

# **The Group Effect: Perceptions of Social Stratification and Electoral Behaviour in Advanced Industrial Democracies**

In contrast to much contemporary election scholarship, the project focuses on the deeper causes of voting. The basic claim is that voters' social identities and their subjective perceptions of the social group structure and of linkages between social groups and political parties constitutes a powerful influence on voting to which contemporary research is blind. Using a strong research design based on methodological triangulation – involving qualitative and quantitative approaches, register data and randomized experiments and analyses in both the UK and Denmark – the project sheds new light on the causes of voting.

## **A New Look on Electoral Behaviour: The Group Effect**

Life chances and behaviours of voters across advanced industrial democracies are powerfully influenced by their belonging to socially stratified groups. This applies to health (Elo 2009), educational attainment (Goldthorpe and Jackson 2008), income (Olsen et al. 2012), and life style choices (Bennett et al. 2009). Social stratification, in other words, continues to be a real and important factor in the lives of modern individuals. This is also reflected in the media where, e.g., the present financial crisis has brought renewed focus on social conflicts such as increasing inequality (see, e.g., *Politiken* October 20, 2012). Furthermore, political parties refer to social groups in their communication – recent examples include such different politicians as US presidential candidate Mitt Romney campaigning on a 'plan for a stronger middle class' and the Swedish Conservative party, *Moderaterna*, dubbing themselves 'The working class party of our time'.<sup>1</sup> And, research has shown that ordinary citizens perceive differences between social groups (Rigby et al. 2009; Zinni et al. 1997), differentiate between groups in terms of the rights they want to accord them (Petersen et al. 2011a; 2011b), and connect groups to the political parties in different ways (Nicholson and Segura 2012; Stubager 2009b; Stubager and Slothuus forthcoming).

Yet, in recent decades election researchers have documented a substantial weakening of the relationship between individuals' *objective* group affiliations and voting – so much so that the bulk of contemporary research considers social groups as being of only limited relevance to electoral

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<sup>1</sup> See, <http://www.mittromney.com/blogs/mitts-view/2012/08/mitt-romneys-plan-stronger-middle-class01>; <http://www.moderat.se/politik>, accessed October 13, 2012.

politics. My contention, and the core, new idea of the proposed project, is that this mismatch between what is important in voters' daily lives and what current electoral research finds to be important to voting results from inadequate scholarly attention being paid to voters' *subjective* perceptions of the social stratification structure, of their own place in it (i.e. their social identities) and, crucially, their perceptions of the connections between groups and political parties. **In essence, my claim is that voters' group attachments continue to play a core role for voting, but this effect is based on voters' subjective perceptions rather than their objective positions.**

Basically, voters are likely to see different groups, to relate differently (i.e. with varying strength) to one or more of them, and to connect them differently to the political parties – and all these important, yet presently neglected, differences have to be taken into account if we are to understand what drives voting. After six decades of scientific advances, thus, election scholars are presently struggling to account for the deeper roots of this central aspect of democracy with research focusing on more ephemeral factors such as voters' attitudes to salient issues and party leaders and their handling of various issues (cf., e.g., Clarke et al. 2009; Thomassen 2005). In contrast, and by focusing on these deeper roots and directing attention to voters' perceptions, the project represents a return to tenets contained in seminal voting studies like *The American Voter* (Campbell et al. 1960) and *Political Change in Britain* (Butler and Stokes 1969).

In a wider perspective, the examination of the roots of voters' electoral choices contributes information of central importance for the functioning of representative democracy. Echoing an analytical problem with the voting variable discussed below, voters are, thus, only able to send a highly muted signal about their policy wishes to the political elite on Election Day. For the elite to interpret this signal and design policies in accordance with voters' wishes, the analyses proposed here are fundamental. They will provide, that is, insight into what lies behind voter choices – into what voters want to communicate with their votes.

