

"So you're just a normal person. Just like me?"

Difference Evasion in Managing an Advantaged Identity and Legitimising Inequality

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## Contents

Chapter 1	General Introduction	4
Chapter 2	How white people manage the weight of the past: The role of advantaged identity strategies in linking colonialism to current racial inequality	23
Chapter 3	Cisheterosexual people in post-closeted times: The role of evading difference in managing an advantaged identity and legitimising inequality	65
Chapter 4	Inequality framings shape cisheterosexual people's construals of LGBTQ-cisheterosexual difference and policy preferences to address inequality	101
Chapter 5	General Discussion	138
	Supplementary Materials for Chapter 2	164
	Supplementary Materials for Chapter 3	207
	Supplementary Materials for Chapter 4	266
	References	292
	English Summary	321
	Nederlandse Samenvatting	325
	Contributions	330

## Chapter 1

### General Introduction

Liberal societies claim to value equality and diversity, yet they are increasingly unequal and resistant to difference. In *Wit is ook een kleur* (2016), Dutch filmmaker Sunny Bergman explores this duality by examining why liberal white Dutch people react strongly to discussions about race and how this relates to their own whiteness. By showing children from liberal backgrounds characters who differed only in skin colour, she found they were three times more likely to perceive a white character as the 'boss' and a black character as the 'naughtiest'. Her findings echo research showing that by age five, children recognise group-based inequalities (Zhang et al., 2024), which often trickle down into prejudices despite their parents' attempts to "not see" race (Cox et al., 2022). Indeed, group differences take root in language early on through social categories (J. Turner, 1987), defining group belonging and shaping people's own social identity (Oakes, 2001). As navigating social categories invites individuals to situate themselves in relation to their group's position (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), employing them allows those advantaged to pinpoint inequality, as well as to either legitimise or question their place within it. While white people in Bergman's documentary often rejected racial categories on the grounds that they may legitimise inequality, this prevented them in turn from situating themselves in relation to their whiteness—preserving a claim to speak from an unbiased, neutral position instead of coming to terms with it. This dissertation addresses this crossroads by examining how advantaged group members construe social categories as they manage their social identity, shaping whether they legitimise or question inequality.

Bergman's documentary illustrates how white people often reject racial categories to maintain a sense of neutrality. In doing so, it reflects a broader ideological framework within

## GENERAL INTRODUCTION

liberal societies—where universalism and individuals are often prioritised over group distinctions. By enshrining principles of universal formal equality among individuals—such as those in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights—societies, especially after WWII, sought to diminish the prominence of group-based distinctions that were deemed the cause of oppression, such as the Holocaust itself. Even class-based distinctions, long central to Western social structures, became increasingly reframed as relics of outdated political frameworks over the last century (Piketty, 2014)—while remaining fully operative in everyday life and fueling inequality in turn (Kraus et al., 2017). With history itself declared at an ‘end’, the very collapse of the Soviet Union and the fall of the Berlin Wall were heralded as the triumph of liberal democracy (Fukuyama, 2012). In the wake of efforts to equalise individuals, the use of social categories and inequality became increasingly conflated.

These equalising efforts coincide with widening inequalities in Western Europe and in relation to societies in the global South. While some minoritised groups<sup>1</sup> in Western Europe have gained legal status comparable to those historically advantaged—for instance, through the abolition of racial segregation, the depathologisation of homosexuality, and same-sex marriage—inequality between the top 1% and the bottom 50% has increased 2.55-fold times since 1980 (Chancel et al., 2022). Public wealth, which accounted for nearly 60% of national income in 1970, fell to near zero or even negative in some Western European countries by 2020 (e.g., UK: -106%) (Chancel et al., 2022). At the same time, the inequality between the global North and the global South has increased since the 1960s, now approaching early 20th-century levels—at the height of Western imperialism (Chancel et al., 2022; Hickel, 2018). While these widening inequalities may at first appear at odds with the liberal ideal of individual equality, this dissertation argues that downplaying social categories has not prevented inequality but instead reinforced it (Duyvendak, 2022; Whyte, 2019).

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<sup>1</sup> The terms *minoritised* and *disadvantaged* are interchangeably employed in this dissertation.

## GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The Netherlands provides a paradigmatic case for examining how advantaged group members construe social categories as they manage their social identity in liberal, increasingly unequal societies. While the country is often praised for its commitment to individual freedoms—being the first to legalise same-sex marriage, for instance—economic inequalities have widened over the past decades. Indeed, since the late 1970s, income inequality has grown markedly, with the bottom decile experiencing a 19% decline in real income by 2011, while the top decile saw a net gain of 26%. Wealth inequality has also intensified, with the top 10% of households expanding their share of total wealth from approximately 40% in the 1980s to 60% in recent years, while the bottom half has remained effectively asset-poor (Salverda, 2014). This reflects the broader trend described in Western European societies as well as in relation to societies in the global South (Chancel et al., 2022; Hickel et al., 2021). Rising economic inequality has been linked to anomy and increased support for authoritarian leadership (Sprong et al., 2019), and the Netherlands is indeed currently governed by a right-wing cabinet led by the far right (Moses, 2024) as well as other European countries.

To address this intersection of equalising efforts and widening inequalities, this dissertation examines two intergroup settings where equalising outlooks have taken deep root in the Netherlands: the ethnic-racial setting, on the one hand, and the sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) setting, on the other hand. By answering how advantaged group members construe social categories as they manage their social identity, I explore whether downplaying social categories prevents people from developing structural understandings of inequality and, in turn, enables those advantaged to blur their dominance—broadening the scope of the observations featured by Bergman’s documentary on liberal, white Dutch people.

### **Social Categories, Difference, and Inequality**

European societies downplay ethnic-racial categories as meaningful concepts till today (Simon, 2017). Arguably, this reluctance to ethnic-racial categorisation reflects an attempt to overcome ethnonationalism, the Holocaust, and the very European colonial history (Juang et al., 2021). Claiming the achievement of individuals' equality once equalising laws are passed (e.g., human rights, same-sex marriage) may indeed translate into the blurring of social categories that have been used to discriminate against. In ethnic-racial and SOGI contexts, however, research suggests that members of advantaged groups may be especially prone to adopting such stances. In blurring social categories, advantaged group members may dispel the threat of being seen as part of advantaged groups and, thereby, from being associated with benefiting from group-based perks (Knowles et al., 2014; Rios, 2022). However, whether and how the blurring of social categories at the intergroup level takes root in ingroup processes among members of advantaged groups—how they manage their advantage—has received scant empirical attention.

At the intergroup level, research suggests that equalising outlooks can reflect, on the one hand, in downplaying the role of social categories in shaping people's lives (difference evasion, e.g., "I don't see colour/sexual orientation and gender identity, I see people") (Knowles et al., 2009; Smith & Shin, 2014). On the other hand, equalising outlooks can reflect in downplaying inequality itself by invoking existing formal equality among individuals (inequality evasion, e.g., "Black/LGBTQ people are not disadvantaged anymore") (Brown et al., 2013; Brownfield et al., 2018). Modern forms of prejudice against ethnic-racial and SOGI minoritised groups rely on this very blurring of social categories and, in turn, the obscuring of associated positions of advantage and disadvantage. Examples include casting minoritised groups' identity claims as detrimental to inclusion (Bilali, 2014; Morrison & Morrison, 2011), framing them as seeking preferential treatment (Salvati et al., 2023), and

## GENERAL INTRODUCTION

even assuming they enjoy above-average wealth, as in the 'gay affluence' myth – the tendency to inaccurately assume that LGBTQ people earn a higher income than cisheterosexual people (Bettinsoli et al., 2022). Meanwhile, ethnic-racial and SOGI inequalities remain pervasive in contexts that claim to uphold individual equality—including the Netherlands (Baalbergen & Jaspers, 2023; Buser et al., 2018; Drydakis, 2022; Geijtenbeek & Plug, 2018; OECD, 2020; Thijssen et al., 2021; van Elk et al., 2019). As such, downplaying social categories has enabled new ways of managing inequality rather than prevented it.

This raises my first specific research question: How do members of advantaged groups navigate difference and inequality in liberal, increasingly unequal contexts? (SQ1) Research indicates that those who evade difference (e.g., “I don’t see colour, I see people”), even when acknowledging inequality (e.g., “Black people are disadvantaged because of racism”), may still disengage from challenging it—resembling patterns observed among those who outright deny inequality. In contrast, only those who acknowledged both difference and inequality exhibited support for challenging inequality (Mekawi et al., 2020). Drawing on self-categorisation theory (Oakes, 2001; J. Turner, 1987), this dissertation posits that acknowledging difference may prompt individuals to construe themselves and others as members of social groups. When advantaged group members acknowledge both difference and inequality, thus, they may be more likely to attribute inequality between people to external, relatively stable constraints (e.g., group-based historical advantage) rather than to internal characteristics such as inherent deservingness, merit, or talent (Vasilyeva & Lombrozo, 2020). While ethnic-racial and SOGI evasion have been documented (Awad & Jackson, 2016; Brownfield et al., 2018; Mekawi et al., 2020; Smith & Shin, 2014), the interplay between evading difference and inequality, and how this relates to distinct strategies to managing an advantaged identity, remains empirically unexamined.



## GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Chapters 2 and 3 apply these insights to both ethnic-racial and SOGI contexts, adopting a person-centred approach that combines qualitative interviews with quantitative surveys. A person-centred approach employs subgroups of individuals as the unit of analysis (e.g., profiles based on multiple constructs) (Osborne & Sibley, 2017). In doing so, these chapters examine whether distinguishing between advantaged individuals who endorse high versus low levels of difference evasion—while exhibiting similarly low levels of inequality evasion, for instance—reveals key variations in how they relate to their group-based advantage. In turn, this distinction may help explain whether and how they are more prone to legitimising or questioning inequality.

Social categories differentiate groups by evoking explanations for their differences (Oakes, 2001; Reicher & Hopkins, 2001). Accordingly, the ways advantaged individuals engage with these categories may reflect how they manage their own group's standing as well as how they address inequality. Blatant prejudice, on the one hand, relies on an internalist view of social categories that attributes category members' characteristics (e.g., white people as advantaged or black people as disadvantaged) to traits internal to the category itself (e.g., "Some groups must be at the top and others at the bottom" as inherent deservingness to rule over others, or "Anyone who is willing to work hard has a good chance of succeeding" as meritocratic beliefs) (Cimpian & Salomon, 2014; Ho et al., 2015; McCoy & Major, 2007). Applied to inequality, this internalist view thus often serves to legitimise it (Hussak & Cimpian, 2015). Internalist views of social categories have thus provided the grounds for conflating their use with inequality, mirroring the patterns observed among individuals who evade both difference and inequality (Mekawi et al., 2020). In contrast, those who evade difference while acknowledging inequality may rely on downplaying social categories altogether rather than wielding them to justify inequality—although still disengaging from challenging it.

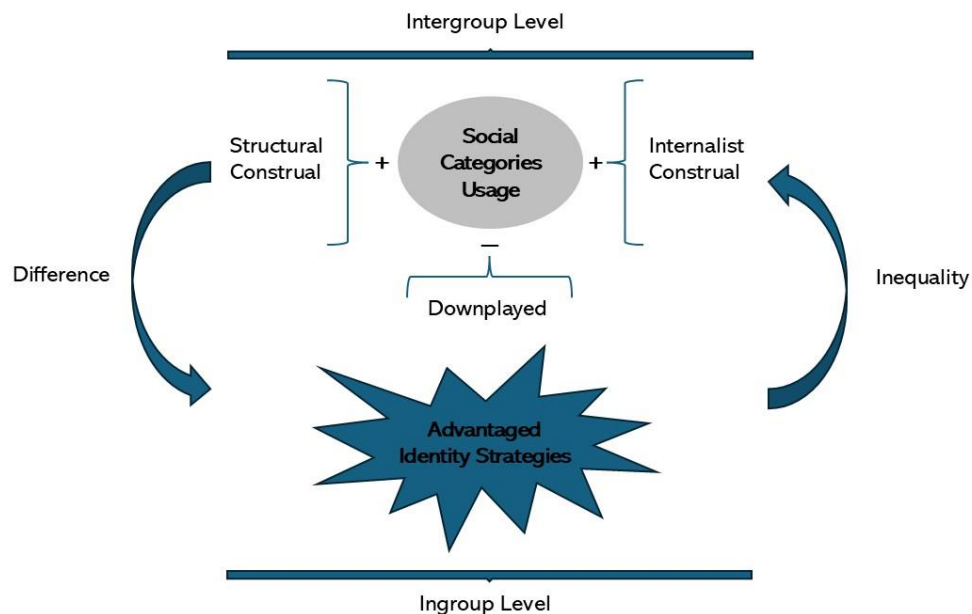
## GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Social categories, however, can also be understood from a structural perspective. Structural views of social categories emphasise external and relatively stable constraints (e.g., historical oppression or current institutional discrimination) that shape category members' characteristics. Research has shown that framing inequality through a structural view increased the likelihood that both children and adults rectify inequality and endorse compensatory measures rather than perpetuating it (Vasil et al., 2024). As such, structural views of social categories align with the profile of individuals who acknowledge both difference and inequality, as they were inclined to challenge inequality by supporting measures aimed at external, relatively stable constraints underpinning racial inequality (Mekawi et al., 2020).

Given that these construals—whether internalist, downplayed, or structural—represent different ways of reasoning about the relationship between social category members and their context (i.e., social reasoning), the perspective adopted may meaningfully reflect how advantaged individuals manage their own group's standing. While research has documented how distinct views of social categories impact the lives of minoritised group members (Phalet & Baysu, 2020), how they relate to advantaged group members' identity strategies remains, however, largely underexplored (Amemiya et al., 2023). For an overview of these relationships, see Figure 1.

**Figure 1**

*Conceptual Map of the Dissertation*



*Note.* The figure illustrates the relationship between social categories and advantaged identity strategies. The model embeds the ingroup level (bottom) within the intergroup level (top), emphasising how social categories shift between structural, downplaying, and internalist perspectives as construals of intergroup difference and inequality vary. "+" and "-" signs indicate positive and negative relationships regarding social categories usage, respectively.

### **Social Categories and Advantaged Identity Strategies**

Building on this, my second specific research question asks: How do members of advantaged groups manage their standing? (SQ2) Prior research shows that group status shapes attitudes toward inequality. In particular, holding an advantaged position can motivate people to maintain it. For instance, children aged 3 to 8 who were assigned to an advantaged group (i.e., receiving more resources) were less likely to perceive the inequality as unfair and less inclined to rectify it compared to those assigned to a disadvantaged group (Rizzo & Killen, 2020). As attaining positive self-esteem is a fundamental task of the self—particularly in Western contexts (Heine et al., 1999; Tajfel & Turner, 1979)—those in advantaged

## GENERAL INTRODUCTION

positions may maintain their positive self-esteem by reinforcing ingroup identification and strengthening categorization, both symbolically (i.e., differentiation) and materially (i.e., inequality). Accordingly, heightened identification with an advantaged identity and strengthened categorization, in the social-psychological tradition, have often been linked to increasing inequality (Billig, 1985; Oakes, 2001; Park & Judd, 2005). This notion, historically rooted in analyses of fascism in the first half of the 20th century (Adorno et al., 1950), in turn equates tolerance and the absence of prejudice with decreasing identification and deflecting categorization. However, this approach has drawn criticism for obscuring how inequality may be perpetuated through equalising outlooks—particularly those that downplay categorisation (Hopkins et al., 1997).

Recent work has thus broadened the scope of how advantaged groups manage their standing to preserve positive self-esteem in liberal contexts (Goren & Plaut, 2012; Knowles et al., 2014; Leach et al., 2001; Shuman et al., 2024). In the Netherlands and other liberal societies—where procedural justice and equality before the law are emphasised—social standing is often framed as a reflection of effort and talent, both prescriptively and descriptively (e.g., meritocratic beliefs) (McCoy & Major, 2007). Because meritocratic beliefs attribute inequality to internal traits rather than structural factors, advantaged group members confronting intergroup inequality may experience a threat of being perceived as structurally advantaged beneficiaries of non-meritocratic perks (Knowles et al., 2014). To manage this threat, some may reinforce their ingroup identification to defend their standing, strengthening categorisation through internalist perspectives, as the social-psychological tradition has suggested. Others, however, may distance themselves from their advantaged identity by emphasising their individuality instead, thereby reducing the salience of social categories—echoing the pattern portrayed by Bergman’s documentary on liberal white Dutch people (Shuman et al., 2024). Whether by strengthening or weakening their advantaged

## GENERAL INTRODUCTION

identification, both strategies may ultimately serve to leave group-based inequality intact at best—and to exacerbate it at worst.

Those who reject meritocratic beliefs, in contrast, may perceive inequality as a reputational threat to their advantaged group (Knowles et al., 2014). In dispelling this threat, they may favour structural views of social categories—over both internalist ones or downplaying their relevance. As structural views cite external, relatively stable constraints that shape category members' features (e.g., group-based historical advantage) (Vasil et al., 2024; Vasilyeva & Lombrozo, 2020), beholders may be prompted to acknowledge their own advantaged position in turn (Goren & Plaut, 2012). In examining whether and how equalising outlooks takes root in advantaged group members' identity processes, thus, this dissertation extends on Bergman's documentary aiming to better understand how advantaged group members can instead question inequality as they manage their social identity.

Existing literature on advantaged identity strategies largely relies on quantitative, cross-sectional research, focusing on settler colonial contexts (e.g., U.S.) and ethnic-racial intergroup relations (Goren & Plaut, 2012; Shuman et al., 2024). Addressing these limitations, this dissertation employs both qualitative (i.e., interviews) (Chapters 2 and 3) and quantitative methods (i.e., surveys) (Chapters 2, 3, and 4). Also, it incorporates cross-sectional (Chapters 2 and 3) and experimental approaches (Chapter 4) by examining a different context: the Netherlands, a European former colonial empire. Moreover, it broadens the scope of advantaged identity strategies beyond ethnic-racial intergroup relations to examine the SOGI setting—all domains where equalising outlooks have taken deep root.

Chapters 2 and 3 examine how white and cisheterosexual Dutch people manage their advantaged social identity, respectively. Building on these findings, Chapter 4 tests the causal relationship between inequality framings (high vs. low vs. control) and difference evasion. It further examines how individual differences (e.g., political orientation, distancing from

## GENERAL INTRODUCTION

cisgender status by stating “I’m just a man, not a so-called cisman”) shape responses to inequality framings, as well as its downstream effects on policy preferences. To date, no research has systematically examined how difference and inequality evasion take root in advantaged group members’ identity processes, implying views of social categories with ideologically divergent implications. Identifying their ideological correlates is thus key to determining whether such divergent views of social categories stem from these foundations.

### **Social Categories Shifting Between the Legitimation and Questioning of Inequality**

This leads to my third and last specific research question: How do advantaged group members legitimise or question inequality? (SQ3) As suggested above, some individuals who evade difference may still acknowledge inequality. However, as mentioned, previous work suggests that they may be just as reluctant to challenge inequality as those who outright deny its existence (Mekawi et al., 2020). Experimental evidence further supports this idea. For instance, white antiegalitarian people in the U.S. strategically evaded difference and endorsed equal treatment rhetoric, which in turn served to justify opposition to structural policies (Chow & Knowles, 2016; Knowles et al., 2009). Mirroring structural views of social categories, structural policies target external, stable factors that sustain group-based inequality, such as institutional practices embedded in school curricula, healthcare systems, and labour markets (Chater & Loewenstein, 2023).

Structural views of social categories are often institutionally prevented by national legislation as well. For instance, anti-discrimination policies in Western European countries often prohibit the use of group categories in decision-making—by forbidding the registration of SOGI or ethnic-racial identity (European Commission, 2017, 2023). As a result, whether a legal measure disadvantages a minoritised group can be dismissed under the pretense of neutrality (i.e., non-discrimination) (Spade, 2015). In turn, the potential of social categories to highlight external, stable factors that uphold inequality instead has been historically

## GENERAL INTRODUCTION

obfuscated (Vasilyeva & Lombrozo, 2020). While employing social categories through an internalist view legitimises inequality, downplaying them may prevent people from developing structural views of inequality instead and allow some to perpetuate it in the name of justice.

Liberal contexts, where individual equality is praised, are thus unlikely to prompt advantaged group members to cultivate self-esteem by reinforcing their ingroup identification—as the social-psychological tradition once suggested. As liberal contexts are burgeoningly unequal, examining whether members of advantaged groups contribute to widening inequalities by distancing themselves from their advantage thus warrants further inquiry. Research suggests that those who do so are also prone to endorsing strong meritocratic beliefs (Knowles et al., 2014; Shuman et al., 2024). By diluting group-based, structural inequality into individuals' trajectories based on merit, research has shown that meritocratic portrayals of inequality lead people to perpetuate inequality (van Dijk et al., 2020; Vasil et al., 2024). While meritocratic beliefs align with liberal standards of procedural justice, as mentioned, anti-egalitarians can strategically invoke these principles to resist efforts aimed at improving the lives of minoritised groups—alleging infringements on equality before the law (Chow & Knowles, 2016). As such, holding the anti-egalitarian belief in inherent deservingness to rule over others (i.e., social dominance orientation, Ho et al., 2015) has also been associated with evading difference (Knowles et al., 2009; Worthington et al., 2008). Social dominance orientation and meritocratic beliefs represent ideological correlates of, respectively, blatant and system-justifying forms of prejudice in the social-psychological tradition (N. Kteily et al., 2012; Ledgerwood et al., 2011).

Chapters 2 and 3 thus examine whether ideologically divergent implications stem from distinct profiles of white and cisheterosexual people. They do so by operationalising beliefs in inherent deservingness to rule over others (i.e., social dominance orientation, Ho et

## GENERAL INTRODUCTION

al., 2015), and the descriptive belief in merit and talent as the basis of social standing (i.e., meritocratic beliefs, McCoy & Major, 2007). Building on this, Chapter 4 tests whether evading difference in response to inequality leads people to favour individual-level policies at the expense of structural ones. In doing so, Chapter 4 examines whether acknowledging difference instead increases support for structural, group-based policies.

Individual-level policies focus on altering perceptions and behaviours, such as awareness campaigns and anti-bias training—in contrast to structural policies targeting external, stable factors sustaining intergroup inequality (Chater & Loewenstein, 2023). Individual-level approaches have dominated behavioural public policy—despite often yielding mixed results or even backfiring. For instance, conditional cash transfers requiring low-income families to send children to school or meet health benchmarks have shown modest short-term gains, while school dropout rates and health disparities remained largely unchanged (Hall, 2008). Diversity training programs aimed at curbing discrimination often lack empirical support and have been associated with post-treatment reactance (Dobbin & Kalev, 2018; Kalev et al., 2006). Similarly, encouraging women to combat bias through assertiveness often leads to backlash against counter-stereotypical behaviour, further entrenching gender inequality (Rudman & Glick, 2001; Rudman & Phelan, 2008). In response, calls for psychological science to adopt structural approaches have recently intensified (Chater & Loewenstein, 2023).

Successful structural approaches have included, for instance, mandating pay transparency to reduce wage gaps (Gamage et al., 2024), instituting quotas for minoritised groups on governing boards (*Women's Labour Force Participation*, n.d.), implementing school-to-work transition programs that ensure equal pay to address gender inequality (Ubfal, 2022), and enacting housing mobility programs that allow families to move to low-poverty neighbourhoods—boosting children's long-term income as a result (Chetty et al., 2016).



## GENERAL INTRODUCTION

While discussions on structural policies concerning class- and gender-based inequality still have a long way to go, their absence in relation to ethnic-racial and SOGI inequality is particularly conspicuous in social-psychological work—with a notable exception in the related yet distinct context of settler colonialism (e.g., Fryberg et al., 2024). This dissertation contributes to this shift in social-psychological research by advancing a structural approach to understanding how advantaged group members manage their position in ethnic-racial and SOGI contexts within liberal, increasingly unequal settings.

### **Summary and Overview**

How do members of advantaged groups construe social categories as they manage their social identity, shaping whether they legitimise or question intergroup inequality? This dissertation addresses this general research question in the ethnic-racial and SOGI intergroup contexts of the Netherlands. It does so by comprehensively bridging self-categorisation theory (Oakes, 2001; Reicher & Hopkins, 2001), advantaged identity strategies (Goren & Plaut, 2012; Shuman et al., 2024), diversity ideologies (Awad & Jackson, 2016; Smith & Shin, 2014), and social reasoning research traditions (Amemiya et al., 2023; Vasilyeva & Lombrozo, 2020).

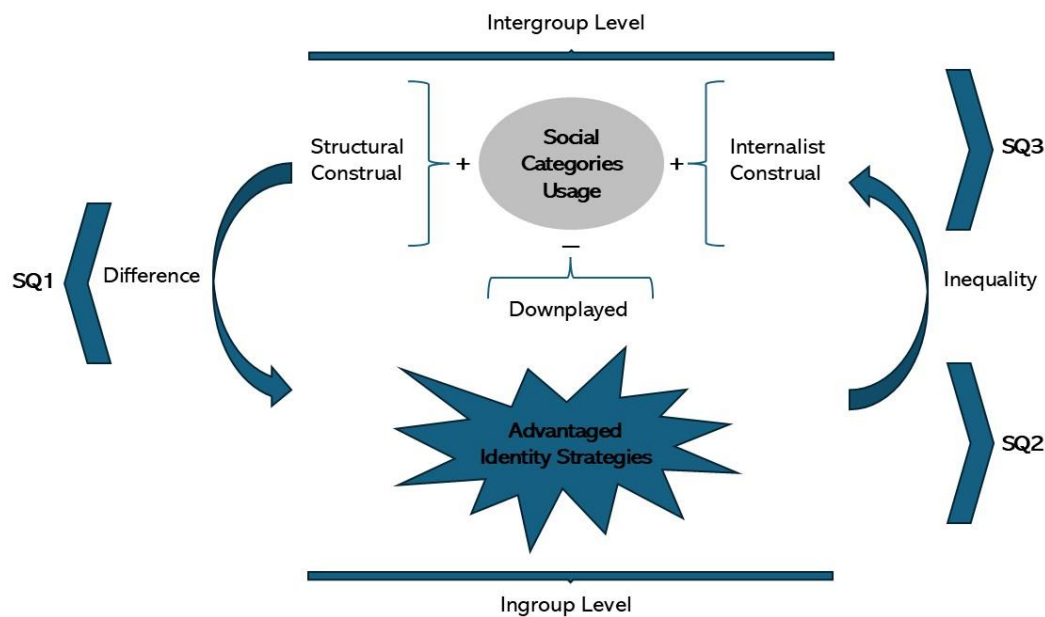
Across three empirical chapters, the general research question outlined above is broken down into the three interrelated specific research questions of:

(SQ1) How do members of advantaged groups navigate difference and inequality?

(SQ2) How do members of advantaged groups manage their standing?

(SQ3) How do members of advantaged groups legitimise or question inequality?

For situating the specific research questions against the backdrop of the conceptual model, see Figure 2. In the next subsections, I outline the content of each of the chapters that follow.

**Figure 2***Mapping Specific Research Questions onto the Conceptual Model*

*Note.* SQ1, SQ2, and SQ3 refer to Specific Research Questions 1, 2, and 3.

## Chapter 2: How White People Manage the Weight of the Past

Based on qualitative (interviews;  $N = 24$ ) and quantitative (surveys;  $N = 591$ ) data, this chapter examines how white Dutch people manage their ethnic-racial identity through distinct self-categorisations. Specifically, I investigated whether and how self-categorising through a structural view (i.e., identifying as *wit*/white to denote advantage) or downplaying self-categorisation (i.e., identifying as *blank* to signal inconspicuousness) is related to linking colonialism to current racial inequality.

Qualitative Study 1 explored (1) how white people managed their advantaged ethnic-racial identity and (2) whether and how they linked colonialism to current racial inequality. Drawing on research examining whiteness in the U.S. and the Netherlands (Essed & Trienekens, 2008; Frankenberg, 1993; Knowles et al., 2014; Wekker, 2016), ethnic-racial identity in Europe (Juang et al., 2021; Jugert et al., 2022), and historical linking (Selvanathan et al., 2023; Sibley et al., 2008; Starzyk & Ross, 2008), we designed a structured interview

## GENERAL INTRODUCTION

scheme to address these questions in an exploratory fashion. After conducting 24 interviews (12 left-wing people, 12 right-wing people), we developed and validated a codebook based on Thematic Analysis guidelines to code the transcriptions (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The thematic axes analysed were Ethnic-Racial Advantaged Identity Strategies and the Historical Linking of Colonialism.

Most participants exhibited a mix of the theorised advantaged identity strategies, rather than adhering strictly to a single strategy. Adopting a person-centered approach, the quantitative Studies 2a and 2b employed Latent Profile Analysis (LPA) to examine how white Dutch people combined identity strategies and clustered into distinct profiles. As no previous scales measured advantaged identity strategies, we developed new scales grounded in the notion of whiteness as a process of self-categorisation (Knowles et al., 2014; Oakes, 2001). In line with construct validation standards in social psychology (Flake et al., 2017), we provide evidence of our measures' structural and external validity in the supplementary materials for this chapter.

In Studies 2a and 2b, the emergent advantaged identity profiles were tested against theorised ideological correlates of general inequality (e.g., social dominance orientation, meritocratic beliefs) and historical linking of colonialism to current racial inequality (e.g., “Colonialism has had a lasting impact in the form of today's racism”). Additionally, these studies examined (3) whether and how advantaged identity strategies relate to ethnic-racial social category construals—namely, difference evasion (e.g., “People who focus a lot on ethnicity forget that we are all just people”) and inequality evasion (e.g., “Compared to white people, Black and Muslim people have equal opportunities”).

Chapter 2 elaborates on the limitations of its approach and future research directions. Finally, it concludes by discussing the theoretical and practical implications of the findings in light of the structural foundations of white ethnic-racial dominance.

### **Chapter 3: Cisheterosexual People in Post-Closeted Times**

Based on qualitative (interviews;  $N = 20$ ) and quantitative (surveys;  $N = 531$ ) data, Chapter 3 builds on the framework developed in Chapter 2 and extends it to the SOGI intergroup context. Taking a person-centred approach from the outset, Chapter 3 investigates (1) how cisheterosexual people navigate difference and inequality regarding SOGI. We qualitatively and quantitatively identified profiles combining low-to-high difference evasion (e.g., “People who focus a lot on sexual orientation and gender identity forget that we are all just people”) and low-to-high inequality evasion (e.g., “Compared to cisgender and heterosexual people, LGBTQ people have equal opportunities”).

After conducting 20 interviews (8 left-wing, 6 centrist, 6 right-wing), we created a codebook and analysed the data following Thematic Analysis guidelines (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The thematic axes under study were Attitudinal Repertoire on Difference and Inequality, Cisheterosexual Identity Strategies, and Countering Inequality. The quantitative Study 2 consisted of Latent Profile Analyses on two independent samples. For addressing our questions quantitatively, we developed and validated novel measures drawing on the ethnic-racial intergroup literature (i.e., racial colourblindness, Awad & Jackson, 2016), previous work on SOGI evasion (Brownfield et al., 2018; Smith & Shin, 2014), and our qualitative observations in Study 1. Following established standards (Rubio et al., 2003), the content validity of difference evasion and inequality evasion scales were successfully pre-validated in a Panel of Experts pilot study ( $N = 6$ ). Constructs’ validation and Study 2 were pre-registered. Evidence of measures’ construct validity is offered in supplementary materials for this chapter.

Upon addressing how cisheterosexual people navigate difference and inequality, we addressed the question of (2) how they manage their advantaged identity. Specifically, we examined whether the resulting profiles of cisheterosexual people shed light on meaningful

qualitative patterns of their advantaged identity strategies and categorically distinguished quantitative correlates. Lastly, the studies examined the question of (3) how these profiles qualitatively related to distinct appraisals of countering inequality (e.g., collective action), and categorically distinguished correlates of legitimising ideologies of inequality (i.e., modern anti-LGBTQ prejudice (Morrison & Morrison, 2003); social dominance orientation, and meritocratic beliefs.)

Lastly, Chapter 3 elaborates on the limitations of our approach and future research directions. By situating SOGI against the backdrop of burgeoning equalising efforts in liberal societies, Chapter 3 concludes by discussing the theoretical and practical implications of the findings.

### **Chapter 4: Inequality Framings Shape Cisheterosexual People's Construals of LGBTQ Cisheterosexual Difference and Policy Preferences to Address Inequality**

Chapter 4 builds on the framework and mixed-methods findings of Chapters 2 and 3 to test whether and how inequality framings causally relate to evading difference, as well as individual versus structural policy preferences. Drawing on previous social psychology research (Klebl & Jetten, 2024; Peters et al., 2022), we successfully pre-validated our SOGI inequality manipulation and policy preferences scale in independent samples ( $N_{\text{manipulation}} = 200$ ;  $N_{\text{scale}} = 40$ ). Following experimental validation standards in social psychology (Chester & Lasko, 2021), evidence of manipulation and measures' construct validity is presented in supplementary materials for this chapter.

In two preregistered, highly-powered experiments ( $N = 2,200$ ), our findings show whether and how cisheterosexual people endorsed difference evasion in response to inequality framings, as well as the role of individual differences (e.g., political orientation and distancing from the cisgender category) in this relationship. Subsequently, our findings show how evading difference in response to these framings shaped cisheterosexual people's

## GENERAL INTRODUCTION

preferences for individual- versus structural-level policies. Drawing on hypothesised and exploratory findings, Chapter 4 theorises potential explanations for the results while reflecting on the strengths and limitations of its approach. From this foundation, Chapter 4 outlines future research directions and discusses the theoretical and practical implications of the findings.

### **Chapter 5: General Discussion**

Lastly, Chapter 5 integrates insights from the nine conducted studies in this dissertation (2 interview studies, 2 survey studies, 2 survey experiments, 1 experimental pre-validation, 1 measure pre-validation, and 1 Panel of Experts). It summarises and interprets the main findings from the empirical chapters by following the three specific research questions of: (SQ1) How do members of advantaged groups navigate difference and inequality? (SQ2) How do members of advantaged groups manage their standing? (SQ3) How do members of advantaged groups legitimise or question inequality?

Chapter 5 theorises about the factors at play that help explain the overarching pattern of results. In doing so, it discusses theoretical implications of the results. Next, it reflects on practical implications of the findings to foster substantive equality amidst difference. By elaborating on the limitations of the present approach, it continues by outlining future research directions. Chapter 5 concludes by highlighting the implications of this dissertation in contributing to a social psychology able to promote structural thinking.

## Chapter 2

### **How white people manage the weight of the past: The role of advantaged identity strategies in linking colonialism to current racial inequality**

Linking European colonialism to the present may pose identity challenges to white European people. Through mixed-methods—interviews ( $N = 24$ ) and surveys ( $N = 591$ )—we examined how white people in the Netherlands manage their advantaged ethnic-racial identity in relation to linking colonialism to current racial inequality. Participants employed combinations of prideful (high identification), distancing (low identification), and power-cognisant (critical identification) identity strategies. Those endorsing prideful and distancing strategies were inclined to unlink colonialism from current racial inequality, downplayed the role of ethnic-racial categories in shaping people's lives, and asserted existing racial equality. In turn, they were the most prone to legitimising the racial status quo. In contrast, those uniquely endorsing power-cognisance strongly linked colonialism to current racial inequality, recognised the role of ethnic-racial categories in shaping people's lives, and acknowledged racial inequality. As such, they exhibited a markedly pro-egalitarian outlook. We conclude by discussing the theoretical and practical implications of how white people's strategies for managing their advantaged identity shape the linkage of colonialism to the present and the legitimacy of the racial status quo.

## HOW WHITE PEOPLE MANAGE THE WEIGHT OF THE PAST

*There is a kind of disapproval in the fact that people used to rob the place, those sailors. And well, there's not much you can do about it, because it happened anyway. I mean, we're not responsible for the actions of our ancestors. [...] I mean what they did then, we do things differently now.* (Sanne, white Dutch woman, 62 years old)

*I feel that this whole racist history is never really stopped. [...] it seems that it was more part of the bigger narrative [Dutch colonialism] and almost like it was a necessary evil to get towards prosperity of Dutch society. [...] Because I feel that the idea that colonialism was acceptable back then, is still kind of what shapes thinking for a lot of people these days.* (Aart, white Dutch non-binary person, 36 years old)

White people in Western countries are increasingly encouraged to reconsider the links between their history of colonisation and the present. For instance, the United Nations recently advocated for redressing colonialism's enduring consequences and cast racism as one of these (Human Rights Council, 2022). Caribbean and African nations pursue reparations for the ongoing impact of transatlantic slavery through international tribunals, among other measures (African Union, 2023; Caribbean Community, n.d.). In Europe, the activism of descendants of colonised peoples often involves connecting their anti-colonial resistance to current racial inequality (Lastrego, Grippa, et al., 2023). However, linking colonialism to current racial inequality remains contentious in Western contexts (Selvanathan et al., 2023). The Dutch tradition of Black Pete, rooted in slavery yet defended by some as unrelated to colonialism, symbolically reflects this controversy (Brienen, 2014). In 2022, the Dutch Prime Minister issued an apology for the Netherlands' role in transatlantic slavery, while excluding economic reparations—a gesture some deemed insufficient as it did not redress colonialism's material impact (Demony & Van Campenhout, 2024). In this article, we address how white people manage the weight of their history of colonisation in the present. We do so by examining how white people's strategies to manage their advantaged ethnic-racial identity



## HOW WHITE PEOPLE MANAGE THE WEIGHT OF THE PAST

relate to the extent to which they link colonialism to current racial inequality and the legitimisation of the racial status quo.

Extreme poverty rose in colonised territories, many of which still have not regained pre-colonial welfare levels (Sullivan & Hickel, 2023), while wealth from colonialism continues to sustain the global dominance of former empires till today (Hickel et al., 2021). These enduring consequences are arguably coupled with lasting psychological traces, both abroad and in Europe. In the U.S., for instance, implicit biases favoring white people persist as a function of the number of black people enslaved, mediated by current racial inequality (Payne et al., 2019). In the Netherlands, white Dutch people often view colonialism and race as issues relevant only to the colonies, not to themselves (Wekker, 2016). Yet, descendants of colonised groups in the Netherlands (e.g., Surinamese, Antillean) faced wage penalties of 16%-21% compared to white Dutch people in 2019 (van Elk et al., 2019). Moreover, research shows that white Dutch people benefit from positive discrimination in education and the labour market over equally qualified non-white people with similar social networks (Baalbergen & Jaspers, 2023; Lek, 2020; Thijssen et al., 2021). Furthermore, only 2 out of the 150 members of the Dutch Parliament in 2024 (1.33%) have a background linked to territories colonised by the Netherlands, while this population represents 6.3% of the total (Bosma, 2012; Twede Kamer der Staten-Generaal, n.d.). European colonialism, far from being confined to the past or to overseas territories, continues to weigh on the lives of people in the former centers of the colonial empires to this day.

How white people manage their advantaged ethnic-racial identity may relate to the extent to which they link colonialism to current racial inequality. As linking colonialism offers a structural explanation for people's societal standing, doing so may threaten white people's internalist explanations about their own standing, such as inherent deservingness to rule over others (i.e., social dominance orientation—SDO) and individuals' effort (i.e.,

## HOW WHITE PEOPLE MANAGE THE WEIGHT OF THE PAST

meritocratic beliefs). Building on the notion that people manage their social identities to achieve and maintain positive self-esteem (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and on advantaged identity strategies research (Shuman et al., 2024), we reason that by emphasising historical discontinuity, white people may draw moral distinctions between past and present and diminish this threat, absolving themselves of accountability for colonialism (Freel & Bilali, 2022). This notion aligns with findings from New Zealand and Chile, where denying the relevance of colonial atrocities among settler individuals was related to lower support for reparations to indigenous people (Castro et al., 2022; Sibley et al., 2008). Conversely, white individuals who reject internalist explanations for people's societal standing may view racial inequality as a threat to their group's reputation, prompting them to consider structural explanations, such as historical oppression (Knowles et al., 2009; Vasilyeva & Lombrozo, 2020). Thus, how white Dutch people manage their advantaged ethnic-racial identity may reflect in whether they link colonialism to current racial inequality.

White people's ethnic-racial identity in Europe is indeed contested (Essed & Trienekens, 2008; Wekker, 2016). Ethnic-racial identity refers to the overlapping aspects of customs, language, and phenotype often racialised in European contexts (Jugert et al., 2022). As such, some people in Dutch refer to white individuals as *blanke mensen*; *blank* denoting to be a blank slate. Some argue that *blank* thus blurs white people's racial position, allowing them to evade their privileged status and history and, by extension, its relation to the marginalised status of colonised descendants. Consequently, some advocate for using the Dutch word *wit* instead (white in English) (Nzume, 2017). This occurs against the backdrop of European societies' reluctance to use racial categories (Simon, 2017), arguably seeking to overcome ethnonationalism, the Holocaust, and the very European colonial history (Juang et al., 2021). Employing distinct social categories to manage their ethnic-racial identity, however, white people in the Netherlands elaborate on how colonialism impacts the present.

## HOW WHITE PEOPLE MANAGE THE WEIGHT OF THE PAST

Linking colonialism to current racial inequality may disrupt its reproduction.

Research has shown that linking colonialism curbed symbolic racism (Lastrego & Licata, 2010) and was positively associated with support for amending inequality (Starzyk et al., 2019). Historical linking may prevent people from explaining groups' societal positions through properties inherent to their social categories (e.g., inherent deservingness or effort). Instead, it may encourage structural explanations that focus on stable, external factors, such as historical oppression, shaping these social categories (Vasilyeva & Lombrozo, 2020). While European research on people's views of colonialism has addressed generational differences (Licata & Klein, 2010), attribution of responsibility (Lastrego et al., 2022), and support for reparations (Lastrego, Magonet, et al., 2023), the role of white people's management of their advantaged ethnic-racial identity has not been examined. This lack of studies on European whiteness has resulted in our current ignorance on how heirs of historical privileges reaped by colonialism manage this inheritance.

Taking a mixed-methods approach, we answer the following questions in the Dutch context: How white people manage their advantaged ethnic-racial identity (RQ1); whether and how they (un)link colonialism to current racial inequality (RQ2); and whether and how advantaged identity strategies relate to legitimising current racial inequality (RQ3). In Study 1, we qualitatively explore our model through in-depth interviews. In Study 2, we quantitatively examine our model using surveys, distinguishing white people's identity strategies, their associations with historical linking, and legitimising ideologies of racial inequality. In the next section, we outline our model, integrating advantaged identity strategies, the historical linking of colonialism, and ideological correlates. For an overview of theoretical expectations, see Table 1.

**Table 1***Hypothesised Theoretical Relations*

	Advantaged Identity Strategy		
	Prideful	Distancing	Power-cognisant
Ethnic Ingroup Identification	High	Low	High
Historical Linking	Low	Low	High
Colour Evasion	Mid	High	Low
Racial Inequality Evasion	High	Low	Low
Inequality Legitimation	High (Social Dominance)	High (Meritocratic Beliefs)	Low (Both)

**Advantaged Identity Strategies, Historical Linking, and Ideological Legitimation*****Prideful Identity Strategy***

Some white Dutch people may pridefully embrace their ethnic-racial identity and defend their societal standing in turn. Research in the U.S. has identified a prideful identity strategy among white individuals, marked by strong ethnic-racial identification, denial of historical and current racial inequality, and the hierarchy-enhancing belief of inherent deservingness to rule over others (i.e., SDO) (Bonam et al., 2019; Goren & Plaut, 2012). As prideful white people are posited to derive their self-esteem from identifying with their group-based advantage, differentiating themselves from other groups through categorisation is often expected (e.g., by using social categories to discriminate against). As mentioned, however, European contexts often discourage racial categorisation (Jugert et al., 2022). Those endorsing a prideful strategy in European contexts may thus strongly identify with their ethnic-racial group and, simultaneously, downplay ethnic-racial categories (i.e., “I do not see colour but people” as colour evasion) (Knowles et al., 2009). Research has reported a positive

## HOW WHITE PEOPLE MANAGE THE WEIGHT OF THE PAST

relation between SDO and unlinking colonialism from the present (Castro et al., 2022; Sibley & Osborne, 2016). Those endorsing a prideful identity strategy are thus expected to endorse high ethnic-racial identification, to unlink colonialism, to evade colour and inequality, and thus legitimise it.

### ***Distancing Identity Strategy***

White Dutch people who attribute people's societal standing to individuals' efforts may be prone to distancing themselves from their group-based advantage (Shuman et al., 2024). In the U.S., for instance, research has shown that white individuals often reject ethnic-racial categories in favour of being seen as individuals or as members of humanity (Dottolo & Stewart, 2013). While distancing may prevent individuals from recognising their group-based advantage, some may still acknowledge inequality by casting it as outgroup disadvantage. Indeed, research suggests that people across advantaged social identities often recognise inequality even when their group membership goes unnoticed to themselves (Pratto & Stewart, 2012). Concurrently, distancing may translate into viewing others as individuals at the expense of their group memberships as well. Such a colour evasive outlook can reframe inequality as a product of individuals' effort (i.e., meritocratic beliefs) (Knowles et al., 2009). This approach, which acknowledges inequality while evading colour, has been associated with a reluctance to counter inequality similar to that observed in outright denial (Mekawi et al., 2020). Indeed, meritocratic framings of inequality have also been shown to lead people to perpetuate inequality (Vasil et al., 2024). Thus, those endorsing a distancing identity strategy are expected to exhibit low ethnic-racial identification, unlink colonialism, evade colour while acknowledging inequality, and still legitimise it.

### ***Power-Cognisant Identity Strategy***

White Dutch individuals who reject notions of inherent deservingness and individuals' effort to explain people's standing may construe racial inequality as an image-

threat to their group's reputation (Shuman et al., 2024). Dispelling this threat, they may favour structural explanations of racial inequality and, in turn, hold power-cognisance as an identity strategy (Goren & Plaut, 2012). Adopting a structural construal allows to recognise external, stable constraints that shape social categories and their properties (e.g., white people's advantaged status) (Vasilyeva & Lombrozo, 2020), inclining individuals to link colonialism to current racial inequality. In doing so, white people may be able to identify with their ethnic-racial group and, simultaneously, prevent them from extending their experience to outgroups. Thus, white people endorsing power-cognisance may acknowledge colour rather than evade it (Helms, 1993). As acknowledging colour has been shown to relate to stronger perspective-taking and empathy (Mekawi et al., 2017), it may also relate to developing a critical view of colonialism—stance associated with support for material reparations (Lastrego, Magonet, et al., 2023). Moreover, research in the U.S. indicates that only those who acknowledged both colour and inequality were inclined to counter inequalities (Mekawi et al., 2020). As such, those endorsing power-cognisance as an identity strategy are expected to exhibit high ethnic-racial identification, link colonialism, acknowledge both colour and inequality, and thus question it.

### **The Present Research**

Taking a mixed-methods approach, in Study 1 we qualitatively explored our model using interviews, addressing how white Dutch people manage their advantaged ethnic-racial identity (RQ1) and whether and how they link colonialism to current racial inequality (RQ2). We found that participants blended identity strategies, yielding qualitatively distinct profiles. As such, these profiles could not be reduced to a single identity strategy.

In examining whether and how white individuals simultaneously endorsed identity strategies, we shifted in Studies 2a and 2b to a person-centred approach employing Latent Profile Analysis (LPA). Echoing our qualitative observations, participants in Studies 2a and

## HOW WHITE PEOPLE MANAGE THE WEIGHT OF THE PAST

2b clustered into categorically distinct identity profiles (RQ1). Additionally, we validate our model by measuring advantaged identity profiles' likelihood of racial self-identification (*blank* vs. *wit*), ethnic ingroup identification (Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992), beliefs in inherent deservingness to rule over others (i.e., SDO) (Unzueta et al., 2012) and meritocratic beliefs (i.e., Protestant Work Ethic) (Major et al., 2007). In turn, we assess these profiles' correlates of historical linking of colonialism (RQ2) and racial inequality legitimization (RQ3) by tapping into colour evasion (Knowles et al., 2009) and racial inequality evasion (Brown et al., 2013). For these constructs, the positive associations with racial inequality legitimization are well-established (Awad & Jackson, 2016; Yi et al., 2023).

Building on the advantaged identity strategies framework (Shuman et al., 2024), we adapt its application from settler colonial contexts to the Netherlands, a former colonial empire shaped by transatlantic slavery (Wekker, 2016). Ensuring the content-validity of our theoretical model, methodologies, and results, we comprehensively drew on ethnic-racial identity research on European contexts (Juang et al., 2021; Jugert et al., 2022) and whiteness in the Netherlands (Essed & Trienekens, 2008; Wekker, 2016). Building on our qualitative observations, we created measures to capture white Dutch people's ethnic-racial identity strategies and historical linking of colonialism. We provide structural, convergent, and discriminant validity evidence for these scales (see supplementary materials).

Currently, no empirical research examines the psychological and ideological implications of advantaged identity strategies or the historical linking of colonialism among white European people. By bridging the gap between individuals and structures of inequality, we investigate, for the first time in a European context, how white people manage their advantaged identity and whether their approach relates to the extent to which they link colonialism to and legitimise current racial inequality.

