequality in gross wages. Unfortunately, there are very few unemployed respondents, which is why unemployed only appear in 1999 in the figure below.

Figure 6-7 Attitudes towards the Level of Inequality in Gross Wages for Groups with Different Employment Statuses in Denmark in ISSP 1999 and 2009, medians and standard errors



Notes: The statements of the chairman of a large national corporation variable are divided with an index constructed from an average of the two lowest paid occupations; that is, the statements of the two occupations: shop assistant and unskilled factory worker are summarised and divided by two. Lastly, the chairman statements are then divided by the low-paid occupations index.

N (1999): Full-time employed=852; Part-time employed=52; unemployed=61; Student=87; Retired=82.

N (2009): Full-time employed=727; Part-time employed=61; unemployed=35; Student=97; Retired=265.

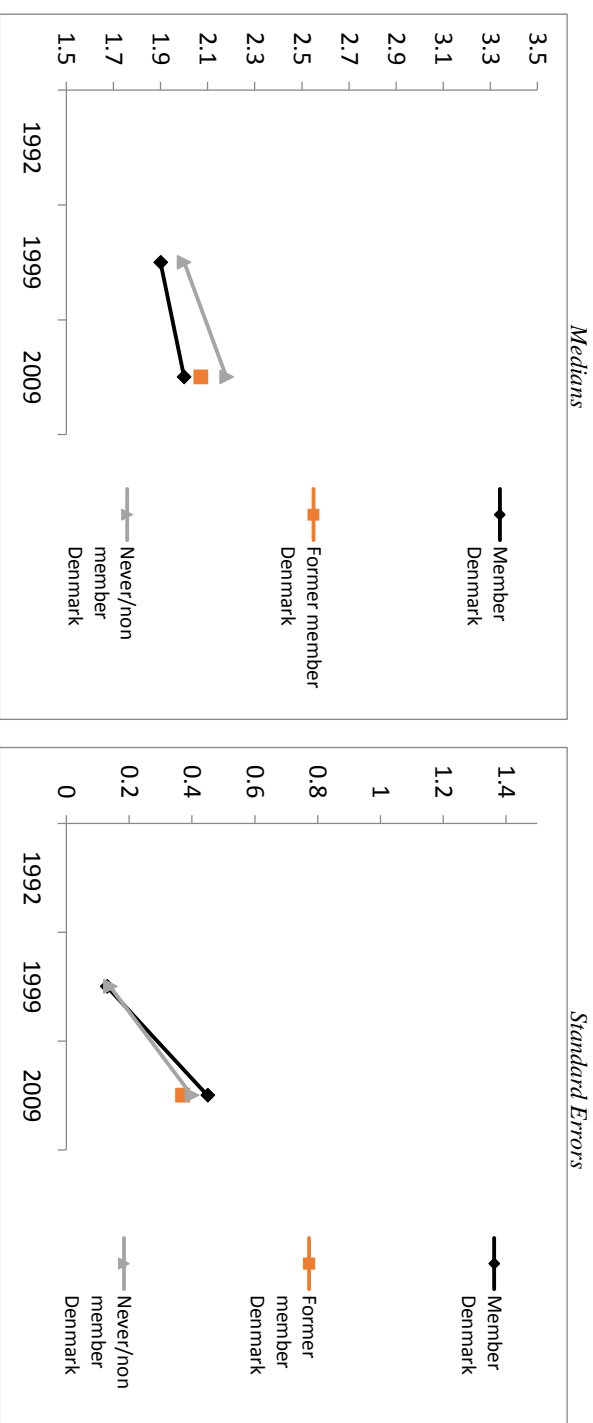
Sources: The Social Inequality Modules (III-IV: 1999 and 2009) of the International Social Survey Program (ISSP).

The employment status medians generally behave in the same way as seen above. What is seen is thus a move towards equal median levels in 2009. The only group deviating —this time markedly — is the students, with a median of 2.75 in 2009, which mirrors the youngest generation of Figure 6-1. As seen above with the oldest and youngest age groups, the retired and students portray huge rises in standard errors from 1999 to 2009. The two employed groups rise, but not excessively.

#### **6.2.1.8 Trade Union Membership**

Trade union membership theoretically has been argued, in Chapter 5, to be one of the few obvious variables to explain Scandinavian egalitarianism on attitudes towards the level of inequality in gross wages. Surprisingly, the various analyses in Chapter 5, trying to test various possible effects of trade union membership appeared rather meagre. Below, trade union membership, is given the benefit of doubt. In the analysis below, the trade union membership variable changes from 1999 to 2009 from being a dichotomous variable, denoting if a respondent is a trade union member, to a trichotomous variable, with the added category 'former member' in 2009. Figure 6-8 below investigates whether divisions linked to trade union membership can be identified in Denmark.

Figure 6-8 Attitudes towards the Level of Inequality in Gross Wages for Trade Union Members, Former Trade Union Members and Never Trade Union Members in Denmark in ISSP 1999 and 2009, medians and standard errors



Notes: The statements of the chairman of a large national corporation variable are divided with an index constructed from an average of the two lowest paid occupations; that is, the statements of the two occupations: shop assistant and unskilled factory worker are summarised and divided by two. Lastly, the chairman statements are then divided by the low-paid occupations index.

N (1999): Trade union member=771; not a member of a trade union=258.

N (2009): Trade union member=903; once a member, but not now=269; never a member of a trade union=124.

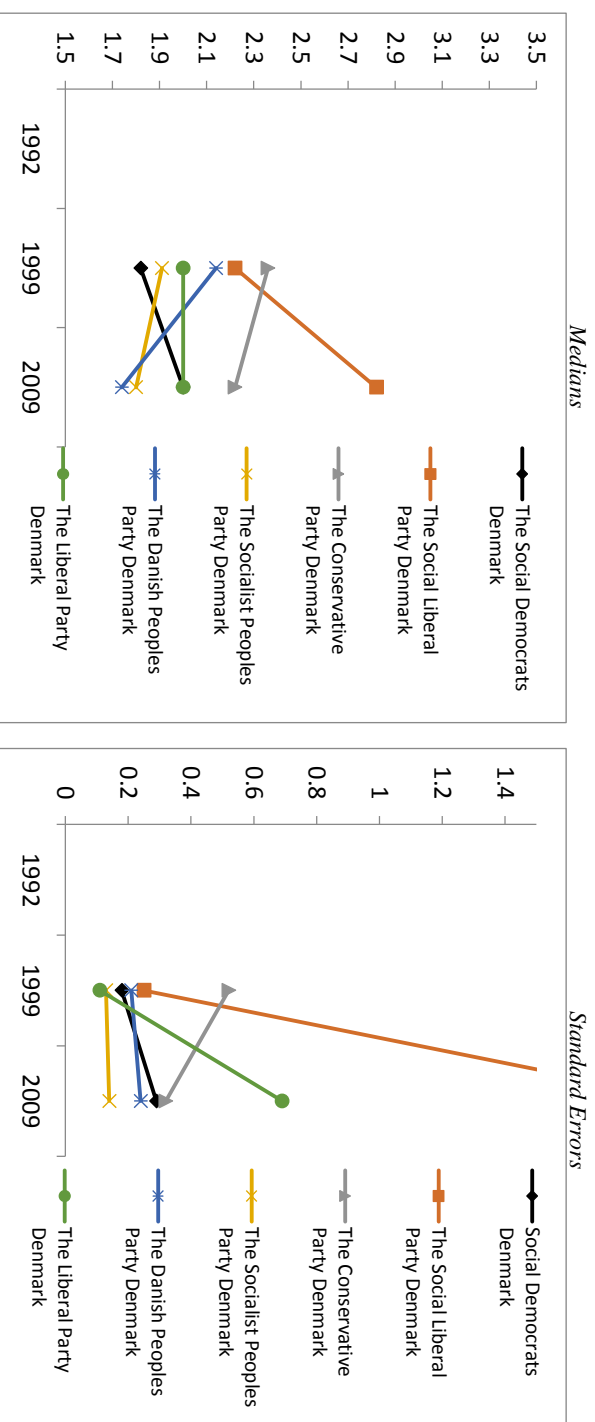
Sources: The Social Inequality Modules (III–IV: 1999 and 2009) of the International Social Survey Program (ISSP).

In contrast to what could be expected from the literature presented, being a trade member or not again seems not to make much difference in Denmark, in either 1999 or 2009. The medians are almost in line in both 1999 and 2009, rising a little bit, while the standard errors all rise from 1999 to 2009.

#### **6.2.1.9 Political Vote at Last General Election**

The various results concerning trade union membership seem to suggest that the Danes are no longer orienting to trade unions and old-fashioned class-membership, although this does not mean that they are not devoting their political identity towards the political system and political parties. Figure 6-9 investigates, whether cleavages linked to general political orientation can be identified. The Scandinavian political systems are multi-party systems with low barriers for running and getting into parliament. At each general election, a multitude of parties therefore run, and quite a lot of those acquire seats in parliament. For the sake of simplicity and the small N problem, only the seven biggest parties are represented in Figure 6-9 below, as well as the corresponding figure for Sweden later in the text.

Figure 6-9 Attitudes towards the Level of Inequality in Gross Wages for the Respondents' Vote for Various Political Parties on the latest General Election in Denmark in ISSP 1999 and 2009, medians and standard errors



Notes: The statements of the chairman of a large national corporation variable are divided with an index constructed from an average of the two lowest paid occupations; that is, the statements of the two occupations: shop assistant and unskilled factory worker are summarised and divided by two. Lastly, the chairman statements are then divided by the low-paid occupations index.

N (1999): The Social Democrats=363; The Social Liberal Party=67; The Conservative Party=116; The Socialist People's Party=136; The Danish People's Party=75; The Liberal Party=323.

N (2009): The Social Democrats=270; The Social Liberal Party=67; The Conservative Party=104; The Socialist People's Party=208; The Danish People's Party=109; The Liberal Party=294.

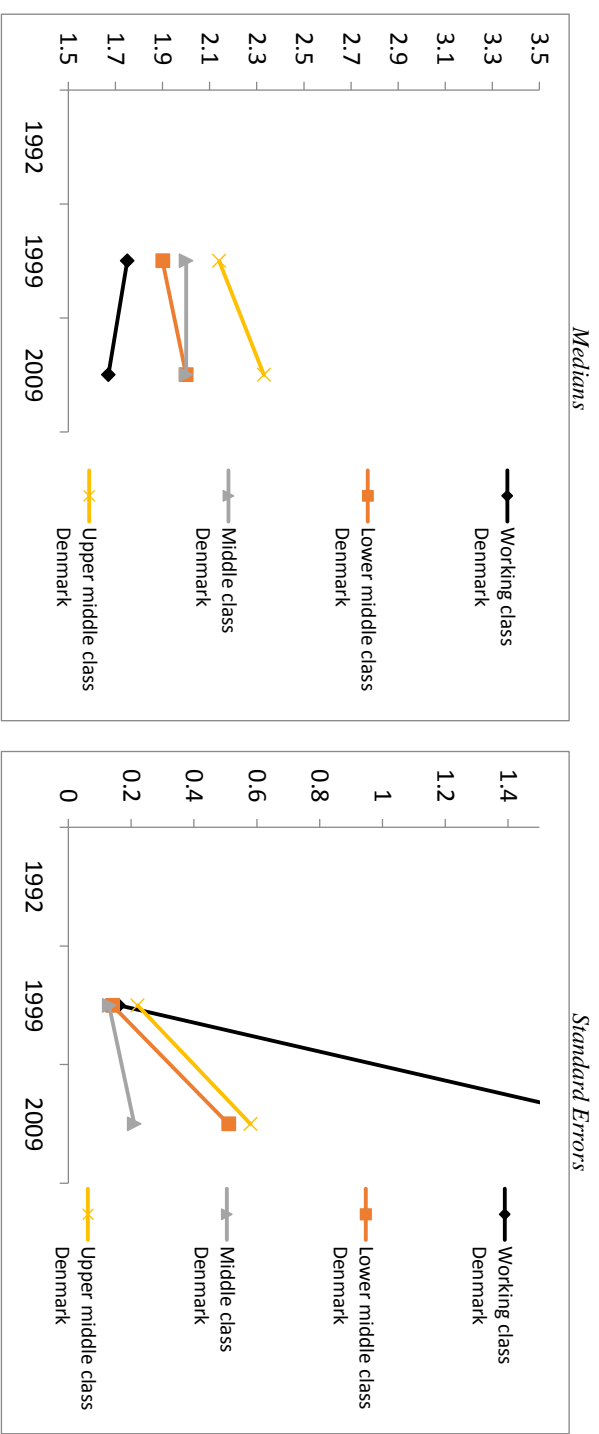
Sources: The Social Inequality Modules (III-IV: 1999 and 2009) of the International Social Survey Program (ISSP).

For Danish standards, the differences between the medians of the different political parties are quite large in 2009, especially the voters for '*radikale venstre*' (the Social Liberal Party), do not seem that 'social' or egalitarian, after all, in 2009. A look at the corresponding standard errors does show a very large tendency for polarisation within the party though. Focussing on the standard errors, excluding the social liberals, and '*venstre*' (the Liberal Party), belonging to a certain political party does seem to matter much more for the consistency of Danish attitudes in 2009, than the various possible cleavages tested above.

#### **6.2.1.10 Self-Reported Social Class**

The analysis in Figure 6-10 investigates the effect of feeling; one *belongs* to a specific social class. Here, we are thus dealing with a more subjective version of class relations. The ESeC or 'objective' class position defined class position based on one's employment relations. It is worth mentioning that in Denmark, Norway nor Sweden no more than a maximum of ten respondents admitted belonging to either the under or upper class in 1992, 1999 or 2009. These groups are therefore omitted in the analyses of subjective social class. This result is of course interesting in its own right, and could be seen as an indicator of Scandinavian egalitarianism, identified in the existing literature, where everybody more or less sees themselves as belonging to the not-extreme classes.

Figure 6-10 Attitudes towards the Level of Inequality in Gross Wages for the Respondents' Self-reported Social Class in Denmark in ISSP 1999 and 2009, medians and standard errors



Notes: The statements of the chairman of a large national corporation variable are divided with an index constructed from an average of the two lowest paid occupations; that is, the statements of the two occupations: shop assistant and unskilled factory worker are summarised and divided by two. Lastly, the chairmen statements are then divided by the low-paid occupations index.  
 N (1999): Working class=209, Lower-middle class=147; Middle class=657; Upper-middle class=326.  
 N (2009): Working class=207, Lower-middle class=185; Middle class=680; Upper-middle class=191.  
 Sources: The Social Inequality Modules (III-IV: 1999 and 2009) of the International Social Survey Program (ISSP).



Together with the results of disaggregating on political orientation, as one of only two analyses so far, we can see some tendency for an expected median divide appearing in 2009, between the subjectively felt upper-middle class being relatively anti-egalitarian and the subjectively felt working class being very egalitarian. The middle/lower-middle class lies in between. People's subjective class identity in Denmark thus seems to matter more for their attitudes towards the level of inequality in gross wages rather than the other potential divisions presented above, except maybe from political orientation. The class-consciousness of the working class has clear limits, reflected in the very low degree of intra-group consensus in 2009, presented in the right-hand side of Figure 6-10. The other groups, except the middle class, also portray rising standard errors from 1999 to 2009.

## **6.2.2. SUMMARY OF THE DANISH DESCRIPTIVE DEVELOPMENTS**

In this subsection, we will try to sum up the general Danish trends identified above. Starting with the medians, the Danes, in general, showed clear signs of an unaltered or even increased degree of homogeneity in medians *across* the groups investigated. There are only three real exceptions from this picture. Firstly, the students of Figure 6-4 and the youngest generation of Figure 6-1 show a dramatic increase in median values from 1999 to 2009. These groups reflect many of the same respondents, and because they are the young people of the future, a rise in the aggregated Danish median can possibly be expected, as the more egalitarian generations pass away. The interpretation is also based on the assumption that the attitudes towards the level of inequality in gross wages remain more or less stable for a generation over time, which given the results above, does not seem totally realistic, at least when subtracting the baby boomers. This generation also shows consistent median levels from 1999 to 2009, and somewhat lower than the remaining generations. In the multivariate analyses below, one of the things we will be able to test is whether the effect of the students and the younger generations can be separated. In addition, it will be investigated which effect this has when controlling for the same groups' perceptions of the actual level of inequality in gross wages. Secondly, divides based on political affiliation or self-reported social class appeared in Figures 6-9 and 6-10. This political or class-consciousness apparently did not have much to do with 'objective' class position, education, income, employment status or trade union membership.

When we look at the standard errors, on the other hand, we see a dramatic development, which is not incompatible with the medians' development though. The general picture is that in 1999 there was a very big within-group consensus in all cases, except for the respondents with the lowest formal qualifications, and the voters for the conservative party. In 2009, almost all groups have clearly raised standard errors, several of these considerably. The groups that are stagnant or only rise marginally are, firstly, the political parties in general, minus the liberal and Social Liberal followers in 2009. Secondly, it is the females, the baby-boomer generation, the full-time employed, with above lowest formal qualifications or

above higher secondary school, and the subjective middle class. Everybody else raises tremendously, some even off the scale. The results thus reveal a very low level of group consciousness in Denmark in 2009, with political affiliation as the only real general exception.

The results therefore align very well with the scenario expected for Danish attitudes towards the level of inequality in gross wages. Danes disaggregated in most social groups portray surprisingly small attitudinal divisions, fitting well with the continued Danish tradition for consensus and seeking compromise. The cleavages possible to identify — self-reported social class and political affiliation — do not seem much connected to any objective measure of social position, such as ESeC, education, employment status, urbanisation or income. Instead, they seem to be politicised value divisions, which are not connected to trade union membership either. Also, as expected, the financial crisis seems to have delivered a reality shock affecting almost all groups' standard errors to rise significantly from 1999 to 2009. The only generally resilient group consciousness is political affiliation. This result again points to the idea that Danish attitudes towards the level of inequality in gross wages of 2009 are structured by political value cleavages. In the analyses below it will be exciting to see whether the same tendencies can be found in Sweden, or whether the differences between Denmark and Sweden also lead to quite different attitudinal patterns in the disaggregated perspective. The analyses thus continue in a similar fashion with the Swedish results.

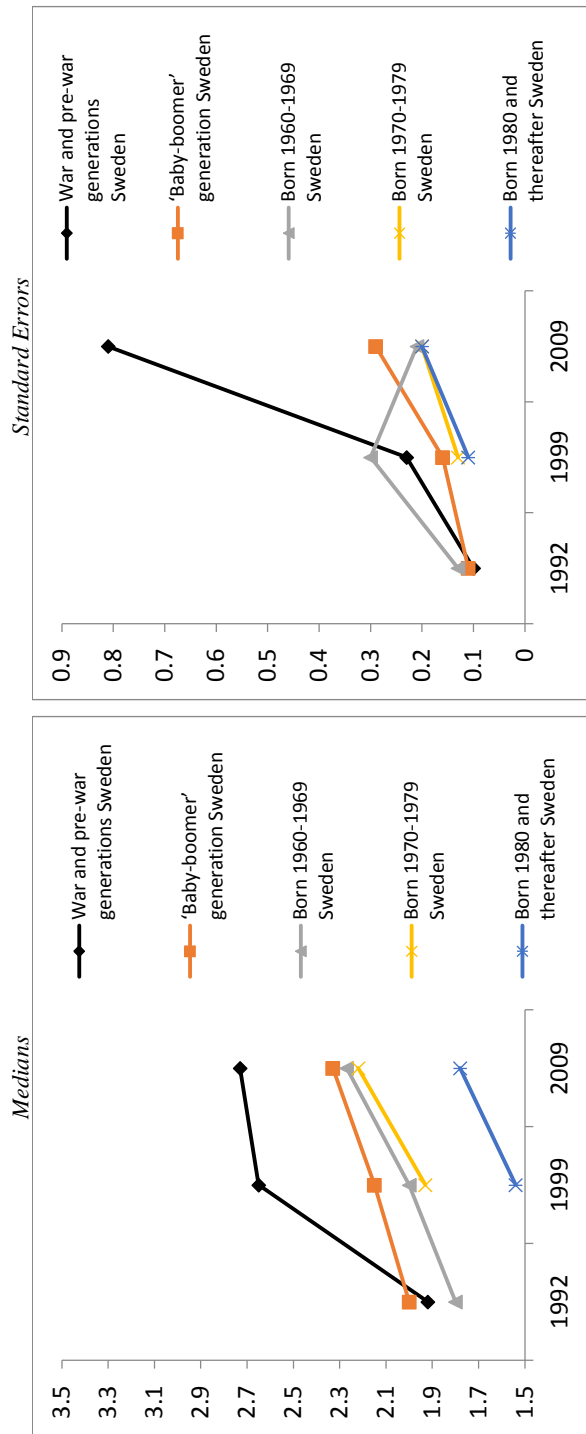
### **6.2.3. SWEDEN**

The Swedish analyses follow the same structure as the corresponding Danish ones. In contrast to Denmark, it was not possible to deduce one consistent scenario, as the context of Swedish is at a watershed in 2009. First, the Swedish HCNI is affected by the legacy of ideological class struggle, revived in the 1980s. This, coupled with the severe economic and financial crisis in the early to mid-1990s in Sweden, should induce Swedish attitudes to be clearly divided, according to social groups and especially social class. However, in 2009, Sweden suffered less from the financial crisis than Denmark, and since the 1990s, the PE has drifted in the Danish direction. The question is whether we can see this in the attitudinal patterns, with a trend in the direction of smaller differences in medians between various social groups, with perhaps larger group standard errors. Alternatively, the class heritage of the 1990s and before could still be strong, thus affecting attitudinal patterns. The analyses again start out with generations in Figure 6-11 below.

#### **6.2.3.1 Generations**

As a start, it will be interesting to investigate whether generational gaps can be identified in Sweden in 1992, 1999 or 2009.

Figure 6-11 Attitudes towards the Level of Inequality in Gross Wages for different Generations in Sweden in ISSP 1992, 1999 and 2009, medians and standard errors



Notes: The statements of the chairman of a large national corporation variable are divided with an index constructed from an average of the two lowest paid occupations; that is, the statements of the two occupations: shop assistant and unskilled factory worker are summarised and divided by two. Lastly, the chairman statements are then divided by the low-paid occupations index.  
 N (1992): War and pre-war generations=262; The baby-boomer generation=203; Born 1960-1969=130; Born 1970-1979=27.  
 N (1999): War and pre-war generations=288; The baby-boomer generation=182; Born 1960-1969=189; Born 1970-1979=182; Born 1980 and thereafter=40.  
 N (2009): War and pre-war generations=177; The baby-boomer generation=299; Born 1960-1969=199; Born 1970-1979=170; Born 1980 and thereafter=158.  
 Sources: The Social Inequality Modules (II-IV: 1992, 1999 and 2009) of the International Social Survey Program (ISSP).

Sweden portrays much larger median differences between generations than Denmark or Norway.<sup>68</sup> Furthermore, in direct opposition to Denmark, it is not the youngest respondents that are the most anti-egalitarian, but the eldest.<sup>69</sup> In terms of intra-group differences, the general tendency of highly risen standard errors found especially in Denmark, but also in Norway in 2009, is not repeated. The exception are the war and pre-war generations, which, like in Denmark and Norway, show markedly larger standard errors in 2009 than in the other two surveys. In contrast to Norway and Denmark, the youngest respondents in Sweden do not show seriously rising standard errors.

If we elaborate on the patterns above, we see both signs of generational, periodical and even age effects. Most obviously, the patterns suggest clear generational effects. Looking at the medians, three groups seem to appear: the youngest; the oldest; and everybody else. Again, it should be remembered that the composition of the oldest and youngest generation changes somewhat through time. The low standard errors for all groups except the oldest generation also suggest a clear attitudinal pattern within each generation, especially when looking at the age-intervals (see Figure 8-2 in Appendix B), where the results could also suggest an age effect appearing in Sweden in 1999 and 2009. The effect of age thus seems more or less linear, with greater age correlated with less egalitarianism. Lastly, the results, as in the other cases, also suggest some periodic effect, resembling the Norwegians somewhat in that all generations portray a general rising tendency.

Even with this first Swedish figure of Chapter 6 (Figure 6-11), the country seems to live up to the expectations of portraying quite different attitudinal patterns from Denmark. The generational effects, which seem to be apparent in Figure 6-11, could reflect the different epochs of the Swedish PEs in which they grew up. While most generations grew up in the heyday of a classic well-organised Swedish political economy, the oldest generation could still be influenced by memories of the times before the expansive Social Democratic Welfare State and centralised collective bargaining dominated. However, this generation did have a median at a level with the other age groups in 1992. The rather deviant medians of the youngest generation could be the result of the first generation being influenced by the heated class struggles of the 1980s, and then a gradual *détente* in the Danish direction through the 1990s. The second result, in accordance with the scenario concerning Sweden, is that the standard errors remain low in all generations, in all three surveys (except for the eldest in 2009). The economic and financial crisis of the 1990s, and to a lesser extent 2008, may have functioned as a reality shock, inducing the oldest to increase their medians from 1.92–2.65 from 1992 to 1999, but the standard errors have not followed.

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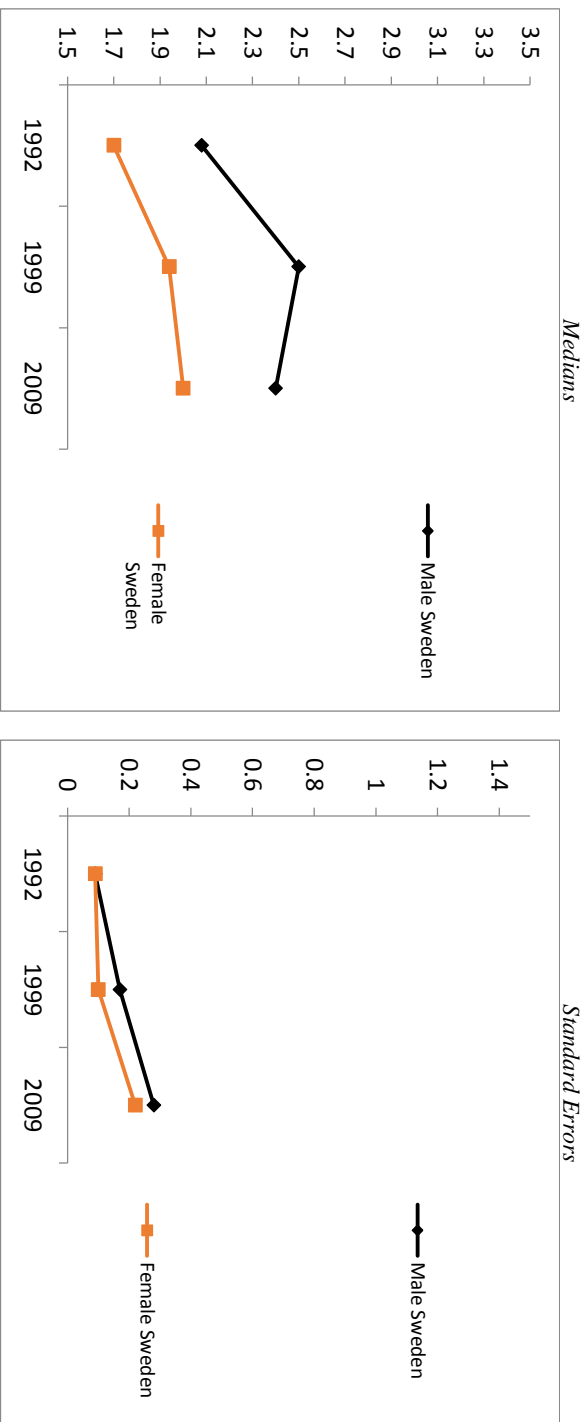
<sup>68</sup> Again, we can see the same result in Figure 8-2 in Appendix B, when dividing the respondents on age intervals.

<sup>69</sup> See also Figure 8-2 in Appendix B for the Swedish respondents divided into age intervals.

### **6.2.3.2 Gender**

Based on the interesting results disaggregating on generations, it will be interesting to investigate whether divisions also linked to gender can be identified in Sweden in 1992, 1999 or 2009.

Figure 6-12 Attitudes towards the Level of Inequality in Gross Wages for Males and Females in Sweden in ISSP 1992, 1999 and 2009, medians and standard errors



Notes: The statements of the chairman of a large national corporation variable are divided with an index constructed from an average of the two lowest paid occupations; that is, the statements of the two occupations: shop assistant and unskilled factory worker are summarised and divided by two. Lastly, the chairman statements are then divided by the low-paid occupations index.

N (1992): Male=329; Female=293; N (1999): Male=484; Female=483; N (2009): Male=488; Female=515.

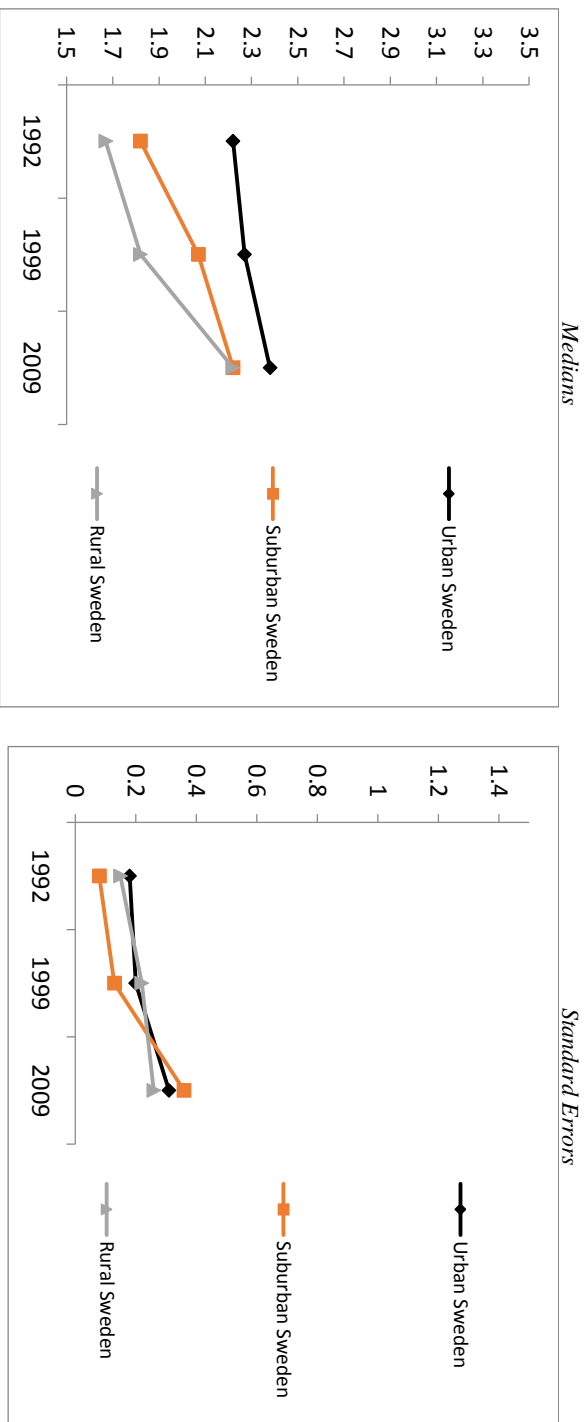
Sources: The Social Inequality Modules (I-IV: 1992, 1999 and 2009) of the International Social Survey Program (ISSP).

Median-wise, we see consistent and much bigger gender differences than is the case was in either Denmark or Norway. Swedish females portray a clear rising trend over the whole period, while males are stagnant from 1999–2009. In this way, Sweden is similar to Denmark, but the general picture is very different. The development in the Swedish standard errors more or less mirrors the result of Figure 6-11, also sustaining a quite high intra-group consensus in 2009.

### **6.2.3.3 Urbanisation**

Figure 6-13 below investigates whether compartmentalisation linked to urbanisation can be identified in Sweden.

Figure 6-13 Attitudes towards the Level of Inequality in Gross Wages for Respondents from Areas with Different Degrees of Urbanisation in Sweden in ISSP 1992, 1999 and 2009, medians and standard errors



Notes: The statements of the chairman of a large national corporation variable are divided with an index constructed from an average of the two lowest paid occupations; that is, the statements of the two occupations: shop assistant and unskilled factory worker are summarised and divided by two. Lastly, the chairman statements are then divided by the low-paid occupations index.

N (1992): Urban=104; Suburban=351; Rural=88, N (1999): Urban=331; Suburban=527; Rural=109, N (2009): Urban=233; Suburban=187; Rural=574.  
 Sources: The Social Inequality Modules (II-IV: 1992, 1999 and 2009) of the International Social Survey Program (ISSP).

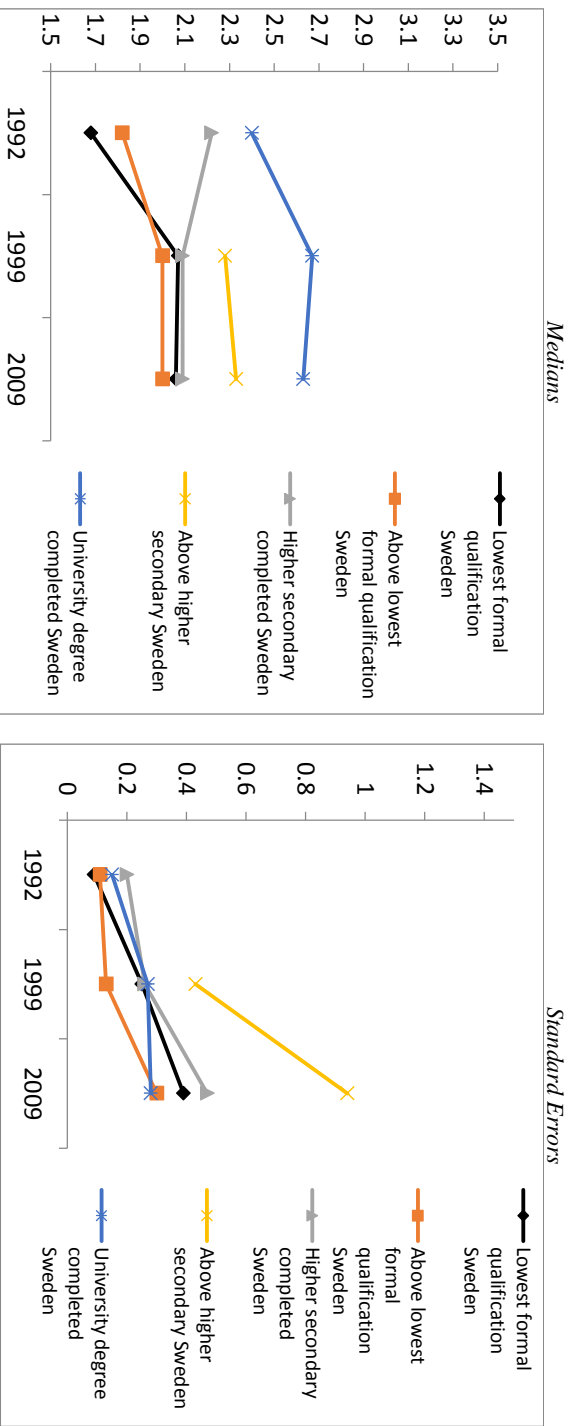


Again, we see larger differences in medians in Sweden than the case was, when investigating urbanisation in Denmark and Norway. As in Norway, the development over time is generally rising, but in direct contrast, the tendency goes towards reduced differences between groups. This could be seen as the first sign that some Swedish attitudinal patterns are moving in the Danish direction in 2009. The Swedish standard errors again remain rather low through the whole period.

