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A critical evaluation of

**INDIVIDUALISM,  
COLLECTIVISM  
& COLLECTIVE  
ACTION**

Tuomo Rautakivi · Ritthikorn Siriprasertchok · Harri Melin

# A Critical Evaluation of Individualism, Collectivism and Collective Action



Tuomo Rautakivi, Ritthikorn Siriprasertchok & Harri Melin

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*Tampere 25th of January 2022*

*Tuomo Rautakivi, Ritthikorn Siriprasertchok and Harri Melin*



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# 1

## Introduction

The aim of this study is to develop an understanding concerning trade unions and the level of collectivism and the capacity of two different countries, Finland and Cambodia, to create collective actions. Behaviour at the societal level, family values, and trust are important variables, and have a significant impact on collectivism-individualism, potentially leading to degrees of efficacy (or inefficacy) in collective action. Perceived collective efficacy (which delivers expectations about outcomes) is a precondition for collective action.

This research aims to describe the differences in collectivism between Finland and Cambodia at the present time because both are often referred to as collective and individual sample countries. Geert Hofstede (1984) was the first person to look at cultural values to differentiate between nation-states. Hofstede's studies on cultural dimensions are widely used in the analysis of collectivism/individualism. Hofstede assumes that national territory implies cultural homogeneity but his own example – China – is not homogeneous (Guo et al., 2011). In examining Cambodia and Finland through his model, it can be said that: (1) Cambodia has a high level of collectivism where group welfare is valued higher than that of the individual, and interaction protocols are followed to maintain a high level of harmony between the individuals of a group (Blunt and Turner, 2005). (2) Finland is seen as an individualist society, with a high preference for a loosely-knit social framework where individuals are expected to take care of themselves and their immediate families only.



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Accordingly, it is commonly supposed that Asia is more collectivist than the West, which might be represented by Finland, but is this really the case? Blunt and Turner (2005) focus on the level of collectivism related to the family and extended family. So if family relations are stronger than organisational and societal relations, how might collective actions be created that go beyond family boundaries, especially if conflicts of interest occur between family and the organisation or society? This question is particularly relevant when noting that collectivistic societies value family cohesion, co-operation, solidarity, and conformity (Skillman, 2000). Therefore, people in these societies tend to make more reference to others, emphasise group goals, and follow the expectations and regulations of the group (Desai, 2007). A less expressed but still very important question is: Who represents the group and who benefits from the group goals? Regardless of the general definition of the collective East, it seems that Eastern countries with so-called collective cultures have difficulty in taking efficacious collective actions at grassroots level. The intention here is to explore how such an apparent contradiction arises, and how it can be resolved.

The tangential purpose of this study is to demonstrate that the traditional approaches adopted by many researchers centred on Hofstede's important innovative work on cultural types are inadequate due to the significant limitations of his theory. The relationship between collective action and cultural orientation is complex. In order to better understand this relationship, this book offers societal relevance, based on creating an appreciation of this relationship. Scientific relevance helps to clarify socially relevant outcomes.

The interest here lies in the trade unions which, in this study, are taken to operate as collective agencies with a culture which normatively facilitates and constrains their cognitive and behavioural processes. Trade unions have behavioural outputs that are taken to be collective and can be measured to give an indication, for instance, of better working conditions or salaries. This research concentrates on the mutual relationship between labour and unions in different levels of social classes. The ratio and level of co-operation and communication are based on culture and mutual trust between people and organisations. Trust is the main factor constituting coherence inside an

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organisation and between humans and their organisation (Yolles and Fink, 2012).

Whether a union is located in the East or West, to be viable, and hence have long-term survivability and the capacity for development, overall, it must adapt to social change and modernisation. If unions do not adapt, their viability is compromised, and they become less able to produce outcomes for predetermined strategies. Viability is connected to stability, and both large and small-scale systems need to maintain their stability if they are to be viable. Dynamic stability is related to the achievement of goals in purposeful systems, coupled with the intention to reach them (Berlinski, 1975). Adaptation is an internal process prompted by environmental change and self-production. Yolles (2006) continues that “purposeful adaptive organisations also have the ability to apply knowledge in any situation of interest and to continually learn from new experiences in order to be able to respond to similar situations in the future”. Efficacy provides an organisation with the capability to produce designated levels of performance that exercise influence over events affecting life (Bandura, 1991). The ability to adapt is a consequence of efficacy. Efficacy can be related to the *capability* of an agency to achieve goals with appropriate actions, seen as performance, while perceived efficacy can be set within the context of beliefs and expectations about such capability (Bandura, 2004, 171).

As previously mentioned, there is a general perception that the West is individualist and the East collectivist in their cognitive orientations. In particular, individualism is mostly seen in the cultures of Western Europe and North America, while collectivism is mostly seen in the cultures of Asia, Africa, and some parts of Europe and Latin America (Triandis, 1993; Nelson and Fuvish, 2004). Luo (2008, 103) has made a similar observation, and indicates that “in business activity, Western countries pursue the value view of equality and persist in the reasonable principle of justice and win-win, which is obviously different to Chinese operators’ strategy of zero-sum”. This can be seen as an egocentric view of life or a modern form of mercantilist philosophy.

Both East and West unionism is in flux: on the one hand, in the West, union membership is slowly declining; on the other hand, in the East, there are indications that unionism and interest in trade unions are increasing,

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consistent with Nuon and Serrano (2010, 71), who explain that union membership continues to grow in Cambodia. Trade unions were born in Europe about 200 years ago, and it can be said that unionism and trade unions are still very much a Western phenomenon.

In Cambodia, trade union membership and the trade union movement are growing. However, this is not as significant as it might seem. This is because such growth refers not only to trade unions but also student unions, volunteer work, classroom co-operation or general social activities like sports clubs. All of these can be considered examples of collective action. In this study, the labour union movement has been chosen, because it is a visible system and easier to investigate than many other collective systems and agents, such as student organisations in universities or volunteer work inside the wings of government organisations. The investigation of such organisation involves time-consuming procedures where the survey questions are created by official channels, which also organise and collect the data, potentially giving rise to problems in the reliability of data.

In the context of the West moving more towards collective action, Sorokin (1962) distinguishes between two extreme types of value system that determine culture: sensate and ideational. According to his theory of sociocultural dynamics, Western culture oscillates between these extremes over periods of time. With respect to civilisations, such oscillations have occurred over centuries. Current theory suggests that Western culture is moving from the height of sensatism (a more materialist orientation) towards ideationalism (a more cognitive orientation). According to Hu, Lin, and Cui (2014), collectivists tend to have strong networks with greater interpersonal influence, than individualists, while individualistic cultures are more effective at propagating collective action when there is both strong motivation to participate, and a low level of social system connectivity. In contrast, collective action in collectivistic cultures is more effective when motivation is weak and the connectivity of the social system is strong.

The dynamics of the cultural change process are applicable in principle to either large-scale continuous cultures, like societies, over the long term, or small-scale continuous cultures, like corporations, over the short term, depending on the population sizes associated with the culture indicated, since

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cultural change is slower with a larger population due to value transference (cf. Fogerty and Kandler, 2020). When referring to a high level of collectivism in people, it means that they directly connect with each other, and can easily find communication problems at a non-abstract level as well as an unknown level. Union organisations are examples of both unknown and non-abstract levels (Yolles and Fink, 2012). In Asia, co-operation and coherence are needed in personal relationships such as “knowing”, while a union is an organisation of unknown persons, and communications between them may create a lack of trust, with issues potentially arising as a result.

This study is concerned with knowledge creation and its relationship to information, seeking a critical view of individual and social knowledge and the processes of communication and associated meanings. It also seeks to create an understanding of the relationship between people and their social collectives for the improvement of social viability, and an appreciation of the role of knowledge in this. In a coherent self-aware autonomous human activity system, knowledge normally occurs in structured patterns. These structures enable a system to recognise its own existence, maintain itself, change, and develop manifestations that can be seen as indicative of systemic content.

This study is a comparative one, examining the underlying cultural factors behind collectivism and collective actions in Cambodia and Finland. The scope of the study concerns only individuals and their capacity to create collective actions and co-operate to achieve common goals. In this context, trade unions are seen as collective agencies with the ability to undertake collective actions. It should be noted that political collectivism is not of specific interest in this research, even though all unions have a political dimension.

The theoretical framework used in this study is sociological, though the frame of reference adopted is systemic, embracing descriptive (soft form of), complex adaptive systems, and in particular Cultural Agency Theory (CAT) (Guo et al., 2016), involving the study of formative traits and norms:

(1) **Formative traits (A)** are substantive, and responsible for character formation in the individual or collective, and determine the orientation it takes in response to external phenomena. If consideration of this character is limited to strategic orientation, then interest lies in its personality, when only strategic traits are of interest. However, interest may also lie in the orientation

of the agency as a whole, when agency operative traits and cultural traits are taken into consideration. In a collective agency, knowledge of agency traits provides an expectation of the emergence and evolution of ultimately observable regularities, arising through collaborative and collective behaviour. (B) Platforms for co-operation can emerge from cultural systems through an understanding of the cultural traits that underpin an agency's action.

(2) **Cultural norms** (C) occur in the coherent collective agency but require the agency to maintain a dominant culture for norms to emerge. Norms orientate the agency both cognitively and operatively. When an agency has formed a character through its formative traits, norms indicate the boundaries for that character. For instance, cognitive norms can constrain and facilitate different types of (collectively) acceptable thought, while behavioural norms may constrain or facilitate different types of (collectively) acceptable behaviour.

Social scientists have developed highly complex and sophisticated techniques for analysing social behaviour (Cohen, 1969; Easton, 1965), the applicability of which depends on the phenomena under investigation. Understanding social theory, of whatever persuasion, serves as a kind of simplifying device, allowing us to see and understand the attributes that matter, and those which do not affect the phenomena (Durfee ad Rosenau, 2000). All theories are necessarily simplifications of a more complex reality (Lim, 2006). Social theory also provides a guide to social actions and a collective mind (less or more) while offering explanations of social context (Heineman, 1996).

Ultimately the aim of this study is to explain why the level of collective actions are more successful in different agencies, and why traits enable a better understanding of different impacts for collectivism and collective action in relation to social need.

A conceptual model is adopted from consideration of the related literature review, serving as the basis from which a research model will be developed. Thus, theoretical frameworks are needed to develop a research model. This research intends to construct a research model through the technique of applying layers of analysis within a theoretical framework.

## Research questions and scope of the research

This study seeks to develop an understanding of the relationships between trade unions from the perspective of collective actions and the level and forms of collectivism in Cambodia and in Finland. Secondly, this study aims to explain if and how the level of collectivism found may affect the degree of co-operation inside the living system. While differences in social values exist between different Asian countries as well as between European countries, if one is to accept Hofstede, then it may be supposed that Cambodia is broadly typical of Asian cultures, and Finland broadly typical of European cultures. This study reflects on this proposition, but in no way attempts to support or reject it.

The purpose of this research is to examine the nature of collectivism and unionism with particular reference to the means by which traits affect collective actions. The efficacy (Bandura, 2006; Yolles, 2011; 2013) of these traits determines the level of outcomes as collective actions through shared beliefs in their collective power to produce the desired results or outcome product, not only of the shared intentions, knowledge, and skills of its members, but also the interactive, coordinated, and synergistic dynamics of their transactions. Hence, this research has three main objectives, with the aim of fostering an understanding of actual circumstances.

1. To analyze, where trade unions are representative of collective outcomes in Cambodia and Finland.
2. To understand the role of traits that affect collectivism in trade unionism in flux.
3. To gain a better understanding of the links between different traits that constitute the level of collectivism, individualism, collective action, and unionism in flux.

There is little doubt that Southeast Asian countries have been described as collectivistic with hierarchical (vertical) structures, and Scandinavian countries as individualistic with egalitarian (horizontal) structures. The unanswered question is: How and why a collective Asian Country like Cambodia has difficulty in creating collective actions, and why an individualistic Nordic country like Finland is able to do so? In order to offer

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at least a partial answer to the question, this study seeks to respond to four questions related to the objectives:

1. How and why do individuals behave at the societal level through political participation?
2. How and why do family values differ between Cambodia and Finland in the meaning of a collective mind?
3. How and why do levels of trust differ between Cambodia and Finland and how does this affect collective action?
4. How and why does the level of perceived collective efficacy affect collective actions?

The scope of the study concerns only individuals and their capacity to create collective action and co-operate to achieve common goals. In this study, trade unions are seen as collective agencies with the ability to undertake collective actions. It should be noted that political collectivism is not of specific interest in this study, even though all unions have a political dimension. This study examines the underlying factors behind collectivism and the collective actions in Cambodia and Finland. In this study, trade unions are like outcomes and examples of collective actions. Political collectivism is not included in this research.

Traditional studies relating to this area of study contain issues or gaps due to the inadequacy of Hofstede's work on individualism and collectivism. This is highlighted by the work of Shalom Schwartz, which began in the 1990s in his very general and extensive study on cultural values, originally initiated because he was dissatisfied with current ideas in this area. The development of Schwartz's ideas forms the basis of the academic study being undertaken.

The theoretical framework used in this study is sociological, involving the examination of 1) The social system, within which observed regularities emerge and evolve through collaborative and collective behaviour. 2) The personality systems of individual actors. 3) The cultural system built into their actions. These three aspects follow the structuring of social action (Parsons, 1951; 1956; Luhmann, 1986; Bandura, 1986; 1991; 1999; Yolles and Fink, 2011; 2013; 2016; Schwartz, 1994; Sagiv-Schwartz, 2007).

## Research design and theoretical framework

The sociological approach is taken in this study, with the main analytical tool being Cultural Agency Theory (CAT), focusing on the levels of collectivism and how collective actions affect unionism and union flux. Social scientists have developed highly complex and sophisticated techniques for analysing social behaviour (Cohen, 1969; Easton, 1965). The applicability of these analysis techniques depends on the phenomena under investigation. Understanding social theory, serves as a kind of simplifying device, allowing one to see and understand the facts and matters which do not affect the phenomena (Durfee and Rosenau, 2000). All theories are necessary simplifications of a more complex reality (Lim, 2006). Social theory also provides a guide to social actions and the collective mind (less or more) and offers explanations of the social context (Heineman, 1996). Accordingly, the differences in understanding what collectivism and collective action mean and how collective action is structured should once again be noted. The CAT is used to avoid Western cultural bias, since it is designed to respond to complex needs and operates within the properties of a living system.

To establish the basis of a research model, the analytical framework makes important suggestions on where to look for information pertinent to this puzzling phenomenon. Similarly, it indicates how to organise such information in an inventory of possible relationships. Thus, a theoretical framework is needed to develop the research model. The research model in this study is therefore constructed by applying layers of analysis within a theoretical framework.

This study aspires to use current information to explain how reality works, and what has already happened. The aim is to identify the underlying processes and forces that help to shape reality using the sociological approach.

Broadly speaking, sociological theory has two broad themes of interest: structure and action. The structural sociological approach focuses on society as a whole, while the action approach focuses on individuals and groups. Shover and Bryant (1993) explain that structural sociologists see society as different systems of interactions that create the structure. CAT adopts a multilevel modelling approach, where lower-level agency components are



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embedded into higher-level ones (Ashkanasy, 2003a; 2003b), and operates through collective norms (Yolles and Fink, 2014). Of central importance to this are the human roles, behaviours, and interactions determined by society, focusing on the micro level rather than the macro. It should be noted that both Luhmann (1986) and Habermas (1987) point out that communication takes a central position.

To investigate the micro-level attitudes and reality, this study analytically decomposes the agency ontologically into three types of reality that can be attributed to archetypical rational beings, differentiated as *believing, thinking, and doing*. Believing is knowledge related, thinking is information related, and doing is connected with empirical experience and data (Yolles, 2007). The connections between these ontological distinctions may not be immediate and linear. In the archetypical emotional being, it may be said that the processes of thinking are complexified by feelings and emotions (Yolles, 2007). Distinguishing between these three types of understanding for reality enables the investigation of individuals and their social knowledge, processes of communication, and associated meanings. It also seeks to create an understanding of the relationship between people and their social collectives for the improvement of social-collective viability and an epistemological appreciation in which the role of knowledge is investigated. In a coherent autonomous human activity system, knowledge occurs in structured patterns. This provides the structure that enables the system to recognise its own existence, maintain itself, change, and develop manifestations that can be seen as indicative of systemic content. The theoretical framework connects well with the work of Merton (1942), Parsons (1937; 1950), Habermas (1987), Luhman, (1986; 1995), Yolles and Fink (2007; 2011; 2013; 2015), and Foucault (1974).

Individual characteristics are explored in this study within the union context, resulting in the acquisition and analysis of data using the Most Similar System Design (MSSD) method. It is an approach that explores variable differences and involves picking similar systems and studying the differences in the main variable. This occurs by comparing very similar cases which only differ in the dependent variable. It is easy to find the independent variables which explain the presence/absence of the dependent variable

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(Nation Master Encyclopedia, 2009). The qualitative advantages of the MSSD approach are that it facilitates: 1) the acquisition of in-depth knowledge; 2) extensive dialogue between data and theory; 3) theory corroboration or theory rejection; and 4) theory building (Rueda, 2004).

The study begins with an analysis of the salient cultural, social, and personal characteristics of each case based on the sociological and historical literature and results of a comparative survey conducted in Cambodia and in Finland during 2015 (total N = 1699). Quantitative data are cross tabulated (frequency analysis), allowing comparison of the relationship between two variables. While quantitative analysis is important, it is usually not enough for a comparative study (Lim, 2006). After appropriate variables are selected, in-depth, qualitative analysis is essential (MSSD).

The research provides explanations of a number of independent variables – formative traits and norms, involving the political participation, family values, trust, and social context that influence differences in outputs including collective action, communication, co-operation between trustees, efficacy, and a culture of individual behaviour. That is, the study will identify the parallel characteristics to be examined in each case and establish the empirical referents for each. This will establish the large-scale patterns specifying the social and collective dimensions that both identify them as a group and differentiate them from one another. The conceptual framework is shown in Figure 1, which includes bipolar trait variables, with brief explanations.

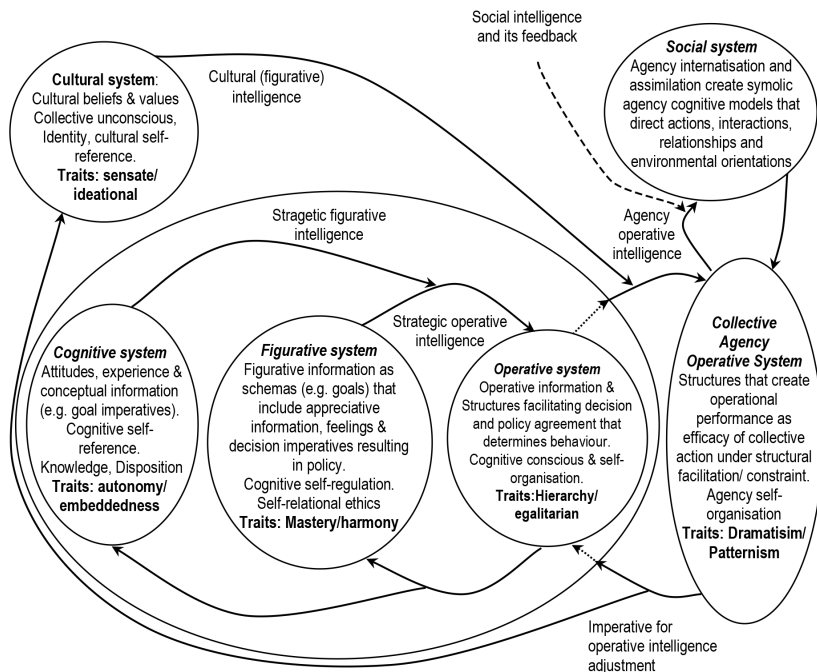


Figure 1. Cultural Agency (Adopted from Yolles and Fink 2013)

Note: Traits are a function of the agency, rather than the social environment. Dramatism/patternism are agency operative traits that determine *social orientation*.

## Cultural Agency Theory (CAT)

Cultural Agency Theory (CAT) is the basic theoretical tool used in this study for collective emotion regulation, strategy deployment through figurative intelligence, and emergent patterns of behaviour through operative intelligence. It represents the development of cultural cognitive agency theory, proposed by Yolles (2006), and centres on cognition/thinking and behaviour within the framework defined by Schwarz (1994) as complex dynamic “living systems” theory. Agency theory when it involves the representation of culture is called Cultural Agency Theory. It sits on the concept of autonomous agency; an entity with the capacity, condition, or state to act or exert power (Yolles, 2006).

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CAT is a cybernetic socio-cognitive theory that usually centres on personality in which formative traits play a major role. However, it may also take in cultural and operative traits (Yolles and di Fatta, 2018). Personality traits create agency character orientations that define an agency's cultural and social tendencies. Trait dynamics are explored, and an explanation provided about how a personality type profile develops (Yolles, Fink, and Frieden, 2014). A collective agency has a shared belief that it can, as a whole, attain goals and accomplish its desired tasks (Bandura, 1986). It affects the collective performance of a social system through its interactive, coordinative, and synergistic dynamics from which group properties emerge (Bandura, 2006). Collective efficacy is connected with a belief or perception that efficacious collective actions are possible in relation to a social need.

Following Jreisat (2002, 58), collectivism involves collectives or collective systems, defined in the following way: In collective systems, preferences are for tightly-knit social frameworks in which individuals can expect loyalty from their family, relatives, clan or friends in looking after them. **Collective action** is possible in relation to a *social need and the ability to communicate and set goals* (Bandura, 2006, 165). According to Olson (1971), a group acts to serve individual interests, presumably based upon the assumption that the individuals in a group act out of self-interest and personal motivation. Luhmann's (1995) theory of social systems arises through social action, within which observed regularities emerge and evolve through collaborative and collective behaviour. A shared belief can be explained as one where the normative agent can, as a whole, attain goals and accomplish its desired tasks (Bandura, 1986). It involves a belief or perception that efficacious collective actions are possible in relation to a social need. The relationship between collectivism and collective action is one where the former is the practice or principle of giving a group priority over each individual in it, while collective action refers to an action taken together by a group of people whose goal is to enhance their status and achieve a common objective. Collective action is, therefore, a function of collectivism, but is not unique to collectivism.

*Efficacy* is a reflection of an agency's capability to produce designated (or more properly, "desired") levels of performance in a social environment. Inefficacy emerges when a given level of capability is not sufficient to achieve

the desired results, i.e., a relatively poor performance (Yolles and Fink, 2013). Efficacy is influenced by the available cognitive resources capable of collecting, recognising, evaluating, and processing information, and by the conforming or conflicting interests of agents within the organisation that incorporate conflicting or identical goals and capability to create dynamic stability (Yolles and Fink, 2010, 3).

**Perceived collective efficacy** involves an individual's perception regarding the group's performance capability. Collective efficacy beliefs have substantial implications for group effort, persistence, and performance, especially for tasks requiring interaction among group members to achieve success (Bandura, 1990). Bandura (2001) explains that in collectivism, people have shared beliefs in their collective power to produce the desired results or outcomes. He continues that group attainments are the product not only of the shared intentions, knowledge, and skills of its members, but also the interactive, coordinated, and synergistic dynamics of their transactions.

**Traits** are usually seen as a distinguishing feature, characteristic or quality of a personality style and action. They create a predisposition for a personality to respond in a particular way to a broad range of situations (Allport, 1961). Traits arise from the interaction between a personality and situation (Chapman et al., 2000), resulting for instance in the interaction model of personality (Stevens and Rodin, 2001). Traits are also described as enduring patterns of perceiving, relating to, and thinking about the environment and oneself, exhibited in a wide range of social and personal contexts. Traits also constitute habitual patterns of thought, emotions, and cluster of behaviour. This research employs the traits based idea of CAT, including two formative traits and norms.

## The structure of the book

Social science and collectivism are united with increasing frequency in studies on social behaviour. This study combines these two important fields in order to focus on the interactions among collective action, social adaptation, and unionism. Therefore, the contributions of this study include the following: First, to explain the connection between collective action and social adaptation

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in the Asian and European context. Second, to explore a model of collectivism and unionism development, characterised as an Asian/European Model on the basis of its characteristics shared among the cases examined. Finally, to examine and highlight the relationship between unionism to manage collective action and the members' shared beliefs of collective action.

This book is written with both academics and practitioners in mind, the intention being to provide understanding of the nature and consequences of collectivism and individualism. This is important both to academics who may be particularly interested in the development of theory, and practitioners who are likely to be more interested in pragmatics. That both audiences are addressed is actually one of the strengths of this work since there is a sufficient base of theory to enable the academic to explore further, while at the same time the techniques provided enable the practitioner to further develop pragmatics, rather than create them.

Therefore, this research aims to create new knowledge regarding collectivism that can explain collective action in the East and West, insofar as they affect matters pertaining to unionism and flux. It also contributes to the body of knowledge concerning the characteristics of different forms of collectivism and their coherence between members inside the organisation. It is hoped that this study is useful for those interested in the collectivism underlying the impact of capacity to achieve collective goals in different cultures and different social systems.

In the second chapter, the theoretical basis of this study is discussed. The chapter reviews the existing literature that outflows into a conceptual model with the ability to respond to the research questions. Chapter 3 presents the methodological approach applied. The primary intent of the project is to investigate the traits affecting collective actions and the agent's capability to create collective action to achieve its goals. These goals include the capability to respond to social needs and effective policy implementation for achieving goals. The research design contains both qualitative and quantitative data. The investigations focus on qualitative data, conducted through the means of a case study: Cambodia and Finland in 2016. The qualitative data are used to explain the theoretical bases and answer the research questions. Within this case, the quantitative data support and help to explain the results. This study

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focuses on collective actions and outcomes and utilises the comparative study technique by applying the MSSD approach. It explores the similarities and differences in collective action.

The results of the study are presented in Chapter 4. The approach is comparative and looks at Asia and Europe through two cases: Cambodia and Finland. Although both countries may be interesting from other perspectives, in this context they are merely used as examples. As previously mentioned, the aim of this study is to create understanding as to the level of collectivism and capacity to create collective actions in two example countries. The behaviour at the societal level, family values, and trust are important variables that create the form of collectivism-individualism which lead to the efficacy or inefficacy of collective action.

## 2

# Theoretical basis

### Introduction

This chapter presents a review of the social scientific literature relating to the scope and purpose of this research. It also explores how such literature relates to the development of meaningful criteria for the assessment of collective action. In accordance with Sekaran (2008, 67), the literature review intends to bring together all the relevant information in a cogent and logical manner rather than presenting all the studies in chronological order, with bits and pieces of uncoordinated information. Accordingly, the literature review helps the researcher to 1) introduce the subject of study; 2) identify the research questions; and 3) build on previous research to offer a basis for progression to the following steps for creating the requisite theoretical framework.

The understanding of an event and the reason behind its occurrence helps in understanding the terms of the social and Cultural Agency Theory contexts to permit clarification of the roles played by traits and their effects on collective action by normative personality. These are affected by the level of collective action and desired outcomes according to collective efficacy and the development of criteria for assessing such collective efficacy. The concepts underlying collectivism-individualism duality, collective action, normative agent, collective agency, behaviour at the societal level, family values, trust,



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and collective efficacy are used to generate and structure the research ideas that follow.

To establish the basis for the research models, an analytical framework makes important suggestions concerning where to look for information pertinent to a puzzling phenomenon. Similarly, it points out how to organise it in an inventory of possible relationships. Thus, theoretical frameworks are needed to develop a research model. The research model in this work is constructed by applying layers of analysis within a theoretical framework. Conversely, the research questions listed in Chapter 1 are used to give a focus to the related literature review.

The fundamental aspect of this research is to create new ideas and debate what constitutes collectivism and collective action as well as how we define and understand them, using a case study on Cambodia and Finland. The study thereby seeks to increase our understanding of the relationships between trade unions and collective actions, and the level and form of collectivism in Cambodia and Finland, and explain how the level of collectivism may affect the degree of within-agency co-operation between the agents populating an agency that can be seen as a living system. While there are differences in the values, culture, and social systems between Asian countries as there are between European countries, it can be assumed that Cambodia is only one example of a Southeast Asian country rather than being typically representative of Asian Culture. Similarly, Finland is only one example of a European country rather than being typically representative of that region. These two countries may not even broadly represent Asian or European cultures. Strong Muslim and Christian (Catholic) cultures can also be found in Southeast Asia. Whatever the current culture of the agency under consideration, there is a strong Chinese Confucian<sup>1</sup> influence, just as in Europe there is a strong Christian influence with different variations of Christianity. Nevertheless, this study

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1 A Confucian structure is based on a hierarchical structure, similar to Buddhism where social status indicates a person's position in the agent. Hierarchy is connected to power and power processes. Unequal distribution of power, roles, and resources is legitimate and the hierarchical distribution of roles is taken for granted along with the obligation to comply with the rules attached to roles. In hierarchical agency, information is power and the distribution of power is limited (Sorokin, 1962; Sagiv and Schwartz, 2007; Yolles and Fink, 2013).

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may give some direction and act as a guide for Asian or European member states on the form of collectivism and its capacity to create collective action.

As with other Asian countries, Cambodia is generally described as a collective society (Blunt and Turner, 2005) where collectivism is connected to the family or extended family (Jreisat, 2002). Familism is one form of collectivism and quite often Western academic literature refers to that quite strictly and generalises that Asian societies are collective because of familism. In Asian societies like Cambodia, family and extended family are commonly known to be important units for collective action. This means that collective action and co-operation occur at a personal level where personal knowledge, trust, and identity is important, and outside that framework (of personal knowing) the world becomes abstract and unknown. An example occurs with Chinese families, family businesses, and social relations, where the emphasis is on interpersonal or relational trust rather than institutional trust. Important frame groups are relatively small and narrow, and this may create difficulties in creating collective actions outside the group. As Weingart (2006) describes, the Cambodian society is rather hierarchically organised and local leadership seems to play a crucial role in the quality of resource management. Her case study also states that externally introduced institutions are less successful in sustainable resource management since collective action takes place in rather small groups which exclude poorer, less powerful individuals. (Weingart, 2006).

This study attempts to determine how the Cambodians and Finns are able to create collective action in a wider perspective that lies beyond family/ingroup boundaries.

### Social context of the current research

The subject of this study is an important one for social sciences in the broad sense. Issues are discussed that also belong to the fields of political science, management, and administration. There is little doubt that Southeast Asian countries have been described as collectivistic societies and Nordic countries as individualistic. The unanswered question is why “collective Asia” has difficulties in creating collective actions, at individual, organisational,

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regional, or state level since studies on Cambodia mention that participation, solidarity, and collective action does not come easily to the country (Öjendal, 2000; 2014; Chou, 2010; Ros et al., 2011). Taking Cambodia as a sample case for Asia and Finland for Nordic countries, the question is: Why can an individualistic country like Finland generate social action at individual, organisational, regional, and state levels?

This is one of the interesting questions of this research. How do we define and understand collectivism and collective action? The way of thinking in the “East” is different from that in the “West”. Activity and action are always based on different understandings of history, government regimes, geography, philosophy, time, situations (Yolles and Fink, 2013), mutual relations between the people, equality, and even words and their meaning. Therefore, it can be assumed that the understanding and meaning of individualism-collectivism differ between the East and West. Currently, the understanding of individualism-collectivism is rooted strongly in Western ideas and the interpretation of collectivism rather than the interpretation and understanding of the East. This is mainly because Western scholars and universities have been able to create theories collectively and dominate these paradigms. It is hard or even impossible to find any “Eastern” research on collectivism/individualism based Eastern values, philosophies or worldviews.

This study focuses on explaining the elements of collective action, using the work of Bandura (1986; 1991; 1999), Yolles (2006), Yolles and Fink (2012; 2013; 2015), and Sagiv and Schwartz (2007). These authors claim that collective action depends on traits and efficacy, including perceived collective efficacy. Yolles and Fink (2006; 2013; 2016) explain that culture drives agency norms and orientates agency traits. Its *cognition* drives the processes of individual and collective thought, along with *emotion* deliver action. *Context* is derived from what may be identified as a set of environments related to the agency’s immanent dynamics. A consequence of change in culture, cognition, and context is that the agency must adapt to maintain viability. The agency substructure, influenced by superstructure, creates behavioural anticipation (Collier, 2006; Leydesdorff and Dubois, 2004; Schwarz, 2001; Rosen, 1985).

