UNIVERSITAT DE BARCELONA

Beyond the American Dream:
Testing the alleged system-justifying effect
of making both social boundaries look permeable and
those who advocate changes look like a threat
(Towards a Model of Class Struggle)

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"System justification is both a threat to the well-being of members of disadvantaged groups and a way of coping with that threat".

(Jost, 2019, p. 277)

"[Social Dominance and System Justification theories] share a common theoretical heritage in the work of Marx and Engels".

(Sidanius et al., 2004, p. 868)

"It is only through collectivity that the powerless gain power and are able to effect change".

(Reicher, 2004, p. 933)

"The dominant groups which benefit from their position tend to develop beliefs, attitudes, ideologies and institutions consistent with their self-interest, whereas subordinate groups which are disadvantaged by their position tend to develop beliefs, attitudes, etc., consistent with theirs, the elimination of their subordination".

(Turner & Reynolds, 2003, p. 201)

"The working class spontaneously gravitates towards socialism; nevertheless, most widespread (and continuously and diversely revived) bourgeois ideology spontaneously imposes itself upon the working class to a still greater degree".

(Lenin, 1902/1977, p. 386)

"Everything which sets men in motion must go through their minds; but what form it will take in the mind will depend very much upon the circumstances."

(Engels, 1888/1973, p. 50)

"The mode of production of material life conditions the general process of social, political and intellectual life"

(Marx, 1859/1999, p. 4)

"For in every city these two diverse humors are found, which arises from desire neither to be commanded nor oppressed by the great, and the great desire to command and oppress the people".

(Machiavelli, 1532/1998, p. 39)

Acknowledgements

INDEX

ABSTRACT

The ultimate aim of the present thesis is to further understand why people rebel (and why don´t). First of all, we carried out a profound review of the literature on system attitudes, mainly Social Dominance Theory, System Justification Theory, Social Identity Approach, and classical Marxism. It led us to devise two hypotheses that should not be extricated one from another: those worse-off individuals within a class-based hierarchy gravitate towards a more equal distribution of labour and resources (H1), whereas dominant-class practices mitigate, or reverse, such gravitation (H2). 5 empirical studies were carried out to test them. First, (1) we developed an instrument to capture willingness towards collective actions in a class-struggle context (2 validation studies; N_{TOTAL} = 442). Second, (2) we tested if making people perceive high social mobility has system-justifying effects (2 survey experiments; N_{TOTAL} = 449). Third, (3) we tested if making people perceive system-change advocates as a threat has system-justifying effects (1 survey experiment; N = 324). Our results, at large, supported our hypotheses. With respect to the first one, our low-income, low-status, and/or working-class participants were, on average, less pro-system oriented than their high-income, high-status, and/or dominant-class counterparts. With respect to the second hypothesis, our findings suggested that ideology can be shaped "from outside" (though not always in the expected direction). In parallel to the foregoing, we developed a proposal for a comprehensive explanation of system attitudes. We named it Model of Class Struggle (MCS), and it proved useful to design research and to analyse findings. The main conclusion of the research process is that, in spite of social reality´s complexities, efforts towards a more objective approach are well worth. More specifically, for a better understanding of people´s beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours towards the system, greater attention to the economic foundations of society seems necessary.

Keywords: Class Consciousness, Class Struggle, Collective Actions, Marxism, Political Psychology, Social Class, Social Dominance Theory, Social Identity Approach, System Attitudes, System Justification Theory

RESUM

L'objectiu últim de la present tesis és comprendre millor per què les persones es rebel·len (i per què no). En primer lloc, realitzem una revisió profunda de la literatura sobre actituds cap al sistema, principalment la Teoria de la Dominància Social, la Teoria de la Justificació del Sistema, l'Enfoc de la Identitat Social i el marxisme clàssic. Això ens va portar a concebre dues hipòtesis que no s'haurien de separar una de l'altra: aquells individus en pitjor situació dins una jerarquia basada en classes graviten cap a una distribució més igualitària del treball i els recursos (H1), mentre que les pràctiques de la classe dominant mitiguen, o reverteixen, aquesta gravitació (H2). Es van realitzar 5 estudis empírics per provar-les. Primer, (1) desenvolupem un instrument per capturar la voluntat cap a accions col·lectives en un context de lluita de classes (2 estudis de validació; $N_{\text{TOTAL}} = 442$). En segon lloc, (2) avaluem si fer que les persones percebin una mobilitat social alta té efectes de justificació del sistema (2 experiments d'enquesta; $N_{\text{TOTAL}} = 449$). Tercer, (3) avaluem si fer que les persones percebin els defensors del canvi de sistema com una amenaça té efectes de justificació del sistema (1 experiment d'enquesta; $N = 324$). Els nostres resultats, en general, van donar suport a les hipòtesis. Pel que fa a la primera, els nostres participants de baixos ingressos, de baix estatus i/o de classe treballadora estaven, de mitjana, menys orientats a favor del sistema que les contraparts d'alts ingressos, d'alt estatus i/o de classe dominant. Pel que fa a la segona hipòtesi, les nostres troballes van suggerir que la ideologia es pot modelar "des de fora" (encara que no sempre en la direcció esperada). Paral·lelament a això, desenvolupem una proposta d'explicació integral de les actituds cap al sistema. L'anomenem Model de Lluita de Classes (MCS), i va resultar útil per dissenyar investigacions i analitzar troballes. La conclusió principal del procés de recerca és que, malgrat les complexitats de la realitat social, val la pena fer un esforç per un enfocament més objectiu. Més específicament, per comprendre millor les creences, actituds i comportaments de les persones cap al sistema, sembla necessari parar més atenció als fonaments econòmics de la societat.

Paraules clau: Accions Col·lectives, Actituds cap al Sistema, Classe Social, Consciència de Classe, Enfocament de la Identitat Social, Lluita de Classes, Marxisme, Psicologia Política, Teoria de la Dominància Social, Teoria de la Justificació del Sistema

RESUMEN

El objetivo último de la presente tesis es comprender mejor por qué las personas se rebelan (y por qué no). En primer lugar, realizamos una profunda revisión de la literatura sobre actitudes hacia el sistema, principalmente la Teoría de la Dominancia Social, la Teoría de la Justificación del Sistema, el Enfoque de la Identidad Social y el marxismo clásico. Esto nos llevó a concebir dos hipótesis que no deberían separarse una de la otra: aquellos individuos en peor situación dentro de una jerarquía basada en clases gravitan hacia una distribución más igualitaria del trabajo y los recursos (H1), mientras que las prácticas de la clase dominante mitigan, o revierten, dicha gravitación (H2). Se realizaron 5 estudios empíricos para probarlas. Primero, (1) desarrollamos un instrumento para capturar la voluntad hacia acciones colectivas en un contexto de lucha de clases (2 estudios de validación; $N_{\text{TOTAL}} = 442$). En segundo lugar, (2) evaluamos si hacer que las personas perciban una alta movilidad social tiene efectos de justificación del sistema (2 experimentos de encuesta; $N_{\text{TOTAL}} = 449$). Tercero, (3) evaluamos si hacer que las personas perciban a los defensores del cambio de sistema como una amenaza tiene efectos de justificación del sistema (1 experimento de encuesta; $N = 324$). Nuestros resultados, en general, apoyaron las hipótesis. Con respecto a la primera, nuestros participantes de bajos ingresos, de bajo estatus y/o de clase trabajadora estaban, en promedio, menos orientados a favor del sistema que sus contrapartes de altos ingresos, de alto estatus y/o de clase dominante. Con respecto a la segunda hipótesis, nuestros hallazgos sugirieron que la ideología puede moldearse "desde fuera" (aunque no siempre en la dirección esperada). Paralelamente a lo anterior, desarrollamos una propuesta de explicación integral de las actitudes hacia el sistema. La llamamos Modelo de Lucha de Clases (MCS), y resultó útil para diseñar investigaciones y analizar hallazgos. La principal conclusión del proceso de investigación es que, a pesar de las complejidades de la realidad social, vale la pena hacer un esfuerzo por un enfoque más objetivo. Más específicamente, para comprender mejor las creencias, actitudes y comportamientos de las personas hacia el sistema, parece necesario prestar mayor atención a los fundamentos económicos de la sociedad.

Palabras clave: Acciones Colectivas, Actitudes hacia el Sistema, Clase Social, Conciencia de Clase, Enfoque de la Identidad Social, Lucha de Clases, Marxismo, Psicología Política, Teoría de la Dominancia Social, Teoría de la Justificación del Sistema

GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS

AIC	Average Inter-item Correlations
AVE	Average Variance Extracted
CA	Collective Action(s)
CFA	Confirmatory Factor Analysis
CFI	Comparative Fit Index
CC	Class Consciousness
CM	Classical Marxism / Classical Marxists
CR	Composite Reliability
CS	Class Struggle
CSA	Class-Struggle Actions
CSAS	Class-Struggle-Actions Scale
DWLS	Diagonally Weighted Least Squares
EFA	Exploratory Factor Analysis
ESJ	Economic System Justification
HTMT	Heterotrait-Monotrait
IRT	Item Response Theory
KMO	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin
MCS	Model of Class Struggle
MDB	Meritocracy Descriptive Belief
MG-CFA	Multiple-group Confirmatory Factor Analysis
PC	Political Consciousness
PCA	Principal Component Analyses
PI	Political Ideology
PPS-UP	Political Partisanship Scale – *Unidos Podemos*
PSJ	Political System Justification
RMSEA	Root Mean Square Error of Approximation
SDO	Social Dominance Orientation
SDT	Social Dominance Theory
SIA	Social Identity Approach
SJ	System Justification / System Justifying
SJM	System-Justifying Motive
SJT	System Justification Theory
SRMR	Standardised Root Mean Square Residual
SSS	Subjective Social Status
TLI	Turcker Lewis Index
UP	*Unidos/as Podemos*

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

PREFACE (JUSTIFICATION AND OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH PROCESS)

Big questions

Why economic inequality persists, and even grows, despite being it detrimental to most individuals and society? Why those harmed the most within a social-economic structure often show subservient attitudes towards those in power? Why, against their ultimate self-interest, many individuals bolster dominant-class practices and institutions? Is it a sort of natural law? Are some people inherently submissive whereas others are inherently oppressive?

Put the other way round, why do revolutions occur every now and then? Why people often struggle for a more equal society? Why, against their immediate self-interest, many individuals challenge dominant-class practices and institutions? Is it, also, a sort of natural law? Are some people inherently conformist whereas others are inherently revolutionary? To put it simpler, why people rebel (and why don´t)? The present thesis´ ultimate aim is to shed further light on these questions from a social-psychological perspective.

System stability and system change might rely upon a plethora of immediate and ultimate intersecting factors, ranging from people´s subjective wishes to the stage of development of each country´s productive forces to natural disasters. To get the whole picture will require different levels of analysis and cooperation among different disciplines, such as Geopolitics, Economics, Anthropology, and Biology. Even though, Social and Political Psychology might also have a say. More specifically, a social-psychological approach would help to understand people´s beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours, towards the system. Ultimately, it might serve to predict the likelihood of system-challenging events.

Origin and scope of the research

The idea of embarking on this project can be traced back to, at least, to 2008. This year was the onset of a world-wide financial crisis, which led to a subsequent economic recession. Spain was then ruled by PSOE (Partido Socialista Obrero Español – Spanish Socialist Workers´ Party). This party, in order to mitigate the effects of the crisis, implemented a number of "austerity" policies such as cuts in social spending, reducing wages, freezing pensions, raising taxes (VAT), etc. The Constitution itself was reformed in August 2011 to prioritise paying the public debt over social

spending. Popular demonstrations and strikes against such policies, including the so-called 15-M or *Indignados* movement, took place. However, neither a massive system-challenging event, nor a massive voter turnout in favour of a force further left to PSOE occurred.

On the contrary, the right-wing PP (Partido Popular – Popular Party) won the national elections of November 2011. "Austerity" policies were then tightened up. More cuts in education, health and other public services were implemented. Unemployment rates reached historical levels. Thousands of families were evicted from their homes. Tens of billions of public money went to rescue private banks. Countless corruption scandals involved the highest levels of public officials, including the Spanish Crown. Etc.

Throughout PP´s period in office more demonstrations and strikes took place. Nevertheless, they were blatantly insufficient, in number and strength, to oblige the Government to reverse its policies. Perhaps, among many other situational or dispositional factors, unemployment rates dissuaded individuals from endorsing system-challenging collective actions. That is, short-term foresight would prevail in a context of existential threat. Another explanation, albeit complementary, could be that many individuals saw chances of thriving following individualistic paths.

In this sense, I noticed that a very particular narrative permeated all levels of society, the *entrepreneur discourse*. Entrepreneurs, i.e., people who start a business and, thanks to their effort and determination, achieve success, became a sort of model citizens. Whether entrepreneurs received actual institutional support beyond rulers´ speeches or not, is matter for another analysis. Either way, the entrepreneur discourse seemed increasingly prevalent, even in the educational system, in the years that followed the crisis. For instance, it was often to find *rags-to-riches* biographies, i.e., stories of people who allegedly succeed following individualistic paths, in different written and audio-visual media.

According to the Social Identity Approach, high perceived social mobility could discourage people from engaging in system-challenging collective actions. Regardless of the real chances of thriving following individualistic paths, there was thus room to suspect that, beyond the entrepreneur discourse, there was an intentional system-maintenance practice carried out by those in power. Indeed, such discourse was highly reminiscent of one renowned system-justifying myth, i.e., the *American Dream* (and therefore its inclusion in the title of the thesis).

Hence, to test the alleged system-justifying (SJ) effect that rags-to-riches stories might have, and upon which specific population groups, I designed and conducted two survey

experiments. First, I gathered relevant social-demographic variables to test if, as expected, low-income, low-status, and/or working-class people justify the system to a lesser extent than their high-income, high-status, and/or upper-class counterparts. Second, some participants were exposed to a successful life-story of the entrepreneur type, whereas others were exposed to the opposing scenario (or were assigned to a control group). Finally, all participants were asked to rate the level to which they agree with a number of statements aiming to capture attitudes towards the system (including a scale of my own creation).

Broadening the scope of the research

Several theoretical and methodological concerns arose when testing the alleged SJ function of the entrepreneur discourse. Most notably, the experimental manipulations yielded mixed results. Perhaps rags-to-riches biographies ceased to be efficient by 2018, i.e., when I carried out my research. Perhaps they never were much. Perhaps ideology is less determining than what is thought. Perhaps survey experiments are at large limited to emulate the effect of dominant-class ideology. Etc.

At any rate, it seemed reasonable to reconsider the focus. Subsequent reviews of the literature also suggested realignments of the work. But it would surely be a historical fact what mainly led me to broaden the scope and consider a slightly different approach to assess people´s attitudes towards the system, i.e., the rise and decline of an alleged "anti-system" political party.

In January 2014 entered the scene *Podemos* (literally "We can"), a novel political party with the stated goal of channelling public outrage into progressive policies. Such party, along with other left-wing forces (including the Communist Party), formed a coalition named *Unidos Podemos* (literally "United We Can"). In June 2016, such coalition obtained more than 21% of the votes and 72 deputies (of 350). That is, a rather striking performance for a two-year-old political movement. Many voters, plausibly disillusioned by PSOE and PP´s management of the crisis, had found an alternative.

However, in spite of its original good prospects, *Unidos Podemos* (UP) did not surpass PSOE, neither PP. Even further, in April 2019 the coalition, then renamed *Unidas Podemos* (i.e., "United We Can" in feminine), obtained less than 15% of the votes and 42 deputies. Such election resulted in a political stalemate between left- and right-wing forces, so a new call took place in November 2019. This time, UP obtained just 12.8% of the votes and 35 seats. That is, an also

striking decline for a party which barely have had a chance to rule. Whatever the case, why Spanish people at large, and those harmed the most by the "austerity" policies in particular, turned their backs on the possibility of a system change seems in full line with the big questions.

In this sense, whether the entrepreneur discourse could have been dominant in the aftermath of the crisis and the following years, it arguably ceased to be the case as soon as an alleged anti-system party started to have good electoral prospects. Admittedly, we might discuss at length to which extent UP is really an anti-system party, or rather a reformist one (or not even that). In parallel, it is conceivable that certain economic recovery, or certain economic stabilisation, made less pressing people´s need for significant changes in the social-economic structure.

Either way, by the end of the decade, UP took centre stage in the public debate (for better or, most often, for worse). Some, if not most, media provided a constant supply of negative news and views about the party, ranging from its leaders´ alleged questionable practices to its alleged links with foreign powers to its alleged plans to ruin Spain and establish a sort of totalitarian regime. This somewhat had its reflex among ordinary people, becoming often to discuss about such ideologically loaded content.

According to the System Justification Theory, to endorse SJ beliefs help to alleviate feelings of fear, anxiety and threat. Regardless of many other factors that might have prevented Spanish people from identifying themselves with UP, there was room to suspect that the broadcast of negative news and views about the party could have played a role. Stated otherwise, to make (alleged) system´s alternatives look like a threat might have analogous SJ effects than to make system´s social boundaries look permeable. It seems but reward and punishment in order to achieve the desired outcome.

Hence, to test the alleged SJ effect that available information about a political party might have, and upon which specific population groups, I designed and conducted an additional survey experiment. First, I gathered relevant social-demographic variables in a similar way, and with the same purpose, than in the previous designs. Second, some participants were exposed to positive messages about UP, whereas others were exposed to negative ones (or were assigned to a control group). Finally, all participants were asked to rate the level to which they identify themselves, or justify, the (alleged) anti-system party —so, too, to indicate which political force they would vote if national elections were to take place tomorrow.

That is, in this second design I aimed to capture system justification "indirectly", by measuring partisanship and vote-intention to an (alleged) anti-system party. At large, this approach

proved better performance (let alone it seemed of greater practical utility). After all, to justify a system would not be to bolster certain beliefs, in the abstract or in isolation, but rather to endorse pro-system attitudes and behaviours. Put another way, to turn the back on system-challenging events, movements and political forces, might well be considered system justification (or pro-system attitudes, if preferred).

Perhaps, UP might even be considered a pro-system force, in the sense that carrying out minor changes in the social-economic structure often serve to divert popular outrage and thus preserve the substance of such social-economic structure. Hence, voting for this party, on the belief that it represents an alternative when it is actually not, could be considered system justification. However, leaving aside that almost no force advocates changes in the mode of production in Western-style multiparty democracies, UP somewhat counterweights right-wing policies. Hence, considering that Spain is, at large, a capitalist society, to vote for a party further to the right, on the belief that UP poses a threat, seems a rather clear pro-system attitude (regardless of the fact that other people might still see the party as a pro-system force and opt not to vote).

Towards a comprehensive social-psychological model

People´s political beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours, might result from a plethora of intersecting factors, ranging from internal dispositions to environmental circumstances. In the present thesis, I focused on two specific, but complementary, system-maintenance practices: making people perceive (1) social boundaries as permeable, and (2) alternatives as a threat. Nevertheless, major theoretical and methodological concerns arose while reviewing literature, designing experiments, and analysing data. Most notably, I gradually realised that mainstream social-psychological approaches often offer fragmentary, imprecise, and sometimes contradictory to each other, explanations of people´s beliefs, attitudes, and behaviour, towards the system.

For instance, Social Dominance Theory speculates on a general desire for group-based dominance. Likewise, System Justification Theory proposes the existence of a fundamental motive to justify the system. Desires and/or motives of this kind might certainly explain system stability. However, they could hardly do likewise with system change (let alone, to attribute the main cause of people´s attitudes to dispositional or motivational factors as such seems a SJ ideology in itself). The Social Identity Approach, meanwhile, focuses on the links between social identities and the social structure. However, it mainly handles gradational measures of status, mostly subjective, and/or noneconomic sources of social cleavage.

That is, mainstream social-psychological approaches could be overlooking a rather relevant aspect in respect of people´s attitudes towards the system, as is the on-going conflict between productive forces and modes of production or class struggle. Such "oversight" contrasts with the perspective of classical Marxists, to which, incidentally, the above approaches often allude (even to claim sharing a common theoretical heritage).

All of this suggested that a more comprehensive approach was necessary to advance human knowledge on system attitudes. To be more precise, it seemed advisable to carry out a systematic review of the above-mentioned social-psychological approaches and classical Marxists´ claims altogether. In doing so, I gradually outlined a proposal for a social-psychological Model of Class Struggle (MCS). Such model mostly drew on Social Identity Approach and classical Marxism, though Social Dominance and System Justification theories also played a role in its development.

For a general overview, the MCS could be summed up in a twofold working hypothesis (or two hypotheses that should not be extricated one from another):

H1 - Low-income, low-status, and/or working-class people gravitate towards a more equal social-economic system or socialism (to greater extent than their high-income, high-status, and/or dominant-class counterparts).

H2 - Dominant-class practices and institutions mitigate, or revert, such gravitation.

Dispositional factors might well have probabilistic effects, in one sense or another, upon system attitudes —so, too, many other situational factors. Even though, my MCS proposes to focus first and foremost on people´s position in, and relationships within, the social-economic structure. Likewise, the MCS proposes to do not extricate ideology from its producers and the material conditions that allow its production.

Broadly speaking, every attempt to explain people´s attitudes locates itself closer to one or another of two main and opposing viewpoints, *idealism* and *materialism*. For the former, ideas are society´s driving force. For the latter, all things, including ideas, result from material interactions. Taken to the extreme, idealists might attribute to ideas an independent existence and thus neglect the importance of situational, material, or historical factors. Materialists, meanwhile, might disregard the importance of ideology and the relative character of human wants. Hence, my MCS situates itself somewhere in between both extremes.

I must, perhaps, emphasise that developing a social-psychological model was not my initial goal, but rather an outcome of the research process. To be more precise, on the face of the existing controversies in the literature, and the manifold theoretical and methodological concerns derived from my empirical studies, I came to recognise that, without a more comprehensive framework we might only achieve fragmentary and mixed results. That is, without strategic foresight, research on system attitudes could eternally keep running around in circles. Stated otherwise, if we draw a parallel with geographical exploration, social research needs a map, a compass, and reference points (even dynamic or modifiable ones).

Either way, in view of both the already reviewed knowledge pool and my own findings, my MCS gradually ceased to be just an outcome, and became a sounder proposal, both to situate my research and for further developments. Hence, I decided to include it in the thesis (and to mention it in the title).

Structure of the thesis

Originally, I aimed to follow the formal stages in traditional dissertations, i.e., introduction – objectives – hypotheses – methodology – results – discussion – conclusion – references. However, while generally following this procedure, a number of factors led me to combine it with the current trend of writing thesis by a compendium of publications.

First, the present thesis should not be seen as a one-sided or linear process; it tends, rather, to be an "organic whole" with feedback loops between the different stages. Most notably, my empirical studies were not carried out after an extensive review of the relevant literature, *but in parallel*. Obviously, an extensive review of the literature preceded the first study. However, manifold theoretical and methodological concerns led to subsequent reviews (before and after each of the following studies). At once, such reviews provided new insights and pointed out the need of improvements (including reanalysing previous findings). Thus, though objectives, hypotheses, and methodology remained at large unaffected, a modular layout helped to upgrade specific sections.

Second, in voluminous one-linear works, one minor mistake in early stages risks being dragged through the whole process, fatally skew it, and end up becoming a major issue. A modular layout might minimise such risk or, at least, help to identify mistakes.

Third, the knowledge pool is continuously expanding. In addition to the aforementioned reviews of the literature to overcome theoretical and methodological concerns, subsequent reviews of new publications also provided insights. The modular layout facilitated to integrate and discuss the most recent developments.

Fourth, each chapter of the present thesis might be somewhat seen as a self-contained area. Though the whole thesis revolves around people´s attitudes towards the system, two empirical studies aimed to validate a social-psychological scale. Another two empirical studies aimed to assess the alleged SJ function of the entrepreneur discourse. An additional one aimed to assess the alleged SJ function of making a left-wing force look like a threat to the system. Hence, again, a modular layout facilitated to work on each specific section.

Fifth, my proposal of social-psychological model (i.e., MCS) was gradually outlined through the whole research process. Likewise, as soon as it became sounder, it helped me to refine the early stages. That is, the MCS can be simultaneously seen as a refinement of the general objective and hypotheses, and as the outcome of the entire research process. Even though, it was not until the study in which I presented UP as a threat to the system that I fully conceptualised it. Therefore, it seemed to me reasonable to leave it there.

Sixth, the aforementioned sections aim to be published in specialised journals. I conducted two validation studies of a scale, two survey experiments to test the alleged SJ effect of the entrepreneur discourse, and an additional survey experiment to test the alleged SJ effect of presenting UP as a threat. This leaves, at best, three publications. Even the systematic review of the social-psychological literature that I carried out for the introduction of the thesis could be considered for publication. In this sense, a modular layout will facilitate upgrading processes based on reviewers' recommendations on each specific section.

Finally, each of the three chapters that comprise the empirical studies also comprises, on a small scale, the formal stages in scientific research. That is, though connected by the same goal, hypotheses and methodology, each chapter comprises its particular introduction, its particular discussion, and its particular conclusion. This might help readers to focus on each specific empirical study while still seeing the big picture. In other words, the modular layout would facilitate the reading of the thesis.

Overview of the chapters

CHAPTER 1 - *Theoretical framework*: *Looking back at classical Marxism to overcome controversies in Social and Political Psychology*. Here I remarked on the highlights of three major social-psychological approaches towards the issue of system attitudes. As one opposes another, I remarked on several theoretical and methodological concerns. As all of them often refer to, and handle constructs of, classical Marxists´ theorising, I use it as reference point to further discuss which social-psychological approach offers a better framework to explain system attitudes.

CHAPTER 2 - *Objectives, hypotheses, and methodology*. This chapter comprises a summary of the general and specific objectives and hypotheses, the rationale for choosing survey experiments to test the hypotheses, and an overall description of the general procedure, the samples, the materials, and the analyses of my empirical studies (albeit more specific information is included on each of the following chapters).

CHAPTER 3 - *Class-Struggle-Actions Scale (CSAS): Development and validation of an instrument to measure attitudes towards collective actions in a context of class struggle*. This chapter comprises two empirical studies. The main contribution is a novel unidimensional scale aiming to capture people´s willingness towards system-challenging attitudes in a context of class struggle.

CHAPTER 4 - *Testing the alleged system-justifying function of promoting entrepreneurship with rags-to-riches biographies*. This chapter comprises another two empirical studies. As already stated, I tried to assess the alleged SJ effect of making people believe that social boundaries are permeable. Results were mixed (they supported MCS´ H1, but roughly H2).

CHAPTER 5 - *Proposal for a social-psychological Model of Class Struggle (MCS) and practical application to explain the decline of an alleged anti-system political force*. This chapter comprises a broader conceptualisation of my MCS and an additional empirical study. As already stated, I tried to assess the alleged SJ effect of making people perceive an (alleged) anti-system force as a threat. Results were satisfactory (they supported MCS´ H1 and, with much to discuss, H2).

CHAPTER 6 – *General discussion*. This chapter comprises a broad discussion of the findings in connection with the general and specific objectives and hypotheses. Likewise, it comprises a summary of the limitations that I faced through the entire research process and suggestions for further developments.

CHAPTER 7 – *General conclusion.* This chapter comprises a final conclusion and an attempt to answer the big questions based upon the entire research process.

Chapters 1, 3, 4, and 5, have been sent as independent papers for review to specialised journals.

A further clarification

We might probably agree that, on the face of complex issues, it is often convenient to step back in order to gain some perspective. Otherwise we would fail to see the wood for the trees. In this sense, bringing up classical Marxism might seem a too great step back. However, with varying degrees of rigour, mainstream social-psychological approaches do likewise. Moreover, classical Marxists´ works seem obligatory reference when researching on system maintenance and system change, people´s political attitudes, dominant ideology, etc. Besides that, looking back at the past is more often than not a good way to understand the present and to anticipate the future. In spite of the complexities and/or ever-changing character of social reality, there might well be patterns and relationships that tend to persist or repeat themselves, and thus worthy of research.

Admittedly, such complexities and/or ever-changing character will require permanent updates and upgrades of the scientific stock-in-trade. Likewise, if we consider that social researcher and subject of study belong to the same whole, to gather comprehensive and objective knowledge about such whole seems a well-nigh impossible task. Nevertheless, in practical terms, we might also consider the possibility that there exists an objective reality, with objective laws, which researchers progressively unveil. Science would not have much sense otherwise.

Perhaps objective knowledge (or practical knowledge, if preferred) sounds more like the stuff of Natural Science than Social Science. However, the latter would gain much tying itself up to the former. More specifically, Social and Political Psychology would gain much tying the study of ideology and system attitudes to the study of the material substratum within which ideology and system attitudes take place.

For this reason, I decided to further develop what I originally conceived as a working framework to understand social reality (and social-reality explanations themselves). It resulted in my MCS, and it was very helpful to conduct my research, to design my experiments, to discuss my findings, etc. Hence, I considered it worthy of sharing with the scientific community.

Needless to say, my MCS may be further refined, expanded, tested with larger samples and/or different population groups, etc. I myself see room for improvement, and get ideas for further research, each time I review it. Whatever the case, the present thesis at large, and my MCS in particular, must be seen as humble contributions towards building a comprehensive explanation of both system maintenance and system change. Hopefully, my work will serve as a source of inspiration for researchers and political action.

1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: LOOKING BACK AT CLASSICAL MARXISM TO OVERCOME CONTROVERSIES IN SOCIAL AND POLITICAL PSYCHOLOGY

Abstract: Different social-psychological approaches offer different explanations of people´s attitudes towards the system. Social Dominance Theory suggests a general desire for group-based dominance. System Justification Theory posits a fundamental motive to see the system as fair. Social Identity Approach, meanwhile, emphasises situational factors. There are, thus, controversies in the literature. On another note, the three approaches allude or claim following Marx and Engels´ theorising. It thus seems relevant to carry out a profound reading of such theorising and the knowledge pool altogether, and then discuss which social-psychological approach better explains system attitudes. The main conclusion is that system maintenance would be explained without dispositional factors, whereas system change should be explained in spite of them. Dispositional factors might have probabilistic effects. However, it seems more appropriate to focus first on people´s position in, and understanding of, the social-economic structure. Hence, controversies on why people rebel (and why don´t) might end.

Keywords: Collective Actions, Inequality Paradox, Marxism, Social Dominance Theory, Social Class, Social Identity Approach, System Justification Theory

1.1. Introduction

One major concern within Social and Political Psychology is understanding, explaining, and in some cases addressing, the so-called "inequality paradox", i.e., why wealth inequality prevails and even grows (Hardoon, Fuentes-Nieva, & Ayele, 2016; Jacobs & Mazzucato, 2016; Piketty, 2015; Stiglitz, 2015), whether it is detrimental to most individuals and society (Evans, 2012; Kraus et al., 2012; Lachman & Weaver, 1998; Mani et al., 2013; Oishi, Kesebir & Diener, 2011; Papageorge & Thom, 2020; Phillips, 2017; Pickett & Wilkinson, 2010; Sargent, 2009; Shah, Mullainathan, & Shafir, 2012). Moreover, preferences for equality and cooperation seem a near universal (Fehr & Fischbacher, 2003; Fehr & Schmidt, 1999; Henrich et al., 2001; Piff, Kraus & Keltner, 2018; Rand, Greene & Nowak, 2012; Sachs et al., 2004; West, Griffin & Gardner, 2007; Zelenski, Dopko & Capaldi, 2015). Therefore, there is an apparent contradiction between social reality and people´s basic needs or preferences.

Admittedly, there is also a debate about whether—and where—inequality has negative impacts on people´s quality of life and subjective well-being (see e.g., Alesina, Di Tella &

MacCulloch, 2004; Kelley & Evans, 2017). Nevertheless, if high-income, high-status, and/or dominant-class individuals might feel "at ease" in their position, this should not be the case of the disadvantaged ones (Marx, 1867/2015, pp. 507-508; Marx & Engels, 1845/1956, p. 51). Why, then, the latter often show out-group favouritism, and/or bolster a system against their very self-interest, remains an outstanding subject of discussion.

Some scholars posit the existence of a "natural" tendency to accept hierarchies and domination (e.g., Adorno et al., 1950; Altemeyer, 1981; Sidanius et al., 2004). Others consider that certain ideologies undermine people´s willingness towards collective actions (e.g., Jost, 2019; Jost et al., 2014). There is even who ascribe our political attitudes and behaviour, to our position in, and understanding of, the social structure (Manstead, 2018; Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner & Reynolds, 2003).

However, we may find little reference in the literature about a quite relevant aspect concerning wealth inequality —i.e., *how* wealth is produced (Engels, 1876/1996, 1880/2005, pp. 65 and 70; Hanappi & Hanappi-Egger, 2018; Marx, 1844/1959, pp. 3-4; 1859/1999, p. 4, 1867/2015, pp. 27, 30 and 507-508 and 541-542, 1875/1970, pp. 10-11; Penn, 2016; Wu, 2011, pp. 8, 25, 163-164, 168 and 175). For classical Marxists, to disregard the on-going conflict between productive forces and modes of production—alienating ideology from its producers and the material conditions that allow its production—condemns anyone who aims to understand and address societal problems to get "bogged down in idealist humbug" (Engels in Marx, 1859/1999, p. 131; see also Engels, 1880/2005, p. 66; Marx & Engels, 1846/1968, pp. 21-23).

Stated otherwise, individuals´ relationships within a certain mode of production, distribution and exchange of commodities, as plausible antecedents of system attitudes, seem largely understudied within Social and Political Psychology. Though people´s attitudes might result from a myriad of variables, it seems rather reasonable to relate subservience—or rebelliousness— within a certain structure, with the inner logic of such structure. Hence, looking back at classical Marxism (CM) would help us to further understand why people rebel (and why don´t).

1.2. Between "naked" materialism and idealism

Conceivably, as long as the capitalist mode of production remains hegemonic, CM or scientific socialism will be relevant —so, too, the latter might become more relevant when the former goes into crisis (Blunden, 1993; Hanappi & Hanappi-Egger, 2018). Indeed, there seems to be a growing interest in CM nowadays, which has been attributed to the last global financial crisis (Mosco, 2012; Patterson, 2020; Penn, 2016). For instance, the Marxist Student Federation (2018) claims that a "red wave sweeps British universities"; a self-proclaimed socialist obtained 46% of support in the Democratic Party's nomination for president in the US; and the Council of Economic Advisers (2018) released a report warning of a return of socialism to the political debate. Even Francis Fukuyama, author of *The End of History and the Last Man*, admitted that "certain things Karl Marx said are turning out to be true" (Eaton, 2018).

In fairness, CM has been always present among those who aspire to understand, explain, and address societal problems. Even outside the Soviet sphere of influence, a plethora of activists and scholars have been referred to, influenced by, and further developed Marxian constructs (e.g., Gramsci, Lukács, the Frankfurt School, Sartre, Althusser, the September Group, Bensaid, Hobsbawm, and Poulantzas).

However, most Western Marxists disregarded society´s material foundations and focused on Marx´s philosophical and subjective aspects —i.e., they separated theory from the working-class practice (Adler, 2007; Anderson, 1989, pp. 32 and 75; Milner, 2019). For instance, many of them reneged on the attempt to build socialism in the East —if they ever supported it. Even further, "post-Marxist" thinkers suggested ceasing to see the working class as the *revolutionary subject*, i.e., the social category capable of carrying out significant system changes, and encouraged articulating "new forms of political subjectivity" (see e.g., Laclau & Mouffe, 1985/2001, pp. 13-14 and 177-178; see also Callinicos, 1990, p. 4; Harrison, 2011; Parenti, 1997, p. 144).

These approaches, idealist as they reject the economic basis of the social superstructure, seem in the wavelength of the so-called postmodernity, which, in turn, might been bolstering the neoliberal project (see Engels, 1880/2005, pp. 62-65; Hanappi & Hanappi-Egger, 2018; Monot, 2018; Rockhill, 2017). For instance, a subjective theory of value such as marginalism would fit in well where post-materialism is hegemonic (see e.g., Bryer, 1994; Clarke, 1991, pp. 9 and 228-234; Keen, 2011, p. 39).

Post-materialism advanced in the West to such a degree that many theorists, Marxists or not, drew attention to the risks of leaving scientific objectivity and tabling the "struggle" just on cultural or subjective grounds (e.g., Bernabé, 2018; Blanco, de la Corte & Sabucedo, 2018; Callinicos, 1990; Chomsky, 2012; Dawkins, 1998; Sokal, 2008, pp. 95-96 and 116).

Notwithstanding the current trend, this pendulum movement swinging back and forth from idealism to materialism was somewhat present within CM. For instance, in confronting utopian socialists, they strongly highlighted the economic foundations of society to explain system change (Engels, 1878/1947, p. 11, 1880/2005, pp. 36 and 65, 1890/1972, 1893/1968; Marx, 1859/1999, p. 4; Marx & Engels, 1848/1969, p. 11). Then Lenin had to confront with the "economists" (or "economicists") and their "naked" materialism, i.e., their disregard for ideology and political struggle (Lenin, 1899/1964, 1902/1977, pp. 373-378 and 386). Lenin (1920/1964) himself also confronted idealists (or idealistic), i.e., those that mistake "*their desire*, their politico-ideological attitude, for objective reality" (p. 58, emphasis in the original).

Either way, it seems reasonable to consider both objective and subjective antecedents of the social fact altogether.

1.3. Classical Marxism and Social and Political Psychology

The foregoing also goes for Social and Political Psychology. There is a longstanding attempt to approach Marxism and Psychology, of course in the Soviet sphere (e.g., Leontiev, 1978; Lomov, 1982; Vygotsky, 1925/1999), but also in the West (see e.g., Gezgin, 2018; Mather, 2003; Nahem, 1982). Likewise, references to CM can be found here and there in the social-psychological literature (e.g., Drury & Reicher, 2009; Jost, 2019; Jost et al*.,* 2014; Sidanius, et al., 2004). However, little attention is given to people´s relationships within the mode of production (Hanappi & Hanappi-Egger, 2018; Penn, 2016). Though many researches approach "class", they mostly—or solely—follow occupational or gradational criteria, either objective or subjective (see Breen in Wright, 2005, p. 43; Penn, 2016; Wright, 2015, pp. 116-117 and 155).

The absence of a more accurate and profound social-psychological reading of CM could derive from, at least, three factors. First, the false belief that CM only focused on Economics (see Engels, 1890/1972, 1893/1968; Engels in Marx & Engels, 1848/1969, p. 11; Marx, 1859/1999, p. 4). Second, the also false belief that CM is ideologically partial and not built upon a sound basis (see Cohen, 1978/2000; Engels in Marx, 1852/1937, p. 3; Lomov, 1982; Morris, 2013; Pannekoek,

1912; Vygotsky, 1927/1984; Wu, 2011, pp. 163-186). And third, the already stated trend of rethinking—to then reject—CM in Social Sciences (Hanappi & Hanappi-Egger, 2018; Parenti, 1997; Rockhill, 2017).

Meanwhile, attempts to carry out empirical research within a proper Marxist framework are often sidelined (see e.g., Keefer, Goode, & Van Berkel, 2015; Marshall et al., 1988; Wright, 1989, 2015; Sawyer & Gampa, 2020). Even further, they face criticism from Western Marxists (e.g., Lukács, 1923/1967, pp. 60-61; Ollman, 1987; see also Wright, 1985, pp. 252-253).

Admittedly, Soviet psychologists saw psychic processes as subjective reflexes of an objective reality (Leontiev, 1978; Lomov, 1982). That is, they worked on a materialist basis. However, it has been noted that, ironically, Social Psychology did not develop much in the USSR (Gezgin, 2018). Subsequently, there is a significant lack of suitable data to test CM´s claims, let alone lack of funding (Wright, 1989).

Notwithstanding the above, it seems reasonable to bear in mind the material environment in which human action takes place. More specifically, researchers could pay more attention to the "conflict between productive forces and modes of production [which] exists, in fact, objectively, outside us" (Engels, 1880/2005, p. 66).

Ideological neutrality in Social Sciences seems a chimera. Nevertheless, to consider factors such as the mode of production, people´s material living conditions, and dominant- and subordinate-class practices altogether, could contribute to a more comprehensive and objective understanding of social reality. Eventually, it could help to bridge gaps within and between social-psychological approaches —so, too, it might allow to pave a common ground to develop and improve strategies for research and political action.

1.4. Intertwining classical Marxism (CM) and the social-psychological knowledge pool

In Engels´ (1880/2005) words, "every new theory (…) had, at first, to connect itself with the intellectual stock-in-trade ready to its hand" (p. 36). Accordingly, a reading of three major social-psychological theorising on system attitudes, i.e., Social Dominance Theory (SDT), System Justification Theory (SJT), and Social Identity Approach (SIA), will be carried out. Each approach´s theoretical fundamentals will be highlighted and remarked —so, too, each approach´s

methodology and instruments. Finally, which social-psychological approach seems more congruent with CM, and offers a better explanation of system attitudes, will be discussed.

The rationale for considering CM as a reference point stems from a number of facts. First, there is a dispute between SDT, SJT, and SIA, over which approach better explains attitudes towards the system, and some form of mediation seems required (see e.g., Jost, 2011; Jost, Becker et al., 2017; Owuamalam, Rubin & Spears, 2019; Sidanius & Pratto, 2003). Second, the three approaches are somewhat modelled on CM, and one might be more accurate than another (see e.g., Jost, 2019, p. 264; Sidanius et al., 2004, p. 868). Third, Marx, Engels, and Lenin, analysed social reality in a systematic and scientific manner (see e.g., Engels, 1845/1969, 1880/2005, 1884/2010, 1878/1947; Lenin, 1894/1977, pp. 140-142 and 159, 1908/1977a, 1916/1974; Marx, 1867/2015, 1880/1938, 1883/2010). Fourth, it seems hard to deny the existence of an economic substratum in many if not most societal problems. Fifth, CM inspired millions of people to change social reality, and, Lenin himself spearheaded successful system-challenging collective actions (see Wu, 2011, pp. 90 and 266). Finally, looking back at the past is often useful to resolve the complex theoretical problems of the present.

Hence, it seems well worth following Leontiev´s (1978) advice, i.e., opening "the treasure chest of Marxist-Leninist ideas" (p. 39), and trying to determine to what extent they match, and/or could contribute to expand, current social-psychological research. Stated otherwise, by intertwining SDT, SJT, SIA, and CM, we might contribute to the advance of scientific knowledge.

1.5. Social Dominance Theory (SDT)

To explain system attitudes, SDT suggests the existence of a general, adaptive, and "fairly stable over time" tendency for humans to form and maintain group-based hierarchies or "general desire for group-based dominance" (Sidanius et al., 2004, pp. 846, 848 and 850; see also Pratto et al, 1994; Sidanius et al., 2017). All major forms of intergroup conflict or group-based oppressions (e.g., racism, classism and sexism) would be special cases—and/or arise from—this alleged tendency to form hierarchies or Social Dominance Orientation (Sidanius et al., 2004, pp. 846; Sidanius & Pratto, 2001). Hence, for SDT, exploitative social relationships are "*very much* a collaborative and cooperative enterprise between dominants and subordinates" (Sidanius et al., 2004, p. 869, emphasis added).

Additionally, SDT postulates the existence of hierarchy-attenuating ideologies and institutions. People with high Social Dominance Orientation (SDO) will tend to endorse or support hierarchy-enhancing ideologies and institutions, whereas people with low SDO will tend to do likewise with hierarchy-attenuating ones (see Ho et al., 2015; Pratto et al., 1994). Hierarchical stability over time would rely upon the balance between those two opposite forces (Pratto, Sidanius & Levin, 2006; Sidanius et al., 2004).

Even though, this alleged "basic human predisposition" to form hierarchies and accept dominance raise several concerns —which could be extended to any attempt to explain subservience based on individual differences or personality traits (e.g., Adorno et al., 1950; Altemeyer, 1981; see also Duckitt, 2015).

1.5.1.   Theoretical concerns (SDT)

The existence of a "general desire" to endorse hierarchies—and even towards social conservatism—could be congruent with both self-interest seeking and an overall tendency towards cooperation; at least, to the extent that there might be other hierarchies around and they might pose a threat (see Eidelman et al., 2012; Engels, 1874/1978; Ipsos, 2021; Van Berkel et al., 2015). Likewise, individual differences may have a probabilistic effect upon people´s political attitudes in one sense or another. Furthermore, this notion of two opposing forces or ideas within, and shaping societies, can be traced back at least to Machiavelli (1532/1998, p. 39).

