DOI: 10.1111/pops.12937

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

*Political Psychology*

# Social justice orientations: Exploring their impact on poverty attributions and support for social protection

**Joaquín Alcañiz-Colomer** [1,2] | **Inmaculada Valor-Segura** [1,2] | **Miguel Moya** [1,2]

[1]Department of Social Psychology, University of Granada, Granada, Spain

[2]Research Centre in Mind, Brain, and Behavior (CIMCYC), Granada, Spain

**Correspondence**
Joaquín Alcañiz-Colomer and Inmaculada Valor-Segura, Department of Social Psychology, University of Granada, Campus de Cartuja, s/n, 18071, Granada, Spain.
Email: jcolomer@ugr.es and ivalor@ugr.es

**Funding information**
Consejería de Economía, Innovación, Ciencia y Empleo, Junta de Andalucía, Grant/Award Number: P20_00199; Ministerio de Ciencia e Innovación, Grant/Award Number: PID2020-114464RB-I00 and PRE2018-083480

## Abstract

Distributive justice remains a central issue in contemporary welfare states, even more during times of economic hardship and social uncertainty. In this article, we analyze how attitudes toward the principles of normative distributive justice (equality, need, equity, and entitlement) are related to support for the redistribution of resources (Study 2) and attitudes toward social protection policies (Studies 1 and 3). In Study 1 ($N = 325$), we found that equality and need positively predicted attitudes toward social protection policies while equity and entitlement negatively predicted these attitudes. In Study 2 ($N = 49{,}519$), using data from Round 9 of the European Social Survey, we replicated this linking normative orientation toward different distributive justice principles with support for redistribution. We replicated these results in Study 3 ($N = 494$). In addition, we explored the role of attributions for poverty in the relationship found in Studies 1 and 2. Attributions for poverty mediated the relationship between orientations toward justice principles and attitudes toward social protection policies.

**KEYWORDS**

attributions for poverty, justice principles, public policy attitudes, social justice, support for redistribution

In Western societies, there is a wide debate about what governments should do to help the most disadvantaged people or to reduce the wide economic inequality that exists in these societies. Citizens hold different views on the role the state should play in reducing inequality and poverty (Rudolph & Evans, 2005; Steele & Breznau, 2019). One key factor underlaying different positions on this issue is the conception of justice that people have, specifically the conception of distributive justice. Theories of distributive justice specify the conditions under which particular forms of the distribution of resources in society are perceived to be "just" or "fair" (Cook & Hegtvedt, 1983; Deutsch, 1975). In the present research, we focus on how these principles of social or distributive justice influence attitudes toward public policies for coping with inequality and distributing resources among citizens. In modern welfare states these public policies are among the most powerful instruments for distributing resources. We adopt a social psychological approach that is focused on subjective aspects, that is, the way individuals think and feel about justice (Gollwitzer & van Prooijen, 2016).

## PRINCIPLES OF DISTRIBUTIVE JUSTICE

Generally, there is a consensus in social psychological literature on identifying three principles of justice, following the classification proposed by Deutsch (1975): equality, need, and equity.

While these principles can be extended to diverse contexts of sharing or exchange (e.g., a school classroom), our focus remains on their application to the distribution of resources within a particular society. In the case of resources' distribution among the people who belong to the same country or society, equality refers to the even redistribution of resources equally among citizens (i.e., each citizen receives the same amount of resources). The principle of need refers to providing resources only to those who do not meet the minimum standard of subsistence, or whoever needs them most. Equity involves distributing resources so that those who contribute more receive more (Hülle et al., 2018). Other principles have been proposed, such as entitlement, which refers to distribution of resources based on ascriptive, or status, characteristics acquired in the past; for instance it will be considered fair if individuals from affluent or esteemed families might possess advantages stemming from their background (Konow, 2003). Although entitlement has recently been criticized for the difficulties in distinguishing it from other principles at the empirical level (Van Hootegem et al., 2021), we have decided to include it. Despite its potential relationship to the concept of equity, it possesses significant nuances at a theoretical level, focusing on privileges or status acquired in the past. We cannot dismiss the possibility that this is an important factor in explaining distinctive preferences toward social protection policies.

We can distinguish two broad approaches regarding how distributive justice principles are related with welfare protection policies. First, some researchers have studied public preferences for distributive principles at an abstract level, analyzing individuals' attitudes toward the principles of justice in general, that is, without applying these principles to any particular policy (e.g., unemployment benefits) or group (Arts & Gelissen, 2001; d'Anjou et al., 1995; Marshall et al., 1999). Second, another line of research has focused on how preferences for the principles of justice vary depending on contextual factors. For instance, some principles, such as equity, are considered appropriate in the world of work, while others, such as equality, are considered more appropriate in interpersonal or family relationships (Scott & Bornstein, 2009). In the specific case of social protection policies, preferred principles of justice vary according to the welfare program referred to, as well as the target of these programs (Reeskens & Van Oorschot, 2013; Van Hootegem et al., 2020). Our research aligns with the first approach, as the measure we employ centers around attitudes toward abstract principles of resource allocation. This measure is not tethered to any particular context but rather captures individuals' overarching beliefs about how resources should be distributed in a broader sense.

A limitation of studies conducted within these two approaches, mostly based on international databases, is their reliance on limited justice principle measures. For example, Reeskens and Van Oorschot (2013), using data from the 2008 European Social Survey wave, operationalized preferences for each justice principle based on three potential responses to whether higher earners should receive higher (unemployment/pension) benefits. The three potential answers, and the justice principle they represented, were: Higher earners should receive more (equity); high and low earners should receive the same amount (equality); and lower earners should receive more (need). While this approach provides valuable insights, it does not fully capture the diversity and coexistence of preferences for justice criteria and how they are applied.

## ATTRIBUTIONS FOR POVERTY

The issue of whether we attribute responsibility for their situation to the people with less resources is related with the principles of distributive justice and with a significant range of outcomes. Two broad types of causal explanations of poverty, based on the locus of control of the person in poverty (i.e., whether the causes of the situation lie within or outside individuals), can be distinguished: People may attribute the responsibility for their poverty to the person in that situation—individualistic attributions—or to wider social causes—structural attributions (Feather, 1974; Furnham, 1982; Kluegel & Smith, 2017). We have chosen to primarily focus on the distinction between individualistic and structural attributions, which has been explored in the context of recent social psychology research (e.g., Piff et al., 2020; Wiwad et al., 2021), not including other dimensions such as cultural or fatalistic attributions. Indeed, there are various ways of categorizing attributions. For instance, research conducted from a more sociological perspective has adopted a fourfold division, distinguishing between individual blame, individual fate, social blame, or social fate (Marquis & Rosset, 2021; Van Oorschot & Halman, 2000). While acknowledging the relevance of these additional dimensions, research has reported mixed findings for these dimensions (Cozzarelli et al., 2001; Furnham, 1982). For instance, recent studies conducted in Spain have encountered challenges in establishing robust empirical evidence for cultural and fatalistic attributions (Sainz et al., 2020, 2023).

## ATTITUDES TOWARD SOCIAL PROTECTION POLICIES AND RESOURCE REDISTRIBUTION

Attitudes toward social protection policies and welfare programs hold significant relevance in our social context, especially during times of economic and social hardship (Meuleman et al., 2020). Politicians and the public policies they implement reflect public policy preferences (Brooks & Manza, 2007), so it is essential to study the factors that influence these preferences, as social justice orientations and attributions for poverty in our research. Although it is true that policies themselves can also influence citizen attitudes (e.g., Campbell, 2012), and that this relationship may be moderated by other variables—such as the federal or centralist state's (e.g., Wlezien & Soroka, 2012)—we have chosen to focus on only one of these possible relationships, although we recognize the importance of the others.

In our case, we will focus on general attitudes toward assistance with a focus on people experiencing poverty without zooming on any specific policy (in our Studies 1 and 3). These general attitudes toward social protection policies are closely related to support for redistribution, another concept that refers to those beliefs about the active role and responsibility of the state in the allocation of resources in a nation or state to reduce inequality. This variable,

attitudes toward redistribution, has been used extensively both in comparative welfare state research (Kulin & Svallfors, 2013) and in the study of individual attitudes toward social protection (Dawtry et al., 2015) and will be analyzed in Study 2.