The nature of collectivism and unionism is discussed and analysed in this work with particular reference to how initiatives are developed and

## *Theoretical basis*

implemented. The efficacy (Bandura, 2006; Yolles, 2011; 2013) of this policy process is, however, not just a function of the governing body, but also its implementation. In this context, consideration is given to the institutional processes of governance and the relationship between union members and their leaders. In the following sections of this study, consideration will be given to the nature of unionism and its relationship with the function and purpose of its services. As part of this, the book will explore the dynamics of unions in Cambodia and Finland through the modelling approach referred to as Cultural Agency Theory (Guo, Yolles, Fink, and Iles, 2016). *Agency Theory in the Cross-Cultural Context* (2016) improves the understanding of collectivism and collective action. The nature of collectivism and unionism is examined with particular reference to the means by which policy initiatives are developed and implemented.

Why do workers form trade unions, what is the logic behind their actions? Almost 40 years ago, British sociologist Colin Crouch (1982) published an influential analysis of trade unions in the United Kingdom. He also discussed the different approaches taken by researchers to analyse unions. There are huge differences when looking at trade unions from Crouch's perspective. He is also interested in social action, commenting that: "social action can be seen as a mass of choices, each of which involves a calculation of gain and loss" (Crouch 1982, 39). In this respect, society can be seen as an arena within which social actors, individuals, and groups pursue conflicting goals according to various beliefs about means and ends. A workers' union or labour union is an example of collectivism; the outcomes of which are the result of collective action. In principle, collectivism ideally relates to people coming together in a collective to act unitarily through normative processes to satisfy some commonly agreed and understood purpose or interest (Fink and Yolles, 2012).

The scope of collectivity in Southeast Asia covers family and close friends (ingroup). Collective groups are small and consequently only have limited capacity for collective action. Collectivity includes mainly (and some extreme forms of patriarchic familism) people the individual feels can be trusted (Han and Shin, 2000). Trusted people are generally family members, while others may pose a threat. A collective group is understood to be concrete, like an extended family, rather than an abstract phenomenon. Collective

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Agency Theory stresses the connection between trust and collectivism. In this study, the reader will recall that individualism is associated with sensate and collectivism in an ideational culture (a sensate culture tends to have material values, like ownership, power, money, or enjoyment, while the values of an ideational culture are more related to the psyche, like ideas, love, spirit, or salvation). Sensate and ideational value systems together compose a bipolar cultural trait.

The idea of CAT was first presented by Yolles (2006) and further developed in other publications (e.g., Yolles, Fink, and Dauber 2011; Guo et al., 2016). Collective agency can be seen as a way of acting by a collective, and its structure is representative of the collective agency. In an agency such as a trade union, a collective cognitive base exists, creating the “truth” that forms both its *epistemic base* and *cultural base*. These are cultural beliefs arising as normative standards of conduct, connected with assumptions, *beliefs*, and *trusted* propositions emanating within cultural development. The cognitive base may be seen as the result of cybernetic interaction (Maturana and Varela, 1987, 75) between the patterns of cultural and analytic knowledge, which affect each other through their history of mutual influence, where cognitive intention plays a metasytemic role and creates a cultural orientation for the agency (Yang et al., 2009). Therefore, the level of trust depends both on cultural and cognitive traits, including experience of the past, which provides precise information about reality and the environment, arising from the figurative trait – potentially creating a level of collective action and beliefs for collectively shared ideas or outcomes.

This study analyses the levels of collectivism and collective action, relationships between individuals and collective agency, and their capacity to create the desired outcomes according to collective efficacy and how the policies pursued affect efficacy or inefficacy. The work focuses on the concepts pertaining to performance within the meaning of collective efficacy to analyse their policy implementation quality. In addition, the criteria for identifying what constitutes efficacy are reviewed to strengthen the ability to think critically about the collectivism and collective action. Thus, the concepts of collectivism, collective action, collective agency, CAT, and efficacy, are used to generate and structure the research ideas.

## *Theoretical basis*

As noted in Chapter 1, understanding social theory (of whatever persuasion) serves as a kind of simplifying device that allows one to see and understand the attributes that matter, and those which do not affect the phenomena (Durfee and Rosenau, 2000). All theories are necessarily simplifications of a more complex reality (Lim, 2006). Social theory also provides a guide to social actions and a collective mind (less or more) and offers explanations of the social context (Heineman, 1996). Talcott Parsons' (1950) General Theory of Action may be seen as a special case of agency theory, involving a cultural, psychic/cognitive/personality, and social system. However, contemporary agency theory is significantly broader than the General Theory of Action.

### Theoretical basis of the study

This research aims to identify the underlying processes and forces that help to shape reality by adopting three approaches: micro, meso, and macro. A micro study refers to either an interest in individuals or their attributes (like people or corporations) together with the systems they organise. A meso approach is concerned with generic structures and their actualisations that allow a focus on a collective, with influences from microscopic entities. The generic structures maintain distinctive patterns of organisation that determine the actualisations, collectively coordinated through the structural attributes, creating the potential for development of future generic attributes. A macro approach focuses on the complex structures that bind collectives, such as those classified as part of specific societal categories, like industrial sectors, and indeed any conceptualisation that creates a broad sociological structure. Abstracts from mesoscopic details are entered to focus on the consequences. A meso analysis can thus help the understanding of a macro analysis (Dopfer, Foster, and Potts, 2004).

A micro approach can be represented through the sociological examination of individuals, their attitudes, and their understanding. The meso approach can be reflected in socio-cognitive studies on how collectives come together and function, for instance, by adopting the principles of social psychology. The macro approach discusses the culture underpinning societies and their relative distinctions often represented as a sociocultural approach.

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The sociological approach comes to terms with claims by sociologists like Parsons, Luhmann, and Habermas, who examine state and power from the social perspective. As already mentioned, this approach is often divided into two theories: structural and social action. The structural sociological approach focuses on society as a whole and is thus macroscopic in nature. Parsons' (1950) general model involves three autonomous systems referred to as culture, society, and personality, and this creates a societal community in which culture and personality are represented only as functional supplements of the societal community, while culture supplies society with values that can be institutionalised based on the idea of functional-structuralism – unions being an example.

Habermas' (1987) theory of communicative action is concerned with the *life world*. The structural ontology adopted distinguishes between three interconnected autonomous worlds: the *internal* and *external* worlds of individuals, and their *social* world. Habermas used this as the basis for developing a theory of communication that explains the semantic processes enabling collective social agreements to be made. Luhmann's (1995) theory of society concerns its communicative nature, as does Habermas', but uses cybernetic principles, where control and communication are of central importance. Following Guo et al. (2016, 14), unlike many cybernetic approaches, Luhmann's work is not directed towards social dynamics or strategy, and he has little interest in examining the pathologies or conditions of social ill-health that can arise. In contrast, Beer's (1997) theory of the strategic organisational agency is capable of identifying, analysing, and diagnosing pathologies.

Shover and Bryant (1993) explain that structural sociologists see society as different systems of interactions for creating the structure of society. Following this view, the main importance of society appears to lie in the identification of human roles, behaviour, and interactions determined by society, while focusing on society at the micro rather than the macro or meso levels. It should be noted that for both Luhmann (1986) and Habermas (1987), communication also takes a central position, and as such constitutes a generic attribute that can be represented at either macroscopic level when looking at the nature of communications as a whole, or mesoscopic when examining

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the generic characteristics associated with segments of society. Attitudes and perceptions of reality reside at the micro level, and to investigate these, this study considers three types of epistemically defined realities that can be attributed to archetypical rational beings: *believing*, which refers to knowledge; *thinking*, which refers to information; and *doing*, which refers to empirical experience reflected in data (Yolles, 2007). However, these connections may not be immediate and linear. In the archetypical emotional being, it can be said that processes of thinking are complexified by feelings and emotions (Yolles, 2007). These three types of understanding about reality enable one to investigate individuals, their social knowledge, processes of communication, and associated semantics/meanings. It also seeks to create an understanding of the relationship between people and their social collectives (like unions) for the improvement of social-collective viability and an appreciation of the role of knowledge in this. In a coherent autonomous human activity system, knowledge occurs in structured patterns. This provides the structure enabling the activity system to collectively recognise its own existence, maintain itself, change, and develop manifestations that can be seen as indicative of systemic content.

### Cultural Agency Theory in relation to personality and socio-cognitive theory

Parsons' General Theory of Action (1950) may be seen as a special case of agency theory, involving a cultural, psychic/cognitive/personality and social system. However, agency theory is significantly broader than the General Theory of Action. Communication is also important within sociocultural settings and the way in which it operates through narrative. Following Kneer and Nassehi (1993, cited in Kirsch, 1998), Luhmann considered his constructs to constitute a functional-structural *systems theory*, unlike Parsons' functional-structural theory. Here, a social system represents the coherence of social actions in mutual reference to one another, thus enabling them to be distinguished from an environment.

Guo et al. (2016, 146) explains that unlike Parsons' *causal functionalism* that identifies connections between system operations and maintenance,



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Luhmann adopts *equivalence functionalism*, where specific operations may be associated with functions and functionally equivalent substitutions are feasible. Maintenance is dealt with since cause and effect are replaced by seeing the social aspect in terms of problem situations and interventions. Unlike Parsons' General Theory of Action, Luhmann's theory embraces the concept of self-reference as a property of living systems with the ability to observe and reflect on themselves and make decisions as a consequence. Habermas (1987), in his theory of communicative action, rejected the Parsonian model of structural-functionalism, and adopted the model of society as a self-regulating system.

Cultural Agency Theory embeds Bandura's (1999) ideas on the nature of agency, and together with the cybernetic theory of "living" complex adaptive systems, refers to the importance of self-regulating and self-organising systems. In Bandura's social cognitive theory, people are agentic operators in their life course, not just onlookers to the internal mechanisms orchestrated by environmental events. They are sentient agents of experiences rather than simply undergoers of experiences. Bandura (1986; 1991; 1999; 2001) explains that people are self-organising, proactive, self-reflecting, and self-regulating, not just reactive organisms shaped and shepherded by external events and forces. Consequently, people have the power to influence their own actions to produce certain results or outcomes.

The capacity to exercise control over one's thought processes, motivation, affect, and action operates through the mechanisms of personal agency. Such agency can be explained in at least three different ways: 1) Autonomous humans operate as entirely independent agents, and have few serious advocates, although they sometimes invoke the characteristics of cognitive theories of human behaviour (Skinner, 1971). 2) A mechanically reactive agency is an internal system through which external influences operate mechanistically on action, but individuals exert no motivative, self-reflective, self-reactive, creative or directive influence on the process, while the self-system is merely a repository for implanted structures and a conduit for external influences (Bandura, 1999). 3) The persons in a mechanically reactive agency are neither autonomous agents nor simply mechanical conveyers of animating environmental influences (Bandura, 1986).

## *Theoretical basis*

Following Bandura (1986; 1999), socio-cognitive theory covers different kinds of agency in various forms, like personal agency, proxy agency, and collective agency, operating through a shared belief of efficacy, pooled understanding, group aspirations and incentive systems, and collective action. The interest of this current work lies in personal and collective agency rather than proxy.

Of central importance to agency – both individual and collective – are efficacy, perceived efficacy, self-efficacy, and perceived self-efficacy. Perceived self-efficacy refers to people’s beliefs in their capabilities to perform in ways that give them some control over events affecting their lives (Bandura, 1986, cf. Yolles, 2013; 2015). Empirically, efficacy can be strong, modest or weak (Yolles, 2011; Guo et al., 2016), but in fact perceived self-efficacy, as a shared belief, does not exhibit outcomes of efficacious action or any actual level of performance. Efficacy beliefs play a central role in the self-regulation of motivation for action. In this study, efficacy refers to outcomes or performance while perceived efficacy concerns a person’s belief in their capacity to undertake action/changes and collective action. Of course, time and political atmosphere (external forces) contribute to the creation of a platform for change. This will be discussed later in Chapter 5, along with the descriptive results. People can make change happen by pursuing an active life to increase the number of fortuitous encounters they are likely to experience (Bandura, 1999). Indeed, Austin (1978) highlights the role of action in chance occurrences. From the proactive socio-cognitive perspective, chance favours the inquisitive, venturesome, and persistent. By selecting advantageous activities, milieus people can make chance occurrences work for them. Personality causes human behaviour and can be modelled to include traits severed from the social realities of everyday life (Bandura, 1999, 16). Yolles and Fink (2013) explain that traits can be used to explain the what, why, and how of dynamic agency behaviour in complex situations. Traditionally, trait approaches tend to be structural theories, but Bandura (1999) rejects this statement and explains that socio-cognitive theories can be combined with trait theories like the five-factor taxonomy, to form a comprehensive personality trait theory. This dualistic thinking is also reflected in suggestions that the processes of socio-cognitive theories can be combined with trait theory: 1)

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extraversion, 2) agreeableness, 3) conscientiousness, 4) neuroticism, and 5) openness to experiences as the universal features of personality structure. There is another framework that views traits in Foucaultian terms, resulting in trait types that include: knowledge, ethics, and power, which Boje (2004) uses in the development of a trait basis for mindscape theory.

Van Egeren (2009) expressed interest in a metaphor linking *agency* and *trait* schemas. Agency theory comes from the socio-cognitive notions of Bandura (1999), concerning cognitive attributes like self-organisation and self-reflection, with some significant interest also placed in the notion of efficacy. This is the cognitive *capability* of an agency to use its talents and abilities in activities; it can enhance self-motivation through goal systems and may be affected by positive or negative emotive orientation in attributes such as self-monitoring, cognitive representation, and the recognition of capabilities in past successes and failures (Bandura, 1991). Efficacy is therefore conditioned by emotional intelligence (Adeyemo, 2007), itself defined as the ability of an agency to monitor its own and others' feelings and emotions, discriminate among them, and use this information to guide its thinking and actions (Salovey and Mayer, 1990).

Yolles and Fink (2013, 2) explain that "a trait is usually seen as a distinguishing feature, characteristic or quality of a personality style". It creates the predisposition for a personality to respond in a particular way to a broad range of situations (Allport, 1961). Traits arise from interaction between a personality and situation (Chapman et al., 2000), resulting, for instance, in the interaction model of personality (Stevens and Rodin, 2001). Traits are also described as enduring patterns of perception, relations, and thinking concerning the environment and oneself, exhibited in a wide range of social and personal contexts. They constitute habitual patterns of thought, emotion, and stable clusters of behaviour, and are consequently better seen as constructs that reflect different sets of values and attitudes. Of central importance to this idea is the concept of "formative traits". There are five formative traits in any agency, independently of whether an individual agency or a collective agency is being considered. One defines cultural orientation, three define normative personality (the cognitive, figurative, operative orientations), and the last defines the social orientation emerging through interaction with the social

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environment (Yolles and Fink, 2013, 23). The traits offer constructs through which one can understand agency. These formative traits constitute self-regulatory propensities or styles that affect how individuals characteristically pursue their goals (Van Egeren, 2009).

Sagiv and Schwartz (2007) identified that traits have bipolar dimensions of culture, representing alternate resolutions for each of the three challenges that confront all societies. Yolles and Fink (2013) explain that in the context of an agency, these bipolar dimensions constitute enantiomer pairs. Enantiomers may be seen as bipolar types constituting the possible values of a given trait. These paired enantiomers are embeddedness/autonomy, hierarchy/egalitarianism, and mastery/harmony. Cultural Agency Theory refers to these as normative personality traits, and CAT also include two bipolar traits regulating the interaction of an agency (an organisation) with its cultural and social operative environments. These paired couples are *sensate/ideational* and *dramatist/patterner*.

There is a divide between modern socio-cognitive approaches to personality assessment and trait and type approaches, even though they can be related in principle (Eysenck, 1957; Van Egeren, 2009). The topic of interest here is human agency theory, which can be modelled as systems with “the cognitive capacities of intention, forethought, and the ability to react and reflect. From these capacities come the *agentic perspective* through which adaptation and change in human development occur. To be an agent is to influence intentionally one’s functioning and life circumstances, and personal influence is part of the causal structure” (Yolles, Fink, and Dauber, 2011, 637).

Cultural Agency Theory involves collective emotion regulation, strategy deployment through figurative intelligence, and emergent patterns of behaviour through operative intelligence (Yolles and Fink, 2013). Accordingly, CAT sees agency as a socio-cognitive entity with attitude, operating through traits that control thinking and decision-making. These traits are epistemically independent and operate on bipolarity (Guo. et al., 2016). A cultural agent is a dynamic, adaptive, self-organising, proactive, self-regulating, socio-cognitive autonomous actor, interacting with its social environments. Cognitive theory accepts that thoughts are determinants for patterns of behaviour developing from personality, and normative personality is the result of a culturally

derived “collective mind” (Yolles, 2009). CAT is concerned with multilevel research, where lower-level agencies are embedded into higher and the same generic principles are valid for nested social wholes. CAT refers to the cultural agent which has collective emotion regulation, strategy deployment through figurative intelligence, and emergent patterns of behaviour through operative intelligence. *Different kinds of intelligence are the precondition of efficacy.* The cultural agency approach enables the future to be anticipated rather than predicted along with the level (efficacy/inefficacy) of collective actions.

The CAT provides guidance for framing multilevel interaction where smaller collectives (such as social systems) are embedded into larger social systems with a culture, an emotional climate, and institution. *Thus, it provides a generic theoretical frame for analyses, where individuals (workers) are integrated into a larger social unit like a labour union.* Cultural agency schemas of personality enable the analysis of individual/collective actions with the social environment.

## Efficacy

Bandura (1999) shows little interest in traits or their causes, and argues that they cannot tell one much about the determinants and regulative structures governing the behaviours constituting a particular cluster. Instead, his interest lies in “perceived self-efficacy”, which is concerned with beliefs about one’s capability to produce designated levels of performance that exercise influence over events that affect life. Self-efficacy beliefs determine how people feel, think, motivate themselves and behave, where beliefs produce these diverse effects through the major processes of cognition, motivation, effectiveness, and selection. Yolles and Fink (2010; 2011; 2013) express an interest in traits and integrate efficacy into trait theory, explaining that different kinds (bipolar) of traits determine various types of intelligence, and efficacy is the result of interaction between different traits.

Efficacy is influenced by the capability of available cognitive resources to collect, recognise, evaluate, and process information, and they are able to conform or conflict with the interests of agents within the organisation and their conflicting or identical goals (Yolles and Fink 2010, 3). Bandura (1986;

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1997) and Williams (1992) mention that cognitive capacities contribute to personality functioning, including the skills, competences, and knowledge structures derived from experiencing real-life situations. Cognitive capacities also contribute to self-reflective processes, enabling people to develop beliefs about themselves within the social context, and self-regulatory processes where people formulate goals, standards, and motivations towards achieving identifiable outcomes, which can be referred to as performance.

A normative agency is normally interested in a desired level of context-specific performance or outcomes. Performance is ultimately determined by the *efficacy* of information migration between trait systems for given personality types (Fink and Yolles, 2011). Furthermore, efficacy is a reflection of an agency's capability to produce designated (or more properly, "desired") levels of performance in social environments. Inefficacy emerges when a given a level of capability is not sufficient to achieve the desired results, i.e., a relatively poor performance occurs (Fink and Yolles, 2013).

Subsequent to the study by Piaget (1950), Yolles (2006) expressed that an agency's efficacy occurs due to its figurative and operative traits. The figurative trait (intelligence) is represented by Yolles as a form of autogenesis and provides relational explanations of reality (Schwarz, 1997). Figurative images such as mental models and abstractions have been solidified from the strategic part of an agency, referred to as its normative personality (Yolles and Fink, 2011). *The figurative trait enables the creation of appropriate and suitable policy instruments that are consistent with its ideology and ethics to deal with what it sees around it.* The operative trait (intelligence) is, for Yolles, a form of autopoiesis (Maturana and Varela, 1987) and provides for its capacity through evidence of its figurative base, which refers to the capacity of an agency to maintain beliefs, values, and knowledge. Attitudes derived from values are described as a set of values directed towards some object of attention and hence, have an operative function. Therefore, operative intelligence is the efficacy of a personality structure, facilitating and conditioning behaviours from which the term performance arises (Yolles and Fink, 2011).

Serewicz (2009) notes that collective efficacy focuses on how the community acts to reduce the causes of things like poverty, disadvantages, and indeed the lack of collective efficacy itself. Community response is one

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of the main factors necessary for collective efficacy. Sampson, Raudenbush, and Earls (1997) describe community response as a neighbourhood collective efficacy, and the link between cohesion, especially working trust and shared expectations for action, while Bandura (2004) describes collective efficacy as an extension of self-efficacy. He links the information process with both self-efficacy and the individual agent and the collective efficacy of a collective agent.

Efficacy is a reflection of an agency's capabilities to produce designated, or more properly "desired" levels of performance in social environments. Inefficacy emerges when a given level of capability is not sufficient to achieve the desired results, i.e., a relatively poor performance occurs (Yolles and Fink, 2013). Performance is ultimately influenced by *efficacy*. Presumably due to issues relating to the measure of efficacy involving the perceptions of others, Bandura (1994) introduced the term *self-efficacy*, which refers to *the perceived beliefs* people have about their capabilities to produce effects. It involves a belief or perception that efficacious collective actions are possible in relation to a social need (Bandura 2006, 165). Problems with the cultural cohesion of an agency may affect its performance through lack of confidence in individual agencies and/or perceptual differences in collective efficacy (Bandura, 1995). It can be related to the cohesiveness or coherence of a collective agent, and thus indicated by a measure of degree of agent entropy. Efficacy is conditioned by emotive imperatives derived from emotions in the cognitive domain and feelings in the figurative domain that can be controlled (Adeyemo, 2007) by emotional intelligence (Salovey and Mayer, 1990).

Efficacy and perceived efficacy have different meanings. While efficacy explains and measures the actual level of the desired outcomes, perceived efficacy is an important factor in creating and achieving the desired goal. The high level of perceived efficacy does not necessarily result in a high level of performance, but it can influence the agency's capacity to achieve it. In contrast, those who doubt their capabilities shy away from difficult tasks, viewing them as personal threats. They have low aspirations and weak commitment towards their chosen goals (Bandura, 1994).

Bandura (1986) defines the *collective efficacy* of the agency as the shared belief that a collective can, as a whole, attain goals and accomplish its desired

## *Theoretical basis*

tasks. Bandura proposed that *collective efficacy is an extension of self-efficacy*. Perceived collective efficacy involves the perception of individuals regarding the group's performance capabilities. Collective efficacy beliefs have substantial implications for group effort, persistence, and performance, especially in the successful achievement of tasks requiring interaction among group members (Bandura, 1990). According to Bandura (1986; 1977), his self-efficacy theory provides a useful framework for the study of behaviour within agency, in this case, unions as collective agency and its members as individual agency – efficacy.

According to Bandura, the idea of self-efficacy in human agency and its exercise comes from one of three attributes, namely personal, proxy, and collective (Bandura, 1999). The *collective agency* operates through shared beliefs of efficacy, pooled understandings, group aspirations, incentive systems, and collective action, arising through normative processes. The difference between perceived self-efficacy and perceived collective efficacy relies on variations in cultural cohesion and the empirical agents (Bandura, 1996). The efficacy of a normative agent influences its ability to communicate, set goals, and persevere during adversity (Bandura, 1995). Normative personality processes in transparent organisations have observable information processes. Yolles and Fink (2010) define efficacy at the organisation level as the capacity to produce the desired result or effect for a collective agent.

Information is interpreted by the personality according to its traits. Personality traits arise from the influence of cultural traits, but it is unclear why some agencies adopt one set of trait combinations, and another a different set. Information may have something to do with this, but how they do so is unclear.



## Traits and efficacy

As mentioned previously, efficacy and traits are interconnected and the level of efficacy depends on different forms of traits, constituting different kinds of reality and intelligence in the world. *Cognitive traits* are based on sociocultural experiences, creating cognitive capacities that contribute to different kinds of (normative) personality functioning, including the skills, competencies, and knowledge structures derived from experience of real-life situations, self-reflective processes that enable people to develop beliefs about themselves within social contexts, and self-regulatory processes where people formulate goals, standards, and motivations towards identifiable outcomes (Bandura, 1986; 1999; Williams, 1992) and the *figurative traits* arising which provide precise information about reality and the environment. All means of representation are involved to keep in mind the states intervening between transformations, i.e., perception, drawing, mental imagery, language, and imitation. Hence, figurative intelligence is a reflection of knowledge patterns and exists through figurative imagery and patterns of information (Yolles and Fink, 2011, 11). These authors continue to state that the figurative system is concerned with driving appreciation and goal formulation, potentially deriving from data collection and involving the careful weighing of arguments as *opposed to spontaneous decisions* following from the spontaneous desires of decision-makers. The efficacious capacity of normative agents creates a cycle of activity that manifests figurative projections as operative objects, namely *operative traits*.

Following Yolles and Fink (2011), operative intelligence occurs in a personality as the capacity of a process network to efficaciously migrate appropriate information from figurative intelligence. All of this interaction creates a social operative system as the fifth trait of a normative agent. The outcomes are operational performance as an efficient and effective direct action, which can be called social orientation. An agency's *efficacy level* is an important factor because the collective agency in terms of implantation level and outcomes is responsible to the people through its professionalism, effectiveness, efficiency, equality, transparency, and efficacy.

## Theoretical basis

Measuring efficacy within the development process of collective action should focus on the impact of how, and how well, agency policies aggregate economic or social outcomes, such as the Most Similar System Design (MSSD), where differences in the dependent variables may provide comparable information on efficacy. Isham et al. (1997) note that nearly all data concerning government actions involve public resources being spent on *inputs and outputs*, rather than comparable *outcomes*. Very little can be learnt from the input or output data alone and certainly nothing about efficacy (Lant, 1996).

As noted previously, efficacy is the capability of an agency to create performance. While Bandura's original concept of efficacy is related to operative intelligence, it can also relate to other forms of intelligence. It is deemed to operate through the intelligence within and beyond the strategic agency. Following Yolles and Fink (various years), efficacy can be discussed in relation to five different systems.

Firstly, efficacy is related to the *figurative system* whereby the existence of cognitive information contributes to the formation of attitudes, emotions, goal imperatives, and self-reference. The manifestation of this cognitive information to the operative couple in the figurative system may not be fully reflective of the needs of an agency, impacting on its capacity to form appreciative schemas like goals. Inefficacious manifestations of such cognitive information may result in inappropriate figurative models impacting directly on operative decision-making. Efficacy measures may be implemented by comparing cognitive information with the figurative schemas arising.

Secondly, efficacy is related to the *operative system* with its figurative schemas manifested into the operative system to facilitate policy decision-making. So, appreciative information structuring cognitive information into schemata to generate goals, decision imperative, and feelings, all influenced by ideology and ethics, is manifested into operative decision-making structures. Consequently, poor operative intelligence is often seen in terms of inefficacious behaviour. Measures of efficacy may arise by comparing figurative schemas with decision outcomes under known contexts.

Thirdly, efficacy is related to the *cognitive system*, since attitudes and information are together manifested as policy options, reflecting the

internalised social context. Efficacy can be measured by comparing attitudes with policy initiatives developed within the agency operative system. Cognitive system efficacy relates to strategic figurative intelligence, but the relationship between policy and its implementation relates to the agency operative or behavioural intelligence, which involves collective action and implementation.

Fourthly, efficacy is related to the *behavioural system* through the implementation of policy within a social environment. To a large extent, this is the function of bureaucracy, which therefore may be seen to have degrees of efficacy that make it behavioural intelligent (or not).

Fifthly, efficacy is related to *cultural intelligence* as a knowledge attribute; emotional imperatives and identity are manifested into the strategic collective agency as information.

Efficacy is associated with the intelligence process. So cognitive efficacy may be assumed as being related to the manifestation of say, *attitudes* in the relationship between strategic figurative and strategic operative, recalling that strategy is an agency-attributed personality as opposed to the whole agency.

Migratory effectiveness relates to how well information is migrated from the figurative to the operative, in contrast, efficiency relates to the capacity of the channels through which migrations occur in relation to the resources required to manifest the information as social action, and efficacy can be strong, modest or weak (Yolles and Fink, 2011; 2013).

## Collectivism

Traditionally (Jreisat, 2002, 58), collectives or collective systems are defined in the following way: “In collective systems, preferences are for a tightly-knit social framework in which individuals can expect loyalty from their family, relatives, clan or friends to look after them”. Here Jreisat explains a form of familism rather than collectivism, familism being one form of collectivism. This means that collective action and co-operation occur at a personal level where the person is known and identified as important, while outside that framework (personal knowing), the world becomes abstract and unknown. Jreisat continues that in collectivist systems, public administration literacy

## *Theoretical basis*

evokes negative images, leading to particularistic forms of decision-making, a managerial euphemism for favouritism and nepotism in public organisations which can easily lead to a lack of confidence and mistrust. Often the decision-making process at the organisational level is seen as being collective and based on consensus, but are the real decision-makers individual persons or individuals in an organisation? A sanitation survey undertaken in Cambodia showed that to achieve a communal goal, some respondents indicated that strict hierarchies limited autonomy to initiate collective action (Salinger et al., 2019).

Persons lower in the hierarchy and social context find it difficult or even impossible to negotiate or criticise a person with a higher ranking in the social context or hierarchy. The process may be seen as collective action but it is far from real collective action.

When important frame groups are relatively small and narrow (mainly family and extended family) it is difficult to create collective action outside the group. In Cambodia, “community” does not historically carry an intelligible meaning beyond the extended family and neighbours (Thion, 1999). Oveson et al. (1996) viewed the villages and communities in a similar way, observing that relationships appeared to be atomised. These authors explained that “every household is an island”, emphasising the lack of trust and bonds between kinship groups, thereby limiting collective action.

Hofstede (1980b, 45) indicated that individualism implies a loosely-knit social framework in which people are supposed to take care of themselves and their immediate families only, while collectivism is characterised by a tight social framework, with people distinguishing between ingroups and outgroups. They expect their ingroup to look after them, and in exchange, feel it is owed absolute loyalty from them. The weakness of Hofsted’s<sup>2</sup> theory

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**2 NOTE: In Hofstede, individualism includes family members. So is therefore individualist/collectivist**

Individualism: the degree to which individuals are integrated into groups. Ties between individuals are loose: everyone is expected to look after him/herself and his/her immediate family.

Collectivist: societies in which people from birth onwards are integrated into strong, cohesive ingroups, often extended families (with uncles, aunts, and grandparents) who continue to protect them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty.

is that he did not take into account the individual aspects during its creation and looks at collectivism from one perspective, focusing mainly on the IBM Corporation (Guo et al., 2011).

Hofstede is surely one of the most cited scientists in the field of cultural studies with such a strong fingerprint, that his definition of collectivism/individualism is a paradigm. The Hofstede model is extensively referred and his ideas form the basis of numerous research papers. Numerous studies have used Hofstede's definitions and understanding of collectivism/individualism, based on the idea of his cultural dimension (2011). Among these are Routamaa (2014), Sivasubramanian (2016), Berkvens (2017), and Bevan (2017).

Both Berkvens and Bevan used the ideas expressed by Hofstede in 1986, where he focuses on individualism/collectivism at the family and extended family level, rather than the societal level, but makes the strong statement (*ibid.*, 307) that a collectivist society is tightly integrated, while an individualist society is loosely integrated<sup>3</sup>. This might be true at the family level but it is not at all clear how that statement can be applied to the wider context beyond the family level. The surveys of Berkvens and Bevan are based on Western ideas of collectivism/individualism and the questions asked and analysis carried out may only reflect Western concerns.

Kalyaney (2017) analysed the collective action issue at the family and societal level through her survey on Cambodia. The survey questions are based on Eastern values and cultures, rather than on Western. She also demonstrates conflict between family and society on the question of collective action and work or volunteerism, writing that "within Cambodia's context, most parents do not allow their children to get involved in volunteering because they believe volunteering for society is a waste of time and money" (*ibid.*, 10). Oveson et al. go even farther, stating that "Cambodians had little faith in collective action to begin with" (Oveson et al., 1996, 66–67).

Hofstede's study on cultural dimensions is one of the first of its kind, opening up a discussion on comparing the organisational cultures of different nations, as mentioned by Sivasubramanian (2016). Despite Hofstede's great works, certain weaknesses exist, since, in some circumstances, misjudgement

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3 Cambodia was not one of the countries included by Hofstede in his original study.

