Tesis Doctoral – PhD Thesis

Programa de Doctorado en Psicología

DESIGUALDAD ECONÓMICA Y PERCEPCIÓN SOCIAL: EXAMINANDO EL CONTENIDO AGÉNTICO Y COMUNAL

ECONOMIC INEQUALITY AND SOCIAL PERCEPTION: EXAMINING THE AGENTIC AND COMMUNAL CONTENT

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A mis padres

A mi hermana

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Resumen

Las diferencias económicas entre las personas que más y que menos recursos tienen ha crecido considerablemente en las últimas cuatro décadas (Alvaredo et al., 2018; Piketty, 2020). A nivel global, actualmente el 10% de las personas más ricas del mundo posee el 51.7% del ingreso mundial total, mientras que el 50% de la población mundial con menores ingresos posee el 9.4% (World Inequality Database, 2020). En consecuencia, la desigualdad económica se ha convertido en uno de los problemas a los que las sociedades actuales deben enfrentarse (Alvaredo et al., 2017), hasta tal punto que desde las ciencias sociales se han hecho eco de la necesidad de comprender cómo y en qué manera puede afectar la desigualdad económica a las personas (Neckerman y Torche, 2007).

Diversas investigaciones sugieren que la desigualdad económica puede afectar a la psicología de las personas (Buttrick y Oishi, 2017; Rodríguez-Bailón et al., 2020). Por ejemplo, percibir un alto nivel de desigualdad económica puede afectar a la manera en la que se percibe a otras personas y el entorno social en el que la persona está inmersa. Estudios recientes sugieren que los entornos con un alto nivel de desigualdad económica son percibidos como muy competitivos y poco cooperativos, y sus habitantes son considerados como personas individualistas que persiguen sus propios objetivos más que objetivos grupales (Sánchez-Rodríguez, Willis, et al., 2019).

Esta tesis doctoral tiene como objetivo principal examinar la relación entre la desigualdad económica percibida y la percepción social. Para ello, utilizamos dos de las principales dimensiones de contenido en dicha percepción: la agencia y la comunión (Abele y Wojciszke, 2007, 2014).

La tesis doctoral está compuesta por un total de ocho capítulos. La parte teórica de la tesis se compone de tres capítulos. En el Capítulo 1 realizamos una revisión sobre la desigualdad económica y su estudio dentro de la psicología social. En el Capítulo 2 revisamos la literatura sobre las dimensiones de agencia y comunión, y otras dimensiones similares y centrales en la tesis, como son la masculinidad y la feminidad. A continuación, en el Capítulo 3, resumimos brevemente los indicios sobre la relación entre la desigualdad económica y la percepción social, y planteamos las diferentes preguntas de investigación y objetivos específicos de este trabajo.

La parte empírica de la tesis se compone de cuatro capítulos, escritos en inglés. En concreto, esta parte comprende desde el Capítulo 4 al Capítulo 7. El Capítulo 4 lo integran dos estudios experimentales que tenían como objetivo examinar el efecto de la desigualdad económica en la percepción social del habitante típico/a de una sociedad en la que sus habitantes no tienen género, y en la percepción social de habitantes de diferente clase social. Los resultados del primer experimento indicaron que las personas asignadas a la condición de alta desigualdad (vs. baja desigualdad) percibieron al habitante típico/a en mayor medida en términos masculinos (i.e., agénticos) que femeninos (i.e., comunal). En el segundo experimento observamos que a quienes pertenecían a la clase social alta se les percibió con mayor masculinidad que feminidad en ambas condiciones experimentales, pero esto ocurría especialmente en la condición de alta desigualdad económica.

El Capítulo 5 lo integran dos estudios experimentales que tratan de examinar el efecto de la desigualdad económica percibida en la percepción de hombres y mujeres en términos agénticos y comunales (i.e., estereotipos de género). El primer experimento se realizó en España, una cultura más orientada a la feminidad que a la masculinidad (Hofstede, 1980; Hofstede Insights, 2020). Los resultados nos permitieron concluir que al hombre se le considera aún más agéntico que comunal cuando existe alta desigualdad económica. En el caso de la mujer, la percepción de un alto nivel de desigualdad económica redujo la diferencia entre la agencia y la comunión que se le atribuía. Decidimos realizar un segundo experimento en México para replicar estos resultados en una cultura orientada a la masculinidad (Hofstede, 1980; Hofstede Insights, 2020). Los datos de este segundo experimento corroboraron el efecto de la desigualdad económica en la percepción del hombre y de la mujer.

En el Capítulo 6 nos propusimos examinar la relación entre la desigualdad económica y la percepción social esta vez en el ámbito organizacional. En concreto, a lo largo de tres experimentos examinamos el efecto de la desigualdad económica en la percepción social de un trabajador (no se indicaba el género) de rango medio y la propia percepción del participante (Estudio Piloto, Estudios 1 y 2), así como la percepción social del líder (no se indicaba el género) de la organización (Estudios 1 y 2). Observamos que cuando existe un alto nivel desigualdad económica (vs. baja desigualdad vs. igualdad) dentro de una organización, las personas perciben al trabajador/a de rango medio como más agéntico que comunal; cuando existe baja igualdad se le percibe de una manera similar en ambas dimensiones; y cuando existe igualdad se le evalúa como más comunal que agéntico. Los resultados, sin embargo, no corroboraron nuestras predicciones en cuanto a la autopercepción y en cuanto a la percepción de los líderes de las organizaciones.

En el Capítulo 7 incluimos dos estudios diseñados para analizar si la autopercepción en términos masculinos (i.e., agénticos), de participantes hombres y mujeres, predecía la preferencia por una mayor desigualdad económica. En el primer estudio (no experimental) observamos que, de acuerdo con lo esperado, la autopercepción en términos masculinos predijo una mayor desigualdad económica ideal. Para establecer una relación causal, realizamos un experimento en el que primamos la masculinidad (vs. feminidad). Los resultados subrayaron que la autopercepción en términos masculinos (vs. femeninos) llevaba a una mayor desigualdad económica ideal.

Por último, en el Capítulo 8 se presenta una síntesis y discusión de los resultados obtenidos de acuerdo con cada una de las preguntas de investigación planteadas. También señalamos las implicaciones de los hallazgos del presente trabajo, las limitaciones generales de los estudios realizados y nuevas ideas para futuras líneas de investigación. Finalmente, presentamos una breve conclusión, en inglés, de los resultados de la tesis doctoral.

En términos generales, en esta tesis encontramos que la desigualdad económica sí afecta a la percepción social que tenemos de otras personas y grupos; y que, además, la percepción de la propia persona influye en el nivel de desigualdad que preferimos.

Overview

The economic disparities between people who have the most and the least resources have grown considerably over the last four decades (Alvaredo et al., 2018; Piketty, 2020). Globally, the richest 10% of the world's people collect 51.7% of the total world income, while the bottom 50% collect 9.4% of it (World Inequality Database, 2020). Consequently, economic inequality has become one of the problems that today's societies must face (Alvaredo et al., 2017), to such an extent that the social sciences have echoed the need to understand how and in what way economic inequality can affect people (Neckerman & Torche, 2007).

Research suggests that economic inequality can affect people's psychology (Buttrick & Oishi, 2017; Rodríguez-Bailón et al., 2020). For example, perceiving a high level of economic inequality can affect how individuals perceive a social environment and other people. Recent studies suggest that environments with a high level of economic inequality are perceived as highly competitive and uncooperative, and their inhabitants are seen as individualistic people who pursue their own goals rather than group goals (Sánchez-Rodríguez, Willis, et al., 2019).

The main aim of this doctoral thesis was to examine the relationship between perceived economic inequality and social perception. For this purpose, we use two of the main content dimensions of social perception: agency and communion (Abele & Wojciszke, 2007, 2014).

The dissertation consists of a total of eight chapters. The theoretical part of the thesis consists of three chapters. In Chapter 1, we review the literature about the social psychology of economic inequality. In Chapter 2, we review the literature on the dimensions of agency and communion and other similar dimensions, such as masculinity and femininity. Then, in Chapter 3, we briefly summarize the relationship between economic inequality and social perception and propose the different research questions and specific objectives of this work.

The empirical part of the thesis consists of four chapters written in English. Chapter 4 is composed of two experimental studies that aimed to examine the effect of economic inequality on the social perception of a typical inhabitant of a society (in which its inhabitants have no gender) and the social perception of citizens of different social classes. The results of the first experiment indicated that people assigned to the high-inequality (vs. low-inequality) condition perceived the typical inhabitant as more masculine (i.e., agentic) than feminine (i.e., communal). In the second experiment, we observed that members of the upper social class were perceived as more masculine than feminine in both experimental conditions, but this was especially true in the condition of high economic inequality.

Chapter 5 is composed of two experimental studies that attempt to examine the effect of perceived economic inequality on the perception of men and women in agentic and communal terms (i.e., gender stereotypes). The first experiment was conducted in Spain, a culture oriented towards femininity more than masculinity (Hofstede, 1980; Hofstede Insights, 2020). The findings of this experiment allowed us to conclude that men are considered even more agentic than communal when there is high economic inequality. In the case of women, the perception of a high level of economic inequality reduced the difference between agency and communality attributed to them. We also decided to conduct a second experiment in Mexico to replicate these findings in a masculinity-oriented culture (Hofstede, 1980; Hofstede Insights, 2020). The results of this second experiment corroborated the effect of economic inequality on the social perception of men and women.

In Chapter 6, we set out to examine the relationship between economic inequality and social perception in the organizational field. Specifically, in three experiments, we examined the effect of economic inequality on the social perception of a middle-ranking worker and the participant's own perception in terms of agency and communion (Pilot Study, Studies 1 and 2), as well as the social perception of an organization's leader (Studies 1 and 2). We observed that when there is a high level of economic inequality within an organization (vs. low inequality vs. equality), people perceive a middle-ranking worker as more agentic than communal; when inequality is low, people do not perceive differences between agency and communion; and when there is equality, people tend to perceive the worker as more communal than agentic. Results, however, did not replicate our results concerning the effects of inequality on how leaders are evaluated and how people evaluate themselves.

In Chapter 7, we conducted two studies to analyze whether self-perception in masculine (i.e., agentic) terms would predict preference for greater economic inequality. In the first (nonexperimental) study, we found that, as expected, self-perception in masculine terms predicted greater ideal economic inequality. To establish a causal relationship, we conducted an experiment in which we primed masculinity (vs. femininity). The results corroborated that self-perception in masculine (vs. feminine) terms led to greater ideal economic inequality.

Finally, in Chapter 8, we synthesize and discuss the results obtained according to each of the proposed research questions. We also point out the implications of the findings of this paper, the general limitations of the studies conducted, and new ideas for future lines of research. Lastly, we present a brief conclusion (written in English) of the results of the doctoral thesis.

Overall, in this thesis we find that economic inequality does affect the social perception we have of other people and groups and, in addition, that self-perception influences the level of inequality we prefer.

CAPÍTULOS TEÓRICOS

THEORETICAL CHAPTERS

Capítulo 1

Aproximación Psicosocial al Estudio de la Desigualdad Económica

La desigualdad económica ha aumentado considerablemente en la mayoría de los países en los últimos 40 años (Alvaredo et al., 2017, 2018; Piketty, 2020). Diferentes organizaciones internacionales han declarado que el aumento de la desigualdad económica es un problema que debe ser abordado de manera prioritaria (Fondo Monetario Internacional [FMI], 2020b; Organización de las Naciones Unidas [ONU], 2020a). Representa, por tanto, uno de los grandes retos a los que se enfrentan las sociedades en la actualidad, siendo su reducción uno de los Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible (ODS) propuestos en la Agenda 2030 (ONU, 2020b).

El término *desigualdad económica* puede estar sujeto a diferentes interpretaciones. Siguiendo a Atkinson (2015), cuando se trata el tema de la desigualdad económica es necesario preguntarse: *¿desigualdad de qué? y ¿desigualdad entre quiénes?* Respecto a la primera pregunta, la desigualdad económica se refiere a la distribución asimétrica de aquellos recursos considerados valiosos entre las personas o grupos en un determinado contexto social (García-Sánchez, Willis, Rodríguez-Bailón, García-Castro, et al., 2018; Peterson, 2017). En general, la desigualdad económica puede englobar la desigualdad de *riqueza* (i.e., todo el capital o activos financieros que posee una persona; como ahorros, propiedades, etc.), la desigualdad de *ingresos* (i.e., el flujo de dinero proveniente de salarios, rentas, inversiones, etc.), y/o la desigualdad de *salarios* (i.e., dinero que se recibe a cambio de un empleo; Brown-Iannuzzi et al., 2017; Keeley, 2018; Peterson, 2017).

En cuanto a la segunda pregunta, se debe tener en cuenta que la desigualdad implica comparación. Desde una perspectiva estrictamente económica, el estudio de la desigualdad económica —ya sea de riqueza, ingresos o salarios— puede tomar como unidad de análisis la desigualdad entre generaciones, hogares (que pueden estar formados por una o diferentes familias), familias (teniendo en cuenta que puede haber hijos/as y padres adultos/as en una misma familia), o individuos (Atkinson, 2015). En este trabajo operacionalizamos la *desigualdad económica*, a la que también nos referiremos más brevemente como *desigualdad*, como la distribución asimétrica de ingresos y otros recursos valiosos entre las personas o grupos de personas (e.g., las que más y las que menos recursos tienen) que forman parte de una misma sociedad o contexto social (Brown-Iannuzzi et al., 2017).

La desigualdad económica viene determinada por un proceso previo de *diferenciación social* (Kerbo, 2011). Las personas tienen diferentes habilidades, actitudes y roles sociales, y por ello son diferentes entre sí (Kerbo, 2011). La diferenciación social en sí misma no implica jerarquías ni desigualdad entre las personas. Sin embargo, categorizar a las personas en virtud de esas diferencias y asignar más valor a determinadas habilidades, actitudes y roles sociales, y recompensar económicamente más a las personas que las poseen, genera y mantiene la desigualdad económica (Bapuji, 2015; Kerbo, 2011). De hecho, en ocasiones, estas variables de nivel *profundo* —como son las habilidades o los roles sociales incluso los valores y actitudes de las personas— pueden ser vistas como congruentes con otras variables de nivel *superficial* (Phillips y Lloyd, 2006), que son visibles o fácilmente detectables en las personas, como el género y la etnia (Guillaume et al., 2012; Liao et al., 2008; Şahin et al., 2019; van Knippenberg y Mell, 2016). En consecuencia, puede ocurrir que se le asigne más valor a las competencias y labores que desarrollan los miembros de grupos de alto estatus social (e.g., hombres y personas blancas) frente las que desarrollan los miembros de grupos de bajo estatus social (e.g., mujeres y personas de etnias minoritarias), por el simple hecho de presuponer ciertas habilidades en ellos/as en base a su grupo de pertenencia (e.g., Eagly, 1987; McGinnity y Lunn, 2011; Schein, 1973).

1. Datos sobre la Desigualdad Económica

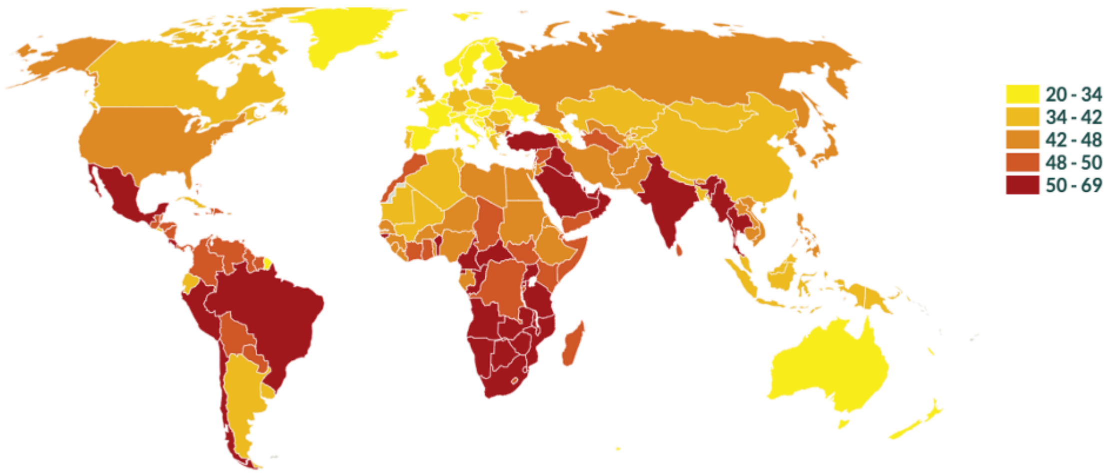
La desigualdad económica ha fluctuado a lo largo de la historia y se ha visto afectada por importantes acontecimientos sociales como la Revolución Industrial, el Crack del 29, o la Primera y la Segunda Guerra Mundial (Milanovic, 2016; Peterson, 2017; Piketty, 2014). Se considera que el periodo de 1950 a 1980 fue relativamente igualitario. Pero a partir de los años 80, y hasta nuestros días, el nivel de desigualdad económica se ha incrementado notablemente, y este crecimiento ha estado condicionado por la propiedad de la riqueza. Esto es, la riqueza de carácter privado dentro de un país ha aumentado en los últimos años, mientras que la riqueza pública ha disminuido, lo que ha hecho que aumenten las diferencias económicas entre la ciudadanía (Alvaredo et al., 2018).

A nivel global, actualmente el 10% de las personas más ricas del mundo posee el 51.7% del ingreso mundial total, mientras que el 50% con menores ingresos posee el 9.4% del ingreso mundial total (World Inequality Database [WID], 2020). Las dos regiones más desiguales del mundo son Oriente Medio y América Latina. En Oriente Medio el 10% más rico posee alrededor del 56% de los recursos, y el 10% más rico de América Latina posee el 54% de los recursos. Europa es una de las regiones menos desiguales del mundo, donde el 10% de las personas más ricas poseen alrededor del 37%

de los recursos (ver Figura 1.1, Alvaredo et al., 2018; WID, 2020). Aún así, el 1% de las personas más ricas de Europa incrementó sus ingresos al doble de velocidad que el 50% de las personas con ingresos más bajos en el periodo comprendido entre 1980 y 2017 (Blanchet et al., 2019).

Figura 1.1.

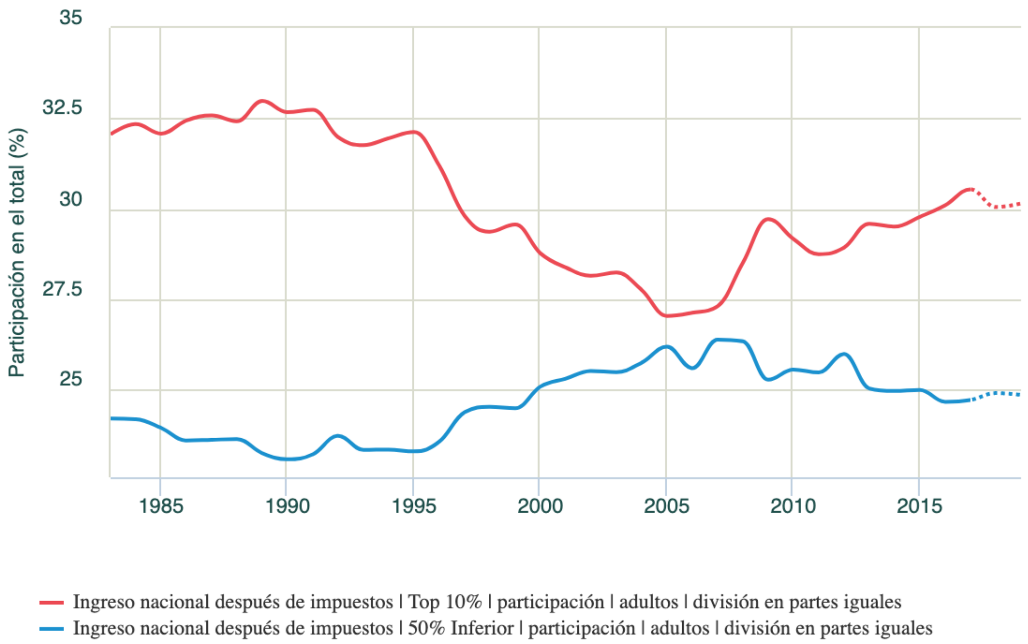
Intervalo del Porcentaje de Participación en la Renta Nacional Antes de Impuestos del 10% de las Personas Más Ricas de Cada Sociedad en el Año 2020 (WID, 2020)



España es uno de los países más desiguales de las naciones que componen la Unión Europea (EUROSTAT, 2020). Igual que ocurre en el resto de los países, la desigualdad económica es mayor que hace décadas. Además, España fue uno de los países que más sufrió las consecuencias de la Gran Recesión en 2007, y desde entonces la desigualdad económica ha ido en aumento (Instituto Nacional de Estadística, 2019; véase Anghel et al., 2018). Así, en la Figura 1.2 vemos que en el año 2019 el 10% de las personas más ricas de España participaban en el 30.1% de los ingresos totales y el 50% de las personas con más bajos ingresos en el 24.9%, mientras que en 2007 estas diferencias en la participación del ingreso total de España eran menores (27.1% vs. 25.6%, respectivamente).

Figura 1.2.

Evolución del Porcentaje de Participación en la Renta Nacional Después de Impuestos del 10% de las Personas Más Ricas y el 50% de las Personas con Menos Recursos de España en el Periodo de 1980 a 2019 (WID, 2020)



Por otro lado, la reciente crisis humanitaria originada por la pandemia del SARS-CoV-2 ha afectado a la situación económica de los países en todo el mundo, aunque ha impactado de manera desigual a sus habitantes. Las personas con ingresos económicos más bajos se han visto más perjudicadas por el impacto económico del COVID-19 (Aspachs et al., 2020; Palomino et al., 2021; Parker et al., 2020), mientras que, en algunos casos, las personas más ricas del mundo han visto cómo su fortuna aumentaba (EFE, 2020; Florio, 2020; Institute for Policy Studies, 2020). Las primeras predicciones sobre la situación de España apuntaban a que, a raíz de la pandemia por COVID-19, el nivel de desigualdad económica aumentaría especialmente en comparación con otros países desarrollados (FMI, 2020a). Esto se debe a que, cuando las consecuencias de la Gran Recesión todavía estaban presentes, se sumaron las consecuencias devastadoras a nivel económico que supone una pandemia (e.g., cierre de toda la actividad económica, aumento de desempleo).

Bajo este contexto económico y social en el que la desigualdad económica tiene un gran protagonismo, recientemente la psicología social ha tratado de arrojar luz sobre qué efectos tiene la desigualdad económica sobre las personas y sociedades, y cuáles son las actitudes hacia ella. En el siguiente apartado haremos una revisión sobre la forma en que se enfoca el estudio de la desigualdad económica dentro de la psicología social.

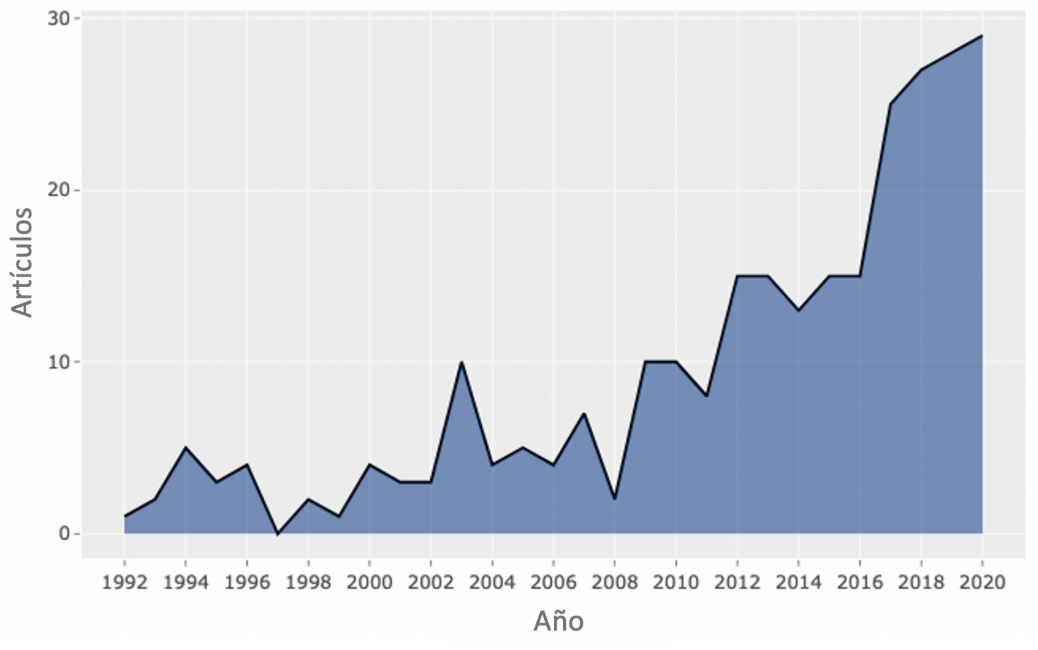
2. Psicología Social de la Desigualdad Económica

La desigualdad económica es un fenómeno social que ha adquirido una creciente relevancia en diferentes disciplinas científicas. La economía (e.g., Atkinson, 2015), la epidemiología (e.g., Wilkinson y Pickett, 2009a, 2009b, 2018), la sociología (e.g., Neckerman y Torche, 2007), y más recientemente la psicología social (e.g., Buttrick y Oishi, 2017; Jetten y Peters, 2019; Rodríguez-Bailón et al., 2020), se han hecho eco de la necesidad de abordar el estudio de la desigualdad económica.

Concretamente, el número de investigaciones publicadas en el campo de la psicología social sobre desigualdad económica en el año 2020 fue más de 20 veces mayor que hace casi dos décadas (Web of Science, 2021). Observamos que, aunque este incremento no ha seguido una tendencia lineal, desde el año 2011 fue acelerándose, especialmente a raíz del año 2016 (ver Figura 1.3).

Figura 1.3.

Evolución del Número de Publicaciones Científicas sobre Desigualdad Económica en la Categoría "Psychology, Social" en la Web of Science en el Periodo Comprendido entre 1990-2020



Nota. Las publicaciones (total = 290) incluyen, artículos científicos empíricos (265), artículos de revisión (9), capítulos de libros y libros (16). Elaboración propia con datos de Web of Science (2021).

En lo que se refiere a la desigualdad económica como variable de análisis, la investigación desde la psicología social ha examinado principalmente tres variables: la desigualdad económica real (e.g., Paskov y Dewilde, 2012), la desigualdad económica percibida (e.g., Hauser y Norton, 2017) y la desigualdad económica ideal (e.g., Norton y Ariely, 2011). Primero introduciremos brevemente la desigualdad económica real. Después dado que, en esta tesis, tres de las cuatro investigaciones que presentamos abordan el estudio de la desigualdad económica percibida nos detendremos más en la explicación de ésta. El último capítulo empírico tratará del estudio de la desigualdad económica ideal.

2.1. Desigualdad Económica Real

La *desigualdad económica real*, también llamada *desigualdad económica objetiva*, se refiere al nivel de desigualdad económica presente en un determinado contexto, como, por ejemplo, un país, una comunidad, o una provincia, entre otros. Habitualmente, las investigaciones desde la psicología social —y otras ciencias sociales relacionadas— han utilizado el coeficiente Gini como medida de la desigualdad económica real (e.g., Kelley y Evans, 2017; Loughnan et al., 2011). El *coeficiente Gini* —o índice de Gini— mide la distribución de los ingresos de una sociedad, y puede comprender desde el valor 0, que indica que los ingresos se distribuyen uniformemente entre toda la sociedad (total igualdad), hasta el valor 1, que indica que una sola persona es la que recibe todos los ingresos (total desigualdad; ONU, 2010). También se utilizan otros indicadores como, por ejemplo, los deciles, percentiles, y quintiles de la distribución de la riqueza, y los ratios. Sin embargo, este tipo de métricas no suelen tener en cuenta todos los datos de la distribución de la riqueza, sino solo los extremos; por ello, los/as investigadores utilizan en mayor medida el coeficiente Gini para estudiar la desigualdad económica. A pesar de que se han examinado diferentes correlatos psicosociales de la desigualdad económica real considerándolos como posibles consecuencias de ésta (Wilkinson y Pickett, 2017), existe una controversia acerca de sus posibles efectos (e.g., Saunders y Evans, 2011; Snowdon, 2010) y su influencia en determinados procesos psicológicos y sociales (Kelley y Evans, 2017; Kim et al., 2021).

2.2. Desigualdad Económica Percibida

La *desigualdad económica percibida* —también llamada *desigualdad económica subjetiva* o *percepción de desigualdad económica*— se refiere al nivel de desigualdad que las personas estiman o perciben en un determinado entorno (García-Sánchez, Willis, Rodríguez-Bailón, García-Castro, et al., 2019). Dicho de otro modo, es la representación subjetiva de la distribución de los recursos económicos (García-Sánchez, 2021). La desigualdad económica subjetiva no coincide necesariamente con la desigualdad económica objetiva (Schmalor y Heine, 2021). Investigaciones previas sugieren que las personas no estiman correctamente el nivel de desigualdad presente en su entorno (Gimpelson y Treisman, 2018; Hauser y Norton, 2017). No obstante, no existe un consenso claro sobre si las personas subestiman (e.g., Kiatspongan y Norton, 2014) o sobreestiman (e.g., Chambers et al., 2014) el nivel de desigualdad económica. Por otro lado, cada vez existen más trabajos que muestran que las personas principalmente piensan y actúan en función del nivel de desigualdad económica que perciben (i.e., desigualdad económica percibida/subjetiva) más que de la desigualdad económica objetiva (e.g., García-Castro et al., 2020; García-Sánchez, Willis, Rodríguez-Bailón, Palacio Sañudo, et al., 2018; Trump, 2020).

Recientemente, Phillips et al. (2020) han propuesto un modelo en el cual la percepción de la desigualdad se considera un *proceso* que viene determinado por cinco etapas relacionadas entre sí e iterativas (ver Figura 1.4). La primera etapa del proceso que determina la percepción de la desigualdad sería el *acceso a las señales* —o estímulos—. Es decir, para percibir la desigualdad primero se ha de tener información sobre ella. Esta información normalmente surge del entorno inmediato de la persona, el cual se podría dividir en tres tipos de fuentes de información: *quién* está alrededor del individuo (i.e., entorno social), *qué* está alrededor del individuo (i.e., entorno físico), y *qué hay en los medios de comunicación* (i.e., entorno informativo).

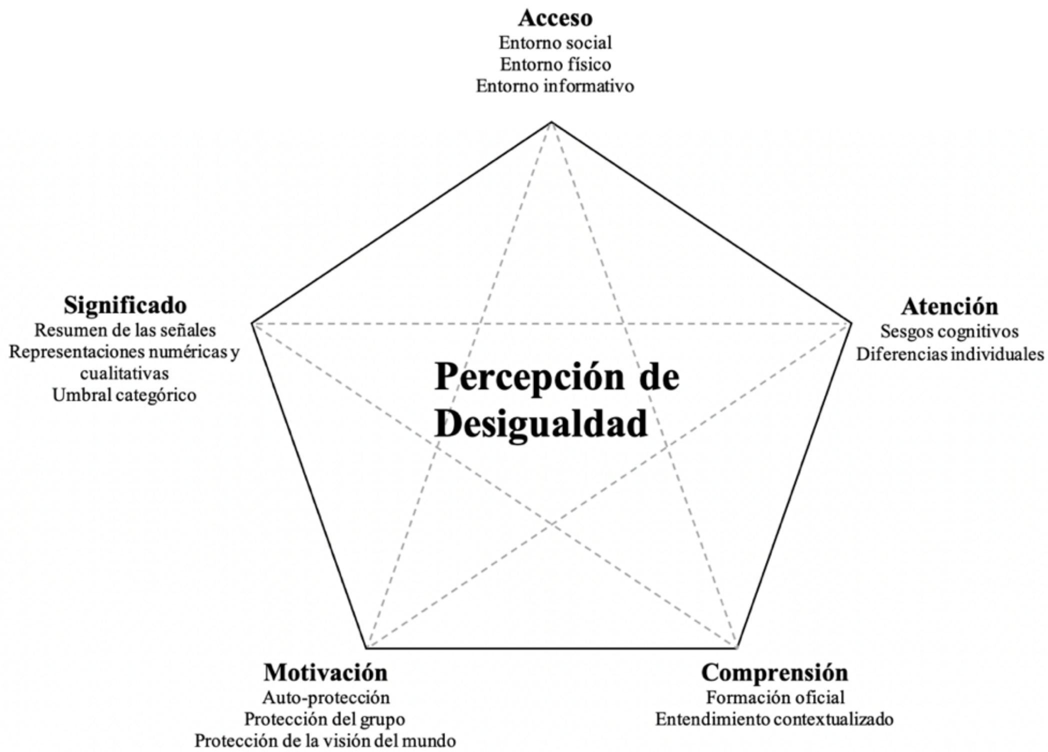
El segundo paso es la *atención a las señales de desigualdad*. No sólo porque un estímulo sea accesible se percibe la desigualdad económica, sino que la persona debe prestar atención a dicho estímulo. La fase de atención es una etapa bastante compleja en el proceso de la percepción de desigualdad, ya que pueden influir determinados sesgos cognitivos (García-Castro et al., 2020; García-Sánchez, Willis, Rodríguez-Bailón, Palacio Sañudo, et al., 2018), al igual que el tipo de señal al que se esté prestando atención, o las diferencias individuales entre los perceptores. El tercer paso es la *comprensión de las señales de desigualdad*. Esta fase implica ser capaz de entender el estímulo al que las personas están expuestas. Generalmente, la comprensión de estímulos de carácter numérico y estadístico (e.g., coeficiente Gini, riqueza de cada decil, quintil, etc.) es más difícil que la de un estímulo físico (e.g., gráficos), relevante para la persona (e.g., gasto semanal en comida), o especialmente llamativo (e.g., la noticia de que una persona muy rica se ha gastado una enorme cantidad de dinero en algo muy lujoso). De igual modo, la comprensión a veces depende de la formación y de la experiencia que tenga la pesona perceptora, así como de que sea capaz de reconocer si un bien o un producto es de alto estatus y/o caro, o si por el contrario es de bajo estatus y/o barato.

La cuarta fase es el *procesamiento motivado de las señales de desigualdad*, o la *motivación* para procesar esas señales. Las personas estamos motivadas para percibir el entorno que nos rodea de manera que encaje y proteja nuestras necesidades, vivencias, y recursos psicológicos (Kunda, 1990). Por ejemplo, la protección de la propia moral y estima (Cohen y Sherman, 2014), del propio grupo (Sidanius y Pratto, 1999), y de la manera de ver el mundo (i.e., valores, creencias, ideologías) puede determinar cómo procesamos la información, y en consecuencia, nuestro comportamiento y actitudes hacia la desigualdad. Por último, la quinta etapa del proceso de percepción de la desigualdad es el *resumen significativo de las señales de desigualdad*. Esta última etapa implica realizar un representación resumida y comprensible de las señales de desigualdad económica, esto es, del *significado* de desigualdad económica.

En general, las personas no suelen separar las señales de carácter cualitativo de las cuantitativas en este proceso. Primero dan respuesta a *por qué* creen que existe la desigualdad (e.g., creencias meritocráticas), y después interpretan las señales de carácter objetivo o cuantitativo (e.g., nivel de desigualdad actual). Además, las personas conceptualizan la desigualdad generalmente en categorías (Fisher y Keil, 2018; véase también García-Sánchez, Willis, Rodríguez-Bailón, García-Castro, et al., 2018) más que como un resumen de datos numéricos. Se trata de una representación que puede variar de persona a persona, ya que las experiencias, las creencias, y la relevancia que se le da a las señales influye en esta representación.

Figura 1.4.

La Percepción de la Desigualdad Económica como Proceso (Phillips et al., 2020). Adaptación al Castellano



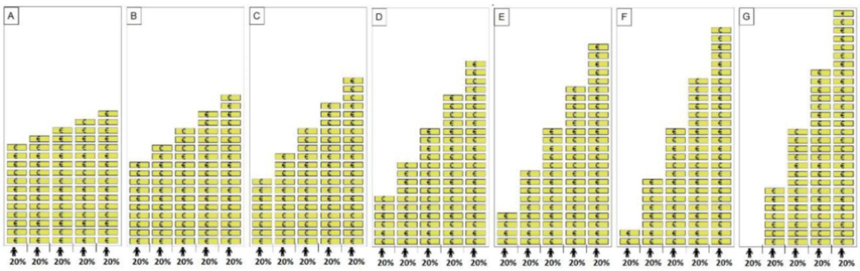
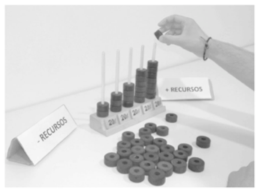
Estas cinco etapas ponen de manifiesto el importante rol de la *subjetividad* en el estudio de la desigualdad económica. Este modelo puede enriquecer las investigaciones futuras que se realicen sobre la desigualdad económica percibida ya que puede ayudar a a comprender mejor en qué se trabaja cuando se mide o manipula esta variable (e.g., para manipulaciones experimentales, veáse Sánchez-Rodríguez y Willis, 2021).

2.2.1. Métodos Utilizados en el Estudio de la Desigualdad Económica Percibida

La desigualdad económica subjetiva se ha estudiado de diferentes maneras, en parte debido a las diferentes conceptualizaciones que se han hecho acerca de este constructo. Recientemente, García-Sánchez (2021) ha clasificado los métodos utilizados en esta investigación en cinco grupos de indicadores (ver Tabla 1.1, para algunos ejemplos). En primer lugar, los *indicadores de tipo semántico* se refieren a aquellos ítems o escalas que recogen las creencias sobre la percepción de la magnitud de la desigualdad. En segundo lugar, los *indicadores diagramáticos* se refieren a aquellas representaciones gráficas sobre la distribución (des)igual de los recursos económicos.

Tabla 1.1.

Ejemplos de Indicadores Utilizados en el Estudio de la Desigualdad Económica Percibida (García-Sánchez, 2021)

Tipo de indicador	**Ejemplos**
Semántico	"Las diferencias de ingresos en [país] son demasiado grandes" (ISSP Research Group, 2017). "En mi ciudad la disparidad en la riqueza de las personas con mayores y menos ingresos es muy grande" (Sommet et al., 2019). En ambos se utiliza una escala de respuesta tipo Likert.
Diagrámatico	"¿Qué grafico representa mejor la estructura económica de la sociedad [nación]? Elige la letra que mejor corresponda con tu respuesta" (Graphic Notes Inequality Measure [GNIM]; Rodríguez-Bailón et al., 2017). 
Distributivo Numérico	Brecha salarial entre trabajadores de alto y bajo rango (e.g., Castillo, 2011; ISPP Research Group, 2017). Se debe el salario mensual de los/as trabajadores de alto y bajo rango en una organización.
Interactivo o de tarea	Paradigma del ábaco para la distribución de recursos (Willis et al., 2015). Se distribuyen las diferentes fichas (que representan los recursos) entre los diferentes postes de madera para representar el nivel de distribución de recursos que se percibe en la sociedad. 
Cualitativo	"¿Cómo percibe usted la desigualdad económica en [contexto]? (García-Sánchez, Willis, Rodríguez-Bailón, García-Castro, et al., 2018). Respuesta abierta.

En tercer lugar, los llamados *indicadores distributivos numéricos* captan numéricamente la manera en que las personas perciben cómo es la distribución de recursos económicos. Esto se realiza gracias a, por ejemplo, la estimación de las brecha salariales o a la riqueza que tienen los diferentes grupos de la sociedad (e.g., quintiles).

En la literatura también nos encontramos con los indicadores interactivos o de tareas. Se trata de actividades en interacción con otras personas o resolución de tareas que permite captar otras dimensiones del constructo, por ejemplo, de manera visual. Finalmente, los indicadores de tipo cualitativo permiten captar la percepción de la desigualdad a partir de la experiencia individual de las personas, sin limitarse a los ítems desarrollados en la investigación (véase García-Sánchez, 2021, para una revisión más detallada de los indicadores).

Por otra parte, se han desarrollado manipulaciones experimentales para examinar las consecuencias de la percepción de desigualdad económica (para una revisión del estudio de la desigualdad económica en el laboratorio véase Sánchez-Rodríguez y Willis, 2021). En algunos casos, se han manipulado las características de un determinado entorno y de la distribución de recursos entre diferentes grupos tratando de hacer evidente que ese entorno es más o menos desigual. En concreto, el Paradigma de Bimboola (Sánchez-Rodríguez, Willis, y Rodríguez-Bailón, 2019; que es una adaptación del paradigma desarrollado por Jetten et al., 2015 para manipular la clase social) hace uso de diferentes estímulos visuales que ayudan a enfatizar las diferencias económicas entre los diferentes grupos sociales de ese contexto. Otros estudios han presentado gráficos con una distribución de recursos más o menos desigual entre, por ejemplo, los diferentes grupos (e.g., quintiles) de una sociedad (e.g., Côté et al., 2015) o entre los diferentes individuos que participan en una tarea de toma de decisiones (e.g., Payne et al., 2017).

Debido a la diversidad en la conceptualización de la desigualdad económica y en la forma de medirla o manipularla, Jachimowicz et al. (2020) proponen cuatro preguntas que conviene tener en cuenta cuando se quiera realizar una investigación sobre este tema (ver Figura 1.5).

Figura 1.5.

Preguntas-Guía en la Operacionalización de la Percepción de Desigualdad Económica (Jachimowicz et al., 2020)

En primer lugar, debemos conocer *qué tipo de desigualdad* es la que se pretende estudiar: desigualdad de *oportunidades* o de *resultados* (Atkinson, 2015; Lefranc et al., 2008; Neckerman y Torche, 2007). La desigualdad de oportunidades (e.g., Davidai, 2018) hace referencia a la distribución asimétrica de las opciones y posibilidades de avanzar y conseguir logros. Es decir, estar en (des)igualdad de condiciones para avanzar (e.g., que unos/as estudiantes dispongan de más medios que otros/as para abordar las mismas tareas). La desigualdad de resultados (e.g., Rodríguez-Bailón et al., 2017) es aquella distribución asimétrica de recursos materiales y tangibles (e.g., riqueza, salarios).

La segunda pregunta es *cuál es el nivel de análisis* que interesa. Existen diferentes niveles de análisis de la desigualdad económica. Por ejemplo, algunas investigaciones se han centrado en la desigualdad económica dentro de un país (e.g., Norton y Ariely, 2011), e incluso entre un conjunto de países, como Europa (e.g., Guinjoan y Rico, 2018). También se ha examinado la percepción de desigualdad dentro de estados, comparando regiones o provincias (e.g., Côté et al., 2015), así como la percepción de desigualdad económica existente en una ciudad (e.g., Du et al., 2021), en un barrio (e.g., Osborne et al., 2015), e incluso entre las personas del entorno social más cercano (e.g., García-Castro et al., 2019, 2020, 2021). Pueden surgir algunos errores en la estimación de la desigualdad cuando no se tiene en cuenta, o no se conoce, en qué nivel están contestando las personas encuestadas, y si es el mismo nivel en el que está pensando quien hace la pregunta (Jachimowicz et al., 2020). Por ejemplo, en una investigación se puede querer medir la percepción del nivel de desigualdad existente en la ciudad de Granada. Sin embargo, quien contesta puede hacerlo pensando en su experiencia diaria en el barrio en el que vive (Cruces et al., 2013). Por consiguiente, su percepción del nivel de desigualdad de Granada estaría sesgada por su experiencia del día a día en su barrio.

En tercer lugar, se debe tener en cuenta en *qué parte de la distribución de recursos* se pone el foco en la investigación. Esto es, focalizarse en toda la distribución de ingresos entre todos los/as habitantes de una sociedad, en algunos grupos o en algunos individuos. Por ejemplo, García-Castro et al. (2020) examinaron la percepción de las diferencias económicas entre las personas con las que se interactúa en el día a día. Otros trabajos se han centrado en el análisis de la distribución de recursos preguntando cuál es el porcentaje de riqueza que posee el quintil más alto de la sociedad (e.g., Eriksson y Simpson, 2012) o desarrollando gráficos de la distribución de ingresos y lo que recibe cada quintil de la población para medir la desigualdad percibida (e.g., ISSP Research Group, 2017; Rodríguez-Bailón et al., 2017).

La última y cuarta pregunta es sobre *cuál es el grupo de referencia* que se quiere estudiar. Por ejemplo, si el interés está en la desigualdad económica entre hombres y mujeres (e.g., Khoreva, 2011), o entre personas de diferente raza (e.g., Gordils et al., 2020; Kraus et al., 2017, 2019). No osbtante, la investigación sobre desigualdad económica principalmente se ha basado en examinar el nivel de desigualdad entre las personas con más y menos recursos, sin especificar el grupo social de pertenecencia.

Por último, otro elemento que se ha de tener en cuenta a la hora de estudiar la percepción de la desigualdad económica es el *framing* o encuadre. Es decir, *cómo se enmarca la desigualdad*. Por ejemplo, las diferencias económicas se pueden evaluar y/o presentar de forma que se haga saliente cuánto tienen los grupos aventajados o cuan poco tienen los grupos desaventajados. Aunque las descripciones del hecho en sí son equivalentes, subrayan aspectos diferentes de la desigualdad (Bruckmüller et al., 2017). Por ejemplo, enmarcar la desigualdad centrándose en lo poco que tienen los grupos desaventajados hace que se perciba que las diferencias económicas son más grandes, que se legitime menos la desigualdad (Bruckmüller et al., 2017), y que aumente el apoyo a acciones para reducirla (Dietze y Craig, 2021).

2.2.2. Consecuencias Psicosociales de la Desigualdad Económica Percibida

Aunque existen numerosos trabajos en los que se han abordado las consecuencias psicosociales de la desigualdad económica real u objetiva (Buttrick y Oishi, 2017; Wilkinson y Pickett, 2009b, 2018), en la presente tesis examinaremos algunas consecuencias de la desigualdad económica percibida. Para enmarcar nuestra investigación, clasificaremos las consecuencias más relacionadas con nuestro objeto de estudio en tres grandes categorías.

En primer lugar, la percepción de desigualdad económica puede influir en *cómo las personas se perciben a sí mismas en relación con los demás*. Así, Sánchez-Rodríguez et al. (2019) mostraron que la percepción de un alto nivel de desigualdad hace que las personas se consideren a sí mismas como menos conectadas con los demás (i.e., *self-construal interdependiente*; Markus y Kitayama, 1991). En relación con la (des)identificación grupal, estudios previos han mostrado que la percepción de un alto nivel de desigualdad económica entre los países de la Unión Europea genera una mayor desidentificación con Europa, es decir, las personas se sienten más distantes de lo que supone la categoría "europeo/a" (Petkanopoulou et al., 2018). La desigualdad económica percibida puede afectar incluso a cómo percibimos a la clase social a la que pertenecemos. Por ejemplo, a través de varios experimentos utilizando el Paradigma de Bimboola se ha demostrado que las personas pertenecientes a la clase social media consideran que su grupo es menos rico (y por tanto, ellas también) cuando perciben que las diferencias económicas son muy altas (vs. bajas), a pesar de que su nivel de riqueza sea el mismo en las dos condiciones de desigualdad (Sánchez-Rodríguez, Jetten, et al., 2019). Es decir, la desigualdad económica puede hacer sentir a las personas que son de una determinada manera, incluso cuando no lo son (Payne, 2017).

En segundo lugar, la desigualdad económica percibida también puede afectar a *cómo se percibe el entorno social y cómo se perciben a las demás personas*. Davidai (2018) examinó el posible efecto de la percepción de la desigualdad económica de una sociedad en la percepción de movilidad económica existente en dicha sociedad. Sus resultados mostraron que quienes percibían una alta desigualdad económica consideraban que la movilidad económica era menor en comparación con quienes percibían baja desigualdad. Es decir, percibían que en las sociedades más desiguales era menos probable mejorar y avanzar económicamente. Además, los contextos sociales en los que se percibe una alta desigualdad económica son percibidos como entornos muy competitivos y poco cooperativos, en los que la norma social se basa en el individualismo, en conseguir objetivos individuales más que grupales, en las relaciones de intercambio, y en la distancia psicológica entre las personas (Sánchez-Rodríguez, Willis, et al., 2019). En la misma línea, la percepción de un alto nivel de desigualdad económica genera la percepción de un clima normativo basado en los valores de *auto-ensalzamiento* (Sánchez-Rodríguez et al., 2020). Esto es, cuando las personas perciben que existe una alta desigualdad en un determinado contexto, consideran que las personas que forma parte de ese entorno se guían más por los valores de auto-ensalzamiento (i.e., poder y logro) que por valores de *auto-transcendencia* (i.e., universalismo y benevolencia; Schwartz, 1992). Otros trabajos han mostrado que una alta desigualdad económica percibida en una sociedad genera una mayor percepción de que dicha sociedad se está desintegrando — esto es, una mayor percepción de *anomia* (i.e., no se puede confiar en otras personas y quienes gobiernan no lo hacen eficazmente ni con legitimidad; Teymoori et al., 2016), lo que a su vez lleva a preferir líderes fuertes orientados al autoritarismo para que reestructuren el orden social (Sprong et al., 2019). Las sociedades desiguales también son percibidas como contextos donde existe una mayor *brecha de méritos* entre las personas ricas y pobres (Heiserman y Simpson, 2017). De manera que cuando se percibe que la sociedad es muy desigual (vs. menos desigual), se percibe a las personas ricas más competentes y merecedoras de reconocimiento, mientras que se percibe a las personas pobres como incompetentes y menos merecedoras de reconocimiento. De igual manera, estudios recientes han mostrado que, efectivamente, las personas de clase social alta son percibidas como más competentes y las de clase social baja como menos competentes en los entornos más desiguales (Connor et al., 2021).

