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Programa de Doctorado en Psicología

DESIGUALDAD ECONÓMICA Y CAMBIO SOCIAL: EL ROL DE LAS IDENTIDADES BASADAS EN LA RIQUEZA

ECONOMIC INEQUALITY AND SOCIAL CHANGE: THE ROLE OF WEALTH-BASED IDENTITIES

Ángel del Fresno Díaz

Directoras:
Guillermo B. Willis Sánchez
Soledad de Lemus Martín

UNIVERSIDAD DE GRANADA

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Autor: Ángel del Fresno Díaz
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Departamento de Psicología Social

Facultad de Psicología

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Resumen

A medida que la desigualdad económica ha crecido rápido rápidamente en los últimos años (Piketty, 2020), también han aumentado los movimientos sociales en su contra (e.g., *Occupy Wall Street*, Stiglitz, 2012). Esto se debe a que cuando las personas se identifican con grupos que reconocen su injusta posición social y además están politizados, se sienten motivadas para protestar por un cambio social (Simon y Klandermans, 2001; van Zomeren et al., 2008).

Por lo tanto, en esta tesis, analizamos los procesos intergrupales que promueven una mayor intolerancia hacia la desigualdad económica y una mayor disposición a llevar a cabo acciones colectivas para confrontarla (es decir, para generar un cambio social en el sistema económico). Para ello, analizamos el papel predictor de la identificación con una amplia variedad de grupos basados en la riqueza que se caracterizan por compartir un agravio común. Particularmente, analizamos el rol de identidades politizadas tradicionales basadas en la riqueza, como la clase trabajadora, así como categorías grupales más recientes, como el 99% o la gente común. Además, exploramos variables identitarias nacionales que, en lugar de promover la igualdad económica, apuntan a mantener el estatus quo económico culpando a otros exogrupos (e.g., narcisismo colectivo, Golec de Zavala et al., 2017).

El Capítulo 1 presenta el marco conceptual. En el Capítulo 2 presentamos nuestras principales preguntas de investigación. Los siguientes capítulos presentan los estudios empíricos.

En específico, en el Capítulo 3 exploramos cualitativamente cuántas y cuáles son las clases sociales que las personas mencionan cuando piensan en grupos basados en la riqueza. Lejos de percibir dos grupos (99% y 1%), el corpus de datos reveló cinco categorías amplias de grupos: *pobres*, *clases bajas y clases trabajadoras*, *clases medias*, *clases altas* y *ricos y más allá*. Además, usando una metodología cuantitativa, analizamos los estereotipos asociados a cada grupo mencionado. Encontramos que las clases bajas y trabajadoras eran percibidas de manera más favorable y se les atribuyeron rasgos más positivos en comparación con los ricos. Sin embargo, las redes psicométricas mostraron ciertas ambivalencias respecto al contenido de dichos estereotipos. Los pobres fueron percibidos como más cálidos, pero menos competentes. En cambio, los ricos fueron principalmente caracterizados como fríos e inmorales.

En el Capítulo 4 analizamos los mecanismos grupales para hacer frente a la amenaza colectiva económica resultante de la pandemia del Covid-19 en 2021. En tres estudios correlacionales, examinamos si la identidad social compartida y politizada (i.e., identificación con el 99% y la clase trabajadora), asi como tener una construcción del yo más interdependiente, mediaban la relación positiva entre la amenaza y a) una mayor intolerancia hacia la desigualdad y b) una mayor disposición a llevar a cabo acciones colectivas. Los resultados corroboraron nuestras hipótesis, mostrando que la amenaza económica puede estar relacionada con respuestas prosociales para reducir la desigualdad a través de una identificación compartida con el 99% y la clase trabajadora, y a través de una construcción interdependiente del yo.

En el Capítulo 5 nuestro objetivo fue analizar los correlatos de la identificación con identidades politizadas sociales específicas, especialmente aquellas que se encuentran politizadas debido a la realidad económica (e.g., la gente común, el 99% y la clase trabajadora), y también identidades basadas en la nación (e.g., la identidad nacional y el narcisismo colectivo). Examinamos estas relaciones en dos contextos sociopolíticos diferentes: Reino Unido y España. Los resultados mostraron que en el Reino Unido la identificación con la gente común estuvo asociada a una mayor intolerancia hacia la desigualdad y con acciones colectivas a favor del cambio. Sin embargo, la identificación con la gente común se asoció positivamente con las intenciones de acción colectiva para mantener el estatus quo en el contexto español. Además, el narcisismo colectivo nacional tuvo un efecto negativo sobre la intolerancia a la desigualdad y las acciones colectivas a favor del cambio y un efecto positivo sobre las intenciones de acción colectiva para mantener el statu quo, mientras que las identidades basadas en la riqueza (es decir, el 99% y la clase trabajadora) tuvieron el efecto contrario, es decir, predecían el rechazo de la desigualdad y la lucha por el cambio social. Especialmente, el 99% fue útil en ambos contextos culturales.

Finalmente, en el Capítulo 6, analizamos el impacto de la identificación con el 99% sobre la intolerancia a la desigualdad y las acciones colectivas en la clase media. Los resultados mostraron que las personas que pertenecen a la clase media como estrato económico y se identifican con el 99%, tienen una mayor intolerancia hacia la desigualdad y una mayor intención de llevar a cabo acciones colectivas para reducirla. Esto no ocurre si las personas se identifican con la clase media. Estos resultados fueron

confirmados manipulando experimentalmente la norma social percibida para el apoyo del 99%.

Finalmente, en el Capítulo 7 discutimos nuestros resultados y destacamos sus implicaciones teóricas y prácticas, las limitaciones de los estudios realizados y futuras las líneas investigación.

En resumen, la desigualdad económica daña las relaciones sociales (e.g., promueve estereotipos negativos); sin embargo, la identificación con grupos en situación de desventaja o que señalan la injusta distribución de riqueza fomenta el rechazo de la desigualdad y una mayor disposición a emprender acciones colectivas para confrontarla.

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Abstract

As economic inequality has grown rapidly in recent years (Piketty, 2020), so has the explosion of social movements against it (e.g., *Occupy Wall Street*; Stiglitz, 2012). This is because when people identify with groups that acknowledge their unjust social position and are also politicised, they tend to protest for social change (Simon & Klandermans, 2001; van Zomeren et al., 2008).

Therefore, in this dissertation, we analysed the intergroup processes that promote greater intolerance towards economic inequality and greater willingness to take collective action to confront it (i.e., to bring about social change in the economic system). We, therefore, tested the effects of identification of a wide variety of wealth-based groups that are characterised by sharing a common grievance. In particular, we analysed the role of traditional politicised wealth-based identities—such as the working class—and more recent group categories—such as the 99% or the common people. We also explored nationalist identities that, instead of promoting economic equality, aim at maintaining the economic *status quo* by blaming other outgroups (e.g., collective narcissism, Golec de Zavala et al., 2017).

Chapter 1 presents the conceptual framework. In Chapter 2 we introduce our main research questions. The next chapters present the empirical studies.

Specifically, in Chapter 3 we explore qualitatively how many and which social classes people mention when they think about wealth-based groups. We also examined the labels they used. Far from perceiving two groups (99% and 1%; the working class vs. the bourgeoise), the corpus of the data showed five broad categories of groups: *poor*, *low and working classes*, *middle classes*, *upper classes*, and *rich and beyond*. In addition, we analysed how these groups are stereotyped using a quantitative methodology. We found that lower and working classes were perceived more favourably and they were attributed more positive traits than the rich. Still, the psychometric networks showed some ambivalence about the content of these stereotypes. The poor were perceived as warmer, but less competent. In contrast, the rich were mainly characterised as cold and immoral.

In Chapter 4, we analysed group coping mechanisms to deal with the collective economic threat resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic in 2021. In three correlational studies, we examined whether shared and politicised social identity (i.e., identification with the 99% and the working class), as well as having a more interdependent self-construal, mediated the positive relationship between threat and a) greater intolerance

towards inequality; b) greater willingness to take collective action. The results corroborated our hypotheses, showing that economic threat may be related to prosocial responses to reduce inequality through shared identification with the 99% and the working class, and through an interdependent self-construal.

In Chapter 5 we aimed to analyse the correlates of identification with specific social identities, especially those that are politicised due to the economic reality (e.g., the common people, the 99%, and the working class), but also national-based identities (e.g., national identity and collective narcissism). We examined these relationships in two different socio-political contexts: UK and Spain. The results indicated that in the UK identification with common people was associated with greater inequality intolerance and pro-change collective actions. However, common people identification was positively associated with collective action intentions to maintain the status quo in the Spanish context. Further, national collective narcissism had a negative effect on inequality intolerance, pro-change collective actions, and a positive effect on collective action intentions to maintain the status quo. In contrast, wealth-based identities (i.e., 99% and working class) had the opposite effect, that is, predicting the rejection of inequality and the fight for social change. The 99% identity was especially useful in both cultural contexts.

Finally, in Chapter 6, we examined the impact of identification within the 99% on intolerance towards inequality and collective action among the middle class. The results showed that people who belong to the middle class as an economic stratum and identify with the 99% have a higher intolerance of inequality and a higher intention to take collective actions to reduce it. This was not the case if people identify with the middle class. These results were confirmed by experimentally manipulating perceived social norms to support the 99%.

Finally, in Chapter 7 we discuss our results and highlight their implications, the limitations of the studies carried out, and future lines of research.

In summary, economic inequality harms social relations (e.g., it promotes negative stereotypes); however, identification with groups that are disadvantaged and that draw attention to the unfairness of the wealth distribution fosters a rejection of inequality and a greater willingness to take collective action to confront it.

CAPÍTULOS TEÓRICOS

THEORETICAL CHAPTERS

Capítulo 1

Desigualdad Económica e Identidad Social

La injusticia económica inunda las sociedades contemporáneas que habitamos. El florecimiento de la primavera árabe, las ocupaciones en Wall Street —pero también en Madrid y Londres— o el estallido social en Chile, son algunos ejemplos colectivos de resistencia (Hechler et al., 2023; Stiglitz et al., 2012). Sus principales motivos: el mercado es inestable; el sistema político no hace lo suficiente para corregir sus fallos; el sistema económico y político son injustos (Stiglitz, 2012).

Si bien es cierto que la desigualdad económica daña los tejidos sociales, fomentando la división y la fragmentación social (Buttrick y Oishi, 2017; Wilkinson y Pickett, 2017), el reconocimiento de agravio compartido también ha llevado a personas de diferentes países a protestar para exigir justicia económica (Jetten et al., 2020). El enfoque de la identidad social (Tajfel y Turner, 1979; Turner et al., 1987) puede ayudar a entender ambos fenómenos: el daño que la desigualdad económica hace a las relaciones intergrupales (e.g., la estereotipación de grupos ricos y pobres), pero también su efecto positivo sobre la motivación por el cambio social (Jetten et al., 2021). Por tanto, es crucial entender la identificación con grupos basados en la riqueza que son resultado del contexto económico y cuáles son sus consecuencias psicosociales.

1. Desigualdad Económica

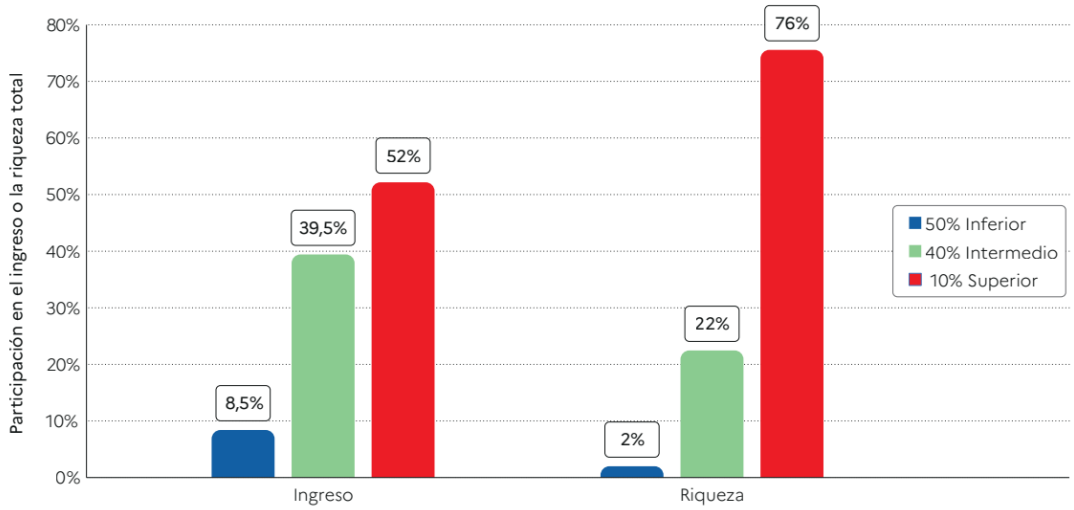
La desigualdad económica se refiere a la disparidad en la distribución de los recursos económicos dentro de un determinado contexto, donde algunas personas o grupos poseen más recursos que otros (García-Sánchez, et al., 2018; Willis et al., 2022). Durante las últimas tres décadas, el 1% más rico de la población mundial incrementó sus ingresos el doble que el 50% más pobre (Alvaredo et al., 2018). El crecimiento constante de la desigualdad económica ha impactado a todo el mundo (OCDE, 2001), y esta situación se ha agravado aún más debido a los efectos de la pandemia Covid-19 (Inequality.org., 2021). Por todo ello, la desigualdad económica se ha convertido en uno de los retos más apremiantes en la sociedad actual (FMI, 2020).

Algunas cifras nos permiten visualizar la actual brecha que existe entre los/as que más y menos tienen. Según el último informe sobre la desigualdad global (Chancel et al., 2022), el 10% más rico de la población mundial recibe el 52% de ingresos, mientras que la mitad más pobre de la población solo obtiene el 8.5% (Figura 1.1). En cuanto a la riqueza, las diferencias son aún más impactantes. La mitad más pobre de la población

apenas posee el 2% de la riqueza total, mientras que tan sólo el 10% más rico de la población mundial posee el 76% de la riqueza (Chancel et al., 2022).

Figura 1.1

Desigualdad mundial de ingresos y riqueza en 2021



Nota. Extraído del último informe del World Inequality Lab (Chancel et al., 2022)

La desigualdad se puede analizar también comparando diferentes contextos culturales. En algunas regiones, cómo Oriente Medio, África del Norte o América Latina, la desigualdad es mucho más alta en comparación con las regiones del Este de Asia o Europa, donde, aunque todavía se encuentran lejos de la igualdad económica, la diferencia es menor (Chancel et al., 2022). Los niveles de desigualdad entre países han disminuido relativamente, acercándose a los niveles de principios del siglo XX (Chancel et al., 2022). Aun así, la desigualdad dentro de los países no se ha visto afectada por este descenso (Chancel et al., 2022.

El reparto de recursos económicos entre las personas, además de ser desigual, es injusto (Oxfam, 2020). Esto es así debido a que no todas las personas se ven afectadas de la misma manera. Por ejemplo, la riqueza de los multimillonarios estadounidenses durante la pandemia aumentó en un 39%; por el contrario, los recursos económicos han disminuido considerablemente en grupos marginales como las clases sociales más bajas, las personas de origen afroamericano o latino y las personas trans (Inequality.org., 2021). La mayoría del crecimiento económico en las diferentes naciones ha estado destinada al sector privado, empobreciendo el sector público y promoviendo el enriquecimiento de grupos privilegiados (Chancel et al., 2022). Además, la disminución de los recursos

públicos dificulta las estrategias estatales para confrontar la desigualdad económica u otros desafíos, como la desigualdad de género o el cambio climático (Chancel et al., 2022; Kulich y Chipeaux, 2019).

La desigualdad afecta la forma en que las personas piensan y actúan. Por ejemplo, la desigualdad económica reduce los niveles de confianza, la cohesión social y el comportamiento prosocial (Gustavsson y Jordahl, 2008; Sandel, 2020; Van de Werfhorst y Salverda, 2012). Esto podría deberse a que en las sociedades con mayor desigualdad es menos probable que las personas de diferentes estratos sociales interactúen entre sí, debido a que residen en vecindarios diferentes, envían a sus hijos/as a escuelas distintas o leen periódicos diferentes (Rothstein y Uslaner, 2005). Estas circunstancias llevan a las personas a vivir en mundos materialmente y psico-socialmente diferentes.

2. El Análisis de la Desigualdad Económica a través de la Lente de la Identidad Social

El enfoque de la identidad social (*Social Identity Theory*; Tajfel y Turner, 1979; *Self-Categorization Theory*, Turner et al., 1987) indaga en los procesos psicosociales que vinculan el contexto socio-estructural y los procesos de categorización e identidad. De esta manera, podemos analizar como la desigualdad económica influye en los procesos psicológicos y su relación con el comportamiento individual y grupal. Específicamente, nos ayuda a comprender por qué, cuándo y para quién la desigualdad económica afecta a la percepción de diferentes grupos en función de la riqueza que poseen (e.g., clases sociales), así como a las relaciones intergrupales (Jetten et al., 2017).

2.1. El enfoque de la identidad social: la teoría de la identidad social y la teoría de la categorización del yo

La *teoría de la identidad social* (Tajfel y Turner, 1979) se centra en la pertenencia de las personas a ciertos grupos o categorías sociales junto con la evaluación que se le atribuye a esa membresía. Cuando las personas categorizan a otras personas, se acentúan perceptualmente las similitudes dentro de las categorías y las diferencias entre ellas (Tajfel y Wilkes, 1963). Es decir, se ven a los miembros del propio grupo (i.e., el endogrupo) como estereotípicamente similares y a los miembros de otros grupos (i.e., los exogrupos) como diferentes (i.e., metacontraste, Brown & Turner, 2002). De acuerdo con Abrams y Hogg (2010), el reconocimiento e identificación con el endogrupo lleva a

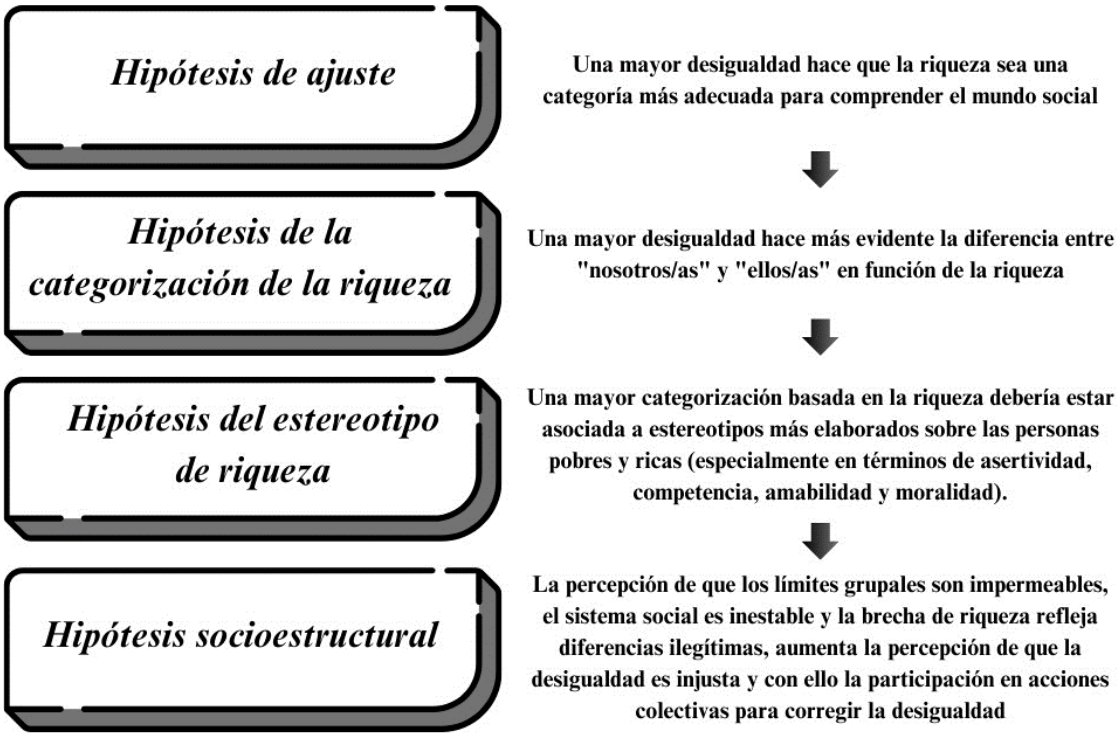
interiorizar las normas y actitudes grupales. Los autores también plantean que las creencias sobre el estatus relativo del grupo, la legitimidad y estabilidad de su posición en la jerarquía, la permeabilidad de los límites grupales y las estrategias que pueden llevar a cabo para redefinir su estatus, determinan cómo los grupos y sus miembros protegen y promueven una identidad social positiva. En suma, una identidad social positiva surge de la comparación social favorable entre el endogrupo y un exogrupo de referencia.

La *teoría de la categorización del yo* (Turner et al., 1987) amplía algunos de los conceptos clave de la teoría de la identidad social. En particular, proporciona una mayor comprensión de cómo y cuándo la pertenencia a un grupo se vuelve más saliente. Oakes (1987) propuso que la saliencia de la identidad social es resultado de la interacción entre la accesibilidad de la categoría grupal y de su ajuste. Así, las categorías se vuelven cognitivamente más accesibles cuando se utilizan con frecuencia (i.e., accesibilidad crónica) o cuando son relevantes en un contexto específico (i.e., accesibilidad situacional). El ajuste se produce cuando estas categorizaciones explican de manera efectiva las similitudes y diferencias entre las personas (i.e., cuando se da un ajuste comparativo) y proporcionan una comprensión del comportamiento de las personas (i.e., cuando se da un ajuste normativo).

Desde su inicio experimental utilizando el paradigma del grupo mínimo (Tajfel et al., 1971), el enfoque de la identidad social ha servido de explicación para un amplio espectro de fenómenos psicosociales (e.g., estereotipos, acción colectiva, cohesión grupal, liderazgo, toma de decisiones grupales, influencia social, motivación, populismo, etc.). La desigualdad económica no ha pasado desapercibida a la hora de ser comprendida a través del prisma de la identidad social. Jetten et al. (2017, 2021) hacen un análisis teórico y empírico de cómo el enfoque de la identidad social es ilustrativo para entender el efecto de la desigualdad económica en las relaciones intergrupales (Figura 1.2).

Figura 1.2

Hipótesis teóricas para entender los efectos psicosociales de la desigualdad económica a través de los procesos grupales e identitarios



Nota. Elaboración propia a partir de la literatura citada (Jetten et al., 2017, 2021)

2.2. La saliencia de la riqueza y la comparación intergrupal: grupos basados en la riqueza

La desigualdad económica aumenta la tendencia de las personas a entender su mundo social a través de la riqueza, dividiendo a las personas en aquellas que la tienen o que no. Retomando la teoría de la categorización del yo (Turner et al., 1987), es más probable que una categoría social sea más saliente si cobra relevancia en un contexto específico, se utiliza con frecuencia y es explicada por las diferencias y similitudes entre las personas. Por lo tanto, cuando existe una alta desigualdad económica, es más probable que exista un ajuste comparativo de las categorías derivadas de la riqueza (Figura 1.2: *Hipótesis del ajuste*, Jetten et al., 2017, 2021). De esta manera, las personas dividen el mundo con mayor facilidad en grupos basados en la riqueza; por ejemplo, entre personas pobres y ricas.

Un ejemplo de esto son los hallazgos encontrados por Peters et al. (2022), los cuales muestran una mayor prevalencia de términos que hacen referencia a la categoría

de riqueza (e.g., rico/a o pobre) en libros que han sido publicados en periodos de la historia que se caracterizan por una mayor desigualdad económica. Experimentalmente también encontraron que estás categorías se emplean con una mayor probabilidad para describir a personas en una sociedad desigual (vs. igualitaria) (Peters et al., 2022). En suma, estos resultados sugieren que las personas que viven en sociedades caracterizadas por niveles relativamente altos de desigualdad económica tienden a mencionar con mayor frecuencia a las personas ricas o a las personas pobres en sus conversaciones.

Asimismo, cuando la distinción de categorías es saliente, las personas también aumentan la percepción de similitudes dentro del grupo (e.g., "todas las personas ricas/pobres son iguales") y realzan las diferencias entre el grupo (e.g., "las personas pobres/ricas somos muy diferentes de ellos/as"). Una mayor desigualdad económica desencadena ambos procesos, fomentando la dinámica de "nosotros/as" versus "ellos/as" (Figura 1.2: *Hipótesis de la categorización de la riqueza*; Jetten et al., 2017, 2021). Esto puede influir en la fragmentación de la sociedad en subgrupos, lo que nos lleva a preguntarnos: ¿Cuántos grupos basados en la riqueza percibimos y consideramos las personas? Teniendo en cuenta cómo se distribuye la riqueza a nivel mundial y aplicando el ajuste comparativo, la respuesta más intuitiva sería dos: quienes tienen riqueza y quienes no. Pero esto debe matizarse por al menos dos cuestiones.

En primer lugar, existen varias formas de representar la desigualdad económica (ya sea medida de forma objetiva o subjetiva). Las medidas de percepción han variado en función de si las personas se centran en la distribución de recursos económicos en toda la sociedad, o en partes específicas; por ejemplo, comparar a las personas más ricas con las de ingresos medios (Jachimowicz et al., 2022). Estas medidas suelen consistir en estimar el número de personas en cada nivel económico (Kteily et al., 2017; Niehue, 2014) seleccionar varias distribuciones de quintiles de ingresos representadas en gráficos circulares o de barras (Norton y Ariely, 2011), estimar el umbral de ingresos para ser considerado como parte del 1% más rico (Chambers et al., 2014), o simplemente, informar sobre la diferencia percibida entre personas pobres y personas ricas (Siahpush et al., 2006)

Por otra parte, un ejemplo de cómo se ha conceptualizado la desigualdad económica objetiva ha sido el S80/S20 ratio, el cual pretende comparar cuántas veces más el 20% superior tiene más riqueza que el 20% inferior. Usando la misma lógica, pero en este caso centrándose en la riqueza acumulada en el percentil superior de la distribución

de riqueza, sería la comparación entre el 99% inferior de la población en comparación con el 1% superior. Ésta última comparación no sólo es objetiva, sino que también ha tenido implicaciones sociales en el cuestionamiento de la desigualdad económica, especialmente en Estados Unidos (*Occupy Wall Street*), pero también en Londres (*Occupy London*) o España (*Movimiento 15M indignados*), tratando de forjar nuevas categorías sociales (Stiglitz, 2012). Por lo tanto, una posibilidad es que las personas tendamos a clasificar la sociedad en dos grupos sociales en función de sus recursos económicos, y que esta percepción dicotómica promueva el conflicto social.

En segundo lugar, definir los grupos únicamente en función de la riqueza que poseen puede no ser la manera más precisa de describirlos, ya que existen otras fuentes de información que aumenta su heterogeneidad. En este sentido, existen múltiples ejes sociales que determinan la identidad social de las personas, el género, la etnicidad, el nivel educativo o la clase social. La clase social es el concepto que más se acerca a la comprensión de un grupo en base a la riqueza que posee, sin embargo, la clase social tiene cualidades perceptivas que van más allá de la riqueza (e.g., cultura; Becker et al., 2017). Así pues, la percepción y la identificación con la clase social pueden complejizar la homogeneización de la distribución de recursos en sólo dos grupos.

2.2.1. Breve aproximación al estudio de la(s) identidad(es) de clase

La investigación indica que el estatus socioeconómico es un aspecto importante de la identidad de las personas en el contexto de la desigualdad económica (Heiserman y Simpson, 2017; Machin y Vignoles, 2005). Como hemos señalado, el incremento de la desigualdad económica conduce a comparaciones más frecuentes entre grupos con diferentes grados de riqueza (Figura 2: *Hipótesis de la categorización de la riqueza*; Jetten et al., 2017: 2021). La clase social a la que pertenecemos puede llevar a diferenciarnos a "nosotros/as" de "ellos/as". De hecho, la desigualdad económica está asociada con la autopercepción individual y puede influir en la identificación con la clase social (Andersen y Curtis, 2015), haciendo más visibles las diferencias de estatus entre personas ricas y pobres (Kraus et al., 2017). Pero ¿a qué nos referimos cuando hablamos de los aspectos identitarios de la clase social?

Desde la sociología y las ciencias políticas se ha debatido continuamente sobre la definición conceptual de la clase social. Basándonos en la teoría marxista, la clase social se ha definido en función de la relación del individuo con los medios de producción: la

burguesía tenía el control de los medios de producción; las clases bajas o proletariado no (Marx y Engels, 1867/2010). Además de este enfoque, se han discutido perspectivas multidimensionales que no solo consideran la distribución desigual de recursos económicos (capital económico), sino también el capital social (e.g., el prestigio o estatus social; Weber, 1958) y el capital cultural (Bourdieu, 1984). Todas ellas poniendo el punto de mira en la clase dominante como propietaria de los recursos —económicos, sociales y culturales— y del control sobre las clases más bajas de la sociedad (Domhoff, 1998).

El enfoque predominante desde el cual la psicología social ha abordado la clase social ha sido el estatus socioeconómico (SES por sus siglas en inglés; *socioeconomic status*). El SES se conceptualiza en relación con la posición económica, el nivel educativo y la posición ocupacional de una persona, así como su posición relativa dentro de la jerarquía social (Manstead, 2018). La psicología social se ha centrado en las diferencias cuantitativas del SES, empleando medidas tanto objetivas como subjetivas. Se ha encontrado que las personas le otorgan una gran importancia subjetiva a las identidades que son indicativas del SES; de hecho, se les da una importancia similar que a las identidades basadas en la etnicidad o el género (Easterbrook et al., 2020). La percepción de la clase social—y sus consecuencias intergrupales—ha sido mayoritariamente estudiada en psicología social desde un enfoque sociocognitivo (Kraus y Stephens, 2012).

El enfoque sociocognitivo se basa en la afirmación de que los determinantes estructurales de la clase social, tanto materiales como culturales, moldean el contexto social de las personas de clase baja y alta, así como su relación con los demás (Kraus et al., 2012). Es decir, la experiencia de la posición que ocupamos en la jerarquía social crea un contexto de clase social que guía patrones de pensamiento, sentimiento y acción (Kraus et al., 2012). El contexto de desigualdad económica que experimentamos aumenta las comparaciones sociales y aporta información sobre los ingresos, el nivel educativo o la ocupación de los/as demás, es decir, nos señala la clase (Kraus et al., 2017). Esto ocurre con frecuencia, rapidez y precisión, refuerza las fronteras grupales y promueve comportamientos que podrían justificar el sistema económico (Kraus et al., 2017).

2.3. Estereotipación de las clases sociales

Las diferencias de riqueza no sólo afectan a la forma en que se categorizan los distintos grupos basado en riqueza; también afecta la forma en qué se perciben estos grupos. A medida que las similitudes y diferencias entre las clases sociales se amplifican

y se comparten socialmente, también se forman distintos estereotipos sobre las personas ricas y pobres (Figura 1.2: *Hipótesis del estereotipo de riqueza*; Jetten et al., 2021).

Los estereotipos de clase social se han teorizado a partir de las dos dimensiones principales propuestas por *el modelo del contenido de los estereotipos*: calidez/sociabilidad y competencia (*Stereotype Content Model*; Fiske et al., 2002). La calidez corresponde a la simpatía interpersonal y la competencia a la capacidad de alcanzar metas. A su vez, los estereotipos surgen a partir del estatus socioeconómico percibido del grupo (alto o bajo) y su interdependencia estructural con los otros grupos (cooperativa o competitiva) (Fiske et al., 2002, 2007). Es de esta manera que el cruce de estas condiciones afecta a la valencia del estereotipo (positiva o negativa). Por ejemplo, un grupo que es percibido con alto estatus y cooperativo será evaluado como competente y cálido, pero un grupo que es percibido de bajo estatus y competitivo será juzgado como incompetente y frío (con algunas diferencias culturales, Cuddy et al., 2009). Aun así, la valencia también puede ser mixta o ambivalente (Fiske et al., 2002). De este modo, las personas ricas pueden ser calificadas como más competentes, pero frías; las personas pobres tienden a ser percibidas como más cálidas que competentes (Durante et al., 2017).

Junto con este modelo teórico, otros/as autores/as han destacado diferentes dimensiones de la percepción social (e.g., moralidad, sociabilidad y competencia, Ellemers, 2017; sociabilidad y competencia; Yzerbyt, 2016; agencia/éxito socioeconómico, creencias conservadoras/progresistas y orientación comunal; Koch et al., 2016; agencia y comunión; (Abele y Wojciszke, 2014). Todos estos enfoques han sido integrados en un marco teórico común (Abele et al., 2021). Según este marco teórico integrado de evaluación social (Abele et al., 2021), se identifican dos dimensiones principales de evaluación. La dimensión vertical se relaciona con la agencia, la competencia y la asertividad del grupo, reflejando su capacidad para alcanzar un estatus más alto dentro de la sociedad. Por otro lado, la dimensión horizontal se refiere a la comunión, amabilidad y moralidad de un grupo, abarcando sus tendencias prosociales para fomentar y mantener relaciones. Una mayor desigualdad afectará al aumento de estereotipos en ambas dimensiones de percepción social (Jetten et al., 2021).

La percepción de las personas ricas y pobres en estas dos dimensiones no sólo depende del estatus socioeconómico. También depende del grado de desigualdad existente. Así, al analizar la dimensión vertical, Connor et al. (2021) encontraron que en los contextos más desiguales las personas con altos ingresos se consideraron más

competentes que las de bajos ingresos; en los contextos menos desiguales, este efecto fue menos pronunciado. Sin embargo, Tanjitpiyanond et al. (2022) encontraron que tanto a las personas pobres como ricas se les atribuyó una menor competencia cuando la desigualdad fue alta. Desde esta perspectiva, la relación entre la clase social y la competencia atribuida no está tan clara: los estudios tienden a mostrar resultados dispares.

Por otra parte, y considerando la dimensión horizontal, a menudo se percibe que las personas ricas tienen menos rasgos morales (Moreno-Bella et al., 2019). Sin embargo, las personas pobres son generalmente percibidos como más amistosas y morales que las personas ricas (Kervyn et al., 2010). Cabe señalar que tanto los grupos ricos como los pobres han sido evaluados como inmorales en condiciones de alta desigualdad, sugiriendo que la desigualdad tiene un efecto perjudicial en las relaciones intergrupales (Tanjitpiyanon et al., 2022; para un resultado similar en grupos de bajo estatus ver también, Moreno-Bella et al., 2023).

El aumento de los estereotipos tiene algunas implicaciones negativas para los grupos en desventaja. Por ejemplo, el hecho de que las personas pobres sean percibidas como vagas o poco competentes justificará el sistema económico actual: se pensará que la gente recibe lo que se merece, fomentando así la meritocracia (Starmans et al., 2017).

2.4. Cambio estructural de la desigualdad

En una distribución desigual de los recursos, las personas de abajo, en comparación con las de arriba, se encuentran en una situación desfavorable o en desventaja. Siguiendo los principios de la teoría clásica de la identidad social, los grupos en desventaja evaluarán su posición y la posibilidad de superar las barreras existentes entre grupos, lo que los llevará a adoptar diversas estrategias con el fin de lograr un autoconcepto más seguro y estable (Tafjel y Turner, 1979). Por ejemplo, cuando las fronteras son permeables, la estrategia más rápida para un grupo en desventaja será unirse a otro grupo de mayor estatus, es decir, la búsqueda de movilidad social. Sin embargo, si estas son percibidas como inalterables, existen estrategias de creatividad social. Por ejemplo, redefinir el contenido de su identidad (e.g., "*Somos pobres, pero somos sinceros/as*").

En el caso de que los límites grupales se perciban como ilegítimos o injustos, aunque impermeables, los grupos en desventaja pueden sentirse motivados a desencadenar el conflicto grupal y desafiar del estatus quo. Esto nos lleva a la *hipótesis*

socioestructural (Figura 2; Jetten et al., 2017, 2021) según la cual, cuando la desigualdad económica se percibe como ilegítima se generan sentimientos de injusticia, resentimiento o ira que pueden llevar a las personas a movilizarse para tomar acciones que impulsan un cambio social (van Zomeren et al., 2008). Esto ocurrirá especialmente en el caso de las clases sociales más bajas, las cuales experimentan una sensación de privación relativa en comparación con las clases sociales más altas (Walker & Smith, 2002), lo que lleva a la comparación intergrupal y a la motivación para actuar colectivamente para mejorar las condiciones del grupo (Wright et al., 1990).

3. Desde lo Social a lo Político: La Identidad Colectiva Politizada

En el apartado anterior, hemos utilizado el término identidad social para referirnos a la identidad que se deriva de la pertenencia a un grupo (Tajfel y Turner, 1979). Sin embargo, Simon y Klandermans (2001) prefieren emplear el término "identidad colectiva" en lugar de "identidad social" para evitar malentendidos en el sentido de que cualquier otra forma de identidad, como la identidad personal, sea necesariamente asocial. Además, algunos/as autores/as sostienen que "colectiva" va más allá de "social" (Klandermans y de Weerd, 2000; Klandermans, 2014). Así, la identidad colectiva no se limita únicamente a cómo las personas se definen a sí mismas como parte de una o varias categorías sociales, sino que implica una definición grupal compartida, con un destino común y con una serie de creencias y sentimientos compartidos con las personas de un grupo (van Stekelenburg, 2022). La identidad colectiva se "politiza" en la medida en que las personas que forman parte del grupo se involucran en una lucha por el poder, intentando establecer, cambiar o defender su lugar en la estructura de poder (Simon & Klandermans, 2001). Además, esta actividad política del grupo es intencionada y en un contexto social de lucha amplio.

Por un lado, el poder social —definido como el control asimétrico sobre los recursos valiosos en las relaciones sociales (Dépret y Fiske, 1993; Gruenfeld et al., 2008; Keltner et al., 2003)— es una fuente de conflicto entre grupos. De hecho, los grupos más poderosos suelen discriminar activamente a los menos poderosos (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). Esto puede conducir a una lucha por la redistribución de los recursos desiguales entre grupos, a menos que otras variables ideológicas (e.g., justificación del sistema, creencias en la meritocracia, orientación a la dominancia social) socaven la identidad colectiva de los grupos menos poderosos (García-Sánchez et al., 2018; Jost et al., 2017;

Sidanius y Pratto, 1999). Esta lucha se intensificará cuando la estructura social sea incierta o inestable, es decir, que los límites grupales sean susceptibles de cambio (Simon y Klandermans, 2001).

El conflicto por el poder no suele encontrarse aislado, sino que en ocasiones involucra a otros grupos o segmentos de la sociedad más amplios (Simon y Klandermans, 2001). Por ejemplo, un movimiento social particular (e.g., un movimiento sindical organizado por un grupo de trabajadores/as) y su antagónico (e.g., los/as directivos/as de la empresa a la que pertenecen) pueden encontrarse en conflicto por la desigual distribución de poder. Ambos grupos tratarán de reclutar adeptos que apoyen su causa en el público general, defendiendo que su causa es de "interés común". De manera que otras personas o grupos que no pertenecen a dichos movimientos pueden formar parte de dicha lucha para incrementar su eficacia de cambio.

3.1. Antecedentes y modelos explicativos de la identidad colectiva politizada

Simon y Klandermans (2001) señalan tres detonantes principales de la identidad colectiva politizada: la conciencia de quejas o agravios compartidos, las atribuciones adversariales para culpar a un/a oponente y la participación de la sociedad mediante la triangulación. Estos tres elementos, junto con el poder y las normas sociales, son los pilares teóricos que desarrollaremos en este apartado.

En primer lugar, el agravio compartido puede hacer saliente la colectivización de la identidad, ampliando los límites grupales a través de la toma de conciencia del destino que comparten los diferentes miembros del grupo (Dovidio et al., 2000; Drury et al., 2016; Klandermans, 2014). Este proceso es guiado por las normas sociales que el grupo representa (Potoczek et al., 2023), las cuales pueden ser previamente consensuadas (Smith et al., 2015).

En segundo lugar, la politización es resultado de un proceso contextual y gradual. Existe una extensa literatura sobre la relación entre la identidad y la participación en las acciones colectivas. Por su parte, la identidad se ha planteado tanto como un antecedente (Simon y Klandermans, 2000; van Zomeren et al., 2008) como una consecuencia (Drury y Reicher, 2009); es decir, cuando los grupos emprenden acciones colectivas, sus miembros muestran una mayor identificación, pero los miembros que más se identifican son los más proclives a la acción colectiva. Esto sugiere que existe una relación bidireccional entre estas dos variables (Reicher et al., 2010).

Un ejemplo clásico de identidad de clase politizada es la clase trabajadora. Desde un análisis marxista, la conciencia de clase trabajadora es lo que ha impulsado la lucha de clases contra la clase dominante y opresora a lo largo de la historia (e.g., el feudalismo, el capitalismo, etc.; Marx y Engels, 1867/2010). Pertenecer a la clase trabajadora ha sido fundamental para el desarrollo de los movimientos políticos (por ejemplo, los movimientos obreros y socialistas, el comunismo) y las actitudes políticas y sociales de las personas (Easterbrook et al., 2020; Manstead, 2018). Mas allá de la identidad de clase trabajadora han surgido otros conceptos asociados y paradigmas para entenderla, como el precariado (Standing, 2012) o el análisis de la desigualdad económica de Thomas Pikkety (2013).

Dado el incremento de la desigualdad económica, durante el 2011, el movimiento *Occupy Wall Street* utilizó el lema "Somos el 99%" para convocar una ocupación de Wall Street. El objetivo principal fue concienciar a las personas de que pertenecen al 99% de la población mundial, en contraste con el 1% de la población que acumula la otra mitad de la riqueza (Stewart, 2019). Así, es fácil identificar dos grupos antagónicos en la lucha por cambiar la estructura de poder. Sin embargo, la desigualdad afecta especialmente a las clases bajas o trabajadoras, por lo que el 99% puede ser un intento de forjar una identidad supra ordenada que también contempla las clases medias, apelando al sentido común: la realidad de las divisiones socioeconómicas dentro de la economía y la sociedad son injustas (Stiglitz, 2012).

Como resultado la incertidumbre económica, otra categoría social relevante es la "gente común", que puede promover que personas pertenecientes a estratos económicos más bajos tengan una mayor probabilidad de experimentar sentimientos de deprivación, lo que puede llevar a que las personas perciban amenazada su identidad basada en el estatus (Manunta et al., 2022). Esto puede generar una sensación de frustración de pertenencia al grupo y una percepción de exclusión social de la sociedad. Además, en un intento de restaurar el control personal (Fritsche y Jugert, 2017), es posible que estas personas sobrevaloren las dimensiones del endogrupo (Pickett et al., 2002). Un ejemplo de esto es el movimiento de los chalecos amarillos en Francia (Jetten et al., 2020).

3.1.1. Amenaza económica y restauración del control personal: Respuestas paliativas o centradas en el problema

Desde la psicología social, las crisis sociales suponen una amenaza para la sensación de control personal (Fritsche y Jugert, 2017). Tanto una crisis financiera como un aumento de la desigualdad económica percibida pueden suponer una amenaza potencial, ya que esta última puede crear un contexto de competencia por los recursos (Jetten et al., 2015; Wilkinson y Pickett, 2017). La incertidumbre puede repercutir en aspectos materiales, como el aumento del desempleo y una mayor disparidad de derechos sociales, así como a la salud física y mental, generando mayores niveles de estrés y ansiedad (Creed et al., 2012; Riumallo-Herl et al., 2014). En última instancia, esto puede llevar a una sensación de falta de control que afecta a las actitudes y el comportamiento.

El grado de control y la identidad social tienen una relación bidireccional. El control percibido está influido por la identidad social (Guinote et al., 2006), y también se considera uno de los motivos que determinan la construcción de la identidad (Vignoles et al., 2008). De manera que el aumento de control personal que favorece la identidad colectiva puede conducir a un mayor bienestar (Greenaway et al., 2015), así como a la acción colectiva (Fritsche y Jugert, 2017). Esto también se plantea desde el *modelo de restauración del control basado en el grupo*, el cual afirma que las personas enfatizarán su pertenencia a un grupo social como una estrategia automática para restaurar un sentido subjetivo de control que está en juego (*Model of Group-Based control;* Fritsche et al., 2011, 2013*)* . Sin embargo, es importante tener en cuenta que diferentes respuestas pueden surgir como resultado de este proceso.

La amenaza económica puede alimentar el etnocentrismo y los prejuicios hacía exogrupos (e.g., grupos de personas migrantes, Becker et al., 2011; Esses et al., 2017). Esto ocurre porque la división entre “nosotros” y “ellos” intensifica un sesgo endogrupal que busca restaurar el control derogando al exogrupo (Fritsche et al., 2017). Así, las respuestas pueden ser paliativas al enfocase en mejorar la autoestima grupal, pero sin promover un cambio de las condiciones económicas desiguales (Fritsche et al., 2017; Frische y Jugert, 2017).

El nacionalismo, al igual que el etnocentrismo, podría ser una respuesta de tipo paliativo. En este sentido, el nacionalismo ha sido empleado en algunas ocasiones por lideres autoritarios para crear una falsa ilusión de control en la ciudadanía (Torres-Vega

et al., 2021). Por ejemplo, la demanda de Donal Trump de construir muros más altos entre la frontera de México y Estados Unidos, o el referéndum pro-brexit para plantear la salida de Reino Unido de la Unión Europea. Ambos tienen la intencionalidad de mejorar la situación económica del endogrupo nacional culpando a exogrupos. Como resultado, pueden surgir movimientos que implican proteger y reforzar la imagen y el estatus positivo del grupo nacional a toda costa (Gronfeld et al., 2022).

Un constructo que captura este proceso grupal en el contexto nacionalista es el narcisismo colectivo, el cual es una tendencia a exagerar la importancia de un endogrupo y el deseo de su reconocimiento externo (Golec de Zavala y Lantos, 2020). El narcisismo colectivo es hipersensible a la amenaza intergrupal y un fuerte detonante de la hostilidad. Cuando se toma como referencia el grupo nacional, se ha encontrado asociado con una menor disposición a participar en acciones colectivas a favor de las personas refugiadas (Górska et al., 2020), o con un mayor apoyo al Brexit para limitar la inmigración (Golec de Zavala et al., 2017; Marchlewska et al., 2018).

Por otro lado, la percepción de falta de control puede llevar a respuestas positivas hacia otros grupos que busquen una solución al problema que la origina. Por ejemplo, la amenaza por desempleo puede llevar a evaluaciones intergrupales más favorables basadas en la empatía y la identificación con otros grupos que se encuentran en la misma situación (Bukowski et al., 2019). También puede llevar a luchar colectivamente contra las consecuencias de una crisis económica (Fritsche et al., 2017). En España, durante la crisis económica derivada de la pandemia (COVID-19), se priorizó la solidaridad dentro de las clases sociales más bajas para superar las dificultades cotidianas durante el confinamiento (e.g., acciones vecinales para evitar que la población más vulnerable contrállese la enfermedad o iniciativas para recolectar recursos económicos destinados a las personas más afectadas). En línea con esto, la investigación ha mostrado como las personas durante la pandemia del COVID-19 mostraron más valores comunitarios (Milyavsky et al., 2022) e identidades compartidas más resilientes (Ntontis et al., 2023).

En resumen, durante una crisis, la sensación de control de una persona puede verse amenazada y buscar la restauración a través de la participación en grupos sociales basados en la riqueza que actúan como representantes de su identidad. En los siguientes apartados, desarrollaremos las teorías más relevantes para comprender la protesta en el contexto de la desigualdad económica.

3.1.2. Ampliando los límites grupales: La identidad compartida

En contextos concurridos, como manifestaciones o conciertos, algunas teorías plantean que la sensación de anonimato en medio de la multitud podría llevar a la pérdida de identidad y control sobre las acciones de las personas (Le Bon, 1895/1947). Sin embargo, la investigación empírica sobre la identidad ha demostrado que este anonimato, conocido incorrectamente como desindividuación (Diener, 1979), es un proceso activo en el que las personas eligen cambiar la identidad individual por otra grupal (Reicher y Levine, 1994). Como resultado, se aceptan las normas asociadas al grupo y se muestra un comportamiento coherente con las normas grupales (Postmes y Spears, 1998).

El *modelo elaborado de la identidad social* (*Elaborated Social Identity Model*; ESIM) se desarrolló para dar explicación a este cambio normativo que suele ocurrir en eventos que son multitudinarios, como disturbios, emergencias o catástrofes. Este modelo explica cómo la participación en acciones colectivas puede llevar a un empoderamiento duradero al surgir nuevas definiciones del yo como resultado de la interacción conflictiva entre grupos (Drury y Reicher, 1999, 2009; Reicher, 1997) Así, la multitud alcanza un propósito común que conlleva la formación de identidades compartidas (Drury et al., 2020). En suma, a través de la participación en una multitud, las personas pueden percibirse a sí mismas en términos de una identidad colectiva, lo cual puede convertirse en la base para actuar.

