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**THE INFLUENCE OF POLITICAL IDEOLOGY ON STEREOTYPES, META-STEREOTYPES AND CAUSAL ATTRIBUTIONS OF HOMELESSNESS IN SPAIN.**

**Running head: Political ideology and perception of homelessness**

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## Introduction

According to the scientific literature, political ideology correlates with biases in perceptions about poor people and in the causal attributions of poverty (Davidai, 2022; Feagin, 1975; Panadero & Vázquez, 2008; Vázquez & Panadero, 2009; Weiner, Osborne, & Rudolph, 2011; Zucker & Weiner, 1993). People with a “left-wing” ideology show a greater propensity to attribute poverty to societal or structural causes, while “right-wing” people tend to attribute poverty to individualistic causes to a greater extent (Bullock, 1999; Cozzarelli, Wilkinson & Tagler, 2001; Furnham, 1982a, 1982b; Wagstaff, 1983; Oorschot & Halman, 2000). Among individuals with a right-wing ideology, there seems to be a tendency to underestimate the effect of social contexts, to overestimate individual effort as a basic factor in personal progress, and to make the individual's dispositional characteristics key factors in social status (Davidai, 2022; Vázquez & Panadero, 2009). So, a greater tendency to blame the poor for their economic difficulties (Furnham & Gunter, 1984; Hine & Montiel, 1999) and to create more negative stereotypes and feelings towards people in poverty (Cozzarelli et al., 2001; Vázquez, 2016; Vázquez et al., 2021; Wagstaff, 1983) is observed among right-wing individuals.

"Causal attributions" essentially consist of making inferences about the causes of the behaviour of others and one's own behaviour. They are not the "real" causes of behaviour, but instead people's belief that they provide the basis for a specific type of behaviour (Piff, 2020; Vázquez, Panadero & Zúñiga, 2017b, 2018). Feagin's traditional classification of causal attributions of poverty (1972) makes a distinction between individualistic causes (which attribute responsibility to poor people for their own situation); societal or structural causes (which make forces external to poor people responsible for poverty), and fatalistic causes (which attribute poverty to factors that are beyond the control of poor individuals, and are not the responsibility of society). Despite criticisms of this model (Lepianka, Oorschot & Gelissen, 2009; Weiner, Osborne & Rudolph, 2011), this approach is the most widely used and is empirically supported (Bullock, Williams & Limbert, 2003; Furnham, 1982a; Morçöl, 1997; Niemelä, 2008; Zucker & Weiner, 1993).

"Stereotypes" are beliefs about the characteristics, attributes and behaviours of the members of certain groups, which tend to involve attributing general psychological characteristics to individuals based on their membership of a group. "Meta-stereotypes" are the beliefs that the members of an in-group have about the stereotypes assigned to them by an outgroup (Vázquez, Panadero & Zúñiga, 2017a; Vorauer, Main & O'Connell, 1998). Few studies have focused on the stereotypes and meta-stereotypes of people in situations of poverty or social exclusion. However, Vázquez et al. (2017a) highlighted the existence of three types of stereotypes/meta-stereotypes related to homeless people: Positives (reflecting a positive image); Negatives (reflecting a negative image); and Indulgents (reflecting an ambivalent image; i.e., despite presenting negative characteristics they have a condescending and tolerant perspective, which to some extent considers homeless people as victims of circumstance, affected by the situation in which they find themselves).

Various authors have discussed the existence of correlations between cognitive variables (e.g. stereotypes, meta-stereotypes, causal attributions, etc.), emotions (e.g. pity, anger, distrust, fear, etc.) and behaviours (e.g. support, avoidance, rejection, discrimination, etc.) (Breckler, 1984; Guillén et al., 2020; Panadero, Guillén, & Vázquez, 2015). Stereotypes and causal attributions of poverty and social exclusion may therefore reflect attitudes that direct individual and collective behaviour, and impact on the design and implementation of public policies aimed at the most disadvantaged groups (Bullock, 1999; Lott, 2002; Vázquez, 2017). Cuddy, Fiske and Glick (2007) noted that stereotypes and emotions shape behavioral tendencies toward groups, and suggest that “warmth stereotypes” determine active behavioral tendencies, attenuating active harm (harassing) and eliciting active facilitation (helping), while “competence stereotypes” determine passive behavioral tendencies, attenuating passive harm (neglecting) and eliciting passive facilitation (associating). Greenwald and Banaji (1995) point out that social behaviour towards certain groups - and towards the socially excluded in particular - is strongly mediated by stereotypes, which are closely linked to unintentional discriminatory behaviours. This factor was also emphasised by

Kurzban and Leary (2001), who noted a strong tendency to avoid people in a situation of social exclusion. Meanwhile, Shelton and Richeson (2005) and Vázquez et al. (2017a) highlighted the tendency for individuals to avoid contact with members of other groups when they believe that these groups do not wish to come into contact with them. The two groups have different attributions as to why the members of the outgroup do not want to initiate these contacts. As noted by several authors (Finchilescu, 2005; Vorauer, Main & O'Connell, 1998; Vázquez et al., 2019; Vázquez, 2016), the ingroup's negative beliefs about how it is perceived by the outgroup can influence how the members of the ingroup perceive the outgroup, and can therefore have a significant effect on the former's contact with the latter.

According to the attributional model of stereotypes (Reyna, 2000), one of the most important functions of stereotypes is to provide causal information about a group member's behaviors and life outcomes. Reyna (2008) noted that along with information about what a group is and does, stereotypes also provide information about why group members are the way they are or why they are in their present state. The relationship between causal attributions of poverty and willingness to help people in that situation appears to be mediated by the affective responses elicited by the attribution. According to Zucker and Weiner (1993), attributions of poverty to structural causes tend to evoke pity for the poor, while attributions to individualistic causes indirectly evoke anger due to the belief that the poor are responsible for their situation. Pity (positively) and anger (negatively) are correlated with a willingness to help the poor. In general, people who tend to attribute poverty to individualistic causes are less in favour of the development of the welfare state and implementing social policies than people who tend to attribute poverty to societal causes (Bullock et al., 2003; Shirazi & Biel, 2005). Attributions of the causes of poverty may therefore affect the design and implementation of policies to combat social exclusion and the support that these policies receive (Reutter, Harrison & Neufeld, 2002; Bullock et al., 2003; Vázquez & Panadero, 2009).

