The Norwegian Voter

A Study of Political Beliefs and Voting Behavior

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Abstract

Do people have ideologically constrained and stable political belief systems, and does it matter for their vote choice? This has been under debate since the seminal article of Converse (1964) stated that most people were "innocent of ideology". In this thesis I map Norwegian voters' belief systems using relational class analysis on Norway's most salient political topics and analyze to what degree their belief systems matter in their vote choice. I find that people vary in their level of ideological constraint and attitudinal stability, with the analysis producing 3 distinct groups that I name *ideologues*, *ideologues light* and *ideologues zero*. However, the level of constraint and stability is high among most voters, and the least constrained are still constrained and stable on some of the most salient topics and single issues. When analyzing vote choice, I find that people are equally likely to vote for the same party over time irrespective of ideological constraint, and that voting stability is high on all the applied measures. However, when people vote for different parties the most constrained have a higher tendency to vote for ideological neighboring parties, whereas less constrained voters tend to move further on the ideological left right axis, and they have a higher tendency to vote for another party block altogether.

Acknowledgements

At the end of this journey there are many I would like to thank for their help and support. First I want to thank my supervisor Zoltán Fazekas for good guidance along the way. His feedback has always been on-point, and it has brought this thesis from “something interesting” into becoming a substantially relevant contribution to the scholarly debate. I also want to acknowledge Øyvind Bugge Solheim and Bernt Aardal for their valuable input along the way.

Further I would like to thank friends and family. In particular I want to mention *Colloquium* which has been a cornerstone in my years at Blindern, and which I hope will remain so in the unbeknownst future. Another special mention goes to Oda for her support and company, reminding me of the life outside of the matrix of R.

Lastly, none of this has happened in a vacuum, and there are lots of structural variables that have been in play. Chief amongst those has been the incredible season of LFC. Even if their success might have negatively affected the time spent on this thesis, the team and Mr. Klopp have shown the importance of ambition, hard work and belief. No matter the final result of this thesis or the CL-final, getting this far is in itself an accomplishment.

All faults in this thesis are my own.

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1 Introduction

A central aspect of theories concerning democracy is that the electorate consists of somewhat rational people that vote according to their political preferences. This aspect has been riddled with decades-long discussion, first regarding the degree to which people have *political belief systems* that consist of stable and consistent preferences on political issues (Baldassari and Goldberg, 2014). Secondly the discussion continues with to what degree people actually vote according to these respective belief systems. In short, the controversy is to what degree voters have consistent preferences, and if they use their vote as a means to attain them. In this thesis I investigate this controversy, by using Norway as a case and answering the following:

To what degree does the political belief systems of Norwegian voters matter in the stability of their vote choice?

When looking at political belief systems, it does seem to be more productive to look at European voters, and more specifically the literature speaks in favor of looking at stable, multi-party systems (Holmberg & Granberg 1988). Norway checks both these boxes, and it can be considered a case where we should find strong evidence of both *ideological constraint*, *attitudinal stability*, and *stable voting behavior* because of its highly educated public and the stable nature of its party system (Statistics Norway 2017; Arter 2008).

To do this I first see to what degree, and how, voters have organized their preferences in some coherent fashion that can make up their political belief systems (Converse 1964: 3). The mapping is done using a panel study over two consecutive elections to also measure attitudinal stability. With more knowledge of the heterogeneity in the constraints and stability among voters' belief systems, I then turn to see how the different levels of constraint impacts the stability of their vote choice.

Running a *relational class analysis* on the panel sample in both 2009 and 2013 using 30-34 of the most central political issues in Norway, divided on 6 *ideological dimensions*/*issue domains*, I find that Norwegian voters do vary in their degree of constraint. The analysis partition the sample into three groups, based on their level and pattern of constraint. I find that these groups vary in their attitudinal stability accordingly, with the most constrained also having the most stable attitudes. But the general level of constraint and stability is remarkably

high, particularly on the *issue domains* regarding morality and migration. There is also evidence of high stability across all groups on individual issues of high salience, such as the controversy surrounding a potential oil excavation in Lofoten, Vesterålen and Senja.

Analyzing the relation between ideological constraints and voting behavior I also find a strong relationship. Whereas party vote stability is similar among the levels of constraint, there are a strong connection between lower levels of constraint and volatility in voting when we look at party switching. The most constrained have a higher tendency to vote for neighboring parties, whereas the less constrained tend to move further on an ordinal left-right axis, and they are more likely to switch party blocks altogether than the most constrained.

In the period under analysis there was a government change, from a Labor-led majority coalition on the left from 2005 to 2013, to a Conservatives-led minority government with two supporting parties from the 2013 election and onwards, which totaled an effective surplus support in parliament as the government would only need one of the supporting parties to form a majority in passing legislation (Stortinget 2015; Fossan 2013). When it comes to public opinion Aardal (2015: 65-67) studied whether there was a so-called "blue wave" ("blå bølge") in opinion in the period, where the opinion more and more supported right-wing policies, so as to explain the electoral change that led to the governmental change. By analyzing shifts in opinion on economic left-right issues they found no significant change between 2009 and 2013, but they found that there had been a significant change when comparing 2005 with 2009 and 2013 (Aardal 2011: 71; Aardal 2015: 65-67).

When it comes to the Norwegian electorate in this period of three elections, 2009 sticks out as an election where the aggregate electoral movement was remarkably stable. The aggregate change in parties' vote shares in 2009 was at 6,7%, compared to 16% in 2005 and 14,3% in 2013 (Aardal & Bergh 2015: 19). This means that there was a remarkably low shift in the balance of votes between the parties. But when considering individual voter instability, the numbers bring to light a different picture, where voters switched parties at a close to equal rate in all elections. Among those that voted in 2009 and 2013, 33% changed their party vote. Between 2005 and 2009, 31 % changed their party vote, and in 2001-2005 40% changed their vote (Aardal & Bergh eds. 2015: 20). This means that people were just about as likely to switch parties at all elections, but that 2009 sticks out as an election were the party switching had less of an aggregate impact in electoral success for the respective parties.

A central question in election research has also been what motivates people in their vote choices. From the old structural cleavages argued for by Lipset, Rokkan and Valen (Converse & Valen 1971; Lipset & Rokkan 1967; Rokkan 1987) through to the ideological dimensions that make out the foundation for issue voting of today (Aardal 2015: 77). In this thesis I explore the constraints of Norwegian voters on the most central ideological dimensions found in the contemporary Norwegian electorate, thus seeing how these dimensions found in the aggregate matter in a heterogeneous electorate. An implication of this exploration is an evaluation of the importance of "old" and "new" politics (Aardal 2015: 88-89; Kitschelt 1994, 1995) among subgroups of the electorate, and how people vary in their constraint on issue domains and even single issues when we consider aspects such as the level of abstraction.

The main aim of this thesis is to take the criticism of ideologically constrained voters and spatial voting and test it on a case that strongly favors this ideal concept. By running an analysis that uncovers heterogeneity in the electorate we will further be able to not just conclude on there being evidence of constraint in the electorate, but also for whom and to what degree. With this I aim to make a bridge between the findings from the sceptics (Converse 1964; Achen & Bartels 2016; Freeder et al 2016) and the optimists (Aardal & Bergh eds. 2015; Ansolabhere et al 2008). Thus presenting evidence for constraint and attitudinal stability amongst vast portions of the electorate, and for whom it might be lacking, why they lack it and electoral consequences thereof.

Outside of this main ambition, there are many subsidiary contributions in this thesis. As I find that less constrained voters have a larger tendency to vote significantly differently than the most constrained in a spatial sense, this means that they might impact elections to a larger degree, and especially close elections in majority-based systems. This finding is also of interest for electoral research where there is shown no significant change in opinion, but where there is a significant electoral change in voting. Such events should not necessarily imply that ideology does not matter at all, but that ideology might play less of a role for some particular portions of the electorate.

Another contribution is a methodological contribution as I use a rather original method and conceptually apply the same principles of single issue perspective on constraint and attitudinal stability as the critics of constraint. Further I examine predictors of ideological constraint within the electorate, finding that political interest is a very fruitful shortcut to explain and

categorize the many aspects found in this thesis. It is a significant predictor of higher levels of constraint, party vote stability, neighboring party vote stability, and block vote stability.

The main finding from this thesis is that people do vary in their level of constraint, but that most voters in Norway do hold constrained and stable political beliefs. Further voting stability varies with the level of constraint, but here again most people show high levels of voting stability across all the applied measures.

2 Political Belief Systems

The ideal model of democratic citizens is that they are fully informed and vote rationally based on the political issues of the day. This means that people should know and have an opinion on all the relevant political issues, and that their political behavior should reflect this (Achen & Bartels 2016: 23). This ideal is rather unrealistic and likely unattainable, and here I explore some of the variations that we can find in reality (Zaller 1992: 1).

People have preferences on a wide set of political issues, these preferences can be traced back to underlying political attitudes that are more stable and act as a compass in the shifting landscape of political issues (Aardal 2015: 49-51). These attitudes can be considered in their totality as an individual's political belief system. Converse (1964) defined a belief system as follows," *a configuration of ideas and attitudes in which the elements are bound together by some form of constraint or functional interdependence"*. The constraints in such a belief system can be understood as how coherent the preferences of voters are within political topics, ideological dimensions or issue domains, such as environmental issues, and across the most important political topics in our societies, which can be environmental, economic, and immigration issues to name a few of the most typical.

In practice ideological constraint can be more or less constrained across preferences, and more or less stable over time. This is both a theoretical and logical possibility, as the complete list of issues at hand in a polity is enormous, and one of the reasons why there exists full-time politicians. It is a demanding task to be up to date and evaluate every single issue, and people vary not only in their time and capacity, but also in their interest for such matters. Taking the standard survey approach that is applied to measure preferences among the public (Bryman 2012: 166), the most constrained will answer in the same way on a wide range of issues concerning the same topic, on taxes, regulation, size of the public sector etc. The least constrained however, will answer in all directions, favorably or in disagreement, even if the questions are on the same political topic, say economic policy, responding as if a dice throw determined each issue preference.

Constraint does not have to be unidimensional, with all preferences going in the same direction across all political topics. Baldassari and Goldberg (2014) found that people's belief systems can be organized in different ways but still have an internal logic and be constrained

accordingly. This means that it can take form in different patterns, as an illustration it could be that a person is rather "liberal" on a wide set of questions regarding moral issues, and "conservative" on economic issues. This multidimensionality fits well with the Norwegian case, as it has been ascribed to have cross-cutting cleavages or dimensions of competition on both "new" and "old" politics, this makes out a multidimensional space within which both parties and voters place themselves (Aardal 2015: 88-92).

So ideally, preferences work as a compass in the political sphere. Ideologically constrained and stable political belief systems make out the foundation for voters when they look at the parties and decide on who to vote for. Without ideologically constrained and stable beliefs that guide people's vote we would have to fall back to other explanations of vote choice. The less constrained and more unstable voters' attitudes are, the less might elections be considered as a tool to aggregate people's preferences. If voters instead hold no opinion or are easily blown around with the wind, and their vote is based on other factors, then it would pose a challenge to the legitimacy of democracy as a system for such a type of aggregated decision making (Achen & Bartels 2016: 14-15). It will make one question, what the representative assemblies actually represent.

2.1 The Controversy on Ideological Constraint

There are two main explanations for the conflicting findings that make out this ongoing debate, on whether people have ideologically constrained political belief systems or not, and to what degree if they have it. One explanation is that they measure constraint differently and that constraint and stability suffers under that. On the critics' side, they look at individual issue questions and look at the stability of preferences for each item individually (Converse 1964; Freeder et al 2016; Achen & Bartels 2016). Those arguing in favor of people having constrained and stable preferences use aggregate indexes that are made up of the most salient issues within each political topic (Ansolabhere et al 2008; Aardal & Bergh eds. 2015), and some find consistency and stability also for individual items (Freeze & Montgomery 2016). They use aggregated indexes as a means to measure latent political attitudes that individual issues might only partially capture. The critique against indexes is that the aggregating process reduces complexity under the notion of measurement error (Zaller, 1992: 31-32), and that the so-called measurement error is out of proportion so that the process is actually reducing the inconsistencies of most people on these individual issues.

The other explanation is that most of the findings can be geographically isolated. Most of this divide is to be found on the respective sides of the Atlantic sea, more specifically with scholars studying the American electorate finding much evidence for little constraint (Achen & Bartels 2016; Converse 1964; Freeder et al 2016) and various other, less and less relevant, factors than ideology to play a role in people's vote choice (Achen & Bartels 2016). On the European side and among certain scholars also in the US case, they however find much evidence for voters holding ideologically constrained and stable preferences who in large fashion choose parties that fit their preferences (Aardal eds. 2011; Aardal & Bergh eds. 2015; Ansolabhere et al 2008; Baldassari & Goldberg 2014; Bartle 2000; Freeze and Montgomery 2016; Jackson & Marcus 1975; Lachat 2011; Peffley & Hurwitz 1985).

Exactly why so conflicting findings can be found among consolidated democracies can be traced back to the type of political system in question. That is the conclusion of research that has studied the differences between the Swedish multi-party system, as a representative of the consolidated democracies of Europe, and the two-party system of the US (Granberg & Holmberg 1988; Niemi & Westholm 1984; Sidanius et al 1987). The political systems of Europe, that in large fashion are party-centered makes the political landscape more stable than in candidate-centered systems, where new candidates bring with them a much more changing political platform than stable parties with a central party manifesto. This stability and focus on party politics makes political issues a more relevant element for people when they navigate the political landscape and in their vote choice.

That scholars find other factors such as valence to matter in choosing between candidates in a polity such as the US or UK (Clarke et al 2009; Clarke et al 2015) is arguably quite rational. This is supported by the finding that placement knowledge is important for attitude stability and constraint (Freeder et al 2016). To be able to place candidates, not parties, on political scales, and especially on a huge set of independent issues, is a huge task for the average voter. A stable multi-party system with clear cut political platforms on defined issue domains, where parties matter more than candidates makes the task of placement knowledge easier, and with this logic it should mean that people would be more ideologically constrained. With a stable multi-party system, it is easier to navigate and learn over time, in comparison to a two-party candidate-based system.

Norway is exactly that, a consolidated democracy with a stable multi-party system. In the Nordic context Norway places itself between the Swedish and Danish case, where Sweden

has a higher, and absolute threshold for electoral support to gain access in parliament, and with Denmark having a lower threshold, having somewhat more volatility in their party system (Arter 2008). One of the benefits of choosing Norway above Sweden is that the emergence of new political issues can lead to parties competing over them more readily than in Sweden. One such example is the emergence of the Progress party, which started out as a protest party and is in time of writing in its second term as a government coalition partner.

Considering there still being a debate regarding people's degree and existence of ideological constraint, I start of by examining how it stands in the Norwegian context. Research on the Norwegian electorate has mostly focused on the aggregate level of constraint in the electorate by applying aggregated indexes (Aardal eds. 2011; Aardal & Bergh eds. 2015). While the critics claim that most individuals lack such constraint when considering single issue items. To combine these two lairs, I study how people vary in their constraint, and what levels of constraint we find below the aggregate on single issues in Norway.

Baldassari and Goldberg (2014) used relational class analysis on representative samples of the US electorate with the ANES data between 1984 and 2004, running the analysis on 24-40 items divided on four ideological domains: Economics, civil rights, morality and foreign policy (Baldassari & Goldberg 2014: 84-85). In their analysis they find three groups, who they dub Ideologues, Alternatives and Agnostics (Baldassari & Goldberg 2014: 60-61). As that was the US case, where previous studies have found little constraint and comparative studies have supported this. And since it is a candidate-centered two-party system. We should at least find the same amount of diversity among the Norwegian electorate. Having more parties to choose from, and a party-centered system where it is easier to take cues and learn where the parties stand on important issues.

1) *People vary in the degree and patterns of ideological constraint within their political belief systems.*

2.1.1 Ideological Constraint and Attitudinal Stability

Since Converse's article in 1964 the debate has been ongoing on not only whether people have constrained beliefs, but also if these beliefs are stable over time. This is essential as attitudinal stability is one of the core aspects that filters issue positions out as firmly held beliefs and not just being part of the mood of the day. If people's beliefs are constrained, but change fully from day to day, or at least from election to election, then the reasoning that this is firmly held beliefs is weakened. Therefore, both constraints and stability are essential in a sophisticated belief system.

Further, as the ideological constraints limit the rational choices of voters in an election, attitudinal stability will impose such similar constraint across time and multiple elections. If attitudinal stability varies, is low or non-existent, then that would mean that voters change their beliefs often, or that they had no actual beliefs in the first place. And it could just be that constraints would more likely be a product of partisanship or post-decision rationalization than actual beliefs. For political beliefs to have any causal effect on vote choice, beliefs should both be constrained and stable over time.

Together with ideological constraint, findings related to attitudinal stability have been conflicting in the time since Converse's article (1964). Converse and others with him argue that most people show little attitudinal stability (Achen & Bartels 2016; Converse 1964; Freeder et al 2016; Zaller 1992), whereas the other side argues that there is stability (Aardal & Bergh eds. 2015; Ansolabhere et al 2008), we just have to look at the latent attitudes behind the individual issue preferences. Converse (1964: 49) argue that the electorate can be divided according to a "black-white model", where some minor parts of the electorate are consistent and stable, whereas most people show little constraint and no stability, but that they instead answer at random.

In the Norwegian context there has been strong evidence for high stability when looking at aggregated indexes on ideological dimensions (Aardal, 2015: 64). When looking below aggregated indexes, on single issues, there has also been found evidence for attitudinal stability in Norway, particularly on issue domains such as morality and migration with mixed results for domains such as climate and the economy (Thomassen 2008: 90). There was also found a positive relationship between a simple measure of ideological constraint and an aggregated measure of attitudinal stability (Thomassen 2008:103).

With most of this stability being found on the aggregate, it is well worth a revisit. Thereby accounting for the possible heterogeneity in constraint and its relations to stability on individual issues and issue domains. Considering the rather high rates of stability shown at the aggregate level, it is unlikely that we will find a majority of voters holding no stable beliefs as Converse theorizes in his "black-white model". Indeed, Thomassen (2008: 113-114) concludes that such a model fits poorly on the Norwegian electorate.

2) *People's attitudinal stability varies with their degree of constraint. Those more constrained will tend to have more stable attitudes over time.*

2.2 Political Beliefs and Spatial Voting

As mentioned at the very beginning of this thesis, a central aspect of democratic theory is that people vote based on their preferences. This is the guiding idea behind theories concerning spatial voting (Downs 1957; Enelow & Hinich 1984). Spatial voting is best imagined as a political landscape where voters and political parties reside. In this landscape the geographical coordinates are based in ideology. Voters are placed according to their preferences on the different political topics, and parties position themselves to be ideologically close to voters without overlapping too much with competing parties. If we have a bird's view of this landscape we could see voters spread around, and parties placed strategically to cater to voters and avoid too much overlap with each other. Spatial voting follows the simple logic that people will vote for the party that are closest to them, by choosing the parties that best represent their preferences.

There are however many other theories of voting, as the ideal of the rational voter has been in need of modifications to fit with reality (Achen & Bartels 2016: 14; de Vries & Giger 2014). These different theories relax the different assumptions of voters' capabilities or focus on factors outside of the ideological. These are theories that look at economic voting, be it retrospective or prospective, and on general or individual economic evaluations (Duch 2007; Lewis-Beck & Stegmaier 2000). Or theories based on valence voting, where voters look at personal characteristics and evaluate the competence, capabilities, or similar aspects of the political options available, particularly relevant in a candidate-based system (Clarke et al 2015; Green 2007).

In this thesis I choose to stick with the theory of spatial voting, and more specifically I rely on proximity theory as it is an easily accessible way of analyzing voting behavior. Within spatial voting there has also been a long debate, between proximity and directional voting that I do not follow up on here (Macdonald et al 1998, 2001; Lewis & King 1999; Westholm 1997, 2001; Fazekas & Meder 2013). Spatial theory comes with demanding assumptions on voters' behalf, but it is therefore also a good test of the importance of consistent and stable belief systems. If people have consistent and stable belief systems, and parties stay put ideologically, then people should be voting for the same party over and over again. If there are some significant changes, and that is far from unlikely since the political agenda are no fixed entity, then people would still vote for the parties that are closest to them. If that means they have to vote for a new party, then that party would be ideologically nearby.

There are also good reasons for why the other theories of voting have been made and found applicable in explaining election outcomes. One such reason could be that not everyone has consistent and stable political belief systems (Converse 1964), and that other factors better explain their vote choice (Achen & Bartels 2016; Duch 2007; Clarke et al 2015). In this thesis I will be able to see if that is the case among Norwegian voters too. If spatial voting is highly present among the most consistent, but less so among those least consistent, then that will both strengthen the case for spatial voting theory, and at the same time indicate why and for whom the other theories might be more applicable.

2.2.1 The Political landscape

There are many ways to understand, analyze and map a political landscape, and the easiest and most prominent is looking at it as a left-right schema (Fuchs & Klingemann 1990). All considered, the left-right schema is a central aspect, a commonly known and recognized way of portraying most political systems and interchangeably called the left-right dimension or axis as well. It is easily accessible and understandable, it is often used by media, politicians and people in general when discussing politics, ideology and relevant elements in the discourse.

The one-dimensional left-right axis approach is then both easily understood and easily applied in analyzing political behavior. In this thesis I use it to analyze vote choice stability and volatility. Considering that a higher understanding of the political landscape is demanding, the left-right axis functions as a minimum level of understanding of the party system. If less

constrained people vote in conflict with this, it should probably not be considered as evidence of a higher understanding of the political landscape. But rather a result of less constraint, less interest and a lower understanding of the political alternatives present at election time.

Norway has a typical Nordic party system (Arter 2008). With a socialist party (SV), a labour party (Ap), an agrarian party (Sp), a liberal party (Venstre), a christian democratic party (KrF), a conservative party (Høyre) and a populist right party (FrP). In the parliament period starting in 2013 it also had a green party (MDG), and in the most recent election of 2017 another socialist party "The Red Party" ("Rødt"), with roots from different communist and socialist parties. This party system resembles those from other European countries. Most parties have a labour party and a conservative party, in some countries the conservative party is also the christian party, as with CDU/CSU in Germany. Most countries also have some liberal party, which often has been the predecessor of most parties on the left.

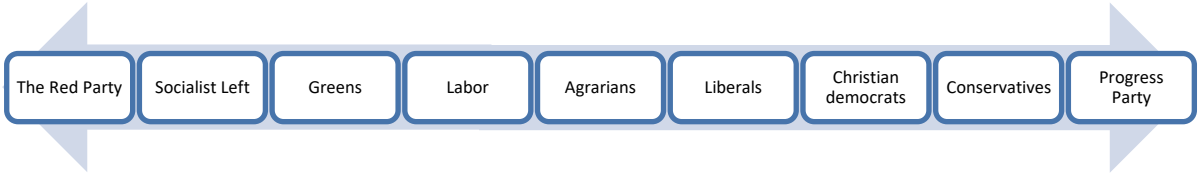

Figure 1 The Norwegian Left-Right Axis
Parties are placed here from left to right in accordance with an ordinal placement of parties based on expert judgements used in ParlGov's dataset on democracies.

2.2.2 Voters Stick Around

In line with spatial theory of voting, and the idea of voters having constrained and stable political belief systems, we should assume that in a stable party system people tend towards voting for the same party over time (Aardal eds. 2011; Aardal & Bergh eds. 2015; Downs 1957; Enelow & Hinich 1984). On the other side, the critique of this idea state that most people do not hold such steadfast beliefs, and that their vote is unstable and based on other grounds (Achen & Bartels 2016).

The ideal of the rational voter goes hand in hand with the idea of spatial voting. Voters will vote for the party that most closely represent their political views in line with proximity theory, or those that most intensely represent them which would be in line with directional voting. The most constrained will also be more stable in their attitudes, and they will therefore

also be more stable in their vote irrespective of it being originally directional or proximate, so if they change their party vote they should still vote within an ideological vicinity.

3) *Voters' with consistent and constrained belief systems will vote for the same party over time.*

4) *If more constrained voters vote for different parties, they are more likely to vote for ideologically neighboring parties.*

2.2.3 Those Less Constrained Change Party More

No person knows everything about everything in politics. People can be more or less interested in politics, and especially on the wide range of political topics. Very few have a degree in economics, health care, education, philosophy and engineering to name a few. To build up a well-informed, constrained and stable political belief system is costly and time-consuming. As we vary in our interest and knowledge, and thereby also quite possibly in the constraints and stability of our political beliefs it is pivotal to see how that variation relates to our vote choice.

All voters are placed differently on the spectrum of political knowledge and interest (Hesstvedt 2016). The more people know about politics the more constrained they tend to be on the relevant topics of the day (Aardal 2015: 64-65). This has also been linked to more interested and knowledgeable people to be more partisan, and to adopt party positions on more abstract political issues (Achen & Bartles 2016: 276, 284). Looking at the contrary, the less constrained voters, those usually less interested and less knowledgeable. To the degree that they are constrained, they will probably tend to be constrained on the most salient issues, and parties would tend to have clear-cut positions on these most salient issues, or "easy issues" (Carmines & Stimson 1980). People have also been found to use heuristics or other information short-cuts to form opinion and make decisions (Lupia 1994; Tversky & Kahnemann 1974).

Even those who are skeptical regarding whether people have ideologically constrained preferences argue that these are shaped by group identities and partisanship, where parties are the most salient groups in political life (Achen & Bartels 2016: 36, 294-295; Cohen 2003), and if people do not choose parties because they have a well-defined set of preferences, then

they will simply adapt their preferences to the party they choose. If that is the case, then the findings on party vote stability may be mixed, as people might choose and stick with parties absent of initial constraint.

Another reason to examine those less constrained closer is that they might differ systematically in their vote choice from those more constrained. Voters that are less constrained on political issues could be less likely to have a favorite political party, or even a clear idea of which parties are ideologically close to them. A constrained and stable political belief system can work as a compass in the political landscape, and without it the voter might feel lost in the jungle. Therefore it might be a possible misstep in applying issue dimensions found on the aggregate, which is the typical method applied in opinion research, to explain the vote of certain groups of people. So the method though simplistic and effective, might create opinion where there is none (Zaller 1992: 34-36).

