

GRID–GROUP THEORY AND POLITICAL IDEOLOGY

A CONSIDERATION OF THEIR RELATIVE STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES FOR EXPLAINING THE STRUCTURE OF MASS BELIEF SYSTEMS

Richard M. Coughlin and Charles Lockhart

ABSTRACT

The primary purpose of this paper is to introduce an alternative, grid–group theory, to the conventional liberal–conservative continuum for understanding the structure of mass belief systems. We also examine the potential advantages of this alternative in explaining preference formation with a series of exploratory empirical comparisons of the relative strengths and weaknesses of grid–group theory and the conventional measure of political ideology. While certain data limitations make our results tentative, we conclude that political ideology retains the advantage of parsimony as the single most powerful predictor of mass attitudes across a range of social and economic issues. But grid–group theory allows us to unpack distinct social logics that are conflated in a unidimensional model. These logics not only tell us more about the bases for persons' attitudes, they offer an explanation for the shifting structure of political conflicts and coalitions. Thus grid–group theory helps us explain who holds which 'core values' and why.

KEY WORDS • mass belief systems • political attitudes • political culture • political ideology • public opinion

For some 30 years the effort to develop empirically supported models of mass attitudes has been the focus of ongoing debate in political science and political sociology. Converse's (1964) seminal work in this area raised serious questions for democratic theory by suggesting that significant portions of mass publics do not derive true attitudes on specific issues through deduction from overarching ideological beliefs, but respond in essentially random fashion to survey questions about public policy and, by extension, to participatory political events such as elections as well. The 'non-attitudes' of this portion of the citizenry are, according to Converse,

Earlier versions of this paper were presented at the Third International Conference of Socioeconomics, Stockholm, Sweden, 16–19 June 1991, and the 1992 annual meeting of the Western Political Science Association, San Francisco, 19–21 March. This paper is part of an ongoing collaborative project. We want to thank Karl Dake, Richard Ellis, Hank Jenkins-Smith, Stefan Svallfors, Joseph White, the late Aaron Wildavsky and this journal's reviewers for constructive comments on earlier versions of this article.

'unconstrained' by abstract schemata for selecting and interpreting information in any systematic consistent fashion. While acknowledging that members of mass publics might rely on unspecified alternative sources of guidance in forming political preferences, Converse located many members outside the ranks of those who position themselves with respect to the liberal-conservative ideological continuum that contemporary western political elites frequently use.

Numerous scholars have disputed various aspects of Converse's thesis. In general, these revisionists argue that the implications of empirical research for democratic theory are not as severe as Converse suggests. While acceptance of the idea that mass publics make only limited use of the liberal-conservative continuum is common, this dimension continues to be widely employed in surveys and academic studies, and some scholars praise its familiarity, parsimony and explanatory capacity with respect to the public's views on concrete issues (Green, 1988). Moreover, the idea that the public's views are unconstrained has been resisted. Prior to Converse's statement and on the basis of in-depth interviews, Lane (1962) had argued that persons develop idiosyncratic abstract schemata. Achen (1975) agreed that citizens generally had true attitudes and attributed researchers' difficulty in persuasively demonstrating their structure to measurement problems. Kinder (1983) and Kinder and Sears (1985) provide useful reviews of an extensive literature on these issues.

We focus on a narrower set of themes in the more recent literature, themes that in our view begin to construct an avenue out of this longstanding impasse. Conover and Feldman (1991) distinguish between schemata and attitudes. They use the former concept in a generic sense to refer to various means of cognitively structuring experience. Schemata provide bases for attending to and interpreting the world. It seems unimaginable that ordinary persons fail to employ some sort of schemata, for life is composed of too many complex and ambiguous stimuli for persons to cope with it successfully in the absence of the simplification that schemata provide. By attitudes, Conover and Feldman refer to affective or evaluative orientations toward specific matters that derive from schemata. Schemata may arise from a variety of sources, involve varying degrees of depth and breadth, and thus acquire different names (e.g. images, ideologies etc.). And there is considerable evidence that ordinary persons do employ various types of schemata (Feldman and Zaller, 1992; Peffley and Hurwitz, 1992).

For the most part, studies demonstrating that members of mass publics employ schemata focus on devices that help persons organize (and thus constrain) distinct and relatively narrow swaths of attitudes: aspects of economic as opposed to social life or foreign as opposed to domestic policy (Smith, 1990). A few scholars have suggested more general devices

(Rokeach, 1973; Maddox and Lilie, 1984; Rosenberg, 1988). We propose to follow in this broader vein, but we draw on the collective work of Conover, Feldman and Zaller in formulating our approach to this enterprise.

In certain respects some of the recent work of these scholars collapses Conover and Feldman's distinction between cognitive schemata and affective/evaluative attitudes (Feldman, 1988; Zaller, 1991; Zaller and Feldman, 1992; Feldman and Zaller, 1992). This work employs core values (presumably at least partially affective) to help explain attitudes toward public policy. But this work both demonstrates that ordinary citizens utilize abstract principles in developing their attitudes and suggests intriguing interpretations of response instability. In particular, we pick up on the suggestion of Feldman and Zaller (1992) that core values are indices of culture. Drawing on a theory recently developed by Douglas (1982b) and Wildavsky (Thompson et al., 1990), we explicate a cognitive schema that may lie behind and structure the relations among various core values. In the process we suggest that the range of American cultures is broader than many have realized (see Smith, 1993). Accordingly, and similarly to Rokeach (1973), we employ two dimensions to reveal distinctions that are conflated in one dimension. Thus we agree with Feldman and Zaller (1992: 292-3) that ordinary persons draw on cultural prisms to interpret their world, but not necessarily ideology in the sense of the liberal-conservative continuum.