Various studies have shown that attributions of poverty to societal or structural causes have a positive correlation with opinions in favour of social welfare, while attributions to individualistic causes are positively correlated with the perception of dishonesty (Bullock, 1999; Niemelä, 2008). Scientific literature indicates that people with a left-wing ideology tend to support to a greater extent public aid and assistance for the poor (e.g., Appelbaum, 2001; Jost, Nosek & Gosling, 2008; Shirazi & Biel, 2005), while right-wing people tend to present greater opposition to government aid for people living in poverty (Cozzarelli et al., 2001; Furnham, 1982a; Furnham & Gunter, 1984; Pratto et al., 1994; Pratto, Stallworth & Conway-Lanz, 1998). Political ideology may therefore influence the position adopted (for or against) regarding tax increases in order to provide funds to finance programmes to improve the situation of groups in need. Jost et al. (2003) noted that political right-wing ideology is structured around two different factors: (a) opposition to social change and (b) acceptance of economic inequality (also see Conover & Feldman, 1981; Jost et al., 2008). Also, people with a right-wing ideology manifest to a greater extent a tendency to underestimate the effect of social contexts and to overestimate individual effort as an essential factor in personal progress (Davidai, 2022; Vázquez & Panadero, 2009). Thus, political right-wing ideology tends to blame the poor for their own financial difficulties (Furnham & Gunter, 1984; Hine & Montiel, 1999) and tends to generate negative stereotypes and feelings about the poor to a greater extent (Cozzarelli et al., 2001; Vázquez, 2016; Vázquez et al., 2021; Wagstaff, 1983).

One of the main criticisms levelled at the main body of research on social cognitions related to poverty is that it has focused on poverty in generic terms (Lepianka et al., 2009). However, as Niemelä (2011) points out, attributions of generic poverty may be different and less complex than attributions of specific situations of poverty. This effect could be especially marked when poverty is linked to social exclusion, as is the case with people living homeless, who are one of the groups with the highest levels of social exclusion in developed societies (Suarez et al., 2018; Panadero, Martín, & Vázquez, 2018). In Spain there is a lack of information about the political ideology of people living homeless and their electoral participation rate, although knowledge of these issues

would allow to analyze to what extent people living homeless could represent significant political interest group, with capacity to exert pressure on public administrations to address their interests.

The limited number of studies undertaken on people in a homeless situation suggest that stereotypes about this group mainly tend to be negative, which can lead to negative attitudes towards them (Hocking & Lawrence, 2000; Vázquez et al., 2017a; Vázquez & Panadero, 2020), hindering their processes of integration. According to Vázquez et al. (2017a), the stereotypes and meta-stereotypes of people living homeless are characterised by their primarily negative or indulgent content. They have very little positive content, and a high degree of uniformity, and the meta-stereotypes are more negative and uniform than the stereotypes. So, according with Vázquez et al. (2017a), people living homeless appear to believe that domiciled people value them less than they really value them, which may unfortunately have negative consequences in their processes of social inclusion. There is also a tendency among people living homeless to attribute their homelessness mainly to individualistic and fatalistic causes, with few attributions to societal or structural causes (Vázquez et al., 2017b, 2018). The same authors found that homeless respondents attributed homelessness to individualistic causes to a greater extent than domiciled population. The confirmation of differences between stereotypes and meta-stereotypes of homeless people (Vázquez et al., 2017a) and of differences in causal attributions of homelessness between domiciled and homeless people (Vázquez et al., 2017b, 2018) highlights the need to analyze these cognitions in groups that are in a different situations in relation to living homeless.

Negative stereotypes of people in a homeless situation, a tendency to attribute their situation to individualistic causes, with the consequent attribution to individuals of personal responsibility for their situation, may adversely affect the general perception of this group, and the belief that they do not deserve particular types of aid (Moura, de Almeida Segundo, & Barbosa, 2019; Vázquez et al., 2017a, 2017b, 2018). For example, the problem of "deserving of help" plays a particularly important role in the "Housing First" intervention programmes (Tsemberis, 2010). This intervention model, initially aimed at people living homeless with mental health problems or addiction issues, is an alternative to the traditionally accepted model, i.e. providing housing first and then combining supportive and treatment services versus traditional supportive housing programmes (linear residential treatment) (Tsemberis, 2010). After the effectiveness of the "Housing First" programmes and their economic profitability had been compared with other similar intervention programmes, one of the main impediments to their implementation is the general perception of people in a homeless situation as "deserving" to benefit from this type of programme. Stereotypes of people living homeless and attributions for the causes of their situation can play a crucial role in this regard.

This research will provide information on political ideology and electoral participation of people living homeless in Madrid, although the main objective of the paper is to analyze in three groups (Homeless Group, Domiciled Service-Users Group and Domiciled Non Service-Users Group) the influence of political ideology on stereotypes and meta-stereotypes of people living homeless, and on the causal attributions for homelessness. Likewise, the relationship between political ideology and willingness to increase or decrease public funds allocated to people living homeless will be analyzed in the three groups.

### **Method**

The research was conducted in Madrid (Spain) based on data provided by individuals belonging to three different groups:

- *The Homeless Group* (HG) (n=188): a group consisting of a representative sample of homeless people in Madrid (84.0% men, 16.0% women), who were all adults (M age = 47.57 years, SD=12.172), who had spent the night before the interview in a shelter or other facility for homeless people, on the street or in other places not initially designed for sleeping: abandoned buildings, basements, metro stations, etc. 71.8% were Spaniards and 28.2% were foreign. The sample size of the HG was determined beforehand from the available data on the total number of people living homeless in Madrid (Muñoz, Sánchez & Cabrera, 2017). We designed a

strategy for random stratified sampling in the street and in all housing resources for homeless people in the city (shelters and other supervised accommodation). We selected a specific number of participants proportionately and randomly, according to their capacity. The selection of the sample in the street was carried out in a random and proportional way, according to the number of people in a homeless situation who spend the night in the streets of Madrid.