To achieve these insights, the project draws on three scientific fields – sociology, social psychology, and political science. Further, it draws upon a multidimensional research design involving analyses in two strategically chosen countries, the UK and Denmark.

## **Double Blindness: Social Groups in Extant Research**

From the advent of election research, much attention has been devoted to the electoral impact of voters' affiliations with social groups such as their class positions (see, e.g., Lipset 1981; Lipset and Rokkan 1967; Rose and Urwin 1969; 1970). In recent decades, however, this focus has been subject to strong criticism by scholars claiming that voters' social background has lost most of its predictive

power vis à vis electoral behaviour (e.g., Clark and Lipset 1991; Dalton et al. 1984; Franklin et al. 1992). Some have even gone so far as to see advanced industrial societies as thoroughly individualized to the point that individuals' social locations have become fluid and malleable thereby possibly dissolving social group attachments and their relevance to political behaviour altogether (Beck and Beck-Gersheim 2002; Thomassen 2005). Quite likely, the focus on individualization is one of the factors behind the increasing interest in party leaders etc.

While elements of this conclusion have been vigorously disputed (see e.g. Evans 1999; 2000; Evans and Tilley 2011; 2012; Houtman et al. 2008; Kriesi et al. 2008; Manza and Brooks 1999; van der Waal et al. 2007), the traditional focus on social groups in electoral research has been replaced by an almost neglect of such groups.

Likewise, a previously bustling US literature focused on the impact of individuals' group identification and perceptions of the social structure on aspects such as political participation, attitude formation, and party images (e.g., Conover 1984; 1988; Conover and Feldman 1984; Gurin et al. 1980; Koch 1994; Miller et al. 1981; Miller and Wlezien 1993; Wlezien and Miller 1997) seems to have died out. And even though the influential study by Green et al. (2002) accords perceived group-party relations pride of place theoretically, it never actually analyzes their impact.

**The problems with extant research** run deeper than this, however. The existing literatures suffer from a set of interrelated problems that precludes them from addressing the electoral significance of social groups appropriately. Incidentally, these problems also apply to research on class consciousness (see, e.g., Gerteis and Savage 1998; Kelley and Evans 1995; Reay 2005):

- 1) Most of those still fewer voting studies (for examples, see Clarke et al. 2009; Kriesi et al. 2008) that do pay attention to social groups do so by concentrating on the impact of voters' objective group affiliations – e.g., their type of occupation, education, or level of income. This procedure is problematic, however. Thus, it is questionable whether the mere fact of being, e.g., a skilled worker has any political implications. This would seem to presuppose that the workers in question identify as workers, that they attach political significance to this identity, and that they see a relationship – positive or negative – between the group of workers and one or more political parties. However, these types of relationships are rarely, if ever, addressed in modern analyses.
- 2) Those parts of the literature (for examples, see Conover 1988; Gurin et al. 1980; Lewis-Beck et al. 2008; Miller et al. 1981; Stubager 2009a) that do pay attention to subjective group attachments do so by focusing on specific types of predetermined groups. While understandable for reasons of analytical ease, this approach has two serious drawbacks. *First*, it

misses the broader picture of groups and group relations in the voters' minds. *Second*, it risks forcing certain differentiations to the surface when, in reality, they are of only little relevance. A crucial aspect of the project, therefore, is to consider the examination of voters' perceptions of social groups, their social identities (including their strength and possible overlap), as well as their perceptions of group-party linkages as the first step in the analysis.

- 3) Almost all studies have voting (or voting intention) as the dependent variable. This variable, however, contains only one piece of information: the party voted for (or presently preferred). It does not tell us anything about the evaluation of other parties whether positive or negative. But such information is crucial when investigating the impact of perceived group-party linkages since these may just as well result in strong dislikes as likes of specific parties. For this reason, the analyses of the proposed project will also involve measures of party evaluations, e.g., in the form of 'sympathy thermometer'-scores (cf. van der Eijk 2002) in order to assess the full impact of social groups on electoral behaviour.

