

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Trust in unions drives egalitarianism: Longitudinal evidence

Juan Diego García-Castro^{1,2}  | Martin Venegas Márquez²  | Pablo Pérez-Ahumada^{2,3} 

¹Universidad de Costa Rica, Instituto de Investigaciones Psicológicas, San José, Costa Rica

²Centre for Social Conflict and Cohesion Studies (COES), Santiago, Chile

³Universidad de Chile, Santiago, Chile

Correspondence

Pablo Pérez-Ahumada, University of Chile, Av. Cap. Ignacio Carrera Pinto 1045, Ñuñoa, Santiago 7800284, Chile.
Email: pabloperez@uchile.cl

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Abstract

Despite the fundamental role of unions in reducing economic inequality, social psychology still needs to incorporate the systematic study of unions concerning the contemporary theories of intergroup inequality. In this study, we do so by testing the reciprocal relationship between trust in unions and social-dominance orientation egalitarianism (SDO-E) over time. Using data from the Longitudinal Social Survey of Chile, which is a panel study with a representative sample of urban areas, we carried out a Random Intercept Cross-Lagged Panel Model with four waves (2016–2019, $N = 2972$ – 2153). We controlled the main effect by sex, age, political ideology and educational level. The results show a positive relationship between SDO-E and trust in unions within and between levels. This means that people who trust in unions also tend to have higher SDO-E (between effect), and an intraindividual increase in trust in labour unions tends to be followed by an increase in SDO-E (within effect). Trusting unions as an institution that promotes the hierarchy reduction between workers and employers helps increase people's SDO-E over time. Please refer to the Supplementary Material section to find this article's [Community and Social Impact Statement](#).

KEYWORDS

egalitarianism, inequality, longitudinal, RI-CLPM, social dominance, trust, unions

Labour unions are essential for equality and democracy. In countries where unions are more powerful, workers can press for redistribution and income inequality is lower (Kerrissey, 2015). However, despite unions' importance in reducing economic inequality, social psychology has not yet included the study of unions in the main contemporary theorisation of between-group inequality, such as social-dominance theory (SDT, Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). In times of accelerated economic inequality growth, it is necessary to deepen the research on one of the social forces that reduces it (Newman & Kane, 2017). Therefore, in the present study, we seek to identify the possible reciprocal relationship between trust in unions and SDO-egalitarianism (SDO-E) over time.

Psychosocial determinants play an essential role in people's attitudes towards unions as an institution that seeks to protect the interests of the working class and reduce economic inequality. For example, attitudes towards unions may be partly guided by stereotypes and feelings of prejudice against their members. Public protests and strikes that are salient aspects of union activities can provoke negative feelings among people, calling unions irresponsible and corrupt during periods of social struggle. Recently, it has been found that a greater left-wing orientation, fewer feelings of prejudice towards union members, and greater knowledge of their activities are associated with greater positive attitudes towards unions. On the contrary, and opposite to what was expected, neither the beliefs of social mobility nor the meritocratic belief that hard work helps one get ahead in life seem to play a role in these attitudes (McAleese & Day, 2022). In this work, we propose that trust in unions and the orientation towards equality could be related to each other, and we explore the possible direction of this relationship.

In this article, we focus on trust in unions because studying trust in institutions or actors (such as labour unions) is fundamental to analyse to what extent they are deemed as legitimate (Frangi et al., 2017; Mingo & Faggiano, 2020). Trust refers to an individual evaluation based on the expectation that these institutions and actors can produce positive outcomes (Mingo & Faggiano, 2020). Trust is an attitude that includes a relatively lasting view of an institution or actor that functions as the basis of its legitimacy and a state of mind that influences people's behaviours (Frangi et al., 2017; Mingo & Faggiano, 2020). Hadziabdic and Frangi (2022) contend that confidence in unions is an attitudinal disposition suitable to complement union membership as an indicator of support for unions among workers. Therefore, public trust in unions is essential for labour movements. On the one hand, trust in unions is a necessary condition for workers to decide to join a union, particularly if union membership results from a voluntary choice, such as occurs in most democratic societies (Hadziabdic & Frangi, 2022). On the other hand, because public confidence in unions increases labour unions' legitimacy, trust is an essential source of power for labour movements (Schmalz et al., 2018). When labour unions effectively develop narratives to intervene in public debates about social justice issues, citizens' confidence in their role as leaders of social struggles increases (Schmalz et al., 2018). When this occurs, labour movements have more capacity to translate their interests, values and morals into a concrete repertoire of actions (Chun, 2009; Lévesque & Murray, 2010).