## DISTRIBUTIVE JUSTICE PRINCIPLES, ATTRIBUTIONS FOR POVERTY, AND ATTITUDES TOWARD SOCIAL PROTECTION POLICIES

Principles of justice can be directly related to attitudes toward social protection policies. Reeskens and Van Oorschot (2013) showed that European citizens vary in their preference for different principles of justice depending on the welfare program target and the nature of target's need: Equality was preferred for less predictable and controllable social risks (which correspond to an external locus of control, analogous to structural attributions), like unemployment; equity was preferred for predictable social risks (an internal locus of control, resembling individualistic attributions), like pension schemes. Recently, Van Hootegem et al. (2020) investigated distributive justice preferences (in terms of equality, need, and equity) in several welfare state domains (health care, pensions, and unemployment benefits), differentiating them by their varying degrees of predictability, locus of control (e.g., whether the causes of the situation lie within or outside individuals), and prevalence. Their results indicated that equality was the most popular principle in all welfare domains and that, after this, citizens prefer the equity principle for pensions and the need principle for unemployment benefits. Andress and Heien (2001) showed that need positively predicted preferences for broader government intervention (including here the responsibility to reduce income differences) across East and West Germany, Norway, and the United States. Similarly, Lewin-Epstein et al. (2003) found that equality and need predicted support for redistribution in Israel. While these approaches are relevant and fruitful, it must be pointed out that researchers establish the locus of control of the different social risks (e.g., unemployment or becoming a pensioner) without directly querying participants. This may not capture individual variability in causal inferences about the nature of these different situations. For instance, in the context of unemployment, people vary in the degree to which they support structural and individualistic explanations (e.g., Furnham & Hesketh, 1987). That is, some people may consider unemployment to be the person's own fault, while others may consider it due to factors beyond the person's control.

Justice orientations also predict attributions for poverty (Habibov et al., 2017; Lepianka et al., 2010). For example, Lepianka et al. (2010) found that those who adhered more strongly to the norms of need and equality were more likely to attribute poverty to societal injustice rather than fatalistic factors. Beliefs regarding the distribution of resources in a given situation are included as part of the normative values individuals employ to comprehend the world around them. Consequently, if an individual holds egalitarian views, advocating for the equal distribution of resources in society, it is probable that such beliefs will encourage a heightened focus on the structural dimensions of poverty.

Finally, explanations about the nature of poverty impact several variables related to attitudes toward social protection, like inclination to accept social spending (Appelbaum, 2001), support for progressive welfare programs (Bullock et al., 2003), support for greater efforts to help the poor (Williamson, 1974), the belief that too much money is spent on social programs (Alston & Dean, 1972), or the support for the welfare state (Marquis & Rosset, 2021). As previously stated, broadly speaking, individuals who recognize structural attributions are inclined to exhibit more favorable attitudes toward social protection and public expenditure on programs aimed at supporting the economically disadvantaged. Therefore, from a theoretical standpoint, it is plausible to anticipate that poverty attributions could potentially act

as mediators in the relationship between justice orientations and attitudes toward social protection and redistribution. In essence, the way individuals attribute the causes of poverty may play a pivotal role in linking their broader justice principles to their specific stances on social welfare and resource allocation.

## THE PRESENT RESEARCH

Our aim of this research is twofold. First, we seek to extend and improve previous findings on the relationship between different orientations toward principles of justice and attitudes toward redistribution and social protection policies. In this sense, our research represents an advance compared to the previous one because, first, in one of our studies we will analyze representative data from numerous countries and, second, because we have tried to improve the way in which it measured both the principles of justice as well as the attitudes toward social protection policies. For instance, the research of Andress and Heien (2001) and Lewin-Epstein et al. (2003), in which they analyzed the relationship between justice principles and social protection policies, did not include all the principles of justice identified in the literature and were restricted to one or a few countries. In addition, some justice principles were measured based on how important certain factors should be in determining a wage. This approach is beneficial and relevant, but it might not comprehensively capture the normative inclinations toward how resources should be allocated across an entire society. Our predictions concerning the relationship between principles of justice and attitudes toward social protection policies are that equality and need would be positively related with a positive attitude toward social protection policies and resources distribution, whereas equity and entitlement would be negatively related.

One of the primary contributions of our research lies in relating social justice orientations and attitudes toward redistribution through attributions for poverty. For instance, individuals who believe that a society's resources should be allocated based on individuals' merits (rather than their needs) would be more inclined to assign blame to those in need of assistance for their circumstances. As a result, they may be less supportive of public policies that advocate for the well-being of such individuals. By illuminating this connection between justice principles, attributions, and attitudes toward redistribution, our research offers valuable insights into the underlying mechanisms influencing public policy attitudes and societal perspectives on social protection. We included several relevant variables, namely socioeconomic status, gender, and political ideology, as covariates in our analyses. The purpose of incorporating these covariates was to discern the unique effects contributed by the variables under study in this article—poverty attributions, social justice orientations, and attitudes toward social protection. Previous research indicates that middle-class individuals, conservatives, and men tend to make more individualistic attributions (Bullock, 1999; Weiner et al., 2011). Similarly, concerning attitudes toward social protection, existing studies have observed a similar pattern where women, particularly in contexts of low welfare provision (Shorrocks & Grasso, 2020), and left-wing individuals (Jæger, 2008, but also see Armingeon & Weisstanner, 2022) exhibit more positive attitudes toward social protection policies. Finally, it's worth noting that gender, political orientation, and socioeconomic status have previously been found to be associated with attitudes toward social justice principles (Adriaans & Fourré, 2022; Hülle et al., 2018; Reeskens & Van Oorschot, 2013).

All materials, R codes for all the studies as well as measures, databases, and preregistration forms for Studies 1 and 3 can be found at https://osf.io/xe29n/?view_only=628c513813e345fca52b174d004703c9.

# STUDY 1

In its original design, Study 1 aimed to test different hypotheses that were not supported by the data. These preregistered hypotheses were that participants who are presented with someone in poverty due to the COVID-19 crisis would show more positive attitudes toward social protection policies in comparison with those who are presented with someone who has been in poverty all their life, and that attitudes toward equity, entitlement, equality, and need as social justice principles would moderate the relation between the perceived group and attitudes toward social protection policies. No hypothesis was supported (see the online supporting information for details about our rationale, experimental manipulation, and results).

However, this data allowed us to check if there was some relationship between the four principles of justice and support for social protection policies, although these analyses were not preregistered.

## Method

### Participants

A total of 391 adults completed our online survey. The participants were recruited from undergraduate students at a university in southern Spain among their relatives, friends, and acquaintances, and they completed an online survey. To incentivize participation, the recruiting students received a small amount of extra credit as compensation. The data collection took place in October of 2020. Sixty-six participants were excluded from the analyses because they met one of the preregistered exclusion criteria (e.g., being under 18 years old). The final dataset comprised of 325 observations ($M_{age} = 28.09$, $SD = 13.15$; 55.69% women); descriptive statistics about the sample are provided in Table S1 in the online supporting information.

### Measures

*Attitudes toward principles of social justice*

We measured this variable using the Basic Social Justice Orientations scale (Hülle et al., 2018). This scale is composed of 12 items with a 1 (*Totally disagree*) to 5 (*Totally agree*) Likert response format, and it was adapted into Spanish through a back-translation process. This scale assesses four social justice principles: equality (the average inter-item correlation = .26) with three items (e.g., "It is just if income and wealth are equally distributed among the members of our society"); need (average inter-item correlation = .29) with three items (e.g., "A society is just if it takes care of those who are poor and needy"); equity (average inter-item correlation = .23) with three items (e.g., "It is just if hard working people earn more than others"); and entitlement ($r = .44$, $p < .001$) with two items (e.g., "It is fair if people at a higher level of society have better living conditions than those on the lower level"). Originally the entitlement construct was measured with three items, but as will be explained below, we decided to retain only two items for this variable.

