

## COVID, ECONOMIC SYSTEM JUSTIFICATION, POLITICAL IDEOLOGY

**Title:** Economic Revival or Virus Containment? Economic System Justification and COVID-19

**Running Head:** Economic Revival, Virus Containment, and Economic System Justification

### **Author Information:**

Shalini Sarin Jain\*

Assistant Professor

Milgard School of Business

University of Washington

1900 Commerce Street, P.O. Box 358420

Tacoma, WA 98402

Email: [ssj8@uw.edu](mailto:ssj8@uw.edu); Phone: (253) 692-4966

Shailendra Pratap Jain

Professor, Department of Marketing and International Business

Michael G. Foster School of Business, 457 Paccar Hall

University of Washington

4273 E Stevens Way NE,

Seattle, WA 98195-3200

Email: [spjain@uw.edu](mailto:spjain@uw.edu); Phone: (206) 221-2946

Yexin Jessica Li

Associate Professor

School of Business

University of Kansas

Capitol Federal Hall

1654 Naismith Drive

Lawrence, KS 66045

Email: [jessica.li@ku.edu](mailto:jessica.li@ku.edu); Phone: (785) 864-7597

\*Corresponding author

### **Compliance with Ethical Standards**

**Conflict of Interest:** The author declares that they have no conflict of interest.

**Ethical approval:** All procedures performed in studies involving human participants were in accordance with the ethical standards of the institutional and/or national research committee (Institutional Review Board, University of Washington) and with the 1964 Helsinki declaration and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards.

This article does not contain any studies performed on animals by the author(s).

**Informed Consent:** Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the studies.

## COVID, ECONOMIC SYSTEM JUSTIFICATION, POLITICAL IDEOLOGY

**Economic Revival or Virus Containment?****Economic System Justification in the Time of COVID-19****ABSTRACT**

An ongoing debate relating to COVID-19 features the tension between opening the economy versus containing the coronavirus, with ethical overtones on both sides. Proponents of opening the economy insist that economic revival should be prioritized over virus containment, with ethicists asking, “What about the risk to human life?” Defendants of restricting the spread of the virus endorse virus containment over economic revival, but contend with the ethical concern “What about people’s livelihoods and human rights?” It is often believed that these differential preferences are driven by political ideology: economic revival is favored by conservatives while virus containment is preferred by liberals. We examine this lay belief and find that economic system justification (ESJ), an ideology that defends the economic system when under threat, is a more reliable predictor than political ideology. Across four studies, we find consistent results: compared to those who scored low on ESJ, people who scored high on ESJ judged China as more justified in concealing the spread of virus within its borders, found price gouging more acceptable, shelter in place less desirable, and opening of the Texas economy more legitimate. We also find that multiple psychological mechanisms might be at work – perceived legitimacy of opening the economy, perceived seriousness of the health crisis, and violation of human rights. The effect of political ideology is inconsistent and unreliable, dissipating after the effect of ESJ is accounted for in two studies and producing effects that are significant but weaker than those of ESJ in the other two studies.

*Keywords: COVID, economic system justification, political ideology, economic revival, virus containment, price gouging, shelter-in-place*

## COVID, ECONOMIC SYSTEM JUSTIFICATION, POLITICAL IDEOLOGY

### **Economic Revival or Virus Containment? Economic System Justification and COVID-19**

*“Should we risk the lives of hundreds of thousands of Americans by reopening the economy too soon or risk the livelihood of tens of millions of Americans by opening the economy too late?”<sup>1</sup>*

Besides the uncertainty associated with its origins, prevention, and cure, COVID-19’s consequences are under immense scrutiny. On the economic side, work life has been interrupted seriously, and innumerable industries (e.g., restaurant, hotel, cruise, airline, and education) have come to a standstill. In the airline industry, in particular, several CEOs have taken a cut in their salaries.<sup>2</sup> Speculations of employee mistreatment are rising<sup>3</sup> and more than 36 million have applied for unemployment in the US as of May 14, 2020.<sup>4</sup> Social services such as food pantries have seen a dramatic uptick in demand as the growing number of unemployed seek help to provide basic necessities for themselves and their families.<sup>5</sup> In partial response, companies like NationSwell are trying to assist workers and businesses experiencing inequity, job losses, and COVID-19 related financial misery.<sup>6</sup> Yet, despite the US government’s unprecedented emergency relief funding, more than 10,000 small businesses have closed in response to the pandemic, taking jobs and health insurance away from thousands of Americans who depend on them.<sup>7</sup> Delay in opening the economy, especially in countries whose citizens have a meager financial safety net, is raising ethical concerns among businesses pertaining to people’s livelihoods – if they do not open, they cannot afford to take care of their employees.

---

<sup>1</sup> Fein, Richard (2020, May 24). COVID-19: Saving lives or livelihoods? <https://www.gazettenet.com/Columnist-Richard-Fein-34383794>

<sup>2</sup> Mann, E.W. (2020, March 30). Here's a list of CEOs taking pay cuts amid the coronavirus crisis. *Yahoo! Finance*, <https://finance.yahoo.com/news/heres-a-list-of-ce-os-taking-pay-cuts-amidst-the-coronavirus-crisis-171206258.html>

<sup>3</sup> Sweney, M (2020, April 22). Legal & General warns firms to act fairly during coronavirus crisis. *The Guardian*, <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2020/apr/22/legal-general-warns-firms-act-fairly-during-coronavirus-crisis>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/14/business/economy/coronavirus-unemployment-claims.html>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/08/business/economy/coronavirus-food-banks.html>

<sup>6</sup> Aziz, A. (2020, April 29). How NationSwell Is Mobilizing Business and Philanthropy to Help Build it Back Better <https://www.forbes.com/sites/afdelaziz/2020/04/29/how-nationswell-is-mobilizing-business-and-philanthropy-to-help-build-it-back-better/#3ff350ae51e4>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2020/05/12/small-business-used-define-americas-economy-pandemic-could-end-that-forever/>

## COVID, ECONOMIC SYSTEM JUSTIFICATION, POLITICAL IDEOLOGY

On the humanity side, as of August 4, 2020 there have been more than 18.5 million confirmed cases and 700,514 deaths in 200+ countries. The US leads with close to a quarter of the globe's infections (4.8 million+) and over one-fifth of deaths (159,542).<sup>8</sup> Despite aggressive R&D efforts, no cure or prevention is in sight and the predicted time for a vaccine to manifest ranges from 6 to 18 months. Not surprisingly, calls for virus containment are at an all-time high and anxiety relating to morbidity and mortality as well as livelihood prevails.

Unfortunately, opening the economy may lead to greater virus exposure that could increase mortality. Mandating the populace to stay at home to contain the virus may delay the economic turnaround. Consequently, the debate rages globally as to how soon to open economies and to what extent to focus on restricting the spread of the virus.<sup>9</sup> In the US, inconsistent guidelines from the federal government, state legislature, and Centers for Disease Control on everything from masks to schooling has resulted in confusion and a new wave of coronavirus cases.<sup>10</sup> Enmeshed within this situation are angry citizens claiming violation of their human rights.<sup>11</sup> Some researchers have suggested that “containing the spread of the disease should be prioritized than resuming economic activities, at least from the perspective of maintaining positive economic expectations among individuals” (Li, Qin, Wu & Yan, 2020, p. 1). However, not everyone agrees. An April 19, 2020 NBC News/WSJ poll reported that “Fifty-eight percent [of respondents] are more worried about stopping the virus’ spread, while 32 percent are more concerned with the economic fallout.”<sup>12</sup> Clearly, people differ on the extent to which they hold

---

<sup>8</sup> [https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/?utm\\_campaign=homeAdvegas1?%22](https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/?utm_campaign=homeAdvegas1?%22)

<sup>9</sup> Tucker, J. (2020, March 8). Why this Draconian Response to COVID-19? *American Institute for Economic Research* <https://www.aier.org/article/why-this-draconian-response-to-covid-19/>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.wsj.com/articles/us-policy-covid-19-coronavirus-outbreaks-california-texas-florida-arizona-11594134950>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.natlawreview.com/article/human-rights-abuses-enforcement-coronavirus-security-measures>

<sup>12</sup> Murray, M. (2020, April 19). In new poll, 60 percent support keeping stay-at-home restrictions to fight coronavirus. *NBC News*, <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/meet-the-press/poll-six-10-support-keeping-stay-home-restrictions-fight-coronavirus-n1187011>

## COVID, ECONOMIC SYSTEM JUSTIFICATION, POLITICAL IDEOLOGY

these two viewpoints (henceforth, “Economic Revival” and “Virus Containment” respectively), likely due to speculations regarding COVID-19’s economic and existential consequences.

Supporters of Economic Revival emphasize the need for people to get back to work, and businesses to begin making a profit again. Endorsers of Virus Containment place primacy on safety and restricting the spread of the virus before opening the economy, lest the situation gets exacerbated. Indeed, U.S. public health experts indicate that some of the states that did open the economy may have done it too soon.<sup>13</sup>

In short, several parts of the world are facing a binary and seemingly impossible choice, each having its supporters and naysayers. In countries like the US, Brazil, and India which on the date of writing this section of the paper were ranked #1, 2, and 3 in terms of number of COVID-19 infections, and #1, 2, and 5 in terms of number of deaths, these zero-sum game options appear particularly relevant. The costs and benefits of these two choices are riddled with ethical challenges, many of which directly and inexorably impact public health, businesses, and entire economies. The primary ethical dilemma is contained in the very trade-off between two choices that businesses and policy makers are debating – economy or public health? To address this question, researchers have attempted to place a dollar value on a human life, an analysis replete with its own complexities and controversies.<sup>14</sup>

At a more micro-level, on the healthcare front, challenges include triage, life support (end-of-life or otherwise) decisions, conducting human challenge studies which carry risks to the participants, and allocation of scarce vaccines if and when they become available. In the economic domain, businesses are grappling with the extent to which they should emphasize

---

<sup>13</sup> Fedal, Leila (2020, May 9). Public Health Experts Say Many States are Opening Too Soon to do so Safely. *NPR*, <https://www.npr.org/2020/05/09/853052174/public-health-experts-say-many-states-are-opening-too-soon-to-do-so-safely>

<sup>14</sup> <https://medium.com/datadriveninvestor/how-much-is-a-human-life-worth-744ded9a2640>

## COVID, ECONOMIC SYSTEM JUSTIFICATION, POLITICAL IDEOLOGY

shareholder value over say, value to their employees and suppliers, engage in price gouging to recover costs as well as due to consumers' greater willingness to pay for scarce and essential goods and services, ignore unethical executive behavior under stress, and maintain transparency even when doing so might compromise their profit pursuit. In this research, we explore the characteristics of those who may be more or less favorably disposed to Economic Revival versus Virus Containment. These hitherto unexplored human dispositions are important to investigate as people's expectations at an individual and group level influence their choices and may impact economic, employment, as well as health-related outcomes (Coibion, Gorodnichenko, & Weber, 2019; Coibion & Gorodnichenko, 2015; Leduc & Sill, 2013).

A commonly held belief in the current COVID context is that "It's all politics," i.e., Political Ideology predicts preference for Economic Revival versus Virus Containment, with conservatives favoring the former and liberals favoring the latter. This belief perhaps carries over from the age-old notion that conservatives believe in the free market system a lot more than liberals (Fuller & Geide-Stevenson, 2007; Fuller, Alston, & Vaughan, 1995). In fact, some recent opinion polls and other anecdotal evidence may support this political divide vis-a-vis the differential preference for economic revival or virus containment. For instance, in the US, while Democrats and independents increasingly see COVID-19 as deadlier than the seasonal flu and tend to believe that the death toll from COVID-19 is understated, Republicans' view appears to be that the virus is similar to the common flu and that the death toll is exaggerated.<sup>15</sup>

There is evidence that suggests the complete picture is more nuanced than straight partisan preferences. As per the NBC News/WSJ poll cited earlier, only 32% were concerned

---

<sup>15</sup> <https://news.gallup.com/poll/311408/republicans-skeptical-covid-lethality.aspx>

## COVID, ECONOMIC SYSTEM JUSTIFICATION, POLITICAL IDEOLOGY

about the economic fallout while the proportion of conservatives in the US is closer to 40%.<sup>16</sup> In a poll conducted by Axios/Ipsos, 62% of Americans say that they wear masks at all times outside of their homes while liberals are only 26% of the country's population.<sup>17</sup> Barrios and Hochberg (2020) using county level data find that the Trump bloc of voters considers the virus as less risky and are more in favor of Economic Revival than others. These findings, while interesting, do not reveal the underlying psychological characteristics associated with this phenomenon. In sum, it is unclear whether emphasis on Economic Revival over Virus Containment can be attributed singularly, or even primarily, to the Trump bloc or political conservatism per se.

### **Economic System Justification**

To help illuminate these psychological characteristics, we rely on Economic System Justification (ESJ) as the construct. ESJ (Jost & Thompson, 2000) is a dispositional variable that belongs to the constellation of various *system justifying beliefs*, e.g., Belief in a Just World (Lerner & Miller, 1978; Hafer, 2000) and Social Dominance Orientation (SDO; Umphress, Simmons, Boswell, & Triana, 2008). System justification in general is conceptualized as the psychological “process by which existing social arrangements are legitimized” (Jost & Banaji, 1994, p. 2). People have been found to vary in the extent to which they hold system justifying beliefs and this variation has led to a compelling research program that demonstrates system justification's import for a host of outcomes, e.g., subjective well-being (Okulicz-Kozaryn, Holmes, & Avery, 2014), status quo maintenance (Kay, Jimenez, & Jost, 2002), inequality legitimization (Operario & Fiske, 2001), and stereotype reliance (Baron & Pfeffer, 1994). To illustrate, SDO, “one's degree of preference for inequality among social groups” (Pratto et al.,

---

<sup>16</sup> Jones, J. (2019, February 22). Conservatives Greatly Outnumber Liberals in 19 U.S. States. *Gallup*, <https://news.gallup.com/poll/247016/conservatives-greatly-outnumber-liberals-states.aspx>.

<sup>17</sup> Saad, L. (2019, January 8). U.S. Still Leans Conservative, but Liberals Keep Recent Gain. *Gallup*, <https://news.gallup.com/poll/245813/leans-conservative-liberals-keep-recent-gains.aspx>

## COVID, ECONOMIC SYSTEM JUSTIFICATION, POLITICAL IDEOLOGY

1994, p. 741), is a system justifying belief about legitimizing inequality. Similarly, Belief in a Just World is a system justifying ideology that taps into the extent to which people believe they get what they deserve in life and are responsible for their own fate (Furnham, 2003). Importantly, “System-justifying tendencies...may stem, at least partially, from epistemic...needs to manage uncertainty and threat” (Jost, Blount, Pfeffer, & Hunyady, 2003, p. 60).

ESJ is a specific form of system justification that assesses the extent to which an individual justifies and endorses the current *economic system*. COVID has disrupted the status quo vis-à-vis human health and the economy, posing a threat to both these dimensions of our existence. The health dimension captures infections, mortality (numbers and rate), and short- and long-term effects of infection. The economic dimension represents increased unemployment and the consequent financial stress, changing the way we perform our jobs, restriction on the type of work that can be done in person versus digitally, how and when schools and universities might begin to operate normally, a re-conceptualization of the type of jobs that are essential versus not, and firms’ resources and capabilities leading to threat of closure. ESJ concerns itself with the economic system and consequently, we expect that motivations to justify the status quo in the economic system would be associated with the tendency to emphasize Economic Revival over Virus Containment. Specifically, as with other system justifying beliefs, if the existing economic system is threatened (as it is in the current COVID context), high ESJ individuals will be motivated to defend and bolster it “even at the expense of personal and group interest” (Jost & Banaji, 1994, p. 2). In short, higher (versus lower) ESJ scores should predict support for Economic Revival (versus Virus Containment).

