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Class consciousness in a mature neoliberal society: Evidence from Chile

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ABSTRACT

Class consciousness is a central element of the sociological analysis of class inequality. It indicates the mechanisms through which inequality creates subjective-level outcomes as dissimilar class identities and material interests. Despite its importance, class consciousness has been largely unexamined in current neoliberal society. With a few exceptions, the basic sociological question of how inequality brings about consequences at the subjective level has not been addressed in recent research. In this paper I address this question by analyzing the patterns of class consciousness in Chile. To do so, I examine how class location and class origins (as indicator of class experiences) shape the two main components of class consciousness: class identity and class interests. The results suggest that the identity component depends on both class experiences and class position, as well as on the way that the latter creates subjective experiences of economic inequality (i.e. inequality in individual resources). On the other hand, the second component of class consciousness—oppositional class interests—depends on both class experiences and class location, and on the way in which the latter brings about subjective experiences of opposition in the terrain of the relations of production.

1. Introduction

The concept of class consciousness is a central component in sociological analyses of social inequality. In fact, class consciousness is key to understanding the mechanisms through which class inequality leads to class conflict in capitalist societies. From Marx onwards, class consciousness has been studied by analyzing the process through which a class becomes aware of its interests and, thereby, acts in the political arena against other classes' interests (cf. Lukács, 1971 [1923]; Marx, 1978 [1852]). In Latin America, class consciousness tended to be examined in contexts marked by the growth of strong working-class movements that became the social basis of important projects of socialist transformation—see, for example, the well-known study of class consciousness among Chilean workers in Huachipato and Lota led by Di Tella, Brams, Reynaud, and Touraine (1967) a few years before the election of Salvador Allende in 1970. It is not surprising, therefore, that after decades of political repression, economic restructuring (i.e. the arrival of neoliberal policies), and the practical absence of class politics, class consciousness has been relegated to a marginal area within the analysis of inequality and political conflict in Latin America. Nor is it surprising that since the 1980s, most scholarly research focused on the way that neoliberal policies transformed the class structure in the region (cf. CEPAL, 2006; Filgueira, 2007; Franco, León, & Atria, 2007; Franco, Hopenhayn, & León, 2010; Klein and Tokman, 2000; Pérez Sainz et al., 2007; Portes and

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Hoffmann, 2003; Weller, 2004), disregarding the question of how such a transformation could have brought about results at the subjective level—e.g. by producing different types of class identities or antagonistic material interests.

The exclusive focus on the objective expressions of inequality has been even more marked in scholarship on Chile. Chile is a country characterized not only by the presence of the most mature neoliberal regime in Latin America, but also by the paradoxical coexistence between high rates of economic growth and one of the highest levels of social inequality in the region (Torche, 2005). These high levels of inequality in Chile have implied not only the establishment of marked class-based differences in people's life chances (Espinoza, 2006; Wormald and Torche, 2004), but also the creation a sociopolitical scenario defined by a huge imbalance of power between capital and labor (Barrett, 2001; Frank, 2004). In this context, several scholars have examined how both the working and the middle classes have tried to re-actualize their collective identity after the consolidation of the neoliberal regime (cf. Leiva, 2012; Mendez and Gayo, 2007; Mendez, 2008; Winn, 2004). Surprisingly, the concept of class-consciousness has been missing in all these investigations. Thus, despite the paradoxical scenario observed in the country, the question of how class leads to dissimilar and even antagonistic interests has been largely unexplored during the last three decades. In doing so, scholarly debates have not addressed one of the most basic and relevant questions in sociology, namely: how class inequality determines subjective mechanisms—e.g. class-based sociopolitical orientations—that may facilitate collective action and, thereby, the development of class-based political conflicts.

In this paper I address this question by analyzing the patterns of class consciousness in current Chilean society. In other words, rather than analyzing how class leads to social conflict, in this paper I address a more basic but fundamental question, namely: how class leads to variations in people's class consciousness. To do so, I integrate into the same framework the "processual" (cf. Steinberg, 1999; Thompson, 1966) and the "structural" (cf. Western, 1999; Wright, 1985) approaches to class, and examine how class consciousness—understood as the subjective awareness people have of their *class identity* and their *oppositional class interests*—is shaped by class location and class-experiences (expressed, for instance, in people's class origin).

The results of the analysis tend to support, although with some important modifications, previous investigations' findings regarding how class identity and class interests are shaped by class experiences and class location (cf. Wright and Shin, 1988). In current Chilean society class consciousness is significantly affected by class position *and* class experiences (measured as class origin). According to the data, the first component of class consciousness—class identity—depends on both class experiences and class position, as well as on the way that the latter creates subjective experiences of economic inequality (i.e. inequality in individual resources). The second component—oppositional class interests—depends, on the other hand, on both class experiences and class location, and on the way in which the latter brings about subjective experiences of opposition in the terrain of the relations of production. This suggests that despite the *classless scenario* observed in Chile—i.e. a sociopolitical context seemingly devoid of class politics—class-related factors as class origin and class position are still a salient foundation for dissimilar identities and oppositional consciousness.

2. Debates on class consciousness, its definition, and its determinants

2.1. The concept of class consciousness

In sociology, the concept of class consciousness is key to understanding the mechanisms through which class inequality leads to class conflict in capitalist societies (Giddens, 1973; Mann, 1973; Marx, 1978 [1852]; Parkin, 1979; Przeworski, 1977; Wright, 1985). Despite its analytical importance, there is no precise definition of class consciousness or agreement on how to study it in empirical research.

Based on Marx's general statements on class consciousness, some scholars have defined class consciousness by emphasizing its *cultural* attributes. For instance, the English historian Thompson (1966) argues that working class consciousness has to be described as the "cultural definition" of the workers' economic-productive experiences: "Class consciousness is the way in which these experiences are handled in cultural terms: embodied in traditions, value-systems, ideas, and institutional forms" (1966: 10). Thompson's framework emphasizes several features of class consciousness that allow us to explain the process of class formation—i.e. the process wherein classes become collective actors aware of their interests. The principal virtue of this framework is that working-class formation is understood not as the mechanical consequence of any sort of "objective class structure", but rather as the cultural process through which workers become aware of their class situation. In fact, whereas for Thompson the concept of experience appears—due to their economic origin—as always determined by structural mechanisms, class consciousness presents more uncertain features. In other words, although Thompson recognizes that there is a *logic* in the responses of similar occupational groups undergoing similar class experiences, he also emphasizes that there is no way to predicate any law to characterize the development of a given type of class consciousness. "Consciousness of class arises in the same way in different times and places, but never in *just* the same way" (p. 10).

On the basis of this idea, Thompson rejects the definition of social classes as an objective "thing" from which we can deduce the "correct" type of class-consciousness if such a "thing" becomes aware of its position and real interests. The definition of class as a "thing" denies for Thompson the fact that class is a relationship. Consequently, such a definition overlooks the existence of class as a *historical phenomenon*; that is, as a process in which people define historically and in cultural terms their experiences. In simpler words, classes do not exist at a given point of history or outside it. They exist only *through* history.

Although very influential, Thompson's conceptualization of class consciousness is not the only definition that exists in the Marxist analysis of class. A different

concept of class consciousness can be found, for instance, in Erik O. Wright's approach (1985, 1997). Wright's analysis emphasizes—as the point of departure in the analysis of class consciousness—the existence of a class structure based on relations of exploitation. The basic principle is that class consciousness refers to people's recognition and understanding of material interest objectively defined in terms of their class positions. In other words, rather than indicating the emergence of *cultural identity* among the members of a class (such as Thompson does), Wright's approach is preoccupied with the problem of *material interests* and the way that people from different classes recognize those interests (Wright, 1997, p. 495).

Wright defines class consciousness as a micro-level (individual-level) concept that refers to those aspects of human subjectivity which, in addition to having a "class content", are discursively accessible to individuals' own awareness (Wright, 1985, p. 244). The "class character" of class consciousness refers, first, to a logical derivation of aspects of consciousness from an analysis of class (e.g. since competitive-market relations are a distinctive feature of capitalism, the belief in the desirability of competition can be seen as having a "class character"). Second, the class character of class consciousness can also refer to those aspects of consciousness implicated in intention, choices, and practices with "class pertinent effects" in the world—i.e. effects on how individuals operate within a given structure of class relations. This latter aspect of class consciousness is the one that Wright emphasizes most in his empirical analysis of class consciousness. In his own words: "If class structure is understood as a terrain of social relations that determine objective material interests of actors, and class struggle is understood as the forms of social practices which attempt to realize those interests, then class consciousness can be understood as the subjective processes that shape intentional choices with respect to those interests and struggles" (Wright, 1985, p. 246). In simpler words, Wright (2005) argues that class consciousness can be understood as the "subjective awareness people have of their class interests and the conditions for advancing them" (p. 21).

Thompson and Wright propose different conceptualizations of class consciousness. Whereas Thompson conceives of class consciousness as the cultural identity constructed by people with shared economic experiences, Wright defines it as the subjective awareness people have of their structurally defined material interests. Both definitions emphasize, therefore, two different components of class consciousness (Wright, 1997, p. 495): while Thompson's analysis focuses on class identity as a historically constructed phenomenon, Wright's framework focuses on material interests as determined by individuals' current class location.