#### **6.2.3.4 Education**

Figure 6-14 below investigates whether cleavages linked to education — the supposedly dominating cleavage in late-modern societies — can be identified in Sweden in the period covered by the three datasets.

Figure 6-14 Attitudes towards the Level of Inequality in Gross Wages for Different Educational Groups in Sweden in ISSP 1992, 1999 and 2009, medians and standard errors



Notes: The statements of the chairman of a large national corporation variable are divided with an index constructed from an average of the two lowest paid occupations; that is, the statements of the two occupations: shop assistant and unskilled factory worker are summarised and divided by two. Lastly, the chairman statements are then divided by the low-paid occupations index.

N (1992): Lowest formal qualification=186; above lowest formal qualification=210; higher secondary completed=96; university degree completed=126.

N (1999): Lowest formal qualification=189; above lowest formal qualification=302; higher secondary completed=204; above higher secondary=84; university degree completed=163.

N (2009): Lowest formal qualification=160; above lowest formal qualification=272; higher secondary completed=172; above higher secondary=102; university degree completed=286.

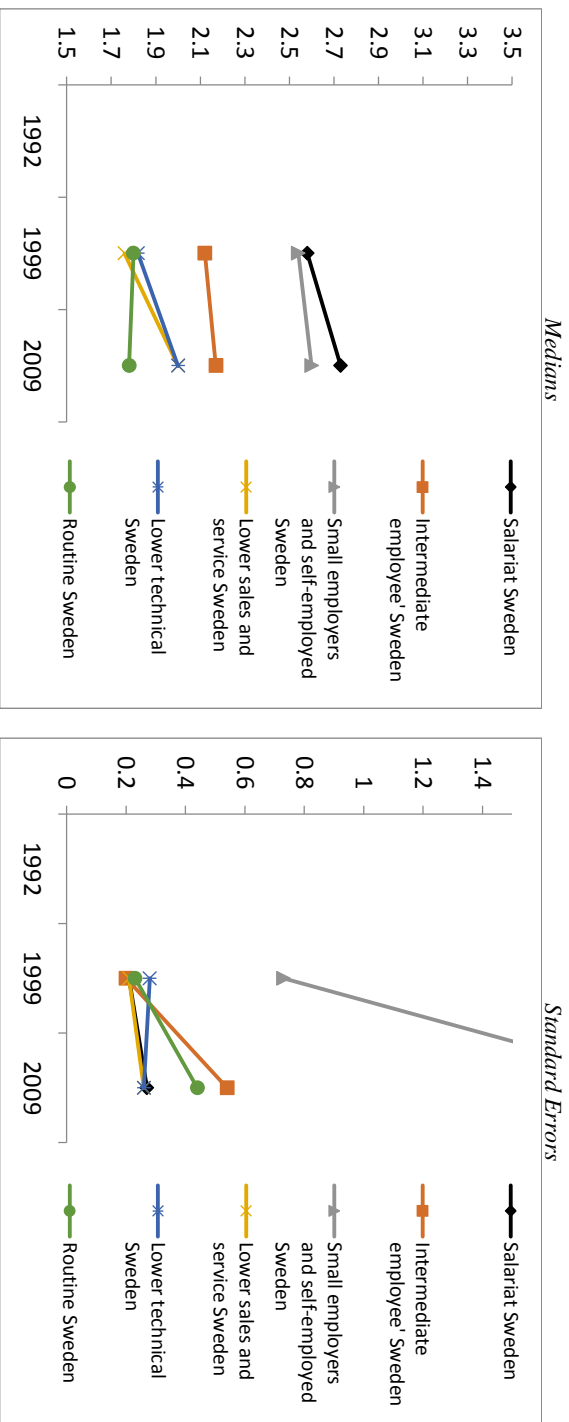
Sources: The Social Inequality Modules (II-IV: 1992, 1999 and 2009) of the International Social Survey Program (ISSP).

The large and consistent Swedish median divides, identified by gender and generations, found further disaggregating with regard to educational groups. Respondents with a university degree completed, and education above higher secondary school are consistently much less egalitarian than all other educational groups. In 1992 it looks like the higher secondary completed group belonged to the top group, as was the case in Denmark. However, in 1999 and 2009, these three bottom groups have virtually identical medians, which was the case in Norway. In Denmark and Norway, some educational groups' standard errors rose tremendously from 1999–2009, while others remained quite low. This is also the case in Sweden, but only the above higher secondary school group belongs to the sharply rising group. The Swedish patterns thus seem to deviate again from the Danish and Norwegian ones, in that the general level of intra-group consensus is higher. The results are also in accordance with the expected patterns for Sweden. Educational level clearly seems to become a crucial attitudinal cleavage in Sweden after 1992. The trend, even in 2009, is that the Swedish patterns do not move in the Danish direction. Instead, the median level divisions remain strong, and the standard errors generally remain low.

#### **6.2.3.5 Social Class**

Unfortunately, the variables necessary to construct a Swedish variable for objective social class do not exist in the ISSP 1992 dataset. Figure 6-15 therefore investigates whether cleavages linked to social class can be identified in Sweden in the period from 1999 to 2009.

Figure 6-15 Attitudes towards the Level of Inequality in Gross Wages for 6 Different Social Classes (ESeC) in Sweden in ISSP 1999 and 2009, medians and standard errors



Notes: The statements of the chairman of a large national corporation variable are divided with an index constructed from an average of the two lowest paid occupations; that is, the statements of the two occupations: shop assistant and unskilled factory worker are summarised and divided by two. Lastly, the chairman statements are then divided by the Low-paid occupations index.

N (1999): Salarist=307; Intermediate employee=178; Small employers and self-employed=52; Lower sales and service=167; Lower technical=67; Routine=114.

N (2009): Salarist=386; Intermediate employee=176; Small employers and self-employed=36; Lower sales and service=163; Lower technical=68; Routine=113.

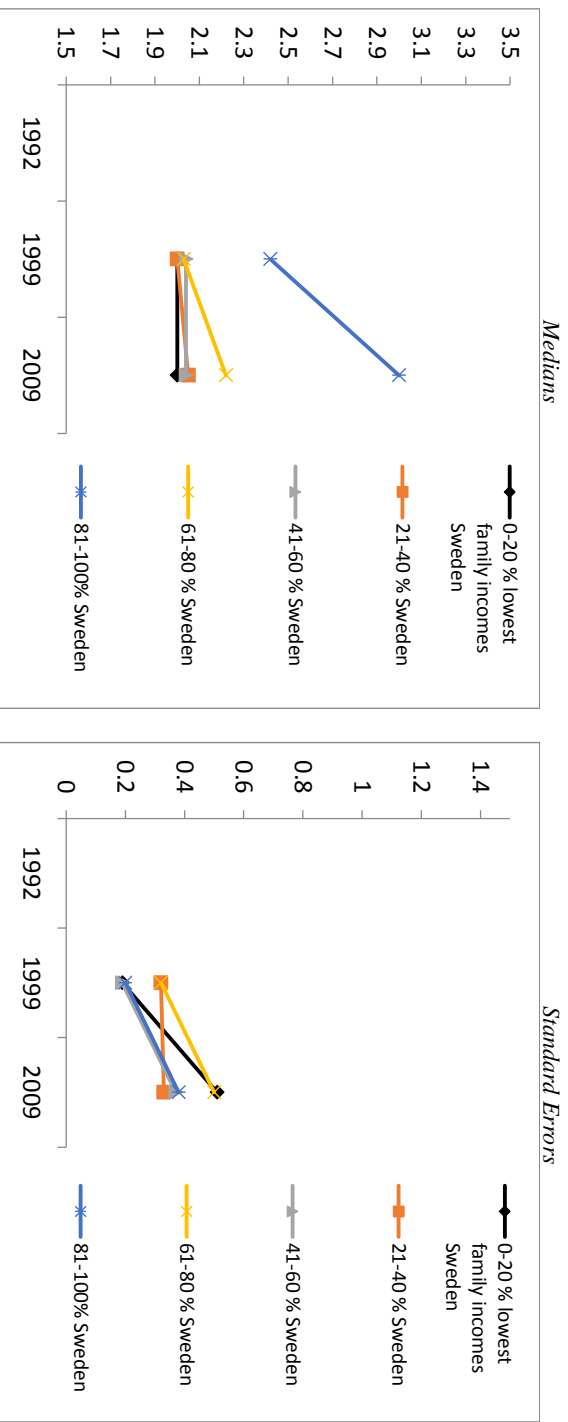
Sources: The Social Inequality Modules (III-IV: 1999 and 2009) of the International Social Survey Program (ISSP).

The consistent Swedish median differences, this time between social classes, are again enormous compared to the Danish and Norwegian figures. Furthermore, they follow a classical class pattern, with the lower classes in the bottom rising towards the higher classes in the top, which is very anti-egalitarian by Scandinavian standards. Turning to the standard errors, the figures are as low for all social classes also in 2009, as they were for educational groups in Figure 6-14. The main reason small employers and self-employed are off the charts is most likely the low N for this group. Even if educational level appeared as a significant cleavage in Sweden after 1992, traditional class cleavages are still prevalent and strong even in 2009. Class-wise, Swedish attitudinal patterns do not seem to be affected by the changes in the PE, by portraying a trend towards Danish attitudinal patterns.

### **6.2.3.6 Household Income**

Unfortunately, no Swedish household income variable exists in the ISSP 1992 dataset. Figure 6-16 thus investigates whether divisions linked to household income can be identified in Sweden in the period 1999–2009.

Figure 6-16 Attitudes towards the Level of Inequality in Gross Wages for Different Household Income Groups in Sweden in ISSP 1999 and 2009. Shown are Medians and Standard Errors



Notes: The statements of the chairman of a large national corporation-variable are divided with an index constructed from an average of the two lowest paid occupations. That is the statements of the two occupations: shop assistant and unskilled factory worker is summarised and divided by two. Lastly, the chairman statements are then divided by the Low paid occupations index.

N (1999): 0-20 % lowest family incomes=168, 21-40 %=168, 41-60 %=186, 61-80 %=162, 81-100 %=219.

N (2009): 0-20 % lowest family incomes=176, 21-40 %=189, 41-60 %=168, 61-80 %=209, 81-100 %=197.

Sources: The Social Inequality Modules (III-IV – 1999 and 2009) of the International Social Survey Program (ISSP).

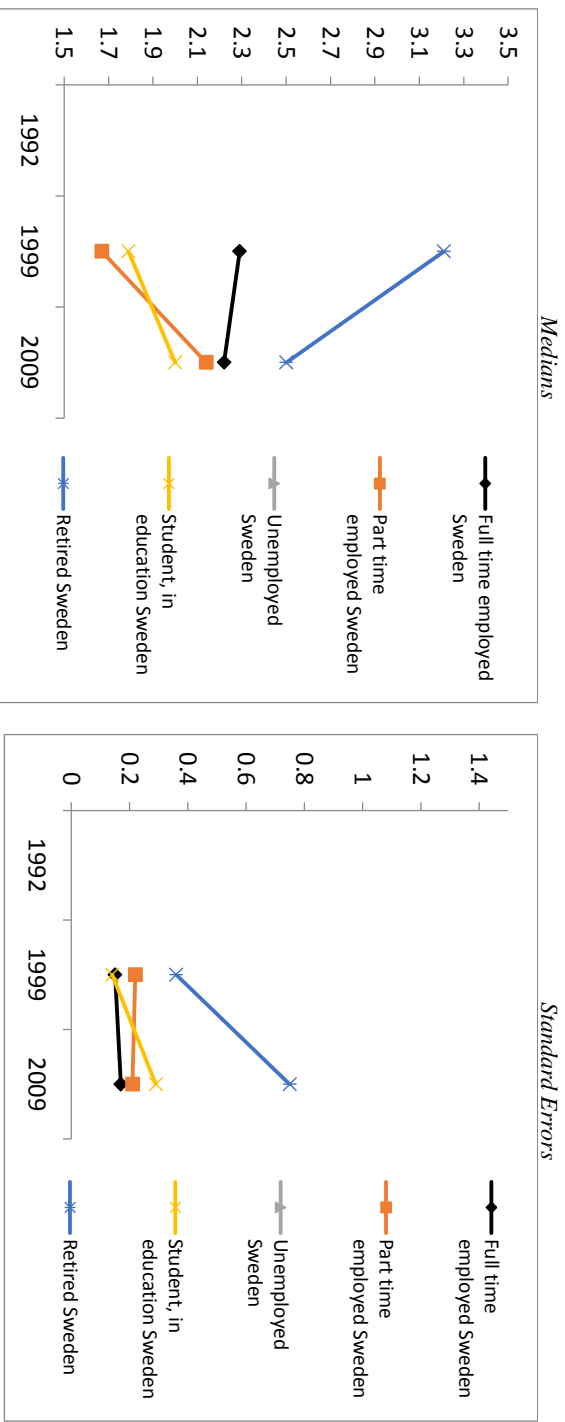
In median-terms, the Swedish results disaggregated by household income are noticeable, and while a more or less linear effect was seen in Denmark and Norway (higher household income indicates less egalitarianism), in Sweden the richest 19 % of the respondents are clearly much less egalitarian than everybody else, who are quite alike. Turning to the standard errors a rising pattern can be seen for all groups except the 21–40 % respondents.

The development in standard errors is again not as dramatic as in the Danish and Norwegian cases though. It is important to notice that the large differences in median levels, which emerge from Figures 6-14–6-16, concerning educational level, social class and household income, are actually caused largely by the absolute top groups not being like the other groups. The highest income group, the salariat and self-employed/small employers, and respondents with a completed university degree, portray substantially higher median levels than other groups. This is a very interesting result, since it could signify that the perceived Swedish class society — the HCNI — could be largely characterised by the elite deviating from the rest of the population. The bottom strata of the population, on the other hand, do not seem to be particularly separate from the middle class. In Chapter 7, this idea will be explored directly, by investigating how the Swedish media actually present the economic elite, operationalised as ‘the rich’.

### **6.2.3.7 Employment Status**

Figure 6-17 investigates whether divisions linked to employment status can be identified in Sweden. Unfortunately, no Swedish employment status data exist in the ISSP 1992 dataset, and as with Denmark and Norway, very few respondents are unemployed in each of the three surveys.

Figure 6-17 Attitudes towards the Level of Inequality in Gross Wages for Groups with Different Employment Statuses in Sweden in ISSP 1999 and 2009, medians and standard errors



Notes: The statements of the chairman of a large national corporation variable are divided with an index constructed from an average of the two lowest paid occupations; that is, the statements of the two occupations: shop assistant and unskilled factory worker are summarised and divided by two. Lastly, the chairman statements are then divided by the low-paid occupations index.

N (1999): Full-time employed=519; Part-time employed=133; Student=101; Retired=111.

N (2009): Full-time employed=573; Part-time employed=123; Student=70; Retired=153.

Sources: The Social Inequality Modules (III-IV: 1999 and 2009) of the International Social Survey Program (ISSP).

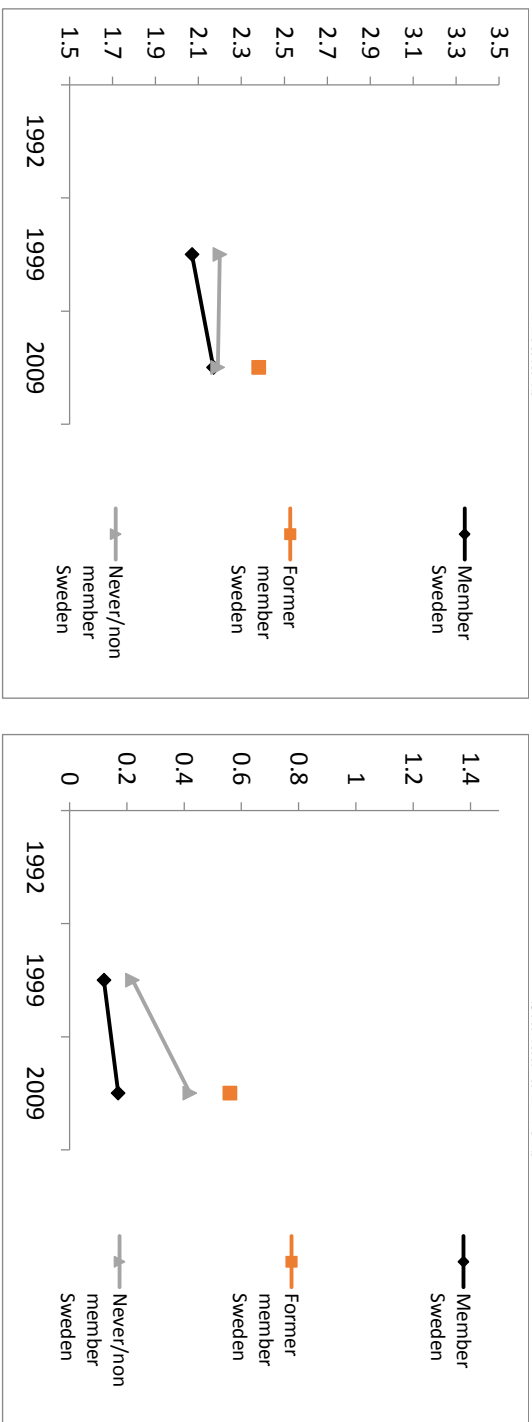


The Swedish employment status groups again portray much bigger median differences than was the case in the other two countries. In 1999, this difference was huge, spanning from 1.67 for the part-time employed, to 3.21 for retired Swedes. The tendency in 2009 is, on the other hand, a much smaller, but still significant division. The retired Swedes median thus falls steeply, while the part-time employed rises sharply. In terms of standard errors, we again see only one group departing from the trend of steady low standard errors in all three surveys: retired Swedish respondents in 2009, who rise from 0.36–0.75 from 1999–2009. The patterns of the retired Swedes are obviously quite similar to the pattern of the oldest generation in Figure 6-11. Together with urbanisation, portrayed in Figure 6-13, disaggregating by employment status is so far the only figure portraying trends in attitudinal patterns, which are moving in the Danish direction in 2009. Notice however, that there are no elite groups among the five categories in Figure 6-17. The results are therefore not in opposition to the idea of elite separation from the rest, which was described in the subsection on household income.

#### **6.2.3.8 Trade Union Membership**

Figure 6-18 investigates whether divides linked to trade union membership can be identified in Sweden, Again, a Swedish trade union membership variable is unfortunately missing from the 1992 dataset.

Figure 6-18 Attitudes towards the Level of Inequality in Gross Wages for Trade Union Members. Former Trade Union Members and Never Trade Union Members in Sweden in ISSP 1999 and 2009, medians and standard errors



Notes: The statements of the chairman of a large national corporation variable are divided with an index constructed from an average of the two lowest paid occupations; that is, the statements of the two occupations: shop assistant and unskilled factory worker are summarised and divided by two. Lastly, the chairman statements are then divided by the low-paid occupations index.

N (1999): Trade union member=694; not member of a trade union=250.

N (2009): Trade union member=574; once a member, but not now=233; never a member of a trade union=188.

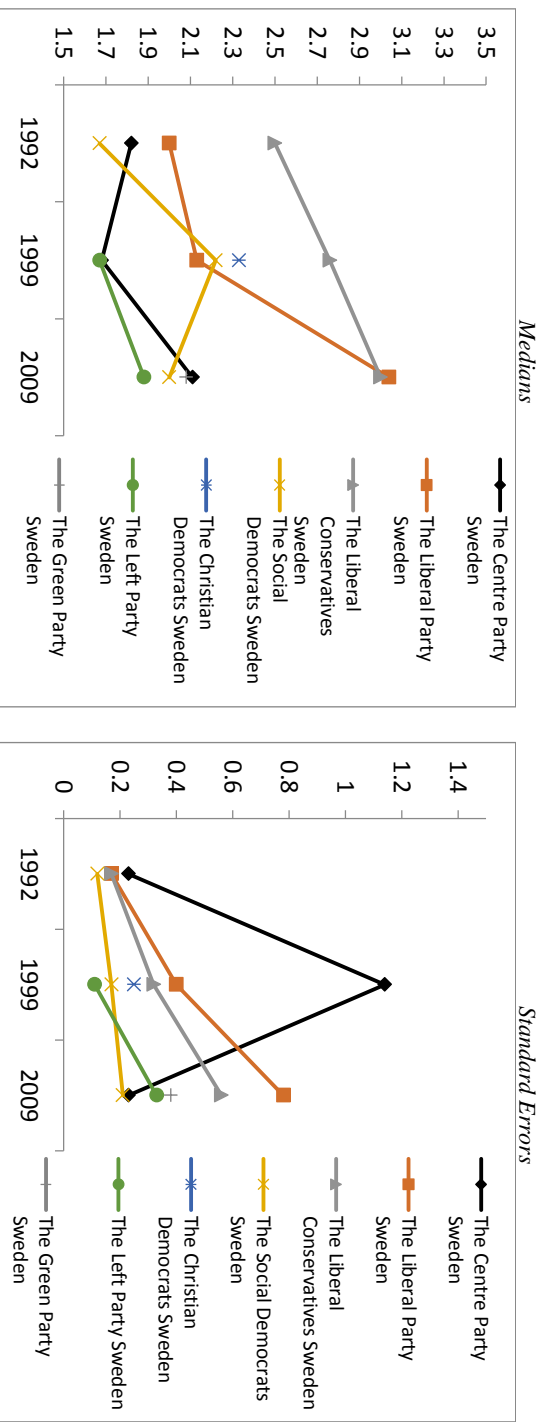
Sources: The Social Inequality Modules (III-IV: 1999 and 2009) of the International Social Survey Program (ISSP).

The median difference among trade union members, former members and never/non-members resembles, to a large extent, the pattern of the corresponding figures of Denmark and Norway, with small median differences between groups, than the case has been in the Swedish analyses so far. In terms of standard errors we also see rather large differences in the development between the groups (except for present members), which is also a pattern more closely resembling Denmark and Norway. Trade union membership might have had important attitudinal micro level effects in the heyday of classic Scandinavian political economies, but the results of Chapters 5 and 6 clearly suggest that those days are long gone.

### **6.2.3.9 Political Vote at Last General Election**

Figure 6-19 investigates whether cleavages linked to political affiliation can be identified in Sweden; this time, in all three datasets. Political affiliation was the dominant attitudinal cleavage emerging in the Danish analysis in Section 6.2.1.

Figure 6-19 Attitudes towards the Level of Inequality in Gross Wages for the Respondents' Vote for Various Political Parties on the latest General Election in Sweden in ISSP 1992, 1999 and 2009, medians and standard errors



Notes: The statements of the chairman of a large national corporation variable are divided with an index constructed from an average of the two lowest paid occupations; that is, the statements of the two occupations: shop assistant and unskilled factory worker are summarised and divided by two. Lastly, the chairman statements are then divided by the low-paid occupations index.

N (1992): The Centre Party=37; The Liberal Party= 49; The Liberal Conservatives= 109; The Social Democrats= 131.

N (1999): The Centre Party=30; The Liberal Party= 46; The Liberal Conservatives= 157; The Social Democrats= 247; The Christian Democrats= 75; The Left Party= 87.

N (2009): The Centre Party=59; The Liberal Party= 71; The Liberal Conservatives= 256; The Social Democrats= 320; The Left Party= 62; The Green Party= 61.

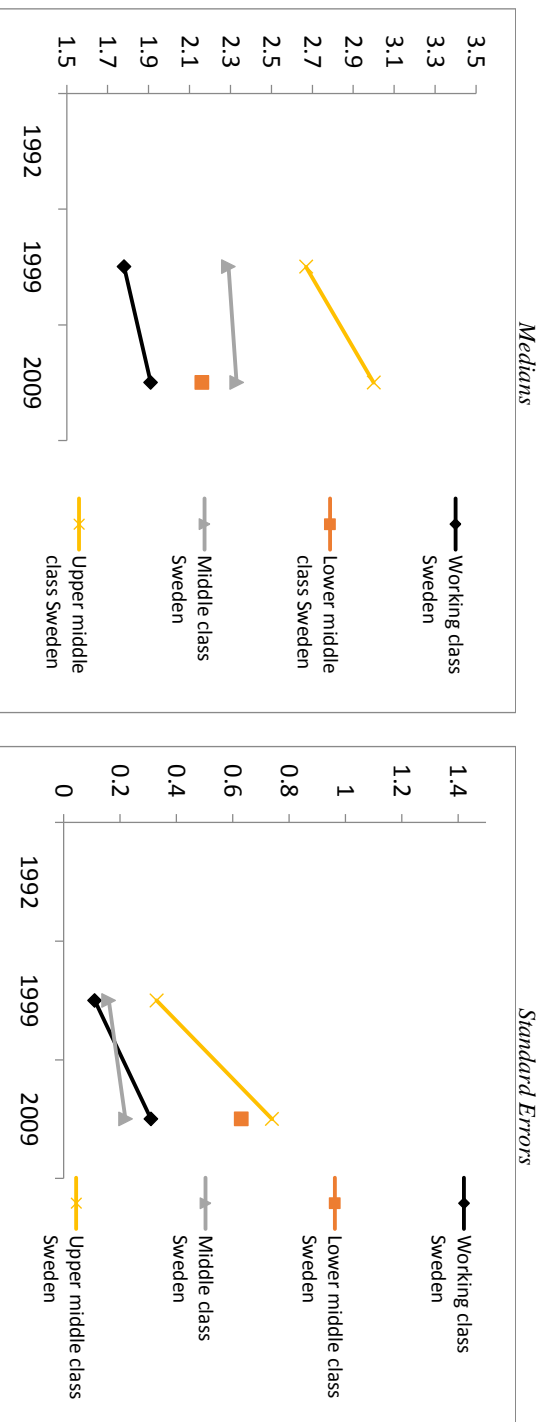
Sources: The Social Inequality Modules (II-IV: 1992, 1999 and 2009) of the International Social Survey Program (ISSP).

As a start, it is worth noting that the majority of the Swedish respondents, in contrast to the Danes and Norwegians, consistently say they voted for one of the two major parties: *'Moderata samlingspartiet'*, here translated to the Liberal Conservatives and *'Sveriges socialdemokratiska arbetareparti'*, here translated as the Social Democrats. The medians and standard errors of the other parties portrayed thus suffer from the small N problem, and the results of these are somewhat uncertain. Between these two major parties, we see large and consistent differences in median levels. The standard error of the liberal conservatives rose markedly in 1999. This may reflect the fact that this party started to gain more voters, who did not traditionally identify with all their views of a more right-wing nature. The same interpretation probably applies to the similar results of the Danish Liberal Party above.

### **6.2.3.10 Self-Reported Social Class**

Figure 6-20 investigates whether divisions linked to subjective social class can be identified in Sweden. Once again, a variable containing Swedish information on self-reported social class, does not exist in the 1992 dataset, and we will have to do without.

Figure 6-20 Attitudes towards the Level of Inequality in Gross Wages for the Respondents' Self-reported Social Class in Sweden in ISSP 1999 and 2009, medians and standard errors



Notes: The statements of the chairman of a large national corporation variable are divided with an index constructed from an average of the two lowest paid occupations; that is, the statements of the two occupations: shop assistant and unskilled factory worker are summarised and divided by two. Lastly, the chairman statements are then divided by the low-paid occupations index.

N (1999): Working class=312; Middle class=436; Upper-middle class=165.

N (2009): Working class=226; Lower-middle class=124; Middle class=484; Upper-middle class=137.

Sources: The Social Inequality Modules (III-IV: 1999 and 2009) of the International Social Survey Program (ISSP).

The polarised median tendencies again turn out to be rampant in Sweden, disaggregated by subjective social class, even more so than in Denmark and Norway. Furthermore, the pattern ranges from the consistently egalitarian working class to the anti-egalitarian upper-middle class. Turning to the standard errors, two groups portray quite significant rising tendencies from 1999 to 2009 in Swedish terms. These are the upper-middle and the lower-middle class. Figure 6-20 more or less repeats the elite separation idea of Figures 6-14–6-16. Only here, the working class actually does appear as a separate group from other non-elite groups. Identifying oneself as working class in a survey is a strong identity statement, which is why this somewhat deviant result is maybe not that surprising after all.

#### **6.2.4. SUMMARY OF THE SWEDISH DESCRIPTIVE DEVELOPMENTS**

Sweden clearly stood out from Norway and Denmark in having much bigger between-group differences in medians in almost all instances. Only when disaggregating on urbanisation and trade union membership did results mirror the other two countries. It should be mentioned that even if these differences between groups were consistent, for urbanisation and employment status there are tendencies for the groups' median levels approaching each other in 2009. Figures 6-11 and 6-14 also portrayed that the median values of educational groups and generations become more separate from 1992 to 1999. As elaborated above, this could be seen as an effect of the Swedish crisis of the early mid-1990s, making the Swedes disperse attitudinally, according to existing social cleavages. One could maybe also notice that, in contrast to Denmark and Norway, the ranking of the groups in Sweden follows a less surprising pattern. The least egalitarian groups are thus: males; older/retired; urban; 19 % richest; full-time employed; the voters for the liberal conservatives; and higher social classes/subjective upper-middle class respondents. The well-off groups in society are thus the least egalitarian. In terms of intra-group differences or standard errors, the Swedish results, in general, also deviated from the Danish and Norwegian results, although to a somewhat lesser degree. The groups' standard errors, in most cases in Norway, and especially in Denmark, rose significantly from 1999–2009. In Sweden, most groups remained at a low, almost 1999 level in 2009. The only real exception from this is in Sweden, in 2009, is the older/retired, the above higher secondary educational group, former and non-members of trade unions, voters for the liberal conservatives and the lower- and upper-middle classes.

For now, the wider perspectives of these results show that the Swedish attitudinal class society does not seem to be disappearing, although it does appear to be changing characteristics somewhat. In fact, Swedish attitudinal patterns seem more and more to resemble the dichotomous class structure, comprised of elite groups and the rest of the population, which was so dominant in the descriptions of the development of the Swedish PE in Chapter 3. In 1992 and to some extent in 1999, there are also consistent attitudinal cleavages. However, here, more than two distinct groups are identifiable. So do the changes in the Swedish PE induce the

Swedish patterns of attitudes towards the level of inequality in gross wages, to move in a Danish direction? For the non-elite social groups the answer seems to be yes. The elite does, on the other hand, not seem to move attitudinally towards the non-elite groups, but rather further away from them, from 1999 to 2009. The multivariate analyses below will reveal further insight into these questions.

### **6.3. SEPARATING THE WHEAT FROM THE CHAFF IN DENMARK AND SWEDEN IN 2009**

The last analytical step in this chapter deviates from the solely descriptive logic above, and returns to the ‘control logic’ of Section 5.2. As described, many of the ten variables splitting the sample of Danish and Swedish respondents above, ought to be strongly correlated. It can be argued that attitudinal divisions are important, as they exist in real life, no matter what their background. In spite of this, it is still relevant to investigate how the various divides relate in the two countries, and furthermore, try to separate, which cleavages actually seem to be fundamental, and which are merely an expression of other more fundamental variables.

To investigate this, a hierarchical regression analysis with five models, split by Denmark and Sweden, will be presented below. This analysis will use the same ten factors as the analyses above. In addition, the analysis will only be conducted with the 2009 dataset. The argument is twofold. For Denmark, the 2009 dataset showed dramatically risen standard errors as compared to 1999. As argued, these are probably caused, to a large extent, by the shock of the crisis in 2008, but it was found, in the descriptive analyses, to be difficult to subscribe these much to any new persistent cleavage. For Sweden, the 2009 dataset seemed to show a great deal of path-dependency with earlier data and the class- cleavage legacy of their HCNI. This is somewhat surprising, given the changes in the Swedish political economy since the 1990s. It is interesting to investigate which form of social cleavage seems to be driving these Swedish descriptive divides. Is it traditional class divisions or has education taken over, especially for the younger generations? In addition, is it possible to identify a potential for changes happening in the otherwise seemingly stable Swedish patterns of attitudes towards the level of inequality in gross wages? Which effect does it, for example, have when the Swedes’ perceptions of the level of inequality in gross wages is taken into account?

For both countries, the effect of controlling for the perceived level of inequality in gross wages (PLI) is therefore very interesting to investigate. As argued in Chapters 2–5, individuals’ PLI in their own country appear to be crucial for their attitudes towards the just levels of the same. This leads to questions such as, for example. How much are divisions descriptively appearing above actually caused by different perceptions in various social groups? As described in Chapter 3, the media mediates the myths, representations and stereotypes of the HCNI and the rest of the political economy, to the citizens of the countries, and thus forms the background for the same citizens’ PLIs. Investigating the effect of the *perceived* level of inequality in



gross wages, on explaining attitudinal divides in the two countries, therefore connects this chapter with the media analyses of Chapter 7.

A few further methodological clarifications are also in order, before the analysis is presented. First, a split hierarchical regression analysis is conducted, to try to separate the relations and paths between the various divides, as described. The variables are therefore entered in five blocks. The order of these again seeks to reflect more or less how ‘natural’ or unchangeable the various background variables are:

1. *Gender, generations and urbanisation*
2. *Education and household income*
3. *Social class (ESeC) and employment status*
4. *Trade union membership, self-reported social class and political affiliation*
5. *The perceived level of inequality in gross wages*

To mitigate the effect of extreme outliers present also in the Danish and Swedish data, the same logarithmically transformed version of the dependent variable, as used in Section 5.2, will be used here. In addition, categories in the variables containing less than thirty respondents in either of the countries have been omitted. This is done in order both to save space in the already very large tables presented below, and also to prevent confusion by presenting categories, which often tends to present mysterious coefficients, which, because of the small n’s, by default seems to be insignificant anyway. The categories omitted are:

- *No formal education (education)*
- *Working less than part-time and helping family member (employment status)<sup>70</sup>*
- *Lower class (self-reported social class)*
- *The Christian People’s party, new alliance and the Left-Wing Alliance (political affiliation, Denmark)*
- *The Christian democrats and the Sweden Democrats (political affiliation, Sweden)*

The omitted categories are interesting in themselves. Unsurprisingly, they suggest that the Danish and Swedish samples contain few respondents from the lowest social strata of society. The Scandinavian multi-party systems also leave some of the niche parties with very few respondents. Without further ado, the Danish analysis is presented in Table 6-1 below.

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<sup>70</sup> This variable has already placed the categories 7–10 (retired, housewife/man, permanently disabled, other not in the labour force) in an ‘outside the labour market’ category. In fact, there are only four categories with more than thirty respondents in the original variable: working full-time; working part-time; students; and retired.

