

Article

Psychosociological Study of the Economic System Justification, Religion and Spirituality in Argentina

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Abstract

This article studies the relationship between social dominance orientation, right-wing authoritarianism, spirituality, religiosity, and economic system justification in the general population of the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires, Argentina, in a sample of 843 participants (52% men and 48% women) aged 18 to 88 years ($M_{age} = 46$; $SD = 15.78$). The study contextualizes social psychological approaches to system justification through a review of sociological literature on domination, religion, and legitimacy. According to the results, system justification is positively associated with social dominance orientation ($r = 0.40$), right-wing authoritarianism ($r = 0.56$) and dimensions of religiosity, particularly extrinsic religious orientation ($0.12 \leq r \leq 0.21$). Regression analyses indicated that social dominance orientation, right-wing authoritarianism, and extrinsic religious orientation were the variables most strongly associated with economic system justification.

Keywords: Right Wing Authoritarianism; social dominance orientation; religiosity; spirituality; economic system justification

1. Introduction

One of the central questions in the social sciences concerns how and why individuals accept and maintain social and economic conditions that disadvantage them (Adorno et al. 1950; Jost and Banaji 1994; Parsons 1937).

Conversely, the question of why individuals rebel against such structures has united a wide spectrum of disciplines ranging from political philosophy to sociology and social psychology (Moore 1978; Gürr 1970). A large body of research in social psychology has shown that individuals often justify and legitimize existing social and economic arrangements, even when these systems reproduce inequality or operate against their own interests (Jost and Banaji 1994; Jost and Hunyady 2002). Previous studies have consistently linked economic system justification with ideological attitudes such as right-wing authoritarianism (RWA) and social dominance orientation (SDO), as well as with different forms of religiosity and spirituality. On the one hand, the system justification is articulated with



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dominance and authoritarianism. On the other hand, religious and spiritual representations and practices.

1.1. Sociological Theoretical Currents and Their Correlates in Latin America and Argentina

1.1.1. Critical Sociology and the Theory of Ideology

Firstly, an influential tradition within Latin American social sciences was the one centred in the term ideology (Marx and Engels [1845–1846] 1968). This concept is related to phenomena such as alienation or false consciousness as elements that delimit a way of understanding why individuals justify and accept domination and inequalities. The functioning of ideology, according to this hypothesis, is based on the construction of pseudo-rational explanations of the world, which constitute a veil for people to acquire a full understanding of the conditions of their situation. For authors such as Marx and Engels ([1845–1846] 1968), these representations are imposed by the ruling class in order to justify the economic and social structure. Within the Marxist framework, this process can be understood through the distinction between structure and superstructure. While the structure refers to the economic base of society and the relations of production, the superstructure encompasses political, legal, cultural, and ideological institutions. Ideology operates within the superstructure as a mechanism through which dominant social relations are legitimized and reproduced, contributing to the acceptance of existing inequalities and hierarchies.

These arguments were renewed during the 20th century in different waves and with different margins of heterodoxy. A central author was Gramsci ([1965] 1990) who further developed this argument on the basis of the concept of hegemony, in which consensus and force are articulated. In this sense, such a notion allows for the justification of the status quo as inevitable and beneficial, as opposed to its recognition as an instrument of domination by the ruling class. To the state and the political economy, Gramsci added other institutions such as the Catholic church and the press as sites for the construction of common sense.

More recently, authors such as Pierre Bourdieu have contributed to the study of symbolic domination relations (Bourdieu 1988; Bourdieu and Boltanski [1976] 2008). In this regard, the author postulates the division of the social space into fields, in which individuals are situated on the basis of the capital they possess. Likewise, the author introduces the concept of habitus to explain the behaviour of individuals, denoting their low awareness of the social relations that determine them. In this sense, Bourdieu reproduces Gramscian hypotheses on the complementary role of the state, the Catholic Church and the press. In the same way he emphasises educational institutions, especially the university.

In Latin America, this proposal had significant milestones. In the 1970s, authors such as Dorfman and Mattelart (1971) developed models that reproduce the hypothesis, adding to the dialogue the contributions of communication studies, which are still valid today (Schmucler 1997). Freire ([1970] 2005), in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, argued that domination is not sustained exclusively through coercion, but also through the internalization of oppressive logics by subordinated groups. According to Freire, oppressed individuals may incorporate the values and aspirations of dominant groups, reproducing relations of domination and legitimizing unequal social arrangements even when these operate against their own interests. Along these lines, but without exhausting an extremely broad spectrum, Canelo (2019) opened a debate in Argentina regarding the institution of forms of common sense based on the belief in individual merit as the axis of the ideological operation that involves justifying inequalities.