- *The Domiciled Service-Users Group (DSUG)* (n=164): a group consisting of a sample of people who still had housing, but needed to use services with homeless people. The members of this group were at high risk of becoming homeless, and they shared various care services with the homeless. The DSUG was equivalent to the HG in terms of gender (81.1% men, 18.9% women), age (M age=45.54 years, SD=10.818) and nationality (62.2% Spanish, 37.8% foreign). The sample was obtained by a random sampling procedure in soup kitchens and facilities providing care for people at risk of being homeless.
- *The Domiciled Non Service-Users Group (DNSUG)* (n=180): this group consisted of a sample of people who had their own home, were not using services designed for the homeless, and were not at risk of becoming homeless. The sample, which was not representative, was collected using a "quota sampling" strategy in Madrid, controlling for its equivalence with the HG and DSUG samples in relation to gender (83.8% men, 16.2% women), age (M age=45.36 years, SD=14.037) and nationality (76.7% Spanish, 23.3% foreign).

After explaining the aims of the research and how the data obtained would be processed, the participants were asked to give their informed consent, ensuring those that took part that their complete anonymity would be respected at all times. The information for the HG and DSUG was gathered using an instrument designed as a structured interview, which resolved the problems arising from the participants' difficulties in reading and/or understanding. The members of the DNSUG completed a self-administered questionnaire, designed in order to enable comparison with the data obtained for the HG and the DSUG.

The instruments gathered information on different issues, including sociodemographic characteristics, political ideology, electoral participation, having their documentation in order, opinions on public funds allocated to homeless people, causal attributions of homelessness, and stereotypes and meta-stereotypes of people living homeless. The instrument designed to gather information on causal attributions for homelessness consisted of the initial instruction: "*Now, we would like your opinion on the causes that usually lead homeless people into that situation. I'm going to give various reasons and I'd like to know whether or not you agree with each one,*" followed by a list of 53 statements (Annex 1) with alternatives for dichotomous responses: "*agree*" or "*disagree*". The instrument designed to gather information on meta-stereotypes (HG) consisted of the initial instruction "*I would like to know what you think people in general think about homeless people. I am going to read you some alternatives and I would like to tell me whether you agree or disagree with each one*" which was followed by a list of 57 statements (Annex 2) with alternatives for dichotomous response: "*agree*" or "*disagree*". To determine the stereotypes of people living homeless, the members of the DSUG and DNSUG were asked the following question: "*Now we would like to know what characteristics homeless people generally have. We are going to read you some alternatives and we would like to say whether you agree or disagree with each one*". The same list of 57 statements presented to the HG (Annex 2) was then included, with dichotomous response alternatives: "*agree*" or "*disagree*".

The database was developed and processed using the SPSS statistical analysis and data management system. Given the difficulties in Spain in correctly interpreting what is supposed to be the political "centre" (which is in many cases determined by disaffection with politics rather than ideology), the "political ideology" category was dichotomised between "left-wing" (encompassing "left" and "centre-left") and "right-wing" (encompassing "right" and "centre-right"). The statistic  $\chi^2$  "Chi squared" was used for comparisons of the nominal variables. A discriminant analysis was carried out in order to identify the causal attributions of homelessness that best discriminated between the members of the DNSUG who claimed to have a right-wing political ideology and those with a left-wing political ideology. To that end, the stepwise inclusion method was used with the

Wilks Lambda procedure, with the dependent variable defined as "Having a left-wing ideology", which took two values: 0 "Right or centre-right political ideology"; 1 "Left or centre-left political ideology". An analysis of the differences between the left-wing and right-wing individuals guided the selection of independent variables, as this technique is quite sensitive to the relationship between sample size and the number of predictive variables.

## Results

The differences between the interviewees in the three groups (HG, DSUG, DNSUG) in terms of political ideology, electoral participation, having their documentation in order, and opinions on public funds allocated to homeless people are shown in Table 1:

*Table 1.* Ideology, electoral participation, having documentation in order and opinions on public funds allocated to homeless people among the members of the "Homeless Group" (HG), "Domiciled Service Users Group" (DSUG) and "Domiciled Non Service Users Group" (DNSUG).

	HG % (n)	DSUG % (n)	DNSUG % (n)	$\chi^2$
<b>Political ideology</b>				50.141***
Left	43.1% (44)	33.7% (29)	31.8% (55)	
Centre-left	8.8% (9)	16.3% (14)	19.7% (34)	
Centre	14.7% (15)	15.1% (13)	26.0% (45)	
Centre-right	1.0% (1)	3.5% (3)	13.3% (23)	
Right	32.4% (33)	31.4% (27)	9.2% (16)	
<b>Political ideology</b>				2.882
Left-wing (left and centre-left)	51.9% (53)	50.0% (43)	51.5% (89)	
Right-wing (right and centre-right)	33.4% (34)	34.9% (30)	22.5% (39)	
<b>Exercised their right to vote</b>	31.5% (47)	41.7% (55)	80.6% (133)	84.747***
<b>Has documentation in order</b>	77.0% (141)	88.8% (142)	98.9% (177)	41.300***
<b>Believes that the public money that is spent on homeless people should...</b>				3.708
Be increased (increasing taxes)	18.2% (28)	17.8% (27)	22.7% (40)	
Be increased (without increasing taxes)	54.5% (84)	55.9% (85)	57.4% (101)	
Stay the same	23.4% (36)	23.0% (35)	17.0% (30)	
Be reduced	3.9% (6)	3.3% (5)	2.8% (5)	

\* $p \leq .05$ ; \*\* $p \leq .01$ ; \*\*\* $p \leq .001$

As shown in Table 1, half of the people living homeless in Madrid reported having a left-wing political ideology, a third said they had a right-wing political ideology, and 15% said they were in the "centre". Similarly, half of the interviewees in the DSUG and DNSUG described themselves as left-wing. There is a greater ideological polarisation among the interviewees in the HG towards the extremes of the political spectrum (right and left), and a smaller percentage of people occupying more central positions. In the HG, there is a larger percentage of left-wing people and a lower percentage of centre-left people than in the other two groups (DSUG and DNSUG). Meanwhile, among the members of the HG and the DSUG there is a larger percentage of people who said they had a right-wing political ideology, and a smaller percentage of centre-right people than in the DNSUG. When the data were studied excluding the interviewees who said they were in the "centre," no statistically significant differences were observed between the HG, DSUG and DNSUG in terms of the percentage of left-wing (centre-left or left) and right-wing (centre-right or right). Among general population in Madrid, 40.6% was on left-wing (23.1% centre-left) and