In line with this idea, several scholars have defined class consciousness by identifying class identity and class interests as the two main components involved in it. Giddens (1973), for example, contends that class consciousness denotes the subjective mechanisms through which individuals recognize dissimilar attitudes, beliefs, and practices as class-based issues. Thus, class consciousness differs from "class awareness" in that the latter does not involve the recognition that those differences in attitudes, practices, and beliefs signify a particular class affiliation nor "the recognition that there exist other classes, characterized by different attitudes, beliefs, and styles of life" (p. 111). In Giddens' definition, the subjective mechanisms associated with class consciousness can be seen as operating at different levels of human consciousness. These levels denote different "levels" of class consciousness. For example, the first and most underdeveloped level involves a conception of class identity and therefore the explicit recognition of class differentiation. The second level implies a conception of class conflict: "where perception of class unity is linked to a recognition of opposition of interest with another class or classes" (p. 112). Finally, the third level is that of the revolutionary class consciousness, which involves not only the recognition of the possibility of an overall reorganization in the institutional mediation of power, but also "a belief that such a reorganization can be brought about through class action" (p. 113).

Similar to Giddens, scholars such as Lopreato and Hazelrigg (1972) and Mann (1973) have also pointed out the idea of "levels of class consciousness" as a way to operationalize class consciousness. All these scholars coincide upon distinguishing class identity and class interests as two central components of class consciousness. For example, Lopreato and Hazelrigg (1972) define class consciousness as "a state of mind in which the individual identifies with a given class to the point of adopting interests as his own and engaging in concerted action within that class against the interests of another" (p. 116). Lopreato and Hazelrigg argue that this definition implies distinguishing different aspects of human awareness that are involved in the formation of class consciousness. These aspects represent different "degrees" or "levels" of class consciousness, among which "class awareness" represent the necessary precondition for more advanced levels of class consciousness (e.g. class solidarity).

Like Lopreato and Hazelrigg (1972) and Mann (1973) contends that the study of working class consciousness in contemporary capitalist society must be based on the distinction of four elements implied in that concept. These elements are: (1) *class identity*, i.e. people's self-identification as members of a class; (2) *class opposition*, that is, the individual's realization that the interests of his/her own class are opposed to the interests of other classes; (3) *class totality*, i.e. the acceptance of the two previous elements as the defining characteristics of (a) one's total social situation and (b) the whole society in which one lives; and (4) the conception of an *alternative* society, that is to say, a goal toward which one moves through the struggle with the class opponent (1973: 13).

The analyses developed by Mann, Giddens, and Lopreato and Hazelrigg coincide on both the identification of "levels" or "stages" of class consciousness and the affirmation of class identity and class interests as two central elements of class consciousness (the third main component identified by them could be defined as "class action"). They also coincide on affirming that a true revolutionary class consciousness—in the Marxist sense of the term—can be seen only in the combination all the "levels" involved in the notion of class consciousness. Specifically, they agree

that a true revolutionary consciousness emerges in those contexts where class identity and class interest bring about class-based collective action aiming at the transformation of the existing class structure. Regardless of the question of the conditions under which a revolutionary class consciousness may emerge, the differentiation of stages of class consciousness is a useful way to accept the possibility of examining class consciousness even at its primary levels of developments—that is, in periods of apparent absence of class conflict. In fact, the conceptual differentiation pointed out by these scholars does not imply affirming as a necessity the joint emergence of all the components of class consciousness—there may exist, for instance, oppositional interests among workers without existing an explicit recognition of the need to change the institutional mediations of power through collective action.

2.2. Empirical investigations on class consciousness and its determinants

The different concepts laid out in the previous section have given rise to several empirical investigations about the determinants of class consciousness. Most of this research has been based on the frameworks initiated by Thompson (1966) and Wright (1985).

Thompson's analysis, for example, has been widely used in sociological debates on class consciousness and class formation, especially by those scholars espousing the so-called *processual approach* to class (cf. Brenner, 1989; Fantasia, 1988; Katznelson, 1986; Sewell, 1980; Steinberg, 1999). For instance, based on Thompson's definition of class consciousness Fantasia (1988) argues in his analysis of the American workers that class consciousness can be observed in a wide range of cultural practices generated by workers in their social struggles (e.g. in wildcat strikes). These "moments of crisis" at the local level—shop-floor, workplace, community level—represent, in effect, the emergence of *cultures of solidarity* that are the clearest expression of working class consciousness. Similar to Fantasia, Brenner asserts that the most productive way to understand the mechanisms that create commonality among individuals of the same class is through their "day-to-day experiences of conflict and cooperation at work" (1989: 185).

The idea of class experiences has also been used to conduct a wide range of historical investigations on working class formation, most of which have been in direct dialog with Thompson's seminal work (cf. Calhoun, 1982; Katznelson, 1986; Sewell, 1980; Steinberg, 1999). For example, in his study of the early nineteenth-century British workers, Steinberg (1999) shows that working class discourses were a mediator and a source of power, because they facilitated collective action by shaping consciousness and the possibilities for collective action. In other words, discourses (which are defined by Steinberg as "fighting words") were the cultural construction on the basis of which workers understood not only their common experiences of exploitation and oppression (i.e. their class identity), but also their capacities to mobilize collectively against the ruling class.

Overall scholars related to this processual approach agree that class consciousness has to be defined through the emphasis of a central principle, namely: class consciousness emerges when a common cultural understanding of society, derived from people' lived experiences, is expressed in traditions, ideas, and values. Those traditions, ideas, and values are thought of as the cultural support of a sense of class *identity* and class *solidarity* that facilitates collective action among the members of a class. That is why this approach has been described as *processual* (Crompton, 1998 [1993]; Wright and Shin, 1988): it emphasizes the process of class formation that leads to the consolidation of a given type of class consciousness.

As opposed to this processual approach, the analysts following E. O. Wright's definition of class consciousness have developed a "structural approach" to class consciousness (cf. Jones, 2001; Wallace and Junisbai, 2004; Western, 1999; Wright, 1985, 1997). This structural approach has been one of the most influential approaches to class in sociological debates of recent decades, especially for the fruitful empirical research that has stemmed from it (Crompton, 1998 [1993]). For example, in his empirical analyses on class structure and class consciousness, Wright (1985) has shown that the essential patterning of class consciousness is basically the same in several advanced capitalist nations (i.e. as we move from a proletariat class to a bourgeoisie class position, people's ideological orientation becomes more pro-capitalist). Similar findings have been reported in other more recent investigations (cf. Jones, 2001; Wallace and Junisbai, 2004; Western, 1999). In all of these, people with a working class location have been found to uphold anti-capitalist interests that are significantly higher than those upheld by people with a middle-class or bourgeois class position.

Wright's investigations have also showed that the degree of ideological polarization (i.e. polarization in the patterns class consciousness) differs considerably across countries. For example, while in the US nearly 40 percent of the labor force could be defined in terms of its ideology as part of the "bourgeois ideological coalition," in Sweden this figure is less than 10%. These results indicate, for Wright (1989, pp. 12–13), that individuals' class consciousness is shaped by two general dynamics: on the one hand, class consciousness is directly affected by class location insofar as it determines a set of interest and experiences faced by the individual; on the other hand, consciousness is shaped by politics, insofar as the strategies of parties, unions, and other political actors determine the ways in which people interpret those experiences and act on their interests.

As can be seen, the processual and the structural approaches have given rise to different type of analyses of class consciousness. In doing so, each approach has emphasized the examination of different determinants of class consciousness. In the processual approach, the main issue considered is the process of class formation that leads to the development of specific types of *class identities*. As a result, the main determinant of class consciousness stressed in this approach is people's *lived-experiences* insofar as they are seen as the historical basis of class identity. In the

structural approach, on the other hand, class consciousness is examined through the idea of objective *material interests*. Thus, this perspective emphasizes *class position* as the main determinant of class consciousness—class position is seen as the principal indicator of people's position in the relations of exploitation that configure those material interests. In short, while the processual approach analyzes class consciousness by paying attention to the way that *historical class experiences* configure people's class *identity*, the structural approach does so by analyzing the way that people's current *class position* configures their *class interest* (Wright, 1997, p. 497).

The processual and structural approaches accentuate not only different dimensions and determinants of class consciousness; they have also given rise to different ways of operationalizing class consciousness in empirical research. The processual approach's emphasis on class identity, for example, has led some scholars to operationalize class consciousness as "class identification." In quantitative research, this type of studies have been based on multivariate analyses whose dependent variable is the standard survey question about subjective class identification (e.g. upper-class, middle-class, working class, etc.) and whose independent variables are several class-related attributes—occupational class, class background, income, etc. (cf. Andersen and Curtis, 2012; Jackman and Jackman, 1983; Lockwood, 1989 [1958]; Vanneman and Weber Cannon, 1987).

Different from this type of research, structural analysts have studied class consciousness by analyzing the extent to which individuals from different classes support different sociopolitical interests (e.g. Jones, 2001; Western, 1999; Wright, 1985, 1997). In this structural approach, class identity is not thought to be a component of class consciousness but rather an independent variable affecting the individual's consciousness (Wallace and Junisbai, 2004, p. 388). Thus, class consciousness is not examined as subjective class identification, but rather through multivariate models predicting variations in "scales of class consciousness". Those scales are usually the sum of several Likert-type items regarding respondents' attitudes toward corporations' benefits, conflicts between workers and managers, support for unions, etc. (cf. Jones, 2001; Wallace and Junisbai, 2004; Wright, 1985, 1997).

During the last decades some scholars have called for an integrated approach that incorporates class identity and class interests into a single definition of class consciousness. According to this perspective, the analysis of class consciousness must be based on both the study of individuals' class interest as determined by their class position and the examination of people's class identity as derived from their class-related experiences. In terms of quantitative empirical research, this implies that the question of subjective class identification must be treated as a dependent variable (i.e. as a component of class consciousness) rather than as an independent variable affecting people's awareness of their class interests. Thus in this type of research, scholars study class consciousness by integrating subjective class identification and the indicators of class interests into the same "scale of class consciousness" (e.g. Ayalon, Ben-Rafael, & Sharot, 1987; Buttel and Flinn, 1979; Marshall, Rose, Newby, & Vogler, 1988; Vallas, 1987; Zingraff and Schulman, 1984).

