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**Legitimation and justice ideologies in contexts  
of extreme economic inequality**

Three developing countries in comparative perspective

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# **Legitimation and justice ideologies in contexts of extreme economic inequality**

## **Three developing countries in comparative perspective<sup>1</sup>**

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### **Abstract**

A high level of economic inequality is usually conceived as a threat to the stability of the social order, as a risk that can lead to the perception that the current distribution system is unfair and the social order is illegitimate. Nevertheless, this normative argument is contrasted with empirical data of societies that evidence a high degree of economic inequality as well as political stability in a democratic context. In explaining this phenomenon, sociologists and social psychologists have typically pointed to the role of ideologies in the legitimation of the distribution system, based on what people think about how goods and rewards should be distributed in a society.

Studies in this area have compared the support of justice ideologies in different societies, mostly based on industrialized countries. The last module of International Social Survey Program (ISSP) on social inequality offers for the first time data from three developing countries (Chile, Brazil and the Philippines), characterized not only by high poverty indexes, but also by higher levels of economic inequality than the ones considered so far in this type of comparative research. This opens the opportunity to study the way in which high levels of economic inequality are related to the support of justice ideologies and to the legitimacy of the distribution system.

In this paper, two classical justice ideologies are analyzed in a comparative perspective: individualism, associated to distribution of goods based on merit and individual effort, and egalitarianism, which emphasizes an active role of the state and redistribution. The results show comparatively higher support both for the individualistic ideology as well as for egalitarianism in countries with high inequality indexes, which is theoretically associated to the split-consciousness approach and to the system justification theory.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Economic inequality is a characteristic of all modern societies that has been dramatically increasing over the last quarter century (Grusky, 2006). This is a fact confirmed by different statistics from international organizations that have commonly relied on income distribution indexes such as the Gini or the comparison between different quintiles or deciles of income. Based on this information it is possible to observe that not only income inequality has increased between and within countries, but also that countries from the developing world are constantly leading the income distribution rankings. Modernization theories have outlined different kinds of explanations as well as proposals to deal with this economic phenomenon,

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ranging from dependence theory approaches to others centered on concepts such as human and social capital. But besides this perspective that conceives economic inequality as a failure of the political and economic system, it is also possible to find sociological and psychological approaches that intend to explain how economic inequality can be legitimated in a society. Theories and studies in this perspective are possible to classify under the umbrella of the empirical social justice research, which concretely deals with what people think is a just distribution and their opinion about the distribution principles that should predominate in a society.

The study of social justice has been developed principally in the realm of philosophy, where the debate has presented different and contesting perspectives about which principles should guide the distribution of goods and rewards, and about how to conceive the relationship between inequality and justice. The *difference principle* proposed by Rawls (1971) is a clear example of one way of conceiving this relationship, where social and economic inequalities should be arranged to the greatest benefit of the least advantaged. Far from generating consensus, Rawls' argument produced a series of critics in political psychology from the liberal and the communitarian perspectives (Nozick, 1974; Walzer, 1983), a productive debate in the normative arena that still continues and that shows the diversity of perspectives on an issue affected by different values and political positions. Besides these philosophical referents, a different and complementary position is assumed by studies that are not concerned about how goods and rewards *should* be distributed in society, but about what *ordinary people believe* this distribution and the stratification in a society should look like (J. R. Kluegel & Smith, 1986; Wegener, 1995). This represents the distinction between two complementary approaches to the study of social justice: a normative one, concerned about how goods should be distributed, and secondly the empirical point of view, related to how common people think goods should be distributed, which is linked to the concept of "justice ideologies" in empirical social justice research.

The association between legitimacy of inequality and justice ideologies is not something new in the empirical social justice research. Different studies have been conducted regarding the role of ideologies in the legitimacy of different systems, especially in comparison of post communist and capitalist countries (Aalberg, 2003; Gijssberts, 1999; J. Kluegel, Mason, & Wegener, 1995) and based on datasets such as the International Social Justice Project (ISJP), as well as the modules on social inequality of the International Social Survey Program (ISSP).

Nevertheless, so far there are not many studies addressing the situation of countries presenting high indexes of economic inequality and at the same time presenting high poverty indicators, since for such countries these kinds of studies are more difficult to finance. Therefore, the inclusion of three developing countries (Chile, the Phillipines and Brazil) for the first time in the ISSP 99 module on social inequality permits to go forward in the study of the relationship between inequality and legitimacy of the distribution system.

Traditionally, in explanatory models of ideologies, structural and cultural factors are considered; the former ones being related to the position of the subject in the stratification system, and the latter to inherent group values transmitted during socialization (Kiecolt, 1988). According to the structural approach, when considering societies with high inequality and high poverty indexes, a legitimacy crisis would be expected since a substantial part of the population would not benefit from the distribution system, therefore there could be dissent regarding the principles on which the distribution of goods and rewards are based (Hadler, 2005; Wegener & Liebig, 1995b). In the cultural approach, attitudes and beliefs of individuals are influenced by dominant values (Abercrombie, Hill, & Turner, 1980) and therefore, the existence of high income inequality would not necessarily lead to a legitimacy crisis. If this were the case in countries with high economic inequality, it would be a strong argument for the influence of cultural factors in the determination of individual attitudes and beliefs.

Taking into account the relationship between legitimacy and economic inequality, the main question guiding the study can be summarized as: what role do justice ideologies play in the legitimation of inequalities in countries with high inequality indexes? For answering this question, two justice ideologies are considered in comparative perspective, and it is studied whether economic inequality has an influence in the legitimation of this same inequality. The justice ideologies considered are two: the ideology of meritocratic individualism, related to the distribution of goods according to personal effort and abilities, and the ideology of egalitarianism, which emphasizes that goods should be distributed independent from personal characteristics, calling for a strong redistributive role of the state. The determinants of these ideologies are described based on three theoretical perspectives: the dominant ideology, the split consciousness, and the system justification theory.

The article is organized as follows: first, the three theoretical approaches regarding the relationship between ideology, legitimacy and inequality are revised. Next are discussed

indicators and evidence that situates developing countries as an interesting case for the study of the distribution system legitimacy. After reviewing recent empirical evidence derived from comparative research, descriptive and multivariate analysis is performed with selected countries of the ISSP 99 dataset. Finally, income inequality is tested as a determinant of the differences among the countries regarding support for justice ideologies.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The study of social inequality is closely associated to the process of social stratification, about how goods and rewards have been distributed throughout the human history, and about the rules that govern this distribution. As Lenski summarizes, stratification is the study of “who gets what and why” (Lenski, 1966). This question is central to most sociological theories, particularly the class theory of Marx (1932), the elite theory of Mosca (1939/1995) and Pareto (1901/1986), as well as to parsonian functionalism (Parsons, 1951). These theoretical approaches have been complemented with the subjective study of stratification<sup>3</sup>, which refers to perceptions and beliefs regarding the existence of inequality, or how people explain, justify or challenge the existence of an unequal distribution of goods and rewards (Wil Arts & Vermunt, 1989; J. Kluegel & Smith, 1981; Stollte, 1983; Van der Sar & Van Praag, 1989).

Empirical research in the area of social justice has tackled this point by comparing public opinion in different societies regarding how goods and rewards ought to be distributed. By this comparison it has been researched to what extent these public beliefs represent a legitimation or a challenge to the current distribution system of a given society (Gijsberts, 1999; Kelley & Zagorski, 2005; Wegener, 1992). From this point of view, a society in which politics are characterized by what Lane (1986) denotes as “market justice” or the principles of free market and individual achievement, and at the same time public opinion support the distribution based on individual abilities and effort, it is possible to talk about a legitimation of the distribution system. If on the contrary, in this same free market oriented society the majority of the population prefers a distribution that emphasizes the role of the state and the redistribution (egalitarian beliefs), it is possible to identify a challenging position of the population and a legitimation crisis of the current distribution system. The individualistic or

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<sup>3</sup> Even though stratification encompasses different dimensions of inequality, in this paper it is restricted to economic inequality.

egalitarianistic beliefs about distribution, when shared by a given society, are the so called justice ideologies.

