SOCIAL BANDITRY: HOW AUTHORITIES' IRRESPONSIVENESS FOSTERS SUPPORT FOR VICARIOUS PROTEST

ABSTRACT

Individuals who cannot directly express their discontents against an unjust system may instead support groups that disrupt the system through deviant, transgressive or even criminal actions. These groups are defined as '*social bandits',* and their actions may be construed as a form of vicarious protest. Very little research has examined what drives individuals' support for social bandits. This thesis focused on hackers, groups operating on the internet often illegally. Seven experiments examined the circumstances in which individuals were more likely to support hackers engaging in disruptive and criminal actions. Experiments 1-2 examined whether individuals were more likely to support hackers that attacked a corrupt (either ingroup or outgroup) authority. Results indicated that individuals legitimized hackers more strongly when they attacked an ingroup corrupt authority. Experiments 3-4 extended these findings focusing on the role of an institution' responsiveness. In two different contexts (online work platform and university), participants who dealt with an institution irresponsive to their grievances were more likely to experience anger and, subsequently, legitimize hackers' attacks. Experiments 5-6 explored the role of schadenfreude. These experiments showed how both government corruption (studies 5 and 6) and low government responsiveness (study 6) may trigger schadenfreude in response to hackers' attack, and stronger support for hackers. Experiment 7 consolidated previous findings and explored the role of identification with an aggrieved group. In this study, low responsiveness elicited anger and schadenfreude, which then predicted increased support for hackers. Results also revealed an interaction effect of identification with an aggrieved group participants belonged to, and emotions on the legitimization of hackers; individuals who identified more strongly with the aggrieved group expressed lower anger and schadenfreude and consequently lower support for hackers (Study 7). Theoretical implications for the emerging field of research on social bandits are discussed, in addition to future directions for research.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INDEX OF TABLES AND FIGURES:

TABLES:

FIGURES:

ABSTRACT

Individuals who cannot directly express their discontents against an unjust system may instead support groups that disrupt the system through deviant, transgressive or even criminal actions. These groups are defined as '*social bandits',* and their actions may be construed as a form of vicarious protest. Very little research has examined what drives individuals' support for social bandits. This thesis focused on hackers, groups operating on the internet often illegally. Seven experiments examined the circumstances in which individuals were more likely to support hackers engaging in disruptive and criminal actions. Experiments 1-2 examined whether individuals were more likely to support hackers that attacked a corrupt (either ingroup or outgroup) authority. Results indicated that individuals legitimized hackers more strongly when they attacked an ingroup corrupt authority. Experiments 3-4 extended these findings focusing on the role of an institution' responsiveness. In two different contexts (online work platform and university), participants who dealt with an institution irresponsive to their grievances were more likely to experience anger and, subsequently, legitimize hackers' attacks. Experiments 5-6 explored the role of schadenfreude. These experiments showed how both government corruption (studies 5 and 6) and low government responsiveness (study 6) may trigger schadenfreude in response to hackers' attack, and stronger support for hackers. Experiment 7 consolidated previous findings and explored the role of identification with an aggrieved group. In this study, low responsiveness elicited anger and schadenfreude, which then predicted increased support for hackers. Results also revealed an interaction effect of identification with an aggrieved group participants belonged to, and emotions on the

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CHAPTER 1

1.1. Introduction

This thesis focuses on the concept of vicarious dissent. Throughout I provide evidence for the hypothesis that in some circumstances individuals can protest against systems which they deem as unjust and manifest their dissent by supporting disruptive actors who directly challenge the said injustice. In social psychology, literature on collective action and political protest has long supported the assumption that in the face of societal injustice, individuals can either engage in direct, confrontational action with the purpose to subvert the injustice or they can submissively accept it. Only recently have researchers started to consider the ways in which inaction may also have a protest intent and that confrontational out-group-directed collective action may not necessarily be the only type of collective action individuals can engage in. My approach stems from this wider perspective in protest action, contending that an alternative way to manifest grievances and show dissatisfaction is through the support of disruptive actors who attack and disrupt an unjust system; thus, protesting *vicariously*.

In the present work, I will focus on the study of hackers, investigating how the legitimization of hackers and their actions can serve as a means for individuals to manifest their dissent and express their anger at injustice and disadvantage. Hackers are a modern example of disruptive actors who live on the margins of society and who individuals can support in their challenging actions against formal powers; other examples being gangs, forms of organized crime and bandits. In the 1950's the historian Hobsbawm suggested that in pre-

industrialized societies, peasants' support for bandits could be accounted as a (albeit primitive) form of political protest. The bandits described by Hobsbawm were groups of violent and armed people living outside the realm of authority who often made incursions to loot and rob the harvests of the rich and the powerful. They would however, as legend purported, leave the peasants untouched (Ciconte, 2020; Hobsbawm, 2000).

Because these bandits effectively posed a challenge to the economic, social and political systems of those who held power, defined laws and controlled resources, Hobsbawm referred to them as 'social bandits' and to the wider phenomenon as 'social banditry'. These outlaws, their ranks often comprised of the peasantry itself, were regarded as criminals by the authorities and the state but admired and protected by peasant society who often regarded them as heroes (Hobsbawm, 1973, 2000). According to Hobsbawm, support of outlaws by the peasantry arose because they were vicarious executors of the peasants' unarticulated rage, their actions being perceived as an explicit rejection of their own social inferiority.

Referring to Hobsbawm's social banditry and to recent research defining hackers as social bandits (Wong & Brown, 2013) Travaglino defined his own 'social banditry framework' (2017). The framework contends that disempowered individuals can manifest their dissent towards the status quo by supporting actors who through legal or illegal means disrupt the functioning of a social system. Like Hobsbawm's social bandits, these actors live at the margin of civil society and operate outside conventional societal and political structures of power and resistance. Travaglino (2017) argues that by supporting these actors, disadvantaged individuals are able to vicariously express their anger and voice their discontent against an unjust system.

In this thesis, drawing on the social banditry framework and research on political action, I explore the circumstances in which individuals support and legitimize the actions of disruptive actors who challenge the status quo.

1.2. Literature review

Literature in social psychology has long been investigating how and why people decide to engage in political protest. In the last fifty years several models have emerged that have indicated perceptions of injustice and cost-benefit values, relative deprivation (RDT; Crosby, 1976, 1982; Folger, 1986; Gurr, 1970; Runciman, 1966), perceived efficacy (Hornsey et al., 2006; Mummendey et al., 1999; Van Zomeren et al., (2004) and social identity as main predictors of political protest intentions. These models have granted differing levels of attention to the various predictors and have therefore resulted in different predictions. Only recently have there been some attempts to develop integrative models of collective action (Mummendey et al.,1999; J. Drury & Reicher, 2009; Becker & Tausch, 2015, van Zomeren, et al., 2008; van Zomeren, et al., 2012; Jost, et al., 2017; Grant et al., 2017; Abrams et al., 2020).

What follows is a summary review of the different approaches adopted in the study of collective action and the description of some of the latest integrative models of collective action. It must be acknowledged that due to the abundance of models and approaches that have been developed in what is a vast and growing field of study, this review must be selective rather than exhaustive. The primary purpose is to provide an overview of the diverse approaches that scholars have taken in the study of collective action and to demonstrate 1) the ways these have at times provided opposing explanations and 2) how the most recent models are now displaying a tendency to integrate these different perspectives.

1.2.1. Theoretical frameworks

Cost-benefit, expectancy-value models

Models of collective action were initially based on the assumption that when individuals decide whether to participate in collective action, they would base their decisions on rational calculations aiming to maximise their subjective utility and minimize personal losses (for reviews, see Klandermans, 1997; Van Zomeren & Spears, 2009; Walker & Smith, 2002). This perspective granted no place to the role of emotions. Olson's (1968) theory of collective action is one of the most famous rationalist theories of collective action.

Olson argued against the contemporary belief that, because individuals are often expected to act on behalf of their personal interests, groups of individuals with common interests should similarly be expected to act on behalf of their shared interests. Conversely, he argued that under common conditions individuals will not contribute to the group by supporting collective action. This is because from a rational cost-benefit point of view it is more convenient for single individuals to enjoy the common goods as free-riders, than having to contribute to them. He further contended that although individuals know that the group will be better off if everyone contributes, they also believe that their individual support will not be decisive in determining whether the collective action takes places or not. Moreover, if no action is undertaken, then their contribution would have not changed the results if, on the other hand, the action takes place, than they can enjoy the benefits while the cost is borne by others (Olson, 1971; Lindhal, 1987).

Relative deprivation and perceptions of injustice

Social psychological models of collective action went on to adopt a more personal and

subjective perspective compared to Olson's theory. This is evident, for example, when examining the case of relative deprivation. An extensive research literature suggests that feelings of deprivation (rather than objectively being deprived) are an important determinant of participation in collective action (for reviews, see Crosby, 1976; Merton & Lazarsfeld, 1950; Walker & Smith, 2002). This has led to the development of relative deprivation theories (RDT) which consider feelings of deprivation as deriving from social comparisons with others more so than from objective experiences (Festinger, 1954). A meta-analysis by Smith and Ortiz (2002) confirmed this finding that feelings of group-based deprivation were stronger predictors of collective action than perceptions of group-based deprivation. This is because perceptions of group-based deprivation are not always considered as unjust and people do not always question inequality (Jost, et al., 2012; Jost, et al., 2017).

Furthermore, this is also congruent with emotion appraisal theories which suggest that emotions serve as a bridge between the appraisal and the subsequent action. From a collective action perspective, the appraisal of a situation as being unjust triggers group-based anger which then, as a highly activating emotion, predicts protest and collective action (e.g., Mackie & Smith, 2002; E. R. Smith, 1993; Van Zomeren, et al., 2004; Yzerbyt, et al., 2003). Research in RDT distinguishes between individual-level (egoistic) and group-level (fraternal relative) deprivation (see Runciman, 1966). Because the focus here is on predictors of collective action only group-level deprivation will be considered.

Explanations of collective action based on relative deprivation began to lose their primacy in the 70's when several scholars started to argue that deprivation was too pervasive in most social and political systems to be a reliable predictor of collective action (Gurney & Tierney, 1982; McPhail, 1971; for reviews, see Ferree & Miller, 1985; Walker & Smith, 2002). In fact, because relative deprivation is so widespread and universally present according to RDT, it is difficult to explain why there are still so many situations in which individuals do

not protest (Klandermans, 1997; Stroebe et al., 2019).

Criticisms of relative deprivation models emphasized the necessity to adopt a more instrumental approach in the study of collective action. Because not all feelings of relative deprivation translate into protest and collective action, it is likely that the emotional reaction to deprivation is not the only and sufficient predictor of protest behaviour. Resource mobilization theory (Klandermans, 1984, 1997; McCarthy & Zald, 1977; Stryker, et al., 2000) in a manner akin to Olson's theory (1968) started to consider collective action as driven by strategic and political calculations rather than by emotionally invested responses.

Resource mobilization theory focuses on the socio-structural study of social movements. From a social psychological standpoint, social movements have been defined as ''efforts by a large number of people who define themselves and are also often defined by others as a group, to solve collectively a problem they feel they have in common, and which is perceived to arise from their relations with other groups'' (Tajfel, 1981, p. 244). Resource mobilization theory viewed social protest as consisting of a set of rational collective actions whose aim was to achieve the groups' goals and to pressure those in power to submit to the demands of the disadvantaged. Focuses of research mobilization theory were political institutions; in particular social movement organizations such as the labour and civil rights movements, the women's movement, and the gay and lesbian movement (SMOs).

The theory further proposed that at an individual-level, decisions to participate in collective action are indeed made rationally, with the intent to minimize personal losses and maximize personal gains. The focus of this theory is therefore on individual's resource; advancing in their personal interests is what motivates individuals to undertake collective action (Gamson, 1992; Mc Adam, 1982). Because of this rational gain-focused perspective, resource mobilization theory overlooked individuals' subjectivity (Van Zomeren, et al., 2012). Klandermans (1984) therefore tried to re-direct attention to the individual by proposing that it

is *subjective* value-expectancy products that are drivers of collective action.

Among these subjective value-expectancy products, Klandermans considered the individual's personal expectations of their actions being effective in achieving their goals i.e., their perceived efficacy. Specifically, he proposed that when individuals decide to engage in collective action, believing that their actions will be useful to achieve their goals positively predicts engagement. This is also true from a group perspective whereby stronger perceived efficacy means people will be more likely to engage in collective action (e.g., Hornsey et al., 2006; Kelly & Breinlinger, 1996; Mummendey et al., 1999). One of the most popular models of collective action in social psychology which grants a leading role to perceived efficacy is the dual pathway model of collective action by Van Zomeren et al. (2004).

Perceived efficacy and the Dual-pathway Model of collective action

Several studies suggest that perceived efficacy has a crucial role in predicting collective action (Hornsey et al., 2006; Mummendey et al., 1999; Stürmer & Simon, 2004a). Van Zomeren et al., (2004) by revising the existing literature on collective action, suggested that the various explanations provided in theory and research could be classified as either emotion-focused or problem-focused (Lazarus, 1991). Research based on social identity theory SIT (Tajfel & Turner, 1979, 1986), and several relative deprivation approaches have an emotion-focused approach. They describe collective action as the result of group based- anger stemming from perceived injustice or unfair group-based disadvantage. Alternatively, explanations based on cost and benefit considerations, expectancy-value models (Klandermans, 1997; Simon, 1998) and the role of efficacy (Bandura, 1995; Mummendey et al., 1999; Stürmer & Simon, 2004a) can be classified as problem-focused approaches.

From such conclusions, van Zomeren et al. (2004) suggested that these two approaches

- emotion focused and problem focused - rather than being competitive explanations of engagement in collective action, in fact indicate two separate yet complementary paths that should be integrated in one model (almost contemporarily, Stürmer and Simon, 2004a, also proposed a model of collective action which considered group efficacy and group identity as two independent pathways to collective action). Van Zomeren et al. (2004) proposed an integration of these two paths in their dual pathway model of collective action: an efficacy path and an injustice appraisal-anger path, the first one being more instrumental (problem-focused) while the second one being more emotional.

The emotion driven path posits that collective disadvantage makes, via inter-group comparison, collective identity salient. The saliency of collective identity would then drive to group-based emotions and appraisal. If the situation is perceived as unfair, then group-based anger is likely to be experienced which then predicts the group member likelihood of engaging in collective action. How much opinions and appraisals of the situation are perceived to be shared with other group members, pertains to the emotion focused coping route. This perceived similarity of opinions and appraisals affects group-based anger and therefore the likelihood of engaging in collective action; the more one believes its views to be shared by other group members, the more likely one will be to engage in collective protest.

The efficacy path revolves around more practical and instrumental evaluations and specifically around the role of efficacy. Group efficacy is the perception that groups can, with the collective effort of its members, achieve their goals (Bandura, 1995, 1997).
Indirectly, social identity theory (Tajfel, 1978a; Tajfel & Turner, 1979) suggests the same: when people identify with a group whose collective disadvantage is perceived as unstable, they will be likelier to engage in collective protest (Mummendey et al., 1999; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). By perceiving the disadvantage as unstable people think that their actions will be more successful in changing it (Folger, 1987; Mummendey, 1999).

According to van Zomeren et al. (2004) this perception of efficacy is also dependent on the perceived social support from fellow group-members, specifically, on the *instrumental social support*, i.e., group-members' willing to engage in collective action. Group-based appraisal of *instrumental social support*, increases perceptions of group efficacy, which then promote collective action, defining an efficacy-focused path to collective action.

The model also argues that these two pathways - emotion-focused and efficacy focused - are distinct and independently predict collective action tendencies. This means that people are more likely to mobilize if they can engage in both emotion-focused coping (they need to know that fellow group members share the same opinions) and problem-focused coping (they need to know that fellow group members will work together through challenging situations).

Social Identity Theory

Individuals' engagement in collective action has also been explained from a social identity theory perspective (SIT; Tajfel, 1978a, b; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). According to SIT, identifying with groups is something individuals strive for, perceived as beneficial to their own well-being. However, sometimes individuals can identify with groups that reflect negatively on them, such as low/status and disadvantaged groups. In these cases, depending on the permeability of the group boundaries and on the legitimacy and stability of the group relationships, individuals will try to exit the group or to subvert the groups' social order. For example, when group boundaries are perceived as impermeable and departing from the disadvantaged group is not an accessible option, individuals might try to better their situation by engaging in social competition and collective action (Ellemers, 1993; Ellemers et al., 1997; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). However, engagement in social competition and collective action will

only be considered when the unfavourable status is perceived as illegitimate. Only then will individuals try to actively change their comparatively lower condition (Ellemers, 1993; Tajfel, 1978b; Turner & Brown, 1978).

SIT posits social identity to be a proximal predictor of collective action. When conditions of relative permeability, instability and illegitimacy of the group boundaries and relationships are satisfied; the stronger the identification with the disadvantaged group, the higher the chances that its members will engage in collective action (de Weerd & Klandermans, 1999; Kelly & Breinlinger, 1995b; Klandermans et al., 2002; Simon & Klandermans, 2001; Stürmer & Simon, 2004b; O'Brien & Major, 2005). One reason for this is that individuals who identify strongly with their group are more likely to care about the status of said group (Abrams & Grant 2012; Abrams, 1990). A stronger bond with the group is likely to elicit greater outrage at said group's illegitimate low status (Kawakami & Dion, 1995) and thus a greater incentive to re-address the causes of injustice.

Further research has then discussed the role that politicised identity, a specific form of social identity, has in predicting collective action (Kelly & Breinlinger, 1996; Simon, 1998; Stürmer & Simon, 2004a; Klandermans et al., 2002). A politicized identity is a social identity which is defined by the identification with a politicised group (Stürmer & Simon, 2004b).

Because politicized identity is more specific to collective action than non-politicized identity it has been found to be a better predictor of collective action (for a review, see Stürmer & Simon, 2004b). The content of the identity and not only the identification process seems to be important in 'preparing' people for collective action. An identity which is politically defined is more directly tied to an activist identity and will carry a stronger internal obligation to participate in social movement activities (Stürmer & Simon, 2004b).

Social identities thus form a basis for collective action to the extent that they form or transform individuals' identities from those which are defined by social circumstance into

more agentic ones (J. Drury & Reicher, 1999; Hercus, 1999; Reicher, 1996, 2001; see also Klein et al., 2007). This can happen in two ways. 1) Social identity associated with group-based emotions and efficacy beliefs, determines whether individuals will engage in collective action making them collectively engaged individuals. 2) Individuals may develop a politicized identity as a consequence of their participation in collective action. By participating in collective action and interacting with other activists, people also become aware of the involvement of society at large and develop a politicized social identity (Reicher, 1996; Stürmer & Simon 2004b; Hercus, 1999).

Furthermore, identification with political groups and social movements is also shaped by inter-group dynamics (Thomas et al., 2014; Jimenez-Moya et al., 2019). In the context of collective political protest social identities are defined in positional terms. That is, social identities become salient due to the presence of an outgroup (Bliuc et al., 2007; Drury et al., 2012; McGarty et al., 2009). The ingroup's norms are largely defined in contrast to those of the outgroup and such norms can change as a result of new relations between groups (Drury & Reicher, 1999, 2000). Typically, individuals self-categorize as members of these contextually defined groups; they internalize their norms and they will act in accordance to the interests of said groups.

Research on crowd behaviour has shown that defining social identities in (op)positional terms can lead to an exacerbation of violence due to changes in identity boundaries and by making conflict more normative. That is, because identities are defined in oppositional terms their boundaries become more inclusive. Protestors come to see themselves as one with other oppositional groups that challenge the police and other authorities and this leads to a sense of empowerment (Drury & Reicher, 2000). Furthermore, in this 'oppositional' context, behaviours originally deemed as unjustifiable become legitimized as rightful forms of protest and as a form of self-defense when enacted in contrast to restrictions and oppression imposed by the

authorities. The increased support for violent protest is experienced not only among protesters but also among non-activist (Saavedra & Drury 2019a, 2019b).

1.2.2. Integrative models of collective action

SIMCA a Social identity Model of Collective action

The SIMCA model derives from three meta-analyses synthetising the effects of a total of 182 effects of perceived injustice, efficacy and identity (van Zomeren, et al., 2008). The authors developed a new model of collective action that integrated the three different socio-psychological perspectives focusing on perceived injustice, efficacy and identity. For the first time, the model considered not only the predictive role of each of these predictors but also how the relationships between them affect collective action.

In line with a renewed attention to the role of identification in predicting collective action, van Zomeren, et al., (2008) revised and integrated their original dual-pathway model of collective action (van Zomeren et al., 2004) to create a new model, the social identity model of collective action (also known as SIMCA). This integrative model grants a prominent role to social identity in predicting collective action. It suggests that social identification has both a central role in directly motivating collective action (specifically through politicised collective identities) and a mediating role through group-based emotions that connect perceptions of injustice and collective action. The authors explain this direct and indirect role of social identification by describing how: a) social identity provides members of a group with a group-based experience of injustice which can 'alleviate' experiences of disadvantage (e.g., Branscombe, et al., 1999; Postmes & Branscombe, 2002) and which can trigger emotional reactions that motivate towards collective action (E. R. Smith, 1993; van Zomeren et al., 2004)

social identity empowers a sense of efficacy because individuals feel stronger when they belong to a group (e.g., J. Drury & Reichner, 2005; Mummendey et al., 1999). Furthermore, it contends that social identity should be relevant for both, structural and more incidental types of collective disadvantage.

When social identification is with a structurally disadvantaged group, providing that the disadvantage is considered illegitimate and that the inter-group status differential is unstable, then the social identification will be predictive of collective action as a reaction to a threat to the social self (Ellemers, 1993; Tajfel, 1978b; Turner & Brown, 1978).

Alternatively, when social identification is with a group that is incidentally disadvantaged (due to a specific contingent situation or event), once people realize that they belong to this disadvantaged group they can adapt and form group-based cognitive (Turner et al., 1987), emotional and behavioural (e.g., Mackie & Smith, 2002; E. R. Smith, 1993; Yzerbyt et al., 2003) responses as part of this newly acquired social identity.

The meta-analysis by van Zomeren, et al. (2008) provided support for several predictions relative to the roles of injustice, identity and efficacy while predicting support for collective action. The authors found that - as literature on collective action widely suggests - injustice, efficacy, and identity each (causally) and uniquely affected collective action. The model further showed that social identity moderated the effects of both perceived injustice and efficacy on collective action, and that politicized collective identity was a better predictor than non-politicized collective identity. Furthermore, affective injustice was a better predictor of support for collective action than non-affective injustice.

The SIMCA model grants to social identity a key role in the explanation of collective action. The model shows how identification not only affects general motivation to engage in collective action (because that is what the group's norms prescribe) but also that it impacts on both, perceived injustice (through group based emotional experience), and perceived efficacy

(through empowerment).

A Dynamic Dual Pathway Model of Approach Coping with Collective Disadvantage

The dynamic dual pathway model builds on and extends the SIMCA. The dynamic dual pathway model differs from the main SIMCA and from most of previous models of collective action for manly two reasons.

Firstly, while van Zomeren, et al. (2012) define the SIMCA as a mostly descriptive and predictive model of collective action, the dynamic dual pathway model of collective action aims to provide a theory of collective action that describes how specific events trigger emotion-focused and problem-focused processes of coping with groups' disadvantage. The emotion and problem focused pathways are dynamically interrelated.

Secondly, the model is a bi-directional cause-and-effect model. Defining the model in terms of coping processes means that both causal antecedents and consequences of collective action are considered. The authors' use of Lazarus' (1991) dynamic theory of coping has provided them with a dynamic and bidirectional model. Central to Lazarus' theory and to this model is the concept of cognitive appraisal, defined as a psychological process that is central to individuals' coping efforts. Lazarus (1991, 2001) defines two main types of appraisal: *primary appraisal* - the individual's perceived relevance of the collective disadvantage for the self and - *secondary appraisal* - the evaluation of the situation of collective disadvantage and of how effectively the individual can cope with it.

In the dynamic dual pathway model, appraisal not only feeds into coping but coping feeds back into appraisal: for example, "the cognitive appraisal of an event evokes the specific cognitive appraisal approach coping efforts that motivate collective action, that, in turn, feed back into cognitive reappraisal (that determines further cognitive reappraisal

coping)" (van Zomeren, et al., 2012, p.181). Group-based anger is key to emotion-focused approach coping with collective disadvantage, whereas group efficacy beliefs are key to problem focused approach coping. Furthermore, anger and efficacy are not mutually exclusive approaches, each having complementary effects on collective action.

The model further conceptualizes social identity as dynamically interrelated with collective action. Group identification will affect the interpretation of the collective disadvantage. The stronger the identification with the group, the stronger the perceived unfairness of the disadvantage and thus attribution of external blame. Stronger perceived unfairness and attribution of external blame will then resolve in higher group-anger. It is thus suggested that the relevance of group identity facilitates emotion-focused approach coping. This automatically implies that low identifiers are less emotionally driven. Lower identifiers will engage in collective action only if they think there are good chances of achieving personal goals through group action (e.g., Doosje, et al., 2002). Low identifiers will therefore rely on group efficacy beliefs to decide if they are to engage in collective protest. Consequently, the dynamic dual pathway model predicts that identification with the group moderates the problem-focused approach coping. Individuals' group efficacy beliefs are stronger predictors of their willingness to undertake collective action when their identification with the group is low.

Finally, because of the dynamic and bidirectional nature of this model, several predictions are made relative to feedback loops from coping to cognitive reappraisal. For instance, a stronger approach coping and thus a stronger belief in group efficacy is likely to increase collective action, which then increases the primary appraisal of self-relevance. This means that a belief in attainable social change can mobilize individuals to collective action and that, through this experience of acting as part of a collective, the group-level self-relevance of collective disadvantage is heightened. Thus, greater problem-focused approach coping should

lead to the greater self-relevance of collective disadvantage (e.g., higher group identification) (van Zomeren, et al., 2012).

In a second feedback loop, the model predicts that engaging in collective action can increase the secondary appraisals of coping potential. This means that by engaging in collective action, individuals feel empowered; this in turn increases their coping potential and external blame for unfairness. What sets the dynamic coping model of collective action apart from previous models of collective action is its use of an approach coping perspective. This perspective enables collective action to be considered as the result of a coping response to a psychological and social reality that is actively co-constructed by the group and its members (van Zomeren, et al., 2012).

IDEAS Identity-Deprivation-Efficacy-Action-Subjective well-being model

As mentioned, in recent years several attempts have been made in social psychology to integrate ideas stemming from relative deprivation theory, social identity theory, and resource mobilization theory, aimed at explaining collective actions taken by members of disadvantaged groups who perceive their disadvantage as illegitimate (e.g., Mummendey et al., 1999; Ellemers, 2002; Becker & Tausch, 2015; Stürmer & Simon, 2004b; van Zomeren, et al., 2012; van Zomeren, et al., 2008).

The IDEAS model belongs to these integrative attempts and it is based on a test and extension of the previous SIRDE model (SIRDE: the social identity– relative deprivation–efficacy model; Grant et al., 2015). It was tested using a representative sample of the Scottish population who were eligible to vote in the nation's independence referendum (a few days prior to the referendum). The model differs from previous models in collective action as it allows for the possibility that, in the face of an illegitimate and yet stable disadvantage,

individuals will consider a more radical option to collective action: separatism. Additionally, the model takes into consideration two domains: relative deprivation and social identification's joint effect on collective action and subjective well-being.

Relative to the *collective action aspect,* the model presents identification and affective collective relative deprivation (CRD - the feeling that the whole group one belongs to is unjustly deprived relative to other groups) as predictive of separatist intentions. These relationships are completely mediated by social change beliefs. Abrams and Grant (2012) suggest that when a group is experiencing sustained and stable illegitimate disadvantage members may decide to advocate for more collective autonomy rather than trying to collectively improve their situation. This is likely to happen when individuals believe that for the group's situation to improve a realignment of power is needed, and this can be achieved through structural separation. The model, indeed, supports the idea that social change belief is the strongest predictor and proximal mediator of separatism.

Akin to the SIMCA (van Zomeren, et al., 2008) and the dual pathway model (van Zomeren, et al., 2012), IDEAS proposes an indirect effect of identification on negative intergroup emotions through perceived discrimination. This is because identification with the disadvantaged group positively predicts perceived discrimination. Identification is found to be positively linked to greater collective efficacy.

Additionally, in line with previous results (Grant, 2008), the model links cognitive CRD (collective relative deprivation) to perceived discrimination and negative collective emotions. The more the disadvantaged group perceives itself as such relative to a reference group, the more they will feel discriminated against and experience negative emotions like anger and frustration. This perspective is also in line with recent models which suggest that group-based anger derives from appraisals of group-based unfairness and outgroup's accountability. Furthermore, the two elements of affective CRD - perceived discrimination and

negative intergroup emotions - are positively related to one another, insofar that greater perceived discrimination is likely to increase levels of anger and frustration.

As for the *well-being aspect* of IDEAS, the model proposes a combinatory effect of relative deprivation and social identification on well-being. Individuals who feel discriminated against as a group and are therefore angry and frustrated are likely to feel less happy and satisfied about their lives. The same applies to individuals who feel personally deprived (PRD - the feeling that one is unjustly deprived compared to other in-group members): the more they feel deprived, the worse their subjective well-being. This indicates that relative deprivation, both collective and personal, can have a negative impact on subjective well-being. These results are in line with Schmitt et al.'s (2014) meta-analysis which found both types of discrimination to be associated with lower well-being.

As for the role that identification has on subjective well-being, the model embraces both the rejection-identification model (Branscombe et al., 1999) and the 'Social Cure' model (Jetten et al., 2012) and suggests that the stronger the identification the greater the subjective well-being.

Finally, the affective components of CRD (i.e., perceived discrimination and negative intergroup emotions) are described as having a negative relationship with subjective well-being. This implies that identification with the group can potentially have a negative effect on well-being, since stronger identification is likely to heighten sensitivity to discrimination and result in a negative indirect effect on well-being.

The IDEAS model supports the belief that both relative deprivation and social identification influence collective action and subjective well-being. The theory shows how relative deprivation and social identification can provide a basis for separatism – a more radical form of social change. A pioneering aspect of the model is that it directly links both the collective action and subjective well-being outcomes with identity and relative deprivation in

the same model. Linking relative deprivation to identification has allowed to consider negative effects of identification on well-being. In a context of collective disadvantage, stronger identification can result in lower well-being through the affective crossover from negative collective emotions and perceptions of discrimination. Stronger identification with a group that is perceived to be suffering may also mean that individual members' well-being suffers. The model therefore suggests that both positive and negative effects of social identity on well-being can coexist in parallel.

Social Identity Model of Collective Action Extended: Integrating who "we" are with what "we" (will not) stand for.

Van Zomeren et al., (2011; 2018) later integrated their SIMCA model with research on morality. The authors developed their model by examining both moral and identity motives leading to engagement in collective action. Specifically, because identification with a group (especially a politicised group) also implies sharing moral beliefs with the other group members (i.e., its normative content) van Zomeren et al., (2011) linked moral beliefs with social identity in their revised version of the SIMCA model.

The relationship between moral beliefs and social identities is illustrated by the concept of 'normative fit', a notion, in turn, derived from self-categorisation theory. According to self-categorisation theory, 'normative fit' refers to the extent to which the behaviours and perceived attributes of a collection of individuals conform to the perceiver's knowledge-based expectations (Turner, et al., 1987; Reynolds et al., 2012; Subašic et al., 2008). This definition of 'normative fit' therefore suggests that the process of social categorization defines what context-specific behaviours are appropriate. From a collective action perspective, this implies that when an individual perceives an act as a violation of their moral beliefs they may self-categorise as part of a group that will not stand for such violation and thus be more likely to

engage in collective action to protest against it.

Initially (van Zomeren et al., 2011), the authors focused on the role played by violation of moral convictions– that is, individuals' strong and subjectively absolutist beliefs about what is right and wrong. Absolutist beliefs are experienced as a non-negotiable, self-evident facts about the world (Skitka, 2010). Across two studies (van Zomeren et al., 2011) examining collective action tendencies in the context of reactions to discrimination of a disadvantaged group (Dutch Muslims in study 1 and Mainland Chinese living in Hong Kong in study 2) by an advantaged group (Non-Muslim Dutch in study 1 and Hong Kong Chinese in study2), the authors proposed that violations of moral convictions against social inequality motivate collective action to oppose inequality by increasing identification with the victims. Specifically, they suggested that moral convictions predict politicized identification, group-based anger and group efficacy, which in turn are associated with stronger engagement in collective action.

Results from the two studies were somewhat inconsistent. Correlations between moral conviction, politicized identification and group efficacy beliefs variables were positive and significant across both studies (as predicted by the integrative model). However, only in Study 1 the relationship between moral conviction and group efficacy was fully mediated by politicized identification. Nonetheless, overall, the two studies supported the idea that SIMCA's predictive power is enhanced by considering individuals' moral convictions. Subsequently, the model (van Zomeren et al., 2018) was further extended by considering a broader set of violations of moral beliefs in individuals' political engagement, as well as the notion of (politicised) identity content. Although moral convictions might be considered as the strongest instantiations of moral beliefs (e.g., Skitka, 2010; Van Zomeren, 2013), van Zomeren and collaborators (2018) contend that the same value-protection processes instigated by moral convictions are also triggered when different operationalisations of moral beliefs, such as

values or rights, are violated.

Furthermore, the authors of the integrated SIMCA model (van Zomeren et al., 2018) emphasise the importance of the perceived violation of moral beliefs in triggering engagement in collective action. This is because the perceived violation of moral beliefs makes the relevant moral belief and the normatively fitting identity more salient (Subašic et al., 2008), thus making clearer who "we" are and what "we" (will not) stand for. The authors (van Zomeren et al., 2018) thus suggest that connecting notions of moral beliefs and identity content will be useful in predicting collective action However, because political identity has typically been measured as a form of group identification, van Zomeren et al (2018) argue that the content and the meaning that the individual ascribes to said identity, is commonly unknown. For this reason, the authors developed an identity content measure, which assess not only identification with but also content of politicised identities.

1.2.3. Inaction and alternative forms of collective action

Van Zomeren, et al. (2012) in their 'Dynamic Dual Pathway Model of Approach Coping with Collective Disadvantage' proposed that: "As our model aims to explain collective action, we focus on approach coping rather than on avoidance coping (e.g., Austenfeld & Stanton, 2004; Folkman & Moskowitz, 2004) that should instead explain why individuals respond passively to collective disadvantage" (p.184). Because the model focuses on direct forms of collective action, there seems to be the assumption that individuals react to collective disadvantage either by directly engaging in action (with the intent to reverse the disadvantage) or by passively responding to it.

This ‘distinction’ between action and passivity has long been supported by literature on protest and reactions to disadvantage and has had two main consequences: 1) inaction has become a synonym for passivity and/or acceptance; 2) the study of collective action has considered only direct and confrontational actions to reduce group disadvantage (for recent reviews, see H. J. Smith, et al., 2012; van Zomeren, et al., 2012). Because alternative forms of collective action have been neglected (forms that are not necessarily confrontational and out-group directed), research has regarded collective action as rather rare (Leach & Livingstone, 2015; Stroebe et al., 2019). Only in the last years have scholars started to challenge these assumptions.

De la Sablonnière (2017) and De la Sablonnière and Taylor (2020), for example, introduced the concept of ‘collective inertia’. The authors argue that the study of collective action has long suffered from a narrow perspective: social psychology has in fact mostly focused on the ‘micro’ psychological aspects without considering a more ‘macro’ sociological perspective. According to the authors this narrow perspective has also led researchers to equate social change with collective action (see Stroebe et al., 2015), leaving out other possible forms of social change.

To counter this, De la Sablonnière (2017) introduced the concept of ‘collective inertia’, a crippling societal state where a dramatic event has left individuals without clear goals, values and norms to guide them. This lack of societal reference and guidance leaves group members paralyzed and unable to engage in coordinated collective action. However, what is most important is that although collective inertia might externally appear as reflective of collective acceptance and endorsement of the status quo, this may not be necessarily the case. Individuals do refrain from engaging in collective action not because they do not want to or are not motivated to, but rather because they lack a sense of collective agency and direction. De la Sablonnière (2017) and De la Sablonnière and Taylor (2020) therefore propose that

collective inaction is not necessarily a form of ‘tacit consent’ but that it can be a state of social paralysis where group members, who would like to change the social system, feel incapacitated to act.

Within research on collective action, system justification theory (Jost, et al., 2012; Jost et al., 2017) has also tried to redefine the meaning of inaction. Researchers advocating for a system-justifying perspective have emphasized how social-psychological models of collective action, although useful, have rarely incorporated ideological factors. This is particularly surprising, as collective action generally arises in a societal context where one group (the disadvantaged) is highly motivated to change the status quo that guarantees privileges to an opposing group (the advantaged) who will fight back to preserve it.

According to this perspective, ideological processes like system justification beliefs, are what motivate individuals to defend or attack the status quo. Several studies have shown how disadvantaged groups can hold system justifying beliefs. Because system justification reduces moral outrage directed at the social system, it effectively impairs system-challenging protest on behalf of the disadvantaged (Becker & Wright, 2011; Jost, et al., 2012; Osborne & Sibley, 2013; Wakslak, et al., 2007). However, because these system justifying beliefs provide the disadvantaged with comfort and reduce their moral outrage, I would argue that the inaction which derives from it is not a sign of passive acceptance of the status quo but rather a sign of active acceptance.

A similar point was recently made by Leach and Livingstone (2015). The authors argued that what appears to be out-group favouritism by the disadvantaged can in fact be a form of psychological resistance from the disadvantaged. According to system justification theory, system justifying beliefs ‘override’ motives for a positive in-group identity, and disadvantaged groups will show less in-group favouritism compared to advantaged groups (Jost, et al., 2004). Thus, out-group favouritism is considered as a proof that disadvantaged

groups have internalized their 'lower' position and evaluate themselves negatively (Jost, et al., 2004).

However, Leach and Livingstone (2015) argue that this reasoning has some limitations: firstly, there are contextual social reality constraints. If an out-group objectively performs better than an in-group, it is not surprising that the former will be evaluated as more competent or having higher power. Secondly, attributing greater power, status and competence does not imply that the disadvantaged are legitimizing the current social structure, but it might be a sign that they fear the oppressive power of the out-group. Finally, and most importantly, system justification theory assumes that describing the advantaged outgroup as more competent, powerful and dominant (traits typically attributed to advantaged out-groups) and the in-group as more communal and moral (traits typically attributed to disadvantaged in-groups) is again proof that in-group members are accepting of their inferior status.

The question as to whether competence, power and dominance are traits that are actually preferred by the in-group compared to communality and morality has not been investigated, however. The authors argue that disadvantaged groups may show in-group favouritism on characteristics such as communality, warmth, and morality because they are effectively preferred compared with characteristics typically attributed to advantaged out- groups (e.g., power, competence, dominance). Furthermore, the authors contend that by disagreeing with what traits are commonly preferred and which are not, the worse off groups are showing psychological resistance to disadvantage. By defining one's group with traits that are less agentic and by placing value on them, disadvantaged groups are effectively refusing to be determined by the outside and instead determine themselves. In fact, *"psychological resistance is the myriad ways in which the disadvantaged assert their own view of themselves and the world despite dominant pressures to accept societal messages to the contrary"* (Leach & Livingstone, 2015, p.616).

Others have also expressed the importance of considering alternative forms of collective action to reduce disadvantage that are not direct and confrontational (for recent reviews, see H. J. Smith et al., 2012; van Zomeren et al., 2012). Diverse are the attitudes that individuals can have regarding their position in society, they are not limited to – which is what social psychology seems to have suggested so far - submissive acceptance or fighting to alter societal systems of disadvantage (Leach & Livingstone, 2015).

For example, the IDEAS model of collective action previously mentioned (Abram et al., 2020) considers separatism (not directly confrontational but not submissive either) as an alternative and extreme form of collective action. Other researchers (Stroebe et al., 2019) have emphasized how collective action in response to disadvantage can be expressed through in-group-oriented actions. Stroebe et al. (2019) conducted research on how inhabitants from the province of Groningen (Netherlands) reacted to the devastating effects (property damage due to earthquakes) caused by large-scale oil extraction. They found that more visible expressions of discontent like protesting were generally chosen as last resort. In this context, where participants felt mostly powerless to influence the actions and decisions made by the national government and the oil industry, collective action in the traditional sense was often not considered as a viable option and other forms of protest were more likely to be considered: reporting damages to the oil company, cooperating with other out-groups (like research groups), joining organized collectives, etc.

This research, together with those previously discussed, stresses the importance of taking a broader perspective on collective action that is not limited to the most visible forms of protest. Even when groups are not engaging in social protest, there is growing evidence suggesting that people are clearly not ‘inactive’ in response to collective injustice. When individuals feel like they have no power to change the situation and little concrete action is possible (e.g., protesting), they are still ‘active’ in many alternative ways.

These alternative ways individuals can rely on are dependent on the position they hold in the social hierarchy. Compared to advantaged and high-status groups, disadvantaged groups do not have the same access to means of social control (like material resources and institutional and political influence), and their capacity to influence 'their betters' are restricted. However, comparatively disadvantaged groups can still redress wrongs against themselves or punish higher up groups by resorting to alternative available strategies. These strategies tend to be non-normative, often costly to enact and ordinarily motivated by a demand for justice and a resolution not to acquiesce. Examples of these forms of social control from below are rebellion, covert retaliation, non-cooperation, and flight (Baumgartner, 1984).

1.2.4. Social Bandits and alternative forms of resistance

There is evidence that recent research in social psychology has started studying protest and collective action from a wider perspective. This perspective provides new explanations to the long-time discussed dilemma derived by the discrepancy between how diffuse social injustices are and yet how seldom people protest. In the past several scholars researching political protest and collective action have pointed out that, although injustices and grievances at a societal level are highly diffuse, only rarely do few people seem to actively oppose this by engaging in protest actions (Klandermans, 1997; McAdam, 1982; McAdam & Boudet, 2012; McCarthy & Zald, 1977; della Porta & Diani, 2006; Snow, et al., 2004; Tarrow, 2011). The reason for this discrepancy has often been attributed to feelings of low perceived efficacy; if individuals feel powerless and believe that their actions cannot change the unfair situation, then they will likely refrain from protesting (e.g., Klandermans, 1984; van Stekelenburg & Klandermans, 2007; van Zomeren et al., 2004; Van Zomeren, et al., 2008).

However, this recent research also suggests that individuals who feel collectively disadvantaged can protest even while feeling powerless, by engaging in alternative forms of collective action (Abrams et al., 2020; Leach & Livingstone, 2015; Stroebe et al., 2019). For example, everyday forms of protest can be traced in the use of humour, of ridicule directed at powerful out-groups; in self-centred strategies like feigned ignorance or inability to learn/ understand instructions; even in taking extended breaks while working or working at a slow pace (Billig, 2005). These actions can all be considered as active, often subtle and covert, forms of resistance to material disadvantage. As they are not confrontational, they may not be directly aiming at societal change, but as forms of psychological resistance they are still clear forms of opposition (Leach & Livingstone, 2015).