### **Political Ideology**



## COVID, ECONOMIC SYSTEM JUSTIFICATION, POLITICAL IDEOLOGY

We also investigate Political Ideology (PI) as a predictor in our testing, for several reasons. First and foremost, it has been posited that one of the elements of PI architecture is acceptance/rejection of economic inequality. In other words, PI and economic considerations are theoretically enmeshed (Jost, Glaser, Kruglanski, & Sulloway, 2003; Conover & Feldman, 1981; Jost, Nosek, & Gosling, 2008). Second, as stated earlier, some believe that partisan political divisions drive the differential emphasis on Economic Revival and Virus Containment. Including PI in the conceptual model enables us to test this belief empirically. Third, ESJ and PI have been found to be related (Jost et al., 2003). If so, ignoring the effect of PI on dependent variables of interest could lead to results that are conflated.

An important recent development in PI scholarship has been the challenge to the empirical capture of PI in terms of a unidimensional bipolar conservative-liberal scale (Bouchard et al., 2003; Smith et al., 2017; Treier & Hillygus, 2009). It has been argued and shown that such a conceptualization may be too broad a generalization of an individual's political ideology. In accord, more fine-grained perspectives and frameworks have emerged that draw distinctions between economic and social dimensions of PI. Our operationalization takes this into account by featuring the Social and Economic Conservatism Scale (Everett, 2013) which is a more complete representation of political ideology subsuming both, its social and economic dimensions.

### **Psychological Mechanisms**

To illuminate the psychological foundations of the phenomenon fully and thoroughly, it is critical that we theoretically predict and provide evidentiary insights into the underlying process(es). In this paper we examine three potential psychological mechanisms/processes predicated on our predictions for preference for Economic Revival for high ESJ individuals and Virus Containment for low ESJ individuals.

## COVID, ECONOMIC SYSTEM JUSTIFICATION, POLITICAL IDEOLOGY

1. *Fairness/Legitimacy.* Judgments of the fairness and legitimacy of a system are at the heart of a system justifying belief. For instance, those who score high on social dominance orientation (SDO), a well-researched system justifying ideology, perceive inequality between social groups as fair and legitimate, which leads them to defend the status quo (Cotterill et al., 2014; Sibley & Duckitt, 2010). American respondents who scored higher on the more general system justification belief scale accorded greater fairness to typical dimensions of a society (van der Toorn, Berkics, & Jost (2010). Several scholars have also shown that endorsement of the status quo is greater when the status quo is seen as more legitimate (Haines & Jost, 2000; Jost, 2001; Tajfel, 1981; Tyler, 2006). Similarly, when the system's legitimacy is threatened, people try and justify inequalities and defend the status quo by showing increased reliance on stereotypes (Kay, Jost, & Young, 2005). In summary, perceived fairness and legitimacy is a viable candidate for the psychological process. Those who score high on ESJ when faced with a threat to the economic system should defend the current economic system and perceive actions that support it as fairer and more legitimate.
2. *Seriousness of the health situation.* People justify their preferred belief system by minimizing conflicting concerns (Kunda, 1990). This well-researched behavior, called motivated reasoning, as a human processing strategy is robust and is observed in innumerable settings (Ditto and Lopez 1992; Kruglanski 1980, 1990). For instance, de Mello, MacInnis, and Steward (2007) found that people are more likely to selectively search for favorable information about products that help them reach a goal, and view that information as more credible and trustworthy when their hopes of attaining the goal are threatened. Similarly, Paharia, Vohs, and Deshpandé (2013) found that people who

## COVID, ECONOMIC SYSTEM JUSTIFICATION, POLITICAL IDEOLOGY

want to justify vacationing in a locale that uses sweatshop labor are more likely to concur with economic justifications for such labor. In the COVID context, the ‘tradeoff’ in people’s preferences is between economic and health concerns. Those who prioritize Economic Revival should minimize concerns relating to Virus Containment to justify their bias. This should be reflected in high scoring ESJ individuals’ judgments of the seriousness of the health implications of COVID-19. In short, they should judge the seriousness of the health consequences to be lower than those who score low on ESJ.

3. *Human rights/freedom of speech.* Mandates on lockdowns and business closures may signify a fundamental challenge to human rights as expressed through freedom to make individual choices. Previous research has found a positive correlation between ESJ and neoliberal ideology, “a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade” (Harvey, [44], p. 2; Azevedo et al., 2019). Neoliberals prioritize personal freedom and choice above all else and believe that it should be up to the individual, rather than government, to decide how to support themselves and their families. As such, high ESJ individuals should judge economic re-opening and the freedom to go to work as aligned with human rights and liberties. Study 4 tests these three mechanisms.

**Empirics**

## COVID, ECONOMIC SYSTEM JUSTIFICATION, POLITICAL IDEOLOGY

Four studies – three conducted during April 2020 and one during May 2020, all on Amazon Mechanical Turk (Mturk) – examine ESJ’s and PI’s association with COVID19-specific beliefs. There are costs and benefits of using MTurk samples for experimental research (Crump, McDonnell, & Gureckis, 2013; Goodman, Cryder, & Cheema, 2012). However, Gosling and colleagues (Buhrmester, Kwang, & Gosling, 2011; Gosling, Vazire, Srivastava, & John, 2004) contend that MTurk data represent more diversity than US university samples, are less expensive, quicker to obtain, more efficient, and importantly, as reliable as those recruited from conventional research methods. Specific to the domain of our inquiry, undergraduates the prototypical sample in much of psychology lab studies may be less appropriate than MTurkers because of the lower perceived COVID-19 related threat to their age group. We provide more details of the sample for each study separately.

Study 1 explored ESJ’s and PI’s association with perceptions pertaining to the oft-mentioned rumor that China volitionally concealed the extent of the virus spread in its early evolution, presumably to protect its economic interests. We expect that the appropriateness of this concealment will be positively correlated with ESJ. Study 2 focused on firm-level pricing behavior and investigates ESJ’s and PI’s correlation with beliefs and judgments about price gouging practices implicated to be directly related to COVID. In study 3, we more directly probed preference for Economic Revival versus Virus Containment viewpoints. Respondents as small business (restaurant) owners made judgments about ‘shelter in place’, and we examined the extent to which these judgments were linked with ESJ and PI. Study 4 examined the relationship between ESJ and responses to Texas announcing the re-opening of its economy on May 18, 2020. It also tested the three psychological mechanisms delineated earlier.

## COVID, ECONOMIC SYSTEM JUSTIFICATION, POLITICAL IDEOLOGY

Each of these scenarios was taken from the evolution of the current pandemic and represents a phenomenon of relevance to the debate between Economic Revival versus Virus Containment. For instance, China's rumored concealment of the virus continues to be a question in the media as international relations with the country hit a road bump.<sup>18 19</sup> In study 1, we examine the idea that people who support China's purported concealment of the virus believe the country is warranted in protecting its economy and status quo. Price gouging is observed globally and routinely as a consequence of pandemics (Ferguson, Ellen, and Piscopo 2011; Culpepper and Block 2008).<sup>20</sup> Study 2 tests the acceptability of this practice during a time when many individuals and businesses are struggling to stay afloat. Restaurants representing small businesses have been affected all over the world due to COVID-19. OpenTable, a restaurant reservation web portal, reports that close to 60,000 restaurants globally have been struggling to stay open.<sup>21</sup> In addition, a negative impact on the restaurant industry has a cascading effect on related industries like liquor, food, fishing farming, transportation and logistics, furnishings, and decoration. Consequently, study 3 which captures judgments of 'shelter in place' was specifically situated in the context of a restaurant as a small business. Finally, Texas' announcement of re-opening the economy is similar to the decision taken by many other countries. For instance, economies of countries like Aruba, Austria, Bermuda, France, Iceland, Italy, Netherlands, Spain, and several others rely greatly on tourism. These countries' recent decision to open their economies partially or fully aligns with Texas' decision, albeit with different outcomes. Another feature of using Texas as an exemplar is that the state is primarily

---

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/08/world/asia/coronavirus-china-narrative.html>

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/06/world/coronavirus-update-us-usa.html>

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.reedsmith.com/en/perspectives/2020/06/global-risks-of-charging-unfair-and-excessive-prices-in-times-of-covid19>

<sup>21</sup> <https://knoema.com/znwbjec/covid-19-forces-restaurant-closures-worldwide>

## COVID, ECONOMIC SYSTEM JUSTIFICATION, POLITICAL IDEOLOGY

conservative and testing our prediction of ESJ as the driver of our DVs instead of political ideology faces a more stringent test in this context. Notably, even after almost 6 months of COVID-19, each of these scenarios is still representative of the questions facing policy makers, businesses, and citizens, presumably because they capture abiding concerns relating to this pandemic.

A consistent picture emerges across the four studies – ESJ predicts support for Economic Revival/Virus Containment. As compared to low ESJ respondents, high ESJ participants judge China as more justified in concealing the extent of COVID-19 incidence within its borders (study 1), price gouging as more acceptable (study 2), ‘shelter in place’ as less desirable (study 3), and Texas’ economy re-opening as more legitimate and preferred (study 4). Study 4 also documents each of the three mechanisms playing a significant role in the outcomes associated with ESJ. PI also has an effect on these judgments when it is the sole predictor. However, its impact is diminished after accounting for ESJ.

### **Study 1: Appropriateness of China’s Perceived Concealment of the Pandemic**

*“Blaming China for coronavirus isn’t just dangerous. It misses the point.”<sup>22</sup>*

The origins of COVID-19 have been debated since its early days. Some people believe that China volitionally concealed the COVID situation and its extent within its borders. As a backdrop to study 1, the first COVID case came to light on December 8, 2019. There were 571 cases on January 22 that increased to 2,800+ by January 27. It is widely speculated that prior to the epidemic going global, there may have been lack of transparency in China about the extent and seriousness of the crisis. *YiMagazine*, an online journal published a special report titled “The Puzzle of No New Case for 12 Days after 6 January,” revealing that from January 11 to 16, no

---

<sup>22</sup> The Guardian (2020, April 10). <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/apr/10/blaming-china-coronavirus-pandemic-capitalist-globalisation-scapegoat>

## COVID, ECONOMIC SYSTEM JUSTIFICATION, POLITICAL IDEOLOGY

new cases were reported in Wuhan. This raised concerns of deliberate concealment, potential of misleading the public, and loss of an opportunity to contain the virus spread. Subsequently, several news reports either omitted updates on the epidemic or reported misleading information to shift the public's attention and underplay the problem. While China's concealment is still speculative, study 1 focuses on this speculation and examines who might be more supportive of this concealment, that many consider was unethical.

### Participants and Method

159 MTurk workers from the US participated for a monetary incentive of \$0.50. Their demographic characteristics were as follows: *Gender*: female: 45.9%, unreported gender: 1.9%; *Age*: median age range: 35-44 years; *Ethnicity*: Caucasian American: 70.4%; Asian: 12.6%; African American: 8.2%; Hispanic: 4.4%; Others: 3.4%; *Location*<sup>23</sup>: Northeast: 16.3%; Midwest: 21.4%; South: 30.8%; West: 31.5%). They first responded to the 17-item ESJ scale (Jost et al., 2003; see supplementary appendix). Examples of these statements include “Economic positions are legitimate reflections of people’s achievements” and “Most people who don’t get ahead in our society should not blame the system; they have only themselves to blame.” Participants expressed their opinion on a 9-point scale (1 = Strong Disagree; 9 = Strongly Agree). After reverse scoring the relevant items, higher scores reflect higher ESJ ( $\alpha = 0.82$ ).

---

<sup>23</sup> *Northeastern States*: New England, Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont, New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania;

*Midwestern States*: Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, Wisconsin, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, and South Dakota;

*Southern States*: Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, District of Columbia, West Virginia, Alabama, Kentucky, Mississippi, Tennessee, Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Texas;

*Western States*: Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah, Wyoming, Alaska, California, Hawaii, Oregon, and Washington.

## COVID, ECONOMIC SYSTEM JUSTIFICATION, POLITICAL IDEOLOGY

Participants then responded to the Social Economic and Conservatism Scale (SEC Scale;  $\alpha = 0.825$ ) as a proxy for PI. This measure taps into the extent to which a respondent is conservative and as explained earlier, serves as a more detailed and layered proxy for PI (Everett, 2013). It has been used successfully in examining the relationship between conservatism and parenting (Kerry & Murray, 2018), analytical cognitive style (Saribay & Yilmaz, 2017), and confirmation bias vis-à-vis fake news (Kim, Moravec, & Dennis, 2019). Participants gave a score of between 0 (more negative feelings) and 100 (more positive feelings) towards 7 social (e.g., abortion, religion) and 5 economic (e.g., limited government, business) domains believed to separate liberals from conservatives (see supplementary appendix). Social items reflect endorsement of traditional values while economic items reflect attitudes toward government involvement and regulation of the economy. After reverse scoring as appropriate, the aggregate score served as a measure of political orientation, with a higher aggregate score indicating a more conservative ideology. As found in earlier research, ESJ and SEC were moderately correlated ( $r = 0.60$ ).

Next, participants read an excerpt from a news article published on *Bloomberg.com* on April 1, 2020. The article highlighted US intelligence community's belief that China made efforts to conceal the initial outbreak of COVID-19 (see supplementary appendix). Respondents were asked to assume that the article was accurate, and to judge China's choice of masking COVID-19's reality within its borders, using two questions, "If China concealed the coronavirus outbreak in its country to prevent damage to its businesses, to what extent do you agree that it did the right thing?" and "If China concealed the coronavirus outbreak in its country to prevent widespread panic, to what extent do you agree that it did the right thing?" (1 = Disagree; 9 = Agree). These responses were positively correlated ( $r = .71, p < .001$ ) and aggregated into an



## COVID, ECONOMIC SYSTEM JUSTIFICATION, POLITICAL IDEOLOGY

index of judgments about the appropriateness of China's actions. Higher scores indicate higher perceived appropriateness. Finally, respondents shared demographic information including gender, ethnicity, age, and occupational status.

### Results and Discussion

A three-step hierarchical regression analysis (HRA) tested the impact of ESJ and SEC on appropriateness judgments. The first step included only control variables (i.e., gender, age, occupation, and ethnicity), the second included control variables and SEC (mean-centered), and the third added ESJ (mean-centered) to the aforementioned variables. Table 1 reports means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations between the variables.

The results reveal that the control variables did not contribute significantly to the model (see Table 2). Adding SEC explained about 6.7% of the variation in attitudes toward China's concealment over and above the control variables,  $F(1, 139) = 11.764, p < 0.001$ . Importantly, including ESJ to the model explained an additional 5.5% of the variation, and this change in  $R^2$  was significant  $F(1, 138) = 10.389, p = 0.002$ . The full model was also significant,  $F(20, 138) = 2.472, p = 0.001$ . In the final step, ESJ was a significant predictor of judgments of China's attempt to conceal the virus ( $B = 0.587, s.e. = .182, t(138) = 3.223, p = .002$ ) while SEC was not ( $B = .014, s.e. = .014, t(138) = 0.986, p > .32$ ).

The results of study 1 support our hypothesis that ESJ is a significant predictor of judgments of China's handling of the virus, even after accounting for the effect of political ideology. In fact, once ESJ was accounted for, SEC was no longer a significant predictor of judgments. In study 2, we focus on the acceptability of price gouging as a potential tradeoff between economic and public health concerns specific to ESJ and SEC.