*Table 6-1 Identifying Spurious Social Cleavages in Attitudes to the Level of Inequality in Gross Wages in Denmark in ISSP 2009*

	<b>Model 1</b>	<b>Model 2</b>	<b>Model 3</b>	<b>Model 4</b>	<b>Model 5</b>
<i>Gender (male)</i>	0.14*	0.12(*)	0.15*	0.13(*)	0.19***
<i>Generations</i>					
- Born 1980 and thereafter	0.18	0.19	0.10	0.12	0.25*
- Born 1970–1979	0.04	0.05	0.07	0.09	0.27**
- Born 1960–1969	-0.04	-0.03	-0.01	0.02	0.15
- The baby-boomer generation	-0.20*	-0.18(*)	-0.16	-0.10	-0.06
- War and pre-war generations (ref.)	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Urbanisation</i>					
- Urban, a big city	0.14	0.08	0.06	0.09	0.13
- Suburb of a big city	0.01	-0.05	-0.06	-0.03	0.05
- Town or small city	0.09	0.06	0.06	0.08	0.10
- Country village	-0.03	-0.06	-0.06	-0.01	0.07
- Farm, home in the country (ref.)	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Education</i>					
- Lowest formal qualification		-0.18	-0.07	-0.02	0.09
- Above lowest formal qualification		-0.46**	-0.31(*)	-0.25	-0.05
- Upper secondary complete		-0.06	0.02	0.02	0.07
- Above upper secondary level		-0.09	-0.05	-0.03	-0.01
- University degree complete (ref.)		-	-	-	-
<i>Household income</i>					
- 0–20 % lowest incomes		-0.01	-0.02	0.04	0.07
- 21–40 %		0.03	0.05	0.10	0.04
- 41–60 %		-0.06	-0.05	0.00	-0.04
- 61–80 %		-0.11	-0.08	-0.08	-0.09
- 81–100 % highest incomes (ref.)		-	-	-	-
<i>Social Class</i>					
- Salaried			0.21(*)	0.14	0.14(*)
- Intermediate employee			0.19	0.16	0.11
- Small employers/self-employed			0.09	0.02	0.08
- Lower Sales & Service			0.17	0.19	0.23*
- Lower Technical			-0.03	-0.02	0.02
- Routine (ref.)			-	-	-
<i>Employment status</i>					
- Employed full-time			-0.03	-0.01	-0.03
- Employed part-time			-0.01	-0.02	0.02
- Student			0.37(*)	0.34(*)	0.17
- Outside the labour force (ref.)			-	-	-
<i>Trade union membership</i>					
- Member				-0.10	-0.15
- Once a member				-0.06	-0.07
- Never a member (ref.)				-	-
<i>Subjective social class</i>					
- Working class				-0.12	-0.10
- Lower-middle class				-0.04	-0.09
- Middle class				-0.02	-0.01
- Upper-middle/upper class (ref.)				-	-
<i>Political affiliation</i>					
- The Social Liberal Party				0.25(*)	0.16
- The Conservative Party				-0.06	0.12
- The Socialist People's Party				-0.27**	-0.23**
- The Danish People's Party				-0.25*	-0.14*
- The Liberal Party				0.07	0.13
- The Social Democrats (ref.)				-	-
<i>Perc. lev. of ineq. in gross wages (cov.)</i>					0.66***
<i>Explained variance (adjusted r<sup>2</sup>)</i>	2 %	2 %	2%	4%	53%

*Notes:* Multiple linear regressions. Unstandardized regression coefficients. The dependent variable is created by taking, for each respondent, the natural logarithm of the ratio between the chairman of a large national corporation and an average of the statements for a shop assistant and an unskilled factory worker. Since the covariates and factors in the models have not been transformed logarithmically, they denote an estimated per-cent-wise difference regarding the dependent variable. For a factor, this is between a certain group and the reference group. For a covariate, it is the estimated per-cent-wise effect of rising one step on the covariate scale. (\*)  $p < 0.10$ , \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ ,  $N$  (all models) = 993.

*Source:* Social Inequality Module IV (2009) of the International Social Survey Program (ISSP).

Table 6-1 unsurprisingly shows very few statistically significant and strong divisions. The level of explained variance in Models 1-4 is correspondingly suspiciously low (but at the level with the aggregated analyses of Chapter 5). Furthermore, as expected, it is really only political affiliation, which remains as a significant cleavage after controlling for the other variables in Model 4, and again trade union membership remains utterly irrelevant. Model 4 shows that voters of the Socialist People's Party and the Danish People's Party want, on average, around 25 % lower levels of inequality in gross wages than the average Social Democrat voter. The voters of the so-called Social Liberal Party, on average, want 25 % higher levels of inequality in gross wages than the average Social Democrat voter. The seemingly strong effect of self-reported social class, identified in Figure 6-10, is explained after controlling for the other variables in the table, especially political affiliation.

Besides these effects, males on average seem to be somewhat less egalitarian than females. Across Models 1-4, they consistently score 12-15 % higher on the dependent variable than females, even if this was not easy to identify in Figure 6-2. The respondents of the educational group, above lowest formal education, appear quite egalitarian in Model 2, as well as in Figure 6-4 above. This group contains skilled workers; a category of people that played a dominant role in the history of the Danish political economy, as described in Chapter 3. After controlling for social class, and again, especially political affiliation, the distinct egalitarianism of this group is statistically explained: the vast majority of this educational group, in fact, indicated that they voted for the Liberal Party, the Socialist People's Party and the Danish People's Party, in that order. The same happens to the relatively egalitarian baby-boomer generation of Model 2 and Figure 6-1. Their extra egalitarianism seems compositionally based, and is explained after controlling for educational level, household income and social class.

Model 5 introduces the logarithmically transformed covariate for the perceived level of inequality in gross wages (PLI), also used in Table 5-16.<sup>71</sup> Unsurprisingly, this covariate has a very strong and highly significant effect, and again explains a large amount of the otherwise to a great extent unexplained variance. Of more interest is that the introduction of this variable brings forward some seemingly suppressed divisions, as well as explains the relative inegalitarianism of the students. First, the students' otherwise strong, but borderline significant, inegalitarianism in Model 4 is completely explained by the introduction of the PLI covariate. Therefore, the Danish students, on average, both perceive and wish the level of inequality in gross wages to be higher than other groups. An obvious explanation for this result is that the students, because of their relative inexperience with the labour market, are more ill-informed about actual wage differences than other employment status groups.

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<sup>71</sup> In Table 4-4, a non-logarithmically transformed version of the PLI was used.

Secondly, the introduction of the PLI also brings forward some seemingly suppressed cleavages. First, males now appear clearly and significantly less egalitarian than females. Danish males, on average, perceive a little bit of a lower degree of inequality in gross wages than females. However, they are, at the same time, less egalitarian than the females. The interpretation of the suppressor effect is thus that had the Danish males perceived the same degree of inequality in gross wages as Danish females, the males would, on average, wish the level of inequality in gross wages to be 19 % higher than the females. Second, a stronger suppressor effect is likewise found concerning the generational cleavages. The oldest generation and, to some extent, the baby boomers perceive higher levels of inequality in gross wages than the younger generations, especially the respondents born from 1970–1979. Controlling for this suppressor effect, the two youngest generations of Danes are significantly less egalitarian than the oldest generations. It should also be remembered that this generational effect is net, or independent of the younger generations' possible status as students, which is controlled for in the model.

Perceptions of the actual level of inequality in gross wages clearly differ among various social groups, and this has clear effects, which are hidden in the descriptive results above. Most significantly, and some might say alarmingly for the egalitarian Danish model, the younger generations both perceive smaller, and wish for larger differences in levels of inequality in gross wages, than the older more egalitarian generations. This result signifies two things. First, the younger generations did not experience the heyday of Scandinavian political economies, and whatever is being mediated of the HCNI by the Danish media to these generations does not seem to have the same impact as with the older generations. Which myths, images and stereotypes of the relevant HCNI (presentations of the rich) the Danish media, are actually mediating, will be investigated in Chapter 7. Second, this result could spell a change underway in the otherwise legitimate egalitarian Danish political economy, hidden by the descriptive statistics above, and the aggregate analyses of Chapter 5. Table 6-2 presents the same analyses with Swedish data.

*Table 6-2 Identifying Spurious Social Cleavages in Attitudes to the Level of Inequality in Gross Wages in Sweden in ISSP 2009*

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
<i>Gender (male)</i>	0.21***	0.20***	0.24***	0.21***	0.11*
<i>Generations</i>					
- Born 1980 and thereafter	-0.38***	-0.43***	-0.33**	-0.36**	0.01
- Born 1970–1979	-0.27**	-0.41***	-0.32**	-0.31**	0.03
- Born 1960–1969	-0.16*	-0.28**	-0.19(*)	-0.20(*)	0.04
- The baby-boomer generation	-0.13	-0.23**	-0.15	-0.13	0
- War and pre-war generations (ref.)	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Urbanisation</i>					
- Urban, a big city	0.21*	0.20*	0.19(*)	0.14(*)	0.19*
- Suburb of a big city	0.15	0.14	0.12	0.09	0.13(*)
- Town or small city	0.15	0.19*	0.18(*)	0.14(*)	0.15(*)
- Country village	0.06	0.13	0.11	0.09	0.12
- Farm, home in the country (ref.)	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Education</i>					
- Lowest formal qualification		-0.16(*)	-0.12	-0.13	-0.09
- Above lowest formal qualification		-0.21*	-0.18*	-0.21*	-0.12(*)
- Upper secondary complete		-0.13(*)	-0.11	-0.14	-0.09
- Above upper secondary level		-0.04	-0.03	-0.03	-0.06
- University degree complete (ref.)		-	-	-	-
<i>Household income</i>					
- 0–20 % lowest incomes		-0.30**	-0.30**	-0.22*	-0.15(*)
- 21–40 %		-0.36***	-0.34***	-0.25**	-0.17*
- 41–60 %		-0.28**	-0.26**	-0.19*	-0.18**
- 61–80 %		-0.20**	-0.19*	-0.11	-0.11(*)
- 81–100 % highest incomes (ref.)		-	-	-	-
<i>Social Class</i>					
- Salaried			0.15	0.08	0.02
- Intermediate employee			0.09	0.04	0.01
- Small employers/self-employed			0.17	0.01	0.09
- Lower Sales & Service			0.21*	0.18(*)	0.11
- Lower Technical			-0.07	-0.10	-0.05
- Routine (ref.)			-	-	-
<i>Employment status</i>					
- Employed full-time			-0.10	-0.06	-0.06
- Employed part-time			-0.11	-0.09	-0.06
- Student			-0.10	-0.05	-0.07
- Outside the labour force (ref.)			-	-	-
<i>Trade union membership</i>					
- Member				-0.01	-0.02
- Once a member				0.03	-0.06
- Never a member (ref.)				-	-
<i>Subjective social class</i>					
- Working class				-0.06	-0.19*
- Lower-middle class				-0.01	-0.09
- Middle class				-0.09	-0.12
- Upper-middle/upper class (ref.)				-	-
<i>Political affiliation</i>					
- The Centre Party				-0.12	-0.04
- The Liberal Party				0.25*	0.18*
- The Green Party				-0.09	-0.10
- The Liberal Conservatives				0.21**	0.14*
- The Left Party				-0.12	-0.26**
- The Social Democrats (ref.)				-	-
<i>Perc. lev. of ineq. in gross wages (cov.)</i>					0.46***
Explained variance (adjusted $r^2$ )	5 %	9 %	10 %	12 %	46 %

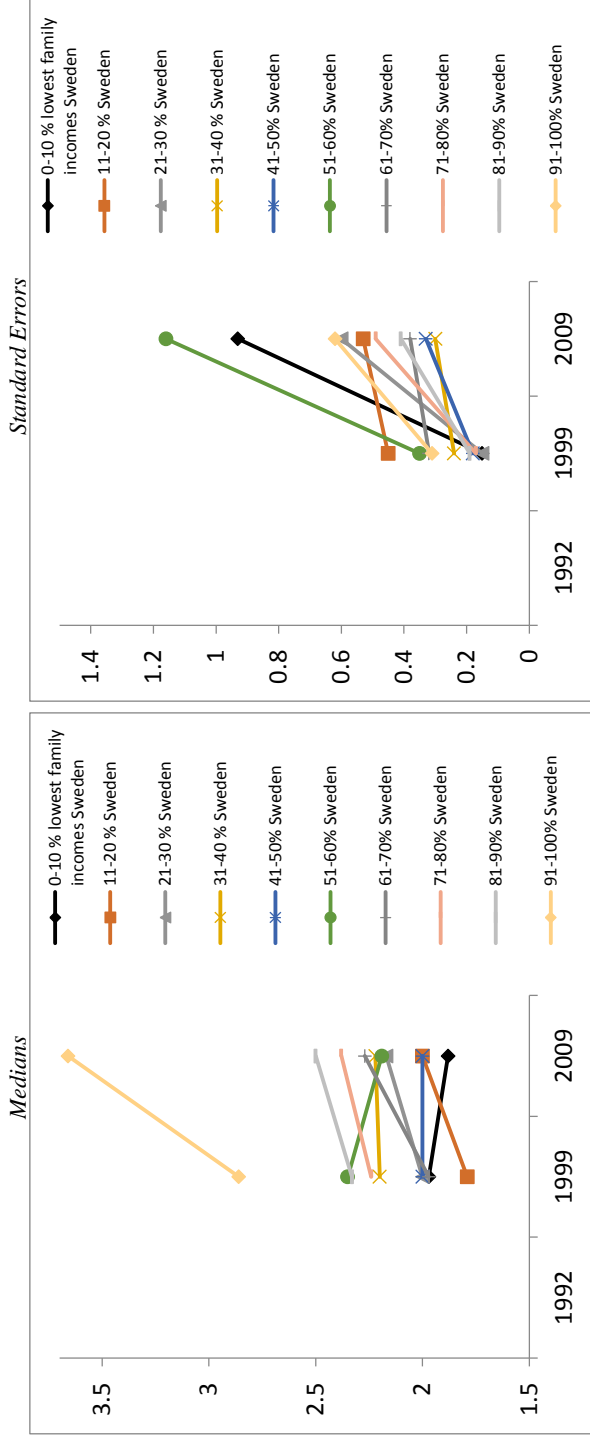
Notes: Multiple linear regressions. Unstandardized regression coefficients. The dependent variable is created by taking, for each respondent, the natural logarithm of the ratio between the chairman of a large national corporation and an average of the statements for a shop assistant and an unskilled factory worker. Since the covariates and factors in the models have not been logarithmically transformed, they denote an estimated per-cent-wise difference regarding the dependent variable. For a factor, this is between a certain group and the reference group. For a covariate, it is the estimated per-cent-wise effect of rising one step on the covariate scale. (\*)  $p < 0.10$ , \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ ,  $N$  (all models) = 736.

Source: Social Inequality Module IV (2009) of the International Social Survey Program (ISSP).

Table 6-2, again unsurprisingly, shows more stronger and more statistically significant attitudinal divisions than Table 6-1, with the corresponding Danish results. The best indicator of the much larger effect of social cleavages in explaining attitudes towards the level of inequality in Sweden in contrast to Denmark can perhaps be found in the level of explained variance. Models 1–4 in Table 6-1 only explained between 2 and 4 % of the variance (a result on a level with the explained variance in the aggregated analyses of Chapter 5). In the corresponding models of Table 6-2, 5–12 % variance is explained. Also, in contrast to the Danish results, the introduction of PLI in Model 5 ‘only’ manages to increase  $r^2$  to 46 %. In the Danish case,  $r^2$  was 53 % in Model 5. As elaborated in Chapter 4, this difference could be seen as an indicator of a higher degree of politicisation with regard to the issue of wages in Sweden than in Denmark, because politicisation could induce respondents to clearly separate the issues of ‘should earn’ from ‘do earn’.

In the disaggregated analyses of Section 6.2.3, Sweden portrayed noteworthy divisions on almost all measures investigated. In the multivariate analyses of Table 6-2 most of these divisions become insignificant after controlling for the other variables. Only household income retains a very large and significant effect across the models. In spite of the poor performance of income in explaining variation in the aggregated analyses of Section 5.2, household income appears to be the dominating attitudinal cleavage in Sweden in 2009. A closer look reveals that it is not exactly a linear effect of income, which is seen in Figure 6-16 and Table 6-2. Instead, the richest 19 % of the respondent households deviate in being clearly less egalitarian than other income groups. In Figure 6-21 below, this ‘economical-elite effect’ becomes even more apparent when household income is disaggregated on income deciles instead of just five groups, as in Figure 6-16.

Figure 6-21 Attitudes towards the Level of Inequality in Gross Wages for Different Household Income Deciles in Sweden in ISSP 1999 and 2009, medians and Standard errors



Notes: The statements of the chairman of a large national corporation variable are divided with an index constructed from an average of the two lowest paid occupations; that is, the statements of the two occupations: shop assistant and unskilled factory worker are summarised and divided by two. Lastly, the chairman statements are then divided by the low-paid occupations index.

N (1999): 0-10 % lowest family incomes=144; 11-20 % =158; 21-30 % =142; 31-40 % =148; 41-50 % =194; 51-60 % =146; 61-70 % =156; 71-80 % =176; 81-90 % =176; 91-100 % =138.

N (2009): 0-10 % lowest family incomes=83; 11-20 % =83; 21-30 % =87; 31-40 % =103; 41-50 % =82; 51-60 % =82; 61-70 % =107; 71-80 % =99; 81-90 % =59; 91-100 % =90.

Sources: The Social Inequality Modules (III-IV: 1999 and 2009) of the International Social Survey Program (ISSP).

As mentioned in the Swedish summary of Section 6.2.4, this clearly suggests that the Swedish elite groups — which seem to be especially the rich — seem to move away from the remaining groups attitudinally.

Besides household income, gender also appears to be an even stronger divide than in Denmark. The urbanisation variable also seems to suggest that people coming from rural areas are more egalitarian than city dwellers, even after controlling for differences in income, education etc. As in Denmark, political affiliation also separates the relative egalitarians of especially the Left Party, from the relative inegalitarians of the Liberal Conservatives and the Liberal Party. The Social Democrats are placed in between these two poles, leaning towards the relative egalitarian wing. Lastly, the strong and significant generational effects also seen in Figure 6-11, also remain in Models 1–4 of Table 6-2. These effects appear to be almost linear in the way that, on average, the younger respondent the more egalitarian.

However, the introduction of the PLI in Model 5 changes this picture dramatically. Both the differences between males and females, but especially the generational differences, disappear completely after controlling for the Swedish respondents' perceptions of the actual level of inequality in gross wages. In contrast to Denmark, males not only wish for, but also perceive larger differences in gross wages than females. The same goes for the older generations. The relative egalitarianism of the older generations of Swedish respondents corresponds perfectly with similar perceptions of larger actual wage differences.

Firstly, the perception of the actual level of inequality in gross wages, as with Denmark, seems to vary quite a lot between social groups. Secondly, these differences in perceptions seemingly have a considerable effect on the same groups' attitudes towards the level of inequality in gross wages. Swedish attitudes towards the level of inequality in gross wages were argued to be at a watershed in 2009. The question was whether these attitudes seemed to be influenced by the historical ideological class legacy, or more recent changes in the Swedish political economy, leaning towards a convergence with the corresponding Danish PE. The answer seems to be both. The relative inegalitarian perceptions and attitudes of the older generations of Swedes seem to fit with the classic image of the Swedish political economy as dominated by class, and class cleavages. The different patterns of the younger generations could suggest these patterns have weakened, in possible accordance with the change in the Swedish political economy, moving in the Danish direction.

The perceptions of the level of inequality in gross wages are, as argued, to a large extent assumed to be built on the basis of the images, myths and stereotypes of the Swedish HCNI mediated by the Swedish media. Even more than Denmark, it seems clear that elite groups, and especially rich groups, could be important herein. However, at the same time, the results clearly indicate that the different generations receive and possibly interpret the images, myths and perception differently.



Investigating which images of the rich the Swedish media actually present is the next step undertaken in Chapter 7.

#### 6.4. SUMMARY OF CHAPTER 6

Section 5.1 showed that when comparing a range of Western countries in aggregated analyses, Denmark, Norway and Sweden seemed very similar. To recap, the three Scandinavian countries were found, in both 1999 and 2009, to wish for exceptionally low differences between gross wages at the top and bottom of the occupational hierarchy. The Scandinavians were, comparatively speaking, quite satisfied with the perceived gross wage levels of the investigated occupations; only the salaries of chairmen were seen as increasingly unjust. Scandinavian egalitarianism was, therefore, argued to be characterised more as an aversion to top excess, rather than a wish to spoil the of the labour market bottom excessively.

Interestingly, quite different results appeared when disaggregating the results on social groups in Denmark and Sweden. While the overall development of the various social groups in Denmark and Norway followed more or less the same pattern, the Swedish groups followed an almost opposite pattern. Overly simplified, the general result of the disaggregated analyses of Chapter 6 is that, in Sweden, large between-group differences exist and remain, but at the same time, the intra-group differences are small, also in 2009. In Denmark and Norway, the differences between groups are small (with notable exceptions), whereas the intra-group differences skyrocket in 2009 for a majority of the groups investigated (more so in Denmark than in Norway).

It is important to keep in mind that, in spite of the group differences identified in the descriptive analyses above, the highest group median values of Chapter 6 would still be placed among the bottom six countries in the third column of Table 5-3, in Subsection 5.1.2.2 above (displaying the same dependent variable in 1999).<sup>72</sup> This empirical result again serves to remind us that despite the differences in attitudinal patterns and development in the political economies of Denmark and Sweden, in the aggregated perspective, the Scandinavian countries are quite alike attitudinally.

Furthermore, the multivariate analysis of Chapter 6 revealed that relatively large Swedish divisions seemed to be dominated by attitudinal differences between household income groups, as well as political differences between the respondents. The attitudinal differences between generations and gender were, on the other hand, found to coincide with similar differences in the perceptions of the level of actual inequality in gross wages among the same groups. The multivariate Danish result confirmed very small attitudinal social divisions, dominated by the political affiliation of the respondents. After controlling for the perceived level of inequality in gross wages, suppressed generational effects appeared. The two youngest Danish

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<sup>72</sup> Retired Swedes in 1999 = 3.21, and 65–74-year-old Swedes in 1999 = 3.49.

generations appear to be clearly less egalitarian than the remaining generations. This could spark change in the legitimacy of the otherwise seemingly stable egalitarian Danish attitudinal model.

## CHAPTER 7. THE THREE SIDES OF THE EQUALITY-COIN

The key result following the disaggregated perspective in the chapters above were the differences identified between Denmark and Sweden. As described in Chapter 3, these differences were firstly apparent in the development of the macro level structures of the political economies of Denmark and Sweden. Secondly, also the actual patterns of Danish and Swedish attitudes towards the level of inequality in gross wages were found in especially Chapter 6 to differ quite a lot. The purpose of the analyses of Chapter 7 is to investigate the link between the macro level political economy, and the Scandinavians' micro level attitudes towards the level of inequality in gross wages. As presented in the conceptual model of the dissertation outlined in Chapter 2, the media and its output is argued to perform this key role of mediating the macro level phenomena to the micro level.

Attitudes towards the level of inequality in gross wages can, as argued in Chapter 1, be seen as corresponding attitudes to the top-middle gap. A historically constructed normative institution (HCNI) was furthermore defined as: a particular representation of the past; a representation that in myths, presentations and stereotypes define: 'who the others are' and in a sense also 'who we are'. A multiplicity of 'others' exists in the circles of social identification for a certain individual at a certain time (de Swaan, 1995). However, since most people per default declare as belonging to the warm and competent middle (Fiske et al., 2007; Larsen, 2013), the relevant possible 'others' in this case are the constructed top. Because the attitudes towards the level of inequality in gross wages concern the economic top, it is more precise to label the relevant top, 'the rich'.

Fiske, Cuddy and Glick (2007) suggest stereotypes are constructed concerning all groups not considered both warm and competent as the middle (class) is. In contrast, 'the rich' are found to spur ambivalent emotions and attitudes by being viewed positively as competent, but at the same time negatively as cold. The use of negative stereotypes of 'the poor' and deservingness criteria tapping into different marginalised groups' moral character in media presentations of these groups is well known in existing literature. Stereotypes are classical subjects for media to build stories on (Gilens, 2000; Gilens, 1996; Larsen, 2013; Larsen & Dejgaard, 2013). Since 'the rich' are found to be perceived as both competent and cold, it is analogically likely that presentations and stereotypes of the correspondingly deserving or undeserving rich (McCall, 2013; Rowlingson & Connor, 2011) also exist in media output. An important prerequisite therefore is that 'the rich' must be considered as being a distinct group of 'others' separate from the 'us' of the middle class, in a HCNI in a given society. This also means that by investigating how and whether the media represents 'the rich', traces of the myths, presentations and stereotypes in the Scandinavian HCNIs should appear.

On this basis, Chapter 2 outlined the basic conceptual model of the dissertation. It was here argued that the media performs a crucial mediating role between the relevant macro level structures of society – in our case the dual sided political economy (PE) – and the attitudes (and perceptions) of the citizens of a society at a given point in time. Following the conceptual model outlined in Chapter 2 and the scenarios deduced in Section 3.7 there should be a degree of correspondence between the PE, the media output and the attitudes of the citizens within the Scandinavian countries – although lags can be expected between each of the three phenomena. Both in terms of the development in the political economies, but also in the actual attitudinal patterns measured, Denmark and Sweden were in fact found to be quite different – and in both cases controlling for the perceived level of actual inequality in gross wages (PLI) had a great effect on attitudinal patterns. Especially in the Swedish case substantial differences existed between the PLI of various groups. Not just the normative attitudes, but obviously also the differences in perceptions between various social groups are likely to be influenced by the myths, images and stereotypes of the HCNI of Denmark and Sweden mediated by the media.

Chapter 7 seeks to complete the empirical puzzle outlined in Chapter 2, linking the developing political economies of Scandinavia (Chapter 3) to perceptions of and attitudes towards the level of inequality in gross wages (Chapters 4-6), by investigating how myths, representations and stereotypes of ‘the rich’ the Danish and Swedish media actually have mediated to the Danish and Swedish citizens from 1996 to 2013. As argued, such an investigation provides a way to more or less directly investigate the otherwise abstract and fluffy contents of the HCNI. The following section will expand on some of the concepts and ideas introduced in this section. The outcome of this endeavour is the development and elaboration of the main, as well as alternative hypotheses for both Denmark and Sweden. These hypotheses will then be tested in the analyses sections of the chapter. Before that, a data and methods section will elaborate on the issues of how to collect the relevant data and how to conduct the investigation.

## 7.1. THEORY AND HYPOTHESES

The following section *first* tries to model the different ideal typical possibilities of how the media could be representing ‘the rich’ over time in Denmark and Sweden in general or in individual newspapers in the two countries. As it was elaborated in Chapter 3, and will be apparent below, it is interesting whether there is a difference between the media’s presentation before and after the financial crisis. At a very basic level, and although the lines between the categories in practice are discussable, a newspaper article can present the rich in three ways: negatively, positively and rather neutrally. It will later be argued that a neutral presentation of the rich in some cases can correspond to a non-construction of the rich as a social group independent from the middle class. Such a situation will also be argued to have consequences for the social construction of the top-middle gap in society. In

other words, this construction equals the HCNI of society concerning the perceived basic (class) nature of society, a construction which de Swaan (1995) labels the widest circle of social identification.

The section *secondly* combines existing literature and results with the issue voting-paradigm from election studies. It proposed that the issue of the rich and the top-middle wage gap to a high extent could be a salient position issue in Sweden, while it in contrast is a not so salient valence issue in Denmark. *Thirdly*, the section tries to operationalise and develop this overall idea into more specific hypotheses on which patterns, we can expect to see, in the representation of the rich in major Danish and Swedish national newspapers from 1996-2013.

### 7.1.1. THE THREE IDEAL TYPICAL POSSIBILITIES OF PRESENTING THE RICH IN SCANDINAVIAN NEWSPAPERS

It seems quite straightforward to imagine the rich being presented positively as ‘the deserving rich’, and negatively as ‘the undeserving rich’ (McCall, 2013; Rowlingson & Connor, 2011). Following Fiske, Cuddy and Glick (2007), ‘the rich’ should spur ambivalent emotions, stereotypes and hence media presentations. Besides these two rather obvious conflicting ideal-types of the ‘deserving- and undeserving rich’, a third option will also be presented.

The *first* ideal typical possibility of ‘the undeserving rich’ could take its departure from the classic social democratic and ultimately Marxist ideology presented in Section 1.4. Following this ideal-type, media representations of the rich would consistently remain sceptical towards and portray the rich in a not so positive light. In the Scandinavian context this means that just as the poor are portrayed in a more positive light in the Scandinavian media and discursively lifted into the middle class (cf. Section 1.4), the excesses at the top of society are looked upon with scepticism. Furthermore the financial crisis from 2008 and onwards could possibly have exploited a possible ‘capitalist-sceptical’ ideological reservoir even further. The assumption must then furthermore be that we expect to see a sharp rise for articles about the rich following the financial crisis.

The *second* possibility is a radical divergence from the ‘capitalist-sceptical’ legacy: Here the rich are not presented negatively as the ‘class-enemy’, but instead positively as the entrepreneurs and job creators. Rowlingson & Connor (2011) distinguish between three overall criteria for being considered ‘deserving rich’: Rewarding merit/hard work, incentives, character. Typical newspaper articles subscribing to this kind of reasoning would e.g. emphasise (See also: Bamfield & Horton, 2009; McCall, 2013):

- How the rich have *worked hard* and struggled to get to where they are now.

- The need for *incentives* in order to maximise the benefits for the rest of society in creating wealth, jobs and competitive companies
- Showing restraint in their *character* and consumption, by paying their high taxes with compliance and furthermore giving more money back to society in the form of charity and donations.

If this discourse remains strong in the wake of the financial crisis, it could even be reinforced. It is possible the rich could then be presented as our only hope of getting the countries out of the perceived economic turmoil.

Because ‘the rich’ are supposed to spur ambivalent emotions, stereotypes and hence media representations, it seems unlikely that either form of presentation could exist without at least some images of the opposite popping up. The negative and the positive positions form two opposite axes in discursive struggles, on which attributes, labels or stereotypes to assign to ‘the rich’. What is crucial to notice is that both of these positions therefore construct ‘the rich’ as being distinct from ‘us’ – the average middle class citizen (Fiske et al., 2007).<sup>73</sup>

Besides the two opposites, there is also a *third* possibility. Maybe the ideological reservoir or rather the myths, images and stereotypes of the HCNI concerning the basic (class) nature of society, which the media mediates, could be neither a ‘capitalist-sceptical’ or a ‘capitalist-friendly’ one. Instead, in a given society it could be the myth and image that there are no such things as excessively rich people with supernormal profits. Maybe the history of the political economy in a country is perceived as such a success that the issue of wage, income and class differences is basically solved. The rich would maybe not even form a distinct class in such a case. They just belong to the upper part of the all-encompassing middle class. In this scenario, the assumption is that there are very few articles about the rich in the newspapers of such a country both before and after the financial crisis and the few articles there are, are written in a quite neutral manner.

The three ideal typical possibilities of presenting the rich are likely to exist in both Danish and Swedish media. However, the main hypothesis to be investigated in this chapter is that there are good reasons to suspect that it varies quite a lot, which positions respectively the Danish and Swedish media mainly subscribe to in the period investigated.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> This idea is also prominent in classical works in the social sciences. Melvin Lerner (1980) for example describes a constructed ‘world of the rich and beautiful’, in which the rule of just desserts, prominent in the perceived ‘just world’ which most people live in, does not apply.

<sup>74</sup> In both countries, the period investigated will be 1996-2013; why will be elaborated below.

### 7.1.2. A SALIENT POSITION ISSUE IN SWEDEN VERSUS A NOT SO SALIENT VALENCE ISSUE IN DENMARK?

What should this overall thesis mean for how we expect the newspapers to construct the rich in Denmark and Sweden? A useful perspective here is the issue voting paradigm from election studies. At a very basic level, issues – such as the distribution of income between the top and the middle strata of society – can take the form of position or valence issues. A *valence issue* is an issue about which voters will usually share a common preference, whereas a *position issue* is a divisive issue for which there are different preferences among the voters. When judging politicians on position issues, the voters obviously judge the extent to which a politician's position or goal on an issue is in accordance with the voter's position. In valence issues there is no real disagreement on the positions/goals; voters instead judge the politicians on their perceived competence or the means they would use to reach the goal (Borre, 2001). In the following hypotheses, we will try to apply the issue voting perspective on the results and interpretations of the chapters above.

If we start with *Denmark*, it was argued in Chapter 3 that the legacy of the classic Danish PE – the background for the Danish historically constructed normative institutions (HCNIs) concerning the basic (class) nature of society – was one of compromise and consensus seeking between the various interest groups making up the Danish society. Although changes in the programmatic institutions of the Danish PE are continuing to take place, the basic consensus seeking and coordinating characteristic of the Danish PE seems to remain intact until today. The high degree of consensus between various social groups also seemed to be mirrored in Danish attitudes towards the level of inequality in gross wages. In Chapter 6, Denmark (and Norway) portrayed very small differences in median attitudes between social groups. In fact, almost no class or other attitudinal cleavages existed towards the top-middle gap in gross wages in Denmark. The only consistent Danish attitudinal cleavage remaining in the models of the multivariate analyses was related to the political affiliation of the respondents. On the other hand, the degree of intra-group agreement appearing in Chapter 6 was clearly smaller than in Sweden. This widespread overall between group similarity in median attitudes, and at the same time intra-group confusion, seems to suggest that the issue to a higher extent is not a very salient valence issue in Denmark.

Chapter 3 also argued that the legacy of the classic *Swedish* PE is to a higher extent one of a peaceful, but highly ideological, class struggle. After great upheaval from the late 1970s to the mid-1990s, recent developments in the Swedish PE suggest a new path emerging largely mirroring the Danish both in the parliamentary sphere and in the industrial relations system. In addition, the more material conditions of the Danish and Swedish PEs have largely converged in recent decades. In spite of these newer tendencies, Sweden still portrayed consistent cleavages in median attitudes between social groups. In the multivariate analysis, the Swedish cleavages

appeared mainly driven by differences between groups of household income and the political affiliations of the respondents.

On this basis, and as the argument also was in Chapter 6, the Swedish media seems to be at a watershed in the period investigated. Because of the idea of lag and the inertness of HCNI's argued above, the main hypothesis must be that the Swedish media must still mediate the historical myth, image or stereotype of Sweden as a class society. The issue of the distribution of income between the top and the middle strata of society should thus largely be a position issue in Sweden, where the positions or cleavages more or less still follow the lines of the social classes (Lipset & Rokkan, 1967). Overall, these positions should therefore be reflected in the presentations of the rich in the Swedish newspapers, where we could expect to see representatives of both negative positions described above, as well as the opposite positive.

On the other hand, the changes in the Swedish political economy in recent decades, and the changes in the actual class structure reflected in the shift to a knowledge, service and welfare economy, making it to a very little extent distinguishable from the corresponding Danish class structure, is also likely to at least somewhat affect the Swedish media output. It is possible a gradual change over time can be seen, where the media output concerning the rich gradually changes to being a steadily less salient, and to a steadily higher degree a valence issue – also in Sweden.

Besides these differences in the political economies and attitudinal patterns between Denmark and Sweden, it is again also important to bear in mind that Sweden, as described in Chapter 3, suffered less from the financial crisis starting in 2008 than Denmark, but had their severe crisis in the 1990s. The diverse impact of the financial crisis in Denmark and Sweden will remain important for the operationalised hypotheses below.