Thus, several scholars are now inclined to consider inertia and passivity as forms of resistance (Carillo & Gromb, 2007; Jost, et al., 2017; Stroebe et al., 2019). It is surprising that this emphasis on covert forms of resistance has emerged only recently in the field of social psychology; in the field of history, passivity has long been considered as a form of resistance (Adas, 1986; Hobsbawm, 1973; Scott, 1973).

In his article on peasants and politics, Hobsbawm (1973) discussed the political relations of 'traditional' peasants to groups and institutions outside their local community. He argued that because of their inferior status and their lack of means, peasants in traditional societies did not have efficient ways to oppose the state and landlords who exploited them.

However, in such circumstances, peasants could always resort to passivity. Devised slowness, real or fake incapability and stupidity were powerful strategies of resistance if enacted by a communally organised traditional peasantry (Amin, 1988; Hobsbawm, 1973; Scott, 1986). Nevertheless, although sometimes useful, because peasants depended on the fruits of their work, this strategy of low productivity could not be used indefinitely.

1.2.5. Hobsbawm and the socio-historical model of 'Social Bandits'

Hobsbawm (1973) therefore acknowledged the importance of 'passivity' as a form of resistance by the disadvantaged long before social psychological theorising was brought to bear on the issue, however his contribution to political protest does not end here: the British historian and social protest movements expert introduced the concept of 'social banditry' (1959). According to Hobsbawm, 'social banditry' is a primitive form of organized social protest of peasants against oppression and he regarded it as one of the most universal social phenomena in history, found in almost every peasant society.

The label "social bandits" (Hobsbawm, 1959) is used to describe bands of men who in peasant societies lived outside the jurisdiction of law and authority and who, using violence, imposed their will on the rich and the powerful (i.e., lords and states). Banditry and 'social banditry' proliferate in pre-industrial societies. Before the era of modern capitalism, control and economic power were mostly established through physical coercion. The rich and the powerful were those who, by force and threat, achieved access to surplus wealth - mostly coming from the land and produced by peasants. Lords and authorities were powerful; however, they did not have sufficient means in keeping constant surveillance over their population. This made their power liable to attacks from bandits, groups of violent and armed people living outside the realm of authority who would rob and loot the harvests of the rich while, as legend would have it, leaving the peasant's untouched (Ciconte, 2020; Hobsbawm, 2000).

This made banditry 'social' in that it effectively challenged the economic, social and political system, by attacking those who hold or claim power, define law and control resources. 'Social bandits' were therefore peasant outlaws regarded as criminals by authorities

and the state but who were admired and protected by the peasantry who at times went so far as considering them heroes, avengers and fighters for justice (Hobsbawm, 1973, 2000).

In peasant societies, rural folk lived separately from the rich and the powerful. As an external collective group, they were often tormented by the feeling of being excluded and inferior to the rich and those in power yet dependent on them. Hobsbawm (1973) suggested that the duplicity of this relationship inevitably created resentment in the peasantry who saw in bandits and their actions an explicit rejection of their own inferiority. Bandit's actions enabled those who did not have the means to directly protest and rebel to the oppressors to do so vicariously. It is important to note however that Hobsbawm's bandits were mostly reformers, not revolutionaries; they wanted a restoration of the traditional order of things, a fairer and more just relationship between the rich and poor, the powerful and the oppressed however they did not want the abolition of the lords.

1.2.6. Social Bandits or just Bandits?

When it first emerged, Hobsbawm's theory of social banditry attracted a great amount of interest and numerous criticisms. Several scholars, especially those studying bandits from Latin American, argued that the English historian had exaggerated the element of protest in social banditry. They argued that he deliberately focused on the ties that bandits had to the peasantry while almost completely ignoring the connections that bandits often held with lords and political figures (Blok,1972; Joseph, 1990; Slatta, 1987). Because bandits need support to survive, it was argued that they were inevitably tied to and protected by kings-men, politicians and landlords; sometimes even entering into contracts with them (Blok, 1972; Ciconte, 2020;

Singelmann, 1975). These contracts and alliances with powerful elite factions provided peasants with a means to ascend the social hierarchy. According to Blok (1972) this was likely to have crippling effects on large-scale peasant mobilization: by permitting some peasants to achieve mobility at the expense of others, class solidarity would be undermined.

Considering how inter-twined bandits were with social and political power structures and how banditry could provide opportunities for bandits to climb up the social ladder, several scholars questioned the image of bandits as champions of the poor and protectors of the weak. Hobsbawm (1969) analysed banditry as a reaction by peasants to 'distant' authorities, injustices and major social disruptions. Popular folktales and ballads described bandits as heroes who protected the common people, who stole from the rich to give to the poor and who would kill only in extreme circumstances (self-defence or personal revenge). However, in reality, bandits embodied this ideal to varying degrees (Singelmann, 1975).

Revisionist scholars of social banditry claimed that in Latin America the 'picture' was quite different from the one described by Hobsbawm. Peasants mostly resorted to banditry for material gain rather than as a form of political protest. They also argued that in light of the 'conservative nature' of peasants, banditry was often chosen as the last option; that when it did occur it was mostly in areas with scarce population and where there was no settled peasantry; and that ventures based on alliances between bandits and elites were more common than those characterized by peasant-bandit solidarity (Blok, 1972; Chandler, 1987; Slatta, 1987).

Hobsbawm's portrayal of social banditry has also been criticized on methodological grounds. Several social historians (Blok,1972; Joseph, 1990; Slatta, 1987) have pointed out that in his characterization of social banditry, Hobsbawm has almost exclusively relied on popular sources of information while almost completely ignoring official sources like police and judicial records. By relying on heroic folk tales and ballads, critics argue that Hobsbawm's characterizations of social bandits reflect the poor's idealized aspirations rather than historical

reality. However, it is worth pointing out that Hobsbawm himself always stated that real social bandits were probably less influential than the legends they inspired (Joseph, 1990).

Hobsbawm actively replied to some of his critics (Hobsbawm, 1972). To those who criticised him for having over-emphasized the occurrence of bandits who were supported and admired by the people, he replied that the issue is not a matter of emphasis but rather a matter of focus. He always stated that his work was not concerned with banditry in general but 'only with some kinds of robbers, namely those who are not regarded as simple criminals by public opinion' (Hobsbawm, 1969, p.13).

Similarly, Hobsbawm has never denied the ambiguity of bandits and their possible ties with established powerholders. This is very clear in the following passage from his book Bandits (1969):

> He (the bandit) is an outsider and a rebel, a poor man who refuses to accept the normal roles of poverty and establishes his freedom by means of the only resources within reach of the poor, strength, bravery, cunning and determination. This draws him close to the poor: he is one of them. At the same time the bandit is,inevitably,
>
> drawn into the web of wealth and power, because, unlike other peasants, he acquires wealth and exerts power. He is "one of us" who is constantly in the process of becoming associated with "them." The more successful he is as a bandit, the more he is both a representative and champion of the poor and a part of the system of the rich. (p.76).

As for the value of “popular” myths and folklore literature as sources of information, social banditry revisionists have maintained that they are unreliable (Blok, 1972; Singelmann, 1975; Slatta, 1987). They argued that these popular sources describe not what (some) bandits indeed do or who they are but what peasants would wish them to do or be. However, Hobsbawm’s (1972, 2000) contention is that the myths cannot be completely disjointed from the reality of banditry and that therefore they must be revealing of some truth.

Finally, several have contested that it is hazardous to consider social banditry as a primitive form of political protest by peasants. According to these revisionists, bandits did not think of themselves as social rebels; they had no intention of subverting the current system, nor did they have the means to, most of the time they were motivated by personal gains and connected to those in power (Chandler, 1987; Slatta, 1987). In response, Hobsbawm emphasizes the symbolic value of social banditry as a protest phenomenon which often originates in acts of defiance, becomes idealized, and then is disseminated through ballads and tales. Social bandits proved with their very existence "that oppression was not universal, and vengeance for oppression was possible." (1969, pp. 80-81). Even if peasants had no alternatives or replacements to the current power-structure, their actions were aimed at undermining the authority of the dominant class. For this reason, peasants' actions could indeed be considered as pre-political only, as Joseph (1990) puts it, peasant resistance was about popular politics, rather than elite, politics.

Furthermore, because social banditry may reflect a desire for justice by those who are disadvantaged, regardless of its phenomenology, it holds an important psychological function as it is an expression of a vicarious form of dissent. As such, social banditism can be considered more like a social psychological construct than an historical fact. To this end, whether bandits did or not defend the poor and the weak is of secondary importance, what is most important is whether they were indeed perceived as doing so by the poor and the weak and why.

Tales and ballads of hero bandits and noble robbers suggest that bandits were sometimes elevated by the folk to advocators of a possible different social order and to symbols of fight against repression. Similarly, the mediatic attention, favour and praise that modern bandits like hackers can attract, shows that they are sometimes perceived as wrong righters and fighters for social justice. Support for these figures then becomes an expression of dissent.

Why and under which circumstances individuals regard bandits as social bandits, is what the social banditry framework focuses on (SBF - Travaglino, 2017).

Considering political protest in the digitalized world, this thesis focuses on digital bandits and on the circumstances under which and the reasons why they come to be perceived as *social* bandits.

1.3. The digital transformation of collective action

Political protest and collective action have drastically changed since the primitive forms of resistance described by Hobsbawm, if not in substance, then certainly in form. The most striking changes in political protest and collective action have been a consequence of the rapid and impressive growth of digital information and communication technologies (ICTs) that has taken place in the last thirty years (Di Maggio, et al., 2001; Norris 2001). Particularly within the realm of extra-institutional politics, ICTs have been widely adopted by social movement organizations and activists, who make use of these new technologies to maximize the effectiveness and the rapidity of diffusing communication and mobilization efforts (Di Maggio, et al., 2001; Norris 2001).

The ubiquitous diffusion of these technologies of information and communication has had an undeniable impact on political (and non-political) activism. Modern technologies and social media have led to a proliferation of "new forms of collective actions and groups: they guarantee the spreading of protest tactics that are now easier to "enact". Individuals are no longer passive consumers of the media, on the contrary, they are learning how to influence the media themselves (van Laer, 2010).

The internet is enabling considerably more than standard mass media does: the diffusion of "how-to" of protest tactics. The dramatic increase of web contestations we have been witnessing in the past thirty years, especially in Western societies, suggests that the Internet provides examples of how to engage in political protest movements (Ayres 1999; Diani 2000; Eagleton-Pierce, 2001; Earl & Kimport, 2009; Jones & Pearson, 2001; Leizerov, 2000; Martinez-Torres, 2001; Myers, 1994; Stoecker, 2002). More generally, activists learn how to directly connect with the wider public, by-passing those gate-keeping functions that have been traditionally served by mass media outlets, and providing information directly to those that within the broader public are interested in it (Benkler, 2006; Bennett, 2003; Jenkins, 2006). This ability to make direct connections is a trademark of Internet technologies (Earl & Kimport, 2009; Jenkins, 2006). A by-product of this 'how-to' of protest tactics are new forms of disruptive actions that solely take place online, such as hacking.

1.3.1. Hackers, a modern form political protest

Hacking is commonly defined in literature as: "an activity which encompasses computer programming, circumventing security systems designed to protect computer networks and digital data stores, designing and executing solutions to solve problems by combining software and hardware in unconventional ways, and modifying and re-purposing digital products of all kinds" Alleyne 2011, p. 1-2 as cited by Madarie, 2017).

In the late fifties when the term was conceived, 'hackers' simply indicated individuals who were formidable programmers who enjoyed finding creative solutions to technical problems. Hackers, colloquially referred to as "geeks" and "nerds", also adhered to a so-called informal

'hacker ethic' which professed a commitment to making information freely available, computer resources freely accessible, and the belief that computer technology should be an instrument for the public good (Nissenbaum, 2004).

Nowadays however, hackers are often considered by the general public as bandits, villains and deviant bullies, who victimize the rest of civil society (Nissenbaum, 2004). This shift of perception may indeed account for how hackers and their motivations have changed with time, however some have argued that, as importantly, the mainstream media, along with public and private authorities have demonized these figures due to the security threat they pose (Halbert, 1997; Nissenbaum, 2004).

This double valance of the term 'hackers' is, not last, caused by the variety of individuals who belong to this category. Hackers are skilled programmers, security researchers, system administrators who hack motivated by justice and ideals of openness; however they are also individuals who have different levels of programming abilities and who hack motivated by personal reasons like: personal enjoyment, to brag about their hacking skills, for the thrill, to impress a romantic partner, leave a sign, belittle the system administrator, or because paid by companies or governments (Turgeman-Goldschmidt 2005; Woo, et al., 2009). This ambiguity of Hackers recalls the ambiguity of Hobsbawm's social bandits who not only wanted to rebel against oppression and establish a fairer system but who were also *often motivated by personal gains and "drawn into the web of wealth and power"* (Hobsbawm, 1969, p.76).

As a heterogeneous group, Hackers can be dangerous for mainstream systems especially when engaging in cyberactivism or hacktivism. Cyberactivism is defined as collective action that occurs on the web and exploits a network infrastructure to promote social and political change. Examples of cyberactivism include electronic disturbance tactics and online civil disobedience, self-organization and autonomous creation of infrastructure,

software and hardware hacking, and hacktivism (Milan, 2012). “Hacktivism” is a type of cyberactisim, a term supposedly coined in 1998 by the hacker collective Cult of the Dead Cow (now going by the name of Hacktivismo) by combining the words “hacking” and “activism” (Delio, as cited in J. Thomas, 2005, p.617). Hacktivism is the use of informatic expertise like coding for political purposes: hacktivist seek to make society a better place through online action.

Hacktivists form subcultural communities that share a set of core values which define and distinguish them from the dominant culture (Milan, 2012). They embody an oppositional and pro-openness ethos. They often find themselves opposing companies and governments that more or less directly obstruct their values of openness and an uncensored internet. In this sense they again remind us of the social bandit who was described as “outsider and rebel who refuses to accept the normal roles of poverty, and establishes his freedom by means of the only resources within reach” (their technical expertise in this case) (Hobsbawm, 1969, p.76).

Hacktivism is an identity-based counterculture: the emphasis is on individuals’ contribution and the hacks are made possible by individuals’ technical skills. A very famous example of an online community that engages in hacktivism is the group ‘Anonymous’ whose professed ideals consist of unfettered openness and transparency in public institutions and the defence of free speech (Tomblin & Jenion, 2016). Anonymous has often been described as a group of criminals and bandits because of its illegal modus operandi.

1.4. Developing a new theoretical Framework: The Social Banditry Framework

Social psychological models of collective action have mostly focused on studying direct forms of protest. Grievances, efficacy, identity and emotions are described as causes of

direct participation in protest or collective action. In line with the social banditry framework, I argue however that protest can also be expressed indirectly or vicariously (Heering et al., 2020; Travaglino, 2017). The "Nothing to lose hypothesis" of protest contends that when individuals feel there are low chances for them to improve their situation, they will adopt more extreme forms of group action (Scheepers et al., 2006). In addition to this, the 'social banditry framework' (SBF - Travaglino, 2017) holds that when individuals feel like they do not have the resources to affect the political decision-making process (Balch, 1974) or when they consider their governments to be irresponsive, their expectations of effectiveness will be impaired and normative political participation will become unappealing. In these circumstances' individuals might fall back on alternative ways to express their dissent: they might decide to plead their own cause vicariously for example by supporting actors that challenge the status quo, disputing core interpretations of our society, and disrupting (both legally and illegally) the functioning of said society (Travaglino, 2017).

The SBF refers to those "external" actors as groups who generally operate outside the official realm of politics and are as such regarded as criminals by the state. Examples of these groups are gangs, groups of organized crime, and hackers. From an historical point of view a connection is drawn here between these actors and the bands of armed and violent men described by Hobsbawm (1959). Within peasant societies the 'social bandits' described by Hobsbawm imposed their will through robberies and extortion meanwhile trying to subvert the economic and social system by challenging those that held or claimed power. Hobsbawm believed that they were supported by peasants because they were vicarious executors of their unarticulated rage and because they regarded their actions as an explicit rejection of their own inferiority. In a similar vein, throughout this thesis I account support for these criminalized groups as a non-normative manifestation of inchoate anger and discontent when individuals feel that their dissent towards the system cannot be expressed directly (Travaglino, 2017).

1.5. Overview of empirical Chapter

Chapter 2 addresses, in more detail, how the injustice of a social and political system might affect the legitimization of social bandits. This chapter compares factually corrupt political systems to non-corrupt ones and contends that the former triggers a stronger support for vicarious dissent, compared to the latter. This chapter reports two experimental studies (Studies 1 – 2) to support this core hypothesis. In addition, this chapter examines the role that national identity plays in the legitimization of vicarious dissent. More specifically it investigates how the correspondence between the participants' national identity and the national identity of the Government described in the factual scenario affects support for hackers. Furthermore, this section also investigates whether the perceived counter-productivity of the hacking action mediates the relationship between the unjust system and legitimization of hackers.

Study 1 examines whether a scenario of injustice, namely a scenario of political corruption has a positive effect on the legitimization of hackers and their action against that said system and whether this is dependent on the national identity of the corrupt system or not. Finally, the study also examines the mediating role that perceiving the hacker's action as counter-productive has on the legitimization of the hackers themselves and whether this relationship is moderated by the nationality of the corrupt system. Study 2 conceptually replicates Study 1, and it further examines whether trust in politicians plays a role in the relationship between corruption and legitimization of vicarious dissent. Overall, this chapter raises implications about the role that perceived injustice, national identity and perceived counter-productivity of the hacking have on the legitimization of Hackers that attack a corrupted political system.

Chapter 3, in turn, mainly focuses on the relationship between legitimization of vicarious dissent and external political efficacy. This chapter contends that experiencing a system (not necessarily a political one) as highly unreceptive to people's requests has a positive effect on the support of social banditry, whereas perceiving a system as open and receptive to people's request would have the opposite effect on the legitimization of social banditry (individuals would be less keen to legitimize it). Furthermore, it is hypothesized that the relationship between low perceived external efficacy and the legitimization of social banditry will be mediated by anger. Chapter 3 also reports two experimental studies (Studies 3 – 4) to support this contention. Study 3 presents an unjust scenario followed by an institutional irresponsive or responsive system and examines whether the irresponsiveness of the system has a positive effect on the legitimization of vicarious dissent and whether this is dependent or independent from the perception of injustice. Furthermore, the study examines anger at the system to assess the role it has in legitimizing hackers. Study 4 offers a conceptual replication, using the same design as in study 3 but a different context for the scenario: the replication of the same pattern of results across different context strengthens the reliability of said results. Overall, this chapter raises implications about the role of perceived external efficacy and the emotional response of anger on legitimization of hackers and their actions.

Chapter 4 explores once again the effect of corruption of a political system on the legitimization of hackers and their actions. Furthermore, the chapter explores the mediating role in the relationship between corruption and support of vicarious dissent of a new emotion: schadenfreude. This chapter contends that when individuals perceive a system as corrupt, they will be more likely to support and justify social bandits that act against it. Furthermore, I hypothesized and found that the emotion of schadenfreude (the pleasure at another's misfortune), has a mediating role in this relationship: with corruption predicting stronger schadenfreude and stronger schadenfreude predicting support for hackers. This hypothesis is

based on literature suggesting a social and emotional regulatory function of schadenfreude (Lange & Boeker, 2018). Chapter 4 reports two experimental studies (Studies 5 – 6) examining these contentions.

Chapter 5 reports a single exploratory experimental study (Study 7) investigating at once the effects that: perceived external efficacy, schadenfreude, anger, solidarity and the interaction of anger and solidarity, have on the perceived legitimacy of Hackers. Specifically, this study focuses on the roles that emotions and identification with the disadvantaged group, play in the legitimization of vicarious dissent. Overall, in this final empirical section, I try to replicate findings from our previous studies (Studies 3 and 4) by examining the predicting role of external efficacy on legitimization of vicarious dissent. Studies 3 and 4 investigated the mediating role of anger in the relationship between external efficacy and vicarious dissent, in this final study the mediating roles of anger and schadenfreude are simultaneously considered. Furthermore, the role of collective identification in the legitimization of hackers is once again explored. This study replicates and summarizes some of the previous findings while also providing insight into the emotional mechanism that leads to vicarious dissent.

While this study draws an interesting picture of the emotional mechanism involved in the legitimization of vicarious dissent, it is only drafted, therefore future studies should try to replicate and further expand on these findings.

CHAPTER 2

2.1. Introduction

In some situations when people feel like they belong to a group that is unjustly disadvantaged they experience anger and decide to engage in collective action with the purpose of improving the overall group conditions (Becker & Tausch, 2015; Jost et al., 2012; Tausch et al., 2011; van Zomeren et al., 2004, van Zomeren et al., 2008). Through petitions, boycotts, peaceful and violent demonstrations, people manifest their disagreement with the current situation and try to improve their collective social and economic standing. In other circumstances, however, even if people are aggrieved because of their disadvantage, they do not try to act upon it (Klandermans, 1997). This is especially true when people think that as a group, they do not have the ability to change the situation and that their actions will not bring about any change, in other words, they have low group-efficacy (Balch, 1974).

This ‘alleged passivity’ is in line with several contemporary and integrative models of protest that describe collective action as a result of two distinct paths or coping strategies: a group-based efficacy (problem-focused coping) path and a group-based anger (emotion-focused coping) path (van Zomeren et al., 2004; van Zomeren et al., 2008; van Zomeren etal., 2012). It is therefore suggested that the decision to engage in collective protest can be predicted

independently by group-based anger and group-based efficacy considerations. These contemporary integrative models stem from a long tradition of models of collective action in social psychology that have their roots in several social science disciplines like sociology, economics and political science (e.g., Blumer, 1939; Davies, 1962; Gurr, 1968, 1970; McAdam, 1982; Olson, 1968; Smelser, 1962; Tarrow, 2011; Turner & Kilian, 1972). This research tradition in social psychology started in the 70's and since then several models have been proposed that have mainly focused on three constructs as predictors of collective action: perceptions of injustice (Jost et al., 2012; Klandermans, 1997; Leach, et al., 2006; van Stekelenburg & Klandermans, 2013; van Zomeren, et al., 2004), efficacy (della Porta & Diani, 2015; McAdam, 1982; McCarthy & Zald, 1977; Tarrow, 2011; van Zomeren, 2004) and social identification (de Weerd & Klandermans, 1999; Kelly & Breinlinger, 1995a; Klandermans et al., 2002; Mummendey et al., 1999; Reicher, 1984; Simon & Klandermans, 2001; Simon et al., 1998; Stryker et al., 2000; Stürmer & Simon, 2004a; O'Brien & Major, 2005), and group-based emotions such as anger as mediators (Becker & Tausch, 2015; Tausch et al., 2011; Stürmer & Simon, 2004b; van Zomeren et al., 2004; van Zomeren et al., 2008; van Zomeren et al., 2012).

Common to these models is the exclusive focus on *direct* forms of protest and political action. This focus is based on the assumption, or maybe has fostered the assumption, that when people do not *actively* engage in protest, they are not indeed expressing dissent. As previously discussed in the former chapter, I believe this to be a common misconception that needs to be re-addressed. My believe is that individuals do not need to be directly engaging in any form of action to protest but can do so also vicariously, by supporting actors that protest on their behalf.

The historian Hobsbawm (1959, 2000) introduced a potential framework for conceptualising expressions of vicarious forms of dissent when describing the world-wide phenomenon of peasant communities providing shelter and support to convicted criminals and robbers. According to Hobsbawm, because these criminals only targeted the rich and the

powerful and often belonged to the peasantry themselves, peasants not only supported them to manifest their anger and frustration towards the status quo but sometimes also regarded them as heroes. Drawing from Hobsbawm and tapping into Wong and Brown's description of e-bandits as social bandits of the digital age (2013), Travaglino proposed that social bandits might, in different guises (i.e., gangs, organized crime groups and hackers), still be relevant today and that support for them can be accounted for as a vicarious form of protest. He developed a "Social Banditry Framework" (SBF) suggesting that disempowered individuals can sometimes use support and legitimization of disruptive groups as a way to manifest their grievances and dissent (Heering et al., 2020; Travaglino, 2017).

In this research I use the social banditry framework (Travaglino, 2017) and propose that support for disruptive actors like hackers, that jeopardize the proper functioning of official online systems through illegal or legally questionable means, represents for disadvantaged individuals a means to voice their discontent against corrupt political systems and to protest vicariously.

By presenting a scenario of government corruption and comparing it to a scenario of non-corruption I test whether corruption (of members of the government) drives individuals to support hackers that disrupt the authority's official website (a governmental website). Drawing from literature on the efficacy of non-normative and violent forms of protest (Saab et al., 2016) I test whether perceiving the hacking as counter-productive or not counter-productive mediates the relationship between corruption and support for said hacking. Research suggests that following a scenario about corruption, the hacking will be perceived as less counterproductive.

This is in line with the nothing to lose hypothesis (Scheepers et al., 2006), which argues that when disadvantaged groups feel like the possibility of improving their condition is low, they will abandon normative forms of protest and turn to more disruptive ones. Even when not promising, these confrontational forms of protest have the potential to improve or at least de-

stabilize the current situation and are therefore preferred to inaction (Saab et al., 2016). When however, the scenario is a neutral one and does not cause grievances, the hacker's action should be perceived as more counter-productive and support for hacking will be lower.

The national identity of the government is also likely to have an impact on the legitimization of hackers. social identity theory (Abrams & Hogg, 1990; Tajfel, 1974; Tajfel & Turner, 2004) and the black sheep effect (Marques, et al., 1998; Marques, et al., 1988; Travaglino et al., 2014) both suggest that individuals should be more strongly motivated to punish the corrupt authority when this belongs to the in-group. In the current studies I test this by presenting the authority as either representative of the UK, the nation where participants are from, or another country (Denmark).

Finally, in light of the intrinsic ambiguity of the hacker's phenomenon and their actions, I explore the role of perceived hacker's motivations in predicting legitimization of the group. Research shows that hackers' motivations to hack range from social justice motives (requesting openness and transparency from public institutions, free circulation of information and protection of freedom of speech) to merely personal ones (personal enjoyment, to brag about their hacking skills, for the thrill, leave a sign, or belittle the system administrator; Tomblin & Jenion, 2016; Turgeman-Goldschmidt 2005; Woo, Kim, & Dominick 2009). In this research I explore whether experiencing a scenario as corrupt has an impact on observer's perceived motivations of the hacking.

2.2. Literature Review

2.2.1. Legitimacy and political engagement

The starting point of most models of collective action is that individuals need to feel

like they are in a condition of objective disadvantage which then provokes grievances and a desire for change. In other words, perceiving a system as unjust will drive people to protest (Jost et al., 2012; Leach, et al., 2006; van Zomeren, et al., 2004). Because of this, social justice has been a key concept in the study of political action. A commonly accepted definition of social justice is the one proposed by Jost and Kay (2010). The two authors define social justice as a property that belongs to social and political systems and that reflects at least two different states of affairs: the first one answering to the question of whether people perceive burdens and benefits in a society as distributed in accordance with a principle of justice (distributive justice), the second one answering to the question of whether people evaluate systems, procedures and rules as fair and just (known as procedural justice).

Perception of legitimacy is fundamental for authorities as it directly affects their power: numerous studies show that when individuals perceive authorities as legitimate, and specifically when they feel that they are being treated fairly and have a say in decision/making procedures (Tyler, 2006a; van der Toorn, 2011), they are more likely to voluntarily accept and obey rules and decisions (e.g., Tyler, 2006a; Tyler & Lind, 1992). This is important because, while it is possible for authorities to govern or rule by exerting influence over others with the mere possession and use of power (by instrumental use of sanctions and incentives) they appear to be more effective when they can rely on a shared sense of responsibility and on a sense of obligation to voluntarily obey (e.g., Tyler, 2006a; Tyler & Blader, 2000; Tyler & Jost, 2007; Tyler & Lind, 1992). Additionally, being able to rely on this sense of obligation increases the authority's effectiveness during periods of crisis and conflict (Tyler, 2006a).

2.2.2. The human proclivity to justify authorities

The quality of legitimacy gives people a sense that they have to defer to the

authorities' decisions and rules out of a feeling of voluntary obligation rather than out of fear of punishment or anticipation of reward (Tyler, 2006b). This is also facilitated by the fact that individuals have a general propensity to justify power systems. This propensity comes from a psychological need that people have, to believe that the social and hierarchical system they live in is fair and just and that everyone, at all levels of the hierarchy, gets what they deserve (Lerner, 1980). As a result of this psychological need to justify the social structure, belief systems develop that explain and legitimize status and power differences between groups (Crosby, 1984; Jost et al., 2012; Jost & Banaji, 1994; Jost & Hunyady, 2002; Lerner, 1980; Major, 1994; O'Brien & Major, 2005; Sidanius & Pratto, 1993, 1999). System justifying beliefs have the function to reduce uncertainty and ambiguity about the social and political world: accepting the status quo allows one to feel certain and secure, whereas rebelling against it (even just mentally) brings risk and uncertainty (Jost et al., 2012; Jost & Hunyady, 2005).

Even Hobsbawm, in his analysis of peasants' support for bandits who attack the authorities and their rulers, emphasizes that peasants themselves do not have a revolutionary intent. They are not interested in subverting the system or in abolishing the lords; instead, they want to restore a more "legitimate", traditional order of things which leaves exploitation of the poor and oppression of the weak within acceptable limits (Blok, 1972). In so doing peasants could, as Hobsbawm observed "work the system to their minimum disadvantage" (Hobsbawm, 1973, p.13). The purpose therefore is not to emancipate themselves from a subordinate condition but rather to be in a subordinate condition that is acceptable. I believe that in a similar vein, by supporting attacks of hackers directed against official systems, individuals might not necessarily hope to subvert the system but instead might be claiming their right to a more legitimate one.

2.2.3. The “nothing to lose” hypothesis

System justifying beliefs can deter people from manifesting their dissent and protesting political authorities and institutions. However, because in modern democracies authorities and institutions’ legitimacy is granted on the basis of procedural fairness, when there is evidence of procedural injustice, e.g., in the form of corruption, then political support is undermined, and political protest becomes a realistic likelier scenario (Seligson, 2002).

For example, E. F. Thomas and Louis (2014, Experiment 2) explored the role that corruption within a governing system or authority could play in galvanising support for violent and non-violent forms of protest. The study suggested that in a context of institutional corruption, corruption effectively undermined the efficacy of non-violent forms and this paradoxically translated into a heightened support for violent forms of protest (E. F. Thomas & Louis, 2014). In fact, as suggested by the ‘nothing to lose hypothesis’ (Scheepers et al., 2006) individuals are more likely to engage in non-normative disruptive forms of protest when political efficacy is low. And corruption of the system is effective in impairing perceptions of (and actual) political efficacy.

In investigating the role of efficacy most research has considered non-normative disruptive forms of protest as a function of the perceived general ability to change the status quo (Scheepers et al., 2006; Tausch et al., 2011; van Zomeren et al., 2013). However, Saab et al. (2016) have highlighted the importance of considering support for aggressive (non-normative) and peaceful forms of action as a function of the perceived efficacy of the actions themselves, both peaceful and aggressive. In two studies they showed how support for aggressive collective action was positively predicted by the perceived efficacy of the aggressive actions. Furthermore, in line with the nothing to lose hypothesis (Scheepers et al.,

2006) results showed that perceived efficacy of peaceful action negatively predicted support for aggressive actions when these were considered to have low efficacy. With two studies the authors have emphasized the importance of, in the context of political protest, considering not only how much individuals feel like they will be able to bring about change, but also how much the protest actions themselves are perceived to be effective in reaching the desired goals.

2.2.4. The role of identity

Group identification appears to have an important role in predicting participation in political protest. Research has shown that, while facing unjust treatment, identifying with a group makes people more likely to convert their discontent into actual protest (de Weerd & Klandermans, 1999; Kelly & Breinlinger, 1995a; Klandermans et al., 2002; Mummendey et al., 1999; O'Brien & Major, 2005; Reicher, 1984; Simon & Klandermans, 2001; Simon et al., 1998; Stürmer & Simon, 2004a; Stryker et al., 2000).

There are various reasons for why this might be the case: firstly, when individuals identify with a category or a group (for example a nation), they feel a certain degree of similarity with other people belonging to the same group and a sense of shared fate. This is also due to a reciprocal process whereby the individual is functional both for and in the group, they are a member of, while the group itself simultaneously attributes meaning to the individual (Milan, 2012). Secondly, this sense of similarity and shared fate increases feelings of efficacy, as individuals know that they are "in it together" (see Simon et al., 1998; Van Zomeren et al., 2008). Furthermore, identifying with a group raises questions about what types of behaviour are appropriate, and what one should do to be considered a "good" group-member; fighting against an unjust treatment might be one of these (De Weerd &

Klandermans, 1999).

Because individuals are highly dependent on the groups they identify with, group membership also plays a role in the punishment of deviants and free riders. Deviants are individuals who violate group or social norms (Marques, et al., 1998). Because deviance has generally negative consequences on the groups' functioning (for a review see Jetten & Hornsey, 2014), deviants are often kept under control, rejected or even punished by fellow group members (Coull, et al., 2001; Yzerbyt, et al., 2000; Richard, et al., 2003). Several reasons make deviant members a hazard for their group and a consistent body of literature has investigated such different motives (Festinger, et al., 1952; Marques et al., 1998; Moscovici, 1976; Schachter, 1951; Rullo et al., in press).

Deviants threaten the groups' ability to achieve group goals that require a coordinated action (*group locomotion*, Festinger, 1954; for reviews, see Levine, et al., 2010) or to attain a shared view of reality (*social reality*, Festinger, 1954). An analysis of group reaction to norm-violators based on the social identity approach (Hogg, 2001; Presaghi & Rullo, 2018; Tajfel& Turner, 1979; Turner, et al., 1987) suggests that in-group deviants pose a threat to the maintenance of a positive identity, especially in intergroup contexts (Marques, et al., 2001; Marques & Paez, 1994; Marques, et al., 1988). Because they threaten the group's positive identity, in-group deviants are liked even less than similar deviants who are members of the outgroup.

Applying different judgement criteria on the basis of the group membership of the target, is what defines the *black sheep effect* (Marques et al., 1988). The black sheep effect has been systematically explained by the Subjective Group Dynamics Theory (SGDT). The theory suggests that one of the main reasons why group members have aversive reactions towards 'negative' in-group members is the motivation to maintain a positive social identity (Marques et al., 1998; Marques, et al., 2001; Pinto, et al., 2010, 2016; Rullo et al., in press). The SGDT

postulates that the creation and the preservation of a positive social identity is highly dependent on the validation of the ingroup prescriptive norms (Abrams, et al., 2002). Group members who violate prescriptive norms then, put the positive image of the group and its shared values at risk (De Castella, et al., 2011; Sankaran, et al., 2017) even more so when they violate norms of fairness thereby displaying immorality (Brambilla, et al., 2013; Ellemers, et al., 2013; Pagliaro, et al., 2013).

Thus, according to SGDT, groups use derogation and rejection of anti-norm members, to affirm their positive image. By openly distancing themselves from the deviant, they signal that he has been categorized as an exception and not the rule. The tendency to inflict harsher punishment on ingroup deviants compared to out-group deviants serves therefore the function to maximize the perceived differences between the group prototype and the unlikeable or incompetent (Marques & Yzerbyt, 1988), disloyal (Branscombe, et al., 1993) and anti-normative ingroup members (Abrams, et al., 2000) thereby protecting the group's positive image and reducing the uncertainty about social identity (Hogg, 1996).

2.3. Overview of the present studies and hypotheses

In the current chapter I investigated whether individuals would more strongly support the hacking of a political authority when this was preceded by a scenario that described the authority as corrupt (an 'illegitimate official authority) than when this was preceded by a neutral (non-corrupt) scenario. Previous studies have demonstrated the existence of a positive association between perceived injustice and attitudes towards social bandits such as Anonymous (Travaglino, 2017). Thus, I expected participants assigned to the "corruption" condition to consider a subsequent hacking action to be more legitimate compared to people assigned to a non-corruption condition. This is because people who are assigned to the

corruption condition should be more likely to consider the authority (government, in this case) as unjust.

Drawing from Saab et al.'s (2016) research on aggressive and peaceful political protest I expected the perceived counter-productivity of the hacking action to mediate the relationship between the injustice condition and the legitimization of Hackers. In the non- corruption condition individuals should perceive the hacking action as more counter- productive and the more the action is perceived as such the less they are expected to legitimize it. The opposite holds for the corruption condition: individuals should be perceiving the hacking as less counter-productive and this should foster higher support for the hackers.

Additionally, I tested whether individual's legitimization of Hackers differed depending on whether the country of the scenario (and target of the attack) was of the same country participants belonged to (UK) or another (Denmark). Throughout this chapter, I will use the terms in-group and out-group to indicate the conditions referring to the UK and to Denmark, respectively. However, it should be noted that in this study participants were only exposed to one of two scenarios in which hackers targeted either the UK (e.g., the national group participants belonged to) or Denmark (a neutral outgroup).

It was hypothesized that the impact of a corrupt scenario on participants' perceived legitimacy of the hacking action would be stronger in the in-group condition compared to the out-group condition. No difference was hypothesized between in-group and out-group in the neutral scenario. The reasoning behind this hypothesis is rooted within social identity theory (Tajfel, 1974; Abrams & Hogg, 1990) and the black sheep effect (Marques, et al., 1988).

According to SIT I would expect people to be more affected by what is happening to their own in-group (UK) rather than to an out-group (Denmark). This is because their identity partially depends on their group memberships with whom they share perceptions and values (Tajfel & Turner, 2004).

In addition, the black sheep effect (Marques, et al., 1998; Travaglino et al., 2014) argues that in-group members that deviate from a prescriptive norm will be derogated more compared to an outgroup deviant, this is because deviant in-group members have the capacity to threaten the positive valence of the in-group's shared reality. Thus, according to this framework, corrupt politicians should be considered as deviants, and I would expect them to be punished more harshly when in-group members (UK) rather than when part of the outgroup (Denmark). This is because resources, reputation and personal identity are strongly dependent on one's own in-group but not on the out-group.

Because of this differential treatment of the in-group and the out-group, the mediated effect of corruption on legitimization through the hacking action's counter-productivity is likely to be affected by the country the corruption takes place in. A moderated mediation was hypothesized with the mediation effect differing depending on whether the scenario referred to the in-group or the out-group. Because of the black sheep effect and a general desire for the in-group to keep a positive valence, I expected the scenario of corruption to lead to the hacking being perceived as less-counter-productive when it referred to the in-group but not to the out-group. When the scenario was neutral, for both groups, I expected it to have a negative effect on the perceived-counterproductivity of the hacking.

Finally, perceived motivations of the hackers were also analyzed. In the corruption condition individuals were expected to perceive the hacking as motivated by the pursuit of social justice more so than in the neutral condition. Conversely, in the neutral condition participants were expected to perceive the hacking as motivated by personal revenge more so than in the corruption condition.

2.4. Study 1

In study 1, I examined the hypothesis that episodes of injustice within your own government vs. the government of another country would have an impact on the legitimization of a hacking action against that Government. Furthermore, I examined the role that the perceived counter-productivity of the hacker's attack has on the legitimization of hackers when individuals are confronted with an injustice. Finally, the impact of perceived motivations of the hackers on their legitimization is explored. Information about the participants, the design, the experimental procedure and the measures employed is provided in this section.

2.4.1. Method

Participants and design

One hundred and eighty-four British Students (138 females, 36 males) took part in this study. However, 12 participants were excluded prior to the analysis because they had not completed the dependent variable measures, thereby leaving us with a final total sample of 172 participants. The mean age was 19.63 (*SD* = 2.05). The majority of participants were English (98.9%), and the rest was Scottish (1.1%). Participants were recruited using the Research Participation Scheme from the University of Kent and were compensated for their participation with one university credit.

Participants were assigned to a 2 (Situation: corruption vs. neutral) x 2 (Group: in-group vs. out-group) between subjects' experimental design. Participants were randomly assigned to one of the four conditions: in-group neutral, in-group corruption, out-group neutral and out-group corruption. Each participant was presented with a (bogus) journal article from a local newspaper describing four different types of scenario: a corruption

scandal in the British Government (in-group corruption), a corruption scandal within the Danish Government (out-group corruption), a "neutral" news article (e.g., regulation of the use of laser pointers inside airports) related to the UK and a "neutral" article (same as for the UK condition) related to Denmark. Denmark was chosen as the out-group country because, as with the UK, it is generally considered reputable and has a similar standing in terms of safety, governance and citizenship behaviors. This can be corroborated by the fact that in the year previous to when the present experiment was conducted, both Denmark and the UK had been rated as belonging to the same category of countries with a strong/robust reputation in the Country RepTrak (Reputation Institute, 2017).

Procedure and materials

Participants were asked to take part in the study in exchange for course credits. After completing the measures, participants were debriefed in writing, thanked, and compensated with university credits.

Participants first provided socio-demographics relative to their gender, age, educational level achieved, ethnicity, marital status and occupation. Subsequently, participants were asked to: "Read and consider carefully the following article from a national newspaper" and told that after this, they would be asked questions about the article itself.

They were then randomly presented with one of the four bogus articles. Below is a brief description of the articles (the texts are reported in full in the appendix I section):

Corruption scenario UK

The title of the article stated: "Twelve MPs implicated in 'cash for influence scandal'. The article described the case of twelve members (half of them belonging to the Labor party and the other half to the Conservative party) of the British parliament who were under

investigation after being accused of exchanging political influence for payments of thousands of pounds. The key passage reported: "*Mr. Higgins, the former defense secretary, offered to lead delegations to ministers and said he was looking to turn his knowledge and contacts into "something that frankly makes money*".

Corruption scenario Denmark

The same article was adapted to the Danish context and titled: "Twelve Folketing (Danish Parliamentarians) MPs implicated in 'cash for influence' scandal. The article described the case of twelve members (six of them belonging to the Danish nationalist conservative party and the other six to the socialist democratic party) of the Danish parliament who were under investigation after being accused of exchanging political influence for payments of thousands of Danish Krona. The salient passage reported: "*Mr. Ibsen, the former defense secretary, offered to lead delegations to ministers and said he was looking to turn his knowledge and contacts into "something that frankly makes money*".

Neutral scenario UK

The title of the article stated: "UK ministers consider licensing laser pointers in bid to reduce attacks. Pilots concerned about potential for crashes and loss of life after more than 1,200 laser attacks at UK airports last year". The article argued the potential need to license the sale of laser pointers in order to protect train drivers and pilots from attacks that could cause fatal crashes.