## *Theoretical basis*

may arise. In “Culture’s Consequences: International Differences in Work-Related Values” (Hofstede, 1984), there are some limitations in identifying culture and collectivism-individualism. Guo et al. (2011) mention that Hofstede assumes that national territory means cultural homogeneity. His example country, China, is not homogeneous, rather it is a big country with strong cultural and regional differences, with various heritages existing in different parts of China. Another limitation of Hofstede’s study is his sample group. As Guo et al. (2011, 11) explained, all Hofstede’s informants worked in a single industry and even for the same single company, IBM. The IBM organisation is known for its common and unified corporate culture across the globe and is unlikely to be typical of the home country. Manual workers in particular are likely to have been mostly excluded from his research and analysis. Guo et al. also noted that Hofstede’s research is culturally bound, as reflected in the methodology used and the cultural bias of (Western) researchers. Finally, the questions asked and the analysis carried out may reflect Western concerns and Hofstede precisely analyses collectivism in the IBM organisation and in the West, collectivism is connected to organisations.

Another problem is that the meanings and understanding of individualism-collectivism differ account to the country and culture under study.<sup>4</sup> While Japanese staff and employees are loyal to their organisations and companies, Chinese employees may well be more loyal to their families (Mead, 1994; Yeh, 1989; Li et al., 2000). Both are collective Asian countries, representing different forms and types of collectivism, but each expresses “collectivism”, in contrast to Western “individualism” (Mead, 1994; Yeh, 1989; Li et al., 2000).

Guo et al. (2016) explain that collectivism relates to people coming together collectively to act unitarily through normative processes to satisfy some commonly agreed and understood purpose or interest. They also say that collectivist perspectives with differently framed realities, maintain

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4 During discussions with Cambodian students (and other South East Asian students about their perspectives and country), they explained that “definitely Cambodians/Thais/Lao are not collective people”. So there is conflict between the way Westerners and Easterners define and understand collectivism and collective actions. Western scholars define and see Cambodians as collective people, and Eastern seems to be used to define them as individual or even ego-centric people.

## *A Critical Evaluation of Individualism, Collectivism and Collective Action*

distinct ontological and epistemic boundaries, leading to a different form of collectivism as collective action. Embedded cultures are consistent with a collectivistic view, where meaning in life can be found largely through social relationships, identifying with a group, participating in a shared way of life, and the adoption of shared goals. Values like social order, respect for tradition, security, and wisdom are important. There tends to be a conservative attitude towards support being provided to maintain the status quo and restraining actions against the inclinations to potentially disrupt ingroup solidarity or the traditional order (Foucault, 1972). An opposite point of view is that autonomy cultures are consistent with an individualistic view.

Bandura (2001) points out that in collectivism, people have a shared belief in their collective power to produce the desired results or outcomes. He expresses that group attainments are the product not only of shared intentions, knowledge, and skills of members, but also the interactive, coordinated, and synergistic dynamics of their transactions. According to CAT (Yolles and Fink, 2014), there are different types and forms of collectivism, such as horizontal collectivism which is based on the assumption that each individual is more or less equal. On the other hand, vertical collectivism assumes that individuals are fundamentally different from each other (Triandis et al., 1998).

Tamis-LeMonda et al. (2007) argue in their individualism/collectivism study that within cultural value systems, presumed polar opposites may be viewed as conflicting, additive, or functionally dependent in response to changes across situations, developmental time, and social, political, and economic sub-contexts. This is because, without achievement orientation, individuals may not exploit their capabilities, but without social orientation, they may care less about social obligations. For example, a vertical/hierarchical individualist view means that people are more likely to interact with others in a strictly economic manner and maximise their personal goals as explained by Probst et al., (1999) and Triandis (1987). Many people consider cultural value sets of individualism and collectivism to operate as a duality (Yolles and Fink, 2012), which may or may not create an interactive dynamic.

When talking about individualism-collectivism one must take into consideration national culture. Hofstede (1991) saw culture as the “software” of the mind, formed through learnt patterns of thinking, feeling, and acting.

## *Theoretical basis*

His idea is based on the classification of cultures across four (later five) dimensions of measurement centred on cultural values. These five dimensions lead to the idea that culture is a collective program of the minds in a group, differentiating them from other groups. Yolles and Iles (2006) explain that Hofstede's (1994) orientation classifications are as follows: 1) individual vs. collective, 2) power distance, 3) uncertainty avoidance, 4) dominant values, and 5) short term vs. long term. The characteristics determine the nature of personality (both individual and collective) can be represented by a variety of theories.

The CAT focuses on an individualism/collectivism, trait-based culture. It includes three traits: 1) cultural, 2) social (Sagiv and Schwartz, 2007), and 3) personality. Personality traits include cognitive, figurative, and operative (Yolles and Fink, 2013). These traits shape the level and form of collectivism. Traits can be used to explain the what, why, and how of dynamic agency behaviour in complex situations. Traits arise from the extensive empirical work on cultural values undertaken by Schwartz (1994) and Sagiv-Schwartz (2007), elaborated by Yolles and Fink (2013). The differences in variables together with short descriptions are shown in Table 2.1.



**Table 2.1:** Differences in variables

<b>Cultural Variable</b>	<b>Nature</b>
<b>Hofstede's Variables</b>	
Power distance	Degree of acceptance that legitimate power is unequally distributed in institutions.
Uncertainty avoidance	Degree of discomfort concerning uncertainty and ambiguity, leading to the support of beliefs that promise certainty and maintain institutions protecting conformity.
Masculinity/femininity	A preference for accomplishment, heroism, severity, and material success as opposed to a preference for relationships, modesty, and attention to the weak qualities of life.
Individualism/collectivism	A preference for socially closed surroundings where individuals care for themselves and their immediate kin, as opposed to depending on groups of others.
Short-term vs. long-term orientation, or Confucian dynamism	Connects the past with current and future actions/challenges.
<b>Sagiv and Schwartz, and Yolles and Fink Variables</b>	
Conservation	Security, conformity, and tradition are priorities, along with maintaining the established order of things.
Hierarchy	Legitimacy of role ascription and fixed resources like social power, authority, humility, and wealth.
Intellectual autonomy	Values that stimulate autonomy to pursue goals and intellectual interests, including curiosity, open-mindedness, and creativity.
Affective autonomy	Promotion and protection of attainment in positive affective experiences like pleasure, excitement, and variety.
Competency	Values that polarise the dominance of surroundings through self-affirmation like ambition, success, and risk.
Harmony	Concepts relating to being at one with nature, and protection of the environment.
Egalitarian compromise	Concepts like equality, social justice, and responsibility.

Adapted from Hofstede (1991; 1994), Sagev and Schwratz (2007), Yolles and Fink (2013; 2015).

## *Theoretical basis*

Yolles and Fink (2013, 2) explain that a trait is usually seen as a distinguishing feature, characteristic, or quality of a personality style and action. It creates a predisposition for a personality to respond in a particular way to a broad range of situations (Allport, 1961). Traits arise from interaction between personality and situation (Chapman et al., 2000), resulting for instance in the interaction model of personality (Stevens and Rodin, 2001). Traits are also described as enduring patterns of perceiving, relating to, and thinking about the environment and oneself, exhibited in a wide range of social and personal contexts, constituting habitual patterns of thought, emotions, and behavioural clustering.

In CAT, *three bipolar normative personality traits* can be identified, namely self-identification, self-regulation, and self-organisation of a “living” social/organisational system, while *two formative bipolar traits regulate the interaction of an agency* (organisation) with its cultural and operative or social operative environments. Normative personality can be seen as a normative set of logical mental rules and strategies, while the collective mind is seen as an information system that operates through a normative set of logical mental rules and strategies (e.g., Atkinson and Shiffrin, 1968; Bowlby, 1980; Novak, 1993; Wang, 2007). These rules and strategies may fail when pathologies develop, either through internal or external forces. The variables of Cultural Agency Theory together with short descriptions are shown in Table 2.2.

**Table 2.2:** Summary of traits and their agency bipolar enantiomers

Trait	Bipolar Trait Values	Nature	Keywords/Values
Cultural	Sensate	Reality is sensory and material, pragmatism is normal, there is an interest in becoming rather than being, and happiness is paramount. People are externally oriented and tend to be instrumental, while empiricism is important.	The senses, utilitarianism, materialism, becoming, process, change, flux, evolution, progress, transformation, pragmatism, temporal.
Strategic Cognitive	Ideational	Reality is super-sensory, morality is unconditional, tradition is of importance, there is a tendency towards creation and the examination of self.	Super-sensory, spirituality, humanitarianism, self-deprivation, creativity of ideas, eternal.
	Intellectual Autonomy	People are seen as autonomous, bounded entities who should find meaning in their own uniqueness and encouraged to express their internal attributes (preferences, traits, feelings, and motives). Intellectual autonomy encourages individuals to pursue their own ideas and intellectual directions independently.	Autonomy, creativity, expressivity, curiosity, broadmindedness.
	Embeddedness	People are viewed as entities embedded in the plural agency. Meaning in life comes through social relationships, identifying with a group, participating in its shared way of life, and striving towards its shared goals. Values such as social order, respect for tradition, security, and wisdom are especially important. Embedded cultures emphasise maintenance of the status quo and restraining actions or inclinations that might disrupt ingroup solidarity or the traditional order. Embracing responsibility and duty and committing to shared goals. Connected with transactional scripting, constituting simple repetition and sameness.	Polite, obedient, forgiving, respecting tradition, self-disciplined, moderate, respecting the social order, family security, public image protection, respecting national security, honouring elders, reciprocating favours.
Strategic Figurative	Mastery and Affective Autonomy	Encouraging active self-assertion to attain group or personal goals and master, direct, and change the natural and social environment. Basically monistic in nature, affective autonomy is encouraged in the pursuit of affectively positive experiences. It encourages individuals to pursue affectively positive experiences for themselves. Those exhibiting trait are likely to treat others as independent actors with their own interests, preferences, abilities, and allegiances. Others need autonomy to self-develop their own ideas.	Ambition, success, daring, competence, an exciting life, enjoying life, a varied life, pleasure, self-indulgence.
	Harmony	Trying to understand and appreciate rather than direct or exploit. This orientation emphasises the goal of "unity with nature", "protecting the environment", and "world at peace". It is basically pluralistic in nature.	Acceptance of portion in life, world at peace, protecting the environment, unity with nature, appreciating beauty in the world.

## Theoretical basis

Strategic Operative	Hierarchy	People are socialised to take the hierarchical distribution of roles for granted and comply with the obligations and rules attached to their roles. In hierarchical cultures, organisations are more likely to construct a chain of authority in which everyone is assigned well-defined roles. There is an expectation that individuals operate for the benefit of the social organisation. People with this orientation see the unequal distribution of power, roles, and resources as legitimate. It has an implicit connection with power and power processes.	Social power, authority, humility, wealth.
	Egalitarianism	Egalitarians seek to induce people to recognise one another as moral equals who share basic interests as human beings. People are socialised to internalise a commitment to co-operate and feel concern for the welfare of others. They are expected to act for others' benefit as a matter of choice. Organisations are built on co-operative negotiation among employees and management. This orientation has an implicit connection with service to the agency.	Quality, social justice, responsibility, honesty.
Agency Operative	Dramatism	Individual relationships with others are important, constituting sequences of interpersonal events. Communication is important, as are individuals and their proprietary belief systems, along with individual social contracts. Goal formation should be for individual benefit. Ideocentric agencies are important, operating through social contracts between the rational wills of individual members.	Sequentiality, communication, individualism, contractual, ideocentric.
	Patternism	Configurations are important in social and other forms of relationships. There is persistent curiosity. The social aspect is influenced by relationships with individuals. Some importance is attached to symmetry, pattern, balance, and the dynamics of relationships. Goal seeking should be for collective benefit, and collective goal formation takes precedence over personal goal formation. Allocentric collectives are important, where members operate subjectively.	Configurations, relationships, symmetry, pattern, balance, dynamics, collectivism, allocentric.

Sources: Sorokin (1962), Sagiv and Schwartz (2007), Shotwell et al. (1980), Yolles and Fink (2009; 2013)

## Formative traits

There are five formative traits in any agency with a set of bipolar traits, which can be defined as two opposite types of behaviour or attitude, both individual and collective.

The strategic agency has normative personality including two environments that determine how it interacts socially: external cultural and social relations, each with their own bipolar trait values (Yolles and Fink, 2014a).

Prior to identifying the formative traits, it is also useful to revisit the relationship between norms and traits. Traits determine agency orientation, they occur in the agency and create its *strategic personality*. Norms constrain and facilitate trait effects, and hence operate as functionality controls. The strength of these controls is also related to the nature of the traits constituting the agency.

*Cultural trait* maintains three forms of knowledge: identification, elaboration, and executor knowledge (Yolles, 2006), each of which can be manifested into the personality system as information. As previously indicated, the two orientation types are *sensate and ideational*. The cultural trait creates a cultural environment which affects how the agency interacts with its environment while the formation of trust is also determined by national culture (Fukuyama, 1995a). Sorokin (1937, 42) explains the characteristic of sensate and reality. Reality is sensory and material, while pragmatism is normal. There is an interest in becoming rather than in being, and happiness is paramount. According to Earley and Ang (2003, 3), the ability of an agency to successfully adapt to a change in the cultural setting is attributable to the cultural context and a consequence of cultural intelligence.

The sensate culture is associated with individualism. Collectivism differs under sensate and ideational cultures. Sensate orientation highlights the nature of needs and ends (outcomes) in respect to goal objectives, and the degree and capacity to pursue those needs by exploiting the external world. Sensate culture is practically oriented, preferring human external needs (externalism). Reality is observed by the senses and reality can be measured and observed rather than reasoned and accepted.

## *Theoretical basis*

The ideational culture is associated with collectivism. Ideational orientation involves appreciating and understanding the conceptual and internal nature of object-based attention and creating fulfilment or realisation through self-imposed minimisation or the elimination of most physical needs. These views are also considered to be important for achieving harmony in society and maintaining a static and stable equilibrium, where traditions and past experiences are important attributes. Reality is observed and understood through what can be envisaged and reasoned. In the case of instability such as modernisation, harmony is preferred; the ascendancy of one type over another may vary according to the means by which a particular group or regime is able to come to power and maintain it. Ideational culture emphasises maintenance and understands old traditions and systems rather than exploiting new ideas. Following Sorokin (1937), it can be said that ideational reality is super-sensory, morality unconditional, and tradition important. There is a tendency towards creation and the examination of one's self. The formation of trust is determined by national culture.

*Social orientation trait* is located in the agency operative system and contains the enantiomers “dramatising” and “patterning”. It directs action, interaction, and reaction that (re)constitutes the social environment in terms of (desired, welcome, undesired, unwelcome) activities, and determines the orientation an agency has towards its environment. The traits do not “work” independently, but are instead interconnected. There is some connection between dramatising and sensate, while patterning is connected to the ideational trait (Park, 2005, 16; Wolf and Grollman, 1982; Matthews, 1977). Social traits determine the social relations and orientations of agency. Shotwell et al. (1980) defined social bipolar traits as a dramatist environment where goal formation is for individual benefit. Self-centred agencies operate through social contracts between the “rational wills” of their individual members. Communication and individual relationships with others are important, constructed as sequences of interpersonal events. In contrast, in the patterner trait, central importance is attached to symmetry, pattern, balance, and the dynamics of social relationships. Goal seeking should be for collective benefit, and collective goal formation takes precedence over personal goal formation.

There is persistent curiosity about configurations which are important in social relationships.

Yolles and Fink (2013, 35) explain that “the social orientation trait is ultimately responsible for the way in which policy will be implemented”. It is also reflective of Jung’s (1971) notions of *extraversion* – with its focus on the external world and participatory activities and actions within it (and reflective of sensate culture), and *introversion* – with its focus on the inner world of ideas and experiences, reflecting on thoughts, memories, and feelings (and reflective of ideational culture). As such, there is a connection between *extroverted/introverted* personalities and sensate/ideational cultural orientation, with implied implicit connections to dramatising/patterning social orientation, respectively (Richardson, 1996, 120; Yolles, 2009a). Thus, the direct connections are between extrovert, sensate, and dramatising, and between introvert, ideational, and patterning. Finally, they explain that while the cultural orientation of a governing body may refer to its political culture, it is in itself influenced by the ambient host culture in which the agency is embedded. Social orientation is an extension of the agency personality oriented within the social environment that hosts it. Both cultural and social traits are therefore part of the agency’s personality environment, with the ability to represent the changing contexts influencing personality.

*The strategic cognitive trait* arises from cognitive and social psychology (Van Liere and Dunlap, 1981; Menary, 2009). It is existentially connected to cognitive self-reference (Hannah et al., 2013), and maintains a relationship with cognitive intention (Freeman, 2008). It might involve the effective potential recognition of social and political structures and associated constraints imposed on the agency through both internal and external pressures, affecting the actions and shared beliefs and agency’s capacity to create favourable outcomes (perceived efficacy). The variable may be seen to take enantiomers that give the agency an *intellectual autonomy orientation* or *embeddedness orientation* (Sagiv and Schwartz, 2007). This is similar to the view expressed by Parsons and Bales (1955) and Huntington (1968; 1975) who talked about the bipolar pairs: autonomous institution vs. subordinate institution determining their capacity for adaptation and development. Cognitive orientation determines the agency’s structure for autonomous

## *Theoretical basis*

actions. These variables can be seen as reversing orientations. Autonomy refers to bounded entities that should find meaning in their own uniqueness and who are encouraged to express their internal attributes (preferences, traits, feelings, and motives). Embeddedness emphasises the maintenance of the status quo and the restraining actions or inclinations that might disrupt ingroup solidarity or the traditional order (Yolles and Fink, 2013, 33). The traditional order may come from the environment such as a top-down society or bottom-up society, determining the level and type of action associated with strategies, ideology and ethics/morality and experience. This can also be connected to the patterns of information arising from conceptual and cultural knowledge, affecting the efficacy or inefficacy of an organisation or agency. The development of efficacy/inefficacy may orientate the agency towards cognitive coherence or dissonance. Endler and Summerfield (1995, 255) explain that the development of inefficacy can lead to a lack of coherence and the demonstration of collective cognitive dissonance, and this can act as a driver for cognitive state/dispositional dysfunctions.

Embeddedness can occur when people are viewed as entities of the plural agency. The meaning of life comes from social relationships, identifying with a group, participating in its shared way of life, and striving towards its shared goals with respect for tradition and the status quo. Whereas “intellectual” autonomy, as opposed to the bipolar trait, refers to people who are seen as autonomous and find meaning in their own uniqueness, independently pursuing their own ideas and intellectual directions.

*The strategic figurative trait* has both cognitive and evaluative aspects. It is influenced by attitudes and reflection and connects with the cognitive purpose and processes of cognitive self-regulation. As a trait variable, the figurative trait takes enantiomers that define a *harmony orientation* and *mastery* with *affective autonomy orientation* (Sagiv and Schwartz, 2007). Mastery is monistic in nature and encourages active self-assertion to attain group (collective) or personal goals and master, direct, and change the natural and social environment. The affective autonomy aspect encourages the pursuit of affectively positive experiences. It encourages individuals to pursue affectively positive experiences for themselves (Yolles and Fink, 2013). Following the idea of Sagiv and Schwartz, harmony is the opposite, being



pluralistic in nature, while attempting to understand and appreciate rather than direct or exploit. This trait maintains an interconnected set of tacit standards to a certain degree, which order and value experience, determining the way an agency sees and place value on different situations, and how instrumental judgements are made and action is taken (Yolles and Fink, 2013).

The figurative system is concerned with driving appreciation, goal formulation, potential for social interaction, and the ethical positioning that may occur in response to opportunities (Yolles and Fink, 2013). It is potentially derived from data collection and the careful weighing of arguments as opposed to spontaneous decisions following on from the spontaneous desires of decision-makers (Yolles and Fink, 2010, 10). Figurative intelligence influences effective decision-making. This trait determines how an agency as a decision-maker observes and interprets reality, and establishes the decision-making process.

Mastery encourages active self-assertion to attain group or personal goals and master, direct, and change the natural and social environment. The autonomy aspect encourages the pursuit of affectively positive experiences. Whereas harmony is basically seen as pluralistic and attempts to understand and appreciate rather than direct or exploit: its goals are “unity with nature”, “protecting the environment”, and “world at peace” (Yolles and Fink, 2014a).

*The strategic operative trait* provides the agency with the ability to durably maintain a separate operative existence while coping with an unpredictable future. As a trait variable can take one of two enantiomers; *hierarchy* and *egalitarianism*, the former relying on hierarchical systems of ascribed roles to ensure productive behaviour (Sagiv and Schwartz, 2007, 179). In hierarchical cultures, organisations are more likely to construct a chain of authority in which everyone is assigned well-defined roles. Members are expected to comply with role obligations and put the interests of the organisation before their own. Hierarchy defines the unequal distribution of power, roles, and resources as legitimate (Yolles and Fink, 2013) where the higher order is unquestionable. In contrast, egalitarianism can be characterised by people recognising one another as moral equals who share basic interests as human beings. People are socialised to internalise a commitment to co-operate. Egalitarian organisations are built on co-operative negotiation among

## *Theoretical basis*

employees and management (Sagiv and Schwartz, 2007, 180). The distinction between hierarchy and egalitarianism is also reflected in the consideration of information power. This is constituted as the disciplining function of information, and its control through, among other things, socialisation and the division of labour (Boje, 2004). In hierarchical agency, information is power and the distribution of power is limited.

Hierarchy is connected to power and power processes. The unequal distribution of power, roles, and resources is legitimate and the hierarchical distribution of roles is taken for granted as well as the obligation to comply with the rules attached to them. Whereas egalitarianism can be seen as a system where people recognise one another as moral equals who share basic interests as human beings. People are socialised to internalise a commitment to co-operate and feel concern for the welfare of others.

### The logic of collective action

Niklas Luhmann's (1982) theory of social systems arises through social action, within which observed regularities emerge and evolve through collaborative and collective behaviour. Collective action is dependent upon meaningful communication, and it is this aspect of collaborative action and discourse that Luhmann's work centres on. For Luhmann, it is from systems of communication that systems of action arise. On the other hand, CAT, including efficacy and traits, explains the origin and preconditions (efficacy) of communication and how it arises from different traits.

The *collective agency* operates through shared beliefs of efficacy, pooled understanding, group aspirations and incentive systems, and collective action, arising through normative processes. The collective agency can be better understood to be a normative agent which among other things, can attain goals and accomplish its desired collective tasks. It involves the belief or perception that efficacious *collective actions* are possible in relation to a *social need and the ability to communicate, to set goals* (Bandura, 2006, 165). According to Mancur Olson (1971), groups act to serve individual interests, presumably based upon the assumption that individuals in groups act out of self-interest and personal motivation.

## *A Critical Evaluation of Individualism, Collectivism and Collective Action*

Perceived collective efficacy creates a common belief in group members concerning their collective capability and coherence. With a shared belief, the normative agent can, as a whole, attain goals and accomplish its desired tasks (Bandura, 1986). It involves a belief or perception that efficacious collective actions are possible in relation to social needs. While this differs from the self-efficacy of the individual agent, the two concepts have the same origin. Personal and collective efficacy differ in the unit of agency, but in both forms, efficacy beliefs serve similar functions and operate through similar processes (Bandura, 1999). The stronger the beliefs people hold about their collective capabilities, the more they achieve (Bandura, 1993; Hodges and Carron, 1992; Little and Madigan, 1994; Prussia and Kinicki, 1996; Sampson, Raudenbush, and Earls, 1997).

The difference between self-efficacy and collective efficacy relates to both cultural cohesion and the dissimilarities that exist between the agency members comprising the collective (Dauber, Fink, and Yolles, 2010). Thus, for instance, a cultural cohesion problem may affect normative performance through an individual agent's lack of confidence and/or lack of trust concerning the perceptual differences in collective efficacy, as noted by Bandura (1995). He continues that the efficacy-inefficacy status of a normative agent influences its ability to communicate, set goals, and persevere during adversity, potentially affecting the outcomes or satisfaction of collective action.

Patterning and trust in the governmental system and regime predicts the form and level of political participation and social activism, e.g., unionism. People who believe they can achieve the desired changes through citizen action while regarding the governmental system as trustworthy and socially responsive, display high involvement in conventional models of political action such as labour policy (Craig, 1979; Finkel, 1985; Pollock, 1983; Zimmerman and Rappaport, 1988). In contrast, those who believe they can produce political change through tenacious collective action but view the governmental system and its leaders as fundamentally unresponsive and untrustworthy favour more confrontive and coercive tactics outside the traditional political channels. Politically apathetic individuals have a low sense of efficacy regarding their influence on governmental functioning through collective initiatives and are disaffected by the political system, believing that it fails to act in their interests

## *Theoretical basis*

(Bandura, 1997). In extreme cases, government action may be negative or violent when external factors create obstacles to successful collective action, which may be negative. This can be called collective mind, potentially seen as an information system that operates through a set of logical mental rules, and strategies based on experience (e.g., Atkinson and Shiffrin, 1968; Bowlby, 1980; Novak, 1993; Wang, 2007). These rules and strategies fail when pathologies (negative external forces and feedback occur) develop (Yolles and Fink, 2010).

## Trust

Italian sociologist Franco Crespi (1989, 134) analysed social action and power, pinpointing that action and structure are non-opposed but interdependent variables of a unique process. Action and structure are both grounded in practical interaction. This means that individuals can be seen as both products of society and potential active producers of new meanings and practices. Crespi also stressed that power should not be considered merely as the capacity to act otherwise. Power also has a specific function as an inner subjective capacity, social relation, and structural dimension. These are important factors to bear in mind when thinking about trust in society.

In a social scientific discussion on trust, two major approaches arise. The first takes the view that trust is an individual property (Allport, 1961; Uslaner, 1999), while the second considers social trust as a property of social systems (Putnam, 2000). Uslander (1999) claims that individuals learn trust early in life from their parents. He also maintains that trust is based on two core personality characteristics: optimism and the capacity to control one's own life. This approach can be referred to as social-psychological explanation.

In the other theoretical approach, trust is embedded in social institutions. Political and social institutions encourage the development of trusting attitudes and behaviour. Social networks play an important role in generating high levels of social trust. Empirical analysis shows that countries with universal welfare benefits are more trusting than those with selective welfare systems (Rothstein, 2011). There is also evidence that trust is higher in societies where income distribution is even (Knack and Keefer, 1997). This may be viewed as societal explanation.

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Francis Fukuyama (1995a) explains trust at the societal level arguing that its formation is determined by national culture. He classifies different countries into low and high-trust societies and states that a common factor among low trust societies is that people tend to develop trust only towards people through blood ties, known as familism, extended family, or consanguinity. Fukuyama (1995a) further argues that familism, as a pattern of collectivism in Eastern Asian countries, is blocking the development of strong social trust.

Guo et al. (2011, 11) find similar patterns of collectivism. For example, ethnic Chinese family businesses emphasise interpersonal or relational trust rather than institutional trust, paternalistic authority, and personal ties, accessing capital through social networks. There are also differences in trust: personal vs. institutional identity (e.g., individualism vs. collectivism). They continue by explaining that this kind of trust has a negative impact on communication and sharing information.

The question of familism is not controversial. Han and Shin (2000) argue that, for example, patriarchic familism is deeply related to vertical individualism rather than collectivism since the former emphasises hierarchy and the latter equality. Fiske (1992) and Triandis (1995) add that patriarchic familism and the perception that competition is the rule of interpersonal interaction and family values are unquestionable as is loyalty. This may be referred to as zero-sum interaction rather than a win-win situation. Similar characteristics are seen in state level Southeast Asian co-operation. The form of collectivism/individualism also determines the trust level of ingroups and outgroups. According to Hoorn (2015, 270), “generally, people find that collectivism is more discriminatory and thereby limits the intensity of the trust that individuals from one group have in those from another, notably in outgroup members (and vice versa for individualism)”. It must be mentioned that this research focuses on two types of trust: general and hierarchical.

Putnam (1993) argues that particularised trust arising from interactions in *voluntary organisations* spills over into generalised trust. Fukuyama (1995, 153) explains generalised trust as a trust towards strangers, arising when “a community shares a set of moral values in such a way as to create expectations of regular and honest behaviour”. Putnam (1993) also notes that trust, norms,

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and networks can improve efficiency and facilitate coordinated actions. However, this current study focuses on collective actions.

The characteristics of societal and cultural systems or traits (Yolles and Fink, 2013) determine the form of trust and the level of collectivism-individualism, which varies in place, time, and situation. Yolles and Fink also note that these traits are interconnected, trust being the sum of all. Triandis (1995) shares his doubts on the pure dichotomy of the value construct. According to him, there should be various kinds of individualism and collectivism. Thus, American individualism is different from Swedish individualism, as Korean collectivism is different from the Israeli Kibbutz (Shin and Park, 2004, 105). Han and Shin (2000) categorise the underlying variables to give four distinctive dimensions of collectivism: 1) horizontal (HC), 2) vertical (VC), 3) horizontal individualism (HI), and 4) vertical individualism (VI).

Horizontal collectivism (HC) is a cultural value orientation, promoting interaction with others on an equal basis, emphasising communal sharing, co-operation, and interdependency with others (Han and Shin, 2000). Trust is positively associated with both general trust and particularised trust. Vertical collectivism (VC) promotes the subordination of personal goals to group goals with social status being an important element. Confucianism has a great influence on collectivism in Asian countries (Triandis, 1995), where primary interpersonal relationships are structured in a hierarchical manner. In a social structure based on VC, one's autonomy and freedom are more restricted than in any other kind of relationship (Triandis, 1995; Triandis and Gelfand, 1998). Horizontal individualism (HI) is a cultural value orientation, promoting individuality, uniqueness, independence, self-reliance, autonomy, and equality in interpersonal interaction (Han and Shin, 2000). Reciprocity is a primary rule of "Equality Matching"; therefore, trustworthiness is an important asset for maintaining the relationship. Mutual reciprocity based on trust is related to hostility towards the other party. This occurs through the interaction between the moral principles of mutual respect and co-operation (Triandis, 1995; Triandis and Gelfand, 1998). Vertical individualism (VI) is a value orientation, encouraging personal achievement through competition. Under such circumstances, others are likely to be seen as competitors (Han and Shin, 2000). Probst et al (1999) note that high levels of VI are linked with

the least co-operative people who utilise different social-relational modes in various behavioural domains simultaneously (Adamopoulos, 1999; Triandis 1990; 1995).

## The research model

The research model is an abstract way of presenting the relations between social phenomena (Abercrombie, Hill, and Turner, 2000, 228). Following Heineman (1996, 9), it is noteworthy that political scientists attempt to construct models of political behaviour. These models may be descriptive or predictive. Descriptive models are used to study what behaviour is, while predictive models study the resultant behaviour. Theory migration is therefore required to integrate descriptive information into predictive and exploratory forms.

Theory migration involves the identification of theoretical constructs and conditioning them within a given context, enabling them to be manifested in a target theory without facilitating theoretical incommensurability, hence facilitating theory coherence – a major requirement of theory development if only implied from a horizon of purpose (Yolles and Fink, 2014). This is discussed further in Chapter 3.

The research model in this study of cultural agency (Figure 2) explains the conceptual basis used for Cambodia and Finland. With reference to the previous literature review, this model draws on the situation in the case study and responds in accordance with the research questions listed in Chapter 1. This model organises and indicates the traits affecting behaviour at the societal level, family values with a collective mind and trust, as well as their relationships to create collective actions. This model shows collective thought and action, the collective *meaning* of pursuits, and the necessary structured collective adaptability (*corrective adjustments*), all of which indicates the *capability* of a political agency in achieving its social needs and collective goals.

