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REJECTION OF CULTURAL BIASES AND EFFECTS ON PARTY PREFERENCE

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Introduction

During the last decade several researchers have designed surveys to explore and test Cultural Theory (Dake 1991; Grendstad 1995; Grendstad and Selle 1997; Marris, Langford and O'Riordan 1996). Their aim, in part, has been to study the cultural biases of individuals so as to determine to which solidarity they adhere, or to find out which solidarity dominates a particular organisation. Common to all these approaches is the belief that individual-level information can be used to 'recreate' solidarities, yet (as is explained in the introductory chapter of this volume) cultural theorists are not entirely clear as to how individuals and solidarities are related (*see* Selle 1991a, 1991b; Wildavsky 1991a). Where earlier work often tended to assume that an individual would have just one cultural bias, more recent formulations see the social solidarities as the stabilisers of the different patterns of beliefs and values (Thompson 1996). Individuals, in this view, are no longer the carriers of particular cultural biases but the potential expressors of values and beliefs that are activated by a social context. Change the social context, and the individual's cultural bias will make the appropriate switch.

Two questions now arise. First, how can the survey researchers take adequate account of this lack of clarity about the individual/solidarity relationship? Second, what can they do to clarify that relationship? As an initial response to the first question I make explicit three *models of the individual* (*see* Olli 1995, 1996), all of which are plausible within the current unclear state of Cultural Theory. The second question, I suggest, can be addressed in terms of a hitherto somewhat neglected aspect of cultural bias – the individual's rejection of those biases that are not supportive of the solidarity of which he or she is part. An individual's support for and rejection of cultural biases, I propose, are partly independent of one another.[1] This partial independence, as well as providing some test of the relative merits of the three models of the individual, illuminates political party preferences in a new way.

Three models of the individual and their implications for bias rejection

The *coherent individual* has only one internally coherent cultural bias, infused by a steady and unambiguous cultural environment. The cultural bias comes very close to being a permanent trait of the individual, almost like a personality. Independent of context, the coherent individual will by default reject all cultural biases different from the one he or she supports. Coherent individuals turn a blind eye to alternatives and have difficulty in interacting with others unless they adhere to the same solidarity.[2] Assuming that the coherent individual approach is correct, the ideal typical egalitarian, for instance, would be a person who supports only egalitarianism and who consistently rejects the other biases. This person may be expected to shun any unfamiliar cultural environment. In a survey we should expect to find that most individuals support one cultural bias and reject, or are indifferent to, the other biases. There are different degrees of coherence, and in its strictest form we find strong support for one bias and strong rejection of the three others. In its weakest form we find support for one bias and indifference about the three others. Others could describe such people as consistent, solid or single-minded. Most people are better adapted to the changing social requirements, which suggests the need for a different model that will fit those who are neither fanatical nor single-minded.

The *sequential individual* holds more than one cultural bias and also has the ability to switch between the biases as if they were roles. If the context in which sequential individuals find themselves changes, they will quickly adapt by changing their biases to a new set of values and attitudes thereby still being internally coherent. The sequential individual withstands all cultural biases other than the one that is valid within the current context. This is not a surprising assertion since individuals whose cultural settings differ at work and at home have been readily recognised (Thompson, Ellis and Wildavsky 1990: 265–267). Assuming that the sequential individual approach is correct, a rejection of one bias follows from support of another bias. Since the supported bias depends upon context, rejection becomes dependent on the context too. We would therefore expect to find individuals having roles where one culture dominates and the others are rejected by default. Thus rejection is reduced to a function of context and its accompanying bias. In a survey we should find that individuals relate differently to the cultural biases in different cultural contexts.

The *synthetic individual* learns about the different solidarities in a manner that makes cultural biases almost turn into schemes or versatile jigsaw pieces of knowledge. Synthetic individuals are not internally coherent in terms of cultural biases, but they display an individual stability and consistency across different contexts. Since synthetic individuals' cultural biases are not determined by the context, they have a greater repertoire of ways of acting (and justifying) in a given situation. Cultural Theory has also been applied in a way that fits this type (Thompson 1998). Assuming that the synthetic individual approach is correct, rejection of biases can no longer be deduced from what the individual supports.

