



KLI PhD Seed Money fund

June 2023

The KLI seedgrant #2023.03 is granted to Enzo Cáceres Quezada, and Marty Colombo

For the project 'Coping with increasing socioeconomic inequalities: Class-blindfolding as coping strategy for the wealthy and class-cognizance for the poor'

Amount: € 3000,-

KLI Research Committee:

Prof. Dr. Ilja van Beest

Dr. Iris van Sintemaartensdijk

Dr. Barbara Nevicka

KLI General Manager:

Hannah Timmermans

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'HT', located below the name Hannah Timmermans.

KLI Research Director:

Prof. Dr. Ilja van Beest

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Ilja van Beest', located below the name Prof. Dr. Ilja van Beest.

Application Form SeedCorn Grants KLI

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Do your supervisors agree to this research project? ¹	YES		

1a Applicant 2

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Do your supervisors agree to this research project? ¹	YES		

¹ It is important to supervisors don't object against time being spend outside of the framework or the dissertation research

Title of the proposal:

Coping with increasing socioeconomic inequalities:

Class-blindfolding as coping strategy for the wealthy and class-cognizance for the poor

Study details (max 500 words):

E.g., describe the core research question(s), scientific and/or practical relevance and novelty/contribution to the literature. Include –where appropriate- information on design and measures.

Socioeconomic inequalities have increased, including in the Netherlands (Coenen, 2017). While the wealthier half of the Dutch population has experienced an increase in their financial status, the poorest individuals have remained as economically deprived as four decades ago in terms of purchasing power (Salverda, 2014). The perception of higher inequality has been linked to anomie and a preference for authoritarian leadership (Spronget al., 2019), underscoring the urgent need to address socioeconomic inequality in order to safeguard democracy.

However, merely recognizing the existence of inequalities does not automatically translate into efforts to counter them. In class-blind settings, inclusion may involve acknowledging inequality while emphasizing individuality and merit-based opportunities for upward mobility (Madeira et al., 2019). Notably, the perception of individual mobility has been shown to legitimize existing inequalities (Day & Fiske, 2017). By remaining oblivious to class-based differences, policies can inadvertently equalize the wealthy (dominant group) and the poor (minoritized group) by favoring individually-focused approaches over structural ones (Klebl & Jetten, 2023). This can perpetuate

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the reproduction of privilege while class-blindfolding serves as a coping mechanism employed by dominant groups to manage the threat posed by increasing inequalities. Paradoxically, class-blindfolding may even contribute to further exacerbating these inequalities (van Dijk et al., 2020). However, in minoritized groups, the experience of increasing inequalities may instead elicit a sense of challenge, leading to heightened class-cognizance (namely low class-blindfolding) (Scheepers, 2008).

With this, the following research questions are posed: 1. How does the perception of high and increasing inequality influence the endorsement of class-blindfolding? 2. How does class membership impact this relationship? 3. How does the extent to which people endorse class-blindfolding impact their behavioral intentions towards inequalities? In Study 1 and 2, we aim to create and validate a measure of class-blindfolding, drawing upon existing measurements of racial color-blindness (Knowles et al., 2009). Subsequently, Studies 3 and 4 will experimentally examine whether the perception of high and increasing inequality, as opposed to low and decreasing inequality, leads to higher class-blindfolding in the dominant group and lower in the minoritized group as a coping strategy. Moreover, we anticipate that higher endorsement of class-blindfolding will result in preferring individually-based policies aimed at addressing inequalities, while lower class-blindfolding will be associated with preferring structurally-focused policies.

Hypotheses:

- 1.1. High and increasing inequality will lead to higher threat and class-blindfolding in the dominant group on average.
- 1.2. Higher class-blindfolding will lead to prefer individually-based policies.
- 2.1. High and increasing inequality will lead to lower threat and class-blindfolding in the minoritized group on average.
- 2.2. Lower class-blindfolding will lead to prefer structurally-based policies.

This research seeks to bridge the gap between diversity ideologies (identity-conscious vs identity-blind), social change, and socioeconomic inequality research. The studies investigate the impact of living in an increasingly unequal society on individuals' emotional responses (threat and challenge) and attitudinal tendencies (class-blindfolding), as well as their behavioral orientations (policy preference). As such, understanding the psychological mechanisms triggered by living in an unequal society can better inform interventions to promote equality and boost democracy.

Justification for requested funds:

Indicate why you need the requested amount (provide quotes if you have those; be specific about how you will spend the money, explain if you can obtain funds from other sources or not).

The total requested amount is €3.000. This fund will finance the conduction of the four studies comprising the current research proposal. As this research project combines elements of our individual PhDs while falling outside of our PhD research plans, substantial funds beyond our PhD grants are necessary to make this joint effort possible. In particular, we will use the requested amount to cover the costs of participants fees, Prolific fees, and related 20% VAT.