## COVID, ECONOMIC SYSTEM JUSTIFICATION, POLITICAL IDEOLOGY

**Study 2: Acceptability of Price Gouging**

*“As Covid-19 Spreads....users on Amazon's forum debate the ethics of raising prices during emergencies.”<sup>24</sup>*

Favor and Lamont (2009) describe a situation pertinent to study 2: “In 1996, Hurricane Fran struck North Carolina, leaving over a million people in the Raleigh-Durham area without power. Without any way of refrigerating food, infant formula, or insulin, and without any idea of when power would be restored, people were desperate for ice, but existing supplies quickly sold out. Four young men from Goldsboro, which was not significantly affected by the storm, rented refrigerated trucks, bought 500 bags of ice for US \$1.70 per bag, and drove to Raleigh. The price they charged for the ice was US\$12 per bag—more than seven times what they paid for it” (Zwolinski, 2008 p. 347).

The illustration above exemplifies the practice of price gouging, charging excessive prices on products in high demand (typically 25% or more above regular prices) because of limited supply. Price gouging is observed in normal as well as crisis times and is controversial as there is ambiguity about its legality and ethicality. This ambiguity is reflected in the US Federal Trade Commission’s (FTC) response to price manipulation by the oil industry following Katrina. FTC stated: “...given the uncertainty about what constitutes an unconscionable, excessive, or exorbitant price, and the paucity of decisions on the issue, statutes based on any of these terms are likely to be difficult to enforce”.

As a consequence, firms sometimes engage in the practice despite policy makers’ and consumers’ concerns. It has been argued that from an economic perspective, price gouging

---

<sup>24</sup> Matsakis, L. (2020, February 25). As Covid-19 Spreads, Amazon Tries to Curb Mask Price Gouging. *Wired*, <https://www.wired.com/story/covid-19-amazon-curb-face-mask-price-gouging/>

## COVID, ECONOMIC SYSTEM JUSTIFICATION, POLITICAL IDEOLOGY

following a crisis (e.g., a natural disaster) “is often due to increased costs of supply and the market reacting appropriately to shortages, and not due to suppliers taking advantage of disaster victims” (Wilson, 2014; p. 54). While there are ethical issues associated with this practice (Zwolinski, 2008), some economists contend that if firms are unable to cover costs in emergency times, they risk having to lay off workers or even close down (Culpepper & Block, 2008). This argument offers an economic reason in favor of price gouging rather than one rooted in exploitation. Notably, Nill and Schibrowsky (2007) note price gouging as a key aspect of marketing associated with ethical dimensions and call for more research: “there is a void of ethical research pertaining to pricing, such as price gouging, prestige pricing, rebates, and price advertising” (p. 272). Study 2 helped bridge this gap by examining responses to price gouging during COVID-19. We expected that high ESJ participants will be more forgiving of such a practice as compared to low ESJ participants.

### **Participants and Method**

267 MTurk respondents from the US participated for a monetary incentive of \$0.50. Their demographic indicators were: *Gender*: female: 45.9%, unreported gender: 1.9%; *Age*: median age range: 35-44 years; *Ethnicity*: Caucasian American: 74.2%; Asian: 9.7%; African American: 8.6%; Hispanic: 5.6%; Others: 1.9%; *Location*: Northeast: 14.6%; Midwest: 17.6%; South: 39.3%; West: 28.5%). They responded to the 17-item ESJ scale from study 1, and then were randomly assigned to either a high-price (over 700% higher than normal price) or a low-price condition (about 60% higher). Next they read a news article excerpt from the website [www.theintercept.com](http://www.theintercept.com) dated April 1, 2020. Names, identities, and some other details were hidden/masked for confidentiality reasons. The high-price condition read:

## COVID, ECONOMIC SYSTEM JUSTIFICATION, POLITICAL IDEOLOGY

### Prices of N95 Masks

*“The market for N95 respirator masks has continued to swell during the coronavirus situation. Tuesday, John Messinger, representative of a manufacturer of these masks insisted that it is committed to combating the inflation of prices for its products used during the coronavirus pandemic. In a statement, he promised that it “will aggressively pursue third-parties that seek to take advantage of this crisis. We are working with administrations around the world.” Several organizations include religious congregations, unions, schools, community health centers, and other civic institutions, began to investigate whether they might be able to arrange a purchase of some of the supplies themselves. Among the suppliers they identified was a distributor who claimed last week to have millions of N95 masks. These masks should cost \$1.27 each according to the manufacturer’s price list released yesterday, the dealer was charging \$9.50 per mask.”*

The low-price condition excerpt was identical except the price was indicated as \$2.05.

Respondents next reported their perceptions of price fairness (Ferguson, Ellen, & Piscopo, 2011) using four items on 9-point scales. Specifically, they reported the extent to which they believed the price being charged was “Very Inexpensive(1)Very Expensive(9)”; “A Real Bargain(1)/A Real Rip off (9)”; “Unfair(1)/Fair(9)”; and “Unsatisfactory(1)/Satisfactory(9)”;  $\alpha = .90$  (the first two items were reverse scored so that a high score indicates greater perceptions of price fairness). Then, we examined respondents’ purchase likelihood with 6-items on a 9-point scale (e.g., “If I bought the N95 masks from this manufacturer, I feel I would be getting my money’s worth”; 1 = Strongly Disagree; 9 = Strongly Agree; see supplementary appendix). The scale was scored such that higher scores indicate greater purchase likelihood ( $\alpha = .96$ ). We next measured participants’ attributional beliefs regarding the reasons underlying the price being charged, on a four-item, 9-point scale (e.g., “The manufacturer is serving its own interests”; 1 = Strongly Disagree; 9 = Strongly Agree;  $\alpha = .88$ ; higher scores show greater pro-manufacturer versus pro-consumer interests; see supplementary appendix). Participants were then administered the SEC scale, followed by the same demographic items used in study 1.

## COVID, ECONOMIC SYSTEM JUSTIFICATION, POLITICAL IDEOLOGY

### Results and Discussion

We conducted a series of five-step hierarchical regression analyses to test the effect of SEC, ESJ, price manipulation, and price x ESJ interaction on each of our dependent variables. The first step included only control variables (i.e., participants' gender, age, occupation, and ethnicity), the second featured control variables and SEC (mean-centered), the third added price (0 = low, 1 = high), the fourth added ESJ (mean-centered), and the fifth added the interaction between ESJ and price (see Tables 3-6 for summary results).

#### *Price Fairness*

The control variables accounted for 7.9% of the variation in perceptions of price fairness, but this effect was not significant,  $F(17, 249) = 1.250, p > 0.22$ . Adding SEC explained an additional 6.2% of the variation,  $F(1, 248) = 17.743, p < 0.001$ , while adding the price manipulation accounted for another 3.9%,  $F(1, 247) = 11.653, p < 0.001$ . The inclusion of ESJ resulted in an additional 4.4% of variance explained, and this change in  $R^2$  was significant  $F(1, 246) = 14.006, p < 0.001$ . The interaction term did not contribute significantly to the model,  $F < 1$ . However, the full model was significant,  $F(21, 245) = 3.379, p < 0.001$ . In the final step of the model, both ESJ ( $B = 0.526, s.e. = .151, t(245) = 3.475, p < .001$ ) and price ( $B = -0.879, s.e. = .251, t(245) = -3.500, p < .001$ ) were significant predictors of perceptions of price fairness, while SEC was not ( $B = .012, s.e. = .009, t(245) = 1.342, p > .18$ ). Unsurprisingly, people generally found the higher (vs. lower) price to be less fair. Consistent with our hypothesis, high ESJ individuals perceived price gouging as fairer and less excessive than low ESJ individuals.

#### *Purchase Likelihood*

The control variables alone explained about 7.6% of the variation in purchase likelihood,  $F(17, 249) = 1.204, p > 0.26$ . SEC explained 7.5% of the variation over and above the control

## COVID, ECONOMIC SYSTEM JUSTIFICATION, POLITICAL IDEOLOGY

variables,  $F(1, 248) = 21.890, p < 0.001$ , while price explained an additional 2.7%,  $F(1, 247) = 8.232, p = 0.004$ . Including ESJ explained another 5.5% of the variation, and this change in  $R^2$  was significant,  $F(1, 246) = 17.527, p < 0.001$ . The interaction term did not contribute significantly to the model ( $F < 1$ ), but the full model was significant,  $F(21, 245) = 3.567, p < 0.001$ . In the final step, both ESJ ( $B = 0.655, s.e. = .169, t(245) = 3.872, p < .001$ ) and price ( $B = -0.832, s.e. = .281, t(245) = -2.963, p = .003$ ) were significant predictors of purchase likelihood, whereas SEC was not ( $B = 0.015, s.e. = .010, t(245) = 1.456, p > .14$ ). These results suggest that people are less likely to purchase masks when price gouging is more (vs. less) severe, but high ESJ individuals are more likely to purchase masks even when the price increase is excessive (i.e., over 700% more than normal).

### *Attributional Beliefs*

The control variables explained about 10% of the variation in attributional beliefs, a marginally significant effect,  $F(17, 249) = 1.627, p = 0.058$ . SEC explained 6.2% of the variation in purchase likelihood decisions over and above the control variables,  $F(1, 248) = 18.274, p < 0.001$ . Adding price explained only 0.6% of the variation, which was not a significant change  $F(1, 247) = 1.776, p > 0.18$ . Including ESJ accounted for an additional 2.7% of the variation, and this change in  $R^2$  was significant  $F(1, 246) = 8.347, p = 0.004$ . The interaction term did not contribute significantly to the model,  $p > .28$ , but the full model was significant,  $F(21, 245) = 2.895, p < 0.01$ . In the final step, ESJ significantly predicted attributional beliefs ( $B = -0.467, s.e. = .156, t(245) = -2.996, p = .003$ ), whereas price did not ( $B = 0.349, s.e. = .259, t(245) = 1.347, p > 0.17$ ). The effect of SEC was marginal ( $B = -0.017, s.e. = .010, t(245) = -1.777, p = .077$ ).

Study 2 examined the relationship between ESJ, SEC, and the acceptability of two degrees of price gouging. The results complement those of study 1 by showing that ESJ is a more

## COVID, ECONOMIC SYSTEM JUSTIFICATION, POLITICAL IDEOLOGY

reliable predictor of perceptions of price fairness, purchase likelihood, and attributions of the manufacturer than political ideology. High (vs. low) ESJ individuals were more favorable toward price increases for masks, as indicated by their judgments of price fairness, greater purchase likelihood, and positive attributions for the manufacturer's price increase.

### **Study 3: Desirability of 'Shelter in Place'**

*"A store filed (a lawsuit) asking that the government's emergency shelter-in-place ordinance be declared unconstitutional."*<sup>25</sup>

A strategy used globally to prevent virus contagion is 'shelter in place' which is essentially 'stay at home', with some variations. In some parts of the world, people have been mandated to follow this strategy or face monetary fines and/or other legal consequences for violation. While this strategy is considered health-protective, one of its outcomes is that several parts of the economy come to a standstill because of it. Some also contend that it harms our education system by forcing teachers to migrate to online instruction without training. Yet another criticism of this practice by eliminating and/or severely constraining our social interactions is compromising on our relationships and curtailing our fundamental freedoms and human rights. There are varying degrees of ethicality associated with these consequences of shelter in place, affording us an opportunity to test our prediction that high (vs. low) ESJ people will be less favorable towards shelter in place directives. We also test the possibility that the prevalence of COVID in the community moderates this effect.

### **Participants and Method**

275 MTurkers from the US participated in the study in exchange for \$0.50. Their demographic characteristics were: *Gender*: female: 44.4%, unreported gender: 0.4%; *Age*:

---

<sup>25</sup> Athens Banner Herald (2020, April 25). Athens Leaders: Kemp ending shelter in place too soon. <https://www.onlineathens.com/news/20200430/athens-leaders-kemp-ending-shelter-in-place-too-soon>

## COVID, ECONOMIC SYSTEM JUSTIFICATION, POLITICAL IDEOLOGY

median age range: 35-44 years; *Ethnicity*: Caucasian American: 74.2%; Asian: 10.9%; African American: 7.6%; Hispanic: 5.8%; Others: 1.5%; *Location*: Northeast: 18.9%; Midwest: 16.4%; South: 36.7%; West: 27.6%). Respondents were randomly assigned to imagine being small business owners in a country that is facing either a high incidence or low incidence of COVID. Further, they were informed that the government was considering shelter in place as a strategy to prevent virus contagion. The high incidence condition read as follows:

*“Imagine you own a popular restaurant on an island nation which is accessible by flight and a water ferry. This restaurant provides you and your family the livelihood you need for sustenance. The population of the island is approximately 100,000. Further, there are over 1,000 coronavirus cases reported on the island thus far, with 58 deaths. The head of the country is considering ‘shelter in place’, a practice when residents of a community will be asked to stay at home and avoid any uncertainty outside. This practice encourages that people ‘self-quarantine’ until further notice. Several cities, states, and countries have asked their residents to follow shelter in place guidelines.”*

In the low incidence scenario, the number of cases was reported to be 5 and the number of deaths to be 0. Participants were then probed on their support for shelter in place orders using 4 items ( $\alpha = .85$ ) “How likely are you to support shelter in place if it is put into practice?” (1 = Not at all likely, 9 = Very likely); “Please circle the number that best represents your opinion below regarding whether shelter in place should be optional or mandated” (1 = It should be optional, 9 = It should be mandatory); Please tell us the extent to which agree or disagree with the statements “Shelter in place helps saves lives”, and “Shelter in place is a violation of human rights” (reverse-scored; 1 = Strongly Disagree, 9 = Strong Agree).

As in studies 1 and 2, participants completed the SECS and reported their demographics. before leaving. Tables 7 and 8 report the summary results of the hierarchical regression analysis.

## Results and Discussion

As in the previous studies, we used HRA to test our predictions. The first step included only control variables (i.e., participants’ gender, age, occupation, and ethnicity), the second



## COVID, ECONOMIC SYSTEM JUSTIFICATION, POLITICAL IDEOLOGY

added SEC (mean-centered), the third incorporated incidence rate (0 = low, 1 = high), the fourth added ESJ (mean-centered), and the fifth added interaction between ESJ and incidence rate.

The results reveal that the control variables account for 9.6% of the variation in support for shelter-in-place, which was significant,  $F(17, 257) = 1.614, p = 0.001$ . Adding SEC explained an additional 10.9% of the variance,  $F(1, 256) = 35.074, p < 0.001$ , and adding virus incidence rate explained another 1%,  $F(1, 255) = 3.327, p = 0.069$ . Importantly, including ESJ to the model explained an additional 6.7% of the variation over and above the aforementioned factors, and this change in  $R^2$  was significant  $F(1, 254) = 23.810, p < 0.001$ . The interaction between ESJ and incidence rate did not contribute significantly to the model,  $F(1, 253) = 1.111, p > .29$ , but the full model was significant,  $F(21, 253) = 4.825, p < 0.001$

In the final step, ESJ was a significant predictor for support for shelter in place ( $B = -.611, s.e. = .142, t(253) = -4.299, p < .001$ ). As hypothesized, high ESJ individuals were less likely to support shelter in place than low ESJ individuals. SEC also had a significant, albeit smaller, effect ( $B = -.018, s.e. = .008, t(253) = -2.327, p < .05$ ), and incidence rate had a marginally significant effect on the outcome, ( $B = .356, s.e. = .207, t(253) = 1.721, p = .086$ ). The results of study 3 are consistent with those in studies 1 and 2 in several ways. First, conservatism was a weaker predictor of shelter in place than ESJ. Second, by indicating less support for shelter in place orders, even in a situation in which the virus spread is relatively high, high ESJ individuals revealed a priority for Economic Revival over Virus Containment.