To analyse the relationship between trust in unions and orientation towards equality, we build upon the SDT. This theory helps us understand how and why human social groups organise and perpetuate as groups based on hierarchies. It integrates social and individual elements that cause and, in turn, are consequences of prejudice and discrimination. Likewise, SDO has shown a central role in a wide range of intergroup attitudes, behaviours and political preferences in diverse cultures (Pratto et al., 2006; Zubielevitch et al., 2022). SDT argues that group-based dominance is produced and maintained through the socialisation of institutions, individuals and collective intergroup processes. Furthermore, as an approach to intergroup relations, SDT recognises reciprocal relationships between institutions and individuals (Fischer et al., 2012; Pratto et al., 2006).

The SDT is composed of two dimensions. Social dominance based on the Domination of some groups over others (SDO-D), and SDO-E. The SDO-E dimension, the focus of this article, is conceptualised as passive and subtle support for equality between groups, based on ideological beliefs and support for social policies that seek to reduce intergroup hierarchy. It represents a preference for systems that reject inequality. Compared to the SDO-D, the SDO-E is more related to liberalism, social nonconformity and support for affirmative and pro-environmental policies (Ho et al., 2012; Kay et al., 2023).

Egalitarianism is the psychological motivation to make society more equal. It is related to attitudes and behaviours that seek to reduce inequality and challenge the status quo. More than an ethnocentric orientation focused on one's group, it is a general tendency for equitable social relations to recognise and favour disadvantaged groups (Bergh et al., 2015; Ho et al., 2012). In social cognition, as the mechanism for processing social information about ourselves and others, egalitarianism translates into the inclusiveness of social groups in the distribution of resources. Moreover, in social contexts dominated by neoliberalism and its meritocratic justification of inequality, egalitarianism (SDO-E) regains particular importance, as it is an orientation contrary to current economic hegemony (Ho et al., 2012; Kay et al., 2023).

To the best of our knowledge, researchers have conducted only one correlational study to investigate the relationship between unions and SDO in union members in the United States. Bringing together social-dominance theory and labour studies, Green and Auer (2013) found that union identification (the affinity people feel with their union) mediates the negative association between union participation and SDO. Additionally, union instrumentality (i.e., members' perception of the union's ability to improve working conditions) moderated the mediational role of union identification, showing a stronger effect on union members who believe that the union influences workplace justice. Green and Auer (2013) explained this result by noting that unions' main activity is diminishing hierarchical relationships between workers and managers. Based on social-dominance theory, they argued that people who oppose domination systems in their workplace will participate more in union activities and identify more strongly with those institutions that fight against inequality (Green & Auer, 2013).

Social-dominance theory proposes a reciprocal relationship between SDO and union identification (Green & Auer, 2013; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). Although union identification is not the same as trust in unions, they are related constructs insofar as they positively correlate to active union participation (Frangi et al., 2017; Green & Auer, 2013). Therefore, our main hypothesis is that a reciprocal relationship exists between trust in unions and SDO-E.

Likewise, the dual-process motivational model initially developed by Duckitt (2001) proposes that those people with high SDO see the world as wild and competitive, increasing their prejudice towards groups low in power and status. This model suggests a causal relationship in which SDO produces intergroup prejudice. However, other studies have found that SDO does not precede attitudes. For example, Hatemi and McDermott (2016) argued that attitudes influence thoughts and feelings, ultimately influencing moral decisions and not in the opposite direction. In fact, there is little evidence of how ideology affects the change in attitudes over time (Stanley et al., 2017). Thus, because there is mixed evidence about the possible direction of the relationship between SDO and attitudes, we do not hypothesise a particular direction or intensity of the relationship between trust in unions and SDO-E.

This article contributes to the scientific literature in two ways. First, it presents the first longitudinal study of the relationship between two constructs that have been rarely analysed together in the literature. This methodology has been recommended in the SDT literature (Fischer et al., 2012; Green & Auer, 2013; Zubielevitch et al., 2022). In addition, we use a representative sample of Chile's urban population, focusing on SDO and trust in labour unions among people who do not belong to White, educated, industrialised, rich, and democratic (WEIRD) countries (Rad et al., 2018). We, therefore, contribute to the existing literature by examining a country of a region (Latin America) that has been usually underrepresented in social psychology. That said, we believe that our study can contribute to understanding attitudes towards unions beyond the specific case of Chile.