Grid-group Theory

Thus our primary purpose in this article is to introduce grid-group theory which was developed initially in – primarily British – cultural anthropology (Evans-Pritchard, 1940; Durkheim, 1951; Douglas, 1978, 1982a, b, 1986, 1992; Thompson et al., 1990) and has since been applied more generally throughout the social and related sciences (Holling, 1979; Schwarz and Thompson, 1990; Ellis, 1993; Coyle and Ellis, 1994). It explains how persons derive a limited range of answers to basic social questions such as: How does the world work? What are humans really like? And how do I hold others accountable to me? (Wildavsky, 1994). Grid-group theorists argue that persons' answers to these questions produce orientations toward two basic social dimensions: the legitimacy of external prescription (grid) and the strength of affiliation with others (group).¹ The theory thus helps to fill a notorious void in the social sciences (Becker, 1976: 133). It explains

1. By 'legitimacy of external prescription' we refer to the varying ease with which persons accept that other persons' judgments are valid for and binding on them. For a career enlisted person in a military service, for instance, this legitimacy is apt to be high since he or she will have chosen a life that routinely involves accepting the orders of officers without question.

how distinctive social relations preferences are formed as a consequence of various grid and group positions (Schwarz and Thompson, 1990: 49). (See below, pp. 37–39.) The range of actual social practice is constrained, since only four general ways – each admitting variations – of responding to these issues are socially viable.² Preferences with respect to various patterns of social relations prompt supporting justifications or cultural biases and vice versa. Together the preferences and justifications create distinctive ways of life or cultures as shown in Figure 1.³

Where low tolerance for external prescription is reinforced by weak feelings of group membership, we find an individualistic way of life organized largely by self-regulation among voluntary, shifting, contract-based networks of persons. Promoting such a way of life among persons

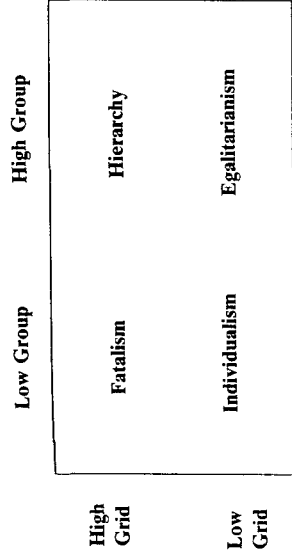


Figure 1. Grid-group Theory's Cultural Biases

2. While this claim is controversial, it is obviously less limiting than the widely accepted notion that only variations on two ways of life – hierarchy and individualism – are socially viable; see Lindblom (1977). Additionally, Fiske (1993) and Maruyama (1980) have independently derived similar typologies. There is also a fair amount of empirical research supporting this claim; see Evans-Pritchard (1940), Dumont (1980), Strathern (1971) and Uchendu (1965). Finally, grid-group theory includes a fifth non-socially-interactive way of life – the hermit's – that we do not apply in this paper; see Thompson (1982).

3. An alternative schema uses the labels 'liberal, libertarian, populist and conservative' to describe contemporary American public opinion orientations (e.g. Maddox and Lilie, 1984: 5). The important difference between this schema and grid-group theory lies not in the labels of the categories, but in the underlying dimensions. Grid-group theory's categories are distinguished by their degree of acceptance of external prescriptions as well as their openness to group affiliation. The resulting categories have demonstrable utility for distinguishing actual ways of life across a broad range of social applications (see footnote 2, above). It is not clear to us that the 'liberal, libertarian, populist and conservative' schema has equally coherent underlying dimensions (for or against the expansion of personal freedoms and for or against government intervention in economic affairs). These dimensions are not clearly independent and are narrowly time- and culture-bound in their focus on the preoccupations of contemporary Americans and think that they would be even more limited if applied in other societies or eras.

perceived as self-interested, with roughly equal broad competencies such as rationality, is one purpose of Smith's *Wealth of Nations*.

Strong feelings of group affiliation together with weak prescription entail a way of life that grid-group theorists call egalitarian. From this perspective broadly equal humans, unmarred by natural flaws destructive of social harmony, ideally prefer to organize into small groups that reach collective decisions through discussions designed to produce consensus. This process is reminiscent of Rousseau's descriptions of the social ideal in *The Social Contract*.

High feelings of group affiliation in conjunction with perceptions legitimizing strong external prescription create a realm of hierarchy. In this view unequal humans with various social shortcomings that require improvement through institutional guidance are arrayed in vertical collectives. The ideal polis portrayed by Plato in *The Republic* illustrates this way of life.

Finally, where weak feelings of group affiliation intersect with perceptions of external direction, grid-group theory locates fatalism. The unhappy combination of recognizing constraint by others but not feeling part of any broader social collective predisposes fatalists to social avoidance rather than varying forms of social interaction. One manifestation of avoidance is that fatalists rarely construct works of political theory; their views and patterns of behavior have, however, been well portrayed by others (Banfield, 1958; Turnbull, 1972).⁴

Grid-group theorists argue that all four ways of life are present in varying proportions in all societies (see Grendstad, 1990). Similarly to the interaction of different amino acids in biological systems, each way of life provides services for the others that they cannot create for themselves. Societies are thus typically 'multicultural' in this sense. In part, grid-group theorists conceive of culture as the beliefs and values (i.e. cultural biases) with which various social groupings justify their rival ways of life (Thompson et al., 1990: 1–38). These cultural biases are based on beliefs about the natural and social environments that rest ultimately on experience. Distinctive conceptions of humans follow from particular beliefs about the world. Together, these beliefs about humans and their world locate persons with respect to the grid and group dimensions and spawn distinctive preferences for different patterns of social relations. Accordingly, grid-group theory offers an account of what persons want and why, that when coupled with an instrumental conception of rationality, creates a series of 'social logics' about institutional and policy choices (Lockhart and Coughlin, 1992; Wildavsky, 1994; Lockhart and Wildavsky, 1997).

Individualists, for instance, perceive bountiful and resilient natural

4. There are exceptions to fatalists' reticence; see *Ecclesiastes* 9:11 and Schopenhauer's *The World as Will and Representation*.

(Locke, *Second Treatise*: Ch. 5) and social (Nozick, 1974) environments. In turn, they view humans as self-interested and equal in broad capacities. They assume that humans are thus properly motivated and sufficiently capable to master their own fates in such environments. Accordingly, individualists evince low-grid preferences, relying primarily on self-regulation to structure social interaction. Government, with its inherent coercion, should be limited. Individualists reveal their low-group position in preferences for working through networks of persons linked by voluntary contractual relations that shift over time rather than through ascribed groups. Our index of individualism (see Appendix) attempts to tap this mastery-of-one's-fate notion.

Egalitarians, in contrast, see a much more delicate context. Not only is the natural environment subject to depredation, but social contexts (e.g. the inner city) are easily perverted as well. Egalitarians believe that humans are naturally benign in their motives and broadly equal in both basic capacities and needs (Gewirth, 1978). Humans are thus potentially able to fit into this delicate context. Yet they are easy prey for destructive social stratification. Egalitarians believe that by undoing natural human equality, stratification creates arrogance in the dominant and resentment in the subjugated, perverting in the process the natural goodness of all. Accordingly, egalitarians exhibit a high-group position, preferring to deal with the hazards posed by fragile environments through the collective resources of close-knit groups that share a limited material bounty fairly equally – exemplified by the aphorism 'live simply so that others may simply live' or, as Schumacher (1973) had it, 'small is beautiful'. These groups are ideally relatively small and manifest their low-grid position by reaching collective decisions through open discussion resulting in consensus (Downey, 1986; Zisk, 1992).⁵ Our index of egalitarianism taps the most notable practical objective of this culture: achieving greater equality of condition than either individualists or hierarchists favor. The index is thus formulated to distinguish egalitarians from these other two cultures under actual societal circumstances rather than – what for egalitarians are – ideal small-group conditions.