More recently, some scholars have treated class interests and class identity as two separate dimensions of class consciousness and have studied the way in which different class-related factors determine variations in each component. Wright and Shin (1988), for example, examined the effects of people's class-trajectories (as indicator of their class-experiences) and class position (as indicator of people's position in the relations of production) on class identity and class interests in the US and Sweden. Their main finding was that whereas class trajectories are more important than class position in shaping the cultural dimensions of class consciousness (i.e. class identity), class locations were relatively more important than class trajectories for shaping the interests-centered dimensions of class consciousness (Wright and Shin, 1988, p. 83).

In this paper I follow Wright and Shin's attempt to integrate the processual and structural approaches to class consciousness by pursuing a twofold empirical analysis. First, I aim to extend the investigations on class consciousness to developing societies by analyzing the general patterns of class consciousness in Chile, a Latin American country with the most advanced neoliberal regime in the region. Second, I seek to contribute to the development of an integrated approach to class consciousness by examining how class identity and class interests are shaped by class position and class lived-experiences (expressed, for instance, in people's class backgrounds or in their biographical class trajectories). To do so, in this paper I define class consciousness as the subjective awareness people have of their class identity *and* their class interests. By class identity I mean individuals' identification with a larger group of people, i.e. a "class" (Jackman and Jackman, 1983). Similarly, based on Giddens' (1973, p. 112) and Mann's (1973, p. 13) conceptualizations, I define class interests broadly as the interests people have with respect to *class opposition*, i.e. with respect to the manner in which people recognize, as member of a class, their opposition with other class or classes. Following the idea of "stages" of class consciousness (cf. Giddens, 1973; Lopreato and Hazelrigg, 1972; Mann, 1973), I conceive of class identity and oppositional class interests not only as two different components of class consciousness, but also as two cumulative "levels" of class consciousness that may be the potential basis for class-based collective action.

On the basis of the empirical research on class identity and class interests already reviewed (e.g. Wright and Shin, 1988; Wright, 1997), the main hypothesis that leads this paper is that in current Chilean society class position and class live-experiences affect in different ways each component of class consciousness. In other words, I hypothesize that whereas class identity is affected mainly by historical mechanisms associated to class-experiences, oppositional class interests are shaped mainly by class position, as expression of people' current position in the relations of production. Before describing the data and methods I used to test these hypotheses, in the next section I depict briefly the main features of current Chilean society. In doing so, I show that an integrated analysis to class consciousness

is particularly relevant for understanding the subjective mechanisms through which class inequality may lead to class action in mature neoliberal societies like Chile.

3. Neoliberal restructuring and class relations in Chile

Unlike other Latin American countries, Chile's authoritarian regime replaced the Import Substitution Industrialization (ISI) model with economic liberalization. Hence, the impact of economic transformations was deeper in Chile than in the rest of the region. In a similar way, the changes associated with neoliberalism (e.g. radical de-unionization, job insecurity, subcontracting) were imposed without the resistance of an organized working class, which was politically repressed by Pinochet's regime between 1973 and 1990 (Drake, 1996). The arrival of center-left democratic governments in 1990 did not mean a change in the policies initiated in the dictatorship. The general neoliberal framework started in the late 1970s as well as some of the main institutional anchors created by Pinochet (e.g. Chilean Constitution, binomial electoral system, etc.) were, in fact, unmodified by the new civilian rules. At the same time, since the early 1990s the principal class-based collective actors such as the labor movement and even some middle-class organizations like teachers and public employees unions have been unable to regain the political influence they had until 1973. Thus, despite the new democratic conditions, since the 1990s there has not been a strong class-based actor, such as the old labor movement, able to reverse these neoliberal policies and the unfavorable scenario stemming from them (Drake, 2003).

This has brought about a paradoxical situation in current Chilean society. Despite the institutional stability and the high rates of economic growth observed during the last thirty years, Chile has one of the highest levels of inequality in the region. Similarly, the situation of workers is extremely precarious (and we could say, almost as precarious as it was in the dictatorship), because the principal Labor Code passed by the authoritarian regime in 1979 has not been changed. As a result, along with low salaries and high levels of job flexibility, Chilean workers do not have a real bargaining power nor can they push for changes through unionization, which is extremely limited by law (Barrett, 2001; Frank, 2004; Leiva, 2012; López, 2009).

In this context of deep and uncontested neoliberal change, several scholars analyzed how the neoliberal policies transformed the Chilean class structure (León and Martínez, 2007; Martínez and Tironi, 1985; Wormald and Torche, 2004). Overall, those investigations showed that the decline of import-substitution and the stabilization of the neoliberal system implied a sharp decline of the industrial-manufacturing sector and a growth of the labor force employed in the private and service sectors. Both the privatization and the de-industrialization of the labor force were the result of the privatization of the former state-owned companies and the general change in the economic orientation of the country. The decline of industrial trade was accompanied by consequent growth of the service sector, which became one of the principal sources of employment—along with the informal work—for the new working class both in Chile and in the rest of Latin America (cf. CEPAL, 2006; Klein and Tokman, 2000; León and Martínez, 2007; Weller, 2004). Even though Chile's rates of informal work are substantially lower than in Latin America as a whole, the patterns of de-industrialization are basically the same. For example, according to data from the Ministry of Labor, in 2008 33% of the Chilean labor force was employed in the industrial sector and 57% in service activities.

These changes have been one of the principal "structural factors" behind the weakening of the traditional working class and middle class identities and, in turn, the reduction in the chances for the formation of class-based social movements (Drake, 2003; Barozet and Fierro, 2011; León and Martínez, 2007). However, the neoliberal restructuring did not imply the weakening of all social classes. Unlike what happened with the working and the middle class, the neoliberal transformation gave rise to a strong entrepreneurial class whose internal cohesion can be observed in its strong defense of Neoliberal reforms, its commitment to anti-labor policies derived from the 1979 Labor Code, and its solid ties to right-wing political parties (Barrett, 2001; Frank, 2004; Silva, 1996).

In this paradoxical scenario, several scholars have analyzed how both the working and the middle classes have tried to re-actualize their collective identity after the consolidation of the neoliberal regime. In relation to the working class, several investigations (cf. Baltera and Dussert, 2010; Klubock, 2004; Leiva, 2009, 2012; Winn, 2004) have showed that workers have regained their identity—destroyed by both the economic changes and the political repression performed during the dictatorship—through micro practices of labor resistance. Such practices are observable in workers' collective actions against the main expressions of the neoliberal labor agenda, i.e. work precariousness, labor flexibility, anti union policies, etc. As for the middle class, scholars have pointed out how in a context of high occupational heterogeneity a new sense of "symbolic identity" has been reconstructed (Mendez and Gayo, 2007; Mendez, 2008, 2010). Though this type of identity is sometimes not explicitly articulated in collective terms, it does indicate the establishment of symbolic and moral barriers—in particular a barrier based on a "sense of authenticity" (Mendez, 2008).

As can be seen, several investigations have accounted for the way that different classes have constructed their own identity in a context marked by rapid and deep transformations carried out during the last 30 years. Surprisingly, the concept of class consciousness has been missing in all these investigations. For example, the analysis of how this political economy of neoliberalism affects workers' sociopolitical consciousness has focused only on their perceptions and attitudes toward labor conflicts, without examining how they identify themselves as part of a larger collectivity (e.g. the working class) or how they define their interests as opposed to employers' interests. Consequently, the more general and sociologically relevant question of how class inequality leads to dissimilar and even conflicting perceptions of the neoliberal economic system has been largely unexplored. Recent

scholarly debates have all overlooked class consciousness, even though Chile's economic regime is characterized by the presence of high and persistent levels of inequality (Torche, 2005). Similarly, class consciousness has not been examined even though the high levels of inequality have been one of the main causes of an emerging process of social mobilization observed in the country since 2011, which has been expressed in some social movements—e.g. the student movement, subcontracted workers' strikes, etc.—which explicitly support anti-neoliberal agendas (Atria, Larraín, Benavente, Couso, & Joignant, 2013; Mayol, 2012).

All these recent phenomena suggest that class consciousness must be brought back in the analysis of inequality and its political consequences. Class consciousness indicates indeed the mechanisms through which inequality creates subjective outcomes, expressed in dissimilar identities and material interests, that may facilitate class-based collective action. In current neoliberal societies, and in particular in Chile, the study of class consciousness is key for understanding how class matters in contexts marked by high economic inequality, high imbalance of power between capital and labor, and by the public "absence" of class (i.e. the absence of class-based issues in the agendas of the mainstream political parties).

4. Data, hypotheses, and methods

The data used in this research come from the Work and Equity Survey ($n = 1368$). The survey was conducted in 2008 and is nationally representative (respondents 18 years and older were randomly selected). Given that most of the variables used to analyze class consciousness were applied only to the salaried population, the sample size represents a subsample of the employed population defined as "wage earner." This is an important limitation of these data. They did not allow for the examination of an important sector of the labor force—the self-employed and the few cases of the survey defined as big entrepreneurs. Therefore the following analysis focuses only on the salaried classes, from high levels managers to unskilled workers.