Since rejection of and support for biases are equally important, but also independent of one another, one would expect an individual to combine rejection and support in different ways. In a survey we should find that individuals are not internally coherent, but that they display a variety of combinations of support and rejection of cultural biases.[3]

These three views of the individual suggest an empirical test of Cultural Theory and an examination of cultural biases different from those that have been carried out before.[4] The full scope of such an examination, however, falls outside the limits of present analysis. Here I will restrict the analysis to an exploration: i) of how individuals combine support for, indifference to and rejection of biases, and ii) of how these combinations of biases relate to party preferences.

Data and method

The data are taken from the 1995 Survey on Environmentalism in Norway of the general public and of organised environmentalists (Strømsnes, Grendstad and Selle 1996).[5] For the purposes of this chapter these two subsamples have been combined into one data set. The reason for this rather unusual procedure is that the present analysis refers to the universe of biases, where the exploration of the ways in which biases may be combined, and their effects on party preferences, are of key interest. Only a combined sample provides a sufficiently large number of cases to carry out such analyses.

A five-point Likert-type response scale (strongly disagree to strongly agree, with a midpoint of 'both' and a 'don't know' option which was set to missing value) was used for all eight cultural biases items.[6] It was also required that a respondent gave valid answers to pairs of cultural biases to be included in the analysis. On the basis of factor analysis and content validity analysis (Olli 1995: 41) two items have been chosen for each cultural bias scale.[7] When forming the scale each question was standardised into Z-scores from which pairwise means were calculated to indicate the bias in question. This procedure gives four scales indicating the cultural biases with averages close to zero and standard deviations somewhat below one.[8] The reason for this standardisation is twofold. First, since cultural biases can be related to one another it is useful to keep them on a similar scale. Second, the original questions have different means, because they have different degrees of difficulty. For instance, if the egalitarian items were too moderate, which we suspect, the majority of respondents will have agreed with them. Had the items been formulated more strongly, we would have been better able to separate between degrees of support for egalitarianism. The standardisation procedure has compensated for these problems.

Support and rejection of cultural biases

The four cultural bias scales are not statistically independent of one other, although the correlations between them are not alarmingly high (*see* Table 4.1). The strongest

Table 4.1 Cultural biases. Correlation coefficients

	Fatalism	*Egalitarianism*	*Individualism*
Hierarchy	0.16	–0.07	0.25
Individualism	0.20	–0.30	
Egalitarianism	0.03		

Note: All correlations are two-tail significant at the 0.000 level, except for 0.03 which is significant at 0.08 level. N = 2932. Listwise deletion of missing values.

correlation is between egalitarianism and individualism (–0.30) and the weakest between egalitarianism and fatalism (0.03). Hierarchy and individualism show a weak but positive correlation (0.25). Fatalism has a positive correlation with all the other biases. This is unfortunate because it might reduce this scale's ability to measure fatalism correctly.[9] In general, scale statistics and intercorrelations are acceptable.

The questionnaire format allowed the respondents to support, reject, or be indifferent to any of the eight cultural items. When items are transformed into scales, corresponding cutpoints are approximately set to the 30th and the 70th percentile; the top 30 per cent are classified as supporters, the bottom 30 per cent are classified as rejectors, and the intermediate 40 per cent are classified as being indifferent to the bias in question. To facilitate identification in tables and text, support of a culture is shown in uppercase initials, rejection is shown in lowercase initials, and indifference is shown in lowercase within parentheses.

Identifying combinations of cultural biases

If individuals combine the three options for each of the four biases randomly, there would be 81 possible combinations each of which would have an expected frequency of 12 per thousand (‰). In Table 4.2, the cells where one finds exclusive support of one cultural bias only and a rejection of all the other three biases, are shown in bold. Here the frequencies are: egalitarians 32‰ (Ehif); individualists 11‰ (eIhf); hierarchists 6‰ (eHif); and fatalists 4‰ (ehiF). By this definition, egalitarians are therefore more frequent whereas hierarchists and fatalists are less frequent.