Nevertheless, the analysis of justice ideologies in relation to political culture of a society is not as straightforward. The degree to which a political system is organized around free market principles certainly vary in western democracies, and therefore for analyzing justice ideologies the political context is a key factor to be taken into account. Besides, empirical evidence has shown that far from achieving consensus, different and apparently contradictory justice ideologies can be supported by individuals at the same time (W Arts & Gijsberts, 1998; Hochschild, 1981; Sennett & Cobb, 1972). In order to clarify the relationship between ideologies, legitimacy and inequality it is therefore necessary to review different concepts that have guided the research in the area: the idea of a dominant ideology and the influence of cultural values, the concept of split consciousness, and the influence of socio psychological factors in the framework of the system justification theory.

a) *The dominant ideology thesis*. Starting as the science of ideas with Destutt de Tracy at the end of the eighteenth century, the concept of ideology has become heavily charged with political connotations and widely used in everyday life with diverse significations. Broadly speaking, it is possible to identify two distinctive perspectives in this area: first, as a critical concept meaning a form of false consciousness which somehow distorts the understanding of social reality, and on a second perspective, conceived as the world view of a class (Chiapello, 2003; Larrain, 1979). The origins of the first perspective could be traced back to Machiavelli and his recognition of two means related to maintaining system legitimacy: through the use of force and through ideological control and the manipulation of social discourse (Sidanius, Levin, Federico, & Pratto, 2001). Under this conception it is argued that even though the use of force is common at the first stages of society as a way of domination and exercise of power, its continuous use is often counterproductive and members of dominant groups are better served by convincing subordinates and themselves of the moral and intellectual legitimacy of social order (Pareto, 1901/1986). This can be considered the central idea under concepts as ideologies or political formulas, that have in common a wide variety of social, moral and religious beliefs that are used to justify the privileged social position of dominant groups and the disadvantaged position of the subordinate ones (Sidanius et al., 2001). The role of ideologies in perpetuating and sustaining inequality has been crucial to developments in legitimation theory (Della Fave, 1980; Shepelak, 1989; Stollte, 1983), and has been also associated to the role of cultural values in shaping justice beliefs (Wegener & Liebig, 1995b)

In this area, a reference concept is the *dominant ideology* (Huber, Form, & Pease, 1970), a stable and comprehensive system of opinions about the structure of opportunities, the causes of inequalities and the social justice, shared by the majority of society. Characteristic elements of this concept are the principle of equal opportunities and belief in the responsibility of each person for his or her social position. This ideology would be related to the legitimation of inequalities, particularly in western democracies, since wealth would be perceived as a product of one's exceptional effort and talents, while poverty would be caused by a lack of them. This ideology is also referred in the literature as meritocratic individualism (Shepelak, 1989).

(Huber et al., 1970) propose the following syllogism of the dominant ideology:

1. Opportunity to get ahead is available for all.
2. If opportunity is available, the position of an individual in the stratification order is a function of personal efforts and abilities, instead of economic or social factors.
3. Since people are personally responsible for the rewards they receive, the current distribution of rewards is fair, and therefore inequality is positively evaluated.

The dominant ideology approach has been criticized from a theoretical and also from an empirical point of view. Abercrombie et al. (1980) refused to believe that the dominant ideology could be so deeply rooted in a society, arguing that there is disagreement between social classes regarding the dominant values, and also they regard as implausible that a small elite could promote these kinds of beliefs throughout the society. Besides, Wegener & Liebig (1995a) have pointed out that the ideology of the ruling class is not the dominant ideology, since this ideology looks for the legitimation of the ruling class itself, and therefore it is not necessary that other classes share this ideology. These critics have led to different approaches in the study of ideology, one of the most relevant in the empirical literature being the concept of split-consciousness.

b) *Split-consciousness*. This approach starts by the recognition that there are more than just dominant cultural values determining the justice ideologies that people support, suggesting that the structural ones also have an important role (W Arts & Gijsberts, 1998; Hochschild, 1981; Kluegel, 1989). By *structural* are meant the determinants linked to the social position



that people occupy in society and their stratification every-day experiences. The personal rational interests are, in this level, the principal determinants of the beliefs about inequality, and people with a disadvantaged status in the social position (for instance low income groups) are expected to present more critical and *challenging beliefs* towards the existence of inequality than people in higher social and economic positions. This approach can be associated with theories ranging from the simple common sense to theories underlining self-interest motives and also theories of social comparison (Homans, 1976; Jasso & Rossi, 1977).

Besides the consideration of the structural factors' influence, the key characteristic of this approach is the argument that dominant cultural values also influence beliefs about inequality but on a different level, allowing that both dominant as well as challenging beliefs can coexist "compartmentalized" in people's minds without any necessary force to change (Kluegel, 1989; J. R. Kluegel & Smith, 1986; Lane, 1962). Therefore, the adoption of a challenging attitude does not necessarily lead to the rejection of the dominant perspective, since at this respect people present "divided selves" (Sennett & Cobb, 1972). In empirical terms, this means that attitudes towards inequalities are structured along two dimensions or factors (individual-structural), as opposed to the one factor solution from the dominant perspective (Kreidl, 2000). Beliefs about inequality would then be formed by two broad influences: first they are product of the inculcation of dominant-ideology beliefs, and second beliefs product of the stratification-related experiences (challenging beliefs).

Nevertheless, based also on the critics to the dominant ideology approach, Wegener (1995) proposes the distinction between primary and secondary ideologies rather than dominant and challenging ones. The author proposes that the primary ideologies are those shared practically by all members of society, and the secondary ones are only supported by specific groups. In this sense, and taking into account the justice ideologies of individualism and egalitarianism, there could be societies where the meritocratic individualistic ideology is the primary one, but also others where the egalitarianistic ideology is the primary ideology.

The reformulations described so far regarding the role of ideologies in the legitimation of the distribution system are mostly based on sociological concepts, which have been complemented by psycho sociological theories that are described next.

c) *System justification motive and associated psychological processes*. The third perspective to be presented here is centered on the socio psychological processes that are at the basis of the support of inequality. This idea was already pointed out by Kluegel and Smith (1986), and has been developed particularly in the last decade in the framework of the system justification theory (Jost, 2002; Jost & Hunyady, 2003; Jost & Hunyady, 2005; Jost & Major, 2001). This theory is aimed at explaining why people provide cognitive and ideological support for the status quo, especially from members of low status groups (Jost, 2002), focusing on research conducted mainly in the U.S. with groups like immigrants, African-americans and women. It establishes that economic inequality does not represent a threat to the legitimacy of the current economic order (Jost & Hunyady, 2003), since this order is conceived not merely as something that is imposed by one group on another, but as a collaborative psychological and ideological process where inequality structures are justified by virtually everyone in society, including the more disadvantaged. Relying on concepts of justice motive, false consciousness and out group favoritism, this theory proposes that: a) there is a motive to justify the existing social order (justice motive), and b) paradoxically, this motive is sometimes strongest among those who are most disadvantaged by the social order (Jost & Major, 2001).

The concept of justice motive is central to system justification theory. This notion comes from the “belief in a just world” theory from Melvin Lerner (1980), who points out the existence of a basic belief that the world is a place where people deserve what they get, and get what they deserve. One of the major consequences of this belief is that people are attributed responsibility for the outcomes they receive, and in this sense is associated with the maintenance of the status-quo. The second proposal of system justification is related to the theory of cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1957). In this framework, research has demonstrated that people who are more socially and physically deprived develop the strongest needs to justify their own suffering, in order to reduce the ideological dissonance associated with a system that deprives them. From here, it follows that those who suffer the most from the system are those who have the most to explain, justify and rationalize, a relationship that has been empirically tested for instance in the case of a negative relation between income and ideological support for authority (Jost, 2002).