As already mentioned, in this research I assess the way that class location and class experiences accounts for class consciousness. To do so, I use standard quantitative research techniques—in particular ordinary least square (OLS) and ordinal logistic regressions. The quantitative analysis of class consciousness has been criticized on account of its de-contextualized approach to people's *practical* construction of their class identity and interests (Fantasia, 1988; Marshall, 1983). According to this critique, the best way of analyzing class consciousness is through the examination of people's struggles and actions by means of which all class-related effects are *practically realized*. Though these criticisms are certainly reasonable, in this research I follow those scholars who argue that class consciousness and other class-related effects like attitudes and perceptions can be accurately analyzed through standard quantitative techniques (e.g. Jones, 2001; Svallfors, 2006; Wallace and Junisbai, 2004; Western, 1999; Wright, 1985, 1997, among others). While limited, survey methodology can be useful to understand the general patterns of class conflict expressed in the polarization of different class-based ideological orientations, attitudes, and opinions. To be sure, quantitative methodology may not be appropriate to examine how individuals from different classes discursively *frame* their class interests. Nor may it be useful to account for the mechanisms and processes that determine the development of certain types of class consciousness at others' expense (e.g. the development of a reformist working class consciousness instead of a revolutionary one). However, quantitative methodology is very useful for mapping out in larger national contexts—as I aim to do it in this research. Based on this, both qualitative and quantitative methodologies seem to be good complements for an empirical examination of class consciousness and class struggle.

Table 1
Descriptive statistics for class identification in Chile ($n = 1368$, frequencies in parentheses).

Lower class	Middle class	Upper-middle or upper class
20.8 (284)	76.6 (1048)	2.6 (36)

4.1. Dependent variable: class consciousness

In this paper, I measured class consciousness through two dependent variables representing the two components involved in it, namely: class identity and oppositional class interests. The lack of appropriate data (for example, questions related to respondents' support for class organizations as unions) made it impossible to include items representing other important elements of class consciousness, e.g. respondents' support for collective organization as a means to pursue their class interests.

1. *Class identity:* Following previous investigations (Andersen and Curtis, 2012; Jackman and Jackman, 1983; Vanneman and Weber Cannon, 1987), I measured class identity through the standard question about subjective class identification. In the survey, this question was worded as follow: "Taking into consideration the socioeconomic conditions of the people of this country, how would you classify yourself?" The answers were coded as 1 (Upper class and upper-middle class), 2 (middle class) and 3 (Lower class). Given the way this variable was coded, the higher the value the higher the "working" or "lower" class identity. Table 1 shows the percentages for each category of this variable. As can be seen, most people (almost 77%) identify themselves as middle-class, whereas only the 2.6% identify themselves as upper-middle or upper class.
2. *Oppositional class interests:* Following the theoretical debates already discussed—in particular the idea of "levels of class consciousness" developed by Mann (1973, p. 13) and Giddens (1973)—I defined oppositional class interests broadly as respondents' explicit "recognition of opposition of interest with another class or classes" (Giddens, 1973, p. 112). I measured oppositional class interests through a "scale of oppositional class interests." The scale was constructed through the summation of five questions:

Table 2
Correlation matrix for items in the scale of oppositional class interests ($n = 1368$).

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
(1) Respondent's evaluation of his/her relation with his/her direct supervisor	1				
(2) Respondent's evaluation of his/her relation with other bosses	0.430***	1			
(3) Respondent's perceptions of relations between workers and managers	0.397***	0.388***	1		
(4) Respondent's perceptions of relations between workers and owners	0.346***	0.402***	0.643***	1	
(5) Respondent's trust in managers' pledges to workers	0.339***	0.331***	0.441***	0.423***	1

*** $p > 0.001$.

(1) How do you describe your relationship with your supervisor in the company where you work? (0. Very good to 3. Very bad)
(2) How do you describe your relationship with other bosses of the company where you work? (0. Very good to 3. Very bad)
(3) How do you describe the relationship between workers and managers in the company where you work? (0. Very good to 3. Very bad)
(4) How do you describe the relationship between the workers and the owners of the company where you work? (0. Very good to 3. Very bad)
(5) Broadly speaking, how much do you trust the pledges managers make to the workers in the company where you work? (0. Much trust to 3. No trust)

All these variables were combined through a simple sum to create a single scale with a range from 0 to 15 points. Given the way that the variables were coded, the higher the score, the higher the oppositional class consciousness—i.e. higher perceptions of conflict between workers and managers/bosses, higher distrust in managers' promises, etc. As can be seen, the items chosen to build the scale of class opposition show interviewees' evaluations about the relations between workers and managers/employers. Although the items do not represent a broad range of oppositional class interests—they do not illustrate, for example, how class opposition is perceived as a "political" conflict or as a conflict of interests that takes place outside the workplace—they might be seen as a good proxy for analyzing the way that oppositional class interests emerge, in their more basic expressions, at the terrain of labor relations (i.e. in terms of evaluations on the relations between workers and managers/employers). Based on this, in this paper I assume that a negative evaluation of the relation between workers and managers/employers, as well as a mistrust in managers' promises, implies, from workers' perspective, the recognition of an lack of harmonious relations and in turn an oppositional stance which can be seen as the basic frame for broader oppositional class interests. In other words, following Marx's (1978 [1847]) argument I assume that although class conflict always takes a political form, such a political form cannot be properly understood without considering its more basic expressions directly observable at the level of labor relations. Similarly, in choosing this type of variables to measure oppositional class interests I follow Evans' (1992, p. 250) recommendations and focus on narrow indicators of oppositional interests—in this case, labor-related indicators—as a way to overcome some typical problems in the analysis of class consciousness; especially the problem of defining as "class consciousness" some attitudes (e.g. policy preferences) whose class content might be clear but difficult to measure in quantitative research. Overall, the way of analyzing oppositional class interests developed in this paper should be seen as a first attempt to examine class consciousness in Chile. Given the lack of investigations to this respect, this attempt might seem limited but necessary.

In Table 2 the correlations between each item of the scale are shown. As shown, all variables are positively and significantly correlated to each other (all the Pearson's coefficients range between .33 and .64). Table 3 shows the descriptive statistics of the scale of oppositional interests as well as the descriptive statistics for each item used to construct it. As can be observed, the mean of the scale is 6.28 and its standard deviation is 2.499. Table 3 also indicates that the scale is internally consistent (alpha = 0.77). Finally, the dimensionality of the scale was examined through Principal Component Analysis (varimax rotation). Such an analysis proved that the scale is unidimensional (the eigenvalues and loading factors for each item are also shown in Table 3).

Table 3
Descriptive statistics for scale of oppositional class interests ($n = 1368$).

	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Factor loading
Items					
(1) Respondent's evaluation of his/her relation with his/her direct supervisor	1.028	0.615	0	3	0.672
(2) Respondent's evaluation of his/her relation with other bosses	1.283	0.657	0	3	0.687
(3) Respondent's perceptions of relations between workers and managers	1.297	0.679	0	3	0.805
(4) Respondent's perceptions of relations between workers and owners	1.486	0.675	0	3	0.789
(5) Respondent's trust in managers' pledges to workers	1.205	0.801	0	3	0.686
Scale of oppositional class interests	6.208	2.499	0	15	
Cronbach's alpha = 0.77					
Eigenvalue, Factor 1 = 2.668[a]					

[a] Factor 1 was the only one with an Eigenvalue higher than 1.

4.2. Independent variables

4.2.1. Social class

The central independent variable in this research is *social class*. As already argued, the best way to analyze how class leads to variations in class consciousness is by combining the structural and the processual approaches. To do so, I use both current class position and class background (as indicator of class experiences) as expressions of social class. I operationalize class on the basis of Erikson and Goldthorpe's (1992) model. The construction of Erikson and Goldthorpe's class scheme was based on the algorithms developed by Ganzeboom and Treiman (2003). They were especially helpful for constructing such a class scheme on the basis of some standard questions present in all the surveys I used in this research (ISCO codes of occupations, interviewee's supervisory status, and interviewee's ownership of mean of production status). On account of this research's purpose, it would have been more advisable to use Wright's (1985) class structure model. It has strong theoretical foundations to examine both people's class position and their material interests derived from such position. However, the lack of some key variables in the data set—in particular those used to operationalize the "organizational assets"—made it impossible to construct Wright's class scheme.

In Erikson and Goldthorpe's scheme, classes are first demarcated according to ownership of the means of production. Then, after differentiating between employers, self-employed, and employees, people in the last positions (wage-earners) are internally delimited in terms of those who are in short-term and reward-for-input type of contract (contract relationship) and those who count on a more diffuse, long-term, prospective type of contract (service relationship). While the former is the prototypical contractual situation of the working class, the latter is—in the context of larger bureaucratic organizations of advanced capitalist societies—the main contractual situation of the "service class"—e.g. higher-level managers (Goldthorpe, 1982). Erikson and Goldthorpe's class scheme has some theoretical shortcomings such as the integration of higher-level managers and big entrepreneurs into the same "service class" (Ganzeboom and Treiman, 2003, p. 163). However, its empirical adequacy and the reliability of its results stemming from international comparative investigations have made this scheme the standard in sociological investigation. This scheme has been indeed widely used in sociological analysis of class consciousness, social mobility, political behavior, and other class-related attitudes (cf. Andersen and Heath, 2002; Evans, 1997; Hout, Brooks, & Manza, 1995; Marshall et al., 1988; Svallfors, 2006)

In this research I used a slightly modified version of Erikson and Goldthorpe's scheme. Instead of using its 11-classes version, I measured people's class position through a collapsed seven-classes scheme (since the data represented only the salaried population, the petty bourgeoisie could not be included in the analysis). The seven classes are: Higher managerial class ("service class"), Lower managerial class, High level routine non-manual employees, Low level routine non-manual employees, Skilled manual working class, Unskilled working class, and Farm workers. Similarly, due to the lack of appropriate variables, the respondents' class background was measured through a collapsed five-classes categorization (here I collapsed the lower managerial class and the routine non-manual classes to create a broader category defined as "middle class"). The main hypothesis is that working class people (or people from classes close to the working class) have stronger class consciousness than people belonging to the higher service class (or belonging to classes close to it). The same is applicable for the variable indicating class origin—people with working class background have stronger working-class class consciousness than do people with a service class background.