However, to ascribe intergroup conflict or group-based oppression to an alleged adaptive tendency to form and accept hierarchies seems a huge leap (not to mention that to ascribe the existence of dominance to an alleged tendency to accept dominance seems a tautology).

On the one hand, to avoid competition, conflict, and/or aggression, might also be considered an adaptive behaviour, if not the most one (Ferguson, 2018; Harris, 1974, p. 66; Kropotkin, 1902, pp. 6, 17 and 76; West, Griffin & Gardner, 2007). Thus, even assuming a tendency to form hierarchies—this being an efficient way to cooperate and avoid conflict— it seems quite contradictory to sustain, at the same time, that it follows competition and conflict (see Turner & Reynolds, 2003).

On the other hand, current society arguably differs from the natural environment which for we might be biologically equipped (Engels, 1876/1996, 1880/2005, p. 70; Ferguson, 2018; Morris, 1967/1999). Thus, to endorse a hierarchy on a practical basis, as our ancestors could have done, seems in stark contrast to endorse being exploited within a world-system or class-based hierarchy.

Consider slavery and cotton production in 19th century. We would probably not say that it was, "very much", a cooperative enterprise between slaves and plantation owners — or that both shared a "slavery orientation". This would obscure dominant-class role in maintaining the exploitative system. Conversely, we should distinguish between active and *forced* cooperation (see Engels, 1880/2005, p. 70; Marx, 1867/2015, pp. 231-232 and 507-509).

On another note, SDT hardly accounts why, every now and then, rebellions take place. Whether people´s SDO scores are "fairly stable over time" (Sidanius et al., 2004, p. 850), the main cause of rebellions should be sought outside this—or any—biological predisposition. Likewise, the main cause of either high or low SDO scores could also be external, i.e., a product of people´s material living conditions and social life (see Bourdieu, 1990; Foster, 2021; Haney, Banks & Zimbardo, 1973; Rubin & Hewstone, 2004; Schmitt & Branscombe, 2003). Even SDT scholars themselves attribute different SDO´s scores to differences in status and power, available information, and other situational factors (e.g., Sidanius et al*.,* 2004, p. 850; Sidanius & Pratto, 2003, p. 208). Hence, it seems more appropriate to focus first on such situational factors.

Whether SDO scores appear stable over time would be because, to some extent, so is social reality. Whether significant changes in social reality take place, people´s beliefs, either system-enhancing or system-attenuating ones, will plausibly do likewise. In other words, system stability might be explained without a SDO; system change must be explained *in spite of* it.

1.5.2.   *Methodological concerns (SDT)*

To demonstrate the existence of a SDO through self-report studies, either observational or experimental, seems questionable. We may feel tempted to consider that emotional, automatic, and/or stable-over-time responses derive from basic human

predispositions. However, as already noted, people´s political worldviews might also be socially acquired, even at early ages, and then remain stable as a reflex of an also stable material reality (Engels, 1878/1947, p. 23, 1888/1969, p. 45; Gambrill, 2012, p. 326; Lenin, 1908/1977a, pp. 15, 26, 155 and 323; MacLeod, 2019; Pennycook, Cannon & Rand, 2018; Tom et al., 2007; Thompson, 1976; Zajonc, 1968, 2001). Hence, surveys might capture but such reflex.

Admittedly, to bolster hierarchies or systems on the belief that they are advantageous, when they are clearly not, might derive from lack of reasoning (see Eidelman et al., 2012; Gambrill, 2012, p. 374; Pennycook & Rand, 2019; Van Berkel et al., 2015, p. 1207). Lack of reasoning, however, might have much to do with scarcity, actual or perceived, and/or dominant-class interferences (Engels, 1845/1969, pp. 87-88; Mani et al., 2013; Piff, Kraus & Keltner, 2018; Shah, Mullainathan, & Shafir, 2012). That is, even if there is a SDO, it would only be determinant under very specific conditions (e.g., lack of chances to use our reasoning).

SDT instruments, meanwhile, seem rather ambiguous. Consider an item: "In getting what you want, it is sometimes necessary to use force against other groups" (Pratto et al., 1994, p. 763). At first glance, egalitarians might *strongly disagree*. However, also egalitarians may consider that, to protect equality, society should protect itself from internal or external violent groups (including the use of force).

Consider another item from the same scale: "It´s OK if some groups have more of a chance in life than others". Some groups *actually* have more chances than others. Thus, to favour some groups over others, i.e., to treat groups "unequally", would also make sense if the former are in a disadvantaged situation with regard to the latter (e.g., children or elderly people).

Consider a further item from a more recent development: "No one group should dominate in society" (Ho et al., 2015, p. 1028). Egalitarians that have in mind sexual, ethnic, and other minorities, may *strongly agree*. However, also egalitarians may think that certain groups deserve obedience, at least in certain situations (e.g., health professionals, lecturers, or a ship´s crew).

SDT instruments, therefore, somewhat capture willingness towards egalitarianism, authoritarianism, and/or social dominance, though in a rather ambiguous way. Besides that, even with more accurate instruments, we may hardly assess whether, or to what extent,

people´s attitudes rely upon dispositional factors. That is, there seems to be much room for discussion.

Consider another example. Both Americans and Russians with "authoritarian personality" see each other as "aggressors", even if they self-identify for and against capitalism respectively (see Altemeyer & Kamenshikov, 1991; McFarland, Ageyev & Abalakina, 1993; McFarland, Ageyev & Djintcharadze, 1996). Albeit those studies did not measure SDO as such, it might serve to illustrate the drawbacks of self-report studies —so, too, of explaining system attitudes based first and foremost on individual differences.

Conceivably, on the assumption that all known surplus-producing social systems are hierarchically organised (Sidanius et al., 2004, p. 872, 2017; see also Engels, 1874/1978), SDT would directly ask participants *what type* of hierarchy is preferred, i.e., one where free competition prevails and private appropriation of others´ surplus value produced is allowed, or one where such surplus value is mainly used for economic and social growth purposes (Lenin, 1902/1977, p. 384; Marx, 1875/1970, pp. 10-11; Pigou, 1948; Wu, 2011, pp. 168 and 175). Either way, different scores among groups and countries speak loud in favour of situational factors behind people´s ideological outcomes, including social dominance.

1.6. System Justification Theory (SJT)

According to SJT, "people are motivated (to varying degrees, depending upon situational and dispositional factors) to defend, bolster, and justify aspects of existing social, economic, and political systems" (Jost, 2019, p. 263). Albeit, perhaps, less biologically determined than the alleged SDO, this fundamental motive to view the system as just, or system-justifying motive (SJM), might also pose a psychological advantage (Jost, 2011; Jost, Langer et al., 2017; Napier & Jost, 2008) —at least in the short term (see Godfrey, Santos & Burson, 2019; Harding & Sibley, 2013).

More specifically, to challenge the status quo entails existential, epistemic and relational threats, such as being arrested, uncertainty during protests, and problems with family and friends, respectively (Jost, Langer et al., 2017). Hence, on SJT´s logic, people tend to endorse, or engage in, a number of system-justifying (SJ) beliefs due to their palliative function, i.e., due to their potential

to reduce anxiety, guilt, fear, and/or those cognitive dissonances that bolstering a system at the expense of self-interest may generate (Jost, 2019; Jost & Banaji, 1994; Jost et al., 2014).

At once, the endorsement of SJ beliefs such as Protestant work ethic or meritocratic ideology might promote a rationale for, or seems associated with, less willingness towards cooperative behaviour at large, and system-challenging collective actions (CA) in particular (see e.g., Jost et al., 2012; Jost & Hunyady, 2005; Osborne & Sibley, 2013; Sagioglou, Forstmann, & Greitemeyer, 2019).

Nevertheless, to posit that people are (often unconsciously) motivated to justify the system on which they depend (see Jost, Banaji, & Nosek, 2004) raises some concerns, to certain extent similar to SDT´s.

1.6.1. *Theoretical concerns (SJT)*

We may certainly consider motives as driving elements of human culture (Damasio, 2020). At once, we may consider that rewarded behaviours tend to be strengthened as those sanctioned ones tend to disappear (Skinner, 1984). What is rewarded or sanctioned, however, may not be attuned with our motives. Consider not finding other than low-paid jobs while having to pay the rent. That is, humans are often *forced* to bolster systems at the expense of their self-interest, out of fear of consequences. Hence, against such no-other-apparent-choice backdrops, SJ beliefs might pose *immediate* psychological advantages and thus palliate outrage (see Lenin, 1908/1977b, pp. 403-406).

The controversy, however, revolves around if a SJM as such is required to explain people´s endorsement of SJ beliefs in particular, and system maintenance at large (see e.g., Jost, 2019; Owuamalam, Rubin & Spears, 2019; Owuamalam & Spears, 2020). SJ beliefs would be partial or entirely a product of situational factors, rather than deriving from an alleged "bottom-up" motive to justify the system, or from an alleged interaction between such motive and "top-down processes of elite communication" (see Jost, 2019, p. 265). To put it simpler, the question is whether there is a fundamental SJM or not (and, if so, how it is originated).

In this sense, evidence points at SJ tendencies in early childhood (Baron & Banaji, 2009). If young children show preferences for a dominant group, either or not they belong

to such group, SJ beliefs could be early acquired. If SJ beliefs work as "opium" for our brain (see Jost et al*.,* 2014; Marx, 1844/1970, p. 3), we might even speculate on heritable phenotype changes, i.e., without alteration in the DNA sequence or epigenetics (see Browne et al*.,* 2020; Vassoler & Sadri-Vakili, 2014). That is, those addicted to an ideology would transmit their vulnerability to endorse ideologies. However, it does not necessarily imply the existence of a SJM as such. SJ tendencies, at any age, would be sufficiently explained by a *status quo bias* or preference for the established order (see e.g., Kahneman, Kenetsch & Thaler, 1991).

Perhaps, susceptibility to biased thinking is, up to a point, inherited. Even though, it does not belittle the importance of circumstances either. For instance, frustrating material living conditions and availability of palliatives remain major risk factors for addictions (see e.g., Engels, 1845/1969, p. 87; Mossakowski, 2008; Wilkinson, 2006). The same would go for endorsement of SJ beliefs. Hence, to consider one unique well-being motive, under the influence of situational and dispositional factors, seems more parsimonious.

Closely related, SJT suggests that SDT´s evolutionary tenets could work as a naturalistic legitimising myth (see e.g., Jost, 2011; Jost, Banaji, & Nosek, 2004). Admittedly, believing that human relations are mainly determined by biological inevitabilities leaves little prospects for social change (Harris, 1974, p. 67). However, to ascribe people´s willingness to endorse SJ beliefs by an alleged SJM seems also quite pessimistic —so, too, tautological. Even further, SJT itself speculated on individual differences and the evolutionary origin of SJ (Jost & Amodio, 2012; Jost, Sapolsky & Nam, 2018). That is, both theories seem tempted to explain system maintenance by internal or dispositional factors. However, without denying predictive power to such internal factors, they seem far from enough to explain system attitudes (as also both theories admit). Hence, whether SDT is a legitimising myth, could SJT be considered a SJ ideology as well?

In the same vein, SJT seems hostile to the self-interest´s logic (see e.g., Jost, 2011, 2019; Jost, Banaji, & Nosek, 2004), albeit both seem congruent if we consider that self-interest seekers rarely operate in perfect information scenarios and/or in absence of power relations (see Elster, 1982; Wright, 2015, pp. 81 and 87). That is, SJ beliefs among disadvantaged people would be the reflex of a distorted or severely constrained self-interest seeking. Congruence ends, however, under the assumption that disadvantaged people *want* or *need* to believe that the system is fair, even when it is actually not (see e.g., Benabou &

Tirole, 2006; Jost, 2019; Jost, Glaser, et al., 2003). That amounts to saying that addicted people want or need drugs (which seems, at the very least, inaccurate).

On the contrary, it is dominant-class individuals who arguably want, need, or could be truly motivated, "to represent [their] interest as the common interest of all the members of society" (Marx & Engels, 1846/1968, p. 21). They would do it or not. Whatever the case, when exploited individuals justify an exploitative system, it seems rather more intuitive to talk about distorted self-interest, short-term foresight, fear-based, false or apparent motives, or *false consciousness*, which, incidentally, seems within SJT´s logic (see e.g., Engels, 1893/1968; Hossler, 2020, p. 204; see also Jost & Banaji, 1994). A SJM as such, however, would obscure dominant-class individuals´ role in shaping others´ beliefs.

Even on the assumption that a SJM as such exists, rebellions could only occur if it became no longer determinant (or became superseded by an opposing motive). Motivational changes of that magnitude, meanwhile, will arguably require profound situational changes as well. Hence, in order to explain both subservience and rebellion, it seems more intuitive to focus first on such situational changes. In other words, as with SDO, system stability might be explained without a SJM; system change must be explained *in spite of* it.

1.6.2. *Methodological concerns (SJT)*

As already suggested, self-report studies might be problematic. They might help to conceptualise theoretical constructs, to test hypotheses, and to identify trends, patterns, and relationships in social reality. However, the distance between our construct and what we actually measure might be considerable and lead to mixed results.

In this sense, following SJT´s logic and studies, one might conclude that low-status people are equally or even more motivated to justify the system than high-status ones (see e.g., Jost, 2011, p. 230, 2017; Jost, Banaji & Nosek, 2004; Jost, Pelham, et al*.,* 2003). Such conclusion has been dubbed *status-legitimacy hypothesis*, and there is much evidence against it (see e.g., Brandt, 2013; Caricati, 2016; Ipsos, 2021; Kelemen et al., 2014; Vargas-Salfate et al*.,* 2018). Admittedly, Jost, Banaji and Nosek (2004) hypothesised that SJ among low-status individuals would take place "when individual and group needs and

interests are low in salience or strength" (p. 909). Nevertheless, evidence remains controversial. We might find low-status individuals showing high levels of SJ, political conservatism, and/or authoritarianism, even when individual or group interests are *high* in salience (see e.g., Li et al, 2020; Li, Wu & Kou, 2020; Tang, 2018; Zhang & Zhong, 2019).

To complicate things further, features often associated with the left-right spectrum in some countries, such as system-supportive or system-challenging attitudes, might vary, and even enter in contradiction in others (see e.g., Beattie, Chen & Bettache, 2021; Langer et al*.,* 2020; Thorisdottir et al. 2007). These apparent inconsistencies would derive from overlooking material and historical factors such as how wealth is produced and rulers´ ideology where our studies are conducted. For instance, high SJ levels among low-status individuals—or high SJ levels at large—in socialist China might well be because her social-economic system successfully meets her citizens´ interests (see Li et al*.,* 2020, p. 3; Tang, 2018; Wu, 2011). Low SJ levels among low-status individuals in capitalist societies, i.e., in most societies, might mean that, ultimately, material reality imposes itself upon dominant ideology (see e.g., Brandt, 2013; Harding & Sibley, 2013; Newman, Johnston & Lown, 2015; Vargas-Salfate et al., 2018). Either way, more careful conceptualisations of system, social status, and SJ, seem required (see Yang et al., 2019).

SJT instruments, meanwhile, might also prompt to mixed results. Consider a couple of items: "In general, you find society to be fair" and "Society is set up so that people usually get what they deserve" (Kay & Jost, 2003, p. 828). Both dominant- and subordinate-class individuals—so, too, both far-left and far-right ones—could *strongly disagree* with the claim, albeit for diametrically opposed reasons (see e.g., Caricati, 2019). That is, those who want socialism might appear as "anti-system" as those who want fascism (i.e., a SJ conclusion itself in capitalist societies). Even though, this instrument would be appropriate to measure overall SJ in cross-system research.

Consider another item: "If people work hard, they almost always get what they want" (Jost, Blount, et al., 2003, p. 61). The scale allegedly measures justification of the capitalist system. However, both a pro-socialist (in China) and a pro-capitalist (in the US) might *strongly agree* (being each one defending opposing systems).

The above at large suggests two possible approaches to assess system attitudes. First, we might follow an "apolitical" approach, i.e., do not mention the mode of production (see Kay & Jost, 2003, p. 828; Jost et al., 2010, p. 21). In that case, we should analyse, at a different level, the system where, and the groups with, we carry out our

studies. For instance, in the study carried out by Langer et al. (2020) in France, SJ appeared strikingly associated to left-wing ideology. In addition to authors´ plausible explanations, it could be pointed out that, when their survey was carried out, socialist Hollande was the president and his party the largest force in French National Assembly. Perhaps, French leftists would not show the same SJ levels when the rightist Sarkozy was in office. Either way, this approach would allow researchers to assess overall SJ in certain country at a certain historical time (though adjustments for cross-system studies might be required).

Second, and conceivably more informative, we might ask participants *what type* of system they prefer (see Table 4 in Jost, Blount, et al., 2003, p. 77). Complementarily, we might ask participants to which extent they would engage in either system-maintenance or system-challenging CA (see e.g., Osborne et al.*,* 2019; Saab et al.*,* 2016; Tausch et al.*,* 2011). In that case, we would consider that all known surplus-producing systems seemingly entail a sort of authority and hierarchical organisation (Engels, 1874/1978; Sidanius et al., 2004). We would also consider the only two known functioning modes of production nowadays (Lenin, 1902/1977, p. 384; Marx, 1875/1970, pp. 10-11; Pigou, 1948; Wu, 2011, p. 168 and 175). That is, we might ask participants to which extent people prefer—or endorse CA towards—either socialism or capitalism (though, perhaps, avoiding mentioning politically loaded terminology would be advisable). To that end, we may use or adapt—or create new scales based on—already existing measures of either political or *class consciousness* (see e.g., Evans, Heath, & Lalljee, 1996; Keefer, Goode, & Van Berkel, 2015; Wright, 1985, pp. 168, 253 and 263, 2004, p. 219). Either way, the characteristics of the system where, and the groups with, we carry out our studies, should always be considered.

With respect to the existence of an alleged SJM, however, it seems unclear how it could be demonstrated with survey designs. Even further, as with SDO, different scores among groups and countries speak loud in favour of situational factors behind people´s ideological outcomes, including SJ.

1.7. Social Identity Approach (SIA)

Social Identity and Self-categorization theories, which together form the SIA, offer a rather different explanation for people´s subservience or rebelliousness. According to Tajfel and Turner (1979), people "strive to achieve or to maintain positive social identity [which is] based to a large extent on favorable comparisons (…) between the in-group and some relevant out-groups" (p.40).

Low-status people might thus follow three strategies in order to improve their social identity: (1) *individual mobility*, when group boundaries are seen as permeable and status quo as stable and/or legitimate, (2) *social creativity*, when group boundaries are seen as impermeable but status quo is still seen as stable and/or legitimate, and (3) *social competition*, when group boundaries are seen as impermeable and status quo as unstable and/or illegitimate (Rubin & Hewstone, 2004; Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner & Reynolds, 2003).That is, disadvantaged people will not support a system, unless they perceive it as stable and/or legitimate, and/or see chances to thrive.

Further social-psychological approaches on CA, within SIA, albeit also integrating Relative Deprivation Theory (see e.g., Cakal et al., 2011; Gurr, 1970; Meuleman et al., 2020), emphasised three major antecedents for low-status people to protest: (1) *anger*, when group-based inequality or deprivation is perceived as unjust, (2) *social identification* with the disadvantaged group, and (3) *collective efficacy,* or the shared belief that issues can be solved collectively (e.g., Drury & Reicher, 2009; Thomas et al., 2019; Thomas, Mavor & McGarthy, 2011; van Zomeren, Leach, & Spears, 2012; van Zomeren, Postmes & Spears, 2008).

Other antecedents of CA would be *intergroup contact* (Cakal et al., 2011), *moral convictions* (Sabucedo et al., 2018; van Zomeren, Postmes & Spears, 2012), and *feelings of threat* (Brandt et al*., 2021; Yustisia et al, 2019). Conversely, low-status people would acquire dominant identity—and less willingness towards CA—as they move up closer to the advantaged group (Wright & Boese, 2015; Wright & Taylor, 1999).

SIA seems thus a quite comprehensive explanation for both system stability and system change. Even though, there are still controversies.

1.7.1.   *Theoretical concerns (SIA)*

One common criticism is that SIA underemphasises, or scarcely explains, out-group favouritism, i.e., why disadvantaged individuals often hold favourable attitudes towards the advantaged ones (see e.g., Jost, 2011, p. 229; Jost, Banaji & Nosek, 2004). However, it seems rather clear when out-group favouritism takes place for SIA, i.e., when the system is perceived as stable and/or legitimate, and/or social boundaries seem permeable.

Closely related, Jost, Becker, et al. (2017) argued that social-psychological models of CA rarely incorporate ideological processes to system attitudes. More specifically, SJT

suggests that a SJM is activated by feelings of threat. This SJM, in turn, will predict the likelihood and the direction of CA. However, from its early theorising, SIA considered "social realities as well as their reflection in social behaviour through the mediation of *socially shared* systems of beliefs" (Tajfel & Turner, 1979, p. 36, emphasis in the original). With regard to the SJM, as already suggested, it would be an unnecessary intermediate stage. Either way, whatever might be activated "from outside" suggests focusing directly on those external activating factors.

On another note, SIA scholars somewhat extricate realistic conflicts from social or "subjective" ones (see e.g., Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Rubin & Hewstone, 2004). Admittedly, social-psychological variables of intergroup behaviour, although powerfully determined by previous social, economic and political processes, "may also acquire, in turn, an autonomous function" (Tajfel & Turner, 1979, p. 46; see a similar approach in Engels, 1893/1968; see also Lenin, 1908/1977b, pp. 403-406; Marx, 1844/1970, p. 7; Marx & Engels, 1846/1968, p. 21). This (perhaps apparent) "autonomous function" could led SIA scholars to relegate the explanation of realistic competition, i.e., intergroup conflict on an objective basis, to Realistic Conflict Theory (see e.g., Jackson, 1993; Sherif, 1967). In so doing, however, SIA could contribute to obscure realistic conflicts in favour of "subjective" ones and thus bolster the post-materialist trend (see Hanappi & Hanappi-Egger, 2018).

Conversely, there might still be a great overlap between objective and subjective conflicts —so, too, between SIA, RCT, and arguably SJT (see Duckitt & Mphuthing, 1998; Jetten, 2018; Turner & Reynolds, 2003). Social competition would be but a reflex, more or less distorted, of realistic competition. That is, competence for either economic power or social status would be equally driven by self-interest over a (perceived as) limited resource. To be bogged down in SJ ideology, meanwhile, would prevent disadvantaged individuals from carrying out realistic readings. Dominant individuals, therefore, would contribute to maintain SJ ideology hegemonic (see Herman & Chomsky, 1988/2008; Marx & Engels, 1846/1968, p. 21; MacLeod, 2019; McCombs & Shaw, 1972; Mullen & Klahen, 2010).

Consider class struggle. Workers vastly outnumber employers. Therefore, the latter should ensure that the former self-identify with "anything but class", as the next step might be to act "realistically" (see Parenti, 1997, p. 141). In light of the foregoing, employers could spread the idea that the system is stable and/or legitimate, that social boundaries are permeable, and/or that any alternative could be far worse. Further "top-down" practices such as making salient inconsistencies within "revolutionary" parties or ideologies,

obscuring their achievements, and/or providing "neutral" diversion, would help to keep workers biased towards employers´ interests (see e.g., Cohen, 1965, p. 13; Franke & Van Rooij, 2015; Jenkins, 2012; MacLeod, 2019; Murray & Nyberg, 2021; van Zomeren et al., 2004; Wilford, 1998). Lastly, albeit perhaps most importantly, material incentives or deterrents such as bribery or an implacable legislation will keep persuasion effective (see Grossman, 2006; Lenin, 1916/1974, pp. 193-194, 281, 283-284 and 301; Marx, 1867/2015, p. 522; Wright, 1985, p. 125, 2015, p. 11; see also the metaphor of "Chiron the centaur" in Machiavelli, 1532/1998, p. 69). All of this plausibly contributes to the stability of the exploitative system.

Perhaps, explaining subordinate-class individuals´ subservience towards dominant classes because the former self-identify with the interests of the latter might also sound tautological. However, it is clearly not the case inasmuch such self-identification does not come from any fundamental predisposition or motive to do so, but rather from situational factors.

1.7.2. *Methodological concerns (SIA)*

As already suggested, survey-designs probably capture but the reflex of social reality in people´s thought. Likewise, such reflex might be approximate and/or distorted — so, too, the observed outcome (see e.g., Engels, 1880/2005, pp. 66-67; Lenin, 1908/1977a, pp. 15, 26, 155 and 323; Rubin & Hewstone, 2004). Accordingly, to minimize the risk of distorted understandings of social reality, we require very careful and precise conceptualisations. Most notably, we should (1) identify and set clear boundaries between conflicting groups, and (2) ask people *what type* of system they would bolster through CA.

With regard to the first point, distinctions such as low versus high-status individuals, or disadvantaged versus advantaged groups, seem rather ambiguous to address the inequality paradox. Admittedly, it is the dominant approach. Researchers mainly handle gradational measures of status or "class", either objective or subjective, or categorisations based on noneconomic sources of "social cleavage" (see e.g., Diemer et al., 2013; Kraus, Tan & Tannenbaum, 2013; Osborne et al., 2019; Savage et al., 2013; Thomas et al., 2019; Vargas-Salfate et al., 2018). However, this framework would be inadequate, or insufficient, to explain system stability and system change (see Hanappi & Hanappi-Egger, 2018; Parenti, 1997, p. 148; Penn, 2016; Wright, 2005, pp. 186-188, 2015, pp. 146-148). It might thus be complemented with more informative or relational measures such as people´s

economic activity status, e.g., employed, self-employed, and unemployed, or role in the mode of production, e.g., worker, manager, and employer (see e.g., Sawyer & Gampa, 2020; Wright, 1985, pp. 195 and 262).

Even further, making distinctions such as low versus high-status, or based on noneconomic forms of "social cleavage", might have SJ effects. To which extent someone´s material living conditions are or are not fair enough seems socially determined (see Kraus, Piff & Keltner, 2009, p. 992; Marx & Engels, 1891/2010, p. 16; Meuleman et al., 2020). Likewise, consensual definitions by others could become "one of the powerful causal factors for a group's self-definition" (Tajfel & Turner, 1979, p. 41). Hence, gradational conceptualisations of "class" would foster close comparisons and prevent class consciousness (or shared identity) from arising. To focus on noneconomic forms of "social cleavage", meanwhile, would make salient group identities with little system-change prospects. Conversely, to categorise society based on economic criteria (e.g., based on people´s economic activity status and property relations) would help to make people see less permeable and legitimate the status quo, i.e., it might enhance "realistic" *social competition*. That is, researchers aim to analyse social reality as it is, though so they could have a word in transforming it (see Marx in Engels, 1888/1969, p. 61).

With regard to the second point, what have been said for SJT also goes here. At large, researchers would adapt—or create new—instruments to capture people´s willingness towards CA within the on-going conflict between productive forces and modes of production or *class struggle*. A variant, or complementary approach, would be asking participants to which extent they self-identify with either working or dominant classes, socialist or capitalist systems, and/or advocates of either the former or the latter.

To be clear, the foregoing does not suggest that subjective social-psychological variables are irrelevant. On the contrary, feelings of anger, shared identity, and/or perceived efficacy, might have *immediate* effects on system attitudes. Ideology, meanwhile, might well play a mediating or moderating role. However, it does not mean that people´s material living conditions at large, and people´s role in the mode of production in particular, might have not predictive power either (see e.g., Wright, 2015, p. 153). Indeed, they might become more relevant when crises "[aggravate] deep-seated antagonisms and brought them to the surface" (Lenin, 1915/1974, p. 98). Stated otherwise, a sudden, sharp, and broad enough change for the worse in most individuals´ material living conditions would raise feelings of anger and shared identities —i.e., it would pave the ground for system-challenging events (see Engels, 1880/2005, pp. 65-67; Davies, 1962;

Lenin, 1915/1974, pp. 98, 213-214 and 216; van Zomeren, Postmes & Spears, 2008; Wright, 2015, pp. 124-125 and 153). Hence, it sounds reasonable to pay due attention to material and historical factors, i.e., to the *objective antecedents* of the *subjective antecedents* of CA.

1.8. Overlaps between social-psychological approaches and classical Marxism (CM)

1.8.1. SDT and CM

Both approaches (1) contemplate power asymmetries, or antagonistic interests, rather than differences in status or prestige, (2) see institutional discrimination as a major force in creating and maintaining such asymmetries, (3) consider that ideology is largely *manufactured* by dominant groups, or classes, to serve their interests, and (4) do no restrict themselves to one level of analysis (see e.g., Marx, 1859/1999, p. 4, 1867/2015, p. 522; Marx & Engels, 1846/1968, p. 21; Sidanius et al*.,* 2004). However, SDT emphasis on an alleged inner predisposition to accept dominance, or SDO, situates the theory far from CM and closer to idealist positions (see e.g., Marx & Engels, 1846/1968, pp. 21 and 54; Turner & Reynolds, 2003, p. 205). Indeed, Marx (1859/1999) clearly considered that "[the antagonism] emanates from the individuals´ social conditions of existence" (p. 4). He even warned against "naively taking this antagonism for a social law of Nature" (Marx, 1867/2015, p. 11). That is, for CM social existence determines people´s consciousness, whereas for SDT seems much the other way round.

Admittedly, which one is more determinant, "nature or nurture", seems a Byzantine discussion (Sidanius et al*.,* 2004, p. 860; see also Marx´s II thesis on Feuerbach in Engels, 1888/1969, p. 59). CM also noted that people´s ideology may be subjectively conditioned "by the physical and mental constitution of its originator" (Engels, 1878/1947, p. 23). Likewise, CM considered that early divisions of labour might be originated "by virtue of natural predisposition" (see Marx & Engels, 1846/1968, pp. 6 and 11). Lenin (1915/1974) himself suggested that a similar event "stuns and breaks some people, *but enlightens and tempers others* (p. 216, emphasis in the original).

That is, CM does not disregard dispositional or internal factors. What CM does, however, is to look first at situational factors such as society´s economic foundation and the sum of social relationships arising from it (see e.g., Engels, 1880/2005, p. 65; Lenin,

1899/1964; Marx, 1859/1999, p. 4, 1861/1973, p. 193). Consider what would have occurred to Marx himself—and his arguably low SDO—without Engels´ financial support.

Plausibly, dominant-class individuals take advantage of human nature (consider e.g., advertising and political propaganda). Nevertheless, a further understanding of our cognitive "shortcomings", and to which extent they play a role in our system attitudes, will require the involvement of disciplines such as Neuroscience and Evolutionary Psychology.

1.8.2.   SJT and CM

SJT broadly uses the construct of *false consciousness* (e.g., Jost, 2011 p. 227, 2019; Jost & Banaji, 1994). Likewise, CM broadly considered existential threats as risk factors to endorse SJ beliefs (Lenin, 1908/1977b, pp. 405-406). This suggests a great overlap. However, SJT scholars´ emphasis on an alleged "bottom-up" SJM also blatantly confronts the idea that social existence determines consciousness (Marx, 1859/1999, p. 4). Even further, SJT scholars first ascribe to such SJM the tendency to endorse SJ beliefs, and then assess to which extent such SJ beliefs correlate with each other (see e.g., Jost, 2019; Jost et al., 2014; Jost & Hunyady, 2005, p. 261; see a similar procedure in Ho et al., 2015). In so doing, ideology is extricated from its producers and the material conditions that allow its production, which is highly reminiscent of "the whole trick of proving the hegemony of the spirit in history" (Marx & Engels, 1846/1968, p. 22).

Admittedly, people might have diverse "bottom-up psychological needs and interests" (Jost, 2019, p. 265). Engels (1888/1969) already suggested that "everything which sets [individuals] in motion must go through their minds" (p. 45). "But—he added— what form it will take in the mind will depend very much upon the circumstances". In our case, certain threats, actual or perceived (e.g., terrorism, enemy attacks, or immigration), would foster social cohesion, conservatism, prejudice, or SJ at large (see e.g., Barbero, 2015; Eadeh & Chang, 2020; Manstead, 2018; Ullrich & Cohrs, 2007; Urbanska & Guimond, 2018). For those ruling it makes sense to highlight any threat that might bolster SJ beliefs. For researchers, meanwhile, it makes sense to consider the importance of the context and available information.

Stated otherwise, "top-down processes" interact with, and/or distort, self-interest seekers´ reasoning capabilities. SJ may occur when people (1) perceive the system to be

their in-group, (2) perceive the system as beneficial (or the alternative as detrimental), or (3) are diverted enough to perceive anything (see e.g., Engels, 1845/1969, pp. 87-88, 1880/2005, pp. 66-67; Mani et al., 2013; Pennycook & Rand, 2019; Rubin & Hewstone, 2004, p. 835). Meanwhile, what people perceive might be largely shaped by dominant-class practices, e.g., through agenda setting and framing by mass-media (see Cohen, 1965, p. 13; Herman & Chomsky, 1988/2008; MacLeod, 2019; McCombs & Shaw, 1972). Hence, to start from people´s beliefs to explain power asymmetries seems putting the cart before the horse.

Either way, with adjustments in place, SJT instruments could render a great service to capture people´s state of mind. Likewise, survey experiments would allow us to assess which specific ideological content has better prospects for system maintenance (or the other way round).

1.8.3. SIA and CM

Both approaches (1) see social identities (or consciousness) as a reflex of people´s position in a complex and constantly evolving material reality (e.g., Engels, 1880/2005, pp. 65-66; Lenin, 1902/1977, p. 386; Marx, 1859/1999, p. 4; Turner & Reynolds, 2003, p. 204; Tajfel & Turner, 1979, p. 33), (2) contemplate feelings of injustice, shared identity of interests, and perceptions of collective efficacy, as immediate antecedents of CA (e.g., Blader, 2007; Drury & Reicher, 2009, p. 722; Lenin, 1899/1964, 1915/1974, pp. 98, 213-214 and 216; Marx & Engels, 1848/1969, p. 25; van Zomeren, Postmes & Spears, 2008), (3) emphasise the importance of CA as the only way for the powerless to gain power (e.g., Lenin, 1899/1964; Marx & Engels, 1846/1968, pp. 34-36; Reicher, 2004, p. 933), (4) remark on relative deprivation and how the disadvantaged acquire dominant identities as they move up closer to dominant groups (e.g., Lenin, 1916/1974, pp. 193-194, 281, 283-284 and 301; Marx & Engels, 1891/2010, p. 16; Meuleman et al., 2020; Wright & Taylor, 1999), and (5) do not consider things "in isolation", but rather "in their motion" and "reciprocal influence on one another" (Engels, 1878/1947, pp. 86-87, 1880/2005, pp. 54-57; Marx & Engels, 1846/1968, p. 9; Reicher, 2004, pp. 924-925; Wright, 2015, pp. 73-74).

However, as most social-psychological approaches nowadays, SIA often handles gradational "class" conceptualisations, either objective or subjective, or noneconomic categorisations. Admittedly, CM largely focused on two major and antagonistic class

locations: (1) the *workers* or *proletarians*, i.e., wage-dependent individuals with little or no property, and (2) the *capitalists* or *bourgeois*, i.e., the ones who own and control the means of production, including the former´s labour (see e.g., Lenin, 1899/1964; Marx, 1867/2015; pp. 507-509; Marx & Engels, 1848/1969, pp. 18 and 37-38, 1891/2010, p. 4). Likewise, workers´ role in the mode of production—and number—led CM to see in this social category the *revolutionary subject* (e.g., Engels, 1880/2005, p. 38; Lenin, 1917/1974, p. 408; Marx, 1867/1992; Marx & Engels, 1845/1956, pp. 51-53, 1846/1968, p. 34).

Notwithstanding it, CM also broadly considered stratification, social mobility, and different forms of social oppression (see e.g., Lenin, 1902/1977, pp. 399-400, 412 and 422, 1916/1974, pp. 193-194 and 281-284; Marx, 1883/2010, p. 633; Marx & Engels, 1848/1969, pp. 20 and 29). That is, possibility exists that Marxist conceptualisation of class has been oversimplified or misunderstood (see e.g., DiMaggio in Fiske & Markus, 2012, pp. 16-17; Manstead, 2018, p. 269; see also Wright, 1985, pp. 13 and 42, 2015).

Either way, of the three read theories, SIA seems the most congruent with CM and, most likely, the best framework to understand system stability and system change.

1.9. Towards a synthetic and comprehensive explanation of system attitudes

To synthesise all the foregoing, we could see humans as self-interest seekers or individuals with a basic well-being motive, only constrained by dispositional factors and the physical environment. However, humans rarely operate in isolation, in perfect information scenarios, or in absence of power relations. Hence, beyond internal dispositions or fundamental motives, our self-interest seeking is largely determined, shaped, or "distorted", by others´ self-interest seeking.

More specifically, we inevitably and objectively enter a certain mode of production, distribution, and exchange, of commodities, in which a few individuals inherit properties, social power, and status, whereas others inherit little or nothing but their workforce (which must be "sold" to the former in order to live). That is, we all form part of a single whole, albeit the starting point and role for each individual differ.

In the self-interest´s logic, proprietors will not be eager to surrender their position. Workers will not be eager to be exploited either. There is, thus, an antagonism or inherent conflict between identical but, at once, opposing interests (e.g., as for wages). Depending on the correlation of forces

between these two groups of individuals or social classes, i.e., on their respective capability to gather power, wealth will be produced and distributed in one way or another.

To complicate things further, a number of intermediate levels or contradictory class locations, and certain mobility among them, exist —so, too, other forms of social oppression. That is, society is a thicket of short- and long-term interests, and power asymmetries, with a more or less clear economic substratum.

Against this backdrop, those who have little or no possibility of appropriating others´ labour may try to do so following individualistic paths. They will face all the vicissitudes of competition, all the fluctuations of the market, and all other constrains that a world-system entails (let alone there is no room for everyone at the top). Other option would be joining other individuals in a similar situation and, all together, prevent others from appropriating their labour. Dispositional factors may have a say over which option is chosen, though available information, personal experiences, and other situational constrains, would be more determinant.

Meanwhile, dominant individuals that aim to remain dominant will do their uttermost to prevent subordinate ones choose the second option. It could be done by manufacturing, spreading, and/or reinforcing beliefs such as (1) the system is stable and/or legitimate, (2) social boundaries are permeable, and (3) to challenge the status quo pose threats. Appealing to whatever natural tendency would raise the efficacy of ideology. Material incentives and deterrents will have the last say.

Though disadvantaged individuals largely outnumber advantaged ones, the latter are in a position of strength. There is, thus, little prospect for system change. Henceforth, the inequality paradox could be partially sorted out, or be better conceptualised, with another paradox: those able to rebel do not have the need to do it, whereas those who have the need to do it cannot rebel.

However, sudden, sharp, and broad enough changes for the worse in society´s economic foundations would foster anger and shared identities among large sections of the population. In such cases, if the hitherto subordinates are able to organise themselves, and the hitherto dominants are unable to handle the situation, system changes would take place.

Cross-sectional and longitudinal correlational research would allow us to determine which specific situations or material living conditions are related, to a larger extent, with system-challenging attitudes. Experimental research, meanwhile, would allow us to assess the effect of different ideological content (e.g., high versus low social mobility, advantages versus

disadvantages associated to certain parties or messages, successful versus unsuccessful system-challenging CA).

Either way, to understand, explain, and eventually predict, system-challenging events, it seems reasonable to focus on people´s position in, and understanding of, the social-economic structure.

2.   OBJECTIVES, HYPOTHESES, AND METHODOLOGY

2.1. Overview of the work

One major goal for Social and Political Psychology—so, too, for the present thesis—is to understand and explain why low-income, low-status, and/or working-class people often bolster a system at the expense of their self-interest; and why, occasionally, they rebel (see e.g., Jost et al*.,* 2012; Jost, Pelham, et al*.,* 2003; Piff, Kraus & Keltner, 2018; Sidanius & Pratto, 2003). In other words, we aim to further understand why class-based hierarchies tend to remain stable over time and why, every now and then, system-challenging events take place. To put it even simpler, we aim to understand why people rebel (and why don´t). That arguably requires multidisciplinary approaches and different levels of analysis, from Biology to Geopolitics. Even though, Social and Political Psychology might also have a say.

Theoretically, we situated our work within the two, perhaps, major social-psychological approaches on the issue nowadays: the System Justification Theory and the Social Identity Approach (see e.g., Jost, 2019; Turner & Reynolds, 2003; van Zomeren, Postmes & Spears, 2008). Testing the evolutionary tenets of the Social Dominance Theory, meanwhile, would plausibly require the involvement of other disciplines such as Neuroscience or Evolutionary Psychology (which is beyond our capabilities).

Having said this, we also considered classical Marxism (CM) to broaden the theoretical framework. It seemed appropriate given the topic of research (i.e., attitudes towards the system) and the plausible economic substratum of many if not most societal problems (see e.g., Engels, 1880/2005, pp. 66-67 and 70; Lenin, 1899/1964; Marx, 1859/1999, pp. 3-4 and 131; Marx & Engels, 1846/1968, pp. 21-23). Moreover, there are controversies over which social-psychological approach better explains system attitudes (see e.g., Jost, 2011; Jost, Becker et al., 2017; Owuamalam, Rubin & Spears, 2019). Likewise, references to CM are often in the literature (e.g., Jost, 2019; Jost et al*.,* 2014; Turner & Reynolds, 2003). Hence, by intertwining both System Justification Theory (SJT) and Social Identity Approach (SIA) with CM, we might contribute to sort out those controversies and further understand social reality.

With the above in mind, we created and validated an instrument to complement current research on people´s attitudes towards the system, named Class-Struggle-Actions Scale (see Chapter 3). We then tested the alleged system-justifying function of promoting entrepreneurship

with *Rag-to-Riches* biographies (see Chapter 4). Finally, we tested the alleged system-justifying effect of making those who challenge the status quo, a novel left-wing political party in our case, look like a threat (see Chapter 5).

2.1.1. *Broadening the scope*

It is worth mentioning that the present work went through a continuous and severe restructuring and improvement process. Initially, the main goal revolved around testing the alleged system-justifying effect that one alleged dominant ideology might have. According to SIA, disadvantaged individuals will tend to support the status quo if they perceive it as either stable or legitimate, and/or if they feel that social advancement is possible (see e.g., Rubin & Hewstone, 2004; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Hence, we hypothesised that *rags-to-riches* plots, i.e., making salient the idea that social advancement is possible following individualistic paths, would increase the likelihood that people see the system as just and fair (see Chapter 4).

However, several circumstances and/or considerations aimed us to broaden the scope. First, our preliminary findings raised manifold theoretical and methodological concerns. Second, subsequent reviews of the literature, including the most recent developments, provided new insights. Third, the on-going political affairs suggested work´s realignment. Finally, we have an overall desire to comprehensively understand social reality al large, why people rebel (and why don´t) in particular, —so, too, to offer a product with practical value.

All at once gradually dawned on us that system justification might also rely upon fear (perhaps, to a greater extent than upon perceptions of social mobility). According to SJT, humans are motivated to endorse system-justifying (SJ) beliefs due to their palliative function, i.e., insofar as they might provide psychological advantages against existential, epistemic or relational threats (Jost, 2019; Jost et al., 2014; Napier & Jost, 2008). Leaving aside controversies on the existence of a motive to justify the system as such (see e.g., Owuamalam, Rubin & Spears, 2019), different threats, actual or perceived, might plausibly have different effects on people´s political attitudes (see e.g., Brandt et al., 2020; Eadeh & Chang, 2020; Ullrich & Cohrs, 2007). That is, it seems plausible to consider that people will tend to bolster a system if they perceive that doing otherwise could entail negative consequences. Hence, we hypothesised that making a political party that proposes changes

to the status quo look like a threat would also play a system-maintenance role (see Chapter 5).

2.1.2. *Towards a social-psychological Model of Class Struggle*

In light of successive reviews of the literature and our findings altogether, a comprehensive theoretical model was taking shape. We named it Model of Class Struggle (MCS). Its basic claim is that people´s beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours, towards the system, critically rely upon situational factors (see a further conceptualisation in Chapter 5).

Admittedly, manifold situational factors (e.g., geopolitical, climatic, and macroeconomic) might have a huge say to explain system maintenance and system change. Likewise, manifold dispositional factors or individual attributes (e.g., personality traits, sex, and age) might have probabilistic effects on people´s political outcomes.

Nevertheless, our MCS proposes to focus first and foremost on both people´s material living conditions and dominant-class individuals´ practices altogether (see e.g., Brandt, 2013; Lenin, 1902/1977, p. 386; Marx, 1859/1999, pp. 3-4 and 131; Turner & Reynolds, 2003, p. 201).