### **7.1.3. OPERATIONALISING HYPOTHESES**

On the following pages, these general theses for Denmark and Sweden will be sought to be operationalised. If we start with *Denmark*, the hypothesis is that because of the relatively low level of salience of the issue, we in general do not expect to see much portrayal of the rich in the Danish media before or after the financial crisis – compared to Sweden. The articles to be found are probably also written in a quite neutral and often factual manner, not really presenting the rich in a certain light at all. Remember the crux of the Danish HCNI was argued to be that the society is not constituted of very distinct social classes at all, but instead a myriad of sectorial interests to be bridged in compromises. It seems possible though that this non-constructing hypothesis could change temporarily in the wake of the financial crisis. This is firstly because Denmark, at least compared to Sweden, was hit quite hard by the financial crisis (cf. Chapter 3). Secondly, it is simply because this quite radical change in the economic situation of the country invites a



discussion about the distribution of the available resources in society, which at that point must be perceived to be quite scarce. In that case, we would see an increase in articles critical of the rich or an increase in articles positive to the rich or both. This financial crisis effect will probably fade out quite fast though, and the Danish newspapers should return to the pre-financial crisis' mostly neutral outline.

We cannot expect to see large differences between the individual Danish newspapers. This concerns both the actual number of the articles about the rich per month, but also the representation of the rich in these articles. It is again a possibility though that there could be a temporal change in this following the financial crisis, where the newspapers more or less voluntarily are forced to cover a very hot political issue at the time both globally and nationally and therefore maybe also to take a stand on the issue. Maybe the effect of the crisis is therefore to politicise and polarise the media construction of the rich even in Denmark (Hedegaard, 2014b; Taber & Lodge, 2006; Togeby, 2004; Zaller, 1992). Following the crisis, in this scenario, the economically liberal newspapers could enhance a positive construction of 'the rich' as hardworking, risk-taking job-creators. The social democratic oriented newspapers on the other hand could return to a clear critical representation of the rich they to a greater extent pursued historically. No matter what the overall hypothesis is, the effect is more temporal and minor than in Sweden.

The main hypothesis for *Sweden* presumes a relatively high degree of salience. We therefore in general expect to see more debate and therefore a larger number of articles about the rich per month than in Denmark. These articles can in general furthermore be assumed not to be written in a neutral manner, but in either a negative or a positive one. The assumption is that because the issue still constitutes a crucial political and journalistic cleavage – a position issue - in Sweden, the economically liberal newspapers will consistently present the rich in a positive manner, while the social democratic newspapers will portray the rich in a negative manner. If the virtual social democratic ideational hegemony claimed by Esping Andersen (1980) has not disappeared completely, it is furthermore possible that the critical discourse is a bit stronger. This means that even if we in general see positive articles in the economically liberal newspapers, the average number of positive articles per month or per economically liberal newspaper is lower than the average of negative articles per month or per social democratic newspaper. If the Swedish media output gradually changes from this outlook, as suggested above, the pattern should to a steadily greater extent start to resemble what is proposed for the Danish media.

What can the effect of the financial crisis in Sweden be then? Two possible conflicting effects can be considered here. First, it is possible that we will not see much difference between the pre- and post-financial crisis. Compared to most other western countries Sweden was, as described in Chapter 3, hit very gently by the financial crisis and already in 2010 experienced impressive GDP growth – and falling unemployment rates – a situation rather opposite from Denmark (Goul

Andersen, 2013). The resources could therefore possibly be experienced as less scarce than in the Danish case, inducing less reason to discuss its distribution. Moreover, if the assumption is true that the issue was already hotly debated in Swedish media before the financial crisis, then the salience could possibly already be near a kind of saturation point, not being able to rise much more. On the other hand, the crisis can also be considered a perfect match for the ideological and journalistic positions of the Swedish media refuelling an already salient debate. Following this argument, the financial crisis effect could also be expected to last longer in Sweden – simply because the issue is assumed to fit with the political and journalistic positions of the newspapers in Sweden.

## **7.2. DATA AND METHODS**

The following section will mainly deal with both the overall design oriented issues and the approach of the article as well as some of the more practical methodological issues arising when conducting a study of the development of newspaper representations of ‘the rich’ in a Danish and Swedish context. These are not trivial issues.

### **7.2.1. THE SELECTION OF A SEARCH ALGORITHM**

First, it is by no means straightforward which search algorithm to use to identify a relevant sample of articles concerning ‘the rich’ (McCall, 2013). It is simply much more straightforward, which keywords are relevant, when you are interested in benefit fraud, social assistance etc. More or less, you just use these words translated into the relevant languages plus a few synonyms. Hereby you collect your relevant sample of newspaper articles.<sup>75</sup>

As it will be shown below, this is by no means the case when you are interested in the newspapers’ presentation of ‘the rich’. The question is how do you identify the relevant sample of articles concerning the rich in Denmark and Sweden? It was decided to actually stick to the most direct translation of the subject of interest and straightforwardly to search for articles containing the word ‘rig/rik’ [rich] or ‘rige/rika’ [the rich] somewhere in the text. Although a number of different approaches have been tried, there are a number of good theoretical and practical arguments against other solutions and for the selection of that particular search algorithm.

First, all attempts to expand the search algorithm with different synonyms or related concepts, which could be used to describe the upper strata of society, appeared biased. In order to test the hypothesis and the change in proportions of articles presenting ‘the rich’ in either a negative, more or less neutral or a positive light, we seemed to need a search algorithm that was not severely biased in either direction.

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<sup>75</sup> See for example (Dejgaard & Larsen, 2011; Lundström, 2011).

Furthermore, this criterion needed to be met not just at a single point in time, but in the whole period from 1996 – 2013 and in both Denmark and Sweden. When trying to obtain a balance by e.g. having three ‘positive’ and three ‘negative’ search terms, the obtained sample was still to a varying extent biased through time. An illustrative example of this is the case of the word ‘capitalist’. In the early years, this was a term which maybe unsurprisingly could have been applied to capture a considerable proportion of the articles describing ‘the rich’ negatively. As time passed, the fame of this concept vanished, and in the later years – but only before the financial crisis – it was sometimes even used as a positive adjective to describe a risk-taking entrepreneur.

One solution to this problem was to expand the search algorithm with all the possible synonyms and relevant concepts you could think of, or that you could find in articles you had read, which were more or less related to the subject. Even if it was technically possible to include many words in the search algorithms in Infomedia and Mediearkivet (see below), and it obviously decreased the bias, it was almost impossible to be sure all relevant search terms were included in the whole period in the two countries. Furthermore, very broad search algorithms led to a new problem: they inherently invited a tremendous amount of ‘noise’ in the form of articles not relevant for the topic of the investigation. Although smaller, this was a problem we also ended up dealing with in our final search algorithm (see details below).

Because of these concerns, and after trying out different search algorithms and skimming and reading through numerous newspaper articles appearing, when using the different possible search algorithms, in different newspapers at different points in time, it was decided to abandon all attempts to create a very expansive search algorithm and return to the ‘rig/rik’ [rich] or ‘rige/rika’ algorithm.<sup>76</sup>

It is also important to emphasise that this choice was furthermore not a forced upon, second best, but practical solution. The concept of ‘the rich’ firstly seems to be the concept actually used in the meagre non-Scandinavian existing literature on attitudes and media presentations of the upper strata of society. In qualitative interviews on the subject, it furthermore seems to be a preferred term to use by the interviewees to describe the upper strata (Bamfield & Horton, 2009; Fiske et al., 2007; McCall, 2013). The concept of ‘the rich’ is basically the negation to the concept of ‘the poor’. It therefore seems reasonable to suspect that media constructions aiming to bind to existing images or stereotypes of the upper strata of society in many cases are likely to use the same term.

Secondly, at first glance one could maybe think that the concept of ‘the rich’ has a quite severe negative bias. It seems strange if this negative bias is larger than the

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<sup>76</sup> This non-linear process of trying different and refining search algorithms resembles what Lundström (2011) describes as a constant comparative technique, which he also employs.

corresponding positive bias in the concept of ‘the poor’ though. Poverty is almost inherently unjust, and existing studies seem to document more negative presentations of ‘the poor’ than positive ones, refuting this simple first hand claim. Obviously, things are more complicated than the positive – negative dichotomy.

One of the consequences of the ambivalence- findings concerning the emotional attitudinal response spurred by the rich is that it seems likely there is great room for representing ‘the rich’ both positively and negatively in media articles – depending on which dimension is emphasised in the presentations (Fiske et al., 2007). Furthermore, Denmark becomes a kind of a critical case, with the perspective of Fiske, Cuddy and Glick (2007). The authors here claim that warmth and competence are two *universal* dimensions of social cognition. They claim that whichever social group not having a high perceived level of competence and warmth is subject to emotional arousal and stereotyping. Stereotypes are as mentioned classical subjects for the media to build stories on (Gilens, 2000; Gilens, 1996; Larsen, 2013; Larsen & Dejgaard, 2013). If we assume that ‘the rich’, not only in the USA but in general, are perceived to be competent but not very warm, can it then really be that the Danish media do not build on and construct stereotypes of ‘the rich’ as somehow being separate from the warm and competent middle class, as the thesis above described?

## 7.2.2. THE SELECTION OF NEWSPAPERS AND TIME PERIOD

The online media archives *Infomedia* (Infomedia A/S, 2013) and *Mediearkivet* (Retriever Sverige AB, 2013) have been used to extract Danish and Swedish newspaper articles correspondingly. The five largest national newspapers in each country have been chosen for maximum discursive impact. This selection also allows for having variation on both the journalistic and political profile in accordance with the recommendations and definitions of (Dejgaard & Larsen, 2011; Lundström, 2011).<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> It should also be mentioned that three other newspapers labelled by Larsen & Dejgaard (2011) as ‘serious-newspapers’ were considered – *Børsen and Information* in Denmark and *Dagens Industri* in Sweden. There are two reasons for why they are not included though. First, while these newspapers do deal with abstract subjects – probably also the one under investigation here – they focus on narrow groups of selected readers, a niche. *Børsen and Dagens Industri* focus on the business community, while *Information’s* niche is mainly left-wing intellectuals and students (A/S Dagbladet Information, 2013; Dagbladet Børsen A/S, 2014; Dagens Industri, 2013). For this reason, they were not found relevant for investigating developments in the broad societal discourse. Second, both Danish newspapers entered the Infomedia archive as late as 2006 (Infomedia A/S, 2013). Including them would therefore have severely restricted the timeframe it was possible to investigate, which for the reasons we will now turn to, would have been very unfortunate.

*Table 7-1 Classification of the Five Largest Danish and Swedish Nation-wide Newspapers*

	<b>Social Democratic</b>	<b>Conservative</b>	<b>Economically Liberal</b>
	<b>Danish</b>		
Newsstand Tabloid	<i>Ekstra Bladet (EB)</i>		<i>BT (BT)</i>
Serious Popular			
Semi-Serious	<i>Politiken (POL)</i>	<i>Berlingske (BL)</i>	<i>Jyllands Posten (JP)</i>
	<b>Swedish</b>		
Newsstand Tabloid	<i>Aftonbladet (AB)</i>		<i>Expressen (EX)</i>
Serious Popular			<i>Göteborg Posten (GP)</i>
Semi-Serious		<i>Svenska Dagbladet (SD)</i>	<i>Dagens Nyheter (DN)</i>

Sources: (Dansk Oplagskontrol, 2013; Larsen et al., 2011; Lundström, 2011; Tidningsutgivarna, 2013).

It is clear from Table 7-1 that the five selected newspapers in each country secure variation on both dimensions chosen – journalistic style and political orientation (ex-post). At the same time, these are the five largest newspapers in Denmark and Sweden – except maybe from a few of the freesheets who have been omitted – indicating that these should have a general discursive impact on different strata of the population.

Which time period should be chosen for the analyses then? To identify general quantified trends in the depiction of the rich in the 10 newspapers, a maximum timespan has been chosen (Lundström, 2011, p. 314). If we start with the Danish newspapers, JP entered the archive 9<sup>th</sup> of January 1996. The four other newspapers entered Infomedia as early as 1990 (Infomedia A/S, 2013). In the Swedish case, all the five selected newspapers entered Mediearkivet earlier than 1996 (Retriever Sverige AB, 2013). Since it was decided to count the number of articles on a monthly basis, the first full month where all 10 newspapers were available was February 1996 – the starting point of the analyses. The last full month available, when the data collection started, was April 2013. Therefore, this month became the last month of collecting the gross sample of newspaper articles.

This expansive approach to collecting a gross sample of newspaper articles will be followed only in the first part of the analysis. As Lundström (2011) does, the focus will be narrowed on specific time periods of interest later. The two time periods chosen are the periods in which the survey data for the third and fourth rounds of the International Social Survey Program's (ISSP) Social Inequality Module was collected in Denmark and Sweden (ISSP Research Group, 2011). These data constituted the core of the analyses of Chapters 4-6 above. The data collection periods are:

- December 2000 to May 2001 (Denmark)<sup>78</sup> + February 1999 to June 1999 (Sweden).<sup>79</sup>
- September 2009 to January 2010 (Denmark)<sup>80</sup> + February 2009 to May 2009 (Sweden).<sup>81</sup>

The periods chosen are then:

- *T1: November 1998 to May 2001.*
- *T2: November 2008 to January 2010.*

These periods include the whole data collection period for both surveys in both countries plus the three months before the collections start in either country. These three months were included for the following reason. It must be assumed that if the attitudes towards the top-middle gap of the respondents in the survey are influenced by the media's presentation of the rich, then those attitudes are probably not just affected by the presentation of the day the respondent answers the questionnaire, but also by the presentations in the period leading up to that. The two selected time periods furthermore have the advantage of providing a post- and a pre-financial snapshot, important for testing the hypothesis deduced above.

### **7.3. AGGREGATED COVERAGE OF THE RICH IN DENMARK AND SWEDEN 1996-2013**

The section aims to get a broad overview of the development in the media coverage of the rich the entire period of full months, from which we have the articles of all 10 newspapers. That is from 1<sup>st</sup> February 1996 to 30<sup>th</sup> April 2013.

The samples obtained by simply searching for articles containing the word 'rig/rik' [rich] or 'rige/rika' [the rich] somewhere in the text are very encompassing. This is because by searching in the entire text of the articles, we should also be able to capture relevant articles, where a version of the word rich is not part of the headline or lead paragraph of the article, which is quite likely. Unfortunately, the vast majority of the articles retrieved this way are not relevant at all, but pure noise.

To eliminate the vast majority of noise-articles we utilised the NOT command in Infomedia and the corresponding ANDNOT command in Mediearkivet. When you utilise this command articles containing the word 'rig/rik' OR 'rige/rika' and one of the words specified after the NOT/ANDNOT command will be discarded.

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<sup>78</sup> (Tobiasen & Sander Andersen, 2005).

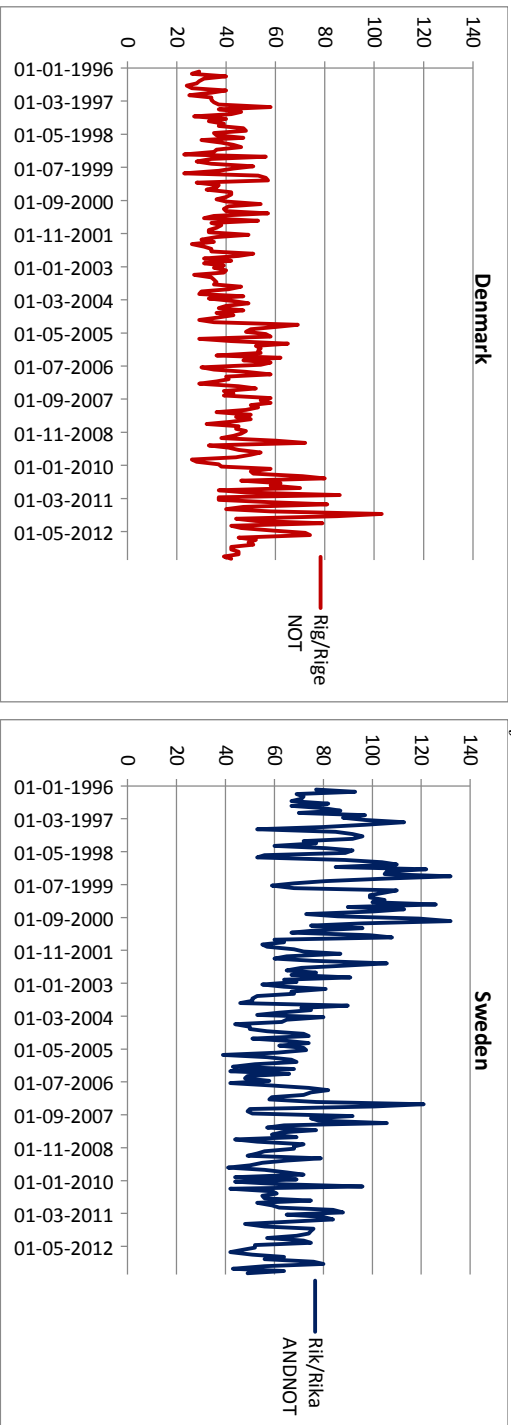
<sup>79</sup> (ISSP Research Group, 2002).

<sup>80</sup> (ISSP Research Group, 2011).

<sup>81</sup> (ISSP Research Group, 2011).

To select the NOT/ANDNOT words we chose a few months from different points in the timespan of 1996-2013 in the two countries, and looked for which words actually seemed to appear together with different versions of the word 'rich' in the noise-articles. These usually fall under themes as 'rich' in foreign countries, sports, culture and lifestyle-articles.

Figure 7-1 The Final search Algorithms utilised to Identify the relevant Cross-Sample of Newspaper Articles dealing with the Rich in Denmark and Sweden on a Month to Month basis in the Period of 1996-2013



Note: See the final search algorithms in the web appendix at: <https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/100770372/The%20final%20search%20algorithms.docx>.



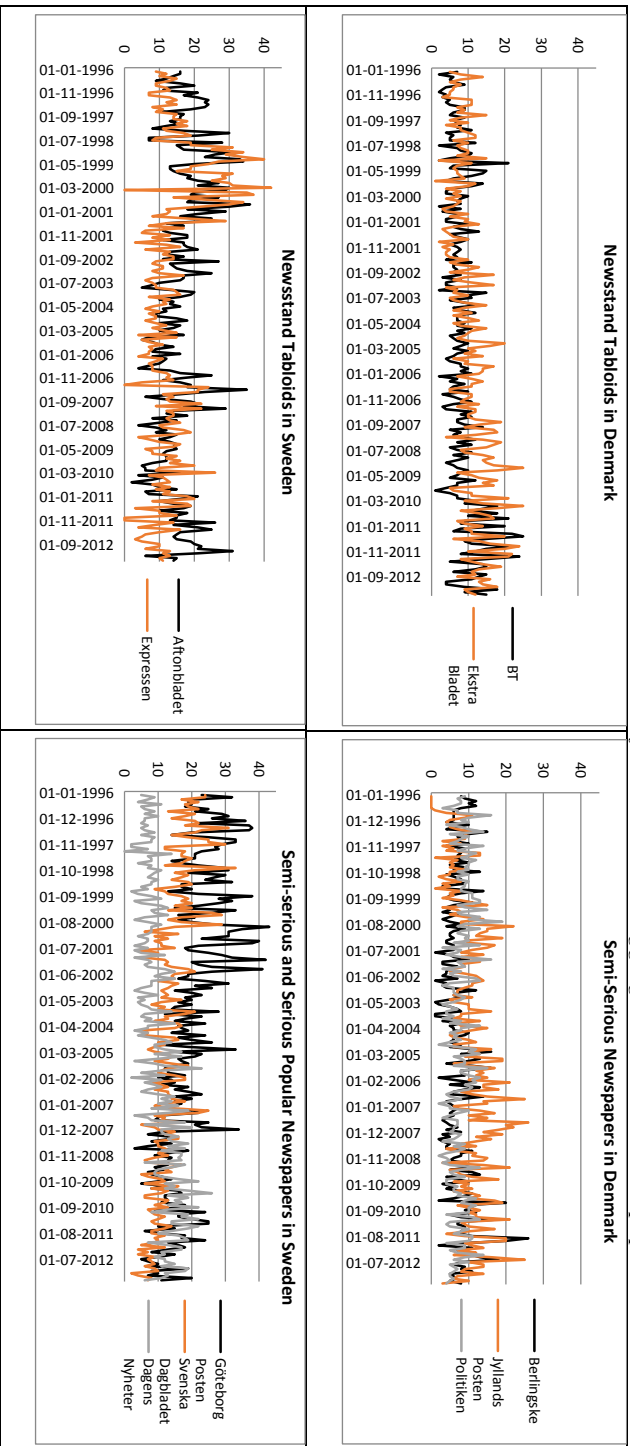
Figure 7-1 reveals results, which for *Denmark* seem to fit with the theoretical expectations deduced in the hypothesis above quite well. The average number of articles and thus the salience of the issue of the rich seems to lie at around 40-50 articles per month in more or less the entire period investigated. This is, as expected, clearly lower than in Sweden, but on the other hand the difference is not overwhelming from 2006-2013. Overall, the tendency in Sweden is thus a gradual decline over time starting from an average of approximately 80 in 1996 being reduced to approximately 50-60 in April 2006, followed in the rest of the period investigated by relative stability in the average monthly level of articles. In addition, as expected for Denmark, we see what seems to be a temporal lagged financial crisis effect from June 2010-May 2012. Only in this period, we see a noticeable rise from the general average of 40-50 articles. If this rise corresponds to a debate following the financial crisis there was clearly a two-year lag in this effect, and the effect clearly seems temporal. In 2013, the average number of articles per month is down to around 40-50 again.

*Sweden* on the other hand does not seem to conform to its expected role as more or less a Danish opposite. This suggests that not just the historical legacy of the Swedish HCNI as a class society, which influences the media patterns, but also the more recent changes in the Swedish political economy, could have an effect. The general Swedish level is as mentioned higher than in Denmark, but the question is if the minute difference from 2006 and onwards really can be labelled substantial. The Swedish story is actually mostly one of much bigger variation over the period than in Denmark. There are remarkable peak periods in Sweden. The first is before the decline sets in, lasting from December 1998-October 2000. In the 'stable period' from 2006-2013, there is first a remarkable peak from April-December 2007 and second a less dramatic but longer peak from March 2010-January 2011. The financial crisis therefore does not seem to form a crucial event for the debate about the rich in Sweden. This fits with the thesis that there is not much effect, because Sweden experienced a very mild crisis. On the other hand, the quite low average at this point does not go well with the additional argument presented above: that the salience of 'the rich' debate is already at a saturation point, not being able to rise much more. The debate was clearly more intense from 1998-2000. It is difficult to deduce more or get closer to answering these questions from the aggregated graphs above. The disaggregated and qualitative investigations below will allow that.

#### **7.4. DISAGGREGATED ON THE FIVE NEWSPAPERS IN THE TWO COUNTRIES**

Below the results of Figure 7-1 are disaggregated on the five newspapers in each country:

Figure 7-2 The Final search Algorithms utilised to Identify the relevant Gross-Sample of Newspaper Articles dealing with the Rich in Denmark and Sweden on a Month to Month basis in the Period of 1996-2013. Disaggregated on the 10 Newspapers included



Note: See the final search algorithms in the web appendix at: <https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/100770372/The%20final%20search%20algorithms.docx>.

Figure 7-2 portrays interesting and especially for Sweden quite surprising results. If we nevertheless again start with *Denmark*, the results are largely in accordance with the thesis deduced above. Compared to Sweden we do not see very big differences between the Danish newspapers in any period investigated. Instead, they seem to follow the overall trend quite well. Important differences may be hidden in the details though. Whereas *Berlingske* and especially *Politiken* vary very little in their average coverage in the whole period, *Ekstra Bladet* and especially *Jyllands Posten* vary more.<sup>82</sup>

What about the temporal lagged financial crisis effect identified above, then? Actually, *Ekstra Bladet* seems to react already in the months followed directly by the financial crisis, while *BT* follows in late 2009. *Jyllands Posten* and *Berlingske* also follow in 2009 and 2010 correspondingly, but only in a few selected months. The only semi-serious, social democratic newspaper *Politiken* apparently does not alter its average in the whole period investigated. If the thesis is right that the temporal lagged effect of the financial crisis is characterised by a temporal return to the historical political profiles on the issue of the various newspapers, it seems that only *Ekstra Bladet* holds the old rich-critical social democratic banner high. Only later analyses will reveal this though.

*Sweden* portrays different results than expected, but which again point to the fact that the changes in Swedish political economy of the last couple of decades seem gradually to have had an effect. Most importantly we see that the end of the decline identified in Figure 7-1 to be in 2006 corresponds to a virtual convergence of all five newspapers of around 10 articles on the subject each per month. Although we as expected see quite big differences between the different newspapers before 2006, after this time they are much smaller and actually comparable to the Danish differences. If we follow the individual newspapers, we also see very clear and interesting trends throughout the period. Whereas *Göteborg Posten* and especially *Svenska Dagbladet* continue to decline throughout the period, *Dagens Nyheter* continue to rise, actually becoming the highest scoring semi-serious newspaper from 2009 and forward. Even if the tabloids generally follow each other quite well, *Aftonbladet* from 2011 and forward clearly seems to increase their coverage of the subject. Except from a few peak months directly following the financial crisis by *Göteborg Posten* and *Aftonbladet*, the general effect of the financial crisis on the debate in Sweden seems to be almost non-existing.

It could be the Swedish media's presentation of the rich from 2006 and onwards, in accordance with the developments in the Swedish PE, more and more is starting to resemble the corresponding Danish. Before 2006, all semi-serious newspapers

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<sup>82</sup> It should be mentioned that Infomedia distinguishes between the different local sections of *Jyllands Posten* from December 2004 and forward. In counting the total number of articles for this newspaper, we have added all these up. The high average value from 2005-2008 for this newspaper could therefore be seen as a bit inflated; at least all of them have not been available to all readers of the paper.

except *Dagens Nyheter* and both tabloids hotly debated the issue. It could seem that after 2010, only *Aftonbladet* held the old sceptical social democratic banner high. Their new ‘capitalist positive’ counterpart could have been the liberalistic *Dagens Nyheter*. We need to investigate the actual content of the articles in order to test these ideas though.

## 7.5. THE TYPES OF REPRESENTATIONS OF THE RICH

The graphs thus far have left many interesting indications. In order to really investigate the development of the representation of the rich in Danish and Swedish nationwide newspapers, we need to investigate the actual content in the articles and not just count them. We have here decided to narrow the focus even further on the articles actually mentioning ‘the rich’ (‘*de rige*’/‘*de rika*’) within the overall samples presented above. The argument for this is that these articles at least in principle explicitly focus on the rich as a group. Table 7-2 below portrays descriptive statistics about the amount of Danish and Swedish articles in each of the two time periods selected, with this rather narrow search algorithm.

*Table 7-2 Number of References to ‘de rige’ in the Five Danish Newspapers and to ‘de rika’ in the Five Swedish Newspapers in the Two Periods Selected*

		T1*	T2**	Total
<b>Danish</b>	-Frequency	147	124	271
	-Percentage of total number of references	54%	46%	100%
	-Average number of articles per month	4.7	8.3	
<b>Swedish</b>	-Frequency	386	101	487
	-Percentage of total number of references	79%	21%	100%
	-Average number of articles per month	12.5	6.7	

Notes: \* T1=01.11.1998-31.05.2001; \*\*T2=01.11.2008-31.01.2010.

Table 7-2 confirms the development seen above, but is maybe even clearer. While the average number of references to the rich per month nearly doubles in Danish newspapers from T1-T2, it nearly halves in corresponding Swedish newspapers. The Danish and Swedish levels are actually almost alike in T2, whereas the debate was much more intense in Sweden than in Denmark in T1. The question is still what these debates contain though, and what the reason is for the surprising decline in Sweden and maybe not so surprising rise in Denmark. In Table 7-3 below, the references above are coded into the categories elaborated in Subsection 7.1.1 above: negative, neutral and positive.

Table 7-3 Number of References to 'de rige' in the Five Danish Newspapers and to 'de rika' in the Five Swedish Newspapers in the two Periods Selected, Coded into Three Broad Categories

			T1*	T2**
<b>Danish</b>	<u>Negative</u>	-Frequency	37	49
		-Average number of articles per month	1.2	3.3
		-Relative development***		+174%
	<u>Neutral</u>	-Frequency	70	55
		-Average number of articles per month	2.3	3.7
		-Relative development***		+62%
	<u>Positive</u>	-Frequency	21	11
		-Average number of articles per month	0.7	0.7
		-Relative development***		+8%
<b>Swedish</b>	<u>Negative</u>	-Frequency	108	31
		-Average number of articles per month	3.5	2.1
		-Relative development***		-41%
	<u>Neutral</u>	-Frequency	155	35
		-Average number of articles per month	5.0	2.3
		-Relative development***		-53%
	<u>Positive</u>	-Frequency	32	19
		-Average number of articles per month	1.0	1.3
		-Relative development***		+23%

Notes: \* T1=01.11.1998-31.5.2001; \*\*T2=01.11.2008-31.01.2010; \*\*\* ([average number of articles per month in T2-average number of articles per month in T1] / [average number of articles per month in T1]).

First, Table 7-3 shows the remarkable rise in the average amount of articles in *Denmark* is caused by a relative rise in all three categories. Clearly most remarkable is the rise among the articles coded as negative, contrasted by a virtual standstill among the positive articles. In obvious contrast, the likewise stark *Swedish* decline identified in Table 7-2 translates into a general decline among the categories; only the amount of positive references holds the line and actually rises 23%. In T2, we actually see an almost equal share of references among the three categories in Sweden, something seen in neither of the two periods in Denmark nor in T1 in Sweden. Table 7-4 below will focus on the remarkable results of Table 7-3: the development of negative articles in Denmark and the development of positive articles in Sweden.

Table 7-4 Number of References to 'de rige' in the Five Danish Newspapers and to 'de rika' in the Five Swedish Newspapers in the Two Periods Selected and focusing on the Categories Sceptical/Negative and Positive

			T1*	T2**
Danish: Negative	<u>Jyllands Posten</u>	-Frequency	10	5
		-Average number of articles/month	0.32	0.33
	<u>Politiken</u>	-Frequency	7	4
		-Average number of articles/month	0.23	0.26
	<u>Berlingske</u>	-Frequency	4	4
		-Average number of articles/month	0.13	0.26
	<u>Ekstra Bladet</u>	-Frequency	8	25
		-Average number of articles/month	0.26	1.67
	<u>BT</u>	-Frequency	8	11
		-Average number of articles/month	0.26	0.73
Swedish: Positive	<u>Dagens Nyheter</u>	-Frequency	2	3
		-Average number of articles/month	0.06	0.20
	<u>Aftonbladet</u>	-Frequency	5	3
		-Average number of articles/month	0.19	0.20
	<u>Expressen</u>	-Frequency	7	11
		-Average number of articles/month	0.23	0.73
	<u>Göteborg Posten</u>	-Frequency	4	0
		-Average number of articles/month	0.13	0.00
	<u>Svenska Dagbladet</u>	-Frequency	14	2
		-Average number of articles/month	0.45	0.13

Notes: \*T1=01.11.1998-31.5.2001; \*\*T2=01.11.2008-31.01.2010.

Table 7-4 shows results, which are not in good accordance with what was suggested above. First, the rise in the negative articles about the rich in the second period in Denmark is clearly driven by the two tabloid newspapers *Ekstra Bladet* and *BT*. Not surprisingly it is the social democratic tabloid *Ekstra Bladet* (ex-post in Table 7-1) whose development is most dramatic. However, the supposedly economically liberal tabloid *BT* also triples their average number of negative articles per month. The serious popular newspapers on the other hand do not seem to have reacted to the financial crisis by being more critical to the rich at all. It was therefore clearly the journalistic style rather than the ex-post political profile of the newspapers that mattered for how the Danish newspapers responded to the financial crisis. It could be plausible that these negative articles therefore are an expression of rather short-term indignation among the working class readers of the two tabloids to the misbehaviour of individuals or groups of 'the rich' before and into the financial crisis. This critique could be grounded in an almost silenced working class identity in opposition to the rich, but the non-response of all the semi-serious newspapers on

the other hand suggests this debate did not materialise into a critique of the rich on a more abstract and structural level. As hypothesised, this is possibly because resource distribution is not a crucial political or journalistic cleavage in the Danish media market anymore. It is therefore also not surprising that the increased salience fades out after May 2012 (see Figure 7-1).

Second, we hypothesised above that because the top-middle wage-gap and distribution of income in general should be a salient position issue in the *Swedish* newspapers, with the positions corresponding more or less to the classic class cleavages, there should be clear proponents of both positive and sceptical views of the rich. Moreover, it is therefore not surprising that the *Swedish* rise in positive articles is born by the two main economically liberal newspapers *Dagens Nyheter* and especially *Expressen*. Actually, it is more surprising that only *Svenska Dagbladet* really took up that position in the first period. As it was seen in Table 7-4 the positive references constituted really the minor part of the total number of articles about the rich in T1, suggesting a strong social democratic, critical hegemony. It is therefore even more surprising that we seem to see no ‘critical’ effect of the financial crisis. Rather the results in Tables 7-3 and 7-4 as well as Figures 7-1 and 7-2 rather support a gradual change from a critical hegemony to a situation resembling the Danish one.

The results above leave open the question of whether the Swedish newspapers simply are on the way to ‘becoming Danish’, debating anything but the rich in society, and if they are presented in articles, is it only on special occasions or mostly in a rather neutral manner? To investigate these assumptions we will look qualitatively at the content of the two ‘critical cases’ identified in Table 7-4: the references coded as negative in T2 in Denmark and the references coded as positive in Sweden in T2. In both cases, we will compare them with the corresponding situation in T1.

## 7.6. THE QUALITATIVE CONTENT

In contrast to the quantitative tendencies for convergence between Denmark and Sweden identified above, the sections below will show substantial differences in how the rich are portrayed qualitatively in the Danish and Swedish articles. The results are that a large part of the Swedish references including the ones coded as positive and neutral refer explicitly to the rich as a group separate from the middle class, and in the case of the positive often take up a defensive stand against an implicit or explicit existing critical discourse. Another perspective on this is that ‘the rich’ in the Swedish references are presented as a group of acting subjects – with a shared agenda, moral characteristics etc. In contrast, the Danish references almost do not discuss the rich as such as a distinct group or individually as in the Swedish case. Instead, the references are relational, collective and actually focussed on issues of inequality and redistribution at large, rather than the rich as a group or a social class in society. This also means the rich are not as in the Swedish case

presented as a distinct group of acting subjects. Instead, ‘the rich’ in the Danish presentations are rather an ‘object’ upon which ‘we’ as a collective have a right to and do act, in order to ensure ‘the right’ distribution of incomes, resources, welfare rights, life chances and personal liberty in society.

As above the references presented below include both reader commentaries (LTTEs), editorials and various forms of informative articles. These references presented are selected to clearly exemplify the types of presentation claimed. One could claim that it is strange to include LTTEs in a study of media output. As it will be apparent below, these often use some of the same frames and images of the rich as the articles written by the newspapers themselves. This is not surprising since editors at the newspapers obviously choose these particular LTTEs. The images are often sharper though, and could maybe be claimed to be a more clear expression of the impact of HCNIs on the Danes and Swedes. Because the purpose is to identify the images, stereotypes and presentation of ‘the rich’ in the Danish and Swedish HCNIs, it is actually not imperative ‘who’ presents the images, but rather ‘which’ images are presented. Nevertheless, for the benefit of doubt and to the extent that it is possible, quotes from both LTTEs as well as newspaper-authored articles will be presented in tandem below. The quotes were selected as representing exemplaries of the general tendencies sought to be documented and described.