*Attitudes toward social protection policies ($\alpha = .86$)*

We measured this variable with 20 statements related with social protection policies, for example, "Many people on welfare benefits spend their money on alcohol" (reversed). Participants indicated their degree of agreement in a 1 (*Totally disagree*) to 5 (*Totally agree*) Likert scale. The scale was inspired by Furnham (1985), changing the words *social security* into social policies; we added some items for the Spanish context. We conducted a confirmatory factor analysis on the items, and these showed satisfactory fit indicators

**TABLE 1** Means, standard deviations, and correlations between variables in Study 1.

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Equality | 3.19 (.94) | | | | | | | | |
| 2. Need | .39*** | 4.43 (.65) | | | | | | | |
| 3. Equity | −.09 | .04 | 3.45 (.79) | | | | | | |
| 4. Entitlement | −.34*** | −.23*** | .22*** | 1.57 (.76) | | | | | |
| 5. Attitudes toward social protection policies | .43*** | .32*** | −.34*** | −.41*** | 3.50 (.60) | | | | |
| 6. Political ideology | −.44*** | −.24*** | .26*** | .39*** | −.60*** | 4.86 (1.97) | | | |
| 7. Age | −.03 | −.08 | −.04 | −.09 | −.01 | .09 | 28.09 (13.15) | | |
| 8. Objective SES | −.05 | .08 | −.05 | −.06 | .24*** | −.1 | .18** | 0 (1.56) | |
| 9. Subjective SES | −.03 | .02 | .04 | −.04 | .07 | .04 | .13* | .48*** | 5.73 (1.36) |

*Note*: Pearson correlation.
***$p < .001$; **$p < .01$; *$p < .05$.

for a one-factor solution (see the online supporting information). Higher scores indicated more favorable attitudes toward social protection policies and their recipients. Scores were standardized and summed. Descriptive statistics and correlations between variables can be found in Table 1.

We also measured political ideology, subjective and objective socioeconomic status, and gender (see the online supporting information for details about these measures).

## Results

### Preliminary analysis

After we conducted and analyzed the studies presented in this article, we became aware of some relevant critiques and nuances of the Basic Social Justice Orientations scale (van Hootegem et al., 2021). We found that their claims about the low internal consistency of the scale and both conceptual and operational ambiguity should be considered when drawing conclusions on the results obtained with this instrument. To address this issue, we pooled the samples from studies 1 and 3 and conducted a confirmatory factor analysis on the pooled database. As we employed two distinct samples that were combined for our analyses, we took measures to examine the multivariate normality of the data. Additionally, to ensure the accuracy and reliability of our findings, we utilized robust estimators, which are designed to provide unbiased results even in the presence of nonnormal data distributions or potential outliers. A description of the process, fit statistics, and methodological and theoretical decisions can be found in the online supporting information; the dataset and R syntax used in this analysis can be found at the OSF page provided above. We decided to remove one item of the entitlement dimension ("It is just if people who have achieved good reputations and wealth profit from this later in life") because of the low load on the entitlement factor and the model's poor fit. We conducted again all analyses planned. Both internal consistency statistics for justice principles and analyses reported in this article are based on this conceptualization of the scale.

### Exploratory analyses

We fitted two multiple regression models exploring the relationship between the four principles of justice and support for social protection policies. We adjusted the *p* value for multiple testing

**TABLE 2** Exploratory regression models in Study 1 on attitudes toward social protection policies.

| | Model 1. Only covariates | | | | | Model 2. All variables | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *B* | CI | *SE B* | *β* | *p* | *B* | CI | *SE B* | *β* | *p* |
| (Intercept) | 4.18 | 3.87 to 4.48 | .14 | 0 | <.001 | 3.76 | 3.26 to 4.27 | .26 | 0 | <.001 |
| Political ideology | −.17 | −.20 to −.15 | .01 | −.57 | <.001 | −.12 | −.14 to −.09 | .01 | −.37 | <.001 |
| Objective status | .08 | .04 to .12 | .02 | .21 | <.001 | .08 | .04 to .11 | .02 | .19 | <.001 |
| Subjective status | −.01 | −.05 to .03 | .02 | −.02 | .697 | −.01 | −.05 to .03 | .02 | −.01 | .789 |
| Gender[a] | .14 | .04 to .24 | .05 | .12 | .018 | .06 | −.04 to .16 | .05 | .05 | .426 |
| Equality | | | | | | .10 | .05 to .17 | .03 | .17 | .006 |
| Need | | | | | | .12 | .04 to .20 | .04 | .13 | .013 |
| Equity | | | | | | −.14 | −.21 to .08 | .03 | −.19 | <.001 |
| Entitlement | | | | | | −.09 | −.17 to .03 | .05 | −.13 | .033 |
| Observations | 319 | | | | | 319 | | | | |
| $R^2/R^2$ adjusted | .403/.396 | | | | | .501/.488 | | | | |
| $\Delta R^2$ | | | | | | .098*** | | | | |

[a]Refence category for gender is "Man."
***$p < .001$.

using the Holm's method (Holm, 1979). In the first model, we included gender, political ideology, and objective and subjective socioeconomic status in order to assess the model improvement by incorporating the social justice principles in our second model. Next, we estimated a model also including the four social justice principles. Our dependent variable was attitudes toward social protection policies in both models. As shown in Table 2, an increase in the endorsement of equality and need as principles of social justice was related to more positive attitudes toward social protection policies. Conversely, an increase in the endorsement of equity and entitlement as social justice principles was associated with more negative attitudes toward social protection policies. As part of our exclusion criteria, we used an attention check that was originally intended for an experimental manipulation. To ensure the robustness of our findings and to verify if there were any effects of the manipulation on the results presented here, we performed additional analyses (see the code for Study 1 in the OSF page provided above). These included participants who failed the manipulation check, as well as incorporating the experimental manipulation as a predictor in the models. The results from these supplementary analyses were similar to those presented here.

## Discussion

Our non-preregistered analyses yielded interesting results. We found that endorsing ideas such as that a society is fair when goods and desserts are equally distributed among members of this society or when the society takes care of those in need predicted more favorable attitudes toward social protection policies. Conversely, agreeing with ideas such as it is just that hard-working people earn more than others, or that it is just that people with higher resources enjoy better living conditions predicted more negative attitudes toward social protection policies.

# STUDY 2

In Study 2, we aimed to confirm the exploratory results previously found in Study 1 with a high-quality dataset including representative samples from 29 European countries and using a

different, although related, dependent measure: attitudes toward redistribution. This concept is related to social protection policies, but is more specific, focused on those beliefs about the active role and responsibility of the state in the allocation of resources in a nation or state to reduce inequality. The data is publicly available at the European Social Survey website (ESS, 2018).

## Hypotheses

Based on results of exploratory analyses of Study 1, we hypothesized that on one hand, endorsing equality (H1a) and need (H1b) as social justice principles would positively predict attitudes toward redistribution. On the other hand, we expected that endorsing equity (H1c) and entitlement (H1d) as social justice principles would negatively predict attitudes toward redistribution.

## Method

### Participants

We used data from the European Social Survey Round 9 (ESS, 2018) released in June 2020. The survey collected data from 49,519 participants (53.51% women, $M_{age} = 51.06$, $SD = 18.65$) in 29 countries.

### Measures

*Attitudes toward social justice principles*

The distributive principles were measured in the survey using a single item for each one. The heading of the question was as follows: "There are many different views as to what makes a society fair or unfair. How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?" For equality, the item was "A society is fair when income and wealth are equally distributed among all people." The item to capture attitudes toward the need principle was "A society is fair when it takes care of those who are poor and in need, regardless of what they give back." The attitude toward equity as social justice principle was measured with the following item: "A society is fair when hard-working people earn more than others." The last item, "A society is fair when people from families with high social status enjoy privileges," measured attitudes toward entitlement as a principle of social justice. These four items used a Likert scale with a range of 1 (*Agree strongly*) to 5 (*Disagree strongly*). Participants indicated the degree of agreement with each one. We reversed these items so that higher scores mean a higher degree of agreement in our analyses. This measure has been assessed before and showed acceptable levels of measurement quality, expect in Bulgaria (Adriaans & Fourré, 2022).