Hierarchists believe in a more complex tolerant/perverse context. They assume that both natural and social environments are sufficiently robust to support some exploitation, but if humans press too hard, disaster is apt to follow. Figuratively, humans live on mesas, not needing to worry about minor variations in the table-top terrain, but having to stay clear of the encircling cliffs. This view of the human environment elicits a conception of

5. In practice, egalitarians frequently compromise their views and form coalitions with other cultures, particularly hierarchy. These coalitions allow them to project their way of life into society at large, gaining specific benefits thereby. In the contemporary period social democracy represents a common form of hierarchical–egalitarian collaboration.

humans that, in contrast to those of the low-grid cultures, attributes great importance to disparities of specific talents. Experts in various matters are required to discern crucial natural and social boundaries that are not equally evident to everyone, as well as to ascertain how humans should adjust their behavior in conformity with these limits. For hierarchists, then, many of the same obvious interpersonal differences that low-grid individualists and egalitarians believe to be inconsequential take on moral and social significance. Hierarchists' high-group position appears in their preference for organizing societies into vertically-arrayed collectives. High-grid preferences appear in their institutions' focus on the dual tasks of education and social control. Experts guide these institutions, attempting to fill ordinary persons' lives with sanctioned activities. In this way the lives of less capable and more seriously flawed persons are improved and the social collective is simultaneously served. Our index of hierarchy taps this culture's sense of one right way of doing things, privy to society's experts, that contrasts sharply with individualism's sense of the benefits of personal experimentation (e.g. J. S. Mill, *On Liberty*). Our index focusses on support for the dominant and thus, for hierarchists, socially sanctioned use of the English language and conventional sexual morality.

Fatalists perceive the natural context as essentially random and human behavior, fittingly, as capricious. Thus rather than attempting to build specific sorts of institutions (e.g. markets that respect individual rights and promote freedom and prosperity, or close-knit groups that provide social solidarity for their members, or hierarchies that promote knowledge and order), fatalists attempt to stay out of harm's way by minimizing their interaction (low-group) with unpredictable uncontrollable environmental and human forces (high-grid). This does not characteristically leave them pleased with their social lot, and fatalists provide a reservoir for social discontent. Our index of fatalism taps this sense of life-plans thwarted or overwhelmed by uncontrollable external forces.

Applying Grid-group Theory to the Structure of Mass Attitudes

Grid-group theory eschews a unidimensional approach to social life, thus opening the way for a richer understanding of how persons make sense of the world around them and formulate preferences. Previous explanations of preference formation have typically been based on self-interest or political ideology. Grid-group theorists argue that both 'self' and 'interest' are concepts that are socially constructed and vary across rival cultures (Wildavsky, 1994). Accordingly, we do not explicitly address in this paper the role played by self-interest, except insofar as to try to control for its more blatant material manifestations (income level) in the data analysis. It

is sufficient here to note the evidence of studies suggesting that, at least with respect to attitudes covering a broad range of public policies, material self-interest does not appear to offer a satisfactory explanation of preference formation (Green, 1988; Sears and Funk, 1990; Coughlin, 1990).

Scholars have also attempted to explain persons' preferences by locating them on a unidimensional scale of political ideology running between left and right. In contemporary American terminology, the left-right scale distinguishes varying degrees of liberalism and conservatism, although these labels – particularly the former – have to be modified for use outside the United States where the left end of the political spectrum is typically represented by social democratic or socialist ideology.

A unidimensional scale of political attitudes offers the virtue of parsimony. But parsimony comes at a price, since it does not allow for discrimination of different reasons for adopting attitudes that appear in similar locations along a single dimension. Obvious examples of such conflating of distinctive views come easily to mind. It is conventional in the United States, for instance, to label as 'conservative' both: (1) persons who vehemently oppose state regulation of economic activities and who also oppose state regulation of morality ('economic conservatives' such as Milton Friedman); and (2) persons who encourage the state to support particular visions of morality but whose views with respect to economic regulation may vary from case to case ('social conservatives' such as Pat Buchanan) (Klatch, 1987). A single dimension of conservatism in this case conflates two distinctive orientations toward public policy, one that opposes government regulation and another that perceives government institutions as important sources of moral sustenance.

Grid-group theory's two dimensions enable us to 'unpack' both the left (liberal) and the right (conservative) ends of the conventional ideological scale, revealing the various social logics that we introduced above. This unpacking extends the core values to which Americans subscribe by distinguishing various types of conservatism (cf. Conover and Feldman, 1981; Feldman, 1988). Grid-group theory thus holds out the promise of a more accurate and theoretically powerful analysis of the bases underlying political attitudes than the conventional left-right continuum.

Grid-group theory's cultural biases cross-cut the conventional left-right continuum in multiple ways. For instance, the most stable residents of the left end of the traditional ideological spectrum are egalitarians – those who perceive themselves as belonging to clearly defined groups made up of equal members able to make their own decisions. Individualists share with their low-grid egalitarian neighbors a basic antipathy toward external direction and belief in an essential (albeit narrower) human equality. Because of these shared outlooks, grid-group theory predicts that egalitarians and individualists will agree on some issues – most notably, support

for some types of individual rights. But individualists are not bound by strong feelings of group identity, nor do they approve of interventions aimed at reducing socially-induced differences among 'individuals.' Instead, they perceive humans as capable self-interested actors who, operating in a bountiful context, strive to differentiate themselves from others, creating their individuality in the process. Thus, individualists part company with egalitarians on many issues involving strategies of collective action, including policy initiatives designed to reduce social and economic inequality. Accordingly, individualists' general opposition to external regulation – most conspicuously what they perceive as interference with an appropriately autonomous economic sphere of life – frequently locates them on the right-hand side of the unidimensional political spectrum, sharply distinguishing them from egalitarians. It is this disparity between the distributional preferences of individualists and egalitarians that our indices for these two cultures are designed to distinguish.