## Theoretical basis

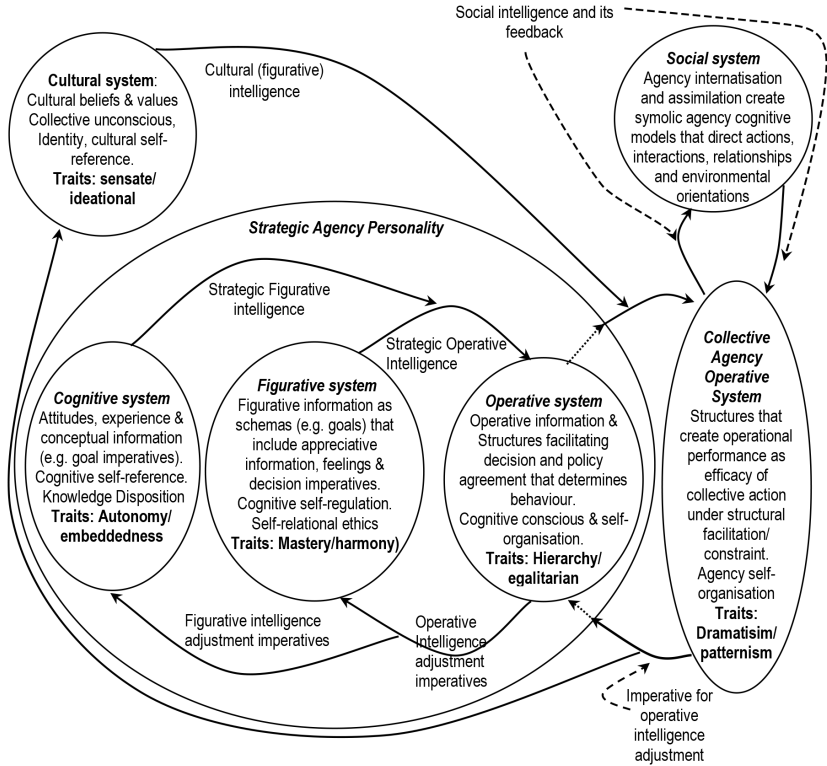


Figure 2. The research model arising from the theoretical framework adapted from Yolles and Fink (2013; 2015)

These traits take measured values, collected together to create an agency orientation. This orientation creates the potential for predictable behaviour, given that the measured values can be determined. When the traits are combined into an interactive whole, they create a mindset.

Agency operates through traits within normative personality and assemble mindsets that determine its orientation (Fink and Yolles, 2013). Mindset theory is based on trait theory which controls functions ultimately orientating the personality towards a pattern of behaviour (Fink and Yolles, 2013). The mindset traits each have dichotomous countering enantiomers that may ultimately be classified as falling into either form of collectivism



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or individualism (the lead dichotomous traits being intellectual autonomy, mastery, and affective autonomy). There are five formative agency traits, three relating to personality and two sociocultural. Sociocultural traits constitute an environment that influences the personality (Fink and Yolles, 2013a, 38).

Traits and their dichotomous enantiomer values constitute agency mindsets, and agency orientations for collectivism and individualism and capacity for collective action(s). The three personality mindset traits couple together into eight possible cognitive mindscape types.

Together, the five agency traits create a schema, theoretically enabling 32 possible agency mindset types to be delivered. In practice, there are four dominant types of individualism and four types of collectivism.

The five formative traits include a set of bipolar values, three of which define the normative personality (cognitive, figurative, operative orientations), one its cultural orientation, and the agency operative defines its social orientation emerging through interaction with the social environment as shown in Table 2.3.

As mentioned earlier, there are four dominant types of individualism and four dominant types of collectivism, and these can interact with each other and create different types of individual/collective variations that determine the form of collectivism, along with four contrasting pairs of mindsets which explain the form of collectivism/individualism.

Following Yolles (2011; 2014), different orientations for agency individualism and collectivism can be identified by mindset theory. Yolles defines four dominant types of individualism, which can interact with each other and create individual/collective variations. In this regard, Cambodia and Finland exhibit variations in individualism and collectivism (respectively) untypical of the results normally found in literature, but which define the characteristics of each country in significantly greater detail. These variations

*Theoretical basis*

in individualism and collectivism are explained in Table 2.3, along with the enantiomers.

**Table 2.3:** Four contrasting pairs of mindsets (Yolles and Fink, 2017)

<u>Pole 1 - Individualism</u>		<u>Pole 2 - Collectivism</u>	
<i>Mastery</i>	Enantiomers	<i>Harmony</i>	Enantiomers
<b>HI</b> <b>Hierarchical Individualism</b>	Intellectual Autonomy Mastery and Affective Autonomy	<b>EC</b> <b>Egalitarian Collectivism</b>	Embeddedness Harmony
	Hierarchy		Egalitarianism
<b>EI</b> <b>Egalitarian Individualism</b>	Intellectual Autonomy Mastery and Affective Autonomy	<b>HC</b> <b>Hierarchical Collectivism</b>	Embeddedness Harmony
	Egalitarianism		Hierarchy
<b>Harmony Individualism =&gt; Synergism</b>		<b>Mastery Collectivism =&gt; Populism</b>	
<b>HS</b> <b>Hierarchical Synergism</b>	Intellectual Autonomy Harmony	<b>EP</b> <b>Egalitarian Populism</b>	Embeddedness Mastery and Affective Autonomy
	Hierarchy		Egalitarianism
<b>ES</b> <b>Egalitarian Synergism</b>	Intellectual Autonomy Harmony	<b>HP</b> <b>Hierarchical Populism</b>	Embeddedness Mastery and Affective Autonomy
	Egalitarianism		Hierarchy

Source: Yolles and Fink, 2017

### 3

## Research methodology

### Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the theoretical foundations and research approach used in this study to answer the research questions in terms of the new conceptual model and theory migration. As previously mentioned, how one defines and understands collectivism and collective action based on one's cultural understanding of these phenomena is the Asian or the Western context.

The critical aim of this study is to avoid Western-centric social theory and adopt a more non-Western-centric perspective. Western scholars and researchers frequently assume that Western-based social theories are universal and relevant to all societies. Western-based social theories are critically examined in this work because they may not necessarily be universal and applicable to all societies. The Western academic approaches tend to be rooted in the experiences, culture, developmental history, and the interpretation of the world from the Western perspective. To avoid such an issue, Cultural Agency Theory (CAT) is applied in this study because it is designed to respond to the needs of complexity, and operates within the properties of a living system.

Why select Cambodia and Finland for comparison? The answer is clear and simple. The *current situation of collectivism and capacity to create*

*collective actions that mainly occur beyond the family level* are considered in this study rather than merely about the level of societal development and how it affects the form of collectivism. These two countries were chosen for their particular forms of collectivism and individualism and capacity to create collective action. Moreover, Finland and Cambodia are often referred to as sample countries in individualism/collectivism. Finland is regularly used as an example of an individualistic society (Routamaa et al., 2010; Saleem, 2016; Sivasubramanian, 2016) and Cambodia a collectivist society (Berkvens, 2017; Bevan, 2017).

This study questions the reliability of referring to the East as collective East and the West as individualist at the present time. However, the development of the state, including institutional and socio/economic is outside the scope of this study, including how these developmental factors affect the level of collectivism and the capacity to create collective action. The primary intent of this work is to investigate the traits affecting collective action and the agent's capability to create collective action to achieve its goals. These goals include the capability of Cambodia and Finland to respond to social needs and implement effective policies.

The empirical analysis in this study uses survey data. The research design contains both qualitative and quantitative data. The investigations focus on qualitative data through the means of a case study on Cambodia and Finland during 2016. The qualitative data is employed to explain the theoretical bases and answer the research questions, while the quantitative data help to explain the results.

A sociological approach is taken to answer the research questions and the Cultural Agency Theory (CAT) perspective adopted to explore the process and nature of collectivism/individualism duality and collective action.

## Theory building and testing

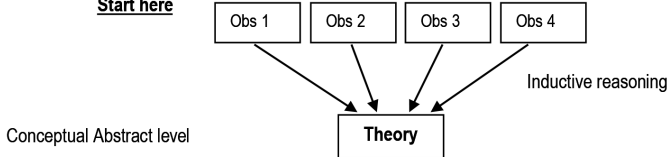
To understand the role of theory in research it is useful to distinguish between the two different styles: theory testing and theory building. Mautner (1996, 426) defined theory as “a set of propositions which provides the principles of analysis or an explanation of the subject matter. Even a single proposition

can be called a theory”. This often depends on the nature of the subject. Here, the research methodology uses theory building rather than theory testing, by setting up a set of characteristics that reflect efficacy from which deductions are possible. The focus of a theory-building process is not to verify established hypotheses, models, or frameworks but to improve their substance (Flynn, B. B., Sakakibara, Schroeder, Bates, and Flynn, E. J., 1990).

**Theory building approach**

Empirical study

**Start here**



**Theory Testing Approach**

Conceptual Abstract level

**Start here**

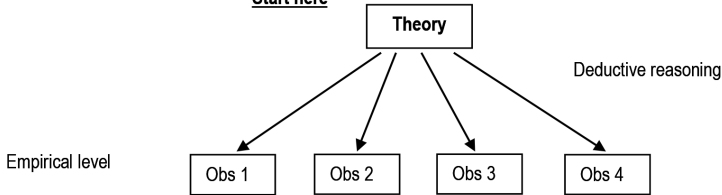


Figure 3. Theory building approach to research

Adopted from Vaus (2001, 8)

Theory building is a research process which begins with observations and uses inductive reasoning to derive a theory from them. This theory then attempts to make sense of the observations. Since the theory evolves after the observations are made, it is often called post factor theory, whereas theory testing begins with a theory and uses it to guide the potential observations, moving from general to particular. The observations should test the value of the theory. Deductive reasoning is required to derive a set of propositions so that if the theory is true, certain things should follow in the real world where:

- *Deduction* enables reasoned conclusions through the logical generalisation of particular knowledge. It is positivist, linked to

## Research methodology

empiricism, and concerned with rationality and incrementalism. Theories are tested through hypotheses.

Particular knowledge → logical generalisations → reasoned conclusions

- *Induction* refers to qualitative research conducted when certain observed phenomena lead to conclusions that create theoretical generalisations from observations. It is constructivist, seeking to construct explanations and theories about observations from an empirical world.

Observed phenomena → conclusions → generalisations

Theory testing and theory building are often presented as alternative modes of research, but they should be part of one ongoing process as shown below.

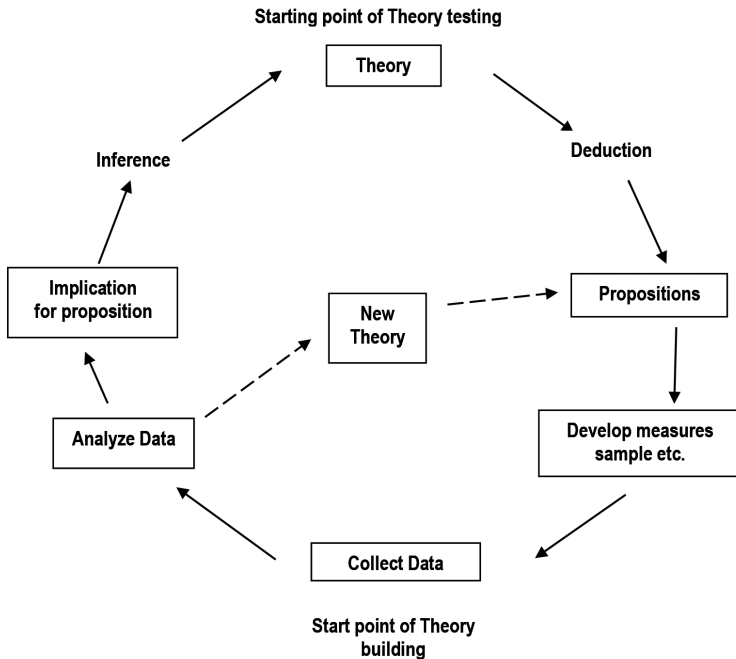


Figure 4. Logic of the research process

*Adopted from Research Design in Social Research, by Vaus (2001, 8)*

Figure 4 shows the logic of the research process facilitated by theory building and explains the set of observations and theory migration. Following Yolles and Fink (2015, 833), CAT integrates and develops the principles of social psychology and personality. CAT adopts a social-psychological approach to systemic science. The social psychological-principles are taken from Piaget's (1950) theory of development while Lehman (1998, 42) saw social-psychological development as a prime function of the cognised operational environment of the agency and its capacity for adaptation. The broadly systemic approach adopted by Bandura (1999, 229) involves the idea that dynamic self-schemas of personality enable the individual/social-collective to see itself as an autonomous system, dynamically interacting with its social environment. Theory migration involves the identification of theoretical constructs in source theories, and conditioning them within a given context so that they may be manifested in a target theory in a way that does not facilitate theoretical incommensurability, hence facilitating theory coherence – a major requirement of theory development if only implied from a horizon of purpose. Illustrations of this arise with the axiomatic principles of the target theory as a “living systems theory” (Schwarz, 1994) and its elaboration (Yolles, 2006). This development of theoretical codes constitutes the process of theory building, embracing new conceptual devices to deliver new strategic modelling processes. This is in contrast to inquiry, which examines the relationships among antecedent variables (Parkhe, 1993). As such, the expected research outcome becomes a refined framework with explanatory power, where theory testing can follow.

The research methodology in this study employs the theory-building approach to identify connections between traits and the factors contributing to the phenomena and its efficacy. The methodology can be used to explain reality in terms of the model through the collection of significant data. Following Creswell (2007, 4), the methodology helps to create a framework for the entire research process. The research design facilitates a plan of action for linking the philosophical assumptions to specific methods.

According to Carver (2005, 320), “there is potential for confusion in comparing theories of personality across literature, due to differences in the use of terms”. Boeree (2006) supports this by stating that the field of

## *Research methodology*

personality gives us a plurality of theories rather than a science of personality, resulting in a confusing complexity of non-relatable terms.

This current research emphasises the importance of multiple measures and observations, each of which may involve different types of errors. Additional importance is placed on the need to use double measurements across these multiple errors, the full sources of which will help this research gain a better grasp on the reality of certain situations (Trochim, 2006). For this reason, this employs a comparative approach and the Most Similar Systems Design (MSSD), supported by the relevant statistical data (see Table 3.2).

The focus of a theory-building process *is not to verify established hypotheses, models, or frameworks, but to improve their substance* (Flynn et al., 1990). Consistent with this approach, firstly the structure of the cultural agency's internal processes is explained along with the nature of collective action (displays of emotions), and agency regulative adaptive processes. Secondly, the epistemic independent bipolar traits are developed which regulate the relative importance attached to the alternate "emotion action" or "emotion adaptation and learning" oriented processes.

The Most Similar Systems Design (MSSD) approach is used in this study since it is both inductive and deductive. Induction draws a conclusion from one or more specific facts or pieces of evidence to explain the facts. Deduction is a form of reasoning in which the conclusion must necessarily follow the reason given. Deduction is valid if it is impossible for the conclusion to be false, if the premises are true (Cooper and Schindler, 2006).

It is assumed in this work that the differences between the case study countries may explain the level of their collective actions. The facts and evidence of the similarities and differences in two countries under study may explain the outcomes regarding their capacity to create collective actions. Starting with the survey results, the data is examined by cross tabulation, and the final qualitative analysis performed using MSSD. Finally, a qualitative assessment is made of the conceptual categories to provide an adequate explanation of each case.



## Most Similar System Design

The Most Similar Systems Design (MSSD) approach (Lim 2006, 34) in qualitative research is used to identify the significant variables and demonstrate the impact of collective action. The MSSD requires at least two different or similar cases for comparison. This study compares two relatively small countries with homogeneous cultures, one in Europe and the other in Southeast Asia. The MSSD approach is based on the comparison of very similar cases, which only differ in the dependent variable. This assumption makes it easier to find the independent variables to explain the presence or absence of the dependent variables. The MSSD design is also particularly relevant in understanding that the differences between the systems are as important as the similarities (Lim, 2006, 39). Differences are crucial to the logic of the MSSD design.

This study compares the level of collective action in Cambodia and Finland by focusing on the similarities and differences in the influential factors. The selection of these two countries is based on the aspiration to explain the level of collective actions (dependent variables) in the current situation at the present time. These two cases will be compared and the similarities and differences between them then evaluated (independent, dependent, and environmental variables).

The countries under study are rather similar, despite Cambodia being a poor country and Finland being among the richest countries in the world. During the period of data collection, both countries were in the middle of social and economic changes and the creation of policies affecting their development in one way or another. Nonetheless, the two countries are dissimilar in their developmental experiences. The differences among them may provide some insight into the characteristics most directly related to their capacity for creating collective action.

## Research methods

This is a mixed-methods study, incorporating quantitative statistical analysis with a qualitative literature review. Given that the topic includes issues such as the role of social needs in creating collective action, epistemological arguments are presented in the broader literature. To answer the research questions, quantitative statistics are used to analyse the survey data. This research employs the comparative study technique with simple cross tabulation as the statistical measure.

To avoid a Western-centric approach, the questions have been taken from the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) along with some supplied by associates in Cambodia. After a simple pre-test, some questions were dropped, due to interpretation problems in both Finland and Cambodia, while a lack of understanding led to others being unreliable. Some of the questions designed by Cambodian associates were difficult for respondents in Finland to understand and vice versa. In the MSSD approach, variables are identified by their impact on national development.

### **The independent variables relevant to this study:**

1. How individuals behave at the societal level (through political participation)
2. Family values
3. Trust
4. Perceived collective efficacy

### **The dependent variable relevant to this study:**

1. Level of collective action at union level

### **The environmental variables relevant to this study:**

1. Population homogeneity
2. Religious/cultural homogeneity

The following MSSD procedure was employed to explore the two case studies of Cambodia and Finland: 1) The level of collective actions in Cambodia

## *A Critical Evaluation of Individualism, Collectivism and Collective Action*

and Finland were compared by looking at the similarities and differences contributing to collective action. 2) Data on the individual behaviour responsible for creating efficacy or inefficacy in collective action were analysed qualitatively, based on information in the literature. 3) The similarities and differences in collective action were explored for the two countries under study, including the norms and formative traits contributing to collective action and how traits affect collective behaviour.

Lastly, this study seeks to better understand how traits affect the level of collective action according to individual shared beliefs and the meaning of perceived collective efficacy and the performance of what can be referred to as efficacy. The measurement of collective action facilitates its analysis with respect to collective efficacy. A variety of literature and historical accounts were reviewed in this study and numerous measures identified and investigated.

As previously mentioned in Chapter 2, Yolles and Fink, in their work on personality theory, defined five traits affecting the creation of variables. These traits aid the understanding of how variables affect collective action. It is important to know the bipolar values because these create deeper information on the logic of collective action. This study follows the propositions of Yolles and Fink, from which measurements can arise, as explained in Chapter 2.

It is also important to measure the efficacy and perceived collective efficacy because these have the same origin and traits as the normative agent. Efficacy enables researchers to measure the level and performance of collective action. Empirically, efficacy can be strong, modest, or weak.

**Table 3.1:** Traits and their bipolar values

Variable	Trait	Nature	Bipolar Trait Values
Behaviour at the societal level (through political participation)	Cultural, Figurative, Operative	<p><b>Cultural:</b> ability of an agency to successfully adapt to a change in cultural setting attributable to the cultural context. Determines what is acceptable in society.</p> <p><b>Operative:</b> Implementation of policy provisions through members of a group. Creation of new knowledge and implementation appropriate for action.</p> <p><b>Cognitive:</b> information into schemata to generate goals, decision imperative and feelings. Evaluate and process information and experiences.</p> <p><b>Figurative:</b> perception, drawing, mental imagery, language and imitation, driving appreciation, and goal formulation.</p> <p><b>Social:</b> responsible for the way in which policy is implemented. Determines social relations for agency and social and environmental orientation.</p>	<p><b>Culture:</b> Sensate/Ideational</p> <p><b>Operative:</b> Hierarchy Egalitarianism</p> <p><b>Figurative:</b> Mastery and Affective Autonomy/Harmony</p>
Family values	Cognitive, Operative	<p><b>Cognitive:</b> information into schemata to generate goals, decision imperative and feelings. Evaluate and process information and experiences.</p> <p><b>Operative:</b> Implementation of policy provisions through members. Creation of new knowledge and implementation appropriate for action.</p>	<p><b>Cognitive:</b> Intellectual Autonomy/Embeddedness</p> <p><b>Operative:</b> Hierarchy/Egalitarianism</p>
Trust	Cultural, Cognitive	<p><b>Cultural:</b> ability of an agency to successfully adapt to a change in cultural setting attributable to the cultural context. Determines what is acceptable in society.</p> <p><b>Cognitive:</b> information into schemata to generate goals, decision imperative and feelings. Evaluate and process information and experiences.</p>	<p><b>Culture:</b> Sensate/Ideational</p> <p><b>Cognitive:</b> Intellectual Autonomy/Embeddedness</p>
Efficacy	Operative	<p><b>Cognitive:</b> information into schemata to generate goals, decision imperative and feelings, evaluate, and process.</p> <p><b>Operative:</b> Implementation of the policy provisions through its members. Creation of new knowledge and implementation appropriate to action.</p>	<p><b>Operative:</b> Hierarchy/Egalitarianism</p>
Perceived collective efficacy	Figurative	<p><b>Figurative:</b> involves perception, drawing, mental imagery, language, and imitation.</p>	<p><b>Figurative:</b> Mastery and Affective Autonomy/Harmony</p>

Sources: Sorokin (1962), Sagiv and Schwartz (2007), Shotwell et al. (1980), Yolles and Fink (2009; 2013)

### Independent variables

Independent variables are those which are presumed to have caused or determined a dependent variable (Babbie, 2008, 19). Moreover, Sekaran (2008, 89) notes that an independent variable is one that influences the dependent variable in either a positive or negative way. Lim’s (2006) explanation states that an independent variable is one which influences another and may explain the origin of the phenomena.

**Table 3.2:** Independent variables employed in the MSSD approach

Independent Variables	Description
Behaviour at the societal level	Within a complex system this variable processes normatively. It has a behavioural habit taken to be collective action and exhibits collaborative and collective behaviour at the societal level.
Family values	Family cohesion, behaviour, and action within group and outgroup members. The size of the collective group influences its ability to look after members, including family and close friends.
Trust	A shared set of moral values to create expectations of regular and honest behaviour. Expecting a certain kind of action/behaviour. Hostility towards another party. Through interaction, the moral principles of mutual respect and co-operation can divide low and high-trust societies.
Perceived Collective efficacy	Involves individual perceptions of the group’s performance capabilities. It also creates a common belief in group members about their collective capability and coherence.

### Dependent variable

Dependent variables are caused by independent variables (Babbie, 2008). The dependent variable is the variable of primary interest in this research. The aspiration, in this instance, is to explain or predict its variability. By analysing the dependent variables and identifying the variables that affect them, it is possible to find answers or solutions to a particular problem and the other variables influencing the dependent variable.

## Research methodology

Dependent variables are defined as the output or outcome, depending on the situation and outcomes, which make it dependent. The outcomes are events that actually occur.

**Table 3.3:** Dependent variable employed in the MSSD approach

Dependent Variable	Description
Level of collective action at union level	Individuals and their capacity to create collective actions and co-operate to achieve common goals  Collective actions are possible in relation to a social need and the ability to communicate and set goals.

## Environmental variables

Environmental variables, intervening and moderate, are those surfacing between the time the independent variables start operating to influence the dependent variable, coinciding with the time their impact is felt on (Sekaran, 2008) the so-called intervening variable. The moderating variable has a contingent effect on the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. The intervening variable does not add to the variance in explaining the independent variable, whereas the moderating variable has an effect on the independent variable that explains this variance (Sekaran, 2008).

**Table 3.4:** Environmental variables employed in the MSSD approach

Environmental Variables	Description
Population homogeneity	A homogeneous population consists of people with similar traits to each other, who share a common language, ethnicity, and genetic background.
Religious/cultural homogeneity	A society comprising people of the same race. This form of culture is characterised by people with the same cultural aspects, such as religion. In general, they speak the same language and abide by the same societal norms and traditions.

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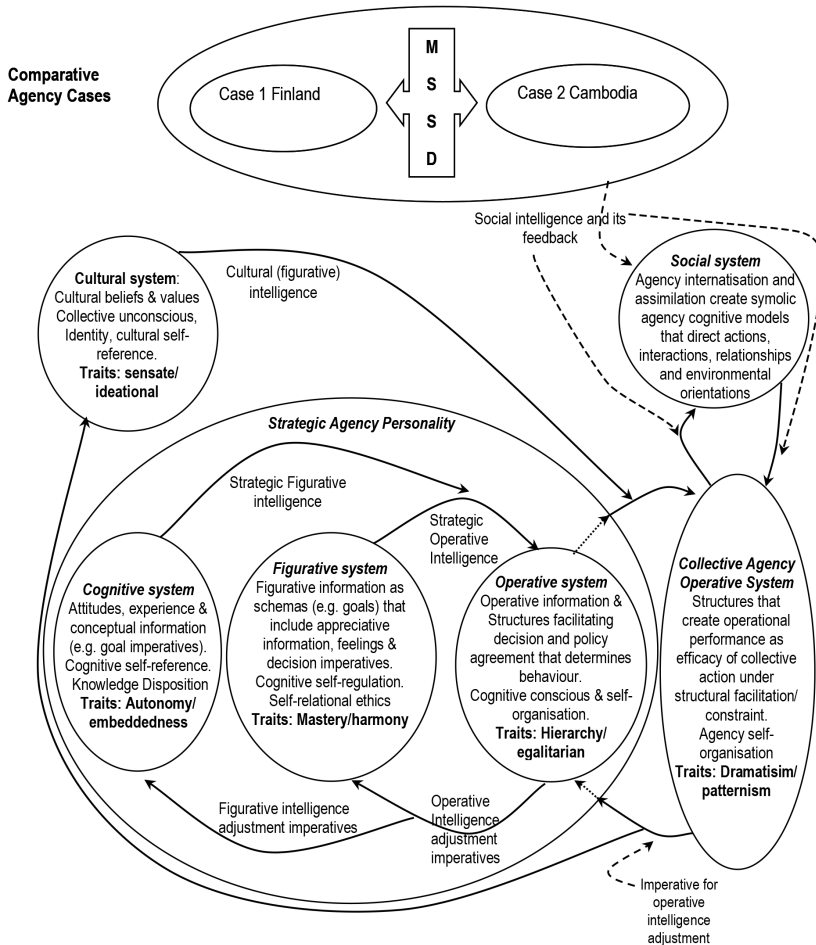


Figure 5. Cultural agency with MSSD

## Data collection

This research is based on survey data. Two surveys were conducted, one in Cambodia and the other in Finland. The Cambodian survey was conducted by Burapha University and the Finnish survey by the University of Tampere together with the Central Organization of Finnish Trade Unions in Finland (SAK). Both samples represented the adult population over 18 years old. In Finland, the survey was carried out in the Finnish language and the Khmer language in Cambodia to avoid problems in understanding the questions.

The Cambodian sample is based on the random probability method with face-to-face interviews and a standardised questionnaire.

In Finland, the sample participants were members of The Central Organisation of Finnish Trade Unions (SAK). The SAK is the biggest trade union in Finland with over 1 million members. It should be borne in mind that the SAK represents blue-collar workers in the manufacturing industry and services. In Finland, there are three big trade union organisations, one for the working class, one for the lower middle class, and one for the upper-middle class. The sample covers all branches of the industry and economy.

### SAMPLING METHODS

Geographical Coverage	Finland (FI) and Cambodia (KH)
Sample	The adult population 18 years old and older.
Selection Method	Strict random probability at every stage. In Finland, the sample was taken from registered data. In Cambodia, areas (cities and villages) were selected first, followed by households.
Mode of Data Collection	Face-to-face interviews using a standardised questionnaire in Cambodia, and a Webropol survey in Finland. In Cambodia, the internet coverage is not adequate for Webropol surveys.
Data Collector	The SAK research unit in Finland, and Burapha research assistants in Cambodia
Date of Collection	15.01.2016 to 30.05.2016
Sample Size	1,699

This work has certain limitations. Firstly, the sample in Finland covered only members of the largest blue-collar trade union organisation, while in Cambodia a nationwide sample was obtained. Secondly, the study was limited by the lack of statistical information, while some of the data was irrelevant or



too controversial since it concerned the distribution of income, poverty, and the GINI index. These metaphorical blockades limited the knowledge gained concerning the real situation. This was particularly relevant to Cambodia, where accounts could be attributed only to selective information and not all the actual facts were obtained. The countries may have “false consciousness” about their identities. False consciousness can be connected to emotive attributes. Efficacy in its full definition includes emotive attributes, but this aspect is outside the research scope and therefore another study limitation. Secondly, this research used Western theories, based on Western culture and values. Furthermore, the results were analysed from the Western perspective and could differ had the analysis been conducted from the Asian viewpoint.

## Data analysis

We have used standard SPSS package. The Finnish data was cleaned by SAK research unit. The Cambodian data was cleaned by researchers in Burapha University. Normal statistical tests were used. In Finland there was no pilot study. In Cambodia the questionnaire was pilot tested in two villages. The collected data is used to identify the percentage ranges. In order to differentiate the percentages, a scheme of data analysis is adopted to distinguish between landmark values.

To do this, a schema applied in operational research is applied, called landmark theory. Landmark values provide a way to convert qualitative values into quantities (Kuipers, 1986; Yolles 1998; 1999, 12–13). Following Kuipers, phenomenal measurement actions need to be set up and a landmark measurement system adopted to create qualitative representations and assign numerical values through a numerical analysis technique. Quantitative values are assigned to qualities typical of the approach taken in the domain of artificial intelligence to represent qualitative human thinking (Yolles, 1998, 12–13).

Yolles and Kuipers each used the landmark value 0.5 from zero to one with three orientations. To give a more accurate meaning to the measurements, numerical bounds are assigned in this study with a value of 0.2 from zero (0) to one (1), as shown in Table 3.5.

**Table 3.5:** Landmark values and band ranges

Band Range	Indicative Influence of Variable/Trait	Landmark Value	Percentage Range	
			Lower	Upper
Strong	High	1	83.5	100
	Relatively high	0.8	67.8	83.4
Modest	Reasonabl	0.6	50.1	66.7
	Relatively low	0.4	33.4	50
Weak	Low	0.2	16.7	33.3
	Minimal	0	0	16.6

These band ranges have been selected to satisfy Occam’s razor, under the principle that the simplest structure is the best. Thus, the number of categories has been minimised to provide improved explanations. The percentage ranges are identified by the data collected. In order to differentiate between percentage ranges of data in a way that is not arbitrary, a scheme of data analysis should be adopted to distinguish between the landmark values, which fall within bands.

As a result, it is possible to distinguish qualitatively between the percentage results by determining their landmark band, and thus what qualitative values they adopt. The creation of landmark values allows quantitative results to take on a qualitative difference. These results are then used to explore the relative meanings of different variable/trait selections. For instance, one is able to say that an outcome for a landmark value of 1 is qualitatively different from those taking on a landmark value of 0.8, the latter having a qualitatively greater influence by the variable under consideration. Thus, given a variable/trait, the results for a landmark value of 0 are minimally influenced, while those with a landmark value of 1 are maximally influenced by that variable/trait. These outcomes are indicative, rather than being inferred results that arise from a confidence interval using the statistics of probability distribution. Inferences have more power than indicative outcomes since the theory of variance is more rigorous than that adopted for indications. As such, it can only be said that indicative results show likely outcomes in relation to the variables, even when adopting qualitative representations that help to eliminate idiosyncratic outcome decisions.

## 4

# Comparison between Cambodia and Finland

This study aims to increase the understanding of the level of collectivism and the capacity to create collective actions in the two example cases. Behaviour at the societal level, family values, and trust are important variables, creating the form of collectivism-individualism leading to efficacy or inefficacy in collective action. The study of collectivism and the outcomes of collective action are the empirical events of this research. The relevant survey data from both countries is analysed, including behaviour at the societal level (through political participation), family values, and trust. The relevant literature supports theory building and creates a wide frame of reference on the topic of collectivism and collective action.

As stated in Chapter 3, the process of theory building and the collection of qualitative and quantitative data using the MSSD approach is suitable for use in this study to compare the countries of Cambodia and Finland, their level of collectivism-individualism, and the role of formative traits and norms to create collective agency. The model built in this study represents cultural agency and its effect on the formulation of traits constituting collectivism-individualism and the capacity to create collective action at union level by comparing Cambodia and Finland.

The MSSD approach is utilised in this study, consisting of a comparison of similar cases with dependent variables but vary in their social and

cultural background. Hence, this chapter presents a country comparison of collectivism-individualism duality and its role in collective action at union level. This is achieved through the analysis of independent variables, dependent variables, environmental variables, and applying the MSSD approach to the case of Cambodia and Finland.