En tercer lugar, al igual que puede modular la manera en la que las personas se ven a sí mismas, al entorno y a los/as demás, la percepción de desigualdad económica también influye en *cómo se muestran las personas ante los/as demás*, es decir, la imagen con la que quieren que se les perciba. Du et al. (2021) mostraron que las personas de clase social baja, que percibían alta desigualdad, indicaban tener un mayor interés y disposición a conseguir bienes que reflejasen alto estatus en comparación con aquellas personas de clase social baja que percibían un bajo nivel de desigualdad. Esta búsqueda de estatus que se genera cuando se considera que el entorno es desigual puede derivar en un mayor uso de estrategias financieras de alto riesgo para conseguir los bienes deseados (Payne et al., 2017).

Según los resultados que hemos presentado, se podría considerar que la desigualdad económica afecta de manera negativa a las personas y a la sociedad (Jetten y Peters, 2019). A pesar de ello, como veremos a continuación, algunas personas justifican y se declaran a favor de un nivel de desigualdad económica elevado.

2.3. Desigualdad Económica Ideal

Además de la desigualdad económica real y de la percibida, también se ha examinado la *desigualdad económica ideal*, que se refiere al grado de desigualdad que las personas consideran que sería justo o adecuado que existiera (García-Sánchez, Willis, Rodríguez-Bailón, Palacio Sañudo, et al., 2018, Willis et al., 2015). La técnica más habitual para medir esta variable ha sido a través de la brecha salarial entre empleados/as. Primero se les pide a los/as participantes que piensen en la empresa más grande de su país, y a continuación que indiquen el salario que consideran que *debería* ganar la persona con el puesto de más responsabilidad y cualificación así como lo que debería ganar la persona con el puesto de menos responsabilidad y cualificación (Castillo, 2011; ISSP Research Group, 2017).

Las personas difieren en el nivel de desigualdad económica que consideran que debería existir (Willis et al., 2015). Desde la psicología social, se han propuesto una serie de variables que pueden influir en la opinión de las personas acerca de cuál es el nivel de desigualdad económica aceptable o ideal que debería existir en la sociedad.

Una de estas variables es la propia percepción de desigualdad económica (Pedersen y Mutz, 2019). Aunque las personas prefieren menos desigualdad económica de la que perciben (Norton y Ariely, 2011), la percepción de una alta desigualdad económica predice una mayor desigualdad económica ideal (Castillo, 2012; García-Sánchez, Willis, Rodríguez-Bailón, Palacio Sañudo, et al., 2018). Es decir, cuanta más desigualdad se percibe más desigualdad se prefiere, aunque el nivel de esta última siga siendo menor que el de la desigualdad percibida. Esta estimación de una mayor desigualdad económica ideal cuando se percibe una alta desigualdad económica puede ser consecuencia de un efecto de anclaje, dado que generalmente se pregunta primero por el nivel de desigualdad de la organización (e.g., diferencia en salarios entre las personas en los rangos más altos y más bajos) y, a continuación, por el nivel de desigualdad ideal. Las estimaciones sobre la desigualdad ideal se ajustarían a las realizadas previamente sobre desigualdad real (García-Sánchez, 2019; Pedersen y Mutz, 2019).

Ciertas características individuales pueden influir en la desigualdad que se desea y se acepta. Por ejemplo, las creencias e ideologías acerca de la desigualdad económica (e.g., Rodríguez-Bailón et al., 2017). Las personas con fuertes creencias en que el mundo es un lugar justo, con creencias meritocráticas y con una ideología política conservadora tienden aceptar más la desigualdad económica (Norton et al., 2014; Son Hing et al., 2019; Trump, 2020). Además, se ha mostrado que la relación entre la desigualdad económica percibida y la ideal es más fuerte en aquellas personas que apoyan ideologías y creencias que legitiman y justifican la desigualdad (García-Sánchez, Van der Toorn, et al., 2018; Willis et al., 2015). Por otro lado, aquellas personas pertenecientes a grupos aventajados, como las pertenecientes a la clase social alta, y los hombres, suelen reportar mayores niveles de desigualdad ideal (Kiatpongsan y Norton, 2014; Norton et al., 2014), ya que las personas están motivadas a actuar y pensar en base a su propio interés (Trump, 2020). Otras investigaciones han mostrado que existen determinadas tendencias en las personas que pueden hacerles más propensas a aceptar la desigualdad y mantener el status quo en la sociedad, como la necesidad de cierre, y la preferencia por tomar decisiones de manera propia (Jost y Hunyady, 2005).

A modo de conclusión, desde la psicología social se ha mostrado que la percepción de desigualdad económica afecta a las personas distorsionando la percepción sobre sí mismas y su grupo, también afecta a cómo se percibe el entorno y la personas que viven en él, y también a la imagen que queremos reflejar ante las demás personas. Aunque estas consecuencias puedan considerarse socialmente no deseables ya que repercuten negativamente en la cohesión social, la desigualdad económica puede ser aceptada y legitimada. Así, la percepción de la desigualdad económica existente en la sociedad, las ideologías, y otras variables individuales pueden predisponer a las personas a aceptar y desear grandes diferencias económicas entre los individuos de una sociedad.

Dentro del estudio de la desigualdad económica, existen pocas propuestas teóricas que hayan tratado de integrar los resultados psicosociales en relación con la desigualdad económica y explicar por qué puede afectar a las personas. En el siguiente apartado revisaremos algunas de las propuestas más recientes.

3. Aproximaciones y Modelos Teóricos sobre las Consecuencias Psicosociales de la Desigualdad Económica

En los últimos años, han surgido dos perspectivas para dar respuesta a *por qué* la desigualdad económica afecta a las personas: la perspectiva neomaterialista (Lynch et al., 2000, 2004) y la perspectiva psicosocial (Wilkinson y Pickett, 2009b, 2017, 2018).

La *perspectiva neomaterialista* sugiere que los problemas que se originan en las sociedades desiguales se deben a la falta de recursos materiales y de inversión pública en infraestructura sanitaria, social y física (e.g., sanidad, educación, transporte, o calidad de la vivienda, entre otros; Lynch et al., 2000, 2004). Desde esta perspectiva, se considera que la desigualdad económica —la cual es el resultado de procesos históricos, culturales y político-económicos— influye en los recursos privados que poseen las personas y en la infraestructura pública de la sociedad. La desigualdad económica en sí misma no sería la causa de las problemáticas sociales en las sociedades desiguales, sino simplemente un problema asociado a otro aún mayor: la falta de recursos tanto privados como públicos.

La *perspectiva psicosocial* sugiere que muchos de los problemas sociales se deben al alto nivel de desigualdad económica *per se* (Pickett y Wilkinson, 2015; Wilkinson y Pickett, 2009b, 2017, 2018). Desde esta perspectiva, se considera que las relaciones sociales son un factor clave cuando se trata de comprender la asociación entre la desigualdad económica y estos problemas. Una de las contribuciones más importantes es la de Wilkinson y Pickett (2009b, 2018). Estos autores proponen que la desigualdad económica es mala para las sociedades no sólo porque suponga una dispersión de los recursos materiales, sino porque reduce la cohesión social y aumenta la distancia psicológica entre las personas (e.g., bajos niveles de confianza y solidaridad, alta criminalidad; de Courson y Nettle, 2020; Elgar y Aitken, 2011; Paskov y Dewilde, 2012; Wilkinson y Pickett, 2009a).

En efecto, Wilkinson y Pickett (2017) sugieren que las diferentes estructuras sociales (i.e., sociedades con diferentes niveles de desigualdad económica) generan entornos selectivos diferentes, y las características de estos entornos son fundamentales para el desarrollo de las características de las personas: en los contextos con alta desigualdad económica, la competición y la dominancia son estrategias sociales exitosas para sobrevivir y desarrollarse en ese entorno (e.g., Sommet et al., 2019); mientras que en los contextos más igualitarios, la cooperación y la reciprocidad son las estrategias sociales más adecuadas para salir adelante (e.g., Paskov y Dewilde, 2012).

Estas dos perspectivas —la neomaterialista y la psicosocial— no son necesariamente opuestas. Pueden ser perspectivas que se complementen entre sí, ya que la desigualdad económica puede causar determinados problemas sociales a través de variables de carácter psicosocial, mientras que otros de los problemas surgen a través de la baja disponibilidad de recursos materiales (e.g., Elgar y Aitken, 2011; Lancee y Van de Werfhorst, 2012).

El tema central de la tesis doctoral se alinea principalmente con la perspectiva psicosocial, puesto que partimos de la noción de que la desigualdad económica es la causa de determinados comportamientos, pensamientos y actitudes de las personas. Desde la perspectiva psicosocial se han desarrollado al menos cuatro explicaciones de *por qué* la desigualdad afecta a las personas. Tres de ellas sugieren las comparaciónes interpersonales e intergrupales como posibles mecanismos por los que la desigualdad afecta a las personas; mientras que la otra aproximación pone el énfasis en las normas y la conformidad con éstas. Las propuestas teóricas basadas en la comparación las explicaremos brevemente en el siguiente apartado y, posteriormente, en un apartado específico, profundizaremos en el modelo teórico más relacionado con los objetivos de la presente tesis doctoral.

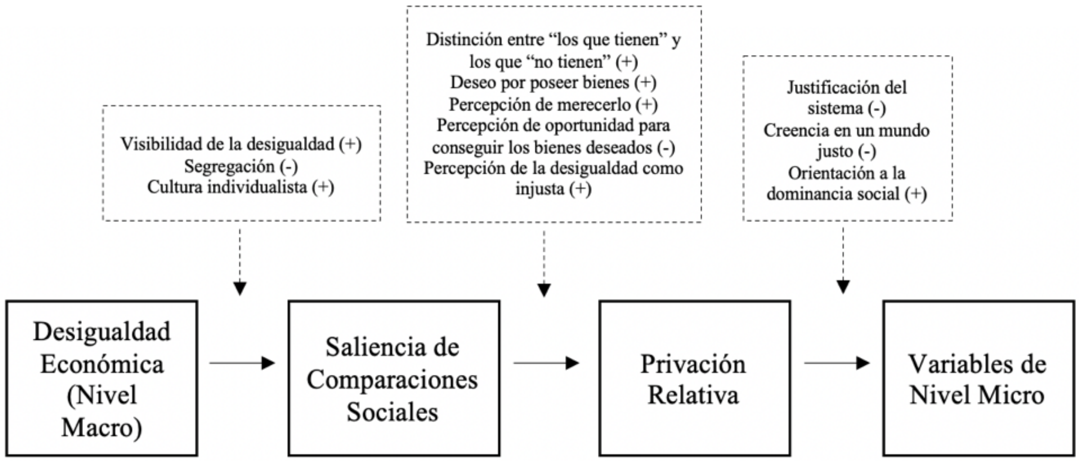
3.1. Propuestas Teóricas Basadas en las Comparaciones Interpersonales e Intergrupales

En primer lugar, Delhey et al. (2017) argumentaron que, además de la desigualdad económica objetiva, existen otros factores a nivel individual (e.g., recibir bajos ingresos) y contextual (e.g., instituciones, consumo cultural) que pueden afectar a la forma en que las personas se relacionan y tratan a otras personas. Desde esta propuesta, la variable más relevante sería la comparación social entre las personas, lo que genera a su vez ansiedad por el estatus.

Recientemente, el *modelo macro-micro de la desigualdad y la privación relativa* (*Macro-micro Model of Inequality and RElative Deprivation*; Osborne et al., 2019) también pone el énfasis en la saliencia de la comparación social y, además, en la percepción de la privación relativa como los mecanismos que explican el efecto de la desigualdad económica objetiva (nivel macro) en otras variables de nivel micro (e.g., bienestar; ver Figura 1.6). Osborne et al. (2019) argumentan que la relación entre la desigualdad económica y la saliencia de las comparaciones sociales depende en gran medida de que dicha desigualdad sea visible o perceptible. Por ejemplo, si existe una gran segregación residencial, las personas tendrán limitaciones para realizar las comparaciones sociales puesto que sólo conocen un único estándar o estilo de vida. Por otra parte, vivir en una cultura individualista que fomenta la competición y el consumo refuerza la saliencia de las comparaciones sociales.

Figura 1.6.

Modelo Macro-Micro de la Desigualdad y la Privación Relativa (The Macro-micro model of Inequality and RElative Deprivation [MIRED]; Osborne et al., 2019). Adaptación al Castellano



Este modelo señala que el incremento de la saliencia de las comparaciones sociales en las sociedades desiguales fomenta la percepción de privación relativa (a nivel *individual* y *grupal*) entre la población, especialmente cuando se cumplen las condiciones básicas de querer poseer ese bien o recurso, creer que se merece, creer que podría conseguirlo, y/o considerar que le ha sido denegado injustamente. Finalmente, la privación relativa percibida a nivel individual o grupal afecta a las personas o grupos, respectivamente. Este último paso en el proceso puede verse moderado por las ideologías que legitiman la desigualdad (e.g., la creencia en un mundo justo).

En tercer lugar, Jetten et al. (2017) propusieron que en los contextos más desiguales la riqueza es una categoría aún más saliente a la hora de percibir a otras personas, enfatizando las diferencias intergrupales basadas en los recursos económicos. También argumentan que, si bien la desigualdad puede afectar tanto a las personas ricas y pobres, las razones que subyacen a sus comportamientos y actitudes en los contextos desiguales serán diferentes: las personas pobres actuarán en función de la privación relativa percibida, mientras que las personas ricas —para mantener su posición— actuarán debido a la ansiedad por el estatus.

3.2. El Modelo de la Desigualdad Económica como Información Normativa

Uno de los modelos teóricos más recientes que ha tratado de explicar los mecanismos que subyacen a los efectos de la desigualdad económica sobre los individuos es el *modelo de la desigualdad económica como información normativa* - *the Economic Inequality as Normative Information Model* (EINIM; Sánchez-Rodríguez et al., 2021).

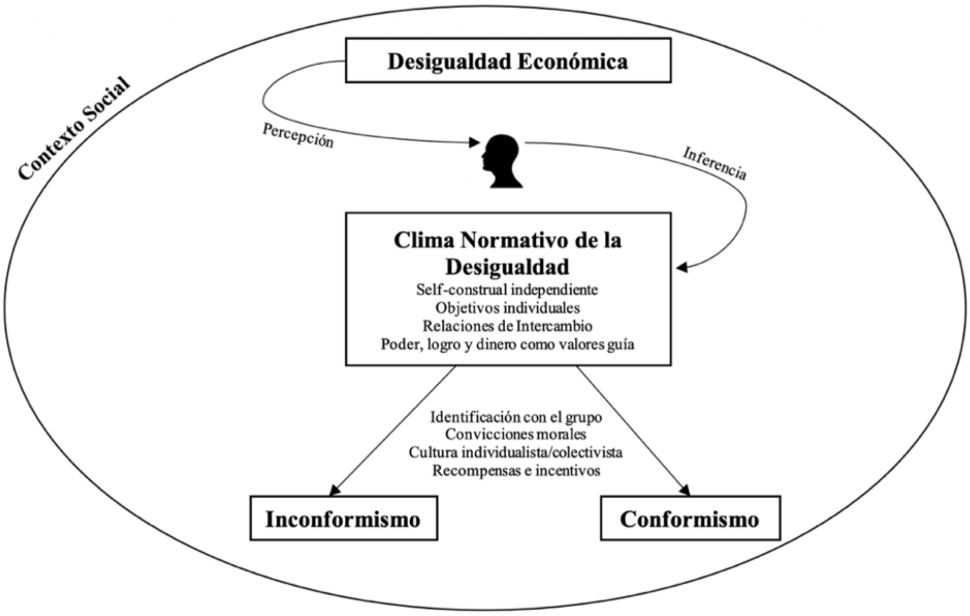
Basándose en la psicología socioecológica (Oishi, 2014; Üskül y Oishi, 2018), en la investigación sobre normas sociales (Cialdini et al., 1990), en la Teoría de la Identidad Social y en la Teoría de la Auto-Categorización (Tajfel, 1974; Turner, 1985), el EINIM propone que el nivel de desigualdad económica que los individuos perciben funciona como una clave o una pista que da información a la hora de inferir cuál es el clima normativo que predomina en ese determinado contexto o sociedad. Así, el nivel de desigualdad económica que percibimos en un contexto ayudaría a las personas a inferir cuáles son las características generales de dicho entorno, de los individuos que viven o interactúan en ese contexto, o incluso del funcionamiento de sus instituciones. Dichas características formarían lo que podríamos denominar el *clima normativo de la desigualdad*.

Dado que las normas influyen en el comportamiento de los individuos (Cialdini et al., 1990), este modelo propone que la información normativa inferida a raíz del nivel de desigualdad económica sirve de guía en el comportamiento y en las actitudes de las personas, lo que las lleva a dos opciones: primero, pueden adaptarse a ese entorno y mostrar su conformidad; segundo, pueden desviarse de esa norma social establecida (ver Figura 1.7).

Partiendo de la perspectiva psicosocial que argumenta que la desigualdad económica genera un entorno selectivo al que las personas deben adaptarse (Wilkinson y Pickett, 2017), este modelo trata de dar respuesta a algunas de las cuestiones que la perspectiva psicosocial aún no ha dilucidado: *a) ¿Qué significa que la desigualdad económica crea un entorno selectivo?; b) ¿Cuáles son las características de ese entorno selectivo?; c) ¿Cuáles son los mecanismos por los cuales la desigualdad económica afecta al comportamiento de las personas?*

Figura 1.7.

Modelo de la Desigualdad Económica como Información Normativa (The Economic Inequality as Normative Information Model [EINIM]; Sánchez-Rodríguez, et al., 2021). Adaptación al Castellano



¿Qué significa que la desigualdad económica crea un entorno selectivo? Según el EINIM, el nivel de desigualdad económica presente en una sociedad crea ciertas facilidades en el entorno que fomentan un tipo de comportamientos y actitudes, mientras que también crea ciertos límites que dificultan otro tipo de comportamientos y actitudes. Por ejemplo, en los contextos altamente desiguales se facilitarían los comportamientos y actitudes basados en la competición mientras que se dificultarían o castigarían aquellos basados en la cooperación (Wilkinson y Pickett, 2017). Por tanto, las personas que se comportaran de un modo más dominante y menos cooperativo serían capaces de sobrevivir y adaptarse mejor al entorno de la desigualdad. Un aspecto importante que destacar es que, dado que las personas buscarían adaptarse (o no) a ese entorno, es necesario que las personas *perciban* la desigualdad económica y sean conscientes de qué comportamientos son exitosos en ese contexto desigual.

¿Cuáles son las características de ese entorno? Estudios previos han mostrado que cuando las personas perciben alta desigualdad en un contexto consideran que dicho entorno se caracteriza por la competitividad (Sánchez-Rodríguez, Willis, et al., 2019). De hecho, las personas tienen una imagen acerca de qué comportamientos y actitudes predominan en un contexto desigual, creando así el *clima normativo de la desigualdad* (Sánchez-Rodríguez et al., 2020): un ambiente social caracterizado por un self-construal independiente, donde se priorizan los objetivos individuales, las relaciones de intercambio social, y donde se persigue el poder, el logro, y el dinero (Sánchez-Rodríguez et al., 2020; Sánchez-Rodríguez, Willis, et al., 2019).

¿Cuáles son los mecanismos por los cuales la desigualdad económica afecta al comportamiento de las personas? En línea con el *modelo de la identidad social de las actitudes del sistema* (*Social Identity Model of System Attitudes* [SIMSA]; Owuamalam et al., 2018), el EINIM propone que la sociedad o el contexto desigual (e.g., país, ciudad, barrio) en su conjunto será percibido como un *endogrupo*, por lo que una vez que las personas ya han inferido cómo es el clima normativo de ese contexto, podrán decidir si se conforman o no con la norma grupal. En este sentido, la *identidad grupal* juega un papel importante. Así, aquellas personas que se identifiquen con el grupo (e.g., país, ciudad, barrio) en el que se percibe la desigualdad económica, tenderán a *conformarse con la norma grupal* (i.e., el clima normativo desigual). Igualmente, las personas que no se identifiquen o se identifiquen poco con el endogrupo puede desviarse de la norma. Es decir, el *conformismo o no* con el clima normativo inferido del grado de desigualdad condicionará el comportamiento de las personas. Este (in)conformismo puede verse influenciado por otras variables como las convicciones morales de las personas, la cultura en la que se viva, y las recompensas e incentivos que se obtengan en dicho clima.

4. Conclusiones

En el presente capítulo hemos revisado el concepto de desigualdad económica, así como su estudio dentro del ámbito de la psicología social, centrándonos tanto en la desigualdad objetiva, como en la desigualdad percibida y en la desigualdad ideal. Hemos resumido cómo se conciben estas desigualdades y cómo se miden. Dado que nuestro trabajo versa principalmente sobre la desigualdad percibida, hemos expuesto algunas de las consecuencias que se han encontrado de tal desigualdad. También hemos presentado algunos modelos teóricos que tratan de explicar los mecanismos por los cuales la desigualdad económica afecta a las personas, prestando especial atención al estudio del clima normativo de la desigualdad económica. Con esta tesis doctoral pretendemos contribuir al conocimiento acerca de las *características que componen el clima normativo* de la desigualdad económica basándonos principalmente en el estudio del contenido dual de la percepción social.

Capítulo 2

Construyendo la Realidad Social: El Contenido Dual Agéntico y Comunal en la Percepción Social

Las imágenes que las personas tienen las unas de las otras son los hechos sólidos de la sociedad"
(Cooley, *Human Nature and the Social Order*, 1922, p. 121)

La realidad social de los seres humanos es muy compleja y requiere que éstos dispongan de mecanismos mentales que les permitan entender los diferentes matices que componen el mundo. Las personas necesitan conocer y comprender la conducta de otras personas y la suya propia, elaborar juicios sobre lo que observan en los/as demás y en sí mismas, y con toda esta información tomar decisiones (Fiske, 1993). Es esta interpretación o construcción *subjetiva* de la realidad social lo que va a determinar cómo piensan, sienten y actúan los individuos (Fiske y Taylor, 1991; Greifeneder et al., 2017).

El campo en el que se estudian los mecanismos mentales implicados en la comprensión de la realidad social (e.g., percepción social, memoria, evaluación, Fiske y Taylor, 1991, 2017) es la *cognición social*. Desde esta perspectiva, se mantiene que las interacciones entre las personas dependen de lo que éstas piensan de sí mismas, de otras personas, y del entorno en el que están inmersas (Fiske y Taylor, 1991, 2017; Greifeneder et al., 2017).

En concreto, la *percepción social* se entiende como ese proceso cognitivo *activo* mediante el cual las personas forman impresiones y juicios acerca de las personas (Aronson et al., 2010; Fiske y Taylor, 2017). Cuando alguien percibe a otras personas, o piensa sobre sí misma, el contenido de esa percepción es esencial. Los trabajos clásicos de Asch (1946) y Rosenberg et al. (1968) ya apuntaban a que el contenido de la percepción social estaba formado generalmente por dos grandes dimensiones de rasgos, dos formas en las que una persona se percibe a sí misma y a las demás. Estas dos grandes dimensiones se fundamentarían en cómo la persona se desenvuelve en su entorno social. Así, existiría una dimensión orientada al *yo como individuo independiente*, y otra dimensión que orientada al *yo como parte de una unidad social* (Bakan, 1966). Estas dimensiones fundamentales se han denominado de diferentes maneras, con significados ligeramente diferentes, y estudiadas en contextos diferentes (e.g., Abele y Wojciszke, 2014; Judd et al., 2005). De entre todas ellas, en la presente tesis doctoral profundizaremos en las dimensiones de Masculinidad y Feminidad (Bem, 1974), y en las dimensiones más amplias y generales de Agencia y Comunión (Abele y Wojciszke, 2007; Bakan, 1966).

1. Masculinidad y Feminidad

La masculinidad y la feminidad son términos que aún son habituales en nuestro día a día. Es fácil encontrar ejemplos en los que las personas pensemos o digamos que alguien es muy *masculino (*o *masculina)* o muy *femenino (o femenina)*. Pero ¿qué es la masculinidad? ¿y la feminidad? Constantinople (1973) señalaba que "tanto teórica como empíricamente [la masculinidad y la feminidad] parecen estar entre los conceptos más confusos del vocabulario de los/as psicólogos/as*"* (p. 390).

Han sido varios los intentos por tratar de esclarecer qué son la masculinidad y la feminidad. El estudio científico de la masculinidad–feminidad desde la psicología se caracteriza por tener una compleja historia desde su comienzo en la primera mitad del siglo XX. En la década de 1920, Lewis Terman realizó una investigación sobre el desarrollo social e intelectual de niños y niñas superdotados. Terman observó que los niños mostraban un patrón de interés sobre determinados temas diferente al de las niñas. Esto le llevó a considerar que las diferencias de sexo en el patrón de intereses que había observado podría ser un medio para medir la masculinidad y feminidad de cada sexo (Lippa, 2005).

Años después, Terman y Miles (1936) desarrollaron el primer test que trataba de examinar la masculinidad–feminidad —al que llamaron *Attitude Interest Analysis Survey*—, considerando que la masculinidad–feminidad era un rasgo más de las personas que podría ser medido con una prueba apropiada. El test consistía en una serie de ítems sobre asociaciones de palabras, de respuestas emocionales y éticas ante diferentes situaciones, de intereses y conocimiento general (ver ejemplos de ítems en la Tabla 2.1). Asumían que un ítem era válido para medir la masculinidad–feminidad si un gran número de mujeres y hombres, en promedio, contestaban de manera diferente a dicho ítem. Se consideraba que la masculinidad y la feminidad hacían referencia a *las diferencias de sexo* en determinadas respuestas y comportamientos, y que eran *dos polos opuestos* de una misma dimensión. Por tanto, la masculinidad sería lo *contrario* a la feminidad, y si una persona *era* masculina no podía *ser* femenina, y viceversa (e.g., Gough, 1956; Guilford y Zimmerman, 1956; Hathaway y McKinley, 1951; Strong, 1943).

Los trabajos de Terman y Miles, y otros posteriores, recibieron críticas por su conceptualización y su forma de medir la masculinidad y feminidad. Tratando de superar las limitaciones de estos trabajos, se empezaron a aplicar análisis factoriales con estos instrumentos que constataron la existencia de *dos dimensiones* relativamente independientes, más que un continuo bipolar (Ford y Tyler, 1952; Graham et al., 1971; véase Fernández, 2011; para una revisión). Constantinople (1973) realizó una de las críticas más exhaustivas acerca de los supuestos de unidimensionalidad y bipolaridad, y de las diferencias de sexo como único criterio de indicador de masculinidad-feminidad, sugiriendo la necesidad de análisis más sofisticados que comprobaran la posible multidimensionalidad de la masculinidad-feminidad y la búsqueda de teorías que explicaran estos términos separándolos del dimorfismo sexual.

Tabla 2.1.

Ejemplos de Ítems Utilizados en el Attitude Interest Analysis Survey para Evaluar la Masculinidad-Feminidad (Terman y Miles, 1936)

Lee las palabras que están en mayúscula. A continuación, lee cada una de las cuatro palabras que le siguen. Señala la palabra que consideres que se asocia mejor o de manera más natural con la palabra en mayúsculas.				
CELOSO/A	Enfado (–)	Envidioso/a (–)	Amante (+)	Mujer (+)
JARDÍN	Flor (–)	Fruta (+)	Vegetal (+)	Malezas (+)
Para cada una de las ocupaciones que aparecen a continuación, pregúntate: ¿Me gustaría ese trabajo o no? Si te gusta, dibuja un círculo alrededor de la G. Si no te gusta, dibuja un círculo alrededor de la D. Si no te gusta ni te disgusta, dibuja un círculo alrededor de la N. Al decidir tu respuesta, piensa sólo en el tipo de trabajo. No tengas en cuenta el salario. Imagina que eres capaz de realizar el trabajo, que tienes la edad adecuada para ello y que está disponible para hombres y mujeres por igual.				
Arquitecto/a	G (+)	D (–)	N (–)	
Cocinero/a	G (–)	D (0)	N (+)	
Bibliotecario/a	G (–)	D (+)	N (+)	

Nota. El signo “+” cuenta como un punto hacia la masculinidad, el signo “–” como un punto hacia la feminidad, el valor “0” como neutro. G: Gusta, D: Disgusta, N: Neutro.

Ante esta situación de crisis, se intentó buscar alguna teoría que pudiera respaldar y guiar la elaboración de nuevos instrumentos que evaluaran la masculinidad y la feminidad, y que cumplieran dos condiciones. En primer lugar, la masculinidad y feminidad deberían tratarse como constructos independientes —y no una sola dimensión bipolar—; en segundo lugar, se buscaba dejar atrás el sexo biológico como indicador de la masculinidad y feminidad (Fernández, 2011).

Tres planteamientos teóricos ya consolidados parecían apropiados para formar la base de lo que sería el desarrollo de la masculinidad y la feminidad como dimensiones independientes entre sí e independientes del sexo biológico (Fernández, 2011). Estos tres modelos teóricos entendían que existían principalmente dos conjuntos de rasgos psicológicos que orientaban el comportamiento del ser humano, independientemente de su sexo, aunque utilizaban diferentes etiquetas para referirse a esas dos orientaciones del comportamiento humano: *instrumentalidad* y *expresividad* (Parsons y Bales, 1955); *agencia* y *comunión* (Bakan, 1966); y *tendencias autoasertivas* e *integrativas* (Koestler, 1967). A pesar de utilizar diferentes etiquetas, estos tres planteamientos teóricos eran similares en su contenido: los tres entendían que las personas pueden orientarse hacia la persecución de objetivos individuales (i.e., instrumentalidad, agencia, y tendencias autoasertivas) y/o hacia la cohesión y bienestar social (i.e., expresividad, comunión, y tendencias integrativas). Dado que consideran que existen dos orientaciones independientes entre sí, las personas podrían basar su comportamiento en ambas orientaciones, o más en una que en otra.

Con la ayuda de estas teorías, en la década de 1970 empezaron a surgir las nuevas conceptualizaciones de la masculinidad y la feminidad. La masculinidad se definía en términos de rasgos instrumentales/agénticos (e.g., dominancia, asertividad, independencia) y la feminidad en términos de rasgos asociados a la expresividad/comunión (e.g., calidez, amabilidad, compasión; Bem, 1974; Lippa, 2001). Una de las primeras autoras que consideraba que la masculinidad “instrumental/agéntica” y la feminidad “expresiva/comunal” eran dos constructos independientes y sin relación con el sexo biológico fue Sandra L. Bem. Esta investigadora desarrolló uno de los principales instrumentos que partían de este enfoque, el *Bem Sex Role Inventory* (BSRI; Bem, 1974), que constaba de 60 ítems de rasgos de personalidad en su primera versión. Con este instrumento se comprobó que, efectivamente, la masculinidad y la feminidad eran dos constructos independientes, y que además, las personas, independientemente de su sexo biológico, podían considerarse a sí mismas (y/o a las demás) como *estereotípicamente masculinas* si puntuaban alto en masculinidad y bajo en feminidad, *estereotípicamente femeninas* si puntuaban bajo en masculinidad y alto en feminidad, *andróginas* si puntuaban alto en las dos dimensiones, e *indiferenciadas* si puntuaban bajo en las dos dimensiones (Bem, 1974).

Casi al mismo tiempo se desarrolló otro de los instrumentos que compartían este enfoque, el *Personal Attributes Questionnaire* (PAQ; Spence et al., 1974). El presupuesto básico del BSRI y del PAQ era la consideración de la masculinidad y la feminidad como dos dimensiones independientes entre sí e independientes del dimorfismo sexual (Fernández, 2011; Lippa, 2001). Se considera que un rasgo es característico de la masculinidad si es considerado como un rasgo socialmente deseable en mayor medida para un hombre que para una mujer en una sociedad en particular; mientras que un rasgo femenino sería aquel que ha sido considerado como socialmente más deseable para un mujer (Lippa, 2005). Por tanto, se entiende que los constructos de masculinidad y feminidad son *constructos socioculturales* (Mehta y Dementieva, 2017).

Actualmente, la contribución de Bem sigue estando vigente en muchas de las investigaciones sobre masculinidad y feminidad (e.g., Donnelly y Twenge, 2017; Hoffman y Borders, 2001; Mehta y Dementieva, 2017), considerando así que la *masculinidad* es aquella dimensión de género que tradicionalmente ha sido asociada a los hombres y que se orienta a la instrumentalidad/agencia, compuesta por diferentes características como ser una persona independiente, auto-suficiente o asertiva; mientras que la *feminidad* ha sido tradicionalmente asociada a las mujeres y se orienta a la expresividad/comunión, e incluye características como ser una persona cálida, atenta a los demás y sensible (Bem, 1974; Mehta y Dementieva, 2017).

No obstante, estas propuestas teóricas y los instrumentos desarrollados también han sido cuestionados (e.g., Choi y Fuqua, 2003; Deaux y Major, 1987; Echebarria Echabe, 2010; Lippa, 2001), habiéndose sugerido en los últimos años la necesidad de aceptar el componente dinámico de los constructos de masculinidad y feminidad en relación con los cambios en los roles sociales. Además, la mayoría de los rasgos considerados como tradicionalmente masculinos y femeninos más recientemente han sido considerados como indiferenciados, mientras que sólo una pequeña parte han sido considerados de acuerdo a su clasificación inicial (Ferrer-Pérez y Bosch-Fiol, 2014). Por tanto, también existiría la necesidad de desarrollar cambios en los instrumentos que evalúan estos constructos (Fernández y Coello, 2010; Ferrer-Pérez y Bosch-Fiol, 2014; Hoffman y Borders, 2001).

Por otra parte, la literatura señala el solapamiento de las dimensiones de masculinidad y feminidad con otros constructos como la agencia y la comunión (e.g., Abele y Wojciszke, 2007) que, además, tienen la ventaja de no estar vinculados al sexo o al género de una manera explícita (Abele y Wojciszke, 2014, 2019; Wojciszke y Abele, 2019). Dado que nos interesaba conocer la forma en la que la desigualdad influye sobre el clima normativo en relación con el género, hemos decidido mantener las etiquetas de masculinidad y feminidad en algunos de los trabajos empíricos; mientras que en otros hemos considerado adecuado utilizar las dimensiones más generales de agencia y comunión.

2. Agencia y Comunión

La agencia y la comunión son las dos dimensiones de contenido principales de la percepción social (Abele y Bruckmüller, 2011; Abele y Wojciszke, 2007, 2014; Judd et al., 2005; Paulhus y Trapnell, 2008; Wojciszke et al., 2011). Como indicamos anteriormente, estas dimensiones originalmente fueron propuestas por Bakan (1966) para conceptualizar las dos grandes orientaciones que guían la existencia humana (e.g., valores, rasgos, motivaciones, comportamiento y cognición): una orientación que manifiesta la importancia de la persona y sus objetivos individuales (i.e., agencia) y otra orientación que manifiesta la relevancia de la persona como parte de un grupo y los intereses grupales (i.e., comunión). Aunque existe una extensa literatura acerca de la agencia y la comunión en el comportamiento humano (véase Rucker et al., 2018; para una revisión), en este capítulo nos centraremos en el estudio de la agencia y la comunión desde la cognición social.

La *agencia* es la dimensión de contenido de la percepción social que se refiere a la consecución y el logro de objetivos individuales, y captura cualidades como la independencia, la inteligencia, autoconfianza, y ambición. La *comunión* —también llamada *comunalidad*— es la dimensión que se refiere al interés por las relaciones sociales y el bienestar de otras personas, y engloba cualidades como la sinceridad, la empatía, y la amabilidad (Abele y Wojciszke, 2007, 2014). En otras palabras, la agencia se refiere al contenido que refleja si la persona está orientada a conseguir sus propios logros, mientras que la comunión se refiere a si está orientada a relacionarse y conectar con otras personas (Chan et al., 2019).

Existen varios conceptos análogos a la agencia y la comunión, como *competencia* y *sociabilidad* (Fiske et al., 2002), o el *self-construal independiente* e *interdependiente* (Markus y Kitayama, 1991; ver Tabla 2.2 para más ejemplos). Hemos de mencionar que, en concreto, los conceptos de competencia y sociabilidad (también llamada *calidez*) han sido ampliamente utilizados en la literatura sobre percepción social. ¿Por qué nos decantamos por utilizar en nuestra investigación los conceptos de agencia y comunión? Como veremos más adelante, se ha propuesto que la agencia y la comunión engloban dimensiones más amplias y aspectos más diversos en la percepción social de las propias personas, de otras y de los grupos (Abele y Wojciszke, 2014). También se trata de conceptos que han sido utilizados en otras áreas de la psicología y, al haber sido términos concebidos originalmente en la psicología, están menos cargados de un significado "cotidiano"; cosa que no sucede, por ejemplo, con masculinidad, feminidad, competencia, o moralidad (Abele y Wojciszke, 2014).

Tabla 2.2.

Ejemplos de Conceptos con Contenido Agéntico y Comunal en Diferentes Ámbitos de la Psicología. Adaptado de Abele y Wojciszke (2014)

Contenido Agéntico	Contenido Comunal	Referencias
Intelectualmente bueno-malo. Rasgos relacionados con actividades intelectuales (habilidad, decisión, ignorancia, torpeza)	*Socialmente bueno-malo.* Rasgos relacionados con actividades sociales (calidez, sociabilidad, frialdad, impopularidad)	Rosenberg et al. (1968); estructura multidimensional de la impresión social.
Masculinidad. Rasgos que tradicionalmente se asocian al rol de género masculino (decisión, dominancia, agresividad)	*Feminidad*. Rasgos que tradicionalmente se asocian al rol de género femenino (empatía, emocionalidad, dependencia)	Bem (1974), Eagly (1987); dimensiones separadas para los estereotipos de género y el autoconcepto.
Yo independiente. Se centra en los derechos de la persona acerca de la autonomía y realización personal (independencia, originalidad).	*Yo interdependiente*. Se centra en la pertenencia al grupo, el interés y la prioridad por el bien común (lealtad, cooperación).	Hofstede (1983), Markus y Kitayama, (1991); dimensiones separadas que describen el self-construal
Iniciación de estructura / Liderazgo transaccional. Liderazgo centrado en las acciones y tareas, y define los roles de cada miembro del grupo.	*Consideración/ Liderazgo transformacional*. El/la liderazgo centrado en las relaciones y el bienestar del grupo.	Bass (1990); Halpin y Winer (1957); comportamientos y estilos de liderazgo (en el ámbito organizacional y político)
Instrumentalidad. Se refiere a los comportamientos orientados a la consecución de objetivos dentro de un sistema social más amplio.	*Expresividad*. Se refiere a los comportamientos orientados a la solidaridad, y la armonía dentro del grupo, a la pertenencia de un sistema social más amplio.	Parsons y Bales (1955); funciones dentro de un sistema o núcleo social.
Competencia. Habilidades, aptitudes, y eficiencia en el logro de objetivos (eficiencia, ignorancia)	*Moralidad*. Información de cómo los objetivos personales se relacionan con el bienestar de los demás y las normas morales (ser justo, desleal)	Wojciszke (2005); diferentes tipos de rasgos y de comportamiento.
Competencia de los grupos estereotipados. Depende de su alto o bajo estatus y poder en la jerarquía social (capacidad, inteligencia, habilidad).	*Sociabilidad de los grupos estereotipados*. Depende de la cooperación o competición de los otros grupos con el nuestro (amabilidad, calidez, confiabilidad)	Fiske et al. (2002); dos dimensiones del contenido del estereotipo.

Aunque los anteriores conceptos parecen ser similares, existen ciertas diferencias; por ejemplo, la dimensión sociabilidad (e.g., amable, empático) es algo diferente a la conceptualización de moralidad (e.g., justo, imparcial); y la de competencia (i.e., competente, inteligente) a la de masculinidad (e.g., dominante, decisivo). Por ello, Abele et al. (2016) propusieron dos facetas o subdimensiones agénticas y dos comunales. La agencia estaría formada por la asertividad y la competencia, mientras que la comunión estaría formada por la calidez y la moralidad (ver Tabla 2.3.). La faceta de asertividad refleja ese componente motivacional para conseguir los objetivos[1], mientras que la competencia refleja la habilidad o capacidad. La calidez expresa la benevolencia que facilita las buenas relaciones sociales, mientras que la moralidad reflejaría la benevolencia que favorece las relaciones correctas y adheridas a la ética y los valores sociales importantes (Abele et al., 2016; Brambilla y Leach, 2014; Kervyn et al., 2015; Leach et al., 2007).

Tabla 2.3.

Rasgos de las Facetas Agénticas de Asertividad y Competencia, y de las Subdimensiones Comunales de Calidez y Moralidad (Abele et al., 2016). Traducción al Castellano de la Tabla Propuesta por Wojciszke y Abele (2019)

Agencia		**Comunión**	
Asertividad	**Competencia**	**Calidez**	**Moralidad**
Seguridad en sí mismo/a	Inteligencia	Ser atenta/o con los/as demás	Ser digna/o de confianza
Sentirse superior	Competencia	Calidez	Fiabilidad
Tener habilidades de liderazgo	Eficiencia	Empatía	Consideración
No rendirse fácilmente	Capacidad	Amable	Actuar justamente
Soportar bien la presión	Habilidad	Afectividad	Imparcialidad

Se han dado dos explicaciones sobre la existencia de las dimensiones de agencia y comunión: una explicación evolutiva y otra funcional. La explicación evolutiva mantiene que las personas tienen dos grandes retos a los que enfrentarse en la vida. Uno sería conseguir objetivos individuales, para lo que se requiere agencia, y el otro sería tener relaciones sociales de apoyo, para lo que se requiere comunión (Abele y Wojciszke, 2014;

[1] Esta definición de asertividad es la que dan las autoras en su propuesta.

Ybarra et al., 2008). La explicación funcional sugiere que la cognición y percepción social, además de reflejar la realidad social, también refleja los objetivos de la persona que percibe (Abele y Wojciszke, 2014). De este modo, primero tenemos que determinar las intenciones de las personas con quien nos relacionamos; esto es, conocer si tienen buenas o malas intenciones que nos beneficien o perjudiquen. Estas inferencias sobre las intenciones se hacen en términos de comunión. Tras ello, debemos determinar su habilidad para actuar y conseguir sus objetivos; por lo que estas inferencias se hacen en términos de agencia (Fiske et al., 2002, 2007).

2.1. Métodos Utilizados en el Estudio del Contenido Agéntico y Comunal de la Percepción Social

Se han utilizado principalmente tres tipos de métodos en el estudio del contenido agéntico y comunal en la percepción social, que aparecen resumidos en la Tabla 2.4). La forma más común ha consistido en la presentación de diferentes rasgos o palabras con contenido agéntico y comunal, pidiéndole a las personas que se los asignen al grupo o persona que se esté estudiando. Se les puede preguntar por su propia opinión o por cómo creen que los percibe la sociedad (e.g., Bruckmüller y Abele, 2013; Fiske et al., 2002). En esta categoría se incluirían varios de los instrumentos utilizados para la evaluación de estas dimensiones en relación con el género (Diekman y Eagly; 2000), incluyendo el PAQ (Spence et al., 1974), o el BSRI (Bem, 1974). En segundo lugar, también se han utilizado tareas de decisión léxica en las que las personas tienen que decir si la palabra que se presenta, que puede ser de tipo agéntico o comunal, es una palabra o si por el contrario no es una palabra. En esta tarea se mide el tiempo de reacción en la clasificación de la palabra (e.g., Abele y Bruckmüller, 2011; Ybarra et al., 2001). Finalmente, el contenido agéntico y comunal también se ha manipulado experimentalmente a través de, por ejemplo, diferentes descripciones de personas (Brambilla et al., 2012, 2019) e incluso a través de imágenes faciales (Oliveira et al., 2019).

A continuación, presentaremos los resultados de varias investigaciones sobre la percepción social haciendo uso de las etiquetas originalmente utilizadas por los investigadores para señalar dichos constructos (e.g., competencia, agencia, calidez, etc.). No obstante, hay que tener en cuenta que, independientemente de la etiqueta que utilicemos, nos referimos al contenido agéntico (e.g, competencia, masculinidad, instrumentalidad) y comunal (e.g., sociabilidad/calidez, feminidad, expresividad) de la percepción social.

Tabla 2.4.

Ejemplos de Métodos Utilizados en el Estudio del Contenido Agéntico y Comunal en la Percepción Social

Objetivo	Técnica	Descripción de la tarea	Ejemplos
Autoevaluación y evaluación de personas y/o grupos en términos agénticos y comunales	Presentación de diferentes rasgos agénticos y comunales	Indicar en qué grado cada uno de los rasgos describe a la persona/grupos que se evalúan, o es más característico de una persona/grupo que de otro.	Abele y Wojciszke (2007); Bem (1974); Carrier et al. (2014); Fiske et al. (2002;) Louvet et al. (2019); Wojciszke et al. (2011); Wojciszke y Abele (2008)
Evaluación del procesamiento de la información agéntica y comunal	Tareas de decisión léxica	Identificar si la palabra presentada (agéntica vs. comunal) se categoriza como palabra.	Abele y Bruckmüller (2011); Ybarra et al. (2001)
Manipulación experimental del contenido agéntico y comunal	Descripciones basadas en las escalas de agencia y comunión y/o en su definición. Modificación de rasgos faciales.	Descripciones de utilizando contenido agéntico o comunal. Leer la descripción y responder ítems (VD) en base a la información.	Abele y Wojciszke, (2007); Brambilla et al. (2012, 2013, 2019); Kulich et al. (2018); Oliveira et al. (2019)

2.2. Evidencia Empírica del Contenido Agéntico y Comunal en la Percepción Social

En psicología social, el estudio del contenido agéntico y comunal ha destacado especialmente en la investigación sobre la percepción social de personas y grupos (e.g., Abele y Bruckmüller, 2011; Fiske et al., 2002), y de la autopercepción (e.g., Wojciszke et al., 2011). Dentro del estudio de la percepción de personas y grupos, el contenido dual se ha aplicado especialmente en los estereotipos en función de la clase social, el género, y el liderazgo, pero también en virtud de la etnia, la nacionalidad y la edad (véase Fiske, 2012, para una revisión). En la presente tesis nos centraremos en las tres primeras clases de estereotipos (i.e., clase social, género, y liderazgo), así como en la autopercepción, por lo que a continuación haremos una revisión de la evidencia empírica sobre el contenido dual en estas cuatro áreas de estudio.

2.2.1. Estereotipos sobre las Clases Sociales

La clase social es un sistema de estratificación que clasifica a las personas en función de su acceso a determinados recursos como la riqueza, la propiedad, el prestigio y el poder (Moya y Fiske, 2017). Esta estratificación social que diferencia a las personas en grupos también hace que los percibamos de maneras diferentes.

Los estereotipos basados en la clase social son aquellas creencias sobre cómo son las personas que pertenecen a diferentes estratos económicos de una sociedad. El contenido agéntico y comunal de los estereotipos de clase social se ha estudiado utilizando principalmente las dimensiones de competencia y calidez/sociabilidad propuestas desde el *modelo del contenido del estereotipo* (Fiske et al., 2002).

Más concretamente, se han estudiado los estereotipos de la clase social alta y baja (e.g., Durante y Fiske, 2017). A las personas que pertenecen a la clase social alta se las percibe como personas trabajadoras, inteligentes y poderosas (i.e., agénticas; Parker, 2012; Ragusa, 2015). Por el contrario, a las personas de clase social baja se las considera como individuos poco trabajadores, perezosos, y necios (i.e., poco agénticos; Cozzarelli et al., 2001), e incluso se les niegan características únicamente humanas, como el civismo y la racionalidad (Sainz et al., 2019).

No obstante, de acuerdo con el *modelo de compensación dimensional* (Judd et al., 2005; Yzerbyt, 2019), cuando se realizan evaluaciones sociales sobre grupos y/u otros individuos a veces se trata de compensar la evaluación positiva de los sujetos en una dimensión (e.g., agencia) con una peor evaluación en la otra dimensión (e.g., comunión), creando así una imagen ambivalente. Y, en efecto, los estereotipos de clase social son ambivalentes (Cuddy et al., 2009; Fiske, 2012; Fiske et al., 2002), pues los estudios transculturales han mostrado que el contenido del estereotipo de las personas de clase social alta se caracteriza por una alta competencia y una baja calidez. Es decir, se les considera personas muy competentes (i.e., habilidosas y capaces) pero frías (i.e., poco empáticas y generosas). En el caso del estereotipo de las personas de clase social baja, este se caracteriza por una baja competencia, aunque no siempre se compensa con una mayor calidez; en ocasiones se les percibe como poco competentes pero cálidas socialmente, pero otras veces son percibidas como poco competentes y poco cálidas (Durante et al., 2013, 2017; Fiske et al., 2002).

Los estereotipos sobre la clase social contribuyen a que se mantengan las desigualdades sociales existentes (Durante y Fiske, 2017; Fiske y Durante, 2019); por ejemplo, pueden empeorar el rendimiento académico de las personas de clase baja a través de la amenaza del estereotipo (Harrison et al., 2006), o pueden reducir el apoyo a determinadas políticas públicas dirigidas a mejorar la situación de las personas con menos ingresos (Sainz et al., 2020).

2.2.2. Estereotipos de Género

Los estereotipos de género son aquellas creencias consensuadas socialmente acerca de los hombres y las mujeres. Estos estereotipos se basan en los esquemas cognitivos (i.e., creencias) sobre cada sexo (Sczesny et al., 2019), y reflejan los atributos que las personas consideran más característicos de un sexo que de otro (Eagly y Mladinic, 1989).