Hierarchists also share some ideological ground with egalitarians. Both have strong feelings of group association, and hierarchists, due to a sense of paternalistic obligation, can agree with egalitarians on some aspects of public policy, such as the desirability of a large active welfare state (e.g. Wilson, 1987). However, hierarchists do not accept egalitarians' fundamental views on human nature and ideal forms of social relations. For hierarchists, humans are by nature unequal and flawed. They require external direction that strong social institutions can provide. Thus hierarchists (Mead, 1984; Glazer, 1988) view social programs not only as a means to support people's material needs, but more importantly as devices for engaging them in institutions designed to improve their character. Hierarchists are 'conservative' in the sense that they are more likely than egalitarians or individualists to adhere to time-tested virtues of traditional values and institutions. It is through this hierarchical belief in the necessity of external moral guidance that our index for hierarchy is designed to distinguish hierarchists from adherents of both low-grid cultures.

Individualists and hierarchists both view stratification as an inescapable part of social organization, but they do so on different grounds. For individualists, equality of opportunity leads to inequality of outcomes due to variations in specific talents, motivation and hard work among individuals who share basic capacities. Individualists are thus likely to oppose ambitious social welfare measures since they perceive the blame for poverty and related social ills to lie with the (potentially capable) poor (Murray, 1984). Hierarchists are more likely than individualists to assess programs of the welfare state positively, since they perceive such measures as justifiable paternalistic efforts on the part of society's leaders to help members who are naturally less capable (Mead, 1984; Glazer, 1988). In some other areas – for example, laws that define and protect property

rights – individualists and hierarchists share views which lead them to adopt stands that are located on the right-hand side of the unidimensional political spectrum. But this shared 'conservative' position is based on sharply different grounds – support for individual rights and ensuring the social collective a class of competent leaders, respectively. And individualists' support for personal rights is apt to distinguish them sharply from hierarchists on many issues, such as conformity to established morality. Our hierarchy index is thus designed to tap the relative intolerance of hierarchists in comparison to individualists.

Unlike the conventional conception of political ideology, which offers only hazily specified concepts of political socialization to account for ideological dispositions at the individual level and political culture at the aggregate level, grid-group theory identifies the origins of specific attitudes in particular patterns of grid-group interaction. For example, persons who perceive external prescription as illegitimate *and* feel strong bonds of membership in a group are bound to reach decisions through a process of lengthy discussion designed to achieve consensus, an approach that hierarchists view as misguided in slighting expertise, and individualists see as inefficient (Downey, 1986; Zisk, 1992). Grid-group theory thus converges with the concerns of other scholars who have mounted recent challenges to earlier conceptions of preference formation (e.g. Etzioni, 1988).

Conceptualization and Measurement

In the following sections we apply our indices for measuring grid-group theory's various cultural biases by conducting some exploratory empirical tests in which we compare the relative advantages and drawbacks of these indices with the conventional left-right dimension of politics for explaining policy-related attitudes among the American mass public. Our indices are not as refined as we would like them to be, and before presenting the results of our empirical analysis, we address some methodological questions concerning the conceptualization and operationalization of grid-group measures.

Although well developed in cultural anthropology and in the study of small-scale societies and some specific contemporary institutions, grid-group theory is relatively new to political science and the study of mass attitudes. Unsurprisingly, then, survey research techniques for measuring grid-group theory's cultures are still developing (Hampton, 1982; Gross and Rayner, 1985; Grendstad, 1990). Lack of experience in the measurement of grid-group theory's cultures has created problems even for researchers who have constructed their own indices for use with small samples (Dake and Wildavsky, 1990; Jenkins-Smith and Barke, 1992). Our

interest in mass publics requires a sample representative of the general American population, and we have drawn on data collected through the General Social Survey (GSS). Developing indices for grid-group theory's cultures from survey questions posed by others for different purposes exacerbates measurement problems.

Our most basic problem is what to operationalize. Probably the most appropriate way to assess these cultures is to measure grid and group directly with high-grid, high-group respondents labeled as hierarchists; low-grid, low-group as individualists etc. This approach provides the capacity for dividing a sample into cultural types (Grendstad, 1990) and offers the least convoluted inferences that grid-group theory's dimensions are responsible for some portion of the observed variance among persons. However, neither the GSS nor to date any other national sample survey has included questions suitable for this task, so proceeding in this manner must await the construction and application of instruments specifically designed for this purpose (Boyle and Coughlin, 1994).

Accordingly, although we do not follow this preferred route here, we think that the avenue we do take is defensible given the circumstances. As Conover and Feldman relate, for hypothetical constructs such as grid, group, egalitarianism etc., measurement is *always* indirect: 'indicators can only provide empirical evidence consistent with the hypothetical construct' (Conover and Feldman, 1991: 1365). Others have measured grid and group less indirectly for related purposes (Grendstad, 1990), and a growing literature has fruitfully used measures of the cultures which these dimensions produce (Dake and Wildavsky, 1990; Ellis and Thompson, 1996). These works increase our confidence that the grid and group dimensions help to explain the results that we relate later. We acknowledge, however, that we take a larger inferential risk by measuring the resulting cultures rather than the grid-group dimensions. Conceivably, some factor other than the grid and group dimensions might be responsible for the results we find. But the results that we report are at least consistent with our most basic hypothetical constructs.

Additionally, the conceptual field produced by the intersection of grid and group creates strong cross-pressures since each cultural bias shares distinct central concerns with two other cultural biases (e.g. for different senses of collective welfare in the case of egalitarianism and hierarchy, and varying conceptions of human equality for egalitarianism and individualism). Moreover, we perceive these cross-pressures as similar to the 'opposing considerations' that Zaller and Feldman (1992: 85) derive from Hochschild's (1981) work and use to explain response instability. Further, we think that in relatively pluralistic contemporary advanced societies, persons are likely to come into contact with, and may be socialized by, the agents of different cultures. Some, as Hochschild (1981) shows, will remain

sympathetic to, and apply different cultural biases in, distinct domains of social life. In other words some persons have hybrid cultural biases and apply the tenets of rival cultures in different social contexts – hierarchy or individualism in the workplace and egalitarianism in the family, for instance. The presence of these contextual boundaries, to which survey questions may be insensitive, suggests caution about deriving generic grid and group labels for persons from mass surveys. The GSS focusses on a range of public issues and policy concerns, and we may obtain a more accurate reading of the cultural bias persons apply to this domain by inquiring directly about the cultures they evince when questioned about this domain than by attempting to probe more deeply and generally for their grid and group orientations.

