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CLASS, SOCIAL CAPITAL AND COLLECTIVE ACTION IN EUROPE

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Introduction

- The present communication is part of a work that is yet in an exploratory phase, but which is hoped to contribute to the introduction of research perspectives in the study of social classes at a European level, not only at an empirical but also at a theoretical level.
- The first part of this presentation will outline the starting theoretical matrix for a problematic articulation of the relations between social classes, social capital and collective action.
- The second part will present some empirical results based on the international survey “European Social Survey” (2006), a questionnaire that enabled the operationalization of the above-mentioned concepts.

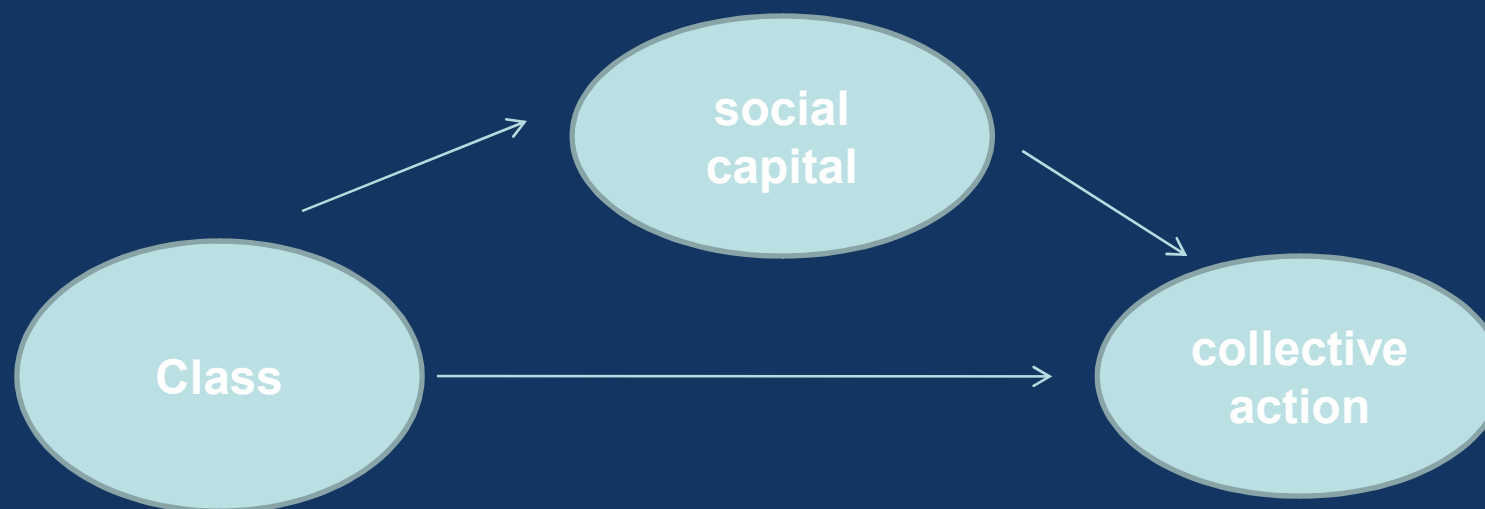
Social capital: basic definitions

- The central idea behind the theory of social capital is the value of social networks that allow people to make contact with one another and ultimately lead to increased productivity and well-being within a group or a community. (Putnam, 1993, 2000; Lin, 2001).
- “Social capital and trust are highly systemic, with a strong complementary between the various sources of reliability, in institutions and individual relationships (...)” (Nooteboom, 2007: 49).
- “Social capital refers to the norms and networks that facilitate collective action” (Woolcock, 2008).