Son dos los motivos comunes para el surgimiento y desarrollo de un conflicto: la diferenciación categórica entre la multitud y el exogrupo (e.g., la policía) y una asimetría en las relaciones de poder (Drury y Reicher, 2009). Este patrón se ha encontrado en diferentes eventos, como protestas estudiantiles (Reicher, 1996) o manifestaciones contra los impuestos locales (Stott y Reicher, 1998). De la misma forma, las experiencias de eventos altamente amenazantes (como los terremotos en Chile de 2010, los atentados en Londres en 2005 o la pandemia de COVID-19, Drury et al., 2009, 2016; Stevenson et al., 2021) son colectivas y ejercen una influencia en las normas sociales. Igualmente, una crisis, o la percepción de la creciente desigualdad económica, son situaciones amenazantes que puede desafiar los límites grupales y brindar una oportunidad para formar nuevas identidades compartidas.

Ampliar los límites grupales y desarrollar un sentido de identidad común ha demostrado mejorar las relaciones intergrupales entre los miembros de los grupos que

componen dicha identidad (Dovidio et al., 2000; Gaertner et al., 2000; Gaertner & Dovidio, 2012). Sin embargo, es importante tener en cuenta que no todos los grupos saldrán beneficiados, ya que las diferencias de poder entre grupos incluidos dentro de esas categorías supraordenadas podrían quedar invisibilizadas.

3.1.3. Armonía o conflicto: Identidades duales e identidades comunes

El *modelo de la identidad común* enfatiza el proceso de recategorización, mediante el cual las personas que pertenecen a diferentes grupos pueden concebirse como parte de un solo grupo superordinado más amplio e inclusivo en lugar de como dos grupos separados (*Common Ingroup Identity Model*, Gaertner et al., 2000). De esta manera se alteran los límites grupales y se redefinen quiénes pertenecen a nuestro grupo y quiénes no, favoreciendo que las personas que antes pertenecían al exogrupo sean percibidas más positivamente (Gaertner et al., 2016)

La construcción de una nueva identidad grupal común no requiere necesariamente que cada grupo abandone por completo su identidad más específica. La recategorización puede ocurrir al menos de dos formas distintas: los dos grupos pueden fusionarse para formar una única categoría, o grupo inclusivo, o los dos grupos pueden redefinirse en una categoría superior manteniendo la distinción y singularidad de cada grupo, lo que se conoce como una identidad "dual" (Gaertner et al., 2016).

La elección entre una u otra forma de recategorización estará modulada por el poder o estatus del grupo. Las motivaciones de un grupo mayoritario o privilegiado (alto estatus, alto poder) o minoritario o en desventaja (bajo estatus, bajo poder) serán diferentes (Scheepers et al., 2006). Los grupos más poderosos tienden a preferir la recategorización en un solo grupo, aunque esto puede socavar la identificación de subgrupos en desventaja y reducir la acción colectiva para desafiar el estatus quo (Wright y Lubensky, 2009). Por el contrario, los grupos menos poderosos pueden preferir mantener una identidad dual, resaltando las diferencias de poder entre grupos y motivando a grupos privilegiados a tomar medidas contra las injusticias (Tyler y Blader, 2003).

En nuestras sociedades navegan diversos grupos basados en la riqueza (e.g., pobres, clases bajas, clase media, ricos, etc.). Algunas de ellos tratan de englobar o reunir diferentes subgrupos a través de un agravio común y de metas compartidas (e.g., las demandas mencionadas por el 99%). Esto puede ser útil para establecer una relación intergrupal armoniosa, al menos entre los subgrupos que la contienen. No obstante,

aunque aparentemente esta categoría supraordenada pueda ser beneficiosa, otros grupos pueden preferir mantener su identidad de origen a través de una coalición entre grupos separados (e.g., clase trabajadora) (Bukowski et al., 2022)

3.1.4. Encontrando acuerdos: Grupos basados en la opinión y el consenso

La identidad no sólo es compartida ampliando los límites grupales o sometiéndose a procesos de recategorización, sino que también es importante mencionar los consensos acordados entre las personas que la componen. Por ejemplo, en una asamblea donde un grupo debate los objetivos de un nuevo movimiento, como los derechos LGTBIQA+, la justicia climática o una iniciativa vecinal en una comunidad de bajos recursos. En este contexto, si hay demandas no abordadas por movimientos anteriores, se requerirá llegar a consensos sobre las estrategias a emplear para abordar estas necesidades, así como los eslóganes o como se harán llamar en la arena activista. Esto fenómeno puede ser capturado en la ocupación de espacios públicos dónde sus participantes tienen un espacio asambleario (e.g., *Occupy Wall Street*, *Occupy Londo*n, *Movimiento indignados 15M*).

El ejemplo anterior ilustra cómo la comunicación de opiniones e ideas puede generar identidades compartidas. Esto ocurre porque las personas implicadas están motivadas para provocar un cambio social, ya que perciben que la forma en que su entorno social está estructurado no es adecuada o justa. Como resultado, la coordinación de estos movimientos se articula sobre normas sociales deseadas que se discuten y se convierten en la base de una identidad emergente (Smith et al., 2015).

Un resultado de estas reflexiones pueden ser los grupos basados en la opinión. Los grupos basados en opiniones son grupos psicológicos que implican una identidad social basada en opiniones compartidas (*Opinion based groups*, Bliuc et al., 2007). Aparentemente, todos los grupos se basan en un cierto grado de acuerdo entre sus participantes, pero los grupos basados en la opinión no comparten necesariamente una categoría social, si no que han llegado a acuerdos y han conformado las normas que contienen la propia categoría (Bliuc et al., 2007; McGarty et al., 2009). De esta manera, pueden emerger identidades colectivas que recojan demandas de grupos previos o que conformen objetivos completamente novedosos. Esto es importante porque, para logar el cambio social, es necesario explorar la identificación con categorías que sean contextualmente más relevantes para la acción y que se basen en un contenido específico (McGarty et al., 2009).

En definitiva, la forma y contenido de los grupos impacta directamente en el potencial que una identidad tiene de politizarse. Los modelos anteriores, lejos de ser excluyentes entre sí, muestran una complementariedad para explicar las razones que llevan a los movimientos a buscar cumplir sus demandas. En el siguiente apartado nos centraremos en las consecuencias actitudinales y comportamentales que la politización de la identidad puede tener en el contexto económico: la acción colectiva.

3.2. Consecuencias actitudinales y comportamentales de la identidad politizada

El estudio del conflicto grupal se ha preocupado por mejorar las relaciones intergrupales que subyacen y guían el comportamiento discriminatorio (e.g., reducción del estereotipo; Wright y Taylor, 2007), pero también por como los grupos en desventaja responden a su posición social a través de la acción colectiva (Wright y Lubensky, 2009).

La acción colectiva se refiere a la acción llevada a cabo por un miembro de un grupo en representación de este, con el propósito de cambiar o mejorar las condiciones del grupo (Wright, 2009). Esta definición se enfoca en aspectos psicológicos y no depende del número de personas involucradas o del contenido de la acción. Además, implica que la identidad del grupo sea saliente y que las preocupaciones del grupo, frente a motivos individuales, motiven la acción (Wright, 2009).

La investigación sobre la acción colectiva ha focalizado su atención en los factores psicosociales que influyen en ella, identificando las variables que generan una sensación subjetiva de desventaja (Klandermans, 1997). El modelo de identidad social integrador de la acción colectiva (*Integrative social Identity Model of Collective Action*; SIMCA, van Zomeren et al., 2008) combina tres variables fundamentales que podrían influir en la acción colectiva: la percepción de injusticia, la percepción de eficacia y la identidad.

La percepción de injusticia (injusticia no afectiva) o el sentimiento de injusticia (injusticia afectiva) actúan como predictores de la acción colectiva y el comportamiento de protesta (van Stekelenburg y Klandermans, 2013; van Zomeren et al., 2008). Específicamente, la investigación ha mostrado que el sentimiento de injusticia predice con mayor intensidad la acción colectiva, en comparación con la injusticia percibida (van Zomeren et al., 2008). Además, la injusticia basada en la comparación entre grupos determina emociones grupales, como la ira, la cual se asocia directamente con la participación en acciones colectivas para cambiar la situación (van Zomeren et al., 2004; Walker y Smith, 2002). Por otro lado, la indignación moral, al ser una emoción orientada

a la acción y dirigida hacia factores sistémicos, ha demostrado también tener efectos en la movilización (Thomas y McGarty, 2009)

Asimismo, si se percibe que la estructura es inestable, existe la posibilidad de cambiarla. La eficacia grupal, que se define como la creencia colectiva de que los problemas relacionados con el grupo pueden ser resueltos mediante el esfuerzo conjunto, es un otro factor predictor de la acción colectiva (van Zomeren et al., 2008; van Zomeren et al., 2004). Este elemento se deriva de los enfoques subjetivos de movilización de recursos, que asumen que la protesta consiste en un conjunto de acciones racionales (Klandermans, 1984; Louis et al., 2005). La eficacia colectiva ha mostrado fomentar una mayor identificación grupal, lo que a su vez impulsa a las personas a actuar en nombre de su grupo (van Zomeren et al., 2010).

Finalmente, la identidad es la piedra angular de este modelo. Como se ha mencionado a lo largo de esta introducción, cuando las personas que forman parte un grupo de bajo estatus perciben que los límites grupales son ilegítimos e inestables, es más probable que se involucren en la acción colectiva para cambiar esa diferencia (Tajfel, 1978; Tajfel y Turner, 2004). En línea con esto, se ha encontrado que la identificación con los movimientos sociales suele ser una variable crucial (Stürmer & Simon, 2004), ya que este tipo de identificación suele ser un predictor más fuerte de la acción colectiva que la identificación basada en la categoría social en desventaja. Esto se debe a que se trata de una identidad politizada (Simon y Klandermans, 2001).

El modelo SIMCA sugiere que la identidad colectiva predice la percepción de injusticia y la eficacia colectiva, y a su vez, estas dos últimas, actúan como mediadoras de la acción colectiva (van Zomeren et al., 2008). Posteriormente, se ha propuesto el *modelo encapsulado de la identidad social en la acción colectiva (Encapsulated Modelo of Social Identity in Collective Action*; EMSICA, Thomas et al., 2012) que plantea que la percepción de injusticia y eficacia grupal son desencadenantes de la identidad social. Es decir, en una situación de injusticia, una persona puede experimentar emociones como la ira o la indignación y al mismo tiempo pensar que junto con otras personas es posible tener éxito para cambiar dicha injusticia. Todo esto llevaría a la formación del grupo y la identificación colectiva en base a ideas compartidas. Esta aproximación teórica resulta más coherente con identidades emergentes que aún no están totalmente consolidadas y requieren del establecimiento de ciertas normas (Bliuc et al., 2007; Uysal et al., 2022).

No obstante, la acción colectiva resultante de este proceso no siempre tiene que conducir a un cambio social "progresista".

Recientemente, Thomas y Osborne (2022) plantearon una síntesis del estudio de la acción colectiva en cuatro fases: fase de agravio, fase de colaboración, fase reaccionaria y fase dialéctica. La primera fase, *agravio*, menciona los enfoques que han analizado el agravio estructural y las condiciones bajo las que los grupos en desventaja y los movimientos sociales se involucran en la acción colectiva (Klandermans y Simon, 2001, van Zomeren et al., 2008). La segunda, *colaboración*, pone el enfoque en el papel de los grupos aventajados para generar cambios sociales actuando como aliados (Radke et al., 2020; Saab et al., 2015; Subašić et al., 2008). La tercera fase, *reaccionaria*, hace un giro teórico para plantear que ciertos movimientos y grupos aventajados han intentado mantener su estatus privilegiado (e.g., *all lives matter*). Por último, la cuarta o *dialéctica*, menciona que tanto los movimientos que persiguen cambiar el estatus quo (e.g., movimientos progresistas) como aquellos que pretenden mantener o aumentar las diferencias de poder (e.g., movimientos reaccionarios) pueden ser explicados por los mismos mecanismos psicosociales (Osborne et al., 2019).

La identidad del 99% o la identidad de clase trabajadora son identidades colectivas politizadas basadas en la riqueza, que responden a cambios en el grado de riqueza y de desigualdad existentes. Por lo tanto, hacen referencia a movimientos progresistas que son llevados a cabo por grupos en desventaja basados en un agravio común. Sin embargo, también pueden existir movimientos reaccionarios donde la identificación con el grupo cumple la función de defender los privilegios y las ventajas endogrupales (e.g., identidad nacional y narcisismo colectivo). Así, la identidad social también puede estar detrás las protestas que buscan defender el estatus quo o incluso llevar a cabo un cambio social reaccionario (Jost et al., 2017; Marinthe et al., 2022; Osborne et al., 2019).

En resumen, la identidad colectiva puede impulsar el cambio social. En el contexto de la desigualdad económica, las personas forman parte de diversos grupos sociales en función de la riqueza que poseen, lo que permite crear identidades basadas en la clase tradicional (e.g., identidad de clase trabajadora, identidad de clase media), pero también nuevas categorías sociales (e.g., 99%, la gente común). Estas identidades pueden resultar útiles para restablecer el control personal que la desigualdad pone en juego y promover la acción colectiva en favor de un sistema económico más equitativo. Además, estas identidades tienen el potencial de formar parte de movimientos progresistas que, a través

de un proceso de politización (e.g., agravios compartidos, culpar a un oponente y la participación de la sociedad mediante la triangulación) luchan por cambiar su posición social. Del mismo modo, los movimientos de tipo reaccionario (e.g., nacionalismo) pueden llevar a cabo acciones colectivas para mantener el sistema actual o incluso ampliar el estatus quo. Por lo tanto, resulta crucial analizar el papel de la identificación con grupos basados en a la riqueza en el contexto actual de desigualdad económica.

Capítulo 2

Planteamiento General, Preguntas de Investigación y Objetivos

Las consecuencias negativas de la desigualdad económica han sido ampliamente estudiadas en las últimas décadas, sin embargo, los procesos intergrupales que motivan a las personas para cambiarlas han tenido menos atención. La presente tesis examina la identificación grupal en el contexto de la desigualdad económica y su relación con la movilización para el cambio social. La revisión de la literatura realizada en el Capítulo 1 pone de relieve la importancia de la relación entre la desigualdad económica y la identidad social. Por un lado, se indica el efecto negativo de la desigualdad económica en las relaciones intergrupales (e.g., estereotipos) y, por otro lado, se analiza el papel de la identidad grupal como mecanismo que hace posible que las personas se sientan motivadas a desafiar el estatus quo.

Investigaciones previas sugieren que cuando las personas se identifican con un grupo con el que comparten creencias y un destino compartido, es posible que su identidad se politice (van Stekelenburg, 2022). La identidad colectiva se politiza en la medida en que las personas que forman parte del grupo se involucran en una lucha por el poder para cambiar su posición social (Simon y Klandermans, 2001). Este fenómeno ha sido ampliamente estudiado en grupos en desventaja, basándose en aspectos identitarios como el género, la etnia o la clase social (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Wright et al, 1990). Por ejemplo, se ha observado en la identificación con el movimiento feminista en el caso de las mujeres (Estevan-Reina et al., 2020) o la identificación con el movimiento gay en el caso del colectivo LGTBIQ+ (Stürmer y Simon, 2004), entre otros. Junto a estas desigualdades, la económica es una de las más apremiantes en las sociedades actuales. La desigualdad económica y la estratificación de la sociedad en clases sociales hacen saliente un agravio que está basado en la riqueza que poseen los grupos (Jetten et al., 2021), motivándolos a responder ante un sentido subjetivo de desventaja (Drury & Reicher, 2000; van Stekelenburg & Klandermans, 2013; van Zomeren et al., 2008).

La identidad de clase trabajadora es un ejemplo clásico de identidad colectiva politizada que ha promovido históricamente el cambio de las estructuras de poder basadas en la clase social (Marx, 1867/2010). Recientemente, nuevas categorías supraordenadas han emergido con el objetivo de reunir a la mayoría de las personas posibles para potenciar un cambio social, resultando así en categorías más amplias (e.g., 99%, la gente común). Esto puede ser así debido a que hablar en términos de relaciones de producción ha perdido eficacia política (Manstead, 2018). Además, en ocasiones llevar teóricamente esta definición conceptual de la clase trabajadora a la práctica puede ser confusa. Por

ejemplo, una persona con un cargo laboral autónomo, la cual sería propietaria de los medios de producción, puede tener un sueldo inferior que una persona asalariada, la cual no posee dichos medios.

De acuerdo con esto, las nuevas formas de entender las relaciones entre clases sociales (e.g., la gente común y las élites económicas, el 99% y el 1%), pero también las clásicas (e.g., la clase trabajadora y la clase dominante) ocupan el objetivo principal de esta tesis. En concreto, proponemos que el 99%, la gente común y la clase trabajadora son identidades politizadas en el contexto económico y nos planteamos la siguiente pregunta: ¿son diferentes de otros grupos basados en la riqueza (e.g., identidades de clase baja, clase media, clase alta) en cuanto a su potencial para promover el cambio social? Para probar esto, analizamos la identificación con el 99%, la gente común y la clase trabajadora, así como otras identidades nacionales que responden a una amenaza económica, y su relación con las actitudes hacia la desigualdad económica y la participación en acciones colectivas dirigidas a reducir la desigualdad.

En primer lugar, nos propusimos explorar el número de grupos (en base a la riqueza que poseen) que las personas piensan que existen, así como analizar cómo se les denomina y caracteriza. Por ello, en la primera serie de estudios, planteamos la siguiente pregunta de investigación: ¿Perciben las personas que la sociedad está dividida en dos o más grupos (en base a sus recursos económicos)? En el Capítulo 3, el Estudio 1 examina de manera cualitativa el número de grupos basados en la riqueza que las personas emplean, así como las etiquetas empleadas para cada de ellas.

Investigaciones previas han resaltado los efectos negativos de fragmentar la sociedad en múltiples grupos, ya que promueve una mayor división social (e.g., nosotros/as contra ellos/as, Peters et al., 2022). Este tipo de categorizaciones pueden erosionar la cohesión social (Buttrick et al., 2017) y promover una mayor estereotipación de los grupos ricos y pobres (Jetten et al., 2021). Esto es relevante debido a que la percepción de baja competencia asociada a los grupos en desventaja reduce el apoyo a políticas públicas de bienestar social (Alcañiz-Colomer et al., 2022; Tanjitpiyanont et al., 2022). Sin embargo, percibir a las personas más ricas como inmorales también puede aumentar el apoyo a la redistribución (Tanjitpiyanont et al., 2022). De esta manera, la percepción negativa de personas con menos recursos puede contribuir a mantener la desigualdad (Durante & Fiske, 2017), mientras que se podría obtener un resultado inverso si son las personas ricas las que se estereotipan de manera negativa. Esto nos lleva a

establecer nuestra segunda pregunta específica de investigación: ¿Se estereotipan a los grupos con menos riqueza de manera más positiva o negativa en comparación con los grupos más ricos? Por ello, en el Estudio 2 analizamos el contenido del estereotipo asociados a cada uno de los grupos mencionados cualitativamente (Estudio 1), tratando de confirmar la valencia asociada a cada grupo (**H1**) y generamos redes psicométricas para comprender el vínculo entre los rasgos estereotípicos asociados a cada clase social.

En segundo lugar, nos proponemos analizar las consecuencias grupales de dividir el mundo en "nosotros/as" versus "ellos/as" (Jetten et al., 2017, 2021). Una de las consecuencias directas de la pandemia del COVID-19 fue el aumento de las diferencias económicas entre quienes más tienen y quienes no (Rodríguez-Bailón, 2020). Este contexto incierto puede resultar amenazante (e.g., puede desencadenar una crisis económica que ponga en riesgos los recursos económicos de un país, Fritsche et al., 2011; Fritsche y Jugert, 2017). Cuando las personas se sienten amenazadas, luchan por mantener una sensación general de control; además, cuando el control personal no es plausible, recurren al yo colectivo (Stollberg et al., 2017). Esto puede conducir a un aumento de las actitudes etnocéntricas, pero también a apoyar el cambio social a través de acciones colectivas a favor del endogrupo (Fritsche et al., 2017; Fritsche & Jugert, 2017) o a la solidaridad intergrupal (Bukowski et al., 2019). Por lo tanto, una grave amenaza social, como una pandemia, puede ser un antecedente de la identidad politizada, y esta a su vez detonar el cambio social progresista.

Cuando abordamos el concepto de cambio social progresista en el marco de la desigualdad económica, el cual implica un cambio en el valor social absoluto o relativo que posee un grupo dentro de un sistema social (Sweetman et al., 2013), tomamos en consideración dos variables fundamentales: el rechazo actitudinal de la desigualdad y las intenciones de llevar a cabo acciones colectivas para confrontarla. Por un lado, la investigación ha demostrado que las actitudes hacia la desigualdad podrían anticipar las preferencias de los individuos por políticas redistributivas y otras medidas orientadas a mitigar la desigualdad económica (García-Castro et al., 2022; García-Sánchez et al., 2018; Rodríguez-Bailón et al., 2017). Por otro lado, las acciones colectivas son aquellas acciones emprendidas por individuos en defensa de los intereses de un grupo con el fin de mejorar su situación (van Zomeren et al., 2008; Wright et al., 1990). Por ende, en esta tesis consideramos tanto la intolerancia hacia la desigualdad económica como las acciones colectivas para enfrentarla como una manera de cambio social en el sistema

económico, y planteamos nuestra tercera pregunta de investigación: ¿Pueden las identidades sociales compartidas (como el 99% y la clase trabajadora) afrontar los efectos perjudiciales de la amenaza económica derivada de la pandemia y fomentar el cambio social? Esta pregunta fue abordada en los Estudios 1, 2 y 3 del Capítulo 4. Esperábamos encontrar que la identificación con el 99% y la clase trabajadora (junto con otras variables) actuarían como variables mediadoras de la relación positiva entre la amenaza económica colectiva y a) la intolerancia hacia la desigualdad económica (**H2**) y b) las intenciones de llevar a cabo acciones colectivas para confrontar la desigualdad económica (**H3**).

Al igual que los grupos que se encuentran en una posición desfavorecida pueden desarrollar una identidad colectiva politizada basada en la experiencia de la desigualad (van Stekelenburg & Klandermans, 2013); también pueden desarrollar resentimiento y exigir una valoración exagerada de su grupo (e.g., narcisismo colectivo, Golec de Zavala & Keenan, 2021). Ambos procesos grupales pueden llevar a la participación en la protesta, ya sea con el objetivo de corregir la desigualdad (acciones progresistas) o de mantenerla (acciones reaccionarias). En relación con esto, una identidad que merece ser mencionada es la de "la gente común". Esta categoría social ha estado presente en movimientos como el de los Chalecos Amarillos en Francia (Jetten et al., 2020). La privación relativa derivada de la comparación entre "el pueblo/la gente común" y "la élite" —basada en una cosmovisión populista — y la identificación politizada compartida por los "chalecos amarillos" se ha relacionado con un mayor apoyo a las protestas (Adam-Troian et al., 2021; Lüders et al., 2021).

De manera similar a la identificación con la "gente común", considerada una reacción a la amenaza que representan las élites corruptas, el auge del populismo en el Reino Unido o Francia ha promovido una identidad nacional más sólida como respuesta a la incertidumbre económica (Jay et al., 2019). Esto puede llevar proteger y reforzar la imagen y el estatus positivo del grupo nacional a toda costa (Gronfeld et al., 2022). Basándonos en investigaciones previas distinguimos el narcisismo colectivo, que es una creencia sobrevalorada de la grandeza del endogrupo que depende del reconocimiento externo (Golec de Zavala et al., 2009), y la identificación nacional (Cichocka & Cislak, 2020; Marinthe et al., 2022). El narcisismo colectivo se ha asociado con una menor disposición a participar en acciones colectivas a favor de los refugiados (Górska et al.,

2020) y un mayor apoyo al Brexit para limitar la inmigración (Golec de Zavala et al., 2017; Marchlewska et al., 2018).

Basándonos en estas razones, en el Capítulo 5 abordamos nuestra cuarta pregunta de investigación: ¿La identificación con grupos basados en la riqueza (e.g., clases sociales) y las identidades nacionales promueven el cambio social de la misma forma? Específicamente, en los Estudios 1a y 1b — llevados a cabo en Reino Unido y España respectivamente — analizamos las implicaciones grupales de identificarse con la gente común, la identidad nacional y el narcisismo colectivo. En los Estudios 2a y 2b, Reino Unido y España respectivamente, tratamos de confirmar la relación entre la identificación con la gente común y a) la intolerancia hacia la desigualdad económica, y b) la disposición a llevar a cabo acciones colectivas para confrontarla **(H4).** Además, exploramos esta asociación con identidades politizadas basadas en la clase social, el 99% y la clase trabajadora. Por otro lado, esperábamos encontrar una relación negativa entre el narcisismo colectivo nacional y a) la intolerancia hacia la desigualdad económica y b) la disposición a llevar a cabo acciones colectivas para confrontarla **(H5).** De manera exploratoria, analizamos la relación entre el narcisismo colectivo nacional y la disposición a llevar a cabo acciones colectivas para mantener el estatus quo. Por último, analizamos las diferencias culturales entre el Reino Unido y España.

De las identidades que analizamos en esta tesis, la menos investigada y con mayor potencial de englobar al mayor número de personas posible, es la identificación con el 99%. Por ello, quisimos poner a prueba su efecto movilizador de manera experimental, estableciendo una relación causal. Específicamente, nos interesa analizar su eficacia para promover el cambio social frente a una identidad asociada al estatus socioeconómico estrictamente, como es la clase media. La identificación del 99% podría implicar la recategorización de la clase media en una categoría superordinada — una identidad común basada en la desigualdad material (Gartner y Dovidio, 2000). Esto nos lleva a plantear nuestra última pregunta de investigación: ¿La identificación con el 99% predice el cambio social por encima de la identificación con la clase media? En la serie final de estudios (Capítulo 6), pusimos a prueba el alcance de la identidad del 99% para influir en la clase media a través de las normas sociales. Específicamente, en los Estudios 1 y 2, examinamos de manera correlacional la relación entre la identificación con el 99% y la identificación con la clase media con nuestras variables principales: la intolerancia hacia la desigualdad y las acciones colectivas para confrontarla. Esperábamos encontrar que la

identificación con el 99% se asociaría positivamente con la intolerancia hacia la desigualdad **(H6)** y las acciones colectivas (**H7**), en mayor medida que la clase media. Estas hipótesis fueron corroboradas en una población de clase media, ya que en el Estudio 2 sólo incluimos participantes que estuvieran actualmente empleados y con un estatus objetivo específico (i.e., un sueldo entre 1,131€ y 3,016€; INE, 2017). Tomamos esta decisión considerando a aquellas personas que, según la perspectiva sociodemográfica de las clases sociales en España, pertenecen a la clase media y ganan entre el 75% y el 200% de la mediana (OCDE, 2019). Finalmente, en los Estudios 3 y 4 manipulamos las normas sociales percibidas asociadas a identificarse con la identidad del 99% a través de noticias ficticias, basadas en los resultados de un estudio piloto previo. En el Estudio 3 manipulamos las normas sociales asociadas a identificarse con el 99% frente a una condición control. Hipotetizamos que la condición experimental (99% vs. control) iba a estar asociada a **(H8)** la intolerancia hacia la desigualdad económica y **(H9)** las acciones colectivas a través de la identificación con el 99% de manera positiva (controlado por la identificación con la clase media). De igual manera, en el Estudio 4, manipulamos las normas sociales asociadas a identificarse con el 99% frente a las normas sociales asociadas a identificarse con la clase media. Hipotetizábamos encontrar que la condición experimental (99% vs. clase media) iba a estar asociada a la **(H10)** intolerancia hacia la desigualdad económica y **(H11)** y la acción colectiva a través de la identificación con el 99% positivamente (controlado por la identificación con la clase media).

Tabla 2.1

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

Objetivo general Analizar la relación entre identidades politizadas debido a la desigualdad económica y el cambio social			
Preguntas de investigación	**Objetivos específicos**	**Hipótesis**	**Capítulo y Estudio Correspondiente**
1. ¿Perciben las personas que la sociedad está dividida en dos grupos (en base a sus recursos económicos)?	Explorar el número de clases sociales que las personas piensan que existen, así como analizar cómo se les denomina y caracteriza.	Estudio exploratorio	Capítulo 3: Estudio 1
2. ¿Se estereotipan a los grupos con menos riqueza de manera más positiva o negativa en	Analizar el contenido del estereotipo asociados a los grupos basados en la riqueza	**H1**: Las personas utilizarán un mayor porcentaje de rasgos negativos para	Capítulo 3: Estudio 2 (H1)

comparación con los grupos más ricos?	Generar y explorar las redes psicométricas para comprender el vínculo entre los rasgos que cada grupo basado en la riqueza posee al ser estereotipado	caracterizar a los grupos ricos (en comparación con los grupos pobres) y un mayor porcentaje de rasgos positivos al evaluar a los grupos pobres (en comparación con los grupos ricos)	
3. ¿Pueden las identidades compartidas (como el 99% y la clase trabajadora) afrontar los efectos perjudiciales de la amenaza económica y fomentar el cambio social?	Analizar qué tipo de estrategias utilizan las personas para hacer frente a la amenaza económica durante la pandemia de COVID-19, específicamente analizar el camino de la identidad social compartida en dos niveles politizados de la identidad: una identidad de clase establecida (la clase trabajadora) y una nueva identidad más amplia (el 99%).	**H2**: Esperábamos encontrar que la relación entre la amenaza económica colectiva y la intolerancia hacia la desigualdad estuviera mediada por la identificación con la clase trabajadora ($H2_a$) y la identificación con el 99% ($H2_b$) **H3**: Esperábamos encontrar que la relación entre amenaza económica colectiva y la disposición para llevar a cabo acciones colectivas para confrontar la desigualdad económica estuviera mediada por la identificación con la clase trabajadora ($H3_a$) y la identificación con el 99% ($H3_b$)	Capítulo 4: Estudios 1, 2 y 3 (H2 y H3)
4. ¿La identificación con grupos basados en la riqueza (e.g., clases sociales) y las identidades nacionales promueven el cambio social de la misma forma?	Analizar el rol progresista o reaccionario de identidades politizadas en la desigualdad económica (i.e., gente común, 99% y clase trabajadora) así como identidades nacionales (i.e., identidad nacional y narcisismo colectivo)	**H4**: La identificación con la gente común estará asociada positivamente con la a) intolerancia hacia la desigualdad económica y b) la disposición de llevar a cabo acciones colectivas para confrontarla **H5**: El narcisismo colectivo nacional estará asociado negativamente con a) la intolerancia hacia la desigualdad económica y b) la disposición a llevar a cabo acciones colectivas para	Capítulo 5: Estudios 1a, 1b, 2a y 2b (H4 y H5)

		confrontar la desigualdad económica.	
5. ¿Predice la identificación con el 99% el cambio social por encima de la identificación con la clase media?	Poner a prueba el efecto movilizador de manera experimental de la identificación con el 99% frente a la identificación con la clase media	La identificación con el 99% se asociará positivamente por encima de otras identidades (e.g., clase media) con la intolerancia hacia la desigualdad económica (**H6**) y la con la disposición a llevar a cabo acciones colectivas para confrontarla (**H7**) Predecimos dos efectos indirectos independientes. La relación entre la condición experimental (99% vs. Control) y la intolerancia hacia la desigualdad (**H8**) y la disposición para llevar a cabo acciones colectivas para confrontarla (**H9**) estarán mediadas por la identificación con el 99% (controlado por la identificación con la clase media) Predecimos dos efectos indirectos independientes. La relación entre la condición experimental (99% vs. Clase Media) y la intolerancia hacia la desigualdad (**H10**) y la disposición para llevar a cabo acciones colectivas para confrontarla (**H11**) estarán mediadas por la identificación con el 99% (controlado por la identificación con la clase media).	Capítulo 6: Estudios 1 y 2 (H6 y H7) Estudio piloto Estudios 3 y 4 (H8, H9, H10, H11)

En la tabla 2.1 se resumen los objetivos, preguntas de investigación e hipótesis de la tesis. Finalmente, hay que destacar que en esta tesis doctoral se siguieron las

recomendaciones de transparencia para la ciencia abierta (Willis & Moya, 2017). Para evitar el uso del HARKING (Hypothesizing After the Results are Know, Kerr, 1998) y el aumento de falso positivos en los análisis de datos (Simmons et al., 2011), las hipótesis y análisis fueron planificados en su mayoría, y por lo tanto pre-registrados en la plataforma Open Science Framework (osf.io).

Teniendo en cuenta que la tesis se estructura por capítulos empíricos en formato de artículos de investigación, es importante señalar que algunos aspectos teóricos pueden repetirse. Por último, en línea con el carácter internacional del doctorado de la Universidad de Granada, algunas secciones están escritas en español, otras en inglés, y otras en ambas lenguas.

EMPIRICAL CHAPTERS

CAPÍTULOS EMPÍRICOS

Chapter 3

Economic Inequality and Representations of Wealth-Based Groups: Unravelling Social Class and Stereotyping

Economic Inequality and Representations of Wealth-Based Groups: Unravelling Social Class and Stereotyping

Ángel del Fresno-Díaz, Efraín García-Sánchez, Elena Padial-Rojas, Soledad de Lemus & Guillermo B. Willis

University of Granada

Abstract

How many groups people perceive in society can have important psychosocial consequences. For instance, when thinking about social classes, some may think of the lower-class, the middle-class, and upper-class; others, may only think in two groups: the 99% and the 1%. The aim of these studies was to explore how people categorise society into classes, that is, investigate how many wealth-based groups people perceive, and discern their associated stereotypes. To address these questions, we conducted two studies using a mixed qualitative and quantitative approach. In Study 1 (N = 90) semi-structured interviews were conducted to identify the number of wealth-based groups. The results revealed several groups that we classified into five main categories: poor, lower and working classes, middle classes, upper classes, and rich and beyond. These groups were described in terms of their living standards (e.g., resources, culture, or differences and similarities between groups) and personal characteristics (e.g., traits). In addition, positive valence traits were associated with poor groups, while negative valence traits were linked to wealthy groups. In Study 2 (N =251) we confirmed these findings using a quantitative methodology. Moreover, we used a network approach to explore the content of wealth-based stereotypes. The stereotype of poor groups consisted mainly of positive traits, whereas the stereotype of rich groups comprised predominantly negative traits. Even so, a certain degree of ambivalence was present. We especially highlight the perception of the poor as warm, while recognising the portrayal of the rich as immoral, and discuss the implications of these stereotypes for intergroup relations.

Keywords: Social division, wealth-based groups, social class, stereotypes

Introduction

What is the number of social classes in modern societies? Are there three, four, or five classes or just two? A common way to answer this question is to speak about three groups: lower class, middle class, and upper class. Other people use other terms, such as poor or working class, rich, or elites. The significant wealth disparity between the "haves" and the "have nots" has also shaped categories such as the 99% and the 1% (Occupy Wall Street movement; Stiglitz, 2012). While more classical perspectives also mention two groups (i.e., the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, Marx & Engels, 1867/2010), recent studies have identified up to seven groups (i.e., elite, established middle class, technical middle class, new affluent workers, traditional working class, emerging service workers, precariat; Savage et al., 2013). This could be important to understand better how fragmented or polarised modern societies are and to grasp possible intergroup conflicts.

Jetten et al. (2017, 2021) argued that the salience of wealth as a category will increase the similarities and differences between groups. Therefore, one of the consequences of perceiving different social classes is the promotion of beliefs and stereotypes about the poor and the rich (Tanjitpiyanond et al., 2022). This raises the question of how many groups people think about when perceiving wealth-based groups and, consequently, how people perceive them.

Previous research has analysed the stereotypes of different social classes (Durante et al., 2017) and how economic inequality influences them (Connor et al., 2021; Heiserman & Simpson, 2017; Moreno-Bella et al., 2019). However, in these studies, social classes were defined and assigned to participants by researchers without knowing whether participants also use the same categories—and the same number of groups—when thinking about wealth-based groups. Moreover, they used a constrained response to the stereotype dimension (e.g., assertiveness or competence). This paper contributes to what we know about wealth-based categorizations using a qualitative approach that allows freedom in both the wealth-based categories people tend to use and in the expression of their stereotypes. Furthermore, we quantitatively corroborated the qualitative results, and unveiled the structure of the stereotype network in each of the social classes that people reported. With this mixed method approach, we modelled the wealth-based stereotype, considering its valence and unravelling the links between different stereotypes.

Economic inequality and wealth-based group categorization

The gap between those at the bottom of the economic distribution and those at the top illustrates that economic inequality tears us apart. However, this division goes beyond material aspects. Research has shown how groups inhabit different worlds through psychosocial pathways such as reduced trust and prosocial behaviour (Buttrick & Oishi, 2017). The perception of our own group, as well as the perception of those outside our group, is shaped through wealth (Jetten et al., 2017). The social identity approach (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner et al., 1987) argues that the salience of wealth categories makes an appropriate foundation for perceiving societal groups (Peters et al., 2022). The accessibility and contextual relevance of wealth categories explain similarities and differences between individuals (i.e., comparative fit, Turner et al., 1987). Indeed, in societies characterized by inequality, individuals are more prone to utilizing wealth-related categories (Peters et al., 2022).

In addition, the social division “us” and “them” becomes shared within society. The comparative fit resulting from wealth-based categorization triggers a norm that promotes the stereotyping of different social classes (Jetten et al., 2021; Turner et al., 1987). Furthermore, the content of wealth-based stereotypes can guide people’s attitudes towards inequality. For instance, Tanjitpiyanond et al. (2022) found that the low competence associated with the disadvantaged reduces support for social welfare, whereas low morality toward the advantaged increases support for redistribution. Therefore, wealth-based stereotypes can influence people's motivations to address inequality and support policies to reduce it.

The number of wealth-based groups identified by individuals may indicate the extent of social division in society. This is important because wealth-based categorisation erodes social cohesion by fostering a sense of living in fragmented societies (Jetten et al., 2017, 2021). For example, the terms lower class, middle class or upper class are often used in everyday life. Recent Marxist approaches argue that we could classify social classes into four: capitalists, petty bourgeoisie, managers, and workers (Wright, 2015). Other class models mention the elite or differentiate the technical middle class from the stablished middle class and the precariat from the traditional working class (Savage et al., 2013; Standing, 2012).

On the other hand, it could be argued that due to the wealth accumulated in the top percentile of the distribution, two large groups could be categorized: the bottom 99% of the population versus the top 1% (Stiglitz, 2012). This could avoid the fragmentary effects of inequality and be positive for changing inequality, as expanding group boundaries and developing a sense of common group identity improves intergroup relations (e.g., recategorization, Gaertner et al., 2000) and could be a push to face inequality (del Fresno-Díaz et al., 2023). For these reasons, our first objective will be to qualitatively explore the number of wealth-based groups that people have in mind when wealth is a salient category.

Social class stereotyping: what are the wealth-based groups like?

When it comes to wealth-based groups, social class stereotyping is a pivotal process in understanding how people categorize groups based on their economic resources. Although the terms wealth-based groups and social class are sometimes used interchangeably, it is important to note that social class has defining qualities beyond wealth (e.g., culture, Becker et al., 2017). In fact, social psychology has predominantly addressed social class using socioeconomic status (SES), which translates into individual economic position, educational level, and occupational position, as well as their subjective place within the social hierarchy (Manstead, 2018). Following this conceptual approach, we define wealth-based or class-based group stereotypes as shared and consensual beliefs anchored in wealth.

Social class stereotypes have been theorized from the two main dimensions proposed by the stereotype content model: warmth and competence (Fiske et al., 2002). Warmth corresponds to interpersonal sympathy and competence to the ability to achieve goals. These stereotypes stem from perceived socioeconomic status (high or low) and interdependence (cooperative-competitive) (Fiske et al., 2002, 2007). The crossing of these variables could lead to positive or negative stereotypes: High-status cooperative groups are perceived as competent and warm, but competitive and low-status group are perceived as incompetent and cold (with some cultural variations, Cuddy et al., 2009). Even so, valence can also be mixed, or ambivalent (Fiske et al., 2002). In this way, the rich can be seen as more competent, but cold; whereas the poor tend to be perceived as warmer than competent (Durante et al., 2017). In addition, the ambivalence of the stereotype is related to income inequality (Durante et al., 2013).

From this perspective, economic inequality guides the process of social class signalling. When inequality is high, the signalling of social class tends to be more accurate (Kraus et al., 2009, 2017). Additionally, class signals contribute to the establishment of group boundaries through stereotypes (Connor et al., 2021). Experimentally, people with high incomes are considered more competent compared to low-income people when inequality is high (Connor et al., 2021). However, both poor and rich were attributed a lower competence when inequality is high (Tanjitpiyanond et al., 2022).

The previous data belongs to the vertical dimension of the social evaluation model (Abele et al., 2021), which proposes two dimensions of evaluation. The vertical dimension is related to the group's competence and assertiveness, reflecting their capacity to attain higher status within society. Considering the horizontal perspective— which refers to the group's friendliness and morality, encompassing their prosocial tendencies in fostering and maintaining relationships—it is often perceived that wealthy individuals have fewer moral traits (Moreno-Bella et al., 2019). Stereotypes of the poor in horizontal dimension are also variable, resulting in the poor being generally perceived as friendlier and more moral than the rich (Kervyn et al., 2010). However, it is important to note that both rich and poor groups were perceived as immoral under conditions of inequality, suggesting that inequality has a detrimental effect on intergroup relations (Jetten et al., 2021; Tanjitpiyanond et al., 2022).

The process of class differentiation influences both the content and valence of the stereotypes about poor and rich groups. Given that some studies provide inconclusive results about the effect of economic inequality on stereotyping, this study used a mixed qualitative and quantitative approach to better understand how wealth-based groups are stereotyped.

The Present Research

Economic inequality promotes a normative climate that reinforces a masculine, individualistic, and competitive mindset (Moreno-Bella et al., 2019; Sánchez-Rodríguez et al., 2019, 2023). It also creates a climate in which people tend to value merit more (Heiserman & Simpson, 2017). This may explain why the rich are perceived as more competent and assertive compared to the poor. Still, recent studies have shown contradicting results, with rich people being perceived as less assertive and competent,

and the poor as more assertive and competent in unequal contexts (Tanjitpiyanond et al., 2023 but see also Tanjitpiyanon et al., 2022).

The aim of this research was to identify the quantity and characteristics of wealth-based groups. From classical to more contemporary conceptualizations of social class our research adopts a qualitative approach to examine the various ways individuals categorize social class. Therefore, in Study 1 we adopt a bottom-up approach by asking open-ended questions about the number and the labels given to different wealth-based groups and the characteristics they possess (e.g., material, and cultural-symbolic manifestations), as well as their traits. In this way, responses were not constrained to pre-established categories, and participants could give a broader framework on the number of groups and their characteristics. Finally, Study 2 confirms our findings in a quantitative way, and examines the underlying structure of these stereotypes through psychometric networks.

Study 1

In Study 1 (https://osf.io/9wzmj/?view_only=8c5e62f11f774053b80b35e124ec101f) we conducted qualitative research to explore the emergence of group categories based on wealth after being informed about the degree of wealth inequality in the world. Through semi-structured interviews, we analysed how people depict wealth-based groups. Our aim was to understand the number of groups that participants mentioned, the labels they used to name them, and the descriptions of their living standards and personal characteristics. Additionally, we investigated whether wealth-based groups were associated with certain characteristics and traits.

Method

Participants

We collected data from 90 participants, including undergraduate students from the University of Granada (i.e., psychology and occupational therapy) and their acquaintances from the general population. The sample consisted of 72 women and 18 men, aged between 18 and 31 years (M = 19.48; SD = 2.18), of centre-left ideology (M = 35.22; SD = 24.63, on a scale from 0 = “left/progressist” to 100 = “right/conservative”) and with a subjective economic status of M = 5.73 (SD = 1.06) on a scale of 1 to 10. Participants had a monthly family income between 651-1,131€ (11.1%), 1,131-1,951€

(31.5%), 1,951-2,600€ (22.2%), and 2,601-3,016€ (10.1%). Regarding the educational level, most participants (74.4%) were currently studying an University degree, others included people with completed secondary education (1.1%), professional training (10.1%), high school studies (5.6%), completed university studies (2.2%), master's degree (4.4%) and Ph.D. (1.1%).

Procedure

The semi-structured online interviews were conducted via a Google Meet video, with an average duration ranging from 9 to 28.02 minutes (M = 16.04; SD = 4.23).

After signing the informed consent form to participate in the interview, we showed the participants a representation of economic reality in a fictional society. We emphasized that this economic reality representing "how wealth is distributed between the poorest and the richest people" was either similar or very similar to the one in our present society.

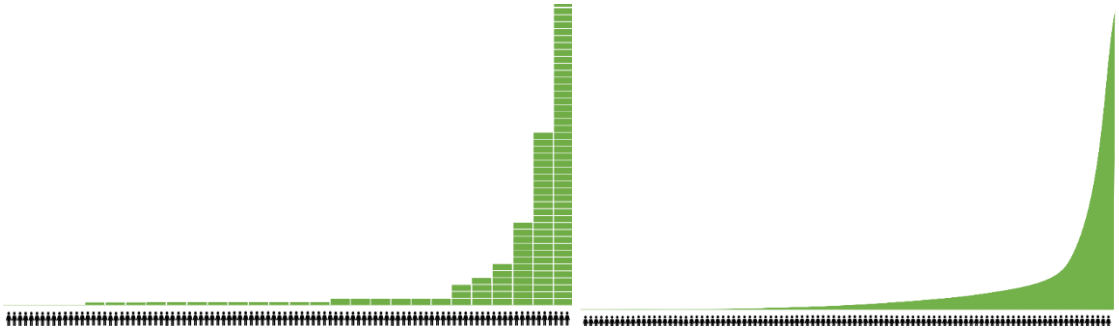
Although participants were informed that the society presented was fictional to avoid biases when discussing the different groups that would inhabit it, the graph was a real representation of the worldwide distribution of economic resources. Using data from the Global Wealth Report (2020), we depicted with 100 persons figures in which the top 1% of wealth holders in a country typically own 25%-40% of all wealth, and the top 10% usually account for 55%-75% (for more details see the global wealth pyramid in Global wealth report, 2020). This graph was created using two different formats (see Figure 1), with (A) bars and with an (B) exponential curve (interviews conducted using Graph A = 47, and Graph B = 43).

The interview was interactive when using the graph image, as participants not only provided answers to these questions but also pointed out on the graph where they believed the boundaries of each group they identified were located

Figure 3.1

Graphs that we showed to the participants to represent the distribution of wealth in two different ways.

Graph A (bars) Graph B (exponential curve)



To check whether the participants perceived this unequal distribution of wealth, we asked on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (Not unequal at all/ Not egalitarian at all) to 7 (Very unequal/Very egalitarian), "Overall, to what extend do you think the society presented has an unequal/egalitarian distribution of resources?". For the extent to which participants perceived inequality in each of the graphs see (see supplemental material; preliminary results). Afterward, the semi-structured interview began.

All the questions that made up the interview were open-ended with the aim of broadly understanding people's mental representation when thinking about wealth-based groups. That is, participants should identify on the basis of disposable wealth how many groups they think would exist in that society, how they would label each group, how they think that people from those groups live (e.g., possessions, consumption capacity, etc.), and how they are or behave on a daily basis (e.g., habits, psychological traits, etc.). Therefore, the participants answered the following sets of questions: (1) "How could you group people in this distribution based on the wealth they have? How many groups could you make? Once this society was grouped into wealth-based groups, what label would you give to each of these groups you have identified? Give a label to each of these groups you have formed based on their wealth" (2) "Think about the wealth of each group and imagine how they live, for example, where they live, what their house looks like if they have one, if they have their own vehicle, if they were able to go on vacation last summer, how they dress…in short, how each group lives? (3) "Think about the personal characteristics of these groups, how they behave, what are their most outstanding traits,

what type of music they listen to… in short, how would you describe these groups in terms of their personality and culture?".

Furthermore, additional questions were asked, and at the end of the interview, exploratory quantitative measures were collected through a Qualtrics survey (see supplementary materials; additional measures).

Analysis plan

We analysed our data using Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA; Schreier, 2012). The coding process was supported by Atlas.ti.23 software. To develop our category framework (coding framework) we combined concept-driven (or deductive) and data-driven (inductive) methods. We derived our codes from the research question (e.g., How many groups based on wealth or social class do people perceive and how are they represented?) and developed categories through a step-by-step process of organization, systematization, and code reduction. Therefore, we deductively constructed conceptual categories based on the main objectives of the research (i.e., wealth-based groups). Then, we inductively developed categories based on participants' responses and in accordance with the information provided by them (i.e., traits, resources, culture, differences, and similarities, contact and relation).

Data were coded by three independent coders. To unify the coding standards, coders were trained with 30 interviews, solving disagreements and setting common rules to continue the coding. Every interview was coded and revised by independent researchers. Once the coding was finished, we merged redundant codes to reduce the categories.

We conducted two main analyses on the coded material. First, we performed a frequency analysis (Krippendorff, 2018) to examine the occurrence of each subcategory within the main categories in our data corpus. This allowed us to determine the count of each category and subcategory and identify the most prevalent themes. Second, we conducted a co-occurrence analysis (Krippendorff, 2018) to explore the relationships between the main subcategories. This analysis helped us understand how the different categories were interconnected and provided insights into the associations between them.

Results

Frequency analysis

Based on the interviews, the most representative categories we found were wealth-based groups, traits, resources, culture, differences and similarities, and relation and contact (see Table 3.1 for a summary of categories and subcategories).