Table 4
Sample descriptive statistics (independent variables: class position and class origin).

	Freq.	%
Class position		
Higher managerial (service class)	81	6.03
Lower managerial	247	18.39
Routine non-manual (higher-grade)	95	7.07
Routine non-manual (lower-grade)	128	9.53
Skilled manual-working class	240	17.87
Unskilled working class	384	28.59
Farm workers	168	12.51
Total	1343	100
Class origin		
Higher Managerial (service class)	39	3.12
Middle class	214	17.15
Skilled manual-working class	383	30.69
Unskilled working class	287	23.00
Farm workers	325	26.04
Total	1248	100

Table 4 shows the percentages and frequencies for the respondent's class position and class backgrounds. As can be observed, most respondents (around 29%) belong to the unskilled working class, while only the 6% of them are located in a higher managerial class position. Regarding class background, the pattern is similar. In this case, most interviewees (31%) come from a skilled working class background, whereas only the 3% of them come from a higher managerial origin.

Along with social class, several other variables were included in the regression models. These variables are grouped into three general categories: demographic variables, class-related variables, and labor-related variables.

4.2.2. Demographic variables

The demographic variables were gender, age, head of household status, place of residence (metropolitan region or not) and educational level. Gender was included as a dummy variable (reference category: male). Age was operationalized as an interval variable (respondent's age in years). Head of household was defined as a dummy variable (reference category: not head of household). Place of residence was also defined as a dummy variable (1 = respondents who live in the metropolitan region of Santiago, 0 = respondent living in other places of the country). Finally, respondent's educational level was measured through a set of dichotomous variables (primary education or less, complete or incomplete secondary education,

two-year college education or incomplete four-year college education. Reference category: four-year college education level or more).

In all these cases I hypothesize that those with a more precarious position in the labor market (female and less educated respondents) are more prone to be working-class class conscious—i.e. are more likely to uphold higher levels of oppositional interests and lower-class identity—than those who have a privileged position. Similarly, in light of their greater family responsibilities and their direct contact with class-related experiences (salary inequality, unemployment, etc.) that otherwise would not be so burdensome, I hypothesize that those who are heads of household are more working-class class conscious than those who are not. Taking into consideration the high levels of centralism in the allocation of resources observed in Chile (which has been the source of many "regionalist" demands) I hypothesize that those who live in the metropolitan region of Santiago are less likely to uphold lower-class identity and oppositional class interests than those who live in the rest of the country. Finally, considering the current weakness of class-based agendas in the mainstream politics (in comparison to the situation of three or four decades ago), I argue that the higher the respondent's age, the higher the levels of working-class class consciousness.

4.2.3. Class-related variables

To assess the way that class affects class consciousness through mechanisms other than class position and class-experiences, I included two class-related variables: *home ownership* and *wage*. The former is a dummy variable that shows whether the respondent is the owner of the home where she/he lives (1 = yes), while the latter is an interval variable that indicates the natural logarithm of annual average income earned by the respondent. Based on previous research on class consciousness (Marshall et al., 1988; Wright, 1997), I expect both home ownership and wage to have a negative impact on lower class identity and oppositional class interests.

4.2.4. Labor-related variables

In order to assess the impact of employment conditions on class consciousness I included seven variables indicating the respondent's labor situation. These variables are: (1) *Contractual situation*: set of dummy variables representing the contractual regulation of the respondent's labor activities (1. No contract, 2. Temporary contract, and 3. Permanent contract. Reference category: permanent contract). (2) *Job insecurity*: Dummy variable indicating the respondent's answer to the statement "I might lose my job in the following six moths" (1 = yes). (3) *Job autonomy*: Dummy variable that shows the respondents' answer to the question "Do you think you have enough freedom to decide how to do your job?" (1 = yes). (4) *Second job holding*: dummy variable that indicates whether the respondent have a second job. (5) *Unemployment*: Dummy variable that indicates whether the respondent has been unemployed during the last ten years (1 = yes). (6) *Sector of employment*: dummy variable that represents whether the respondent is employed in the public or private sector of the economy (1 = public sector). (7) *Union membership*: dummy variable representing whether the respondent is unionized (1 = unionized).

The general hypothesis behind the inclusion of these variables is that upholding worse labor-related characteristics—precarious contractual situation, job insecurity, and lack of autonomy at the work place—affects positively the emergence of lower class identity and oppositional class interests. Following Wallace and Junisbai's (2004) argument, I define the act of holding multiple jobs "as a strategy by which workers hedge against poor employment prospects in the future" (p. 404). Based on this, I hypothesize that those who have a second job are more likely to have stronger working class consciousness than those who do not have a second job. Similarly, I hypothesize that unemployment history will yield higher class consciousness. Finally, taking the recent Chilean history into account—in particular the importance of unions and public employment as source class-based collective action throughout the second half of twentieth century (Martínez and Tironi, 1985; León and Martínez, 2007)—I hypothesize that those who are employed in the public sector and those who are unionized have stronger working-class class consciousness than those who either work in the private sector or who are not unionized.

5. Empirical results

The following tables show the results of several regression models whose dependent variables are class identity and oppositional class interests. In all those models the independent variables were included in the same way. First, I included the main variables of this paper (class location and class origin) to analyze their effects on the dependent variables—the different combinations of this are shown in the models 1, 2, and 3. Next, in model 4, I included all the demographic controls plus the class-related variables. Finally, all the labor-related variables were added in model 5. While running the regression models, I assessed potential problems of multicollinearity and endogeneity. The results of the different tests showed no indication of multicollinearity and endogeneity (see Appendix).[1]

[1] As for multicollinearity, I run OLS regression models and examined the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) and the Tolerance (1/VIF). The analysis showed no indication of multicollinearity (none variable had a VIF greater than 10, nor a tolerance value lower than 0.1). In relation to endogeneity, most independent variables were, in principle, exogenous—most of them are "objective" variables that can be conceived as "structural determinants" of the type of attitudes and perceptions measured through the dependent variables. One important exception was, however, the variable defined as "job autonomy," which was based on respondents' perceptions about his/her freedom to perform his/her labor tasks. I assessed whether "autonomy" was endogenous through the use of several instrumental variables, which I examined for each dependent variable. Then I run the Durbin-Wu-Hausman test. In none of those cases there was indication of endogeneity. Along with this, in all the regression models that I estimated, the relationship between the dependent variables and the rest of the independent variables (including class position and class background) did not change substantially after including "job autonomy". This suggests, again, that the models were not affected by endogeneity.

Table 5
Determinants of class identity in Chile (ordinal logistic regression coefficients).

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4		Model 5	
	Coeff.	S.E.	Coeff.	S.E.	Coeff.	S.E.	Coeff.	S.E.	Coeff.	S.E.
Class position (*ref. higher managerial*)										
Lower managerial	0.704†	0.380			0.421	0.394	−0.025	0.422	−0.106	0.430
Routine non-manuals (higher-grade)	2.049***	0.469			1.678**	0.486	0.654	0.539	0.611	0.547
Routine non-manuals (lower-grade)	2.415***	0.439			2.033***	0.456	0.780	0.514	0.826	0.526
Skilled manual-working class	2.792***	0.408			2.299***	0.428	0.928†	0.484	0.952†	0.493
Unskilled working class	3.089***	0.398			2.517***	0.423	0.960*	0.481	0.991*	0.489
Farm workers	3.747***	0.414			3.013***	0.449	1.060*	0.517	1.072*	0.526
Class origin (*ref. higher managerial*)										
Middle class			1.964***	0.440	1.362**	0.462	0.865†	0.503	0.897†	0.507
Skilled manual-working class			2.513***	0.426	1.812***	0.452	1.103*	0.494	1.143*	0.498
Unskilled working class			3.050***	0.435	2.023***	0.464	1.272*	0.509	1.294*	0.514
Farm workers			3.657***	0.432	2.374***	0.466	1.468**	0.509	1.521**	0.514
Demographic controls										
Female							−0.193	0.182	−0.260	0.185
Age							−0.009	0.007	−0.009	0.007
Head of household							0.272	0.185	0.220	0.188
Metropolitan Region inhabitant							0.060	0.185	0.139	0.190
Primary education or less							1.752***	0.435	1.861***	0.440
Secondary education							0.806*	0.402	0.859*	0.406
Two-year college							0.354	0.408	0.410	0.413
Class-related variables										
Home ownership status							0.209	0.159	0.230	0.162
Wage (logged)							−0.808***	0.139	−0.776***	0.150
Labor-related variables										
Temporary contract									−0.035	0.203
No contract									0.072	0.223
Job insecurity									0.444*	0.175
Autonomy									−0.317*	0.159
Second job									0.182	0.391
Unemployment experience									0.121	0.193
Public sector									0.578*	0.226
Union									0.195	0.228
Threshold 1	−1.915	0.315	−1.149	0.365	−0.658	0.424	−14.048	2.353	−13.471	2.544
Threshold 2	4.003	0.385	4.335	0.419	5.493	0.515	−7.436	2.310	−6.734	2.502
Likelihood Ratio χ^2	191.12***		107.88***		208.68***		275.39***		295.36***	
Pseudo R^2	0.11		0.07		0.14		0.19		0.20	
N	1343		1248		1230		1193		1193	

Note: Omitted variables are "Higher managerial" (for class position and class origin), male (for gender), not head of household (for head of household), non-metropolitan region inhabitant (for Metr. Region inhabitant), tertiary education (for education level), not home owner (for home ownership status), permanent labor contract (for type of contract), no perception of job insecurity (for job insecurity), no autonomy (for job autonomy), no second job (for second job), no experience of unemployment (for unemployment), private sector (for employment sector) and non-unionized (for unionization).