## Study 1

### Method

#### Participants

Twenty-four self-identified white Dutch participants were interviewed (54.16% cis men, 41.6% cis women, and 1 trans person), ranging in age from 23 to 68 years ( $M = 49.21$ ,  $SD = 15.32$ ). Participants were selected based on age and political orientation, representing three distinct generations as well as left-wing and right-wing political leanings (see supplementary materials). As twelve interviews are recommended per analysis axis for data saturation (Guest et al., 2006), our analysis drew on twelve participants for each political orientation. We obtained ethical approval from the Ethics Review Board of the University of Amsterdam.

#### Procedure

Study 1 pre-registration can be viewed here [https://osf.io/p8nym/?view\\_only=c9bdc19ea4114d0c801c4738968dd192](https://osf.io/p8nym/?view_only=c9bdc19ea4114d0c801c4738968dd192). Potential participants completed a pre-screener survey advertised on Facebook. Those who matched our criteria were invited to participate. Upon providing consent, the structured interviews were conducted in-person or via Zoom. Interviews lasted between 1 hour 13 minutes and 2 hours 34 minutes. They were conducted in Dutch or English based on participants' preference, and were audio-recorded, anonymised, and transcribed. Transcriptions in Dutch were translated into English.

We adopted a two-fold approach in our interview scheme by prompting participants to consider their *ethnic* group membership (e.g., “What ethnic group do you feel you belong to?”) while allowing self-categorisation in *racial* terms (e.g., “Just *blank*, average Dutch person” or “I’m a white (*wit*) Dutch person”). The interviews comprised five sections on *Dutch Groups and their Shared Past* (e.g., How would you summarise Dutch history to the



## HOW WHITE PEOPLE MANAGE THE WEIGHT OF THE PAST

new generations?), *White Ethnic-Racial Identity* (e.g., Which ethnic group do you feel that you belong to?), *Master and Alternative White Narratives* (e.g., What opinions are dominant among people from your ethnic group when remembering Dutch history?), *Partaking in White Collective Memory* (e.g., How was the so-called Golden Age taught to you and what is your opinion?), and *Past/Present Relations* (e.g., To what extent are those events important to understand current-day Dutch society?) (for the entire interview scheme, see [https://osf.io/62qp9/?view\\_only=ff514ca5e4ea4b5da8a9831f5763f3dd](https://osf.io/62qp9/?view_only=ff514ca5e4ea4b5da8a9831f5763f3dd)).

### **Analytical Strategy**

The first, fourth, and fifth authors analysed the data following Thematic Analysis guidelines (Braun & Clarke, 2006) using ATLAS.ti (2023). We began by creating a deductively-driven codebook to ensure coding theoretical trustworthiness. We proceeded with an inductively-driven phase by contrasting the codebook with the data allowing us to change existing codes and create new ones. Lastly, the first author honed his skills to independently code text content by assessing intercoder agreement with the fourth and fifth co-authors on a random subset of three interviews. Intercoder agreement was calculated by the proportion of overlap among coders, resulting in 73.88%. After discussing discrepancies, intercoder agreement was again calculated, resulting in 99.24%. The first author then coded the remaining interviews using the validated codebook (for codebook creation see supplementary materials). The anonymised transcripts can be accessed at [https://osf.io/62qp9/?view\\_only=ff514ca5e4ea4b5da8a9831f5763f3dd](https://osf.io/62qp9/?view_only=ff514ca5e4ea4b5da8a9831f5763f3dd).

### **Results**

We first describe how participants managed their white ethnic-racial identity reflecting each advantaged identity strategy, addressing RQ1. We then describe how the white identity strategy related to the linking of colonialism to current racial inequality, addressing RQ2.

### **Prideful Identity Strategy**

*I'm really proud of the Golden Age. I'm really proud that we Dutch people, who lived in this part of Europe, that we did [that]. That we went all over the world, that we discovered other countries, other people, other food, everything. And that we had these great arts. I've never thought about, ahm, this slavery thing. (Annelies, 56 years old, right-wing)*

For Annelies and five others across generations and political leanings, pridefulness defends collective identity in response to acknowledgers of colonialism. For others, pridefulness signals resistance against non-white Dutch people. As Peter (61 years old, right-wing) stated:

*I do have the feeling that an appeal is being made to me that I should accept the society that is being created now, that I should like it all. And 'ahh how lovely, how multicultural'. No, I don't like that. Nice, listen, in the Bijlmer we all sat together and I was the only Dutchman [...] You think to yourself, "What the hell, I was the only Dutchman". [...] There are so many taboos now that you become a bit of a pariah if you think differently, if you talk about history and if you talk about pride.*

The Bijlmer area in Amsterdam is home to post-colonial black and brown immigrants whose Dutch nationality is legally unquestionable, but Peter still views himself as the sole Dutch person around. In this way, his prideful statement subtly positions white skin colour as an implicit category of Dutch belonging and, simultaneously, flipped whiteness's dominant position in society into one of disadvantage. In pridefully defending his identity, Peter smuggled whiteness as an unmarked vantage point defining Dutchness and circumventing its associated privileges.

Some younger participants also endorsed pridefulness by explicitly disentangling it from skin colour to incorporate non-white Dutch people, as articulated by Irine (26 years old, right-wing).

## HOW WHITE PEOPLE MANAGE THE WEIGHT OF THE PAST

*We shouldn't be proud that we are white because you know that's a bad thing. I don't think you need to link it to skin colour, you can just say we are proud to be Dutch and you're also Dutch, so let's be proud together.*

### ***Historical Unlinking of Colonialism***

Those endorsing a prideful identity strategy were inclined to unlink colonialism from the present.

*I don't feel it has much use being very apologetic. I mean, we were not those people. Those were different times, different lives. We must see it in perspective. Besides I mean everybody did it. Any country that got the chance to be great and conquer land and you know they did it. It was another age.* (Bram, 66 years old, right-wing)

Bram's quote reflects how historical discontinuity was asserted by framing colonialism as belonging to a distinct, past era. By separating 'those people' from 'us,' he divides the past and the present into distinct entities. This periodisation is reinforced by a call for perspective-taking, which further distances the audience from the events. Bram's reasoning suggests that colonial settlements are part of a time that is not 'ours,' effectively unlinking colonialism from the present.

### **Distancing Identity Strategy**

[Interviewer] *Would you recognise yourself as part of white people?* [Interviewee] *Yeah but even the white people is not one group.* [Interviewer] *How would you say white in Dutch?* [Interviewee] *Blank.* [Interviewer] *And ethnically how would you label that?* [Interviewee] *Normal Dutch? Normal Dutch. [...] Very average.* (Klaas, 66 years old, left-wing)

Nine participants across generations and political orientations distanced themselves from their ethnic-racial membership by presenting it as “normal” or “average.” By referring to a compelling normality that would better define them than being white, they used the

## HOW WHITE PEOPLE MANAGE THE WEIGHT OF THE PAST

category *blank* instead of *wit* to describe themselves. As mentioned, using *blank* to refer to being white in Dutch has been contested as it is posited to blur people's ethnic-racial positions. Accordingly, those distancing emphasised individual characteristics at the expense of their ethnic-racial group membership. For instance, Aldo stated:

*So, in that sense, a certain culture is also, what influences life then. And yes, you know, I don't have the feeling that I belong to any particular culture at all. (48 years old, left-wing)*

Some often emphasised a lack of culture, distancing themselves from bearing a cultural background, as if this detachment stripped away any group-based perspective. In rejecting what they termed 'group thinking' and 'hooliganism,' in turn, they viewed these as barriers to individuality and freedom of thought. As Irine (26 years old, right-wing) stated:

*I'm really a person who likes to look at individuals. I think it's really wrong to say this whole group is this, this whole group is that, I think it's really wrong and always ends in tragedy. I think really individualised, I think which used to be I guess a core value right of the Western society. I really hate the group thinking.*

### ***Historical (Un)linking of Colonialism***

Those distancing endorsed either blatant historical unlinking or reluctant linking. In either case, these participants portrayed attempts to link colonialism to the present as a source of bias. As Dan (31 years old, right-wing) stated:

*It contributes to hyperpolarisation. [...] As if in Dutch history, that sort of the wrongs of our history is constitutive of our whole society. I don't view our society as an oppressive society [...]. It's one of the wealthiest societies that you can imagine, in the world and in history, and you should be glad and thankful for being here.*

At the same time, a few made some room for historical linking. As Klaas (66 years old, left-wing) stated “*It's important to black people [to claim historical linking], because*

## HOW WHITE PEOPLE MANAGE THE WEIGHT OF THE PAST

*whenever we look upon it, they still find difficulties in having the same opportunities and same chances. [...] But objectively, it's much more complicated.*" As such, objectivity often appeared as the litmus test to address the past.

### **Power-Cognisant Identity Strategy**

*I'm ethnically Dutch. I'm white. So, I'm definitely not on the back negative end of the colonial histories. I'm a privileged person. Ik ben wit en ik ben Netherlands. [I'm white and Dutch] [...] is the label that I should carry, because I think that the label wit comes also with a certain responsibility and privilege that I get to experience.* (Aart, 36 years old, left-wing)

Ten participants—two right-wing and eight left-wing—explicitly referenced their skin colour by using the term *wit*. By doing so, they acknowledged the structural advantages of their ethnic-racial group. The implications of using *wit* or *blank* as ethnic-racial categories were also critically discussed during the interviews.

*Blank I would translate it to like nude, so like neutral, without colour. For me, it's like a colourblind term. So it's a way to not claim whiteness, like have it [to] be the normal, unnamed, natural state.* (Carlijn, 24 years old, left-wing)

As *wit* sheds light on their background, these participants were able to describe norms and values of their white cultural upbringing, detaching themselves from it. While they identified as part of their ethnic-racial group, this identification implied a critical distance that galvanised their perspective-taking. In turn, they were prone to appreciating intergroup differences as they enabled renewed understandings. As Amber (25 years old, left-wing) said about discussing with non-white people:

*It's very interesting to have a conversation, for example have like a miscommunication, but not in a bad way but more in a way like, wow, I meant it like this, but it's picked up in a different way and then, you're kind of like oh, I think we don't really*

## HOW WHITE PEOPLE MANAGE THE WEIGHT OF THE PAST

*understand each other, like, what's going on? And then you explain it like, oh, I never even thought I could look at it this way.*

### ***Historical Linking of Colonialism***

*We have this beautiful center of the city because really rich people back in the day, built their houses with money, partially from the colonies. And we wouldn't have this beautiful city center, if not for the extortion of other ethnicities. [...] I mean you do need to take accountability for that.* (Lucas, 23 years old, left-wing)

This statement, along with Aart's quote at the start of this paper, illustrates how those endorsing power-cognisance frequently linked colonialism to current racial inequality. In doing so, some interpreted contemporary racism as stemming from the belief that colonial oppression was mechanically driven and somehow inevitable (see Bram's quote). By framing inevitable past oppression as a factor fueling present-day racism, discussions on colonialism were viewed as relevant for questioning current racial inequality. In challenging the notion of inevitability, some participants reflected on the structural factors that enabled oppression and elaborated on the resistance efforts of colonised people. As Eline (41 years old, right-wing) stated:

*I was also taught that black people are very poor, you know, that we captured them then they needed to work for us, very poor people. Well, in the reality, they're very strong and courageous: they run away, they fight, and they just were not letting them get enslaved so easily. But that perspective is never told.*

### **Blending Identity Strategies**

All in all, most participants blended distancing either with pridefulness or power-cognisance. On the one hand, some blended pridefulness with distancing strategy, blurring in turn their ethnic-racial group membership (e.g., *"I don't think you need to link it to skin colour, you can just say we are proud to be Dutch and you're also Dutch so let's be proud*

*together*” Irine). Also, only few participants exhibited distancing strategy alone (e.g., *“I don’t have the feeling that I belong to any particular culture at all.”* Aldo). Both prideful-distancing and distancing people unlinked colonialism from the present. On the other hand, some blended distancing with power-cognisant strategy. They exhibited some degree of historical linking under the guise of objectivity (e.g., *“It’s important to black people [to claim historical linking] But objectively, it’s much more complicated.”* Klass). Lastly, some participants also exclusively endorsed power-cognisance, associated with strong historical linking (e.g., *“I feel that the idea that colonialism was acceptable back then, is still kind of what shapes thinking for a lot of people these days”* Aart).

### Discussion

White Dutch people employed prideful, distancing, and power-cognisant identity strategies. In line with our expectations, participants who conveyed prideful and distancing strategies were likely to unlink colonialism from current racial inequality, while power-cognisant people strongly linked colonialism to the present.

Beyond these three expected strategies, the interviews also suggested two unexpected combinations: prideful-distancing and distancing-cognisant identity profiles. These participants unlinked colonialism from current racial inequality. As such, we provided preliminary evidence of distinct white identity strategies in an European context (RQ1) and demonstrated that they were meaningfully associated with (un)linking colonialism (RQ2). Further examining how white Dutch individuals simultaneously endorse identity strategies, in Studies 2a and 2b we shift to a person-centred approach and quantitatively examine advantaged identity strategies profiles (RQ1), their associations with historical linking (RQ2), and their ideological correlates (RQ3).

### Studies 2a and 2b

We collected two independent samples to quantitatively assess advantaged identity strategies among white Dutch people in relation to the historical linking of colonialism. Participants were recruited from Prolific (Study 2a) and Facebook (Study 2b) to ensure a range of ages—those in Study 2a were younger ( $M = 29.94$ ) than those in Study 2b ( $M = 64.53$ ). Both studies comprised identical measures and procedures. Samples were independently analysed to provide evidence for the scales' structural (i.e., factoriality and robustness) and external validity (i.e., convergent and discriminant validity) (see supplementary materials). Materials, data and code for constructs validation are available at [https://osf.io/n583t/?view\\_only=4e8243acddf440689f4f5db93ed5c23c](https://osf.io/n583t/?view_only=4e8243acddf440689f4f5db93ed5c23c).

Building on our qualitative observations, we conducted Latent Profile Analyses in each sample (LPA) and empirically determined whether and how participants clustered in distinct profiles by employing advantaged identity strategies simultaneously (RQ1). Drawing on person-centred research standards in social psychology (Osborne & Sibley, 2017), LPA enabled us to ascertain the composition and number of profiles that best summarised the data at hand. Next, we assessed profiles' associations with the theorised key outcomes of participants' racial self-identification (*blank* vs *wit*) and ethnic ingroup identification (Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992). Further validating the advantaged identity profiles in line with our model, we examined profiles' associations with beliefs in inherent deservingness to rule over others (i.e., SDO) (Unzueta et al., 2012) and meritocratic beliefs (Major et al., 2007).

Lastly, we assessed the profiles' associations with the historical linking of colonialism (RQ2) as well as their tendencies toward colour evasion (Knowles et al., 2009) and racial inequality evasion (Brown et al., 2013), both of which reflect legitimization of racial inequality (RQ3). See Table 1 for an overview of the hypothesised theoretical relations.



## HOW WHITE PEOPLE MANAGE THE WEIGHT OF THE PAST

Studies 2a and 2b are presented in unified sections. Materials, data, and code for Studies 2a and 2b are available at

[https://osf.io/jcsw5/?view\\_only=edb466ede2db4f8ebef4494b3ec59827](https://osf.io/jcsw5/?view_only=edb466ede2db4f8ebef4494b3ec59827). We report all measures and data exclusions.

### Method

#### Participants

##### *Study 2a*

Three-hundred and fifty-six participants were recruited through Prolific. Nine participants identified otherwise than *blank* or *wit* and were therefore excluded from analysis, yielding a final sample of 347 self-identified white Dutch participants (47.83 % cis men, 49 % cis women, and 3.17 % trans and non-binary people). Ages ranged from 18 to 73 years old ( $M = 30.03$ ,  $SD = 9.90$ ). Political orientations ranged from left (1) to right (9) ( $M = 3.86$ ,  $SD = 1.76$ ).

##### *Study 2b*

Two-hundred and seventy participants were recruited through Facebook. Those who identified otherwise than *blank* or *wit* were excluded, yielding a final sample of 244 self-identified white Dutch participants (55.33% cis men, 42.21% cis women, and 2.04% trans and non-binary). Ages ranged from 19 to 83 years ( $M = 64.49$ ,  $SD = 11.13$ ). Political orientations ranged from left (1) to right (9) ( $M = 3.74$ ,  $SD = 1.89$ ).

#### Measures

Participants reported their political orientation on a scale from 1-Left to 9-Right and self-identified by using ethnic-racial identity categories (e.g., *Blank Nederlands*, *Wit Nederlands*). For all other measures, participants rated their agreement with statements on 9-point Likert scales, ranging from “1-Strongly disagree” to “9-Strongly agree”.

## HOW WHITE PEOPLE MANAGE THE WEIGHT OF THE PAST

Ethnic ingroup identification was measured using four items from Luhtanen & Crocker's identity subscale (1992) (e.g., "My ethnic group is an important reflection of who I am.";  $\alpha_{2a} = .71$ ,  $\alpha_{2b} = .70$ ).

Advantaged identity strategies were measured as follows: Prideful strategy (e.g., "I see myself as a proud Dutch person of our ethnic heritage",  $\alpha_{2a} = .79$ ,  $\alpha_{2b} = .82$ ); Distancing strategy (e.g., "I feel that my ethnic group does not have a significant impact on how I see the world",  $\alpha_{2a} = .69$ ,  $\alpha_{2b} = .68$ ); Power-cognisant strategy (e.g., "I see myself as a white Dutch person with associated privileges because of my ethnic group membership",  $\alpha_{2a} = .80$ ,  $\alpha_{2b} = .76$ ). Construct validity analyses confirmed a three-factor advantaged identity strategies scale, with four items each (see supplementary materials).

Legitimising ideologies of general inequality were measured as follows: social dominance orientation, eight items (e.g., "Group equality should not be our main goal";  $\alpha_{2a} = .81$ ,  $\alpha_{2b} = .83$ ) (Unzueta et al., 2012); and meritocratic beliefs (i.e., Protestant Work Ethic), three items (e.g., "Anyone willing to work hard has a good chance of succeeding";  $\alpha_{2a} = .86$ ,  $\alpha_{2b} = .85$ ) (Major et al., 2007).

Historical linking of colonialism was measured with seven items (e.g., "Colonialism has had a lasting impact in the form of today's racism",  $\alpha_{2a} = .90$ ,  $\alpha_{2b} = .91$ .) Construct validity analyses confirmed a one-factor scale (see supplementary materials).

Legitimising ideologies of racial inequality were measured as follows: colour evasion, four items (e.g., "People preoccupied with ethnicity forget that we are all just humans";  $\alpha_{2a} = .86$ ,  $\alpha_{2b} = .83$ ) (adapted from Knowles et al., 2009); racial inequality evasion, four items (e.g., "Racism is a problem in the Netherlands" (reverse-coded);  $\alpha_{2a} = .88$ ,  $\alpha_{2b} = .86$ ) (adapted from Brown et al., 2013).

### Procedure

Participants were asked to report their political orientation, to identify in ethnic-racial terms, and to complete the ethnic ingroup identification measure, followed up by the randomised advantaged identity strategies scale. The historical linking of colonialism scale and ideological measures were completed thereafter, all items randomised. We obtained ethical approval from the Ethics Review Board of the University of Amsterdam.

### Analytical Strategy

LPA was conducted using the *tidyLPA* package in R (R Core Team, 2021; Rosenberg et al., 2019). Indicator variables for profile construction were the advantaged identity strategies scale: prideful, distancing, and power-cognisance. Models with one to seven profiles were tested in each sample. To ensure model parsimony, variances of indicators and residual covariances were constrained to zero. Following person-centred research standards in social psychology (Osborne & Sibley, 2017), we selected profile solutions considering best model fit (i.e., Akogul & Erisoglu, 2017 analytic hierarchy process based on AIC, AWE, BIC, CLC, KIC fit indices; smallest BIC; Bootstrap Likelihood Ratio Test  $<.05$  relative to a simpler model with  $k - 1$  classes), classification quality (i.e., entropy index 0.6-0.8 indicating that 80-90% of the sample has been correctly classified), and theoretical plausibility.

Fisher's exact tests were conducted to assess the association between profiles and racial self-identification odds (i.e., *blank* vs *wit*). Profiles' ethnic ingroup identification, historical linking of colonialism, and ideological correlates were compared by regressing each variable on the profiles' posterior probabilities. Tukey's HSD tests were used to assess differences between profile indicators and profiles' outcome means and Cohen's  $d$  values were computed to reveal effect sizes.

## Results

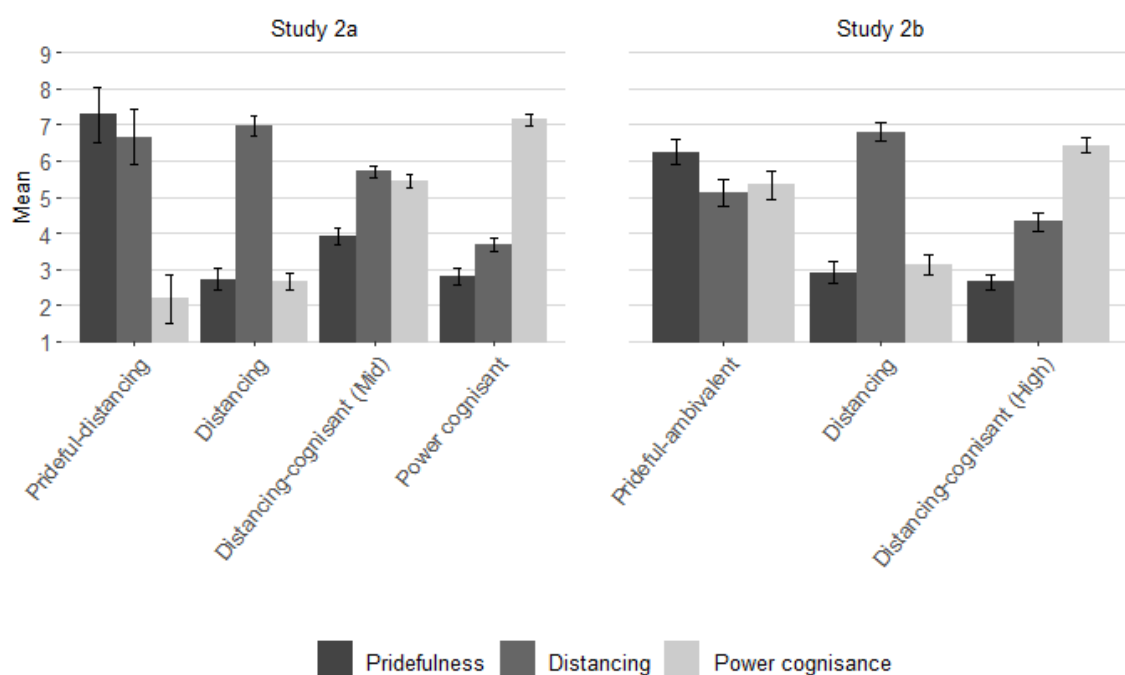
We begin by describing profile selection in Studies 2a and 2b, followed by examining their likelihood of racial self-identification (i.e., *blank* vs. *wit*), correlates of ethnic ingroup identification, and associations with social dominance orientation and meritocratic beliefs, thereby addressing RQ1. Next, we present the profiles' associations with the historical linking of colonialism, addressing RQ2. We conclude by describing profiles' correlates of racial inequality legitimization, focusing on evasion of colour and racial inequality, addressing RQ3. For clarity, the study in which a profile was identified will be specified when comparing outcomes. Outcome means are interpreted as low/weak ( $< 4$ ), medium ( $\geq 4$  and  $< 6$ ), and high/strong ( $\geq 6$ ). Effect sizes are interpreted as small ( $d < 0.50$ ), medium ( $0.50 \leq d < 0.80$ ), and large ( $d \geq 0.80$ ). See Table S18-S25 for raw Cohen's  $d$  values.

### Latent Profiles Selection

Figure 1 illustrates the means of the indicator variables by profile in Studies 2a and 2b.

**Figure 1**

*Indicator Means by Latent Profile*



*Note.* Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

### *Study 2a*

Using the prideful, distancing, and power-cognisant identity strategies as indicator variables, a four-profile solution was identified as the best-fitting model according to the analytic hierarchy process (see Table S12). This solution also exhibited the lowest BIC value and the highest entropy (0.72) and provided a significantly better fit than the simpler three-profile solution, as indicated by the Bootstrapped Likelihood Ratio Test ( $p < 0.01$ ).

Table 2 presents the descriptives for each of the four profiles: (1) the prideful-distancing profile, characterised by high pridefulness, high distancing, and low power-cognisance; (2) the distancing profile, defined by low pridefulness, high distancing, and low power-cognisance; (3) the distancing-cognisant profile, marked by low pridefulness, mid distancing, and mid power-cognisance; and (4) the power-cognisant profile, distinguished by low pridefulness, low distancing, and high power-cognisance. Most profile indicators differed significantly ( $p < .001$ ), with large to very large effect sizes. Exceptions were the prideful-distancing and distancing profiles' similarly high levels of distancing ( $p = 0.83$ ) and similarly low levels of power-cognisance ( $p = 0.51$ ), as well as the distancing and power-cognisant profiles' similarly low levels of pridefulness ( $p = 0.98$ ). For full pairwise comparison statistics, see Table S13.

**Table 2**  
*Statistical Features per Latent Profile Study 2a*

	Prideful- distancing (high-high- low)	Distancing (low-high- low)	Distancing- cognisant (low-mid- mid)	Power- cognisant (low-low- high)
N of respondents	9	61	166	111
Proportion of respondents	.03	.17	.48	.32
Age	32.55 <sup>a</sup>	32.77 <sup>a</sup>	31.17 <sup>a</sup>	28.66 <sup>a</sup>
Proportion female	.00	.33	.47	.65
Political orientation	7.00 <sup>a</sup>	4.60 <sup>b</sup>	4.13 <sup>b</sup>	2.80 <sup>c</sup>

*Note.* Below each whiteness profile the level on each identity strategy is described as follows Pridefulness, Distancing, and Power Cognisance. Values denote means unless otherwise stated. Values in a row not sharing a superscript are significantly different at  $p < .05$ . Political orientation ranged from 1-Left to 9-Right.

### **Study 2b**

A three-profile solution was identified as the best-fitting model according to the analytic hierarchy process (see Table S12). This solution also exhibited the lowest BIC value, the highest entropy (0.69), and significantly outperformed a simpler, two-profile solution, as indicated by the Bootstrapped Likelihood Ratio Test ( $p < 0.01$ ).

Table 3 presents the descriptives for each of the three profiles: (1) the prideful-ambivalent profile, characterised by high pridefulness, mid distancing, and mid power-cognisance; (2) the distancing profile, defined by low pridefulness, high distancing, and low power-cognisance; and (3) the distancing-cognisant profile, marked by low pridefulness, mid distancing, and high power-cognisance. Most profile indicators differed significantly ( $p < 0.001$ ) and demonstrated medium-to-very-large effect sizes. Exceptions were the prideful-distancing and distancing profiles' similarly high levels of distancing ( $p = 0.83$ ) and similarly low power-cognisance ( $p = 0.51$ ); as well as the distancing and power-cognisant profiles' similarly low pridefulness ( $p = 0.98$ ). For full pairwise comparison statistics, see Table S14.

**Table 3**  
*Statistical Features per Latent Profile Study 2b*

	Prideful- ambivalent (high-mid-mid)	Distancing (low-high-low)	Distancing- cognisant (low-mid-high)
N of respondents	77	54	113
Proportion of respondents	.22	.31	.46
Age	66.77 <sup>a</sup>	65.28 <sup>a</sup>	64.43 <sup>a</sup>
Proportion female	.39	.43	.43
Political orientation	5.07 <sup>a</sup>	4.07 <sup>b</sup>	2.86 <sup>c</sup>

*Note.* Below each whiteness profile the level on each identity strategy is described as follows: Pridefulness, Distancing, and Power cognisance. Values denote means unless otherwise stated. Values in a row not sharing a superscript are significantly different at  $p < .05$ . Political orientation ranged from 1-Left to 9-Right.

### Latent Profiles' Correlates

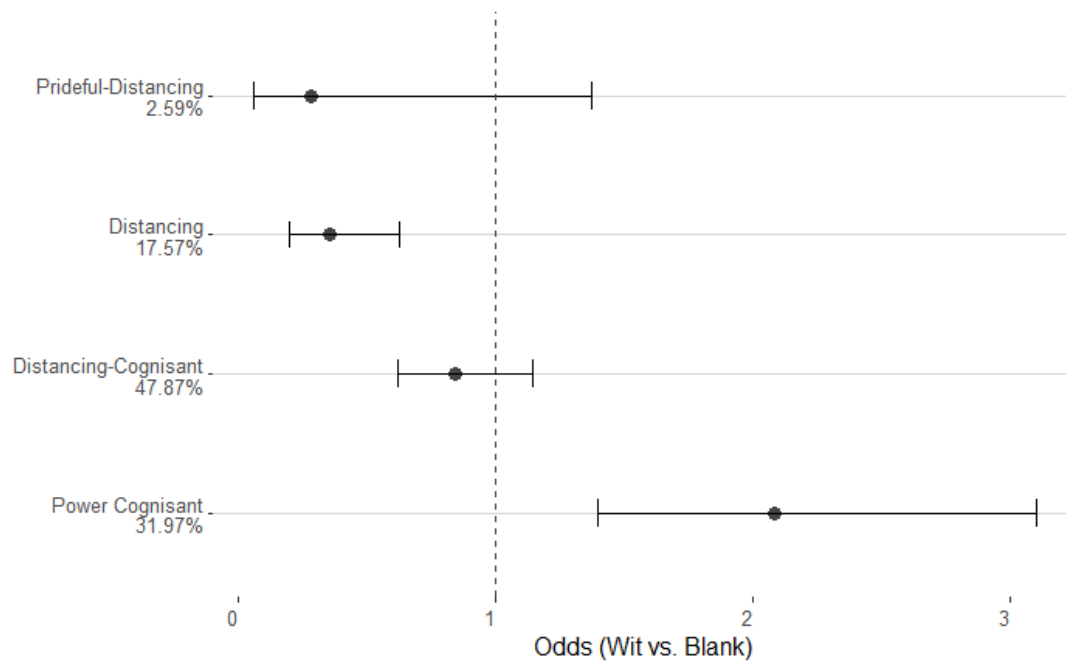
#### *Racial Self-Identification*

Chi-squared tests revealed significant associations between profile membership and racial self-identification (*blank* vs. *wit*) in Study 2a,  $\chi^2(3, N = 347) = 31.24, p < .001$ , and Study 2b,  $\chi^2(2, N = 244) = 16.85, p < .001$  (see Tables S15-16).

Figures 2 and 3 illustrate the odds of identifying as *wit* vs. *blank* by profile in each sample, respectively. Individuals with prideful and distancing identity profiles were more likely to identify as *blank* rather than *wit*. Those with distancing-cognisant identity profiles were equally likely to identify as *blank* or *wit*, while individuals with a power-cognisant identity profile were more likely to identify as *wit* than *blank* (for proportions and within-profile odds ratios, see Table S17).

**Figure 2**

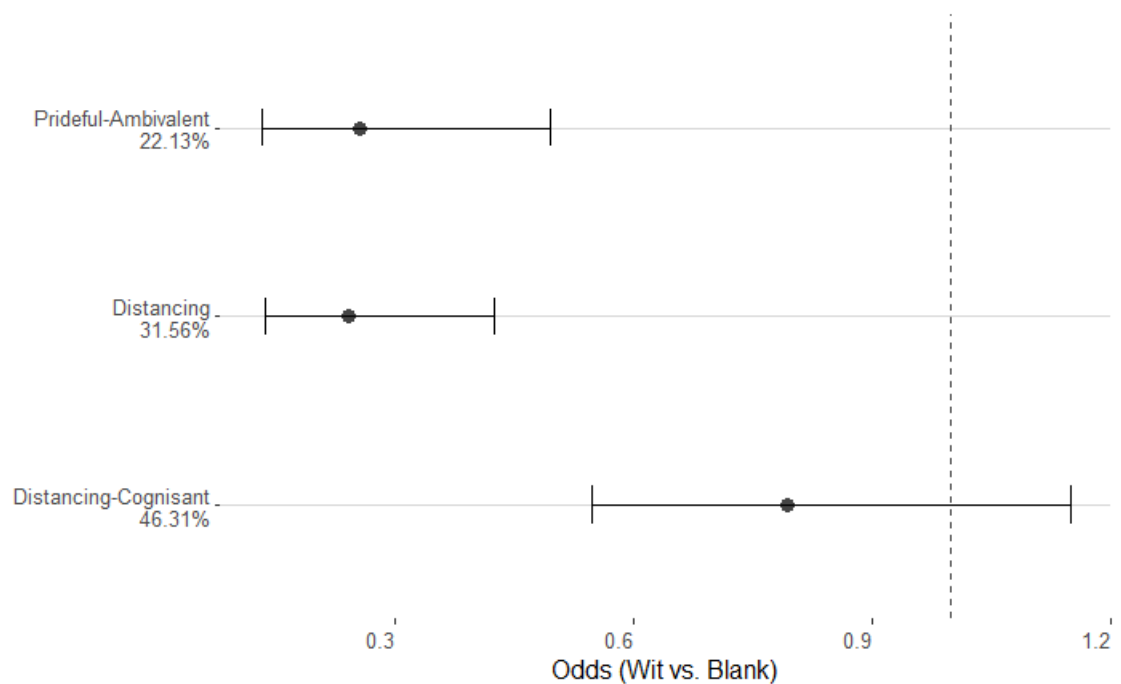
*Odds of Identifying as Wit vs. Blank by Latent Profile Study 2a*



*Note.* The dashed line indicates equal likelihood between *Wit* and *Blank*. Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

**Figure 3**

*Odds of Identifying as Wit vs. Blank by Latent Profile Study 2b*

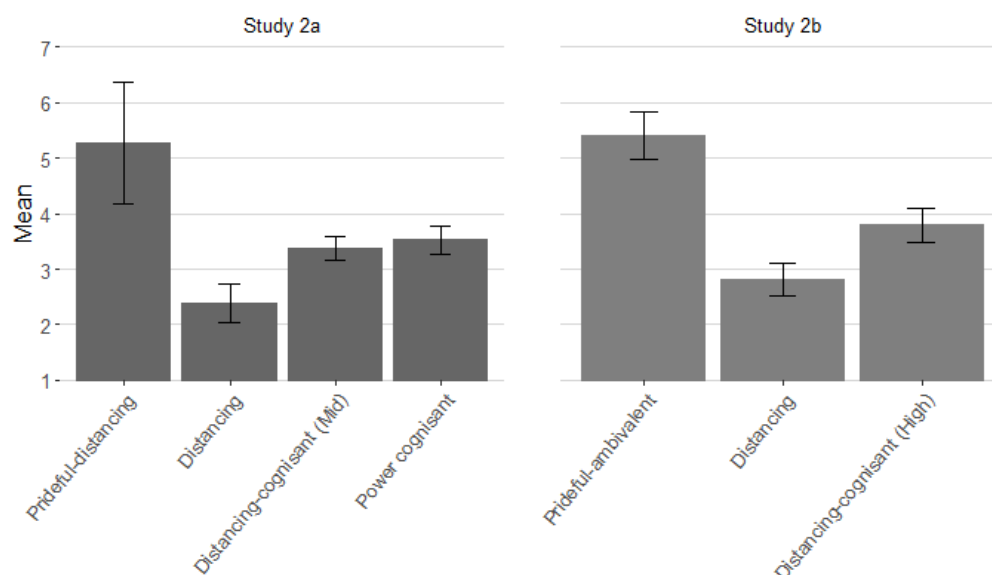


*Note.* The dashed line indicates equal likelihood between *Wit* and *Blank*. Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.



***Ethnic Ingroup Identification***

Figure 4 illustrates means by profile. As expected, those endorsing prideful strategies predicted the strongest ethnic ingroup identification with large effect sizes, i.e., prideful-distancing ( $p < .01$ ) and prideful-ambivalent profiles ( $p < .001$ ) in Study 2a and 2b, respectively. Also, as expected, the distancing profiles predicted the weakest ethnic ingroup identification ( $p < .001$ ), exhibiting medium-to-large effect sizes. The distancing-cognisant profiles exhibited low-to-mid levels, significantly lower than the prideful profiles and higher than the distancing profiles ( $p < .001$ ). Contrary to expectations, the power-cognisant profile also predicted low-to-mid levels of ethnic ingroup identification, which did not statistically differ from the distancing-cognisant profile ( $p = .811$ ). For full pairwise comparison statistics, see Tables S18-S19.

**Figure 4***Latent Profiles' Means of Ethnic Ingroup Identification*

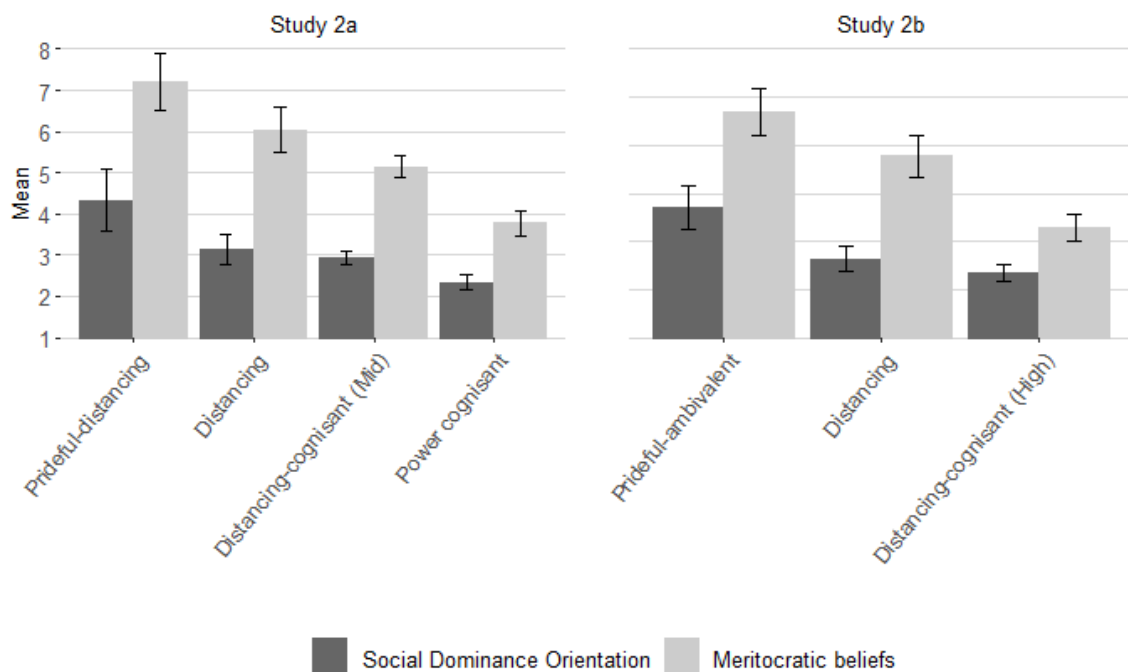
*Note.* Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

### *Legitimising Ideologies of General Inequality*

Figure 5 illustrates means for social dominance orientation and meritocratic beliefs by profile. See Tables S20–S21 for full pairwise statistics.

**Figure 5**

*Latent Profiles' Means of Social Dominance Orientation and Meritocratic Beliefs*



*Note.* Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

#### **Social Dominance Orientation.**

As expected, the prideful profiles exhibited the highest levels of SDO across studies. In Study 2a, the prideful-distancing profile exhibited significantly higher levels than the distancing ( $p = .017$ ), distancing-cognisant ( $p = .002$ ), and power-cognisant profiles ( $p < .001$ ), with large-to-very-large effect sizes. In Study 2b, the prideful-ambivalent profile similarly exhibited higher levels than the distancing ( $p < .001$ ) and distancing-cognisant profiles ( $p < .001$ ), also with large effect sizes.

The distancing and distancing-cognisant profiles did not statistically differ in Study 2a ( $p = .658$ ) or Study 2b ( $p = .233$ ) and showed significantly higher levels than the power-

cognisant profile in Study 2a ( $p < .001$ ), with medium effect sizes. As expected, the power-cognisant profile exhibited the lowest levels of SDO.

### **Meritocratic Beliefs.**

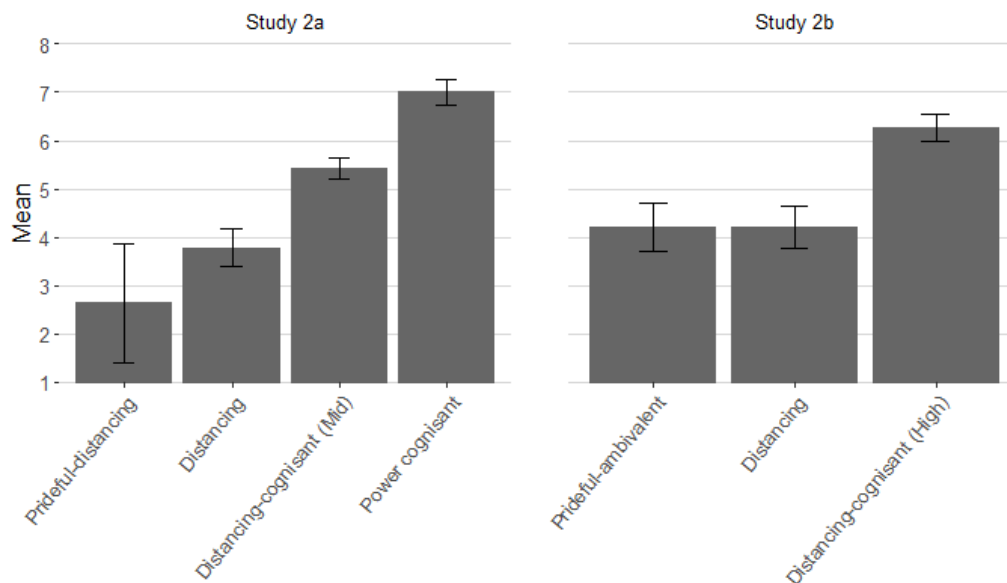
**As expected**, the distancing profiles exhibited high levels of meritocratic beliefs across studies. Also, the prideful profiles demonstrated strong levels. Prideful and distancing profiles did not statistically differ in Study 2a ( $p = .254$ ). In Study 2b, the prideful-ambivalent profile showed significantly higher levels of meritocratic beliefs than the distancing profile ( $p = .008$ ). The prideful and distancing profiles showed in turn significantly higher levels of meritocratic beliefs than the distancing-cognisant profiles ( $p < .01$ ), with medium-to-very-large effect sizes. As expected, all profiles exhibited significantly stronger meritocratic beliefs than the power-cognisant profile in Study 2a ( $p < .001$ ), with large-to-very-large effect sizes.

### ***Historical Linking of Colonialism***

Figure 6 illustrates means for historical linking of colonialism by profile. As expected, in Study 2a, the prideful-distancing and distancing profiles predicted the weakest historical linking ( $p < .001$ ), exhibiting large-to-very-large effect sizes, and did not statistically differ between them ( $p = 0.12$ ). In Study 2b, the prideful-ambivalent and distancing profiles also predicted the weakest levels ( $p < .001$ ), exhibiting large effect sizes, and did not differ between them either ( $p = 0.99$ ).

**Figure 6**

*Latent Profiles' Means of Historical Linking of Colonialism*

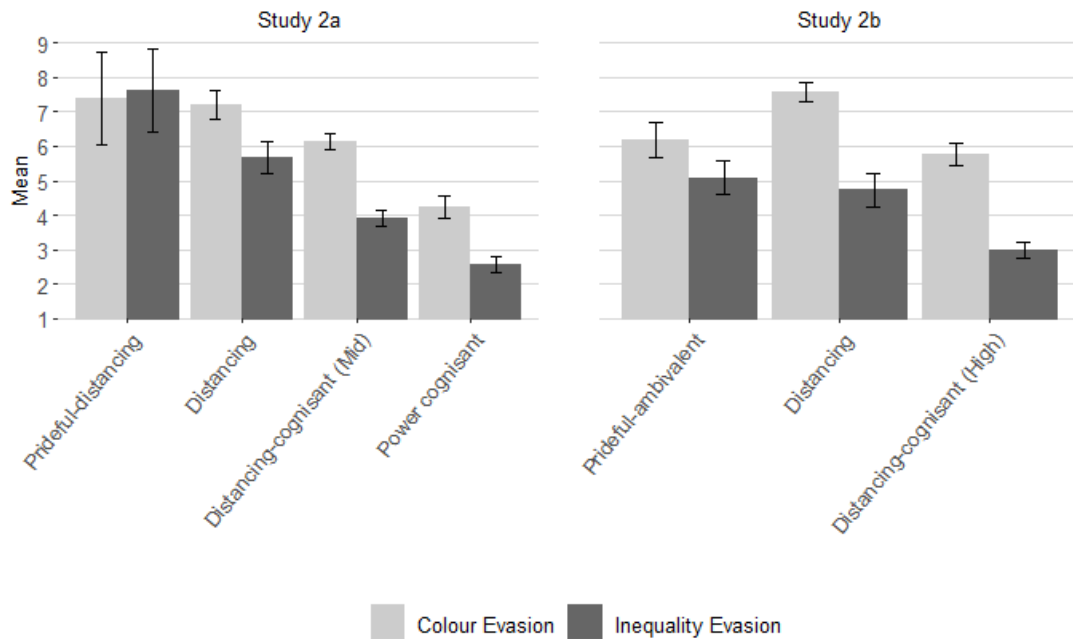


*Note.* Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

The distancing-cognisant profiles predicted medium historical linking in Study 2a and mid-to-high levels in Study 2b, both at higher levels relative to the proudful and distancing profiles ( $p < 0.001$ ), and exhibited large effect sizes. As expected, the power-cognisant profile predicted the strongest levels of historical linking in Study 2a ( $p < 0.001$ ), exhibiting large-to-very-large effect sizes. For full pairwise comparison statistics, see Tables S22-S23.

### ***Legitimising Ideologies of Racial Inequality***

Figure 7 illustrates means for colour evasion and racial inequality evasion by profile. See Tables S24-S25 for full pairwise statistics.

**Figure 7***Latent Profiles' Means of Colour and Racial Inequality Evasion*

*Note.* Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

### **Colour Evasion.**

As expected, the prideful, distancing, and distancing-cognisant profiles exhibited high to moderate levels of colour evasion. There were no statistical differences between the prideful and distancing-cognisant profiles in either study ( $p = .985-.288$ ). In Study 2a, the distancing profile did not differ from the prideful-distancing profile ( $p = .985$ ) and exhibited higher levels than the distancing-cognisant profile ( $p < .001$ ). In Study 2b, the distancing profile exhibited significantly higher levels than both the prideful-ambivalent and distancing-cognisant profiles ( $p < .001$ ), with large effect sizes. As expected, the power-cognisant profile exhibited significantly lower levels of colour evasion compared to all other profiles in Study 2a ( $p < .001$ ), with large-to-very-large effect sizes.

### **Racial Inequality Evasion.**

As expected, the prideful profiles exhibited strong racial inequality evasion across studies. In Study 2a, the prideful-distancing profile exhibited significantly higher levels than the distancing, distancing-cognisant, and power-cognisant profiles ( $p < .001$ ), with large-to-

very-large effect sizes. In Study 2b, contrary to expectations, the prideful-ambivalent profile did not statistically differ from the distancing profile ( $p = .479$ ) while exhibiting higher levels than the distancing-cognisant profile ( $p < .001$ ), with a large effect size.

In contrast to expectations, the distancing profiles exhibited higher racial inequality evasion than the distancing-cognisant profiles across both studies ( $p < .001$ ), with large effect sizes. In turn, both the distancing and distancing-cognisant profiles exhibited higher levels of racial inequality evasion than the power-cognisant profile in Study 2a ( $p < .001$ ), with very large and large effect sizes, respectively. The power-cognisant profile thus exhibited the statistically lowest levels of racial inequality evasion in Study 2a ( $p < .001$ ), with large-to-very-large effect sizes.

### Discussion

White Dutch participants endorsed prideful, distancing, and power-cognisant identity strategies by blending them in categorically distinct ways. These advantaged identity profiles meaningfully distinguished correlates of racial self-identification, ethnic ingroup identification, inherent deservingness and meritocratic beliefs, historical linking of colonialism, and ideological legitimization of racial inequality.

Concerning advantaged identity strategies (RQ1), we distinguished profiles of white people endorsing pridefulness and blending it with distancing (i.e., prideful-distancing in Study 2a, prideful-ambivalent in Study 2b) and power-cognisance (i.e., prideful-ambivalent in Study 2b). The recurring profiles that combined prideful and distancing identity strategies highlight a subset of participants who express ethnic-racial ingroup pride while distancing from explicit racial categories that signaled their group membership. The prideful profiles exhibited the strongest ethnic ingroup identification. Along with these prideful profiles, however, the distancing profiles—characterised by exclusively endorsing strong distancing—were most likely to self-identify as *blank*. Concurrently, the distancing profiles exhibited the

weakest ethnic ingroup identification. Further validating our model, prideful profiles displayed the strongest endorsement of inherent deservingness (i.e., SDO), and in Study 2a demonstrated meritocratic beliefs as high as those of the distancing profile.

The distancing-cognisant profiles blended mid-level distancing and mid-to-high level power-cognisance and were the most prevalent. These profiles did not predict racial self-identification (i.e., equal likelihood of *blank* and *wit*). In turn, they exhibited mid-levels of ethnic ingroup identification. Our results show that the distancing-cognisant profiles did not differ in their endorsement of social dominance to the highly meritocratic distancing profile, while showed levels of meritocratic beliefs in-between the prideful and distancing profiles, on the one hand, and the power-cognisant profile, on the other hand.