Table 3.1

Categorical framework

Category **(with definition)**	**Subcategory**	**Indicators and codes with examples**	**Frequency**
Wealth-based groups Groups defined by a set of individuals have in common the wealth they possess. Additionally, the people comprising each group share resources and culture than make them similar to each other and distinguish them from other groups. This is also referred to as "social clas".	• Poor • Low and working classes • Middle classes • Upper classes • Rich and Beyond	"The first one would say homeless, the second one would be poor, a bit poor, the third one would be average, normal, the fourth one would be wealthy, and the fifth one would be millionaires or rich" (participant 24) "Very poor, poor, working class, upper middle class, rich or high class" (participant 46).	1156
Traits The terms used to define personally, psychologically, and culturally the groups of people categorized based on wealth. These terms can be positive, negative, or neutral depending on the affective attitudes towards them.	• Positive • Negative • Neutral	"I believe that the non-wealthy are humble in the sense that, having nothing, they settle for very little. The normalized society, I would describe as ambitious, somewhere between humble and ambitious because some people may think, "Okay, what I have is enough, and I don't need much more," but there's another part of society that wants to increase their wealth, climb the social ladder, and always wants more. The wealthy would be very ambitious, and I think they would be less generous. What's mine is mine, and I want my wealth" (participant 25). "The lower middle class and the poor are more honest because they have lived a different reality that the rich or the upper class have not experienced. So, I believe they have more camaraderie and empathy. Some of the upper-class individuals, not all, will be a bit selfish or discriminate against the poor. The middle-class group, I think,	447

		will have a bit of everything. Some will empathize more with the lower class because they see themselves reflected in them, while others will discriminate and try to pretend, they have more" (participant 59).	
Resources Resources that enable the lifestyle of wealth-based groups (e.g., properties, housing, clothing). There resources can be quantified based on quantity or status.	● Nothing or absence ● Basic or restricted ● Moderate or normal ● Many & ● High status ● Low status	"In the lower-class group, they probably have housing, likely social housing" (Participant 38) "The middle-class individuals do have a house, and maybe it's not fully paid off, but they manage to make ends meet. They also have a vehicle. Moreover, it they have a job, it's a stable one with a good salary, allowing them to afford their expenses. They can treat themselves to something nice every month, buy clothes, dine out a fancy restaurant every weekend, and go on vacation during the summer" (Participant 50)	793
Culture Set of knowledge, beliefs, values, norms, traditions, customs, artistic expressions, and symbolic manifestations that characterize a group of people and are influenced by the wealth that this group possess		"…and people with more money, well, they might listen to more refined things, like classical music and such…" (Participant 5) "People from the lower class, well, we could say that they have hobbies. I don't know, maybe children like playing soccer because they can afford it, they can buy a ball, for example…" (Participant 14) "…there is more drug consumption, or consumption of trashy TV, or junk food…" (Participant 64)	108
Differences and similarities Perception of common goals or values and different experiences among groups		"There are two extremes. One has nothing, and the other one, I think, has everything" (Participant 23) "They are similar because they are people, but what sets them apparat is the way of life they have" (Participant 11)	56
Contact and relation Forms of intergroup contact between		"A rich person, with another rich person…I imagine that they only associate with people who have money…I think the rich always associate everything with money" (Participant 1)	30

wealth-based groups, that is, the possibility of interactions between individuals belonging to different groups and the opportunities for establishing relationships.	"…but the two extremes are the ones who have the least interaction, so there may be empathy, but not psychical interaction with them" (Participant 64)

We analyzed in-depth two main categories to explored how groups were perceived and stereotyped: wealth-based groups and traits.

Main category 1: Wealth-based groups. In this first main category, participants were asked to indicate how many groups they identify in the wealth distribution they were just presented with, and how they would label them. The variability of the responses in ranged from 2 groups (e.g., "Rich and poor", Participant 32) to a maximum of 7 (e.g., "Very low economic level, low economic level, medium economic level, normal economic level, high economic level, very high economic level, quite high economic level", Participant 63), with a median of 4 and a standard deviation of 1. In terms of percentages, 2.2% identified 2 groups, 35.6% identified 3 groups, 31.1% identified 4 groups, 25.6% identified 5 groups, 4.4% identified 6 groups, and only 1.1% identified 7 groups.

Although participants mentioned a wide range of wealth-based labels (a total of 113 codes were used), traditional labels such as "poor", "lower class", "middle class", "upper class" or "rich" were the most frequent. To synthesize the number of codes used to label the different groups, we grouped the codes into 5 relevant subcategories: (1) Poor, (2) Low and Working Classes, (3) Middle classes, (4) Upper Classes, and (5) Rich and Beyond. The logic behind this division was twofold: On the one hand, due to the similarity between codes, we assessed the belonging to each of these subcategories; on the other hand, the codes were placed in this order because it reflected the order in which participants labelled each of these groups and indicated them in the graph.

The following Table 3.1[1] shows a summary of this category, its subcategories, and associated codes in order of frequency.

Table 3.2

Frequencies for the subcategories of the first main category: wealth-based group

Categories	Subcategories	Labels[2]	Frequency	Per cent
Wealth-based group	Poor	Poor, poverty, homeless, extreme poverty, poorest, less poor, poor (just enough), intermediate poor, less privilege class, low economic resources, not so poor, disadvantaged, maximum poverty, super poor, needy, small poverty, scarce, not very poor.	322	27,85%
	Low-and Working-Classes	Lower class, working class, workers, working people, lumpen, precarious, very low, resigned, limited, non-existent wealth, low, insufficient wealth, very low economic level, fairly low economic level, underprivileged, laborers, not wealthy, very low class, limited wealth, unlucky, marginalized.	129	11,16%
	Middle-Classes	Middle class, middle, upper-middle class, normal, lower-middle, intermediate, lower-middle class, adequate, insufficient wealth, wealthy, lower bourgeois, conformist, stable, middle class, semi-privileged, moderate, normal economic level, normalized society, more wealth, middle economic level, normative, common, mediocre, in the middle, lucky, bourgeois, less wealth.	303	26.21%
	Upper-Classes	Upper class, high class, wealthy, privileged, excessive, powerful, dominant, most favoured class, billionaires, arrogant, politicians, high economic resources, affluent class, very privileged, wealth, high wealth, low rich, engineers, soccer players.	166	14.36%
	Rich-and-Beyond	Rich, very rich, millionaires, very high class, royalty, high economic level, intermediate rich, rich class, high bourgeoisie, fortunate, very high economic level, excessive wealth, rich class, rotten in money, extreme wealth, more than rich, high rich, super rich, very high wealth.	236	20,42%
Total			1156	100%

Main category 2: Traits. The second category refers to the personal and cultural characteristics that people attributed to each of the groups they had previously mentioned. It involves considering the personal characteristics of these groups, how they behave, and which traits are most prominent among them.

> “The rich are often perceived as very arrogant and believe themselves to be superior to others” (Participant 50)

> “The poor, on the other hand, are often seen as seeking happiness in small things, non-material possessions, and being humbler. They tend to focus on simple pleasures rather than grandiose things" (Participant 15)

Participants mentioned that people from poor groups had limited economic resources. Those belonging to the lower and working class were described as kind, approachable, humble, or happy; but also as distrustful, careless, or conformist. On the other hand, individuals from higher classes, with significant economic resources or wealthy backgrounds, were described as competent, educated, and happy; but also as materialistic, arrogant, selfish, or haughty. In addition, if groups with less and more resources are widely characterized, the groups that were in the center of the graph, the so-called “middle class”, are vaguely described as a neutral group without nuanced affective traits.

> “The normal ones I would say are like the neutral group, who are not on one side or the other, they are, I don’t know, the most common way of behaving and you can find anything there, that depends on where you grew up…” (Participant 33)

Furthermore, these common traits of each group also promote their differentiation, making it difficult for group contact.

> “The first group the very poor, I imagine them in comparison with, for example, the rich, I see them as more, how to say it, friendly, the rich I think are more, a little more distant, more repellent, in the sense of not wanting, for example, a rich person not wanting to associate with a super poor person. Personally, I see them as very materialistic, very possessive, and I see the very poor as more empathic, approachable…” (Participant, 48)

To facilitate interpretation, we further code the traits in accordance to their valence: positive and negative. This criterion was agreed upon by the researchers who

coded the content, and it was also evaluated by two external expert judges who were not involved in this study. The inclusion of each trait in the respective subcategory was determined based on the agreement of both judges. The following Table 3.3 gathers the frequency table for each code.

Table 3.3

Frequencies and percentages of codes of the second main category: traits

Main category: Traits	**Subcategories**	**Codes**	**Frequency**	**Per cent**
	Negatives (29)	Haughty	40	15,75%
		Selfish	33	12,19%
		Class-unconscious	23	9,05%
		Conformist	20	7,87%
		Materialistic	18	7,09%
		Arrogant	15	5,91%
		Greedy	11	4,33%
		Economically concerned	10	3,94%
		Pretentious	10	3,94%
		Sad	8	3,15%
		Careless	8	3,15%
		Unsociable	7	2,76%
		Bad	6	2,36%
		Indifferent	6	2,36%
		Opportunistic/self-interest	5	1,97%
		Desperate	4	1,58%
		Delinquent	4	1,58%
		Wasteful	3	1,18%
		Unambitious	3	1,18%
		Classist	2	0,79%
		Extravagant	2	0,79%
		Impressionable	2	0,79%

		Compares themselves to lower groups	2	0,79%
		Unlucky	2	0,79%
		Distrustful	2	0,79%
		Frivolous	2	0,79%
		Hypocrite	2	0,79%
		Fear of the poor	2	0,79%
		Susceptible	2	0,79%
Total			254	100
	Positives (20)	Humble	192	27,08%
		Kind	71	10,06%
		Happy	64	9,09%
		Value	58	8,24%
		Solidary	56	7,92%
		Empathic	39	5,51%
		Hardworking	33	4,58%
		Educated	32	4,51%
		Class-conscious	30	4,29%
		Distinct	25	3,52%
		Familiar	22	3,15%
		Competent	21	2,91%
		Approachable	18	2,58%
		Survivors	9	1,26%
		Sociable	9	1,23%
		Helpful	8	1,16%
		Competitive	7	0,94%
		Honest	6	0,82%
		Calm	5	0,76%
		Diverse	3	0,40%
Total			710	100%

The most used positive traits to describe the poor group were “kind”, “happy”, “humble”, “solidary”, “empathic”, and “familiar”. However, negative traits such as “distrustful”, “economically concerned”, “desperate”, “conformist”, “bad”, “careless” or “delinquent” were also associated with this group. On the other hand, the rich group was perceived as “materialistic”, “haughty”, “selfish”, “class unconsciousness”, “greedy”, “sad”, “unsociable”, “classist” and “arrogant”. However, they were also positively described as “calm”, “happy”, “competent”, “hardworking” and “highly educated”.

Co-occurrence analysis

Descriptively, the results indicated a consistent pattern where positive traits were frequently associated with poor groups and lower classes, while negative traits were more commonly linked to rich groups. To further investigate this association, we conducted a co-occurrence analysis, which examined the presence of multiple categories within the same recording unit. Specifically, we focused on the relationship between positive and negative traits and the different wealth-based groups, considering the occurrence of both codes together (using the AND operator). This analysis allowed us to explore the extent of association between the identified traits and the various wealth-based groups.

Qualitatively, the results indicated an association between traits and the different groups. Subsequently, we proceeded to analyze this association by conducting Pearson’s Chi-square test. This technique assesses the independence between two categorical variables and provides an estimation of the effect size of any potential association (Field, 2013).

The results showed a significant association between wealth-based groups and the traits’ valence, χ^2 (4) = 56.352, $p < .001$, Cramer’s $V = .39$, odds ratio (OR) = 1.67, 95% confidence interval (CI) = [.01, .85]. Subsequent post hoc Bonferroni tests were conducted to further explore the associations between the subcategories. Specifically, the “rich-and-beyond” was associated with more negative traits and less positive traits, similarly to the “upper-classes”. In contrast, the “poor” group was associated with more positive traits and less negative traits. However, no significant associations were found for the “low-and-working classes” and the “middle-classes” (see a summary of these results in the Table 3.4).

Table 3.4

Bonferroni post hoc test of traits showing the standardized residuals between in brackets for testing independence for each group.

	Traits		
Wealth-based groups	Negative trait	Positive trait	p value
Poor	32	64	<.001
	(-4.97)[3]	(4.97)	
Low-and-working classes	16	25	.292
	(-2.18)	(-2.18)	
Middle-classes	40	44	1.00
	(-1.55)	(1.55)	
Upper-classes	43	12	.001
	(3.76)	(-3.76)	
Rich-and-beyond	68	18	<.001
	(5.14)	(-5.14)	

Discussion

The results of this study provide a first general approach to the number of wealth-based groups, the labels used by participants to refer to them, and their traits.

The salience of wealth in an unequal context triggers the segmentation of society into groups (Jetten et al., 2017, 2021). Our study was not intended to demonstrate these causal relationships, but qualitatively, we explore how participants fragment society and label each of the groups based on wealth. Instead of showing a division into two "big groups" (e.g., 99% and 1%; or the working class and the bourgeois), multiple distinct groups emerged. In fact, the median number of groups was 4, with a standard deviation of one, so the number oscillates between 3 and 5. However, we argue that all these groups could be grouped into five main categories because four categories do not reflect a mid-point, which is important to reflect at a conceptual level given the importance of an in-between reference group (e.g., middle class). For these reasons, we expanded from 4 to 5, so that we had a middle group and the same number of groups at each extreme.

Moreover, the narratives that emerged regarding each of these groups differed. We found that groups with less wealth were associated with more positive traits compared to

groups with greater wealth. Conversely, the group with higher wealth tended to be described with more negative traits.

This finding provides valuable insights, considering that even though the valence of a trait may be positive or negative, the content of the stereotype can be more extensive, including such ambivalence (Fiske et al., 2002). For example, poor groups can be described negatively as conformist, a trait that could be part of the vertical dimension as they are perceived as lacking the ambition to climb the social ladder (Abele et al., 2021). However, they can also be described positively in a moral sense, such as being humble. This is consistent with ambivalent classism (Jordan et al., 2021; Sainz et al., 2021). In the case of the rich, they are seen as immoral, described as "arrogant" or "materialistic". However, materialism also gives them a positive evaluation, such as being perceived as "competent" because of their ambition.

Study 2

In Study 2, we focus on wealth-based stereotypes to confirm their association with positive and negative characteristics (https://osf.io/25ecq/?view_only=3db493cdddd1432e887796ac0aecb241). We aim to quantitatively confirm the previous findings that wealthy groups were associated with negative traits (Hypothesis 1) and that poorer groups were associated with positive traits (Hypothesis 2). Specifically, we hypothesized that participants would use a higher percentage of negative traits to characterize rich groups (compared to poor groups) and a higher percentage of positive traits when evaluating poor groups (compared to rich groups).

In addition, we explored the content of wealth-based stereotypes through a network approach. That is, we used psychometric networks to map the structure of wealth-based stereotypes. Psychometric networks have been used previously to investigate the structure of the stereotypes (Sayans-Jiménez et al., 2019), attitudes, and behaviours (Chambon et al., 2022; Dalege et al., 2017).

Method

Participants

We planned the required sample size a priori. We conducted a power analysis for chi-square using the "pwr" package in RStudio (Champely et al., 2017). The required

sample size to detect a medium effect size of .30 (assuming df = 2) with 80% power and an alpha error of 0.5 was determined to be 174 observations. Therefore, we pre-registered a minimum sample size of 200 participants.

In total, 258 participants took part in the study. Following the pre-registered criteria, seven participants were excluded from the data analysis because they did not have a "Native" or "Advanced level" of the Spanish language or were under 18 years of age. The final sample consisted of 251 participants (180 women, 63 men, 1 non-binary, and 3 "prefer not to say"), with an age range from 18 to 66 years (M = 24.72, SD = 8.98). Regarding political ideology, participants characterized themselves as center-left on economic issues (M = 3.24, SD = 1.49) and social issues (M = 2.63, SD = 1.30) on a scale ranging from 1 (radical left) to 7 (radical right). They also reported a subjective socioeconomic status with a mean of 5.98 (SD = 1.30) on a scale of 1 to 10.

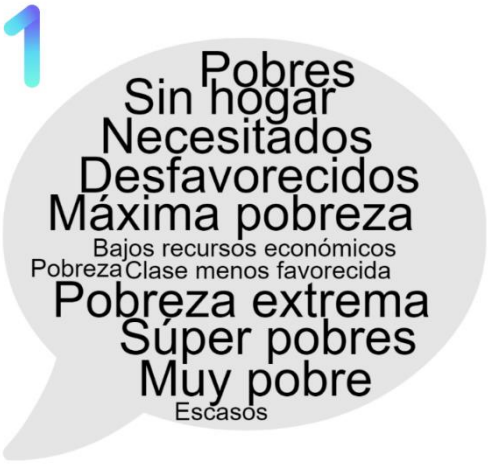
Procedure

The sample was collected by incidental sampling through a mailing list disseminated by the University of Granada, which is mostly accessed by undergraduate, master's, and doctoral students, and teaching staff. The study was conducted through a web link on the Qualtrics platform. To encourage participation, fifty euros were raffled.

The design of this study was based on the previous qualitative results. Participants were informed that the concept of "social class"[4] would be used and provided the following definition: "The population of a society can be described as composed of several social classes. A social class is a group of people with similar levels of wealth, occupation, and education". Subsequently, participants were informed that they would be shown five-words clouds (to see an example, Figure 2, and to view the rest of the word clouds, please refer to the supplementary material) containing words that people commonly use to refer to wealth-based groups or social classes. The terms used for each word cloud were the labels identified in Study 1 for each subcategory: (1) poor, (2) low and working classes, (3) middle classes, (4) upper classes, (5) rich and beyond. Participants were not shown these labels, only the content of the word clouds. However, to facilitate the process, participants created their own labels for each word cloud. In this way, when they had to respond to the measures, the word cloud and the term they had developed themselves appeared.

Figure 3.2

Word cloud representing the codes contained in the "poor" subcategory.



Note: The size of the codes in the image was set based on the number of occurrences of the codes. Translation of labels in the word cloud 1: *Poor, Homeless, Needy, Disadvantaged, Extreme poverty, Low economic resources, Poverty, Less privileged class, Extreme poverty, Super poor, Very poor, Scarce.*

Plan analysis

To test our main hypotheses that wealthy groups were associated with negative traits, and that poorer groups were associated with positive traits, we used chi-square analysis to examine the association between wealth-based groups and traits. Specifically, we aimed to determine whether the percentage of negative traits used in the rich groups was higher compared to the poor groups, and whether the percentage of positive traits employed in the poor groups was higher compared to the rich groups. This analysis was conducted for each of the traits across the five groups representing the different wealth-based groups.

For this analysis, we carried out the "chisq.test" function and the "chisq.posthoc.test" package in RStudio (R Core Team, 2017), which is based on Pearson's Chi-Squared test for count data. We constructed a proportions table with the subcategories (poor, low and working classes, middle classes, upper classes, and rich and beyond) as rows and the trait (e.g., negative traits as "Selfish" and positive traits as "Kind") as columns, using the "matrix" function. The table represented the percentage of participants who assigned each trait to the corresponding group, indicating whether the trait was characteristic of the group or not. As a robustness check, we performed two meta-analyses with random effects to examine the consistency in the association between

each positive and negative trait with each wealth-based group. We used the DerSimonian-Laird estimator (DerSimonian & Laird, 1986), and included all the effects tested. The "metafor" package (Viechtbauer, 2010) in RStudio was used for conducting the meta-analyses.

Additionally, we relied on the Causal Attitude Network (CAN) model (Dalege et al., 2016) to map the stereotype content of wealth-based groups. This approach used psychometric networks to test the connections between variables and identify the underlying structure of those associations. The psychometric network is composed of nodes (variables) and edges (semi-partial correlations). As recommended in the literature (Dalege et al., 2017), we used the Ising model (with regularized method) to estimate a network with binary data (1 = marked; 0 = unmarked). The Ising model estimates the association between every pair of nodes in the network, while controlling for the potential influence of the remaining nodes. Data and materials to reproduce our analyses are publicly available: https://osf.io/549mq/?view_only=68bbb37826064539813a6f5f4f371c6d

Measures

Traits. Participants were shown 49 traits that may characterize each wealth-based group (29 negative and 20 positive). Participants select whether the traits were characteristic of each group. These traits were obtained from Study 1. They had the option to select multiple wealth-based groups for the same trait or choose only one wealth-based group.

The selected traits belonged to the subcategories of "negative traits" (e.g., arrogant, careless) and "positive traits" (e.g., humble, competitive), which were previously evaluated by external experts. All these traits were presented in a random order (to see the complete list of traits, refer to Table 3.3).

Feeling thermometer. Participants were asked to rate each word cloud on a scale from 0 (colder or less favourable) to 100 (warmer, more favourable) based on how they felt about the wealth-based group represented by the set of words.

Sociodemographic. Finally, some sociodemographic data were requested: Subjective socioeconomic status (Adler et al., 2000), objective socioeconomic status, educational level, political ideology focused on economic and social issues (adapted from

Atwell et al., 2015) with two items ("Radical left", "Center left", "Center", "Center right", "Right" and "Radical right"), gender, age, language, and nationality.

Results

Preliminary results

Feeling towards wealth-based groups: warm (or favorable) and cold (or unfavorable). The repeated measures ANOVA revealed a main effect of wealth-based group F (1,250) = 189.846, p <.001, η^2 =.43. Significant differences were found between the rich group (M = 21.81, SD = 1.63) perceived as less warm (less favorable) compared to compared to the poor group (M = 57.24, SD = 1.86) or the low and working class groups (M = 67.78, SD = 1.67), with p <.001 in all contrasts. In the same way, the upper-class group (M = 30.49, SD = 1.61) was perceived as less warm compared to the poor group and lower and working class. On the other hand, the middle-class group (M = 63.04; SD = 1.37) was perceived more favourably than the poor group, upper class, and rich (all ps <. 001), but there were no differences compared to the low and working classes group (p = .091).

Descriptive analysis. From a descriptive perspective, participants mostly ascribed the poor with traits, such as survivor (.85[5]), difficulties (.84), and unlucky (.84); the low and working classes with economically concerned (.84), value (.84), and hardworking (.83); the middle class with educated (.80), hardworking (.78), sociable (.78); the upper classes with materialistic (.75), classist (.71), and fear of the poor (.68); and rich and beyond with materialistic (.78), arrogant (.76), and selfish (.76) (see Table 3.5 for complete information).

Table 3.5

Proportion of mentioning traits by wealth-based groups

Negative Traits	Class 1. Poor	Class 2. Low and Working Class	Class 3. Middle class	Class 4. Upper class	Class 5. Rich and beyond
Wasteful	0.02	0.05	0.12	0.61	0.76
Arrogant	0.04	0.03	0.13	0.67	0.76
Careless	0.38	0.27	0.15	0.35	0.34
Classist	0.04	0.05	0.24	0.71	0.74
Desperate	0.81	0.56	0.14	0.05	0.06
Extravagant	0.07	0.03	0.09	0.57	0.75
Impressionable	0.45	0.55	0.47	0.26	0.17
Haughty	0.03	0.06	0.14	0.62	0.66
Greedy	0.05	0.07	0.17	0.60	0.70
Compare themselves to lower groups	0.06	0.30	0.56	0.42	0.28
Conformist	0.21	0.43	0.56	0.14	0.08
Bad	0.19	0.12	0.11	0.33	0.60
Economically concerned	0.75	0.84	0.59	0.09	0.07
Class-unconscious	0.15	0.11	0.30	0.40	0.52
Pretentious	0.02	0.01	0.13	0.60	0.76
Delinquent	0.57	0.24	0.09	0.25	0.48
Unlucky	0.84	0.59	0.09	0.01	0.03
Distrustful	0.45	0.39	0.34	0.41	0.47
Selfish	0.08	0.08	0.17	0.66	0.76
Frivolous	0.08	0.03	0.14	0.54	0.73
Hypocrite	0.07	0.08	0.23	0.62	0.70
Indifferent	0.11	0.13	0.34	0.41	0.43
Materialistic	0.06	0.11	0.29	0.75	0.78
Fear of the poor	0.01	0.10	0.33	0.68	0.71
Unsociable	0.30	0.10	0.06	0.20	0.45
Unambitious	0.37	0.42	0.30	0.10	0.08
Opportunistic	0.16	0.20	0.35	0.65	0.65
Susceptible	0.48	0.50	0.35	0.22	0.20
Sad	0.73	0.50	0.19	0.13	0.26
Positive traits	**Class 1. Poor**	**Class 2. Low and Working Class**	**Class 3. Middle class**	**Class 4. Upper class**	**Class 5. Rich and beyond**
Class-conscious	0.48	0.63	0.52	0.30	0.24
Distinct	0.46	0.30	0.25	0.32	0.58
Empathic	0.52	0.76	0.69	0.16	0.06
Familiar	0.54	0.74	0.75	0.31	0.19
Honest	0.48	0.68	0.64	0.16	0.08
Humble	0.66	0.80	0.55	0.08	0.03
Helpful	0.49	0.72	0.56	0.12	0.05
Sociable	0.37	0.62	0.78	0.51	0.30
Solidary	0.43	0.66	0.70	0.22	0.09
Survivor	0.85	0.62	0.21	0.03	0.02

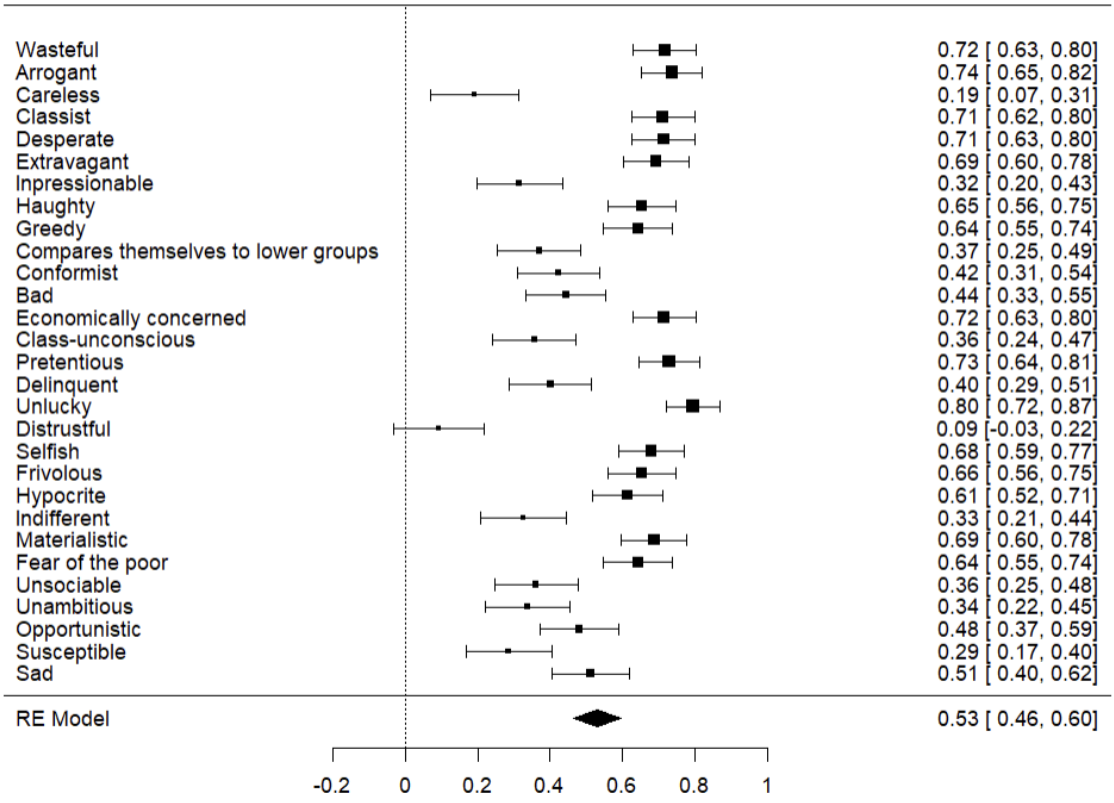
Value things	0.74	0.84	0.66	0.09	0.03
Diverse	0.41	0.50	0.63	0.20	0.17
High Educated	0.35	0.58	0.80	0.58	0.38
Competent	0.23	0.50	0.73	0.47	0.30
Happy	0.15	0.34	0.70	0.60	0.39
Hardworking	0.49	0.83	0.78	0.31	0.19
Calm	0.18	0.30	0.63	0.43	0.30
Kind	0.53	0.76	0.73	0.33	0.15
Approachable	0.37	0.72	0.71	0.13	0.03
Competitive	0.06	0.19	0.51	0.66	0.53

Main results

Perception of wealth-based groups in terms of negative valence traits. We tested our Hypothesis 1 that wealthy groups are associated with negative traits by conducting chi-square tests. We conducted a chi-square test for each negative trait, and then conducted a meta-analysis encompassing the effect of each trait and its association with wealth-based categorization (that is, the overall effect of the five wealth-based groups). The results showed that all associations between negative traits and wealth-based groups were statistically significant, except for the negative trait 'distrustful' (Figure 3.1).

Figure 3.3

Meta-analysis of the effects of Cramer's V for each association between negative traits and the groups.

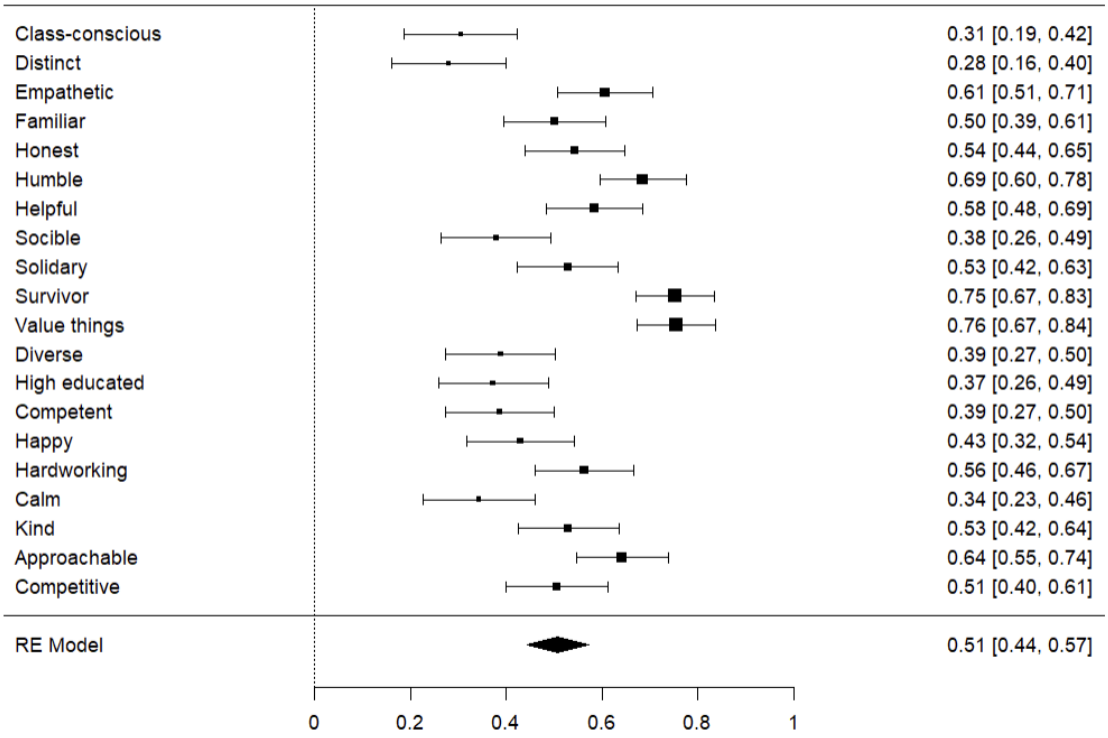


After examining the pattern of association, Bonferroni post hoc tests revealed that most of the negative traits were related to the "rich and beyond" and "upper class" groups, compared to all other groups. Nineteen traits out of twenty-nine negative traits were associated with "rich and beyond" group while six traits out of twenty-nine were associated with the "poor" group.

Perception of wealth-based groups in terms of positive valence traits. We tested our Hypothesis 2 that poorer wealth-based groups are associated with positive traits. After conducting a chi-square tests for positive traits and a meta-analysis that encompasses the effect of each of them, the association between positive traits and wealth-based group categorisation was statistically significant (see Figure 3.4).

Figure 3.4

Meta-analysis of the effects of Cramer's V for each association between positive traits and the groups.



After examining the pattern of association, Bonferroni post hoc tests revealed that most of the positive traits were related to the "lower and working classes" group compared to the other groups. In the case of the "poor" group, only four out of twenty positive traits were attributed to them. Still, in the "lower and working classes" group there was an association of twelve traits out of twenty, while the rich and beyond group was only characterised by two positive traits.

Importantly, some of the negative and positive traits did not perform as expected. Please refer to the supplementary material (Bonferroni post hoc test of each positive and negative trait, Table S2; S4) for a summary of the Chi-square test showing the associations between groups and negative/positive traits and for further details of each negative trait and each positive trait, including the standardized residuals used to test the independence for each group.

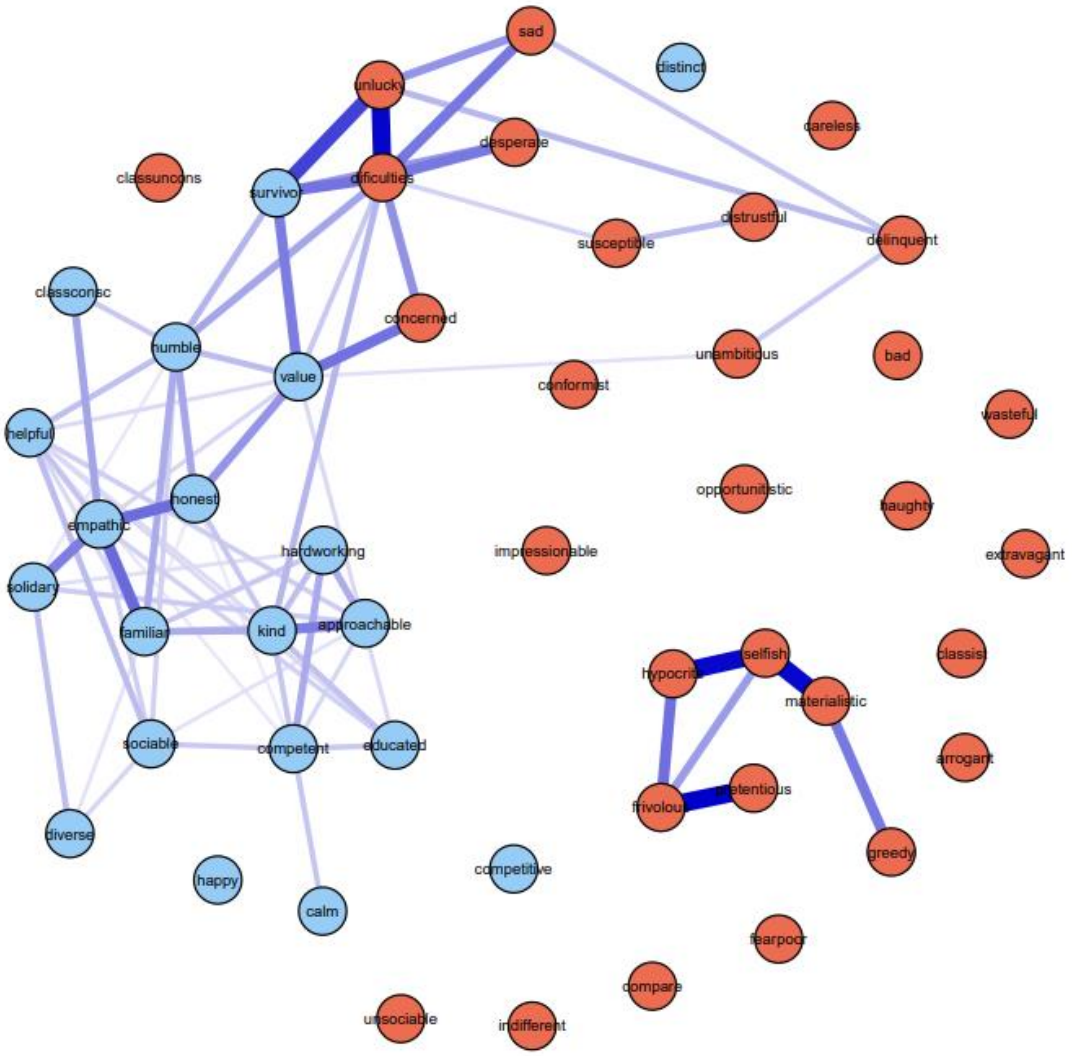
Psychometric network analysis to map wealth-based stereotype content. Figures 3.5 to 3.9 illustrate the network of wealth-based group stereotypes. The nodes

were colored based on the traits' valence (i.e., positive in light blue, and negative in light red). The thickness of the edges between nodes indicates the strength of the association between nodes, as estimated from the Ising model. A non-statistically significant relationship is omitted from this network. To facilitate visual inspection, we used the Fruchtermon-Reingold algorithm to visualize the network, averaging the layout parameters of the five networks. Next, we will describe the main pattern of results for each wealth-based group in terms of nodes, relations, and centrality measures.

Regarding the “Poor”, the nodes with the strongest connection were pretentions-frivolous (2.04), unlucky-difficulties (2.00), materialistic-selfish (1.99), selfish-hypocrite (1.98), and survivor-unlucky (1.51). As shown in Figure 7, the interconnections between positive nodes on the left, showed strong connections between empathetic, honest, familiar, solidary, class-conscious. However, there are also two clusters of nodes, one related to negative traits, such as frivolous, hypocrite, pretentious, selfish, materialistic, and greedy; and another one that combines positive and negative traits, such as unlucky, difficult, and economically concerned linked to survive and value. The nodes with the largest centrality strength were difficulties (8.28), empathic (5.68), value (5.17), survivor (5.11), and unlucky (4.93), which means that these nodes are the most influential in structuring the stereotype of the poor.

Figure 3.5

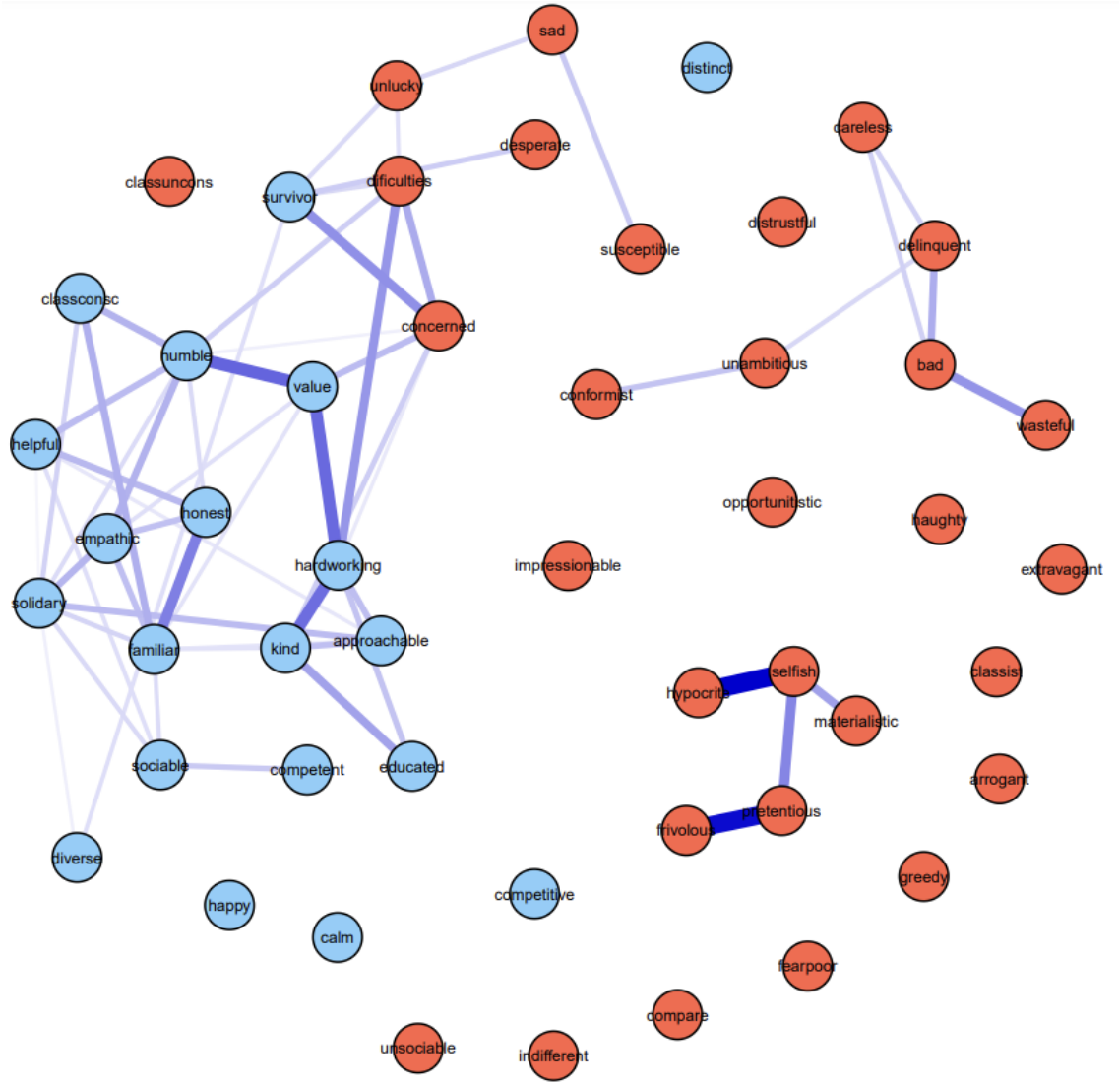
Class 1: Poor



The lower and working classes showed a similar pattern to the poor class, but with less intensity. The strongest connections were hypocrite-selfish (2.39), frivolous-pretentious (2.29), value-humble (1.45), hardworking-value (1.40), and hardworking-kind (1.37). In this group, our measure of strength centrality was particularly large on nodes such as, hardworking (5.14), humble (4.82), selfish (4.42), familiar (4.07), value (4.06), and kind (3.58). The visual inspection of the network indicates that connections between positive traits still outweigh negative traits, although some positive traits, such as survivor and hardworking, are linked to negative characteristics related to having economic difficulties and concerns. Furthermore, an isolated set of traits was also unveiled, such as the associations with delinquency, bad, and careless.

Figure 3.6

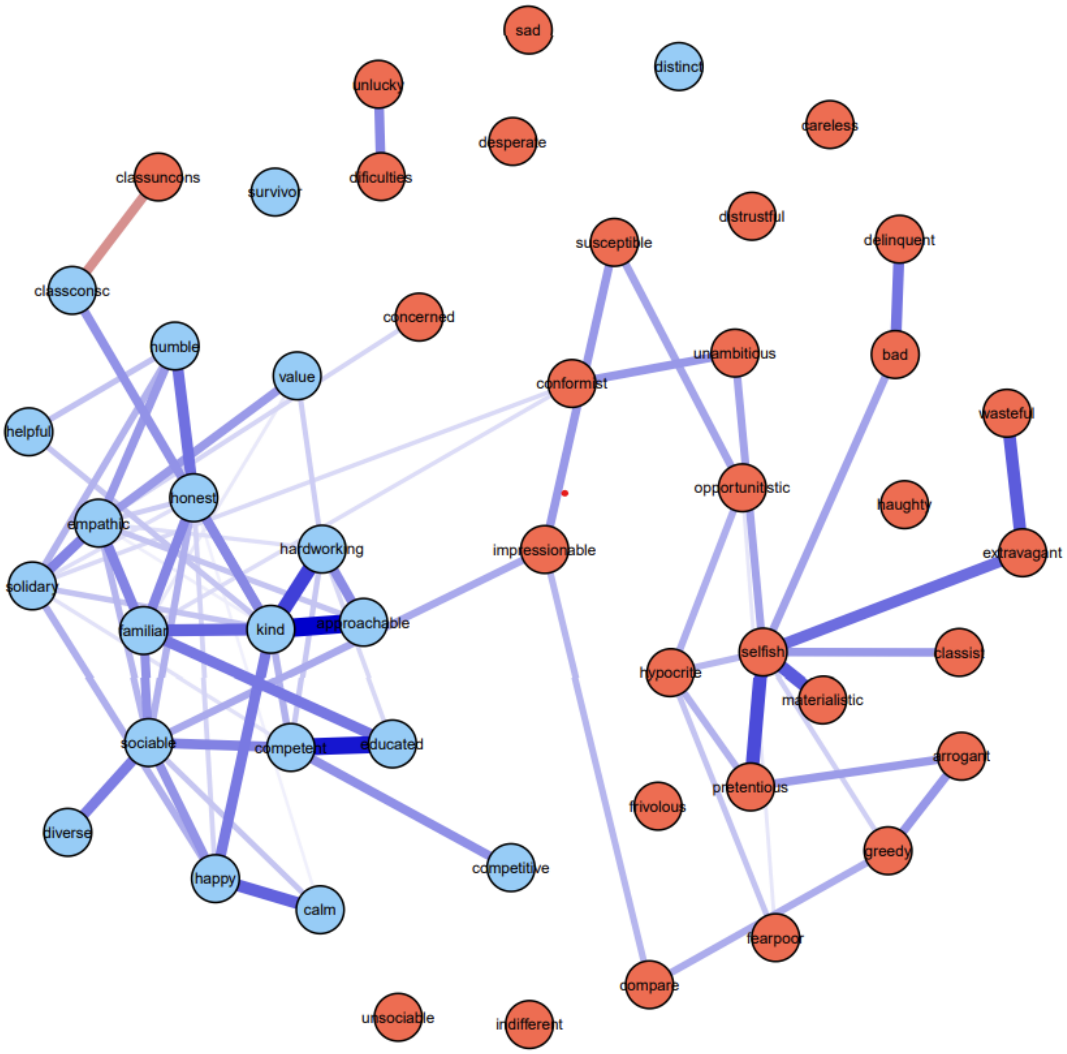
Class 2: Low and working classes.



The middle-class network seems to show two broad clusters, one composed of positive traits and other composed of negative. The positive cluster is mainly structured around characteristics such as hard-working, approachable, kind, educated, and competent. The negative cluster is mainly based on characteristics such as selfish, materialistic, and pretentious. The strongest relationship in this network were approachable-kind (1.52), competent-educated (1.39), kind-hardworking (1.14), selfish-pretentious (1.07), and selfish-materialistic (0.98). The strength centrality also suggests that the most important nodes in this network are the ones related to kind (7.01), selfish (5.34), sociable (4.59), empathic (4.31), familiar (4.19), and competent (3.73).

Figure 3.7

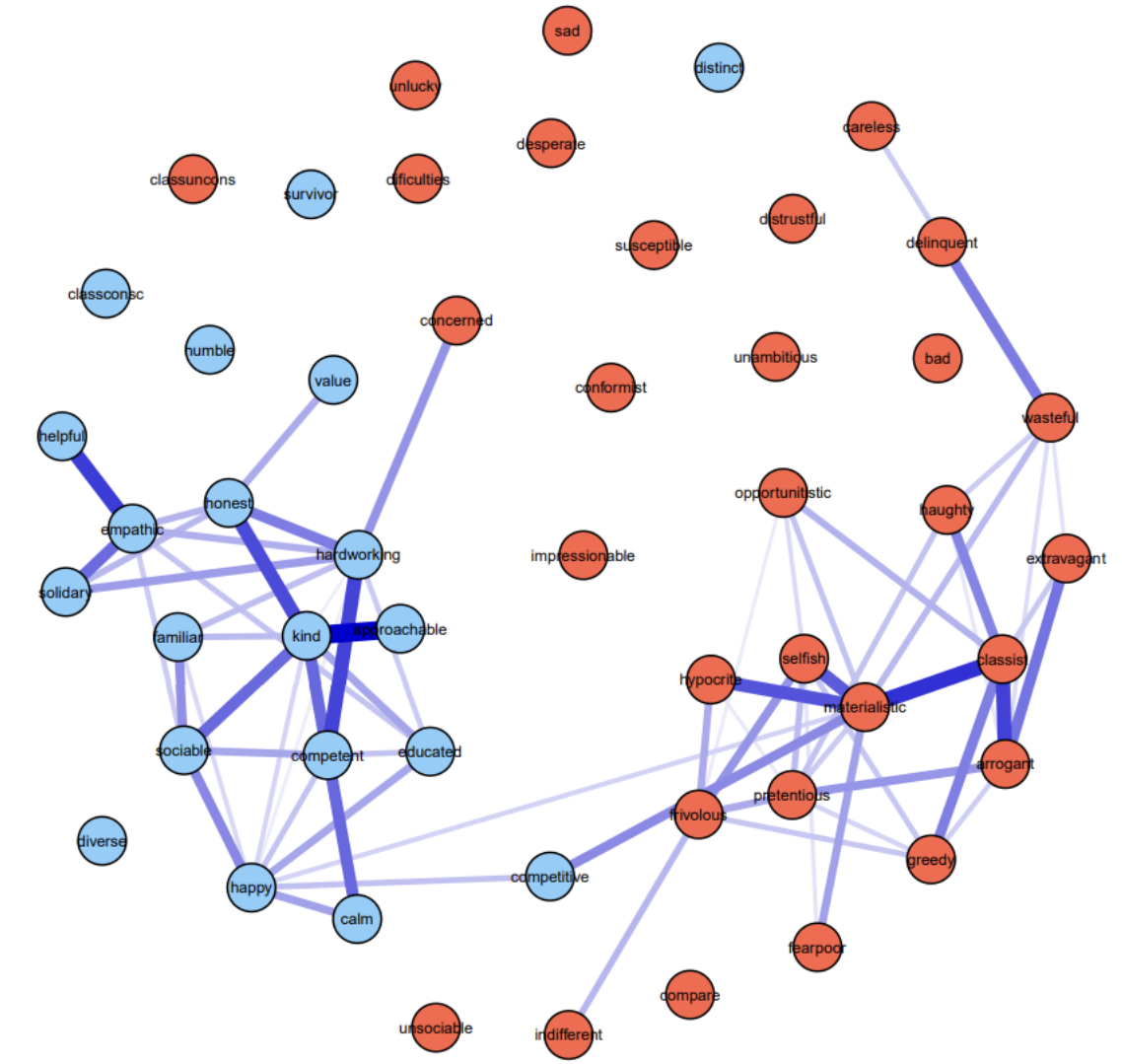
Class 3: Middle classes



The upper-classes group mirror the two-cluster structure of the middle class but with more dense connections between negative traits than in positive traits. The negative traits were mainly driven by materialistic, classist, selfish, and hypocrite. The strongest associations between nodes were approachable-kind (1.43), materialistic-classist (1.16), helpful-empathetic (1.10), classist-arrogant (1.06), and hardworking-competent (1.05). The nodes with the highest strength centrality were kind (5.52), materialistic (5.48), classist (4.37), hardworking (4.24), empathic (3.42), and happy (3.17).