Looking below the aggregate we can see how different degrees of constraint might play into vote choice. The least constrained might be more unstable in their attitudes and in their vote choice as well. The other scenario is that even the least constrained are still constrained on some issues or domains, and their vote choice is simply just as stable as others. Perhaps will a belief system that is constrained on fewer issue domains make the choice easier and more stable than complex, abstract structures of beliefs.

5) *Less constrained voters are more likely to vote for different parties over time.*

6) *Less constrained are likely to move a larger ideological distance, on the left right-axis, when switching parties.*

2.3 Summary and the Way Ahead

In this thesis I map people's political belief systems, their degree of ideological constraint and attitudinal stability. Further I test the relationship between constraint and voting stability under a varied set of measures. This is no causal analysis of such a relationship, and the causal relationship if there is one is likely to be of the two-way, interactive, sort. But in this thesis, I do theorize that people hold constrained and stable belief systems, while also believing that we will see variation as people vary in their interest and capacity to care about politics. Further I assume that there is a link between degrees of constraint and vote stability.

3 Data and Method

3.1 Research Question and Hypotheses

In this thesis I look at how voters' political belief systems vary in their degree of ideological constraint and attitudinal stability. Further I analyze how this affects the stability of their vote choice under a varied set of measures. This is captured in my research question: "*To what degree does the political belief systems of Norwegian voters matter in the stability of their vote choice?"* And it is answered by testing the following hypotheses that I argued for in chapter 2.

1) *People vary in the degree and patterns of ideological constraint within their political belief systems.*

2) *People's attitudinal stability varies with their degree of constraint. Those more constrained will tend to have more stable attitudes over time.*

3) *Voters' with consistent and constrained belief systems will vote for the same party over time.*

4) *If more constrained voters vote for different parties, they are more likely to vote for ideologically neighboring parties.*

5) *Less constrained voters are more likely to vote for different parties over time.*

6) *Less constrained are likely to move a larger ideological distance, on the left right-axis, when switching parties.*

3.2 Research Design

In this thesis I apply a quantitative approach to study Norwegian voter's political attitudes and vote choice. More specifically I use several different analytical approaches, relational class analysis (RCA), correlation analysis, regression and logistic regressions on a panel study made of a representative sample of Norwegian voters. The benefits of this approach are

manifold. A quantitative approach like this makes it easier to analyze many respondents, in this case a representative sample of Norwegian voters. Further it makes it possible to analyze all these phenomena, ideological constraint, attitudinal stability, and voting behavior within the space of one thesis. The representative sample makes it possible to generalize the findings to Norwegian voters in general. There has been gathered much quality data on Norwegian voters over the years, and in this thesis I use a panel sample of voters gathered from the Norwegian Election Survey from 2009 and 2013.

I map their political belief systems using relational class analysis on a set of 30-34 attitudinal questions covering 6 ideological dimensions found by the Norwegian Electoral Research Program. These dimensions cover what is recognized as the most important ideological dimensions among consolidated western democracies, widely discussed in the literature as "New" and "Old" politics, materialistic and post materialistic values and other similar categorizations (Aardal eds. 2011; Aardal & Bergh eds. 2015; Flanagan 2003; Inglehart & Flanagan 1987; Kitschelt 1994, 1995; Knutsen 1990). These dimensions include economic, climate, migration, moral, rural-central and global-national issues, where some dimensions could be considered abstract like climate and global-national issues, others are more concrete and relatable, such as moral issues. I do this mapping at both elections individually. Applying relational class analysis is one of the original contributions of this thesis, which divides the sample into groups with their own group-wise unique belief system. Therefore, I supply it with a set of supporting analyses. I check if there are some background variables that can explain "membership" in the different groups, and thereby explain different levels of constraint. Then I run a set of analyses that link the election-specific results together.

With a thorough analysis of the constraint and stability of voters' belief systems I turn to look at some of the electoral implications of varying degrees of constraint. I check this towards party vote stability, party neighborhood stability, party block stability, and with a measure of ideological movement across the three elections I have data on. This part explores some of the fundamental aspects of spatial voting and the ideal of democratic theory, where people vote on the basis of ideology (Downs 1957).

3.3 The Data

The data I use come from "*Valgundersøkelsen*", the post-election survey of Norwegian voters administered by Statistics Norway, the national statistical institute of Norway (SSB), and the Norwegian Electoral Research Program ("Valgforskningsprogrammet")[1]. The surveys date back to 1957, and have followed every parliamentary election since 1965. The survey is conducted by personal interviews of a representative sample of Norwegian voters, using a closed set of questions regarding a wide range of aspects, from typical background information, to political attitudes and political preferences. A portion of the respondents interviewed in one election year is used as a panel in the consecutive election, as a measure of continuity and change that occurs over time (Statistics Norway 2015: 5).

In this thesis I focus on the two most recent election surveys, made after the parliamentary election in 2013 and 2009. In this period there was a change of government, from a majority, centrist-left coalition to a minority, right coalition with centrist backing. To study attitudes in these two elections is interesting as the electoral movement meant a substantial change in government.

The panel sample from the 2009 and 2013 surveys total 586 respondents, and excluding missing observations on a couple of attitudinal questions the RCA-sample consist of 582 respondents. I have used 2013 as the outset of this analysis, and therefore based the selection of attitudinal questions on what was available and most relevant then. This is so that the analysis can be more readily compared to the coming research based on the most recent election of 2017. For comparison I have therefore only used the 30 attitudinal questions in 2009 that was also among the 34 chosen questions from 2013. As can be seen in the results section, these questions seemed at least equally important in 2009 as in 2013.

While nationally representative, there are biases in these data: people with low education levels are somewhat underrepresented, whereas those with higher education is somewhat overrepresented. Furthermore, those who did not vote are also somewhat underrepresented (Berglund et al, 2011: 13-14). In addition, some parties are underrepresented compared to

[1] The data used in this thesis is mostly from «Valgundersøkelsen, 2009» and «Valgundersøkelsen, 2013». Data is collected by Statistics Norway (SSB). Data is administered by Norsk samfunnsvitenskapelig datatjeneste AS (NSD) in anonymous form. Neither Statistics Norway nor NSD stand responsible for my analysis of the data, nor the interpretations that are presented here.

their actual electoral backing in the parliamentary elections, such as the Progress Party (FrP). This means that the analyses of ideological constraint and vote choice among these relevant individuals and groups will suffer under some more uncertainty.

Another limitation is the combination of a multi-party system with many small parties and a sample of respondents where only a few of these smaller parties' voters are included. In practice this sums up to far less than 100 respondents reporting having voted for a given smaller party, which means that conclusions on statistical relations regarding their specific party vote is potentially riddled with uncertainty. This is circumvented by my focus on different forms of voting stability, which elevates the focus from specific party voting to more general concepts of stability.

To analyze vote choice, and the relation between ideological constraint and ideological voting, I use ParlGov's (2018) time invariant positioning of parties to construct an ordinal scale. There are many other possible ways, subjective party placements which the respondents report themselves, party manifesto placements from the Comparative Manifesto Project (CMP) or other expert judgements such as the Chapel Hill's. With criticism of misclassification and coder reliability in data such as the CMP (Mikhailov et al 2012) I have run my own wordfish analysis of party manifestos which can be found in the appendix. In this thesis I keep it simple by using an ordinal scale which is time invariant. This makes analysis that much easier and understandable, and it is not my aim to calculate vote movement in ideological millimeters.

3.4 Relation Class Analysis

In this thesis I apply a method named relational class analysis (RCA), first implemented by Goldberg (2011) on music taste, and later applied to American voters' belief systems by Baldassarri and Goldberg (2014). It was first applied on music taste by looking at people's preferences for a wide array of music genres, then more substantially relevant on American voter's political attitudes. The analyses were in essence the same, as the method group similar people together be they musical connoisseurs or political ideologues. This method separates a sample into subgroups that maximizes the internal similarity and intra-group difference on the selected set of items (Baldassarri and Goldberg 2014: 83, 86).

The RCA does this by looking at the pairwise relation between all the selected items, be it music genres, or in this case attitudinal questions on the most relevant political issues in Norway. This method link answers to questions regarding political attitudes, so that we see what type of answers relate to other types of answers for every individual respondent, meaning that it maps the political belief system of the respondent. These findings are then aggregated into larger entities, separating the sample of respondents to a smaller set of groups, each having a distinct belief system. In my analysis this process generates 3 groups in both the 2009 and 2013 election.

The method is rather explorative, and the groupings depends on the relevance and amount of questions and respondents included. More questions tend in general to produce more groups as nuances and differences appear when we include more issues and issue domains. Whereas more respondents stabilize and possibly reduces the number of groups. This is a logical result as more questions means there are more parameters on which the respondents are measured, and the amount of measures should be balanced off by a sufficient sample on which to apply them. For further information on the method and its application, I recommend the original article by Goldberg (2011), and the comparable analysis done on the American electorate by Baldassari and Goldberg (2014).

3.4.1 RCA compared to other methods

Relational class analysis is a relatively new method and is one of many ways of analyzing political attitudes. As was discussed in the introduction to this thesis, there has been many different methods applied to the topic, and some of the difference in conclusions can be traced back to choice of method.

One of the most prevalent methods applied in the research of political attitudes have been factor analysis. Be it confirmatory where there is a theoretical assumption on the number of factors that will be found, or exploratory factor analysis where the factors are discovered through the analysis (Christophersen 2013: 179). These methods give us a set of distinct factors based on the attitudinal questions we analyze, and these can then again be interpreted as ideological dimensions and similar. Now this approach is quick and easy to apply, and it does demand way less computer power than analyzing the same data with RCA. It is also beneficial in that it can uncover latent dimensions, attitudes, which individual issues can be

considered to only be a partial representative of. It is therefore great in finding general, empirically based patterns in opinion.

A downside to such an approach is that it masks potential heterogeneity within the electorate, and variations in factor scores might be due to a variation of reasons, be it a unison decline in importance or just a solid decline among a certain part of the electorate. This heterogeneity can best be exemplified by looking at the analysis done on the respective party voters in the Norwegian case that I am using (Aardal, 2015, 79-86). By using the factors to compose indexes of the sets of questions and using this to measure ideological positions of the party voters (Aardal, 2015, 88) it is assumed that all these indexes are equally valid in ascertaining their ideological positions. This assumption is doubted by looking at the box-plots surrounding the averages, and seeing the sometimes huge variance within some of the dimensions. This can be because the parties have a wide electoral basis of voters, but it can also be that some of the indexes are not so valid for voters with lower degrees of ideological constraint.

By generalizing the factors found from the factor analysis to all respondents, we risk assuming opinion where there might be no opinion. The RCA produces distinct subgroups where the constraint and patterns in opinion of each respondent is considered individually. With this I will, among others, find which dimensions are shared among all, and which dimensions that vary with degrees of ideological constraint.

3.5 Variables and Operationalizations

In this thesis I use the Norwegian case, and the Norwegian national election survey data. This is an often-used dataset where a substantial amount of research has been done by the Norwegian electoral research program (Aardal eds. 2011; Aardal & Bergh eds. 2015). In order to make my thesis more comparable to these studies I perform the same operationalization of the multitude of attitudinal variables in the data, which includes changing the direction of answer categories so that all questions within the same topic, defined by the election research, goes in the same meaningful direction.

Further I use the analyses of Aardal (2015: 56-58) as a guide to organizing the many attitudinal questions within *issue domains*, interchangeably named *ideological dimensions* or

political topics. This makes interpretation of the results easier. It also makes the findings here more easily comparable to existing and future research on Norwegian voters.

3.5.1 Attitudinal Variables

I have selected the attitudinal questions that are connected to the most salient topics from the election survey. This saliency is based on the factors found in the principal component factor analysis in the election surveys, where I have selected the questions with the highest factor loadings (Aardal 2015: 56-58). These factors are what are made out to be the most prominent ideological dimensions on which the Norwegian political landscape is organized, and where the political parties compete against each other. This amount to 34 attitudinal questions, divided on 6 political topics: Migration, Economy, Climate, Rural-Urban, Moral and Global-National. I include all the questions that make out the factors in 2013, and to the extent that they were also asked in 2009.

The questions on the Global-National-topic is included as a supplement, as it is a factor that was found in 2009, but disappeared due to low factor loadings in the factor analysis of 2013, according to the election research (Aardal 2015: 62-63). This dimension is in many ways similar to the urban-rural dimension and to a large degree melted together with it in 2013. I include it so to see how the constraint on this topic changes between 2009 and 2013, and how it is constrained among the subgroups.

TABLES OF ATTITUDINAL QUESTIONS

In these tables I present the attitudinal variables as they were asked in the surveys and their given name in the analysis. I have named each issue with the domain it belongs under and given it a number for identification. The issues that are unique to 2013 are named with suffix ".u". The specific issues and their original question text can be found in the surveys' documentation and through my replication script.

Table 1 Attitudinal questions.

Factor 1:	**Migration, Immigration – Solidarity (High value = Positive towards immigration)**
Migration1	*0-10 scale, 0= make it easier for immigrants to get access to Norway. 10= Harder limitations of immigrants to Norway.*
Migration2	*Immigration constitutes a grave threat to our national distinctiveness.*
Migration3.u	*Begging should become illegal in Norway.*
Migration4	*Fugitives and immigrants should have the same right to social security as Norwegians, even without citizenship.*
Migration5	*In economically hard times, we should prioritize giving jobs to Norwegians.*
Migration6.u	*Immigrants should pass a test on Norwegian language and social sciences to be allowed citizenship.*
Migration7	*1-3 scale, Some people believe that Norway's foreign aid to poor countries, so-called developing countries, should be reduced (value 1), while others mean it should be stabilized on current levels or increased (value 3).*

Factor 2	**Economic, Private – Public (High value = Private sector)**
Econ1	*Many economic activities could be performed better and cheaper had they been left to the private sector.*
Econ2	*We should allow commercial, privately driven schools.*
Econ3	*In the current economic situation, there is room for substantial reductions in taxes and duties.*
Econ4	*We should reduce the state's control over private businesses.*
Econ5	*Wealth tax should be abolished.*
Econ6	*It is more important to expand public services than to reduce taxes.*

Factor 3	**Climate, Protection – Growth (High value = Climate protection)**
Climate1	*0-10 scale. 0= Climate change is no problem. 1= Climate change is a huge problem.*
Climate2	*0-10 scale. 0= Climate protection should not be furthered at the expense of our living standards. 10=Should increase climate protection, even at the expense of our living standards.*
Climate3	*There is too little focus on climate protection in today's Norway.*
Climate4	*Climate change is primarily man-made.*
Climate5	*We should accept oil and gas excavation in Lofoten, Vesterålen and Senja*
Climate6	*We need more industrial complexes to secure economic growth, even if it comes at the detriment of climate protection.*

Factor 4	**Rural, Urban – Rural (High value = Urban)**
Rural1	*0-10 scale. 0= central government cares too little for Rural-Norway. 10= Central government cares too much for Rural-Norway.*
Rural2.u	*The EEC-agreement should be terminated.*
Rural3	*More state-owned businesses should be moved to the districts.*
Rural4	*Politicians and bureaucrats in Oslo understand little of what is going on in Rural-Norway.*
Rural5_global2 *Rural5*	*0-10 scale. 0= Norway should absolutely not become member of the EU, 10= Norway should absolutely become member of the EU.*
Rural6	*The government should reinstate efforts to reduce income inequality.*

Factor 5	**Moral, Religious – Secular (High value = Religious)**
Moral1	*0-10 scale. 0= Christian-centered curriculum should be obligatory in primary and secondary education. 10= Christian-centered curriculum should be voluntary in primary and secondary education.*
Moral2	*It should be allowed to use surrogate mothers to carry forth children in Norway.*
Moral3	*Abortion, 4 statements. 1= Abortion should never be allowed. 2=Accepted under health, or life or death conditions. 3=Accepted based on personal reasons. 4=Up to the woman herself*
Moral4	*We should aim for a society where Christian values play a larger role.*
Moral5	*We should allow euthanasia.*
Moral6	*There should be equal opportunity for adoption for homosexuals as for heterosexuals.*

Factor 6	**Global, Global – National (High value = National)**
Global1(.mig)	*We should aim for a society with more international orientation and with less weight on borders between people and countries.*
Rural5_global2 Rural5	*0-10 scale. 0= Norway should absolutely not become member of the EU, 10= Norway should absolutely become member of the EU.*
Global3(.rur)	*It is important that we sign international treaties, even if they limit Norwegian authorities' freedom of action.*
Global4(.rur)	*Globalization is necessary for economic growth.*
	In 2009: Globalization is an absolute necessity for economic growth.

For the analysis, this selection of questions means that some level of constraint is already established among the respondents, at least in the aggregate. Whatever heterogeneity found in the following analysis will however shed light to the extent of this constraint among subgroups. Whether the ideological dimensions on which we describe the polity actually matters to the same extent for all voters.

The attitudinal questions follow mostly in the same fashion, being constructed on Likert-scales (Bryman 2012: 166). There are a couple exceptions, those going from 1-4 has no middle category originally. They all go from 1-4, 1-5, or 0-10/1-11, where 1/0 is "fully agree", the highest value 4/5/11 is "fully disagree". There is also a separate category for those who do not have a preference and those who do not want to express a preference on the issue. I have coded all the questions in the same way as in the Norwegian election research. This means that those who have not given an answer within the respective ranges, i.e. from 1-5, are placed in the middle category. Following the reasoning that this minimizes the sample reduction that could come from list-wise exclusion (Aardal 2015: 58). This means that the results might be somewhat closer to the middle scores, making the real mapping of attitudes more average-looking that they actually are. But the panel-approach I take is an approach were each respondent is highly valuable so I consider it to be worth it.

Further, some of the questions have their direction turned around, in order to have all questions within a specific topic to go in the same meaningful direction. These directions also

follow in the footsteps of the election research. This makes it easier to interpret the results from the following analysis, without changing any underlying realities. The different directions that questions are asked initially is essentially a method to avoid *response sets*, such as *yeah-saying*, the tendency to agree to statements posed in questions (Bryman 2012: 227).

Lastly I have taken a step further, and standardized and centered the questions to their middle score in line with Baldassari and Goldberg's analysis (2014: 60). This makes the interpretation of the analysis results easier, as every question is on the same scale with the same middle category. This also mean that we can compare the results across time as I have included all the questions that was asked both in 2009 and 2013. For 2009 there is 30 attitudinal questions that were asked of the 34 that I selected from the 2013 survey. This means that we have almost all the same issues, covering all the same topics across both elections.

3.5.2 Validity of Measurement

The attitudinal variables are no random get-together of survey items, they are bound together in the aim to understand people's political beliefs, and in this thesis to map their political belief systems on the most central political topics in modern, consolidated democracies. With this aim it is worth considering how valid the measurements are in capturing the essence of the theoretical concept of political beliefs (Adcock & Collier 2001: 530-531).

The theoretical concept of a political belief system was defined by Converse as a set of ideas and attitudes that are bound together by some form of constraint (Converse 1964: 3). The relational class analysis is a method that closely follows the concept of a belief system, in that it looks to what degree and how all the political ideas and attitudes are bound together. The resulting groupings, and their respective belief systems, that this method brings forth is therefore a good operationalization and measurement of the theoretical concept.

The operationalized measures of this concept used here is based on the existing electoral research on the most important issues among the Norwegian electorate. This means that it does not measure everything, but the selection is based so that the most salient political issues are included. Therefore it is not all-encompassing, but the analysis portray the degree of

constraint and patterns that characterize Norwegian voters' belief systems on the most important political topics.

3.5.3 Background variables

Behind every vote there is a person, and each person varies on a wide set of more or less relevant factors outside of their political attitudes. There is a set of usual suspects that have been included to explain vote choice over the years. These are gender, age, education, occupation to name a few. Some of these factors have been linked to both political attitudes and voting. In this analysis I include many of these potentially relevant background variables that might explain differences in constraint and voting behavior.

Gender is one of the most typical variables to include in any analysis. In the analysis I have coded the variable as 1 for women, 0 for men. There have been research that link gender with vote choice (Østerud 2007: 220), finding that women tend to vote for the left block at a higher rate than men. In the panel sample there are 299 men and 286 women.

Everyone has an age, and as we grow older we accumulate experience. This experience can also have generational differences by people having experienced different times. Therefore, age might both have an effect that varies because of aging and because of cohort-effects. Age is by default numerical and goes from 17, turning 18 in the election year which is the earliest that people can vote, and upwards. In this analysis I use a variable where age is grouped into brackets, mostly of 10-year-spans which makes it easier to compare age groups. In the following table, the age in 2009 is the vertical categories, and the respondents' age group in 2013 is shown horizontally.

Table 2 Cross table over age.

	18-29	*30-39*	*40-49*	*50-59*	*60+*
18-29	70	24	0	0	0
30-39	0	47	55	0	0
40-49	0	0	71	61	0
50-59	0	0	0	81	48
60+	0	0	0	0	125

With education comes knowledge and becoming educated is a demanding task. The education variable is a constant in social research on individuals, and with good reason. Time and time again the level of education seem to have a significant relationship with aspects of interest. Education can be measured in multiple ways, the one which I use divides the highest achieved level of education into 3 categories: secondary school, senior secondary school, and college/university. In the following table, 2009 categories are vertical, whereas the 2013 is horizontal.

Table 3 Cross table over highest level of education

	Secondary School	*Senior secondary*	*College/university*
Secondary School	33	28	2
Senior secondary	8	195	51
College/university	1	18	234

As we can see from the table most people have the same level of education at both time points, and there are necessarily some shifts upwards as some people eventually become more educated as they age. What is a bit troublesome is the 27 respondents that report a lower level of education in 2013 than in 2009, which makes no sense logically. Potential reasons for that could be a) that it is the respondent's child that answer in round 2, b) that the respondent answered falsely at one of the rounds, c) that there was some other mistake somewhere.

Work is a part of life, at least for most people, and for some people work is life. With it being such a substantial part of peoples' lifespans, it can be related to many things. I have therefore included three different variables about work that I have tested out in the analyses. The first is what *type of work* people do, the National Election Survey has a variable that divides the different occupations into 12 main categories. These categories look at whether the job is in the private or public sector, whether it is a higher or lower position, without work, stay at home, student, or in rent plus some.

Another variable looks at the amount of *work hours*, as the amount of work can say something about the economic security, or free time, that people have. Working part-time, not at all, averagely or 100% overtime can make quite an impact on people's day and life. It is measured in hours going from 0 up to a maximum of 80. The latter leaving little time for anything else.

The last work-related variable I account for is *income,* measured in thousands. Levels of income is an indication of economic capital, the difference between rich and relatively poor in Norway. Income could affect people's political preferences on economic policies, and is an indication of capacity/possibility and social position.

Norway is a vast country, and the territorial aspect has been found relevant since the beginning of electoral research. Apart from many of the attitudinal questions probing this aspect of Norwegian politics, we also have information on where people are from. For this I have applied two variables from the dataset, one divides the 19 voting districts into *7 regions*: south, west, middle, north, and the east divided three ways. Then I have also used a variable that looks at whether people live in urban or rural areas. *None of these turn up significant.*

To account for political shifts in the electorate I have also included variables that include their *previous party block vote,* coded 1 for the left block and 0 for the right block. This is made for each election (*blockvote05*, *blockvote09*, *blockvote13*). This is used as a control variable when looking at block change.

Lastly, I have also included *political interest* and *political knowledge*. Political interest is a self-report question going from 1, highly interested, to 4 not at all interested. I have changed its direction and standardized it around its mean. This might not be so much a background question, as it is could possibly be a product of the background questions. It is, as will be seen in the latter analysis, intertwined with how constrained people's political beliefs are, and also the probability of switching between political blocks. I have centered it on its mean and standardized it.

I have also included the battery of 4 questions that tested the political knowledge of the respondents. For each question there was 1 correct alternative, I therefore coded each correct answer as 1, and summated the answers among respondents into a new variable going from 0, with no correct answers, to 4 and all correct answers.

3.5.4 **Dependent Variables: Vote Choices**

There are two main aspects of interest in this thesis. One is the political beliefs of voters, which I analyze by looking at the broad set of political issues measured by the attitudinal questions mentioned above. The other is the link between people's political beliefs and their vote choice. More specifically I am interested in seeing to what degree their political beliefs act as compasses and ideological anchors in their vote choice. I measure this by looking at whether they tend to vote for the same party, whether a change of party merely means they go to the neighboring party, and the likelihood for them changing "political blocks" altogether.

To do this I have computed a set of dependent variables that capture these aspects. All these variables are based on the questions asking the respondent what party they voted for in the given election, be it 2005, 2009 or 2013. 2005 sticks out somewhat, as it was asked as part of the 2009-survey, 4 years and one election later. These types of recall questions tend to have some inaccuracy, as people might not remember correctly, or they change their answer to fit with the vote they gave most recently (Aardal 2011: 22). However I consider it an important addition, and we will eventually see whether the findings on vote stability varies significantly between 2005 (the recall) and 2009 on one side, and 2009 and 2013 on the other.

As I use the panel portion of the election survey, we have at hand some of the best data on vote choice in Norway across two elections, and rather good data on the same respondents' vote choice at a third election. Having their vote choice for three elections we can look at the individual degree of stability in their vote, whether they vote for the same party all along, or to which party they switch. In the case they change their party vote to another party we can look at how far across the political spectrum they move, and other substantial measures of movement.

The political spectrum can at its easiest be understood as the ideological left-right axis, and with expert judgments we can place the parties on this ideological axis and give us some pointers as to the ideological distance between these parties. There are many sources, elite and otherwise on what is the best measures and concrete placements of parties. In this analysis I use party positions from ParlGov, and only to make an ordinal left-right scale, 1-8. This scale is then used to decide which parties are neighbors to who. One issue with this is the Green party (MDG), who just entered parliament and the electoral research's voting variables in 2013. My solution has been to include them between the Socialist Left party (SV) and the

Labor party (Ap), in line with ParlGov, but giving it a score of 2,5 so as not to change the coding of SV (2) nor Ap (3) which would alter the whole scale and comparison with the elections in 2005 and 2009. This has an implication for measuring vote movement and neighborhood voting.