*Support for redistribution*

This variable was measured with the item: "The government should take measures to reduce differences in income levels." Participants indicated their degree of agreement using a Likert scale with a range of 1 (*Agree strongly*) to 5 (*Disagree strongly*). As with the previous measure, we reversed the scores so that higher ones mean a higher degree of agreement in our analyses.

We also included political ideology, income, educational level, country's Gini index, poverty rate, and gross domestic product per capita (see the online supporting information for details on how these variables were measured).

### Analytical approach

We fitted four multilevel models using the lmer4 package (Bates et al., 2015) in the R program (R version 4.1.2; R Core Team, 2020). This involved fitting four distinct models that progressively integrated individual and country-level variables. The intercept-only model revealed 8% of variance attributed to country-level differences in support for redistribution. To counter potential bias, we continued with multilevel analysis. Model 1 incorporated individual-level control variables, while Model 2 integrated predictor variables, providing insights into the relationship. Model 3 extended this by considering both individual and country-level factors. Online supporting information contain comprehensive details about our analytical approach, process, and these models, including statistical indices that affirm the adequate fit of our approach to the data (Table 3).

## Results

As shown in Table 3, including all control variables at individual and country level, attitudes toward equality (H1a) and need (H1b) as social justice principles positively predicted participants' support for redistribution across models. Attitudes toward equity (H1c) as social justice principle did not significantly predict support for redistribution. As predicted, attitudes toward entitlement (H1d) as principle of social justice negatively predicted the degree of agreement with government intervention to reduce income disparities in the country. Individual variables included as controls also significantly predicted support for redistribution: Political ideology as well as income and educational level negatively predicted support for redistribution, that is, the more right-wing a person is and the more income and education they have, the less in favor they are of resource redistribution. Compared to men, women displayed higher levels of support for income redistribution through government action. Country-level variables included as controls did not show a significant predictive role in our models. In addition, we tested these same models by holding the number of observations across them constant. The results were similar.

## Discussion

Results of this study suggest that attitudes toward social justice principles may play an important role in one important construct related to public resource governance: the support for income redistribution through government action. However, several limitations in the present study invite us to be cautious in our interpretations. All the constructs were assessed using one-item only measures, which are far from being perfect in most cases. Further, the validity of these measures for assessing attitudes toward social justice principles has recently been questioned (Van Hootegem et al., 2021). As these authors have argued, inter alia, the conceptualization of the need principle in the ESS survey may reflect only one specific aspect of these principles. In particular, they suggested that it provides a very generous understanding of the need principle, conceptually close to the equality one. In the same vein, Adriaans and Fourré (2022) warned about the possible limitations of need and equity items as independent variables in empirical models because of the low within and between-country variation in response to these items.

# STUDY 3

Given our previous results, Study 3 was designed to replicate them and explore the relationship between attitudes toward social justice principles and attitudes toward social protection

**TABLE 3** Estimated multilevel models in Study 2.

| | Model. Intercept only | | | | Model 1. Individual-level controls | | | | Model 2. All individual-level variables | | | | Model 3. Individual- and country-level variables | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Predictors** | ***B*** | ***SE*** | **CI** | ***p*** | ***B*** | ***SE*** | **CI** | ***p*** | ***B*** | ***SE*** | **CI** | ***p*** | ***B*** | ***SE*** | **CI** | ***p*** |
| (Intercept) | .01 | .05 | −.09 to .11 | .826 | −.02 | .05 | −.12 to .08 | .659 | −.02 | .05 | −.12 to .08 | .748 | 0 | .04 | −.08 to .09 | .912 |
| Gender[a] | | | | | .09 | .01 | .07 to .11 | <.001 | .08 | .01 | .06 to .10 | <.001 | .08 | .01 | .06 to .10 | <.001 |
| Income | | | | | −.04 | 0 | −.05 to −.04 | <.001 | −.03 | 0 | −.03 to −.02 | <.001 | −.03 | 0 | −.03 to −.02 | <.001 |
| Education | | | | | −.03 | 0 | −.04 to −.02 | <.001 | −.02 | 0 | −.02 to −.01 | <.001 | −.02 | 0 | −.02 to −.01 | <.001 |
| Ideology | | | | | −.08 | 0 | −.09 to −.08 | <.001 | −.06 | 0 | −.06 to −.06 | <.001 | −.06 | 0 | −.06 to −.05 | <.001 |
| Equality | | | | | | | | | .26 | 0 | .25 to .27 | <.001 | .25 | 0 | .24 to .26 | <.001 |
| Equity | | | | | | | | | 0 | .01 | −.02 to .01 | .48 | 0 | .01 | −.01 to .02 | .554 |
| Need | | | | | | | | | .08 | .01 | .07 to .09 | <.001 | .08 | .01 | .07 to .09 | <.001 |
| Entitlement | | | | | | | | | −.1 | 0 | −.11 to −.09 | <.001 | −.1 | 0 | −.11 to −.09 | <.001 |
| Gini index | | | | | | | | | | | | | 0 | .02 | −.04 to .04 | .833 |
| Poverty rate | | | | | | | | | | | | | .01 | .02 | −.02 to .05 | .493 |
| GDP | | | | | | | | | | | | | 0 | 0 | −.00 to .00 | .191 |
| *Random effects* | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| $\sigma^2$ | .89 | | | | .85 | | | | .75 | | | | .75 | | | |
| $\tau_{00}$ | $.07_{country}$ | | | | $.08_{country}$ | | | | $.07_{country}$ | | | | $.04_{country}$ | | | |
| ICC | .08 | | | | .08 | | | | .09 | | | | .06 | | | |
| *N* | $29_{country}$ | | | | $29_{country}$ | | | | $29_{country}$ | | | | $27_{country}$ | | | |
| Observations | 48,586 | | | | 34,778 | | | | 33,758 | | | | 31,771 | | | |
| Marginal $R^2$/ Conditional $R^2$ | .000/.077 | | | | .063/.140 | | | | .159/.235 | | | | .172/.219 | | | |
| Deviance | 132,529.973 | | | | 93,143.935 | | | | 86,428.382 | | | | 81,043.595 | | | |
| AIC | 13,254.087 | | | | 932.332 | | | | 86,527.801 | | | | 81,187.161 | | | |
| log-Likelihood | −66,267.044 | | | | −46,593.166 | | | | −43,252.901 | | | | −40,579.58 | | | |

*Note*: Models fitted using maximum likelihood (ML).

[a]Refence category for gender is "Man."

policies including attributions for poverty as a mediator variable. Considering that the results obtained in the preceding studies were exploratory (in Study 1) and not preregistered (in Study 2), in Study 3, we seek to replicate these findings by preregistering the hypotheses and conducting new data collection to subject them to rigorous examination. This approach aligns with recommendations from some authors concerning preregistrations (e.g., Van't Veer & Giner-Sorolla, 2016).

## Preregistered hypotheses

We hypothesized that attitudes toward social protection policies would be positively predicted by attitudes toward equality (H1a) and need (H1b) and negatively predicted by attitudes toward equity (H1c) and entitlement (H1d) as social justice principles. Regarding attributions for poverty, we expected that individualistic attributions would negatively predict attitudes toward social protection policies (H2a) and that structural attributions would positively predict the latter (H2b).

Exploratorily, we propose that scores in individualistic poverty attributions will negatively correlate with attitudes toward equality and need as social justice principles and positively with attitudes toward equity and entitlement as social justice principles. In the case of structural attributions, we expect to find the reverse pattern: Scores in these attributions will positively correlate with attitudes toward equality and need as social justice principles and negatively with attitudes toward equity and entitlement as social justice principles. We will also explore whether attributions for poverty will mediate the relation between social justice orientations and attitudes toward social protection policies.[1]

## Method

### Participants

Our online survey yielded 566 responses from undergraduate students at a university in the south of Spain. These participants willingly volunteered to take part in the study and were offered a chance to enter a prize draw for €50. Data collection occurred in April 2021, and the survey was distributed through the university's mailing list. Answers from 72 participants were removed because they met our exclusion criteria (e.g., taking more than 1 hour to complete the questionnaire). After this, 494 responses remained ($M_{age} = 24.53$, $SD = 7.25$; 70.45% women).