Figure 3.8

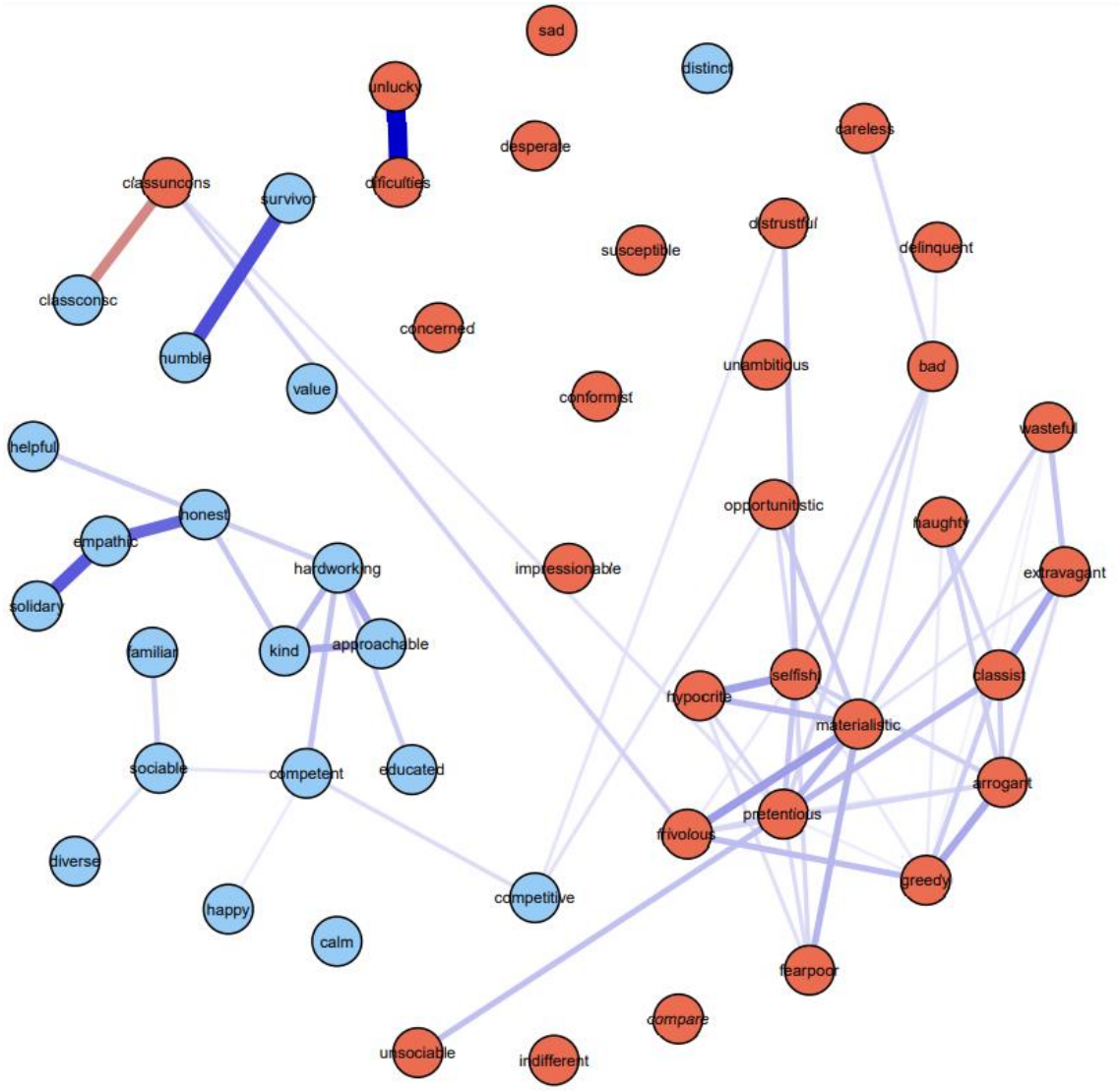
Class 4: Upper classes



Finally, the rich and beyond group showed a predominantly dense interconnection between negative traits and a looser connection between positive traits. The strongest relationships were between unlucky-difficulties (3.01), survivor-humble (2.09), solidary-empathic (1.96), honest-empathic (1.77), and frivolous-materialistic (1.15). However, the most important nodes for structuring the stereotype network were related to being materialistic (5.93), pretentious (5.76), selfish (5.15), arrogant (3.98), empathic (3.73), and classist (3.72)

Figure 3.9

Class 5: Rich and beyond



Discussion

In Study 2, we corroborated the qualitative results from Study 1. First, with respect to the warm or cold feelings we found that the lower wealth groups (poor and low and working classes) were perceived more favourably than the higher wealth groups (upper classes and rich and beyond). Moreover, the middle class was perceived more favourably than the rest of the groups, except for the low and working classes group. In line with the above, a similar pattern was found in the way groups were stereotyped. The results revealed how most of the negative traits were associated with wealthier groups (upper classes and rich and beyond) and, on the other hand, the positive traits were associated

with the lower wealth groups. Still, this was only noticeable in the case of the low and working-class groups, as the poor group was not as positively stereotyped.

The results are not limited to whether the valence is negative or positive, but the content of the ascribed traits. For example, rich people are seen as arrogant, classist, haughty, or ultimately bad. In contrast, the poor were perceived as economically concerned, desperate, unambitious, and delinquent. Therefore, both extreme wealth-based groups were attributed in some way immoral traits, especially the rich (as in previous results; Tanjitpiyanond et al., 2022). The same happened with the positive traits, as the rich were perceived as competent and the poor as humble. This gives us an indication that the groups with the greatest wealth, but also the ones with the least, are stereotyped in an ambivalent manner. This is coherent with the relationship between the ambivalence of stereotypes and economic inequality (Durante et al., 2013, 2017).

The network analysis yields provoking results along these lines, with two clusters of negative and positive traits coexisting in the five groups. From the poor (Class 1), where the density of relationships between traits is in the cluster of positive traits, to the rich (Class 5), where the relationships are denser in the negative cluster, but in both groups both clusters are connected. Beyond the trait-by-trait analysis, the results show visually how positive and negative traits make up the content of the stereotype.

General Discussion

The aim of this research was to identify the quantity and characteristics of wealth-based groups. From a qualitative approach, which has the potential not to limit participants in their responses, the results show how society is divided into groups. Following research into understanding economic inequality through the lens of social identity (Jetten et al., 2017, 2021; Tanjitpiyanond et al., 2022), the results of Study 1 showed the accessible number of groups people have in their minds based on wealth. Far from perceiving two groups, the data corpus showed five major wealth-based groups that bring together various ways of naming themselves: poor, lower and working classes, middle classes, upper classes, and rich and beyond. Furthermore, as corroborated in Study 2, the groups at the extremes of the hierarchy were stereotyped differently. The poor groups—particularly low and working classes—were perceived more favourably and were attributed more positively valence traits than the rich. Further, the node density in the psychometric networks also suggests that participants hold ambivalent stereotypes of

wealth-based groups. That is there were links between positive and negative traits in each wealth-based group, even though the traits attributed to the poorest groups were mostly positive and to the wealthiest groups were mostly negative.

These studies enrich the research of wealth-based categorization and social class stereotypes with some theoretical contributions. One of the benefits of using a qualitative methodology is to broaden the understanding of the stereotype beyond the description of wealth-based groups, as other structural features are salient. While it is true that wealth is salient and can help shape intergroup barriers (Jetten et al., 2017, 2021), the content analysis showed that wealth-based perceptions of groups extend to cultural practices or their relationship with other groups in terms of equality or domination. This and other aspects have been part of the conceptualization of social classes in social sciences (Becker et al., 2017; Kraus & Stephens, 2012; Marx, 1867/2010; Murdock, 1989). Therefore, a broader perception of social class can help to better understand how economic inequality divides us and shapes the stereotype.

In terms of the number of groups perceived by the participants, the results did not show that there were two groups: the haves and have-nots. The corpus data showed a wide variety of labels that could be classified into five broad groups. This is a further indicator that economic inequality divides us and can be corrosive to intergroup relations (Nishi et al., 2015; Oishi et al., 2011), becoming a reason to demobilize people to address it. Perceiving a broader group to which we belong through shared grievance and fate can be part of collective strategies to combat inequality (Drury & Reicher, 2000; Klandermans, 2014). The resulting politicized identity and other associated variables (e.g., perception of unfair economic distribution) may have been the result of broad categories that have emerged in protest contexts (e.g., 99%; Stiglitz, 2012). Although our data do not corroborate that people are sensitive to these categories, they did perceive an extreme rich group (i.e., rich, and beyond). This can be useful when looking for someone to blame for an unfair system (Simon & Klandermans, 2001), even more so if there are strong moral convictions (van Zomeren et al., 2011) and this group is seeing as immoral as it seems.

The stereotype of poor groups (poor, but especially lower and working classes) is mainly composed of positive traits, and the stereotype of the rich (upper classes and rich) is composed of negative traits. This pattern is stable, poor-positive, and rich-negative. However, when examining trait by trait and their linkages, the results showed that the content of the stereotype changes. In line with the stereotype content model (Durante

et al., 2013, 2017; Fiske et al., 2002), the results revealed that the very rich were perceived as cold (e.g., frivolous) but competent (e.g., competitive). In contrast, the poor were considered warm (e.g., humble) but incompetent (e.g., unambitious). Perceiving the poor positively may be the other group's way of compensating for the stereotype to justify the system (Kay et al., 2007).

The networks show that the density of positive connections for the poor and negative connections for the rich reinforces our main hypotheses. These relationships are broad and complex and may generate certain ambivalence within the groups themselves. The poor were perceived as warmer and less competent (e.g., with difficulties, economically concerned, unlucky but empathic and value things), but in the case of the rich, their coldness stands out (e.g., materialistic, pretentious, selfish, arrogant, or classist). Although in our results we cannot affirm that inequality is the exclusive cause of wealth-based stereotypes because we did not manipulate it, theoretically our results are in line with the effect of economic inequality on the horizontal (morality and kindness) and vertical (assertiveness and competence) dimensions of stereotyping (Abele et al., 2021; Jetten et al., 2021). That is, both poor and rich groups are stereotyped negatively in terms of competence (Tanjitpiyanond et al., 2022). Moreover, the stereotyping of the rich group was affected mainly in the horizontal dimension, that is, those attributes derived from interpersonal relationships (e.g., arrogant, classist, haughty or frivolous). These results support that the rich are perceived as less kind and moral than the poor (e.g., Moreno-Bella et al., 2019).

Some of the reasons why the rich are perceived as immoral may be because of the way some of them acquire their wealth is perceived as illegitimate (Sussman et al., 2014; Tao et al., 2016). Although the low perception of competence by the poor—especially in persistent poverty—has negative consequences, such as reducing support for social protection policies (Alcañiz-Colomer et al., 2022), perceiving the rich as immoral can increase support for progressive taxation (Tanjitpiyanond et al., 2022). These arguments show the double edge of the stereotype since it can be useful to justify the system (e.g., justify status differences, Kay & Friesen, 2011), but also to confront it if the dominant group is perceived as immoral.

This study has some limitations. First, the sample could be characterized as WEIRD (White, educated, industrialized, rich, democratic), so the external validation of these findings may be under threat, and it would be convenient to carry it out in other

cultural contexts. In addition, the sample of Study 1 was mainly composed of university population and particularly women. Also, this study lacks information on causality. That is, we do not know what causes these stereotypes. This wealth-based categorization may depend on inequality, social stratification, or even ideologies. However, this research shed light on promising future lines of research connecting wealth-based categorisations to political behaviour. For example, a future line of studies could examine how these stereotypes vary as a function of economic inequality compared to social stratification and how it affects political behaviour.

In summary, this paper sheds some insights to understand how people perceive societies where wealth fragments and shapes groups. Outside of the logic that two groups can be perceived due to the accumulation of wealth on one side of the graph, people think of more groups. In addition, the variety of wealth-based groups also affects the variety of stereotypes that are generated about them, with the poor being perceived as warm and the rich as immoral.

Footnotes

1. Some subcategories such as “middle class” or simply “middle” were kept since the term “class” did not necessarily appear in the terms mentioned.
2. Even though some labels are extreme in some subcategories (e.g., billionaires), the participants mentioned even more extreme labels in the next subcategory (e.g., rotten in money). Also, we must consider that some participants did not mention 5 groups, so some extreme labels may also fall into other subcategories.
3. Standardized residuals.
4. This research focuses on wealth-based categorisation but will be influenced by the perception of social classes. Therefore, we used in this case social class as an anchor to facilitate the understanding of the task, as it is a more familiar concept.
5. Proportions are displayed in parenthesis.

Supplementary Materials

pertaining to

Economic Inequality and Representations of Wealth-Based Groups

This section contains supplementary material in addition to the Chapter 3.

Study 1: Additional measures, preliminary results.

Study 2: Procedural material, and tables summarising results from **Study 2.**

All materials are available at the following OSF link:

https://osf.io/549mq/?view_only=68bbb37826064539813a6f5f4f371c6d

Study 1

Additional measures

After the end of the interview the participants answered some exploratory measures

“Remember the economic reality that exists in the fictional society "Cratania". This distribution of wealth, that is, how wealth is distributed between the poorest people and the richest people, is the distribution of wealth that currently exists in the world. The graph that represents how people distribute wealth is real, it belongs to the distribution of wealth in the world. Remember that the graph represents all the inhabitants of the world. That is, the 100 people that are represented in the graph are equivalent to the world population. Think about your economic situation if you are economically independent, or that of your family if you are not, and imagine that one of the people represented in the graph is you. Think about the distribution of wealth that we present to you and imagine where you would be in that distribution:”

Group identification (common people, 99%, working class and national identities)

First, participants read the definition of these identities. In the case of 99% identity: “The term 99% represents the majority of the world’s population (the 99%) against a very small percentage (1%) that owns half of the planet’s wealth (if wealth were a pie cut in two, the 1% richest gets one half while the other corresponds to 99% of the world’s inhabitants)”, working class identity : “The term working class designates the group of workers who work in exchange for a salary in opposition to the ruling class that owns the majority of the property of economic resources”, middle class: “The term middle class designates the group of people who belong to the social class that is applied to people with an average socioeconomic level which is between the lower class and the upper class”, upper class “The term upper class designates the group of people who belong to the social class that is applied to people with a high socioeconomic level which is above the rest of the social strata”.

After reading the descriptions participants indicated the extent to which they identified with 99%, working-class middle class, and upper class:

I identify with...

I feel connected to...

I feel in solidarity with...

I feel committed to...

I often think about the fact that I am part of...

I t is an important part of my identity to be part of...

It's a big part of how I see myself being a part of...

Intolerance toward economic inequality

Being 1 “Strongly disagree” and 7 “Strongly agree”, to what extent would you rate the following statements?

- *The negative consequences of economic inequality have been greatly exaggerated.*
- *Economic inequality is causing many of the problems in Spain.*
- *I am very concerned about the degree of economic inequality that exists in Spain.*
- *Economic inequality is not a problem.*
- *We must do everything possible to reduce the economic inequality that exists in Spain today.*

Collective actions

Next, we ask you to answer with what probability you would participate in actions to reduce economic inequality. Being 1 "Never" and 7 "Very often", to what extent would you be willing to carry out the following actions?

- *I would vote for political parties whose priorities are reducing economic inequality.*
- *I would contact political representatives to promote policies to combat economic inequality.*
- *I would donate money to a political party or organization that wants to combat economic inequality.*
- *I would belong to a political party, union, or organization against economic inequality.*

- *I would participate in union or political group activities to combat economic inequality.*
- *I would participate in peaceful demonstrations demanding the reduction of economic inequality.*
- *I would engage in nonviolent civil disobedience to protest laws that favour economic inequality.*
- *I would distribute political material against economic inequality.*
- *I would boycott products that maintain economic inequality.*
- *I would sign petitions against economic inequality.*
- *He would be active in movements against economic inequality.*

Sociodemographic measures

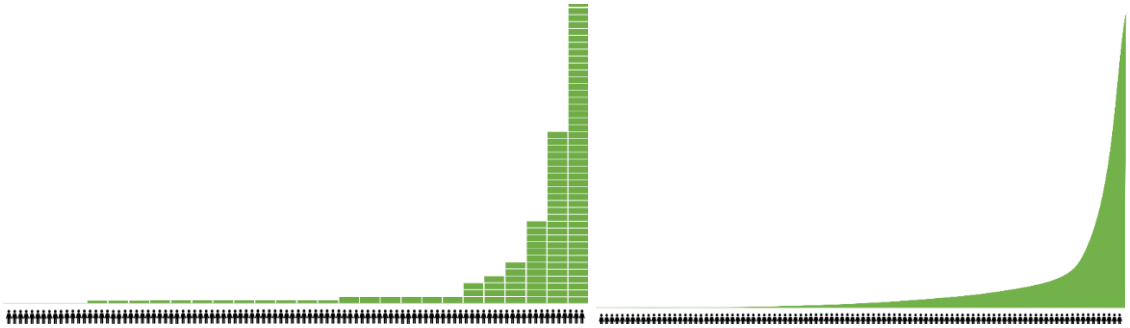
Finally, some sociodemographic data were requested: subjective socioeconomic status with the Scale of Subjective Social Status (SES, Adler et al., 2000), objective economic status, political orientation, educational level, gender and age.

Preliminary results

We compared whether both economic inequality graphs (A = Bars graph; B = Curve graph; Figure 1) were perceived similarly and if this influenced the perception of inequality or the number of social classes created by the participants. For this reason, we conducted two independent sample t-tests. Results showed that the perception of economic inequality was the same in both graphs ($M = 6.34$, $SD = .75$; $M = 6.18$, $SD = .96$; $t(88) = .854$, $p = .198$) but in Graph A, more groups were created ($M = 4.26$, $SD = .99$) than in Graph B ($M = 3.67$, $SD = .92$; $t(87.975) = 2.890$, $p < .01$).

Figure 1.

Graphs that we showed to the participants to represent the distribution of wealth in two different ways.



Study 2

Procedural material

Participants were informed that they would be shown five-word clouds containing words that people commonly use to refer to wealth-based groups or social classes. The terms used for each word cloud were the labels identified in Study 1 for each subcategory: (1) poor, (2) low and working classes, (3) middle classes, (4) upper classes, (5) rich and beyond. Participants were not shown these labels, only the content of the word clouds. However, to facilitate the process, participants created their own label for each word cloud. In this way, when they had to respond to the measures, the word cloud and the term they had developed themselves appeared.

Figure 2.

Word cloud representing the codes contained in the "poor" subcategory.

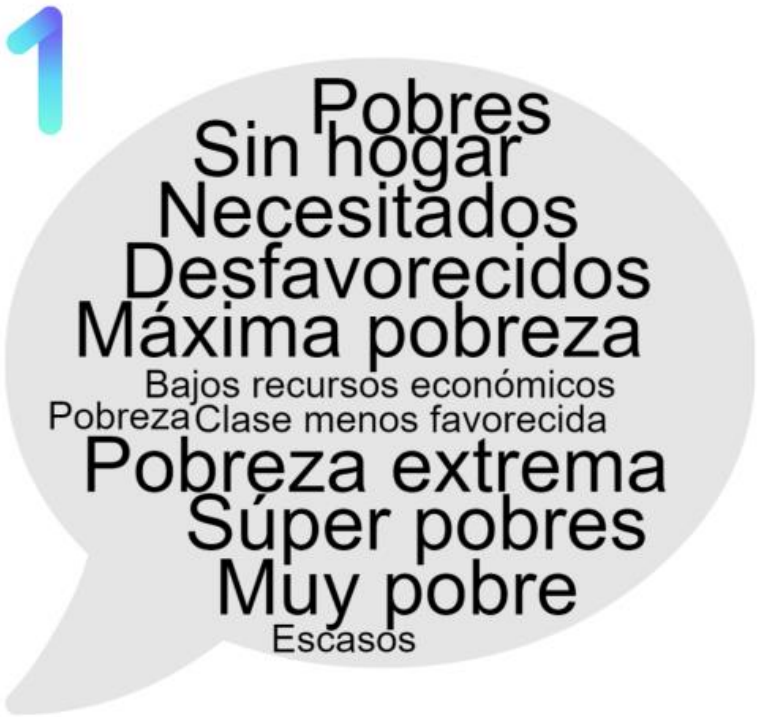


Figure 3.

Word cloud representing the codes contained in the "low and wornking classes" subcategory.

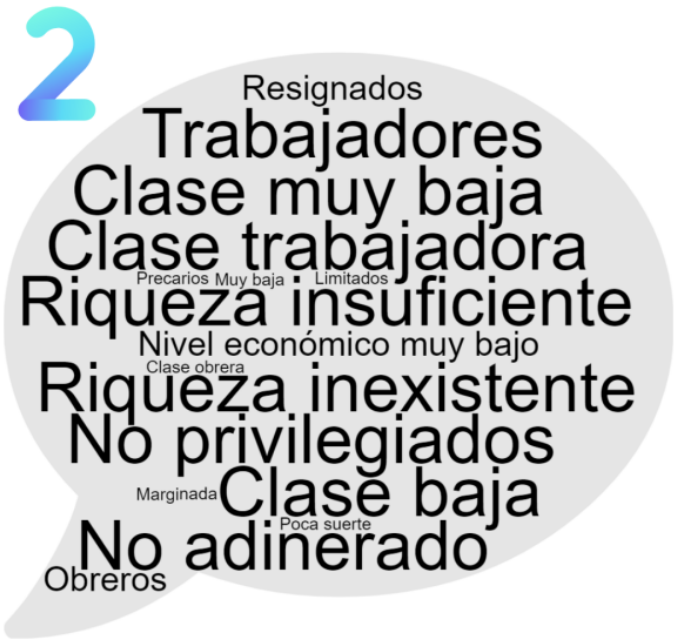


Figure 4.

Word cloud representing the codes contained in the "middle classes" subcategory.

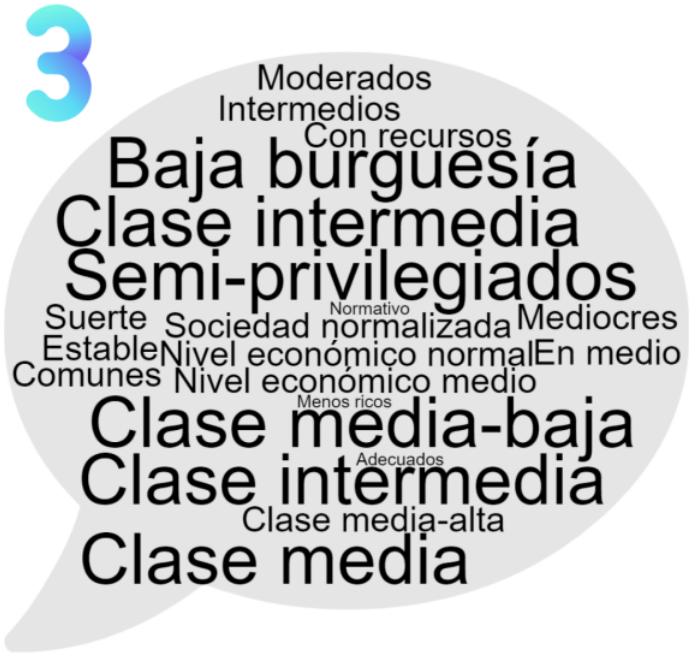


Figure 5.

Word cloud representing the codes contained in the "upper classes" subcategory.

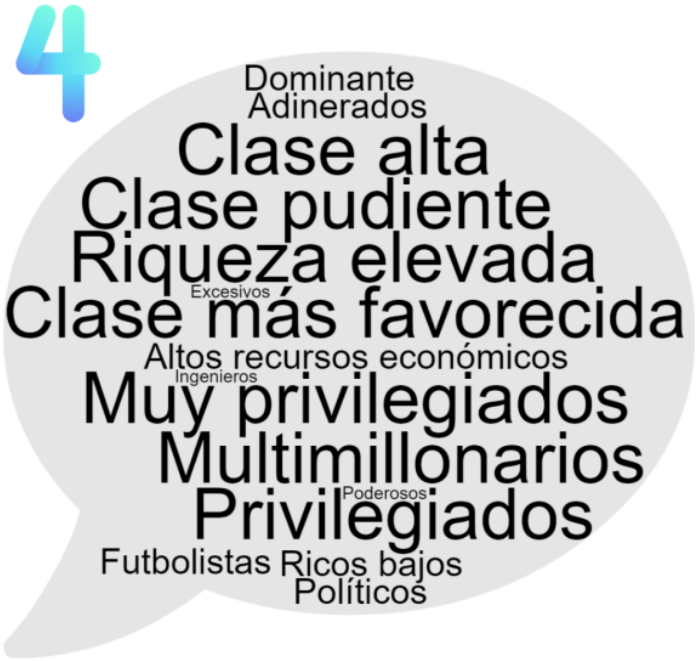
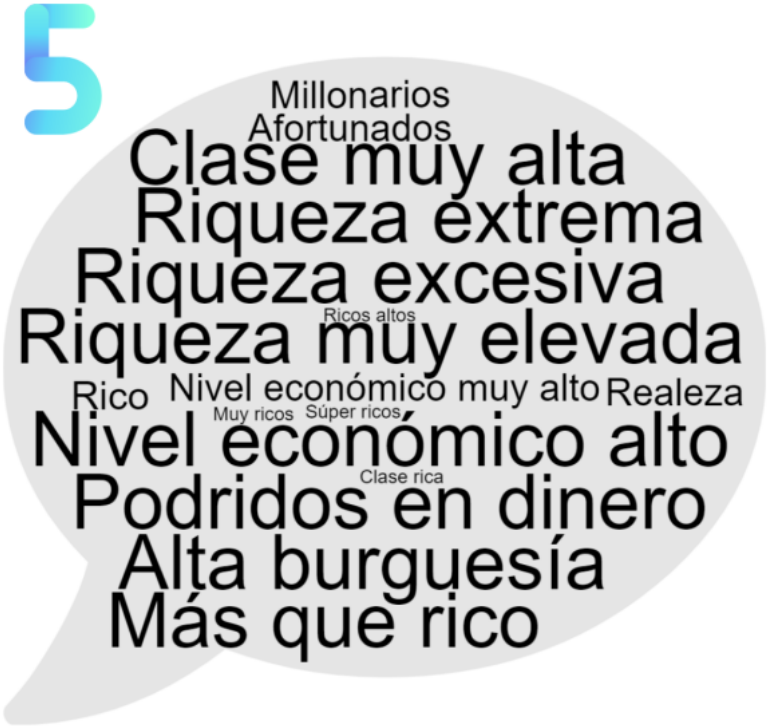


Figure 6.

Word cloud representing the codes contained in the "rich and beyond" subcategory.



Results

Perception of wealth-based groups in terms of negative valence traits

The post hoc Bonferroni tests revealed that all the associations between negative traits and wealth-based groups were statistically significant, except for the negative trait "distrustful" (Table 1). After inspecting the pattern of the association, we found that most of the negative traits were linked to rich-and-beyond and upper-class compared to the remaining group (Table 2).

Table 1.

Chi-square test showing the associations between groups (poor, low and working classes, middle classes, upper classes, and rich an beyond) and negative traits

Negative Trait	χ2	gl	Cramer' s V	odds ratio (OR)
Haughty	213.92**	4	.65	5.77
Selfish	230.68**	4	.68	11.35
Class-unconscious	63.46**	4	.36	0.34
Conformist	89.70**	4	.42	0.56
Materialistic	236.92**	4	.69	16.82

Arrogant	271.36**	4	.74	-13.33
Greedy	206.88**	4	.64	4.69
Economically concerned	256.44**	4	.72	-47.16
Pretentious	266.30**	4	.73	-17.41
Sad	130.80**	4	.51	1.09
Careless	18.50**	4	.19	.08
Unsociable	65.35**	4	.36	.35
Bad	98.34**	4	.44	.64
Indifferent	1.37**	4	.33	.27
Opportunistic/self-interest	115.51**	4	.48	.85
Desperate	254.57**	4	.71	-71.40
Delinquent	80.36**	4	.40	0.47
Wasteful	256.27**	4	.72	-48.60
Unambitious	57.10**	4	.34	.29
Classist	253.11**	4	.71	-120.13
Extravagant	239.93**	4	.69	21.67
Impressionable	49.87**	4	.32	0.25
Compares themselves to lower groups	68.53**	4	.37	0.38
Unlucky	316.50**	4	.80	-4.83
Distrustful	4.20	4	.09	.02
Frivolous	214.54**	4	.66	5.88
Hypocrite	188.63**	4	.61	3.02
Fear of the poor	207.06**	4	.64	4.71
Susceptible	40.83**	4	.29	.19

Table 2.

Bonferroni post hoc test of each negative trait showing the standardized residuals for testing independence for each group.

Negative Trait	Poor	Low and working classes	Middle classes	Upper classes	Rich and Beyond	
Haughty	7.11**	6.35**	4.28**	-8.30**	-9.44**	No
	-7.11**	-6.35**	-4.28**	8.30**	9.44**	Yes
Selfish	6.86**	6.95**	4.58**	-7.95**	-10.43**	No
	-6.86**	-6.95**	-4.58**	7.95**	10.43**	Yes
Class-unconscious	3.77**	4.73**	0.05	-2.50	-6.04**	No
	-3.77**	-4.73**	-0.05	2.50	6.04**	Yes
Conformist	1.83	-3.85**	-7.13**	3.76**	5.38**	No
	-1.83	3.85**	7.13**	-3.76**	-5.38**	Yes
Materialistic	8.36**	7.19**	2.72	-8.59**	-9.66**	No
	-8.36**	-7.19**	-2.72	8.59**	9.66**	Yes
Arrogant	7.40**	7.40**	5.18**	-8.68**	-11.29**	No
	-7.40**	-7.40**	-5.18**	8.68**	11.29**	Yes
Greedy	6.86**	6.48**	3.97**	-7.25**	-10.06**	No
	-6.86**	-6.48**	-3.97**	7.25**	10.06**	Yes
Economically concerned	-6.99**	-9.12**	-2.87*	9.22**	9.76**	No
	6.99**	9.12**	2.87*	-9.22**	-9.76**	Yes
Pretentious	7.34**	7.62**	4.62**	-7.80**	-11.75**	No
	-7.34**	-7.62**	-4.62**	7.80**	11.75**	Yes
Sad	-9.47**	-3.46**	4.53**	5.90**	2.52	No
	9.47**	3.46**	-4.53**	-5.90**	-2.52	Yes
Careless	-2.06	0.87	3.82**	-1.49	-1.13	No
	2.06	-0.87	-3.82**	1.49	1.13	Yes
Unsociable	-2.40	3.28*	4.84**	0.71	-6.42**	No
	2.40	-3.28*	-4.84**	-0.71	6.42**	Yes
Bad	2.01	4.14**	4.24**	-1.34	-9.05**	No
	-2.01	-4.14**	-4.24**	1.34	9.05**	Yes

Indifferent	4.67**	4.02**	-1.42	-3.44**	-3.82**	No
	-4.67**	-4.02**	1.42	3.44**	3.82**	Yes
Opportunistic/self-interest	5.98**	5.26**	1.33	-6.29**	-6.29**	No
	-5.98**	-5.26**	-1.33	6.29**	6.29**	Yes
Desperate	-12.74**	-5.97**	4.76**	7.17**	6.79**	No
	12.74**	5.97**	-4.76**	-7.17**	-6.79**	Yes
Delinquent	-6.38**	2.31	5.92**	2.04	-3.89**	No
	6.38**	-2.31	-5.92**	-2.04	3.89**	Yes
Wasteful	7.53**	6.68**	5.07**	-7.61**	-11.67**	No
	-7.53**	-6.68**	-5.07**	7.61**	11.67**	Yes
Unambitious	-3.10*	-4.49**	-1.33	4.31**	4.61**	No
	3.10*	4.49**	1.33	-4.31**	-4.61**	Yes
Classist	8.09**	8.00**	2.80	-8.99**	-9.91**	No
	-8.09**	-8.00**	-2.80	8.99**	9.91**	Yes
Extravagant	5.98**	7.02**	5.60**	-6.97**	-11.62**	No
	-5.98**	-7.02**	-5.60**	6.97**	11.62**	Yes
Impressionable	-1.99	-4.25**	-1.99	2.98*	5.24**	No
	1.99	4.25**	1.99	-2.98*	-5.24**	Yes
Compares themselves to lower groups	6.76**	0.44	-5.69**	-2.52	1.00	No
	-6.76**	-0.44	5.69**	2.52	-1.00	Yes
Unlucky	-13.93**	-7.17**	5.93**	7.72**	7.44**	No
	13.93**	7.17**	-5.93**	-7.72**	-7.44**	Yes
Distrustful	-1.21	0.50	1.65	-0.04	-0.91	No
	1.21	-0.50	-1.65	0.04	0.91	Yes
Frivolous	5.88**	7.01**	4.48**	-6.10**	-11.28**	No
	-5.88**	-7.01**	-4.48**	6.10**	11.28**	Yes
Hypocrite	6.89**	6.62**	2.87*	-7.23**	-9.16**	No
	-6.89**	-6.62**	-2.87*	7.23**	9.16**	Yes
Fear of the poor	8.89**	6.70**	0.81	-7.79**	-8.58**	No
	-8.89**	-6.70**	-0.81	7.79**	8.58**	Yes
Susceptible	-3.34**	-3.80**	0.05	3.22**	3.87**	No
	3.34**	3.80**	-0.05	-3.22**	-3.87**	Yes

Perception of social class in terms of positive valence traits

The post hoc Bonferroni tests revealed the specific group and direction in which traits were associated (see Table 3). After inspecting the pattern of the association, we found that most of the positive traits were linked to “low and working classes” compared to the remaining groups. Contrary to expectations, the “poor” group did not have a higher percentage of positive traits (see Table 4).

Table 3.

Chi-square test showing the associations between groups (poor, low and working classes, middle classes, upper classes, and rich and beyond) and positive traits.

Positive Trait	$\chi 2$	gl	Cramer's V	odds ratio (OR)
Humble	235.01**	4	.69	14.70
Kind	140.34**	4	.53	1.27
Happy	92.31**	4	.43	.58
Value things	285.15**	4	.76	-8.35
Solidary	139.62**	4	.53	1.25
Empathetic	183.92**	4	.61	2.74
Hardworking	158.53**	4	.56	1.71
High educated	69.58**	4	.37	.38
Class-conscious	46.58**	4	.31	.23
Distinct	38.99**	4	.28	.18
Familiar	125.49**	4	.50	1.00
Competent	74.83**	4	.39	.42
Approachable	206.41**	4	.64	4.63
Survivor	283.71**	4	.75	-8.67
Sociable	71.69**	4	.39	.40
Helpful	170.97**	4	.58	2.14
Competitive	128.18**	4	.51	1.04
Honest	148.13**	4	.54	1.44
Calm	59.04**	4	.34	.31
Diverse	75.40**	4	.39	.43

Table 4.

Bonferroni post hoc test of each positive trait showing the standardized residuals for testing independence for each group.

Positive trait	Poor	Low and working classes	Middle classes	Upper classes	Rich and Beyond	
Humble	-5.91**	-9.23**	-2.97*	8.47**	9.64**	No
	5.91**	9.23**	2.97*	-8.47**	-9.64**	Yes
Kind	-.90	-6.64**	-5.74**	4.48**	8.80**	No
	.90	6.64**	5.74**	-4.48**	-8.80**	Yes
Happy	7.03**	2.47	-6.53**	-4.02**	1.06	No
	-7.03**	-2.47	6.53**	4.02**	-1.06	Yes
Value things	-6.71**	-9.01**	-4.65**	9.42**	10.95**	No
	6.71**	9.01**	4.65**	-9.42**	-10.95**	Yes
Solidary	-.26	-5.72**	-7.15**	5.10**	8.04**	No
	.26	5.72**	7.15**	-5.10**	-8.04**	Yes
Empathetic	-2.02	-7.73**	-6.12**	6.73**	9.13**	No
	2.02	7.73**	6.12**	-6.73**	-9.13**	Yes
Hardworking	.92	-7.73**	-6.58**	5.15**	8.23**	No
	-.92	7.73**	6.58**	-5.15**	-8.23**	Yes
High educated	4.85**	-1.15	-6.69**	-1.05	4.03**	No
	-4.85**	1.15	6.69**	1.05	-4.03**	Yes
Class-conscious	-1.11	-4.67**	-2.00	3.17**	4.60**	No
	1.11	4.67**	2.00	-3.17**	-4.60**	Yes
Distinct	-1.80	2.16	3.34**	1.53	-5.23**	No
	1.80	-2.16	-3.34**	-1.53	5.23**	Yes
Familiar	-.94	-5.68**	-6.12**	4.80**	7.95**	No
	.94	5.68**	6.12**	-4.80**	-7.95**	Yes
Competent	5.33**	-1.36	-7.01**	-.64	3.72**	No

	-5.33**	1.36	7.01**	.64	-3.72**	Yes
Approachable	0.50	-8.19**	-8.03**	6.70**	9.02**	No
	-0.50	8.19**	8.03**	-6.70**	-9.02**	Yes
Survivor	-12.72**	-7.02**	3.55**	7.96**	8.23**	No
	12.72**	7.02**	-3.55**	-7.96**	-8.23**	Yes
Sociable	3.60**	-2.60	-6.74**	.18	5.29**	No
	-3.60**	2.60	6.74**	-.18	-5.29**	Yes
Helpful	-2.52**	-8.47**	-4.24**	6.76**	8.48**	No
	2.52**	8.47**	4.24**	-6.76**	-8.48**	Yes
Competitive	8.22**	5.09**	-3.09*	-6.68**	-3.54**	No
	-8.22**	-5.09**	3.09*	6.68**	3.54**	Yes
Honest	-1.83	-6.67**	-5.77**	6.17**	8.12**	No
	1.83	6.67**	5.77**	-6.17**	-8.12**	Yes
Calm	4.71**	1.71	-6.51**	-1.72	1.80	No
	-4.71**	-1.71	6.51**	1.72	-1.80	Yes
Diverse	4.71**	1.71	-6.51**	-1.71	1.80	No
	-4.71**	-1.71	6.51**	1.71	-1.80	Yes

Chapter 4

Fighting Inequalities in Times of Pandemic: The Role of Politicised Identities and Interdependent Self-Construal in Coping with Economic Threat

Fighting Inequalities in Times of Pandemic: The Role of Politicised Identities and Interdependent Self-Construal in Coping with Economic Threat

Ángel del Fresno-Díaz[1], Lucía Estevan-Reina[2], Ángel Sánchez-Rodríguez[3], Guillermo B. Willis and Soledad de Lemus[1]

[1] University of Granada

[2] Jagiellonian University

[3] University of Salamanca

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Abstract

During the COVID-19 pandemic, institutions encouraged social isolation and non-interaction with other people to prevent contagion. Still, the response to an impending economic crisis must be through collective organization. In this set of pre-registered studies, we analyze two possible mechanisms of coping with collective economic threat: shared social identity and interdependent self-construction. We conducted three correlational studies during the pandemic in May-October 2020 (Study 1, $N = 363$; Study 2, $N = 250$; Study 3, $N = 416$). Results show that shared identity at two levels of politicization (i.e., working class and 99% identities) and interdependent self-construal mediated the relationship between collective economic threat, intolerance towards economic inequality and collective actions to reduce it. The results highlight that the collective economic threat can reinforce the sense of community—either through the activation of a politicized collective identity, such as the working class or the 99% or through the activation of an interdependent self—which in turn can trigger with greater involvement in the fight against economic inequality.

Keywords: Economic threat, shared politicized identity, 99%, working class, interdependent self-construal, collective actions

Introduction

"Don't personalise, collectivise!" (Reicher & Drury, 2020)

The effects of pandemics are not limited to health; they also influence the world economy and cause an exacerbation of inequalities (Adams-Prassl et al., 2020; Aspachs et al., 2021). For example, while the wealth of American billionaires has increased by 39%, lower classes, latino and black people, as well as transgender people have become increasingly vulnerable (Inequality.org., 2021). This situation is a severe injustice that infringes the rights of the most vulnerable ones limiting their access to basic resources (Oxfam, 2022). Challenging this injustice mutual aid groups emerged in many countries around the world aiming to protect the community (Ntontis et al., 2021; Stevenson et al.,2021). People tend to come together when facing a crisis (Bukowski et al, 2019; Fritsche et al, 2017; Hawdon & Ryan, 2011). Also, the perception of share grievances or perceived injustice can lead people to challenge it via protests (van Stekelenburg and Klandermans, 2013; van Zomeren et al., 2008). As such, a common fate is crucial for both; the emergence of shared identities (Drury et al., 2016; Simon & Klandermans, 2001), and the development of a more interdependent self-construal (Oishi & Komiya, 2017) to react to shared injustice (Drury & Reicher, 2000).

The aim of the current work was to analyze whether the collective economic threat linked to COVID-19 is related to social identities and self-construction which, in turn, could predict intolerance towards economic inequality and collective actions against it. Specifically, we proposed that economic collective threat might be associated to economic inequality intolerance and actions to challenge it because it is positively related to politicized collective identities (Simon & Klandermans, 2001; Van Zomeren et al., 2008) (classical -working class identity- and emergent -99% identity-) and interdependent self-construal (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Sánchez-Rodríguez et al., 2019).

Reactions to collective economic threat

An uncertain context such as the pandemic increases economic injustice, promoting differences between the haves and have-nots (Rodríguez-Bailón, 2020). In such context, realistic threats (e.g., scarcity in material resources and physical integrity) arise. People could perceive such threats on a personal (e.g., I could get the disease or lose my job) or on a collective level (e.g., my country will have a lack of health resources; Fritsche et al., 2011; Fritsche & Jugert, 2017). When people feel threatened, they strive

to maintain a general sense of control; when personal control is not plausible, they turn to the collective self (Stollberg et al., 2017). This can lead to an increase in ethnocentric attitudes, but also to supporting social change through collective actions in favor of the ingroup (Fritsche et al., 2017; Fritsche & Jugert, 2017) or in solidarity with others (Bukowski et al., 2019).

Threat is related to the identification with groups with whom we shared grievances, which in turn might lead to rejecting inequality (e.g., showing less intolerance towards inequality or being involved in collective actions intentions; Drury & Reicher, 2000; Reicher, 1996). Among the most relevant antecedents of collective action are the perception that the context is unfair; a high group efficacy to change it, group-based anger emotions, and a highly politized identity (van Zomeren et al., 2008). Rising economic inequality due to the pandemic may fuel all of these processes, leading to social protest. Further, the perception of a common fate may also contribute to increasing social cohesion and connection (Resta et al., 2021), promoting a more interdependent self-construal, which could also lead them to reject inequality and promote social change. Thus, we argue that collective economic threat might promote identification with politicized groups, as well as an increase in interdependent self-construction, as a means to reject and confront economic inequality.

Politicized identities against inequality

In order to face the shared grievances a shared identity emerges (van Stekelenburg & Klandermans, 2017). In response to threats, social identities promote social change—especially if they are politicized (Simon & Klandermans, 2001; Stürmer & Simon, 2009; van Stekelenburg et al., 2009; van Zomeren et al., 2008). In order to become politicized, people must engage as self-conscious members in a power struggle on behalf of their group (Simon & Klandermans, 2001), and understand the need to change the structural aspects of shared grievances and injustices (Curtin et al., 2016). We argue that economic collective threat derived from the COVID-19 pandemic might have triggered politicized identities opposing economic inequality, leading participants to express less tolerance towards inequality and more intentions to participate in collective actions against it.

From a Marxist analysis, the working class consciousness is what drives class struggle against the oppressor across history (e.g., feudalism, capitalism, etc.; Marx & Engels, 1848/2004). Belonging to the working class has been central for the development

of political movements (e.g., labour and socialist movements, communism) and people's political and social attitudes (Easterbrook et al., 2020; Manstead, 2018). Thus, we proposed that identification with the working class can be a mobilizer to confront economic threat in the context of pandemics (cf. Žižek, 2020). However, in the last decades the concept of the working class has been questioned, and some academics have redefined it (Wright, 2018). Beyond the traditional identity of a working class, other concepts emerge such as the precariat (Standing, 2013) or the analysis of inequality by Thomas Piketty (2013). The Occupy Wall Street movement proposed an alternative politicized identity against economic inequality: the 99%. The 99% identity is defined by the shared goal of reducing economic inequality and may be a way to maintain this shared identity but based on the reality of socio-economic divisions within the economy and society (Stiglitz, 2012). We propose that the 99% identity can also promote a change in attitudes and support for collective actions aimed at fighting against economic inequality. Furthermore, we aim to compare the role of old and new conceptualization of social class identification in triggering actions against inequality in the context of an economic threat.

Summing up, we argue that economic threats derived from the COVID-19 pandemic can promote group identities that challenge the status quo, but also might trigger changes at the self-construal level.

The interdependence self-construal

Self-construal is a property of individuals that promotes thinking, feeling and behaving independently or interdependently as a result of the cultural contexts they inhabit (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Independent self-construction is defined as seeing oneself as separate from others, emphasizing one's uniqueness and self-expression, and promoting personal goals over collective goals. In contrast, interdependent self-construction includes seeing oneself as connected to others, fitting in with others, sacrificing one's personal goals and exercising self-control (Markus & Kitayama, 1991).

Research on the psychology of the self, identities, and cultures proposes that the self is dynamic and malleable to the context (Markus & Hamedani, 2007; Markus & Kitayama, 2010; Stephens et al., 2014). In this line, past research has tested the relationship between economic inequality and the self-construal. When economic inequality is high, people are more prone to perform independent self-construction, increasing the competitive and individualistic social norm; conversely, when economic

inequality is low it leads to an interdependent self-construction (Sánchez-Rodríguez et al., 2019, 2020). Similarly, the global COVID-19 pandemic is an exceptional collective social context that might affect self-construal. Indeed, the virus has changed our notions of "self" and whether we define ourselves as "us" (Jetten, 2020).

In such a context, an interdependent self-construction may be beneficial to prioritize collective obligations over personal wishes (Bavel et al., 2020). Based on previous literature we propose that the economic threat may increase interdependent self-construal, which might lead to less tolerance towards inequality and more collective actions against it. However, interdependent self-construal is a multidimensional construct and each dimension might be affected by different antecedents (Vignoles et al., 2016). Given that collective economic threat linked to COVID-19 might have generated the perception of a shared common fate (Drury et al., 2016; Drury & Reicher, 2000; Reicher, 1996), we expected that it might particularly affect feelings of self-reliance (vs. being dependent on others), self-containment (vs. connections with others), differentiation from others (vs. similarity), and self-interest (vs. commitment to others). However, we have less reasons to expect that the economic threat derived by pandemic is linked with dimensions that have less to do a perceived common fate, such as self-direction (vs. receptiveness to influence), self-expression (vs. harmony), and consistency (vs. variability) of self across time. Therefore, we focus only on those dimensions of self-construal that we consider might have been affected by perceiving that the COVID19 pandemic represents a shared grievance.