Party Vote Stability

To measure party vote stability I have made a variable that looks at whether the person voted for the same party in all three elections (1) or not (0), called *samepartyvote_all*. As people have tended to change parties more often over time (Aardal & Bergh 2015: 20) I have also created a variable that looks a bit above the party level and looks at whether the person voted for the same, or a neighboring party on either side of it (1), or if they voted for any other party that was neither the same nor neighboring (0). This variable was computed for both elections separately, looking at the vote in 2005 and 2009 for the first variable, and 2009 and 2013 for the second (*sameorside.09*, *sameorside.13*).

Ideological Vote Movement

With an ordinal scale in hand we can also look at the ideological distance that voters travel when they change their party vote. Further we can see if, and to what degree, their political belief system relates to this move.

To measure ideological vote movement I have computed a variable that measures voters' ordinal movement between parties across the elections. To do this I have put all the parties on an ordinal scale from left to right using the ParlGov party positions, giving each party a number from 1-8. Then I have calculated vote movement as following:

$$Party_{t0} - Party_{t1} = votemoveXX\_YY$$

As the "distance" between two elections. For the total movement between the 3 elections (*votemove_all*), I have used:

$$votemove\_all = \sqrt{votemove05\_09^2} + \sqrt{votemove09\_13^2}$$

There are some issues with this, one is the fact that new parties means an alteration or obscuration of the ordinal scale, such as the introduction of the Green party in 2013 which I have given a value of 2.5. The other is the fact that the right block has been more fragmented, and that the ideological movement within the blocks has some bias when using the ordinal

scale as a result. One such case is the position of the Christian Democrats (KrF) between the Liberals (V) and the Conservatives (H), where one could just as well assume that people would move from H to V rather than to KrF, which in itself could we considered more of a niche party. Limitations aside, this outcome variable is an additional measure of the stability of vote choice. The further voters move between elections is an indication of vote volatility, and so it works as a supporting measure to the other outcome variables.

Party Block Change

A party is heavily connected with its ideological neighbors, be it for getting policy through parliament or forming a government. In most parliamentary systems, including the Norwegian, we speak about party blocks, which is sets of parties that tend to cooperate in passing legislation and forming or supporting governments. These vary in their stability among countries and over time, in Norway these block structures have been mostly stable throughout the post-war period, and especially so in the time period under study here. In fact, 2005 was the first election in which Labor campaigned as part of a coalition, making *the Left* a clearer political block, whereas *the Right* has had coalitions all along, most of these has been minority governments with supporting parties. Also, the Agrarian Party has historically been on the right, with a change of blocks occurring between 2001 and 2005. A change that precedes the time under study, and had its early steps in connection with the EU-referendum of the nineties.

With this in mind I apply a more conservative measure that only looks at party block voting, which has less bias and possible measurement error. For this I have created variables that look at block switching between elections and across all elections (*vote.blockchange05_09*, *vote.blockchange09_13*, *vote.blockchange_all*). Where people are coded 0 if they vote for the same block of parties, and 1 if they vote for different blocks across two elections. This measure is more conservative, as it divides the party system into two, the *left block* (socialist block/leftist parties/"venstresiden") consisting of all parties to the left of and including the Agrarian party, and the *right block* (conservative block/bourgeois parties/"borgerlig side") consisting of every party to the right of, and including, the Liberal party. This makes the measure a good test of validity of the vote-moving distance analysis. If people change blocks, that is a substantial change in voting, not only of party and its platform, but also on the whole set of platforms that make out a block, and a potential government coalition.

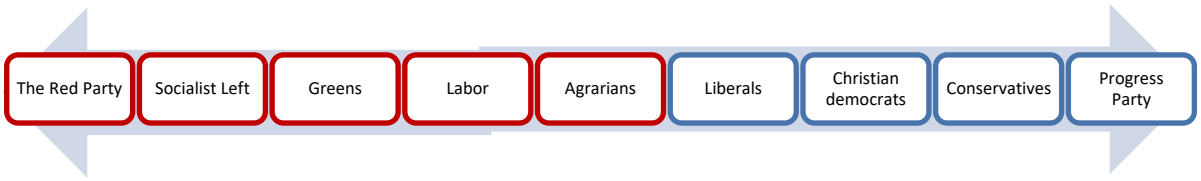

Figure 2 The Norwegian Left-Right Axis divided according to blocks, Left Block colored in red, Right Block in blue Parties are placed here from left to right in accordance with an ordinal placement of parties based on expert judgements used in ParlGov's dataset on democracies.

4 Mapping Political Belief Systems

4.1 Norwegian Voters' Belief Systems

In this chapter I map the Norwegian voters' belief systems using relational class analysis as presented in chapter 3. I present the results chronologically, so that we look at the partitions in 2009 first and move on to the 2013 later. With this sequential ordering we can also more readily trace any possible change in the patterns of constraint that might have occurred over this time span.

4.1.1 In 2009

When running the analysis on attitudinal questions in 2009, the relational class analysis produces 3 groups[2]. These groups are clearly distinct from each other in their constraint both within and across issue domains. The groups vary in size. Group 1, the most constrained group who I dub *ideologues* consist of 180 respondents (31%). The somewhat constrained group who I dub *ideologues light* has 145 respondents (25%), and the least constrained, *ideologues zero*, total 256 respondents (44%).

[2] In addition it produces a fourth group consisting of only one respondent, this group/individual is omitted from the analysis.

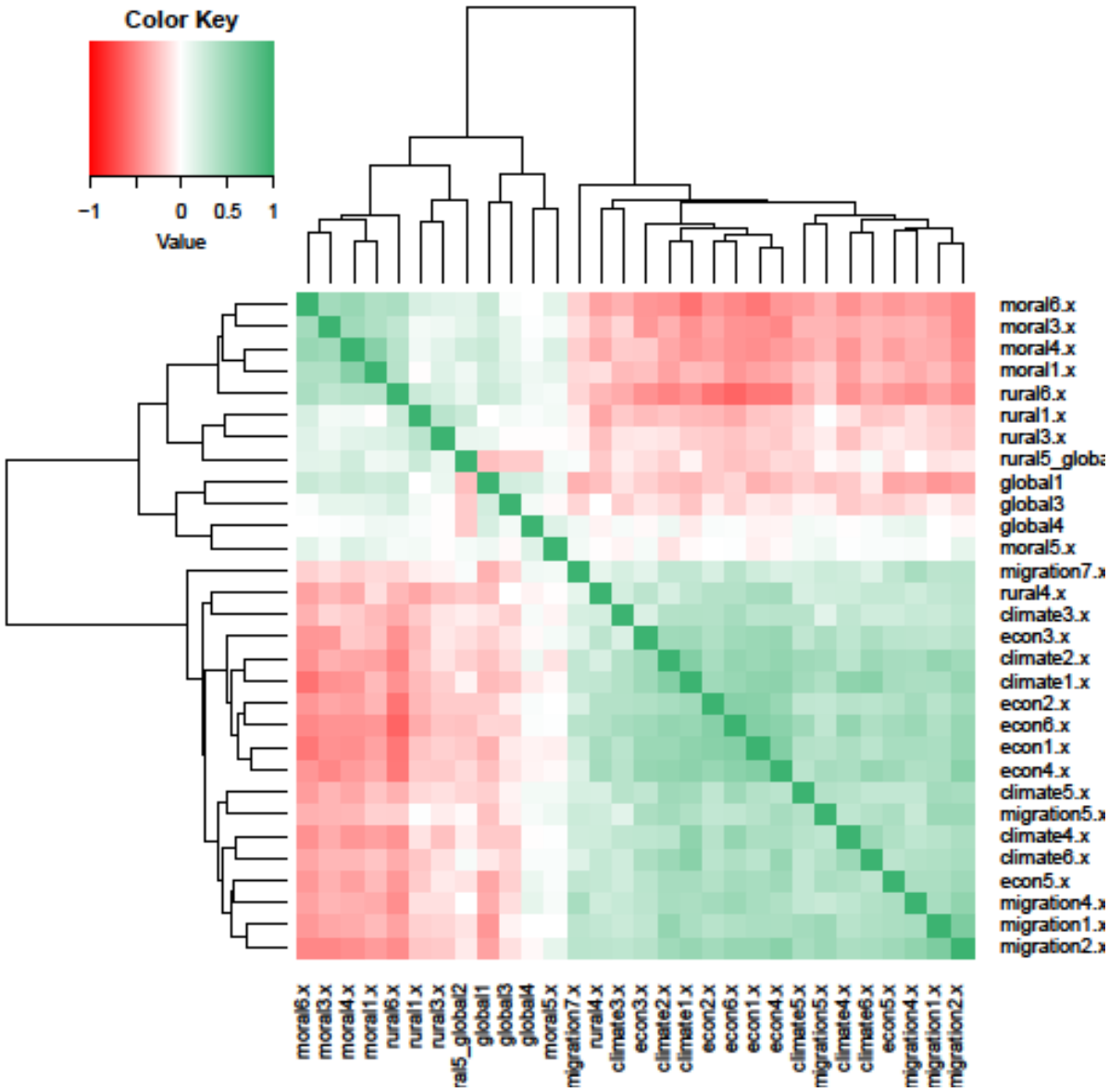

Figure 3 RCA2009 Group 1 ***The most constrained – Ideologues - 180 respondents***
These plots are colorized and show the degree and direction of correlation among all the issues included in the analysis for each group specifically. The stronger the color, the stronger the correlation. Green means positive correlation, red is negative correlation, and white means no correlation. As mentioned before, the method does not know which items belong to the same issue domain, so the grouping is merely based on correlations.

This is the most constrained group. They are strongly constrained on almost all issues and across all domains. We can see that all domains except some rural and global issues are strongly correlated. The members of this group could therefore be considered as *ideologues*, even if they might not live up to the ideal of the full-time politicians and a country's political elite, as prescribed by Converse (1964). They are clearly well constrained on all the ideological dimensions of our time.

This mapping only looks at constraint, its patterns and directions. We can use this mapping to make some substantial interpretation of the ideologues' belief systems, as we know the direction of each of these issue domains. However, these patterns can go both ways, so a substantial example will have a mirror version exhibiting the direct opposite opinion, but with the same pattern across issues.

A substantial example here would be a voter that has positive correlations on migration, economy, and climate, and negative correlations on moral, rural, and global issues. Translated with the known directions of each of these issue domains this would be someone who is positive towards migration and climate protection, negative towards public spending, liberal on moral issues, and rural and nationally oriented.

The counter-example that also fits within this pattern would be: negative towards migration and climate protection, positive towards public spending, morally conservative, and urban and globally oriented.

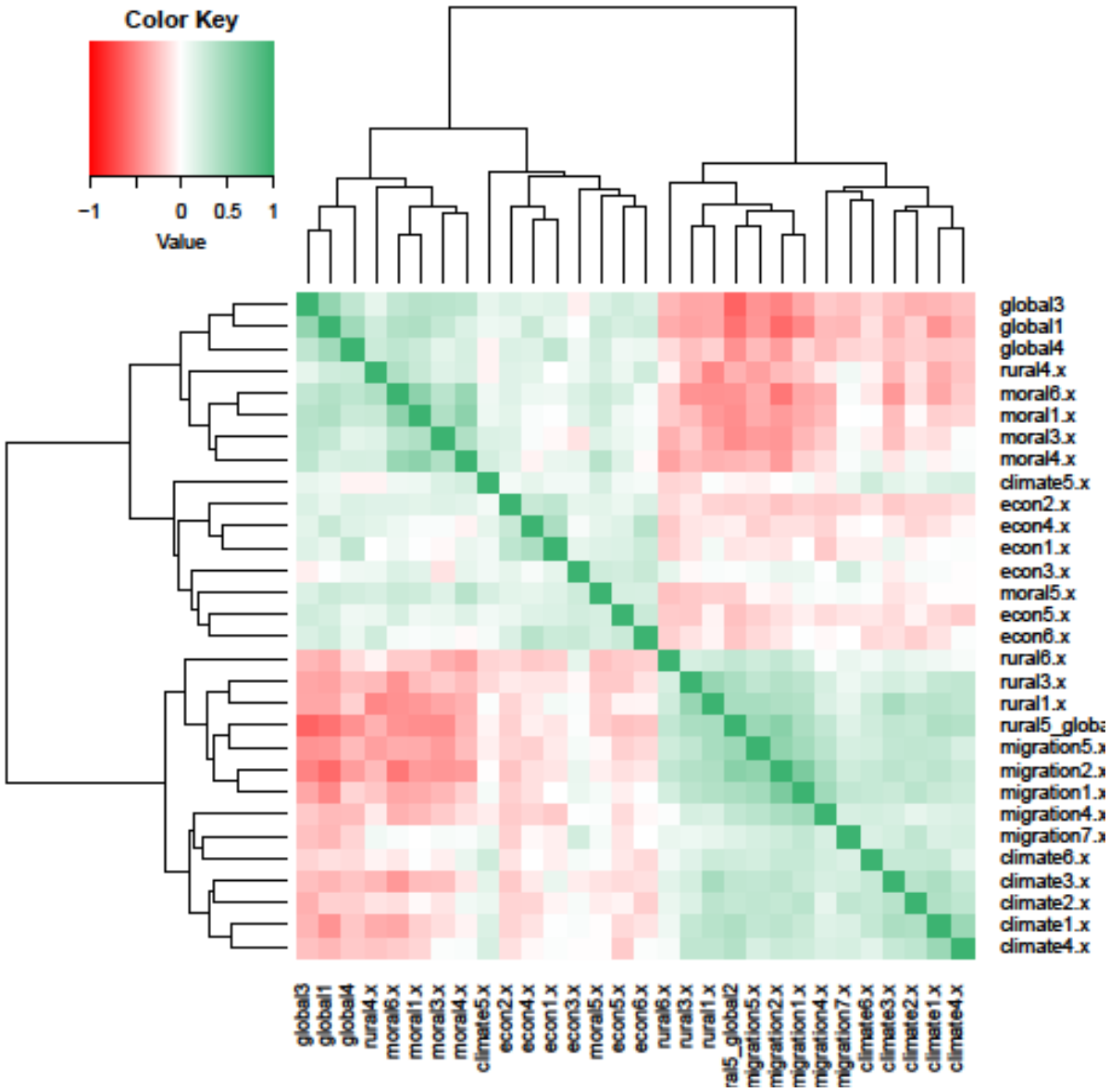

Figure 4 RCA2009 Group 2 ***The somewhat constrained – Ideologues Light - 145 respondents***
These plots are colorized and show the degree and direction of correlation among all the issues included in the analysis for each group specifically. The stronger the color, the stronger the correlation. Green means positive correlation, red is negative correlation, and white means no correlation.

This group is quite constrained with a clear pattern, but the group seems to be slightly less constrained than the *ideologues*, with somewhat more white spots and in general lower correlations. I have therefore branded this group the *ideologues light*. Economical, moral, and global issues are constrained together in a positive direction, and another pole of constraint with the opposite direction on rural, climate, and migration issues.

Also the pattern seems to be somewhat different. By using a substantial example this will give us either a voter that 1) is positive towards migration, climate protection, and public spending,

morally liberal, and with a global and urban orientation. Or the opposite in 2) negative towards migration, climate protection and public spending, morally conservative, and with a national and rural orientation. To make these examples even more on line with what we see, the economic issues will be constrained within the issue domain in both groups, its constraint with the other domains varies however, so it could vary more among respondents.

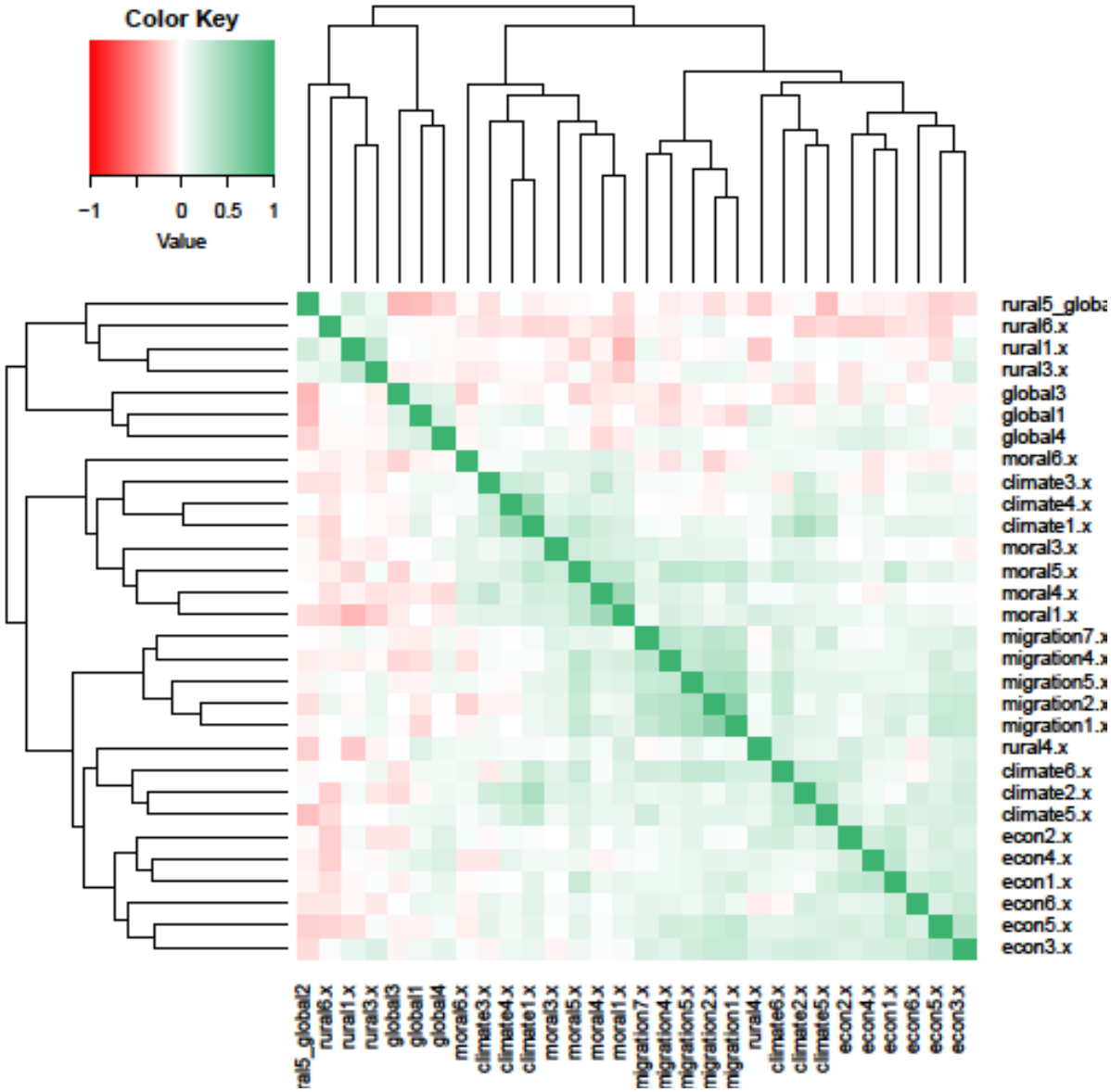

Figure 5 RCA2009 Group 3 ***The least constrained - Ideologues Zero - 256 respondents***
These plots are colorized and show the degree and direction of correlation among all the issues included in the analysis for each group specifically. The stronger the color, the stronger the correlation. Green means positive correlation, red is negative correlation, and white means no correlation.

This is clearly the least constrained group, we can see that there are no area here with high correlation within, nor among domains thereby fitting the name *ideologues zero*. The closest is some moderate correlations within the migration domain, followed by weak correlations within all the other domains. There are some equally weak correlations between domains, where some single issues are correlated across domains, but the inter-domain constraint is also riddled with white spots. The constraints are found between moral, migration, climate, and economical issues. There are seemingly some constraint on rural and global issues, but these are also only weakly constrained with the other domains.

A substantial example here would be a voter that has some rather strong constraint on migration, and then just some smaller and sporadic constraint that connects the domains.

4.1.2 **In 2013**

When we turn to 2013 the picture stays somewhat the same, as should be expected. Also here we get 3 groups[3], where we can see distinct differences in degrees of constraint. There is however a shift in the proportions of each group, with more respondents being in the groups of the more constrained. The ideologues number 168 (29%), the ideologues light number 213 (37%) and the ideologues zero number 199 (34%) of the respondents. This could mean that more people are constrained in 2013 than in 2009, but looking at the output it does however also seem to be lower levels of constraint in all groupings. It is therefore a mixed result.

[3] In addition it produces a fourth group consisting of only one respondent, the same as in 2009, and this group/individual is omitted from the analysis.

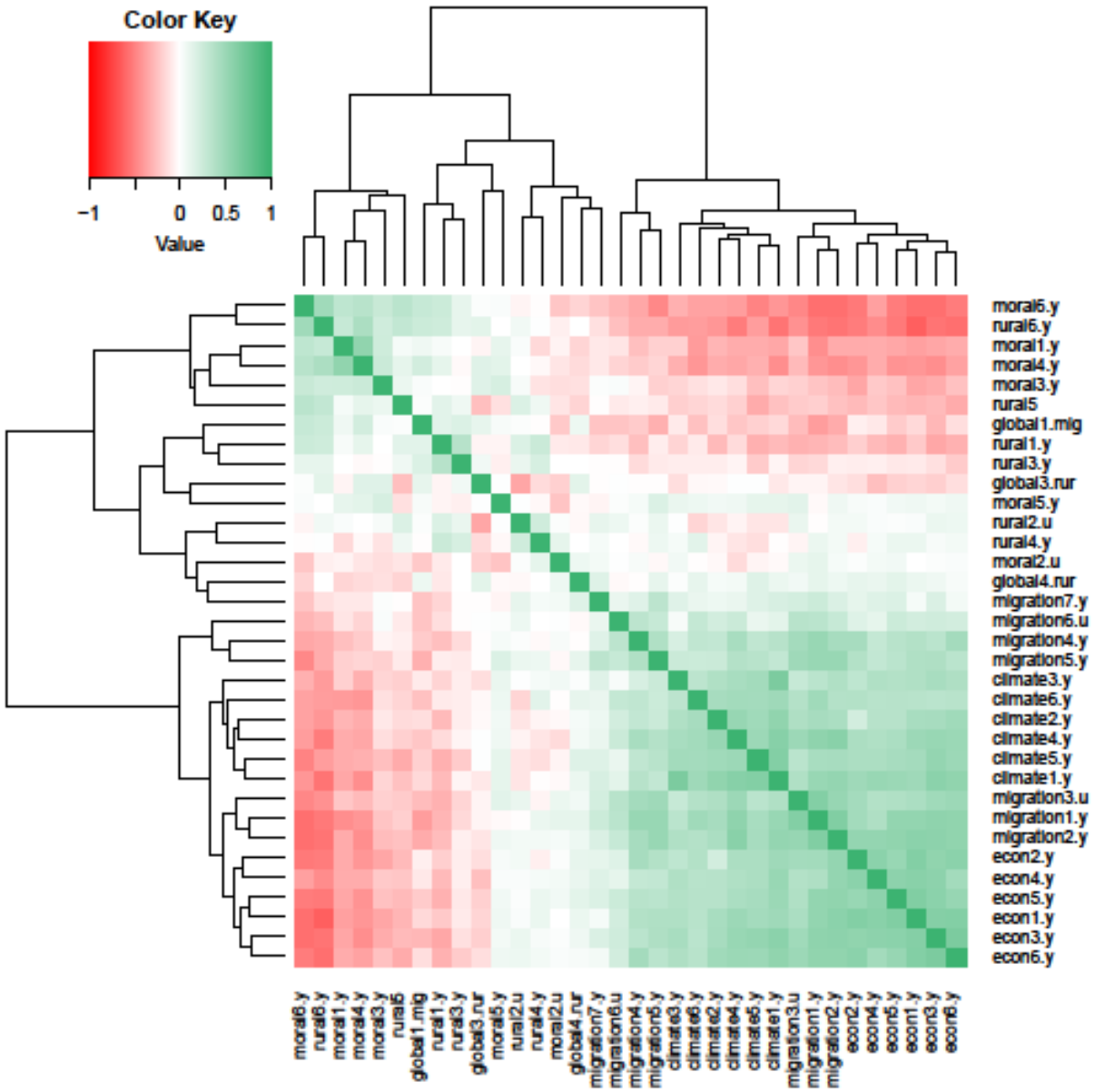

Figure 6 RCA2013 Group 1 ***The most constrained – Ideologues, 168 respondents***

These plots are colorized and show the degree and direction of correlation among all the issues included in the analysis for each group specifically. The stronger the color, the stronger the correlation. Green means positive correlation, red is negative correlation, and white means no correlation.

Group 1 is strongly constrained and very similar to the ideologues from 2009. One difference is that the constraint on rural issues are much weaker, and close to non-existent. Apart from those two dimensions there is much constraint both within and across domains, and the substantial examples for the ideologues in 2009 fit the findings here as well.