Neutral scenario Denmark

The title of the article stated: "Danish ministers consider licensing laser pointers in bid to

reduce attacks. Pilots concerned about potential for crashes and loss of life after more than 1,200 laser attacks at Danish airports last year". The article argued the potential need to license the sale of laser pointers in order to protect train drivers and pilots from attacks that could cause fatal crashes.

The articles were identical (but adapted to the different national contexts) except for the differences described above. The articles were formatted to have a similar appearance to those found in a local newspaper. Following the articles, participants were showed a brieftext that read:

> Immediately following the press release of the article above, a group of British/Danish hackers hacked into the computers of various British/Danish government officials, apparently succeeding in stealing government sensitive files and the officials' personal information.

This scenario was designed in a way that left the causal link with the information previously presented in the article, as ambiguous. It was not clearly stated whether the action was successful or not because I did not want the "success of the action" to be a confounding variable.

Following the manipulations and the description of the hacking action, participants completed the dependent variables.

Hacking motives. Two separate items were used to measure the perceived motives behind the hacking actions (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*). The items were: "The Hacker's actions are motivated by the pursuit of collective social justice" and "The Hacker's actions were motivated by the pursuit of personal revenge".

Perceived Counter-productivity of the hacking action. Participants read: "When hackers use illegal means against politicians, their actions undermine the credibility of those who use legal ones" and were asked to rate how much they agreed with the statement (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*). This item was adapted from Saab et al. (2016).

Attitudes towards the hackers. Attitudes towards the hackers were measured using six items. Participants were asked to think about the article they just read and to consequently indicate how much they agreed/disagreed with the items. Items were: "The purpose of the hacker's action was legitimate", "Actions like those performed by the hackers are a threat to democracy" (reverse-coded), "The hacker's actions deserve respect", "The hacker's actions are criminal and should be condemned" (reverse-coded), "Actions like this are a threat to personal security" (reverse-coded) and "The hacker's actions deserve admiration". The responses were again on a seven-point Likert scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*) and the items formed a reliable scale $\alpha = .82$.

Additionally, an array of measures was included in this study for exploratory purposes, including political orientation, political interest, perceived efficacy of the hacking action, desire for revenge, social dominance orientation, internal and external political efficacy, Competitive World Beliefs and Dangerous World Beliefs and general intentions to participate in political action (details about these measures are reported in the supplementary materials of this chapter; see Supplementary 2.).

2.4.2 Results

Effects of corruption and group membership on Perceived Legitimacy of the Hacking action

A two-way ANOVA was conducted to examine the effects of Group (in-group/ out-group) and Scenario (corruption/ non corruption) on perceived legitimacy of the hacking action. There was a statistically significant difference in mean legitimacy between the corruption and the non-corruption conditions F (1, 168) = 10.77, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .060$ whereas the difference in mean legitimacy between the in-group and the out-group condition was not statistically significant $p = .071$.

The interaction between Group and Scenario was significant F (1, 168) = 3.98, $p = .047$. Simple effect analysis of the difference of Scenario within Group showed that the difference in the mean of perceived legitimacy between the two conditions was significant only for the out-group F (1, 168) = 13.91, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .076$. For the out-group, the mean legitimacy for the corruption situation was 3.70 (SD = .93) whereas the mean legitimacy for the neutral situation was 2.96 (SD = .93).

Subsequently the items “The Hacker’s actions were motivated by the pursuit of collective social justice” and the item “The Hacker’s actions were motivated by the pursuit of personal revenge” were used as dependent variables. For the social justice item, the only statistically significant difference in mean of the DVs was between the corruption and non-corruption condition F (1, 168) = 12.61, $p <. 001$, $\eta_p^2 = .070$ with M = 4.36 and SD = 1.31 for the non-corruption condition and M = 5.01 and SD = 1.03 for the corruption condition. There was no significant difference for the personal revenge item depending on the condition F (3, 168) = .56, $p =. 64$, $\eta_p^2 = .010$.

Perceived counter-productivity of the Hacking action

Another two-way ANOVA was conducted using the "counter-productivity of the Hacking action" as a dependent variable. Both main effects of Scenario and Group were not statistically significant. However, the interaction Group*Scenario was significant: F (1,168) = 6.72, p = .010, η_p^2 = .002. An inspection of the simple main effect (Figure 2.1) showed that the effect of Scenario was only significant within the out-group: F (1, 167) = 5.50, p = .020, η_p^2 = .032 and again only for the neutral condition F (1, 168) = 4.35, p = .039, η_p^2 = .025. Surprisingly, only when participants were assessing the counter-productivity of the hacking action directed towards the out-group they differentiated between the scenario being corrupt or not-corrupt.

Decomposition of simple effects revealed that, amongst participants evaluating Denmark the perceived counter-productivity of the hacking action was dependent on the type of Scenario and specifically, that it was negatively predicted by the scenario being described as corrupt, b = −.31, SE = .134, β = −.25, t (168) = −2.346, p = .02, 95% CI [−0.59, - 0.50]. In contrast, amongst participants evaluating the UK, the perceived counter-productivity did not depend on the type of Scenario, b = - .174, SE = .134, β = - .139, t (168) = 1.301, p = .195, 95% CI [-0.44, 0.09]. Put differently, when the scenario was neutral, the perceived counter-productivity of the hacking action was positively predicted by the Danish scenario b = −.27, SE = .133, β = −.21, t (168) = 2.009, p = .046, 95% CI [0.01, 0.53], but not by the UK scenario, b = - .223, SE = .136, β = - .178, t (168) = -1.643, p = .102, 95% CI [-0.49, 0.05].

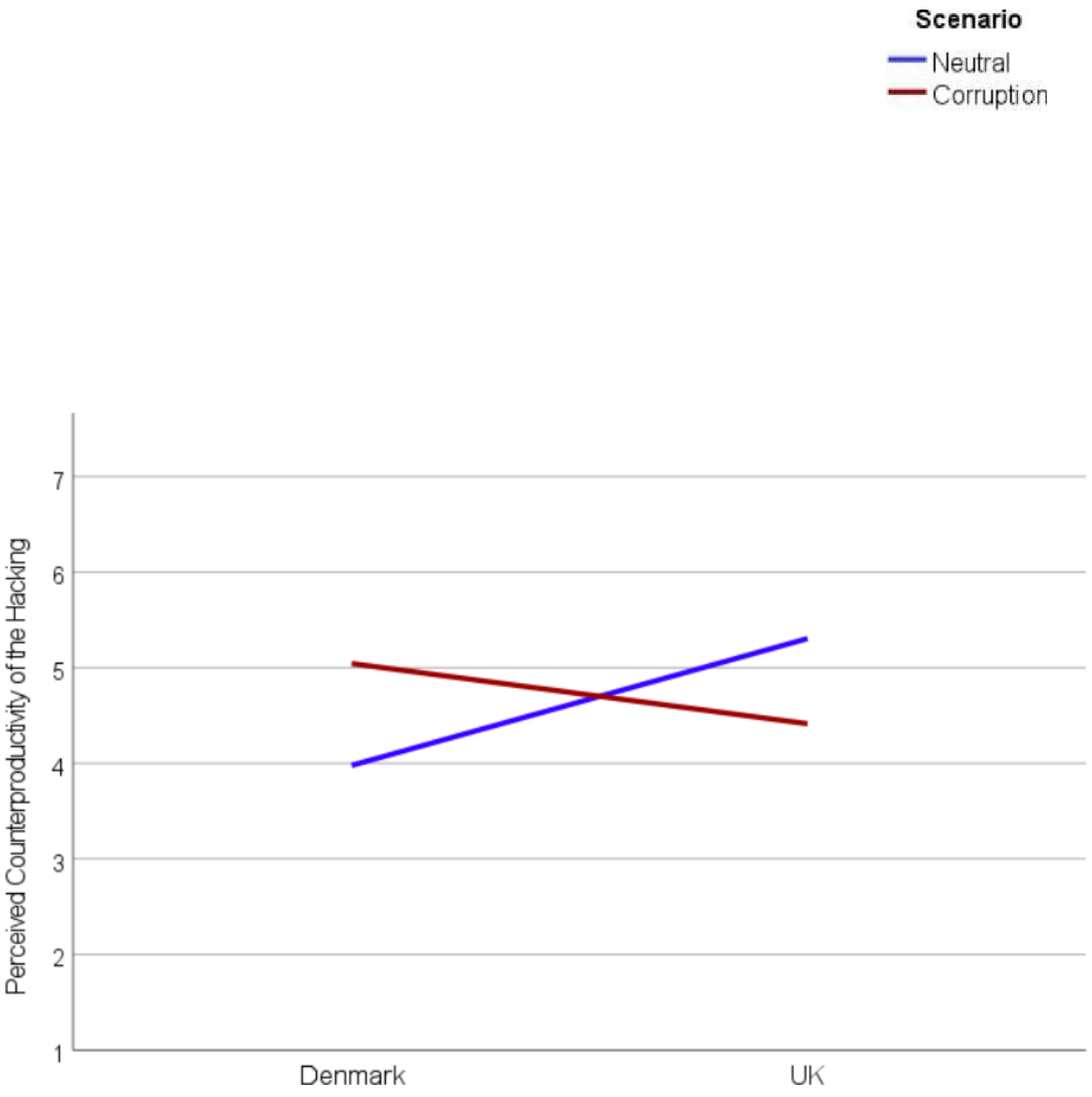


Figure 2.1. Perceived counterproductivity of the Hacking action as a function of country of the scenario (Denmark vs UK) and type of scenario (Corruption vs. Neutral).

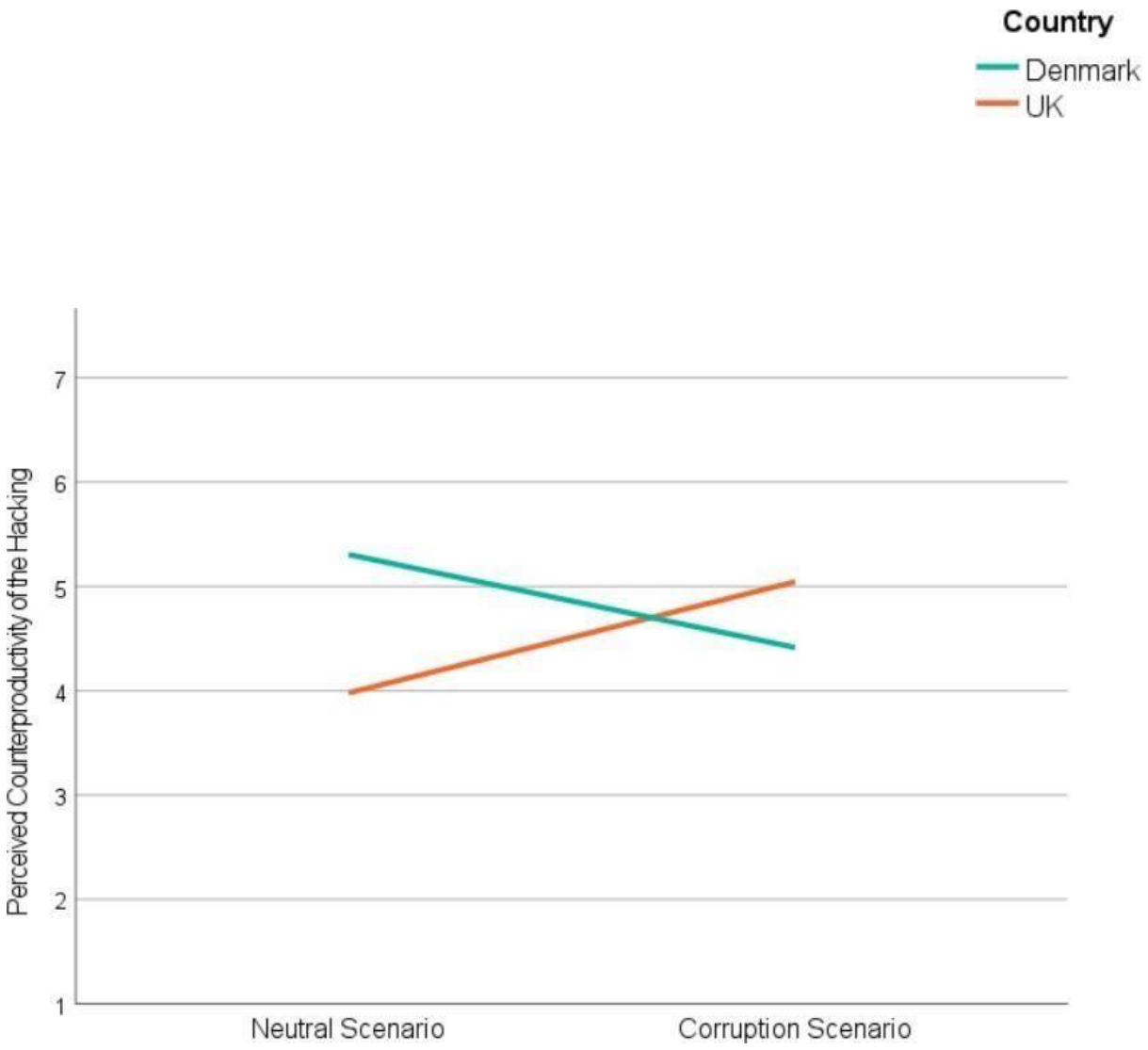


Figure 2.2. Perceived counterproductivity of the Hacking action as a function of the type of scenario (Corruption vs. Neutral) and country of the scenario (Denmark vs UK).

Moderated mediation

Saab et al. (2016) found that the perceived counter-productivity of aggressive collective action was a significant negative predictor of support for aggressive collective action. I thus

tested the hypothesis that the perceived counter-productivity of the hacking action may have a negative effect on the perceived legitimacy of the hacking action. To further explore the relationship between the Scenario and the perceived legitimacy of the hacking action conditional process modelling was used in order to test for moderated mediation as outlined by Hayes (2013), using the PROCESS macro. Specifically, I tested whether nationality moderated the relationship between corruption, perceived counter- productivity of the hacking action and perceived legitimacy of the hacking action.

Corruption led to counter-productivity of the Hackers action (b = - 3.56; $p < .01$), suggesting that when the Government was presented as corrupt the hacking action was considered as less counter-productive. Counter productivity of the hacking action was then negatively related to the legitimization of Hackers (b = -.211; $p < .001$). Nationality was added as the moderator. For the out-group, the indirect effect (b = - .629, $p = .02$) was significant with bootstrapped CI ranging from -1.1598, -.0988. For the in-group, the indirect effect was not significant, (b = .348, $p = .19$), 95% Bootstrap CI [- .1806, .8783]. Pairwise comparisons between two levels of the moderator showed that the effect of corruption on perceived legitimacy of the hacking action through perceived counter-productivity of the hacking action was significantly different for the out-group condition and the in-group condition, Bootstrap CI [- .5048, -.0199]. The direct effect path between corruption and perceived legitimacy was significant indicating that no complete mediation had occurred b =.441, SE = .138, $p < .002$.

The indirect path from corruption to perceived legitimacy of the hacking action through perceived counter-productivity of the hacking action was tested with moderated mediation analyses Using the Hayes (2018) PROCESS v3.1 in SPSS bootstrap tested with 5000 resamples, bias corrected. Nationality was added as the moderator. For the out-group, the indirect effect (b = -.132) was significant with bootstrapped CI ranged from .0040 to.3574. For the in-group, the indirect effect was not significant, (b = .074), 95% Bootstrap CI [-.2199,

.0275]. Pairwise comparisons between two levels of the moderator showed that indirect effect of perceived counter productivity of the hacking action for the out-group condition was significantly different from that of the in-group condition, Bootstrap CI [-.5048, - .0199].

Therefore, counter-productivity of the hacking action explains part (mediates) of the negative relationship between type and legitimacy but only for the out-group, the effect on the in-group is not significant (Figure 2.3).

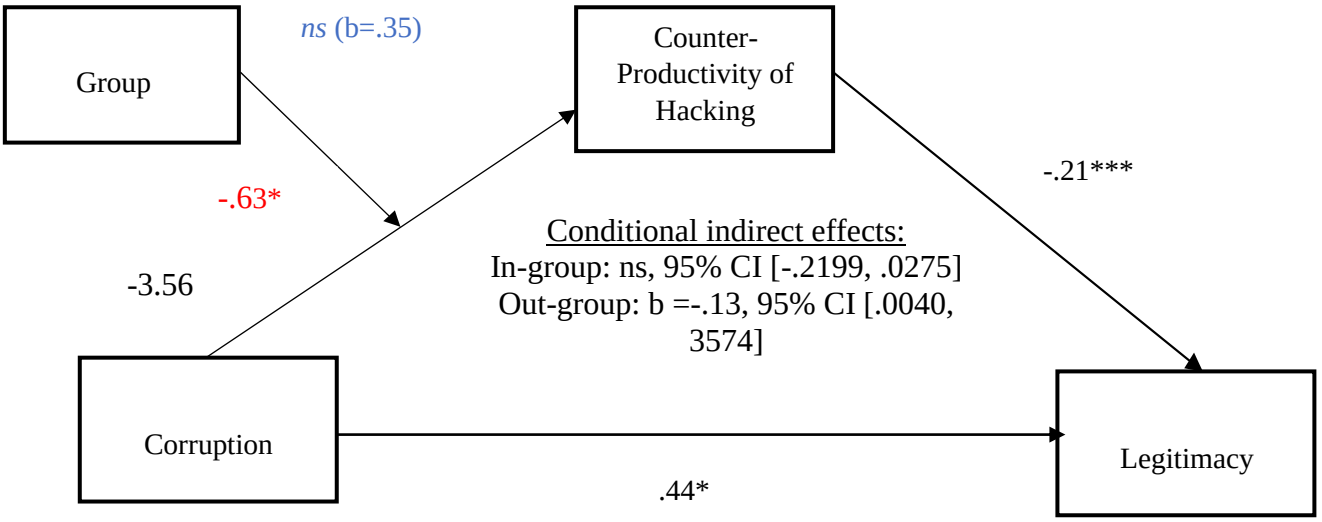


Figure 2.3. Moderated mediation model showing the coefficient for indirect effect of the manipulation of scenario on individuals' legitimization of hackers' actions via counter-productivity of the hacking action moderated by Group in Study 1.

Notes: * < .05, ** < .01, *** < .001.

Condition Group: 0 = Denmark, 1=UK Condition Justice: 0= Neutral, 1= Corruption

Moderation effect: the relationship between corruption and counter-productivity is negative (b = -.31) when the corruption is referred to Denmark (group = 0), and non-significant when the corruption is referred to the UK (group = 1).

2.4.3. Summary

Results suggest that participants perceived the two scenario conditions (corruption and non-corruption) differently and that this manipulation was successful. Specifically, in line with previous research (Travaglino, 2017), individuals were more likely to legitimize hacking actions against the government when they followed the description of an episode of government corruption.

Interestingly, and unexpectedly, results also showed that participants were affected by the type of scenario only in the out-group condition. Corruption had a positive effect on the perceived legitimacy of the hacking action only for the out-group condition where participants tended to legitimize the hacking action significantly more following an episode of corruption compared to a non-corruption scenario. In the in-group condition however, participants perceived the hacking action as equally legitimate regardless of the type of scenario.

Perceived counter-productivity of the hacking action followed a similar pattern of results. Only when participants were assessing the counter-productivity of the hacking action directed towards the out-group they differentiated between the situation being corrupt or non-corrupt. Further analyses showed that this item mediated the relation between scenario and legitimacy but only for the out-group. When the neutral scenario was relevant to the out-group, it had a negative effect on the perceived legitimacy of the hacking action, whereas when the neutral scenario was relevant to the in-group this still had a positive effect on the perceived legitimacy of the hacking action.

Results showed that overall participants considered the hacking action as more legitimate when the target was the in-group rather than the out-group, using different evaluative

standards for the two groups. A possible explanation for these findings is that participants might hold a negative opinion of British politicians and mistrust them, especially following recent political events (Abrams & Travaglino, 2018). On the other hand, it is less likely that participants would hold positive or negative opinions about the out-group country's politicians as they are presumably less familiar and less "interested" in the politics of this country.

An additional reason for why people might use different standards when considering the legitimacy of hacking action between the two countries could pertain to the groups' relevance. Considering that the in-group is always more relevant to individuals than the out-group (Tajfel & Turner, 2004), the in-group would be objected to harsher scrutiny and judgement. This further suggests that participants might have felt angrier towards the politicians that belonged to their in-group compared to those who belonged to the out-group. Therefore, it would be worthwhile in the next study to consider how angry participants felt after reading the mock article.

I found that participants were generally more willing to legitimize a hacking action when this was directed at their own Government compared to when it was directed at a Foreign Government intriguing. This was true not only when Governments were described as corrupt, but also when there was no indication of corruption. Henceforth I decided to replicate the study with a few integrations and using a different sample. The purpose was to test whether a similar pattern of results would be found when using a different socio-demographical pool.

2.5. Study 2

With Study 2 I attempted to replicate the findings reported in Study 1. For this study I

relied on the Prolific platform to recruit participants. This meant that the sample was quite different from the one of the previous study, which was made solely by university students. Recruiting via Prolific also ensured that the sample was more socio-demographically diverse compared to the previous one. Therefore, if results are replicated it should give some proof of generalizability.

The study was almost identical to Study 1 aside from a few differences: 1) I slightly modified the layout of the mock articles; 2) I added and explored the role of politicians' trustworthiness; 3) I added an emotion-related variable, specifically a measure of anger felt in response to the mock article, and 4) I dropped several measures that were included in study 1 for exploratory purposes: perceived efficacy of the hacking action, Competitive World Beliefs and Dangerous World Beliefs (details about these measures are reported in the supplementary materials of this chapter; see Supplementary 2).

Reflecting on the results from our first study, I thought that previously held opinions on the trustworthiness of the politicians of the two countries might have affected the higher ratings of perceived legitimacy attributed to the hacking action when directed towards the British Government website rather than when directed at the Danish Government website.

Specifically, it is likely that, being British, participants would have held opinions relating to the trustworthiness/untrustworthiness of their politicians and that these might influence their perception of the hacking action's legitimacy. Contrastingly, for the legitimacy of the Danish hacking, politician trustworthiness may not play an important role since participants might have no previously formed opinion on the trustworthiness of Danish politicians. To test this possible explanation, I added an item to measure British/ Danish politician's trustworthiness before I presented participants with the manipulation.

2.5.1. Method

Participants

Two hundred and thirty-nine British participants (143 females, 95 males, 1 other) took part in this study. The mean age was 37.63 (*SD* = 13.07). The majority of participants were English (85.4%). The remaining participants were Scottish (9.6%), Welsh (3.3%) and the rest were Northern Irish (1.7%). Participants were recruited using Prolific Academic and were compensated for their participation.

The design was the same as the one from the previous study. Participants were assigned to a 2 (Scenario: corruption vs. neutral) x 2 (Group: in-group vs. out-group) between-subjects experimental design. As with study 1 the in-group was the UK, and the out- group was Denmark. Thus, participants were randomly assigned to one of the four conditions: UK neutral, UK corruption, Denmark neutral, Denmark corruption. Denmark was chosen as the out-group country because of its similar international reputation to UK (Reputation Institute, 2017).

Participants were recruited using Qualtrics via the online platform Prolific Academic and were asked to participate in a "brief study on personal identity, opinions and beliefs on social issues". After completing the measures, participants were debriefed in writing, thanked, and compensated.

Participants first provided socio-demographics relative to their gender, age, educational level achieved, ethnicity, marital status, and occupation. To test the hypothesis that previously held opinions about UK politicians' trustworthiness might have influenced the perceived legitimacy of the hacking action, I added an item to measure (depending on the condition) either British or Danish politician's trustworthiness before participants were presented with the

manipulation: *"*How trustworthy do you think British/Danish politicians are?". Responses were on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = *not at all trustworthy*, 7 = *completely trustworthy*).

Manipulation

Subsequently, participants were asked to: "Read and consider carefully the following article from a national newspaper" and told that after this they would be asked some questions about the article itself. As with study 1, participants were then randomly presented with one of the following four bogus articles: Corruption scenario UK, Corruption scenario Denmark, Neutral scenario UK, Neutral scenario Denmark.

The articles were formatted in an identical vein to those found in a local newspaper.

Following the articles, participants were showed a brief text that read:

> Immediately following the press release of the article above, a group of British/Danish hackers hacked into the computers of various British/Danish government officials, apparently succeeding in stealing government sensitive files and the officials' personal information.

This scenario was designed in a way that left the causal link with the information previously presented in the article, as ambiguous. It was not clearly stated whether the action was successful or not to avoid "success of the action" to be a confounding variable.

Following the manipulations and the description of the hacking action, participants first were asked to complete a measure of anger.

Anger. Participants read the following description: "Relative to the article you just read please indicate how much you agree with the following statement: "When I think about episodes like the one described in the article:". They then had to indicate their degree of agreement (1 = *Strongly disagree*, 7 = *Strongly agree*) with three items: "I feel angry", "I feel outraged", "I feel frustrated" (α = .90).

Subsequently, as in study 1 they completed the following variables: perceived Counter-Productivity of the Hacking action (adapted from Saab et al. 2016) and attitudes towards the Hackers (α = .82). Additionally, an array of measures was included in this study for exploratory purposes (details about these measures and related analyses are reported in the supplementary materials of this chapter; see Supplementary 2).

2.5.2. Results

Trust in politicians

An independent t-test showed that trust of local politicians was significantly different for the UK (in-group) and Denmark (out-group), t (237) = 11.48 $p < .001$. Specifically, the trust in out-group politicians was significantly higher (M = 4.33, SD = .97) compared to trust in in-group politicians (M = 2.71, SD = 1.19). This showed, in agreement with the hypothesis, that participants who rated the out-group's politician's trustworthiness reported considerably higher scores compared to those who rated the trustworthiness of ingroup's politicians.

Effects of corruption and group membership on Perceived Legitimacy of Hacking action

A two-way ANOVA was conducted to examine the effects of Group (in-group/ out-group) and Scenario (corruption/ non corruption) on perceived legitimacy of the hacking action. There was a statistically significant difference in mean legitimacy between the corruption and the non-corruption condition F (1, 235) = 54,68, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .189$ and between the in-group and the out-group condition (not significant in the previous study) F (1, 35) = 4.21, $p = .041$, $\eta_p^2 = .018$ (Fig. 2.2). The mean legitimacy for the ingroup was M = 3.24 (SD = 1.18) and for the out-group M = 2.95 (SD = 1.09). The interaction between group and situation was not significant in this sample F (1, 235) = 0,41, $p = .52$, $\eta_p^2 = .002$.

ANCOVA: controlling for the impact of politician's trustworthiness

I conducted an ANCOVA to the previous analyses, exploring the impact of controlling for trust in politicians. The covariate did not significantly predict the dependent variable F (1, 234) = 2.41, $p = .12$, $\eta_p^2 = .010$. However, once controlled for the covariate, Group became a non-significant predictor of legitimization: F (1, 234) = .50, $p = .48$ $\eta_p^2 = .002$, whereas Scenario was still a significant predictor: F (1, 234) = 55.43, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .19$. Furthermore, once controlling for 'politicians' trustworthiness the interaction Scenario*Group was still not significant: F (1, 234) = .23, $p = .65$ $\eta_p^2 = .001$.

Effects of corruption and group membership on Perceived motivation of Hacking action

A similar pattern was found when investigating the perceived motives behind the hacking action. When using the item "The Hacker's actions were motivated by the pursuit of collective social justice" as a dependent variable. The only statistically significant difference

in mean of the DV was between the corruption and non-corruption condition F (1, 235) = 42.59, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .153$. Similar results were obtained when using the item “The Hacker’s actions were motivated by the pursuit of personal revenge" as a DV. The only statistically significant difference in mean of the DV was again between the corruption and non-corruption condition F (1, 235) = 15.41, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .062$.

Anger

We conducted a two-way ANOVA using anger as a dependent variable. The main effects of Scenario and Group were not statistically significant. The effect of Scenario was F (1, 235) = 1.90, $p = .17$, $\eta_p^2 = .95$, whereas the effect of Group was F (1, 235) = .22, $p = .64$, $\eta_p^2 = .001$. The interaction effect Group*Scenario, on the other hand, was significant F (1, 235) = 4.96, $p = .03$, $\eta_p^2 = .02$.

Simple effect analysis of the difference of Scenario within group showed that the difference in the mean of feelings of anger between the two conditions was significant only for the in- group F (1, 235) = 6.38, $p = .012$, $\eta_p^2 = .026$. For the in-group, the mean anger was: $M = 5.47$ ($SD = 1.10$) for the corruption condition and 4.92 ($SD = 1.43$) for the neutral one. On the other hand, for the out-group the difference between conditions was not significant and the means were respectively: $M = 5.19$ ($SD = 1.18$) for the neutral and $M = 5.06$ ($SD = 1.02$) for the corruption condition.

Perceived Counter-productivity of the Hacking action

I conducted a two-way ANOVA using the “counter-productivity of the hacking action” as a dependent variable. The main effects of Scenario and Group were both statistically significant. The effect of Scenario was strong and highly significant F (1, 235) = 6.98, $p < .01$,

η_p^2 = .029, whereas the effect of Group was marginally significant F (1, 235) = 3.83, p = .051, η_p^2 = .016, with individuals interestingly judging the Hackers' actions more counterproductive when directed against the out-group (M = 4.97, SD = 1.47) than against the in-group (M = 4.56, SD = 1.71) The interaction Group*Scenario, on the other hand, was not significant F (1, 235) = .006, p = .93, η_p^2 =.00.

Moderated mediation

Finally, I tested the same moderated mediation model as in study1 hypothesizing that the relationship between corruption and legitimization of hackers would be mediated by the perceived counter-productivity of the hacking action and that there would be a conditional effect of the moderator on the mediation. To further explore the relationship between the Scenario and the perceived legitimacy of the hacking action conditional process modelling was used in order to test for moderated mediation as outlined by Hayes (2013), using the PROCESS macro.

Specifically, I tested whether nationality moderated the relationship between corruption, perceived counter-productivity of the hacking action and perceived legitimacy of the hacking action. The effect of Corruption on counter-productivity of the Hackers action was not significant however results indicated a non-significant trending in the predicted direction suggesting a negative relationship between corruption and counter-productivity of the hacking (b = -.52; p = .058). Counter-productivity of the hacking action was negatively related to the legitimization of Hackers (b = -.36; p < .001). The direct effect path between corruption and perceived legitimacy was significant (b = .83, SE = .12, p < .001).

The indirect path from corruption to perceived legitimacy of the hacking action through perceived counter productivity of the hacking action was tested with moderated mediation analyses using the bootstrap tested with 5000 resamples, bias corrected.

Group was added as the moderator. For the out-group, the indirect effect (b = .187) was significant with bootstrapped CI ranged from .0072 to .3951. For the in-group, the indirect effect was not significant, (b = .198), 95% Bootstrap CI [-.0241, .4378]. Pairwise comparisons between two levels of the moderator showed that indirect effect of perceived counter productivity of the hacking action for the out-group condition was not significantly different from that of the in-group condition, Bootstrap CI [-.2842, 2990] (Figure 2.4).

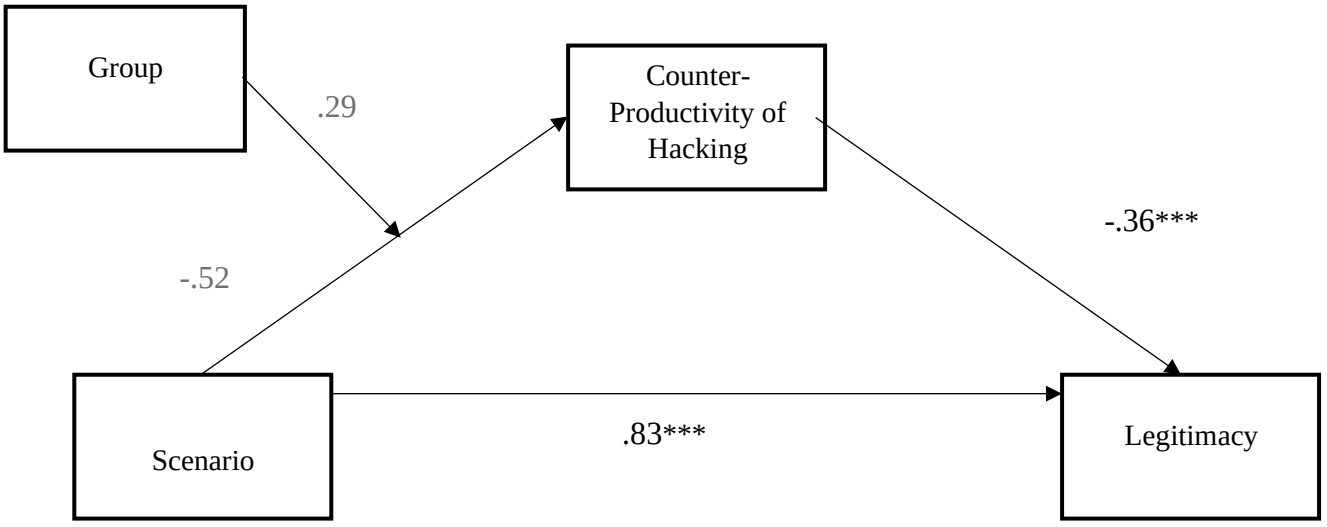


Figure 2.4. Moderated mediation model showing the coefficient for indirect effect of the manipulation of scenario on individuals' legitimization of hackers' actions via counter-productivity of the hacking action moderated by Group in Study 2.

Notes: * < .05, ** < .01, *** < .001.

Condition Group: 0 = Denmark, 1 = UK Condition Scenario: 0 = Neutral, 1 = Corruption

2.5.3. Discussion

Consistent with study 1 results suggest that participants perceived the two Scenario conditions (corruption and non-corruption) differently and were more likely to legitimize hacking actions against the government when they followed the description of an episode of government corruption.

In contrast to study 1, where the main effect of country (Group) on perceived legitimization of hackers was not significant, results showed that participants perceived legitimacy was significantly affected not only by the type of scenario but also by the country of the scenario, with participants legitimizing the hacking action significantly more when the scenarios referred to the UK rather than when they referred to Denmark. Thus, similarly to study 1, participants seemed to hold harsher judgment criteria when evaluating the UK compared to when evaluating Denmark.

Perceived counter-productivity of the hacking action followed a similar pattern of results. There was a strong effect of scenario whereby – expectedly - participants judged the hackers' actions more counter-productive when they followed a neutral scenario compared to when they followed a scenario of corruption. However, what was of particular interest (although this effect was only marginally significant) was that participants generally judged the hackers' action as more counterproductive when it was directed against the out-group than when it was directed against the in-group.

In this study the moderated mediation model did not replicate. The link between the predictor variable (type of scenario) and the mediator (counter-productivity of the hackers'

action) was not significant (although results suggest a trend in the predicted direction, b = -.52; p = .058). However as for study 1 there was a strong positive direct effect of corruption on legitimization of hackers and a medium-strong negative effect of perceived counter productivity of the hacking action on the legitimization of hackers.

As for study 1, results suggested that overall participants considered the hacking action as more legitimate when the target was the in-group rather than the out-group, using different evaluative standards for the two groups. After analyzing data from study 1 I hypothesized that this 'differential treatment' of the two countries could be explained by participants generally being less trustful of British politicians compared to Danish politicians. Descriptive statistics provide some support to the idea that participants might have held, previous to the experiment, significantly different opinions about the trustworthiness of the in-group and out-group politicians, in fact the mean trust for out-group politicians was: M = 4.34, SD = .97 whereas for the in-group it was significantly lower M = 2.71, SD = 1.19. Furthermore, an analysis of covariance showed that after controlling for politicians' trustworthiness Group (country) that previously predicted legitimization of hackers did not significantly predict the dependent variable thereby suggesting that trust in politician's does play a role in support for vicarious dissent.

2.6. Limitations and suggestions for future studies

A limitation of these studies is that I did not focus more closely on the role that emotions played in the legitimization of hackers. I measured anger in the second study and saw that, only for the in-group, anger was significantly stronger for the corruption condition compared to the neutral one. However, it is possible that the effect of corruption on anger was

affected by anger being measured after the hacking scenario: reading about the hacking scenario might have attenuated the effect of corruption on anger elicited by the news article.

Additionally, in these studies I did not investigate the role that anger and other emotions like contempt have played in the legitimization of vicarious dissent. Future studies should therefore consider the role that emotions have in the legitimization of vicarious dissent. Specifically, anger and contempt are emotions that have often been found to predict political protest (van Zomeren et al., 2008; Tauch et al., 2011) and as demonstrated by Travaglino's study (2017) it is likely that they would have an important role in the relationship between perceived corruption and legitimization of vicarious dissent. For this reason, a focus on measures for anger or contempt would be a useful addition to these studies.

Furthermore, although this was not relevant to the aims of this study, when exploring the role of efficacy of the hacking it would be valuable for future studies to provide participants with the choice to support a normative form of protest, alongside the non-normative hacking action. This would allow to test for the 'nothing to lose hypothesis' (Scheepers et al., 2006) and explore how the perceived efficacy of a normative action influences and interacts with the efficacy of a disruptive forms of protest (like hacking).

As regards the role of group membership, there are some important limitations to consider. As mentioned in the introduction, I used the terms in-group and out-group to define two groups that are not directly opposed to one another; in fact, in the two studies every participant was exposed to only one of the groups: UK or Denmark. It is therefore impossible to know which group identity was salient for participants while reading the text and the following hacking scenario i.e., did they identify as British citizens as opposed to the hackers or as the people (both including or excluding hackers in this category) as opposed to the politicians? Future studies should attempt to assess the role that identification has in the legitimization of hackers, perhaps by manipulating it.

2.7. Conclusions

Across two studies I investigated the effect that a scenario of corruption had on the legitimization of a subsequent hacking attack and whether the legitimization was dependent on the country that was attacked. In both studies participants legitimized the hackers attack more when this followed an episode of governmental corruption. The likely explanation here is that participants did not recognize the corrupt system as a legitimate one and that they supported hackers to protest. This is in line with literature showing that, when there is evidence of procedural injustice, in the form of corruption, then political support is undermined, and political protest becomes a realistic scenario (Seligson, 2002).

This result also provides support to the social banditry framework (Travaglino, 2017). This new framework suggests that when a system is perceived as unjust and irresponsive to those that it should represent (like a corrupt political system with its citizens), those that are worse off and disadvantaged (like the citizens that are wrongfully represented by their corrupt political system) may plead their causes vicariously and rely on disruptive actors and their actions to protest against the injustice. This result is important because it experimentally demonstrates that when official authorities fail in their duties to govern or rule in accordance with a principle of justice, citizens may decide to take a stand against the corrupt authority and support actors that attack it.

I also found some support (the mediation was significant for study 1 but not for study 2) for perceived efficacy of vicarious dissent to mediate the relationship between an episode of injustice and legitimization of vicarious dissent. The predictive role of the counter-productivity and efficacy of the protest action has been rarely considered in literature on political protest which has mostly focused on efficacy more broadly intended as the general

possibility of achieving a desirable social change (Saab et al., 2016). The mediation was not replicated in the second study however results still pointed to the same direction with corruption negatively predicting the counter-productivity of the hacking and counter-productivity predicting lower legitimization.

Additionally, an interesting pattern of results emerged providing proof that in both studies participants used different criteria to judge the legitimization of hackers. When the action was directed against the in-group, participants generally perceived it as more legitimate compared to when it was directed against the out-group. This suggests that individuals judged the in-group more harshly than the out-group. This could be explained by participants generally being more trustful of the out-group's politicians compared to the in- group ones, which is not surprising considering the general negative opinion and mistrust of British politicians documented recently (Abrams & Travaglino, 2018). This hypothesis was confirmed by an ANCOVA conducted in the second study that showed how after controlling for politicians' trustworthiness Group (country) ceased to be a predictor of legitimization of hackers.

Additionally, the higher legitimacy of the hackers' actions directed at the British politicians might be explained by the fact that the British participants were more interested in reprehending or punishing British politicians compared to Danish ones. This could depend on the in-group's behaviour being more relevant to the participants than the out-group's, as they share with the in-group some degree of inter-dependency (Tajfel & Turner, 2004; Turner et al., 1987). This is also in line with literature describing that often individuals decide to inflict harsher punishment on a free rider when he is a member of the in-group compared to when he belongs to the out-group (Marques, et al., 1988).

In this research, through two experiments I demonstrated how people tend to legitimize a hacking action directed against an official authority when the authority is described as

corrupt. I also found some evidence of differential treatment by participants, who displayed harsher judgment towards an in-group compared to an out-group. Here, they supported disruptive forms of dissent more when it was directed at the in-group compared to the out-group. This suggests that to manifest their dissent against a system or authority that they consider illegitimate or unjust, individuals are likely to support the actions of disruptive actors even when the authority is their own official government, and the attack can possibly hinder its power and stability.

CHAPTER 3[1]

3.1. Introduction

Citizens' direct engagement in political action is an important aspect of democracy (de Moor, 2016). By voting or demonstrating, individuals are able to promote or resist social change, alter status relations in society and highlight the importance of specific social issues that concern them. The internet has provided individuals with many additional avenues to voice their discontent (Di Maggio, et al., 2001; Meyer & Tarrow, 1998; Norris 1996; Van Laer, 2010). A large body of research in psychology has so far examined the psychological predictors of these forms of 'direct engagement' (Becker & Tausch, 2015; Saab, et al., 2016; van Zomeren at al., 2004; Zaal, et al., 2011). However, direct engagement in political action is not the only way people can voice discontent. When individuals perceive the political and

social systems as unresponsive to their voice and demands, they may rely on the disruptive potential of other actors to exert revenge against and disrupt the status quo on their behalf. Individuals may, thus, express their dissent *vicariously* by supporting such actors (Travaglino, 2017).

The increasing relevance of the internet and the digital revolution has affected many spheres of life by completely transforming the way in which individuals share information and communicate with each other. The internet creates links and enables communications that are a- geographical and synchronous: in the blink of an eye individuals across geographical and social boundaries can share and publish information easily and almost costless, by-passing those gate-keeping functions that have been traditionally served by mass media outlets and providing information directly to those among the broader public who are interested in it (Earl & Kimport, 2009). This revolution has inevitably impacted the realm of politics and collective action and enabled the emergence on the political scene of new actors such as 'hackers' and 'online trolls' (Coleman, 2014; Goode, 2015; Jordan & Taylor, 1998; Travaglino, 2017; Wong & Brown, 2013; Woo, et al., 2004). Their highly public actions are sometimes designed to generate amusement, awareness, and to be seen as widely as possible. For instance, in 1996, Swedish hackers defaced the American agency CIA's website, changing the title from 'Central Intelligence Agency' to 'Central Stupidity Agency'.