Lastly, the power-cognisant profile only identified in the younger sample (Study 2a) was the most prone to acknowledge their white ethnic-racial identity and their advantages, and the least prone to endorse prideful and distancing strategies. Accordingly, the power-cognisant profile was four times more likely to identify as *wit* than *blank*. However, they also exhibited mid-levels of ethnic ingroup identification. The power-cognisant profile predicted the significantly lowest endorsement of legitimising ideologies of general inequality, with medium-to-very-large effect sizes. Together, these findings confirm our qualitative observations and reveals that white Dutch people's racial self-identification as *blank* and *wit* were meaningfully associated with psychologically consistent advantaged identity strategies, ethnic ingroup identification, and ideological legitimization of general inequality.

Concerning the historical linking of colonialism (RQ2), participants exhibiting pridefulness and those exclusively distancing were the least prone to linking colonialism to current racial inequality. The distancing-cognisant profiles endorsed mid-to-high levels of historical linking. The power-cognisant profile exhibited high and the strongest linking of colonialism to the present. These findings confirm our qualitative observations and introduce

nuance to our model by quantifying degrees of historical linking as a function of advantaged identity profile.

Concerning the legitimization of racial inequality (RQ3), we found that most participants strongly evaded colour except for those in the power-cognisant profile. Noting that the power-cognisant profile was the only profile exhibiting low levels of distancing strategy, this pattern confirms that those distancing from their advantaged ethnic-racial identity were also prone to evading colour.

Those who blended prideful with distancing as identity profile, or exclusively endorsed the distancing strategy, exhibited strong tendencies to evade racial inequality. Introducing nuance to our expectations, this finding shows that endorsing distancing strategy alone was likely to translate into evading racial inequality. In contrast, the distancing-cognisant profiles exhibited low racial inequality evasion. This aligns with the notion that some white individuals can evade ethnic-racial categories while still acknowledging outgroup disadvantage (Pratto & Stewart, 2012).

The power-cognisant profile uniquely exhibited the lowest levels of colour evasion and racial inequality evasion. These findings support the notion that those who uniquely endorsed power-cognisance conveyed a structural construal of social categories and, thereby, linked colonialism to current racial inequality (Vasilyeva & Ayala-López, 2019).

### **General Discussion**

Colonial wealth and deeds continue to sustain former empires' global dominance to this day (Hickel et al., 2021). While white Dutch people often view colonialism and race as issues relevant only to the colonies, not to themselves (Wekker, 2016), descendants of colonised groups in the Netherlands (e.g., Surinamese, Antillean) faced wage penalties of 16%-21% compared to white Dutch people in 2019 (van Elk et al., 2019). Moreover, white individuals in the Netherlands benefit from positive discrimination and greater access to



opportunities in education and the labour market over equally qualified non-white people with similar social networks (Baalbergen & Jaspers, 2023; Lek, 2020; Thijssen et al., 2021). As of 2024, only 2 out of the 150 members of the Dutch Parliament (1.33%) have a background linked to territories colonised by the Netherlands, while this population represents 6.3% of the total (Bosma, 2012; Twede Kamer der Staten-Generaal, n.d.). As extreme poverty rose in colonised territories, many of which still have not regained pre-colonial welfare trends (Sullivan & Hickel, 2023), European colonialism weighs on people's lives in the centers of the former colonial empires till today. In this context, we examined how white people manage their advantaged ethnic-racial identity (RQ1) in relation to linking colonialism to current racial inequality (RQ2). In doing so, we extended for the first time the advantaged identity strategies framework theorised in a settler colonial context, the U.S., to a European former colonial empire, the Netherlands. As such, we assessed whether and how advantaged ethnic-racial identity strategies were associated with the ideological legitimization of current racial inequality (RQ3). For an overview of findings, see Table 4.

**Table 4**  
*Summary of Findings*

	Advantaged Identity Profiles			
	Prideful (Distancing/ Ambivalent)	Distancing	Distancing- cognisant	Power- cognisant
Ethnic Ingroup Identification	High	Low	Mid	Mid
General Inequality Legitimation	High	High	Mid-Low	Low
Historical Linking	Low	Low	Mid	High
Colour Evasion	High	High	Mid-High	Low
Racial Inequality Evasion	High	High	Mid-Low	Low

*Note.* 'High,' 'Low,' and 'Mid' indicate outcome means in relative terms.

In Study 1, we conducted structured in-depth interviews ( $N = 24$ ). Concerning RQ1, we found that white Dutch people meaningfully employed prideful (high identification),

## HOW WHITE PEOPLE MANAGE THE WEIGHT OF THE PAST

distancing (low identification), and power-cognisant (critical identification) strategies to manage their advantaged ethnic-racial identity, echoing previous findings and theorising (Goren & Plaut, 2012; Knowles et al., 2014; Shuman et al., 2024). Contrary to expectations, most participants either blended pridefulness with distancing or distancing with power-cognisance, and only a few exhibited one single identity strategy.

Drawing on our qualitative observations, in Studies 2a and 2b, we conducted surveys in two independent samples ( $N_{2a} = 347$ ;  $N_{2b} = 244$ ) to measure the advantaged identity strategies of pridefulness (e.g., "I see myself as a proud Dutch person of our ethnic heritage"), distancing (e.g., "I feel that my ethnic group does not have a significant impact on how I see the world"), and power-cognisance (e.g., "I see myself as a white Dutch person with associated privileges because of my ethnic group membership"). Latent Profile Analyses allowed to confirm whether and how white people employed simultaneously distinct identity strategies. Four distinct identity profiles emerged: the prideful profiles (distancing-ambivalent), characterised by high levels of pridefulness coupled either with high distancing or medium distancing and power-cognisance; the distancing profiles, marked by strong endorsement of the distancing strategy alone; the distancing-cognisant profiles, blending distancing with power-cognisance; and finally, the power-cognisant profile, characterised by high endorsement of power-cognisance only. Our results thus revealed unexpected combinations of advantaged identity strategies among white individuals in the Dutch context, introducing nuance to previous work that addressed advantaged identity strategies as discrete constructs (Goren & Plaut, 2012; Shuman et al., 2024).

Concerning RQ2, our qualitative and quantitative analyses revealed that individuals endorsing prideful or distancing strategies exhibited relatively lower historical linking of colonialism to current racial inequality. In contrast, those who critically identified with their advantaged ethnic-racial identity—i.e., power-cognisant participants—demonstrated a strong

connection between colonialism and current racial inequality. Concerning RQ3, the prideful profiles exhibited the strongest beliefs in inherent deservingness (i.e., SDO), and along with the distancing profiles, exhibited the highest levels of meritocratic beliefs, as well as ideological legitimization of racial inequality (i.e., high colour evasion and racial inequality evasion). The distancing-cognisant profiles showed lower levels of general and racial inequality legitimization, although conspicuously exhibiting mid-to-high colour evasion. The power-cognisant profile exhibited the lowest levels across ideologies.

### **Theoretical Implications**

Colonialism has been historically justified by white supremacist narratives (Human Rights Council, 2022). However, explicit white supremacy became socially unacceptable in Europe post-WWII, and along with it, the naming of race as a meaningful category (Essed & Trienekens, 2008; Juang et al., 2021; Jugert et al., 2022; Simon, 2017). Our findings suggest how white Dutch individuals may legitimise racial inequality through various identity profiles bypassing overt white supremacy, such as taking pride in their ethnic-racial group while distancing from their advantaged ethnic-racial status (i.e., prideful profiles) or distancing altogether from it (i.e., distancing profiles). This absence of blatant white supremacy has often served to downplay racism in the Netherlands (Wekker, 2016). Yet, blatant racial discrimination does not equate open supremacy and coexists in Western contexts alongside system-justifying outlooks like racial colourblindness (Knowles et al., 2009). Indeed, prideful profiles exhibited the strongest beliefs in inherent deservingness (i.e., SDO) and high meritocratic beliefs, aligning with unlinking colonialism from the present, as well as with colour evasion and racial inequality evasion. Those endorsing the distancing strategy alone exhibited high meritocratic beliefs, also aligning with unlinking colonialism from the present, as well as with colour evasion and racial inequality evasion.

## HOW WHITE PEOPLE MANAGE THE WEIGHT OF THE PAST

The distancing-cognisant profiles demonstrate that distancing from an advantaged status and evading colour can coexist with acknowledging racial inequality. Notably, these profiles comprised the largest proportion of participants. This aligns with findings from the United States, where individuals frequently acknowledged racial inequality while evading colour (Mekawi et al., 2020). Distancing-cognisant individuals exhibited levels of colour evasion similar to those in the prideful and distancing profiles, yet their acknowledgment of inequality aligned more closely with the power-cognisant profile—albeit at higher levels. Consequently, two distinct approaches emerged through which white Dutch individuals tended to acknowledge racial inequality: distancing-cognisant individuals did so while distancing themselves from their ethnic-racial status, and power-cognisant individuals acknowledged racial inequality while recognising their ethnic-racial status as a source of privilege, dispensing with distancing as an identity strategy.

Both the distancing-cognisant and power-cognisant profiles were associated with low-to-medium levels of ethnic ingroup identification and a tendency to link colonialism to the present. These patterns align with prior research in Belgium, where mid-identifiers—compared to both low and high identifiers—were most likely to experience group-based guilt related to colonialism (Klein et al., 2011). Complementing this previous work, our findings revealed categorical distinctions between these profiles of mid-identifiers. In Study 2a, the distancing-cognisant profile predicted moderate historical linking, while the power-cognisant profile demonstrated stronger historical linking and a distinctive system-challenging ideological stance. Also, while the distancing-cognisant profile in Study 2b descriptively showed similar low endorsement of general legitimising ideologies as the power-cognisant profile in Study 2a, it exhibited colour evasion levels as high as the prideful-ambivalent profile. Thus, taking a person-centred approach revealed categorically distinct advantaged identity profiles among mid-identifiers, which translated into statistically different attitudinal

outcomes—differences that a one-dimensional measure of ingroup identification would have obscured.

Supporting the notion that a structural construal of social categories is favoured when inherent deservingness and meritocratic beliefs are low, the power-cognisant profile employed the racial category *wit* the most, acknowledged the impact of race in shaping people's lives (i.e., lowest colour evasion), and strongly linked colonialism to current racial inequality. As observed in Study 1, those who displayed power-cognisance integrated the consequences of colonialism into their daily lives. In temporally linking colonialism to current racial inequality, they spatially connected distal colonial dispossession with their present traces in the metropole, such as recognising that iconic Dutch urban architecture was funded through colonial exploitation and, in turn, acknowledging accountability.

Integrating self-categorisation processes (Oakes, 2001) into the study of how white people manage their advantaged ethnic-racial identity, our findings add ecological validity to this framework by demonstrating how distinct self-categorisations (e.g., *blank* vs *wit*) consistently related to advantaged identity profiles in the Dutch context. These profiles, in turn, were meaningfully associated with theoretically consistent ideological correlates. By disambiguating self-construals (i.e., advantaged identity strategies) from intergroup construals (e.g., colour evasion, inequality evasion), we also provide enhanced conceptual clarity to prior work that has equated advantaged identity strategies (e.g., pridefulness, power-cognisance) with attitudes toward intergroup inequality (e.g., deny, dismantling) (Shuman et al., 2024).

Person-centred social psychological research has traditionally focused on attitudes or ideologies (Rivera Pichardo et al., 2023; Sibley & Liu, 2013). Our work contributes to this burgeoning literature by examining how advantaged individuals manage their structural position while distinctly uncovering their intergroup attitudes. This approach can prevent

## HOW WHITE PEOPLE MANAGE THE WEIGHT OF THE PAST

researchers from overlooking the material context (e.g., inequality) that shapes intergroup dynamics and participants' construals of these settings. By grounding participants' ideological outlooks in their socio-psychological and historical foundations (Hakim et al., 2023), we aimed to address white people's advantaged identity strategies in relation to colonialism. In doing so, we offer a distinctly intergroup perspective to study whether and how advantaged group members link historical oppression to current inequality.

### **Practical Implications**

Our results demonstrate that white individuals adopting an identity-cognisant outlook on intergroup relations were more likely to link historical oppression to current inequality. These findings support the value of an identity-cognisant approach among advantaged group members to foster structural thinking and epistemic justice (Vasilyeva & Ayala-López, 2019). Thus, these insights could be used to create targeted anti-racist interventions. For prideful individuals, interventions would focus on educating them about the historical contributions of multiple ethnic groups to the current national culture, thereby countering ethnonationalist nostalgia. For distancing individuals, interventions that highlight the role of social structures in perpetuating inequality may prove effective. For distancing-cognisant individuals, interventions that promote awareness of structural advantage while safeguarding self-esteem could help prevent them from evading colour. Finally, for power-cognisant individuals, teaching concrete strategies to counter racial inequality while avoiding tokenism would be beneficial.

### **Limitations and Future Directions**

While Latent Profile Analysis can predict outcomes, it does not establish causality. We reason that advantaged identity strategies and historical linking likely hold a bidirectional relationship. For instance, nudging certain identity strategies could either foster or hinder historical linking, while priming historical linking may activate specific identity profiles

## HOW WHITE PEOPLE MANAGE THE WEIGHT OF THE PAST

depending on people's ideological outlook. Future studies could explore these relationships and their moderators, experimentally and longitudinally (for examples of manipulating historical linking, see Sibley et al., 2008; Lastrego & Licata, 2010).

Our studies did not account for attitudes toward immigration, which may also influence the observed pattern of results. In the Netherlands and other Western European countries, national histories are often invoked to racialise who belongs and who is seen as incompatible in the context of migration (Duyvendak, 2021; Smeeke et al., 2018). While our findings provide strong evidence for the construct validity of advantaged ethnic-racial identity strategies, future research could account for attitudes toward immigrants and assess the incremental validity of advantaged identity strategies in explaining the historical linking of colonialism. Finally, the non-representativeness of our sample limits the generalizability of these findings.

Our measures are ecologically valid for Dutch speakers. Future research could adapt and validate them for broader use in other European countries with colonial histories as well as in former colonies and settler nations where racial dominance may operate differently. For instance, in contexts where the national identity is rooted in ethnic-racial mixing (i.e., *mestizaje*) between colonisers and colonised Indigenous people, as in regions of the Americas, the figure of the *mestizo/a* might function similarly to the distancing strategy, glossing over ethnic-racial distinctiveness and, thus, the positioning of colonisers' descendants (Walsh, 2019). Mirroring how the distancing strategy operates among white people in former colonial empires, the identity dynamics of *mestizaje* in settler societies could be investigated in relation to neo-colonial versus pro-egalitarian support for Indigenous people (Rivera Pichardo et al., 2023).

### **Conclusion**

In examining how white people in a European context manage their ethnic-racial identity amidst burgeoning discussions about colonialism, we found that white Dutch people adopted distinct combinations of prideful, distancing, and power-cognisant identity strategies. Extending on previous research in settler colonial settings, we uncovered some unexpected combinations of advantaged identity strategies: prideful-distancing, prideful-ambivalent, and distancing-cognisant profiles. Those employing prideful and distancing strategies were less prone to link colonialism to current racial inequality than white people who endorsed power-cognisance alone. Concurrently, those endorsing power-cognisance while dispensing with distancing and pridefulness questioned current racial inequality the most. We conclude by arguing that white people can legitimise racial inequality not only by pridefully identifying but also by distancing from their advantaged ethnic-racial identity. By critically examining their whiteness, in contrast, white people could be better positioned to acknowledge the enduring impact of the past on the present and to challenge its ongoing effects.



Chapter 3

**Cisheterosexual people in post-closeted times: The role of evading difference in managing an advantaged identity and legitimising inequality**

How do cisheterosexual people navigate inequality against LGBTQ people in contexts where discrimination is often considered a matter of the past? We argue that some do so by evading difference based on sexual orientation and gender identity. While emphasising individuals and their fundamental sameness may convey an egalitarian standpoint, evading difference might obscure markers of intergroup inequality, blur the advantaged status of cisheterosexual people, and thereby legitimise structural inequality. Using mixed-methods—in-depth interviews ( $N = 20$ ) and online surveys ( $N = 531$ )—we characterised distinct profiles of cisheterosexual people in the Netherlands, combining low-to-high difference evasion (“People who focus a lot on sexual orientation and gender identity forget that we are all just people”) with low-to-high inequality evasion (“Compared to cisgender and heterosexual people, LGBTQ people have equal opportunities”). In turn, these profiles distinguished how cisheterosexual people manage their advantaged identity and their ideological outlook on inequality. Specifically, those evading difference were more likely to evade inequality than those acknowledging difference. Furthermore, those acknowledging difference were most likely to recognise privilege and exhibit a substantive egalitarian outlook. We conclude by discussing how cisheterosexual people can either perpetuate or challenge inequality by managing difference and the implications of these findings.

*“I think [we] are doing quite well compared to other places in the world [...] Maybe not number one, but definitely in a top 10. [...] Like people are pretty much equal. There's no special treatments for well, for anyone, I would say. So that's equality, right?”* (Kevin, cisheterosexual Dutch individual).

With the achievement of civil rights such as equal marriage, a prevailing assumption emerges: formal equality of individuals marks the end of arbitrary injustice based on sexual orientation and gender identity—SOGI. However, attaining civil rights does not equate achieving substantive equality. For instance, research reveals that gay and bisexual people suffered wage penalties of 4% to 12% up to 2020 in Europe, North America, and Australia (Drydakis, 2022). Also, LGBTQ people in OECD countries face 7% lower employment odds and 11% lower chances of holding managerial roles compared to their cisheterosexual peers (OECD, 2019). In the Netherlands, similar penalties affect gay, bisexual, and trans women (Buser et al., 2018; Geijtenbeek & Plug, 2018), alongside higher burnout rates and lower self-esteem (Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau, 2022). Trans people often do not receive gender affirming care within two years after requesting it, they lack legal protection against hate crimes, and acceptance toward LGBTQ people overall has been decreasing (GGD Amsterdam, 2023; van de Grift et al., 2024). In contexts like the Netherlands—a country well-known for having pioneered equal marriage—portraying legal advancements as evidence for individuals' equality within societal norms, as in the quote above, might obscure entrenched inequalities related to SOGI.

A context shaped by the notion that SOGI ‘should not matter’ for the sake of individual equality may contribute to a psychological blurring of group distinctions. This blurring, in turn, can hinder social action aimed at addressing SOGI-based inequality. The use of social categories signals group memberships and highlights intergroup differences, particularly when differences between groups are portrayed in a given context as more

significant than differences within groups (J. Turner, 1987). Social categories thus help individuals organise the social world and, when necessary, facilitate social action based on these distinctions. Concurrently, social categories guide self-reference by situating individuals within society also in relation to their group memberships (Oakes, 2001). In evading difference, thus, cisheterosexual people may blur their advantaged status and, as a result, evade inequality. Understanding this dynamic may shed light on modern forms of prejudice against LGBTQ individuals that arguably arise from such blurring. Examples include casting LGBTQ identity claims as detrimental to inclusion (Morrison & Morrison, 2011), framing LGBTQ movements as seeking preferential treatment (Salvati et al., 2023), or the assumption of above-average wealth among LGBTQ individuals, such as the ‘gay affluence’ myth (Bettinsoli et al., 2022).

In racial intergroup contexts, research suggests that racial colourblindness (e.g., framing race as irrelevant by stating, “I don’t see colour, I see people” to evade difference, or denying systemic issues with statements like “Black people are not disadvantaged anymore” to evade inequality) enables some white individuals to appear egalitarian while avoiding recognition of their advantaged status (Awad & Jackson, 2016). Moreover, research indicates that those who evade difference, even when acknowledging inequality, may disengage from challenging inequality, resembling patterns observed among those who outright deny it. In contrast, only those who acknowledged both difference and inequality exhibited support for challenging inequality (Mekawi et al., 2020). Drawing on self-categorisation theory (Oakes, 2001; J. Turner, 1987), we reason that acknowledging difference prompts individuals to construe themselves and others as members of social groups. When both difference and inequality are acknowledged, individuals may thus be more likely to attribute unequal societal positions to external, stable constraints (e.g., group-based inequality) rather than to internal characteristics such as inherent deservingness or merit (Vasilyeva & Lombrozo,

2020). Applying these insights to the SOGI context, we propose that person-centred distinctions between cisheterosexual individuals endorsing high versus low levels of difference evasion—while exhibiting similarly low levels of inequality evasion—may also reveal key variations in how they relate to their advantaged status and whether they are prone to challenging inequality. While similar forms of SOGI evasion have been documented (Brownfield et al., 2018; Smith & Shin, 2014), the interplay between evading difference and inequality, and how this relates to managing cisheterosexual people's advantaged status, remains unexplored.

Adopting a person-centred approach, in which subgroups of individuals with shared characteristics serve as the unit of analysis (Osborne & Sibley, 2017), we address the following research questions in the Dutch context: How do cisheterosexual people navigate difference and inequality (RQ1) and how do they manage their advantaged identity (RQ2). By linking cisheterosexual people's attitudes on difference and inequality to how they manage their advantaged status, we aimed to uncover whether distinct profiles emerge, and, in turn, how these profiles relate to challenging inequality (e.g., collective and affirmative action) and to ideologically legitimising inequality (RQ3).

### **Social Categories and Advantaged Identity Strategies**

Social Identity Theory suggests that individuals manage their social identity to achieve and maintain positive self-esteem (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). For members of advantaged groups, this often involves deriving self-esteem from identifying with their advantaged status and differentiating themselves from others through social comparison and categorisation. Supporting this idea, Davis-Delano & Morgan (2016) and Uysal et al. (2022) found that a stronger display or identification as heterosexual was related to lower support for LGBTQ rights, while Falomir-Pichastor et al. (2017) and Hoyt et al. (2019) found that believing in fundamental differences between gay and straight individuals was associated

with antiegalitarian motives. However, contexts that downplay social categories for the sake of individual equality may enable advantaged groups to adopt alternative identity strategies. When faced with the prospect of being seen as privileged, strategies such as claiming to be "just normal" to defend their status or distancing themselves from their advantaged identity may seem more appealing than identifying with it. Privilege refers to unearned advantages automatically granted to individuals based on their dominant social identity (Case et al., 2012, 2014). Research also suggests that individuals with weaker identification with their advantaged group can channel antiegalitarian motives in ways consistent with their lower identification—such as emphasising individuality and framing inequalities as meritocratic outcomes (Shuman et al., 2024). These approaches dilute group-based, structural inequalities and can contribute to perpetuating them (Vasil et al., 2024). Consequently, evading difference, rather than emphasising it, may serve as a more efficient coping mechanism for navigating inequality in certain contexts.

How cisheterosexual people construe difference and inequality may thus reflect how they navigate their advantaged identity. Building on advantaged identity strategies initially applied in racial and gender intergroup contexts (Shuman et al., 2024), we propose that cisheterosexual individuals who attribute their societal position to inherent deservingness to rule over others (i.e., social dominance orientation) may evade both difference and inequality. This approach might involve conflating cisheterosexuality with normalcy, claiming to be “just normal” as a way of *defending* their status. In contrast, those who evade difference but acknowledge inequality may *distance* themselves from their social identity, instead attributing their position to personal efforts (e.g., meritocratic beliefs). Conversely, SOGI inequality may prompt those rejecting inherent deservingness or meritocratic beliefs to critically examine their privilege. Such individuals may be more inclined to acknowledge both difference and inequality, adopting *power-cognisance* as an identity strategy (Goren &

Plaut, 2012). The next section introduces our person-centred model of cisheterosexuality profiles, linking attitudes toward difference and inequality with identity strategies and ideological orientations. For an overview of theoretical expectations, see Table 1.

**Table 1**

*Hypothesised Theoretical Relations*

	Profiles of Cisheterosexuality		
	Defenders	Evaders	Acknowledgers
Difference Evasion	High	High	Low
Inequality Evasion	High	Low	Low
Identity Strategy	Defence	Distancing	Power-cognisance
Challenging Inequalities	Opposition	Indifference	Endorsement
Ideological Correlates of Inequalities	Legitimising	Legitimising	Questioning

*Note.* Ideological correlates were operationalised by measuring social dominance orientation, meritocratic beliefs, and modern prejudice against LGBTQ people.

**Profiles of Cisheterosexuality**

***Defenders Profile: Evading Difference and Inequality***

Some cisheterosexual people who portray their position to be “just normal” may evade both difference and inequality. In U.S. racial intergroup contexts, research shows that those who evade difference and inequality often oppose actively addressing racial inequalities (Mekawi et al., 2020). Similarly, advantaged individuals who conflated their identity with normalcy were more likely to endorse their group’s inherent deservingness to rule over others, thereby legitimising inequalities (i.e., social dominance orientation) (Pratto & Stewart, 2012). In this light, we reason that cisheterosexual individuals who evade both difference and

inequality may conflate cisheterosexuality with normalcy more strongly than other profiles as a means of defending their status. This tendency is likely related to opposing efforts to actively address inequalities (i.e., collective and affirmative action) and to ideologically legitimising inequalities through medium-to-high levels of social dominance, meritocratic beliefs, and modern prejudice against LGBTQ people. As modern prejudice against LGBTQ people frames discrimination as a matter of the past and LGBTQ identity claims as detrimental to inclusion, it has been associated with rejecting public displays of LGB affection and lower voting intentions for a gay politician (C. Bishop, 2021; Morrison & Morrison, 2011).

### ***Evaders Profile: Evading Difference while Acknowledging Inequality***

Some cisheterosexual people may acknowledge outgroup disadvantage and still evade difference by distancing from their advantaged identity. In the U.S., for instance, most advantaged individuals across social identities acknowledged inequalities, even when their own group membership went unnoticed to themselves (Pratto & Stewart, 2012). At the same time, work in the racial intergroup context of the U.S. showed that those evading difference while acknowledging inequalities were as reluctant to challenge inequalities as those who outright denied them (Mekawi et al., 2020). Similarly, we reason that cisheterosexual individuals who evade difference while acknowledging inequality may distance themselves from their advantaged status more strongly than other profiles as an identity strategy. In turn, evaders are expected to exhibit indifference to challenging inequalities, and endorse medium levels of ideological legitimization.

### ***Acknowledgers Profile: Acknowledging Difference and Inequality***

Acknowledging difference may reflect in recognising privilege. For instance, white individuals in the U.S. who acknowledged the role of race in society (i.e., low colour evasion) also exhibited higher levels of openness to experience, stronger perspective-taking,

and were prone to acknowledging white privilege (Mekawi et al., 2017). Moreover, research in the U.S. showed that individuals were more likely to challenge racial inequalities, such as by participating in diversity campus programs, when they acknowledged both difference and inequality (Mekawi et al., 2020). Taking a person-centred approach, this work thus distinguished between evaders and acknowledgers, two distinct profiles differing in how they viewed difference while sharing similar low levels of inequality evasion. We reason that cisheterosexual individuals who acknowledge difference may be more likely to associate individuals with their group memberships. Acknowledging both difference and inequality, in turn, might make people more inclined to attribute individuals' unequal societal positions to structural, stable constraints (e.g., group-based inequality) rather than internal features such as inherent deservingness or merit (Vasilyeva & Lombrozo, 2020). Thus, acknowledgers are expected to recognise privilege and, thereby, to endorse power-cognisance more strongly than other profiles as an identity strategy (Goren & Plaut, 2012), support challenging inequalities, and exhibit the most system-challenging ideological features.

### **The Present Research**

We adopt a person-centred approach using mixed-methods across two studies. Study 1 utilises qualitative in-depth interviews to obtain rich descriptions about whether and how the profiles of cisheterosexuality emerge in the Dutch context. In Study 2, we conduct surveys and Latent Profile Analysis (LPA) to confirm and further assess our person-centred model. LPA allows to examine whether and how cisheterosexual individuals combining difference and inequality evasion cluster in different profiles, and whether these distinguish their identity strategies and ideological orientations.

Building on prior research on SOGI evasion (Brownfield et al., 2018; Smith & Shin, 2014), we extended the racial colourblindness scale subdimensions (i.e., difference and inequality evasion) to the SOGI context and content-validated new measures through a pilot



study with a Panel of Experts ( $N = 6$ ; see supplementary materials). Additionally, we developed novel measures of cisheterosexual identity strategies, expanding advantaged identity strategies to the SOGI context. In doing so, we provide convergent and discriminant validity evidence of these constructs (see supplementary materials). By linking individuals to structures of inequality, this work is the first to integrate the literature on SOGI diversity ideologies with advantaged identity strategies, offering a person-centred understanding of how cisheterosexual individuals may legitimise or question SOGI inequality by managing difference and their advantaged status.

### **Study 1**

#### **Method**

##### **Participants**

Participants were required to self-identity as cisheterosexual, reside in the Netherlands, and be over 16 years old. Following data saturation guidelines of six interviews per analytical axis (Guest et al., 2006), we purposefully interviewed at least six participants per political orientation (left-wing, centrist, right-wing) while aiming for an even age distribution. As a result, 20 self-identified cisheterosexual Dutch participants residing in the Netherlands were interviewed (45% cis women; see Table S1). We obtained ethical approval from the Ethics Review Board of the University of Amsterdam.

##### **Procedure**

Potential participants completed a pre-screener survey distributed via paid Facebook advertisements. A total of 139 individuals completed the survey, and those who met the sampling criteria were invited on a rolling basis. All 20 invited participants accepted, and they received an electronic letter detailing the study objectives and procedure. Participants gave their consent by signing a form and were paid 10 euros per hour their interview lasted. The interviews' scheme was designed by the first author and interviews were conducted by

the third author along with two Cultural Psychology master students. Data collection spanned from the 10<sup>th</sup> of March 2022 to the 2<sup>nd</sup> of May 2022. Interviews lasted between 36 minutes to 2 hours, were conducted in person or via Zoom, in Dutch or English. Interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed, and anonymised. Transcriptions in Dutch were translated into English. The interviews comprised five sections on *Sex-gendered groups in Dutch society* (e.g., What are the most important issues to be addressed regarding sex and gender issues?), *Cisheterosexual identity* (e.g., How do you identify in terms of gender identity and sexual orientation?), *Queer blindfolding* (e.g., How do you think people's sexual and gender identity are important regarding how their lives develop?), *Public sphere* (e.g., What do you think about “conversion therapy”?), and *Countering cisheterosexism* (e.g., Have you participated in any action against discrimination toward LGBTQ people?) (for interview scheme, see [https://osf.io/865ar/?view\\_only=c08e11420bc540ccb1c1f7569bae8ac0](https://osf.io/865ar/?view_only=c08e11420bc540ccb1c1f7569bae8ac0)).

### **Analytical Strategy**

The first and third authors analysed the data following Thematic Analysis guidelines (Braun & Clarke, 2006) using ATLAS.ti (2023). We began by deductively creating a codebook drawing on our theoretical framework. Next, we familiarised ourselves with the data through reflective reading of the interviews. We then engaged in an inductive phase, contrasting the codebook with the data, which allowed us to tailor our codebook. Lastly, we refined our skills in independently coding text content and assessed the discriminant capability of our codebook by calculating intercoder agreement on a random subset of three interviews. Intercoder agreement was calculated by the proportion of overlap between coders, resulting in 54%. After discussing discrepancies, a second intercoder agreement index was calculated by the same procedure, resulting in 94.59% (see Table S3). The first author then coded the remaining interviews using the validated codebook (for details on codebook construction, see supplementary materials).

We clustered participants into the three theorised profiles drawing on whether and how they evaded difference and inequality. As such, those firmly evading difference and inequality were allocated to the defenders profile. Participants evading difference and acknowledging some features of inequality or not evading it were allocated to the evaders profile. Lastly, participants acknowledging difference and inequality or only weakly evading these were allocated to the acknowledgers profile. In the vein of qualitative research, transcripts were allocated to profiles based on a comprehensive appreciation of the data at hand rather than by quantitative considerations. The resulting code frequencies per profile, however, largely echoed our qualitatively-driven decisions (see Tables S4-S6). Participants' data were thereafter jointly analysed per resulting profiles (for participants per profile, see Table S7). Coding queries can be accessed at [https://osf.io/865ar/?view\\_only=c08e11420bc540ccb1c1f7569bae8ac0](https://osf.io/865ar/?view_only=c08e11420bc540ccb1c1f7569bae8ac0).

## Results

We present each profile in separate subsections, illustrating them with meaningful vignettes, followed by participants' birth cohort and political orientation. Each profile description first addresses participants' attitudes toward difference and inequality (RQ1), followed by their identity strategies (RQ2), and concludes with their appraisals of challenging SOGI inequalities (RQ3).

### Defenders Profile

#### *Evading Difference and Inequality*

*Well, for me it's not relevant. You can be gay or lesbian or whatever. You know, black, white, whoever you are. It's not relevant to, you know, being able to have a friendship.*  
(Amy, 1965–1984, centrist)

These participants evaded difference by highlighting the inconspicuousness of sexual orientation. In contrast, they did not emphasise the inconspicuousness of gender identity. In

line with blurring people's group memberships, some expressed sadness and irritation at symbols signaling LGBTQ difference. In grappling with difference, participants bracketed it by recategorising LGBTQ people as humans or valuing individuals over groups. For instance, as Emanuel (1985–2003, right-wing) stated when talking about the frequency of his interactions with LGBTQ people:

*You want to know how often? I wouldn't look for it, but living in Rotterdam you can't go around it. And if it happens you know that's just a human being.*

Some participants justified their opposition to LGBTQ symbols by pointing to the existing acceptance of LGBTQ people in Dutch society. As reflected in the quote opening this paper, they often engaged in downward social comparisons with other countries to downplay SOGI inequality in the Netherlands. Emphasising formal equality enforced by law was pervasive, rendering affirmative actions against discrimination illegitimate. In portraying a society where equality prevailed, some even speculated that identifying as LGBTQ stemmed from “feeling” discriminated. In doing so, they echoed pathologising tropes. For instance, as Barend (1985–2003, right-wing) and Floortje (1945–1964, centrist) respectively remarked:

*I also think it's a bit nonsensical to hang it in Amsterdam, all those flags where everyone already, the acceptance of gays is at the forefront.*

*You might not count in the gay world if you don't feel discriminated against. [...] Kind of a self-fulfilling prophecy.*

As such, the denouncement of anti-LGBTQ discrimination was framed as a biased viewpoint, rendering in turn the very experiences of LGBTQ people illegitimate. In doing so, cisheterosexual individuals positioned themselves as unpolluted by group-based concerns, thereby claiming to hold a neutral standpoint. Accordingly, these participants frequently emphasised this claimed neutrality when discussing incidents of anti-LGBTQ violence. For

instance, in 2022, unidentified individuals set fire to a student building in west Amsterdam, and national newspapers speculated that LGBTQ flags displayed in its windows might have made it a target. However, Amy (1965–1984, centrist) remarked, “*I have no idea whether those students who put out the flags have good relations with their neighbors or not,*” exemplifying their investment in neutrality.

### ***Blended Distancing-Defence Identity Strategy***

*I don't like what this is called, like a heterosexual man. If you ask me, "What are you? What species are you?" Oh I'm a human. [...] In my opinion, the question should be the other way around, because that's more normal. I think 98% of men are straight. It should be like: How do you know one of the men is not normal?* (Emanuel, 1985–2003, right-wing)

Mirroring their approach to LGB sexual orientations, these participants distanced themselves from their heterosexuality by stressing its inconspicuousness. At the same time, participants defended the normalcy of heterosexuality. As such, they consciously articulated what they claimed to be a given. As reflected in Emanuel’s quote above, some defenders explicitly endorsed their cisheterosexual status as an unmarked vantage point, entitled to define what diverges from it as abnormal.

Some also claimed biological rootedness of sex differences between women and men to defend their cisgender status as ‘normal’, while others distanced themselves from their cisgender status by stressing their individuality. As Will (1945-1964, left-wing) stated: *There are men and there are women and everything is possible, but we are all individuals.*

### ***Opposition to Challenging Inequality***

*I'm not much of a school bully and I therefore consciously choose to do that [confronting discrimination] privately to someone.* (Floortje, 1945-1964, centrist)

Participants conveyed reluctance to participating in efforts to challenge inequality. When they did claim to have participated, it was by emphasising how randomly they ended

up engaging in it and mostly in the private domain. As such, when taking part in collective actions, they prioritised personal or universal concerns over those specific to the LGBTQ community.

### **Evaders profile**

#### ***Evading Difference and Acknowledging Inequality***

*It's okay. I don't see the differences. [...] There were no social different group. So you're just normal people? Just like me.* (Adam, 1945-1964, left-wing)

Participants evading difference while acknowledging inequality emphasised sameness when talking about LGBTQ people. Unlike defenders, evaders bracketed difference by normalising LGBTQ people rather than framing their identities as inconspicuous. In turn, some expressed reservations when difference disrupted notions of normalcy. As Rosemarijn (Gen 2, left-wing) reflected on a newborn celebration she attended:

*They didn't put either boy or girl on the birth card but 'them'. And I say, I'm okay with everything, but I can find it awkward and secretly maybe still think, 'huh? That's going a long way.'*

As such, some explicitly conditioned their acceptance of LGBTQ individuals on conformity to what they viewed as normal. Notably, some equated 'normality' with the absence of preferential treatment, echoing defenders' advocacy for formal equality. As Daan (1945-1964, right-wing) remarked:

*I don't have a problem with them either as long as they move through society normally in quotes. It's only when they start insisting that they want preferential treatment.*

Echoing defenders' emphasis on neutrality, some participants carefully scrutinised attempts to attribute the arson attack in west Amsterdam to anti-LGBTQ hatred. Accordingly, they also stressed that they would react to violence “equally”—rather than neutrally. For

them, responding “equally” meant doing so regardless of the victim’s group membership. As Patrick (1985–2003, left-wing) stated:

*I don't think that my friends reacted to that news [gay people being hit and pushed into the canals of Amsterdam]. Or me [that I] react to the news much different than if it were straight people that were assaulted and thrown in the canals.*

Unlike defenders, however, evaders could acknowledge inequality to some extent when considering the impact of SOGI on life opportunities in the Netherlands. For instance, Rosemarijn (1965-1984, left-wing) did so by elaborating on how difference plays a role:

*I think at that age, in the subculture with the youth, you can be bullied or ignored or whatever. [...] And with that, if it already goes wrong so to speak, then it already affects the future.*

### ***Blended Distancing-Cognisant Identity Strategy***

Participants who evaded difference while acknowledging some features of inequality displayed some cognisance on their advantaged status. As Rosemarijn (1965–1984, left-wing) stated:

*Often don't realise [discrimination occurs] because you don't experience it. You're not next to it, you're not in it so to speak huh, so you don't see it.*

Elaborating on how they might convey their cisheterosexual status to others, however, evaders deflected awareness. As Adam stressed “*No, I don't think I present myself as a heterosexual. [...] Just being default.*” (1965–1984, left-wing).

### ***Indifference to Challenging Inequality***

*All I do is just give my Facebook profile a little rainbow colour, so to speak.*  
(Rosemarijn, 1965–1984, left-wing)

Participants expressed indifference toward collective efforts to challenge inequalities, reporting only individual actions, often limited to the workplace or social media. Moreover,

some viewed collective action in public spaces as likely to backfire. For instance, Wilma (1945-1964, right-wing) remarked, *“I don't know if you can change minds with protests. Because all the actions, it's always action and reaction.”*

### **Acknowledgers Profile**

#### ***Acknowledging Difference and Inequality***

*Mary is someone that is from the LGBTQ [community]. I never approached her as that, I approached her as the person that she shows me to be. And I don't care what group you belong to. Might sound rude in a way. But...It doesn't mean that I'm insensitive toward what that can imply.* (Pieter, 1985–2003, centrist)

Some of these participants' accounts conveyed the tension between evading and acknowledging difference. While some expressed reserves, they often elaborated on the social relevance of group-based differences and gained insight into LGBTQ people's experiences by using categories pointing out those differences. For example, Emma (1985–2003, left-wing) remarked, *“It is really important to talk about groups because groups have specific needs sometimes and specific issues they run into.”*

While some of participants acknowledged inequality as a matter of probability—*Chances are if you're like a gay or non-binary, transgender, people think you're odd and you go and you're going to be the odd one out* (Marcus, 1965-1984, left-wing)—others elaborated on its structural features, emphasising the pervasiveness of cisheterosexual norms to illustrate the depth of anti-LGBTQ discrimination. For instance, Thea (1965–1984, centrist) stated:

*The whole society is still largely set up for heterosexuality so as soon as you fall outside of that norm [...] [In conservative settings] as a homosexual man then you have an even bigger problem.*



All in all, participants emphasised that discrimination based on gender identity remains severe in the Netherlands and attributed inequality evasion to progressive Dutch self-praise and downward social comparisons. As Pieter (1985–2003, centrist) remarked:

*We look at the United States and we're like, ah, we're fine. No, it's usually a very much, they're like the standard.*

### ***Power-Cognisant Identity Strategy***

*When I was starting to get more aware of the diversity and automatically following being more able to identify myself.* (Claire, 1965–1984, left-wing)

Participants reflected on their cisheterosexual status by describing their shift from unawareness to recognition. In doing so, they illustrated how seamlessly they molded into these identities, later unpacking how inhabiting this default position denoted dominance and privilege. As Jasper (1965–1984, centrist) remarked, “*I have to recognise that I'm really sort of the default group. Right. So there is no struggle in trying to be me.*”

Some further reflected on how awareness of dominance facilitates the acknowledgement of difference. Concurrently, an explicit call was made for situating cisheterosexual ignorance alongside empathy. As Pieter (1985–2003, centrist) stressed “*I will never pretend to know the hardships that someone else has been through.*”

### ***Endorsing Efforts to Challenge Inequality***

*I can never fail, even if it's just a millimeter to gain space in again daring to think wider and open up to the new [...] I can't do otherwise, because I feel otherwise.* (Thea, 1965–1984, centrist)

Most participants described engaging in efforts to challenge inequality. Some reflected on how these efforts might interlock in society transformation, viewing group identities as catalysts for equalitarian change. For example, Emma (1985–2003, left-wing)

reflected on sex education, stating, “*Start to educate in the sense of celebrating possibilities and not just teaching fear.*”

### Discussion

Cisheterosexual people’s attitudes toward difference and inequality meaningfully clustered into the three theorised profiles: defenders, evaders, and acknowledgers. These profiles, in turn, were qualitatively distinct in terms of participants’ identity strategies, taking the form of distancing-defence, distancing-cognisance, or uniquely endorsing power-cognisance, respectively. As such, defenders opposed, evaders remained indifferent to, and acknowledgers endorsed efforts to challenge inequality.

Our qualitative observations suggest some nuances from what we expected. Concerning our research question on how cisheterosexual people navigate difference and inequality (RQ1), we hypothesised that evaders would evade difference but would acknowledge inequality. However, they still evaded inequality to some extent, for instance, by claiming neutrality when assessing it. Also, we hypothesised that acknowledgers would convey cognisance to both difference and inequality. However, some still hesitated when elaborating on difference and inequality.

Concerning our research question on how cisheterosexual people manage their advantaged identity (RQ2), most participants managed their identity by blending strategies rather than employing a single approach. In turn, profiles also distinguished their perspectives on challenging SOGI inequality (RQ3). Defenders, for instance, blended defence and distancing strategies, opposing challenging. Evaders exhibited distancing and power-cognisance, conveying indifference toward challenging. Lastly, acknowledgers endorsed power-cognisance and conveyed support for challenging. Noting that our model drew partly from the racial intergroup literature, we posit that our findings on the blending of advantaged identity strategies and associated perspectives on challenging highlight unique dynamics

within SOGI intergroup relations. We explore these nuances further in the General Discussion.

Profiles of cisheterosexuality drawing on difference and inequality evasion, thus, meaningfully distinguished people's identity strategies and ideological features. Given the exploratory character of Study 1, our observations merited further evaluation. In Study 2, thus, we employed surveys to examine whether Latent Profiles based on difference and inequality evasion also emerged quantitatively, examining their associations with cisheterosexual identity strategies and ideological correlates.

### **Study 2**

#### **Method**

##### **Participants**

Three hundred fifteen participants were recruited through Prolific, and two hundred eighty-three were recruited through CloudResearch. Participants were recruited from different sources, as those from Prolific were younger ( $M = 30.82$ , 95% CI [29.71, 31.92]) than those from CloudResearch ( $M = 50.22$ , 95% CI [48.25, 52.18]). Twenty participants did not pass the quality check, and thirty-seven identified as non-cisheterosexual; these cases were therefore excluded from analysis. Our final sample consisted of 531 self-identified cisheterosexual participants living in the Netherlands who were fluent in Dutch (47.83% cis women). Ages ranged from 17 to 81 years ( $M = 40.05$ ,  $SD = 16.2$ ), and 84.74% identified as white. Political orientations ranged from left (1) to right (9) ( $M = 4.98$ ,  $SD = 2.05$ ).

##### **Procedure**

Participants gave their consent by signing an online form and completed a quality check item. Thereafter, participants completed the scales of difference and inequality evasion, followed by those of advantaged identity strategies and ideologies, randomised among and within blocks per construct. Lastly, participants filled in demographic

information. Data collection took place from the 1<sup>st</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> of December 2023. We obtained ethical approval from the Ethics Review Board of the University of Amsterdam. Construct validation process of newly devised measures and the current study were pre-registered and can be viewed at:

[https://osf.io/na8md/?view\\_only=168ad37349f8470f960d8a4a671bdc0a](https://osf.io/na8md/?view_only=168ad37349f8470f960d8a4a671bdc0a). Materials, data and code can be accessed at [https://osf.io/zvje4/?view\\_only=22ae275ff5cf4c198cae1cf602586a74](https://osf.io/zvje4/?view_only=22ae275ff5cf4c198cae1cf602586a74) (Construct Validation Process) and [https://osf.io/d379t/?view\\_only=cfa27478e0f349479955aef980483d68](https://osf.io/d379t/?view_only=cfa27478e0f349479955aef980483d68) (the present study).

We report all measures and data exclusions.

### **Measures**

Participants indicated their agreement with statements on 9-point scales ranging from “1-Strongly disagree” to “9-Strongly agree”.

#### ***Indicator Variables for Profile Construction***

Difference evasion was measured with four items (e.g., "People who focus a lot on sexual orientation and gender identity forget that we are all just people.";  $\alpha$ : .83) (adapted from Knowles et al., 2009), and inequality evasion with three items (e.g., " Compared to cisgender and heterosexual people, LGBTQ people have equal opportunities for employment, on-the-job training and promotion.";  $\alpha$ : .73) (adapted from Brownfield et al., 2018). Construct validity analyses confirmed a two-factor scale (see supplementary materials).

#### ***Profile Outcome Variables***

**Advantaged Identity Strategies.** Cisheterosexual identity strategies were measured with three items each for defence (e.g., "I think we as normal people have the right to defend our lifestyle.";  $\alpha$ : .83) and distancing (e.g., "I see myself as an individual with a neutral view on things rather than a so-called cisheterosexual person.";  $\alpha$ : .73). Power-cognisance was measured with four items (e.g., "Cisheterosexual people in the Netherlands have certain

advantages because of their sexual orientation and gender identity.";  $\alpha$ : .89) (adapted from Brownfield et al., 2018). Construct validity analyses confirmed a three-factor advantaged identity strategies scale (see supplementary materials).

**Ideological Measures.** Legitimising ideology of SOGI inequality was measured using a scale of modern anti-LGBTQ prejudice, twelve items (e.g., "LGBTQ people should stop complaining about the way they are treated in society and just get on with their lives.";  $\alpha$ : .94) (adapted from Morrison & Morrison, 2011).

For general legitimisation of inequalities, social dominance orientation was measured as a blatant hierarchy-enhancing ideology, with eight items (e.g., "Group equality should not be our main goal";  $\alpha$ : .77) (Ho et al., 2015).

Lastly, meritocratic beliefs were assessed as a system-justifying ideology ( $\alpha$  = .71), including subcomponents of social mobility beliefs, with four items (e.g., "The Netherlands is an open society in which all individuals can achieve higher status") (McCoy & Major, 2007) and the Protestant Work Ethic, with three items (e.g., "Anyone willing to work hard has a good chance of succeeding") (Levin et al., 1998).

### **Constructs Validation**

The content validity of difference evasion and inequality evasion scales was assessed in a pilot study with a Panel of Experts ( $N = 6$ ; see supplementary materials). The measures described above were included in larger questionnaires to evaluate convergent and discriminant validity. Details are thoroughly provided in the supplementary materials.

### **Analytical Strategy**

The indicator variables for profile construction were difference evasion and inequality evasion. Using the *tidyLPA* package in R (R Core Team, 2021; Rosenberg et al., 2019), we tested latent profile solutions assessing models with one to seven profiles. To ensure model parsimony, the variances of the indicators and residual covariances were constrained to zero.

Profile selection followed established standards in social psychological research (Osborne & Sibley, 2017), comprehensively considering best model fit (i.e., Akogul & Erisoglu, 2017 analytic hierarchy process based on AIC, AWE, BIC, CLC, and KIC fit indices; smallest BIC; Bootstrap Likelihood Ratio Test  $<.05$ ), classification quality (i.e., entropy index 0.6-0.8 indicating that 80-90% of the sample has been correctly classified), and theoretical plausibility. We compared the profiles on demographics, identity strategies, and ideological correlates by regressing these variables on the profiles' posterior probabilities. To test differences between profile indicators and outcome means, we conducted Tukey's HSD tests and calculated Cohen's  $d$  values to estimate effect sizes.