1.1.2. Moral Consensus and Cognitive Closure

A second classic position focuses on the hypothesis that the acceptance of inequalities and social order is part of a process of moral consensus and cognitive closure. This argument assumes that ideologies combine ideas and attitudes that are interdependently grouped (Converse 1964) and that they serve a positive function of functional organisation (Knight 2006). In this sense, social order is defined by a set of beliefs about what is desirable and how it can be achieved. This structural functionalist argument can be synthesised as follows: there are shared structures of mental models held by groups that provide both an interpretation of the environment and a prescription of how it should be structured. Then, ideology links the personal and the cognitive with social practices, thus becoming a system of subjective perception and representation about the realities surrounding groups of individuals. Or, to put it in Talcott Parsons' terms, these links between values, systems of perception and representation are what allow the Hobbesian problem of order to be solved (Parsons and Shils 1968). From the above, it can be inferred that social order is accepted out of cognitive necessity.

In Latin America, this proposal was not always accepted by local authors. However, there were specialised authors who did take up the hypothesis within the framework of a general theory of anomie (Waldmann 2003; Germani 1962; Vilas 2013). In a similar way as in the previous hypothesis, although without a diametrical relationship, in our field there are works on the new right that in some way could be related to this hypothesis. At the same time, they take into account the religious factor when developing their arguments (Vommaro and Morresi 2015; Morresi 2008).

1.1.3. Phenomenology and Pragmatic Sociology

A third hypothesis considers reality as a social construction. A first milestone came from authors such as Schutz (1974) and Berger and Luckmann ([1966] 2011) who studied the social order and the individual's relationship with it, through the analysis of everyday life reality. In this way, they explain the social order as the result of a continuous dialectical socialization process composed of three moments: externalisation, objectification and internalisation. These arguments were refined by authors such as Goffman (1967). This author puts the definition of the situation at the centre of the problem. In other words, he understands the possibility of the stability of links based on practical knowledge that is constantly recreated in the field of interaction. Finally, Gusfield (2014) is the one who, within this theoretical current, directly addresses the problem of the acceptance of the social order based on the logics of interaction and definition of the situation. For this author, what prevails in mass society is disorder and the acceptance of order—or its questioning through authoritarian movements and leaders—is a collective response to this disorganisation.

Within this current, we find the latest work of Lüc Boltanski, subsequent to his early research with Bourdieu. This approach gives greater capacity to the actors to understand and transform reality, placing objective and subjective relations on the same level (Boltanski and Chiapello 2010). Likewise, technical devices are introduced into the analysis, in terms of mutual influence with social actors in the construction of society.

Based on the above, this school of thought starts from an argument about social order: basically, that it does not exist as something given. On the contrary, it is a construction that is always subject to discussion by different types of agents, narratives and explanations. Hence, the acceptance of inequalities or different forms of domination cannot be seen as something that is imposed either, but that is subject to permanent negotiation between agents with asymmetrical capacities and distribution of resources. Therefore, these traditions are also seriously questioned for their failure to deal with social conflict.

In the present study, these sociological perspectives are not treated as alternative explanations to psychological approaches, but rather as complementary interpretative frameworks that help contextualize individual attitudes toward social and economic inequality.

1.2. A Contribution from Social Psychology

This characterisation is linked to studies within social psychology, such as those developed by [Jost and Banaji \(1994\)](#). They construct a theory of the justification of social order which posits that individuals possess a psychological motivation to defend, justify, and maintain existing social, economic, and political arrangements, even when these systems disadvantage them. This motivation serves to reduce uncertainty, threat, and cognitive dissonance by perceiving the status quo as fair, legitimate, and necessary. In this sense, system justification operates as a palliative mechanism that preserves social stability by aligning individual beliefs with prevailing hierarchies and institutions feeding a motivational structure that predisposes individuals to justify the status quo ([Jost and Hunyady 2002](#)). This theory analyses the phenomena of the justification of inequalities and hierarchies from a psychological perspective, focusing on the personality factors that modulate the individual when it comes to adopting an attitude of justification or rejection towards the aforementioned impositions.