The Present Research

We situate our research in the context of Spain during the first two waves of the Covid-19 pandemic (May-October 2020). A total of 239.429 people diagnosed with covid were reported (31 May 2020, start of the first wave), being the third country in Europe with more confirmed cases after Russia and the United Kingdom (Ministry of health, Government of Spain 2020a). In the second wave after summer, a total of 1.098.320 infected were reported (26 October), being in the same way the third country with the most confirmed cases after Russia and France (Ministry of health, Government of Spain 2020b). In terms of economic consequences, the pandemic could bring Spain back to inequality levels similar to those experienced during the economic crisis in 2008 (Oxfam, 2021). This translated into an increase in the relative poverty in Spain of 22.9% (one million more people below the poverty line). The unemployment caused by the pandemic

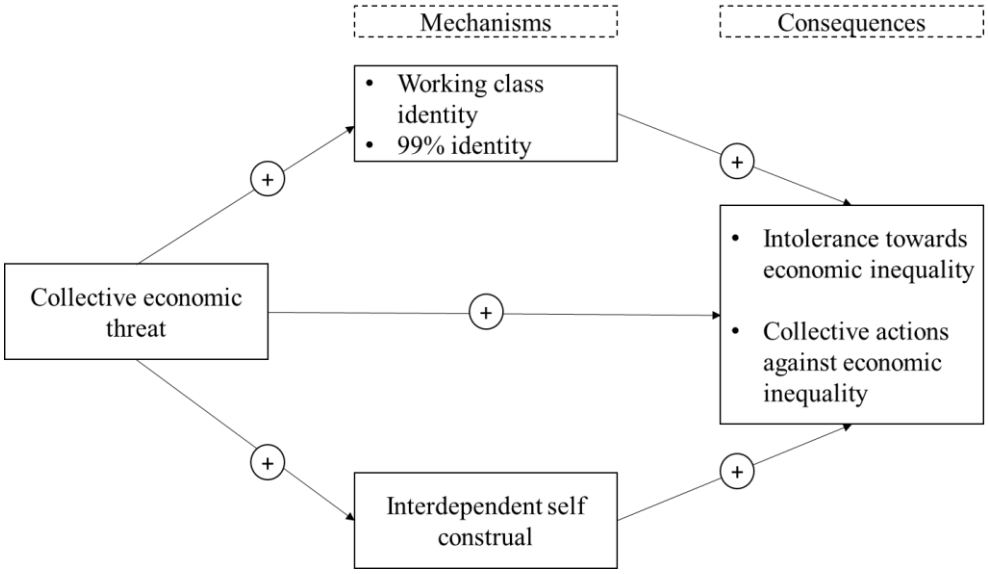
is the main generator of inequality and poverty, due to the fall in the income of the most precarious workers. The increase in unemployment was accentuated in migrants, young people, women, also doubling in the lowest educational levels (Oxfam, 2021).

The protests derived from this situation relate to the working class as an aggrieved group (e.g., Marches for dignity; Sabucedo et al., 2017). The pandemic increased the importance of social positions, situating social class and economic inequality in the centre of the public debate. Working class identity is a traditional identity among the politicized lower classes in Spain (especially for members of traditional left-wing political parties). On the other hand, the emergence of indignados movement in 2011 supposed a political renovation in many senses (e.g., rejection of classic concepts, emergence of new political parties...) in that context the identity of the 99% became popular. These are politicized and emerging identities in contexts where a great generalized injustice is perceived. The current research offers an opportunity to test in parallel old and new identities against economic inequality.

We conducted three correlational studies to find out what kind of mechanisms people use to cope with economic threat during the COVID-19 pandemic. We analyze the impact on class-related politicized identity at two levels: a classical well-established identity (i.e., the working class) and a new broader emerging identity (e.g., the 99%). Additionally, we investigate the role of an interdependent self-construal as a separate path to confront this collective threat. We predicted that these two paths, identity-based and self-construal, are related to intolerance towards economic inequality and collective actions.

Figure 4.1

Theoretical model that shows the relationship between the collective economic threat and intolerance towards economic inequality and collective actions through identity and interdependent self-construal mechanisms.



Study 1

In Study 1 (https://osf.io/sr2nz/?view_only=95056997b7d7411d8be6be0b1dd16ab2), we explored whether the economic threat generated by the Covid-19 pandemic is related to less tolerance to inequality and support for social change (Spain, May 2020). Specifically, we tested whether the perception of economic threat is related to emerging identities against inequality—i.e., the 99% identity, working class identity— and an interdependent self-construal. We also tested whether this, in turn, is related to greater intolerance towards economic inequality and participation in collective actions against inequality.

Method

Participants and procedure

An incidental sampling was carried out with a general population in Spain. The study was conducted through a web link on the *Qualtrics* platform, and the collaboration was voluntary and anonymous. Fifty euros were raffled to encourage participation.

We planned to collect a minimum of 300 and a maximum of 400 observations after exclusions. After removing incomplete data, 368 participants took part in the study. We excluded five participants from the data analyses because they did not have the preregistered exclusion criteria requirements: data from participants who are not Spanish speakers. The final sample consisted of 363 participants (262 women, 96 men and 5 "other") aged between 18 and 70 years (M = 33.71; SD = 13.96).

Measures[1]

Economic threat perception. We translated the Financial Threat Scale (FTS) (Marjanovic et al., 2013) and adapted it to the context of the economic threat caused by the coronavirus pandemic. The scale is made up of five items with a 5-point scale (1 = "nothing"; 5 = "a lot/totally").

We measured the individual threat with five items (e.g., "How much uncertainty do you feel about your economic situation?", α = .91), and collective threat with three items (e.g., "How worried are you about the economic situation in Spain?", α = .84).

99% and working class identification. First, participants read the definition of these two identities. In the case of the 99% identity, we defined it as: "The term 99% claims the majority of the world's population (99%) compared to a very small percentage (1%) that owns half of the planet's wealth (if wealth were a pie cut in two, the richest 1% takes possession of one half while the other corresponds to 99% of the world's inhabitants)". In the case of working class identity, we defined it as: "The term working class designates the set of workers who work in exchange for a salary in opposition to the ruling class that owns the majority of the property of economic resources.".

Afterward, we measured to what extent participants identified with the 99% (α = .94) and the working class (α = .88) using 3 centrality (e.g., "Being part of the 99%/working class is an important part of my identity") and 3 solidarity (e.g., "I feel a bond with the 99%/working class") items of Leach et al.'s identification scale (2008), and a general item (e.g., "I identify with the 99%/working class") on a Likert scale (1 = "Not at all"; 7 = "Very much").

Interdependent self-construal. We measured four components of Self Construal Scale: self-sufficient vs. dependent others (e.g., "I would rather be self-sufficient than depend on others"), autonomy vs. connections with others, (e.g., "I consider that my

happiness is independent of the happiness of my friends and family"), different vs. similar (e.g., "I am a unique individual"), self-interest vs. commitment to others items (e.g., "I would sacrifice my own interest for the benefit of my group") (α = .71). We used four items of each component with the highest factor weight (Vignoles et al., 2016) using a 5-point scale (1 = "It does not describe me at all"; 5 = "It describes me exactly").

(In)tolerance towards economic inequality. We used a Spanish version of the Support for Economic Inequality Scale (Wiwad et al., 2019, e.g., "Economic inequality is causing many of the problems in Spain", α = .76) using a Likert scale (1 = "Totally disagree"; 7 = "Totally agree").

Collective actions. Based on previous measures used in the literature to evaluate collective actions, formal political participation and activism (Becker et al., 2013; Ekman & Amnå, 2012), we created eleven items to measure willingness to participate in collective actions within the framework of economic inequality caused by the pandemic (e.g., "I would participate in peaceful protests that demand the expropriation and nationalization of all private health companies to improve health care for the entire population"; α = .91) using a Likert scale (1 = "Never"; 7 = "Very often").

Sociodemographic measures. Finally, some sociodemographic data were requested: Subjective socioeconomic status (Adler et al., 2000), political ideology measured with one item (1 = "Extreme left"; 100 = "Extreme right"), objective social class based on level on education and income (e.g., "How much net monthly income do you have? Consider sources of income including wages"), sex, age, mother tongue and nationality. Sex, age, political orientation and subjective economic status are used as covariates in our analyses.

In addition, we measured other variables (e.g., health threat perception, humanity identification, justification of the economic system and orientation to social dominance) not included in the text but described in supplementary materials.

Results and discussion

Pearson's correlations between the main variables and descriptive statistics are presented in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1

Descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) and bivariate correlations between the variables measured in Study 1.

	Collective ET	Individual ET	Working class Id.	99% Id.	Inter. S-C	Intolerance EI	Collective actions
Collective ET	4.16(0.81)	.21**	.31**	.17**	.16**	.21**	.16**
Individual ET		3.03(1.07)	.01	.01	-.07	.04	.02
Working Class Id.			5.97(1.17)	.25**	.09	.32**	.31**
99% Id.				5.09(1.79)	.01	.23**	.26**
Inter. S-C					3.21(0.47)	.14**	.18**
Intolerance EI						5.90(1.00)	.53**
Collective actions							4.88(1.40)

Note: * $p \leq 0.05$; ** $p \leq 0.01$; *ET*., Economic Threat; *Id*., Identification; *EI*., Economic Inequality; *Inter. S-C*., Interdependent Self-Construal; Diagonal shows mean of the participants' score in the scale and standard deviation in brackets.

Individual economic threat did not predict significantly intolerance towards economic inequality $\beta = -.03$, $p = .542$, neither collective action $\beta = .06$, $p = .185$ (see Supplementary Material). Therefore, we only focus on collective economic threat in the subsequent studies.

We carried out two parallel mediation analyses with PROCESS (model 4; Hayes, 2013) to test the role of the 99% identity (M1), working class identity (M2) and interdependent self-construal (M3) as potential mediators of the relationships between collective economic threat (X) and intolerance towards economic inequality (Y1) and collective actions (Y2). We used 5,000 bootstrap samples to estimate bias-corrected standard errors and 95% percentile confidence intervals for the indirect effects. Specifically, we included the covariates sex, age, political orientation and subjective economic status in our main analyses[2].

Concerning the first model, we found that collective economic threat was related to intolerance towards economic inequality directly and indirectly via working class and

99% identification, but not via interdependent self-construal. Secondly, we found that collective economic threat was related to collective actions directly and indirectly via 99% identification. On the contrary, it was not mediated by working class identification, or by interdependent self-construal (see total, direct and indirect effects in Table 4.3).

These results provided initial evidence that collective economic threat is related to attitudes toward economic inequality and willingness to participate in collective actions through the activation of politicized identities. Nevertheless, we should note that the confidence intervals of our indirect effects were close to zero, so we decided to confirm the social identity path and again explore the interdependent self-construal path in further studies.

Study 2

In Study 2 (https://osf.io/auh4r/?view_only=9b9645316e1c4167bcd09d32447ec03a) we preregistered a confirmatory study in the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic (Spain, October 2020). We expect that the relation between collective economic threat and intolerance towards economic inequality is mediated by identification with the working class (Hypothesis 1a), and by identification with the 99% (Hypothesis 1b). Similarly, we expect that the relation between collective economic threat and collective actions is mediated by identification with the 99% (Hypothesis 2). Further, with exploratory purposes, we analyze the working-class identity and interdependent self-construal as mediators in our models [3].

Method

Participants and procedure

The procedure was similar to Study 1. To achieve a power of .80 (considering an alpha level of .05), for detecting a medium-large effect size on path a = .40 and for detecting a medium effect size on path b = .20, we needed at least 202 participants (Fritz & MacKinnon, 2007). We planned to recruit a minimum of 250 participants to further increase our statistical power.

Seven hundred and two participants finished the study, of which we excluded thirty-six participants from the data analyses because they did not have the preregistered exclusion criteria requirements: data from participants who are not Spanish speakers. The

final sample consisted of 666 participants. As we planned to recruit 250 participants for Study 2, we decide to use the first 250 participants in date order to corroborate the hypotheses referred to in Study 2 and analyze the rest as confirmatory in Study 3.

Measures

Using the same measures described in Study 1 we evaluated collective economic threat perception (α = .79), individual economic threat (α = .90), 99% identification (α = .95), working class identification (α = .88), interdependent self-construal (α = .70), intolerance towards economic inequality (α = .76), collective actions (α = .91) and sociodemographics. In addition, we measured other variables that were excluded from the main text (e.g., emotions; group efficacy; community-focused collective actions; see Supplementary Material).

Results and discussion

We carried out Pearson's correlations between the main variables and descriptive statistics (see Table 4.2).

Table 4.2

Descriptive statistics and bivariate correlations between the variables measured in Study 2 and 3.

	Study 2 *M* (*SD*)	Study 3 *M* (*SD*)	Collective ET	Individual ET	Working Class Id.	99% Id.	Inter S-C	Intolerance EI	Collective actions
Collective ET	4.05 (0.77)	4.03 (0.81)	-	.22**	.16**	.12*	.03	.26**	.10*
Individual ET	3.45 (0.94)	3.42 (0.98)	.26**	-	.09	.03	-.07	.20**	.12*
Working Class Id.	5.65 (1.28)	5.52 (1.38)	.15*	.09	-	.03	.04	.34**	.33**
99% Id.	4.80 (1.91)	4.27 (2.00)	.09	.10	.05	-	.01	.07	.19**
Inter S-C	3.03 (0.45)	3.04 (0.43)	.14*	.16*	.11	.14*	-	.07	.12**
Intolerance EC	6.01 (1.00)	5.85 (1.07	.16*	.07	.35**	.23**	.20**	-	.51**
Collective actions	4.54 (1.45)	4.54 (1.45)	.01	.18**	.39**	.08	.17**	.46**	-

Note: * $p \leq 0.05$; ** $p \leq 0.01$; *ET*., Economic Threat; *Id*., Identification; *EI*., Economic Inequality; *Inter S-C*., Interdependent Self-Construal. The results of Study 2 are below the diagonal and the results of Study 3 are above the diagonal.

Similar to Study 1, we conducted two parallel mediation analyses[4] with PROCESS (model 4; Hayes, 2013) to test our pre-registered hypotheses.

Results showed that collective economic threat was related to intolerance towards economy inequality directly and indirectly with identification with the working class (supporting Hypothesis 1a) but not with identification with the 99% (against Hypothesis 1b) or interdependent self-construal. In addition, collective economic threat was not directly related to collective actions but indirectly with working class identification. On the contrary, it was not mediated by identification with the 99%, thus providing no support for Hypothesis 2, or by interdependent self-construal (see total, direct and indirect effects in Table 3).

The results of Study 2 showed that collective economic threat was related to identification with the working class and this in turn with a greater intolerance and participation in collective actions against economic inequality. Furthermore, we find this relationship to be mediated by the interdependent self-construal, but not by the 99% as we had predicted based on Study 1's results.

Study 3

In Study 3 (https://osf.io/mqbd3/?view_only=f4c27c8c8db14ba8ab2375fa35b1a40a) (Spain, October 2020) we wanted to confirm the role of working class identity as a mediator of the impact of collective economic threat on intolerance towards economic inequality (Hypothesis 1a) and confirm its role in the support of collective action after the economic threat (Hypothesis 2a). Also, the role of interdependent self-construal, as a second parallel mediator in explaining both intolerance towards economic inequality (Hypothesis 1b) and collective action against economic inequality (Hypothesis 2b) as a context of economic collective threat. We explored the role of 99% identification as a mediator to clarify the inconsistencies found in Studies 1 and 2.

Method

Participants and procedure

The procedure was the same as in Study 2. The final sample of Study 3 consisted of 416 participants (286 women, 123 men, 7 other) aged between 18 and 62 (M = 22.88, SD = 5.66).

Measures

Using the same measures described in Study 2 we evaluated collective economic threat perception (α = .85), individual economic threat (α = .88), 99% identification (α = .90), working class identification (α = .90), interdependent self-construal (α = .68), (in)tolerance towards economic inequality (α = .74), collective actions. (α = .91) and sociodemographics.

Results and discussion

We carried out Pearson's correlations between the main variables and descriptive statistics (see Table 2).

Similar to Study 2 we conducted two parallel mediation analyses with PROCESS (model 4; Hayes, 2013).

The results showed that collective economic threat was related to intolerance towards economic inequality directly and indirectly via working class identification, which supports Hypothesis 1a. However, it was not mediated via interdependent self-construal, which is contrary to Hypothesis 1b, or by 99% identification. In addition, collective economic threat was not related directly to collective actions but indirectly via working class identification (supporting Hypothesis 2a) and 99% identification. On the contrary, it was not mediated by interdependent self-construal, thus providing no support for Hypothesis 2b (see total, direct and indirect effects in Table 4.3).

Across studies, there was evidence that working class identity mediated the relation between collective economic threat and our criterion variables: intolerance towards economic inequality and collective actions. However, the results regarding 99% identification and interdependent self-construal as mediators are less consistent. Given the heterogeneity of some results, we decided to conduct a pooled analysis of the three studies to confirm the patterns that hold across samples.

Pooled Analysis

To provide insights into the robustness of the central effects we pooled the data of Studies 1-3 following an integrative data analysis approach (Curran & Hussong, 2009). The total sample was composed of 1029 participants, (721 women, 291 men, 17 other) aged between 18 and 70 ($M = 26.79$, $SD = 10.75$). We carried out the same analysis strategy as in Studies 1-3 and tested prerregistered Hypotheses 1 and 2 of Studies 2-3.

We conducted a sensitivity analysis for a mediation analysis with three mediators using "pwr2ppl" package for RStudio (Aberson, 2019) to determine the detectable effect size. With $\alpha = 0.05$ and power $1-\beta$ (M1 = 0.80; M2 = .80; M3 = .80), and with 1029 participants, we are able to detect a minimum effect size between r = .10 and r = .15. As such, we think we have enough power to detect the hypothesized effects.

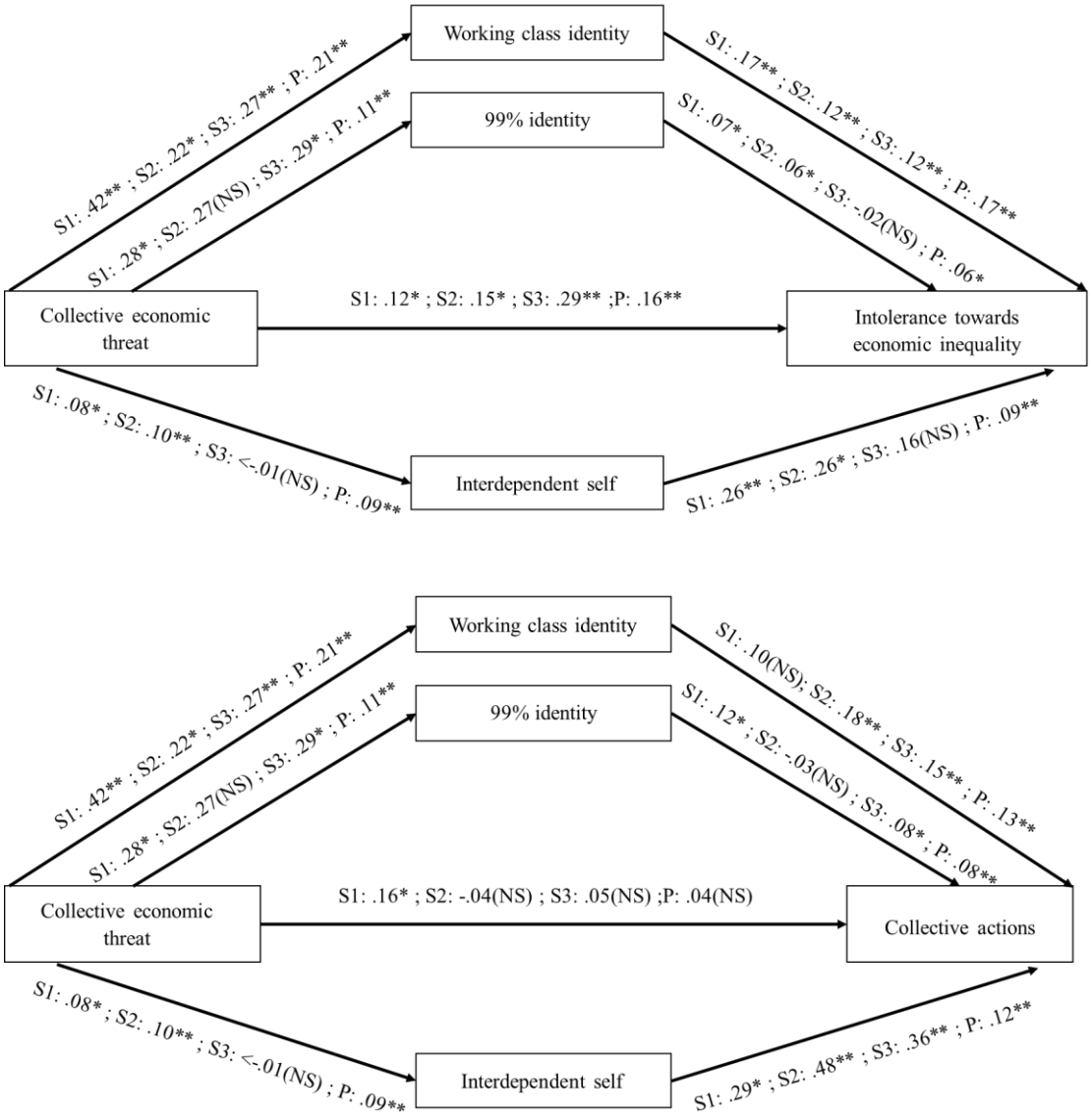
Results showed that collective economic threat was related to intolerance towards economic inequality directly and indirectly via working class and 99% identification and interdependent self-construal, supporting the model proposed in Hypothesis 1. In the same way, collective economic threat was related to collective actions indirectly (but not

directly) via working class and 99% identification and interdependent self-construal, supporting the model proposed in Hypothesis 2.

A summary of the results appears in Table 4.3 and Figure 4.2

Figure 4.2

Identification with the working class, 99% identities and interdependent self-construal as mediators between collective economic threat, intolerance towards economic inequality and collective actions in Studies 1-3 and pooled analysis.



Note: S1 = Study 1; S2 = Study 2; S3 = Study 3; P = Pooled Analysis * p ≤ 0.05; **p ≤. 01; NS = Non significative

Table 4.3

Summary of total, direct and indirect effect of collective economic threat and intolerance towards economic inequality, collective actions, mediated by 99% and working class identification, Studies 1-2-3 and pooled analyses.

Relationship between collective economic threat and intolerance towards economic inequality via working class identity, 99% identity and interdependent self-construal.																
	Study 1 (N = 363)				Study 2 (N = 250)				Study 3 (N = 416)				Pooled analyses (N = 1029)			
	Effect	SE	LLCI	ULCI	Effect	SE	LLCI	ULCI	Effect	SE	LLCI	ULCI	Effect	SE	LLCI	ULCI
Total effect	.23	.06	.12	.35	.23	.07	.09	.37	.32	.06	.21	.43	.21	.03	.16	.27
Direct effect	.12	.06	<.01	.24	.15	.07	.02	.30	.29	.06	.18	.41	.16	.03	.11	.22
IE Working Class	.07	.03	.02	.14	.03	.02	<.01	.07	.03	.02	.01	.07	.03	.01	.02	.05
IE 99%	.02	.01	<.01	.05	.02	.01	<-.01	.05	-.01	.01	-.02	.01	.01	<.01	<.01	.02
IE Interdependent self-construal	.02	.01	<-.01	.05	.03	.02	<-.01	.06	<-.00	.01	-01	.01	.01	<.01	<.01	.02
Relationship between collective economic threat and collective actions via working class identity, 99% identity and interdependent self-construal																
	Effect	SE	LLCI	ULCI	Effect	SE	LLCI	ULCI	Effect	SE	LLCI	ULCI	Effect	SE	LLCI	ULCI
Total effect	.26	.08	.11	.41	.04	.10	-.16	.24	.11	.07	-.04	.25	.09	.03	.03	.14
Direct effect	.16	.08	.01	.32	-.04	.10	-.24	.15	.05	.07	-.10	.19	.04	.03	-.01	.09
IE. Working Class	.04	.03	-.02	.12	.04	.03	<.01	.11	.04	.02	.01	.09	.03	.01	.01	.04
IE. 99%	.03	.02	<.01	.07	-.01	.01	-.04	.02	.02	.01	<.01	.05	.01	<.01	<.01	.02
IE. Interdependent self-construal	.02	.02	<-.01	.06	.05	.02	.01	.10	<-.01	.01	-.02	.02	.01	<.01	<.01	.02

Note: *IE*= Indirect effect

In sum, the results of the pooled analyses confirmed that the social identity and interdependent self-construal paths contribute to understanding the relationship between collective economic threat in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and responses against inequality such as intolerance towards economic inequality and collective actions.

General Discussion

Among the possible ways to deal with economic threat, our results show evidence of two possible mechanisms to cope with it: via social identification and interdependent self-construal processes. Specifically, we analyzed how these two mechanisms are fuelled by collective economic threat and, in turn, are related to a greater intolerance towards economic inequality and collective actions against it. Despite the negative consequences of the pandemic, based on our results we argue that this pandemic has reinforced the sense of community and, above all, has promoted a rejection of inequality.

In this paper we made two important contributions. First, we showed that politicized identities linked to economic inequality serve to channel collective efforts to deal with economic threat. COVID-19 threat may induce or exacerbate intergroup tensions and hostility (Bavel et al., 2020) but the perception of a shared or common identity with various social groups during the pandemic can prevent such tensions (Dovidio et al., 2020). The economic threat derived from the pandemic implies a shared fate, but the different effects of such threats on people—depending on their social and economic status—might be perceived as a shared injustice, however future research should address this directly. When there is an injustice or shared grievance, this identity also has a politicized value, further increasing the value of cohesion that it mobilizes for protests (van Zomeren et al., 2008). This is especially relevant if we focus on social class as a representative element of people's identities (Easterbrook et al., 2020; Manstead, 2018). The working class has been marginalized, eroding its communal and collective aspects (Jones, 2011). This reduces the salience and clarity of traditional classes (Leach et al., 2008), promoting the perception that status difference is an individual—instead of a collective—process (Jetten et al., 2013). Our results suggest that class identities that promote social change arise in response to the pandemic economic threats.

Second, we found evidence that social change is also fuelled by changes at the self-construal level (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Singelis, 1994). People who perceived a high collective threat also showed a higher interdependent self-construal, in line with

previous research in other contexts (Oishi & Komiya, 2017). Interdependent self-construal, in turn, was related to an increase in intolerance towards inequality and participation in collective actions. These results suggest that seeing yourself as connected to others, fitting in with others, perceiving yourself as similar, and sacrificing personal goals may trigger shared goals to face inequalities. We should note that we did not include all the dimensions of interdependent self-construal, just those that we expected were related to the idea of common fate.

It is also important to highlight that in these studies we use social identity and self-construal as two different and independent processes. People with an interdependent self-construal may have a greater tendency for thinking in group—rather than in individual—terms (Markus & Kitayama, 1991), which might suggest that social identity and interdependent self-construal are positively related. However, under specific circumstances those who are more independent might be the ones who identify more with social groups (McAuliffe et al., 2003). Future research is needed to clarify the relations between these two constructs. Importantly, we argue that beyond the potential link between them, social identity and self-construal can separately impact on intolerance towards inequality, and participation in collective actions as a response to collective economic threat.

Applied implications

Our results suggest that people perceive high economic threat caused by the coronavirus pandemic, particularly the collective economic threat. Thus, individuals are not only worried about health issues caused by the pandemic, but also about the economy. However, the media focus their messages about the pandemic on health-related issues undermining the socio-economic impact of it. A broader coverage of the pandemics implications directly addressing social inequalities would help to promote active coping.

Moreover, economic threat triggers collective actions via class identity and an interdependent self. Thus, social awareness of economic threat can be a tool for social movements to mobilize people to protest against economic inequality and build a sense of community. This is a socially constructive response that contravenes the tendency to increase prejudice and ethnocentrism as a consequence of Covid threat (Lemay et al., 2021). Therefore, we emphasize the benefits of promoting this route to social coping via

awareness of shared economic grievances and social class identities instead of focusing on other levels of categorization (e.g., nationality).

Limitations

Among the possible limitations of our study, the indirect effects of shared identity, especially the 99% identity, and interdependent self-construal as mediators are small and inconsistent across studies. Even so, this is solved in a parsimonious way in the pooled analysis. Importantly, all our results are correlational, so the inference about causality is limited. Furthermore, in these contexts of polarization some disruptive individual identities for social change become relevant (e.g., covid-deniers) that should be tested in further research. Finally, a more diverse sample in other contexts could help to corroborate the generalizability of our findings. However, the data collection occurred at an extraordinary time, and it is a challenge to know if these results could be replicated in another context.

In summary, economic threat derived from COVID-19 pandemic (in its first stages) is related to an increase in prosocial and conflict responses—a greater intolerance towards economic inequality and a greater involvement in collective actions to reduce inequalities. In this process, the activation of politicized identities (e.g., classic identities, working class; and the new 99%) and interdependent self-construal play a key role. This can lead to a stronger bond with others and a greater awareness of the needs of others, which can allow us to jointly face multiple challenges in our societies.

Footnotes

1. All pre-registered measures are translated into English in the Supplementary Material.

2. We introduced political orientation to control for the existing overlap between politicized identification and political ideology (Moreira et al., 2018). Further, we added subjective economic status (SES) as a covariate to control for the structural aspect of class in the participants. SES, age and sex are important predictors of the importance that people place on different types of identities within their self-concepts (Easterbrook et al., 2020), and are related to our criterion variables (García-Sánchez et al., 2020) so we included them to adjust for potential background influences.

3. We did not prerregister that collective economic threat will increase collective action intentions through the activation of the working class identification due to the results of Study 1. However, we conducted this exploratory analysis because it is theoretically relevant. In addition, we wanted to explore the interdependent self-construal as a mediator of collective actions focused on the community.

4. We have decided to include the models in parallel instead of simple ones to simplify the presentation. The results in parallel models were similar to simple models.

Supplementary Materials

pertaining to

Fighting Inequalities in Times of Pandemic: The Role of the Politicized Identities and Interdependent Self-Construal in Coping with Economic Threat

This section contains the supplementary material in addition to the Chapter 4

(1) Specifically, measures, hypotheses and analyses of Studies 1-3 that have been discarded to facilitate understanding from the original manuscript for being inconsistent.

Study 1: Measures (e.g., health threat perception; humanity identification; orientation to social dominance; justification to economic system) and descriptive statistics and correlation (Table S1).

Study 2-3: Measures (e.g., collective efficacy; emotions; Community collective actions), hypothesis discarded and parallel mediation analyses.

(2) In the final section of this document all the measurement materials appear, including the items used for each variable.

All materials are available at the following OSF link:

https://osf.io/e3hk6/?view_only=92ecabf44f4c47e6b727180bc418b45f

(1) DESCRIPTION OF ADDITIONAL MEASURES AND RESULTS

Study 1

Measures

Here we discuss measures that were included in the first study that are not described in the main text.

***Health threat perception*.**

We translated and adapted the Financial Threat Scale (FTS) (Marjanovic et al., 2013) to the context of the health threat caused by the coronavirus pandemic. The scale is made up of five items with a Likert scale from 1 to 5. We measured health threat perception. On the one hand, we measured the personal threat with five items (e.g., "How much uncertainty do you feel about your health?*",* α = .88), and on the other hand, the collective threat with three items (e.g., "How worried are you about the health situation in Spain?", α = .84).

Humanity identification.

First, we defined humanity identity "The term humanity comes from a Latin word related to the nature of the human race. It serves to mention the set of human beings that inhabit the planet". After, we measured, with a Likert scale (1 = Not at all; 7 = Very much) to what extent did participants identify with humanity (α = .89). We measured humanity identification with the centrality and solidarity items of Leach et al., (2008) scale adapted to humanity identity. Seven items made up the measured; three captured the idea of centrality (e.g., "The fact of being part of humanity is an important part of my identity"), and three more captured the idea of solidarity (e.g., "I feel a bond with humanity"). In addition, we included a general item (e.g., "I identify with (in-group)").

Orientation to social dominance.

We used the Social Dominance Orientation scale (SDO) (Pratto et al., 1994) translated into Spanish. The scale consisted of sixteen items (Alpha = .82) formed by two main components; Group dominance (α = .72) (e.g., "*The value of some groups of people is greater than that of others*") and Opposition to equality (Alpha = .84) (e.g., "We should do our best to equalize the conditions for different groups"), with a Likert scale (1 = Totally disagree; 7 = Totally agree).

Justification of the economic system.

To measure the general ideological tendency to legitimize economic inequality we used a reduced version of the original Economic System Justification scale (ESJ, Jost & Thompson, 2000) adapted and validated into Spanish (Jaume et al., 2012). The scale consisted of seven items ($\alpha = .79$) (e.g., "If people work hard, they almost always get what they want") with a Likert scale (1 = Totally disagree; 7 = Totally agree).

Results

A summary of the descriptive statistics and correlation between the variables of our Study 1 is presented in Table S1.

Table S1. Descriptive statistics and bivariate correlations between the variables measured in Study 1.

	CET	IET	CHT	IHT	WC Id.	99% Id.	H id.	Inter S-C	Intol EI	Coll actions	OSD	JES
CET	4.15(0.81)	.21**	.47**	.29**	.31**	.17**	.01	.16**	.21**	.16**	-.07	.01
IET		3.03(1.07)	.10	.09	.01	.01	-.08	-.07	.04	.02	.12*	.07
CHT			3.97(0.84)	.46**	.25**	.14*	.12*	.10*	.17**	.19**	-.07	.01
IHT				2.85(0.93)	.19**	.12*	.10	.12*	-.02	.01	.08	.17**
WC Id.					5.97(1.17)	.25**	.21**	.09	.32**	.31**	-.20**	-.14*
99% Id.						5.09(1.79)	.16**	.01	.23**	.26**	-.11*	-.09
H id.							6.03(1.16)	.20	.07	.11*	-.21**	-.03
Inter S-C								3.12(0.47)	.14**	.18**	-.14**	-.18**
Intol EC									5.90(1.00)	.53**	-.54**	-.39**
Coll actions										4.88(1.40)	-.45**	-.42**
OSD											2.07(0.77)	.44**
JES												2.40(0.74)

Note: * $p \leq 0.05$; ** $p \leq 0.01$; C*ET*., Collective Economic Threat; *IET*., Individual Economic Threat; *CHT*., Collective Health Threat; *IHT*., Individual Health Threat; *WC Id*., Working class identification; *99% id*., 99% identification; *H id*., Humanity identification; *Inter. S-C*., Interdependent Self-Construal; *Intol EC*., Intolerance towards Economic Inequality; *Coll actions*., Collective actions; *OSD*., Orientation to Social Dominance; *JES*., Justification of Economic System. Diagonal shows mean of the participants' score in the scale and standard deviation in brackets.

Study 2 & 3

Pre-registered hypothesis discarded:

Hypothesis 3. We predicted two indirect effects in parallel. The relation between the collective economic threat and the community collective actions are mediated, in the one hand, by the levels of identification with the identity of the working class, and on the other hand, by the interdependent self-construal. In the sense that the perception of economic collective threat because of COVID-19 will lead participants to identity more strongly with the working class and to show more interdependent self-construal, and both will lead to increase the willingness to participate in community collective actions.

Hypothesis 4, 5 y 6. We predicted a significant mean difference on the participant's perception of illusion, hope and indignation between the first and second waves of pandemic. We expected that the emotions of illusion and hope that the participants remember having felt in the first wave of the pandemic will be significantly greater that the emotions of illusion and hope that participants felt in the second wave of the pandemic. Also, the emotions of indignation that the participants remember having felt in the first wave of the pandemic will be significantly lower than the emotions of indignation that participants felt in the second one.

Hypothesis 7. We predicted a significant mean difference of collective efficacy between the first and second waves of pandemic. We expected that the collective efficacy that the participants remember having perceived in the first wave of the pandemic will be significantly greater than the collective efficacy that the participants perceived in the second one.

Measures

In the same way as in Study 1, some measures and results did not appear in the main text. Here we discuss measures that were included in the Study 2-3 that are not described in the main text

Collective efficacy

We used four items translated into Spanish (Stolleberg et al., 2015) (e.g., "Together, the citizens, we are stronger"). We measured in two different ways. First, we asked participants to recall the first wave of the pandemic (Study 2: $\alpha = .76$; Study 3: $\alpha =$

.82) and second, we asked how they perceive it in the current wave (Study 2: α = .82; Study 3: α = .84).

Emotions

In addition, we included three items to measure hope ("Hope that as a society a change of course will be considered") (Study 2: r = .18 p = .005; Study 3: r = .211, p < .001), illusion ("Illusion that things could change") (Study 2: $r = .147$, $p = .021$; Study 3: $r = .133$, $p < .01$) and indignation ("Indignation and the impact of the pandemic because the pandemic exacerbates economic inequality") (Study 2: $r = .645$, $p < .001$; Study 3: $r = .618$, $p < .001$). Following the same logic than in the previous measure, we asked participants to recall the emotions that they experienced during the first wave of pandemic, and second one.

Community collective actions

We also measured community collective actions with four items (e.g. It would participate in neighbourhood groups that have been formed to help with purchases for the elderly and the population at risk; Study 2: α = .88; Study 3: α = .87).

Results

Some results do not appear in the main manuscript due to facilitate of understanding or inconsistent results.

Individual and collective economic threat antecedents

In Study 1, our results showed that the collective economic threat positively predicted both intolerance toward economic inequality F (6, 355) = 16.68; $p < .001$, $\beta = .24$, $p < .001$ and collective actions F (6, 355) = 35.15; $p < .001$, $\beta = .15$, $p < .001$. On the contrary, the individual economic threat did not predict intolerance towards economic inequality $\beta = -.03$, $p = .542$, neither collective actions $\beta = .06$, $p = .185$. Further, following the same plan analysis, we introduced the working class and the 99% identification and the interdependence self-construal as criterion variables. Results showed that the collective economic threat positively predicted working class identification F (6, 347) = 12.37; $p < .001$, $\beta = .29$, $p < .001$, 99% identification F (6, 331) = 2.55; $p = .020$, $\beta = .13$, $p = .021$ and interdependence self-construal F (6, 355) = 10.72; $p < .001$, $\beta = .13$, $p < .01$. For these reasons, we carried out the parallel mediation analysis to test the role of 99% identity, working class identity and interdependent self-construal as potential mediations

between collective economic threat and intolerance towards economic inequality and collective actions. Given these results in Study 1, we focus only on collective threat and we did not pre-register the individual economic threat in the subsequent studies.

Social identity and self-construal as mediators between collective economic threat and community collective actions

Then, we carried out parallel mediation analyses with PROCESS (model 4; Hayes, 2013) to test the role of 99% identity (M1), working class identity (M2) and the interdependent self-construal (M3) as potential mediators of the relationships between collective economic threat (X) and the community collective action (Y). We used 5,000 bootstrap samples to estimate bias-corrected standard errors and 95% percentile confidence intervals for the indirect effects. We included the covariates: sex, age, political orientation and subjective economic status.

In Study 2, neither the total effect of collective economic threat on community collective actions (b = 0.14, 95% CI [-0.09, 0.36]; p = .237), nor the direct effect (b = 0.06, 95% CI [-0.17 0.29]; p = .613) were significant. The indirect effects via the working class identity (b = 0.03, 95% CI [-0.01,0.10]), and 99% identity (b = 0.04, 95% CI [-.01,0.04]) were not significant. Otherwise, the indirect effect via interdependent self-construal was significant (b = 0.04, 95% CI [0.01,0.10]).

In Study 3, we found that the total effect of collective economic threat on community collective actions was significant (b = 0.24, 95% CI [0.08, 0.40]; p = .003), also the direct effect (b = 0.22, 95% CI [0.05, 0.38]; p = .009). Neither the indirect effects via the 99% identity (b = -0.01, 95% CI [-0.02,0.24]), nor the indirect effect via interdependent self-construal (b = -0.01, 95% CI [-0.02,0.02]) were significant. Otherwise, the indirect effect via working class identity was significant (b = 0.03, 95% CI [0.01,0.08]).

Differences on the perception of emotions and collective efficacy between the first and second wave of pandemic

In Study 2, we conducted a t-test to explore possible differences on the perception of emotions (illusion, hope and indignation) as well as on collective efficacy over time. The results showed significant differences between pandemic waves on illusion, $t(244)$ = 12.764, $p < .001$, d = 1.07; hope, $t(244)$ = 13.74, $p < .001$, d = 1.12; and indignation,

$t(244) = -7.84$, $p < .001$, $d = .43$). In such a way that participants perceived in the first pandemic wave more illusion ($M = 5.20$; $SD = 1.81$) and hope ($M = 4.93$; $SD = 1.78$) but lower indignation ($M = 5.31$; $SD = 1.72$) that in the second pandemic wave (illusion: $M = 3.28$; $SD = 1.79$; hope: $M = 2.97$; $SD = 1.71$; indignation: $M = 5.98$; $SD = 1.36$). However, differences on perceived collective efficacy between the first ($M = 5.32$; $SD = 1.30$) and the second pandemic waves ($M = 5.15$; $SD = 1.50$) were not significant, $t(244) = 1.907$, $p = .058$, $d = .121$).

The results of Study 3 showed significant differences between pandemic waves on illusion, $t(405) = 17.28$, $p < .001$, $d = 1.116$; hope, $t(405) = 18.68$, $p < .001$, $d = 1.17$; indignation, $t(404) = -8.52$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.38$; and collective efficacy $t(404) = 5.76$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.30$. In such a way that participants perceived in the first pandemic wave more illusion ($M = 5.27$; $SD = 1.67$) and hope ($M = 5.00$; $SD = 1.80$) but less indignation ($M = 5.36$; $SD = 1.64$) that in the second pandemic wave (illusion: $M = 3.44$; $SD = 1.61$; hope: $M = 2.99$; $SD = 1.64$; indignation: $M = 5.93$; $SD = 1.36$). Finally, the means of perceived collective efficacy in the first wave ($M = 5.45$; $SD = 1.25$), was higher than in the second wave ($M = 5.04$; $SD = 1.52$), $t(404) = 5.761$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.295$).

(2) MEASURAMENT MATERIALS

Main variables items

Individual Economic Threat

Think about the current economic situation caused by the coronavirus (COVID-19), that is, how the coronavirus influences people when it comes to coping with their own expenses or their economic/financial position. Please indicate your response to the following statements

Please indicate how you feel about your current financial situation. Please indicate your answer on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is "Not at all" and 5 is "Very/Totally"

- How much uncertainty do you feel about your financial situation?
- Do you feel at risk because of your economic situation?
- Do you feel threatened by your economic situation?
- How concerned are you about your financial situation?
- How often do you think about your financial situation?

Collective Economic Threat

Now you will have to indicate how you feel about the economic situation in Spain. Think about your family environment, friends, neighbors and acquaintances. Please indicate your answer on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is "Not at all" and 5 is "Very/Totally"

- How much uncertainty do you feel about the economic situation in Spain?
- How concerned are you about the economic situation in Spain?
- How often do you think about the economic situation in Spain?

Group identification

Next, we will ask you a series of questions about different social groups (99%, working class). Before proceeding to complete them, please read carefully the following information about each of the groups:

- The term 99% vindicates the majority of the world's population (the 99%) against a very small percentage (1%) that owns half of the planet's wealth (if wealth were a cake divided in two, the 1% richest gets one half while the other corresponds to 99% of the world's inhabitants)
- The term working class designates the group of workers who work for a salary in opposition to the ruling class that owns the majority of the property of economic resources.

In relation to the above information, indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statements. Please indicate your answer on a scale of 1 to 7 to what extent you feel identified with the group in each column, where 1 is "totally disagree" and 7 is "totally agree"

- I identify with the 99%/working class.
- I feel connected to the 99%/working class.
- I feel in solidarity with the 99%/working class.
- I feel committed to the 99%/working class.
- I often think about the fact that I am part of the 99%/working class.
- It is an important part of my identity to be part of the 99%/working class.
- An important part of how I see myself is being part of the 99%/working class.

Self-Construal Scale

Below are some statements that someone might use to try to describe you. Some of the statements will probably not describe you well, while others will describe you better. Please check the corresponding number to indicate how well or poorly the phrase describes you. For example, if the statement does not describe you at all, then mark 1. If the statement describes you exactly, then mark 5.

- I prefer to be self-sufficient rather than depend on others
- I try not to depend on other people
- I prefer to turn to other people for help rather than rely solely on myself
- It is important for me to act as an independent person
- I consider that my happiness is independent of the happiness of my friends and family
- It is important for me to be an accepted member of both my family and my group of friends.
- I usually feel a great sense of pride when someone in my family achieves a significant achievement.
- When I think of myself, I often think of my close friends and family.
- I am a unique individual
- Being a unique individual is important to me
- I am a unique person, separate from others
- I enjoy being unique and different from others in many ways
- I would sacrifice my own interest for the benefit of my group
- My relationships with others are more important than my personal achievements
- I will stay in my group if they need me, even when I am not happy with the group
- I stay with my group even despite the difficulties

Intolerance towards Economic Inequality

Being 1 "Totally disagree" and 7 "Totally agree", to what extent would you rate the following statements?

- The consequences of economic inequality have been greatly exaggerated
- Economic inequality is causing many of the problems in Spain
- I am very concerned about the degree of inequality that exists in Spain

- Economic inequality is not a problem
- We must do everything possible to reduce the economic inequality that exists in Spain today

Collective Actions

Please check below how likely you would be to participate in actions to reduce economic inequality in the current context. Being 1 "Never" and 7 "very often", to what extent would you be willing to carry out the following actions?

- I would vote for political parties whose priority is to establish a special tax on large fortunes to use the proceeds for those who need it most.
- I would promote a campaign to encourage Congress to approve a universal basic income (financial subsidy) for all residents of Spain.
- I would donate money to associations that organize initiatives aimed at financially supporting people in situations of greater vulnerability (e.g., resistance boxes).
- I would join a party, union or political organization against economic inequality.
- I would participate in union activities or political groups that defend that the workers affected by dismissal or ERTES receive 100% of their salary.
- I would participate in peaceful demonstrations that demand the expropriation and nationalization of all private health companies to improve health care for the entire population.
- I would participate in non-violent civil disobedience actions to demand that maximum prices be set for basic necessities (e.g., food, hygiene).
- I would distribute political material (flyers, posters, newspapers) that promoted the distribution of wealth.
- I would boycott products that maintain economic inequality.
- I would sign petitions in favor of economic redistribution.
- Would be active in movements against economic inequality

Exploratory variables items

Health Individual Threat

Now, think about the current health situation caused by the coronavirus (COVID-19), that is, how the coronavirus influences people's health (contagion, disease...).

Please indicate how you feel about your current health. Please indicate your answer on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is "Not at all" and 5 is "Very/Totally"

- How much uncertainty do you feel about your health?
- Do you feel your health is at risk?
- Do you feel threatened by your health?
- How concerned are you about your health?
- How often do you think about your health?

Group identification

Next, we will ask you a series of questions about different social groups (humanity). Before proceeding to complete them, please read carefully the following information about each of the groups:

- The term humanity comes from a Latin word related to the nature of the human race. It serves to mention the group of human beings that inhabit the planet.

Collective Health Threat

Now, you will have to indicate how you feel about the current health situation in Spain. Think about your family environment, friends, neighbors and acquaintances. Please indicate your answer on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is "Not at all" and 5 is "Very/Totally"

- How much uncertainty do you feel about the health situation in Spain?
- How concerned are you about the health situation in Spain?
- How often do you think about the health situation in Spain?

Social Dominance Orientation

Being 1 "Totally disagree" and 7 "Totally agree", to what extent would you rate the following statements?

- Some groups of people are worth more than others
- We should do everything possible to level the playing field for the different groups
- Sometimes it is necessary to use force against other groups to get what your group wants.

- If certain groups of people held their ground, we would have fewer problems.
- We would have fewer problems if we treated different groups equally.
- To get ahead in life, it is sometimes necessary to step over other groups of people.
- No one group of people should dominate in society.
- Equality between groups of people should be our ideal.
- All groups of people should have equal opportunities in life.
- Social equality must be increased.
- The higher groups of people should dominate the lower groups.
- It is probably a good thing that certain groups are in a higher position and others in a lower position.
- We must fight to achieve more equal income for all.
- Sometimes some groups of people must stay in their position.
- It would be desirable for all groups to be equal.
- The lower groups should stay in their position

Economic System Justification

Next, a series of statements about our society will appear. Please mark the number that you think is most convenient to indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. Being 1 "Totally disagree" and 5 "Totally agree", to what extent would you rate the following statements?

- If people work hard, they almost always get what they want.
- Most of the people who do not progress in our society should not blame the system: they are the only ones to blame.
- The gap between social classes reflects differences in the natural order of things.
- The economic position of people is a product of their achievements.
- If someone tries hard enough, they can move up the social ladder.
- There are many people who are poor because they don't like to work.
- It is good to have an economic system that rewards those who make an effort.

Community Collective Actions

- I would participate in neighborhood groups that have been formed to help the elderly or the population at risk with purchases.
- I would participate in initiatives aimed at collecting funds (solidarity piggy banks or resistance boxes) to financially support the vulnerable population (people affected by ERTE, in an irregular situation, with minors or dependents in their care, etc.).
- I would participate in solidarity actions (such as clothing collection, food bank, etc.) aimed at providing resources for people with economic difficulties.