An adherent of a culture can also be defined less strictly as one who supports that bias only and rejects or is indifferent to any of the other three biases. These types, or categories, have been identified in Table 4.2 by bars and shades. By this definition the egalitarians total 147‰, but they are not a uniform group. Only a small proportion is indifferent to all the other cultural biases (12‰) whereas the remainder reject one or more of the other biases. Those who support egalitarianism and combine this position with rejection of both hierarchy and individualism and either reject (33‰) or are indifferent (32‰) to fatalism, are potentially strong egalitarians because they reject the other active biases. The hierarchists

Table 4.2 Cultural biases per thousand

‰		Supports hierarchy H			Indifferent to hierarchy (h)			Rejects hierarchy h			
		F	(f)	f	F	(f)	f	F	(f)	f	N
Supports egalitarianism E	I	20	10	5	7	5	1	6	6	5	
	(i)	19	13	6	4	12	8	11	23	13	
	i	8	13	7	8	13	13	20	33	32	
Indifferent to egalitarianism (e)	I	25	20	9	10	14	3	9	10	6	
	(i)	23	25	14	8	22	13	11	24	21	
	i	8	11	10	5	13	13	9	21	21	
Rejects egalitarianism e	I	22	18	13	10	17	10	13	16	11	
	(i)	17	23	13	8	15	14	9	13	13	
	i	4	6	6	3	5	4	4	7	9	
Total number											2932

A pure type **A mixed type** Hierarchs Individualists Fatalists Egalitarians

total 108‰ and their pattern of rejection differs from that of the egalitarians. The largest group of hierarchists consist of those who are indifferent to the other biases (25‰). Only a minority are strong hierarchists in that they reject both egalitarianism and individualism and are indifferent to (6‰) or reject fatalism (6‰). This is only a quarter of the relative frequency of strong egalitarians.

The individualists total 85‰ and a minority is indifferent to the other three cultures (14‰). A total of 25‰ are strong individualists, who reject both egalitarianism and hierarchy. A majority of individualists reject egalitarianism, hierarchy or both. This pattern seems to be quite similar to the one found for egalitarians. The fatalists total 57‰ and only a minority of them are indifferent to the other cultural biases (8‰). This is relatively less indifference than what is displayed by individualists and more than egalitarians (who quite actively reject the other cultures). Almost half of fatalists reject one other cultural bias. Only a few pure fatalists (4‰) reject all three 'active' cultural biases.

Each of these four cultural categories can also be analysed in terms of how they reject, if at all, the other three biases. Table 4.3 summarises the frequency of support and rejection and permits four conclusions to be drawn. First, egalitarians seem to reject the other biases more actively than do any of the others. Second, hierarchists are more indifferent to the other cultures. Third, egalitarians and individualists reject each other more than they reject fatalism. Fourth, and above all, it is evident that support for any of the four cultural biases can go together with rejection of any of the other three.

In addition to detecting cultural rejections from the position of a given cultural bias, one should also ascertain the relative pattern of cultural support and rejection in order to explore the three views of the individual within Cultural Theory. The coherent individual approach claims that individuals support one culture and reject the others. The sequential individual approach claims that individuals sequentially support one bias only while rejecting the others.[10] The synthetic individual approach accepts rejection and support in any combination. Table 4.4 shows the results of the analysis.

Table 4.3 Cultural support and rejection (per cent)

		The only supported bias			
	%	*H*	*I*	*E*	*F*
	h		48	69	58
Rejected	i	31		62	38
bias	e	45	61		42
	f	40	36	45	
	N	319	249	426	168

Note: Only respondents who support only one bias are included (i.e. the cells that are marked in Table 4.2). The sum in each column is different from 100% because some people reject several of the biases.

Table 4.4 Supporting and rejecting biases (per cent)

		The number of supported biases						
Total %		*0*	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*N*	*%*
	0	2	6	8	6	2	692	2
Number	1	7	15	12	4		1076	37
of rejected	2	9	14	6			851	29
biases	3	5	5				287	10
	4	1					26	1
	N	671	1162	742	297	60	2932	100
	%	23	40	25	10	2	100	