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We deem four studies appropriate to intertwine the insights coming from different lines of research (i.e., economic inequality, social change, identity-blindfolding), as well as to achieve robust investigation of the model at hand. In doing so, we aim to create and validate the class-blindfolding scale and validate the experimental manipulation. In study 1 and 2, we will test the construct validity and reliability of our newly devised measure of class-blindfolding drawing on racial color-blindness existing measures. Study 1 will comprise Exploratory Factor Analysis and Confirmatory Factor Analysis to select and assess the factor structure of our items. Study 2 will seek to confirm such factor structure in a new sample and assess convergent, discriminant, and predictive validity of class-blindfolding (Flake et al. 2017). In study 3, we will test the theoretical validity and effectiveness of our manipulation of increasing (vs decreasing) economic inequality (Chester & Lasko, 2022). Lastly, in study 4 we will experimentally test the effect of changing economic inequality on class-blindfolding as coping mechanism and policy preference as behavioral outcome.

For each study, we calculated the ideal sample size from a combination of power analysis in G*Power Version 3.1.9.4 (Faul et al., 2007) and the findings of previous relevant research. Drawing on Howard (2016), the ideal sample size for Study 1 (EFA-CFA) and Study 2 (CFA-construct validity) is $N=300$ each. For Study 3, with a power of .90 and alpha .05 to detect an effect size of $f=.20$ based on initial evidence on manipulating social change, the minimum sample size is $N=265$ (ANCOVA). We will aim to collect responses from 300 participants to ensure robustness of our results. Finally, based on a power of .90 and alpha .05 to detect an effect size of $f=.15$ based on Study 4 of Peters et al. (2022), the minimum sample size for Study 4 must be $N=469$ (ANCOVA). We will aim to collect responses from 500 participants to ensure robustness of our results.

All the studies will be conducted on Prolific and will cost, respectively and approximately, €362, €723, €362, and €1808. The total costs sum up to approximately €3254.

Additional costs should not exceed €254 and will be equally divided between the applicants and covered using our individual PhD grants.

Expected Outputs:

Please provide a list of expected outputs (e.g. indicate where you want to publish and/or present the results, who will benefit from developed practical tools, etc.).

We aim to achieve the following outputs:

- Publish two scientific articles in Political Psychology Journal, Journal of Behavioral and Experimental Economics, or Journal of Social Change. The first article will show the validation of the class-blindfolding scale, comprising Studies 1 and 2. The second article will focus on the experimental manipulation of increasing (vs decreasing) socioeconomic inequality and its downstream effects on class-blindfolding and policy preferences, comprising Studies 3 and 4.
- We envision presenting our results in the next KLI and ASPO conferences.

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- We seek to socialize our results with policy makers via TNO Government subsection and national worker unions (e.g. FNV) working on socioeconomic inequality in the Netherlands.

Time plan:

Please provide information on when you want to do the proposed study and when you expect to deliver the expected outputs.

We expect to start working on this research project soon after receiving the KLI Seedmoney fund, approximately around the end of June 2023.

We plan to conduct and analyze the data of Study 1 and Study 2 between the months of July and August 2023, and to conduct and analyze the data of Study 3 between August and September 2023. We will finally conduct and analyze the data of Study 4 between October and November 2023. The writing of the two journal articles will start in December 2023 and continue until April 2024, by which we will be ready to submit both our manuscripts.

By the end of the current year and beginning of the next one, we expect to be in a good stand to submit our proposals to both KLI and ASPO conferences.

Data Management and Ethics approval:

Please provide information on if the project data could be relevant for reuse and how these data will be stored so that they are suitable for reuse. Also indicate which of the applicants will request approval from their ethical committee of their university.

We are persuaded that the data produced could be relevant for reuse. Beyond its utility for further research and stakeholders, we endorse the practices encouraged by the Open Science Framework to make research reliable and researchers accountable. Therefore, we will pre-register our studies and will publish the data on OSF. Moreover, we will archive the data at both UU and UvA repositories to allow other researchers to make use of it. Lastly, Enzo Cáceres Quezada will request approval from the UvA ethical committee – which requires and provides the means for archiving data as well.

Estimated budget:

Study 1 participants fee + Prolific fee + VAT 20%	258,25 + 86.08 + 17.22 = € 361.55
Study 2 participants fee + Prolific fee + VAT 20%	258,25 + 86.08 + 17.22 = € 361.55
Study 3 participants fee + Prolific fee + VAT 20%	516.50 + 172.17 + 34.43 = € 723.10
Study 4 participants fee + Prolific fee + VAT 20%	1291.08 + 430.36 + 86.07 = € 1807.52

	<u>3253.72</u> +
Amount of Requested funding:	€ 3000

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