† $p < .10$ (two-tailed).
* $p < .05$ (two-tailed).
** $p < .01$ (two-tailed).
*** $p < .001$ (two-tailed).

5.1. Class identity

Table 5 shows the coefficients (log-odds) from several ordinal logistic regression models for the dependent variable defied as "class identity." As can be seen, both class position and class origin are significantly related to variations in class identity. All else being equal, people from all non-managerial classes are more likely to uphold a lower class identity than those from the reference category (higher managerial class). The same can be said in regard to interviewees' class origins (the "lower" the origin, the stronger the lower class identity).

In the fourth model it is also possible to see that educational level is the only demographic control that is associated with significant variations in class identity—as hypothesize, the less educated respondents are more likely than the better educated to uphold lower class identity. It is worth noting that effects of some coefficients for educational level (e.g. primary) are rather high. This indicates that in current Chilean society inequality in education is a central mechanism through which class creates subjective outcomes that affects people's perceptions of their position in the class structure. This might be, in turn, one of the reasons why on of the main sources of conflict currently observed in Chilean society have to do education—in particular with a demand for the establishment of a public and state-funded system of education (Atria et al., 2013; Mayol, 2012).

The fourth model also shows that the only class-related variable that produces significant variations on class identity is wage. Again, the direction of the relation follows the pattern hypothesized (the higher the yearly salary, the lower the chances for the respondent to identify herself as lower class). The importance of wage as a determinant of class identity can be observed in the fact that the coefficients for several class positions (e.g. routine non-manual classes and skilled manual working class) are no longer significant ($p < 0.05$) in the fourth model. Similarly, the class positions' coefficients that remain significant in the fourth model decrease substantially in terms of their value. For example, the log odds for the farm worker class location decreased from 3.01 (third model) to 1.06 (fourth model). This may indicate that in current Chilean society class identity is shaped by both class and the individual economic resources associated with it. Class identity, in other words, may represent the subjective consequence of the huge levels of economic (income-based) inequality in Chile. This type of inequality has been widely reported by scholars (cf. Nuñez and Miranda, 2011; Nuñez and Tartakowsky, 2011) and seems to be one of the main mechanisms through which social class affects people's class identity in current neoliberal society.

Finally, the fifth model shows that job insecurity, autonomy, and public sector are labor-related variables that are related to significant variations in lower class identity. In all those cases the direction of the relationship follow the patterns hypothesized. Whereas higher perceptions of job insecurity are significantly related to higher chances of lower class self-identification, having higher levels of job autonomy and working in the private sector negatively affect lower class identity. The coefficients for job insecurity and autonomy indicate that they are two key subjective mechanisms through which people's position in the labor market shape class identity. The coefficient for sector of employment (public/private), on the other hand, seems to confirm the idea that the expansion of private employment in Chile has meant the de-structuration of working class identities among the salaried population ("*desobrerización*" of the wage earners), mainly because those identities were rooted in a project of import-substitutive industrialization in which the state played a key role (León and Martínez, 2007).

Overall the regressions of Table 5 indicate that although class identity is affected by both class position and class background, the effects of the latter tend to be stronger than those of the former. In fact, whereas the effects of class position are mediated through the effects of variables as education, autonomy, and especially and wage, the effects of class origin seems to have an explanatory power that is, on its own, much more important to shaping class identity. Indeed, that explanatory power remains significant, and at the same level of intensity, even after controlling for all the other variables included in the model. This supports the main thesis of the processual approach to class consciousness (cf. Thompson, 1966). In current Chilean society the effect of class experiences—measured in this case as class background—tend to be more robust than the effects of class location in shaping the identity component of class consciousness.

In order to show more clearly how class identity is shaped by class experiences associated to class origin, I calculated the predicted probabilities of holding lower-class identity associated with different types of class trajectories. More specifically, I calculated the predicted probabilities for "average case scenarios"—i.e. hypothetical cases of individuals located in each class position and whose class origins are the modal category (skilled manual working class)—and compare them with "class immobility cases" (hypothetical cases of individuals whose class origin coincides with their current class locations), holding all other variables constant at their means (interval variables) or their modal categories (categorical variables). To estimate such probabilities I used the coefficients—log odds—from the fifth model of Table 5. The calculations were based on the *prvalue* command for STATA (Long and Freese, 2005). Following the main claims of the processual approach as well as the idea of "demographic identity" of classes (Goldthorpe, 1982)—that is, the idea that class immobility favors the emergence of class consciousness among the members of a class, the immobile class trajectories are expected to show more polarized patterns of class identity.

This is precisely what is illustrated in Fig. 1. As shown in Fig. 1, the predicted probabilities for the class immobility scenarios tend to be more polarized than the probabilities for the average case scenarios. Thus, for example, the predicted probabilities of upholding a lower class identity for an individual located in the higher managerial class and whose class origin is the average (skilled manual working class) are 5%. Those probabilities would decrease up to 2% of the same individual had come from a higher managerial class background. The opposite results can be observed for the manual working class and especially for farm workers. In both cases the situation of class immobility is associated with increments in the probabilities of upholding lower class identity (for example, for farm workers the probabilities raise from 14% to 19%). Although purely speculative, the calculation of these probabilities is helpful for understanding the way that class experiences, now analyzed as class trajectories, shape class identity. In this case, the data suggest that in Chilean society immobile class trajectories tend to strengthen class identity by reinforcing classes' demographic identity and the processes my means of which class experiences are lived through across generations.

5.2. Oppositional class interests

Table 6 shows the coefficients resulting from several OLS regressions whose dependent variable is the scale of oppositional class interests. Like for class identity, the regressions suggest that class location and class origin account for significant variations in people's oppositional class interests (those with a working class location or with a working class origin tend to uphold higher oppositional class interests than do those with a higher managerial class location or origin). Unlike class identity, however, these regressions show that class location is relatively more important for shaping oppositional interest than class origin. As suggested by the *R*-squared for models 1 and 2, class position accounts for 4% of the variation of the outcome variable, whereas class origin explains only 1% of it. The

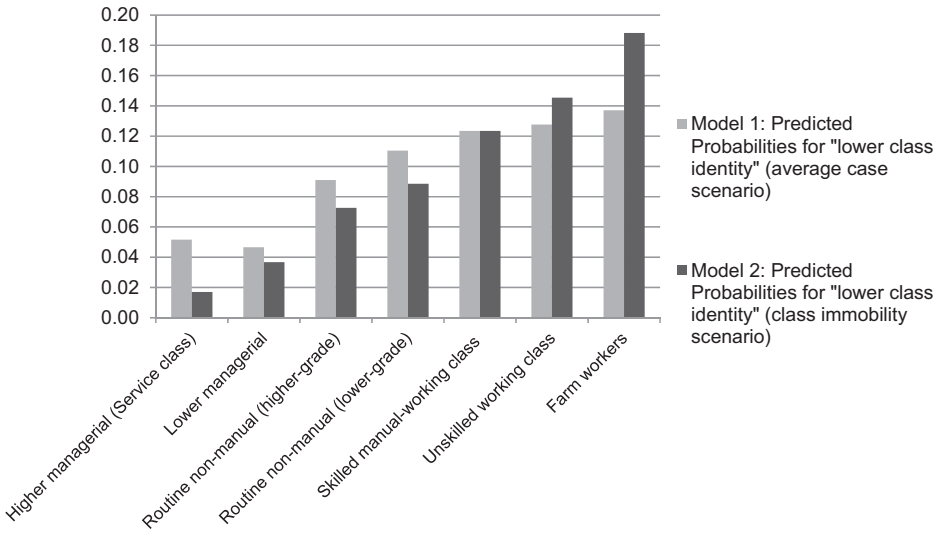

Fig. 1. Predicted probabilities of holding lower-class identity associated with different types of class trajectories.

importance of class position as determinant of oppositional class interests can also be observed in the fact that neither the significance level nor the values of most class position's coefficients change substantially when other variables are included in models 4 and 5. Unlike what happens for class identity—where the effect of class location is mediated through other variables such as wage—class location has an explanatory power over oppositional interests that tend to remain significant and equally powerful even in the models with the entire set of control variables. In other words, class position has an explanatory power that stands on its own.

The coefficients for class position observed in the most complete models (models 4 and 5) suggest some interesting features of oppositional class interests in Chile. They suggest, for example, that in the current neoliberal society the traditional distinction between manual and nonmanual workers is not relevant for explaining variations in oppositional class consciousness, such as argued by several scholars for the case of the most advanced capitalist societies (cf. Burris, 1999; Crompton, 1998 [1993]; Parkin, 1979; Wright, 1978, 1985). According to these data, both manual workers and lower-level nonmanual workers (e.g. lower-grade routine workers) tend to uphold similar levels of oppositional interests—in both cases the scores in the scale are significantly higher than the scores for the reference category. In other words, lower-level nonmanual workers do not seem to be "less" working-class class conscious than manual workers.[2]

The variables included in models 4 and 5 also suggest several qualities of oppositional class interests that are worth noting. For instance, the results obtained in the fourth model suggest that almost none of the demographic variables explain significant variations in oppositional consciousness. The only exception is age—in contrast to what was hypothesized, the older the respondent the lower the score in the scale of oppositional interests. Similar to the results for class identity, the fourth model also shows that wage is the only class-related variable that produces significant variations in people's oppositional consciousness. This result could be seen, like for the case of class identity, as the subjective consequence of the high levels of economic disparity currently observed in Chile. However, neither the effect of wage nor the effect of age remain significant once the labor-related variables are added to in the model 5.