The institutions and policies governing labour unions in Chile represent a prototypical example of neoliberal industrial relations (Pérez Ahumada, 2023). Similar to the neoliberal pattern of labour law reform initiated in other countries in the late 1980s and early 1990s (Baccaro & Howell, 2017), the Chilean industrial relations system is based on regulations designed to weaken unions' bargaining power, to decentralise collective bargaining, and to restrict the right to strike (Cook, 2007; Pérez Ahumada, 2023). In spite of this unfavourable context, Chilean unions have been revitalised in the last few decades (Medel et al., 2023). For example, consistent with their historical affiliation with left-wing politics, throughout the 2010s unions became a prominent actor in the wave of protest that was observed in the country (Donoso & Von Bülow, 2017). This was especially noticeable during the social upheaval of October–December 2019. Along with other social movements, labour unions made several calls for general strikes

to demand more equality and deep institutional changes (Pérez Ahumada, 2023). All in all, this indicates that studying Chile is relevant for understanding attitudes towards unions in neoliberal societies with weak (but emerging) labour movements and high socioeconomic inequality.

Data, script analyses and supplemental materials are available at https://osf.io/zbxat/?view_only=f172365ffc1647788df580ab444aff48.

1 | METHODS

1.1 | Participants

We used secondary data from the Longitudinal Social Survey of Chile (ELSOC). The ELSOC corresponds to a panel study representative of urban areas: It uses probabilistic, stratified, cluster, and multistage sampling. Its target population is men and women between the ages of 18 and 75 who are habitual residents of private houses. The ELSOC is intended to measure what Chileans think and feel about various dimensions of conflict and social cohesion and has been in use since 2016 (COES, 2022). We used the 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019 waves because they measured SDO-E and trust in labour unions. The sample for 2016 comprised 2927 people, 2477 people for 2017 (15% attrition), 2229 people for 2018 (9.9% attrition) and 2153 for 2019 (3.4% attrition).

1.2 | Measures

The two main constructs in this article were measured on a 5-point Likert scale (see Table 1 for descriptive statistics of main variables). On the one hand, trust in labour unions is measured with the item ‘Using the following scale of trust ranging from “not at all” to “very much,” can you tell me how much you trust labor unions?’ The possible responses range from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*very much*).

On the other hand, two items were used to measure egalitarianism (SDO-E). The items used were ‘We should work to give all groups an equal opportunity to succeed’ and ‘We should make every effort to level the playing field for different groups’ (Ho et al., 2012). Each item was rated on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*totally agree*). Both items maintained their original scale, so a higher score on the Likert scale represents a greater presence of egalitarianism. The two items for measuring SDO-E showed a good correlation in every wave ($r_{t1} = .55$, $r_{t2} = .58$, $r_{t3} = .64$, $r_{t4} = .54$; all with $p < .001$).

TABLE 1 Descriptive statistics between main variables.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Mean	SD
1. SDO-E T1	-								4.01	0.62
2. SDO-E T2	0.13***	-							3.98	0.77
3. SDO-E T3	0.07**	0.10***	-						4.12	0.69
4. SDO-E T4	0.08**	0.07**	0.11***	-					4.25	0.58
5. Trust in unions T1	0.05	0.06*	−0.03	0.06*	-				2.22	1.15
6. Trust in unions T2	−0.02	0.13***	0.09***	0.06*	0.33***	-			2.16	1.14
7. Trust in unions T3	0.03	0.07**	0.14***	0.12***	0.35***	0.39***	-		2.22	1.13
8. Trust in unions T4	0.01	0.05*	0.00	0.07**	0.33***	0.33***	0.42***	-	2.07	1.09

Abbreviation: SD, standard deviation.

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

In addition, we control the effects of sex, age, political ideology, and educational level. Sex was identified with a dummy variable (1 = woman and 0 = man). All waves included more women than men (approximately a 60:40 ratio). Age was measured in years; the mean ages in the four waves ranged from 46 to 48. Political ideology was measured on a scale from 0 to 10, with 0 being the most left and 10 being the most right. All waves included more people who positioned themselves in the centre (e.g., 37.84% at t1) than on the left (e.g., 36.53% at t1) or right (e.g., 25.63% at t1). Education was indicated with the following categories: 1 = no studies, 2 = incomplete basic or high school education, 3 = complete basic or high school education, 4 = incomplete high school or humanities education, 5 = complete high school or humanities education, 6 = incomplete higher technician, 7 = complete higher technician, 8 = incomplete university, 9 = complete university and 10 = postgraduate studies (master's degree or doctorate). To facilitate the communication of results, educational level was used as a continuous variable under the assumption that the acquisition of knowledge is progressive as one advances through the levels and that each level delivers more complex knowledge than the previous one, even though it is not fully completed. In general, the complete high school or humanities education category accounted for approximately 65% of the frequency in all waves. For a detailed description of control variables, see the Supplementary [Material](#).