When it comes to the effect of social groups on voting, thus, the bulk of extant research suffers from a double blindness in the sense that it looks in the wrong place for the effect of the wrong kind of groups.

## **The Theoretical Model**

To overcome these problems the proposed theoretical model has two integrated parts that focus on each their aspect of the group effect.

### **Part I: Voters' Perceptions of Social Groups and Political Parties**

The natural anchoring point for voters' perceptions of the social structure and their own place in it is their location in the objective social structure. This is also the starting point here. Thus, it is an important research question how the subjective perceptions are rooted in the objective structure. However, while social class as traditionally defined by voters' occupational relations has played a key role in stratification studies and is possibly still important, it is not adequate for capturing all of the most salient stratifications in modern industrial democracies (Bourdieu 1984; Faber et al. 2012; Grusky and Sørensen 1998; Savage 2000, cf. also Olsen et al. 2012). Hence, in line with contemporary sociological research the project has a broader focus on perceived stratification among the population. For this reason and because the class concept has become too loaded with connotations, I use the more generic term 'social groups.'

The social structure is seen as a multidimensional space of positions, constituted by distributions of various forms of resources or capital, most importantly economic and cultural capital (e.g. Bourdieu 1984; 1987; 1998; Harrits 2013; Harrits et al. 2009; Prieur and Savage 2011; Weininger 2002). More concretely, I expect a wider range of sociostructural aspects than those related to traditional conceptions of class to influence voters' perceptions of the social group structure. While the economic factors are still relevant it is also expected that aspects related to cultural distinctions are of relevance. This involves, but is not restricted to, the impact of education. This approach should be able to capture the bulk of the different conceptions of social stratification advanced by recent research (see Chan and Goldthorpe 2007; Kitschelt 2004; Kriesi et al. 2008; Oesch 2006; Rehm 2009).

The theoretical basis for analyzing voters' perceptions is *schema theory*. The schema concept, which has been curiously neglected by political scientists for the past two decades (see, however, Lau 2003; Lau and Redlawsk 2006) although it is still widely used within psychology (cf. Holyoak and Morrison 2005), constitutes a convenient way to conceptualize and analyze voters' perceptions of social groups and group-party linkages. Schemas are defined as cognitive structures in the individual's mind consisting "of 'organized prior knowledge, abstracted from experience with specific instances' that guides the 'processing of new information and the retrieval of stored information'" (Conover 1988, 56; cf. Fiske and Linville 1980). A simple example of a schema would be the perception that there are two groups in society, the upper class and the lower class, and that these two classes are in conflict. Schemas help individuals by organizing information, guiding information encoding and retrieval, "filling in" missing information, and aiding decision making by providing short-cuts that can replace conscious mental processing (Conover and Feldman 1984, 96-7; cf. also Lau and Redlawsk 2006; McGraw 2000; Nicholson and Segura 2012).

As noted by Conover (1988) schemas that encompass the individual are particularly potent. This means that individuals' social identity is a central factor. For this reason, the project draws on *Social Identity Theory* (SIT) as developed by Tajfel and his colleagues (Tajfel 1974; Tajfel & Turner 1979; cf. also Hogg and Smith 2007; Huddy 2001; Yzerbyt and Demoulin 2010). The basic claim of the theory is that individuals differentiate between their own and other groups on the basis of their perception of social group formations (i.e. their group schemas), in order to achieve a positive self-image. In this way, SIT predicts some measure of intergroup discrimination as an unavoidable consequence of social categorisation, thereby enhancing the effects of group schemas that encompass the voter herself.

**The research goals for Part I**, thus, entail 1) a delineation of voters' social identities, their various group and group-party schemas and the strength, overlap, and distribution of these among the voters as well as 2) an examination of the degree to which these perceptions are grounded in voters' objective social locations.