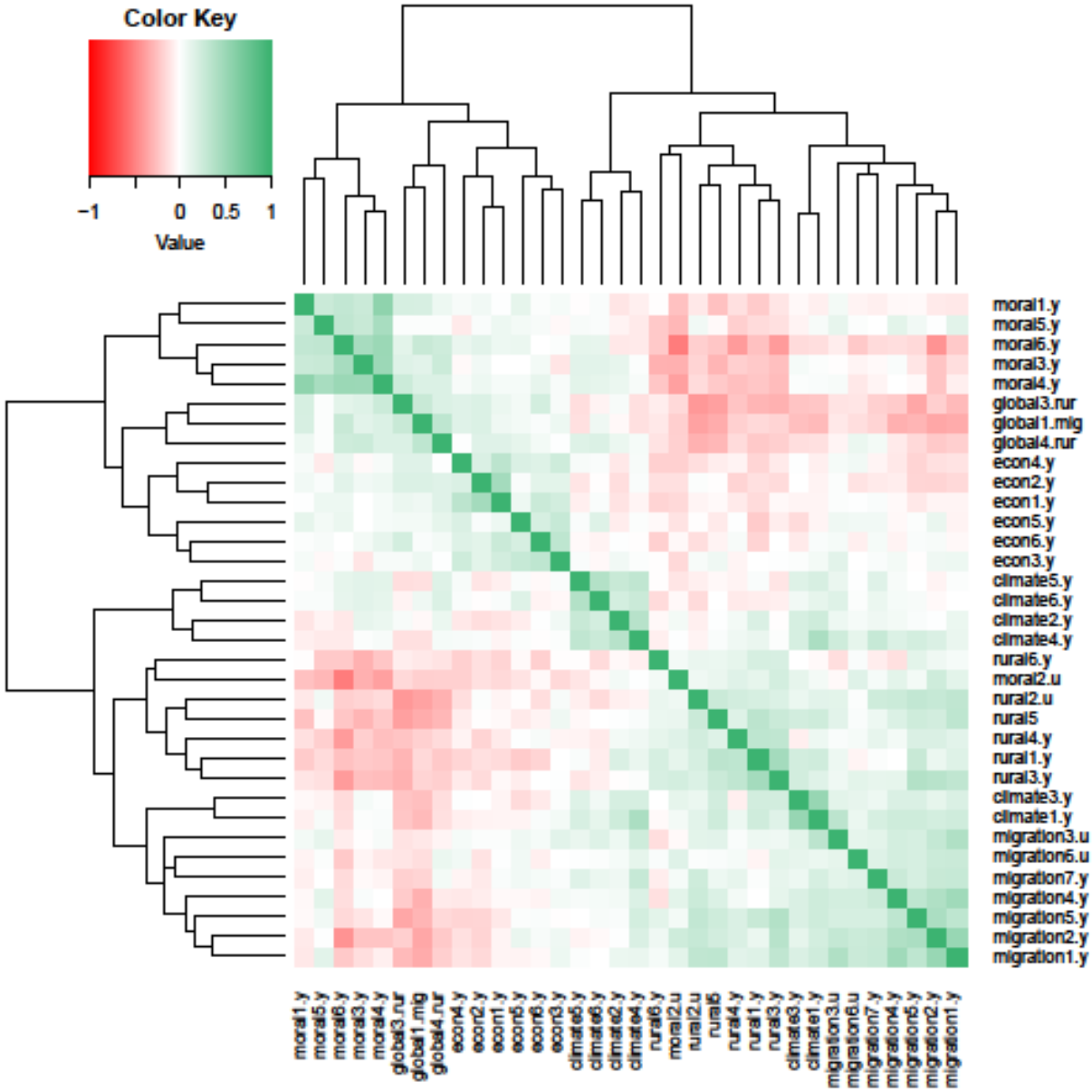

Figure 7 RCA2013 Group 2 ***The somewhat constrained - Ideologues light - 213 respondents***
These plots are colorized and show the degree and direction of correlation among all the issues included in the analysis for each group specifically. The stronger the color, the stronger the correlation. Green means positive correlation, red is negative correlation, and white means no correlation.

In this group we see that all issue domains are moderately constrained within their domains, but that there is moderately to low, or no constraint across domains. The pattern follows the similar group in 2009, but the constraints are generally weaker.

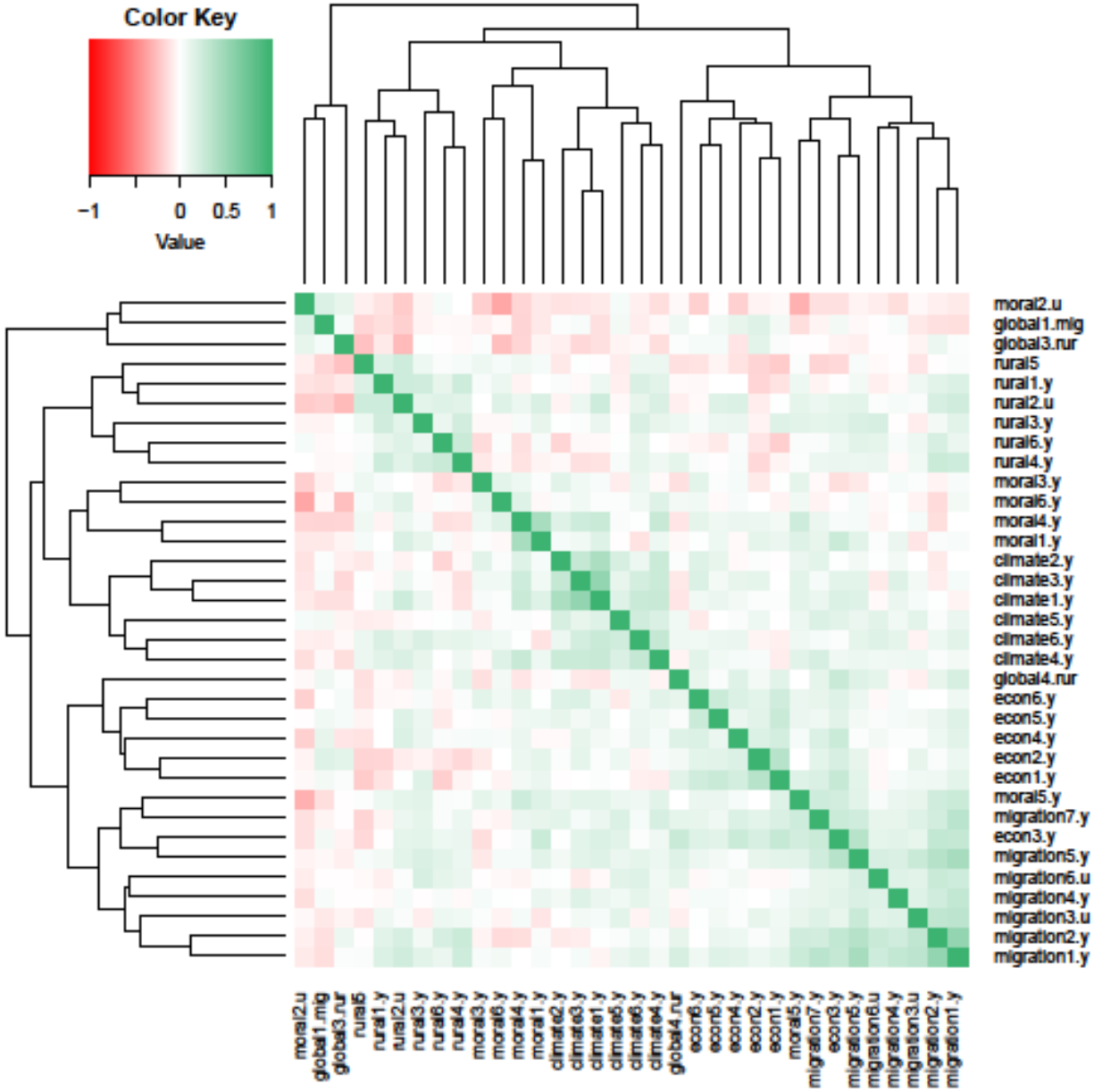

Figure 8 RCA2013 Group 3 ***The least constrained – Ideologues zero - 199 respondents***
These plots are colorized and show the degree and direction of correlation among all the issues included in the analysis for each group specifically. The stronger the color, the stronger the correlation. Green means positive correlation, red is negative correlation, and white means no correlation.

This group is the least constrained. Like its 2009 counterpart the constraint is mostly within domains, but both the within and between domain-constraint is weaker here than in 2009.

4.1.3 Stability Testing of the RCA-partitions

The relational class analysis was done on the panel sample, as that is the basis of my analysis of ideological constraint, with its attitudinal stability over time and electoral consequences across multiple elections. For the sake of generalizing to the Norwegian electorate as a whole,

and to make sure the findings are stable, I reran the analysis on larger samples. These cannot be compared between elections as most of the respondents are only interviewed once, but they make a good test of the stability of the findings for the panel sample on each election specifically.

Running the same relational class analysis on randomly drawn samples of 1000 respondents from each survey produces the same partitions, 3 subgroups with the same patterns at each time point. I have also run the analysis on the complete samples from 2009 and 2013, getting very similar results. This supports the findings presented here, and that the partitions and number of issues included is sufficient to capture the heterogeneity in larger samples. More variables could produce more groupings as more heterogeneity comes to the foreground, but for looking at the degrees of constraint among the electorate on the most salient issues in the polity this current approach is sufficient and stable.

4.2 Background Variables and Constraint

Having found out that Norwegian voters do vary in the ideological constraints of their belief systems, we now turn towards what can explain these differences. To do so I have run two multinomial logistic regressions to see what background variables predict the differences in constraint.

In these models, the most constrained groups of Ideologues, for 2009 and 2013 respectively, have been set as the constant. This means that the categories we see in the table are the groups with lower constraint, and that significantly positive relations imply a higher probability of being less constrained. With the Ideologues Light as a sort of middle ground, and the Ideologues Zero as the lowest level of constraint.

Table 4 Multinomial regressions on RCA-groups

	Dependent variable: RCA-groups			
	2009		2013	
	Light	Zero	Light	Zero
Gender	-0.326	-0.055	-0.256	-0.098
	(0.230)	(0.207)	(0.219)	(0.224)
Age 30-39	0.749*	0.635*	0.733*	0.292
	(0.420)	(0.364)	(0.445)	(0.474)
Age 40-49	0.372	0.378	0.123	0.263
	(0.395)	(0.331)	(0.390)	(0.390)
Age 50-59	0.254	-0.178	-0.364	-0.245
	(0.389)	(0.333)	(0.383)	(0.380)
Age 60+	1.156***	0.697*	0.707*	0.442
	(0.407)	(0.357)	(0.386)	(0.392)
Senior Secondary School	0.801*	0.267	-0.727	0.029
	(0.459)	(0.356)	(0.490)	(0.510)
University/College	0.634	-0.681*	-0.688	-0.788
	(0.456)	(0.362)	(0.482)	(0.512)
Political Interest	-0.607***	-0.749***	-0.494***	-0.580***
	(0.199)	(0.179)	(0.121)	(0.124)
Constant	-0.807	0.702*	1.331**	1.044*
	(0.525)	(0.411)	(0.580)	(0.602)
Akaike Inf. Crit.	1,196.272	1,196.272	1,212.505	1,212.505

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

The constant here is: male voters with the highest level of constraint (Ideologues), aged 17-29 with secondary school as their highest achieved education and average political interest.

Looking at the results from the regression we can see that there is a common denominator among all groups, which is a strong and significant negative relationship with political interest. This means that people who are above averagely interested in politics are less likely to have lower levels of constraint. It also seems to be the strongest explanative variable in these regressions, which is logical as it can be considered theoretically to be closely connected to people's political beliefs. No interest, no belief. Highly interested, then there should be some belief.

Looking further back we see that age seems to play a role. The oldest age-group has a tendency towards less constraint. The most significant relationship is between people *aged 60+* and being among the *ideologues light* in 2009. The other relationships between age groups and lower constraint have low to no significance, and they are fully insignificant for the *ideologues zero* group in 2013.

There are two more significant relationships uncovered by these regressions. In 2009 we find a significant, negative relationship between *higher education* and the *lowest level of constraint*. We also find a positive relation between *senior secondary school* and the *ideologues light*, which is weakly significant. This matches well with the idea that the higher educated are more likely to have an informed, and therefore constrained, opinion.

The link between higher education and degree of constraint is strengthened in a model without political interest, but then the model fit is also worsened. This is reported on further in the appendix.

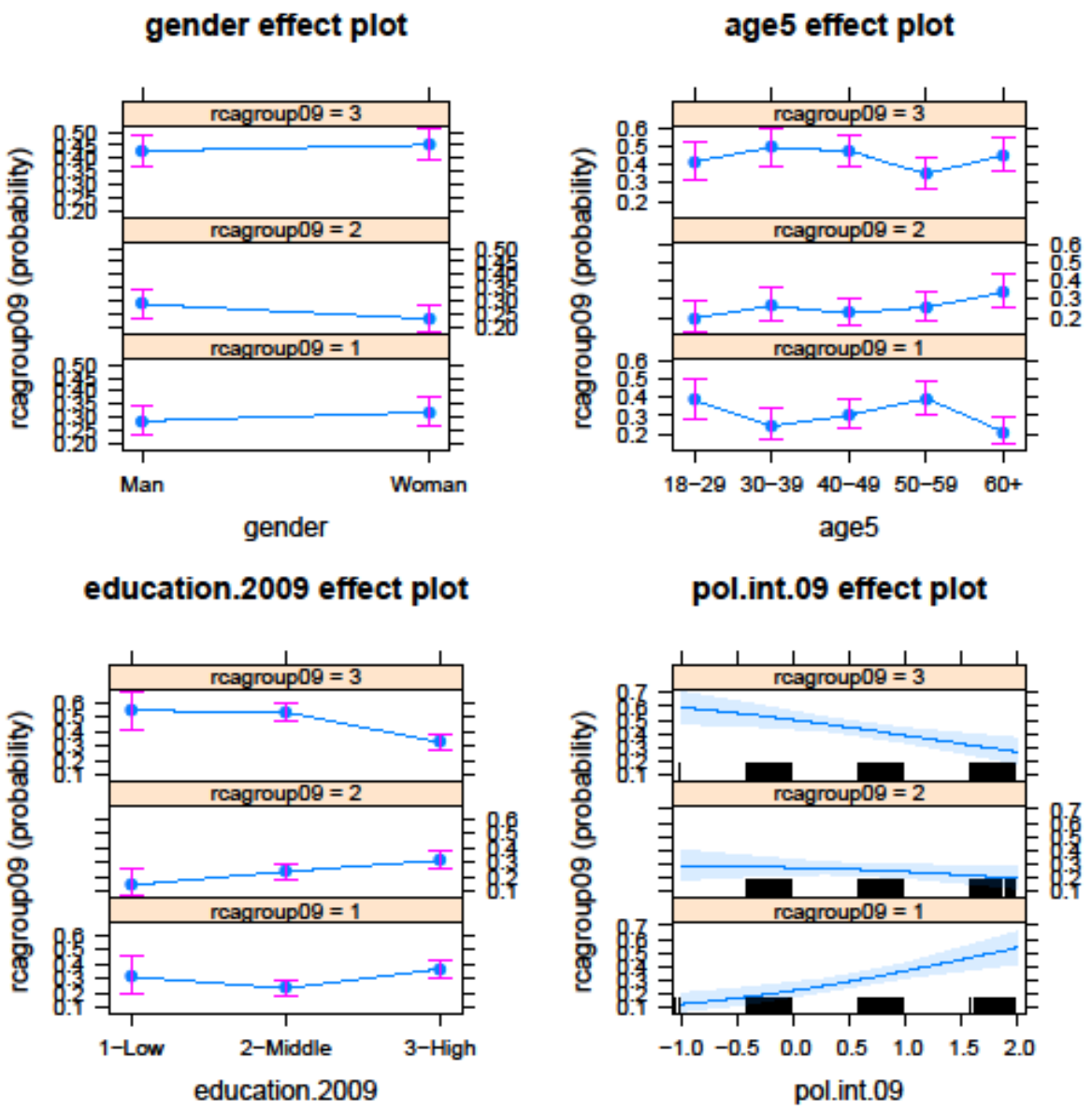

Figure 9 This plots the effects of each variable and its values on the dependent variable, level of constraint (rcagroup09=1=Ideologues, 2=Light, 3=Zero), with 95% confidence intervals around the effect estimates.

With the graphs we can see the effects and 95% confidence intervals of the different variables in the models. One benefit of this approach is that we can look at each variable's specific categories or scales, and see where we have more or less uncertainty. This uncertainty can come from large variance within few categories, such as gender, or from few respondents on which to make any claims, such as the lowest level of education.

We see that the lowest educated and the younger tend towards being less constrained, whereas older people, excepting the very oldest, and people with higher education tend to be more constrained.

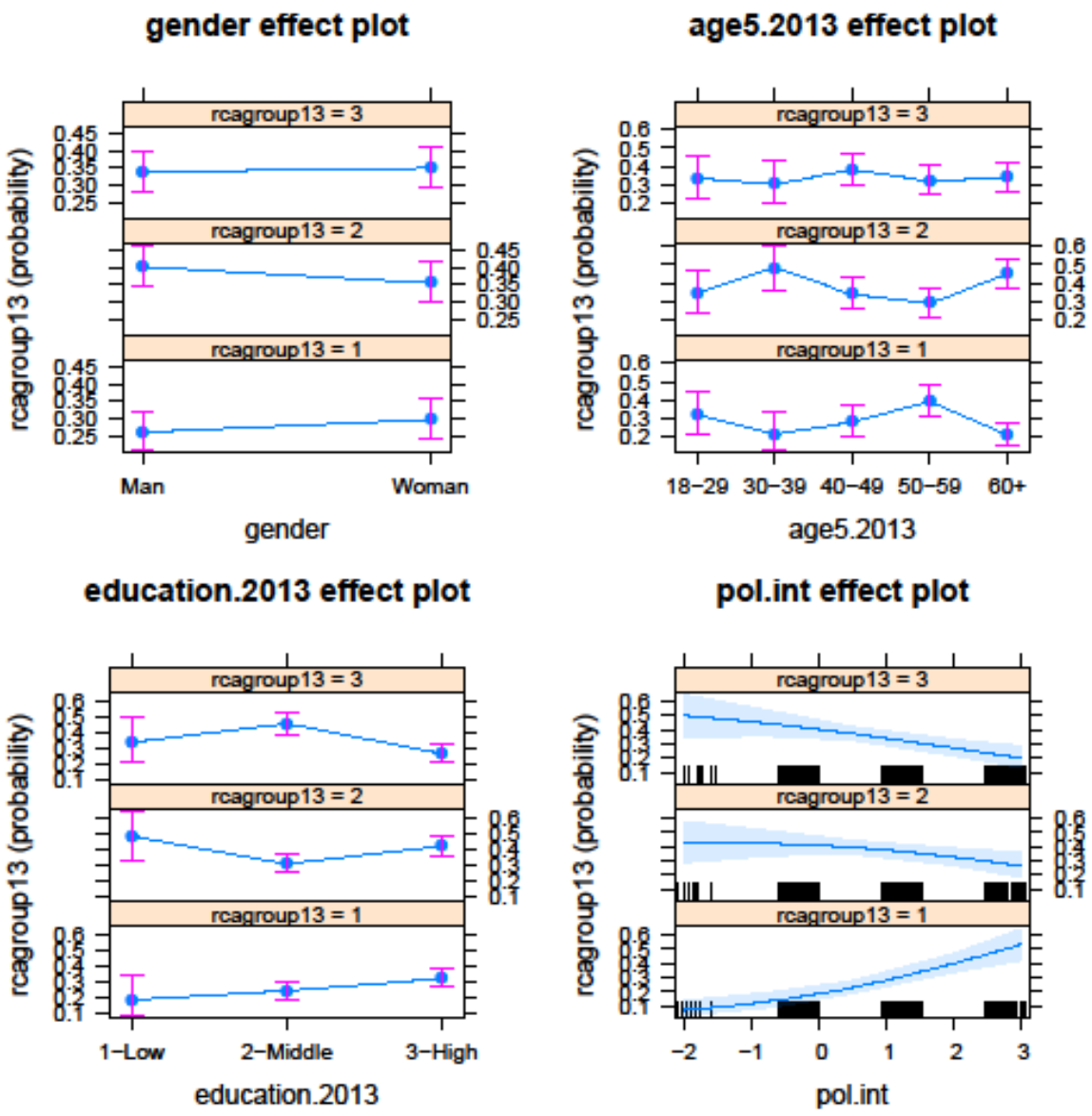

Figure 10 This plots the effects of each variable and its values on the dependent variable, level of constraint (rcagroup13=1=Ideologues, 2=Light, 3=Zero), with 95% confidence intervals around the effect estimates.

To sum up we can see that political interest is consistently and quite strongly related to constraint, whereas the relation between age and education towards constraint is mixed. A positive notion to gather from this is that it might be so easy as to increase political interest, if one wants to increase ideological constraint.

4.2.1 Comparing the 2009 and 2013 RCA Results

When looking at the resulting groups and belief system structures from the two elections we can see that there is much resemblance between 2009 and 2013. Even if we see the same patterns and degrees of constraint, we should also see to what extent the same people stay within the same group, summarized in the table below. In line with the previous tables I present the 2009 groups vertically, and 2013 horizontally.

Table 5 Cross table over level of constraint in 2009 and 2013

	Ideologues	*Ideologues Light*	*Ideologues Zero*
Ideologues	107	44	29
Ideologues Light	16	86	42
Ideologues Zero	45	83	128

As we can see from the table, most people stay within the same group at both time points. The most constrained in 2009 tend to be among the most constrained in 2013 also. There is however some movement between groups, which is both a good thing and substantially interesting. What we see is probably changes in constraint, which means instability in opinion, and that the relationship between people's political beliefs are not all set in stone. Some become less constrained, but a majority stay at their level of constraint or become more constrained.

To better see the tendencies, I have regressed the membership in one of the 3 2013-RCA-groups on the 2009 groupings and a set of relevant background variables, using a multinomial logit model.

Here group 1 in 2013, the constrained, are set as part of the constant, together with group 1 from 2009, the most constrained group. It is most likely that the most constrained in 2009 are also the most constrained in 2013, which is confirmed in this model.

Table 6 Multinomial regression on RCA-groups in 2013 with RCA2009 as controls

	Dependent variable: RCA-Groups in 2013	
	Light	Zero
Gender	-0.135	-0.010
	(0.239)	(0.243)
Age 30-39	0.703	0.225
	(0.477)	(0.506)
Age 40-49	0.0002	0.186
	(0.420)	(0.417)
Age 50-59	-0.385	-0.172
	(0.415)	(0.410)
Age 60+	0.506	0.333
	(0.417)	(0.423)
Senior Secondary School	-0.995*	-0.148
	(0.532)	(0.555)
University/College	-0.780	-0.664
	(0.523)	(0.557)
Political Interest	-0.419***	-0.467***
	(0.131)	(0.134)
Ideologues Light in 2009	2.533***	2.118***
	(0.336)	(0.370)
Ideologues Zero in 2009	1.323***	2.003***
	(0.275)	(0.283)
Constant	0.361	-0.354
	(0.646)	(0.681)
Akaike Inf. Crit.	1,107.774	1,107.774

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

The constant here is: male voters with the highest level of constraint (Ideologues), aged 17-29 with secondary school as their highest achieved education and average political interest.

In this multinomial regression I have regressed the RCA 2013 groupings on a set of background variables and their preceding RCA 2009 groups.

As we can see, the regressions repeat the main findings from the cross table, most people tend to be in the same group at both time points. We also see that the movement between groups is picked up here, and that this movement is highly significant. The ideologues light of 2009

also tend towards being among the ideologues zero in 2013. And the ideologues zero of 2009 tend towards being among the ideologues light in 2013.

We can also see that political interest plays a role. As in the multinomial model that looked at who goes into what group, we can see that there is a negative relationship between higher degrees of political interest and having lower levels of constraint in 2013.

This shows that degrees of ideological constraint is not fully stable over time. Considering this in the light of the cross table we see that some people switch between the groups between 2009 and 2013, but that most stay put, or become more constrained.

4.3 Ideological Constraint and Attitude Stability

There are multiple ways of looking at stability. In the previous section we looked at to what degree people stayed put within the different groups and their respective levels of constraint. Another approach is to look at the content of these groupings, not to see how stable their "group membership" is, but to see how stable their attitudes are – given their initial level of constraint.

To do this I have run pairwise correlations of the attitudinal questions from 2009 with their 2013 counterparts. I have done this for each of the groups produced by the RCA on the 2009 attitudinal questions, the ideologues, ideologues light, and ideologues zero. With this separation we can see if the groups vary not only in their contemporary constraint, but also in their attitudinal stability between the 2009 and 2013 elections.

The table presents the correlations of single issues between the surveys of 2009 and 2013 among the different levels of constraint. It is rounded off to two decimals and colorized according to their actual correlation values. Red is below 0.30, yellow is from 0.30 to 0.49, and green is from 0.50.

	Ideologues	Ideologues Light	Ideologues Zero
Migration1	0.69	0.61	0.58
Migration2	0.73	0.60	0.54
Migration4	0.50	0.37	0.38
Migration5	0.56	0.53	0.57
Migration7	0.28	0.33	0.18
Economy1	0.73	0.59	0.52
Economy2	0.61	0.60	0.46
Economy3	0.60	0.39	0.30
Economy4	0.54	0.45	0.35
Economy5	0.51	0.40	0.44
Economy6	0.64	0.51	0.23
Climate1	0.57	0.48	0.40
Climate2	0.43	0.26	0.18
Climate3	0.28	0.31	0.26
Climate4	0.30	0.31	0.14
Climate5	0.57	0.54	0.58
Climate6	0.33	0.20	0.11
Moral1	0.65	0.59	0.44
Moral3	0.66	0.63	0.58
Moral4	0.72	0.63	0.54
Moral5	0.66	0.59	0.62
Moral6	0.75	0.72	0.63
Rural1	0.49	0.58	0.44
Rural3	0.46	0.60	0.41
Rural4	-0.04	-0.27	-0.05
Rural5	0.59	0.63	0.53
Rural6	0.56	0.36	0.32
Global1	0.44	0.50	0.17
Global2	0.36	0.49	0.31
Global3	0.39	0.41	0.30

Table 7 Attitudinal stability.

From this there are several findings. First among them is that there are generally rather high correlations among all three groups, with some domain-specific exceptions. Especially the migration and moral domains have high correlations for all groups. But there is a clear pattern that correlations do vary between the groups. The ideologues have generally higher degrees of stability, in that the correlations are higher between the time points.