Collective Efficacy

Next, we are going to ask you to remember and try to think about the thoughts you had during the first wave of the pandemic (in confinement: between the months of March and May) and compare them with what you think today, during the second wave of the pandemic. Show your level of agreement or disagreement with each of the following statements, from 1, which is totally disagree, to 7, which is totally agree.

Before:

- Together, citizens, we are stronger
- We citizens can achieve things collectively that cannot be achieved individually
- No one should think that you cannot count on us, the citizens

After:

- Together, citizens, we are stronger
- We citizens can achieve things collectively that cannot be achieved individually
- No one should think that you cannot count on us, the citizens

Emotions

Next, we ask you to remember and try to think about how you felt during the first wave of the pandemic (in lockdown: between the months of March and May) and compare it with how you feel today, during the second wave. of the pandemic. Show your level of agreement or disagreement with each of the following statements, from 1, which is totally disagree, to 7, which is totally agree.

Before:

- Illusion, that things could change
- Hope, that as a society we would consider a change of course
- Indignation, before the impact of the pandemic because the pandemic exacerbates economic inequality

After:

- Illusion, that things could change
- Hope, that as a society we would consider a change of course
- Indignation, before the impact of the pandemic because the pandemic exacerbates economic inequality

Chapter 5

Confronting and/or Maintaining Economic Inequality: A Cross-Country Analysis of Politicised Identification and Collective Narcissism

Confronting and/or Maintaining Economic Inequality: A Cross-Country Analysis of Politicised Identification and Collective Narcissism

Ángel del Fresno-Díaz[1], Rebekka Kesberg[2], Guillermo B. Willis[1], Soledad de Lemus[1] & Matthew J. Easterbrook[3]

[1] University of Granada

[2] University of Amsterdam

[3] University of Sussex

Abstract

Economic inequality has increased, giving rise to responsive social movements (e.g., Occupy Wall Street or the Yellow Vests). Recognising the unjust social positioning of economic elites, or the 1%, has generated various identity-driven expressions that amplify economic grievances, and/or attribute one's disadvantage to other groups. Hence, we conducted four studies using representative samples from the UK ($N_{Study1a}$ = 1,711 & $N_{Study2a}$ = 1,215) and Spain ($N_{Study1b}$ = 412 & $N_{Study2b}$ = 391) to analyse the predictive role of specific politicised identities regarding economic inequality (e.g., common people, 99% and working-class) and national group processes (i.e., national identity and collective narcissism), on attitudes towards inequalities, and collective actions confronting or maintaining inequality. The results indicated that identification with common people was associated with greater inequality intolerance (Studies 1a, 1b, and 2a) and pro-change collective actions (Studies 1a and 1b). However, common people identification was positively associated with collective action intentions to maintain the status quo in Study 2b. Further, national collective narcissism has a negative effect on inequality intolerance, pro-change collective actions and a positive effect on collective action intentions to maintain the status quo, whereas wealth-based identities (i.e., 99% and working class) have the opposite effect to confront inequalities. These findings highlight the pernicious effects of collective narcissism and the mobilizing effect of identifying with wealth-based groups in promoting social change. As well as they unveil the inconsistent role of identification with common people and social change in two different cultural contexts.

Keywords: common people, collective narcissism, economic inequality, collective actions, politicized identity

Introduction

The rise of economic inequality in recent decades has had major consequences for societies worldwide (OECD, 2021). This has given impetus to social movements since 2011 such as Occupy Wall Street or the indignados movement in Spain, culminating in the more recent French "yellow vest" protests in 2018. These movements have embraced various expressions of identity (e.g., the common people or the 99%) bringing together all those citizens who feel in grievance against the political and economic elites (Gerbaudo, 2022; Jetten et al., 2020). At times, these grievances have meant a resurgence of "the national" (Gerbaudo, 2022). The question is to what extent these wealth and national-based group processes are associated to social change or maintaining the status quo.

While individuals may belong to multiple social groups, people's identification with certain groups depends on the situation or context (Turner et al., 1987). The salience of economic inequalities can create distinct wealth-based groups, ultimately promoting an "us versus them" mentality (Jetten et al., 2017, 2021). Furthermore, when groups feel that they are unfairly disadvantaged compared to others, they may develop a stronger sense of collective identity based on their shared experience of inequality (van Stekelenburg & Klandermans, 2013) but also a feeling of resentment and entitlement recognition (Golec de Zavala & Keenan, 2021). This can lead to organizing collective actions or protests that seek to redress, or maintain, these inequalities.

The present research focuses on the association between specific social identities—especially those politicized regarding economic inequality—attitudes towards inequalities, and behavioural intentions to redress or maintain inequality. Specifically, we analyse politicized identities based on wealth, rooted in traditional social classes (i.e., working class), as well as common people, and those promoted in specific contexts (e.g., 99%; Occupy Wall Street; populist movements). We examine the associations of these wealth-based identities with attitudes towards inequalities and willingness to engage in collective action across two studies including representative samples from two different contexts: the UK and Spain. Moreover, we compare those relations with the impact of national identification and collective narcissism (i.e., the tendency to exaggerate the importance of a group; Golec de Zavala et al., 2009 on collective action. We thus extend previous research by including multiple social identities which emerged in recent social

movements (e.g., yellow vest, Occupy Wall Street) and by exploring whether and how they foster a willingness to fight against inequality or to act in favour of the status quo.

The role of identity in promoting social change against economic inequality: common people, 99% and working class

Wealth is a relevant category for understanding the social world, and perceiving a division between those who have and those who do not can encourage categorizations based on wealth: “us” versus “them” or the “haves” and the “have nots” (Jetten et al., 2017, 2021). From a historical perspective, the working class has been a driving force behind the class struggle and political movements aimed at reducing economic inequality (Marx & Engels, 1848/2004; Easterbrook et al., 2020; Manstead, 2018). More recently, movements like Occupy Wall Street have promoted alternative, novel politicized identities such as “the 99%, which unite people around a shared goal of reducing economic inequality (Stiglitz, 2012). Research has shown that, while identifying with a middle-class identity is not associated with intolerance to inequality, identifying with the 99% or with the working-class are associated with inequality intolerance and intending to engage in actions to confront it (del Fresno-Díaz et al., 2023).

While both the 99% and working-class identities are politicized and associated with intolerance of inequality and collective action intentions, the 99% offer a more inclusive identity. An even broader identity might be the identity of the "common people”, which is frequently evoked in populist communication (Hameleers et al., 2021). As such, the term “common people” encompasses a broad category of individuals who share a collective frustration resulting from the concentration of wealth and power in the hands of a” corrupt elite” (Mudde, 2004). Common people may not be a direct example of a wealth-based identity, but it has similarities to the 99% in that they both are based on shared economic grievances (e.g., common people vs. economic elites). For example, “while ordinary people around the world suffer from economic impacts, billionaires have seen their fortunes expand” (Inequality.org, 2021), or “the 1% of the population have what 99% need” (Stiglitz, 2012). This intergroup dynamic was exemplified by movements like the Yellow Vest Movement (Jetten et al., 2020). The relative deprivation derived from the comparison between “people” and “elite”—based on a populist worldview—and shared politicized identification of “yellow vests” was associated with the protest (Adam-Troian et al., 2021; Lüders et al., 2021).

Because there has been limited research on the correlates of identifying with common people in the context of economic inequality, we measure common people as identity as well as the identification with the 99% and working class. When income and wealth differences become more visible and prominent, unfair, and permeable group boundaries determine whether inequality is challenged (Jetten et al., 2021). Identification with 99%, of working-class or common people may allow people to become more aware of shared group grievances and engage as conscious members in power struggle on behalf of their group (Klandermans, 2014; Simon & Klandermans, 2001). Thus, the politicized identity will explain a greater intolerance to inequality and a greater willingness to protest, in addition to other variables such as anger, perception of injustice, or group efficacy (SIMCA model, van Zomeren et al., 2008).

Based on these considerations, our first research aim is to understand the relationship between the three identities—the common people, 99%, and working-class identities—and willingness to redress economic inequality.

Beyond national identity: national collective narcissism promoting the maintenance of economic inequality

The rise of populism due to economic uncertainty in a more polarized Europe fosters the rise of progressive movements, but also reactionary ones (Gozgor, 2022; Muis & Immerzeel, 2017). Although the focus of collective action research has been on analysing protests that aim to bring about changes in existing systems of inequality, specifically referring to progressive movements that support disadvantaged groups (Thomas et al., 2020), a positive relationship between identifying with one's group and supporting a movement that benefits it is theoretically consistent for both groups who face structural disadvantages and those who are advantaged. Thus, collective action perspectives can also explain reactionary social movements that aims to maintain the economic status quo (Jost et al., 2017; Marinthe et al., 2022; Osborne et al., 2019).

Similar to identification with the "common people", which is considered a reaction to the threat posed by corrupt elites, the rise of populism in the UK or France has promoted a stronger national identity as a reaction to economic uncertainty (Jay et al., 2019). The economic threat has been found to boost identification with national identities, which can have positive effects such as promoting collective action on behalf of the group interests (Fritsche et al., 2017). However, there may also be negative consequences

associated with national collective identity. The division between groups ("us" versus "them") can also be attributed to nationalism, where the native population of a country feels aggrieved due to the economic downturn. The reactionary social movements promoted by conservative groups are characterized by anti-minority ideologies and are against policies that aim to redistribute wealth (e.g., against lowering the tax burden for wealthy people and companies).

Right-wing movements imply protecting and reinforcing the image and positive status of the national group at all costs (Gronfeld et al., 2022). Based on previous research (Marinthe et al., 2022), we distinguish collective narcissism—a belief in ingroup greatness that is contingent upon external recognition of one's group's worth (Golec de Zavala et al., 2009)—and national identification, which are sometimes opposing mechanisms in intragroup and intergroup processes (Cichocka & Cislak, 2020; Marinthe et al., 2022). Research has highlighted the role of collective narcissism in supporting reactionary, pro-ingroup social movements, and in predicting weaker support for progressive movements. Collective narcissism concerning the national group has been associated with a lower willingness to participate in collective actions in favor of refugees (Górska et al., 2020), and greater support for Brexit to limit immigration (Golec de Zavala et al., 2017; Marchlewska et al., 2018). These relations do not hold when considering national identification (e.g., secure ingroup identification, Marchlewska et al., 2022), or when included as a covariate, the effect is stronger for collective narcissism.

Our second research question therefore aims to explore whether national identity and national collective narcissism—as different ways to identify with a national group (Cichocka & Cislak, 2020; Golec de Zavala et al., 2009)—can promote collective action to maintain the status quo, that is, maintaining economic inequality.

The Present Research

Our results involve a comparison between two societies Spain and the United Kingdom. The Gini coefficient of the UK stands at 0.35, which is higher than Spain's 0.32 (OECD, 2020a). Moreover, the income poverty rate is greater in Spain (.15) than UK (.12) (OECD, 2020b). We conducted four correlational studies, two in each country (i.e., UK and Spain). Given these circumstances, in Studies 1a and 1b, we explored the role of identification with common people and national identities (i.e., Spanish, and English

identities) alongside collective national narcissism and its relationship to intolerance towards inequality and the pro-change collective actions.

In both Spain and the UK, protest campaigns and urban occupations have emerged to change the inequalities (e.g., Occupy London in the UK and the "indignados" movement 15M in Spain). These movements are aligned with the European anti-austerity protests in 2010, with demands on issues of economic inequality and social justice (Peterson et al., 2015). The demands were in line with Occupy Wall Street in the United States, that is, the middle and working classes that are part of the "99%" or "common people" against the 1%. Through politicization, people identified with wealth-based politicized identities—either traditional (e.g., working-class identities; Marx & Engels, 1848/2004) or emerging (e.g., 99% Stiglitz, 2012; del Fresno-Díaz et al., 2023)—tend to act against inequality. Thus, beyond common people identity, these other politicized identities (working class and the 99%) might promote inequality confrontation. These aspects were examined in Studies 2a and 2b.

We expected to find that identification with the working class, the 99%, and/or the common people would be positively associated with intolerance towards economic inequality and collective action intentions to confront it. However, there is a lack of evidence concerning the impact of collective narcissism and identification with the common people on promoting or opposing economic inequality. To capture system-stabilizing effects, we include specific measures of collective actions that seek to maintain the status quo. Based on the literature mentioned (e.g., support for reactionary movements (Marinthe et al., 2022) and results of Studies 1a and 1b, we expected to find that national collective narcissism is negatively associated with intolerance towards inequality and collective action intentions to confront inequality, yet positively correlate with collective action intentions to maintain status quo.

Studies 1a & 1b

In Studies 1a and 1b, we examined two group-based antecedents of attitudes toward economic inequality and collective action. Specifically, we examined the role of identification with the common people and national collective narcissism. The results were compared between the United Kingdom (Study 1a) and Spain (Study 1b).

We introduce age, gender, and educational level as covariates to control for their impact on our criterion variables (e.g., perceptions and beliefs of inequality, García-

Sánchez et al., 2020), and because they are associated with the importance that people place on different types of identities within their self-concepts (Easterbrook et al., 2020).

Method

Participants and procedure

We used the existing data collected by NORFACE UNDPOLAR consortium (https://www.norface.net/project/undpolar/). The overall sample consists of 11,217 respondents who were 18+ years old and living in Belgium (1,215), Denmark (1,215), France (1,201), Greece (1,213), Hungary (1,215), Netherlands (1,202), Poland (1,529), Spain (1,215), or the UK (1,212). For the purposes of this study, we used the sample collected in Spain and the United Kingdom.

The sample from the United Kingdom (Study 1a) consisted of a first pilot study (n = 499) and the study belonging to the first wave of data collection (n = 1,212). We pooled the data, resulting in a total main sample of N = 1,711 (1,007 women, 696 men, 2 non- binary and 6 “prefer not to say”) aged between 18 and 91 years (M = 45.57; SD = 16.44). The main Spanish sample (Study 1b) consisted of 1,215 (617 women, 594 men, 1 non-binary, and 3 participants who identified as “other”) aged between 16 and 93 years (M = 48.90; SD = 14.32).

We conducted a sensitivity analysis using G*Power (Faul et al., 2009) to determine the smallest effect size the current studies could detect. The results showed that with a sample size (N_{UK} = 1,711; N_{Spain} = 1,215), with $\alpha = 0.05$ and power = 0.80, the minimum effects size that we could detect for a multiple regression analysis with five predictors was (UK = $f^2 = 0.01$ and Spain = $f^2 = 0.02$).

Measures

We use the same measures for both Studies 1a (UK) and 1b (Spain). The data belongs to a large research project (https://www.norface.net/project/undpolar/), and we only report the variables of interest for our research questions. Complete information about the survey can be found at (https://osf.io/d4pba/?view_only=f9d067cb00fc46a48def07d3bd09a896).

Group identification. Group identification with the common people was measured (i.e., I identify with the common people, as a group) and national identity (i.e.,

I identify with the United Kingdom/Spain) on a Likert scale (1 = Strongly disagree; 5 = Strongly agree)[1]. We used one item for each identity (Leach et al., 2008; Postmes et al., 2013).

Collective narcissism. Collective narcissism of national identity was measured using three items (e.g., People from the UK/Spain deserve special treatment, UK: ω = .80, ω = .83) from the short version of Collective Narcissism Scale (Golec de Zavala et al., 2009) on a Likert scale (1 = Strongly disagree; 5 = Strongly agree).

(In)tolerance towards economic inequality. Measured with one item (i.e., Incomes should be made more equal… We need larger income differences; Standard survey question, ISSP) on a Likert scale from 1 to 10.

Pro-change collective actions. Collective action was measured using five items (e.g., During the last 12 months, have you done any of the following… Contacted a politician, government, or local government official? UK: ω = .80; Spain: ω = .74)**.** Participants were asked if they had carried out any of these actions to improve things in the United Kingdom/Spain or help prevent things from going wrong in the past 12 months.

Sociodemographic measures. Sociodemographic data like gender, age, and level of education were measured. The gender was measured "Are you… 1 = woman, 2 = man, 3 = Prefer not to say). The educational level in the United Kingdom (0 = No formal qualifications; 1 = GCSE/O-levels/CSE, or NVQ/SVQ Level 1 or 2, or City and Guilds Level 1 or 2/Craft/Intermediate, or GNVQ/GSVQ Foundation; 2 = A-levels, or NVQ/SVQ Level 3, or City and Guilds Level 3/Advanced/Final, or GNVQ/GSVQ Advanced Level, or equivalent; 3 = NVQ/SVQ Level 4 or 5, or City and Guilds Level 4/Full Technological, or equivalent; 4 = Higher National Certificate, Higher National Diploma, Foundation Degree; 5 = Undergraduate degree (BA/BSC/other); 6 = Graduate degree (MA/MSc/MPhil/other); 7 = Post-graduate diploma or certificate (e.g., PGCE); 8 = Doctoral degree (PhD)) and Spain (0 = No formal qualifications; 1 = Less than 5 years of schooling; 2 = Primary education (LOGSE primary Education, 5th grade of EGB); 3 = Secondary education; 4 = Degree or undergraduate level; 5 = Official university master's degree; 6 = Doctorate) was analysed as a continuous variable.

Analyses Plan

To address our research questions of whether common people identity is related to redressing economic inequality, while national identity and collective narcissism are not, we initially examined the identification with common people, collective narcissism in relation to national identity, identification with the nation, and their relationship with intolerance towards economic inequality and collective actions.

To achieve this, we first conducted a Pearson correlation analysis. Secondly, a stepwise regression analysis was performed. Specifically, we carried out two linear regression analysis with our main variables (each country). We introduced the covariates (age, gender, and level of education) in the first step, common people identity, national identity, and the collective narcissism[2] as predictor variables in the second step, and intolerance toward inequality and collective action as the criterion variables.

Results

As shown in Table 5.1, identification with common people was positively related to inequality intolerance and pro-change collective actions, whereas collective narcissism was negatively related to these variables in both countries.

Table 5.1

Descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) and bivariate correlations between the mean variables in Studies 1a and 1b.

	Study 1a UK N = 1,711 M (SD)	Study 1b Spain N = 1,215 M (SD)	Common id.	National id.	Collective narcissism	Intolerance towards EI	Pro-change Collective action
Common id.	3.64(1.16)	3.89(1.25)	-	.09**	-.05	.19**	.21**
National id.	3.80(1.27)	3.90(1.45)	-.01	-	.23**	-.10**	-.04
Collective narcissism	2.58(.97)	3.25(.99)	-.01	.46**	-	-.22**	-.11**
Intolerance towards EI	6.84(2.31)	7.08(2.64)	.24**	-.12**	-.17**	-	.08**
Collective action	1.38(.36)	1.55(.44)	.22**	-.02	-.07*	.06*	-

Note: * $p \leq 0.05$; ** $p \leq 0.01$; *Id*., Identification; *EI*., Economic Inequality. The results of UK sample are below the diagonal and the results of Spanish sample are above the diagonal.

Second, regression analyses showed that when age, gender and education were controlled for, identification with common people was positively associated with intolerance towards economic inequality and pro-change collective actions in Spain

(intolerance: β = .23, p <.001; collective actions: : β = .21, p <.001) and the United Kingdom (intolerance: β = .14, p <.001; collective actions: β = .20, p <.001). Conversely, collective narcissism was negatively associated with intolerance in both samples (UK: β = -.15, p <.001; Spain: β = -.19, p <.001), and weakly with pro-change collective actions only in Spain (β = -.08, p <.01). Finally, national identity was negatively and weakly associated with pro-change collective actions only in the UK (β = -.05, p <.01). Thus, whereas the results for common people identity are common in both countries, they diverge in the importance of collective narcissism and national identity in respect to pro-change collective actions (Table 5.2).

Table 5.2

Linear regression analysis of intolerance towards economic inequality and collective actions in the United Kingdom and Spain (Studies 1a and 1b).

	Study 1a						**Study 1b**					
	UK (N = 1,711)						**Spain (N = 1,215)**					
	Intolerance towards economic inequality						**Intolerance towards economic inequality**					
	Model 1a			***Model 1b***			***Model 2a***			***Model 2b***		
Predictor	**β**	**SE**	**CI**	**β**	**SE**	**CI**	**β**	**SE**	**CI**	**β**	**SE**	**CI**
Step 1												
Age	-.17**	.00	[-.03, -.02]	-.14**	.00	[-.03, -.01]	.03	.01	[-.01, .02]	.05	.01	[-.00, .02]
Gender	-.02	.11	[-.30, .14]	-.02	.11	[-.28, .14]	.02	.16	[-.23, .38]	.04	.15	[-.09, .50]
Level of education	-.02	.06	[-.16, .06]	-.07*	.06	[-27, .05]	.04	.06	[-.04, .21]	.01	.06	[-.10, .14]
Step 2												
Common people id.				.14**	.05	[.21, .41]				.23**	.06	[.37, .61]
National id.				-.10**	.06	[-.34, -.12]				-.03	.06	[-.18, .06]
Collective narcissism				-.15**	.06	[-.46, -.24]				-.19**	.09	[-.66, -.32]
R^2/R^2 *adjusted*	0.031/0.029			0.087/0.084			0.002/0.000			0.095/0.090		
F	17.942**			26.616**			.892			19.754**		

	Pro-change collective actions						Pro-change collective actions					
	Model 3a			***Model 3b***			***Model 4a***			***Model 4b***		
Predictor	**β**	**SE**	**CI**	**β**	**SE**	**CI**	**β**	**SE**	**CI**	**β**	**SE**	**CI**
Step 1												
Age	-.06**	.00	[-.00, -.00]	-.04	.00	[-.00, .01]	.01	.00	[-.00, .00]	.01	.00	[-.00, .00]
Gender	.05	.02	[-.00, .07]	.06*	.02	[.01, .07]	.03	.03	[-.02, .08]	.04	.03	[-.01, .09]
Level of education	.17**	.00	[.04, .08]	.17**	.01	[.04, .08]	.14**	.01	[.03, .07]	.12**	.01	[.02, .06]
Step 2												
Common people id.				.20**	.01	[.05, .09]				.21**	.01	[.05, .09]
National id.				-.05*	.01	[-.04, .00]				.02	.01	[-.01, .03]
Collective narcissism				-.02	.01	[-.03, .01]				-.08*	.01	[-.07, -.01]
R^2/R^2 *adjusted*	0.036/0.034			0.078/0.074			0.019/0.017			0.068/0.063		
F	20.612**			23.390**			7.395**			13.690**		

Note: * p ≤ 0.05; **p≤0.01; *CI*., confidence interval; SE., standard error; *Id*., Identification.

Discussion

Our results show a similar pattern in both countries with some differences. Identification with "common people" was associated with greater intolerance of economic inequality and pro-change collective actions in Spain and UK. That is, identifying with this group was associated with rejecting current levels of economic inequality and action to address it. It is important to acknowledge that identification with the common people was associated with rejecting inequality in both countries; however, there may be questions about which side of the ideological spectrum is politicized (Elchardus & Spruyt, 2016; Simon & Klandermans, 2001)

National collective narcissism and national identity had different effects in Spain and the UK. National collective narcissism was associated with less intolerance in both countries and not pro-change collective actions in Spain. In addition, national identity was associated with less intolerance of inequality and less pro-change collective action in the UK, but not in Spain. Therefore, both national identity and national collective narcissism can be precedents for not changing economic inequality. Specifically, collective narcissism shows a more consistent pattern in Spain. This is in line with the results suggesting that collective narcissism has a detrimental effect on social change over and above identity effects (Golec de Zavala et al., 2017; Marchlewska et al., 2018).

Studies 2a & 2b

In Studies 2a and 2b (https://osf.io/mp6wf/?view_only=1b96dcac96ff4acfbc002921b3e56262)[3], our aim was to confirm the role of common people's identity and national collective narcissism, as well as to extend this model by exploring other wealth-based politicized identities. We tested this by including working-class and 99%, to confirm whether the associations found with common people remain stable or if they lose their transformative potential. Additionally, we analysed whether the role of collective narcissism differs notably from that of national identity, based on the results found in Studies 1a and 1b.

In this way, we investigated group mechanisms that may differ in whether they are associated with social change or, on the contrary, maintain inequality. To capture this, in Studies 2a and 2b we used specific measures for collective action, to differentiate between those aimed to confronting economic inequality, and those aimed at maintaining it.

Method

Participants and procedure

The UK sample was collected by through the Prolific platform. The study was built on a Qualtrics web link and participation was rewarded with £6 per hour. The Spanish sample was collected by incidental sampling through a mailing list disseminated by the University of Granada, which is mostly accessed by undergraduate, master's, and doctoral students, and teaching staff. The study was conducted through a web link on the Qualtrics platform. To encourage participation fifty euros were raffled. The preregistered requirements for taking part in the study were participants with nationality in the United Kingdom or Spain, be over 18 years of age, and English/Spanish being their first language.

We planned to collect 400 participants per country. After applying the exclusion criteria and removing incomplete data, the final sample consisted of: Study 2a = 412 UK participants (246 women, 159 women, 6 non binary and 1 "prefer not to say") aged between 18 and 78 years (M = 41.26; SD = 13.67) and Study 2b = 391 Spanish participants (261 women, 109 man, 21 non binary) aged between 18 and 74 years (M = 25.58; SD = 8.80).

We conducted a sensitivity analysis using G*Power (Faul et al., 2009) to determine the smallest effect size the current studies could detect. The results showed that with these sample sizes (N_{UK} = 412; N_{Spain} = 391), with $\alpha = 0.05$ and power = 0.80, the minimum effects size that we could detect for a multiple regression analysis with five predictors was $f^2 = 0.03$ for both countries.

Measures

We use the same measures for both Studies 2a (UK) and 2b (Spain).

Group identification (common people, 99%, working class and national identities). First, participants read the definition of these identities. In the case of common people identity, we defined it as: "Common people are about those people who identify with ordinary or everyday people", 99% identity: "The term 99% represents the majority of the world's population (the 99%) against a very small percentage (1%) that owns half of the planet's wealth (if wealth were a pie cut in two, the 1% richest gets one half while the other corresponds to 99% of the world's inhabitants)", working class identity : "The

term working class designates the group of workers who work in exchange for a salary in opposition to the ruling class that owns the majority of the property of economic resources", national identity (England/Spanish)[4] "National identity is belonging to the collectively of a country or nation".

After reading the descriptions participants indicated the extent to which they identified with common people (UK: ω = .90, Spain: ω = .87), 99% (UK: ω = .86, Spain: ω = .86), working class (UK: ω = .92, Spain: ω = .92) and English/Spanish (UK: ω = .90, Spain: ω = .89) using 3 centrality items (e.g., "I often think about that fact that I am a common people/99%/working class/ English/Spanish") and a general item (i.e.,, "I identify with common people/99%/working class/English/Spanish as a group") of the Multicomponent In-group Identification scale (Leach et al., 2008; Postmes et al., 2013) on a Likert Scale (1 = Completely disagree; 7 = Completely agree).

Collective narcissism. We measured the collective narcissism of national identity using the same items as in Study 1 (UK: ω = .79, Spain: ω = .84).

(In)tolerance towards economic inequality. We used the Support for Economic Inequality Scale (Montoya-Lozano et al., 2023; Wiwad et al., 2019; e.g., "Economic inequality is causing many of the problems in Spain", UK: ω = .90, Spain: ω = .80) using a Likert scale (1 = "Completely disagree"; 7 = "Completely agree").

Collective actions intentions. We measured collective actions intentions in two ways: a) Collective actions to confront inequality**:** we used eleven items to measure willingness to participate in collective actions to challenge economic inequality (Becker et al., 2013; del Fresno-Díaz et al., 2023, e.g., "I would participate in peaceful demonstrations demanding the reduction of economic inequality"; UK: ω = .94, Spain: ω = .93) using a Likert scale (1 = "Never"; 7 = "Very often"); b) Collective actions to maintain the status quo: we used four items built by us (e.g., I would support political parties that benefit large and recognized companies with fiscal advantages UK: ω = .73, Spain: ω = .84) using a Likert scale (1 = "Never"; 7 = "Very often").

Sociodemographic measures. Finally, some sociodemographic data were requested: subjective socioeconomic status with the Scale of Subjective Social Status (SES, Adler et al., 2000), objective economic status, educational level (UK: 1 = GCSE/O-levels/CSE, or no formal qualifications; 2 = A-levels; 3 = Undergraduate degree; 4 = Graduate and postgraduate degrees; 5 = Doctoral degree (PhD) and Spain: 1 = Primary

studies; 2 = Secondary studies; 3 = Professional training; 4 = High school graduates; 5 = Unfinish undergraduate degree; 6 = Undergraduate degree; 7 = Postgraduate degree ; 8 = Doctoral degree (PhD)), political ideology focused on economic and social issues (adapted from Atwell et al., 2015) with two items ("Radical left", "Center left", "Center", "Center right", "Right" and "Radical right") gender, age, language and nationality.

Plan analyses

We tested our research questions on whether common people, 99% and working-class identities are related to redressing economic inequality, while national identity and collective narcissism are not, and are even promoters to maintain economic inequality. Specifically, we tested the relationship of all our group identity predictors with intolerance towards economic inequality and collective actions a) to confront economic inequality and b) to maintain status quo.

First, a Pearson correlation analysis and a stepwise regression analysis was performed. We conducted three linear regression analyses on intolerance toward inequality and two types of collective action intentions (i.e., confronting economic inequality and maintaining status) as criterion variables. In the first step, we introduced the covariates (age, gender, and level of education), in the second step, national identity and the collective narcissism as predicting variables to analyze the differential effects from the rest of identities. In the third step, we included the common people identity, the 99% identity and the working-class identity.

In addition, we conducted a Paternoster analysis ($z = (\beta_1 - \beta_2)/\text{sqrt}(SE\beta_1^2 + SE\beta_2^2)$) to test whether there are significant differences between two regression coefficients (Paternoster et al., 1998). In this way, we could identify whether the associations between different predictors differed significantly in their effect on our outcome variables.

Results

Correlational and regression analysis: Different associations for intolerance towards economic inequality and collective action intentions.

As shown in Table 5.3, identification with common people was positively related to inequality intolerance and collective action intentions to confront economic inequality, whereas collective narcissism was negatively related to these variables in both countries, confirming previous results. Furthermore, collective narcissism was associated with

willingness to take collective action intentions to maintain status quo in both countries. On the other hand, extending these findings, identification with 99% and working-class were positively associated with intolerance and collective action intentions to confront economic inequality in both countries. Particularly, identification with the working class in Spain was negatively associated with collective action intention intentions to maintain the status quo.

Table 5.3

Descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) and bivariate correlations between the mean variables in Studies 2a and 2b.

	UK Study 2a N = 412 M (SD)	Spain Study 2b N = 403 M (SD)	Common Id	99% Id	Working class Id	National Id	Collective Narcissism	Intolerance towards EI	CA confront EI	CA maintain the status quo
Common Id	3.93 (1.49)	4.53 (1.47)	-	.52**	.55**	.33**	.03	.24**	.25**	.07
99% Id	3.88 (1.70)	4.49 (1.60)	.43**	-	.44**	.15**	-.02	.27**	.30**	.03
Working class Id	4.31 (1.56)	4.93 (1.64)	.44**	.51**	-	.21**	.07	.18**	.23**	.15**
National Id	4.31 (1.56)	4.21 (1.67)	.18**	.07	-.01	-	.41**	-.16**	-.10	.35**
Collective Narcissism	1.86 (.95)	2.17 (1.21)	.01	-.04	-.10*	.49**	-	-.36**	-.24**	.31**
Intolerance EI	5.65 (1.21)	5.74 (1.16)	.22**	.29**	.40**	-.21**	-.37**	-	.55**	-.32**
CA confront EI	3.49 (1.44)	4.08 (1.53)	.24**	.34**	.46**	-.22**	-.24**	.60**	-	-.07
CA maintain the status quo	2.40 (1.08)	2.34 (1.37)	.00	-.17**	-.23**	.38**	.50**	-.51**	-.28**	-

Note: * $p \leq 0.05$; ** $p \leq 0.01$; *Id*., Identification; *EI*., Economic Inequality; *CA*., Collective Action intentions. The results of UK sample are above the diagonal and the results of the Spanish sample are below the diagonal.

Second, regression analysis showed that identification with common people was positively associated with intolerance towards economic inequality (β = .18, *p* <.01) in the UK, but not in Spain. Further, identification with common people was not associated with collective action intentions to confront economic inequality in neither country. However, identification with common people was positively associated with collective action intentions to maintain the status quo in Spain (β = .11, *p* <.01).

Collective narcissism was negatively associated with intolerance of inequality (UK: β = -.30, *p* <.001; Spain: β = -.25, *p* <.001) and with collective action intentions to confront it (UK: β = -.18, p <.001; Spain: β = -.11, *p* <.05) in both countries. In the UK, national identification was negatively associated with intolerance towards inequality (β = -.12, *p* <.05), but less strongly than collective narcissism (z = -2.47, *p* = .006). In Spain, national identification was also negatively associated with collective action intentions to confront economic inequality (β = -.18, *p* <.001), but in this case there was no difference in the strength of association compared to collective narcissism (z = -.97, *p* =.166). Finally, both collective narcissism (UK: β = .29, *p* <.001; Spain: β = .35, *p* <.001) and national identification (UK: β = .19, *p* <.001; Spain: β = .19, *p* <.001) were positively associated with collective action intentions to maintain the status quo in both countries. The association of collective narcissism and collective action intentions to main the status quo was stronger compared to national identification in Spain (z = -2.22, *p* = .014), but not in the UK (z = -1.38, p = .085).

Extending our results, identification with the 99% was positively associated with intolerance towards inequality (UK: β = .18, *p* <.01; Spain: β = .12, *p* <.05) and collective action intentions to confront inequality (UK: β = .23, *p* <.001; Spain: β = .15, *p* <.01) in both countries. In the UK, the associations of the 99% and common people with intolerance did not differ in strength (z = -.62, *p* = .270). However, the working-class identification was positively associated with intolerance towards inequality (β = .26, *p* <.001) and collective action intentions to confront it (β = .33, *p* <.001) only in Spain, but not in the UK. Specifically, the association of working-class was stronger than the 99% identity with these variables (intolerance towards inequality: z = -2.47, *p* =.006; collective action intentions: z = -2.54, *p* =.005). Furthermore, identification with the 99% (β =- .13, *p* <.01) and the working class (β = -.15, *p* <.01) were negatively associated with collective action intentions to maintain the status quo only in Spain, and these associations did not

differ in strength ($z = 2.52$, $p = .993$). A summary of these results can be found in Table 5.4 and 5.5.

Table 5.4.

Linear regression analysis of intolerance towards economic inequality in the United Kingdom and Spain (Studies 2a and 2b).

	Study 2a: UK (N = 412)									**Study 2b: Spain (N = 391)**								
	Intolerance toward economic inequality									**Intolerance towards economic inequality**								
	Model 4a			***Model 4b***			***Model 4c***			***Model 5a***			***Model 5b***			***Model 5c***		
Predictor	**β**	**SE**	**CI**	**β**	**SE**	**CI**	**β**	**SE**	**CI**	**β**	**SE**	**CI**	**β**	**SE**	**CI**	**β**	**SE**	**CI**
Step 1																		
Age	-.14**	.00	[-.02, -.00]	-.13*	.00	[-.02, -.00]	-.09	.00	[-.02, .00]	-.10	.01	[-.03, .00]	-.04	.01	[-.02, .01]	-.06	.01	[-.02, .00]
Gender	.12*	.11	[-.07, .52]	.09	.12	[-.02, .45]	.08	.11	[-.04, .41]	.23**	.11	[.29, .71]	.17**	.10	[.16, .56]	.12*	.10	[.07, .45]
Level of education	.05	.06	[-.06, .17]	-.00	.06	[-.12, .11]	-.00	.06	[-.11, .11]	.14*	.05	[.03, .22]	.07	.05	[-.03, .15]	.01	.04	[-.07, .10]
Step 2																		
National id.				-.02	.04	[-.10, .07]	-.12*	.04	[-.18, -.01]				-.07	.04	[-.12, .03]	-.10	.04	[-.14, .00]
Collective narcissism				-.33**	.07	[-.57, -.29]	-.30**	.07	[-.53, -.26]				-.29**	.05	[-.37, -.16]	-.25**	.05	[-.33, -.14]
Step 3																		
Common people id.							.14*	.05	[.02, .22]							.03	.04	[-.05, .10]
99% id.							.18**	.04	[.05, .23]							.12*	.04	[.01, .15]
Working class id.							.07	.04	[-.03, .13]							.26**	.04	[.11, .26]
R^2/R^2 *adjusted*	0.044/.037			0.159/0.147			0.252/.235			0.062/0.055			0.163/0.152			0.281/0.266		
F	5.701**			13.244**			14.647**			8.406**			14.847**			18.438**		

Table 5.5.

Linear regression analysis of collective actions in the United Kingdom and Spain (Studies 2a and 2b).

	Study 2a: UK (N = 412)									**Study 2b: Spain (N = 391)**								
	Collective action intentions to confront economic inequality									**Collective action intentions to confront economic inequality**								
	Model 6a			***Model 6b***			***Model 6c***			***Model 7a***			***Model 7b***			***Model 7c***		
Predictor	**β**	**SE**	**CI**	**β**	**SE**	**CI**	**β**	**SE**	**CI**	**β**	**SE**	**CI**	**β**	**SE**	**CI**	**β**	**SE**	**CI**
Step 1																		
Age	-.22**	.01	[-.03, -.01]	-.24*	.01	[-.03, -.01]	-.20**	.00	[-.03, -.01]	.06	.01	[-.01, .03]	.09	.01	[-.00, .03]	.07	.01	[-.00, .03]
Gender	.01	.13	[-.25, .28]	-.02	.14	[-.32, .23]	-.03	.13	[-.33, .19]	.13**	.14	[.10, .67]	.10	.14	[-.00, .56]	.04	.13	[-.15, .36]
Level of education	.10*	.07	[.01, .27]	.05	.07	[-.07, .20]	.05	.07	[-.06, .20]	.11*	.06	[.01, .25]	.06	.06	[-.05, .20]	-.00	.06	[-.11, .11]
Step 2																		
National id.				.01	.05	[-.09, .11]	-.09	.05	[-.18, .02]				-.14*	.05	[-.23, -.03]	-.18**	.05	[-.26, -.07]
Collective narcissism				-.21**	.08	[-.48, -.15]	-.18**	.08	[-.42, -.12]				-.15*	.07	[-.33, -.04]	-.11*	.06	[-.26, -.01]
Step 3																		
Common people id.							.11	.06	[-.02, .22]							.05	.05	[-.05, .16]
99% id.							.23**	.05	[.10, .31]							.15**	.05	[.04, .24]
Working class id.							.11	.05	[-.00, .19]							.33**	.05	[.21, .41]
R^2/R^2 *adjusted*	0.062/.055			0.117/0.104			0.243/.225			0.035/0.027			0.097/0.085			0.286/0.271		
F	9.574**			9.284**			13.893**			4.569**			8.178**			18.868**		

	Study 2a: UK (N = 412)									Study 2b: Spain (N = 391)								
	Collective action intentions to maintain status quo									Collective action intentions to maintain status quo								
	Model 8a			*Model 8b*			*Model 8c*			*Model 9a*			*Model 9b*			*Model 9c*		
Predictor	**β**	**SE**	**CI**	**β**	**SE**	**CI**	**β**	**SE**	**CI**	**β**	**SE**	**CI**	**β**	**SE**	**CI**	**β**	**SE**	**CI**
Step 1																		
Age	.03	.00	[-.01, .01]	-.02	.00	[-.01, .01]	-.03	.00	[-.01, .01]	-.03	.01	[-.02, .01]	-.05	.01	[-.02, .01]	-.04	.01	[-.02, .01]
Gender	-.04	.10	[-.29, .12]	-.05	.11	[-.32, .09]	-.05	.11	[-.31, .11]	-.17**	.13	[-.69, -.19]	-.09*	.11	[-.46, -.01]	-.08	.11	[-.42, .02]
Level of education	-.11*	.05	[-.22, -.02]	-.04	.05	[-.15, .06]	-.04	.05	[-.14, .07]	-.13*	.06	[-.25, -.03]	-.08	.05	[-.19, .02]	-.07	.05	[-.17, .03]
Step 2																		
National id.				.26**	.04	[.11, .26]	.29**	.04	[.12, .28]				.20**	.04	[.08, .24]	.19**	.04	[.08, .24]
Collective narcissism				.20**	.06	[.11, .35]	.19**	.06	[.10, .34]				.37**	.06	[.30, .52]	.35**	.06	[.28, .50]
Step 3																		
Common people id.							-.10	.05	[-.17, .02]							.11*	.05	[.01, .19]
99% id.							-.01	.04	[-.08, .09]							-.13**	.04	[-.20, -.03]
Working class id.							.07	.04	[-.03, .12]							-.15**	.04	[-.21, -.04]
R^2/R^2 *adjusted*	0.016/.009			0.162/0.150			0.169/0.150			0.048/0.041			0.282/0.278			0.332/0.318		
F	1.597			13.544**			8.834**			6.343**			30.680**			23.463**		

Note: * p ≤ 0.05; **p≤0.01; *CI*., confidence interval; *SE*., standard error; *Id*., Identification.

To visualize the aggregated results, please refer to Figures 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3.

Figure 5.1

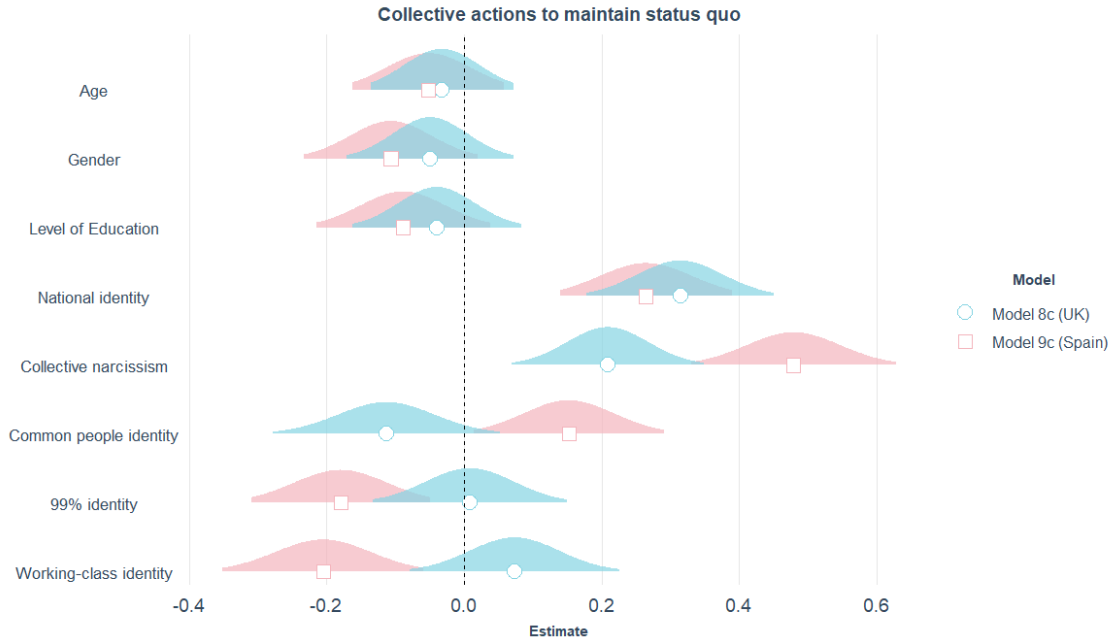
Regression analysis effects of intolerance towards economic inequality in the UK and Spain: national identity, collective narcissism, common people identity, 99% identity and working-class identity.

Figure 5.2

Regression analysis effects of collective actions to confront economic inequality in the UK and Spain: national identity, collective narcissism, common people identity, 99% identity and working-class identity.

Figure 5.3

Regression analysis effects of collective actions to maintain status quo in the UK and Spain: national identity, collective narcissism, common people identity, 99% identity and working-class identity.



Discussion

The results of Studies 2a and 2b show that identification with common people was only positively associated with rejection of economic inequality, but not with intentions to confront it. This pattern was observed in the UK. However, in Spain, this effect disappears when controlling for other politicised wealth-based identities (99% and working-class). In this case, there is a willingness to act, but it is aimed at maintaining status quo. So, we could not confirm the previous results regarding common people identity. On the other hand, the association between collective narcissism and lower intolerance towards inequality as well as lower intention to confront was confirmed in Spain and the UK. Moreover, collective narcissism was positively associated with the intention to carry out collective actions to maintain status quo, confirming its pernicious role in both countries. These results contrast with the lack of a consistent effect of national identity across countries and studies. Importantly, collective narcissism was more strongly associated than national identity with intolerance (the UK), or with collective actions to maintains status quo (Spain).

Further, the identification with 99% showed a positive association with both intolerance of inequality and collective actions to confront it in both the UK and Spain. Interestingly, working-class identification more clearly predicted lack of tolerance for inequality and a willingness to confront it, rather than maintaining it in Spain, but not in the UK.

General Discussion

In four studies conducted in two different socio-political contexts (the UK and Spain), we progress the literature by examining how multiple identities —common people and collective narcissism, but also the 99% and working-class identifications— are independently associated with attitudes towards inequality and intentions to engage in collective action both for and against maintaining the economic status quo.

The results indicated that identification with common people was associated with greater inequality intolerance (Studies 1a, 1b, and 2a) and pro-change collective actions (Studies 1a and 1b). This suggest that identification with common people can encompass features of a politicised identity (Simon & Klandermans, 2001), characterized by a shared grievance among those who are not part of the economic elite, thus triggering a motivation to confront them. However, common people identification was positively associated with

collective action intentions to maintain the status quo in Spain in Study 2b, suggesting that such an unspecific identity can also possess a populist nature that might sometimes hinder progressive social change (e.g., conservative populism Muis & Immerzeel, 2017). Based on the results of Studies 2a and 2b showed, the potential of common identity may be limited to attitudinal aspects and not to intention to confront inequality, or even to maintain the status quo.

Research on populism suggest that these types of identities can be constructed and employed strategically to serve political goals (Shayegh et al., 2022). Consequently, common people identification has fluid characteristics in terms of politicization (thin ideology; Elchardus & Spruyt, 2016; Mudde, 2004) and it is deeply anchored in the social and cultural context. So, what is the common grievance or sense of disadvantage felt by those who identify with the common people? The common people group does not appear to be in a state of anomie or economic deprivation. Instead, they adopt a populist narrative that highlights the divide between the virtuous consequences of discourse around an unjust society (Elchardus & Spruyt, 2016). As a result, the content of their grievances can take on an 'anti-system' nature, targeting the economic elite, or an 'exclusionary' nature, seeking external groups to blame (e.g., migrants; Hameleers et al., 2021; Jagers & Walgrave, 2007). We can therefore observe how this group may hold negative attitudes towards economic inequality in the UK, but also attitudes that perpetuate inequality in Spain.

Our results also showed that collective narcissism and national identity are group processes that can be associated with a negative response in the context of economic inequality. We found a higher disruptive potential of collective narcissism—over and above national identification— in both Spain and the UK. Specifically, collective narcissism has a negative effect on inequality intolerance, pro-change collective actions and a positive effect on reactionary actions to maintain the status quo. This is consistent with research showing how national collective narcissism intensifies in the face of intergroup threat and is associated with prejudice against migrants (Bertin et al., 2022). Furthermore, we provide results that add to the argument of its differential role with national identity (e.g., secure ingroup identity, (Cichocka & Cislak, 2020; Marchlewska et al., 2020). Thus, in line with the “anti-justice” narrative of this group process, our results provide summative evidence of its potential to reject economic equality and actively maintaining inequality. This is consistent with social movements that seek to

defend a social order through reactionary actions (Becker, 2020). This is also consistent with the "nativist" element of populist narratives (e.g., national populisms, Golec de Zavala & Keenan, 2021), that is, the assumption that common people are those who belong to the national group and not to other groups (e.g., migrants, Shayegh et al., 2022).

The positive effect of social identities to confront inequalities is supported by the role of wealth-based identities such as the 99% and the working-class in line with previous findings (del Fresno-Díaz et al., 2023). The 99% has the potential to unite people from different socioeconomic backgrounds and mobilize them against a situation perceived as illegitimate (van Zomeren et al., 2008) more unambiguously than the common people identity, possibly because the 99% identification clearly identified an unequal distribution of resources as the cause of the experienced grievances. However, cultural context matters. Whereas in Spain, we found that identification with working-class identity was the stronger predictor of confronting inequalities, this is not the case in the UK where identification with 99% and common people fulfil that role. The Spanish working class has spearheaded numerous protests (e.g., anti-austerity protest in Europe, Peterson et al., 2015; marches for dignity, Sabucedo et al., 2017), which translates into its important role in promoting collective actions. This can be seen, for instance, in the case of Galician farmers, whose collective identity promoted that they were more likely to participate in collective actions that their Dutch counterparts (Klandermans et al., 2002). On the other hand, the British working class has been stereotyped and marginalized within the political and social context, being demonized as a legacy of Thatcherism (Jones, 2011). Further, there is evidence that people broadly identify with working class, even if they do not belong to it in the UK (Evans & Mellon, 2016). Both arguments could explain why the working class is not associated with confronting inequalities in that context.