### **7.6.1. THE NEGATIVE ARTICLES IN DENMARK**

Starting with the negative Danish references in T2 a very clear pattern appears. Even if the references should be focussed on the rich as a group, a vast majority of the negative Danish references in T2 have some kind of *collective* reference attached.

Most dominantly more than half of all these articles describe how the rich ‘get’ or ‘have been given’ something that others in society – lowly paid or everybody else – have not. What ‘have been given’ are typically tax deductions or advantages in connection to reforms of taxes or the characteristics of the existing tax system. These are not the only examples though; also exemptions from cut-downs, better access to (private) healthcare, dentistry and the prospects of worry-free lives as pensioners are mentioned. Sometimes there are explicit references to who the ‘giver’ is: the politicians, the state, the government, named politicians or even ‘us’. Other times the references are not explicit, but implicitly the address is the same. Below two quotes will be presented trying to exemplify typical references in this category. The first is a reader commentary (LTTE), while the second is meant as an informative article from the newspaper *Berlingske*:

‘It is not strange that the current government gets millions in contributions from the largest Danish firms, when the Danish managers get a 440.000 DKK tax reliefs a year. It is obvious who is paying the



party of VKO.<sup>83</sup> It is the managers and the richest Danes, who again share the Christmas presents of the government, while the rest of us can look forward to a petty tax relief of a petty 300 DKK a month. This must absolutely be called a skewed policy on the income distribution.’ (Lannov, 2009) [Author’s translation]<sup>84</sup>

Moreover, the informative article from *Berlingske*:

‘The inequality in the health conditions of the ‘rich’ and the ‘poor’ in Denmark is growing. The difference in the life expectancy between high and low has been rising in recent years, and now new statistics from AE-Rådet<sup>85</sup> show that an unskilled worker has twice the number of visits to the general practitioner and uses up to 57 percent more on medicine as a highly educated person - at the same time, however, far less on dentist-visits, which are paid privately.’ (Holm Nielsen, 2009) [Author’s translation]

The second most frequently seen reference is equally collective and related to the first type. Here the call is that the rich in different ways ‘could’ and ‘should’ pay more back to society. This is first and foremost by paying higher taxes<sup>86</sup> or it is by accepting user charges for certain public benefits. Again, these articles are unsurprisingly mainly LTTEs. The quote below exemplifies a typical form of the collective reference we have sought to describe:

‘I am so tired of listening to the rich bastards talking about lowering the top-tax. Just the other day Nasar Khader<sup>87</sup> started bleating along the same lines. Why not lower the bottom-tax. That would benefit more people and the consumption in society would be increased considerably, because the ordinary Dane does not have too much to live by from day to day as it is now. An increased consumption would also create more jobs, and it is about time the lowest paid will be favoured.’ (Serwin, 2009) [Author’s translation]

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<sup>83</sup> A commonly used abbreviation for the parties of the government from 2001-2011 and their main supporting party.

<sup>84</sup> In each case the translation is as close to the text as possible. In some cases unique national expressions are used in the quotes, which, if translated directly, would confuse the meaning. In these cases, the meaning and not the individual words are translated.

<sup>85</sup> In their own words, the Economic Council of the Labour Movement (ECLM) is a Danish economic policy institute and think-tank working to promote social justice in Denmark. The ECLM secretariat is funded by the Danish trade union confederation (LO), and by revenue from research and analysis carried out on behalf of various clients (The Economic Council of the Labour Movement, 2014).

<sup>86</sup> Including the infamous millionaire-tax, this was eventually scrapped.

<sup>87</sup> Politician who shifted political parties.

The three quotes clearly illustrate that it is not the rich individually or as a group in itself that are the main reference and concern of negative Danish articles of T2. Even when focussing just on references to ‘the rich’, it is not the rich as a group in itself that is important; it is their ‘contributions’ vs. ‘given rights’ compared to the rest of society and therefore ultimately the level and manner of inequality in society that is discoursivised.

If we compare these results to the negative Danish references in T1 we see similarities, but also differences. In T1, large parts of the articles are also the rich ‘get’ or ‘have been given’ type. The only real difference is the subject. In T1, the dominant subject is the housing market (mostly in Copenhagen) in different ways described as being consciously regulated to benefit the rich by the politicians. In addition, taxes, health and home care are mentioned:

‘It is the rich and the well-educated, who occupy the best apartments – also the social housing flats, who were supposed to be for the socially disadvantaged.’ (Løcke, 2001) [Author’s translation]

Again, it is not only informative articles which are following this form:

‘...When the politicians with Prime Minister Poul Nyrup Rasmussen in the forefront say that they want to do so much for us elderly, I need to say it is empty words. I do not buy their fancy words. As a pensioner,<sup>88</sup> I cannot afford to pay my transport to be operated. The option of freely selecting a hospital is thus apparently only for those who can afford to pay, meaning all the rich.’ (Grave, 2000) [Author’s translation]

However, and in contrast to T2, the second largest group of references actually describes the rich as a group in itself. The themes vary, but the general conclusion is the rich are portrayed as a group of immoral, selfish and snobbish people. Again first an opinion piece and then an informative article:

‘John Stefan Olsen, TV and film author, 2 December in *BT* says: ‘We have in the last 25 years become stinking rich, very selfish and have enough in ourselves’. I have to agree with John Stefan. The rich have become richer. The poor have become poorer, and as far as I can see, when I look around, it is the poor who are doing voluntary work – so the poor are not selfish or have enough in themselves.’ (Nielsen, 2000) [Author’s translation]

In addition, the informative article from the newspaper *Jyllands Posten*:

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<sup>88</sup> The word used is ‘folkepensionist’, which could be translated to ‘people’s pensioner’. This reference indicates that she does not have a private or labour market pension scheme, but lives from the state old-age pension scheme.

‘The municipality of Gentofte together with the neighbouring municipality, Lyngby-Taarbæk,<sup>89</sup> has disproportionately many polluted sites from former dry cleaning establishments, and the explanation given by the man in charge of the county’s groundwater is that the rich citizens in these municipalities to a greater extent than elsewhere had their fur and fine clothes rinsed.’ (Bjerg, 2000) [Author’s translation]

The apparent negative Danish rise from T1-T2 is therefore put into a new light. Where substantial parts of the negative presentations of the rich in Danish newspapers in T1 actually distinguish and are critical to the rich as a group, in T2 clearly the main concern is not the rich in themselves, but questions about redistribution and inequality in resources and opportunities in society.

### 7.6.2. THE POSITIVE ARTICLES IN SWEDEN

The *second case* we will look into is the positive Swedish references in T1 and T2. In both T1 and T2, we see a stark difference from the strong collective and inequality context identified in the sceptical Danish articles. Almost every positive Swedish article in both periods refers explicitly to the rich as a group, often taking up a defensive stand against an existing critical discourse.

Typical themes for this defence in both T1 and T2 include firstly arguing that most of ‘the rich’ are giving a lot or too much back to society in the form of paying taxes and ‘we’ should be grateful rather than critical. In T2, the criticisms are often aimed explicitly to the social democrats’ proposal for a new ‘millionaire tax’ and a reintroduced wealth tax:

‘Sahlin and Östros<sup>90</sup> have now informed the public that they wish to increase the tax for the ‘rich’, if they regain power. Do they by that mean that the wealth tax for the richest 20-30 families in Sweden ought to be reintroduced?’ (Nylander, 2009) [Author’s translation]

The following editorial from *Expressen* is even more specific in singling out just a single man as representing ‘the rich’:

‘...The richest person in Sweden is the owner of H&M Stefan Persson. He is also our best taxpayer. Last year Persson delivered 797.4 million SEK to the tax-authorities. That huge sum can be difficult to comprehend. However, it is easy to claim that this money pays for a whole lot of public welfare, Mona Sahlin. Maybe a billionaire is

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<sup>89</sup> Gentofte and Lyngby-Taarbæk are two municipalities north of Copenhagen known for their high proportion of affluent inhabitants.

<sup>90</sup> Mona Sahlin and Thomas Östros were respectively the political leader and the political spokesperson on economic issues for the Swedish Social Democrats in 2009.

supposed to give up all assets before qualifying to be a contributor to the welfare? With Stefan Persson's tax-money, you can for example pay for approximately 1600 nursing home spaces or hire approximately 2000 teachers. Stefan Persson apparently also thinks it is cool to pay his taxes, in contrast to some of his tax-tormented colleagues. He does not stop there. Last year he donated 350 million to the Karolinska institute. Other Swedish business leaders dismiss charity with a reference to the high tax burden. H&M-Persson is a hero. Mona Sahlin should honour him instead of increasing his taxes.' (Expressen, 2009) [Author's translation]

In the positive articles, it is secondly argued that 'the rich' targeted in debates or policies are often not exceptional, but rather ordinary responsible Swedes. This reader commentary is a good example:

'In the article,<sup>91</sup> it is 'humorously' claimed, 'the rich never wanted to pay taxes on their assets'. Is the person, who builds and maintains his house, paid his loans and then by the state assigned a high taxable real estate-value value, rich? No, he has tied up assets in his house, but he is not rich.' (Böttiger, 2000) [Author's translation]

Lastly, there is a group of references especially prominent in T1 arguing that it is benefitting everybody that the rich are buying many apartments in central Stockholm. These references argue that the housing problems there are not caused by too little intervention and regulation, but by too much, making it impossible for the free market to work its wonders.

The second most prominent type of positive Swedish references is 'red carpet'-like descriptions and portraits of the life of 'the rich and beautiful' (Lerner, 1980), describing their homes, where they spend their holidays etc., but also how they enjoy simple things and give to charity. This informative article about the establishment of a millionaire dating-bureau is a good example hereof:

'Wealthy and lonely? Now a dating-bureau for all with Rolex watches and full accounts exist.

Who wants a millionaire? Now a dating-bureau for the successful – but lonely – starts up in Scandinavia. Maybe you fit the standard of the exclusive costumers of the dating-bureau? Alternatively, search for a partner yourself. Scandinavian world offers a major opening discount. The membership fee is lowered from 58.000 to 4.000 SEK...FACTS ABOUT THE RICH. 80 percent of the Swedish millionaires are already occupied. Swedish income statistics speak against the image of the lonely millionaire. On the contrary, the high-income earners are to a

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<sup>91</sup> John Böttiger refers to an article written by Svenska Dagbladet on 23 April 2000.

larger extent than the rest of the population married or cohabiting.’  
(Hansson, 2000) [Author’s translation]

The Swedish explicit representations of the rich as a distinct group are in striking contrast to the Danish collective discourse identified above. This tendency is not limited to the positive references though. Not surprisingly, a majority of the negative Swedish articles present the rich in the same ‘group-wise’ and even ‘class-wise’ manner. Even among the references coded as neutral, although not a majority, but a significant share, also adhere to this textual context:

‘...Joakim Palme narrated how the class-cleavages in society endure, that people on average have gotten lower incomes during the ‘90s – but only the rich earn more. The cleavages have increased especially in recent years....’ (Wangersjö, 2000) [Author’s translation]

The Danish quote by Holm Nielsen (2009) presented four pages above constitutes basically the same form of informative article, summarising investigations conducted externally to the newspaper. The differences between the two articles are striking though. While the Swedish article refers to ‘class cleavages’, the Danish article refers to ‘the inequality in the health conditions of the ‘rich’ and the ‘poor’’.<sup>92</sup> Obviously, this result probably reflects the terms used by Professor Joakim Palme in the study referred, but this is on the other hand also quite revealing on the elite discourse concerning the subject in the two countries. The Palme example might be exemplary, but it reflects a general trend in such articles in Sweden. Here is another example:

‘Now the rich are richer – again. The pay gap is as large as 1950 today. Wage differences between the Swedish power elite and ordinary workers have increased dramatically in recent years. The inequality today is as large today as in the 1950s. A top manager earns 26 times as much as an industrial worker. This is shown in a large survey LO presents today. ‘Elites’ comeback - A study of income for the power elite in 1950 to 1995.’ (Holmqvist & Crofts, 1999) [Author’s translation]

Even if the actual subject of the quote is wage inequality, the high wage earners are equated with being not only the rich or the economic elite – they are ‘makteliten’ in Swedish, which translates directly to the power elite. Similar Danish articles simply do not make such connotations.

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<sup>92</sup> Other similarly used phrases in such Danish articles could be: ‘the differences between the rich and the poor’ or simply ‘income differences in society’.

### 7.6.3. IMAGES OF THE RICH

In contrast to the trend identified in the quantitative media analyses, the qualitative results above seem in accordance with original theoretical idea, that the top-middle relationship is mostly a position issue in Swedish media, while it in contrast is a valence issue in Denmark. Accordingly, the qualitative results secondly seem in accord with HCNI of the two countries: The compromising consensus democracy in Denmark, as well as the peaceful, but ideological and class cleavaged, 'folkehem' in Sweden. Another way to even more directly try to test this idea fully seems to be to focus on which images of the rich are portrayed in the qualitative content of the Danish and Swedish articles. Is it clear whom they are represented as, and is this clearly distinct from the broad middle class? If the Swedish images of the rich build on the historical legacy, the rich could be portrayed as classic capitalists owning the means of (the industrial) production. In the first half of the last century, these were even epitomised by a few dominant families (cf. Chapter 3). The Swedish rich could accordingly be imaged as a clearly distinct class of traditional industrialists with a few individuals or families dominating. Denmark has largely lacked dominant, visible capitalist families historically.<sup>93</sup> It is therefore much less clear which historical image of the rich Danish representations could build on (cf. Chapter 3). This could leave greater room for diversity in presentations and greater room for more generic and modern images of different elites, such as financiers, CEOs and even the highly educated, to be in focus. Again as elaborated above, such 'rich' do not necessarily form a distinct class, but rather the upper echelons of the wide middle class.

Already in the seven Danish and six Swedish quotes presented above, it is clear that the Danish and Sweden images of the rich do in fact differ in general. It is relevant not just to dwell on the quotes selected above though. In the *Danish* articles – positive, negative and neutral – the one dominant image of the rich is geographical. In a substantial quantity of the articles 'the rich' are portrayed as the inhabitants of certain counties, municipalities or towns, especially north of Copenhagen. Also certain quarters within Copenhagen or Aarhus and even 'the right' areas within these quarters are mentioned. 'The beach road' (strandvejen) and 'the whiskey-zone' (whiskeybæltet) seem the ultimate symbols of where the rich live in Denmark.<sup>94</sup> In these articles there are no references to individuals, the occupation of

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<sup>93</sup> The word largely should be emphasised here. Denmark had and has a few large family owned enterprises. These include the Kirk Christiansen family owning Lego and maybe especially A.P. Møller, his family and descendants owning the A.P. Møller Mærsk Corporation.

<sup>94</sup> The municipalities obviously differ before and after the municipality reform implemented in 2007, merging 275 municipalities into 98 larger ones (Indenrigs- og Sundhedsministeriet, 2005). Some of the municipalities mentioned are Gentofte, Frederiksberg, Søllerød, Lyngby-Tårnbæk and Hørsholm. Some of the prominent towns and quarters mentioned are: Vedbæk, Hellerup, Ørestaden, Frederiksberg and Østerbro all in or north of Copenhagen as well as Skåde and the right part of Risskov, which are suburbs of the second largest city, Aarhus.

people living in these areas or how they have acquired their wealth. There are articles directly or indirectly mentioning selected individuals or occupations as representing ‘the rich’. These are mostly different kinds of celebrities and not named traditional capitalists of any form.<sup>95</sup> One article about the families owning the corporations A.P. Møller Mærsk, Lego and Danfoss could be seen as singling out traditional capitalists though. The article is written in mostly neutral language informing the reader of the size of their wealth, and of how much it grew last year:

‘One man, as usual, stands out from the crowd. He personally has a fortune of nearly 100 billion DKK. It is, of course, Mærsk Mc-Kinney Møller, the uncrowned king of the Danish business community, which tops the list with the firm A.P. Møller. Last year Mr. Møller noted a loss of 20 billion, but this year he takes a solid revenge and adds 40 billion to his assets. The company can especially thank the rising oil prices for the increased earnings. There is a long way down to the next places where the families behind Lego and Danfoss ‘only’ can juggle 32 and 24 billion. On the other hand, there is also here a reason to smile all the way to the bank. Both families have since last year deposited 10 billion in their bank accounts. Both companies have been through trims and restructuring and if measured on assets, the operations were a success.’  
(Rughede, 2000) [Author’s translation]

Mærsk Mc-Kinney Møller at the age of 98 died in 2012. The quote illustrates that with his death maybe the last personified symbol of ‘the rich’ in Denmark – except maybe for the royal family – died also. A last question to ask is what group the rich are imaged as belonging to. Here again there is great variety, so great that besides the people living in certain geographical areas or certain specific persons or families, it seems safe to claim that the rich are not portrayed as a unified group or class in the Danish media at all in either of the two periods. In the positively coded references, the rich are often argued to be ‘normal’ Danes.<sup>96</sup> Similarly, some use very unspecific frames connected to ‘the rich’ to describe who they are.<sup>97</sup> Besides a

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<sup>95</sup> Mentioned individuals are models such as Helena Christensen, the actor Brigitte Nielsen, an unspecified rich football player, the entertainer Finn Nørbygaard and the celebrity businesspersons Peter Asschenfeldt and Asger Aamund. The royal family is in contrast to the individuals mentioned several times.

<sup>96</sup> In the discussion about taxes and tax reforms, it is for example often emphasised that ‘the rich’ i.e. the ones paying the ‘top (income) tax’ for example are a large proportion of the population. They are also again presented as responsible house owners punished for their responsible behaviour. A number of articles also discuss the rich pensioners, and whether they should have the same rights to government paid welfare services as everybody else.

<sup>97</sup> The rich and beautiful (thin and healthy are also not always flatteringly meant as synonyms used), the rich red wine indulgers, rich career parents, the ones who can afford a full Bang & Olufsen stereo and TV.

few references to managers, 'the rich and highly educated' are in several instances mentioned together. The rich hereby clearly become more a synonym for the 'elite', not necessarily defined by wealth, but by other forms of capital.

To sum up then, besides people living in certain geographical areas, the now deceased Mærsk Mc-Kinney Møller and elites such as the highly educated, the Danish media do not portray an image of the rich as a unified group or class at all. This is exactly in accordance with the expectations deduced above.

In *Sweden*, this image as expected deviates. However, there are only a few references connecting the rich to the image of individuals or families of rich industrial capitalists. The geographic connotation – especially the Stockholm suburb Danderyd – does as in Denmark appear in Sweden also.<sup>98</sup> However, connecting 'the rich' just to people living in certain geographic areas is much less common in Sweden than in Denmark. Instead, as hinted above, many both positive and negative Swedish articles refer and describe 'the rich' as a relatively small group of people clearly distinct from the rest of the population. This is done in different ways. First, and with one prominent example quoted above, much more Swedish than Danish references refer to rich individuals.<sup>99</sup> Second, a number of articles also describe the life of 'the rich'.<sup>100</sup> Descriptions of the lives of the rich and beautiful are prominent in Danish tabloids and can be found in at least one of the freesheets – but not the newspapers selected here. However, the open discussion of the characteristics of the so-called rich is almost not seen in Denmark, and not at all in T2. As argued above, whereas the rich are presented as a group of acting subjects, with shared interests and characteristics in Sweden, they are mostly presented as an object of action in Denmark. In other words, the rich are discussed in Denmark, but it is usually with a collective reference, and not as directly as for

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<sup>98</sup> Besides Danderyd, other wealthier suburbs or areas in Stockholm area are also mentioned: the city centre, Lidingö, Täby, Bromma, Enskede and Djurholm. As in Denmark, the geographic image of the rich seems to be very much connected to the vicinity of the capital. There are a few instances where other areas, such as the harbour area of Helsingborg or the rich neighbourhoods of Göteborg (Askim, the city centre and Örgryte) are mentioned.

<sup>99</sup> These range from the king and the rest of the royal family, H&M Persson, the Switzerland residing owner of IKEA Ingvar Kamprad, former NHL players, pop stars such as E-type, Roxette and Ace of Base, actors and Dan Olufson, the owner of a consultancy firm, who apparently spends his Fridays in Cannes, while he goes on three-week buffalo hunting trips in Africa.

<sup>100</sup> Prominently, 'the rich' in general all own a summer house on the island of Gotland or in the village of Torekov in the province of Scania. Stories tell about how they all meet on a specific inn on Gotland – there are interviews with both the owner and the employees there. There are stories of which car brands are available for only the rich, which upper secondary schools they attend and finally, which magazines they read. A particular magazine 'for the rich' is described in a LTTE as superficial, materialistic and un-intellectual. The title of that LTTE by the way also translates to 'fuck the rich' (Aftonbladet, 2000).



example revealed in just the headline of a Swedish LTTE, written by the host of a program for children on Swedish national public TV:

‘There is something very unsympathetic about the rich.’ (Leksell, 2000)  
[Author’s translation]

In Denmark the connotations mentioned with ‘the rich’ were often the highly educated and in some instances e.g. managers. Binding the rich directly to other connotations is also common in Swedish articles, but the connotations are often quite different and often connected to the perceived moral character of this group.<sup>101</sup> As described above, and in stark contrast to Denmark, it is very common also in informative articles to connect ‘the rich’ to concepts as ‘klasskillnader’ (class divides) or ‘överklass’ (the upper class). As also referred in the quote concerning the dating site for the rich, a few articles also describe strategies or ways how to ‘catch a rich guy and marry to get millions’.

Although ‘the rich’ as described are clearly a group discussed as being separate from the broad middle class, it has also in Sweden been hard to find many direct images matching the classic industrialist capitalist. A number of articles refer more or less vaguely to ‘top managers’, and the firstly presented Swedish quote referred to the 20-30 richest families, in accordance with the original industrialist dynasties dominating SAF in the first part of the last century. There is one quote, though, which clearly uses this image of the rich:

‘MUF is only for the rich.  
So Thomas Idergard resigned as MUF<sup>102</sup> chairman. One who has Thatcher's favourite, the minister that as the English church ran a reverse Robin Hood policy, can of course only be missed in an extreme group consisting of only the very rich. It is not among the ordinary income earners you find those, who want to further worsen the situation for those who already have little. It is among the rich managers of SAF and the confederation of industries the myth is kept alive that if you want to get the poor to do something useful you have to make him poorer. In contrast, if you want to make the rich do something useful then you must give him a chance to make money. This is nothing else but pure deception.’ (Johnson, 1998) [Author’s translation]

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<sup>101</sup> The rich are described e.g. as those with capital but little imagination and few ideas, the rich and powerful, the power elite, those who cheat with their taxes, those who speculate on the stock exchanges, the rich and strong, the rich, thin and beautiful, those who can afford to be FTMs (full time moms); the rich are greedy, selfish, a class of lonely people, who are often alcoholics and finally in three instances LTTEs arguing that as the bible says, the rich have a defunct moral character.

<sup>102</sup> ‘Moderata Ungdomsförbundet’ or the Moderate Youth League/Swedish Young Conservatives. It is the youth wing of the Swedish Moderate Party.

It is not coincidental that the classic reference to ‘the rich managers of SAF’ is from 1998, rather than 2009. Even if this connotation referring back to the classic Swedish political economy gradually seems to have vanished, it is clear that the rich – whoever they are – are imaged as a group of people separated from the broad middle class in Sweden. This reader commentary from *Expressen* in 2009 concerning a curious idea – organised bus trips to areas where the rich live – clearly exemplifies that the debate concerning ‘the rich’ is not dead in Sweden yet. I am sure such an idea would never materialise in Denmark:

‘Tough times bring strange sides in humans forward, particularly envy. This has been clearly felt lately by the much talk about those who have, and those who have succeeded.

Tough times means that those who have not succeeded at all costs want to be rich. One should rob others of their wealth, one should whine, demand and one should do anything except fight to progress yourself. Above all, do not be satisfied with what you have. In the TV programme ‘Debatt’, 13 October, we were informed about a new phenomenon: that there is an association: ‘Everything for everybody’,<sup>103</sup> where members organise bus trips to areas where the rich live. The purpose is, I suppose, that the rich should feel shame because they are economically secured. Absolutely incredible! I myself am just an ordinary pauper who is not disturbed by the fact that others have succeeded – in the case only that they are acquiring their wealth and things in a fair way and are enjoying doing just that. People can be rich in various ways. It does not necessarily need to be rich in money. ‘Those who consider themselves to be poor shall not demand fish from others. He can ask to borrow a fishing rod and learn how to fish.’ (Trusz, 2009) [Author’s translation]

## 7.7. SUMMARY OF CHAPTER 7

Scandinavian egalitarianism is a well-known and supposedly well-described concept. The Scandinavian welfare institutions are famous for promoting equality and the Scandinavian people and media in general support the endeavour. A closer look at this literature reveals the Scandinavian egalitarianism to be mainly defined in terms of the poorer strata and their relations to the middle class (cf. Section 1.4). This is only one side of the equality coin though. The second side of the equality coin concerns the richer strata and their relations to the middle class. This chapter has sought to improve our knowledge of Scandinavian egalitarianism in relation to this more forgotten side of the equality coin.

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<sup>103</sup> In Swedish: ‘Allt åt alla’.

The general theoretical idea of the chapter was to propose that the top-middle relationship (the second side of the equality coin) can be mostly a position or a valence issue in a given society at a given point in time. Being a position issue, a discursive struggle will rage. The struggle will deal with which labels and stereotypes to assign to ‘the rich’ – negative or positive. In both cases, the rich are represented as being not a part of ‘us’ – the broad middle-class citizens. Being a valence issue the rich are not presented as a distinct social entity clearly separate from the middle class. The perception and goal of maintaining the rich as merely the upper part of ‘us’ – the broad middle class – is not discussed. What is discussed are instead the ‘means’ or just contributions and/or rights of that particular subgroup in relation to the rest of ‘us’ – the broad middle class. The overall hypothesis of the chapter was that the issue of ‘the rich’ to a high extent could be perceived as a salient position issue in Sweden and a not so salient valence issue in Denmark. The background therefore was the results of the previous chapters of the dissertation: first, the somewhat different historical legacy of the political economy of Denmark and Sweden described in Chapter 3, and second, the survey results indicating Swedes to be much more divided according to social class on the issue of the top-middle gap in Chapter 6.

The *Swedish* results were somewhat surprising though and did not merely confine to the simple hypothesis. In contrast, the quantitative results did not seem to portray a steadily salient and politicised debate over ‘the rich’ in society. Instead, from 2006 and forward the graphs looked mysteriously like the Danish graphs, both in aggregated terms and disaggregated on newspapers, and even the financial crisis did not seem to have much effect. In addition, when focussing just on the references to ‘the rich’ in particular, the Swedish newspapers neared a Danish average level in T2, with a clear decline in the average level of both the negative and the neutral references from T1 to T2. A closer qualitative analysis of the positive Swedish references clearly revealed that this was not the whole story though. A large part of the Swedish references including the ones coded as positive and neutral refer explicitly to the rich as a group separate from the middle class, and in the case of the positive often take up a defensive stand against an implicit or explicit existing critical discourse.

In *Denmark*, we did see a short but clear lagged effect of the financial crisis from June 2010-May 2012. The lag was probably caused by the fact that it took the public and the media some time to realise how severe the Danish crisis actually was, also compared to most other western countries. Once this rather shocking truth became widespread knowledge, it would be strange not to see at least some effect on the amount of references to the rich in any context. Therefore it is actually not surprising that the amount of references negative to the rich was clearly higher in the second period sampled in the later analyses (T2) than in the first (T1). What is surprising is that even under these very special circumstances only the two ‘newsstand-tabloid’ newspapers *Ekstra Bladet* and *BT* reacted by printing substantially more negative references to the rich in T2 than in T1. Even more surprising was the qualitative nature of the negative references. Almost without

exception, these did not really discuss the rich as such as a distinct group or individually as in the Swedish case. Instead, the references were relational, collective and actually focussed on issues of inequality and redistribution at large, rather than the rich as a group or a social class in society.

These results lead to two conclusions. First, even if Swedish newspapers individually and collectively on the surface seem to debate 'the rich' less as time passes, and even if the debate is also becoming less non-positive as time passes, the issue of 'the rich' can still be characterised as a rather salient and politicised position issue in 2013. Because a large part of all the Swedish references refer explicitly to 'the rich' as a group or individuals herein as distinct from the middle class and the rest of society, this representation equals a social construction of an 'us-and-them' cleavage in society. This is precisely the same way, as Rothstein (1998) proposed, residualised/targeted benefits do in Anglo-Saxon countries, as Fiske, Cuddy and Glick (2007) argue, that 'the rich' are represented in USA or as Lundström (2011) or Gilens (1996) claim happens in relations to the media's portrayal of poorer (black) strata in USA.

Second, if we turn to the Danish case, an almost opposite conclusion can be made. Even if we clearly see a negative reaction once the severity of the financial crisis is realised, 'the rich' are not really a salient and politicised position issue, even in this extraordinary situation. Instead 'the rich' or individual rich people are almost never constructed as being really distinct from the middle class and the rest of society. Instead, Danes – even when your search algorithm explicitly searches for 'the rich' only – debate the overall distribution of resources and opportunity in society. In the concepts of issue voting these results suggest that the 'the rich' is really a valence issue in Denmark. This means there is no disagreement on the position or goal, which we here interpret as the perception and norm that the rich more or less are and should be confined to the upper middle class. What are discussed are instead the 'means' or just contributions and/or rights of that particular sub-group in relation to the rest of 'us' – the broad middle class. Even the negative Danish references are therefore really non-constructing the rich as a social entity separate from the regular society.

The results mark a peculiar continuity from the differences between Denmark and Sweden that Esping-Andersen (1980) identified more than 30 years ago. In addition, there really seems to be three and not two sides of the equality coin: the bottom-middle relationship, the top-middle relationship and in the Danish case the middle-middle-middle relationship.

## CHAPTER 8. CONCLUSION

The aim of the dissertation has been to investigate the state of Scandinavian egalitarianism; more specifically, to try to understand the attitudes of Scandinavian citizens towards the level of inequality in gross wages. The overall research question (RQ) sought to be answered in the dissertation is:

*What attitudes do Scandinavians express towards the level of inequality in gross wages, how do these attitudes develop over time and why do the Scandinavians express these attitudes?*

The Scandinavian countries are well known for their egalitarian political economies, institutionally constituted of the social democratic welfare (state) regime and the industrial relations system(s). The main *theoretical relevance* of the dissertation in the aggregated perspective is accordingly to try to understand if and how this Scandinavian model reproduces its public legitimacy. The reproduction is to happen in a situation where many characteristics of the Scandinavian political economy(ies) are changing. In the disaggregated perspective, the question is furthermore how different the answer is in the two countries epitomising the ‘West- and East Nordic model’ – Denmark and Sweden.

The *empirical relevance* is also straightforward. The Scandinavian countries have managed to acquire the envy of many countries in being successful on most measures of societal success. They even seem to have defeated the supposed trade-offs between economic growth, small wage and income differences as well as generous social protection and expansive welfare systems. The institutions of the Scandinavian political economy(ies) and the high degree of economic equality they produce constitute the foundation behind these outcomes. But with a fundamentally changed class structure, a steady weakening of the central actors behind the creation of the model(s) and also changes in especially the industrial relations system(s), the attitudes of Scandinavians, utilising their reflective potential, could be some of the last veto players, the last line of defence of this/these renowned model(s).

The *structure of the dissertation* in general followed the split between the aggregated and disaggregated perspective. In Chapter 3, the descriptions of the development in the Scandinavian political economies first followed the aggregated perspective, and then the main part of the chapter focussed on the differences between Denmark and Sweden. The analyses in Chapters 5-7 were also split on perspective. Chapter 5 followed the aggregated perspective and sought to gain an understanding of Scandinavian attitudes towards the level of inequality in gross wages in comparative perspective. Chapter 6 switched to the disaggregated perspective, and sought to reveal and understand the differences between Danish and Swedish attitudes. Finally, in Chapter 7, a media study sought to reveal the differences in portrayals of ‘the rich’ in Danish and Swedish media.

Following these two different perspectives, the dissertation aimed to gain an understanding of the interplay between the various levels and factors portrayed in the conceptual model of the dissertation (Figure 2-2). Building on this model, one overall scenario and some alternative ideas were developed in Section 3.7. In order to understand and evaluate how the myriad of quite diverse empirical and theoretical results of the thesis fit together as a whole, it seems imperative to first recap on the central concepts in the dissertation, and how these are assumed to fit in the overall scenario.

The dissertation used the term *political economy* (PE) to denote the key macro level structures of society influencing the formation of attitudes towards the level of inequality in gross wages in society. The term was understood very broadly in the dissertation as the interplay between the economic and political spheres of society. Crucially the term PE was argued to be dual-sided. First, on the more or less material side, the following factors were found important. The main institutions governing the two spheres – the industrial relations system (IRS) and the welfare (state) regime – were key concepts of the programmatic institutions constituting the political economy. Operating within these institutional spheres, the key actors of the dissertation were the labour/trade union movement, the corresponding organisations on the employer's side and the strength and character of the traditional left wing of the political spectrum. The foundation behind these institutions and actors was argued to be the economic structures of society and especially the developing social class structures.

Second, the PE was argued to have an immaterial side also, demarcated under the terms of *historically constructed normative institutions* (HCNI). These were in turn defined as: a particular representation of the past, a representation that in myths, representations and stereotypes define: 'who the others are' and in a sense also 'who we are'. They are therefore by definition inert and although the material sides of the political economy continuously influence them through history, the myths, representations and stereotypes concerning for example 'the rich' and the class structure of society should largely be based on a historical representation of them. They are therefore not just an unbiased reflection of the current social stratification of society. Multiplicities of socially constructed 'others' defined by the HCNI exist at a given society in a point in time. However, since the level of inequality in gross wages can be viewed as attitudes towards the (class?) gap between the economic top and middle strata of society, the relevant 'others' in the dissertation are therefore the economic top strata of society or in a social constructivist sense 'the perceived rich'.

On this basis, the *overall scenario* proposed was in simple terms that various time lags were to be expected between the components described above. Changes in the material parts the PE are - with some time lag - assumed to influence the HCNI and hereby the media presentations of among other things 'the rich'. In time, ultimately Scandinavian attitudinal patterns will be affected and change. The general tendency

over time is thus assumed towards correspondence or equilibrium between the various macro and micro components (I will discuss this last point further below).

In the *aggregated* perspective, this deduced to the scenario that the overall *level* of Scandinavian attitudes towards the level of inequality in gross wages must still be egalitarian, although the *trend* over time could be a decline of this egalitarian position. The argument was that although changes in material sides of the Scandinavian political economies are happening, in a comparative perspective, the arrow still points towards economic equality. First, Section 3.5 showed that the Scandinavian levels of wage and income inequality, also disaggregated on the top-middle and middle-bottom ratios, are still low in comparative perspective. Second, the programmatic institutions of the industrial relations systems and welfare regime in Scandinavia are, in comparative perspective, still strong and committed at securing a high degree of gross and net income equality. Lastly, the Scandinavian parliamentary left wings and trade union movements – although increasingly weakened and fragmented – are still strong, in comparative perspective.