Las dimensiones de agencia y comunión son esenciales en el estudio de los estereotipos de género (Sczesny et al., 2019). El estereotipo tradicional masculino se compone principalmente de la agencia (e.g., independencia, competición) y se aleja de la comunión/comunalidad (e.g., sensibilidad, generosidad). De este modo, se considera que los hombres priorizan —y deben priorizar— el trabajo y a sus objetivos individuales, se les percibe como personas competentes y con habilidades de liderazgo, y se les niega el tener como prioridad la conexión interpersonal con otras personas, la debilidad y la sensibilidad. Por otro lado, el estereotipo femenino tradicional se compone principalmente de un contenido comunal y se aleja del contenido agéntico. Así, tradicionalmente se ha considerado que las mujeres priorizan —y deben priorizar— el cuidado de otras personas, el bienestar común y la familia, considerándolas personas socialmente cálidas, y negándoles la ambición personal por conseguir el logro profesional, la dominancia y el liderazgo (Ellemers, 2018; Prentice y Carranza, 2002; Schein, 1973). Hay que resaltar que estos estereotipos guardan un paralelismo con los estereotipos de los grupos sociales de diferente estatus: en general, a los grupos de alto estatus se le asocia con características agénticas, mientras que a los de bajo estatus se le asocia con la comunalidad (Conway et al., 1996; Fiske et al., 2002; Rucker et al., 2018).

Aunque los estereotipos de género están presenten en todas las sociedades, existen algunas diferencias en el contenido de dichos estereotipos en función de los valores culturales de las sociedades. Por ejemplo, investigaciones previas sugieren que el estereotipo masculino se ajusta a las dimensiones culturales de individualismo y colectivismo, de manera que en aquellas culturas colectivistas (e.g. Korea y Japón), a los hombres se les considera poco agénticos pero comunales, mientras que en las culturas individualistas (e.g., Alemania y Estados Unidos) se les percibe agénticos pero poco comunales (Cuddy et al., 2015; Steinmetz et al., 2014). Los estereotipos de género pueden influir en las actitudes hacia los hombres y las mujeres (Eagly y Mladinic, 1989), en la discriminación y prejuicio hacia las mujeres (Glick et al., 2000; Glick y Fiske, 1996, 2001), así como en las oportunidades que éstas tienen en el ámbito profesional (e.g., techo de cristal y acantilado de cristal; Barreto et al., 2009; Ryan y Haslam, 2005).

2.2.3. Estereotipos sobre el Liderazgo

El estudio de la percepción agéntica y comunal de líderes se ha llevado a cabo sobre todo en la psicología organizacional, y en relación con los estereotipos de género. Schein (1973) sugirió que los rasgos que componen el estereotipo de líder *exitoso/a* son más similares a los rasgos que componen el estereotipo tradicional masculino (i.e., agencia) que el femenino. Es decir, las personas consideran que quien ejerce un liderazgo exitoso comparte características con los hombres—pero no con las mujeres—, lo que se conoce como la asociación *think manager-think male* (Schein, 1973, 1975).

En efecto, poseer habilidades para liderar es, en sí mismo, una de las características que componen el contenido agéntico. Ryan et al. (2011) mostraron que a quien lideraba organizaciones *no exitosas* se les percibía de manera más similar al estereotipo tradicional femenino (i.e., orientado a la comunalidad) que al estereotipo masculino. Además, en situaciones de crisis e inestabilidad en la organización, las personas prefieren liderazgos más orientados a la comunalidad que a la agencia —asociación *think crisis-think female*— porque se considera que gestionan mejor las relaciones sociales y pueden asumir la culpa del fracaso de la organización. Este fenómeno fue denominado "el acantilado de cristal" (Ryan y Haslam, 2005). Sin embargo, cuando se considera que es necesario un cambio real para mejorar la situación de la empresa y solucionar la crisis, se prefiere contar con liderazgos agénticos (Kulich et al., 2018).

2.2.4. Autopercepción

La autopercepción, o percepción social de uno/a mismo/a, se refiere a lo que cada persona piensa sobre sí misma (Abele y Hauke, 2019). El estudio del contenido agéntico y comunal en la autopercepción se ha realizado examinando la relación de ésta con la autoestima, y también desde la perspectiva de la identidad de género.

En primer lugar, cuando una persona piensa en cómo es, generalmente piensa en rasgos con contenido agéntico (e.g., decisiva, inteligente) y comunal (e.g., empática, amable; Abele y Wojciszke, 2014), lo que puede afectar la evaluación global que hace sobre su propia valía (i.e., su autoestima; Abele y Hauke, 2019). Así, los estudios han mostrado que la autopercepción basada en la agencia predice la autoestima, pero no la autoestima basada en la comunión (Abele et al., 2016; Wojciszke et al., 2011); no obstante, también hay algún estudio que señala que la comunión es un importante predictor de la autoestima, por ejemplo, en culturas asiáticas donde los valores comunales son especialmente importantes (Bi et al., 2013).

En segundo lugar, el contenido agéntico y comunal tiene especial importancia en la identidad de género (i.e., la autopercepción de lo que es ser estereotípicamente hombre o mujer dentro de una determinada cultura; Wood y Eagly, 2015). Cuando se ha examinado la identidad de género generalmente se ha utilizado escalas que contenían rasgos de personalidad agénticos y comunales (e.g., Bem, 1974; Spence et al., 1974), a los que tradicionalmente se les denominaba rasgos estereotípicos masculinos y femeninos. Al igual que los estereotipos de género, la autopercepción en términos comunales y agénticos por parte de hombres y mujeres ha ido cambiando ligeramente a lo largo del tiempo. Así, por ejemplo, las mujeres actualmente se consideran más agénticas que hace años (Donnelly y Twenge, 2017).

3. Aproximaciones y Modelos Teóricos sobre el Contenido de la Percepción Social

3.1. El Modelo de la Perspectiva Dual de la Agencia y la Comunión

El *modelo de la perspectiva dual de la agencia y la comunión* (*The Dual Perspective Model of Agency and Communion* [DPM-AC, o DPM]), propuesto por Abele y Wojciszke (2014), propone que el contenido agéntico y comunal en la percepción social reflejan dos perspectivas diferentes cuando se evalúa la realidad social: la perspectiva del observador/receptor, y la perspectiva del actor/agente. Este modelo propone tres hipótesis:

a) La comunión es la dimensión primaria en la cognición social. Las investigaciones han puesto de manifiesto que los rasgos comunales son reconocidos más rápidamente que los agénticos en el comportamiento de las personas (Abele y Bruckmüller, 2011) y en tareas de decisión léxica (Ybarra et al., 2001). También se ha demostrado que de las características que se dan en diferentes culturas y que, por tanto, se consideran universales (e.g. generosidad), dos tercios se relacionaban con las dimensiones de agencia y comunión; y, de éstas, el 87% se evaluaron como comunales frente a solo el 13% que fueron evaluados como agénticas (Ybarra et al., 2008).

b) La comunión es la dimensión que domina en la percepción de otras personas (perspectiva observador/receptor). La información de carácter comunal sobre una persona influye en mayor medida que la agéntica en la impresión que nos formamos de ella (Wojciszke et al., 1998). De igual modo, las personas describen a los demás basándose en la dimensión de comunión más que en la de agencia (Abele y Bruckmüller, 2011). Además, otras investigaciones ponen el énfasis en que, en concreto, la faceta comunal de moralidad es la dimensión con más peso en la percepción social de los/as demás (Brambilla et al., en prensa; Brambilla y Leach, 2014).

Sin embargo, existen algunos factores moderadores que se han de tener en cuenta, como la relación entre quien percibe y la persona a la que se percibe: a las personas cercanas se les evalúa más en términos agénticos que a quienes no son cercanas (Abele y Wojciszke, 2014; Wojciszke y Abele, 2019). Un segundo moderador hace referencia al poder y al estatus de la persona a la que se evalúa. Las personas con alto estatus y poder social (e.g., clase social alta, hombres, líderes) son evaluadas más en términos agénticos que comunales, mientras que las personas de bajo estatus y poder (e.g., clase social baja, mujeres, minorías étnicas) son evaluadas más en términos comunales que agénticos (Abele, 2014; Fiske et al., 2002; Louvet et al., 2019; Wojciszke y Abele, 2019).

c) La agencia es la dimensión que domina en la autopercepción (perspectiva actor/agente). Las personas generalmente piensan en sí mismas como *agentes* que tienen la libertad y la intencionalidad de perseguir sus propios objetivos en la vida (Wojciszke y Abele, 2019). Es decir, piensan en sí mismas más en términos agénticos. Cuando a las personas se les pide que se auto-describan tienden a utilizar más palabras con contenido agéntico que cuando tienen que describir a una persona cercana (Bruckmüller y Abele, 2013), y cuando se les pide que recuerden eventos que han afectado a su autoestima tienden a recordar más comportamientos de contenido agéntico (i.e., éxitos o fracasos en la consecución de objetivos) que comunales (Abele y Wojciszke, 2007; Wojciszke y Abele, 2008).

Desde este modelo también se diferencia en función de a quién benefician los comportamientos y/o rasgos que se observan: Los rasgos y/o comportamientos *self-profitable* benefician o dañan directamente a la persona que posee esos rasgos, al agente. Los autores consideran que los rasgos y comportamientos agénticos corresponderían a esta categoría. Por otro lado, los rasgos y comportamientos *other-profitable* serían aquellos que directamente benefician o dañan a otras personas, por lo que los rasgos y comportamientos comunales pertenecerían a esta categoría (Abele y Wojciszke, 2007). Por ejemplo, si una persona está arreglando un coche probablemente se le perciba como una persona capaz y habilidosa (i.e., agéntica); sin embargo, si el coche que está arreglando es el de su vecina probablemente se le percibirá como comunal, puesto que está tratando de beneficiar y ayudar a otra persona.

3.2. Otros Modelos sobre el Contenido de la Percepción Social

Las dimensiones de agencia y comunión, a pesar de ser las dos grandes dimensiones de contenido, no son las únicas dimensiones que han sido propuestas en la literatura sobre percepción social. Además del *modelo de la perspectiva dual de la agencia y la comunión*, existen otros modelos teóricos que ponen de relieve diferentes dimensiones de contenido en la percepción social. Seguidamente comentaremos cuatro de estos modelos.

En primer lugar, el *modelo del contenido de los estereotipos (Stereotype Content Model*; Fiske et al., 2002), ha sido uno de los modelos más utilizados y reconocidos dentro de la percepción social. Como hemos indicado anteriormente, sugiere que la calidez/sociabilidad y la competencia son las dos grandes dimensiones en la percepción social. Según este modelo, el estatus del grupo o individuo predice la competencia con la que es percibido mientras que la interdependencia (i.e., competición vs. cooperación) predice la calidez. Además, las distintas combinaciones de competencia y calidez en la evaluación provocarán diferentes emociones y comportamientos. Por ejemplo, los grupos de alto estatus y competitivos a los que se les percibe competentes pero fríos (e.g., personas asiáticas, ricas) provocan envidia y celos, dando lugar a un prejuicio basado en la envidia; mientras que aquellos grupos de bajo estatus y no competitivos, a los que se les considera poco competentes y muy cálidos (e.g., amas de casa, personas mayores), provocarán pena y simpatía, dando lugar a un prejuicio paternalista (Fiske et al., 2002).

En segundo lugar, el *modelo de regulación del comportamiento* (*The Behavioral Regulation* Model; Ellemers, 2017), propone a la moralidad (i.e., las intenciones más profundas del ser humano), la sociabilidad (i.e., comportamiento más superficial), y la competencia (i.e., probabilidad de lograr un objetivo) como las tres dimensiones de la percepción social (Leach et al., 2007). Además, sugiere que la moralidad es la dimensión que más influye en la identificación y orgullo del grupo.

Por otro lado, el *modelo de compensación dimensional (Dimensional Compensation Model*; Yzerbyt, 2016) combina la investigación en cognición social y en identidad social para también proponer que existen dos dimensiones, la sociabilidad y la competencia (Asch, 1946). Este modelo principalmente propone que las personas tratan de compensar la evaluación positiva en una dimensión con una evaluación negativa en la otra dimensión; es decir, mantiene que la percepción social está fundamentada en un efecto de compensación.

Finalmente, el *modelo de agencia-creencias-comunión* (*Agency-Communion-Beliefs Model*; Koch et al., 2016, 2020) sugiere que las personas perciben a otras personas en función de la agencia o éxito socioeconómico, creencias (conservadoras o progresistas), y la orientación comunal de la persona percibida. También propone que las personas infieren la comunión de otras personas basándose en la similitud entre quien percibe y la persona percibida en las otras dos dimensiones, es decir, la agencia y las creencias.

Todos estos modelos —así como el propuesto por Abele y Wojciszke (2014)— discrepan en cuanto al número de dimensiones propuestas, la organización y la definición/etiquetas de dichas dimensiones, la prioridad otorgada a cada una de ellas, y la relación entre las dimensiones. A pesar de ello, actualmente los/as autores de los cinco modelos han examinado estas diferencias así como sus similitudes tratando de sumar las virtudes y el potencial de cada modelo con el objetivo de crear un marco teórico que integre todos los modelos de percepción social (Abele et al., 2020; Ellemers et al., 2020; Koch et al., 2021). Así, reconocen que todos los modelos han sido apoyados con evidencia empírica bastante sólida, y consideran que ningún modelo excluye a los otros, sino que pueden ser complementarios y coexistir legítimamente (Koch et al., 2021).

4. Conclusiones

A lo largo de este capitulo hemos profundizado en la literatura acerca del contenido dual de la percepción social. En concreto, hemos revisado la historia de los constructos de masculinidad y feminidad hasta llegar a los conceptos análogos de agencia y comunión. También hemos señalado la evidencia que muestra que los estereotipos de las clases sociales, los estereotipos de género, y los estereotipos de líderes se basan principalmente en las dimensiones de agencia y comunión, o también llamadas *The Big Two* (Paulhus y Trapnell, 2008). De igual modo, hemos revisado que también la autopercepción se basa en estas dos grandes dimensiones de contenido.

Dando un paso más, en la presente tesis proponemos examinar si el contenido agéntico y comunal de la percepción social puede verse afectado por la desigualdad económica percibida. En el siguiente capítulo expondremos de manera resumida y conjunta la evidencia sobre la relación entre la desigualdad económica y la agencia-comunión en la que nos hemos basado para el desarrollo de esta tesis, las preguntas de investigación que tratamos de responder y los objetivos propuestos.

Capítulo 3

Planteamiento General:

Preguntas de Investigación y Objetivos

En la presente tesis doctoral examinamos la relación entre la desigualdad económica percibida y la percepción social utilizando las dimensiones de agencia y comunión. La revisión de la literatura sobre la desigualdad económica realizada en el capítulo anterior pone de relieve la importancia de analizar su efecto en determinados procesos psicológicos. Asimismo, la revisión sobre el contenido dual en la percepción social también nos indica que la manera en la que percibimos a otras personas es un aspecto importante que puede determinar nuestras interacciones sociales.

Investigaciones previas sugieren que podría existir una relación positiva entre la desigualdad económica y la agencia. Por ejemplo, la desigualdad económica se ha relacionado de manera positiva con la importancia asignada al estatus (Buttrick y Oishi, 2017; Delhey y Dragolov, 2014; Du et al., 2021; Layte y Whelan, 2014), con el sesgo de auto-ensalzamiento (Loughnan et al., 2011), y la necesidad de logro (Sommet et al., 2019). Por otro lado, la desigualdad económica también podría relacionarse con una baja comunión: se ha mostrado que en las sociedades más desiguales las personas son menos generosas y solidarias (Côté et al., 2015; Paskov y Dewilde, 2012), y se muestran menos agradables ante los demás (de Vries et al., 2011).

Estos resultados van en la línea de la propuesta de Wilkinson y Pickett (2017), que sugieren que la alta desigualdad económica crea un ambiente social caracterizado por la competitividad en detrimento de la cooperación, algo que, desde nuestra perspectiva, estaría relacionado con la agencia-comunión. Además, la investigación sobre la desigualdad económica *percibida* muestra una evidencia similar. Cuando se *percibe* un alto (vs. bajo) nivel de desigualdad económica las personas se sienten menos conectadas con otras personas (Sánchez-Rodríguez, Willis, & Rodríguez-Bailón, 2019) y cooperan menos (Nishi et al., 2015). Cuando las personas *perciben* un alto (vs. bajo) nivel de desigualdad económica en una sociedad perciben que la norma social de ese entorno se rige por las relaciones de intercambio, la competición y la independencia —versus la cooperación e interdependencia—, y que los valores guía de las personas que viven en esa sociedad se orientan hacia la búsqueda de poder y logro (Sánchez-Rodríguez et al., 2020, 2021; Sánchez-Rodríguez, Willis, et al., 2019). De igual modo, el clima normativo que se infiere se caracteriza por una reducción de los valores asociados al interés en las relaciones sociales (Sánchez-Rodríguez et al., 2020).

Así, parece que estas consecuencias de la desigualdad económica podrían asociarse con las dimensiones de agencia (i.e., independencia, persecución de logros y objetivos, dominancia, y sentirse superior) y comunión (i.e., objetivos grupales, bienestar de los/as demás; Abele et al., 2016; Abele y Wojciszke, 2007, 2014; Wojciszke y Abele, 2019). En concreto, consideramos que la desigualdad económica podría favorecer o mantener aquellos procesos psicosociales relacionados con la agencia, mientras que reduciría aquellos relacionados con lo comunal.

No obstante, los estudios realizados sobre el clima normativo de la desigualdad económica sólo han examinado determinados aspectos o características que podrían estar relacionados con la agencia y la comunión por separado (e.g., competición, independencia, cooperación), pero no se han estudiado directamente estos dos constructos dentro de la literatura sobre la psicología de la desigualdad económica. Para intentar llenar este vacío, el objetivo general de la presente tesis doctoral fue examinar la relación entre la desigualdad económica y la percepción social definida en términos de agencia y comunión.

Para llevar a cabo este objetivo principal se formularon diversas preguntas de investigación y objetivos específicos que mencionaremos a continuación. Dada la importancia de la desigualdad económica percibida (Kim et al., 2021; Phillips et al., 2020; Schmalor y Heine, 2021), en las tres primeras series de estudios examinaremos cómo esta variable afecta a la percepción social utilizando tres paradigmas experimentales diferentes.

En la primera serie de estudios nos planteamos la siguiente pregunta de investigación: *¿Puede la percepción de un alto nivel de desigualdad económica en una sociedad influir en cómo se percibe a las personas que viven en dicho entorno en términos de masculinidad y feminidad?* Esta pregunta, en lo que alcanza nuestro conocimiento, no ha sido estudiada previamente. El Capítulo 4 recoge esta investigación, en la que nos basamos en las dimensiones tradicionales de masculinidad (i.e., contenido agéntico) y feminidad (i.e., contenido comunal) para examinar la evaluación social de las personas "promedio" que vivían en entornos desiguales a través de dos experimentos.

En concreto, en el primer experimento (Estudio 1) analizamos si la percepción de un alto (vs. bajo) nivel de desigualdad económica en una sociedad ficticia podía llevar a percibir al ciudadano/a típico/a de esa sociedad como más masculino/a (vs. femenino/a; H_1). Para evitar la influencia de los estereotipos ligados al género de los targets, nos basamos en el procedimiento de Hoffman y Hurst (1990) y desarrollamos la descripción de una sociedad en la que las personas que la habitaban no se consideraban ni hombres ni mujeres.

Tras este primer estudio, consideramos relevante explorar la percepción de los grupos de clase social alta y baja en términos de las dos dimensiones mencionadas (masculinidad y feminidad). Así pues, nuestra segunda pregunta de investigación fue si *la desigualdad económica percibida podría afectar a la percepción social en términos de masculinidad y feminidad de las personas que pertenecen diferentes clases sociales.*

En el Estudio 2 de la primera serie de estudios utilizamos el mismo paradigma que en el Estudio 1 y examinamos el efecto de la desigualdad económica (alta vs. baja) percibida sobre los estereotipos de miembros de diferentes clases sociales en términos de masculinidad (i.e., agencia) y feminidad (i.e., comunión). En particular, esperábamos encontrar que se percibiera a las personas de clase social alta como más masculinas que femeninas, especialmente en la sociedad en la que se percibe alta (vs. baja) desigualdad económica (H_2).[2]

Una vez que examinamos la relación entre el nivel de desigualdad económica de una sociedad y la percepción social de las clases sociales (alta vs. baja), en la segunda serie de estudios (Capítulo 5) quisimos profundizar en el análisis del efecto de la desigualdad económica en la percepción social de otros grupos sociales con diferente poder y estatus, en particular, de los grupos basados en el género. Durante et al. (2013) mostraron en un estudio transcultural que la desigualdad económica real predecía la ambivalencia de los estereotipos de diferentes grupos sociales. No obstante, a pesar de que en dicha investigación se preguntaba acerca de la competencia y sociabilidad de hombres y mujeres, los resultados se basaban en la asociación entre el coeficiente de correlación competencia-sociabilidad de numerosos grupos sociales considerados conjuntamente (e.g., hombres, mujeres, políticos/as, judíos, etc.) y el coeficiente Gini de cada país. Es decir, no examinaban en detalle si la desigualdad económica real (i.e., coeficiente Gini) se relacionaba con las puntuaciones específicas en competencia y sociabilidad de cada uno de los grupos. Por tanto, en esta serie experimental buscamos llenar este hueco en la literatura e investigar la forma en que la desigualdad económica afecta a los estereotipos de género.

Es importante destacar que los estereotipos tradicionales masculino y femenino se componen por rasgos principalmente agénticos y comunales, respectivamente (Abele, 2003; Ellemers, 2018). A pesar de que en la primera serie de estudios utilizamos las

[2] Aunque en la investigación correspondiente al Capítulo 4 se reportan y enumeran hipótesis adicionales no relacionadas directamente con la desigualdad económica, en el presente capítulo decidimos reportar y enumerar las hipótesis en relación con la desigualdad económica.

etiquetas *masculinidad y feminidad* para denominar al conjunto de rasgos agénticos y comunales (asociados tradicionalmente a hombres y mujeres) utilizados para evaluar la percepción de los targets, en esta segunda serie de estudios consideramos más apropiado utilizar los términos análogos *agencia y comunión.* Creemos que esto permite resaltar las posibles diferencias entre ambas dimensiones de la percepción social dentro de cada estereotipo de género por separado (estereotipo masculino y femenino).

La principal pregunta de la segunda serie de estudios de la tesis doctoral fue: *¿afecta la desigualdad económica percibida a los estereotipos sobre hombres y mujeres, esto es, a la percepción de hombres y mujeres en término de agencia y comunión?* En el Capítulo 5, abordamos la respuesta a esta pregunta a través de dos experimentos preregistrados. De manera más concreta, esperamos encontrar que la diferencia entre las dimensiones de agencia y comunión en el estereotipo de los hombres se acentuará en el contexto de alta desigualdad económica (H_3), mientras que en el estereotipo de las mujeres esta diferencia disminuirá (H_4). En ambos experimentos utilizamos el Paradigma de Bimboola (Sánchez-Rodríguez, Willis, y Rodríguez-Bailón, 2019) para manipular la desigualdad económica en una sociedad y evaluamos la atribución de rasgos agénticos y comunales a los hombres y mujeres de dicha sociedad. Teniendo en cuenta que el Estudio 1 de esta línea de trabajo lo realizamos en España, una cultura más orientada a la feminidad en términos de las dimensiones culturales de Hofstede (Hofstede, 1998; Hofstede Insights, 2020), podría ocurrir que la desigualdad económica afectara a los estereotipos de género precisamente porque los roles tradicionales de género en las sociedades femeninas están menos presentes que en las sociedades más masculinas (Hofstede, 2011); es decir, los estereotipos de género están menos acentuados por lo que es más fácil que éstos se vean influidos por la desigualdad. Por eso queríamos corroborar que incluso en sociedades masculinas, donde los roles de género están muy bien establecidos, se pueden replicar los efectos del Estudio 1. Por tanto, el Estudio 2 fue llevado a cabo en México, una sociedad más masculina (Hofstede, 1998, 2011; Hofstede Insights, 2020).

En la tercera serie de estudios que compone esta tesis doctoral tratamos de corroborar los efectos de la desigualdad económica percibida en la percepción social en un ámbito diferente: las organizaciones. La mayoría de las investigaciones que han estudiado la desigualdad económica lo han hecho poniendo el foco en la desigualdad económica entre países (e.g., Guinjoan & Rico, 2018), entre diferentes grupos sociales dentro de una región (Côté et al., 2015) o dentro de una nueva sociedad (e.g., Sánchez-

Rodríguez, Willis, y Rodríguez-Bailón, 2019). El estudio de la desigualdad económica percibida en el ámbito laboral y organizacional ha recibido una menor atención (Ronay et al., 2018). En consecuencia, nos preguntamos: *¿Puede la desigualdad económica en el ámbito organizacional afectar a la percepción social?*

Así, en el Capítulo 6, y a lo largo de tres experimentos preregistrados, tratamos de examinar la relación entre la desigualdad económica en el plano organizacional y la percepción social (i.e., contenido agéntico y comunal) de las personas que están inmersas en dicho contexto (des)igual. En los tres experimentos (i.e., Estudio Piloto, Estudio 1 y Estudio 2), manipulamos el nivel de desigualdad económica presente en una organización (alta desigualdad vs. baja desigualdad vs. igualdad), y examinamos si la percepción social de un trabajador/a de rango medio en términos de agencia (vs. comunión) era más fuerte en la condición de alta desigualdad económica que en las otras dos condiciones (baja desigualdad e igualdad; H_5).

Ya que investigaciones previas han mostrado que la desigualdad puede afectar a cómo las personas se ven a sí mismas en relación con las demás (e.g., Sánchez-Rodríguez, Willis, y Rodríguez-Bailón, 2019), quisimos explorar el posible efecto de la desigualdad económica en la autopercepción de agencia y comunión. De este modo, en el estudio piloto exploramos la autopercepción de los/as participantes en términos agénticos y comunales al preguntarles cómo se definirían en una entrevista de trabajo para conseguir un puesto en la organización presentada.

Mientras que en el Estudio Piloto sólo exploramos, sin hipótesis preregistradas, el posible efecto de la desigualdad económica en la autopercepción, en el Estudio 1 hipotetizamos que las personas asignadas a la condición de alta desigualdad (vs. baja e igualdad) se percibirían a sí mismas como más agénticas que comunales (H_6). Con el fin de ampliar el alcance del Estudio Piloto, en el Estudio 1 también tratamos de dar respuesta a cómo se percibiría a los/as líderes de la organización. Dado que en el Capítulo 4 ya examinamos el efecto de la desigualdad en la percepción social de grupos de alto estatus, consideramos que sería interesante examinar el mismo proceso en el ámbito organizacional. Así, investigamos la percepción social del líder con mayor estatus y rango. Específicamente, esperábamos encontrar que se le percibiera como más agéntico que comunal especialmente en la condición de alta desigualdad económica (vs. baja e igualdad; H_7). En el Estudio 2 de esta serie de estudios, abordamos las mismas preguntas que en el Estudio 1 para tener más evidencia sobre la consistencia de nuestros resultados tras haber realizado algunas modificaciones en la manipulación experimental.

¿Por qué es importante cómo se percibe a la gente, o a nosotros/as mismos/as, en términos de masculinidad (agencia) y feminidad (comunión)? La evidencia empírica muestra que estas percepciones tienen consecuencias para otros procesos cognitivos, emocionales y conductuales. Así, por ejemplo, el *modelo del contenido de los estereotipos* (Fiske et al., 2002) ha documentado cómo la percepción de los miembros de diferentes grupos en términos de competencia y sociabilidad influye en los sentimientos y en las conductas que suscitan tales grupos (Caprariello et al., 2009). Igualmente, a partir de las aportaciones de Sandra Bem y de otros/as autores/as, existen investigaciones que han mostrado que la autopercepción en términos de masculinidad y feminidad puede influir en las actitudes hacia la desigualdad social. Por ejemplo, aquellas personas que se autoperciben como más masculinas reportan actitudes más positivas hacia la desigualdad de género y a la discriminación en base a la orientación sexual (Dahl et al., 2015; Endut et al., 2020; Kosakowska-Berezecka et al., 2016; Vandello et al., 2008; Weaver & Vescio, 2015).

En la última y cuarta serie de estudios quisimos examinar el efecto de la autopercepción masculina (i.e., agéntica) en las actitudes, en nuestro caso, hacia la desigualdad económica. Así, examinamos la relación inversa a la que hemos estudiado en todos los estudios anteriores de la tesis y nos preguntamos: *¿puede la autopercepción en términos de masculinidad ayudar al mantenimiento de la desigualdad económica entre las personas?* Para dar respuesta a esta pregunta nos centramos en el estudio de la autopercepción en términos masculinos (i.e., agénticos) como posible variable predictora de la desigualdad económica ideal.

En el Capítulo 6 presentamos los dos estudios que realizamos para responder a esta pregunta. Nuestra hipótesis principal fue que la autopercepción en términos de masculinidad (vs. feminidad) llevaría a preferir mayores niveles de desigualdad económica (H_8). En un primer estudio correlacional examinamos la asociación entre la autopercepción en términos de masculinidad (i.e., agencia) y la preferencia de la desigualdad económica (i.e., desigualdad económica ideal). Después realizamos un segundo estudio de tipo experimental, en el cual hicimos saliente la masculinidad (vs. feminidad) de los hombres y las mujeres participantes y evaluamos de nuevo la desigualdad económica ideal.

En referencia a la estructura de la tesis doctoral, hemos de indicar que los distintos capítulos empíricos son artículos científicos independientes, por lo que cada capítulo presentará una introducción y una discusión general. En consecuencia, es posible que algunos de los argumentos presentados en los diferentes capítulos se puedan repetir; asimismo, las tablas y figuras aparecen enumeradas de acuerdo con el capítulo al que pertenecen. Tras los capítulos empíricos, presentamos la discusión general de los resultados encontrados en la presente tesis doctoral y una breve conclusión redactada en inglés. De manera adicional, incluimos un apartado con el material suplementario (e.g., manipulaciones experimentales utilizadas, instrumentos, análisis adicionales, etc.) y las referencias bibliográficas utilizadas en la tesis doctoral.

Por otro lado, con el propósito de cumplir los requisitos para la obtención de la mención de doctorado internacional, algunos capítulos se presentan en español (capítulos teóricos y capítulo de discusión) y otros en inglés (capítulos empíricos y el apartado de conclusiones del Capítulo 8). Finalmente, nos gustaría señalar que se ha tratado de utilizar el lenguaje inclusivo a lo largo de los capítulos.

Tabla 3.1.

Resumen de los objetivos, preguntas de investigación e hipótesis de la tesis doctoral

Objetivo General

Estudiar la relación entre la desigualdad económica y la percepción social.

Preguntas de Investigación	Objetivos Específicos	Hipótesis	Capítulo y Estudio Correspondiente
1. ¿Puede la percepción de un alto nivel de desigualdad económica en una sociedad influir en el contenido de la percepción social acerca de las personas que viven en dicho entorno?	Examinar el efecto de la desigualdad económica percibida en la percepción social del típico/a habitante en términos de masculinidad (i.e., agencia) y feminidad (i.e., comunión).	H_1: En la sociedad en la que se perciba alta (vs. baja) desigualdad económica se percibirá al típico/a habitante como más masculino (vs. femenino).	Capítulo 4: Estudio 1 (H_1)
2. ¿La desigualdad económica percibida podría afectar a la percepción social de las personas que pertenecen a diferentes clases sociales?	Examinar el efecto de la desigualdad económica percibida en la percepción social de los/as habitantes de clase alta y baja en términos de masculinidad (i.e., agencia) y feminidad (i.e., comunión).	H_2: En la sociedad en la que se perciba alta (vs. baja) desigualdad económica se percibirá al habitante de clase social alta como más masculino (vs. femenino).	Capítulo 4: Estudio 2 (H_2)
3. ¿Afecta la desigualdad económica percibida a los estereotipos sobre hombres y mujeres?	Examinar el efecto de la desigualdad económica percibida en los estereotipos de género (i.e., atribuciones de agencia y comunión a hombres y mujeres).	En la sociedad con alta (vs. baja) desigualdad económica: (H_3) el estereotipo masculino como más agéntico (vs. comunal) se acentuará, y (H_4) el estereotipo femenino como más comunal (vs. agéntico) se reducirá.	Capítulo 5: Estudios 1 y 2 (H_3, y H_4)
4. ¿Puede la desigualdad económica en el ámbito organizacional afectar a la percepción social?	Analizar el efecto de la desigualdad económica percibida a nivel organizacional en la percepción social en términos agénticos y comunales.	En la organización con alta desigualdad económica (vs. baja desigualdad e igualdad): (H_5) se percibirá al trabajador/a de rango medio como más agéntico (vs. comunal), (H_6) las personas se autodescribirán como más agénticas (vs. comunales), y (H_7) se percibirá al trabajador/a de alto rango (i.e., líder) como más agéntico (vs. comunal).	Capítulo 6: Estudio Piloto (H_5) Estudios 1 y 2 (H_5, H_6, y H_7)
5. ¿Puede la autopercepción en términos de masculinidad ayudar al mantenimiento de la desigualdad económica entre las personas?	Analizar si la autopercepción en términos masculinos (i.e., agénticos) predice la desigualdad económica ideal.	H_8: La autopercepción en términos de masculinidad (vs. feminidad) predecirá la preferencia de mayores niveles de desigualdad económica	Capítulo 7: Estudios 1 y 2 (H_8)

EMPIRICAL CHAPTERS

CAPÍTULOS EMPÍRICOS

Chapter 4

Economic Inequality and Masculinity–Femininity: The Prevailing Perceived Traits in Higher Unequal Contexts are Masculine

Economic inequality and Masculinity-Femininity: The Prevailing Perceived Traits in Higher Unequal Contexts Are Masculine

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Abstract

Previous studies have shown that economic inequality influences psychological processes. In this article, we argue that economic inequality also makes masculine attributes more prototypical. In Study 1 (*N* = 106), using an experimental design, we showed that individuals belonging to a society characterized by a higher level of inequality are perceived as more masculine than feminine. Study 2 (*N* = 75) shows, also experimentally, that the upper social class is perceived mostly in terms of masculine traits, and that this effect is greater when economic inequality is relatively high. Conversely, the lower social class is more clearly perceived in terms of feminine traits. These results inform our understanding of the impact of economic inequality on social perception.

Keywords: Economic inequality, masculinity, femininity, stereotypes, social class

Introduction

In recent years, economic inequality has been growing in the majority of developed countries (Piketty & Saez, 2014). This inequality is associated with important psychological processes, the most unequal societies tend to promote relational dynamics that are focused on personal independence and individualism (Sánchez-Rodríguez, Willis, & Rodríguez-Bailón, 2019; Sánchez-Rodríguez, Willis, et al., 2019), competitiveness (Sommet et al., 2019), and aggressiveness and hostility (Greitemeyer & Sagioglou, 2018).

In this article, we assert that these characteristics —greater independence, competitiveness, or agressiveness— of more unequal societies may generate a stereotype for their individual members, that is, they generate some expectations about individuals' more representative characteristics or attributes. More precisely, we state that, in the most unequal societies, stereotypes are associated with attributes that have, traditionally, been defined as masculine.

Psychosocial Effects of Economic Inequality

Economic inequality influences social psychological processes (Buttrick & Oishi, 2017; Wilkinson & Pickett, 2017). The rationale behind how economic inequality has psychosocial effects is the notion that different social structures provide different environments, which are fundamental to the development of human characteristics (Wilkinson & Pickett, 2017). It is therefore crucial to be aware of the extent to which a given society is hierarchical or egalitarian. In terms of distribution of resources and income, it may be necessary to determine which social strategy is appropriate in an unequal context, relative to a more egalitarian one: In a more unequal context, competition and dominance are social strategies that seem appropriate; in more equal contexts, strategies based on reciprocity and cooperation seem more suitable (Wilkinson & Pickett, 2017). Consistent with this idea, Buttrick and Oishi (2017) have argued that economic inequality influences society by increasing individuals' mistrust and anxiety about their own positions.

From this perspective, experimental social-psychological studies have corroborated some of the proposed causal effects of economic inequality. For instance, economic inequality has been found to influence perceived societal norms, leading individuals to infer that others are more individualistic (Sánchez-Rodríguez, Willis, et al., 2019); it also leads them to describe themselves by means of an independent self-construal (Sánchez-Rodríguez, Willis, & Rodríguez-Bailón, 2019). At the same time, economic inequality is an important predictor of perceived competitiveness within a society (Sommet et al., 2019; Sánchez-Rodríguez, Willis, et al., 2019). When people perceive that there is a high degree of economic inequality, they tend to be less cooperative with others (Nishi et al., 2015), and high status people become less generous (Côté et al., 2015; but see Schmukle et al., 2019 for a non-replication of this finding). Similarly, when individuals face a disadvantageous situation in a context of economic inequality, they tend to be more aggressive toward others (Greitemeyer & Sagioglou, 2018).

In this paper, we are interested in the consequences of perceived economic inequality on societal inferences about others. Given that many of the above characteristics —independence, competitiveness and aggressiveness— have commonly been associated with social constructions of masculinity (see Bem, 1974), we suggest that individuals living in societies that are perceived as more unequal may be perceived in terms of traits more closely associated with masculinity (and less associated with femininity).

Masculinity-Femininity

Masculinity and femininity are cultural constructs related to gender (Bem, 1993; Starr & Zurbriggen, 2017), which can be applied to both subjects and groups (Ellemers, 2018). The masculinity construct, traditionally linked to men, is understood as the gender dimension involving the characteristics associated with carrying out work (Mehta & Dementieva, 2017), acting as a leader and being self-sufficient, independent or aggressive (Bem, 1974; Bem et al., 1976; Berdahl et al., 2018; Moya, 2003; Parsons & Bales, 1955; Prentice & Carranza, 2002). By contrast, femininity, traditionally associated with women, includes attributes related to attending to others' well-being (Mehta & Dementieva, 2017): understanding others, or being sensitive to others' needs, inter alia (Bem, 1974; Bem et al., 1976; Moya, 2003; Parsons & Bales, 1955; Prentice & Carranza, 2002).

In the field of social psychology, masculinity and femininity have been equated with other gender constructs, with which they share a common core, given that they also represent an orientation toward the achievement of goals (*agency*, *instrumentality,* and *competence*) or toward the preservation of good relationships between members of a group (*communion*, *expressiveness,* and *sociability*; Abele & Wojciszke, 2014; Mehta & Dementieva, 2017; Parsons & Bales, 1955; Spence & Helmreich, 1980). Masculine and feminine traits represent those behaviors that are expected from men and women, respectively; they function as prescriptive gender stereotypes (Prentice & Carranza, 2002). These expectations about what should be done to belong to a group of men or women reinforce and justify the gender roles and inequality between both sexes (Ellemers, 2018).

In much the same way as people, societies can be more or less feminine. For example, Hofstede's research shows that societies can be categorized according to five dimensions; one such dimension is masculinity/femininity, by which it is possible to determine the extent to which societies are focused on achieving self-oriented objectives (masculine societies), relative to social objectives (feminine societies; Hofstede, 1998). In those societies labeled as masculine, there is a bigger differentiation of gender roles, relative to those societies labeled as feminine. In fact, in feminine societies, both men and women care for the improvement of living standards and are not focused on financial success (Hofstede, 1998).

The Current Research

In the present research, we examine how individuals within a given society are perceived by others, in terms of the traits that form the social constructs of masculinity and femininity, and according to the society's level of economic inequality. Specifically, in Study 1, we predicted that when the level of economic inequality is relatively high, then average members of that society are perceived as more masculine than feminine (H1).

In Study 2, we examined this relation, but added another key variable: Perceptions about upper and lower social class members. Previous studies examined whether there are differences between the ways that social classes are perceived. Fiske et al. (2002), in their research about the stereotype content model (SCM), suggest that social classes are perceived stereotypically, but with ambivalence about the dimensions of *competence* (related to masculinity) and *warmth* (related to femininity; Abele & Wojciszke, 2014; 2019). Upper-class individuals are perceived as competent but cold, whereas lower-class individuals tend to be perceived as warm but incompetent (Durante et al., 2013, 2017; Fiske et al., 2002). Thus, in Study 2, we examined whether: (a) members of the lower social class are regarded as more stereotypically feminine than masculine, notwithstanding the level of economic inequality (H2); and (b) members of the upper social class are regarded as stereotypically more masculine than feminine, notwithstanding the level of economic inequality (H3).

Finally, we also hypothesize that increasing inequality increases the perception of upper social class individuals of the society as more masculine than feminine (H4). We did not have a clear prediction, however, about the effects of inequality on perceptions of lower-class individuals. On the one hand, it can be argued that inequality also increases perceptions of masculinity about this group (for the same reasons we have argued that inequality has a main effect on the average member). On the other hand, economic inequality has also been found to increase the ambivalence of perceptions (Durante et al., 2013), so that groups tend to be perceived in a more polarized way within their stereotype. From this perspective, it is reasonable to expect that low status groups are perceived as more feminine than masculine when inequality is high. In Study 2, we explore which of these two impacts of economic inequality bear on the masculinity/femininity of low-class individuals.

Study 1

In this study, we investigated how the average member of a society with higher economic inequality (as opposed to lower inequality) is described, in terms of masculinity and femininity. We expected, according to H1, that the average member of a society with high economic inequality (vs. another society with lower inequality) would be described as more masculine than feminine.

Method

Participants and Procedure

Participants volunteering for the study included 106 psychology students from the University of Granada, of whom 89 were women and 17 were men, whose average age was 21.87 years (SD = 3.84). The participants were randomly assigned to each experimental condition.

We conducted a sensitivity power analysis. For a mix-design ANOVA (with two groups and two dependent variables), this sample size (N = 106) allows us to detect an effect size as small as f = .22 (η^2_p = .05) with a power of .80 (and an alpha level set at 0.05)

This study's sample was collected in the Psychology Faculty of the University of Granada. The students were offered university credits in the subject of Social Psychology. Also, the researcher received informed written consent from the participants, who read information about their voluntary participation, as well as the anonymity and confidentiality of their answers. The researcher explained the instructions to all participants and handed out paper copies of the questionnaires, ensuring that each had enough time to complete the questionnaire during class time. The study was conducted after receiving approval from the Ethics Committee of the University of Granada.

Materials

Manipulation of economic inequality. The participants read a text about an extraterrestrial society, in which the inhabitants are neither women nor men, following a similar approach to that taken by Hoffman and Hurst (1990). The text briefly described this society, and finally, stated that, as in other societies, this one was stratified on the basis of unequal distribution of resources to various groups; the salary of the 10% with the highest income was either 30 times higher than the earnings of the poorest 10% of the population (condition of higher economic inequality), or 5 times higher (condition of lower economic inequality; see Supplementary Materials SM4.1). After reading the text, they were given a manipulation check, which asked participants: "Please, answer to which extent you think that income distribution in the extraterrestrial society is unequal." The answer choices consisted of a scale, which ranged from 0 (*not at all*) to 100 (*very much*), in 10-point increments.

Masculinity-Femininity of the average member. The participants were asked to consider the nature of the average member of the extraterrestrial society. To assess their answers, we used the items of the Spanish adaptation of the Bem Sex Role Inventory (Bem, 1974; adapted to Spanish by Páez & Fernández, 2004). This inventory consists of 18 items, of which 9 measure the social construct of masculinity ($\alpha = .83$) —for example, "strong personality", "acting as a leader" and "dominant"—, and the other 9 items measure the social construct of femininity ($\alpha = .87$) —"sensitive to others' needs", "loving" and "loves children"— (See Supplementary Materials SM4.2). In this case, the answer format was a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*very much*); however, unlike the BSRI, where the participants must think of themselves and provide a personal answer, in this case, participants had to indicate whether they considered every trait characteristic for the average extraterrestrial member of the hypothetical society.

Political Orientation. The participants indicated their political orientation by answering to the following item: *In politics, it is often discussed that there is "left-wing" and "right-wing". Where would you place yourself on a scale in which 1 means "left-wing" and 10 means "right-wing?"*"

Social Class. We then assessed subjective social class, according to a MacArthur Scale of Subjective Social Status (Adler et al., 2000). Participants were also asked about family income level. The family income level was assessed using scale, consisting of 10 intervals, within which they had to appropriately situate their monthly family income.

Sociodemographic data. We asked participants about their gender, age, nationality, and educational attainment. They had to state their educational attainment according to an 8-category scale, on which the lowest level was "elementary studies" and the highest was "PhD studies".

Results

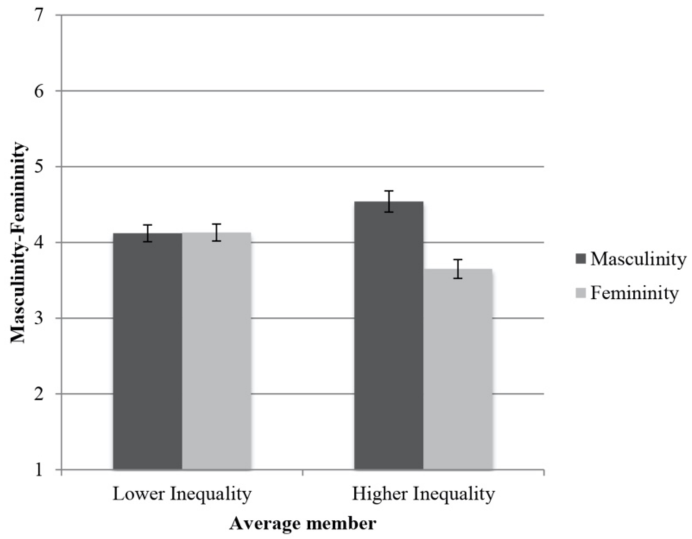
The results obtained from the manipulation check showed that there were differences in the experimental conditions: the participants assigned to a condition of higher economic inequality (M = 76.59; SD = 16.59) perceived a higher level of inequality for income distribution in that society than in the other experimental condition (M = 51.84; SD = 23.42), F(1, 94) = 35.45, p < .001, η^2_p = .27[3].

Next, we tested our main hypothesis, using a mixed-design ANOVA of 2 (Economic inequality: Higher Inequality vs. Lower Inequality) x 2 (Masculinity vs. Femininity), with repeated measures in the last variable. We tested simple effects within the same ANOVA, adjusting for multiple comparisons (Bonferroni). Results showed a main effect of the Masculinity-Femininity variable, F(1, 104) = 9.62, p = .002, η^2_p = .08. The participants generally evaluated the average extraterrestrial member as more prototypically masculine (M = 4.33, 95% CI = [4.15, 4.51]) than feminine (M = 3.89, 95% CI = [3.73, 4.06]), M_D = .44, 95% CI = [.16, .72]. However, this effect was qualified by a significant interaction between Masculinity-Femininity and Economic Inequality, F(1, 104) = 9.95, p = .002, η^2_p = .09 (see Figure 4.1). In the condition of lower inequality, the average extraterrestrial member was evaluated using, both masculine (M = 4.13, 95% CI = [3.87, 4.38]) and feminine (M = 4.13, 95% CI = [3.90, 4.37]) traits, M_D = -.01, 95% CI = [-0.40, 0.39]; F < 1. By contrast, and corroborating H1, in the condition of higher

[3] Degrees of freedom vary given that we had missing values in some questions.

Figure 4.1.

Average Rating in Masculinity–Femininity of the Average Member According to the Level of Economic Inequality of the Society



inequality, the average extraterrestrial member was assessed as more masculine (M = 4.54, 95% CI = [4.28, 4.79]) than feminine (M = 3.65, 95% CI = [3.42, 3.89]), M_D = .88, 95% CI = [0.49, 1.28]; F (1, 104) = 19.57, p < .001, η^2_p = .16.

Finally, we conducted a robustness check by running a repeated measures ANCOVA, using the same dependent and independent variables, but using as covariates: political orientation, subjective social class, sex, age, income level, and educational attainment. The main results were not influenced by these sociodemographic variables (see Supplementary Materials SM4.3). Means, standard deviations, and correlations are available in Supplementary Material SM4.4.

Discussion

In this study, we found that, when the economic inequality of a society is higher, the average member of that society is perceived with more masculine than feminine traits, which verifies our H1. Nonetheless, we found no differences in the evaluation of an average member of a society characterized by conditions of lower economic inequality. This suggests that, in a society where economic inequality is lower, individuals may be perceived as less different from each other, or as sharing more similar traits. It may be inferred that, in a situation of lower economic inequality, individuals may be perceived in more androgynous terms.

We performed another study to further research how members of a society are perceived according to the level of economic inequality. Here, we assessed the perception of members of the upper and lower social classes within a society, according to the existing level of economic inequality.

Study 2

Given that social class triggers certain stereotypes (Fiske, 2005; Fiske et al., 2002; Piff et al., 2018), we were interested to know the moderating role of the targets' social class in the relationship between economic inequality and perceived masculinity-femininity. Therefore, in this study we tried to check how the members of the upper and lower social classes of an imaginary society are perceived, according to the level of economic inequality (Higher Inequality vs. Lower Inequality) (see H2, H3 and H4).

Method

Participants and Procedure

In this second study, however, we were only able to recruit 75 Psychology students from the University of Granada (59 women and 16 men), with an average age of 24.48 years (SD = 2.03). The participants were randomly assigned to one of the two experimental conditions.

To determine the effect size we conducted a sensitivity power analysis. The present sample size (N = 75), allow us to detect an effect size as small as f = .22 (η^2_p = .05), considering a statistical power of .80 (and an alpha level set at 0.05) for a mix-design ANOVA (with two groups and four dependent variables).

This study's sample was collected in the Psychology Faculty of the University of Granada. The students were offered university credits in the subject of Social Psychology. As in Study1, the researcher received informed written consent from the participants, who read information about the voluntary nature of their participation, as well as the guaranteed anonymity and confidentiality of their answers. The researcher explained the instructions to all the participants and handed out paper copies of the questionnaires, ensuring they each had enough time to fill them in the questionnaires during class time. The study was conducted after receiving approval from the Ethics Committee of the University of Granada.