More specifically, among people´s material living conditions, we looked at factors such as personal and family income, economic activity status, and role in the mode of production. Among the plethora of practices that dominant-class individuals´ might carry out in order to remain dominant, we considered two (plausibly) complementary ones: (1) to make people believe that social advancement is possible within the current system, and (2) to make people believe that those who advocate changes pose a threat.

That is, modelled on SJT, SIA and CM, our MCS aims to further understand why people rebel (and why don´t) in a, perhaps, more parsimonious way. Hence, the initial goal of testing the alleged system-justifying function of promoting entrepreneurship was broaden to an attempt to provide empirical support for our MCS (though, still, we always kept on testing the alleged system-justifying effect of dominant ideology).

2.2. Objectives

2.2.1. *General or ultimate objectives*

The strategic aim of the present thesis is, from a social-psychological standpoint, to advance the knowledge pool on why and how system maintenance and system change take place. That is, looking at people´s beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours towards the social-economic structure (or system). Simply stated, this thesis intends to shed light on why people rebel (and why don´t).

Such strategic aim evolved to, and/or comprises, the following general or ultimate objectives:

(1) To intertwine different social-psychological approaches and their empirical evidence, and classical Marxism, trying to bridge gaps within and between them.

(2) To place focus on people´s position in, and relationships within, the social-economic structure. That is, to link both objective and subjective antecedents of people´s political behaviour.

(3) To do not extricate ideology from its producers and the situational, material and/or historical conditions that allow its production. That is, to counterweight idealism and/or post-materialism.

(4) To propose a synthetic, comprehensive and parsimonious social-psychological model (the MCS) that might serve as a common ground, general guideline, or working framework, for further research and political action.

2.2.2. *Secondary or specific objectives*

On a more tactical level, i.e., in between the strategic objectives and the most purely technical ones, such as learning new software, designing empirical research, analysing data, forwarding papers to specialised journals, etc., the present thesis comprises the following specific or secondary objectives:

(1) To develop and validate an instrument to capture system-challenging attitudes or Class-Struggle-Actions Scale (see Chapter 3).

(2) To assess the alleged system-justifying effect of *Rag-to-riches* biographies of the entrepreneur type (see Chapter 4).

(3) To assess the alleged system-justifying effect of making a novel left-wing political party (i.e., *Unidos Podemos)* look like a threat (see Chapter 5).

(4) To consider economic activity status and role in the mode of production as relevant independent variables, or potential predictors, of system beliefs and attitudes (see Chapters 4 and 5).

2.3. Hypotheses

2.3.1. General "twofold" hypothesis

Largely modelled on both SIA and CM, the whole thesis revolves around a twofold working hypothesis, or two hypotheses that should not be extricated one from another (see e.g., Brandt, 2013; Engels, 1880/2005, pp. 65-67; Lenin, 1902/1977, p. 386; Marx, 1859/1999, pp. 3-4; Turner & Reynolds, 2003, p. 201; Vargas-Salfate et al.*,* 2018):

H1 - Low-income, low-status, and/or working-class people gravitate towards a more equal social-economic system or socialism (to greater extent than their high-income, high-status, and/or dominant-class counterparts).

H2 - Dominant-class practices and institutions mitigate, or revert, such gravitation.

It is our understanding that those two statements should be considered altogether. More specifically, if the second one is true at its finest, it might appear that the first one is not. Stated otherwise, if dominant-class practices are fully effective, disadvantaged people would show less system-challenging attitudes than what would have been expected given their material living conditions.

Consider workers that suffer offensive or denigrating treatment at the workplace. They will, plausibly, aim to improve their conditions. Consider now that the employer offer wage increases to all those who meet the established standards, and/or threaten with reprisals to all those who complain. Though each individual´s attitudes might depend upon manifold other situational and/or dispositional factors, the likelihood of system-challenging attitudes or behaviours within such backdrop will, most likely, decrease.

Admittedly, we must also consider the alternative statements, or twofold working antithesis, i.e., low-income, low-status, and/or working-class people do not gravitate towards socialism and dominant-class practices are wished, irrelevant, or inexistent. It might follow from SDT and SJT´s claims such as there is a general desire for group-based dominance or fundamental motive to justify the system (see e.g., Jost, 2019; Jost & Banaji, 1994; Pratto et al, 1994; Sidanius et al., 2004, 2017). However, the existence of desires and/or motives of this kind could hardly account why, every now and then, system changes take place (let alone such theorising has all the appearance of being a system-legitimising myth or system-justifying ideology in itself).

Even further, evidence suggests that, at least in capitalist societies, low-status people tend to justify the system to a lesser extent than high-status ones (see e.g., Brandt, 2013; Caricati, 2016; Ipsos, 2021; Kelemen et al., 2014; Vargas-Salfate et al., 2018). Likewise, plenty of research suggests that dominant-class ideological production might influence people´s political attitudes (see e.g., Cohen, 1965; Franke & Van Rooij, 2015; Herman & Chomsky, 1988/2008; Jenkins, 2012; MacLeod, 2019; McCombs & Shaw, 1972; Murray & Nyberg, 2021).

Hence, it seems reasonable to do not extricate people´s understanding of, and attitudes towards, the social-economic structure, from both people´s position in such social-economic structure and dominant-class practices. Either way, for readability purposes, we may also speak of first and second hypothesis respectively (e.g., for designing research or discussing findings).

2.3.2. *Specific and secondary hypotheses*

In the two studies carried out in Chapter 3, i.e., development and validation of an instrument to measure attitudes towards class-struggle actions (CSA), we further hypothesised that willingness towards such CSA would rely upon social-economic factors

rather than upon individual attributes such as sex, age, or level of studies. In parallel, we hypothesised that willingness towards CSA would correlate with other ideological outcomes such as political ideology (PI) or system justification (SJ). We expected that, the more willingness towards CSA, the more participants will score to the left in PI (and the less will score in SJ).

In the two studies carried out in Chapter 4, i.e., testing the system-justifying function of promoting entrepreneurship with rags-to-riches biographies, our general hypotheses took the following form:

H1 - The closer individuals are to the upper class the more likely they would justify the system and the less likely they would show positive attitudes towards CSA (in a capitalist society).

H2 - Reading/listening life-stories of the entrepreneur type might affect system attitudes. Successful life-stories would increase SJ beliefs and decrease willingness towards CSA (H2a). Failure versions would have the opposing effect (H2b).

In the study carried out in Chapter 5, i.e., explaining the decline of *Unidos Podemos* (UP), a Spanish left-wing political party, the main working hypotheses took the following form:

H1 - Low-status, low-income, and/or working-class people, gravitate towards leftist political positions to greater extent than high-status, high-income, and/or dominant-class ones.

H2 - Available information about UP might affect voters´ attitudes. Positive information might increase the likelihood of support (H2a). Negative information might have the opposing effect (H2b).

That is, the first hypothesis is always that disadvantaged individuals will tend to show more system-challenging attitudes than the advantaged ones (at least in capitalist societies). The second hypothesis, meanwhile, is always that dominant-class practices might mitigate, or revert, such system-challenging attitudes.

More specifically, if in Chapter 4 we aimed to test available information about the system itself, in Chapter 5 we did likewise with available information concerning a party

that claims being an alternative to that system. Both approaches are complementary. Both making salient system´s virtues and presenting an alternative as a threat might increase the likelihood of pro-system attitudes. Both rewards and punishments may lead to the desired behaviour. Simply put, both approaches aim to capture system justification, either directly, i.e., asking participants the extent to which they do so as in Chapter 4, or indirectly, i.e., asking participants the extent to which they support an (alleged) anti-system party.

2.4. Methodology

2.4.1.   *Rationale for choosing survey experiments to test the hypotheses*

To test our hypotheses, we carried out correlational, causal-comparative, and experimental research (see Lavrakas, 2008, pp. 252-254 and 728-729). More specifically, we carried out several *vignette experiments*, i.e., experiments embedded in cross-sectional surveys (see Druckman et al., 2011; Gaines, Kuklinski, & Quirk, 2007; Mullinix et al., 2015; Mummolo & Peterson, 2019). Even more specifically, we carried out several "Post-Test–Only Control Group Designs", i.e., we compared our participants´ scores after being exposed to one or another type of ideological content, or where randomly assigned to a control group (see Holbrook in Druckman et al*.,* 2011, p. 148; see also Lavrakas et al., 2019, p. 294).

Admittedly, research based on self-report measures might have less external and internal validity than field studies and lab-designs. For instance, usual precautions in survey administration such as guaranteeing anonymity and confidentiality would be insufficient to build trust with participants. Also, response artefacts such as extreme-response styles or acquiescence are often problematic (see Diener et al., 1991; Krumpal, 2013; Nederhof, 1985).

Notwithstanding the foregoing, survey designs also pose advantages. Most notably, they seem a rather efficient, economic and accessible procedure —so, too, they are broadly used within Social and Political Psychology (see e.g., Alexander & Becker, 1978; Atzmüller & Steiner, 2010; Druckman et al*.,* 2011, pp. 312-313; Jost et al., 2012; Lavrakas et al*.,* 2019, pp. 369-413; Steiner, Atzmüller & Su, 2017; Ullrich & Cohrs, 2007; Van der Meer, Hakhverdian & Aaldering, 2015). Survey experiments in particular are broadly used to elicit stated preferences and study how we make multidimensional choices (Hainmueller, Hangartner & Yamamoto, 2015).

Perhaps, what self-report studies capture is but the reflex of an ever-changing social reality in people´s thought (and in an approximate, non-exact way). That is, there might always be a distance between an alleged material and objective reality "in motion" and how researchers conceptualise it —so, too, between people´s understanding of such reality and what self-report studies capture (see e.g., Engels, 1878/1947, p. 23, 1880/2005, pp. 66-67; Lenin, 1894/1977, p. 140, 1908/1977a, pp. 15, 26, 155 and 323; Reicher, 2004, pp. 924-925; Rubin & Hewstone, 2004).

Either way, with precautions in place, survey designs might help us to conceptualise theoretical constructs, to test hypotheses, and to identify trends, patterns, and relationships in social reality.

In this sense, to increase internal validity, we might randomly assign participants to either one or more experimental groups, and to a control one, and then compare their scores. To increase external validity, meanwhile, we might collect large *enough* samples to achieve reasonable effect sizes, i.e., samples that would allow us to find meaningful statistical differences between groups (see Brysbaert, 2019; Funder & Ozer, 2019; Sullivan & Feinn, 2012).

On another note, pure correlational approaches would not allow making proper causal inferences (let alone to collect representative samples would be money and time-consuming processes). That is, we decided in favour of survey experiments for practical reasons, though bearing in mind that collected evidence should be seen as an approximation to social reality and/or as a complementary approach.

2.4.2. *General procedure of the studies*

First, to develop an instrument to measure willingness towards CSA, we conducted the relevant validation process, such as construct definition, creation of an item pool, expert consultation, discussion on anchor points, labelling, and scaling instructions, conducting factor analysis, and assessing internal consistency, reliability, and validity (see Chapter 3).

Then, we conducted three *vignette experiments* (see Chapters 4 and 5). Such experiments consisted in:

(1) Asking all participants about a number of social-demographic or ideological variables (e.g., sex, income, economic activity status, role in the mode of production, subjective social status, and political ideology). Such variables were predictors and/or covariates, i.e., variables that might determine our participants´ beliefs, attitudes or intended behaviours (so, too, they might moderate the effect of our experimental manipulation).

(2) Randomly assigning our participants to one or another experimental condition (e.g., with a successful life-story of the entrepreneur type or with an unsuccessful one), or to a control one. This was the independent variable, i.e., the variable that we manipulated.

(3) Post-testing if it took place a direct *priming* effect in a number of ideological variables (and/or if there was an interacting effect). Such ideological variables were the dependent ones.

That is, we followed a three level unifactorial experimental design.

Noteworthy, we carried out correlational analyses between our predictors or covariates and the ideological outcomes or dependent variables in all our studies. Most notably, we considered several "class" measures as *predictors*. Expectedly, in line with our first hypothesis, those more disadvantaged individuals would show more system-challenging beliefs, attitudes, or intended behaviours, than those more advantaged ones. Needless to say, we cannot manipulate individual attributes to assess whether there is an effect in people´s ideology or not. Likewise, our sample sizes were far from being representative. Even though, we expected suggestive relationships.

At an experimental level, meanwhile, the content of the vignettes was the independent variable, i.e., the variable that we manipulated (see Lavrakas, 2019, p. 369). Expectedly, in line with our second hypothesis, making salient certain messages would have an effect on people´s political attitudes or beliefs. In that case, the dependent variables were still our participants´ beliefs, attitudes or intended behaviours. However, class and other individual attributes became here a moderator or *third variable* that might influence the strength, the direction, and/or the presence, of the relationship between the independent and the dependent ones, i.e., content of the vignette and ideological measures, respectively

(see Hefner in Allen, 2017, pp. 123 and 1852-1853; Mackinnon, 2011). That is, we aimed to emulate alleged dominant-class practices by manipulating available information.

It might be noted that, following our main hypotheses, the experimental condition should be considered the moderator. That is, being exposed to one or another type of narrative would *moderate* the alleged relationship between material living conditions and ideology. However, given that we cannot manipulate but available information—so, too, given that we considered our main hypotheses as a single whole—, we did not see major theoretical concerns to consider class and other individual attributes as moderators, at least for simple moderation models (see Hayes & Montoya, 2017, pp. 2-3).

It might also be noted that, for our study in Chapter 5, we introduced slight methodological variations. In an attempt to address several theoretical and methodological concerns that arose in Chapter 4, we included different ideological measures before the experimental manipulation. Likewise, post-test measures were more closely related to the content of the vignettes. That is, in Chapter 5 we aimed to assess the alleged effect of certain narratives on people´s attitudes towards the system though in an indirect manner, i.e., measuring partisanship to an (alleged) anti-system political party.

Stated otherwise, in Chapter 4 we exposed participants to a frame of social mobility and then we measured SJ. In Chapter 5, however, we exposed participants to charged information about an (alleged) anti-system party and then we measured partisanship. Either way, attitudes towards the system underlie in both approaches. After all, to justify a system is not just showing high scores on a SJ scale, but rather to hold attitudes and/or to behave in a way that contributes to maintain the status quo (e.g., to do not vote for a political party with the stated goal of implementing changes in such status quo).

2.4.3. *Samples*

First, we gathered a traditional college student sample ($N = 117$) for exploratory analyses. We then administered an anonymous online survey (Qualtrics Online Questionnaire Hosting) following a random walk methodology (i.e., distributing survey links in diverse internet forums) to gather an additional sample ($N = 332$). Following the latter procedure, we obtained an additional sample ($N = 324$). That is, we gathered a total of 773 Spanish-speaking participants to carry out our analyses.

Except for the student sample, we computed a priori power calculations using G*Power (Faul et al., 2007). All our participants were told about the academic intent of the study, the anonymous character of the survey, and effective privacy laws. Also, all our participants agreed to participate and were offered further information after request.

It should be noted that we used the same samples to validate our instrument and to test the alleged system-justifying effect of *Rag-to-riches* narratives (though we excluded 5 participants in the first study in Chapter 3 because they did not fully answer all items of our instrument). That is, the two surveys in which our instrument was embedded also comprised other measures and an experimental manipulation. Either way, this should not be a concern since, to validate our instrument, we considered all participants at once, i.e., irrespective of their experimental condition. Likewise, available information and/or ideological interferences also operate in real life.

Hence, in Chapter 3 we conducted two studies to validate an instrument aiming to measure system-challenging attitudes ($N = 112$ and $N = 332$, respectively).

In Chapter 4 we conducted two studies to test the alleged system-justifying function of promoting entrepreneurship ($N = 117$ and $N = 332$, respectively).

And, in Chapter 5 we conducted one study to test the alleged system-justifying function of making a left-wing political party look like a threat ($N = 324$).

2.4.4. *Materials*

Predictors and/or covariates: In the first survey ($N = 117$), we first measured relevant socio-demographic variables such as sex and age. Given that it was a college student sample we did not asked our participants about their level of studies, nor their economic activity status. Even though, we asked them about their family income and their subjective social status. We also asked them to situate themselves within the left-right spectrum (from $1 = $ *far left* to $10 = $ *far right*). We included this ideological measure due to its still great polar or axiological meaning (Bobbio, 1996; Thorisdottir et al. 2007). Likewise, we included it within the pre-vignette baseline due to its (arguably) deep-rooted and/or hard-to-manipulate character.

In the second survey (N = 332), we introduced slight variations and/or upgrades. We included a third option for sex (i.e., other), a 4-level measure of studies (i.e., basic education, secondary education, professional training, or university degree), and a 6-level measure of economic activity status (i.e., student, unemployed, public sector employee, private sector employee, self-employed, or retired). Also, given that the survey was administered online, and participants would live in different countries, we asked them about their personal income (from less than the minimum wage to more than 5 times the minimum wage). Finally, to measure political ideology, we opted for a shortened version, from 1 = *far left* to 7 = *far right* (see e.g., Jost, Nosek & Gosling, 2008).

In the third survey (N = 324), we introduced further variations. Sex, age, level of studies, and subjective social status´ measures remained as in the second survey. We also asked participants to situate themselves within the left-right spectrum (from 1 = *far left* to 7 = *far right*). Nevertheless, we added one level to the measure of economic activity status (i.e., employer) and we asked about both family and personal income. Moreover, modelled on both CM and more recent developments, we asked participants about their role in the mode of production. More specifically, we contemplated the two main class location within a class-based hierarchy or capitalist society, i.e., worker and owner, and the "contradictory" one, i.e., manager (see e.g., Baizidi, 2019; Marx, 1867/2015, pp. 231-232; Marx & Engels, 1848/1969, pp. 18, 20 and 29; Sawyer & Gampa, 2020, p. 206; Wright, 1985, p. 42, 2005, p.16, 2015, pp. 11, 155-156 and 168).

We also included measures of political and class consciousness, and system justification (Evans, Heath & Lalljee, 1996; Keefer, Goode & Van Berkel, 2015). We considered that they might also be hard to manipulate, though they would still play a moderating role. Finally, we asked participants about their vote in past elections.

Experimental manipulation: In the first survey (N = 117), we exposed our participants to a fictional newspaper article, presented as a real story. Participants were randomly assigned to either a successful or unsuccessful life-story of the entrepreneur type (or received neutral information). We expected that our participants might justify the system to a greater extent in the success condition than in the other two.

In the second survey (N = 332), we included slight variations. In this case, our participants watched a short video including audio, images related to the story, and subtitles. Most notably, we strengthened the rags-to-riches myth by emphasising the humble origin of the entrepreneur and his effort and determination in order to fulfil his

dream. In the failure condition we attributed the cause of the bankrupt to the harsh conditions imposed by the bank, rather than to an imprecise factor such as the crisis. We expected that these changes might increase the likelihood of significant differences in our participants´ attitudes towards the system between experimental conditions.

In the third survey (N = 324), we followed a slightly different approach. In this case, our participants were exposed to a real-based press release about a left-wing political party (i.e., *Unidos Podemos*). In the *positive* condition, they read an "expert" recommendation to vote for such party. In the *negative* one, they read an "expert" recommendation with the opposite recommendation. We expected that our participants might support *Unidos Podemos*, an alleged anti-system political party, to greater/lesser extent in the *positive/negative* conditions. In other words, we aimed to measure the alleged system-justifying function of available information in an indirect manner (i.e., without directly asking participants about SJ beliefs).

Dependent variables and/or outcomes: In the first survey (N = 117), we administered several instruments after the manipulation. First, we asked our participants how credible they found the story on a single-item measure (from 1 = *totally not credible* to 7 = *totally credible*). Then, we administered the following measures: Political System Justification (Kay & Jost, 2003), Just World Belief (Lipkus, 1991), and our Class-Struggle-Actions Scale (CSAS).

In the second survey (N = 332), we also asked our participants how credible they found the story (though we shortened it to 5 options). We also administered the scale of Political System Justification and our CSAS, though we included two additional instruments: Economical System Justification (Jaume, Etchezahar, & Cervone, 2012; Jost, Blount, et al., 2003) and Meritocracy Descriptive Belief (Zimmerman & Reyna, 2013). We expected that different instruments might capture better the alleged SJ effect of entrepreneur-type narratives.

In the third survey (N = 324), as already noted, we followed a slightly different approach. We also asked participants about credibility of the vignette (from 1 = *totally disagree* to 5 = *totally agree*). Nevertheless, modelled on both SJT and SIA (e.g., Bankert, Huddy & Rosema, 2017; Jost et al. 2010), we developed several items aiming to measure political partisanship towards *Unidos Podemos*. Finally, we asked participants to indicate which party they will vote if national elections "were to take place tomorrow". We

expected that *positive/negative* information about the party would increase/decrease people´s partisanship. Given the "anti-system" discourse of *Unidos Podemos,* it might represent an indirect manner of testing whether certain narratives might influence people´s attitudes towards the system.

2.4.5. *Analyses*

In all studies, preliminary operations were conducted (e.g., excluding participants that did not finish the survey, searching for coding errors, recoding reverse items, and calculating means of the scales). We also reviewed how data were distributed to identify possible atypical cases or outliers. For the sake of reproducibility we shall mention that, instead of removing outliers, we carried out Welch´s ANOVA and *t*-test, i.e., a robust alternative to analyses of variance when the assumption of homogeneity could be violated due to the different size of each level in categorical variables, so, too, to downweight outliers, as recommended by some authors (see Bakker & Wicherts, 2014; Carifio & Perla, 2008; Delacre, Lakens, & Leys, 2017; Greco et al., 2019; Norman, 2010; Ruxton, 2006).

In Chapter 3, to validate our instrument, we ran Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests and calculated descriptive statistics for each item, calculated inter-item and item-total correlations, carried out subsequent exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses, computed unidimensional item response theory, assessed internal consistency and reliability, and convergent, discriminant, and nomological validity (for procedure and thresholds see Brown, 2015; Cohen, 1992; Costello & Osborne, 2005; Field, 2009; Fornell & Larcker, 1981; George & Mallery, 2020; Hair et al, 2019, pp. 161, 642, 676, and 775; Hu & Bentler, 2009; Kline, 2016; Netemeyer, Bearden, & Sharma, 2003, pp. 11 and 153-154).

In Chapter 4, to test the alleged system-justifying function of promoting entrepreneurship, we carried out both correlational analyses and analyses of variance. Subsequent simple moderation models were delimited and "simple slopes" were tested (see Aiken & West, 1991; Hayes & Montoya, 2017). In Chapter 5, to test the alleged system-justifying function of making a left-wing political party look like a threat, we followed an analogous procedure.

For the construction of the database and the performance of the statistical analyses, we used the version 24.0 of IBM SPSS Statistics. Confirmatory factor analyses and item

response theory were conducted with R Studio version 4.1.2 ("Bird Hippie"). We assessed effect sizes with online software (see Lakens, 2013; Lenhard & Lenhard, 2016). Finally, we assessed the consistency of p-values with Statcheck (Rife, Nuijten, Epskamp, 2016).

We provided further information about samples, procedure, materials, and analyses, on each respective chapter.

3. CLASS-STRUGGLE-ACTIONS SCALE: DEVELOPMENT AND VALIDATION OF AN INSTRUMENT TO MEASURE ATTITUDES TOWARDS COLLECTIVE ACTIONS IN A CONTEXT OF CLASS STRUGGLE

Abstract: Many studies in Social and Political Psychology focus on subjective antecedents of collective actions. However, they often overlook people´s position in, and understanding of, the social-economic structure, as ultimate antecedent of system-challenging events. We thus saw ground to address a particular kind of collective actions, i.e., those being carried out in a context of class struggle. After the relevant validation process, from construct definition to factor analyses to reliability to construct validity, we obtained a 4-item unidimensional Class-Struggle-Actions Scale (CSAS). Congruent with our hypotheses, low-income/low-status/working-class individuals scored significantly higher on our CSAS than those high-income/high-status/proprietor-class ones. Most notably, unemployed individuals scored significantly higher than self-employed ones. Results also suggested that our instrument captures a portion of variance that other system-justification measures do not. At large, our results seemed congruent with Social Identity Approach and classical Marxism. Further concerns and limitations are discussed.

3.1. Introduction

2008 world-wide financial crisis, and its subsequent recession, had devastating effects for the working classes, even in developed societies (see e.g., Foster & Wolfson, 2010; Jacobs & Mazzucato, 2016, p. 5; Perez & Matsaganis, 2017; Peugny, 2019; Ruckert & Labonté, 2017; Stiglitz, 2015, p. 426; Stuckler et al., 2017; Van Hal, 2015). In Spain, unemployment rates reached historical levels, with peaks of 50% among young workers. Cuts in public services and privatisations largely undermined the welfare of the popular sectors (Navarro, 2013; Verd, Barranco & Bolíbar, 2019). Meanwhile, a wave of strikes, protests, and mobilisations, i.e., a very specific type of collective actions, took place around the world (Della Porta, 2017; Dotti Sani & Magistro, 2016; Peterson, Wahlström, & Wennerhag, 2015; Sabucedo et al., 2017).

Classical Marxists already suggested that sudden, deep, and broad enough, changes for the worse in societies´ economic foundation and people´s material living conditions precede system-challenging events (see e.g., Engels, 1880/2005, pp. 65-67, 1878/1947, p. 23; Lenin, 1915/1974, pp. 98, 213-214, and 216, 1920/1974, pp. 84-85; Marx, 1859/1999, pp. 3-5; Marx & Engels, 1848/1969, pp. 18-19 and 25; see also Davies, 1962). In Lenin´s (1915/1974) words, popular uprisings may take place if lower classes do not want, and upper classes are unable, "to live in the old way" (pp. 213-214). Indeed, it has been noted both the "class basis" of the protests and a resurgent interest in Marx´s theorising and socialism (e.g., Della Porta, 2017; Kenny, 2014; Penn, 2016; Mosco, 2012; Peterson, Wahlström, & Wennerhag, 2015).

However, little reference can be found in the literature to individuals´ relationships within a certain mode of production, distribution and exchange of commodities, and the plausible effect of the economic foundations on people´s ideological outcomes (see e.g., Hanappi & Hanappi-Egger, 2018; Sawyer & Gampa, 2020; Wright, 1989, 2015). We therefore saw room to explore the objective or ultimate antecedents of collective actions (CA) in a context of class struggle (CS), or class-struggle actions (CSA), which for developing and validating a proper instrument seems a prerequisite.

3.2. Previous measures

When it comes to measure attitudes towards system-challenging events, System Justification Theory (SJT) and its instruments seem obligatory reference (see e.g., Jost, 2019; Jost, Blount, et al., 2003; Jost et al., 2010; Kay & Jost, 2003). That is, we might ask participants to which extent people endorse system-justifying (SJ) beliefs. At large, high SJ beliefs appear negatively associated with *system-challenging* CA, but positively with *system-supporting* ones (see Choma et al*.,* 2019; Jost, 2017; Jost et al., 2012; Osborne et al*.,* 2019; Sagioglou, Forstmann, & Greitemeyer, 2019).

However, SJ measures might not properly capture attitudes towards CSA. For instance, both workers and employers might fully agree with a statement like "Radical changes are needed to turn our economic system into a fair one" (Jost et al., 2010, p. 22), though each one having in mind a diametrically opposed idea of what "fair" means. The same would go for both left and right-wing fierce partisans (see Caricati, 2019). Consensual definitions and careful conceptualisations, such as *which* system is or not justified, and *what type* of CA is or not endorsed, seem required to avoid mixed results.

Despite SJT´s most recent developments (e.g., Langer et al., 2020; Osborne et al., 2019), we still note the absence of specific research from a CS perspective, i.e., focusing on the particular interests or demands of the working class as the oppressed group and the relationship between people´s material living conditions and their attitudes towards the social-economic structure.

In this sense, obligatory reference seems the Social Identity Approach (SIA) and the Relative Deprivation Theory (RDT) at large, and the Social Identity Model of Collective Actions (SIMCA) in particular (see e.g., Saab et al., 2016; Tausch et al., 2011; van Zomeren, Leach, & Spears, 2012; van Zomeren, Postmes, & Spears, 2008). For these approaches, CA are preceded by: (1) a sense of injustice or feelings of anger among the disadvantaged groups, (2) social identification among those disadvantaged groups, and (3) the belief that issues might (or should) be solved collectively (see e.g., Bäck, Bäck, & Sivén, 2018; Becker et al., 2011; Blader, 2007; Drury & Reicher, 2009; Kelly & Kelly, 1994; Meuleman et al., 2020; Miron & Brehm, 2006; Saab et al., 2016; Tausch et al., 2011; van Zomeren et al., 2008).

However, we still note lack of research from a CS perspective. Both SIA and RDT scholars seem mostly interested in the subjective or immediate antecedents of CA. For instance, they focus on the already mentioned feelings of injustice, identity, and efficacy (e.g., Thomas et al., 2011; van Zomeren et al., 2008), intergroup contact (Cakal, 2019), moral convictions (e.g., Sabucedo et al., 2018; van Zomeren, Kutlaca, & Turner-Zwinkels, 2018; van Zomeren, Postmes & Spears, 2012), and feelings of threat (e.g., Brandt et al., 2021; Yustisia, 2017).

On another note, SIA scholars often focus on particular demands of certain low-status, disadvantaged, and/or oppressed groups, rather than considering working and capitalist classes as antagonistic groups. That is, social-movement scholars seem at large more attracted by creative forms of political participation, in spite of their ephemeral nature, vis-à-vis the "old" working-class movement (see e.g., Genovese, Schneider & Wassmann, 2016; Hanappi & Hanappi-Egger, 2018; Peterson, Wahlström, & Wennerhag, 2015; Pianta & Gerbaudo, 2015).

Class approaches, meanwhile, more often than not follow gradational, either "objective" or subjective, criteria (see e.g., Manstead, 2018; Piff, Kraus & Keltner, 2018; Savage et al, 2013; Sawyer & Gampa, 2020; Wright, 2015). In so doing, setting boundaries between classes becomes a well-nigh impossible task (see Breen in Wright, 2005).

Admittedly, social-psychological variables may acquire "an autonomous function", i.e., objective or ultimate antecedents might lose relevance in the "causal spiral" (Tajfel & Turner,

1979, p. 46; see also Engels, 1893/1968; Marx & Engels, 1846/1968, p. 21). However, in the wake of system-challenging events, we still see ground to (1) develop an instrument aiming to capture people´s willingness towards CSA, and (2) explore between-group differences based on people´s material living conditions.

3.3. Objectives and hypotheses

The general aim of the current paper is to develop an instrument to measure people´s willingness towards class-struggle actions (CSA). Such instrument would complement and enrich both Political Psychology and the Marxist tradition. More specifically, a class-struggle actions scale (CSAS) would help to know under which specific material living conditions people will endorse system-challenging events.

The general working hypothesis is that people´s material living conditions determine their ideology (see e.g., Brandt, 2013; Lenin, 1902/1977, p. 386; Turner & Reynolds, 2003, p. 201). More specifically, low-income/low-status/working-class individuals would tend to show more favourable attitudes towards CSA than high-income/high-status/proprietor-class ones (albeit different life experiences and/or situational factors such as dominant-class practices could moderate such tendency). Simply stated, those harmed the most by an economic crisis (i.e., the poorer and/or unemployed people) would significantly show more favourable attitudes towards CSA than those in a more comfortable situation.

Conversely, given the broad scope of CS, we do not expect significant differences by individual attributes such as sex and age, or level of studies. That is, though sex and age might entail different experiences and socialisation processes, people´s social-economic conditions arguably impose themselves to a greater extent in determining people´s ideological outcomes. The same arguably goes to level of studies (though it might be seen as an indirect measure of class and/or imply an overall larger understanding of social reality).

On another note, willingness towards CSA might correlate with other ideological outcomes such as political ideology (PI) or system-justification (SJ). At least in capitalist societies, we expect that the more participants score to the left in PI, the more positive attitudes towards CSA. The opposite would go for SJ, i.e., the more participants justify the status quo, the less positive attitudes towards CSA. Even though, CSAS would be a more predictive measure of system-challenging attitudes.

3.4. Materials and Methods

3.4.1. Defining the construct

Collective actions (CA) can be defined as any action taken on behalf of the interests of a group by individuals that self-identify with the interests of such a group (see Marshall, 1994, p. 64; see also Bäck, Bäck, & Sivén, 2018; van Zomeren et al., 2008).

Class struggle (CS) can be roughly defined as the on-going conflict between productive forces (i.e., workers and capitalists) and modes of production (i.e., socialism and capitalism) in which every individual inevitably takes part (see e.g., Engels, 1880/2005, pp. 36 and 66-67; Lenin, 1899/1964, 1917/1964, pp. 84-85, 1924/1964; Marx & Engels, 1848/1969; see also Elster, 1982, p. 478; Wu, 2011, p. 175).

Class consciousness (CC), can be defined as (1) recognition of the existence of, and ourselves within, the on-going conflict between productive forces and modes of production, and (2) willingness to act on behalf of our own class interests (see Engels, 1876/1996, 1880/2005, p. 36; Lenin, 1899/1964, 1902/1977, pp. 374-375, 1920/1974, p. 292; Marx, 1847/1955, pp. 79-80, 1867/2015, pp. 163-164; Marx & Engels, 1848/1969, p. 46).

Therefore, class struggle actions (CSA) would be defined as any action taken on behalf of the interests of either the working or the capitalist class. That is, CSA might be seen as the social-psychological expression of the *class-for-itself* sub-construct (or the highest stage of CC if preferred).

For instance, from the point of view of the working-class interests, CSA might include taking part on a strike or joining a demonstration against the unequal distribution of economic resources. High agreement with such kind of actions arguably entails high willingness towards taking part in system-challenge events (at least in capitalist societies). That is, CSA is a very specific type of CA in which the working class becomes the *revolutionary subject*.

The rationale for considering workers as the revolutionary subject arises from both (1) their role in the mode of production, and (2) their numerical superiority above other social categories (see Engels, 1880/2005, p. 38; Lenin, 1915/1974, p. 109; Marx, 1867/1992; Marx & Engels, 1846/1968, pp. 21-22 and 34, 1848/1969, pp. 6-8, 20 and 26;

see also Wright, 2015, pp. 124-125). We thus focused on CSA from the point of view of the working class.

3.4.2. *Item development*

Modelled on prior social-psychological research (e.g., Becker et al., 2011; Saab et al., 2016; Tausch et al., 2011) and classical Marxism (e.g., Engels, 188072005, Lenin, 1899/1964; Marx, 1847/1955, pp. 79-80; Marx & Engels, 1848/1969), we created a pool of items aiming to capture attitudes towards CSA. The general approach was to contemplate diverse actions that had already occurred, or seem likely to occur, in a context of CS.

Admittedly, assessing CA is a challenging task (see Tausch et al., 2011; van Zomeren et al., 2008). Most notably, boundaries between *normative* and *non-normative*, *moderate* and *radical*, *peaceful* and *aggressive*, etc., attitudes or behaviours, might be highly situational (e.g., they might vary depending on the country and the historical time). For that reason, we considered a broad range of CA, ranging from *soft* to *hard* (e.g., signing an online petition or to assault who do not respect workers´ rights).

Closely related, CA could be of either *liberatory* or *reactionary* nature (Drury, 2002; Drury & Reicher, 2009). That is, crowds might take part in actions for and against social change (in our case, for and against working-class interests). Therefore, we made clear the intention and/or the direction of the actions contained in the items (e.g., to defend workers´ rights or to advocate for an equal distribution of economic resources).

Our items were reviewed by experts in CA and social activists who commented on their content and made suggestions to refine them. For instance, they raised doubts about some of the actions within a CS context given their "individualistic" or "unilateral" nature. After careful discussion, we selected 14 items to be administered (see Table 3.1). The order of the items was randomised prior to administering the scale.

Table 3.1

English version and Spanish originals of the initial 14 items

1.	To put active pressure in favour of the working class´ interests / Presionar de manera activa en favor de los intereses de las clases trabajadoras.
2.	To sign an "online" petition to the Government to defend the interests of the workers / Participar en una petición "online" al gobierno para que defienda los intereses de los trabajadores.
3.	To blackmail an employer who does not respect workers´ rights / Hacer chantaje a un empresario que no respete los derechos de los trabajadores.
4.	To write threatening letters to those employers who do not respect workers´ rights / Escribir cartas amenazantes a los empresarios que no respeten los derechos de los trabajadores.
5.	To go on strike for equal distribution of economic resources / Hacer huelga a favor de que la distribución de recursos económicos sea igualitaria.
6.	To sign an "online" petition against employers who do not respect workers´ rights / Firmar una petición "online" en contra de los empresarios que no respeten los derechos de los trabajadores.
7.	To make a request for all citizens to have the same economic resources / Hacer peticiones para que todos los ciudadanos cuenten con los mismos recursos económicos.
8.	To hold demonstrations against social inequalities / Hacer manifestaciones en contra de las desigualdades sociales.
9.	To hack email accounts and websites of those companies that do not respect workers´ rights / Piratear las cuentas de correo y las páginas web de las empresas que no respetan los derechos de los trabajadores.
10.	To make donations to workers´ organisations in favour of workers´ rights / Hacer donaciones a las organizaciones de trabajadores que luchan por los derechos de estos.
11.	To scratch with a key the car of those employers who do not respect workers´ rights / Rayar el coche con unas llaves a los empresarios que no respeten los derechos de los trabajadores.
12.	To assault those employers who do not respect workers´ rights / Agredir a los empresarios que no respeten los derechos de los trabajadores.
13.	To publicly demonstrate against those employers who do not respect workers´ rights / Manifestarse públicamente en contra de los empresarios que no respeten los derechos de los trabajadores.
14.	To participate with other citizens in initiatives against unequal distribution of resources / Participar con otros ciudadanos en iniciativas contra la distribución desigual de recursos.

Note. Scale instructions: *¿En qué medida aprobarías cada una de las siguientes acciones?* (Literally: To which extent would you approve each of the following actions?). Likert scale with endpoint labelling (from 1 = *not at all* to 9 = *to great extent*).

3.4.3. *Anchor points and labelling*

We chose a 9-point Likert scale with endpoint labelling (from 1 = *not at all* to 9 = *to great extent*). Parametric statistics might be robust enough with respect to Likert data, small sample sizes, unequal variances, and non-normal distributions (see Carifio & Perla, 2008; Norman, 2010). However, indices of reliability, validity, and discriminating power, would also be higher for scales with more response categories (Preston & Colman, 2000). Also, respondents seemingly prefer 10-point scales, closely followed by 7-point and 9-point ones (Preston & Colman, 2000).

On another note, asking about willingness towards CSA seemed a rather sensitive topic and it could evoke acquiescence response styles. End labelling might compensate this, though at the expense of a higher risk of extreme response styles (see Moors, Kieruj, & Vermunt, 2014; Weijters, Cabooter, & Schillewaert, 2010). To compensate such risk, we chose the 9-point Likert scale, i.e., with a middle or "neutral" option, instead of the 10-point one. Above all, more response categories and endpoint labelling seem more in line with interval or percentage scales (Preston & Colman, 2000; Weijters, Cabooter, & Schillewaert, 2010).

3.4.4. *Scale instructions*

Behavioural intentions seem a useful proxy for actual behaviour, i.e., a good predictor of actual participation (Tausch et al. 2011). However, social science surveys on sensitive topics could also be problematic (De Schrijver, 2012). In our case, we feared that asking directly to which extent participants will take part in CSA could yield results below the real likelihood. Hence, we opted to ask them to which extent they will *approve* certain behaviours. The scale instructions were, in Spanish: *¿En qué medida aprobarías cada una de las siguientes acciones?* (Literally: To which extent would you approve each of the following actions?). Certainly, if participants "approve" an action, it does not necessarily mean that they will "take part" in such action. However, the real likelihood of supporting a potentially dangerous behaviour would be better captured through indirect questions.

3.4.5. *Sample and procedure*

We gathered a total sample of 444 Spanish-speaking participants (see Table 3.2). In Study 1, the instrument was administered to a traditional college student sample. In Study 2, to replicate and generalise the results of its predecessor, we distributed an anonymous online survey (Qualtrics Online Questionnaire Hosting) in diverse Internet forums. All participants went through several social-demographic and ideological questions, including our CSAS.

Table 3.2

Participant characteristics (N$_{TOTAL}$ = 442)

	Study 1 (*N* = 112)				Study 2 (*N* = 332)			
	n	*%*	*M*	*SD*	*n*	*%*	*M*	*SD*
Sex								
Male	28	25			143	43.1		
Female	84	75			189	56.9		
Age			21.83	2.61			41.15	11.23
Level of studies							3.69	.65
Economic activity status								
Student	112	100			42	12.7		
Unemployed					33	9.9		
Public sector employee					55	16.6		
Private sector employee					123	37.0		
Self-employed					63	19.0		
Retired					16	4.8		
Income[a]			2.64	1.23			2.28	1.18
SSS[b]			6.47	1.50			5.61	1.46
PI[c]			5.01	1.91			2.63	1.33

Note. [a]Family income in Study 1 (from 1 = *less than € 1,000* to 6 = *more than € 5,000 pcm*) and personal income in Study 2 (from 1 = *less than minimum wage* to 6 = *more than five times the minimum wage*).

[b]Subjective Social Status (from 1 = *lowest step* to 10 = *highest step*).

[c]Political Ideology (Study 1: from 1 = *far left* to 10 = *far right*. Study 2: from 1 = *far left* to 7 = *far right*). We included the option "other" in sex but no one chose it. Level of studies in Study 2 (1 = *basic education*, 2 = *secondary education*, 3 = *professional training*, 4 = *university degree*).

3.4.6. Further materials

In Study 1, we asked participants to rate themselves on a 6-point scale, based on their family income (from less than € 1,000 to more than € 5,000 per calendar month). In Study 2, given that the questionnaires were administered online and some participants could live and work in a different country, we used a 6-point scale (from less than the minimum wage to more than 5 times the minimum wage).

Since "objective" class measures may obscure "the material conditions of life that an individual enjoys" (Kraus, Piff & Keltner, 2009, p. 992; see also Marx & Engels, 1891/2010, p. 16; Pettigrew, 2002; Rubin et al., 2014), we opted for including a scale of status (see e.g., Kraus et al., 2012; Kraus, Tan & Tannenbaum, 2013; see also Goodman et al., 2001). Participants had to stand on a 10-step ladder, ranging from 1 (*lowest step*) to 10 (*highest step*), depending on their perceived or Subjective Social Status (SSS).

Since subjective measures may being prone to ideological interferences, and/or response artefacts such as social desirability bias (see e.g., Diener et al., 1991; Shaked et al., 2016; Wright, 2005, 2015; Sawyer & Gampa, 2020), we also included a measure of

economic activity status (only in Study 2, as in Study 1 all participants were students). Such measure was modelled on the categories used for censuses in the United Kingdom (see e.g., Office for National Statistics, 2021). Participants had to select which category better describes their current situation (i.e., student, unemployed, public sector worker, private sector worker, self-employed, or retired).

To explore the association between willingness towards CSA and political ideology (PI), i.e., to further explore construct validity, we included a left-right single-item measure. The left-right metaphor is (still) widely believed to possess great polar or axiological meaning (see Bobbio, 1996; Castles & Mair, 1984; Evans, Heath, & Lalljee, 1996; Kroh, 2007; Thorisdottir et al. 2007). Thus, in Study 1 participants placed themselves in a range from 1 = *far left* to 10 = *far right*. In Study 2 we opted for a shortened version, i.e., from 1 = *far left* to 7 = *far right* (see Jost, Nosek, & Gosling, 2008).

To further explore construct validity, we included a measure of Political System Justification (PSJ; Kay & Jost, 2003). Participants responded to an 8-item scale (from 1 = *totally disagree* to 7 = *totally agree*) with two reverse scored items. Examples of items: "In general, the Spanish political system works as it should" or "In Spain everyone has the same opportunity to achieve wealth and happiness". Reliability was α = .78 in Study 1 and α = .76 in Study 2.

In Study 2, we also included a measure of Economic System Justification (ESJ; Jost, Blount, et al., 2003), already adapted to Spanish by Jaume, Etchezahar, & Cervone (2012). Participants responded to a 7-item scale with similar response options to the previous one. Examples of items: "If people work hard, they almost always get what they want" or "Economic positions are legitimate reflections of people's achievements". Reliability of this scale was α = .84.

3.4.7. *Analyses*

First, we excluded participants that did not finish the questionnaire, recoded reverse items, and calculated means and reliability of the scales. In Study 1 we excluded 5 participants that did not fully answer our CSAS. In Study 2, we opted for a forced-response approach to avoid blanks. Even though, we excluded 283 participants that did not finish the questionnaire. We decided not to remove outliers even though, when applicable, we carried

out Welch´s tests, i.e., a robust alternative to analyses of variance (see Bakker & Wicherts, 2014; Delacre, Lakens, & Leys, 2017; Ruxton, 2006).