[Jost and Thompson \(2000\)](#) developed an Economic System Justification scale (hereafter ESJ), which allows assessing individual differences in the tendency to defend and justify the existing economic system. The scale is composed of 22 items grouped into a single dimension ($\alpha = 0.84$). There, it was observed that the perceived social class of the subjects did not introduce a significant difference in ESJ values with individuals who perceive themselves to be of a different class.

Recovering this working hypothesis, [Wakslak et al. \(2007\)](#) observed that an individual, regardless of the social class to which he or she belongs, may or may not support egalitarian ideologies ([Gatica et al. 2017](#)). On the other hand, they proposed that the justification of social systems offers psychological benefits, such as increased subjective well-being, a sense of perception of the world as orderly and controllable, a reduction in emotional distress or the maintenance of self-esteem ([Jost and Hunyady 2002](#)). Moreover, having psychological benefits is also influenced by motivational and personality factors ([Jost and Hunyady 2002](#)) such as Right-Wing Authoritarianism and Social Dominance Orientation.

In this regard, Right-Wing Authoritarianism (hereafter RWA), as defined by [Altemeyer \(1996\)](#), refers to a personality and attitudinal cluster characterized by submission to established authorities, adherence to conventional norms, and aggression toward individuals or groups perceived as deviants or threats to the social order. To measure RWA, [Altemeyer \(1996\)](#) created the Right-Wing Authoritarianism Scale, a unidimensional instrument composed of 24 items ($\alpha = 0.88$) ([Farkhari et al. 2025](#); [Zubieta and Sosa 2022](#)). On the other hand, Social Dominance Orientation (hereafter SDO), formulated by [Pratto et al. \(1994\)](#), describes a general preference for hierarchical intergroup relations and the dominance of high-status groups over low-status ones. To operationalize SDO, the authors developed the Social Dominance Orientation Scale, consisting of 16 items and demonstrating high internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.91$). Both RWA and SDO have been shown to predict support for conservative ideologies and resistance to social change.

The connection between system justification, RWA, and SDO lies in their shared function of legitimizing and stabilizing hierarchical social systems ([González and Martínez 2021](#)). Individuals high in RWA may justify economic inequalities as a reflection of moral or normative order, while those high in SDO view such inequalities as natural or desirable expressions of group-based dominance. System justification processes provide the cognitive and motivational foundation that enables both authoritarian and dominance-oriented

attitudes to persist, reinforcing the perception that existing economic systems are fair and necessary. Thus, these constructs jointly contribute to the psychological maintenance of socio-economic inequality through different but complementary pathways: RWA through moral conformity and SDO through hierarchy enhancement.

While these sociological currents explain the macro-construction of legitimacy, social psychology, through System Justification Theory, allows for the identification of the cognitive and motivational mechanisms operating at the micro level. Concepts such as Right-Wing Authoritarianism (RWA) and Social Dominance Orientation (SDO) act as psychological mediators of the processes of hegemony and habitus described above.

In this framework, religion is not a secondary factor but a fundamental pillar of the superstructure that has historically legitimized the social order. In the present study, the importance of this concept is central, including multiple dimensions (intrinsic, extrinsic, quest religiosity, and spiritual transcendence) to determine whether religion serves as a source of psychological uncertainty or as a reinforcement of the existing economic hierarchy. This multiplicity of measures is necessary to capture the complex role that different religious orientations play in answering our research questions. Furthermore, the five major personality traits (Big Five) are incorporated into the analysis. The inclusion of these measures is essential to ensure that the observed associations between ideological attitudes, religion, and system justification are not merely by-products of basic temperamental dispositions, thus allowing for a more robust and controlled understanding of systemic legitimization processes. In particular, intrinsic and extrinsic religious orientations capture motivational aspects of religious involvement, whereas quest religiosity reflects openness and existential questioning. Spiritual transcendence, in turn, assesses broader spiritual beliefs that may operate independently from institutional religiosity. Including multiple measures therefore allowed us to examine whether different forms of religious and spiritual orientation are differentially associated with economic system justification.