Despite the increasing political and social relevance of these online groups, very little is known about the psychological determinants of their support and perceived legitimacy among the wider community. Understanding why individuals may express dissent vicariously by supporting and legitimizing actors such as hackers is important for, at least, two reasons. First, individuals' legitimization of these (and similar) actors may enable such actors to gain and exert social influence and power, and to avoid detection from the authorities (Travaglino & Abrams, 2019). In other words, public legitimization of these actors limits the state's

capacity to express sovereignty and has significant implications for democracy, because the actions of these groups are rarely (if ever) subject to public scrutiny or characterized by transparent decision making (Kuldova & Quinn, 2018; Lea & Stenson, 2007; van Dun, 2014). Second, after learning of, and interacting with these actors, individuals may embrace more radical political positions and, in some circumstances, become even more likely to engage in radical actions. Research shows that prior contact with radical groups may precede individuals' engagement in more radical forms of political action or limit opposition against them (L. Drury & Travaglino, 2019; Sageman 2004, 2008; Wiktorowicz, 2005).

To understand the way in which individuals perceive hackers' actions, Travaglino (2017) recently proposed a *social banditry framework* (SBF). The SBF draws on Hobsbawm (1959)' sociological and historical analysis of banditry in pre-industrial, peasant societies. Hobsbawm (1959) famously referred to these bandits as 'social' because, despite acting illegally, they were liked and protected by the communities where they operated. Bandits' actions against the powerful provided otherwise voiceless masses with an opportunity to express their grievances. In this chapter, I draw on the SBF (Travaglino, 2017), and report two experiments examining for the first time the role of individuals' perceived responsiveness of the system (i.e., external efficacy; Niemi, et al., 1991) in sustaining individuals' legitimization of hackers' actions. Specifically, I propose and demonstrate that when individuals perceive the system as unresponsive to their demands, they will feel more anger towards the system and, subsequently, be more likely to legitimize hackers' disruptive actions.

[1] This chapter is adapted from Heering, M., Travaglino, G., Abrams, D., & Goldsack, E. (2020). "If they don't listen to us, they deserve it": The effect of external efficacy and anger on the perceived legitimacy of hacking. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations*, *23*(6), 863-881. https://doi.org/10.1177/1368430220937777.

3.2. Literature Review

3.2.2. Direct and Vicarious Political Dissent

Research in social psychology has examined why people actively engage in direct forms of political participation, and why they refrain from doing so (Klandermans, 1997; van Stekelenburg & Klandermans, 2013; van Zomeren et al., 2012; van Zomeren et al., 2008; Verba et al., 1995). According to the dual pathway model of political action (van Zomeren et al., 2004), the two key paths leading to direct engagement are injustice appraisal-anger (Jost, et al., 2012), and efficacy (Bandura, 1982; Verba et al., 1995; van Zomeren et al., 2008).

When individuals perceive the system as unjust, they are motivated to participate in political protest and collective action to promote social change. Perceptions of unfairness trigger anger which is a key factor motivating people to mobilize against the source of injustice (e.g., Jost et al., 2012; Leach et al., 2006; van Zomeren, et al., 2004). Anger is an intensive emotional state linked to high physiological arousal. It may fuel individuals' motivation to fight back against unfair treatment (see Leach et al., 2006, p. 1234).

Importantly, however, individuals' likelihood of taking part in political action is also predicted by the extent to which individuals feel their actions will help them to achieve their goals (Klandermans, 1997; van Zomeren et al., 2008). When individuals do not perceive they have the resources to affect the political decision-making process, or when they consider their governments to be unresponsive towards their demands and needs (i.e., low political efficacy), direct engagement in political action is less likely (Balch, 1974).

In such circumstances, I contend, individuals do not just passively accept unjust arrangements. Rather, they might fall back on an alternative way of expressing dissent. Travaglino (2017) proposed that individuals may plead their own cause vicariously by

supporting actors that challenge the status quo, dispute core social discourses, and disrupt the functioning of the system (see also Travaglino & Abrams, 2019). These actors (i.e., bandits) generally operate outside the official realm of politics and are often regarded as criminals by the state (Hobsbawm, 1959; Schneider & Schneider, 2008). Such indirect expressions of dissent were termed '*vicarious'*.

A modern example of bandits is hackers operating on the internet (Wong & Brown, 2013). I contend here, that individuals' legitimization of, and support for hackers is a key expression of vicarious dissent, because hackers' actions are highly visible and public, require expertise that laypeople do not generally have, and often (but not exclusively) may be aimed at government agencies, corporations and other powerful entities. In this chapter, two experiments are reported examining what motivates individuals to support and legitimize hackers' actions.

3.2.3. Bandits, Hackers, and the Social Banditry Framework

Hobsbawm (1959) first used the term 'Social Banditry' to indicate those individuals who in peasant societies were not integrated within rural communities and were forced to the margins. They were generally outlaws or criminals. What made them 'social' was that they allegedly never robbed or looted peasant's harvests in their own territories. Rather, they tended to attack mostly the rich and the powerful (i.e., those with property), or were perceived as doing so. As a result, they often had the support of local communities and were at times even considered as mythical heroes, e.g., Robin Hood (Hobsbawm, 2000). In reality, however, bandits consisted of bands of armed and violent men who damaged peasants as much as the powerful (Blok, 1972; Joseph, 1990). Nonetheless, in the eyes of peasants, bandits' predatory actions represented a challenge to the economic and social institutions of the time (Hobsbawm,

1959). Peasants had no way to express their discontent against the powerful. The rigid pre-industrial system in which they lived did not provide them with a channel to voice their demands and alter the status quo. Thus, support for bandits' actions became a concrete manifestation of their inchoate anger against social arrangements they perceived as unfair (Travaglino, 2017).

In the digital era, the opportunity to exchange information rapidly and the availability of synchronous communication has redefined the concept of political action. Additionally, with the rise of micro media (such as emails and cell phones) and middle media (such as web sites and online campaigning) formal and informal organizations and individuals can manage information, communicate and coordinate with each other in a way that was previously possible only for formal organizations (see, for example, Bennet, 2003; Neuman, 1991).

These changes have also provided a platform for the emergence of novel disruptive actors. Hackers are individuals who use their informatic expertise to disrupt the current social, economic or political systems (Wong & Brown, 2013). They organize themselves into groups where membership is defined by self-identification. Hackers are connected and communicate through the web, usually using pseudonyms to preserve their anonymity. Their actions generate public amusement and include trolling (i.e., using pranks), spamming, disrupting access to websites, doxing (broadcasting a target's personal information), and disseminating disturbing content online (Coleman, 2014). Hackers' have substantial impact on the costs of computer security for public institutions and corporations (Voiskounsky, et al., 2013). In addition, hackers and their supporters may sometimes become echo-chambers of radical views, through which individuals could build radical networks (cf. Malthaner & Waldmann, 2014).

Similarly, to the *bandits* first described by Hobsbawm (1959, 2000), hackers' motivations are inherently ambiguous. Some individuals engage in hacking merely for

personal enjoyment, amusement or even material gains, without any explicit political or social agenda. Others define themselves as 'hacktivists' taking action against those companies, governments, and individuals who they consider as a threat to their norms and values (such as openness and free circulation of information on the Internet; Coleman, 2014; Milan, 2012). Regardless of their motivations, however, hackers might be considered as a modern instance of social banditry because their actions are criminalized by the state and yet they may earn people's admiration and support by enabling individuals to express their dissent vicariously.

Previous research has investigated individuals' vicarious dissent in the context of attitudes towards Anonymous, a well-known group of hackers (Travaglino, 2017). Travaglino (2017)'s SBF posits that individuals who perceive the system as unjust but simultaneously feel they do not have the means to oppose it (i.e., low political efficacy), are more likely to express their anger against the system as support for disruptive actors such as hackers. To test this idea, Travaglino (2017) used two cross-sectional studies and demonstrated that individuals were more likely to engage in *direct* forms of political action to express social discontent (e.g., voting or demonstrating in the streets) when they perceived the system as unjust but felt they had higher political efficacy, replicating the basic tenet of the dual pathway model (van Zomeren et al., 2004). However, when individuals perceived lower political efficacy, they felt stronger anger against the system, which subsequently predicted stronger support towards Anonymous' actions.

Here, I extend this research by addressing the important question of what type of political efficacy determines individuals' legitimization of hackers' actions. An important limitation of Travaglino's studies (2017) is that they used a generalized measure of political efficacy that did not distinguish between different key aspects of this construct.

Moreover, the correlational nature of the studies meant that no causal conclusions could be drawn on the relationship between efficacy and individuals' support for Anonymous. In this

chapter, I extend this research by experimentally manipulating the responsiveness of the system (external political efficacy; Niemi et al., 1991). In addition, individuals' legitimization of nonspecific hackers' actions are examined, to generalize the findings beyond the specific group of Anonymous.

3.2.4. Political Efficacy and Banditry

As discussed earlier, individuals are more likely to engage directly in political action if they feel they have the means to achieve their goals, a concept known as efficacy (van Zomeren, et al., 2013). At the societal level, individuals' feelings towards institutions are a key predictors of individuals' political engagement (Campbell, et al., 1954). Campbell et al. (1954, p. 187) defined the concept of political efficacy as 'the feeling that political and social change is possible, and that individual citizens can play a part in bringing about this change'.

There is a vast literature on the role of political efficacy in political action (e.g., Flavin & Keane, 2012; McAdam, 1982; Smets & van Ham, 2013; Tarrow, 2011). This research supports the idea that individuals' feelings of political efficacy may concern two distinct spheres (Niemi et al., 1991). Individuals' beliefs about their own ability to understand, and control the political process are referred to as *internal* political efficacy. In contrast, *external* political efficacy refers to individuals' beliefs about the responsiveness of the system to their political demands. These constructs have different implications in the social sphere (Balch, 1974).

According to the SBF, feelings of external political efficacy should be of particular relevance in individuals' appraisals and legitimization of hackers' actions. Hobsbawm's (2000) analysis of social banditry proposed that peasants protected and aided outlaws because outlaws embodied their anger and resentment against a system unresponsive to their desire for

more just social arrangements. Indeed, at the time, the masses operated in a structural system that was perceived as unalterable because authority was rooted in unmovable traditions, divine rights or superior might.

In socio-psychological terms, this analysis seems to imply that individuals' feelings about the responsiveness of the system play a key role in the legitimization of hackers' actions. Thus, here, the idea is proposed and tested that individuals who feel the system is not responsive to their aspiration for more justice, might see the (potentially illegal) actions of hackers as more legitimate.

3.2.5. Anger against the System

I contend that individuals' legitimization of hackers' actions is an expression of anger against the system, following the system's unresponsiveness to individuals' demands for more just arrangements. Work on the social psychological underpinnings of political action has generally focused on emotional expressions at intergroup levels of analysis (Iyer & Leach, 2008; Mackie, et al., 2008). Relatively little research has examined the outcomes of individuals' feelings and emotions at the levels of institutions and the system (Solak, et al., 2012; cf. Iyer, et al., 2007). Solak et al. (2012, p. 679) define system-level emotions as 'emotions that are experienced as a direct or indirect result of subjective or objective system-level characteristics. Perceived structural injustice that is not addressable within an existing system is known to generate anger, and this feeds into a desire to change the system (Abrams, et al., 2020). In the present research, I focus specifically on system-level emotions and posit that these should reflect individuals' appraisals of the system's responsiveness. Specifically, I test the idea that a system that does not listen to individuals' grievances may trigger anger,

which then motivates legitimization for social banditry against the system. Thus, stronger anger against the system should mediate the association between external political efficacy and legitimization of hackers' actions.

3.3. Overview of the Studies

Two studies are presented that examine individuals' legitimization of hackers' actions in the contexts of a university (Study 1) and an online survey platform (Study 2). Across studies, individuals were presented with a description of an unjust situation (i.e., an unjust grading process or an unfair exploitation of their work). I subsequently manipulated individuals' feelings of external political efficacy by altering the responsiveness of the system. In line with the SBF and previous evidence (Travaglino, 2017), I predicted that individuals would have felt angrier when the system was described as unresponsive to their demands (i.e., lower political efficacy). Individuals' anger against the system would in turn predict stronger legitimization of the hackers' actions.

Across studies, I also measured and controlled for individuals' feelings of internal political efficacy. Internal political efficacy refers to individuals' beliefs about their own competence to deal with the system. I predicted that this variable would be less relevant in the context of individuals' legitimization of hackers because support for these actors is a reaction against an unresponsive system rather than against the individuals' own abilities to engage with political issues. Finally, gender and age were also controlled for given the male stereotypes links to hackers and the fact that younger people might have more familiarity with this phenomenon (Bakker & de Vreese, 2011; Tanczer, 2016). All results reported below are substantively the same if these covariates are not added to the model. The studies report all conditions, and no participants were excluded from the analyses.

3.4. Study 1

3.4.1. Method

Participants and design

Two-hundred-fifty-nine British university undergraduate students (222 females, 37 males) took part in this study. The mean age was 19.87 (*SD* = 3.62). The majority of the participants reported to be White (53.7%) whereas the remaining participants were Black (11.6%), Asian (9.7%) or from mixed and other ethnicities (24.7%). Participants took part in exchange for course credits via the online software Qualtrics. No participants were excluded or included following data analysis (except deletions due to missing cases). Participants were randomly assigned to one of two conditions (External Efficacy: High vs. Low). A sensitivity power analysis using G*Power (Faul, et al., 2007) indicated that this sample size enabled us to detect a small-to-medium effect size, $f = .17$, at 80% power ($\alpha = .05$).

Procedures and materials

Participants were invited to take part in a study related to issues with the grading process. After reading an informed consent sheet, participants were asked to provide demographic information (age, gender, ethnicity). Subsequently, participants read a brief scenario (identical across conditions) presenting an unfair grading process after a university exam. The exam was described as important to students' career and future prospects', to augment the psychological relevance of the manipulation. Specifically, participants read:

You have just received the results of a university exam. There was a lot of pressure for you to do well in this exam. The grade will determine whether you are able to enroll in the Master's program you wish to pursue next year.

However, you are worried about your performance on this last exam. Many of the questions were unclear, not directly touching on the content taught to you in the lectures. Indeed, the grade you receive is lower than you had hoped for. When looking at the transcript you find your exam to have been graded unfairly. Most of the feedback refers to content you have not been taught, despite having attended the relevant lectures over the previous term.

As the results mean a lot to you, you and your colleagues who also have been affected decide to bring this up to the university's exam office. You all explain to the staff working there that you feel your grades have been awarded unfairly and your reasons for this.

After this introductory cover story, the text changed depending on the condition.

Low external efficacy condition. Participants in this condition read about the system being unresponsive to request to address their grievances about the unfair grading process.

In response to your complaint, the office does not agree to talk to the Head of School. They do not seem to take your complaint very seriously. They do not show any interest in investigating the matter and just tell you that there is no option to grade the exam regardless of the results or the type of feedback.

High external efficacy condition. Participants in the high external efficacy condition read the following text indicating that the university system was willing to address their grievances.

> In response to your complaint, the office agrees to talk to the Head of School. They assure you that they will take your complaint very seriously. They tell you they will investigate the matter and that there will be an option to regrade the exam if results of the whole cohort are abnormally low or the feedback is seen as not reflecting the core learning objectives of the module.

Participants were then asked to complete the measures described below in relation to the scenario they had just read.

Manipulation checks. The manipulation was intended to affect individuals' sense of external efficacy, while describing a situation which was equally unfair across conditions. To test whether the manipulation worked as intended, two items were adapted from a measure of external political efficacy (Lee, 2006) and four items from the System Justification Scale (Kay & Jost, 2003). Specifically, *external efficacy* was measured by asking participants to indicate how much they disagreed or agreed with the following statements, "The university responds to students' opinions effectively" and "The university's exam office responds to students' opinions effectively" (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*; Spearman-Brown r =.92). *Perceived fairness* was measured using these four statements "The way in which the exam had been graded was unfair", "All students had a fair shot at achieving a good grade", "The exam system is set up so that students usually get the results they deserve", "I find the university grading system to be unfair" (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*; α = .72).

Internal efficacy. To control for participants' sense of internal efficacy I measured this

construct using the following two items adapted from a measure of internal efficacy (Niemi et al., 1991), “I have enough ability to talk about and participate in decisions about how exams should be graded”, and “I have enough ability to understand how exams should be graded” (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*; Spearman-Brown r =.69).

Anger against the system. Anger against the system was measured using the following three items adapted from Travaglino (2017), “The response of the exam office angers me”, “I am furious about the way in which the exam office handled my complaint”, and “When I think about the university's exam system, I feel outraged” (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*; α = .89).

After measuring these constructs, participants were informed of the hackers’ attack against the School. Participants read that a group of hackers had defaced the School’s website, leaving the following message ‘*learn to do your job’* on the front page. In addition, participants were informed that the hackers’ actions had made the website inaccessible for three days. They were then asked to respond to some items.

***Legitimization of hackers’ actions*.** Individuals’ legitimization of hackers’ actions was measured using six items. Participants were asked to indicate how much they disagreed or agreed with the following statements: “The aims of the hackers are legitimate”, “The hackers’ activities deserve respect”, “The hackers’ activities are dangerous for democracy” (reverse-coded), “The hackers deserve admiration”, “The hackers and like-minded groups are criminals” (reverse-coded), “The activities of the hackers may have positive consequences for university students” (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*). The items formed a reliable scale (α = .74).

Additionally, a measure of willingness to participate in normative and non-normative forms of protest was included in this study for exploratory purposes (details about this measure are reported in the supplementary materials of this chapter; see Supplementary 3.A.)

3.5. Results and discussion

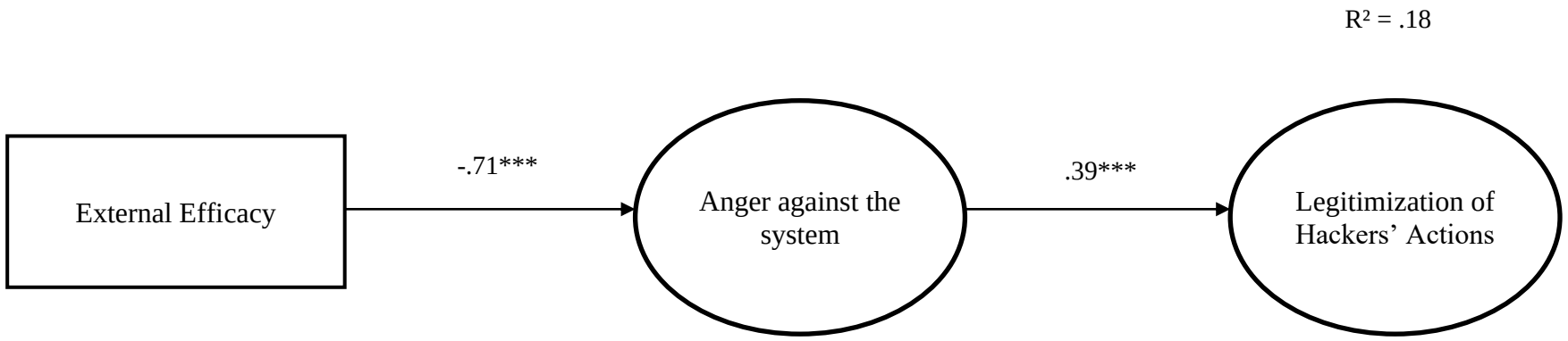
Manipulation checks

The responsiveness and perceived fairness of the system are related constructs (Cichocka & Jost, 2014). To examine whether the manipulation affected individuals' feelings of external efficacy but not of perceived fairness two ANCOVAs were used. I tested the effect of condition on external efficacy controlling for perceived fairness and, conversely, the effect of condition on perceived fairness controlling for external efficacy. Results indicated that the manipulation significantly affected individuals' feelings of external efficacy, F (1, 253) = 99.80, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .28$. Participants reported higher external efficacy in the high efficacy (M = 4.97, SD = 1.34) condition, compared to the low efficacy (M = 3.09, SD = 1.47) condition. Conversely, the effect of condition on perceived fairness of the grading system was not significant, F (1, 253) = .196, p = .659, η_p^2=.001, and similar in the high (M = 4.13, SD = 1.03) and low (M = 3.74, SD = 1.00) efficacy conditions. The results indicated that the manipulation successfully affected individuals' external efficacy, whereas the overall situation was perceived as equally unfair.

Perceived legitimacy of the hackers' actions

In line with the social banditry framework, it was hypothesized that lower external efficacy would trigger individuals' anger against the system. In turn, anger against the system should predict a stronger legitimization of the hackers' actions. To test these hypotheses, a mixed structural equation model was used whereby the external efficacy manipulation (1 = low external efficacy, 2 = high external efficacy) predicted individuals' anger against the system, which in turn predicted individuals' legitimization of the hackers' actions. Gender, age, and internal political efficacy were covariates in the model. Analyses were run in R using the lavaan package (Rosseel, 2012). The model's fit was adequate, $\chi 2 = (68, N = 247) = 105.21$, $p = .003$, CFI = .97, SRMR = .04, RMSEA = .05. Results are summarized in Figure 3.1 and Table A.3.1 presents means, standard deviations and correlations among variables.

Anger was negatively predicted by condition, $\beta = -.71$, $SE = .16$, $p < .001$. This is consistent with previous findings from Tausch et al. (2011, Study 3) and Travaglino (2017) and suggests that perceiving the system as unresponsive increases individuals' anger against the system. Supporting the idea that social bandits are supported because their actions embody individuals' anger against the system, legitimization of the hackers' actions was predicted by anger, $\beta = .39$, $SE = .27$, $p < .001$. Internal efficacy did not predict anger against the system, $\beta = -.09$, $SE = -.10$, $p = .15$ or perceived legitimacy $\beta = .01$, $SE = .01$, $p = .89$. In line with our hypothesis, inspection of the indirect effect revealed a significant indirect effect of condition on individuals' legitimization of the hackers' actions through anger $\beta = -.27$, $SE = .11$, 95% CI [-.82, -.38]. Thus, the results provide evidence for the SBF. In the next experiment, I attempt to replicate this pattern of findings in a different context, using a non-student sample.



Indirect Effect: $\beta = -.27$, SE = 0.11, 95% CI [− 0.82, − 0.38]

Figure 3.1. Structural equation model showing the coefficient for the indirect effect of the manipulation of external efficacy on individuals' perceived legitimacy of hackers' actions via anger against the system in Study 1.

Notes. External efficacy = 1 (low), 2 (high); gender, age and internal political efficacy are covariates in the model; ***$p \leq .001$.

3.6. Study 2

3.6.1. Method

Participants and design

Two hundred twenty-five British participants (160 females, 64 males, 1 other) took part in this study. The mean age was 35.16 (*SD* =11.26). The majority of the participants were White (89.8%), the remaining were Asian (4%), Black (1.8%), or from mixed and other ethnic groups (4.5%). Participants were recruited using the Prolific Academic platform via the survey software Qualtrics and were compensated for their participation.

As a selection criterion, participants must have taken part in at least five prior studies on Prolific to ensure that they had some familiarity and involvement with the platform. As in Study 1, participants were assigned to one of two between-subject conditions (Condition: High External Efficacy vs. Low External Efficacy). A sensitivity power analysis using G*Power indicates that this sample size enables us to detect a small-to-medium effect size,

$f = .19$, at 80% power ($\alpha = .05$). No participants were dropped from the analyses (except deletion due to missing cases) and no participants were added to the sample following the analysis.

Procedure and materials

Participants were asked to take part in a study about payment procedures on Prolific. After completing the measures, participants were debriefed in writing, thanked, and

compensated for their time. Procedures were similar to those of Study 1 but were adapted to the context. Prolific is a platform where participants can take part in studies in exchange for payment. Researchers have the opportunity to reject participants' submissions if they do not meet some pre-specified conditions, or are suboptimal (for instance, failure to respond correctly to an attention check). Rejection of a submission may limit participants' ability to take part in further studies, but the researchers have still access to the submission, creating the potential for unfair dynamics.

Participants were first presented with an informed consent sheet and then provided some demographic information (gender, age, ethnicity). Subsequently, participants read a scenario describing a situation in which a researcher unfairly rejected their and other workers' submission.

> Think about a study you recently took part in, on the platform Prolific Academic. You carefully read the instructions and the participation criteria, which clearly stated you were a suitable participant. Moreover, you were careful in answering the questions honestly and put a lot of thought into your answers. The day after completing the study you receive a notification that your submission was rejected. The reason provided to you was that you failed two out of three attention checks. You find this unfair because you really did not see any attention check despite putting a lot of attention in the study. You also read a post on a forum in which many other people complained about being rejected from the same study due to the same reason.
>
> Due to the fact that you really have put effort and time in the study, you first contact the researchers to ask them to reverse the rejection, but because you receive no answer you contact Prolific Support. In your email you provide a detailed explanation of why you think your submission should not have been rejected. The subsequent text varied across conditions.

Low external efficacy condition. In response to your complaint, Prolific Support does not agree to help you discuss the matter with the researcher or make enquiry on your behalf. They do not seem to take your complaint very seriously. They do not show any interest in investigating the matter and just tell you that there is no option to review the rejection- approval process.

High external efficacy condition. In response to your complaint, Prolific Support agrees to mediate between you and the researcher. They assure you that they will take your complaint very seriously. They tell you they will investigate the matter and that there will be an option to revise the whole rejection-approval process if anomalies are to be found in the rejection criteria used by this specific researcher.

Following the manipulations, participants were asked to respond to some items.

Manipulation checks. To examine whether the scenario successfully affected individuals' feelings of external efficacy, but was perceived as equally unfair across conditions, the same items as in Study 1 were adapted. Specifically, two items were used to measure participants' feelings of external efficacy ("The Prolific Support Team responds effectively to people who take part in the studies" and "Researchers who recruit participants on Prolific Academic respond to participants' requests effectively"; Spearman-Brown r =.84) and four items were used to measure participants' perceived unfairness of the system, "The way in which this submission was rejected was unfair", "All participants had a fair shot at getting paid for their contribution on Prolific Academic", "I find the system to administer studies on Prolific Academic unfair", "Prolific Academic is set up so that participants usually get the outcome they deserve". This scale failed to achieve good reliability, $\alpha = .53$, which improved if the first

item was dropped, α = .64. Below, we present results using all four items but using only three items does not alter the pattern of findings.

Internal efficacy. Two items were used to measure participants' perceived ability to engage with the issue, "I have enough ability to understand the criteria for rejecting a submission on Prolific" and "I have enough ability to talk about and participate in decisions about how submissions should be evaluated on Prolific" (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*; Spearman-Brown *r* =.86).

Anger against the system. Anger against the system was measured using three items, "The response of the Prolific Support team angers me", "I am furious about the way in which Prolific handled my complaint" and "When I think about Prolific's support system I feel outraged", (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*; α = .89).

Following the measures, participants were presented with a scenario similar to the one used in Study 1. Specifically, the scenario described some hackers attacking the support website, leaving the following message on the front page, *'learn to do your job'*. Participants were also informed that this created a disruption whereby the website was not accessible for three days.

***Legitimization of hackers' actions*.** The same six items as Study 1 were used to measure participants' legitimization of hackers' actions (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*). The items formed a reliable scale (α = .74)**.**

3.7. Results and discussion

Manipulation checks

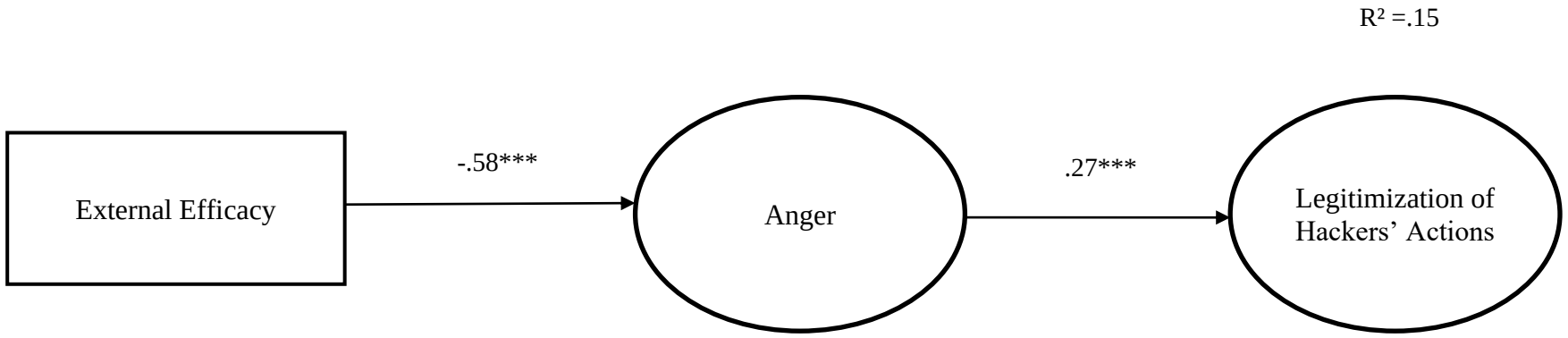
To examine whether the manipulation affected participants' feelings of external efficacy independently of the perceived fairness of the system, two ANCOVAs were used as in Study 1. Results indicated that the manipulation significantly affected participants' external efficacy F (1, 222) = 64.56, $p < .001$, η_p^2=.23, controlling for perceived fairness. As expected, participants perceived stronger external efficacy in the high (M = 5.44, SD = 1.00) compared to the low (M = 3.90, SD = 1.75) efficacy condition. Conversely, participants' perception of fairness was not affected by the manipulation controlling for external efficacy F (1, 222) = .44, p = .51, η_p^2 = .002. The situation was perceived as equally unfair in the high (M = 4.40, SD =.57) vs. low (M = 4.46, SD = .73) condition.[2]

[2] 1 Across both studies, some of the items assessing perceived fairness could have been interpreted by participants as measuring a global characteristic of the system, and not just the fairness of the specific situation. To examine the dimensionality of the scale, and test whether different items loaded on different factors, I employed exploratory factor analyses using maximum likelihood as method of extraction. These analyses suggested the existence of only one factor, across studies. Moreover, I repeated the manipulation check analyses using only those items that more clearly referred to the specific situation described in the manipulation (i.e., in Study 1, 'The way in which the exam had been graded was unfair', and 'All students had a fair shot at achieving a good grade', and in Study 2, 'The way in which this submission was rejected was unfair', and 'All participants had a fair shot at getting paid for their contribution on Prolific Academic'). Across studies, two ANCOVAs assessing the effect of condition on perceived fairness and external efficacy controlling for the other construct yielded results very similar to those reported.

Legitimization of hackers' actions

Data were analysed using the same procedures as Study 1. Specifically, I tested a structural equation model with latent variables whereby the manipulation of external efficacy predicted anger against the system, which in turn predicted the legitimization of the hacker' actions. Gender, age and internal political efficacy were covariates in the model. Figure 3.2 summarizes the model, and Table A.3.2 presents means, standard deviations and correlations among variables. The model's fit was adequate, $\chi 2 = (68, N = 225) = 114.34$, $p < .001$, CFI =.97, SRMR = .06, RMSEA = .055.

In line with the SBF and replicating results from Study 1 in a different context, anger was affected by condition, $\beta = -.58$, $SE = .19$, $p < .001$. Participants felt more anger against the system when the system was described as unresponsive to their demands and needs. In turn, legitimacy of the hackers' action was positively predicted by anger, $\beta = .27$, $SE = .05$, $p < .001$. The indirect effect of the manipulation of perceived external efficacy via anger on the perceived legitimacy of the hackers' actions was significant, $\beta = -.16$, $SE = 0.09$, 95% CI [-.49, -.14]. As in the previous study, internal efficacy did not significantly predict anger, $\beta = -.03$, $SE = .04$, $p = .58$ or the legitimization of the hackers' actions, $\beta = -.08$, $SE = .06$, $p = .50$, in line with the idea that it is the perceived system's unresponsiveness that drives individuals' support for social bandits.



Indirect Effect: β = −.16, *SE* = 0.09, 95% CI [− 0.49, − 0.14].

Figure 3.2. Structural equation model showing the coefficient for the indirect effect of the manipulation of external efficacy on individuals' perceived legitimacy of hackers' actions via anger against the system in Study 2.

Notes. External efficacy = 1 (low), 2 (high); gender, age and internal political efficacy are covariates in the model; ***p ≤ .001.

3.7.1. General Discussion

Hackers and other online actors are playing an increasingly important role on the political scene (Coleman, 2014). These groups operating on the internet have attacked key targets, including governments and financial institutions. As more and more aspects of individuals' social life (i.e., voting, exchanging goods and money, interfacing with bureaucracies) take place in the digitalized world, it is important to examine how hackers are perceived by others. In this article, I have proposed that the social banditry framework (Travaglino, 2017) provides us with a useful theoretical basis for understanding individuals' reactions to hackers' actions. Specifically, it is argued that the system's responsiveness to individuals' demands for fairer social arrangements is a key factor determining individuals' legitimizations of hackers' actions.

Results from two studies supported this contention. In two experiments, I manipulated the extent to which the system (i.e., the university in Study 1, or an online survey platform in Study 2) was responsive towards its users, following an unfair episode. In Study 1, the episode concerned unfair 'grading' practices among students, whereas in Study 2 it was an unfair exploitation of users' work. Across studies, results indicated that individuals in the low external efficacy condition reported more anger against the system. In turn, anger predicted individuals' legitimization of hackers' actions following a hacker attack. Importantly, across studies, the manipulation checks indicated that the system was perceived as less responsive in the low efficacy condition, but as equally unfair across conditions. The results cannot, therefore, be attributed to differences in individuals' perceptions of unfairness, which remained similar across conditions, but depended specifically on perceiving the system as irresponsive to their grievances. Moreover, I also measured, and controlled for, participants' feelings of internal

efficacy. The findings showed that the latter construct was not systematically linked to anger nor to individuals' legitimization of the hackers' actions.

Taken as a whole, this pattern of findings provides support for the SBF (Travaglino, 2017). The notion of social banditry was originally proposed by Hobsbawm (1959) to explain peasants' support for violent outlaws in pre-industrial societies. Bandits' actions enabled individuals who had no other political channels to express their grievances in a vicarious form. Thus, bandits earned the support of the community, which created myths and legends to celebrate bandits' actions and protected them from the law. In line with this analysis, the present studies demonstrated that external efficacy is a key factor involved in individuals' support for hackers. Systems that do not provide participants with the ability to express their aspirations for more justice trigger more anger. This anger, in turn, is an important predictor of individuals' support for, and legitimization of bandits' disruptive actions against the system.

3.7.2. Direct and Vicarious Dissent: Theoretical Contributions

Research in social psychology has focused on individuals' engagement in direct forms of political action such as protesting or voting (e.g., Becker & Tausch, 2015; van Zomeren et al., 2008). This research indicates that stronger efficacy, injustice appraisals and anger are important predictors of individuals' engagement. Research has generally paid less attention to the way in which individuals express dissent when legitimate routes to social change are ineffective or blocked (cf. Abrams et al, 2020), they do not feel they have the means to achieve social change. Moreover, I am aware of no studies in psychology focusing specifically on individuals' perceptions of responsiveness of the system (i.e., external political efficacy) in relation to alternative forms of dissent. Indeed, current psychological models of political engagement often assume passivity and inaction as a consequence of lower efficacy (e.g., van

Zomeren et al., 2012) or other barriers to participation (Klandermans & Oegema, 1987). Alternatively, lower political efficacy has been linked to violent political engagement (Tausch et al., 2011; study 3), although it should be noted that Tausch et al. (2011) used a generalized measure of political efficacy that did not distinguish between internal and external efficacy.

In this research, I extend previous work, by proposing an additional avenue that individuals may use to voice their discontent. I contend that individuals may express discontent vicariously, by supporting disruptive actors that attack the system on their behalf. Specifically, in line with the SBF, the results of these studies indicate that support for, and legitimization of these actors may reflect individuals' anger against an *unresponsive* system.

The notion of 'vicarious dissent' and the SBF enable us to move past the dichotomy between 'action' and 'inertia', which characterizes much of the psychological research on individuals' dissent. For instance, although there are circumstances in which individuals do not seem to be directly challenging the status-quo, it does not follow that they are supinely accepting it. Rather, the present studies indicate that individuals may find alternative ways to express their grievances. Such alternatives are perhaps harder to detect, but they may serve an important function in the longer run, including fostering people's resilience, and exposing them to the idea that the system can be questioned and challenged, thus shaping politicized identities in opposition to the status quo (see also Hobsbawm, 1972; Travaglino, 2017).

However, these alternative forms of dissent may also involve some risks for security and democracy. Research on social banditry in sociology or history has often debated the question of whether certain specific groups in various geographical locations were in fact social bandits, as opposed to merely self-interested criminals or even violent outlaws who preyed on defenseless communities on behalf of the powerful (Blok, 1972; Hobsbawm, 1972; Joseph, 1990; Schneider & Schneider, 2008). Nowadays, this same ambiguity may frame hackers' actions. Some hackers may engage in attacks against governments 'only for fun', others may

have a more developed political agenda (Coleman, 2011), and others still may work on behalf of governments and other powerful hidden entities (van Der Walt, 2017). In addition, hackers operate in secrecy (Voiskounsky, et al., 2013), and it is oftentimes difficult to discern who is the author of an online attack, or their objectives and motivations. This means that, generally, their decisions cannot be publicly scrutinized or altered. Without external accountability, hackers' and other banditry's actions could easily degenerate, damage 'wrong targets', violate the fundamental principle of due process, or foster mistrust in institutions.

Despite these ambiguities, I contend that individuals may, in certain circumstances, legitimize hackers' actions because those actions offer a way to manifest individuals' anger against the system. Therefore, from a psychological point of view, rather than whether bandits are genuinely 'political', it is perhaps more important to speak of a 'social banditry function' that may characterize certain actions or groups, regardless of their actual motivations and objectives. Additional research is needed to examine other predictors of individuals' legitimization of such actors, as well as other online and offline groups that may perform such 'social banditry function' (e.g., mafias, terrorist organizations, and paramilitary groups).

3.7.3. Limitations and Future Directions

This research is the first to experimentally demonstrate how individuals' sense of external efficacy affects their support for social bandits. This research has some limitations which should be taken into account in the interpretation of the results. One limitation is that I did not ask participants whether they had experienced previous situations or events similar to those described in our manipulation. The chronic experience of the system's unresponsiveness or unfairness may have a stronger impact on individuals' expressions of vicarious dissent, compared to transient ones. The results of the present studies are, however, in line with those of

previous survey research examining more stable individuals' perception of the political system in relations to hackers (Travaglino, 2017).

Moreover, while stressing the role of external efficacy, it is also important to note that the SBF holds that individuals' perception of an unjust system is an important determinant of their support for banditry (Travaglino, 2017). Future research should extend the present work by directly manipulating the perceived fairness of the system in order to establish at what point it sets a boundary or threshold condition for the impact of external efficacy to occur.

Future research could also manipulate the hackers' explicit motivations in order to understand under which circumstances 'bandits' are more likely to lose support, and perhaps increase opposition. For instance, hackers who explicitly aim at personal gains may be seen as motivated by selfish aims, and therefore may be less likely to earn people's support. In addition, identification with the group targeted by hackers (e.g., identification as university students, or national identification) may be negatively linked to support for hackers. This is because higher identification may be associated with more trust towards the system and stronger external efficacy, or because individuals who identify with a group may be more likely to express their dissent directly rather than vicariously.

Relatedly, an additional important task for future research is to examine other social and psychological mechanisms that explain why individuals express support for "bandits". According to Subšić, et al. (2008)'s model of political solidarity, there are situations in which a "silent majority" may stop siding with an established societal authority and sympathize with, or sustain a minority in position of disadvantage. This realignment of the

majority is made possible by processes of redefinition of the self, during which individuals dis-identify from the authority and identify, instead, with the minority that is challenging it. A similar process may also take place in the context of individuals' support for bandits, whose challenge to the system may enable individuals to question the meaning of their relationship to

the authority, embrace alternative definitions of who they are and ultimately switch their allegiances (Travaglino, 2017).

There are also important differences between this model and the SBF. Central to the political solidarity model is the analysis of when and why a silent majority expresses support for the struggling minority treated unfairly. Conversely, the SBF addresses situations in which it is a smaller group of individuals with access to special resources (e.g., hackers' technical skills and abilities, traditional bandits' capacity for violence, or criminal organizations' access to weapons) who purport to make the interests of the majority.

Moreover, according to Hobsbawm, support for banditry grows out of an expression of individualistic desire for revenge, rather than a collective program for social change (see also Travaglino, 2017). Nonetheless, future research should examine the social identity and self-categorization processes involved in individuals' support for banditry (cf. Abrams et al., 2020).

Finally, the experience of schadenfreude could help explaining why individuals may sometimes legitimize forms of disruptive and illegal dissent such as banditry (Heering, Travaglino & Abrams., 2020). The literature on schadenfreude contends that when individuals witness the misfortune of someone that they perceive as higher in status they will draw pleasure from it. Previous research on schadenfreude (Leach et al., 2003) also suggests that, in the inter-group context, a powerful outgroup will be perceived as more 'deserving' of misfortunes when its superiority is perceived as illegitimate (e.g., Doosje, et al., 1995; Ellemers, et al., 1997). The role of schadenfreude may be especially relevant in the context of banditry in general, and hackers in particular because of their use of humour to attack the powerful (Milan, 2012).

3.8. Conclusions

The last thirty years have seen rapid growth of digital information and communication technologies (ICTs). The diffusion of ICTs has happened at a much faster pace compared to other technological advancements as telephone or TV (Van Laer, 2010). This has inevitably led to many changes in different spheres of life, not least in politics and in the context of collective action (Di Maggio et al., 2001; Norris 2001), where the internet has provided the opportunity for new forms of protest and expression to arise. Hacking and online activism are examples of novel forms of protest that have been made possible by, and entirely rely on the web. These forms of protest have become increasingly influential, garnering significant media attention and spurring public debate around issues of security, privacy and freedom (Tomblin et al., 2016).

Hacking and other illegal (or semi-legal) forms of online actions may undermine public institutions and security, increase the costs of operating online systems, and even destabilize democratic decision making due to their unaccountability. Hacking and other illegal (or semi-legal) forms of online actions may shed light on the weaknesses of official authorities, thus posing a real threat to the legitimacy and the stability of the system. It is, therefore, not surprising that these actors are often criminalized by the state (Schneider & Schneider, 2008).

Nonetheless, hackers' actions may be perceived as legitimate by the wider public and these actors may be supported by people who may perceive them as a way to 'get back' against a system that does not listen to their demands. In line with this idea, we demonstrated the importance of external efficacy and anger in individuals' vicarious dissent, and support for hacker groups. The findings suggest that open and responsive political systems that grant individuals the ability to express their grievances may see reduced support for this and other forms of social banditry.