40 per cent of the respondents support one culture, and the majority of them reject one or two of the other cultural biases (15 per cent and 14 per cent, respectively). This means that two out of five respondents fit the description of the coherent individual. 25 per cent of the respondents support two cultures and a majority of them reject one (12 per cent) or more cultures (six per cent). Only 10 per cent support three cultures.[11] 77 per cent of all respondents, ranging from those who support only one bias to those who support all four, thus fit the description given by the sequential individual approach. A challenge to Cultural Theory lies in the 23 per cent of individuals who do not support any culture, yet still reject one or several biases. They cannot be ignored. The synthetic individual approach can accept any individual level combinations of support and rejection. Consequently, 100 per cent of the sample fits the assumptions of this approach.[12]

Biases and party preferences

Even if individuals relate to all four cultural biases simultaneously these findings will not make any real difference if the combinations of biases are ineffective. Preference for a political party can be viewed as a distinct expression of a political value. Party preference will therefore be the dependent variable.[13] In the subsequent analyses, fatalism has been dropped from the analysis for three reasons. First, fatalism has effects on parties and groups that are excluded from the present analysis.[14] Second, fatalism is the weakest of the four scales. Third, eliminating one of the solidarities reduces the number of cultural combinations from 81 to 27 thereby facilitating analysis. The analyses of effects of biases on party preferences will be limited to four Norwegian parties, each of which embodies a distinct history as well as different policies.

The *Conservative party* (Høyre, H) represents a modernised version of the 'the old right'. Founded in 1884, the party advocates a combination of value-conservatism and economic liberalism. The *Labour party* (Arbeiderpartiet, DNA) represents traditional social democracy and is identified with 'the old left'. Founded

in 1887, it is the largest party in Norway and has maintained single party majority and minority governments for substantial periods since the Second World War. The party was in office when the survey was conducted. *The Christian Peoples' party* (Kristelig Folkeparti, KrF) was founded in 1933 and is an evangelical, value-conservative party. Its policies are based on family values and what the party identifies as their 'social conscience.' The *Socialist-Left party* (Sosialistisk Venstre-parti, SV) represents 'the new left'. Founded in 1960, it advocates a modern version of socialism with a touch of environmentalism, despite still having some hard-core labour unionists among its ranks.

The test of the hypothesis that biases have effect follows two methodological approaches: the additive approach of OLS (ordinary least squares) regression, and the combinatory approach (*see* Ragin 1987). Survey-based social science frequently relies on additive techniques like multiple regression, one of the basic assumptions of which is that the effects across independent variables can be added together to form the prediction (or the likelihood of) an outcome on the dependent variable. One feature of this technique is that opposite effects of independent variables may cancel each other out, thereby reducing the overall effect measured by deviation from the grand mean. The proportion of variance in the dependent variable accounted for by the independent variables are referred to as explained variance (i.e. R^2). Whereas the additive approach studies *deviations* from a grand mean by summarising deviations across explanatory variables, the combinatory approach studies the ways in which individuals *combine* variables (e.g. values or properties) regardless of how deviant they may be. Juxtaposing the additive and the combinatory approaches allows a closer study of the effects of biases and allows us to assess which of the two methodological approaches is more fruitful.

Accounting for party preference

The four regression analyses are presented in Table 4.5. The beta-weights (i.e. standardised regression coefficients) show the relative importance of each bias on the preference for a particular party.[15] The additive effect of biases on preferences for Arbeiderpartiet (DNA) and Kristelig Folkeparti (KrF) is negligible since explained variance is very low (R^2 = 0.02–0.01). The analysis shows that support for egalitarianism and rejection of hierarchy and individualism are conducive to a preference for the Sosialistisk Venstreparti (SV), as one could expect. The analysis also shows that a rejection of egalitarianism and support for individualism is conducive to a preference for Høyre (H). Together, the biases explain 13 and 14 per cent in the preference for Sosialistisk Venstreparti and Høyre respectively.