The economic domain follows the pattern of decreasing stability with lower levels of constraint. For the most constrained group there is much stability, whereas both the other groups have mixed and somewhat lower stability, with the ideologues zero having the lowest stability. The climate domain is perhaps one of the most interesting topics, where some issues are close to equally stable among the groups, and other issues being close to equally unstable.

Even if there is still some tendency to gradually lower stability with less constraint on that topic as well.

There are also differences in general levels of stability between topics. Moral and migration issues score high for all groups, the rural domain also score rather high for all groups, but with one interesting issue that sticks out. *Rural4*, it seems that the issue might have undergone some substantial change between the elections as every group have changed their opinion significantly on it. This is rather interesting, as it is a general questions asking about whether politicians and bureaucrats in the capital Oslo understand the situation and challenges in the rural parts of Norway. I believe there was not any major change in politicians nor bureaucrats' competence in this time span, but there was a government change, so this attitudinal change across all groups could be explored further. Another interesting exception is that both the global and rural domains are somewhat more stable among the ideologues light than the other groups.

These findings can be compared to the black and white model theorized by Converse (1964) and explored by Baldassari & Goldberg (2014), that the electorate is a mix of ideologues and agnostics, where ideologues are very constrained and agnostics are not at all, and where this divide translates into different degrees of attitudinal stability. The findings do however show generally high levels of attitudinal stability, despite the variations, and no sign of a clear cut black-white divide among the electorate's level of attitudinal stability

4.4 Concluding Remarks on Belief Systems

In this chapter I have mapped Norwegian voters' belief systems, grouped them according to their level of ideological constraints, seen how their attitudinal stability varies accordingly, and looked at which variables can explain these different levels of constraint. These steps have been taken to fully answer the first pair of hypotheses in my thesis.

Hypothesis 1
People vary in the degree and patterns of ideological constraint within their political belief systems.

A general finding across the two surveys is that many people have very constrained belief systems. This is a finding that is almost necessitated by the selection of attitudinal items, as it

is based on the items with the highest factor loadings in the Norwegian Election Survey of 2013. It is nevertheless a positive finding that the degrees of constraint on this broad set of issues is high among so many, and that the aggregate result is driven by a majority of the respondents. Aside from that the finding that there are groups of respondents where these issues are not so constrained is important for many reasons.

As these are the most constrained issues on the aggregate, it shows the importance to look at subgroups and heterogeneity in opinion. For some of the groups there are only a few set of topics where they exhibit constraint across multiple issues. For the groups of the ideologues zero in each survey year, there are many topics where they are far from constrained.

This is important when aggregate scores are used to make indexes of ideological dimensions to place voters, where the voters themselves have no constrained opinion on the topic as a whole. In such cases, which seem to be a substantial portion of the samples in question here, this means that we construct and impose opinion and ideological positions on people where there is none. This is taking the construed opinion, of which Zaller (1992) criticizes in opinion polling, one step further.

Now aggregate scores are helpful, and we see that the aggregate findings necessarily is found among substantial portions of the sample, but the results from the relational class analysis show that caution should be taken in applying those to explain the attitudes of everyone.

Hypothesis 2

People's attitudinal stability varies with their degree of constraint. Those more constrained will tend to have more stable attitudes over time.

Another interesting finding is the varying degrees of attitudinal stability that is strongly connected with the degrees of constraint. The most constrained tend to also hold more stable beliefs, but there are issue domains where all voters hold stable beliefs as well, such as on migration and moral issues. However there are also issue domains where people had low attitudinal stability regardless of constraint, this was most evident on climate issues.

Seeing the degrees of constraint and attitudinal stability, it could be discussed further whether the ideologues light are more similar to the most constrained group than the ideologues zero.

5 Belief Systems and Voting Behavior

With the mapping of Norwegian voters' belief systems at hand, we turn to study the electoral consequences of these varying levels of ideological constraint. More specifically I test to what degree belief systems matter in the stability of people's vote choice. First I look at the relation between constraint and party vote stability, then I extend this stability measure to include the immediate neighborhood of parties. After this I look further into the extent of ideological instability and constraint, first by looking at the ordinal movement of voters between elections and lastly if there is a relationship when we look at party block switching and constraint.

5.1 Party Vote Stability, do voters stay or do they go?

The ideal is that people have constrained political belief systems that are stable over time, and that they vote for parties according to these beliefs, which means that their party vote should also be quite stable over time as long as the party system is stable as well. There has however been a general reduction in party vote stability over the last 50 years (Aardal & Bergh 2015:19). From this I hypothesized that voters will vary in their party vote stability depending on their degree of constraint.

Hypothesis 3

Voters' with consistent and constrained belief systems are more likely to vote for the same party over time.

As an initial exploration of this we can look at simple cross tables. In the two following tables I set the different groups produced by the two RCA-iterations up against whether they voted for the same party across all three elections or not. In parentheses I report the column percentages, so that we can see how the groups are divided internally in their vote choice.

Table 8 Cross tables of level of constraint on party switching

RCA 2009	*Ideologues*	*Ideologues Light*	*Ideologues Zero*
Switched at least once	72 (50%)	56 (51%)	87 (49%)
Same party at all elections	72 (50%)	54 (49%)	90 (51%)

RCA 2013	*Ideologues*	*Ideologues Light*	*Ideologues Zero*
Switched at least once	72 (52%)	80 (53%)	63 (45%)
Same party at all elections	67 (48%)	70 (47%)	78 (55%)

From the two cross tables there are few differences to find. All groups look to be about equally stable in their party vote, irrespective of constraint. One difference is the ideologues zero-group from 2013, they are actually more stable in their specific party vote than the others, with 55% having voted or report having voted for the same party across all three elections.

In the following regression I analyze the hypothesis further. As the dependent variable I set whether they have voted for the same party across all elections (1), or not (0). Then I have regressed the RCA-groups from 2009 and 2013 in two separate iterations, each with the same set of time specific control variables as applied earlier in this thesis. I run both the 2009 and 2013 variables as the dependent variable encompass both time points and none of them is in their own a more logical choice than the other.

Table 9 Logistic regression on party switching

	Dependent variable:	
	Voting for the same party in all elections	
	RCA 2009	RCA 2013
	(1)	(2)
Gender	-0.007	-0.009
	(0.201)	(0.202)
Age 30-39	0.189	0.219
	(0.594)	(0.600)
Age 40-49	0.527	0.501
	(0.557)	(0.561)
Age 50-59	0.386	0.369
	(0.554)	(0.556)
Age 60+	0.849	0.832
	(0.556)	(0.559)
Senior Secondary School	0.099	0.025
	(0.424)	(0.425)
University/College	-0.110	-0.151
	(0.421)	(0.421)
Ideologues Light	-0.034	-0.035
	(0.266)	(0.252)
Ideologues Zero	0.111	0.386
	(0.244)	(0.259)
Political interest	0.410***	0.429***
	(0.120)	(0.120)
Constant	-0.997	-1.037
	(0.698)	(0.701)
Observations	429	428
Log Likelihood	-286.527	-284.433
Akaike Inf. Crit.	595.055	590.866

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

The constant here is: male voters with the highest level of constraint (Ideologues), aged 17-29 with secondary school as their highest achieved education and average political interest.

The results show no significant effect of constraint on party vote stability. What we see from the regressions is that political interest matters on whether people vote for the same party over time, this positive effect of higher political interest on party vote stability is significant at 1%. Outside of that, those in the age group 60+ tend towards the same, but the result is not so significant, 10%.

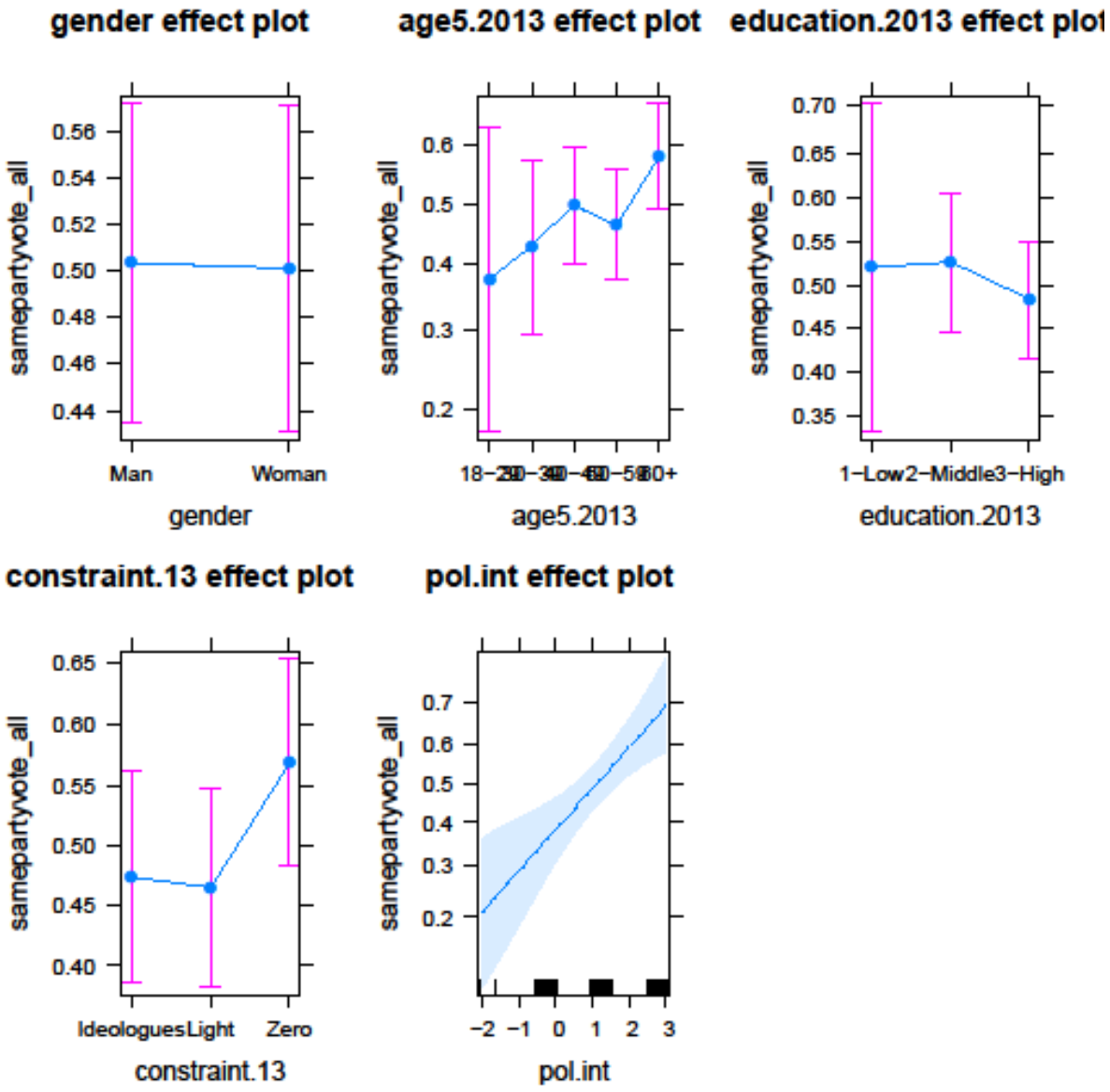

Figure 11 Voting for the same party across all election 2005, 2009 and 2013, using 2013-variables
This plots the effects of each variable and its values on the dependent variable with 95% confidence intervals around the effect estimates.

The findings are made more explicit here. We can see how the estimated effects vary within the categories of the variables, but outside of political interest, no effect is significant.

So this is very interesting, the degree of constraint does not seem to affect the probability of staying with the same party. Running the models without political interest produces both a worse model fit, and still no significant effect of constraint on party vote stability. We could theorize that ideological constraint does not matter for party vote stability and loyalty, but that with interest comes (intellectual) investment and that solidifies the party loyalty. Another explanation is that the level of constraint required to stay with the same party is remarkably low.

5.2 The Party Next Door

Despite having found no link between degrees of constraint and party vote stability, where people are just as likely to vote for the same party over time, irrespective of constraint according to my analysis. We should find a link when we look outside of the respective parties and consider the ideological vicinity or neighborhood of parties instead. Here I assume that people who are more constrained will vote for ideologically neighboring parties, as they will seek to vote on the basis of more constrained and stable ideological beliefs than those with less ideological constraint.

Hypothesis 4
If the most constrained vote for different parties, they are more likely to vote for ideologically neighboring parties.

To investigate this, I run a set of models looking at the likelihood of voting for the same or a neighboring party in the subsequent election, as opposed to voting for any other party. Looking first at the pair of 2005 and 2009 parliamentary elections, and then to the pair of 2009 and 2013 elections. Before these models we can already see a clear tendency by just looking at some simple cross tables, where we look at the vote choice in the pairwise elections and divide the sample using their respective group of constraint at the time point closest to those elections. In parentheses I report the column percentages, so that we can see how the groups are divided internally in their vote choice.

Table 10 Cross tables of levels of constraint on neighborhood voting

	RCA2009	*Ideologues*	*Ideologues Light*	*Ideologues Zero*
2005-2009	*Different party altogether*	17 (11%)	21 (18%)	40 (21%)
	Same party or neighboring	136 (89%)	95 (82%)	154 (79%)

	RCA2013	*Ideologues*	*Ideologues Light*	*Ideologues Zero*
2009-2013	*Different party altogether*	12 (8%)	32 (20%)	28 (18%)
	Same party or neighboring	131 (92%)	132 (80%)	126 (82%)

What we see in these tables is first that most people tend to vote within the ideological vicinity of their previous vote. That around 80% among the lower levels of constraint vote for the same or a neighboring party shows a remarkable high level of stability. But we also see that ideologues have an even higher tendency to stay within their initial party's neighborhood, where 90% stay put.

Table 11 Logistic regression on neighborhood voting

	Dependent variable: Voting for the same or the neighboring party	
	2005-2009	2009-2013
	(1)	(2)
Gender	-0.260	-0.056
	(0.257)	(0.269)
Age 30-39	0.540	-0.466
	(0.466)	(0.534)
Age 40-49	0.584	-0.051
	(0.447)	(0.504)
Age 50-59	0.793*	0.116
	(0.465)	(0.511)
Age 60+	1.416***	0.618
	(0.514)	(0.529)
Senior Secondary School	0.896*	0.428
	(0.468)	(0.614)
University/College	0.494	-0.203
	(0.463)	(0.599)
Ideologues Light	-0.707*	-0.920**
	(0.368)	(0.375)
Ideologues Zero	-0.746**	-0.948**
	(0.336)	(0.383)
Political Interest	0.369	0.293*
	(0.237)	(0.156)
Constant	0.683	1.979**
	(0.629)	(0.811)
Observations	461	460
Log Likelihood	-198.519	-186.649
Akaike Inf. Crit.	419.038	395.298
Note:		*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

The constant here is: male voters with the highest level of constraint (Ideologues), aged 17-29 with secondary school as their highest achieved education and average political interest.

Here I have run a model that looks at whether people voted for the same party, or the party that neighbors it on the ordinal left-right scale, first in 2005-2009, then in 2009-2013.

What we see here is that constraint does matter when we look at vote stability within the immediate ideological vicinity of parties. Both the ideologues light and the ideologues zero are less likely to vote for the same or the neighboring parties than the most constrained. As we saw that people where just as likely to vote for the same party over time, irrespective of constraint, this means that constraint matters significantly first when people change parties. A potential explanation for this is that more constrained voters might vote more tactically or punish their preferred party by voting for parties that still "strengthens the cause". Still it is important to underline the high level of neighborhood voting that we found among all groups of constraint, with four out of five voting for the same or a neighboring party even among the least constrained.

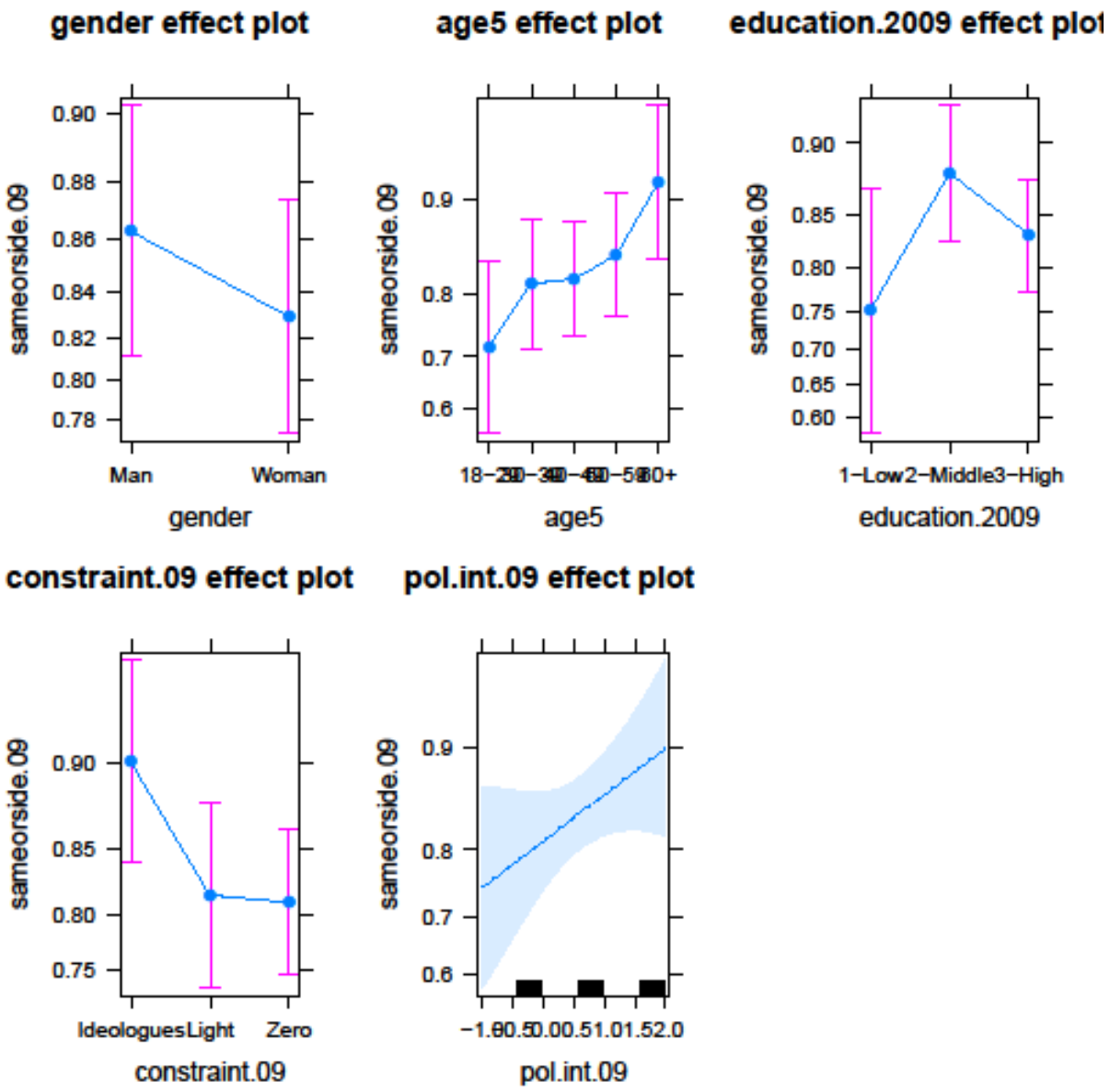

Figure 12 Voting for the same or neighboring party in 2005 and 2009
This plots the effects of each variable and its values on the dependent variable with 95% confidence intervals around the effect estimates.

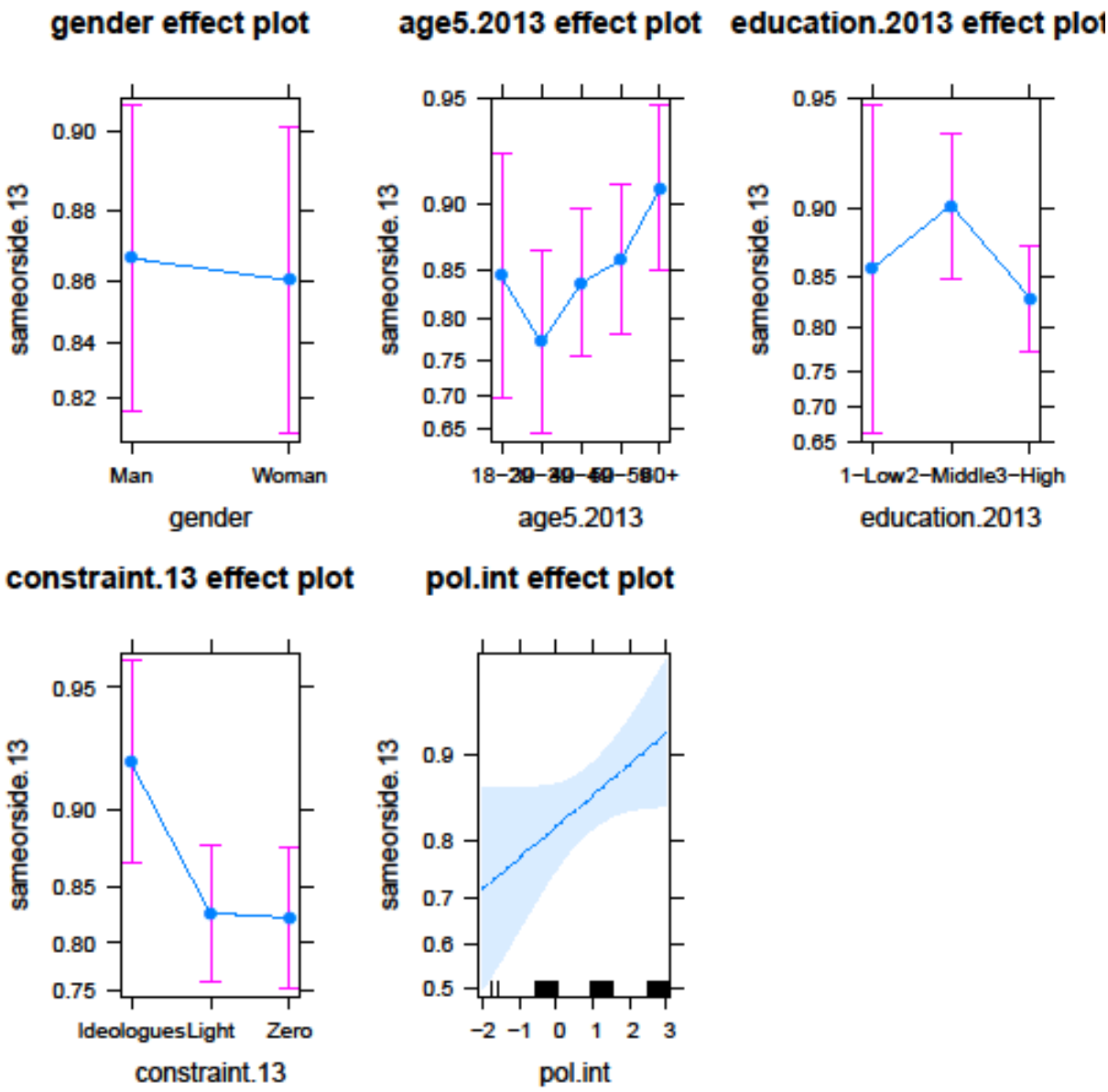

Figure 13 Voting for the same or neighboring party in 2009 and 2013
This plots the effects of each variable and its values on the dependent variable with 95% confidence intervals around the effect estimates.

This finding leads us into the next sections, where we look more explicitly at the extent of the ideological movement among the different groups.

5.3 Less Constraints, More Movement

There are many parties to choose from in the Norwegian party system, and these are spread out in the political landscape, a landscape which is often and most easily represented as a line from left to right. In line with the reasoning from before I assume that we will see more vote movement among the less constrained.

Hypothesis 5

Less constrained voters are more likely to vote for different parties over time.

Hypothesis 6

Less constrained are likely to move a larger ideological distance, on the left right-axis, when switching parties.

First out we can start by looking at cross tables of vote movement across the three elections. One thing that is worth noticing is how the inclusion of the Green party with its placement of 2.5 have made the analysis and these tables somewhat uneven. In the tables, 1 is ideologues, 2 is ideologues light, and 3 is ideologues zero.

Table 12 Cross tables of level of constraint on vote movement

RCA-GROUP 2009 AND TOTAL ORDINAL VOTE MOVEMENT ACROSS 3 ELECTIONS

	0	**0.5**	**1**	**1.5**	**2**	**2.5**	**3**	**3.5**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**	**11**	**12**
1	72	3	31	2	18	0	4	1	5	2	3	0	1	0	0	0	1
2	54	1	15	0	14	1	4	0	6	8	5	0	1	0	1	0	0
3	90	0	20	0	24	0	5	0	16	5	4	2	6	2	2	1	0

RCA-GROUP 2013 AND TOTAL ORDINAL VOTE MOVEMENT ACROSS 3 ELECTIONS

	0	**0.5**	**1**	**1.5**	**2**	**2.5**	**3**	**3.5**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**	**11**	**12**
1	67	3	30	2	24	0	3	1	3	4	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
2	70	1	29	0	15	1	4	0	13	5	6	2	4	0	0	0	0
3	78	0	7	0	17	0	6	0	11	6	5	0	4	2	3	1	1

In these tables we see that most people do not move at all, and those who move tend toward moving one or two points (parties) across the three elections. Had these tables been distribution plots we would see right-tailed distributions for all levels of constraint. But with some variation among the groups, which we examine further in the following regression table.

In this regression I use the measure of total ordinal vote movement across the 3 elections as the dependent variable. Then I have applied the RCA-groups from 2009 in one, and 2013 in the other, and used the background variables from 2013 as controls. Looking at “how far” people have moved between parties we do see some interesting and significant patterns.