Hereafter, in this order, we (1) ran Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests and calculated descriptive statistics (i.e., asymmetry, kurtosis, mean, and standard deviation) for each item, (2) calculated inter-item and item-total correlations, and (3) carried out a preliminary principal component analyses (PCA), paying attention to Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy, Bartlett´s test of sphericity, diagonals of the anti-image correlations matrix, and communalities (see e.g., Field, 2009, p. 647; George & Mallery, 2020, p. 268; Hair et al., 2019, p. 161).

Then, in Study 1, we carried out subsequent exploratory factor analyses with principal components (PC) extraction using both orthogonal rotation (Varimax) and oblique rotation (Direct Oblimin) with Kaiser normalisation (see e.g., Costello & Osborne, 2005; Field, 2009; Hair et al., 2019, p. 142; Howard, 2015).

In Study 2, meanwhile, we carried out both exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses (EFA and CFA). We did so following the recommendations of conducting CFA after EFA, and not upon the same data (see e.g., Cabrera-Nguyen, 2010; Fokkema & Greiff, 2017; Worthington & Whittaker, 2006; see also Schmitt et al., 2018, p. 4). We thus randomly divided the sample of Study 2 in two exact halves, and carried out a cross-validation, i.e., we performed EFA with one half and CFA with the other. Given that our data might not meet the assumption of multivariate normality, we used the diagonally weighted least squares (DWLS) as estimator, and the default nonlinear NLMINB optimiser for our CFA (see Li, 2016; Mîndrilă, 2010; Nash, 2014).

For each CFA, we reported ratio of chi-squared to the degrees of freedom, goodness of fit or comparative fit index (CFI), Tucker Lewis index (TLI), the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), and the (standardised) root mean square residual (SRMR), as recommended by Hu and Bentler (1999), and Kline (2016). Relatively small sample sizes—so, too, relatively few degrees of freedom—might lead to a higher-than-recommended RMSEA values, even if the model fits well the data (see Kenny, Kaniskan, & McCoach, 2014; Kline, 2016, p. 16; Lai & Green, 2016). We thus also considered the cut-off standards for a model situation of $N < 250$ and a number of observed variables of $m \leq 11$ (see Hair et al., 2019, p. 642).

We then carried out a multiple-group confirmatory factor analysis (MG-CFA) to assess measurement of invariance, i.e., to assess whether the properties of our instrument are equal among different groups (see Hirschfeld, & Von Brachel, 2014; Luong & Flake, 2022; Rosseel, 2014). We followed the typical sequence of steps i.e., we first assessed configural, then metric (or weak), and finally scalar (or strong) invariances (see e.g., Rosseel, 2014, p. 26). To assess the configural model we used the same cut-off criteria than in our previous CFAs (see Hu & Bentler, 1999, p. 27). To assess the metric and scalar ones, meanwhile, we looked at their respective p-value (see Rosseel, 2014, p. 26). We kept applying the same estimator method than in previous CFA, i.e., DWLS.

We also computed unidimensional item response theory (IRT) with the mirt package in RStudio to fit and assess a graded response model. That is, we analysed participants´ responses to the different items, and used the index S-X^2 to assess how well each item fits the model. Though originally proposed for dichotomous IRT models, such index seems also appropriate for polytomous items (see Kang & Chen, 2008; Orlando & Thissen, 2003).

Additionally, to assess internal consistency and reliability (in both studies), we calculated item-to-total and average inter-item correlations (AIC), average variance extracted (AVE), composite reliability (CR), and Cronbach´s α (see formulas and thresholds in Hair et al., 2019, pp. 161, 676, and 775; Netemeyer, Bearden, & Sharma, 2003, pp. 11 and 153-154).

To conclude, also in both studies, we assessed construct validity, i.e., we evaluated convergent, discriminant, and nomological validity (see Hair et al., 2019, pp. 162). To do so, we first created a summated scale (mean) with our most satisfactory items (see Hair et al., 2019, p. 160). We then calculated correlations (Pearson) between our instrument and those arguably related ideological measures (see guidelines for Pearson´s r in Cohen, 1988, pp. 79-80). To further assess discriminant validity we applied the Fornell-Larcker criterion, i.e., we compared the root square of each construct´s AVE with the correlation estimate between these two constructs (see Fornell & Larcker, 1981; see also Hair et al., 2021, pp. 78 and 85; Roni & Djajadikerta, 2021, pp. 76-88). We excluded PI from the analysis as the AVE of a single-item construct is 1.0 by design (see Hair et al., 2021, p. 86). Some authors suggest that the Fornell-Larcker criterion would not perform well when the indicator loadings of a construct slightly differ (see e.g., Hair et al., 2021, p. 78). This being our case, we also calculated the heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) of correlations for our instrument and the other SJ scales (see Hair et al., 2019, p. 677; Hair et al., 2021, pp. 78-

80; Henseler, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2015). Finally, to assess nomological validity, i.e., to explore differences between known-groups, we carried out subsequent Welch´s *t*-tests (see e.g., Delacre, Lakens, & Leys, 2017).

All the analyses were carried out with version 24.0 of IBM SPSS Statistics and R Studio version 4.1.2 ("Bird Hippie"). We used online calculators for effect sizes (see Lakens, 2013; Lenhard & Lenhard, 2016).

3.5. Results (Study 1)

3.5.1. *Preliminary analyses*

The Kolmogorov-Smirnov statistic showed that the distribution of each item and the mean of the whole items were significantly non-normal ($p < .05$). Skewness and kurtosis suggested removing items 4, 11 and 12 due to their low discriminative capacity (see Table 3.3). Worthy of mention is that items 3, 4, 9, 11, and 12, showed positive asymmetry (i.e., they would belong to another dimension, if not reverse scored).

Table 3.3

Distributional indices of the CSAS in Study 1 (N = 112)

Item No.	*M*	*SE*	*SD*	*Var*	*Skewness*	*Kurtosis*
1	6.55	.24	2.51	6.30	-0.86	-0.40
2	6.42	.23	2.47	6.12	-0.61	-0.84
3	3.39	.24	2.58	6.67	0.82	-0.61
4	2.38	.19	2.04	4.18	1.65	2.21
5	6.20	.25	2.65	7.05	-0.54	-0.95
6	6.40	.25	2.63	6.94	-0.67	-0.91
7	6.16	.26	2.71	7.34	-0.61	-0.89
8	6.69	.24	2.50	6.27	-0.83	-0.44
9	2.75	.23	2.45	6.03	1.46	0.95
10	5.53	.23	2.42	5.85	-0.35	-0.95
11	1.95	.19	2.02	4.08	2.43	5.28
12	1.48	.13	1.42	2.02	3.80	15.54
13	6.68	.23	2.45	6.02	-0.87	-0.29
14	6.46	.24	2.54	6.47	-0.72	-0.69

Note. Values in between ±2 in skewness and kurtosis were considered acceptable for parametric testing (George & Mallery, 2020, p. 114).

All items positively correlated > .30 with at least one other item (Hair et al., 2019, p. 161). The absence of negative correlations suggested the absence of reverse scored items (though there might be different dimensions). At large, results suggested reasonably factorability, i.e., all items—but the already removed ones—would be included in

successive EFAs and CFAs. Incidentally, items 8 and 13 showed a rather high correlation ($r = .82$, $p < .001$) so one would be removed to avoid redundancy.

All item-to-total correlations (but items 3, 9, and 10) were above the rule of thumb of $> .50$ (Hair et al., 2019, p. 161). That is, items 3, 9, and 10, would belong to a different dimension.

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy was .87 and the Bartlett´s test of sphericity yielded a significance value of $p < .001$. It suggested that our 11-item model was acceptable for factor analyses (see thresholds in George & Mallery, 2020, p. 268; see also Field, 2009, p. 647).

The diagonals of the anti-image correlations matrix were all $> .50$ which also suggests sample adequacy (see Field, 2009, p. 651).

Communalities were almost all $> .60$, i.e., each item shared common variance with the others. This also suggested an adequate sample size for factor analysis (see Field, 2009, p. 647; Slocum-Gori & Zumbo, 2011). Item 1 was .578 which still seems acceptable. However, item 10 was .385, so we would not include it in the final scale (see Costello & Osborne, 2005).

3.5.2.   *Exploratory Factor Analyses (EFAs)*

We ran an EFA with Principal Components (PC) extraction using orthogonal rotation (Varimax) with Kaiser normalisation for the 11 items (see Table 3.4).

Items 1 and 2 showed a cross-loading $> .50$ in both factors after rotation. Also, item 6 loaded .75 and .34 in the primary and secondary factors respectively. This would be problematic according to the .40-.30-.20 rule. That is, items should load $> .40$ in the primary factor, $< .30$ onto alternative ones, and demonstrate a difference of .20 between primary and alternative loadings (Howard, 2015).

Prior to the rotation, Factor 1 comprised 9 items with loadings ranging from .55 to .88 (only item 10 had a loading $< .70$, and only items 3 and 9 had cross-loadings). It suggested that rotation would be unnecessary (see Field, 2009, p. 643). Thus, we would consider a unique dimension for items 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 13, and 14.

Table 3.4

*Factor loadings from EFA in Study 1 (*N = 112*)*

Items	Model 11 items[a]		Items	Model 9 items[b]	Items	Model 6 items[b]	Items	Model 4 items[b]
	Factor 1	Factor 2				Factor 1		
8	**.887**		8	**.890**	8	**.890**	5	**.925**
13	**.868**		13	**.875**	13	**.875**	7	**.870**
14	**.866**		14	**.869**	14	**.869**	8	**.865**
5	**.806**		6	**.828**	7	**.828**	14	**.857**
7	**.794**		5	**.824**	5	**.824**		
6	**.755**	.341	7	**.790**	10	**.790**		
10	**.618**		2	**.729**				
2	**.589**	**.518**	1	**.688**				
1	**.545**	**.530**	10	**.564**				
3		**.821**						
9		**.815**						
% of variance explained	53.08	13.30		62.49		69.26		77.35

Note. EFA = Exploratory Factor Analysis. [a]Extraction method: Principal component analysis (PC). Rotation method: Varimax with Kaiser normalisation. [b]Extraction method: Principal component analysis (PC). Rotation method: not needed. Values > 60% of variance explained are considered satisfactory (Hair et al., 2019, p. 142). Factor loadings ≤.30 were eliminated.

We re-ran an EFA using oblique rotation (Direct Oblimin) with Kaiser normalisation (*delta* = 0) for the 11 items (see Costello & Osborne, 2005). Results were similar to the previous EFA, albeit item 6 showed a cross-loading of .807 and .419 after rotation.

We re-ran an EFA without items 3 and 9 and only one component was extracted (see Model 9 items in Table 3.4). There were no other factors with Eigenvalues > 1.0, i.e., rotation was not needed (see George & Mallery, 2020, p. 260). Communalities were all > .60, but for items 1, 2, and 10.

Looking back at the initial item pool, items 3 and 9 represented "hard" actions. This was also the case of the previously removed items 4, 11 and 12. It explained their loadings on a secondary factor. Their "sensitive" nature would also explain their low discriminative capacity. Besides that, items 3 and 9—so, too, the initially removed items 4, 11, and 12—were already questioned by experts as proper CSA given their "individualistic" or "unilateral" nature. That is, there were not sound theoretical reasons to

consider them within the scale, but rather otherwise. Furthermore, a subscale of two items would be "weak and unstable" (see Costello & Osborne, 2005).

We performed an EFA without those items that showed cross-loadings, i.e., without items 1, 2 and 6 (see Model 6 items in Table 3.4). We also re-ran an EFA without item 10, which had communality < .50 in all the previous models, and without item 13, due to its redundancy with item 8 (see Model 4 items in Table 3.4). Our results suggest assessing the unidimensionality of, at least, items 5, 7, 8, and 14.

3.5.3. *Internal consistency and reliability*

We calculated item-to-total and inter-item correlations for our 4-item CSAS (i.e., items 5, 7, 8, and 14). Results were well above the cut-off criteria of > .50 for the former and > .30 for the latter (see Hair et al*.,* 2019, pp. 161). More specifically, the corrected item-to-total correlations ranged from .74 to .85. Average inter-item correlation (AIC), i.e., the mean of all pairs of correlations, was .69.

We then calculated the average variance extracted (AVE), the composite reliability (CR), and Cronbach´s α. Results (AVE = .77, CR = .93, and Cronbach´s α = .90) were well above the cut-off criteria of > .50 for AVEs and between .70 and .95 for measures of reliability (see Clark & Watson, 1995; Hair et al., 2019, pp. 163, 676, 760, and 776; Hodson, 2021). Reliability of the scale did not significantly improve excluding any item. That suggested that our 4-item CSAS might be used for further analyses.

3.5.4. *Convergent and discriminant validity*

First, we created a summated scale (mean) with our top 4 loading items. Pearson correlations between our instrument, PI, and PSJ, suggested an overlap between our instrument and both PI (*r* = -.68), and PSJ (*r* = -.56), though also that our instrument captures an amount of variance that the others do not.

Results of applying the Fornell-Larcker criterion showed discriminant validity for our CSAS and PSJ (see Table 3.5). Incidentally, with an AVE > .50, PSJ functioned as a single-factor measure (see Hair et al., 2021, p. 78).

Table 3.5

Convergent and discriminant validity of CSAS and PSJ in Study 1 (N = 112)

Variable	CR	AVE	MSV	1	2
1. CSAS (4-item)	.93	.77	.58	*.88*	
2. PSJ	.85	.58	.37	-.55	*.76*

Note. CSAS = Class-Struggle-Actions Scale; PSJ = Political System Justification; CR = composite reliability; AVE = average variance extracted; MSV = maximum shared variance. Bold italicised numbers in the diagonal are the square root of the each construct´s AVE. Off-diagonal is the correlation estimate between latent constructs. Squared root of the AVE > correlation estimate suggests discriminant validity (see Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 2021, p. 85).

The HTMT ratio was -.72, i.e., below the threshold value of .90, and even below the more conservative value of .85 (see Hair et al., 2021, p. 79). That is, discriminant validity could be established between our 4-item CSAS and PSJ.

3.5.5. *Nomological validity*

Finally, to explore theoretically supported relationships, we calculated correlations (Pearson) between our 4-item CSAS and the two measures of social class, i.e., income and SSS. Results showed small correlations of our CSAS with family income ($r = -.245$, $p < .05$) and SSS ($r = -.208$, $p < .05$). We did not find significant relationships for sex and age.

3.6. Results (Study 2)

3.6.1. *Preliminary analyses*

Kolmogorov-Smirnov statistic demonstrated that distributions of each item and the mean were significantly non-normal ($p < .05$). Descriptive statistics suggested removing items 11 and 12 (see Table 3.6). All other items—including item 4—fell within the acceptable values of ±2. Again, all items but 3, 4, 9, 11, and 12, showed negative asymmetry.

Table 3.6

*Distributional indices of the CSAS in Study 2 (*N = *332)*

Item No.	*M*	*SE*	*SD*	*Var*	*Skewness*	*Kurtosis*
1	7.48	.09	1.69	2.88	-1.14	1.23
2	7.09	.12	2.23	4.98	-1.19	0.65
3	3.56	.15	2.69	7.21	0.70	-0.85
4	2.53	.12	2.25	5.08	1.57	1.50
5	6.71	.14	2.63	6.91	-0.95	-0.33
6	7.11	.13	2.45	5.99	-1.18	0.23
7	6.31	.18	2.68	7.20	-0.72	-0.71
8	7.33	.12	2.14	4.60	-1.34	1.01
9	3.34	.18	2.86	8.17	0.86	-0.78
10	6.21	.13	2.39	5.69	-0.65	-0.30
11	2.05	.11	2.02	4.10	2.13	3.65
12	1.71	.09	1.66	2.75	2.73	7.37
13	7.13	.13	2.38	5.67	-1.24	0.45
14	7.34	.12	2.16	4.67	-1.43	1.34

Note. Values of ±2 in skewness and kurtosis were considered acceptable for parametric testing (George & Mallery, 2020, p. 114).

We then calculated inter-item correlations without the problematic items (11 and 12). All items positively correlated at least .44 with at least one other item. The absence of negative correlations suggested no reverse scored items. At large, such results suggested reasonably factorability, so all items—but 11 and 12—would be included in consecutive EFAs and CFAs.

Even though, only 6 items (i.e., 1, 5, 7, 8, 13, and 14) were above the rule of thumb (> .50) for item-to-total correlations (Hair et al., 2019, p. 161). It suggested proceeding only with those 6 items. Incidentally, these results were analogous to the ones in Study 1 (except that results in Study 2 suggest proceeding with item 1 instead of item 10).

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy (.87) and Bartlett´s test of sphericity ($p < .001$) suggested that those 6 items were acceptable for factor analysis. Results for the 4-item version (i.e., taking items 5, 7, 8, and 14) were similar (KMO = .82, Bartlett´s $p < .001$).

The diagonals of the anti-image correlations matrix were all well above .5 which also suggested sample adequacy. Communalities were almost all > .70, which also suggested an adequate sample size for factor analyses. Item 7, with .58, would be acceptable. However, item 1 was .48. It suggested us that we might finally exclude it. Likewise, items 8 and 13 still showed a rather high correlation ($r = .68$, $p < .001$). So, too, we might finally exclude item 13.

3.6.2.   Exploratory Factor Analyses (EFAs)

First, we randomly split the sample of study 2 ($N = 332$) in two exact halves. Upon the first one ($n = 166$), we ran an EFA for items 1, 5, 7, 8, 13 and 14 (see Model 6 items in Table 3.7). Results showed only one factor with eigenvalues > 1.0, which explained 66.69% of the variance, i.e., a "satisfactory" level (Hair et al., 2019, p. 142). Therefore, rotation was not needed.

Yet item 1 was the one with a lower communality (.51). Likewise, items 8 and 13 still showed a rather high correlation ($r = .62$, $p < .001$). We thus re-ran an EFA without those items, i.e., with items 5, 7, 8 and 14 (see Model 4 items in Table 3.7). Results showed only one factor with eigenvalues > 1.0, which explained 71.71% of the variance. Such results suggest considering either the 6-item version, or the 4-item one, for a unidimensional CSAS. To further decide which one we carried out CFA.

Table 3.7

*Factor loadings from EFA in Study 2 (*n = *166)*

Items	Model 6 items	Items	Model 4 items
	Factor 1		Factor 1
14	**.904**	5	**.888**
5	**.838**	14	**.876**
8	**.823**	7	**.866**
13	**.805**	8	**.829**
7	**.804**		
1	**.715**		
% of variance explained	66.69		74.84

Note: EFA = Exploratory Factor Analysis. Extraction method: Principal component analysis (PC). Rotation method: not needed. Values $> 60\%$ of variance explained are considered satisfactory (Hair et al., 2019, p. 142). Factor loadings $\leq.30$ were eliminated.

3.6.3.   Confirmatory Factor Analyses (CFAs)

To assess the undimensionality of items 1, 5, 7, 8, 13, and 14, we conducted a one-factor CFA upon the second random exact half of the sample ($n = 166$). Such CFA roughly fitted the cut-off standards (see Model 6 items in Table 3.8).

Yet, we also performed a one-factor CFA with items 5, 7, 8, and 14, i.e., the most satisfactory ones thorough the research process (see Model 4 items in Table 3.8 and Figure 3.1). Such CFA suggested that the hypothesis of a perfect fit should not be rejected for our 4-item CSAS. Indeed, such CFA fitted the cut-off standards for a model situation of $N = 166$ and a number of observed variables of $m = 4$ (see Hair et al., 2019, p. 642).

Table 3.8

Fit indices of CFA in Study 2 (n = 166)

	χ^2	df	p	CFI	TLI	RMSEA	SRMR
Model 6 items	18.06	9	.035	.997	.996	.078	.046
Model 4 items	1.82	2	.403	1.000	1.000	.000	.018
Recommended cut-off criteria[a]			$p > .05$	≥.95 (good) ≥.90 (reasonable)	≥.95 (good) ≥.90 (reasonable)	≤.05 (close) ≤.08 (adequate)	0 (perfect) ≤.05 (good) ≤.10 (acceptable)

Note. CFA = Confirmatory Factor Analysis. CFI = comparative fit index; TLI = Tucker-Lewis index; RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation (90% CI); SRMR = standardised root mean square residual.

[a] (Hair et al., 2019, p. 642; Hu & Bentler, 1999, p. 27).

Figure 3.1

CFA (4-item model) in Study 2
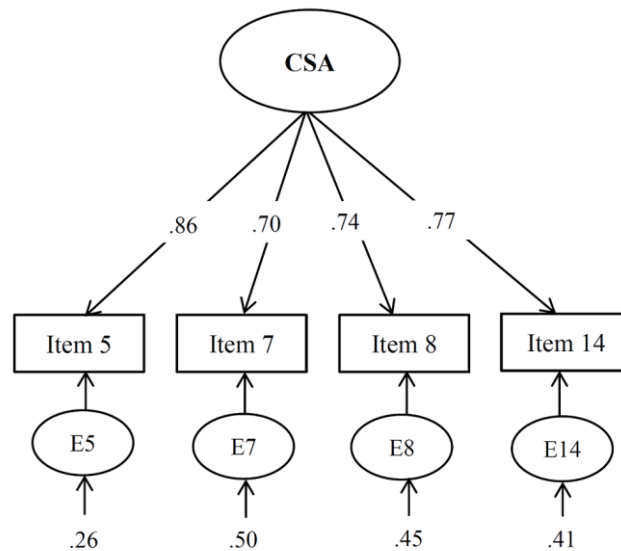
Note. CFA = Confirmatory Factor Analysis. CSA = Class-Struggle-Actions. Path diagram showing standardized estimates for the CSA hypothesised model.

To further contrast our results, we conducted two additional one-factor CFAs with the whole sample of Study 2 (N = 332). Results were analogous to the ones performed with the second random half of the sample. The 6-item model roughly fitted the cut-off standards for N > 250 (p = .006 and RMSEA = .069). For the 4-item one, meanwhile, results were $\chi2$ (2) = 3.72 (p = .155), CFI = 1.000, TLI = .999, RMSEA = .051 (90% CI: .00, .13), $SRMR$ = .018. At large, it suggested that the hypothesis of a perfect fit should not be rejected for our 4-item version of our CSAS. Hence, given that (1) the indicator loadings of our construct only slightly differ, (2) the 4-item model demonstrated better goodness-of-fit indices than the 6-item one, and (3) for the sake of parsimony, we decided to carry on with our 4-item version of the scale.

3.6.4. *Measurement invariance*

First, we measured invariance for the two random exact halves, i.e., the one for EFA and the one for CFA. Configural invariance was set for the two halves (CFI > .95, TLI > .95, RMSEA < .05, and SRMR < .05). So, too, metric ($\Delta\chi^2$ = 2.28, df = 3, p = .51) and scalar invariances ($\Delta\chi^2$ = 4.46, df = 3, p = .46).

Configural invariance was set for sex (CFI > .95, TLI > .95, RMSEA < .05, and SRMR < .05). So, too, metric ($\Delta\chi^2$ = 2.67, df = 3, p = .44) and scalar invariances ($\Delta\chi^2$ = 4.46, df = 3, p = .22).

For age we halved the sample by the median ($\leq$ 38 years, n = 161; $\geq$ 39 years, n = 171). Configural invariance was set for age (CFI > .95, TLI > .95, RMSEA < .05, and SRMR < .05). So, too, metric ($\Delta\chi^2$ = 4.12, df = 3, p = .25) and scalar invariances ($\Delta\chi^2$ = .61, df = 3, p = .89).

For income we halved the sample by the median (lower income, n = 216; higher income, n = 116). Configural invariance was set for income (CFI > .95, TLI > .95, RMSEA < .05, and SRMR < .05). So, too, metric ($\Delta\chi^2$ = 1.73, df = 3, p = .70) and scalar invariances ($\Delta\chi^2$ = .61, df = 3, p = .19).

For subjective status we halved the sample by the median (lower perceived status, n = 137; higher perceived status, n = 195). Configural invariance was set for SSS (CFI > .95, TLI > .95, RMSEA < .05, and SRMR < .05). So, too, metric invariance ($\Delta\chi^2$ = 3.97, df = 3, p = .16). Yet the p-value for scalar invariance suggest caution (p = .051).

We also halved the sample by economic activity status (unemployed, $n = 33$; rest of participants, $n = 299$). Configural invariance was set for unemployed versus the rest of participants (CFI > .95, TLI > .95, RMSEA < .05, and SRMR < .05). So, too, metric ($\Delta\chi^2 = 2.29$, $df = 3$, $p = .51$) and scalar invariances ($\Delta\chi^2 = 2.34$, $df = 3$, $p = .50$).

We further halved the sample by economic activity status (unemployed, $n = 33$; self-employed, $n = 63$). Configural invariance was set for unemployed versus self-employed participants (CFI > .95, TLI > .95, RMSEA < .05, and SRMR < .05). So, too, metric ($\Delta\chi^2 = 1.16$, $df = 3$, $p = .76$) and scalar invariances ($\Delta\chi^2 = 3.84$, $df = 3$, $p = .28$).

3.6.5. *Item Response Theory (IRT)*

Results of the unidimensional IRT with our 4-item model (i.e., with items 5, 7, 8, and 14) were χ^2 (2) = 7.255 ($p = .026$), CFI = .993, TLI = .979, RMSEA = .089 (90% CI: .01, .16), SRMR = .052. It suggested a reasonable fit (see Hu & Bentler, 1999; Keefer, Goode & Van Berkel, 2015).

The use of the S-X^2 index also showed an adequate fit between the model and the data (all RMSEA values were < .07).

Finally, we computed both IRT and factor analysis parameterisation. Item 5 was the most discriminating one with a slope value or a-parameter of 3.44. Item 7 was the less discriminating one with a slope estimate of 2.36. That suggested that item 5 had the stronger relationship with the latent dimension. Yet all items showed similar performance and a great relationship (loadings > .80) with the latent variable.

3.6.6. *Internal consistency and reliability*

We conducted reliability analyses with the most satisfactory items (i.e., 5, 7, 8, and 14). First, we calculated item-to-total and inter-item correlations. Results were well above the cut-off criteria (> .50 and > .30 respectively). More specifically, the corrected item-to-total correlations ranged from .68 to .76 (AIC = .62).

We then calculated AVE (= .72), CR (= .91), and Cronbach´s α (= .86). Results were well above the cut-off criteria (> .50 for AVEs and between .70 and .95 for measures

of reliability). Reliability of the scale did not significantly improve excluding any item. That suggested that our 4-item CSAS might be used for further analyses.

3.6.7. *Convergent and discriminant validity*

As in Study 1, we created a summated scale (mean) with our top 4 loading items and calculated correlations (Pearson) between our instrument, PI, and the two SJ measures. Results suggested, again, certain overlap between our CSAS and PI ($r = -.55$), PSJ ($r = -.43$), and ESJ ($r = -.56$).

Results of applying the Fornell-Larcker criterion showed discriminant validity for our CSAS and the other two measures of system justification (see Table 3.9). Incidentally, both PSJ and ESJ functioned as a single-factor measure (AVE > .50).

Table 3.9

*Convergent and discriminant validity of CSAS, PSJ and ESJ in Study 2 (*N *= 332)*

Variable	CR	AVE	MSV	1	2	3
1. CSAS (4-item)	.91	.72	.45	*.85*		
2. PSJ	.84	.55	.29	-.46	*.74*	
3. ESJ	.88	.62	.48	*-.57*	.59	*.79*

Note. CSAS = Class-Struggle-Actions Scale; PSJ = Political System Justification; ESJ = Economic System Justification; CR = composite reliability; AVE = average variance extracted; MSV = maximum shared variance. Bold italicised numbers in the diagonal are the square root of the each construct´s AVE. Off-diagonal is the correlation estimate between latent constructs. Squared root of the AVE > correlation estimate suggests discriminant validity (see Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hair et al*.,* 2021, p. 85).

The HTMT ratios of our 4-item CSAS with PSJ and ESJ were - .54 and - .65 respectively, It suggested that discriminant validity may be established between our instrument and the other two (see Hair et al., 2021, p. 79).

3.6.8. *Nomological validity*

Pearson correlations showed only a weak correlation between our 4-item CSAS and personal income ($r = -.109$, $p < .05$). As in Study 1, we did not find significant differences by sex or age. We found, however, a weak correlation with level of studies ($r = .115$, $p < .05$).

Subsequent Welch´s *t*-tests showed significantly different scores in our 4-item CSAS when comparing unemployed participants ($M = 7.58$, $SD = 1.974$) and all the rest combined ($M = 6.85$, $SD = 2.036$) [Welch´s $t(39.893) = 2.020$, $p = .05$].

More specifically, we found significant differences between unemployed and self-employed participants ($M = 6.71$, $SD = 2.053$) [Welch´s $t(67.386) = 2.020$, $p < .05$]. Effect sizes for each pairwise comparison were $g_{Hedges} = -.36$ and $-.43$, respectively.

3.7. Discussion, limitations, and further research

Results suggested that items 5, 7, 8, and 14, represent a unique dominant underlying factor that would be considered to predict willingness towards CSA. At large, our results supported our hypothesis, i.e., material living conditions determine people´s ideological outcomes. Our low-income/low-status/working-class participants tended to show more favourable attitudes towards CSA than high-income/high-status/proprietor-class ones. Most notably, we found statistically significant differences between unemployed and self-employed people. We also found small but significant correlations with income. Incidentally, measurement of invariance suggested that our instrument was similarly interpreted across different groups of people.

At large, our results seem congruent with both SIA and classical Marxism. That is, our results supported the idea that those harmed the most within the social structure tend to challenge the system to a greater extent, at least within capitalist societies (see e.g., Brandt, 2013; Caricati, 2016; Caricati & Owuamalam, 2020; Davies, 1962; Engels, 1880/2005, p. 36; Lenin, 1915/1974, pp. 98, 109-110, 213-214, and 216, 1917/1964, pp. 467-468; Marx & Engels, 1848/1969, p. 19; Owuamalam, Rubin, & Issmer, 2016; van Zomeren et al., 2008; Yang et al., 2019; see contrary evidence from socialist China in Li et al., 2020; Tang, 2018; Zhang & Zhong, 2019; see also Ipsos, 2021).

On another note, we found moderate to strong (negative) correlations between our 4-item CSAS and other ideological outcomes (i.e., PI, PSJ, and ESJ). Positive attitudes towards CSA are likely to be negatively associated with SJ (at least within capitalist societies). Even though, our results suggested discriminant rather than convergent validity (AVEs < .50, CRs < .70, AVEs > CRs), but for CSAS and PI (see Carlson & Herdman, 2010; Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 2019, pp. 675-677; Miller & Lovler, 2017, p. 217). That is, our instrument arguably captured a portion of variance that SJ scales do not.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, a number of issues require further discussion.

3.7.1. *About normality*

We expected overall unfavourable attitudes towards actions with arguably high personal cost and uncertain personal benefits (Bäck, Bäck, & Sivén, 2018). However, most participants highly agreed with our items. A possible explanation might be that we described only CSA from the point of view of the working class, being dominant-class individuals largely underrepresented in our samples. Another explanation would be that our samples were rather skewed to the left, at least in Study 2. Even further, we might consider that willingness towards CSA could follow a non-normal distribution (see Bono et al.*,* 2017; Greenshaw & Dourish, 1987, p. 80).

Ideally, one might expect that few people either agree or disagree with certain behaviour, while most people are in between agreement and disagreement. However, with certain issues and/or under certain historical conditions, most people would show a high level of agreement, few people would be dubious, and scanty would disagree (e.g., support for war). In this cases, transforming data would be required prior to carrying out parametric analyses (Field, 2009, pp. 154-155; Limpert, Stahel & Abbt, 2001), though some authors consider that such analyses are robust enough with respect to violations of normality (see Arnau et al.*,* 2012; Carifio & Perla, 2008; Field, 2009, pp. 154-155; Norman, 2010) and that adjusting tests to normal distribution is an artificial procedure (see Coolican, 2017, p. 224).

Either way, bigger and more representative samples would lead to more normal distributions (e.g., dominant-class and right-wing participants would approve our CSA items to a lesser extent). The same would go for adding items that describe more specific or disruptive actions and/or from the point of view of the dominant class (i.e., reverse scored items). Also, further research might consider a more direct head question (e.g., to which extent would you *take part* in the following actions?) as in Tausch et al. (2011).

3.7.2. *About unidimensionality*

We initially considered "hard" and "soft" actions as two plausible dimensions for our CSAS. However, results revealed non-satisfactory correlations between the former and the main underlying factor. Looking back at the theory, our "hard" actions would not be

considered proper CSA. Indeed, classical Marxists already questioned violent and non-normative behaviour of individualistic or unilateral nature (see e.g., Lenin, 1902/1977, pp. 417-420, 1907/1972, pp. 78-82, 1920/1974, pp. 17-117; Marx & Engels, 1848/1969, pp. 34 and 53-54). Non-normative actions might certainly create bad investment climate and thus dissuade dominant classes from applying unpopular policies, though they might also be used as a pretext for stepping up repression.

Notwithstanding this, we do not discard further multidimensional developments of our CSAS (including the non-normative or violent dimension). For instance, further research might consider adding items describing "hard" actions of (clearly stated) collectivistic nature such as taking part in picket lines or road blockades, or confronting riot forces during a strike.

3.7.3. *About the "attenuation paradox"*

Some authors (e.g., Clark & Watson, 1995, 2019; Piedmont, 2014) suggest that item-to-total correlations and AIC should be between .15 and .50 (or even between .20 and .40) to do not compromise construct validity. Admittedly, this was not our case, with item-to-total correlations around .80 and .70, and AIC of .69 and .62, in Studies 1 and 2 respectively. Even though, we arguably met the less conservative criteria of > .50 for the former and > .30 for the latter (see Hair et al., 2019, p. 161). Also, we might consider that CSA is a rather narrow construct so our results could be acceptable for an exploratory research.

Either way, more representative samples, more direct head question, and adding more specific or disruptive items, would lead to less isomorphism. Further developments might draw from our most discriminating items according to our IRT (i.e., items 5 and 8).

3.7.4. *About convergent and discriminant validity*

Our scale showed moderate to strong correlations with PI and other SJ scales. Yet our scale arguably explains a percentage of variance that the other measures do not. That is, we confirmed discriminant validity for our 4-item CSAS.

Admittedly, it seems rather intuitive considering that those individuals that show lower SJ are, at once, the ones that might score higher in our CSAS. However, both far-left

and far-right individuals might tend to show low SJ, at least in capitalist societies (see Caricati, 2019). In parallel, the former and the later might have a diametrically opposed idea of how society should be. That is, they will not show the same willingness towards CSA.

The same arguably goes for class-conscious workers and employers. That is, theoretically, our CSAS seems an interesting path of research on system stability and system change (at least from the point of view of the mode of production). In this sense, it would be interesting to contrast our CSAS with other measures of CC, which we were unaware of when our studies were carried out (see e.g., Keefer, Goode, & Van Berkel, 2015; Wright, 2004, p. 219).

Even though, our 4-item CSAS seems rather a measure of the sub-construct "class for itself", whereas previous CC research seemingly focus on the sub-construct "class in itself" —or, at most, on the dimension of awareness of the existence of CS (see e.g., Engels, 1880/2005, p. 36; Marx, 1847/1955, pp. 79-80). In this sense, we do not discard different approaches aiming to capture the construct of CC at large, and the sub-construct "class for itself" in particular. For instance, participants might be asked to which extent they identify themselves with certain classes, political parties, trade unions, etc., or whether they would join them or not. In doing so, we would pay due attention to the dimension of party identification or partisanship, arguably an immediate antecedent of CSA (see Blader, 2007; Drury & Reicher, 2009, p. 722; Engels, 1880/2005, p. 36; Kelly & Kelly, 1994; Finkel & Opp, 1991; Reicher, 2004, p. 933).

Likewise, to include any short of behavioural indicator or "objective" measure of participation in CSA (e.g., asking about political or trade-union militancy) would help to assess convergent/discriminant validity of our instrument (see Hodson, 2021).

On another note, since our CSAS is a measure "only" from the point of view of the working class, further research might consider measuring support to actions in favour of dominant-class interests (e.g., abolition of social rights such as to strike, to demonstrate, and to set trade unions, or privatisation of public goods). Such actions should be negatively related with our 4-item CSAS, i.e., they might be reverse scored items. Indeed, they would capture the arguably related dimension of "false consciousness" when a worker scores high —or capitalist CC when an employer does (see Engels, 1893/1968; Hossler, 2020, p. 204; see also Wright & Taylor, 1999).

3.7.5. *About nomological validity*

We certainly found differences in our CSAS by income, SSS, and economic activity status, though rather small. Plausibly, our class measures were "insufficient" to capture people´s material living conditions. Income obviated the relative character of our "wants and pleasures" (Marx & Engels, 1891/2010, p. 16; see also Kraus, Piff & Keltner, 2009). SSS seemed but an ideological measure of class, rather than an "objective" one (see e.g., Diener et al.*,* 1991; Keefer, Goode & Van Berkel, 2015, p. 254; Krumpal, 2013; Nederhof, 1985; Sawyer & Gampa, 2020; Shaked et al.*,* 2016). At once, due to their gradational nature, both measures obviated the factually based *antithesis* or conflict of interests between workers and capitalists (e.g., as for wages; Elster, 1982, p. 478; Lenin, 1899/1964, 1902/1977, p. 384; Marx, 1867/2015, pp. 163-164 and 507-509; Marx & Engels, 1848/1969, pp. 18 and 37-38; Wright, 2005, 2015, pp. 80-81; Wu, 2011, p. 175). Economic activity status, meanwhile, did not properly discriminate between the two main roles in the capitalist mode of production either.

Even though, present studies shall be seen as first approaches. People´s material living conditions might predict CSA, albeit more, and more specific, covariates, are required. For instance, further research might consider Marxist measures of class, i.e., asking participants for their role in the mode of production (e.g., worker, manager, and employer; see Baizidi, 2019; Sawyer & Gampa, 2020, p. 206; Wright, 1985, p. 195, 2015). Also, it would be interesting to consider more discriminating situations, such as short- and long-term unemployment (see Badimon, 2013; Chandola & Zhang, 2018; Van der Meer, 2014). Moderation/mediation analyses might also be useful to identify relationships between ultimate and immediate antecedents of CSA.

On another note, the predictive usefulness of our scale would be further assessed with both correlational and experimental research. For instance, we might compare results being taken in different historical times (e.g., prior to, during, or in the aftermath of, a financial crisis). In tandem research (e.g., analyses of the frequency and characteristics of popular mobilisations) would be most helpful here. Since carrying out repeated cross-sectional studies with enough sample sizes—so, too, longitudinal or prospective cohort studies—may be logistically and economically prohibitive, we might assess participants´ differences on CSAS after being exposed to one or another frame (e.g., high/low social mobility, successful/failed strikes, etc.).

3.8. Conclusion

So far, we noticed a lack of measures that can be used to explain and predict willingness towards collective actions (CA) in a context of class struggle (CS). We thus developed an instrument that asked participants to which extent they would approve a number of class-struggle actions (CSA). After a thorough validation process, we obtained a 9-point Likert scale with endpoint labeling, or Class-Struggle-Actions scale (CSAS). It comprised 4 items (see items 5, 7, 8, and 14, in Table 1). Congruent with our hypotheses, low-income/low-status/working-class individuals showed higher scores than those high-income/high-status/proprietor-class ones.

We also found moderate to strong correlations with political ideology and other system-justification (SJ) measures (though our scale proved rather discriminant than convergent validity with them). As expected, the more to the left, and the less SJ, the more positive attitudes towards CSA. At large, such results arguably support both Social Identity Approach and classical Marxism. More specifically, they arguably support the idea that people´s material living conditions at large, and social class in particular, determine people´s consciousness (see e.g., Lenin, 1902/1977, p. 386; Marx, 1859/1999, p. 4; Turner & Reynolds, 2003, p. 201).

Admittedly, we might find workers that do not identify themselves with the working class, nor with socialism —so, too, members of the upper classes that advocate for social justice. On the one hand, certain social-psychological variables such as social identification or self-identity—or early acquired and deep-rooted ideologies—may act as having an (apparent) "autonomous function" and blur the causal relationship between material reality and people´s consciousness (Bail et al., 2018; Nyhan & Reifler, 2010; Tajfel & Turner, 1979, p. 46; see also Engels, 1893/1968; Marx, 1844/1970, p. 7; Marx & Engels, 1846/1968, p. 21). On another, certain dispositional or motivational factors could also have a probabilistic effect on people´s ideology (see e.g., Jost, 2019; Jost et al., 2012; Jost, Sapolsky & Nam, 2018). Thus, non-class and noneconomic cleavages, or "individual attributes", might have more (apparent) predictive power over people´s political outcomes (see Wright, 2005, pp. 186-188, 2015, pp. 3-6 and 124-125).

However, people´s political attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours, might also be largely determined by people´s context, experiences, or material living conditions, including exposure level to dominant-class ideology. That is, the foregoing does not mean that class in its classical Marxist sense is "irrelevant" —nor that it would not become a more salient category given the proper objective and subjective conditions (see Lenin, 1915/1974, pp. 213-214 and 216; Wright, 2015, pp. 124-125 and 153). After all, the kind of society we live in arguably relies to great extent

upon the ability of each class to carry out successful actions on behalf of their respective and antagonistic interests.

We thus see room to develop a comprehensive social-psychological model of CS aiming to explain what willingness towards CSA depends upon. Our CSAS is but a modest contribution in this sense. Results showed that the instrument presents adequate psychometric properties of reliability and validity. Likewise, confirmatory factor analysis supported the one-factor structure. Hence, it would be of interest for future studies about system stability and system change. In other words, it would be useful to fully understand why people rebel (and why don´t).

4. TESTING THE ALLEGED SYSTEM-JUSTIFYING FUNCTION OF PROMOTING ENTREPRENEURSHIP WITH *RAGS-TO-RICHES* BIOGRAPHIES

Abstract: Economic crises might foster wrath among disadvantaged people. At once, to believe that social boundaries are permeable seemingly have system-justifying effects. We thus hypothesised that to spread *rags-to-riches* stories might have been a dominant-class practice to appease people´s anger in the aftermath of 2008 financial crisis. In two survey experiments (N_{total} = 449), participants were exposed to a successful life-story of the entrepreneur type, to a failure one, or received neutral information. As expected, the closer to the upper class the more people justify the system. Also, being exposed to failure life-stories undermined system-justifying beliefs. However, successful life-stories did not have the expected effect, but rather the other way round. We discussed in depth why this could have happened. Either way, our results encourage paying more attention to people´s material living conditions as a relevant predictor of people´s political beliefs and to all-players´ production and reproduction of ideology.

Keywords: System Justification, Collective Actions, Marxism, Dominant Ideology

4.1. Introduction

The 2008 financial crisis, and the subsequent economic recession, had devastating effects for the working class and the lower strata of the middle class—so, too, a wave of protests and mobilisations took place all around the world (see e.g., Della Porta, 2017; Foster & Wolfson, 2010; Jacobs & Mazzucato, 2016, p. 5; Perez & Matsaganis, 2017; Peugny, 2019; Ruckert & Labonté, 2017; Stiglitz, 2015, p. 426; Sabucedo et al., 2017; Stuckler et al., 2017; Van Hal, 2015). Spain was not an exception to this, with unemployment rates reaching peaks of 50% among young workers, and cuts in public services and privatisations, which largely undermined popular welfare (Navarro, 2013; Verd, Barranco & Bolíbar, 2019) —so, too, analogous protests and mobilisations took place in the country (e.g., general strikes and the 15-M or the *Indignados* movement).

However, what struck us was the (sudden) salience of a very particular narrative. On the one hand, ordinary working-class people took the blame of the crisis because they "have been living beyond their means". On the other, in a context of high unemployment and lack of access to income possibilities for large sections of the working class, people were encouraged to launch a

business that would (allegedly) grow large beyond the solo founder. As if, to paraphrase Wright (2015), there were a situation of "perfect competition" and an "*absence of any power relations between actors within a market*" (p. 81, emphasis in the original).

Though the phenomenon was plausibly not exclusive of Spain, entrepreneurs came into the spotlight as—to our knowledge—they have ever been (see Mascherini & Bisello, 2015; Moruno, 2015). They received all kinds of messages of support from the institutions and media provided a supply of (allegedly real) successful entrepreneurs or *rags-to-riches* biographies. The idea of individual initiative, or individual success, filtered to all levels of society and it became often to hear about political entrepreneurship, social entrepreneurship, academic entrepreneurship, etc. (i.e., it seems like the spread of "dominant ideology").