The unconditional party preferences are 19 per cent for The Socialist Left party; 21 per cent for the Labour party; 5 per cent for the Christian People's party; and 11 per cent for the Conservative party. In the absence of fatalism, there are now 27 possible combination of biases. For each of these parties, each cell in Table 4.6 represents one of the 27 possible combination of biases. For each

Table 4.5 Cultural biases and party preference (regression analysis)

	Preferred party (dummies)			
	SV	*DNA*	*Krf*	*H*
Hierarchy	–0.19 (.00)	0.12 (.00)	0.10 (.00)	0.02 (.38)
Egalitarianism	0.19 (.00)	–0.03 (.12)	0.05 (.01)	–0.32 (.00)
Individualism	–0.15 (.00)	0.03 (.14)	–0.04 (.08)	0.12 (.00)
F (p-value)	145,7 (.00)	19,8 (.00)	12,6 (.00)	161,1 (.00)
R^2	0.13	0.02	0.01	0.14

Regression coefficients are given in Beta-weights with their p-values in parentheses. Listwise deletion of missing cases. N for all analyses is 2873.

party, each of these cells shows the proportion in per cent of individuals who would vote for that party.[16] The cells that display support considerably beyond the unconditional preference for each party are of special interest and have been shaded.

Initially there are two combinations of biases that would make individuals prone to vote for the Socialist Left party: rejection of individualism only (third column) or rejection of hierarchy only (bottom row). When individuals reject individualism and hierarchy and also support egalitarianism (cell Ehi), an impressive 47 per cent say they would vote for SV. The lowest support can be found in the segments where a person supports individualism and hierarchy and rejects or is indifferent to egalitarianism. The difference between lowest and highest support is a substantial 47 per cent points.

There are three combinations which increase the probability of voting for the Labour party (DNA). First, support for hierarchy seems to have a general effect regardless of attitudes towards egalitarianism or individualism (top row). Second, the combination of rejecting egalitarianism and being indifferent to or rejecting individualism (the two far right columns) leads to a high support for DNA, regardless of attitude towards hierarchy. Third, there are four cells where individuals are indifferent to hierarchy, not supporting individualism and independent of the relation to egalitarianism, where DNA gathers much of its support. This pattern is indicative of a party which has manoeuvred itself into the middle of the political landscape (*see* Strøm and Leipart 1989; Grendstad 1995). The difference between lowest and highest support for this party is 32 percentage points.

There are three combinations that lead to increased support for the Christian People's party (KrF). First, support for egalitarianism combined with support for hierarchy is conducive to vote for KrF, regardless of attitudes towards individualism. Second, even stronger support can be found among individuals who reject both individualism and egalitarianism and support hierarchy. Support for hierarchy could thus have been the common denominator for KrF; had it not been for the

Table 4.6 Cultural biases and party preferences: a combinatory approach (per cent)

	Supports egalitarianism E			Indifferent to egalitarianism (e)			Rejects egalitarianism e		
	I	(i)	i	I	(i)	i	I	(i)	i
% support for the Socialist-Left party, SV, (baseline 19%)									
Supports Hierarchy H	4	9	21	4	12	16	3	2	
Indifferent (h)	18	22	41	0	2	8	2	8	15
Rejects hierarchy h	31	46	47	18	28	34	7	6	25
% support for the Social-Democratic party, DNA, (baseline 21%)									
Supports hierarchy H	25	19	27	37	28	28	16	26	28
Indifferent (h)	15	29	10	7	22	32	17	24	29
Rejects hierarchy h	10	5	8	25	14	13	19	32	25
% support for the Christian People's party, KrF, (baseline 5%)									
Supports hierarchy H	13	11	12	5	6	9	1	5	15
Indifferent (h)	5	9	7	13	10	13	0	2	12
Rejects hierarchy h	0	1	2	3	6	3	5	3	2
% support for the Conservative party, H, (baseline 11%)									
Supports hierarchy H	10	4	3	11	7	1	**35**	**25**	11
Indifferent (h)	3	5	0	5	2	8	**23**	15	9
Rejects hierarchy h	6	2	0	10	3	2	**41**	13	**18**

third combination, that is, those who are indifferent to both egalitarianism and hierarchy regardless of their view of individualism. If egalitarianism and hierarchy are equally important to individuals, then KrF is the solution. But some of this party's supporters also reject both egalitarianism and individualism but support or are indifferent to hierarchy. So, even if they are only indifferent to hierarchy, it is still their most preferred bias.

The combination of support for individualism and rejection of egalitarianism provides the key support for the Conservative party (H). If we add rejection of hierarchy to this combination, this party reaches a support of 41 per cent. This figure also represents the range of support for this party, and it is quite significant for an ideological pattern. This support exceeds the expected value among those who both support and reject hierarchy while rejecting egalitarianism.