Based on the theoretical perspectives reviewed above, this study aims to analyse the relationship between economic system justification, right-wing authoritarianism, social dominance orientation, religiosity, and spirituality in the population of the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires. Specifically, we examine whether authoritarian and dominance-oriented attitudes, as well as different dimensions of religiosity and spirituality, are associated with higher levels of economic system justification. Although previous studies have demonstrated associations between system justification, authoritarianism, social dominance orientation, and religiosity, less is known about how these relationships operate in Latin American contexts. Furthermore, previous research has rarely examined multiple dimensions of religiosity and spirituality simultaneously within the same explanatory model. Based on the theoretical perspectives reviewed above, this study asks: *Which ideological and religious factors are associated with the justification of the economic system in Argentina?*

Economic system justification was selected as the primary dependent variable because it captures legitimization of material inequality, which is central in the socio-economic context of Argentina. We argue that system justification is not only shaped by ideological predispositions such as right-wing authoritarianism (RWA) and social dominance orientation (SDO), but also by religious orientations that may contribute to the legitimization of existing social arrangements. Accordingly, we hypothesize that:

- (H1).** *Right-wing authoritarianism will be positively associated with economic system justification.*
- (H2).** *Social dominance orientation will be positively associated with economic system justification.*
- (H3).** *Extrinsic religious orientation will be positively associated with economic system justification.*

Additionally, given the exploratory nature of previous findings on religiosity and system justification, religious and spiritual dimensions are examined in an exploratory manner.

2. Materials and Methods

This study employed a cross-sectional, correlational design. The sample was non-probabilistic and purposively recruited in the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires. Participants were selected through convenience sampling in public spaces and online recruitment. A total of 843 people from the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires participated in the study (52% men and 48% women). The age range was 18 to 88 years ($M_{\text{age}} = 46$; $SD = 15.78$). Participants were recruited through social media (convenience sampling), and they completed a self-administered digital survey. Participation was voluntary and unpaid. Multiple measures of religiosity and spirituality were included to capture different dimensions of religious experience, including motivational (intrinsic/extrinsic), existential (quest), and dispositional (spiritual transcendence) aspects. Finally, the Big Five personality traits were included as control variables due to their established associations with ideological attitudes and system justification processes in previous research. To assess the internal structure of the instruments, confirmatory factor analyses (CFA) were conducted for each scale using EQS 6.1. Model fit was evaluated through Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), and Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR), following conventional cutoff criteria.

Age Universal I-E 12 (“Age Universal” I-E; Maltby 2002). “Age Universal” I-E 12 is a 12-item self-administered questionnaire that assesses two religious motivational orientations in adolescent and adult populations: (1) Intrinsic Religious Orientation (6 items) (“I try hard to live all my life according to my religious beliefs”), (2) Personal Extrinsic Orientation (“What religion offers me most is comfort in times of trouble and sorrow”) (3 items), and (3) Social Extrinsic Orientation (“I go to church because it helps me make friends”) (3 items). The scale presents a Likert-type response format with five response anchors according to the degree of agreement of the participants, with 1 = “Strongly disagree” and 5 = “Strongly agree”. A version adapted and validated for the Argentinean context has been used (Simkin and Etchezahar 2013). In the present study the scale showed adequate psychometric properties in terms of internal reliability for the factors Intrinsic Religious Orientation ($\alpha = 0.92$; $\omega = 0.94$), Social Extrinsic Orientation ($\alpha = 0.76$; $\omega = 0.86$), Personal Extrinsic Orientation ($\alpha = 0.82$; $\omega = 0.86$) and for the overall scale ($\alpha = 0.78$; $\omega = 0.97$) and Factorial Validity (CFI = 0.986; SRMR = 0.0426).

International Personality Item Pool Abbreviated (Mini IPIP; Donnellan et al. 2006). For personality assessment it was used the Mini IPIP questionnaire, a 20-item self-administered questionnaire that assesses five dimensions of personality in adolescent and adult populations: (1) Openness to experience (e.g., “When I get used to doing something in a certain way, I keep doing it the same way.”) (4 items), (2) Conscientiousness (e.g., “I am very well organised with my things so that I get everything done on time”) (4 items), (3) Extraversion (e.g., “Social gatherings generally bore me”) (4 items), (4) Agreeableness (e.g., “I prefer to collaborate with others”) (4 items), and (5) Neuroticism or Emotional Stability (e.g., “I often feel tense and restless”) (4 items). The scale presents a Likert-type response format with five response anchors based on the degree of agreement of the participants, with 1 being “Strongly Agree” and 5 being “Strongly Disagree”. Higher scores on each dimension indicate higher levels of Openness, Responsibility, Extraversion, Agreeableness and Neuroticism. All five factors have shown acceptable levels of reliability as reported by the authors (Donnellan et al. 2006). The technique has presented evidence of Donella construct validity (exploratory factor analysis) and internal consistency ($\alpha \geq 0.70$). For the present study we used a version adapted and validated to the Argentinean context

(Simkin et al. 2020), which has presented adequate levels of reliability for the factors Openness ($\omega = 0.88$), Responsibility ($\omega = 0.80$), Extraversion ($\omega = 0.82$), Agreeableness ($\omega = 0.88$) and Neuroticism ($\omega = 0.77$) and factorial validity (CFI = 0.927; RMSEA = 0.061) (Simkin et al. 2020).