Materials

Manipulation of economic inequality. The manipulation of economic inequality was operated in the same way as in Study 1. Participants assigned to the higher economic inequality condition read the text about the fictitious society, in which the salary of the 10% with the highest income was either 30 times higher than the earnings of the poorest 10% of the population; and participants assigned to the lower economic inequality condition read that the differences of salary between the 10% with the highest income was five times greater than the poorest 10% of society. After the economic inequality manipulation, participants completed the manipulation check in which they indicated the degree they considered that society was unequal, on a range from 0 (*not at all)* to 100 (*very much*), as in Study 1.

Masculinity-Femininity of typical upper- and lower-class members. We used the Spanish version of BSRI (Bem, 1974; adapted to Spanish by Páez & Fernández, 2004), as in Study 1. However, in this study, the participants assessed two extraterrestrial members using this scale: one belonged to the upper social class (with more resources) and the other to the lower social class (with fewer resources). The reliability of masculinity when they were assessing the upper-class extraterrestrial member was α = .75; when they assessed the lower-class member, reliability was α = .75. The reliability of femininity was α = .89 and α = .83 for the extraterrestrial member's assessment, according to upper and lower social class, respectively.

Political Orientation. The measure used in Study 1 to assess the political orientation was applied here. We also asked about their family income level using the scale of 10 intervals in Study 1.

Social Class. To assess the social class, we used the same measure (Adler et al., 2000) as in Study 1.

Sociodemographic data. The participants stated their age, nationality, and educational attainment in the same way they did in Study 1, using the same answer format for the answers.

Results

By analyzing the data obtained from the manipulation check, we were able to observe that, as in Study 1, there were differences between the experimental conditions: the participants assigned to the condition of higher economic inequality perceived that the economic inequality was greater (M = 73.45, SD = 16.32) than the participants assigned to the condition of lower economic inequality (M = 48.95, SD = 22.39), $F(1, 65)$ = 24.67, p < .001, η^2_p = .27.

A mixed-design ANOVA was subsequently performed, to test the different hypotheses (H2, H3, and H4), using a 2 (Economic inequality: Higher inequality vs. Lower inequality) x 2 (Social class: Upper Social Class vs. Lower Social Class) x 2 (Masculinity vs. Femininity) design, with repeated measures in the last two variables (see Table 4.1). We tested simple effects within the same mixed-design ANOVA, adjusting for multiple comparisons (Bonferroni).

Table 4.1.

Results from Mix-Design ANOVA: 2 (Economic Inequality: Higher Inequality vs. Lower Inequality) x 2 (Social Class: Upper Social Class vs. Lower Social Class) x 2 (Masculinity vs. Femininity)

	F	p value	η^2_p
MF	2.81	.098	.037
SC	1.47	.229	.020
MF x SC	167.83	.000	.697
EI x MF	5.11	.027	.065
EI x SC	2.66	.107	.035
EI x SC x MF	5.21	.025	.067

Note. MF = Masculinity-Femininity; SC = targets' Social Class; EI = Economic inequality.

Following our prediction, we found a significant three-way interaction between Economic Inequality, the target's Social Class, and Masculinity-Femininity, $F(1, 73)$ = 5.21, p = .025, η^2_p = .07.

When this interaction was analyzed, we first found that, in both the high (M_D = 1.26, 95% CI = [0.96, 1.55]; $F(1, 73)$ = 71.35, p < .001, η^2_p = .49) and the low inequality condition (M_D = 1.16, 95% CI = [0.90, 1.42]; $F(1, 73)$ = 77.61, p < .001, η^2_p = .51), lower-class individuals were evaluated as more feminine than masculine (see Table 4.2). This corroborates H2.

Table 4.2.

Means, Standard Deviations, and 95% Confidence Intervals oof Results of Mix-Design ANOVA of Study 2.

Higher Economic Inequality							
Upper Social Class Member				Lower Social Class Member			
Masculinity		Femininity		Masculinity		Femininity	
M (*SD*)	95% CI	*M* (*SD*)	95% CI	*M* (*SD*)	95% CI	*M* (*SD*)	95% CI
5.12 (.71)	[4.838, 5.398]	3.20 (.82)	[2.882, 3.515]	3.70 (.65)	[3.441, 4.959]	4.96 (.65)	[4.704, 5.209]

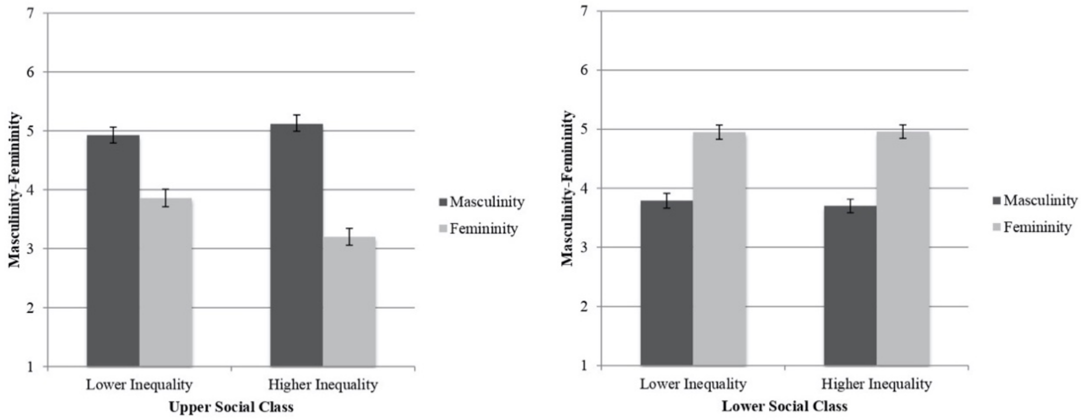
Lower Economic Inequality							
Upper Social Class Member				Lower Social Class Members			
Masculinity		Femininity		Masculinity		Femininity	
M (*SD*)	95% CI	*M* (*SD*)	95% CI	*M* (*SD*)	95% CI	*M* (*SD*)	95% CI
4.93 (.87)	[4.677, 5.173]	3.86 (.98)	[3.582, 4.143]	3.79 (.81)	[3.559, 4.018]	4.95 (.78)	[4.726, 5.173]

Note. 2 (Economic Inequality: Higher inequality vs. Lower inequality) x 2 (Social Class: Upper social class vs. Lower social class) x 2 (Masculinity vs. Femininity. Ratings were given on a 7-point scale from 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*very much*).

In addition, and consistently with H3, we found that, in both the high (M_D = 1.92, 95% CI = [1.44, 2.40]; $F(1, 73) = 63.16$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2_p = .46$) and in the low inequality conditions (M_D = 1.06, 95% CI = [0.64, 1.49]; $F(1,73) = 24.65$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2_p = .25$), upper social class members were perceived as more masculine than feminine (see Table 4.2). Importantly, and as the significant three-way interaction suggests, this difference was greater in the higher economic inequality condition than in the lower economic inequality condition (see Figure 4.2). Thus, as predicted in H4, we found that upper-class individuals were evaluated using more masculine than feminine traits, especially when economic inequality was high (vs. lower inequality).

Figure 4.2.

Average Rating in Masculinity–Femininity of the Average Member According to the Level of Economic Inequality of the Society



Apart from the main analysis, to verify the results, we conducted the same mixed-design ANCOVA, controlling for political orientation, subjective social class, sex, age, income level, and level of studies. The three-way interaction was not influenced by these variables (see Supplementary Materials SM4.5).

Discussion

In this study, we found that, when participants evaluate upper social class individuals, they consider masculine traits to prevail over feminine ones. Although lower social class individuals tended to be described by participants mostly through feminine traits, we did not find that this effect was influenced by economic inequality. In short, these results indicate that economic inequality only changes how individuals judge the prototypically advantaged members of society.

General Discussion

These two studies provide us with information about the potential consequences of economic inequality on the perception of the members of a given society, in terms of their masculinity and femininity. In Study 1 we found that the perception of an average inhabitant of a society of which we know very little may vary, depending on the level of economic inequality characterizing that society. If the level of inequality is low, then the inhabitants are perceived as more similar, in terms of their masculinity and femininity. Nonetheless, if there is higher economic inequality, then the inhabitants of that society are perceived as more masculine than feminine. These results are consistent with previous research, which has found that the most stereotypical traits of masculinity, such as aggressiveness (Greitemeyer & Sagioglou, 2018), competitiveness (Sommet et al. 2019, Sánchez-Rodríguez, Willis, et al., 2019) and independent self-construal (Sánchez-Rodríguez, Willis, & Rodríguez Bailón, 2019) are associated with economic inequality.

It is important to note that our research has shown that there are differences in the way we perceive others, in terms of traditional gender traits, according to economic inequality, without having offered information about the gender of the members of the society. Besides, as in Study 1, the typical member of the society was evaluated with more masculine than feminine traits in the society with higher economic inequality; this may be interpreted as reflecting that, in a higher-inequality context, people regarded central or core traits as masculine, relative to feminine traits. Conversely, under not-so-high —or lower— inequality conditions, the core traits seem to be equally masculine and feminine. In addition, in Study 2, upper-class members were perceived as representing the same core traits that we found in Study 1—that is, masculine traits— especially in the context of greater economic inequality. These results may be understood on the basis of the notion that the valued or core traits are associated with dominant groups (Correll & Ridgeway, 2003; Cuddy et al., 2015; Ho et al., 2012; Jost & Banaji, 1994; Pratto et al., 1994; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999; Tajfel, 1981) and, because men are the dominant group regarding gender (Fiske et al., 2002, 2016; Glick et al., 2000), it is reasonable to expect masculine traits to be reflected as the culture's most valued traits (relative to feminine traits), especially under more unequal conditions.

In Study 2, we extended the research by including an assessment of members of upper and lower social classes. Upper-class individuals, notwithstanding the level of economic inequality, were perceived as prototypically more masculine than feminine (H3), whereas lower-class subjects, notwithstanding the level of economic inequality, were perceived as more feminine than masculine (H2). Our results extend the literature about the way different social classes are perceived (see Fiske et al., 2002). Moreover, members of upper social classes are perceived as more prototypically masculine when the level of inequality is higher, relative to when it is lower (H4). We did not find, however, that the level of inequality influenced how low-class members are evaluated. Economic inequality may have influenced the perception of this group in two contrasting ways, and these may have cancelled each other out. On the one hand, it may be that, for some participants, inequality increases perceived masculinity for all the members of the society; for others, however, inequality may increase the ambivalence of their perceptions, prompting them to evaluate low-class members as even more feminine than masculine.

However, it is important to be cautious when interpreting Study 2's three-way interaction because of (a) the relatively small sample size of Study 2 and (b) the fact that interactive effects are typically harder to replicate than main effects (Altmejd et al., 2019).

Our findings have implications for the research on gender, social class, and economic inequality. The contribution of our research to the wide literature on stereotypes and social classes is the discovery that a society's level of economic inequality is a relevant variable that specifically affects masculine traits. Given that our results suggest that, in more economically unequal societies, traditionally masculine traits are more representative than feminine traits, we reckon that this may negatively affect women, who are generally expected to behave according to those traits that are traditionally more feminine than masculine. In this respect, existing literature has already tested that, in prototypically masculine contexts —or rather, in the contexts where masculine traits are the most representative ones, as is the case of leadership— women are disadvantaged solely because they are women, provided that they are expected to adapt their behavior to their predefined roles (Eagly & Karau, 2002; Ryan et al., 2011).Further, the richest people in the world are mostly men —according to the perception of the upper social class as prototypically masculine (H2), whereas the majority of world's poor are women —the *feminization of poverty* (Chant, 2007; Gornick & Boeri, 2016). That is to say that there is a connection between lower social class and femininity (H2), as we proposed. Additionally, economic inequality and gender inequality are not only closely related with each other (Aslan et al., 2017; Deléchat et al., 2018; Seguino, 2010), but it is also the case that, in countries with higher gender inequality, there are more men who support hostile sexist ideologies, thereby driving women to support benevolent sexist ideologies (Glick et al., 2000). Due to these relationships, it can be interpreted —and addressed in future research— that high levels of economic inequality may facilitate the maintenance of sexist ideologies and traditional gender stereotypes, at the expense of men and women, in comparison with low levels of economic inequality.

This research manifests some limitations. One was the sample type of both studies, composed of psychology students. The results could benefit substantially from our using general population samples, given that university students, especially those related to the field of psychology, may be more aware of gender stereotypes than other sectors of general society. Notwithstanding that limitation, even within this population with a high level of awareness, the results clearly indicate the existence of stereotypical perceptions, according to the level of inequality, which suggests that the effects within sectors of the population with lower awareness of gender inequality may be even more noticeable (e.g., Moya et al., 2000). We believe that another limitation of our research is that the samples of both studies were composed mainly of women, which may have influenced the results. In addition, although the two present experiments had high internal validity, we are aware that they suffer from a lack of ecological validity, which demands that we should be particularly cautious in drawing conclusions concerning real-world applications. Moreover, some reported effect sizes in our investigation are very large, especially in Study 2. This is consistent with related literature (e.g., Durante et al., 2017; Hentschel et al., 2019) and with the notion that mixed-designs tend to have smaller error terms, relative to between-groups design, which is associated with larger effect size (Raskin & Kircher, 2014).

In sum, with this research, we have tried to address some of the psychosocial consequences of economic inequality. The results presented here support and contribute to the evidence that economic inequality has an impact, at a psychosocial level, on the very way we perceive the others, according to the social constructs of gender (Masculinity vs. Femininity). Specifically, our results suggest that the level of economic inequality may be a strong macro-social factor influencing the prevalence of masculine traits, over feminine ones, as core traits in an economically unequal society.

Data Availability

The data set, syntax, and manipulation of our experiments are available at osf.io/xwd8r.

Chapter 5

Economic Inequality Shapes Agency and Communion in Gender Stereotypes

Economic Inequality Shapes Agency–Communion in Gender Stereotypes

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Abstract

Economic inequality is one of the main issues of current societies and affects people's psychological processes. In this research, we propose that economic inequality might affect how men and women are perceived. In two experiments, carried out in Spain (N = 170) and Mexico (N = 215), we tested whether high (vs. low) economic inequality leads to changes in the perceived agency and communion of both men and women. Our findings suggest that when economic inequality is high (vs. low), communal content in social perception of both men and women decreases. Specifically, under high (vs. low) inequality, the difference in agency–communion ascribed to a man becomes greater (i.e., men are perceived as even more agentic than communal), whereas this difference becomes smaller for women (i.e., they are still perceived as more communal than agentic, but this difference is smaller). We discuss the implications of these findings regarding the psychosocial effects of economic inequality.

Keywords: economic inequality, agency and communion, gender stereotypes, person perception, social perception

Introduction

Imagine a society in which the economic differences between citizens are very high. Those at the top of the social ladder earn much more than those at the bottom, live in luxury houses, and drive the most expensive cars, whereas those at the bottom can barely afford a decent house. Does this affect perception of men, women, or both? In such an economically unequal society, are the men perceived as dominant or kind? What about the women? Would men and women be perceived differently in a more egalitarian society? In our research, we sought to answer these questions by examining the effect of perceived economic inequality on the agency and communion attributed to both genders.

Recent research has shown that economic inequality influences how different individuals and groups are evaluated (Connor et al., 2021; Durante et al., 2013; Moreno-Bella et al., 2019). However, the effect of perceived economic inequality on the specific features attributed to men and women has received little attention. In the present research, we sought to contribute to the literature by examining the effect of economic inequality on the content features attributed to men and women along the Big Two: agency and communion (Abele & Wojciszke, 2007, 2019).

The Psychosocial Effects of Economic Inequality

Economic inequality and its consequences at the individual and societal level have attracted social psychologists' attention in recent years (e.g., Buttrick & Oishi, 2017; Jetten & Peters, 2019; Rodríguez-Bailón et al., 2020; Trump, 2020). For instance, it has been shown that in more unequal environments, people trust others less (Elgar & Aitken, 2011; Graafland & Lous, 2019; Oishi et al., 2011; Uslaner & Brown, 2005), tend to show less solidarity and generosity (Nishi et al., 2015; Paskov & Dewilde, 2012), and consider themselves less connected to others (Sánchez-Rodríguez, Willis, & Rodríguez-Bailón, 2019). This research suggests that economic inequality may undermine social cohesion and cooperation between people.

Similarly, in highly economically unequal contexts, people compare themselves more with others (Cheung & Lucas, 2016, 2020), are more anxious about increasing—and not losing—their status (Buttrick & Oishi, 2017; Delhey & Dragolov, 2014; Layte & Whelan, 2014), and tend to view themselves as superior to others (Loughnan et al., 2011). In such unequal environments, people feel a greater need for achievement by increasing other approach-avoidance motivation (Sommet et al., 2019). In other words, apart from diminishing the connection with other people (e.g., trust), economic inequality is associated with an increase in people's concern about their relative social standing (e.g., Paskov et al., 2013). In sum, high economic inequality affects people's behaviour and attitudes, which implicitly involve their (lack of) connection with others.

Wilkinson and Pickett (2017) argued that different levels of economic inequality might have these and other effects because they provide diverse social environments to which individuals successfully adapt. Building on this perspective, it has been proposed that unequal and equal environments tend to have different normative climates; that is, they involve distinct social norms about how most people are and behave (Sánchez-Rodríguez, Willis, et al., 2019). It is therefore crucial to understand people's inferences about the specific features of the normative climate, given that social norms have an important effect on their attitudes and behaviours (Asch, 1951; Cialdini et al., 1990; Sherif, 1936).

In examining the effects of economic inequality on the normative climate, research has shown that when economic inequality is relatively high, people tend to infer that others are less cooperative and more competitive (Sánchez-Rodríguez, Willis, et al., 2019; Sommet et al., 2019) and pursue less guiding values that capture interest in others' welfare, namely self-transcendent values (Sánchez-Rodríguez et al., 2020). Likewise, people also tend to think that others have less traditional feminine (vs. masculine) traits (Moreno-Bella et al., 2019), and people think that others are less interdependent (vs. independent), strive less for group goals (vs. personal goals), and are less interested in communal relationships (vs. exchange relationships; Sánchez-Rodríguez, Willis, et al., 2019). These findings suggest that high economic inequality decreases communal (i.e., related to social ties and connection) over agentic (i.e., related to skills and assertiveness) content in the perceived normative climate.

The effects of economic inequality on the perceived normative climate also translate to how people evaluate and stereotype different social groups. For instance, when inequality is high (vs. low), people tend to show greater stereotype ambivalence (Durante et al., 2013). This is especially true when evaluating socioeconomic status (SES) groups (Durante et al., 2017). Indeed, experimental studies have also shown that high inequality amplifies the high-SES group stereotype as competent but less warm (e.g., Connor et al., 2021; Moreno-Bella et al., 2019). Importantly, the effect of economic inequality on gender stereotypes has not been directly examined. Although Durante et al. (2013) did measure stereotypes about men and women, they used an ambivalence index that included various groups. Thus, exclusive examination of the economic inequality effect on gender stereotypes has not been conducted. Moreover, the causal effect of inequality on how men and women are evaluated has not been examined using an experimental approach. In this paper, we will therefore present two experiments investigating how manipulated economic inequality influences the agency–communion attributed to a typical man and woman in a particular societal context.

Agency and Communion in Gender Stereotypes

Gender stereotypes are people's shared beliefs about the features of men and women (Ellemers, 2018). These stereotypes can be *descriptive*—the features men and women have—or *prescriptive*—the features men and women should (or should not) have (Prentice & Carranza, 2002). In our research, we focused on descriptive gender stereotypes; that is, the characteristics that people consider men and women to have.

When examining gender stereotypes, we focused on agency and communion, which represent the two fundamental dimensions of content in social evaluation (Abele & Wojciszke, 2014). Agency captures goal achievement, task functioning, and self-orientation, emphasizing assertiveness (i.e., feeling superior, dominant, self-confident) and competence (i.e., capable, efficient, clever). Communion represents the maintenance of relationships, social functioning, and other orientation, emphasizing warmth (i.e., caring, affectionate, empathetic) and morality (i.e., reliable, trustworthy, considerate; Wojciszke & Abele, 2019). The agentic and communal contents are essential in the analysis of gender stereotypes (Hentschel et al., 2019; Sczesny et al., 2019). Although gender stereotypes are dynamic and changing (Eagly et al., 2019; Haines et al., 2016), men are still perceived as more agentic than communal, whereas women are considered more communal than agentic in most cultures (Ellemers, 2018; Sczesny et al., 2019; see Cuddy et al., 2015; Steinmetz et al., 2014). In other words, agency prevails in the masculine stereotype, and communion in the feminine stereotype (Eagly et al., 2019).

Given that socioeconomic context affects the expression of stereotypes of particular social groups, such as those linked to social class (Grigoryan et al., 2020), we proposed that this could also be the case for gender stereotypes. What could be the effect of economic inequality on the ascribed agency and communion of men and women? Wilkinson and Pickett (2017) maintained that in unequal environments, social rank becomes more important and more salient, so competition and dominance seem to be the preferred strategies to successfully adapt to such contexts; in more equal settings, however, reciprocity and cooperation may be more suitable strategies. Competition and dominance may be framed in the agency dimension but also imply a lack of communion given that they are attained at the expense of others; conversely, reciprocity and cooperation may be framed in the communion dimension (Abele et al., 2008, 2016; Diekman & Eagly, 2000; Wojciszke & Abele, 2019).

High economic inequality contexts might increase the importance of agency content in the social evaluation of men and women, but there is clearer evidence about the decrease—or lack—of communion content in the normative climate (e.g., less cooperation and more competition, less interest in others' welfare; Sánchez-Rodríguez et al., 2020; Sánchez-Rodríguez, Willis, et al., 2019; Sommet et al., 2019). On the one hand, when evaluating men, the normative traits of a highly unequal society and the traits traditionally associated with their gender go in the same direction. Economic inequality may therefore amplify the traditional stereotype; that is, in economically unequal environments, men will tend to be perceived as even more agentic than communal (in comparison to less unequal environments). On the other hand, women have been traditionally perceived as more communal than agentic. However, given that inequality might increase the importance of agency and decrease the relevance of communality, when economic inequality is high, women may be perceived in a less stereotypical way—the difference between ascribed agency and communion may be smaller.

The Present Research

The principal aim of this research was to examine the effect of economic inequality on gender stereotypes. Research on economic inequality and stereotyping has focused on SES group stereotypes (Connor et al., 2021; Durante et al., 2017; Moreno-Bella et al., 2019), but gender groups have received little attention, even though gender is a primary factor in person perception (Ellemers, 2018). Given that perceived economic inequality seems to be a better predictor of people's behaviour and cognition than actual economic inequality (e.g., Loveless, 2013), we wanted to fill that gap by examining whether perceived economic inequality affects trait ascriptions to men and women, that is, gender stereotypes.

We expected an interaction effect between the level of perceived economic inequality and the type of trait (agentic vs. communal) attributed to a typical man and woman in a given society. In this sense, we hypothesized that in a high (vs. low) economically unequal society, the difference between agency and communion trait ascriptions to men would become greater; that is, men would be perceived as more agentic than communal, but this difference would be higher and stronger in the high (vs. low) economic inequality condition (H1). By contrast, we hypothesized that in a high (vs. low) economically unequal society, such a difference between both dimensions in trait ascriptions would become smaller for women; in other words, women would be perceived as more communal than agentic, but this difference would be smaller in the high (vs. low) economic inequality condition (H2).[4]

We tested both hypotheses through two preregistered experiments, in which we manipulated economic inequality in a society and measured the extent to which participants considered the typical male and female citizens of that society in terms of agency and communion. In Study 1, using a fictitious society paradigm to manipulate economic inequality, we tested H1 and H2 using a Spanish sample. In Study 2, we wanted to replicate the results of Study 1 using the same paradigm with a sample from a more culturally masculine country, such as Mexico (Hofstede Insights, 2020; World Bank, 2020). The preregistration of all studies and data sets can be found online in the Open Science Framework (https://osf.io/dnfbk/).

Study 1

First, in Study 1, we aimed to test H1 and H2 using an experimental manipulation of economic inequality based on a fictitious society.

Method

Participants and Procedure

We conducted an a priori power analysis with G*Power (Faul et al., 2009). For a repeated-measures analysis of variance (ANOVA; within-between interaction), for an effect size of $f = .20$, statistical power of 0.80, and at an alpha level of 0.05, the minimum desired sample size is 72 valid observations. We tried to collect a minimum of 100 (50 per experimental condition) participants and a maximum of 200 valid observations. We were able to collect 195 responses from university students and university library users. Following the preregistration, we excluded participants who did not indicate Spanish as their native language and did not indicate being 18 years or older. After these exclusions,

[4] We rewrote the hypotheses in the article to make them easier to understand. The preregistered hypotheses capture the same meaning and predict the same direction of the effect, but their writing did not promote easy reading of the article. The edits did not result in any changes to the hypotheses.

the final sample was composed of 170 participants (87.1% university students and 12.9% university library users) older than 18 years (106 women, 64 men; M_{age} = 21.24, *SD* = 5.25).

We recruited participants from a psychology class (67.6%) and from the library of a public university (32.4%) in the southeast of Spain. The experiment was conducted online. One researcher asked participants to take part in the study via an online survey provided with a survey link and QR code. All participants gave their informed consent at the beginning of the survey and read information about their voluntary participation, as well as the anonymity and confidentiality of their answers. Participants were randomly assigned to one of the two experimental conditions of economic inequality (between-groups variable) and completed the agency–communion-related measures (within-subjects variable).

Measures

We presented the following measures in an online survey created in Qualtrics. We counterbalanced the order of presentation of the typical man and woman evaluation.

Experimental Manipulation of Economic Inequality. To manipulate economic inequality, we used the Bimboola paradigm adapted by Sánchez-Rodríguez, Willis, and Rodríguez-Bailón (2019) from the original paradigm used for manipulating social class (Jetten et al., 2015). We asked participants to imagine that they were going to live in a new (fictitious) society called Bimboola. They learned that Bimboola society consisted of three income groups, and they would be assigned to one of those income groups. Participants were randomly assigned to one of the two experimental conditions (high inequality vs. low inequality). However, regardless of which experimental condition they were assigned to, all participants learned that they were assigned to the middle-income group, which earned 7,000 Bimboolean coins (BC). In the high-inequality condition (*n* = 85), the wealthiest group was presented as very wealthy (earning 13,500 BC per month) and the poorest group as very poor (500 BC per month). In the low-inequality condition (*n* = 85), the income differences between the three income groups of Bimboola were less pronounced (i.e., the wealthiest group earned 8,000 BC per month and the poorest group earned 6,000 BC per month). Following the procedure, and to improve its realism, we asked participants to imagine that they lived in Bimboola, and to get their life started, we invited them to pursue the essentials in life, such as a house, mode of transport, and vacation. Participants could choose only items that their income group (middle income) could afford, and the houses, cars, and vacations from which they could choose were identical in the low- and high-inequality conditions. However, the items that the wealthiest and the poorest groups in Bimboola could afford differed across the conditions. Whereas the houses, cars, and vacations open to the wealthiest group in Bimboola were only slightly more luxurious than those of the middle group in the low-inequality condition, the items that the wealthiest group could purchase in the high-inequality condition were much more luxurious and extravagant (large mansions, top-of-the-line sports cars, and expensive vacations). Likewise, whereas the items that people from the poorest group could purchase in the low-inequality condition were only slightly less luxurious than those of the middle group, the items they could afford in the high-inequality condition were of much poorer quality, including substandard houses and old and damaged motorcycles; they did not have the means to go on vacation. All items were adapted to fit the Spanish context (see Sánchez-Rodríguez, Willis, & Rodríguez-Bailón, 2019).

Manipulation Checks. We included two manipulation checks to test whether our experimental manipulation of economic inequality was successful. Participants were asked to answer the questions "To what extent is Bimboola economically unequal?" (1 = *Not unequal at all*, 9 = *Very unequal*) and "To what extent is Bimboola economically equal?" (1 = *Not equal at all*, 9 = *Very equal*). The latter item was reverse scored, and the two items were averaged ($r = .82$, $p < .001$). Next, participants also answered a manipulation check about which income group they were assigned to (1 = *Group 1* [the highest income], 2 = *Group 2* [middle income], 3 = *Group 3* [the lowest income]) and responded to the question "Considering socioeconomic status as a system of social stratification based on access to resources such as wealth, education and prestige, what would you say is your socioeconomic status in Bimboola society?" (1 = *The lowest of the society*, 9 = *The highest of the society*).

Agency and Communion of the Typical Man. We asked participants to indicate how they would describe the typical man in the described society. To measure agency and communion, we used Diekman and Eagly's (2000) eight agentic traits of personality (e.g., "competitive" and "daring"; $\alpha = .74$) and eight communal traits of personality (e.g., "affectionate" and "sympathetic"; $\alpha = .94$). The trait items were translated into Spanish by a native speaker and then back-translated into English by someone who was blind to the original content (to see personality traits in English and Spanish, please see Supplementary Materials [SM5.1]). Participants had to indicate to what extent they considered each trait item presented applied to the typical man of that society on a 7-point scale (1 = *Not at all*, 7 = *Very much*).

Agency and Communion of the Typical Woman. We used the same procedure for women. Thus, we used the eight agentic traits (α = .73) and the eight communal traits (α = .92).

Socioeconomic Status of Men and Women. To be sure that the participants did not think about extreme social groups when evaluating the typical man and typical woman of Bimboola, we asked them the following question about the target (woman target within parentheses): "When you answered about the typical man (woman) of Bimboola, which group did you consider him (her) to belong to?" (1 = *Group 1* [the highest income], 2 = *Group 2* [middle income], 3 = *Group 3* [the lowest income]). Most participants considered the typical man (75.9%) and woman (88.2%) to be middle class.

Sociodemographic and Socioeconomic Variables. Afterwards, participants were informed that the simulation in the Bimboola society had ended. They were asked to return to reality and answer several sociodemographic questions. We measured political orientation on a 10-point scale, where 1 indicated "left wing" and 10 indicated "right wing" (*M* = 4.61, *SD* = 2.55). Subjective SES was also measured with the MacArthur Scale of Subjective Social Status (Adler et al., 2000; *M* = 5.94, *SD* = 1.32). Participants indicated their native language, family income level (1 = *Below €500*, 7 = *Above €5,000*; *M* = 3.86, *SD* = 1.96), job status, and educational attainment (1 = *Less than a high school degree*, 8 = *Doctoral degree*; *M* = 5.10, *SD* = 0.69). Following prior research (Kraus et al., 2009), we calculated objective SES as the summary of the standardized scores for participants' family income and educational attainment.[5]

Results

Manipulation Check of Economic Inequality

We conducted a Student's *t*-test (between-subjects) analysis with two levels (high inequality vs. low inequality), with the average of the manipulation checks as the dependent variable. The outcomes suggested that the experimental manipulation of economic inequality was successful: Participants assigned to the high-inequality condition perceived to a greater extent that the society was economically unequal (*M* =

[5] Correlations between the variables of each study are available in the Supplementary Materials.

7.73, SD = 1.41) than those assigned to the low-inequality condition (M = 5.08, SD = 1.73), t(168) = 10.92, p < .001, η_p^2 = .42.

Attention Check of Assigned Group

All participants who responded to the attention check answered it correctly. There was only one missing value. To follow the preregistration, we did not exclude that participant, so we will present the results for all participants.

Preregistered Analyses

To test our main hypotheses, we preregistered to run two repeated-measures ANOVAs, in which we included economic inequality (high inequality vs. low inequality) as the between-participants factor, content traits (agentic vs. communal) as the within-participants variable, and perception of the (a) typical man and (b) typical woman as the dependent variable. To interpret the meaning of the interaction, we ran pairwise comparisons with Bonferroni adjustment within the repeated-measures ANOVA.[6]

Agency and Communion of the Typical Man. Results revealed a significant interaction of Economic inequality × Content, Wilks's λ = .91, F(1, 168) = 15.58, p < .001, η_p^2 = .08. Concretely, participants assigned to the high-inequality condition evaluated the typical man as more agentic than communal, M_D = 0.75, 95% CI [0.45, 1.04], Wilks's λ = .87, F(1, 168) = 25.10, p < .001, η_p^2 = .13. In the low-inequality condition, the difference between agentic and communal ascriptions to the typical man was not significant, M_D = -0.09, 95% CI [-0.38, 0.21], Wilks's λ = .99, F(1, 168) = 0.33, p = .568, η_p^2 = .01. These results support H1 (see Table 5.1 for descriptive statistics).

We also observed a main effect of the content, F(1, 168) = 9.85, p = .002, η_p^2 = .05, in the sense that people generally ascribed more agentic (M = 4.51, SD = 0.85) than communal traits (M = 4.18, SD = 1.11) to the typical man.

Agency and Communion of the Typical Woman. As expected, we observed a significant interaction effect of Economic inequality × Content, Wilks's λ = .94, F(1, 167) = 10.89, p = .001, η_p^2 = .06. When we interpreted the interaction, we found that in the low-inequality condition, participants evaluated the typical woman as more communal than agentic, M_D = 0.77, 95% CI [-1.00, -0.53], Wilks's λ = .80, F(1, 167) = 45.53, p <

[6] Non-preregistered repeated-measures ANCOVAs are available in the Supplementary Materials [SM5.2]. We included gender, age, political orientation, subjective socioeconomic status (SES), objective SES, and the counterbalanced order of presentation of the male and female target evaluation as covariates. The results of the ANCOVAs suggest no changes in the results.

.001, η_p^2 = .20. However, participants assigned to the high-inequality condition evaluated the typical woman as slightly more communal than agentic, but that difference was not significant, M_D = 0.22, 95% CI [-0.01, 0.45], Wilks's λ = .98, $F(1, 167) = 3.53$, $p = .062$, η_p^2 = .02. Overall, these findings support H2.

We also observed a main effect of the content, Wilks's λ = .82, $F(1, 167)$ =35.40, $p < .001$, η_p^2 = .17, in the sense that participants evaluated, in general, the woman in a more communal (M = 4.79, SD = 0.98) than agentic way (M = 4.30, SD = 0.81). For descriptive statistics, see Table 5.1.

Table 5.1.

Descriptive Statistics of the Economic Inequality × Content Interaction on the Typical Man and Woman's Ascriptions in Study 1

	High EI				Low EI			
	AC		CC		AC		CC	
	M (*SD*)	95% CI	*M* (*SD*)	95% CI	*M* (*SD*)	95% CI	*M* (*SD*)	95% CI
Man ascriptions	4.58 (0.83)	[4.40, 4.76]	3.83 (1.05)	[3.61, 4.06]	4.44 (0.87)	[4.26, 4.63]	4.53 (1.07)	[4.30, 4.76]
Woman ascriptions	4.29 (0.09)	[4.11, 4.46]	4.51 (0.10)	[4.30, 4.71]	4.31 (0.09)	[4.14, 4.49]	5.08 (0.10)	[4.87, 5.28]

Note. EI = Economic inequality; AC = Agentic content; CC = Communal content.

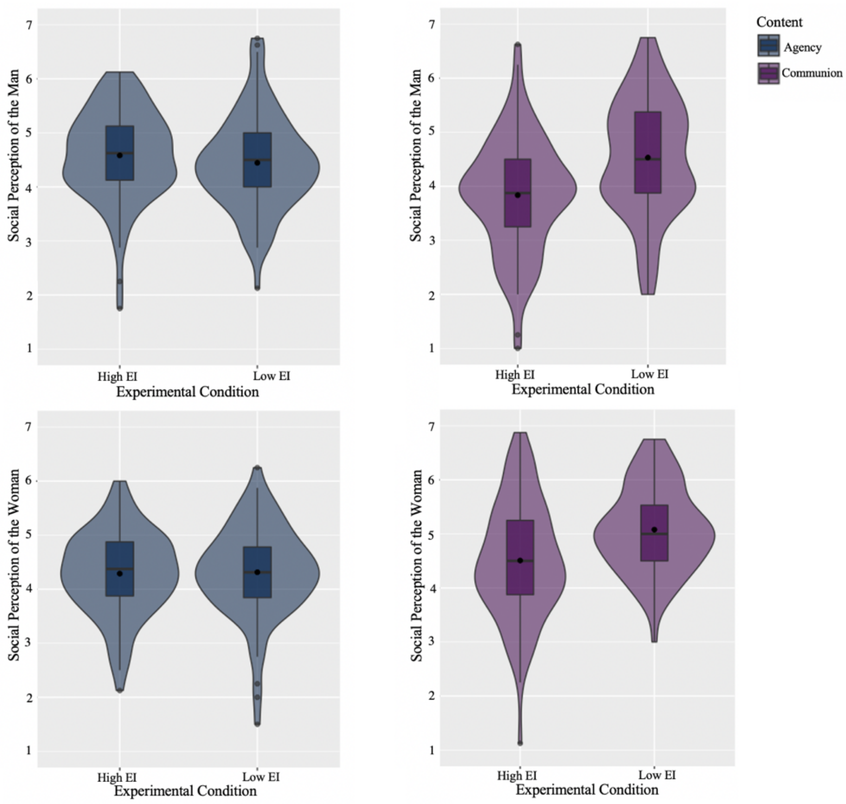
Non-Preregistered Analysis: Multivariate Analysis of Covariance for Agency and Communion Dimensions

To test the robustness of the effect of economic inequality on agentic and communal dimensions and to see which dimension was driving the differences in ascriptions, we carried out a multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA). This analysis enabled us to learn whether the differences occurred because inequality increases perceived agency or decreases perceived communion, or both.

We included economic inequality as the between-subjects variable and (a) agency and (b) communion of the male target and (c) agency and (d) communion of the female target as the dependent variables. We included gender, age, political orientation, subjective SES, objective SES, and the counterbalanced order of presentation of the male and female target evaluation as covariates. Even controlling for the covariates, we observed a multivariate effect of economic inequality, Wilks's λ = .88, F(4, 155) = 5.32, p < .001, η_p^2 =.12. In particular, the communion ascribed to males (F[1, 158] = 16.01, p < .001, η_p^2 =.10) and females (F[1, 158] = 11.11, p = .001, η_p^2 =.07) was influenced by economic inequality (see Figure 1). We observed that in the high economic inequality condition, men's and women's communion were significantly lower than in the low economic inequality condition. We did not observe significant differences (p > .05) for agency ascribed to males and females between the high- and low-inequality conditions (see Table 5.S1 and Table 5.S2 in the Supplementary Materials for descriptive statistics and correlations between the variables [in SM5.3 and SM5.4], respectively]).

Figure 5.1.

Visualization of the Data Distribution for the Social Perception of Each Target (Man vs. Woman) by Content (Agency vs. Communion) Across the Two Experimental Conditions (High Economic Inequality [n = 85] vs. Low Economic Inequality [n = 85]) in Study 1



Note. The figure shows the minimum, first quartile, mean, median, third quartile, maximum, density of the data at different values, and outliers in each experimental condition by content. EI = Economic inequality experimental condition.

Discussion

The results of Study 1 provided evidence for the effect of perceived economic inequality in a society on the different use of the Big Two when perceiving a man and a woman. More precisely, and supporting our hypotheses, we observed that when people perceived high economic inequality, the difference in agentic–communal ascriptions to a man became greater (H1), and it became smaller—and not significant—when evaluating a woman (H2).

Moreover, follow-up analyses showed that this effect was driven mainly by the effects of inequality on perceived communion. We found that when people perceived high economic inequality, it was harder for them to see trust, kindness, and warmth (i.e., communality) in others; thus, the ascribed communion decreased when people also perceived high economic inequality. The ascription of agency to men and women was hardly influenced by the fact that the environment was equal or unequal. All this might mean that the agency ascribed to males is even greater than communality under high economically unequal settings, and that the communality versus agency ascribed to females is not as great under high economic inequality as under low economically unequal conditions.

In short, we found that economic inequality increased the relative importance of agency over communion in men's stereotypes and decreased the prevalence of communion over agency in women's stereotypes. This was mainly due to the decrease of perceived communion in both men and women. Hence, it could be worthwhile to consider that economic inequality may foster particular agentic dynamics (e.g., competition; Sommet et al., 2019) that at the same time imply a lack of communion (Chan et al., 2019; Wojciszke & Abele, 2019), which leads to the decrease of communion itself.

However, it could be argued that these results might have occurred because we did our research in Spain, one of the countries in which gender roles are less established. In fact, Spain is a feminine-oriented culture, a culture in which there is less gender role differentiation (Hofstede, 2011; Hofstede Insights, 2020). Consequently, gender stereotypes could be less cognitively accessible, and inequality could influence the perception of both men and women in a similar way (i.e., by decreasing communion) because there is less gender role differentiation. To rule out the possibility that our results were due to gender role differentiation being less cognitively accessible for our participants, in Study 2, we aimed to replicate our results using a sample from a more masculine country, Mexico, according to Hofstede's cultural dimensions (Hofstede Insights, 2020).

Study 2

Culture and socioeconomic conditions are main aspects of countries worldwide. Indeed, cultural and socioeconomic environments affect people's psychology (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Triandis, 1994; Üskül & Oishi, 2018, 2020). According to Hofstede's (1998) cultural dimensions, Mexico has a more masculine culture than Spain (Hofstede Insights, 2020). Consequently, in Mexican society, gender roles are more established in the population than in the Spanish culture; therefore, they are more cognitively accessible. Moreover, Mexico is also economically more unequal than Spain (World Bank, 2020). In Study 2, we therefore wanted to replicate results of Study 1 in a different cultural context: a more masculine and more unequal society than Spain, namely, Mexico.

Method

Participants and Procedure

We conducted an a priori power analysis with G*Power (Faul et al., 2009) with the same criteria as in Study 1. Thus, to detect an effect size of $f = .20$, the minimum desirable sample size was 72 participants. We were able to collect 222 initial responses[7] from students at a university in the northeast of Mexico. Following the preregistration, we excluded participants who did not indicate Spanish as their native language and did not indicate being 18 years or older. After these exclusions, a total of 215 participants older than 18 years (157 women, 58 men; $M_{age} = 21.51$, $SD = 5.23$) took part in the study.

We recruited participants from a psychology class at a Mexican university. As in Study 1, a researcher from our team asked students to participate in the study via an online survey provided with a survey link and QR code. All participants gave their consent for participation through informed consent at the beginning of the survey, and they read information about their voluntary participation, as well as the anonymity and confidentiality of their answers.

[7] The reason we collected more participants than the maximum number after exclusions is that we considered that the entire recruited sample would meet all the requirements to participate. There were also cases with no initial responses, which we excluded.

Measures

All the following measures were presented in the online survey created in Qualtrics.[8] We counterbalanced the order of presentation of the typical man and woman evaluation.

Experimental Manipulation of Economic Inequality. We used the same experimental manipulation of economic inequality as in Study 1. Although we used the Bimboola paradigm (Sánchez-Rodríguez, Willis, & Rodríguez-Bailón, 2019), we used house, car, and vacation items adapted to the Mexican context. Participants were randomly assigned to the high-inequality (n = 111) or low-inequality (n = 104) experimental condition. We used the same two manipulation checks as in Study 1 (r = .77, p < .001).

Agency and Communion of the Typical Man and the Typical Woman. As in Study 1, participants answered to what extent they considered each of Diekman and Eagly's (2000) agentic and communal trait items—translated into Spanish—presented applied to the typical man (α_{agency} = .80; $\alpha_{communion}$ = .89) and woman (α_{agency} = .77; $\alpha_{communion}$ = .92) of that society on a 7-point scale (1 = *Not at all*, 7 = *Very much*).

Socioeconomic Status of Men and Women. Similar to Study 1, after responding to the dependent variables, participants answered the following question about the target (woman target within parentheses): "When you answered about the typical man (woman) of Bimboola, which group did you consider him (her) to belong to?" (1 = *Group 1* [the highest income; 11.6%], 2 = *Group 2* [middle income; 79.1%], 3 = *Group 3* [the lowest income; 9.3%]). Generally, participants considered the typical man (66.5%) and woman (79.1%) to be middle class.

Sociodemographic and Socioeconomic Variables. Finally, participants responded to the same sociodemographic measures as in Study 1: political orientation (M = 6.14, SD = 2.04), subjective SES (M = 7.14, SD = 1.53), native language, family income level (M = 5.08, SD = 0.89), job status, and educational attainment (M = 5.07, SD = 0.40). We also calculated objective SES (Kraus et al., 2009).

[8] Other measures were collected with an exploratory purpose. These measures and analyses are available in the Supplementary Materials (SM5.5).

Results

Manipulation Check of Economic Inequality

We conducted a Student's *t*-test (between-subjects) analysis with two levels (high inequality vs. low inequality), with the average of the manipulation checks as the dependent variable. We observed that the experimental manipulation was successful, as participants assigned to the high-inequality condition perceived to a greater extent that the society was economically unequal (M = 7.49, SD = 1.45) than participants in the low-inequality condition (M = 5.00, SD = 1.41), $t(213) = 12.71$, $p < .001$, η_p^2.43.

Attention Check of Assigned Group. Almost all participants (99.5%) who answered the question about which income group they were assigned to indicated being assigned to the middle-income group, except one participant, who indicated being assigned to the high-income group. To avoid deviation from the preregistered exclusion criteria, we continued our analysis including that participant.

Preregistered Analysis

To test our main hypotheses, we preregistered and followed the same analysis strategy used in Study 1[9].

Agency and Communion of the Typical Man. Similar to Study 1, results revealed a significant interaction effect of Economic inequality × Content, Wilks's λ = .93, $F(1, 213) = 16.65$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .07$. Participants assigned to the high-inequality condition evaluated the typical man of the society as more agentic than communal, M_D = 0.77, 95% CI [0.55, 1.00], Wilks's λ = .82, $F(1, 213) = 46.87$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .18$. In the low-inequality condition, the difference between agentic and communal ascriptions to the typical man was not significant, M_D = 0.11, 95% CI [-0.12, 0.34], Wilks's λ = .99, $F(1, 213) = 0.90$, $p = .345$, $\eta_p^2 = .01$. All these findings support H1. See Table 5.2 for descriptive statistics.

We also observed a main effect of the content, Wilks's λ = .88, $F(1, 213) = 29.61$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .12$, in the sense that people ascribed more agentic (M = 4.72, SD = 0.87) than communal traits (M = 4.27, SD = 0.95) to the typical man.

Agency and Communion of the Typical Woman. Replicating Study 1, we found an interaction effect of Economic inequality × Content, Wilks's λ = .97, $F(1, 213) = 7.46$,

[9] As in Study 1, non-preregistered repeated-measures ANCOVAs are available in the Supplementary Materials [SM5.6]. The results of the ANCOVAs suggest no changes in the results.

p = .007, η_p^2 = .03. Interpreting this interaction, we observed that participants assigned to the high-inequality condition evaluated the typical woman in the society as more communal than agentic, M_D = 0.46, 95% CI [0.24, 0.68], Wilks's λ = .92, F(1, 213) = 17.49, p < .001, η_p^2 = .08. However, this difference was even bigger in the low-inequality condition, M_D = 0.89, 95% CI [0.67, 1.12], Wilks's λ = .78, F(1, 213) = 61.61, p < .001, η_p^2 = .22, supporting H2. See Table 5.2 for descriptive statistics.

As in Study 1, we observed a main effect of the content, Wilks's λ = .74, F(1, 213) = 73.08, p < .001, η_p^2 = .25; that is, participants generally ascribed more communal (M = 5.04, SD = 0.91) than agentic traits to the typical woman (M = 4.37, SD = 0.86).

Table 5.2.

Descriptive Statistics of the Economic Inequality × Content Interaction on the Typical Man and Woman's Ascriptions in Study 2

	High EI				Low EI			
	AC		CC		AC		CC	
	M (*SD*)	95% CI	*M* (*SD*)	95% CI	*M* (*SD*)	95% CI	*M* (*SD*)	95% CI
Man ascriptions	4.75 (0.08)	[4.59, 4.92]	3.98 (0.85)	[3.81, 4.15]	4.69 (0.09)	[4.52, 4.85]	4.58 (0.09)	[4.40, 4.75]
Woman ascriptions	4.38 (0.08)	[4.22, 4.54]	4.84 (0.09)	[4.66, 5.03]	4.35 (0.08)	[4.18, 4.52]	5.24 (0.10)	[5.05, 5.43]

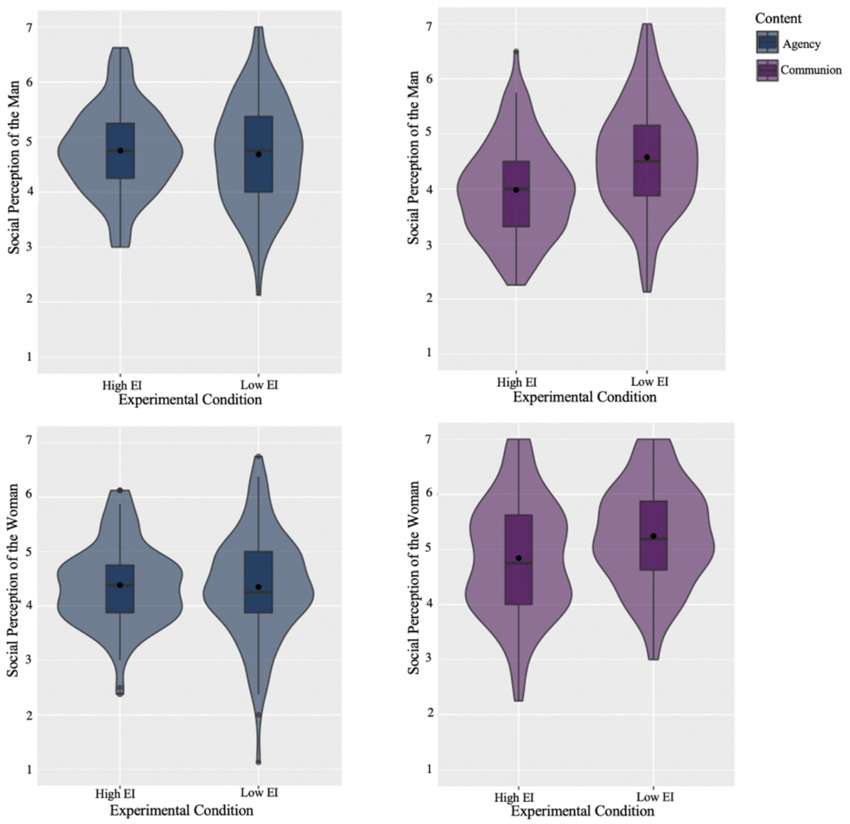
Note. EI = Economic inequality; AC = Agentic content; CC = Communal content.