The *disaggregated* scenarios focussed on the differences between Denmark and Sweden. In short, although many changes have taken place in all parts of the political economy, *Denmark* was argued to have retained its historical characteristic as a compromising ‘consensus-democracy’ with blurred and unpoliticised class lines. Correspondingly, the idea of the consensus-democracy is basically that the society is not constituted of a few social classes with diverging interests, but instead of a great number of sectorial groups each with their interests to be bridged in compromises. Building on this foundation, both the historical legacy, but also recent developments in the constituting parts of the Danish PE, should lead the Danish *media* not to present the media as a distinct social group in society, but rather as one of the broad range of groups making up the very broad middle class. As with any others of these groups, the interests of this group have to be respected, but the group also has to make concessions to be able to reach solutions everybody can accept. In terms of *attitudinal* patterns, the Danish political economy, the consensus-democracy and a media not presenting ‘the rich’ as a distinct class should translate into Danish attitudes to the level of inequality in gross wages to be very consensual across social classes and other potential cleavages. The financial crisis starting in 2008 hit Denmark hard though, and it was proposed it could function as a joker at least temporarily stirring up Danish media and attitudinal patterns.

The developments in recent decades in the political economy in *Sweden* do not seem to have been as path dependent as the corresponding Danish developments. The legacy of the classic Swedish political economy was, in contrast to Denmark, one of an ‘ideological class struggle’ in the IRS as well as in the parliamentary sphere (although in comparative perspective a very orderly and institutionalised one). While the events of especially the 1980s enhanced by the economic crisis from 1990-1993 can be seen as a revival of an even more open class struggle, the outcome in the last couple of decades is maybe a sign of a divergence from the

ideological, class struggle path. Crucially both the Swedish IRS and the interplay between central actors in the parliamentary sphere over time seem to move more and more in the Danish direction. This means, first, smaller ideological differences in the parliamentary sphere concerning the management of the economy and welfare state as well as the distribution of resources in society. It secondly means a more decentralised yet highly institutionalised and coordinated IRS.

Both the media output, but also Swedish attitudes, were therefore to a higher extent than corresponding in Denmark argued to be at a watershed. The Swedish HCNI could still be influenced by the still quite recent legacy of a quite vivid class struggle. It was thus proposed that it was likely that the Swedish *media* might still be influenced by this overall societal image when presenting the social stratification of society and place of ‘the rich’ herein. Because of the lags described above, it was argued to be more an empirical question, whether Swedish *attitudes* towards the level of inequality in gross wages would be mostly influenced by the historical ideological class legacy or the more recent developments. If Swedish attitudes were still mostly dominated by the HCNI, they could be more dominated by ideological differences in attitudes, broadly following the ‘old’ social classes of society. If they instead, with some lag, started to parallel the more recent developments in the Swedish PE, Swedish attitudes should to a higher and higher extent gradually become consensual across social classes, like the corresponding Danish attitudes.

## 8.1. MAIN RESULTS – EMPIRICAL AND THEORETICAL

Chapter 5 of the dissertation contained the analyses of the *aggregated* perspective. As described above, the expectations in very short were that the Scandinavians in comparative perspective would still be very egalitarian. Although the trend might be that, this level of egalitarianism could become less exceptional over time.

A very quick answer to these simple propositions is the following. Firstly, Scandinavians do in fact seem exceptionally egalitarian in the period from 1992 – 2009. The Scandinavian countries most clearly and consistently stood out from the other western countries, when investigating *attitudes towards the level of inequality in gross wages* in the analyses of Section 5.1. No matter which of the three aggregated or the three disaggregated measures were tested here, the Scandinavians wanted very small levels of inequality in gross wages in 1992-2009. As argued above, in spite the unavoidable ‘bias’ of contextuality in the responses, these results can also be seen as a confirmation of reliability of the central dependent variable in the survey analyses of the dissertation. The expectations concerning the *trend* were secondly not met though. In contrast, the median level of Scandinavian attitudes towards the level of inequality in gross wages almost did not change in the three datasets – 1992, 1999 and 2009. Moreover, this is not because there is an inherent stability-bias in the measures hereof. Several countries have changed their median levels significantly across the period investigated (e.g. Australia scored 3.55 in 1992 and 8.0 in 2009 on the main dependent variable in Table 5-5).



These descriptive aggregated results suggested two things. First, in spite of globalisation, changes in the Scandinavian political economy(ies) and the weakening of central actors behind the model, there was in fact still an exceptional degree of Scandinavian egalitarianism worth investigating. Second, what needed an explanation, at least in the aggregated perspective, was in fact that in spite of the changes, a quite remarkably stable egalitarian Scandinavian attitudinal equilibrium seemed to appear.

The purpose of the analyses of Section 5.2 was exactly to try to reveal the *drivers* behind the seemingly stable Scandinavian egalitarian attitudinal equilibrium. The maybe most remarkable, but maybe not that surprising, result was that the equilibrium generally cannot be ascribed to most mainstream non-contextual explanations in the existing studies. These were identified as the marginal economic utility of the individual and social cleavages in general, individual convictions regarding justice and their connection to national narratives/cultural justice beliefs – at least the ones possible to operationalise in the dataset. These theories explain some of the differences between individuals as well as between countries, but not the Scandinavian egalitarianism (cf. Tables 5-12 and 5-13).

This ‘surprising’ result was in fact not that surprising after all. The ontology of Critical Realism specifically specifies that the social world is both complex and contextual. Although the social world in the realist sense is assumed to exist independently of the observer, the impact of social mechanisms (i.e. causal potentials) in a concrete situation depends on the interplay between various social mechanisms unique for that context.

In fact, several results seemed to confirm the importance of unique contextual effects and especially the *power of perceptions*. First, Section 3.5 showed that the actual Scandinavian – especially Danish and Norwegian – levels of inequality in gross wages or income inequality in general are not that uniquely low anymore. In fact, they are approaching the levels of other western countries. In spite of this, Scandinavians still perceive uniquely low levels of inequality in gross wages. Accordingly, by introducing the covariate for the perceived actual degree of inequality in gross wages (PLI) in Table 5-15, we are able to explain roughly 60% of the Scandinavian dummy, signifying Scandinavian egalitarianism. These results are in accordance with the results of a survey-experiment analysed in Section 4.3. The conclusion is that individuals’ perceptions of the actual levels of inequality in gross wages in their country appear to be crucial for their attitudes towards the just levels of the same. The comparatively low perceived – rather than actual – level of inequality in gross wage levels between occupations in Scandinavia therefore seems self-legitimising.

Second, other effects also point in the same direction. First, the effect of the aggregated index for the existence of conflicts between social groups found in Table 5-13 was completely explained after controlling for the perceived level of inequality in gross wages (PLI) in Table 5-15. In accordance with existing

literature, this signifies that in countries perceived as egalitarian, like the Scandinavian countries, people also experience a low degree of conflicts between social groups. Secondly, Section 5.1.2.3 showed that Scandinavians in general find the wage levels they perceive uniquely just. Thirdly, even after controlling for PLI, a significant cross level interaction, with the same size of the coefficient as the main effect, between the Scandinavian dummy and the objective social class measure, remained in Table 5-15. This means that in contrast to in other countries, social class does on average not matter for attitudes towards the level of inequality in gross wages in Scandinavia – at least in Denmark and Norway.

The various aggregated empirical results therefore suggest a *Scandinavian nexus*, where a perceived – rather than an actual – low degree of inequality in gross wages leads the Scandinavians to the following: firstly, to see their society as quite harmonic without major conflicts between social groups; secondly and more importantly, this leads to small attitudinal class differences and even the higher strata Scandinavians to be egalitarian, in a comparative perspective. The very small attitudinal differences between social classes are as the disaggregated results show a Danish and Norwegian characteristic, but not a Swedish one. Lastly, the perceived harmonious society also leads the Scandinavians in general to find the wage levels they perceive just.

In addition to these results, it is also relevant to dwell on the actual *content of Scandinavian egalitarianism*. The results of Section 5.1 showed that Scandinavian egalitarianism seems to be mostly expressed as an aversion to top excess rather than a wish to spoil the bottom of the labour market excessively. The only exception to the rule of finding the perceived wage levels just concerns the perceived wage level of chairmen of large national corporations. The Scandinavians want to reduce these by between 33 – 40% in 2009.

Larsen (2013) finds that the ‘bottom’ of society is perceived very narrow in Denmark and Sweden, and even still sharing the norms of the ‘trustworthy middle class’. This is in contrast to the US and Great Britain, where most people are perceived as belonging to ‘the bottom’ of society, a bottom also perceived as not at all sharing the norms of the ‘trustworthy middle class’. While this ‘lifting of the bottom into the middle class-effect’ seems to be identified the Scandinavian countries in Larsen’s (2013) book, a corresponding ‘keeping the top down in the middle class’ does not seem to be uniformly present in Scandinavian attitudes. The aggregated results suggest that the ideal of a society constituted only of a wide perceived middle class is not completely instituted in the mind of all Scandinavians. This preliminary aggregated answer appeared to differ quite substantially between Denmark and Sweden in the disaggregated analyses. While the perceived or socially constructed bottom-middle relationship, as revealed in Larsen’s (2013) book, might explain Nordic vs. Anglo-Saxon differences, the perceived or socially constructed top-middle relationship might explain continued differences between the ‘West- and East Nordic model’ i.e. between Denmark and Sweden (Knudsen & Rothstein, 1994).

Chapters 6 and 7 followed the *disaggregated* perspective and hence zoomed in on intra-Scandinavian differences – the differences between Denmark and Sweden. As described above, the expectations in very short were that quite substantial differences were to be expected between Denmark and Sweden – both in the media output concerning ‘the rich’ and the attitudes towards the level of inequality in gross wages. The *Danish* ‘consensus-democracy’ was expected to lead, first, the Danish media not to present ‘the rich’ as a distinct group in society, and, second, the Danish attitudes towards the level of inequality in gross wages to be very consensual across social classes and other potential cleavages. In contrast, the *Swedish* legacy of ‘ideological class struggle’ should lead the Swedish media to present the rich as a distinct group in society, and the Swedish attitudes towards the level of inequality in gross wages to be cleavage according to social class. Changes in the Swedish political economy in recent decades led to a *trend-hypothesis* also. Because these changes seem to make the Swedish PE appear more and more as the corresponding Danish PE, the Swedish media and attitudinal patterns could be expected in time to start to resemble the Danish more and more.

The results of Chapters 6 and 7 largely confined to the expectations – and the notion of a west and east Nordic model clearly seems still to be relevant. In short, the general results of the *descriptive* disaggregated analyses of Chapter 6 are that in *Sweden* big between-group differences exist and remain, but at the same time, the intra-group differences are small, also in 2009. The *multivariate* analysis sought to separate the wheat from the chaff among the descriptively appeared cleavages. They revealed that the relatively large Swedish cleavages seemed dominated by political differences between the respondents, as well as attitudinal differences between household income groups – especially the relatively in-egalitarian attitudes<sup>104</sup> of the richest decile of the Swedish respondents (‘the rich’?). The attitudinal cleavages between generations and gender were completely explained after controlling for the perceived level of actual inequality in gross wages (PLI). The perceptions of the level of inequality in gross wages are as argued largely assumed to be built based on the images, myths and stereotypes of the Swedish HCNI mediated by the Swedish media. The Swedish survey results clearly indicate that the different generations receive and possibly interpret the images, myths and stereotypes differently.

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<sup>104</sup> It is important to keep in mind that in spite of the group differences identified in the descriptive analyses of Chapter 6, the highest Scandinavian group median values (Retired Swedes in 1999 = 3.21 and 65-74 year old Swedes in 1999 = 3.49) would still be placed among the bottom six countries in the third column of Table 5-3 in sub-section 5.1.2.2 (displaying the same dependent variable in 1999). This empirical result again serves to remind us that in spite of the differences in attitudinal patterns and development in the political economies of Denmark and Sweden, in the aggregated perspective, the Scandinavian countries are quite alike attitudinally.

The representations of the rich in Swedish *media* analysed in Chapter 7 also confined more or less to the expectations. The *qualitative* analyses of Section 7.6 revealed a large part of the Swedish references including the ones coded as positive and neutral referring explicitly to the rich as a group separate from the middle class, and in the case of the positive ones often taking up a defensive stand against an implicit or explicit existing critical discourse. The qualitative results for Sweden are in accordance with the theoretical idea that the issue of ‘the rich’ is still a position issue in Sweden. Being a position issue a discursive struggle will rage. The struggle will deal with which labels and stereotypes to assign to ‘the rich’ – negative or positive. In both cases, the rich are represented as being not a part of ‘us’ – the broad middle-class citizens. The qualitative results therefore also confine to the ‘ideological class struggle legacy’ in Sweden. The *quantitative* Swedish media analyses indicated that the trend-hypothesis has empirical relevance also. From 2006 and onwards the graphs looked mysteriously like the Danish graphs, both in aggregated terms and disaggregated on newspapers, and even the financial crisis did not seem to have much effect. In addition, when focussing just on the references to ‘the rich’ in particular, the Swedish newspapers neared a Danish average level in T2, with a clear decline in the average level of both the negative and the neutral references from T1 to T2.

In contrast to Sweden, in *Denmark* (and Norway) the *descriptive results* of the disaggregated analyses of Chapter 6 showed that the attitudinal differences between groups are small (with notable exceptions), whereas the intra-group differences skyrocket in 2009 for a majority of the groups investigated (more so in Denmark than in Norway). The *multivariate* Danish result confirmed very small attitudinal social cleavages dominated by the political affiliation of the respondents. After controlling for the perceived level of inequality in gross wages, suppressed generational effects appeared. The two youngest Danish generations appear as clearly less egalitarian than the remaining generations. This could spark change in the legitimacy of the otherwise seemingly stable egalitarian Danish attitudinal model (more below).

The analyses of the Danish media’s representation of ‘the rich’ – both quantitative and qualitative – also confined very well with what was expected. *Quantitatively* the salience was lower than in Sweden, at least until 2006, although we did see a lagged temporary effect of the financial crisis. What is surprising is that even under these very special circumstances only the two ‘newsstand-tabloid’ newspapers *Ekstra Bladet* and *BT* reacted by printing substantially more negative references to ‘the rich’ in T2 (1 November 2008 to 31 January 2010) than in T1 (1 November 1998 to 31 May 2001). The *qualitative* nature of the Danish references also followed the expected pattern. Even the negative references in the midst of the financial crisis which hit Denmark hard followed this pattern. Almost without exception, these did not really discuss ‘the rich’ as such as a distinct group or individually as in the Swedish case. Instead, the references were relational, collective and actually focussed on issues of inequality and redistribution at large, rather than ‘the rich’ as a distinct group or a social class in society.

## 8.2. CONSEQUENCES OF SUBSCRIBING TO THE CRITICAL REALIST ONTOLOGY

In these last two sections, I will try to elevate the view from the immediate results of the dissertation. Interesting as they might be, it is my experience that what really interests most social scientists is the general questions a study raises, ideas of how to move forward and even speculations about the future. I will walk an unknown and dangerous path and try to present some, hopefully, educated guesses on these questions.

The first question is, what we can learn from this study theoretically – and maybe even meta-theoretically? In this study, I have insisted on, and tried empirically to show, that the realist, but complex and contextual *ontology* of Critical Realism, is fruitful to maintain, if one is to gain an understanding of a complex phenomenon as Scandinavian attitudes towards the level of wage inequality.

This firstly means embracing *complexity*. Attitudes, and indeed Scandinavian egalitarianism, cannot just be reduced to macro level structures – being either a culture of equality (Andersen, 1983; Graubard, 1986; Svendsen et al., 2012) or the superstructure of society (Esping-Andersen, 1980; Hay, 2006; Marx & Engels, 1968; Marx, 1972). Instead, values and attitudes need to be reproduced, and in the process of reproduction, individuals have a reflective potential allowing for, but not guaranteeing, change in the attitudinal reproduction processes. This on the other hand does not mean that structures do not exist, are not relevant for attitudes or are constituted only of the formal institutions of society, as they are in pure rational choice inspired approaches to attitudes.

It secondly means insisting on *contextuality*. The multilevel analyses of Section 5.2 revealed how utterly unable existing mainstream non-contextual theories were at explaining Scandinavian egalitarianism statistically. Much of the existing literature on the attitudes towards the level of inequality in gross wages is main-effect regression-focussed articles, not applying cross level interactions. It is not that there is anything wrong with applying the method of main-effect regression analyses, but implicit in its design – and the design of Tables 5-12 and 5-13 – is often a rather naïve positivist search for linear effects functioning across contexts and time. The simple view of causality underlining this search seems rather naïve given the contextual and complex understanding of causality in the critical realist ontology of the dissertation, and the results are as mentioned meagre at best.

If applying for example the multilevel methodology, with many countries included, a fruitful way of modelling contextual effects is via cross-level interactions. However, besides the statistical limitations of this approach – specifically the small N-problem – the variables in cross-national datasets are obviously not created for testing unique contextual effects. As discussed above, the Social Inequality datasets are hampered in at least two ways. First, on the selection of a chairman, instead of

for example a CEO to represent the private sector top occupation is obviously problematic and seems strange.<sup>105</sup> Second, all the justice belief-deduced variables are connected to the equity/merit or need justice beliefs. In a Scandinavian tradition, it is likely that citizen or equality-based justice belief measures would be more relevant though, and could possibly be better at explaining Scandinavian egalitarianism statistically (Goul Andersen, 1999; Goul Andersen, 2004; Marshall, 1950). The International Social Justice Project (ISJP) (Kluegel et al., 1995) did include some alternative measures to measure the effect of the ‘socialist legacy’. This is not necessarily the same as a ‘social-democratic legacy’, but is a place to look for inspiration. No Scandinavian countries were included in that dataset though, so we do not know how they would function in Scandinavia.

There are obviously also consequences, and some might say side effects, of subscribing to the critical realist ontology. The first of these concerns the issue of epistemology and external validity. As described in Chapter 2, structures and relations can be stable and certain mechanisms can have prominence in a certain period in a certain context in Critical Realism. However, the structures conditioning the social mechanisms are a product of human interaction, and as humans in CR are viewed as being intentional beings with a reflective potential, structural change is surely possible. The contextual limitations of the scope of social studies are therefore both in space and in time. The concept of external validity is not ruled out totally though. Literature on CR does emphasise that in spite of the contingent nature of context-bound structures, social mechanisms identified in one context probably also apply in many others.

One epistemological consequence of adhering to the critical realist ontology is the rather restricted possibilities for external generalisation. The second consequence concerns the practical design and methodological consequences so intensely discussed in the literature on critical realism itself. When adhering to the positivist ideal of creating ‘objective’ knowledge of the social world, existing in a realist sense, however, at the same time, subscribing to all the complexities of the CR

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<sup>105</sup> I suppose the inspirational background for this selection in the four Social Inequality questionnaires is found in the seminal book: *Equality in America – The View from the Top* (Verba & Orren, 1985). Verba & Orren (1985) ask their sample of ‘Leaders’ in the US what they think the average gross salary of a whole range of occupations is, and what they think it should be. In their argument for picking the occupations, they do – among which is ‘A President of a Top 100 Corporation’ – Verba & Orren (1985) emphasise the following arguments. First, the occupations need to represent a great deal of variation, both concerning average wage levels and sectors. In this way, they argue, it is easier to get an idea of the just wage gap wanted by the respondents. Second, the occupations need to be very concrete/precisely defined and it should be clear that the amounts in question are monthly gross wages. If this book is the inspiration for the ISSP 1987 survey and henceforth, then besides the generic ‘dispersion’ and ‘precision’ arguments, it seems fully coincidental that a chairman and not e.g. a CEO of a large national corporation is selected as representing the top occupation in the private sector. If correct, this seems a textbook example of unintended consequences of path dependency in cross-national attitudinal research.

ontology, how do you as a researcher create valid ‘objective’ knowledge about the social world?

As mentioned in Chapter 2, the answer given is that an iterative, abductive approach must be applied, but what this actually entails varies tremendously in the literature on CR. Sayer (1992) for example recommends an extremely qualitative approach to tap into structures and social mechanisms of the ‘real strata’ via the human ‘internal mode of interpretive access’. Kemp & Holmwood (2003) on the other hand seem to recommend going in the total opposite direction by starting with quantitative data mining identifying ‘regularities of events’ and ‘patterns of connection’ between these. The approach is still clearly not solely positivist, as the quote below shows, but the suggested research process, on the other hand, does not seem very distinct from that of more or less positivist, quantitative ‘normal-science’:

‘it is regularity manifested over a particular tract of time, and this regularity may be significant if it provides a glimpse of the causal influence of a mechanism while other influences are temporarily balanced or absent... spontaneously occurring regularities can be used to test structural theories. Success in such a test will involve offering a coherent account of the regularities, and theorising the mechanism that produces them.’ (p. 177)

The definition of ‘normal-science’ in CR therefore seems to be quite wide or contested – at least methodologically. The flipside of this discussion is obviously that it is hard in CR to ultimately define quality criteria of what is the right way to go about doing a solid research project. What steps needs to be taken in order to insure a high degree of reliability and validity and hence trustworthy claims of having created ‘objective’ knowledge about the social world? CR is on the other hand not an interpretivist position. In the realist sense, the social world therefore exists independently of the observer. It thus does not appear a satisfactory answer that the outcome of research processes is always in some form the subjective interpretation of social phenomena by the researcher. Since the social world is objectively out there, good research should gain some form of ‘objective’ knowledge about it – as restricted in space and time as that may be. The approach of the dissertation is an attempt to take the CR ontology seriously, by trying to model and investigate how the various central components affecting a given phenomenon fit together in a convincing way. In accordance with the abstract descriptions of the iterative, abductive method, the process has been characterised by switching between inductive and deductive methods, and between theory and empirical data (of many sorts), and continuous theoretical reflection over how the many pieces of the puzzle could fit together. Hopefully, the result can offer a ‘coherent account of the regularities, and theorising the mechanism that produces them’. (Kemp & Holmwood, 2003, p. 177)

### 8.3. FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS IN SCANDINAVIA

The last issue to speculate on is generalisation in *time*. What is to be expected of Scandinavian attitudes towards the level of inequality in gross wages in the future? And, what are the drivers of the development?

It is almost cliché that you have to be careful when trying to predict the future. If you furthermore adhere strictly to the CR ontology, you definitely have to be even more cautious. This is because the impact of social mechanisms in a concrete situation depends on the interplay between these various social mechanisms unique for that context in that particular point in time – at a different time, the interplay is likely to be different. In spite of these precautions, I will try to walk the dangerous path of prediction, while trying to be clear about the assumptions I make when presenting the ideas.

The big question of future developments can be specified as to whether we will see mostly stability or change in the Scandinavian attitudinal patterns. Changes in the Scandinavian political economy(ies) are definitely taking place in these years. The question is how the Scandinavians will react to these changes. This question is in fact a reformulation of the adaption vs. reaction hypotheses described in various places. As described in Chapter 2, the answer to this question again depends basically on the ontological assumptions on human nature and motivation. However, if we assume that the macro-micro associations portrayed in the conceptual model in Figure 2-2 and the overall scenario presented in Section 3.7 continue to be relevant in the future, we could deduce two tentative conflicting scenarios concerning the development in Danish and Swedish attitudes towards the level of inequality in gross wages in the coming years.

The first scenario assumes that the difference we see between Danish and Swedish media outputs and attitudes in 2009 is caused only by the time lags involved. The material conditions, the interplay of central actors and the programmatic institutions of the Swedish IRS resemble the corresponding more or less material parts of the Danish PE more and more. It is therefore only a matter of time before the Swedish HCNI and hence media presentations of the rich and ultimately Swedish attitudinal patterns will resemble the corresponding Danish patterns.

How much time such a process will take is also a good question though. There were some indications in the analyses of Chapter 6 that at least for some generations, the patterns were rather consistent through time. If such generational effects dominate, then only the generations of Swedes, having their political formative experiences of youth after the class struggles ebbed away in the mid-1990s, could be expected to portray attitudinal patterns resembling the corresponding Danish patterns. On the



other hand, much suggested, that the attitudinal patterns easily change over the rather short timeframe from 1992-2009.<sup>106</sup>

The second scenario assumes that the change or some could even say dismantling of the classic Swedish, but maybe also Danish political economy and especially IRS, cannot be equated. The relatively in-egalitarianism of the younger Danish generations could for example indicate a change underway, as elder Danish generations eventually die. How the various programmatic institutions look in 10 years' time in both countries is not easy to tell neither is their effect on attitudes and media, which will, as we know, depend on the interplay with other social mechanisms unique for that context. Therefore, while the first scenario predicts Swedish media outputs and attitudinal patterns might start to a higher extent resembling the corresponding Danish media outputs and attitudinal patterns in the future, the second scenario is sceptical.

In both of these scenarios the assumption is that the *internal* developments in the macro level phenomena of the political economy, which are crucial for the long-term development in media outputs and citizen's attitudes, are implicit. I am sceptical that *external* shocks, as for example caused by the financial crisis, will have long-term effects on attitudinal and media patterns in itself. This is not to say that such a crisis cannot have an effect; it can temporarily enable people to utilise their reflective potential to question the current state of affairs. However, if something or somebody does not 'keep the pot boiling', the effect seems likely to be temporary. As indicated above, the availability and ability to 'keep the pot boiling' depends both on actors actively trying to keep the issue salient as well as the availability of myths, images and stereotypes (HCNIs) to latch on to for the media stories. In this argumentation, ultimately, the long-term effect of external shocks therefore also depends on the 'translation' and 'politisisation' by the internal macro level phenomena encapsulated in the concept of the political economy (See also: Hedegaard, 2014b; Taber, 2003).

The International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) rotates its core modules, and has started to rerun each module every 10 years. If this precedence is continued, these and other questions, assumptions and scenarios can be investigated in the fifth and sixth rounds of the Social Inequality Module in 2019 and 2029, a future endeavour, which I will encourage. Hope you have enjoyed reading this dissertation – thank you.

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<sup>106</sup> Good examples are the Danish and Norwegian changes in standard deviations/errors from 1999 to 2009, and the development in the Australian median value on the dependent variable from 3.55 in 1992 to 8.0 in 2009.

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## **APPENDICES**

### **Appendix A. Appendix for Chapter 5**

#### **Other Measures of Attitudes towards Levels of Wages in 1999 – Gross Net Wages and Euros**

*Table 8-1 Attitudes towards the Levels of Yearly Net Wages for six Occupations in ISSP 1999. Shown are Country Median in PPP Corrected \$*

	a cabinet minister in the <math>\langle \text{national} \rangle\text{-government}</math>	a chairman of a large national corporation	a doctor in general practice	A skilled worker in a factory	a shop assistant	an unskilled worker in a factory	Country'-averages
FR	57,949	FR	USA	USA	NO	CDN	USA
AUS	57,747	CDN	CDN	CDN	CDN	USA	CDN
USA	56,318	GB	AUS	NO	USA	NO	FR
GB	53,563	USA	FR	AUS	AUS	FR	GB
AT	52,815	AUS	NO	GB	ES	ES	AUS
CDN	47,063	WD	GB	ES	FR	AUS	NO
IL	45,466	AT	NZ	ES	FR	AUS	AT
PT	44,470	NZ	AT	FR	DK	DK	AT
WD	42,409	SLO	WD	NZ	GB	GB	NZ
NZ	42,215	NO	WD	AT	IL	AT	IL
ES	41,688	IL	DK	DK	IL	NZ	PT
NO	37,283	ES	ED	WD	NZ	SE	WD
SLO	37,010	PT	ES	IL	WD	IL	ES
ED	35,341	ED	PT	SE	SE	WD	DK
CY	34,783	PL	SLO	ED	SLO	ED	SLO
PL	33,538	LY	SE	PT	PT	ED	ED
DK	32,909	CZ	CY	SLO	ED	SLO	SE
CZ	29,210	DK	PL	PL	CY	CY	PL
SE	28,742	SE	CZ	LV	LV	PL	CZ
RUS	24,793	RUS	BG	CZ	PL	CZ	CZ
LV	23,529	HU	HU	RUS	HU	BG	LV
HU	22,960	CY	LV	BG	HU	HU	HU
BG	16,342	BG	RUS	HU	RUS	RUS	RUS

*Notes:* The following countries have asked about yearly salaries: Denmark, Norway, USA, United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand and Canada. The remaining countries have asked about monthly salaries. The recalculation to yearly salaries for these has been made by multiplying with 12 (cf. the national questionnaires downloadable at: (ISSP Research Group, 2011)). The following countries have asked about net salaries: Slovenia, Israel, Spain, Latvia, France and Portugal. In Poland, Bulgaria and Russia it is unspecified whether the respondents should think about gross or net salaries. The statements in these countries are assumed as net salaries. The remaining countries have asked about gross salaries (cf. the national questionnaires



downloadable at: (ISSP Research Group, 2011)). The PPP-conversion rates for the years 1999 and 2009 have been subtracted from the 2010 version of World Economic Outlook. Because the rates are defined as: 'National currency per current international dollar', the recalculations have been made by dividing the national currency statements with the current PPP-conversion rate (International Monetary Fund (IMF), 2011). For the following countries preliminary recalculations from local currency to Euro have been made – followed by another recalculation to PPP-corrected \$: France, Portugal, Spain, West- and East Germany, Austria and Slovenia. The reason is, that the PPP-conversion rates for these countries prescribes that the local currency is Euro also in 1999. The Australian, Slovenian, Spanish and Portuguese statements have furthermore been multiplied with 1000, because the respondents here were asked to answer in whole thousands of their local currency (cf. the national questionnaires downloadable at: (ISSP Research Group, 2011)).

*Table 8-2 Attitudes towards the Levels of Yearly Net Wages for Six Occupations in ISSP 1999. Shown are Country Medians in Euros.*

a cabinet minister in the <national> government		a chairman of a large national corporation		a doctor in general practice		A skilled worker in a factory		a shop assistant		an unskilled worker in a factory	
FR	54.878	FR	91.463	USA	63.571	USA	22.568	<b>NO</b>	<b>16.436</b>	USA	15.893
GB	48.948	GB	78.108	FR	45.732	<b>NO</b>	<b>19.567</b>	<b>DK</b>	<b>16.484</b>	<b>DK</b>	<b>15.734</b>
AT	48.167	USA	63.571	GB	41.657	GB	18.746	USA	15.893	<b>NO</b>	<b>15.653</b>
USA	47.678	CDN	59.987	CDN	41.370	<b>DK</b>	<b>18.731</b>	FR	14.634	FR	14.634
IL	43.413	WD	52.163	<b>NO</b>	<b>39.134</b>	FR	18.293	IL	13.024	<b>SE</b>	<b>12.592</b>
CY	41.797	AT	48.167	AUS	38.776	CDN	17.376	<b>SE</b>	<b>12.592</b>	GB	12.497
WD	41.731	IL	43.413	<b>DK</b>	<b>37.463</b>	WD	15.649	GB	12.497	CDN	12.411
AUS	38.776	<b>NO</b>	<b>39.134</b>	AT	36.126	AUS	15.511	CDN	12.411	AT	12.042
<b>DK</b>	<b>37.463</b>	AUS	38.776	WD	34.776	<b>SE</b>	<b>15.320</b>	WD	12.171	IL	11.577
ED	34.776	NZ	36.452	NZ	29.161	AT	15.052	AT	12.042	ES	10.818
<b>NO</b>	<b>31.307</b>	<b>DK</b>	<b>35.964</b>	IL	28.942	IL	14.471	AUS	11.633	WD	10.433
CDN	31.028	ED	34.776	ED	27.820	ED	13.910	ES	10.818	CY	9.718
PT	29.928	PT	29.928	CY	27.168	ES	13.703	ED	10.433	AUS	9.694
<b>SE</b>	<b>29.381</b>	<b>SE</b>	<b>29.381</b>	<b>SE</b>	<b>25.184</b>	NZ	12.758	CY	9.404	NZ	9.113
NZ	29.161	ES	28.848	ES	18.751	CY	12.539	NZ	9.113	ED	8.694
ES	28.848	CY	27.168	PT	17.957	PT	8.978	PT	7.183	PT	5.986
SL	18.622	SL	24.829	SL	12.414	SL	5.587	SL	5.587	SL	4.345
PL	15.130	PL	15.130	PL	7.565	PL	4.539	PL	3.026	PL	3.026
CZ	11.418	CZ	12.687	CZ	5.075	LV	3.610	LV	2.707	CZ	2.030
HU	9.303	LV	12.633	HU	4.652	CZ	3.299	CZ	2.537	HU	1.861
LV	9.024	HU	9.303	LV	3.610	HU	2.481	HU	2.171	LV	1.805
RUS	4.844	RUS	4.844	BG	3.072	BG	1.843	BG	1.228	BG	1.229
BG	4.300	BG	3.686	RUS	1.453	RUS	1.453	RUS	727	RUS	484

*Notes:* The following countries have asked about yearly salaries: Denmark, Norway, USA, United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand and Canada. The remaining countries have asked about monthly salaries. The recalculation to yearly salaries for these has been made by multiplying with 12 (cf. the national questionnaires downloadable at: (ISSP Research Group, 2011)). The following countries have asked about net salaries: Slovenia, Israel, Spain, Latvia, France and Portugal. In Poland, Bulgaria and Russia it is unspecified whether the respondents should think about gross or net salaries. The statements in these countries are assumed as net salaries. The remaining countries have asked about gross salaries (cf. the national questionnaires downloadable at: (ISSP Research Group, 2011)). The Australian, Slovenian, Spanish and Portuguese statements have furthermore been multiplied with 1000, because the respondents here were asked to answer in whole thousands of their local currency (cf. the national questionnaires downloadable at: (ISSP Research Group, 2011)).