### **Study 4: Support for Reopening Texas' Economy**

*"Reopening the Economy Would Add 233,000 Deaths by July but Save Millions of Jobs."*<sup>26</sup>

---

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.usnews.com/news/economy/articles/2020-05-01/reopening-the-economy-would-add-233-000-deaths-by-july-but-save-millions-of-jobs>

## COVID, ECONOMIC SYSTEM JUSTIFICATION, POLITICAL IDEOLOGY

In study 4, we investigate the relationship between ESJ and support for reopening the Texas economy, as well as several potential mechanisms for the relationship between ESJ and Economic Revival versus Virus Containment. Restricting the state in question ensures all participants are thinking about the same parameters when making judgments about a state's potential reopening. Several states started reopening their economies in May 2020, and we chose to study Texas' reopening for several reasons. With a \$1.9 trillion economy, its size is second only to California,<sup>27</sup> making it an important state not only to its millions of residents, but to the US at large. Unlike California, however, Texas resolved to reopen relatively early, and its decision has been called "one of the quickest and most expansive efforts to reignite the economy."<sup>28</sup> This study also attempts to manipulate high and low ESJ using a scenario, rather than relying solely on self-reported beliefs.

### Participants and Method

284 MTurk workers from the US participated in the study in exchange for \$0.75. Their demographic indicators were: *Gender*: female: 37.3%, unreported gender: 0.7%; *Age*: median age range: 25-34 years; *Ethnicity*: Caucasian American: 68.4%; Asian: 15.9%; African American: 7.8%; Hispanic: 5.8%; Others: 2.1%; *Location*<sup>29</sup>: Northeast: 15.6%; Midwest: 18.3%; South: 41.7%; West: 24.4%). The slightly higher incentive was justified because the instrument

---

<sup>27</sup> <https://www.forbes.com/places/tx/>

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2020/may/11/texas-reopen-economy-coronavirus-covid-19>

<sup>29</sup> *Northeastern States*: New England, Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont, New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania;  
*Midwestern States*: Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, Wisconsin, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, and South Dakota;  
*Southern States*: Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, District of Columbia, West Virginia, Alabama, Kentucky, Mississippi, Tennessee, Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Texas;  
*Western States*: Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah, Wyoming, Alaska, California, Hawaii, Oregon, and Washington.

## COVID, ECONOMIC SYSTEM JUSTIFICATION, POLITICAL IDEOLOGY

took a bit longer to complete than those used in the first three studies. In this study, we attempted an ESJ manipulation (high vs. low) to examine causal impact of high ESJ individuals' preference for Economic Revival over Virus Containment. The high ESJ condition read as follows:

*“Scientists have been conducting research all over the globe for the past 4 decades to understand an economic system. They have made several observations that reveal some consistent and enduring patterns. Individual economic success depends on how hard you work rather than the help you get. The harder you work, for the most part, the more economically successful you are. In that sense, most people who don't get ahead in society have only themselves to blame, and they should not blame the system. In essence, economic positions are indicative of people's achievements and it is extremely hard to change the economic system to make things equal. Consequently, extreme wealth and extreme poverty can co-exist, and there will be poor people and there will be unemployed people. Inequalities are simply a part of economic life, and the economic system is often a fair reflection of the 'laws of nature'.”*

The low ESJ condition was rewritten to attribute individual economic success to an unfair economic system and not indicative of how hard one works. Participants were then asked to state the main points of the article they read. The manipulation was not successful at creating variation between high and low ESJ individuals as hoped, perhaps because ESJ is a more deeply embedded construct in the minds of people and context independent.

Thus, as with studies 1, 2, and 3, as well as prior literature, we used the ESJ scale as the independent variable of interest, following which participants then read a recent excerpt from a business website about reopening of the Texas economy (see supplementary appendix). The main dependent measure comprised of nine questions about respondents' comfort with and support for the reopening (e.g., “To what extent do you support the decision of reopening Texas?” 1 = Not at all, 9 = Very much so) ( $\alpha = .93$ ). Participants also responded to four exploratory items regarding their intentions to complain about the reopening (see supplementary appendix for the items and the findings).

Measures of the mediators followed next (see supplementary appendix for all items). Participants first answered questions about the perceived seriousness of the crisis, on two items

## COVID, ECONOMIC SYSTEM JUSTIFICATION, POLITICAL IDEOLOGY

(“I don’t believe the number of cases will be as high as predicted by the UT Southwest Medical Center, once the Texas economy reopens” and “I don’t believe the coronavirus situation in Texas is as serious as it is made out to be” anchored by Strongly Disagree (1) and Strongly Agree (9);  $r = 0.733, p < .001$ ). These items were reverse scored so that higher values indicate greater perceived severity. Next, they responded to four items about the fairness/legitimacy of Texas reopening its economy for businesses (e.g., “Is it fair for Texas to reopen its economy on Monday?”; “How legitimate is it for Texas to reopen its economy on Monday?” 1 = Not at all, 7 = Extremely;  $\alpha = .84$ ; higher scores indicated higher judgments of fairness/legitimacy). Finally, participants answered seven questions about human rights and freedom issues around the Texas reopening (e.g., Please tell us the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements: “Reopening the Texas economy is showing respect for freedom of expression”; 1 = Definitely Disagree, 9 = Definitely Agree;  $\alpha = .72$ ; higher scores indicate judgments of greater freedom).

As in the previous studies, participants then completed the SECS and reported their demographics before being dismissed. Tables 9 reports the correlations, means and standard deviations, and Table 10 reports the summary results of the hierarchical regression analysis.

### **Results and Discussion**

We first performed HRA to test our predictions of ESJ on the dependent measures and mediator variables. The first step included only control variables (i.e., participants’ gender, age, occupation, and ethnicity), the next added SECS (mean-centered), and the third step included dispositional ESJ (mean-centered). We report the HRA results for each dependent measure and mediator below.

## COVID, ECONOMIC SYSTEM JUSTIFICATION, POLITICAL IDEOLOGY

### ***DV: Support for Reopening***

The results revealed that the control variables accounted for 16.9% of the variation on support for reopening the economy, which was significant,  $F(19, 264) = 2.830, p < 0.001$ . Adding SEC explained another 26.2% of the variation,  $F(1, 263) = 121.484, p < 0.001$ . Including ESJ in the model explained an additional 13.6% of the variation over and above the aforementioned factors, and this change in  $R^2$  was significant  $F(1, 262) = 82.605, p < 0.001$ . The full model with all predictors was also significant,  $F(21, 262) = 16.400, p < 0.001$ . In the final step of the model, ESJ was a significant predictor for support ( $B = .624, s.e. = .069, t(262) = 9.089, p < .001$ ). As hypothesized, high ESJ individuals were more likely to support reopening than low ESJ individuals. SEC also had a significant effect on support ( $B = 0.28, s.e. = .005, t(262) = 5.540, p < .001$ ).

### ***Mediator: Perceived Seriousness of the Crisis***

The control variables accounted for 11.2% of the variation on perceived seriousness of the crisis, which was significant,  $F(19, 264) = 1.747, p < 0.05$ . Adding SEC explained an additional 13.4% of the variance,  $F(1, 263) = 46.889, p < 0.001$ . Including ESJ explained another 12.1% of the variation over and above the aforementioned factors, and this change in  $R^2$  was significant  $F(1, 262) = 49.961, p < 0.001$ . The full model with all predictors was also significant,  $F(21, 262) = 7.228, p < 0.001$ . In the final step, ESJ was a significant predictor of perceived seriousness of the COVID crisis ( $B = -.848, s.e. = .120, t(262) = -7.068, p < .001$ ), whereby high ESJ individuals perceived the crisis to be less serious than low ESJ individuals. SEC was also a significant predictor, though as earlier, its effect was smaller than that of ESJ ( $B = -0.21, s.e. = .009, t(262) = -2.342, p < .05$ ).

## COVID, ECONOMIC SYSTEM JUSTIFICATION, POLITICAL IDEOLOGY

### *Mediator: Fairness and Legitimacy of Reopening*

The control variables accounted for 17.2% of the variation on fairness judgements, which was significant,  $F(19, 264) = 2.886, p < 0.001$ . Adding SEC explained an additional 23.0% of the variance,  $F(1, 263) = 101.313, p < 0.001$ . Including ESJ explained 8.3% of the variation over and above the aforementioned factors, and this change in  $R^2$  was significant  $F(1, 262) = 42.066, p < 0.001$ . The full model with all predictors was also significant,  $F(21, 262) = 11.747, p < 0.001$ . In the final step of the model, both ESJ ( $B = .400, s.e. = .062, t(262) = 6.486, p < .001$ ) and SEC ( $B = .025, s.e. = .005, t(262) = 5.473, p < .001$ ) were significant predictors.

### *Mediator: Respect for Human Rights*

The control variables accounted for 19.0% of the variation on human rights, which was significant,  $F(19, 264) = 3.251, p < 0.001$ . Adding SEC explained an additional 17.1% of the variance,  $F(1, 263) = 70.436, p < 0.001$ . Including ESJ explained another 6.9% of the variation over and above the aforementioned factors, and this change in  $R^2$  was significant  $F(1, 262) = 31.716, p < 0.001$ . The full model with all predictors was also significant,  $F(21, 262) = 9.405, p < 0.001$ . In the final step of the model, both ESJ ( $B = .389, s.e. = .069, t(262) = 5.632, p < .001$ ) and SEC ( $B = .022, s.e. = .005, t(262) = 4.311, p < .001$ ) were significant predictors.

### *Multiple Mediation Analysis*

We theorized that all three mediating constructs (perceived seriousness, fairness/legitimacy for businesses, and respect for human rights) are associated with ESJ and the Economic Revival perspective. In this context, “the multiple-mediator model is likely to provide a more accurate assessment of mediation effects” (MacKinnon, Fairchild, & Fritz, 2007).

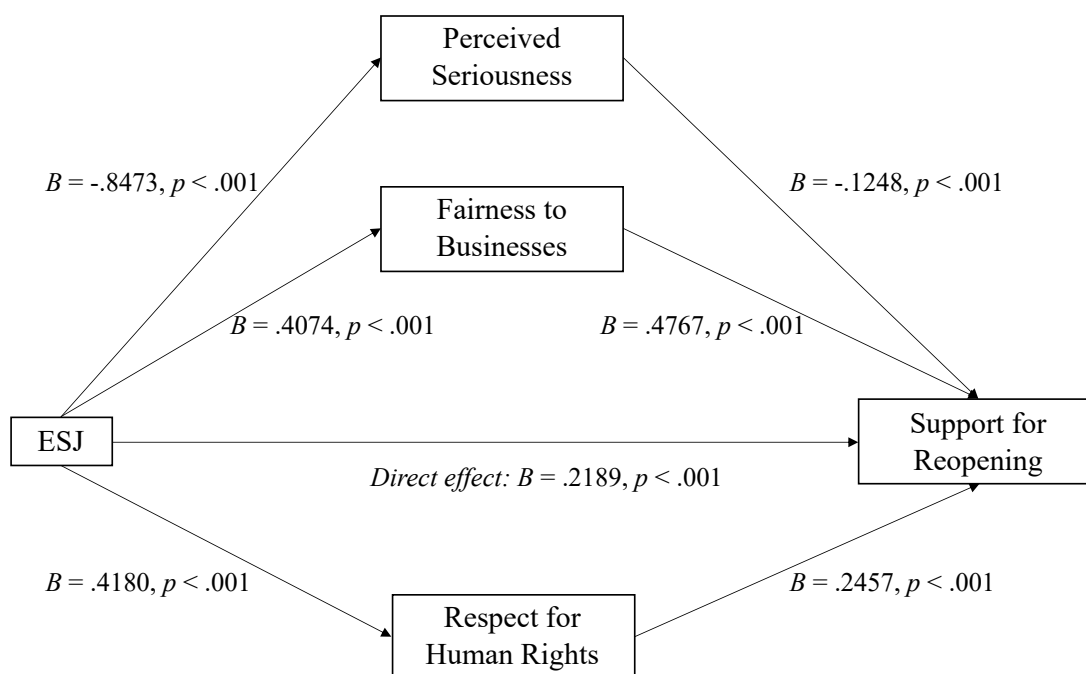
Therefore, we conducted a multiple mediation analysis to examine the total indirect effect when

## COVID, ECONOMIC SYSTEM JUSTIFICATION, POLITICAL IDEOLOGY

all three mediators are included in the model simultaneously, as well as the indirect effect of each mediator while controlling for the other mediators (Lockwood & MacKinnon, 1998).

A multiple mediation analysis was conducted with 10,000 bootstrap samples (Hayes 2017, model 4). Support for reopening the Texas economy was regressed on the three mediators which were regressed simultaneously on ESJ (mean-centered). SEC (mean-centered) was used as a covariate. The results revealed a significant total indirect effect,  $B = .4027$ , 95% CI = [0.2965, 0.5098]. Next, we examined the specific indirect effect of each of the three mediators. As predicted, all three mediators produced significant indirect effects of ESJ on support for reopening (seriousness:  $B = .1057$ , 95% CI = [0.0415, 0.1864]; fairness:  $B = .1942$ , 95% CI = [0.1057, 0.2918]; rights:  $B = .1027$ , 95% CI = [0.0447, 0.1699]) (see Figure 1).

**Figure 1**



The results of study 4 provide additional evidence for the focal hypothesis that ESJ is associated with a preference for Economic Revival over Virus Containment. High ESJ

## COVID, ECONOMIC SYSTEM JUSTIFICATION, POLITICAL IDEOLOGY

individuals were more likely to support reopening a large economy within the United States, even as health experts warn there could be dire effects of doing so too soon.<sup>30</sup> Consistent with previous studies, this effect continued to be prominent after controlling for SEC. Further, with respect to the three potential mechanisms, high ESJ individuals were more likely to believe that reopening the economy is fair and legitimate, respects people's rights, and perceived the COVID-19 crisis to be less serious than low ESJ individuals. All three of these factors significantly mediated the relationship between ESJ and support for reopening, providing insight into proximate psychological variables that contribute to bias toward Economic Revival.

### **General Discussion**

The unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic has led to millions of job losses, concomitant threats to job security, countless businesses struggling or shutting down, and over half a million deaths worldwide. Our research examines the impact of SEC and ESJ on judgments of four controversial consequences of COVID-19 that epitomize the tradeoff between Virus Containment and Economic Revival: China's perceived initial response to the outbreak, price gouging for masks, shelter in place orders, and re-opening the Texas economy. The results for each of the four studies with an aggregate sample size of close to 1,000 respondents representing varied US demographics support ESJ's role in predicting perceptions of the appropriateness of these actions more so than political ideology. Of note, ESJ and SEC were significantly correlated. However, the fact that SEC's effect was mitigated after accounting for ESJ suggests that the preference for Economic Revival may reside primarily in those conservatives who espouse an economic belief system that justifies the status quo.

---

<sup>30</sup> <https://www.npr.org/2020/05/09/853052174/public-health-experts-say-many-states-are-opening-too-soon-to-do-so-safely>



## COVID, ECONOMIC SYSTEM JUSTIFICATION, POLITICAL IDEOLOGY

The uniqueness of COVID-19 and the speed and span of its spread has created considerable ethical tension for policy makers and businesses/employers – that of prioritizing between two mutually reinforcing values of the collective good – saving the economy or saving lives. Hence, beyond the theoretical interest of distinguishing value-laden belief systems like ESJ from broader political ideologies like conservatism, the insights from this research may be useful in bridging the current political divide and nudging Americans to seek data-driven solutions proposed by the scientific community. Policy-makers could reduce uncertainty and address concerns about changes to the status quo by designing, implementing, and communicating policies that are proportional, equitable, inclusive, and concomitantly ethical, so as to effectively reach high ESJ individuals reluctant to prioritize virus containment and convince low ESJ individuals that choosing economic revival is not automatically partisan. For example, a high ESJ friendly policy may be to require firms receiving stimulus benefits to institute mandatory employee protections. A low ESJ policy may mandate mask wearing, equitable pricing, and disbursement of PPE supplies and vaccines to the most vulnerable and those with high social utility (e.g., medical professionals) as opposed to the highest bidders. Collectively they can provide important markers to enable effectual and ethical decision-making. Furthermore, for a country with a strong individualistic belief system like the US, a coordinated national response, versus an inconsistent state-by-state response, may help level the playing field for all citizens in critical response areas. Civic education and engagement that promotes understanding and acceptance of proposed solutions will be an important endeavor while ascertaining that the message is clear, consistent and unequivocal.<sup>31</sup> Such considerations are especially useful for politicians who often make crucial decisions based on guesswork about what their constituents

---

<sup>31</sup> <https://news.gallup.com/poll/311408/republicans-skeptical-covid-lethality.aspx>

## COVID, ECONOMIC SYSTEM JUSTIFICATION, POLITICAL IDEOLOGY

want or the best way to serve them. Such steps could also help high and low ESJ people see different perspectives and support middle way alternatives that may benefit the workforce which is experiencing hardship like never before in living memory, both economically and socially.