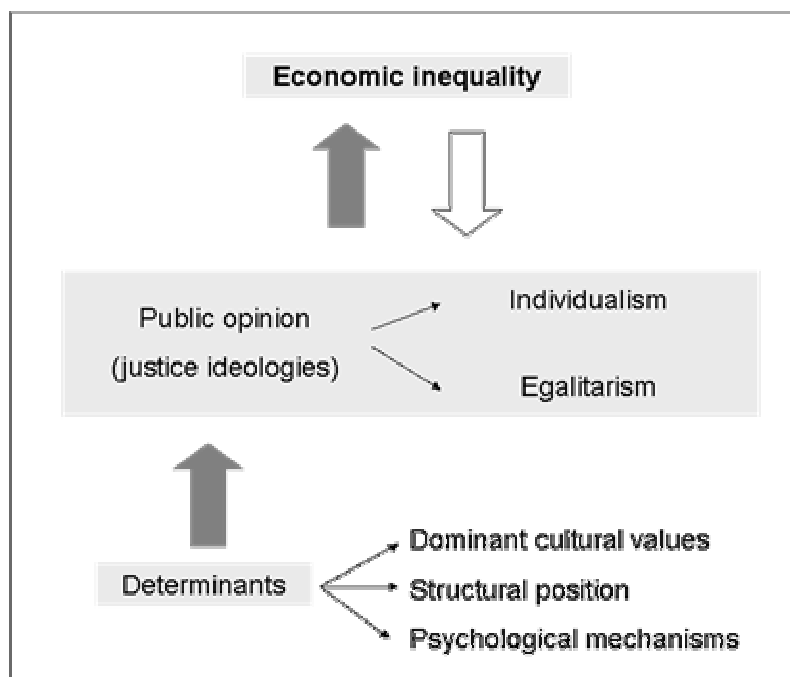
This last perspective can be considered to be complementary to the dominant ideology approach, but being mostly focused on explaining the socio psychological mechanisms solidifying the support for a distribution system based on meritocratic principles.

Nevertheless, the theoretical integration between sociological and psychological approaches in the study of the legitimation of inequality is still an uncompleted task that will certainly require a stronger interdisciplinary work, as well as empirical research projects where explanatory models considering both perspectives are possible to be tested.

### **Determinants of justice ideologies of egalitarianism and individualism.**

Having reviewed the main characteristics of the three determinants of beliefs about inequality, a general model of analysis is introduced where the justice ideologies are the central factors. Egalitarianism is conceived as beliefs emphasizing the redistributive role of the government and in the redistribution mechanisms from people who earn more to the ones who earn less, whereas individualism is referred to the distribution of goods and rewards based on individual effort and abilities. The patterns that these two ideologies adopt within and between the countries is conceived here as a way to study the legitimacy of the distribution system, particularly in the case of developing countries, based on the following schema:

Fig.1: Economic inequality, justice ideologies and their determinants



This picture presents the general framework of analysis, reflecting the idea of what people (public opinion) think about social inequality, where they can have a position that legitimize it (individualistic ideology) or that challenge it (egalitaristic ideology). The dark arrow between public opinion and economic inequality represents what people think about inequality,

whereas the white arrow means how economic inequality influence public opinion. The main interest here is the attempt to explain the variations in the support of these ideologies between countries by identifying three types of determinants that were described above at individual level: the structural position, the dominant cultural values, and also psychological mechanisms. Besides, the influence of economic inequality (white arrow) is considered also as a determinant at a macro level. This leads to the following hypotheses organized at individual and at a macro level:

### Individual level

Considering first the effect of structural factors reflected in the social standing of the individuals, the most influential mechanism is the self interest linked to feelings of deprivation that lead low standing groups (measured by income, education, work status and subjective social position), to hold preferably challenging beliefs regarding the distribution system. This thesis has encountered empirical support by Kluegel & Smith in research of challenging beliefs of African-americans (J. R. Kluegel & Smith, 1986) and also by Kreidl comparing western and post-communist countries (Kreidl, 2000). Therefore, people with low social standing tend to challenge the current distribution system and support egalitarianistic ideology, leading to the first hypothesis:

H1: Indicators of low social position (income, unemployed, low educational level) have a positive influence on egalitarianism.

With regard to individualism the situation is rather different. As it was described in the theoretical section, individualism tends to be dominant in western democracies. Therefore, in general the effect of socio structural variables are expected to be less significant than in the case of egalitarianism. Furthermore, following system justification theory, it is possible to expect that totally contrary effects as expected from the self interest motives appear, since people in the lowest positions in the social hierarchy have more to justify than others in higher positions. Based on this argument, the second hypothesis is:

H2: Socio structural variables have a smaller explanatory power as determinants of individualism in comparison to egalitarianism. They also exhibit counter intuitive effects, whereby people from lower social positions can show higher support for individualism.

Finally, at the micro level psychological dimensions as the self rated position in the social hierarchy are also considered. Contrary to expectations based on variables such as income, a consistent effect is anticipated in relation to the two justice ideologies, namely a positive relation with individualism and a negative one with egalitarianism. The sense to include this dimension is to explore the possibility of comparison with other concrete status variables such as income, and to contrast the role of objective and subjective factors in the support for justice ideologies. This last hypothesis at the individual level states:

H3: The higher the self attributed social position, the higher individualism and the lower the egalitarianism.

#### Comparative (macro) level

At this level of analysis the dominant cultural values acquire importance, as well as the incorporation of developing countries to the analysis. By definition, these countries are characterized by a substantial part of the population living in situation of poverty and by high indexes of economic inequality. Poverty in this case is referred not only as something relative or in comparison to the rest of the population, as the poverty measures in the industrialized world, but also refers to levels of absolute poverty, where people are not able to satisfy a minimum standard of basic needs. Therefore, following the structural position thesis, it is possible to say that the stratification-related experiences of an important part of the population would lead to increasing demands for a more egalitarian distribution of goods, in the sense of challenging beliefs. If this were the case, there would certainly be difficulties in achieving some form of political stability in these countries, in this sense it is argued that the individualistic ideology also plays an important role in the legitimacy of the distribution system in societies with high economic inequality.

Unfortunately, so far there are not many datasets available for developing countries related to comparative research in attitudes and beliefs about justice, being the exception the ISSP 1999 module on social inequality, where Chile, Brazil and the Philippines are present<sup>4</sup>. Descriptive analysis of the ISSP 99 data in the area of justice ideologies have shown that developing countries perceive higher economic inequality compared to other countries, but at the same

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<sup>4</sup> Chile is one of the participants of International Social Justice Project (ISJP) 2006, and the data will be available in August 2007.

time they justify the existence of economic inequality as a trade off for prosperity (Lübker, 2004). Using this same dataset, Hadler employs multilevel modeling to analyze the influence of micro and macro level factors in the individual appraisal of income differences, but not making special consideration to actual inequality and the behavior of developing countries in the models (Hadler, 2005). Osberg and Smeeding (2004) analyze also ISSP 99 data focused on individual preferences about individual earnings, where Chile and the Philippines appear with the highest index of what they call “ethical inequality”, referred to the accepted earnings’ gap between people in low status and in high status occupations.

The actual state of the art presents the opportunity to study more specifically the case of developing countries as far as support for ideologies is concerned and in a comparative perspective. Given that the main interest of this paper is the study of justice ideologies in context with high economic inequality, it is especially interesting that two of the three developing countries considered (Chile and Brazil) are among the 10 countries with the most unequal income distribution worldwide, according to the UNDP development report 1999 (year when the survey was conducted).