23.8% was on right-wing (17.2% centre-right) (CIS, 2021). Table 1 also shows that the electoral participation of members of the HG and the DSUG is much lower than that of the members of the DNSUG. Likewise, a larger percentage of the members of the HG do not have their documentation in order than the members of the DSUG, while almost all the members of the DNSUG have their documentation in order. Finally, Table 1 shows that more than 70% of the interviewees considered that the public funds allocated to the people living homeless should be increased, although more than half thought that this should be done without increasing taxes. There are no statistically significant differences between the three groups in this respect. No statistically significant differences were observed between the interviewees in each of the three groups (HG, DSUG and DNSUG) in terms of basic socio-demographic variables such as age, gender or nationality (Spanish vs. foreign).

The differences in each of the three groups in terms of the percentage of agreement with the various possible causes of homelessness based on political ideology are shown in Table 2:

*Table 2.* Differences in agreement with statements about the causes of homelessness according to political ideology between members of the "Homeless Group" (HG), the "Domiciled Service Users Group" (DSUG) and the "Domiciled Non Service Users Group" (DNSUG).

<b>Causes of homelessness</b>	<b>Left-wing</b> % (n)	<b>Right-wing</b> % (n)	<b><math>\chi^2</math></b>
<b>DNSUG</b>			
Because of the government	63.5% (54)	37.8% (14)	6.897**
Because of being uprooted (migration, abandonment...)	95.5% (84)	84.2% (32)	4.592*
Because of prejudice and discrimination in society	70.5% (62)	23.7% (9)	23.602***
Because of rejection and misunderstanding by society	68.5% (61)	24.3% (9)	20.693***
Because of having experienced a lot of traumatic situations	61.8% (55)	42.1% (16)	4.189*
Because of living beyond their means	48.9% (43)	69.2% (27)	4.531*
Because of the economic crisis	89.9% (80)	69.2% (27)	8.437**
Because of the inequality of opportunity in society	72.7% (64)	39.5% (15)	12.548***
Because of the meaninglessness of their life (lack of goals, objectives, hopes, etc.)	64.8% (57)	39.5% (15)	6.936**
Because of they did not have access to adequate education	42.7% (38)	20.5% (8)	5.796**
Because of government incompetence/inefficiency	65.2% (58)	26.3% (10)	16.161***
Because of poor distribution of wealth	70.5% (62)	41.0% (16)	9.887**
Because of not having access to social welfare support	51.2% (44)	29.7% (11)	4.807*
Because of coming from broken and troubled families	70.8% (63)	51.3% (20)	4.525*
Because of being very lazy, not taking responsibility for their situation and expecting other people to sort it out for them	13.8% (12)	34.2% (13)	6.891**
Because of being lazy and not making enough effort	13.8% (12)	28.9% (11)	4.045*
<b>DSUG</b>			
Because of suffering from illness and physical problems	26.2% (11)	68.8% (11)	8.914**
Because of the inequality of opportunity in society	76.2% (32)	46.7% (7)	4.459*
Because it is God's will	4.8% (2)	40.0% (6)	11.375**
<b>HG</b>			
Because of a lack of support from the immediate environment (family, friends, etc.)	82.7% (43)	53.3% (8)	5.520*
Because of they did not have access to adequate education	52.9% (27)	14.3% (2)	6.643**

\* $p \leq .05$ ; \*\* $p \leq .01$ ; \*\*\* $p \leq .001$

As seen in Table 2, there are more differences in causal attributions for homelessness based on political ideology among the interviewees in the DNSUG than among the members of the HG or the DSUG. Among the homeless group (HG), those who considered themselves left-wing differed from the right-wing individuals in that they agreed to a greater extent with two societal causes of homelessness (lack of social support; inability to access quality education). Among the people at risk of becoming homeless (DSUG), more right-wing individuals said they agreed with an individualistic cause of homelessness (illnesses and physical problems they suffer from) and a



fatalistic cause (the will of God), while a larger percentage of people with left-wing ideology agreed with a societal cause (unequal opportunities in society). Among the interviewees who were not at risk of becoming homeless (DNSUG), people with a right-wing ideology attributed homelessness to a greater extent to three individualistic causes (having lived beyond their means; being complacent and waiting for others to solve their problem; being lazy and not trying hard enough), while more people with a left-wing ideology agreed with ten societal causes of homelessness (the government; lack of roots; prejudice and social discrimination; rejection and social incomprehension; the economic crisis; the inequality of opportunities in society; the inability to access quality education; the incompetence and inefficiency of government; poor distribution of wealth; the impossibility of access to social care), two fatalistic causes (suffering from many traumatic situations; coming from unstructured families) and an individualistic cause (lack of meaning in their lives).

A discriminant analysis was carried out in order to identify the causal attributions for homelessness that best discriminated between right-wing and left-wing members of the DNSUG. Table 3 shows the standardised coefficients resulting from the discriminant analysis, which included as independent variables all the attributions for causes of homelessness in which statistically significant differences were found between the members of the DNSUG who said they had a left-wing or right-wing political ideology.

*Table 3. Standardised coefficients of canonical discriminant functions*

<b>Causes of homelessness</b>	<b>Function</b>
Because of prejudice and discrimination in society	.686
Because of the economic crisis	.410
Because of being very lazy, not taking responsibility for their situation and expecting other people to sort it out for them	-.449
Because of the meaninglessness of their life (lack of goals, objectives, hopes, etc.)	.445
Because of living beyond their means	-.370

The discriminant analysis showed that the combination of five causal attributions of homelessness ("because of prejudice and discrimination in society", "because of the economic crisis", "because of being very lazy, not taking responsibility for their situation and expecting other people to sort it out for them", "because of the meaninglessness of their life", "because of living beyond their means") provided the best possible discrimination between left-wing and right-wing members of the DNSUG. The inclusion of other variables did not contribute significantly to the discrimination between the two groups, and as such they were not included in the discriminant function.