COVID-19 has presented a novel conundrum in business ethics. Perhaps the most fundamental decision businesses must make at this moment is whether to open at all. Risk of virus transmission increases with social activities, even with the best intentions and most stringent precautionary measures. In many cases, the decision of what to do is entirely up to the business owners and employees. For example, when an executive order closed down bars that do not sell food, some bars opted to offer simple concessions like \$1 “Cuomo chips” and “9 French fries” to be technically compliant with the rule.<sup>32</sup> Other bars realized the difficulty of social distancing when drinking alcohol, and vowed to remain closed even if it meant laying off employees and threatening the future of a business they built. When making these difficult choices, business leaders undoubtedly consider the Economic Revival over Virus Containment tradeoffs laid out in this paper.

In recent memory, US businesses have rarely been expected to ensure the health and other basic needs of their employees or customers. Now, some business owners refuse to remain beholden to the ever-changing policy directives on the pandemic and may voluntarily consider policies that go beyond mere compliance. Examples of ethical business practices aimed at employees in particular include flexible work schedules, reduced hours, part-time reduction in benefits, reassignments, shared work leave, ensuring furloughed workers have access to health insurance, voluntary retirement, directing some of the CSR budgets towards employees, and work with government to use mobile technology to speed up contact tracing exponentially. In

---

<sup>32</sup> [https://www.vice.com/en\\_us/article/dyz44j/bars-are-serving-ridiculous-dollar1-menu-items-to-stay-open-during-covid-restrictions](https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/dyz44j/bars-are-serving-ridiculous-dollar1-menu-items-to-stay-open-during-covid-restrictions)

## COVID, ECONOMIC SYSTEM JUSTIFICATION, POLITICAL IDEOLOGY

fact, in the absence of consistent policy directives, many businesses are voluntarily providing the public good of ‘health protection’ such as requiring masks to receive service, facilitating customer social distancing by creating one-way aisles, outdoor seating, and offering no-touch services where possible as a means to assure customers that they are cognizant of their safety concerns while continuing to offer services and remaining viable.

Despite its contribution to understanding the COVID-19 landscape, our research is not without limitations. First, all four studies are correlational, making statements of causation unreliable. We tried addressing this challenge by testing a home-grown manipulation for high and low ESJ beliefs based on the ESJ scale items but were unsuccessful. An argument in favor of correlational research in this case is that the dependent measures in all four studies are tied to the U.S. COVID-19 crisis, which did not start until approximately March, 2020. In contrast, belief systems such as ESJ are much more likely to have originated before the pandemic. It is thus reasonable to assume that beliefs about economic equality precede that of attitudes toward COVID-related issues, with the former impacting the latter. Regardless, it would be beneficial for future research to engender situational ESJ beliefs and examine their causal impact on attitudes toward current crises.

In addition, our findings may be bounded by the country setting (all respondents are from the US). Consistent with this speculation, early on, we used the examples of the US, Brazil, and India as more appropriate settings for our inquiry. Indeed Cichoka and Jost (2014) while comparing system justification in 20 countries representing capitalist and post-Communist societies conclude: “...there are lower levels of system justification in post-Communist countries. At the same time, we find that system justification possesses similar social and psychological antecedents, manifestations, and consequences in the two types of societies” (p. 6).

## COVID, ECONOMIC SYSTEM JUSTIFICATION, POLITICAL IDEOLOGY

The implication appears to be that the framework and the findings may need to be carefully interpreted in the context of countries where system justification may be at a lower level. It will be particularly insightful to test our model in these non-US settings.

It is also possible that other system justifying beliefs (e.g., SDO; Belief in a Just World) predict COVID-19 reactions. In fact, Jost and colleagues (2003) report significant correlations between several system justifying ideologies including ESJ, SDO, Power Distance Belief, and Belief in a Just World, among others. While these correlations may lead to the prediction that beliefs others than ESJ will follow a pattern similar to what we observed in this research, PI's effect was markedly less reliable than that of ESJ despite the positive correlation between the two constructs. In addition, other system justifying ideologies seem less proximate to the economy than ESJ. These considerations suggest that different types of system justifying ideologies will have varying degrees of impact on economic-relevant judgments, a hypothesis that should be investigated by future research.

Although MTurk samples are reliable, efficient, and representative (Buhrmester, Kwang, & Gosling, 2011), it would be useful to generalize the results of our studies to other samples. Considering the widespread impact of COVID, such cross-sample investigation is especially important. There are several other contexts that can offer additional evidence of ESJ's link with Economic Revival, and multiple questions with important ethical implications for future research to examine. For example, will high ESJ individuals be accepting of more deaths, particularly those of more vulnerable populations, if the economy turns around sooner as a consequence? Might high ESJ people be willing to try untested medication if doing so promises more expedient re-opening of the economy? Recently, cases have begun to emerge of suspected data suppression and manipulation relating to the infection and mortality rate of COVID. Taking a cue from this

## COVID, ECONOMIC SYSTEM JUSTIFICATION, POLITICAL IDEOLOGY

phenomenon, are high ESJ people willing to suppress mortality and/or medical efficacy evidence to catalyze businesses getting back into business? In some countries, governments are rumored to be using the COVID situation to take greater control of peoples' lives to further their agendas. Might COVID serve as a springboard for manipulating political agendas and even elections?

These and other questions are central to our future after COVID and they deserve to be explored. Never before has the world faced such a direct conflict between saving livelihoods and saving lives, a conflict replete with ethical, moral, monetary, and mortality related challenges and pitfalls. Our research takes this conflict head on. Our findings point to several psychological mechanisms that are responsible for a bias toward economic revival vs. virus containment, suggesting that such preferences are due to more than 'just politics.' Even though our investigation captures a moment in time specific to a global challenge evolving and morphing daily, the pandemic-related tension between the economy and public health, particularly in free market economies, seems to be a perennial one.<sup>33</sup>

---

<sup>33</sup> Ladd, Chris (2017, March 7) There is Never a Free Market in Health Care. Forbes, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbespr/2020/07/08/more-than-half-of-tycoons-on-2020-forbes-korea-rich-list-see-net-worth-shrink-amid-pandemic/#5ca176b65073>

COVID, ECONOMIC SYSTEM JUSTIFICATION, POLITICAL IDEOLOGY  
TABLES

**Table 1: Means, Standard Deviations, and Intercorrelations for Study 1 Variables (N = 159)**

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
1.ESJ	4.53	1.12	1	.599**	.328**	.146	-.107	-.144	.048	-.050	-.074	.093	.001	-.054	-.144	-.079	.023	.091	.099	.131	-.042	.026	-.012	-.029	.055	-.121	-.005
2.SECS	59.0	16.0	.599**	1	.244**	.114	-.081	-.120	.087	-.129	-.185*	.192*	.079	-.083	-.233**	-.160*	.010	.250**	.136	.176*	-.076	.069	.066	.076	-.148	-.048	-.070
3.Attitudes (DV)	3.36	2.11	.328**	.244**	1	-.054	.085	-.112	.197*	-.228**	.015	.003	-.037	-.127	.088	.105	-.125	.007	-.095	.048	-.089	.052	.080	-.040	-.025	-.075	-.068
4.Gender (M)	.52	.501	.146	.114	-.054	1	-.963**	-.145	-.036	.075	.105	-.044	-.040	-.118	.076	-.164*	.055	.046	.024	.108	-.083	.042	.021	.010	-.055	.073	-.145
5.Gender (F)	.46	.500	-.107	-.081	.085	-.963**	1	-.128	.076	-.064	-.097	.051	.048	-.104	-.098	.166*	-.036	-.028	-.011	-.104	-.073	-.012	-.013	.001	.069	-.067	-.035
6.Gender (UR)	.02	.136	-.144	-.120	-.112	-.145	-.128	1	-.146	-.043	-.032	-.025	-.030	.814**	.082	-.005	-.071	-.064	-.050	-.016	.574**	-.113	-.030	-.041	-.053	-.022	.660**
7.Occupation (E)	.77	.420	.048	.087	.197*	-.036	.076	-.146	1	-.574**	-.425**	-.333**	-.397**	-.209**	-.233**	.210**	.017	.013	-.044	-.074	-.147	.176*	-.030	-.113	-.112	.087	-.146
8.Occupation (UE)	.09	.284	-.050	-.129	-.228**	.075	-.064	-.043	-.574**	1	-.072	-.056	-.067	-.035	.141	-.090	-.050	.031	.029	-.035	-.025	-.139	.042	.069	.150	-.050	-.043
9.Occupation (S)	.05	.219	-.074	-.185*	.015	.105	-.097	-.032	-.425**	-.072	1	-.041	-.049	-.026	.420**	-.109	-.047	-.106	-.082	-.026	-.018	-.103	.091	.141	-.001	-.037	-.032
10.Occupation (R)	.03	.175	.093	.192*	.003	-.044	.051	-.025	-.333**	-.056	-.041	1	-.039	-.020	-.070	-.133	-.003	.011	.163*	.303**	-.014	.117	-.039	-.054	-.068	-.029	-.025
11.Occupation (O)	.04	.206	.001	.079	-.037	-.040	.048	-.030	-.397**	-.067	-.049	-.039	1	-.024	-.084	-.094	.117	.062	.020	-.024	-.017	-.063	-.046	.048	.103	-.034	-.030
12.Occupation (UR)	.01	.112	-.054	-.083	-.127	-.118	-.104	.814**	-.209**	-.035	-.026	-.020	-.024	1	-.044	.035	-.058	-.052	-.040	-.013	.705**	-.174*	-.024	-.034	-.043	-.018	.814**
13.Age (18-24)	.13	.340	-.144	-.233**	.088	.076	-.098	.082	-.233**	.141	.420**	-.070	-.084	-.044	1	-.288**	-.200*	-.180*	-.139	-.044	-.031	-.114	-.084	.155	.076	-.063	.082
14.Age (25-34)	.35	.479	-.079	-.160*	.105	-.164*	.166*	-.005	.210**	-.090	-.109	-.133	-.094	.035	-.288**	1	-.377**	-.341**	-.263**	-.083	-.059	-.013	.034	-.076	.038	.050	-.005
15.Age (35-44)	.21	.407	.023	.010	-.125	.055	-.036	-.071	.017	-.050	-.047	-.003	.117	-.058	-.200*	-.377**	1	-.237**	-.183*	-.058	-.041	-.144	.117	.017	.086	.116	-.071
16.Age (45-54)	.18	.382	.091	.250**	.007	.046	-.028	-.064	.013	.031	-.106	.011	.062	-.052	-.180*	-.341**	-.237**	1	-.165*	-.052	-.037	.119	-.019	.043	-.126	-.074	-.064
17.Age (55-64)	.11	.318	.099	.136	-.095	.024	-.011	-.050	-.044	.029	-.082	.163*	.020	-.040	-.139	-.263**	-.183*	-.165*	1	-.040	-.028	.188*	-.077	-.107	-.076	-.057	-.050
18.Age (> 64)	.01	.112	.131	.176*	.048	.108	-.104	-.016	-.074	-.035	-.026	.303**	-.024	-.013	-.044	-.083	-.058	-.052	-.040	1	-.009	.073	-.024	-.034	-.043	-.018	-.016
19.Age (UR)	.01	.079	-.042	-.076	-.089	-.083	-.073	.574**	-.147	-.025	-.018	-.014	-.017	.705**	-.031	-.059	-.041	-.037	-.028	-.009	1	-.123	-.017	-.024	-.030	-.013	.574**
20.Ethnicity (W)	.70	.458	.026	.069	.052	.042	-.012	-.113	.176*	-.139	-.103	.117	-.063	-.174*	-.114	-.013	-.144	.119	.188*	.073	-.123	1	-.331**	-.461**	-.586**	-.248**	-.214**
21.Ethnicity (H)	.04	.206	-.012	.066	.080	.021	-.013	-.030	-.030	.042	.091	-.039	-.046	-.024	-.084	.034	.117	-.019	-.077	-.024	-.017	-.331**	1	-.064	-.081	-.034	-.030
22.Ethnicity (B)	.08	.275	-.029	.076	-.040	.010	.001	-.041	-.113	.069	.141	-.054	.048	-.034	.155	-.076	.017	.043	-.107	-.034	-.024	-.461**	-.064	1	-.113	-.048	-.041
23.Ethnicity (A)	.13	.333	.055	-.148	-.025	-.055	.069	-.053	-.112	.150	-.001	-.068	.103	-.043	.076	.038	.086	-.126	-.076	-.043	-.030	-.586**	-.081	-.113	1	-.061	-.053
24.Ethnicity (O)	.03	.157	-.121	-.048	-.075	.073	-.067	-.022	.087	-.050	-.037	-.029	-.034	-.018	-.063	.050	.116	-.074	-.057	-.018	-.013	-.248**	-.034	-.048	-.061	1	-.022
25.Ethnicity (UR)	.02	.136	-.005	-.070	-.068	-.145	-.035	.660**	-.146	-.043	-.032	-.025	-.030	.814**	.082	-.005	-.071	-.064	-.050	-.016	.574**	-.214**	-.030	-.041	-.053	-.022	1

\*  $p < .05$  \*\*  $p < .01$

Coding Key:

Gender: Male (M); Female (F); Unreported (UR)

Occupation: Employed (E); Unemployed (UE); Student (S); Retired (R); Other (O); Unreported (UR)

Ethnicity: White (W); Hispanic (H); Black (B); Asian (A); Other (O); Unreported (UR)

## COVID, ECONOMIC SYSTEM JUSTIFICATION, POLITICAL IDEOLOGY

**Table 2: Regression Results for Study 1 on Judgments Relating to China's Perceived Concealment of COVID-19**

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	$\Delta R^2$
Step 1				.376	.141	.141
Gender (female)	.435	.328	1.327			
Gender (unreported)	-.015	2.042	-.007			
Occupation (unemployed)	-1.677	.580	-2.893**			
Occupation (student)	-.543	.822	-.660			
Occupation (retired)	-.319	.959	-.332			
Occupation (other)	-.218	.774	-.281			
Occupation (unreported)	-1.626	3.540	-.459			
Age (18-24 years)	1.897	.635	2.990**			
Age (25-34 years)	.901	.438	2.055*			
Age (45-54 years)	.404	.520	.777			
Age (55-64 years)	-.187	.594	-.315			
Age (65 years and older)	.537	1.508	.356			
Age (unreported)	1.069	2.773	.385			
Ethnicity (Hispanic)	1.021	.785	1.301			
Ethnicity (Black)	-0.421	.595	-.707			
Ethnicity (Asian)	-.170	.500	-.341			
Ethnicity (other)	-.405	1.013	-.399			
Ethnicity (unreported)	-0.652	2.036	-.320			
Step 2				.456	.208	.067***
SEC (mean-centered)	.014	.014	.986			
Step 3				.514	.264	.055**
ESJ (mean-centered)	.587	.182	3.223**			

\*  $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$

Note:  $N = 159$ . Unstandardized coefficients are reported. Results presented are from the final model, though Step 1 and Step 2  $R$ ,  $R^2$  and  $\Delta R^2$  are included for completeness. For each control variable, the most common option was used as the reference category: Gender (male), Occupation (employed), Age (35-44 years), Ethnicity (White).