Taking into consideration the characteristics of developing countries, a number of hypothesis are possible to establish in relation to the legitimation of inequality. First of all, it is necessary to state that there are cultural differences between the countries yet to be analyzed, which include industrialized and developing countries, and only then it would be possible to explore whether some of the differences such as support for justice ideologies are possibly explained by country characteristics such as income inequality. But, how could one measure the influence of culture in the support of justice ideologies? A possible solution is what is known as the residual variation approach (Wegener & Liebig, 2000). This consists of considering first structural determinants in the explanatory models on justice ideologies, and then the remaining unexplained variance accounts for cultural differences between countries. On the other side, if the differences between the countries diminish radically or disappear after considering structural factors, then culture is said to have a smaller effect and the individual structural characteristics prevail. Since from the conceptual framework cultural differences are relevant as determinant of justice ideologies, the hypothesis to this respect is

H4: Differences between the countries with regard to support for individualism and egalitarianism are significant, and remain so after controlling for structural factors.

Besides establishing that differences between countries do actually exist, it is central now to theoretically derive the sense of these differences, and to explain how they are determined by country characteristics such as the level of economic inequality, where the participation of developing countries is a decisive element. Starting with egalitarianism, it is possible to anticipate that since in developing countries an important part of the population lives in absolute poverty, the degree of support of egalitarianism is expected to be higher than in the rest of the countries, leading to the following hypothesis:

H5: Egalitarianism is higher in developing countries.

On the other side, individualism is expected not to be only a primary ideology, but also significantly higher in developing countries than in the industrialized ones. Support for individualism is in this sense a system justifying belief expected to be higher in societies in which social and economic inequality is more extreme than less extreme (Jost, 2002; Jost, Banaji, & Nosek, 2004). This approach can be linked to the “reflection thesis” specified by Hadler (2005), where people’s beliefs would reflect more or less the situation in the real world, or in the words of Homans “justice depends on expectations, and expectations in the long run of actualities. What is, is always becoming what ought to be” (Homans, 1976). Here it is important to mention that system justification theory does not focus on other ideologies but basically on meritocratic individualism, assuming that this is the primary ideology. This is due to the fact that most of the research conducted in the framework of this theory has been done in the US, but also based on the argument that for the study of legitimacy, the key aspect is the so called “loyal opposition”, or compliance by those who somehow are not benefited by the distribution system (Zelditch, 2001). This approach could therefore offer some possibilities of theoretical explanation particularly for the study of legitimacy in developing countries, with the consequent hypothesis:

H6: Support for individualism is expected to be higher in countries with higher inequality (developing countries).

## DATA, VARIABLES AND METHODS

### Data

The analysis is based on data of the International Social Survey Program (ISSP) 1999 module on social inequality. The ISSP was founded in 1984 as a cross-national research collaboration for the social sciences which started with four members (Germany, United States, United Kingdom and Australia), and for the time being includes more than 30 countries. The ISSP country members design together questionnaire modules or key topics of social research that are then translated from the English master questionnaire and replicated over time to allow cross-national and inter-temporal comparable designs (Lübker, 2004). The data is obtained from national representative samples.

The ISSP 1999 module on social inequality represents the third time that this topic is investigated (the other waves were in 1987 and in 1992), and as mentioned before, it is the first time that three developing countries are included (Brazil, Philippines and Chile). The data of ISSP 99 was only merged and available in 2002, and there are still few publications about this wave. Altogether this version includes 28 countries (34.178 cases), but for this analysis only some of them are considered:

- Former West Germany, former East Germany, Czech Republic and Spain: the reason for the selection of these countries is that this research is considered a previous stage of analysis for the replication of the International Social Justice Project in Chile the year 2006, in which these European countries are also participating<sup>5</sup>.
- The Philippines and Brazil: based on their poverty indicators and inequality indexes.
- USA: since it has a long tradition in empirical social justice research, both in the areas of split consciousness and system justification theory, and because in ideology research the country has been the traditional reference for individualism.

With these countries, the total sample to be analyzed reaches 11.660 cases.

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<sup>5</sup> Israel is not included because even though it takes part in the ISSP 99, it lacks of information in some relevant variables, such as income.



## Variables and methods

The main focuses of study in this article are justice ideologies, conceived here as individualism and egalitarianism, and that are the dependent variables of this study. Egalitarianism refers to people leaning to think that the state is responsible for the (re)distribution of wealth, whereas individualism is associated to the idea that only the achievers are rewarded with success based on their merits and efforts (Lippl, 2003; Verwiebe & Wegener, 2000). For the determination of these ideologies are considered some of the ISSP items which are measured in a 5 points scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree, from where then the two ideologies are extracted through factor analysis. The items are the following:

Table 2: ISSP items related to individualism and egalitarianism

Individualism	<p>It is just or unjust – right or wrong – that people with higher income can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Buy better health care than people with lower incomes?</li> <li>• Buy better education for their children than people with lower incomes?</li> </ul>
Egalitarianism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is responsibility of the government to reduce the differences in income between people with high incomes and those with low incomes</li> <li>• People with high incomes should pay a larger share of their income in taxes than those with low incomes</li> <li>• People in wealthy countries should make an additional contribution to help people in poor countries</li> </ul>

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Note: all items were recoded to the following scale: 5=strongly agree; 4= agree; 3= neither agree or disagree; 2= disagree; 1=strongly disagree

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The items' means for each country are presented in the appendix. The independent variables are personal income, self rated position, unemployment at the micro level, and Gini index as macro level variable. Among the control variables are age, sex and education, as well as religion and political orientation representing individual values. About these last two variables, they are also conceived in an explorative sense that can become an input for future studies in this line. Particularly religion is a topic that was not possible to be evaluated in

depth here, and that could have an influence in the developing countries considered here where the catholic religion plays an important role. The variables are summarized in the following table:

Table 3: Independent and control Variables

Independent variables	
Income	1 - 10 (low-high) deciles of personal income
Self rated position	10 point scale: 1= low social standing, 10= high social standing
Unemployed	Dummy (Unemployed= 1, ref: other occupational status)
Gini Index	Economic Inequality Gini Index of each country (UNDP, 2001). See appendix for details).
Control variables	
Age	Respondent's age in years
Sex	Dummy (Women= 1, ref: man)
Educational level	CASMIN 1: reference category
	CASMIN 2: dummy
	CASMIN 3: dummy
Religion	Dummy (1= Catholic, 0= other religions)
Church attendance	Frequency of church attendance
	6=once a week; 5= two or three times a month; 4=once a month; 3=several times a year; 2= less frequently; 1= never
Political right	Dummy right= 1 (ref 0= other political preferences)

The methods of analysis proceed in the following way: first, the ideologies of egalitarianism and individualism are extracted from the items' batteries by maximum likelihood factor analysis, and then the factors are scored as variables that assume a value for each subject. These two variables are described in the first stage in relation to country differences in economic inequality, and then in a second phase a multivariate analysis is performed. Four regression models are built for each ideology, described in the section of multivariate analysis. Finally, a "slopes as outcomes" model is regressed for the justice ideology of individualism in relation to personal income as independent variable, and finally the correspondent slopes and intercepts become the independent variables regressed on Gini.