### Results

We begin by describing the profile selection process based on difference and inequality evasion (RQ1). Next, we describe correlates of each profile focusing on their underlying identity strategies (RQ2), and ideological correlates (RQ3). See Table 2 for demographics per profile. Low/weak ( $< 4$ ), medium ( $\geq 4$  and  $< 6$ ), and high/strong ( $\geq 6$ ) interpretations of the resulting means are used. Effect sizes are interpreted as small ( $d < 0.50$ ), medium ( $0.50 \leq d < 0.80$ ), and large ( $d \geq 0.80$ ). See Table S28 for raw Cohen's  $d$  values.

**Table 2***Latent Profiles' Indicators Means and Demographics (N = 531)*

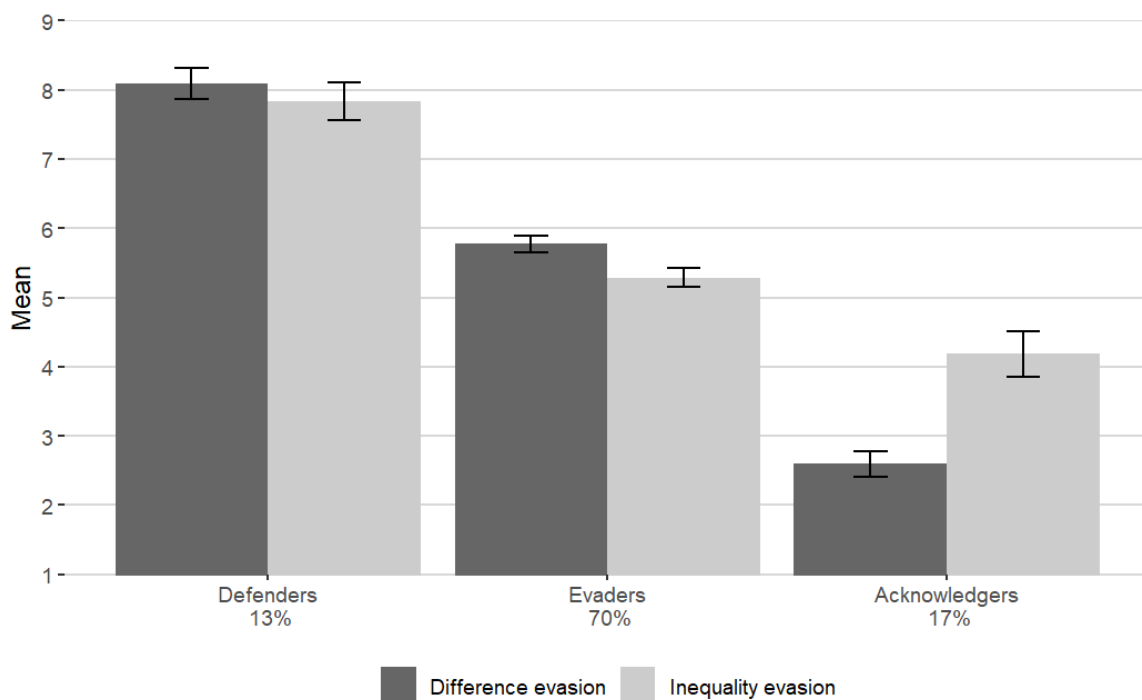
	Profiles of Cisheterosexuality		
	Defenders (high-high)	Evaders (mid-mid)	Acknowledgers (low-mid)
Difference evasion	8.04 <sup>a</sup>	5.71 <sup>b</sup>	2.53 <sup>c</sup>
Inequality evasion	7.7 <sup>a</sup>	5.24 <sup>b</sup>	4.18 <sup>c</sup>
N of respondents	69	372	90
Age	41.35 <sup>a</sup>	39.75 <sup>a b</sup>	34.91 <sup>b</sup>
% of female	34	47	61
Political orientation	6.39 <sup>a</sup>	5.1 <sup>b</sup>	3.4 <sup>c</sup>

*Note.* Values in a row not sharing a superscript are significantly different at

$p < .01$ . Political orientation was coded from 1-Left to 9-Right.

### Latent Profile Analysis

Based on difference evasion and inequality evasion (RQ1), as expected, the analytic hierarchy process using AIC, AWE, BIC, CLC, and KIC fit indices identified the three-profile solution as the best-fitting model (see Table S27). The three-profile solution also exhibited the lowest BIC value across tested models. The three-profile solution showed an entropy value of 0.65, the second highest value across solutions and indicating acceptable classification precision. Lastly, the Bootstrap Likelihood Ratio Test (BLRT) confirmed that the three-profile solution significantly outperformed a simpler, two-profile solution,  $p = 0.01$ . Based on these considerations, the three-profile solution was deemed appropriate. Figure 1 illustrates the profiles' means for the indicator variables.

**Figure 1***Means of Latent Profile Indicators*

*Note.* Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

As expected, a first profile of defenders emerged—characterised by high difference evasion and high inequality evasion. Introducing nuance to our expectations, a second profile of evaders emerged, defined by mid-levels of both difference evasion and inequality evasion. Also, a third profile of acknowledgers emerged, coupling low difference evasion with mid inequality evasion. Contrary to expectations, no profile exhibited low inequality evasion (i.e.,  $< 4$ ). Profile indicators were significantly different ( $p < .001$ ). Profiles' means concerning difference evasion exhibited large and increasingly greater effect sizes between defenders and evaders, evaders and acknowledgers, and defenders and acknowledgers, respectively. Profiles' means concerning inequality evasion exhibited large effect sizes between defenders and evaders as well as between defenders and acknowledgers, while medium effect sizes were observed between evaders and acknowledgers.



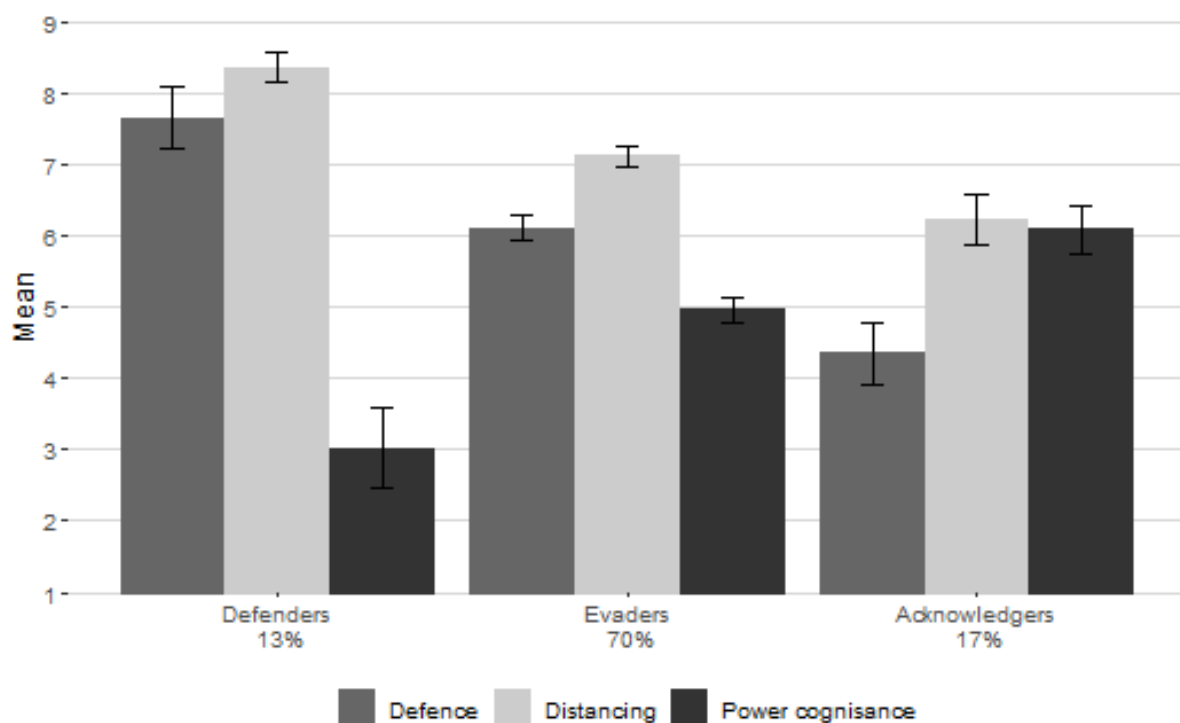
## Correlates of Profile Membership

### *Advantaged Identity Strategies*

Figure 2 depicts means of identity strategies per profile. Addressing profiles underlying identity strategies (RQ2), as expected, defenders displayed the strongest defence ( $p < .001$ ), exhibiting large effect sizes relative to evaders and acknowledgers. In contrast to expectations, defenders also endorsed distancing the most across profiles ( $p < .001$ ), exhibiting large effect sizes relative to both profiles. Defenders endorsed the weakest power-cognisance ( $p < .001$ ), showing large effect sizes regarding both profiles.

**Figure 2**

*Means of Cisheterosexual Identity Strategies per Latent Profile*



*Note.* Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

In contrast to expectations, as mentioned, evaders endorsed distancing strategy less strongly than defenders. As expected, evaders endorsed distancing strategy more strongly than acknowledgers ( $p < .001$ ), showing a medium effect size. As expected, acknowledgers

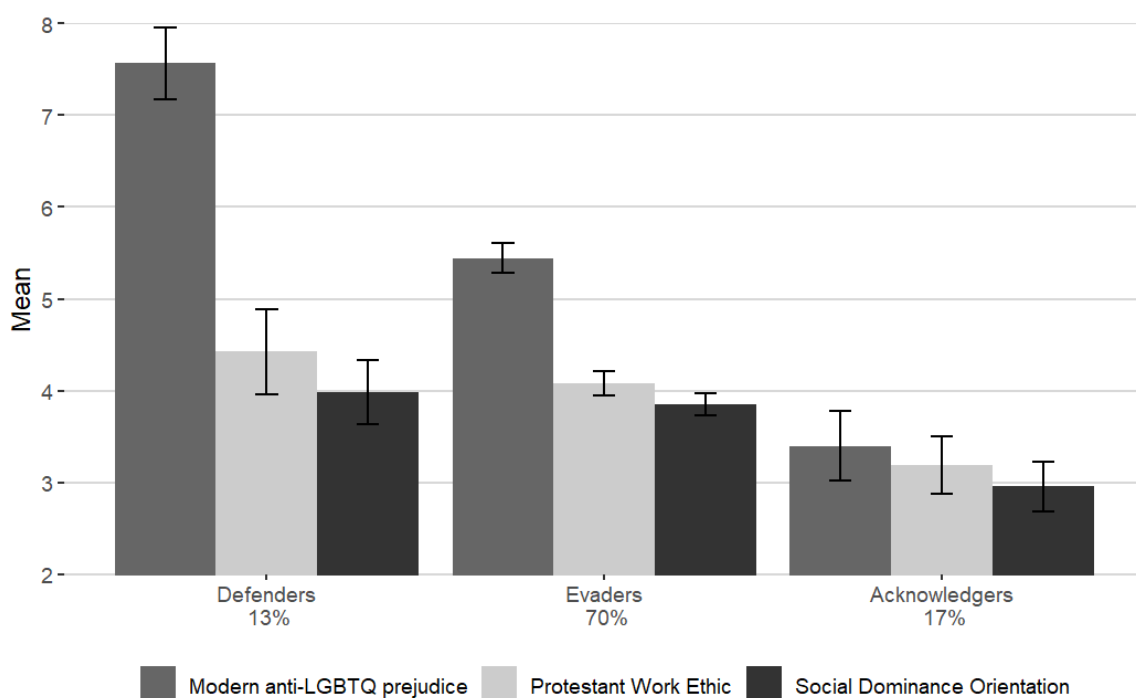
displayed the strongest power-cognisance ( $p < .001$ ), exhibiting large and medium effect sizes relative to defenders and evaders, respectively.

### *Ideological Legitimisation of Inequality*

Figure 3 depicts means of modern anti-LGBTQ prejudice, meritocratic beliefs (i.e., Protestant Work Ethic), and social dominance orientation per profile.

**Figure 3**

*Ideological Correlates per Latent Profile*



*Note.* Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

Addressing profiles' correlates of ideological legitimisation of inequality (RQ3), as expected, the defenders profile predicted strong modern anti-LGBTQ prejudice and higher levels than both profiles ( $p < .001$ ), exhibiting large effect sizes. As expected, evaders predicted medium and higher levels than the acknowledgers profile ( $p < .001$ ), showing a large effect size. As expected, acknowledgers exhibited weak and the lowest levels of modern anti-LGBTQ prejudice.

As for ideologies about general legitimisation of inequality, as expected, defenders endorsed medium ( $M = 5.17$ ) and the highest levels of meritocratic beliefs ( $p < .001$ ),

exhibiting a medium and large effect size relative to evaders and acknowledgers, respectively. Evaders also displayed medium levels ( $M = 4.59$ ) and higher than the acknowledgers profile with a medium effect size ( $p < .001$ ). As expected, acknowledgers endorsed the lowest levels of meritocratic beliefs ( $M = 3.75$ ). In breaking down meritocratic beliefs, however, defenders and evaders held equally medium levels of Protestant Work Ethic (i.e., “In the Netherlands, getting ahead does always depend on hard work.”) ( $p = .174$ ;  $d = 0.25$ ).

In contrast to expectations, defenders and evaders held equally low-to-medium levels of social dominance orientation ( $p = 0.707$ ;  $d = 0.11$ ). As expected, acknowledgers endorsed weak and the lowest levels ( $p < .001$ ), exhibiting medium effect sizes relative to defenders and evaders.

### Discussion

Cisheterosexual people exhibited categorical differences in combining difference evasion and inequality evasion. These findings quantitatively confirm that cisheterosexual participants’ attitudes toward difference and inequality are best summarised by three profiles of defenders, evaders, and acknowledgers. Introducing nuance to our model, evaders exhibited medium, rather than high, levels of difference evasion, and no profile demonstrated low levels of inequality evasion. We address these nuances further in the General Discussion.

These profiles categorically distinguished cisheterosexual people’s identity strategies. Notably, the strong defence and distancing strategies exhibited by both defenders (12.99%) and evaders (70.05%) suggest that for a large proportion of participants (83%), defending their status by conflating cisheterosexuality with normalcy was closely tied to distancing from their social identity. While profiles were constructed based on difference evasion and inequality evasion—categorically distinguishing defenders (High-High) from evaders (Mid-Mid)—their shared patterns of identity strategies reflect similar positioning toward their

cisheterosexuality. In contrast, acknowledgers—characterised by low difference evasion and medium inequality evasion—displayed the strongest power-cognisance while endorsing defence and distancing the least.

Profile membership also distinguished participants' levels of modern anti-LGBTQ prejudice. In contrast to expectations, defenders and evaders endorsed equal levels of blatant (e.g., social dominance orientation) and meritocratic (e.g., Protestant Work Ethic) inequality legitimisation. In contrast, acknowledgers rejected both, exhibiting a pro-egalitarian outlook on SOGI-based and on general inequality. This finding further suggests that acknowledging difference represents a key factor in distinguishing a pro-egalitarian profile among cisheterosexual individuals.

### General Discussion

*I don't think of people as categories. I don't like it, to me it's very denigrating and it's the opposite of evolution basically. Because in all of human existence we struggled to get the right of the individual respected above the herd. [...] We make too much an issue of the surface problems, like the problems on the surface, but underneath we are all human.*

(Emanuel, cisheterosexual Dutch individual)

LGBTQ individuals in certain Western and global South contexts enjoy formal equality with cisheterosexual people. Following civil rights advancements like equal marriage, however, some cisheterosexual people may view these gains as evidence that equality has been achieved overall. We investigated whether, by endorsing formal equality, some cisheterosexual people tend to evade difference (as Emanuel does in the quote above), equating themselves with LGBTQ people and, thereby, diluting entrenched SOGI inequality and further legitimising it. We drew on prior work on SOGI evasion (Brownfield et al., 2018; Smith & Shin, 2014), racial colourblindness (Knowles et al., 2009; Mekawi et al., 2020), and advantaged identity strategies (Shuman et al., 2024) to examine whether how cisheterosexual

people construe key features of social categories—difference and inequality—reflects in how they manage their advantaged identity and their ideological orientations. We employed a mixed-methods approach to address our research questions. In Study 1, we conducted structured, in-depth interviews ( $N = 20$ ) to explore our model in the Dutch context. Next, in Study 2, we used surveys ( $N = 531$ ) to test our predictions in a confirmatory fashion using Latent Profile Analysis (for model overview, see Table 1). Cisheterosexual people exhibited distinct profile combinations of low-to-high difference evasion (“People who focus a lot on sexual orientation and gender identity forget that we are all just people”) and low-to-high inequality evasion (“Compared to cisgender and heterosexual people, LGBTQ people have equal opportunities”), resulting in three meaningfully distinct profiles: defenders (high-high), evaders (mid-mid), and acknowledgers (low-to-mid).

Attitudinal profiles of difference and inequality distinguished cisheterosexual people’s identity strategies and, in turn, their ideological outlook concerning inequality. In particular, cisheterosexual people evading difference were also prone to evading inequality (i.e., defenders strongly evading both difference and inequality and evaders evading difference while acknowledging outgroup disadvantage). Moreover, those who evaded difference (i.e., defenders and evaders) were highly prone to defend their status, distancing themselves from their advantaged social identity and ideologically legitimising inequalities (e.g., by opposing or remaining indifferent to challenging inequalities and by endorsing higher levels of modern LGBTQ prejudice, social dominance, and meritocratic beliefs). Importantly, those with an acknowledger profile—characterised by low levels of difference evasion and mid-to-low levels of inequality evasion—were the most likely to recognise cisheterosexual privilege as part of their identity strategy. Acknowledgers also exhibited the lowest endorsement of defence and distancing strategies. As such, the acknowledgers profile qualitatively conveyed

strong support for individual, collective, and institutional actions to challenge inequality and quantitatively exhibited the most ideologically pro-egalitarian outlook.

Some unexpected patterns also emerged. Addressing how cisheterosexual people navigate difference and inequality (RQ1), those expected to acknowledge inequality, i.e., evaders and acknowledgers profiles, displayed mid-levels of inequality evasion rather than low-levels. In light of our qualitative observations, we reason that our findings reflect the specific SOGI intergroup dynamics of the Netherlands, which might also emerge in other contexts where equalising narratives concerning SOGI prevail (e.g., ‘SOGI should not matter’ for the sake of individual equality). As participants elaborated in Study 1, societal narratives in the Netherlands are imbued with downward comparisons regarding other countries where LGBTQ people do not enjoy civil rights to the same extent, thereby deterring people from pinpointing SOGI inequality in the Netherlands, let alone cisheterosexual privilege.

The identity strategies associated with the profiles were also slightly different than expected. Addressing cis heterosexual people’s identity strategies (RQ2), defenders blended defence with distancing as an identity strategy rather than primarily endorsing defence. While defence as strategy echoes those prideful white people characterised in the U.S. by high ingroup identification and denial of inequalities (Goren & Plaut, 2012; Shuman et al., 2024), cisheterosexual individuals in the Dutch context defended their status by conflating cisheterosexuality with normalcy and, simultaneously, distanced from their social identity. On the other hand, evaders blended strong distancing with medium power-cognisance as an identity strategy. Recent work found that some white Dutch people who distanced themselves from their advantaged ethnic-racial identity did so by also acknowledging racial inequality to some extent (Cáceres Quezada et al., 2025). Our person-centred approach thus extends prior

work addressing advantaged identity strategies as discrete constructs by showing that most participants blended them (Goren & Plaut, 2012; Shuman et al., 2024).

The profiles were meaningfully associated with distinct perspectives on challenging SOGI inequality (Study 1) and categorically distinguished cisheterosexual people's ideological outlook (Study 2). Addressing profiles' construals of the status quo (RQ3), Study 1 showed that defenders opposed efforts to challenge inequalities, evaders conveyed indifference, and acknowledgers supported challenging efforts. In Study 2, profiles categorically distinguished participants' endorsement of modern anti-LGBTQ prejudice, revealing that defenders endorsed high levels, evaders endorsed medium levels, and acknowledgers low levels. Regarding general ideological legitimization of inequality, defenders and evaders endorsed equal levels of blatant (i.e., social dominance orientation) and meritocratic (i.e., Protestant Work Ethic) ideological legitimization of inequality. The similarity in how defenders and evaders legitimised inequalities in the Dutch SOGI context parallels the deniers and evaders profiles identified in the U.S. racial intergroup context, where both exhibited reluctance to challenge racial inequalities (Mekawi et al., 2020). This cross-context consistency in how advantaged group members navigate difference supports the notion of difference evasion as a coping mechanism for managing an advantaged status in the face of inequality. Indeed, those who acknowledged difference, i.e., acknowledgers, exhibited low endorsement and the weakest levels across legitimising ideologies.

By considering the role of social categories in construing the self and others (Oakes, 2001; J. Turner, 1987), we conceptually and methodologically distinguished cisheterosexual people's attitudes to difference and inequality from their identity strategies. In doing so, our work extends previous research that has equated some advantaged identity strategies (e.g., defence, power-cognisance) with attitudes toward inequality (e.g., defending inequality, dismantling inequality) (Shuman et al., 2024). In turn, we also demonstrated that

antiegaltarian motives in cisheterosexual people could manifest through evading rather than emphasising difference, introducing nuance to classic notions associating antiegaltarian motives with high identification and increased differentiation (Falomir-Pichastor et al., 2017; Hoyt et al., 2019a).

### **Practical Implications**

Anti-discrimination policies in countries with equalising laws often penalise the use of group categories to make decisions over individuals (e.g., by equalising the age for sex consent or forbidding sexual orientation to be registered) (Guyan, 2022). Consequently, whether a legal decision benefits or disadvantages a historically marginalised group can be disregarded under the pretense of neutrality (Spade, 2015). We reason that formal equality approaches to SOGI, which center on individuals, might inadvertently legitimise structural inequalities by psychologically reflecting in people's social categorisation processes. Our results indicate that when cisheterosexual people evade difference, they are indeed prone to circumvent their own structural advantage and, in turn, to evade inequality.

Despite the universalist appeal of evading difference to prevent people from using group categories to oppress, research on racial colourblindness in the U.S. (i.e., "I don't see colour but people" tropes) has demonstrated how antiegaltarians can strategically evade difference to endorse the humanistic principle of equal treatment and, thereby, morally-license themselves to oppose policies aimed at achieving substantive racial equality (Knowles et al., 2009). While equalising laws such as equal marriage fostered acceptance toward LGBTQ people in Europe (Aksoy et al., 2020), propelled LGB people's political participation (Page, 2018), and coincided with the narrowing of LGBTQ wage gaps (Drydak, 2022), these and other inequality indicators have since stagnated. Moreover, anti-LGBTQ violence and acceptance have worsened over the last decade in some Western European societies, as reported by the Council of Europe and the city of Amsterdam (Ben



Chikha, 2021; GGD Amsterdam, 2023). Promoting equalitarian values can indeed mitigate authoritarian intolerance and increase LGBTQ visibility (Oyamot Jr. et al., 2017). Such an increased visibility, however, does not necessarily lead to greater support for LGBTQ rights among cisheterosexual people (Flores et al., 2018). By establishing formal equality as an end point, we argue that a liberal framework on SOGI may consecrate tolerance at best and indifference at worst as an attitudinal norm among cisheterosexual people, thereby preventing societies from moving forward toward substantive SOGI equality.

In examining how a liberal framework toward SOGI in the Netherlands reflects in cisheterosexual people intergroup attitudes and identity strategies, our results suggest that policies addressing SOGI inequality could benefit from a difference-cognisant approach. For instance, governments could substantively improve LGBTQ people's living conditions by implementing state-sponsored practices that allow voluntary registration of sexual orientation and gender identity—both as self-identification and behaviour, in both categorical and continuous fashion. This approach would enable to track outcomes across various domains, thereby informing tailored policies that would more effectively address LGBTQ people's needs. Some countries have begun collecting SOGI data in national censuses (e.g., Australia, Chile, Ecuador, the U.K.), and Canada has initiated its first Action Plan in this regard, which includes funding for community-led policy research and focused on LGBTQ seniors (Government of Canada, 2024). At the same time, registering practices must be continuously implemented, monitored and informed by LGBTQ lay experts and researchers to ensure that the potential for benefits outweigh potential harms (Guyan, 2022).

### **Limitations and Future Directions**

While LPA can predict outcome variables, causality cannot be established. We reason that confronting cisheterosexual people with SOGI inequality might trigger their endorsement of difference evasion as coping mechanism. However, this causal relation may be moderated

by political orientation and identity strategies. Future research could explore these relations experimentally and longitudinally.

The non-representativeness of our online sample limits generalisability. Online surveys tend to underrepresent individuals with lower digital literacy, education, or survey engagement (Andrade, 2020). Consequently, our findings may reflect associations primarily among medium-to-highly educated, urban populations. Future research would benefit from nationally representative samples that track socioeconomic status, education, and city of residence.

The present studies provide content, convergent, and discriminant validity of the constructs at hand. However, predictive validity remains to be assessed. Future research could examine whether difference evasion promotes individual-level focused policies at the expense of structural-level solutions to address SOGI inequality (Chater & Loewenstein, 2023). Such an individual-level focus aligns with recent work suggesting that LGBTQ people experience difference evasion as exclusionary (Cipollina & Sanchez, 2025). Further research could explore whether and how LGBTQ people also engage in difference evasion to navigate these social contexts and at what cost, offering critical insights into the impact on sexually and gender minoritised groups as cisheterosexual people evade difference and obscure their advantage.

Our findings also revealed meaningfully distinct appraisals of efforts to challenge inequality. As evaders conveyed indifference while engaging in small-scale or individual actions—such as those confined to the workplace or social media—these past efforts may have signaled support for LGBTQ people while leaving inequality unchallenged. Moreover, they could be strategically invoked to justify current detachment, thereby engaging in moral credentialing, which reduces the perceived need for further, substantive action (Mullen & Monin, 2016). Future research could examine whether and how nudging moral credentialism

(e.g., endorsing “Love is love” tropes) shapes collective action intentions and policy preferences, as well as the role of difference evasion in this process.

Our measures are ecologically valid for Dutch speakers. Future research would benefit from adapting and validating these measures in other Western European societies and in those where pro-LGBTQ laws are burgeoning. By measuring difference evasion alongside other established scales (e.g., modern and old-fashioned anti-LGBTQ prejudice, Morrison & Morrison, 2011), future studies could longitudinally trace the interplay between national legislation and shifting intergroup dynamics. As social change unfolds, research could assess causality between legislation and pro-egalitarian attitudes (see, for instance, Aksoy et al., 2020; Eisner et al., 2021). Furthermore, this research could distinguish substantive pro-egalitarian attitudinal profiles (e.g., low difference evasion) from those that merely reflect equalising outlooks (e.g., high difference evasion), offering insight into the mechanisms by which these profiles emerge and their nomological network, thereby informing timely interventions.

### **Conclusion**

In examining how cisheterosexual people in the Netherlands navigate SOGI intergroup relations, we identified distinct profiles characterised by combinations of difference evasion and inequality evasion. These profiles categorically distinguished how cisheterosexual people managed their advantaged identity. In evading difference, cisheterosexual individuals signaled individual-focused appraisals of people’s value at the expense of their group memberships. Cisheterosexual people who evaded difference also tended both to defend their status by conflating cisheterosexuality with normalcy and to distance themselves from their social identity. These identity strategies tended to equate cisheterosexual people to LGBTQ people, reflecting an individual’s formal equality motive. In turn, they were prone to opposing or holding indifference to challenging inequalities and to

ideologically legitimising them. Those who acknowledged difference, in contrast, were more likely to acknowledge inequality, recognise cisheterosexual privilege, and to exhibit the most system-challenging ideological features. We conclude by arguing that when cisheterosexual people evade difference, they may, at best, overlook and, at worst, entrench SOGI inequality. Conversely, by acknowledging difference, cisheterosexual people can be better positioned to recognise SOGI inequalities and participate in dismantling them.

## Chapter 4

### **Inequality framings shape cisheterosexual people's construals of LGBTQ-cisheterosexual difference and policy preferences to address inequality**

Facing inequality can resurface categorical differences between groups and encourage action based on these distinctions. As a result, individuals may be more likely to address the group-based, structural underpinnings of inequality. Examining the sexual orientation and gender identity context, we investigated whether higher inequality framing (vs lower inequality and control) prompts cisheterosexual individuals to acknowledge difference between themselves and LGBTQ people. In acknowledging difference, we theorised that cisheterosexual people would prefer structural-level policy to address inequality (vs individual-level policy). Two preregistered, highly-powered experiments ( $N = 2,364$ ) yielded four key findings. First, higher inequality framing did not directly impact acknowledgement of difference nor policy preferences. Second, higher inequality framing may increase evasion of difference (vs acknowledgement) when participants distanced themselves from their advantaged status. Third, participants preferred individual-level policies (vs structural-level policies) when they assessed inequality to be low and evaded difference. Fourth, participants preferred individual-level policies (vs structural-level policies) when they employed sexual orientation and gender identity categories to describe a queer person's life after receiving information about inequality. We conclude by discussing the theoretical and practical implications of these findings, along with the limitations and future research directions of our approach.

*"He puts too much emphasis on what others think of him through labels like he, him, they. Other than that, he's a normal person who doesn't need to highlight that he's gay and lives an ordinary life."* Participant's open-response to describe a queer person

*"A normal person who does ordinary things, nothing special or abnormal, just like any regular person, like any normal person, like everyone else."* Participant's open-response to describe a cisheterosexual person

The quotes above reflect how two cisheterosexual participants described a fictional character after receiving information about inequality on sexual orientation and gender identity—SOGI—in the Netherlands. While these statements may appear anecdotal, they arguably do so because they reflect how cisheterosexual people navigate SOGI inequality in contexts where anti-LGBTQ discrimination is often considered a matter of the past (Brownfield et al., 2018; Cipollina & Wang, 2024; Cvetkovska et al., 2024; Smith & Shin, 2014). Once equalising laws are enacted (e.g., equal marriage, gender recognition), some may cast differences that were used to discriminate against as normatively negligible for the sake of equality among individuals thereafter. Downplaying these differences, however, may prevent some from acknowledging entrenched SOGI inequality.

Research in Western contexts has shown a growing tendency to cast LGBTQ people's identity claims as detrimental for inclusion, as seeking preferential treatment, up to inaccurately assume above-average wealth among LGBTQ individuals (e.g., the gay affluence myth) (Bettinsoli et al., 2022; Morrison & Morrison, 2011; Salvati et al., 2023). However, research reveals that gay and bisexual people in Europe, North America, and Australia—contexts known for their equalising policies—suffered wage penalties of 4% to 12% up to 2020 (Drydak, 2022). Moreover, LGBTQ people in OECD countries faced 7% lower employment odds and 11% lower chances of holding managerial roles compared to cisheterosexual peers (OECD, 2019). In the Netherlands, similar penalties exist among

LGBTQ individuals (Buser et al., 2018; Geijtenbeek & Plug, 2018), alongside higher burnout rates as well as lower self-esteem (Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau, 2022). Furthermore, acceptance toward LGBTQ people has been overall decreasing in the city of Amsterdam (GGD Amsterdam, 2023). While equalising laws have enfranchised LGBTQ individuals, some seem to construe these gains as an authorisation to downplay group-based differences and evade enduring inequality in turn.

As reflected in the quotes above, people navigate social life by employing or deflecting social categories that point to differences between groups. Social categories allow us to cast those who belong to a category and those who do not when necessary (J. C. Turner et al., 1987), cementing our ingroup/outgroup relations. The salience of social categories thus results from a relational process that shapes our own social identity (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and whether and how we act based on the distinctions they make (Oakes, 1987; Reicher & Hopkins, 2001). A context shaped by the notion that SOGI ‘should not matter’ for the sake of individuals’ equality may thus contribute to a psychological blurring of group distinctions. This blurring, in turn, can hinder social action aimed at addressing SOGI inequality. Building on this approach, we addressed the Dutch context and examined whether exposing SOGI inequality to cisheterosexual people disrupted their evasion of difference. In turn, we examined whether acknowledging difference instead prompted cisheterosexual people to prefer structural policy to address inequality.

### **Social Categories and Advantaged Identity Strategies**

In Western contexts, people often manage their social identity to maintain positive self-esteem (Heine et al., 1999). Social-psychological research suggests that advantaged group members do so by identifying with their advantage and, thereby, differentiating themselves from others (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). This process can reinforce hierarchies and fuel inequality. Research has shown that stronger identification with and display of

heterosexual identity, on the one hand, as well as the belief in categorical differences between straight and gay people, on the other hand, are associated with right-wing conservatism and rejection of LGBTQ rights (Davis-Delano & Morgan, 2016; Falomir-Pichastor et al., 2017; Hoyt et al., 2019a; Uysal et al., 2022). In contexts where social categories are downplayed for the sake of individuals' equality, however, differentiation may menace advantaged group members with shedding light on their group-based advantages. In dispelling the threat of been seen as (illegitimately) privileged, some advantaged individuals may evade difference rather than emphasise it to preserve their self-stem (Shuman et al., 2024). As evading difference contributes to blurring their advantaged status, cisheterosexual people may be less prone to acknowledge inequality in turn. Evading difference may thus work as a coping mechanism for some advantaged individuals, aligning with system-justifying tendencies (Chow & Knowles, 2016; Knowles et al., 2009). As such, we hypothesised that right-wing political orientation would be positively associated with difference evasion (e.g., 'Sexual orientation and gender identity labels make people forget that we are all unique individuals.')

(H1).

Facing inequality, however, may resurface categorical differences between cisheterosexual and LGBTQ people by increasing the salience of social categories. For instance, research on economic inequality in the U.K. showed that facing inequality increased people's use of wealth categories (e.g., rich and poor) (Peters et al., 2022; Study 4). We reasoned that facing SOGI inequality might similarly prompt cisheterosexual individuals to sense categorical differences between themselves and LGBTQ people. Thus, we hypothesised that higher inequality framing would reduce difference evasion compared to lower inequality framing (H2a). As an alternative hypothesis and in line with the notion of evading difference as coping mechanism, we also examined whether higher inequality framing increases difference evasion relative to a control, no framing condition (H2b). In



addition, we explored the moderating role of individual differences by examining whether right-wing individuals show greater difference evasion under higher inequality relative to lower inequality (H3).

As the coping role of difference evasion may hinge on distancing from an advantaged social identity, we exploratorily tested whether cisheterosexual individuals who distanced themselves from their cisgender identity (e.g., by stating, "I don't have a gender identity; I'm just normal") were more likely to evade difference under higher inequality. In the wake of burgeoning reforms aimed at ensuring gender recognition, this exploration warrants inquiry as cisgender status is increasingly contested among cisheterosexual individuals (Molinier, 2020; Richardson-Self, 2022).

Finally, accounting for the possibility that the impact of inequality framings on difference evasion entirely hinges on individual differences (e.g., political orientation, distancing strategy), we tested the alternative hypothesis that inequality framing has no direct effect on difference evasion (H4).

### **Social Categories and Policy Preferences**

Acknowledging difference may enable individuals who recognise inequality to support structural policies aimed at addressing it. Structural policies target external, stable factors underpinning inequality (e.g., institutional practices in school curricula, health disparities, wage gaps). In contrast, those who evade difference may prefer individual-level policies, which focus on changing perceptions and behaviors (e.g., awareness campaigns, anti-bias training) (Chater & Loewenstein, 2023).

Research on ethnic-racial intergroup relations substantiates this rationale. Cross-sectional research in the U.S. found that acknowledging inequality was linked to support for structural policies (e.g., affirmative action) only when individuals also acknowledged difference (e.g., by rejecting "I don't see color, I see people" tropes). Conversely, those who

acknowledged inequality while evading difference opposed structural policies—mirroring the patterns observed among those who evaded inequality altogether (Mekawi et al., 2020).

Indeed, experimental evidence shows that white antiegalitarian individuals strategically evaded difference to justify equal treatment of individuals regardless of their group memberships, thereby opposing structural policies aimed at improving Black people’s live conditions (Chow & Knowles, 2016; Knowles et al., 2009).

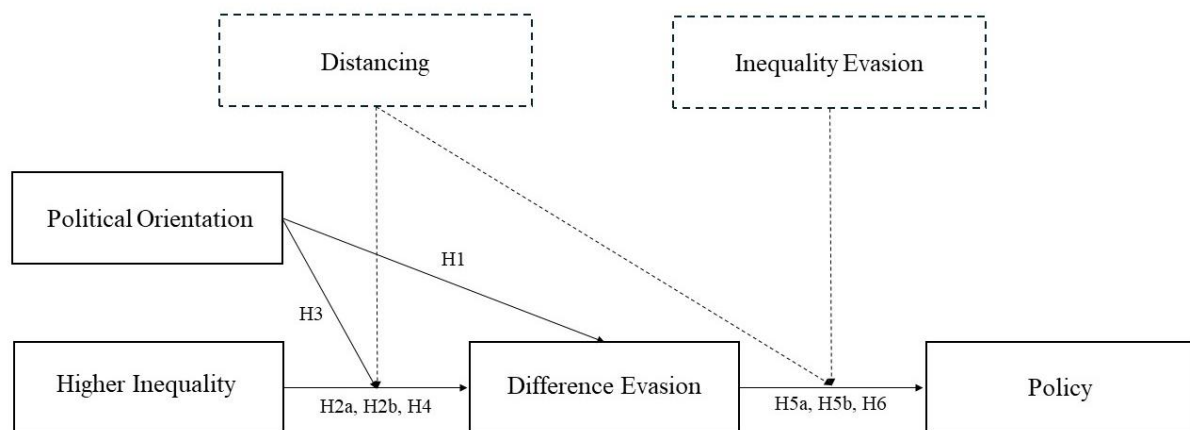
Building on the idea that social categories shape social actions based on the distinctions they make (Oakes, 2001; Reicher & Hopkins, 2001), we reasoned that cisheterosexual individuals who acknowledge inequality would prefer structural policies, particularly when they also acknowledge difference. Accordingly, we hypothesised that acknowledging difference (i.e., low difference evasion) would increase preference for structural policy over individual-level policy. In other words, evading difference (i.e., high difference evasion) was hypothesised to increase preference for individual-level policy (H5). While assessing H5, we explored the role of evading inequality (i.e., assessing SOGI inequality to be small in the Netherlands). Indeed, downplaying structural inequality toward ethnic-racial minorities has been negatively associated with empathy, affirmative action beliefs, and social justice commitment (Awad & Jackson, 2016; Brown et al., 2013; Mekawi et al., 2020; Yi et al., 2023).

Acknowledging the role of social categories in shaping people’s lives may translate into employing SOGI categories. As the quote opening this paper suggests, however, employing SOGI categories when they become salient (e.g., under higher inequality) may also work to portray them as detrimental for inclusion (e.g., “He’s a normal person who doesn’t need to highlight that he’s *gay*”). To account for this nuance, we hypothesised that participants under higher inequality who employ SOGI categories to describe an outgroup member (i.e., queer character) while evading difference as scale would prefer individual-level

policies (H6). In addition, we exploratorily examined whether and how employing SOGI categories related to cisheterosexual people's policy preferences. Figure 1 provides an overview of our model. Table 1 summarises our hypotheses.

**Figure 1**

*Conceptual Model*



*Note.* Dotted lines represent exploratory variables.

**Table 1**

*Summary of Hypotheses and Dependent Variables*

Hypotheses	Dependent Variable
H1. Right-wing orientation will be positively associated with evading difference.	
H2a. Higher inequality framing decreases difference evasion relative to lower inequality framing.	Difference Evasion scale
H2b. Higher inequality framing increases difference evasion relative to a control condition.*	Use of SOGI categories
H3. Right-wing individuals endorse greater difference evasion under higher inequality relative to lower inequality.	
H4. No main effect of inequality framing on difference evasion.*	
H5. Higher difference evasion is associated with lower preference for structural policy (or, conversely, greater preference for individual-level policy).	Policy preferences scale
H6. Under higher inequality, employing SOGI categories to describe the queer character while evading difference predicts preference for individual-level policy.*	

*Note.* Hypotheses marked with an asterisk (\*) were preregistered following Study 1 and were tested exclusively in Study 2.

### **The Present Research**

In two online experiments, we evaluated our model by conceptually replicating previous work on manipulating people's assessment of economic inequality (Peters et al., 2022).

We manipulated participants' assessment of SOGI inequality using the Rainbow Index 2023 as a proxy for SOGI inequality. The Rainbow Index, developed by the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, and Intersex Association (ILGA-Europe, 2023), ranks European countries based on their protection of LGBTQ people's human rights, with higher scores indicating stronger protections. In 2023, the Netherlands scored 55.9 out of 100. To frame inequality, we presented participants with comparisons between the Netherlands and other European countries that ranked either higher (higher inequality framing) or lower (lower inequality framing) on the index. Full details on the inequality framings are available in the supplementary materials. Study 2 further included a control condition without inequality framing.

SOGI categories use was assessed by analysing participants' open-responses. After learning about the Netherlands' relative position in the Rainbow Index, they completed a character description task in which the character's SOGI identity was varied (cisheterosexual vs. queer). This design allowed us to test our hypotheses on difference evasion—both as an outcome for Hs 1 to 4 and as a predictor for Hs 5 and 6—measured through scales and social category use. Studies 1 and 2 were preregistered and can be found at [https://osf.io/bxusd?view\\_only=09a7d71a8f65475ba07f12f029671e58](https://osf.io/bxusd?view_only=09a7d71a8f65475ba07f12f029671e58) and [https://osf.io/7kqw5/?view\\_only=e20a3a1351664b37b80b29ebfa599458](https://osf.io/7kqw5/?view_only=e20a3a1351664b37b80b29ebfa599458), respectively. Some preregistered hypotheses for Study 2 are addressed in supplementary materials as results prompted a shift in focus. The materials, data, and code for Studies 1 and 2 are available at

[https://osf.io/kgxdy/?view\\_only=296058fca8284c72a7c50ae77ece05a3](https://osf.io/kgxdy/?view_only=296058fca8284c72a7c50ae77ece05a3) and

[https://osf.io/5w26q/?view\\_only=3057c4453f1649769916d19f2537f73a](https://osf.io/5w26q/?view_only=3057c4453f1649769916d19f2537f73a), respectively.

### Study 1

#### Methods

##### Participants

769 participants were recruited on the online survey platforms *Prolific.co* and *Cloudresearch*. Data collection on *Prolific.co* took place from June 21<sup>st</sup> to September 19<sup>th</sup> 2023, and on *Cloudresearch* from 24<sup>rd</sup> June to 21<sup>st</sup> July 2023. Recruiting participants from different sources allowed us to reach a range of ages as those from *Prolific.co* were younger ( $M = 28.01$ , CI 95% [26.39-29.64]) than those from *Cloudresearch* ( $M = 40.38$ , 95% CI [38.98, 41.78]). Participants were paid €2,60.

Participants reported their sexual orientation (i.e., heterosexual or LGB+) and their gender identity (i.e., trans woman, trans man, cis woman, cis man, other). 205 participants were excluded from analysis ( $N = 96$  did not pass the quality check item,  $N = 1$  was younger than 16 years old, and  $N = 109$  self-identified as LGBTQ). 264 participants identified as cisheterosexual women, 244 as cisheterosexual men. 53 participants identified as heterosexual individuals that selected “other” as their gender identity (i.e., declining gender identity identifications). The final sample amounted to 563 participants and exceeded our target sample of 350, which we selected as having 90% power to detect our hypotheses’ effects. Participants’ political orientations ranged from left (1) to right (9) ( $M = 4.99$ ,  $SD = 1.84$ ), their ages ranged from 16 to 79 years old ( $M = 37.85$ ,  $SD = 14.83$ ), and 82.23% identified as white. We obtained ethical approval from the Ethics Review Board of the University of Amsterdam.

### **Procedure and Measures**

All measures were anchored on a scale from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 9 (Strongly Agree), unless otherwise specified.

#### ***Construct Validation of Inequality Manipulation***

The SOGI inequality manipulation was successfully pre-validated in a Pilot Study ( $N = 200$ ) (see supplementary materials). As mentioned, the higher inequality framing condition compared the Netherlands' actual position in the Rainbow Index 2023 to countries with higher scores. As such, participants under higher inequality were told that the Netherlands is *more unequal* for LGBTQ people than France, Luxembourg, Denmark, Belgium, and Malta. Lower inequality framing, conversely, compared the Netherlands' actual position to countries with lower scores. Thus, participants under lower inequality were told that the Netherlands is *more equal* for LGBTQ people than Switzerland, Slovenia, Albania, Cyprus, and Latvia.

#### ***Inequality Framing (1<sup>st</sup> Manipulation)***

After providing consent to participate, participants were introduced to the Rainbow Index 2023 as a proxy of SOGI inequality. Thereafter, they were randomly allocated either to the higher inequality or to the lower inequality framing condition.

#### ***Difference Evasion: Scale***

Following the manipulation, participants completed a scale measuring difference evasion, consisting of four Likert-type items ( $\alpha = .81$ ,  $M = 5.68$ ,  $SD = 1.92$ ), adapted from Knowles et al. (2014) (e.g., 'Sexual orientation and gender identity labels make people forget that we are all unique individuals.')

#### ***Character's Identity (2<sup>nd</sup> Manipulation)***

Next, participants were introduced to a character named Willem whose SOGI identity was randomly varied as either cisheterosexual or queer. The character's life was described through 11 statements outlining their preferences (e.g., interest in musicals), daily activities

(e.g., liked rice), and life circumstances (e.g., divorced). Eight of these statements differed depending on the character's SOGI identity: the cisheterosexual character was described with characteristics and perks often associated with cisheterosexual individuals (e.g., having been promoted as a team leader, no mention of harassment related to SOGI), while the queer character was described with characteristics and challenges commonly faced by LGBTQ individuals (e.g., having questioned their gender identity, having been harassed at school).

Participants provided free-response descriptions of the character's life (e.g., 'How do you think Willem is as a person?') and their own lives (e.g., 'We would like you to think about your daily life'). Self-descriptions are not analysed in the current manuscript.

### ***Difference Evasion: Use of SOGI Categories***

Participants' free-response descriptions were revised to detect invalid responses (i.e., non-sensical responses) following the automated procedure outlined by Yeung & Fernandes (2022) (see supplementary materials). Valid free-response descriptions of the character's life were in turn analysed taking a dictionary-based approach using the *quanteda* package in R (Benoit et al., 2018; R Core Team, 2021) (see supplementary materials for the entire dictionary). The analysis revealed that 104 participants (18.47%) employed SOGI categories to describe the character's life (see supplementary materials). Dummy variables for spontaneous reference to SOGI categories were computed in turn (1 Used, 0 Not Used.)

### ***Policy Preferences***

Following the free-response task, participants were asked to imagine themselves as members of the Dutch parliament, tasked with allocating 10 million euros to address SOGI inequality in the Netherlands. They did so by choosing between six pairs of policies (adapted from Klebl and Jetten, 2024).

Each policy choice asked to determine whether the resources would be allocated to Proposal A (an individual-level behavioural policy; e.g., "Launch a major campaign to

confront discriminatory remarks or behaviour against LGBT+ people”) or to Proposal B (a structural-level policy; e.g., “Establish a Ministry of Equality to provide material support, networking, and advocacy opportunities to LGBT+ individuals”). Our policy preferences scale was successfully pre-validated in a pilot study ( $N = 40$ ), which show that participants perceived Proposals B (compared to Proposals A) as more focused on structural change, more impactful in reducing inequality, in changing society as a whole, and slower to implement (see supplementary materials).

Participants indicated their preference for each policy pair on a scale ranging from -5 (“Strongly prefer Proposal A”) to +5 (“Strongly prefer Proposal B”) ( $\alpha = .65$ ,  $M = 0.36$ ,  $SD = 1.80$ ). Scores below 0 reflect a preference for individual-level policies, while scores above 0 reflect a preference for structural-level policies.

### ***Inequality Evasion***

After completing the policy preferences task, participants assessed SOGI inequality in the Netherlands using three Likert-type scale items adapted from Peters et al. (2022) (e.g., “In general, how small or big do you think the inequality between cisheterosexual and LGBT+ people is in the Netherlands?”). Scores were reversed so that higher values indicate greater levels of inequality evasion ( $\alpha = .82$ ,  $M = 5.41$ ,  $SD = 1.84$ ).

### ***Political Orientation***

Participants reported their political orientation on two Likert-type scale items, each ranging from 1 (Left) to 9 (Right). One item assessed economic beliefs (e.g., “Please indicate your political beliefs on issues of the economy, such as social welfare, government spending, tax cuts”), and the other item assessed social beliefs (e.g., “Please indicate your political beliefs on social issues, such as immigration, same-sex marriage, abortion”) These two items were averaged and the resulting composite was employed as the measure of political orientation ( $r = .80$ ,  $M = 5.00$ ,  $SD = 1.85$ ).



### ***Distancing Status***

Participants reported their sexual orientation (heterosexual, LGB+) and gender identity (cis woman, cis man, non-binary, trans woman, trans man, other). The dummy variable Distancing Status captures whether self-identified heterosexual participants declined gender identity identifications by selecting “other” (1 = Distancing, 0 = otherwise). For convergent and incremental validity evidence of the distancing status measure, see the supplementary materials.

Of the self-identified heterosexual participants, 508 endorsed their cisgender status, while 53 declined it. Among those declining, 38 provided written descriptions of their gender identity (e.g., “biological woman,” “just a man,” “irrelevant”).

