

Cultural Theory Specified
- The Coherent, Sequential
and Synthetic Individual Approaches

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ABSTRACT:

Within cultural theory there exists an internal debate about the relationship between the individual and culture. I take my starting point in this unclear relation between the individual and culture, and present **three interpretations** of cultural theory: The Coherent Individual, The Sequential Individual and The Synthetic Individual. These three interpretations differ in the way individuals' cultural biases are affected by **context**, and in the way **rejection** of a cultural bias is treated. In the **second chapter** I present my research design and the survey I use as data material, develop an apparatus of measurement for cultural biases and examine their reliability and validity. In each of the **three following chapters**, I run an analysis of individuals' party preferences based on the different specifications (i.e., Coherent, Sequential, and Synthetic) of the relation between individual and culture. Theoretical assumptions and expectations constrain the analyses in different ways; therefore, none of the analyses alone can answer all of the questions, and, further, each specification must be evaluated on its own premises. To **examine** each of these specifications, it is necessary to use statistical analyses that resemble the **structure** of the current specification in order to see if the preferences could have been created by the mechanisms described by this version of the theory. **The final chapter** is a systematic comparison of the three analyses. The empirical results indicate that individuals often support more than just one cultural bias, and that rejection of a cultural bias has an effect on individuals' party preference. Cultural theory, interpreted as the Synthetic Individual Approach, proved to be a powerful tool for prediction of party preferences.

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