These results bring out several interesting patterns. First, the core areas of support for each of these parties hardly overlap. Second, the conventional left-right dimension polarises the positions of SV and H, and it has been suggested that a combination of high value on individualism and a low value on egalitarianism is similar to a conventional 'right' (i.e. conservative) political position (Grendstad and Selle 1997; Grendstad and Rommetvedt 1996). To these observations we can now add the importance of hierarchy which is rejected by the adherents of SV and remains unsettled among the adherents of H as long as egalitarianism is rejected. It remains unclear whether hierarchy is a non-issue for the Conservative party or whether it is an issue that produces factions within the party. Third, the individuals who reject all three cultures do not find a party that would be close to their own ideological position; they show support for SV, DNA, and H, thus covering a large range of ideological options.

In short, the additive approach detected next to no effects of cultural biases on the preferences for the Labour party or the Christian People's party. The combinatory approach revealed that the two parties were increasingly favoured when hierarchy was supported, whereas the two parties' adherents diverge through different combinations of support for and rejection of egalitarianism and individualism.

The additive approach detected modest effects of cultural biases on the preferences for the Socialist Left party and the Conservative party. The combinatory approach uncovered significant support for the former party when individuals reject individualism and hierarchy in combination with support for egalitarianism. This approach also uncovered significant support for the latter party only when support for individualism is combined with a rejection of egalitarianism.

Discussion

The fact that individuals can reject a culture in much the same way that they can support it, has not received due attention by cultural theorists. The degree to which individuals combine rejections and support has consequences both for empirical research and for the ways in which Cultural Theory understands the individual within its theoretical framework. The use of party preference as the

dependent variable provides an opportunity to indicate the ways in which Cultural Theory has affinities with theories of political behaviour.

The role of rejection

The analyses showed that rejection of a cultural bias seems to operate quite independently of support for other biases: individuals combined support, indifference and rejection with relative ease. The first conclusion is therefore that individual-level support for a culture does not by default entail rejection of the three other biases.

Another conclusion is that the majority of individuals do not have a coherent attitude towards cultural biases. One possible reason is that most of the individuals probably do not have what Converse (1964) has called a consistent ideology. Another explanation is that individuals do not need to be consistent. Cultural Theory's notion of what it means to be an egalitarian, hierarchical, individualistic or fatalistic has been advanced without giving sufficient attention to what kind of attitudes and biases individuals in fact entertain, and in what ways they combine them.

The analysis has also established that rejection of a bias is an important determinant of an individual's party preference. Knowing what individuals reject, in addition to what they support, considerably improved predictions of party preferences. When it comes to the effect of rejection of a cultural bias, it seems clear that rejection does not have any more effect than support for a bias on its own. The analysis also indicated that a combinatory approach provides the most fruitful way of handling individuals' cultural biases. It is the *combination*, and not the summation, of cultural biases that affects party preference.

If one thinks of cultural biases as constituting a four-dimensional system, it seems that the parties have different salient bias dimensions.[17] The analysis indicated that parties draw support from different cultural segments, and that these segments overlap only to a limited extent. However, the relation between biases and party preferences is not straightforward – the Conservative and the Christian People's parties get least votes among those who reject hierarchy and support egalitarianism, but each still has a separate cultural segment from which it attracts voters.

Consequences for empirical analysis

The findings indicate some consequences for individual-level analysis. First, some popular techniques for estimating individual-level effects, such as multiple regression, may be less suited for the task than previously believed. Further, the biases' effects cannot simply be added together at the individual-level, because different combinations have different effects, and an additive technique assumes that each of the biases always has the same effect.[18] This may account for the low explained variance of the cultural biases in several studies (Marris, Langford and O'Riordan 1996; Stenvold 1996: 242).

Second, the findings suggest that the categorisation of individuals should be based on combinations of cultural biases. Unfortunately, many categories/combinations need large samples; data from almost 3000 respondents were used in this chapter. Three biases required 27 combinations to be analysed whereas all four biases would require 81 combinations.

Third, the results suggest that researchers should use more of the information in the data by including rejection of, as well as support for, biases. The explanatory power of Cultural Theory would thereby increase. However, a considerable number of individuals support only one culture and reject one or several cultures (40 per cent in Table 4.4). This indicates that, in many cases, one may still obtain satisfactory results without accounting for the different combinations of support and rejection.