Religious Quest Orientation Scale (Quest; Gorsuch and Venable 1983). The Religious Quest Orientation scale is a 12-item self-administered questionnaire that assesses the extent to which people look to religion for answers to life's existential questions, using three sub-dimensions: (1) Openness (3 items) ("As I grow and change, I hope that my religion will also grow and change"), Self-criticism (3 items) ("It might be said that I value my religious doubts and uncertainties"), and Readiness (3 items) ("I was not very interested in religion until I begin to ask questions about the meaning and purpose of my life"). The scale has a Likert-type response format with five response anchors according to the degree of agreement of the participants, with 1 = "Strongly disagree" and 5 = "Strongly agree". A version adapted and validated for the Argentinean context has been used (Jaume et al. 2013). In the present study the scale showed adequate psychometric properties in terms of reliability for the factors Readiness ($\alpha = 0.80$; $\omega = 0.61$), Self-criticism ($\alpha = 0.78$; $\omega = 0.83$) and Openness ($\alpha = 0.67$; $\omega = 0.76$), for the total scale ($\alpha = 0.83$; $\omega = 0.85$) and for factorial validity (CFI = 0.965; SRMR = 0.0729).

Assessment of Spirituality and Religious Sentiments Scale (ASPIRES; Piedmont 2004). ASPIRES is a 35-item self-administered questionnaire, which assesses two dimensions: (1) Religious Sentiments (RS) (12 items) and (2) Spiritual Transcendence (ST) (23 items). In the foreground, RS is composed of two aspects: (A) Religious Involvement (items 1, 2, 3, 3, 4, 5, 5, 6, 7 and 8) ("ex") and (B) Religious Crisis (items 9, 10, 11 and 12) ("ex"), while ST comprises three others: (A) Prayer Fulfilment (items 1, 2, 4, 8, 11, 12, 17, 18, 19 and 21) ("ex"), (B) Universality (items 3, 5, 6, 13, 15, 16 and 20) ("ex") and (C) Connectedness (items 7, 9, 10, 14, 22 and 23) ("ex"). The scale has a Likert-type response format with five response anchors according to the degree of agreement of the participants, with 1 = "Strongly disagree" and 5 = "Strongly agree". A version adapted and validated for the Argentinean context has been used (Simkin 2017). In the present study the scale showed adequate psychometric properties in terms of the internal reliability of the factors: religiosity ($\alpha = 0.85$; $\omega = 0.89$), prayer fulfilment ($\alpha = 0.90$; $\omega = 0.93$), connectedness ($\alpha = 0.57$; $\omega = 0.69$) and universality ($\alpha = 0.54$; $\omega = 0.67$). Overall reliability gave us a value of significance ($\alpha = 0.69$; $\omega = 0.92$). Factorial validity was adequate for both the Spiritual Transcendence factor (CFI = 0.980, SRMR = 0.0547) and the Religiosity factor (CFI = 0.989; SRMR = 0.0284).

Social Dominance Orientation (SDO; Jost and Thompson 2000). SDO is a 20-item self-administered questionnaire that assesses an individual's preference for hierarchy within any social system and dominance over lower status groups on the basis of two factors: (1) Group Dominance Orientation (5 items) ("It's probably a good thing that certain groups are at the top and other groups are at the bottom") and Opposition to Equality Orientation (5 items) ("We would have fewer problems if we treated different groups more equally"). The scale features a Likert-type response format with five response anchors based on participants' degree of agreement, with 1 = "Strongly Disagree" and 5 = "Strongly Agree". A version adapted and validated for the Argentinean context has been used (Etchezahar et al. 2012). In the present study the scale showed adequate psychometric properties in terms of the internal reliability of the factors: group dominance orientation ($\alpha = 0.72$; $\omega = 0.85$) and opposition to equality orientation ($\alpha = 0.81$; $\omega = 0.89$). Overall reliability gave us a value of ($\alpha = 0.83$; $\omega = 0.93$) and factorial validity (CFI = 0.990; SRMR = 0.0424).