1.3 | Analysis

Random intercept cross-lagged panel models (RI-CLPMs) were used as an analysis strategy. This technique is a relatively recent proposal for dealing with cross lagged panel models (CLPM) limitations. CLPM allows for understanding the reciprocal relationships between two phenomena over time. They are commonly used in psychology to test hypotheses from various theoretical frameworks (e.g., Marsh et al., 2022) or to explore little-studied relationships (Wong & Gong, 2023). However, according to Hamaker et al. (2015), CLPM has the main limitation of combining within and between effects. Essentially, this implies that it is impossible to separate trait-like, time-invariant characteristics of individuals from those that change over time, leading to biased results and misleading conclusions. In contrast, the RI-CLPM introduces a random intercept that separates the variances, enabling us to understand the variations attributed to stable personality components and dynamic characteristics over time. In technical terms, a covariance between the random intercepts of two variables represents a between effect and a regression effect between variables at different times represents a within effect.

Following Cole and Maxwell's (2003) guidelines and the recent literature (e.g., Chayinska et al., 2021; García-Castro et al., 2022), we estimated four models (see Table 2). First, we estimated Model a to test for autoregressive effects (i.e., how trust in unions at time $t-1$ affects trust in unions at time t). Second, we estimated Model b to estimate unidirectional forward effects (i.e., how trust in unions at time t affects SDO-E at time t). Third, we estimated Model c to estimate unidirectional backward effects (i.e., how SDO-E at $t-1$ affects trust in unions at time t). Finally, we estimated Model d to estimate bidirectional effects (i.e., how trust in unions at $t-1$ affects SDO-E at time t and how SDO-E at $t-1$ affects trust in unions at time t).

To test for measurement invariance, two versions of each model were formulated: one with free estimates and the other with time-constrained estimates. We compared adjustment indices of both models based on Rutkowski and Svetina's (2014) criteria and Chen's (2007) recommendation of a difference of 0.02 in comparative fit index (CFI) and 0.03 in RMSEA between unconstrained and constrained models. If the CFI and RMSEA indices did not substantively differ according to the proposed criteria, we retained and interpreted the most parsimonious (constrained) model. We used full-information likelihood to deal with missing cases.

2 | RESULTS

Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics between SDO-E and trusts in unions across measures. The various SDO-E measurements are positively correlated between T1 and T2 ($r = .13$; $p < .001$), T2 and T3 ($r = .10$; $p < .001$) and T3

TABLE 2 Fit indices and measures of invariance.

Model	Model fit	Model comparison	Model invariance testing
a1	$\chi^2(87) = 130.949, p < .001$; CFI = 0.997; TLI = 0.996; RMSEA = 0.011; SRMR = 0.023		
a2	$\chi^2(91) = 134.844, p < .001$; CFI = 0.997; TLI = 0.996; RMSEA = 0.01; SRMR = 0.023	a2 versus a1	$\Delta\text{CFI} = 0$; $\Delta\text{RMSEA} = 0$
		a2 versus b2	$\Delta\text{CFI} = 0.039$; $\Delta\text{RMSEA} = -0.03$
		a2 versus c2	$\Delta\text{CFI} = 0.039$; $\Delta\text{RMSEA} = -0.03$
		a2 versus d2	$\Delta\text{CFI} = 0.037$; $\Delta\text{RMSEA} = -0.03$
b1	$\chi^2(108) = 672.332, p < .001$; CFI = 0.958; TLI = 0.941; RMSEA = 0.042; SRMR = 0.065		
b2	$\chi^2(118) = 687.028, p < .001$; CFI = 0.958; TLI = 0.945; RMSEA = 0.041; SRMR = 0.065	b2 versus b1	$\Delta\text{CFI} = 0$; $\Delta\text{RMSEA} = -0.002$
		b2 versus d2	$\Delta\text{CFI} = -0.002$; $\Delta\text{RMSEA} = 0$
c1	$\chi^2(112) = 678.394, p < .001$; CFI = 0.958; TLI = 0.943; RMSEA = 0.042; SRMR = 0.064		
c2	$\chi^2(118) = 685.662, p < .001$; CFI = 0.958; TLI = 0.945; RMSEA = 0.041; SRMR = 0.064	c2 versus c1	$\Delta\text{CFI} = 0$; $\Delta\text{RMSEA} = -0.001$
		c2 versus d2	$\Delta\text{CFI} = -0.002$; $\Delta\text{RMSEA} = 0$
d1	$\chi^2(97) = 637.493, p < .001$; CFI = 0.96; TLI = 0.937; RMSEA = 0.044; SRMR = 0.063		
d2	$\chi^2(113) = 656.099, p < .001$; CFI = 0.959; TLI = 0.945; RMSEA = 0.041; SRMR = 0.064	d2 versus d1	$\Delta\text{CFI} = 0$; $\Delta\text{RMSEA} = -0.003$