## **Part II: The Political Implications of Voter Perceptions**

The major contribution of the project lies in demonstrating the impact of the group effect on party evaluations and voting. In this context, existing research has left open a set of pertinent questions. Thus, while recent studies of the effect of social identity on voting (Campbell et al. 2011; Jackson 2011; Lewis-Beck et al. 2008; cf. also Barreto and Pedraza 2009; Fowler and Kam 2007) indicate that factors akin to identity and group-party schemas influence voting, the studies suffer from either one or more of the three problems identified above (i.e., focusing on objective and/or predetermined groups and their effect on voting). Further, with the exception of Lewis-Beck et al. (2008), the studies do not look at groups arising out of social stratification.

The first step in the analyses, hence, is to establish the existence and strength of the impact of the group-party schemas and identities on party evaluations and voting intentions. Basically, this entails that parties seen as related to groups with which voters identify should be evaluated more positively and possibly voted for – and vice versa. This effect can, e.g., function by groups serving as heuristics for party evaluations on the form “I identify with the rich and since I associate this group with the Conservative Party, I evaluate the party positively and will vote for it” (cf. Green et al. 2002). The analyses rely on the use of ‘sympathy-thermometers’ that permit an assessment of both positive and negative group effects.

A number of factors may be expected to influence such effects. First, the salience and clarity (i.e. the extent to which a group is seen as linked to a single party) of the group-party schemas should condition their impact (cf. Campbell et al. 2011). Second, the effects may be particularly strong when coupled with perceptions of the fairness of group positions. Thus, according to Conover (1988, 57) ‘the desire to know who is getting what and whether they deserve it’ ‘dominates’ thinking about groups in politics (cf. also Petersen et al. 2011a). If a party is seen as linked to a group that is not seen as deserving of its status etc. this may be damaging to the evaluations of the party.

To substantiate the relevance of the contribution by the subjective group perspective to our understanding of voting it is necessary to demonstrate that the combination of voters' social identities and group-party schemas contributes independent explanatory power (cf. the indicative

results of Stubager and Slothuus forthcoming). The group effect should, in other words, function over and above the impact of, e.g., voters' attitudes to salient issues. Such factors, which play a dominant role in contemporary electoral research (see, e.g., Clarke et al. 2009; Thomassen 2005), will, thus, have to be controlled in all of the analyses.

Hence, the **research goals for Part II** entail the establishment of the core relationship between voters' social identity, group-party schemas and party evaluations and voting as well as the factors that moderate this relationship.

## **Research Design**

### **Scope of the Project**

The theoretical model presented is applicable to a wide variety of groups and countries. However, in order to be able to reach the analytical depths required to provide new, interesting knowledge, the scope of the analyses has to be limited on both counts. Regarding the groups, focus is centred on those based on social stratification according to, e.g., economic and cultural capital. This choice rests on the fact that social stratification is an important fact of life in all advanced industrial countries just as it has played a core role in voting research. This does not mean that the project is blind to the impact of group attachments based on, e.g., gender, race/ethnicity, religion, and sexual preferences. To the extent that such factors turn out to play a role to voters' perceptions of social stratification, they will be included in the analyses.

The two countries – the UK and Denmark – have been chosen on the basis of a Most Different Systems Design logic (cf. Landman 2003). The core idea is to demonstrate that despite important differences between the countries, the mechanisms of the group effect operate in both of them, thereby indicating that similar effects can be found in other countries too. Central differences can be identified at two levels. *First*, although both Denmark and the UK are parliamentary democracies with a tradition of social cleavage-based party systems, the British tradition of class divisions, class consciousness, and class voting is often seen as distinct for advanced industrial democracies (cf. Gerteis and Savage 1998; Kelley and Evans 1995; Reay 2005, 912) and it is certainly much more prevalent than in Denmark (Larsen 2012). This means that the tradition for using group references and/or thinking in group terms may be more widespread in the UK than in Denmark. *Second*, whereas Denmark has one of the most proportional electoral systems, the UK has a first-past-the-post system with two major parties. The resulting simpler party system means that the class distinction may be more entrenched in political reasoning since there is a clearer match between the prevalent class image of society and party politics than in Denmark.