## Other measures of attitudes towards levels of Wages in 2009 – Net Wages and Euros

*Table 8-3 Attitudes towards the Levels of Yearly Net Wages for Five Occupations in  
ISSP 2009. Shown are Country Median in PPP Corrected \$*

a cabinet minister in the <national> government	a chairman of a large national corporation	a doctor in general practice	a shop assistant	an unskilled worker in a factory	country - averages						
CH	140.515	AUS	160.381	US	115.84	CH	31.616	CH	28.103	CH	85.012
AUS	80.191	USA	154.460	AU	96.229	US	23.169	US	23.169	US	79.959
FR	79.034	CH	140.515	CH	84.309	NO	<b>22.590</b>	NO	<b>22.590</b>	AU	75.914
USA	77.230	FR	131.723	GB	76.264	IS	22.324	IS	22.324	FR	63.491
NZ	75.082	GB	113.826	NZ	66.174	DK	<b>21.446</b>	AU	21.384	GB	58.962
GB	68.296	FI	88.873	FR	65.862	AU	21.384	SE	<b>21.227</b>	NZ	51.666
DE	66.118	DE	82.648	NO	<b>52.709</b>	FR	21.076	ES	20.103	DE	45.622
IL	64.918	NZ	81.444	IS	52.089	FL	20.339	FL	20.339	FI	44.436
PL	61.475	AT	75.999	DK	<b>50.040</b>	SE	<b>20.262</b>	DK	<b>20.016</b>	IS	43.159
IS	59.530	SL	75.117	DE	49.589	IL	19.475	FR	19.759	AT	42.707
AT	56.999	PT	68.966	AT	47.499	ES	18.557	IL	19.475	IL	42.196
SL	56.338	FL	65.763	FL	47.458	GB	18.212	GB	18.212	SL	42.065
FL	54.237	ES	61.856	SL	46.948	NZ	17.816	NZ	17.816	FL	41.627
DK	<b>53.614</b>	PL	61.475	FI	44.436	FI	17.774	FI	17.775	NO	<b>41.414</b>
FI	53.324	IL	64.918	SE	<b>43.419</b>	AT	17.100	AT	15.437	PT	38.103
NO	<b>52.709</b>	IS	59.530	PT	43.103	SL	16.901	SL	15.023	ES	37.114
EE	52.493	EE	59.055	IL	42.196	DE	16.530	DE	13.224	SE	<b>36.279</b>
PT	51.724	NO	<b>56.474</b>	ES	38.660	PT	13.793	EE	13.123	DK	<b>36.172</b>
SE	<b>48.243</b>	SE	<b>48.243</b>	PL	30.738	EE	13.123	PL	12.295	PL	35.656
ES	46.392	RUS	45.859	HR	28.255	PL	12.295	PT	12.931	EE	32.808
RUS	45.859	HR	42.383	EE	26.247	HR	11.302	HR	11.302	RU	24.895
SK	43.361	HU	42.119	CZ	26.023	SK	10.844	SK	10.844	SK	24.576
HU	42.119	CZ	39.034	TR	25.862	LV	10.370	LV	10.370	HR	24.299
TR	41.379	SK	36.146	SK	21.687	TR	10.345	TR	10.345	TR	23.793
CZ	32.528	DK	<b>35.743</b>	HU	18.427	RU	9.827	RU	9.827	HU	23.692
LV	29.630	TR	31.034	LV	17.778	CZ	9.758	CZ	9.758	CZ	23.420
HR	28.255	UA	30.447	RU	13.103	HU	7.897	HU	7.897	LV	19.556
UA	26.641	LV	29.630	UA	11.418	UA	7.612	UA	7.612	UA	16.746

*Notes:* The following countries have asked about yearly wages: Denmark, Norway, United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand. The remaining countries have asked about monthly wages. The recalculation to yearly wages for these has been made by multiplying with 12.

The following countries have asked about gross wages: Australia, Austria, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Finland, Hungary, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, Denmark and United Kingdom. In Spain, it is unspecified whether the respondents should think about gross or net wages. The statements in these countries are assumed as net wages, because this was specified in 1999. The remaining countries have asked about net wages (cf. the national questionnaires downloadable at: (ISSP Research Group, 2011)). The PPP-conversion rates for the years 1999 and 2009 have been subtracted from the 2010 version of World Economic Outlook. Because the rates are defined as: 'National currency per current international

dollar', the recalculations have been made by dividing the national currency statements with the current PPP-conversion rate (International Monetary Fund (IMF), 2011).

*Table 8-4 Attitudes towards the Levels of Yearly Net Wages for Five Occupations in ISSP 2009. Shown are Country Medians in Euros.*

a cabinet minister in the <national> government		a chairman of a large national corporation		a doctor in general practice		a shop assistant		an unskilled worker in a factory	
CH	161.355	CH	161.355	CH	96.813	CH	36.305	CH	32.271
FR	72.000	FR	120.000	USA	83.546	<b>DK</b>	<b>24.351</b>	<b>DK</b>	<b>22.727</b>
<b>DK</b>	<b>60.877</b>	AUS	118.407	AUS	71.044	<b>NO</b>	<b>22.035</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>22.035</b>
AUS	59.203	USA	111.395	FR	60.000	FR	19.200	<b>SE</b>	<b>18.164</b>
DE	56.333	<b>FI</b>	<b>85.140</b>	<b>DK</b>	<b>56.818</b>	FL	18.000	FR	18.000
USA	55.697	GB	77.700	GB	52.059	<b>SE</b>	<b>17.338</b>	FL	18.000
<b>NO</b>	<b>51.415</b>	DE	70.416	<b>NO</b>	<b>51.415</b>	<b>FI</b>	<b>17.028</b>	<b>FI</b>	<b>17.028</b>
<b>FI</b>	<b>51.084</b>	AT	64.675	NZ	44.642	USA	16.709	USA	16.709
NZ	50.652	FL	58.200	<b>FI</b>	<b>42.570</b>	IS	16.271	IS	16.271
AT	48.506	<b>NO</b>	<b>55.080</b>	DE	42.250	AUS	15.788	AUS	15.788
FL	48.000	NZ	54.944	FL	42.000	AT	14.552	ES	15.600
GB	46.620	PT	48.000	AT	40.422	ES	14.400	IL	13.639
IL	45.462	SL	48.000	IS	37.967	DE	14.083	AT	13.137
IS	43.390	ES	48.000	<b>SE</b>	<b>37.154</b>	IL	13.639	GB	12.432
<b>SE</b>	<b>41.282</b>	IL	45.462	ES	30.000	GB	12.432	NZ	12.019
SL	36.000	IS	43.390	SL	30.000	NZ	12.019	DE	11.267
ES	36.000	<b>SE</b>	<b>41.282</b>	PT	30.000	SL	10.800	SL	9.600
PT	36.000	<b>DK</b>	<b>40.584</b>	IL	29.550	PT	9.600	PT	9.000
EE	30.678	EE	34.513	HR	16.361	EE	7.669	EE	7.669
PL	28.820	PL	28.820	EE	15.339	HR	6.544	HR	6.544
SK	23.892	HR	24.541	PL	14.410	SK	5.975	SK	5.975
TR	22.451	HU	22.510	TR	14.032	LV	5.930	LV	5.930
HU	22.510	CZ	20.858	CZ	13.905	PL	5.764	PL	5.764
RUS	20.618	RUS	20.618	SK	11.950	TR	5.613	TR	5.613
CZ	17.382	SK	19.916	LV	10.165	CZ	5.214	CZ	5.214
LV	16.942	LV	16.942	HU	9.848	RUS	4.418	RUS	4.418
HR	16.361	TR	16.838	RUS	5.891	HU	4.221	HU	4.221
UA	7.847	UA	8.968	UA	3.363	UA	2.242	UA	2.242

*Notes:* The following countries have asked about yearly wages: Denmark, Norway, United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand. The remaining countries have asked about monthly wages. The recalculation to yearly wages for these has been made by multiplying with 12.

The following countries have asked about gross wages: Australia, Austria, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Finland, Hungary, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, Denmark and United Kingdom. In Spain, it is unspecified whether the respondents should think about gross or net wages. The statements in these countries are assumed as net wages, because this was specified in 1999. The remaining countries have asked about net wages (cf. the national questionnaires downloadable at: (ISSP Research Group, 2011)).

# **Degree of Consensus Apparent in the Measures for Attitudes towards Levels of Gross Wages for Different Occupations in ISSP 1999 and 2009**

*Table 8-5 Coefficients of Variations for the Statements of the Just Wage Levels for the Six Occupations Selected in ISSP 1999*

	a cabinet minister in the <national>-government	a chairman of a large national corporation	a doctor in general practice	A skilled worker in a factory	a shop assistant	an unskilled worker in a factory	country - averages
RUS	0.102	RUS	0.159	PL	0.055	PL	0.062
PL	0.098	CDN	0.110	BG	0.052	BG	0.060
BG	0.093	PL	0.098	PT	0.043	PT	0.048
LV	0.074	HU	0.090	RUS	0.037	RUS	0.048
NZ	0.067	LV	0.079	IL	0.024	LV	0.046
CDN	0.045	ED	0.060	CDN	0.034	PL	0.042
HU	0.041	GB	0.054	<b>DK</b>	SL	IL	0.037
<b>DK</b>	0.039	USA	0.051	HU	0.031	CDN	0.034
ED	0.038	PT	0.050	ED	0.029	FR	0.034
PT	0.038	NZ	0.047	AT	0.028	CDN	0.033
FR	0.031	<b>SE</b>	USA	USA	0.016	USA	0.031
GB	0.028	FR	0.043	FR	0.025	FR	0.029
USA	0.027	BG	0.042	WD	0.025	GB	0.028
SL	0.026	WD	0.041	NZ	0.024	CY	0.028
WD	0.023	<b>DK</b>	0.040	GB	0.023	NZ	0.024
AT	0.020	AT	0.037	SL	0.022	ES	0.022
IL	0.019	SL	0.029	CY	0.019	ED	0.021
<b>SE</b>	0.017	IL	0.028	IL	0.018	<b>DK</b>	0.021
CZ	0.017	AUS	0.026	CZ	0.015	CZ	0.019
ES	0.015	CZ	0.023	<b>SE</b>	ES	<b>SE</b>	0.019
AUS	0.014	CY	0.023	AUS	0.012	WD	0.018
CY	0.012	ES	0.015	NO	0.007	AT	0.015
<b>NO</b>	0.010	<b>NO</b>	0.008	<b>NO</b>	AUS	NO	0.012
							<b>0.008</b>

*Notes:* The following countries have asked about yearly salaries: Denmark, Norway, USA, United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand and Canada. The remaining countries have asked about monthly salaries. The recalculation to yearly salaries for these has been made by multiplying with 12 (cf. the national questionnaires downloadable at: (ISSP Research Group, 2011)). The following countries have asked about net salaries: Slovenia, Israel, Spain, Latvia, France and Portugal. In Poland, Bulgaria and Russia it is unspecified whether the respondents should think about gross or net salaries. The statements in these countries are assumed as net salaries. The remaining countries have asked about gross salaries (cf. the national questionnaires downloadable at: (ISSP Research Group, 2011)). The PPP-conversion rates for the years 1999 and 2009 have been subtracted from the 2010 version of World Economic Outlook. Because

the rates are defined as: 'National currency per current international dollar', the recalculations have been made by dividing the national currency statements with the current PPP-conversion rate (International Monetary Fund (IMF), 2011).

For the following countries preliminary recalculations from local currency to Euro have been made – followed by another recalculation to PPP-corrected \$: France, Portugal, Spain, West- and East Germany, Austria and Slovenia. The reason is, that the PPP-conversion rates for these countries prescribes that the local currency is Euro also in 1999. The Australian, Slovenian, Spanish and Portuguese statements have furthermore been multiplied with 1000, because the respondents here were asked to answer in whole thousands of their local currency (cf. the national questionnaires downloadable at: (ISSP Research Group, 2011)).

*Table 8-6 Coefficients of Variations for the Statements of the Just Wage Levels for the Five Occupations Selected in ISSP 2009*

a cabinet minister in the <national>-government		a chairman of a large national corporation		a doctor in general practice		a shop assistant		an unskilled worker in a factory		country - averages	
USA	0.271	CH	0.573	US	0.391	PL	0.302	DE	3.601	DE	0.862
GB	0.253	US	0.554	<b>NO</b>	<b>0.222</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>0.253</b>	PL	0.279	USA	0.295
<b>NO</b>	<b>0.158</b>	DE	0.541	PL	0.177	PT	0.236	PT	0.271	PL	0.204
PT	0.119	FL	0.248	PT	0.158	US	0.233	GB	0.245	<b>NO</b>	<b>0.199</b>
<b>DK</b>	<b>0.123</b>	GB	0.241	GB	0.151	AU	0.196	<b>NO</b>	<b>0.216</b>	GB	0.194
PL	0.107	<b>DK</b>	<b>0.181</b>	<b>DK</b>	<b>0.146</b>	<b>DK</b>	<b>0.103</b>	<b>DK</b>	<b>0.203</b>	PT	0.186
DE	0.081	PL	0.155	DE	0.057	GB	0.079	AU	0.202	<b>DK</b>	<b>0.151</b>
RUS	0.071	<b>NO</b>	<b>0.148</b>	AU	0.057	ES	0.032	UA	0.038	CH	0.137
CH	0.067	FR	0.148	HU	0.043	DE	0.030	ES	0.027	AUS	0.116
AUS	0.060	PT	0.144	FL	0.043	FI	0.026	LV	0.026	FL	0.072
ES	0.057	UA	0.140	ES	0.040	IL	0.025	RU	0.026	UA	0.055
FL	0.053	LV	0.081	NZ	0.038	RU	0.024	US	0.026	FR	0.053
LV	0.046	<b>SE</b>	<b>0.079</b>	UA	0.034	UA	0.024	TR	0.025	RUS	0.045
FR	0.041	NZ	0.073	AT	0.034	FR	0.024	FR	0.020	ES	0.040
HU	0.041	RU	0.071	RU	0.034	EE	0.022	FI	0.017	LV	0.040
AT	0.039	AU	0.066	FR	0.032	TR	0.020	SL	0.017	NZ	0.033
UA	0.039	AT	0.061	SL	0.031	CZ	0.018	EE	0.017	FI	0.032
FI	0.035	EE	0.058	EE	0.031	LV	0.017	HU	0.015	AT	0.031
NZ	0.034	IS	0.057	LV	0.031	HU	0.015	<b>SE</b>	<b>0.012</b>	HU	0.030
CZ	0.029	TR	0.056	FI	0.027	SL	0.013	AT	0.011	EE	0.030
TR	0.026	FI	0.055	CH	0.026	IS	0.012	NZ	0.011	TR	0.029
<b>SE</b>	<b>0.024</b>	ES	0.045	<b>SE</b>	<b>0.021</b>	<b>SE</b>	<b>0.011</b>	IS	0.010	<b>SE</b>	<b>0.029</b>
SL	0.024	IL	0.042	TR	0.020	NZ	0.011	SK	0.010	SL	0.023
SK	0.021	HU	0.036	IL	0.020	AT	0.010	IL	0.010	IL	0.023
EE	0.020	SK	0.035	IS	0.018	CH	0.010	HR	0.009	IS	0.023
IS	0.019	SL	0.031	SK	0.015	FL	0.010	FL	0.008	CZ	0.020
HR	0.018	CZ	0.030	CZ	0.014	SK	0.009	CH	0.008	SK	0.018
IL	0.016	HR	0.026	HR	0.011	HR	0.008	CH	0.007	HR	0.014

*Notes:* The following countries have asked about yearly wages: Denmark, Norway, United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand. The remaining countries have asked about monthly wages. The recalculation to yearly wages for these has been made by multiplying with 12.

The following countries have asked about gross wages: Australia, Austria, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Finland, Hungary, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, Denmark and United Kingdom. In Spain, it is unspecified whether the respondents should think about gross or net wages. The statements in these countries are assumed as net wages, because this was specified in 1999. The remaining countries have asked about net wages (cf. the national questionnaires downloadable at: (ISSP Research Group, 2011)).

The PPP-conversion rates for the years 1999 and 2009 have been subtracted from the 2010 version of World Economic Outlook. Because the rates are defined as: 'National currency per current international dollar', the recalculations have been made by dividing the national currency statements with the current PPP-conversion rate (International Monetary Fund (IMF), 2011).



# Degree of Consensus Apparent in the Measures of attitudes towards the Level of Inequality in Gross Wages in ISSP 1999 and 2009

*Table 8-7 Degree of Consensus Apparent in the Six Different Measures of Attitudes towards the Level of Inequality in Gross Wages in ISSP 1999. Shown are Standard Deviations*

<sup>A</sup> Wage dispersion index		<sup>B</sup> High- vs. Low paid occ.		<sup>C</sup> Chairmen vs. Low paid occ.		<sup>D</sup> High paid occ. Vs. Skilled worker		<sup>E</sup> Chairmen vs. Skilled worker		<sup>F</sup> Skilled worker vs. Low paid occ.	
<b>NO</b>	<b>0.432</b>	RUS	0.744	RUS	0.967	<b>NO</b>	<b>0.636</b>	RUS	0.429	RUS	0.035
RUS	0.390	<b>NO</b>	<b>0.637</b>	CDN	0.426	RUS	0.312	CDN	0.286	BG	0.030
PL	0.218	PL	0.302	GB	0.414	NZ	0.242	PL	0.273	USA	0.030
GB	0.208	GB	0.254	LV	0.413	PL	0.217	HU	0.239	IL	0.027
LV	0.174	LV	0.253	PL	0.396	USA	0.195	GB	0.230	WD	0.020
CDN	0.171	CDN	0.236	HU	0.343	CDN	0.158	LV	0.230	LV	0.019
USA	0.159	HU	0.207	FR	0.255	GB	0.146	FR	0.205	SLO	0.018
PT	0.158	USA	0.203	PT	0.245	HU	0.146	SL	0.166	GB	0.018
HU	0.144	PT	0.183	USA	0.242	LV	0.145	PT	0.158	FR	0.016
FR	0.111	FR	0.157	ED	0.195	FR	0.128	NZ	0.155	PT	0.016
NZ	0.107	ED	0.134	WD	0.188	SL	0.119	ED	0.149	PL	0.015
ED	0.101	WD	0.124	NZ	0.186	PT	0.111	US	0.148	CY	0.015
WD	0.100	NZ	0.121	AT	0.157	ED	0.103	WD	0.139	CDN	0.015
AT	0.092	AT	0.109	SL	0.144	BG	0.100	BG	0.133	ED	0.014
SL	0.073	SL	0.102	CZ	0.136	WD	0.092	AT	0.119	HU	0.013
CZ	0.067	CZ	0.094	IL	0.105	AT	0.082	CZ	0.094	ES	0.011
BG	0.061	BG	0.074	<b>SE</b>	<b>0.103</b>	CZ	0.065	IL	0.091	NZ	0.010
IL	0.055	IL	0.072	AUS	0.099	IL	0.061	<b>SE</b>	<b>0.081</b>	<b>DK</b>	<b>0.010</b>
<b>DK</b>	<b>0.055</b>	AUS	0.067	BG	0.086	<b>DK</b>	<b>0.057</b>	AUS	0.073	CZ	0.009
AUS	0.054	<b>DK</b>	<b>0.063</b>	<b>DK</b>	<b>0.083</b>	AUS	0.050	<b>DK</b>	<b>0.071</b>	AT	0.009
CY	0.046	<b>SE</b>	<b>0.061</b>	CY	0.064	<b>SE</b>	<b>0.048</b>	CY	0.049	AUS	0.008
<b>SE</b>	<b>0.045</b>	CY	0.050	ES	0.050	CY	0.038	ES	0.036	<b>NO</b>	<b>0.007</b>
ES	0.037	ES	0.047	<b>NO</b>	<b>0.032</b>	ES	0.035	<b>NO</b>	<b>0.026</b>	<b>SE</b>	<b>0.005</b>

Notes: <sup>A</sup>The wage dispersion index is calculated by summarising the statements for the three occupations: chairman of a large national corporation, minister in the national government and general practitioner and dividing by three. Hereafter the statements of the two occupations: shop assistant and unskilled factory worker is summarised and divided by two. Lastly, the first index is then divided by the second.

<sup>B</sup>This index is calculated the same way as the wage dispersion index, but the occupation general practitioner is withdrawn from the index of the top group.

<sup>C</sup>In the index of the third column the occupation minister in the national government is also withdrawn in the same way.

<sup>D</sup>The index of the fourth column is constructed by dividing the index of the average statements of the top occupations, with the statement of a skilled factory worker.

<sup>E</sup>This index taps the chairmen vs. skilled worker wage ratio.

<sup>F</sup>This index is the ratio of a skilled worker to the average of the two low paid occupations – shop assistant and unskilled worker in a factory.

*Table 8-8 Degree of Consensus Apparent in the Three Different Measures of Attitudes towards the Level of Inequality in Gross Wages in ISSP 2009. Shown are Standard Deviations*

<sup>A</sup> Wage dispersion index		<sup>B</sup> High- vs. Low paid occ.		<sup>C</sup> Chairmen vs. Low paid occ.	
USA	56.13	GB	8.658	GB	16.89
GB	7.970	AUS	2.260	USA	3.889
AUS	2.021	USA	2.107	AUS	3.689
DE	1.264	DE	1.900	DE	3.649
CH	0.734	CH	1.077	CH	1.961
FR	0.325	FR	0.481	FR	0.914
PT	0.322	FL	0.451	FL	0.830
FL	0.309	PT	0.436	PT	0.763
PL	0.254	PL	0.368	PL	0.586
<b>DK</b>	<b>0.204</b>	UA	0.266	UA	0.449
<b>NO</b>	<b>0.183</b>	RUS	0.252	NZ	0.384
UA	0.181	<b>DK</b>	<b>0.232</b>	<b>DK</b>	<b>0.326</b>
NZ	0.180	NZ	0.231	RUS	0.319
RUS	0.170	AT	0.182	FI	0.290
AT	0.137	FI	0.178	AT	0.279
FI	0.128	HU	0.171	EE	0.223
HU	0.125	<b>NO</b>	<b>0.162</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>0.195</b>
EE	0.095	EE	0.132	LV	0.194
LV	0.090	LV	0.128	HU	0.185
SL	0.083	TR	0.106	<b>SE</b>	<b>0.180</b>
TR	0.077	<b>SE</b>	<b>0.101</b>	IL	0.164
BG	0.076	CZ	0.099	TR	0.154
IL	0.073	ES	0.099	IS	0.141
<b>SE</b>	<b>0.072</b>	SL	0.098	SL	0.135
CZ	0.071	BG	0.095	BG	0.128
ES	0.068	IL	0.094	ES	0.127
SK	0.065	SK	0.089	CZ	0.124
IS	0.062	IS	0.085	SK	0.119
CY	0.060	HR	0.061	HR	0.095
HR	0.044	CY	0.061	CY	0.049

*Notes:* <sup>A</sup>The wage dispersion index is calculated by summarising the statements for the three occupations: chairman of a large national corporation, minister in the national government and general practitioner and afterwards dividing this figure by three. Hereafter the statements of the two occupations: shop assistant and unskilled factory worker is summarised and divided by two. Lastly, the first index is then divided by the second.

<sup>B</sup>This index is calculated the same way as the wage dispersion index, but the occupation general practitioner is withdrawn from the index of the top group.

<sup>C</sup>In the index of the third column the occupation minister in the national government is also withdrawn in the same way.

# Degree of Consensus Apparent in the Measures of Attitudes towards the Degree of Justice in Levels of Gross Wages for Different Occupations in ISSP 1999 and 2009

*Table 8-9 Degree of Consensus Apparent in the Degree of Justice Measures in Levels of Gross Wages for Six Occupations in ISSP 1999. Shown are standard deviations*

a cabinet minister in the <national> government	a chairman of a large national corporation	a doctor in general practice	a skilled worker in a factory	a shop assistant	an unskilled worker in a factory
PL 0.106	<b>NO 153.3</b>	<b>NO 191.6</b>	RUS 0.188	PT 0.096	RUS 0.155
RUS 0.071	RUS 0.142	USA 2.068	BG 0.072	RUS 0.092	FR 0.101
PT 0.071	PL 0.137	PT 0.334	PT 0.059	BG 0.070	BG 0.066
USA 0.059	IL 0.093	RUS 0.289	USA 0.041	CDN 0.061	LV 0.066
NZ 0.057	PT 0.058	BG 0.160	PL 0.040	PL 0.055	PL 0.054
LV 0.040	BG 0.057	PL 0.082	LV 0.039	HU 0.050	GB 0.053
HU 0.039	USA 0.048	LV 0.076	SL 0.038	IL 0.040	PT 0.052
ES 0.036	NZ 0.046	HU 0.049	IL 0.031	USA 0.040	SL 0.047
BG 0.038	LV 0.041	GB 0.049	HU 0.031	LV 0.039	USA 0.046
FR 0.030	HU 0.034	IL 0.029	<b>DK 0.025</b>	SL 0.035	HU 0.042
ED 0.027	GB 0.031	CDN 0.025	<b>NO 0.023</b>	GB 0.034	CDN 0.038
CDN 0.025	CDN 0.027	AT 0.023	FR 0.022	ES 0.026	IL 0.032
IL 0.025	ES 0.021	SL 0.021	WD 0.021	FR 0.026	CY 0.031
WD 0.021	FR 0.021	FR 0.021	ES 0.018	CZ 0.023	ES 0.028
SL 0.018	SL 0.020	ED 0.018	ED 0.015	CY 0.020	CZ 0.025
AT 0.017	<b>SE 0.019</b>	<b>DK 0.018</b>	NZ 0.014	ED 0.019	<b>DK 0.019</b>
GB 0.016	AT 0.019	CZ 0.016	GB 0.014	NZ 0.018	ED 0.017
<b>SE 0.016</b>	<b>DK 0.017</b>	NZ 0.014	CY 0.012	<b>SE 0.013</b>	<b>SE 0.015</b>
<b>DK 0.014</b>	CY 0.017	WD 0.014	CDN 0.011	<b>NO 0.012</b>	NZ 0.013
AUS 0.013	ED 0.016	ES 0.013	CZ 0.011	WD 0.012	WD 0.011
<b>NO 0.012</b>	CZ 0.015	AUS 0.009	AT 0.009	<b>DK 0.010</b>	AT 0.010
CY 0.011	WD 0.014	CY 0.009	AUS 0.008	AT 0.009	<b>NO 0.009</b>
CZ 0.009	AUS 0.013	<b>SE 0.009</b>	<b>SE 0.007</b>	AUS 0.008	AUS 0.008

*Notes:* <sup>A</sup> Calculated by for each occupation subtracting, what the respondents in the various countries think that the occupations actually earns usually, from what the occupation should earn. This figure is then standardized by dividing, with the usually earns actually statement of the respondent.

*Table 8-10 Degree of Consensus Apparent in the Degree of Justice Measures in Levels of Gross Wages for Five Occupations in ISSP 2009. Shown are standard deviations*

a cabinet minister in the <national> government		a chairman of a large national corporation		a doctor in general practice		a shop assistant		an unskilled worker in a factory	
GB	0.749	USA	364.7	GB	2.126	AUS	38.64	DE	5.938
<b>NO</b>	<b>0.672</b>	DE	0.860	USA	1.568	GB	1.239	USA	4.245
<b>SE</b>	<b>0.656</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>0.723</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>1.038</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>1.095</b>	GB	1.244
PL	0.111	<b>DK</b>	<b>0.638</b>	UA	0.109	DE	0.406	<b>NO</b>	<b>1.220</b>
PT	0.063	NZ	0.135	TR	0.096	USA	0.352	AUS	0.778
NZ	0.054	FR	0.134	HU	0.078	PT	0.331	PT	0.420
UA	0.046	GB	0.072	RUS	0.051	RUS	0.050	<b>DK</b>	<b>0.067</b>
<b>DK</b>	<b>0.044</b>	<b>SE</b>	<b>0.053</b>	BG	0.044	UA	0.048	UA	0.064
RUS	0.034	RUS	0.039	<b>DK</b>	<b>0.043</b>	PL	0.036	EE	0.048
SL	0.032	UA	0.037	PT	0.040	EE	0.035	RUS	0.042
USA	0.030	EE	0.035	EE	0.038	BG	0.035	SL	0.034
ES	0.028	IL	0.031	NZ	0.036	TR	0.035	LV	0.030
TR	0.028	PL	0.028	LV	0.031	HU	0.033	BG	0.029
DE	0.027	BG	0.028	PL	0.030	<b>DK</b>	<b>0.033</b>	TR	0.027
HU	0.026	LV	0.028	AUS	0.029	FI	0.031	HU	0.027
EE	0.025	TR	0.026	IL	0.027	LV	0.028	FI	0.027
BG	0.025	ES	0.023	FI	0.021	CZ	0.027	PL	0.024
AUS	0.024	SK	0.021	FR	0.021	IL	0.026	FR	0.023
FI	0.022	PT	0.021	ES	0.020	SL	0.026	SK	0.021
IL	0.022	CH	0.020	SL	0.019	ES	0.025	ES	0.020
AT	0.021	FI	0.020	<b>SE</b>	<b>0.019</b>	FR	0.022	<b>SE</b>	<b>0.018</b>
IS	0.020	FL	0.019	IS	0.018	<b>SE</b>	<b>0.020</b>	CZ	0.016
CH	0.018	AUS	0.018	AT	0.018	HR	0.016	HR	0.016
LV	0.018	HU	0.018	FL	0.018	SK	0.013	IL	0.016
CZ	0.017	CZ	0.017	CZ	0.017	NZ	0.013	IS	0.014
FL	0.014	IS	0.015	DE	0.014	IS	0.012	NZ	0.013
FR	0.014	AT	0.015	HR	0.014	CH	0.012	AT	0.009
CY	0.011	SL	0.014	SK	0.014	AT	0.010	FL	0.009
SK	0.011	HR	0.013	CH	0.013	FL	0.010	CH	0.008
HR	0.009	CY	0.004	CY	0.005	CY	0.009	CY	0.007

*Note:* Calculated by for each occupation subtracting, what the respondents in the various countries think that the occupations actually earns usually, from what the occupation should earn. This figure is then standardized by dividing, with the usually earns actually statement of the respondent.

## List of Country Abbreviations used in Tables of the Chapter 5

*Table 8-11 List of Country Abbreviations used in the Tables of Chapter 5*

GB	United Kingdom	EE	Estonia
NO	Norway	BG	Bulgaria
SE	Sweden	AUS	Australia
PL	Poland	FI	Finland
PT	Portugal	IL	Israel
NZ	New Zealand	AT	Austria
UA	Ukraine	IS	Iceland
<b>DK</b>	Denmark	CH	Switzerland
RUS	Russia	LV	Latvia
SL	Slovenia	CZ	Czech Republic
USA	United States of America	FL	Flanders
ES	Spain	FR	France
TR	Turkey	CY	Cyprus
DE	Germany	SK	Slovak Republic
ED	East Germany	HR	Croatia
WD	West Germany	HU	Hungary
CDN	Canada		

# The content of the different ESeC classes and how the different class models are related

*Table 8-12 The European socio-economic classification*

	<i>ESeC class</i>	<i>Common term</i>	<i>Employment regulation</i>
1	Large employers, higher grade professional, administrative and managerial occupations	Higher salariat	Service Relationship
2	Lower grade professional, administrative and managerial occupations and higher grade technician and supervisory occupations	Lower salariat	Service Relationship (modified)
3	Intermediate occupations	Higher grade white collar workers	Mixed
4	Small employer and self employed occupations (exc agriculture etc)	Petit bourgeoisie or independents	Not applicable
5	Self employed occupations (agriculture etc)	Petit bourgeoisie or independents	Not applicable
6	Lower supervisory and lower technician occupations	Higher grade blue collar workers	Mixed
7	Lower services, sales and clerical occupations	Lower grade white collar workers	Labour Contract (modified)
8	Lower technical occupations <sup>1</sup>	Skilled workers	Labour Contract (modified)
9	Routine occupations <sup>1</sup>	Semi- and non-skilled workers	Labour Contract
10	Never worked and long-term unemployed	Unemployed	Not applicable

*Source: Taken from Harrison & Rose (2007), p. 464.*

Table 8-13 Collapsing ESeC from 10 to 6 to 5 to 3 Class Models

ESeC Class	10 class version	6 class version	5 class version	3 class version
Higher salariat	1	1+2	1+2	1+2
Lower salariat	2			
Higher white collar	3	3+6	3+6	3+4+45+6
Petit bourgeois	4	4+5	4+5	
Small farmers	5			
Higher grade blue collar	6	3+6	3+6	
Lower white collar	7	7	7	7+8+9
Skilled manual	8	8	8+9	
Semi-/unskilled	9	9		
Unemployed	(10)	(10)	(10)	(10)

Source: Taken from Harrison & Rose (2007), p. 470.

# Variable Description for the Analyses of Section 5.2

*Table 8-14 Variable Description for the Analyses of Section 5.2*

Created variables	Scale	Comments and origin in the ISSP 2009-dataset. Original variable name in bold.
<b>National/macro level-variables</b>		
Scandinavian dummy	0 = Scandinavian country; 1 = others	Created by recoding variable <b>V5</b> .
Aggr. Market justice – just deserts index (3)	1–5	Each individual is assigned their country's average on the equity index.
Aggr. Need index (4)	1–5	Each individual is assigned their country's average on the market vs. need index.
Aggr. Success ideology index (9)	1–5	Each individual is assigned their country's average on the success ideology index
Aggr. Market justice – money should buy index (7)	1–5	Each individual is assigned their country's average on the money buys index
Aggr. Political affiliation index (2)	1–5	Each individual is assigned their country's average on the state and tax index.
Aggr. Socials conflicts index (10)	1–4	Each individual is assigned their country's average on the social conflict index.
Aggr. Limitations – corruption index (1)	1–5	Each individual is assigned their country's average on the corruption index.
Aggr. Limitations – entering university index (5)	1–5	Each individual is assigned their country's average on the university index.
Aggr. Limitations – social background index (6)	1–5	Each individual is assigned their country's average on the social background index.
Aggr. Limitations - discrimination index (8)	1–5	Each individual is assigned their country's average on the discrimination index.
Aggr. Perceived level of inequality in gross wages	1.42–3.91	Each individual is assigned their country's average on the perc. lev. of diff. in pay index.
Estimated trade union density	0.07–0.96	Each individual is assigned their country's average on the dummy_union variable.
<b>Individual/micro-level variables</b>		
Perceived level of inequality in gross wages (PLI)	–10.29–13.42	Created by computing the function: $LN(v23 / (v24 + v25) / 2)$ .
Household income	0-129	See the description in the text above
Respondent income	0-1020	See the description in the text above
Social Class	1 = Salarist; 2 = Intermediate employee; 3 = Small employers/Self-employed; 4 = Lower Sales & Service; 5 = Lower Technical; 6 = Routine.	The variable for 'objective' class location - the European Socio-economic Classification schema or ESeC - is constructed according to the recoding algorithms provided by the ESeC consortium (Harrison & Rose, 2006; Rose & Harrison, 2007).



Relative deprivation	1–5	Created by computing the function $(v21 + v53) / 2$ .
Relative deprivation <sup>2</sup>	1-25	Created by computing <b>rel_depr</b> * <b>rel_depr</b> to test for curve linear age effects.
Relative deprivation <sup>3</sup>	1-125	Created by computing <b>rel_depr</b> * <b>rel_depr</b> * <b>rel_depr</b> to test for cubic linear age effects.
Cognitive dissonance	-4-4	Created by computing the function $v54 - v55$ . This creates a measure for how far one's ideal society deviates from one's perception of society.
Status of job compared to father	1 = much higher; 2 = higher; 3 = lower; 4 = much lower; 5 = about the same.	Created by recoding <b>v46</b> , to have 'what I deserve' as category of reference.
Perceived social mobility	-9-9	Created by computing the function <b>v44-v45</b> . This creates a measure for, if one feels they have a higher status than the family of origin.
Subjective social class	1 = lower class; 2 = working class; 3 = lower middle class; 4 = middle class; 5 = higher middle and upper class.	Created by merging the two last categories of the variable <b>v66</b> , which only entailed a few respondents individually.
Employment status	1 = full time; 2 = half time; 3 = less than half time; 4 = helping family member; 5 = student; 6 = outside the labour market	Created by merging different categories people outside the labour market of the variable <b>wrkst</b> . Individually, these only entailed a few respondents.
Age square	225-9604	Created by computing <b>age*age</b> to test for curve linear age effects.
Limitations – corruption index (1)	1–5	Created by computing the function $(v11 + v12) / 2$ .
Political affiliation index (2)	1–5	Created by computing the function $(v33 + v34 + reversed\_v35 + v36 + reversed\_v37) / 5$ .
Market justice – just deserts index (3)	1–5	Created by computing the function $(v47 + v51 + v52) / 3$ .
Need index (4)	1–5	Created by computing the function $(v49 + v50) / 2$ .
Limitations – entering university index (5)	1–5	Created by computing the function $(v18 + v19) / 2$ .