### ***Demographic Questions***

Participants concluded by reporting their nationality, their country of residence, age, and ethnic group membership (survey materials can be found at [https://osf.io/kgxdy/?view\\_only=296058fca8284c72a7c50ae77ece05a3](https://osf.io/kgxdy/?view_only=296058fca8284c72a7c50ae77ece05a3).)

### **Analytical Strategy**

All continuous variables were standardised.

### ***Inequality Framings in Shaping Difference Evasion***

To examine this relationship, a robust regression was conducted when difference evasion was operationalised as a continuous scale, and a logistic regression was conducted when difference evasion was operationalised as SOGI categories use. These analyses addressed the following hypotheses:

H1. Right-wing orientation is positively associated with evading difference.

H2a. Higher inequality framing decreases difference evasion relative to lower inequality framing.

H3. Right-wing individuals endorse greater difference evasion under higher inequality relative to lower inequality.

The models included political orientation, inequality condition, distancing status, and their interactions as predictors of difference evasion. The character condition was included in the logistic regression. This approach thus explored the role of distancing status while controlling for their interactions. Age and ethnicity were included as control variables, with white Dutch serving as the reference category.

### ***Difference Evasion in Shaping Policy Preferences***

To examine this relationship, independent robust regressions were conducted, modeling difference evasion either as scale or as SOGI categories use. These analyses addressed the following hypotheses:

H5. Higher difference evasion is associated with lower preference for structural policy (or, conversely, greater preference for individual-level policy).

The models included inequality condition, character condition, distancing status, inequality evasion, difference evasion (either as scale or categories use), and their interactions as predictors. This approach thus explored the roles of distancing status and inequality evasion while controlling for their interactions. Political orientation, age, and ethnicity were included as control variables, with white Dutch serving as reference category.

## **Results**

Findings on difference evasion as scale are presented first, followed by those on difference evasion as categories use, and concluding with findings on policy preferences.

### **Inequality Framings in Shaping Difference Evasion Scale**

In line with H1, difference evasion increased as participants identified as right-wingers ( $\beta = .31$ ,  $SE = .07$ ,  $t(546) = 4.44$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

## INEQUALITY FRAMING AND POLICY PREFERENCES

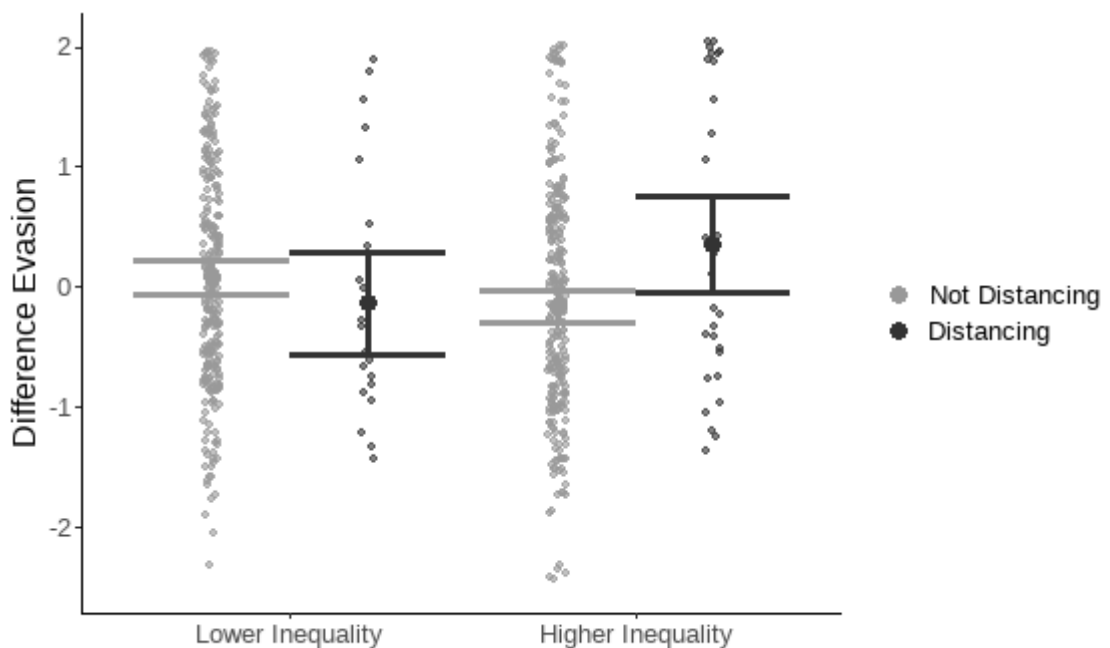
In contrast to H2a, the main effect of inequality condition on difference evasion was not significant ( $\beta = 0.09$ ,  $SE = .09$ ,  $t(546) = 0.95$ ,  $p = .342$ ).

In contrast to H3, the interaction between inequality condition and political orientation was not significant ( $\beta = -0.08$ ,  $SE = .09$ ,  $t(546) = -0.82$ ,  $p = .41$ ).

Consistent with exploratory expectations, the interaction between inequality condition and distancing status was significant ( $\beta = 0.58$ ,  $SE = .30$ ,  $t(546) = 1.96$ ,  $p < .049$ ). This indicates that when participants distanced from their cisgender status endorsed greater difference evasion under higher inequality framing (see Figure 1).

**Figure 1**

*Difference Evasion by Distancing Status and Inequality Framing*



*Note.* Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

### ***Exploratory Path via Distancing and Inequality Evasion***

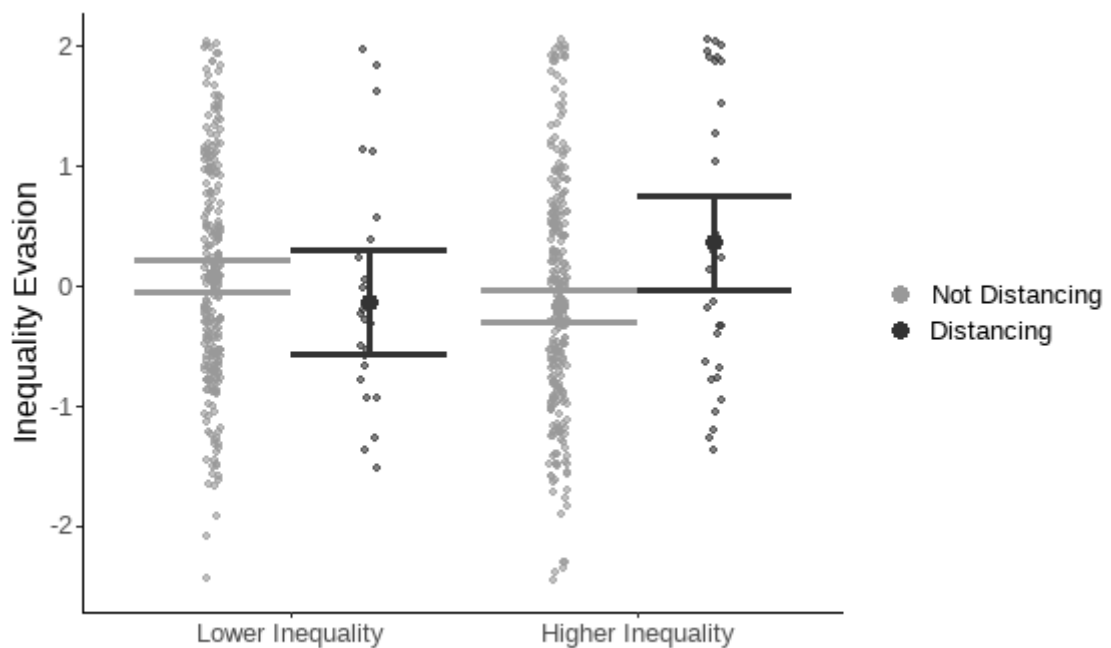
To further investigate the observed pattern, we conducted an identical model predicting inequality evasion. If cisheterosexual individuals when distancing under higher inequality also exhibit increased inequality evasion, this would suggest that evading

inequality contributes to the rise of difference evasion—providing support for a moderated mediation framework.

The interaction between inequality condition and distancing status in predicting inequality evasion was significant ( $\beta = 0.74$ ,  $SE = .30$ ,  $t(549) = 2.46$ ,  $p = .014$ ). This finding indicates that participants who distanced from their cisgender status also exhibited stronger inequality evasion under higher inequality framing (see Figure 2). Based on these results, we examined the moderated mediation framework.

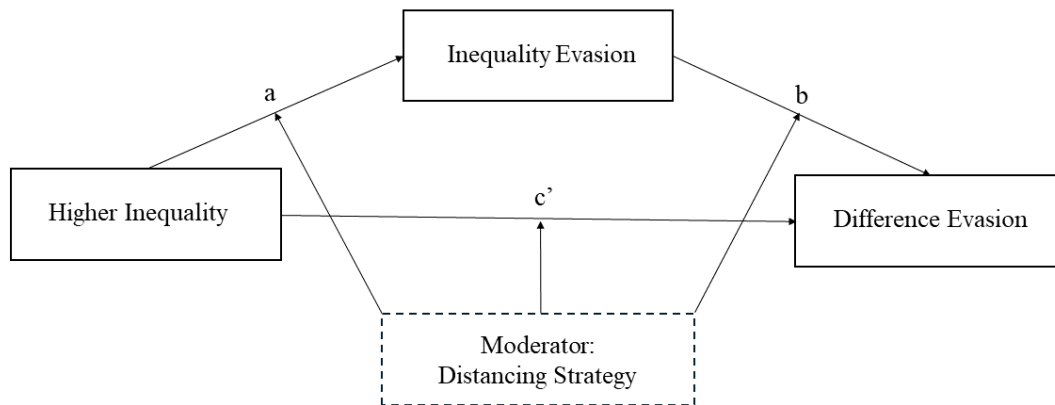
**Figure 2**

*Inequality Evasion by Distancing Status and Inequality Framing*



*Note.* Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

**Moderated Mediation.** We implemented a Bayesian model to examine the relationship between inequality framing (independent variable) and difference evasion (dependent variable) mediated through inequality evasion (mediator), with distancing status as the moderator (see Figure 3).

**Figure 3***Moderated Mediation Model*

**Priors.** Priors were empirically informed by independent robust regressions for the mediator and the outcome (see supplementary materials).

**Mediator Model.** Inequality evasion was predicted by the interaction of inequality framing and distancing status, with controls for political orientation, ethnicity, and age (Path *a*).

**Outcome Model.** Difference evasion was predicted by the interaction of inequality evasion (mediator), inequality framing, and distancing status, along with identical controls (Paths *b* and *c'*).

**Simple and Moderated Indirect Effects.** The simple indirect effect through inequality evasion was not statistically credible, median estimate =  $-0.03$ , 95% CI  $[-0.14, 0.07]$ .

Consistent with exploratory expectations, the indirect effect of inequality evasion moderated by inequality framing  $\times$  distancing status was positive and statistically credible, median estimate =  $0.31$ , 95% CI  $[0.05, 0.69]$ . This indicates that growing inequality evasion among those who distanced under high inequality mediated the rise of difference evasion.

In turn, the combined simple and moderated indirect pathways were positive and statistically credible, median estimate =  $0.28$ , 95% CI  $[0.01, 0.67]$ .

**Direct Effects.** The direct effect was not statistically credible, median estimate = 0.52, 95% CI [-0.05, 1.09].

**Total Effects.** The total effect (indirect + direct) was positive and statistically credible, median estimate = 0.81, 95% CI [0.19, 1.45].

Introducing nuance to H2a, this indicates a moderated mediation mechanism shaping difference evasion through inequality evasion when distancing under higher inequality.

### **Inequality Framings in Shaping Difference Evasion as Categories Use**

In contrast to H1, political orientation main effect on categories use was not significant ( $\beta = 0.05$ ,  $SE = 0.24$ ,  $z = 0.214$ ,  $p = .830$ , odds ratio = 1.05).

In contrast to H2a, the main effect of inequality condition on categories use was not significant ( $\beta = 0.03$ ,  $SE = 0.29$ ,  $z = 0.108$ ,  $p = .914$ , odds ratio = 1.03).

In contrast to H3, the interaction between inequality condition and political orientation on categories use was not significant ( $\beta = -0.06$ ,  $SE = .31$ ,  $z = -0.208$ ,  $p = .835$ , odds ratio = 0.94).

In contrast to exploratory expectations, the interaction between inequality condition and distancing status on categories use was not significant ( $\beta = -1.08$ ,  $SE = 1.08$ ,  $z = -1.005$ ,  $p = .315$ , odds ratio = 0.34).

### **Difference Evasion in Shaping Policy Preferences**

#### ***Difference Evasion as Scale***

In contrast to H5, difference evasion main effect on policy preferences was not significant ( $\beta = -0.02$ ,  $SE = 0.08$ ,  $t(494) = -0.266$ ,  $p = .790$ ).

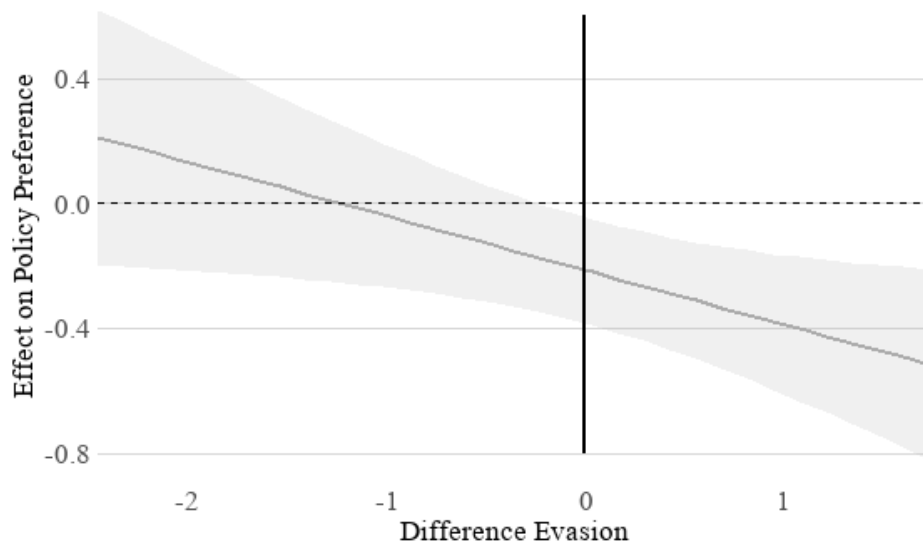
**Exploratory Path via Inequality Evasion.** The interaction between difference evasion and inequality evasion was significant ( $\beta = -0.17$ ,  $SE = 0.08$ ,  $t(494) = -2.28$ ,  $p = .022$ ). Simple slope analyses revealed that inequality evasion predicted stronger preference for individual-level policy over structural policy as difference evasion increased above the

mean (see Figure 4; inequality evasion slope at +1 SD of difference evasion:  $\beta = -0.36$ ,  $SE = 0.12$ ,  $t(494) = -3.11$ ,  $p < .01$ ; at mean levels:  $\beta = -0.21$ ,  $SE = 0.09$ ,  $t(494) = -2.36$ ,  $p = .02$ ). In contrast, when difference evasion was below the mean, the effect of inequality evasion on policy preferences was not significant (at -1 SD:  $\beta = -0.06$ ,  $SE = 0.12$ ,  $t(494) = -0.46$ ,  $p = .64$ ).

This exploratory finding introduces nuance to H5, highlighting the moderating role of difference evasion in shaping policy preferences.

**Figure 4**

*Effect of Inequality Evasion Across Observed Values of Difference Evasion*



*Note.* Shade represents 95% confidence interval. The solid line indicates inequality evasion effects at the mean of difference evasion. The dashed line indicates non-effect.

#### ***Difference Evasion as Category Use***

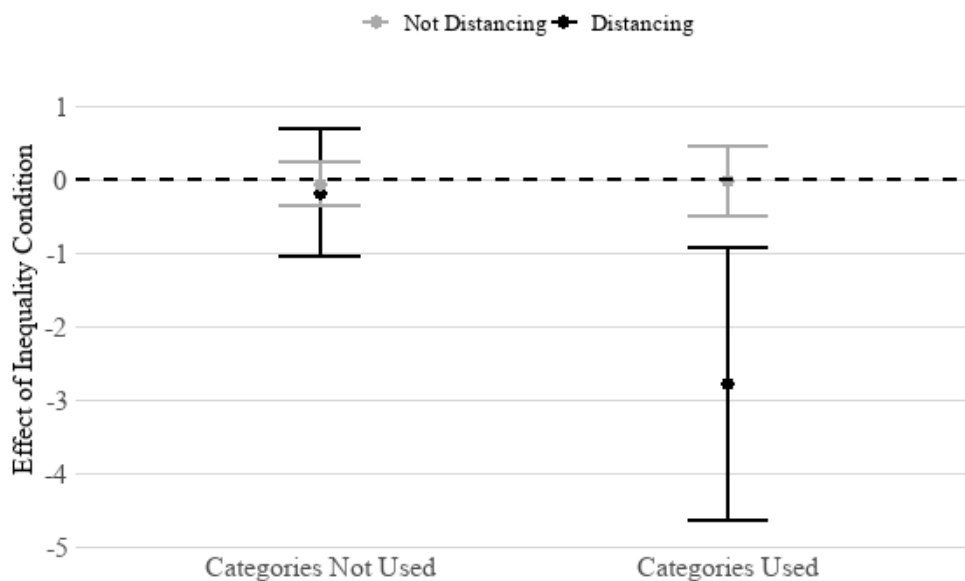
In contrast to H5, categories use main effect on policy preferences was not significant ( $\beta = -0.73$ ,  $SE = 0.21$ ,  $t(494) = -0.37$ ,  $p = .73$ ).

**Exploratory Path via Distancing.** The interaction between inequality condition, distancing status, and category use was significant ( $\beta = -2.63$ ,  $SE = 1.08$ ,  $t(494) = -2.43$ ,  $p = .015$ ; see Figure 5). Simple slope analyses revealed that higher inequality framing predicted strong individual-level policy preferences over structural policy among those distancing and

employing SOGI categories (Slope of inequality condition when distancing and employing SOGI categories:  $\beta = -2.66$ ,  $SE = 0.94$ ,  $t = -2.84$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Introducing nuance to H5, thus, employing SOGI categories when distancing under higher inequality had a negative impact on policy preferences.

**Figure 5**

*Model-Estimated Effect of Higher Inequality on Policy Scores by Distancing Status and Category Use*



*Note.* Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals. The dashed line indicates non-effect.

## Discussion

In support of H1, right-wing political orientation related to higher difference evasion as a scale (e.g., ‘Sexual orientation and gender identity labels make people forget that we are all unique individuals.’). In contrast, political orientation was not directly related to SOGI categories use. These disparate trends show that attitudinally downplaying SOGI categories was consistent with right-wingers’ standpoint. In contrast, whether participants employed these categories was not directly associated with their political orientation.



## INEQUALITY FRAMING AND POLICY PREFERENCES

In contrast to H2a, higher inequality framing (vs lower) did not directly decrease difference evasion as scale nor directly increase the likelihood of SOGI categories use. These results contrast with prior work showing heightened salience of wealth categories when facing higher economic inequality (Peters et al., 2022).

In contrast to H3, right-wingers were not more likely to evade difference under higher inequality (relative to lower) when measured as scale nor as SOGI categories use.

Echoing exploratory expectations, individuals who distanced from their cisgender status under higher inequality exhibited greater difference evasion as scale via increased inequality evasion. These findings introduce nuance to H2a and H3, revealing a pathway among those distancing under higher inequality showing increased difference evasion through inequality evasion.

In contrast to H5, neither difference evasion measured as scale nor as SOGI category use directly predicted policy preferences. Echoing previous work on ethnic-racial settings, inequality evasion predicted a preference for individual-level over structural policies. This relationship strengthened as difference evasion as scale increased. Conversely, at low levels of difference evasion, the negative effect of inequality evasion on policy was suppressed. Acknowledging difference thus buffered the negative effect of inequality evasion on structural policy support.

Lastly, employing SOGI categories while distancing under higher inequality predicted preference for individual-level policy. This challenges the notion that employing SOGI categories necessarily reflects acknowledgment of difference and thus preference for structural, pro-egalitarian policy.

### Study 2

In Study 2, we recruited a larger sample and added a control condition, employing a 3x2 between-subjects experimental design.

## Methods

### Participants

2161 participants were recruited on the online survey platform *Cloudresearch*. Data collection took place from June 13<sup>th</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> 2024. Participants were paid €2,68. 361 participants were excluded from analysis according to preregistered criteria ( $N = 93$  did not pass the quality check item,  $N = 261$  identified as LGBTQ,  $N = 7$  did not live in the Netherlands). Participants reported their sexual orientation (i.e., heterosexual or LGB+) and their gender identity (i.e., trans woman, trans man, cis woman, cis man, other). 966 identified as cisheterosexual women and 666 as cisheterosexual men. 168 self-identified heterosexual individuals selected other as their gender identity (i.e., declining gender identity identifications). The final sample amounted to 1800 participants and exceeded our target sample of 1750, which we selected as having 90% power to detect our hypotheses' effects. Participants' political orientations ranged from left (1) to right (9) ( $M = 5.30$ ,  $SD = 1.82$ ), their ages from 16 to 87 years old ( $M = 40.47$ ,  $SD = 15.96$ ), and 79.44% identified as white. We obtained ethical approval from the Ethics Review Board of the University of Amsterdam.

### Procedure

After providing consent, participants were randomly assigned to the higher inequality, lower inequality, or control condition. The higher and lower inequality framings were identical to Study 1. In contrast, participants in the control condition proceeded directly to the difference evasion scale. Thereafter, all participants followed the same procedure as in Study 1. Finally, Study 2 concluded with scales measuring meritocratic beliefs and advantaged identity strategies for convergent and discriminant validity analyses (see supplementary materials).

### Measures

All measures were anchored on a scale from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 9 (Strongly Agree), unless otherwise specified.

#### *Difference Evasion: Scale*

Difference evasion was measured with four Likert-type items adapted from Knowles et al. (2014) ( $\alpha = .77$ ,  $M = 5.81$ ,  $SD = 1.76$ ; e.g., 'Sexual orientation and gender identity labels make people forget that we are all unique individuals.')

#### *Difference Evasion: Use of SOGI Categories*

Participants' free-response descriptions were revised to detect invalid responses (i.e., non-sensical responses) following the automated procedure outlined by Yeung & Fernandes (2022) (see supplementary materials). Valid free-response descriptions of the character's life were in turn analysed taking a dictionary-based approach using the *quanteda* package in R (Benoit et al., 2018; R Core Team, 2021) (see supplementary materials for the entire dictionary). The analysis revealed that 306 participants employed SOGI categories (17%). Dummy variables for spontaneous reference to SOGI categories were computed in turn (1 Used, 0 Not Used.)

#### *Policy Preferences*

Following the free-response task, participants imagined themselves as members of the Dutch parliament, responsible for allocating 10 million euros to address SOGI inequality in the Netherlands. They chose between six policy pairs, using the same policy preferences scale as in Study 1 (adapted from Klebl and Jetten, 2024). Proposal A represented an individual-level behavioral policy (e.g., 'Launch a major campaign to confront discriminatory remarks or behavior against LGBT+ people'), while Proposal B represented a structural-level policy (e.g., 'Establish a Ministry of Equality to provide material support, networking, and advocacy opportunities for LGBT+ individuals').

## INEQUALITY FRAMING AND POLICY PREFERENCES

Preference for each policy pair ranged from -5 (“Strongly prefer Proposal A”) to +5 (“Strongly prefer Proposal B”) ( $\alpha = .70$ ,  $M = 0.48$ ,  $SD = 1.80$ ). Scores below 0 thus reflect a preference for individual-level policies, while scores above 0 reflect a preference for structural-level policies.

### ***Inequality Evasion***

Inequality evasion was assessed by reversing participants’ assessment of SOGI inequality in the Netherlands in three Likert-type scale items adapted from Peters et al. (2022) (e.g., “In general, how small or big do you think the inequality between cisheterosexual and LGBT+ people is in the Netherlands?”). Higher values thus indicate greater levels of inequality evasion ( $\alpha = .80$ ,  $M = 4.78$ ,  $SD = 1.75$ ).

### ***Political Orientation***

Political orientation was calculated as the average of two Likert-type scale items, each ranging from 1 (Left) to 9 (Right). One item assessed economic beliefs (e.g., “Please indicate your political beliefs on issues of the economy, such as social welfare, government spending, tax cuts”), and the other assessed social beliefs (e.g., “Please indicate your political beliefs on social issues, such as immigration, same-sex marriage, abortion”) ( $r = .76$ ,  $M = 5.30$ ,  $SD = 1.82$ ).

### ***Distancing Status***

The dummy variable Distancing Status was created based on whether self-identified heterosexual participants selected "other" for gender identity, thereby declining gender identity identifications (1 = Distancing, 0 = otherwise). Of the self-identified heterosexual participants, 1632 endorsed their cisgender status, while 168 declined it. Among those declining, 118 provided written descriptions of their gender identity (e.g., “just a woman,” “heterosexual,” “just normal”).

### ***Demographic Questions***

Participants concluded by reporting their nationality, their country of residence, age, ethnic group membership, and completed measures of meritocratic beliefs and advantaged identity strategies (survey materials can be found at

[https://osf.io/kgxdy/?view\\_only=296058fca8284c72a7c50ae77ece05a3](https://osf.io/kgxdy/?view_only=296058fca8284c72a7c50ae77ece05a3).)

### **Analytical Strategy**

All continuous variables were standardised except for the policy preferences scale.

### ***Inequality Framings in Shaping Difference Evasion***

To examine this relationship, a robust regression was conducted when difference evasion was operationalised as a continuous scale, and a logistic regression was conducted when difference evasion was operationalised as SOGI categories use. These analyses addressed the following hypotheses:

H1. Right-wing orientation is positively associated with evading difference.

H2a. Higher inequality framing decreases difference evasion relative to lower inequality framing.

H2b. Higher inequality framing increases difference evasion relative to the control condition.

H3. Right-wing individuals endorse greater difference evasion under higher inequality relative to lower inequality.

H4. No main effect of inequality framing on difference evasion (alternative hypothesis).

The models included political orientation, inequality condition, distancing status, and their interactions as predictors of difference evasion. The character condition was included in the logistic regression. This approach thus explored the role of distancing status while controlling for their interactions. Lower inequality framing was used as reference category.

## INEQUALITY FRAMING AND POLICY PREFERENCES

The pairwise comparison between higher inequality framing and control is reported. Age and ethnicity were included as control variables, with white Dutch serving as the reference category.

### *Difference Evasion in Shaping Policy Preferences*

To examine this relationship, independent robust regressions were conducted, modeling difference evasion either as scale or as SOGI category use. These analyses addressed the following hypotheses:

H5. Higher difference evasion is associated with lower preference for structural policy (or, conversely, greater preference for individual-level policy).

The models included inequality condition, character condition, distancing status, inequality evasion, difference evasion (in its respective form), and their interactions as predictors. This approach thus explored the roles of distancing status and inequality evasion while controlling for their interactions. Lower inequality framing was used as reference category. Political orientation, age, and ethnicity were included as control variables, with white Dutch serving as reference category.

Predicted means of policy preferences were calculated using estimated marginal means for each combination of inequality condition (Higher, Lower, Control), character identity (cishet, queer), and levels of difference evasion ( $-1$  SD and  $+1$  SD). The interaction terms and covariates (political orientation, ethnicity, and age) were included to account for their influence. Confidence intervals were computed as indication of whether the predicted means were significantly different from zero. This analysis addressed the following hypothesis:

H6. Under higher inequality, employing SOGI categories to describe the queer character while evading difference predicts preference for individual-level policy.

## Results

Findings on difference evasion operationalised as scale are presented first, followed by results for difference evasion as categories use, and concluding with the findings on policy preferences.

### Inequality Framings in Shaping Difference Evasion Scale

In line with H1, difference evasion increased as participants identified as right-wingers ( $\beta = .21$ ,  $SE = .04$ ,  $t(1779) = 5.08$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

In contrast to H2a, higher inequality framing (vs lower inequality) was not significant ( $\beta = 0.05$ ,  $SE = .06$ ,  $t(1779) = 0.75$ ,  $p = .454$ ).

In contrast to H2b, higher inequality framing (vs control) was not significant ( $\beta = -0.04$ ,  $SE = .11$ ,  $t(1779) = 0.37$ ,  $p = .710$ ).

In contrast to H3, the interaction between political orientation and inequality framings (lower vs higher) was not significant ( $\beta = 0.06$ ,  $SE = .06$ ,  $t(1779) = 1.11$ ,  $p = .269$ ).

In line with H4, neither the higher inequality framing nor the control condition differed from the lower inequality framing in predicting difference evasion (higher inequality:  $\beta = 0.045$ ,  $SE = 0.060$ ,  $t = 0.75$ ,  $p = .45$ ; control:  $\beta = 0.054$ ,  $SE = 0.060$ ,  $t = 0.89$ ,  $p = .37$ ). A direct contrast test confirmed no significant difference between the higher inequality framing and control conditions,  $F(1, 1779) = 0.020$ ,  $p = .89$ .

In contrast to exploratory expectations, the interaction between distancing status and inequality framings (lower vs higher) was not significant ( $\beta = 0.00$ ,  $SE = .20$ ,  $t(1779) = 0.02$ ,  $p = .982$ ).

### Inequality Framings in Shaping Difference Evasion as Categories Use

In contrast to H1, political orientation was not associated with categories use ( $\beta = -.08$ ,  $SE = .14$ ,  $t(1774) = -0.59$ ,  $p = .554$ , odds ratio: 0.92).

## INEQUALITY FRAMING AND POLICY PREFERENCES

In contrast to H2a, higher inequality framing (vs lower inequality) was not significant ( $\beta = -0.03$ ,  $SE = .20$ ,  $t(1774) = -0.13$ ,  $p = .894$ , odds ratio: 0.97).

In contrast to H2b, higher inequality framing (vs control) was not significant ( $\beta = 0.28$ ,  $SE = .25$ ,  $t(1774) = 1.41$ ,  $p = .258$ , odds ratio: 1.33).

In contrast to H3, the interaction between inequality framings (lower vs higher) and political orientation was not significant ( $\beta = 0.30$ ,  $SE = .20$ ,  $t(1774) = 1.46$ ,  $p = .145$ , odds ratio: 1.34).

In line with H4, neither the higher inequality nor the control condition differed from lower inequality (higher inequality:  $\beta = -0.03$ ,  $SE = 0.21$ ,  $z = -0.13$ ,  $p = .894$ , odds ratio: 0.97; control:  $\beta = 0.19$ ,  $SE = 0.21$ ,  $z = 0.91$ ,  $p = .363$ , odds ratio: 1.20). A direct contrast confirmed that the difference between the higher inequality and control conditions was not significant,  $\chi^2(1) = 1.11$ ,  $p = .293$ , odds ratio: 0.808.

In contrast with exploratory expectations, the interaction between inequality framings (lower vs higher) and distancing status was not significant ( $\beta = -0.33$ ,  $SE = .76$ ,  $t(1774) = -0.44$ ,  $p = .661$ , odds ratio: 0.71).

### **Difference Evasion in Shaping Policy Preferences**

#### ***Difference Evasion as Scale***

In contrast to H5, difference evasion main effect on policy preferences was not significant ( $\beta = 0.02$ ,  $SE = 0.06$ ,  $t(1719) = 0.30$ ,  $p = .766$ ).

**Exploratory Path via Inequality Evasion.** Figure 6 illustrates the significant interaction between difference evasion and inequality evasion ( $\beta = -0.13$ ,  $SE = 0.06$ ,  $t(1719) = -2.30$ ,  $p = .022$ ). Simple slope analyses revealed that inequality evasion predicted stronger preference for individual-level policy over structural policy as difference evasion increased above the mean (inequality evasion slope at +1 SD of difference evasion:  $\beta = -0.36$ ,  $SE = 0.08$ ,  $t(1719) = -4.59$ ,  $p < .001$ ; at mean levels:  $\beta = -0.23$ ,  $SE = 0.06$ ,  $t(1719) = -3.62$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

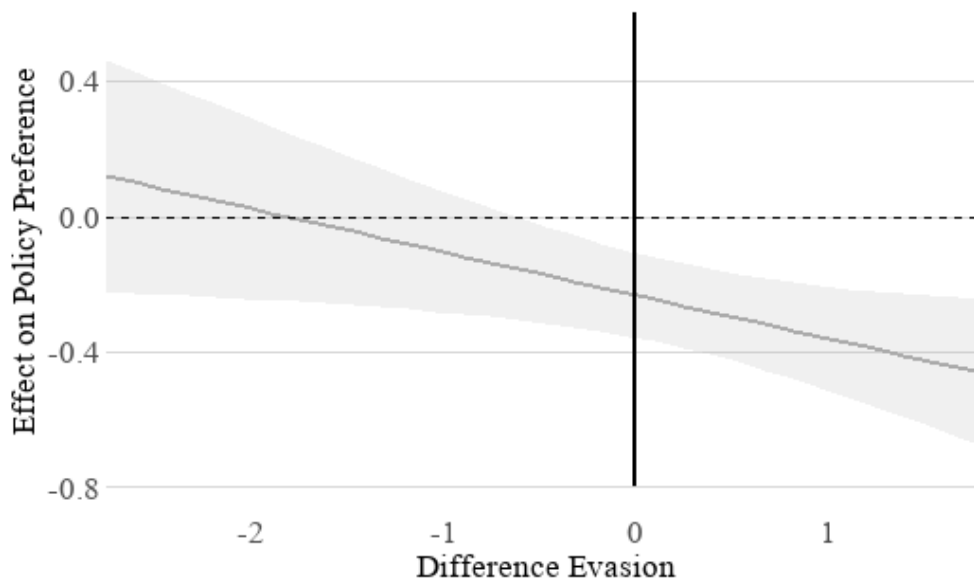


.001). In contrast, when difference evasion was below the mean, the effect of inequality evasion on policy preferences became not significant (at -1 SD:  $\beta = -0.10$ ,  $SE = 0.09$ ,  $t(1719) = -1.13$ ,  $p = .260$ ).

This exploratory finding introduces nuance to H5, replicating the observed moderating role of difference evasion in Study 1 in shaping policy preferences.

**Figure 6**

*Effect of Inequality Evasion Across Observed Values of Difference Evasion*



*Note.* Shade represents 95% confidence interval. The solid line indicates inequality evasion effect at the mean of difference evasion. The dashed line indicates non-effect.

#### ***Difference Evasion as Categories Use***

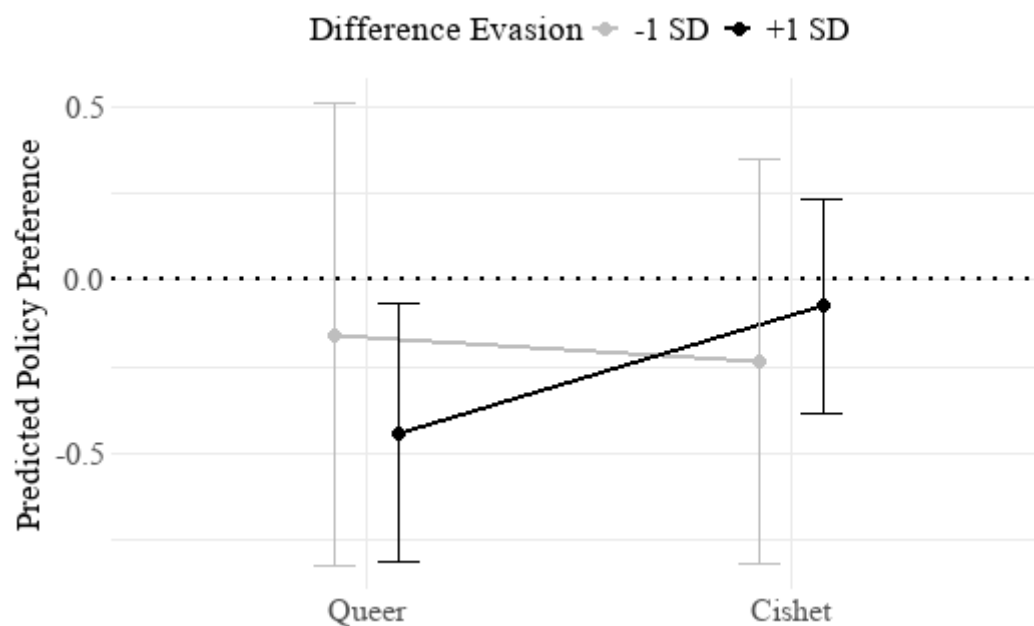
In contrast to H5, categories use's main effect on policy preferences was significant and negative ( $\beta = -.35$ ,  $SE = 0.14$ ,  $t(1671) = -2.58$ ,  $p = .010$ , odds ratio: 0.70).

In contrast to Study 1, the interaction between inequality framing (lower vs higher), distancing status, and categories use was not significant ( $\beta = -1.34$ ,  $SE = 1.88$ ,  $t(1671) = -0.71$ ,  $p = .58$ , odds ratio: 0.26).

In line with H6, employing SOGI categories while evading difference (+1 SD) to describe the queer character under higher inequality uniquely predicted preference for individual-level policy ( $M = -0.442$ ,  $SE = 0.190$ , 95% CI  $[-0.815, -0.070]$ ). See Figure 7.

**Figure 7**

*Model-Estimated Policy Scores under Higher Inequality by Character Condition and Difference Evasion*



*Note.* The dashed line indicates non-effect.

## Discussion

In support of H1, right-wing political orientation related to higher difference evasion as scale. In contrast, political orientation was not directly related to SOGI categories use. These disparate trends confirm that whether participants attitudinally downplayed SOGI was ideologically distinct from whether they employed these categories.

In contrast to H2a, higher inequality framing (vs lower) did not decrease difference evasion as scale (nor increase the likelihood of SOGI categories' use). In contrast to H2b, higher inequality framing (vs control) did not increase difference evasion as scale either (nor decrease the likelihood of SOGI categories' use).

## INEQUALITY FRAMING AND POLICY PREFERENCES

In contrast to H3, right-wingers were not more likely to evade difference under higher inequality (relative to lower) when measured as scale nor as SOGI categories' use. In line with H4, inequality framings did not have a direct, main effect on difference evasion.

In contrast to H5, difference evasion as scale did not predict policy preferences. Replicating Study 1's exploratory findings, inequality evasion predicted a stronger preference for individual-level policies over structural policies as difference evasion as scale increased. At low levels of difference evasion, the negative effect of inequality evasion on policy was suppressed. This further confirms the buffering role of acknowledging difference in preventing inequality evasion from translating into preference for individual-level policy at the expense of structural change.

Conversely, categories use negatively predicted policy preferences scores, showing that employing SOGI categories was mainly associated with individual-level policy preferences at the expense of structural policy.

In line with H6, employing SOGI categories while evading difference under higher inequality predicted preference for individual-level policy. This confirms that employing relevant social categories while evading difference can undermine support for structural policy under higher inequality.

### **General Discussion**

Addressing inequality does not necessarily foster substantive equality. In the realm of sexual orientation and gender identity—SOGI—, equalising laws aimed at individual liberties and dignity (e.g., equal marriage, anti-discrimination) have often taken precedence over enshrining collective rights (e.g., sex education, transgender employment rights) (Spade, 2015). While where these equalising laws were passed coincided with the narrowing of SOGI wage gaps (Drydakis, 2022) and increased acceptance towards LGB+ people (Aksoy et al., 2020), some SOGI inequality indicators stagnated or worsened over time. The Organisation

for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) has recently revealed enduring SOGI structural inequality across state members in cultural, health, and employment sectors (OECD, 2019, 2020; Valfort, 2017). Also, the Council of Europe recently documented the rise of human rights violations against LGBTQ people in the region and called for urgent action (Ben Chikha, 2021). Against this background, we explored the notion that addressing SOGI inequality by centering individuals' equality might backfire when it psychologically blurs the social categories of the groups at hand—the group-based, categorical difference between cisheterosexual and LGBTQ people.

Building on previous work manipulating people's assessment of economic inequality (Peters et al. 2022), we examined in two preregistered survey experiments ( $N_1 = 563$ ,  $N_2 = 1800$ ) whether confronting cisheterosexual individuals to SOGI inequality resurfaced categorical differences between them and LGBTQ people. In turn, we examined whether the saliency of social categories spurred preference for structural policy over individual-level policy to address inequality. We did so in the Netherlands, a well-known country for having pioneered equal marriage—the most championed liberal project equalising LGBTQ folks to cisheterosexual people. Study 1 ( $N = 563$ ) employed a 2x2 between-subjects design contrasting higher inequality vs. lower inequality framings, measuring difference evasion both continuously (scale) and categorically (through SOGI categories use). Addressing Study 1's limitations, Study 2 ( $N = 1800$ ) included a larger sample size and a control condition, resulting in a 3x2 between-subjects design. In turn, when and why cisheterosexual participants preferred structural policy over individual-level policy was assessed.

### **Difference Evasion as Scale**

As expected, our results confirm that participants identifying as right-wing (vs. left-wing) were more prone to evade difference. Contrary to expectations, however, right-wing participants were not more likely to evade difference under higher inequality (vs. lower).

Supporting the idea that distancing from an advantaged social identity drives difference evasion, those who distanced from their cisgender status (e.g., "I don't have a gender identity; I'm just normal") exhibited stronger difference evasion under higher inequality (vs. lower) in Study 1. While these results did not replicate in Study 2, we believe that Study 1's results reflect patterns that warrants further inquiry. We address this in future research directions.

### **Difference Evasion as Categories Use**

We built on the assumption that difference evasion, driven by antiegalitarian motives, would manifest in *not employing* SOGI categories when describing another person's life. Our results significantly nuanced this assumption. Unlike with difference evasion measured as scale, political orientation did not predict whether participants employed SOGI categories. Similarly, right-wing participants were not less likely to employ SOGI categories under higher (vs. lower) inequality. Together, these findings suggest that the use of SOGI categories was not a straightforward indicator of ideological stance.

### **Policy Preferences**

In line with previous work, higher reported inequality was associated with preferring structural-level policy (Klebl & Jetten, 2024). After controlling for political orientation and interactions, indeed, inequality evasion had a negative effect on policy preferences' scores in both studies.

Across studies, inequality evasion negative effect on policy preferences strengthened as difference evasion increased—buttressing individual-level policy preferences. This finding aligns with work on ethnic-racial intergroup relations showing that evading inequality coupled with evading difference strongly related to rejecting structural-level policy (i.e., positive action) (Mekawi et al., 2020). When participants acknowledged difference as scale, in contrast, their assessment of inequality was not associated with their policy preferences. As such, this result suggests that evading difference enabled the relation between evading

inequality and individual-level policy preference. In other words, acknowledging difference prevented inequality evasion from translating into rejecting structural change.

In Study 2, employing SOGI categories to describe another person's life predicted a preference for individual-level policies. This finding challenges our initial assumption that employing SOGI categories as a proxy for acknowledging difference would align with preferences for structural policies. In other words, cisheterosexual individuals tended to employ SOGI categories in ways that aligned with individualising policy preferences. This supports the idea that social categories can serve distinct ideological motives (Oakes, 2001; Reicher & Hopkins, 2001) and that the content, rather than the form, of social categories determines their implications (Billig, 1985). Indeed, as expected, employing SOGI categories to describe the queer character under higher inequality predicted individual-level policy *only* when difference evasion was also high (see Figure 7).

### **Practical Implications**

Increasing knowledge about SOGI inequality emerges as a crucial factor in sparking preference for comprehensive, structural-level policies. Across both studies, acknowledging inequality consistently predicted preference for structural policy, independently of political orientation. Fostering an appreciation of difference in social life appears equally important—as low difference evasion mitigated the link between low reported inequality and a preference for individual-level policies at the expense of structural ones.

### **Limitations and Future Directions**

The non-representativeness of our samples limits generalisability. While our results are ecologically valid in the Dutch context and likely translatable to other societies where liberal norms on SOGI prevail, we reason that these findings require significant scrutiny and adaptation in contexts where collectivistic norms prevail (Guyan, 2022). In doing so, cultural imposition might be prevented in favor of bottom-up, pro-egalitarian approaches toward

SOGI. Future research could thus benefit from adapting and validating these measures and experimental paradigm in other Western European societies and those where equalising laws burgeon.

The higher inequality framing in our manipulation could also be interpreted as an intervention, as it relies on 'factual' data that situates the Netherlands in a comparative perspective, revealing enduring inequality. Conversely, the lower inequality framing could be seen as the true manipulation. By offering a downward comparison, it presents a complacent view of SOGI inequality in the Netherlands, potentially fostering moral licensing for difference evasion. Future research could thus analyze these data as an intervention for higher inequality and as the actual manipulation for lower inequality.

We also acknowledge that our SOGI manipulation does not reflect how cisheterosexual people typically encounter SOGI inequality in daily life. To better understand difference evasion, future research would benefit from more ecologically valid manipulations, such as exposing participants to witnessed instances of inequality against LGBTQ people—whether blatant (e.g., slurs) or meritocratic (e.g., job dismissal) (e.g., Szekeres et al., 2023).

Our measure of policy preferences contrasted two types of policy. In doing so, it may have made the middle point of the scale prone to ambiguous interpretation. For some, selecting the middle point might have signaled equal endorsement of both policy types, while for others, it may have indicated reluctance toward any policy addressing inequality. Future research could refine this measure by disaggregating its bipolar structure into unipolar scales of policy preferences. Developing more robust measures of structural-level policy preferences would be a valuable contribution to countering theoretical and methodological individualism in psychological science (Chater & Loewenstein, 2023).

While our dictionary-based analysis uncovering categories' use relies on a fully reproducible procedure, our approach could benefit from accounting for the relation between words-in-context (i.e., words embeddings) (Baden et al., 2022). Indeed, our approach arguably missed partial or figurative allusions to SOGI. Future research could implement computational text analyses on a broader corpus to uncover a wider range of social categories pointing to SOGI. In doing so, ways of blurring SOGI could also be better identified.

Lastly, a SOGI dictionary's convergent and discriminant validity is still to be examined. Drawing from a broader corpus, dictionary's convergent and discriminant validity regarding established ideological constructs could be assessed, uncovering direct and conditional associations with network analysis techniques (for instance, see Birkenmaier et al., 2023; Fang et al., 2022; Rheault & Cochrane, 2020).

### **Conclusion**

Addressing the SOGI context, we examined whether confronting cisheterosexual individuals to SOGI inequality resurfaced categorical differences between them and LGBTQ people. In turn, we examined whether the saliency of social categories spurred preference for structural policy over individual-level policy to address inequality. Across two preregistered online experiments, we found that higher inequality framing did not directly impact acknowledgement of difference nor policy preferences. In turn, higher inequality framing may increase evasion of difference (vs acknowledgement) when participants distanced themselves from their advantaged status. Additionally, our results demonstrate that acknowledging inequality was consistently associated with structural-level policy preferences, beyond and independently of political orientation. Conversely, joint evasion of inequality and difference decreased preference for structural-level policies in favor of individual-level policies. Conversely, joint evasion to inequality and difference decreased preference for structural-level policy in favour of individual-level policy preference.



## INEQUALITY FRAMING AND POLICY PREFERENCES

Highlighting the ideological malleability of social categories, difference evaders preferred individual-level policies when employing SOGI categories to describe a queer person's life after receiving information about inequality. We conclude that fostering both knowledge of inequality and an appreciation of difference is key for enabling cisheterosexual individuals to think and act structurally in addressing SOGI inequality.

### Chapter 5

#### **General Discussion**

Post-WWII, efforts to equalise individuals across groups have coincided with widening inequalities in Western Europe and in relation to global South countries (Chancel et al., 2022; Hickel et al., 2021). While some minoritised groups in Western Europe have gained legal status comparable to those historically advantaged—for instance, through the abolition of racial segregation, the depathologisation of homosexuality, and same-sex marriage—inequality between the top 1% and the bottom 50% has increased 2.55-fold times since 1980 (Chancel et al., 2022). At the same time, the inequality between the global North and the global South has increased since the 1960s, now approaching early 20th-century levels—at the height of Western imperialism (Chancel et al., 2022; Hickel, 2018). In the Netherlands, the poorest individuals remain as economically deprived as they were five decades ago, while the wealthier half of the Dutch population has enhanced its financial status (Salverda, 2014). Rising inequality has been linked to anomy and support for authoritarian leadership (Sprong et al., 2019), and the Netherlands is indeed currently governed by a right-wing cabinet led by the far right (Moses, 2024). In addressing this intersection between burgeoning equalising efforts and widening inequalities, this dissertation examined the role of advantaged groups in this process. I did so by examining two intergroup settings where equalising outlooks have taken deep root in the Netherlands: the ethnic-racial context, on the one hand, and the sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) context, on the other hand. In particular, this dissertation addressed the research question of how advantaged group members construe social categories while managing their advantaged social identity—shaping whether they legitimise or question inequality in turn.