In addition, the two countries have a set of unique features that enhance their relevance for the project. The UK assumes a special place as the classical, core case in much of extant research into class voting, class identity etc. The inclusion of the UK, therefore, enables me to engage directly with those parts of the literature. With respect to Denmark, the country's extensive public registers, containing information on all aspects of voters' social backgrounds, provide so far unused analytical opportunities. Thus, the data will enable the project to assess the highly relevant question of the rooting of group identity and group schemas in voters' social backgrounds with a unique degree of precision due to the removal of much measurement bias.

### **An Integrated Design**

The research design must meet a number of challenges. Hence, it is necessary to gain both a deep and detailed understanding of voters' mental images and to obtain statistically generalizable results just as it is necessary to tackle issues of causality. To meet these challenges, the design is built around the concept of methodological triangulation which involves using different, but complementing, methodological approaches to illuminate the research question. In each country, I therefore intend to assemble

- *Focus group interviews* aimed at uncovering the content and labelling of voters' group and group-party schemas.
- *Large-scale* (i.e. up to 2,000 respondents) *surveys* of nationally representative samples of voters aimed at measuring the distribution of social identity and group and group-party schemas as well as party evaluations and voting intentions.
- *Randomized survey experiments* embedded in the large-scale surveys containing manipulations of, e.g., group saliency and group identity. Such experiments are ideally suited to assess the causal impact of identity and group-party schemas on party evaluations and voting intentions.

To supplement the comparative analyses, I further intend to use the unique Danish register data in combination with the Danish survey.

The overall design that comes out of combining the different approaches is rather strong. Thus, the qualitative approach, i.e. *focus group interviews*, is ideally suited for uncovering the contents of voters' schemas. While this may seem straightforward, an important result of contemporary research (Faber et al. 2012) and the premise of the subjective perspective proposed here is exactly



that although groups are clearly perceived, they are not referred to in standard class terms. A major drawback of this approach, however, is that the restrictions on the number of individuals that can be included in focus groups makes it impossible to meet conventional standards of statistical inference. Meeting these standards is the great advantage of *nationally representative large-scale surveys* which, in contrast, suffer from limitations in terms of the level of detail that can be meaningfully assessed. By including both approaches in the design, hence, it will be possible to reap the benefits of both an in-depth understanding and statistical inference.

Another typical problem with large-scale surveys is that respondents – willingly or unwillingly – misrepresent their social backgrounds, e.g., by indicating a higher level of education than they have actually obtained. This means that such surveys are prone to under- and/or misestimate the effect of voters' social positions on their political behaviour. As a way to tackle this problem, the project builds on the opportunity in Denmark to link survey data with the content of the extensive Danish *public registers* that contain information on a long list of factors pertaining to citizens' social positions, thereby removing much of the usual bias.

In order to test the core causal claims – i.e. that voters' social identity in combination with their group-party schemas influence party evaluations and voting intentions – it is necessary to use randomized survey experiments. Experiments have the advantage of allowing researchers to randomize the allocation of stimuli, thereby assuring that any effects identified are due to the experimental manipulation and that alone (cf. Gaines et al. 2007). This is exactly what is needed here.