Note: Letters and numbers represent distinct types of models: a1 = free autoregressive model; a2 = time constrained autoregressive model; b1 = free unilateral forward model; b2 = time constrained unilateral forward model; c1 = free unilateral backward model; c2 = time constrained unilateral backward model; d1 = free bilateral model; d2 = time constrained bilateral model.

Abbreviations: χ^2 = Chi-square statistic, degrees of freedom in parentheses. CFI, comparative fit index; RMSEA, root mean square error of approximation; SRMR, standardised root mean square residual; TLI, Tucker Lewis Index; ΔCFI , CFI difference between models; ΔRMSEA , RMSEA difference between models.

and T4 ($r = .11$; $p < .001$). In the case of trust in unions, positive correlations exist between T1 and T2 ($r = .33$; $p < .001$), T2 and T3 ($r = .39$; $p < .001$) and T3 and T4 ($r = .42$; $p < .001$). In addition, significant positive correlations exist between trust in unions and SDO-E across measures: between T1 and T2 ($r = .06$; $p < .05$), T2 and T3 ($r = .09$; $p < .001$) and T3 and T4 ($r = .12$; $p < .001$). That is, those who trust more in unions in one measure have more SDO-E in the next wave.

When conducting longitudinal data analysis, it is important to account for the possible effects that variables may have on themselves across different time points. This is because, before testing relationships between different variables across time, it is useful to determine if variables exhibit some sort of stability over time, and if this is the case, control for these effects. These models are usually referred to as autoregressive. In our analysis, model a1 estimated the autoregressive effects on the variables of interest (i.e., the effect of SDO-E at time t on SDO-E at time $t + 1$) and the same with trust in unions (i.e., the effect of trust in unions at time t on trust in unions at time $t + 1$). In addition,

we estimated a second model (a2), in which the variances of the estimates between time points were constrained. This means that the paths between points were set to be equal: $T1 \rightarrow T2 = T2 \rightarrow T3 = T3 \rightarrow T4$. When we compared models a1 and a2, we observed that invariance between the models was met ($\Delta CFI = 0$, $\Delta RMSEA = 0$), so the more parsimonious model (a2) is retained. Model a2 shows that within each individual, SDO-E is a positive predictor of SDO-E at the next measurement ($\beta = .041$, $p = .011$) (within-level effect). The same is true for trust in unions: An individual who trusts unions at time t is expected to trust unions more at time $t + 1$ ($\beta = .066$, $p = .003$).

After testing for autoregressive effects, we proceed to test for relationships between variables. Model b1 estimated the unidirectional forward effects (i.e., the effect that trusts in unions at time t has on SDO-E at time $t + 1$). When we analysed fit indicators, we observed that the CFI and RMSEA are above the thresholds recommended in the literature (CFI = 0.958, RMSEA = 0.042). As in the case of the autoregressive models, we tested intermodel invariance by estimating a time-constrained forward model (b2). The b2 model index also shows a fit above the thresholds recommended in the literature (CFI = 0.958, RMSEA = 0.041). Comparison of models b1 and b2 showed an invariance between models, so we retained b2 ($\Delta CFI = 0$, $\Delta RMSEA = -0.002$). Model b2 shows that when we analyse the SDO-E variations of each individual over time, an individual who had high confidence in unions in one measurement should have higher SDO-E values in the following measurement ($\beta = .030$, $p = .006$), controlling for autoregressive effects, sex, age, political ideology and education (within-level effect).

In contrast to forward models, backward models seek to test the inverse relationship between the variables of interest (i.e., how SDO-E at time t affects trust in unions at time $t + 1$). Model c1 tested this relationship by allowing for variation in the estimates each time. This model showed a fit that is also above the thresholds recommended in the literature (CFI = 0.958, RMSEA = 0.042). By estimating the model with time-constrained estimates (c2), we could test the invariance between models ($\Delta CFI = 0$, $\Delta RMSEA = -0.001$). We also observed a fit above the thresholds recommended in the literature (CFI = 0.958, RMSEA = 0.042). Otherwise, Model c2 did not show significant relationships of SDO-E as a predictor of trust in unions.