Fourth, given that the synthetic individual approach has merit, one should in future surveys examine the alleged coherence between people's cultural bias, behavioural strategy and social relations. This is a key proposition within Cultural Theory. Surveys that until now have mainly collected information about people's biases would do better by including questions about behavioural strategies and social relations thereby allowing a more complete description of an individual's cultural makeup.

Consequences for Cultural Theory

Since combinations of cultures matter at the individual level, the synthetic individual approach seems to be more accurate than the coherent or sequential individual approach when analysing individuals' biases. Alternatively, one can stick to the coherent individual approach and claim that there is a problem with the measurement of biases. However, the weakness of the coherent individual approach lies in its failure to account for the large variations in rejection, whereas its strength lies in its simplicity. Do cultural theorists prefer realism or parsimony?

Within Cultural Theory we find the theory of surprise, which aims to explain individual change. When the discrepancy between expectations and experience becomes too large, the theory hypothesises that an individual will exit the present culture disillusioned. But Cultural Theory does not predict in which of the three remaining cultures the individual will land. However, if we include knowledge about the individual's degree of support for, indifference to and rejection of the other cultures, then our predictions may improve, in that it is more likely that the individual will end up in, or transfer their support to, a culture he or she is indifferent to rather than one that he or she rejects.

Complementing approaches to political behaviour

The present application of Cultural Theory to political behaviour connects to all three of the main traditions explaining an individual's party preference. The *structural cleavage approach* takes cleavages in the political system as its starting point: an individual's party preference is a function of his or her place in the

society (Rokkan 1967; Valen and Rokkan 1974). By contrast, Cultural Theory describes how one's cultural bias is influenced by one's context, i.e. the social relations and structures. Thus suggesting a study of how structural cleavages are translated into votes.

The Michigan model uses a wide set of factors that affect voting, spanning from long-term forces such as class, ideology, party identification and social position to short-term forces such as various political issues and candidates' personal characteristics (Campbell *et al.* 1960). This chapter can be interpreted as an exploratory attempt to redefine how the ideological aspects of the long-term forces can be categorised and analysed. Like the proximity model, this chapter assumes that individuals try to minimise the political distance between themselves and their party or candidate (Miller 1976), but claims in addition that the effects of ideological factors, defined as the cultural biases, are neither simple nor additive.[19]

Rational choice models claim that individuals calculate before they vote for the party that is most capable of fulfilling their preferences (Rabinowitz and Macdonald 1989). Rational choice models have, however, been criticised for the lack of distance between preference and voting, i.e. *explanans* and *explanandum*. The use of cultural biases in this chapter suggests a way of permitting a theory to prescribe the ideological ground so that there will then be a sufficient distance between a general set of preferences and party preferences. On the other hand, Cultural Theory criticises rational choice models for including only one type of rationality, whereas at least four are needed to account for the social variations. Or, more correctly, four frameworks for deciding what shall count as rational and what shall count as irrational. Since rational people defend their solidarity, then what is rational depends on their social context (Wildavsky 1994).

Cultural Theory can also be related to the critics of rational choice who emphasise frames, schemas and the processing and interpretation of information (Lau and Sears 1986; Brady and Sniderman 1985; Kulinski, Luskin and Bolland 1991). Cultural Theory is thus a framework that allows us to combine cognitive aspects (such as world views, understandings of human and physical natures, and styles of information rejection) and affective aspects (such as evaluation of a policy or attitude towards a group in society). Thus Cultural Theory may bridge aspects which previously have been applied within two quite different theoretical traditions (Conover and Feldman 1991).

Cultural Theory may also fill the gap between the structural cleavages and Michigan models by explaining how social structures and positions get translated into ideological positions. Moreover, it may fill the gap between the rational choice and Michigan models, by explaining where the preferences come from, why individuals have biased perceptions and how different preferences (cultural biases) allow for different forms of rationality.

Above all, this analysis has shown that applying the combinatory approach to existing theories may have a significant potential for understanding individuals' voting behaviour. Whether this significance applies to Cultural Theory too can only be answered once researchers have resolved how cultural biases can be properly measured at the individual-level.