The results of the discriminant analysis revealed a statistically significant function that correlated with the variables of the group in 0.581 with a Chi-square ( $\chi^2(5) = 49.268$ ) which was statistically significant. The centroids of the groups were -1.066 for the right-wing group, and 0.471 for the left-wing group. The standardised coefficients shown in Table 3 show the sign and magnitude assigned to each of the five variables in the discriminant function, with a Wilks' lambda distribution of 0.662 ( $p < .001$ ). This function correctly classified 77.4% of all the original cases - a figure that exceeds the criterion of maximum randomness. 78.9% of the right-wing and 76.7% of the left-wing individuals were assigned membership of the correct group. The criterion of accuracy of classification - a quarter higher than that obtained by randomness (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 1999) - was met for both.

The differences in each of the three groups in terms of the percentage of agreement with different meta-stereotypes (i.e. beliefs that the members of an in-group have about the stereotypes assigned to them by an outgroup) or stereotypes (i.e. beliefs about the characteristics, attributes and behaviours of the members of certain groups) of homeless people based on political ideology are presented in Table 4:

Table 4. Differences in agreement with various statements about the characteristics of homeless people according to political ideology between members of the "Homeless Group" (HG), the "Domiciled Service Users Group" (DSUG) and the "Domiciled Non Service Users Group" (DNSUG).

Characteristics of homeless people	Left-wing % (n)	Right-wing % (n)	$\chi^2$
<b>DNSUG (Stereotypes)</b>			
They are rejected by society <sup>+++</sup>	94.4% (84)	82.1% (32)	4.853*
They are lazy <sup>++</sup>	24.1% (21)	42.1% (16)	4.097*
They are bohemians, hustlers <sup>++</sup>	17.2% (15)	39.5% (15)	7.167**
They are consumers of alcohol <sup>++</sup>	80.2% (69)	94.3% (33)	3.711*
They are drug users <sup>++</sup>	60.7% (51)	82.9% (29)	5.498*
They are misunderstood <sup>+++</sup>	85.9% (73)	68.4% (26)	5.098*
They lack moral values <sup>++</sup>	12.3% (10)	29.7% (11)	5.247*
They are idle <sup>++</sup>	26.6% (21)	55.6% (20)	9.049**
They are victims of the system <sup>+++</sup>	76.2% (64)	40.5% (15)	14.405***
They are aggressive <sup>++</sup>	18.5% (15)	36.1% (13)	4.237*
<b>DSUG (Stereotypes)</b>			
They are malnourished <sup>+++</sup>	73.8% (31)	50.0% (15)	4.300*
They take advantage of the system <sup>++</sup>	46.3% (19)	70.0% (21)	3.942*
They are vulnerable, defenceless <sup>+++</sup>	64.3% (27)	85.7% (24)	3.901*
<b>HG (Meta-stereotypes)</b>			
They are enterprising, fighters <sup>†</sup>	26.0% (13)	48.3% (14)	4.049*
They have poor social relationships <sup>++</sup>	76.5% (39)	55.2% (16)	3.903*

\* $p \leq .05$ ; \*\* $p \leq .01$ ; \*\*\* $p \leq .001$

<sup>†</sup> Positive meta-stereotype; <sup>++</sup> Negative meta-stereotype; <sup>+++</sup> Indulgent meta-stereotype

As seen in Table 4, more members of the HG who claimed to have a right-wing political ideology agreed with a positive meta-stereotype (people consider homeless people to be enterprising and combative), while a higher percentage of the left-wing individuals had a negative meta-stereotype (people consider that homeless people engage in poor social relationships). Meanwhile, a larger percentage of the right-wing DSUG interviewees said they agreed with a negative stereotype (they take advantage of the system) and an indulgent stereotype (they are vulnerable, defenceless), while a larger percentage of the left-wing agreed with an indulgent stereotype (they are malnourished). Finally, among the members of the DNSUG, the left-wing individuals expressed a higher level of agreement with three indulgent stereotypes of people living homeless (they are socially rejected; misunderstood; victims of the system), while the right-wing individuals agreed to a greater extent with seven negative stereotypes (lazy; consumers of alcohol; drug users; lacking moral values; idle; aggressive; bohemian, hustlers).

Among the interviewees in the HG, no statistically significant differences were observed in terms of their opinion as to whether public funds allocated to the people in a homeless situation should "be increased" or "stay the same/be reduced" depending on whether they had a left-wing political ideology (78.4% be increased vs. 21.6% stay the same/be reduced) or a right-wing political ideology (76.9% be increased vs. 23.1% stay the same/be reduced) ( $\chi^2=0.23$ ;  $p=.548$ ). Among the members of the DSUG, a larger percentage of left-wing individuals believed that public funds allocated to the homeless should be increased (85.0% be increased vs. 15.0% stay the same/be reduced) than right-wing (62.1% be increased vs. 37.9% stay the same/be reduced) ( $\chi^2=4.761$ ;  $p=.029$ ). Among the members of the DNSUG, left-wing individuals tended to believe that public funds allocated to the people living homeless should be increased (75.2% be increased vs. 12.6% stay the same/be reduced) to a greater extent than right-wing (65.8% be increased vs. 34.2% stay the same/be reduced) ( $\chi^2=7.930$ ;  $p=.006$ ).

The differences in each of the three groups in terms of political ideology as regards whether they believed that public funds allocated to people in a homeless situation should be increased, maintained or reduced are presented in Table 5:

Table 5. Differences in opinions regarding increasing or decreasing the funds allocated to people in a homeless situation according to political ideology between the members of the "Homeless Group" (HG), the "Domiciled Service Users Group" (DSUG) and the "Domiciled Non Service Users Group" (DNSUG).