Admittedly, some rags-to-riches biographies might be true. The point here is the real chances, for most disadvantaged people, of achieving success following individualistic paths —let alone there is no place for everyone at the top (see Elster, 1982; Reicher, 2004, p. 931; Wright, 2015, pp. 80-89). This connects with the so-called practice of *tokenism*, i.e., "allowing" the inclusion of a few members of the disadvantaged group in the advantaged one and further uses them as living examples of the possibility to thrive following individualistic paths (Kanter, 1977; Laws, 1975; Wright & Boese, 2015; Wright & Taylor, 1999). A paradigmatic example of this would be the (exceptional) case of today´s billionaire Oprah Winfrey, being born black, women, and poor, a life story that "resonates with and reinforces the ideology of the American Dream" (Cloud, 1996, p. 115). Meanwhile, no matter how hard other disadvantaged individuals try, "access [to the advantaged group] is systematically denied for the vast majority" (Wright & Taylor, 1999, p. 648).

In spite of this, mass media and relevant authorities keep on spreading the idea, reminiscent of the Protestant work ethic and the American Dream, that with personal effort and determination anyone can succeed (see Chomsky, 2000, p. 35; Derber & Magrass, 2014, p. 37; Forest, 2014; see also Weber, 1905/2005). Hence, in light of the foregoing, we suspected that encouraging people to become entrepreneurs would be a dominant-class practice to divert people´s anger in a context of class struggle (CS).

4.2. Previous research

Classical Marxists already considered sudden, deep, and broad enough changes for the worse in people´s material living conditions as the ultimate antecedent of people´s outrage, though, as Social Identity Approach (SIA) suggests, manifold subjective or situational factors might determine what such outrage translates into (see Engels, 1880/2005, p. 65; Lenin, 1915/1974, pp. 98, 213-214, 216 and 240, 1920/1974, p. 85; Marx, 1859/1999, p. 4, 1867/2015, pp. 464-468; Marx & Engels, 1848/1969, p. 19; see also Blader, 2007; Davies, 1962; Drury, 2002; Miron & Brehm, 2006; Drury & Reicher, 2009; van Zomeren, Postmes & Spears, 2008).

In our case, when people see chances of thriving following individualistic paths, the likelihood of endorsing popular mobilisations plausibly decreases. Believing that social boundaries are permeable, i.e., believing that social advance is possible, appears having system-justifying (SJ) effects such as undermining low-status people´s willingness towards collective actions (see Owuamalam et al., 2018a; Reicher, 2004; Rubin & Hewstone, 2004; Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner & Reynolds, 2003; see a review of this idea in Jost, Becker, et al., 2017). Indeed, cross-national studies suggest that income mobility—or the perception of income mobility—could help to tolerate inequality and accept the status quo (Shariff, Wiwad, & Aknin, 2016).

Moreover, experimental studies suggest that priming meritocracy might increase SJ beliefs and/or appease anger about perceived injustice (Davidai, 2018; McCoy & Major, 2007; Sagioglou, Forstmann, & Greitemeyer, 2019). Conversely, exposing participants to a frame of low mobility or inequality would have the opposite effect (Day & Fiske, 2017; McCall et al., 2017).

Henceforth, the entrepreneurship narrative would function as a dominant, system-maintenance, or SJ ideology —not necessarily because it makes low-status people believe that they would be rich themselves, though believing that such a thing is possible could evoke a sort of survivorship bias and thus push them to believe that the system is fair. Either way, to our knowledge, there is not any attempt to directly expose participants to rags-to-riches biographies (nor to the opposing *rags-to-rags* ones) in a context of crisis and further testing its plausible effect on attitudes towards the system.

4.3. Objectives and hypotheses

The ultimate aim of the present work was to further understand system maintenance and system change. A more specific aim was to test the (alleged) SJ effect of encouraging people to become entrepreneurs with rags-to-riches biographies. Modelled on classical Marxism and SIA at large, and criticism of the so-called status-legitimacy hypothesis in particular, we handled a twofold working hypothesis: those worse-off individuals within a society gravitate towards a more equal distribution of wealth, whereas dominant-class practices mitigate, or reverse, that trend, at least in capitalist societies (see e.g., Brandt, 2013; Lenin, 1902/1977, p. 386; Turner & Reynolds, 2003, p. 201). For this study in particular, the foregoing took form in the following specific hypothesis:

H1 - The closer individuals are to the upper class the more likely they would justify the system —and the less likely they would show positive attitudes towards collective actions (CA) in a context of CS.

H2 - Reading/listening entrepreneur life-stories might affect attitudes towards the system. Success versions might increase SJ beliefs and decrease willingness towards CA in a context of CS (H2a). Failure versions might have the opposite effects (H2b).

That is, though manifold subjective and/or dispositional factors might have probabilistic effects on people´s political outcomes, we focused here on objective or situational ones (see Engels, 1878/1947, p. 23; Marx, 1859/1999, p. 4; Turner & Reynolds, 2003, p. 205).

4.4. Materials, methods, and analyses

4.4.1. Sample and procedure

To test our hypotheses we carried out two survey experiments (N_{total} = 449), i.e., experiments embedded in a cross-sectional survey (see Alexander & Becker, 1978; Druckman et al., 2011; Gaines, Kuklinski & Quirk, 2007; Lavrakas et al., 2019; Mummolo & Peterson, 2019). More specifically, we carried out a *vignette experiment* (see e.g., Gaines, Kuklinski & Quirk, 2007; Jost et al., 2012; Ullrich & Cohrs, 2007; Van der Meer, Hakhverdian & Aaldering, 2015).

In Study 1, we gathered a traditional college student sample of 117 Spanish-speaking participants (see Table 4.1). Given the exploratory character of this study, we did

not compute a priori power calculation. Post hoc analysis using G*Power (Faul et al., 2007) revealed that we had 66% power (two-tailed; $\alpha = .05$) for a medium effect size of $f = .25$ (see Cohen, 1988, p. 286).

Table 4.1

Participant characteristics ($N_{TOTAL} = 449$*)*

	Study 1 ($N = 117$)				Study 2 ($N = 332$)			
	n	*%*	*M*	*SD*	*n*	*%*	*M*	*SD*
Sex								
Male	30	25.6			143	43.1		
Female	87	74.4			189	56.9		
Age			21.82	2.59			41.15	11.23
Level of studies							3.69	.65
Economic activity status								
Student	117	100			42	12.7		
Unemployed					33	9.9		
Public sector employee					55	16.6		
Private sector employee					123	37.0		
Self-employed					63	19.0		
Retired					16	4.8		
Income[a]			2.67	1.26			2.28	1.18
SSS[b]			6.46	1.47			5.61	1.46
PI[c]			5.02	1.89			2.63	1.33
Experimental condition								
Success (S)	39	33.3			123	37.0		
Failure (F)	40	34.2			108	32.5		
Control (C)	38	32.5			101	30.4		

Note. [a]Family income in Study 1 (from 1 = *less than € 1,000* to 6 = *more than € 5,000 pcm*) and personal income in Study 2 (from 1 = *less than minimum wage* to 6 = *more than five times the minimum wage*).
[b]Subjective Social Status (from 1 = *lowest step* to 10 = *highest step*).
[c]Political Ideology (Study 1: from 1 = *far left* to 10 = *far right.* Study 2: from 1 = *far left* to 7 = *far right*). We included the option "other" in sex but no one chose it. Level of studies in Study 2 (1 = *basic education*, 2 = *secondary education*, 3 = *professional training*, 4 = *university degree*).

In Study 2, an anonymous online survey (Qualtrics Online Questionnaire Hosting) was administered using a random walk methodology. An a priori power analysis revealed that, assuming a moderate effect size ($f = 0.25$), with alpha and power set at 0.05 and 0.80 respectively, we needed at least 269 participants for a 1 x 3 design with a 6 levels moderating covariate to achieve a significant critical F-value of 1.866 (see Faul et al., 2007; Funder & Ozer, 2019; Cohen, 1988, p. 286; Sullivan & Feinn, 2012). We gathered 616 Spanish-speaking participants. After excluding those who did not finish the

questionnaire, and participant number 354 which was a researchers´ testing, we had 332 participants (see Table 4.1).

In both studies, participants went through a number of socio-demographic measures (e.g., sex, age, income). Then, they were exposed to a vignette of either a successful or unsuccessful life-story of the entrepreneur type (or received neutral information). The experimental condition comprised a fictional newspaper article, presented as a real story. Finally, participants went through several self-report measures aiming to post-test if there was a SJ priming effect (and/or a moderating one). That is, we followed a three level unifactorial experimental design. All participants received information about the study and provided written consent for their participation. Data collection was carried out in 2012 and 2018 (for Study 1 and 2 respectively).

4.4.2. *Materials*

We first gathered relevant socio-demographic variables (i.e., sex, age, and level of studies). We then asked participants about:

- *Income*. In Study 1, we asked participants to rate themselves on a 6-point scale, based on their family income, from less than 1,000 euros to more than 5,000 euros per month (M = 2.66, SD = 1.26). In Study 2, since the questionnaire was administered online and some participants could live in different countries, we asked about personal income, from less than the minimum wage to more than 5 times the minimum wage (M = 2.29, SD = 1.17).

- *MacArthur Scale of Subjective Social Status* (Goodman et al., 2001; Adler et al*.,* 2000). This instrument asked participants to stand on a 10 step-ladder (from 1 = *lowest step* to 10 = *highest step*), depending on how subjectively perceive their socioeconomic status, as being used in Kraus, Tan, & Tannenbaum (2013). In Study 1: M = 6.46, SD = 1.47; in Study 2: M = 5.64, SD =1.46.

- *Economic activity status* (only in Study 2; in Study 1 all participants were students). It consisted in asking participants to select the category that better describes their current situation (i.e., student, unemployed, public sector worker, private sector worker, self-employed, or retired).

- *Political ideology* (PI). We included a single-item measure due to the (still) great polar or axiological meaning of the left-right metaphor (see Bobbio, 1996; Castles & Mair, 1984; Evans, Heath, & Lalljee, 1996; Jost, Nosek, & Gosling, 2008; Kroh, 2007; Thorisdottir et al. 2007). In Study 1, participants placed themselves in a range, from 1 = *far left* to 10 = *far right* (M = 5.01, SD = 1.89). In Study 2 we opted for a shortened version, from 1 = *far left* to 7 = *far right* (M = 2.58, SD = 1.29), as in Jost, Nosek, & Gosling (2008). Though PI seems an outcome, rather than an independent variable, we opted to include this measure among the covariates due to their (arguably) hard-to-manipulate character.

Then, all participants but those randomly assigned to the control group read an alleged press article titled "A Real-life Story". The text was modelled on similar content in written media. It consisted in the following passage:

> "Antonio Fernández began his entrepreneur adventure by opening a small pizzeria in Madrid. He developed his own recipes and giving it all to taste to the neighbourhood children. In his early stage, he was responsible for all commercial activities, from making the dough to serving, delivery, or sweeping, pizzeria's floor".

Following this, participants randomly assigned to the success group read:

> "He took out a bank loan, and thanks to his effort and determination, could return it soon. Today, his company has a turnover of 200 million euros a year, employing over 13,000 people".

In the failure condition, however, participants read:

> "He took out a bank loan but despite his effort and determination, he could not return it because of the crisis. Today, the bank has seized the pizzeria, and he is desperate looking for a job to survive".

Meanwhile, participants in the control condition read a short text, similar in extension to the previous ones, about the geographical distribution of the barn swallow.

In Study 2, we included slight variations. Instead of reading an alleged media article, participants watched a short video. Such video, of our own development, included audio, images related to the story, and subtitles. To strengthen the "epic" of the message, we emphasised both the humble origin of the entrepreneur and his effort to fulfil his dream. We aimed to make the rags-to-riches myth more salient. Also, in the failure condition, we highlighted the main cause of the bankruptcy (the harsh conditions imposed by the bank), instead of talking about an imprecise factor (the crisis). Participants listen and/or read:

"Antonio Fernandez was born into a very humble family. He worked hard and has been saving for years until fulfilling his dream: to open a Pizzeria. He developed his own recipes according to the taste of the neighbourhood children. In the initial stages he was responsible for all commercial activities, from making the dough to serving, delivering or sweeping the floor of the pizzeria. Over time, he decided to expand the business".

After this, in the success condition, the video continued:

"He took out a bank loan and thanks to his effort and determination, was able to pay it back soon. Today, his company has a turnover of millions a year, employing thousands of people".

In the failure condition, however, the video continued:

"He took out a bank loan but despite his effort and determination, he was unable to repay it due to the harsh conditions imposed. Today, the bank has taken over the pizzeria, and he is desperate for a job to survive".

Meanwhile, participants in the control condition watched a short video, similar in form to the previous ones, about the discovery of Pluto.

Finally, the following instruments were administered:

- *Credibility of the story.* Participants were asked to rate how credible they found the story on a single-item measure (from 1 = *totally not credible* to 7 = *totally credible*). In Study 2 we shortened it to 5 options).

- *Political System Justification* (PSJ; Kay & Jost, 2003). 8-item Likert scale (response options ranged from 1 = *totally disagree* to 7 = *totally agree*). Examples of items: "I think the society is fair" or "Society is getting worse every day". Reliability: α = .78 and .76 (in Studies 1 and 2 respectively).

- *Just World Belief* (JWB; Lipkus, 1991). 6-item scale with similar response options to the previous scale. Examples of items: "I think unfortunate people deserve their misfortune" or "I think the world is basically a fair place"). Reliability: α = .90 (scale used only in Study 1).

- *Economic System Justification* (ESJ; Jost, Blount, et al., 2003), adapted to Spanish by Jaume, Etchezahar, & Cervone (2012). 7-item scale with similar response options to the

previous ones. Examples of items: "If people work hard, they almost always get what they want" or "Economic positions are legitimate reflections of people's achievements". Reliability: α = .84 (scale used only in Study 2).

- *Meritocracy Descriptive Belief* (MDB; Zimmerman & Reyna, 2013). 6-item scale (response options ranged from 1 = *totally disagree* to 5 = *totally agree*). Examples of items: "People who work hard do achieve success" and "discrimination does not prevent minority groups from getting ahead if they work hard". Reliability: α = .86 (scale used only in Study 2).

- *Class Struggle Actions Scale* (CSAS). Modelled on prior CA research (see e.g., Becker et al., 2011; Jost et al., 2012; Saab et al., 2016; Tausch et al., 2011) and classical Marxist theorising (e.g., Engels, 188072005, Lenin, 1899/1964; Marx, 1847/1955, pp. 79-80; Marx & Engels, 1848/1969), we developed a 4-item scale aiming to measure people´s willingness towards CA in a context of CS. We asked participants to which extent they would approve the following actions: "To go on strike for equal distribution of economic resources", "To make a request for all citizens to have the same economic resources", "To hold demonstrations against social inequalities", and "To participate with other citizens in initiatives against unequal distribution of resources" (Likert scale with endpoint labelling, from 1 = *not at all* to 9 = *to great extent*).

Subsequent factor analyses confirmed the unidimensionallity of these 4 items. In Study 1, an Exploratory Factor Analysis with Principal Components (PC) extraction using orthogonal rotation (Varimax) with Kaiser Normalization showed no other factors with Eigenvalues larger than 1.0 (see George & Mallery, 2020, p. 260). That is, rotation was not needed. This single factor explained 77.79% of the variance, i.e., a "satisfactory" level (see Hair et al., 2019, p. 142), with loadings > .85 and communalities > .73 for all items. In Study 2, rotation was not needed either. The single underlying factor accounted for 71.71% of the variance, i.e., also "satisfactory", with loadings > .82 and communalities > .68 for all items. Reliability was good in both studies (α = .90 and .86 respectively).

4.4.3. Analyses

We first carried out preliminary operations (e.g., excluding participants who did not finish the questionnaire, recoding reverse items, calculating means and reliability of each scale). Then, to test our hypotheses, we carried out both correlational analyses and

analyses of variance. Pearson correlation was used to analyse the relationship between the covariates (e.g., family income, subjective social class, and political ideology) and the outcomes. Subsequent analyses of variance were performed using the criterion of economic activity status and experimental condition as the independent variables, and credibility of the story, PSJ, JWB, ESJ, MDB, and CSAS, as the dependent ones.

We repeated analyses of variance excluding students, self-employed, and retired participants, i.e., only with proper working-class participants, either employed or unemployed (n = 211). The rationale for this operation was classical Marxists´ consideration of the working-class as the main subject to be persuaded by dominant-class ideology (see e.g., Lenin, 1902/1977, p. 386; Marx & Engels, 1846/1968, pp. 21-22, 1848/1969, p. 19). We also carried out pairwise comparisons between unemployed and other groups, (arguably) being the former the more liable category to be diverted from their outrage by entrepreneur-type narratives (see Badimon, 2013; Van der Meer, 2014).

Finally, we delimited subsequent simple moderation models. The dependent variables were credibility of the story, PSJ, JWB (in Study 1), ESJ and MDB (in Study 2), and CSAS. The independent variable or focal predictor was the experimental condition, and the moderator ones were either income or SSS —even though, according to the literature, it would be seen the other way round (see Lenin, 1902/1977, p. 386; Turner & Reynolds, 2003, p. 201; see also Hayes & Montoya, 2017, pp. 2-3). That is, being exposed to certain ideology might "moderate" the effect of people´s material living conditions on people´s beliefs. Since the independent variable or focal predictor, i.e., experimental condition, was both multicategorical and nominal, we used "indicator coding" (see Hayes & Montoya, 2017). We also tested "simple slopes" when applicable (see Aiken & West, 1991).

For the sake of reproducibility we shall mention that, to prevent biasing the sample, i.e., as a matter of caution, we decided not to remove outliers and to carry out robust tests, i.e., Welch´s ANOVA and t-test (see Bakker & Wicherts, 2014; Delacre, Lakens, & Leys, 2017; Ruxton, 2006). We did so even though parametric statistics might be robust enough towards Likert data, small sample sizes, unequal variances, and non-normal distributions (see Carifio & Perla, 2008; Norman, 2010). We also calculated effect sizes for each pairwise comparison, reporting Hedge´s g, i.e., the corrected measure of Cohen´s d (see Lakens, 2013; Lenhard & Lenhard, 2016). All the analyses were carried out with version 24.0 of IBM SPSS Statistics and the macro PROCESS for SPSS version 3.4 developed by Hayes (2018).

4.5. Results (Study 1)

4.5.1. *Correlational analyses*

As we can see in Table 4.2, family income was related to PSJ, JWB, and CSAS, and SSS with PSJ and CSAS. These were weak to moderate associations (see Cohen, 1988). PI appeared largely associated to PSJ, JWB, and CSAS. Sex (coded 1 = male, 2 = female) slightly correlated with PSJ (r = -.195, p = .05) and JWB (r = -.194, p = .05). Age did not correlate with any outcome.

Table 4.2

Correlations between relevant covariates and dependent variables

Outcome variables	Covariates		
	Income	SSS	PI
Study 1 (N = 117)			
PSJ	.314***	.331***	.526***
JWB	.256**	.141*	.474***
CSAS	-.277**	-.213*	-.674***
Study 2 (N = 332)			
PSJ	.255***	.200***	.425***
ESJ	.112*	.160**	.641***
MDB	.194***	.146**	.569***
CSAS	-.109*	-.051	-.546***

Note. Family income in Study 1 and personal income in Study 2; SSS = Subjective Social Status; PI = Political Ideology; PSJ = Political System Justification; JWB = Just World Belief; CSAS = Class Strugge Actions Scale; ESJ = Economic System Justification; MDB = Meritocracy Descriptive Belief.

* p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001.

4.5.2. *Analyses of variance*

We used the criterion of group (entrepreneurial success, entrepreneurial failure and control) as the independent variable and credibility of the story, PSJ, JWB, and CSAS, as the dependent ones. There were not statistically significant differences between groups by experimental condition but for credibility of story (see Table 4.3). Levene´s test was not significant (p > .05), i.e., the assumption of homogeneity of variance was not violated. Even though, as already noted, we decided to report Welch´s ratios. There was a significant effect of the experimental manipulation on credibility of the story [Welch´s F(2, 74.84) = 16.176, p < .001]. Non-parametric post-hoc pairwise comparisons (Games-Howell) showed that the score of credibility in failure condition (M = 6.12, SD = 1.304) was significantly higher to both success (M = 4.74, SD = 1.617) and control ones (M = 4.42, SD = 1.553).

The success condition did not significantly differ from the control one. The total effect size was partial $\eta^2 = .202$. The effect size for the failure versus control group comparison was $g_{Hedges} = 1.18$. That is, a large effect (see Cohen, 1988).

Table 4.3

Welch´s ANOVA by experimental condition

Variables	Condition	Study 1 (N = 117)			Study 2 (N = 332)			Study 2 (only workers) (n = 211)		
		M	*SD*	Welch´s *F*	*M*	*SD*	Welch´s *F*	*M*	*SD*	Welch´s *F*
Credibility	Success	4.74	1.62	16.17***	3.16	1.10	46.41***	3.01	1.04	32.882***
	Failure	6.12	1.30		4.25	.82		4.22	.87	
	Control	4.42	1.55		3.31	.99		3.20	1.02	
PSJ	Success	2.77	.84	.57[n.s.]	2.40	.84	1.60[n.s.]	2.33	.84	3.230*
	Failure	2.56	.89		2.41	.79		2.42	.84	
	Control	2.66	.97		2.59	.87		2.69	.92	
JWB	Success	2.48	1.01	.20[n.s.]	-		-	-		-
	Failure	2.60	1.14		-			-		
	Control	2.62	1.17		-			-		
ESJ	Success	-	-	-	3.23	1.28	.46[n.s.]	3.22	1.24	2.337[n.s.]
	Failure	-	-		3.19	1.15		2.98	1.07	
	Control	-	-		3.35	1.29		3.42	1.29	
MDB	Success	-	-	-	2.38	.95	.31[n.s.]	2.26	.95	3.747*
	Failure	-	-		2.39	.89		2.23	.83	
	Control	-	-		2.47	.97		2.62	.96	
CSAS	Success	6.25	2.19	.05[n.s.]	6.87	2.25	.17[n.s.]	7.17	2.07	.425[n.s.]
	Failure	6.39	2.30		7.01	1.91		7.23	1.99	
	Control	6.40	2.45		6.88	1.90		6.94	1.87	

Note. PSJ = Political System Justification; JWB = Just World Belief; ESJ = Economic System Justification; MDB = Meritocracy Descriptive Belief; CSAS = Class Struggle Actions Scale. Post-hoc pairwise comparisons: Games-Howell.
* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$; n.s. = non-significant.

4.5.3. *Moderation analyses*

We delimited simple moderation models with experimental condition (success, failure, or control) as independent variable, either family income or SSS as moderators, and PSJ, JWB, and CSAS, as dependent variables. However, we did not find significant interactions.

4.6. Results (Study 2)

4.6.1. *Correlational analyses*

As we can see in Table 4.2, income appeared related to PSJ, ESJ, MDB, and CSAS. SSS was related to PSJ, ESJ, and MDB. PI was related to PSJ, ESJ, MDB, and CSAS. Sex (coded 1 = male, 2 = female) slightly correlated with PSJ ($r = -.138$, $p = .05$) and level of studies with CSAS ($r = -.115$, $p = .05$). Age did not correlate with any outcome. Incidentally, we found a relevant correlation between PI and credibility of the story ($r = .525$, $p < .001$) in the success condition ($n = 123$). That is, left-wing participants significantly found less believable the rags-to-riches story than their right-wing counterparts. We did not find relationship between ideology and credibility in the other conditions.

4.6.2. *Analyses of variance*

As in study 1, the experimental condition was the independent variable and credibility of the story, PSJ, ESJ, MDB, and CSAS, the dependent ones. Results did not show statistically significant differences between groups by experimental condition but, again, for credibility of the story (see Table 4.3). Levene´s test showed statistical significance only for this variable ($p < .05$). Either way, we kept on reporting Welch´s ratios. There was a significant effect of the experimental manipulation on credibility of the story [Welch´s $F(2, 215.65) = 46.406$, $p < .001$]. Post-hoc pairwise comparisons (Games-Howell) were statistically significant. The mean score for failure condition ($M = 4.25$, $SD = .822$) was significantly higher than both the success ($M = 3.16$, $SD = 1.104$) and the control ones ($M = 3.31$, $SD = .997$). The success condition did not significantly differ from the control one. The effect size of the failure group versus the control one was $g_{Hedges} = -1.032$. That is, a large effect (see Cohen, 1988).

We repeated ANOVAs only with proper working-class participants, either employed or unemployed ($n = 211$). A post hoc analysis using G*Power revealed that we still had 90% power (two-tailed; $\alpha = .05$) for medium effect sizes ($f = .25$), i.e., an acceptable level (Brysbaert, 2019; Di Stefano, 2003). Results showed statistically significant differences by experimental condition on PSJ [Welch´s $F(2, 137.03) = 3.230$, $p < .05$] and MDB [Welch´s $F(2, 138.21) = 3.747$, $p < .05$] (see Table 4.3). Post-hoc pairwise comparisons (Games-Howell) showed significant differences between participants´ PSJ scores in the control condition ($M = 2.72$, $SD = .919$) and the success one ($M = 2.34$, $SD =$

.844). Meanwhile, MDB scores in the control condition ($M = 2.62$, $SD = .959$) were significantly different than those in the failure one ($M = 2.23$, $SD = .834$). The effect size for each pairwise comparison was around $g_{Hedges} = -.43$, i.e., a small effect (see Cohen, 1988).

On another note, to further assess ideological differences between those participants that are (arguably) most disadvantaged and thus more vulnerable to the entrepreneurship discourse (i.e., unemployed) and the rest, we carried out subsequent Welch´s t-tests (see Ruxton, 2006). As we can see in Table 4.4, unemployed participants compared to all other participants combined demonstrated significantly different scores in PI [Welch´s $t(41.673) = -2.915$, $p < .01$], PSJ [Welch´s $t(40.166) = -2.505$, $p < .05$], and CSAS [Welch´s $t(39.893) = 2.020$, $p = .05$]. Effect sizes for each pairwise comparison were $g_{Hedges} = .48$, .45, and -.36, respectively.

We obtained similar outputs when comparing unemployed and employed participants in PI [Welch´s $t(49.293) = -2.374$, $p < .05$] and PSJ [Welch´s $t(47.824) = -2.692$, $p < .01$], and when comparing unemployed and self-employed in PI [Welch´s $t(71.150) = -3.171$, $p < .01$] and CSAS [Welch´s $t(67.386) = 2.020$, $p < .05$]. Effect sizes for each pairwise comparison were $g_{Hedges} = .41$, .48, .66, and -.43, respectively. That is, small to moderate effect sizes.

Table 4.4

Welch´s t-*test by economic activity status*

	Unemployed ($n = 33$)		Other participants ($n = 299$)		
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	Welch´s *t*
PI	2.06	1.17	2.70	1.33	-2.915**
PSJ	2.13	.79	2.50	.83	-2.505*
CSAS	7.58	1.97	6.85	2.03	2.020*

Note. PI = Political Ideology; PSJ = Political System Justification; CSAS = Class Struggle Actions Scale.

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

4.6.3. *Moderation analyses*

As in Study 1, we delimited subsequent moderation models, with experimental condition as focal predictor, either personal income or SSS as moderators, and PSJ, ESJ,

MDB, and CSAS, as dependent variables. The interaction between personal income and experimental condition was found to be statistically significant for MDB. More specifically, the interaction was found to be statistically significant when comparing failure versus the other two conditions. Overall model: $F(5, 326) = 3.93$, $p < .01$, $R^2 = .05$. Interaction: $b = -2.61$, 95% CI [-.492, -.030], $t(326) = -2.23$, $p < .05$. That is, both experimental condition and income accounted for approximately 5% of the variance in MDB. We tested "simple slopes" for the association between the antecedents and the dependent variable (see Figure 1).

Figure 4.1

Interaction between experimental condition and personal income on MDB
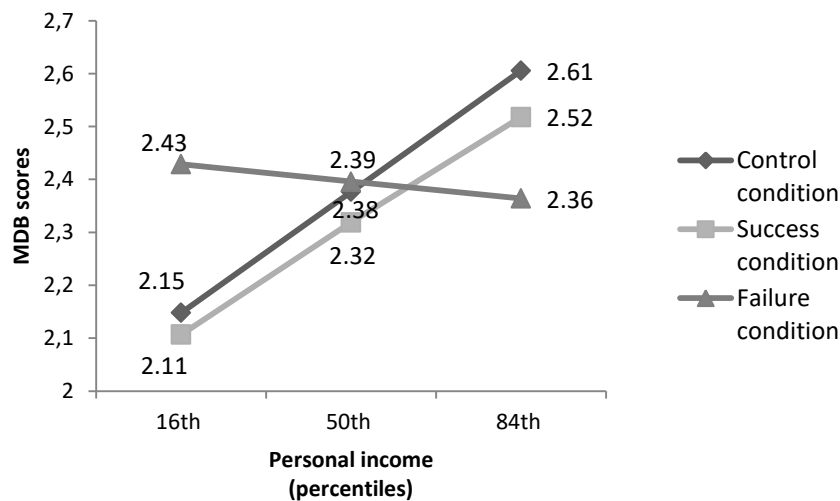
Note. The slopes suggest that failure stories of the entrepreneur type might undermine system-justifying beliefs among high-income participants (and the other way round among low-income ones). MDB = Meritocracy Descriptive Belief; Personal income from 1 = *less than minimum wage* to 6 = *more than five times the minimum wage*.

Incidentally, we found a significant interaction between experimental condition and PI for CSAS. More specifically, the interaction was found to be statistically significant when comparing success versus the other two conditions. Overall model: $F(3, 328) = 49.29$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .31$. Interaction: $b = -.32$, 95% CI [-.607, -.033], $t(328) = -2.19$, $p < .05$. We also tested "simple slopes" (see Figure 4.2). We did not find other significant interactions.

Figure 4.2

Interaction between experimental condition and political ideology on CSAS
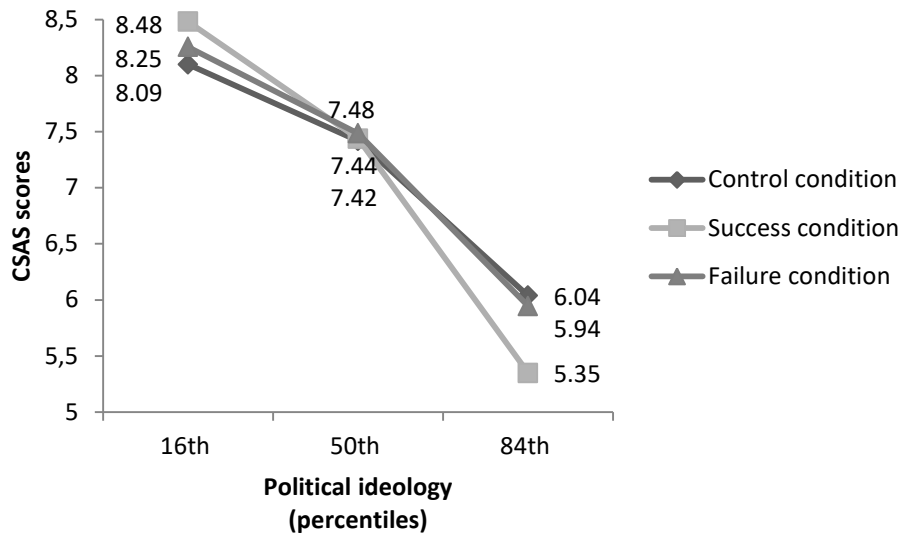
Note. The slopes suggest that successful stories of the entrepreneur type might undermine willingness towards collective actions on right-wing participants (and the other way round on left-wing ones).

CSAS = Class Struggle Actions Scale; Political Ideology from 1 = *far left* to 7 = *far right*.

4.7. Discussion, limitations and further research

With respect to H1, our results confirmed that the closer to the upper class the more SJ, and the less willingness towards CA in a context of CS (see Table 4.2). Most notably, unemployed people, when compared to other participants, showed lower SJ scores (see Table 4.4). This, at large, supports both classical Marxists and SIA´s idea that social being determines consciousness —so, too, it supports criticism of the so-called "status-legitimacy hypothesis" (see e.g., Caricati, 2016; Caricati & Owuamalam, 2020; Kelemen et al., 2014; Brandt, 2013; Lenin, 1916/1974, pp. 193-194, 281, 283-284, and 301; Marx, 1859/1999, p. 4; Marx & Engels, 1848/1969, p. 25; Owuamalam, Rubin, & Issmer, 2016; Owuamalam, Rubin, & Spears, 2016, 2018a, 2018b; Turner & Reynolds, 2003, p. 205; Wright & Boese, 2015; Wright & Taylor, 1999; Yang et al., 2017).

Admittedly, manifold subjective social-psychological variables might supersede people´s material living conditions in the "causal spiral" and thus acquire immediate predictive relevance (see Tajfel & Turner, 1979, p. 46; see also Engels, 1893/1968, 1894/1968; Marx & Engels, 1846/1968, p. 21; Wright, 2005, pp. 186-188, 2015, pp. 3-6 and 124-125). Nevertheless, it seems

well worthy of considering the "economic conditions" as the ultimate antecedent of people´s political beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours, towards the system —or, at the very least, as a relevant variable (see Engels, 1878/1947, p. 170, 1893/1968, 1894/1968; Lenin, 1915/1974, pp. 213-214 and 216, 1920/1974, pp. 84-85; Turner & Reynolds, 2003; Wright, 2015, pp. 124-125 and 153).

With respect to H2, our results were mixed. We did not confirm that reading/listening rags-to-riches biographies have SJ effects (H2a), but rather the other way round. More specifically, when carrying out our ANOVAs with working-class participants alone ($n = 211$), PSJ and MDB scores were significantly lower in the success condition than in the control one (see Table 4.3). At large, it would raise questions about the usefulness of promoting entrepreneurship through rags-to-riches biographies as a SJ technic to appease workers´ anger about perceived injustice. Even though, it would help to "retain" right-wing people (see Figure 4.2).

Exposing participants to rags-to-rags biographies, however, seemingly had the expected effect (H2b). More specifically, also excluding students, self-employed, and retired participants, MDB scores were significantly lower in the failure condition than in the control one (see Table 4.3). At large, it supports the idea that exposing people to a frame of low mobility would undermine their SJ beliefs (Day & Fiske, 2017; McCall, Burk, Laperrière, & Richeson, 2017).

Moreover, participants at large—and left-wing oriented ones in particular—found significantly more credible the failure condition than either the success or control ones. All this is rather suggestive about the usefulness for social activists of spreading the (arguably more realistic) message of unsuccessful entrepreneurship. Even though, it would have mixed effects in low-income people (see Figure 4.1).

Having said this, several limitations, concerns, and ideas for further research, arose in the research process.

4.7.1. *About the covariates*

First, objective measures of "class" (income) might overlook the subjective character of people´s material living conditions (see Kraus, Piff & Keltner, 2009, p. 992; Marx & Engels, 1891/2010, p. 16; Rubin et al., 2014). Second, subjective measures of "class" (SSS) would be prone to ideological interferences and/or response artefacts like social-desirability bias (see e.g., Diener et al*.,* 1991; Keefer, Goode & Van Berkel, 2015, p. 254; Krumpal, 2013; Nederhof, 1985; Sawyer & Gampa, 2020; Shaked et al*.,* 2016). The

"inflated" SSS values with respect to participants´ income were rather suggestive in this sense (see Table 4.1). Third, both income and SSS somewhat obscure the class-based *antithesis* or conflict of interests between workers and capitalists due to their gradational nature, i.e., they do not allow setting other than arbitrary boundaries (Wright, 2005, p. 43, 2015, pp. 116-117 and 155). Finally, our measure of economic activity status seemed still inadequate to capture the relations of exploitation between productive forces (e.g., the category self-employed did not discriminate between autonomous workers and employers).

That is, our covariates proved being largely upgradeable to test the hypothesis that material living conditions have effects on ideology. Further research might consider including questions about participants´ role in the mode of production and/or participants´ main source of income. A good option would be Wright´s (1985) "matrix using the exploitation-centred concept of class" (p. 195), or a shortened version that still discriminates between the two main class locations, i.e., workers and capitalists, and the "contradictory" one, i.e., managers/supervisors (see Baizidi, 2019; Sawyer & Gampa, 2020, p. 206; Wright, 1985, 2015).

Admittedly, sample-size limitations spoke loud in favour of gradational measures. Most notably, continuous predictors might allow simpler statistical analyses and simpler interpretation of the data, with rather small sample sizes, than categorical ones (see Lazic, 2008). However, research on system attitudes as ours arguably requires between-group comparisons (e.g., low- versus high-status, or working- versus dominant-class). That is, dichotomisation of the data will be required which, beyond theoretical concerns, could be statistically problematic (see e.g., Cohen, 1983; Field, 2009, pp. 8-10 and 361; MacCallum et al*.,* 2002). Hence, categorical predictors based on people´s position and role in the mode of production may be worthy of consideration.

More specific material-living-conditions measures, e.g., discriminating between short- and long-term unemployment, may also be relevant (see Badimon, 2013; Chandola & Zhang, 2018; Van der Meer, 2014).

4.7.2. *About the vignettes*

The fact that respondents did not find the vignettes equally believable was a worrisome sign. Admittedly, looking back at the vignettes, there were slight variations by treatment condition. We primarily manipulated the outcome, though also the attribution of such outcome: only to individual effort in the success condition, to the crisis, or to the

bank, in the failure one. Also, albeit based on an alleged real-life story, the success vignette contained massive leaps which participants could have found hard to believe. Even the sex of the main character (male) could have evoked response artefacts. Nevertheless, dominant-class practices and fluctuations of the market might also be what most prevent entrepreneurs from success. If so, an approximate reflex of social reality would be taking place, i.e., people might be aware that unsuccessful entrepreneurial ventures are far more likely than successful ones (see Mascherini & Bisello, 2015; Marx & Engels, 1848/1969, p. 18; Moruno, 2015; Wright, 2015). In other words, rags-to-riches biographies might (also or mainly) evoke sound "backfire effects" (see Nyhan & Reifler, 2010; Wood & Porter, 2019). Either way, more precise, subtle, and/or nuanced manipulations, would sort these problems out (see e.g., Atzmüller & Steiner, 2010; Steiner, Atzmüller & Su, 2017). A possibility would be asking participants to imagine themselves within an either successful or unsuccessful entrepreneurial venture.

4.7.3. *About the post-test instruments*

First, mainstream SJ measures might not properly capture which system participants´ support —basically, capitalism or socialism (see Elster, 1982, p. 478; Engels, 1880/2005, pp. 36 and 66-67; Lenin, 1902/1977, p. 384; Wu, 2011, p. 175). This would lead to mixed results. For instance, both a worker and an employer would "completely agree" with items such as "Society is getting worse every day" (Kay & Jost, 2003, p. 828) though each one having in mind diametrically opposing ideas. The same would go for both left and right-wing partisans (Caricati, 2019; see also Osborne et al*.,* 2019). Second, perhaps there was a huge leap between the content of the vignettes and our ideological measures —most notably, with our CSAS. Though theoretically related, the likelihood of properly capturing such relation with survey designs is questionable. Finally, we might consider the so-called "respondent fatigue", i.e., lack of interest and motivation of participants after being faced with too many instruments and/or too long questionnaires (see e.g., Lavrakas et al., 2019, pp. 742-743). Further research would consider more specific, accurate, and clearly related measures, such as social mobility beliefs in our case, within simpler and/or shorter questionnaires.

4.7.4. *About the sample*

It is conceivable that both members of dominant classes and the lowest stratum of the working class were underrepresented in our studies. Hence, we might hardly find large

ideological differences based upon material living conditions if most participants belong to the so-called middle class, i.e., if they arguably share "common conditions" (see Henrich, Heine & Norenzayan, 2010; Lenin, 1916/1974, pp. 193-194 and 283-284; Marx & Engels, 1846/1968, p. 34; Wright, 1985). On another note, our first study was underpowered at 66%, i.e., there was a large risk of committing a Type II error or accepting the null hypothesis that there is no effect when it actually does exist (see Lavrakas 2008, p. 913). Larger enough and/or more representative samples would sort these problems out.

4.7.5. *About external validity*

Beyond and above the foregoing, it seems well worth considering if—or to which extent—it is possible with survey research to emulate the effect that dominant ideology have on people´s consciousness. It is, perhaps, too pretentious to expect that deep-rooted and sincerely-held ideological views could be manipulated by exposing participants to a single brief vignette. Admittedly, the basic idea is to make salient situations or discourses, and then testing if they have an effect in people´s beliefs, i.e., to manipulate the available information, elicit stated preferences, and then assess how we make choices (see Hainmueller, Hangartner & Yamamoto, 2015).

However, we may hardly compare the scope of a vignette—which many participants would not even read—with dominant-class "means of mental production" (Marx & Engels, 1848/1968, p. 21; see also Cohen, 1965; Herman & Chomsky, 1988/2008; Lenin, 1902/1977, p. 386; Mullen & Klahen, 2010; Pedro-Carañana, Broudy, & Klaehn, 2018).

Closely related is the plethora of bias and/or response artefacts, often conflicting, that each manipulation might evoke (see Dimara et al.*,* 2020; Krumpal, 2013; Nyhan & Reifler, 2010; Pennycook & Rand, 2019; Wood & Porter, 2019). It has a difficult solution; the more we delimit or isolate a social fact, the more we lose sight of its relational nature, with other social facts and with the physical environment (see Engels, 1885/2005, pp. 54-57, 1890/1972; Järvikoski, 1996; Marx & Engels, 1846/1968, p. 9; Mullinix et al.*,* 2015; Wright, 2015, pp. 73-74). We should therefore consider that there might always be mediators or moderators, i.e., *third variables* influencing the strength, the direction, and/or the presence, of the relationship between our independent and dependent ones (see Hefner in Allen, 2017, pp. 123 and 1852-1853; Mackinnon, 2011).

4.7.6.   About the role of dominant ideology

Following the latter concern, we might even consider whether dominant ideology actually plays a primary role in the formation of people´s consciousness or not. People´s beliefs would be but the outcome of manifold intersecting forces, including, perhaps mainly, complex human interactions within an ever-changing material reality (see Engels, 1878/1947, p. 23, 1890/1972; Reicher, 2004, pp. 924-925). That is, people´s attitudes towards the system would ultimately rely upon their personal experiences (even though dominant ideology would have an effect in how we interpret our personal experiences). As with the latter concern, different levels of analysis and multidisciplinary approaches seem required.

4.8. Conclusion

Financial crises, and the subsequent economic recessions, seemingly increase the likelihood of protests and mobilisations. At once, to believe that social boundaries are permeable seemingly has system-justifying (SJ) effects. We thus saw ground to explore if encouraging people to become entrepreneurs with rags-to-riches biographies could be a dominant-class practice to divert popular outrage in the aftermath of 2008 financial crisis. Modelled on classical Marxism and Social Identity Approach (SIA), we hypothesised that the closer individuals are to the upper class the more they will justify the system (H1). Likewise, we hypothesised that being exposed to successful life-stories of the entrepreneurial type might have SJ effects (H2a) —as being exposed to unsuccessful ones might have the opposing effect (H2b).

We carried out two "vignette experiments" to test our hypotheses (N_{total} = 449). Though modest, our results confirmed the first one. Low-income and unemployed people, when compared to other participants, showed lower scores in our SJ measures. This, at large, supported both classical Marxist and SIA´s idea that social being determines consciousness —so, too, it supported criticism of the so-called "status-legitimacy hypothesis". With respect to the second hypothesis, our results were mixed. Being exposed to Rags-to-riches biographies did not have SJ effects in our participants, but rather the other way round. Being exposed to rags-to-rags ones, however, did have effects in the intended direction.

We already discussed several technical limitations in the previous section. Beyond them, we envision the possibility that being exposed to rags-to-riches plots would evoke a rather factually-based "backfire effect" among working-class individuals —as being exposed to rags-to-rags ones would confirm their (also factually-based) existing beliefs. We also discussed if it is

possible with survey research to emulate the effect of dominant ideology and if it actually plays a primary role in the formation of people´s consciousness.

Either way, our results encourage paying more attention to both people´s material living and dominant-class practices with regard to the production and reproduction of certain ideologies. After all, dominant classes have long spread the idea that, with effort and determination, it is possible to succeed —the Protestant work ethic and the American Dream are, perhaps, its major exponents. This alone suggests that dominant ideology might have an effect in the desired direction.