Non-Preregistered Analysis: Multivariate Analysis of Covariance for Agency and Communion Dimensions

We ran a similar MANCOVA as in Study 1. We found a multivariate effect of economic inequality, Wilks's λ = .89, F(4, 203) = 6.50, p < .001, η_p^2 =.11, even when controlling for the covariates. Economic inequality influenced the communion ascribed to males (F[1, 206] = 20.12, p < .001, η_p^2 =.09) and females (F[1, 206] = 6.93, p = .009, η_p^2 =.03), as can be seen in Figure 5.2. Replicating the findings of Study 1, in the high economic inequality condition, men's and women's communion was significantly lower than in the low economic inequality condition. We did not observe significant differences (p > .05) for agency ascribed to males and females between the high- and low-inequality conditions. See Table 5.S3 and Table 5.S4 in the Supplementary Materials for descriptive statistics and correlations (in SM5.7 and SM5.8, respectively).

Figure 5.2.

Visualization of the Data Distribution for the Social Perception of Each Target (Man vs. Woman) by Content (Agency vs. Communion) Across the Two Experimental Conditions (High Economic Inequality [n = 111] vs. Low Economic Inequality [n = 105]) in Study 2



Note. The figure shows the minimum, first quartile, mean, median, third quartile, maximum, density of the data at different values, and outliers in each experimental condition by content. EI = Economic inequality experimental condition.

Discussion

These findings corroborate the effect of economic inequality on agentic and communal ascriptions to a man and a woman in a different cultural and socioeconomic context from that of Spain. Consistent with Study 1, we found that the typical man in the society was perceived as more agentic than communal, especially in the high versus low economic inequality condition, whereas the typical woman was perceived as more communal than agentic, but this difference was smaller under the high economic inequality condition. In other words, we observed again that when economic inequality is high, the difference in agentic–communal ascriptions to a man becomes greater (H1), and it becomes smaller in a woman's evaluation (H2). Importantly, in Study 2, we replicated the results of Study 1, showing that these effects might be driven by the effects of economic inequality on perceived communion.

General Discussion

Research on the psychosocial impact of economic inequality has increased considerably in recent years. More precisely, recent studies have evidenced the effect of perceived economic inequality on groups' stereotypes (e.g., Connor et al., 2021; Moreno-Bella et al., 2019). To address the gap regarding the possible effect of subjective economic inequality on gender stereotypes, we tested across two experiments whether perceived economic inequality would affect men's and women's agentic and communal trait attributions.

In both experiments, using samples from two different cultures, we evidenced that perceiving a society as very economically unequal leads to accentuating the difference between agentic and communal ascriptions to men. That is, male citizens were perceived as more agentic than communal when the economic gap in the society was large versus small. According to previous findings, high social status and power entail competence (Fiske et al., 2016). Indeed, members of groups with high social status, such as men (Eagly & Steffen, 1984; Ridgeway & Bourg, 2004; Rucker et al., 2018), are considered more competent than warm (Fiske et al., 2002, 2016; Glick et al., 2000). Going beyond that, and consistent with research on perceived economic inequality, our results showed that perceiving high economic inequality in a society amplifies the difference in agency–communion attributions to high social status groups (Moreno-Bella et al., 2019).

By contrast, our studies showed that women citizens were perceived as more communal than agentic when people perceived the economic gap in the society to be small versus large. In other words, when people perceived that the society was very economically unequal, the difference in agency–communion attributions to women citizens decreased; however, when they perceived that economic differences in the society were not as excessive (i.e., low economic inequality condition), they attributed significantly more communal than agentic traits to the woman citizen. These results evidence that contextual socioeconomic features may shape traditional women stereotypes, decreasing the ambivalence of their traditional stereotype. This might be explained by the fact that women's stereotypes are generally more dynamic and fluid than men's stereotypes given that has been a greater change in the social roles of women than that of men (Diekman & Eagly, 2000; Eagly et al., 2019; Haines et al., 2016; López-Zafra & García-Retamero, 2021; Moya & Moya-Garófano, 2021). In this sense, it is worth mentioning that we observed this finding even in a masculine culture (i.e., Mexico), where the social role differentiation between genders is considerably more salient and well established than in a more feminine-oriented culture, such as Spain (Hofstede, 1980, 2011; Hosftede Insights, 2020).

Economic inequality, as a macro-economic variable (i.e., Gini index), has not been shown to be related to cultural masculinity and femininity (Malinoski, 2012), that is, to the differentiation between gender roles at the macro level. However, Durante et al. (2013, 2017) revealed that objective economic inequality (i.e., Gini index) increased the ambivalence of the stereotypes, so groups were perceived in a more polarized way within their stereotype. At first glance, our results might appear to contradict the referred findings, as we found a casual effect of perceived economic inequality on gender stereotypes, and beyond that, we obtained a pattern contrary to the polarization concerning women's stereotype when economic inequality was perceived as high. However, Durante et al. (2013) focused on studying the ambivalence of stereotypes of several societal groups as a whole and its relationship with actual economic inequality. Unlike these authors, we particularly focused on the effect of economic inequality on, specifically, descriptive gender stereotypes. Additionally, to further understand these possible contradictory results, it should be taken into account that economic inequality of an objective or subjective nature may have different effects. In the abovementioned findings, Durante et al. focused on objective economic inequality measured by an indicator based on the dispersion of income across the whole income distribution (Census Bureau, 2016). Instead, in our research, we focused on examining an individual-level variable, namely, perceived (or subjective) economic inequality. The distinction between objective and subjective perceptions of economic inequality is relevant for insight into individuals and societal outcomes (Hauser & Norton, 2017). Importantly, perceived economic inequality is a complex process in people's minds, and it is a better predictor of people's behaviour than objective economic inequality (for a review, see Jachimowicz et al., 2020; Phillips et al., 2020).

Our results indicated that when high economic inequality is perceived, both men and women are considered less communal relative to perceived low levels of economic inequality. Thus, it might be considered that economic inequality underestimates the relevance of communality (i.e., being connected with others), traditionally related to women, which might affect them in some respects (e.g., academic and job opportunities). However, also, it may harm all individuals who are mainly communal regardless of their sex. Additionally, these results might have important implications for gender equality. Given that gender stereotypes influence behaviours towards men and women (Eagly & Heilman, 2016; Eagly & Wood, 2016; Ellemers, 2018), future studies could address this issue by examining whether gender stereotypes in economically unequal settings—where the scarcity of resources is salient—predict particular attitudes towards gender equality, such as support for women quotas, and willingness to act collectively for gender equality.

Our results align with the aforementioned evidence about the decrease of communion-oriented behaviours (e.g., Elgar & Aitken, 2011; Graafland & Lous, 2019; Nishi et al., 2015; Oishi et al., 2011; Paskov & Dewilde, 2012; Uslaner & Brown, 2005) and communion-oriented norms (Sánchez-Rodríguez, Willis, et al., 2019) when inequality is high (vs. low). We did not observe a significant increase of agency in the high economic inequality condition, but communion was the driver of the increase in agency and communion differences in men's stereotypes and of the smaller difference between agency and communion in women's stereotypes. Based on the dual perspective model (Abele & Wojciszke, 2014), which suggests that communion is a more relevant dimension than agency in the observer perspective, it is reasonable to consider that communion could be the main driver of such content differences in others' evaluations.

The two studies presented in this research have certain limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the samples examined were mainly composed of educated participants, that is, university students and university library users. Further research could benefit from replicating the main results with general population samples, given that university students might be more aware of socioeconomic-related issues and gender stereotypes than those in other sectors of society. Therefore, there is a possibility that the effect of perceived economic inequality on gender stereotypes is more noticeable with general populations who have lower awareness of economic and gender inequality issues (Moya et al., 2000). Second, the method researchers use to manipulate economic inequality influences the outcomes (Jachimowicz et al., 2020). We used the Bimboola paradigm to manipulate economic inequality (Sánchez-Rodríguez, Willis, & Rodríguez-Bailón, 2019). This paradigm has shown to work well in the field of perceived economic inequality and its consequences (e.g., Blake & Brooks, 2019; Sánchez-Rodríguez, Jetten, et al., 2019; Sánchez-Rodríguez, Willis, et al., 2019; Sprong et al., 2019). However, this paradigm has the limitation of being based on a fictitious society. Although this allows one to see how participants perceive the social climate in a context that is alien to them and to the norms already established in their society, we believe that it would be worthwhile to use different methods to highlight the economic inequality in real environments. Lastly, although our research supports previous literature suggesting that economic inequality decreases communality-oriented social norms, we consider it appropriate to explore the reverse pattern to illuminate whether perceived economic inequality is the cause in such a relationship or, conversely, a consequence of the normative social climate, working as a vicious circle of the normative climate of economic inequality.

Overall, across two studies with different socioeconomic and cultural contexts, we found that when people perceived the social context to have high economic inequality (versus relatively low economic inequality), the difference in agentic–communal content in their social evaluations of men increased, whereas it decreased in the case of women's social evaluations by a reduction of communality in person perception. This suggests that perceived economic differences between people makes it harder to see good intentions and kindness in others. In sum, extending the evidence of the psychosocial consequences of perceived economic inequality, we contribute to this literature by showing that perceiving high economic inequality may also shape traditional gender stereotypes.

Chapter 6

Wage (In)equality Matters: Economic Inequality as Facilitator of Agency in Others' and Self-Ascriptions

Wage (In)equality Matters: Economic Inequality as Facilitator of Agency in Others' and Self-Ascriptions

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Abstract

Economic inequality has consequences at the social-psychological level, such as in the way people make inferences about their environment and other people. In the present three preregistered studies, we manipulated economic inequality in an organizational setting (higher vs. lower inequality vs. equality) and measured ascriptions of agentic versus communal traits to employees and the self. Participants in the Pilot Study (N = 195) attributed more agency than communion to a middle-status employee and themselves under circumstances of high economic inequality, and more communion than agency when economic equality was salient. In Study 1 (N = 187) and Study 2 (N = 198) this finding was replicated, and besides, exploratory analyses revealed that this inequality-agency association was explained by perceptions of competitive employee relationships. Finally, participants attributed agency more strongly than communion to a high-status employee in both inequality conditions. We conclude that agency and communion ascriptions may be functional and thus inform about the expectations people have on the nature of social relationships in the face of economic inequality.

Keywords: economic inequality, equality, agency and communion, social perception, social status

Introduction

The unequal distribution of income and resources has increased in the majority of developed societies over the past four decades (Alvaredo et al., 2018; OECD, 2015). Although several factors play a role for this growing economic inequality, one is crucial: the distribution of resources to employees in organizations (Bapuji, 2015; Piketty & Saez, 2003). Indeed, the difference in income between a CEO and a typical medium rank employee in the United States is six times higher than in the 1980's (Institute for Policies Studies, 2021). As highlighted by recent research, the perception of economic inequality impacts social psychological processes (García-Castro et al., 2020; García-Sánchez, Osborne, et al., 2019). In the present work, we make people aware of economic inequality and investigate how it affects individuals' perceptions of the people who work in the organization. More precisely, we aimed to extend the findings on the psychosocial consequences of perceived economic (in)equality by examining its effects on how people perceive others—and the self—along two key trait dimensions: agency, typically associated with masculine stereotypes, high status, and power, and communion, typically associated with feminine stereotypes, low status, and power (Abele & Wojciszke, 2014; Carrier et al., 2014).

In three preregistered experiments, we manipulated the size of (in)equality in an organizational context and measured whether it affected agency and communion trait-ascriptions to social groups of distinct statuses (employees vs. leaders) and the self. In the Pilot Study, we investigated the evaluation of an average employee in the middle-ranks of an organization as well as self-evaluations. Moreover, consistent evidence has shown that social groups of different status differ in the content of their evaluations (Fiske et al., 2002; Sainz et al., 2019), thus we further investigated ascriptions to a leader (i.e., an employee at the highest organizational ranks) in Studies 1 and 2.

Psychosocial Effects of Economic (In)equality

Research on the psychosocial consequences of economic inequality has been growing in recent years. Measured at the country level, higher levels of economic inequality are associated with social problems such as crime (Wilkinson & Pickett, 2009; see also Snowdon, 2010), greater self-enhancement (Loughnan et al., 2011), perceived competitiveness, need for achievement (Sommet et al., 2019), and lower social cohesion (Van de Werfhorst & Salverda, 2012). Regarding ascriptions, economic inequality increases the perceived ambivalence of high- and low-SES individuals: High-SES people are assessed as more competent than low-SES people especially in countries with higher inequality (Durante et al., 2013, 2017).

Displaying certain traits may be a motivated response to a given context. Thus, people may adapt their traits flexibly depending on the demands of a specific situation to succeed. Whether a context is more or less hierarchically organized can influence which self-concepts people come to internalize and how they present themselves to others (Wilkinson & Pickett, 2017). In this way, individuals' self-portrayals may change depending on what appearance or behavior they consider to be crucial in a given setting (Oishi, 2014). Specifically, competition and dominance are perceived appropriate social strategies in a more unequal context, whereas reciprocity and cooperation are seen as more suitable social strategies in more equal contexts (Wilkinson & Pickett, 2017).

Following these observations, experimental studies have shown that perceived economic inequality has causal effects on psychosocial processes. Sánchez-Rodríguez and colleagues (2019) showed that when people perceived contexts with higher economic inequality, they described themselves as using an independent self-construal; when economic inequality was lower, an interdependent self-construal was more prominent. Likewise, when inequality is high (vs. low) people perceived a more competitive normative climate (Sánchez-Rodríguez, Willis, Jetten, & Rodríguez-Bailón, 2019), and they also tended to ascribe more masculine (vs. feminine) traits to a typical member and to a high-SES member of the unequal society (Moreno-Bella et al., 2019). Recently, Connor et al. (2021) found that being exposed to inequality makes people ascribe more competence traits to high-income individuals.

Of interest, the absence of inequality—that is, economic equality—and its correlates and consequences have not been the focus of investigations so far. In sociological and correlational studies, different degrees of inequality are measured by indicators of economic inequality (e.g., Gini coefficient). As today there are no totally equal societies (e.g., in which no income gaps exist) a context of complete equality has not been studied. Hence, an alternative to obtain a context of equality, in which people may immerse and interact, are laboratory settings. For instance, Nishi et al. (2015) manipulated equality and inequality through a network public goods game. Their findings suggested that people exposed to an economically equal setting tended to be more cooperative than those who experienced inequality.

Despite the relevance of pay dispersion in organizational settings for the rise of economic disparities at a societal level (Amis et al., 2018; Atkinson, 2015), it has received little attention outside of organizational psychology (Bapuji, 2015; Ronay et al., 2018). An organization in which earnings and social dynamics play a major role could be a relevant context to study the consequences of perceived economic inequality (Stainback et al., 2010). The decline of earnings among low- and middle-wage workers and, at the same time, the increase of high-wage earning gains are clear symptoms of economic inequality, may contribute to the growth of inequality in society (Mouw & Kalleberg, 2010; Saez, 2008). That is, organizations may influence economic inequality at the societal level by implementing unequal wages and rewards (Bapuji et al., 2020). These economic differences at workplaces increases and reinforces economic inequality between citizens over time because it implies an initial advantage for some people and a disadvantage for others (van Dijk et al., 2020). Wage inequalities within organizational hierarchies are a reality for most members of organizations and thus likely impact people's psychosocial processes and behaviors (Bapuji, 2015). Indeed, wage inequality was shown to lead to status seeking (Bell & Freeman, 2001) and feelings of unfairness, as well as lower cooperation and job satisfaction in employees (Pfeffer & Langton, 1993).

Although it might seem that economic inequality in an organization refers to meritocratic principles assuming that the economic difference between groups of individuals can be justified by their distinct contributions and skills, it is worth mentioning that economic inequality refers also to assigning excessive economic value to certain skills and very little to others. These socially constructed value hierarchies may legitimize social inequalities (van Dijk et al., 2020). Overall, this shows that people may experience and perceived economic inequality in the context of organizations (Bapuji, 2015). Hence, studying the effects of the size of earning differences between employees of different ranks on the ascriptions of socially meaningful traits to different groups of employees may reveal more about people's attitudes, behaviors, and intergroup relations in organizations. To our knowledge, no published research has examined these relationships yet.

Overall, research suggests that perceived economic inequality promotes competitive behaviors and self and other descriptions with traits that reflect independence and masculinity-oriented traits (Moreno-Bella et al., 2019; Sánchez-Rodríguez, Willis, & Rodríguez-Bailón, 2019). Not only perceived societal economic inequality affects individuals, but perceiving economic inequality within an organization may also have similar effects (Bapuji, 2015). As a point of fact, workplaces often replicate societies' hierarchical structures and highly unequal resource distribution. Thus, unequal pay in organizations and societal economic inequality can be expected to have similar effects on individuals' mindset and behavior (Bratanova et al., 2019). We sought to contribute to this literature by examining how unequal and equal organizational contexts influence the ascriptions of agency and communion to employees of differing status and the self.

Two Core Dimensions of Human Group Perceptions

Prior research has evidenced that two dimensions, agency and communion, underlie the content of human cognition (Abele & Wojciszke, 2019). Different labels have been used to refer to the two contents of person perception: masculinity and femininity (Bem, 1974), instrumentality and expressiveness (Parsons & Bales, 1955), or competence and warmth (Fiske et al., 2002). However, these dimension pairs can be integrated into the agency–communion framework because they share a common core (Abele & Wojciszke, 2007, 2014).

Agency refers to goal achievement and task functioning, putting forward the desire to advance one's own interests, emphasizing qualities such as assertiveness, independence, and dominance. On the contrary, communion captures the maintenance of relationships and task functioning and thus refers to the desire for affiliation with others, emphasizing qualities such as helpfulness, trustworthiness, and closeness (Abele & Wojciszke, 2014). These two concepts define and structure person perception (Abele & Bruckmüller, 2011), and self-perception (Wojciszke et al., 2011). Thus, we used them as a core measure in our research.

The Present Research

In three preregistered experiments, we generally predicted that the exposure of participants to various levels of economic inequality (i.e., high inequality, low inequality, and equality) in an organizational context would influence the agentic content of social perceptions as compared to their communal content. Agentic ascriptions would therefore be stronger than communal ones in a high-inequality context than in a low-inequality or equality context. This effect was expected for ascriptions to a typical middle-rank employee (Hypothesis 1) and to the self (Hypothesis 2). More precisely[10], in Hypothesis 1, we predicted that participants would evaluate an employee as having higher communal ratings than agentic ratings in an organization with economic equality as having little or no difference in the attribution of agency versus communion in an organization with low inequality, and more agentic traits than communal traits when economic inequality was higher.. We expected the same pattern for self-adscriptions. In the Pilot Study, we only preregistered Hypothesis 1, and in Study 1-2, we preregistered both, Hypotheses 1 and 2.

Moreover, in line with previous research that showed that high-status individuals are perceived in more masculine than feminine terms when there is economic inequality (both high and low; Moreno-Bella et al., 2019), in Study 1, we also aimed to test whether perceived economic inequality (relatively high and low inequality) leads to stronger agentic (vs. communal) ascriptions to high-rank individuals (i.e., leaders) compared to the equality condition, especially when economic inequality is high (Hypothesis 3)[11].

We also explored possible mechanisms of the inequality by examining the perceived employee cooperation and competition as explanatory variables. In Study 2, we improved the experimental manipulations and replicated findings of the previous studies. All preregistered hypotheses, data, and syntax files of the three studies are available in the Open Science Framework (https://osf.io/exus2/).

Pilot Study

In the Pilot Study, we preregistered Hypothesis 1. Hypothesis 2 was stated as an exploratory expectation. In this study, we used, for the first time, an economic inequality manipulation applied to the organizational context—thus, this was a pilot study for the manipulation.

[10] We have slightly edited the statements of our hypotheses in the three preregistrations to be consistent and facilitate the comprehension of hypotheses across all studies in the article, but we have not changed the direction of our predictions.

[11] This hypothesis was misstated in the preregistration of Study 1: "We expected the same pattern as in H1 for ascriptions to an employee in the highest managerial position." The results of previous research had already showed that high-status people are always perceived as more agentic than communal, but even more so in settings with greater inequality (Connor et al., 2021; Moreno-Bella et al., 2019). We have used the corrected hypothesis in the text.

Method

Participants and Procedure

We conducted an a priori power analysis to determine sample size. For a mixed-design within–between interaction analysis of variance (ANOVA), statistical power of .80, and an effect size of f = .25, the required sample size was a minimum of 135 participants. We used the platform Amazon Mechanical Turk to collect data. We preregistered to collect a minimum of 150 and a maximum of 200 valid observations. We recruited 203 participants (excluding six participants who asked for their responses to be deleted and two missing values). The final sample was therefore 195 (n = 69 females, M_{age} = 35.60 years, SD = 10.55). All of them were US nationals.

Materials

Manipulation of economic inequality. We randomly assigned participants to one of the three experimental conditions. To manipulate economic inequality, we presented a scenario about the roles and functions of employees in the organization. This organization had large (i.e., employees in managerial positions earned 50 times more than those in nonmanagerial positions, indicating higher inequality), small (i.e., employees in managerial positions earned 10 times more than those in nonmanagerial position did, indicating lower inequality), or no differences (i.e., all employees earned the same, indicating equality) in salary and access to resources between the employees in the highest managerial positions and those in nonmanagerial positions (see Supplementary Materials [SM6.1] for the experimental manipulations).

We included two manipulation check items. The first asked, "How much do employees with managerial positions in this organization earn in relation to other employees with nonmanagerial positions?" Three response options were reflecting the remuneration differences reported in the different manipulations (*50 times more*, *10 times more*, and *the same*). A second item measured participants' perception of the differences: "How large do you consider the economic differences to be between employees in managerial positions and nonmanagerial positions in this organization?" The item was measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*very small differences*) to 5 (*very large differences*; M = 3.53, SD = 1.35).

Ascriptions to the typical middle-rank employee. We used the 16 traits of Diekman and Eagly (2000), of which eight were agentic (e.g., "dominant", "courageous,"

$\alpha = .81$, $M = 4.57$, $SD = 1.01$) and eight were communal (e.g., "warm", "sensitive," $\alpha = .93$, $M = 4.63$, $SD = 1.20$), with a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*very much*). Participants rated how agentic and communal they expected a typical employee in the middle-ranks to be and to behave.

Self-ascriptions. We asked participants to imagine that they had applied for a middle-rank job vacancy in the presented organization, that they had gone through different stages of the staff-selection process, and that they had been invited for a job interview. We then asked them to indicate how they would describe themselves in that interview using the same traits we described above (agentic: $\alpha = .81$, $M = 4.86$, $SD = .96$; communal: $\alpha = .92$, $M = 5.15$, $SD = 1.07$).

Results

Manipulation Checks

We conducted a Chi-square test to examine whether the manipulation had the expected effect on our three-level categorical manipulation measure. A main effect of economic (in)equality was found, $\chi^2(4, N = 195) = 220.58$, $p < .001$. In the higher inequality condition 77% of the participants indicated correctly that the income difference was 50 times higher, in the lower inequality condition 93.5% of the participants indicated that the difference was 10 times, and in the equality condition 78% of the participants perceived that the employees earned the same[12].

An ANOVA with economic (in)equality as the between-groups factor revealed an effect on the perceived economic differences item, $F(2, 192) = 68.73$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .42$. Post-hoc Bonferroni corrected comparisons revealed that participants considered differences between employees in the highest-managerial positions and in nonmanagerial positions to be greater in the organizations with higher ($M = 4.22$, $SD = 0.91$; $M_D = 2.00$, 95% CI [1.59, 1.43], $p < .001$) and lower economic inequality ($M = 3.97$, $SD = 0.83$; $M_D = 1.75$, 95% CI [1.29, 2.20], $p < .001$) relative to the economic equality condition ($M = 2.22$, $SD = 1.34$). The two inequality conditions did not differ significantly ($M_D = 0.25$, 95% CI [-0.18, 0.68], $p = .497$).

[12] We explored analysing data without the participants who did not answer the manipulation checks correctly. Because main results did not change, we kept those participants in the analyses presented here to be consistent with the preregistration (in all the studies).

Analysis Plan

To test the main hypothesis, we preregistered and conducted a mixed-design ANOVA, with a 3 (Economic [in]equality: Higher inequality vs. Lower inequality vs. Equality) between-groups × 2 (Ascriptions to the target: Agentic vs. Communal) within-participants factors[13]. Table 6.S1 in the Supplementary Materials (Section SM6.3) reports descriptive statistics for the Pilot Study.

Preregistered Hypothesis Testing: Typical Middle-Rank Employee (H1)

We only found a significant interaction effect between economic inequality and ascriptions to the typical middle-rank employee, $F(2, 192) = 11.71$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .11$ (see Figure 6.1, Pilot Study [a]). Post hoc Bonferroni corrected comparisons revealed that the difference between agentic and communal ascriptions was not significant for organizations with higher economic inequality ($M_D = 0.26$, 95% CI [-0.01, 0.53]; $F[1, 192] = 3.67$, $p = .057$, $\eta_p^2 = .02$). We also found no significant differences between the two dimensions in the low inequality condition ($M_D = 0.17$, 95% CI [-0.12, 0.47]; $F[1, 192] = 1.38$, $p = .242$, $\eta_p^2 = .01$)[14].

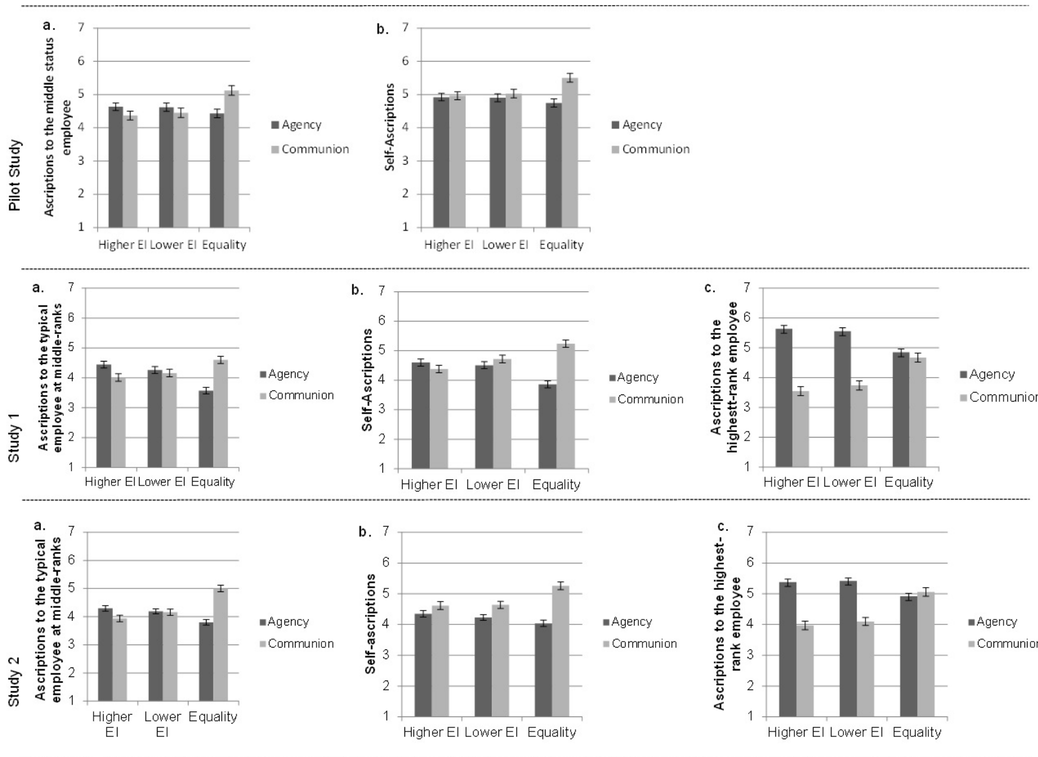
Finally, we examined participants in the equality condition who differed in agency and communion ascriptions, $F(2, 192) = 18.65$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .09$, ascribing less agency than communion to middle-rank employees ($M_D = -0.66$, 95% CI [-0.96, -0.36]). Thus, our findings only partially supported Hypothesis 1, as we did not find that agency was higher than communion in the high inequality condition, but we did find that communion was higher than agency in the equality condition and that there were no differences between the two dimensions in the low inequality condition. Moreover, the difference between agency and communion was also in the predicted direction: Participants tended to ascribe more agency than communion in the high inequality condition than in the other two.

[13] We also ran a mixed-design ANCOVA controlling for participants' gender, income level (in all studies), participant's educational attainment, and employment status (in Pilot Study; see Supplementary Materials, SM6.2). The main results did not change.

[14] We also examined the evidence in favor of this null hypothesis using a Bayesian analysis. We reported these analyses in the SM6.4 section for the ascriptions to the middle-rank employee and self-ascriptions in the lower economic inequality condition (for all studies).

Figure 6.1.

Agentic and Communal Content as a Function of the Economic (In)Equality Condition in Pilot Study, Study 1, and Study 2



Note. In *a.* ascriptions to the typical employee at middle-ranks, in *b.* self-ascriptions, and in *c.* ascriptions to the highest-status employee were measured. EI = Economic Inequality.

Exploring Self-ascriptions

A main effect of self-ascriptions occurred. Participants generally self-ascribed less agency (M = 4.87, SD = .97) than communion (M = 5.15, SD = 1.08); $F(2, 192) = 12.75$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .06$. Furthermore, we found an economic (in)equality × self-ascription interaction, $F(2, 192) = 6.81$, $p = .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .07$ (see Figure 6.1, Pilot Study [b]). Against the expectations articulated in H2, post hoc Bonferroni corrected comparisons showed no differences in agency and communion self-ascriptions in the higher equality condition (M_D = -0.05, 95% CI [-0.31, 0.22]); $F[1, 192] = 0.12$, $p = .726$, $\eta_p^2 < .01$). The difference in the lower inequality condition was also nonsignificant (M_D = -0.11, 95% CI [-0.40, 0.18]); $F[1, 192] = .53$, $p = .469$, $\eta_p^2 < .01$). However, as expected, in the equality condition, the agentic self-ascriptions were lower than the communal self-ascriptions (M_D = -0.74, 95% CI [-1.04, -0.44]), $F(2, 192) = 24.00$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .11$. Results for self-ascriptions followed the same pattern than the results for the middle-rank employee.

Discussion

In line with our general expectations, the level of economic equality or inequality affected agency–communion ascriptions to middle-rank employees. Hypothesis 1 was built on previous research showing that agency ascriptions were relatively higher than communion ascriptions in a higher inequality context (Moreno-Bella et al., 2019). However, a closer inspection of the expected interaction effect indicated that it did not occur because of the expected agency–communion ascription differences in the higher inequality condition. Instead, the effect was driven by higher communal ascriptions than agentic ascriptions in the equality condition. Thus, the present findings raise questions about the role of communion, particularly in the context of economic equality. In sum, we did not replicate the agency–communion differences previously found for the higher inequality context, but we did replicate the minor differences for the lower inequality condition. Importantly, we also revealed new evidence for differences between communion and agency in an equality context.

Moreover, we explored self-ascriptions and found, again, higher communion ratings compared to agency ratings in the equality context. A plausible interpretation might be that economic equality facilitates associations with relational concepts such as helpfulness and affiliation with others. Displaying communion might be perceived as a successful social strategy in contexts where everyone is considered equal in terms of resource allocation. However, previous research suggest that, generally, agency is the dominant dimension of content in self-perception (Abele & Wojciszke, 2014). Moreover, under high economic inequality, self-perception is more oriented toward agency as indicating higher self-enhancement (Loughnan et al., 2011) and independent self-construal (Sánchez-Rodríguez, Willis, & Rodríguez-Bailón, 2019). Thus, theoretically, the prevalence of agency (vs. communion) in self-ascriptions would be expected under high economic inequality.

One limitation of this first study was that—as the results of the second manipulation check show—inequality perceptions were similar in the two inequality conditions, and both differed from the equality condition. In the second study, we therefore improved this manipulation by increasing the objective difference in the size of inequality between the two conditions.

Study 1

In Study 1, we aimed to test the same Hypothesis 1 but with an improved manipulation of the low inequality condition. Furthermore, we preregistered Hypothesis 2. Finally, taking our work a step forward, we included a measure about the perceived competitive/cooperative relationships between employees to explore a possible explanatory path for the inequality effects found in the Pilot Study; and we measured the ascriptions to another social group: a highest-rank employee (leader)[15].

We expected that the degree of perceived economic (in)equality would affect the ascriptions of agentic and communal traits to a typical employee in the middle-ranks of an organization (see Hypothesis 1). Agency prevails in self-perception (Abele & Wojciszke, 2014), and especially under high inequality (e.g., Loughnan et al., 2011; Sánchez-Rodríguez, Willis, & Rodríguez-Bailón, 2019). We hypothesized higher agentic (vs. communal) self-ascriptions in the higher economic inequality condition, small or no differences in the lower inequality condition, and lower agentic than communal self-ascriptions in the economic equality condition (Hypothesis 2).

Previous research show that there are differences in how individuals with different statuses are perceived, and high-status individuals are considered as being more masculine (vs. feminine) and competent (vs. warmth) under economic inequality conditions (Connor et al., 2021; Moreno-Bella et al., 2019). In line with these findings, we expected that individuals would assess the typical highest-rank employee as possessing stronger agentic than communal traits in the higher and lower economic inequality conditions compared to the equality condition, and that this difference should be especially pronounced for the higher economic inequality condition (Hypothesis 3).

Method

Participants and Procedure

We conducted a prior power analysis to determine the sample size. For a mixed-design, within–between interaction ANOVA, a statistical power of .80, and an effect size of $f = .25$, the minimum sample size was 135 participants. We preregistered to collect a minimum of 130 and a maximum of 230 valid observations. The participants were 187

[15] We did not report the secondary hypothesis concerning the comparison between middle- and highest rank employees (Study 1) and other measures (Pilot Study and Study 1) because they are not directly relevant to address the main research question. See preregistration in Open Science Framework for details (https://osf.io/exus2/).

students from a university in Switzerland's French-speaking region. They took part in the study in exchange for course credit. Because two participants did not give their informed consent at the end, and two had missing values, the final sample size was 183 (n = 153 females, M_{age}= 22.98 years, SD = 4.82).

Materials

All measures and materials were translated into French.

Manipulation of economic inequality. We administered the same scenarios as in the Pilot Study. We modified the experimental condition of lower economic inequality by decreasing differences in income and the resources between employees of distinct status to make them appear less unequal (i.e., employees in the managerial positions earned 5 times more than those employees with nonmanagerial position) than in Pilot Study (see Supplementary Materials [Section SM6.1]). We randomly assigned participants to one of the three experimental conditions (Higher inequality vs. Lower inequality vs. Equality). We included the same two manipulation checks: The three-level categorical manipulation measure and the continuous variable on the perception of economic differences (M = 3.60, SD = 1.54).

Ascriptions to the typical middle-rank employee. We used the trait scale of Diekman and Eagly (2000); composed of eight agentic traits items (α = .72, M = 4.07, SD = 0.93), and eight communal traits items (α = .87, M = 4.31, SD = 1.01).

Self-ascriptions. We presented the interview scenario from Pilot Study and measured agentic (α = .77, M = 4.28, SD = .97) and communal (α = .86, M = 4.81, SD = 1.05) self-ascriptions.

Ascriptions to the typical employee in the highest ranks. We assessed the typical employee in the highest-managerial position with the trait scales (agency: α = .72, M = 5.32, SD = 0.92; communion: α = .91, M = 4.07, SD = 1.30).

Perception of competition and cooperation. We asked participants what type of relationship they thought employees of the organization had with the single traits "competitive" (M = 4.40, SD = 2.10) and "collaborative" (M = 3.82, SD = 1.96; 7-point scale from 1 [*not at all*] to 7 [*very much*]).

Results

Manipulation Checks

We ran a Chi-square test on the categorical manipulation check variable and found a significant main effect, $\chi^2(4, N = 183) = 245.30, p < .001$. In the higher inequality condition 88.1% of the participants correctly indicated that the income difference was *50 times higher*; in the lower inequality condition 96.6% correctly indicated that the difference of income was *5 times higher*, and in the equality condition 77% of the participants correctly indicated that there was *no difference* in income and employees earned the same amount.

For perceived economic differences, the continuous manipulation check measure, we ran an ANOVA with economic inequality as the between-groups factor and found a main effect, $F(2, 180) = 115.01, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .56$. Post-hoc Bonferroni tests showed that participants perceived that differences between employees in managerial and nonmanagerial positions were greater in the organization with higher economic inequality ($M = 4.71, SD = 0.49$) than in the organization with lower economic inequality ($M = 4.19$, $SD = 0.76$; $M_D = .52$, 95% CI [0.06, 0.98], $p = .020$) and economic equality ($M = 2.09$, $SD = 1.49$; $M_D = 2.62$, 95% CI [2.18, 3.07], $p < .001$). Finally, economic differences were perceived as greater in the organization with lower economic inequality in comparison to the one with economic equality ($M_D = 2.10$, 95% CI [1.65, 2.55], $p < .001$).

Analysis Plan Hypothesis Testing for H1, H2, and H3

We preregistered and conducted three mixed-design ANOVAs to analyze the ascriptions to three target groups. The design was a 3 (Economic inequality: Higher inequality vs. Lower inequality vs. Equality) × 2 (Ascriptions to the target: Agentic vs. Communal), the first variable was a between-groups variable and the latter was a within-participants variable. The respective targets of ascriptions were (a) a typical middle-rank employee, (b) the self, and (c) a typical highest rank employee. Table 6.S2 in the Supplementary Materials (Section SM6.3) reports descriptive statistics for Study 1.

Typical Middle-Rank Employee (H1)

We found a significant interaction effect between economic inequality and ascriptions to a typical middle-rank employee, $F(2, 180) = 20.83, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .19$ (see Figure 6.1, Study 1 [a]). Decomposing this interaction, we found that in the higher economic inequality condition, participants ascribed more agency than communion to the typical middle-rank employee (M_D = 0.43, 95% CI [0.063, 0.79]), $F(1, 180) = 5.35$, p = .022, η_p^2 = .03. In the lower economic inequality condition, no significant differences between agency and communion ascriptions occurred, $F(1, 180) = 0.29$, p = .588, η_p^2 = .002. Finally, in the economic equality condition, participants ascribed less agency than communion to the typical middle-rank employee (M_D = -1.12, 95% CI [-1.46, -0.77]), $F(2, 180) = 40.96$, $p < .001$, η_p^2 = .18. These results fully support Hypothesis 1.

Self-Ascriptions (H2)

A main effect of self-ascriptions showed that participants generally self-ascribed agency (M = 4.28, SD = .97) to a lesser extent than communion (M = 4.81, SD = 1.05), $F(1, 180) = 21.09$, $p < .001$, η_p^2 = .10. We also found an interaction between economic inequality and self-ascriptions, $F(2, 180) = 23.06$, $p < .001$, η_p^2 = .20 (see Figure 6.1, Study 1 [b]). Post-hoc Bonferroni corrected comparisons showed that in the higher inequality condition, participants did not differ in terms of agency compared to communion self-ascriptions, $F(1, 180) = 1.37$, p = .243, $\eta_p^2 < .001$. Participants in the lower economic inequality condition also did not differ in this regard, $F(1, 180) = 1.45$, p = .230, $\eta_p^2 < .001$. Finally, participants assigned to the experimental condition of the organization with economic equality self-ascribed less agency than communion (M_D = -1.47, 95% CI [-1.82, -1.11]), $F(2, 180) = 67.93$, $p < .001$, η_p^2 = .27). Thus, Hypothesis 2 was supported in the lower inequality and equality conditions, but not in the high inequality condition.

Employee in the Highest Ranks (H3)

The results indicated a main effect of ascriptions to a typical employee in the highest ranks. Participants ascribed higher agency (M = 5.32, SD = .92) than communion (M = 4.07, SD = 1.30) to the employee in the highest ranks, $F(1, 180) = 142.17$, $p < .001$, η_p^2 = .44. Moreover, results showed an interaction effect between economic inequality and trait ascriptions, $F(2, 180) = 36.28$, $p < .001$, η_p^2 = .29 (see Figure 6.1, Study 1 [c]). Post-hoc Bonferroni corrected comparisons revealed that in the higher inequality condition, participants ascribed more agency than communion (M_D = 2.10, 95% CI [1.72, 2.48]) to employees in the highest ranks, $F(1, 180) = 118.66$, $p < .001$, η_p^2 = .40. Similarly, in the lower inequality condition, participants ascribed higher agency than communion to employees in the highest ranks (M_D = 1.79, 95% CI [1.41, 2.18]), $F(1, 180) = 85.45$, p <

.001, η_p^2 = .32). In the equality condition, participants did not indicate different ratings for employees in the highest ranks in terms of agentic and communal traits (M_D = 0.25, 95% CI [-0.33, 0.38]), $F(1, 180) = 0.18$, $p = .893$, $\eta_p^2 < .001$. Thus, Hypothesis 1, when applied to highest-rank employee, was supported in the case of higher and low inequality but not in the equality condition.

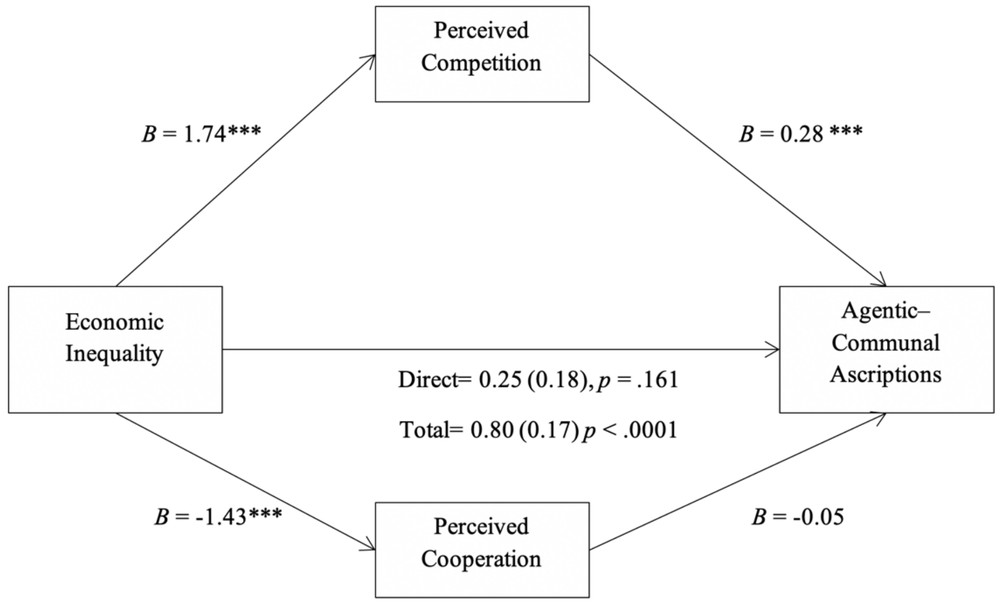
To test whether agentic ascriptions were higher than communal ones, especially in the higher inequality condition as compared to the lower inequality condition, we conducted a follow-up ANOVA, including economic inequality as the between-groups factor, and the leaders' agency–communion difference score (M = 1.25, SD = 1.74) as the dependent variable. We observed a main effect of economic inequality on agency–communion, $F(1, 195) = 26.41$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .21$. Post hoc Bonferroni corrected test, showed that agency–communion was higher in the higher (M_D =2.07, 95% CI [1.43, 271], $p < .001$) and lower (M_D =1.77, 95% CI [1.13, 2.41], $p < .001$) economic inequality conditions compared to the equality condition, which was in line with our expectations. However, the findings indicated that the agency–communion ascriptions to the highest-rank employees did not differ significantly in the higher economic inequality condition compared to the lower inequality condition (M_D =0.30, 95% CI [-0.35, 0.96]). This, in sum, did not support Hypothesis 3.

Exploring the Mediating Role of Employee Relations

We explored the possible simultaneous mediating role of perceived competition (the "competitive" item) and cooperation (the "collaborative" item) between employees on the relationship between the economic equality and inequality manipulation and trait-ascriptions to the typical middle-rank employee. As a criterion variable, we computed a difference score by subtracting the mean of the communal traits from the mean of the agentic traits in ascriptions to the employee (M = -0.23, SD = 1.57). We performed a multiple mediation analysis with the PROCESS macro for SPSS (Model 4), using a bias-corrected bootstrapping for 10,000 resamples and a 95% confidence interval (Hayes, 2013). Economic inequality was coded as an orthogonal contrast, with contrast C1 as a predictor that positioned the higher economic inequality condition (coded as 1) and the equality condition (-1) as opposites, with lower economic inequality (0) situated in between. The residual C2 contrasted higher economic inequality and equality (-1) while controlling for lower economic inequality (2). Results indicated an indirect effect of economic inequality (C1) on agentic–communal ascriptions (the difference score) to the typical middle-rank employee through perceived competition, *IE* = .48 (.15), 95% CI [0.22, 0.82], but not through perceived cooperation, *IE* = -.08 (.10), 95% CI [-0.13, 0.27]. See Figure 6.2.

Figure 6.2.

Multiple Mediation Analysis (Study 1): Perceived Competition and Collaboration as Mediators of the Relationship Between Perceived Economic Inequality and Agentic-Communal Ascriptions to the Typical Employee at Middle-Ranks



Note. Perceived economic inequality was coded as a linear effect (C1) coded as higher EI = 1, lower EI = 0, equality = -1. This model controlled for the orthogonal residual contrast (C2), coded as higher EI and equality = -1, lower EI = 2. *$p < .05$, **$p < .01$, ***$p < .001$.

Discussion

The results of Study 1 replicated results of the Pilot Study, supporting Hypothesis 1. Overall, the present findings indicate that agency and communion attributions to middle-status individuals are socially relevant dimensions affected by the economic inequalities of the context (here a working organization). Particularly, agency seemed to be perceived as a dominant dimension in contexts of higher economic inequality, whereas communion was perceived as the norm in equal settings.

Concerning self-ascriptions, differences only occurred in the economic equality condition, not in the inequality conditions, replicating the pilot study but disconfirming H2. This may suggest that individuals focus more strongly on the relational dimension in self-evaluations than when rating other individuals. Moreover, we found that, generally, participants ascribed more communal traits to themselves than they did agentic traits. Finally, for the employee in the highest-ranks, higher and lower economic inequality in the organizational settings led to higher ascriptions of agentic than communal traits. However, we found no support for H2 that suggested that this trend was stronger in the high inequality condition compared to the low inequality condition. We also showed that agency and communion ascriptions converged in the equality condition. Although agency is a requested trait dimension for leaders (Schein, 2001), we observed that when an economic setting is characterized by equality of income and resources, both become normative traits for leaders. Hence, these results suggest that the perceived level of economic equality or inequality modulates agentic and communal ascriptions to organizational leaders, showing that they are not necessarily perceived as more agentic than communal in all settings, as they traditionally have been shown. Overall, our results indicate that the social stereotype of leadership is contextual (e.g., cultural differences; Sczesny et al., 2004). Although we expected economic inequality to influence leaders' social perceptions, the interaction effect was not driven by higher agency (vs. communion) in the higher (vs. low vs. equality) economic inequality conditions. Thus, Hypothesis 3 was not supported.

Overall, our findings suggest that participants might use indicators of economic inequality to predict what type of traits (i.e., agentic or communal) would be the norm among average employees within an organizational setting. The fact that agency ascriptions tended to be higher in more unequal contexts and communion ascriptions higher in more equal settings, as expected in Hypothesis1, may come from expectations that link inequality to competitive relations and equality to cooperative relations (Nishi et al., 2015; Sánchez-Rodríguez, Willis, Jetten, & Rodríguez-Bailón, 2019). Exploratory mediational analyses showed that the higher perceived competition among employees in the more unequal context explained the higher agentic rather than communal ascriptions to typical middle-rank employees.

Study 2

To provide more evidence about the impact of perceived economic (in)equality in organizations on agency-communion ascriptions (to middle-status and high-status targets) and self-ascriptions, as well as about the role of perceived competitive/cooperative relationships, we conducted a new preregistered study with a new experimental manipulation of economic (in)equality. In this new version of the experimental manipulation, we tried to control for other possible inferences related to the organizations (e.g., profit or nonprofit; Aaker et al., 2010). Again, we made the same predictions for examining the effect of perceived economic equality or inequality on the ascriptions to a middle-rank individual (Hypothesis 1), the participant's self-ascriptions (Hypothesis 2), and ascriptions to the highest-rank individual in an organization (Hypothesis 3). Likewise, to overcome possible limitations regarding people's inferences about the organization, we asked participants their perception of the organization (see SM6.5 in the Supplementary Materials).

Method

Participants and Procedure

We planned to obtain a minimum of 130 valid observations and a maximum of 230 valid observations. We collected 201 responses from students from a Swiss University in the French-speaking region. They took part in the study in exchange for course credit. Because one participant did not indicate to give their informed consent at the end and two had missing values, the final sample size was 198 (n = 164 females; M_{age} = 21.84 years, SD = 2.92). We conducted a sensitivity power analysis[16] for a mixed-design ANOVA, with our sample size (N = 198) and a statistical power of .80 the minimum effect size that we can detect is f = 0.18.