## COVID, ECONOMIC SYSTEM JUSTIFICATION, POLITICAL IDEOLOGY

**Table 3: Means, Standard Deviations, and Intercorrelations for Study 2 Variables (N = 267)**

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
1.ESJ	4.51	1.28	1	.593**	.044	.298**	.334**	-.262**	.053	-.055	.018	.039	-.028	-.076	.149*	-.115	-.070	-.002	.033	.006	.054	-.156*	.032	-.026	-.026	-.045	.084	-.021	.066
2.SECS	61.6	17.6	.593**	1	.072	.213**	.249**	-.205**	.016	-.017	-.004	-.044	-.116	-.099	.232**	-.068	-.023	-.149*	-.009	-.044	.072	.002	.178**	-.102	.034	.107	.012	-.054	.075
3.Price (IV)	.48	.50	.044	.072	1	-.191**	-.167**	.071	-.048	.055	-.059	-.051	.038	.007	.091	-.043	-.059	-.009	-.079	.067	.038	-.027	.026	-.136*	.124*	.079	.039	-.083	.040
4.Fairness (DV)	4.28	2.15	.298**	.213**	-.191**	1	.834**	-.783**	-.026	.020	.049	-.034	.038	.015	-.080	.047	.121*	-.098	.081	.045	.066	-.045	-.140*	.058	.047	-.038	-.104	.009	.040
5.Purchase (DV)	4.74	2.41	.334**	.249**	-.167**	.834**	1	-.687**	.002	-.007	.036	.030	-.010	-.034	-.055	.009	.108	-.074	.081	-.006	.059	-.017	-.109	.091	.085	-.053	-.158**	.000	.019
6.Attribution (DV)	3.36	2.11	-.262**	-.205**	.071	-.783**	-.687**	1	.051	-.056	.037	-.023	-.005	-.044	.139*	-.030	-.097	.106	-.115	-.057	-.081	.075	.203**	-.035	-.020	.002	.027	.062	.060
7.Gender (M)	.51	.501	.053	.016	-.048	-.026	.002	.051	1	-.993**	-.062	-.087	-.136*	-.003	.077	-.022	-.062	.017	.112	-.054	-.075	-.073	.039	-.032	.012	-.073	.095	-.002	.034
8.Gender (F)	.49	.501	-.055	-.017	.055	.020	-.007	-.056	-.993**	1	-.060	-.075	.139*	.005	-.075	-.011	.063	-.038	-.106	.058	.077	.075	-.036	.044	-.010	.075	-.092	.002	-.104
9.Gender (UR)	.00	.061	.018	.004	-.059	.049	.036	.037	-.062	-.060	1	-.098	-.025	-.011	-.015	.271**	-.004	.172**	-.045	-.035	-.023	-.019	-.017	-.104	-.015	-.019	-.020	-.005	.575**
10.Occupation (E)	.72	.450	.039	.044	-.051	-.034	.030	-.023	.087	-.075	-.098	1	-.652**	-.281**	.390**	-.362**	-.098	-.042	.112	.131*	-.086	-.016	-.248**	.050	.008	-.016	.009	-.139*	-.091
11.Occupation (UE)	.14	.350	-.028	-.116	.038	.038	-.010	-.005	-.136*	.139*	-.025	-.652**	1	-.072	-.099	-.092	-.025	-.009	-.008	-.013	.102	.028	-.113	-.102	-.006	.028	.047	.213**	.058
12.Occupation (S)	.03	.171	-.076	-.099	.007	.015	-.034	-.044	-.003	.005	-.011	-.281**	-.072	1	-.043	-.040	-.011	.216**	.008	-.102	-.067	-.054	.037	.104	-.043	-.054	-.058	-.015	-.019
13.Occupation (R)	.06	.231	.149*	.232**	.091	-.080	-.055	.139*	.077	-.075	-.015	-.390**	-.099	-.043	1	-.055	-.015	-.087	-.180**	-.104	-.044	-.017	.692**	.033	-.060	.041	-.025	-.021	-.026
14.Occupation (O)	.05	.216	-.115	-.068	-.043	.047	.009	-.030	-.022	-.011	.271**	-.362**	-.092	-.040	-.055	1	-.014	.030	-.021	-.051	.122*	-.007	-.063	-.065	.096	-.007	-.016	-.020	.141*
15.Occupation (UR)	.00	.061	-.070	-.023	-.059	.121*	.108	-.097	-.062	.063	-.004	-.098	-.025	-.011	-.015	-.014	1	-.022	-.045	-.035	-.023	.200**	-.017	.036	-.015	-.019	-.020	-.005	-.007
16.Age (18-24)	.11	.316	-.002	-.149*	-.009	-.098	-.074	.106	.017	-.038	.172**	-.042	-.009	.216**	-.087	.030	-.022	1	-.262**	-.206**	-.136*	-.109	-.098	-.169**	.119	-.025	.163**	-.031	.075
17.Age (25-34)	.35	.479	.033	-.009	-.079	.081	.081	-.115	.112	-.106	-.045	.112	-.008	.008	-.180**	-.021	-.045	-.262	1	-.427**	-.282**	-.226**	-.204	-.102	.024	.053	.049	.118	-.004
18.Age (35-44)	.25	.434	.006	-.044	.067	.045	-.006	-.057	-.054	.058	-.035	.131*	-.013	-.102	-.104	-.051	-.035	-.206**	-.427**	1	-.221**	-.178**	-.160**	.065	.009	-.024	-.044	-.050	-.062
19.Age (45-54)	.13	.334	.054	.072	.038	.066	.059	-.081	-.075	.077	-.023	-.086	.102	-.067	-.044	.122*	-.023	-.136*	-.282**	-.221**	1	-.117	-.106	.072	-.044	.003	-.050	-.033	-.041
20.Age (55-64)	.09	.281	-.156*	.002	-.027	-.045	-.017	.075	-.073	.075	-.019	-.016	.028	-.054	-.017	-.007	.200**	-.109	-.226**	-.178**	-.117	1	-.085	.120*	-.075	-.094	-.056	-.027	.094
21.Age (> 64)	.07	.258	.032	.178**	.026	-.140*	-.109	.203**	.039	-.036	-.017	-.248**	-.113	.037	.692**	-.063	-.017	-.098	-.204**	-.160**	-.106	-.085	1	.064	-.068	.071	-.091	-.024	-.030
22.Ethnicity (W)	.74	.439	-.026	-.102	-.136*	.058	.091	-.035	-.032	.044	-.104	.050	-.102	.104	.033	-.065	.036	-.169**	-.102	.065	.072	.120*	.064	1	-.413**	-.520**	-.556**	-.147**	-.181**
23.Ethnicity (H)	.06	.231	-.026	.034	.124*	.047	.085	-.020	.012	-.010	-.015	.008	-.006	-.043	-.060	.096	-.015	.119	.024	.009	-.044	-.075	-.068	-.413**	1	-.075	-.080	-.021	-.026
24.Ethnicity (B)	.09	.281	-.045	.107	.079	-.038	-.053	.002	-.073	.075	-.019	-.016	.028	-.054	.041	-.007	-.019	-.025	.053	-.024	.003	-.094	.071	-.520**	-.075	1	-.101	-.027	-.033
25.Ethnicity (A)	.10	.297	.084	.012	.039	-.104	-.158**	.027	.095	-.092	-.020	.009	.047	-.058	-.025	-.016	-.020	.163**	.049	-.044	-.050	-.056	-.091	-.556**	-.080	-.101	1	-.029	-.035
26.Ethnicity (O)	.01	.086	-.021	-.054	-.083	.009	.000	.062	-.002	.002	-.005	-.139*	.213**	-.015	-.021	-.020	-.005	-.031	.118	-.050	-.033	-.027	-.024	-.147*	-.021	-.027	-.029	1	-.009
27.Ethnicity (UR)	.01	.106	.066	.075	.040	.040	-.019	.060	.034	-.104	.575**	-.091	.058	-.019	-.026	.141*	-.007	.075	-.004	-.062	-.041	.094	-.030	-.181**	-.026	-.033	-.035	-.009	1

\*  $p < .05$  \*\*  $p < .01$ 

## Coding Key:

Gender: Male (M); Female (F); Unreported (UR)

Occupation: Employed (E); Unemployed (UE); Student (S); Retired (R); Other (O); Unreported (UR)

Ethnicity: White (W); Hispanic (H); Black (B); Asian (A); Other (O); Unreported (UR)



## COVID, ECONOMIC SYSTEM JUSTIFICATION, POLITICAL IDEOLOGY

**Table 4: Regression Results for Study 2 on Perceptions of Price Fairness**

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	$\Delta R^2$
Step 1				.280	.079	.079
Gender (female)	-.068	.251	-.272			
Gender (unreported)	.980	2.560	.383			
Occupation (unemployed)	.445	.371	1.199			
Occupation (student)	1.023	.745	1.373			
Occupation (retired)	.022	.750	.029			
Occupation (other)	.636	.602	1.057			
Occupation (unreported)	4.946	2.027	2.440*			
Age (18-24 years)	-.868	.466	-1.861			
Age (25-34 years)	-.068	.323	-.211			
Age (45-54 years)	-.047	.424	-.110			
Age (55-64 years)	-.541	.503	-1.074			
Age (65 years and older)	-1.496	.700	-2.138*			
Ethnicity (Hispanic)	.570	.555	1.027			
Ethnicity (Black)	-.160	.453	-.354			
Ethnicity (Asian)	-.798	.430	-1.859			
Ethnicity (Other)	-.487	1.452	-.335			
Ethnicity (Unreported)	.103	1.448	.071			
Step 2				.374	.140	.062***
SEC (mean-centered)	.012	.009	1.342			
Step 3				.423	.179	.039***
Price (0 = low, 1 = high)	-.879	.251	-3.500***			
Step 4				.472	.223	.044***
ESJ (mean-centered)	.526	.151	3.475***			
Step 5				.474	.225	.001
ESJ x Price	-.131	.194	-.679			

\*  $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$

Note:  $N = 267$ . Unstandardized coefficients are reported. Results presented are from the final model, but  $R$ ,  $R^2$  and  $\Delta R^2$  for each step of the model are included for completeness. For each control variable, the most common option was used as the reference category: Gender (male), Occupation (employed), Age (35-44 years), Ethnicity (White).

## COVID, ECONOMIC SYSTEM JUSTIFICATION, POLITICAL IDEOLOGY

**Table 5: Regression Results for Study 2 on Purchase Likelihood**

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	$\Delta R^2$
Step 1				.276	.076	.076
Gender (female)	.042	.281	.151			
Gender (unreported)	1.510	2.862	.528			
Occupation (unemployed)	.177	.415	.426			
Occupation (student)	.141	.833	.169			
Occupation (retired)	-.150	.839	-.179			
Occupation (other)	.232	.673	.345			
Occupation (unreported)	4.855	2.266	2.143*			
Age (18-24 years)	-.357	.521	-.685			
Age (25-34 years)	.210	.361	.581			
Age (45-54 years)	.186	.474	.393			
Age (55-64 years)	-.036	.563	-.064			
Age (65 years and older)	-1.143	.783	-1.460			
Ethnicity (Hispanic)	.895	.620	1.442			
Ethnicity (Black)	-.379	.506	-.749			
Ethnicity (Asian)	-1.468	.480	-3.057**			
Ethnicity (Other)	-.524	1.623	-.323			
Ethnicity (Unreported)	-.710	1.619	-.439			
Step 2				.388	.151	.075***
SEC (mean-centered)	.015	.010	1.456			
Step 3				.422	.178	.027**
Price (0 = low, 1 = high)	-.832	.281	-2.963**			
Step 4				.483	.233	.055***
ESJ (mean-centered)	.655	.169	3.872***			
Step 5				.484	.235	.002
ESJ x Price	-.158	.216	-.730			

\*  $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$

Note:  $N = 267$ . Unstandardized coefficients are reported. Results presented are from the final model, but  $R$ ,  $R^2$  and  $\Delta R^2$  for each step of the model are included for completeness. For each control variable, the most common option was used as the reference category: Gender (male), Occupation (employed), Age (35-44 years), Ethnicity (White).

## COVID, ECONOMIC SYSTEM JUSTIFICATION, POLITICAL IDEOLOGY

**Table 6: Regression Results for Study 2 on Attributional Beliefs**

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	$\Delta R^2$
Step 1				.316	.100	.100
Gender (female)	.178	.259	.688			
Gender (unreported)	.245	2.640	.093			
Occupation (unemployed)	-.236	.383	-.617			
Occupation (student)	-1.332	.769	-1.733			
Occupation (retired)	.350	.774	.452			
Occupation (other)	-.648	.621	-1.043			
Occupation (unreported)	-4.459	2.090	-2.133*			
Age (18-24 years)	.908	.481	1.887			
Age (25-34 years)	-.062	.333	-.187			
Age (45-54 years)	-.001	.437	-.003			
Age (55-64 years)	.723	.519	1.392			
Age (65 years and older)	1.908	.722	2.643**			
Ethnicity (Hispanic)	-.100	.572	-.175			
Ethnicity (Black)	.028	.467	.059			
Ethnicity (Asian)	.317	.443	.716			
Ethnicity (Other)	1.936	1.497	1.293			
Ethnicity (Unreported)	1.493	1.493	1.000			
Step 2				.402	.162	.062***
SEC (mean-centered)	-.017	.010	-1.777			
Step 3				.410	.168	.006
Price (0 = low, 1 = high)	.349	.259	1.347			
Step 4				.442	.195	.027**
ESJ (mean-centered)	-.467	.156	-2.996**			
Step 5				.446	.199	0.004
ESJ x Price	.215	.200	1.076			

\*  $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$

Note:  $N = 267$ . Unstandardized coefficients are reported. Results presented are from the final model, but  $R$ ,  $R^2$  and  $\Delta R^2$  for each step of the model are included for completeness. For each control variable, the most common option was used as the reference category: Gender (male), Occupation (employed), Age (35-44 years), Ethnicity (White).