### Measures

We measured attitudes toward social protection policies ($\alpha = .90$) with the same scale as in Study 1. We also used the Basic Social Justice Orientations scale (Hülle et al., 2018) to assess attitudes toward equality (average inter-item correlation = .45), need (average inter-item correlation = .35), equity (average inter-item correlation = .40), and entitlement ($r = .62$, $p < .001$). Political ideology and subjective SES were also measured as in Study 1. To measure objective

[1]It is important to acknowledge that there are some manual errors in the wording of the hypotheses as formulated in the preregistration process. Specifically, in Hypothesis 2b, it is stated that structural attributions will negatively predict attitudes toward social protection. However, from a theoretical standpoint, it is logically expected that they would positively predict the latter. Secondly, in the hypotheses concerning mediations, the mediator variable appears mistakenly as the independent variable, and vice versa. While these were originally intended as exploratory hypotheses, we deem it crucial to address and highlight these discrepancies.

SES, in addition to household income and educational level, we included parents' educational level, considering that most of our participants would be university students. We standardized and summed these scores to obtain a general measure of objective SES.

*Attributions for poverty*

We adapted to Spain 19 items taken from Furnham (1982) and Weiner et al. (2011) to measure individualistic and structural attributions for poverty. The format of response was from 1 (*Totally disagree*) to 5 (*Totally agree*). We measured individualistic attributions ($\alpha = .90$) with nine items (e.g., "Lack of effort") and structural attributions ($\alpha = .77$) with 10 items (e.g., "Lack of jobs to access"). We also conducted a confirmatory factor analysis that showed acceptable fit indicators for a two-factor solution (see the online supporting information). As might be expected, individualistic attributions were positively related to political ideology and negatively related to attitudes toward social protection, while structural attributions were positively related to attitudes toward social protection and negatively related to ideology. Table 4 shows the descriptive statistics and correlations between variables in this study.

## Results

### Preregistered hypotheses

To test the first set of hypotheses (1a, 1b, 1c, and 1d), we fitted two multiple regression models using ordinary least squares (OLS), including attitudes toward social protection policies as dependent variables; as in Study 1, we adjusted the $p$ value for multiple testing. In the first model, we included control variables (objective and subjective SES, political ideology). In the second model, we included the four justice principles. This model explained a significant proportion of the variance, $R^2 = .59$, $F(8, 481) = 86.58$, $p < .001$, adjusted $R^2 = .58$. We also checked for multiple regression assumptions (see the online supporting information). As shown in Table 5, the results confirmed and replicated our findings from Studies 1 and 2. Attitudes toward equality and need as social justice principles positively predicted attitudes toward social protection policies; attitudes toward equity and entitlement as social justice principles were negatively associated with these attitudes.

We followed the same procedure to test Hypothesis 2a, that individualistic attributions would negatively predict attitudes toward social protection policies, and Hypothesis 2b, that structural attributions would positively predict the latter. To achieve these goals, we fitted two regression models using OLS (see Table 6); assumptions checking can be found in the online supporting information. The first model included the covariates. As shown in Table 6, objective SES positively predicted attitudes toward social protection policies, whereas subjective SES negatively predicted political ideology (higher scores reflecting right-win orientation). The second model, including all variables, explained a significant proportion of the variance, $R^2 = .65$, $F(6, 483) = 148.44$, $p < .001$, adjusted $R^2 = .64$. As expected, higher scores in individualistic attributions predicted negative attitudes toward social protection policies, while higher scores in structural attributions predicted positive attitudes toward social protection policies, confirming Hypothesis 2a and Hypothesis 2b

### Exploratory hypotheses

As we hypothesized, exploratorily, individualistic attributions for poverty correlated negatively with equality and need as justice principles but correlated positively with equity and entitlement as justice principles (see Table 4). Structural attributions, on the other hand, were

**TABLE 4** Mean, standard deviation, and correlations between variables in Study 3.

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Individualistic attributions | 2.81 (.87) | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2. Structural attributions | −.11* | 3.82 (.58) | | | | | | | | | |
| 3. Equality | −.38*** | .33*** | 3.55 (1.00) | | | | | | | | |
| 4. Need | −.22*** | .38*** | .43*** | 4.34 (.64) | | | | | | | |
| 5. Equity | .52*** | −.04 | −.21*** | −.02 | 3.49 (.88) | | | | | | |
| 6. Entitlement | .41*** | −.35*** | −.37*** | −.46*** | .20*** | 1.70 (.90) | | | | | |
| 7. Attitudes toward social protection | −.73*** | .29*** | .49*** | .49*** | −.47*** | −.46*** | 3.48 (.66) | | | | |
| 8. Political ideology | .51*** | −.19*** | −.35*** | −.34*** | .36*** | .43*** | −.59*** | 4.69 (1.96) | | | |
| 9. Age | −.01 | −.05 | .11* | .07 | −.05 | −.12** | .04 | −.01 | 24.53 (7.25) | | |
| 10. Objective SES | −.01 | −.15*** | −.10* | .04 | .02 | .15** | .03 | .09* | .08 | 0 (2.61) | |
| 11. Subjective SES | .18*** | −.15** | −.12** | −.05 | .18*** | .12** | −.19*** | .26*** | 0 | .41*** | 5.65 (1.40) |

*Note*: Pearson correlation.

***$p < .001$; **$p < .01$; *$p < .05$.

**TABLE 5** Regression models with attitudes toward social justice principles as predictors and attitudes toward social protection policies as dependent variable (Study 3).

| | Model 1. Only covariates | | | | | Model 2. All variables included | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Predictors** | ***B*** | **CI** | ***SE B*** | ***β*** | ***p*** | ***B*** | **CI** | ***SE B*** | ***β*** | ***p*** |
| (Intercept) | 4.43 | 4.15 to 4.72 | .14 | 0 | <.001 | 3.30 | 2.85 to 3.75 | .17 | 0 | <.001 |
| Objective SES | .03 | .01 to .05 | .01 | .11 | .018 | .02 | .01 to .04 | .01 | .10 | .016 |
| Subjective SES | −.05 | −.08 to −.01 | .02 | −.10 | .030 | −.03 | −.06 to .00 | .02 | −.06 | .157 |
| Political ideology | −.19 | −.21 to −.16 | .01 | −.55 | <.001 | −.09 | −.12 to −.07 | .01 | −.27 | <.001 |
| Gender[a] | .11 | .01 to .22 | .05 | .08 | .039 | .03 | −.05 to .12 | .05 | .02 | .437 |
| Equality | | | | | | .11 | .07 to .16 | .02 | .17 | <.001 |
| Need | | | | | | .28 | .21 to .36 | .04 | .27 | <.001 |
| Equity | | | | | | −.23 | −.28 to −.18 | .03 | −.23 | <.001 |
| Entitlement | | | | | | −.07 | −.12 to .01 | .03 | −.09 | .040 |
| Observations | 482 | | | | | 490 | | | | |
| $R^2/R^2$ adjusted | .345/.339 | | | | | .564/.557 | | | | |
| $\Delta R^2$ | | | | | | .219*** | | | | |

[a]Refence category for gender is "Man."