Strides toward equalising individuals coincide with the shift in attitudes in Europe post-WWII. Explicit supremacism became increasingly unacceptable and, in turn, the naming of race as a meaningful category (Essed & Trienekens, 2008; Jugert et al., 2022; Simon, 2017). This reluctance to employ ethnic-racial categories arguably reflects an attempt to move beyond ethnonationalism, the Holocaust, and the very European colonial history (Juang et al., 2021). By enshrining universal formal equality among individuals—such as in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)—Western and global South societies sought to diminish group-based distinctions deemed sources of oppression in the aftermath of the Holocaust. More than 70 years after the UDHR, these equalising efforts have coincided with widening socioeconomic inequality (Whyte, 2019), with modern prejudices now drawing on the very blurring of social categories once deemed to justify oppression. In the ethnic-racial and SOGI intergroup contexts examples include portraying minoritised people's identity claims as threats to inclusion (Bilali, 2014; Morrison & Morrison, 2011), framing them as seeking preferential treatment (Salvati et al., 2023), and even assuming they enjoy above-average wealth, as in the 'gay affluence' myth (Bettinsoli et al., 2022). Meanwhile, ethnic-racial and SOGI inequalities remain pervasive in liberal societies that claim to uphold individual equality—including the Netherlands (Baalbergen & Jaspers, 2023; Buser et al., 2018; Drydakis, 2022; Geijtenbeek & Plug, 2018; OECD, 2020; Thijssen et al., 2021; van Elk et al., 2019).

Modern forms of prejudice obscure entrenched inequalities by invoking infringements of individual equality. As such, the blurring of social categories may have enabled new ways of managing inequality rather than prevented it (Duyvendak, 2022; Whyte, 2019). In blurring social categories, advantaged group members may be specially prone to dispel the threat of being seen as part of advantaged groups and, thereby, from being associated with benefiting from group-based perks (Knowles et al., 2014; Rios, 2022). However, whether and how the

## GENERAL DISCUSSION

blurring of social categories at the intergroup level takes root in ingroup processes among members of advantaged groups has received scant empirical attention. This dissertation sought to fill this gap.

At the intergroup level, I answered the specific research question: How do members of advantaged groups navigate difference and inequality in liberal, increasingly unequal contexts? (SQ1) I built on research suggesting that equalising outlooks can reflect, on the one hand, in downplaying the role of social categories in shaping people's lives (difference evasion, e.g., "I don't see colour/sexual orientation and gender identity, I see people") (Knowles et al., 2009; Smith & Shin, 2014). On the other hand, equalising outlooks can reflect in downplaying inequality itself by invoking existing formal equality among individuals (inequality evasion, e.g., "Black/LGBTQ people are not disadvantaged anymore") (Brown et al., 2013; Brownfield et al., 2018). A key insight has been that those who evade difference, even while acknowledging inequality (e.g., "Black people are disadvantaged because of racism"), may still disengage from challenging inequality (i.e., evaders profile)—mirroring patterns seen in those who outright deny inequality (i.e., defenders profile). In contrast, only those who acknowledged both difference and inequality exhibited support for challenging inequality (i.e., acknowledgers profile) (Mekawi et al., 2020).

I then grounded ingroup processes in the intergroup level of analysis by drawing from self-categorisation theory (Oakes, 2001; J. Turner, 1987). In particular, this dissertation posited that acknowledging difference may prompt those advantaged to construe themselves and others as members of social groups—recognising the role of social categories in shaping people's lives. As such, when advantaged group members acknowledge both difference and inequality—acknowledgers—they may be more likely to attribute inequality to external, relatively stable constraints (e.g., group-based historical advantage) rather than to internal characteristics such as inherent deservingness to rule over others, merit, or talent (Vasilyeva &

## GENERAL DISCUSSION

Lombrozo, 2020). In contrast, when advantaged group members evade difference while acknowledging inequality—evaders—they may dispense with situating themselves in relation to their own advantaged group’s standing. This, in turn, may make inequality more likely to be diluted into an individual matter, if acknowledged at all—defenders. From this foundation, I reasoned that how advantaged group members construe both difference and inequality may thus reflect how they manage their own structural standing and help explain whether—and how—they legitimise or question inequality.

This brings us to the ingroup level, where I addressed the specific research question: How do members of advantaged groups manage their standing? (SQ2) At the ingroup level, this dissertation built on the notion that attaining positive self-esteem is a fundamental task of the self in Western contexts (Heine et al., 1999; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Framed as liberal settings, Western societies often praise social standing as a reflection of people’s effort and talent (e.g., meritocratic beliefs) (McCoy & Major, 2007). Because meritocratic beliefs attribute inequality to internal traits rather than structural factors—such as belonging to an advantaged group—facing intergroup inequality may pose a meritocratic threat to some members of advantaged groups as they manage their advantaged social identity (Knowles et al., 2014). In this light, evading difference or inequality by invoking existing formal equality may allow advantaged group members to appear egalitarian and, at the same time, equalise themselves to minoritised groups. Thus, distancing themselves from their advantaged membership may represent a key identity strategy for some while navigating intergroup inequality (Shuman et al., 2024).

Those who reject meritocratic beliefs, in contrast, may perceive intergroup inequality as a reputational threat to their advantaged group (Knowles et al., 2014). In dispelling this threat, they may favour structural views citing external, relatively stable constraints that shape category members’ features (e.g., historical group-based advantage) (Vasil et al., 2024;

## GENERAL DISCUSSION

Vasilyeva & Lombrozo, 2020). As such, those holding such a structural view may be prompted to acknowledge their own advantaged position, thereby adopting power-cognisance as an identity strategy (Goren & Plaut, 2012).

In examining whether and how ideologically divergent views of social categories stem from these foundations, I addressed the last specific research question: How do advantaged group members legitimise or question inequality? (SQ3) To this end, Chapters 2 and 3 employed a person-centred approach, where subgroups of individuals served as the unit of analysis (Osborne & Sibley, 2017). These chapters identified distinct profiles of white and cisheterosexual people based on their construals of difference and inequality. Next, I examined how these profiles relate to advantaged identity strategies and ideological correlates. In particular, social dominance orientation and meritocratic beliefs were measured as key ideological correlates, representing blatant and system-justifying forms of prejudice in the social-psychological tradition, respectively (N. Kteily et al., 2012; Ledgerwood et al., 2011).

Chapter 4 then experimentally assessed whether and how evading difference—when responding to inequality framings—interacts with key individual factors (e.g., political orientation, distancing identity strategy) in shaping advantaged group members' policy preferences. Specifically, it examined the preference for individual-level vs. structural-level policies in the SOGI context. As mentioned, individual-level policies reflect internalist or downplaying views of social categories by focusing on altering perceptions and behaviours, such as awareness campaigns and anti-bias training. In contrast, structural policies reflect structural views of social categories by targeting external, stable factors that sustain group-based inequality, such as institutional practices in schools, healthcare systems, and labour markets (Chater & Loewenstein, 2023).

In the following sections, I summarise the findings drawing on this rationale across the three empirical chapters. I do so by integrating person-centred and variable-centred results in

light of their theoretical implications. Next, I discuss their practical implications, followed by the limitations of our approach and future research directions.

### **Summary of Results and Theoretical Implications**

Chapters 2<sup>2</sup> and 3 identified three profiles of white and cisheterosexual people in the Netherlands based on their construals of difference and inequality: *defenders* (high difference evasion alongside high inequality evasion), *evaders* (mid-to-high difference evasion alongside low-to-mid inequality evasion), and *acknowledgers* (low-to-mid levels of both). Chapter 4 demonstrated that evading difference and inequality jointly shaped policy preferences. Also, it showed that employing SOGI categories shaped policy preferences depending on situational (inequality framings) and dispositional factors (advantaged identity strategies).

I elaborate on each profile in separate subsections, first addressing (SQ1) how advantaged group members construed difference and inequality, then (SQ2) how they managed their standing, and finally (SQ3) how they legitimised or questioned inequality. I begin with defenders and evaders, followed by variable-centred findings on mid-to-high difference evasion as inequality evasion varied—the key feature these profiles share. Next, I elaborate on acknowledgers, followed by variable-centred results on low-to-mid difference evasion—their defining characteristic.

### **Defenders: When Evading Difference Aligns with Evading Inequality**

As expected, categorically distinct subgroups of participants exhibited a defender profile. Defenders exhibited high difference evasion (e.g., ‘People preoccupied with ethnicity/sexual orientation and gender identity forget that we are all just people’) alongside high inequality evasion (e.g., ‘Dutch society is fair toward Black and Muslim people/Compared

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<sup>2</sup> For parsimony and in line with their quantitative properties, the General Discussion translates the identity-based profiles from Chapter 2 into attitudinally based profiles, as outlined in the General Introduction and Chapter 3: the prideful-distancing and distancing profiles into defenders, the distancing-cognisant profile into evaders, and the power-cognisant profile into acknowledgers.

## GENERAL DISCUSSION

to cisgender and heterosexual people, LGBTQ people have equal opportunities’). Defenders correspond to the prideful-distancing and distancing identity profiles in Chapter 2.

Reflecting the equalising background that serves as context of the widening of inequalities, defenders articulated principled standpoints to downplay the role of social categories in shaping people's lives. For instance, evading difference among defenders was reflected in statements such as:

*I'm really a person who likes to look at individuals. I think it's really wrong to say this whole group is this, this whole group is that. I think it's really wrong and always ends in tragedy. I think really individualised, I think which used to be I guess a core value, right, of the Western society. I really hate the group thinking.* (Chapter 2, Irine)

Infusing their views on inequality, evading difference in this way was reflected in obscuring inequality—as defenders hardly ever made reference to it. Instead, they dismissed claims about inequality as biased, casting doubt on their factual basis. Evading inequality among defenders was reflected in statements such as:

*You might not count in the gay world if you don't feel discriminated against. [...] Kind of a self-fulfilling prophecy.* (Chapter 3, Floortje)

### ***Dominance-Affirming Distancing Identity Strategy***

While person-centred research has traditionally focused on attitudes or ideologies (Rivera Pichardo et al., 2023; Sibley & Liu, 2013), we sought to expand this literature by grounding participants’ construals of social categories in their social identity foundations. A common assumption in social-psychological research is that advantaged group members prone to endorse hierarchy-enhancing motives tend to exacerbate both the symbolic (i.e., differentiation) and material (i.e., inequality) dimensions of their advantage (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Consequently, strengthened categorisation and heightened identification with an advantaged identity have often been equated with increasing inequality (Adorno et al., 1950).



## GENERAL DISCUSSION

Introducing nuance to the notion that dominance-affirming stances equate categorising themselves and others, defenders asserted their advantage by reinforcing its unmarked nature instead. In other words, they upheld their advantage by conflating it with normality.

Defenders conflated their advantage with normality in two ways. On the one hand, some blended strong pridefulness (e.g., "I see myself as a proud Dutch person of our ethnic heritage") or defence (e.g., "I think we as normal people have the right to defend our lifestyle") while strongly distancing themselves from their advantaged group (e.g., "I feel that my ethnic group does not have a significant impact on how I see the world/I see myself as an individual with a neutral view on things rather than a so-called cisheterosexual person"). On the other hand, most endorsed the distancing identity strategy alone. Either way, this dominance-affirming stance entailed strong distancing, as reflected in statements such as:

*I don't like what this is called, like a heterosexual man. If you ask me, "What are you? What species are you?" Oh I'm a human. [...] In my opinion, the question should be the other way around, because that's more normal. I think 98% of men are straight. It should be like: How do you know one of the men is not normal?* (Chapter 3, Emanuel)

### ***Ideological Legitimation of Inequality***

Aligning with the notion that equalising outlooks can serve a hierarchy-enhancing function, defenders exhibited the strongest meritocratic beliefs (McCoy & Major, 2007) (e.g., "Anyone willing to work hard has a good chance of succeeding") and some held the strongest belief in inherent deservingness to rule over others as well (Ho et al., 2015) (e.g., "Some groups must be at the top and others at the bottom"). Introducing nuance to the notion that hierarchy-enhancing tendencies in advantaged groups are exclusive to those highly identified, both those with the strongest (i.e., prideful-distancing) and the weakest identification (e.g., distancing) exhibited the highest levels of inequality legitimization.

Defenders exhibited the strongest hierarchy-enhancing tendencies across intergroup contexts. Crucially, they did so while dispensing with categorising tropes both at the intergroup level—by evading difference—and at the ingroup level—by distancing themselves from their advantaged social identity. Social-psychological science has long been shaped by equating discrimination and prejudice with categorisation (Billig, 1985; Oakes, 2001; Park & Judd, 2005). Historically linked to fascism in the first half of the 20th century (Adorno et al., 1950), such portrayals, in turn, equate tolerance and the absence of prejudice with deflecting categorisation. By reinforcing the notion that social categories channel discrimination and may exacerbate inequality, this approach has drawn criticism for enabling those who endorse it to downplay the ways inequality is perpetuated by reflecting equalising outlooks (Hopkins et al., 1997). Distinguishing an anti-egalitarian profile of advantaged group members relying on deflecting categorisation, these results challenge an abstract account of social cognition that equates prejudice with categorisation by uncovering anti-egalitarianism in liberal, increasingly unequal societies.

### **Evaders: When Evading Difference Aligns with Acknowledging Inequality**

As expected, categorically distinct subgroups exhibited an evader profile. Evaders exhibited mid-to-high levels of difference evasion alongside low-to-mid levels of inequality evasion—corresponding to the distancing-cognisant profile in Chapter 2. Evaders therefore quantitatively evaded difference—similarly to defenders. Unlike defenders, evaders acknowledged inequality to varying degrees.

While defenders evaded difference by appealing to principled standpoints, evaders instead bracketed difference by normalising minoritised people with statements such as:

*It's okay. I don't see the differences. [...] There were no social different groups. So you're just normal people? Just like me.* (Chapter 3, Adam)

## GENERAL DISCUSSION

While defenders dismissed inequality altogether, evaders framed their views as objective and neutral when addressing inequality. In line with the notion that difference evasion manifests at the ingroup level in distancing from advantaged identity (Knowles et al., 2014; Shuman et al., 2024), evading difference prompted them to also demand others detach their views on inequality from their group's position. This was reflected in statements such as:

*Of course, it's important to black people [to claim historical linking of colonialism to the present], they still find difficulties in having the same opportunities and same chances. [...] But objectively, it's much more complicated.* (Chapter 2, Klaas)

### ***Distancing-Cognisant Identity Strategy***

Introducing nuance to the notion that distancing from an advantaged status is at odds with recognising its privileges (Knowles et al., 2014), evaders blended distancing with power-cognisance (e.g., "I see myself as a white Dutch person with associated privileges because of my ethnic group membership/Cisheterosexual people in the Netherlands have certain advantages because of their sexual orientation and gender identity"). Unlike defenders, evaders recognised certain aspects of inequality while distancing themselves from their advantaged status. This distancing-cognisant identity blending mirrors the Distancing from Identity facet identified by Shuman et al. (2024) among those who acknowledged white privilege but denied personal benefit (e.g., "It bothers me when other people highlight one's racial identity").

Unlike defenders who conflated their standing with normality, evaders invoked a form of inconspicuousness that they described as more fundamental than being white or cisheterosexual. Evaders thus often employed the word *blank* or default when elaborating on their advantaged group memberships:

Interviewer: *Would you recognise yourself as part of white people?*

Interviewee: *Yeah but even the white people is not one group.*

Interviewer: *How would you say white in Dutch?*

## GENERAL DISCUSSION

Interviewee: *Blank*.

Interviewer: *And ethnically how would you label that?*

Interviewee: *Normal Dutch? Normal Dutch. [...] Very average.* (Chapter 2, Klaas)

*No, I don't think I present myself as a heterosexual. [...] Just being default.* (Chapter 3, Adam)

### ***Ideological Legitimation of Inequality***

Unlike defenders, who dismissed claims of inequality by casting doubt on their factual basis, evaders did not dismiss inequality. However, evaders often neutralised the potential for pro-egalitarian change by invoking backlash. In doing so, they exhibited relatively moderate levels of ideological legitimation. In line with the notion that equalising outlooks can also serve a system-maintenance function (Täuber & Moughalian, 2022), evaders invoked backlash by equating the positions of advantaged and minoritised groups when discussing inequality. For instance, this was reflected in white evaders opposing claims to decolonise the Dutch urban landscape or cisheterosexual evaders downplaying collective action:

*If we start to politicise certain aspects of the public sphere, everything becomes politicised, in the sense that, ahm, why wouldn't White identity groups emerge, who do want to name, ahm, streets after Hitler, because they, they can also make a claim.* (Chapter 2, Daan)

*I don't know if you can change minds with protests. Because all the actions, it's always action and reaction.* (Chapter 3, Wilma)

Neutralisation, rather than outright dismissal, characterised the ideological stance of evaders on inequalities.

### **The Malleability of Difference Evasion as Inequality Evasion Varies**

Defenders and evaders illustrate how evading difference qualitatively shifts as inequality either fades from sight or is reframed as an individual matter, respectively. At the intergroup level, defenders evaded difference on principled standpoints, aligning with the

## GENERAL DISCUSSION

tendency to dismiss inequality altogether. Evaders, in contrast, bracketed minoritised people's identities, aligning with a framing of inequality as an individual matter.

At the ingroup identity level, defenders conflated their standing with a distinctive normality that conferred entitlement, whereas evaders rendered their standing inconspicuous. While defenders exhibited hierarchy-enhancing tendencies, evaders engaged in system-maintenance reasoning by invoking backlash in response to challenges to inequality.

These findings thus illustrate how difference evasion can overcome blatant categorisation in ways that reinforce hierarchy-enhancing motives, as seen in defenders' conflation of advantage with normality. At the same time, these results point to how difference evasion can align with system-justifying motives by making advantage inconspicuous while acknowledging individual inequality, as seen in evaders.

Our variable-centred findings mirror this pattern. In Chapters 2 and 3, supplementary analyses indicate that inequality evasion consistently predicted meritocratic beliefs, whereas difference evasion was strongly associated with meritocratic beliefs only when inequality evasion was low. In other words, when inequality was acknowledged, evading difference took on the role of inequality evasion in underpinning meritocratic beliefs—paralleling the pattern observed among evaders (see Chapters 2 and 3 supplementary materials). Moreover, in Chapter 4, evading inequality predicted preference for individual-level policy at the expense of structural ones. In addition, this effect grew as difference evasion increased—echoing defenders intergroup outlook by evading both difference and inequality.

Together, these variable-centred findings support the idea that assessing social categories as 'not meaningful' (difference evasion) and viewing inequality as 'non-existent' (inequality evasion) shape how individuals navigate intergroup relations. As these stances reflect how advantaged group members manage their own social identity—such as mitigating the threat of being perceived as privileged—they serve a functional role in intergroup relations.

## GENERAL DISCUSSION

Extending on pioneering work that drew the foundations of colour and power evasion by Frankenberg (1993), conceptualising construals of intergroup difference and inequality through the lens of *evasion* finds further support in these findings.

### **Acknowledgers: When Acknowledging Difference Reinforces Acknowledging Inequality**

As expected, categorically distinct subgroups among advantaged groups exhibited an acknowledger profile. Acknowledgers endorsed low-to-mid levels of difference evasion alongside low-to-mid levels of inequality evasion—corresponding to the power-cognisant profile in Chapter 2. Unlike defenders and evaders, acknowledgers quantitatively acknowledged both difference and inequality.

While evaders bracketed minoritised people's identities, acknowledgers recognised the role of social categories in shaping people's lives. For instance, they did so when elaborating on sharing reality with non-white people, in statements such as:

*It's very interesting to have like a miscommunication, but not in a bad way but more in a way like, wow, I meant it like this, but it's picked up in a different way and then, like, what's going on? And then you got explained it like, oh, I never even thought I could look at it this way. (Chapter 2, Amber)*

In line with expectations, acknowledging difference was related to structural understandings of inequality. For instance, they did so by linking colonialism to the present or elaborating on social norms in statements such as:

*I feel that this whole racist history is never really stopped. [...] The idea that colonialism was acceptable back then, is still kind of what shapes thinking for a lot of people these days. (Chapter 2, Aart)*

*The whole society is still largely set up for heterosexuality so as soon as you fall outside of that norm [...] [In conservative settings] as a homosexual man then you have an even bigger problem. (Chapter 3, Thea)*

### ***Power-Cognisant Identity Strategy***

As theorised, acknowledging difference reflected in recognising themselves bounded to their advantaged group memberships. White acknowledgers, on the one hand, did so by explicitly referencing their skin colour to self-categorise. Using the Dutch word *wit*—white in English—they pinpointed the structural advantages of their ethnic-racial group and, in turn, contested the use of *blank*. Cisheterosexual acknowledgers, on the other hand, employed social categories to describe their passage from unawareness to comprehension. For instance, they did so in statements such as:

*Blank I would translate it to like nude, so like neutral, without colour. For me, it's like a colourblind term. So it's a way to not claim whiteness, like have it [to] be the normal, unnamed, natural state.* (Chapter 2, Carlijn)

*When I was starting to get more aware of the diversity and automatically following being more able to identify myself.* (Chapter 3, Claire)

As mentioned, strengthened categorisation and heightened identification with an advantaged identity have often been equated with increasing inequality in social psychology (Billig, 1985; Oakes, 2001; Park & Judd, 2005). Distinguishing defenders and evaders challenged that notion, highlighting the hierarchy-enhancing and system-maintenance roles of evading difference. Moreover, acknowledgers further challenge it by illustrating how self-categorising in terms of the ingroup can align with pro-egalitarian orientations among advantaged individuals.

By integrating self-categorisation processes (Oakes, 2001) into the study of how advantaged group members manage their social identity (Knowles et al., 2014), these results thus support the potential of social categories to foster structural thinking among the privileged (Vasilyeva & Ayala-López, 2019). As such, these findings complement research on critical consciousness, which has predominantly focused on minoritised groups, by offering a

framework to address advantaged people (Freire, 2018; Rapa & Godfrey, 2023; Seider et al., 2020). The current framework also refines prior work that has equated attitudes toward intergroup inequality (e.g., denial, defence, or dismantling of inequality) with advantaged identity strategies (e.g., pridefulness, defence, power-cognisance) (Shuman et al., 2024) by disentangling intergroup construals (e.g., difference evasion, inequality evasion) from self-construals (i.e., advantaged identity strategies).

### *Ideological Questioning of Inequality*

Unlike defenders and evaders, acknowledgers exhibited a markedly pro-egalitarian outlook while finding meaning in their advantaged membership. In turn, acknowledgers rejected beliefs in inherent deservingness to rule over others as well as meritocratic beliefs—exhibiting the lowest and weakest levels across intergroup settings.

White acknowledgers, on the one hand, favoured structural views of racial inequality by endorsing the strongest linkage of colonialism to the present. Cisheterosexual acknowledgers, on the other hand, rejected the notion that LGBTQ identity claims undermine inclusion by showing the lowest levels of modern anti-LGBTQ prejudice (Morrison & Morrison, 2011). Such pro-egalitarian outlooks were reflected when elaborating on accountability and fostering equality through statements such as:

*We have this beautiful center of the city because really rich people back in the day, built their houses with money, partially from the colonies. And we wouldn't have this beautiful city center, if not for the extortion of other ethnicities. [...] I mean you do need to take accountability for that.* (Chapter 2, Lucas)

*I can never fail, even if it's just a millimeter to gain space in again daring to think wider and open up to the new [...] I can't do otherwise, because I feel otherwise.* (Chapter 3, Thea)



### **Acknowledging Difference in Shaping Structural Views of Inequality**

Extending previous critiques within the discipline that contest equating prejudice with categorisation (Billig, 1985; Oakes, 2001; Park & Judd, 2005; Reicher & Hopkins, 2001), acknowledgers' ideological correlates support the idea that acknowledging difference particularises people's experiences through categorisation—citing external, relatively stable factors that shape category members' characteristics (Vasilyeva & Lombrozo, 2020). While particularisation is typically seen as opposing categorisation by distinguishing individuals from categories (Billig, 1985), the notion that acknowledging difference reflects structural views of inequalities highlights categorisation *as a means* of particularising people's material, lived experiences.

At the same time, the findings from Chapter 4 caution against assuming that employing social categories inherently signals a pro-egalitarian acknowledgment of difference. In Study 1, individuals who employed SOGI categories and distanced from their cisgender status—under higher inequality—favoured individual-level policies over structural ones. Similarly, in Study 2, those who strongly evaded difference yet employed SOGI categories to describe the queer character—under higher inequality—also preferred individual-level policies. Rather than inherently reflecting a pro-egalitarian acknowledgment, employing social categories under these conditions predicted opposition to structural change.

Social categories can thus also be mobilised in ways that deter structural change in liberal contexts. Arguably, those who attitudinally downplay the role of SOGI in shaping people's lives while employing SOGI categories may convey virtue-signalling—exhibiting cognisance while detaching from its implications. This virtue-signalling may facilitate moral credentialing (Mullen & Monin, 2016), reducing the perceived need for structural change and favouring individual-level policies instead.

### **Practical Implications**

Anti-discrimination policies in countries with equalising laws often penalise the use of group categories to make decisions over individuals (e.g., by forbidding sexual orientation or ethnic-racial background to be registered) (European Commission, 2017, 2023; Guyan, 2022; Simon, 2017). Consequently, whether a law-binding decision favours or harms a disadvantaged group can be disregarded under the pretense of neutrality that the anti-discrimination principle enshrined (Spade, 2015). Formal equality approaches to minoritised groups, which center on individuals, might thus legitimise structural inequalities by psychologically reflecting in people's social categorisation processes (Chow & Knowles, 2016; Knowles et al., 2009). Indeed, our results indicate that when members of advantaged groups evaded difference, they were prone to circumventing their own structural advantage and, in turn, to evade inequality.

Despite the universalist appeal of evading difference to prevent people from using categories to oppress, our results align with burgeoning research on ethnic-racial and SOGI contexts (Awad & Jackson, 2016; Brownfield et al., 2018; Cvetkovska et al., 2024). This work shows how antiegalitarians can strategically evade difference to endorse the humanistic principle of equal treatment. In doing so, they morally-license themselves to oppose policies aimed at achieving substantive intergroup equality (Chow & Knowles, 2016; Cipollina & Sanchez, 2025). By establishing formal equality as an end point, our results thus support the notion that a liberal framework in ethnic-racial and SOGI settings may, at best, consecrate tolerance as an attitudinal norm. At worst, it may reinforce indifference. Either way, this framework prevents societies from advancing toward substantive intergroup equality.

These findings thus concur with burgeoning calls on governments to shift their approach to minoritised groups (European Commission, 2017, 2023; Guyan, 2022; Simon, 2017). For instance, states could meaningfully improve minoritised people's living conditions by implementing participatory-binding programs in collaboration with minoritised

## GENERAL DISCUSSION

communities. These programs could include voluntary registration of ethnic-racial background, sexual orientation, and gender identity, enabling the tracking of outcomes across various domains. This, in turn, would inform tailored policies that more effectively address minoritised people's needs and boost their resources. By being implemented, monitored, and guided by lay experts and researchers from minoritised groups, these registration practices would help ensure that benefits outweigh potential harms (Guyan, 2022).

In Chapter 4, increasing knowledge about inequality emerged as a crucial factor in sparking preference for comprehensive, structural-level policies. Indeed, acknowledging inequality consistently predicted preference for structural policy, uniquely and independently of political orientation. Fostering an appreciation of difference appeared equally important—as low difference evasion mitigated the link between low assessment of inequality and a preference for individual-level policies. Our results thus highlight the value of an identity-cognisant approach among advantaged group members in fostering structural thinking.

Identifying profiles of defenders and evaders helps address two key foundations of epistemic injustice. Epistemic injustice refers to the unequal distribution of epistemic resources, preventing minoritised people from making sense of and asserting sovereignty over their place in the world. Epistemic injustice unfolds through the misrecognition of minoritised groups' knowledge and authority to articulate their experiences—echoing defenders—and/or by maintaining the structural conditions that deprive them of the means to do so—echoing evaders (Vasilyeva & Ayala-López, 2019). By citing external, relatively stable constraints that shape both advantaged and disadvantaged groups' positions, structural thinking challenges both misrecognition and inaction. As such, our findings are ripe to inform person-centred, targeted research-interventions tailored to defenders, evaders, and acknowledgers.

For defenders, interventions would first focus on examining their own experiences of disadvantage and equipping them with the knowledge to make sense of these experiences. The

## GENERAL DISCUSSION

ability to recognise emotions in oneself is critical for recognising emotions in others (Israelashvili et al., 2019). Indeed, research has shown that working-class white men who attributed poverty to individual failings lacked structural explanations to draw from when reflecting on their own experiences of class-based dispossession (Hershberg & Johnson, 2019). Defenders appeal for normality as a source of entitlement—if not pride—arguably stems from having adapted by silencing grievances they lacked the means to articulate. Fostering structural thinking among defenders may thus require dismantling such an internalised demand to adapt—for instance, by sparking “creative maladjustment” (Allen & Leach, 2018). In the worst-case scenario, they may become less defensive and less reactionary. In a more optimistic note, they could develop key coalition-building skills by enhancing their empathetic repertoire—critical for fostering solidarity across lines of difference. Indeed, research suggests that individuals who simultaneously hold advantaged (e.g., white) and disadvantaged (e.g., working-class) identities may be particularly well-positioned to develop strong perspective-taking skills, ripe for politisation (Curtin et al., 2016). By providing intersectional lenses to advantaged groups’ own experiences, some defenders may become better positioned to dispense with equalising outlooks as they develop structural views of their own experiences of dispossession and privilege.

For evaders, interventions may harness that they can already pinpoint inequality at the individual, non-structural level. In light of our results, evaders would benefit from developing structural views on inequalities while safeguarding self-esteem to prevent them from evading difference. Self-affirming interventions (Cohen & Sherman, 2014) would imply elaborating on features they value about themselves while linking these with attitudes and behaviours akin to counter structural inequality. For instance, interventions could integrate value-relevant activities for evaders (e.g., fairness). In turn, they could be asked to reflect on how they would enact these in scenarios where structural factors limit access to housing or education to a

## GENERAL DISCUSSION

minoritised person. To encourage perspective-taking, social role reflection could be used by prompting evaders consider how their social roles (e.g., as employees, parents, or voters), rather than themselves, shape their opportunities compared to minoritised groups playing out these same roles. To encourage behaviour, evaders could be prompted to take a concrete action aligned with their values while centring individuals, such as mentoring a student from a minoritised background. These activities would be framed as expressions of their personal commitment to values such as fairness or responsibility, offering opportunities to develop structural views in the mid- and long-term.

Interventions targeting both defenders and evaders would greatly benefit from prioritising simplicity while clearly conveying structural factors shaping inequality. One effective way to achieve this is by using generic language to frame structural accounts of inequality—instead of referring to all-encompassing concepts (i.e., capitalism). Generics refer to statements that attribute a property (e.g., earning less) to a social category (e.g., Black or trans people) without specifying individuals or quantifying the claim. Indeed, such statements (e.g., Black/trans people earn less) can be interpreted either as an inherent feature of the group (i.e., internalist view) or as a consequence of structural constraints (i.e., structural view) (Vasilyeva & Lombrozo, 2020). As noted in the introduction, research shows that framing inequality through a structural view uniquely increased the likelihood that both children and adults rectified inequality and endorsed compensatory measures more often than perpetuating it (Vasil et al., 2024). A difference-cognisant approach in these interventions would, therefore, lean on generics in their structural form—for instance, stating: “Black/trans people earn less *because* of bias in hiring, pay gaps, and educational discrimination.”

Generic language provides concrete, relatable examples while enabling room for further understanding. Simplicity is also key to preventing reactance, which may arise from claims that inequality is “too complex” to address. While structural approaches necessarily

## GENERAL DISCUSSION

account for an entangled context, rhetoric invoking complexity is also often weaponised to deter structural change—obscuring straightforward causes of inequality as well as actionable solutions. For example, a politician might argue against wage transparency based on ethnic-racial membership across sectors by claiming that “pay disparities arise from a complex mix of personal ambition, cultural values, education levels, and industry-specific factors”. Instead of addressing clear structural factors, complexity rhetoric frames inequality as too intricate to intervene in, effectively shifting responsibility away from institutions and onto individuals (see Petticrew et al., 2017; Savona et al., 2021). Moreover, the same politician may further argue that exposing wage disparities will most likely fuel internalist justifications of those, encouraging difference evasion in turn. Thus, developing and employing generics in their structural form (e.g., Black/trans people earn less because of bias in hiring, pay gaps, and educational discrimination) is not just an effective communication tool—it is a strategic necessity. It cuts through obfuscation, resists attempts to blur responsibility and forces structural factors to remain visible. Rather than allowing complexity rhetoric to diffuse accountability, structural generics anchor discussions in clear, generalisable mechanisms of inequality encompassing members of whole categories, ensuring that structural problems demand structural solutions.

Finally, for acknowledgers, providing concrete strategies to counter structural inequality would benefit them. A key focus would be on recognising and challenging tokenism, where symbolic gestures (e.g., hiring a single disadvantaged employee) replace structural policies (e.g., establishing a Diversity and Equity office to track inequalities and implement reforms). Without this tool of recognising and challenging tokenism, acknowledgers risk performative allyship—actions that signal virtue without addressing inequality, providing moral licensing for their social networks and further deflecting from structural change (Effron & Conway, 2015). Effective allyship thus requires shifting from reactive to proactive

## GENERAL DISCUSSION

engagement. While reactive allyship responds to discrimination as it arises, proactive allyship works preemptively to change policies, redistribute resources, and foster inclusive environments (De Souza & Schmader, 2025).

Fostering self-reflection on motivation is key—advantaged group members may engage in allyship to protect their status rather than to support minoritised groups (Radke et al., 2020). Since civil courage is essential, acknowledgers must also build trust with minoritised communities and integrate into their networks to navigate resistance from their own advantaged peers (Williams et al., 2023). Interventions would thus benefit from equipping them with strategies to navigate backlash and feelings of alienation. Accordingly, equipping minoritised group members to include advantaged allies appears equally important. By highlighting the relevance of coalitions-building, effective allyship appears as more than participation—it requires structural engagement and community-based resilience. By reframing allyship as a long-term, systemic commitment grounded in meaningful relationships with minoritised groups, acknowledgers can move beyond tokenism and enact lasting, embodied pro-egalitarian change.

### **Limitations and Future Directions**

In this thesis, I aimed to examine the ethnic-racial and the SOGI intergroup settings. However, difference evasion and inequality evasion arguably also vary as the history of intergroup relations shape distinct forms of advantage. For instance, beliefs about the extent to which ethnic-racial and SOGI categories are concealable may differ between white and cisheterosexual people, respectively (Le Forestier et al., 2023). Having anti-racist movements shed light on inequalities by underscoring colour (e.g., Black power), white people have been confronted with unconcealable racial markers of inequalities. Thus, white people who acknowledge difference (i.e., by rejecting racial colourblind tropes) are more likely prevented from evading inequalities in comparison to cisheterosexual people. By alleging SOGI

## GENERAL DISCUSSION

concealability, in contrast, cisheterosexual people who acknowledge difference might still claim that LGBTQ people can choose whether they face discrimination by concealing their identity. Consequently, even those cisheterosexual individuals who acknowledge difference might still evade inequalities to some extent. Indeed, the latent profile approach applied in this dissertation captured such heterogeneity between the white and cisheterosexual acknowledgers' profiles. Future work could further interrogate the narrative of identity concealability in shaping advantaged people's construals of difference and inequality.

Building on prior manipulations of socioeconomic inequality (Peters et al., 2022), Chapter 4 experimentally tested key insights by developing an original manipulation of SOGI inequality. While the SOGI inequality manipulation relied on 'factual' information, it presented an uncommon experience rather than the everyday events that typically shape attitudes and behaviours. In this light, the current SOGI inequality manipulation could also be seen as an intervention aimed at countering difference and inequality evasion rather than assessing its occurrence. A promising avenue for future research is thus to experimentally manipulate whether participants witness inequality occurring, as seen in studies on witnessing prejudice (e.g., Szekeres et al., 2023). Examining how difference evasion unfolds in naturalistic, ecologically valid settings would offer valuable insights.

As mentioned, Chapter 4's measure of policy preference, which contrasted structural- and individual-level policies, may have made the middle point of the scale susceptible to ambiguous interpretation. Future research could make a valuable contribution to the field by refining this measure and disaggregate the bipolar structural–individual policy contrast into separate unipolar measures. Developing robust, standardised scales of structural-level policy preferences across identity axes would meet the call for countering the discipline's prevailing theoretical and methodological individualistic approach (Chater & Loewenstein, 2023).



## GENERAL DISCUSSION

The non-representativeness of our samples limits generalisability. Online surveys also tend to underrepresent individuals with lower digital literacy, education, or survey engagement (Andrade, 2020). Consequently, our findings may reflect associations primarily among medium-to-highly educated, urban populations. Future research would thus benefit from employing nationally representative samples that track socioeconomic status, education, and city of residence. Longitudinal work also warrants further inquiry by offering the possibility to track attitudinal change as it unfolds. As social change occurs, research could assess causality between legislation and pro-egalitarian attitudes (see, for instance, Aksoy et al., 2020; Eisner et al., 2021). By measuring difference evasion alongside other established scales, this research could distinguish substantive pro-egalitarian attitudinal profiles (e.g., low difference evasion) from those that merely reflect equalising outlooks (e.g., high difference evasion). In doing so, longitudinal work could offer key insights into the mechanisms by which these profiles emerge and their nomological network, thereby informing timely person-centred interventions.

As previously suggested, developing person-centered interventions tailored to defenders, evaders, and acknowledgers invites further intervention-oriented research. For defenders, identifying their own disadvantaged social identities is crucial for designing strategies that help them make sense of group-based experiences of dispossession and build up the foundations for empathy. For evaders, research is key in assessing how self-affirmation strategies can expand valued personal features to encompass attitudes and behaviours akin to countering structural inequalities. For acknowledgers, studies could explore how to cultivate civil courage, such as through exposure to historical and contemporary examples of structural allyship (e.g., white abolitionists and current white anti-racist activists) or by practicing strategies to navigate backlash (e.g., seeking social support from both like-minded advantaged and minoritised people). Moreover, future research could examine how to address concerns about co-optation among minoritised communities, helping them to assess trustful allyship and

## GENERAL DISCUSSION

ensuring that allyship efforts find fertile ground. Finally, across all profiles, interventions focusing on disrupting complexity rhetoric that obscure structural inequalities and discourage corrective action are pivotal.

### **Conclusion**

After WWII, efforts to equalise individuals across groups have coincided with widening inequalities in Western and global South contexts. More than half a century since the Holocaust—rooted in the persecution of people based on their group memberships—the aspirations of diminishing the prominence of divisive, group-based memberships conflated social categories with inequality. Addressing the intersection between equalising outlooks and widening inequalities, I examined how members of advantaged groups manage their structural standing through distinct uses of social categories and, in turn, legitimise or question inequality. Focusing on the ethnic-racial and SOGI contexts of the Netherlands—two settings where equalising efforts have taken deep root—I utilised qualitative interviews, quantitative surveys, and survey experiments to address this question.

The findings confirm that difference and inequality represent two distinct, interrelated constructs in how advantaged group members navigate intergroup relations and their own social identity. Key person-centered distinctions emerged between those who endorsed high versus low levels of difference evasion while exhibiting similar levels of inequality evasion. On the one hand, advantaged group members who evaded difference were more likely to distance themselves from their advantaged status and, in turn, evade inequality. As such, evading difference was associated either with opposing attempts to counter inequality or with indifference (Chapters 2 and 3). In combination with inequality evasion, difference evasion increased support for individual-level policies to address inequality at the expense of structural change (Chapter 4).

## GENERAL DISCUSSION

On the other hand, those who acknowledged difference were inclined to recognise their structural advantage. Acknowledging difference was in turn linked to recognising historical and ongoing inequalities (Chapters 2 and 3), supporting efforts to counter inequality (Chapter 3), and rejecting hierarchy-enhancing (e.g., belief in inherent deservingness to rule over others) as well as system-justifying stances (e.g., meritocratic beliefs) (Chapters 2 and 3). In addressing the liberal inheritances in both politics and social psychology, I conclude that fostering knowledge about inequality and difference can promote structural thinking that embraces substantive equality because of difference, rather than despite it.

Supplementary Materials for Chapter 2

**How white people manage the weight of the past: The role of advantaged identity  
strategies in linking colonialism to current racial inequality**

**Contents**

**Study 1**

Participants' Demographics .....	166
Codebook .....	167
Codebook Construction and Validation .....	168

**Study 2**

Constructs Validation Substantive Phase .....	171
Constructs Validation Structural Phase .....	177
Constructs Validation External Phase .....	183
Latent Profile Analyses Statistics .....	190

<b>Moderation Analysis of Colour Evasion and Inequality Evasion .....</b>	<b>205</b>
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**Study 1****Participants Demographics****Table S1***Participants Scheme*

	Left-wing (1 – 4)	Right-wing (5 – 8)	Age
1 <sup>st</sup> generation (1945-1964)	Klaas (Male)	Bram (Male)	
	Lisa (Female)	Sanne (Female)	$M = 62.87$
	Reinhard (Gay)	Maikel (Gay)	Min = 59 ; Max = 68
	Roxanne (Lesbian)	Peter (Gay)	
2 <sup>nd</sup> generation (1965 – 1984)	Aldo (Male)	Annelies (Female)	
	Loes (Female)	Jan (Male)	$M = 45.12$
	Aart (Non binary)	Eline (Bi)	Min = 36 ; Max = 55
	Gijs (Gay)	Remco (Other)	
3 <sup>rd</sup> generation (1985 – 2003)	Amber (Female)	Daan (Male)	
	Lucas (Male)	Marieke (Female)	$M = 26.62$
	Carlijn (Female, Bi)	Irine (Female, Bi)	Min = 23 ; Max = 31
	Henk (Gay)	Job (Gay)	

*Note.* Self-reported political orientation on a scale from 1-Left to 8-Right. 1<sup>st</sup> generation (born 1945-1964), marked by the Indonesian independence; 2<sup>nd</sup> generation (born 1965 – 1984), characterised by Suriname independence; and 3<sup>rd</sup> generation (born 1985 – 2003), distinguished by the political framing of Dutch society as multicultural.

## Codebook

**Table S2**

*Summary and Definitions of Codes*

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### **Advantaged Ethnic-Racial Identity Strategies**

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Prideful	<p>Identity strategy associated with in-group pride and anti-diversity attitudes (Goren &amp; Plaut, 2012).</p> <p>Identity markers to look at:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Response to ingroup threat: <i>Denial of privilege</i>. For example, flipping white privilege into white disadvantage via victimisation. Another way of denial of privilege may be justifying it via rationalisation of power imbalances (Frankenberg, 1993; Knowles et al., 2014).</li> <li>Overt identity signalisation: Longing for identity and/or pridefulness. Pridefulness can imply a more or less explicit attitude of looking down on other groups (Goren &amp; Plaut, 2012).</li> </ol>
Distancing	<p>Identity strategy related to a weak identification with any ethnic-racial category, preferring either individual labels (e.g. “I just think of myself as ‘her name’, not in group terms”), or over-encompassing categories such as nationality and humanity (Frankenberg, 1993; Goren &amp; Plaut, 2012). Also, a distancing White identity would be more related to taking on a colour evasive approach in intergroup relations (Knowles et al., 2014; Neville et al., 2013).</p> <p>Identity markers to look at:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Response to ingroup threat: <i>Distancing</i> from being spotted as a White person.</li> <li>Overt identity signalisation: Identification with overarching categories—nationality, provinciality, humanity—or rejecting any group designation by virtue of seeing themselves as individuals.</li> </ol>
Power-cognisant	<p>Identity strategy that blends awareness of racial privilege with a strong ethnic-racial identification (Goren &amp; Plaut, 2012). This identity strategy relates to pro-diversity attitudes (Frankenberg, 1993). People displaying power-cognisance would be less defensive and more open to acknowledge ingroup historical atrocities (e.g., colonialism) and the privileges rooted in that history (Knowles et al., 2014).</p>

- Identity markers to look at:
- a. Response to ingroup threat: *Dismantling of racial inequalities*.
  - b. Overt identity signalisation: Calling themselves as white/*wit* when they are asked about their ethnicity.

**Historical Repertoire**

Historical Linking of Colonialism	Colonial history is stressed to understand current-day society and contemporary inequalities.
Historical Unlinking of Colonialism	(Colonial) history is considered inappropriate to understand current social life and/or contemporary inequalities and issues.

---

**Codebook Construction**

Drawing on our theoretical framework, we sketched the codes nesting related codes in the same category. The literature review concerned Advantaged Identity Strategies and racial colour-blindness literature accounting for the semantic domain Advantaged Identity Strategies (Frankenberg, 1993; Goren & Plaut, 2012; Knowles et al., 2014; Neville et al., 2013); whereas historical negation (Sibley et al., 2008; Sibley & Osborne, 2016), historical privity (Banfield et al., 2014; Starzyk & Ross, 2008), and historical recognition (Selvanathan et al., 2023) literature accounted for the semantic domain Historical Repertoire.

Next, in a team of three coders composed of the first, fourth, and fifth co-authors, we contrasted the codebook deductively built with the narrative data. We began by freely coding significant portions of text, exploring how the codes stemming from the extant literature shed light on our data and, in turn, how the data refracted our theoretically-driven codebook. We utilised *meaningful units of analysis* rather than a predetermined textual length or linguistic form. As a result, finer-grained descriptions emerged (see Table S2).

Then, we conducted directed-coding. First, the first author independently coded four new interviews. Next, he deleted his codes but leaving the portions of the text he coded as



highlighted text. In doing so, he unitised the portions of text proposed as the meaningful units to later on be blindly coded by the two other coders.

Blind coding in our procedure meant that the second and third coders were blind regarding the code coder 1 utilised for the meaningful unit. As such, the first author sent out the unitised transcripts to the second and third coders. Hence, the second and third coders worked on the resulting unitised transcripts made by the first coder. Once the second and third coders finished to code the transcripts, the coders' files were merged on Atlas.ti. Upon merging, the resulting codes were compared and discussed among the three researchers. Directed-coding was meant to test the codebook discriminant capability—how well coders could independently and unambiguously code text content (for a similar procedure see Campbell et al., 2013).

### **Codebook Validation**

The validation comprised the assessment of, first, intercoder reliability and, later, intercoder agreement. Intercoder reliability—the extent to which the coders operating independently of each other selected the same code for the same unit of text—was assessed conducting directed-coding led by the first author on three new interview transcripts. An index per code was calculated by assessing the percentage of overlap among the coders (see Table S3, column Intercoder Reliability). Intercoder reliabilities showed high (70-85%) or very high (above 85%) indexes. Only the code Historical unlinking of colonialism displayed a poor level. This was due to meaning overlap with the code *Inequality evasion* tapping into the denial of power imbalances—that is not part of this study.

Next, an intercoder agreement was assessed after discussing among the coders over their discrepancies with three possible results: 1. Holding up the discrepancy, 2. reaching consensus in favor of any of the codes at stake, and 3. selecting a new code that attained more consensus. Then, the intercoder agreement index was calculated by assessing the percentage

of overlap among the coders (see Table S3, column Inter-coder Agreement). All the codes attained very high inter-coder agreement (above 95%). Once the codebook was thereby validated, the first author implemented it on the complete data set.

**Table S3***Overlap Percentage per Code*

Semantic domain / Code	Number of textual units	1 <sup>st</sup> Inter-coder Agreement Overlap % <sup>a</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup> Inter-coder Agreement Overlap % <sup>a</sup>
Advantaged Identity Strategies			
Prideful	2	100	100
Distancing	4	100	100
Power-Cognisance	4	83	100
Historical Repertoire			
Historical Linking of Colonialism	5	86.4	96.2
Historical unlinking of colonialism	2	0	100

*Note.* <sup>a</sup> Basis of calculation: Extent of agreement (the textual unit was coded as 1 when the three coders agreed, as .66 when only two coders agreed, and as 0 when no coder agreed) divided by the total number of textual units coded by the first author as the respective code.

### **Studies 2a and 2b**

Drawing on up-to-date social psychology standards (Flake et al., 2017), we report the validation steps followed for our measures of Advantaged Ethnic-Racial Identity Strategies and Historical Linking of Colonialism. We did so by conducting three consecutive phases of construct validation: a Substantive Phase (i.e., Item Generation drawing on qualitative observations and theoretical framework), a Structural Phase (i.e., Confirmatory Factor Analyses to assess our measures psychometric robustness), and an External Phase (i.e., Correlational Analyses to examine whether our measures covaried in theoretically sounding ways with established measures).

The Structural and External phases were conducted using two independent samples. These significantly differed in terms of age and allowed us to assess our measures' reliability across age groups. Upon implementing these analyses, we conducted the reported Latent Profile Analyses of Study 2a and 2b in the Main Manuscript. The following subsections present the Substantive, Structural, and External Phases. Each subsection begins by the Advantaged Ethnic-Racial Identity Strategies scale, followed up by the Historical Linking of Colonialism scale.

#### **Constructs Validation Substantive Phase**

##### ***Item Generation***

Drawing on our theoretical framework, and Study 1's codebook and qualitative observations, we initially designed five items to capture the prideful strategy, eight items for the distancing strategy, five items to capture power-cognisance strategy (see Table S4), and seven items for Historical Linking of Colonialism (see Table S6). In doing so, we aimed for robust scales comprising well-beyond the recommended minimum of three items to ensure psychometric reliability (Marsh et al., 1998).

### Advantaged Ethnic-Racial Identity Strategies.

We designed items for pridefulness (i.e., by pridefully embracing their ethnic-racial identity), distancing (i.e., by alleging detachment from ethnic-racial identity and claiming neutrality), and power-cognisance (i.e., by critically identifying with their ethnic-racial identity). See Table S4 for full list of initial items and S5 for the retained final scale items.