## Cambodia – collectivism, individualism, and collective action

Cambodia is a small South Asian country with a population of 14 million people. The country is poor but the economy is growing rapidly. Agriculture is still the main income source for most people. Manufacturing industries, especially textiles, are becoming increasingly important. Finland is a small Nordic country with a 5.5 million population and one of the richest in the world. These two countries provide an interesting comparative case on the meaning of collectivism/individualism and collective action.

Cambodia is a homogeneous nation-state like Finland. In Cambodia, around 90% of the population are Khmers and 5% Vietnamese. Officially, Cambodia is a Buddhist country, with 97% of the population practising Buddhism, which has a strong influence on Cambodian culture and a harmony-oriented structure. In Cambodia, there is a low level of trust between the population and government institutions in general, or even a negative perception of government institutions (UN, 2005; 2009). The World Bank (various years) and United Nations (various years) also report similar problems.

Cambodia (Khmer) has a long history of more than one thousand years. Once Cambodia was the centre of the Mekong area for trade and culture. The city of Angkor was the biggest in the region with a population of more than half a million people living in great prosperity and culture. The current situation is very different. After decades of bitter conflicts both internal and external, Cambodia is currently enjoying peace and stability (Chea, 2003). Over the last 20 years (from the end of the 1990s until the present) Cambodia has become significantly more politically stable and is today almost representative of the global average. Despite the positive development of political stability,

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in recent years political tensions have risen, which means that political and social instability are likely to increase, potentially affecting its economic development (Global Risk Insights (GRI), 2015).

After more than thirty years of political conflict and instability (Khmer Rouge), Cambodia is still suffering from a drop in human resources. After long years of humiliation, contemporary Cambodia is moving forward and trying to develop and modernise its operations despite facing many problems in the process. However, after 20 years of stability, productivity remains at a low level compared to other Southeast Asian Nations (OECD Report, 2017).

Despite its significant economic development over recent years, social and socio-economic development is far behind the level required for sustainable economic growth. According to the economic statistics mentioned in the World Bank Report (2017), the obstacles to socio-economic development include weak public service delivery, ineffective management of land and natural resources, environmental sustainability, and good governance. Underlying the quality, adequacy, and efficiency of public services is the lack of ability by the government to generate the appropriate level of public goods to promote socio-economic development. The Social Progress Index (SPI, 2016)<sup>5</sup> shows that Cambodia is ranked 99/134, while the United Nations Development Programme ranked Cambodia 143/188 in the Human Development Index. On the other hand, following the economic statistics of the World Bank (2016), Cambodia is far ahead of the world average in economic growth (GDP) and enjoys significant economic development. Cambodia has also been able to reduce its poverty rate from 53% to 20% for the period 2004 to 2011 (World Bank, 2013), representing about 10% of the Cambodian population which means 1.90 US\$ per day. The World Bank Report (2014) mentions that the reduction in poverty remains vulnerable and a loss of 30 cents would increase poverty to 40% of the population.

According to many international comparisons, it appears that Cambodia is not doing as well as one may assume when merely considering its economic growth. The level of education is low. According to the index in 2013,

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5 The **Social Progress Index** measures the extent to which countries provide for the social and environmental needs of their citizens.

## *Comparison between Cambodia and Finland*

Cambodia is among the least educated countries in the world at 0.50 out of 1. Cambodia is 0.15 points lower than the world median (0.65). The country has an adult literacy rate of 78% which is 16% lower than the world median (94%), according to the United Nations Human Development Report (2016). Moreover, the education system is very unequal between rural and urban areas since the quality of education (schools) depends on social status and family prosperity. The World Government Index (2016) shows that there has been no development at all from the corruption perspective in the last 20 years and Cambodia's relative position in the world ranking has even declined by five percentiles.

The Communist Party of Cambodia (CPK), also known as the Khmer Rouge, took control of the country in Spring 1975. Under the Khmer Rouge regime, many government institutions were destroyed or overturned (Hill and Menon, 2013) and a significant number of the educated population killed. From this perspective, it is not surprising that most institutions are weak, as mentioned in the Asian Development report (2013). The same report also notes that the country is more democratic than either Lao PDR or Vietnam, but it has had more or less continuous one-party rule for two decades. Furthermore, the Prime Minister, Hun Sen, has been in his post for more than three decades.

The country's political and institutional features are heavily shaped by its history. Cambodia is a quasi-authoritarian state with weak formal institutions (Hughes and Un, 2011). As a result of the concentration of political power, formal institutions are not widespread. This is due to very low salaries in the public sector, a weak civil society, and the limitations of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs). In this research, the labour unions are an example of NGOs. About three-quarters of the whole population live precariously, below or marginally above the poverty line. Reflecting its troubled history, most social indicators are low, especially rural education and health (Hill and Menon, 2013).

During the past few decades, Cambodia has been able to reduce poverty, inequality, and improve the level of education, but as the World Bank Report explains "Cambodia's performance has been good with a 1 to 1.5 percentage point fall in poverty p.a., 1994–2004, but other countries, including some post-conflict nations, have done better (2.5–4.5 percentage points p.a.)". The

World Bank Report continues that “on 1993/4–2004 trends, Cambodia would make progress but not meet its target of halving poverty (1994–2015)”, and some of the social indicators were among the very lowest in the world. During recent times, Cambodia has experienced sustained economic growth and a stable macroeconomic situation. However, at the same time, the Human Development Index even fell (UN, 2016). The decreasing poverty rate is not equal to the economic growth rate. All in all, it is very difficult to obtain accurate statistical information from Cambodia, and its statistical methods are also controversial and not undisputed.

### Unionism and labour conditions

As mentioned previously, social institutions play an important and integral role in development, social change, and transformation. Both Amsden (1988) and Huntington (1968; 1975) point out that public institutions are of critical importance to development. Amsden (1988, 239–44) points to the critical importance of the state, as a pre-eminent public institution in the development process. Cumings (1987, 44–83) mentions that economic, political, and social institutions and their arrangements are also of significant importance. In developing countries, changes are linked to the attitudes of political leaders and how far political elites support change (Riggs, 2001), how much change is allowed, how to deal with a changing environment, and whether the ruling elite are willing to support development and collective actions which may challenge their power.

Manufacturing industries have been growing in Cambodia. During the last 20 years, the garment industry has been the most important economic sector, and alone accounts for 70 to 80% of Cambodia’s exports, although statistics may vary. While the Cambodian garment sector has one of the highest union density rates in the global industry, most Cambodians are not garment workers and many, including domestic workers, “tuk tuk” (auto rickshaw) drivers, teachers, and other civil servants fall outside the labour laws and prevented from joining unions and bargaining collectively. Moreover, the Trade Union Law, implemented at the end of 2014, faces strong criticism. Some trade unions have even claimed that it is a tool to threaten

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workers not to join trade unions (Ulandssekretariatet, 2014). Voices from the trade union movement have argued that the law is a way to control the unions (Cambodian Daily, 2014, February). At the beginning of 2014, the density of the labour unions equated to 25% of wage earners and 7,7% of the total labour force (Ulandssekretariatet, 2014). Only 25 % of workers fall under the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) since it was initiated in 2003.

Small family farmers should also be mentioned. Agriculture is the largest sector of the economy, employing 54 % of working Cambodians. Typically, they are small family farmers. Agriculture contributes 34% of the country's GDP, which means a low productivity level. Most of the union members are women. Danish experts (LO, 2014) estimate that 83% of trade union members are women working in the garment industry, while the union leadership is occupied by men. Furthermore, the labour law does not apply to civil servants who join or establish labour unions. Interestingly, labour unions are connected to the ruling elite, with the majority of unions being affiliated to the ruling party.

The informal economy is defined as working without official or solid legal status, regulation, or protection by state institutions, (Amin, 2002; Becker, 2004). Workers also lack legal rights and access to the social security system, and accordingly, social development poverty and informal employment are closely connected. Social security is also related to employment. It is estimated that around 8% of workers are members of unions. According to the American Center for International Solidarity (2012), there has recently been a decline in the membership (15%) of labour unions, with unions facing internal organisational problems and instability caused by a shrinking and declining labour market<sup>6</sup>. Approximately 90% of workers in Cambodia operate in the informal sector (Ulandssekretariatet, 2014). The size of the informal sector means that the majority of the labour factor is outside the rules and regulations and informal activities are not regulated. This has led to labour

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6 Despite the shrinkage and decline of the labour market, the Cambodia official labour statistics show a 0.2% unemployment rate, which means the country has the second-lowest unemployment rate in the world after Qatar. Furthermore, the university system produces more graduate and ungraduated students than the labour market can absorb (Visoth, 2017).



dumping. Cambodia is ranked among the bottom countries in the world and even among the worst countries in the world for workers (ITUC, 2014).

The Cambodian Government has taken steps to implement a comprehensive social protection system. This change is registered as public spending on social protection, which has been on the rise, increasing 11% per year since 2007. However, three out of four (74%) members of the population are not covered by health and social protection (Van Minh et al., 2014) and only 5% of the elderly population enjoy pensions. From the larger perspective, this means that families must take care of social issues rather than the state or private companies. Collective actions and collective bargaining are not favoured or even allowed in Cambodia. When unions demand better working conditions or higher wages, the demonstrators and their leaders are faced with violence from the police (Clean Clothes organisation, 2016; Solidarity center, 2016<sup>7</sup>).

It is worth remembering that the informal sector not only relates to uneducated people and those in poverty. The informal sector is also important to the emerging middle class like teachers and government officers. Formal jobs provided by the government are few and poorly paid (Bhowmik, 2005), as is the majority of formal employment in Cambodia, and this pushes people to do extra work in the informal sector. More than 90% of teachers work second jobs to support their families (Visoth, 2017)<sup>8</sup>. This study also found that after and during school hours many female teachers often sell snacks and phone cards on the school campus, while male teachers work as motorbike taxi drivers or have other jobs to supplement their income. Teachers also increase the grade of students by receiving payment, which in the long term affects the morality of the system and erodes trust. The Cambodia Independent Teachers Association (CITA) (2015, 6) report similar findings and their survey shows that as much as 93% of teachers were required to take a second job to survive. The findings of Rautakivi et al. (2019) support these results.

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7 <http://www.solidaritycenter.org/where-we-work/asia/cambodia/#sthash.lvrNAUWH.dpuf>

8 Survey for Cambodia. (Problems and Obstacles to finding a job after university graduation, incomplete master thesis)

## *Comparison between Cambodia and Finland*

One important problem is the fixed duration contract (one-year contracts) without terms of notice or protection against dismissal. Some independent trade unions have claimed it is a tool to threaten workers not to join trade unions (LO, 2014). Even today, the unions cannot find a strong or appropriate position in society and face opposition from the government and ruling elites with violence and arrest. Both the Solidarity Center and the ILO have called for many of the government's proposed provisions to be amended because they do not comply with ILO Convention standards. Moreover, the ITUC (2014) report notes that the Cambodian Government responded with lethal force to demonstrations expressing legitimate collective demands and collective actions and prevented the unions from taking collective action.

### Finland – collectivism, individualism, and collective action

In 2017, Finland celebrated its 100 anniversary as an independent state. At the beginning of the twentieth century, Finland was situated in the North-Western corner of the Russian empire where capitalist social relations were lagging behind the European average. As an agrarian society, over 85% of Finland's population were agricultural workers or tenant farmers, while manufacturing industries played only a minor role in the country's economy. Finland's Independence Day on 6 December 1917 was soon followed by a bloody and violent civil war. The country was reunited only during the Second World War against the Soviet Union but for a long time remained a poor agricultural society, with rapid structural change starting in the late 1950s. Since then, economic growth has been significant, the educational level of the population has grown rapidly, and the country has managed to build a comprehensive welfare model for all citizens.

Fifty years ago, Finland was still part of the European periphery, being one of the poorest countries in Western Europe. Today, the country is among the richest in the world. By international comparison, Finland seems to be doing very well. It has very high rankings in studies like PISA (various years), anti-corruption (World Governance Indicators, 2016), and happiness. What is the

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secret behind all this? Why has Finland – a small Northern country with a population of 5.5 million people – been so successful?

The first explanation is that the population is homogenous. More than 95% are native Finns and national minorities (Roma, Sami, and Swedish) and well integrated into society. Moreover, in the religious sense, Finland is quite homogeneous and Lutheran Christians represent 74% of the whole population. The country has long traditions of parliamentary democracy. Women received voting rights in 1907. Parliament and other political institutions have played an important role in the modernisation of society. There is strong trust between fellow citizens and significant institutional confidence. Since the late 1960s, industrial relations have also been based on trust.

Social institutions, including governmental and non-governmental, have played an important role in the process of social change. Effective institutional solutions concerning such aspects as social security and education have created space for development. Since the 1980s, Finland has had an open and effective innovation system with a relatively high level of collective efficacy. This means that private companies, universities, and public funding organisations have worked together to promote innovation (Castells and Himanen, 2001). Finally, the educational system must be mentioned. The Finnish school system promotes equality and supports all pupils regardless of their social background. The basic idea is that the whole cohort will receive an education that allows mobility from basic education to higher education for the majority.

The core of the Nordic model lies in broad public participation in various areas of economic and social life, which can be referred to as collective action. The purpose of this social model is to promote economic efficiency, improve the ability of the whole society to master its problems and enrich and equalise the living conditions of individuals and families through the whole of society.

Finland is a class society. However, the class distinctions are small in comparison to the international average, especially when comparing it with Cambodia. It could be said that contemporary Finnish society is middle class, with its own strong organisations such as political parties, trade unions, voluntary organisations, and where the middle-class way of life dominates (Melin and Blom, 2014, 51).

## Unionism and labour conditions

The working people in Finland began to organise themselves in trade unions during the latter half of the nineteenth century. In the early years, the trade union movement was primarily concerned with improving the economic position of the working class by focusing on the conditions of the sale of labour power (Melin, 1988, 111). In Finland, unionisation really began to take off when rapid economic and structural changes took place at the end of the 1960s. The membership of unions more than doubled during the 1970s. Trade union organisations follow class divisions with three major nationwide central organisations; one for blue-collar workers, one for white-collar workers, and one for those with an academic education. These could be referred to as class-based organisations, influencing politics and policy processes, and becoming class-based societal actors. This is the result of the capacity of individuals to produce collective action.

At the same time, a new kind of industrial relations emerged. Finland adopted a model of social corporatism (Carrol and Palmer, 2006). This meant that collective bargaining took place at the national level. In many cases, collective agreements covered all central organisations and unions. The Finnish Government agreed to moderate wage increases and new social legislation with tripartite income policy agreements. In some years, the agreements were reached at the union level. There were various strikes and other industrial disputes during the 1970s and 1980s but the number of conflicts has subsequently declined dramatically. Currently, approximately 90% of the workforce are covered by collective bargaining agreements both in the unionised and non-unionised sectors (Laamanen, 2017). It can be said that the Finnish model is based on trust and negotiation between the major actors in the labour market.

More than 60% of all employees belong to a trade union in Finland. This figure is one of the highest in the world. However, there are great differences between generations. While about 80% of employees over 50 years old are unionised, less than half the younger generation are union members, according to a recent survey conducted by the Finnish Broadcasting Company. The same survey indicated that the reason behind this difference lies in the different

## *A Critical Evaluation of Individualism, Collectivism and Collective Action*

working life experiences. Most people over 50 years old have permanent jobs and relatively stable positions in the labour market, while the majority of the younger generation are in a precarious position. This means that they have fixed-term contracts or work part-time and their general employment situation in the labour market is unstable.

During the past 20 years, the working life and model of industrial relations has changed rapidly, and Finland is at the edge of something new. Sociologically, it is interesting to analyse the kind of strategic choices unions are likely to make in the future. Major industrial corporations in Finland have changed their structures and ways of operating. A lot of the simple component work has been outsourced to Asian countries where labour costs are much lower than in Finland. The share of sub-contracting has increased too, and these new modes both have an impact on trade unions.

Moreover, the ways companies hire employees have changed. Part-time work is more common than it was 20 years ago. The same goes for fixed-term labour contracts. There are new actors like Accenture and Manpower, which hire employees to different companies. Taken together, all these factors mean that trade unions have become more vulnerable. It is not so easy to gain new members when workplaces are smaller and workers are continuously on the move.

The structure of the employed population has changed, with the social composition being very different than it was in the 1970s. Internal differentiation has increased, along with the number of graduates in the workforce. Class divisions in the workplace are different from in the past. Nowadays, it is not self-evident that the working class receive lower wages or that job autonomy is high in white-collar workers. Variation within class groups is becoming increasingly bigger. Furthermore, genders and generations are making new dividing lines in their working life. Immigration to Finland is currently growing, especially work-related immigration, which is greater than ever. There are more and more immigrant workers in the Finnish labour market, and this presents a significant challenge for the trade unions.

Furthermore, organisations have changed their policies. The employer's central organisation has decided not to make any more nationwide agreements. They want different collective agreements for various branches of

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the economy, and more negotiations at the company level. Finally, the unions have changed too. Trade unions are like all complex organisations, with their own hierarchies and power structures. They have their own bureaucracies and elites. Trade unions in Finland do not mobilise their members as in the past. One may claim that trade unions act like insurance companies, providing bargaining services and protection against economic loss during possible unemployment, making them more like a business than social activists. Today, trade unions act professionally and their own managerial practices do not differ significantly from those of private companies. As a consequence, it seems that trade unions in Finland have lost some of their previous power resources, and do not attract as many workers as in previous decades.

### Collectivism, individualism, and collective action

The current period is a time of enormous change for social environments. Global challenges such as climate change, rapid digitalisation, and the COVID-19-pandemic have had an enormous impact on national economies across the world. Economic growth has stagnated. The country comparison is important for creating a wider understanding of the current phenomenon since unionism, labour conditions, and government action are the outcomes of collective action and impact the socio-economic situation.

In Cambodia, 25% of wage earners are members of labour unions, representing 7.7 % of the total labour force, while in Finland the figure is about 60%. Collective action and collective bargaining are not looked upon favourably in Cambodia or even allowed, and when unions demand better working conditions, an increase in the minimum wage or changes from fixed duration (one year) contracts to permanent employment contracts, demonstrators and their leaders are subject to police violence (Clean Clothes Organisation, 2016; Solidarity Center, 2016). Only 2.5% of workers in Cambodia fall under the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA), since its initiation in 2003. In Finland, approximately 90% of the workforce are covered by collective bargaining agreements (Laamanen, 2017). It can be said that the Finnish model is based on trust and negotiation between the major actors in the labour markets. There is strong trust between fellow citizens and

significant institutional confidence. Since the late 1960s, industrial relations have been based on trust. However, in Cambodia, there is a low level of trust between the population and government institutions (Hill and Menon, 2013).

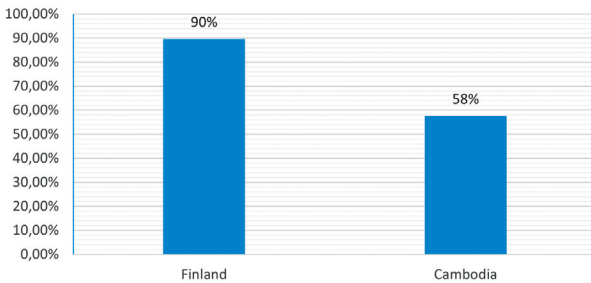
A full analysis of the country comparison and case situations can be found in the tables contained in the Appendix (frequency and cross tabulation). Chapter 4 provides merely a summary conclusion to avoid confusion for the reader. Appendix 3 includes all the analysis charts.

This research has identified a set of criteria, arising from Yolles and Fink (2011; 2012; 2013; 2014) and Bandura (1986; 1991; 1999; 2006), which allows for the analysis of collective action in Cambodia and Finland by establishing categories. The following section describes the similarities and differences between Cambodia and Finland, their political behaviour, and the kind of political actions people have taken.

### Political attitudes

Sociologists have been interested in attitudes since the Second World War. Today, analysing social and political attitudes – not to mention consumption – is a big business. The attitudes concerning politics, family, and trade unions are set out in the following charts.

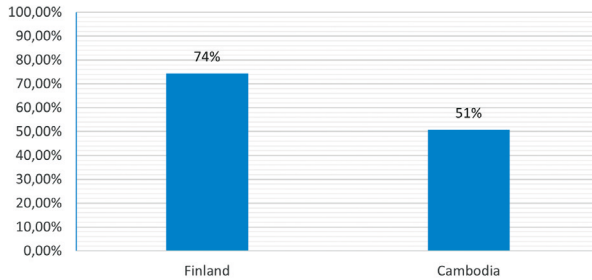
Chart 1: Participation in the last general election (%)



## Comparison between Cambodia and Finland

Political engagement is closely linked to an individual's faith in the government and belief that he or she can have an influence on political matters. In Finland, the participation in general elections by survey respondents was 90% (LMV 1/high) which indicates the level of perceived political efficacy. It should be borne in mind that the average voting rate in the Finnish parliamentary election in 2015 was 70% (LMV 0.8/relatively high). The respondents in this study were also politically active. In Cambodia, the participation was 58% (LMV 0.6/reasonable) which is significantly lower than in Finland. It is also significantly lower than the Asian average and indicates a modest level of political awareness towards the meaning of elections.

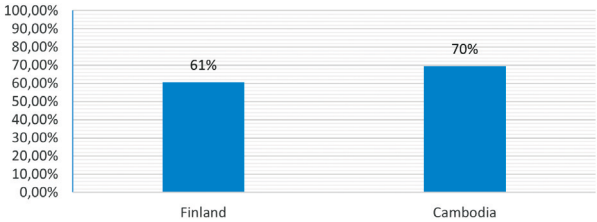
Chart 2: Signed a petition (%)



In Finland, 74% of respondents expressed that they have signed a petition (LMV 0.8/relatively high), while in Cambodia the figure was 51% (LMV 0.6/reasonable). The Cambodian figures are lower than for Finland but generally higher than in other Asian countries. In Finland, people believe petitions are highly effective, which demonstrates a relatively high level (strong) of political participation, while for Cambodia the level of political participation is reasonable (modest). In Finland, most petitions relate to local issues such as infrastructure projects or environmental concerns. Whereas petitions in Cambodia tend to be connected with wider social issues like farmland, agricultural land management, land ownership, and violence against people and demonstrators by the ruling elite.

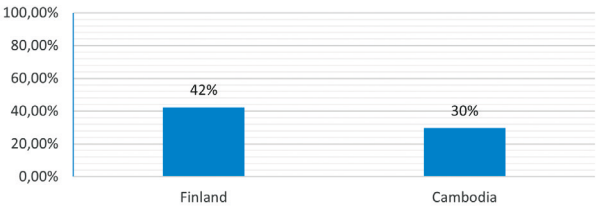


Chart 3: Boycotted or deliberately bought certain products for political, ethical, or environmental reasons (%)



In both countries, boycotting is at a similar level. In Finland, 61% (LMV 0.6/reasonable) of people believe that this kind of activity produces reasonable results in terms of expectations. In Cambodia, the level of belief is even 10% higher than for Finland, with 70% (LMV 0.8/relatively high) of respondents supporting such action. It is also significantly higher than in other Asian countries. Therefore, in summary, there is a relatively small qualitative difference between the two countries. Using this LMV, Finland and Cambodia are qualitatively different, but not substantially so. It should also be noted that the respondents in Cambodia were younger than in Finland and this type of activity is more common in the younger than older population (Pew Research Center).

Chart 4: Took part in a demonstration (%)

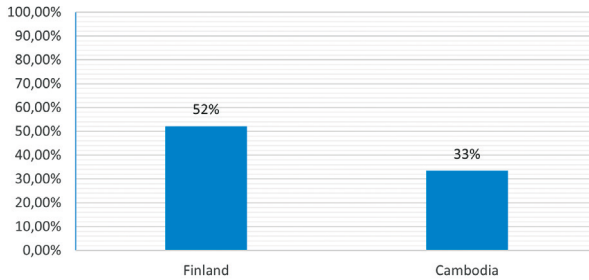


In Finland, 40% (LMV 0.4/relatively low) of respondents took part in a demonstration, indicating a modest level of political participation. Whereas in Cambodia, the figure is lower at 30%, (LMV 0.2/low), implying that demonstrations are not a common activity in Cambodia and this shows weak political participation. Mass demonstrations nowadays are quite rare in Finland, demonstrations are typically connected to social issues

## Comparison between Cambodia and Finland

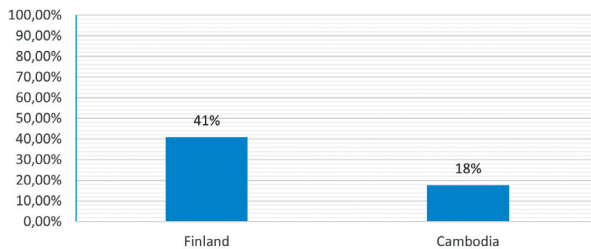
(e.g., healthcare) or the labour market (unemployment). In Cambodia, any demonstrations tend to be connected to labour rights and land issues such as confiscation and forced evictions by politically powerful individuals (Human Right Watch, 2015).

Chart 5: Attended a political meeting or rally (%)



In Finland, more than half (52%) of respondents have attended a political rally or meeting, (LMV 0.6/reasonable), indicating a modest level of political participation. In Cambodia, around one-third (33%) (LMV 02/low) attended a political rally, implying a weak level of political participation. In Finland, the belief that political rallies are useful is at a significantly higher level than in Cambodia.

Chart 6: Contacted, or attempted to contact, a politician or civil servant to express own views (%)

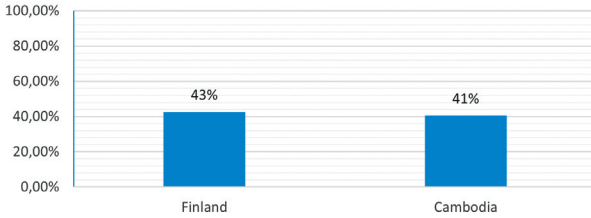


In Finland, it is quite common for individuals to contact political leaders or civil servants to express their own views and ideas (41%), (LMV 0.4/relatively low), indicating a modest level of political participation. In Cambodia, the level of political participation is weak with fewer than one-fifth (18%) of

*A Critical Evaluation of Individualism, Collectivism and Collective Action*

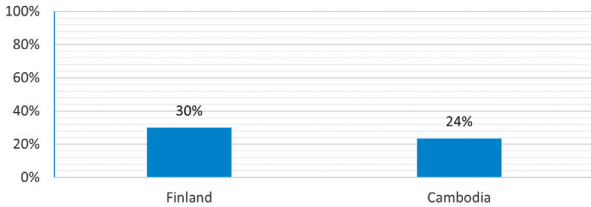
respondents (LMV 0.2/low) being willing to express their own ideas and views. One reason behind this is the low level of trust between the population and government institutions, or even a negative perception of government institutions. The country comparison supports this finding (see Appendix A).

Chart 7: Donated money or raised funds for a social or political activity (%)



Donations or financial assistance are at similar levels in both countries at slightly above 40%, with no significant differences. Both countries are at a modest level with the same landmark value (LMV) (0.4/relatively low).

Chart 8: Contacted by, or appeared in the media to express own views (%)



In both countries, participants expressed no significant interest in expressing their personal views and ideas through the media. While in Finland 30% of respondents showed an interest (LMV 0.2/low), in Cambodia the figure was 24% (LMV 0.2/low), indicating no significant difference – both countries being in the same band. Therefore, both countries expressed weak political participation towards this issue.

The foregoing comparisons show that there are no significant differences in the political opinions of participants between countries since the results are surprisingly similar. However, behind the figures, there are likely to be differences. In summary, there is a relatively small qualitative difference between the two countries. Using the LMV, Finland and Cambodia are

## *Comparison between Cambodia and Finland*

qualitatively different, but not substantially so. To analyse the differences, more qualitative data is required, since the differences deserve their own study.

The landmark values between Finland and Cambodia are not significantly different, with Finland having an average LMV of 0.55 while for Cambodia the LMV average is 0.4.

The landmark values and questions on political participation are shown in the following table 4.1.

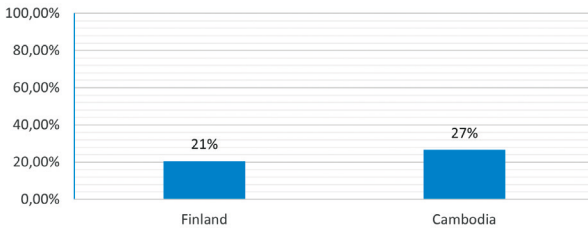
**Table 4.1:** Political participation

Question No. Chart	Question	Variable/Trait	Finland		Cambodia		Relationship Between Landmark Values
			%	Landmark	%	Landmark	
1	Participated in the last general election	Political Participation	90	1	58	0.6	Different
2	Signed a petition.	Political Participation	74	0.8	51	0.6	Different
3	Boycotted, or deliberately bought certain products for political, ethical or environmental reasons	Political Participation	61	0.6	70	0.8	Different
4	Took part in a demonstration	Political Participation	42	0.4	30	0.2	Different
5	Attended a political meeting or rally	Political Participation	52	0.6	33	0.2	Different
6	Contacted, or attempted to contact, a politician or civil servant to express a personal view.	Political Participation	41	0.4	18	0.2	Different
7	Donated money or raised funds for a social or political activity	Political Participation	43	0.4	41	0.4	Same
8	Contacted by, or appeared in the media to express a personal view.	Political Participation	30	0.2	24	0.2	Same

## Family

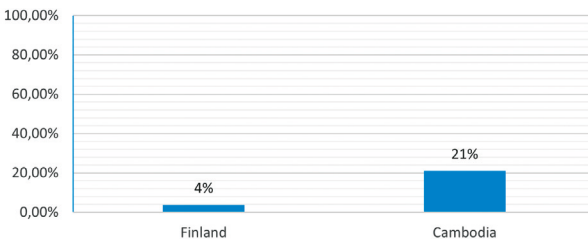
The similarities and differences between Cambodia and Finland according to family values and the level of familism are presented in the following section. Traditionally, Cambodia is described as a collective society with a high level of family values and familism. In contrast, Finland is described as an individual society with a low level of familism. The question of familism is not controversial, but the perception that competition relates to interpersonal interaction and the capacity for collective action through trust.

Chart 9: Helped someone outside of your household with housework or shopping (%)



In Finland, 21% (LMV 0.2/low) of respondents helped somebody outside their household (family), while in Cambodia the figure was slightly higher at 27% (LMV 0.2/low). However, the results for both countries indicate a relatively low rate. (Note: In this question, the focus time period was one week or less). There was no significant difference for this social action between countries, despite the assumption of it being more commonplace in Asia than Europe, with both countries demonstrating a weak level.

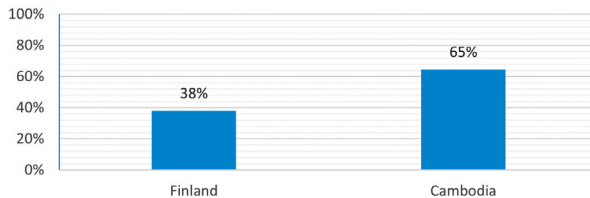
Chart 10: Lent a substantial amount of money to another person (%)



## Comparison between Cambodia and Finland

The results for lending a substantial amount of money to another person are significantly different between Finland and Cambodia. In Finland, only 4% (LMV 0.0/minimal) of respondents said they have lent money to another person, while the figure was 21% (LMV 0.2/low) for Cambodian respondents. These results may imply economic vulnerability and uncertainty, regarding family values and support for family members. In Finland, it is common for parents and grandparents to help young adults and families with small children by giving them money rather than lending it. In Cambodia, it is the young adults who lend money and give economic support to other family members such as parents and grandparents, due to the absence of a social security system and pension provision.