Materials

Manipulation of economic inequality. We used the scenarios of Study 1 (in French) with some minor modifications. The first addressed the potential limitation that people likely thought about a nonprofit organization (e.g., a non-governmental organization [NGO]) when they read about economic equality, and about a lucrative organization when they read about inequality. To ensure that this was not a confounding factor in our experimental design, we controlled this information by pointing out to all participants across all conditions that the organization was lucrative in nature and not an NGO. Similarly, to avoid possible perceived differences in the work setting, we included information on several potential dimensions that could be related to the equality/inequality concept. Thus, we informed all participants (assigned to all

[16] An a priori power analysis was preregistered and based on orthogonal contrast. However, afterwards we realized that this type of analysis was not adequate to test our main hypothesis focused on the within comparisons.

experimental conditions) that employees worked the same number of hours regardless of their status, that the employees' salary satisfaction was comparable to that in other organizations, that the salaries did not necessarily reflect power and status differences, and that the organization applied a modern payment method (see SM6.1 in the Supplementary Materials). We used the same two manipulation check items used in Pilot Study and Study 1. The first one was the item with the three response options (*50 times more*, *10 times more*, and *the same*). And the second item measured participants' perception of the differences on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*very small differences*) to 5 (*very large differences*; M = 3.61, SD = 1.51).

Ascriptions to the typical employee in the middle-ranks. We used the traits scale of Diekman and Eagly (2000; eight agentic, α = .67, M = 4.10, SD = 0.79; and eight communal, α = .89, M = 4.36, SD = 1.01.

Self-ascriptions. We presented the interview scenario from Study 1 and measured agentic (α = .70, M = 4.21, SD = 0.83) and communal (α = .86, M = 4.83, SD = 1.04) self-ascriptions.

Ascriptions to the typical employee in the highest ranks. We assessed the typical employee in the highest-managerial position with the traits scales (agency: α = .69, M = 5.25, SD = 0.80; communion: α = .90, M = 4.37, SD = 1.20).

Perception of competition and cooperation. We asked participants what type of relationship they thought employees of the organization had with the single traits "competitive" (M = 4.36, SD = 2.07) and "collaborative" (M = 3.85, SD = 1.76; 7-point scale from 1 *not at all* to 7 *very much*).

Results

Manipulation Checks

We conducted a Chi-square test on the categorical manipulation check variable, and found a significant main effect, $\chi^2(4, N = 198) = 311.28$, $p < .001$. In the higher inequality condition 96.6% of the participants correctly indicated that the income difference was 50 times higher, in the lower inequality condition 83.7% correctly indicated that the difference of income was 5 times higher, and in the equality condition 100% of the participants correctly indicated that there was no difference in income.

For perceived economic differences (continuous manipulation check measure), we computed an ANOVA with economic inequality as the between-groups factor and found a main effect, $F(2, 195) = 255.114$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .72$. Post-hoc Bonferroni corrected comparisons revealed that participants perceived greater differences in salary between employees in managerial and nonmanagerial positions in the organization with higher economic inequality ($M = 4.71$, $SD = 0.55$) compared to the lower economic inequality ($M = 4.26$, $SD = 0$ .53; $M_D = 0.45$, 95% CI [0.12, 0.78], $p = .004$), and the economic equality ($M = 1.75$, $SD = 1.18$; $M_D = 2.97$, 95% CI [2.62, 3.31], $p < .001$) conditions. The latter two differed significantly ($M_D = 2.52$, 95% CI [2.18, 2.85], $p < .001$).

Analysis Plan Hypothesis Testing for H1, H2, And H3

We conducted three mixed-design ANOVAs to analyze the ascriptions to the three target groups (a middle-rank employee, the self, and the highest-rank employee). As in our previous studies, the design was 3 (Economic inequality: Higher inequality vs. Lower inequality vs. Equality) × 2 (Ascriptions to the target: Agentic vs. Communal), with the last variable as a within participants variable[17]. Table 6.S3 in the Supplementary Materials (Section SM3) reports descriptive statistics for Study 2.

Typical Middle-Rank Employee (H1)

The findings revealed a main effect of ascriptions, $F(1, 195) = 8.72$, $p = .004$, $\eta_p^2 = .04$. Middle-rank employees were perceived as more communal ($M = 4.35$, $SD = 1.01$) than agentic ($M = 4.10$, $SD = 0.79$). We also observed an interaction between economic inequality and ascriptions to a typical middle-rank employee, $F(2, 195) = 27.02$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .22$ (see Figure 6.1, Study 2 [a]).

Post-hoc Bonferroni corrected comparisons showed that, in the higher economic inequality condition, participants ascribed more agency than communion to a typical middle-rank employee ($M_D = 0.37$, 95% CI [0.06, 0.69]), $F(1, 195) = 5.48$, $p = .020$, $\eta_p^2 = .03$. In the lower economic inequality condition, no significant differences occurred, $F(1, 195) = 0.26$, $p = .861$, $\eta_p^2 < .01$. Participants assigned to the equality condition ascribed less agency than communion to typical middle-rank employees ($M_D = -1.20$, 95% CI [-1.51, -0.88]), $F(2, 195) = 56.42$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .22$. These results fully support Hypothesis 1.

[17] We preregistered orthogonal contrasts. However, to address our current research question based on the within comparison of the ascriptions and to be consistent with how we presented our results in the Pilot Study and Study 1, we deviated from the preregistration and followed the same mixed-design ANOVA used in Pilot Study and Study 1.

Self-Ascriptions (H2)

As in the prior studies, we observed a main effect of ascriptions $F(1, 195) = 48.75$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .20$. Participants perceived themselves as less agentic ($M = 4.20$, $SD = 0.83$) than communal ($M = 4.82$, $SD = 1.04$). Importantly, we found an interaction effect between economic inequality and ascriptions, $F(2, 195) = 10.39$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .10$ (see Figure 6.1, Study 2 [b]).

Post-hoc Bonferroni corrected comparisons revealed that participants assigned to the experimental condition of high economic inequality did not differ in self-ascriptions of agency and communion ($M_D = -0.27$, 95% CI [-0.58, 0.04], $F(1, 195) = 2.89$, $p = .091$, $\eta_p^2 = .02$). In the low economic inequality condition, participants agency to themselves to a lesser extent than they ascribed communion ($M_D = -0.41$ 95% CI [-0.70, -1.11]), $F(1, 195) = 7.30$, $p = .007$, $\eta_p^2 = .04$). Likewise, in the equality condition, they ascribed less agency to themselves than they ascribed communion ($M_D = -1.22$, 95% CI [-1.53, -0.90]), $F(1, 195) = 57.95$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .23$). These results do not support Hypothesis 2 in the high and low inequality conditions, but they support Hypothesis 2 in the equality condition.

Employee in the Highest Ranks (H3)

The results revealed a main effect of ascriptions, suggesting that employees in the highest ranks were perceived as more agentic ($M = 5.25$, $SD = 0.79$) than communal ($M = 4.37$, $SD = 1.20$), ($F(1, 195) = 78.42$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .29$). An interaction effect between economic inequality and ascriptions was also found ($F(2, 195) = 26.41$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .213$; see Figure 6.1, Study 2 [c]).

Post-hoc Bonferroni corrected comparisons demonstrated that participants perceived the highest-rank employee as more agentic than communal in the higher economic inequality condition ($M_D = 1.41$, 95% CI [1.07, 1.76], $F(1, 195) = 67.86$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .26$) and in the lower economic inequality condition ($M_D =1.31$, 95% CI [1.00, 1.63], $F(1, 195) = 66.74$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .26$). However, there was no significant difference between agentic and communal ascriptions in the equality condition ($M_D = 0.75$, 95% CI [-0.49, 0.19], $F(1, 195) = 66.74$, $p = .388$, $\eta_p^2 = .01$). These findings replicated those found in Study 1.

To test whether the prevalence of agency over communal ascriptions was greater in the high than in the low inequality condition, we conducted a follow-up ANOVA that included economic inequality as the between-groups factor and the leaders' agency–

communion difference score of (M = 0.88, SD = 1.53) as the dependent variable. We observed a main effect of economic inequality on agency–communion, $F(1, 195) = 26.41$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .21$. A post hoc Bonferroni corrected test showed that agency–communion was greater in the higher (M_D =1.57, 95% CI [0.97, 2.15], $p < .001$) and lower (M_D =1.46, 95% CI [0.89, 2.03], $p < .001$) economic inequality conditions compared to the equality condition. However, the findings suggested that agency–communion ascriptions to the highest-ranked employee did not differ significantly in the higher and lower economic inequality conditions (M_D =0.10, 95% CI [-0.47, 0.67]). Thus, results did not fully support Hypothesis 3, as we did not find that agency–communion was greater, especially when economic inequality is high. See Table 6.1 for a summary of the predicted and found effects in all studies.

Table 6.1.

Predicted and Found Effects for the Perceived Agency (A) and Communion (C) of the Middle-Ranks Employee, of the Self (i.e., Self-Ascriptions), and of the High-Ranks Employee

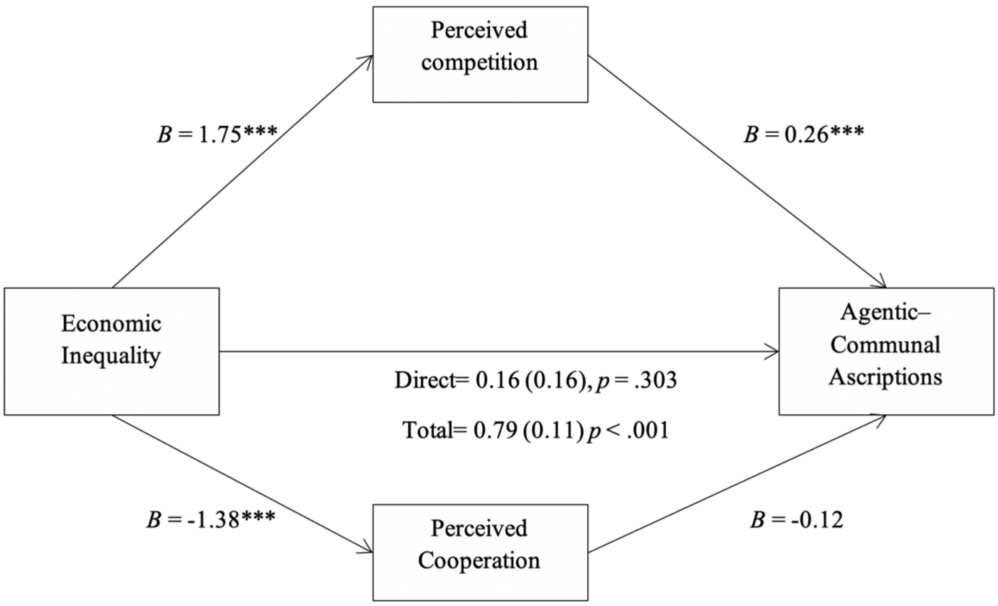
	Predicted Effects								
	High Inequality: A > C			Low Inequality: A = C			Equality: A < C		
	Pilot Study	Study 1	Study 2	Pilot Study	Study 1	Study 2	Pilot Study	Study 1	Study 2
Middle-Ranks Employee	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Self-Ascriptions	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓
	Predicted Effects								
	A > C: the difference will be larger as a function of the exp. condition (High inequality > Low inequality > Equality)								
High-Ranks Employee				N/A	✗	✗			

Exploring the Mediating Role of Employee Relations

As in Study 1, we explored the possible simultaneous mediating role of perceived competition and cooperation between employees on the relationship between the economic equality and inequality manipulation and agency–communion ascriptions (the difference score) to middle-rank employees. We computed the difference score by subtracting the mean of the communal traits from the mean of the agentic traits in ascriptions of such employees (M = -0.25, SD = 1.42). We followed the same procedure to perform a multiple mediation analysis using the PROCESS macro for SPSS (Model 4). The results indicated an indirect effect of economic inequality (C1) on agentic–communal ascriptions to typical middle-rank employees through perceived competition, IE = .46 (.10), 95% CI [0.21, 0.38], but not through perceived cooperation, IE = -.16 (0.11), 95% CI [-0.04, 0.39]. See Figure 6.3.

Figure 6.3.

Multiple Mediation Analysis (Study 2): Perceived Competition and Collaboration as Mediators of the Relationship Between Perceived Economic Inequality and Agentic-Communal Ascriptions to the Typical Employee at Middle-Ranks.



Note. Perceived economic inequality was coded as a linear effect (C1) coded as higher EI = 1, lower EI = 0, equality = -1. This model was control for the orthogonal residual contrast (C2), coded as higher EI and equality = -1, lower EI = 2. *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001.

Discussion

In this last study, we controlled in the experimental manipulation several potential factors that could have produced variations in perceptions of organizations with unequal or equal pay systems such as the type of the organization (company versus not-for-profit organization, or work conditions). Despite these variations, we replicated our previous findings showing higher agentic compared to communal ascriptions to an employee in the context of high remuneration inequality. In the low inequality condition, we found no differences, whereas in the equality condition, we observed that agentic ascriptions were lower than communal ascriptions.

As in the Pilot Study and Study 1, we found no support for Hypothesis 2 concerning self-ascriptions, given that findings did not suggest agency–communion differences when economic inequality was high, and communal self-ascriptions seemed to be higher than agentic ones in the low inequality and equality conditions. Furthermore, we observed that in both inequality conditions participants ascribed agency more strongly than communion to the highest-ranks employee. However, in contrast with our expectations, ascriptions of agency and communion did not differ between higher and low economic inequality conditions, so we were not able to corroborate Hypothesis 3.

Finally, we replicated that competitiveness in employees' relationships played a role for the agency-inequality association. Future research should directly investigate the role of perceived competition and cooperation by manipulating the organizational climate and thus clearly disentangling them from agency and communion perceptions of employees.

General Discussion

Corroborating past research, agency ascriptions to middle-status targets are higher in unequal contexts (Moreno-Bella et al., 2019), with the novelty that the effect also occurs in organizational contexts and in comparison with an equality situation.

In the three experiments, the perception of high economic inequality in an organization led to ascriptions of more agency than communion to middle-rank employees, as stated in Hypothesis 1. These findings are in line with the previous literature that showed that contexts of higher economic inequality led to perceive an agentic normative climate and to ascribe the people traits related to agency (Moreno-Bella et al., 2019; Sánchez-Rodríguez, Willis, & Rodríguez-Bailón, 2019). Furthermore, in the case of social perception of the middle-ranks employees, the perception of competition mediated this association. These findings are important because descriptive norms influence people's attitudes and behaviors (Cialdini et al., 1990). Considering that economic inequality increases social comparisons (Cheung & Lucas, 2016, 2020), people who take part in such unequal settings could modify their attitudes toward others depending on that descriptive norm; for instance, this might undermine cooperation and increase disruptive behaviors among employees within an organization (Bratanova et al., 2019).

To our knowledge, the present research is the first to test the impact of equality in comparison to inequality on the ascription of agentic and communal traits to employees. These novel findings add to past research by showing that economic equality has positive effects on cohesion and cooperation (Nishi et al., 2015). In line with the work of Wilkinson and Pickett (2017), communal self-ascriptions may be functional in a context with equality in the distribution of income and resources, where cooperation is more appropriate as a social strategy. Even if such "equal" scenarios are still utopic, knowing how people react to and act within such settings is of interest in terms of considering whether society should strive for such features.

We should mention that the dominance of communal (vs. agentic) self-ascriptions in all studies, may appear to contradict previous findings (e.g., Abele & Wojciszke, 2007). the dual perspective model of agency and communion (Abele & Wojciszke, 2014) proposes that from the actor perspective, the agency is more important than the communality dimension. Therefore, the main effect of the type of ascriptions should have revealed that self-ascriptions are mainly agency oriented rather than communion oriented. However, in general, we observed dominance of communal self-ascriptions. A possible explanation of this disparate result has already been advanced before in the agency-communion literature. Abele and Wojciszke (2014) suggested that communal traits may be more relevant for social approval; therefore, people tended to build their reputation mainly on the communal dimension. Taking a more functional perspective, the participants might have intended present themselves in a more positive light by exaggerating the communal traits in their self-ascriptions because they hoped this might increase social approval in that context. However, in the organizational context, creating a good image based on agency rather than communion might be more beneficial for the individual. To clarify this, further research may examine under what concrete circumstances there is a delimitation of the dominance of agentic and communal self-ascriptions.

Against our expectations, the magnitude of agentic versus communal ascriptions to employees in the highest ranks was not greater in more unequal organizations than in organizations with relatively inequality. However, Studies 1 and 2 showed that, in the high and low organizational inequality contexts, an employee in the highest ranks was ascribed as predominantly agentic rather than communal compared to in equal organizations. Previous research showed a preference for agentic (over communal) leaders particularly in crisis settings related to financial difficulties because task-oriented leadership was seen as most relevant (Kulich et al., 2018). It seems that hierarchical contexts, as well as crisis types linked to financial aspects, are likely associated with agentic leadership ideals. However, according to the glass cliff-effect (Ryan & Haslam, 2005, 2007) women tend to be promoted to higher leadership positions during crisis, when the probability of failure is considerably higher. In future studies, it is worth considering whether higher levels of organizational economic inequality might also affect what traits are desirable for a leader, as well as which gender is preferred under such circumstances. Interestingly, participants exposed to an equal organization ascribed agentic and communal traits to employees in the highest rank almost evenly. Therefore, equality in income and resources triggered higher communal content, creating a more balanced—as well as less ambivalent—social image of the highest rank employee.

In our studies, the same status hierarchy existed in all experimental conditions (i.e., high-, middle-, and low-rank employees). Therefore, the economic gap between workers (but not the differences in status per se) could be an important clue regarding what influences the social ties between workers with different statuses in organizations. In relation to this, previous research has suggested that high economic differences between highest- and middle-rank employees leads the latter to perceive more social distance between themselves and the leader (Peters et al., 2019).

Our findings have implications for the consequences of economic (in)equality and the maintenance of stereotypical social representations. Equal economic conditions in a hierarchical social environment (i.e., an organization) may counterbalance the effect that ambivalent social images have on the maintenance of status quo and social inequality (Durante & Fiske, 2017), thereby reducing the traditional agentic stereotype of high-status individuals. This implies that in organizations with equal distributions of resources, prototypical leaders would be expected to be neither more masculine nor more feminine. Consequently, minority groups (e.g., women) who do not fit the agentic leader stereotype of traditional organizational settings (Eagly & Karau, 2002) would likely perceive higher compatibility between them and the expected leader profiles in more equal settings, but also influence in the same way employer's assessment (Stainback et al., 2010). More equal organizational contexts where communal qualities prevail over masculine attributes may allow for gender incongruent behaviors and attitudes (Kulich & Chipeaux, 2019).

In sum, our research contributes to the literature about economic inequality and its social psychological consequences. We used a new experimental manipulation of economic inequality in an organization and measured whether it affects agentic/communal ascriptions to other targets and to oneself. Our findings suggest that people make ascriptions to middle-status individuals and to high-status individuals predominantly oriented to the agentic dimension under economic inequality. This research allows to understand the effect of economic inequality on people’s social perception in an organizational environment.

Chapter 7

Upholding the Social Hierarchy: Masculinity as a Predictor of the Ideal Level of Economic Inequality

Upholding the Social Hierarchy: Masculinity as a Predictor of the Ideal Level of Economic Inequality

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Abstract

Many societies are becoming more economically unequal, and some people tend to accept economic inequality more than others do. Traditionally, masculinity has been associated with high-status and high-power groups. In this research, we examined whether participants' masculinity led them to accept higher levels of economic inequality. To answer this research question, in Study 1 ($N = 191$), we used correlational data and found that masculinity predicts higher levels of ideal economic inequality. In Study 2 ($N = 204$), using an experimental design, we revealed that priming masculinity (vs. femininity) also leads to higher levels of ideal economic inequality. These findings extend prior evidence on the psychosocial effects of masculinity and illustrate the connection between masculinity and the acceptance of economic inequality. The implications of these results are discussed.

Keywords: masculinity-femininity, economic inequality, acceptance of inequality, social inequality, social status

Introduction

Masculinity and femininity are two social constructs that people use to define themselves and others (Bem, 1974b; Eagly & Wood, 2012; Wood & Eagly, 2015). Importantly, these constructs have been associated with social groups with differing status and power (e.g., men/women or high-SES/low-SES people; see Berdahl et al., 2018). In particular, masculinity traditionally has been associated with high-status and high-power groups (Morgan, 2005; Rucker et al., 2018).

People's internalization of masculinity also predicts different attitudes and behaviours such as meat consumption (Rothgerber, 2013), authoritarianism and antigay aggression (Goodnight et al., 2014), financial risk-taking (Meier-Pesti & Goetza, 2006), and risky health and sexual behaviours (Mahalik et al., 2007; Parmenter et al., 2020). In this paper, we go further and examine whether masculinity could be related with attitudes towards economic inequality. As such, in the present research we tested whether masculinity may shape people's ideal level of economic inequality.

Previous studies have examined the relationships among economic inequality, masculinity, and other close constructs. For instance, economic inequality positively predicts preferences for strong leadership (Sprong et al., 2019), aggression (Greitemeyer & Sagioglou, 2018), and competition (Sánchez-Rodríguez, Willis, et al., 2019; Sommet et al., 2019)—and all of these characteristics have been associated with masculinity (Eagly & Wood, 2012; Wood & Eagly, 2015)—. Moreover, recently, it has been shown that participants who perceived a more unequal society (vs. a more egalitarian one) tended to imagine its inhabitants as more masculine than feminine (Moreno-Bella et al., 2019). In this paper, we will examine whether the opposite causal relation also holds true and whether participants' masculinity could increase the preference for a more unequal society.

In this paper, we present two studies and advance this literature by suggesting that people's masculinity, in comparison to femininity, may drive their preference for higher economic inequality. Given that masculinity symbolizes achievement, status, and power (Good & Sherrod, 1997) as well as the maintenance of social inequalities (Weaver & Vescio, 2015), we predict a positive association between masculinity and the ideal level of economic inequality.

Masculinity and Femininity

Masculinity and femininity dimensions have been studied in different fields such as medicine, sexology, psychiatry, and psychology. From a psychological perspective, the backgrounds of these two dimensions have changed across time. The early attempts to understand masculinity and femininity and their measurement considered that both constructs were on a single continuum and therefore were incompatible (Terman & Miles, 1936). However, this changed when Bem (1974), among others, developed a new instrument considering masculinity and femininity as two different dimensions. Simultaneously, other research spoke about two dimensions with different labels but a common conceptual core: agency and communion (Bakan, 1966), instrumentality and expressiveness (Parsons & Bales, 1955), and competence and warmth (Fiske et al., 2002).

In short, masculinity as a personality trait reflects assertiveness, independence, dominance, and leadership, among other characteristics (Bem, 1993). It represents achievement and a self-interest orientation, and it traditionally has been associated with men. Conversely, femininity, traditionally related to women, reflects kindness, sensitiveness, understanding, and affectivity. In other words, it represents an orientation towards others' needs and well-being (Bem, 1974; Ellemers, 2018; Good & Sherrod, 1997; Mehta & Dementieva, 2017; Moya, 2003).

Although a person can be masculine and feminine to different degrees (Bem, 1974), masculinity and femininity traditionally have represented what men and women should be (Ellemers, 2018). However, the extent to which men and women perceive themselves in masculine and feminine terms has changed, at least in Western societies: meta-analytic research has found that women attribute less traditional feminine features to themselves (Donnelly & Twenge, 2017) and also are seen as more competent than they have in the past (Eagly et al., 2019). In addition, men have slightly moved into traditionally female roles such as care of the family (Croft et al., 2015).

In this paper, given that masculinity is related with a greater preference for status and power differences (Abele & Wojciszke, 2019; Rucker et al., 2018), we argue that masculinity will also predict support for higher levels of economic inequality, as a subtle expression of feelings of advantage and the maintenance of a hierarchical social structure (Weaver & Vescio, 2015).

Economic Inequality

Nowadays, economic inequality is one of the main societal issues (World Economic Forum, 2017). Over the last decades, an increasing income difference between the richest and the poorest has been a reality in most countries (Alvaredo et al., 2018). Spain, where we conducted this research, is one of the most unequal countries within the European Union (EUROSTAT, 2018). Social psychologists have examined the negative associations between economic inequality and life satisfaction (Cheung & Lucas, 2016; Oishi et al., 2011), well-being (Napier & Jost, 2008), and mental health (Alesina et al., 2004; Kondo et al., 2009, 2012) and its positive relationship with the rise of far-right populism (Jay et al., 2019), anti-immigrant sentiment (Jetten et al., 2015), and a longer list of social issues (for a review, see Wilkinson & Pickett, 2009a).

Thus far, research has shown that economic inequality and masculinity may be closely related constructs. A substantial body of empirical work suggests that when perceived economic inequality is high (vs. low), people tend to infer that other people are more masculine, individualistic, and competitive (Moreno-Bella et al., 2019; Sánchez-Rodríguez, Willis, et al., 2019; Sommet et al., 2019) and also prefer a strong national leader (Sprong et al., 2019). Likewise, when the context is highly economically unequal, people see themselves as more independent from others (Sánchez-Rodríguez et al., 2019b), tend to self-enhance more (Loughnan et al., 2011), orient themselves towards achievement (Sommet et al., 2019), and feel greater status anxiety (Layte & Whelan, 2014; Payne et al., 2017; Walasek & Brown, 2015; Wang et al., 2019).

All these findings depict the symbolic core of the masculinity dimension—that is, a desire for success, achievement, independence, strong personality, leadership, and so on (Bem, 1974; Good & Sherrod, 1997; Thompson & Pleck, 1986). In a similar vein, evidence suggests that people are less feminine in societies with greater economic inequality. Thus, in highly economically unequal contexts, people trust (Fiske et al., 2012; Uslaner & Brown, 2005) and help others less (Paskov & Dewilde, 2012), tend to be less agreeable (de Vries et al., 2011) and are less willing to contribute to the other people's welfare(Paskov & Dewilde, 2012).

However, although all these studies have implied a relationship between economic inequality and masculinity, little evidence exists for the causal relationship between the two constructs, largely due to their nature. The most common thought is to assume, even implicitly, that economic inequality is what increases masculinity. However, the other causal relation may also be possible. Thus, highly masculine people would make the groups and societies to which they belong more unequal. Therefore, we wanted to explore the associations between economic inequality and these dimensions in further detail, to establish a causal link. Specifically, we examined whether masculinity, as compared to femininity, leads one to prefer higher economic inequality.

The Present Research

Masculinity represents competition, individualism, a strong personality, dominance, competence, and status (e.g., Bem, 1974; Morgan, 2005). Economic inequality symbolizes similar masculine-related underpinnings such as competition social norms, individualism, a preference for leaders with strong personalities, higher competence, and desire for status (Connor et al., 2021; Sánchez-Rodríguez, Willis, et al., 2019; Sommet et al., 2019; Sprong et al., 2019; Wang et al., 2019). Therefore, both constructs are expected to be closely related, and previous research showed the first evidence of this (e.g., Moreno-Bella et al., 2019).

Given that people's masculinity influences their attitudes and behaviours (e.g., De Backer et al., 2020; Mahalik et al., 2003), in this research, we suggest that masculinity may affect people's preference for a more unequal society. In sum, in this paper, we present one correlational study and one preregistered experiment, in which we predict that a masculinity orientation may influence attitudes towards economic inequality, operationalized as the ideal wage gap between the better and the worse paid workers (see Kiatpongsan & Norton, 2014; Willis et al., 2015).

Study 1

In Study 1, we explored the relationship between the ideal level of economic inequality and the participants' masculinity–femininity dimensions in a correlational study. We also explored the association between masculinity/femininity and perceived economic inequality, given that the latter is strongly related with the ideal levels of economic inequality (García-Sánchez, Willis, Rodríguez-Bailón, Palacio Sañudo, et al., 2018; Willis et al., 2015). Similarly—and considering that prior evidence has shown that gender, political orientation, and socioeconomic status (SES) are related to either economic inequality or masculinity/femininity (Chambers et al., 2014; Ellemers, 2018; Evans & Kelley, 2004; García-Sánchez, Willis, Rodríguez-Bailón, Palacio Sañudo, et al., 2018; Irwin, 2018; Willis et al., 2015)—we included them as control variables in the analyses. The data and the syntax files can be found at the Open Science Framework (https://osf.io/j825h/)

Method

Participants and Procedure

In total, 196 participants from the general population were recruited to participate in this study. We excluded three participants who indicated that their native language was not Spanish and two participants who did not report it. After these exclusions, the final sample comprised 191 participants older than 18 years (M_{age} = 21.60, *SD* = 2.91); concretely, it was composed of 105 women and 86 men.

A sensitivity analysis was conducted for a multiple linear regression. The sensitivity analysis suggested that our sample (N = 191, α = .05) allowed us to detect an effect size as small as f^2 = .04 with a power of .71.

The participants were recruited using incidental sampling. One researcher went to a public area (bus station) of a city located in southeast Spain and requested that volunteers participate in this study. We used a paper questionnaire. All the participants gave their consent for participation through informed written consent, and they read information about their voluntary participation and the anonymity and confidentiality of their answers.

Measures

We presented the following measures in a counterbalanced order. Some participants first completed masculinity and femininity measures, and they later completed perceived and ideal economic inequality measures. Other participants first completed these economic inequality-related measures and later completed the masculinity and femininity measures. Finally, all the participants reported their sociodemographic and socioeconomic data.

Masculinity and Femininity. We evaluated participants' masculinity and femininity orientation with the Spanish adaptation of the Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI; (Bem, 1974; Páez & Fernández, 2004).This measure consists of 18 items (see Supplementary Materials [SM7.1]), of which nine items measure the social construct of masculinity (α = .68; e.g., "dominant" and "acts as a leader"), and the other nine items measure the social construct of femininity (α = .73, e.g., "gentle" and "sensitive to the needs of others"). Participants were asked to indicate the extent to which they identified with each presented trait. The answer format was a 7-point scale (1 = *not at all*, 7 = *very much*).

Ideal Economic Inequality. To measure the participants' ideal level of economic inequality, we asked them to think about the largest and most important company that could exist in their ideal society (see Supplementary Materials [SM7.2]). Likewise, they had to estimate the ideal monthly wage that an employee with the highest qualifications and the most responsibilities (i.e., the highest-status position) and an employee with the lowest qualifications and the least responsibilities (i.e., the lowest-status position) should earn (Castillo, 2011; ISSP Research Group, 2017). We calculated the logarithmic ratio between the ideal wages for the highest-status-position and the lowest-status-position employee (Castillo, 2011). Higher values indicate higher ideal economic inequality (a ratio of 0 indicates absolute equality).

Perceived Economic Inequality. Following a similar procedure, we asked the participants to think about the largest and most important company in Spain (see Supplementary Materials [SM7.3]). They were also asked to estimate what the monthly wage would be for employees in the highest- and lowest-status positions. Similar to the operationalization of ideal economic inequality, we calculated the logarithmic ratio between the perceived wages for the highest-status-position and the lowest-status-position employee (Castillo, 2011; ISSP Research Group, 2017). Higher values indicated higher perceived economic inequality (a ratio of 0 indicates absolute equality).

Sociodemographic and Socioeconomic Variables. The participants answered sociodemographic data questions such as for gender, age, familiar income (*Below €650*, to 10 = *More than €5800),* educational attainment *(*from 1 = *primary studies* to 8 = *PhD studies*), nationality, and native language. We measured political orientation on a 10-point scale where 1 indicated *left wing* and 10 indicated *right wing* (M = 4.49, SD = 2.06). Socioeconomic status (SES) was also measured with the MacArthur Scale of Subjective Social Status (Adler et al., 2000).

Results

Because we ran analyses that included variables measured with different response scales, all the variables were standardized. The correlations between all the variables are available in Table 7.1.

Table 7.1.

Descriptive Statistics and Correlations between Variables in Study 1. Means and Standard Deviations are Presented in the Diagonal Line

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Masculinity	3.75 (0.77)								
2. Femininity	-.12	4.74 (0.82)							
3. Ideal EI	.20**	-.19**	1.41 (1.50)						
4. Perceived EI	.12	-.04	.49***	3.20 (2.62)					
5. Gender	-.11	.17*	-.29***	-.19**	-				
6. Age	.15*	.04	-.06	-.06	-.07	21.60 (2.91)			
7. PO	.11	.01	-.04	.04	-.01	-.01	4.49 (2.07)		
8. SES	.14	.02	.12	.04	.12	.07	.05	5.47 (1.45)	
9. CP	.03	-.05	.15*	.08	-.04	.03	-.02	.08	-

Note. EI = Economic inequality; PO = Political orientation; SES = Socioeconomic status; CP = Counterbalanced Presentation; Gender (1 = woman = 1, -1 = man); * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Hierarchical Regression Predicting Ideal Economic Inequality from Masculinity

We ran a hierarchical regression to test whether a participant's masculinity may predict higher scores for their ideal economic inequality. At Step 1, the participants' gender (*woman* = 1, *man* = −1), age, political orientation, SES, and the order of presentation of measures (counterbalanced; *first BSRI* = 1, *second BSRI* = −1) were included as predictors in the model to control by them (e.g., Willis et al., 2015). In the second step, we included masculinity and femininity as the predictors.

As can be seen in Table 7.2, Model 1 was significant, R^2= .1, $F(5, 176) = 5.57$, $p < .001$, with the participant's gender ($\beta = -.32$, $p < .001$) negatively predicting ideal economic inequality and participant SES ($\beta = .16$, $p = .031$) predicting it in a positive way. That is, men and high-SES people reported higher ideal economic inequality scores. Model 2 was also significant, $F(7, 174) = 5.23$, $p < .001$, $\Delta R^2 = .04$, ΔF (2, 174) = 3.92,

p = .022. Femininity was not associated with ideal economic inequality (β = −.11, p = .122), but participants' masculinity positively predicted ideal levels of economic inequality (β = .15, p = .038).

Table 7.2.

Results of Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analyses Predicting Ideal Economic Inequality

	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3		
Predictor	β	*t*	*p*	β	*t*	*p*	β	*t*	*p*
Step 1									
Gender	-.32	-4.50	<.001	-.28	-3.93	<.001	-.27	-3.86	<.001
Age	-.10	-1.43	.154	-.12	-1.65	.102	-.12	-1.73	.084
PO	.03	.49	.624	.02	0.29	.770	.01	0.19	.851
SES	.16	2.17	.031	.13	1.90	.059	.13	1.83	.068
CP	.11	1.56	.122	.10	1.49	.138	.10	1.47	.143
Step 2									
Masculinity				.15	2.09	.038	.24	2.07	.040
Femininity				-.11	-1.56	.122	-.12	-1.69	.093
Step 3									
Gender × Masculinity							-.11	-.98	.327

Note. PO = Political orientation, SES = Socioeconomic status, CP = Counterbalanced Presentation; Gender (1 = woman = 1, -1 = man).

Because of the effects of gender and masculinity on ideal economic inequality and the relationship between them, we decided to explore the interactions between gender and masculinity. Thus, we ran a similar hierarchical regression analysis as the previous one but included, in a third step, the Gender × Masculinity and Gender × Femininity interactions as predictors. We observed that Model 3 was significant, F (8, 173) = 4.69, p < .001, ΔR^2 = .01, ΔF(1, 173) = 0.97, p = .327; however, this third model did not increase the explained variance of ideal economic inequality. Said otherwise, the effects of masculinity on ideal inequality were not qualified by participants' gender.

Hierarchical Regression Predicting Perceived Economic Inequality from Masculinity

Although we did not find evidence of a correlation between perceived economic inequality and either masculinity or femininity, we wanted to explore the potential predictors of perceived economic inequality. We conducted a hierarchical regression, including, at Step 1, the participants' gender (*woman* = 1, *man* = −1), age, political orientation, and SES and the order of presentation of measures (counterbalanced; first BSRI = 1, second BSRI = −1) in the model to control by them. In Step 2, we included masculinity and femininity as the predictors. We observed that Model 1 was not significant, R^2= .06, $F(5, 176) = 2.17$, $p = .059$, nor was Model 2, $F(7, 174) = 1.93$, $p = .068$ ($\Delta R^2 = .01$, $\Delta F(2, 174) = 1.29$, $p = .278$). That is, none of the predictors included in the model explained perceived economic inequality (see Table 7.3).

Table 7.3.

Results of Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analyses Predicting Perceived Economic Inequality

Predictor	Model 1			Model 2		
	β	*t*	*p*	β	*t*	*p*
Step 1						
Gender	-.21	-2.77	.006	-.19	-2.56	.011
Age	-.10	-1.34	.180	-.12	-1.59	.113
PO	-.05	-.72	.475	-.06	-.87	.348
SES	.08	.1.01	.315	.06	.78	.435
CP	.07	.93	.354	.07	.92	.362
Step 2						
Masculinity				.03	.39	.698
Femininity				.12	1.60	.112

Note. PO = Political orientation, SES = Socioeconomic status, CP = Counterbalanced Presentation; Gender (1 = woman = 1, -1 = man).

Discussion

Study 1 provides evidence that the participants' masculinity positively predicted ideal economic inequality. This result provides initial support for our hypothesis that traditional masculinity could lead to a higher preference for economic inequality. In other words, people who consider themselves in a more traditionally masculine way also prefer higher levels of economic inequality. Based on the evidence that perceived inequality is closely and positively associated with the ideal levels of economic inequality(Castillo, 2012), we decided to explore whether perceived economic inequality may also be led by masculinity as the ideal economic inequality was. However, we did not find an association between masculinity and perceived economic inequality.

Likewise, although gender seems to be an important variable, it did not interact with masculinity (or femininity) when predicting the ideal economic inequality. That is, participants who described themselves in a more traditional masculine way scored higher on ideal economic inequality, independently of their gender.

Importantly, it must also be mentioned that because this first study has a correlational nature, we cannot claim a causal effect. To overcome this limitation and provide more evidence about the tested relationship between traditional masculinity and ideal economic inequality, we ran a preregistered experiment.

Study 2

Study 2 was aimed at analysing the effects of priming traditional masculinity on ideal economic inequality. To do so, we used a subtle priming procedure in this study to manipulate participants' masculinity experimentally and then measured participants' ideal economic inequality. Therefore, we expected a main positive effect of masculinity priming on the ideal economic inequality.

Concretely, in our preregistered hypothesis, we predicted that participants assigned to the experimental condition of priming for traditional masculinity would rate higher on ideal economic inequality than participants assigned to the condition of priming for traditional femininity. The preregistration for the hypothesis, measures, as well as data and the syntax files, can be found at https://osf.io/j825h.

Method

Participants and Procedure

We conducted an a priori power analysis with G*Power (Faul et al., 2009). For a *t*-test (two groups) with an effect size of $d = .40$ ($f^2 = .20$), statistical power of .80, and $\alpha = .05$, the minimum desired sample size was 200 valid observations. We planned to collect a minimum of 200 valid observations before 15 March 2020. Therefore, we were able to recruit 208 participants.

As preregistered, we excluded four participants who did not indicate Spanish as their native language. The final sample comprised 204 participants older than 18 years ($M_{age} = 21.63$, $SD = 4.09$). The sample was composed of 126 women and 78 men.

As in Study 1, the participants were recruited using incidental sampling. One researcher visited different public areas (libraries and faculties) of a university located in a city in southeast Spain to request volunteers for participation in this study. We used a paper questionnaire. All the participants gave their consent for participation through informed written consent, and they read information about their voluntary participation and the anonymity and confidentiality of their answers.

Measures

Priming of Masculinity and Femininity

The participants were randomly assigned to either a masculinity-priming ($n = 101$) or a femininity-priming ($n = 103$) experimental condition. We used two tasks to prime for masculinity and femininity. First, we created a scenario based on different masculinity or femininity traits from among the BSRI traits (Bem, 1974; Páez & Fernández, 2004). The participants assigned to the masculinity-priming experimental condition read the following scenario (the scenario for participants assigned to the femininity-priming condition is in parentheses):

> To begin, we ask you to think of a situation in which you showed yourself as a person who stands up for your own beliefs and thoughts (who is sensitive to the needs of others), quite confident (affectionate) and assertive (understanding). You could say you showed yourself as self-sufficient (tender) and independent (cheerful) person, as well as decisive (gentle) because you made decisions with

ease (tried to calm down the people who needed it). You showed yourself in a strong and dominant way (warm and tender way).

In the next task, we asked the participants to think about that situation and describe it:

Think for a moment about that situation in which you had to behave the way we have defined in the text. If there has not been a situation, please think of a situation where you were required or might be required to behave this way, or roughly. You can read the text again to think about the situation. Then, briefly describe that situation.

Scenarios and the task are available at the Supplementary Materials [SM7.4 and SM7.5]). We included several manipulation checks to test whether our manipulation worked. First, we presented the following item: "Regarding the text about the situation you read on the first page, you could say that it has content characterized by ....". Following previous research claiming that masculinity is oriented towards self-interest whereas femininity is oriented towards interest in social relationships (e.g., Ellemers, 2018; Moya, 2003), we used a 7-point scale as the answer format (1 = *interest in social relationships*, 7 = *self-interest*). Finally, we used the same BSRI masculinity ($\alpha = .72$) and feminine ($\alpha = .76$) trait items as those used in Study 1 to measure the participants' masculinity and femininity.

Ideal and Perceived Economic Inequality

We used the same procedure and measures as in Study 1 to measure participants' ideal and perceived levels of economic inequality.

Sociodemographic and Socioeconomic Variables

The participants answered sociodemographic questions as in Study 1. We also measured political orientation ($M = 4.77$, $SD = 2.37$) and subjective SES ($M = 5.78$, $SD = 1.53$) in the same manner as in Study 1. Similarly, the participants indicated their educational attainment (from 1 = *primary studies* to 8 = *PhD studies*), and their family income level (from 1 = *below €650* to 10 = *more than €5,800*).

Results

The correlations between all the variables are available in Table 7.4.

Table 7.4.

Descriptive Statistics and Correlations between Variables in Study 2. Means and Standard Deviations are

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Masculinity	3.82 (0.89)						
2. Femininity	-.19**	4.67 (0.90)					
3. Ideal EI	.22**	-.11	1.63 (1.67)				
4. Perceived EI	.14	-.04	.67***	2.81 (2.18)			
5. Gender	-.33***	-.20**	-.36***	-.38***	-		
6. Age	.01	.03	.07	.07	-.16*	21.62 (4.09)	
7. PO	.26***	-.04	.15*	-.08	-.16*	-.06	4.77 (2.37)
8. SES	.23**	.03	.03	-.04	-.11	-.20**	.33***
9. CP	.26***	-15*	-.16*	.10	-.13	-.03	.05

Note. EP = Experimental manipulation (0 = Femininity-priming, 1 = Masculinity-priming); EI = Economic inequality; PO = Po
status; Gender (0 = man, 1 = woman). * *p* < .05, ** *p* < .01, ****p* < .001.

Manipulation Check

We conducted a Student's *t*-test (between-subjects) to check our manipulation's success. As expected, participants assigned to the masculinity-priming condition considered themselves to be focused on self-interest to a higher extent ($M = 4.38$, $SD = 1.60$), in comparison to the participants assigned to the femininity-priming condition ($M = 2.35$, $SD = 1.38$), $t(202) = 9.67$, $p < .001$, $d = 1.36$. These results suggest that the participants correctly interpreted the goal of our priming scenario.

We then ran two new *t*-tests using participants' masculinity and femininity scores in the BSRI as the dependent variables to test whether our experimental manipulation had worked. The outcomes suggested that the participants assigned to priming for masculinity described themselves as higher on masculinity ($M = 4.05$, $SD = 0.78$) than those assigned to priming for femininity did ($M = 3.60$, $SD = 0.94$), $t(202) = 3.74$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.52$. Conversely, participants assigned to priming for femininity evaluated themselves higher on femininity ($M = 4.80$, $SD = 0.85$) than those assigned to priming of masculinity ($M = 4.54$, $SD = 0.94$), $t(202) = -2.09$, $p = .038$, $d = 0.29$. These results suggest that the masculinity and femininity priming worked correctly.

Preregistered Analysis: Testing the Main Hypothesis

We conducted a Student's *t*-test (between-subjects) analysis with two levels (priming: masculinity [coded 1] vs. femininity [coded 0]) and with ideal economic inequality as the dependent variable. We found that participants assigned to the masculinity-priming condition scored higher on ideal economic inequality ($M = 1.90$, $SD = 2.03$); that is, they preferred higher levels of economic inequality than those assigned to femininity-priming did ($M = 1.37$, $SD = 1.18$), $t(202) = 2.26$, $p = .025$, $d = 0.32$, supporting our main hypothesis.

Nonpreregistered Analysis: Exploring the Interaction Between the Priming and Gender

Because the participants' gender may play an important role in this research, we decided to explore the effects of masculinity/femininity priming and gender. We conducted a two-way ANOVA, including the priming (Masculinity vs. Femininity) and participants' gender as the fixed factors and ideal economic inequality as the dependent variable. We also controlled by participants' political orientation and SES.

We observed a main effect of gender, $F(1, 193) = 25.21$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .12$, suggesting that men scored higher on their ideal economic inequality ($M = 2.46$, $SD = 2.17$) than women did ($M = 1.18$, $SD = 1.07$). We also observed a main effect of masculinity/femininity priming, $F(1, 193) = 4.27$, $p = .040$, $\eta_p^2 = .02$. This effect indicated that participants assigned to the masculinity-priming condition scored higher on ideal economic inequality than those assigned to the femininity-priming condition did, as we already observed in the preregistered *t*-test analysis, supporting our hypothesis.

More importantly, we found an interaction effect of the priming for masculinity and femininity with participants' gender, $F(1, 193) = 4.82$, $p = .029$, $\eta_p^2 = .02$. Pairwise comparison revealed that men assigned to the masculinity priming scored higher on ideal economic inequality ($M = 2.85$, $SD = 2.48$) than men assigned to the femininity priming did ($M = 1.86$, $SD = 1.47$), $M_D = 0.99$, $p = .008$, $\eta_p^2 = .04$. We did not find a significant effect of priming for women ($M_{Priming\ Masc} = 1.17$, $SD = 1.17$; $M_{Priming\ Fem} = 1.20$, $SD = 0.99$), $M_D = -0.03$, $p = .903$, $\eta_p^2 < .01$.

Nonpreregistered Analysis: Exploring the Effects of Masculinity Priming on Perceived Economic Inequality

We conducted a Student's *t*-test (between-subjects) analysis with two levels (priming: masculinity vs. femininity) and with perceived economic inequality as the dependent variable. We did not find a significant difference between the experimental conditions, $t(202) = 1.47$, $p = .144$, $d = .20$, suggesting that participants assigned to the masculinity- ($M = 3.04$, $SD = 2.55$) and femininity-priming conditions ($M = 2.59$, $SD = 1.73$) did not differ in their ideal economic inequality ratings.

Discussion

The results from Study 2 evidenced that a masculinity-priming may affect people's ideal level of economic inequality. As expected, we observed that when primed with traditional masculinity, people tend to prefer higher levels of economic inequality in comparison to when they are primed for traditional femininity. Adding more evidence to the results of Study 1, based on Study 2, we can say that masculinity priming affected the ideal level of economic inequality.

Exploring our data in more detail, the interaction between masculinity/femininity priming and participants' gender suggested that the priming effect was present for men but not for women. However, we should be cautious when interpreting this interaction effect because (a) it resulted from an exploratory analysis and was not hypothesized, (b) this study may not have enough statistical power to detect the effect in subgroups and (c) this interaction effect only emerged in the experimental, but not in the correlational study. Likewise, we did not observe effects of the priming on perceived economic inequality.

We should mention that participants described themselves higher on femininity (M = 4.54) when they were assigned to masculinity-priming, in comparison to their masculinity scores (M = 4.05). Nonetheless, we observed that masculinity and femininity priming worked as we wanted, as observed in the between-groups differences in the manipulation check.

General Discussion

The literature arising about the psychosocial processes that maintain inequality (e.g., (Rodríguez-Bailón et al., 2020) mainly has focused on the role of ideologies (e.g., (García-Sánchez, Willis, Rodríguez-Bailón, Palacio Sañudo, et al., 2018; Rodríguez-Bailón et al., 2017; Willis et al., 2015). However, to the best of our knowledge, other factors related to how people define themselves have not yet been considered. To address this gap, we conducted two studies—one correlational study and one preregistered experiment—in which we tested the association between masculinity orientation and the ideal size of economic inequality.

In Study 1, we found that more masculine-oriented participants preferred greater economic inequality. By contrast, femininity did not predict ideal economic inequality. Notably, these findings were independent of the participants' gender. These findings imply initial evidence of a relationship between masculinity and ideal economic inequality. Similarly, our results are in line with previous research showing an association between masculinity (and closely related constructs, e.g., competition) and economic inequality (e.g., (Moreno-Bella et al., 2019; Sommet et al., 2019).

Nonetheless, to corroborate that masculinity leads to greater ideal economic inequality, we conducted an experiment to establish a causal relationship between our main variables. In Study 2, we more directly assessed masculinity's role on the ideal levels of economic inequality using an experimental approach, in which we primed for either a masculinity or a femininity orientation. Consistent with our expectations, masculinity priming led to higher scores on the ideal economic inequality, as compared to femininity priming. Although this does not rule out the causality of economic inequality on masculinity norms and other related variables, it does show that a reverse and complementary pattern also exists: masculinity predicts people's ideal levels of economic inequality.

Notably, we found an effect on ideal economic inequality but not on perceived economic inequality. Thus, people do not perceive their social context differently depending on their masculinity or femininity—they only want it to be different from what it is (or what they think it is). Although past evidence suggested an associative network between perceived economic inequality and masculinity that might seem tautological, we went beyond this by showing that activating masculinity does not influence the current perceived level of inequality but instead a preference for higher economic inequality.

Our claim is that masculinity leads to one preferring higher levels of economic inequality, as an attempt to uphold social inequality. The present research is consistent with showing a relationship between masculinity and ideologies that promote inequality such as group-based inequality, sexism, and gay discrimination (Dahl et al., 2015; O'Connor et al., 2017; Weaver & Vescio, 2015). Our results are also consistent with research presenting masculinity as a form of power, status, and dominance (Dahl et al., 2015; Vandello et al., 2008; Weaver & Vescio, 2015). Concretely, in our research, we evidenced that masculinity (e.g., self-confidence, strength, dominance, and ease decision-making; (Bem, 1974) leads one to express higher ideal economic inequality. This is also in line with Weber's (2006) claim about masculinity's relevant roles on other power relationships (e.g., social classes) and the study of inequality.