***$p < .001$.

**TABLE 6** Regression models with attributions for poverty as predictors and attitudes toward social protection policies as dependent variable (Study 3).

| | Model 1. Only covariates | | | | | Model 2. All variables included | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | ***B*** | **CI** | ***SE B*** | ***β*** | ***p*** | ***B*** | **CI** | ***SE B*** | ***B*** | ***p*** |
| (Intercept) | 4.43 | 4.40 to 4.85 | .12 | 0 | <.001 | 4.41 | 4.08 to 4.75 | .18 | 0 | <.001 |
| Objective SES | .03 | .01 to .05 | .01 | .11 | .018 | .02 | .00 to .03 | .01 | .06 | .128 |
| Subjective SES | −.05 | −.09 to −.01 | .02 | −.09 | .030 | −.01 | −.04 to .02 | .02 | −.01 | .67 |
| Political ideology | −.19 | −.21 to −.16 | .01 | −.57 | <.001 | −.09 | −.11 to −.09 | .01 | −.26 | <.001 |
| Gender[a] | .11 | .01 to .22 | .05 | .08 | .039 | −.07 | −.16 to .01 | .04 | −.05 | .198 |
| Individualistic attributions | | | | | | −.44 | −.49 to −.39 | .03 | −.58 | <.001 |
| Structural attributions | | | | | | .23 | .16 to .30 | .03 | .20 | <.001 |
| Observations | 482 | | | | | 482 | | | | |
| $R^2/R^2$ adjusted | .345/.339 | | | | | .624/.619 | | | | |
| $\Delta R^2$ | | | | | | .279*** | | | | |

[a]Refence category for gender is "Man."

***$p < .001$.

related positively to equality and need, but related negatively to equity and entitlement as social justice principles.

We estimated several mediation models including the four justice principles as predictor variables, one in each model, attitudes toward social protection policies as criteria variables, and individualistic attributions and structural attributions as mediators, so we conducted eight mediation analyses (see Figures 1 and 2). Individual attributions mediated the relationship between the four social justice principles and attitudes toward social protection policies. On one hand, attitudes toward equality and need negatively predicted individualistic attributions leading to more favorable attitudes toward social protection policies; equity and entitlement positively predicted individualistic attributions, which led to a more negative attitude toward these policies. Structural attributions for poverty also mediated the relation between attitudes toward social justice principles and attitudes toward social protection policies except for attitudes toward equity, where no indirect effect was observed. However, these indirect effects were small and explained a small proportion of the total effect, used here as a measure of effect size for the mediation models.

## Discussion

Results of Study 3 replicated our previous findings. These outcomes further suggest the role of attributions in the relationship between normative orientations toward the distributive justice principle and social protection policies, linking attribution theory with theories on individual orientations toward distributive justice principles. Greater belief in equality and necessity as justice principles that should guide the allocation of resources in a society lead to less blaming of people in poverty for their situation, which in turn leads to more positive attitudes toward protection policies focused on people in poverty. The belief that resources should be allocated equitably based on individual contributions or entitlements based on ascriptive characteristics highlights individualistic causes for poverty, which leads to a more negative attitude toward social protection policies.

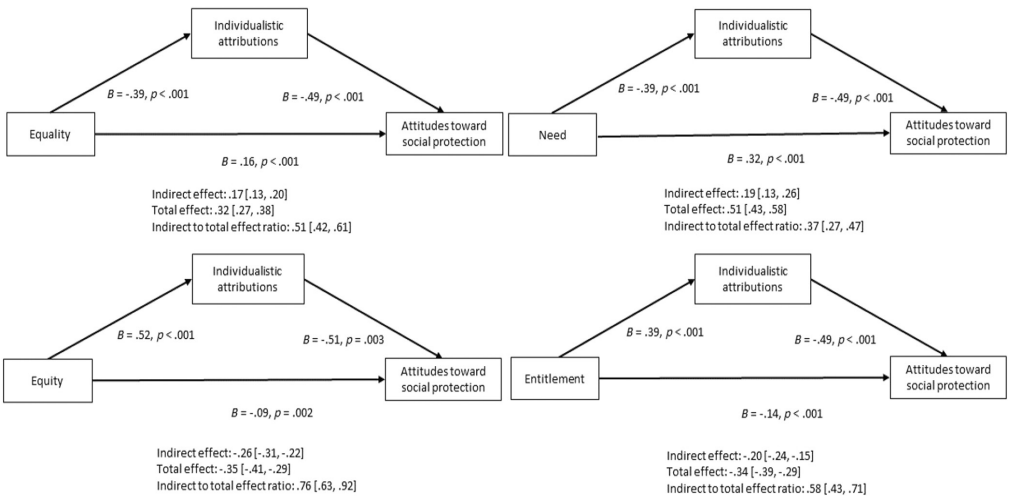


**FIGURE 1** Individualistic attributions for poverty as mediators between attitudes toward social justice principles and attitudes toward social protection policies. The numbers in brackets refer to the 95% confidence intervals.

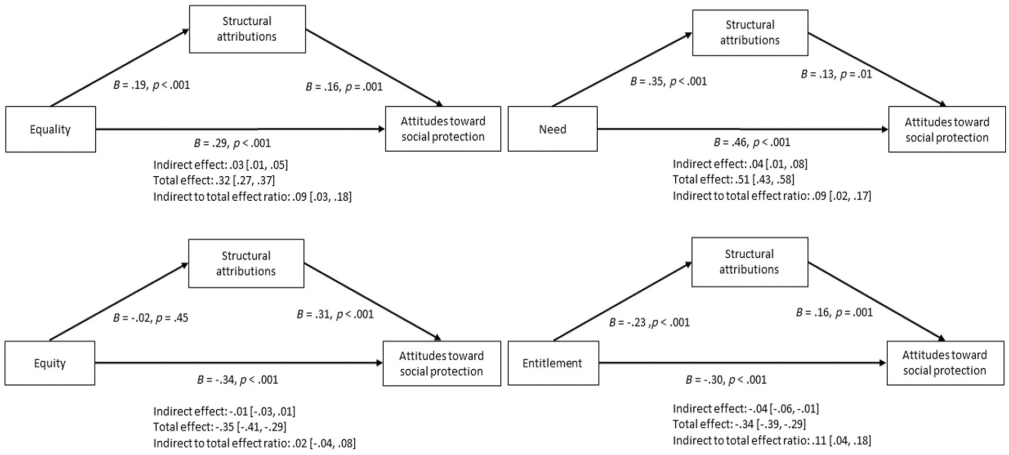


**FIGURE 2** Structural attributions for poverty as mediators between attitudes toward social justice principles and attitudes toward social protection. The numbers in brackets refer to the 95% confidence intervals.

## GENERAL DISCUSSION

Our studies provided consistent evidence demonstrating the impact of citizens' normative orientations toward general social justice principles on their attitudes toward social protection policies. People who support the notion that a society is fair when all people coexisting in it have similar living conditions and incomes (equality) also support the idea that government should intervene to reduce differences in income levels and have a more positive attitude toward social protection policies targeting people in poverty. Similarly, the trend observed for the orientation toward need as a social justice principle was consistent across all three studies: The notion that a just society takes care of those members who are in need is positively related with supporting government intervention for redistribution and with more favorable attitudes toward social protection policies focused on people in poverty.

However, endorsing equity as the logic of resources allocation leads to less support for government intervention to reduce income differences and to a more negative attitude toward social protection policies. This observation is in line with theoretical expectations, given that the conceptualization of equity aligns reasonably with meritocracy—that is, the belief that rewards are based on individual merits, whose relationship with attitudes toward redistribution has been previously documented (e.g., García-Sánchez et al., 2020). Regarding attitudes toward entitlement as a principle of social justice, we found evidence in our studies that high scores in this principle predicted lower support for reducing income differences and a more negative attitude toward social protection policies. Despite criticisms directed at this construct (Van Hootegem et al., 2021), we have found consistent results and, although in the same direction, not equivalent to those of the equity principle (e.g., the latter was not a significant predictor in Study 2). Beliefs that resources should be redistributed based on status acquired in the past do seem relevant to our case.

Our work confirms and extends the findings of other studies on the relationship between principles of justice and attitudes toward redistribution and social protection (Andress & Heien, 2001; Lewin-Epstein et al., 2003). Distinctively, we use more elaborate measures of social justice principles and of how resources should be distributed in society. This sets us apart from other important contributions that have used proxy measures such as the importance that certain criteria should have in determining wages (Lewin-Epstein et al., 2003) or have not included all justice principles (Andress & Heien, 2001). In addition, we replicate these findings using a database with representative samples from 29 European countries.