The coefficients for the labor-related variables included in model 5 suggest that, net of other variables, the lack of autonomy at the workplace, the perceptions of job insecurity, as well as unemployment experience and unionization, affect positively oppositional class interests. The variation in the *R*-squared indicates that these labor-related variables are indeed a powerful determinant of oppositional consciousness in current Chilean society—after the inclusion of them the adjusted *R*-squared increases from 5% (model 4) to 13% (model 5). This seems to be an indicator of the way that labor conflicts continue to be a central terrain of class conflict. As already argued, labor relations in Chile are characterized not only by the precarious economic conditions of many workers, but also by the strong legal limitations they face to organize collectively

[2] Even though this conclusion could be affirmed for the lower-grade routine workers, it might be wrong to apply it for the case of the lower managerial class. Although the regression coefficients show that people from the lower managerial class have oppositional interests higher than the reference category, such a coefficient is probably the result of the way that the questions in the survey were worded. As I showed in the methodological section, in some of those questions the respondents were asked to make general evaluations about the relations between workers and employers/managers. Therefore, and given the supervisory role occupied by lower-level managers, the coefficient could be explained as the result of their closer contact (in comparison to the higher managers) with workers. In other words, lower-level managers may perceive higher oppositional interests than do higher managers not because they are ideologically closer to the workers, but rather because they are one the main actors—located on the opposite side of the workers—in the workplace conflicts.

Table 6
Determinants of oppositional class interests in Chile (unstandardized OLS regression coefficients).

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4		Model 5	
	Coeff.	S.E.	Coeff.	S.E.	Coeff.	S.E.	Coeff.	S.E.	Coeff.	S.E.
Class position (*ref. higher managerial*)										
Lower managerial	1.143***	0.314			1.069**	0.318	1.017**	0.335	0.860**	0.325
Routine non-manuals (higher-grade)	0.592	0.371			0.494	0.377	0.228	0.415	0.134	0.401
Routine non-manuals (lower-grade)	1.383***	0.349			1.288***	0.355	0.940*	0.403	0.766*	0.392
Skilled manual-working class	1.566***	0.316			1.436***	0.326	1.135**	0.376	0.867*	0.363
Unskilled working class	1.891***	0.300			1.698***	0.320	1.400***	0.376	1.215**	0.363
Farm workers	1.557***	0.332			1.358***	0.370	0.965*	0.435	0.652	0.420
Class origin (*ref. higher managerial*)										
Middle class			0.911*	0.432	0.543	0.442	0.703	0.454	0.753†	0.435
Skilled manual-working class			1.067*	0.417	0.633	0.430	0.842†	0.445	0.910*	0.426
Unskilled working class			1.458**	0.423	0.867*	0.441	0.982*	0.457	0.968*	0.438
Farm workers			1.199**	0.420	0.496	0.446	0.620	0.463	0.669	0.443
Demographic controls										
Female							0.114	0.172	0.083	0.166
Age							−0.015*	0.007	−0.009	0.006
Head of Household							0.166	0.175	0.056	0.169
Metropolitan Region Inhabitant							−0.153	0.170	−0.063	0.166
Primary education or less							0.207	0.341	0.193	0.330
Secondary education							−0.066	0.286	−0.118	0.277
Two-year college							0.163	0.298	0.146	0.287
Class-related variables										
Home ownership status							−0.185	0.147	−0.185	0.141
Wage (logged)							−0.302*	0.124	−0.154	0.127
Labor-related variables										
Temporary contract									0.254	0.179
No contract									0.223	0.203
Job Insecurity									0.691***	0.160
Autonomy									−1.124***	0.141
Second Job									0.435	0.325
Unemployment experience									0.456**	0.171
Public sector									0.044	0.193
Union									0.588**	0.194
Constant	4.914***	0.273	5.103***	0.397	4.391***	0.437	9.486***	2.070	7.386**	2.123
Adjusted R^2	0.04		0.01		0.04		0.05		0.13	
N	1343		1248		1193		1193		1193	

Note: Omitted variables are "Higher managerial" (for class position and class origin), male (for gender), not head of household (for head of household), non-metropolitan region inhabitant (for Metr. Region inhabitant), tertiary education (for education level), not home owner (for home ownership status), permanent labor contract (for type of contract), no perception of job insecurity (for job insecurity), no autonomy (for job autonomy), no second job (for second job), no experience of unemployment (for unemployment), private sector (for employment sector), and non-unionized (for unionization).

† $p < .10$ (two-tailed).
* $p < .05$ (two-tailed).
** $p < .01$ (two-tailed).
*** $p < .001$ (two-tailed).

in unions in order to defend their interests vis-à-vis the employers. In other words, labor relations, and by extension class relations, are currently defined by the presence of high levels of economic (salary-related) and "political" (i.e. organizational power) inequality (cf. Barrett, 2001; Frank, 2004). This might explain why the concrete expressions of such inequalities—e.g. job insecurity, unemployment experiences, lack of job autonomy—as well as the affiliation to organizations designed to overcome them (e.g. unions) are a central determinant of people's oppositional interests. They all are expressions of the manner in which class relations operate in current neoliberal society as well as the expression of who win and who lose under the current sociopolitical context.

It is worth mentioning that the effect of job autonomy is the highest one among all the labor-related variables. This may be interpreted as the consequence of the way that labor process implies, as argued by Braverman (1998 [1974]), the workers' loss of control over the performance of their work. Braverman did not address directly the question of the ideological consequences, i.e. increments in the levels class consciousness, of the "proletarianization" trend he observed (cf. Vallas, 1987). Neither can these data be used to demonstrate (or discredit) the existence of such a trend in neoliberal society. Yet these data show that one of the main factors of the labor process identified by Braverman—the loss of job autonomy—plays an important role in increasing oppositional class interests in a mature neoliberal society like Chile.

Overall, the results of Table 6 suggest that class location and several labor-related factors dependent on class (e.g. job autonomy and unionization) are central determinants of oppositional consciousness in current Chilean society. This support the main claims of the structural

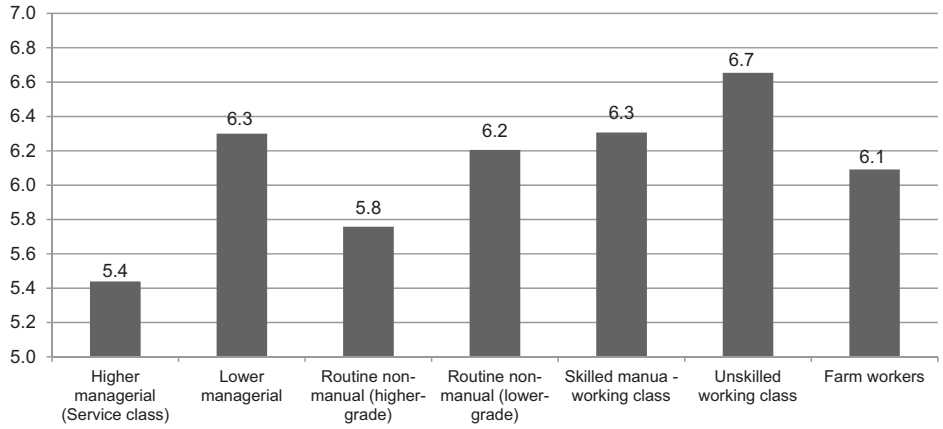

Fig. 2. Predicted values in the scale of oppositional class interests for each class position.

approach to class (cf. Wright, 1997). As correctly argued by Wright (1997), people's class position determines the set of objective alternatives that actors face in class structure in pursuing their material interests (e.g. in trying to obtain their material well-being). Therefore, class position is a central determinant of their material interests or, in the case analyzed in this research, a central determinant of people's *oppositional* interests.

To summarize the impact of class on oppositional class interests, Fig. 2 shows the predicted values in the scale of oppositional consciousness for each class position, calculated on the basis of the fifth model of Table 6. To calculate the predicted values, I held the other variables of the model constant at their means (if they are interval variables) or at their modal values (if they are dummy variables). Thus Fig. 2 represents the hypothetical case of individuals belonging to all social classes with a skilled working class origin (modal value for class origin). As can be seen, Fig. 2 shows that the most polarized scores are found in the higher managerial class and the unskilled working class. While the former has the lowest values in the scale of oppositional interests, the latter has the highest values. Given this polarization of attitudes, both classes might be seen as the main actors in the current processes of class conflict in Chile.

Though supporting the structural approach, the results presented in Table 6 also suggest that in current Chilean society oppositional class interests are significantly affected by people's class background—as already argued, those with a working class origin tend to uphold higher oppositional class interests than do those with a higher managerial origin. This indicates that the temporal aspects of class associated with class backgrounds determine not only how people create a sense of class identity but also the way they understand their class interests. In other words, this supports the thesis of some scholars espousing the processual approach who argue that class interests—in particular oppositional interests—become relevant only once the members of a class create a common understanding of their historical class-lived experiences (cf. Steinberg, 1999).

In Chile, the significant effect of class origin on class interests may indicate the temporal persistence of the main class-based ideological divisions present in the country since, at least, the second half of the twentieth century. One of the main characteristics of the Chilean working class throughout the twentieth century was, in fact, its close links with left-wing political parties. Those links were developed mostly through unions and were eventually a determining social force in, for example, the election of the Socialist president Salvador Allende in 1970. In Chile, political struggles were inseparable from class struggles. This may explain the fact that, regardless of the deep political and economic transformation of the country—which included 17 years of a right-wing dictatorship, people with a working class background continue to uphold higher oppositional class interests than people with a higher managerial class background. The same can be said of unionization. As in the case of class origin, the higher oppositional consciousness of unionized workers is probably the result of long-term class forces that have been present during the recent Chilean history. In fact, despite the weakness and even the pro-business orientation of many unions in Chile, unionization continues to be an important source of oppositional consciousness.