One important limitation of our studies is that they have a correlational nature, which restricts the ability to make causal inferences. However, they provide valuable explanatory insights regarding associations in two cultural contexts. In future studies, we will address this limitation by experimentally manipulating antecedent variables of identity and politicization, such as economic threat or relative deprivation. Additionally, we will explore potential effects on populist attitudes (Akkerman et al., 2014).

Our findings have not only theoretical implications but also practical ones, as they shed light on the complex interplay of identities in the context of economic inequality. It

is therefore crucial to recognize that promoting national identity or excessive patriotism through narcissism at the expense of other wealth-based identities can have detrimental effects on social relationships and hinder efforts to address economic injustices. Additionally, it is worth noting that while different class-based identities may share common goals, their functions and meanings may vary across cultural contexts, as we observed in the case of Spain and the United Kingdom.

If there is one (or more than one) message to take away, it is that the 99% in the United Kingdom and the working class in Spain are positive group correlates for social change and economic justice. In the case of "common people", it can appear both positive and negative at the same time, so we must understand it within a populist narrative and be cautious of its consequences. Lastly, more extreme forms of nationalism, particularly collective narcissism, have a detrimental impact on protests aimed at achieving a fairer distribution of wealth.

Footnotes

1. In the case of the United Kingdom, for the measures of national identity, common people identity, and collective narcissism, the measurement scale was from 1 to 6 in the pilot study and from 1 to 5 in the data collection during the first wave. This was considered for the analyses conducted.
2. In the United Kingdom, since the measurement scales for common people identity, national identity, and collective narcissism differed between the pilot study and the data collection in the first wave, standardized scores were used.
3. In this pre-registration there are other measures with a different main objective, which will be included in another manuscript.
4. In the case of the UK sample, we also measured other national identities (i.e., Scottish, Welsh and Northern Irish), but we only considered the English identity because it is representative of the sample (N = 356).

Chapter 6

"We are the 99%": Consequences of Politicised Identity in the Stablished Middle-Class

“We are the 99%”: Consequences of Politicised Identity in the Established Middle-class

Ángel del Fresno-Díaz. Soledad de Lemus, Guillermo B. Willis

University of Granada

Abstract

The Occupy Wall Street movement popularized the slogan “we are the 99” to raise awareness about the vast economic disparities between the wealthiest individuals and the rest of society. In this set of preregistered studies, we investigated the impact of the 99% identity on middle class attitudes and collective actions intentions. We conducted two correlational studies (Study 1, $N = 374$; Study 2, $N = 344$) and two experimental studies (Study 3, $N = 336$; Study 4, $N = 127$). In Studies 1-2, we found that the 99% identity predicted greater intolerance toward economic inequality and stronger intentions for collective action to reduce inequality over and above the middle-class identity. These findings were replicated and extended in Studies 3-4 using an experimental paradigm to manipulate the perceived norm of supporting the 99%. We found an indirect effect of the social norms on inequality tolerance and collective actions via identification with the 99%. Overall, our findings suggest that the 99% is a predictor of mobilization among the middle-class, a group that is typically less likely to engage in collective action for reducing economic inequality.

Keywords: 99%, middle-class, economic inequality, social norms, collective actions, politicized identity

Introduction

Economic inequality is one of the social issues that best defines the 21st century. Furthermore, the richest 1% of the world's population have increased their wealth twice as much as the least advantaged 50% (Alvaredo et al., 2018). This situation has worsened after covid pandemic and if current conditions remain unchanged, it is expected to continue growing (Inequality.org, 2023; OECD, 2020). People's reactions to such inequalities have promoted several protests in the last decade around the globe, such as Arab Spring, the Spanish Indignados movement, or the Occupy Wall Street movement.

When we talk about percentages that reflect the unfair distribution of wealth, the Occupy Wall Street movement is an interesting element of study. Within this context during 2011, the Occupy Wall Street movement started using the slogan, "We are the 99%", to raise awareness that they belonged to the 99% of the world population in comparison to the 1% of the population that accumulated half of the wealth (Stewart, 2019). The 99% was the reference group and established a norm, satisfying the control lost due to the pernicious effects of the economy. This concept was not new, given that Joseph Stiglitz (2012) had already argued that those who belonged to the 99% continued thinking "we are all middle-class." However, this new group—"we are the 99%—represents an attempt to forge a new social identity based not on the grounds of a universal middle-class, but on the reality of socio-economic divisions within the economy and society (Stiglitz, 2012).

In this paper, we maintain that the 99% emerged as a politicized collective identity; that is, it is politicized to the extent that those group members (self)consciously engage in a power struggle on behalf of their group (Simon & Klandermans, 2001). The 99% identity is rooted in the perception of injustice and seeks to reduce economic inequality as its main goal. Therefore, it has the potential to promote social change though protests (Drury & Reicher, 2000; del Fresno-Díaz et al.,2023; van Stekelenburg & Klandermans, 2013). In this research, we examine whether middle-class individuals[1] identify with the 99% and whether this is negatively related to tolerance toward inequality and positively related to collective action intentions to reduce inequalities—over and above the identification with the middle-class.

Economic inequality through comparison: 99% vs 1%

Economic inequality deeply impacts people's lives (Buttrick & Oishi, 2017; Rodríguez-Bailón et al., 2020; Wilkinson & Pickett, 2017), which is especially true after the COVID-19 pandemic (Jetten et al., 2020; Rodríguez-Bailón, 2020). Research about economic inequality aims to understand how it is maintained through different beliefs and attitudes toward it (Caricati & Owuamalam, 2020; García-Castro et al., 2020; Trump, 2020). Attitudes toward economic inequality are related to behaviours aimed at mitigating economic inequality via helping the poor (Wiwad et al., 2019) and are correlated positively with support for redistribution, but only among those who hold a meritocracy ideology (García-Sánchez et al., 2020). Furthermore, when inequality is perceived as unfair and illegitimate, responses such as collective action are triggered (Jetten et al., 2021).

People's estimate of actual income inequality is not always accurate (Norton & Ariely, 2011). The mental representation of inequality, sensitivity to income distribution, and tolerance towards it, all influence how people respond to it (Peters & Jetten. 2023; Willis et al., 2022). However, there are different ways of defining economic inequality (Jachimowicz et al., 2020). For example, inequality is measured using the S80/S20 ratio, which compares how many times more the top 20% of the population earns in comparison with the bottom 20% (or the S90/S10, which follows a similar logic). Alternatively, inequality can be defined by comparing the income of the bottom 99% to the top 1%, where the difference become more striking. Research shows that people tend to support redistributive policies more when they make economic comparisons between individuals (Clark & Senik, 2010), which can result in attitudes changes (Cruces et al., 2013). Therefore, it is likely that the use of the 99% as a reference group will influence people's tolerance towards economic inequality.

Importantly, the awareness of the 99% as a category may be particularly important for building a politicized collective identity (Simon & Klandermans, 2001). Identification with groups with which we shared grievances leads to rejecting inequality (Drury & Reicher, 2000). Moreover, the 99% category helps the different members of the in-group to compare upwards (Caricati & Owuamalam, 2020; Wright, 2009). The 99% identity can help to perceive more inequality and not tolerate it (del Fresno-Díaz et al., 2023).

The class struggle and the emergence of novel shared identities

The socio-ecological conditions that economic inequality establishes suggest that signals of the unequal distribution of income and wealth play an important role in social categorization and group dynamics (Peters & Jetten, 2023; Jetten et al., 2017). There are multiple social axes that determine people's identities that are based on characteristics such as gender, ethnicity, educational level, or social class. Research indicates that socioeconomic status (SES) is an important aspect of identity in today's society (Destin et al., 2017; Easterbrook et al., 2020), especially in the context of economic inequality (Heiserman & Simpson, 2017; Machin & Vignoles, 2005), which can serve as a trigger for collective action to confront it (Fritsche et al., 2017).

From a Marxist perspective, class is defined in terms of how people are related to the means of production—someone belongs to the bourgeoisie if they own them or to the proletariat if they do not (Marx & Engels, 1848/2004). Traditional social class groupings have been an important source of identity throughout history, and have been central to political movements (e.g., labor and socialist movements, communism). It also influences people's political and social attitudes (Easterbrook et al., 2020; Manstead, 2018). Nowadays, this concept of the working class has been questioned and redefined (Wright, 2018). Beyond the traditional identity of the working class, other new concepts have emerged (e.g., precariat or 99%, Stading, 2013; Stiglitz, 2012).

Social psychological literature defines social class in terms of wealth, including a person's educational attainment, income, and occupational prestige (Kraus et al., 2012). These socioeconomic differences shape people's behaviors, thoughts, feelings, and everyday experiences (Kraus et al., 2012; Kraus & Stephens, 2012). As with other aspects of identity, people ascribe meaning and value to their social class, establishing a sense of belonging and group membership (Destin et al., 2017; Spears, 2011). This leads people to categorize social class into different groups, such as the working or lower class, the middle-class, or the upper class. Importantly, identities indicative of a higher social class provide higher social status and self-esteem (Easterbrook et al., 2020), which leads to a more positive social identity (Becker & Tausch, 2014; Vignoles, 2011). As self-categorization theory would predict, a greater economic inequality will increase and make more salient the intergroup differences between social classes (Jetten, et al., 2017).

The reasons behind the political preferences towards inequality of the working and the middle-class are different (Brown-Iannuzzi et al., 2015; Kraus et al., 2012). In fact, when economic inequality is high, people from the most disadvantaged classes

identify even less with their group (Jetten et al., 2017), or become depoliticized because they do not believe these categories are effective (Kuppens et al., 2015). The feeling of higher relative status has been associated with lower support for redistribution (Brown-Iannuzzi et al., 2015). This promotes identification with established classes that restores the "fear of falling" into the hierarchy, promoting greater tolerance towards inequality among the middle or upper classes (Jetten et al., 2017). This upward comparison leaves out the less privileged social classes, being an argument that impedes social change.

There is evidence that activism provides opportunities for the emergence of new identities in a recursive way (Curtin et al., 2016; Drury & Reicher, 2000). In addition, shared identities are group mechanisms that face collective threats (Drury & Reicher, 2000). The 99% is a way to deal with the economic threat and lead people to tolerate less economic inequality, as well as promote collective actions to confront it (del Fresno-Díaz et al., 2023). We suggest that identification with a wealth-based superordinate category—the 99%—that includes the economic strata of middle-classes may strengthen the motivation for social change. This identification is useful to restore the control threatened by the economic context while establishing norms of economic egalitarianism.

The politicized identity: Norm-making to confront economic inequality

Based on social identity and self-categorization theories (Tajfel, 1982; Tajfel & Turner, 2004), when individuals are faced with a situation that threatens their group, it will also be perceived as a personal threat. Economic crisis can threaten an individual's sense of control and lead to its restoration through social groups—social agents that represent the self and its norms (Bukowski et al., 2017; Potoczek et al., 2022). It is important to note that not all groups lead to participation in collective action for social change, nor do the norms represented by that group have to be egalitarian (e.g., ethnocentrism) (Fritsche et al., 2017; Stollberg et al., 2017).

A group norm that promotes a shared identity can help to restore control to face economic grievance. Social norms promote identification, but not every group identification will promote engagement in collective action (Curtin et al., 2016; McGarty et al., 2009; Simon & Klandermans, 2001; Sturmer & Simon, 2004; van Stekelenburg et al., 2016). For achieving social change, it is necessary to explore the identification with specific categories that are more contextually relevant for action, instead of broader social categories (McGarty et al., 2009). We argue that in the economic inequality context, a

99% collective identity can emerge when people become aware of the disproportioned distribution of resources in society in general and act as a reference group that sets the social norm. Thus, awareness of the 99% vs. 1% categorization is a strong trigger of perceiving such inequalities as unfair, which is a key antecedent of collective actions (van Zomeren et al., 2008).

The politicized collective identity develops through the process of understanding the structural aspects of shared grievances and injustices and the need for social change (Curtin et al., 2016). Politicized identities are more important in predicting collective action than nonpoliticized identities (Simon & Klandermans, 2001; Sturmer & Simon, 2004). Such identities carry a stronger internal obligation to become an activist and engage in actions to achieve social change (Curtin et al., 2016; Sturmer & Simon, 2004; van Zomeren et al., 2008), establishing a stronger social norm and thus guiding the action of the followers.

The Present Research

In this paper we aimed to examine whether the identity of the 99% is able to influence the (in)tolerance toward economic inequality and collective action intentions of middle-class participants. The 99% identity implicitly perceives the privilege and the ability to act in solidarity with the minority group (Radke et al., 2020; Stiglitz, 2012; Subašić et al., 2008). What reasons make the middle-class a demobilizing identity? First, the positive intergroup contact with advantaged groups undermines collective actions among the disadvantaged (Becker et al., 2013; Tausch et al., 2015). Second, the middle-class position is associated with high anxiety and fear of falling (Ehrenreich, 1990; Jetten et al., 2017). However, the 99% identity (vs. 1%) confronts the middle-class with the advantageous group and the social comparison would be upwards, breaking theorizing about being “stuck in the middle.”

In the present research, we aimed to investigate the relationship between identification with the 99% identity and (a) intolerance toward economic inequality and (b) willingness to engage collective actions among middle-class individuals. We hypothesized that would be a positive association between the degree of identification with the 99% identity and both (a) and (b), over and above the identification with the middle-class. To test our hypotheses, we conducted two correlational studies and two

experimental studies, in which we manipulated participant's perception of the social norm to increase acceptance of the 99% identity.

Study 1

In Study 1, a preregistered study with exploratory purposes (https://osf.io/2udbn/?view_only=81f7edc66e0d47f9903ccc8aa68b6bb2), we examined whether there is a relationship between the identification with the 99%, different social class identifications—i.e., middle-class, poor, and rich—and (in)tolerance toward inequality.

Method

Procedure and Participants

An incidental sampling was carried out in public localizations (e.g., the bus station and different coffee shops). Participants were asked for collaboration in a voluntary and anonymous study that would not take more than 15 minutes. Once they agreed to participate, they received the questionnaire to study "experiences of your daily life and opinions about various socio-economic issues."

On the first page, there was information about how wealth is distributed in the world, giving the concrete example of how wealth is distributed in Spain with a graph (see supplementary materials). This information showed that the wealth of the planet is distributed in such a way that 1% of the population owns half, and the 99% owns the other half. The relevant information was worded as follows: "half of the planet's wealth is in the hands of 1% of the world's population, that is, the remaining half is distributed in the 99% of the planet's inhabitants."

We planned to collect a minimum of 350 and a maximum of 400 observations after exclusions. In total, 396 participants took part in the study. Twenty-two participants were excluded from the data analysis because they were not native Spanish speakers (preregistered criteria). The final sample consisted of 374 participants (209 women, 165 men), with an age range between 18 and 74 years (M = 31.33, SD = 13.82). We conducted a sensitivity analysis using G*Power (Faul et al., 2009) to determine the smallest effect size the current study could detect. The results showed that with this sample size (N = 374), with $\alpha = 0.05$ and $1\text{-}\beta = 0.80$, the minimum effect size that we could detect for a multiple regression analysis with four predictors was $f^2 = 0.03$.

Measures

Group identification (99%, Poor, Rich, and Middle-class). We measured to what extent participants identified with the 99% (α = .88), the rich (α = .75), the poor (α = .87) and the middle-class (α = .87). We used three centrality ("Being part of the 99%/poor/rich/middle-class is an important part of my identity"), one solidarity (e.g., "I feel solidarity with 99%/poor/rich/middle-class") two individual self-stereotyping (e.g., "I have a lot in common with the majority of 99%/poor/rich/middle-class") and two in-group homogeneity (e.g., "Those who make up the 99%/poor/rich/middle-class are very similar to each other") items of Multicomponent In-group Identification (Leach et al., 2008), and a general (e.g., "I identify with 99%/poor/rich/middle-class") on a Likert scale (1 = "Not at all"; 7 = "Very much"). The measure used was the mean of these items.

Intolerance toward economic inequality. We used a question that is included in most international surveys for assessing this construct. With a Likert scale (1 = "Very small"; 7 = "Extremely large"), we asked, "To what extend are the income differences in Spain too large?" (see García-Castro et al., 2020; García-Sánchez et al., 2018).

Perceived illegitimacy. We used two items to measure the perceived illegitimacy of inequality ("Differences in power and status between groups in Spain are legitimate/fair," ; $r = .43$, $p < 0.01$; adapted from Brandt et al., 2020) using a scale (−3 = "Disagree strongly"; 3 = "Agree strongly").

Meritocracy. We used a meritocracy scale (e.g. "It is good to have an economic system that rewards those who strive"; α = .90; García-Sánchez et al., 2018) on a Likert scale (1 = "Agree strongly"; 7 = "Disagree strongly").

Sociodemographic. Finally, some sociodemographic data were requested: Subjective socioeconomic status (Adler et al., 2000), objective social class based on the level on education and income(e.g., "How much net monthly income do you have? Consider all sources of income including salaries, pensions, scholarships, rental income, etc."), political ideology measured with one item (0 = "Extreme left"; 100 = "Extreme right"), sex, age, mother tongue and nationality. Sex, age, political orientation and subjective economic status are used as covariates in our analysis.

In addition, we measure economic inequality perception, which is not included in the text but described in Supplementary materials.

Results

Descriptive and Correlational Analysis

Pearson's correlations between the main variables and descriptive statistics are presented in Table 6.1.

Table 6.1

Descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) and bivariate correlations between the variables measured in Study 1.

	99% Id.	Rich Id.	Poor Id.	Middle-class Id.	Perceived Illegitimacy	Meritocracy	Intolerance EI
99% Id.	4.40(1.65)	-.10	.40**	.20**	.19**	-.11*	.16**
Rich Id.		1.68(0.94)	-.11*	-.10	-.14**	.23**	-.10
Poor Id.			2.88(1.43)	.01	.14**	-.06	.13*
Middle-class Id.				4.82(1.33)	.021	.11*	.02
Perceived Illegitimacy					5.13(1.53)	-.40**	-.19**
Meritocracy						3.28(1.10)	-.24**
Intolerance towards EI							5.72(1.22)

Note: * $p \leq 0.05$; ** $p \leq 0.01$; *Id*., Identification; *EI*., Economic Inequality; Diagonal shows mean of the participants' score in the scale and standard deviation in brackets.

Regression Analysis

In two linear regression analysis, we introduced the covariates (sex, age, political orientation, and subjective economic status) in the first step, the 99% identity and the other identities (rich identity, poor identity, and middle-class identity) as predicting variables in the second step, and (in)tolerance toward inequality and perceived illegitimacy as the criterion variables. Our results showed that the 99% identity positively predicted both intolerance toward economic inequality (F [8, 339] = 3.256; $p < .001$ β = .12, $p < .05$; see Table 6.2) and perceived illegitimacy (F [8, 338] = 6.826; $p < .001$, β = .12, $p < .01$). On the contrary, middle-class identity did not predict intolerance toward economic inequality (β = -.01, p = .932) or perceived illegitimacy (β = .01, p = .806).

Table 6.2

Linear regression analysis of intolerance towards economic inequality.

	Intolerance towards economic inequality			
	Model 1		***Model 2***	
Predictor	**β**	***95% CI***	**β**	***95% CI***
Step 1				
Sex	.07	[-.08,.44]	.07	[-.08,.43]
Age	.04	[-.01,.01]	.03	[-.01,.01]
Political Orientation	-.18**	[-.02, -.01]	-.14**	[-.01,.-.01]
Subjective Status	.03	[-.07,.10]	.08	[-.03,.16]
Step 2				
99% Id.			.12	[.01,.18]
Rich Id.			-.09	[-.26,.02]
Poor Id.			.07	[-.05,.17]
Middle-class Id.			.01	[-.10,.10]
R^2	.04		.07	
F	3.535**		3.256**	
Δ R^2			.03	
Δ F			2.899*	

Note: * p ≤ 0.05; **p≤0.01; *CI*., confidence interval; *Id*., Identification.

Discussion

Results showed that people who identified with the 99% were positively associated with intolerance towards the gap between rich and poor and the perception of injustice of these differences, even controlling for the rest of identities and the variables political orientation, sex, age, and subjective status. By contrast, the middle-class identification did not predict any of these variables.

However, in this study, we did not control whether our participants really belonged to the middle-class. Thus, in the next study, we aimed to replicate these results,

preregistering our hypothesis and running the study in a sample of middle-class participants.

Study 2

In Study 2 we included only participants who were currently employed and who belonged to the middle-class, focusing on the objective status as an exclusion criterion (i.e., they earned between 1.131€ and 3.016€; INE, 2017)[2]. We made this decision because people in middle-income households in Spain typically earn between 75% and 200% of the median income (OECD, 2019). Furthermore, we include another validated measure of intolerance towards economic inequality (Support for Economic Inequality Scale; Wiwad et al., 2019) and collective action intentions against economic inequality.

Method

Pre-Registered Hypothesis

(https://osf.io/e9nvd/?view_only=5da94df7dde849b08a3d8ca6ea3c2ca2).

Hypothesis 1a: Identification with the 99% identity will be negatively associated, over and above other identities (middle-class, upper class, or rich), intolerance toward economic inequality measured with the Support for Economic Inequality Scale (Wiwad et al., 2019).

Hypothesis 1b: Identification with the 99% identity will be negatively associated, over and above other identities (middle-class, upper class, or rich), intolerance toward economic inequality (measured with the income differences item “are income differences in Spain too large?”).

Hypothesis 2: Identification with the 99% identity will be positively associated, over and above other identities (middle-class, upper class, or rich), collective actions against economic inequality[3].

Procedure and Participants

The procedure of Study 2 was similar to Study 1. We showed the same graph as in Study 1 adding the annual income in terms of low, middle, upper, or wealthy class (see supplementary materials).

We planned to collect a minimum of 350 and a maximum of 400 observations after exclusions. We excluded participants from the data analyses if they did not have the preregistered exclusion criteria requirements: data from participants who were not Spanish speakers, who were younger than 18 years old, and who did not have a salary that was included in the middle-class deciles (i.e., between 1.131€ and 3.016€). The final sample consisted of 344 participants, following the preregistered planned sample size (199 women and 145 men) who were between 18 and 73 years old ($M = 36.33$, $SD = 13.11$). We conducted a sensitivity analysis using G*Power (Faul et al., 2009) to determine the effect size the current study could detect. The results showed that with this sample size ($N = 344$), with $\alpha = 0.05$ and $1\text{-}\beta = 0.80$, the minimum effect size that we could detect for a multiple regression analysis with four predictors was $f^2 = 0.04$.

Measures

Group identification (99%, rich, upper class, and middle-class). We used the same measures as in Study 1: questioning to what extent participants identified with the 99% ($\alpha = .94$), the rich ($\alpha = .86$), the upper class ($\alpha = .92$), or the middle-class ($\alpha = .91$). We added the satisfaction scale (e.g., "I think the 99%/rich/upper class/middle-class have a lot to be proud of") to capture the self-investment (Leach et al., 2008) and excluded the in-group homogeneity scale because it could be associated to prejudice towards class (Becker & Tausch, 2014).

Intolerance toward economic inequality. We measured intolerance toward economic inequality, in two different ways (a different way for each hypothesis).

First, we used the six-item Support for Economic Inequality Scale (Wiwad et al., 2019; $\alpha = .68$) translated into Spanish with a Likert scale (1 = "Totally disagree"; 7 = "Totally agree") for Hypothesis 1a.

Second, we used the income differences item used in Study 1 for Hypothesis 1b.

Collective actions. We use 11 items to measure collective actions against economic inequality (e.g., "I would participate in peaceful protests that demand the reduction of economic inequality"; $\alpha = .92$; del Fresno-Díaz et al., 2023) based on classical items of collective action (Becker et al., 2013; Ekman & Amnå, 2012) and adapted to the framework of economic inequality.

Sociodemographic. Finally, the same sociodemographic information as in Study 1 was requested.

Results

Descriptive and Correlational Analysis

Pearson's correlations between the main variables and descriptive statistics are presented in Table 6.3.

Table 6.3

Descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) and bivariate correlations between the variables measured in Study 2.

	99% Id.	Rich Id.	Upper Id.	Middle-class Id.	Intolerance EI_a	Intolerance EI_b	Collective actions
99% Id.	4.52(1.58)	-.02	-.11*	.07	.26**	.15***	.25**
Rich Id.		1.95(0.87)	.79**	.03	-.28**	-.25**	-.31**
Poor Id.			2.12(1.11)	.07	-.27**	-.20**	-.39**
Middle-class Id.				5.22(1.14)	-.07	-.04	-.10
Intolerance EI_a					5.77(1.07)	.43**	.52**
Intolerance EI_b						5.72(1.21)	.35**
Collective actions							4.59(1.45)

Note: * $p \leq 0.05$; ** $p \leq 0.01$; *Id*., Identification; *EI*., Economic Inequality; a., Support for Economic Inequality Scale; b., income differences item. Diagonal shows mean of the participants' score in the scale and standard deviation in brackets.

Regression Analysis

To test our preregistered hypotheses, we carried out a linear regression analysis. First, we introduced the 99% identity and controlled by the other identities (i.e., rich identity, upper class identity, and middle-class identity) in the same step as predicting variables. Intolerance toward economic inequality and collective action intentions were included as criterion variables. Also, we introduced the covariates used in Study 1: sex, age, subjective status, and political orientation.

For Hypothesis 1a, using the Support for Inequality Scale measure (Wiwad, et al., 2019), we corroborated that 99% identity was positively associated to intolerance toward

inequality (F [8, 322] = 19.665; p < .001, β = .16, *p* < .001). Following Hypothesis 1b and using a different measure (income differences item), was also positively associated to intolerance (F [8, 322] = 7.859; p < .001, β = .11, *p* < .05).

Regarding Hypothesis 2, results showed that 99% identity was positively associated to collective actions (F [8, 322] = 37.036; *p* < .001, β = .14, *p* < .001).

In contrast, middle-class identity was not a predictor of any measures of intolerance toward economic inequality (β = −.04, *p* = 415; β = −.01, *p* = 792); nor was it predictive of collective actions (β = −.02, *p* = .652). A summary of these results appears in Table 6.4.

Table 6.4.

Linear regression analysis of intolerance towards economic inequality$_a$, intolerance towards economic inequality$_b$ and collective actions.

	Intolerance towards economic inequality $_a$				**Intolerance towards economic inequality $_b$**				**Collective actions**			
	Model 1		***Model 2***		***Model 1***		***Model 2***		***Model 1***		***Model 2***	
Predictor	**β**	***95% CI***	**β**	***95% CI***	**β**	***95% CI***	**β**	***95% CI***	**β**	***95% CI***	**β**	***95% CI***
Step 1												
Sex	-.01	[-.22, .18]	-.01	[-.20, .19]	.02	[-.21, .29]	.02	[-.21, .29]	-.01	[-.26, .22]	.01	[-.22, .24]
Age	-.13**	[-.02, -.01]	-.14**	[-.02, -.01]	-.01	[-.01, .01]	-.01	[-.01, .01]	.08*	[.01, .02]	.07	[-.01, .02]
Political Or.	-.50**	[-.03, -.02]	-.42**	[-.02, -.01]	-.36**	[-.02, -.01]	-.31**	[-.02, -.01]	-.65**	[-.05, -.04]	-.58**	[-.04, -.03]
Subjective Status	-.03	[-.11, .05]	.01	[-.07, .09]	-.03	[-.13, -07]	.01	[-.10, .10]	-.04	[-.14, .05]	.01	[-.10, -.10]
Step 2												
99% Id.			.16**	[.05, .17]			.11*	[.01, .16]			.14**	[.06, .21]
Rich Id.			-.16*	[-.37, -.01]			-23**	[-.55, -.09]			.05	[-.14, .30]
Upper Id.			-.02	[-.16, .13]			.11	[-.06, .30]			-.20**	[-.43, -.09]
Middle-class Id.			-.04	[-.12, .05]			-.01	[-.13, .10]			-.02	[-.13, .08]
R^2	.279		.328		.132		.163		.433		.479	
F	31.534**		19.665**		12.448**		.7.859**		62.178**		37.036**	

Note: * p ≤ 0.05; **p≤0.01; *CI*., confidence interval; *Id*., Identification; Or., Orientation; Intolerance towards economic inequality (a) measured with Support for Economic Inequality Scale (Wiwad et al., 2019); (b) measured with income differences item ("income *differences in Spain too large*?") (García-Castro et al., 2020; García-Sánchez, et al., 2018)

Discussion

In Study 2, we aimed to replicate the same effects found in Study 1, focusing on the middle-class. As expected, our results confirmed that people who belong to the middle-class and identify with the 99% identity, are more intolerant toward economic inequality and have a greater disposition for collective actions. Middle-class identification did not predict our main variables. These results confirm that if middle-class people identify with the 99% identity, they are more intolerant of economic inequality, and participate in collective actions to reduce it.

In Study 3, we tested the causal relationship between the variables by manipulating the acceptance norm of the 99% identity and examining its effects on identification with the 99%, intolerance toward inequality, and collective actions.

Study 3

In Study 3, we aimed to manipulate perceived social norms regarding the identification with the 99% identity. We examined whether it influenced intolerance toward inequality and collective actions through increased identification with the 99% identity. According to research on opinion-based groups, a shared opinion against a social problem needs to become part of the social identity to mobilize a group (Bliuc et al., 2007; McGarty et al., 2009). Such shared opinions make the group members behave according to the perceived norms. These opinion-based groups are specifically relevant for understanding collective action and are the antecedent of politicized emerging identities (McGarty et al., 2009). Based on this model, we considered that manipulating acceptance of the 99% identity as a norm would trigger a shared identity based on the rejection of inequality.

Method

Pre-Registered Hypotheses

(https://osf.io/he6pn/?view_only=50d0adf1c3a74c64adc9278cfbe88f4f).

In Study 3, we preregistered three hypotheses.

Hypothesis 1: We predicted an indirect effect. The relation between the experimental condition (most students identify with the 99% vs. Control) and the intolerance toward economic inequality will be mediated by the levels of identification

with the 99% identity, controlling by middle-class identity. In the sense that in the condition of the 99% identity, participants will identify more strongly with the 99%, which will lead to intolerance toward economic inequality.

Intolerance toward economic inequality measured in two different ways: (a) H1a measured with the Support for Economic Inequality Scale (Wiwad et al., 2019); and (b) H1b measured with the income differences item "income differences in Spain too large?" (García-Castro et al., 2020; García-Sánchez, et al., 2018).

H2: We predicted an indirect effect. The relation between the experimental condition (most students identify with the 99% identity vs. Control) and collective actions will be mediated by the levels of identification with the 99% identity, controlling by middle-class identity. In the sense that the condition of the 99% identity, participants will identify more strongly with the 99%, which will lead to collective actions in the framework of economic inequality.

Participants and Research Design

In this experiment, for a medium effect size (r = .25), we computed the sample size required for finding an indirect effect. The results showed that for obtaining a power of .80 (considering an alpha level .05), we needed at least 160 participants. To increase the statistical power, we therefore planned to recruit a minimum of 200 and a maximum of 250 observations after exclusions.

The sample was composed of 363 students. Twenty-seven were excluded from the data analysis because they did not have the following preregistered exclusion criteria requirements: 18 participants who were not native Spanish speakers and nine who wrongly completed the memory check. The final sample consisted of 336 participants[4] (245 women, 90 men, and 1 "other") between the ages of 18 and 50 ($M = 23.22$, $SD = 4.44$). We conducted a sensitivity analysis using G*Power (Faul et al., 2009) to determine the minimum effect size the current study could detect. The results showed that with this sample size ($N = 336$), with $\alpha = 0.05$, and $1\text{-}\beta = 0.80$, the minimum effect size that we could detect for a multiple regression analysis with four predictors was $f^2 = 0.04$.

Study 3 was a single factor, between-subjects design with the perceived social norm as an independent factor (99% condition = 184 participants vs. Control condition = 152 participants). In the experimental condition, we manipulated perceived social norms

of percentage of students (in-group) who thought that people tended to highly identify with the 99% category.

Experimental Manipulation

Previously, we conducted a pilot study with 122 participants (76 women, 37 men) between the ages of 18 and 62 ($M = 22.92$, $SD = 7.94$). We tested one experimental condition (the 99% condition) versus two alternative control conditions (see supplementary materials). We conducted a t-test for independent samples on identification with the 99% between the experimental condition and control conditions. We found that those assigned to the 99% condition identified more with the 99% ($M = 4.30$; $SD = 1.73$), than those in one of the control conditions ($M = 3.38$; $SD = 1.16$; t [120] $= 4.339$, $p < .001$, $d = .62$).

Based on the pilot study's results, participants were randomly assigned to the experimental condition (99% Condition) or the control condition. We manipulated the perceived social norms with the 99% category with a fictitious news: "The 99% generation concerned about economic inequality. Most university students identify with an identity called 99%, which is part of a social movement that combats economic inequality." The control condition was a news article about mobile phone addiction, "21% of young people are at risk of being addicted to new technologies," that also induced threat but not at the economic level After reading the news in both conditions, we asked participants to think of three words they were thinking about when reading the news (see supplementary materials).

Measures

Memory check. One item was used to measure if participants had read and understood the news: "What is the news mainly about?" They had two alternatives to answer depending on the condition presented, the news was about the 99% or about addiction to mobile phones. Participants who chose the wrong answer were discarded from the analysis.

Group identification (99%, lower class and middle-class). We used the same measures in Study 2, to what extent they identified with the 99% ($\alpha = .92$), middle-class ($\alpha = .92$), or low class ($\alpha = .92$).

Intolerance toward economic inequality. As in Study 2, we had two ways for measuring this construct: the Support for Economic Inequality Scale (α = .92) and the income differences item.

Collective actions. We use the same measure as in Study 2 (α = .92).

Sociodemographic. The same sociodemographic as in previous studies were requested.

Procedure

An incidental sampling was carried out with pregraduate psychology students of a university in southern Spain. The study was conducted through a web link on the Qualtrics platform, and the collaboration was voluntary and anonymous. To encourage participation 50 euros were raffled.

Results

We conducted a t-test for independent samples on identification with the 99% identity. As expected, those assigned to the 99% condition identified more with the 99% identity (M = 4.32; SD = 1.18), than those in the control condition (M = 3.65; SD = 1.02, t [334] = 5.521, $p < .001$, d = .61).

Mediational Analysis

Then, we carried out three mediation analyses with PROCESS (Model 4; Hayes & Scharkow, 2013) to test the role of the 99% identity as a mediator of the relationships between the manipulated condition (1 = “99% condition” ; 0 = “Control condition”) and the intolerance toward economic inequality and the collective actions as preregistered. We used 10,000 bootstrap samples to estimate bias-corrected standard errors and 95% percentile confidence intervals for the indirect effects. We controlled by the middle-class identity, sex, age, and political orientation.

Neither the total effect of the 99% condition on intolerance toward economic inequality (measured by Wiwad et al., 2019; b = 0.05, 95% CI [−0.15, 0.25]; p = .628) nor the direct effect (b = −0.04, 95% CI [−0.25, 0.18]; p = .738) were significant. Otherwise, the indirect effect via the 99% identity was significant (b = 0.09, 95% CI [0.03, 0.16]). Concerning Hypothesis 1b, neither the total effect of the 99% condition on intolerance toward economic inequality (measured by income differences item; b = −0.11,

95% CI [−0.37, 0.14]; p = .384) nor the direct effect (b = −0.25, 95% CI [−0.51, 0.01]; p = .063) were significant. Otherwise, the indirect effect via the 99% identity was significant (b = 0.14, 95% CI [0.06,0.24]). Thus, results supported Hypotheses 1a and 1b (see Figure 6.1)

Neither the total effect of the 99% condition on collective actions (b = −0.01, 95% CI [−0.27, 0.24]; p = .919) nor the direct effect (b = −0.12, 95% CI [−0.38, 0.14]; p = .364) were significant. Otherwise, the indirect effect via the 99% identity was significant (b = 0.11, 95% CI [0.03, 0.21]). Results supported Hypothesis 2 (see Figure 6.1).

Discussion

In Study 3, we confirmed our three hypotheses. We found indirect effects, showing that the condition in which we manipulated perceived social norms over the 99% (vs. control condition) was related to a greater identification with the 99%, which in turn was related with greater intolerance toward economic inequality and a greater willingness to participate in collective actions.

These results informed us about the mobilizing potential of the 99% identity when controlling for middle-class identification. However, our main research question remained whether identification with the 99% mobilizes people against economic inequality when it is directly compared with a middle-class identification. Thus, in Study 4 we compared a 99% identification scenario against a middle-class once again using bogus information about the acceptance of social norms among students as a trigger.

Study 4

According to the results found in Study 3, in which the 99% identity mediated the relationship between the manipulated condition (vs. control) and intolerance toward economic inequality and collective actions, in the present preregistered study (https://osf.io/b4wu3/?view_only=ea7f4be019e841eb863ce402d3e0133c), we wanted to explore these predictions experimentally by manipulating the perceived social norms (Bliuc et al., 2007; McGarty et al., 2009) of supporting the 99% and the middle-class.

Method

Non-Preregistered Hypothesis

Hypothesis 1: We predicted an indirect effect. The relation between the experimental condition (most students identify with the 99% vs. Middle-class condition) and the intolerance toward economic inequality will be mediated by the levels of identification with the 99% identity, controlling by middle-class identity. In the sense that in the condition of 99% identity, participants will identify more strongly with the 99%, which will lead to intolerance toward economic inequality.

Intolerance toward economic inequality will be measured in two different ways: (a) H1a measured with the Support for Economic Inequality Scale (Wiwad et al., 2019); and (b) H1b measured with the income differences item "income differences in Spain too large?" (García-Castro et al., 2020; García-Sánchez, et al., 2018).

Hypothesis 2: We predicted an indirect effect. The relation between the experimental condition (most students identify with the 99% identity vs. Middle-class condition) and collective actions will be mediated by the levels of identification with the 99% identity, controlling by middle-class identity. In the sense that the condition of 99% identity, participants will identify more strongly with the 99%, which will lead to collective actions in the framework of economic inequality.

Participants and Research Design

Based on power analysis for a linear multiple regression with two predictors, getting a power of 1-β = 0.80 with α = 0.05, for a medium effect size (f^2 = .15), we needed at least 68 participants per condition. We therefore planned to recruit a minimum of 140.

After removing incomplete data, 151 participants took part in the study. We excluded seven participants because they were not Spanish speakers and 17 participants because they wrongly answered the memory check (preregistered exclusion criteria requirements). The final sample consisted of 127 participants[5] (96 women and 31 men) between the ages of 18 and 57 (M = 22.20, SD = 6.42). We conducted a sensitivity analysis using G*Power (Faul et al., 2009) to determine the effect size the current study could detect. The results showed that with this sample size (N = 127), with α = 0.05 and 1-β = 0.80, the minimum effect size that we could detect for a multiple regression analysis with two predictors was f^2 = 0.07.

Study 4 was a single factor, between-subjects design with perceived identification social norms manipulation as an independent variable (99% condition = 61 participants vs. Middle-class condition = 66 participants).

Experimental Manipulation

First, we explained participants via online instructions that the experimental task required the participation of three participants to be carried out. After 10 seconds in which the program was presumably searching for other participants available online, we provided bogus feedback that three other people were connected at the same time (see supplementary material; Figure S1). Then, the fictitious news were presented depending on the condition and participants were instructed to read them carefully.

Participants were randomly assigned to one of the two experimental conditions. We manipulated the perceived social norms of identification with the 99% category using a similar piece of news as in Study 3 (“The 99% generation”). The information was modified for the middle-class perceived norms conditions in the news article “The middle-class generation” (see supplementary material).

Then participants entered a fictitious opinion forum where other nonreal three participants have given their opinion of the news. The opinion forum varied depending on the condition presented (e.g., "How interesting is the news? I have always thought I was 99%/middle-class"; "I agree with the news, most of the people I know belong to the 99%/middle-class"; and "There is no doubt with these data, I would say that my environment is 99%/middle-class"). In this way, we also reinforce the group-affirmation, which increases the prominence of social identity (Ehrlich & Gramzow, 2015).

To reinforce the manipulation, participants had to type a message to include in the chat giving their opinion on the news. In addition, we asked them for three words that were related to the news they had read.

Measures

Memory check. One item was used to measure if the participants had read and understood the news: “What is the news mainly about?” They had two alternatives to answer depending on the condition presented (i.e., “Most people feel they belong to the 99%” or “Most people feel like they belong to the middle-class”).

Group identification (99% and Middle-class). For our first dependent variable, we asked in a Likert scale (1 = "Not at all"; 7 = "Very much") to what extent they identified with the 99% (α = .90) and middle-class (α = .90), using the same measures in Study 3.

Intolerance Toward Economic Inequality. We used the same two measures used in Study 3: Support for Economic Inequality Scale (Wiwad et al., 2019; α = .67) and the income differences item.

Collective Actions. We used the same scale from previous studies to measure willingness to participate in collective actions (α = .90).

Sociodemographic. The same sociodemographic as in previous studies were requested.

Procedure

We followed the same procedure for recruiting participants as in Study 3.

Results

As expected, a t-test showed that those assigned to the 99% condition identified more with the 99% identity ($M = 4.43$; $SD = 1.08$) than those in the middle-class condition ($M = 3.82$; $SD = 1.53$; $t\,[125] = 2.621$, $p = .010$, $d = .46$). Besides, those assigned to the middle-class condition did not identify significantly more with middle-class identity ($M = 4.80$; $SD = 1.25$) than those in the 99% condition ($M = 4.59$; $SD = 1.27$; $t\,[125] = -.217$, $p = .334$, $d = .17$.

Mediational Analysis

Similar to Study 3, we did a three mediation analysis with PROCSESS (Model 4; Hayes & Scharkow, 2013) to test the role of the 99% identity as a mediator of the predicted relationships. We used 10,000 bootstrap samples to estimate bias-corrected standard errors and 95% percentile confidence intervals for the indirect effects. We controlled by the middle-class identity, sex, age, and political orientation as covariates.

Neither the total effect of the 99% condition on intolerance toward economic inequality (measured by Wiwad et al, 2019; $b = 0.11$, 95% CI [−0.19, 0.40]; $p = .482$), nor the indirect effect via the 99% identity ($b = 0.03$, 95% CI [−0.05, 0.12]), or the direct effect ($b = 0.07$, 95% CI [−0.23, 0.38]; $p = .635$) were significant. Concerning Hypothesis

1b, neither the total effect on intolerance toward economic inequality (measured income differences item; $b = 0.21$, 95% CI [−0.21, 0.64]; $p = .318$), nor the indirect effect via the 99% identity ($b = 0.03$, 95% CI [−0.08, 0.13]), or the direct effect ($b = 0.19$, 95% CI [−0.25, 0.62]; $p = .402$) were significant. Thus, the results did not support Hypotheses 1a and 1b.

Neither the total effect of 99% condition on collective actions ($b = -0.01$, 95% CI [−0.42, 0.39]; $p = .946$) nor the direct effect ($b = -0.15$, 95% CI [−0.55, 0.26]; $p = .477$) were significant. Otherwise, the indirect effect via the 99% identity was significant ($b = 0.13$, 95% CI [0.01, 0.29]). The results supported Hypothesis 2 (see Figure 6.1).

Discussion

As in Study 3, in Study 4, we wanted to examine the indirect effects of manipulated social norms (99% vs. Middle-class) on intolerance toward economic inequality and collective actions. We did not find a significant indirect effect in intolerance toward economic inequality, but we found the predicted pattern for collective actions.

We also found that the 99% identity predicted collective actions above the middle-class identity when the perceived acceptance of the 99% category was salient as a norm. This is important because the middle-class salience condition provides a stronger test for our hypothesis than a neutral condition (as used in Study 3), providing converging evidence for the mobilizing effect of the 99% identity.

On the contrary, identification with the middle-class did not predict any of our criterion variables. Surprisingly, in this last study, the identification of the 99% identity did not predict inequality intolerance, although the pattern consistently emerged in the previous three studies. Situational factors (e.g., Study 4 was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, which might have affected global levels of inequality awareness) or random effects might account for this unexpected result.

Pooled Analysis

Across studies, there was evidence that the 99% identity predicted intolerance toward economic inequality (income differences item). However, we did not find this effect in Study 4. To account for these inconclusive results, we carried out a pooled analysis (Curran & Hussong, 2009).

Using a database consisting of Study 3 and 4 ($N = 463$), we did conditional effects analysis with PROCESS (Model 4; Hayes & Scharkow, 2013) to test the role of the 99% identity as a mediator of the predicted relationships (Hypotheses 1a, 1b, and 2 of Studies 3 and 4). We used 10,000 bootstrap samples to estimate bias-corrected standard errors and 95% percentile confidence intervals for the indirect effects. We controlled by the middle-class identity, sex, age, and political orientation as covariates.

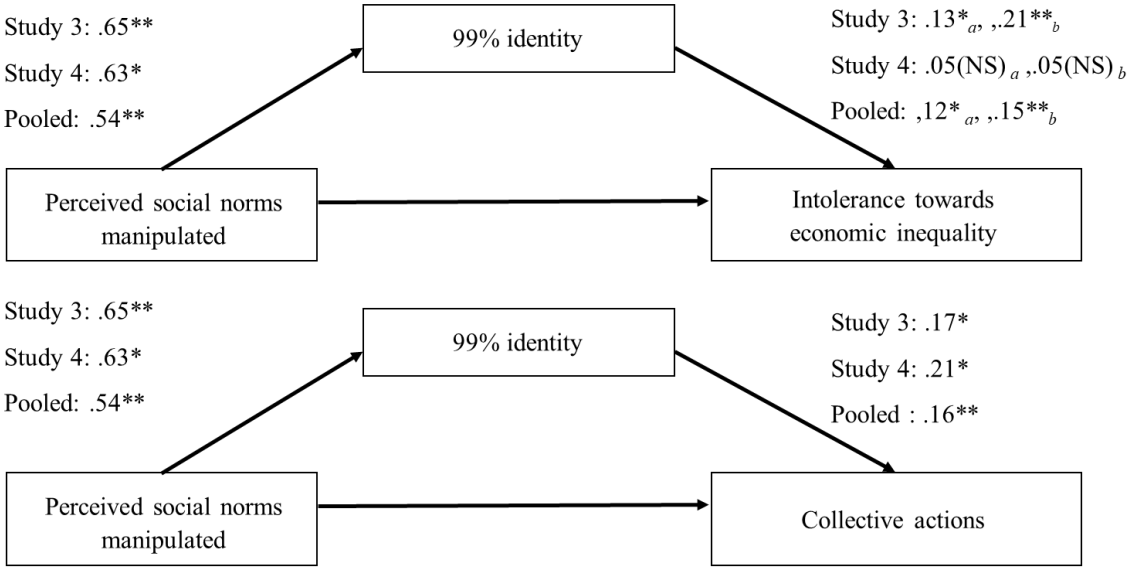
Neither the total effect of the 99% condition on intolerance toward economic inequality (measured by Wiwad et al, 2019; $b = 0.07$, 95% CI [−0.09, 0.23]; $p = .383$) nor the direct effect ($b = 0.01$, 95% CI [−0.16, 0.17]; $p = .958$) were significant. Otherwise, the indirect effect via the 99% identity was significant ($b = 0.07$, 95% CI [0.02, 0.12]).

Neither the total effect of the 99% condition on intolerance toward economic inequality (measured by income differences item; $b = −0.01$, 95% CI [−0.19, 0.16]; $p = .384$) nor the direct effect ($b = −0.10$, 95% CI [−0.27, 0.08]; $p = .062$) were significant. Otherwise, the indirect effect via the 99% identity was significant ($b = 0.08$, 95% CI [0.03, 0.14). Thus, these results supported Hypotheses 1a and 1b.

Concerning Hypothesis 2, neither the total effect of the 99% condition on collective actions ($b = −0.01$, 95% CI [−0.16, 0.14]; $p = .883$) nor the direct effect ($b = −0.10$, 95% CI [−0.25, 0.06]; $p = .225$) were significant. Otherwise, the indirect effect via the 99% identity was significant ($b = 0.09$, 95% CI [0.04, 0.14]). A summary of results appears in Figure 6.1.

Figure 6.1

Identification with the 99% identity as a mediator between condition and intolerance towards economic inequality$_{a, b}$ and collective actions in Studies 3, 4 and pooled analysis.



Note: in condition 0 participants passed by control condition/middle class condition; in condition 1 participants perceived identification with the 99% through the social norm. All confidence intervals for indirect effects are a BCa bootstrapped CI based in 5000 samples. The subscript a and b indicates the measure used to intolerance towards economic inequality.

** $p \leq 0.01$; **$p \leq .001$*

Discussion

The pooled analysis corroborated that the manipulated social norm was related to intolerance toward economic inequality through identification with the 99% category but not directly. The same indirect pattern was consistently shown for collective actions. These results remain robust when controlling for sex, age, political orientation, and middle-class identity.

General Discussion

The results from four studies show that the politicized shared identity of the 99% predicted greater intolerance toward economic inequality and greater willingness to act collectively. In Study 1, we verified how the 99% identity, above the rest of identities predicted a greater intolerance toward economic inequality with a general community

sample. Subsequently, in Study 2 we replicated these results using a middle-class sample. In contrast, middle-class identity was not predictive of our main dependent variables. Also, in Study 3 and Study 4, and in a pooled analysis of these two studies, we corroborated these findings using experimental methods. The results held after controlling by political orientation, sex, age, and middle-class identity.