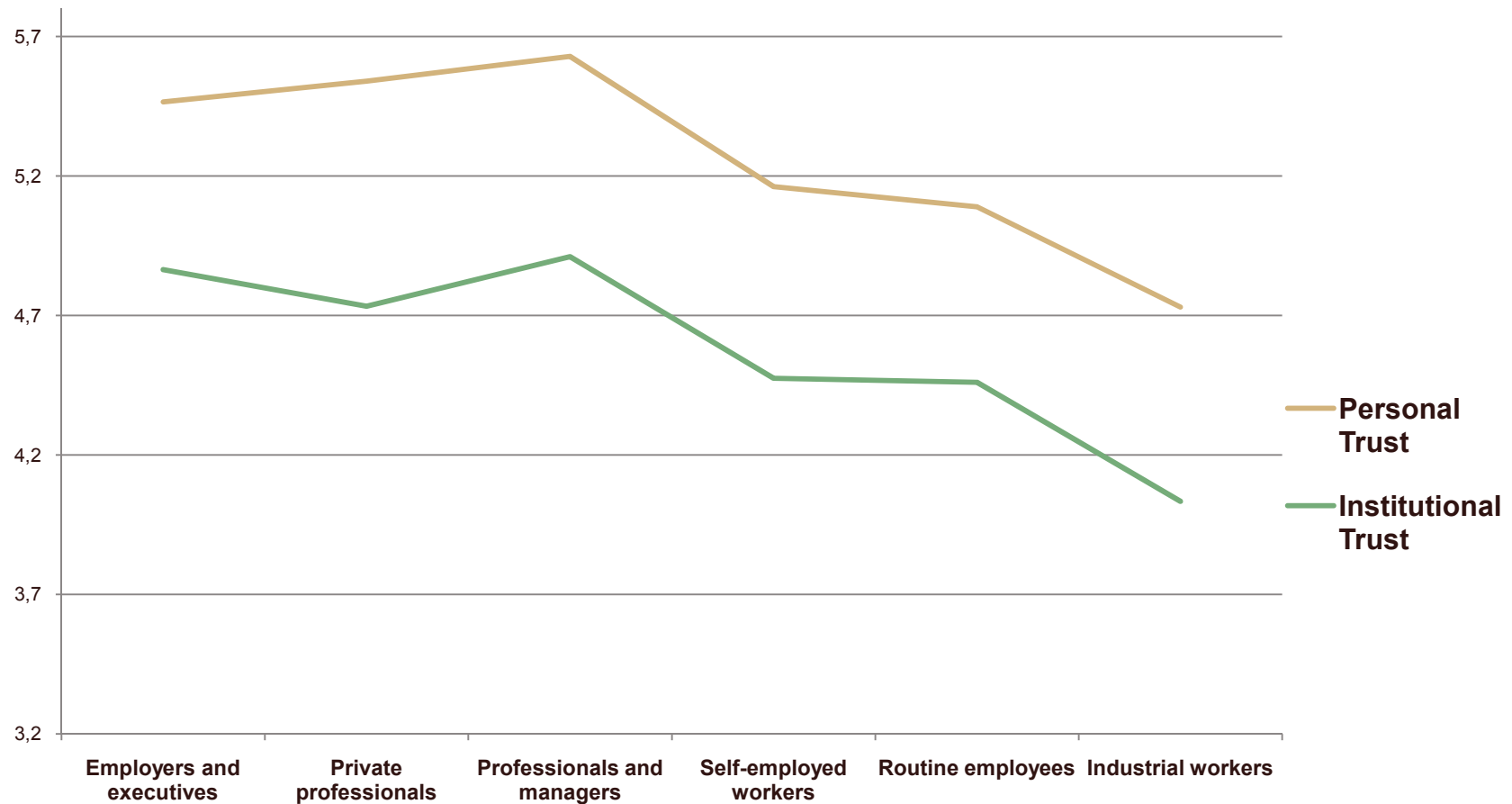
Classes and social *closure*

- Pierre Bourdieu (1980) and James Coleman (1990) conceive social capital as an important resource for relatively circumscriptive individuals or groups, resulting from the level of inter-connectivity of relations and social networks.
- Social *closure* can be understand “as process by which social collectivities seek to maximize rewards by restricting access to resources and opportunities to a limited circle of eligibles” (Parkin, 1971: 44).
- Social *closure* represents a *privileged good* which generate the exclusion of others groups to have chance in obtaining the same type of resources. As mention Frank Parkin, “exclusion is the predominant form of closure in all stratified societies” (Parkin, 1971: 47).