Right Wing Authoritarianism (RWA; Zakrisson 2005) RWA is a 6-item self-administered questionnaire ("If the society so wants, it is the duty of every true citizen to help eliminate the evil that poisons our country from within") that assesses the extent to which people

have a high degree of willingness to submit to authorities they perceive as legitimate, adhere to social conventions and norms, and are hostile toward people who do not adhere to them. The scale presents a Likert-type response format with five response anchors according to the degree of agreement of the participants, with 1 = “Strongly Disagree” and 5 = “Strongly Agree”. A version adapted and validated for the Argentinean context has been used (Etchezahar et al. 2012). In the present study the scale showed adequate psychometric properties in terms of reliability ($\alpha = 0.83$; $\omega = 0.88$) and factorial validity (CFI = 0.996; SRMR = 0.0230).

Economic System Justification (EJS; Kay and Jost 2003) is a 7-item self-administered questionnaire (“If people work hard, they almost always get what they want”) that assesses the extent to which people perceive the status quo as good, legitimate and/or desirable. The scale presents a Likert-type response format with five response anchors according to the degree of agreement of the participants, with 1 = “Strongly disagree” and 5 = “Strongly agree”. A version adapted and validated for the Argentinean context has been used (Jaume et al. 2012). In the present study the scale showed adequate psychometric properties in terms of reliability ($\alpha = 0.83$; $\omega = 0.86$) and factorial validity (CFI = 0.993; SRMR = 0.0315).

2.1. Procedure

Subjects were invited to participate in the research on a voluntary basis and their consent was requested. Before answering the evaluation instrument, participants were informed that the data derived from this research would be used exclusively for scientific purposes under the Argentinean National Law 25.326 on the protection of personal data.

2.2. Data Analysis

Statistical analyses were conducted using SPSS 22 and EQS 6.1. First, descriptive and correlational analyses were performed to examine associations between economic system justification, right-wing authoritarianism, social dominance orientation, religiosity, spirituality, and the remaining study variables. Subsequently, multiple linear regression analyses using the backward stepwise method were conducted in order to identify the variables that significantly predicted economic system justification. Following methodological recommendations (Hayes and Rockwood 2017; Freiberg and Fernández 2015), the overall fit of the regression model and the explained variance were assessed using R, R^2 , and adjusted R^2 . Multicollinearity was examined through variance inflation factors (VIF) and condition indices.

3. Results

First, a correlational analysis was carried out in order to explore the associations between the variables of interest. As can be seen in Table 1, ESJ is most strongly associated with RWA, SDO and AGE extrinsic (Table 1).

Subsequently, a model was tested that includes ESJ as the dependent variable and SDO, RWA, Age Intrinsic, Age Extrinsic, Quest, Religiosity and Spiritual Transcendence.

The backward stepwise method was applied, from which a model was obtained that includes a significant explanation of the variables SDO, RWA and Age Extrinsic on ESJ (Hayes and Rockwood 2017). Following recommendations from the literature, the overall regression model was evaluated using R, R^2 , and adjusted R^2 , with R^2 indicating the proportion of variance in economic system justification explained by the final model and adjusted R^2 correcting this estimate for the number of predictors (Freiberg and Fernández 2015) (Table 2).

Table 1. Correlations between the studied variables.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)	(17)	(18)
1. ESJ	1																	
2. DG	0.45 **	1																
3. OI	0.25 **	0.51 **	1															
4. SDO	0.40 **	0.85 **	0.87 **	1														
5. RWA	0.56 **	0.35 **	0.09 **	0.25 **	1													
6. INT	0.17 **	0.06	0.05	0.07 *	0.29 **	1												
7. PER	0.20 **	0.09 **	0.00	0.05	0.28 **	0.66 **	1											
8. SOC	0.12 **	0.08 *	0.03	0.07 *	0.16 **	0.37 **	0.36 **	1										
9. EXT	0.21 **	0.10 **	0.02	0.07 *	0.28 **	0.66 **	0.90 **	0.73 **	1									
10. PRE	0.12 **	0.10 **	−0.01	0.04	0.18 **	0.51 **	0.49 **	0.28 **	0.49 **	1								
11. AUT	−0.01	0.05	−0.06	−0.00	0.00	0.31 **	0.26 **	0.18 **	0.28 **	0.40 **	1							
12. OPE	−0.04	−0.03	0.10 **	−0.08 *	0.01	0.20 **	0.20 **	0.12 **	0.21 **	0.38 **	0.59 **	1						
13. QUE	0.03	0.05	−0.07 *	−0.01	0.08 *	0.44 **	0.41 **	0.25 **	0.41 **	0.75 **	0.82 **	0.81 **	1					
14. REL	0.15 **	0.08 *	0.07 *	0.08 *	0.24 **	0.79 **	0.48 **	0.30 **	0.49 **	0.36 **	0.21 **	0.11 **	0.29 **	1				
15. PRA	0.19 **	0.00	−0.00	−0.00	0.21 **	0.60 **	0.55 **	0.22 **	0.51 **	0.42 **	0.26 **	0.24 **	0.39 **	0.48 **	1			
16. CON	−0.05	−0.07 *	−0.03	−0.06	0.00	0.03	0.15 **	0.01	0.11 **	0.03	0.00	0.09 **	0.05	−0.02	0.05	1		
17. UNI	−0.01	−0.11 **	−0.07 *	−0.10 **	−0.05	0.27 **	0.15 **	0.01	0.11 **	0.22 **	0.16 **	0.20 **	0.25 **	0.21 **	0.42 **	0.14 **	1	
18. TRA	0.06 *	−0.08 *	−0.05	−0.08 *	0.09 **	0.45 **	0.43 **	0.13 **	0.37 **	0.34 **	0.21 **	0.27 **	0.34 **	0.33 **	0.74 **	0.58 **	0.73 **	1