Finally, we estimated bidirectional models, testing the within effect of trust in unions on SDO-E and the effect of SDO-E on trust in unions jointly. When we estimated the model without time constraint (d1), we observed measures of fit slightly above the recommended thresholds (CFI = 0.96, RMSEA = 0.044). When we compared Model d1 with Model d2 (time-constrained), we verified the invariance between models and, therefore, retained Model d2 ($\Delta CFI = 0$, $\Delta RMSEA = -0.003$). Testing for measurement invariance was based on Rutkowski and Svetina's (2014) and Chen's (2007) criteria, and model d2 was retained because both models (freely and constrained) were equivalent, usually when this is the case, the more parsimonious one (constrained) is retained. Model d2 also has fit indices above the thresholds recommended in the literature (CFI = 0.959, RMSEA = 0.041). In substantive terms, model d2 shows a within effect between trust in unions and SDO-E, in which a positive deviation in the mean of individuals' trust in unions at time t predicts a positive deviation in expected SDO-E mean at time $t + 1$ ($\beta = .034$, $p = .002$), controlling for autoregressive effects, sex, age, political ideology and education.

Figure 1 presents the bidirectional constrained model (d2). On the left side, random intercepts for SDO-E and trust in unions are latent variables representing stable trait-like effects. Rounded arrows indicate the variance of each random intercept. The results show that both random intercepts have a statistically significant variance ($\sigma^2_{SDO-E} = .032$, $\sigma^2_{Trust,t} = .375$; both with $p < .001$). This means that a stable variation needs to be separated from a time-dynamic variation, justifying using a RI-CLPM (Mulder & Hamaker, 2021). The arrow connecting random intercepts represents the covariance between them, showing a between effect. That is, people who trust labour unions also tend to have more SDO-E and vice versa ($cov = 0.022$, $p = .008$).

The main variables and their regression paths are shown on the right side. SDO-E and trust in unions each time are represented by a latent variable given by the corresponding observed variable with factor loading set to 1. The straight arrow between each latent variable indicates the autoregressive paths. The cross arrow represents the forward path between SDO-E and trusts in unions. This path shows a within effect. This means that a 1-point deviation from the average level of individuals' trust in unions predicts a positive deviation of 0.034 in egalitarianism during