Importantly, both of our samples comprised similar numbers of women and men; that is, the associations found were not due to a higher number of men —traditionally related to masculinity—in our sample. Indeed, the participants—even the male participants—generally considered themselves as more feminine than masculine (see Hentschel et al., 2019). However, research about changes in gender stereotypes has shown that women have increased their masculinity over the years (Bosak et al., 2018; Duehr & Bono, 2006; Eagly et al., 2019; Twenge, 1997). Hence, if masculinity predicts higher ideal economic inequality, could this mean that the levels of ideal economic inequality have also increased over time among women? Further research should explore the possible changes to the ideal levels of economic inequality supported by women.

Similarly, these results also could have important implications for reducing toxic and traditional masculinity. As previously mentioned, masculinity leads to support for social inequalities such as gender inequality (Kosakowska-Berezecka et al., 2016); therefore, there are recent attempts (e.g., educational programmes) to reduce traditional masculine self-descriptions in order to improve attitudes towards gender equality. Likewise, considering our findings, these programmes may also change attitudes towards economic inequality while reducing the preferred levels of economic inequality.

Being aware of our research limitations, we should note that the results from Study 2 might also be interpreted as femininity decreasing —rather than masculinity increasing— the desire for greater ideal economic inequality. However, in Study 1 we observed that femininity did not significantly predict the ideal levels of economic inequality, so this is consistent with our claims that it is mainly masculinity what it is driving our results. Nevertheless, whether masculinity increases ideal economic inequality and femininity simultaneously decreases it should be tested in future studies.

Conclusion

Our research proposes that masculinity —characterized by status, power, and dominance—may generate support for socioeconomic conditions that are more unequal. Supporting previous research, our findings suggest that masculinity is an important factor for maintaining the status quo and social inequalities within societies.

CAPÍTULO FINAL

FINAL CHAPTER

Capítulo 8

Discusión General y Conclusiones

En la presente tesis doctoral hemos analizado la relación entre la desigualdad económica y la percepción social, centrándonos en las dimensiones de agencia y comunión. Para ello, en los Capítulos 4, 5 y 6 incluimos un total de siete de experimentos en los que manipulamos el nivel de desigualdad económica de diferentes contextos sociales y medimos los efectos de esta desigualdad en la percepción social de otras personas, otros grupos sociales y de la propia persona participante. En general, los resultados muestran que el nivel de desigualdad económica percibido influye en tales percepciones. Para ratificar la importancia que tiene percibirse a sí mismo/a en términos agénticos y comunales, en el Capítulo 7 incluimos dos estudios con el propósito de examinar el efecto de la autopercepción masculina (i.e., agéntica) en el mantenimiento de la desigualdad económica: en el primer estudio, de naturaleza correlacional, exploramos la relación entre la autopercepción en términos de masculinidad y la desigualdad económica ideal; después realizamos un estudio experimental para intentar establecer un efecto causal.

A continuación, sintetizaremos los resultados obtenidos en los trabajos empíricos. Con el fin de hacerlo con la mayor claridad posible, los presentaremos como respuestas a las principales preguntas que hemos intentado responder en esta tesis. Tras este resumen, comentaremos las implicaciones y las limitaciones generales de nuestra investigación. Finalmente, propondremos nuevas ideas de investigación derivadas de nuestro trabajo y que podrían hacer avanzar esta área de estudio.

1. ¿Puede la Percepción de un Alto Nivel de Desigualdad Económica en una Sociedad Influir en el Contenido de la Percepción Social Acerca de las Personas que Viven en Dicho Entorno?

En el Estudio 1 del Capítulo 4 examinamos si la desigualdad económica podría afectar a la percepción social del ciudadano/a típico de esa sociedad, utilizando las dimensiones de masculinidad y feminidad. Desarrollamos un escenario sobre una sociedad ficticia de extraterrestres que no podían ser considerados hombres o mujeres. Para evitar que algunas personas pensaran en habitantes de diferentes clases sociales, les pedimos específicamente que evaluaran al ciudadano/a típico de esa sociedad.

Como esperábamos, las personas asignadas a la condición de alta desigualdad percibieron al ciudadano/a típico/a en mayor medida en términos de masculinidad que de feminidad (H_1); en la condición de baja desigualdad se le percibió de manera similar en ambas dimensiones. Hasta donde nuestro conocimiento alcanza, estos resultados han sido los primeros en evidenciar que la percepción social de ciudadanos/as en términos masculinos y femeninos varía en función del nivel de desigualdad percibida. Por tanto, contestando a la primera pregunta de investigación, podemos corroborar que la desigualdad económica sí influye en el contenido de la percepción social.

Nuestros hallazgos son consistentes con estudios previos sobre autopercepción y percepción del entorno que han mostrado que un alto (vs. bajo) nivel de desigualdad económica lleva a una mayor percepción de uno/a mismo/a como independiente y distante de los/as demás; a una menor percepción de la propia persona como interdependiente (Sánchez-Rodríguez, Willis, y Rodríguez-Bailón, 2019); y a percibir que existe más competición (vs. cooperación) en la sociedad (Sánchez-Rodríguez, Willis, et al., 2019; Sommet et al., 2019).

Estas variables afectadas por la desigualdad económica coinciden con aquellas características tradicionalmente masculinas (e.g., independencia) y femeninas (e.g., cooperación). De manera similar, creemos que nuestros resultados son congruentes con otras investigaciones que evidencian que la desigualdad afecta a determinados comportamientos de carácter agéntico —tradicionalmente masculino— y comunal —tradicionalmente femenino—. Por ejemplo, la mayor desigualdad económica también se ha asociado a una menor generosidad y amabilidad (de Vries et al., 2011; Paskov y Dewilde, 2012), y con una mayor hostilidad (Greitemeyer y Sagioglou, 2018). Basándonos en esta literatura y en los resultados obtenidos en el primer estudio del Capítulo 3, parece que la desigualdad económica refuerza aquellas características tradicionalmente adscritas a la masculinidad (i.e., contenido agéntico) mientras que debilita o reduce aquellos rasgos tradicionalmente asociados a la feminidad (i.e., contenido comunal) en la percepción social.

2. ¿La Desigualdad Económica Percibida Podría Afectar a la Percepción Social de las Personas que Pertenecen a Diferentes Clases Sociales?

Como hemos señalado, en el Estudio 1 (Capítulo 4) buscábamos que los juicios de las personas no se vieran afectados por la clase social del ciudadano/a, y por eso intentamos evitar que pensaran en personas de clase alta o baja. No obstante, después pensamos que sería interesante estudiar si la clase social de pertenencia del *target* podía influir en la manera en la que se le percibe en términos de masculinidad y feminidad. Los resultados del Estudio 2 del Capítulo 4 mostraron que a los miembros de clase social baja se les percibió como más femeninos que masculinos y a los miembros de la clase social alta como más masculinos que femeninos, y que esto último ocurría especialmente en la sociedad con alta desigualdad (vs. baja; H_2). Así pues, según nuestros resultados, el nivel desigualdad económica percibida sí afectó a la percepción social de los miembros de clase social alta en términos de masculinidad y feminidad, pero no a la percepción de los miembros de clase social baja.

Estos resultados son congruentes con la literatura previa sobre desigualdad económica y estereotipos de las diferentes clases sociales. Durante et al. (2017) mostraron que a las personas de clase social alta se les percibe como más competentes (i.e., agénticas) que sociables (i.e., comunales), especialmente en los países con altos niveles de desigualdad). Este incremento del estereotipo en términos de agencia (vs. comunión) de los miembros de las personas con más recursos, cuando la sociedad es muy desigual, podría interpretarse como un mecanismo que contribuye a legitimar la situación social de desigualdad (Fiske y Durante, 2019).

En efecto, la desigualdad económica refuerza el estereotipo agéntico de la clase social alta, lo que a su vez mantiene la desigualdad de clases sociales. Corroborando esta interpretación, Heiserman y Simpson (2017)[18] mostraron que la percepción de un alto (vs. un bajo) nivel de desigualdad económica llevaba a considerar a las personas de clase social alta como más competentes y a las de clase social baja como menos competentes. En la misma línea, una investigación reciente con una muestra mayor replicó estos resultados (Connor et al., 2021).

Así pues, la desigualdad económica parece generar una percepción de mayor meritocracia, lo que lleva a justificar la desigualdad entre clases (Mijs, 2019), puesto que se puede considerar que las personas de clase social alta tienen más mérito y merecen más recompensas (Fiske y Durante, 2019; Heiserman y Simpson, 2017). Esto podría generar un circulo vicioso: la desigualdad aumenta la competencia percibida de las clases altas, y este estereotipo puede terminar aumentando la desigualdad.

Por otro lado, estudios previos han mostrado que a las personas de clase social baja se les percibe como poco competentes pero sociables, incluso en los países con alta desigualdad económica. No obstante, los estereotipos de las personas de clase social baja parecen ser menos estables y consistentes, ya que en ocasiones las personas pertenecientes a esta clase social han sido evaluadas igual de competentes que sociables (Durante et al., 2017). Por tanto, consideramos que sería necesario explorar bajo qué

[18] Esta investigación se publicó con posterioridad a la realización del Estudio 2 del Capitulo 4.

circunstancias ocurren cada uno de estos resultados contradictorios y si existe algún otro factor que modere el posible efecto de la desigualdad económica.

También debemos tener en cuenta las diferentes etiquetas que se han utilizado en la investigación sobre los estereotipos de clase social baja. En nuestro caso hemos utilizado la etiqueta "clase social baja", mientras que otras investigaciones han utilizado la etiqueta "pobres" (Durante et al., 2017), "clase trabajadora" (Grigoryan et al., 2020), "personas que pertenecen al percentil 10" (Heiserman y Simpson, 2017), o han mostrado una imagen de personas clasificadas como clase social baja (Connor et al., 2021). La etiqueta utilizada podría sesgar la respuesta y explicar los resultados dispares encontrados en la literatura.

Por otro lado, los experimentos de Connor et al. (2021) mostraron que era la competencia la dimensión que variaba en función del nivel de desigualdad económica. Sin embargo, análisis con datos de diferentes países mostraron que era la dimensión de sociabilidad la que disminuía en el estereotipo de la clase social alta y aumentaba en el de clase social baja en los países con más desigualdad (Durante y Fiske, 2018). Futuros estudios podrían esclarecer esta cuestión.

3. ¿Afecta la Desigualdad Económica Percibida a los Estereotipos Sobre Hombres y Mujeres?

Una vez que mostramos que la desigualdad económica podía afectar a la percepción social de otras personas y a la de miembros de grupos de diferente clase social, quisimos examinar si la desigualdad económica podía influir también en la percepción social de hombres y mujeres (i.e., estereotipos de género). Aunque en los dos estudios ya comentados incluidos en el Capítulo 4 examinamos la masculinidad y feminidad, en esta ocasión decidimos abordar esta cuestión utilizando las dimensiones de agencia y comunión. Si bien ambos pares de dimensiones son similares (Abele y Wojciszke, 2007), se ha demostrado que la agencia y la comunión representan mejor las dos orientaciones generales de la cognición humana (i.e., interés en el propio individuo o en las relaciones sociales; Abele y Wojciszke, 2007; Bakan, 1966), ya que engloban varias dimensiones de percepción social. Asimismo, partimos de la evidencia que sostiene que, tradicionalmente, a los hombres se les ha percibido como más agénticos que comunales, mientras que a las mujeres se les ha percibido como más comunales que agénticas (Eagly, 1987; Ellemers, 2018).

Para llevar a cabo nuestro objetivo, en el Estudio 1 del Capítulo 4 utilizamos el paradigma experimental de Bimboola (i.e., se una sociedad ficticia con diferentes niveles de desigualdad económica, véase Sánchez-Rodríguez et al., 2020) y evaluamos la *percepción social del hombre y la mujer* que forman parte de esa sociedad, utilizando los rasgos agénticos y comunales de personalidad (Diekman y Eagly, 2000). Para evitar la posible influencia de los estereotipos sobre las clases sociales, les preguntamos por el ciudadano y la ciudadana típico/a de clase social media de dicha sociedad.

En este estudio encontramos que la desigualdad económica sí afecta a los estereotipos de género: al hombre se le percibió como aún más agéntico que comunal, pero sólo en la condición de alta desigualdad económica, es decir, aumenta la diferencia entre la agencia y la comunión que se le atribuye (H_5). En el caso de la mujer, el efecto que tiene la desigualdad reduce la diferencia entre la agencia y la comunión que se le atribuye a la mujer (H_6), haciendo que no existan diferencias significativas entre ambas dimensiones de percepción social cuando la desigualdad es alta—mientras que cuando la desigualdad era relativamente baja, a la mujer se le percibió como más comunal que agéntica—.

Sin embargo, el primer estudio del Capítulo 5 fue llevado a cabo en España, una sociedad culturalmente orientada a la feminidad (Hofstede Insights, 2020), donde la diferencia entre los roles tradicionales de género no es tan saliente como en otras sociedades más masculinas. Quisimos poner a prueba que el efecto de la desigualdad económica podía ocurrir incluso con una muestra en cuya cultura las diferencias de género estuvieran más presentes como norma social. Para ello, realizamos una réplica del experimento mencionado en México, que es una cultura más orientada a la masculinidad (Hofstede Insights, 2020). Los resultados de este segundo estudio replicaron el efecto de la desigualdad económica en la percepción del hombre. En la percepción de la mujer, al igual que en el Estudio 1, la desigualdad también afectó reduciendo las diferencias entre las dos dimensiones (aunque la comunión seguía siendo significativamente mayor que la agencia).

Estos resultados están en línea con aquellas investigaciones que muestran que a las personas de alto estatus social (e.g., clase social alta), ante situaciones de alta desigualdad económica, se les percibe como aún más agénticas que comunales (e.g., Connor et al., 2021; Estudio 2 del Capítulo 4). En cuanto al efecto de la desigualdad económica sobre el estereotipo de las mujeres, nuestros resultados podrían discrepar de aquellos que muestran que existe una mayor ambivalencia en el estereotipo de los grupos sociales con menor estatus (e.g., Durante et al., 2013). No obstante, también es cierto que la evidencia actual sobre el estereotipo de los grupos de menor estatus no es muy consistente (e.g., Durante et al., 2017).

También realizamos análisis secundarios en los dos estudios incluidos en el Capítulo 5 para examinar si la alta desigualdad económica producía los cambios en la percepción en términos agénticos, comunales, o en ambas dimensiones. Los resultados mostraron que la percepción de comunión, tanto en el hombre como en la mujer, era menor en la condición de alta (vs. baja) desigualdad económica; sin embargo, la percepción de agencia no se vio afectada por el nivel de desigualdad. Estos resultados son congruentes con los de aquellas investigaciones que muestran que la norma social de los contextos desiguales se caracteriza por una disminución en el interés por los demás y en la cooperación (Sánchez-Rodríguez et al., 2021; Sánchez-Rodríguez, Willis et al., 2019), y por el incremento de la distancia social (Pickett y Wilkinson, 2015; Sánchez-Rodríguez, Willis, y Rodríguez-Bailón, 2019). Consideramos que estos resultados muestran la importancia y fuerza del efecto de la desigualdad económica sobre la percepción social, puesto que los estereotipos de género parecen ser menos dependientes de la influencia de otras variables externas (como el contexto socioeconómico) que otros estereotipos (Ellemers, 2018).

En síntesis, hemos mostrado que la desigualdad económica percibida afecta a los estereotipos de género. Aunque hemos encontrado los mismos resultados en dos países diferentes —uno con alta y otro con masculinidad cultural— no podemos concluir con toda certeza que la desigualdad afecta a los estereotipos de género independientemente de la masculinidad o feminidad cultural. Sería necesario realizar una investigación más exhaustiva que aplicara modelos multinivel para explorar la relación entre la desigualdad económica con los estereotipos de género en distintos países, teniendo en cuenta otras variables culturales (e.g., masculinidad-feminidad, distancia de poder, individualismo/colectivismo).

4. ¿Puede la Desigualdad Económica a Nivel Organizacional Afectar a la Percepción Social?

Tras mostrar que la desigualdad económica que se percibe en una sociedad puede afectar a cómo percibimos a las demás personas, nos preguntamos si se replicarían algunos de los hallazgos anteriores en un contexto diferente, más concreto. Así, consideramos relevante estudiar la desigualdad económica en el campo organizacional, puesto que la desigualdad que se genera dentro de las organizaciones está muy relacionada con la desigualdad económica en las sociedades en las que se insertan dichas organizaciones (Atkinson, 2015; Bapuji et al., 2020; Cobb, 2016).

Para este fin realizamos los tres estudios que se presentan en el Capítulo 6, en los que manipulamos el nivel de desigualdad económica (alta desigualdad vs. baja desigualdad vs. igualdad) y evaluamos tres variables: la percepción social de una persona trabajadora de rango laboral medio, la autopercepción de la persona participante (Estudio Piloto, Estudios 1 y 2), y la percepción del empleado/a de mayor rango en la organización (Estudios 1 y 2). En todos los casos, las percepciones se analizaron utilizando las dimensiones de agencia y comunión.

Los resultados de los tres estudios permitieron concluir que la agencia (vs. comunión) predomina en la percepción social de otras personas en las organizaciones con alta desigualdad económica frente a las organizaciones menos desiguales e igualitarias (H_5). Estos resultados replican el efecto encontrado en el Estudio 1 del Capítulo 4 en el que se manipuló la desigualdad económica en una sociedad. Nuestros resultados también apoyan las investigaciones que sugieren que las organizaciones son contextos que pueden reflejar las dinámicas de la sociedad, y que la desigualdad económica a nivel organizacional puede afectar a las personas de manera similar que la desigualdad económica de la sociedad (Bratanova et al., 2019). De hecho, en el Estudio 1 y el Estudio 2 del Capítulo 6 realizamos análisis alternativos y encontramos que la percepción de relaciones competitivas entre los/as trabajadores de la organización explicaba la relación entre la desigualdad económica y la predominancia de la agencia (vs. comunión) en la percepción social de los trabajadores. Es decir, en las organizaciones más desiguales se percibía que las relaciones entre los empleados eran competitivas —como también se ha visto en investigaciones sobre la desigualdad económica en la sociedad (Sánchez-Rodríguez, Willis, Jetten, et al., 2019b; Sommet et al., 2019)— y esto predecía la percepción de los/as trabajadores como más agénticos que comunales.

Las propias organizaciones tienden a ser percibidas en términos de competencia (Aaker et al., 2010) y, por tanto, es probable que se considere que quienes trabajan en ellas requieren de esa dimensión. Además, la alta competencia suele ser una característica asociada a los y las "profesionales" (Fiske et al., 2002). Parecería lógico esperar que la motivación, capacidad y habilidad para conseguir objetivos (i.e., la agencia) se asociara con las organizaciones y las personas que forman parte de esos contextos, y que esta asociación fuera más fuerte que la asociación entre desigualdad-comunión. No obstante, en nuestros estudios encontramos que en la organización económicamente igualitaria solía primar la comunión (vs. agencia). Una posible explicación podría ser que fuera vista como una organización sin ánimo de lucro, ya que este tipo de organizaciones son percibidas en términos comunales (Aaker et al., 2010). Aunque en las manipulaciones (especialmente en la del Estudio 2 del Capítulo 6) tratamos de hacer patente que la organización descrita era una organización con fines lucrativos, consideramos que es necesario realizar estudios en los que este aspecto esté más controlado. También debemos señalar que a pesar de hacer saliente que se trataba de una organización con fines lucrativos, en las organizaciones reales no es común implementar la igualdad salarial.

En relación con la autopercepción de quienes participaron en estas investigaciones, encontramos que las personas tendían a tener una mayor percepción de sí mismas en términos de agencia (vs. comunión) en las tres condiciones experimentales, por lo que no tenemos evidencia que corrobore la hipótesis planteada (ver H_6 en Tabla 8.1). Aunque estos resultados parecen ser contrarios a la premisa propuesta desde el *dual perspective model of agency and communion* (DPM-AC; Abele y Wojciszke, 2014) que sostiene que la agencia es la dimensión dominante en la autopercepción, los autores del modelo también sugieren que las personas construyen su reputación en base a la comunión, ya que esta dimensión es más relevante para la aprobación social de los demás. Dado que a quienes participaron en nuestras investigaciones les pedíamos que indicaran cómo se describirían en una entrevista de trabajo, la comunión puede reflejarse en la intención de ser bien evaluado/a y aprobado/a socialmente. Por tanto, consideramos importante que otros estudios muestren cómo se perciben a sí mismas las personas cuando se ponen en el rol de trabajadores de la organización; o mejor aún, evaluando la autopercepción de auténticos trabajadores de empresas que difieren en los salarios y recompensas que reciben.

Por último, los resultados encontrados en las investigaciones incluidas en el Capítulo 6 no encontramos que el/la empleado/a de mayor estatus de la organización (líder) fuera evaluado como más agéntico que comunal especialmente en la condición de alta desigualdad (vs. las otras dos condiciones experimentales), lo que no nos permitió corroborar nuestras hipótesis (ver H_7 en Tabla 8.1.). Podría ocurrir que la agencia fuera considerada una dimensión inherente en los/as líderes de las organizaciones, por lo que la percepción de estos *targets* no se viera afectada por la presencia de diferencias salariales y de recursos. No obstante, la presencia de igualdad económica sí influyó en la percepción social del líder, haciendo que se le percibiera de una manera más similar en cuanto a su nivel de agencia y comunión.

En resumen, y para contestar a la pregunta de investigación, podemos concluir que la desigualdad económica en el ámbito organizacional también influye en la percepción social de las personas que forman parte de dichos entornos; sobre todo cuando se evalúa a una persona con un rango laboral medio.

5. ¿Puede la Autopercepción en Términos de Masculinidad Influir en las Actitudes Hacia la Desigualdad Económica?

En las investigaciones incluidas en el Capítulo 7 analizamos si la autopercepción masculina (i.e., contenido agéntico) predice la aceptación de la desigualdad económica ideal. Con estas últimas investigaciones queríamos mostrar las importantes consecuencias que puede tener autopercibirse en términos de masculinidad (agencia) o feminidad (comunión). En un primer estudio correlacional (Estudio 1, Capítulo 7), encontramos una relación positiva entre la masculinidad autopercibida de los/as participantes y la desigualdad económica ideal (H_8). Es decir, cuanto más se percibían las personas a sí mismas en términos de masculinidad, mayor era la brecha salarial preferida.

Con el objetivo de mostrar que se trataba de un efecto causal, esto es, que era la masculinidad la que influía sobre la desigualdad económica ideal, llevamos a cabo un segundo estudio con un diseño experimental. Los/as participantes debían recordar y escribir una situación en la que se hubieran comportado con rasgos masculinos o femeninos, en función de la condición experimental a la que fueron asignados/as. Los resultados de este estudio mostraron que las personas que fueron asignadas a la condición donde primamos la masculinidad (vs. la condición de feminidad) preferían mayores niveles de desigualdad económica. No obstante, nuestros resultados mostraron que este efecto ocurría en los hombres, pero no en las mujeres.

Aunque en el Estudio 2 encontramos un efecto de interacción entre el priming de masculinidad-feminidad y el género de quien participó, debemos tener cautela a la hora de interpretar este resultado puesto que, en este estudio, el tamaño muestral era pequeño para examinar un efecto de la interacción siguiendo los estándares actuales. Además, esta interacción sólo surgió en el estudio experimental pero no en el correlacional.

Por otra parte, y dado que estudios recientes han mostrado que la masculinidad se asocia con un mayor sexismo, racismo y actitudes xenófobas (Vescio y Schermerhorn, 2021), consideramos que nuestros resultados coinciden con los de la literatura que sugiere que la masculinidad promueve la desigualdad entre los grupos (e.g., Dahl et al., 2015). En este caso, mostramos que también puede promover aceptación y/o preferencia de la desigualdad económica entre las personas.

No obstante, debemos aclarar que en esta literatura previa la concepción de la masculinidad es algo diferente a la nuestra, ya que se examina la masculinidad hegemónica que sostiene, legitima y refuerza la superioridad de la masculinidad sobre la feminidad (Vescio y Schermerhorn, 2021). En nuestro caso, evaluamos la masculinidad con los rasgos del BSRI (Bem, 1974), cuya interpretación se orienta más hacia una visión de la propia persona como agéntica y comunal. Otros instrumentos (e.g., Precarious Manhood Beliefs de Vandello et al., 2008; o el Male Role Norms Inventory de Thompson y Pleck, 1986) sí reflejan el componente de estatus y poder implícito en la masculinidad, por lo que sería importante utilizarlos en futuros estudios. Esto también nos lleva a ser cautelosos con la interpretación de los resultados que mostramos.

Un resumen de la evidencia empírica reportada en cada capítulo, así como la pregunta de investigación y objetivos a los que se pretendía responder, puede verse en la Tabla 8.1.

Tabla 8.1.

Resumen de los Objetivos, Preguntas de Investigación e Hipótesis de la Tesis Doctoral

Objetivo General				
Estudiar la relación entre la desigualdad económica y la percepción social.				
Preguntas de Investigación	**Objetivos Específicos**	**Hipótesis**	**Capítulo y Estudio Correspondientes**	**Respuesta**
1. ¿Puede la percepción de un alto nivel de desigualdad económica en una sociedad influir en el contenido de la percepción social acerca de las personas que viven en dicho entorno?	Examinar el efecto de la desigualdad económica percibida en la percepción social del típico/a habitante en términos de masculinidad (i.e., agencia) y feminidad (i.e., comunión).	H_1: En la sociedad en la que se perciba alta (vs. baja) desigualdad económica se percibirá al típico/a habitante como más masculino (vs. femenino).	Capítulo 4: Estudio 1 (H_1)	Sí. En la sociedad con alta (vs. baja) desigualdad económica, los participantes percibieron al ciudadano/a típico/a como más masculino (vs. femenino; H_1).
2. ¿La desigualdad económica percibida podría afectar a la percepción social de las personas que pertenecen a las clases sociales alta y baja?	Examinar el efecto de la desigualdad económica percibida en la de los/as habitantes de clase alta y baja en términos de masculinidad (i.e., agencia) y feminidad (i.e., comunión).	H_2: En la sociedad en la que se perciba alta (vs. baja) desigualdad económica se percibirá al habitante de clase social alta como más masculino (vs. femenino).	Capítulo 4: Estudio 2 (H_2)	Sí. En la sociedad con alta (vs. baja) desigualdad, los/as participantes percibieron al ciudadano/a de clase social alta como más masculino (vs. femenino; H_2).
3. ¿Afecta la desigualdad económica percibida a los estereotipos sobre hombres y mujeres?	Examinar el efecto de la desigualdad económica percibida en los estereotipos de género (i.e., atribuciones de agencia y comunión a hombres y mujeres).	En la sociedad con alta (vs. baja) desigualdad económica: (H_3) el estereotipo masculino como más agéntico (vs. comunal) se acentuará, y (H_4) el estereotipo femenino como más comunal (vs. agéntico) se reducirá.	Capítulo 5: Estudios 1 y 2 (H_3, y H_4)	Sí. En la sociedad con alta (vs. baja) desigualdad económica el estereotipo masculino en términos de agencia (vs. comunalidad) se acentuó (H_3), y el estereotipo femenino en términos de comunalidad (vs. agencia) se redujo (H_4).

(Continúa tabla)

Tabla 8.1.

(Continuación de la tabla)

Preguntas de Investigación	Objetivos Específicos	Hipótesis	Capítulo y Estudio Correspondientes	Respuesta
4. ¿Puede la desigualdad económica en el ámbito organizacional afectar a la percepción social?	Analizar el efecto de la desigualdad económica percibida a nivel organizacional en la percepción social en términos agénticos y comunales	En la organización con alta desigualdad económica (vs. baja desigualdad e igualdad): (H_5) se percibirá al trabajador/a de rango medio como más agéntico (vs. comunal), (H_6) las personas se autodescribirán como más agéntico (vs. comunal), y (H_7) se percibirá al trabajador/a de alto rango (i.e., líder) como más agéntico (vs. comunal).	Capítulo 6: Estudio Piloto (H_5) Estudios 1 y 2 (H_5, H_6, y H_7)	Sí. En la organización con alta desigualdad económica (vs. baja desigualdad e igualdad) se percibió al trabajador/a de rango medio como más agéntico que comunal (H_5). No se encontró que las personas se autopercibieran con mayor agencia que comunalidad en función del nivel de desigualdad (no confirmándose la H_6). Encontramos que en las organizaciones con alta y baja desigualdad (vs. igualdad) las personas percibieron al trabajador/a de alto rango (i.e., líder) como más agéntico (vs. comunal), pero no especialmente en la de alta vs. baja desigualdad (no se confirma la H_7).
5. ¿Puede la autopercepción en términos de masculinidad influir en las actitudes hacia la desigualdad económica?	Analizar si la autopercepción en términos masculinos (i.e., agénticos) predice la desigualdad económica ideal	H_8: La autopercepción en términos de masculinidad (vs. feminidad) predecirá la preferencia de mayores niveles de desigualdad económica	Capítulo 7: Estudios 1 y 2 (H_8)	Sí. La autopercepción en términos de masculinidad (vs. feminidad) predijo una mayor desigualdad ideal (H_8).

6. Implicaciones

Los resultados encontrados en esta tesis doctoral han proporcionado evidencia empírica sobre la relación entre la desigualdad económica y la percepción social. Consideramos que suponen una de las primeras evidencias sobre la asociación entre el contenido agéntico y comunal de la percepción social y la desigualdad económica percibida e ideal. A continuación, señalamos algunas de las implicaciones teóricas derivadas de estos estudios.

En primer lugar, los resultados sobre la relación entre la desigualdad económica y la percepción social contribuyen a la reciente literatura sobre las características que componen el clima normativo de la desigualdad (Sánchez-Rodríguez et al., 2021; Sánchez-Rodríguez, Willis, et al., 2019). Nuestros hallazgos van en la línea de los estudios que han examinado diferentes factores relacionados con la agencia (e.g., independencia) y la comunión (e.g., cooperación). Consideramos que nuestra investigación da un paso más al evaluar, en concreto, la percepción de las características de personalidad de los individuos que forman parte de contextos que varían en su nivel de desigualdad económica. En otras palabras, mostramos que la desigualdad no sólo cambia la percepción de cómo otras personas se comportan; también cambia la percepción de cómo son.

En segundo lugar, otra evidencia encontrada en nuestras investigaciones concierne al efecto de la desigualdad económica percibida sobre los estereotipos de la clase social. Recientemente se ha examinado la competencia y la sociabilidad de las clases sociales utilizando otras manipulaciones experimentales de la desigualdad económica (Connor et al., 2021). Asimismo, Tanjitpiyanond et al. (2021) han mostrado que la percepción de alta desigualdad económica hace que a las personas de clase social baja se les perciba como personas poco asertivas y poco morales, y a las de clase social alta como personas muy asertivas, pero poco morales. Sin embargo, estos estudios fueron realizados después de la publicación de las investigaciones incluidas en el Capítulo 4. Por lo tanto, podemos decir que nuestros estudios han sido, al menos, unos de los primeros en el análisis experimental de los efectos de la desigualdad económica percibida en los estereotipos de clase social.

En tercer lugar, consideramos que nuestras investigaciones sobre la relación entre la desigualdad económica y los estereotipos de género suponen un primer paso en el estudio de ambos temas de manera conjunta. Hasta donde conocemos, los estudios sobre percepción de desigualdad económica y estereotipos se habían centrado fundamentalmente en los estereotipos de clase social, pero no en el efecto de la desigualdad sobre los estereotipos de género. Consideramos que nuestros hallazgos pueden contribuir a cubrir ese vacío en la literatura al mostrar que en los contextos altamente desiguales la norma descriptiva —para hombres y mujeres— es ser menos comunal que en los contextos relativamente poco desiguales.

En cuarto lugar, los efectos de la desigualdad económica sobre la percepción social en el ámbito organizacional pueden plantear nuevas preguntas dentro de la psicología organizacional. Las condiciones contextuales de la organización (e.g., crisis y éxito financiero) pueden determinar los rasgos ideales en quien ejerce el liderazgo y la preferencia por diferentes candidatos/as (Kulich et al., 2018; Ryan et al., 2011). Nuestros resultados nos permiten preguntarnos si la desigualdad económica, además de afectar a los rasgos descriptivos de las personas que forman parte de la organización, también podría determinar la preferencia por líderes con diferentes perfiles (agénticos vs. comunales) y los motivos que subyacen a esta preferencia (e.g., el deseo de cambio y la reducción de desigualdades excesivas).

En quinto lugar, los hallazgos encontrados muestran que no sólo la desigualdad económica puede afectar a la percepción de características descriptivas de otras personas, sino que también la autopercepción de la propia persona en términos de masculinidad puede influir en el nivel de desigualdad que considera que debería existir. Por tanto, la autopercepción en términos de agencia (vs. comunión) puede ser consecuencia de un entorno desigual, pero también puede potenciar las actitudes positivas hacia la desigualdad económica.

En resumen, consideramos que los resultados que derivan de la tesis suponen un avance en el estudio de la desigualdad económica y la percepción social al examinar el efecto de aquella sobre el contenido de la percepción mediante diseños experimentales, en diferentes contextos sociales (i.e., sociedades y organizaciones), y utilizando diferentes *targets* de evaluación (i.e., *targets* asexuados, individuos de diferente clase social, hombres, mujeres, empleados/as, líderes de organizaciones, y la propia persona), y mostrando que la manera en la que nos percibimos puede contribuir a la aceptación de la desigualdad económica.

Las implicaciones prácticas de nuestra investigación inevitablemente se relacionan con su contribución teórica. Así, por ejemplo, los hallazgos encontrados en esta tesis podrían ser de apoyo en aquellos informes desarrollados por algunas organizaciones (e.g., Oxfam, ONU) sobre las consecuencias de la desigualdad económica y su interseccionalidad con otras desigualdades (e.g., género).

Por otro lado, los resultados obtenidos en la tesis podrían animar a desarrollar campañas de concienciación y cambio sobre los estereotipos de diferentes grupos sociales, mostrando sus orígenes y consecuencias. Este tipo de intervenciones lograrían modificar la manera en la que las personas interpretan su propio comportamiento y el de otras personas (Dittmann y Stephens, 2017) y podría ser una manera para intentar amortiguar los efectos de la percepción de desigualdad económica en los estereotipos sociales (e.g., clase social, género) y su perpetuación. Por ejemplo, sería interesante desarrollar, desde la educación primaria, campañas de concienciación de los estereotipos sociales y la forma en que la desigualdad puede influir en cómo percibimos a las personas de distintos grupos y clases sociales.

Asimismo, nuestros resultados muestran que a mayor desigualdad económica, menor es la percepción de comunión. Por tanto, consideramos que sería necesario que en los entornos con altos niveles de desigualdad económica se prestara una mayor atención a la comunión. Además de las citadas campañas de concienciación y cambios de estereotipos tradicionales, una manera de paliar el efecto negativo de la desigualdad económica sobre la comunión sería mediante la realización de actividades que ayuden a fomentar los lazos sociales, la cooperación y el sentido de comunidad entre las personas y grupos. Por ejemplo, en aquellos contextos en que las diferencias económicas sean muy altas, sería más importante aún promover actividades que fomenten la participación comunitaria, como actividades lúdicas sobre temas sociales hasta participación en voluntariados (Moreno-Jiménez et al., 2013). Esta participación comunitaria, además de mejorar la sensación de control y el bienestar ante una situación económicamente amenazante como es vivir en un entorno muy desigual (Chavis y Wandersman, 1990), también podría ayudar a crear una norma social basada en la cooperación y, por tanto, en la comunión.

Por último, debemos mencionar que una de las maneras más eficaces de reducir las consecuencias de la desigualdad económica (tanto las que hemos mostrado aquí como las encontradas por otras investigaciones) sería reducir el nivel de desigualdad presente en las sociedades. Así, desde la psicología social se ha hecho hincapié en la relevancia del contexto directo con la desigualdad económica: la percepción de desigualdad económica entre personas del círculo social más cercano lleva a las personas a apoyar políticas redistributivas (García-Castro et al., 2020). Esto, a largo plazo, podrían suponer una reducción del nivel de desigualdad económica en la sociedad. Por tanto, aunque no de manera directa, ser conscientes y percibir la desigualdad que existe en nuestro entorno también podría repercutir en las consecuencias psicosociales de la desigualdad económica.

7. Limitaciones

A pesar de que los estudios realizados en esta tesis suponen una contribución novedosa en psicología social, no están exentos de limitaciones. A continuación, resumiremos algunas limitaciones que consideramos que comparten las diferentes investigaciones realizadas en la tesis doctoral, aunque hayan podido ser señaladas anteriormente en los diferentes capítulos empíricos.

En primer lugar, hemos de tener en cuenta la relativa baja validez ecológica de nuestras investigaciones. Dado que el nivel de desigualdad económica que nuestros participantes percibían en su entorno real escapaba de nuestro control, necesitábamos realizar estudios experimentales en los que pudiéramos manipular el nivel de desigualdad presente en un determinado entorno. Pero el uso de diseños experimentales basados en sociedades y organizaciones ficticias (Capítulos 4, 5 y 6) pone de relieve la dificultad de que las conclusiones derivadas de los resultados obtenidos pudieran aplicarse fuera del ámbito experimental. En los dos experimentos del Capítulo 4, pedimos a quienes participaron que se imaginaran una sociedad ficticia de extraterrestres que no tenían un género definido. Esto nos permitió evaluar la masculinidad y feminidad evitando los roles y estereotipos tradicionales de género; no obstante, no es una situación que pueda ocurrir en nuestro entorno real. En el Capítulo 5 tratamos de solventar esta limitación al utilizar el paradigma de Bimboola y preguntando acerca de los hombres y las mujeres que vivían allí. Sin embargo, a pesar de que las personas que habitaban esa supuesta sociedad sí que forman parte de nuestra realidad social (i.e., hombres y mujeres), la sociedad seguía siendo ficticia y desconocida para nuestros participantes. Una manera de superar esta limitación podría ser creando manipulaciones experimentales que versen sobre el país de origen o en el que residan los/as participantes. Aunque nos planteamos replicar nuestros resultados con este tipo de manipulación, la llegada del COVID-19 y las distintas predicciones sobre su impacto económico nos frenaron en nuestro intento de replicar estos efectos utilizando información relacionada con España (e.g., podría ser complicado manipular un bajo nivel de desigualdad dentro del contexto actual).

El cambio de paradigma experimental en el Capítulo 6 también presenta ciertas limitaciones. Además de tratarse de una organización ficticia, la inclusión de una condición de igualdad económica también supone un problema. A pesar de que en algunas organizaciones se ha tratado de implementar el mismo salario para todas las personas empleadas (e.g., Stern, 2021), esto no es común en empresas con ánimo de lucro. Consideramos que esto podría haber influido en las respuestas de los participantes, dado que se les preguntaba sobre cómo son los/as trabajadores de una empresa que rara vez han podido ver o imaginarse en el mundo real.

En segundo lugar, otra limitación se refiere a los instrumentos utilizados. Por ejemplo, la medida utilizada para evaluar la desigualdad económica ideal en el Capítulo 7 se basa en una estimación de los salarios que las personas considerarían justos. Uno de los problemas que presenta esta medida es el anclaje a la desigualdad económica percibida (Pedersen y Mutz, 2019). Y, como se mencionó anteriormente, las personas no suelen estimar correctamente el nivel de desigualdad existente (Gimpelson y Treisman, 2018; Hauser y Norton, 2017). Por otro lado, la utilización de las traducciones al español del inventario de Bem (1974) y los rasgos de Diekman y Eagly (2000), tratándose en algunos casos de versiones de hace décadas, suponen otra limitación. Consideramos que en futuras investigaciones sería necesario contar con instrumentos mejor adaptados al español y al momento actual, y que mostraran mayores evidencias de validez y fiabilidad.

En tercer lugar, otra limitación importante de nuestros estudios es el tipo de muestra a la que tuvimos acceso. En la mayoría de nuestros estudios (excepto en el Estudio Piloto del Capítulo 6 y el Estudio 1 del Capítulo 7) la muestra estuvo compuesta por población universitaria. Esto supone que debemos ser cautos/as a la hora de extrapolar nuestras conclusiones a la población general. Numerosos problemas, entre los que se incluyen cuestiones de financiación, han limitado el acceso a muestras más representativas de la población. Dadas las características de nuestros objetivos, realizar estudios con población general de sociedades (e.g., ciudades, países) muy desiguales (vs. poco desiguales) y con trabajadores de organizaciones desiguales (vs. poco desiguales) enriquecería las conclusiones que aquí hemos presentado mediante diseños experimentales, y a la vez, superaría la limitación de la validez ecológica.

Por último, en este trabajo nos basamos fundamentalmente en las dos dimensiones generales de agencia y comunión. Consideramos que utilizar las dos dimensiones ha servido como punto de partida para explorar el efecto de la desigualdad económica percibida en la percepción social. Pero sería interesante tener en cuenta, por separado, las diferentes facetas de las dimensiones de agencia (i.e., asertividad y competencia) y comunión (i.e., sociabilidad y moralidad).

8. Futuras Direcciones

Según los trabajos empíricos recogidos en esta tesis, y teniendo en cuenta las limitaciones citadas, podrían surgir nuevas líneas de investigación que complementaran nuestros resultados y ayudaran a esclarecer la relación entre la desigualdad económica y la percepción social. Algunas ideas ya han sido sugeridas a lo largo de los distintos apartados de implicaciones y limitaciones. Aquí presentaremos ideas que derivan de otras preguntas que nos hemos planteado a lo largo del desarrollo de esta tesis doctoral.

Primero, debido a la posible controversia acerca de si la desigualdad económica como indicador macroeconómico (i.e., objetiva) tiene efectos similares a los de la desigualdad económica percibida sobre la percepción social, podrían llevarse a cabo nuevos estudios que examinen ambas variables de manera conjunta (e.g., Sommet et al., 2019). Consideramos que sería enriquecedor analizar si la desigualdad económica percibida puede explicar el efecto de la desigualdad económica objetiva sobre, por ejemplo, los estereotipos, o si puede funcionar como una variable moderadora en dicho efecto.

En segundo lugar, otros posibles nuevos estudios podrían girar en torno a nuevos *targets* de evaluación. Nuestros resultados sugieren que la desigualdad económica puede influir en los estereotipos de clase social y género, y que, por tanto, podría tener importantes repercusiones para el mantenimiento de las desigualdades sociales. Una investigación reciente sugiere que la desigualdad económica incrementa el prejuicio hacia las personas de diferente etnia, con diferente idioma, religión, y hacia personas inmigrantes (Caluori et al., 2020). Según este resultado, creemos que sería interesante analizar si la desigualdad económica también influye en los estereotipos de las minorías étnicas y racializadas, en términos de agencia y comunión. Se podría esperar que la desigualdad económica redujera la agencia y, especialmente, la comunión atribuida a estos grupos, y que ello se relacionara con la evaluación prejuiciosa de estos grupos minoritarios.

Por otro lado, en nuestra tesis hemos analizado la percepción de líderes organizacionales. El actual contexto sociopolítico se caracteriza por el surgimiento y apoyo a líderes políticos más orientados al autoritarismo que a la democracia (Kriesi y Pappas, 2015; Torres-Vega et al., 2021). Estudios recientes han mostrado que la percepción social de estos líderes (e.g., su competencia y sociabilidad) es una variable predictora de la eficacia con la que se les percibe (Sainz et al., 2021). Teniendo en cuenta el incremento de las desigualdades a causa del COVID-19 (Palomino et al., 2021; Rodríguez-Bailón, 2020), consideramos que sería importante esclarecer si la desigualdad económica puede influir en cómo se percibe a los actuales dirigentes nacionales y miembros de otros grupos políticos, y si esto a su vez puede afectar en la intención de voto o preferencia por líderes políticos con estilos de liderazgo opuestos.

En resumen, el estudio de la relación entre la desigualdad económica y la percepción social abre una serie de posibles líneas que ayudarían a comprender cómo las disparidades económicas pueden influir en la manera en que las personas interpretan a las demás y también en sus actitudes hacia ellas. Nuestra contribución, junto con otras líneas de investigación paralelas, puede servir como uno de los puntos de partida que permitan conocer mejor qué dinámicas se dan en los contextos más desiguales, y qué factores pueden influir en que las personas se inclinen hacia la desigualdad económica.

9. Conclusions

In this doctoral dissertation we attempted to explore the relationship between economic inequality and social perception. First, we mainly aimed to test the causal effect of economic inequality on social perception throughout the first seven studies (Chapters 4, 5, and 6) presented in the doctoral thesis. We analysed social perception firstly in terms of masculinity and femininity and later relied on the broader Agency–Communion framework. Our results suggest that the level of economic inequality is an informative clue that shapes the way in which we perceive other people. Concretely, when perceived economic inequality is high, people perceive others as more masculine (i.e., the broader agentic content) than feminine (i.e., the broader communal content).

Our findings also show that perceived economic inequality shapes social class and gender stereotypes. Regarding the former, people assigned to the condition of high (vs. low) economic inequality considered that high-SES people were mainly more masculine than feminine. Low-SES stereotypes were not affected by the manipulated level of economic inequality. Similarly, men were perceived as even more agentic than communal when economic inequality was high (vs. low). By contrast, and although women were always perceived as more communal than agentic, the difference between both dimensions was smaller when economic differences in the society were bigger.

Importantly, the agency–communion differences in gender stereotypes were driven by a decrease of communion in highly economically unequal societies.

The influence of economic inequality was also tested in organizational settings. We observed again that people who were exposed to high economic inequality perceived middle-rank workers as more agentic than communal, whereas there were no differences between both dimensions when economic inequality was low and whereas communal perception increased over agentic perception when there was total equality. Moreover, self-perception was also more oriented towards communion when people perceived equality, and in this situation the prominence of agency over communion in the social perception of leaders disappeared.

Finally, in Chapter 7, we aimed to explore a reverse pattern suggesting that self-perception in terms of masculinity and femininity may affect people's attitudes towards economic inequality. The results of our last two studies suggest that people who perceived themselves as more masculine (i.e., agentic-view orientation) than feminine (i.e., communal-view orientation) reported higher levels of ideal economic inequality.

Overall, the findings of this doctoral thesis support previous literature by suggesting that economic inequality is an informative clue that shapes social psychological processes. They also contribute to a recent theoretical proposal that aimed to go deep into the characteristics of the normative social climate of economic inequality (Sánchez-Rodríguez et al., 2021). In short, in this thesis we show that economic inequality orients our perception of the social world towards agency and not communion. This may benefit those who fit the agency norm (i.e., advantaged social groups) and harm those who do not (i.e., disadvantaged social groups). Going further, social perception increases the economic gap that people prefer, which in turn helps to reproduce inequality. All in all, we showed that the perception of economic inequality is an important process that shapes how we perceive other people and groups. Economic inequality, in short, influences how we perceive the social world.

MATERIAL SUPLEMENTARIO Y REFERENCIAS

SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS AND REFERENCES

Material Suplementario

Supplementary Material

Supplementary Material

Pertaining to

Chapter 4

"Economic Inequality and Masculinity-Femininity: The Prevailing Perceived Traits in Higher Unequal Contexts Are Masculine"

SM4.1. Manipulation of Economic Inequality (used in Study 1 and Study 2)

SM4.2. Spanish adaptation of the BSRI (Bem, 1974; adapted to Spanish by Páez and Fernández, 2004), used in Study 1 and Study 2

SM4.3. Main analysis of Study 1, controlling for sociodemographic variables.

SM4.4. Presentation of Table 4.S1

SM4.5. Main analysis of Study 2, controlling for sociodemographics variables.

SM4.6. Presentation of Table 4.S2

SM4.7. Presentation of Table 4.S3

SM4.1. Manipulation of Economic Inequality (used in Study 1 and Study 2). English version

Higher Economic Inequality Condition:

"Imagine there is an extraterrestrial society in which the inhabitants **cannot be considered women nor men**. Their reproductive system is neutral, so anybody can breed with any other individual. This society has existed for centuries. The individuals are scaly-skinned and have two rows of teeth, and the rest of attributes vary considerably among the inhabitants.

The members of this society enjoy their leisure time and have several opportunities to enjoy themselves, both with their relatives and friends. Thanks to the development of new technologies, they have new ways to spend their spare time. The technological development is so advanced that they have managed to build a spaceship which allows them to travel at the speed of light. They also respect their cultures and traditions: they usually hold several festivals and yearly celebrations, but the most important one is that of New Year's Eve.

This society, as most are, is stratified: some groups of inhabitants count on more resources than others. For instance, in this society, the richest 10% earns 30 times as much as the poorest 10%. As a matter of fact, the differences within social groups are extremely high as for opportunities to access higher education, medical care or decent housing.

After having read the information about this extraterrestrial society, we want you to imagine what these inhabitants are like. How do they look? What are their characteristics? How are their personalities?

You will now be asked a series of questions about these individuals."

Lower Economic Inequality Condition:

"Imagine there is an extraterrestrial society in which the inhabitants **cannot be considered women nor men**. Their reproductive system is neutral, so anybody can breed with any other individual. This society has existed for centuries. The individuals are scaly-skinned and have two rows of teeth, and the rest of attributes vary considerably among the inhabitants.

The members of this society enjoy their leisure time and have several opportunities to enjoy themselves, both with their relatives and friends. Thanks to the development of new technologies, they have new ways to spend their spare time. The technological development is so advanced that they have managed to build a spaceship which allows them to travel at the speed of light. They also respect their cultures and traditions: they usually hold several festivals and yearly celebrations, but the most important one is that of New Year's Eve.