5. PROPOSAL FOR A SOCIAL-PSYCHOLOGICAL MODEL OF CLASS STRUGGLE (MCS) AND PRACTICAL APPLICATION TO EXPLAIN THE DECLINE OF AN ALLEGED ANTI-SYSTEM POLITICAL FORCE

Abstract: To further understand why people rebel (and why don´t), and to bridge gaps between System Justification Theory (SJT) and Social Identity Approach (SIA), we propose a social-psychological Model of Class Struggle (MCS). At large, we hypothesise that low-income, low-status, and/or working-class individuals, gravitate towards socialism, though dominant-class practices mitigate or reverse such gravitation. To provide empirical support to our MCS, we carried out a survey experiment (N = 324). Our participants were exposed to an alleged press release containing either positive or negative information about *Unidos Podemos* (UP), a Spanish left-wing political party (or were assigned to a control group). Congruent with our hypothesis, results suggest that: (1) people´s material living conditions determine people´s ideology, and (2) dominant classes would have undermined UP´s partisanship presenting the party as a threat to Spanish people. We discuss limitations, recommendations for further research, and practical applications of our MCS.

Keywords: Collective Actions, Ideology, Marxism, Partisanship, *Podemos*, Social Identity Approach, System Justification Theory

5.1. Introduction

A major concern for Social and Political Psychology is the so-called *inequality paradox*, i.e., why wealth inequality prevails and even grows (Hardoon, Fuentes-Nieva, & Ayele, 2016; Stiglitz, 2015), despite it being harmful for most individuals and society (Mani et al., 2013; Oishi, Kesebir & Diener, 2011; Sargent, 2019; Shah, Mullainathan, & Shafir, 2012), and despite preferences for equality and cooperation being a near universal (Fehr & Fischbacher, 2003; Rand, Greene & Nowak, 2012; Sachs et al*.,* 2004; Zelenski, Dopko & Capaldi, 2015). To put it simpler, why disadvantaged people often bolster a status quo when it is against their very self-interest?

In respect thereof, System Justification Theory (SJT) suggests that "people are motivated (…) to defend, bolster, and justify aspects of existing social, economic, and political systems" (Jost, 2019, p. 263). To cope with existential, epistemic and relational threats, people would engage in system-justifying (SJ) beliefs due to their palliative function. Such beliefs would, in turn, undermine willingness towards collective actions (Jost, 2019; Jost & Hunyady, 2005; Jost, Glaser,

et al.*,* 2003; Jost et al.*,* 2014; Sagioglou, Forstmann, & Greitemeyer, 2019). This would explain out-group favouritism or why millions of working-class individuals support right-wing parties. At a psychological level, it would help to reduce uncertainty (most notably if left-wing parties are perceived as a threat).

However, to posit the existence of a fundamental motive to see the system as fair—or system-justifying motive (SJM)—runs the risk of becoming a SJ ideology in itself. On the one hand, system stability could be sufficiently explained without resorting to such SJM —let alone it could hardly explain why, every now and then, system changes take place (see e.g., Owuamalam & Spears, 2020; Owuamalam, Rubin, & Spears, 2018a, 2018b, 2019). On the other, such SJM would somehow "exonerate" dominant-class practices from their role in the formation of people´s ideology (see Cohen, 1965; Druckman, 2004; Herman & Chomsky, 1988/2008; MacLeod, 2019; Marx & Engels, 1846/1968, p. 21; Mullen & Klahen, 2010). In other words, to focus on an alleged "bottom-up" SJM to explain subservient attitudes (see Jost, 2019, p. 265) situates SJT closer to idealist positions (see Marx & Engels, 1846/1968, pp. 21-23).

Meanwhile, for Social Identity Approach (SIA) and classical Marxism (CM), disadvantaged individuals will not support the prevailing order —unless they perceive it as stable and/or legitimate, and/or see chances of social advancement (Brandt, 2013; Lenin, 1902/1977, p. 386, 1916/1974, pp. 283-284; Reicher, 2004; Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Turner & Reynolds, 2003; Wright & Boese, 2015). Thus, inasmuch the latter perceptions are hegemonic, system will be stable. Nevertheless, sudden, deep, and broad enough changes for the worse in most people´s material living conditions might also foster feelings of anger and shared identity of interests among the disadvantaged —so, too, system-challenging collective actions (CA) might take place (see Blader, 2007; Davies, 1962; Drury & Reicher, 2009; Engels, 1880/2005, p. 65; Lenin, 1915/1974, pp. 98, 213-214, 216 and 240, 1920/1974, p. 85; Miron & Brehm, 2006; van Zomeren, Postmes & Spears, 2008).

On another note, if shared identity is a pre-requisite for CA, and CA is a pre-requisite for the powerless to gain power, it is to be expected that dominant classes will do their utmost to prevent working-class individuals develop "class consciousness" (CC), i.e., shared identity and willingness towards system-change CA (see Lenin, 1899/1964, 1902/1977, p. 386; Marx & Engels, 1848/1969, p. 25; Reicher, 2004, p. 933).

That is, both SIA and CM explain system attitudes considering people´s position in, and understanding of, the social-economic structure altogether (see Engels, 1880/2005, pp. 17, 54-55, and 65-67; Marx & Engels, 1846/1968, p. 58; Turner & Reynolds, 2003, p. 204). It is "[people´s]

social existence that determines their consciousness]", rather than the other way round (Marx, 1859/1999, p. 4; see also Turner & Reynolds, 2003, p. 205). SJT on the one hand, and SIA and CM on the other, appear thus as irreconcilable positions. Even though, we see room to approach each other.

5.2. A social-psychological Model of Class Struggle (MCS)

Intertwining SIA and CM, we propose considering all individuals as well-being motivated or self-interest seekers within an on-going "conflict between productive forces and modes of production" or *class struggle* (Engels, 1880/2005, pp. 65-66; Marx, & Engels, 1845/1956, p. 51, 1848/1969, pp. 20-21; Tajfel & Turner, 1979, p. 33; Wright, 2015, pp. 81 and 123-125). Such class struggle (CS) might usually take place in the workplace, where each workers and employers´ self-interest seeking are at once analogous and antagonistic, e.g., as for wages (Elster, 1982, p. 478; Lenin, 1899/1964). At the macro level, the conflict might take the form of demonstrations, strikes and, ultimately, inter-state wars. In other words, we all live within a context of power asymmetries or class-based hierarchy.

Plausibly, from better-off individuals arise the action of preserving the status quo, whereas from the disadvantaged the action of not being exploited (Machiavelli, 1532/1998, p. 39; Marx, & Engels, 1845/1956, p. 51; Turner & Reynolds, 2003, p. 201). However, dominant-class individuals have resources enough to divert others´ self-interest seeking, i.e., to "alienate" them, awakening "false or apparent motives" or "false consciousness" (Engels, 1893/1968; Hossler, 2020, p. 204; see also Jost, Sapolsky & Nam, 2018, pp. 2-3). It follows a twofold working hypothesis (or two hypotheses that should not be extricated one from another): working-class individuals gravitate towards socialism (H1), whereas dominant-class individuals´ practices and institutions mitigate, or reverse that trend (H2), at least in capitalist societies (Brandt, 2013; Lenin, 1902/1977, p. 386; Turner & Reynolds, 2003, p. 201).

Working-class individuals may be roughly defined as wage-dependent individuals, without means of production of their own, and thus highly vulnerable to market fluctuations and crises (Marx & Engels, 1848/1969, pp. 18-19 and 37-38, 1891/2010, p. 6). Based on their material living conditions, workers greatly correspond to the "lowest stratum" of a class-based hierarchy (Marx & Engels, 1848/1969, p. 20; see also Davis, 2006; Marx, 1883/2010, p. 633; Lenin, 1916/1974, pp. 193-194, 281-284; Wright, 1985, pp. 95 and 195). Based on their role and number, workers seem the only social category that, if salient, could change the mode of production, i.e., the mechanism

by which social inequality is created and maintained (Engels, 1880/2005, pp. 38 and 65-67; Lenin, 1917/1974, p. 408; Marx, 1867/1992; Wright, 2015, pp. 124-125).

Socialism, meanwhile, may be roughly defined as a system where there is not major class antagonism, the means of production are socially owned, and surplus value produced is used for economic and social growth purposes (Engels, 1880/2005, p. 36; Lenin, 1917/1964, pp. 84-85; Marx, 1847/1955, p. 26, 1875/1970, pp. 10-11; Marx & Engels, 1848/1969; Pigou, 1948; Wu, 2011, p. 175). Thereupon, if nothing prevents it, class-conscious workers will act according to their ultimate and objective interest, i.e., not being exploited (Engels, 1880/2005, pp. 36 and 66-67; Lenin, 1899/1964; Marx, 1847/1955, pp. 79-80). "Political consciousness" (PC), meanwhile, will be the highest stage of CC —and scientific knowledge, i.e., being able to see the entire picture, would be required to be reached (Lenin, 1902/1977, p. 375).

Finally, dominant-class practices may range from subtle propaganda to repression (Biddle, 1931, p. 283; Clement & Scalia, 2021; Gramsci, 1930s/1992, p. 149; Herman & Chomsky, 1988/2008; O´Rourke, 2018; Robinson, 2020; Wacquant, 2010). Material incentives—or deterrents—will be required, every now and then, to keep a short of "class compromise", i.e., to keep system stability (see Wright, 2015). Such will undoubtedly be the case in times of crises. Even though, dominant-class ideological production might also play a relevant system-maintenance role.

To paraphrase Marx and Engels (1846/1968), "[dominant class is compelled] to represent its interest as the common interest of all the members of society" (p. 21). Being human´s decision-making largely based on the available information (Tversky & Kahneman, 1974; Weber, 1987), those who control the "means of mental production" would influence others in, at least, two ways. Following SJT, dominant-class ideology might create or make salient those threats that would make others seek for what they perceive as safe and familiar. Following SIA, meanwhile, dominant-class individuals might spread ideas like social boundaries are permeable and/or that the status quo is both stable and legitimate.

Let us leave aside that what SJT calls "the system" SIA considers it "the perceived in-group" (Rubin & Hewstone, 2004, p. 835). It seems but a lexical discussion. Let us also leave aside SJT´s focus on an alleged "bottom-up" SJM whose very existence remains controversial. Let us, simply, consider that people might be (externally encouraged to be) motivated to justify the system.

Both techniques—the one based in SIA and the one based in SJT—seem compatible. The former highlights the (alleged) superiority of the system which people (allegedly) belong to. The

latter highlights the (alleged) negative consequences that questioning such system might have. Indeed, one would reinforce another. The outcome will, in any case, be more system justification and less system-challenging behaviours (or more pro-system attitudes and less support an alleged *anti-system* political party). Let us illustrate the foregoing with an example.

5.3. The case of *Unidos Podemos´* diminishing support

In January 2014, still in a context of deep social-economic crisis, a new political party entered the scene in Spain, *Podemos* (literally "We Can"), with the stated goal of channelling people´s outrage towards progressive policies (Labio-Bernal in Pedro-Carañana et al., 2018). A couple of years later, *Podemos* and other left-wing forces (including the Communist Party), formed a coalition named *Unidos Podemos* (UP; literally "United We Can"). The coalition obtained more than 21% of the votes and 72 deputies in June 2016. In April 2019, however, UP (then renamed *Unidas Podemos,* i.e., "United We Can" in feminine) obtained less than 15% of the votes and 42 deputies. Following a political stalemate between left- and right-wing forces, new general elections were held on November 2019. Finally, UP obtained 12.8% of the votes and 35 seats, entering a government coalition with PSOE (Partido Socialista Obrero Español – Spanish Socialist Worker´s Party). Table 5.1 shows major parties´ evolution in successive national elections.

Table 5.1

National elections results in parliament seats (absolute majority: 176/350)

Year	IU/UP [a]	PSOE	*Ciudadanos*	PP	*Vox* [b]
2008	2	169	-	154	-
2011	11	110	-	186	-
2015	2 + 69	90	40	123	-
2016	72	85	32	137	-
2019 (I)	42	123	57	66	24
2019 (II)	35	120	10	84	52

Note. The table displays the major political parties in Spain based in their position in left-right political spectrum: IU/UP (Izquierda Unida/Unidos Podemos – United Left/United We Can); PSOE (Partido Socialista Obrero Español – Spanish Socialist Worker´s Party); *Ciudadanos* (literally Citizens); PP (Partido Popular – Popular Party); *Vox*. Source: Spanish Government Website (Ministerio del Interior, 2017).

[a] In 2015 IU and *Podemos* ran separately. Before 2015, prior to *Podemos* appearance, only IU´s results are shown.

[b] *Vox* first entered in Parliament in 2019 so it was not considered in our analyses.

The striking rise of *Podemos* was attributed to several non-exclusive factors. We highlight: (1) a deep economic and social crisis, with increasing unemployment, inequality and poverty, privatisations and austerity policies, (2) disaffection or lack of trust with traditional parties due to

their innumerable cases of corruption, (3) popular perception of similarity among the two main parties in economic issues, (4) emergence of citizen activism and popular demands for transparency and political participation, and (5) presence of party´s leaders in mainstream and digital media with a well-designed speech and a new code of ethics (Bickerton & Accetti, 2018; Casero-Ripollés, Feenstra & Tormey, 2016; Moreno-Montero, 2017; Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2018; Navarro, 2015; Nez, 2017; Orriols & Cordero, 2015; Toret Medina, 2015; Tormey & Feenstra, 2015). *Podemos* arguably appeared in a context of certain economic recovery, though unemployment rates were still at historical levels and public services were being increasingly affected by privatisations and austerity measures (Cervero-Liceras, McKee & Legido-Quigley, 2015; Rodon & Hierro, 2016). That is, popular outrage towards dominant-classes was still at highs, which seems the most favourable scenario for a party that brings neoliberal policies into question.

However, the reasons for *Podemos´* striking decline remain less clear. Some plausible non-exclusive factors could be: (1) certain recovery or stabilisation of the economic situation, (2) softening or abandonment of its original "disruptive" rhetoric, (3) actual or perceived shift from materialist positions towards post-materialist ones (e.g., feminism, LGTB+), (4) alleged inconsistencies between some members´ behaviour and their new code of ethics, (5) infightings among rival factions and with regional allies, (6) loss of party´s novelty appeal due to the emergence of new—or renewed—political parties such as *Ciudadanos* and *Vox*, (7) progressive openness and good willingness towards PSOE, (8) onset of social issues which for the party had not well-articulated proposals (e.g., immigration, nationalism), and (9) hostility of the *de facto* powers (most notably corporate media).

Admittedly, neither UP nor PSOE might be considered socialist parties, but rather Keynesian (Bickerton & Accetti, 2018; Wright, 2015, pp. 193-194 and 198; see also Marx & Engels, 1848/1969, pp. 19-20 and 28-33). UP, and far less PSOE, did not oppose the capitalist mode of production. Even though, UP might somehow counterweighted right-wing policies —so, too, it had real electoral prospects. Hence, dominant classes would have had a "motive" to undermine its popular support (Labio-Bernal in Pedro-Carañana et al., 2018; Navarro, 2015, 2018). Consider the words of the former director of *El Mundo*, one of the leading newspapers in Spain: "the elites saw with terror the arrival of *Podemos* to the Government and made a decision to avoid it" (Precedo, 2019). Consider also the suggestion of the president of Sabadell bank: "we need a rightist *Podemos"* (Navarro, 2019). That is, irrespective of the fact that UP was a reformist rather than an anti-system force, there was room to suspect that dominant classes could be interested in making the party look like a threat which, in turn, could result in pro-system attitudes.

Thus, to test if corporate media could have influenced Spaniards´ voting behaviour—and to provide empirical support to our MCS—we carried a survey experiment.

5.4. Objectives and hypotheses

The ultimate or strategic goal of the present exploratory study was to provide some empirical support for our MCS and, if possible, to bridge gaps between SIA, CM, and SJT. The specific or practical goal was to further understand system attitudes and the decline of UP in the Spanish political landscape. All the foregoing takes form in the following hypotheses:

H1 - Low-status, low-income, and/or working-class people, gravitate towards leftist political positions to greater extent than high-status, high-income, and/or dominant-class ones.

H2 - Available information about UP might affect voters´ attitudes. Positive information might increase the likelihood of support (H2a). Negative information might have the opposing effect (H2b).

5.5. Materials, methods, and analyses

5.5.1. Sample and procedure

We carried out a "vignette experiment", i.e., an experiment embedded in a cross-sectional survey (see Druckman et al., 2011; Gaines, Kuklinski & Quirk, 2007; Jost et al., 2012; Lavrakas et al., 2019; Mummolo & Peterson, 2019; Ullrich & Cohrs, 2007; Van der Meer, Hakhverdian & Aaldering, 2015). The procedure involved (1) gathering a number of socio-demographic and ideological variables, (2) randomly assigning our participants to one of two experimental conditions (one with positive information about UP; the other with negative information), or to a control one, and (3) post-testing attitudes towards UP and vote intention. That is, we followed a three level unifactorial experimental design.

Assuming a moderate effect size ($f = 0.25$), with alpha and power set at respectively 0.05 and 0.80 (see Cohen, 1988), an *a priori* power analysis using G*Power (Faul *et al.*, 2007) revealed that we required at least 305 participants for a 1 x 3 design (i.e., two experimental conditions and a control one) with a 8 levels moderating covariate (i.e.,

our independent variable with more categories) to achieve a significant critical *F*-value of 1.724.

We administered an anonymous online survey (Qualtrics Online Questionnaire Hosting) following a random walk methodology (i.e., distributing survey links in diverse internet forums). All participants agreed to participate and were offered further information after request. We gathered a convenience sample of 481 Spanish-speaking participants. After excluding those who did not complete the questionnaire, and participant number 2 which was one researchers´ testing, we had 324 participants (see Table 5.2). Data collection was carried out in 2018. We registered the study on the website of the Open Science Framework (https://osf.io/rvqyf/).

Table 5.2

Participants characteristics (N = 324)

	n	*%*	*M*	*SD*
Sex				
Male	208	64.2		
Female	113	35.2		
Other	3	0.9		
Age			38.89	14.02
Studies				
No schooling	1	0.3		
Elementary	5	1.5		
Secondary	43	13.3		
Professional training	54	16.7		
University	221	68.2		
Economic activity status				
Student	60	18.5		
Unemployed	27	8.3		
Public sector workers	65	20.1		
Private sector workers	122	37.7		
Self-employed	21	6.5		
Retired	24	7.4		
Employer	5	1.5		
Working role				
Worker	287	88.6		
Manager	21	6.5		
Owner	13	4.0		
Family Income[a]			4.88	2.04
Personal income[b]			3.06	1.72
SSS[c]			5.57	1.54
PI[d]			2.13	1.25
PC[e]			4.21	.78
CC[f]			3.99	.72
SJ[g]			1.96	.92
Vote past (June 2016)				
Unidos Podemos	195	60.2		
PSOE	10	3.1		
Ciudadanos	30	9.3		
PP	8	2.5		
Experimental condition				
Positive	117	36.1		
Negative	106	32.7		
Control	101	31.2		

Note. [ab]Family and Personal income (from 1 = *less than € 700* to 8 = *more than € 3,500 pcm*).

[c]Subjective Social Status (from 1 = *lowest step* to 10 = *highest step*).

[d]Political Ideology (from 1 = *far left* to to 7 = *far right*).

[e]Political Consciousness. [f]Class Consciousness. [g]System Justification.

5.5.2. *Materials*

We first gathered relevant socio-demographic variables such as sex, age, level of studies, both family and personal income, and economic activity status (see Table 5.2). We also asked participants about:

- *Subjective Social Status* (SSS; Goodman et al., 2001). Participants had to stand on a 10 step-ladder (from 1 = *lowest step* to 10 = *highest step*), depending on how they perceive their socioeconomic status

- *Working role*. Modelled on Marxist literature (Marx, 1867/2015, pp. 231-232; Marx & Engels, 1848/1969, pp. 18, 20 and 29; Wright, 1985, p. 42, 2005, p.16, 2015, pp. 11, 155-156 and 168) we developed an *ad hoc* item to categorise people based on their role in the mode of production. Participants were asked about their current position within their workplace (or the one they had or consider they will likely have in case of being retired, unemployed, or students). We considered the two main "class locations", i.e., worker and owner, and the "contradictory" one, i.e., managers (Baizidi, 2019; Sawyer & Gampa, 2020, p. 206; Wright, 1985, 2015). With this measure we aimed to broaden the conceptual framework and consider the phenomenon of exploitation, or property relations, as a plausible antecedent of people´s ideology.

- *Working role W-M (workers-managers).* We recoded the previous measure to further assess the Marxist concept of "labour aristocracy" or how working-class individuals might endorse dominant-class ideology as they move up closer to the advantaged group, i.e., to compare workers and managers (Lenin, 1916/1974, pp. 193-194, 281, 283-284 and 301; Wright & Boese, 2015; Wright & Taylor, 1999).

- *Political Ideology* (PI). Participants placed themselves on a single-item measure, from 1 = *far left* to 7 = *far right* (*M* = 2.05, *SD* = 1.18), as being used in Jost, Nosek, and Gosling (2008). The rationale for such measure was its still great polar or axiological meaning (Bobbio, 1996; Thorisdottir et al. 2007).

- *Political Consciousness* (PC). To further assess participants´ ideology and "gravitation" towards socialism, we took those five items corresponding to the economic dimension from the biaxial instrument developed by Evans, Heath, and Lalljee (1996). Table 5.3

shows such five items. The selection criterion was our specific subject matter, i.e., voting attitudes towards a left-wing party within a context of crisis. We translated and adapted the scale to Spanish, i.e., we made forward and backward translations, experts were consulted, etc. (see Gudmundsson, 2009; Lavrakas et al*.,* 2019). Factor analyses revealed that all items loaded (> .6) on a single underlying factor which accounted for 57.2% of the variance. Reliability was α = .80.

Table 5.3

English originals and Spanish version of the Political Consciousness Scale

1.	Government should redistribute income from the better off to those who are less well-off / El Gobierno debería redistribuir los ingresos de los más a los menos favorecidos.
2.	Big business benefits owners at the expense of workers / Los dueños de las grandes empresas se benefician a costa de los trabajadores.
3.	Ordinary working people do not get their fair share of the nation's wealth / La gente trabajadora no recibe la parte que le corresponde de la riqueza de la nación.
4.	There is one law -for the rich and one for the poor / La ley no es igual para los ricos que para los pobres.
5.	Management will always try to get the better of employees if it gets the chance / El empresario siempre tratará de aprovecharse de sus empleados si tiene oportunidad.

Note. Scale instructions: *Por favor, lee las siguientes afirmaciones e indica tu grado de acuerdo en cada una de ellas* (Literally: Please, read the following statements and indicate your level of agreement with each of them). 5-point Likert scale (from 1 = *totally disagree* to 5 = *totally agree*).

- *Class consciousness* (CC). To further assess "gravitation" towards socialism, we included a shortened version of the Multidimensional Class Consciousness Scale (MCCS) developed by Keefer, Goode, and Van Berkel (2015). We took their top three loading items from each MMCS´ first three dimensions, i.e., awareness of social class, perceptions of class conflict, and beliefs about permeability of social boundaries (see Table 5.4). We also translated and adapted the instrument. Factor analyses revealed that all items loaded (> .5) on a single underlying factor which accounted for 44.8% of the variance. We observed some potentially problematic cross loadings (see Howard, 2015), though rotation (Varimax) converged in 4 iterations. Reliability of the whole scale was α = .83.

Table 5.4

English originals and Spanish version of the Class Consciousness Scale

1.	Social class is still an important issue in today's society / La clase social es todavía algo importante en la sociedad de hoy.
2.	To understand society, we need to be aware of social class differences / Para entender la sociedad debemos tener en cuenta las diferencias de clase.
3.	There is no such thing as "social class" / Las clases sociales no existen (R)
4.	A wealth difference between social classes represents an unfair society / Las diferencias de riqueza entre clases sociales representan una sociedad injusta.
5.	For the rich to increase their wealth they must exploit the poorer classes / Para aumentar su riqueza los ricos deben explotar a las clases pobres.
6.	As one social class gains wealth, another social class inevitably loses / Para que una clase social gane riqueza otra tiene que perderla inevitablemente.
7.	People who fail to improve their social class have usually not tried hard enough / La gente que no mejora su situación social es porque no se ha esforzado lo suficiente. (R)
8.	We could all be wealthy if we really tried / Todos podemos ser ricos si nos esforzamos realmente. (R)
9.	Any person who is able and willing to work hard has a good chance of improving their social class / Toda persona que está dispuesta a trabajar duro puede subir de clase social. (R)

Note. Scale instructions: similar to PC scale (see Table 5.3). Items followed by "(R)" were reverse-scored prior to analyses.

- *System Justification* (SJ). This instrument comprised items 7, 8, and 9 of the previous measure (see Table 5.4). Based on classical Marxist theory, those items might capture "false consciousness", and hence their reverse scoring, at least in capitalist societies (Engels, 1893/1968; Hossler, 2020, p. 204). Given the clear parallelism between such items and those used by SJT (e.g., Jost, Blount, et al., 2003; Zimmerman & Reyna, 2013) we named it SJ. To keep its opposing character with CC we did not reverse the subscale. Reliability was $\alpha = .83$.

- *Vote past (left-right)*. We asked participants to place themselves in a 10-choice item depending on their vote in last national elections (June 2016), including the nine largest parties at a state level, and an option for "other/don´t know/don´t want to answer". For the analyses, we merged voters to create a binary cluster or dichotomous variable (coded 0 = left, 1 = right). We considered UP, *Compromís*, PSOE, ERC, and EH Bildu as left-wing parties, whereas PP, *Ciudadanos*, EAJ-PNV, and PDeCAT, as right-wing ones. Though theoretically arguable, we did so based on both the actual government coalition and how people situate each party in the left-right spectrum (see Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas, 2019).

- *Vote UP* (past). Based on the previous one, we created an additional dichotomous measure to consider UP voters separated from the others (coded 1 = UP, 0 = others).

With respect to the manipulation, all participants—but those randomly assigned to the control group—were exposed to a real-based press release appeared on media on June 2016 (Casi 200 economistas). We slightly changed the content of the vignette for each experimental group. In the positive condition, participants read an "expert" recommendation to vote for UP. In the negative condition, participants read an analogous text but with the opposite recommendation (i.e., we made salient "feelings of threat"), being this type of message arguably prevailing in corporate media (Labio-Bernal in Pedro-Carañana et al., 2018; Navarro, 2018). Incidentally, we presented the text as international experts´ claims aiming to mitigate the risk of confirmation bias or backfire that apocryphal or partisan statements could evoke (Nyhan & Reifler, 2010; Bail et al., 2018; Bullock & Lenz, 2019; Van Bavel & Pereira, 2018).

Hence, participants randomly assigned to the positive condition were asked to read the following text, introduced as a part of a real-press statement:

"Almost 200 internationally-renowned economists recommend voting for Unidos Podemos.

Almost 200 economists from universities around the world have signed a manifesto in which they publicly support the candidacy of Unidos Podemos for the upcoming elections. According to experts, their economic proposals are very reasonable, and they compare them with those applied in advanced countries such as Denmark. If these proposals are carried out, experts say, the economy of Spain would experience great growth, unemployment would be reduced, and the quality of life of her inhabitants would notably improve."

Meanwhile, participants randomly assigned to the negative condition read:

"Almost 200 internationally-renowned economists recommend not voting for Unidos Podemos.

Almost 200 economists from universities around the world have signed a manifesto in which they publicly reject the candidacy of Unidos Podemos for the upcoming elections. According to experts, their economic proposals are not reasonable at all, and they compare them with those applied in backward countries like Venezuela. If these proposals are carried out, experts say, the economy of Spain would experience a great downturn, unemployment would increase, and the quality of life of her inhabitants would notably worsen."

Meanwhile, participants in the control condition read a short text, similar in extension to the previous ones, about meerkat colonies in Angola.

After the experimental manipulation, the following instruments were administered:

- *Credibility of the vignette*. Participants were asked to rate how credible they found the text on a single-item measure (from 1 = *totally disagree* to 5 = *totally agree*).

- *Political Partisanship Scale – Unidos Podemos* (PPS - UP). Modelled on both SJT and SIA (e.g., Bankert, Huddy & Rosema, 2017; Jost et al. 2010) we developed several items aiming to measure political partisanship towards UP (see Table 5.5). Prior factor analyses revealed that all items loaded (> .6) on a single underlying factor which accounted for 66.1% of the variance. Reliability of the summated scale was α = .92. It suggested high item isomorphism, though the value was within the thresholds (Hair et al., 2019, p. 776). Items 2, 4, and 8, showed the highest positive correlation (point biserial) with voting for UP.

Table 5.5

Items used to measure Unidos Podemos´ *partisanship*

1.	In general, I find *Unidos Podemos'* proposals to be fair / En general creo que las propuestas de Unidos Podemos son justas.
2.	Most of *Unidos Podemos'* proposals serve the greater good / La mayoría de las propuestas de Unidos Podemos sirven al bien común.
3.	If *Unidos Podemos* won the elections economic situation in Spain would significantly worsen / Si Unidos Podemos ganara las elecciones la situación económica de España empeoraría notablemente. (R)
4.	*Unidos Podemos* is one of the best political parties in Spain / Unidos Podemos es una de las mejores formaciones políticas de España.
5.	In general, I believe that *Unidos Podemos'* proposals are achievable / En general creo que las propuestas de Unidos Podemos son realizables.
6.	If *Unidos Podemos* won the elections my economic situation would significantly improve / Si Unidos Podemos ganara las elecciones mi situación económica mejoraría notablemente.
7.	In general, I think that *Unidos Podemos'* proposals are dangerous for Spain / En general creo que las propuestas de Unidos Podemos son peligrosas para España. (R)
8.	I identify myself with most of *Unidos Podemos'* proposals / Me siento identificado con la mayoría de las propuestas de Unidos Podemos.

Note. Responses range from 1 = *completely disagree* to 5 = *completely agree*. Items followed by "(R)" were reverse-scored prior to data coding and analyses.

- *Vote intention (left-right)*. Similar measure to *vote past (left-right)*. In this case, we asked participants to indicate which party they will vote if national elections "were to take place tomorrow". We also merged voters to create a dichotomous variable (coded 0 = left, 1 = right).

- *Vote UP (intention).* Similar measure to *vote UP (past)* though based on *vote intention* (coded 1 = UP, 0 = others).

5.5.3. Analyses

First, we carried out preliminary operations (e.g., we excluded participants that did not finish the questionnaire, recoded reverse items, calculated reliability for each scale, etc.). We decided not to remove outliers yet, as a matter of caution, we carried out Welch´s ANOVA and *t*-test, i.e., a robust alternative to analyses of variance when the assumption of homogeneity could be violated due to the different size of each level in categorical variables, so, too, to downweight outliers (see Bakker & Wicherts, 2014; Carifio & Perla, 2008; Delacre, Lakens, & Leys, 2017; Greco et al., 2019; Norman, 2010; Ruxton, 2006).

To test H1, we first measured the strength of the linear relationship between our covariates and the subjective measures, i.e., between our independent variables (social class and other social-demographic attributes) and the outcomes (political attitudes). We calculated several correlation coefficients depending on whether our variables were quantitative-quantitative (Pearson), quantitative-ordinal (Biserial), quantitative-nominal dichotomous (Point-biserial), ordinal-nominal dichotomous (Rank-biserial), or nominal dichotomous-nominal dichotomous (Phi) —e.g., PI or CC were quantitative, level of studies or working role were ordinal, sex or vote UP were nominal-dichotomous (Cureton, 1956; Everitt & Skrondal, 2010, p. 325; Field, 2009, pp. 182; Lavrakas, 2008, p. 728). We performed subsequent analyses of variance when the covariates, i.e., the social-demographic attributes, were categorical. Additional Fisher´s Exact tests were carried out when both covariate and outcome were nominal and dichotomous, e.g., workers-managers with vote left-right (Field, 2009, p. 690; Lavrakas et al. 2019, p. 511).

To test H2, we first carried out exploratory analysis to compare participants´ voting outcomes (past and intention), i.e., frequencies, Phi correlation, and McNemar´s tests (Everitt & Skrondal, 2010, p. 274; Field, 2009, p. 555). Then, we carried out analyses of variance with experimental condition as the independent variable and our continuous post-test measures as the dependent ones. Fisher´s Exact tests were also performed when the dependent variable were dichotomous (i.e., vote left-right, and vote UP-others).

Finally, we delimited simple moderation models with experimental condition as the independent variable or focal predictor, our covariates as moderators, and our post-test measures as the dependent ones. We also tested "simple slopes" (Aiken & West, 1991).

Admittedly, following our MCS, experimental condition would be the moderating variable. That is, being exposed to different information would "moderate" the alleged effect that people´s material living conditions might have on ideology. Nevertheless, the other method allowed us applying Johnson-Neyman technique and facilitated data visualisation (see Hayes, 2018, p. 254). Either way, since we used simple moderation models, results will be analogous in both cases (see Hayes & Montoya, 2017, pp. 2-3).

For the analyses we used version 24.0 of IBM SPSS Statistics and the macro PROCESS version 3.4 developed by Hayes (2018). We also used R Studio version 4.1.2 ("Bird Hippie") for factor analyses. For effect sizes we used online calculators, and reported Hedge´s g (i.e., the corrected measure of Cohen´s d) after Welch´s t-tests, or the Phi coefficient (i.e., φ, similar to Pearson´s r in its interpretation) after 2x2 contingency tables (Lakens, 2013; Lenhard & Lenhard, 2016; see also Cohen, 1992, p. 157). We assessed the consistency of p-values with Statcheck (Rife, Nuijten, Epskamp, 2016).

5.6. Results (Hypothesis 1)

To test if worse-off individuals gravitate towards socialism to greater extent than those better-off ones, we carried out preliminary Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests of normality with our summated scales. Results revealed that all our ideological measures were not normally distributed ($p < .05$). Even though, parametric analyses might be robust enough with respect to violations of normality (see Arnau et al., 2012; Carifio & Perla, 2008; Norman, 2010).

5.6.1. Correlational analyses

We found significant correlations in the intended direction between almost all "class" measures and ideological outcomes (see Table 5.6). Noteworthy, only personal income appeared associated with voting UP (past). Also noteworthy, working role slightly correlated with family income ($r_b = .192$, $p < .01$) and personal income ($r_b = .232$, $p < .001$). Similarly, working role (workers-managers) slightly correlated with family income ($r_b = .232$, $p < .001$) and almost moderately with personal income ($r_b = .277$, $p < .001$). Working role did not appear related to SSS. Other individual attributes showed weaker, or null, relationships with ideology (see Table 5.7).

Table 5.6

*Correlations between "class" and ideology (*N = 324*)*

Ideological outcomes	"Class" measures				
	Family income	Personal income	SSS	Working role	Working role W-M
PI	.177**	.286***	-.249***	.146**	.151**
PC	-.218***	-.333***	-.255***	-.165**	-.130*
CC	-.175**	-.314***	-.261***	-.250***	-.215***
SJ	.171**	.285***	.230***	.297***	.228***
PPS - UP	-.113*	-.230***	-.119*	-.176**	-.161**
Vote past (left-right)	.232***	.305***	.127*	.184**	.218**
Vote intention (left-right)	.188**	.269***	.116	.193**	.195**
Vote UP (past)	-.108	-.143**	-.032	-.109	-.097
Vote UP (intention)	-.097	-.078	-.079	-.095	-.063

Note. Family and Personal income (from 1 = *less than € 700* to 8 = *more than € 3,500 pcm*); SSS (Subjective social status); Working role (coded 1 = worker, 2 = manager, 3 = owner); Working role W-M (coded 1 = worker, 2 = manager); PI = Political Ideology; PC = Political Consciousness; CC = Class Consciousness; SJ = System Justification; PPS - UP = Political Partisanship Scale - *Unidos Podemos*; Vote past and vote intention (coded 0 = left, 1 = right); Vote UP past and intention (coded 1 = UP, 0 = others).

We report different correlation coefficients depending on the type of the variables.

* *p* < .05; ** *p* < .01; *** *p* < .001.

Table 5.7

*Correlations between individual attributes and ideology (*N = 324*)*

Ideological outcomes	Individual attributes		
	Sex	Age	Level of studies
PI	.183**	.022	.042
PC	-.218***	-.150**	-.074
CC	-.179**	-.069	-.051
SJ	.067	-.003	.012
PPS - UP	-.081	.095	.002
Vote past (Left-right)	.124*	.000	.086
Vote intention (Left-right)	.118	-.039	.109
Vote UP (past)	-.062	.096	.119*
Vote UP (intention)	-.095	.142	.045

Note. Sex (coded 1 = male, 2 = female); Age (*M* = 38.89, *SD* = 14.02); Level of studies (1 = *no schooling*, 2 = *elementary*, 3 = *secondary*, 4 = *professional training*, 5 = *university*); PI = Political Ideology; PC = Political Consciousness; CC = Class Consciousness; SJ = System Justification; PPS - UP = Political Partisanship Scale - *Unidos Podemos*; Vote past and vote intention (coded 0 = left, 1 = right); Vote UP past and intention (coded 1 = UP, 0 = others).

We report different correlation coefficients depending on the type of the variables.

* *p* < .05; ** *p* < .01; *** *p* < .001.

On another note, items 2, 4, and 8, of our PPS, showed the largest relationship (r_{pb} > .6) with voting UP (past and intention). The summated scale also showed a large correlation (r_{pb} > .6) with those outcomes. Meanwhile, all our ideological measures, including vote past and intention (left-right), showed large correlations among them (> .5) though moderate ones with vote UP past and intention. PI showed the greatest relationship with the outcomes vote past (r_{pb} = .783, p < .001) and vote intention (r_{pb} = .802, p < .001). Accordingly, PI showed the greatest relationship with the variables vote UP past (r_{pb} = -.454, p < .001) and vote UP intention (r_{pb} = -.407, p < .001). Noteworthy, leaving aside voting measures, PC and CC showed the greatest correlation estimate among ideological outcomes (r_{pb} = .721, p < .001).

5.6.2.   Analyses of variance

A preliminary Welch´s ANOVA showed significant effects by economic activity status for almost every ideological outcome. Games-Howell post-hoc pairwise comparisons revealed that differences were mostly between students and unemployed participants on the one hand, and employed participants on another. Subsequent Welch´s t-tests showed that unemployed participants compared to employed ones scored significantly different in PI, CC, SJ, and PPS – UP (see Table 5.8). Effect sizes for each pairwise comparison were around Cohen's (1988) convention for medium effects (d = .50).

Table 5.8

Welch´s t-*test by economic activity status*

	Unemployed (n = 27)		Employed (n = 187)			
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	Welch´s *t*	Effect sizes (g_{Hedges})
PI	1.67	.78	2.35	1.33	-3.789***	.53
CC	4.25	.65	3.87	.71	2.762**	-.54
SJ	1.69	.80	2.08	.92	-2.310*	-.44
PPS - UP	3.67	.83	3.31	.89	2.105*	-.41

Note. PI = Political Ideology; CC = Class Consciousness; SJ = System Justification; PPS - UP = Political Partisanship Scale - *Unidos Podemos*. Employed comprised both private and public sector workers.

* p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001.

We also found significant effects by working role for several ideological outcomes. More specifically, workers compared to managers demonstrated significantly different

scores in PI, CC, and SJ (see Table 5.9). Workers compared to owners also showed significant differences in CC [Welch´s $t(12.569) = 2.475$, $p < .05$] and SJ [Welch´s $t(12.569) = 3.028$, $p < .05$] (though not in PI). Effect sizes in this case were $g_{Hedges} = -.95$ and -1.23 respectively.

Table 5.9

Welch´s t-*test by working role*

	Workers (n = 287)		Managers (n = 21)			
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	Welch´s *t*	Effect sizes (g_{Hedges})
PI	2.06	1.22	2.81	1.57	-2.144*	.60
CC	4.06	.66	3.46	.94	2.854**	-.88
SJ	1.86	.84	2.67	1.17	-3.076**	.94
PPS - UP	3.51	.85	2.94	1.24	2.105*	-.65

Note. PI = Political Ideology; CC = Class Consciousness; SJ = System Justification; PPS - UP = Political Partisanship Scale - *Unidos Podemos*. Employed comprised both private and public sector workers.

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

5.6.3.   Fisher´s Exact tests

To further determine whether there was an association between our dichotomous categorical variables or not, we carried out non-parametric tests. Due to a relatively small sample size, we decided to carry out Fisher´s Exact tests instead of Chi-square tests of independence (see e.g., Field, 2009, p. 690).

Results showed statistically significant differences between unemployed and employed participants in vote past and intention (two-tailed $p < .01$ and $p < .05$ respectively). All unemployed participants chose left, whereas around 22% of employed ones chose right (in both past and intention). Effect sizes were $\varphi = .196$ and .186 respectively. We did not find significant differences in vote UP past and intention.

Similarly, results showed statistically significant differences between workers and managers in vote past and intention (two-tailed $p < .01$). Workers were more left-wing oriented than managers. Effect sizes were $\varphi = .218$ and .195 respectively. We did not find differences in vote UP past and intention.

5.7. Results (Hypothesis 2)

To test if being exposed to positive/negative messages about UP increase/decrease people´s support for that party (H2a/H2b), we first carried out frequency analysis and calculated correlation coefficients to compare vote for UP past and intention (coded 1 = UP, 0 = other option). We did likewise with vote in general (coded 0 = left, 0 = right). Since the same individuals were asked (or surveyed) twice about their voting behaviour (i.e., they faced the same measure before and after the manipulation), we carried out additional McNemar´s tests (see e.g., Everitt & Skrondal, 2010, p. 274; Field, 2009, p. 555).

Results revealed that 60.2% of our participants voted for UP in 2016 and 48.8% would do it again (r_ϕ = .705, p < .001). Meanwhile, 67% of our participants voted left in 2016 and 60.5% indicated that they would do it again (r_ϕ = .877, p < .001). Subsequent McNemar´s tests confirmed that participants´ favourability towards UP significantly changed between past and intention (two-tailed p < .001). In the positive condition the difference was almost non-significant (two-tailed p = .049). Meanwhile, the proportion between vote past and intention (left-right) remained rather stable, in general and within each experimental condition (two-tailed p > .05). That is, our sample reflexed UP´s loss of popular support (without major changes in left-right clusters).

5.7.1. Analyses of variance

We performed one‑way ANOVAs using the criterion of group (positive, negative, and control) as the independent variable and credibility of the vignette. PPS – UP as a summated scale, and each of its items separately, were the dependent ones. Mean plots showed tendencies in the intended direction. However, results did not show statistically significant differences between groups by experimental condition, but for credibility of the story [Welch´s $F(2, 190.96)$ = 52.223, p < .001] and item 7 of our PPS – UP [Welch´s $F(2, 207.96)$ = 3.049, p < .05].

More specifically, participants´ scores on PPS – UP (item 7) were significantly lower in the negative condition than in the positive one [Welch´s $t(206.173)$ = 2.470, p < .05] or than in both positive and control conditions combined [Welch´s $t(191.328)$ = 2.237, p < .05]. Effect sizes for these pairwise comparisons were g_{Hedges} = .33 and .27 respectively.

Noteworthy, UP voters compared to voters of other parties, both in last elections, showed different credibility towards positive and negative vignettes (see Table 5.10). We also observed significant differences on credibility between positive and negative

conditions among UP voters (past) [Welch´s $t(126.102) = 16.142$, $p < .001$]. Effect size was $g_{Hedges} = -.28$. Other parties´ voters found the three vignettes equally believable —so, too, all participants the control one.

On another note, Fisher´s Exact tests did not find any statistical significant association between experimental condition and vote intention.

Table 5.10

Welch´s t-*test comparing vote past on credibility of the vignette*

Experimental condition	UP voters (past)		Others (past)		Welch´s *t*	Effect sizes (g_{Hedges})
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*		
Positive	4.03	.85	2.89	.94	-6.658***	-1.28
Negative	1.61	.86	2.71	1.24	8.558***	1.06
Control	3.16	.59	3.05	.23	-1.223	-.22

Note. Credibility of the vignette (from 1 = *totally disagree* to 5 = *totally agree*). Voters by condition (UP and others respectively): Positive $n = 70$ and $n = 47$; Negative $n = 61$ and $n = 45$; Control $n = 64$ and $n = 37$.