Note: ESJ = Economic System Justification, DG = Group Dominance Orientation, OI = Equality Opposition, SDO = Social Dominance Orientation, RWA = Right Wing Authoritarianism, INT = Age Universal Intrinsic, PER = Age Universal Personal Extrinsic, SOC = Age Universal Social Extrinsic, EXT = Age Universal Extrinsic, PRE = Quest Preparation, AUT = Right wing authoritarianism, OPE = Quest Openness, QUE = Quest, REL = Aspires Religiosity, PRA = Prayer Fulfilment, CON = Connectiveness, UNI = Universality, TRA = Aspires Spiritual Transcendence. * $p < 0.005$, ** $p < 0.01$.

Table 2. Summary of the regression model predicting economic system justification (ESJ).

	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²
ESJ *	0.629	0.396	0.394

* ESJ = Economic System Justification.

Subsequently, the models were tested for compliance with the assumptions of multicollinearity and homoscedasticity of the residuals (Freiberg and Fernández 2015). Given the cross-sectional nature of the design, the independence of observations was ensured by the sampling procedure itself, as each participant provided a single observation on one occasion; therefore, no test of serial autocorrelation of the residuals was required. Homoscedasticity was examined through visual inspection of standardized residual plots. Condition indices and variance inflation factors (VIF) were used to examine multicollinearity, with the former being below 30 and the latter below 10. As can be seen in Tables 2 and 3, compliance with these assumptions supports the adequacy of the estimated model (Table 3).

Table 3. Multicollinearity indices.

		Condition Indices	VIF
ESJ *	SDO **	5.603	1.070
	RWA ***	6.833	1.156
	Age Ext ****	8.984	1.087

* ESJ = Economic System Justification, ** SDO = Social Dominance Orientation, *** RWA = Right Wing Authoritarianism, **** Age Ext = Age Universal Extrinsic.

Regarding the associations between the independent variables and economic system justification, as can be seen in Table 4, the unstandardized B coefficients indicate the expected change in economic system justification associated with a one-unit increase in each predictor (extrinsic religiosity, spirituality, social dominance orientation and right-wing authoritarianism), holding the remaining predictors constant. The standardized beta coefficients were interpreted as indicators of the direction and relative magnitude of the association between each predictor and economic system justification, expressed in standard deviation units, whereas the variance explained by the model is reported through R² and adjusted R² (Table 2). The t-test and its significance level allowed us to determine whether each regression coefficient differed significantly from zero. According to the results reported in Table 4, social dominance orientation, right-wing authoritarianism and extrinsic

religiosity are presented as the variables significantly associated with economic system justification (Table 4).

Table 4. Regression model coefficients.

		B	CI 95%	Standard Error	Beta	t	Sig.
ESJ *	(constant)	4.424	[3.008, 5.840]	0.721		6.133	0.000
	SDO **	0.279	[0.225, 0.333]	0.027	0.282	10.168	0.000
	RWA ***	0.498	[0.439, 0.557]	0.030	0.477	16.529	0.000
	AGE Ext ****	0.073	[0.002, 0.144]	0.036	0.056	2.014	0.044

* ESJ = Economic System Justification, ** SDO = Social Dominance Orientation, *** RWA = Right Wing Authoritarianism, **** AGE Ext = Age Universal Extrinsic.