CHAPTER 4

4.1. Introduction

As discussed, and shown in previous studies, when people perceive a situation as unjust, they might decide to engage in protest; a number of real-life cases demonstrates this. For instance, when the French Government at the end of 2018 announced an increase in fuel taxes at the start of the new year, more than 300,000 people across the streets of France gathered to protest (Lichfield, 2019; L'Obs, 2019). The protest effectively became a very visible and loud movement for economic justice (*Mouvement des gilets jaunes*, i.e., the 'yellow vest movement' because of the yellow high-visibility vests worn by protesters) and it successfully led to several concessions by the Government (France Bleu, 2018; Illsher, 2018).

Literature on political protest and on protest movements suggests that episodes of people protesting, like the one described, are more likely to happen when people perceive they have a political voice, a concept known as efficacy. However, an important question in the social psychology of collective action is whether the refraining from direct protest participation effectively means abstaining from protest. It may be that people respond passively to an injustice and abstain from any form of protest (Jost et al., 2012). Others suggest that inaction might be a condition at a societal level whereby a lack of collective shared goals and values leaves individuals confused and paralyzed unable to act against a status-quo that they do not endorse (de la Sablonnière, 2017; de la Sablonnière & Taylor, 2020). Another possibility is that

individuals do in fact express dissent, but they do so vicariously through supporting disruptive groups that attack the system on their behalf. This form of vicarious dissent is known as social banditry, a phenomenon first examined by the sociologist Hobsbawm (1959). In his analysis of traditional societies, Hobsbawm argued that peasants support otherwise violent bandits and outlaws when such bandits attack the rich and powerful. The peasants' support for bandits is explained by the satisfaction they feel at the sight of an unjust but unassailable system under attack. Hobsbawm's socio-historical analysis suggests that schadenfreude (i.e., one's pleasure at another's misfortune) could be an important driver of individuals' legitimization of social bandits.

As discussed in previous chapters, hackers account as an example of modern forms of outlawry and social banditry. I therefore hypothesize that, similarly to the support for bandits, the legitimization of Hackers (with their notorious use of irony and pranks during their attacks) could be explained by the pleasure and satisfaction that people experience when they see a system that they consider unjust being belittled and taking a hit. This is also in line with the ethos of many hackers and hacktivists (online activists) that aim to empower those who are not privileged while exposing the weaknesses of the powerful (Wong & Brown, 2013).

Support for this reasoning can be found in research connecting schadenfreude with the deservingness of the misfortune: this research connects schadenfreude with feelings of injustice as it suggests that individuals experience joy at the expense of someone who is superior to them; especially when they believe that the superior status is illegitimate and therefore unjust (Feather, 1994, 1999; Feather, et al., 2013). From this I argue that schadenfreude might represent an experience of 'personal justice' whereby it embodies a feeling of satisfaction derived from a sense that justice is being restored (Feather & Sherman, 2002; Lange & Boeker, 2018; van Dijk et al., 2011). It was therefore hypothesized that schadenfreude, would be a fundamental emotion in predicting the legitimization of hackers and their actions when people

perceive a system to be unjust.

4.2. Literature Review

4.2.1. The malicious yet(?) human nature of Schadenfreude

When individuals witness someone else's misfortune, they generally feel empathy towards the person and will openly manifest sympathy. However, this is not always the case. In some circumstances individuals might derive pleasure from witnessing the misfortune of others (Combs, et al., 2009; Feather & Sherman, 2002; Leach, et al., 2003; Smith et al., 1996; van Dijk, et al., 2006). Social psychology has adopted for this latter feeling the German term *schadenfreude*. Schadenfreude is a composite word that derives from the combination of *schaden*, which means "harm" and *freude*, "joy".

There are several circumstances that make the feeling of schadenfreude more likely to be experienced. Studies have shown that individuals are more likely to experience schadenfreude when they feel like the other person deserves their misfortune (Feather, 2006, 2008; Feather & Sherman, 2002; Singer et al., 2006; Smith et al., 1996, 2009; van Dijk et al., 2005) or when the person is disliked (Hareli & Weiner, 2002; Leach et al., 2003). Some studies have also shown that individuals are more likely to experience schadenfreude when the misfortune befalls an envied person, or when individuals gain from the misfortune of said person (Feather, et al., 2013; Lange, et al., 2018; Sawada et al., 2012; van Dijk, et al., 2006; but see Feather & Sherman, 2002; Hareli & Weiner, 2002; Leach & Spears, 2008).

Feather (2012) and Feather et al. (2011) describe the seemingly common experience of

rejoicing (secretly or publicly) when someone in a high-status position gets punished for some misdoing. This suggests that individuals may be more likely to experience schadenfreude when an authority that they feel is unjust "takes a hit". It is important to note however that the misfortune one rejoices in is generally caused by a third party or external circumstance; not by the person deriving pleasure from it. For this reason, Schadenfreude is described as a 'malicious pleasure', because there is often no direct personal gain from the situation and it cannot be confused with manifestations of gloating and pride as they are usually derived by defeating someone in a competitive context (e.g., Leach, et al., 2003).

4.2.2. Schadenfreude as an inter-group balancing emotion

Even though the experience of schadenfreude is not necessarily related to a direct personal benefit, it could signal a more subtle personal gain involved. Drawing from research connecting schadenfreude to deservingness and a sense of injustice (Feather, 1994, 1999; Feather & Sherman, 2002), experiencing schadenfreude might have a cathartic function. This is especially the case when the misfortune befalls someone who is considered as having higher, undeserved, status (Doosje, et al., 1995; Ellemers, et al., 1997; Leach et al., 2003).

Several studies have found that objectively inferior groups that suffer because of their inferiority are likely to experience schadenfreude at the misfortune of a superior out-group (Leach et al., 2008; Leach et al., 2003).

In fact, in inter-group contexts, in-group inferiority often pushes people to derogate, devalue or compete against superior out-groups to try to subvert the social order. However, when the inferiority of the in-group is objective and the in-group is not able to subvert the social system, seeking direct competition with the superior out-group may not be beneficial (Leach et al., 2008). When this is the case, one way by which the inferior in-group can redirect

its hostility is by rejoicing at the out-group's misfortune (Leach et al., 2003). Lange and Boeker (2018) advanced the hypothesis that rejoicing in the misfortunes of a superior can have a social function, especially when the rejoicing is made publicly explicit (for example by laughing and giggling). The authors suggest that this manifestation of joy socially signals that the dominant group or person is not feared. Through public ridicule (explicit manifestations of schadenfreude) the dominance is denied and consequently decreased in the eyes of others. As such, schadenfreude has a social and emotional regulatory function because the emotional experience of malicious joy provides both a signal and a means to a re- defined social order (Lange & Boeker, 2018). Hackers and hacktivists often use public ridicule when they deface websites, changing the official visual layout with one of their liking (generally comic images or pranks, political messages or signatures of the hacker - "graffiti" style).

Drawing from this research and from Feather's research on schadenfreude and deservingness (Feather, 1994, 1999; Feather & Sherman, 2002) I hypothesize that schadenfreude has a further, more intrapersonal, social emotional regulatory function. At a personal level, rejoicing in the misfortunes of a superior can help individuals release negative feelings associated with their own inferiority, i.e., low self-esteem and shame, and thus achieves a cathartic function. This cathartic function may represent a gain in itself.

Neurological studies seem to support this idea by demonstrating that observing a deviant target receiving 'painful' monetary punishment enhances the activation of the ventral striatum, a part of the brain associated with reward. This finding suggests that humans may derive satisfaction from merely witnessing justice being administered, even though the punishment is out of their control (De Quervain et al., 2004; Fehr & Gachter, 2002).

I contend that this personal cathartic function of schadenfreude could have important social implications. Particularly, this cathartic function of schadenfreude could play a primary role when individuals feel like they do not have the means to change a system or subvert an

authority that they consider unfair. In these circumstances, support for illegal and semi-legal groups who fight on behalf of the disempowered to expose and re-correct unjust and corrupt systems could be partially explained by the joy felt over the misfortune befalling the unjust system or the illegitimate authority. Similar to the experience of schadenfreude,

support for these groups helps express feelings of frustration derived from the perceived lack of efficacy (Lange & Boecker, 2018). Therefore, the personal satisfaction associated with the experience of schadenfreude may predict legitimization of groups that retaliate against unfair or undeserving authorities. The actions of so-called social bandits might - if not materially fix the wrongdoings of undeservedly superior authorities - at least provide some sense of 'popular justice': the same kind of 'popular' justice that has made bandits historically liked and widely supported by the people (Ciconte, 2020; Hobsbawm, 2000).

4.2.3. Schadenfreude and vicarious dissent

As Schadenfreude is often associated with a feeling of undeserved superiority it is likely that such a feeling would be experienced by individuals when an authority that they feel is unjust 'takes a hit'. This has been previously suggested by Feather (2012) and Feather et al. (2011) who describe the not uncommon experience of rejoicing (secretly or publicly) when someone in a high-status position (for example, a politician or a high business leader) is dismissed or demoted because of some misdoing. Feather refers to these high-status individuals as 'tall poppies' and suggests that others may feel a certain degree of satisfaction when witnessing them being 'cut down to size'.

When faced with an unjust authority, individuals will generally manifest their discontent and, if possible, take action against the injustice (Jost et al., 2012; Klandermans, 1997; Leach, et al., 2006; van Stekelenburg & Klandermans, 2013; van Zomeren, et al., 2004). The perception that

a system is unjust will undermine the legitimacy of authorities and systems (e.g., Muller, 1979; Rogowski, 1974; Tyler, 2001, 2003, 2006a, b; Tyler & Lind, 1992) and thereby motivate people to participate in political protest. However, individuals will be motivated to engage only if the perceived injustice triggers a feeling of moral outrage and anger (Jost et al., 2012; Leach, et al., 2006; van Zomeren, et al., 2004). In fact, it is the intensive emotional state of anger and outrage (e.g., high physiological arousal) that fuels motivation to fight back and participate in protest (see Leach et al., 2006, p. 1234).

Individuals also need to feel that their actions will be effective in achieving the proposed goals - that they have some efficacy - when they decide to engage in political protest (e.g., Gamson, 1992; Klandermans, 1997; McCarthy & Zald, 1977; Mummendey, et al., 1999; Van Zomeren, et al., 2004). A person is more likely to engage in political protest and collective action when they feel like their action will be effective in achieving their goals (Bandura, 1982; Saab et al., 2016; van Zomeren et al., 2008; Verba et al., 1995). A lack of means and resources, or a feeling that the personal action will not have an impact on the unjust system, might deter individuals from engaging in protest behaviours (Balch, 1974; Zomeren et al., 2012; Zomeren et al., 2008; van Zomeren et al., 2004).

Alternatively, a sense of low perceived efficacy might push individuals to rely on third parties or external actors that would manifest their discontent on their behalf or ‘vicariously’ (Heering et al., 2020; Travaglino, 2017). Vicarious dissent is an alternative form of political protest that arises when individuals do not have the possibility to directly engage in collective action. Supporting disruptive actors that challenge the system can thus serve individuals to manifest their dissent and to express grievance and release negative emotions. Among these disruptive actors are groups like hackers and hacktivists who take it upon themselves to (allegedly) fight on behalf of the disempowered to expose and re-correct unjust and corrupt systems. In Robin Hood-esque fashion, they take from the powerful (in the form of information

and limitation of online freedom and surveillance) and give to the powerless (freedom of information and privacy).

I believe that support for illegal and semi-legal forms of vicarious dissent could be partially explained by feelings of malicious pleasure at the disadvantage of an authority that is perceived as illegitimate. In the same way as schadenfreude can be considered a passive emotion elicited by a feeling that a sense of justice is being restored, the legitimization of vicarious dissent is a way through which individuals can express their dissent without having to directly engage in any action. It is therefore hypothesized that schadenfreude, as an emotional expression of malicious joy, will be a fundamental emotion in predicting the legitimization of hackers and their actions when people perceive a system to be unjust.

4.3. Overview of the present studies and hypotheses

In this chapter, I draw on the Social Banditry Framework (Travaglino, 2017), and report two experiments examining the role that a corrupt authority has in sustaining individuals' legitimization of hackers' actions. Specifically, I propose and demonstrate that when individuals are confronted with a corrupt political system, they will be more likely to legitimize hackers' disruptive actions and that this relationship is mediated by a feeling of schadenfreude at the system's misfortune. Furthermore, in line with previous studies (studies 3 and 4 Chapter 3 where external efficacy predicted anger) it is shown how generally perceiving the political authority as having low efficacy positively predicts the experience of schadenfreude at the authority's misfortune.

4.4. Study 1

In this study, I considered the role that schadenfreude, or pleasure at another's misfortune, plays in the legitimization of hackers. For the first time, I assessed the mediating role of schadenfreude in the relationship between perceived injustice and perceived legitimacy of bandits' actions against the authority - a form of vicarious dissent.

4.4.1. Method

Participants

One-hundred forty-one British participants (50 males, 90 females, 1 unknown) took part in the experiment (M_{age} = 34.78, *SD* = 11.86). Participants were recruited via Qualtrics, using the online recruitment platform Prolific Academic. They were compensated for their time (£ 0.50). The majority of participants self-described as white (87.9%), followed by Black (5%) and Asian (2.8%). The remaining participants self-described as other or mixed ethnicity. Almost half of the sample (48.9%) reported holding an undergraduate or graduate degree, whereas the remaining part of the sample reported other qualifications.

Procedure, design and materials

Participants were randomly assigned to one of two conditions (injustice vs. neutral). Sample size was predetermined at 140 participants. This sample size enabled us to detect a medium effect size, f = .23, at 80% power (α = .05).

Participants were invited to take part in a study on 'social and political issues'. At the beginning of the study, participants were asked to provide demographic information (age, gender, ethnicity, education and political orientation) and to respond to items assessing

political orientation and identification as British. Additionally, an array of measures was included in this study for exploratory purposes, including political interest, perceived internal and external political efficacy and system justification of British society (details about these measures are reported in the supplementary materials of this chapter; see Supplementary 4.A).

Participants were then asked to read an extract from a national newspaper. Depending on the condition, the extract either reported a (mostly factual) news article about the recent British political scandal of 'cash for influence', or a neutral (also mostly factual) news article about the government trying to regulate the sale of laser pointers to limit attacks at airports.

Across conditions, the extract was formatted as being published on the official website of a British daily newspaper, 'The Guardian'. In the injustice condition, the headline was 'Twelve MPs implicated in 'cash for influence' scandal.' Participants then read a text explaining that 'twelve members of the parliament have been accused of offering to use their political influence in return for payments of thousands of pounds'. Participants were displayed (bogus) photos and names of four MPs implicated in the scandals and read that these belonged to two major British parties, the Conservative and Labour parties. They were then provided (accurate information) about the MPs' activities (i.e., lobbying in exchange for payments). In the neutral condition, participants read the headline 'UK ministers consider licensing laser pointers in bid to reduce attacks. The article provided information about recent attempts to regulate the sale of laser pointers due to a recent spike in attacks at airports (verbatim transcripts of the articles are available in the supplementary materials). The texts of these manipulations were the same as the ones used in study 1 and 2 (Chapter 2).

Following the extract, participants read about a hacking attack on governmental officials. Specifically, participants read: "Sometime after the release of the article, a group of British hackers hacked into the computers of various British government officials, apparently succeeding in stealing sensitive files and the officials' personal information. The hackers'

actions have caused a lot of public damage to the officials involved, and to the government as a whole."

Subsequently, participants completed the dependent variables, were asked how clear they found the study (1 = *Extremely unclear,* 7 = *extremely clear*) and if they had comments they liked to share with the researcher (using a textual box).

Measures

Political Orientation. Participants answered the question: 'Many people think of political attitudes being on the "left" or "right". This is a scale stretching from the Left to the Right. When you think of your own political attitudes, where would you place yourself?' (1 = *left*, 7 = *right*).

National Identification. Participants indicated how much they agreed with each of the following statements 'I am pleased to think of myself as British', 'I am proud I am British', 'I identify with other people who live in the UK' (1 = *strongly disagree,* 7 = *strongly agree*; α = .89).

Schadenfreude against the Government. To measure schadenfreude, participants answered five items (adapted from van Dijk et al., 2006). Participants read the prompt 'When I think about what the hacking attack means for the Government…', and then: 'I cannot resist a little smile', 'This gives me satisfaction', 'I feel pleasure', 'I actually have to laugh a little' and 'I feel schadenfreude' (1 = *strongly disagree,* 7 = *strongly agree;* α = .92).

Legitimization of Hacker's actions. Participants were asked to respond to six items in relation to the hackers' attack they had just read about. Items were, 'The purpose of the

hackers' actions was legitimate', 'The hackers' actions are a threat to democracy' (reversed), 'the hackers' actions deserve respect', 'the hackers' actions are criminal and should be condemned' (reversed), 'the hackers' actions are a threat to personal security' (reversed), 'the hackers' actions deserve admiration' (1 = *strongly disagree,* 7 = *strongly agree;* α = .89).

4.4.2. Results

Descriptive statistics and Zero-order Correlations

Table 4.1 reports the means, standard deviations of each variable as well as the correlation amongst them.

Measures	M	SD	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Condition (Neut/Corrupt)	-	-	.46***	.35***	-.03	.06	.16	.14	.11
2. Schadenfreude.	3.06	1.25-	-.	.71***	.09	-.12	.02	-.13	-.04
3. Legitimacy of Hackers	3.02	1.15		.	.16	-.24***	-.12	-.18*	-.13
4. System Justification	3.44	1.27				.46***	.06	.01	.15
5. National identification	5.08	1.28					.35***	-.01	.06
6. Political Orientation	3.53	1.39						-.22***	.14
7. Gender	-	-							.02
8. Age	34.78	11.87							

Notes: Gender 1(male), 2(female); * < .05, ** < .01, *** <.001. Condition: 1: Neutral, 2: Corruption

Analysis of Covariance

I examined the effects of 'condition' on 'feelings of schadenfreude' towards the Government. It was hypothesized that participants assigned to the 'corruption' condition would have stronger feelings of schadenfreude compared to participants assigned to the neutral condition. To examine the effects of condition on feelings of schadenfreude I also controlled for gender, age, political orientation and British identification. I controlled for British identification because in line with results from studies 1 and 2 in Chapter 2 I expected identification to have a negative relationship with legitimization of hackers (see correlation tables A.2.1 and A.2.2 in Appendix I). Results indicated that the manipulation significantly affected participants' feelings of schadenfreude F (1, 133) = 36.84, $p < .001$, η_p^2=.22. As expected, participants experienced higher feelings of schadenfreude in the corruption condition (M = 3.63, SD = 1.14) compared to the neutral (M = 2.49, SD = 1.08) condition.

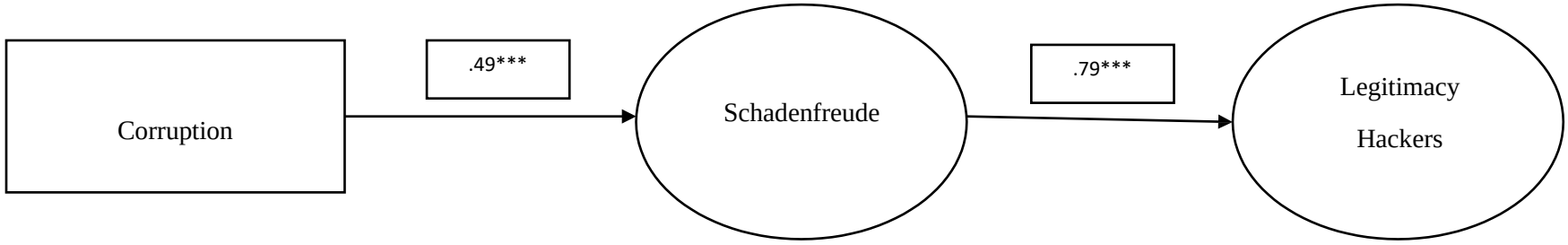
The mediating role of Schadenfreude

To test the hypotheses, a latent variable model was specified in which the independent variable (justice vs. neutral) predicted participants' feelings of schadenfreude against the government. Schadenfreude in turn predicted participants' legitimization of the hackers' actions. Covariates in the model were British identification, gender, age, and political orientation. Data were analyzed using R and the lavaan package (Rosseel, 2012) using robust standard errors. The model is summarized in Figure 4.1. Table 4.1 presents means and standard deviations for the variables -as well as zero-order correlations.

The model fit the data adequately, χ^2 (123, N = 139) = 230.278 robust, $p < .001$, Comparative Fit Index (CFI) = .93, Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) = .08, Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) = .07. Individuals who read the article about corruption were more likely to feel schadenfreude in response to the hackers' attack, β = .49, *SE* = .23, $p < .001$. As predicted, more schadenfreude was linked to stronger legitimization of hackers' actions, β = .79, *SE* = .06, $p < .001$. The indirect effect of condition on individuals' legitimization of hackers through perceived schadenfreude against the government was significant, β = .39, *SE* = .18, $p < .001$, 95%), CI [-1.34, -0.63].

In summary, controlling for political orientation and national identification, participants felt more schadenfreude in reaction to a hackers' attack when this followed an episode of corruption. In line with the social banditry framework, perceived schadenfreude was in turn linked to a stronger legitimization of the hackers' actions. In the next study, I aimed to replicate these findings, as well as examining the role of individuals' perceived political efficacy in relation to schadenfreude.

Figure 4.1 – Structural Equation Model with latent variables testing the Indirect effect of the Experimental Manipulation on Individuals' Perceived Legitimacy of Hackers via Schadenfreude



Notes: *** <.001; Gender, Age, Political Orientation, and National Identity are covariates in the model

4.5. Study 2

Study 2 attempted to replicate the findings reported in Study 1. The design of the study was similar to Study 1 and participants were once again recruited through the Prolific Academic platform, however there were some important differences outlined below. In Study 2 participants were recruited through the Prolific Academic platform and the scenario of injustice was adapted to this context. Compared to study 1 there were some important changes relative to the manipulation text (full verbatim transcriptions of the two versions of the article are available in the relevant Supplementary section). For this study, across conditions, the articles were formatted as published on the news agency website 'Reuters'. Reuters was chosen because as a news agency it has the reputation of being a neutral source of information. The previously used 'Guardian' on the other hand, is known to have a left-winged readership and this could have potentially impacted individuals' perceptions of the article. Additionally, in the injustice condition, participants were not presented with (bogus) photos and names of the four implicated MPs. Similarly, in the neutral condition there were no direct references to (fake) names of authorities and people involved. By avoiding bogus names and photos the aim was to increase the credibility of the article.

More importantly, study 2 consisted of two phases. To avoid common method variance, political efficacy (and national identification) was measured a week in advance of the manipulation. In the second phase participants were presented with the manipulation and measures of the DVs.

4.5.1. Method

Participants and design

Two hundred and fifty British participants were invited to take part in a study on 'social and political issues' via Qualtrics on the platform Prolific Academic. This number of participants was sampled in view of a likely drop-out rate in participants after a week. Participants were informed that this was a two-part study. Specifically, participants were told that they would be asked to respond to some items in part 1, and then be re-invited after a week to complete the rest of the study. In part 1, participants completed measures of internal and external political efficacy, and national identification (assessed with the same items as study 1). Two hundred and seven participants also completed the second part of the study which included the main manipulation and the dependent variables. This was particularly valuable because it allowed to make some causal inferences relative to the relationship between efficacy and legitimization of bandits.

Of that two-hundred and seven participants (106 males, 101 female) that completed both parts of the study (M_{age} = 37.32, *SD* = 12.95), the majority self-described as white (93.7%), followed by Black (2.4%) and Asian (2.4%). The remaining participants self-described as other or mixed ethnicity. As for the previous study participants were compensated for their time (£ 0.50).

Materials and procedure

In part 1, participants completed measures of external political efficacy and national identification (assessed with the same items as study 1). Internal political efficacy was also included in this study for exploratory purposes (details about these measures are reported in the supplementary materials of this chapter; see Supplementary 4.A.).

External political efficacy. Political external efficacy was measured with three items (*1= strongly disagree, 7= strongly agree*). Two of the items focusing on the willingness of the British Government to take citizens' demands into account ("Public officials in the UK do not care much about what people like me think" and "The British government does not pay attention to what the people think when it decides what to do), the third focusing more on the actual ability of the Government to deliver results ("The current British political system responds to public opinion effectively"), (de Moor, 2015). The scale had a good reliability (α = .81).

In the second part of the study, conducted one week after the first one, the procedure was similar to Study 1, except for the differences outlined below. As for study 1, participants were asked to read a journal article. However, to increase the credibility of the article describing the 'cash for influence scandal' this time (bogus) photos and names of the four MPs implicated in the scandal were not displayed.

The article, instead, simply referred to four MPs from both the Conservative and the Labour party involved in the scandal and the images of the MPs were substituted with a picture of Westminster. Subsequently, as for study 1, participants were then informed that a hacking attack had taken place targeting computers of various British government officials. This time, participants read a slightly different message: "Immediately following the press release of the article above, a group of British hackers hacked into the computers of various British government officials, apparently succeeding in stealing sensitive files and officials' personal information. The hackers' actions have caused a lot of public damage to the officials involved and to the government as a whole." This message was different to the previous one as it enhanced the immediacy of the hacking attack (the message reported: "Immediately following the press release..." instead of: "Sometime after the release"). The intent was to strengthen the connection between the episode of political corruption and the hacking attack.

Finally, as in study 1, participants completed the dependent variables of ‘feelings of schadenfreude against the Government’ and Legitimization of Hacker’s action. They were then asked how clear they found the study (1 = *Extremely unclear*, 7 = *extremely clear*) and if they had any comments they would like to share with the researcher (using a textual box).

Finally, in this study schadenfreude was measured with four items instead of five. Compared to van Dijk et al. (2006) the item: “I feel schadenfreude” was omitted, as the term *schadenfreude* is less common in English - in the previous study several participants commented that they did not know what schadenfreude meant and had had to look it up.

4.5.2. Results

Descriptive statistics and Zero-order Correlations

Table 4.2. reports the means, standard deviations of each variable as well as the correlation amongst them.

Measures	M	SD	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Condition (Neut/Corrupt)	_	_	.41***	.31***	-.05	-.07	.10	-.03	-.04	.02
2. Schadenfreude	3.27	1.64		.70***	.01	-.26***	-.05	-.06	-.17*	-.15*
3. Legitimacy of Hackers	3.26	1.21			-.01	-.20**	-.17*	-.16*	-.14*	-.16*
4. Int. political Efficacy	5.14	1.22				-.06	-.17*	-.06	-.30***	.20**
5. Ext. political Efficacy	2.63	1.13					.06	.03	.17*	-.06
6. National Identification	5.19	1.28						.34***	.03	.07
7. Political Orientation	3.59	1.32							-.04	.12
8. Gender	_	_								.01
9. Age	37.32	12.95								

Notes: Gender 1(male), 2(female); * < .05, ** < .01, *** <.001. Condition: 1: Neutral, 2: Corruption

Analysis of Covariance

The effects of ‘condition’ on ‘feelings of schadenfreude’ towards the Government were examined. I hypothesized that participants assigned to the ‘corruption’ condition would have stronger feelings of schadenfreude compared to participants assigned to the neutral condition.

To examine the effects of condition on feelings of schadenfreude, I also controlled for British identification, gender, age, and political orientation. Results indicated that the manipulation significantly affected participants' feelings of schadenfreude F (1, 202) = 42.66, $p < .001$, η_p^2=.17. As expected, participants experienced higher feelings of schadenfreude in the corruption (M = 3.96, SD = 1.54) compared to the neutral (M = 2.61, SD = 1.45) condition.

The mediating role of Schadenfreude

To test the hypotheses, I specified a latent variable model in which external political efficacy (measured one week prior) and Scenario (justice vs. neutral) predicted participants' feelings of schadenfreude against the government. Schadenfreude in turn predicted participants' legitimization of the hackers' actions. Covariates in the model were British identification, gender, age, and political orientation. Data were analyzed using R and the lavaan package (Rosseel, 2012) using robust standard errors. The model is summarized in Figure 4.1. Table 4.1 presents means and standard deviations for the variables, and zero-order correlations.

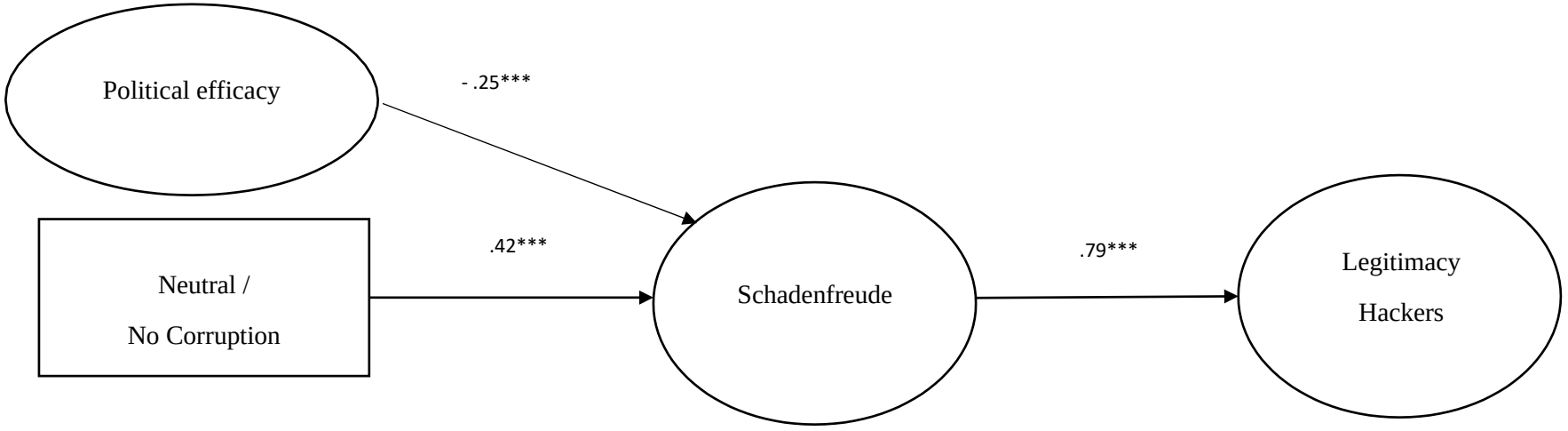
The model fit the data adequately, χ^2 (208, N = 207) = 3184.105, $p < .001$, Comparative Fit Index (CFI) = 0.92, Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) = .07, Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) = .06. Individuals who read the article about corruption were more likely to feel schadenfreude in response to the hackers' attack, β = .42, SE = .20, $p < .001$. Furthermore, schadenfreude was also predicted by external efficacy measured one week before β = - .25, SE = .09, $p < .001$. As predicted, more schadenfreude was linked to stronger legitimization of hackers' actions, β = .79, SE = .05, $p < .001$. The indirect effects of condition β = .33, SE = .14, $p < .001$, 95%, CI [-1.1, - 0.52] and political efficacy β = .19, SE = .05, $p < .001$, 95%, CI [.012, 0.33] on individuals' legitimization of hackers

through perceived schadenfreude, were significant.

In summary, controlling for political orientation and national identification, participants felt more schadenfreude in reaction to a hacking attack when this followed an episode of corruption. In line with the social banditry framework (Travaglino, 2017), perceived schadenfreude was in turn linked to a stronger legitimization of the hackers' actions. Expanding on past studies (Heering et al., 2020), in study 2 perceived external efficacy was found to predict feelings of schadenfreude. This result is particularly valuable because, whereas in the past studies the relationship between perceived external efficacy and legitimization of hackers had been established via direct manipulation of perceived external efficacy, this time the relationship was established by measuring efficacy a week prior to the DV and with no clear link to the manipulation.

This moreover eliminates the possibility that the measure of perceived external efficacy was in any way affected by the manipulation of justice, an important question that was addressed in previous studies (Studies 3 and 4, chapter 3) that arises because responsiveness and perceived fairness of the system are closely related constructs (Cichocka & Jost, 2014).

Figure 4.2 – Structural Equation Model with latent variables testing the Indirect effect of the Experimental Manipulation and External Political efficacy on Individuals' Perceived Legitimacy of Hackers via Schadenfreude



Notes: *** <.001; Gender, Age, Political Orientation, and National Identity are covariates in the model

4.6. Discussion

Through two studies I have consolidated previous findings in the context of the social banditry framework and showed new and consistent patterns. In study 2 the pre-measure of perceived external efficacy significantly predicted feelings of schadenfreude in the second part of the study. This consolidates and further extends previous findings demonstrating how low manipulated external efficacy predicted the emotional reaction of anger (Heering et al., 2020; Travaglino, 2017).

Furthermore, these two studies consistently show how feelings of schadenfreude mediate the relationship between perceived unfairness of the political system and the legitimization of a hacker attack directed against that same political system. Perceptions of an unfair authority and feelings of schadenfreude have often been associated with the desire to make up for an injustice, almost like a universal karma that repairs for an occurring social injustice (Feather & Sherman, 2002; van Dijk, et al., 2006). Neurological evidence also supports the idea that people derive pleasure by witnessing a defector being punished (De Quervain et al., 2004; Fehr & Gachter, 2002). The hypothesis is here advanced that the pleasure that people experience while witnessing the misfortune of an undeserving authority is what partially explains support for actors that are causing the misfortune.

4.6.1. Limitations and Future Directions

Through two experiments research from this chapter demonstrates how a political scenario of corruption affects support for social bandits; however, there are some limitations

concerning the interpretation of results which should be addressed. One limitation is that I did not ask participants whether they had previous experience with situations or events such as those described in our manipulation (i.e., having had prior experience of corrupt political authorities) which may have had an impact on the participant's expressions of vicarious dissent, – controlling for these variables would have been useful in mitigating this potential for bias.

Another limitation (that leaves room for exploration in future studies) was that the design was relatively simple and the focus on a small set of different variables. For example, I manipulated the perceived fairness of the political authority in order to establish whether describing one as corrupt would elicit support for hackers. In the scenarios provided, the MPs were clearly motivated by personal gain, violating rules contingent to their public roles in exchange for money or power. This was therefore an extreme, unambiguous case of corruption made particularly salient by selfishness and materialistic motives. Future research might, then, manipulate the explicit motivations and 'degrees' of corruption in order to understand under which circumstances 'bandits' will garner support or opposition.

Another aspect worth exploring is related to the contingent and dynamic nature of identification. In their political solidarity model, Subašić et al. (2008) explain that there are instances in which a silent majority, when perceiving an authority as illegitimate, ceases to support said established authority and sides with a challenging minority instead. As a result, the 'silent majority' dis-identifies with the official authority and supports the opposing minority instead. Subašić's model alerts us to the possibility, then, that the participants in our present studies could potentially have legitimized the hacking because they identified more with the hackers than with the official authority.

Alternatively, in line with the contingent and dynamic nature of identification, Social Identity Theory suggests that the behaviour of a disadvantaged group in response to status differences is independently predicted by three structural aspects of the inter-group context,

namely the permeability of group boundaries, the stability of status differentials, and the legitimacy of status differentials (Ellemers, 1993; Ellemers et al., 1990; Kelly & Breinlinger, 1996; Wright et al., 1990). Specifically, the perceived lack of permeability of group boundaries, and the stability and illegitimacy of the status differential all positively predict engagement in social competition and collective action (Ellemers, 1993; Ellemers et al., 1997; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). This alerts us to the possibility that, in our current studies, the perceived illegitimacy of the status differentials between politicians and participants, status that may also be perceived as stable and unchangeable (it is unlikely that individuals could affect, or have access to the politicians' higher status group) may encourage the disadvantaged group of participants to support disruptive collective action against the advantaged group.

Unfortunately, in the current research it is not possible to test for these hypotheses. In both of the present studies, British identification (measured before the manipulation) was negatively correlated with the legitimization of hackers. However, the question of whether British identification corresponds to some degree to identification with the political authority (the MPs) is unclear and in need of further exploration. Future studies should therefore examine the role that social identity and self-categorization processes have in individuals' legitimization of social banditry (cf. Abrams et al., 2020).

As previously mentioned, the design was fairly simple and the studies focused on a small set of different variables, mainly: system injustice, schadenfreude, legitimization of hackers and political efficacy. As much as this made our model quite clear, it also means that there is a fair number of different variables that could have played a role and that were not considered. Literature on schadenfreude suggests that measures of pain of inferiority, resentment and empathy may all play a role in the relationship between unjust systems, schadenfreude and legitimization of vicarious dissent (Feather 2008; Feather & Nairn 2005; Feather & Sherman 2002; Leach & Spears, 2008). People who feel the pain of inferiority about

their own comparatively lower outcomes may experience more resentment at the success of another person, which then leads to stronger feelings of pleasure or schadenfreude when the latter suffers failure (Leach & Spears, 2008). Empathy on the other hand may weaken the relationship between unjust systems and schadenfreude.

Finally, because I focused on the social and emotional regulatory function of schadenfreude, it would be valuable to compare measures of anger and perceived injustice before and after having experienced schadenfreude. If schadenfreude does have a social and emotional regulatory function, I would expect individuals to express less anger and to perceive the same situation as less unfair once they have experienced schadenfreude. This could mean that prior exposure to schadenfreude at the misfortune of an illegitimate authority could reduce support for later opportunities where vicarious dissent is possible, as individuals will have already expended some of their anger and frustration. If this were demonstrated, it could have important implications in political and organizational contexts. For example, faulty authorities could decide to willfully undergo a 'reasonable' public humiliation with a longer-term view to mitigate levels of public anger in the future.

4.7. Conclusions

Previous research has suggested that schadenfreude is an emotion related to a sense of social justice. Individuals tend to experience this malicious pleasure when they: dislike the person who is "falling from grace"; envy the person and, most importantly, think the person experiencing the misfortune is undeserving of their status on the ladder of achievement (Feather, 2006, 2008; Feather & Sherman, 2002; Feather, et al., 2013; Hareli & Weiner, 2002;

Lange, et al., 2018; Leach et al, 2003; Singer et al, 2006; R. H. Smith et al., 1996, 2009; van Dijk et al., 2005; van Dijk, et al., 2006). This feeling of malicious pleasure can be particularly pronounced when we are faced with the misdemeanors of the so called 'Tall poppies' individuals that benefit from high status and high-power positions (Feather et al., 2011; Feather, 2012). These two studies investigate for the first time the relationship between schadenfreude experienced at the misfortune of 'the authorities' that 'fall from grace', andthe legitimization of hackers and their attack against the undeserving high-status figures as an example of vicarious dissent.

I propose here a new social-emotional regulatory function of schadenfreude. Drawing from research describing the social function of schadenfreude as dominance regulator (Lange & Boeker, 2018) and from research linking schadenfreude to deservingness and perceived justice (Feather, 1994, 1999; Feather, et al., 2013; Leach & Spears, 2008), I suggest that in the context of perceived injustice schadenfreude might have a personal cathartic function that explains why individuals support retaliation against and punishment of illegitimate authorities. This cathartic function derives from the personal satisfaction of witnessing an entity (individual or group) that has an undeservingly higher status, experiencing a fall. This feeling of personal satisfaction is itself motivated by a sense of restored justice where the entity that undeservingly holds a higher status is undermined and its left exposed.

In this sense schadenfreude could explain the support for dangerous actors like hackers who attack unjust official authorities. Hackers often justify their attacks as motivated by a desire to repair social injustices and restore a rightful social order (Wong & Brown, 2013). Taking this into account and following previous reasoning on schadenfreude I believe feelings of schadenfreude at an unjust system and the legitimization of hackers that supposedly target that faulty system to be highly connected.

CHAPTER 5

5.1. Introduction

In chapter 2, I examined individuals' legitimization of hackers that attacked an institutional authority. Across two experiments, evidence showed that legitimization of hackers was stronger when the authority was described as corrupt (compared to when it is not). The studies also showed that national group membership played a role in the hackers' perceived legitimacy, with participants legitimizing hackers and their actions more so when they harmed their National government compared to when they harmed a foreign one.

Furthermore, counter-productivity of the hacking action was found to mediate the relationship between the system that was perceived as unjust and legitimization of hackers.

In chapter 3, I examined support for hackers attacking an institutional authority that, after a scenario of injustice, proved to be highly or scarcely responsive to the demands of a disadvantaged group. Across two experiments, results showed that when the institution was perceived as scarcely responsive, participants legitimized the hackers more compared to the highly responsive scenario. Furthermore, results showed the relationship to be mediated by stronger perceived anger.

In chapter 4, I examined support for hackers that attack an official authority when the

authority is described as corrupt (compared to when it is not) however this time I focused on the role played by schadenfreude, an emotional response defined as 'the pleasure at another's misfortune'. Across two experiments evidence showed that legitimization of hackers was stronger when the authority was described as corrupt, and that this relationship was mediated by stronger feelings of schadenfreude. Furthermore, perceived political efficacy measured one week prior to the experiment negatively predicted schadenfreude, with participants experiencing more schadenfreude when they believed the authority to be scarcely efficient.

In this final experiment I explore the interactive effects of anger and identification with the disadvantaged group on schadenfreude at the expenses of an authority that is perceived as having low efficacy. I then test the role of schadenfreude in predicting legitimization of vicarious dissent.

5.2. Literature Review

5.2.1. Legitimization of vicarious dissent

Social psychological models of collective action have mostly focused on studying direct forms of protest. Grievances, efficacy, identity and emotions are described as causes of direct participation in protest or collective action. Scholars also widely agree on the circumstances under which individuals are less likely to participate in institutional forms of protest. When people perceive that the chances they have to improve their situation are low, then normative political participation will be unappealing and they will either refrain from protesting tout court or adopt more extreme forms of protest (the 'Nothing to lose hypothesis'; Scheepers et al., 2006).

However, the social banditry framework (henceforward SBF) argues that protest can also

be expressed indirectly or vicariously (Heering et al., 2020; Travaglino, 2017). When expectations of effectiveness are impaired, individuals can decide to plead their own cause vicariously. They may for example support actors that challenge the status quo, disputing core interpretations of our society, and disrupting (both legally and illegally) the functioning of said society (Travaglino, 2017). Support for these actors can serve individuals to manifest and express their anger at an injustice. A feeling that justice is being restored and the pleasure derived from the status quo being under attack (experience of schadenfreude) have also proven to be predictive of support for these groups (Studies 4 and 5 Chapter 4).

These "external" actors generally operate outside the official realm of politics and are as such regarded as criminals by the state. Throughout this thesis I have focused on modern examples of these actors: hackers. The term hacker often refers to individuals with technical skills, used to gain unauthorized access to systems or networks. Hackers may, for example, damage, deface or bring down systems and steal or leak information; however, they often describe their attacks as motivated by a desire for social justice, for freedom of information and a right for privacy (Coleman, 2011; Nissenbaum, 2004). The SBF considers support for these groups as a non-normative manifestation of inchoate anger and desire for justice when individuals feel that their dissent towards the system cannot be expressed directly (Travaglino, 2017). In this chapter I present an exploratory study which considers the simultaneous roles that collective identity, anger and schadenfreude have on the legitimization of vicarious dissent.