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

5.7.2. *Moderation analyses*

Given the observed tendencies, we delimited subsequent simple moderation models, with experimental condition as focal predictor, our covariates as moderators, and PPS – UP, and vote UP (intention) as dependent variables. The interaction between age and experimental condition was found to be statistically significant for PPS - UP. Overall model: $F(3, 320) = 2.77$, $p < .05$, $R^2 = .02$. Interaction: $b = .01$, 95% CI [.001, .018], $t(320) = 2.27$, $p < .05$. More specifically, the interaction was found to be statistically significant when comparing negative versus the other two conditions. Overall model: $F(3, 320) = 3.16$, $p < .05$, $R^2 = .03$. Interaction: $b = .02$, 95% CI [.003, .032], $t(320) = 2.33$, $p < .05$. This model accounted for approximately 3% of the variance in the variable PPS - UP. Johnson-Neyman technique (see Hayes, 2018, p. 253) revealed a region of significance for ages < 23 and > 76 (and a region of marginal significance for ages < 30 and > 62). We tested "simple slopes" to visualise the association between the variables (see Figure 5.1).

Figure 5.1

Interaction between experimental condition and age on PPS – UP
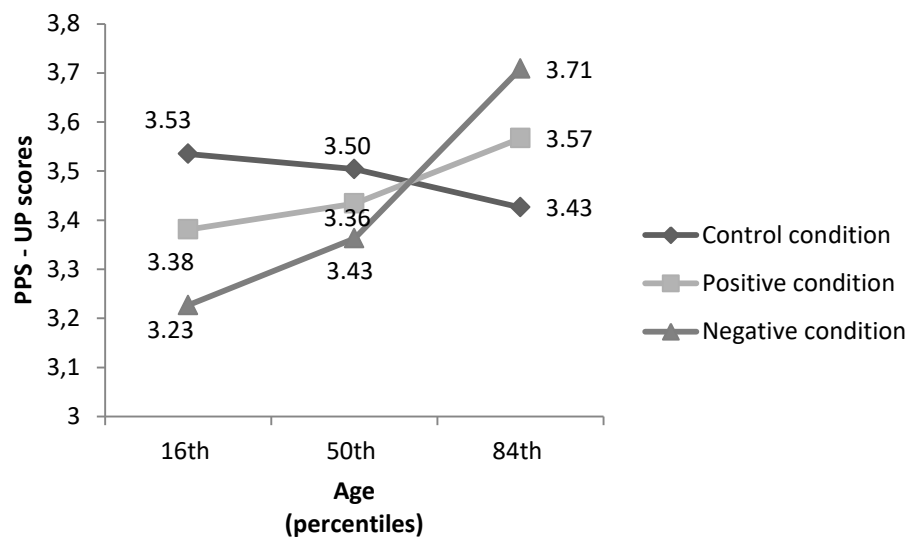
Note. The slopes suggest that being exposed to negative information about UP would undermine popular support for that party among young people (though the other way round among older individuals).

PPS - UP = Political Partisanship Scale – *Unidos Podemos*.

We also found a statistically significant interaction between family income and experimental condition for vote UP (intention). Given the dichotomous character of such variable (coded 1 = UP, 0 = others), PROCESS conducted logistic regression analyses (see e.g., Hayes, 2018, p. 70; Hayes & Matthes, 2009). Overall model: $\chi^2 (3) = 7.487$, $p = .06$. Interaction: $b = -.15$, 95% CI [.001, .018], $Z(3) = -2.14$, $p < .05$. More specifically, the interaction was found to be statistically significant when comparing negative versus the other two conditions. Overall model: $\chi^2 (3) = 8.416$, $p < .05$. Interaction: $b = -.27$, 95% CI [-.518, -.03], $Z(3) = -2.24$, $p < .05$. This model explained approximately 3.4% (Nagelkerke R^2) of the variance in vote UP (intention). Johnson-Neyman technique revealed a region of significance for values > 6.63 in family income (and a region of marginal significance for values < 1.70 and > 6.25). We tested "simple slopes" to visualise the association (see Figure 5.2).

Figure 5.2

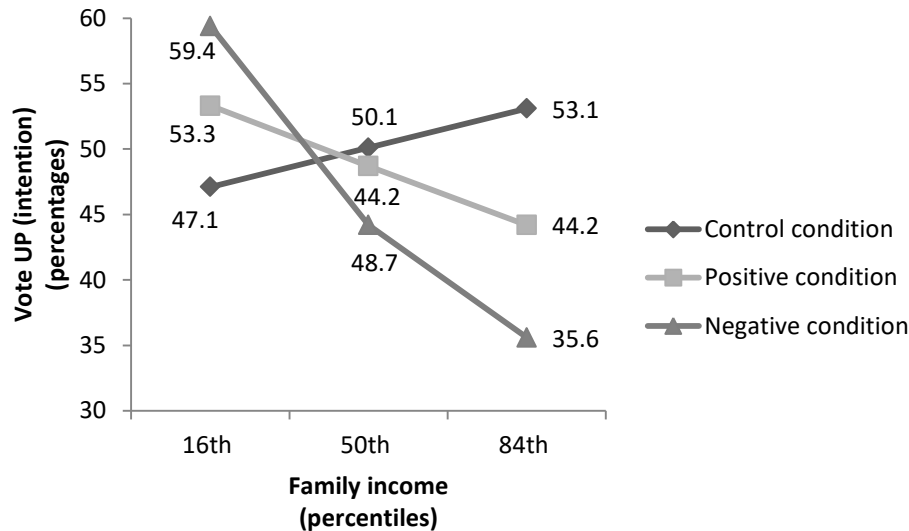*Interaction between experimental condition and family income on vote UP*

Note. The slopes suggest that being exposed to negative information about UP would undermine popular support for that party among high-income individuals (though the other way round among low-status ones). Vote UP intention (coded 1 = UP, 0 = others); Family Income (from 1 = *less than € 700* to 8 = *more than € 3,500 pcm*).

5.8. Discussion, limitations and further research

With respect to H1, our results suggest that the disadvantaged gravitate towards socialism (at least, they showed more CC and less SJ). More specifically, both family and personal income, economic activity status, and working role, appeared related with every ideological outcome as predicted, including vote intention (though only personal income appeared related with voting to UP and only in last elections).

With respect to H2, our results confirmed that available information could have an effect in people´s ideology in one sense or another. More specifically, being exposed to positive/negative information about a political party—to UP in our case—might increase/decrease support for that party (though main effect was significant only for item 7 of our PPS – UP and interaction effects only for age and family income).

At large, our results support both SIA and CM —so, too, somehow SJT. Let us discuss more in detail our findings, several concerns and/or limitations, and further research proposals.

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5.8.1. *About the sample*

Different sample sizes across levels in our categorical covariates, and an overall left-wing skewed distribution, narrowed our analyses. For instance, we had 287 workers, 21 managers, and only 13 owners. Also, UP voters outnumbered four times the other three major parties combined. That alone would explain the non-normal distribution of our ideological measures, the modest effect of our manipulation, and why participants did not find positive and negative vignettes equally believable. Since most of our participants were already class-conscious workers—and/or UP voters—we should not hope but partisan or confirmation bias in the positive condition, and backfire effects in the negative one (Nyhan & Reifler, 2010; Bail et al., 2018; Bullock & Lenz, 2019; Van Bavel & Pereira, 2018). Though representative samples will likely always include more workers than managers or owners, further research should try to reach at least $n > 30$ on each level of each covariate, including vote past (see Field, 2009, p. 42).

5.8.2. *About the questionnaire*

More than 150 participants did not finish the questionnaire. Even many of those who finished it could have not pay full attention to the vignettes. This alone would also explain the modest effect of our manipulation. Perhaps, we included too many measures prior to the manipulation which, in turn, could have caused "respondent fatigue" (Ben-Nun in Lavrakas, 2008, pp. 742-743). Further research should consider more specific measures within shorter questionnaires.

5.8.3. *About our "class" measures*

Personal income showed small to medium correlation estimates with most ideological outcomes. Family income showed a bit lower ones. Such "weak" relationships would rely in the fact that income-based measures obscure the relative character of "our wants and pleasures" (Kraus, Piff & Keltner, 2009; Marx & Engels, 1891/2010, p. 16; Wright, 1985, pp. 147-148). SSS also showed "weak" relationships with ideology. In this case, the measure itself seems an ideological outcome and, perhaps, vulnerable to social-desirability bias (Diener et al., 1991; Sawyer & Gampa, 2020; Shaked et al., 2016). Meanwhile, our working-role measure showed analogous correlation estimates with ideology.

Noteworthy, we found only small to moderate correlations between working role and income. This would be due to the fact that proper dominant classes were largely underrepresented in our study.

Either way, unlike gradational or occupational measures, our relational one took the class-based *antithesis* or conflict of interests between productive forces (in capitalist societies) into consideration (Elster, 1982, p. 478; Lenin, 1899/1964; Marx, 1867/2015, pp. 163-164, 231-232 and 507-509; Wright, 2015, pp. 80-81). Likewise, it allowed us to set rather non-arbitrary class boundaries for our analyses (Wright, 2015, pp. 116-117 and 155). Larger sample sizes would let us consider an even wider range of "class fractions" (see e.g., Wright, 1985, p. 195). Also, being identity an immediate antecedent of CA, we might also directly ask participants to which extent they identify themselves with the working class (Postmes, Haslam & Jans, 2012; Thomas et al*.,* 2019). As the case may be, all "class" measures (i.e., gradational, relational, objective, and subjective) might have a say in our research topic.

5.8.4. *About our political or class-consciousness measures*

To which extent our ideological measures properly capture "gravitation" towards socialism goes beyond the present study. Perhaps they mostly measure "vulgar socialism" or socialism "in embryo" (Lenin, 1902/1977, pp. 374-375; Marx, 1875/1970, p. 11). Even though, all of them largely correlated ($> .5$). That is, they would plausibly correlate with a "theoretically accurate" instrument (if respondents do not find it gobbledygook).

What seems clear is that our measures captured *working-class* consciousness. That is, low dominant-class individuals´ scores do not mean lack of CC; they might still be conscious of their own class.

On another note, CC empirical research has often faced objections (Lukács 1923/1967, pp. 60-61; Ollman, 1987; Wright, 1985, pp. 252-253). By all means, social reality—or just reality—is complex and constantly evolving —so, too, its reflexion in people´s thought (Engels, 1880/2005, pp. 66-67; Marx, 1859/1999, p. 4; Reicher, 2004, pp. 924-925). The observed interaction effects for age and family income alone do not but confirm the complexity of social reality.

However, we do not see major theoretical objections for approaching material reality and its reflexion in people´s thought altogether. We might identify tendencies, recognise patterns, make predictions, etc. For instance, we would expose participants to different frames (e.g., successful versus unsuccessful class-struggle actions such strikes) and test their effect on people´s CC, including attitudes towards CA in a context of CS (see e.g., Tausch et al*.,* 2011; van Zomeren et al., 2008). In such cases, any scale aiming to capture CC, including perhaps any subjective measure of class, should be applied after the manipulation.

5.8.5. *About credibility of the vignette*

People´s susceptibility to be deceived would be caused by lack of reasoning rather than by motivated reasoning (Pennycook & Rand, 2019; Ross, Rand, & Pennycook, 2021). However, as already noted, our results suggest that both partisanship biases and backfire effects have been simultaneously taking place (Nyhan & Reifler, 2010; Bail et al., 2018; Bullock & Lenz, 2019; Van Bavel & Pereira, 2018). While other parties´ voters found our vignettes equally believable, UP ones gave much more credibility to the positive one (and much less to the negative one). Admittedly, we know that the positive vignette was true. Moreover, since the survey was administered online, we cannot determine to which extent participants were able to fully apply their analytic skills. Even though, based on SIA and CM, we would plausibly find analogous results if the negative vignette were true. It follows from the assumption that social-psychological variables or social identities may acquire an (apparent) "autonomous function" (see Tajfel & Turner, 1979, p. 46). Or, in Marx´s (1844/1970) words, that "theory also becomes a material force as soon as it has gripped the masses" (p. 7).

Meanwhile, the fact that other parties´ voters found both positive and negative vignettes equally believable could be attributed to the specific narrative, i.e., coming from experts, or to mere indifference. In any event, a constant supply of either true or fake information, taking advantage of human cognitive biases, might help to keep partisans loyal to any ideology. Further research, with larger samples and thus more ideologically diverse participants, could take these issues forward.

5.8.6. *About external validity of our experiment*

We aimed to emulate and/or making salient a very specific narrative, i.e., an expert´s recommendation to vote (or not to vote) for UP, and then measuring its effect on our participants´ political preferences. However, it seems pretentious to expect a large impact on peoples´ deep-rooted and sincerely-held ideological beliefs by reading a single vignette —which some of our participants might even have not "sincerely" read it. Survey experiments would thus allow but a timid and partial reproduction of what actual "means of mental production" might be capable of (Cohen, 1965, p. 13; Herman & Chomsky, 1988/2008; MacLeod, 2019; Marx & Engels, 1846/1968, p. 21; McCombs, 2005; Mullen & Klahen, 2010; Pedro-Carañana et al., 2018).

On another note, in real life, people might be overwhelmed with information of all kinds, often false or biased, about different issues. That is, quantity might be more important than quality.

Further complicating matters, people´s political preferences might rely upon a plethora of intersecting and often contradictory factors such as personal experiences, likelihood of receiving incentives (i.e., "clientelism" or exchange of commodities for partisanship), likelihood of suffering retaliation, and existence or not of realistic alternatives. Even dispositional factors would have probabilistic effects. Admittedly, those with more resources may find it easier to impose their worldviews—and their interests— upon those of others. Nevertheless, though important, media influence would be but another way of doing so. Albeit the mere existence of large-scale propaganda campaigns against collectives and ideologies suggests that they are effective, only multidisciplinary approaches might allow sound conclusions.

5.8.7. *About overlaps with System Justification Theory (SJT)*

Our unemployed participants scored more to the left than those employed ones. Based on SJT, employed people would develop a higher SJM, i.e., a higher motivation to defend a system that allows them keeping their current status, especially in a context of high unemployment (see e.g., Jost, 2019; Jost et al*.,* 2012). Based on SIA and CM, employed people would perceive the status quo as stable and/or legitimate, and/or see themselves as members of the advantaged group (see Lenin, 1916/1974, pp. 193-194, 281, 283-284 and 301; Rubin & Hewstone, 2004, p. 835; Wright & Boese, 2015; Wright & Taylor, 1999). Both seem congruent.

Likewise, workers scored more to the left than owners and, to even a greater extent, than managers. Plausibly, those that "command in the name of capitalists" (Marx, 1867/2015, p. 232), tend to develop a SJM and/or a sense of belonging to the advantaged group. Since most managers are still wage earners, and thus still highly vulnerable to market fluctuations, they might tend to bolster the status quo to even a greater extent than proper dominant-class individuals (Marx & Engels, 1848/1969, pp. 18-20; Welch & Foster, 1987; Wright & Taylor, 1999). This would be a reflex of the so-called "contradictory class locations" (see Wright, 1985, 2015, pp. 108-109). Either way, we still see an overlap among SJT, SIA, and CM.

5.8.8.   *About discrepancies with SJT*

One major concern with SJT is the great value placed to an alleged "bottom-up" SJM to explain subservient attitudes (Jost, 2019, p. 265; see also Baron & Banaji, 2009; Jost & Hunyady, 2005). We do not deny that humans might have an overall motive to bolster what they perceive as advantageous for themselves. We neither deny that dispositional variables might have probabilistic effects on people´s ideology (see Sidanius et al, 2004; Jost, 2019; see also Engels, 1878/1947, p. 23). It would partially explain why some dominant-class members' show desires of social justice or why some subaltern individuals show the greatest resistance to deception.

However, we are reluctant to attribute people´s both material living conditions and ideology to a sort of personality trait, individual predisposition, or fundamental SJM. History, the social-psychological literature, and our results, suggest that the context, including available information, might have greater impact on people´s political attitudes than other individual attributes (e.g., Blader, 2007; Davies, 1962; Drury & Reicher, 2009; Lenin, 1915/1974, pp. 98, 213-214, 216 and 240; Marx, 1859/1999, p. 4; Papageorge & Thom, 2020; van Zomeren, Postmes & Spears, 2008; Weber, 1987; Wright, 2015, pp. 3-4 and 76).

Likewise, whether a SJM as such exist, it might largely be the outcome of people´s position in the social structure, i.e., a truly SJM for dominant individuals, and a sort of "reassurance" or *false motive* in the face of powerful material constrains for the subordinate ones (see e.g., Engels, 1845/1969, pp. 87-88, 1893/1968; Jost et al., 2014; Marx, 1844/1970, p. 3). That is, the alleged SJM would be highly, if not uniquely, situational.

5.8.9. *About our Model of Class Struggle (MCS)*

What has been said so far does not imply that class in its classical Marxist sense is the only, or always a *direct,* cause of people´s ideology, not even that socialism is working-class individuals´ immediate interest (Wright, 2015, pp. 76, 143 and 167-169). As already suggested, and congruent with SJT, SIA, and CM, some workers might achieve a status—sometimes well above the one of many employers—which are not willing to lose. Such workers might tend to perceive that the system is either stable, legitimate, and/or that social advance is possible (which, up to a point, might be true). On certain historical periods, dominant-class practices would even lead most workers to bolster the status quo and/or to struggle individually to be part of the advantaged group (i.e., if our H2 is true at its finest it may seem that our H1 is not). Eventually, certain individual attributes might also become more salient than class (Wright, 2005, pp. 186-188; 2015, pp. 3-4 and 76). In this regard, as CM already noted, simple polar conceptualisations of class could be an oversimplification (see Lenin, 1902/1977, p. 193; 1916/1974, pp. 193-194, 281 and 283-284; Marx, 1883/2010, p. 633; Marx & Engels, 1848/1969, p. 18; Wright, 2015, pp. 4 and 153-156; see also about the "embarrassment of the middle class" in Wright, 1985, p. 13).

Even though, every known system fosters either individual or collective surplus-value appropriation (Lenin, 1902/1977, p. 384; Marx, 1875/1970, pp. 10-11; Pigou, 1948; Wu, 2011, p. 175). At once, workers´ role in the mode of production, and number, suggest that working-class is the "revolutionary subject", i.e., the only social category capable of significant system change (Engels, 1880/2005, p. 38; Lenin, 1917/1974, p. 408; Marx, 1867/1992; Marx & Engels, 1845/1956, pp. 51-53, 1846/1968, pp. 21-22 and 34). When sudden, sharp, and broad enough changes for the worse in most working-class individuals´ material living conditions occur, the ones affected develop a shared identity or sense of commonality of interests, and act accordingly, i.e., given the proper objective and subjective conditions, system changes might take place (Engels, 1880/2005, pp. 65-67; Davies, 1962; Lenin, 1915/1974, pp. 98, 213-214 and 216; van Zomeren, Postmes & Spears, 2008; Wright, 2015, pp. 124-125 and 153). It seems thus well worth considering to which extent working-class individuals self-identify as such and show willingness towards system-challenging CA.

5.8.10. *About* **Unidos Podemos**´ *diminishing support*

Our results suggest that available information could somehow impact voting attitudes, though it seems hard to assess the role of dominant classes. Conceivably, mass-media could have made salient UP's infightings, its leaders´ questionable behaviour, inconvenient issues for left-wing parties such as immigration, and the links between the party and Venezuela´s regime (see Barbero, 2015; Labio-Bernal in Pedro-Carañana et al., 2018; Urbanska & Guimond, 2018; Van Zomeren et al*.,* 2004). Our negative condition had, indeed, echoes of the latter. However, the fact that our working-class participants did not support the party to a greater extent than those better-off ones seems a worrisome sign for an alleged left-wing party. The fact that our participants—mostly workers and, apparently, class-conscious ones—passed from 60.2% to 48.8% in vote UP (past and intention) was also suggestive. Considering that negative information about UP was largely rejected by its past voters, we might consider an additional explanation to media influence. That is, UP could have fully disclosed itself as a non-socialist party.

Admittedly, people´s interest in socialism might diminish following economic recoveries and a regular supply of anti-communist ideology (Beaufre, 1963/2012, p. 126; Davies, 1962; Gilman, 2003, pp. 42-46 and 58, 2017; Gregory & Stuart, 2014, p. 290; Herman & Chomsky, 1988/2008; MacLeod, 2019). Also admittedly, paying attention to different oppressions might help the awakening of CC among workers (Lenin, 1902/1977, pp. 399-400, 412 and 422). Hence, UP could have decided to temper its discourse, and/or to focus on post-materialist issues, believing that society demands it and/or that it might serve to further spread socialism. Nevertheless, it might also have contributed to obscure CS issues and/or to create disaffection among working-class conscious´ voters.

Political scientists, economists, sociologists, etc., would assess whether UP is a true follower of the socialist tradition or not, whether Spain´s economic foundation actually improved or not, etc. Social psychologists, meanwhile, would explore which rhetoric has better electoral prospects (e.g., disruptive versus moderate, materialist versus post-materialist) and on which target group (e.g., workers, unemployed, women). Plausibly, as we have seen in our manipulation, effects may not be one-way. What is gained by one side might be lost by another. The goal, for any political party, is to make the gains outweigh the losses.

5.8.11. About MCS´ practical usefulness

The methodology we have seen so far would serve, after refinement, to predict the likelihood of, and address, system-challenging events. Longitudinal and/or subsequent cross-sectional correlational research would make it possible to assess the "boiler pressure" within certain society, within certain collective, and within certain historical period. Parallel analyses of the nature and number of popular demonstrations would help to assess the external validity of the instruments. Qualitative surveys might also have a say, though large enough samples would be logistically and economically prohibitive, not to mention the risk of biases and reproducibility concerns. A number of factors such as the ideological stance of the ruling party, the existence or not of a proper socialist movement, and other idiosyncrasies of society, might also have predictive value (see e.g., Alesina, Glaeser & Sacerdote, 2001; Gingrich & Häusermann, 2015; Żuk & Toporowski, 2020). Theoretically, keeping track of certain social-economic indicators could serve to predict the risk of system change without need for measuring people's attitudes.

However, it could still be interesting to assess, with experimental designs, the extent to which making salient certain issues (e.g., immigration, nationalism, environmentalism, post-materialism) has SJ effects (see e.g., Brandt et al. 2021; Eadeh & Chang, 2020; Hanappi & Hanappi-Egger, 2018; Cutts, Ford & Goodwin, 2011; Spies, 2013; Urbanska & Guimond, 2018). At a more practical level, all the above could serve to different social agents, media, political parties, trade unions, social movements, etc., to define and refine their respective strategies.

5.9. Conclusion

The present study began by referring to the so-called inequality paradox, i.e., why disadvantaged people often bolster a harmful system. Following SJT, SIA, CM, and our findings, it might be partially addressed with another paradox: those able to rebel do not have the need to do it, whereas those who have the need cannot rebel. Admittedly, bolstering a system which is disadvantageous for the self might lead to a sort of mental conflict, or *cognitive dissonance*, which would be but the reflex in thought of the class struggle in fact. Those individuals who feel "at ease" in such class struggle would thus feel motivated to enhance any ideology that might serve as a palliative for others´ mental conflicts. Every now and then, material incentives or deterrents, or mere diversion, would be required to keep propaganda effective.

However, given the proper objective and subjective conditions, system changes might take place. Multidisciplinary approaches and different levels of analyses, from Geopolitics to Biology, will progressively unveil such objective and subjective conditions. From a social-psychological perspective, our MCS proposes to focus first and foremost on people´s position in, or relationships within, the social-economic structure.

6.   GENERAL DISCUSSION

6.1. Major findings and contributions of the present thesis

The major finding of the present thesis is that people´s position in the social-economic structure determines, to certain extent, their attitudes towards such social-economic structure. At large, our low-income, low-status, and/or working-class participants, showed less pro-system attitudes than their high-income, high-status, and/or dominant-class counterparts. Likewise, we found that available information, or politically loaded messages, could have an effect on people´s political attitudes (though, perhaps, not always in the expected direction).

In parallel, a profound review of the literature revealed that mainstream social-psychological approaches offer different explanations of people´s beliefs, attitudes, and behaviour, towards the system —so, too, often contradictory to each other. It led us to propose what could perhaps be considered the major contribution of the present thesis, i.e., a synthetic, comprehensive and parsimonious attempt to explain system attitudes, or social-psychological Model of Class Struggle (MCS).

Such model was largely modelled on classical Marxism (CM) and the Social Identity Approach (SIA), though other approaches such as Social Dominance and System Justification theories (SDT and SJT, respectively) also contributed to its development.

Another original contribution was our 4-item instrument to measure people´s attitudes towards the social-economic structure, or Class-Struggle-Actions Scale (CSAS). Though it would be seen as an early development, the instrument presented adequate psychometric properties of reliability and validity. Hence, it would be of utility for predicting the likelihood of system-challenging events (or, at the very least, it may serve as starting point for further developments).

Last but not least, the manifold theoretical and methodological concerns that arose—and were thoroughly discussed—over the course of the entire research process, may be of interest for future studies about system stability and system change. More specifically, relational measures of class (i.e., in its classical Marxist sense) seem as worthy of consideration as gradational ones (either subjective or objective), if not more, to explain system stability.

Hence, to sum up, the present thesis might help to further understanding why people rebel (and why don´t). Let us discuss about the above in more detail:

6.2. Discussing the findings in connection with the hypotheses

The whole thesis revolved around a twofold working hypothesis (or two hypotheses that should not be extricated one from another):

H1 - Low-income, low-status, and/or working-class people gravitate towards a more equal social-economic system or socialism (to greater extent than their high-income, high-status, and/or dominant-class counterparts).

H2 - Dominant-class practices and institutions mitigate, or revert, such gravitation (at least in capitalist societies).

Those two hypotheses were present in all the empirical studies of the present thesis. Nevertheless, the second one varied somewhat between studies. Though always testing (alleged) system-justifying (SJ) practices, in two studies we focused on making people perceive the system as advantageous. In another, however, we focused on making people perceive an alternative as detrimental. It therefore led to two specific or secondary hypotheses. That is:

H2 - Reading/listening life-stories of the entrepreneur type might affect system attitudes. Successful life-stories would increase SJ beliefs and decrease willingness towards CSA (H2a). Failure versions would have the opposing effect (H2b).

H2 - Available information about an alleged anti-system political force might affect voters´ attitudes. Positive information would increase the likelihood of support (H2a). Negative information would have the opposing effect (H2b).

6.2.1. About the general "twofold" hypothesis

With respect to the first hypothesis, results of our empirical studies largely support it. Those low-income, low-status, and/or working-class participants justified less the political and economic system than those high-income, high-status, and/or dominant-class ones. Conversely, the former showed more leftist attitudes, including (working) class-consciousness, and more willingness towards system-challenging collective actions (CA) than the latter. Even further, our unemployed participants, i.e., people arguably among those harmed the most within the social-economic structure, were less pro-system oriented than the others.

Hence, our results support criticisms of the so-called status-legitimacy hypothesis (see e.g., Brandt, 2013; Caricati, 2016; Kelemen et al., 2014; Vargas-Salfate et al., 2018; see also Ipsos, 2021; Jost, Banaji & Nosek, p. 909). Moreover, our results support both CM and SIA´s idea that social being determines consciousness (see e.g., Marx, 1859/1999, p. 4; Turner & Reynolds, 2003, p. 205).

Admittedly, analogous studies being carried out in different countries, with different population groups, and/or in different historical moments, would yield different results (see e.g., Li et al, 2020; Li, Wu & Kou, 2020; Tang, 2018; Zhang & Zhong, 2018). That is, low-status and low-income people would show more pro-system attitudes in socialist countries than their high-status and high-income counterparts (which, incidentally, would still be congruent with our first hypothesis).

Either way, people´s position in the social-economic structure seems a relevant antecedent of system attitudes (though parallel analyses of such social-economic structure would always be advisable).

With respect to the second hypothesis, however, we obtained mixed results. Let us discuss about it separately, i.e., in connection with the specific or secondary hypotheses.

6.2.2.   *About the specific or secondary hypotheses*

When testing one alleged dominant-class practice, i.e., making people believe that social boundaries are permeable, we didn´t obtain the expected effect (but rather the other way round). Those working-class participants that were exposed to a *rags-to-riches* plot of the entrepreneur type tended to justify the political system to lesser extent than those that were assigned to a control group.

A plausible explanation could be that our samples comprised mostly working-class, and left-oriented, individuals. Complementarily, when the studies were carried out, several years had passed away since the alleged outbreak of the entrepreneur discourse. That is, our participants could somehow suspect that rags-to-riches plots do not correspond with actual possibilities for most people in the real world. Such plots could, thus, generate a sort of backfire.

Notwithstanding the above, our results also suggested that rags-to-riches biographies of the entrepreneur type could undermine willingness towards CA among right-wing people. That is, broadcasting the idea that social boundaries are permeable could have certain SJ effects (at least among certain population groups).

Meanwhile, our results suggested that *rags-to-rags* biographies, i.e., life-stories of people who try to thrive following individualistic paths and fail, would undermine SJ beliefs. More specifically, rags-to-rags biographies undermined descriptive Meritocracy— i.e., the belief that Meritocracy exists—among our working-class participants. It would support the idea that low social-mobility frames would undermine SJ beliefs (see e.g., Day & Fiske, 2017; McCall, Burk, Laperrière, & Richeson, 2017).

Even though, our results also suggested that rags-to-rags plots could undermine beliefs in Meritocracy among high-income individuals, though the other way round among low-income ones. Perhaps, a sort of backfire took place among our low-income participants. Further research would shed light on such striking finding.

On another note, things were a bit different when testing another, albeit still related, dominant-class practice, i.e., making people believe that parties that advocate system changes pose a threat. In this experiment, our participants were exposed to either positive or negative information about *Unidos Podemos*, a novel left-wing political force (or were assigned to a control group). Results showed that those participants who were exposed to negative information about the party considered that its proposals "are dangerous for Spain" (to greater extent than those who were exposed to positive information). That is, if we consider that *Unidos Podemos* advocate for changes in the system, it suggests that making the party look like a threat could have system-maintenance effects.

This approach seemed of more practical utility and proved better performance to test the hypothesis that dominant-class practices undermine system-challenging attitudes. Even though, a closer look at the results indicated that social reality is complex. More specifically, the negative information about *Unidos Podemos* undermined support for that party among our younger participants, although the other way round among our older ones. One plausible explanation is that young people at large do not have a well-formed political ideology yet and are thus easier to be influenced. Another plausible explanation, albeit complementary, is that most of our older participants were *Unidos Podemos´* partisans. Thus, negative information about the party could have provoked a backfire effect.

Likewise, negative information about *Unidos Podemos* undermined support for that party among our high-income participants (though the other way round among our low-income ones). In this case, high-income people at large would have less pressing need of profound system changes. Thus, making *Unidos Podemos* look like a threat for their way of life, would undermine partisanship among this population group. Conversely, low-income people, i.e., people that have less to lose with system change, would backfire in front of negative messages against those who advocate such system changes.

Either way, our results suggest that (manufacturing) available information could have an effect upon people´s political attitudes. Stated otherwise, system-justification and/or system attitudes may be shaped "from outside".

6.3. Discussing the findings in connection with the objectives

The strategic aim of the present thesis was to shed further light on why people rebel (and why don´t). Originally, we suspected that one plausible explanation was that dominant classes manufacture, spread, and/or reinforce, certain ideologies, that might play a system-maintenance role. More specifically, we suspected that rags-to-riches biographies could evoke a sort of survivorship bias and thus prevent people from taking part in system-challenging events. However, manifold theoretical and methodological concerns arose in the research process, which led to a number of complementary objectives (4 general or ultimate, and 4 secondary or particular). Let us discuss our findings in connection with such objectives, ranging from the particular to the general ones:

6.3.1.   *About developing a Class-Struggle-Actions Scale (see Chapter 3)*

Since early readings of the literature it was noted a significant lack of attention to people´s position in, and understanding of, the social-economic structure, as ultimate antecedent of system-challenging events. We therefore saw ground to develop and validate an instrument aiming to capture willingness towards a very particular type of CA, i.e., those being carried out in a context of class struggle. After relevant theoretical and methodological works, we achieved a 4-item Class-Struggle-Actions Scale (CSAS) that would be considered for further research on system attitudes —or, at the very least, as a frame for further developments.

As expected, our results showed certain overlap between our instrument and other existing SJ measures, though also that the former captures an amount of variance that the latter do not. Likewise, congruent with our first hypothesis—so, too, with classical Marxism and SIA—low-income, low-status, and/or working-class individuals, scored significantly higher on our CSAS than those high-income, high-status, and/or proprietor-class ones (see e.g., Brandt, 2013; Caricati, 2016; Kelemen et al., 2014; Ipsos, 2021; Lenin, 1902/1977, p. 386, 1916/1974, pp. 193-194, 281, 283-284 and 301; Turner & Reynolds, 2003, p. 201; Vargas-Salfate et al., 2018). Most notably, unemployed participants showed higher scores than all the others, which suggest that a change for the worse in people´s material living conditions could lead to more system-challenging attitudes. So, this particular goal was achieved.

However, a number of theoretical and methodological concerns led us to do not include it to test the alleged SJ effect of making *Unidos Podemos* look like a threat.

First, our CSAS showed convergent validity with the single-item measure of political ideology, i.e., the left-right spectrum (perhaps a consequence of the narrowness of our construct). That is, to include it in a study within the same material and historical context (i.e., Spain), could be redundant —so, too, it could contribute to the so-called "respondent fatigue" (see Ben-Nun in Lavrakas, 2008, pp. 742-743).

Second, in the two precedent empirical studies, i.e., when testing the alleged SJ effect of rags-to-riches biographies, we did not observed a direct effect of the manipulation on CSAS. It suggested a big leap between the content of the vignette and what our instrument captures. That is, our CSAS would be more appropriate for manipulations more closely related, such as exposing participants to successful versus unsuccessful CA, e.g., making the government revoke laws after popular demonstrations, or alleged positive versus negative existential, epistemic, and/or relational consequences of endorsing CA, e.g., being fired after joining a strike (see e.g., Jost, Langer et al., 2017; Saab et al., 2016; Van Zomeren et al., 2004).

Third, our CSAS could require much refinement. For instance, it would be interesting to further demonstrate its discriminant validity, perhaps using a longitudinal design, bigger samples, etc. (which was materially unattainable). Also, we expected an overall unfavourable attitude towards CA that might entail high personal cost and/or uncertain benefits (see Bäck, Bäck, & Sivén, 2018). However, most participants showed

high scores in our CSAS. It could have happened for not having enough dominant-class and right-wing individuals in our samples, and/or for not considering a more direct head question such as asking people how willing they will engage in the described actions (see e.g., Tausch et al. 2011, p. 139).

Hence, in the pursuit of practical utility, we envisioned a slightly different approach to capture system attitudes, i.e., to ask participants for vote intention in a context of (alleged) pro-system and anti-system political forces.

6.3.2. *About associating the system with opportunities (see Chapter 4)*

As already stated when commenting on the hypotheses, we obtained mixed results with respect to this particular objective. Our results suggested that rags-to-riches biographies might lead to lower scores in our CSAS among right-wing people, i.e., broadcasting such type of ideological content would have SJ effects. However, we observed rather opposing effects among our working-class participants. Thus, we cannot assure that rags-to-riches biographies have an overall SJ effect. If so, we were unable to capture such effect with our survey design.

Admittedly, some research suggests that priming meritocracy could increase SJ and/or appease anger about perceived injustice (see e.g., Davidai, 2018; McCoy & Major, 2007; Sagioglou, Forstmann, & Greitemeyer, 2019). Likewise, the idea that with personal effort and determination anyone can succeed has been long widespread (see e.g., Chomsky, 2000, p. 35; Derber & Magrass, 2014, p. 37; Forest, 2014; see also Weber, 1905/2005). That is, conceivably, being exposed to such narratives from the earliest age might advance people´s survivorship bias, lead them to overestimate the likelihood of success following individualistic paths and, ultimately, contribute to see the system as legitimate and/or social boundaries as far more permeable than what they actually are.

Nevertheless, we did not observe a direct effect of rags-to-riches plots on our participants´ scores. Perhaps such stories were no longer effective at the time the studies were carried out. Perhaps such stories lead to backfire among working-class individuals (i.e., most of our participants). Or perhaps survey experiments are limited to emulate the effect of dominant ideology. Either way, this particular objective was barely achieved.

6.3.3. *About making system-change advocates look like a threat (see Chapter 5)*

In this case, as also already stated, this slightly different approach yielded clearer results. Our participants were exposed to either positive or negative information about an alleged anti-system party (or were assigned to a control group). Those who read a negative message about the party considered that "*Unidos Podemos'* proposals are dangerous for Spain" (to a greater extent than those who read alternative messages). Likewise, those younger participants that read negative information about the party showed less willingness to vote for it than those ones that read alternative information. Bearing in mind the limitations that survey designs entail, such result was rather suggestive. In other words, if we were able to somewhat manipulate our participants´ political attitudes—by reading a single brief vignette—we might reasonably assume that mass-media content could do likewise to a much larger extent.

Even though, our findings also suggest that mass-media content could be but one factor, and perhaps not the most important, of *Unidos Podemos´* decline. On the one hand, our working-class participants did not show higher support towards the party than their upper-class counterparts. On the other, 60.2% of our participants—mostly workers and, apparently, class-conscious ones—voted for the party in past elections, but only 48.8% said they would do it again. However, *Unidos Podemos´* old voters—and older voters at large—tended to reject negative messages about the party. That is, they would be resilient to media influence.

Admittedly, we might consider that a constant supply of negative news and views about *Unidos Podemos* could have contributed to its gradual decline (see e.g., Labio-Bernal in Pedro-Carañana et al., 2018; Navarro, 2018; see also Herman & Chomsky, 1988/2008; MacLeod, 2019). Perhaps, such constant supply could have been effective in the long term among old *Unidos Podemos´* voters (even if it was not in the short term).

Nevertheless, beyond the role that dominant-class practices could have had upon people´s political attitudes, we may also consider an alternative—or complementary—explanation for *Unidos Podemos´* decline. That is, the party could have disclosed itself as a non-interesting option for many working-class voters.

In turn, we envision several causes for such disengagement between *Unidos Podemos* and many of its working-class voters. Most notably, certain recovery or stabilisation of the economic situation could have made less pressing working-class people´s need for profound system changes. That is, *Unidos Podemos* could have certainly taken advantage of those feelings of anger and shared identities that situations of crisis and economic recession provoke (see Engels, 1880/2005, pp. 65-67; Davies, 1962; Lenin, 1915/1974, pp. 98, 213-214 and 216; van Zomeren, Postmes & Spears, 2008; Wright, 2015, pp. 124-125 and 153). Nevertheless, by 2018, i.e., when our sample was collected, popular outrage could have been deflated.

Likewise, *Unidos Podemos´* could have moved far away from the working class and rather focused on "new forms of political subjectivity" (see e.g., Laclau & Mouffe, 1985/2001, pp. 13-14 and 177-178; see also Callinicos, 1990, p. 4; Parenti, 1997, p. 144). It would also partially explain why many of our working-class participants withdrew their support to the party —so, too, why our working-class participants, in spite of their high class-consciousness scores, did not support the party to greater extent than their upper-class counterparts.

Infightings among rival factions and with regional allies, questionable behaviours of some of its leaders, emergence of new—or renewed—political parties, lack of well-articulated proposals for certain social issues, entering in coalition with an "old-regime" political force, could also have contributed to *Unidos Podemos´* decline.

Either way, our results suggest that people´s attitudes towards the system might be shaped "from outside" —so, too, in the hypothesised direction (i.e., making people turn their backs off alleged system-change advocates). That is, this particular objective was achieved.

6.3.4. *About our "novel" class measures (see Chapters 4 and 5)*

Mainstream social-psychological research often handle gradational measures of status or "class", either "objective" or subjective (see e.g., Diemer et al*.,* 2013; Kraus, Tan & Tannenbaum, 2013; Osborne et al*.,* 2019; Savage et al*.,* 2013; Thomas et al., 2019; Vargas-Salfate et al*.,* 2018). However, such measures could be inappropriate, or at least insufficient, for a comprehensive understanding of people´s attitudes towards the system.

On the one hand, "objective" gradational measures (i.e., family or personal income) could obscure the relative character of "our wants and pleasures" (Kraus, Piff & Keltner, 2009; Marx & Engels, 1891/2010, p. 16; Wright, 1985, pp. 147-148). Consider certain amount of capital. It may or may not be enough to satisfy people´s needs, depending on circumstances such as having or not family responsibilities, living in urban or rural areas, etc.

On the other hand, the MacArthur´s Scale of Subjective Social Status (SSS) could be prone to "ideological interferences". Indeed, in all our studies, people tended to choose middle or upper-middle positions in the 10-step MacArthur´s ladder. We could have concluded that our samples comprised mainly middle- or upper-middle-class people, if it were not for the fact that most of our participants were wage-dependent individuals (and their incomes were, on average, close to two times the minimum wage). That is, SSS could be social-desirability biased and/or somehow conflated ranks (see e.g., Diener et al., 1991; Sawyer & Gampa, 2020; Shaked et al., 2016).

The above led us to ask our participants which economic activity status better describes them (i.e., student, unemployed, public sector worker, private sector worker, self-employed, or retired). At large, unemployed participants showed more left-wing attitudes and higher scores in our CSAS than all the others. This result seems in full line with our first hypothesis and SIA, i.e., those harmed the most within a social-economic structure tend to show more anti-system attitudes, at least in capitalist societies (see e.g., Brandt, 2013; Turner & Reynolds, 2003; Vargas-Salfate et al., 2018).

Noteworthy, our unemployed participants justified the system to a lesser extent than our employed ones. On CM and SIA´s logic, employed people would tend to perceive the status quo as stable and/or legitimate, and/or to see themselves as members of the advantaged group, at least in a context of high unemployment (see e.g., Lenin, 1916/1974, pp. 193-194, 281, 283-284 and 301; Rubin & Hewstone, 2004, p. 835; Wright & Boese, 2015; Wright & Taylor, 1999).

Incidentally, the above could be somewhat congruent with SJT (see e.g., Jost, 2019; Jost et al., 2012). That is, employed individuals could be more *motivated* to bolster the status quo than unemployed ones (at least, out of fear of going the same way as the latter). Indeed, there is in Spain a rather common saying with all the traces of a SJ belief, i.e., "I don´t complain, at least I have a job". Such beliefs may or may not derive from an

alleged fundamental system-justifying motive (see e.g., Jost, 2019; Owuamalam, Rubin & Spears, 2019; Owuamalam & Spears, 2020). Perhaps they are be but the reflex, or a by-product, of powerful situational constrains, i.e., a sort of rationalisation made by individuals that cannot satisfy their truly motives. Either way, such beliefs might arguably contribute to palliate outrage and thus contribute to system stability.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, further readings of the literature suggested that economic activity status (i.e., making distinctions among employed, unemployed, students, retired, etc.) was still insufficient to approach system attitudes. Most notably, how wealth is distributed could have much to do with how wealth is produced (see e.g., Engels, 1876/1996, 1880/2005, pp. 65 and 70; Hanappi & Hanappi-Egger, 2018; Marx, 1844/1959, pp. 3-4; 1859/1999, p. 4, 1867/2015, pp. 27, 30 and 507-508 and 541-542, 1875/1970, pp. 10-11; Penn, 2016; Wu, 2011, pp. 8, 25, 163-164, 168 and 175). Accordingly, people´s attitudes towards the mode of production could have much to do with their role in such mode of production

That led us to ask our participants (in the study of Chapter 5) about their current position within their workplace (or the one they had or consider they will likely have in case of being retired, unemployed, or students). Due to sample-size limitations, we developed a shortened version of Wright´s (1985) "matrix using the exploitation-centred concept of class" (p. 195). That is, we focused on the two *main* class locations within the capitalist mode of production, i.e., workers and owners, and the "contradictory" one, i.e., managers (see Baizidi, 2019; Sawyer & Gampa, 2020, p. 206; Wright, 1985, p. 42, 2005, p.16, 2015, pp. 11, 155-156 and 168).

At large, workers showed less pro-system attitudes than managers and owners. That is, a result in full line with our first hypothesis —so, too, with CM and SIA (see e.g., Brandt, 2013; Lenin, 1916/1974, pp. 193-194, 281, 283-284 and 301; Turner & Reynolds, 2003; Wright & Taylor, 1999; Vargas-Salfate et al., 2018).