Another important contribution of this research is to extend the framework of the research conducted to date, proposing a model in which the relation between preferences for different principles of social justice and attitudes toward social protection policies is mediated by attributions for poverty. Notably, this model reveals that individualistic attributions played a more substantial role than structural attributions in elucidating the causal connection between attitudes toward social justice principles and attitudes toward social protection policies. Orientations toward equity and entitlement are positively related to explaining poverty in terms of personal responsibility for such a situation, which leads to a more negative attitude toward social protection policies. In turn, when people prefer the justice principles of equality and need, they are more likely to explain poverty in wider sociostructural terms, which results in a more positive attitude toward social protection policies. In this manner, our research bridges two previous lines of research. The first one demonstrates that normative orientations toward justice, as part of personal values, influence poverty attributions (Lepianka et al., 2010), while the second illustrates how poverty attributions influence attitudes toward social protection (Bullock et al., 2003). However, other interpretations are also possible, and future research should be conducted to address this. For instance, one might think that attributions for poverty influence social justice orientations. That is, beliefs about the root causes of poverty could exert an influence on individuals' convictions regarding the principles that should govern resource allocation within a society. Subsequently, these principles could impact attitudes toward social protection. In line with the dynamics of many intricate psychosocial phenomena, one would expect a bidirectional and not just a unidirectional relationship. While this bidirectional nature seems plausible, further exploration is necessary, and such nuanced relationships warrant investigation in future research endeavors.

We treated attitudes toward principles of justice as general normative orientations, not referring to concrete domains of welfare. Thus, our research question has a different focus from research studying how citizens prefer different social justice principles for different welfare domains (Van Hootegem et al., 2021). These approaches respond to different interests, but they could be complementary. New research could address how preferences for different distribution logics in different welfare domains, considering what will be distributed, are shaped by previous normative orientations about ideas of what is a just society, as well as the variables explaining this. On the other hand, because it is outside our main objective, we have decided not to focus on the role of political ideology in the link between social justice principles. While political ideology undoubtedly represents an essential aspect in understanding the dynamics of the variables examined in this study, we acknowledge that its comprehensive exploration lies beyond the scope of this article.

Our research has several limitations that should be noted. First, the studies presented here have a correlational nature, so our capacity to draw causal inferences is limited, and we cannot definitively exclude other explanations for the relationship found. We found consistent and significant relations that supported the predictions made in Studies 2 and 3, based on Study 1 results; we have also suggested a causal path for these relations. However, as mentioned earlier, more theoretical development and empirical research is needed. Indeed, to further elucidate and strengthen the model proposed in this study, it would be beneficial to conduct new studies that involve manipulating social justice orientations. By directly manipulating these orientations, we could determine causal relationships and gain a deeper understanding of their impact on attitudes toward social protection and public policies through attributions for poverty. Certain precautions must be acknowledged concerning the characteristics of the samples in Studies 1 and 3. For instance, in Study 3 more women than men participated. Although we have controlled for gender in our analyses, it is important to remain mindful of the disproportionality in gender representation. Furthermore, both Study 1 and Study 3 samples consist of relatively young individuals with relatively low socioeconomic status, although we found similar results in Study 2, which representative samples from many countries.

We must recognize that our study focused on two primary dimensions of poverty attributions, namely individualistic and structural attributions. We acknowledge that this approach may not capture the entirety of the complexity surrounding poverty attributions. Future research efforts could explore a more comprehensive model that includes a broader array of dimensions.

Finally, another constraint lies in the way that our main variable, attitudes toward justice principles, is operationalized. In our sample, the Basic Social Justice Orientations scale did not fully meet some of the statistical criteria, in terms of its dimensionality, that would be expected. Although they were acceptable overall, we join concerns about the need for further theoretical and empirical development on how to measure these constructs expressed by other authors (Van Hootegem et al., 2021). This does not undermine the validity of our conclusions but points to the need for further improvement in the measures used to capture attitudes and normative orientations toward principles of social justice. Here we established a framework for further research on this topic in what we hope will be a fruitful way in the future; we emphasize that, as in any other field of study, in-depth collective theoretical and methodological discussion is necessary.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Funding for open access charge: Universidad de Granada / CBUA.

## DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

Preregistration forms for Studies 1 and 3 as well as datafiles, questionnaires, and R code used in Studies 1, 2, and 3 are available at: https://osf.io/xe29n/?view_only=628c513813e345fca52b174d004703c9.

## ORCID

*Joaquín Alcañiz-Colomer* https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1706-2895
*Inmaculada Valor-Segura* https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2303-3326
*Miguel Moya* https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2421-7282

## REFERENCES

Adriaans, J., & Fourré, M. (2022). Basic social justice orientations—Measuring order-related justice in the European Social Survey Round 9. *Measurement Instruments for the Social Sciences, 4*(1), 1–13. https://doi.org/10.1186/s42409-022-00040-3

Alston, J. P., & Dean, K. I. (1972). Socioeconomic factors associated with attitudes toward welfare recipients and the causes of poverty. *Social Service Review, 46*(1), 13–23. https://doi.org/10.1086/642795

Andress, H. J., & Heien, T. (2001). Four worlds of welfare state attitudes? A comparison of Germany, Norway, and the United States. *European Sociological Review, 17*(4), 337–356. https://doi.org/10.1093/esr/17.4.337

Appelbaum, L. D. (2001). The influence of perceived deservingness on policy decisions regarding aid to the poor. *Political Psychology, 22*(3), 419–442. https://doi.org/10.1111/0162-895X.00248

Armingeon, K., & Weisstanner, D. (2022). Objective conditions count, political beliefs decide: The conditional effects of self-interest and ideology on redistribution preferences. *Political Studies, 70*(4), 887–900. https://doi.org/10.5167/uzh-204203

Arts, W., & Gelissen, J. (2001). Welfare states, solidarity and justice principles: Does the type really matter? *Acta Sociologica, 44*(4), 283–299. https://doi.org/10.1177/000169930104400401

Bates, D., Mächler, M., Bolker, B. M., & Walker, S. C. (2015). Fitting linear mixed-effects models using lme4. *Journal of Statistical Software, 67,* 1–48. https://doi.org/10.48550/arXiv.1406.5823

Brooks, C., & Manza, J. (2007). *Why welfare states persist*. Chicago University Press.

Bullock, H. E. (1999). Attributions for poverty: A comparison of middle-class and welfare recipient attitudes 2059-2082. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 29*(10), 2059–2082. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1559-1816.1999.tb02295.x

Bullock, H. E., Williams, W. R., & Limbert, W. M. (2003). Predicting support for welfare policies: The impact of attributions and beliefs about inequality. *Journal of Poverty, 7*(3), 35–56. https://doi.org/10.1300/J134v07n03_03

Campbell, A. L. (2012). Policy makes mass politics. *Annual Review of Political Science, 15,* 333–351. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-polisci-012610-135202

Cook, K. S., & Hegtvedt, K. A. (1983). Distributive justice, equity, and equality. *Annual Review of Sociology, 9*(1), 217–241.

Cozzarelli, C., Wilkinson, A. V., & Tagler, M. J. (2001). Attitudes toward the poor and attributions for poverty. *Journal of Social Issues, 57*(2), 207–227. https://doi.org/10.1111/0022-4537.00209

d'Anjou, L., Steijn, A., & Van Aarsen, D. (1995). Social position, ideology, and distributive justice. *Social Justice Research, 8*(4), 351–384. https://doi.org/10.1007/BF02334712

Dawtry, R. J., Sutton, R. M., & Sibley, C. G. (2015). Why wealthier people think people are wealthier, and why it matters: From social sampling to attitudes to redistribution. *Psychological Science, 26*(9), 1389–1400. https://doi.org/10.1177/0956797615586560

Deutsch, M. (1975). Equity, equality, and need: What determines which value will be used as the basis of distributive justice? *Journal of Social Issues, 31*(3), 137–149. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4560.1975.tb01000.x

ESS Round 9: European Social Survey. (2020). *ESS-9 2018 Documentation Report* (2nd ed.). European Social Survey Data Archive, NSD—Norwegian Centre for Research Data for ESS ERIC. https://doi.org/10.21338/NSD-ESS9-2018