5.2.2. Anger and Schadenfreude in collective action

As discussed extensively in previous chapters, anger has been identified as the core emotion involved in protest action (Tausch et al., 2011; van Stekelenburg & Klandermans, 2007; van Zomeren et al., 2004). Compared to other emotions that we might experience while facing authorities (i.e., fear and shame) anger is an activating emotion that motivates people to

engage in promotion-focused actions, actions that aim at changing the situation rather than actions aimed at avoiding confrontation (prevention focused actions; Tyler & van der Toorn, 2013). The dual-pathway model of political protest considers anger together with injustice appraisal as one of the two pathways that lead to participation in protest. Similarly, the SIMCA (van Zomeren et al., 2008) and the "dynamic dual pathway model of approach coping with collective disadvantage" (van Zomeren et al., 2012) describe group-based anger as one of the main causes of collective action.

Attempts have been made to test to what extent feelings of anger provide a unique motivating process in protest participation. For example, throughout two studies Stürmer and Simon (2009) found that anger about a collective injustice was indeed a positive predictor of willingness to participate in protest activities, but only when these activities were suited to reduce the individual's negative emotional state (hostile protest). Anger did not predict participants' willingness to engage in more task-oriented protest activities (instrumental protest). The authors thereby suggested that the unique effect of group-based anger on willingness to protest is based on a desire to reduce negative tensions.

In a similar vein, the studies described in chapter 3 showed that anger mediated the relationship between perceived political efficacy and legitimization of dissent, with participants experiencing anger when they perceived the system to be poorly responsive to their requests and anger causing more support for disruptive forms of protest. Support for these disruptive forms of protest was likely to play a role in reducing the individual's negative emotional state.

In the models and studies described, anger is always associated with feelings of injustice. Because anger elicited by injustice appraisals has proven to be a strong predictor of protest, several scholars have considered the role of resentment in predicting protest action. This is because resentment is a form of anger, central to which are feelings of injustice (Feather & Nairn, 2005; Feather & Sherman, 2002). Resentment is experienced when the perceived

injustice is reflected in another's undeserved positive outcome. Resentment is experienced privately however tends to be expressed publicly, because those who feel resentment aim to publicly sanction the injustice (R. H. Smith et al., 1994). Empirical studies have also shown that resentment caused by an undeserved positive outcome is predictive of schadenfreude (the pleasure at another's misfortune) experienced when the person benefitting from an undeserved positive outcome subsequently suffers a failure (Feather, 2008; Feather et al., 2011; Feather & Nairn, 2005; Feather & Sherman, 2002).

In this study I focused on the roles that anger (triggered by an injustice) and schadenfreude have in the legitimization of vicarious dissent and on the relationships between the two. Schadenfreude has often been linked to perceived injustice, envy, dislike and deservingness (Feather, 2005, 2008; Hareli & Weiner, 2002; Leach et al., 2003; Singer et al., 2006; Smith et al., 1996; van Dijk et al., 2006). Specifically, Feather and Sherman (2002) propose that individuals will feel schadenfreude when they perceive the other person's negative outcome to be deserved. In addition, there is evidence showing that in achievement contexts, when an individual is perceived as undeserving of their higher status, it is likely that anger and schadenfreude will be elicited in an external person (Feather et al., 2011). Since deservingness is a central justice-related variable and schadenfreude is strongly linked to deservingness and to anger, I examine the role that both schadenfreude and anger have in predicting legitimization of vicarious dissent when the authority is unjust.

5.2.3. In-group identification and Schadenfreude in collective action

Alongside a personal identity (the self-concept made by personal attributes) individuals also have a social identity. The social identity is defined by social category membership, i.e.,

the groups we belong to (Tajfel & Forgas, 2000; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). If a category or group membership becomes particularly salient, one's social identity might become temporarily more salient than one's personal identity. In these circumstances people will define themselves mostly in terms of what makes them similar to others (Turner et al., 1987). Furthermore, the degree to which they identify with a group determines how relevant the group is for their self-concept. The higher the identification the greater the relevance; the greater the relevance the stronger the feeling of care and commitment and the chances that the person identifying with the group will fight on behalf of it.

In fact, having a shared identity has been found to be an important factor in predicting support for and participation in protest and collective action. As members of a group or category individuals feel like they share a common fate with others which makes them feel somewhat close to them. This perceived closeness and sense of shared fate further suggest that individuals can count on the social support and solidarity of other in-group members. As a result, as a group, they become a much more efficacious social agent than they would be as separate individuals (Simon & Klandermans, 2001).

This enhanced sense of efficacy derived from being able to rely on social support and solidarity is one of the reasons why the more individuals identify with a group, the more likely they are to engage in collective action on behalf of the group (de Weerd & Klandermans, 1999; Kelly & Breinlinger, 1995b; Klandermans et al., 2002; Mummendey et al., 1999; O'Brien & Major, 2005; Simon et al., 1998; Simon & Klandermans, 2001; Stürmer & Simon, 2004; Stryker et al., 2000; Reicher, 1984; van Zomeren et al., 2008).This process explains why research on social identity has tended to emphasize individual's solidarity with in-groups (e.g., Ellemers, et al., 1999).

Recent studies have also found a link between group identification and schadenfreude. The more one identifies with the in-group, the stronger the feeling of schadenfreude at the

misfortune of an out-group member (Ouwerkerk et al., 2018). This link between schadenfreude and group identification has been explained by Feather (1999a, b) in his 'deservingness model'. The author argues that in-group/out-group relations determine our perceptions of deservingness and un-deservingness. In-groups' positive outcomes will generally be perceived as more deserved than outgroup positive outcomes, whereas in- groups' negative outcomes will be perceived as less deserved compared with outgroups' negative outcomes (Feather et al., 2013).

In view of the revised literature, I defined a context within this study where, following an injustice, the competent authority reacts either in a responsive or irresponsive manner to the requests of the aggrieved group. In this context I explored the relationship between anger, identification with the aggrieved group, schadenfreude and legitimization of hackers. In line with the literature linking group identification and schadenfreude I expected individuals who highly identified with the disadvantaged group to feel more schadenfreude towards the irresponsive authority. I also expected anger to positively predict schadenfreude and schadenfreude in turn to predict legitimization of hackers (as was found in studies 5 and 6).

Finally, I tested the interaction effect of anger and identification on legitimization of hackers through feelings of schadenfreude. In line with literature on social identity theory (Ellemers, 1993; Tajfel, 1978a; Turner & Brown, 1978) I expected the effect of anger to be stronger for highly identified people. People who identify strongly with a group are more invested in it and will, as a result, feel more aggrieved when the group is the object of unjust disadvantage (Abrams & Grant 2012; Kawakami & Dion, 1995).

5.3. Overview of the present study

Experiment 7 is an exploratory study. In this study I examined how anger and identification with the disadvantaged group affects the legitimization of hackers' actions when targeting an irresponsive authority. Specifically, the study showed an interactive effect of identification and anger on feelings of schadenfreude at the authority's misfortune. Furthermore, in line with our previous studies (studies 5 and 6 Chapter 4) the study showed how schadenfreude at the authority's misfortune subsequently predicts the legitimization of the hackers' actions.

5.3.1. Method

Participants

Three-hundred and seven British participants (151 females, 155 males, 1 other) took part in this study. The mean age was 39.69 (*SD* =12.95). The majority of the participants were White English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish (91.9%). The remaining participants were Asian/Asian British (3.6%), from Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups (1.6%), Black/African/Caribbean/Black British (1%), White Irish (1%) or from other ethnic groups (1%). Participants were recruited using the Prolific Academic platform and were compensated for their participation.

Design

The study had a 2 (External Efficacy: high vs low External Efficacy) x 2 (Identity:

collective Identity vs neutral) between-subjects experimental design. Participants were randomly assigned to one of the 4 conditions. For the External efficacy condition, participants were randomly assigned to one of two scenarios where the team of Prolific Support was either described as highly or poorly responsive to Prolific subscribers' requests. For the Identity manipulation, participants were randomly assigned to either read a scenario meant to enhance a feeling of collective identity, or alternatively they were asked to report information on a 'neutral' topic (weather). Further details of the conditions are in the section below.

Procedure, Materials and Measures

Participants were recruited using the Prolific Academic platform. They were asked to take part in a study titled 'Getting paid on Prolific'. After completing the measures, they were debriefed in writing, thanked, and compensated for their time.

Participants were first presented with the informed consent and asked to indicate their agreement with it. Then they were presented with some socio-demographic questions assessing gender, age, educational level achieved, ethnicity and political orientation. Participants were then randomly assigned to one of the two conditions. The first part of the manipulation was the same for both conditions. A scenario was presented where someone taking a survey on Prolific got his submission apparently unjustly rejected:

> Think about a study you recently took part in, on the platform Prolific Academic. You carefully read the instructions and the participation criteria which clearly stated you were a suitable participant. Moreover, you were careful in answering the questions honestly and put a lot of thoughts in your answers.

> The day after completing the study you receive a notification that your submission was rejected. The reason provided was that you failed two out of three attention checks. You find this unfair because you really did not see any attention check despite putting a lot of attention in the study. `You also read a post on a forum in which many other people complain for being rejected from the same study for the same reason.
>
> Due to the fact that you really have put effort and time in the study, you first contact the researchers to ask them to reverse the rejection, but because you receive no answer you contact prolific support. In your email you provide a detailed explanation of why you think your submission should not have been rejected.

After this introductory cover story, the text changed depending on the condition.

Low External Efficacy Condition*:* an inquiry is made by the subscriber to the Prolific Support Team that does not seem willing to consider the subscriber's requests:

> In response to your complaint, Prolific Support does not agree to help you discuss the matter with the researcher or make enquiry on your behalf. They do not seem to take your complaint very seriously. They do not show any interest in investigating the matter and just tell you that there is no option to review the rejection-approval process.

High External Efficacy Condition*:* an inquiry is made by the subscriber to the Prolific Support Team that seems willing to consider and investigate further the subscriber's requests:

> In response to your complaint, Prolific Support agrees to mediate between you and the researcher. They assure you that they will take your complaint very seriously. They tell you they will investigate the matter and that there will be an option to revise the whole rejection-approval process if anomalies are to be found in the rejection criteria used by this specific researcher.

The scenario of unjust rejection and the following manipulation of external efficacy were identical to the ones used in study 4, chapter 4.

Manipulation check. To examine whether the scenario successfully affected individuals' feelings of external efficacy, participants were asked immediately after the manipulation to indicate how much they agreed with the two items: "The Prolific Support Team responds effectively to people who take part in the studies" and "Researchers who recruit participants on Prolific Academic respond to participants' requests effectively".

Answers were on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*). Items were adapted from De Moor et al. (2016).

Perceived fairness. Participants were also asked to rate the perceived fairness of the system, by answering 4 items on a 7-point Likert scale (from strongly disagree to strongly agree); examples of items are: "The way in which this submission was rejected was unfair and "All participants have a fair shot at getting paid for their contribution on Prolific Academic" ($\alpha = .72$).

Anger towards the system. Three items were used to measure participants' anger towards the system: "The response of the Prolific Support team angers me", "I am furious about the way in which Prolific handled my complaint" and "When I think about Prolific's support system I feel outraged" on a 7-point Likert scale ($\alpha = .89$).

Having expressed their attitudes towards the system, participants were presented with a hacking scenario. The scenario described a group of hackers attacking the Support website and leaving on the home page the following message: "LEARN TO DO YOUR JOB". In addition, participants were informed that the hackers' actions had made the website inaccessible for three days.

Participants were then again randomly assigned to one out of two conditions: collective identity condition vs neutral condition.

Collective identity manipulation. Participants were asked to write down possible ways in which they, together with other unsatisfied Prolific Academic participants, could join efforts to modify the undesired outcome. In the neutral condition, identification was not manipulated, and participants were asked to write a few sentences indicating whether April was a good month to visit their country and why. This latter scenario was meant to be as emotionally and ideologically neutral as possible. (Verbatim transcriptions of the manipulations are presented in the supplementary materials for this chapter; see Supplementary 5.B.).

Schadenfreude against the Prolific Organization. To measure schadenfreude, participants answered five items (van Dijk et al., 2006). Participants read the prompt "When I think about what the hacking attack means for the Prolific Organization…", and then "I cannot resist a little smile", "This gives me satisfaction", "I feel pleasure", "I actually have to laugh a little" and "I feel schadenfreude" (1 = *strongly disagree,* 7 = *strongly agree;* $\alpha = .92$). The item 'I feel schadenfreude' was followed by a footnote specifying the definition of schadenfreude: * "a feeling of pleasure at the bad things that happen to other people".

Legitimization of Hackers' actions. Participants were asked to respond to six items in relation to the hackers' attack they had just read about. Items were: "The purpose of the hackers' actions was legitimate", "The hackers' actions are a threat to democracy" (reversed), "the hackers' actions deserve respect", "the hackers' actions are criminal and should be condemned" (reversed), "the hackers' actions are a threat to personal security" (reversed), and "the hackers' actions deserve admiration" (1 = *strongly disagree,* 7 = *strongly agree;* $\alpha = .89$).

Solidarity with Prolific participants. Respondents were asked to indicate how much they agreed or disagreed with three sentences assessing commitment and solidarity with other Prolific Academic participants. Items were adapted from Leach et al. (2008). As for the other variables, answers were on a 7 - point Likert scale (1 = *strongly disagree,* 7 = *strongly agree;* $\alpha = .89$).

Experience with prolific Academic Support Team. Participants answered the single item: "Have you ever had negative experiences with the Prolific academic support Team?". Answers were yes or no. This measure was added to avoid a limitation common to the previous studies. Having experienced situations or events similar to those described in our manipulation might have affected how they perceived the situation. For example, chronic experiences with the system's unresponsiveness or unfairness may have a stronger impact on individuals' expressions of vicarious dissent, compared to transient experiences. Therefore, controlling for past experience might be relevant when examining legitimization of disruptive protest.

Additionally, measures that are not discussed in this chapter were included for further exploratory purposes, including internal political efficacy and measures of perceived warmth and efficacy of Prolific Support System (details about these measures are reported in the supplementary materials of this chapter; see Supplementary 5.B.).

5.4. Results and Discussion

Descriptive statistics and Zero-order Correlations

Means, standard deviations and inter-correlations are presented in table 5.1. As expected, inspection of this table reveals that anger was positively associated to schadenfreude (r = .37), whereas the relationship with solidarity was not significant. Furthermore, as in previous studies I conducted, anger (r = .25) and schadenfreude (r = .53) were both positively associated to perceived legitimization of hackers.

Manipulation check

To examine whether the manipulation affected participants' feelings of external efficacy independently of the perceived fairness of the system, two ANCOVAs were used. Results indicated that, controlling for perceived fairness, the manipulation significantly affected participants' external efficacy F (1, 304) = 53.93, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .15$. As expected, participants perceived stronger external efficacy in the high (M = 5.61, SD = .93) compared to the low (M = 4.06, SD = 1.73) efficacy condition. Conversely, participants' perception of fairness was not affected by the manipulation after controlling for external efficacy F (1,304) = .08, p = .72, η_p^2 = .001. The situation was perceived as equally unfair in the high (M = 3.47, SD = 1.16) vs. low condition (M = 2.82, SD = .75).

Manipulation check of collective politicized identity

I examined the effects of 'identity condition' on 'feelings of Solidarity' with Prolific Academic participants, to test whether the manipulation of collective identity did in fact have an effect in strengthening the perceived connection with other Prolific Academic participants. I hypothesized that participants assigned to the 'collective identity' condition would have stronger feelings of Solidarity compared to participants assigned to the neutral condition.

To examine the effects of condition on feelings of Solidarity gender, age, and political orientation were controlled for. Unfortunately results indicated that the manipulation was not successful, as there was no significant difference between the two groups in feelings of Solidarity F (1, 305) = .88, p = .35, η_p^2 =.003. Descriptive statistics for the two conditions were: M = 3.98, SD = 1.50 for the collective identity condition and M = 4.14, SD = 1.51 for the neutral condition. Results remained similar even when the covariates were not added to the model.

Effects of collective identity and perceived efficacy on the legitimization of Hackers

Subsequently, the effects of 'identity condition' and 'external efficacy' on 'legitimization of hackers' were examined. It was hypothesized that participants assigned to the 'low External Efficacy' condition would legitimize hackers and their actions more strongly compared to participants assigned to the high External Efficacy condition. Because the identity manipulation did not prove to be successful, no significant difference in legitimization of hackers between the two identity conditions was expected. Results showed that participants did legitimize hackers and their actions more strongly in the low External Efficacy condition (M = 2.83, SD = 1.12) compared to the high External Efficacy condition (M = 2.37, SD = 0.85),

F (1, 304) = 20.26, p < .001. As expected, no significant difference in the legitimization of hackers was found between the collective Identity and the neutral Identity condition F (1, 304) = 1. 00, p = .32.

Controlling for 'past negative experience with Prolific' did not significantly change the results. The covariate was not predictive of the dependent variable F (1, 302) = .47, p = .49 as was not the collective Identity condition F (1, 302) = 1.72, p = .190, (M = 2.73, SD = .95 for the neutral Identity condition and M = 2.96, SD = 1.32 for the collective Identity condition). The efficacy condition remained a positive predictor F (1, 302) = 17.59, p < .001 (M = 2.83, SD = 1.12 for the low Efficacy condition and M = 2.36, SD = .85 for the high Efficacy condition). However, only 3.65% of participants said they had had negative experiences with Prolific compared to 96.4% who said they did not. Therefore, it is not surprising that no effect of the latter variable was found.

Legitimization of hackers' actions

It was hypothesized that greater anger and stronger identification would lead to stronger feelings of schadenfreude. Schadenfreude, in turn, was expected to foster legitimization of hackers and their actions. Because the identity manipulation proved not to be effective, solidarity was used as a proxy for identification. Thus, the hypothesis was tested that the association between anger and schadenfreude was stronger for those who expressed more solidarity (more identification) with the in-group. The model also included a test of the relationship between anger, solidarity, their interaction term, and legitimization of hackers as mediated by feelings of schadenfreude. Analyses were run in R using the lavaan package (Rosseel, 2012).

The model fit was good χ^2 = (4, N = 307) = 12.16 robust, p = .016, CFI = .97,

SRMR =.033, RMSEA = .082. Results are summarized in Figure 5.1. The External Efficacy manipulation negatively predicted anger β = - .59, *SE* = .15, *p* < .001 but not schadenfreude, β = .001, *SE* = .16, *p* = .99. Schadenfreude was positively predicted by anger, β =. 40, *SE* = .06, *p* < .001 and unexpectedly, negatively by solidarity, β = - .13, *SE* =.04, *p* = .012 and by the interaction term of Anger X Solidarity β = - .18, *SE* = .07, *p* = .002. Finally, as expected, legitimization of hackers was positively predicted by schadenfreude β = .49, *SE* = .05, *p* < .001 but not by solidarity, β = - .06, *SE* = .03, *p* = .25. In line with our hypothesis, inspection of the indirect effects revealed that controlling for gender and age there was a significant (although small) indirect effect of the interaction term of Solidarity X Anger on individuals' legitimization of the hacker's action through schadenfreude β = - .09, *SE* = .01, *p* = .003, CI [- .061, - .013] (see Figure 5.1).

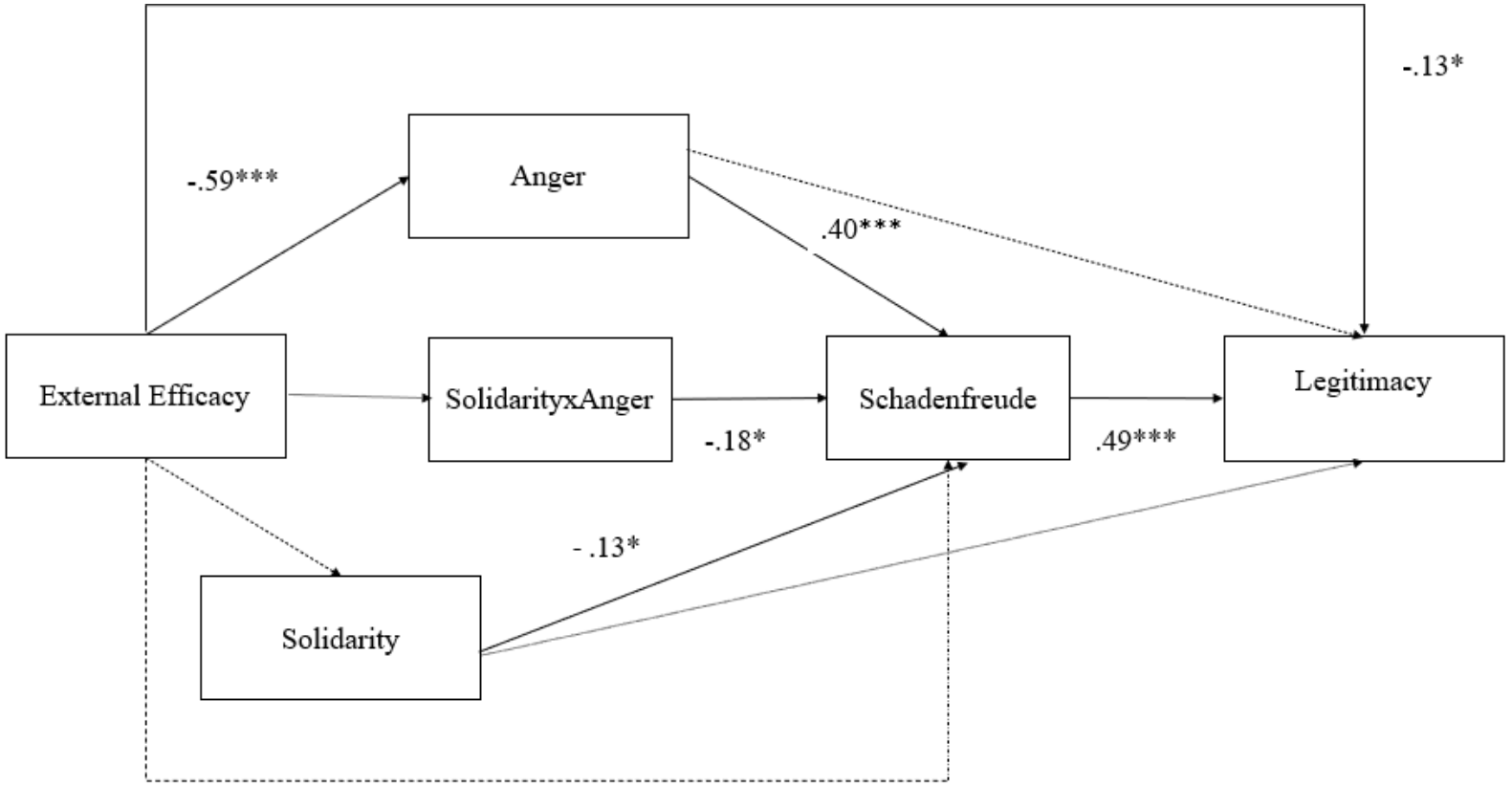
Decomposition of simple effects (Fig. 5.2) revealed that, amongst participants lower on solidarity (-1 *SD*), there was a strong positive link between schadenfreude at Prolific Academic's Support System and levels of anger, *b* = .53, *SE* = .24, β = .44, *t* (307) = 2.19, *p* = .03, 95% CI [0.53, .99] which halved amongst participants high on solidarity (+1 *SD*), *b* = .26, *SE* = 0.08, β = .22, *t* (307) = 3.13, *p* = .002, 95% CI [0.10, 0.43]. Put differently, amongst participants high on anger (+1 *SD*), there was a strong negative link between solidarity and schadenfreude at Prolific Academic's Support System, *b* = - 0.37, *SE* = 0.09, β = - .31, *t* (307) = - 4.13, *p* < .001, 95% CI [- 0.55, -0.12]. In contrast, among people low on anger (-1 *SD*), schadenfreude was not dependent on solidarity, *b* = 0.06, *SE* = 0.08, β = .05, *t* (307) = .64, *p* = .518, 95%, CI [- 0.55, -0.12].

Although this was an exploratory study and hypothesis on the interaction effect were only drafted, overall, results on the interaction effect were in the opposite direction as expected. It was expected that participants who felt higher solidarity with other Prolific Academic participants would have felt more anger at the unjust rejection and therefore more

schadenfreude and legitimization. The data, however, suggested the opposite: those who identified more strongly with the group of Prolific Academic participants were also those who felt less anger at the rejection.

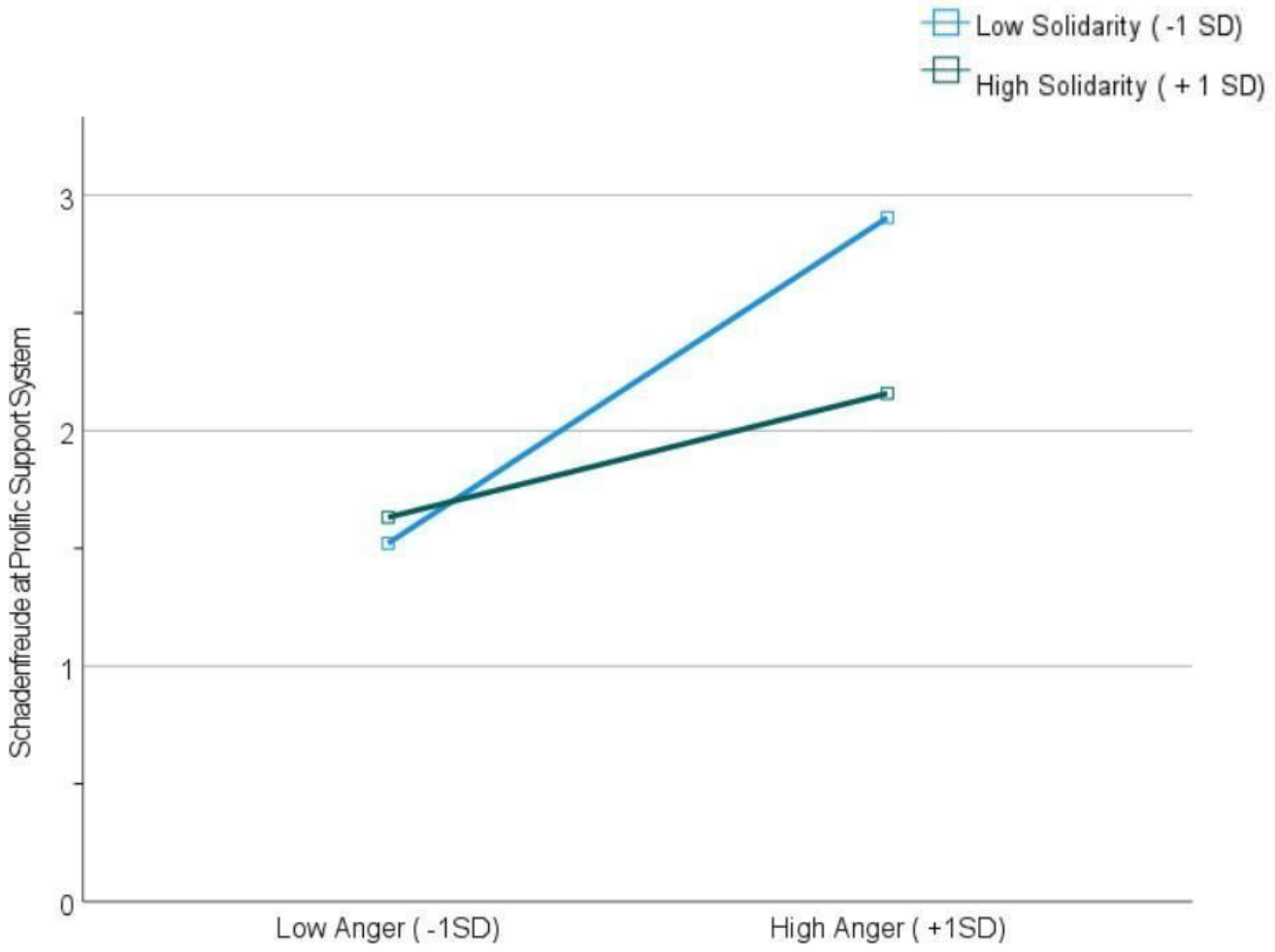
A plausible explanation of this effect is that, although the measure of solidarity was meant to capture solidarity with other Prolific Academic participants it might have instead assessed a broader solidarity with the Prolific Academic community. If this were the case, it would explain why individuals who identified the most would experience less schadenfreude at the expenses of the community they identify with. This hypothesis is further supported by schadenfreude being negatively predicted by solidarity. Unfortunately, in the current study, it is not possible to test for this hypothesis.

Figure 5.1 –Path Analysis with latent variables testing the indirect effects of Anger and Solidarity on Individuals' Perceived Legitimacy of Hackers via Schadenfreude controlling for age and gender.



Notes: * < .05, ** < .01, *** <.001. External efficacy condition 1 (low), 2 (high)

Figure 5.2. Feelings of schadenfreude at the expenses of Prolific Academic Support System as a function of solidarity and anger (7-point scale).



Note. Scores are estimated at −1 and +1 standard deviation of each standardised variable.

5.5. General Discussion

Hackers openly portray themselves as apart from the dominant culture and generally holding an 'oppositional ethos', i.e., as sharing a set of core values that defines and

distinguishes them from the dominant culture. Specifically, they often find themselves opposing companies and governments asking for a more open and transparent use of computer technology, including free availability of information, uncensored internet and protection of privacy. Because hackers are often apart if not in contrast with dominant culture, it is important to examine why they may be supported by others. In this study, I drew on the social banditry framework (Travaglino, 2017) as a theoretical basis for understanding individuals' reactions to hackers' actions. The study explores how low responsiveness of political and social systems to individuals' demands for fairer social arrangements, can lead to individuals' legitimizations of hackers' actions. Specifically, it considers the separate roles of anger, schadenfreude and collective identification. Results from previous studies and from literature in collective protest are replicated and new insights into the process of legitimization of social bandits are made.

Consistent with studies from previous chapters, low external efficacy was found to predict legitimization of hackers' actions (Studies 3 and 4, Chapter 3) and this relationship was mediated by feelings of schadenfreude (as in Study 6, Chapter 4). Furthermore, low external efficacy of the system predicted stronger anger against the system (as in Studies 3 and 4, Chapter 3). Anger, in turn, predicted schadenfreude which then predicted legitimization of vicarious dissent. Results about anger (a key emotion in predicting political protest) are in line with literature in political protest and political activism (Becker & Tausch, 2015; Tausch et al., 2011; van Zomeren et al., 2012; van Zomeren et al., 2008; van Zomeren et al., 2004). However, the present study extended previous results by showing that anger predicted schadenfreude, which then mediated the relationship between anger and legitimization of hackers. In the studies described in chapter 4 schadenfreude was also found to positively predict legitimization of social bandits. Because these were - to my knowledge - the first studies to investigate the role of schadenfreude in predicting vicarious dissent, testing the findings in the present study is of particular value as they give further validation to the previous results.

Additionally, by experimentally manipulating identification with the aggrieved group, the current study aimed to explore its role in the expression of vicarious dissent. Because however the manipulation was not successful, the measure of solidarity with the in-group was used as a proxy. In contrast to what expected, it was found that the stronger the feelings of solidarity, the weaker the feelings of schadenfreude and thus the lower the legitimization of hackers. A plausible explanation to this effect is that, the three items used to measure solidarity: “I feel solidarity with other Prolific Academic participants”, “I feel a bond with other Prolific Academic participants” and “I feel committed to other Prolific Academic participants” instead of measuring solidarity specifically with other Prolific Academic participants (as opposed to the Platform) might have instead assessed solidarity more broadly, as solidarity with the Prolific Academic community. If this were to be the case it would explain why individuals who expressed more solidarity experienced less schadenfreude at the expenses of the community, they identify with. Furthermore, solidarity measuring the bond with the Prolific community rather than just the bond with other participants would also explain the negative effect of the interaction term Anger x Solidarity on schadenfreude, with participants higher in Solidarity experiencing less anger and therefore less schadenfreude.

This explanation would be in line with both: literature on schadenfreude and literature on identification/solidarity. The former shows that in-groups’ negative outcomes will be perceived as less deserved compared with outgroups’ negative outcomes and that therefore schadenfreude is less likely to be experienced (Feather et al., 2013). As regards to solidarity, the literature argues that the higher the identification with a group the greater the relevance; and the greater the relevance the stronger the feeling of care and commitment towards said group (Simon & Klandermans, 2001; Turner et al., 1987).

By replicating findings from studies described in previous chapters and by testing new relationships, this study explores the mechanisms leading to support for vicarious dissent.

Common to previous studies (studies 3, 4 and 6) is a consistent pattern of results with political efficacy predicting emotional reactions like anger and schadenfreude which then predict individuals' support for vicarious expressions of dissent. Therefore, a model is specified where the emotional path (anger and schadenfreude) follows the instrumental path (i.e., efficacy). Interestingly, this appears to be in direct contrast with the dual-pathway model (Van Zomeren et al., 2004), which suggests that the instrumental and emotional path are distinct and independent paths to political engagement. However, the operationalization of political efficacy that was used throughout these studies - as efficacy in relation to the responsiveness of the system - is rather different from van Zomeren's – more closely related to the group's perceived ability to achieve social change. Thus, the difference between these two models could potentially be explained by the discrepancy in the operationalization of the predictor (see also Tausch et al., 2011; Travaglino, 2017; Travaglino & Moon, 2020). Future research should test both models using different operationalizations of efficacy, to provide a better understanding of the relationships between efficacy, emotions and dissent.

5.5.1. Limitations and Future Directions

In this chapter, I assessed by means of an exploratory study the roles that perceived external efficacy, anger and solidarity with the aggrieved group have in predicting support for social bandits and the mediating role of schadenfreude. Although this study solidifies some of our previous findings it is also explorative in nature and has several limitations that need to be considered while interpretating results.

Because the manipulation failed, measurement of solidarity was used as a proxy for group identification. Copious literature has included items tapping into solidarity (i.e., Ellemers, et al., 1999; Jackson, 2002; Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992), and considered solidarity as

one of the multiple components that define in-group identification (Leach et al., 2008). Furthermore, the operationalization of solidarity used in this study has previously proven to be associated with a sense of belonging, psychological relevance of the in-group, and coordination with other group members (Leach et al., 2008). For these reasons, solidarity can be argued to be a valid proxy for identification in the current study.

However, because solidarity was measured and not manipulated, this means that no causal inferences about the role of identification can be drawn from this study. Furthermore, results suggest that the measure of solidarity might have been interpreted differently than intended. Contrastingly to expectations solidarity was found to be negatively associated to anger and schadenfreude at the institution. It is plausible that individuals interpreted the measure of solidarity with other Prolific participants as a measure of solidarity with the Prolific community more in general and this would explain why higher solidarity was associated to lower anger and schadenfreude. Because, however, this hypothesis cannot be tested, it can only be regarded as a possible explanation.

Identification has often been proven to be a difficult concept to manipulate and it would seem to be of particular interest in the study of support and legitimization of social bandits, especially those that are notoriously ambiguous like hackers. For instance, in scenarios like the one described in this study several and conflicting are the social identities involved. While someone in this circumstance might strongly identify with the ‘minority’ of unfairly treated participants, they might be hesitant to identify with the Hackers and their illegal actions and more strongly identify with the Prolific system instead. Therefore, it would be of importance for future studies to assess how much individuals feel similar or identify with the different parts (i.e., the official system, the hackers, and the ‘minority’) and to more broadly examine the social identity and self-categorization processes involved in individuals’ support for banditry (cf. Abrams et al., 2020).

With regard to possible directions for future research, because a description of injustice seems to be a prerequisite to the manipulation of efficacy, it would be worthwhile to extend the present work by directly manipulating the perceived fairness of the system. The analyses of covariance showed that, in the current study, the effect of perceived external efficacy was independent from the effect of perceived injustice. However, to establish at what point the perceived injustice sets a boundary or threshold condition for the impact of external efficacy to occur, the perceived injustice would need to be manipulated too.

5.6. Conclusions

Several disciplines including social psychology have long investigated the reasons why individuals engage in political protest. So far, however, the literature on the topic has mostly focused on direct forms of normative and non/normative forms of political protest (e.g., Becker & Tausch, 2015; Tausch et al., 2011; study 3; van Zomeren et al., 2008). This approach overlooks all those forms of political protest that are not directly exerted by the person him/herself.

Together with the studies previously examined, the current study focuses on these forms of indirect or vicarious political protest, specifically on the legitimization of and support for Hackers and their actions. The social banditry framework (Hobsbawm, 2000; Travaglino, 2017) was used as a framework to understand how individuals might react to a system that they deem irresponsive to their requests.

In a similar vein to how Hobsbawm (1959) described peasants of pre-industrial societies, who supported local social bandits because they thought they had no other way to effectively express their grievances, the social banditry framework argues that in the present

day, individuals will back and legitimize actors like hackers and their actions in retaliation to an unsupportive system. This is supported by findings from the current and previously discussed studies, showing how anger and schadenfreude predict support for and legitimization of hackers that attack an institution that is poorly responsive to the requests of the people it serves. These results should not be underestimated because they effectively show that disruptive groups who challenge the status quo feed off the anger and resentment of those who feel powerless.

Table 5.1: Means and Standard Deviations (SD) for variables in Study.

Measures	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. Identity Cond.	-	-	-	.09	-.07	-.07	-.05	-.06	-.07	-.01	-.04	-.06	.03	-.03
2. Efficacy Cond.	-	-		-.	-21***	-.60***.	-23***	-.07	-.51***	-.08	-.11	.02	.02	.09
3. Schadenfreude	2.04	1.20			.	.37***	.53***	-.09	.20***	-.24***	-.24***	-.06	-.01	-.01
4. Anger	2.83	1.62					.25***	.08	.83***	-.17**	-.20**	-.02	.06	.06
5. Legitimacy	2.60	1.02						-.10	.13*	-.22***	-.12*	-.21***	.06	-.19*
6. Solidarity	4.07	1.50							.54***	.15**	.21***	.06	.11	.15**
7. Anger x Soli	1.00	40.11								-.06	-.05.	01	.02	.10
8. Competence	4.06	0.66									.73***	.11	-.06	.05
9. Warmth	3.95	0.73								.		.04	.01	-.01
10. Political Orientation	3.46	1.40									.		.06	.18**
11. Gender	-	-							.			.		.02
12. Age	39.69	12.95												

Notes: Gender 1(male), 2(female); * < .05, ** < .01, *** <.001. Identity condition 1(neutral), 2 (collective identity) External efficacy condition 1(low), 2 (high),

CHAPTER 6: GENERAL DISCUSSION

In this chapter I summarise the main findings from the seven studies presented in the previous empirical chapters. Work discussed in this thesis has been theoretically based on the newly developed social banditry framework (Travaglino, 2017) and has aimed to test and consolidate this framework as a useful theory in the study of alternative forms of political protest. Throughout this thesis seven studies have tested some of the conditions under which individuals support and legitimize disruptive groups who challenge the status quo, specifically focusing on support for hackers. The social banditry framework regards legitimization of these disruptive groups as a vicarious form of dissent and, in line with Hobsbawm's socio-historical perspective, defines them as social bandits. These groups are considered as 'bandits' because they act outside of the law. However, they have a social 'quality' that derives from the fact that their disruptive actions against the status quo are often regarded by the public as defending and protecting the rights and interests of the 'common people'. In this thesis, I focused on a modern instantiation of social banditry, i.e., hackers. As political actors, hackers are akin to Robin Hood. They resist the powers who threaten the freedom of the internet and they do so by disruptively (and often illegally) "taking" what has been interdicted/restricted (Wong & Brown., 2013).

Overall, throughout this thesis, results from the seven studies show that hackers (as modern social bandits) were evaluated more positively when their disruptive actions were directed at an official authority that was described as corrupt, compared to when there was no indication of failed procedural justice (Studies 1, 2, 5 and 6). When the authority was described as corrupt the action of hackers was perceived as less counter-productive, which led to an increased support for the action itself (Studies 1 and 2). Participants also displayed

a tendency to legitimize the hackers more when they were attacking an authority that was described as part of the in-group (same national identity) as opposed to an authority that was described as part of an out-group (different national identity) (Studies 1 and 2).

Similarly, results showed that hackers were evaluated more positively when their disruptive actions were directed at an institution described as poorly responsive to peoples' needs (low in efficacy). Perceiving the institution as poorly responsive (low external efficacy) elicited anger and schadenfreude, which then led to increased support for hackers (Studies 3, 4 and 7). Additionally, throughout the three studies schadenfreude (measured as pleasure at the institution's misfortune) was a strong positive predictor of legitimization of vicarious dissent. Finally, there was an interaction effect of identification with the group and anger on legitimization of hackers, whereby individuals who identified more strongly expressed less anger and schadenfreude and consequently less support for hackers (Study 7). In this chapter I discuss the main results and their theoretical and practical implications, as well as their limitations. Finally, I suggest some future directions for research.

6.1. Theoretical background

Research from this thesis stems from the social banditry framework (Travaglino, 2017; Hobsbawm, 2000) and as such it is based on two main theoretical backgrounds: research on political protest and socio-historical research on banditry, specifically Hobsbawm's conceptualization of social bandits. The social banditry framework has linked these two areas of research, suggesting that support for disruptive actors who challenge the status quo illegally or by using means that are on the verge of legality can be accounted of as

being a vicariously expressed form of protest.

As discussed in the introduction, there is vast agreement in the field of social psychology that perceptions of injustice, efficacy, identification and injustice-fueled anger are to be considered as key predictors of political protest and collective action (Abrams et al., 2020; Becker & Tausch, 2015; J. Drury & Reicher, 2009; Jost et al., 2017; Mummendey et al.,1999; Stürmer, & Simon 2004a; van Zomeren, et al., 2012; van Zomeren, et al., 2008). Perceiving a situation as unjust and the grievance that derives from it has often been considered as the necessary condition for individuals to engage in protest action. Perceiving a situation as unjust is likely to trigger anger, which then promotes action (Becker & Tausch, 2015; Jost et al., 2012; Tausch et al., 2011; van Zomeren et al., 2012; van Zomeren et al., 2004). However, feeling aggrieved may not be enough to lead individuals to take action. Believing that their actions will have some impact on the current disadvantage, a sense of efficacy, is another crucial determinant of protest action. Individuals are much more likely to engage in protest if they believe that through their actions, they will be able to bring about change (i.e., Hornsey et al., 2006; Kelly & Breinlinger, 1996; Mummendey et al., 1999; Van Zomeren et al 2012; Van Zomeren et al., 2008; Van Zomeren et al., 2004).