Admittedly, continuous predictors may pose statistical advantages vis-à-vis categorical ones (see Lazic, 2008). However, given our research topic, between-group comparisons were required (e.g., low- versus high-status, low- versus high-income, working- versus dominant-class individuals). In this sense, our working-role measure allowed us to set non-arbitrary class boundaries (Wright, 2015, pp. 116-117 and 155). Otherwise, we would have had to dichotomise the gradational measures, i.e., a hardly

advisable practice (see e.g., Cohen, 1983; Field, 2009, pp. 8-10 and 361; MacCallum et al., 2002).

Incidentally, our working-role measure showed analogous correlation estimates with people´s ideology than the gradational ones. After all, there is a gradation ranging from worker to manager to owner. However, our measure showed only small to moderate correlation with income (and no significant correlation with SSS). One plausible explanation could be that proper dominant-class individuals were largely underrepresented in our study. Also, SSS would have conflated ranks. Larger samples would allow us considering a wider range of "class fractions" (see Wright, 1985, p. 195).

Either way, our working-role measure seems worthy of consideration for further research on system attitudes. That is, though our measure might be seen as a first approach, this particular objective was achieved.

6.3.5.   *About intertwining social-psychological approaches and classical Marxism*

From its early drafts, the present thesis faced the inconvenient that the three (perhaps) major social-psychological approaches to system attitudes nowadays, i.e., SDT, SJT, and SIA, often confront each other about which one has better explanatory power on the issue (see e.g., Jost, 2011; Jost, Becker et al., 2017; Owuamalam, Rubin & Spears, 2019; Sidanius & Pratto, 2003). That is, a sort of mediation and/or reference point was needed to design, situate, and carry out research on system attitudes. In this sense, almost unwittingly, we noticed that the three approaches allude to, handle constructs of, and even boast sharing a common theoretical heritage with, classical Marxism (e.g., Drury & Reicher, 2009; Jost, 2019; Jost et al., 2014; Sidanius, et al., 2004; Turner & Reynolds, 2003). To go to the original sources could, thus, provide a good reference point.

On another note, regardless of its ideological connotations, classical Marxism seems rather worthy of consideration when researching on system-challenging attitudes (see e.g., Engels, 1880/2005; Lenin, 1908/1977a, 1916/1974; Marx, 1867/2015; Marx & Engels, 1846/1968, 1848/1969). Therefore, it seemed advisable to carry out a profound review of each theory´s major claims, and discuss about both theoretical and methodological concerns, in connection with classical Marxists´ works (see Chapter 1 of the present thesis).

With respect to SDT, we considered hard to demonstrate the existence of an (alleged) tendency for humans to form and maintain group-based hierarchies, let alone such idea seems a system-legitimising myth in itself (see e.g., Pratto et al, 1994; Sidanius et al., 2004, 2017). Admittedly, group-based dominance and/or hierarchies seem ubiquitous in human societies. Likewise, egalitarian societies seem instable. Even further, dispositional factors might well have a probabilistic effect on each individual´s political preferences. However, such political preferences could well be a reflex of social reality, rather than a biological inevitability. For instance, a "general desire" to endorse hierarchies could be advantageous to the extent that there are other hierarchies around and they may pose a threat, actual or perceived (see e.g., Engels, 1874/1978). On another note, also rebellions often take place in human societies. Therefore, system change should be explained in spite of any fairly-stable-over-time (alleged) preference for group based dominance, or Social Dominance Orientation (SDO). Simply put, the constant cannot account for the changing.

Likewise, with respect to SJT, we also considered hard to demonstrate the existence of an (alleged) fundamental system-justifying motive (SJM), let alone such idea also seems a system-justifying belief in itself (see e.g., Jost, 2011, 2011; Jost, Langer et al., 2017; Napier & Jost, 2008). Admittedly, existential, epistemic, and relational threats might have an effect on people´s system attitudes. However, it seems rather counterintuitive that people can be motivated to bolster a system against their very self-interest. At most, we may consider that dominant-class individuals are truly motivated in this sense, whereas disadvantaged ones might do likewise albeit out of fear of the consequences, based upon false information, and/or diverted enough to use their reasoning. Even if disadvantaged people endorse SJ beliefs due to its palliative function, i.e., they develop a SJM, it would likely be a consequence of powerful situational constrains.

SIA, meanwhile, seemed a more comprehensive approach and, by far, the most congruent with classical Marxism. However, most social-psychological research— including SIA´s—handles gradational "class" conceptualisations, often subjective, and/or focus on noneconomic sources of "social cleavage" (see e.g., Kraus, Tan & Tannenbaum, 2013; Osborne et al., 2019; Savage et al., 2013; Thomas et al., 2019; Vargas-Salfate et al., 2018; see also Hanappi & Hanappi-Egger, 2018; Parenti, 1997, p. 148; Penn, 2016; Wright, 2005, pp. 186-188, 2015, pp. 146-148). It would be insufficient and/or inappropriate to understand system stability and system change (let alone it would also have SJ effects). More specifically, gradational and/or noneconomic conceptualisations of status would hamper setting boundaries between dominant and subordinate groups (or classes) which, in

turn, would hamper identifying the "relevant comparison group", i.e., it would prevent the disadvantaged form acting realistically (see e.g., Hanappi & Hanappi-Egger, 2018; Parenti, 1997, p. 148; Penn, 2016; Tajfel & Turner, 1979, p. 45; Wright, 2005, pp. 186-188, 2015, pp. 146-148).

Having said this, the dispute seemingly revolves around which one is the ultimate or the main cause of system attitudes. Without denying the importance of situational factors, SDT and SJT put the focus on an alleged SDO or SJM respectively. On the contrary, SIA and classical Marxism place more emphasis on situational factors. The knowledge pool—so, too, our results—suggest that the context can impose itself upon whatever dispositional factor or motive that specific individuals may have (see e.g., Brandt, 2013; Davies, 1962; Haney, Banks & Zimbardo, 1973; Ipsos, 2021; Langer et al., 2020; Lenin, 1915/1974, pp. 98, 213-214 and 216; van Zomeren, Postmes & Spears, 2008; Vargas-Salfate et al., 2018; Wright, 2015, pp. 124-125 and 153). Consider our unemployed participants and their higher "anti-system" attitudes. Consider also the differences between our workers, managers, and employers. That is, we should not extricate people´s understanding of the social-economic structure from their position in, and their relationships within, such social-economic structure.

Even though, we should not exclude the probabilistic effect that dispositional factors and/or existential, epistemic, or relational threats might have on people´s political attitudes either. Likewise, with adjustments and complementary analyses in place, SJT´s instruments seem good material for assessing overall SJ in certain country at a certain historical time at large, and attitudes towards socialist or capitalist systems in particular (see Kay & Jost, 2003, p. 828; Jost, Blount, et al., 2003, p. 77; Jost et al., 2010, p. 21).

Henceforth, to overcome controversies—and to further understand why people rebel (and why don´t)—we might need, at least:

(1) More careful and consensual conceptualisations of system, social status, class, SJ, CA, etc. (see e.g., Drury, 2002; Drury & Reicher, 2009; Tausch et al., 2011; van Zomeren et al., 2008; Yang et al., 2019).

(2) To distinguish between active and *forced* cooperation (see Engels, 1880/2005, p. 70; Marx, 1867/2015, pp. 231-232 and 507-509; see also Sidanius et al., 2004, p. 869).

(3) To consider the existence of proper and distorted self-interest seeking, short- and long-term foresight, truly and fear-based, false or apparent motives, and/or class, political, and *false consciousness* (see e.g., Engels, 1893/1968; Hossler, 2020. p. 204; see also Jost & Banaji, 1994).

(4) To pay attention to the on-going conflict between productive forces and modes of production, i.e., to *how* wealth is produced (see e.g., Engels, 1876/1996, 1880/2005, pp. 65 and 70; Hanappi & Hanappi-Egger, 2018; Marx, 1844/1959, pp. 3-4; 1859/1999, p. 4, 1867/2015, pp. 27, 30 and 507-508 and 541-542, 1875/1970, pp. 10-11; Penn, 2016; Wu, 2011, pp. 8, 25, 163-164, 168 and 175).

(5) To do not alienate ideology from its producers and the material conditions that allows its production (see e.g., Engels, 1880/2005, p. 66; Marx, 1859/1999, p. 131; Marx & Engels, 1846/1968, pp. 21-23).

Though easier said than done, the above would plausibly help to surpass sometimes sound, sometimes lexical infightings within Social and Political Psychology (and Social Sciences at large). Either way, we intertwined SDT, SJT, SIA, and classical Marxism. Whether our bridges withstand or not, the objective was achieved.

6.3.6. *About placing focus on people´s position in the social-economic structure*

This objective derived from the foregoing. That is, while intertwining SDT, SJT, SIA, and classical Marxism, we were gradually realising that people´s understanding of the social-economic structure would have much to do with people´s position in, and relationships within, such social-economic structure. In other words, it seemed reasonable to link both objective and subjective antecedents of people´s political attitudes and behaviour,

Whatever the case, we found, in all our empirical studies, significant relationships between income, economic activity status, and role in the mode of production, on the one hand, and political attitudes on the other. Such relationships were always in the expected direction, i.e., low-income, low-status, and/or working-class people, tended to show less pro-system   attitudes   than   their   high-income,   high-status,   and/or   dominant-class

counterparts. Hence, we may confirm that people´s attitudes towards the social-economic structure are somewhat connected with people´s position in such social-economic structure.

Admittedly, even though attitudes could be a useful proxy for actual behaviour (Tausch et al. 2011), we cannot assure to which extent our participants´ scores properly reflex social reality. People's beliefs, attitudes and behaviours—if not society itself—plausibly arise from a vector sum of manifold endogenous and exogenous intersecting forces in constant motion (see e.g., Engels, 1890/1972; Reicher, 2004, pp. 924-925). Moreover, social-psychological variables such as identities or ideology may acquire, at least in appearance, "an autonomous function", i.e., objective or ultimate antecedents might lose relevance in the "causal spiral" (Tajfel & Turner, 1979, p. 46; see also Engels, 1893/1968; Marx, 1844/1970, p.7; Marx & Engels, 1846/1968, p. 21). Thus, different levels of analysis, from biology to geopolitics, would be required to calculate a hypothetical and ever-changing net force (note the overlap with Sidanius et al., 2004, p. 871).

Even though, both our findings and the literature suggest that people´s material living conditions in general, and people´s role in the mode of production in particular, are far from being "irrelevant"; they would even become more relevant given the proper objective and subjective conditions (see e.g., Brandt, 2013; Lenin, 1915/1974, pp. 213-214; Vargas-Salfate et al., 2018; Wright, 2015, pp. 124-125 and 153). Hence, this objective was achieved.

6.3.7. *About counterweighting idealism and/or post-materialism*

Though also derived from, and closely related with, the foregoing, this objective was hard to achieve. Both our findings and the knowledge pool suggest that people´s ideology is determined by situational, material and/or historical conditions (see e.g., Brandt et al., 2021; Caricati, 2016; Ipsos, 2021; Kelemen et al., 2014; Newman, Johnston & Lown, 2015; Vargas-Salfate et al., 2018). Likewise, there is ground to suspect that dominant-class individuals interfere, on their self-interest, in the way others perceive social reality (see e.g., Cohen, 1965, p. 13; Franke & Van Rooij, 2015; Jenkins, 2012; Herman & Chomsky, 1988/2008; MacLeod, 2019; Marx & Engels, 1846/1968, p. 21; McCombs & Shaw, 1972; Murray & Nyberg, 2021; Wilford, 1998). That is, the literature suggests that we should not extricate ideology from its producers and the situational, material, and/or historical

conditions that allow its production. The challenge, however, is to demonstrate whether certain ideological content have an effect on people´s political attitudes or not, and, if so, to which extent upon other dispositional or situational factors (at least, with self-report measures).

First, people´s worldviews, ideology, and/or identities, may be acquired through their social existence, even at early ages, and then remain more or less stable reflexing an also more or less stable material context (see e.g., Engels, 1878/1947, p. 23, 1888/1969, p. 45; Gambrill, 2012, p. 326; Lenin, 1908/1977a, pp. 15, 26, 155 and 323; MacLeod, 2019; Pennycook, Cannon & Rand, 2018; Tom et al., 2007; Thompson, 1976; Zajonc, 1968, 2001). That is, as already stated, ideology or identities may play "an autonomous function" (Tajfel & Turner, 1979, p. 46; see also Engels, 1893/1968; Marx, 1844/1970, p.7). It would partially explain the observed backfire effects among our participants, i.e., why our working-class and left-wing participants did not find believable rags-to-riches biographies and negative information about *Unidos Podemos* (see e.g., Nyhan & Reifler, 2010; Wood & Porter, 2019). However, it may seem that ideology cannot be shaped from outside.

Second, manufactured ideas often enter in conflict with material reality —so, too, with the approximate reflex of such material reality in people´s thought. For instance, in connection with our studies, both rulers and media may encourage people to follow individualistic paths and become entrepreneurs. However, people at large may fall short of knowledge, contacts, and/or capital enough to start a business. Even further, people may be somehow aware that unsuccessful entrepreneurial endeavours are far more likely than successful ones (see e.g., Mascherini & Bisello, 2015; Marx & Engels, 1848/1969, p. 18; Moruno, 2015; Wright, 2015, p. 81). This would also partially explain that our rags-to-riches vignettes had little effect in the expected direction. However, it may also raise doubts about the efficacy of broadcasting certain ideological content.

Third, certain individual attributes such as sex or race might become more salient than people´s role in the mode of production. Conceivably, the agenda-setting function of dominant-class media is somewhat responsible of this (see e.g., Cohen, 1965, p. 13; McCombs & Shaw, 1972; Monot, 2018; Rockhill, 2017). Another plausible explanation, albeit perhaps closely related, could be a relative well-off social standing of the upper strata of the working classes, and thereby a less pressing need for significant changes in the social-economic structure, at least in developed countries (see e.g., Lenin, 1916/1974, pp. 193-194, 281, 283-284 and 301; Wright & Boese, 2015; Wright & Taylor, 1999). Even, as already stated, mainstream social research could have played a role in obscuring class-

struggle issues (see e.g., Laclau & Mouffe, 1985/2001, pp. 13-14 and 177-178; see also Callinicos, 1990; Hanappi & Hanappi-Egger, 2018; Parenti, 1997). Hence, certain social oppressions, whether they have existed for centuries or not, might obscure the economic substratum of ideology. In other words, it may seem that people´s position in the social-economic structure has little to do with system attitudes.

Fourth, we may consider that manufacturing ideological content is not just the realm of dominant classes. Subordinate classes also tend to develop ideology, and institutions, consistent with their self-interest, i.e., aiming to eliminate their subordination (see e.g., Lenin, 1899/1964, 1917/1964, pp. 467-468; Marx, & Engels, 1845/1956, p. 51, 1848/1969, pp. 20-21; Turner & Reynolds, 2003, p. 201). However, we may well find advocates of dominant-class ideology among working-class individuals —so, too, advocates of working-class ideology among dominant-class individuals (see e.g., Lenin, 1902/1977, p. 375). Hence, it may seem that people´s material living conditions have not a direct effect on ideology.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, both our findings and the knowledge pool speak loud in favour of bearing in mind the economic substratum of people´s beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours, towards the system. Moreover, our manipulation of the available information had certain effects on people´s ideological outcomes. It does not seem therefore unreasonable to consider that, if reading one single vignette had certain effect in the expected direction, a constant supply of ideological content by mass-media could be partially responsible of pro-system attitudes among the disadvantaged.

The everlasting discussion between materialism and idealism will plausibly continue. Nevertheless, we provided some support to the former. That is, this objective was achieved.

6.3.8. *About our social-psychological Model of Class Struggle (MCS)*

In light of all of the foregoing, i.e., through the whole research process, a theoretical model was taking shape. It was originally conceived as a general guideline to design the research and analyse the findings of the empirical studies. However, to further conceptualise it became a general objective in itself. Either way, given the topic of research, and aiming to complement to both SIA and classical Marxism, we named it

Model of Class Struggle (see e.g., Marx & Engels, 1848/1969; Van Zomeren, Postmes, & Spears, 2008).

Such Model of Class Struggle (MCS) can be summed up in the "twofold" general hypothesis of the present thesis, i.e., broadly speaking, low-income, low-status, and/or working-class people gravitate towards socialism (H1), whereas dominant-class practices and institutions mitigate, or revert, such gravitation, at least in capitalist societies (H2). This hypothesis was mainly modelled on both SIA and classical Marxists´ theorising. More specifically, two passages provided the insight:

> "The working class spontaneously gravitates towards socialism; nevertheless, most widespread (and continuously and diversely revived) bourgeois ideology spontaneously imposes itself upon the working class to a still greater degree" (Lenin, 1902/1977, p. 386).

> "The dominant groups which benefit from their position tend to develop beliefs, attitudes, ideologies and institutions consistent with their self-interest, whereas subordinate groups which are disadvantaged by their position tend to develop beliefs, attitudes, etc., consistent with theirs, the elimination of their subordination" (Turner & Reynolds, 2003, p. 201).

It seems a rather elegant explanation of why people rebel (and why don´t). In the self-interest logic, those disadvantaged individuals within a social-economic structure will advocate changes in the status quo, though those advantaged ones will prevent such changes from happen. At once, such opposing interests will have their approximate reflex in people´s thought. That is, disadvantaged and advantaged individuals will show, respectively, anti- and pro-system beliefs and attitudes. Both our findings and the literature seemingly support this idea (see e.g., Brandt, 2013; Caricati, 2016; Ipsos, 2021; Jenkins, 2012; Kelemen et al., 2014; Herman & Chomsky, 1988/2008; Vargas-Salfate et al., 2018; Wilford, 1998). Nevertheless, we are aware that there is much to discuss about it. We might advance some plausible, and closely related, concerns:

First, we referred to *class struggle* because of the on-going, and *objective,* conflict between productive forces and modes of production (see Engels, 1880/2005, p. 66). Consider the division of labour. Both workers and owners aim to maximise their gains, but the gain of the former often contradicts the gain of the latter (see e.g., Elster, 1982, p. 478; Lenin, 1899/1964; Marx, 1844/1959, p. 3, 1867/2015, pp. 163-164; Marx & Engels, 1845/1956, p. 51, 1891/2010; Wright, 2015, pp. 80-81). Consider also the international division of labour. The gain of some countries often contradicts the gain of others (see e.g., Lenin, 1916/1974, p. 191). Thus, whether the parties involved are conscious or not, to further understand system stability (and change) arguably requires (1) considering people´s

role in the mode of production, and their antagonistic interests derived thereof, and (2) complementary analyses of the material and historical background within which we carry out our research.

Second, we considered a "twofold" hypothesis, or two hypotheses that should not be extricated one from another, because if the second statement is true at its finest, it might seem that the first one is not. In other words, if dominant-class practices are fully effective, disadvantaged people will show more pro-system attitudes than what we would expect given their material living conditions. Consider that we carry out a survey in degrading workplaces or oppressing regimes. Those harmed the most within a social-economic structure may well desire a change, but they may hide their actual opinion out of fear of the consequences.

Third, we considered low-income, low-status, and/or working-class individuals as (almost) interchangeable terms to translate those harmed the most within the social-economic structure. However, although workers might largely correspond to the "lowest stratum" of a class-based hierarchy, this could not be always the case (see Marx & Engels, 1848/1969, p. 20; see also Davis, 2006; Marx, 1883/2010, p. 633; Lenin, 1916/1974, pp. 193-194, 281-284; Wright, 1985, pp. 95 and 195). Consider that the super salaries of some wage-dependent individuals situate them closer to the dominant-class than many small-property owners. Consider also that working classes in most developed societies often have better access to public services than their counterparts in other countries. We should not lose sight of this.

Fourth, our measure of people´s role in the mode of production, i.e., worker, manager and owner, might be theoretically more accurate than "naked" gradational conceptualisations of class—either "objective" or subjective—in the sense that it allows setting non-arbitrary boundaries, i.e., based on the dimension of economic exploitation and property relations (see e.g., Hanappi & Hanappi-Egger, 2018; Parenti, 1997, p. 148; Penn, 2016; Wright, 2005, pp. 186-188, 2015, pp. 146-148). Likewise, our measure takes the hassle out of dichotomising continuous variables (see e.g., Cohen, 1983; Field, 2009, pp. 8-10 and 361; MacCallum et al., 2002). However, in view of the above, we should not lose sight of gradation (see e.g., Lenin, 1916/1974, pp. 193-194 and 283-284; Marx, 1883/2010, p. 633; Wright, 1985, p. 195).

Fifth, concepts such as "capitalism" and "socialism" may seem ideologically or morally loaded. However, there is not any ideological or moral commitment here, but an

attempt to relate, from a social-psychological perspective, people´s position in, and understanding of, the social-economic structure (see Turner & Reynolds, 2003, p. 205). In other words, we simply hypothesised that people´s attitudes towards the system may be somewhat connected with people´s material living conditions (see e.g., Davies, 1962; Engels, 1880/2005, pp. 66-67; Marx, 1867/2015, p. 164; Marx & Engels, 1846/1968, p. 58; Wright, 2015, pp. 124-125 and 153). In this sense, socialism could be roughly defined as a system where there are not class antagonisms, the means of production are socially owned, and the surplus value produced is used for economic and social growth purposes (Engels, 1880/2005, pp. 36; Lenin, 1899/1964, 1917/1964, pp. 84-85; Marx, 1847/1955, pp. 26 and 79-80, 1875/1970, pp. 10-11; Marx & Engels, 1848/1969, p. 18; Pigou, 1948; Wu, 2011, p. 175). Therefore, in the self-interest logic, it is to be expected that working-class people gravitate towards this type of society.

Sixth, the idea that working-class individuals "gravitate towards socialism" might sound linear, reductionist, and/or teleological (see Sokal, 2008, p. 345). However, the MCS does not claim that working-class individuals always, nor thoroughly, gravitate towards socialism. On the contrary, such "gravitation" will often be lax, vague, and/or "in embryo" (see Lenin, 1902/1977, pp. 374-375). Likewise, interest in socialism might vanish inasmuch working-class individuals acquire certain status and/or properties (see e.g., Lenin, 1916/1974, pp. 193-194, 281, 283-284 and 301; Wright & Boese, 2015; Wright & Taylor, 1999). Given the proper objective and subjective conditions, working-class individuals might even bolster far-right populisms, e.g., in context of crisis, in the absence of sound political alternatives, and/or following years of anti-communist propaganda and repression (see e.g., Alesina, Glaeser & Sacerdote, 2001; Gingrich & Häusermann, 2015; Herman & Chomsky, 1988/2008; Wilford, 1998; Żuk & Toporowski, 2020). Either way, the very existence of dominant-class practices and institutions suggest that they fear that working-class gravitation towards socialism could be more drastic.

Seventh, some may argue that there is not such a thing as ideal socialism (or ideal capitalism). Admittedly, all known societies may be situated in a sort of continuum between socialism and capitalism (or show particularities of both systems). Likewise, some may advocate for European welfare states as the most balanced type of society. However, considering material and historical factors such as the international division of labour and world´s limited natural resources, i.e., from a global and system-wide perspective, doubts cast as to whether welfare states such as European´s are achievable to all countries or not (see e.g., Lenin, 1916/1974, p. 191; Pigou, 1948, pp. 136-137; Wu, 2011). We may even consider that low-status people in socialist countries would be more pro-system oriented

than their high-status counterparts, i.e., the very opposite that in capitalist societies (see e.g., Li et al, 2020; Li, Wu & Kou, 2020; Tang, 2018; Zhang & Zhong, 2019). Either way, the dualism between socialism and capitalism seems worthy of consideration for research on system attitudes.

Eighth, to emphasise the economic substratum of people´s beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours towards the system does not belittle the importance of other social oppressions. On the contrary, it might serve to approach them more "objectively". Whatever new form of political subjectivity (see Laclau & Mouffe, 1985/2001) will, most likely, end up facing material constrains with regard to the social-economic structure. Consider that any political force or social movement needs capital to carry out their advocacy activities. Consider also that individuals may agree on certain social issues, but may tend to close ranks with their respective class in others. Therefore, we should not belittle the economic foundations and/or the "class basis" of system attitudes (see e.g., Della Porta, 2017; Penn, 2016; Peterson, Wahlström, & Wennerhag, 2015).

Ninth, in spite of our rather suggestive findings and the knowledge pool altogether, a full test of MCS´ "twofold" hypothesis will arguably require interrupting, or somehow neutralising, dominant-class practices and institutions. Thus, we could assess whether people at large feel comfortable within a more equal social-economic system or they rapidly rebuild a group-based dominance. However, it goes without saying that this is unattainable. Even if a successful system-change takes place in a place, dominant classes from the surrounding territories will try to make it wreck —let alone, due to the above mentioned "autonomous function" of social identities, old ways of thinking might take time to evolve (see e.g., Lenin, 1917/1964, pp. 46-47, 141, 255-256). Either way, the same goes for SDT´s claims. That is, to interrupt or neutralise dominant-groups practices and institutions will also be required to assess whether a SDO exist or not. To test SJT´s claims, meanwhile, seem even harder to demonstrate. We might conclude the existence of a fundamental SJM in every stable system.

That is, our MCS requires much refinement. It could be further expanded, complemented, nuanced, etc., in order to serve as a common ground, general guideline, or working framework, for further research and political action. Nevertheless, at first glance, it proved useful to design our research and to analyse our findings. That is, this objective was achieved.

6.4. Limitations of the research and suggestions for further developments

6.4.1. About the theoretical framework

Leaving aside obvious material limitations such as lack of funding and lack of time, which arguably go for many if not most research processes in Social Sciences, we faced one major setback that forced us to devote substantial reading efforts: i.e., the controversies among different social-psychological approaches to people´s attitudes towards the system. More specifically, as already stated, SDT, SJT, and SIA´s theorising often contradicts each other (see e.g., Jost, 2011; Jost, Becker et al., 2017; Owuamalam, Rubin & Spears, 2019; Sidanius & Pratto, 2003). Thus, to design our research, and to analyse our findings, became particularly complex. We had to carry out a profound and thorough reading of each approach to see how we might contribute to advance the knowledge pool. Needless to say, such journey was, at large, intriguing and enlightening. However, there were also times of impasse and loss of sense of direction.

Fortunately, almost unwittingly, we found references to classical Marxism here and there in the literature (see e.g., Drury & Reicher, 2009; Jost, 2019; Jost et al., 2014; Sidanius, et al., 2004; Turner & Reynolds, 2003). We took it as reference point and it resulted in our MCS. Even though, the immense classical Marxists´ work required an additional intriguing and enlightening, but also challenging, journey. Reviewers at large, and SDT, SJT, SIA, and classical Marxists´ advocates in particular, might identify any potential misalignment or misunderstanding that we may have made. Further research, meanwhile, would continue intertwining classical Marxism and the knowledge pool for the sake of a more comprehensive understanding of people´s beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours, towards the system.

6.4.2. About the Class-Struggle-Actions Scale (see Chapter 3)

A recurring limitation of our empirical studies was gathering more representative samples to carry out our analyses. More specifically, most of our participants were working-class individuals (which, on another note, arguably reflex the social-economic structure). Either way, in connection with our 2 studies of validation of a scale, we suggest the following developments:

(1) To collect, and apply our instrument within, a larger sample of participants. Conceivably, dominant-class and right-wing people will show less willingness towards the collective actions described in our instrument.

(2) To add items describing more specific, or disruptive, collective actions (e.g., taking part in picket lines or road blockades, or confronting riot forces during a strike). It would likely result in a two-dimension scale.

(3) To add items from the point of view of the dominant class (e.g., to support strikebreakers, to snitch the police on demonstration plans, or to rally against left-wing policies). This would be reverse scored items and, in turn, will likely capture the dimension of "false consciousness" (see Engels, 1893/1968; Hossler, 2020, p. 204).

(4) To consider a more direct head question, e.g., to which extent would you *take part* in the following actions? (see Tausch et al., 2011).

(5) To contrast the CSAS with measures of class consciousness (e.g., Keefer, Goode, & Van Berkel, 2015; Wright, 2004, p. 219). It would result in multidimensional scales.

(6) To ask participants to which extent they self-identify with the working-class, and/or with certain political parties, trade unions, social movements, etc. (see e.g., Postmes, Haslam & Jans, 2012; Thomas et al*.,* 2019).

(7) To contrast CSAS´ scores with more "objective" measures of political participation (e.g., asking participants about their political or trade-union militancy).

(8) To assess which specific material conditions lead to higher, or lower, scores in our CSAS (beyond mainstream´s gradational measures of status, either "objective" or subjective). More specifically, to consider property relations or people´s role in the mode of production (see e.g., Baizidi, 2019; Sawyer & Gampa, 2020, p. 206; Wright, 1985, p. 195, 2015).

(9) To consider additional, and plausibly predictive, material living conditions such as short- and long-term unemployment (see Badimon, 2013; Chandola & Zhang, 2018; Van der Meer, 2014).

(10)   To carry out subsequent cross-sectional studies with enough sample sizes and/or longitudinal or prospective cohort studies. It would be of predictive utility to carry out correlational studies in different historical times (e.g., prior to, during, or in the aftermath of, a financial crisis).

(11)   To carry out experimental research to assess which specific situations and/or ideological content might affect CSAS´ scores (e.g., high/low social mobility, successful/failed strikes, etc.).

(12)   To complement all the foregoing with analyses, at a different level, of the material and historical context (e.g., unemployment rates, consumer price index, government´s ideology, trade union membership, etc.).

6.4.3. *About associating the system with opportunities (see Chapter 4)*

The 2 empirical studies of this section were carried out with the same sample than the foregoing. Therefore, they shared the same underrepresentation of dominant-class individuals and the same concerns about the covariates. However, these 2 studies were vignette experiments, so they led to additional methodological concerns. Most notably, our respondents did not find both rags-to-riches and rags-to-rags vignettes equally believable. This could well be because, in real life, the former is more unlikely than the latter, though it is hard to determine this. Also, we observed little—and even contradictory—effects in the expected direction. This could well be because there were a huge leap between the content of the vignettes and what our instruments capture —so, too, perhaps, because we faced our participants with too many instruments. Last but not least, these experiments casted serious concerns about whether researchers may emulate the effect of dominant-class practices with survey designs. That is, we might hardly compare the effect of a vignette with mass-media ideological content (let alone, some respondents would be on guard while others would not pay attention to the vignette). Either way, we suggest the following developments:

(1) To collect larger enough samples to compare the effect of certain ideological content among different population groups. That is, try to reach at least $n > 30$ on each level of each covariate (see Field, 2009, p. 42).

(2) To consider additional measures of people´s position in the social-economic structure such as people´s role in the mode of production and/or short- and long-term unemployment.

(3) To include different predictive criteria such as whether participants received training with regard to entrepreneurship or not (e.g., at the college or at the job centre). Incidentally, it would indirectly assess whether encouraging people to become entrepreneurs have an effect in the intended direction or not.

(4) To design alternative vignette content such as asking participants to imagine themselves in the process of either successful or unsuccessful entrepreneurial ventures.

(5) To expose participants to actual mass-media content such as movies were the main character succeeds following individualistic paths.

(6) To consider gender neutral content, to avoid artefacts or extraneous ideological interferences.

(7) To do not include too many post-test measures to prevent the so-called "respondent fatigue" (see e.g., Lavrakas et al., 2019, pp. 742-743).

(8) To include post-test measures *closely related* to the content of the vignettes. In our case, i.e., testing the alleged SJ effect of rags-to-riches plots of the entrepreneurial type, we would ask participants to which extent they would open a business themselves.

(9) To complement all the foregoing with analyses, at a different level, of the material and historical context (e.g., public policies with regard to entrepreneurship, success rate of entrepreneurial ventures, socio-demographic profile of the entrepreneurs, etc.).

6.4.4.   *About associating system-change with a threat (see Chapter 5)*

This empirical study shared some limitations with the foregoing. With respect to the sample, dominant-class individuals were still underrepresented. Also, left-wing voters at large, and *Unidos Podemos´* ones in particular, largely outnumbered the other participants. This alone would explain the non-normal distribution of our measures, the

modest effect of the manipulation, and why participants did not find equally believable the vignettes. Likewise, this experiment also casted serious concerns about whether researchers may emulate the effect of dominant-class ideology with survey designs. Last but not least, this was the first attempt to provide empirical support to our MCS in its "final" form. Therefore, a number of additional concerns arose (both theoretical and methodological) which, in turn, led to additional suggestions for further developments. Let us summarise them:

(1) To collect larger enough samples to compare the effect of certain ideological content among voters of different parties and different population groups, e.g., try to reach at least $n > 30$ on each level of past vote (see Field, 2009, p. 42).

(2) To consider including a wider range of "class fractions" when asking participants about their role in the mode of production (see e.g., Wright, 1985, p. 195). This would also require larger samples.

(3) To avoid including too many measures prior to the manipulation, in order to prevent respondents "fatigue" when they face the experimental content and/or the post-test measures.

(4) To develop or improve instruments aiming to properly capture "gravitation towards socialism". We administered two scales of political and class consciousness (see Evans, Heath, & Lalljee, 1996; Keefer, Goode, & Van Berkel, 2015). However, they might perhaps measure "vulgar socialism" or socialism "in embryo" (see Lenin, 1902/1977, pp. 374-375; Marx, 1875/1970, p. 11). In this sense, a further reading of classical Marxists´ work seems advisable (see e.g., Engels, 1880/2005; Lenin, 1899/1964, 1902/1977, pp. 374-375, 1920/1974, p. 292; Marx, 1847/1955, pp. 79-80, 1867/2015, pp. 163-164; Marx & Engels, 1846/1968, 1848/1969).

(5) As already stated, one single-item measure of social identity (e.g., asking participants to which extent they identify themselves with the working-class) could be both an elegant way of measuring class consciousness and of predictive utility (Postmes, Haslam & Jans, 2012; Thomas et al., 2019).

(6) Though differences on credibility with regard to the vignettes could almost certainly be attributed to the large proportion of left-wing participants, i.e., to both partisanship bias (in the case of positive information about *Unidos* Podemos) and backfire effects (in the

case of negative information), more representative samples would overcome this concern.

(7) To expose participants to different content with regard to the alleged causes of *Unidos Podemos´* decline (e.g., inconsistencies of their leaders, infightings among rival factions, shift towards post-materialist positions, etc.). This would allow assessing which cause is more relevant.

(8) Beyond *Unidos Podemos*, we may consider making salient different issues (e.g., positive/negative information about socialist/capitalist regimes, immigration, nationalism, environmentalism, etc.) and then assess whether there is an effect on our "improved" class and political consciousness´ measures.

(9) We would also expose participants to different content and thus assess which rhetoric has better electoral prospects (e.g., disruptive versus moderate, materialist versus post-materialist) and on which population group (e.g., workers, unemployed, women). In this sense, we would have to further refine our Political Partisanship Scale, and to adapt it to any political force, social movement, or ideology, which people´s support we want to assess.

(10) To complement all the foregoing with analyses, at a different level, of the material and historical context (e.g., vote intention, social-economic indicators, media content, geopolitics, etc.).

7. GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

The ultimate aim of the present thesis was to shed further light on system stability and system change from a social-psychological perspective. Quite often individuals belonging to disadvantaged groups tolerate and bolster oppression, exploitation, and inequality, at the expense of their own self-interest. Every now and then, however, system-challenging events take place. Why people rebel (and why don´t)? We carried out a thorough review of the literature on system attitudes —most notably, Social Dominance and System Justification Theories, Social Identity Approach, and classical Marxism (see Chapter 1). We then defined a "twofold" working hypothesis (or two hypotheses that should not be extricated one from another). That is, those worse-off individuals within the social-economic structure gravitate towards a more egalitarian distribution of labour and resources (H1), whereas the practices of those better-off ones mitigate or reverse such gravitation (H2). To test such "twofold" hypothesis we carried out five empirical studies. First, we developed and validated a four-item instrument aiming to capture people´s willingness towards collective actions in a context of class struggle, or Class-Struggle-Actions Scale (see Chapter 3). Second, we tested the alleged system-justifying function of making people perceive that social boundaries are permeable (see Chapter 4). Third, we tested the alleged system-justifying function of making people perceive advocates of social change as a threat (see Chapter 5). In parallel, largely modelled on both the Social Identity Approach and classical Marxism, we developed what aims to be a comprehensive social-psychological explanation of system attitudes, which we named Model of Class Struggle (see Chapter 5 and the discussion in Chapter 6). Finally, we thoroughly discussed findings and limitations, and made suggestions for further research (see Chapter 6).

7.1. Key findings

Broadly speaking, our findings suggest that Social Identity Theory and classical Marxism are not only congruent with each other, but may have more explanatory and predictive value than Social Dominance and System Justification Theories. System maintenance could be explained without drawing on alleged *a priori* pro-system tendencies, i.e., prior to people´s experiences, as the latter approaches suggest. System change must be explained *in spite of* them. That is, system attitudes could mainly, or simply, reflex people´s position in, and understanding of, the social-economic structure. More specifically, in line with our first hypothesis, our low-income, low-status, and/or working-class participants showed on average greater anti-system attitudes than their high-income, high-status, and/or dominant-class counterparts. As expected, the former scored significantly different than the latter in system justification, political ideology, vote intention, and

our Class-Struggle-Actions Scale. Noteworthy, our unemployed participants, i.e., likely the most disadvantaged group, showed on average more anti-system attitudes than all other participants combined. Likewise, workers showed more anti-system attitudes than managers and owners of the means of production. That is, system attitudes seem an *a posteriori* phenomenon, i.e., an outcome of the context. Put simply, the more privileged people are, the more they will justify the system. Of course, this may not always be the case. Whether or not a person justifies the system may depend on multiple reasons. However, the trend seems clear, and in favour of both the Social Identity Approach and classical Marxism. That is, our results fit with criticism of the so-called "status-legitimacy hypothesis" and seem to be in line with what is to be expected in capitalist societies.

With respect to our second hypothesis, meanwhile, we obtained mixed results that should be interpreted with more caution. More specifically, our findings suggest that broadcasting rags-to-riches biographies of the entrepreneur type, i.e., making people perceive that social boundaries are permeable, could have system-justifying effects. We observed it among our participants of right-wing ideology (yet the other way round in leftist ones). Likewise, our results suggest that broadcasting negative views about (alleged) anti-system political forces, i.e., to make salient feelings of threat regarding a hypothetical system change, could have system-justifying effects. In this case, beyond a modest direct effect, negative information about *Unidos Podemos* undermined its support among our younger and high-income participants (yet the other way round among older and low-income ones). Perhaps political attitudes depend mainly on personal experiences, or situational constrains other than available information. It could be that people´s worldviews, ideology, and/or identities, often acquired at early ages, play an "autonomous" role, facilitating cognitive biases, social desirability, backfire or partisanship, depending on the situation. Alternatively, perhaps, many of our participants, simply, did not pay much attention to the content of our vignettes. Either way, our findings suggest that available information would somehow shape or influence people´s political attitudes. In addition, once again, it seems congruent with both the Social Identity Approach and classical Marxism. Conceivably, mass-media constant supply of biased news and views could lead to more direct effects on system attitudes than exposing survey respondents to a single brief vignette (at least in the long term). Either way, our results suggest that people´s beliefs would be shaped "from outside".

7.2. Contributions and implications of the thesis

The present research introduces a novel and promising tool, our Class-Struggle-Actions Scale. Results indicate that it is a psychometrically sound instrument with potential to predict the likelihood of system-challenging events. At least, it could be considered as a basis for further

developments. Likewise, results indicate that our measure of people´s role in the mode of production, i.e., a rather unexplored category in mainstream research, may have predictive utility for system attitudes. Further research on the topic would thus consider including the two main and antagonistic class locations in a class-based hierarchy (i.e., workers and owners) and the contradictory one (i.e., managers), at least to complement other measures of "class".

Furthermore, we outlined a comprehensive socio-psychological Model of Class Struggle to better understand system stability and change. Such a model can be seen as an extension of the Social Identity Approach, or as an update of the Marxist theorising if preferred, and could be useful to design research, interpret results, and eventually improve strategies for political action. Its basic tenet is that ideology should not be separated either from its producers, or from the material and historical conditions that allow its production. More specifically, researchers should consider not only (people´s attitudes towards) how wealth is distributed, but also how wealth is produced, and the antagonistic interests and situations that arise from it. Even more specifically, to explain people´s beliefs, attitudes and behaviours towards exploitation, oppression and/or economic inequality, researchers should consider the on-going conflict between productive forces (i.e., workers and owners) and modes of production (i.e., socialism and capitalism), or class struggle, and the overwhelming superiority of means of one of the (at least) two opposing sides. Political actors, for their part, would find the methodology of this thesis of practical use either to change the status quo or to preserve it.

7.3. Trying to answer the main research question

Having said the above, we will try to answer the leading question of the entire research process. Why people rebel (and why don´t)? In light of both our findings and the reviewed literature, we devised a number of plausible, and non-exclusive, antecedents that would *prevent* people from engaging in system-challenging collective actions:

(1) They belong to, and/or self-identify with, the advantaged group.
(2) They feel at ease in their position.
(3) They consider that the system is stable and/or legitimate.
(4) They perceive that social boundaries are permeable.
(5) They are diverted enough to think about it.
(6) They are out of fear of negative consequences if they do so.
(7) They are physically constrained and/or do not know how to do so.

Likewise, we devised a number of plausible antecedents, also non-exclusive, that would *facilitate* that people engage in system-challenging collective actions:

(1) They belong to, and/or self-identify with, the disadvantaged group.

(2) They feel anger, grievance, and/or (relative) deprivation.

(3) They consider that the system is unstable and/or illegitimate.

(4) They perceive that social boundaries are impermeable.

(5) They consider that issues may (or should) be solved collectively.

(6) They are not afraid (or loose fear) of negative consequences if they do so.

(7) They are physically capable and possess basic knowledge on how to do so.

Both our findings and the literature suggest that disadvantaged individuals, on average, gravitate towards the second list, whereas advantaged ones, on average, gravitate towards the first one (*situation oblige*). On another note, contexts of economic growth or economic stability—and dominant-class practices and institutions—, would increase the likelihood of the factors comprised in the first list. Sudden, deep, and broad enough changes for the worse in societies´ economic foundations—and working-class practices and institutions—, meanwhile, would increase the likelihood of the factors comprised in the second list. The fact that our unemployed participants were, on average, more anti-system oriented than the others was rather suggestive in this sense. That is, the existing antagonism between wage-dependent individuals and owners of the means of production may increase or decrease. Given the proper objective and subjective conditions, i.e., if the hitherto subordinates are able to organise themselves, and the hitherto dominants are unable to handle the situation, system change would take place.

Admittedly, establishing precise cause-effect relationships between objective and subjective antecedents of political behaviour is very complicated. For example, the same objective event may encourage many disadvantaged people to protest, even though many others still fear negative consequences. Similarly, some advantaged people may be physically capable and possess basic knowledge of how to challenge the system, although they may have no interest in doing so (rather the opposite). On the other hand, in socialist countries, disadvantaged people would be inclined to support the system (on which they are highly dependent). Even dispositional factors might have probabilistic effects on people´s political attitudes in one direction or another. That is, further research could refine, improve, and/or expand our theoretical proposal.

7.4. An afterword

To demonstrate whether *a priori* pro-system tendencies exist or not may seem a well-nigh impossible task. Thus, controversies in Social and Political Psychology will most likely continue. Yet, on a practical basis, individuals may support the status quo to varying degrees. Such support may increase or decrease, depending on different factors. The recommendation here is to look first at people´s position in the social-economic structure and the material and historical conditions within which human behaviour takes place, i.e., at the context. Dispositional factors may certainly have probabilistic effects. However, the context may facilitate some dispositions at the expense of others (e.g., dominant classes may take advantage of individual differences to impose labour and social discipline). Even if aprioristic pro-system tendencies exist, their relevance would ultimately rely on external factors (e.g., dominant-class propaganda and diversion would facilitate their primacy). Thus, why not looking preferentially at such external factors?

Even further, is it not more parsimonious and more practical for both social research and political action to see humans as self-interest seekers, driven by one unique well-being motive or general desire to maintain homeostasis? Why many people act at the expense of their own self-interest would be sufficiently explained by situational, material, or objective constrains, that would range from lack of information to the existence of other, more powerful self-interest seekers. That is, power asymmetries and imperfect information would largely determine, shape, and/or "distort", our self-interest seeking, given rise to short-term foresight, fear-based, false or apparent motives, or *false consciousness*. Hence, if disadvantaged people support the system at the expense of their own interest, it is worth considering first of all that they are somehow externally forced to do so, rather than attributing it to a supposed desire or motive of the exploited to be exploited. Either way, as a take-home message, to further understand and explain (people´s attitudes towards) how wealth is distributed, it seems worth considering how wealth is produced.

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