Notes

1 To distinguish between the cultural and the individual level, I use 'opposition' about relations between solidarities/biases and 'rejection' about people's relation to biases. The four biases as social constructs are by definition in opposition to each other, but there is no apparent reason why the situation must be the same on the individual level. People must relate to all four solidarities, but it is not given *how* they relate to them.

2 This argument can be extended to include the theory of surprise. This theory states that if the one cultural bias upon which the individual has based his life is no longer compatible with the individual's actual experiences of the world, he or she would give up the disproved cultural bias for one which is more compatible with the present conditions.

3 One may also find individuals who first and foremost are in opposition to others and have few, if any, positively defined solutions to problems at hand. Contrary to supra-individual social units, it is conceivable that an individual can make rejection of a bias their exclusive social strategy, although their social life may become disappointing.

4 In another sense, these views are ways of modelling the individual empirically.

5 Technically, the organised environmentalist sample is based on twelve different subsamples of environmental organisations. However, one can consider these subsamples as one sample drawn randomly from the members of environmental organisations.

6 The wording of the questions used to measure cultural biases are: *Hierarchy*: One of the problems with people today is that they challenge authority too often; the best way to provide for future generations is to preserve our customs and heritage. *Egalitarianism*: What this world needs is a fairness revolution to make the distribution of goods more equal; I support a tax shift so that the burden falls more heavily on corporations and people with large incomes. *Individualism*: If people have the vision and ability to acquire property, they ought to be allowed to enjoy it; everyone should have an equal chance to succeed and fail without government interference. *Fatalism*: Cooperation with others rarely works; it seems that whatever party you vote for things go on pretty much the same.

7 Two items may be scant since it will restrict the reliability of the scale when measured by Cronbach's alpha.

8 The general population sample served as the basis for standardisation and was obtained by the *Descriptives* procedure in SPSS. The organised environmentalists' cultural biases were calculated on the basis of the means and standard deviations from the general population sample.

9 A factor analysis (not shown) indicated that one fatalist item also loaded strongly on the factor identified as hierarchy. Although not strictly comparable because of item selection and sample procedures, the scales used by Dake (1991) correlated with one another from 0.28 to 0.54 in absolute terms. Both Dake (1991) and Marris, Langford and O'Riordan (1996) reported strong correlations between the hierarchy and individualism scales.

10 A complete empirical test of the sequential individual approach would require samples from different contexts. Since it is not possible to assert from which context the present survey is drawn (a private, non-socially controlled context?) consistent interpretation remains difficult.

11 Two per cent of the repondents are found in 'the autonomous culture' in that they support all four biases (Thompson, Ellis and Wildavsky 1990: 8). By default they cannot reject any of the other biases.

12 The three models of the individual rely on different ways of testing. Therefore the proportion of individuals that are correctly described exceeds 100 per cent.

13 In the questionnaire the respondents were asked what party they would vote for if there were a parliamentary election tomorrow. *See* e.g. Heidar and Svåsand (1994), Strøm and Svåsand (1997) for a discussion of the Norwegian party system.
14 Fatalism correlates well (not shown) with a preference for The Progress party (Fremskrittspartiet, FrP), the Agrarian party (Senterpartiet, Sp) and small parties, as well as with those without a party preference.
15 Listwise deletions of missing values for each of the parties are used. OLS-regression is questionable when the dependent variable is a dummy-variable (Aldrich and Nelson 1984). Logit-analysis can therefore be appropriate, but also much less accessible (Franklin et al. 1992: 424, 436). The present models have also been submitted to logit-analysis but the results do not alter the present conclusion.
16 If one included all party preferences and missing values each cell would add up to 100 per cent. A complete table can be obtained from the author.
17 There have been some attempts to describe parties consisting of coalitions of cultural biases; e.g. social-democratic parties have been described as regimes consisting of hierarchists and egalitarians (Thompson, Ellis and Wildavsky 1990: 89).
18 This kind of causal conjuncture can be tested with the use of interaction models in multivariate regression, although restrictions apply (*see* Ragin 1987: 65).
19 A LISREL analysis could help us test the number of predicitons of how social experiences influence party preference and party identification through cultural biases (*see* Franklin and Jackson 1983).

Part 2

ORGANISATIONS