Feather, N. T. (1974). Explanations of poverty in Australian and American samples: The person, society, or fate? *Australian Journal of Psychology, 26*(3), 199–216. https://doi.org/10.1080/00049537408255231

Furnham, A. (1982). Why are the poor always with us? Explanations for poverty in Britain. *British Journal of Social Psychology, 21*(4), 311–322. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.2044-8309.1982.tb00553.x

Furnham, A. (1985). The determinants of attitudes toward social security recipients. *British Journal of Social Psychology, 24*(1), 19–27. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.2044-8309.1985.tb00656.x

Furnham, A., & Hesketh, B. (1987). Explanations for unemployment in Great Britain and New Zealand. *The Journal of Social Psychology, 129*(2), 169–181. https://doi.org/10.1080/00224545.1989.9711718

García-Sánchez, E., Osborne, D., Willis, G. B., & Rodríguez-Bailón, R. (2020). Attitudes towards redistribution and the interplay between perceptions and beliefs about inequality. *British Journal of Social Psychology, 59*(1), 111–136. https://doi.org/10.1111/bjso.12326

Gollwitzer, M., & van Prooijen, J. W. (2016). Psychology of justice. In C. Sabbagh & M. Schmitt (Eds.), *Handbook of social justice theory and research* (pp. 61–82). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4939-3216-0_4

Habibov, N., Cheung, A., Auchnnikava, A., & Fan, L. (2017). Explaining support for structural attribution of poverty in post-communist countries: Multilevel analysis of repeated cross-sectional data. *Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare, 44*(3), 173–197.

Holm, S. (1979). A simple sequentially rejective multiple test procedure. *Scandinavian Journal of Statistics, 6,* 65–70. https://www.jstor.org/stable/4615733

Hülle, S., Liebig, S., & May, M. J. (2018). Measuring attitudes toward distributive justice: The basic social justice orientations scale. *Social Indicators Research, 136*(2), 663–692. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-017-1580-x

Jæger, M. M. (2008). Does left–right orientation have a causal effect on support for redistribution? Causal analysis with cross-sectional data using instrumental variables. *International Journal of Public Opinion Research, 20*(3), 363–374. https://doi.org/10.1093/ijpor/edn030

Kluegel, J. R., & Smith, E. R. (2017). *Beliefs about inequality: Americans' views of what is and what ought to be*. Routledge.

Konow, J. (2003). Which is the fairest one of all? A positive analysis of justice theories. *Journal of Economic Literature, 41*(4), 1188–1239. https://doi.org/10.1257/002205103771800013

Kulin, J., & Svallfors, S. (2013). Class, values, and attitudes towards redistribution: A European comparison. *European Sociological Review, 29*(2), 155–167. https://doi.org/10.1093/esr/jcr046

Lepianka, D., Gelissen, J., & Van Oorschot, W. (2010). Popular explanations of poverty in Europe: Effects of contextual and individual characteristics across 28 European countries. *Acta Sociologica, 53*(1), 53–72. https://doi.org/10.1177/0001699309357842

Lewin-Epstein, N., Kaplan, A., & Levanon, A. (2003). Distributive justice and attitudes toward the welfare state. *Social Justice Research, 16*(1), 1–27. https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1022909726114

Marquis, L., & Rosset, J. (2021). When explanations for poverty help explain social policy preferences: The case of european public opinion amidst the economic recession (2009–2014). *Social Justice Research, 34,* 428–459. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11211-021-00381-0

Marshall, G., Swift, A., Routh, D., & Burgoyne, C. (1999). What is and what ought to be popular beliefs about distributive justice in thirteen countries. *European Sociological Review, 15*(4), 349–367. https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordjournals.esr.a018270

Meuleman, B., van Oorschot, W., & Laenen, T. (2020). Welfare attitudes in times of crisis and austerity. In T. Laenen, B. Meuleman, & W. van Oorschot (Eds.), *Welfare state legitimacy in times of crisis and austerity*. Edward Elgar Publishing.

Piff, P. K., Wiwad, D., Robinson, A. R., Aknin, L. B., Mercier, B., & Shariff, A. (2020). Shifting attributions for poverty motivates opposition to inequality and enhances egalitarianism. *Nature Human Behaviour, 4*(5), 496–505. https://doi.org/10.1038/s41562-020-0835-8

R Core Team. (2020). *R: A language and environment for statistical computing*. R Foundation for Statistical Computing. https://www.R-project.org/

Reeskens, T., & Van Oorschot, W. (2013). Equity, equality, or need? A study of popular preferences for welfare redistribution principles across 24 European countries. *Journal of European Public Policy, 20*(8), 1174–1195. https://doi.org/10.1080/13501763.2012.752064

Rudolph, T. J., & Evans, J. (2005). Political trust, ideology, and public support for government spending. *American Journal of Political Science, 49*(3), 660–671. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-5907.2005.00148.x

Sainz, M., García-Castro, J. D., Jiménez-Moya, G., & Lobato, R. M. (2023). How do people understand the causes of poverty and wealth? A revised structural dimensionality of the attributions about poverty and wealth scales. *Journal of Poverty and Social Justice, 31*(1), 81–100. https://doi.org/10.1332/175982721X16645485533332

Sainz, M., Martínez, R., Sutton, R. M., Rodríguez-Bailón, R., & Moya, M. (2020). Less human, more to blame: Animalizing poor people increases blame and decreases support for wealth redistribution. *Group Processes and Intergroup Relations, 23*(4), 546–559. https://doi.org/10.1177/1368430219841135

Scott, J. T., & Bornstein, B. H. (2009). What's fair in foul weather and fair? Distributive justice across different allocation contexts and goods. *The Journal of Politics, 71*(3), 831–846. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022381609090744

Shorrocks, R., & Grasso, M. (2020). The attitudinal gender gap across generations: Support for redistribution and government spending in contexts of high and low welfare provision. *European Political Science Review, 12*(3), 289–306. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1755773920000120

Steele, L. G., & Breznau, N. (2019). Attitudes toward redistributive policy: An introduction. *Societies, 9*(3), 50. https://doi.org/10.3390/soc9030050

Van Hootegem, A., Abts, K., & Meuleman, B. (2020). Differentiated distributive justice preferences? Configurations of preferences for equality, equity and need in three welfare domains. *Social Justice Research, 33*(3), 257–283. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11211-020-00354-9

Van Hootegem, A., Meuleman, B., & Abts, K. (2021). Measuring public support for distributive justice principles: Assessing the measurement quality of the basic social justice orientations scale. *International Journal of Public Opinion Research, 33,* 986–997. https://doi.org/10.1093/ijpor/edaa041

Van Oorschot, W., & Halman, L. (2000). Blame or fate, individual or social? An international comparison of popular explanations of poverty. *European Societies, 2*(1), 1–28. https://doi.org/10.1080/146166900360701

Van't Veer, A. E., & Giner-Sorolla, R. (2016). Pre-registration in social psychology—A discussion and suggested template. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 67,* 2–12. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2016.03.004

Weiner, B., Osborne, D., & Rudolph, U. (2011). An attributional analysis of reactions to poverty: The political ideology of the giver and the perceived morality of the receiver. *Personality and Social Psychology Review, 15*(2), 199–213. https://doi.org/10.1177/1088868310387615

Williamson, J. B. (1974). Beliefs about the motivation of the poor and attitudes toward poverty policy. *Social Problems, 21*(5), 634–648. https://doi.org/10.2307/799639

Wiwad, D., Mercier, B., Piff, P. K., Shariff, A., & Aknin, L. B. (2021). The impact of COVID-19 on attitudes toward poverty and inequality. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 93,* 104083. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2020.104083

Wlezien, C., & Soroka, S. N. (2012). Political institutions and the opinion–policy link. *West European Politics, 35*(6), 1407–1432. https://doi.org/10.1080/01402382.2012.713752

## SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Additional supporting information can be found online in the Supporting Information section at the end of this article.

**How to cite this article:** Alcañiz-Colomer, J., Valor-Segura, I., & Moya, M. (2023). Social justice orientations: Exploring their impact on poverty attributions and support for social protection. *Political Psychology*, *00*, 1–22. https://doi.org/10.1111/pops.12937