This society, as most are, is stratified: some groups of inhabitants count on more resources than others. For instance, in this society, the richest 10% earns 5 times as much as the poorest 10%. As a matter of fact, the differences within social groups are not extremely high as for opportunities to access higher education, medical care or decent housing.

After having read the information about this extraterrestrial society, we want you to imagine what these inhabitants are like. How do they look? What are their characteristics? How are their personalities?
You will now be asked a series of questions about these individuals."

Manipulación de la Desigualdad Económica (utilizada en el Estudio 1 y en el Estudio 2). Versión en español (original)

Condición de Alta Desigualdad Económica:

"Imagina que existe una sociedad de extraterrestres en la que los habitantes no se pueden **considerar ni hombres ni mujeres**. Su aparato reproductor es neutro, por lo que cualquier extraterrestre puede reproducirse con cualquier extraterrestre. Esta sociedad tiene varios siglos de existencia, se caracterizan por tener el cuerpo cubierto de escamas y doble fila de dientes, el resto de rasgos que poseen son muy variados entre los habitantes.

A los miembros de esta sociedad les gusta disfrutar de su tiempo de ocio y suelen tener varias oportunidades para divertirse, tanto individualmente como con sus familiares y amigos. Gracias al desarrollo de nuevas tecnologías tienen nuevas maneras de disfrutar de ese tiempo libre. Tal es el desarrollo tecnológico, que han logrado construir una nave espacial que les permite viajar a la velocidad de la luz. Los miembros de esta sociedad también respetan sus culturas y tradiciones: suelen tener varias fiestas y celebraciones anuales, aunque la más importante es la celebración de fin de año.

Esta sociedad, como la mayoría de las sociedades, se encuentra estratificada: algunos grupos de extraterrestres suelen tener más recursos que los demás. Por ejemplo, en esta sociedad el 10% más rico de la población gana 30 veces más que el 10% más pobre. De hecho, las diferencias entre los grupos sociales son extremadamente grandes en cuanto a las oportunidades para acceder a una educación superior, recibir asistencia médica o tener una vivienda digna.

Después de leer esta información sobre esta sociedad de extraterrestres, te pedimos por favor que imagines cómo serían estos habitantes. ¿Cómo serían físicamente? ¿Cuáles serían sus características? ¿Cómo sería su personalidad?

A continuación, te haremos una serie de preguntas sobre estos habitantes."

Condición de Baja Desigualdad Económica:

"Imagina que existe una sociedad de extraterrestres en la que los habitantes no se pueden **considerar ni hombres ni mujeres**. Su aparato reproductor es neutro, por lo que cualquier extraterrestre puede reproducirse con cualquier extraterrestre. Esta sociedad tiene varios siglos de existencia, se caracterizan por tener el cuerpo cubierto de escamas y doble fila de dientes, el resto de rasgos que poseen son muy variados entre los habitantes.

A los miembros de esta sociedad les gusta disfrutar de su tiempo de ocio y suelen tener varias oportunidades para divertirse, tanto individualmente como con sus familiares y amigos. Gracias al desarrollo de nuevas tecnologías tienen muchas maneras de disfrutar de ese tiempo libre. Tal es su grado de desarrollo tecnológico, que han logrado construir una nave espacial que les permite viajar a la velocidad de la luz. Los miembros de esta sociedad también respetan sus culturas y tradiciones: suelen tener varias fiestas y celebraciones anuales, aunque la más importante es la celebración de fin de año.

Esta sociedad, como la mayoría de las sociedades, se encuentra estratificada: algunos grupos de extraterrestres suelen tener más recursos que los demás. Por ejemplo, en esta sociedad el 10% más rico de la población gana 5 veces más que el 10% más pobre. De hecho, las diferencias entre los grupos sociales no son extremadamente grandes en cuanto a las oportunidades para acceder a una educación superior, recibir asistencia médica o tener una vivienda digna.

Después de leer esta información sobre esta sociedad de extraterrestres, te pedimos por favor que imagines cómo serían estos habitantes. ¿Cómo serían físicamente? ¿Cuáles serían sus características? ¿Cómo sería su personalidad?

A continuación, te haremos una serie de preguntas sobre estos habitantes."

SM4.2. Spanish Adaptation of the BSRI (Bem, 1974; adapted to Spanish by Páez and Fernández, 2004), Used in Study 1 and Study 2

1. Atlético/a, deportivo/a (Masc)

2. Cariñoso/a (Fem)

3. Personalidad fuerte (Masc)

4. Sensible a las necesidades de los demás (Fem)

5. Desea arriesgarse, amante del peligro (Masc)

6. Comprensivo/a (Fem)

7. Compasivo/a (Fem)

8. Dominante (Masc)

9. Cálido/a, afectuoso/a (Fem)

10. Tierno/a, delicado/a, suave

11. Agresivo/a, combativo/a (Masc)

12. Actúa como líder (Fem)

13. Individualista (Masc)

14. Amante de los niños (Fem)

15. Alguien que llora fácilmente (Fem)

16. Duro/a (Masc)

17. Sumiso/a (Fem)

18. Egoísta (Masc)

Note. Masc = Masculine trait; Fem = Feminine trait.

Sm4.3. Main Analysis of Study 1, Controlling for Sociodemographic Variables

To verify the results of Study 1, we conducted a mixed-design ANCOVA of 2 (Economic inequality: Higher vs. Lower) x 2 (Masculinity vs. Femininity). Economic inequality was the between-groups variable and Masculinity-Femininity was the within-participants variable, and political orientation, subjective social class, sex, age, income level, and educational attainment were covariates. We adjusted for multiple comparisons (Bonferroni). We did not find an effect of any covariates. Unlike the analysis without control variables, we did not find a main effect of Masculinity-Femininity, $F < 1$. There were no differences between masculinity ($M = 4.31$, $SD = .94$) and femininity ($M = 3.91$, $SD = .87$) of the average member.

Even so, we did find the interaction effect between masculinity-femininity and economic inequality, $F(1, 92) = 8.27$, $p = .005$, $\eta^2_p = .082$. In the lower economic inequality condition, there was no difference between the way the average member was perceived, masculine or feminine ($M_{masc} = 4.13$, 95% CI =[3.89, 4.40] vs. $M_{fem} = 4.16$, 95% CI = [3.92, 4.40]), MD = -.017, 95% CI = [-0.42, 38]; F < 1; but we found, in the higher economic inequality condition, that the average member was assessed as more masculine ($M = 4.48$, 95% CI = [4.21, 4.75]) than feminine ($M = 3.66$, 95% CI = [3.41, 3.90]), *M*D = .824, 95% CI = [0.41, 1.23]; $F(1, 92) = 15.99$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2_p = .15$. Thus, including covariates in these analyses did not change the main conclusion of this study.

SM4.4. Presentation of Table S1

Table S1.

Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations of Study 1

Variables	*M* (*SD*)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Masculinity	4.33 (.94)	-						
2. Femininity	3.89 (.88)	-.359***	-					
3. Political Orientation	3.93 (1.75)	.005	-.047	-				
4. Subjective Social Class	5.99 (1.29)	-.038	-.098	.112	-			
5. Sex	.84 (.37)	-.071	.051	.087	.179	-		
6. Age	21.87 (3.84)	.002	.010	-.020	-.039	-.170	-	
7. Income Level	4.51 (2.03)	.086	-.053	.145	.672***	.073	-.061	-
8. Educational Attainment	5.04 (.31)	.231*	-.095	.094	-.102	-.199*	.118	-.031

Note. **p* < .05, ***p* < .01, ****p* < .001

SM4.5. Main Analysis of Study 2, Controlling for Sociodemographics Variables

We decided to perform a mixed-design ANCOVA of 2 (Economic inequality: Higher vs. Lower) x 2 (Social class: Upper Social Class vs. Lower Social Class) x 2 (Masculinity vs. Femininity). Economic inequality was the between-groups variable, whereas Social Class and Masculinity-Femininity were the within-participants variables, and political orientation, subjective social class, sex, age, income level, and educational attainment were covariates. We adjusted for multiple comparisons (Bonferroni). We found an effect of the following covariates: subjective social class (F(1, 67) = 5.80, p = .019, η^2_p = .08), income level (F(1, 67) = 4.161, p = .045, η^2_p = .058), and educational attainment (1, 67) = 10.26, p = .002, η^2_p = .13.This analysis yielded a significant three way interaction between economic inequality, social class and masculinity-femininity, F(1, 67) = 5.41, p = .027, η^2_p = .07. We analyzed this interaction and we corroborated that, in higher (M_D = 1.281, 95% CI = [.99, 1.57]; F(1, 67) = 77.30, p < .001, η^2_p = .54) and in lower (M_D = 1.14, 95% CI = [.88, 1.40]; F(1, 67) = 78.42, p < .001, η^2_p = .54) economic inequality conditions, lower social class individuals were assessed as more feminine than masculine (see Table 5); as in the analysis without control variables and corroborating H2. Moreover, we confirmed that in the higher (M_D = 1.89, 95% CI = [.1.42, 2.36]; F(1, 67) = 64.68, p < .001, η^2_p = .49) and the lower economic inequality conditions (M_D = 1.08, 95% CI = [.67, 1.50]; F(1, 67) = 27.08, p < .001, η^2_p = .29), upper social class individuals were perceived as more masculine than feminine, as we predicted in H3. This difference was greater in the higher economic inequality condition than in the lower economic inequality condition (H4). Thus, and as in Study 1, including these covariate did not change the main conclusions of the study. See the table below for means, standard deviations and 95% confidence intervals (Table S2).

SM4.6. Presentation of Table S2

Table S2.

Means, Standard Deviations, and 95% Confidence Intervals of Results of Mix-Design ANCOVA of Study 2

Higher Economic Inequality							
Upper Social Class Member				Lower Social Class Member			
Masc		Fem		Masc		Fem	
M (*SD*)	95% CI	*M* (*SD*)	95% CI	*M* (*SD*)	95% CI	*M* (*SD*)	95% CI
5.12 (.71)	[4.84, 5.40]	3.23 (.82)	[2.92, 3.53]	3.70 (.65)	[3.43, 4.73]	4.98 (.65)	[4.73, 5.24]
Lower Economic Inequality							
Upper Social Class Member				Lower Social Class Member			
Masc		Fem		Masc		Fem	
M (*SD*)	95% CI	*M* (*SD*)	95% CI	*M* (*SD*)	95% CI	*M* (*SD*)	95% CI
4.92 (.87)	[4.67, 5.17]	3.84 (.98)	[3.57, 4.11]	3.79 (.81)	[3.55, 4.03]	4.93 (.78)	[4.70, 5.15]

Note. 2 (Economic Inequality: Higher inequality vs. Lower inequality) x 2 (Social Class: Upper social class vs. Lower social class) x 2 (Masculinity vs. Femininity). Masc = Masculinity; Fem = Femininity. Ratings were given on a 7-point scale from 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*very much*).

SM4.7. Presentation of Table S3

Table S3.

Means, Standard Desviations, and Correlations of Study 2

Variables	*M* (*SD*)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Masculinity	4.38 (.56)	-						
2. Femininity	4.26 (.67)	.283*	-					
3. Political Orientation	3.33 (1.78)	.127	.055	-				
4. Subjective Social Class	5.86 (1.58)	.027	.276*	.232*	-			
5. Sex	.79 (.41)	-.012	-.006	-.049	-.065	-		
6. Age	21.48 (2.03)	.048	.104	.165	.079	-.102	-	
7. Income Level	4.69 (2.27)	.061	.053	.092	.602***	-114	-.062	-
8. Educational Attainment	4.97 (.57)	.194	-.176	.018	-.144	.008	.128	-.254

Note. **p* < .05, ***p* < .01, ****p* < .001.

Supplementary Material

Pertaining to

Chapter 5

"Economic Inequality Shapes the Agency-Communion in Gender Stereotypes"

SM5.1. Measures: Agentic and Communal Personality Traits

(Diekman & Eagly, 2000)

English	Spanish
1. Competitive	1. Competitivo
2. Affectionate	2. Afectuoso
3. Daring	3. Atrevido (a) /Audaz
4. Sympathetic	4. Simpático
5. Adventurous	5. Aventurero (a) / Arriesgado
6. Gentle	6. Gentil / Tierno (a)
7. Sensitive	7. Sensible
8. Aggressive	8. Agresivo (a)
9. Supportive	9. Comprensivo (a) / De apoyo
10. Courageous	10. Valiente
11. Dominant	11. Dominante
12. Kind	12. Amable
13. Stand up under pressure	13. Soporta la presión
14. Warm	14. Cálido (a) / Cordial
15. Unexcitable	15. No se pone nervioso (a)
16. Nurturing	16. Se preocupa por los demás

SM5.2. Additional Analyses and Results of Study 1

Testing the Main Hypothesis: Repeated-Measures Analysis of Covariance

We ran a repeated-measures analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) in which we included economic inequality (high inequality vs. low inequality) as the between-participants factor, content traits (agentic vs. communal) as the within-participants variable, and the perception of the (a) typical man and (b) typical woman as the dependent variable. We also included gender, age, political orientation, subjective socioeconomic status (SES), objective SES, and the counterbalanced order of presentation of the male and female target evaluation as covariates.

Agency and Communion of the Typical Man

Results suggested that even including the covariates in the analysis, the interaction Economic × Content remained significant, Wilks's λ = .91, $F(1, 159) = 15.41$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .09$. This interaction showed that in the high-inequality condition ($M_D = 0.75$, 95% CI [0.45, 1.05], Wilks's λ = .87, $F[1, 159] = 23.91$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .13$), participants considered the typical man to be more agentic than communal. By contrast, in the low-inequality condition, we did not find significant differences, $M_D = -0.10$, 95% CI [-0.39, 0.20], Wilks's λ = .99, $F(1, 159) = 0.42$, $p = .519$, $\eta_p^2 = .01$. See Table S1 for descriptive statistics.

Agency and Communion of the Typical Woman

Results suggested that even including the covariates in the analysis, the interaction Economic × Content remained significant, Wilks's λ = .94, $F(1, 158) = 9.21$, $p = .003$, $\eta_p^2 = .06$. This interaction suggested that participants evaluated the typical Bimboolean woman as more communal than agentic in both experimental conditions, but this difference was slightly smaller in the high-inequality condition ($M_D = 0.25$, 95% CI [0.01, 0.49], Wilks's λ = .97, $F[1, 158] = 4.37$, $p = .038$, $\eta_p^2 = .03$) than in the low-inequality condition ($M_D = 0.77$, 95% CI [0.53, 1.00], Wilks's λ = .79, $F[1, 158] = 41.67$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .21$), as expected. See Table S1 for descriptive statistics.

See also Table S2 for correlations between the variables in Study 1.

SM5.3. Presentation of Table 5.S1.

Table 5.S1

Descriptive Statistics of the Economic Inequality × Content Interaction (ANCOVA) on the Typical Man and Woman's Ascriptions in Study 1

	High EI				Low EI			
	AC		CC		AC		CC	
	M (*SD*)	95% CI	*M* (*SD*)	95% CI	*M* (*SD*)	95% CI	*M* (*SD*)	95% CI
Man ascriptions	4.60 (0.09)	[4.42, 4.77]	3.85 (0.12)	[3.62, 4.08]	4.41 (0.09)	[4.24, 4.59]	4.51 (0.11)	[4.28, 4.74]
Woman ascriptions	4.30 (0.09)	[4.13, 4.48]	4.56 (0.10)	[4.35, 4.77]	4.29 (0.09)	[4.11, 4.45]	5.05 (0.10)	[4.85, 5.26]

Note. EI = Economic inequality; AC = Agentic content; CC = Communal content.

SM5.4. Presentation of Table 5.S2

Table 5.S2

Correlations Between the Variables in Study 1

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. EI	-						
2. Agency-Man	-.08	4.51 (0.85)					
3. Communion-Man	.31***	-.04	4.18 (1.12)				
4. Agency-Woman	.02	.51***	.37***	4.30 (.81)			
5. Communion-Woman	.29***	.23**	.61***	.25**	4.79 (0.99)		
6. Gender	-0.2	-.01	-.14	-.08	-.11	-	
7. Age	.01	.10	.07	.08	.04	-.05	-
8. PO	.03	.01	.15	.06	.05	-.25**	.0
9. Subjective SES	.04	.11	.11	.11	.03	-.03	-.1
10. Objective SES	.01	.06	.01	-.04	-.07	-.08	-.1
11. Order	.09	.30***	.10	.20**	.16*	-.11	-.0

Note. Means and standard deviations are presented on the diagonal line. EI = Economic inequality (1 = High inequality, 2 = Lo
SES = Socioeconomic status, Order = Counterbalanced Order of Presentation; Gender (0 = male, 1 = female); * $p < .05$, ** $p <$

SM5.5. Additional Measures and Exploratory Analyses of Study 2

Measures

We considered measuring gender ideology and feminist identification to test whether these variables might have an influence.

Gender Ideology

We used the short version of *Escala sobre Ideología de Género* (Moya et al., 2006). This instrument measures traditional gender orientation and consists of 12 items (α = .89) on a 7-point scale (1 = *Totally disagree*, 7 = *Totally agree*). Higher scores indicate a higher traditional gender perspective, that is, higher support for traditional gender roles.

Feminist Identification

Participants responded to the item "To what extent do you consider yourself as feminist?" on a 7-point scale (1 = *Not at all, I do not consider myself feminist at all*, 7 = *Totally, I consider myself feminist*).

Results of Exploratory Analyses

To examine whether either gender ideology or feminist identification might predict the agency and communion attributed to both man and woman in the described society, we conducted multiple hierarchical regression analyses on agentic and communal ascriptions to man and woman. Continuous predictors were first standardized. Participant's gender (0 = man, 1 = woman) was additionally introduced in Step 1. Gender ideology and feminist identification were included in Step 2. Afterwards, we ran two moderated models using the PROCESS macro (Hayes, 2013). We selected Model 2 (10,000 bootstrap repetitions). Economic inequality was included as the independent variable, gender ideology and feminist identification as moderators, and communal ascriptions to (a) man and (b) woman as dependent variables in each model.

Multiple Hierarchical Regression for Agency in Man's and Woman's Ascriptions

For agentic ascriptions to the man of Bimboola, neither Model 1, R^2= .01, F(1, 213) = 2.46, p = .118, nor Model 2, F(3, 211) = 1.36, p = .256 (ΔR^2 = .01, ΔF[2, 211] = 0.81, p = .446), was significant. In a similar way, for woman's agentic ascriptions, Model

1, $F(1, 213) = 1.12$, $p = .291$, and Model 2, $F(3, 211) = 0.61$, $p = .608$ ($\Delta R^2 = -.01$, $\Delta F[2, 211] = 0.36$, $p = .697$), were not significant. In other words, neither participant's gender, gender ideology, nor feminist identification predicted agentic ascriptions to man and woman (ps > .050).

Multiple Hierarchical Regression for Communion in Men's and Women's Ascriptions

For man's communal ascriptions, we observed that Model 1 was not significant, $F(1, 213) = .04$, $p = .847$. On the contrary, Model 2 was significant, $F(3, 211) = 3.64$, $p = .014$ ($\Delta R^2 = .04$, $\Delta F[2, 211] = 5.44$, $p = .005$). We observed a similar pattern for woman's communal ascriptions. Model 1 was not significant, $F(1, 213) = .33$, $p = .566$, but Model 2 was indeed significant, $F(3, 211) = 4.52$, $p = .004$ ($\Delta R^2 = .05$, $\Delta F[2, 211] = 6.60$, $p = .002$). These results show that although participants' gender had no influence, gender identity and feminist identification predicted communal ascriptions. Concretely, supporting traditional gender ideology leads to considering the female target to be communal ($\beta = .18$, $p = .011$), but not the male ($\beta = -.11$, $p = .131$). On the other hand, feminist identification leads to considering the male target to be communal ($\beta = -.17$, $p = .027$), but not the female ($\beta = .11$, $p = .136$).

Moderated Model in the Relationship Between Economic Inequality and Communality in Man's and Woman's Ascriptions

For man's communal ascriptions, we did not find an Economic inequality × Gender ideology interaction effect, $b = -.10$, $t = -0.76$, $SE = .14$, $p =.443$, 95% CI [-0.38, 0.17], or an Economic inequality × Feminist identification interaction effect, $b = 0.8$, $t = 0.56$, $SE = .14$, $p = .580$, 95% CI [-0.20, 0.36]. Regarding woman's communal ascriptions, again, we did not find an Economic inequality × Gender ideology interaction effect, $b = -.12$, $t = -0.87$, $SE = .14$, $p = .383$, 95% CI [-0.41, 0.16], or an Economic inequality × Feminist identification interaction effect, $b = -.03$, $t = -0.17$, $SE = .15$, $p = .861$, 95% CI [-0.32, 0.26].

SM5.6. Additional Analyses and Results of Study 2

Testing the Main Hypothesis: Repeated-Measures Analysis of Covariance

We ran a repeated-measures ANCOVA following the same criteria as in Section 1 (Study 1).

Agency and Communion of the Typical Man

Even including the covariates in the analysis, we found the interaction Economic × Content to be significant, Wilks's λ = .92, $F(1, 206) = 18.02$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .08$. Pairwise comparison revealed that in the high-inequality condition (M_D = 0.79, 95% CI [0.56, 1.01], Wilks's λ = .81, $F[1, 206] = 48.06$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .19$), participants considered the typical man to be more agentic than communal. In the low-inequality condition, we did not find significant differences, M_D = 0.09, 95% CI [-0.14, 0.032], Wilks's λ = .99, $F(1, 206) = 0.62$, $p = .434$, $\eta_p^2 = .01$. See Table S3 for descriptive statistics.

Agency and Communion of the Typical Woman

After controlling for other variables, the interaction Economic × Content remained significant, Wilks's λ = .96, $F(1, 206) = 7.75$, $p = .006$, $\eta_p^2 = .04$. Participants evaluated the typical woman as more communal than agentic in both experimental conditions, but this difference was smaller in the high-inequality condition (M_D = 0.46, 95% CI [0.24, 0.68], Wilks's λ = .92, $F[1, 206]= 17.00$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .08$) than in the low-inequality condition (M_D = 0.90, 95% CI [0.68, 1.13], Wilks's λ = .77, $F[1, 206]= 62.61$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .23$), as expected. See Table S3 for descriptive statistics.

See Table S3 for correlations between the variables in Study 2.

SM5.7. Presentation of Table 5.S3

Table 5.S3.

Descriptive Statistics of the Economic Inequality × Content Interaction (ANCOVA) on the Typical Man and Woman's Ascriptions in Study 2

	High EI				Low EI			
	AC		CC		AC		CC	
	M (*SD*)	95% CI	*M* (*SD*)	95% CI	*M* (*SD*)	95% CI	*M* (*SD*)	95% CI
Man ascriptions	4.78 (0.81)	[4.62, 4.94]	3.99 (0.09)	[3.82, 4.17]	4.65 (0.83)	[4.49, 4.38]	4.56 (0.09)	[4.38, 4.74]
Woman ascriptions	4.41 (0.08)	[4.25, 4.57]	4.87 (0.09)	[4.68, 5.05]	4.32 (0.08)	[4.16, 4.48]	5.22 (0.10)	[5.03, 5.41]

Note. EI = Economic inequality; AC = Agentic content; CC = Communal content.

SM5.8. Presentation of Table 5.S4.

Table 5.S4

Correlations Between the Variables in Study 2

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. EI	-						
2. Agency-Man	-.04	4.72 (0.87)					
3. Communion-Man	.31***	.08	4.27 (0.95)				
4. Agency-Woman	-.02	.60***	.32***	4.37 (0.86)			
5. Communion-Woman	.20**	.23**	.63***	.20**	5.03 (1.00)		
6. Gender	.01	.11	-.01	.07	.04	-	
7. Age	.04	-.08	.09	-.06	.01	-.02	-
8. PO	-.02	-.06	-.06	-.22**	-.08	.01	.0
9. Subjective SES	.02	-.03	.01	-.05	.12	.09	.20
10. Objective SES	.02	-.11	.05	-.14*	.03	-.03	.39*
11. Order	.14*	.23**	.09	.17*	.13	-.02	-.0

Note. Means and standard deviations are presented on the diagonal line. EI = Economic inequality (1 = High inequality, 2 = Lo
SES = Socioeconomic status, Order = Counterbalanced Order of Presentation; Gender (0 = male, 1 = female); * $p < .05$, ** $p <$

Supplementary Material

Pertaining to

Chapter 6

"Wage (In)equality Matters: Economic Inequality as Facilitator of Agency in Others' and Self-Ascriptions"

SM6.1. Manipulation of Economic Inequality (Pilot Study, Study 1, and Study 2)

SM6.2. ANCOVAS of Pilot Study, Study 1, and Study 2

SM6.3. Tables of Descriptive Statistics of Pilot Study, Study 1, and Study 2

SM6.4. Bayesian Analyses of Pilot Study, Study 1, and Study 2

SM6.5. Additional Measures of Inferences About the Organization (Study 2)

SM6.1. Manipulation of Economic Inequality

Higher Economic Inequality Experimental Condition in Pilot Study and Study 1

Imagine a large organization. In this organization, as in most large organizations, employees have different roles and functions. There are employees at higher and lower ranks. Those at the higher ranks have managerial positions and those at lower ranks have non-managerial positions. In this organization, employees who occupy the highest managerial positions earn about **50 times more** than those who occupy the lowest positions in the organizational hierarchy.

Moreover, employees in managerial positions enjoy other benefits: 15% additional vacation per time and a private 400 square foot office. Employees in lower positions do not have such perks: they have the standard vacation time and shared offices.

In summary, in this organization employees are rewarded differently depending on the roles and functions they enact in the organization. These rewards have an impact on the opportunities and services that employees have access to in their personal lives.

Lower Economic Inequality Experimental Condition in Pilot Study

Imagine a large organization. In this organization, as in most large organizations, employees have different roles and functions. There are employees at higher and lower ranks. Those at the higher ranks have managerial positions and those at lower ranks have non-managerial positions. In this organization, employees who occupy the highest managerial positions earn about **10 times more** than those who occupy the lowest positions in the organizational hierarchy.

Moreover, employees in managerial positions enjoy other benefits: 5% additional vacation time per year and a private 150 square foot office. Employees in lower positions do not have such perks: they have the standard vacation time and shared offices.

In summary, in this organization employees are rewarded differently depending on the roles and functions they enact in the organization. These rewards have an impact on the opportunities and services that employees have access to in their personal lives.

Changes of Lower Economic Inequality Experimental Condition in Study 1

In this organization, managers in the highest positions earn about **5 times** more than the employees in the lowest positions in the organizational hierarchy. In addition, managers receive other benefits: 3% more holidays and an individual office of 15m2. Employees in the lowest positions do not have these advantages: they have standard vacancies and shared offices.

Economic Equality Experimental Condition in Pilot Study and Study 1

Imagine a large organization. In this organization, as in most large organizations, employees have different roles and functions. There are employees who have managerial positions and employees who have non-managerial positions. In this organization, employees who occupy the highest managerial positions earn the same as those who occupy the lowest positions in the organizational hierarchy.

All employees have the same amount of vacation time and the same office space.

In summary, in this organization employees are rewarded similarly regardless of the roles and functions they enact in the organization. These rewards have an impact on the opportunities and services that employees have access to in their personal lives.

Higher Economic Inequality Experimental Condition in Study 2

Imagine a large for-profit company. In this company, as in most large companies, employees have a variety of roles and functions. There are employees at higher levels and employees at lower levels. Those in higher ranks have managerial positions and those in lower ranks have non-managerial positions.

In this company, the status and power of an employee depends on the role held. All employees work the same number of hours per day (8 hours), regardless of their role. A modern remuneration system is applied so that the distribution of salaries depends on the role of the employees: Managers in the highest positions earn **about 50 times more** than employees in the lowest positions in the organizational hierarchy. In addition, managers receive other benefits: 15% more vacation time and a 45m2 individual office. Employees in the lowest positions do not have these benefits: they have standard vacations and shared offices. Satisfaction with salaries is comparable to that of other large companies.

In summary, the employees of this company receive different rewards depending on their role and function in the company. They work the same number of hours but the differences in status and power of the employees are reflected in the amount of their salaries. These rewards have an impact on the opportunities and services that employees can access in their private lives.

Lower Economic Inequality Experimental Condition in Study 2

Imagine a large for-profit company. In this company, as in most large companies, employees have a variety of roles and functions. There are employees who occupy higher ranks and employees who occupy lower ranks. Those in higher ranks have managerial positions and those in lower ranks have non-managerial positions.

In this company, the status and power of an employee depends on the role held. All employees work the same number of hours per day (8 hours), regardless of their role. A modern remuneration system is applied so that the distribution of salaries depends on the role of the employees: Managers in the highest positions earn about **5 times more** than employees in the lowest positions in the organizational hierarchy. In addition, managers receive other benefits: 3% more vacation and a 15m2 individual office. Employees in the lowest positions do not have these benefits: they have standard vacations and shared offices. Satisfaction with salaries is comparable to that of other large companies.

In summary, the employees of this company receive different rewards depending on their role and function in this organization. They work the same number of hours, but the differences in the status and power of the employees are reflected in the amount of their salaries. These rewards have an impact on the opportunities and services that employees can access in their private lives.

Economic Equality Experimental Condition in Study 2

Imagine a large for-profit company. In this company, as in most large companies, employees have a variety of roles and functions. There are employees at the top and employees at the bottom. Those in higher ranks have managerial positions and those in lower ranks have non-managerial positions.

In this company, the status and power of an employee depends on the role held. All employees work the same number of hours per day (8 hours), regardless of their role. A modern remuneration system is applied so that the distribution of salaries is **equal** for all employees: managers in the highest positions earn as much as employees in the lowest positions in the organizational hierarchy. All employees have the same amount of vacation and office space. Satisfaction with salaries is comparable to other large companies.

In summary, employees in this company receive similar rewards regardless of their role or function in the organization. They work the same number of hours, and differences in employee status and power are not reflected in the amount of their salaries. These rewards have an impact on the opportunities and services that employees can access in their private lives.

*For information about the original French version of the manipulation of Economic (In)equality in Study 1 and 2, please contact the first author.

SM6.2. ANCOVAs of Pilot Study, Study 1 and Study 2

Pilot Study

Sociodemographic Data

We measured age, gender, level of proficiency in English, educational attainment, status employment, ethnicity, and annual household incomes.

Main Analysis of Pilot Study Controlling for Participants' Gender, Educational Attainment, Level of Income, And Employment Status

Typical Middle-Rank Employee

We conducted a mixed-design ANCOVA, including economic inequality as between-group factor, ascriptions as a within-subject variable, and participants' gender, educational attainment, level of income, and employment status as covariates. The interaction between economic inequality and ascriptions remained stable, $F(2, 188) = 11.31$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .11$; and the covariates did not interact with agentic-communal ascriptions, all $F < 1$.

Self-Ascriptions

We conducted a mixed-design ANCOVA, including economic inequality as between-group factor, self-ascriptions as a within-subject variable, and participants' gender, educational attainment, level of income, and employment status as covariates. The interaction between economic inequality and self-ascriptions remained stable, $F(2, 188) = 6.73$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .07$; and covariates did not interact with agentic-communal self-ascriptions, all $F < 1$.

Study 1

Sociodemographic Data

We measured age, gender and annual household incomes. We did not include educational attainment and employment status due to all participants were students of a subject in Psychology of a Swiss university.

Main Analysis of Study 1 Controlling by Participants' Gender and Level of Familiar Income

Typical Middle-Rank Employee

We run a mixed-design ANCOVA in which economic inequality was included as between-groups factor, ascriptions as within-subjects factor, and gender and familiar income level as covariates. The interaction effect between economic inequality and ascriptions to the typical employee at the middle ranks, $F(2, 178) = 20.80$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .19$. Covariates did not interact with agentic-communal ascriptions, all *ps* > .05.

Self-Ascriptions

We conducted a mixed-design ANCOVA including economic inequality as between-groups factor, self-ascriptions as within-subjects factor, and participants' gender and familiar income level as covariates. As in the main analysis, results revealed a main effect of self-ascriptions, $F(1, 178) = 4.49$, $p = 0.40$, $\eta_p^2 = .02$. Also, the interaction effect between economic inequality and self-ascriptions was stable, $F(2, 178) = 22.36$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2_p = .20$. The covariates did not interact with self-ascriptions, all *ps* > .05.

Employee in the Highest Ranks

We run a mixed-designed ANCOVA with economic inequality as between-groups factor, ascriptions to the employee at the highest ranks as a within-subjects factor, and participants' gender and familiar income level as covariates. The main effect of ascriptions to the employee at highest ranks remained stable, $F(1, 178) = 24.29$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .12$; as well as the interaction effect between economic inequality and agentic and communal ascriptions to the employee at highest ranks, $F(2, 178) = 37.91$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .30$. Results revealed that covariates did not interact with ascriptions.

Study 2

Sociodemographic Data

We measured age, gender and annual household incomes. We did not include educational attainment and employment status due to all participants were students of a subject in Psychology of a Swiss university.

Main Analysis of Study 1 Controlling by Participants' Gender and Level of Familiar Income

Typical Middle-Rank Employee

We run a mixed-design ANCOVA in which economic inequality was included as between-groups factor, ascriptions as within-subjects factor, and gender and familiar income level as covariates. The interaction effect between economic inequality and ascriptions to the typical employee at the middle ranks remained stable, $F(2, 193) = 27.50$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .22$. Covariates did not interact with agentic-communal ascriptions, all *ps* > .05.

Self-Ascriptions

We conducted a mixed-design ANCOVA including economic inequality as between-groups factor, self-ascriptions as within-subjects factor, and participants' gender and familiar income level as covariates. Results revealed that the main effect of self-ascriptions did not remain stable, $F(1, 193) = 3.38$, $p = .067$, $\eta_p^2 = .02$. We observed the interaction effect between economic inequality and self-ascriptions was corroborated, $F(2, 193) = 10.56$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .10$. The covariates did not interact with self-ascriptions, all *ps* > .05.

Employee in the Highest Ranks

We run a mixed-designed ANCOVA with economic inequality as between-groups factor, ascriptions to the employee at the highest ranks as a within-subjects factor, and participants' gender and familiar income level as covariates. The main effect of ascriptions to the employee at highest ranks remained significant, $F(1, 193) = 6.35$, $p = .013$, $\eta_p^2 = .03$; as well as the interaction effect between economic inequality and agentic and communal ascriptions to the employee at highest ranks, $F(2, 193) = 25.96$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .21$. Results revealed that covariates did not interact with ascriptions, $p > .05$.

SM6.3. Tables of Descriptive Statistics of Pilot Study, Study 1, and Stud

Table 6.S1.

Means, Standard Deviations, and 95% Confidence Intervals of Results of Mixed-design ANOVAs of Pilot S

Higher Economic Inequality				Lower Economic Inequality				Economic E
Agency		Communion		Agency		Communion		Agency
M (*SD*)	95% CI	*M* (*SD*)	95% CI	*M* (*SD*)	95% CI	*M* (*SD*)	95% CI	*M* (*SD*)
4.62 (0.92)	[4.38, 4.85]	4.36 (1.21)	[4.09, 4.63]	4.61 (0.88)	[4.36, 4.87]	4.44 (1.11)	[4.15, 4.73]	4.44 (1.25)
4.91 (0.92)	[4.69, 5.13]	4.96 (1.19)	[4.71, 5.20]	4.92 (0.89)	[4.68, 5.17]	5.03 (0.98)	[4.76, 5.30]	4.78 (1.11)

Note. Ratings were given on a 7-point scale from 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*very much*).

Table 6.S2.

Descriptive Statistics (Means, Standard Deviations, and 95% Confidence Intervals) of Results in Study 1

Higher Economic Inequality				Lower Economic Inequality				Economic E
Agency		Communion		Agency		Communion		Agency
M (*SD*)	95% CI	*M* (*SD*)	95% CI	*M* (*SD*)	95% CI	*M* (*SD*)	95% CI	*M* (*SD*)
4.44 (0.86)	[4.22, 4.66]	4.01 (0.86)	[3.76, 4.27]	4.28 (0.71)	[4.06, 4.50]	4.18 (0.88)	[3.92, 4.43]	3.56 (0.94)
4.60 (0.86)	[4.37, 4.83]	4.38 (1.13)	[4.13, 4.64]	4.50 (0.88)	[4.27, 4.74]	4.73 (0.94)	[4.47, 4.99]	3.81 (0.97)
5.64 (0.73)	[5.43, 5.86]	3.55 (1.09)	[3.24, 3.85]	5.59 (0.73)	[5.37, 5.81]	3.80 (0.97)	[3.49, 4.11]	4.79 (1.00)

Note. EI = Economic inequality. Ratings were given on a 7-point scale from 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*very much*

)

Table 6.S3.

Descriptive Statistics (Means, Standard Deviations, and 95% Confidence Intervals) of Results in Study 2

Higher Economic Inequality				Lower Economic Inequality				Economic
Agency		Communion		Agency		Communion		Agency
M (*SD*)	95% CI	*M* (*SD*)	95% CI	*M* (*SD*)	95% CI	*M* (*SD*)	95% CI	*M* (*SD*)
4.31 (0.78)	[4.12, 4.50]	3.94 (0.96)	[3.71, 4.16]	4.19 (0.75)	[4.01, 4.37]	4.16 (0.91)	[3.95, 4.38]	3.80 (0.78)
4.35 (0.69)	[4.14, 4.5]	4.62 (1.10)	[4.37, 4.87]	4.23 (0.86)	[4.04, 4.42]	4.64 (1.07)	[4.40, 4.87]	4.04 (0.89)
5.38 (0.82)	[5.19, 5.57]	3.96 (1.08)	[3.69, 4.24]	5.42 (0.73)	[5.24, 5.60]	4.10 (1.15)	[3.85, 4.36]	4.92 (0.75)

Note. Ratings were given on a 7-point scale from 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*very much*).

SM6.4. Bayesian Analyses of Pilot Study, Study 1, and Study 2

Pilot Study

Typical Middle-Ranks Employee

To test the small or no differences between agency and communion in lower economic inequality, we estimated a Bayes factor using Bayesian Information Criteria (BIC; Masson, 2011; Nathoo & Masson, 2016; Wagenmakers, 2007) comparing the fit of the data to the null (H_0) and the alternative (H_1) hypotheses. Results indicated positive evidence for the null hypothesis, $\Delta BIC = 6.49$, $BF_{01} = 25.65$, p_{BIC} (H_0|D) = 0.962.

Self-Ascriptions

Putting the non-difference for the lower economic inequality condition to a test, BIC (Masson, 2011; Nathoo & Masson, 2016; Wagenmakers, 2007) indicated positive evidence if favor of the null hypothesis, $\Delta BIC = 8.268$, $BF_{01} = 62.44$, p_{BIC} (H_0|D) = 0.984.

Study 1

Typical Middle-Rank Employee

Bayes factor using BIC (Masson, 2011; Nathoo & Masson, 2016; Wagenmakers, 2007) comparing the fit of the data to the null (H_0) and the alternative (H_1) hypotheses, also indicated positive evidence for the null hypothesis, $\Delta BIC = 3.69$, $BF_{01} = 6.33$, p_{BIC} (H_0|D) = 0.864, in line with H1.

Self-Ascriptions

To appropriately test whether the null hypothesis (H_0) should be preferred over the alternative hypothesis (H_1), we examined the estimating Bayes factor using BIC (Masson, 2011; Nathoo & Masson, 2016; Wagenmakers, 2007). Results indicated positive evidence for the null hypothesis, $\Delta BIC = 2.70$, $BF_{01} = 3.86$, p_{BIC} (H_0|D) = 0.794, as expected for the low inequality condition.

Study 2

Typical Middle-Ranks Employee

As expected, BIC (Masson, 2011; Nathoo & Masson, 2016; Wagenmakers, 2007) comparing the fit of the data to the null (H_0) and the alternative (H_1) hypotheses indicated positive evidence for the null hypothesis, $\Delta BIC = 4.25$, $BF_{01} = 8.36$, p_{BIC} (H_0|D) = 0.893.

Self-Ascriptions

As we did obtain a significant difference between agency and communion in the low economic inequality condition, we did not run a Bayesian analysis.

SM6.5. Additional Measures of Inferences About the Organization (Study 2)

Method

In this Study 2, we were also interested in measuring other inferences about the organization that we present through the new experimental manipulation and see whether the changes were successful. We measured the extent to which participants consider the distribution of salaries and resources as equal/unequal (5-point scale from 1 [*Very equal*] to 5 [*Very unequal*]; $M = 3.49$, $SD = 1.39$), fair/unfair (5-point scale from 1 [*Very fair*] to 5 [*Very unfair*]; $M = 3.47$, $SD = 1.19$), and the extent to which they consider how the organization was in general (5-point scale from 1 [*Very equal*] to 5 [*Very unequal*]; $M = 3.37$, $SD = 1.24$).

Results

Additionally, to examine what are participant's inferences about the organization, we computed a MANCOVA with economic inequality as the between-groups factor and the three organization new items as dependent variables. We observed a multivariate effect of economic inequality, Wilks' lambda = .51, $F(6, 386) = 26.06$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .29$. Firstly, economic inequality has an effect on the perception of the distribution of salaries and resources as equal/unequal, $F(2, 195) = 85.36$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .47$. Concretely, Bonferroni post-hoc test showed that participants perceived that the distribution was more unequal in the high economic inequality condition ($M = 4.43$, $SD = .0.84$) than in the low ($M = 3.85$, $SD = .0.80$; $M_D = 0.59$, 95% CI [0.15, 1.01], $p = .004$) and in the economic equality condition ($M = 2.14$, $SD = 1.37$; $M_D = 2.29$, 95% CI [1.85, 2.73], $p < .001$). Likewise, those assigned to the low inequality condition consider the organization as more unequal than those assigned economic equality ($M_D = 1.70$, 95% CI [1.28, 2.13], $p < .001$). Afterwards, we observed an effect of economic inequality on the perception of the distribution fairness, $F(2, 195) = 31.86$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .25$. Bonferroni post-hoc tests revealed that participants assigned to high economic inequality ($M = 4.14$, $SD = 0.95$) condition considered the organization was the less fair in comparison to those assigned to the low economic inequality ($M = 3.57$, $SD = 0.93$; $M_D = 0.57$, 95% CI [0.14, 1.00], $p = .005$) and economic inequality ($M = 2.68$, $SD = 1.22$; $M_D = 1.46$, 95% CI [1.01, 1.91], $p < .001$). In low economic inequality condition, the organization distribution was perceived as less fair than in economic equality ($M_D = 0.89$, 95% CI [0.46, 1.32], $p < .001$). Concerning the general perception of the organization, we found an effect of economic inequality, $F(2, 195) = 60.18$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .38$. Post-hoc tests corrected for Bonferroni revealed that participants assigned to the high economic inequality condition considered the organization as more unequal ($M = 4.16$, $SD = 0.86$) than those assigned to the low economic inequality ($M = 3.61$, $SD = 0.83$; $M_D = 0.55$, 95% CI [0.14, 0.96], p =.004) and economic equality ($M = 2.30$, $SD = 1.21$; $M_D = 1.86$, 95% CI [1.44, 2.28], $p <$ .001). Similarly, those assigned to the low economic inequality considered the organization as more unequal than those assigned to the economic equality condition (M_D = 1.31, 95% CI [0.90, 1.72], $p < .001$).

Supplementary Material

Pertaining to

Chapter 7

"Upholding the social hierarchy: Masculinity as a predictor of the ideal level of economic inequality"

SM7.1. Measure "Masculinity-Femininity" (BSRI; Bem, 1974; Páez & Fernández, 2004; [Study 1 and Study 2])

A continuación te presentamos una serie de características. Por favor, indica en qué grado consideras que eres…	Nada						Mucho
1. Atlético/a, deportivo/a	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. Cariñoso/a	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. Personalidad fuerte	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. Sensible a las necesidades de los demás	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. Desea arriesgarse, amante del peligro	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. Comprensivo/a	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. Compasivo/a	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. Dominante	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. Cálido/a, afectuoso/a	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. Tierno/a, delicado/a, suave	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11. Agresivo/a, combativo/a	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. Actúa como líder	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13. Individualista	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14. Amante de los niños	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15. Alguien que llora fácilmente	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16. Duro/a	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17. Sumiso/a	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18. Egoísta	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

SM7.2. Measure "Perceived Economic Inequality" (Castillo, 2011; ISSP Research Group, 2017 [Study 1 and Study 2])

Piensa en la empresa española más grande e importante que conozcas. Abajo, en la casilla izquierda indica cuánto ***CREES*** que es el salario mensual promedio de la persona con el cargo de más responsabilidad dentro de esa empresa (e.g. el/la ejecutivo/a que ocupa el puesto más elevado dentro de ella).

En la casilla derecha, indica cuál crees que es el salario mensual promedio de uno de los trabajadores menos cualificados de esa misma empresa (e.g. operarios, obreros, etc.). Recuerda que estos cálculos representan los salarios que ***CREES*** que reciben estas personas.

Persona ALTAMENTE cualificada y con un cargo de MUCHA responsabilidad en la Empresa	Persona NO cualificada y con un cargo de muy POCA responsabilidad en la Empresa
€/mes	**€/mes**

English Translation

Think of the biggest and most important Spanish company you know. Below, in the left box indicate how much you ***THINK*** is the average monthly salary of the person with the most responsibility within that company (e.g., the executive who holds the highest position within the company).

In the right box, indicate what you think is the average monthly salary of one of the least qualified workers at that same company (e.g., workers, laborers, etc.). Remember that these calculations represent the wages you ***THINK*** these people receive.

HIGHLY qualified person with a position of MUCH responsibility in the company	NON-Qualified person with a position of very LITTLE responsibility in the company
€/month	**€/month**

SM7.3. Measure "Ideal Economic Inequality" from (Study 1 and Study 2)

Ahora imagina lo que sería la sociedad ideal para ti. Imagina la empresa más grande e importante que pudiera desarrollarse dentro de ella. En la casilla izquierda escribe cuál crees que sería el salario mensual promedio ***IDEAL*** que debería recibir la persona con el cargo de máxima responsabilidad dentro de esa empresa (e.g. un cargo ejecutivo directivo).

A continuación, en la casilla derecha, indica cuál crees que sería el salario mensual promedio ***IDEAL*** de los trabajadores menos calificados dentro de esa misma empresa (e.g. operarios, obreros, etc.). Recuerda que estos cálculos representan los salarios *ideales* que crees deberían recibir estas personas.

Persona ALTAMENTE cualificada y con un cargo de MUCHA responsabilidad en la empresa	Persona NO cualificada y con un cargo de muy POCA responsabilidad en la empresa
€/mes	**€/mes**

English Translation

Now imagine what the ideal society would be like for you. Imagine the largest and most important company that could be developed within it. In the left box write what you think would be the ***IDEAL*** average monthly salary that the person with the highest responsibility position within that company should receive (e.g., a senior executive position).

Then, in the right box, indicate what you think would be the ***IDEAL*** average monthly salary of the least qualified workers within that same company (e.g. workers, laborers, etc.). Remember that these calculations represent the *ideal* salaries that you think these people should receive.

HIGHLY qualified person with a position of MUCH responsibility in the company	NON-Qualified person with a position of very LITTLE responsibility in the company
€/month	**€/month**

SM7.4. Experimental Condition "Masculinity prime" (Study 2)

Para comenzar, te pedimos que pienses en una situación en la que…

> …Te mostraste como una persona que **defiende sus propias creencias y pensamientos**, bastante **seguro/a de ti mismo/a** y **asertivo/a**.
> Se podría decir que te mostraste como una persona **autosuficiente** e **independiente**, además de **decisivo/a** pues **tomaste las decisiones** con facilidad.
> Te mostraste de una forma **fuerte** y **dominante**.

Piensa durante un momento en esa situación en la que has tenido que comportarte de la manera en la que hemos definido en el texto. Si no ha habido ninguna situación, por favor, piensa en una situación en la que se requería o se pudiera requerir que te comportaras así, o de manera aproximada. Puedes volver a leer el texto para pensar en la situación. A continuación**, describe brevemente esa situación**:

English translation

To begin with, we ask you to think of a situation in which...

...You showed yourself to be a **person who stands** up for your own beliefs and thoughts, quite **confident** and **assertive**.
You could say that you showed yourself as a **self-sufficient** and **independent** person, as well as **decisive** because you **made decisions with ease**.
You showed yourself in a **strong** and **dominant** way.

Think for a moment about that situation in which you had to behave the way we have defined in the text. If there has not been a situation, please think of a situation where you were required or might be required to behave this way, or roughly. You can read the text again to think about the situation. Then, **briefly describe that situation**:

SM7.5. Experimental Condition "Femininity Prime" (Study 2)

Para comenzar, te pedimos que pienses en una situación en la que…

…Te mostraste como una persona sensible ante las necesidades de los/as demás, bastante afectuoso/a y comprensivo/a.
Se podría decir que te mostraste como una persona **cariñosa** y **alegre**, además de gentil pues intentaste **calmar a las personas que lo necesitaban**.
Te mostraste de una forma **cálida** y **tierna**.

Piensa durante un momento en esa situación en la que has tenido que comportarte de la manera en la que hemos definido en el texto. Si no ha habido ninguna situación, por favor, piensa en una situación en la que se requería o se pudiera requerir que te comportaras así, o de manera aproximada. Puedes volver a leer el texto para pensar en la situación. A continuación, **describe brevemente esa situación**:

English Translation

To begin with, we ask you to think of a situation in which...

...You showed yourself as a person who is sensitive to the needs of others, quite affectionate and understanding.
You could say that you showed yourself as a **tender** and **cheerful** person, as well as **gentle**, because you tried to **calm down the people who needed it**.
You showed yourself in a **warm** and **tender** way.

Think for a moment about that situation in which you had to behave the way we have defined in the text. If there has not been a situation, please think of a situation where you were required or might be required to behave this way, or roughly. You can read the text again to think about the situation. Then, **briefly describe that situation**:

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