We conducted a series of exploratory empirical comparisons of grid-group theory indices and conventional political ideology using ordinary least squares (OLS) regression. Independent variables were drawn from attitudinal indices derived from grid-group theory's four cultural biases, a measure of conventional political ideology (respondent's self-location on a seven-point scale running from 'extremely liberal' to 'extremely conservative'), years of formal education and annual family income. Education and income were treated as control variables in this analysis. Empirically, education and income were found to be correlated with both our independent variables and many of our dependent variables, so their inclusion in the regression analysis was necessary to guard against spurious relationships. In addition, including education and income as control variables helps to isolate the effects of political ideology and the cultural bias measures from extraneous (for purposes here) effects such as greater access to information as a result of more formal education or simple material self-interest associated with the impact of various public policies on different socioeconomic strata. Although the effects of education and income on public attitudes are by no means uninteresting, they are not central to the empirical tests of this study and are thus 'held constant' here.

Our cultural measures consist of simple additive indices of three to five survey items each (see Appendix), designed to tap respectively the four cultural biases. Initially, we hoped that data from several years of the GSS could be included in the analysis; however, only the 1984 GSS contained the combination of attitudinal items allowing for a simultaneous test of all four cultural bias measures. Following our theoretical discussion (pp. 37–39 and 40–42), our purpose with respect to individualism is to tap its central theme of persons as masters of their own fates. To this end, we employ items relating to low-group skepticism about persons having broad social responsibilities and low-grid acceptance of a broad range of interpersonal differences.

Our egalitarian index concentrates on the most notable practical concern

for egalitarians in large-scale society, achieving greater equality of condition among persons, through the inclusion of items designed to tap high-group acceptance of broad social responsibilities. These responsibilities, in turn, support a belief among egalitarians that some differences in condition among persons (e.g. access to primary goods) are illegitimate. These two indices are thus designed to distinguish individualists and egalitarians with respect to their sharply disparate views toward persons' capacities vis-à-vis the forces of the social environment and their resulting responsibilities toward others.

Our index for hierarchy focusses on this culture's strong tendency to accept one correct way of operating, the way defined by socially sanctioned experts. We operationalize this focus through items about the legitimacy of various expressive and sexual practices that are designed to pick up hierarchists' high-grid acceptance of external authority. Thus our hierarchy index is designed to contrast this culture's acceptance of external moral guidance with the corresponding reluctance of the low-grid cultures of egalitarianism and individualism in this regard. Individualists, in particular, often perceive non-conformity as a virtue.

Our fatalism index is designed to tap the sense of personal life-plans overwhelmed by uncontrollable external forces inherent in a high-grid (recognize external authority) but low-group (not a group member) perspective. We rely on a series of items reflecting the limitations of friendship, attention to duty and hard work to achieve positive outcomes.

Our dependent variables were drawn from survey questions probing respondents' qualitative judgments on a range of social and economic issues. These attitudinal items asked respondents to express preferences or judgments about the desirability of government participation in various social or economic problems and toward permitting or prohibiting certain types of activities or behavior. Because more than half of the policy-related questions were coded dichotomously by the GSS researchers, hence presenting potential problems for OLS regression, the items were analyzed both separately and in groupings of from two to four items. Assignment of items to the groupings was determined by three criteria: (1) face validity (i.e. questions that addressed similar areas of policy); (2) observed patterns of intercorrelation among items; and (3) factor analysis (principal components) of each grouping to test for unidimensionality. Before being grouped, all items were recoded to achieve uniform direction and metric.

Exploratory Results

Zero-order correlations among the main independent variables are reported in Table 1. The indices of individualism, egalitarianism and hierarchy

of

Table 1. Zero-order Correlations: Political Ideology and Cultural Bias Indices

	Individualism	Egalitarianism	Hierarchy	Fatalism
Political ideology ^a	.12**	-.20**	.22**	-.03
Individualism ^b	-	-.31**	.12**	-.06*
Egalitarianism		-	.00	.27**
Hierarchy			-	.11**
Fatalism				-

* $p < .05$ (one-tailed test) ** $p < .001$ (one-tailed test)
^a Political ideology is respondent's self-location on a seven-point scale running from 'extremely liberal' to 'extremely conservative'.
^b Details of the make-up of the cultural bias indices are found in the Appendix.
Source: National Opinion Research Corporation, General Social Survey, 1984.

all show moderate correlations with the political ideology measure, with fatalism showing a non-significant negative correlation. Both in magnitude and sign, these correlations are consistent with the predictions of grid-group theory. That the cultural bias variables are not strongly correlated with political ideology indicates that our measures are not merely duplicating the conventional left-right dimension of political attitudes. The correlations show directional consistency with our expectations concerning the tendencies found within cultural bias types: individualism and hierarchy tend to be associated with the right-hand side of the conventional spectrum, while egalitarianism tends toward the left end, and fatalism displays no regular relationship to the left-right dimension.

Correlations among the cultural bias measures also generally conform to expectations of theory: individualism and hierarchy are positively correlated (.12), as are fatalism and hierarchy (.11). Individualism and fatalism are negatively related (-.06); while individualism and egalitarianism show the strongest negative correlation (-.31). The positive relationship between egalitarianism and fatalism (.27) is consistent with grid-group theory's portrayal of these biases as sharing disaffection with the American societal mainstream.

The only anomalous finding in Table 1 is the correlation between egalitarianism and hierarchy, which turned out to be zero instead of carrying the expected negative sign. The likely explanation for the absence of a negative correlation between egalitarianism and hierarchy may be found in the nature of the hierarchy measure we used, which in turn is related to how social stratification is perceived in the United States. Our measure of hierarchy emphasizes conformity to traditional values, which is clearly central to the tenets of grid-group theory. It does not, however, directly capture the component of social inequality that is also part of grid-group theory's conception of hierarchy. This is largely due to the parti-

cularities of American history (see Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*; Hartz, 1955) in which social inequality is rarely perceived in terms of inherited social class status. Indeed, as has been often observed, Americans are inclined to deny the importance of ascribed class status (see Williams, 1970), embracing instead a 'middle class ethos' (Verba et al., 1987: 41-4). Consequently, discussion of economic inequality in American society tends to be framed in terms of attempting to explain why some persons succeed and others fail, which concentrates conflicts concerning inequality along the egalitarianism-individualism axis (as evidenced by the substantial negative correlation in Table 1 and other results discussed later) rather than between egalitarianism and hierarchy.

To test the relative effects of the grid-group theory variables compared to the measure of conventional political ideology, we conducted a series of OLS regressions. First we regressed each dependent variable on the political ideology measure; then we repeated the regressions with the four cultural bias scales in place of ideology; and finally we performed a test with both ideology and the cultural bias indices included in regressions on combined groupings of the dependent variables. As noted earlier, education and income were included in all regressions as control variables. The standardized regression coefficients (beta weights) of these runs are reported in Tables 2 to 4.