By way of a simple example, the focus groups might reveal the existence of the abovementioned schema comprised of two conflicting groups and a concomitant group-party schema linking the two groups to the various parties in different ways. It is then for the large-scale surveys to determine the prevalence of these schemas among voters as well as their degree of identification with the two groups. In Denmark, the survey data will, further, be linked with the register data to determine whether the schemas are particularly prevalent among voters in certain objective conditions. Moreover, the randomized experiments embedded in the surveys will be used to detect the influence of the group-party schemas in combination with voters' identities (of varying strength) on party evaluations. The experiments would, e.g., entail that a randomized half of the respondents is alerted to a given group-party relationship while the other half is not given this information. Differences in evaluations of the party across the two groups would then count as evidence of an effect of group-party schemas. Finally, the comparison of results across the two countries should reveal few differences, thereby supporting the generality of the group effects. The

actual findings are expected to be much more complicated, but the example illustrates the design logic.

## **Workpackages**

The project is divided into the following workpackages (WPs) that set out in more detail the analyses aimed at reaching the research goals of Parts I and II; WPs 1 and 2 relate to Part I while WP 3 relates to Part II. In order for the methodological synergies of the design to arise, preliminary results from the analyses of WP1 will have to be available before the initiation of WP2 and 3, but apart from that, the WPs will run in parallel. To ensure that the postdoc can be employed at the beginning of the project, major work will begin January 1, 2014.

### **WP1 The content and distribution of social group schemas, social identity, and group-party schemas**

*Responsible researchers: Stubager, Harrits, Thomsen, and Postdoc.*

WP1 focuses on delineating the content of voters' social group schemas (i.e. which groups are perceived), their social identity (in terms of both content and strength), and group-party schemas (i.e. which groups are seen as linked to which parties and with which strength) as well as the distribution of schemas, and social identity in the populations of the two countries. The main hypothesis is that it is possible to identify a set of relatively demarcated, stable, and widespread perceptions of the social group structure, a concomitant development of social identity, and of a set of widely shared beliefs about the linkage between specific parties and specific groups; i.e., that the schemas exist.

To address these issues, the WP will draw upon the focus group interviews, primarily to delineate the range and content of the group and group-party schemas, and the large-scale surveys, primarily to detect the distribution of the various schemas among voters. The WP, and the postdoc in particular, will have responsibility for conducting the focus group interviews.

The postdoc will, further, have main responsibility for conducting the analyses of the content of the group schemas. His/her project will focus on the coherence in and distribution of the various schemas. While the overall expectation for his/her work is that the schemas are based on perceived differences in possessions of economic and cultural capital, the degree to which this is so and the extent of variation in the schemas in each of the countries as well as between them are central, yet unknown, elements for investigation.

## **WP2 The objective and subjective social structure**

*Responsible researchers: Stubager, Harrits, and Postdoc.*

In continuation of the analyses of WP1, the second WP focuses on the extent to which voters' group and group-party schemas are rooted in their objective social locations. The questions examined relate to both the degree of match between the objective and the subjective social groupings and the degree of agreement about the subjective perceptions across different objective groups. I hypothesize that voters' group perceptions do, to a large extent, resemble the objective structure in the sense that the perceived distinctions follow the distinctions within and between different combinations of economic and cultural capital.

For the analyses, the WP will use the data collected through the focus group interviews as well as the large-scale surveys including, in Denmark, the linked register data which provides for a so far unseen level of precision and unbiasedness in the analyses of the impact of voters' objective positions.

## **WP3 The impact of social identity and group-party schemas on party evaluations and voting intentions**

*Responsible researchers: Stubager, Evans, Slothuus and PhD-student.*

WP3 targets the core questions of whether and how voters' party evaluations and voting intentions are impacted by their social identity and group-party schemas in terms of both their content and strength. The main hypothesis is that parties seen as linked to groups with which the voter identifies are evaluated positively and are therefore more likely to be voted for by the voter. Vice versa, parties seen as linked to groups opposed to those with which voters identify should be evaluated negatively and, thus, not voted for. And the stronger the identity and perceived group-party linkages, the stronger the effects should be.