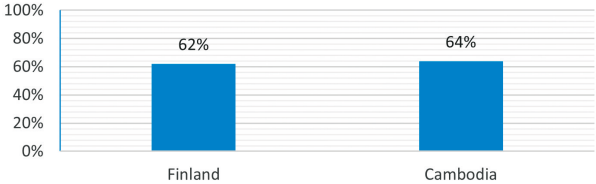
Chart 11: Adult children have a duty to look after their elderly parents (%)



In Finland, slightly more than one-third (38%, LMV 0.4/relatively low) of respondents share the idea that adult children have a duty to look after their elderly parents, while in Cambodia the level is significantly higher, with two-thirds (65%, LMV 0.6/ reasonable) of respondents expressing the view that adult children (family) should be responsible for taking care of adult parents. In this case, the level of familism is clearly higher in Cambodia than in Finland. This could be because Finland has developed a social security system that allows elderly people to live alone without support from the family, with the state looking after elderly people collectively. Whereas in Cambodia, there is no comprehensive pension system for elderly people. In Finland, municipalities offer care home places to elderly people if they cannot cope alone in their own homes. In Cambodia, this is not the case, with the family being like a survival unit, representing a type of forced familism and elderly people do not have the necessary tools for survival. In summary, there

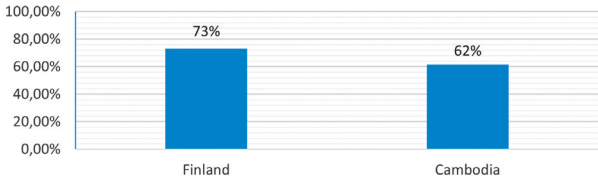
is a relatively small qualitative difference between the two countries but they are relatively different in quantitative terms.

Chart 12: Families have a duty to look after their disabled and seriously ill family members (%)



On the question of disabled or seriously ill family members, the results for Finland and Cambodia were similar. In Finland, 62% (LMV 06/reasonable) of the respondents believed the family have a duty to take care of seriously ill family members, while in Cambodia, the figure was 64% (LMV 06/reasonable). Both countries show similar values at the modest level. The results are interesting because the government of Cambodia does not offer support or services for disabled people – only if the family is able to pay for such services from the private sector. In Cambodia, the seriously ill or disabled family members are considered to be the family’s responsibility rather than society’s. In the case of Finland, seriously ill or disabled family members are considered to be society’s responsibility collectively rather than the responsibility of the family, or even an individual.

Chart 13: You should take care of yourself and your family first, before helping other people (%)

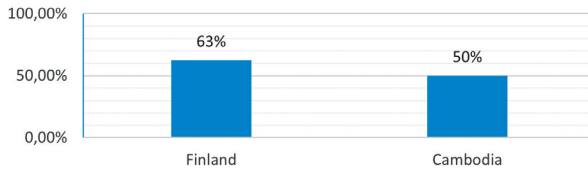


In Finland, 73% (LMV 0.8/relatively high) of respondents preferred to take care of their family first, while in Cambodia only 62% (LMV 06/reasonable) thought that the “family comes first”. These results indicate that Finnish people are more family-oriented than Cambodians, despite the latter being

## Comparison between Cambodia and Finland

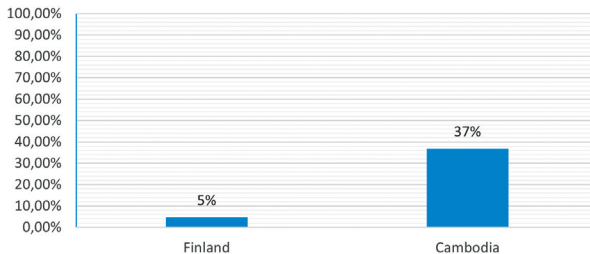
assumed to have high family values with familism, where the family is seen as a central survival unit, with Finland exhibiting strong values and Cambodia modest values. These findings are slightly unexpected because Finland is usually seen as individualistic, whereas Cambodia is frequently described as a collective society with high family values, representing familism. This raises the question: What do we really understand about family values and the form of familism, whether self-imposed or forced?

Chart 14: People who are better off should help friends who are less well off (%)



In Finland, two-thirds (63%) (LMV 0.6/reasonable) of respondents expressed that they would help friends who are less well off. This is indicative of social justice and responsibility towards others and their welfare (egalitarianism), while the figure was half (50%, LMV 0.4/relatively low) for Cambodian respondents. This indicates that the unequal distribution of resources is qualitative, with greater influence being placed on the hierarchical structure and traits. Finland's LMV of 0.6 is qualitatively different from Cambodia's which has an LMV of 0.4, validating the idea that the former is qualitatively more egalitarian than Cambodia, with both countries showing only modest values.

Chart 15: It is alright to develop friendships with people just because you know they can be of use to you? (%)



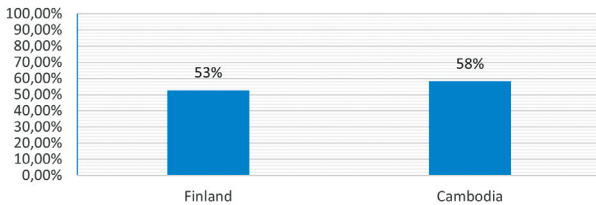


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In Finland, there is a very low level of acceptance towards developing friendships just because they can be of use. Friendship for the sake of benefits is favoured only by 5% (LMV 0/minimal). In Cambodia, the percentage was significantly higher at 37% (LMV 0.4/relatively low), indicating that it is more acceptable to develop friendships for benefits. Culture determines what is acceptable and commonplace in society, including formal and informal rules and regulations. That worldview represents vertical/hierarchical individualism and patriarchic familism. Vertical individualism/hierarchical individualism refers to people who are more likely to interact with others in a strictly economic manner and maximise self-interest and personal goals (Probst et al., 1999; Triandis, 1987; Shin and Park, 2005). In this case, Finland clearly demonstrates an egalitarian trait while the Cambodian results indicate a hierarchical trait. It should also be noted that hierarchical/vertical individualism mediated by familiarity and vertical individualism are linked to the least co-operative people (Probst et al., 1999).

The next three issues deal with care. Who should be responsible for childcare, a decent standard of living for the elderly, and healthcare for the seriously ill? In Cambodia and in Finland healthcare and social care are organised in very different ways. The results show some interesting differences between the two countries.

Chart 16: On the whole, do you think it should be the government's responsibility to provide childcare for everyone who wants it? (%)

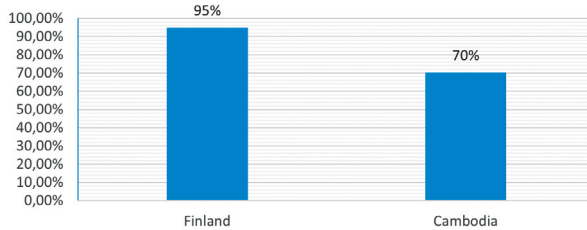


In the case of childcare, there is no significant difference between Finland and Cambodia. In Finland, slightly more than half (53%) of respondents (LMV 06/reasonable) believe that childcare should be the government's responsibility, while in Cambodia, the figure was 58% (LMV 0.6/reasonable), with both countries showing modest values in this case. The results are

## Comparison between Cambodia and Finland

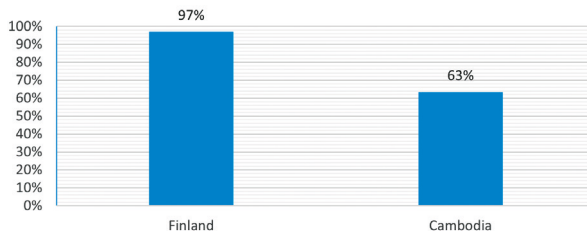
interesting because, in Finland, the government or municipality offers childcare, while in Cambodia they do not. In Finland, parents send their children to daycare, while the Cambodians usually send their children to grandparents or other relatives.

Chart 17: Do you think it should be the government's responsibility to provide a decent standard of living for the elderly? (%)



In response to the questions concerning the standard of living in the case of the elderly population, in Finland, 95% (LMV 1/high) of respondents stressed that it was the responsibility of the government. In Cambodia, the respondents' **opinions** were also at a relatively high level with 70% (LMV 0.8/relatively high) expressing that the government should provide a decent life for elderly people. However, the results are qualitatively different. In Finland, the government is able to respond to people's demands and needs, while the Cambodian Government does not. In this case, Finland demonstrates a higher egalitarian trait value than Cambodia but both countries exhibit strong values for this issue. The LMV 1 of Finland is qualitatively different from the LMV 0.8 for Cambodia, validating the idea that the former is qualitatively more egalitarian than the latter.

Chart 18: Do you think it should be the government's responsibility to provide healthcare for disabled and seriously ill people? (%)



## *A Critical Evaluation of Individualism, Collectivism and Collective Action*

In Finland, 97% (LMV 1/high) of respondents expressed that the government should be responsible for taking care of disabled or seriously ill people, with a similar view about providing a decent life for the elderly. In Cambodia, only 63% (LMV 0.6/reasonable) of respondents express the view that the government should provide healthcare for disabled and ill people. In reality, the Finnish Government takes care collectively of disabled or ill people, while despite the views of the Cambodian respondents, the result was significantly different for Cambodia.

The municipal social security system and the municipal healthcare system takes care of disabled and seriously ill people in Finland and 97% of respondents believe it is the government's responsibility to provide healthcare for disabled people. In Cambodia, the figure was 63%, which is significantly lower (see Chart 18 for comparison). Finland's LMV 1 is qualitatively different from that of Cambodia (LMV 0.6) validating the idea that Finland is qualitatively more egalitarian than Cambodia. The figures indicate that Finland has more egalitarian values while Cambodia demonstrates a more hierarchical orientation. The landmark values for Finland and Cambodia are not significantly different, with the Finnish average LMV being 0.52 0.50 for Cambodia, both being in the same band, and therefore demonstrating similar family values.

### **Trust**

In a social scientific discussion on trust, two major approaches can be considered. The first takes the view that trust is an individual property (Uslaner, 1999), while the second holds that social trust is a property of social systems (Putnam, 2000). Uslaner (1999) claims that we learn trust early in life from our parents. He also maintains that trust is based on two core personality characteristics; optimism and the capacity to control one's own life. This approach may be referred to as a social psychological explanation of trust. In the other theoretical approach, the political and social institutions encourage the development of trusting attitudes and behaviour. Social networks play an important role in generating high levels of social trust. According to empirical analysis, countries with universal welfare benefits are more trusting, than

## *Comparison between Cambodia and Finland*

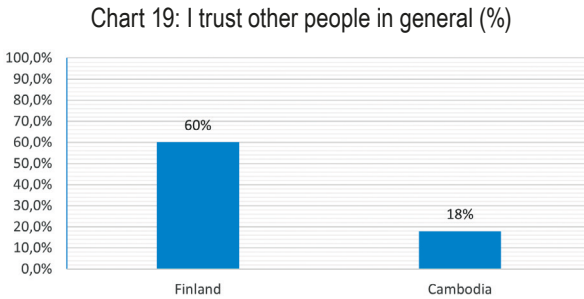
**Table 4.2: Familism**

Question No. Chart	Question	Variable/ Trait	Finland		Cambodia		Relationship Between Landmark Values
			%	Landmark	%	Landmark	
9	Helped someone outside of your household with housework or shopping	Familial Collectivism	21	<b>0.2</b>	27	<b>0.2</b>	Same
10	Lent a substantial amount of money to another person.	Familial Collectivism	4	<b>0</b>	21	<b>0</b>	Different
11	Adult children have a duty to look after their elderly parents	Familial Collectivism	38	<b>0.4</b>	65	<b>0.6</b>	Different
12	Families have a duty to look after their disabled and seriously ill family members.	Familial Collectivism	62	<b>0.6</b>	64	<b>0.6</b>	Same
13	You should take care of yourself and your family first, before helping other people	Familial Collectivism	73	<b>0.8</b>	62	<b>0.6</b>	Different
14	People who are better off should help friends who are less well off	Familial Collectivism Colleague Egalitarianism	63	<b>0.6</b>	50	<b>0.4</b>	Different
15	Is it alright to develop friendships with people just because you know they can be of use?	Familial Collectivism Material Egalitarianism	5	<b>0</b>	37	<b>0.4</b>	Different
16	On the whole, do you think it should be the government's responsibility to provide childcare for everyone who wants it?	Familial Collectivism Colleague Egalitarianism	53	<b>0.6</b>	58	<b>0.6</b>	Same
17	Do you think it should be the government's responsibility to provide a decent standard of living for the	Familial Collectivism Colleague Egalitarianism	95	<b>1</b>	70	<b>0.8</b>	Different
18	Do you think it should be the government's responsibility to provide healthcare for disabled and seriously ill people?	Familial Collectivism Colleague Egalitarianism	97	<b>1</b>	63	<b>0.6</b>	Different

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those with selective welfare systems (Rothstein, 2011). There is also evidence to suggest that trust is higher in societies where income distribution is even (Knack and Keefer, 1997). This may be referred to as a societal explanation.

Social psychological explanations do not clarify trust as much as social explanations (Delhey and Newton, 2003, 12–13). Societal conditions of conflict and safety are important in all countries, while secondly, membership of informal social networks play an important role along with personal success. The following section describes the similarities and differences in the level and form of trust between Cambodia and Finland. Trust is an important variable for creating the form of collectivism-individualism which leads to the efficacy or inefficacy of collective action.

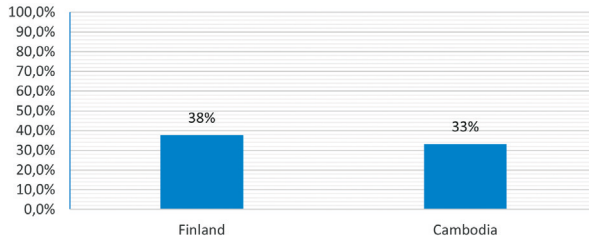


On the basis of previous results, it seems that Finland has a higher generalised level of trust than Cambodia. The results confirm these findings. In Finland, 60% (LMV 06/reasonable) of respondents express that they generally trust other people, which is a modest value. In Cambodia, the figure is 18% (LMV 0.2/low), indicating a weak value. Thus, there is a qualitative distinction in this variable between Finland and Cambodia. This pattern does not change much when moving from a general and quite abstract formulation to a more concrete setting. In the survey, the respondents were asked about trust in their boss or supervisor. General trust was significantly higher in Finland than in Cambodia where the level of general trust was at a relatively low level. In the case of Finland, it is likely to represent more egalitarian collectivism, where trust is an important variable and precondition for collective action. In Cultural Agency Theory (CAT), there is a connection between trust and collective action (traditional, horizontal collectivism). In Cambodia, there is more likely to be a trait of hierarchical individualism (traditional, vertical

## Comparison between Cambodia and Finland

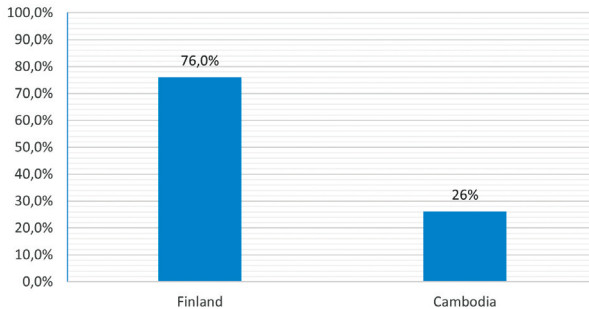
individualism). Moreover, Finland may be more sensate oriented, with trust occurring through formal contracts and rule of law, while Cambodia tends to exhibit a more ideational culture, where informal word of mouth is sufficient.

Chart 20: There are only few people I can trust completely (%)



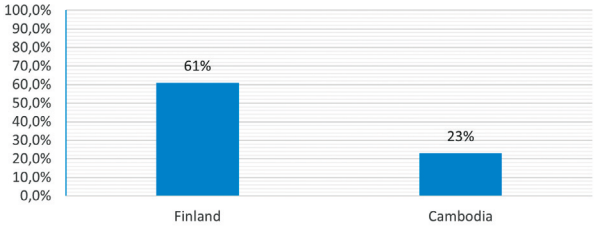
There are no significant differences between the two countries on the question of how much people can trust their fellow citizens. While in Finland the level is 38%, the value in Cambodia is 33%. Unfortunately, this response does not explain where the trusted people and relationships come from.

Chart 21: Your boss or superior trusts you (%)



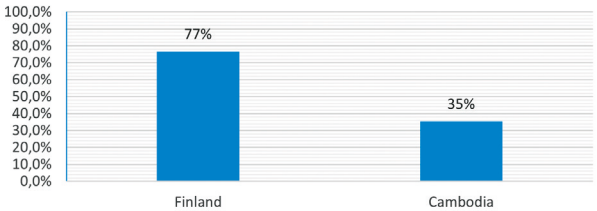
In Finland, the level of trust is at a high level, especially in ingroups (as organisations) and 76% (LMV 0.8/relatively high) of respondents believe their superior trusts them, which indicates a strong value. In the case of Cambodia, the level of trust inside the organisation (ingroup) is at a pretty low level, with just 26% (LMV 0.2/low) of respondents believing their superior trust them, indicating a weak value. It can be assumed that any organisation needs ingroup trust to develop or create collective action and achieve common goals.

Chart 22: You trust your boss or supervisor (%)



The respondents' level of trust towards their superior produced similar results to the previous question. In Finland, 61% of respondents in organisations (ingroup) trust their superiors (LMV 0.6/reasonable), indicating a modest value. In Cambodia, the results show that only a quarter (23%, LMV 0.2/low) trust their superiors, which is relatively low. This implies that almost 80% of respondents do not trust their superiors, demonstrating a very weak level of trust. Trust from both the bottom up and top to bottom are significantly lower in Cambodia than in Finland. This indicates a low level of trust in organisations from both sides, ultimately affecting the achievement of collective goals.

Chart 23: If you are a supervisor or have subordinates, you trust the staff under your control? (%)



Respondents in Finland who are superiors in a work organisation have a high level of trust and confidence in their subordinates (77%, LMV 0,8/ relatively high). Cambodia's result was at a relatively low level (35%, LMV 0,4/ relatively low), indicating that supervisors do not trust their subordinates. The figure was significantly higher in Finland (strong) compared to Cambodia (modest). It seems that Cambodians are willing to trust only their co-workers rather than vertically, in both up and down directions. This can be referred

## *Comparison between Cambodia and Finland*

to as the concept of egocentrism. It should be noted that the research by Six et al. (2015) confirms the importance of trust in collective action. According to these researchers, in collective action, trust is regarded as a safeguard for delivering optimal outcomes. Without trust, it is difficult to create collective action. The landmark values for Finland and Cambodia are significantly different, with Finland having an average of 0.64 and Cambodia 0.24. The landmark values for trust are shown in Table 4.3.

**Table 4.3:** Trust

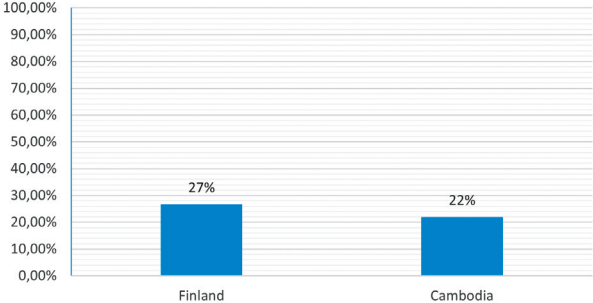
Question No. Chart	Question	Variable/ Trait	Finland		Cambodia		Relationship Between Landmark Values
			%	Landmark	%	Landmark	
19	I trust other people in general	Trust	60	<b>0.6</b>	18	<b>0.2</b>	Different
20	There are few people I can trust completely	Trust	38	<b>0.4</b>	33	<b>0.2</b>	Different
21	Your boss or superior trusts you	Trust	76	<b>0.8</b>	26	<b>0.2</b>	Different
22	You trust your boss or supervisor	Trust	61	<b>0.6</b>	23	<b>0.2</b>	Different
23	If you are a supervisor or have subordinates, you trust the staff under your control	Trust	77	<b>0.8</b>	35	<b>0.4</b>	Different

## Unionism and efficacy

The following section describes the similarities and differences between Cambodia and Finland concerning the level of unionism. Here, the focus is on work conditions and the efficacy of unions, where efficacy refers to an agency's capability to produce the designated levels of performance in social environments.

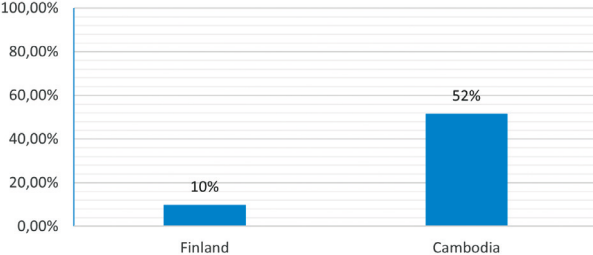


Chart 24: I earn enough from work (%)



In Finland, 27% of respondents believe they earn enough from work, while the figure is 22% in Cambodia, indicating no significant differences between the two countries. This is an interesting result. Despite wages being much higher in Finland, only a quarter of Finns say they earn enough from work. Both countries have the same LMV (0.2/low), implying a weak level. In parallel, the responses indicate that a relatively high number of study participants are not satisfied with their earnings. This implies a relatively high number of dissatisfied people in both countries (LMV 0,8/relative high), indicating a strong level of income dissatisfaction.

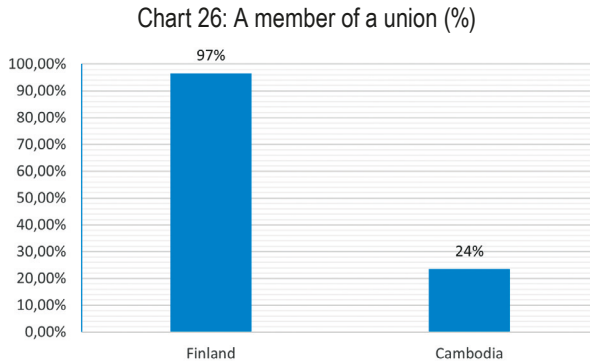
Chart 25: I must do another job and earn more money to survive (%)



In Finland, only 10% (LMV 0/minimal) of respondents were interested in taking on extra work, while in Cambodia more than half (52%, LMV 0.6/reasonable) needed other work to survive, with one job not being sufficient for a decent life. In this regard, the level of union efficacy in Cambodia is too low to demand better earnings for employees, demonstrating inefficacy rather than efficacy, for one reason or another. On the other hand, in Finland,

## Comparison between Cambodia and Finland

the unions enter into nationwide collective agreements for earnings and other benefits.



In Finland, over 60% of employees are members of unions (SAK, 2016). Compared with most other countries, the membership is at a strong level. In Cambodia, trade union members account for 7.7% of the total workforce with 25% being wage workers (Ulandssekretariatet, 2014).

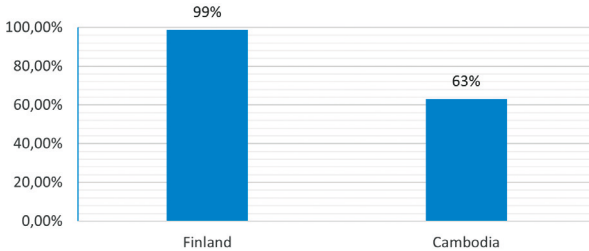
In Cambodia, the sample group is fairly representative of the overall situation in the country. In contrast to Finland, the union membership is low in Cambodia. Despite the relatively low wages, workers are not willing to become union members. There are many reasons for this. In Cambodia, the proportion of wage workers is still very small. There are no traditions of collective action in terms of unionism. Finally, the powerful elite is against independent unions. This may also relate to the question of communication between unions and workers. In Cambodia, almost half (48%) of respondents do not know what a trade union is. While in Finland, close to 100% of the population know about unions, and communication between unions and people are at a high level. Communication arises from the social trait system and can divide two bipolar values into dramatism and patternism. These trait types direct the actions, interactions, and reactions that (re)constitute the social environment (Yolles and Fink, 2013).

In Cambodia, there are more patterns, with the social environment being influenced by relationships with individuals. Some importance is attached to symmetry, pattern, balance, and relationship dynamics. Goal

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seeking should be for collective benefit, and collective goal formation takes precedence over personal goal formation. Efficacy refers to shared beliefs, affecting appreciation and goals, task intentions, cultural cohesion, normative performance, and the ability to communicate. The results also show efficacy is high, while Cambodia’s weak efficacy status may influence an agency’s ability to communicate, develop appreciation, cite tasks, and set goals. Finland is more likely to represent dramatism, where communication and social contracts are important, while Cambodia represents patternism, where allocentric collectives are important.

Chart 27: Your employer allows workers to join a trade union if they want to (%)



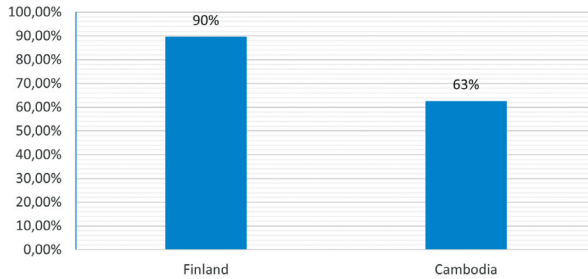
In Finland, almost 100% (98.80%, LMV 1/high) of employers allow their workers to join a trade union (Finland has freedom of association legislation). Cambodia also has a relatively high degree of freedom to join unions (LMV 0.6/reasonable) indicating a modest level.

**Perceived collective efficacy**

Next, the perceived collective efficacy is analysed in Cambodia and Finland. Here, perceived collective efficacy is understood to be a shared belief in people’s collective power and collective capability to produce the desired results or outcomes.

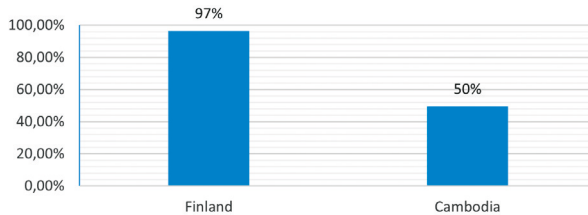
## Comparison between Cambodia and Finland

Chart 28: Do you think there is mutual trust between unions and the workers of the public? (%)



In Finland, there is very high level of trust (90%, LMV 08/relatively high) between a union and its members, while for Cambodia, it is two-thirds (63%, LMV 06/ reasonable). Although this figure is significantly lower than Finland, it is still reasonably high. Cambodia demonstrates the highest level of mutual trust between members and unions compared with other types of trust, which is interesting. While mutual trust is high, shared beliefs towards collective action is low as shown by the following variables.

Chart 29: Workers need strong trade unions to protect their interests (%)



The *collective agency* operates through the shared beliefs of efficacy, pooled understanding, group aspirations, incentive systems, and collective action, arising through normative processes.

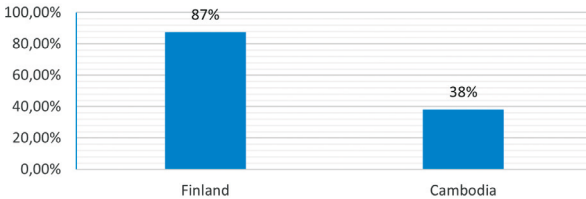
The belief in a strong union is high in Finland with 97% (LMV 1/high) of respondents expressing that they need strong unions to protect their interests, implying a strong level of belief, while in Cambodia this figure is 50% (LMV 0.4/relatively low). In Finland, *perceived* collective efficacy is strong while in Cambodia it is modest. When perceived collective efficacy is low, the agency does not have the capacity to perform effectively and collective efficacy is at a

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low level and vice versa. This variable implies that belief systems are different between Finland and Cambodia, despite the latter being traditionally described as a collective society and the former individualistic.

The cultural trait has two bipolar values: *sensate and ideational*. The cultural trait creates the orientation of the cultural environment, affecting how the agency interacts with its environment, and the formation of trust is also determined by national culture (Fukuyama, 1995a). Sensate culture is associated with individualism and the ideational culture with collectivism. Collectivism (action) are different under sensate and ideational cultures. Sensate orientation highlights the nature of needs and ends (outcomes) in terms of the goal objective along with the degree and capacity to pursue those needs by exploiting the external world. This variable shows that Finland is more likely to be a sensate culture and Cambodia an ideational culture where harmony is important for keeping society stable. Unions may disturb the balance of a stable situation.

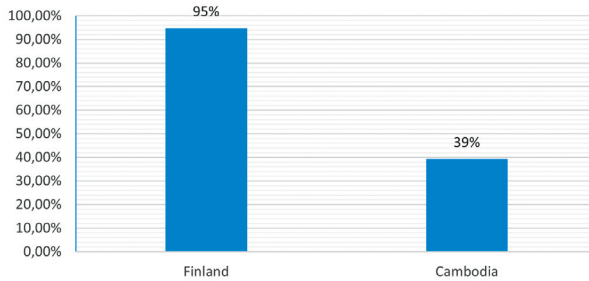
Chart 30: Unions are important because they can increase the wages and salaries of employees (%)



In Finland, 87% (LMV 1/high) of respondents believe that unions are important because they can increase the wages of employees. While in Cambodia, the figure is only 38% (LMV 0.4/relatively low). This variable explains individuals believe in the capacity of unions to increase wages. The perceived collective efficacy of individual members is shown to be strong in Finland, while in Cambodia it is modest.

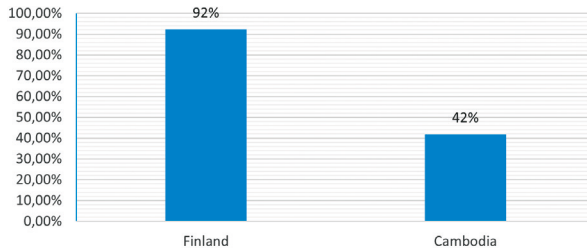
## Comparison between Cambodia and Finland

Chart 31: Unions can create stable working conditions (%)



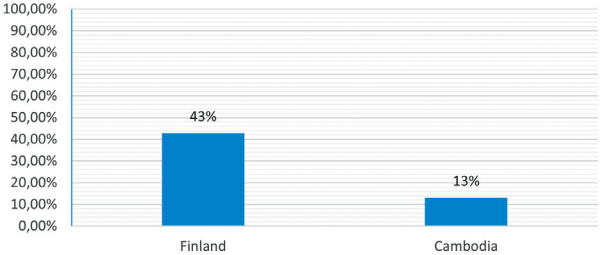
In Finland again, a great majority (95%, LMV 1/high) of the respondents believe that unions can create stable working conditions, while in Cambodia the same figure is only 39% (LMV 0.4/relatively low), indicating a modest level of belief. Significant differences can be found between Finland and Cambodia in the belief that unions have the capacity to create stable working conditions. Moreover, a strong level of perceived collective efficacy is demonstrated in Finland towards this variable while in Cambodia, perceived collective efficacy is only modest.

Chart 32: Without unions, wage earners' working conditions may worsen (%)



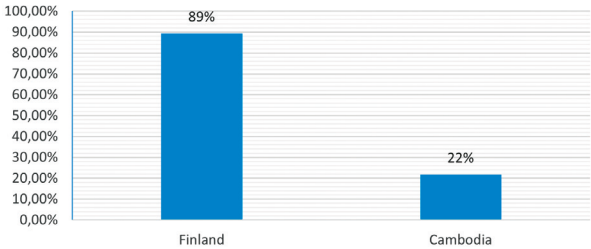
In Finland, 92% (LMV 1/high) of respondents believe that working conditions may worsen if there is no union and support collective action, while in Cambodia less than half the respondents (42%, LMV 0.4/relatively low) believe that without unions, working conditions would worsen. Moreover, a strong level of perceived collective efficacy is demonstrated in Finland while in Cambodia, perceived collective efficacy is modest.

Chart 33: Better wages (%)



In Finland, almost half of respondents (43%, LMV 0.4/relatively low) expect a better salary as a union member. In the case of Cambodia, it seems that better wages are not an important factor in the decision to join a union, with only 13% of respondents (LMV 0/minimal) agreeing with this statement. There is an interesting notion, that although the respondents of the survey in both countries believe unions play an important role in helping to increase wages, it is not the main reason for joining a union – indicating that unions do not have the ability to collectively bargain for better wages. Furthermore, a modest level of perceived collective efficacy is demonstrated by this variable in Finland while in Cambodia perceived collective efficacy is weak.

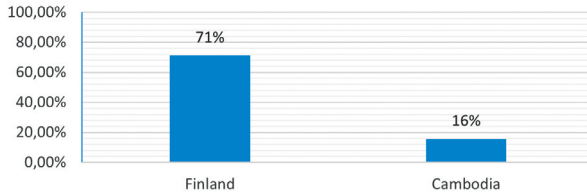
Chart 34: I trust the union to represent my best interests for me (%)



In Finland, most respondents (89%, LMV 1/high) believe that unions represent the best interests of their members, while in Cambodia the figure is only 22% (LMV 0.2/low). Furthermore, perceived collective efficacy is at a strong level in Finland, but weak in Cambodia.