In order to show more clearly how class experiences associated with class background determine variations in class consciousness, in Fig. 3 I show the predicted values in the scale of oppositional interests for each class position in a scenario of class immobility, i.e. in scenario where class origin and current class position coincide. In other words, Fig. 3 shows the predicted values for different types of class trajectories. For example, a "higher managerial trajectory" shows the situation in which an individual comes from a higher managerial class origin and is currently located in the same class position (the same logic is applied for the manual working class trajectories). Similarly, the different types of middle-class trajectories indicate the situation of a person who comes from a middle-class origin and is currently located in the lower managerial class (trajectory 1), in the higher-grade routine nonmanual class (trajectory 2) or in the lower-grade routine nonmanual class (trajectory 3). Similar to the analysis of the predicted probabilities for class identity, the main thesis of the processual approach as well as the idea of "demographic class

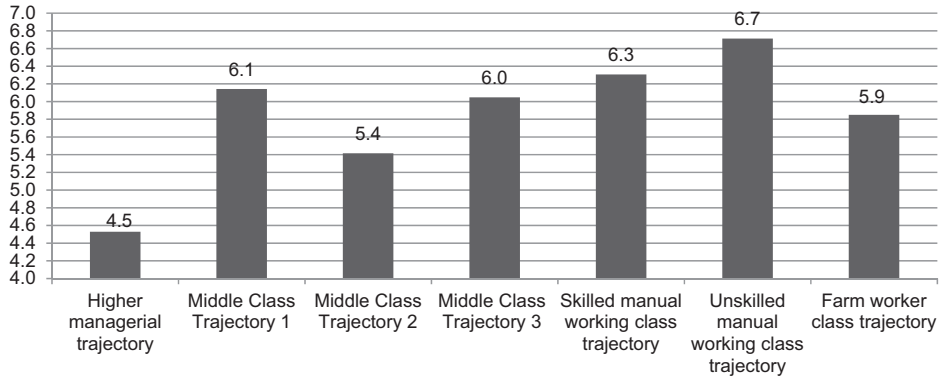

Fig. 3. Predicted values in the scale of oppositional class interests for different types of class trajectories (middle class trajectory 1 = middle-class origin, lower managerial class position; middle class trajectory 2 = middle-class origin, higher grade routine nonmanual class position; middle class trajectory 3 = middle-class origin, lower grade routine nonmanual class position).

formation" (Goldthorpe, 1982), would lead us to expect more polarized scores in these scenarios of class immobility.

This is precisely what happens for the higher managerial class. In that class the scores in the scale of oppositional class interests diminish in comparison to the scores of Fig. 2 (they diminish from 5.4 to 4.5 points). In other words, the levels of oppositional interests for the members of the higher managerial class go down when they come, in the model examined, from a higher managerial background (remember that the data of Fig. 2 represent a case in which the members of all classes come from a skilled working class background). The predicted values for the unskilled working class trajectory indicate that there are no substantial differences, in unskilled workers' class oppositional consciousness, derived from the fact of having a skilled working class background (Fig. 2) versus having an unskilled working class origin (Fig. 3). A similar pattern can be observed for the other class trajectories—i.e. middle-class trajectories and farm-worker trajectory—where there exist no or very small differences in the scores of Fig. 3, in comparison to those presented in Fig. 2. In conclusion, the only type of class trajectory that seems to produce substantial variations in oppositional class interests is the class immobility existing within the higher managerial class. This suggests that the levels of demographic class formation in the Chilean "upper class" are stronger than in the other classes. The stronger demographic class formation of the "upper class" can be observed in the high levels of social closure and class immobility that are characteristic of the Chilean "elite" (cf. Torche, 2005; Wormald and Torche, 2004). Social closure and class immobility create not only strong "barriers" to social mobility (i.e. barriers to either "get in" or "get out from" that class), but they also seem to produce, according to these data, levels of oppositional class consciousness that are more unified than those observed in other social classes.

Taken together, all these results support the main theses of both the processual and the structural approaches to class consciousness. In a neoliberal society like Chile, people's position in the class structure as well as their class experiences associated with their class origins and trajectories are important determinants of class identity and oppositional class interests. According to the data, these two components of class consciousness are equally affected by class, class origin, and other class-related variables, but in a somewhat different manner.

In relation to class identity, the regressions suggest that while the effect of class origin on class identity tends to be a "direct" effect (it is an effect that stands on its own because it remains significant even after including all the other control variables), the effect of class position on identity exists but is largely mediated through class-related variables such as wage (that is why some class location coefficients lost their explanatory power once wage was included in the regression). As for oppositional interests, the data indicate that although they are shaped "directly" by both class position and class origin (in neither case the coefficients changed substantially after the inclusion of other class- and labor-related variables), the effect of class position is slightly more important—it explains more variance—than the effect of class origin. Finally, the regressions for oppositional interests also suggest that the main mechanisms through which class location affects oppositional consciousness are not associated with wage (like in the case of class identity), but rather with labor-related factors dependent on class, such as job autonomy, job insecurity, and unionization. In simpler words, the data indicate that whereas class identity depends on both historical class experiences and class position, as well as on the way that the latter creates subjective experiences of economic inequality (i.e. inequality in individual resources), oppositional interests depend on both class experiences and class location, as well as on the way in which the latter brings about subjective experiences of opposition in the terrain of the relations of production.

Based on this, the main hypothesis of this paper should be accepted but with some minor modifications. The analysis presented here suggests, in fact, a picture slightly different from that showed in previous investigations for advanced industrial nations as the US and Sweden (Wright and Shin, 1988). In Chile both class identity and interests are equally affected, although in a different manner, by the structural and the temporal aspects of class—represented

by class location and class experiences, respectively. Both historical factors of Chilean society (e.g. high levels of working class organization existing until 1973) and socioeconomic features currently observed in the country (e.g. huge levels of inequality) may explain why these two aspects of class are equally important in shaping class identity and class interests.

6. Conclusion

In this research I have examined the patterns of class consciousness in current Chilean society. As already argued, the study of class consciousness is key to understanding the mechanisms through which class inequality brings about subjective outcomes (e.g. dissimilar types of identity and material interests), which may eventually be the source of class-based collective action. Though I did not address the second part of this causal chain (i.e. how class consciousness determines collective action) in this paper, I did analyze those subjective outcomes derived from class inequality. The results of such analysis indicate that class location and class experiences are an important determinant of class consciousness in Chile. Both aspects of class are, in other words, an important determinant of class consciousness in a society with an advanced neoliberal regime characterized by high levels of inequalities, a huge imbalance of power between capital and labor, and the political "absence of class" (i.e. the absence of class-based issues in the agendas of the mainstream political parties).

According to the data, the impact of class is given by the influence that class position and class background have on people's class identity and oppositional class interests. The data allowed me to demonstrate that class identity is also affected by class-related variables such as wage, whereas oppositional interests are also determined by several labor-related variables such as unionization and autonomy at the workplace. This suggests that whereas income disparities are a central mechanism through which class location affects identity, those mechanisms are found, for the case of oppositional class interests, in the terrain of labor relations. This indicates, in turn, that in neoliberal societies labor relations are still an important field for the development of class conflict.

Overall, these results show that the integration of the structural and the processual approaches to class into a unified framework is helpful to examine the patterns of class consciousness in current neoliberal societies. In this research I developed such integrated analysis through a definition of class consciousness that included both class identity and class interests as its main components. At the same time, I tried to contribute to this integrated perspective by examining the effects of both class position and class-background (as indicator of class experiences) on class consciousness. Finally, I sought to contribute to this type of agenda by showing how each component of class consciousness—i.e. class identity and class interests—are affected in a somehow different way by class position, class origin, and other class-related phenomena.

The results of the entire analysis indicate that an integrated approach to class is a fruitful way to bring class consciousness back in the more general study of inequality and political conflicts in current capitalist society. Further research should overcome some important limitations of this strand of research. For instance, further analysis should try to work with data that allow them to analyze how class consciousness affects people's disposition toward collective action. Due to data limitations I could not do so. Nor could I examine the entire employed population—I focused only on the respondents defined as "wage earners". Therefore, this study should be seen more as a starting than an end point of a research agenda.

This nascent research agenda could focus, for example, on the way that class may be the source of new and renovated forms of collective action in neoliberal society. Taking the Chilean case as example, this seems to be particularly relevant on account of the emerging process of social mobilization observed during the last years (cf. Atria et al., 2013; Mayol, 2012). The social foundations of these mobilizations are not still clear. They include a very diverse type of actors and demands, such as regionalist and city-based movements, new and innovative union organizations carried out by "non-traditional workers" such as service and temporary workers, and the well-known student movement. Despite their differences, all these movements agree to a greater or a lesser extent in a basic critique: neoliberalism and democracy without real people's participation are no longer accepted as legitimate nor passively taken for granted—at least such as they were after the end of the dictatorship. For all these social movements, neither neoliberalism nor democracy were able to fulfill what they once promised, i.e. social and economic integration in a sociopolitical regime that was thought to be (according to their supporters) the most developed of Latin America.

Taking into consideration the levels of inequality and economic precariousness produced by neoliberalism in Chile, it is highly probable that those most affected by neoliberalism (e.g. the working class broadly defined) are the main supporters of these demands for social change. On the basis of what I show in this research, important class forces are operating behind dissimilar identities and antagonistic sociopolitical orientations. This suggests that both the causes and the consequences of this emerging process of social mobilization cannot be appropriately examined without considering *class*. Today, like in the past, class matters. Therefore further research should analyze how in advanced neoliberal societies, classes—in particular subordinate classes—can overcome the unfavorable scenario they have faced until now. By doing so we could understand how classes operate *in reality* in a political context where the idea of class struggle has been (perhaps unsuccessfully) banned.

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Appendix A. Supplementary data

Supplementary data associated with this article can be found, in the online version, at http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.rssm.2014.06.002.

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