	The public funds that are spent on homeless people should...				$\chi^2$
	Be increased (increasing taxes) % (n)	Be increased (without increasing taxes) % (n)	Stay the same % (n)	Be reduced % (n)	
<b>DNSUG</b>					13.000**
Left-wing	34.5% (30)	52.9% (46)	11.2% (10)	1.1% (1)	
Right-wing	10.5% (4)	55.3% (21)	26.3% (10)	7.9% (3)	
<b>DSUG</b>					6.829
Left-wing	25.5% (10)	60.0% (4)	12.5% (5)	2.5% (1)	
Right-wing	6.9% (2)	55.2% (16)	31.0% (9)	6.9% (2)	
<b>HG</b>					2.049
Left-wing	25.5% (13)	52.9% (27)	21.6% (11)	0% (0)	
Right-wing	26.9% (7)	50.0% (13)	19.2% (5)	3.8% (1)	

\*p ≤ .05; \*\*p ≤ .01; \*\*\*p ≤ .001

As shown in Table 5, there are no statistically significant differences between the members of HG and DSUG according to their political ideology in terms of the belief that public funds allocated to the people living homeless should be increased by increasing taxes, increased without increasing taxes, stay the same or be reduced. However, among the members of the DNSUG, who are at no imminent risk of becoming homeless, the left-wing individuals showed a greater willingness to increase the funds allocated to the homeless (by increasing taxes) than the right-wing, of whom a larger percentage believed that these funds should remain the same.

### Discussion and conclusions

In Madrid (Spain), half of the people in a homeless situation and of those who despite having housing shared care services with the homeless said they had a left-wing political ideology, as opposed to a third who said they had a right-wing ideology. There is a polarisation in the political positions in both groups (both to the left and to the right of the political spectrum) greater than that found among the members of the DNSUG, who are people with housing not at risk of becoming homeless. Political polarisation is accentuated among the people living homeless. In this group, there is a higher percentage of "left" respondents and a lower percentage of "centre-left" respondents than among people at risk of becoming homeless. The situation of social difficulty in which domiciled service-users and especially homeless people find themselves could lead to both groups agreeing with less moderate political ideas to a greater extent. The need for an urgent solution to their difficult personal situation could help to explain why the members of the HG and DSUG consider to a greater extent the political options more polarized as more effective in improving their situation. Likewise, in these groups there could be greater disenchantment with the moderate policies (center-left and center-right) that have prevailed in Spain for more than 40 years, and that do not seem to have had an impact on improvements in their personal situation.

A quarter of the interviewees in the DNSUG claimed to be in the "centre" politically, compared to 15% of the homeless or domiciled service-users. In the Spanish context, declaring oneself to be politically in the "centre" can often be interpreted as a form of disinterest or disaffection towards politics rather than as an ideological position. Accordingly, people living

homeless and domiciled service-users would appear to be relatively less disaffected with politics than the domiciled population. Nevertheless, their electoral participation (31% among the homeless and 42% among the domiciled service-users) is much lower than that reported among the domiciled population interviewed (81%) and lower than that of the general Spanish population (71.8% electoral participation in the general elections held in April 2019). This lower level of electoral participation among the most disadvantaged groups does not seem to be the result of problems with keeping their documentation in order, as 77% of the homeless people and 89% of the domiciled service users reported having their documentation in order. The problems associated with registration for the electoral roll, as well as the need for people living homeless who are not from Madrid to travel to exercise their right to vote or administer their postal vote well in advance, could help account for the low levels of electoral participation among these groups. When added to the non-existent capacity for collective mobilisation among those who are homeless or at risk, this factor means that they are not a significant political interest group. This renders these groups invisible, and limits their opportunities for exerting pressure on public administrations to address their interests.

Mostly of the interviewees in the three groups believe - independently of their political ideology - that government bodies should make a greater effort to increase the public funds that are allocated to improving the situation of the people in a homeless situation, although most of them - independently of their political ideology - thought that this effort should not imply an increase in taxes. There are no differences in this respect between the homeless people, the domiciled service-users and the domiciled non-service-users. This means that those who would benefit most from increased funds for certain public policies (the homeless people) shared the same opinion as the net contributors who were not at risk of becoming homeless (the domiciled non service-users).

Although the scientific literature indicates that people with a left-wing political ideology have a greater propensity to attribute poverty to societal or structural causes, and right-wing people tend to attribute poverty to individualistic causes to a greater extent (Bullock, 1999; Cozzarelli et al., 2001; Furnham, 1982b; Wagstaff, 1983; Oorschot & Halman, 2000), among the people living homeless and the domiciled service-users in Madrid, political ideology seems to bear hardly any relationship to the kind of causal attributions of homelessness or to the type of meta-stereotypes (i.e. beliefs that the members of an in-group have about the stereotypes assigned to them by an outgroup) and stereotypes (i.e. beliefs about the characteristics, attributes and behaviours of the members of certain groups) of the people living homeless. Although the members of the homeless group (HG) stated that they have more polarised political positions than the members of the other groups (DSUG and DNSUG), the polarisation of their political positions does not appear to be relevant to how they process the circumstances surrounding homeless people. Direct knowledge of the circumstances surrounding homeless people could apparently have an impact on the reduction of the attributive biases and stereotypical biases usually associated with political ideology. In this regard, direct contact with people living homeless (HG and DSUG) could lead to stereotypes about homeless people and causal attributions of homelessness specific, while among individuals who lack contact with people living homeless (DNSUG) stereotypes and causal attributions of this situation could be more similar to the stereotypes and causal attributions usually associated with generic poverty and social exclusion, in which have been observed biases by political ideology (e.g. Feagin, 1975; Panadero & Vázquez, 2008; Vázquez & Panadero, 2009; Weiner et al., 2011; Zucker & Weiner, 1993). As Reyna (2008) point out, stereotypes provide causal information about a group member's behaviors and life outcomes, and at the same time they provide information about why group members are in their present state (Reyna, 2000). Thus, the stereotypes about homeless people -specific vs. generic - could modulate causal attributions of homelessness, being influenced differently by political ideology. In the same way, among the people living homeless and the domiciled service-users, political ideology appears to have very little relationship with opinions on the volume of public funds that should be allocated to policies providing support for the homeless, or to opinions as to whether these funds should be maintained, reduced or increased, or whether taxes should be increased or otherwise. Direct knowledge of needs of homeless people could reduce

the influence of political ideology on the predisposition to contribute with public funds to support people living homeless.