Table 13 Regression on vote movement

	Dependent variable:	
	The total ordinal movement of voters across all elections	
	RCA 2009	RCA 2013
	(1)	(2)
Gender	0.018	0.004
	(0.211)	(0.210)
Age 30-39	0.471	0.431
	(0.605)	(0.604)
Age 40-49	0.075	0.006
	(0.568)	(0.565)
Age 50-59	-0.072	-0.118
	(0.564)	(0.560)
Age 60+	-0.525	-0.569
	(0.565)	(0.563)
Senior Secondary School	-0.376	-0.358
	(0.443)	(0.443)
University/College	-0.232	-0.182
	(0.440)	(0.439)
Ideologues Light	0.410	0.482*
	(0.279)	(0.262)
Ideologues Zero	0.505**	0.803***
	(0.256)	(0.268)
Political Interest	-0.416***	-0.397***
	(0.121)	(0.121)
Constant	2.013***	1.894***
	(0.714)	(0.713)
Observations	429	428
R^2	0.070	0.081
Adjusted R^2	0.048	0.059
Residual Std. Error	2.150 (df = 418)	2.139 (df = 417)
F Statistic	3.164*** (df = 10; 418)	3.654*** (df = 10; 417)
Note:		*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

The constant here is: male voters with the highest level of constraint (Ideologues), aged 17-29 with secondary school as their highest achieved education and average political interest.

There are some significant relations here, the more politically interested tend to move shorter, and the least constrained, ideologues zero, tend to move longer across the elections. There is also some mixed results on the ideologues light, with a weakly significant result when applying the RCA2013 grouping. This can be further examined by looking at the visualization of the individual variables' effect on vote movement.

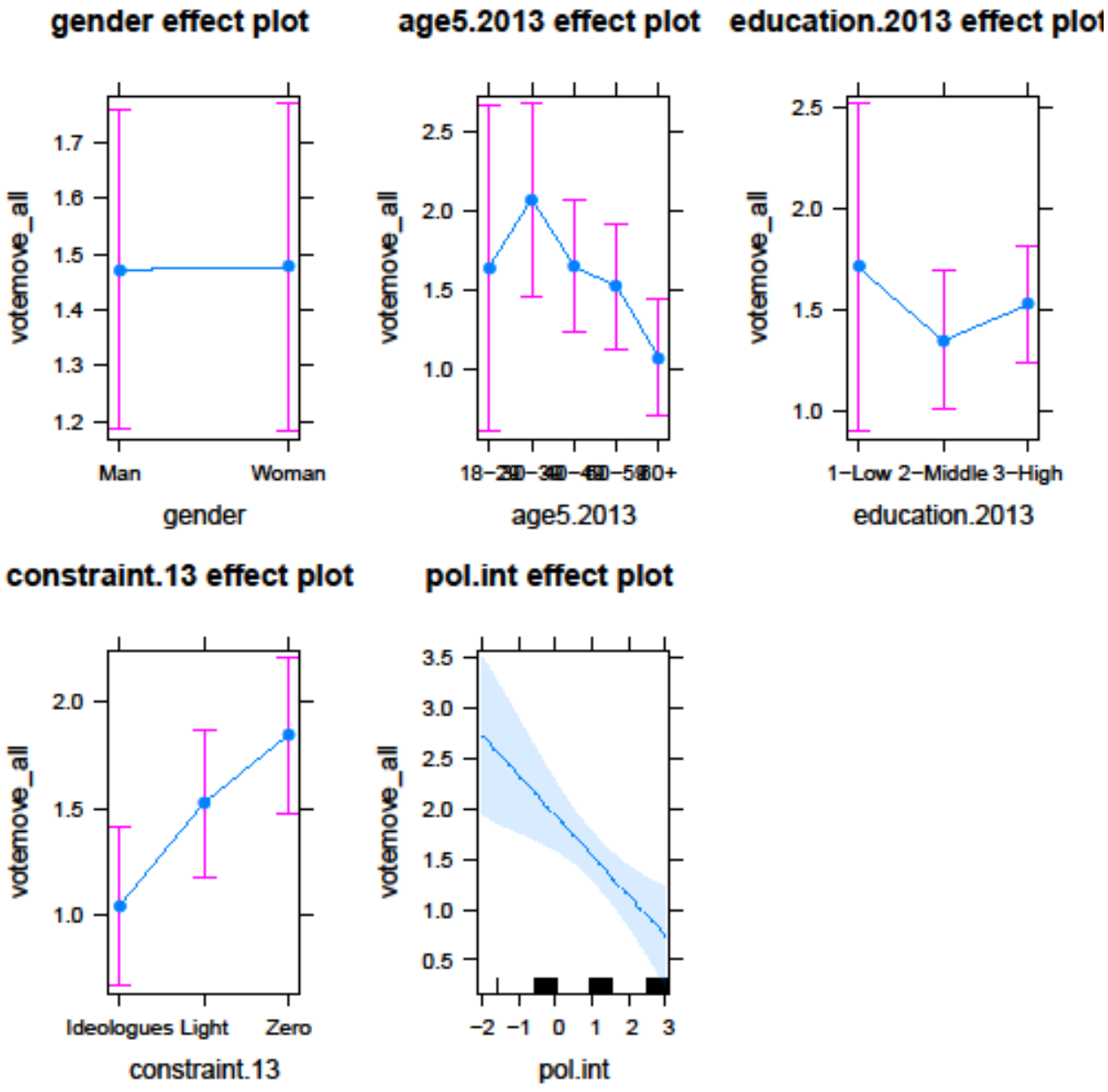

Figure 14 Total "vote movement" across all elections from 2005, by 2009, to 2013.
This plots the effects of each variable and its values on the dependent variable with 95% confidence intervals around the effect estimates.

Alas, a potential weakness with the analysis is that the parties on the right have been a bit more fragmented than those on the left. With 3 parties, now 4 in 2013 on the left, and 4

parties on the right the movement is likely to be larger among the right block voters than the left block voters. There is also the possibility that people on the right move between the Conservative and the Liberal party, but on the ordinal scale the Christian Democrats are in between while they have a more unique electoral basis. On the left comes the Green Party in 2013, and between many options I opted to squeeze it in without changing the ordinal scale, this further biases the scale and analysis.

All this builds up under the argument that this measurement and analysis is crude and possibly faulty. We therefore need to more measures for more certain conclusions.

5.4 Changing Party Blocks

As discussed above, vote movement across elections is a very coarse measure that can overlook essential nuances. The scale's ordinal origin also makes it non-viable to say much about ideological vote movement. The findings should therefore be retested with better measures, and one of them follows here. By looking at block change we have a precise measure that can be considered to have high validity, when looking at substantial and ideological party change, and as a good test of the earlier results.

Having a span of 3 elections to look at we can see how many changed blocks in 2009 and 2013. This is interesting as a vote for a different block can be considered as a substantial shift in party vote that exceeds most intra-block vote changes. For this I have coded a variable where the left block consist of The Red Party ("Rødt"), Socialist Left Party (SV), The Greens (MDG), Labor Party (Ap) and The Agrarian Party (Sp). The right block consist of The Liberals (V), The Christian Democrats (KrF), The Conservative Party (Høyre) and The Progress Party (FrP). Block changing votes are those who voted for one block at one election, and the other block in the other election. I have coded this for the pairwise elections 2005-2009 and 2009-2013, and I have coded another to look at block vote changing across all the three elections.

In 2009, 65 out of 464 respondents vote for a party in a different block than they voted for in the preceding election. In 2013, 62 voted for a different block. Of these people, 19 voted for a new block in each of the elections, which constitutes a bit less than a third of the "block-changers". The block change variable that looks at all three elections is coded so that minimum one block change equals 1, those who never changed blocks score a 0.

I have run 3 different pairs of logistic regressions on block change, where I analyze the block-changing in each election-pair respectively and lastly all elections together. This is because each election might have some specific contextual differences that the models do not account for, and it is important to see whether the effects are similar, in direction and significance across the elections.

5.4.1 Changing party blocks between 2005 and 2009

As with the other aspects of vote choice covered in this thesis, we start of by examining cross tables of the dependent variable against level of constraint. In parentheses I report the column percentages, so that we can see how the groups are divided internally in their vote choice.

Table 14 Cross tables on level of constraint on block changing, 2005-2009

RCA2009 & Block change		*Ideologues*	*Ideologues Light*	*Ideologues Zero*
2005-2009	*Same block*	141 (92%)	97 (84%)	161 (83%)
	Changed blocks	12 (8%)	19 (16%)	33 (17%)

RCA2013 & Block change		*Ideologues*	*Ideologues Light*	*Ideologues Zero*
2005-2009	*Same block*	136 (93%)	139 (83%)	123 (82%)
	Changed blocks	10 (7%)	27 (17%)	27 (18%)

We see little difference between the different RCA-iterations when it comes to block voting in 2005 and 2009. What we do see is that the level of stability in block voting is remarkably high among all groups with stability above 80%, but with a tendency towards the less constrained being more inclined to change blocks than the ideologues.

Table 15 Logistic regression of block changing, 2005-2009

	Dependent variable:	
	vote.blockchange05_09	
	RCA 2009	RCA 2013
	(1)	(2)
Gender	0.137	0.126
	(0.281)	(0.282)
Age 30-39	-0.507	-0.583
	(0.487)	(0.494)
Age 40-49	-0.581	-0.658
	(0.467)	(0.481)
Age 50-59	-0.893*	-0.964*
	(0.497)	(0.506)
Age 60+	-1.720***	-1.743***
	(0.571)	(0.570)
Senior Secondary School	-0.748	-0.600
	(0.516)	(0.515)
University/College	-0.674	-0.462
	(0.521)	(0.513)
Ideologues Light	0.963**	0.974**
	(0.409)	(0.407)
Ideologues Zero	0.737*	1.053**
	(0.380)	(0.419)
Political Interest	-0.615**	-0.581**
	(0.259)	(0.259)
Constant	-0.711	-0.995
	(0.683)	(0.700)
Observations	461	460
Log Likelihood	-171.587	-170.589
Akaike Inf. Crit.	365.174	363.177

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

The constant here is: male voters with the highest level of constraint (Ideologues), aged 17-29 with secondary school as their highest achieved education and average political interest.

The first regressions looks at block change between the 2005 and 2009 election. Where I switch between the RCA-groupings from 2009 and 2013 as explanatory variables. Both solutions show significant effects of constraint. Both the less constrained groups in 2009 had a higher tendency to vote for another block. But the relation between the ideologues zero in 2009 and block switching is only significant on the 10% level, whereas the ideologue zeros in 2013 are significant at a 5%-level.

One reason for controlling for both RCA-groupings is that attitude formation, constraint and stability might not only come before the vote choice, but is also an ongoing process. So when we see that those who are still less constrained at the following election survey in 2013 (which in essence is a lagged variable, t+1) are even more likely to have changed blocks in 2009, that could pinpoint towards those who switch blocks to also be less likely to become constrained over time.

Age is also significant with a negative relation to block switching among the oldest group of 60+, and there is mixed results for lower age groups with a tendency towards higher stability with higher age in general.

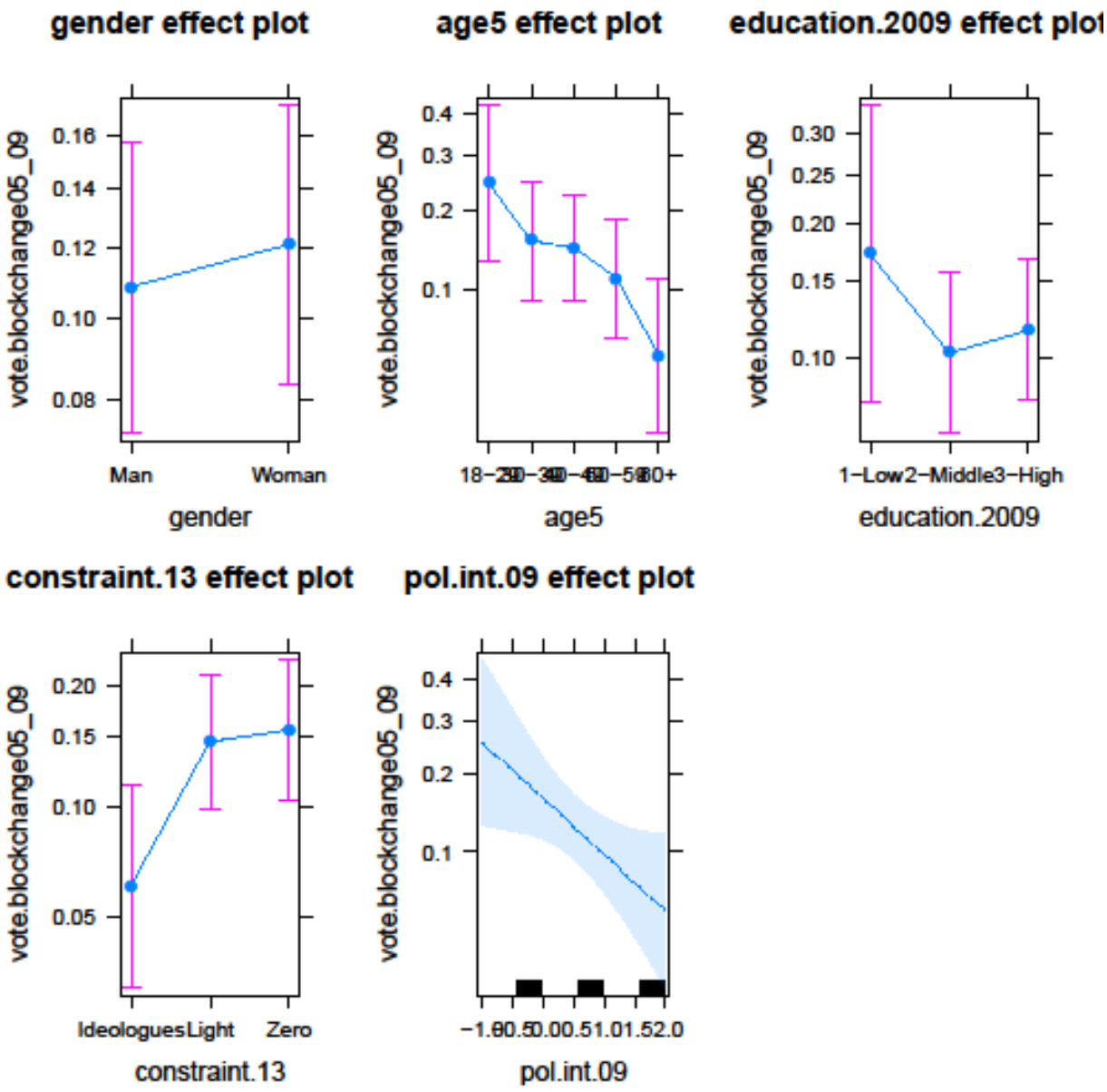

Figure 15 Probability of changing party blocks between 2005 and 2009
This plots the effects of each variable and its values on the dependent variable with 95% confidence intervals around the effect estimates.

5.4.2 Changing party blocks between 2009 and 2013

To make sure that the findings from looking at block change between 2005 and 2009 is something more than a happy coincidence, I also check it for the elections of 2009 and 2013. First out we look at cross tables for the dependent variable and levels of constraint. In parentheses I report the column percentages, so that we can see how the groups are divided internally in their vote choice.

Table 16 Cross tables of constraint on block changing, 2009-2013

RCA2009 & Block change		*Ideologues*	*Ideologues Light*	*Ideologues Zero*
2009-2013	*Same block*	141 (92%)	100 (86%)	161 (85%)
	Changed blocks	13 (8%)	17 (14%)	29 (15%)

RCA2013 & Block change		*Ideologues*	*Ideologues Light*	*Ideologues Zero*
2009-2013	*Same block*	133 (93%)	139 (85%)	129 (84%)
	Changed blocks	10 (7%)	25 (15%)	25 (16%)

Looking at cross tables over block change and level of ideological constraint we see much of the same picture as with 2005-2009. There are evidence of high levels of constraint, the lowest averaging 85%, and the less constrained have a higher tendency to change blocks than the ideologues.

Table 17 Logistic regression of block changing, 2009-2013

	Dependent variable:	
	vote.blockchange09_13	
	RCA 2009	RCA 2013
	(1)	(2)
Gender	-0.173	-0.129
	(0.293)	(0.290)
Age 30-39	1.017	1.060*
	(0.631)	(0.633)
Age 40-49	0.639	0.693
	(0.601)	(0.603)
Age 50-59	0.121	0.159
	(0.623)	(0.626)
Age 60+	-0.137	0.001
	(0.634)	(0.627)
Senior Secondary School	-0.575	-0.449
	(0.625)	(0.622)
University/College	-0.113	-0.021
	(0.616)	(0.613)
Ideologues Light	0.537	0.682*
	(0.405)	(0.410)
Ideologues Zero	0.614	0.865**
	(0.373)	(0.412)
Political Interest	-0.485***	-0.485***
	(0.169)	(0.169)
Constant	-1.832**	-2.161**
	(0.859)	(0.891)
Observations	460	460
Log Likelihood	-164.307	-165.348
Akaike Inf. Crit.	350.615	352.697

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

The constant here is: male voters with the highest level of constraint (Ideologues), aged 17-29 with secondary school as their highest achieved education and average political interest.

In this regression I look at block change between 2009 and 2013, here the 2009 groupings seem to have no significant relation with block change. However, when look at the groupings from 2013, there is a significant positive relation between the least constrained, ideologues

zero, and block changing. There is also a weakly significant relation between the ideologues light and block changing. This means that those who were less constrained in 2013 were also more likely to switch blocks than the most constrained, ideologues. This also indicates that earlier levels of constraint might not be the best predictor of future voting stability.

Political interest is however strongly significant across both elections and with both RCA-applications.

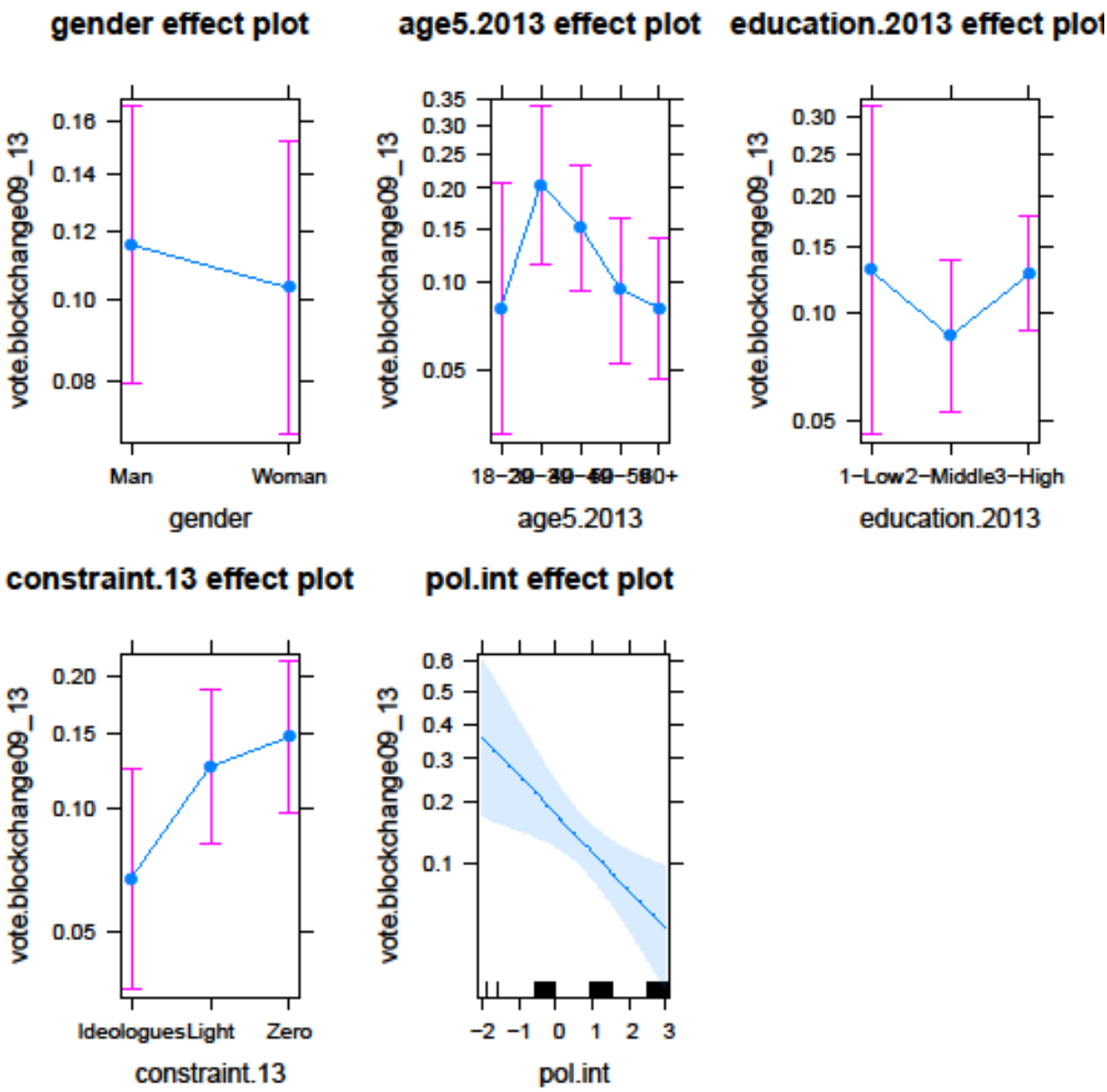

Figure 16 Probability of changing party blocks between 2009 and 2013
This plots the effects of each variable and its values on the dependent variable with 95% confidence intervals around the effect estimates.

5.4.3 Changing party blocks at least once between 2005-2013

Lastly I check how it stands when we look at block changing as a concept across all the elections. Turning to the cross tables first, looking at the dependent variable and levels of constraint. In parentheses I report the column percentages, so that we can see how the groups are divided internally in their vote choice.

Table 18 Cross tables of constraint on block change, all elections

RCA2009 & Block change		*Ideologues*	*Ideologues Light*	*Ideologues Zero*
All elections 05-09-13	*Same block*	124 (87%)	79 (72%)	129 (73%)
	Changed blocks	19 (13%)	31 (28%)	48 (27%)

RCA2013 & Block change		*Ideologues*	*Ideologues Light*	*Ideologues Zero*
All elections 05-09-13	*Same block*	120 (87%)	110 (73%)	101 (72%)
	Changed blocks	18 (13%)	40 (27%)	40 (28%)

Here we still see rather high levels of stability, with over 70% reporting having never changed blocks across the three elections even among the less constrained. We also spot a starker contrast between the ideologues and the rest, where 87% of the ideologues never changed their blocks.

The logistic regression that follows looks at all the elections, with the dependent variable being whether someone changed party blocks at least once between these elections.

Table 19 Logistic regression of block changing, all elections

	Dependent variable:	
	vote.blockchange_all	
	RCA 2009	RCA 2013
	(1)	(2)
Gender	0.112	0.093
	(0.243)	(0.243)
Age 30-39	0.268	0.259
	(0.630)	(0.637)
Age 40-49	-0.059	-0.067
	(0.600)	(0.606)
Age 50-59	-0.578	-0.580
	(0.610)	(0.614)
Age 60+	-0.642	-0.620
	(0.612)	(0.617)
Senior Secondary School	-0.394	-0.329
	(0.508)	(0.505)
University/College	-0.112	-0.038
	(0.506)	(0.501)
Ideologues Light	0.906***	0.751**
	(0.340)	(0.330)
Ideologues Zero	0.761**	0.873***
	(0.319)	(0.333)
Political Interest	-0.473***	-0.467***
	(0.143)	(0.143)
Constant	-0.851	-0.917
	(0.789)	(0.795)
Observations	429	428
Log Likelihood	-213.341	-213.405
Akaike Inf. Crit.	448.682	448.811

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

The constant here is: male voters with the highest level of constraint (Ideologues), aged 17-29 with secondary school as their highest achieved education and average political interest.

Now this last regression looks at all three elections, and whether someone changed blocks at least once between them. Here the same pattern is shown as was seen with 2005-2009. The

groups of lower constraint, be it ideologues light or ideologues zero had a significantly (5%) higher tendency to switch blocks. Having the 2005-2009 regressions in mind, it seems that the 05-09 regressions drives the results for the combined regression that looks at both pairs of elections. It should therefore be tested at more elections to be more certain if this effect is a general finding, or a particularly strong finding in 2009. Nevertheless the tendency is so strong that it stays significant when combining the two pair-wise elections, which supports that there is some substance to it.

There are also some other possible reasons. One is that the 05-information is based on self-report of their vote, and none say they did not vote or similar. Between 2009 and 2013 there are however more people that for different reasons did not vote, there can be a discrepancy in this. And had we included those who did not vote for some reason in 2009 and 2013, the findings would probably strengthen the results found here. Were we could assume that the less constrained (and also the least interested) would be less likely to vote at all. So not jumping over the fence, but staying on it.