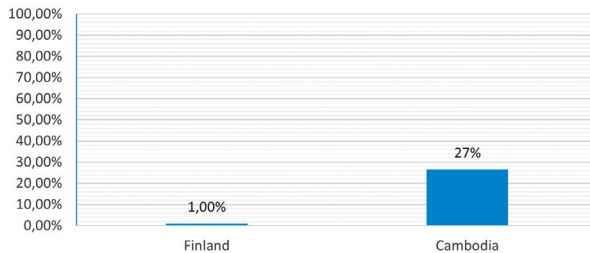
## Comparison between Cambodia and Finland

Chart 35: Legal Protection (%)



In Finland, 71% of respondents (LMV 0.8/relatively high) believe that unions can provide legal protection when a problem arises between the employer and employee, while in Cambodia, the figure is only 16% (LMV 0/minimal). In Finland, perceived collective efficacy is strong, with a high level of legal protection, while in Cambodia the opposite is true, with weak perceived efficacy and a low level of legal protection. This may be because Cambodians tend not to trust government institutions and the legal system in the country.

Chart 36: Unions can do very little or nothing to help workers (%)



An interesting point of collective action is the belief in what unions can and cannot do. In Finland, only 1% of respondents believe that unions can do nothing or very little to help workers. This means that 99% of respondents believe in the capacity of unions to successfully perform collective action. In Cambodia, more than a quarter of respondents believe that unions can do very little or nothing at all to help workers. However, it should be noted that 73% of Cambodian respondents believe that unions can successfully perform collective action.

The results for Cambodia are quite surprising in relation to unions and their capacity because other variables connected to collective action are at the



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relatively low or even weak level. In Finland, perceived collective efficacy is extremely strong, while it is also strong in Cambodia and at the high level.

Collective action at union level depends on individuals and their capacity to co-operate to achieve common goals. Collective actions are possible in relation to social needs and the ability to communicate and set goals (Bandura, 2006). Trade unions in Cambodia are unable to lure people to join, despite membership being allowed by the government. It should be borne in mind that 25% of union members are wage earners, representing only 8% of the total labour force (Ulandssekretariatet, 2014). Almost half the population do not even know the purpose of a union. The majority of formal employment in Cambodia is poorly paid, pushing people to do extra work in the informal sector, where 90% of workers operate according to the Utlandssekretariatet LO/LFT Council statistics (2014). The informal economy is defined as working without official or solid legal status, regulation, or protection by state institutions (Amin, 2002; Becker, 2004).

Workers in the Cambodian labour markets also lack legal rights and access to the social security system. Collective actions and bargaining are not favoured or even allowed in Cambodia. Only a very small proportion of workers (2.5%) fall under the Collective Bargaining Agreement. The ITUC Report (2014) ranked Cambodia bottom for working safety and conditions, with a weak level of collective action, and demonstrating inefficacy in relation to outcomes. This is a result of both internal and external problems.

In contrast, 70% of the labour force in Finland belong to a union, indicating a very strong level of unionisation in the global context. Union awareness and the role they play in society is well known in Finland. The rules and regulations relating to wages and working conditions are based on collective bargaining agreements, which cover approximately 90% of the workforce, both unionised and non-unionised sector (Laamanen, 2017). In many cases, the Collective Bargaining Agreement is a tripartite agreement between unions, the government, and central employers' associations.

In Finland, the efficacy of unions is high while the perceived collective efficacy of individuals is also at the modest level. The landmark values between Finland and Cambodia are significantly different, with an average LMV of 0.76 and 0.35, respectively.

## *Comparison between Cambodia and Finland*

**Table 4.4:** Efficacy and perceived collective efficacy

Question No. Chart	Question	Variable/ Trait	Finland		Cambodia		Relationship Between Landmark Values
			%	Landmark	%	Landmark	
24	I earn enough from work	Unionism and Efficacy	27	0.2	22	0.2	Same
25	I need an extra job to earn more money to survive.	Unionism and Efficacy	10	0	52	0.6	Different
26	Member of a union.	Unionism and Efficacy	97	1	24	0.2	Different
27	Your employer allows workers to join a trade union if they want to.	Unionism and Efficacy	99	1	63	0.6	Different
28	Do you think there is mutual trust between unions and public workers?	Perceived Collective Efficacy	90	1	63	0.6	Different
29	Workers need strong trade unions to protect their interests	Perceived Collective Efficacy	97	1	50	0.4	Different
30	Unions are important because they can increase the wages of employees.	Perceived Collective Efficacy	87	1	38	0.4	Different
31	Unions can create stable working conditions	Perceived Collective Efficacy	95	1	39	0.4	Different
32	Without unions, the working conditions of wage earners may worsen.	Perceived Collective Efficacy	92	1	42	0.4	Different
33	Unions can help to provide better wages.	Perceived Collective Efficacy	43	0.4	13	0	Different
34	I trust the union to represent my best interests.	Perceived Collective Efficacy	89	1	22	0.2	Different
35	Being a member of a union better represents my needs and opinions as a worker and gives me more bargaining power.	Perceived Collective Efficacy	80	0.8	38	0.4	Different

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36	Unions can provide legal protection.	Perceived Collective Efficacy	71	0.8	16	0	Different
37	Unions can take care of work safety.	Perceived Collective Efficacy	33	0.2	14	0	Different
38	Unions can do very little or nothing at all to help workers.	Perceived Collective Efficacy	1	1	27	0.8	Different

**Environmental variables**

Different environmental factors promote development, adaptability, and collective actions, such as institutional social development. The factors are included in the overall country comparison to create a wider understanding of the current situation but are not given closer consideration in this study. This research analyses the environmental variables, based on the MSSD approach, focusing on the population’s homogeneity, and religious/cultural homogeneity.

Both Finland and Cambodia are homogeneous nation-states with similar population structures. In Finland, over 90% are native Finns, while around 90 % of the population in Cambodia are Khmers and 5% Vietnamese. Officially, Cambodia is a Buddhist country, with 97% of the population practising Buddhism which has a strong influence on Cambodian culture and a harmony-oriented structure. In Finland, Christianity is the dominant religion with over 70% of the population belonging to the Lutheran church. However, the role of religion in the country has decreased during recent decades. In Cambodia, there is a low level of trust between the population and government institutions in general, and even a negative perception of government institutions (UN, 2005; 2009). Reports from the World Bank (various years) and United Nations (various years) mention similar problems. Finland is a high-trust society where both trust in fellow citizens and social confidence are at a very high level.

Both countries have a high level of cultural homogeneity. According to Daun (1989), homogeneity favours a collective personality orientation, despite ethnic and cultural heterogeneity providing the basis of an individualistic

orientation. This is only likely to be true if other factors are present such as hierarchy which have a stronger influence, thereby interfering with the relationship between homogeneity and the level of collective action as in the case of Cambodia. The heterogeneity of the population and culture does not explain the results for collective action in this study with respect to the nature of efficacy. Both countries have similar environmental variables but different outcomes in relation to collective action.

## Most Similar System Design (MSSD) analysis

The study analysis shows that Finnish people are more willing to take part in political action than Cambodian respondents and perceived (political) efficacy seems to be higher in Finland than in Cambodia. The results also indicate that Finnish respondents use all channels for political action, while Cambodians are more willing to express their actions and opinions anonymously rather than publicly/openly.

Secondly, the analysis shows that Finnish people are more politically oriented than Cambodians, despite more Cambodian respondents receiving a higher education. Only 11% of the Finnish respondents received a higher education than high school/vocational school<sup>9</sup>, while in Cambodia, 69% of respondents received a higher education than high school or vocational school. This difference is due to the sample under study. The Finnish sample is representative of only blue-collar workers while the Cambodian sample is a nationwide random sample. In general, people with higher levels of education tend to be closer to the centre of politically important social networks which affect their levels of political participation (Hillygus, 2005). In Finland, perceived political efficacy is strong, while Cambodians demonstrate a weak level of perceived political efficacy, despite their higher level of education.

While the cultural orientation of a governing body may refer to its political culture, the social orientation trait is ultimately responsible for the way in which policy is implemented. Together, these create a sociocultural

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<sup>9</sup> This is due to the sample. The SAK represents blue collar workers whose typical education is vocational training.

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environment. There is some connection between dramatising and sensatism, while patterning is connected to ideationalism.

Cultural orientation refers to an agency's political culture, which may adopt a sensate or ideational perspective. A sensate culture may be "active" when its carriers try to transform the external environment to satisfy their needs and desires (Nieli, 2012). Sensate offers ways and means to implement ideas and is also indicative of what does not work operationally. The ideational culture may also be "fideistic" when its carriers represent a late stage of ideational culture, where intuition and the ongoing testimony of mystics, prophets, and saints are replaced by a blind and desperate "will-to-believe" on the part of people who have lost any kind of direct contact with the supraconscious (Yolles and Fink, 2013, 116). Ideational cultural orientation epistemic attributes include appreciating the conceptual and internal nature of an object of attention and creating fulfilment or realisation through the self-imposed minimisation or elimination of most physical needs. These views are also considered important for achieving harmony in society (Yolles and Fink, 2013, 32), in this regard Finland is more sensate, while Cambodia represents an ideational culture.

Political behaviour includes understanding and realising social and political structures. Self-reference arises from the cognitive trait, which can take one of two bipolar "type" values: autonomy and embeddedness. Autonomy type orientation occurs when an agency is less interested in following the guidance of its host culture and might react more autonomously to the lessons drawn from (or opportunities offered by) environmental impulses (Sagiv and Schwartz, 2007). Embeddedness emphasises the maintenance of the status quo and restraining actions or inclinations that might disrupt ingroup solidarity or the traditional (social) order (Yolles and Fink, 2014). From that perspective, Finland represents an autonomy orientation, and Cambodia an embeddedness orientation. It should be mentioned that full participation would provide a mechanism for civil society at least within the Western civilisation context to directly participate in the political decision-making processes and Cambodia is far from a civil society. A civil society may disturb the traditional order and harmony arising from figurative orientation, and in the case of Cambodia, it presents a harmony orientation trait, arising in the figurative trait.

## Family

Regarding family values, there is no significant difference between Finland and Cambodia. However, inside the family values, significant differences exist in some variables, as presented in Chart 22. In Finland, only 4% of respondents have lent a substantial amount of money to another person, while the figure is 21% for Cambodia. This variable may have a relationship with a weak economic situation and the principle of reciprocity. There are significant differences concerning the relationship between children and elderly parents. In Cambodia, there is strong family responsibility, while in Finland, people do not have such strong views about taking care of elderly parents. This may result from Finland's government policy, where the state assumes responsibility for taking care of the elderly collectively through the pension system. In contrast, a higher level of individualism may affect the differences in outcomes. People in Finland may also think individualistically, considering the elderly to be the responsibility of the state rather than themselves (family life cycle).

The biggest difference in the countries concerns friendship and morality. Only 5% of Finland's respondents accept "friendship with benefits", while in Cambodia almost 37% think that fear creates "friendship with benefits". This is an example of vertical/hierarchical individualism in the case of Cambodia, and horizontal/egalitarian collectivism in the case of Finland.

In the case of equal living standards, both countries show a relatively high level of consensus about the government's responsibility to provide a decent standard of living for the elderly. In Finland, the figure is 95%, indicating that egalitarian values are at a significantly high level, while in Cambodia, the figure of 70% points towards a more hierarchical trait than in Finland. In the case of healthcare for disabled/ill people in Finland, the level is extremely high (more than 97%), while slightly more moderate in Cambodia (63%), indicating a higher hierarchical trait value, and it seems that the unequal distribution of resources is legitimate.

The government in Finland appears to be better able to implement the shared values of society than in Cambodia, but such implementation is outside the scope of this research. Despite Cambodia being defined as a collectivistic

society with a high level of familism, there is no significant difference with Finland, traditionally described as individualistic. Finland appears to have more egalitarian collectivism (CAT)/horizontal collectivism (see e.g., Fukuyama, 1995a; Park, 2004), where egalitarianism and horizontality are equivalent concepts.

In contrast, Cambodia demonstrates a more hierarchical/vertical individualism in the case of family values, where hierarchical CAT (Yolles and Fink, 2010; 2014) and vertical collectivism (Fukuyama, 1995a) take on equivalent meanings.

## Trust

In Finland, there is a high level of general trust in society, while it is low in Cambodia. In general, trust may affect a person's capacity to create trust and relationships with outgroup members. Organisational (ingroup) trust between superiors and subordinates (hierarchical trust) is at a relatively high level in Finland, while in Cambodia it is relatively low. It can be assumed that organisational trust can also be categorised into ingroup trust between superiors and subordinates. This trust is significantly lower in Cambodia than in Finland. The cultural trait affects how the agency interacts with its environment, and the formation of trust is also determined by national culture (Fukuyama, 1995). The social trait determines the social relations of an agency, while social orientations direct action, interaction, and reaction that (re)constitutes the social environment in terms of activities, and determines the orientation of an agency towards its environment. This explains Finland's sensate culture and Cambodia's more ideational culture.

From this perspective, Finland represents horizontal/egalitarian collectivism and is positively associated with both general and hierarchical trust. Generally, Finland and other Nordic countries can be described as being horizontal individualist/egalitarian individualist. From the horizontal individualism/egalitarian individualism perspective, people engaged in a relationship can be trusted only when constrained by the social institutions that bind them with a sense of obligation which enables them to reciprocate the debt to each other (Triandis, 1995; Triandis and Gelfand, 1998; Shin

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and Park, 2004). Shin and Park (2004) found that horizontal and vertical individualism was not significantly linked to general trust. The question of trust and collectivist-individualism is not undisputed. Huff (2003, 23) mentioned that “propensity to trust refers to an expectation that others in general, whether members of ingroups or outgroups, can be trusted. Individuals with high propensities to trust will trust both ingroup and outgroup members”. Following the idea expressed by Huff (2003), Finland seems to be individualistic. In contrast, Shin and Park (2005, 107) explain that “horizontal collectivism encourages people to trust not only family and relatives but also others who have not been familiar”, who can be referred to as outgroup members. In this study, Finland appears to have a relatively high level of general trust, leading to the view that it is more likely to represent horizontal collectivism/egalitarian collectivism, which is associated with both general and hierarchical trust. It is important to note that the level of trust affects an agency’s efficacy or inefficacy (Yolles and Fink, 2013). In Cambodia, both ingroup and outgroup trust appears to be at a low level, representing that the country leans towards vertical/hierarchical collectivism. Vertical/hierarchical collectivism exhibits particularised trust, but in the case of Cambodia, all trust in this survey is at a low level for all sectors, which means that hierarchical/vertical individualism tends to be mediated by familiarity. In the case of Cambodia, lack of trust can create collective action inefficacy, and vertical individualism is also linked with the least co-operative people (Probst et al., 1999).

Vertical Individualism might not involve any trust relationship at all, in particular, regarding strangers. People who endorse high levels of hierarchical/vertical individualism (VI) may “decide” not to trust anyone who is not familiar, due to a lack of information (Shin and Par, 2005). Horizontal collectivism is positively related to both general and particular trust. In the case of Cambodia, the paradox of a hierarchical society is that weak hierarchical trust also exists. Following the philosophy of CAT in sensate cultures, trust occurs through formal contracts and rule of law, but in ideational cultures, informal word of mouth is enough. Therefore, in ideational cultures, people may have a metaphorical little “black book” in which people who welch on their word are likely to be ambiguous or untrustworthy.



## Unionism, efficacy, and perceived collective efficacy

The *collective agency* operates through shared beliefs of efficacy, pooled understanding, group aspirations and incentive systems, and collective action, arising through normative processes. In Cambodia, union membership is quite rare. This may be due to the experience of real-life situations, creating self-reflective processes that enable people to develop beliefs about themselves within social contexts, and arising from *figurative traits* which provide precise information about reality and the environment. The figurative trait includes two bipolar values: mastery and harmony. Figurative intelligence is a reflection of knowledge patterns and exists through figurative imagery and patterns of information (Yolles and Fink, 2011, 11). Information as experience with memories can be negative or positive. In the case of Finland, it demonstrates mastery (with affective autonomy), while in Cambodia it indicates more of a harmony orientation.

These results can also be reflected in the level of communication or lack of communication. The efficacy of an agency influences its ability to communicate, as evidenced by the fact that half the Cambodian respondents do not know what a “union” is really for. Communication is also important within the sociocultural setting and the way in which it operates through narrative. The type and form of communication arise in the social trait, which has two bipolar values: dramatising and patterning, following Yolles and Fink (2013). These trait types direct (collective) action, interaction, and reaction, determining the agency’s orientation towards its environment. Park (2005, 16) and Wolf and Grollman (1982) mention that there is also a connection between dramatising and sensate (individualism) and vice versa between patterning and ideational (collectivism). Communication is the main feature of dramatising, while configuration arises from the patterning orientation.

There is still the question of how respondents believe in what unions can do and achieve, and how they are able to create collective action and act like collective agents and represent their individual members. The *collective agency* operates through shared beliefs and the shared belief of a collective can, as a whole, attain goals and accomplish the desired tasks. The results are significantly different between Finland and Cambodia. In Cambodia, only

## *Comparison between Cambodia and Finland*

22% of respondents trust a union to represent “my best interests”, while in Finland 89% believe that unions represent “the best interests of their members”. Furthermore, the level of shared belief in bargaining power is different in both countries. In Finland, the level of shared belief that unions have more bargaining power than standing alone is high (80%), while in Cambodia only slightly more than one-third (38%) believe unions can increase bargaining power over individual workers. From the perspective of what unions can do, only 1% of Finnish respondents believe that unions can do very little or nothing at all, while for Cambodia the figure is 27%.

The shared belief that the normative agent can, as a whole, attain goals and accomplish its desired tasks (Bandura, 1986) involves the belief or perception that efficacious collective actions are possible in relation to a social need. The collective performance of a social system involves transactional dynamics, and perceived collective efficacy is an emergent group-level property, not simply the sum of the efficacy beliefs of individual members (Bandura, 2001). Efficacy, the capability to create performance, needs perceived collective efficacy, and if individuals in a collective agency do not believe in their capacity to create favourable outcomes by efficacious action, it is difficult or impossible for them to reach the desired task. The high level of perceived efficacy does not necessarily result in a high level of performance, but it can influence the performance and the agency’s capacity for achievement. Comparing the three variables in the context of Cambodia, both perceived collective efficacy and union outcomes are weak. In Finland, the perceived collective efficacy is strong and the union outcomes relatively strong. In Finland, unions negotiate work agreements rather than the individual members themselves. Furthermore, unions, the government, and employers’ associations make tripartite agreements and unions are an integral part of the political scheme and social system.

Efficacy is normally taken as the capability of an agency to organise and implement a series of actions to produce a given attainment or performance (Bandura, 1977; 1986; Wood and Bandura, 1989). This capability is influenced by the capacity of the *operative trait* to generate coherence, and an agency’s interactive, coordinative, and synergistic dynamics. Efficacy is a reflection of an agency’s capability to produce designated, or “desired”, levels of

performance in social environment (Yolles and Fink, 2013). In contrast, when inefficacy emerges, the given level of capability is not sufficient to achieve the desired results, i.e., relatively poor performance occurs.

In the case of a particular action, only 16% of Cambodian respondents expect unions to provide legal protection when required. In contrast, 71% of Finnish respondents exhibited a strong belief in the capacity of unions to provide legal protection. Accordingly, Finland demonstrates a high level of perceived collective efficacy, while in Cambodia the level of perceived collective efficacy is weak.

In the case of work safety issues in Cambodia, only 14% of respondents expect unions to take care of safety issues. The Finnish respondents also express relatively low expectations towards the capability of unions to take care of work safety. Both countries express similar views on the question of their expectations regarding better working conditions. These figures can be explained by the fact that safety issues are taken care of by the employers with unions only having a minor role in this respect.

In general, the perceived collective efficacy in Finnish respondents is relatively strong for their belief in the union's capacity to create appropriate outcomes and performance. In contrast, the Cambodian respondents demonstrate a weak level of perceived collective efficacy. In the case of Cambodia, the respondents' shared and general beliefs towards collective action are at a weak level.

## Dependent and environmental variables

The results of collective action for Cambodia and Finland vary. In Cambodia, the level of collective action is at a weak level in all aspects in relation to collective efficacy. In Finland, collective efficacy is strong. Efficacy can be observed if the cultural agency has shared beliefs or perceives that efficacious collective actions are possible in relation to a social need and the *ability to communicate and set goals* (Bandura, 2006). In Cambodia, perceived collective efficacy is also at a weak level, with respondents unable to believe in their capacity for collective action. In contrast, Finland's perceived collective efficacy is strong. In the case of Cambodia, inefficacy can lead to a lack of coherence and the

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demonstration of collective cognitive dissonance, potentially acting as a driver for cognitive state/dispositional dysfunction.

**Table 4.5:** The MSSD Approach using the cases of Cambodia and Finland

Variable	Cambodia	Finland	Similar/Different
<b>Independent variables</b>			
Individuals behave at the societal level (through political participation)	Relatively Low/ Modest	Reasonable/ Modest	Different
Family values	Relatively Low/ Modest	Relatively Low/ Modest	Similar
Trust	Low/Weak	Reasonable/ Modest	Different
Perceived collective efficacy	Relatively High/ Strong	Low/Weak	Different
<b>Dependent variable</b>			
Level of collective action (union level)	Low	High	Different
<b>Environmental variables</b>			
Population homogeneity	High	High	Similar
Religious/cultural homogeneity	High	High	Similar

The level of collective action results from the sum of interconnected traits and interaction while one trait determines the level of collective action. The level of collective action is low in Cambodia but strong in Finland. Furthermore, the factors creating the logic of collective action are missing in Cambodia, such as a lack of communication, pooled understanding, shared belief in a common goal, lack of trust, and so on. While the concept of logic in collective action exists in Finland and all sectors have a strong level of communication, pooled understanding, shared belief in common goals, lack of trust, and so on, the opposite is true for Cambodia.

Demographically, both Cambodia and Finland can be characterised by their ethnic homogeneity as nation-states, with commonly shared languages, religion, and history. Both countries have a high level of cultural homogeneity. Homogeneity favours a collective personality orientation, while heterogeneity favours an individualistic orientation (Daun, 1989). The heterogeneity of the population and culture does not explain the difference in collective action in relation to efficacy. Both countries have similar environmental variables but different outcomes in relation to collective action.

## 5

# Conclusions

This chapter provides the conclusions of this study, based on an analysis of the research findings and supported by the conceptual model of Cultural Agency Theory (CAT). The concept of agency centres on the viability of social systems through their ability to survive, and where necessary, adapt. The model provides new knowledge regarding normative social processes insofar as they have a direct impact on matters pertaining to the level of collective actions in unions, representing the results and outcomes of labour collaborations. The limitations of the study and suggestions for future research are also considered at the end of this chapter. This research endeavours to provide an understanding of collective action by comparing the distinctive Cambodian and Finnish ways of creating and fostering it.

The study involves only two countries, one principally individualist and the other collectivist, and as such, it is not generalisable to other cultures since each culture has its own individualist/collectivist orientation, and these may be distinct. What is generalisable is that the theory-based methods adopted are able to show the differences and similarities.

CAT offers a dynamic complex adaptive system model, and one of its developments concerns the psychological/social-psychological evaluation of individuals and societies. It uses formative traits, each with bipolar “type” values that indicate the various levels of orientation impacting potential behaviour. The influence in bipolar trait values in this study is enhanced by

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the impact of collective action at the union level (as the normative agent) in Cambodia and Finland. The research model adopts the technique of applying layers for analysis within a theoretical framework.

In respect to the theoretical framework, the following approach is applied as the basis for this sociological approach, involving the study of a sociocultural system with a normative agent, within which observed regularities emerge and evolve through collaborative and collective behaviour.

This research investigation adopts a comparative study technique, employing the use of the Most Similar Systems Design (MSSD) and statistical measures. The primary intent of this study is to investigate collective action by analysing the level of societal participation, family values, and trust.

The cultural agency perspective is used in this research to explore the nature of collective action, and determine how the related traits are linked to union actions and organisations to clarify the relative level of efficacy or inefficacy. Hence, this research examines how collective action and traits are linked. The independent variables and their connection to the sociological context are explained through the traits that influence the different outcomes in relation to collective action.

The comparative study technique using the MSSD approach is employed in this study to explore the similarities and differences in collective action. An analysis is then provided of the significant differences between the two countries of interest. According to Lim (2006), the logic of the MSSD approach dictates that there are at least two key differences or dissimilarities. There should be at least one significant difference with regard to the presumed independent variables.

The analysis shows the traits constituting the independent variables and the different “types” of values they take. The “types” indicate the sociocultural orientations impacting the possibility of socio-political behaviour. With respect to the dependent variable, there are clear differences in the level of collective action at union level between Cambodia and Finland. With respect to the environmental variables under investigation, both population homogeneity and cultural homogeneity turn out to be similar. Environmental variables are not an explanatory factor and do not determine the results.

**Table 5.1:** The MSSD Approach

Variable	Cambodia	Finland	Similar/Different
<b>Independent variables</b>			
Individual behaviour at the societal level (through political participation)	Relatively Low/ Modest	Reasonable/ Modest	Different
Family values	Relatively Low/ Modest	Relatively Low/ Modest	Similar
Trust	Low/Weak	Reasonable/ Modest	Different
Perceived collective efficacy	Low/Weak	Relatively High/ Strong	Different
<b>Dependent variable</b>			
Level of collective action (union level)	Low	High	Different
<b>Environmental variables</b>			
Population homogeneity	High	High	Similar
Religious/cultural homogeneity	High	High	Similar

The research questions and findings are summarised as follows:

**1) How and why do individuals behave in a certain way at the societal level (through political participation)?**

Significant differences are revealed in how individuals behave at the societal level through political participation in Cambodia and Finland. In Cambodia, the level of political participation is not very high. All measured factors show a weak or modest level of participation. The participation levels during Cambodian elections are modest, with little more than half the population voting in the last election. Meanwhile, the voting rate in Finland is strong.

Secondly, the Finnish people tend to be more politically oriented than Cambodians, despite Cambodian respondents exhibiting a higher education level (degree) which generally indicates greater political activity.

Thirdly, Cambodian respondents are more willing to express their actions and opinions anonymously rather than publicly/openly, while Finnish respondents use all available channels for political action. In Finland, perceived political efficacy appears to be strong and modest, while Cambodian respondents show a weak level of perceived political efficacy, despite their higher level of education (Perceived political efficacy is beyond the scope of this research.).

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Individual behaviour at the societal level through political participation arises in both cultural and social traits. The cultural orientation of a governing body may refer to its political culture, while the social orientation trait is ultimately responsible for the way in which policy is implemented, thereby creating sociocultural traits. There is some connection between dramatising and sensatism, while patterning is connected to ideationalism. With respect to CAT, political attitudes in Cambodia tend to arise from formative traits and ideational culture with a patterning orientation. In contrast, political attitudes in Finland tend to arise from sensate trait values with a dramatising orientation. Political behaviour also includes understanding and realising the social and political structure arising from norms and cognitive traits. From this perspective, Cambodia has shown a more embeddedness orientation, implying collectivism, while Finland exhibits more intellectual autonomy, implying individualism.

### **2) How and why do family values differ between Cambodia and Finland in relation to the collective mind?**

There are no significant differences between Finland and Cambodia, despite the latter being described as a collectivistic country with high family values. Cambodians feel strongly that adults are under a responsibility to take care of their elderly parents, while in Finland the result was significantly lower. There are no differences on the question of disabled or seriously ill family members, with the results being similar in both countries.

Secondly, an interesting finding for Finland is that there is a strong feeling that family comes first, meaning that the immediate family needs to be taken care of, while this was significantly lower in Cambodia. Also, in Finland the idea that people who are better off should take care of those less well-off is commonly shared, while in Cambodia the result is significantly lower. The most interesting point is that in Cambodia, the idea that it is acceptable to create friendship for the sake of benefits is commonly held, while in Finland this is only marginally accepted. In Cambodia, people are more willing to lend money to others than in Finland, and this may be connected to a weak economic situation, the reality of economic vulnerability and uncertainty (principle of reciprocity), along with the absence of a social security system.



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Thirdly, Cambodians strongly believe that adults are under a responsibility to take care of their elderly parents, while in Finland the result is significantly lower. There is no difference on the question of disabled or seriously ill family members, the results being similar in both countries, despite Finland having a social system that takes care of disabled and seriously ill people while Cambodia does not. In Finland, there is a strong feeling that family comes first, meaning that the immediate family needs to be taken care of, but this result is significantly lower for Cambodia, despite the fact that in Cambodia the family is a survival unit. Finland has developed a strong social security system that allows elderly people to live alone without the support of their family, with the state looking after elderly people collectively. Whereas, there is no pension system for elderly people in Cambodia. Furthermore, in Finland, the government offers homes for the elderly while Cambodia does not. Therefore, in this case, the family resembles a survival unit and represents forced familism, where the elderly do not have the appropriate tools for survival.

There are no significant differences between Cambodia and Finland in helping other people outside the family. Another interesting finding is that in Finland there is a commonly shared belief that people who are better off should take care of those who are less well off, while in Cambodia the result is significantly lower. The most interesting point is that in Cambodia, it is a commonly shared belief that it is acceptable to create friendships for benefits, while in Finland it is only marginally accepted. This demonstrates extreme hierarchical individualism rather than collectivism, while Finland shows more egalitarian collectivism, arising from the operative trait.

The question of a decent life for elderly and disabled people is highly prioritised in Finland while in Cambodia the result is much lower, with Cambodians not commonly sharing this idea. A similar viewpoint also arises from the operative trait and shows two distinctive bipolar values, with Cambodia demonstrating hierarchical values, with support for the legitimate unequal distribution of prosperity, while in Finland respondents are likely to support the collective idea of an egalitarian distribution of prosperity.

The traits determine the values supported by the majority of people in society (since they are a reflection of normativity), and the overall results

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indicate that in the case of Cambodia, the unequal distribution of resources is legitimate, leaning towards a hierarchical structure and orientation. In Finland, the results concern social justice and the responsibility of Finnish people towards the welfare of others, which means that the operative trait takes on the value of egalitarianism. Family values show that Cambodia tends to exhibit hierarchical individualism and Finland egalitarian collectivism.

### **3) How and why do the levels of trust differ between Cambodia and Finland? How does it affect collective action?**

In the case of Cambodia, there is low and weak levels of general trust, while in Finland the opposite is true. Vertical trust is also weak in Cambodia, but strong in Finland. Cambodia appears to be a low trust society, and Finland a high-trust society.

The cultural trait creates a sociocultural environment, affecting how the agency interacts with its social environment, but it should be borne in mind that the formation of trust is also determined by national culture. In Cambodia, all forms of trust appear to be weak, and people tend to lack trust in governmental institutions, while the opposite is true for Finland. Consequently, Cambodia seems to have an ideational culture, while Finland exhibits a more sensate culture. The question of trust is complex and the result of a combination of trait types, rather than just one. In the history of mutual influence, cognitive intention plays a metasystemic role and creates a cultural orientation for the agency. Therefore, the level of trust depends on both cultural and cognitive traits, including past experiences, and provides precise information about reality and the environment arising from the figurative trait; this potentially creates collective action and the belief in collectively shared ideas that show as outcomes. In this sense, Cambodia implies an embeddedness orientation while Finland represents intellectual autonomy. It should also be noted that this research shows a reasonable/modest level of trust in Finnish society, significantly lower (even though it is still comparatively high globally) than indicated by the majority of previous research on Finland.

### **4. How and why does the level of perceived collective efficacy affect collective action?**

In the case of Cambodia, both collective efficacy and perceived collective efficacy are found to be low and weak levels, but high and strong in Finland.

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However, there are contrasting results for collective action. In Cambodia, collective action is low in all aspects relating to collective efficacy, along with the level of perceived collective efficacy, while in Finland it is strong or modest. The collective agency operates through shared beliefs of efficacy, pooled understanding, group aspirations and incentive systems, and collective action. A shared belief indicates that the normative agent can, as a whole, attain goals and accomplish its desired tasks, but if the shared belief is absent, there can be no agency efficacy (with respect to unionism). This involves a belief or perception that efficacious collective actions are possible in relation to a social need.