## COVID, ECONOMIC SYSTEM JUSTIFICATION, POLITICAL IDEOLOGY

Table 7: Means, Standard Deviations, and Intercorrelations for Study 3 Variables (N = 275)

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
1.ESJ	4.72	1.22	1	.559**	-.042	-.438**	.074	-.062	-.094	.120*	-.077	-.100	-.032	.042	-.051	-.055	-.005	-.097	.154*	.007	-.002	.033	-.057	-.020	.036	-.100	.024
2.SECS	64.7	16.9	.559**	1	-.057	-.340**	-.009	.019	-.085	.057	-.012	-.163**	.123*	-.001	-.067	-.159**	-.089	-.081	.084	.150*	.180**	.018	.029	.047	-.061	-.108	.014
3.Incidence (IV)	.53	.500	-.042	-.057	1	.128*	-.046	.039	.057	-.058	.084	.020	-.031	.042	-.090	.064	-.019	-.082	.107	-.043	.003	.057	-.107	.053	-.066	-.005	.081
4.Support (DV)	6.58	1.89	-.438**	-.340**	.128*	1	-.109	.099	.078	-.166**	.104	.074	.090	.040	-.021	.031	.014	-.020	-.010	-.090	.113	-.064	-.021	.028	.069	.104	-.060
5.Gender (M)	.55	.498	.074	-.009	-.046	-.109	1	-.993**	-.067	.250**	-.188**	-.158**	.042	-.116	-.009	-.031	.048	.048	-.076	-.061	.055	-.146*	.036	.121	.080	-.009	-.009
6.Gender (F)	.44	.498	-.062	.019	.039	.099	-.993**	1	-.054	-.236**	.168**	.159**	-.041	.117	.010	.033	-.058	-.044	.079	.064	-.053	.159**	-.034	-.119*	-.078	.010	-.076
7.Gender (UR)	.00	.060	-.094	-.085	.057	.078	-.067	-.054	1	-.112	.169**	-.014	-.011	-.009	-.005	-.018	.079	-.033	-.026	-.022	-.015	-.102	-.015	-.017	-.021	-.005	.706**
8.Occupation (E)	.77	.419	.120*	-.057	-.058	-.166**	.250**	-.236**	-.112	1	-.661**	-.429**	-.341**	-.277**	-.159**	-.194**	.086	.229**	-.007	-.103	-.215**	.099	-.052	-.041	-.035	-.056	-.056
9.Occupation (UE)	.11	.317	-.077	-.012	.084	.104	-.188**	.168**	.169**	-.661**	1	-.083	-.066	-.053	-.031	-.063	-.009	-.110	.100	.122*	-.035	-.079	.059	.027	.023	-.031	.105
10.Occupation (S)	.05	.220	-.100	-.163**	.020	.074	-.158**	.159**	-.014	-.429**	-.083	1	-.043	-.035	-.020	.541**	-.039	-.125*	-.100	-.084	-.056	-.128*	.013	.058	.078	.175**	-.020
11.Occupation (R)	.03	.178	-.032	.123*	-.031	.090	.042	-.041	-.011	-.341**	-.066	-.043	1	-.027	-.016	-.054	-.140*	-.099	-.079	.061	.586**	.062	-.046	.024	-.064	-.016	-.016
12.Occupation (O)	.02	.146	-.042	-.001	.042	.040	-.116	.117	-.009	-.277**	-.053	-.035	-.027	1	-.013	-.044	-.062	-.081	.073	.101	.074	.088	-.037	-.043	-.052	-.013	-.013
13.Occupation (UR)	.01	.085	-.051	-.067	-.090	-.021	-.009	.010	-.005	-.159**	-.031	-.020	-.016	-.013	1	-.025	.112	-.046	-.037	-.031	-.021	-.145*	.162**	-.025	.107	-.007	-.007
14. Age (18-24)	.08	.272	-.055	-.159**	.064	.031	-.031	.033	-.018	-.194**	-.063	.541**	-.054	-.044	-.025	1	-.225**	-.159**	-.127*	-.107	-.071	-.040	-.073	.016	.069	.133*	-.025
15. Age (25-34)	.37	.483	-.005	-.089	-.019	.014	.048	-.058	.079	.086	-.009	-.039	-.140*	-.062	.112	-.225**	1	-.411**	-.328**	-.276**	-.183**	-.240**	.197**	.093	.096	.024	.024
16. Age (35-44)	.23	.419	-.097	-.081	-.082	-.020	.048	-.044	-.033	.229**	-.110	-.125*	-.099	-.081	-.046	-.159**	-.411**	1	-.232**	-.196**	-.130*	-.040	-.023	.009	.062	-.046	.056
17. Age (45-54)	.16	.364	.154*	.084	.107	-.010	-.076	.079	-.026	-.007	.100	-.100	-.079	.073	-.037	-.127*	-.328**	-.232**	1	-.156**	-.103	.208**	-.107	-.124*	-.086	-.037	-.037
18. Age (55-64)	.12	.321	-.007	.150*	-.043	-.090	-.061	.064	-.022	-.103	.122*	-.084	.061	.101	-.031	-.107	-.276**	-.196**	-.156**	1	-.087	.136*	-.042	-.019	-.127*	-.031	-.031
19. Age (> 64)	.05	.228	-.002	.180**	.003	.113	.055	-.053	-.015	-.215**	-.035	-.056	.586**	.074	-.021	-.071	-.183**	-.130*	-.103	-.087	1	.105	-.060	-.009	-.084	-.021	-.021
20.Ethnicity (W)	.74	.438	.033	.018	.057	-.064	-.146*	.159**	-.102	.099	-.079	-.128*	.062	.088	-.145*	-.040	-.240**	-.040	.208**	.136*	.105	1	-.421**	-.487**	-.593**	-.145*	-.145*
21. Ethnicity (H)	.06	.235	-.057	.029	-.107	-.021	.036	-.034	-.015	-.052	.059	.013	-.046	-.037	.162**	-.073	.197**	-.023	-.107	-.042	-.060	-.421**	1	-.071	-.087	-.021	-.021
22. Ethnicity (B)	.08	.266	-.020	.047	.053	.028	.121*	-.119*	-.017	-.041	.027	.058	.024	-.043	-.025	.016	.093	.009	-.124*	-.019	-.009	-.487**	-.071	1	-.101	-.025	-.025
23. Ethnicity (A)	.11	.312	.036	-.061	-.066	.069	.080	-.078	-.021	-.035	.023	.078	-.064	-.052	.107	.069	.096	.062	-.086	-.127*	-.084	-.593**	-.087	-.101	1	-.030	-.030
24. Ethnicity (O)	.01	.085	-.100	-.108	-.005	.104	-.009	.010	-.005	-.056	-.031	.175**	-.016	-.013	-.007	.133*	.024	-.046	-.037	-.031	-.021	-.145*	-.021	-.025	-.030	1	-.007
25. Ethnicity (UR)	.01	.085	.024	.014	.081	-.060	-.009	-.076	.706**	-.056	.105	-.020	-.016	-.013	-.007	-.025	.024	.056	-.037	-.031	-.021	-.145*	-.021	-.025	-.030	-.007	1

\*  $p < .05$  \*\*  $p < .01$ 

## Coding Key:

Gender: Male (M); Female (F); Unreported (UR)

Occupation: Employed (E); Unemployed (UE); Student (S); Retired (R); Other (O); Unreported (UR)

Ethnicity: White (W); Hispanic (H); Black (B); Asian (A); Other (O); Unreported (UR)

## COVID, ECONOMIC SYSTEM JUSTIFICATION, POLITICAL IDEOLOGY

**Table 8: Regression Results for Study 3 on Desirability of Shelter-in-Place**

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	$\Delta R^2$
Step 1				.311	.096	.096
Gender (female)	-.296	.218	-1.358			
Gender (unreported)	3.892	2.448	1.590			
Occupation (unemployed)	.321	.343	.937			
Occupation (student)	.063	.570	.110			
Occupation (retired)	.468	.710	.658			
Occupation (other)	.555	.711	.781			
Occupation (unreported)	-1.152	1.219	-.945			
Age (18-24 years)	-.238	.460	-.518			
Age (25-34 years)	-.103	.277	-.374			
Age (45-54 years)	.200	.323	.618			
Age (55-64 years)	-.334	.362	-.923			
Age (65 years and older)	1.009	.589	1.712			
Ethnicity (Hispanic)	.057	.459	.123			
Ethnicity (Black)	.335	.397	.844			
Ethnicity (Asian)	.648	.342	1.893			
Ethnicity (Other)	1.442	1.208	1.194			
Ethnicity (Unreported)	-3.212	1.717	-1.871			
Step 2				.453	.205	.109***
SEC (mean-centered)	-.018	.008	-2.327*			
Step 3				.464	.216	.010
Incidence (0 = low, 1 = high)	.356	.207	1.721			
Step 4				.532	.283	.067***
ESJ (mean-centered)	-.611	.142	-4.299***			
Step 5				.535	.286	0.003
ESJ x Price	.180	.171	1.054			

\*  $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$

Note:  $N = 275$ . Unstandardized coefficients are reported. Results presented are from the final model, but  $R$ ,  $R^2$  and  $\Delta R^2$  for each step of the model are included for completeness. For each control variable, the most common option was used as the reference category: Gender (male), Occupation (employed), Age (35-44 years), Ethnicity (White).

## COVID, ECONOMIC SYSTEM JUSTIFICATION, POLITICAL IDEOLOGY

**Table 9: Means, Standard Deviations, and Intercorrelations for Study 4 Variables (N = 284)**

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29
1.ESJ	4.67	1.27	1	.570**	.637**	-.522**	.554**	.495**	.042	-.002	-.236**	.179**	-.099	-.035	-.136*	-.116	-.042	.015	-.014	.038	-.075	.041	-.027	-.072	.029	-.009	.025	-.047	.013	.079	-.003
2.SECS	55.3	17.2	.570**	1	.562**	-.391**	.529**	.442**	-.028	.072	-.255**	.045	.003	-.001	-.126*	-.030	-.022	-.006	-.071	.018	-.067	.069	.028	.034	.010	-.016	.005	.041	-.034	-.003	.042
3.Support (DV)	5.21	1.69	.637**	.562**	1	-.707**	.810**	.746**	.060	-.026	-.195**	.183**	-.029	-.094	-.131*	-.121*	-.149*	.068	.002	.105	-.129*	-.011	-.003	.015	-.020	-.030	.157**	.042	-.128*	-.114	-.011
4. Serious (Mediator)	5.13	2.43	-.522**	-.391**	-.707**	1	-.660**	-.671**	-.045	.022	.134*	-.166**	.034	.120*	.095	.092	.095	-.089	.007	-.061	.050	-.007	.055	.016	.009	.111	-.191**	-.029	.014	.095	.055
5. Fair (Mediator)	4.55	1.39	.554**	.529**	.810**	-.660**	1	.730**	.022	.015	-.216**	.168**	.012	-.083	-.153**	-.156**	-.153**	.084	.023	.018	-.027	-.010	-.011	-.016	-.002	-.020	.133	.029	-.088	-.153**	-.042
6. Rights (Mediator)	5.86	1.47	.495**	.442**	.746**	-.671**	.730**	1	.119*	-.094	-.144*	.157**	-.010	-.045	-.095	-.144*	-.196**	.113	.040	.131*	-.148*	-.043	.000	-.064	.006	-.004	.179**	.011	-.148*	-.089	-.066
7. Gender (M)	.62	.486	.042	-.028	.060	-.045	.022	.119*	1	-.985**	-.108	.099	-.106	.050	.047	-.091	-.076	.047	-.124*	.098	.032	-.075	-.022	-.061	-.076	.020	-.028	-.017	.016	.047	-.029
8. Gender (F)	.37	.485	-.002	.072	-.026	.022	.015	-.094	-.985**	1	-.065	-.076	.109	-.048	-.046	.031	.077	-.046	.091	-.097	-.025	.080	.026	.063	.077	-.030	.033	.021	-.011	-.046	.031
9. Gender (UR)	.01	.084	-.236**	-.255**	-.195**	.134*	-.216**	-.144*	-.108	-.065	1	-.133*	-.017	-.011	-.005	.347**	-.005	-.005	.192**	-.009	-.044	-.029	-.023	-.009	-.005	.056	-.029	-.024	-.028	-.005	-.010
10.Occupation (E)	.92	.268	.179**	.045	.183**	-.166**	.168**	.157**	.099	-.076	-.133*	1	-.693**	-.462**	-.205**	-.412**	-.205**	.017	-.201**	.057	.053	.017	-.028	-.099	.017	-.105	.101	.035	.007	.017	.035
11.Occupation (UE)	.04	.193	-.099	.003	-.029	.034	.012	-.010	-.106	.109	-.017	-.693**	1	-.027	-.012	-.024	-.012	-.012	-.042	.070	-.014	-.012	-.054	-.021	-.012	.093	-.070	-.058	-.005	-.012	-.024
12.Occupation (S)	.02	.132	-.035	-.001	-.094	.120*	-.083	-.045	.050	-.048	-.011	-.462**	-.027	1	-.008	-.016	-.008	-.008	.371**	-.041	-.069	-.047	-.036	-.014	-.008	.030	-.047	-.039	.046	-.008	-.016
13.Occupation (R)	.00	.059	-.136*	-.126*	-.131*	.095	-.153**	-.095	.047	-.046	-.005	-.205**	-.012	-.008	1	-.007	-.004	-.004	-.012	-.066	-.031	-.021	.222**	-.006	-.004	.039	-.021	-.017	-.020	-.004	-.007
14.Occupation (O)	.01	.118	-.116	-.030	-.121*	.092	-.156**	-.144*	-.091	.031	.347	-.412**	-.024	-.016	-.007	1	-.007	-.007	.123*	-.133*	-.062	.054	.088	.280**	-.007	.014	-.042	.077	-.040	-.007	-.014
15.Occupation (UR)	.00	.059	-.042	-.022	-.149*	.095	-.153**	-.196**	-.076	.077	-.005	-.205**	-.012	-.008	-.004	-.007	1	-.004	-.012	-.066	.115	-.021	-.016	-.006	-.004	.039	-.021	-.017	-.020	-.004	-.007
16.Age (<18)	.00	.059	.015	-.006	.068	-.089	.084	.113	.047	-.046	-.005	.017	-.012	-.008	-.004	-.007	-.004	1	-.012	-.066	-.031	-.021	-.016	-.006	-.004	-.090	.170**	-.017	-.020	-.004	-.007
17.Age (18-24)	.04	.202	-.014	-.071	.002	.007	.023	.040	-.124*	.091	.192**	-.201**	-.042	.371**	-.012	.123*	-.012	-.012	1	-.234**	-.109	-.074	-.056	-.022	-.012	.024	.039	.005	-.069	-.012	-.025
18.Age (25-34)	.55	.498	.038	.018	-.105	-.061	.018	.131*	.098	-.097	-.009	.057	.070	-.041	-.066	-.133*	-.066	-.066	-.234**	1	-.575**	-.389**	-.298**	-.115	-.066	-.100	.042	.022	.060	.053	.047
19.Age (35-44)	.21	.409	-.075	-.067	-.129*	.050	-.027	-.148*	.032	-.025	-.044	.053	-.014	-.069	-.031	-.062	.115	-.031	-.109	-.575**	1	-.181**	-.139*	-.053	-.031	-.072	.012	.011	-.089	-.031	.011
20.Age (45-54)	.11	.312	.041	.069	-.011	-.007	-.010	-.043	-.075	.080	-.029	.017	-.012	-.047	-.021	.054	-.021	-.021	-.074	-.389**	-.181**	1	-.094	-.036	-.021	.083	-.050	.025	-.078	-.021	-.042
21.Age (55-64)	.07	.250	.027	.028	-.003	.055	-.011	.000	-.022	.026	-.023	-.028	-.054	-.036	.222**	.088	-.016	-.016	-.056	-.298**	-.139*	-.094	1	-.028	-.016	.176**	-.094	-.078	-.089	-.016	-.032
22.Age (> 64)	.01	.102	-.072	.034	.015	.016	-.016	-.064	-.061	.063	-.009	-.099	-.021	-.014	-.006	.280**	-.006	-.006	-.022	-.115	-.053	-.036	-.028	1	-.006	.068	-.036	-.030	-.034	-.006	-.012
23. Age (UR)	.00	.059	.029	.010	-.020	.009	-.002	.006	-.076	.077	-.005	.017	-.012	-.008	-.004	-.007	-.004	-.004	-.012	-.066	-.031	-.021	-.016	-.006	1	.039	-.021	-.017	-.020	-.004	-.007
24.Ethnicity (W)	.70	.460	-.009	-.016	-.030	.111	-.020	-.004	.020	-.030	.056	-.105	.093	.030	.039	.014	.039	-.090	.024	-.100	-.072	.083	.176**	.068	.039	1	-.531**	-.440**	-.502**	-.090	-.181**
25. Ethnicity (H)	.11	.312	.025	.005	.157**	-.191**	.133*	.179**	-.028	.033	-.029	.101	-.070	-.047	-.021	-.042	-.021	.170**	.039	.042	.012	-.050	-.094	-.036	-.021	-.531**	1	-.101	-.116	-.021	-.042
26. Ethnicity (B)	.08	.268	-.047	.041	.042	-.029	.029	.011	-.017	.021	-.024	.035	-.058	-.039	-.017	.077	-.017	-.017	.005	.022	.011	.025	-.078	-.030	-.017	-.440**	-.101	1	-.096	-.017	-.035
27. Ethnicity (A)	.10	.299	.013	-.034	-.128*	.014	-.088	-.148*	.016	-.011	-.028	.007	-.005	.046	-.020	-.040	-.020	-.020	-.069	.060	.089	-.078	-.089	-.034	-.020	-.502**	-.116	-.096	1	-.020	-.040
28. Ethnicity (ME)	.00	.059	.079	-.003	-.114	.095	-.153**	-.089	.047	-.046	-.005	.017	-.012	-.008	-.004	-.007	-.004	-.004	-.012	.053	-.031	-.021	-.016	-.006	-.004	-.090	-.021	-.017	-.020	1	-.007
29. Ethnicity (PI)	.01	.118	.003	.042	-.011	.055	-.042	-.066	-.029	.031	-.010	.035	-.024	-.016	-.007	-.014	-.007	-.007	-.025	.047	.011	-.042	-.032	-.012	-.007	-.181**	-.042	-.035	-.040	-.007	1