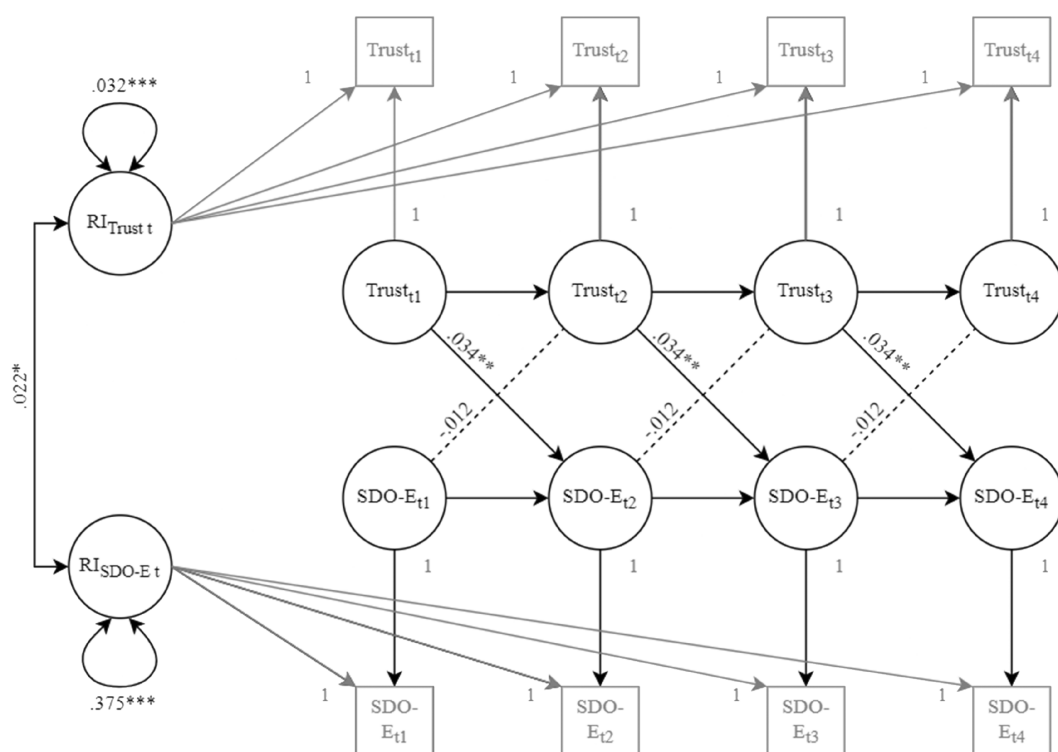


FIGURE 1 Constrained bidirectional RICLPM (d2). *** = $p < .001$; ** = $p < .01$; * = $p < .05$. RI, random intercepts; SDO, social dominance orientation; t, time; Trust, trust in labour unions. Circles represent latent variables, arrows represent effects, squares represent observed variables and dotted lines represent non-significant effects.

the next measurement, controlling for deviations from the expected score for SDO-E and age, gender, political ideology and education. Finally, the dotted line shows no backward path between trust in unions and SDO-E.

In summary, the results show a positive relationship between SDO-E and trust in unions within and between levels. This means that people who trust in unions also tend to have higher SDO-E (between effect), and an intra-individual increase in trust in labour unions tends to be followed by an increase in egalitarian attitudes (within effect). We found no inverse relationship.

3 | DISCUSSION

We aimed to test the reciprocal relationship between trust in unions and SDO-E over time. We found that trust in unions is positively correlated with SDO-E over time. Because unions are a tool for organised workers to defend their rights, working conditions and wages, trusting them promotes the rejection of intergroup inequality. Following SDT, the values institutions represent are usually consistent with individuals' values (Haley & Sidanius, 2005). Therefore, trusting the institutions that fight to reduce inequality will lead to the rejection of social inequality over time (Green & Auer, 2013).

That trust in unions promotes egalitarianism over time is consistent with their societal role. Unions function as a great equality mechanism by increasing the salaries of their members and limiting large differences between management and workers. They can even influence social norms of what is appropriate to pay, which can influence the salary standards of non-union workers as well (McAleese & Day, 2022). Furthermore, unions generally support public

policies of economic redistribution and challenge the neoliberal economic system (Wallace et al., 2022), an essential part of the egalitarian orientation of social dominance (Kay et al., 2023).

For some years now, in the social science literature and especially in social psychology, there has been a call to take into account the importance of separating the types of effects (within and between) (Curran & Bauer, 2011). It is important that the theoretical proposals align with the type of analysis to be carried out since a result may not occur at both levels of analysis or may even be opposite (e.g., Dietvorst et al., 2018). In this article, we use a novel technique to separate the levels of analysis: RI-CLPM. Specifically, these models allowed us to distinguish variance associated with trait-like characteristics (between effects) from variance associated with characteristics that change over time inside every individual (within effect). In this article, we found both effects. First, the Chilean population from urban areas tends to be more egalitarian-oriented when they trust labour unions more. In other words, there seems to be a time-invariant characteristic in the Chilean population. Second, we also found this relationship in every individual across time. This means that if we focus on one individual, this individual will likely trust labour unions in 1 year and will be more egalitarian-oriented in the next year. Both effects mark a starting point to deepen the relationship between the two phenomena.

Although there is not much previous literature on the relationship studied, it is possible to make some general observations regarding the fact that trust in unions promotes egalitarianism at both levels. This finding suggests that this relationship is not something circumstantial of the particular context of the individuals or of the moment in which the measurement is made. Moreover, considering that the data of this study goes from 2017 to 2019, it could be preliminarily argued that this effect has been strong enough to withstand 4 years of vicissitudes in the country's socio-political context, as well as a great social revolt in 2019. Seen in this way, it could be interesting to deepen whether this process occurs particularly with the institution of unions, or whether other types of institutions also generate individual changes in people's egalitarian attitudes. Future studies could consider this incipient idea and test it with more waves and other institutions.

That said, we found no evidence of SDO-E influencing trust in unions. Two alternative explanations can be posited for this. The first one is that those with more egalitarian orientations do not trust unions because Chileans generally do not perceive these organisations as legitimate. This can occur, for example, when unions are seen as corrupt or highly bureaucratic organisations (Bensusán, 2019). Recent research casts doubt on this explanation. Pérez Ahumada and Carrasco (2023) show evidence suggesting that Chile is the Latin American country with the highest trust in unions. They show that, in 2020, the average probability that someone from Chile would trust unions was around 45%, whereas such probability was around 15% for someone from Argentina or Mexico. According to these authors, these national variations can be explained by the sociopolitical and economic conditions in which unions operate. They argue that one of the reasons why trust in unions is high in Chile is because, unlike what happens in countries such as Argentina, in Chile, people do *not* see unions as 'powerful' (e.g., centralised and bureaucratised) organisations.