## EMPIRICAL FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Factor analysis and descriptive results

The first step in the analysis is the determination of dependent variables, which are the justice ideologies of individualism and egalitarianism. A maximum likelihood factor analysis is performed with the five aforementioned items in order to extract the latent dimensions correspondent to the two ideologies. The results after the varimax rotation are described in the following table:

Table 4: Factor Structure of Individualism and Egalitarianism<sup>6</sup>

Variable	Individualism	Egalitarianism	Uniqueness
Egalitarianism: government redistribution	-0.18649	0.57395	0.63580
Egalitarianism: higher taxes	-0.07369	0.43083	0.80895
Egalitarianism: contribution to poor countries	0.06205	0.50838	0.73770
Individualism: buy better health	0.92593	0.00863	0.14258
Individualism: buy better education	0.87294	0.02955	0.23711
Eigenvalue	1.891	1.465	

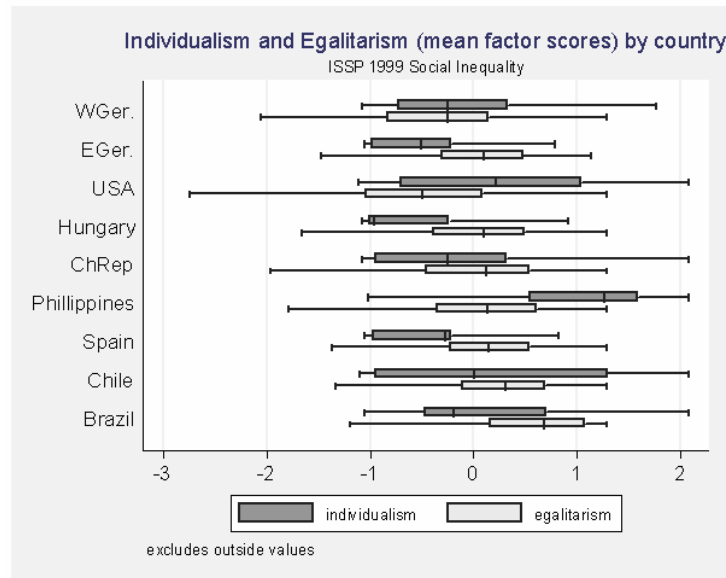
Maximum likelihood method, varimax rotation

LR test: independent vs. saturated:  $\chi^2(10) = 3.8e+04$  Prob> $\chi^2 = 0.0000$

The results permit identification of two dimensions: three first items related to egalitarianism load in one factor, and the two individualistic items in another one. Since the solution is after the orthogonal (varimax) rotation and is also significant according to the likelihood ratio test, it is possible to say that the dimensions identified here are independent from each other ( $r=0,013$ ). This independence is an argument favoring the split consciousness approach, since instead of forming a continuum from individualism to egalitarianism, the ideologies in this case are organized in two factors, and therefore it would be possible to present high (or low) values in both dimensions. This opens the possibility to analyze separately the preference for each ideology in different national contexts, as the following graphic shows:

<sup>6</sup> The factor structures were replicated in each of the countries considered for this analysis and they are relatively stable.

Graphic 1: Median and standard deviation of individualism and egalitarianism by country.

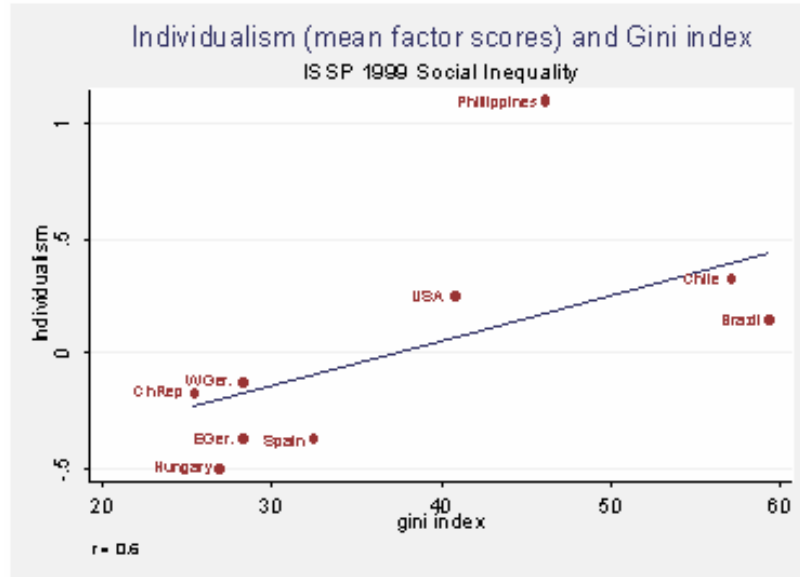


This graphic presents the first results of the distribution of both ideologies in the countries analyzed, based on the median and standard deviations (see appendix for details of these indicators). Both ideologies present important variation between countries, as well as different patterns within each country. Between countries, it is possible to see that the Philippines, USA, Chile and Brazil show the highest scores for individualism, but at the same time the developing countries present comparative higher scores for egalitarianism. Already these descriptive results give us some initial evidence about the distinctiveness of developing countries as far as support for justice ideologies is concerned that would be later tested in multivariate analysis. European countries present in general a higher level of egalitarianism in relation to individualism. Instead of having a challenging character associated to the structural determinants, this seems to be related to cultural values of the welfare state regimes and possibly to the previous communist regimes in the cases of Hungary and Czech Republic. In relation to the dispersion of the data, egalitarianism shows similar levels across the countries, whereas individualism appears as having a greater variation in the US and Chile. This can be considered as a measure of the spread of the ideology in the population and its primary (in contrast to secondary) character.

Turning now to a preliminary bivariate analysis based on the means of the dependent variables for each country, it is possible to consider the effect of the macro variable income inequality in the justice ideologies. As it is seen in the following graphic of individualism and Gini index, there is a group of countries with low Gini and low individualism, constituted by

the European nations considered for this research. This is consistent with other results in the empirical study of justice ideologies, particularly in comparison with the US, and attributed to

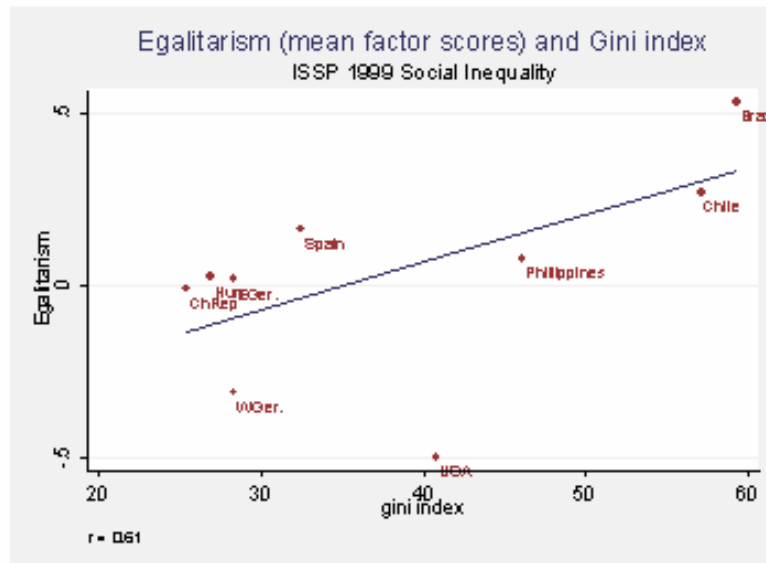
Graphic n° 2: Individualism and Gini index.



the role of welfare state in the case of Germany and also Spain, and to the cultural effects of the former communist regimes in the eastern European countries (Aalberg, 2003; Gijssberts, 1999). On the other side, in the US comparatively the state plays a smaller role and the distributive principles emphasize individual effort are characteristic (Huber & Form, 1973; Lane, 1962). But what is actually new in this results is the location of developing countries, which in the case of Brazil and Chile are in a similar level of individualism compared to the US, and where in the case of the Philippines appears to be as extremely characterized by supporting the individualistic ideology, when compared to the rest of the countries. A general conclusion from this first analysis would be that as actual income inequalities increase, a comparatively higher level of individualism is found. Given that with the exception of the US, countries in this group have also higher poverty indexes, it would be possible to argue consistently with previous research that the preference for the individualistic ideology seems reluctant to be affected by structural factors such as income, but this will be tested later.

Now looking at the graphic that shows the results of mean factor scores in egalitarianism and the Gini index, the pattern followed by the developing countries has changed, and now they appear to be closer to the European nations in this dimension. The extreme value is displayed

Graphic n° 3: Egalitarianism and Gini index.



here by Brazil, which is at the same time the country with the highest economic inequality. Hence if only these results were considered, the conclusion would be on the side of the structural position thesis in the sense of ‘the higher the economic inequality, the higher the support for an egalitarian ideology’. But two cases seem to be breaking this tendency: the US and former West Germany, with the lowest scores in egalitarianism.