**Table S4**

*Initial Advantaged Ethnic-Racial Identity Strategies Scale's Items*

Prideful	I see myself as a proud Dutch person of our ethnic heritage.
	I feel honoured to be part of my ethnic group because we have achieved so much.
	I feel confident when connecting with other people because I am proud of my ethnic background, regardless of who they are.
	The rich history of my ethnic group enables me to act according to our highest values.
	<i>I feel that I have a more objective view of what the world revolves around compared to ethnic minorities because I belong to my ethnic group.</i>
Distancing	I feel that my ethnic group does not have a significant impact on how I see the world.
	I believe that belonging to my ethnic group has not significantly influenced my life.
	I am an individual with a neutral perspective on things.
	I feel that being part of my ethnic group does not colour how I relate to other people.
	<i>I see myself primarily as an individual and not as a member of an ethnic group.</i>
	<i>Because I am part of the universal human race, I can directly empathise with someone.</i>
	<i>I find my personal history much more important than the history of my ethnic group to understand myself.</i>
	<i>I see myself as an individual with an objective perspective on things.</i>

	I see myself as a white (wit) Dutch person with associated privileges because of my ethnic group membership.
	My position on the social ladder is partly due to the ethnic group I belong to.
Power-cognisance	I realise that my membership in an ethnic group influences my interactions with others.
	I think critically about how belonging to my ethnic group inevitably influences my interactions with others.
	<i>Acknowledging the oppressive aspects of the history of my ethnic group helps us to not repeat them.</i>

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*Note.* Items in *italics* were dropped after assessing their psychometric properties via Confirmatory Factor Analyses across two independent samples. See Constructs Validation Structural Phase.

**Table S5**

*Final Advantaged Ethnic-Racial Identity Strategies Scale's Items*

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	1. I see myself as a proud Dutch person of our ethnic heritage.
	2. I feel honoured to be a part of my ethnic group because we have achieved so much.
Pridefulness	3. I feel confident when connecting with other people because I am proud of my ethnic background, regardless of who they are.
	4. The rich history of my ethnic group enables me to act according to our highest values.
	5. I feel that my ethnic group does not have a significant impact on how I see the world.
Distancing	6. I believe that belonging to my ethnic group has not significantly influenced my life.
	7. I am an individual with a neutral view on things.
	8. I feel that being a part of my ethnic group does not colour how I relate to other people.
Power-Cognisance	9. I see myself as a white (wit) Dutch person with associated privileges because of my ethnic group membership.
	10. My position on the social ladder is partly due to the ethnic group I belong to.

- 11. I realise that my membership in an ethnic group influences my interaction with others.
  - 12. I think critically about how belonging to my ethnic group inevitably influences my interactions with others.
- 

**Historical Linking of Colonialism.**

As for Historical Linking of Colonialism to the present, we designed items addressing racism, White people’s privileges, non-White people’s disadvantages, social accountability for the caused harm, and soundness of linking colonial oppressions and current times. See Table S5 for full list of items.

**Table S6**  
*Historical Linking of Colonialism Scale’s Items*

---

- 1. Colonialism has had an impact on current inequalities against ethnic minorities.
  - 2. Colonialism has had a lasting impact in the form of current racism.
  - 3. Western colonialism is reflected in current institutions that discriminate in favour of White people.
  - 4. By redressing current ethnic-based inequalities, we are correctly responding to past colonial injustice.
  - 5. Today's society cannot be held responsible for the situations that occurred during colonialism. (reverse-coded)
  - 6. Blaming colonialism for current social problems is too far-fetched. (reverse-coded)
  - 7. Colonialism may have been a problem in the past, not now. (reverse-coded)
- 

We refined our measure of Historical Linking of Colonialism by considering related constructs and their conceptual shortcomings for our objectives: Historical privity (Banfield et al., 2014), Historical negation (Sibley et al., 2008; Sibley & Osborne, 2016), and Historical recognition of colonialism (Selvanathan et al., 2023). Firstly, historical privity (Banfield et al., 2014) focuses on whether people perceive enduring suffering in previously oppressed groups but does not tap into the dominant group’s privileges reaped by such oppression.

Secondly, while historical negation (Sibley et al., 2008) involves denying past atrocities and avoiding responsibility for amending them, it does not encompass the inherited privileges associated with those atrocities. Thirdly, historical recognition of colonialism (Selvanathan et al., 2023) does capture historical linking of past oppression and current dynamics of privilege and disadvantage. However, this measure only included three items and lacks explicit coverage of institutional dimensions of colonial heritage and, thereby, does not explicitly address racism as a still-enduring consequence of colonialism. For an overview of the reviewed constructs’ items, See Table S7.

**Table S7**  
*Item Content Examples per Reviewed Construct*

<b>Assessment of Privity</b> (Banfield et al., 2014)	
<i>Items Study 1</i>	<i>Items Study 2</i>
Former Africville residents are still suffering physical harm as a result of the destruction of Africville.	Even today, African (Native) Americans are still suffering psychological harm as a result of their past treatment by the U.S. government.
Former Africville residents are still suffering psychological harm as a result of the destruction of Africville.	Even today, African (Native) Americans are still suffering financial harm as a result of their past treatment by the U.S. government.
Former Africville residents are still suffering financial harm as a result of the destruction of Africville.	
<b>Historical Negation</b> (Sibley et al., 2008; Sibley & Osborne, 2016)	
Grievances for past injustices should be recognised and due compensation offered to the descendants of those who suffered from such injustices (reverse-coded).	
New Zealand law needs to recognise that certain ethnic minorities have been treated unfairly in the past.	
People belonging to those groups should be entitled to certain benefits and compensation (reverse-coded).	

I believe that I should take part in the efforts to help repair the damage to others caused by earlier generations of people from my ethnic group (reverse-coded).

We as a nation have a responsibility that see that due settlement is offered to Maori in compensation for past injustices (reverse-coded).

We should not have to pay for the mistakes of our ancestors.

We should all move on as one nation and forget about past differences and conflicts between ethnic groups.

It is true that many things happened to Maori people in the past that should not have happened, but it is unfair to hold current generations of Pakeha/NZ Europeans accountable for things that happened so long ago.

People who were not around in previous centuries should not feel accountable for the actions of their ancestors.

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**Historical Recognition of Colonialism** (Selvanathan et al., 2023)

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To what extent does the history of colonialism influence the lives of Australians today?

To what extent do White Australians continue to have unearned privileges in society as a result of our colonial history?

To what extent has the trauma experienced as a result of colonialism transmitted to present-day generations of First Australians?

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### **Constructs Validation Structural Phase: Confirmatory Factor Analyses**

The main goal of this Structural Phase of constructs' validation was to assess the psychometrical properties of the Advantaged Ethnic-Racial Identity Strategies and the Historical Linking of Colonialism scales by assessing their factor structure. In doing so, we aimed to ensure the robustness of our newly-devised measures across samples before conducting the Latent Profile Analyses (see Main Manuscript, Studies 2a and 2b).

We hypothesised 3-factors as the best model solution for the Advantaged Ethnic-Racial Identity Strategies scale, and 1-factor solution or two 2 correlated factors reflecting item wording (i.e., pro- and con-trait phrasing; Bishop et al., 1978) for the Historical Linking of Colonialism scale. Confirmatory Factor Analyses—CFA—were conducted. All analyses were executed using two independent samples. In turn, these samples correspond to Study 2a's sample and Study 2b's sample in the Main Manuscript, respectively.

### **Participants**

#### ***Sample 1***

Three-hundred and fifty-six participants were recruited through Prolific. Nine participants identified otherwise than *blank* or *wit* (White in Dutch) and therefore were excluded from analysis. Our final sample amounted to three-hundred forty-seven self-identified White Dutch participants (47.83 % cis men, 49 % cis women, and 3.17 % trans and non-binary people). Their ages ranged from 18 to 73 years old ( $M = 30.03$ ,  $SD = 9.90$ ). Their political orientations ranged from left (1) to right (8) ( $M = 3.86$ ,  $SD = 1.76$ ).

#### ***Sample 2***

Two-hundred and seventy participants were recruited through Facebook. Twenty-six participants identified otherwise than *blank* or *wit Nederlands* and therefore were excluded from analysis. Our final sample amounted to two-hundred forty-four self-identified White Dutch people (55.33 % cis men, 42.21 % cis women, and 2.04 % trans and non-binary people).

Their ages ranged from 19 to 83 years old ( $M = 64.49$ ,  $SD = 11.13$ ). Their political orientations ranged from left (1) to right (9) ( $M = 3.74$ ,  $SD = 1.89$ ).

### **Procedure and Measures**

The procedure followed was identical as described in the Main Manuscript. Participants began by completing demographic and ethnic-racial identification measures, followed by the randomised items of the Advantaged Ethnic-Racial Identity Strategies (see Table S4). Next, participants completed the Historical Linking of Colonialism scale (see Table S6) along with the measures to assess constructs' convergent, discriminant, and predictive validity, randomising all the items. These measures will be described in the Construct Validation External Phase section.

### **Analytical Strategy**

We conducted consecutive CFAs on the initial set of items of the Advantaged Ethnic-Racial Identity Strategies scale using our two samples. Upon several trials, we confirmed that 12-items out of the initial 18-items were statistically robust across samples (i.e., three-factors showing acceptable fit indices such as CFI and TLI values above 0.90, RMSEA below 0.08, and unbiased SRMR (uSRMR) below 0.08; Kline, 2016). For brevity, we hereby report only the CFAs on the White identity scale's 12-items that showed statistical robustness and were used for assessing External Validity and the Latent Profile Analyses reported in the Main Manuscript.

We entered the 12-items (7-items) of the Advantaged Ethnic-Racial Identity Strategies scale (Historical Linking of Colonialism scale) to CFA using maximum likelihood estimation with robust standard errors using the *semTools* package (Jorgensen et al., 2022) for R (R Core Team, 2021).

As for the Advantaged Ethnic-Racial Identity Strategies scale, we compared the hypothesised 3-factors model, to three alternative solutions: (Model 1) A single factor model

(all items loading onto one factor); (Model 2) A two-factors model blending, on the one hand, a prideful-distancing factor, in contrast to a power-cognisance factor, on the other hand; (Model 3) A two-factors model blending, on the one hand, a distancing-cognisance factor, in contrast to a prideful factor, on the other hand. We chose these contrasting models to assess that, even though some mixtures are theoretically sounding and empirically plausible drawing on our very qualitative observations (see Study 1, Main Manuscript), the hypothesised three-factor solution comprising three distinct Advantaged Ethnic-Racial Identity Strategies is empirically more robust than alternative models. We will consider CFI and TLI values above 0.95, RMSEA below 0.06, and unbiased SRMR (uSRMR) below 0.08 indices as denoting excellent fit to the data (Kline, 2016).

As for the Historical Linking of Colonialism scale, we compared the hypothesised 1-factor model to a 2 correlated factors solution reflecting item wording (i.e., pro- and con-trait phrasing). Research has shown that when assessing scales' structures, reverse-coded items often create methodological artefacts by suggesting distinct factors while differences between them are not substantive (G. F. Bishop et al., 1978; Ho et al., 2015).

## Results

**Table S8**

*Summary of Confirmatory Factor Analyses of Advantaged Identity Strategies Scale*

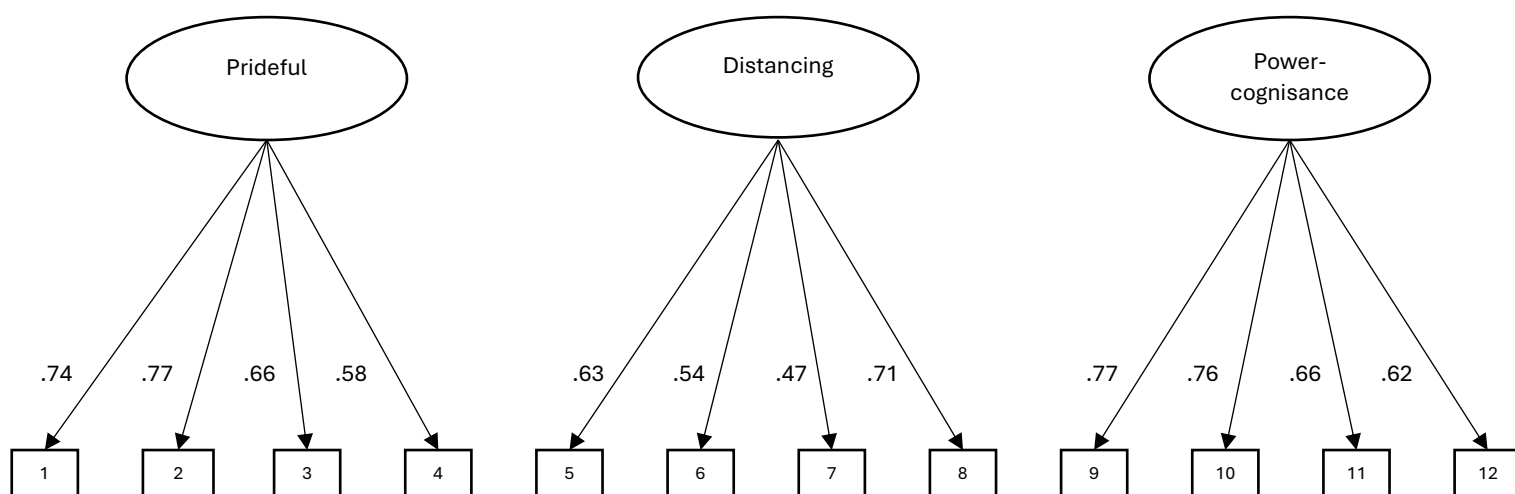
	Sample 1					Sample 2				
	Model Comparison	CFI	TLI	RMSEA	SRMR	Model Comparison	CFI	TLI	RMSEA	SRMR
1. One-factor		.629	.547	.155	.130		.395	.261	.198	.204
2. Two-factors (Prideful-distancing +		.668	.587	.148	.168		.651	.565	.152	.171

# SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS CHAPTER 2

Power Cognisance)									
$\Delta$ regarding Model 1	$\chi^2(1) =$ 48.38								
	$p < .000$								
3. Two-factors (Prideful + Distancing- cognisant)		.931	.914	.0\68	.053		.937	.921	.065 .058
$\Delta$ regarding Model 1	$\chi^2(1) =$ 368.32								
	$p < .000$								
4. Three- factors (Hypothesised)		.958	.945	.054	.047		.962	.951	.051 .053
$\Delta$ regarding Model 3	$\chi^2(2) =$ 34.72								
	$p < .000$								

**Figure S3**

*Factor Loadings of Advantaged Identity Strategies in Sample 1*

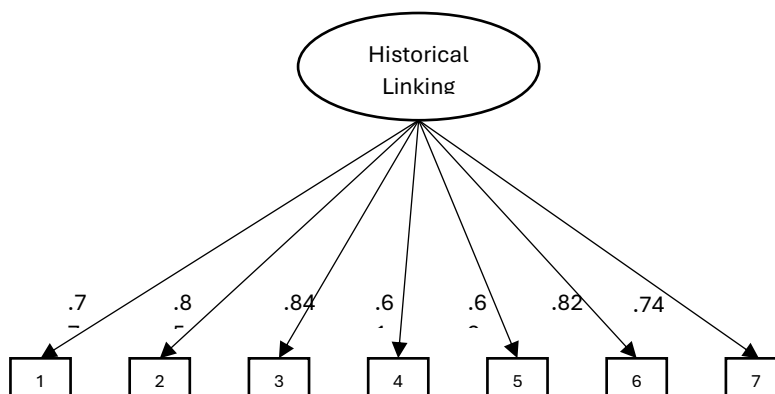


*Note.* Factors were allowed to correlate. Items' numbers correspond to those shown in Table

S4.

**Table S9***Summary of Confirmatory Factor Analyses of Historical Linking of Colonialism Scale*

Sample 1						Sample 2				
	Model Comparison	CFI	TLI	RMSEA	SRMR	Model Comparison	CFI	TLI	RMSEA	SRMR
1. One-factor		.951	.926	.122	.038		.955	.932	.115	.035
2. Two-factors (pro- and con-trait phrasing)		.986	.977	.068	.023		.983	.972	.074	.025
$\Delta$	$\chi^2(1) = 52.14$ $p < .000$					$\chi^2(1) = 28.63$ $p < .000$				

**Figure S4***Factor Loadings of Historical Linking of Colonialism in Sample 1*

*Note.* Items' numbers correspond to those shown in Table S5.

See Table S8 for an overview of results regarding the Advantaged Ethnic-Racial Identity Strategies scale. The hypothesised three-factors model showed excellent goodness of fit in Sample 1,  $\chi^2(51) = 102.75$ ,  $p < .000$ , CFI = .958; TLI = .945; RMSEA = .054, 90% CI [.039, .069]; SRMR = .047, and did it better than the second best fitting alternative Model 3

(i.e., Prideful + Distancing-cognisance),  $\chi^2(2) = 34.72$ ,  $p < .000$ . Also, all factor loadings were significant and above .45 (see Figure S3). The covariance between Prideful and Distancing was .10,  $p = .129$ , between Prideful and Power-cognisance was -.159,  $p < .05$ , and between Distancing and Power-cognisance was -.80,  $p < .000$ .

As for Sample 2, the hypothesised three-factors model showed excellent goodness of fit  $\chi^2(51) = 83.254$ ,  $p < .01$  (.003), CFI = .962; TLI = .951; RMSEA = .051, 90% CI [.030, .070]; SRMR = .053, and all factor loadings were significant and above .45 except for Item 6 ( $\lambda = .36$ ). The covariances between Prideful and Distancing was -.025,  $p = .318$ , between Prideful and Power-cognisance was .027,  $p = .339$ , and between Distancing and Power-cognisance was -.800,  $p < .000$ .

As such, these results provide confirmatory evidence for the psychometrical robustness of the hypothesised Advantaged Ethnic-Racial Identity Strategissscale's three-factors structure in the Dutch context.

See Table S9 for an overview of results regarding the Historical Linking of Colonialism scale. The hypothesised one-factor model showed acceptable goodness of fit in Sample 1,  $\chi^2(14) = 86.193$ ,  $p < .000$ , CFI = .951; TLI = .926; RMSEA = .122, 90% CI [.098, .147]; SRMR = .038, Also, all factor loadings were significant and above .60 (see Figure S4). Also, the hypothesised two-factors model reflecting item wording showed acceptable of fit in Sample 1,  $\chi^2(13) = 34.046$ ,  $p < .01$ , CFI = .986; TLI = .977; RMSEA = .068, 90% CI [.041, .097]; SRMR = .023, all factor loadings were significant and above .60. Indeed, two-factors model solution reflecting item wording showed better fit than the one-factor model  $\chi^2(1) = 52.147$ ,  $p < .000$ .

As for Sample 2, the hypothesised one-factor model showed acceptable goodness of fit  $\chi^2(14) = 58.850$ ,  $p < .000$ , CFI = .955; TLI = .932; RMSEA = .115, 90% CI [.085, .146]; SRMR = .035, and all factor loadings were significant and above .60. Also, the hypothesised

two-factors model reflecting item wording showed acceptable of fit in Sample 2,  $\chi^2(13) = 30.220, p < .01$ , CFI = .983; TLI = .972; RMSEA = .074, 90% CI [.039, .108]; SRMR = .025, all factor loadings were significant and above .60. Again, the two-factors model solution reflecting item wording showed better fit than the one-factor model in Sample 2 as well  $\chi^2(1) = 28.63, p < .000$ .

As such, these results provide confirmatory evidence of the psychometrical robustness of the Historical Linking of Colonialism scale in the Dutch context.

### **Constructs Validation External Phase: Co-Variations with Theoretically Related**

#### **Constructs**

Using the samples described above, we also measured nine ideologically relevant constructs for assessing convergent and discriminant validity of our measures, and two allyship's behavioral intentions for assessing the predictive validity of our scales. These constructs should covary with our resulting scales in theoretically consistent directions to support the Advantaged Ethnic-Racial Identity Strategies and Historical Linking of Colonialism scales' convergent, discriminant, and predictive validity. For brevity, we conducted correlational analyses pulling the samples together. We drew on previous research to support our theoretical expectations. These expectations will be described and immediately contrasted with our findings in the Results section.

#### **Measures**

Participants were asked to report their age and their political orientation (i.e., from 1 – Left to 9 – Right). Participants indicated their agreement with statements on a 9-point scale ranging from “1 - Strongly disagree” to “9 - Strongly agree” to every scale.

Ethnic identification was assessed using four items (identity subscale, Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992), e.g., “My ethnic group is an important reflection of who I am.”  $\alpha$ : .70.

Social dominance orientation (Ho et al., 2015) was assessed using eight items, e.g., “Group equality should not be our main goal.”  $\alpha$ : .81.

System justification (Jost & van der Toorn, 2012) was measured using six items, e.g., “Most policies serve the greater good.”  $\alpha$ : .78.

Meritocratic beliefs (Major et al. 2007) was measured using three items, e.g., “Anyone willing to work hard has a good chance of succeeding.”  $\alpha$ : .85.

Colour evasion was measured (Knowles et al., 2009) using four items, e.g., “People concerned with ethnicity forget that we are all human beings.”  $\alpha$ : .85.

Inequality evasion was measured (Brown et al. 2012; Neville et al. 2000) using four items, e.g., “Racism is a problem in the Netherlands”, reverse-coded.  $\alpha$ : .86.

Collective Action intentions (Selvanathan et al., 2018) were assessed using four items, e.g., “I am willing to participate in a demonstration against systemic racism in the Netherlands.”.  $\alpha$ : .87.

Affirmative Action support (Kteily et al., 2016) was measured using six items, e.g., “Using group membership as one of several considerations when selecting staff.”.  $\alpha$ : .80.

## Results

**Table S10**

*Advantaged Identity Strategies Scale's Associations*

	Advantaged Identity Strategies		
	Prideful ( $\alpha$ : .80)	Distancing ( $\alpha$ : .69)	Power-cognisance ( $\alpha$ : .77)
Age	.05	.05	-.11**
Ethnic Identification	.35***	-.11**	.08*
Political Orientation	.42***	.26***	-.41***
Social Dominance Orientation	.17***	.02	-.03



System Justification	.28***	.22***	-.18***
Meritocratic Beliefs	.36***	.34***	-.40***
Colour Evasion	.05	.50***	-.52***
Inequality Evasion	.11**	.00	.01
Collective Action	-.23***	-.28***	.51***
Affirmative Action	-.15***	-.37***	.56***
Historical Linking	-.26***	-.17***	.40***

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

**Table S11**

*Historical Linking of Colonialism Scale's Associations*

	Historical Linking of Colonialism ( $\alpha$ : .90)
Age	-.15***
Ethnic Identification	-.05
Political Orientation	-.39***
Social Dominance Orientation	-.14***
System Justification	-.19***
Meritocratic Beliefs	-.31***
Colour Evasion	-.16***
Inequality Evasion	-.38***
Collective Action	.45***
Affirmative Action	.41***
Prideful Identity Strategy	-.26***
Distancing Identity Strategy	-.17***

Power-cognisant Identity Strategy

.40\*\*\*

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

For a summary of correlations, see Table S10 and S11 for the Advantaged Ethnic-Racial Identity Strategies and Historical Linking of Colonialism scales, respectively. In interpreting our results to ascertain convergent, discriminant, and predictive validity, we will consider a correlation weak from .15, moderate from .25, and as strong from .35 (Gignac & Szodorai, 2016). We begin by addressing the associations expected to denote convergent validity. Next, we address the associations expected to denote discriminant validity. Lastly, we address the associations expected to denote predictive validity.

### **Expected Associations for Convergent Validity**

Young people in Belgium were found to be more critical than their older-counterparts regarding their ancestry role in colonialism (Licata & Klein, 2010). Accordingly, we expected and found a negative association between age and Historical Linking of Colonialism, such that older people were less prone to historically link colonialism to the present.

Consistent with research on White identities showing that high identifiers are more likely to display a prideful identity strategy (Goren & Plaut, 2012), we expected and found the prideful scale to be positively and strongly associated with ethnic identification.

Research has shown that right-wing individuals are more prone to display higher ingroup favoritism and racist beliefs (Nail et al., 2003), and support for human rights violations (David et al., 2016) than left-wing individuals. As such, we expected and found positive associations of political orientation regarding prideful and distancing identity strategies, whereas we expected and found negative associations of political orientation regarding power-cognisance and Historical Linking of Colonialism.

Social Dominance—SDO—conveys endorsement of hierarchy (Unzueta et al., 2012). In line with claims of inherent status, we expected and found SDO to be positively associated with the prideful identity strategy. In contrast to our expectations to find a negative association between SDO and power-cognisant identity strategy, we did not find such an association. Lastly, we expected and found that SDO shows a negative association with Historical Linking of Colonialism, in line with its hierarchy-attenuating character.

System Justification—SJ—conveys support for the status-quo and the belief in its fairness (Jost & van der Toorn, 2012). Thus, we expected and found that SJ was positively related to prideful and distancing identity strategies, whereas we expected and found that SJ was negatively related to power-cognisance and Historical Linking of Colonialism.

Meritocratic beliefs stress that people have the conditions to thrive provided they work hard enough (Major et al., 2007). As such, we expected and found that meritocratic beliefs were strongly and positively associated with prideful and distancing strategy, whereas it was negatively and strongly associated with power-cognisance. Lastly, we expected and found that meritocratic beliefs was negatively associated with Historical Linking of Colonialism.

Colour evasion stresses that people should be seen as individuals instead of exemplars of their ethnic-racial groups (Knowles et al., 2009). In line with research showing that those evading colour are more likely to oppose or to disengage from attempts to counter racial inequalities (Mekawi et al., 2020; Unzueta et al., 2012), we expected and found that colour evasion was strongly associated with distancing identity strategy. In contrast to our expectations, colour evasion did not show associations with prideful identity strategy.

Inequality evasion reflects the belief that racism has been overcome (Brown et al., 2013; Mekawi et al., 2020; Neville et al., 2013). In contrast to our expectations, Inequality evasion did not show associations above traditional benchmarks with the Advantaged Ethnic-

Racial Identity Strategies scale. As expected, however, we found a negative and strong association between Inequality evasion and Historical Linking of Colonialism.

Summarising, we found evidence supporting most of our expectations denoting the convergent validity of our constructs. In line with prior research, prideful and dissociated identity strategies were positively correlated with support for the status quo (i.e., SDO-prideful, and SJ-distancing), meritocratic beliefs, colour evasion, and more right-wing political orientation. Also echoing prior research, the power-cognisant identity strategy was negatively associated with political orientation (i.e., such that higher power-cognisance was associated with a more left-leaning orientation), SJ, meritocratic beliefs, and colour evasion. Lastly, consistent with its theorised hierarchy-attenuating character, Historical Linking of Colonialism showed negative associations with age (i.e., such that higher linking of colonialism was associated with younger ages), political orientation, SDO, SJ, meritocratic beliefs, colour evasion, and inequality evasion.

Thus, these pattern of results give initial credence of our scales' convergent validity regarding established ideological measures (e.g., meritocratic beliefs, political orientation) and demographic features (e.g., age).

### **Expected Associations for Discriminant Validity**

Young people have been found to be more critical than their older-counterparts regarding their ancestry's role in colonialism (Licata & Klein, 2010). Confirming that the Identity Strategies scale is not only reflecting generational differences, we did not find associations above traditional benchmarks between age and Identity Strategies.

Confirming that distancing and power-cognisant strategies reflect identity features that are irreducible to traditional understandings of ingroup identification, ethnic identification was not associated with these constructs either.

We expected SDO to be unrelated to distancing identity strategy since its construct is meant to tap into avoidance of group-based power relations rather than endorsing them. Corroborating our expectations, we did not find associations between SDO and the distancing identity strategy.

As such, these patterns of results provide initial support for the discriminant validity of our scales concerning demographic features (i.e., age), related constructs (i.e., ethnic identification), and blatant hierarchy-enhancing motives (i.e., distancing identity strategy).

### **Expected Associations for Predictive Validity**

As for collective action (Selvanathan et al., 2020) and affirmative action (N. S. Kteily et al., 2017), denoting allyship behavioral intentions, we expected and found negative associations with the prideful and the distancing identity strategies. Also, we expected and found positive associations with power-cognisant identity strategy and Historical Linking of Colonialism. Thus, these patterns of results provide initial support for the predictive validity of our scales concerning allyship behavioral intentions.

**Table S12**

*Values of Fit Indices for Solutions with Different Numbers of Profiles*

No. of profiles	Sample 1					Sample 2				
	AIC	AWE	BIC	CLC	KIC	AIC	AWE	BIC	CLC	KIC
1	4043.87	4118.06	4066.96	4033.87	4052.87	2971.96	3041.92	2992.94	2961.96	2980.86
2	3921.78	4047.41	3960.28	3903.14	3934.78	2897.62	3016.21	2932.59	2878.97	2910.62
3	3907.08	4083.57	3960.97	3880.37	2874.17	<b>3040.71</b>	<b>2923.13</b>	<b>2847.55</b>	<b>2847.55</b>	<b>2891.17</b>
4	<b>3869.01</b>	<b>4096.14</b>	<b>3938.29</b>	<b>3834.44</b>	<b>3890.01</b>	2865.29	3079.90	2928.24	2830.57	2886.29
5	3860.74	4138.74	3945.42	3818.10	3885.74	2870.74	3133.49	2947.67	2827.86	2895.74
6	3854.21	4182.97	3954.30	3803.62	3883.21	2876.59	3187.30	2967.52	2825.73	2905.59
7	3851.75	4231.32	3967.23	3793.13	3884.75	2871.07	3229.58	2975.98	2812.38	2904.07

*Note.* Values of retained profile solutions are in bold. AIC, Akaike information criterion; AWE, approximate weight of evidence; BIC, Bayesian information criterion; CLC, classification likelihood criterion; KIC, Kullback information criterion.

**Table S13**

*Study 2a Pairwise Comparisons of Profile Indicators*

	Prideful			Distancing			Power-cognisance		
	<i>M</i>	<i>p</i> -value	<i>d</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>p</i> -value	<i>d</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>p</i> -value	<i>d</i>
Prideful-distancing	7.28			6.67			2.17		
Distancing	2.72	< .001 ***	3.82	6.99	.827	0.29	2.66	.508	0.53
Distancing-cognisant	3.91	< .001 ***	2.36	5.70	.039 *	0.89	5.44	< .001 ***	3.08
Power-cognisant	2.80	< .001 ***	3.65	3.68	< .001 ***	3.14	7.14	< .001 ***	5.46
Distancing									
Distancing-cognisant		< .001 ***	1.17		< .001 ***	1.17		< .001 ***	2.68
Power-cognisant		.983	0.06		< .001 ***	3.26		< .001 ***	4.86
Distancing-cognisant									
Power-cognisant		< .001 ***	0.81		< .001 ***	1.95		< .001 ***	1.68

*Note.* \*  $p \leq 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p \leq 0.001$ . *M* denotes means and *d* denotes Cohen's *d* effect sizes.

**Table S14***Study 2b Pairwise Comparisons of Profile Indicators*

	Prideful			Distancing			Power-cognisance		
	<i>M</i>	<i>p</i> -value	<i>d</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>p</i> -value	<i>d</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>p</i> -value	<i>d</i>
Prideful-ambivalent	6.25			5.13			5.34		
Distancing	2.90	< .001 ***	2.59	6.81	< .001 ***	1.42	3.10	< .001 ***	1.66
Distancing-cognisant	2.64	< .001 ***	3.06	4.31	< .001 ***	0.61	6.44	< .001 ***	0.85
Distancing									
Distancing-cognisant		.305	0.22		< .001 ***	2.01		< .001 ***	2.70

*Note.* \*\*\*  $p \leq 0.001$ . *M* denotes means and *d* denotes Cohen's *d* effect sizes.



**Table S15***Study 2a Chi-Square Analysis of Racial Self-Identification per Profile*

Profile	<i>Blank</i>	<i>Wit</i>	Row Total
Prideful-distancing	Count: 7 Expected: 4.62 Row %: 77.78 Column %: 3.93 Total %: 2.02 Std Residual: 1.11	Count: 2 Expected: 4.38 Row %: 22.22 Column %: 1.18 Total %: 0.58 Std Residual: -1.14	9
Distancing	Count: 45 Expected: 31.29 Row %: 73.77 Column %: 25.28 Total %: 12.97 Std Residual: 2.45*	Count: 16 Expected: 29.71 Row %: 26.23 Column %: 9.47 Total %: 4.61 Std Residual: -2.52*	61
Distancing-cognisant	Count: 90 Expected: 85.15 Row %: 54.22 Column %: 50.56 Total %: 25.94 Std Residual: 0.53	Count: 76 Expected: 80.85 Row %: 45.78 Column %: 44.97 Total %: 21.90 Std Residual: -0.54	166
Power-cognisant	Count: 36 Expected: 56.94 Row %: 32.43 Column %: 20.23 Total %: 10.38 Std Residual: -2.78*	Count: 75 Expected: 54.06 Row %: 67.57 Column %: 44.38 Total %: 21.61 Std Residual: 2.85*	111
Column Total	178 Column %: 51.30	169 Column %: 48.70	347

*Note.* \*  $p < .05$ ; Pearson's Chi-Squared Test:  $\chi^2(3) = 31.24$ ,  $p < .001$ . Fisher's Exact Test:  $p < .001$ ; Minimum expected frequency = 4.38; Cells with Expected Frequency  $< 5 = 2$  out of 8 (25%).

**Table S16***Study 2b Chi-Square Analysis of Racial Self-Identification per Profile*

Profile	<i>Blank</i>	<i>Wit</i>	Row Total
Prideful-ambivalent	Count: 43 Expected: 37.18 Row %: 79.63 Column %: 25.60 Total %: 17.62 Std Residual: 0.954	Count: 11 Expected: 16.82 Row %: 20.37 Column %: 14.47 Total %: 4.51 Std Residual: -1.419	54
Distancing	Count: 62 Expected: 53.02 Row %: 80.52 Column %: 36.91 Total %: 25.41 Std Residual: 1.234	Count: 15 Expected: 23.98 Row %: 19.48 Column %: 19.74 Total %: 6.15 Std Residual: -1.834*	77
Distancing-cognisant	Count: 63 Expected: 77.80 Row %: 55.75 Column %: 37.50 Total %: 25.82 Std Residual: -1.678	Count: 50 Expected: 35.20 Row %: 44.25 Column %: 65.79 Total %: 20.49 Std Residual: 2.495*	113
Column Total	168 Col %: 68.85	76 Col %: 31.15	244

*Note.* \*  $p < .05$ ; Pearson's Chi-Squared Test:  $\chi^2(2) = 16.85$ ,  $p = .0002$ ; Fisher's Exact Test:  $p = .0002$ ; Minimum expected frequency = 16.82.

**Table S17***Proportions of Racial Self-Identification by Profile and Within-Profile Odds Ratios*

Profile	<i>Blank</i> (% and row count)	<i>Wit</i> (% and row count)	<i>Blank vs. Wit</i> (Odds Ratio)
Study 2a			
Prideful-distancing	77.78% 7	22.22% 2	12.07
Distancing	73.77% 45	26.23% 16	7.92
Distancing-cognisant	54.22% 90	45.78% 76	1.39
Power-cognisant	32.43% 36	67.57% 75	0.48 ( <i>wit</i> 4.33 times more likely)
Study 2b			
Prideful-ambivalent	79.63% 43	20.37% 11	15
Distancing	80.52% 62	19.48% 15	17.21
Distancing-cognisant	55.75% 63	44.25% 50	1.59

**Table S18***Study 2a Pairwise Comparisons of Ethnic Ingroup Identification*

	<i>M</i>	<i>p</i> -value	Cohen's <i>d</i>
Prideful-distancing	5.28		
Distancing	2.39	< .001 ***	2.09
Distancing-cognisant	3.37	< .001 ***	1.32
Power-cognisant	3.52	.002 **	1.25
Distancing			
Distancing-cognisant		< .001 ***	0.69
Power-cognisant		< .001 ***	0.82
Distancing-cognisant			
Power-cognisant		.811	0.11

*Note.* \*\*  $p \leq 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p \leq 0.001$ . *M* denotes means.

**Table S19***Study 2b Pairwise Comparisons of Ethnic Ingroup Identification*

	<i>M</i>	<i>p</i> -value	Cohen's <i>d</i>
Prideful-ambivalent	5.40		
Distancing	2.81	< .001 ***	1.84
Distancing-cognisant	3.80	< .001 ***	0.99
Distancing			
Distancing-cognisant		< .001 ***	0.66

*Note.* \*\*\*  $p \leq 0.001$ . *M* denotes means.

**Table S20***Study 2a Pairwise Comparisons of Profiles for Social Dominance and Meritocratic beliefs*

	Social Dominance			Meritocratic beliefs		
	<i>M</i>	<i>p</i> -value	Cohen's <i>d</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>p</i> -value	Cohen's <i>d</i>
Prideful-distancing	4.33			7.19		
Distancing	3.13	.017 *	0.87	6.04	.254	0.58
Distancing-cognisant	2.93	.002 **	1.24	5.14	.003 **	1.20
Power-cognisant	2.34	< 0.001 ***	2.05	3.77	< .001 ***	2.25
Distancing						
Distancing-cognisant		.658	0.16		.003 **	0.49
Power-cognisant		< .001 ***	0.68		< .001 ***	1.30
Distancing-cognisant						
Power-cognisant		< .001 ***	0.55		< .001 ***	0.82

*Note.* \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p \leq 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p \leq 0.001$ . *M* denotes means.

**Table S21***Study 2b Pairwise Comparisons of Profiles for Social Dominance and Meritocratic beliefs*

	Social Dominance			Meritocratic beliefs		
	<i>M</i>	<i>p</i> -value	Cohen's <i>d</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>p</i> -value	Cohen's <i>d</i>
Prideful-ambivalent	3.71			5.69		
Distancing	2.63	< .001 ***	0.79	4.78	.008 **	0.49
Distancing-cognisant	2.35	< .001 ***	1.14	3.29	< .001 ***	1.52
Distancing						
Distancing-cognisant		.233	0.28		< .001 ***	0.88

*Note.* \*\*  $p \leq 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p \leq 0.001$ .

**Table S22***Study 2a Pairwise Comparisons of Historical Linking of Colonialism*

	<i>M</i>	<i>p</i> -value	Cohen's <i>d</i>
Prideful-distancing	2.63		
Distancing	3.79	.124	0.75
Distancing-cognisant	5.41	< .001 ***	1.89
Power-cognisant	7.01	< .001 ***	3.06
Distancing			
Distancing-cognisant		< .001 ***	1.10
Power-cognisant		< .001 ***	2.21
Distancing-cognisant			
Power-cognisant		< .001 ***	1.11

*Note.* \*\*\*  $p \leq 0.001$ . *M* denotes means.



**Table S23***Study 2b Pairwise Comparisons of Historical Linking of Colonialism*

	<i>M</i>	<i>p</i> -value	Cohen's <i>d</i>
Prideful-ambivalent	4.21		
Distancing	4.21	.999	0.00
Distancing-cognisant	6.28	< .001 ***	1.26
Distancing			
Distancing-cognisant		< .001 ***	1.23

*Note.* \*\*\*  $p \leq 0.001$ . *M* denotes means.

**Table S24***Study 2a Pairwise Comparisons of Racial Inequality Legitimation*

	Colour Evasion			Inequality Evasion		
	<i>M</i>	<i>p</i> -value	Cohen's <i>d</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>p</i> -value	Cohen's <i>d</i>
Prideful-distancing	7.41			7.61		
Distancing	7.20	.985	0.13	5.66	.001 **	1.10
Distancing-cognisant	6.13	.107	0.79	3.90	< .001 ***	2.52
Power-cognisant	4.25	< .001 ***	1.84	2.55	< .001 ***	4.23
Distancing						
Distancing-cognisant		< .001 ***	0.67		< .001 ***	1.13
Power-cognisant		< .001 ***	1.77		< .001 ***	2.19
Distancing-cognisant						
Power-cognisant		< .001 ***	1.14		< .001 ***	0.99

*Note.* \*\*  $p \leq 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p \leq 0.001$ . *M* denotes means.

**Table S25***Study 2b Pairwise Comparisons of Racial Inequality Legitimation*

	Colour Evasion			Inequality Evasion		
	<i>M</i>	<i>p</i> -value	Cohen's <i>d</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>p</i> -value	Cohen's <i>d</i>
Prideful-ambivalent	6.19			5.07		
Distancing	7.56	< .001 ***	0.90	4.73	.479	0.17
Distancing-cognisant	5.77	.288	0.23	3.00	< .001 ***	1.45
Distancing						
Distancing-cognisant		< .001 ***	1.12		< .001 ***	1.06

*Note.* \*\*\*  $p \leq 0.001$ . *M* denotes means.

**Table S26***Constructs' Associations*

	Colour Evasion	Power Evasion
Prideful	0.053	0.369***
Distancing	0.506***	0.363***
Power-cognisance	-0.525***	-0.616***
Historical Linking of Colonialism	-0.483***	-0.825***
Political Orientation	0.309***	0.592***
SDO	0.100*	0.557***
System Justification	0.225***	0.418***
Protestant Work Ethic	0.324***	0.584***
Solidarity-based Action	-0.35***	-0.678***
Affirmative Action	-0.452***	-0.601***
Age	0.242***	0.088**
Ingroup Identification	-0.115**	0.129**

*Note.* \*  $p < .05$  ; \*\*  $p < .01$  ; \*\*\*  $p < .001$ . SDO denotes social dominance orientation. SES denotes self-reported socioeconomic status.

### **Moderation Analysis of Colour Evasion and Inequality Evasion on Meritocratic Beliefs**

The multiple regression analysis included an interaction term between colour evasion and racial inequality evasion while controlling for age, political orientation, racial-ethnic background, gender, and education.

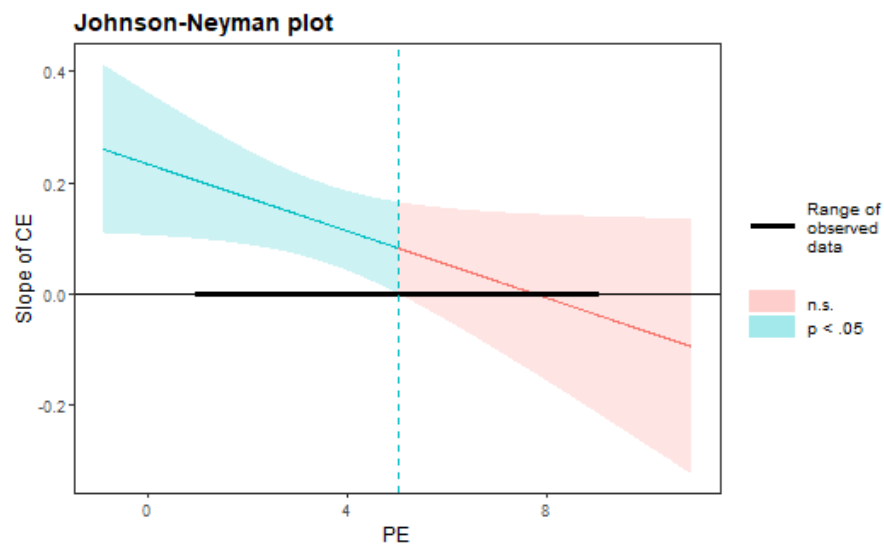
Results revealed a significant main effect of colour evasion ( $b = 0.23$ ,  $SE = 0.07$ ,  $t = 3.57$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and racial inequality evasion ( $b = 0.56$ ,  $SE = 0.11$ ,  $t = 5.24$ ,  $p < .001$ ) on meritocratic beliefs. Notably, the colour evasion  $\times$  racial inequality evasion interaction was significant ( $b = -0.03$ ,  $SE = 0.02$ ,  $t = -1.98$ ,  $p = .048$ ).

The Johnson-Neyman analysis indicated that colour evasion was a significant positive predictor of meritocratic beliefs when racial inequality evasion was below 5.03 ( $p < .05$ ) but not significant when racial inequality evasion exceeded 5.03. Figure S5 illustrates the region of significance of colour evasion at different levels of racial inequality evasion.

A simple slopes analysis further revealed that at low levels of racial inequality evasion ( $-1$  SD; raw score = 2.02), colour evasion was significant ( $\beta = 0.17$ ,  $SE = 0.04$ ,  $t = 4.00$ ,  $p < .001$ ). At mean levels of racial inequality evasion (raw score = 3.92), the effect remained significant but weaker ( $\beta = 0.11$ ,  $SE = 0.04$ ,  $t = 3.19$ ,  $p = .002$ ). However, at high levels of racial inequality evasion ( $+1$  SD; raw score = 5.82), the effect was no longer significant ( $\beta = 0.06$ ,  $SE = 0.05$ ,  $t = 1.19$ ,  $p = .23$ ). Figure S6 illustrates the predicted values of meritocratic beliefs as colour evasion varies per levels of racial inequality evasion.

**Figure S5**

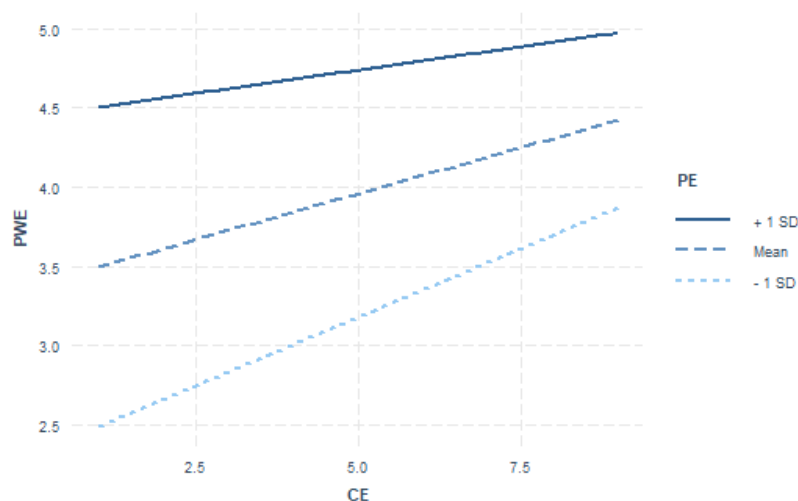
*Region of Significance of Colour Evasion as Racial Inequality Evasion Varies*



*Note.* CE and PE stand for colour and racial inequality evasion, respectively. *n.s.* stands for non-significance.

**Figure S6**

*Predicted Values of Meritocratic Beliefs as Colour Evasion Varies per Levels of Racial Inequality Evasion*



*Note.* CE and PE stand for colour and racial inequality evasion, respectively. SD stands for standard deviation.

Supplementary Materials for Chapter 3

**Cisheterosexual people in post-closeted times: The role of evading difference in  
managing an advantaged identity and legitimising of inequalities**

**Contents**

**Study 1**

Participants' Demographics .....	209
Codebook .....	210
Codebook Construction and Validation .....	214
Quantitative Features of Qualitative Profiles.....	217

**Study 2**

Constructs Validation Substantive Phase.....	220
Constructs Validation Structural Phase 1.....	225
Constructs Validation Structural Phase 2.....	241
Constructs Validation External Phase.....	250
Latent Profile Analysis Fit Indices .....	262

<b>Moderation Analysis of Difference Evasion and Inequality Evasion .....</b>	<b>264</b>
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**Study 1****Participants' Demographics****Table S1***Participants as a Function of Generation, Political Orientation, and Ethnic-Racial Identity*

Birth Cohort	Left-wing (1 – 4)	Centre (5 – 7)	Right-wing (8 – 11)	Ethnic-Racial Identity
1 <sup>st</sup> generation (1945-1964)	Will (M) Adam (M)	Floortje (W)	Wilma (W) Daan (M)	White
				BIPOC
2 <sup>nd</sup> generation (1965 – 1984)	Claire (F) Rosemarijn (F) Marcus (M)	Thea (F) Jasper (M)	Hans (M) John (M)	White
	Veerle (F)	Amy (F)		BIPOC
3 <sup>rd</sup> generation (1985 – 2003)	Emma (F)	Pieter (M) Kevin (M)	Barend (M)	White
	Patrick (M)		Emmanuel (M)	BIPOC

*Note.* Self-reported political orientation on a scale from 1-Left to 11-Right. BIPOC stands for Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour. M stands for male and F stands for female. 1<sup>st</sup> generation (born between 1945-1964), marked by the end of WWII and the creation of the Human Rights Universal Declaration; 2<sup>nd</sup> generation (1965 – 1984), characterised by renewed public emergence of Black, homosexual, and trans emancipatory movements; and 3<sup>rd</sup> generation (1985 – 2003), distinguished by the framing of Dutch society as an equalitarian liberal endpoint whereby equal marriage was enshrined.

## Codebook

**Table S2**

*Summary and Definitions of Codes*

---

### Attitudinal Repertoire

**Difference evasion** Attitudinal repertoire characterised by the denial of potential differences made by sexual orientation/gender identity emphasising sameness. “I don’t see the sexuality/gender of the person”; is a typical phrase to lay claim about.

Main attitudinal marker to look at:

- a. Overt effort of emphasising individuals and sameness.

**Inequality evasion** Attitudinal repertoire characterised by a selective attention to difference, allowing conscious scrutiny of differences unless they involve naming of inequality, power imbalance, hatred, or fear. In this sense, it is a form of denial of cisheterosexism which emphasises the belief that everyone has the same opportunities, including denial/minimisation of (a) blatant cisheterosexist issues, (b) institutional cisheterosexism, and (c) cisheterosexual privilege. Hence, inequality evasion seeks to override intergroup hostility stemming from power imbalances.

Main attitudinal marker to look at:

- a. When talking about intergroup or outgroup situations where the tension is latent, any mention to group-based power imbalances is overridden.