Finally, research and models of political protest have emphasized the importance of identifying with the group that is at a disadvantage. Social identity empowers a sense of efficacy because individuals feel stronger when they belong to a group (J. Drury & Reichner, 2005; Mummendey et al., 1999; van Zomeren et al., 2004). Furthermore, the more one identifies with a group the more one will care for it and thus feel angry and frustrated when it is subject to unjust disadvantage (Abrams & Grant 2012; Kawakami & Dion, 1995).

However, these predictors of political protest have mainly been tested for those forms of protest that are direct and confrontational. In fact, while studying political protest, social psychology has almost exclusively focused on those forms of protest that are confrontational

and out-group-directed, like taking part in direct protest. Inaction has been widely assimilated to acceptance of subordination. Only recently have researchers started to consider alternative forms of protest which fall in between the spectrum of inaction and direct protest. Examples of these forms are in-group favouritism, in-group-oriented actions, cooperating with other out-groups, or separatism (Abrams et al., 2020; Leach & Livingstone, 2015; Stroebe et al., 2019).

Regardless, not all disciplines seem to have adopted this dual distinction between direct action and inaction while considering forms of protest. For example, historians and sociologists have long recognized that although disadvantaged groups have less chances to impose their will, they still have some strategies to impose control from below. This happened in peasant societies, when peasants could impose some control onto their landlords by deciding to slacken their work and productivity (Adas,1986; Baumgartner, 1984; Hobsbawm, 1973; Scott, 1986). Alternatively, it was suggested (Hobsbawm, 1969) that peasants could affect the wealthy land and cattle owners by supporting and protecting groups of bandits and outlaws who robbed the rich. Because these groups supposedly only attacked those who held property and power, the historian and social protest expert Hobsbawm defined them as ‘social bandits’. According to Hobsbawm these bandits were supported and at times even regarded as heroes by peasantry and the rich number of popular legends and tales circulating worldwide, would support this (Hobsbawm, 1973, 2000). Furthermore, because of their attack against the status quo Hobsbawm contended that support for these social bandits was a, albeit primitive, form of political protest.

Many scholars studying banditism disagreed with Hobsbawm’s definition of bandits as social. According to these revisionist scholars, bandits may have robbed and looted the rich and the powerful more frequently than the poor, however they considered the reason to be related to the first ones having more possession than the latter. These scholars pointed out instead how bandits formed violent groups who attacked and robbed indiscriminately; who

often made deals with authorities and who eventually, if given the opportunity, even joined their ranks (Blok, 1972; Chandler, 1987; Ciconte, 2020; Slatta, 1987).

Hobsbawm acknowledged that the 'noble robber' was only a rare example of its broader category and that the *social* bandit was more of an exception than the rule. Nevertheless, he emphasized the importance of social banditism for the social and symbolic value it carried. By rebelling against and attacking those in power, bandits effectively showed peasants that alternatives were possible, and that subordination was not the only available option.

The social banditry framework further stresses this point. What makes bandits social is not the nature of bandits' intentions but rather the meaning that the public attributes to them and their actions. Whether bandits in peasants' societies purposely damaged only the rich and the powerful with the intent to subvert the power structure or whether they were more simply robbers moved by personal gain who happened to attack the rich more so than the poor is less relevant than it might seem. In fact, peasants construed the bandits as the symbol of subversion, a way to refuse suppression. Through their actions, bandits demonstrated that alternatives to servitude were possible. Bandits became a symbol of refusal of blind acceptance of the status quo, a role that today is held by modern forms of social bandits, like hackers.

In this thesis, I have considered support and legitimization of hackers and their actions as a form of vicarious dissent. Hackers are individuals who live at the margin of civil society and who employ illegal and semi-legal means to attack and disrupt political, economic and social powers. The term hacker often refers to individuals with technical skills that are used to gain unauthorized access to systems or networks. Hackers may, for example, damage, deface or bring systems down and steal or leak information; however, they often describe their attacks as motivated by a desire for social justice, for freedom of information and a right for privacy (Coleman, 2011; Nissenbaum, 2004). Many parallels can be drawn between hackers and the

social bandits described by Hobsbawm and several are the strategies of control from below that hackers typically resort to (Baumgartner, 1984; Heering et al., 2020; Travaglino, 2017; Wong & Brown, 2013).

First, Hackers tend to use semi-legal and illegal tactics to attack their targets and challenge authorities. However, as for social bandits, these do not have a coherent and unified political program. Secondly, hackers generally live at the margins of civil society, they are in a sense, *deserters of civil society*. As for traditional bandits, who lived in areas that were remote and difficult to reach, they operate in a space (the Internet) which is difficult to control and oversee (Schneider & Schneider, 2008). Thirdly, hackers are surrounded by the same ambiguity that characterized the concept of social banditry. They are criminalized by the state, people may perceive them as troublemakers or even criminals (Tomblin & Jenion, 2016) yet also regard them as social justice warriors, admiring and supporting them. Their ambiguity is additionally fueled by the fact that their operations are often motivated by a wide variety of factors such as social justice ideals, but also, undeniably, by personal enjoyment and gain. Similarly, social bandits in traditional societies were believed to act in favour of the weak and the subordinate by the peasantry; however, they were often simply criminals and thieves who acted for personal vengeance or gain.

Hackers furthermore employ several of the strategies that disadvantaged groups can use to impose control from below. They publicly unveil mistakes and misbehaviours of those they aim to attack, they use irony and public derision to undermine institutions and authorities, and finally, they cause official websites to be unavailable or malfunction, using inertia and underperformance as their weapons (Baumgartner, 1984; Coleman, 2011; Nissenbaum, 2004; Wong & Brown, 2013).

Notwithstanding their ambiguity, it can be argued that, as with traditional social banditry, hackers perform a social and ideological function. Whether their conduct is really

motivated by social justice purposes or not, with their actions they demonstrate to the public that opposition to the status quo is possible. And because, whatever their reasons, they often unveil official authorities' misdeeds and demand for central powers to be held accountable for their mistakes, hackers can readily become symbols of opposition to injustice. Therefore, as for traditional social banditry, the actual intentions guiding hackers' actions are less relevant in determining their legitimization and support than the perceptions that people have of their action.

Because actors like hackers can be extremely harmful and disruptive to institutions and authorities it is important to understand under which circumstances, they are supported and legitimized. Building on these lines of research in collective action and political protest, through a social banditry perspective, the work in this thesis explored the role that main predictors of political protest have in the legitimization of vicarious dissent. I specifically focused on the roles that injustice (in the form of corruption), external political efficacy, group identification and emotions like anger and schadenfreude have in predicting support for hackers and their actions.

I tested whether corruption of an authority plays a role in determining individuals' evaluations of bandits who attack the authority. First, it was examined whether individuals' legitimization of hackers attacking an authority is influenced by the authority being described as corrupt (i.e., unjust) or not; and whether individuals use different standards to judge authorities that are representative of their own nation compared to those who are not (Experiment 1 and 2). Second, mediators of these evaluations were examined. Specifically, I tested factors pertaining to the perceived efficacy or counter-productivity of the hacking action (Experiment 1-2), and emotional responses to the corruption and the hacking, like anger and schadenfreude (Experiments 2, 5 and 6).

Subsequently, the role of another important predictor of political protest, namely,

perceived efficacy, was explored. I examined whether individuals' legitimization of hackers attacking an institution is influenced by the institution being described as either responsive or irresponsive of participants' requests (Experiments 3, 4 and 7). In addition to efficacy, I also investigated whether identification with the disadvantaged group plays a role in the legitimization of hackers (Experiment 7). Moreover, I examined the mediators of these evaluations. Specifically, I explored the mediating role of emotional responses, like anger and schadenfreude, in the link between the perceived efficacy of the institution and legitimization of the hacking action (Experiments 3, 4 and 7).

6.2. Summary of findings

6.2.1. Experiments 1-2, 5 and 6

According to literature on the psychology of justice, if an authority is described as corrupt its legitimacy is undermined and protest is more likely to happen (Seligson, 2002; E. F. Thomas & Louis, 2014). Similarly, according to research in political protest, perceiving a system as unjust leads to increased chances of protest actions, because individuals will feel angry and frustrated at the injustice (Jost et al., 2012; Leach, et al., 2006; van Zomeren, et al., 2004). Throughout experiments 1, 2, 5 and 6 I explored the role that corruption, in the sense of procedural injustice, has in predicting support for social bandits (hackers). Because the idea is that support for bandits is a form of protest, although a vicarious one, I expected corruption to be a predictor of support for hackers and their actions.

Experiments 1 and 2

Experiments 1 and 2 tested the hypothesis that individuals use different standards when evaluating a corrupt in-group compared to a corrupt out-group, the hypothesis based on both SIT (Abrams & Hogg, 1990; Tajfel, 1974; Tajfel & Turner, 2004) and the black sheep effect (Marques, & Yzerbyt, 1988; Marques, et al., 1998; Travaglino et al., 2014) (both discussed in more detail in chapter 2). Because of these different standards of evaluation, I tested whether group membership had an effect on how legitimate the hackers attacking the corrupt groups were perceived to be. Both experiment 1 and 2 used a 2 x 2 experimental design. Participants were randomly assigned to one out of four conditions.

They read a mock article describing either a case of procedural injustice (government corruption) pertaining to the UK or to Denmark, or a mock article describing a piece of neutral news (national regulations for laser pointers) also pertaining to either the UK or to Denmark. Participants then read a brief text describing a hacking attack directed at the governments' official website and indicated how legitimate they considered it to be.

Participants were also asked to indicate the degree to which they thought the hacking action was counter-productive, as undermining legal forms of protest.

Results showed that hackers and their actions were legitimized more when they followed the article describing an episode of corruption and when the Government under attack was of the same one participants belonged to (the UK ingroup). Evidence further suggested that counter- productivity of the hacking action mediated the relationship between corruption and legitimacy of hackers. If the scenario was one of corruption the hacking was perceived as less counter- productive, which led to stronger support for hackers.

Experiments 5 and 6

Experiments 5 and 6 also tested the hypothesis that describing an authority as corrupt would lead to stronger support for hackers and their actions compared to when there is no reference to the authority being implicated in corruption; however, additionally, the experiments focused on the mediating role of schadenfreude (defined as the pleasure at another's misfortune). A model was tested where corruption predicts schadenfreude and schadenfreude in turn predicts vicarious dissent. Literature on schadenfreude has long provided evidence of how, in an inter-group context, schadenfreude is connected to a sense of justice, specifically to a desire to restore a more just social order. So far, however, the role of schadenfreude in the context of political protest has been mostly unexplored. Both experiment 5 and 6 used a between-subjects' experimental design. Participants were randomly assigned to one out of two conditions. With a similar procedure to studies 1 and 2, participants were asked to read an extract from a national newspaper.

Depending on the condition, the extract either reported a (mostly factual) news article about the recent British political scandal of 'cash for influence', or a neutral (also mostlyfactual) news article about the government trying to regulate sale of laser pointers to limit attacks at airports. Participants then read a brief text describing a hacking attack directed at the governments' official websites. Subsequently, schadenfreude as a result of the hacking attack and perceived legitimacy of said attack were measured. Results showed that hackers and their actions were legitimized more when they followed the article extract describing an episode of corruption compared to the laser pointers extract. Evidence further suggested that corruption triggered schadenfreude which in turn predicted increased support for hackers.

6.2.2. Experiments 3-4 and 7

Experiments 3, 4 and 7 were somewhat specular to those previously discussed. They focused on the same moderator (identification with the disadvantaged group) and the same mediators (anger and schadenfreude) as experiments 1, 2, 5 and 6, however this time the focus was on the role that the perceived efficacy of an institution has in predicting support for vicarious dissent.

Experiments 3 and 4

Experiments 3 and 4 tested the hypothesis that when individuals perceive a system (an institution) as scarcely responsive to their aspirations for more justice, they might see the (potentially illegal) actions of hackers as more legitimate. The studies further hypothesised that the relationship between the perceived responsiveness of the system (i.e., the external political efficacy) and the legitimization of hackers that attack the said system is mediated by anger - the hypothesis being that a system that does not listen to individuals' grievances may trigger anger, which then motivates legitimization of social banditry opposing the system.

Both experiment 3 and 4 used a between-subject experimental design. The studies examined individuals' legitimization of hackers' actions in the contexts of a university (Study 1) and an online survey platform (Study 2). Across the studies, individuals were presented with a description of an unjust situation (i.e., an unjust grading process or an unfair exploitation of their work). Subsequently, they were randomly assigned to one out of two conditions, either a low external efficacy condition or a high external efficacy condition.

Specifically, participants were told that after having made a formal complaint to the institution (either the university's exam office or the Support System of the survey platform) the

system was either willing (high external efficacy condition) or unwilling (low external efficacy condition) to address their requests and grievances. Following the manipulation participants were asked to indicate how angry they were at the institution. Participants then read a brief text describing a hacking attack directed at the institutions' official websites and had to indicate how legitimate they considered it to be. Results showed that hackers and their actions were legitimized more when they followed the low external efficacy condition compared to the high external efficacy condition. Evidence further suggested that low efficacy triggered anger which in turn predicted increased support for hackers.

Experiment 7

Experiment 7 was mostly an exploratory study, examining how anger and identification with the disadvantaged group affect the legitimization of hackers' actions when targeting an irresponsive authority. The experiment had a 2 (External efficacy: Low vs High) x 2 (Identification: Collective identification vs Neutral) between-subject experimental design. The aim of the study was to analyse the relationship between anger, identification with the aggrieved group, schadenfreude and legitimization of hackers. The study examined individuals' legitimization of hackers' actions in the contexts of an online survey platform. Participants were presented with a description of an unjust situation (i.e., an unfair exploitation of their work). Then they were randomly assigned to one out of two conditions, either a low externalefficacy condition or a high external efficacy condition. Specifically, participants were told that after having made a formal complaint to the Support System of the survey platform, the system was either willing (high external efficacy condition) or unwilling (low external efficacy condition) to address their requests and grievances.

Following the manipulation participants were asked to indicate how angry they were at the institution. They were then randomly assigned to one of the two identity conditions:

collective or neutral. For the collective identity condition, they were asked to imagine how they, together with other Prolific participants, could have joined forces to complain and change their unjust situation; for the neutral condition they were simply asked to indicate whether April would be a good month to visit their country. Finally, all participants read a brief text describing a hacking attack directed at the institutions' official websites and had to indicate how legitimate they considered it to be and how much schadenfreude they felt at the expenses of the survey platform Support System.

In line with expectations, results showed that hackers and their actions were legitimized more when they followed the low external efficacy condition compared to the high external efficacy condition; that low efficacy triggered anger; in turn predicting schadenfreude, which then predicted increased support for hackers. However, in contrast to expectations, results showed that individuals who highly identified with the disadvantaged group felt less schadenfreude towards the irresponsive authority.

Finally, the interaction effect of anger and identification on legitimization of hackers through feelings of schadenfreude was tested. In line with literature on social identity theory (Ellemers, 1993; Tajfel, 1978a, b; Turner & Brown, 1978) I expected the effect of anger to be stronger for highly identified people. People who identify strongly with a group are more invested and will, as a result, feel more aggrieved when the group is the object of unjust disadvantage (Abrams & Grant 2012; Kawakami & Dion, 1995). Unexpectedly, the study showed that those who identified more strongly with the group of Prolific Academic participants experienced less anger and therefore expressed lower support for the hackers and their action. This result has been explained with the measure of solidarity towards Prolific participants as ultimately assessing solidarity towards the broader Prolific community, which would then explain why higher levels of solidarity predict lower anger and schadenfreude at the Platform.

Finally, in line with previous results (studies 5 and 6 Chapter 4) the study showed how schadenfreude at the authority's misfortune subsequently predicts the legitimization of the hackers' actions.

6.3. Theoretical implications

Injustice and corruption

Concerning the roles played by injustice and corruption, research has shown how perceiving an institution or authority as corrupt effectively undermines its legitimacy and leads to people engaging in protest action (e.g., E. F. Thomas & Louis, 2014; Tyler, 2006a; Tyler & Lind, 1992). The legitimacy of modern democracies, authorities and institutions' is granted by their adherence to standards of social justice; when authorities and institutions fail to comply to these standards then their legitimacy is questioned (Seligson, 2002). Social justice is often defined in psychology (Jost & Kay, 2010) as a property that belongs to social and political systems and that reflects at least two different states of affairs: the first one answering the question of whether people perceive burdens and benefits in a society as distributed in accordance with a principle of justice (distributive justice), the second one answering the question of whether people evaluate systems, procedures and rules as fair and just (known as procedural justice).

On the basis of procedural fairness, when there is evidence of procedural injustice in the form of corruption, then political support is undermined, and political protest becomes a likely scenario (Seligson, 2002). Furthermore, because corruption of an authority is effectively a sign of social injustice, it is likely to provoke anger and frustration in those who are ruled by

the authority. Consequently, anger and frustration prompt protest action (Jost et al., 2012; Leach, et al., 2006; van Zomeren, et al., 2004). Studies from this thesis have proved that similar mechanisms apply to support for social banditism. When an authority is described as corrupt, the decreased legitimacy of the authority and the anger and frustration triggered by the social injustice lead to increased support for social bandits. This suggests that when the legality of the authority itself is questioned, individuals may start perceiving illegal action enacted by disruptive actors as more legitimate (E. F. Thomas & Louis, 2014).

Efficacy

Concerning now the role that efficacy has in predicting political protest, numerous studies (e.g., Klandermans, 1984; van Stekelenburg & Klandermans, 2007; van Zomeren et al., 2004) have shown that believing that one's actions can change an unfair situation makes individuals more likely to participate in political protest. Believing that individuals' actions have the potential to shape, and thus change, the social structure, involves two different aspects. Firstly, people need to believe that as a group they can combine their efforts and make their voices be heard, and secondly, they need to believe that the authority or system is somewhat receptive to the claims made by their group.

The first aspect is conceptualized as *group or collective* efficacy: the belief that individuals as part of a group can change things (i.e., the status quo, the socio-political system) by combining efforts (Bandura, 1997). The second aspect refers to the concept of *external political efficacy*: 'the perceived responsiveness of the state/system/authority, the extent to which people think that authorities will change political outcomes according to their demands' (De Moor, 2016).

Past research exploring the role that efficacy has in predicting political protest has mostly focused on efficacy intended as group or collective efficacy (Hornsey et al., 2006; Mummendey et al., 1999; Stürmer & Simon, 2004a; van Zomeren et al., 2012; van Zomeren et al., 2008; van Zomeren et al., 2004). In this thesis I have instead focused on the role that external political efficacy plays in predicting protest action and specifically, in predicting vicarious forms of dissent. Although group efficacy and external political efficacy are different operationalizations of efficacy, they overlap as both refer to the likelihood that one's actions will have the power to change the current situation. In terms of perceived external efficacy, perceiving a system as responsive to one's requests (high perceived external efficacy) should predict stronger intentions to engage in peaceful and normative protest actions because the system is perceived as already receptive to people's demand. However, findings relative to the role of perceived external efficacy in predicting engagement in noninstitutional forms of protest have not been consistent, with some authors finding a negative relationship between perceived external efficacy and non- normative forms of protest (e.g., Lee, 2005), and others finding none (e.g., Gil de Zúñiga, et al., 2017).

Throughout this thesis several studies have investigated the role that perceived external efficacy has in vicarious forms of dissent. These studies have demonstrated that when individual perceive the state/system/authority as having low political efficacy then they are prompted to support disruptive forms of protest. Specifically, studies 3, 4 and 7 showed the existence of a path from political efficacy to support of vicarious expressions of dissent through emotional reactions like anger and schadenfreude. When individuals believed that their actions could not change the unfair situation, because the authority was unwilling or irresponsive to meet their requests, they experienced anger and frustration which then resulted in greater support for disruptive actors (hackers).

This defines a model of political protest where the emotional path (anger and

schadenfreude) follows the instrumental path (i.e., efficacy). Thus, it is a model that contradicts one of the dual-pathway model's tenets (Van Zomeren et al., 2004), which suggests that the instrumental and emotional path are distinct and independent paths to political engagement. However, because the operationalization of political efficacy that was used in these studies - as efficacy in relation to the responsiveness of the system - is rather different from van Zomeren's - more closely related to the group's perceived ability to achieve social change - the discrepancies between the two models are potentially due to the different operationalization of the predictor (see also Tausch et al., 2011; Travaglino, 2017; Travaglino & Moon, 2020). In order to provide a better understanding of the relationships between efficacy, emotions, and dissent, it would be useful for future research to test both models and compare them.

Anger and schadenfreude

In social psychological literature on political protest, anger has been the emotion most often associated with support for and intentions to protest. Numerous models have described how a perceived injustice or a state of relative deprivation trigger anger, an active and confrontational response that motivates individuals to engage in protest action. In the dual-pathway model of political protest, anger elicited by injustice appraisal constitutes one of the two pathways that lead to participation in protest. Similarly, in the SIMCA (van Zomeren et al., 2008) and the "dynamic dual pathway model of approach coping with collective disadvantage" (van Zomeren et al., 2012) group-based anger is described as one of the main causes of collective action.

Attempts have been made to test to what extent feelings of anger provide a unique motivating process in protest participation. In two studies Stürmer and Simon (2009) found

that anger did in fact positively predict willingness to participate in protest activities. However, in their studies anger was only a positive predictor of hostile forms of protest - protest activities suited to reduce the individual's negative emotional state. Anger did not predict participants' willingness to engage in more task-oriented protest activities (instrumental protest). The authors thereby suggested that the unique effect of group-based anger on willingness to protest is based on a desire to reduce negative tensions.

Literature on protest has also suggested that different forms of anger have different implications on political action (cf. Russell & Fehr, 1994; Tausch et al., 2011). Evidence from Tausch et al. (2011) suggests, for example, that normative and non-normative protest are predicted by different types of emotions. Somewhat in opposition to Stürmer's and Simon's conclusions (2009), the research suggests that normative protest seems to be predicted by anger whereas non-normative protest is predicted by contempt instead. This is because, anger is intended as a proactive emotion that pushes people to engage in action with a reconciliatory purpose. Anger is related to a feeling that things can be changed, and that the system or authority can meet the individuals' requests at some point along the way (Fisher & Roseman, 2007; Weber, 2004). Contempt, on the other hand, can be considered as a less intense but longer lasting emotion, which implies more negative and stable changes in the beliefs one holds about another person (i.e., Frijda & Mesquita, 1994) and in the treatment of said person (ostracism or taking distance). Individuals express contempt when the behaviour that is reprehended is considered as stable and therefore out of one's control.

Throughout this thesis the role that anger plays in the legitimization of social bandits was investigated in several studies (Studies 2, 3 ,4 and 7). Results showed that anger was positively predicted by both perceived corruption of the authority (Study 2) and low perceived external efficacy (Studies 3, 4 and 7) and that in turn it predicted legitimization of vicarious dissent. Furthermore, anger was shown to predict schadenfreude, and to positively

interact with collective identification to predict support for hackers. Therefore, the role of anger in predicting vicarious dissent was generally in line with the role of anger in predicting direct political protest with the exception, that instead of predicting direct forms of protest, it predicted support for actors who could embody individuals' anger.

Additionally, it is worth noting that across these studies anger was measured as a system- level emotion specifically directed against the system/institution, rather than being more broadly directed at the perceived injustice, which is how most of the previous models discussed have measured it (van Zomeren et al., 2012; van Zomeren et al., 2008; van Zomeren et al., 2004). Because individuals' emotional appraisals of social and political systems have proved to have important implications on their political actions (Solak et al., 2012; Travaglino & Moon, 2020), anger directed against the system was expected to have an impact on participants' protest behaviours and specifically on their support for vicarious dissent.

Another form of anger that has been considered in prediction of protest action is resentment. Resentment is a form of anger, experienced when someone is benefitting from an undeserved positive outcome, inciting a general feeling of injustice (Feather & Nairn, 2005; Feather & Sherman., 2002). Although experienced privately, resentment tends to be expressed publicly, because those who feel resentment aim to publicly sanction the injustice (Smith et al., 1994). Empirical evidence has further shown that resentment caused by an undeserved positive outcome predicts schadenfreude (the pleasure at another's misfortune). Individuals experience pleasure at the failure of someone who was previously benefitting from an undeserved positive outcome (Feather 2008; Feather et al., 2011; Feather & Nairn 2005; Feather & Sherman 2002).

For these reasons, several studies in this thesis have considered the role of schadenfreude in predicting vicarious dissent (Studies 5, 6 and 7). Schadenfreude was positively predicted by an authority being described as corrupt and it was negatively predicted

by identification with the disadvantaged group; however, it was negatively predicted by perceived external efficacy in study 6 but not in study 7. Furthermore, schadenfreude at the expenses of a corrupt or irresponsive system invariably predicted support and legitimization of social bandits.

Identification

Identification has also been indicated as having a prominent role in protest and collective action. Several studies show how identifying with a group positively affects the likelihood that individuals will engage in protest in several different ways (i.e., Branscombe, et al., 1999; J. Drury & Reichner, 2005; Mummendey et al., 1999; Postmes & Branscombe, 2002; E. R. Smith, 1993; Stürmer & Simon, 2004b; van Zomeren et al., 2004).

For example: a) the group-based experience of injustice which members of a group share as part of their social identity can 'buffer' experiences of disadvantage (e.g., Branscombe, et al., 1999; Postmes & Branscombe, 2002) and trigger emotional reactions (like anger) that motivate to collective action (E. R. Smith, 1993; van Zomeren et al., 2004); b) social identity allows for a sense of heightened efficacy as belonging to a group makes individuals feel emboldened (e.g., J. Drury & Reichner, 2005; Mummendey et al., 1999).

Jimenez-Moya et al. (2019) have built on this link between social identification and efficacy by showing how, in the context of social movements, social identification predicts legitimacy of collective action through group efficacy. Social identification provides a source of shared social meaning and an expectation of social support. Such dynamics have an impact on individual's perception of efficacy. Individuals who identify with a social movement more strongly will experience a heightened sense of group efficacy. This perception that the

movement is high in efficacy will subsequently lead to a heightened legitimization of protest. By demonstrating efficacy a social movement gains more credibility and acceptance by people. In line with the perceptual theory of acceptance (Crandall & Beasely, 2001) which contends that humans have a need to form consistent impressions of others – the efficacy of a social movement is also linked to the perception that the movement is legitimate. The relationship between efficacy and legitimacy may be particularly destabilizing when applied to counter-normative groups because it may lead to legitimization of actors who challenge official institutions and authorities.

It is contended throughout this thesis that identification is likely to have a crucial role also in vicarious forms of dissent. This assumption is supported by the results of several studies previously discussed (Studies 1 and 2, Chapter 1 and Study 7, Chapter 5). However, although these studies point to identification having a key role in the legitimization of vicarious forms of dissent, the type and direction of this relationship has not always been clear. In studies 1 and 2 results showed that, overall, participants considered the hacking action as more legitimate when the target was the in-group rather than the out-group, using different evaluative standards for the two groups. A similar pattern of results showed that the counter-productivity of the hacking action directed against the authority was dependent on the situation being corrupt or non-corrupt only when participants were considering the out- group. The perceived counter-productivity mediated the relation between scenario and legitimacy but only for the out-group; when the neutral scenario was relevant to the out-

group, it had a negative effect on the perceived legitimacy of the hacking action, whereas when the neutral scenario was relevant to the in-group it still had a positive effect on the perceived legitimacy of the hacking action.

This suggests that participants were judging the in-group more harshly compared to the out-group; in fact, there was a significant difference in anger between the neutral and the

corrupt condition only for the in-group (Tajfel & Turner, 2004). Overall, belonging to the same group as the corrupt politicians (therefore sharing with them their national identity) had a positive effect on legitimization of hackers with individuals legitimizing the hackers more when they attacked representatives of their own country. Both SIT and the black sheep effect can be useful frameworks for explaining these results (both theories are discussed in chapter 2).

The role of identification in vicarious dissent was also explored in study 7. Participants were presented with a hypothetical scenario describing an unfair exploitation of their and other participants' work by a survey platform. The platform support system was then described as either responsive or irresponsive to their requests for more just treatment. Identification with the exploited group was measured, hypothesising that the more one identified with the disadvantaged group, the more one was likely to feel angry at the irresponsive institution and thus more likely to legitimize the hacking actions directed against it. This is because the stronger the group identification, the stronger the perceived unfairness of the disadvantage and thus attribution of external blame. Stronger perceived unfairness and attribution of external blame will then resolve in higher group-anger (van Zomeren et al., 2012). Higher- group anger in turn motivates support for and engagement in collective action (Simon & Stürmer, 2004a; van Zomeren et al., 2012; van Zomeren et al., 2008; van Zomeren et al., 2004).

Despite this, however, the opposite was found: higher identification with the disadvantaged group predicted lower anger and schadenfreude at the institution and thus lower legitimization of hackers. A reasonable explanation for these results is that the measure of identification used in this study assessed identification with the larger community and not only of the participants (in opposition to the institution). Therefore, identifying with the irresponsive institution resulted in individuals judging it less harshly, feeling less anger and legitimizing hackers and their attack less.

If it is indeed true that the measure of identification assessed identification with the larger community of the survey platform, feeling less anger and legitimizing hackers' attacks less would be in line with literature on social identity. The literature argues that the higher the identification with a group, the greater the relevance of said group for the individual and thus the stronger the feeling of care and commitment towards said group (Simon & Klandermans, 2001; Turner et al., 1987).

As for results showing that individuals who identified more with the group experienced less schadenfreude (study 7), the deservingness model of Feather et al. (2013) shows that in-groups' negative outcomes are often perceived as not deserved, which makes schadenfreude less likely to be experienced. This explanation of results, however, would appear to be in contrast with the results from studies 1 and 2 where participants held particularly harsh judgments when considering a group, they had a shared identity with.
Nonetheless, it is important to note that in comparison to study 7, where the perceived efficacy of a support system was manipulated, in studies 1 and 2 it was the procedural justice (corruption) of a political system that was manipulated. In Western democratic countries, corrupt government officials are likely to violate social justice principles and moral convictions (Seligson, 2002; Skitka et al., 2005). In contrast, a survey platform's support system (i.e., the Prolific Support System) that is inefficient may disappoint individuals' expectations, but not necessarily represent a violation of absolute moral stances. For this reason, I believe the scenarios described in these studies (study 1 and 2 versus study 7) may not be directly comparable.

Whether the apparent conflict between these results depends on the different impacts of corruption and low efficacy, on the nature of the group one identifies with, such as nationality - identification with which should be relatively pervasive and unchangeable - or alternatively, a survey platform - identification with which should be relatively limited and changeable - or

whether this discrepancy of results is due to some other factor, is something that should be investigated in future research.

6.4. Theoretical Contributions

Developing a Social Banditry Framework

Studies discussed in this thesis have expanded and developed on the social banditry framework (Travaglino, 2017) in several different ways. First, studies based on this framework had previously been only correlational. These studies (Travaglino, 2017) showed that individuals who perceived a system as unjust and felt like they had no means of opposing it (i.e., low political efficacy) were more likely to express their anger against the system by supporting for disruptive actors such as hackers. However, because data were collected through two cross- sectional studies no causal inferences could be made.

Contrastingly, throughout research described in this thesis, support for social banditry has been assessed with experimental studies. The experimental design of these studies allowed for causal relationships to be drawn and to separately assess the effects of both the perceived justice of the system and perceived efficacy of the system. By alternately manipulating one and controlling for the other, it was possible to assess the extent to which perceiving a system as unjust or perceiving it as irresponsive affected the legitimization of hacking.

A second important contribution of the present thesis to the development of the SBF pertains to the generalizability of the results. Previous studies investigating the SBF have assessed the legitimization and support of a specific group of social bandits, namely the hackers' group *Anonymous*. In this thesis, a more general focus on hackers' actions was

adopted.

Examining individuals' support for hackers' actions allowed us to investigate the psychological processes involved in individuals' support for vicarious forms of dissent, regardless of the specific group disrupting the system. This should enable me to generalize the results to a broader range of situations and contexts in which individuals support deviant acts as a way to express their discontent against the status quo.

Third, these studies addressed some of the limitations of Travaglino's studies (2017) with regard to the measure of political efficacy. In his previous studies Travaglino (2017) measured political efficacy with a set of diverse items tapping on different dimensions of political efficacy and making it impossible to distinguish between possible effects of internal or external political efficacy. Throughout this thesis the role of political efficacy was measured separately for internal and external political efficacy, with the focus being overwhelmingly on external political efficacy. This allowed one to clearly assess the impact that the perceived responsiveness of an institution/system (i.e., external political efficacy) had on the support for social banditry (separately from individuals' personal belief to be able to deal with system/institution, i.e., the impact of internal efficacy). Notably, external efficacy was the strongest and (consistent across studies) the only significant predictor of individuals' support for social banditry.

Finally, important contributions have been made relative to the role played by emotions in the context of individuals' expressions of dissent. This research has focused not only on the role that anger plays in vicarious dissent, but it has also explored the role played by schadenfreude (pleasure at someone else's misfortune). While the role played by anger in political protest has been widely established, literature investigating schadenfreude in political protest is extremely scarce and, to my knowledge, these are the first studies exploring the role of schadenfreude in the support for disruptive and illegal protest actions. This is surprising

considering that schadenfreude is an emotion closely linked to a sense of perceived injustice and to anger. Because protest often stems from the first and is fueled by the latter, I consider assessing the role of schadenfreude in the legitimization of disruptive protest to be an important addition to the SBF and to research in political protest more broadly, and an interesting avenue for future studies.

6.4.1. Direct and Vicarious Dissent: Theoretical Contributions

How vicarious dissent fits into the normative vs non-normative political protest distinction

It is also important to consider how the SBF fits the theoretical distinction between normative and non-normative forms of political engagement. Research on non-normative political action has so far examined the predictors of individuals' *direct* engagement in actions that are violent and illegal or, more generally, depart from the norms of society (Becker & Tausch, 2015; Tausch et al., 2011).

The SBF provides a complementary perspective by investigating those instances in which individuals express their dissent *vicariously*, legitimizing disruptive groups and actors who dwell at the margins of legality (or whose actions are outright illegal). The SBF, in other words, aims at explaining the circumstances in which some individuals may be keen to support groups that are unaccountable, sit outside normative power structures, and whose actions may potentially represent a danger also for their own security (Jordan & Taylor, 1998; Voiskounsky et al., 2013).

Clearly, vicarious dissent could be expressed both in relation to normative and non-normative avenues. For instance, individuals' support for mafia groups, criminal organizations

that heavily rely on illegal activities and the use of violence, involves different socio-psychological predictors compared to their support for hackers, online activists and pranksters that don't always act illegally and even more seldomly use violence (Travaglino & Abrams, 2019). Moreover, there might be important differences between the psychological determinations of individuals' support for humorous, relatively harmless forms of hacking, and more serious and dangerous ones.

Moreover, future research should examine vicarious expressions of dissent in the context of actors who attack an unfair authority with legal means. In the present studies, I focused on individuals' legitimization of semi-legal actions. Conversely, the official authority might be attacked by actors who are outside the system but act legally or according to different sets of laws, as for example in the case of an international court. Future studies may provide further insight into this important extension of the SBF, by examining the legitimization of normative attempts to challenge an unfair authority and by comparing them to illegal ones[3].

6.4.2. Contributions of the current research to the broader context of political protest and collective action.

Research on collective action and political protest has largely focused on the reasons and circumstances that predict individuals' intentions and decisions to engage in protest action (Becker & Tausch, 2015; de Weerd & Klandermans, 1999; Jost et al., 2012; Kelly & Breinlinger,

[3] This section was directly incorporated from Heering, M., Travaglino, G., Abrams, D., & Goldsack, E. (2020). "If they don't listen to us, they deserve it": The effect of external efficacy and anger on the perceived legitimacy of hacking. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations*, *23*(6), 863-881. https://doi.org/10.1177/1368430220937777.

1995a; Klandermans et al., 2002; Mummendey et al., 1999; Reicher, 1984; Simon & Klandermans, 2001; Simon et al., 1998; Stürmer & Simon, 2004a; Stryker et al., 2000; Tausch et al., 2011; van Zomeren et al., 2018; van Zomeren et al., 2008; van Zomeren et al., 2004). Yet so far, little research has examined non-activists' support for protest practices and even less has investigated the support of criminal actors as a way of expressing dissent. This is a significant oversight not only because collective actions need broader support in order to achieve social change (Burstein, 2003; Burstein & Linton, 2002; Louis, 2009; Simon & Klandermans, 2001) but also because it has been widely suggested that in the dynamic context of conflict, supporters and non-activists can re-categorize themselves into protesters (Reicher, 1984; Drury & Reicher, 2000; Jimenez-Moya's et al., 2019; Saavedra & Drury, 2019).

For many years, social psychological studies have established the importance of non-participants to the success of collective action. Non-participants are useful to social movements as sources of emotional support (van Zomeren, Spears, Fischer, & Leach, 2004), of solidarity (Saab, Tausch, Spears, & Cheung, 2015; Subašic, Reynolds, & Turner, 2008) and of new recruits (Simon & Klandermans, 2001). However, very little research has focused on the implications and reasons behind non-participants' support for protesters' actions (e.g., Stuart, Thomas, & Donaghue, 2018; Teixeira, Spears, & Yzerbyt, 2019), especially when these actions involve the use of violence (e.g., Jimenez-Moya et al., 2019; Saab, Spears, Tausch, & Sasse, 2016; Saavedra & Drury, 2019; Thomas & Louis, 2014).

More importantly, almost no research exists in social psychology that investigates non-participants' support for criminal acts that have no clear protest intent. Hackers' semi- legal and illegal actions, for example, are often ambiguous and can be perceived as either clear forms of protest, as pranks, derision, or more generally as acts of defiance (Turgeman-Goldschmidt 2005; Woo, et al., 2009). Research described throughout this thesis has aimed to address this gap in the literature in light of the newly developed social banditry framework

(Travaglino, 2017). To the extent that support for these ambiguous actors can be considered an indirect form of protest, I hold that this bears similar consequences as the support for more overt and direct forms of protest. In a similar vein to direct and unambiguous protest actions, the impact of hackers' disruptive actions changes notably depending on the support they receive from others (Wong & Brown, 2013), and support for disruptive actions is likely to be dependent on changes in self-categorization (Saavedra & Drury, 2019a, 2019b) and to be predictive of more extreme actions like participation in radical networks (Malthaner & Waldmann, 2014).

Several models and theories have been developed in recent years to explain when non-participants' will support protesters' non-violent and violent action. These explanations have focused on instances in which non-activists come to support activists' actions opposing and protesting against a perceived injustice or illegitimate order. For example, Jimenez-Moya's et al (2019) and Saavedra and Drury's studies (2019a, 2019b) have started addressing the issue of how non-participants' come to legitimize and support protesters' use of violence. To explain non-participants' support for violent protest, the researchers referred to the Elaborated Social Identity Model (ESIM) of crowd behaviour (Drury & Reicher, 2000; Reicher,1996a, 1996b, 2001; Stott & Reicher, 1998) and to the notion of opinion-based groups (Bliuc et al., 2007; McGarty et al., 2009).

The ESIM was developed to explain involvement in protest violence within crowd events. According to the model, one's social identity and self-categorization is dependent on one's position within a set of social relations. In a dynamic crowd context, where opposing parties (i.e., protesters and police force) are involved, social relations are likely to change, and so is the participant's social identity. The changes in social relations further determine changes in the social identity in terms of content ('who we are'), identity-boundaries (who counts as 'one of us'), definitions of legitimate behaviour, and empowerment (Drury & Reicher, 2000).

For example, within a protest context, initially peaceful protesters may, at a later time, consider violent actions as an acceptable reaction to the perceived illegitimacy and indiscrimination of police actions (Drury & Reicher, 2000, 2005). Protest violence becomes collectively legitimised within the crowds because the interaction with police officers determines new norms of conflict. The illegitimate aggression carried out by police officers against peaceful protesters, turns what was previously unacceptable for most people (i.e., resorting to violence) into an acceptable act of retaliation or self-defence. As a result, because violence becomes legitimized, individuals within the crowd of protesters will more likely resort to it (Drury & Reicher, 2018).

Jimenez-Moya et al (2019) and Saavedra and Drury (2019a, 2019b) have proposed that in a manner akin to protesters, non-participants' legitimization of protesters' violence will be dependent on the protest context and on transformations in individuals' self- definitions. For example, a non-participant who supports the protesters' cause might perceive himself as part of a broader group of people who endorse the same position held by the protesters (i.e., an opinion-based group; Bliuc, et al., 2007; McGarty, et al., 2009; Smith, et al., 2015). This shared opinion connects the non-participant to the protesters. As a result, a new identity emerges, an opinion-based identity, whereby a group of individuals share the same opinion about a specific issue and is different from those individuals who do not (Bliuc, et al., 2007; McGarty, et al., 2014; O'Brien & McGarty, 2009).

According to ESIM this newly emerged identity is defined in positional terms, and it changes as a result of new relations between social groups (Drury & Reicher, 2000; Drury et al., 2012). Consequently, a new set of forms of action and opportunities can arise from these novel identities (Drury & Reicher, 2000; Drury, et al., 2003) and actions that were initially evaluated as nonnormative or unjustifiable can become legitimized over time. When the sympathetic non-participants realize that they are on the protesters' side (in terms of their

shared opinion), they will begin to consider more positively certain actions taken by the protesters that they initially did not approve of as legitimate.

Although the ESIM model has been developed to explain the possible escalation of violence that can happen in the course of a crowd event, the self-categorization processes described by this model could also be applied to other contexts of conflictual interactions between groups. For example, in the studies described throughout this thesis participants were presented with an authority (MP's or a survey support system) that was either corrupt or poorly responsive to the requests of its subscribers. Because individuals generally expect a politician to adhere to principles of procedural justice (Skitka et al., 2005; Tyler, 2006a) and a support system to support its users, it could be argued that in both circumstances the said authorities' actions have been perceived as illegitimate.

The belief that the authority is illegitimate then becomes the connection between the participants of the studies (the bystanders) and the protestors/disruptors (the hackers) and a new identity can emerge based on this shared opinion (i.e., participants can identify together with the hackers as a group of people who consider the authority unrightful and illegitimate). When this happens, participants may decide to abandon the 'supposedly' universal norm dictating that social change should be pursued through peaceful means (Murdie & Pureser, 2017) and support disruptive actions instead. In the eyes of the participants, then, the actions of the hackers have become justified and acceptable reactions to the perceived illegitimacy of the authority. This would then be in line with both studies on the effects of corruption on legitimization of violent protest (Thomas & Louis, 2014) and studies on the effects of low perceived efficacy on the legitimization of non-normative and violent protest (Tausch et al., 2011; Becker & Tausch, 2015; Spears et al., 2010).