The combined results are possible to be understood by dividing the countries in different groups. First, the group of European countries shows low income inequality and a relatively consistent pattern characterized by low individualism and relatively high egalitarianism. In this group, the former West Germany appears to be moving away from the pattern, with comparative lower egalitarianism and higher individualism. A clear opposite blueprint is expressed by the US, with the lowest egalitarianism and higher individualism, and when taking into account the higher degree of inequality, appears as breaking the tendency that the higher the economic inequality, the higher the egalitarianism. The third pattern possible to identify is the one of developing countries, with in general a high individualism and high egalitarianism, which can be interpreted in part in the framework of the split-consciousness approach. When considering only these three countries, the pattern seems to be inverted, since the higher the inequality, the higher the egalitarianism and the lower the individualism. Nevertheless, this “low” individualism reaches the level of the USA. All in all it is clear that the developing countries follow a quite distinctive expression as far as support for egalitarianism and individualism is concerned, and that is not possible to attribute only to the level of actual inequality or the structural position thesis, by which it is probable that a cultural-ideological factor is playing an important role.

### Multivariate analysis

Four OLS regression models were calculated for the analysis of both ideologies as dependent variables. Model 1 is intended to analyze the data at the individual level, considering variables related to the structural position as income and unemployment, and also the self attributed social position. In model 2 the country differences which were described earlier are analyzed, and now are subject to significant test for the hypothesis outlined at a macro level. The selected reference category is the US, since this makes possible to establish a common pattern of analysis with previous research that typically has considered this country as a reference for individualism. Model 3 adds the income inequality index Gini to the models, replacing the country dummies as a macro variable. Finally in model 4 the country dummies and structural variables are presented altogether.

Taking first into consideration the justice ideology of egalitarianism, in model 1 it is possible to observe a significant negative effect of income, associating therefore a lower income with stronger support for egalitarianism. This is actually what from the rational motives of the subjects would be expected, as well as the positive effect of the unemployment dummy variable. In the case of the variable self rated position, the sign of the effect is negative and therefore the lower people locate themselves in the social hierarchy, the higher the level of egalitarianism, being then coherent both objective and subjective measures of status, which will not be the case when comparing afterwards with individualism. As far as the control variables is concerned, the significant effect of the variable sex is also described in previous research, and it has been commonly associated to the role of socialization privileging caring and egalitarianistic values in the case of women. The education level plays an important role, being the people with higher educational level degree significantly less egalitarianistic in relation to people with lower levels of education (reference category is Casmin 1). This is also consistent with the variables income and self rated position. With regard to other control variables that consider the influence of personal values, the effect of the catholic religion does not appear significant, but the church attendance shows evidence of a positive effect. This variable was considered as control and explorative, given the possible influence of the role of the church and the importance of the religion in developing countries. Though this result

Table 5: OLS regression results of egalitarianism and individualism (unstandardized coefficients).

	Egalitarianism				Individualism			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
USA (ref.)								
West Ger.		0.19 (5.19)**		0.08 (2.02)*		-0.33 (6.92)**		-0.32 (6.22)**
East Ger.		0.58 (10.76)**		0.42 (7.69)**		-0.65 (9.31)**		-0.62 (8.56)**
Hungary		0.60 (18.46)**		0.44 (12.71)**		-0.73 (17.19)**		-0.70 (15.23)**
Czech Rep.		0.53 (17.77)**		0.41 (12.76)**		-0.43 (11.18)**		-0.42 (9.86)**
Spain		0.67 (20.96)**		0.52 (14.98)**		-0.62 (14.84)**		-0.62 (13.41)**
Phillippines		0.59 (19.52)**		0.46 (14.00)**		0.86 (21.85)**		0.87 (19.55)**
Chile		0.79 (26.08)**		0.58 (17.32)**		0.10 (2.56)*		0.14 (3.02)**
Brasil		1.03 (36.94)**		0.87 (26.21)**		-0.12 (3.17)**		-0.07 (1.65)
Income	-0.02 (5.46)**		-0.02 (2.91)*	-0.02 (7.01)**	-0.03 (7.25)**		-0.03 (1.52)	-0.01 (1.97)*
Self rated Position	-0.06 (14.10)**		-0.05 (3.22)*	-0.03 (7.08)**	0.02 (3.43)**		0.04 (2.50)*	0.02 (3.25)**
Unemployed	0.08 (2.74)**		0.07 (2.79)*	0.03 (0.95)	-0.06 (1.41)		-0.08 (2.00)	-0.02 (0.48)
Age	-0.00 (3.48)**		0.00 (0.54)	0.00 (3.32)**	-0.00 (6.61)**		0.00 (0.18)	0.00 (2.03)*
Sex	0.03 (2.08)*		0.05 (2.56)*	0.06 (3.94)**	-0.15 (7.07)**		-0.12 (3.53)**	-0.08 (4.31)**
Cas2	-0.19 (10.36)**		-0.13 (1.96)	-0.05 (2.82)**	0.03 (1.16)		0.15 (1.94)	-0.01 (0.54)
Cas3	-0.36 (15.22)**		-0.32 (2.25)	-0.13 (5.22)**	0.18 (5.27)**		0.26 (2.33)*	-0.03 (0.82)
Catholic	0.02 (1.12)		0.05 (0.61)	0.06 (3.03)**	0.13 (6.01)**		0.19 (1.16)	0.01 (0.49)
Church att.	0.02 (5.70)**		0.00 (0.54)	0.00 (1.06)	0.11 (18.77)**		-0.05 (1.57)	-0.01 (2.14)*
Political right	-0.22 (10.78)**		-0.18 (2.85)*	-0.18 (9.14)**	0.08 (2.73)**		0.14 (2.44)*	0.17 (6.68)**
Gini index			0.01 (2.65)*				0.02 (3.49)**	
Constant	0.79 (20.64)**	-0.51 (22.44)**	0.04 (0.20)	-0.18 (3.42)**	0.73 (13.60)**	0.23 (7.93)**	-0.75 (1.80)	0.19 (2.68)**
Observations	8173	8173	8173	8173	8173	8173	8173	8173
R-squared	0.13	0.17	0.15	0.22	0.07	0.23	0.12	0.24

Absolute value of t statistics in parentheses - \* significant at 5%; \*\* significant at 1%



could be linked to the effect of religiosity level on egalitarianism, its interpretation certainly requires further research. Finally, the negative effect of the variable political right was also among the expected given the negative association of right political values and the promotion of an active role of the state in the redistribution.

In model 2 all countries appear as significantly more egalitarianistic than USA, with the  $t$  values increasing on the side of the developing countries and locating comparatively Brazil and Chile as the most egalitarian countries, as it was also presented on the previous descriptive analysis of the mean factor scores. With these results it is possible to establish that the two ideologies represent two independent dimensions that have a particular manifestation in different societies or cultural contexts, and that the structural conditions of developing countries are possible to play a decisive role in this relationship. This assertion will be tested afterwards in the slops as outcomes model.

With regard to model three, it is calculated differently than other models, including a cluster option that allows reducing estimation errors due to repeated observations within the countries, as it is the case of the variable Gini index that assumes a unique value for all country members. The Gini index exhibits a significant value, suggesting that the high economic inequality as a context variable leads to a greater support for egalitarianism. Even though it is not highly significant, this result acquires sense when considering the challenging character of the egalitarianistic ideology that would lead societies with higher economic inequalities to present higher demands for redistribution. Other significant effects in the model disappear or diminish their significance level, indicating that part of their explaining power was referred to variance between countries that was controlled by the cluster option, suggesting that this explanatory model works differently within countries. Nevertheless, the independent variables income, self rated position and unemployment appear to have a general effect, confirming hypothesis 1 with regard to the determinants of egalitarianism. Model four basically maintains the effects of the two previous models with some remarks. Former West Germany diminishes its level of significance, being the region with the most similar levels of egalitarianism in reference to the US of the group of countries. Unemployment is no longer significant, probably due to that this influence is specific to just some of the countries.