Table 2 shows the results of the regressions with political ideology as the independent variable. The consistently significant (and in this case positive, meaning 'more conservative') beta weights in the regressions involving items tapping opposition to various types of social welfare and related questions of government intervention into social and economic affairs ($PI_1 = .19$, $PI_2 = .18$, $PI_3 = .17$, $PI_4 = .11$) are consistent with what we know about the usefulness of the left-right dimension as a summary measure of attitudes in the realm of political economy. Persons locating themselves toward the 'conservative' end of the left-right dimension tend to oppose social welfare interventions, while those identifying themselves as 'liberals' tend to support them. A similar pattern obtains for items tapping opinions on various 'moral' issues: opposing legalization of marijuana ($PI_6 = .17$), disapproving of abortion on demand ($PI_7 = .15$), enacting laws against the distribution of pornography ($PI_8 = .10$), and prohibiting a homosexual from making a speech in the community ($PI_9 = .07$). Finally, on two items dealing with law and order - support for capital punishment ($PI_{11} = .08$) and the perceived leniency of the criminal justice system ($PI_{12} = .04$) - the effects of political ideology are in the same direction as the other items in the table but weaker in magnitude.

Table 3 shows the results of regressions involving the same set of dependent variables, only with cultural bias indices substituted for the political ideology measure. As in Table 2, the beta weights in these

Table 2. Political Ideology as a Predictor of Attitudes

Dependent Variables	Standardized OLS Regression Coefficients				R ²
	Political Ideology	Education	Income		
1. Feel government does not have special obligation to help Blacks	.19**	-.07*	.18**		.07
2. Feel government should not help with health care	.18**	.05*	.18**		.06
3. Think government is doing too many things that should be left to business and individuals	.17**	.18**	.13**		.09
4. Agree that social welfare benefits are a disincentive	.11**	-.04	.03		.01
5. (1) + (2) + (3) + (4)	.27**	.05	.19**		.12
6. Oppose legalization of marijuana	.17**	-.15**	.03		.05
7. Disapprove of abortion if woman wants one for any reason	.15**	-.23**	-.04		.08
8. Feel that there should be laws against distributing pornography	.10**	-.13**	.03		.03
9. Say homosexual should not be allowed to make speech in the community	.07*	-.26**	-.10**		.10
10. (6) + (7) + (8) + (9)	.20**	-.30**	.04		.14
11. Favor the death penalty for person convicted of murder	.08*	.04	.12**		.02
12. Think courts deal too leniently with criminals	.04	-.06	.10**		.01
13. (11) + (12)	.08*	.01	.15**		.03

* $p < .05$ (two-tailed test) ** $p < .01$ (two-tailed test)

Note: Education and income are included as control variables.

Source: National Opinion Research Corporation, General Social Survey, 1984.

regressions are consistently significant, and they also yield an increase in explained variance (adjusted R -squared) in all equations. This latter result is not surprising, given the larger number of variables used in constructing the cultural bias indices. More important is the way in which the cultural bias indices allow us to unpack the left-right dimension, more accurately pinpointing the foci of cleavages and isolating stronger effects than are generally produced by the conventional measure of ideology.

For example, the basic antinomy between individualism and egalitarianism is reflected in attitudes on the question of government intervention across a range of social welfare issues: not providing special help for African-Americans ($I_1 = .13$, $E_1 = -.16$) or not helping persons with health care ($I_2 = .08$, $E_2 = -.27$). A similar pattern emerges on questions of

Table 3. Cultural Bias Indices as Predictors of Attitudes

Dependent Variables	Standardized OLS Regression Coefficients							R ²
	I	E	H	F	Education	Income		
1. Feel government does not have special obligation to help Blacks	.13**	-.16**	.05	.05	-.05		.16**	.08
2. Feel government should not help with health care	.08**	-.27**	.09**	-.03	.02		.09	.12
3. Think government is doing too many things that should be left to business and individuals	.06*	-.32**	.02	-.07*	.11**		.07	.18
4. Agree that social welfare benefits are a disincentive	.18**	-.06*	.04	.12**	-.02		.03	.05
5. (1) + (2) + (3) + (4)	.15**	-.35**	.07*	.00	.03		.13**	.21
6. Oppose legalization of marijuana	.01	.04	.35**	-.09**	-.10**		.03	.14
7. Disapprove of abortion if woman wants one for any reason	-.02	.01	.26**	.00	-.18**		-.02	.12
8. Feel that there should be laws against distributing pornography	-.05	-.02	.28**	-.04	-.08**		.03	.08
9. Say homosexual should not be allowed to make speech in the community	.05	.00	.25**	.07*	-.18**		-.10**	.17
10. (6) + (7) + (8) + (9)	.01	-.01	.43**	-.02	-.21**		-.03	.28
11. Favor the death penalty for person convicted of murder	.07*	-.13**	.02	.08*	.05		.10**	.04
12. Think courts deal too leniently with criminals	.02	-.01	.12**	.02	-.02		.10**	.02
13. (11) + (12)	.04	-.11**	.07*	.07*	.03		.13**	.04

* $p < .05$ (two-tailed test) ** $p < .01$ (two-tailed test)

Note: Education and income are included as control variables. For regressions (8) and (9), items concerning pornography and homosexuality, respectively, are excluded from the Hierarchy index (see footnote 7 for explanation).

Source: National Opinion Research Corporation, General Social Survey, 1984.

whether government is doing many things that should be left to business and individuals ($I_3 = .06$, $E_3 = -.32$) and the perception that social welfare benefits are a disincentive to individual effort ($I_4 = .18$, $E_4 = -.06$). Unlike the effects of the political ideology measure, these results reveal where support and opposition are concentrated with respect to various types of

government interventions. For instance, on such questions as government help for the sick and 'government doing too many things that should be left to business and individuals', our results indicate that egalitarian approval tends to be stronger than individualistic (or hierarchist) opposition.⁶

Tension between individualism and egalitarianism in social welfare and related government interventions is accompanied by a significant contribution from the fatalism measure, although with varying signs from item to item. On the question of whether government does many things that should be left to business and individuals, fatalists join with egalitarians ($F_3 = -.07$); while they side with individualists in agreeing that social welfare benefits are a disincentive ($F_4 = .12$).