In short, we made two important contributions to the literature in this paper. First, we provided evidence that the 99% identification was related to opposition to inequality. Group identity helps to face economic threat (Fritsche & Jugert, 2017), and due to the prescriptive content of such identity, it produces intolerance toward it (García-Castro et al., 2020; Wiwad et al., 2019). As previous literature shows, the lower classes do not identify with their identity (Jetten, et al., 2017; Kuppens et al., 2015) and the middle-classes fear losing their status (Jetten et al., 2017). The S99/S1 ratio may reduce the categorization into multiple subgroups, with an outgroup-focused motivation to engage in action and the interest in improving the status of the low class groups (Radke et al., 2020; Stiglitz, 2012). Importantly, our results supported this among the middle-class.

Second, using the 99% as a superordinate category is a way to mobilize the middle-class, whereas the middle-class identity alone does not promote social change. Research on collective actions reveals the role of politicized identity as a predictor of social mobilization (Curtin et al., 2016; McGarty et al., 2009; Simon & Klandermans, 2001; van Zomeren et al., 2008). The definition of collective actions, which is ns action taken by a group member who is acting as a representative of their group with the goal of improving their group's conditions (Wright, 2009) implies that disadvantaged groups take such actions. However, the advantaged groups, such as middle-class members, can also participate in many of the relevant behaviors designed to advance the cause of the minority group (Radke et al., 2020; Subašic et al., 2008). One of the factors in achieving social change is mobilizing the majority (e.g., triangulation; Simon & Klandermans, 2001) and the capacity for change of advantaged groups is greater (Drury & Kaiser, 2014). Categorization at the level of a superordinate group makes the middle-class politicized and allows a focus on their shared interests with the lower class identities.

According to how norms can shape or change attitudes towards inequality, group identity plays a relevant role. Social norms per se may not be enough to influence people's

behavior. Within the framework of free-rider theories, a member of the middle-class may not engage in change if as an individual, or as a group, other people are already working on it (Olson, 1971). Our results highlight that these norms do not have a direct effect on attitudinal and behavioral change, but they trigger identification processes that can promote such change (Smith & Louis, 2009). The absence of direct effect is a limitation of these studies that needs to be further explored in future studies. Other ways of increasing group identification (e.g., manipulating group efficacy) might help to strengthen the causal relationship.

Taken together, these results could have important theoretical implications. According to the literature about the psychology of alliances (Radke et al., 2020; Subašic et al., 2008) the 99% identity can mobilize the middle-class to tolerate less the economic system, which mostly affects lower class individuals, but also their own group. Furthermore, what might initially emerge as an opinion-based group may acquire the articulation of an effective politicized collective identity (McGarthy et al., 2009; Simon & Klandermans, 2001). If we analyse movements such as Occupy Wall Street or 15M/Indignados, most of them have disappeared as an opinion-based group. However, they fostered the development of political alternatives that crystalized into new activist groups, political parties, or specific proposals the main political parties' programs included, thus having an impact on social change at the political level.

Importantly, working class identity may not need these new emerging identities to mobilize because it is by itself politicized (Simon & Klandermans, 2001). Still, many people who belong to the lower classes do not identify with their own group and therefore demobilize (Jetten et al., 2017; Kuppens et al., 2015). Among the possible limitations of our study, we must mention that Study 4 was conducted in a very particular and threatening social context, due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In summary, our results confirm that people who identify with a novel identity, in our case the 99% identity, which has a prescriptive character of rejecting the economic inequality, is a potential predictor of the mobilization of groups that are not politicized such as the middle-class. This way, the middle-class can mobilize toward social change through collective action.

Footnotes

1. People in middle-income households who earn a salary between 75% and 200% of the median in Spain (OCDE, 2019; https://www.oecd.org/social/under-pressure-the-squeezed-middle-class-689afed1-en.htm). This means having an annual income of between 13.573 euros and 36.195 euros (INE, 2017; https://www.ine.es/index.htm).
2. Also, with exploratory purposes, we decided to include a new rich identity category, the upper class identity, to see it both identities behaved the same way. The rich identity can have more negative evaluative connotations; thus upper class may be a better control for our hypotheses.
3. In our preregistered study, we divided this hypothesis into two hypotheses where we predicted activism and political participation. Due to its high correlation (r = .821; p < .001), we decided to group political participation and activism into "collective actions."
4. The survey collected more participants than those preregistered because it was open for a longer time and we did not want to lose this information.
5. We deviated from preregistration because we did not collect the planned sample. This is due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Supplementary Materials

pertaining to

"We are the 99%": Consequences of Politicized Identity in the Established Middle-Class

This section contains the supplementary material in addition to the Chapter 6. Specially measures materials including the items used for each variable and experimental manipulations material.

Study 1-2: Measures.

Pilot Study and Study 3-4. Experimental manipulations.

Finally appear measures that have been discarded to facilities understanding from the original manuscript for being inconsistent.

All materials are available at the following OSF link: https://osf.io/cxa96/?view_only=e993a33ab90946fa817fd50ed5ecd6ed

Study 1

Information about how wealth is distributed in the world

Graph of how wealth is distributed in Spain retrieved from (https://es.statista.com/grafico/12623/el-1-mas-rico-de-espana-acapara-el-25-de-la-riqueza-del-pais/). In addition, the following information was presented:

"According to the latest data from Intermón Oxfam, half of the planet's wealth is in the hands of 1% of the world's population, that is, the remaining half is distributed among 99% of the planet's inhabitants (if wealth were a pie divided in two, the richest 1% appropriates one half while the other corresponds to 99% of the world's inhabitants). Currently, only 8 people have the same wealth as 3,600 million people, 99%. Although these differences are not so extreme, something similar happens in Spain: The richest 1% of people own 25.1% of the total wealth; 99% keep the remaining wealth."

Main variables items

Group identification (99%, Poor, Rich, and Middle-class). In relation to the above information, we ask you to specify, on a scale from a to 7, to what extent you feel identified with each group (99%, rich, poor, middle class), where 1 is "Not at all" and 7 "A lot".

- To what extent do you identify with the 99%/ rich people/ poor people/ middle class?
- I feel a bond with the 99%/rich people/poor people/middle class
- I often think about the fact that I am part of the 99%/rich people/poor people/middle class.
- Being part of the 99%/rich people/poor people/middle class is an important part of my identity.
- Being part of the 99%/rich people/poor people/middle class is a big part of how I see myself.
- I have a lot in common with most of the 99%/rich people/poor people/middle class.
- I look like most of the 99%/rich people/poor people/middle class.
- Those who make up the 99%/rich people/poor people/middle class have a lot in common.

- Those who make up the 99%/rich people/poor people/middle class are very similar to each other.

Intolerance toward economic inequality. Being 1 “very small” and 7 “extremely large”, to what extent would you rate the following question?

- To what extent are the income differences in Spain too great?

Perceived illegitimacy. Being -3 “totally disagree” and 3 “Totally agree”, to what extent would you rate the following statements?

- Power and status differences between groups in Spain are legitimate.
- Power and status differences between groups in Spain are fair.

Meritocracy. Being 1 “Strongly disagree” and 7 “Strongly agree”, to what extent would you rate the following statements?

- It is good to have an economic system that rewards those who try.
- The gap between social classes reflects the natural order of things.
- People who work hard manage to succeed in life.
- Discrimination does not prevent members of disadvantaged groups from getting ahead, if they work hard.
- With hard work, members of disadvantaged groups manage to climb the social ladder just like anyone else.
- Spain is an open society where anyone can achieve higher status through hard work.
- Most of the people who do not progress in our society should not blame the system: they are the only ones to blame.
- The economic position of people is a product of their achievements.
- There are many people who are poor because they do not like to work.
- If people work hard, they get everything they set out to do.
- If people work hard, they almost always get what they want.
- Advancing in Spanish society is possible for all people who make an effort.
- If someone tries hard enough, they can move up the social ladder.

Study 2

Information about how wealth is distributed in the world

Graph of how wealth is distributed in Spain retrieved from (https://es.statista.com/grafico/12623/el-1-mas-rico-de-espana-acapara-el-25-de-la-riqueza-del-pais/). In addition, the following information was presented:

"According to the latest data from Intermón Oxfam, half of the planet's wealth is in the hands of 1% of the world's population, that is, the remaining half is distributed among 99% of the planet's inhabitants (if wealth were a pie divided in two, the richest 1% appropriates one half while the other corresponds to 99% of the world's inhabitants). Currently, only 8 people have the same wealth as 3,600 million people, 99%. Although these differences are not so extreme, something similar happens in Spain: The richest 1% of people own 25.1% of the total wealth; 99% keep the remaining wealth. This can be interpreted in terms of class, according to the latest data from the INE, the middle class has annual incomes of between 13,573 euros and 36,195 euros. Therefore, below this income would be framed the lower class, and above, the upper class or rich people. In the graph you can see how wealth is distributed according to social class."

Main variables items

Group identification (99%, rich, upper class, and middle-class). In relation to the above information, we ask you to specify, on a scale from a to 7, to what extent you feel identified with each group (99%, rich, upper class, middle class), where 1 is "Not at all" and 7 "A lot".

- To what extent do you identify with the 99%/ rich people/ upper class/ middle class?
- I feel a bond with the 99%/rich people/upper class/middle class.
- I feel in solidarity with 99%/rich people/upper class/middle class.
- I feel committed to the 99%/rich people/upper class/middle class.
- I'm glad I'm 99%/rich people/upper class/middle class.
- I think 99%/rich people/upper class/middle class have a lot to be proud of.
- It's nice to be 99%/rich people/upper class/middle class.
- Being 99%/rich people/upper class/middle class gives me a good feeling.
- I often think about the fact that I am part of the 99%/rich people/upper class/middle class.
- Being part of the 99%/rich people/upper class/middle class is an important part of my identity.

- Being part of the 99%/rich people/upper class/middle class is a big part of how I see myself.
- I have a lot in common with the majority of the 99%/rich people/upper class/middle class.
- I look like most of the 99%/rich people/upper class/middle class.

Intolerance toward economic inequality. Being 1 “Strongly disagree” and 7 “Strongly agree”, to what extent would you rate the following statements?

- The negative consequences of economic inequality have been greatly exaggerated.
- Economic inequality is causing many of the problems in Spain.
- I am very concerned about the degree of economic inequality that exists in Spain.
- Economic inequality is not a problem.
- We must do everything possible to reduce the economic inequality that exists in Spain today.

Collective actions. Next, we ask you to answer with what probability you would participate in actions to reduce economic inequality. Being 1 "Never" and 7 "Very often", to what extent would you be willing to carry out the following actions?

- I would vote for political parties whose priorities are reducing economic inequality.
- I would contact political representatives to promote policies to combat economic inequality.
- I would donate money to a political party or organization that wants to combat economic inequality.
- I would belong to a political party, union, or organization against economic inequality.
- I would participate in union or political group activities to combat economic inequality.
- I would participate in peaceful demonstrations demanding the reduction of economic inequality.
- I would engage in nonviolent civil disobedience to protest laws that favour economic inequality.

- I would distribute political material against economic inequality.
- I would boycott products that maintain economic inequality.
- I would sign petitions against economic inequality.
- He would be active in movements against economic inequality.

Pilot study

Fictitious news of experimental manipulation (99%, Middle class, Control)

99% Condition. We manipulated the perceived social norms with the 99% with a fictitious news. The headline of the news said: “The 99% generation concerned about economic inequality. Most university students identify with an identity called 99%, which is part of a social movement that combats economic inequality”.

Also, the body of the news: “Economists, sociologists or political scientists, such as the Nobel Prize for economics Joseph Stiglitz or Nancy Fraser, speak of an identity called "99%". This identity has its origin in the unequal distribution of wealth on the planet, which, if it were a pie divided in two, the richest 1% of the population appropriates half of the wealth, while the remaining part corresponds to the 99% of the world's inhabitants. Recent research carried out at the University of Granada concludes that the majority of students, after knowing these data on global economic inequality, identify more with the 99% than with the identity of the middle or lower class.”

Additionally, an image appeared of a rioter holding a “We are the 99%” sign on Occupy Wall Street.

Control Condition. The control condition was a news article about mobile phones addiction. The headline of the news said: “21% of young people are at risk of being addicted to new technologies”.

Also, the body of the news: “Young people live glued to the mobile. It is an extension of their hands; it connects them with the world and makes them feel integrated. They are hooked on the phone and, in some cases, that dependency has led to addiction. According to a study on pathological behaviours on the Internet, carried out by the NGO Protégeles, which collaborates in programs of the European Commission, 21.3% of young people are at risk of becoming addicted to new technologies. 1.5% already is. They do not control their behaviour, which affects work and personal relationships”.

Additionally, an image appeared of a young person holding a mobile.

Middle Class Condition. We manipulated the perceived social norms with the middle class with a fictitious news. The headline of the news said: “Generation of the middle class. Most university students identify with the middle class and not with the identity of the 99%, which is part of a social movement that fights economic inequality.

Also, the body of the news: “Economists, sociologists or political scientists, such as the Nobel Prize for economics Joseph Stiglitz or Nancy Fraser, speak of an identity called "99%". This identity has its origins in the unequal distribution of wealth in the world. If the world’s wealth were a pie divided into two parts, the richest 1% of the population would own half of the wealth, while the remaining portion would belong to the 99% of the world’s inhabitants. A recent study carried out at the University of Granada concludes that the majority of students, after learning about these data on global economic inequality, identify more with the middle class that with the lower class or the so-called 99%.

Additionally, an image appeared of a rioter holding a “We are the 99%” sign on Occupy Wall Street.

Study 3

Fictitious news of experimental manipulation (99% vs. Control)

99% Condition. We manipulated the perceived social norms with the 99% with a fictitious news. The headline of the news said: “The 99% generation concerned about economic inequality. Most university students identify with an identity called 99%, which is part of a social movement that combats economic inequality”.

Also, the body of the news: “Economists, sociologists or political scientists, such as the Nobel Prize for economics Joseph Stiglitz or Nancy Fraser, speak of an identity called "99%". This identity has its origin in the unequal distribution of wealth on the planet, which, if it were a pie divided in two, the richest 1% of the population appropriates half of the wealth, while the remaining part corresponds to the 99% of the world's inhabitants. Recent research carried out at the University of Granada concludes that the majority of students, after knowing these data on global economic inequality, identify more with the 99% than with the identity of the middle or lower class.”

Additionally, an image appeared of a rioter holding a “We are the 99%” sign on Occupy Wall Street.

Control Condition. The control condition was a news article about mobile phones addiction. The headline of the news said: “21% of young people are at risk of being addicted to new technologies”.

Also, the body of the news: “Young people live glued to the mobile. It is an extension of their hands; it connects them with the world and makes them feel integrated. They are hooked on the phone and, in some cases, that dependency has led to addiction. According to a study on pathological behaviors on the Internet, carried out by the NGO Protégeles, which collaborates in programs of the European Commission, 21.3% of young people are at risk of becoming addicted to new technologies. 1.5% already is. They do not control their behavior, which affects work and personal relationships”.

Additionally, an image appeared of a young person holding a mobile.

Study 4

Fictitious news of experimental manipulation (99% vs. Middle class)

99% Condition. We manipulated the perceived social norms with the 99% with a fictitious news. The headline of the news said: “The 99% generation. Researchers from the University of Granada conclude in their latest study that the majority of the population identifies with a group popularly called 99%”

Also, the body of the news: “Economists, sociologists or political scientists, such as the Nobel Prize for economics Joseph Stiglitz, speak of an identity called "99%". This identity has its origin in the unequal distribution of wealth on the planet, which, if it were a pie divided in two, the richest 1% of the population appropriates half of the wealth, while the remaining part corresponds to the 99% of the world's inhabitants. The study found that the majority of the population, after knowing these data, identified more with the identity of the 99% than with other class identities, such as the middle-class identity.”.

Additionally, the same image of Study 3 appeared.

Middle Class Condition. We manipulated the perceived social norms with the middle class with a fictitious news. The headline of the news said: “The middle class

generation. Researchers from the University of Granada conclude in their latest study that the majority of the population identifies with a group popularly called middle class”

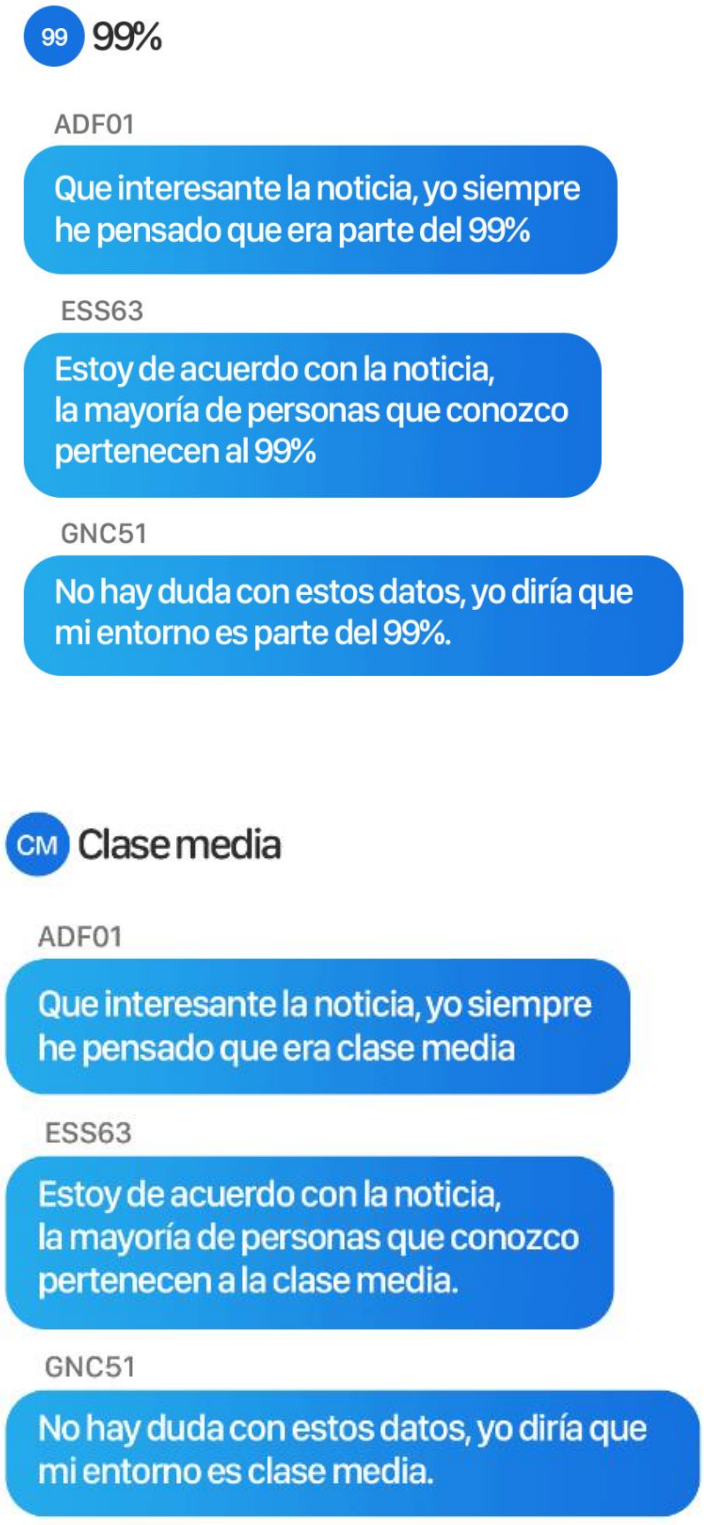
Also the body of the news: “Economists, sociologists or political scientists, such as the Nobel Prize for economics Joseph Stiglitz, speak of an identity called "middle class". This identity has its origin in the stratification of social class that applies to people with a medium socioeconomic level, which is located between the lower class and the upper class. In addition to their objective character, people who belong to the middle class also tend to have a certain mentality, political attitudes, consumer styles and moral notions. The study found that the majority of the population, after knowing these data, identified more with the middle-class identity than with other class identities, such as the low class and upper class identity”

Additionally, appeared an image of people walking on a busy street.

Forum opinion. Subsequently, the participants entered an opinion forum created with a moving image “gif” (both conditions) where the following comments from non-real participants appeared: (e.g., "How interesting are the news, I have always thought I was 99%/middle class." "I agree with the news, most of the people I know belong to the 99%/middle class" "There is no doubt with these data, I would say that my environment is 99%/middle class") (see image 1).

Figure S1.

Examples in images of the chat that appeared represented in the opinion forum (one for each condition; 99% and middle class)



To reinforce the manipulation participants had to type a message to include in the chat giving their opinion on the news.

DESCRIPTION OF ADDITIONAL MEASURES

Study 1

Measures

Here we discuss measures that were included in the first study that are not described in the main text.

Perceived economic inequality. Participants had to calculate the pay gap between a high- and low-ranking profession. Specifically, they had to give a figure for the current and ideal higher-rank salary, in the same way with the lower-rank salary.

Chapter 7

General Discussion and Conclusions

In the present dissertation, our main objective was to analyse the relationship between wealth-based identities—especially those politicised due to economic inequality—and social change. Thus, we examined how traditional (e.g., working-class) or broader (e.g., the 99%) class identities may lead to rejecting economic inequality and to taking action to confront it.

For this purpose, we conducted a total of thirteen studies. In two of these studies (Chapter 3), we qualitatively explore wealth-based group representations, focusing on the number of groups that people think about and mapping their stereotypes. Then, in three correlational studies (Chapter 4) we tested how identifying with specific wealth-based groups (i.e., the 99% and working-class identities) can help cope with the economic threats stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic (along with other variables such as having an interdependent self-construal). In four studies (Chapter 5), we again analysed the consequences of identifying with several politized wealth-based groups (e.g., common people, 99%, working-class identities), but also with nation related identities (e.g., national identity and collective narcissism) in two cultural contexts: the UK and Spain. Finally, we investigated the potential of the 99% identification versus middle-class identity to reject economic inequality through intolerance towards economic inequality and collective action intentions in two correlational studies (Chapter 6). Then we manipulated social norms to promote identification with the 99% in two experimental studies (vs. control condition; vs. middle-class condition), to establish a causal effect between identification with the 99% and social change.

We will next summarise the results obtained from the empirical works. To do this, we organise the discussion around the main questions we tried to answer within the current dissertation (see Table 2.1 for a summary of the goals, research questions, and hypotheses of the thesis). Furthermore, we will draw out the general implications and limitations of our studies. Finally, we will propose future lines of research.

1. Do people perceive that society is divided into two groups (based on their economic resources)?

In Study 1 (Chapter 3) our main objective was to understand the number of social classes people had in mind, the labels they used to name them, and the personal traits that attributed to them.

Regarding the number of groups perceived by the participants, instead of two "broad groups" (e.g., the 99% and 1%; the working class and the bourgeois; the haves and the have-nots), multiple distinct groups emerged. The corpus data showed a wide variety of labels that we classified into five main categories: *poor*, *lower and working classes*, *middle classes*, *upper classes*, and *rich and beyond*.

Although our results cannot establish a causal relationship between de degree of economic inequality and the division of society, our findings are in line with the salience of wealth hypothesis (Jetten et al., 2017, 2021): Inequality makes wealth an appropriate basis for categorizing groups based on wealth and therefore for describing individuals in a given society (Peters et al., 2022). Moreover, the "us vs. them" distinction promotes social comparison processes with evaluative consequences for all groups. This wealth-based differentiation not only affects the perception of social position but also their content.

2. Are groups with less wealth stereotyped more positively or negatively compared to wealthier groups?

As "us" similarities and "them" differences increase, it serve as the basis for the formation of stereotypes (Jetten et al., 2017, 2021). Our results were consistent with this and revealed several traits that people attribute to each of the wealth-based groups identified. Specifically, in Study 1 (Chapter 3) we observed that groups with less wealth were associated with more positive traits compared to groups with more wealth. Conversely, the wealthier group tended to be described with more negative traits.

In Study 2 we conducted a quantitative analysis to extend the scope of Study 1 by testing the relationship between each of the traits and the wealth-based groups. We hypothesized that participants would use a higher percentage of negative traits to characterize rich groups (compared to poor groups) and a higher percentage of positive traits when evaluating poor groups (compared to rich groups) **(H1).** We corroborated the qualitative results obtained from Study 1. The results revealed that most of the negative traits were associated with wealthier groups, and, on the other hand, positive traits were associated with the lower wealth groups. Particularly, this is noticeable in the case of the lower and working classes group and in the rich and beyond group. In addition, we examined the associations that exist between the differential valence traits (and their content) associated to the five wealth-based groups through psychometric networks. The

node density in the psychometric networks suggests that participants hold ambivalent stereotypes of wealth-based groups.

This pattern—poor-positive, and rich-negative—is stable. However, when examining trait by trait and their linkages, the results showed that the content of the stereotype sometimes changes. In line with the stereotype content model (Durante et al., 2013, 2017; Fiske et al., 2002), the results revealed that the very rich were perceived as cold (e.g., frivolous) but competent (e.g., competitive). In contrast, the poor were considered warm (e.g., humble) but incompetent (e.g., unambitious). The positive perception of poor people could be a compensation effect that may justify the system (Kay et al., 2007).

Although the results cannot affirm that inequality was the cause of stereotyping because it was not manipulated, theoretically the results are consistent with the effect of economic inequality on the horizontal (morality and kindness) and vertical (assertiveness and competence) dimensions of social perception (Abele et al., 2021; Jetten et al., 2021). That is, both poor and rich groups were stereotyped negatively in terms of competence (Tanjitpiyanond et al., 2022). Moreover, the stereotype of the rich group was affected mainly in the horizontal dimension—attributes derived from interpersonal relationships. These results support the idea that the rich are perceived as less kind and moral than the poor (Moreno-Bella et al., 2019).

3. Could shared social identification (such as the 99% and the working class) address the detrimental effects of economic threat and promote social change?

One of the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic was the widening economic gap between the haves and have-nots (Rodríguez-Bailón, 2020). This uncertain context can be threatening (e.g., an economic crisis that puts a country's economic resources at risk, Fritsche & Jugert, 2017) and can lead to support social change through collective actions in support of the ingroup (Fritsche et al., 2017) or in solidarity with other outgroups (Bukowski et al., 2019).

For these reasons, in Chapter 4 we aimed to test whether a shared identity—the extension of group boundaries because of a common economic grievance—was a useful group process for dealing with the economic threat stemming from the pandemic. In Studies 1, 2, and 3 we corroborated that identification with both the 99% and the working

class (but also interdependent self-construal; see Chapter 4) mediated the positive relationship between collective economic threat and a) intolerance towards economic inequality (**H2**) and b) intentions to take collective action against it (**H3**). A pooled analysis of the three studies corroborated these results.

These findings extend the literature on the psychosocial consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic (Bavel et al., 2020; Jetten et al., 2020). In particular, the results unveil forms of resistance to the potential threat posed by the global pandemic. For instance, studies investigating the pathogenic threat suggest that it increases xenophobia, right-wing authoritarianism, and social conservatism (Karwowski et al., 2020; Pazhoohi & Kingstone, 2021). It also triggered the emergence of conspiracy theories and the spread of misinformation (Shahsavari et al., 2020). However, in response to such a threat, research has also placed value on shared common identities as a way of mitigating adverse outcomes (i.e., inclusionary attitudes towards migrants; Adam-Troian & Bagci, 2021).

According to the elaborated social identity model (ESIM), a highly threatening event such as a global pandemic exerts an influence on crowd social norms (Drury & Reicher, 1999, 2009). Our results extended the literature by showing that participating in social actions against the pandemic (e.g., neighborhood actions to prevent the most vulnerable population from controlling the disease or initiatives to collect financial resources for the most affected people) may lead to a shared identity.

4. Does identification with wealth-based groups (e.g., social classes) and national identities promote social change in the same way*?*

Given that social movements against economic inequality have shaped diverse expressions of identity, such as the "common people" versus economic elites (e.g., the Yellow Vests), the 99% versus the 1% (Occupy Wall Street), or the working class versus the ruling classes, Studies 1a, 1b, 2a, and 2b (Chapter 5) considered their associative potential with social change in two different cultural contexts (UK and Spain). Moreover, it is not only progressive social movements that have emerged to address inequality but also reactionary movements that seek to maintain the status quo. Therefore, nation-based identities (i.e., national identity and collective narcissism) were also analysed.

In short, in Studies 1a and 1b we found that identification with common people was positively associated with a) intolerance of economic inequality and b) collective

actions for change (in both countries). In contrast, national collective narcissism was negatively associated with a) intolerance of economic inequality and b) collective actions for change. These results sought to be confirmed in Studies 2a and 2b, also including identification with the 99% and the working-class.

The results indicated that the potential of common identity may be limited to attitudinal aspects and not to the intention to address inequality in the UK. However, in Spain identification with common people was associated with collective action intentions to maintain status quo (not corroborating **H4,** as we predicted the opposite relationship). According to Simon and Klandermans (2001), identification with common people may contain elements that define it as a politicised identity: the belief in a shared grievance, blaming an outgroup (i.e., the economic elite), and the demand for the rest of society to act. However, the group of common people does not appear to be economically deprived. On the contrary, they embrace a populist narrative that brings to the foreground the division between common people and elites as a result of a populist discourse around an unjust society (Elchardus & Spruyt, 2016). Consequently, the content of their grievances may take on an 'anti-system' nature, directed against the economic elite, or an 'exclusionary' nature, seeking to blame another outgroup (e.g., immigrants; Hameleers et al., 2021; Jagers & Walgrave, 2007). For these reasons, identification with common people has fluid characteristics in terms of politicisation, that is, it can shift across the progressive-conservative ideological spectrum (thin ideology; Elchardus & Spruyt, 2016; Mudde, 2004) and is deeply anchored in the social and cultural context.

On the other hand, a way of addressing inequalities is by the adoption of politicised wealth-based identities. The 99% share similarities with the identity of common people, in that both express economic grievances (e.g., the 99% versus the 1%; common people versus the economic elites). However, the 99% seem to possess a greater capacity to bring together individuals from different socio-economic backgrounds and mobilise them against a perceived illegitimate situation (van Zomeren et al., 2008), more unambiguously than the identity of common people. This may be because identification with the 99% is related to the material reality—it considers that the common grievances are explained by the unequal distribution of resources. In line with this, the working class also refers to material reality, however the consequences of aligning with the working-class identity displayed variations between countries. While in Spain identification with working class identity predicted system change attitudes, this was not the case in the UK.

This may be because the British working class has been stereotyped and marginalised within the political and social context (Jones, 2011). As such, it may have momentarily lost its politicized component in this context.

Finally, we found a greater reactionary potential of collective narcissism—over and above national identification—in both Spain and the UK. Specifically, collective narcissism was negatively associated with intolerance of inequality and collective actions for change, and positively with reactionary actions to maintain the status quo (**H5**). Collective narcissism provides a framework for understanding populism across the right-wing ideological spectrum. This may be due to the "nativist" element of populist narratives (e.g., national populisms, Golec de Zavala & Keenan, 2021). National collective narcissism played a stable role across studies and countries. These results are in line with those showing that national collective narcissism has been associated with a lower willingness to engage in collective action for refugees (Górska et al., 2020), and higher support for Brexit to limit immigration (Golec de Zavala et al., 2017; Marchlewska et al., 2018).

5. Does identification with the 99% predict social change over-identification with the middle-class?

In five studies in this thesis, we found a correlational effect whereby identification with the 99% was positively associated with intolerance of economic inequality and collective action to challenge economic inequality. In Chapter 6 we set out to extend its potential when compared with other wealth-based identities (i.e., the middle class).

First, in Studies 1 and 2, we found that identification with the 99%—over and above identification with the middle class—was positively related to intolerance towards economic inequality **(H6),** and collective actions to confront economic inequality (**H7**). Our results confirmed that people who belong to the middle-class and identify with the 99% identity, are more intolerant toward economic inequality and have a greater disposition to participate in collective actions. In fact, middle-class identification did not predict our outcome variables. These results corroborate the mobilising effect of the 99% *vis-à-vis* other wealth-based identities.

Following a recategorization process (Gaertner and Dovidio, 2000), these results suggest that using the 99% as a superordinate group is a way of mobilising the middle

class. This is important because middle-class identity alone does not promote social change. What could be the non-mobilising reasons for the middle class? Unlike the identities mentioned above (the 99%, working class even common people), their identity expression does not seem to easily locate a common grievance or an outgroup to blame. Furthermore, the middle-class position is associated with high anxiety and fear of falling (Ehrenreich, 1990; Jetten et al., 2017). As such, people identifying with the middle class may be more interested in their own fate than in the structural change of economic inequality.

In Studies 3 and 4, we confirmed these results experimentally by manipulating perceived social norms with the 99% category (vs. control; Study 3 vs. middle class; Study 4). Results show that those in the experimental condition (vs. control condition; middle-class condition) identified more strongly with the 99%, and this effect in their identification level predicted greater intolerance of economic inequality (corroborating **H8**, but not **H10**), and greater willingness to engage in collective action (**H9, H11**). The pooled analysis corroborated that the manipulated social norm was indirectly related to intolerance of economic inequality through identification with the 99% category, but not directly (**H8**, **H10**). The same indirect pattern was consistently shown for collective actions (**H9**, **H11**). These results remain robust when controlling for gender, age, political orientation, and middle-class identity.

These results are in line with the EMSICA model (Thomas et al., 2009, 2012). This theoretical model is relevant for emerging identities that are not yet fully consolidated and require the establishment of certain norms (Bliuc et al., 2007), since people may identify with the 99% after perceiving economic injustice. In addition, manipulation of social norms and their subsequent consensus (e.g., through a fictitious online discussion group) leads to identification with the 99%. This is consistent with opinion-based groups, where demands and goals are consensual prior to the emergence of identity (Bliuc et al., 2007; McGarty et al., 2009).

A summary of the empirical evidence reported in each chapter, as well as the research question and objective to which it was intended to answer, can be seen in Table 7.1.

Tabe 7.1

Summary of the research questions, and hypotheses of the current research

General aim

To analyse the relationship between politicised identities due to economic inequality and social change.

Research Question	Hypotheses	Chapter & Study	Answer
1. Do people perceive that society is divided into two wealth-based groups?	Explore the number of social classes that people think exist, as well as analyze how they are called and characterized	Chapter 3: Study 1	No, participants did not perceive society as divided into two groups. Participants perceived a wide variety of groups. We classified them into five main categories: poor, lower, and working classes, middle classes, upper and rich classes, and beyond.
2. Are groups with less wealth stereotyped more positively or negatively compared to wealthier groups?	**H1**: People will use a higher percentage of negative traits to characterize rich groups (compared to poor groups) and a higher percentage of positive traits when evaluating poor groups (compared to rich groups).	Chapter 3: Study 2 (H1)	Yes, poorer groups were described with more positive traits (especially the lower and working classes) and richer groups were described with more negative traits (upper and rich classes and beyond) (**H1**).
3. *Could shared social identification (such as the 99% and the working class) address the detrimental effects of economic threat and promote social change?*	**H2**: We expected to find that the relationship between collective economic threat and intolerance towards inequality was mediated by identification with the working class ($H2_a$) and identification with the 99% ($H2_b$). **H3**: We expected to find that the relationship between collective economic threat and willingness to take collective action to confront economic inequality was mediated by identification with the working class ($H3_a$) and identification with the 99% ($H3_b$).	Chapter 4: Studies 1, 2, and 3 (H2 and H3)	Yes, identification with the 99% and with the working class mediated the positive relationship between collective economic threat and a) intolerance of economic inequality and (**H2**$_{a,b}$) b) intention to take collective action to confront economic inequality (**H3**$_{a,b}$)
4. Does identification with wealth-based groups (e.g., social classes) and national identities	**H4**: Identification with common people will be positively associated with a) intolerance towards economic inequality and b) willingness to take collective action to confront it	Chapter 5: Studies 1a, 1b, 2a, and 2b (H4 and H5)	No, the politicisation of identity may encourage different responses, even those that maintain the status quo.

promote social change in the same way?	**H5**: National collective narcissism will be negatively associated with a) intolerance towards economic inequality and b) the willingness to carry out collective actions to confront economic inequality.		Identification with common people was limited to attitudinal aspects and not to the intention to address inequality (UK), or even to maintain the status quo (Spain) (**H4**). On the other hand, national collective narcissism had a negative effect on intolerance of inequality and collective actions for change, and a positive effect on reactionary actions to maintain the status quo (**H5**). Finally, non-preregistered analyses showed that the 99% and the working-class identities had a positive effect when addressing inequalities.
5. Does identification with the 99% predict social change over and above the identification with the middle-class?	Identification with the 99% will be positively associated over other identities (middle class) with intolerance towards economic inequality (**H6**) and with the willingness to carry out collective actions to confront it (**H7**). We predicted two independent indirect effects. The relationship between the experimental condition (99% vs. Control) and intolerance towards inequality (**H8**) and the willingness to carry out collective actions to confront it (**H9**) will be mediated by identification with the 99% (controlled by identification with the middle class). We predicted two independent indirect effects. The relationship between the experimental condition (99% vs. Control) and intolerance towards inequality (**H10**),	Chapter 6: Studies 1 and 2 (H6 and H7) pilot study Studies 3 and 4 (H8, H9, H10, H11)	Yes, identification with the 99%, was positively related to perceived injustice, intolerance towards economic inequality (**H6)**, and collective actions to address economic inequality (**H7**), over and above identification with the middle class. We confirmed these results experimentally by manipulating perceived social norms with the 99% category with fictitious news (vs. control condition: **H8, H9**; vs. middle-class condition: **H10, H11**).

	and the willingness to carry out collective actions to confront it (**H11**) will be mediated by identification with the 99% (controlled by identification with the middle class)

6. Theoretical and Practical Implications

The present results provided empirical evidence of the relationship between politicised identities due to economic inequality and social change. In the section below, we point out some of the theoretical implications derived from these studies.

First, the term "wealth-based group" is conceptually close to how social psychology defines social class, but not identical. These groups are not only defined by their economic resources, but also by other characteristics such as cultural practices or their interdependence with other groups (e.g., in a dominant or egalitarian position). In contrast to the classical definition of social class related to the means of production, individuals perceive and understand wealth-based groups with a more multidimensional perspective (Becker et al., 2017; Kraus & Stephens, 2012; Wrigh, 2015). Consistent with this, qualitative research enriches social class research, as it does not limit participants' responses, providing a pool of terms to refer to groups based on wealth.

Furthermore, our results indicate that there are many wealth-based groups, which exponentially increases the fragmentation of society—instead of just two groups. This is important because social division can encourage competition for resources and hinders shared identification (Jetten et al., 2021; Sánchez-Rodríguez et al., 2023), negatively affecting social change. In addition, the absence of a broad low-status group can hinder collective strategies to fight inequality (Klandermans, 2014; Drury et al., 2016). This could influence inter-group collaborations, since social division prevents the perception of similarities between subgroups (Subašić et al., 2008; Radke et al., 2020). Therefore, multiple labels for wealth-based groups could affect political strategies to promote economic justice.

Second, identification with the 99% is effective in articulating social change. Our findings may argue that it is a politicised wealth-based identity that can motivate people to reduce economic inequality. As evidenced by studies conducted during the pandemic, identification with the 99% was a way of coping with the negative effects of economic

threat. While the COVID-19 pandemic may exacerbate intergroup tensions and hostilities (van Bavel et al., 2020), a common identification with people of different socio-economic status may avoid such tensions (Dovidio et al., 2020). This translates into a problem-focused—reducing inequality—rather than a palliative response to the threat (Fritsche & Jugert, 2017). Furthermore, the 99% is an identity based on the shared experience of inequality, which can drive people to protest to address it (Drury & Reicher, 2000; van Stekelenburg & Klandermans, 2013; van Zomeren et al., 2008). This is due to its positive association with intolerance of inequality, collective action intentions to confront it, and its negative effect on their intentions for collective actions that maintain the status quo. Moreover, this was found in two cultural contexts: Spain and the UK. This is important because we did not find such a stable pattern with other wealth-based identities (e.g., common people or working class) in a cross-cultural way. The 99% is not a wealth-based group that has been explicitly generated in the Spanish context— it has been commonly employed in a North American context—but its identification retain its potential to promote change. Additionally, we found experimental evidence of its effect. It highlights the difference between identities based on politicised wealth (i.e., the 99%) and identities based on non-politicised wealth (i.e., the middle class).

Third, the importance of identification with the working class for social change was less consistent. On the one hand—similar to identification with the 99%—identification with the working class promoted coping with economic threat. These results are particularly relevant if we emphasize social class as a representative element of people's identities (Easterbrook et al., 2020; Manstead, 2018). This is positive since the working-class has been marginalized, eroding its communal and collective aspects (Jones, 2011). On the other hand, we did not find a positive association toward intolerance of inequality and intentions for collective action in the British context. One possible argument for these results is that there is no single working-class identity and that variations may influence their attitudes and political preferences. Recent studies with a nationally sample of working-class white Americans have shown different working-class identities: *working-class patriots*, *class conflict aware*, or *working-class connected* (Knowles, 2023). For example, while the “class conflict aware" working class displays progressive behaviour, "working class patriots" would embrace national identity and consequently exhibit non-system-changing behaviours (Knowles et al., 2023).

Since politicised groups based on the shared experience of inequality can prompt protest to confront it (Drury & Reicher, 2000; van Stekelenburg & Klandermans, 2013; van Zomeren et al., 2008), some groups can also foster resentment and demand an exaggerated evaluation of their group, leading certain social movements to protect the status quo (Jost et al., 2017; Marinthe et al., 2022). Taking these arguments into account, our fourth implication depicts a scenario in which both problem-focused and palliative-focused responses contribute to the shared theoretical foundations of collective action research.

In line with reactionary responses, this is reflected in collective narcissism, which was associated with resisting change and preserving the system. This result represents a new contribution in the field of the perpetuation of economic inequality, aligning with the aspiration of collective narcissism to defend other inequalities (Golec de Zavala et al., 2017; Marchlewska et al., 2018). Furthermore, identification with common people was associated with both progressive and reactionary responses depending on the cultural context. This contribution offers theoretical insights into research on communication in populism, which argues that blaming economic elites for the struggles of those who feel disadvantaged is a way to persuade and mobilize citizens (Bos et al., 2020). Our findings highlight how this identity has a liquid content (e.g., endorsement of thin populist ideologies; Manunta et al., 2022) that can produce different effects depending on the cultural and political context.

Overall, some practical implications can be derived from the theoretical contributions. First, the identification of the traits that compose the content of stereotypes of both poor and rich groups can be useful in reducing levels of economic inequality via workshops or awareness campaigns. This is important because stereotypes legitimise myths and rationalise differences between groups to maintain an unequal system (Jost & Banaji, 1994; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). Therefore, reducing the negative stereotypes of the lower social classes—by showing counter-exemplars that they are not lazy or incompetent—will foster improved social policies. Thus, controlling the spreading of these stereotypes in social media or correcting the political discourse can encourage the reduction of the stereotyping of the lower classes.

Second, the preferences of the richest 1% of the population, economic elites, and business-oriented groups in the United States have a greater impact on politics, while

average citizens have a smaller impact (Gilens & Page, 2014). Working-class people are more likely to believe that the government should take more responsibility and intervene in the market (Andersen & Curtis, 2015). Encouraging political participation of lower social classes can therefore favour fairer economic policies. Thus, our findings imply that the use of social categories that motivate people to point out economic injustices, such as the 99% or the working class, can increase political participation. This, in turn, may lead to reduced economic inequality.

Finally, individuals who identify with wealth-based social groups, as opposed to nation-based identities, may favour more constructive strategies for social change. The use of nationalist nostalgia discourse—as a group emotion of longing for the national past—or the claim that individuals who belong to the nation deserve social benefits compared to immigrants (i.e., national collective narcissism), is not only detrimental to the Spanish and English natives but also to other ethnic minorities (Golec de Zavala & Lantos, 2020; Smeekes et al., 2021; Wohl et al., 2023). Therefore, establishing a coherent discourse from social movements that highlight a common ingroup identity (e.g., of natives and immigrants) may serve to counter right-wing populist or reactionary discourses.

7. Limitations

Although the results of this dissertation contain some novel contributions, it is not exempt from certain limitations. We will now summarise some of the limitations that we consider to be shared by the different research carried out in the thesis, even though they have been pointed out in the different empirical chapters.

The primary limitation is that we cannot establish causality for most of our claims. Most of our studies were conducted in correlational designs, so we can only mention that our results are associations. Additionally, the experimental studies presented in Chapter 6 did not reveal a direct effect of the experimental conditions on the outcome variables; instead, only an indirect effect was observed. Therefore, the inference about causality is limited.

Furthermore, although in Studies 1a, 1b, 2a, and 2b (Chapter 5) we extend our results to another cultural context, the external or cross-cultural validity is relatively low. The samples of all empirical chapters belong to Spain and UK, two WEIRD countries (i.e., Western, Educated, Industrialised, Rich, and Democratic), which limits our

generality to other cultural contexts that are not part of the global North. Moreover, even if gender is not a core variable in this dissertation, it is important to acknowledge that we used a relatively binary perspective. Although this thesis has the strength of a variety of samples, such as the representative samples of Studies 1a and 1b (Chapter 5) in Spain and the UK respectively, some of the studies were still sampled from university students, as in those cases the use of more representative samples in the general population was limited by resources. In addition, the results found in Chapter 4 were produced in an exceptional pandemic context, so replicating these results in other contexts would be challenging.

8. Future Research

The empirical work collected in this thesis, and considering the limitations mentioned above, could lead to new lines of research that complement our results.

First, since some results are correlational in nature, future lines should find causal effects between our main variables. Some ways to encourage group identification may be to manipulate social norms through focus groups and discussions in real, controlled conditions, strengthening the conditions for opinion-based groups (Thomas et al., 2016). In addition, manipulating variables associated with economic uncertainty or economic distress (e.g., economic threat, relative deprivation, or perceptions of economic inequality) could promote the triggering of group processes that favour the re-establishment of personal control through identity. In this line, the manipulation of variables that integrate the SIMCA or EMSICA models (van Zomeren et al., 2008; Thomas et al. 2012), such as the perception of injustice or group efficacy, would be convenient.

Second, the components that form an identity are typically not isolated. Therefore, delving into the latent profiles that might shape the various groups tested in this dissertation could aid in understanding their collective implications. For instance, examining whether wealth-based identities—such as the 99% or working class—or nation-based identities, contribute to shared profiles, could provide an explanation for the disparities in political attitudes across different political groups.

Third, future studies should investigate populist attitudes arising from identification with both the “popular” groups that have emerged in recent decades (e.g., the 99%, common people, or national collective narcissism) and traditional ones (e.g.,

working class). Uncovering the association between these identities and distinct components of populism, along with related variables such as pluralist or anti-elitist attitudes (Akkerman et al., 2014), as well as attitudes towards other groups (e.g., migrants, feminists, climate change activists), would enhance the comprehension of populist social movements within the global economic context.

Finally, considering an intersectional and cross-cultural perspective, it would be relevant to test the categories used in our studies in other cultural contexts (e.g., non-Western) and with other important aspects of people's identity (e.g., gender). For example, future studies could test the potential effect of identification with the working class in conjunction with identification with the feminist movement. Given that both movements aim to end an unjust system (e.g., capitalism or patriarchy), it would be interesting to know whether identification with these movements can configure different ideological profiles. On the other hand, the feminism of the 99% is also a category employed by some institutions and is under theoretical discussion (Arruza et al., 2019). Future studies should address whether this broad category that brings together the intersection of different groups based on social class, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or gender identity triggers effective social change.

9. Conclusions

This dissertation is a first step to increasing our knowledge about the relationship between group-based wealth identifications and social change. Specifically, we examined the effect of different wealth-based groups that are politicised due to economic inequality.

First, we explored the perception of wealth-based group representations in a qualitative way, finding up at least five main categories—instead of showing two broad groups. Furthermore, the extreme wealth-based groups (i.e., rich and poor groups), varied according to the way they were stereotyped, with the poor groups being positively evaluated and the rich group being negatively evaluated. Secondly, our results supported that shared identities—such as the 99% and the working class—can protect against economic threat, by promoting social change under difficult conditions as in a global pandemic. Third, we confirmed the positive consequences of identifying with the 99%, as opposed to other identities such as the common people and national collective narcissism, in two cultural contexts (Spain and UK). In the case of the working-class, it only promoted social change in the Spanish context. Finally, we found a causal effect of

perceived norms of support for the 99% on 99% identification, and this in turn, promoted intolerance towards inequality and collective action. Importantly, this was not the case for the middle-class identification.

In summary, our findings showed that economic inequality affects intergroup relations and damages social relations (e.g., wealth-based stereotypes); however, identification with groups that could signal the unfair distribution of wealth fosters positive social outcomes. In the case of the 99%, this identity can help to address the economic threat and lead to confronting economic inequality (both in Spain and the United Kingdom). Other non-politicized wealth-based identities—like the middle-class or common people identity—did not have this potential. It is important to note that not all feelings of economic disadvantage or grievance make social change possible, as populist and nationalist ideologies can be an obstacle. In this case, we find that the national collective narcissism has a reactionary response.

Overall, in the present dissertation, we found that it is possible to promote social change through the identification with politicized class identities. Both traditional class identities —such as the working class— and more novel class identities —such as the 99%— may be a useful way of facing economic inequality and aiming for a more egalitarian and fairer society.

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