So far, all seem to indicate that the structural factors have a coherent effect in the sense of the rational motives of the individuals when it comes to the legitimacy of inequality, which

confirm hypothesis at macro and micro level regarding egalitarianism: the higher the degree of social disadvantage (low income, unemployment at micro level, inequality at a macro level), the higher the support for a justice principle that emphasizes the redistribution, challenging the current distribution system. Nevertheless, this is only one side of the coin, and the picture gets quite less straightforward when it comes to the analysis of individualism.

Starting by considering the effect of personal income in model 1, it is possible to realize that this significant determinant cannot longer be explained by the rational interests linked to social position, since this results show that the lower the personal income, the higher the support for individualism. How come that the same determinant has the same negative effect in two opposite ideologies? First, in theoretical terms it is possible to understand this result in the framework of the split consciousness approach, where the support for one ideology is not necessarily an impediment for supporting another whose content seems to be the contrary. And secondly, from an empirical point of view it was already stated that individualism and egalitarianism represent two significant independent dimensions given the orthogonal rotation procedure in the factor analysis.

As far as the rest of the variables is concerned, self rated position has the contrary effect of income, suggesting that the subjective judgments have a more logical and therefore expected relationship with the support of this ideology, which permits one to distinguish the *actual* situation from the *perceptual* ones in the area of support for justice ideologies. As pointed out by Walster and Walster (1975), “justice is in the eye of the beholder”, and consistently the higher the people perceive themselves in the social scale, the more they support the individualistic ideology, a cognitive effect also possible to be explained by the reduction of reducing cognitive dissonance. Nevertheless, the causal direction of this effect must be interpreted with caution, since it is a perceptual variable that could be also affected by the support of a given ideology, and therefore there could be a problem regarding the direction of the causality. Unemployment is not significant in this model, a result that makes sense in the distinction of Wegener between primary and secondary ideologies. Even though the primary and secondary character of individualism and egalitarianism can vary between the countries, in the pooled data individualism appears to have a more primary character, and therefore the effects of variables linked to specific groups such as the unemployed are possible to be not significant, as it is here the case. In the same line the variables of educational levels show less significance in comparison to egalitarianism, and the explanatory power of model 1 for

individualism is smaller than the same model for egalitarianism, being all these facts an argument for the primary character of the individualistic ideology. As far as the rest of the control variables is concerned, women exhibit lower preference for individualism than men, which is also consistent with the results of other researches and usually attributed to different socialization experiences. The positive and significant effect of right-wing parties' preference on individualism is also among the expected.

In model 2 it is possible to describe the results separating the countries in two groups. All the European countries show significantly smaller levels of individualism in reference to the US, which is coherent with previous evidence of international comparison in the field (Aalberg, 2003; Gijsberts, 1999). Now, when attending to the developing countries, both the Philippines and Chile present significantly higher levels of individualism, confirming the hypothesis that countries with higher inequality show stronger support for this ideology, in the framework of system justification theory now applied at a macro level. The case of Brazil initially does not match this pattern, since it has a negative sign and significantly less support for individualism with US as reference. Since this country is the one with the highest index of inequality, a possible interpretation would be that individualism is in general positively related to income inequality, but just to a certain level, and that after this breaking point, individualism would lean to decrease as inequality increases. Nevertheless, this result should be analyzed carefully, since it would be necessary to have more countries with high inequality indexes to confirm this trend, and secondly because the negative effect of Brazil disappears in model 4 when incorporating independent and control variables.

As in the third model for egalitarianism, now it is incorporated the macro level variable Gini index considering countries as separated clusters. In this case it is confirmed what was already presented in the descriptive analysis, where the higher the economic inequality, the higher the support for the individualistic ideology. Based only on this result, is not difficult to make a link to theories of the dominant ideology, false consciousness phenomena and ideological control of the ruling class, that imply a manipulation of lower classes, leading them to interpret the distribution system in an alienated way to their own interests. However, based on the theoretical critics presented to this perspective (Abercrombie et al., 1980), and also taking into account the empirical results on egalitarianism, there is not enough empirical support to sustain the thesis of the ideological control of the lower status groups. Rather, it is only possible to say that some cultural effects that are reflected in the differences between countries are not possible to be reduced to the rational motives of individuals. This is also

confirmed in model 4 when adding the country effects to the control and independent variables and the differences between countries essentially maintain. All these results speak for the hypothesis referred to the relationship of developing countries with regard to the US as classical benchmark of individualism (Huber & Form, 1973) where it is possible to say that the three developing countries have similar or higher levels of individualism than this country, even under control of structural factors.

A last observation with regard to model 4 is that some structural effects diminish or even disappear when incorporating the country dummies, such as the effect of the variables religion, education and unemployment. On the other hand, the age appears as significant and with a positive effect. The vanishing of some significative effects on the side of the structural variables was among the expected, given that individualism would have a more “primary” character as ideology, and consequently less influenced by structural factor in comparison to egalitarianism. This same conclusion can be reached when considering the variance explained by the different models, where in the case of individualism the variables considered explain less variance than the ones in egalitarianism, which is actually the contrary when considering differences between countries in models two and four.

The question that is now raised is how it is possible to specify these cultural differences between countries, and what role does income inequality play in the explanation of these differences? This inquiry emerges primarily because it is not technically possible to consider together in a OLS model the country variables and the Gini index, given the contextual character of the last in terms of having one unique value for each country. One possible solution to overcome this limitation is to calculate a model where the coefficients of the previous models become the dependent variables, and to introduce income inequality as independent variable. This is known as “slopes as outcomes” model.

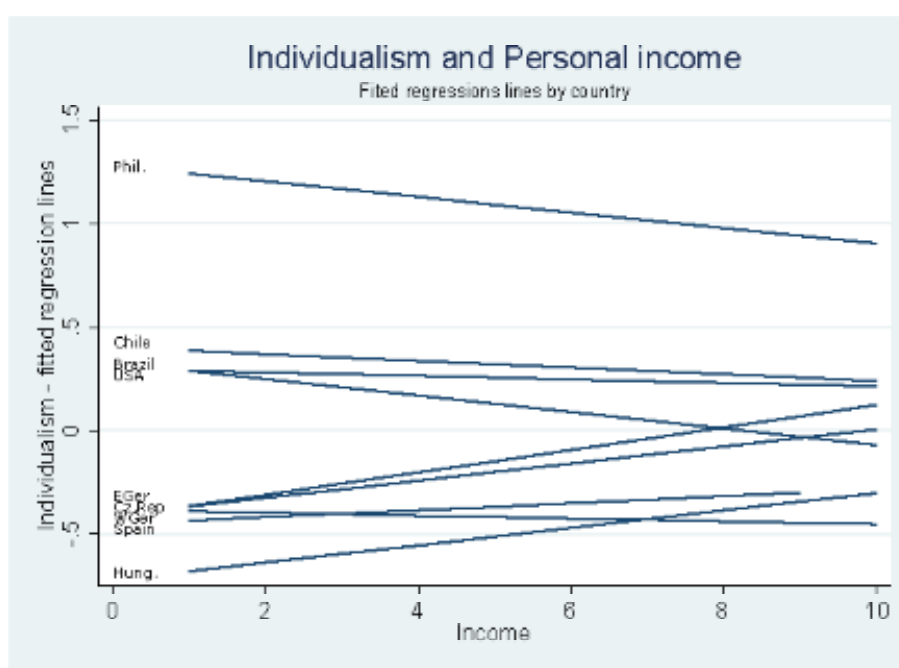
#### Income inequality as determinant of countries’ justice ideologies

The varying coefficients or slopes as outcomes model can be considered as a first step to multilevel analysis (Kreft & de Leeuw, 1998). In this type of analysis each context has its own micro level by estimating separated parameters for explanatory and response variables, and therefore generating in this specific case a micro level with one intercept and one slope for each ideology in the respective countries analyzed. This analysis will be focused in the

ideology of individualism and personal income as independent variable, whose negative effect in the OLS models appears to be one of the most interesting results at an individual level. This raises the question about how dominant cultural values can overcome the rational interest of the individuals, and how this relationship is affected (or not) by the economic inequality as a context variable.