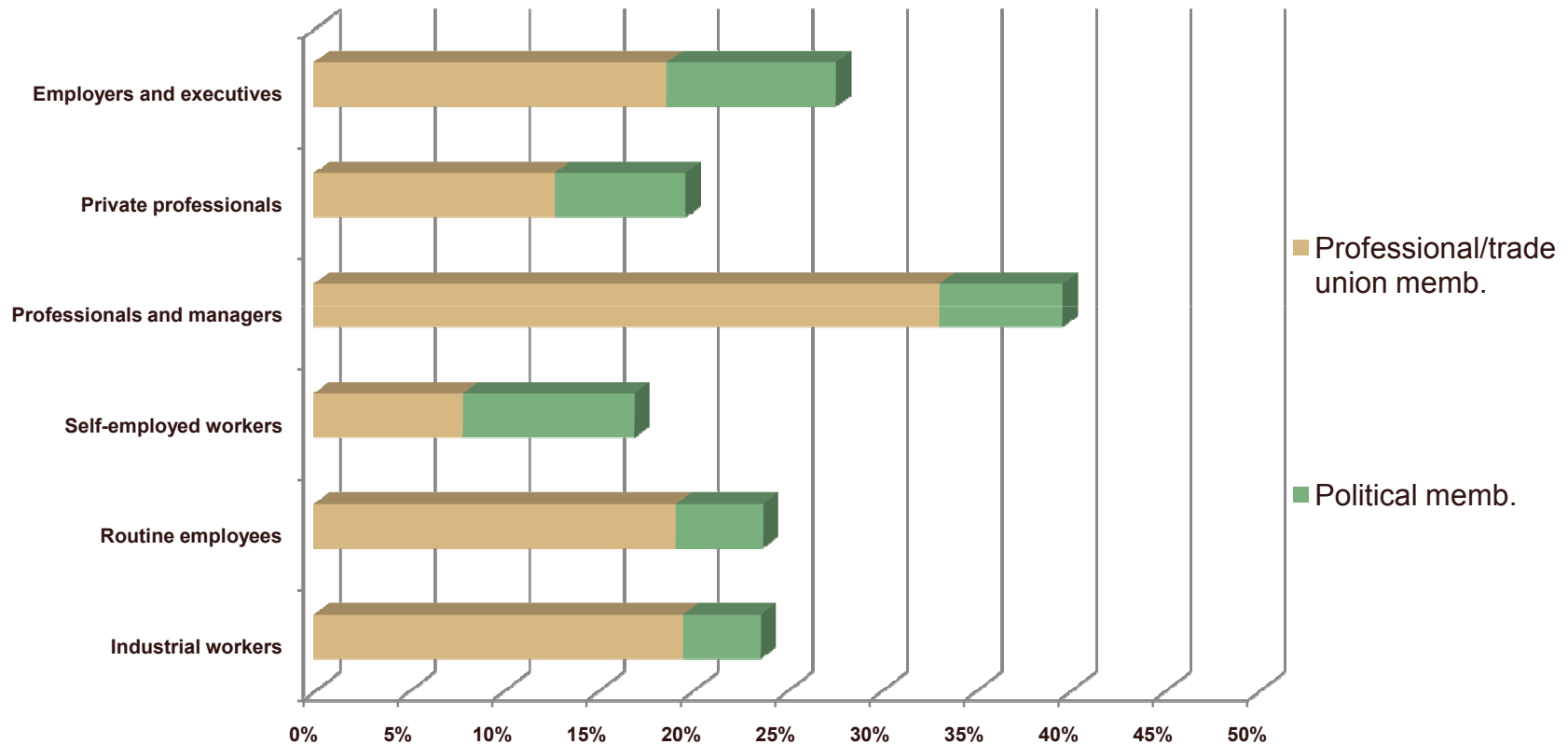
Analytical model in the “European Social Survey”