Efficacy is normally taken as the capability of an agency to organise and implement a series of actions to produce given attainments or performances. This capability is influenced by the capacity of the operative trait. In the case of Cambodia, the efficacy value arises from hierarchy, while in Finland the value arises from egalitarianism. The figurative trait constitutes perceived collective efficacy, and in the case of Cambodia it arises from harmony, while in Finland it arises from mastery.

In this study, efficacy is not the main factor under investigation, but it provides a measurement system for collective action. Furthermore, it is important to create a meaning for efficacy to provide a wider understanding of collective action at the union level. Efficacy is directly related to belief and trust. In Cambodia, the level of collective action in unions is weak, and this influences its performance, for creating better working conditions, higher earnings, or legal protection for workers. In Finland, the level of collective action regarding the meaning of performance is strong. At the union level, the results indicate that luring people to join unions is weak in Cambodia. In contrast, union membership in Finland is strong. Against this background, Cambodian respondents do not believe that collective action is even possible.

One can consider the shared belief that the normative agent can, as a whole, attain goals and accomplish its desired tasks (Bandura, 1986). It involves a belief or perception that efficacious collective actions are possible in relation to a social need. The collective agency can be better understood as a normative agent. The view that collective groups act to serve individual

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interests is presumably based on the assumption that individuals in groups act out of self-interest and personal motivation.

From this perspective, it is easy to understand the differences in collective actions. In Cambodia, the collective action is low, while in Finland it is strong (indicating the general responsibility taken up by unions). The responses to the survey indicate that Cambodia is less politically oriented, and unions have a political dimension. The politically apathetic have a low sense of efficacy in their ability to influence governmental functions through collective initiatives and are disaffected from the political system, believing it does not act in their interests. Cambodia has an ideational culture, which is associated with collectivism, while an ideational orientation appreciates and understands the conceptual and internal nature of an object of attention, creating fulfilment or realisation through self-imposed minimisation or the elimination of most physical needs. These views are also considered to be important for achieving harmony in society.

The finding that Finland is likely to show a sensate orientation highlights the nature of needs and ends (outcomes) in respect of a given goal or objective, and the degree and capacity to pursue such needs by exploiting the external world. The sensate culture is practically/pragmatically oriented, thus referring to human external needs. Reality is observed by senses and can be measured and observed rather than reasoned and accepted.

On the question of family values, the Cambodians are likely to demonstrate a relatively high level of hierarchical individualism which does not favour collective actions. As previously mentioned, individuals with strong hierarchical individualism are the least co-operatively oriented people. Probst et al, (1999) note that high levels of vertical individualism are linked to the least co-operative people. From this perspective, it is difficult to create the foundations for collective action. Finland is more egalitarian, and egalitarian organisations are built on co-operative negotiation among members with the ability to create collective actions.

With respect to trust, Cambodia exhibits a low level of trust in all aspects: general and hierarchical/verticals. In contrast, in Finland the levels of general and hierarchical/vertical trust are strong. The ratio and level of co-operation

and communications are based on culture and mutual trust between people and organisations. Trust is the main factor constituting coherence inside an organisation and between humans and their organisation. Furthermore, the level of communication is low in Cambodia, while strong in Finland. Communication is a core value in the dramatist social trait, while lack of communication is related to patternism. In the case of collective action through trust, as before, Cambodia is likely to demonstrate hierarchical individualism and Finland egalitarian collectivism.

## The conceptual model and new knowledge

This study aims to construct a model of cultural agency, known as normative agency with the culture of collective action evaluated by comparing Cambodia and Finland. Hence, a research model is constructed by applying layers for analysis within a theoretical framework in respect to the trait values. In addition, the technique utilises the sociological approach of CAT.

This research also analyses the trait values insofar as they affect the logic of collective action in Cambodia and Finland. This involves the evaluation of variables relating to the model, generated using the MSSD approach. The criteria for investigating trait values are the logic of collective action, perceived collective efficacy, and collective efficacy, to evaluate their effects on the two nations under study.

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**Table 5.2:** Trait values in Cambodia and Finland

Trait Nature	Trait Value	Cambodia	Finland
Formative	Cultural	Ideational	Sensate
Strategic	Cognitive	Embeddedness	Intellectual autonomy
	Figurative	Harmony	Mastery
	Operative	Hierarchy	Egalitarianism
	Social	Patternism	Dramatism
Significant Attributes		Social relationships, traditional, status quo, order, solidarity, understanding, unity, pluralism, hierarchy, inequality, authority, humility, power, configurations, relations, patterns, balance, collectivist, allocentric, super-sensory, moral, creation, collectivist.	Autonomy, uniqueness, independent, self-development, self-assertion, mastery, monistic, moral equality, co-operation, equality (homogenesitic), social justice, relationalist, sequential, communication, contractivist, individualist, ideocentric, sensory, pragmatic, instrumental, individualist.

As explained in Table 5.2, there are no similar trait values between Cambodia and Finland. It seems therefore, that in the sociocultural context, with respect to the formative traits, sensate and dramatism favours collective action rather than ideational patternism. In the case of the normative agent, intellectual autonomy, mastery, and egalitarianism also have a greater positive effect on collective action than embeddedness, harmony, and hierarchical trait values.

The significant attributes of each of the two countries under study are indicative of their general orientations and can be used as predictors in further research of their potential development as long as they do not shift. Such movements can take many years or decades to occur.

In order to generate new knowledge from this study, the investigation takes into account a variety of factors suitable for the framework. From the analytical perspective, formative and normative criteria are introduced to strengthen one's ability to think critically about collective action and union efficacy. The development of new knowledge regarding normative and formative trait values help to explain the level and form of collective action and efficacy in relation to outcomes in Cambodia and Finland, insofar as they affect matters pertaining to the logic of collective action in the two countries.

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Unions in Cambodia tend to lack trust, coherence, equality, and communication, leading to the inability to create collective action. In this respect, the unions are unable *to make corrective adjustments* and therefore *incapable* of achieving their goals. On the other hand, in Finland, unions are able to create trust, coherence, equality, and communication thereby creating collective action in relation to social need, reflecting their ability to put common ideas into collective action. This means that unions are able to pursue favourable policies and initiate the structured *corrective adjustments* necessary to enable unions in Finland to be *capable of* achieving their goals.

The efficacy or inefficacy of unions can affect social or economic development in a positive or negative way. In the case of Cambodia, the level of perceived collective efficacy is weak and people do not even believe in collective action, resulting in a weak level of collective efficacy. In the case of Finland, the perceived collective efficacy of unions positively affects collective efficacy. Furthermore, it is highly unlikely that unions in Cambodia could create any collective action or address the social needs of their members. Thus, it is hypothesised that the capacity of unions to achieve sustainable development is likely to be problematic in the future.

The findings of this research reveal that collective action can only occur when politically autonomous units are efficacious in the development and manifestation of their policies. The paradox for Cambodia is that, while unions as a collective agency represent the equal distribution of resources, the individual values show a more hierarchical trait. In Finland, individuals tend to show egalitarian values that match the idea of unions. Therefore, Finland demonstrates efficacy, whereas Cambodia does not. As a consequence, collective action in Cambodia fails to create better conditions for the people, while Finland can be expected to continue collective action, at least until its circumstances change.

This study focuses on collective action in Cambodia and Finland. Future research should include more countries in both the East and West context, to attain a wider perspective of collective action and the effects of bipolar values, thus generating more accurate information and knowledge. Future research may identify other common characteristics with the capacity to create

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collective action. Secondly, an analysis should be conducted on the roles of hierarchy, trust, homogeneity, and heterogeneity in the level of collective action.



## 6

# Summary

Based on the previous analysis, this chapter provides a characterisation of Cambodia and Finland. These traits can be defined as follows:

### Strategic personality traits

*The figurative trait* includes two bipolar trait values: mastery and harmony orientation. Mastery is monistic in nature and encourages active self-assertion to attain group (collective) or personal goals and master, direct, and change the natural and social environment (Sagiv and Schwartz, 2007). Harmony is the opposite and pluralistic in nature and attempts to understand and appreciate rather than direct or exploit. This trait maintains an interconnected set of more or less tacit standards which order and value experience. Following the bipolar values, as explained by the results, Cambodia demonstrates a low level of collective action and more harmony oriented, while Finland tends to show a more collective, masterly orientation (affective autonomy).

*Strategic operative traits* include hierarchical and egalitarian bipolar values. Hierarchy determines the chain of authority with everyone assigned well-defined roles. There is an expectation that individuals operate for the benefit of the social organisation. They see the unequal distribution of power, roles, and resources as legitimate and it is up to individuals to

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ensure responsibility to the group or organisation (who benefit from the controlled collective action and its outcome). In this regard, the results show that Cambodians have a hierarchical individualist orientation and strong hierarchical individualism, meaning they may be the least co-operatively oriented people (Probst et al., 1999). Egalitarian traits are representative of moral equals who share basic interests as human beings. People are socialised to internalise their commitment to co-operate and feel concern for another's welfare and social justice is an important value. Agents are built on co-operative negotiations and communication.

Finland has more egalitarian values, and egalitarian organisations are built on co-operative negotiation among members with the ability to create collective action.

*Cognitive traits* are part of normative personality and include two bipolar values: intellectual autonomy and embeddedness orientation. Cognitive orientation determines the agency's structure for autonomous actions. Intellectual autonomy refers to bounded entities that should find meaning in their own uniqueness and be encouraged to express their internal attributes. Vice versa, embeddedness emphasises maintenance of the status quo and restraining actions or inclinations that might disrupt ingroup solidarity or the traditional order (Yolles and Fink, 2013, 33). From this perspective, the results indicate that Cambodia demonstrates a more embeddedness orientation, implying collectivism, while Finland's more intellectual autonomy implies individualism.

## Sociocultural traits

*Cultural traits* include two bipolar values: sensate and ideational. Sensate culture is associated with individualism and ideational culture with collectivism. Collectivism (action) is different under sensate and ideational cultures. The sensate orientation highlights the nature of needs and ends (outcomes) to provide goal objectives, and the degree and capacity to pursue these by exploiting the external world. Due to its need for unions and collective action, Finland is more likely to be a sensate culture and Cambodia

an ideational culture where harmony is important for keeping society stable. Unions may disturb the balance and affect the static situation.

*The social orientation trait* is located in the agency operative system and includes two bipolar values: dramatism and patterning. This trait directs action and interaction between agents and reactions that construct the social environment. Social orientations also determine the agency's orientation towards its environment. In a dramatist environment, the important characteristic is goal formation for individual benefit, and self-centred agencies operate through social contracts between individual members. Communication and individual relationships with others are important. In contrast, with patterner values, central importance is attached to symmetry, pattern, balance, and the dynamics of social relationships. Lack of communication is related to patternism. Goal seeking should be for collective benefit (Shotwell et al., 1980). However, the beneficiary of collective goals and benefits should be considered. In this sense, Cambodia tends to show patternism and Finland dramatism according to the results.

## Summary of the character of Cambodia as an agency for action

Cambodia is collectivist with a patterner-ideational sociocultural orientation and the strategic personality of hierarchical collectivism defined in terms of embeddedness, harmony, and hierarchy.

Cambodia's social orientation is that of a patterner, where configurations tend to be important in social and other forms of relationship, indicating the relative positions individuals and groups have with one another, affecting the nature of society. Symmetry, pattern, balance, and the dynamics of relationships are important, implying a trust role. Individuals tend to seek goals for collective benefit, where collective goal formation takes precedence over personal goal formation. They tend to support allocentric collectives, where there is an interest in others, and subjectivity is an important attribute. The ideational cultural attribute sees reality as super-sensory so that the

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consequences of psyche and thought are significant, morality unconditional, and tradition is of importance. Such individuals tend to be creative and self-examining.

The strategic personality determines how individuals in the Cambodian culture understand and respond to reality. Their HC collectivism involves embeddedness, where others are viewed as entities embedded, which refers to the embracing of shared collective understanding in shaping economic strategies and goals. Social relationships are important and individuals tend to identify with the group, participating in its shared way of life and striving towards its shared goals. Values like social order, respect for tradition, security, and wisdom are especially important. The status quo is important, as are restraining actions or inclinations that might disrupt ingroup solidarity or the traditional order. Responsibility, duty, and the commitment to shared goals also play important roles. Individuals possess transactional scripting, implying that the wants and needs of individuals embrace repetition and sameness. Harmony is also important, so that individuals tend to understand and appreciate rather than direct or exploit and embrace such goals as “unity with nature”, “protecting the environment”, and “world at peace”. Cambodian culture is also hierarchical so that the socialisation process requires individuals to take the hierarchical distribution of roles for granted and comply with the obligations and rules attached to their roles. Organisations are also more likely to construct a chain of authority in which everyone is assigned well-defined roles. Individuals are also expected to operate for the benefit of the social organisation. The unequal distribution of power, roles, and resources are legitimate, and this underscores the importance of those with power and power-based processes.

## Summary of the characteristics of Finland as an agency for action

Finland is individualist with a dramatist-sensate sociocultural orientation, and the strategic personality of egalitarian individualism (EI) defined in terms of intellectual autonomy, mastery, affective autonomy, and egalitarianism.

Finland's social orientation is dramatist, meaning that individual relationships with others are important, but in terms of the sequence of interpersonal events. Communication is also important, as are individuals and their proprietary belief systems, and individual social contracts. Goal formation should be for individual benefit. Behaviour is ideocentric, denoting interest centring on self or one's own ways, and behaviour operates through social contracts between the rational wills of individual members. The cultural orientation of Finnish people tends to be sensate so that reality is sensorially important as is the material. Where pragmatism is normal, there is an interest in becoming rather than being, and happiness is paramount. People are externally oriented and tend to be instrumental in relying on empiricism as a validation process.

The strategic personality determines how individuals in the Finnish culture understand and respond to reality. Their EI individualism involves intellectual autonomy, where people are seen as autonomous and bounded entities, finding meaning in their own uniqueness, and encouraged to express their internal attributes like preferences, traits, feelings, and motives. They are also encouraged to pursue their own ideas and intellectual directions independently and tend to embrace mastery and affective autonomy, through which they can actively self-assert themselves to achieve group or personal goals and master, direct, and change the natural and social environment. It is basically monistic in nature, so that perceived existing things can be explained in terms of a single reality or substance. In affective autonomy, individuals are encouraged to pursue affectively positive experiences for themselves. Others tend to be treated as independent actors with their own interests, preferences, abilities, and allegiances, while also requiring autonomy to self-develop ideas. Finland is also egalitarian, meaning people tend to recognise one another

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as moral equals who share basic interests as human beings. The Finnish are socialised to internalise a commitment to co-operate and feel concern for the welfare of others. They are expected to act for another's benefit as a matter of choice. Organisations are built on co-operative negotiation among employees and management. This has an implicit connection with service to the agency.

### From agency orientation to collective action

Traits determine the values assumed by the majority of people in a society. People with such values are therefore likely to do better in that society than those who have different values. Traits and the values of bipolar pairs determine the nature and values and that combination defines how they occur and act. It cannot be assumed that some traits are "better" or more effective than others, they just create the tendential ambient characteristics of individuals, the organisation, or state, thus providing tools to predict or understand the situation and how it may occur. Sagiv and Schwartz (2007) define the characteristics of bipolar traits, while Fink and Yolles (2017) define and categorise eight different types of collectivism/individualism. The form and type of collectivism /individualism depend on the traits and how they interact together, as explained previously.

The main characteristics, as explained by the social systems theory of Luhmann (1995), arise through social action, within which observed regularities emerge and evolve through collaborative and collective behaviour. Collective action is dependent upon meaningful communication and the collaborative action proposed by Luhmann (1982; 1995). Another important factor that constitutes collective action is belief. The stronger the beliefs people hold about their collective capabilities, the more they achieve (Bandura, 1993; Hodges and Carron, 1992; Little and Madigan, 1994; Prussia and Kinicki, 1996; Sampson, Raudenbush, and Earls, 1997). Luhmann highlighted the importance of communication and collaborative actions. Cultural Agency Theory is based on the origin and preconditions (efficacy) for communication arising from different traits. The collective agency operates through shared beliefs of efficacy, pooled understanding, group aspirations, incentive

systems, and collective action, arising through normative processes which have different traits.

The five formative traits are a set of bipolar values which constitute opposite values, three of which define its normative personality (the cognitive, figurative, operative orientations), one its cultural orientation, and the agency operative defines its social orientation emerging through interaction with the social environment, as noted earlier.

## Collective action and agency orientation

Collective action refers to action taken together (collectively) based on a collective decision by a group of people whose goal is to enhance their condition and achieve a common objective. Considering this in terms of Cambodia, collective action is based on trust, but it is also underpinned by the creation of collective goals, arising from goal-seeking orientation and the collective benefits and collective goal formation should take precedence over personal goal formation. There is persistent curiosity about the importance of configurations in social relationships to achieve collective goals. Different cultures and social systems affect the capacity of agencies to achieve collective goods. In Cambodia, perceived collective efficacy is low. If an agency cannot believe collective action is possible, it creates a negative platform for favourable outcomes (efficacy) in relation to collective action. Group aspirations and collective actions arise through normative processes, enabling people to develop beliefs about themselves within the social context and arising from the figurative trait.

While Cambodians tend to rely on personal relationships cemented by trust in their ingroups, they are more careful with outgroups, implying that ingroup collective action is much easier to create than outgroup, for which there is little process of socialisation. The situation is different in Finland, where a soft form of individualism exists and outgroup collective action is more likely. The soft individualism of Finland enables people to be socialised to make internalised commitments to co-operate while embracing

## *Summary*

the possibility of benefit for others through choice. To explore this further, Hofstede's definition of collectivism and individualism is revisited here:

- Collectivism in a society is a preference for a tightly-knit framework, where individuals can expect their relatives or members of a particular ingroup to look after them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty.
- Individualism refers to the preference for a loosely-knit social framework in which individuals are expected to take care of only themselves and their immediate families.

The ingroup and outgroup relationship is important. To relate this to the possibility of collective action, the traits options for collectivism and individualism are elaborated, and a number of characteristics noted which are more or less important to the type of collectivism/individualism. These arise from Earley (1993) who explains that an important attribute of a collectivistic society is that individuals view and identify themselves through a very limited number of ingroups, viewing outgroup members with suspicion and distrust. They are also more competitive than individualists even when doing so is counterproductive, and denigrate the outgroup so as to enhance self-identity and ingroup status, which is a function of embeddedness. Collectivists are also motivated to co-operate to achieve collective outcomes and shared rewards through group interests. This socialisation implies greater difficulties in creating collective action. Collectivists display social loafing (through non-participation) in outgroups but not ingroups, thereby creating ambient collective action that lies beyond the difficult ingroup. In contrast, individualists socially loaf where their contributions are unnoticed within the group context unless driven by personal incentives contingent on individual action and/or assurances that those involved in the interaction will receive benefits proportionate to expectations. Furthermore, they demonstrate social loafing in both ingroup and outgroups, and their ability to overcome this is incentivised by the anticipated rewards for performance. Thus, in individualist societies, collective action needs to be seen in the light of individual benefit.

It is clear from the study analysis that the trait values, and hence, the resulting mindsets of Cambodia and Finland, are distinct, and this leads to different expectations concerning their behaviour or capacity to understand each other. It seems therefore, that in the sociocultural context, with respect



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to the formative traits, sensate and dramatism favours collective action, more than ideational patternism. For the normative agent, intellectual autonomy, mastery, and egalitarianism also have a more positive effect on collective action than embeddedness, harmony, and hierarchical trait values. It should be noted here that there is some connection between dramatising and sensate, while patterning is connected with ideationalism (Park, 2005, 16; Wolf and, 1982; Matthews, 1977). It seems that the traits exhibited by Finland are more favourable for creating collective actions than those of Cambodia.

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# Appendix

## Questionnaire

- 1. Gender             Male  Female
  
- 2. Year of birth:    \_\_\_\_\_ *BE*
  
- 3. How many people in your household are ?
  - 18 years or older        \_\_\_\_\_ People
  - 7 to 17 years            \_\_\_\_\_ People
  - Less than 7 years        \_\_\_\_\_ People
  
- 4. You are at present.
  - Single                    1
  - Divorced                2
  - Married                 3
  - Cohabitation            4
  - Widow                   5
  - Other                    6
  
- 5. Your education                    Me                    partner
  - Primary School                    1                    1
  - Vocational School                2                    2
  - High School                        3                    3
  - College                              4                    4
  - Polytechnic                        5                    5
  - University                          6                    6
  - Undergraduate Degree            7                    7
  - Graduate Degree                  8                    8

## Appendix

6. What describes your current life situation?	Me	partner
A full time job [35 hours or more per week]	1	1
A part-time job [10-29 hours per week]	2	2
A job with less than [10] hours a week	3	3
No paid job at all	4	4
Unemployed	5	5
Support for family business	6	6
Assist on the family farm	7	7
Student	8	8
Retired	9	9
Farmer	10	10
Self-employed	11	11

### 7. What is your occupation and in what field do you work?

	Me	partner
Agriculture -, forest-, or fishing	1	1
Industry	2	2
Electric, water supply	3	3
Construction	4	4
Garment industry	5	5
Vendor	6	6
Self-employed	7	7
Retail and wholesale	8	8
Accommodation and food service	9	9
Transportation and logistics	10	10
Information technology	11	11
Finance and insurance	12	12
Service sector	13	13
Public service and public administration	14	14
Education	15	15
Health and social sector	16	16
Home farming	17	17
International organization	18	18

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8. What are your weekly working hours? \_\_\_\_\_ Hours
9. What are your spouse's weekly working hours? \_\_\_\_\_ Hours
10. What is your professional status?
- |                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| Wage earner           | 1 |
| Farmer                | 2 |
| Other entrepreneurial | 3 |
11. Your employer:
- |                   | Me | partner |
|-------------------|----|---------|
| Government sector | 1  | 1       |
| Local government  | 2  | 2       |
| Public company    | 3  | 3       |
| Private company   | 4  | 4       |
| Self-employee     | 5  | 5       |
| Another employee  | 6  | 6       |
12. What is **your** average monthly net income? \_\_\_\_\_/month
13. What is your **household** net income? \_\_\_\_\_ /month
14. I usually work
- |                       |                          |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| Less than 5 days week | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5 days week           | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6 days week           | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7 days week           | <input type="checkbox"/> |
15. My working hours per day are \_\_\_\_\_ hours per day

## Appendix

16. I earn enough from my work

Strongly agree	1
Agree	2
Neither agree nor disagree	3
Disagree	4
Strongly disagree	5
Can't choose	8

17. I must do another job and work to earn more money to survive.

Strongly agree	1
Agree	2
Neither agree nor disagree	3
Disagree	4
Strongly disagree	5
Can't choose	8

18. Are you a member of a union?

Yes, I am a member	1
I have been a member, but not now	2
Never been a member	3

19. I am not member of a union because...

I don't know what a union is	1
There is no union in my work place	2
I don't see any reason to be a member of a union	3
I can take care of my work conditions better than a union	5
My employer does not allow me to be a member of a union	6

20. Did you participate in the last general election?

Yes	1
No	2
I don't have the right to vote	3



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21. Are you a member of some religion congregation?

- Christian society 1
- Buddhist society 2
- Islamic society 3
- Confucianist society 4
- Another religious society 5
- I am not a member of any religious society 6

(A) How often you participate in religion events?

- Commonly every week 1
- One time per week 2
- A Couple of times per month 3
- One time per month 4
- A Couple of times per year 5
- One time per year 6
- Less than once a year 7
- Never 8

(B) If you participate in a religious organization (church, temple, mosque),

- I participate alone 1
- I participate with family 2
- I participate with other people and join  
the (people in mosque, temple, church) 3

22. (A) How often you participate in a sports or personal interest group?

- Commonly every week 1
- One time per week 2
- A Couple of times per month 3
- One time per month 4
- A Couple of times per year 5
- One time per year 6
- Less than that 7
- Never 8
- I don't know 9

## Appendix

(B) If you participate in a sports or personal interest group

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| I participate in a private club with fees      | 1 |
| I participate in a voluntary club without fees | 2 |

(C) If you are playing a team sport or game and you let the team down, do you feel personally bad and responsible for it?

Yes

No

23. During the past 12 months, how often have you done any of the following things for people you know personally, such as relatives, friends, neighbors or other acquaintances?

(A) helped someone outside of your household with housework or shopping

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| More than once a week                        | 1 |
| Once a week                                  | 2 |
| Once a month                                 | 3 |
| At least two or three times in the past year | 4 |
| Once in the past year                        | 5 |
| Not at all in the past year                  | 6 |

(B) Lent quite a bit of money to another person

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| More than once a week                        | 1 |
| Once a week                                  | 2 |
| Once a month                                 | 3 |
| At least two or three times in the past year | 4 |
| Once in the past year                        | 5 |
| Not at all in the past year                  | 6 |

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24. How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

(A) Adult children have a duty to look after their elderly parents.

Strongly agree	1
Agree	2
Neither agree nor disagree	3
Disagree	4
Strongly agree	5
Can't choose	8

(B) Families have a duty to look after their disabled and seriously ill family members.

Strongly agree	1
Agree	2
Neither agree nor disagree	3
Disagree	4
Strongly agree	5
Can't choose	8

(C) You should take care of yourself and your family first, before helping other people.

Strongly agree	1
Agree	2
Neither agree nor disagree	3
Disagree	4
Strongly agree	5
Can't choose	8

(D) People who are better off should help friends who are less well off.

Strongly agree	1
Agree	2
Neither agree nor disagree	3
Disagree	4
Strongly agree	5
Can't choose	8

## Appendix

(F) It is all right to develop friendships with people just because you know they can be of use to you.

Strongly agree	1
Agree	2
Neither agree nor disagree	3
Disagree	4
Strongly agree	5
Can't choose	8

25. On the whole, do you think it should or should not be the government's responsibility to provide childcare for everyone who wants it?

Definitely should be	1
Probably should be	2
Probably not should be	3
Definitely should not be	4
Can't choose	8

26. Do you think it should or should not be the government's responsibility to provide a decent standard of living for the old?

Definitely should be	1
Probably should be	2
Probably not should be	3
Definitely should not be	4
Can't choose	8

27. Do you think it should or should not be the government's responsibility to provide healthcare for disabled and seriously ill people?

Definitely should be	1
Probably should be	2
Probably not should be	3
Definitely should not be	4
Can't choose	8

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28. I trust the government generally.

Strongly agree	1
Agree	2
Neither agree nor disagree	3
Disagree	4
Strongly disagree	5
Can't choose	8

29. I trust other people in general.

Strongly agree	1
Agree	2
Neither agree nor disagree	3
Disagree	4
Strongly disagree	5
Can't choose	8

30. If you are not careful, other people will take advantage of you.

Strongly agree	1
Agree	2
Neither agree nor disagree	3
Disagree	4
Strongly disagree	5
Can't choose	8

31. There are only few people I can trust completely.

Strongly agree	1
Agree	2
Neither agree nor disagree	3
Disagree	4
Strongly disagree	5
Can't choose	8

## *Appendix*

32. Your boss or superior trusts you.

Strongly agree	1
Agree	2
Neither agree nor disagree	3
Disagree	4
Strongly disagree	5
Can't choose	8

33. You trust your boss or supervisor.

Strongly agree	1
Agree	2
Neither agree nor disagree	3
Disagree	4
Strongly disagree	5
Can't choose	8

34. If you are a supervisor or you have subordinates, you trust the staff under your control.

Strongly agree	1
Agree	2
Neither agree nor disagree	3
Disagree	4
Strongly agree	5
Can't choose	8

35. You have free access to your work place (with a key or key card), whenever you want

Agree	1
Disagree	2

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36. Here are some different forms of political and social action that people can take. Please indicate, for each one,

- whether you have done any of these things in the past year;
- whether you have done it in the more distant past;
- whether you have not done it but might do it;
- or have not done it and would never, under any circumstances, do it.

	Have done it in the past year	Have done it in the more distant past	Have not done it but might do it	Have not done it and would never do it	Can't choose
1. Sign a petition	1	2	3	4	8
2. Boycotted, or	1	2	3	4	8
3. Took part in a demonstration	1	2	3	4	8
4. Attended a political meeting or rally	1	2	3	4	8
5. Contacted, or attempted or contact, a politician or a civil servant to express your views	1	2	3	4	8
6. Donated money or raised funds for a social or political activity	1	2	3	4	8
7. Contacted or appeared in the media to express your views	1	2	3	4	8
8. Expressed political views on the internet	1	2	3	4	8

37. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

(A) Workers need strong trade unions to protect their interests.

- Strongly agree 1
- Agree 2
- Neither agree nor disagree 3
- Disagree 4
- Strongly disagree 5
- Can't choose 8

## Appendix

(B) Strong trade unions are bad for <country's> economy.

Strongly agree	1
Agree	2
Neither agree nor disagree	3
Disagree	4
Strongly disagree	5
Can't choose	8

38. Unions are important because they can

(A) Increase the wages and salary of employee

Strongly agree	1
Agree	2
Neither agree nor disagree	3
Disagree	4
Strongly disagree	5
Can't choose	8

(B) Unions can create stable working conditions

Strongly agree	1
Agree	2
Neither agree nor disagree	3
Disagree	4
Strongly disagree	5
Can't choose	8

(C) Without unions, wage earners' working conditions may worsen

Strongly agree	1
Agree	2
Neither agree nor disagree	3
Disagree	4
Strongly disagree	5
Can't choose	8



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39. Are workers with your employer allowed to join a trade union if they want to?

- a) Yes
- b) No

40. Do you feel under pressure to join a trade union?

- No, there has been no mention of joining a union 1
- I have been asked, but don't feel under pressure 2
- My colleagues are putting pressure on me to stand united with them 3
- My employees are putting pressure on me to join a union 4

41. I am not member of a union because...

- I don't know what a union is 1
- There is no union in my work place 2
- I don't see any reason to be a member of a union 3
- I can take care of my work conditions better than a union can 4
- My employer does not allow me to be a member of a union 5

43. What do you expect from being a member of a union?

- Better wages 1
- Legal protection 2
- Taking care of work safety 3
- Increment on fringe benefits 4
- Better working conditions 5
- Can do little or nothing 6

44. Do you think there is mutual trust between unions and the workers of the public?

- Yes 1
- No 2

## Appendix

45. Do you prefer to eat with other people or alone?

- I prefer to eat alone.
- I like to eat with my family only.
- I like to eat with family or close friends only.
- I like to eat with people I know like workmates.
- I feel comfortable eating in public with anyone.

46. Do you like to work alone or in a team?

- I prefer to work by myself.
- I like to work in a small team of trusted coworkers only.
- I am comfortable working in a team.
- I don't like to work alone. I like working in teams only.

47. I trust a union to represent my best interests for me.

- Strongly agree 1
- Agree 2
- Neither agree nor disagree 3
- Disagree 4
- Strongly disagree 5
- Can't choose 8

48. I don't believe an impersonal organization like a union can really understand my needs and opinions.

- Strongly agree 1
- Agree 2
- Neither agree nor disagree 3
- Disagree 4
- Strongly disagree 5
- Can't choose 8

*A Critical Evaluation of Individualism, Collectivism and Collective Action*

49. Being a member of a union better represents my needs and opinions as a worker and gives me more bargaining power.

Strongly agree	1
Agree	2
Neither agree nor disagree	3
Disagree	4
Strongly disagree	5
Can't choose	8

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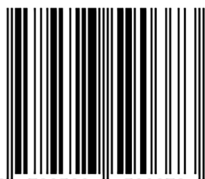
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# The question of **individualism** versus **collectivism** is more complex than is generally believed.

This comparative study aims to develop a deeper understanding of collectivism, trade unionism, and the capacity to create collective action using Finland and Cambodia as examples of individualistic and collectivistic societies, respectively.

The authors discuss different aspects of collective action including political participation, family values, and levels of trust within the society. The theoretical framework used in the book is sociological, involving the study of social systems within which observed regularities emerge and evolve through collaborative and collective behaviour.

The results of the study show significant differences in how individuals behave at the societal level, leading to the conclusion that collective action can only occur when politically autonomous units are efficacious in the development and manifestation of their policies.



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