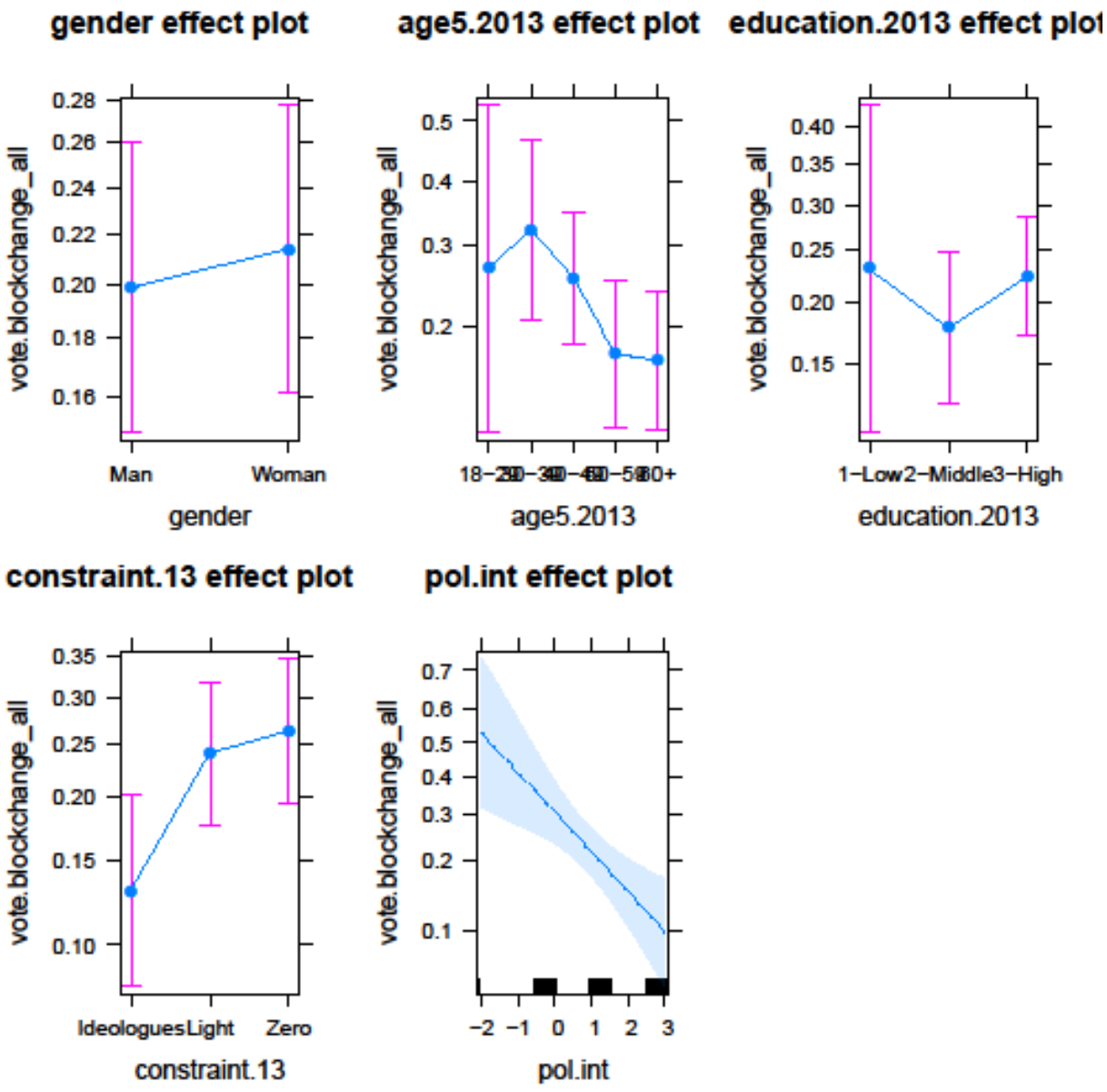

Figure 17 Probability of changing party blocks at least once across all elections, 2005, 2009 and 2013. This plots the effects of each variable and its values on the dependent variable with 95% confidence intervals around the effect estimates.

5.4.4 Other Models and Robustness Checks

I have run several different models to see what variables would be suitable to explain voting stability, in line with the variety of possibly relevant background variables described under section 3.5.3. In what turned up to be the most optimal model in terms of explained variance, I found work hours and one specific type of occupation to be significant, a higher position in the public sector. This model reduced the sample size drastically however, so as to avoid

omitting relevant respondents I dropped these variables for the main analysis, but the model can be found in the appendix together with all the other models from this section.

I have also run an alternative model on block change that includes people's previous block vote as a control. This might help in capturing shifts in the electorate as a whole, which it indeed does for 2009-2013, logically as there was an electoral movement from left to right. By using this as a control variable I find that both level of constraint and political interest is significant in 2009-2013.

Further I have run several models without political interest, as it is a variable that could be assumed to be closely linked with political beliefs in itself. Interest and investment goes hand in hand, and many of the phenomena studied in this thesis is logically tied with interest. Lastly I have also looked at what explains people's varying levels of political interest. It was simply intended as a control, but seeing how significant it is, I find it important to look further into what explain it as well.

When it comes to robustness checks I have done several. All of these can be found in the appendix. The consensus from them is that the groups of constraint are relevant variables, that the logistic regressions do a good job at predicting rare outcomes, but that there is some heteroscedasticity in the models, where the dependent variables correlate with the error variance. This means that there seems to be omitted variables that could bias the conclusions in this thesis.

5.5 Concluding Remarks on Voting Behavior

In this chapter I have explored the relation between people's level of constraint and their voting behavior. More precisely I have analyzed people's voting stability under a varied set of measures. First I looked at the relation between ideological constraint and party vote stability, then extending it to ideological neighborhoods. Next I looked at ideological movement, first by analyzing the ordinal vote movement across all three elections. Then lastly with more conservative measures on ideological movement, by looking at the tendency to vote for different party blocks. I have done this to fully answer the last sets of hypotheses.

Hypothesis 3

Voters' with consistent and constrained belief systems will vote for the same party over time.

This hypothesis was debunked in section 5.1, where we saw that voters were just as likely to stay with the same party across all elections irrespective of their level of constraint. Voters in general are likely to vote for the same party over time, and it cannot be linked to higher levels of constraint.

Hypothesis 4

If more constrained voters vote for different parties, they are more likely to vote for ideologically neighboring parties.

This hypothesis was studied indirectly in all the subsequent analyses of voting stability, but specifically so in section 5.2. All findings point towards more constrained voters voting more stably when we extend the scope to include the ideological vicinity. This shows that there might be qualitative differences in party switching, where ideologues are more likely to vote for different parties on ideological grounds.

Hypothesis 5

Less constrained voters are more likely to vote for different parties over time.

This hypothesis is a mixture of mirroring hypothesis 3, where it is disproven as they vote just as stably for specific parties, and an assumption of the more random voting behavior of less constrained voters. Which is reflected in their party switching behavior.

Hypothesis 6

Less constrained are likely to move a larger ideological distance, on the left right-axis, when switching parties.

This hypothesis is specifically analyzed in section 5.3 and 5.4. From there we saw the less constrained voters were indeed more likely to move further on an ordinal scale across all elections, and they were more likely to switch party blocks. It is further supported by the finding that they were less likely to vote for a neighboring party than the ideologues. So less constrained voters do seem to be less bound by ideology, and make substantially larger shifts when they switch parties.

These hypotheses were in their totality used to investigate the relation between people's level of ideological constraint and their voting stability. Together they form evidence towards ideological constraint playing a role in people's voting behavior. The ideologues tend to be more anchored in their vote choice than the ideologues light or ideologues zero. But looking at the data and levels of stability we see that most voters tend towards high levels of stability when we look above the individual party level.

6 Discussion

In this thesis I have mapped some of the variation that can be found in people's political belief systems, concerning their degree of ideological constraint and attitudinal stability. Further I have analyzed how varying degrees of constraint relate to the stability of people's vote choice. The main aim has been to look at some general aspects, level of ideological constraint, attitudinal stability and voting stability. But along the way there has been several substantial aspects of interest, some I will cover here, but others I leave for future investigation.

People vary in their ideological constraint, and I have found three main groups of differing levels of constraint at both time points, the *ideologues*, *ideologues light* and *ideologues zero*. As was apparent when studying each group separately, the analysis show higher levels of constraint and attitudinal stability among a majority of the electorate. The ideologues and the ideologues light made out 56% of the sample in 2009 and close to two-thirds in 2013. They are very capable of seeing individual issues in the context of their issue domains, they have a clear pattern of constraint across all the issue domains included in this analysis, and they are mostly stable in their attitudes across elections.

There are also signs of constraint even among the least constrained, where within-domain constraint was solid on some domains, particularly regarding migration and moral issues. The corresponding attitudinal stability was also close to equal with the other groups on these domains. In addition there was both constraint and stability in opinion when looking at individual issues on many domains which have had prolonged public debate, such as the dispute over potential oil excavation in the areas of Lofoten, Vesterålen and Senja. This shows that the ideological dimensions that the Norwegian Electoral Research Program has found clearly exist. These findings further provide evidence against the "Black-white model" of Converse (2006: 49), even if the ideological constraint and attitudinal stability varies across dimensions there are some clear signs of both constraint and stability.

The fact that the issue domain regarding migration is more constrained and stable across all groups, in comparison to the economic issue domain which has gradually lower stability with lower constraint, follows in line with research that argue that there is a change in mass opinion constraint from "old" to "new" politics (Kitschelt 1994, 1995). The economic left-

right dimension varies in both stability and constraint among the groups, this indicates that the dimension might be most relevant for the politically sophisticated voter. I found the climate dimension to be unstable on a majority of its' individual issues for all levels of constraint. An instability that was also found on the global-national dimension. As de Vries et al (2013) argue, the left-right axis remain as an organizing structure in politics, but the content of it changes.

This variance in ideological constraint is also shown to matter in the stability of their vote, but first when people change parties. I found that the specific party vote stability, or party loyalty did not vary with degrees of constraint. People were equally likely to vote for the same party over time, regardless of their levels of constraint. When we looked at party change, the picture was different. Whereas the most constrained where more likely to switch to neighboring parties, the less constrained people were more likely to move to a party further away. This finding was further supported when looking at block switching, where less constrained voters tended towards jumping over the fence to the other side more often than the more constrained.

When trying to explain what predicts people's level of constraint I found that the single most important explaining factor was their self-reported political interest. Those that were more interested tended towards both being more constrained and towards more stable voting. Thus political interest might be a handy measure and stand-in for researchers who are curious to study the aspects in this thesis without going the long way through lots of attitudinal questions and mapping of belief systems. This finding that political interest is a strong predictor of both constraint and vote stability can also serve as good news for representative democracy and spatial voting theory. Those that want a qualitative improvement of democracy could further support actions that strengthens people's interest in politics. Making its relevance clearer and more accessible.

These findings put together shows that we have varying levels of ideological constraint among people and that their level of constraint is related to the stability of their vote choice. An implication of this is that close elections could be decided by unstable voters with unstable and unconstrained beliefs. This is less the case in a multi-party system, where parties negotiate between themselves and many different types of government can be formed. But it can be considered more pivotal in majority-based elections, and it can become more important in party systems where party blocks become more solidified and/or polarized.

Another way of seeing it is that the less constrained are also more open to other arguments, and thereby different political alternatives in elections. But as was seen in the analysis, their vote was less anchored by their constraints. Instead low interest and low constraint increases the volatility of the vote, and for explaining their voting behavior we might do well in looking at other explanations than ideology, as was proposed by Achen and Bartels (2016). The plethora of voting theories that exist has been grounded in some empirical findings, and the varying degree that they matter across polities could very well be because of the heterogeneity within the electorate when it comes to the capacity, interest and relevance for ideologically based voting.

This thesis show that there is evidence for high levels of ideological constraint, attitudinal stability and voting stability among the Norwegian electorate. This is ascribed to high levels of political interest, and behind interest we find age and education, but it also supports the conclusion from Granberg and Holmberg (1988) that the political system matters. In a stable, party-centered political system there is good reason to have a political belief system and vote according to it.

The most constrained voters also switch parties sometimes, but when they do they tend to vote for neighboring parties in a larger degree than the less constrained. This is in line with spatial voting theory, of ideologically reasoned voters that choose their best alternative (Downs 1957; Enelow & Hinich 1984). Voting for a neighboring party can be strategical, optimizing coalition success chances, it can be directional in moving the ideological foundation of a coalition (Macdonald et al 1998, 2001), and it can be a way of punishing a party while still supporting the potential coalition block.

But as we see, some portions of the electorate are less constrained and care for only a few issue domains. They are also less stable in their vote choices, and what motivates their larger ideological shifts in party preference is well worth further inquiry. By this I believe it is plausible that other theories of voting could be more applicable for these subgroups of the less constrained, such as economic or valence voting, as has been found more applicable in other polities (Achen and Bartels, 2016; Clarke et al 2015; Duch 2007).

An extension of this analysis could be to look at more attitudinal questions, so to look at a more complete picture of public opinion. The most constrained could very well be constrained on many more issues. Another approach could also look at the impact of valence evaluations,

as issue domains such as health care and education is important to voters and parties (Karlsen 2015: 36), but the differentiation between parties' policies is not as easily done as with issues on climate or migration policy, and it is often measured as *issue ownership* which is a good indicator but difficult to place in an ideological space. Every party promises a good health care and education policy, and the question for the voter is then who is more trustworthy and capable.

The disagreement on the degree of constraint and stability among people's political belief system was traced back to two main factors. One is the political system, and the other was the method applied to analyze it all. My analysis builds on the analysis of Baldassari and Goldberg (2014) that was conducted on the US electorate, and together with Freezer (et al 2016) find that both constraint and attitudinal stability can be found when looking at single issues. While all these studies, including mine, find that some portion have lower levels of constraint, I find that even the least constrained are constrained and stable on some issue domains.

As with Baldassari and Goldberg (2014) I find three groups at both time points when running relation class analysis, but where they find two completely different patterns of constraint, Ideologues and Alternatives, and a group without constraint, Agnostics, I find that the groups in Norway are mostly similar in patterns of constraint, and rather differ in their degree of constraint. There was some indication of variation in the patterns between the ideologues and ideologues light, and that is a potential venue for further analysis.

7 Conclusion

In this thesis I have mapped the political belief systems of Norwegian voters and looked at how varying degrees of ideological constraint affected electoral outcomes in the 2009 and 2013 national election. From these analyses I have gathered that Norwegian voters do vary in their degree of constraint, that people with lower constraint tend to have less stable attitudes over time, and that the less constrained are also more probable to switch party blocks if they switch parties, but they are just as likely to stay with the same party over time as others.

The fact that people do vary in their degree of ideological constraint is important. This means that some of the ideological dimensions that are important and exist on the aggregate might not be applicable for every voter. Future research on elections should consider to divide the sample, for example on their reported level of political interest when conducting analyses such as factor analysis. Another option is to use this division and see to what degree the different explanative variables differ in models of vote choice. Certain surprising electoral outcomes could probably be better understood when accepting the notion that people's political interest, attitudinal constraint and stability vary, and accustoming for that in their models.

In Norway I have found that the general level of constraint and stability is high, even when we look at individual issues. This is positive news on behalf of democratic theory, and stands in contrast to some of the most realistic/pessimistic among us. Now Norway is but one of many democracies, and it is in many ways very privileged. Nevertheless, in these interesting times where doubt on democracy is resurfacing, and we experience electoral outcomes that surprise both us and our models - this thesis might stand as further evidence that political beliefs are achievable and exist among the public, while also presenting a pathway to discovery and explanation where we find none.

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Appendix

A.1 Various Alternative Models

A.1.1 Model with Previous Block Vote

This model is a reiteration of the analyses of block change between the elections in 2005 and 2009, and 2009 and 2013. The new addition is a control variable that accounts for their previous block vote, right (0) or left (1), which then captures the general vote movement within the electorate between the blocks. In both elections people who voted for the left tended towards changing blocks more so than those who voted for the right block. In 2009 the right block achieved a majority among voters, but not in mandates, whereas in 2013 they also won the majority in mandates and formed a government.

Controlling for the block vote in the previous election, the degrees of constraint emerge as significant at both elections. All the effect estimates have kept the same direction. The model fit is better for these models than their equivalents as well.

Table 20 Block change, with previous block vote as control

	Dependent variable:	
	vote.blockchange05_09	vote.blockchange09_13
	(1)	(2)
Gender	0.071	-0.193
	(0.284)	(0.299)
Age 30-39	-0.404	0.993
	(0.492)	(0.651)
Age 40-49	-0.505	0.799
	(0.471)	(0.624)
Age 50-59	-0.803	0.205
	(0.501)	(0.647)
Age 60+	-1.635***	0.033
	(0.576)	(0.645)
Senior Secondary School	-0.716	-0.303
	(0.518)	(0.634)
University/College	-0.651	0.275
	(0.526)	(0.626)
Ideologues Light	1.057**	1.223***
	(0.415)	(0.433)
Ideologues Zero	0.845**	1.297***
	(0.386)	(0.429)
Block vote prev. election	0.520*	1.504***
	(0.307)	(0.344)
Political interest	-0.578**	-0.483***
	(0.260)	(0.173)
Constant	-1.204	-3.721***
	(0.750)	(0.998)
Observations	461	460
Log Likelihood	-170.101	-154.367
Akaike Inf. Crit.	364.203	332.734

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

The constant here is: male voters with the highest level of constraint (Ideologues), aged 17-29 with secondary school as their highest achieved education and average political interest.

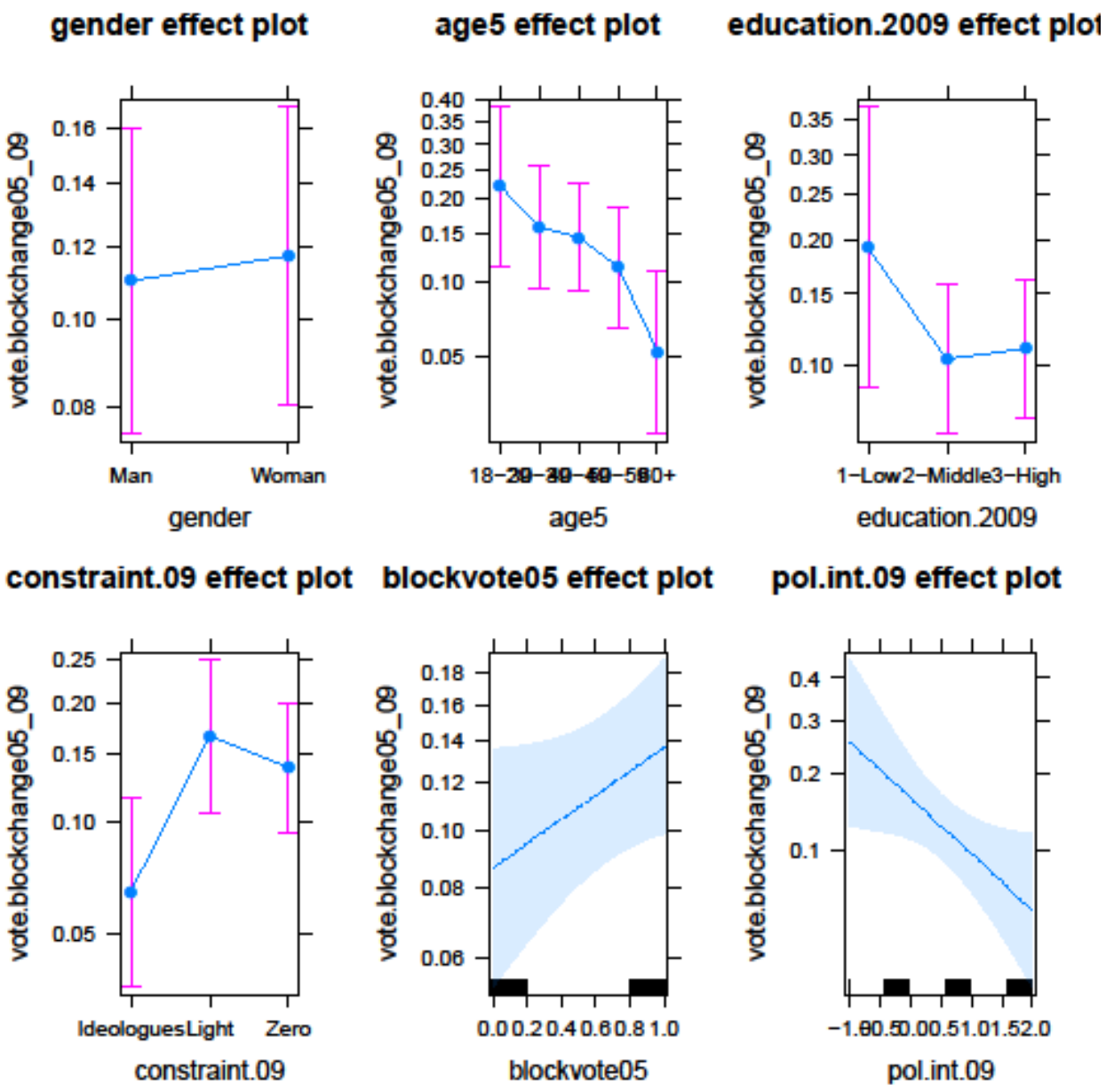

Figure 18 Probability of changing party blocks between 2005 and 2009, including previous block vote
This plots the effects of each variable and its values on the dependent variable with 95% confidence intervals around the effect estimates.

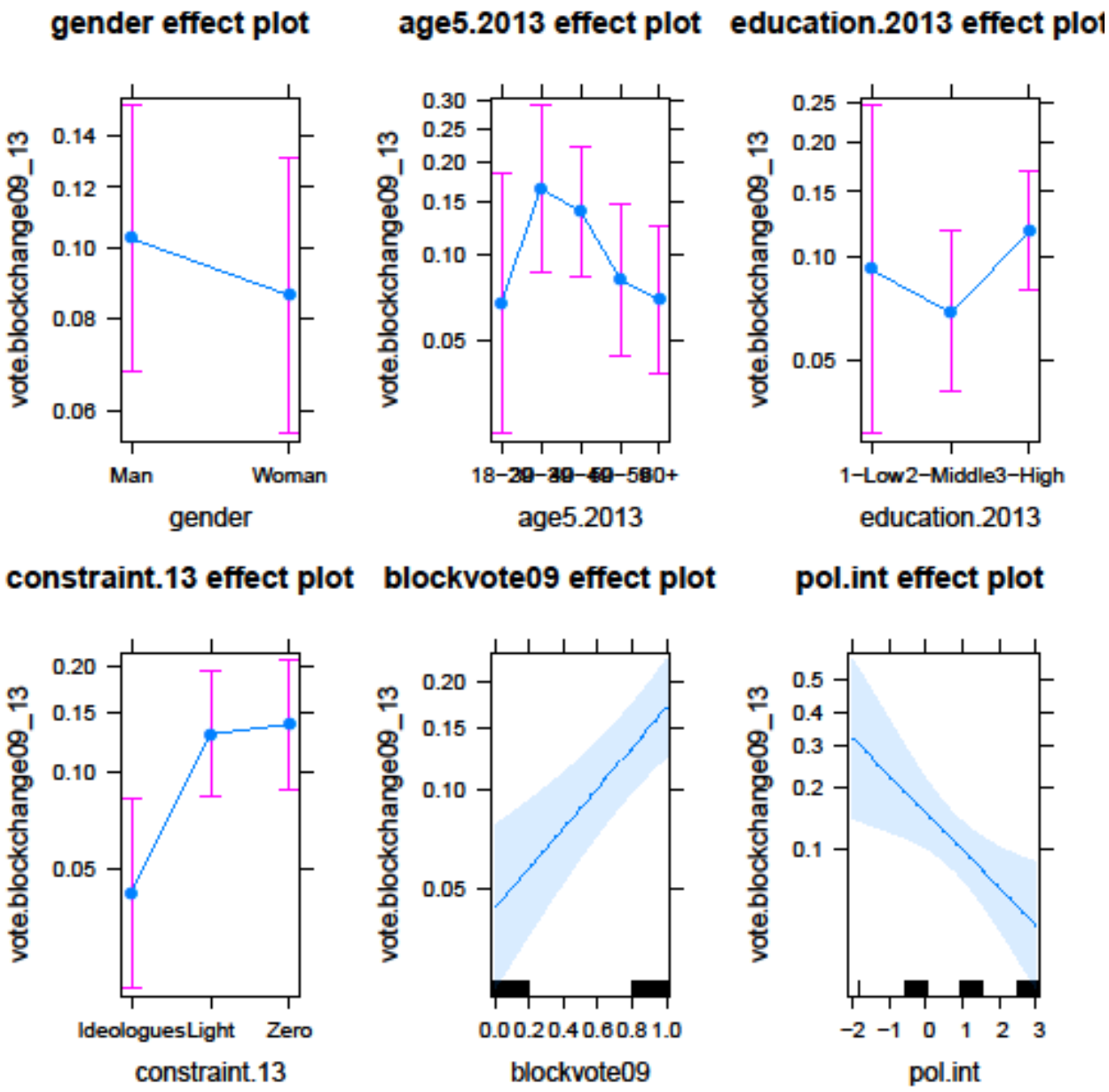

Figure 19 Probability of changing party blocks between 2009 and 2013, including previous block vote. This plots the effects of each variable and its values on the dependent variable with 95% confidence intervals around the effect estimates.

A.1.2 An Optimal Model with a Suboptimal Sample Size

I ran different models to see what variables would be suitable. In a full model I included occupation. Here I have only found one of these to be significant in explaining block change, which was people working in a high position in the public sector ("hopf"), I made this into a dummy. This is the "optimal" model for all elections, with the best model fit and most significant variables. The problem is a reduction of over 100 respondents in the sample, down to 333 from +/- 460.

Table 21 An "optimal" model on block change

	Dependent variable:
	vote.blockchange_all
Gender	-0.146
	(0.290)
Age 30-39	0.137
	(0.669)
Age 40-49	-0.210
	(0.638)
Age 50-59	-0.880
	(0.654)
Age 60+	-0.952
	(0.687)
Senior Secondary School	-0.109
	(0.753)
University/College	0.123
	(0.750)
Ideologues Light	0.862**
	(0.380)
Ideologues Zero	0.961**
	(0.376)
Political interest	-0.578***
	(0.170)
Work hours	-0.032**
	(0.014)
Higher public functionaire	1.024***
	(0.390)
Constant	0.256
	(1.070)
Observations	333
Log Likelihood	-163.129
Akaike Inf. Crit.	352.257
Note:	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

The constant here is: male voters with the highest level of constraint (Ideologues), aged 17-29 with secondary school as their highest achieved education and average political interest.

What we see in this model is that constraint and political interest is still significant, but that the amount of work hours and one particular occupation is significant as well. The amount of hours people work are significantly and negatively linked with the likelihood to change party blocks. Those working in an occupation that can go under the tag “higher ranked public office worker” tended to change blocks at a significantly higher rate than other types of occupation, and no other category of occupation had a significant relationship to block change.