4. Discussion

The aim of this study was to assess the main factors associated with individuals' acceptance of or resistance to economic and social situations that are detrimental to them. Based on this question, we aimed to link two areas of study, on the one hand, social domination and right-wing authoritarianism, and on the other, spirituality and religiosity, in order to analyse their relationship with the justification of the economic system in the general population of the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires.

In line with the specific literature (Jost and Hunyady 2002; Pratto et al. 1994), the study demonstrated how right-wing authoritarianism and social dominance emerge as strongly correlated variables associated with economic system justification. On the other hand, regarding spirituality and religiosity, the findings were in general less significant, although extrinsic religiosity was significantly associated with economic system justification. In this sense, an important finding of the present study is that, among the multiple dimensions of religiosity and spirituality assessed, only extrinsic religious orientation remained significantly associated with economic system justification in the final model. This suggests that not all forms of religiosity contribute equally to the legitimization of the economic system. Rather, the findings indicate that socially and instrumentally oriented forms of religiosity may be more closely linked to system-legitimizing attitudes than intrinsic spirituality or existential religious questioning.

From a broader theoretical perspective, these findings may also be interpreted in light of Marxist and Gramscian approaches discussed in the introduction. The positive association between economic system justification, authoritarianism, social dominance orientation, and certain forms of religiosity suggests that ideological and cultural factors may contribute to the legitimization and reproduction of existing social arrangements. In this sense, the results provide empirical support for the idea that systems of belief and meaning can help sustain unequal material conditions by encouraging individuals to perceive the social and economic order as natural, legitimate, or desirable, even when such arrangements may operate against their own interests.

Based on the aforementioned, the findings suggest two broader implications as main contributions for future research. Firstly, although several correlations between religiosity/spirituality and RWA/SDO were statistically significant, these associations were generally modest and inconsistent across dimensions. This may be due to the heterogeneity that the new right-wing groups present today in comparison with the period when these scales were developed in the last century. In this sense, the new right-wings that have emerged during the 21st century no longer appeal to the traditional religious values of the past, of the family, the country and the church, nor necessarily to a certain spirituality. Although they continue to postulate economic liberalism in general, they locate themselves far from any stigmatising moralism of the past and try to show themselves as broad and

respectful of the new rights of minorities that used to be the target of their attacks in the past. In line with the advances of sexual, minority, gender and immigrant freedoms in the democratic political arena in some countries of the region, certain practices have been left out of the political discourse. In addition, and during the shift to the left in Latin America in the first decades of the 21st century, the conservative profile was pejoratively associated with the military coups that besieged Latin America during the second half of the 20th century (Vommaro and Morresi 2015; Morresi 2008). Thus, today, some sectors of the new right are in tune with new age ideas, such as cultural liberalism or multiculturalism, while holding firm to their economic ideals (Viotti and Funes 2015). Because of this, not only the studies of political positions, but also the analysis of religion and spirituality could benefit from deeper understanding of particular contexts and from the link between social and psychological perspectives (Brambilla et al. 2016). In this sense, the present work can serve as a starting point for the elaboration of new scales or the updating of previous ones, taking into account these new socio-political configurations.

On a second point, although the present study relies primarily on constructs and measures developed within social psychology, the findings may nevertheless be interpreted in dialogue with broader sociological discussions concerning ideology, domination, and legitimacy. In particular, the observed associations between economic system justification, authoritarianism, social dominance orientation, and religiosity may be understood not only as individual psychological tendencies, but also as attitudes embedded within broader cultural and social frameworks.

In this sense, the sociological literature reviewed in the introduction provides a complementary interpretative framework that helps contextualize the psychological mechanisms examined in this study. Rather than demonstrating a fully interdisciplinary methodological approach, the present research attempts to establish a conceptual bridge between psychological and sociological perspectives on the legitimation of social inequality. Future research could strengthen this dialogue by incorporating sociological variables, institutional dimensions, or qualitative approaches that allow a more direct examination of how ideological and religious meanings are socially produced and reproduced in specific historical contexts.

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Abbreviations

The following abbreviations are used in this manuscript:

Mini IPIP	International Personality Item Pool Abbreviated
QUEST	Religious Quest Orientation Scale
ASPIRES	Assessment of Spirituality and Religious Sentiments Scale
SDO	Social Dominance Orientation
RWA	Right Wing Authoritarianism
EJS	Economic System Justification

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