Limitations – social background index (6)	1–5	Created by computing the function $(v6 + v7) / 2$ .
Market justice – money should buy index (7)	1–5	Created by computing the function $(v38 + v39) / 2$ .
Limitations - discrimination index (8)	1–5	Created by computing the function $(v14 + v15 + v16) / 3$ .
Success ideology index (9)	1–5	Created by computing the function $(v9 + v10) / 2$ .
Socials conflicts index (10)	1–4	Created by computing the function $(v40 + v41 + v42 + v43) / 4$ .
Dummy_union	0 = Never a trade union member; 1 = present or former trade union member.	Created by merging the categories of present and former member of a trade union in the variable <b>union</b> .

## Appendix B. Appendix for Chapter 6

### Attitudes to the Level of Inequality in Gross Wages Disaggregated on Age-Intervals

Figure 8-1 Attitudes towards the Level of Inequality in Gross Wages for different Age-Cohorts in Denmark in ISSP 1999 and 2009. Shown are Medians and Standard Deviations

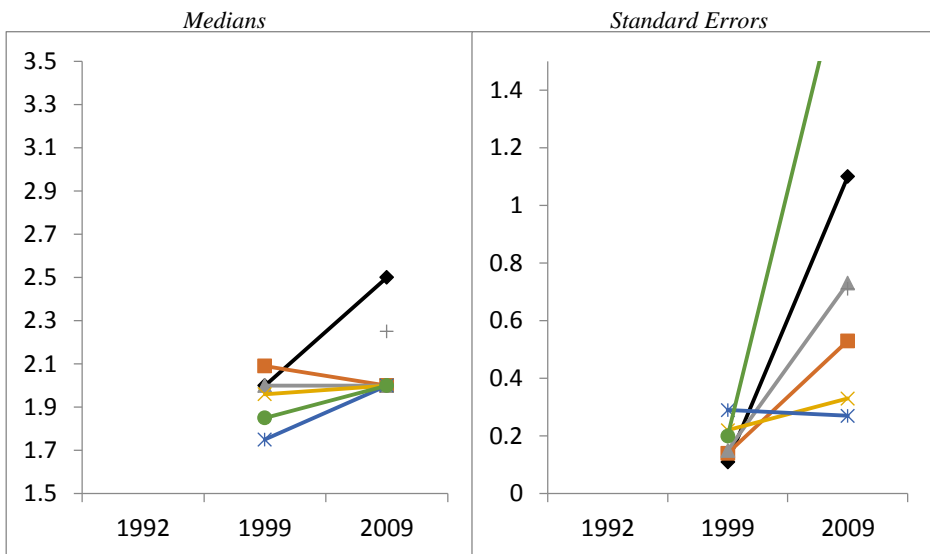
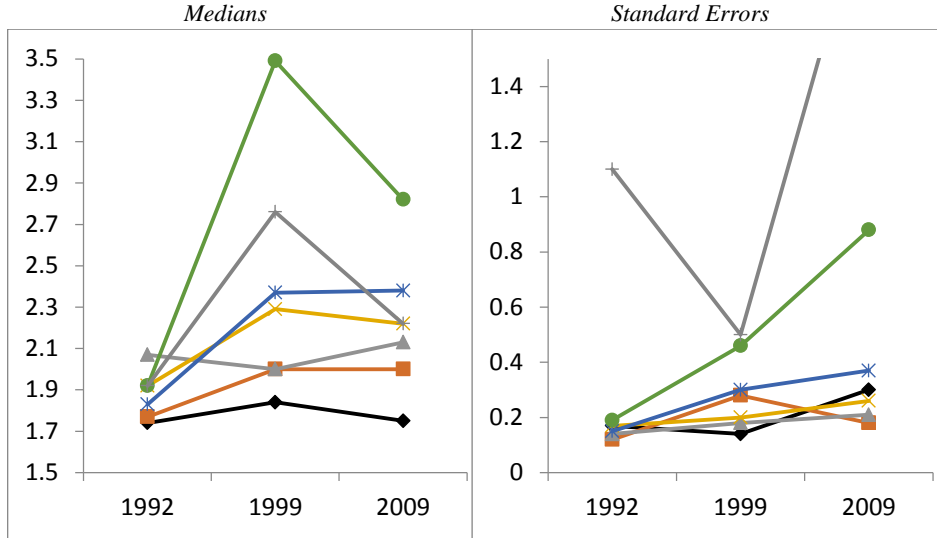


Figure 8-2 Attitudes towards the Level of Inequality in Gross Wages for different Age-Cohorts in Sweden in ISSP1992, 1999 and 2009. Shown are Medians and Standard Deviations



# Appendix C. ISSP 2009 Source Questionnaire

# International Social Survey Programme

## *2009 Social Inequality IV*

### Final questionnaire

August 2008



Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, China, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Great Britain, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Russia, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan, Turkey, Ukraine, Uruguay, USA, Venezuela



## Social Inequality IV

### Drafting group:

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	CONTENT OF THE MODULE	OLD ITEM	NEW ITEM	STANDARD BACK-GROUND	OPTIONAL	TOTAL
<b>Questions on social inequality</b>						
1a-k, 2a	Getting ahead: 4 dimensions: ascription, merit, discrimination, corruption	11	1			12
2bcd	Getting ahead in education		3			3
4a-e, 5a-e	Actual / should occupational earnings	10				10
6a	Toolarge	1				1
6b-7b	Role government / tax	5				5
8ab	Buying social benefits	2				2
9a-d	Perception of class conflict	4				4
10ab	Top-Bottom identification		1	1 (TOPBOT)		2
11	Subjective social mobility	1				1
12a-f	Pay criteria	6				6
3, 13	Just earn / just pay	1	1			2
14ab	Image of society	2				2
<b>Questions on social background</b>						
15ab, 22a	Fathers occupation	1	1		1	3
16abc, 22b	Mothers occupation		3		1	4
17	Cultural resources	1				1
18ab, 19ab, 23ab	Respondents first and last/current occupation	1	1	2 (ISCO88 and WRKTYPE)	2	6
20	Subjective social class	1				1
21ab	Wealth		2			3
24abc, 25abc	Non-cognitive traits				6	6
	<b>Total</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>73</b>

## GENERAL NOTES TO ISSP MEMBERS

1. All notes which are not part of the questionnaire and intended only for members (for example, translation notes, TN) are enclosed in double, square brackets [[like these]]..
2. All the elements in questions which require local adaptation are enclosed in angle brackets. These instructions often relate to adding the name of the relevant country. For example, in Australia “Generally, how would you describe taxes in <country> today?” would read “Generally, how would you describe taxes in Australia today?”
3. Every question starts with a reference between square brackets to earlier Social Inequality questionnaires: A=1987, B=1992, C=1999, D=2008 (=pretest). The reference also contains the ITEM NAME (which refer to names in merged datafile). For example: [[AHEAD16: C,D]] “To get all the way to the top in <country>, you have to be corrupt.” This question was only asked in the Social Inequality module 1999 and in the pretest 2008.
4. For questions for which no “Can’t choose” is provided, code non-productive or missing answer to -99.
5. A fully harmonized file with data of all three previous ISSP Social Inequality rounds (1987, 1992, 1999) and the 2008 pretest is available at: <http://home.fsw.vu.nl/HBG.Ganzeboom/issp2009>.
6. The Social Inequality IV module proper consists of 47 attitudinal questions and 13 background questions. To be consistent we also present 3 standard background questions that are strongly related to the module questions. In addition, we offer 4 background questions and 6 attitudinal questions as options. Note that according to ISSP rules the 47 attitudinal questions of the module proper need to be presented to the respondents consecutively, the background questions, both standard and optional, as well as the optional attitudes can be put in where it fits best. Our recommended order is: {Q24abc}, Q1-Q14ab, {Q22ab}, Q15ab, Q16abc, Q17, {Q25abc}, {Q23ab}, Q18, Q19ab, Q20, Q21ab. Variables in curly brackets {} are optional.



## Social Inequality IV

[[TN: The word RACE in Q1i should be translated referring to 'ethnicity' in a broader sense.]]

To begin we have some questions about opportunities for getting ahead ...							
<b>Q1. Please tick one box for each of these to show how important you think it is for getting ahead in life... (please tick one box on each line)</b>							
		Essen- tial	Very Impor- tant	Fairly impor- tant	Not very impor- tant	Not impor- tant at all	Can't choose
a.	[[AHEAD1: ABCD]] ... how important is coming from a wealthy family?	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>8</sub>
b.	[[AHEAD2: ABD]] ... how important is having well-educated parents?	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>8</sub>
c.	[[AHEAD3: ABD]] ... how important is having a good education yourself?	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>8</sub>
d.	[[AHEAD4: ABD]] ... how important is having ambition?	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>8</sub>
e.	[[AHEAD6: ABD]] ... how important is hard work?	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>8</sub>
f.	[[AHEAD7: ABCD]] ... how important is knowing the right people?	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>8</sub>
g.	[[AHEAD8: ABD]] ... how important is having political connections?	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>8</sub>
h.	[[NEW: AHEAD17: D]] ...how important is giving bribes?	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>8</sub>
i.	[[AHEAD9: ABD]] ... how important is a person's race?	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>8</sub>
j.	[[AHEAD10: ABD]] ... how important is a person's religion?	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>8</sub>
k.	[[AHEAD12: ABD]] ... how important is being born a man or a woman?	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>8</sub>

[[TN to Q2bcd: with 'university' we mean the truly academic segment of higher education]]

<b>Q2. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?</b> <i>(please tick one box on each line)</i>		<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b>	<b>Dis-agree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Can't choose</b>
<b>a.</b>	[[AHEAD16: CD]] To get all the way to the top in <country> today, you have to be corrupt.	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>8</sub>
<b>b.</b>	[[NEW: AHEAD20: D]] In <country> only students from the best secondary schools have a good chance to obtain a university education.	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>8</sub>
<b>c.</b>	[[NEW: AHEAD19: D]] In <country>, only the rich can afford the costs of attending university.	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>8</sub>
<b>d.</b>	[[NEW: AHEAD21: D]] In <country> people have the same chances to enter university, regardless of their gender, ethnicity or social background.	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>8</sub>

<b>Q3. [[JUSTPAY2: CD]] Would you say that you earn... If you are not working now, please tell about your last job. (please tick one box)</b>	
	Much less than I deserve <input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>
	Less than I deserve <input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>
	What I deserve <input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>
	More than I deserve <input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>
	Much more than I deserve <input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>
	Never worked <input type="checkbox"/> <sub>6</sub>
	Can't choose <input type="checkbox"/> <sub>8</sub>

[[Q4-5 should be on facing pages. However, they should NOT be on the same page –respondents should answer the ‘ACTUAL’ earnings questions first, and only then go on to answer the ‘SHOULD questions.]]

[[In 1992, Q4-5 asked about YEAR and BEFORE taxes, in 1999 countries could ask the Q5-6 in the way that was most customary in their country. You should follow the way that you have asked it before. If you did not participate in the 1992 and 1999 ISSP and, you may use whichever of ‘year’, ‘month’, ‘fortnight’, or ‘week’ is most customary in your nation. Use ‘before’ tax or ‘after’ tax, according to the custom in your nation. For example you might say: “Please write how much you think they usually earn each year before taxes”, or “Please write how much you think they usually earn each week before taxes”, or “Please write how much you think they usually earn each week after taxes”.]]

[[A LARGE NATIONAL CORPORATION: a privately owned corporation that operates throughout the country, not a corporation owned by the government. “Company” is also acceptable in English rather than “corporation”.

A CABINET MINISTER IN THE <NATIONAL> GOVERNMENT: use the word that makes clear sense in your language. For example, in Australia it would be ‘A cabinet minister in the federal government’.]

[[Do not insert “Can’t choose” in the questions.]]

[[Coding instructions:

- If answered with a range, take best estimate midpoint
- If answered DK, take –98.
- If not answered, code –99.
- If multiple answers, take first.]

**Q4. We would like to know what you think people in these jobs actually earn. Please write in how much you think they usually earn each <YEAR/MONTH/FORTNIGHT/WEEK>, <BEFORE/AFTER> taxes. Many people are not exactly sure about this, but your best guess will be close enough. This may be difficult, but it is very important. So please try.**

***Please write in how much they ACTUALLY earn each <year/month/fortnight/week> <before/after> taxes.***

<b>a.</b>	[[ACTUAL2: ABD]] About how much do you think a doctor in general practice earns?	-----
<b>b.</b>	[[ACTUAL5: ABCD]] How much do you think a chairman of a large national corporation earns?	-----
<b>c.</b>	[[ACTUAL12: ABCD]] How much do you think a shop assistant earns?	-----
<b>d.</b>	[[ACTUAL10: ABCD]] How much do you think an unskilled worker in a factory earns?	-----
<b>e.</b>	[[ACTUAL11: ABCD]] How much do you think a cabinet minister in the <national> government earns?	-----

**Q5. Next, what do you think people in these jobs ought to be paid. How much do you think they should earn each <YEAR/MONTH/FORTNIGHT/WEEK>, <BEFORE/AFTER>, regardless of what they actually get...**

*Please write in how much they SHOULD earn each <year/month/fortnight/week> <before/after> taxes.*

a.	[[SHOULD2: ABCD]] About how much do you think a doctor in general practice should earn?	-----
b.	[[SHOULD5: ABCD]] How much do you think a chairman of a large national company should earn?	-----
c.	[[SHOULD12: ABCD]] How much do you think a shop assistant should earn?	-----
d.	[[SHOULD10: ABCD]] How much do you think an unskilled worker in a factory should earn?	-----
e.	[[SHOULD11: ABCD]] How much do you think a cabinet minister in the <national> government should earn?	-----

**Q6. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?**  
(Please tick one box on each line)

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Dis-Agree	Strongly disagree	Can't choose
a. [[TOLARGE: ABCD]] Differences in income in <country> are too large.	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>8</sub>
b. [[GOV1: ABCD]] It is the responsibility of the government to reduce the differences in income between people with high incomes and those with low incomes.	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>8</sub>
c. [[GOV6: ABD]] The government should provide a decent standard of living for the unemployed.	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>8</sub>
d. [[GOV4: ABD]] The government should spend less on benefits for the poor.	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>8</sub>

**Q7a. [[TAX4: ABCD]] Do you think people with high incomes should pay a larger share of their income in taxes than those with low incomes, the same share, or a smaller share? (please tick one box)**

Much larger share	<input type="checkbox"/>	1
Larger	<input type="checkbox"/>	2
The same share	<input type="checkbox"/>	3
Smaller	<input type="checkbox"/>	4
Much smaller share	<input type="checkbox"/>	5
Can't choose	<input type="checkbox"/>	8

**Q7b. [[TAX3: ABD]] Generally, how would you describe taxes in <country> today for those with high incomes? Taxes are... (please tick one box)**

...much too high	<input type="checkbox"/>	1
...too high	<input type="checkbox"/>	2
...about right	<input type="checkbox"/>	3
...too low	<input type="checkbox"/>	4
...much too low	<input type="checkbox"/>	5
Can't choose	<input type="checkbox"/>	8

[[TN: The translation of JUST OR UNJUST – RIGHT OF WRONG in Q8a and Q8b should have a normative interpretation.]]

**Q8a. [[BUY1: CD]] Is it just or unjust – right or wrong – that people with higher incomes can buy better health care than people with lower incomes? (please tick one box)**

Very just, definitely right	<input type="checkbox"/>	1
Somewhat just, right	<input type="checkbox"/>	2
Neither just nor unjust, mixed feelings	<input type="checkbox"/>	3
Somewhat unjust, wrong	<input type="checkbox"/>	4
Very unjust, definitely wrong	<input type="checkbox"/>	5
Can't choose	<input type="checkbox"/>	8

**Q8b. [[BUY2: CD]] Is it just or unjust – right or wrong – that people with higher incomes can buy better education for their children than people with lower incomes?**  
*(please tick one box)*

Very just, definitely right	<input type="checkbox"/>	1
Somewhat just, right	<input type="checkbox"/>	2
Neither just nor unjust, mixed feelings	<input type="checkbox"/>	3
Somewhat unjust, wrong	<input type="checkbox"/>	4
Very unjust, definitely wrong	<input type="checkbox"/>	5
Can't choose	<input type="checkbox"/>	8

**Q9. In all countries, there are differences or even conflicts between different social groups. In your opinion, in <country> how much conflict is there between... *(please tick one box on each line)***

	Very strong conflicts	Strong conflicts	Not very strong conflicts	There are no conflicts	Can't choose
<b>a.</b> [[CONFLIC1: ABCD]] ...poor people and rich people?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>b.</b> [[CONFLIC2: ABCD]] ... the working class and the middle class?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>c.</b> [[CONFLIC4: ABCD]] ... management and workers?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>d.</b> [[CONFLIC7: CD]] ... people at the top of society and people at the bottom?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

[[For Q10ab, Use either numbered or unnumbered boxes, or numbers, to label the answer categories. Note that the answer categories of this question MUST be laid out vertically with 10 at the top and 1 at the bottom as shown above. Recommendation: please use these figures and page layout as proposed, unless consistency with earlier use prevents it.]]

**Q10a.** [[STANDARD BACKGROUND: TOPBOT: ABC]] **In our society there are groups which tend to be towards the top and groups which tend to be towards the bottom. Below is a scale that runs from top to bottom. Where would you put yourself now on this scale?**  
*(Please tick one box)*

	TOP	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>10</sub>	TOP
		<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>9</sub>	
		<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>8</sub>	
		<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>7</sub>	
		<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>6</sub>	
		<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	
		<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	
		<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	
		<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	
		<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	
	BOTTOM		BOTTOM

**Q10b.** [[NEW: FTOPBOT]] **And if you think about the family that you grew up in, where did they fit in then?** *(Please tick one box)*

	TOP	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>10</sub>	TOP
		<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>9</sub>	
		<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>8</sub>	
		<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>7</sub>	
		<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>6</sub>	
		<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	
		<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	
		<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	
		<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	
		<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	
	BOTTOM		BOTTOM

**Q11. [[SUBJMOB: ABC]] Please think about your present job (or your last one if you don't have one now). If you compare this job to the job your father had when you were <14/15/16>, would you say that the level of status of your job is (or was)... (please tick one box.)**

Much higher than your father's

\_1

Higher

\_2

About equal

\_3

Lower

\_4

Much lower than your father's

\_5

I never had a job

\_6

I don't know what my father did / father never had a job / never knew father / father deceased

\_7



**Q12. In deciding how much people ought to earn, how important should each of these things be, in your opinion... (please tick one box on each line)**

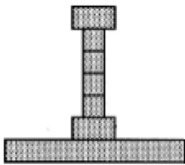
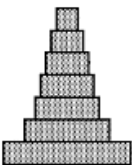
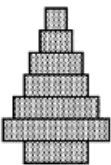
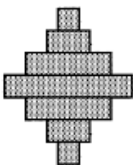
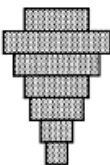
	Essen- tial	Very Impor- tant	Fairly impor- tant	Not very impor- tant	Not impor- tant at all	Can't choose
a. [[PAYCRIT1: BCD]] How much responsibility goes with the job – how important do you think that ought to be in deciding pay?	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>8</sub>
b. [[PAYCRIT2: BCD]] ... the number of years spent in education and training?	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>8</sub>
c. [[PAYCRIT4: BCD]] ... what is needed to support a family?	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>8</sub>
d. [[PAYCRIT5: BCD]] ... whether the person has children to support – how important should that be in deciding pay?	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>8</sub>
e. [[PAYCRIT6: BCD]] ... how well he or she does the job – how important should that be in deciding pay?	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>8</sub>
f. [[PAYCRIT7: BC]] ... how hard he or she works at the job?	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>8</sub>

[[TN: The translation of JUST in Q13 should have a normative interpretation.]]

**Q13. [[REFORMULATED: JUSTPAY1:C,D]] Is your pay just? We are not asking about how much you would like to earn - but what you feel is just given your skills and effort. If you are not working now, please tell about your last job. (please tick one box).**

Much less than is just	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>
A little less than is just	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>
About just for me	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>
A little more than is just	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>
Much more than is just	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>
Never had a job	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>6</sub>
Can't choose	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>8</sub>

[[TN: Please use diagrams and page layout for Q14 as given, unless consistency with earlier use prevents it.]]

<b>Q14. These five diagrams show different types of society. Please read the descriptions and look at the diagrams and decide which you think best describes &lt;country&gt; ..</b>				
				
<b>Type A</b>	<b>Type B</b>	<b>Type C</b>	<b>Type D</b>	<b>Type E</b>
A small elite at the top, very few people in the middle and the great mass of people at the bottom.	A society like a pyramid with a small elite at the top, more people in the middle, and most at the bottom.	A pyramid except that just a few people are at the bottom.	A society with most people in the middle.	Many people near the top, and only a few near the bottom.

<b>a. [[DIAGRAM: BCD]] First, what type of society is &lt;country&gt; today – which diagram comes closest? (please tick one box )</b>	
Type A	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>
Type B	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>
Type C	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>
Type D	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>
Type E	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>
Can't choose	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>8</sub>
<b>b. [[DIAOUGHT:BCD]] What do you think &lt;country&gt; ought to be like – which would you prefer? (please tick one box )</b>	
Type A	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>
Type B	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>
Type C	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>
Type D	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>
Type E	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>
Can't choose	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>8</sub>

**BACKGROUND QUESTIONS**

[[TN: The background questions can be asked separately from the attitudinal questions. Country specific wording is allowed as long as it gets this information. Like other demographic and background variables, the questions can be put wherever you like in the questionnaire – they need not be with the other ISSP questions.]]

[[TN: The age reference – “when you were <14-15-16>” in the questions below – should preferably be age 15 (PISA age). Relevant arguments to deviate are (A) when the question of similar questions have been asked with a different referent age, and the alternative choice would make the questionnaire more consistent, (B) when age 14 or 16 is clearly more relevant in terms of educational or labor market choices.]]

[[TN: Countries that expect the categories in Q15a, Q16b, Q18a and Q19a not to fit their national situation, should add country specific codes. Examples: collective farming in (post)communist countries, helper in family business/farm, apprenticeships as first jobs.]]

[[TN: Answers to open alternatives in Q15a, Q16b and Q18a – if included – should be post-coded.]]

<b>Q15a. [[FWRKTYP: BCD]] When you were &lt;14-15-16&gt; years old, for whom did your father work? If your father did not have a paid job at the time, please give information about his last job before that time. (please tick one box)</b>	
	<b>Your father</b>
Employee of a private company or business	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
Government [national, state or local government]	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
Self-employed	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
Other (please specify) _____	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
Can't choose	<input type="checkbox"/> 8

[[TN: Answers to the open occupation questions (Q15b, Q16c and Q18a) must be coded to the international Labour Office's International Standard Classification of Occupations 1988 – the full 4 digit code. Note that recommendations on coding ISCO are available on the ISSP website.]]

<p><b>Q15b. [[FISKO: ABCD]] When you were &lt;14-15-16&gt; years old, what kind of work did your father do; what was his main occupation?</b></p> <p><b>Describe fully, using two words or more (do not use initials or abbreviations). If your father did not have a paid job at the time, please give information about his last job before that time.</b></p>	<p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>
--	---

**Q16a. [[NEW: MWORK: D]] When you were <14-15-16> years old, did your mother work outside the household? If your mother did not work when you were <14-15-16> years old, did your mother work before? If she worked before, when did she stop working? (please tick one box)**

	Your mother
Yes, my mother did have a job when I was <14-15-16> years	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
No:	
▪ my mother <b>never</b> had a job outside the household	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
▪ my mother stopped working <b>before</b> she got married	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
▪ my mother stopped working <b>after</b> she got married, but <b>before</b> her first child was born	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
▪ my mother stopped working <b>after</b> her first child was born	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
Can't choose	<input type="checkbox"/> 8

**Q16b. [[NEW: MWRKTYP: D]] In her last job – i.e. when or before you were <14-15-16> years old, for whom did your mother work? If your mother did not have a paid job at the time, please give information about her last job before that time. (please tick one box)**

	Your mother
Employee of a private company or business	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
Government [national, state or local government]	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
Self-employed	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
Other (please specify) _____	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
My mother never worked outside the household	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
Can't choose	<input type="checkbox"/> 7

**Q16c [[MISKO: BCD]] When you were <14-15-16> years old, what kind of work did your mother do; what was her main occupation?**

**Describe fully, using two words or more (do not use initials or abbreviations). If your mother did not have a paid job at the time, please give information about her last job before that time.**

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

**Q17. [[BOOKS: CD]] About how many books were there around your family's house when you were <14-15-16> years old? (please tick one box)**

None	<input type="checkbox"/>	1
1 or 2	<input type="checkbox"/>	2
Around 10	<input type="checkbox"/>	3
Around 20	<input type="checkbox"/>	4
Around 50	<input type="checkbox"/>	5
Around 100	<input type="checkbox"/>	6
Around 200	<input type="checkbox"/>	7
Around 500	<input type="checkbox"/>	8
1000 or more	<input type="checkbox"/>	9

**Q18a. [[NEW: WRKTY1: D]] In your first job, after leaving full-time education, for whom did you work? (please tick one box)**

Employee of a private company or business	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
Government [national, state or local government]	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
Self-employed	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
Other (please specify) _____	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
I have never had a paid job	<input type="checkbox"/> 7

**Q18b. [[NEW RISK01: D]] In this first job, what was your main occupation?**

**Describe fully, using two words or more (do not use initials or abbreviations).**

.....

.....

.....

.....

**Q19a. [[STANDARD BACKGROUND: WRKTYPE: ABCD]] In your current job, for whom do you work? If you are not working now, please tell us about your most recent job. (please tick one box)**

Works for government	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
Works for a publicly owned firm	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
Does not work for government or a publicly owned firm and not self-employed	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
Self-employed	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
Other (please specify) _____	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
I have never had a paid job	<input type="checkbox"/> 0

[[TN: Answers to Q19b must be coded to the international Labour Office's International Standard Classification of Occupations 1988 – the full 4 digit code. Note that recommendations on coding ISCO are available at the ISSP website. Q19a and Q19b are standard background variables.]]

**Q19b. [[STANDARD BACKGROUND ISCO88: ABCD]] And in your current job, what is your main occupation? If you are not working now, please tell us about your last job.**

**Describe fully, using two words or more (do not use initials or abbreviations).**

.....

.....

.....

.....

[[TN: In the past Q20 has been asked in different formats in different countries. Please **change** to the specification here, if this is the case in your country.]]

<b>Q20. [[CLASS: ABCD]] Most people see themselves as belonging to a particular class. Please tell me which social class you would say you belong to? (please tick one box)</b>	
Lower class	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
Working class	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
Lower middle class	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
Middle class	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
Upper middle class	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
Upper class	<input type="checkbox"/> 6

[[TN: Answer categories for Q21ab can vary between countries. Use the following guidelines for developing the categories:

- Categories 1-2 are reserved
- Choose the midpoint of category 7 to be equivalent of the expected mean wealth using external information.
- Choose midpoints of categories 3 and 11 to be equivalent to approximately 1/6, respectively 6x the midpoint of category 7.
- Interspace other categories evenly between 3, 7 and 11.
- Add open ended category 12 consistent with 11.
- Replace € sign with appropriate equivalent in your country.]]

[[TN: 'your immediate family' in Q21ab refers to spouse [husband/wife], children or other members of the nuclear family]]

<b>The next few questions are about the things you and your immediate family own.</b>	
<b>Q21a. [[NEW: WEALTH1: D]] About how much money would be left if the home or apartment you and/or your immediate family live in was sold, and any debts on it, such as a mortgage or personal loan, would have been paid off? Please give your best estimate. (Tick one box.)</b>	
Just debts	<input type="checkbox"/> 01
I / we do not own a home	<input type="checkbox"/> 02
€ 1 - € 30.000	<input type="checkbox"/> 03
€ 30.000 - € 60.000	<input type="checkbox"/> 04
€ 60.000 - € 90.000	<input type="checkbox"/> 05
€ 90.000 - € 120.000	<input type="checkbox"/> 06
€ 120.000 - € 160.000	<input type="checkbox"/> 07
€ 160.000 - € 200.000	<input type="checkbox"/> 08
€ 200.000 - € 400.000	<input type="checkbox"/> 09
€ 400.000 - € 700.000	<input type="checkbox"/> 10
€ 700.000 - € 1.000.000	<input type="checkbox"/> 11
More than € 1.000.000	<input type="checkbox"/> 12
Can't choose	<input type="checkbox"/> 99

**Q21b.** [[NEW: WEALTH2: D]] **About how much money would be left if you and/or your immediate family converted to cash all savings, stocks, or bonds you own, and then paid off any personal debts you have (not including any home loan)? Please give your best estimate. (Tick only one box.)**

Just debts	<input type="checkbox"/>	01
Nothing	<input type="checkbox"/>	02
€1 - € 15.000	<input type="checkbox"/>	03
€ 15.000 - € 25.000	<input type="checkbox"/>	04
€ 25.000 - € 50.000	<input type="checkbox"/>	05
€ 50.000 - € 80.000	<input type="checkbox"/>	06
€ 80.000 - € 120.000	<input type="checkbox"/>	07
€ 120.000 - € 200.000	<input type="checkbox"/>	08
€ 200.000 - € 300.000	<input type="checkbox"/>	09
€ 300.000 - € 500.000	<input type="checkbox"/>	10
€ 500.000 - € 700.000	<input type="checkbox"/>	11
More than € 700.000	<input type="checkbox"/>	12
Can't choose	<input type="checkbox"/>	99



## OPTIONAL BACKGROUND VARIABLES

[[TN: We recommend to ask Q22ab before Q15 and Q16, and Q23ab before Q18-Q19.]]

[[TN: Use the examples of occupations as specified; however you can substitute a certain occupation if it would not work in your country, e.g. because it does not fit the general description.]]

[[TN: Q22ab and Q23ab can be asked in separate formats if this fits better with the way you ask for current/last occupation.]]

<b>Q22ab.</b> [[REFORMULATED FCRUDE: ABD]] + [[NEW MCRUDE: D]] <b>Here is a list of different types of jobs. Which type of job did your father/mother have when you were &lt;14-15-16&gt; years (or earlier when they did not have a paid job at that time?)</b> <i>(please tick one box for your father and one box for your mother)</i>	<b>Your father</b>	<b>Your mother</b>
<b>Professional and technical</b> (for example: doctor, teacher, engineer, artist, accountant, nurse)	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>
<b>Higher administrative</b> (for example: banker, executive in big business, high government official, union official)	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>
<b>Clerical</b> (for example: secretary, clerk, office manager, civil servant, bookkeeper)	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>
<b>Sales</b> (for example: sales manager, shop owner, shop assistant, insurance agent, buyer)	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>
<b>Service</b> (for example: restaurant owner, police officer, waitress, barber, caretaker)	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>
<b>Skilled worker</b> (for example: foreman, motor mechanic, printer, seamstress, tool and die maker, electrician)	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>6</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>6</sub>
<b>Semi-skilled worker</b> (for example: bricklayer, bus driver, cannery worker, carpenter, sheet metal worker, baker)	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>7</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>7</sub>
<b>Unskilled worker</b> (for example: labourer, porter, unskilled factory worker, cleaner)	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>8</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>8</sub>
<b>Farm worker</b> (for example: farm labourer, tractor driver)	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>9</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>9</sub>
<b>Farm proprietor, farm manager</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>10</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>10</sub>
Father/mother never had a job	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>96</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>96</sub>
Father/mother unknown	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>99</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>99</sub>

**Q23ab.** [[REFORMULATED: CRUDE1: D]] + [[REFORMULATED: CRUDE: D]] **Here is a list of different types of jobs. Which type of job did you have in your first job – after leaving full-time education – and which type of job do you have now in your current job? If you are not working now, please tell us about your last job.** (please tick one box for your first job and one box for your current/last job)

	Your first job	Your current/last job
<b>Professional and technical</b> (for example: doctor, teacher, engineer, artist, accountant, nurse)	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>
<b>Higher administrative</b> (for example: banker, executive in big business, high government official, union official)	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>
<b>Clerical</b> (for example: secretary, clerk, office manager, civil servant, bookkeeper)	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>
<b>Sales</b> (for example: sales manager, shop owner, shop assistant, insurance agent, buyer)	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>
<b>Service</b> (for example: restaurant owner, police officer, waitress, barber, caretaker)	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>
<b>Skilled worker</b> (for example: foreman, motor mechanic, printer, seamstress, tool and die maker, electrician)	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>6</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>6</sub>
<b>Semi-skilled worker</b> (for example: bricklayer, bus driver, cannery worker, carpenter, sheet metal worker, baker)	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>7</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>7</sub>
<b>Unskilled worker</b> (for example: labourer, porter, unskilled factory worker, cleaner)	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>8</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>8</sub>
<b>Farm worker</b> (for example: farm labourer, tractor driver)	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>9</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>9</sub>
<b>Farm proprietor, farm manager</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>10</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>10</sub>
First job is same as current job.	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>96</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>96</sub>
I have never had a job	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>97</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>97</sub>

## OPTIONAL PERSONALITY TRAITS

[[TN: We recommend to ask Q24 somewhere before Q1 (i.e. before the module items) and Q25 after Q17 (i.e. with the questions on family background). The idea is to keep Q24 and Q25 far apart.]]

<b>Q24. How would you describe yourself as a person?</b> <i>(please tick one box on each line)</i>					
	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Dis-agree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Can't choose</b>
<b>a.</b> [[NEW: MOT1: D]] I work hard to complete my daily tasks, even if I am slightly sick or when there is another legitimate reason for taking a break.	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>8</sub>
<b>b.</b> [[NEW: MOT2: D]] I perform to the best of my ability even on a task that I do not like.	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>8</sub>
<b>c.</b> [[NEW: MOT3: D]] I work hard to maintain my performance on a task, even if the task takes a long time to start producing any results.	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>8</sub>

<b>Q25. Please think about the time you were &lt;14-15-16&gt; years old (or before, if you left school at a younger age). How would you describe yourself at the time?</b> <i>(please tick one box on each line)</i>					
	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Dis-agree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Can't choose</b>
<b>a.</b> [[NEW: MOT5: D]] I tried hard to go to school everyday, even if I was slightly sick or when there was another legitimate reason for staying home.	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>8</sub>
<b>b.</b> [[NEW: MOT6: D]] I performed to the best of my ability in school, even on an assignment that I did not like.	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>8</sub>
<b>c.</b> [[NEW: MOT4: D]] I worked hard to maintain my performance on a school assignment, even if it would take a long time to start producing any results.	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>8</sub>



## SUMMARY

The dissertation finds that, compared to people in other western countries, the Scandinavians were exceptionally egalitarian in the period from 1992 to 2009. This Scandinavian egalitarianism seems constituted mostly of an aversion to top-level excess, rather than a wish to spoil the bottom of the labour market excessively. This egalitarianism cannot be ascribed to mainstream non-contextual explanations within the field, but instead rests on a perceived nexus of legitimated harmonic egalitarian societies. The attitudinal patterns of Danes and Swedes are however quite different. These differences are in congruence with the historical differences in the two countries' political economies, and with differences in how the media in the two countries still represent "the rich": The Swedish legacy of the ideological but peaceful class-society has evolved into representations of the rich as a class distinct from the middle class, and into attitudes divided by class and income. The Danish legacy of consensus democracy on the other hand has evolved into representations of the rich as part of the very wide perceived middle class, and very similar attitudinal patterns across class and other potential cleavages.

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