Based on this finding, we believe a second explanation might be more suitable. This explanation refers to whether people believe unions effectively reduce inequality. As mentioned above, the Chilean labour legislation was designed to undermine unions' bargaining power. This legislation contains regulations that restrict collective bargaining to the level of the individual firm, put strong limitations on the right to strike and weaken unions' capacities to build collective power by promoting the formation of thousands of small, firm-level unions (Pérez Ahumada, 2023). In contexts like this, unions may not be perceived as organisations with the power to challenge (let alone change) the status quo. This can affect citizens' trust in unions, especially those with more egalitarian orientations. Although these people desire more equality, they might not see unions as effective for fulfilling their egalitarian aspirations.

We did not want to hypothesise a possible direction of the relationship between trust in unions and SDO-E because the limited existing literature presents mixed results. However, we provide evidence of how attitudes precede egalitarianism over time rather than vice versa. This pattern has also been previously found in at least one other longitudinal study (Stanley et al., 2017). We want to be cautious with the direction of this relationship because,

theoretically, both relationships are possible and because there is a lack of greater empirical evidence to support the association found. Furthermore, the results may be influenced by third variables not considered in this study—for example, active participation in unions or perceived economic inequality in everyday life.

The main limitation of this study is that the relationship between trusting unions and SDO-E is small. Nevertheless, because it is a relationship controlled by multiple variables over time, the result is consistent. Another considerable limitation is the measures used. Working with secondary data entails using the information available in studies with representative samples, but it is necessary to adapt the research questions to the available items. Despite being a high-power study due to the sample size, the variability that can be found using short measures is limited. The relationships found here should be explored in the future, at least with the other dimension of SDO-D domination and different attitudes towards unions other than trust, for example, the perception of their importance.

Our dataset did not include any other variable measuring attitudes towards unions (e.g., their perceived importance, or the attitudes towards the role of unions in the workplace or in society). The lack of other measurements did not allow us to analyse whether trust in unions is correlated with these other types of attitudes. Nevertheless, recent research suggests that such a correlation might exist. Trust in unions is an attitudinal disposition that usually indicates wage-earners' support for the role they play in society (Hadziabdic & Frangi, 2022).

For future research, we recommend continuing investigating unions' psychosocial impacts in the fight against economic inequality, a pending research agenda to which we want to contribute with this study.

Social psychology has given greater importance to economic inequality due to its overwhelming levels in the contemporary world and the consequences it entails within social behaviour (García-Castro et al., 2022). However, this has not led to a systematic study within the discipline of unions as an organisation that promotes equality. Attitudes towards unions have been theorised as rational mechanisms associated with material self-interest (Frangi et al., 2017). However, the results we found with the general population challenge this argument and suggest that contemporary theories of social psychology, such as SDT, are associated with attitudes towards unions. For example, it had also previously been found that SDO-E activates desires to distribute resources in general without being linked to any specific group or particular interest (Ho et al., 2012). Complementing the study of the social psychology of union behaviour and the social psychology of economic inequality can be a promising line that gives rise to a greater understanding of the struggle to live in more equitable societies.

Although union membership has declined in most countries as economic inequality has increased, its leading role in reducing economic inequality remains (Kerrissey, 2015). Research has shown that trade unions strengthen workers' commitment to equality at the individual level by reinforcing their left-wing orientations and their support for redistribution (Hadziabdic & Baccaro, 2020; Turner et al., 2020). Trade unions also contribute to democracy by reinforcing workers' interest in politics, commitment to the democratic system and willingness to participate in politics (Freeman, 2003; Hadziabdic & Baccaro, 2020). Using a relatively new method, we have contributed to these investigations by showing that a pro-union attitude also drives egalitarianism over time.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclosure.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

Data, scripts analyses and supplemental materials are available at https://osf.io/zbxat/?view_only=35bd3d806fe9498bbea95fd3561b22ab.

ETHICS STATEMENT

ELSOC's panel data were collected under the principles of the Declaration of Helsinki.

ORCID

Juan Diego García-Castro  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9662-6547>

Martin Venegas Márquez  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5800-2680>

Pablo Pérez-Ahumada  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0410-0725>

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