The hypotheses highlight the issue of causality, i.e. the certainty with which it will be possible to conclude that the schemas do influence party evaluations and voting intentions and that over and above the impact of values and attitudes. A satisfactory analysis of them, hence, hinges on the use of randomized survey experiments allowing me to manipulate the saliency of the relevant schemas while holding constant respondents' values and attitudes. WP3, consequently, will draw upon the large-scale surveys and the experiments embedded therein; collection of these surveys is the special responsibility of the WP.

The PhD-student will work on a project focusing on the processes through which group-party schemas influence party evaluations. Prominent elements in his/her work will be the strength

with which the schemas serve as heuristics and/or interpretational templates guiding voters' understanding of party behaviour.

### **Research Team Organization etc.**

The research team is led and managed by Stubager. I have some experience as a research leader from the Danish National Election Study, but the Sapere Aude grant will enable me to form, for the first time, a research group of my own. From my previous work, I have extensive experience with large-scale data collection regarding both survey data and coded textual material (see, Green-Pedersen and Stubager 2010; Petersen et al. 2011a; 2011b; Stubager 2008; 2009a). The project will, further, be able to benefit from my extensive network among international election scholars from the US, the UK and the Nordic countries.

The other members of the team include Professor Geoffrey Evans, Nuffield College, Oxford University, who is the leading expert in the field. He has an outstanding scholarly record and has worked and published on topics related to those under investigation in all of the three scientific fields – sociology, social psychology, and political science – between which the project is situated (e.g. Evans 1993; 1997; Evans and Tilley 2011; 2012). Evans will take part in the biannual team meetings (funds for which are included in the budget), just as I plan to spend six months as a visiting scholar at Nuffield College in order to work with Evans and his research group. Evans will have particular responsibility for the British analyses for WP3 and he will devote 8 months to the project over the 4-year period (cf. enclosure 13). However, he has no teaching to be bought out of and does not, therefore, appear in the budget.

The third team member, Associate Professor Gitte Sommer Harrits, Aarhus University has worked extensively on topics related to the project using qualitative methods (see, Harrits 2013; Harrits et al. 2009). Thus, she contributes valuable first-hand knowledge of this type of data analysis. Likewise, Associate Professor Jens Peter Frølund Thomsen, Aarhus University has over the past years focused his research on the psychological side of intergroup relations which makes him an ideal participant in WP1 (see Thomsen 2012; Jensen and Thomsen forthcoming). Finally, Associate Professor Rune Slothuus, Aarhus University has extensive experience in working with survey experiments of the type planned for WP3 and his research based on such experiments has appeared in high ranking journals such as the *American Political Science Review* (see, Slothuus and de Vreese 2010; Druckman et al. forthcoming). Two other team members will be hired through open announcements. This includes a postdoc (24 months) and a PhD-student (36 months) financed

by Aarhus University (see letter by Vice-Dean Per B. Overgaard, enclosure 12). Finally, the budget also contains funds for student assistance.

Apart from personnel costs, the major items on the budget is funding for data collection. As the exact content of the surveys cannot be know in advance, it is only possible to provide estimates of the cost (this is also reflected in the enclosed documentation). In Denmark, the planned survey can be carried out over the telephone (estimated at 20 min. interview time) for some DKR 400,000 (see enclosures 8 and 9), In the UK, prices for quality surveys are much higher. Thus, in that country the best available option is to run the survey as a module on the annual British Social Attitudes survey which provides high-quality face-to-face interviews and includes all background questions necessary to conduct the analyses. As documented by enclosure 10 the price hereof is some DKR 1,000,000 (prices are not expected to rise dramatically). In addition, the necessary pilot testing of items can be conducted using internet-based interviewing (entailing substantially lower data quality) for an estimated DKR 100,000.

As part of the project, a number of goals will be pursued:

- Publication of 10-12 international, peer-reviewed articles
- 3-4 of these should be published in top-ten journals
- Publication of a book with a recognized academic publisher
- Publication of a Danish language book communicating the results to a non-scientific audience
- Development of project management skills
- Preparation of ERC Consolidator Grant application

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