In the appendix are presented the mean of the intercepts and slopes for each country, and the results that are summarized in the following graphic:

Graphic n°4: Fitted regression lines of individualism on personal income.



Two groups of countries are possible to identify in this picture: the ones with positive intercept and negative slope, and the ones with negative intercept and positive slope. The only exception is eastern Germany, but based on the previous analysis and also given that the value of its slope is close to zero, it will be considered as part of the second group. Again, the developing countries and the US are members of the same group, characterized by a negative association between personal income and individualistic ideology, whereas in the second group of European countries this relationship appears to be exactly the opposite. Therefore, the income effect on individualism vary among the different social contexts, and in the case of the European countries it is difficult to state whether this influence is due only to the rational interests derived from structural conditions, or to cultural determinants. But in the case of the developing countries and USA, the structural determinants are not possible to clarify alone

these results, leaving the possibility to attribute this relationship to different shared cultural values.

The remaining question is how can income inequality explain these differences? The following table presents the result of the intercepts and slopes regressed on the Gini index, showing that positive and significant effect on the intercept, and a highly significant negative effect on the slope, explaining respectively 54% and 67% of the variance.

Table 6: Intercepts and slopes regressed on Gini index.

	Individualism on personal income	
	Intercept	Slope
Gini index	0.04 (2.90)*	-0.00 (3.81)**
Constant	-1.37 (2.77)*	0.09 (3.84)**
Observations	9	9
R-squared	0.54	0.67

Absolute value of t statistics in parentheses - \* significant at 5%; \*\* significant at 1%

Given that the variance of the slope can be considered as a measure of the intensity of this relationship, the overall conclusion is that the higher the economic inequality, the more intense the negative effect of personal income on the justice ideology of individualism. With these last results it is possible to state that income inequality as context variable has an influence in the legitimation of inequalities through the support of the individualistic ideology. This result certainly opens a series of new research questions, such as the influence of the institutional design of the distribution system on public opinion, as well as to what extent this influence has an impact on cultural values in a particular society. Another relevant question is whether there is a specific braking point in the levels of economic inequality where legitimating and challenging ideologies enter into a conflict, this is, where split consciousness is no longer possible. Further analyses are needed to answer these questions, as well as to expect the development of future comparative studies on distributive justice that consider the participation of more developing countries.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The general objective of this research was to study the legitimation of the distribution system in countries with high economic inequality as the three developing countries considered, in comparison with countries with lower economic inequality. One of the principal findings is referred to the support for the justice ideology of individualism in these countries, where there was evidence to confirm the hypothesis that countries with high inequality are the ones that strongly support individualism, even significantly more than the US, the classical referent for this ideology in empirical social justice research. This finding could be subject of different interpretations: on the one side it fits quite well Homans' notion "What is, is always becoming what ought to be", a conception in the area of legitimation that so far has not been extensively considered as the other characteristic approaches, namely the structural position thesis and the ideology thesis. This strong argument of this Homans-based approach represents a key aspect in the study of legitimation, and in this area it is interesting to keep exploring the possibilities of theoretical complementation with system justification theory and other psychosocial approaches to the study of ideologies, such as social dominance theory from Sinadius and Pratto (2001). The contribution here in the study of legitimation is the emphasis on people and groups that are not being favored by the distribution system, such in the case of societies with high concentration of income and also high poverty indexes. It is actually in this case that the influence of ideologies can be better appreciated, not being only centered on the idea of an "indoctrination process" from certain elites that try to keep in power, but focusing in the cognitive mechanisms that could make conceive the legitimation process as a particular collaborative game.

Another possible source of explanation of the high levels of individualism in the developing countries considered here is that of the cultural influence of the US in Latin America as well as in the Philippines. With no doubt the economical and political strategies followed by these three countries have been strongly influenced by structural adjustment programs guided by the Washington consensus and international institutions as the World Bank and the IMF. The cultural impact of these measures that emphasized privatization of state services and in general free market principles could certainly be considered as a possible explanation for the high levels of individualism presented by these countries. Particularly in the case of Chile where most of the macro economic reforms were undertaken in a long period of military

dictatorship, this had certainly a strong impact in the political culture that persists even though the country has recovered its democracy.

A completely different conclusion would have been reached if the study would have only been restricted to the study of egalitarianism. But here the puzzle is quite different: on the one side, in the literature has been argued that egalitarianism was comparatively higher in post-communist countries and in occidental countries where the role of the welfare state was predominant. In this area, the developing countries studied here also represent a challenge to these explanations, since these countries are characterized neither by previous communist regimes nor by an extensive welfare state. When egalitarianism appears as comparatively high and strongly rooted in the culture of a given society, it was argued that it could represent also a primary ideology, as in a study comparing Germany and USA (Wegener, 1995). But taking into account the results of this study, it is worthwhile to ask the question whether the high egalitarianism in countries with high economic inequality is probably due to structural factors instead of cultural values derived from a political system. It is quite reasonable to think that in countries with high inequality the support for egalitarian values is related with a degree of discontent with the current distribution. That is why without information about alternative ideologies such as individualism it would be difficult to expect a minimum degree of political stability due to pressures for redistribution in these kinds of societies.

Developing countries follow a different pattern in comparison to other countries analyzed in previous research, displaying higher individualism and higher egalitarianism than the rest of the countries. Therefore, the inclusion of these countries could be considered as a trial by fire for the split consciousness approach, which was actually successfully approved: both egalitarianism and individualism can be supported in the same society without an apparent conflict, and now it is possible to add, in societies with high economic inequality indexes.

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**APPENDIX****A) Variable means**

Country	Egalitarianism			Individualism	
	Gov. redist.	Taxes	Contribution	Health	Education
West Ger.	2.71	2.01	2.94	3.87	3.86
East Ger.	2.08	1.90	2.77	4.20	4.21
USA	3.08	2.16	3.01	3.36	3.30
Hungary	1.81	1.86	3.22	4.34	4.38
Czech Rep.	2.07	1.95	2.83	3.84	4.07
Spain	2.45	1.93	2.06	2.27	2.21
Philippines	1.99	1.92	2.08	4.19	4.22
Chile	2.06	1.72	2.09	3.27	3.35
Brazil	1.48	1.67	1.90	3.61	3.33

**B) Country Gini indexes**

Gini Index	
USA	0,40
West Ger.	0,28
East Ger.	0,28
Hungary	0,26
Czech Rep.	0,25
Spain	0,32
Philippines	0,46
Chile	0,57
Brazil	0,59

Source UNDP (2001)

**B) Median and standard deviation of factor scores individualism and egalitarianism.**

Country	Individualism		Egalitarianism	
	Median	Standard dev.	Median	Standard dev.
WGer.	-.2480879	.7583147	-.249166	.6957145
EGer.	-.5072517	.7053081	.0967796	.5816408
USA	.2158605	1.000722	-.4898557	.7976808
Hungary	-.959188	.7337778	.0967796	.6394755
ChRep	-.2525416	.7597872	.1225119	.7513036
Philippines	1.270433	.7607599	.1320213	.6831077
Spain	-.269997	.7072484	.1486418	.5720545
Chile	.0035173	1.146125	.3085496	.6360459
Brazil	-.1870375	.9151211	.6834149	.5970374

**D) Mean of intercepts and slopes of the OLS regression of individualism on personal income by country**

Country	mean(inter)	mean(slope)
WGer.	-.4184967	.054228
EGer.	-.3828762	-.0068745
USA	.2983442	-.0084011
Hungary	-.7210537	.0419427
Ch. Rep.	-.4066582	.0412778
Philippines	1.279407	-.0375777
Spain	-.4514284	.0168043
Chile	.4026683	-.0162739
Brazil	.3294532	-.0399672