Unlike the findings observed among the members of the HG and DSUG, among the members of the DNSUG, who are domiciled people not at risk of becoming homeless, there are major differences in terms of political ideology as regards the type of causal attributions for homelessness and their stereotypes of homeless people. This is despite the fact that the members of this group appeared to be less politically polarised, and a larger percentage of the interviewees are "centre-left" and "centre-right."

Among the respondents in the DNSUG, left-wing individuals used indulgent stereotypes of the people living homeless to a greater extent, while the right-wing had more strongly negative stereotypes of homeless people. In the opinion of Greenwald and Banaji (1995), social behaviour towards certain groups is strongly mediated by stereotypes, which are closely linked to discriminatory behaviour. Cuddy et al. (2007) noted that hated groups (cold, incompetent) elicit active (harassing) and passive (neglecting) harm, while pitied groups (warm, incompetent) elicit active facilitation (helping) but passive harm (neglecting). Indulgent and negative stereotypes denote incompetence, but indulgent stereotypes are to a large extent warm (e.g. vulnerable, defenceless; malnourished; socially rejected; misunderstood; victims of the system...), whereas negative stereotypes are largely cold (e.g. consumers of alcohol; drug users; lazy; lacking moral values; idle; aggressive; bohemian, hustlers...). So, indulgent stereotypes would elicit to a greater extent active facilitation but passive harm towards people living homeless, whereas negative stereotypes would elicit to a greater extent active and passive harm towards them. It is therefore highly probable, as Kurzban and Leary (2001) point out, that domiciled people in the general population with a right-wing political ideology have a strong tendency to avoid the people in a homeless situation. Unfortunately, systematic avoidance acts as a barrier to adequate knowledge of the phenomenon, which would reinforce cognitive biases related to it.

In the attributions for the causes of the homelessness made by the members of the DNSUG, left-wing individuals agreed to a greater extent with attributions of homelessness due to societal causes, while more right-wing attributed homelessness to individualistic causes, and in particular to judgemental causes largely related to the dispositional characteristics of homeless people. Despite the limited sample size of DNSUG, not being at risk of becoming homeless and not having any contact with people living homeless could bias the causal attributions of people with a right-wing ideology. They present what is known as "fundamental attribution error" - the tendency to overestimate the impact of personal disposition and to underestimate the impact of situations - (Shtudiner, Klein & Kantor, 2017, Vázquez, 2017b) when explaining the causes of homelessness.

In fact, the combination of causal attributions of the homelessness that best predicted a right-wing political ideology was believing that homeless people had lived beyond their financial means and were lazy, did not take responsibility for their situation, and expected others to solve their problems; as well as not considering that the economic crisis that Spain had experienced, prejudice and discrimination in society, or that homeless people had a lack of objectives in life, hopes, etc. were major causes of homelessness.

In general, people who tend to account for poverty based on individualistic causes (more common among right-wing individuals) are less in favour of developing the welfare state and implementing social policies aimed at helping the most disadvantaged than those who tend to attribute poverty to societal causes, who are more common among left-wing people (Bullock et al., 2003; Shirazi & Biel, 2005). Various studies have shown that attributions of poverty to societal or structural causes correlate positively with pro-social welfare attitudes, while attributions to individualistic causes correlate positively with the perception of dishonesty (Bullock, 1999; Niemelä, 2008). Accordingly, in line with the results reported by Bullock et al. (2003), Reutter et al. (2002), and Vázquez and Panadero (2009), attributions for the causes of homelessness may influence the design and implementation of public policies to fight against homelessness, and on the support that those public policies receive.

As pointed out by Zucker and Weiner (1993), attributions of homelessness to structural causes (more common among left-wing individuals) tend to evoke pity towards the poor, while attributions to individualistic causes (more common among right-wing individuals) indirectly evoke anger, due to the belief that the homeless people are responsible for their situation. In this respect, pity (positively) and anger (negatively) influence willingness to help the people in a homeless situation. Despite the limited sample size of DNSUG, the results obtained show that the left-wing members of the DNSUG were more willing to increase the public funds allocated to the people living homeless by increasing taxes, while more of the right-wing believed that the public funds allocated to homeless people should stay the same or be reduced. As highlighted by various authors, left-wing individuals tend to support more aid and assistance for the people in a homeless situation (e.g., Appelbaum, 2001; Jost et al., 2008; Shirazi & Biel, 2005), while right-wing tend to be more strongly opposed to government aid for this group (Cozzarelli et al., 2001; Furnham, 1982a; Furnham & Gunter, 1984; Pratto et al., 1994; Pratto et al., 1998). In this respect, political ideology appears to influence the position adopted (for or against) as regards increases in taxation funds to finance programmes to improve the situation of homeless people.

People with a right-wing ideology manifest to a greater extent a tendency to underestimate the effect of social contexts and to overestimate individual effort as an essential factor in personal progress, making the dispositional characteristics of the individual concerned crucial to social status (Davidai, 2022; Vázquez & Panadero, 2009). Thus, political right-wing ideology tends to blame the poor for their own financial difficulties (Furnham & Gunter, 1984; Hine & Montiel, 1999) and tends to generate negative stereotypes about the poor to a greater extent (Cozzarelli et al., 2001; Vázquez, 2016; Vázquez et al., 2021; Wagstaff, 1983). Political right-wing ideology is structured around the opposition to social change and the acceptance of economic inequality (Conover & Feldman, 1981; Jost et al., 2003, 2008), so blaming the victim for their situation provides a justification for their attributions of poverty, which legitimises both the social system and acceptance of people's inequality (Jost, Banaji & Nosek, 2004; Kay, Jost & Young, 2005).

As occurs with generic poverty, people with a right-wing ideology have less favourable attitudes towards the implementation of support programmes for people in a homeless situation (Pellegrini et al., 1997). Negative stereotypes of people living homeless, a tendency to attribute their situation to individualistic causes, with the consequent attribution to individuals of personal responsibility that this entails, may adversely affect the general perception of this group and the belief that they do not deserve certain types of aid (Moura et al., 2019, Vázquez et al., 2017a). For example, in the case of the intervention programmes known as "Housing First" (Tsemberis, 2010), the problem of "deserving help" plays a particularly important role, as one of the major barriers to their implementation is the general perception that homeless people do not deserve the type of help provided by these programmes. This is an issue in which stereotypes and attributions of the causes of homelessness play a crucial role.