In the realm of moral issues, the results in Table 3 reveal the powerful impact of hierarchy: strong opposition to legalizing marijuana ($H_6 = .35$) and abortion on demand ($H_7 = .26$), favoring laws against distributing pornography ($H_8 = .28$) and prohibiting an admitted homosexual from making a speech in their community ($H_9 = .25$).⁷ On these questions individualism and egalitarianism recede as significant explanatory factors, their modest effects overwhelmed by the impact of hierarchy's moral authoritarianism. So the conservatism that appears on the social welfare items is distinct from the conservatism that is so prominent on these moral issues. Fatalism's contribution to the moral issues is also apparent, although of a much lesser magnitude than hierarchy and, as in the case of the social welfare attitudes, inconsistent in direction (e.g. supporting legalization of marijuana, $F_6 = -.09$, but opposing speeches by homosexuals, $F_9 = .07$).

The items in Table 3 concerning law and order also reveal a pattern that is more finely grained than can be produced using a single left-right dimension of political ideology. We find opposition to capital punishment concentrated among egalitarians ($E_{11} = -.13$), with individualists and fatalists allied in support of the death penalty ($F_{11} = .08$, $I_{11} = .07$). Although not evidencing any statistically significant support for the death penalty in these data, hierarchists take the lead in expressing the opinion that the courts deal too leniently with criminals ($H_{12} = .12$).

Table 4 shows the results of an additional test of the cultural bias indices compared to political ideology, in which both sets of measures were

6. This finding helps us to understand otherwise paradoxical situations, such as why a program like Social Security is able to garner such strong support among an American population that is nominally more 'conservative' than 'liberal.'

7. Two items used in constructing the hierarchy index addressed the issues of pornography and homosexuality, respectively. The item mentioning 'sexual relations between adults of the same sex' was dropped from the index used in the regression concerning prohibiting an admitted homosexual from speaking in the community. Similarly, the 'breakdown of morals' item was dropped from the index in the regression concerning enacting a law against the distribution of pornography.

Table 4. Political Ideology and Cultural Bias Indices as Predictors of Attitudes

Dependent variables from Tables 2 and 3	Standardized OLS Regression Coefficients						Income R^2
	I	E	H	F	Ideology	Educ.	
1. Gov't/social welfare items (1) + (2) + (3) + (4)	.15**	-.32**	-.01	.01	.19**	.02	.12** .24
2. Traditional morality items (6) + (7) + (8) + (9)	.01	.00	.34**	-.02	.14**	-.22**	-.05 .24
3. Law and order items (11) + (12)	.03	-.10**	.06*	.08*	.05	.04	.13** .04

* $p < .05$ (two-tailed test) ** $p < .01$ (two-tailed test)

Note: Education and income are included as control variables.

Source: National Opinion Research Corporation, General Social Survey, 1984.

entered simultaneously into the regression equations. The dependent variables in these equations consist of the combined items for each of the three groupings shown in Tables 2 and 3. The results of this exercise show that both cultural bias indices and political ideology retain significant explanatory power for the combined government intervention/social welfare and traditional morality items. However, as in the previous results, the cultural bias indices enable us to locate the focus of conflict on the social welfare items along the individualism-egalitarianism axis ($I_1 = .15$, $E_1 = -.32$), and they also highlight the strong influence of hierarchy ($H_2 = .34$) on the traditional morality items. In the case of the law and order items the effects of all the independent variables are weaker, but again the cultural bias indices provide details about the sources of support for and opposition to 'getting tough with criminals' that are blurred by the left-right dimension. Here we find egalitarians against harsher criminal penalties ($E_3 = -.10$, with hierarchists ($H_3 = .06$) and fatalists ($F_3 = .08$) in favor.

In summary, the results of the regression analysis reveal a distinctive social logic associated with each cultural bias in the realm of policy preferences. Others have noticed similarly nonlinear patterns but have not had a systematic schema for explaining them (Conover and Feldman, 1981; Feldman 1988). Grid-group theory provides a structure for helping us understand varying patterns of attitudes in a way not possible within the confines of the unidimensional measure of political ideology. We see that egalitarians favor a variety of governmental activities aimed at reducing differences of social and economic standing. Their lodestar is greater equality of condition. Individualists, in contrast, prefer to see government stay out of these matters; for them, such efforts represent harmful government interference in a sphere appropriately autonomous from public regulation. Liberty in this autonomous sphere is the central value for these economic conservatives. When the liberty of persons to engage in activities contrary to traditional

moral standards is at issue, it is another form of conservatism, social conservatism or hierarchy, that offers the most powerful explanatory framework within which opposition to such activities can be understood. Although hierarchists are positively inclined toward imposing their restrictive morality on others, they are relatively unconcerned with questions of economic and social engineering unless these questions tap their 'moral dimension'. Adhering to the moral expertise provided by some societal leaders and represented in certain time-tested doctrines is hierarchists' central concern. Fatalists are erratic in their preferences. Apart from their perception that the world is unpredictable and the forces of nature (and humans) capricious, fatalists demonstrate little that is coherent or programmatic in their preferences concerning collective action.

Conclusions

Because of our data's limitations, we consider our current conclusions tentative. We shall have more confidence once we have produced similar results using indices of grid and group. In that regard, while we shall draw on Hampton (1982), Gross and Rayner (1985) and Grendstad (1990), we are not satisfied with existing measures of grid and group and wish to draw on a broader literature (Dake and Wildavsky, 1990; Boyle and Coughlin, 1994; Ellis and Thompson, 1996) in revising these indices by drawing selectively on facets of the cultures that they produce. Nonetheless, we are encouraged by our current results. Our exploration of the explanatory capacities of conventional left-right political ideology and grid-group theory's cultures suggests that these alternative approaches have relative strengths and weaknesses in explaining the structure of mass belief systems. While our grid-group theory indices collectively do better in terms of explaining variance among policy-related attitudes, such improvement is to be expected from the use of multiple indices, and political ideology sometimes remains the most powerful predictor. In addition to its parsimony, it is – at least at present – far more widely recognized than our cultural indices. So left-right political ideology remains a useful simple device, but it is insensitive to some important distinctions. We agree that a more complex structure lies behind the core values that recent research suggests persons actually employ.

Our cultural indices deal with this complexity by unpacking various social logics that are conflated by a unidimensional index. Explicating these logics holds two categories of benefits. First, we learn more than conventional political ideology can tell us about the origins of persons' beliefs and their reasons for holding them. For example, grid-group theory provides a schema that reveals a structure among core values similar to those

employed by Conover, Feldman, Zaller and also Sniderman et al. (1991). The theory enables us to see how and why these core values are systematically related to an overall structure of beliefs: for example, how favoring societal efforts to achieve equality of condition or celebrating the virtues of individual initiative are each outcroppings of broader deeper patterns of perceptions and values associated with one of the four rival cultures. Thus, an egalitarian is not merely a liberal but someone with characteristic views about human environments and human nature, consistent with a low-grid high-group perspective, that produce characteristic institutional preferences and attitudes toward public policy. Further, the cultural bias indices help us to understand when and why individualists will be socially liberal as well as when and why they will be economically conservative. Indeed, these indices expand the list of Americans' core values in a way that transcends the left-right continuum, revealing two sorts of conservatives. Additionally, the theory explains why hierarchists are likely to dominate the socially conservative side in the public debate over moral issues, but tend to be less involved in many areas of economic and social policy.