Furthermore, this is also in line with van Zomeren's et al., (2018) latest integration of the SIMCA model which suggests that to predict engagement in collective action, together

with ‘who we are’ (the content of our politicised identity), researchers should also consider ‘what we stand for’ (our moral beliefs). In fact, drawing from self-categorisation theory, the authors underlined how social categorization (e.g., identification with a politicised group or with an opinion-based group) defines context specific behaviours (Turner, et al., 1987; Reynolds et al., 2012; Subašic et al., 2008). From a collective action perspective, this implies that when individuals perceive an act as a violation of their moral beliefs then, after witnessing such violation, they may self-categorise as part of a group that will reject and engage in collective action to protest against it. Thus, considering moral values and beliefs may be crucial when studying support for disruptive and illegal actors.

The evidence presented here speaks in favor of the importance of considering contextual factors while studying political protest and more specifically the importance of considering the role played by bystanders and non-participants. Research has suggested that protesters are increasingly likely to reach their goals when the public legitimatizes both their claims and actions (Zomeren et al., 2004). Moreover, several contemporary studies have shown that solidarity with protesters can lead to support for protesters’ violent actions and provoke non-participants to directly engage in action against an authorities’ measures, or to question the legitimacy of authorities (Drury, et al., 2003; Saavedra & Drury, 2019a, 2019b).

Because supporters and non-participants are potential future activists and disrupters, investigating when and why individuals legitimize protest and disruptive forms of action is crucial to predict and potentially prevent engagement in and legitimization of violence and extreme actions. Research connecting political support to political action suggests that for both political action and political violence, stronger forms of action are generally preceded by milder forms of support (Thomas, et al., 2014). In the literature on social movements Klandermans (1997) identified four different stages of protest engagement: from sympathizing with the cause to active participation. Similarly, research on violent protest and radicalism has

described engagement with violence as an incremental process utilizing a staircase (Moghaddam, 2005) or conveyer-belt metaphor (Moskalenko & McCauley, 2009). Considered from a Social Banditry perspective, support for illegal and/or violent action directed against official powers and authorities, is thus likely to be predictive of future support and (possibly) engagement in similar and more extreme behaviours. Understanding why these actions are supported could be a useful tool to prevent the insurgence of more extreme and radical behaviours.

The urgency to understand support for these actions has become more pressing if we consider that, in the last three decades, the risks of extremism and radicalization in collective action have been increased by the use of the internet (Chan, 2017; Di Maggio, et al., 2001; Lee, 2018; Norris 2001). The internet has fostered collective action by allowing the emergence and diffusion of online actors (including alternative media) who question and challenge existing powers. By creating "collective action frames" that promote beliefs about the ability of the in-group to oppose and change the way they have been unfairly treated, these online actors galvanise participation (Benford & Snow, 2000; Gamson, 1992; McDonald, 2015). For example, social media is suggested to have been pivotal for the so called 2010 "Arab Spring", a widespread protest movement against oppressive regimes (McGarty et al., 2014; Stewart et al., 2016); similarly, the consumption and diffusion of alternative media has also been linked to support for the Hong Kong pro-democracy "Umbrella movement" (Chan, 2017; Lee, 2018).

Radicalization is also facilitated through the internet's widening of opportunities for connection and interaction with like-minded people (Chan & Fu, 2017). Because individuals tend to engage and gather around online media websites that more closely reflect their ideologies and beliefs, facilitated by social media companies' use of algorithms to predict and advertise similar topics of interest to its users, online echo-chambers emerge where like-minded people interact with each other and are rarely exposed to opposite views. Because

hackers and their supporters organize themselves into groups where membership is defined by self-identification, they can too become promoters of radical views (Lee, 2018; Malthaner & Waldmann, 2014).

In the context here described I believe the experiments presented throughout this thesis have a pivotal role, as they are among the first to study support for ambiguous disruptive action. Exploring the reasons why individuals decide to support turbulent and illegal actors as a means of protest can provide insights into increases in support for more extreme forms of physical action. For example, research discussed throughout this thesis and additional research discussed in this section has highlighted the importance of the role of identity and self- re-definition processes. Considering how individuals' social identity and self-categorization is dependent on their position within a set of social relations is fundamental to understanding possible changes in the definitions of 1) 'who they are', 2) "legitimate" behaviour and 3) 'what they will and will not stand for' (Drury & Reicher, 2000, van Zomeren et al., 2018). For example, in a dynamic context where criminal actors and official authorities are opposed, people may support the disruptors as opposed to the official powers, as the disruptors better fit individuals' definitions of who they are and what they stand for. Support for these actors and their disruptive actions is then likely to be predictive of future support for similar actions, especially when support for these actions is integrative of the individuals' self-perception (of 'who they are') (Moskalenko & McCauley, 2009).

A limitation of the research discussed in this paragraph and throughout this thesis more generally is that it has mostly considered support for protesters' actions within Western democracies. It should be borne in mind that outside of Western democracies support for protesters' and disruptors' actions may be more difficult or costly. Different countries and cultures will have divergent social norms regarding which types of actions can be supported (e.g., only peaceful actions) and varying levels of repression (Honari, 2018; Regan &

Henderson, 2002). For example, demonstrating may be a normative peaceful form of protest in one country yet illegal and objectionable in another. Costs of support and participation will thus vary considerably depending on the social and cultural setting. By this rationale, Wright et al.'s (1990) popular distinction between normative (i.e., action that conforms to the norms of the existing social system, such as political participation or peaceful protest) and non-normative (i.e., action that violates these rules, such as violence and terrorism) collective action should not be viewed as totemic. Becker et al. (2011) remind us that this distinction is subject to locally applicable definitions often defined by authorities themselves. Depending on where it takes place, the same protest behaviour may be considered as normative and legal in one country and non-normative and/or illegal in another. For these reasons future research on support for protest and disruptive action should take into stronger consideration the role played by culture. For example, because the costs of varying forms of action are highly dependent on social norms, future studies could measure the extent to which individuals believe how different forms of protest (among which hacking) are acceptable and prosecutable within their societies and then explore the role this has on their legitimization.

Nevertheless, although culturally biased, this section has presented arguments and evidence from various research that illustrate the importance that non-participants' and the general public's support has on the realization of political protest and collective action. By showing how broader support is necessary to achieve the protesters' and disruptors' goals (van Zomeren et al., 2004; Saab, et al., 2015; Subašic, et al., 2008), how supporters and non-activists can easily re-categorize themselves into protesters (Reicher, 1984; Drury & Reicher, 2000; Jimenez-Moya's et al., 2019; Saavedra & Drury, 2019) and how support for milder forms of protest is predictive of support and engagement in more extreme forms of action, both online and offline (Chan, 2017; Klandermans, 1997; Lee, 2018 Moghaddam, 2005; Moskalenko & McCauley, 2009; Simon & Klandermans, 2001), the case is made that

investigating the reasons for why individuals decide to support disruptive action (online and offline) is an area of study that deserves further attention. To my knowledge, studies discussed throughout this thesis are amongst the first to address this subject.

6.5. Limitations and future directions

This research used different scenarios, contexts and paradigms in order to test individuals' legitimization of social bandits as a form of vicarious dissent. Results yield converging evidence that individuals will support disruptive actors who challenge the status quo when they feel the latter to be unjust and irresponsive to requests for fairer treatment. Support for these actors then, is an expression of their inchoate anger. The present research does have limitations.

Firstly, it would be useful to replicate these findings using additional contexts, situations, and samples. Throughout this thesis there has been an exclusive focus on legitimization of hackers as a vicarious form of dissent. Hackers are however only one possible expression of social banditry. In order to generalize these results to the wider phenomenon of vicarious dissent- intended as an alternative resource individual can resort to for expressing their grievances - other forms of social banditism should also be considered. Examples of these might be: support for organized crime, gangs and radical activist groups.

Furthermore, this research exclusively relies on surveys and experiments. Experimental research should be generalized cautiously to real-life settings. Experiments offer a controlled setting characterised by high internal validity. The studies presented in this thesis could be complemented by field research and qualitative methodologies like interviews

with hackers, members of gangs and organized crime and those who support them. This would however place considerable obstacles considering the illegal nature of these groups and their actions. Alternatively, content analysis of statements and messages from hackers or of confessions and depositions of convicted criminals and informers would also be useful in order to understand how these groups work and what makes them appealing to the wider public.

There is also scope for cross cultural research into support for disruptive actors who attack official powers. For example, there is reason to believe that more collectivist communities will be less likely to support actors who attack official leaders and disrupt the status quo (Travaglino, 2017). Alternatively, they may control their leaders more closely and thereby prevent them from breaching rules in the first place.

Another important task for future research is to clarify the role that identifying with the disadvantaged group (as opposed to a group who is defying procedural justice) has in the legitimization of social bandits. In Chapter 1 identification with the mistreated group (British people) somewhat included identification with the group causing the injustice (British politicians), as it was measured as identification with the macro-category of British nationals. In this chapter the stronger the group identification, the harsher the treatment of the corrupt authority who was presumably treated as a deviant in-group member. In chapter 5 however, identifying with the community of the faulty institution, conversely predicted lower anger and schadenfreude at the irresponsive authority. These contrasting results on the role that identity plays in the legitimization of vicarious dissent might be due to the lower emotional impact that perceiving the authority as irresponsive might hold compared to perceiving it as corrupt; alternatively, they could be dependent on the type of group identity, where identification with a nation is more pervasive and unchangeable compared to identification with a survey platform. Nevertheless, the role that identifying with both: the disadvantaged group and the

group being responsible of the injustice, requires further investigation.

Literature on political protest has consistently shown that identification with a disadvantaged group who perceives its disadvantage as unjust predicts engagement in protest (Becker & Tausch, 2015; Jost et al., 2012; Tausch et al., 2011; van Zomeren et al., 2008; van Zomeren et al., 2004). However, when considering vicarious forms of dissent things get more complicated because the actors and group identities involved are always at least three: the authority or institution representing the status quo, the disadvantaged or mistreated group, and finally the external group who attacks the status quo. The degree to which one legitimizes disruptive actors is likely to depend not only on how unjust one believes the system to be but also on how close one feels to the disruptive group.

More research is also needed to examine the role that hackers' motivations have in the legitimization of their actions. In the studies discussed hitherto, hackers' motivations to attack official authorities were not explicit; however, the message left by the hackers "Learn how to do your job" suggested that they were partially motivated by a desire to punish the procedural injustice. It would be valuable for future research to directly manipulate the hackers' explicit motivations in order to understand under which circumstances 'bandits' are more likely to lose support, and perhaps increase opposition. For instance, hackers who explicitly aim at personal gains may be seen as motivated by selfish aims, and therefore may be less likely to earn people's support. In addition, this could be moderated by identification with the group targeted by hackers (e.g., identification as university students, or national identification). For example, individuals who identify highly with the targeted group; might be less affected by the supposed selfishness of hackers' motivations. This is because, in line with the black sheep effect (Marques, & Yzerbyt, 1988; Marques, et al., 1998) and results from Study 1 and 2, high identifiers may be motivated above all by a desire to punish the deviant in-group member.

Finally, future research might investigate the role that different forms of anger have in

vicarious forms of dissent. Literature on protest has suggested that different forms of anger have different implications on political action (cf. Russell & Fehr, 1994; Tausch et al., 2011). Tausch's et al. research (2011) for example, suggested that normative and non- normative protest are predicted by different types of emotions. To the extent that normative protest seems to be predicted by anger Tausch et al. (2011) suggest that nonnormative protest is predicted by contempt rather than anger. This is because, in line with some literature, anger is intended as proactive type of emotion that drives people to engage in action with a reconciliatory purpose (Fisher & Roseman, 2007; Weber, 2004).

Anger is related to a feeling that things can be changed, and that the system or authority can meet individuals' requests at some point along the way. Conversely, contempt is experienced when the behaviour that is reprehended is considered as stable and therefore out of one's control. Contempt is therefore also associated with a derogation of the offender as a whole (system, authority, etc.) and a desire to take a distance from it (Fisher & Roseman, 2007). As such contempt is felt when there is a general cynical perception that the system or authority will not change, and individuals feel like there is no easy way to reconcile (Becker & Tausch, 2015). Support for social bandits like hackers may be driven by feelings that are more akin to contempt than to anger, since individuals are likely to perceive a corrupt political system as overall unjust and uncontrollable (Feather & Sherman, 2002; Smith, et al., 1994). It would be of interest in future studies to compare the effects that anger, schadenfreude, and other forms of anger like contempt and resentment have in predicting legitimization of social bandits.

6.6. Practical implications

There are interesting and potentially important implications for the study of political protests from this research. From a scholarly perspective, research discussed throughout this thesis speaks in support of a more inclusive categorization of political protest. As several authors have by now suggested (Jost et al., 2017; Leach & Livingstone, 2015; Stroebe et al., 2019), political protest should not be constrained to direct and confrontational forms of protest and alternative forms should be included too. Research from this thesis supports this contention by defining legitimization of hackers, as groups who use semi-legal or illegal means to attack official powers, as a vicarious form of protest. Throughout this work I have considered those that, from a social psychological perspective, are held to be the most common predictors of political protest: perceived injustice, efficacy, identification and anger. I have tested the rolesthat these predictors have in the legitimization of disruptive actors and their actions. Support has been provided to the hypothesis that vicarious forms of dissent share the same predictors as direct forms of political protest and that overall, the same mechanisms apply for the two forms of protest. This strengthens the contention that vicarious dissent should indeed be considered as a form of protest.

Furthermore, there are also interesting and potentially important implications for official powers like political authorities or public and private institutions. Results suggest that individuals are likely to support semi-legal actors who attack and challenge official authorities when they believe that they are not acting in the interest of the people whom they should represent or serve. By either failing procedural justice or by showing inability or unwillingness to comply with demands for fairer conditions, authorities incur anger and frustration. These emotional responses then can, at times, result in support for external actors who attack said authorities and destabilize their powers. This holds true (maybe even more so)

also when the person who legitimizes the attack belongs to the same group as the authority. Because public legitimization of these actors limits the state's capacity to rule and has considerable implications for democracy (actions of these groups are rarely, if ever, subject to public scrutiny or characterized by transparent decision making; Kuldova & Quinn, 2018; Lea & Stenson, 2007; van Dun, 2014) and because contact with these actors may, in some circumstances, lead to individuals' engagement in more radical forms of action or to passively accept them (L. Drury & Travaglino, 2019; Sageman, 2004, 2008; Wiktorowicz, 2005), understanding why individuals may express dissent vicariously by supporting and legitimizing actors such as hackers is very important for both official authorities and public or private institutions.

6.7. Conclusions

In the last thirty years or so political authorities, corporations, public and private institutions and organizations, have increasingly been targets of hacking attacks. Whether motivated by an explicit political or social agenda, or by enjoyment or even personal material gains, hackers pose a threat to these entities by interfering with or disrupting their normal functioning, thus undermining and destabilizing their authority and reputation.

Furthermore, non-institutional actors who carry out social justice can pose serious risks for democracy as a whole. Firstly, because they operate in secret, it is impossible to know these actors' actual motives - hackers may engage in attacks against governments "just for fun" or pursue a clearer political agenda (Coleman, 2011). In addition, hackers could be acting alone or be hired by governments, bad actors and hidden entities (van der Walt, 2017). Secondly, and most crucially, because they operate in secrecy and anonymously, hackers cannot be made accountable for their actions. This means that, generally, hackers' decisions

cannot be the object of public scrutiny nor be easily altered, ended or persecuted (Voiskounsky et al., 2013). Without these forms of external accountability, hackers' and other bandits' actions can easily degenerate, misfire their targets or foster mistrust in institutions (Travaglino, 2017).

The results of the research presented in this thesis suggest that, if individuals feel that official authorities and institutions do not have people's best interest at heart, then they may support hackers even when these are potentially harmful to their own governments. The anger and the feeling of injustice derived by perceiving an authority as irresponsive, inapt, or corrupt are powerful motivators of vicarious forms of dissent. Given the risk that hackers and other social bandits pose and considering that support for disruptive protest is a predictor of future support for and engagement in more extreme forms of protest, reaching an adequate understanding of this phenomenon in order to devise methods to mitigate those risks should be a priority.

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APPENDIX I: CHAPTER 2 SUPPLEMENTARY

In Supplementary 2, I report further details on the other constructs included in Studies 1 and 2, along with their descriptive statistics, zero-order correlations (Tables A.2.1. & A.2.2.), and their inter-related correlations.

Other measures

Political orientation

Participants' political orientation was measured with one item (1 = *Left*, 7 = *Right*). Participants read, "Many people think of political attitudes as being on the 'left' or 'right'. This is a scale stretching from the Left to the Right. When you think of your own political attitudes, where would you place yourself?".

Political interest

Participants' political interest was measured with one item (1 = *Not at all interested*, 5 = *Very interested*). Participants were asked "Generally, how interested are you in politics?".

British ID pre-conditioning

British identity was measured two times: before and after the conditioning. It was measured with three items (1 = *completely disagree*, 7 = *completely agree*). Participants read "I am pleased to think of myself as British", "I am proud I am British" and "I identify with other people who live in the UK" (Cronbach's $\alpha = .89$).

Intentions to participate in political action

Intentions to engage in political actions were measured with three items (1= *very unlikely*, 7 = *very likely*). Participants first read:

> "Below are listed a series of activities people may take part in to express their voice and/or dissent against the government. Considering a situation like that described in the previous article, please indicate how likely you would be to take part in each of these activities in the future if the opportunity arises".

Participants were then asked to indicate how likely they were to: "sign a petition", "attend a protest event" and "participate in a public demonstration" (α =.76).

Perceived Efficacy of the Hacking action. *(only in Study 1)*

Participants read: "By exposing the British Government, the Hacker's actions increase the possibility that episodes of corruption and lobbying will be reduced" and were asked to rate how much they agreed with the statement (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*). This item was designed taking inspiration from Saab et al. (2016).

Desire for revenge (only study 1)

Participants had to indicate how much they agreed with the following statement: "Since British people suffer at the hands of the politicians, then politicians should suffer at the hands of the hackers" (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*) this item was designed taking inspiration from Saab et al. (2016).

Effects of Group and Scenario on desire for revenge *(study 1)*

I conducted a two-way ANOVA using the "desire for revenge" as a dependent variable. The main effect of Scenario was statistically significant F (1, 168) = 4.90, p = .03, η_p^2 = .028, whereas the effect of Group was not significant F (1, 168) = .66, p = .41, η_p^2 = .004. The interaction Group*Scenario was not significant F (1, 168) = 2.72, p = .10, η_p^2 =.016.

Social Dominance Orientation

Social Dominance Orientation was measured using four items: "Superior groups should dominate inferior groups", "Group equality should be our ideal", "We should not push for group equality" (reverse-coded item) and "In setting priorities, we must consider all groups" (reverse-coded item), (Pratto et al., 1994: Pratto et al., 2013). Items were preceded by the following instructions (Pratto et al., 2013), "There are many kinds of groups in the world: men and women, ethnic and religious groups, nationalities, political factions. How much do you agree or disagree with these ideas about groups in general? Indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements" (Cronbach's α = .78).

Political efficacy

At the end of the questionnaire there was a section titled "Views about politics and social issues". Participants were asked to indicate their level of agreement (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*) with statements related to their perceived political efficacy and the perceived external efficacy of their government.

Internal political efficacy

Internal political efficacy was measured with three items (1 = *strongly disagree,* 7 = *strongly agree*) measuring how familiar the participant felt with the political agenda and how comfortable in discussing and directly participating in it. The items were: "I have enough ability to understand political matters", "I have the ability to talk about and participate in public affairs" and "I am able to understand most political issues easily". The scale had a good reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha = .87$).

External political efficacy

Political external efficacy was also measured with three items (1 = *strongly disagree,* 7 = *strongly agree*). Two of the items focusing on the willingness of the British Government to take citizens demands into account ("Public officials in the UK do not care much about what people like me think" and "The British government does not pay attention to what the people think when it decides what to do), the third focusing more on the actual ability of the Government to get things done (The current British political system responds to public opinion effectively), (de Moor, 2015). The reliability of the scale was good (Cronbach's $\alpha = .74$, without last item it increases to $\alpha = .83$).

Social Worldviews *(only in Study 1)*

Dangerous World Belief. Beliefs that the social world is "a dangerous and threatening place in which good, decent people's values and way of life are threatened by bad people" (Duckitt, et al., 2002) was measured with a shortened version of Duckitt's 10-item scale (2001) (1 = *strongly disagree,* 7 = *strongly agree*). Examples of items are: "Any day now chaos and anarchy could erupt around us. All the signs are pointing to it", "If a person takes a few sensible precautions,

nothing bad is likely to happen to him or her; we do not live in a dangerous world" (reverse-coded item) and "Every day as society becomes more lawless and bestial, a person's chance of being robbed, assaulted, and even murdered go up and up" (Cronbach's α = .79).

Competitive Jungle Beliefs

Beliefs that the social world is "a competitive jungle characterized by a ruthless, amoral struggle for resources and power in which might is right and winning everything" (was measured with a reduced version of Duckitt et. al's 20-item scale (2002) (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*) (Duckitt, et al., 2002). Examples of items are: "Winning is not the first thing: it's the only thing", "Life is not governed by the "survival of the fittest". We should let compassion and moral laws be our guide" (reverse-coded item) and "It's a dog-eat-dog world where you have to be ruthless at times". There were some problems with this scale, in fact, even though it generally seems to have a very good reliability in this case the reliability was very low (Cronbach's α = .30). The cause of this seems to be the reverse-coded item 4, in fact by deleting this item the reliability goes up to α = .76. The reason of this might be that item number 4: "It is much more important in life to have integrity in your dealings with others than to have money and power" among the items used is the only one that directly compares an abstract concept like the value of integrity with more tangible concepts like the ones of money and power

Descriptive statistics and Zero-order Correlations

Table A.2.1 reports the means, standard deviations of each variable as well as the correlation amongst them.

Table A.2.1: Means and Standard Deviations (SD) for variables in Study 1.

Measures	M	SD	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1. Condit(Denmark/Uk)	_	_	.02	.14	-.03	.04	-.11	.01	.14	-.11	-.09	.13	-.08	.01
2. Condit(Neut/Corrupt)	_	_		.24***	-.08	.26***	.04	-.05	.17*	.10	-.01	.17	-.01	.01
3.Legitimacy	3.45	.97		-	.33***	.37***	.16	.02	.10	.25**	-.15*	-.19	-.05	.01
4. revenge motives	4.17	1.19				-.15	-.07	-.10	-.02	-.11	.-02	-.13*	-.07	.05
5. Social motives	4.68	1.23					.15*	.02	-.12	.24**	-.02	-.08	.04	.00
6. Ext pol eff	3.31	1.03						-.11	.08	-.03	.14	.14	-.09	.02
7. Int. pol eff	4.71	1.34							-.02	.16*	-.02	-.05	.16*	-.06
8. SDO	2.12	1.00								-.07	. -07	.46***	-.21**	.12
9. Protest intent	4.19	1.36									-.09	-.23**	.07	-.03
10. National Id	5.03	1.11										.09	.08	.01
11. Political Orientation	3.17	1.28											-.23**	.12
12. Gender	_	_												-.08
13. Age	19.63	2.05												

Notes: Gender 1(male), 2(female); * < .05, ** < .01, *** <.001. Condition Group: 0= Denmark, 1=UK; Condition Justice: 0 = Neutral, 1 = Corruption

Descriptive statistics and Zero-order Correlations

Table 2.2 reports the means, standard deviations of each variable as well as the correlation amongst them.

Table A.2.2: Means and Standard Deviations (SD) for variables in Study 2.

Measures	M	SD	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. Condit(Denmark/Uk)	_	_	.004	.03	.12	-.52***	-.60***	-.007	-.003	.008	.002	-.10	.02
2. Condit(Neut/Corrupt)	_	_		.086	.43***	-.18***	.01	.03	.06	-.03	.03	-.01	-.01
3. Anger	5.16	1.20			-.08	-.04	.08	-.20**	.17**	.26***	.11	.18**	.11
4. Legitimacy	3.09	1.18				-.18**	-.14*	-.03	.12	-.25***	-.26***	-.13*	-.07
5. Ext pol Efficacy	3.55	1.40					.60***	.02	-.08	.02	-.01	.03	.02
6. Trust	3.54	1.35						-.09	.03*	.15*	.08	.07	.10
7. SDO	2.41	1.14							-.30***	.13	.41***	-.21**	.02
8. Protest action	4.27	1.30								-.09	-.16**	.10	-.02
9. National Id	5.20	1.36						.			.41***	.09	.17**
10. Political Orientation	3.36	1.41										.01	.19**
11. Gender	_	_											
12. Age	37.63	13.07											

Notes: Gender 1(male), 2(female); * < .05, ** < .01, *** <.001. Condition Group: 0 = Denmark, 1 = Uk, Condition Justice: 0 = Neutral, 1 = Corruption

APPENDIX III: CHAPTER 3. SUPPLEMENTARY

In Supplementary 3., I report further details on the other constructs included in Studies 3 and 4, along with their descriptive statistics, zero-order correlations (Tables A.3.1. & A.3.2.), and their inter-related correlations.

Willingness to participate in protest actions (measured only in study 3)

Participants were asked to indicate how likely they would be to participate to various forms of protest action.

The text read: "Below is a list of actions that students may use to express their voice at the University. How likely would you be to take part in these if the opportunity were to arise?" Participants were then asked to indicate the likelihood of them participating to 6 different opportunities for protest (1 = *extremely unlikely*, 7 = *extremely likely*). Items were: 'Sign a petition', 'Attend a public demonstration', 'Attend a student meeting', 'Throw stones during a public demonstration', 'Take part in an arson attack', 'Take part in the blocking of public buildings'. Because this scale included both normative and non-normative forms of protest as one could expect the reliability was quite low $\alpha = .58$.

Factorial Analysis of 'willingness to participate in protest actions'

I did factorial analysis for the 6 items assessing willingness to participate in protest actions. The factorial analysis showed that the items loaded on two different factors.

Factor 1 explained 41. 57% of variance and was defined by the following items: ‘Throw stones during a public demonstration’, ‘Take part in an arson attack’ and ‘Take part in the blocking of public buildings’ this factor therefore indicated ‘disruptive forms of protest’. Factor 2 in turn, explained 28.03% of variance and was defined by the remaining three items ‘Sign a petition’, ‘Attend a public demonstration’ and ‘Attend a student meeting’ therefore indicating ‘peaceful forms of protest’.

Measures	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Condition	-	-	-	-.12	-.04	-.59**	.47**	.17*	.04	.07
2. Perceived Legitimacy of Hackers' actions	2.40	.92		-	.05	.22**	-.19**	-.13*	.11	-.21**
3. Perceived Fairness	4.43	.65			-	.27**	-.17*	-.03	.04	-.02
4. Anger	3.02	1.63				-	-.53**	-.17**	-.01	-.03
5. External Efficacy	4.67	1.62					-	.46**	-.05	.06
6. Internal Efficacy	5.38	1.37						-	.02	.07
7. Gender	-	-							-	-.06
8. Age	35.16	1.37								-

Notes. Condition: 1 = low efficacy, 2 = high efficacy; Gender: 1 = female, 2 = male; $*p \leq .05.$ $**p \leq .01.$

Table A.3.1. Means, Standard Deviations and Correlations among Variables in Study 4.

Measures	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Condition	-	-	-	-.12*	-.10	-.25**	.19**	-.67**	.56**	.01	-.05	-.05
2. Peaceful protest	4.87	1.11		-	.04	.13*	-.20*	.23**	-.20*	.14*	-.16*	.07
3. Disruptive protest	1.52	.96			-	.24**	.30	.12	.04	-.07	.05	.01
4. Perceived Legitimacy of Hackers' actions	3.54	.96				-	-.35**	.34**	-.25**	-.03	.01	.03
5. Perceived Fairness	3.93	1.03					-	-.34**	-.38**	-.05	.12	-.06
6. Anger	4.08	1.53						-	-.59**	-.05	.02	-.01
7. External Efficacy	4.00	1.69							-	.14*	.01	-.11
8. Internal Efficacy	4.96	1.18								-	-.02	-.01
9. Gender	-	-									-	.12
10. Age	19.87	3.62										-

Notes. Condition: 1 = low efficacy, 2 = high efficacy; Gender: 1 = female, 2 = male; $*p \leq .05.$ $**p \leq .01.$

Table A.3.2. Means, Standard Deviations and Correlations among Variables in Study 3.

APPENDIX IV: CHAPTER 4. SUPPLEMENTARY

Supplementary 4.A.: Additional Measures

Political interest

Participants' political interest was measured with one item (1 = *Not at all interested*, 5 = *Very interested*). Participants were asked "Generally, how interested are you in politics?".

British ID pre-conditioning

British identity was measured two times: before and after the conditioning. It was measured with three items (1 = *completely disagree*, 7 = *completely agree*). Participants read "I am pleased to think of myself as British", "I am proud I a British" and "I identify with other people who live in the UK" (Cronbach's $\alpha = .89$).

Internal political efficacy

Internal political efficacy was measured with three items (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*) measuring how familiar the participant felt with the political agenda and how comfortable in discussing and directly participating in it they were. The items were: "I am able to understand political matters", "I am capable of talking about and participate in public affairs" and "I am able to understand most political issues easily".

The scale had a good reliability α = .90.

System justification of British Society

System justification of British Society was measured with four items (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*). Items were: "Everyone has a fair shot at wealth and happiness in the UK", "In general, I find British society to be fair", "Most British policies serve the greater good" and "In general, the British political system operates as it should". The scale had a good reliability (α = .88).

External political efficacy (only study 5)

Political external efficacy was measured with three items (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*). Two of the items focusing on the willingness of the British Government to take citizens' demands into account ("Public officials in the UK do not care much about what people like me think" and "The British government does not pay attention to what the people think when it decides what to do), the third focusing more on the actual ability of the Government to get things done ("The current British political system responds to public opinion effectively"), (de Moor, 2015). The scale had a good reliability (α = .81).

Supplementary 4.B.: Study 5 Additional Materials and Analyses

Here I provide further details on the experimental manipulation of corruption used in study 5.

Design

A between participants design was employed for the purpose of this study. First, participants completed some demographics and three items assessing identification as British. Next, corruption of the system was manipulated.

Specifically, participants were randomly assigned to either a corruption condition (N = 70) or a neutral condition (N = 71). Specifically, participants read a brief instruction:

> "You will be now shown an extract about events in **the UK** from a national newspaper. Please, read and consider carefully the extract. You will then be asked some questions about it."

Then they were presented with one of two mock articles, formatted as coming from the official website of the Guardian. The articles described either a corrupted government (corruption condition) or news about airport regulation of laser pointers (neutral condition). As mentioned in the relevant methods section after having read the article participants were presented with a hacking scenario and asked to indicate how legitimate they felt it was. The texts for the corruption (1) and the neutral (2) condition are presented here in this order:

1. Text for corruption condition:

Twelve MPs implicated in 'cash for influence' scandal

Twelve members of the parliament have been accused of offering to use their political influence in return for payments of thousands of pounds.

Twelve members of the British parliament have been accused of breaking the rules by discussing payments of up to £320,000 to facilitate amendments to the law to benefit a business. The twelve members, now under investigation, belong to the two major British parties, the Conservative and the Labour Party.

The police are currently reviewing the positions of MPs Stephanie Stone (Conservative Party), Paul Burns (Conservative Party), Heather Smith (Labour Party) and Anthony Higgins (Labour Party) who were all secretly recorded discussing financial payment with an undercover reporter posing as a company executive looking to hire MPs for lobbying work.

MR Burns, the former trade and transport secretary, is alleged to have described himself as "like a sort of cab for hire" for up to £6,000 a day.

According to investigators, Mr Burns, who stood down as a minister 2001, claimed to have put pressure on the relevant minister to change policies on behalf of rail and bus operator National Express and, on a separate occasion, on behalf of supermarket giant Tesco.

The *Dispatches* and the *Sunday Times* investigation also alleges that:

Miss Stone, a former health secretary, claimed she was paid £3,000 a day to help a client obtain a key seat on a Government advisory group.

Mr Higgins, the former defence secretary, offered to lead delegations to ministers and said he was looking to turn his knowledge and contacts into "something that frankly makes money", and added he charged £3,000 a day. Mr Higgins said he had not offered to lobby government, nor had he broken any rules.

"I was written to by what seemed to be a reputable American company. They had a website and addresses in both the United States and St James's Square, London "he said in a statement.

"I was asked to visit their offices to have what they described as 'an informal chat'. This took place after the announcement of my decision to leave Parliament before the next election".

He said that "in the course of what I assumed to be a private conversation; I was asked whether I might be interested in joining the advisory board of a UK company that they were thinking of

establishing".

He said he made clear he would not lobby government or "attempt to sell confidential or privileged information arising from my time in government".

Mr Higgins told the undercover reporter he was interested in "translating my knowledge and contacts about the international scene into something that frankly makes money".

2. Text for neutral condition:

UK MPs consider licensing laser pointers in bid to reduce attacks

Pilots concerned about potential for crashes and loss of life after more than 1,200 laser attacks at UK airports last year.

Sales of laser pointers could be licensed in an attempt to protect pilots and train drivers from attacks that could cause fatal crashes.

The devices are more commonly used in meetings and conferences to highlight items in presentations. However, airline pilots are increasingly concerned that pointing laser pointers at planes could cause aircraft to crash.

There were 1,258 laser attacks on planes landing or taking off from UK airports last year, according to the Civil Aviation Authority.

George Spearman, general secretary of the British Airline Pilots Association, said: “Startling, dazzling and distracting a pilot at a critical stage of flight has the potential to cause a crash and loss of life. This is especially a problem for helicopters, which operate close to the ground and are sometimes single-pilot operations.”

The inexpensive pointers can also cause eye damage or temporary blindness. Spearman said he was concerned about the risk of permanent damage to pilots’ and passengers’ eyes as the power of lasers increased.

The first laser attack on an aircraft was reported in 2004, and since 2011 there have been an average of 1,500 annually in the UK. The number of attacks on aircraft using Heathrow airport rose by a quarter last year, to 151. Attacks at Glasgow almost doubled, to 83, and Birmingham airport reported 73. Seventy-two attacks were reported at Manchester, 62 at London City, with 55 at Gatwick.

There were 466 incidents against trains between April 2011 and October 2016, according to British Transport Police.

The business minister Janis Marshall, launching an eight-week call for evidence and said they wanted to ensure regulations kept up with the increasing use of the devices.

Study 6 Additional Materials and Analyses

Here I provide further details on the experimental manipulation of corruption used in study 6.

Design

A between participants design was employed for the purpose of this study. The study was divided in two parts. In part 1, participants completed measures of external political efficacy and national identification (assessed with the same items as study 1) and internal political efficacy. Participants were invited to take the second part of the survey one week after the first one. In the second part of the survey corruption of the system was manipulated.

Participants were randomly assigned to either a corruption condition (N = 101) or a neutral condition (N = 106). Specifically, participants read a brief instruction:

> "You will be now shown an extract about events in **the UK** from a national newspaper. Please, read and consider carefully the extract. You will then be asked some questions about it."

Then they were presented with one of two mock articles, formatted as coming from the official website of the press agency Reuters. The articles described either a corrupted government (corruption condition) or news about airport regulation of laser pointers (neutral condition). As mentioned in the relevant methods section after having read the article participants were presented with a hacking scenario and asked to indicate how legitimate they felt it was.

The texts for the corruption (1) and the neutral (2) condition are presented here in this order:

1. Text for corruption condition:

Twelve MPs implicated in 'cash for influence' scandal

5 MIN READ 

LONDON (Reuters) - Twelve members of the British parliament have been accused of breaking the rules by discussing payments of up to £320,000 to facilitate amendments to the law to benefit a business. The twelve members, now under investigation, belong to the two major British parties, the Conservative and the Labour Party.

The police are currently reviewing the positions of six MPs from the Conservative Party and six MPs from the Labour Party who were all secretly recorded discussing financial payment with an undercover reporter posing as a company executive looking to hire MPs for lobbying work.

One of the MPs, the former trade and transport secretary, is alleged to have described himself as "like a sort of cab for hire" for up to £6,000 a day.

According to investigators, the MP, who stood down as secretary 2001, claimed to have put pressure on the relevant minister to change policies on behalf of rail and bus operators and, on a separate occasion, on behalf of one of the supermarket giants.

The *Dispatches* and the *Sunday Times* investigation also alleges that: a former health secretary, claimed she was paid £3,000 a day to help a client obtain a key seat on a Government advisory group.

A former defence secretary, instead, offered to lead delegations to ministers and said he was looking to turn his knowledge and contacts into "something that frankly makes money", and added he charged £3,000 a day. The MP insists he had not offered to lobby government, nor had he broken any rules.

"I was written to by what seemed to be a reputable American company. They had a website and addresses in both the United States and St James's Square, London "he said in a statement.

"I was asked to visit their offices to have what they described as 'an informal chat'. This took place after the announcement of my decision to leave Parliament before the next election".

He said that "in the course of what I assumed to be a private conversation; I was asked whether I might be interested in joining the advisory board of a UK company that they were thinking of establishing".

He said he made clear he would not lobby government or "attempt to sell confidential or privileged information arising from my time in government".

The MP told the undercover reporter he was interested in "using my knowledge and contacts about the international scene to make money".

2. Text for neutral condition:

UK MPs consider licensing laser pointers in bid to reduce attacks

LONDON (Reuters) - Sales of laser pointers could be licensed in an attempt to protect pilots and train drivers from attacks that could cause fatal crashes. A cross-party delegation of twelve members of the British Parliament are preparing to table a measure.

The devices are more commonly used in meetings and conferences to highlight items in presentations. However, airline pilots are increasingly concerned that pointing laser pointers at planes could cause aircraft to crash. A delegation of six MPs from the Conservative Party and six MPs from the Labour Party are currently preparing a measure to amend existing regulations.

There were 1,258 laser attacks on planes landing or taking off from UK airports last year, according to the Civil Aviation Authority.

The general secretary of the British Airline Pilots Association said: “Startling, dazzling and distracting a pilot at a critical stage of flight has the potential to cause a crash and loss of life. This is especially a problem for helicopters, which operate close to the ground and are sometimes single-pilot operations.”

The inexpensive pointers can also cause eye damage or temporary blindness. Spearman said he was concerned about the risk of permanent damage to pilots’ and passengers’ eyes as the power of lasers increased.

The first laser attack on an aircraft was reported in 2004, and since 2011 there have been an average of 1,500 annually in the UK. The number of attacks on aircraft using Heathrow airport rose by a quarter last year, to 151. Attacks at Glasgow almost doubled, to 83, and Birmingham airport reported 73. Seventy-two attacks were reported at Manchester, 62 at London City, with 55 at Gatwick.

There were 466 incidents against trains between April 2011 and October 2016, according to British Transport Police.

The MPs are launching an eight-week call for evidence and said they wanted to ensure regulations kept up with the increasing use of the devices.

APPENDIX V: CHAPTER 5 SUPPLEMENTARY

Supplementary 5.A.: Additional Measures

Measures of warmth and competence

Participants were asked to evaluate, from a Prolific participants perspective, how they view the Prolific Support system in terms of competence (competent, confident, capable and skillful) and in terms of warmth (friendly, warm, good-natured and sincere) by rating them for each one of the attributes on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = *not at all*, 5 = *extremely*).

Measures were adapted from (Cuddy et al., 2009) and reliability was $\alpha = .92$ for competence and $\alpha = .95$ for warmth.

Internal efficacy

Internal efficacy was measured with two items: “I have enough ability to understand the criteria for rejecting a submission on Prolific” and *“*I have enough ability to talk about and participate in decisions about how submissions should be evaluated on Prolific”.

Measures were adapted from Niemi et al. (1991).

Supplementary 5.B.: Additional Materials and Analyses

Here I provide further details on the experimental manipulations of external efficacy and politicized collective identity used in study 7.

Design

A between participants design was employed for the purpose of this study. The design was a 2 x 2 experimental design. Both external efficacy (low vs high) and identity (politicized collective identity vs neutral) were manipulated. Participants were first randomly assigned to either a low external efficacy condition (N = 154) or a high external efficacy condition (N = 153). Specifically, participants read a brief introduction:

> Think about a study you recently took part in, on the platform Prolific Academic. You carefully read the instructions and the participation criteria which clearly stated you were a suitable participant. Moreover, you were careful in answering the questions honestly and put a lot of thoughts in your answers.
>
> The day after completing the study you receive a notification that your submission was rejected. The reason provided was that you failed two out of three attention checks.
> You find this unfair because you really did not see any attention check despite putting a lot of attention in the study. `You also read a post on a forum in which many other people complain about being rejected from the same study for the same reason.
>
> Due to the fact that you really have put effort and time in the study, you first contact the researchers to ask them to reverse the rejection, but because you receive no answer you contact prolific support. In your email you provide a detailed explanation of why you think your submission should not have been rejected.

Then the text changed depending on the condition:

Low efficacy manipulation text

> In response to your complaint, Prolific Support does not agree to help you discuss the matter with the researcher or make enquiry on your behalf. They do not seem to take your complaint very seriously. They do not show any interest in investigating the matter and just tell you that there is no option to review the rejection-approval process.

High efficacy manipulation text

> In response to your complaint, Prolific Support agrees to mediate between you and the researcher. They assure you that they will take your complaint very seriously. They tell you they will investigate the matter and that there will be an option to revise the whole rejection-approval process if anomalies are to be found in the rejection criteria used by this specific researcher.

Following the external efficacy manipulation participants were presented with items assessing *perceived internal* and *external efficacy*, *perceived fairness of prolific support system* and *anger at the system*. Participants were then again randomly assigned to either a politicized collective identity condition (N = 140) or a neutral condition (N = 167).

Specifically, participants read:

> ***Politicized collective identity condition text***
>
> There have been episodes in the past where unsatisfied participants of Prolific have successfully reached out to each other to obtain what they wanted from the Prolific Academic Platform. Think of a way in which you and other participants from Prolific could join forces and by working together obtain your desired outcome.

Neutral condition text

> Someone you know is planning to come visit your country this year, they were planning to come during the month of April, but they have not made their minds up yet.
>
> Would you recommend April as a month to come visit your country? Why yes? Why not? Please provide a brief answer indicating why April would/would not be a good month.

Following the politicized collective identity manipulation all participants read the text describing the Prolific Support website being hacked:

> A few weeks after the rejection of yours and other peoples' submissions, you hear that a group of hackers has attacked the Prolific Support website and defaced the home page.
>
> Instead of the usual webpage containing the information about Prolific, now there is a large red writing stating, 'LEARN TO DO YOUR JOB'.
>
> As a result, Prolific takes the website down and it is not possible to access the website for the successive two or three days.