However, "fundamental attribution error", which is so marked among the right-wing Domiciled Non Service-Users Group, is not observed among the homeless people or among the interviewees who share services with them, regardless of their left-wing or right-wing political ideology. Raising awareness and publicising the situation of people in a homeless situation, influencing stereotypes and attributions about the causes thereof, could make right-wing taxpayers more favourable to the implementation of intervention programmes aimed at supporting these groups.

One of the main limitations of this study is that although it is based on a representative sample of people living homeless in Madrid, it was not possible to guarantee the representativeness of the domiciled service-users group and the domiciled non service-users group. Furthermore, this is a cross-sectional study design, and caution must therefore be exercised when trying to establish causal relationships. Additionally, the study is limited to Madrid, Spain, which makes it difficult to generalize the results to other contexts.

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## ANNEX 1:

List of 53 statements about causes of homelessness:

Because of excessive alcohol consumption; Because of taking the wrong decisions; Because of having lost everything they had; Because of excessive drug use; Because of having got used to the situation of being homeless and doing nothing to overcome it; Because of being unable to keep their jobs; Because of living beyond their means; Because of having had problems with the family; Because of having mental health problems; Because of a lack of support from the immediate environment (family, friends, etc.); Because of being uprooted (migration, abandonment...); Because of the meaninglessness of their life (lack of goals, objectives, hopes, etc.); Because of problems with their partners; Because of having experienced a lot of traumatic situations; Because of gambling addiction; Because of poor distribution of wealth; Because of the economic crisis; Because of coming from broken and troubled families; Because of not being able to take responsibility; Because of a lack of knowledge about how to overcome the situation; Because of a lack of self-confidence; Because of a lack of an ability to adapt to changes; Because of an unwillingness to change their inappropriate habits and ways; Because of social rebellion, not accepting the rules; Because of low wages; Because they don't fit in with the labour market; Because of being lazy and not making enough effort; Because of the inequality of opportunity in society; Because they don't want to work; Because of fate or bad luck; Because of being very lazy, not taking responsibility for their situation and expecting other people to sort it out for them; Because of having been thrown out of their home as a child or adolescent; Because they don't know how to apply for social welfare support; Because of having been in an institution (prison, psychiatric hospital, orphanage, juvenile facility, etc.); Because of not having access to social welfare support; Because of being unable to control their basic impulses: aggression, sexual urges, etc.; Because they don't know how to live with other people; Because of a lack of training and advice for getting a job; Because of suffering from illness and physical problems; Because of rejection and misunderstanding by society; Because they value freedom above all else; Because of the government; Because of prejudice and discrimination in society; Because of government incompetence/inefficiency; Because they want to be homeless; Because of being born and raised in poor families; Because of they did not have access to adequate education; Because homelessness is an inevitable part of modern life; Because the "homeless" life is the easiest solution to a lot of their problems; Because of the lack of access to quality health care; Because they are not very intelligent; Because it is God's will; Because it's what they deserve.

## ANNEX 2.

List of 57 statements about stereotypes / meta-stereotypes of homeless people:

They are consumers of alcohol<sup>\*\*</sup>; They lack economic resources<sup>\*\*\*</sup>; They live hand to mouth and don't think about the future<sup>\*\*</sup>; They lack motivation<sup>\*\*\*</sup>; They are solitary<sup>\*\*</sup>; They are drug users<sup>\*\*</sup>; They are physically and psychologically worn out<sup>\*\*\*</sup>; They are rejected by society<sup>\*\*</sup>; They are lazy<sup>\*\*</sup>; They don't wash properly, they're dirty<sup>\*\*</sup>; They have had a difficult past<sup>\*\*\*</sup>; They are sick<sup>\*\*\*</sup>; They are distrustful<sup>\*\*\*</sup>; They are difficult to live with and to deal with<sup>\*\*</sup>; They are unstable, problematic<sup>\*\*</sup>; They are idle<sup>\*\*</sup>; They have low self-esteem<sup>\*\*\*</sup>; They are lazy (easy-going), irresponsible<sup>\*\*</sup>; They are malnourished<sup>\*\*\*</sup>; They are bohemians, hustlers<sup>\*\*</sup>; They are mentally ill<sup>\*\*\*</sup>; They have poor social relationships<sup>\*\*</sup>; They are criminals<sup>\*\*</sup>; They are rebels<sup>\*\*</sup>; They are dangerous<sup>\*\*</sup>; They are unfortunate, they have been unlucky<sup>\*\*\*</sup>; They are pessimists<sup>\*\*</sup>; They blame others for their situation<sup>\*\*</sup>; They are aggressive<sup>\*\*</sup>; Homeless people can't be trusted<sup>\*\*</sup>; They are defenceless<sup>\*\*\*</sup>; They are vulnerable, defenceless<sup>\*\*\*</sup>; They don't have any social skills<sup>\*\*\*</sup>; They are wasteful<sup>\*\*</sup>; They are useless, they can't contribute anything to society<sup>\*\*</sup>; They are free<sup>\*</sup>; They are tough, resistant<sup>\*</sup>; They are misunderstood<sup>\*\*\*</sup>; They have a weak character<sup>\*\*\*</sup>; They live exclusively on the streets<sup>\*\*</sup>; They deserve pity<sup>\*\*\*</sup>; They lack moral values<sup>\*\*</sup>; They have no family<sup>\*\*\*</sup>; They appreciate things more<sup>\*</sup>; They take advantage of the system<sup>\*\*</sup>; They are caring<sup>\*</sup>; They don't attach any importance to material things<sup>\*</sup>; They are victims of the system<sup>\*\*</sup>; They are sociable<sup>\*</sup>; They are

normal, like everyone else<sup>\*</sup> ; They are courteous, respectful, polite<sup>\*</sup> ; They are trusting<sup>\*</sup> ; They are optimists<sup>\*</sup> ; They are enterprising, fighters<sup>\*</sup> ; They are hard-working<sup>\*</sup> ; They are clean<sup>\*</sup> ; They are happy<sup>\*</sup> .

\*Positive meta-stereotype; \*\*Negative meta-stereotype; \*\*\*Indulgent meta-stereotype