These benefits create the basis for a second category of advantages. By revealing much more than conventional ideology about why persons hold their beliefs, grid-group theory provides the basis for understanding the structure of American political conflicts and coalitions. For example, historically gun control has been much less successful in the United States where it has been opposed by an informal but powerful low-grid anti-statist coalition of individualists and egalitarians than in many European and Asian societies where hierarchy is predominant. But egalitarians not only share low-grid personal rights concerns with individualists, they also tend to join hierarchists in advocating collective welfare concerns characteristic of high-group cultures. Across the past few years, growing fears about public safety have prompted many egalitarians to shift away from their former anti-statist coalition with individualists on gun control toward a growing high-group coalition interested in various firearms restrictions. This stronger multicultural coalition has supported some successful policy initiatives.

Lines of conflict and coalition shift largely in response to historical contingencies that raise the profile of some issues (public safety) vis-à-vis others (personal rights). Therefore, we cannot expect great success in predicting which views will dominate with respect to certain public issues in the future. But we can nonetheless use grid-group theory's social logics to help to explain why the adherents of particular cultures hold distinctive views and even why their policy preferences change in the face of certain historical contingencies. Accordingly, we need to be cautious about inferring that change in policy preferences across time and changing circumstances is evidence of lack of constraint. Thus we agree with Hochschild (1981: 230–7) that use of the liberal-conservative continuum is neither the

crucial index of cognitive sophistication nor required for participation in the 'history of ideas' (Converse, 1964: 255).

APPENDIX

Our cultural bias indices were constructed using from three to five items from the 1984 General Social Survey (GSS). We began by selecting items from the GSS that seemed to best approximate the distinctive character of, respectively, individualism, egalitarianism, hierarchy and fatalism. Adjusting the items for direction and metric, we constructed simple additive indices for each of the four cultural biases predicted by grid-group theory. Respondents with two or more missing responses on the index variables were dropped from the analysis; for the remaining 1109 cases retained in the analysis, those who had one missing response on the index variables were assigned to the mean for that item. We then factor analyzed (principal components) the indices to test for unidimensionality.

Cronbach's alpha for the indices ranged from .45 to .56, which is relatively low but nonetheless acceptable in exploratory research where concepts and measures are in the early stages of development. Two additional points bear keeping in mind here. First, Cronbach's alpha represents the lower bound to the reliability of an unweighted index (Novick and Lewis, 1967). Second, given that alpha is strongly influenced by both the number of items in the index and the mean correlations among items, the alpha reliabilities of our indices could only achieve .70 to .80 levels by increasing the number of items in each index or by using items with higher intercorrelations (see Carmines and Zeller, 1979: 46), neither of which was an option for us in secondary analysis of GSS data.

The individualism index consisted of the following five items (alpha = .56):

1. Each person should take care of himself ((5) on a five-point scale).
2. America has an open society. What one achieves in life no longer depends on one's family background, but on the abilities one has and the education one acquires (Strongly agree or somewhat agree).
3. Only if differences in income and social standing are large enough is there an incentive for individual effort (Strongly agree or somewhat agree).
4. Differences in social standing between people are acceptable because they basically reflect what people made out of the opportunities they had (Strongly agree or somewhat agree).
5. All in all, I think social differences in this country are justified (Strongly agree or somewhat agree).

The egalitarianism index consisted of the following four items (alpha = .45):

1. The economy can run only if businessmen make good profits. That benefits everyone in the end (Strongly disagree or somewhat disagree).
2. The government must see to it that everyone has a job and that prices are stable, even if the rights of businessmen have to be restricted (Strongly agree or somewhat agree).
3. Generally speaking, business profits are distributed fairly in the United States (Strongly disagree or somewhat disagree).
4. Personal income should not be determined solely by one's work. Rather,

everybody should get what he/she needs to provide a decent life for his/her family (Strongly agree or somewhat agree).

The hierarchy index consisted of the following three items (alpha = .47):

1. [The next questions are about pornography – books, movies, magazines, and photographs that show or describe sex activities.] Sexual materials lead to breakdown of morals (Yes).
2. What about sexual relations between two adults of the same sex – do you think it is always wrong, almost always wrong, wrong only sometimes, or not wrong at all? (Always wrong or almost always wrong)
3. [I'd like to ask now about certain obligations that some people feel American citizens owe their country. I just want your own opinion on these – whether you feel it is a very important obligation, a somewhat important obligation, or not an obligation that a citizen owes to the country.] Being able to speak and understand English (Very important or somewhat important).

The fatalism index consisted of the following four items (alpha = .50):

1. Some people say that people get ahead by their own hard work; others say that lucky breaks or help from other people are more important. Which do you think is most important (Luck or help is most important)?
2. In spite of what some people say, the lot (situation/condition) of the average man is getting worse, not better (Agree).
3. Most public officials are not really interested in the problems of the average man (Agree).
4. Do you think that most people would try to take advantage of you if they got a chance, or would they try to be fair (Would take advantage)?

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RICHARD M. COUGHLIN is Professor and Chair of Sociology at the University of New Mexico. His research interests include domestic and comparative social policy, public opinion, and socio-economic theory. He is the author of *Ideology, Public Opinion and Welfare Policy* (Institute of International Studies, Berkeley, 1980), and editor of *Reforming Welfare* (University of New Mexico Press, 1989), and *Morality, Rationality, and Efficiency* (M. E. Sharpe, 1991). ADDRESS: Department of Sociology, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, New Mexico 87131, USA. [email: coughlin@unm.edu]

CHARLES LOCKHART is Professor of Political Science at Texas Christian University. His efforts to understand cross-societal public social policy differences as practical realizations of rival moral theories have brought him to the comparative study of political culture. He is the author of *Gaining Ground: Tailoring Social Programs to American Values* and a number of journal articles in this area. ADDRESS: Department of Political Science, Texas Christian University, PO Box 297021, Fort Worth, Texas 76129, USA. [email: c.lockhart@tcu.edu]

Paper submitted 31 March 1996; accepted for publication 2 April 1997.