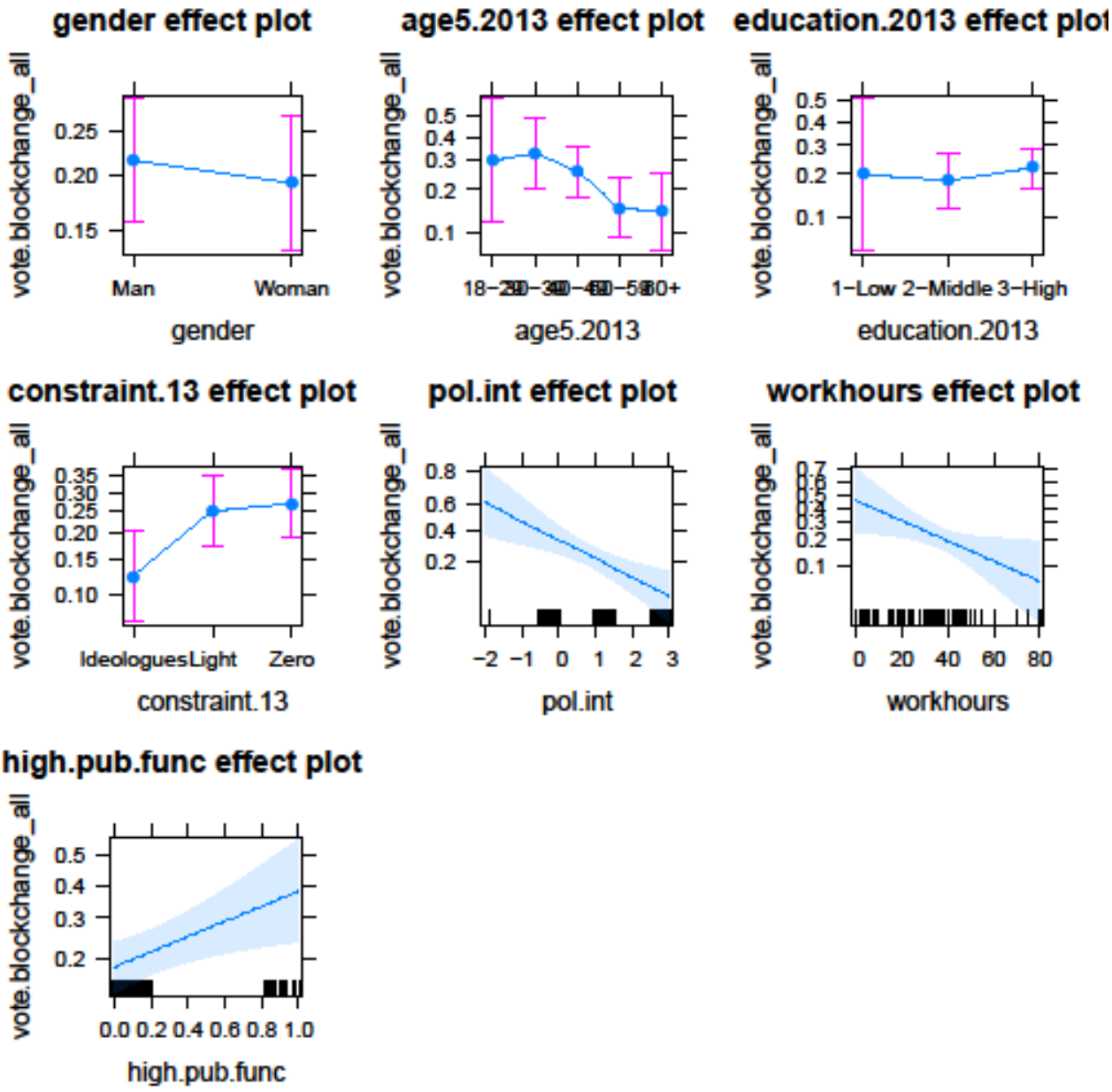

Figure 20 Probability of switching party blocks at least once across all elections, 2005, 2009 and 2013. Model with all control variables. This plots the effects of each variable and its values on the dependent variable with 95% confidence intervals around the effect estimates.

A.1.3 Models without Political Interest

Due to the potential overshadowing effect of political interest, I have rerun block change models without it.

Table 22 Block change models without political interest

	Dependent variable:		
	vote.blockchange_all	vote.blockchange09_13	vote.blockchange05_09
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Gender	0.177	-0.023	0.183
	(0.238)	(0.285)	(0.278)
Age 30-39	0.164	0.946	-0.611
	(0.624)	(0.627)	(0.481)
Age 40-49	-0.201	0.533	-0.731
	(0.593)	(0.594)	(0.460)
Age 50-59	-0.713	0.016	-1.087**
	(0.600)	(0.617)	(0.487)
Age 60+	-0.822	-0.216	-1.897***
	(0.601)	(0.617)	(0.562)
Senior Secondary School	-0.270	-0.374	-0.791
	(0.498)	(0.615)	(0.508)
University/College	-0.178	-0.169	-0.847*
	(0.491)	(0.603)	(0.509)
Ideologues Light	0.877***	0.821**	1.047***
	(0.323)	(0.403)	(0.406)
Ideologues Zero	1.009***	0.992**	0.898**
	(0.327)	(0.405)	(0.373)
Constant	-1.333*	-2.566***	-0.953
	(0.771)	(0.870)	(0.673)
Observations	428	460	461
Log Likelihood	-218.905	-169.543	-174.420
Akaike Inf. Crit.	457.809	359.085	368.841

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

The constant here is: male voters with the highest level of constraint (Ideologues), aged 17-29 with secondary school as their highest achieved education and average political interest.

What we see in the rerun of the regressions without political interest, is that the different levels of constraint do turn up significant in all models. Apart from that we see that higher age has a significantly negative relation with block change in 2009. The AIC-score is however lower, meaning better, in the models with political interest. But as has been shown in models and discussed frequently throughout the analysis, political interest is strongly tied with levels of ideological constraint and voting behavior. Omitting political interest makes it possible to see what other factors come into play, and might function indirectly through political interest.

Political interest does however seem to be a good and accessible go-to variable for capturing the aspects uncovered in this thesis, both ideological constraint and electoral volatility. So it could be used in models as a rather decent proxy.

A.1.4 Political Interest Explained

Here I present a model that tries to explain the reported levels of political interest. What we see is that there are several factors that has a significant relationship with political interest. There is a negative relationship between women and political interest, everything else kept equal. Further there is a positive relationship between higher levels of education and higher age on political interest.

Table 23 Regression on political interest in 2013

	Dependent variable:
	pol.int Political interest in 2013
Gender	-0.238***
	(0.079)
Age 30-39	0.070
	(0.162)
Age 40-49	0.255*
	(0.142)
Age 50-59	0.466***
	(0.140)
Age 60+	0.594***
	(0.138)
Senior Secondary School	0.055
	(0.161)
University/College	0.555***
	(0.161)
Constant	0.427**
	(0.197)
Observations	574
R^2	0.108
Adjusted R^2	0.097
Residual Std. Error	0.944 (df = 566)
F Statistic	9.768*** (df = 7; 566)
Note:	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

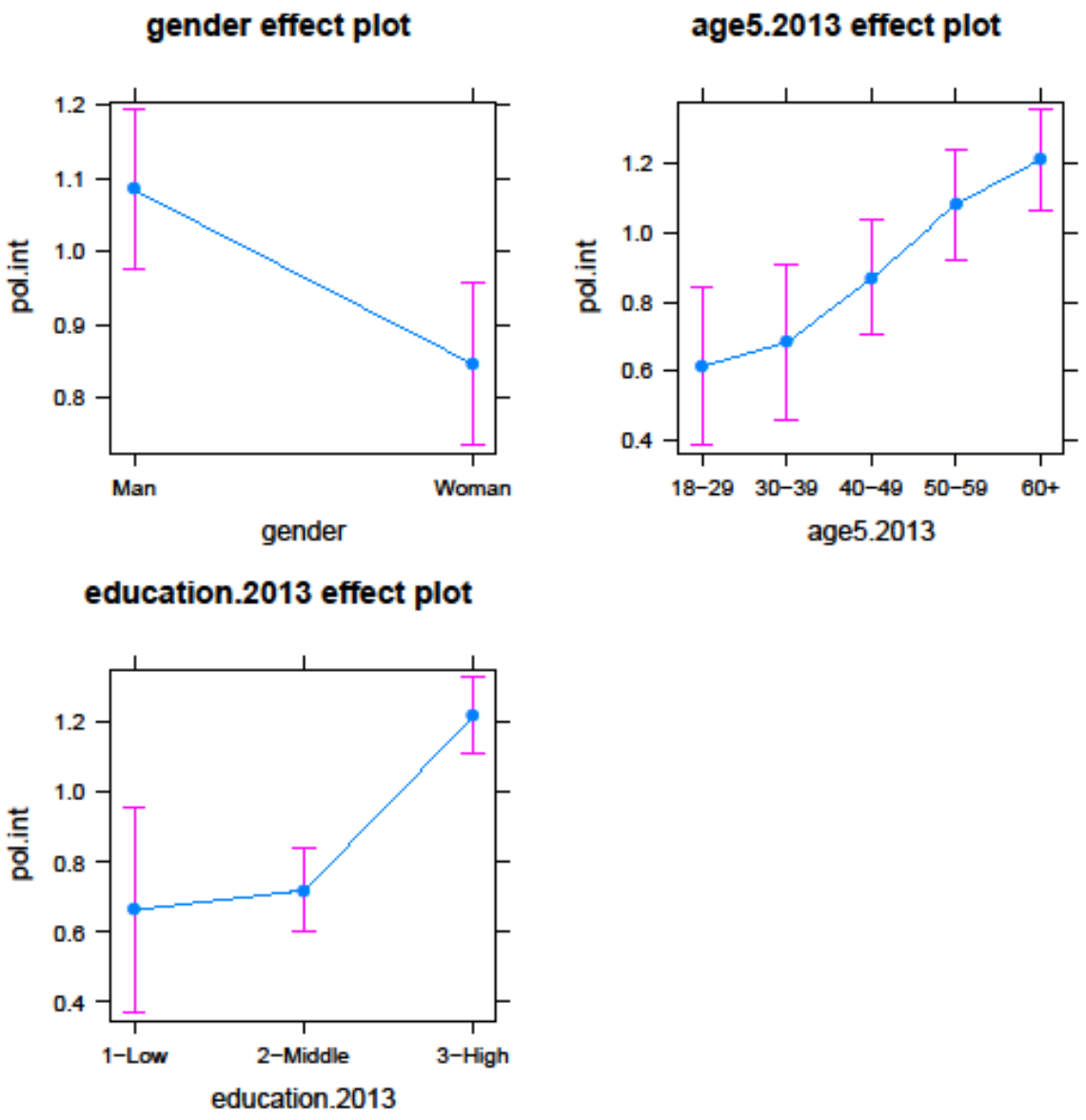

Figure 21 Level of political interest in 2013
This plots the effects of each variable and its values on the dependent variable with 95% confidence intervals around the effect estimates.

A.2 Robustness Checks

Up until now we have gone through plenty of models and estimates and looked at what they tell us. We have considered what effects were significant and which models had the better model fit. In this section I take these considerations one step further and look at the robustness of my findings. To make sure that the results from the models can be trusted I have sent them through the statistical equivalent of the Spanish inquisition.

The first tests were reported as part of the regression tables. There I tested models with different variables to make sure to get the best *model fit*, measured by AIC for logistic models and R2 for the linear regression, which is explained variance. Among these I tested a "complete model" with as many relevant background variables as possible. It did show some significant variables that I have not included in the analyses reported in the thesis, the main reason for that is that these variables abducted over 100 more respondents (25%) due to missing values.

Moving on from the past reports to present tests. I have tested whether the variables I include are collinear, meaning whether the variables in their nature cover the same variance and therefore measure more or less the same phenomenon. The VIF-tests uncover some moderate *collinearity* between 1 and 2, and it is the model that looks at 2013 RCA-group membership based on preceding 2009 group affinity that has variables closest to 2. VIF-scores around 1 is of no particular danger to the models, and can be branded as decent scores of low collinearity.

Having tested for *heteroscedasticity*, which is whether the dependent variable correlates with the error (unexplained) variance, I do have problems according to the Breuch-Pagan tests with all models on vote choice. This means that the dependent variables correlate with the unexplained variance, and we can therefore assume that there is some *omitted variable bias* in the models. There is simply some variables that are not accounted for which seem relevant. I tried a more complete model, including a vast set of additional variables to see if the heteroscedasticity went away, but it did not.

I have also checked the McFadden's pseudo R^2 for the models, with all models scoring around a 0.05, which had it been an ordinary R^2 it would mean that the models explain about 5% of the variance. One model that is remarkable is the so-called "optimal" model that use all possible relevant variables, but has drastically fewer respondents, it has a pseudo R^2-score of 0.30 which is very high for a cross-section analysis.

Another way of evaluating the models is to look at how well they predict the dependent variables. To do this I have calculated the AUC-score for each model, which look at the degree of correct classification. This gives us a score from 0 where the models gets everything wrong, to 1 where the model perfectly predicts all the outcomes. A usual rule of thumb is to look at whether the model does better than a coin toss, which would have a 50/50 chance of getting the classification right. However, in the case of my vote choice models, the outcomes

are not equally probable. Instead the outcomes of interest, party switching in its various substantial forms, are way less likely than staying put, and so even a coin toss would misclassify more often than not in half the cases.

The AUC-scores are all above 0.50 for the models on vote choice, which mean that they are rather good at predicting the different outcomes, be it not voting for neighboring parties, or switching party blocks all together. This can also be seen graphically, as AUC stands for "area under the curve". The models do rather well in predicting what in essence are rare outcomes.

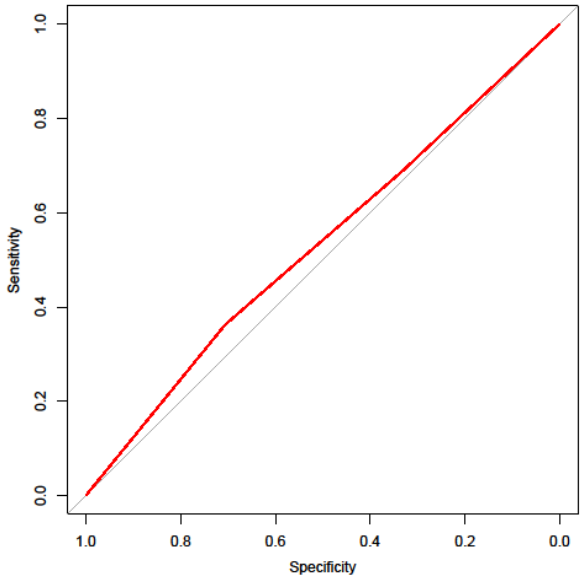

Figure 22 AUC for voting for the same party at all elections. The red line is the model.

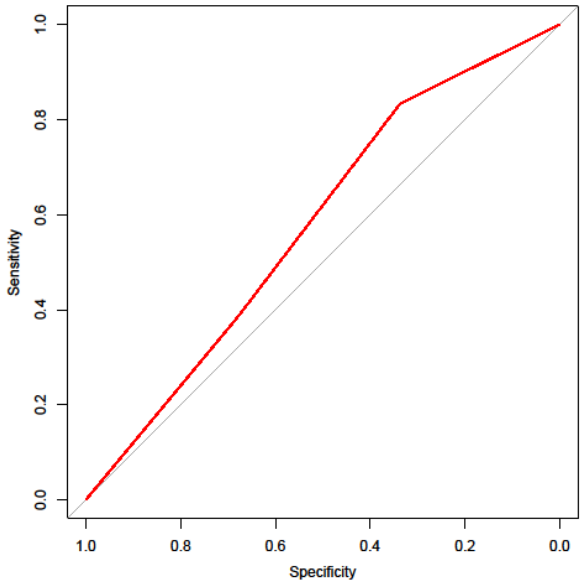

Figure 23 AUC Voting for the same or neighboring party.
The red line is the model.

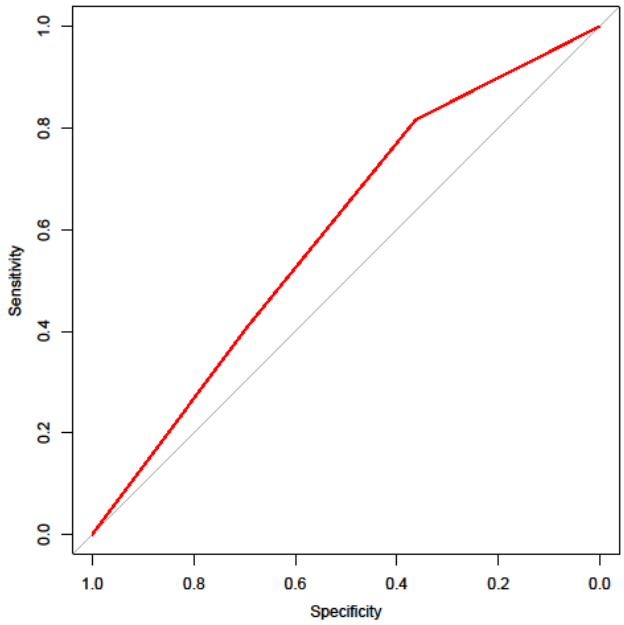

Figure 24 AUC Block Change across all elections.
The red line is the model.

A.3 Supplementary Wordfish analysis

As mentioned when discussing the left-right axis and different expert judgements on party placements, I have also conducted an analysis that places parties. This analysis uses Wordfish, a quantitative text analysis method, on all party manifestos and a selection of government

platforms (Holder de ord 2018) to place all the political parties on a left-right axis. I have one complete analysis that uses the all their manifesto promises to place them, where the method is only given all their text and a direction to place them. i.e. Socialist Left-Progress Party, or Stoltenberg II (Left-block government) – Solberg I (Right-block government). Around the party placements there is also reported a 95% confidence interval.

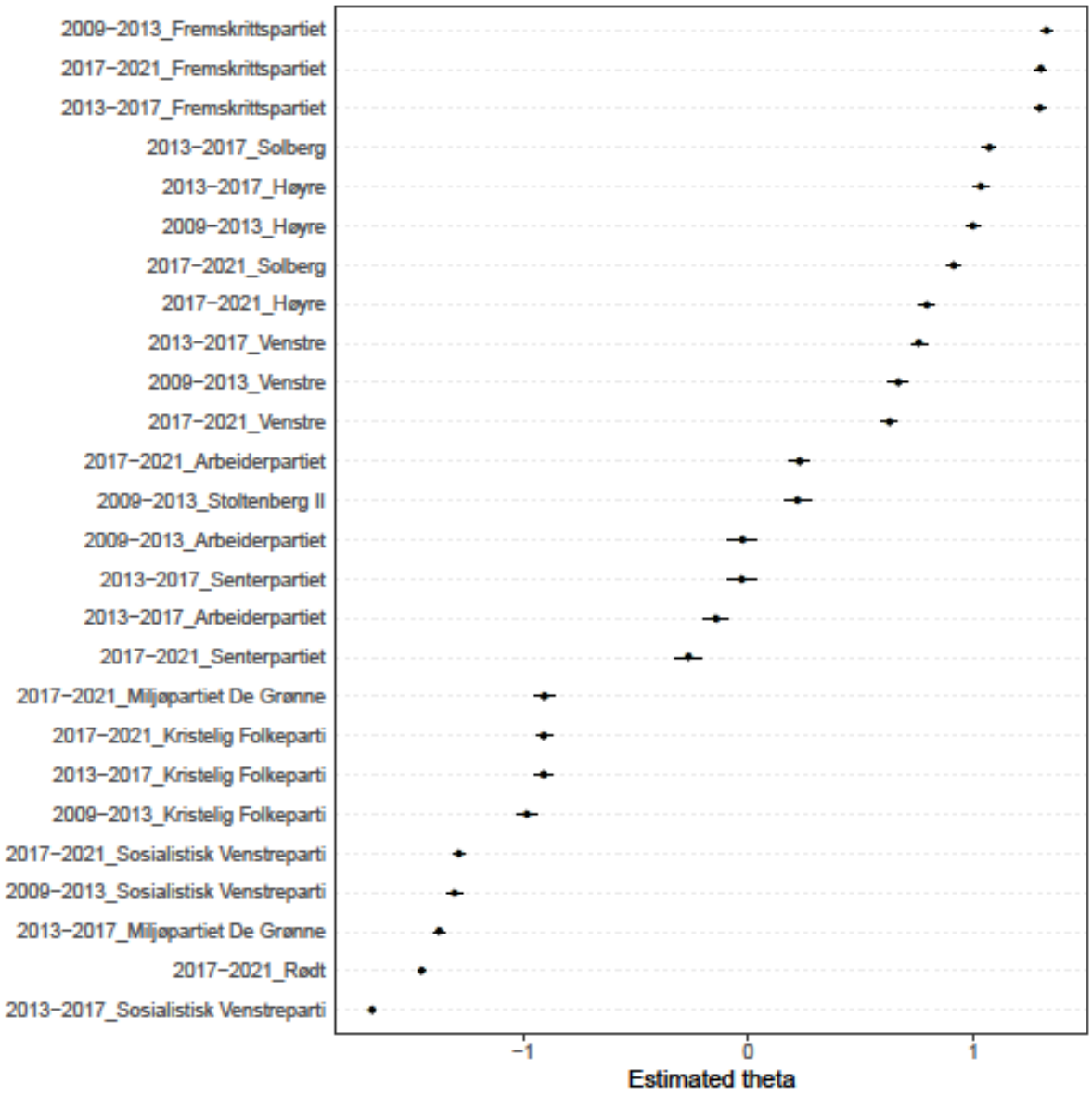

Figure 25 Wordfish analysis of Party manifestos - left-right placements

This sort of party placement is limited, in that voters do not necessarily react to party manifestos alone. Also the placement of the Christian Democrats (Kristelig folkeparti) in this analysis is likely to cause some discussion in particular.

I also have another analysis that breaks the manifestos down to issue domains. Here I present health care promises, as that is one of the most important issue domains among voters, but which is only to a lesser degree analyzed as part of mass opinion.

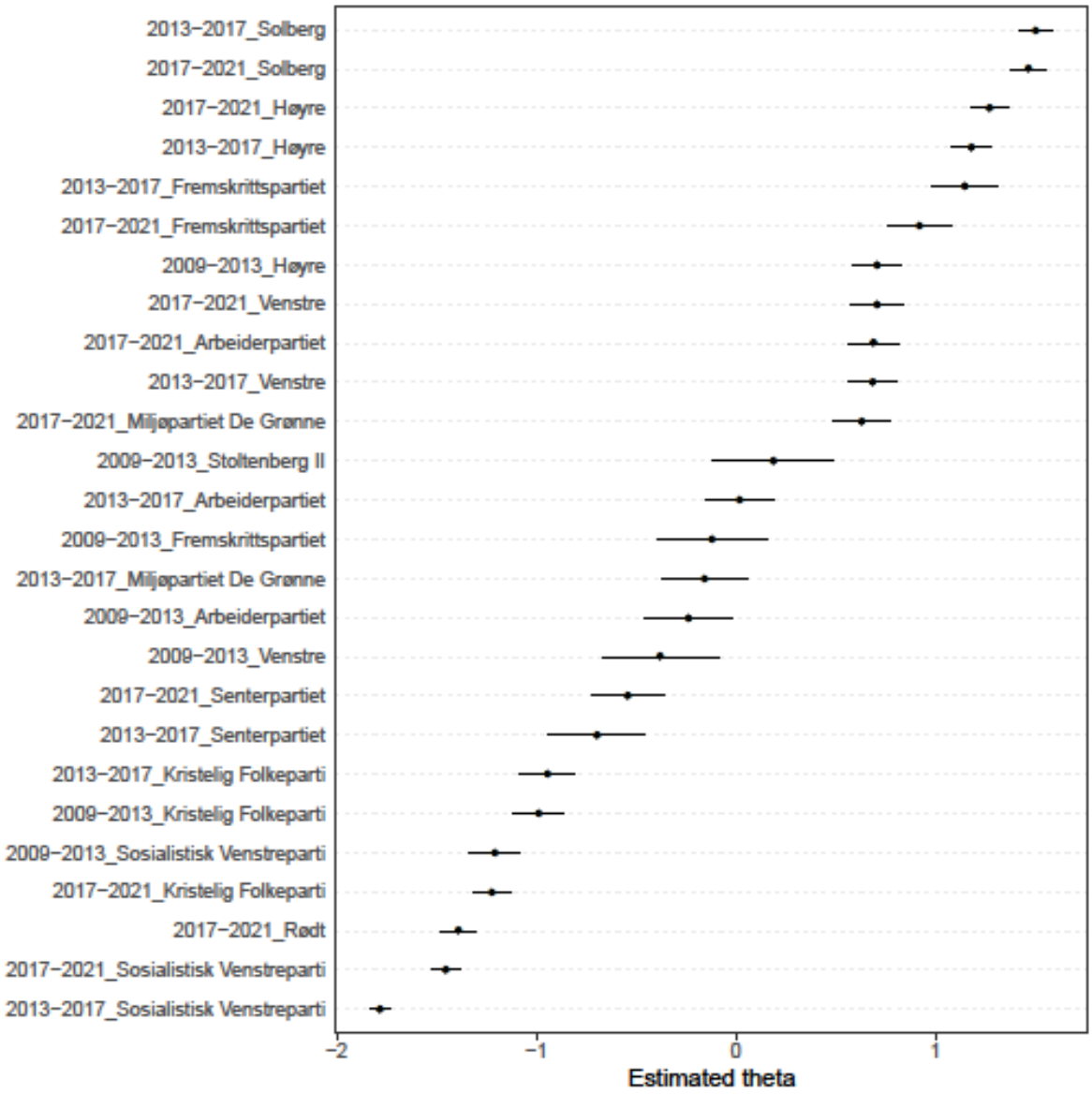

Figure 26 Wordfish analysis of Party manifestos on health care

This show some interesting variation that wreaks havoc on the standard left right placements. The multidimensionality does indeed make the political landscape complex, and parties' movements between elections on certain issue domains are also worth a closer look.
Do note one extra limitation, the Agrarian party's manifesto from 2009-2013 is excluded as it is written in "nynorsk", one of Norway's two official written languages, which despite its beauty is difficult to include in quantitative text analysis.