\*  $p < .05$  \*\*  $p < .01$ 

Coding Key:

Gender: Male (M); Female (F); Unreported (UR)

Occupation: Employed (E); Unemployed (UE); Student (S); Retired (R); Other (O); Unreported (UR)

Ethnicity: White (W); Hispanic (H); Black (B); Asian (A); Middle Eastern (ME); Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (PI)

## COVID, ECONOMIC SYSTEM JUSTIFICATION, POLITICAL IDEOLOGY

**Table 10: Regression Results for Study 4 on Support for Reopening the Economy**

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	$\Delta R^2$
Step 1				.411	.169	.169***
Gender (female)	-.198	.147	-1.342			
Gender (unreported)	-.046	.934	-.050			
Occupation (unemployed)	.218	.364	.600			
Occupation (student)	-1.281	.571	-2.243*			
Occupation (retired)	-.934	1.202	-.777			
Occupation (other)	-1.218	.665	-1.832			
Occupation (unreported)	-3.136	1.168	-2.685**			
Age (<18 years)	.956	1.173	.814			
Age (18-24 years)	.448	.388	1.155			
Age (35-44 years)	-.328	.177	-1.853			
Age (45-54 years)	-.363	.231	-1.568			
Age (55-64 years)	-.148	.297	-.499			
Age (> 64 years)	.983	.716	1.374			
Age (Unreported)	-1.047	1.162	-.901			
Ethnicity (Hispanic)	.615	.231	2.667**			
Ethnicity (Black)	.350	.265	1.320			
Ethnicity (Asian)	-.601	.238	-2.529*			
Ethnicity (Middle Eastern)	-4.443	1.163	-3.822***			
Ethnicity (Hawaiian/Pacific Islander)	-.365	.586	-.624			
Step 2				.657	.432	.262***
SEC (mean-centered)	.028	.005	5.540***			
Step 3				.754	.568	.136***
ESJ (mean-centered)	.624	.069	9.089***			

\*  $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$

Note:  $N = 284$ . Unstandardized coefficients are reported. Results presented are from the final model, but  $R$ ,  $R^2$  and  $\Delta R^2$  for each step of the model are included for completeness. For each control variable, the most common option was used as the reference category: Gender (male), Occupation (employed), Age (35-44 years), Ethnicity (White).

### References

- Azevedo, F., Jost, J. T., Rothmund, T., & Sterling, J. (2019). Neoliberal ideology and the justification of inequality in capitalist societies: Why social and economic dimensions of ideology are intertwined? *Journal of Social Issues*, 75(1), 49–88.
- Baron, J. N., & Pfeffer, J. (1994). The Social Psychology of Organizations and Inequality. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 57(3), 190–209.
- Barrios, J. M., & Hochberg, Y. (2020). Risk Perception Through the Lens of Politics in the Time of the COVID-19 Pandemic, NBER Working Paper No. 27008.
- Bouchard, T. J., Segal, N. L., Tellegen, A., McGue, M., Keyes, M., & Krueger, R. (2003). Evidence for the Construct Validity and Heritability of the Wilson–Patterson Conservatism Scale: A Reared-Apart Twins Study of Social Attitudes. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 34(6), 959–969.
- Buhrmester, M. D., Kwang, T., & Gosling, S. D. (2011). Amazon’s Mechanical Turk: A New Source of Inexpensive, Yet High-Quality, Data? *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 6(1), 3-5.
- Cichocka, A., & Jost, J. T. (2014). Stripped of illusions? Exploring system justification processes in Capitalist and post-Communist societies. *International Journal of Psychology*, 49, 6-29.
- Coibion, O., & Gorodnichenko, Y. (2015). Information Rigidity and the Expectations Formation Process: A Simple Framework and New Facts. *American Economic Review*, 105(8), 2644–2678.
- Coibion, O., Gorodnichenko, Y., & Weber, M. (2019). Monetary policy communications and their effects on household inflation expectations (No. 25482). NBER Working Paper.



COVID, ECONOMIC SYSTEM JUSTIFICATION, POLITICAL IDEOLOGY

- Conover, P. J., & Feldman, S. (1981). The origins and meaning of liberal/conservative self-identifications. *American Journal of Political Science*, 25(4), 617-645.
- Cotterill, S., Sidanius, J., Bhardwaj, A., & Kumar, V. (2014). Ideological Support for the Indian Caste System: Social Dominance Orientation, Right-Wing Authoritarianism and Karma. *Journal of Social and Political Psychology*, 2, 98 –116.
- Crump, M. J. C., McDonnell, J. V., & Gureckis, T. M. (2013). Evaluating Amazon’s Mechanical Turk as a Tool for Experimental Behavioral Research. *PLoS ONE*, 8(3), e57410.
- Culpepper, D., & Block, W. (2008). Price Gouging in the Katrina Aftermath: Free Markets at Work. *International Journal of Social Economics*, 35(7–8), 512–520.
- de Mello, G., MacInnis, D. J., & Stewart, D. S. (2007). Threats to Hope: Effects on Reasoning about Product Information. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 34 (2), 153-61.
- Ditto, P. H., & Lopez D. F. (1992), Motivated Skepticism: Use of Differential Decision Criteria for Preferred and Nonpreferred Conclusions. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 63 (4), 568-84.
- Everett, J. A. C. (2013). The 12 Item Social and Economic Conservatism Scale (SECS). *PLoS One*, 8(12), e82131.
- Favor, C., & Lamont, J. (2009). Price gouging in disaster zones: an ethical framework. *Social Alternatives*, 28(1), 49.
- Ferguson, J. L., Ellen, P. S., & Piscopo, M. G. (2011). Judging Fairness of Price Increases Following a Disaster. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 98(2), 331-349.
- Federal Trade Commission (FTC). (2006). Investigation of Gasoline Price Manipulation and Post- Katrina Gasoline Price Increases. URL:  
 <<http://www.ftc.gov/reports/060518PublicGasolinePricesInvestigationReportFinal.pdf>

## COVID, ECONOMIC SYSTEM JUSTIFICATION, POLITICAL IDEOLOGY

Fuller, D. A., Alston R. M., & Vaughan, M.B. (1995). The Split between Political Parties on Economic Issues: A Survey of Republicans, Democrats, and Economists. *Eastern Economic Journal*, 21(2), 227-238.

Fuller, D. A., & Geide-Stevenson, D. (2007). Consensus on Economic Issues: A Survey of Republicans, Democrats, and Economists. *Eastern Economic Journal*, 33(1), 81-94

Furnham, A. (2003). Belief in a just world: Research progress over the past decade. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 34(5), 795–817.

Goodman, J. K., Cryder, C. E., & Cheema, A. (2012). Data Collection in a Flat World: Strengths and Weaknesses of Mechanical Turk Samples. In *NA - Advances in Consumer Research*, Volume 40, eds. Zeynep Gürhan-Canli, Cele Otnes, and Rui (Juliet) Zhu, Duluth, MN: Association for Consumer Research, Pages:112-116.

Gosling, S.D., Vazire, S., Srivastava, S., & John, O.P. (2004). Should We Trust Web-based Studies? A Comparative Analysis of Six Preconceptions About Internet Questionnaires. *American Psychologist*, 59(2), 93–104.

Hafer, C. L. (2000). Do innocent victims threaten the belief in a just world? Evidence from a modified Stroop task. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 79(2), 165–173.

Haines, E. L., & Jost, J. T. (2000). Placating the powerless: Effects of legitimate and illegitimate explanation on affect, memory, and stereotyping. *Social Justice Research*, 13, 219–236.

Harvey, D. (2005). *A brief history of neoliberalism*. New York : Oxford University Press.

Jost, J. T. (2001). Outgroup favoritism and the theory of system justification: An experimental paradigm for investigating the effects of socio-economic success on stereotype content. In G. Moskowitz (Ed.), *Cognitive social psychology: The Princeton symposium on the legacy and future of social cognition* (pp. 89–102). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

## COVID, ECONOMIC SYSTEM JUSTIFICATION, POLITICAL IDEOLOGY

- Jost, J. T., & Banaji, M. R. (1994). The role of stereotyping in system justification and the production of false consciousness. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 33(1), 1-27.
- Jost, J. T., Blount, S., Pfeffer, J., & Hunyady, G. (2003). Fair Market Ideology: Its Cognitive-Motivational Underpinnings. *Research in Organizational Behavior*, 25, 53–91.
- Jost, J. T., Glaser, J., Kruglanski, A. W., & Sulloway, F. J. (2003). Political Conservatism as Motivated Social Cognition. *Psychological Bulletin*, 129(3), 339–375.
- Jost, T. J., Nosek, B. A., & Gosling, S. D. (2008). Ideology: Its Resurgence in Social, Personality, and Political Psychology. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 3(2), 126-136.
- Jost, J. T., & Thompson, E. P. (2000). Group-based dominance and opposition to equality as independent predictors of self-esteem, ethnocentrism, and social policy attitudes among African Americans and European Americans. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 36(3), 209–232.
- Kay, A. C., Jimenez, M.C., & Jost, J.T. (2002). Sour grapes, sweet lemons, and the anticipatory rationalization of the status quo. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 28(9), 1300–1312.
- Kay, A. C., Jost, J. T., & Young, S. (2005). Victim-derogation and victim-enhancement as alternate routes to system-justification. *Psychological Science*, 16, 240–246.
- Kerry, N., & Murray, D. R. (2018). Conservative parenting: Investigating the relationships between parenthood, moral judgment, and social conservatism. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 134, 88–96.

## COVID, ECONOMIC SYSTEM JUSTIFICATION, POLITICAL IDEOLOGY

- Kim, A., Moravec, P. L., & Dennis, A. R. (2019). Combating Fake News on Social Media with Source Ratings: The Effects of User and Expert Reputation Ratings. *Journal of Management Information Systems*, 36(3), 931–968.
- Kruglanski, Arie W (1980), "Lay Epistemo-Logic—Process and Contents: Another Look at Attribution Theory," *Psychological Review*, 87 (1), 70-87.
- Kruglanski, Arie W. (1990), "Lay Epistemic Theory in Social-Cognitive Psychology," *Psychological Inquiry*, 1 (3), 181-97.
- Kunda, Z. (1990). The Case for Motivated Reasoning. *Psychological Bulletin*, 108, 480-498.
- Leduc, S., & Sill, K. (2013). Expectations and Economic Fluctuations: An Analysis Using Survey Data. *The Review of Economics and Statistics*, 95(4), 1352–1367.
- Lerner, M. J. & Miller, D. T. (1978). Just world research and the attribution process: Looking back and ahead. *Psychological Bulletin*, 85(5), 1030-1051.
- Li, K., Qin, Y., Wu, J., & Yan, J. (2020). Containing the Virus or Reviving the Economy? Evidence from Individual Expectations during the COVID-19 Epidemic. Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3563597>.
- Lockwood, C. M., & MacKinnon, D. P. (1998). Bootstrapping the standard error of the mediated effect. Paper presented at the Proceedings of the 23rd Annual Meeting of SAS Users Group International Conference, Cary, North Carolina, USA.
- MacKinnon, D.P., Fairchild, A.J., & Fritz, M.S. (2007). Mediation analysis. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 58, 593-614.
- Nill, A., & Schibrowsky, J. A (2007). Research on marketing ethics: a systematic review of the literature. *Journal of Macromarketing*, 27, 256–73.
- Operario D., & Fiske, S. T. (2001). Stereotypes: Content, Structure, Processes, and Context. In

COVID, ECONOMIC SYSTEM JUSTIFICATION, POLITICAL IDEOLOGY

- R. Brown, & S. Gaertner (Eds.), *Blackwell Handbook of Social Psychology: Intergroup Processes* (pp. 22-44), 3. Oxford, UK: Blackwell.
- Okulicz-Kozaryn, A., Holmes, O. IV, & Avery, D. R. (2014). The subjective well-being political paradox: Happy welfare states and unhappy liberals. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 99(6), 1300-1308.
- Paharia, N., Vohs, K. D., & Deshpandé, R. (2013), Sweatshop Labor is Wrong Unless the Shoes are Cute: Cognition Can Both Help and Hurt Moral Motivated Reasoning. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 121 (1), 81-8.
- Pratto, F., Sidanius, J., Stallworth, L. M., & Malle, B. F. (1994). Social dominance orientation: A personality variable predicting social and political attitudes. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 67(4), 741-763.
- Saribay, S., & Yilmaz, O. (2017). Analytic cognitive style and cognitive ability differentially predict religiosity and social conservatism. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 114, 24-29.
- Sibley, C. G. and Duckitt, J. (2010). The Ideological Legitimation of the Status Quo: Longitudinal Tests of a Social Dominance Model. *Political Psychology*, 31, 109-137.
- Smith, K.B., Alford, J.R., Hibbing, J. R., Martin, N. G., & Hatemi, P. K. (2017). Intuitive Ethics and Political Orientations: Testing Moral Foundations as a Theory of Political Ideology, *American Journal of Political Science*, 61(2), 424–437.
- Smith, M. & Upshur, R. (2019). Pandemic Disease, Public Health, and Ethics. In Mastroianni, A., Kahn, J., and Kass, N. (Eds.). *The Oxford Handbook of Public Health Ethics*. Oxford University Press.
- Tajfel, H. (1981). *Human groups and social categories*. Cambridge: Cambridge University

## COVID, ECONOMIC SYSTEM JUSTIFICATION, POLITICAL IDEOLOGY

Press.

Treier, S., & Hillygus, D. S. (2009). The Nature of Political Ideology in the Contemporary Electorate. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 73(4), 679–703.

Tyler, T. R. (2006). *Why people obey the law: Procedural justice, legitimacy, and compliance*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Umphress, E. E., Simmons, A. L., Boswell, W. R., & Triana, M. d. C. (2008). Managing discrimination in selection: The influence of directives from an authority and social dominance orientation. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 93(5), 982–993.

van der Toorn, J., Berkics, M., & Jost, J. T. (2010). System justification, satisfaction, and perceptions of fairness and typicality at work: A cross-system comparison involving the U.S. and Hungary. *Social Justice Research*, 23, 189-210.

Wilson, D. (2014). Price Gouging, Constructions Cartels or Repair Monopolies? Competition Law Issues Following Natural Disasters. *Canterbury Law Review*, 20, 53-90.

Zwolinski, M. (2008). The ethics of price gouging. *Business Ethics Quarterly*, 18(3), 347–78.