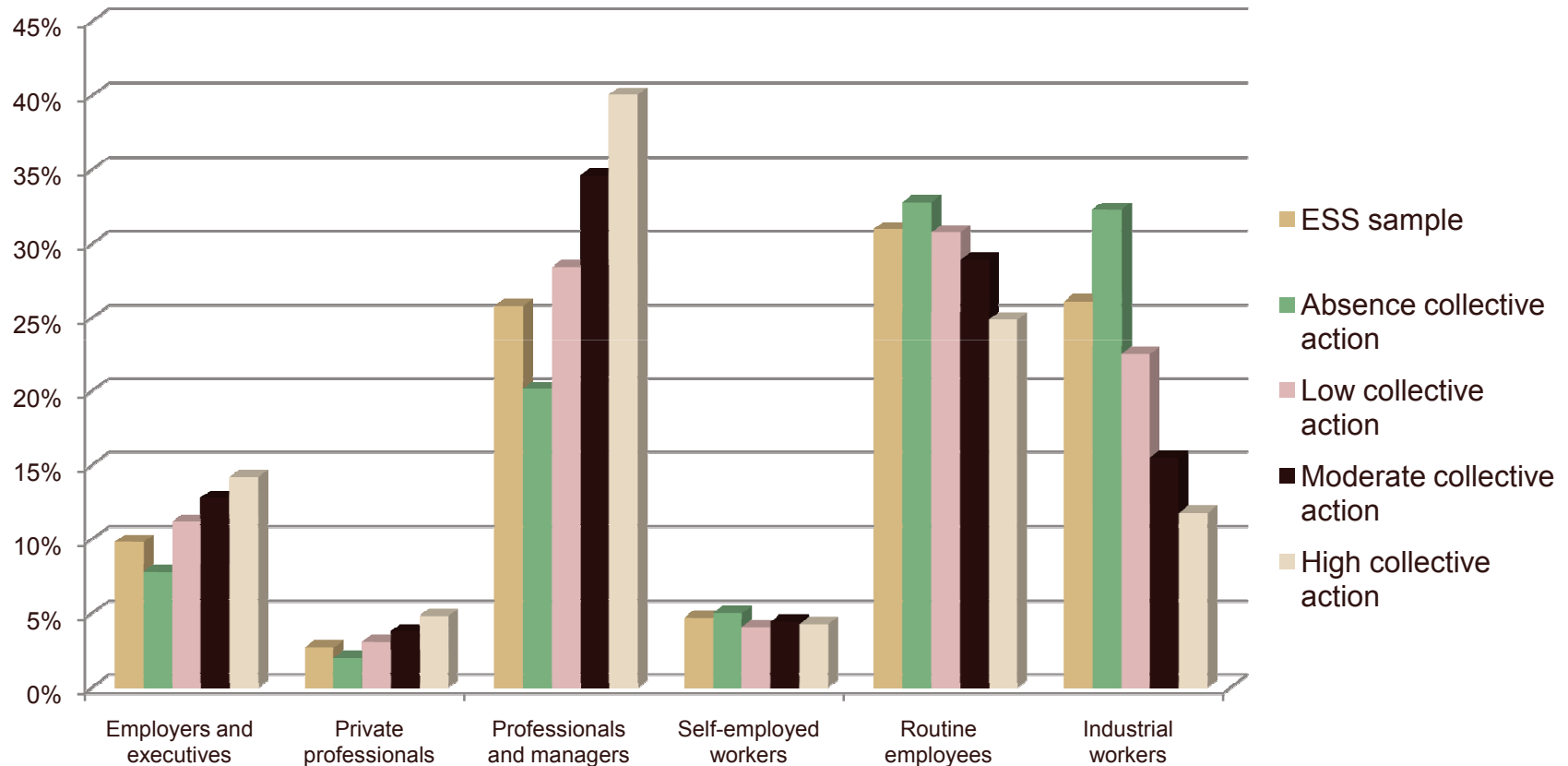
Trust in social classes



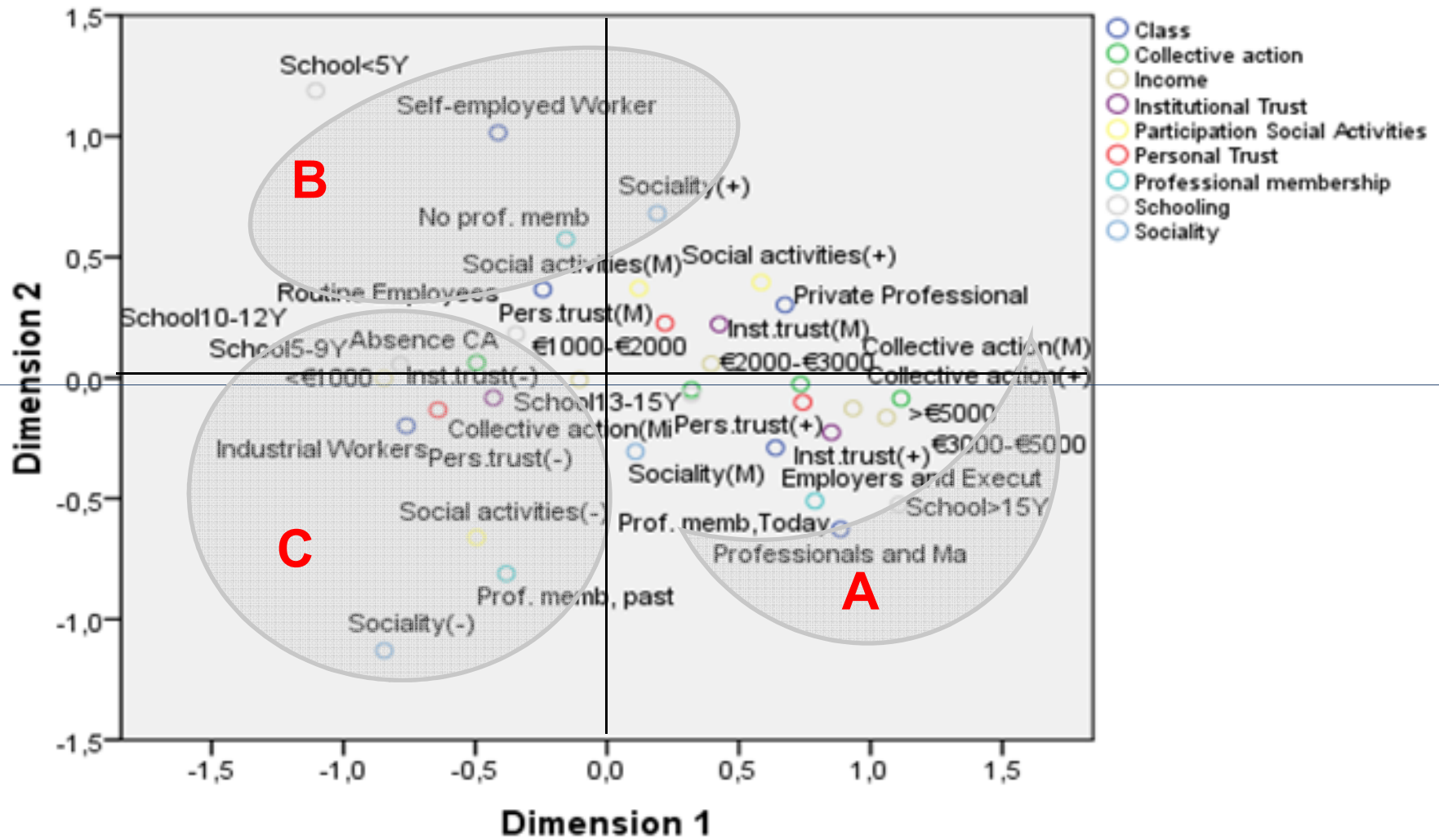
Associational membership in social classes



Social classes and collective action in Europe



The social space of classes, social capital and collective action in Europe



Final remarks...

- ➡ The interrelationship between class and the different capitals (economic, cultural and social)
- ➡ An uneven distribution of resources which is reflected in collective action
- ➡ Social inequalities linking class, social capital and collective action