*Analytical clue for disentangling difference and inequality evasion:* Difference evasion should be coded when an overt emphasis on sameness is done, whereas inequality evasion should be coded when reference to inequality is absent while intergroup relations are discussed. In other words, difference evasion is about *emphasising* sameness for evading division, and inequality evasion is about *muting* power-relational aspects to avoid confrontation. Presence vs. absence.

**Difference cognisance** Attitudinal repertoire characterised by pinpointing difference rather than sameness. Such recognition of difference disentangles more or less explicitly the contradiction that cisheterosexism performs, namely that sexual orientation/gender identity inequalities are justified by essentialist or meritocratic reasons. Based on conceptualisation of colour cognisance (Frankenberg, 1993).

Main attitudinal marker to look at:

- a. Acknowledging difference reflects an attempt to understand it without being threatened by pinpointing difference. Difference thereby becomes a source of insight and subordination is not looming as the unequivocal outcome of acknowledging difference.
- Inequality cognisance      Attitudinal repertoire characterised by pinpointing structural inequality rather than stressing individuals' equal opportunities.

Main attitudinal marker to look at:

- a. Acknowledging inequality reflects an attempt to understand it by pointing out different aspects, ranging from interpersonal to structural dimensions.

### **Heterosexual Identity Strategies**

Defence      Heterosexual identity strategy associated with defending heterosexual dominant status and anti-diversity attitudes (Goren & Plaut, 2012; Morgan & Davis-Delano, 2016; Shuman et al., 2024).

Identity markers to look at:

- a. Response to ingroup threat: *Defence of status*, this can be done in multiple ways. For example, flipping heterosexual privilege into heterosexual disadvantage via victimisation. Another way of defending heterosexual status may be justifying its role as normative yardstick. This normalising defence of heterosexuality might reflect the rationalisation of privilege and dominance.
- b. Overt identity signalisation: Longing for normality as default identity. Defence can imply more or less explicit attitude of looking down on other groups.

Distancing      Heterosexual identity form related to a weak identification with any sexual category, preferring labels like being 'a normal/typical person' (Goren & Plaut, 2012). Also, a distancing heterosexual identity would be more related to a difference evasive approach toward sexual and gender diversity (Knowles et al., 2014; Smith & Shin, 2014).

Identity markers to look at:

- a. Response to ingroup threat: *Distancing* from being spotted as heterosexual, multiple ways of doing so may be employed.

- b. Overt identity signalisation: Identification with overarching categories or rejecting any group designation by virtue of looking at themselves as individuals.
- Power-cognisance<sup>1</sup> Heterosexual identity strategy that blends awareness of privilege with acknowledgement of heterosexual status, which relates to pro-diversity attitudes (Goren & Plaut, 2012).

Identity markers to look at:

- a. Response to ingroup threat: *Dismantling*, which involves recognising privilege.
- b. Overt identity signalisation: Calling themselves as heterosexual when they are asked about their sexual orientation. Also, they could pinpoint their heterosexual upbringing and background.

### Cisgender Identity Strategies

- Defence Cisgender identity strategy associated with defending cisgender dominant status and anti-diversity attitudes (Goren & Plaut, 2012; Morgan & Davis-Delano, 2016; Shuman et al., 2024).

Identity markers to look at:

- a. Response to ingroup threat: *Defence of status*, this can be done in multiple ways. For example, flipping cisgender privilege into disadvantage via victimisation. Another way of defending cisgender status may be justifying its role as normative yardstick. This normalising defence of cisgender status might reflect the rationalisation of privilege and dominance.
- b. Overt identity signalisation: Longing for normality as default identity. Defence can imply more or less explicit attitude of looking down on other groups. Essentialising sex differences between women and men to rule out the existence of or pathologise transgender people is a strong signal of it.

- Distancing Cisgender identity form related to a weak identification with any gender category, preferring rather labels like being ‘a normal/typical person’ (Goren & Plaut, 2012). Also, a weakly identified cisgender identity would be more related to a difference evasive approach toward sexual orientation/gender identity diversity (Knowles et al., 2014).

Identity markers to look at:

	<div><div>a. Response to ingroup threat: <i>Distancing</i> from being spotted as cisgender, multiple ways of doing it may appear. Rejecting the label of cis- can be also a signal of distancing , especially if it is NOT associated with derogation of transgender people—as in seeing the other but not recognising the positionality from which they stand as cisgender.</div><div>b. Overt identity signalisation: Identification with overarching categories as humanity or rejecting any group designation by virtue of looking at them as individuals.</div></div>
Power-cognisance <sup>1</sup>	<div>Cisgender identity form that blends awareness of privilege with acknowledgement of cisgender status, which relates to pro-diversity attitudes (Goren &amp; Plaut, 2012).</div> <div>Identity markers to look at:<div><div>a. Response to ingroup threat: <i>Dismantling</i>, which involves recognising privilege.</div><div>b. Overt identity signalisation: Calling themselves as cisgender when they are asked about their gender identity. Also, they could pinpoint their cisgender upbringing and background.</div></div></div>
<b>Countering</b>	
Countering cisheterosexism	Attempts to counter cisgenderism and heterosexism either in public or in private.

*Note.* <sup>1</sup>Our analysis found that heterosexual power-cognisance was mostly coupled with cisgender power-cognisance. As such, we formed a composite code denoting cisheterosexual power-cognisant identity strategy. See Table S6 in Quantitative Features of the Qualitative Profiles subsection.

## **Codebook Construction and Validation**

### ***Codebook Construction***

Drawing on our theoretical framework, we sketched the codes nesting related codes in the same category. The literature review on dominant identity strategies accounted for the semantic domains of Heterosexual and Cisgender Identity Strategies (Davis-Delano & Morgan, 2016; Goren & Plaut, 2012; Knowles et al., 2014; Morgan & Davis-Delano, 2016; Shuman et al., 2024); whereas the identity-blind diversity ideologies literature in racial (Awad & Jackson, 2016; Frankenberg, 1993; Neville et al., 2013) and SOGI intergroup relations (Brownfield et al., 2018; Smith & Shin, 2014) accounted for the semantic domains of Intergroup Attitudinal Repertoire and Countering.

Next, in a team of two coders composed of the first and fourth co-authors, we contrasted the codebook deductively built with the narrative data. We began by freely coding significant portions of text, exploring how the codes stemming from the extant literature shed light on our data and, in turn, how the data refracted our theoretically-driven codebook. We utilised *meaningful units of analysis* rather than a predetermined textual length or linguistic form. As a result, finer-grained descriptions emerged (see Table S2).

Then, we conducted directed-coding, namely the first author coded independently three random interviews deleting his codes but leaving the portions of the text he coded. In doing so, he unitised the portions of text proposed as the meaning units to be blindly coded by the second coder. Blind coding means that the second coder was unaware while coding of the code coder 1 utilised for the respective meaning unit. Hence, coder 2 coded the same units of text as coder 1. Directed-coding aimed at testing the codebook discriminant capability—how well coders could independently and unambiguously code text content (for a similar procedure, see Campbell et al., 2013). Once coder 2 finished, the coders' files were

merged on Atlas.ti and the resulting codes were compared and discussed between the two researchers.

### ***Codebook Validation***

The validation consisted in, first, assessing an intercoder agreement before discussion and, upon discussing discrepancies, reassessing intercoder agreement. Intercoder agreement—the extent to which the coders operating independently of each other selected the same code for the same unit of text—was assessed employing directed-coding led by the first author on three new random interviews. An index per code was calculated via the percentage of overlap between the coders (see Table S3, first column Intercoder Agreement). Intercoder agreement showed from low (41,66 %) to excellent (100%) indices.

Next, the intercoder agreement was assessed again after discussing between the coders over their discrepancies with three possible results: 1. holding up the discrepancy, 2. reaching consensus in favor of any of the codes at stake, and 3. selecting a new code that attained more consensus. Then, a second intercoder agreement index was calculated again via the percentage of overlap between coders (see Table S3, second column Intercoder Agreement). All codes attained very high intercoder agreement indices (75% - 100%). Once the codebook was validated, we deployed it on the complete data set.

**Table S3***Intercoder Agreement Indices Before and After Discussion*

<b>Semantic domain</b> Code	Proportion overlap <sup>a</sup>	Intercoder agreement <sup>b</sup>	Proportion overlap	Intercoder agreement <sup>b</sup>
<b>Heterosexual identity strategies</b>				
Defence	-	-	1/1	100 <sup>c</sup>
Distancing	1/2	50	3/4	75
Power-cognisant	-	-	-	-
<b>Cisgender identity strategies</b>				
Defence	1/1	100	2/2	100
Distancing	-	-	-	-
Power-cognisant	-	-	-	-
<b>Intergroup Repertoire</b>				
Difference evasion	5/12	41,66	4/4	100
Inequality evasion	6/12	50	13/13	100
Difference cognisance	2/4	50	2/2	75
Inequality cognisance	1/1	100	1/1	100
<b>Countering inequality</b>	1/1	100	1/1	100
Total estimates before discussion	17/34 50%	Total estimates after discussion	27/29 93.10%	

*Note.* <sup>a</sup> Sheer proportion. <sup>b</sup> Basis of calculation: overlap between the two coders divided by total number of meaning units coded. <sup>c</sup> Upon discussion, meaning units were recoded using codes not considered before.



**Quantitative Features of the Qualitative Profiles****Table S4**

*Frequency of Coding Difference and Inequality Evasion as a Function of Profile*

	Defenders	Evaders	Acknowledgers	Total
Participants	7	7	6	20
Difference Evasion	28 (4)	28 (4)	11 (1.83)	67 (3.35)
Inequality Evasion	51 (7.28)	25 (3.57)	3 (.5)	79 (3.95)
Totals	79	53	14	146

*Note.* Values in brackets denote averages per transcript.

**Table S5**

*Frequency of Coding Difference and Inequality Cognisance as a Function of Profile*

	Defenders	Evaders	Acknowledgers	Total
Participants	7	7	6	20
Difference Cognisance	0	1 (.14)	7 (1.16)	8 (.4)
Inequality Cognisance	5 (.71)	11 (1.57)	26 (4.33)	42 (2.1)
Totals	5	12	33	50

*Note.* Values in brackets denote averages per transcript.

**Table S6***Frequency of Identity Strategies Codes as a Function of Profile*

	Defenders	Evaders	Acknowledgers	Total
Participants	7	7	6	20
Defence Cisgender	4 (.57)	1 (.14)	0	5 (.25)
Defence Heterosexual	5 (.71)	4 (.57)	0	9 (.45)
Distancing Cisgender	14 (2.14)	7 (1)	1 (.17)	22 (1.1)
Distancing Heterosexual	20 (2.85)	10 (1.43)	12 (2)	42 (2.1)
Power Cognisant Cishet	1 (.14)	10 (1.43)	35 (5.83)	46 (2.3)
Totals	44	32	48	124

*Note.* Values in brackets denote averages per transcript.

**Table S7***Participants as a Function of Profile, Political Orientation, and Birth Cohort*

Profile	Left-wing (1 – 4)	Centre (5 – 7)	Right-wing (8 – 11)	Birth Cohort
Defenders	Will (M, W)	Floortje (F, W)		1945-1964
		Amy (F, BIPOC)	Hans (M, W)	1965 – 1984
		Kevin (M, W)	Barend (M, W) Emanuel (M, BIPOC)	1985 – 2003
Evaders	Adam (M, W)		Daan (M, W) Wilma (F, W)	1945-1964
	Rosemarijn (F, W) Veerle (F, BIPOC)		John (M, W)	1965 – 1984
	Patrick (M, BIPOC)			1985 – 2003
				1945-1964
Acknowledgers	Claire (F, W) Marcus (M, W) Emma (F, W)	Jasper (M, W) Thea (F, W)		1965 – 1984
		Pieter (M, W)		1985 – 2003

*Note.* F stands for female and M stands for Male. BIPOC stands for Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour and W stands for White.

## Study 2

Drawing on social psychology standards of construct validation (Flake et al., 2017), we validated our measures of difference and inequality evasion and cisheterosexual identity strategies by conducting three consecutive phases. First, we conducted a substantive phase of scale construction (i.e., by ensuring that our measures were addressing what we conceptually aimed for). Secondly, we conducted a structural phase of scale construction (i.e., by assessing whether our measures were empirically distinct from extant scales and psychometrically reliable). Note that this phase resulted in narrowing down power evasion into inequality evasion. Lastly, we conducted an external phase of scale construction (i.e., by examining whether our measures covaried in theoretically sounding ways with established measures).

The Structural and External phases of construct validation were conducted using two independent samples. Upon validating our measures, these two samples were pulled together to conduct the Latent Profile Analysis presented in Study 2 in the Main Manuscript. We hereby report the Substantive, Structural, and External validation phases implemented. Each subsection begins by the difference and inequality evasion (i.e., initially power evasion) scales, followed up by the cisheterosexual identity strategies scale.

### Constructs Validation Substantive Phase: Item Generation

#### *Difference Evasion and Power Evasion Scales*

**Item Generation.** Drawing on our qualitative findings and prior research (Brownfield et al., 2018; Knowles et al., 2009; Smith & Shin, 2014), we designed five items to capture difference evasion and power evasion, respectively. Also, we created additional five items capturing procedural blindfolding (i.e., by explicitly endorsing difference evasion as a means for equality attainment). This third factor was not utilised further in the Structural and External Phases of Construct Validation since it did not meet the followed content validation

standards (Rubio et al., 2003). See Table S8 for the final set of items upon implementing Panel of Experts suggestions.

### **Study S1: Panel of Experts Assessment**

#### ***Procedure and Measures***

Drawing on Rubio et al., (2003) procedure, we recruited six Social Psychology researchers fluent in Dutch with quantitative expertise in intergroup relations research. We asked them to assess an initial version of our scales. We described them the study procedure, the scale intent, and defined each proposed factor. Then, experts were asked to establish for each item (1) to what described factor it corresponded (i.e., factoriality), (2) how well the item reflected the respective factor (i.e., representativeness), and (3) how clear the item was (i.e., clarity). Experts' scores on representativeness and clarity were measured by using scales ranging from 1 - *item is not representative/clear*, 2 - *item needs major revision to be representative/clear*, 3 - *item needs minor revision to be representative/clear*, and 4 - *item is very representative/clear*. Also, experts were asked to provide written suggestions to improve each item regarding its representativeness and clarity.

Next, we calculated for each item a factorial validity index (FVI), a content validity index (CVI), and an intercoder agreement index for clarity (IAC). FVI was calculated by summing up the number of experts who correctly associated the item with the intended factor and then divided by the total number of experts. CVI and IAC were calculated by counting the number of experts who rated the item as 3 - *item needs minor revisions to be representative/clear* or 4 - *item is highly representative/clear* and then dividing by the total number of experts. These calculations resulted in the proportion of experts who deemed the item content valid by yielding the CVI (i.e., items' representativeness score) and clear by yielding the IAC (i.e., items' clarity score). Subsequently, a CVI and an IAC for each factor were estimated by calculating the average CVI and IAC across the respective factor's items.

Lastly, we revised experts' written suggestions to improve each item and implemented changes accordingly. See Table S8 for resulting FVI, CVI, and IAC per item and factor.

### Results

Overall, experts correctly assigned items to their intended factors, suggesting initial evidence of the scale factorial validity ( $FVI_{\text{Difference evasion}} = .86$ ;  $FVI_{\text{Power evasion}} = .76$ ;  $FVI_{\text{Procedural blindfolding}} = .76$ ). Also, experts assessed difference and power evasion items as highly representative of the intended factors, providing evidence of their content validity ( $CVI_{\text{Difference evasion}} = .86$ ;  $CVI_{\text{Power evasion}} = .76$ ). Although experts assessment of procedural blindfolding items representativeness (CVI from .66 to 1) were in general acceptable according to traditional benchmarks (Rubio et al., 2003), item 11 was deemed poorly representative ( $CVI = .33$ ). Consequently, procedural blindfolding CVI resulted below the recommended benchmark ( $\sim .8$ ). Lastly, experts adjudicated factors' items to be very clear ( $IAC_{\text{Difference evasion}} = .96$ ;  $IAC_{\text{Power evasion}} = .9$ ;  $IAC_{\text{Procedural blindfolding}} = .76$ ).

**Table S8**

*Panel of Experts' Assessment of Difference Evasion and Power Evasion Scales' Items Factoriality, Representativeness, and Clarity*

	FVI	CVI	IAC
1. People lose their individuality when they put labels on their sexual orientation and gender identity.	.66	1	1
2. Sexual orientation and gender identity labels make people forget that we are all unique individuals.	.83	.83	.83
3. Lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender are labels that keep LHTB+ people from thinking as individuals.	1	.83	1
4. I don't see heterosexual people, gay people or transgender people, just people.	.83	1	1
5. People who focus a lot on sexual orientation and gender identity forget that we are all just people.	1	1	1
<i>Difference Evasion Factor</i>	.86	.86	.96

6. Being part of a sexual or gender identity minority can mean fewer opportunities at school, at work and in society.	.50	1	1
7. Inequality against LGBTQ people may have been a problem in the past, but it is not a common problem today.	.83	.83	.83
8. Discrimination against LGBTQ people only occurs occasionally in my country and only driven by specific individuals.	1	.83	.83
9. Compared to cisgender and heterosexual people, LGBTQ people have equal opportunities for employment, on-the-job training and promotion.	.67	.83	1
10. There is sufficient legislation in the Netherlands to protect LGBTQ persons from inequality based on sexual orientation and gender identity.	.67	.83	.83
<i>Power Evasion Factor</i>	.73	.87	.90
11. We need to look at people as individuals, not as groups based on sexual orientation and gender identity, to achieve equality for all.	<b>.5</b>	<b>.33</b>	<b>.66</b>
12. By valuing individuals beyond their sexual orientation and gender identity, the Netherlands promotes greater equality.	.83	<b>.66</b>	<b>.66</b>
13. Paying attention to our differences based on sexual orientation and gender identity will not lead us to a more egalitarian society.	.83	.83	.83
14. We can only achieve equality for LGBTQ people by paying attention to what we have in common.	<b>.66</b>	<b>.66</b>	.83
15. We can only prevent inequality against LGBTQ people by focusing on what we have in common rather than in our differences.	1	1	1
<i>Procedural Blindfolding Factor</i>	.76	.7	.76

*Note.* FVI stands for Factorial Validity Index. CVI stands for Content Validity Index. IAC stands for Interrater Agreement Index on Clarity. Bold values do not meet established criteria.

### *Cisheterosexual Identity Strategies Scale*

**Item Generation.** Drawing on our qualitative findings and prior research (Davis-Delano & Morgan, 2016; Goren & Plaut, 2012; Knowles et al., 2014), we designed items to capture the cisheterosexual strategies of defence, distancing, and power-cognisance. We

designed four items per identity strategy, more than the recommended minimum of three per factor (Marsh et al., 1998). For full list of items, see Table S9.

**Table S9**

*Initial Cisheterosexual Identity Strategies Scale's Items*

Identity strategy	Items
Defence	I think that we as cisheterosexuals, we have a right to defend our lifestyle.
	I think we as normal people have the right to defend our lifestyle.
	I was born male or female, two biological realities that cannot be changed by feeling like a different gender.
	We should defend our lifestyle because it is normal, regardless of issues like sexual orientation or gender identity.
Distancing	I prefer to see myself as a normal person rather than a cisheterosexual person.
	I am just a normal human being, not my sexual orientation or gender identity.
	When it comes to discussion, I strive to stand as an individual, separate from any group interest.
	I see myself as an individual with a neutral view on things rather than a so-called cisheterosexual person.
Power-cognisance	My position on the social ladder is partly due to being cisheterosexual.
	We as cisheterosexuals have certain advantages in society because of our sexual orientation and gender identity.
	I actively reflect on the impact of my privileges as a cisheterosexual person on my interactions.
	I think critically about how my position as a cisheterosexual inevitably affects my interactions with others.



### **Constructs Validation Structural Phase 1: Exploratory Factor Analyses**

In Study S2, we assessed the resulting difference and inequality evasion and cisheterosexual identity strategies scales' factor structures conducting exploratory factor analyses—EFA—. Along with the proposed constructs, we administered several adaptations of established measures in the field such modern anti-LGBTQ prejudice (Morrison & Morrison, 2003), among others. In doing so, we aimed to assess (1) whether and how these were distinct from meaningfully related ones and (2) to examine difference and inequality evasion and cisheterosexual identity strategies scales external validity (i.e., correlations). The current section will address the EFAs aiming to assess our constructs' structure and whether they are empirically distinct from established measures.

### **Method**

#### **Participants**

Three-hundred and fifteen participants were recruited through Prolific. Four participants did not pass the quality check item. Also, twenty participants self-identified otherwise than cisheterosexual. Consequently, our final sample amounted to two-hundred ninety one self-identified cisheterosexual participants living in the Netherlands who were fluent in Dutch (37.8 % cis women). Their ages ranged from 18 to 74 years old ( $M = 30.82$ ,  $SD = 9.56$ ), and 80.7% identified as *Blank* or *Wit* (i.e., white in Dutch). Their political orientations ranged from left (1) to right (9) ( $M = 4.63$ ,  $SD = 2.11$ ).

#### **Measures**

Participants indicated their agreement with statements on 9-point scales ranging from “1-Strongly disagree” to “9-Strongly agree”. Higher scores indicate higher endorsement on the respective construct. Participants' scores were computed by summing their scores across the respective construct's items and dividing by its total number.

As mentioned, we administered the resulting difference evasion (five items) and power evasion (five items) as displayed in Table S8. Also, we administered the resulting cisheterosexual identity strategies scale (twelve items) as displayed in Table S9.

Seeking to assess whether difference and inequality evasion were empirically distinct from related established measures, on the one hand, we administered scales of contemporaneous attitudes toward LGBTQ people, such as modern anti-LGBTQ prejudice, twelve items (e.g., “LGBTQ people should stop complaining about the way they are treated in society and just get on with their lives.”;  $\alpha : .95$ ) (adapted from the modern homonegativity scale, Morrison & Morrison, 2003), and amnesic cisheterosexism, four items (e.g., “Discrimination against LGBTQ people is virtually non-existent in today's Dutch society.”;  $\alpha : .91$ ) (adapted from the amnesic heterosexism subscale, Walls, 2008).

Seeking to assess whether cisheterosexual identity strategies were empirically distinct from related established measures, on the other hand, we measured acknowledgement of cisheterosexual privilege, four items (e.g., “Cisheterosexual people have it easier than LGBTQ people.”;  $\alpha : .91$ ) (adapted from the heterosexual privilege subscale, Brownfield et al., 2018), and cisheterosexual identity centrality, three items (e.g., “Being cisheterosexual is an important part of my identity.”;  $\alpha : .76$ ) (adapted from the identity centrality subscale, Leach et al., 2008).

Also, we administered several other measures to assess convergent and discriminant validity. These will be described later on in the External Validation subsection.

### **Procedure**

See Main Manuscript, Study 2.

### **Analytical Strategy**

We ran two different set of EFAs. Firstly, we assessed our items scales internal structure. Upon achieving robust solutions, we assessed whether the proposed measures were empirically distinct from established measures.

For each EFA, we submitted the items using principal axis factoring with *promax* rotation—since we anticipated the resulting factors to correlate. The factorability of the data was verified with the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy (Kayser & Rice, 1974). The number of factors was chosen by relying on scree analysis (Cattell, 1966) and parallel analysis (Horn, 1965). We assessed the adequacy of items based on their factor loadings. Guided by Tabachnick and Fidell (2014) and Child (2006), we retained items that (1) had coefficients exceeding .40 on the target factor, (2) loaded at least twice as strongly on the target factor as they did on the next highest loading factor, and (3) did not load more than .30 on multiple factors.

### **Results**

We present our results in two sections. We begin by presenting the difference evasion and inequality scales' results and then we present those concerning the cisheterosexual identity strategies scale. Each subsection begins with the EFAs assessing our scales structure and item retention, followed by the EFAs assessing whether our scales are empirically distinct from other established measures.

#### **Difference Evasion and Power Evasion Scales Analyses**

##### ***Exploratory Factor Analysis***

The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) sampling adequacy test indicated that the data were well-suited for factor analysis (KMO = .86). Scree test (Cattell, 1966) and parallel analysis (Horn, 1965) indicated a two-factor solution (see Figure S1).

Next, we assessed item retention based on their factor loadings. Table S10 shows the pattern coefficients resulting from the first EFA. As such, Item 4 did not meet our retention criteria ( $\lambda = .33$ ). We ran a second EFA on the remaining items meeting our criteria. Table S11 shows the pattern coefficients for the 9 items from the second iteration. These two final factors accounted for 55% of the variance, with difference evasion (four items) explaining 27%, and power evasion (five items) explaining 28%. Internal consistency reliability was deemed excellent for each subscale (both  $\alpha s > 0.80$ ; see Table S11).

**Table S10**

*Summary of EFA First Iteration (N = 291)*

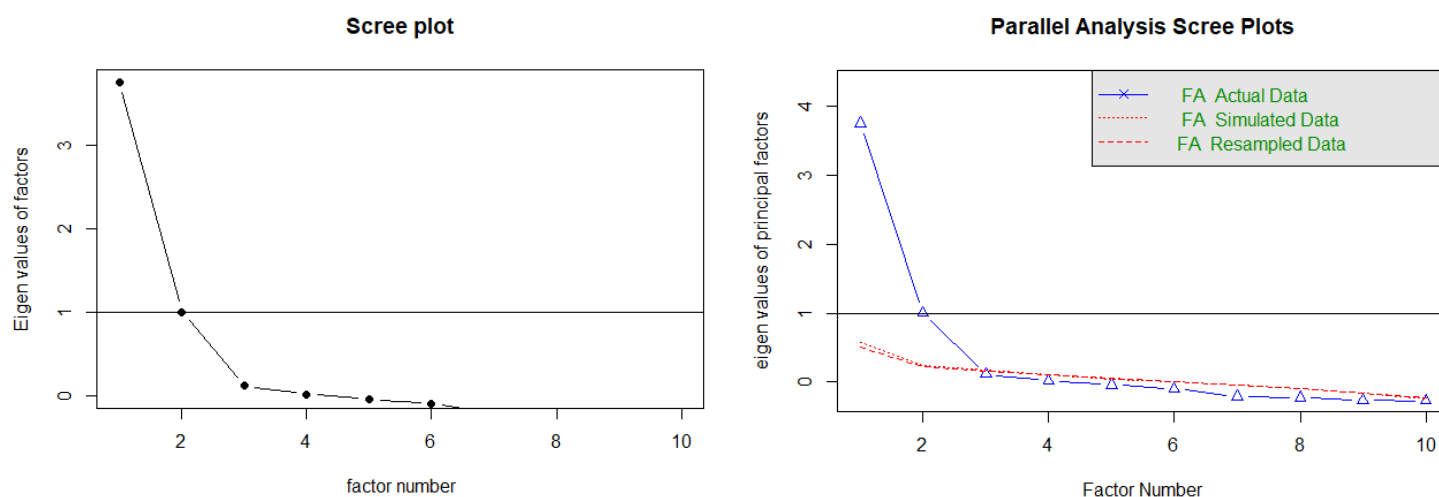
	Difference evasion	Power evasion
1. Sexual orientation and gender identity labels make people forget that we are all unique individuals.	<b>.87</b>	.01
2. People lose their individuality when they put labels on their sexual orientation and gender identity.	<b>.76</b>	.00
3. Lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender are labels that keep LGBTQ people from thinking as individuals.	<b>.69</b>	.10
5. People who focus a lot on sexual orientation and gender identity forget that we are all just people.	<b>.62</b>	.21
<i>4. I don't see heterosexual people, gay people or transgender people, just people.</i>	<b>.33</b>	-.09
6. Being part of a sexual or gender identity minority can mean having fewer opportunities at school, at work and in society.	-.08	<b>.78</b>
7. Inequality against LGBTQ people may have been a problem in the past, but it is not a common problem today.	.03	<b>.76</b>
8. Compared to cisgender and straight people, LGBTQ people have equal opportunities for employment, on-the-job training and promotion.	-.01	<b>.71</b>
9. Discrimination against LGBTQ people only occurs occasionally in my country and only driven by specific individuals.	-.05	<b>.65</b>
10. There is sufficient legislation in the Netherlands to protect LGBTQ people from inequality based on sexual orientation and gender identity.	.11	<b>.64</b>

*Note.* Bold values indicate item loadings on target factor. Item in *italics* does not meet the established retention criteria and therefore was dropped.

**Table S11***Summary of EFA Second Iteration (N = 291)*

	Difference evasion ( $\alpha = .86$ )	Power evasion ( $\alpha = .83$ )
1. Sexual orientation and gender identity labels make people forget that we are all unique individuals.	<b>.91</b>	-.07
2. People lose their individuality when they put labels on their sexual orientation and gender identity.	<b>.79</b>	-.07
3. Lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender are labels that keep LGTBQ people from thinking as individuals.	<b>.74</b>	.03
4. People who focus a lot on sexual orientation and gender identity forget that we are all just people.	<b>.65</b>	.16
5. Being part of a sexual or gender identity minority can mean having fewer opportunities at school, at work and in society.	-.07	<b>.78</b>
6. Inequality against LGBTQ people may have been a problem in the past, but it is not a common problem today.	.05	<b>.74</b>
7. Compared to cisgender and straight people, LGBTQ people have equal opportunities for employment, on-the-job training and promotion.	-.01	<b>.71</b>
8. Discrimination against LGBTQ people only occurs occasionally in my country and only driven by specific individuals.	-.05	<b>.65</b>
9. There is sufficient legislation in the Netherlands to protect LGBTQ people from inequality based on sexual orientation and gender identity.	.12	<b>.62</b>

*Note.* Bold values indicate item loadings on target factors. Factors' correlation was .54

**Figure S1**

In assessing whether difference evasion and inequality evasion were empirically distinct from theoretically related and established constructs, we conducted EFAs on the resulting scales as displayed in Table S11 along with modern anti-LGBTQ prejudice (adapted from modern homonegativity scale, Morrison & Morrison, 2003) and amnesic cisheterosexism (adapted from amnesic heterosexism subdimension scale, Walls, 2008).

### ***EFA along with related constructs***

The KMO sampling adequacy test indicated that the data were well-suited for factor analysis ( $KMO = .96$ ). We submitted the resulting constructs of difference evasion, four items, and power evasion, five items, as displayed in Table S11. In addition, we submitted the modern anti-LGBTQ prejudice scale, twelve items (Morrison & Morrison, 2003), and the amnesic cisheterosexism scale, four items (Walls, 2008). Scree test (Cattell, 1966) and parallel analysis (Horn, 1965) indicated a three-factor solution (see Figure S2).

In examining whether and how the constructs were empirically distinct, we assessed item retention based on their factor loadings. We followed the same criteria indicated before: (1) items loading exceeding .40 on the target factor, (2) loaded at least twice as strongly on the target factor as on the next highest loading factor, and (3) did not load more than .30 on

multiple factors (Child, 2006; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2014). Table S12 shows the pattern coefficients for the twenty-five items from the first iteration. The three-final factors accounted for 62% of the total variance, with difference evasion (four items) loading on an independent factor and explaining 10%, power evasion (five items) loading together with amnesic cisheterosexism (four items) on an independent factor explaining 22%, and lastly, modern anti-LGBTQ prejudice items loaded on an independent factor, accounting for 30%.

**Table S12**

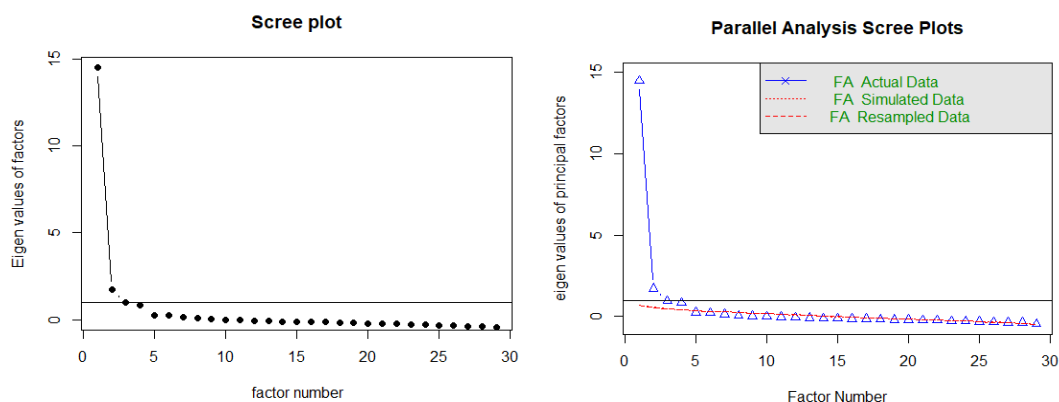
*Summary of EFA First Iteration of the Difference and Inequality Evasion Scales and Related Constructs (N = 291)*

		Difference evasion	Power evasion & Amnesic cisheterosexism	Modern anti- LGBTQ prejudice
Difference evasion	1. People lose their individuality when they put labels on their sexual orientation and gender identity.	<b>.75</b>	-.11	.08
	2. Sexual orientation and gender identity labels make people forget that we are all unique individuals.	<b>.96</b>	.02	-.15
	3. Lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender are labels that keep LGTBQ people from thinking as individuals.	<b>.62</b>	-.01	.20
	4. People who focus a lot on sexual orientation and gender identity forget that we are all just people.	<b>.66</b>	.11	.05
Power evasion	5. Being part of a sexual or gender identity minority can mean having fewer opportunities at school, at work and in society.	-.04	<b>.56</b>	.17
	6. Inequality against LGBTQ people may have been a problem in the past, but it is not a common problem today.	.01	<b>.77</b>	.08
	7. Discrimination against LGBTQ people only occurs occasionally in my country and only driven by specific individuals.	-.02	<b>.56</b>	.06
	8. Compared to cisgender and straight people, LGBTQ people have equal opportunities for employment, on-the-job training and promotion.	.12	<b>.62</b>	-.08
	9. There is sufficient legislation in the Netherlands to protect LGBTQ people from inequality based on sexual orientation and gender identity.	.16	<b>.42</b>	.15
Amnesic cisheterosexism	10. Discrimination against LGBTQ people is virtually non-existent in today's Dutch society.	-.14	<b>.96</b>	.01
	11. Most Dutch people treat LGBTQ people as fairly as anyone else.	.11	<b>.82</b>	-.18
	12. LGBTQ people are treated as fairly as anyone else in today's Dutch society.	.05	<b>.82</b>	.02
	13. LGBTQ people are no longer discriminated against in the Netherlands.	-.16	<b>.90</b>	.07
Modern anti-LGBTQ	14. Many LGBTQ people use their sexual orientation to gain special privileges.	.02	.13	<b>.72</b>
	15. LGBTQ people seem to focus on the ways in which they are different from cisheterosexuals and ignore the ways in which they are the same.	.14	-.12	<b>.77</b>

16. LGBTQ people do not have all the rights they need.	.04	.33	<b>.48</b>
17. The idea of universities giving students degrees in LGBTQ studies is ridiculous.	.04	-.05	<b>.75</b>
18. Celebrations like "LGBTQ Pride Day" are ridiculous because they assume that one's sexual orientation and gender identity should be a source of pride.	.03	.01	<b>.73</b>
19. LGBTQ people still need to protest for equal rights.	.01	.37	<b>.48</b>
20. LGBTQ people should stop shoving their lifestyle down the throats of others.	-.04	-.05	<b>.98</b>
21. If LGBTQ people want to be treated like everyone else, they should stop making such a fuss about their sexuality/culture.	.10	.00	<b>.84</b>
22. LGBTQ people who are "out of the closet" should be admired for their courage.	-.06	.11	<b>.47</b>
23. LGBTQ people should stop complaining about the way they are treated in society and just get on with their lives.	-.02	.12	<b>.83</b>
24. In the current difficult economic times, the tax money of Dutch people should not be used to support organisations of LGBTQ people.	-.06	.10	<b>.81</b>
25. LGBTQ people have become far too confrontational in their demand for equal rights.	-.01	-.05	<b>.89</b>

*Note.* Bold values indicate item loadings on target factors. Correlations between Factor 1 and Factor 2 was .51, between Factor 1 and Factor 3 was .64, and between Factor 2 and Factor 3 was .74.

**Figure S2**



The resulting factoriality showed that our novel measure of power evasion was empirically undistinguishable from the established measure of amnesic cisheterosexism. As such, for the next EFA iteration, we narrowed down our approach and ran an additional EFA only on these two scales' items. The KMO sampling adequacy test indicated that the data were well-suited for factor analysis (KMO = .91). Parallel analysis (Horn, 1965) indicated a three-factor solution (see Figure S3). Table S13 shows the pattern coefficients for the nine



items. The three-final factors accounted for 66% of the total variance. The items adjudicating anti-LGBTQ discrimination as pertaining to the past loaded on an independent factor (i.e., Temporal Evasion factor). Items conveying evasion of inequalities loaded together on a second independent factor (i.e., Inequality Evasion factor). Lastly, items displaying evasion of discrimination by stressing equal treatment loaded together on a third independent factor (i.e., Discrimination Evasion factor). As such, Item 9 did not meet the criteria to be retained ( $\lambda < .40$ ).

### **Discussion**

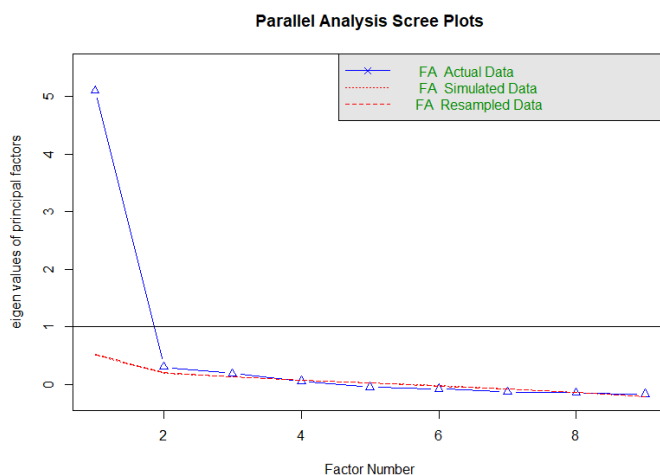
In light of these results, we decided to narrow down the construct originally meant to tap into power evasion broadly construed into one more conceptually precise tapping into inequality evasion. We did so considering that the resulting Inequality Evasion factor was the closest to our research questions and the only exclusively encompassing items from our newly-devised measure, content validated by the Panel of Experts (see Table S8, Items 6 to 10). At the same time, none of the items from the adapted measure of amnesic cisheterosexism scale loaded onto the Inequality Evasion factor—giving further credence of inequality evasion empirical distinguishability from established measures.

**Table S13**

*Summary of EFA Results Between Power Evasion Items and Amnesic Cisheterosexism Items (N = 291)*

	Temporal evasion ( $\alpha = .72$ )	Inequality evasion ( $\alpha = .76$ )	Discrimination evasion ( $\alpha = .87$ )
1. <i>LGBTQ people are no longer discriminated against in the Netherlands.</i>	<b>.97</b>	-.05	-.01
2. <i>Discrimination against LGBTQ people is virtually non-existent in today's Dutch society.</i>	<b>.84</b>	-.03	.13
3. Inequality against LGBTQ people may have been a problem in the past, but it is no longer a common problem today.	<b>.61</b>	.30	-.03
4. Compared to cisgender and heterosexual people, LGBTQ people have equal opportunities for employment, on-the-job training and promotion.	-.01	<b>.78</b>	-.04
5. Being part of a sexual or gender identity minority can mean having fewer opportunities at school, at work and in society. (reversed)	.10	<b>.68</b>	-.02
6. There is sufficient legislation in the Netherlands to protect LGBTQ persons from inequality based on sexual orientation and gender identity.	-.08	<b>.62</b>	.16
7. <i>Most Dutch people treat LGBTQ people as fairly as anyone else.</i>	-.02	.08	<b>.79</b>
8. <i>LGBTQ people are treated as fairly as anyone else in today's Dutch society.</i>	.18	.01	<b>.78</b>
9. Discrimination against LHBQT persons occurs in my country only sometimes and only driven by specific individuals.	.20	.37	.09

*Note.* Bold values indicate item loadings on target factors. Amnesic cisheterosexism scale items are in *italics*. Correlation between Factor 1 and Factor 2 was .76, between Factor 1 and Factor 3 was .75, and between Factor 2 and Factor 3 was .76.

**Figure S3**

## Cisheterosexual Identity Strategies Scale Analyses

### *Exploratory Factor Analysis*

The KMO sampling adequacy test indicated that the data were well-suited for factor analysis ( $KMO = .84$ ). We submitted the twelve items of the cisheterosexual identity strategies scale as displayed in Table S6. We used principal axis factoring with Promax rotation, using an oblique rotation since we expected the factors to correlate. We followed best practices for evaluating factor structure (Courtney, 2013) by ascertaining the number of factors that most parsimoniously summarised the data at hand by conducting scree test (Cattell, 1966) and parallel analysis (Horn, 1965). These tests indicated a three-factor solution (see Figure S4).

Next, we assessed item retention based on their factor loadings. We followed the same criteria as before by retaining items that (1) had coefficients exceeding .40 on the target factor, (2) loaded at least twice as strongly on the target factor as on the next highest loading factor, and (3) did not load more than .30 on multiple factors (Child, 2006; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2014). Table S14 shows the pattern coefficients for the twelve items from the first iteration. Item 4 did not meet our retention criteria ( $\lambda = .27$ ).

Subsequently, we ran a second iteration on the remaining eleven items meeting our criteria. Table S15 shows the resulting pattern coefficients. The three final factors accounted

for 59% of the total variance, with defence (three items) explaining 19%, distancing (four items) explaining 19%, and power-cognisance (four items) explaining 21%. Internal consistency reliability was excellent for each subscale ( $\alpha > 0.80$ ; see Table S15).

**Table S14***Summary of EFA First Iteration (N = 291)*

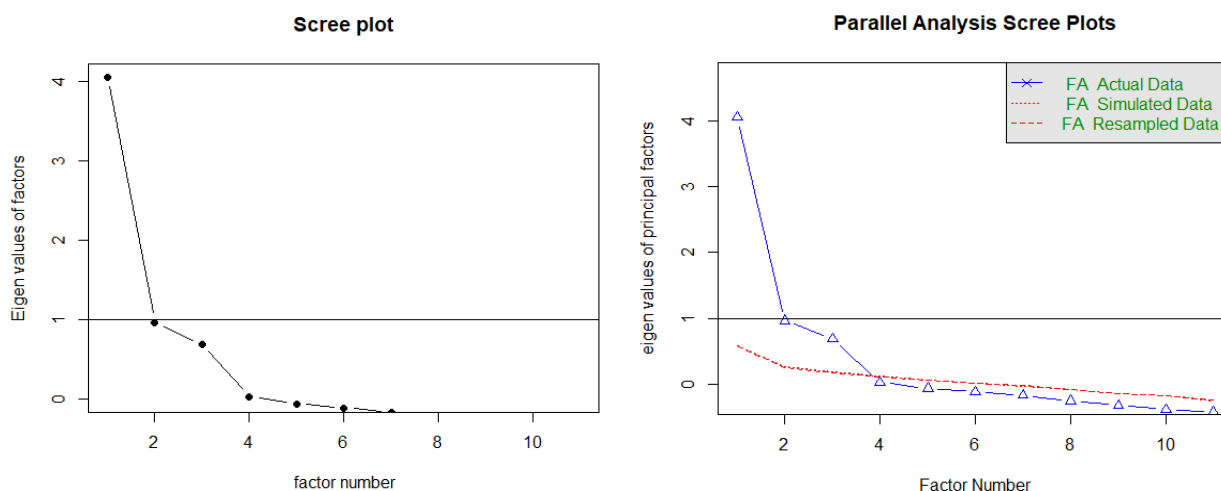
	Defence	Distancing	Power-cognisance
1. I think we as normal people have the right to defend our lifestyle.	<b>1</b>	-.07	.09
2. We must defend our lifestyle because it is normal, regardless of issues such as sexual orientation or gender identity.	<b>.77</b>	-.05	.03
3. I think we cisheterosexuals have the right to defend our lifestyle.	<b>.74</b>	.05	.03
4. <i>I was born male or female, two biological realities that cannot be changed by feeling like a different gender.</i>	<b>.27</b>	.20	-.26
5. I see myself as an individual with a neutral view on things rather than a so-called cisheterosexual person.	-.15	<b>.86</b>	.01
6. I am just a normal human being, not my sexual orientation or gender identity.	-.07	<b>.85</b>	.00
7. I see myself as a normal person rather than as a cisheterosexual person.	.21	<b>.63</b>	.07
8. When it comes to discussion, I strive to stand as an individual, independent of any group interest.	.06	<b>.51</b>	-.03
9. I think critically about how my position as a cisheterosexual inevitably affects my interactions with others.	.20	.01	<b>.95</b>
10. I actively reflect on the impact of my privileges as a cisheterosexual person on my interactions.	.16	-.05	<b>.92</b>
11. My position on the social ladder is partly due to being cisheterosexual.	-.11	.01	<b>.63</b>
12. As cisheterosexuals, we have certain advantages in society because of our sexual orientation and gender identity.	-.21	.07	<b>.54</b>

*Note.* Bold values indicate item loadings on target factors. Items in *italics* do not meet the established retention criteria.

**Table S15***Summary of EFA Second Iteration (N = 291)*

	Defence ( $\alpha = .84$ )	Distancing ( $\alpha = .80$ )	Power- cognisance ( $\alpha = .84$ )
1. I think we as normal people have the right to defend our lifestyle.	<b>1</b>	-.07	.06
2. We must defend our lifestyle because it is normal, regardless of issues such as sexual orientation or gender identity.	<b>.73</b>	-.02	.00
3. I think we cisheterosexuals have the right to defend our lifestyle.	<b>.69</b>	.08	.00
4. I am just a normal human being, not my sexual orientation or gender identity.	-.07	<b>.85</b>	-.02
5. I see myself as an individual with a neutral view on things rather than a so-called cisheterosexual person.	-.12	<b>.83</b>	.00
6. I see myself as a normal person rather than as a cisheterosexual person.	.21	<b>.62</b>	.05
7. When it comes to discussion, I strive to stand as an individual, independent of any group interest.	.07	<b>.49</b>	-.04
8. I think critically about how my position as a cisheterosexual inevitably affects my interactions with others.	.17	.00	<b>.93</b>
9. I actively reflect on the impact of my privileges as a cisheterosexual person on my interactions.	.12	-.06	<b>.90</b>
10. My position on the social ladder is partly due to being cisheterosexual.	-.12	-.01	<b>.61</b>
11. As cisheterosexuals, we have certain advantages in society because of our sexual orientation and gender identity.	-.20	.04	<b>.53</b>

*Note.* Bold values indicate item loadings on target factors. Correlations between Factor 1 and Factor 2 was .56, between Factor 1 and Factor 3 was -.48, and between Factor 2 and Factor 3 was -.51.

**Figure S4**

In assessing whether and how the resulting cisheterosexual identity strategies scale was empirically distinct from established measures, we conducted an EFA on the resulting scale as displayed in Table S12 along with cisheterosexual privilege (adapted from heterosexual privilege subscale, Brownfield et al., 2018) and cisheterosexual identity centrality (adapted from the identity centrality subscale, Leach et al., 2008) scales.

#### ***EFA along with Related Constructs***

The KMO sampling adequacy test indicated that the data were well-suited for factor analysis ( $KMO = .87$ ). We submitted the resulting cishet identity strategies scale as displayed in Table S12, along with cisheterosexual privilege, four items (e.g., “Cisheterosexual people have it easier than LGBTQ people.”;  $\alpha : .91$ ) (Brownfield et al., 2018), and cishet identity centrality, three items (e.g., “Being cisheterosexual is an important part of my identity.”;  $\alpha : .76$ ) (Leach et al., 2008). We used principal axis factoring with Promax rotation, using an oblique rotation since we expected the factors to correlate. Scree test (Cattell, 1966) and parallel analysis (Horn, 1965) indicated a four-factor solution (see Figure S5).

Next, we assessed item retention based on their factor loadings. We followed the same criteria indicated before. Table S16 shows the pattern coefficients for the eighteen items from the first EFA. The four-final factors accounted for 61% of the total variance, with

cisheterosexual privilege (four items) loading on an independent factor along with two items from power-cognisant identity strategy (Items 10 and 11 in Table S15) and explaining 22%, distancing strategy (four items) loading together with defence strategy (three items) on an independent factor explaining 17%, cishet identity centrality (three items) loading on an independent factor explaining 11%, and the remaining two items from power-cognisant identity strategy (Items 8 and 9 in Table S15), accounted for 11% of the variance.

### **Discussion**

In light of these results, we confirmed that our novel measures were empirically distinct from an existing and conceptually related ingroup identification measure (i.e., identity centrality) (Leach et al., 2008). Also, we found that distancing and defence strategies were indistinguishable when assessed along with related constructs. In other words, the difference between distancing from and defending cisheterosexual status is prone to be quantitatively blurred. As such, a finer-grained analysis specifically on cishet identity dynamics proves fruitful.

Our proposed measure of power-cognisant identity partially overlaps with an adapted cisheterosexual privilege scale derived from the established heterosexual privilege subscale (Brownfield et al., 2018). For the sake of parsimony in the field, we decided to utilise the adapted cisheterosexual privilege scale instead of our newly-devised measure.

# SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS CHAPTER 3

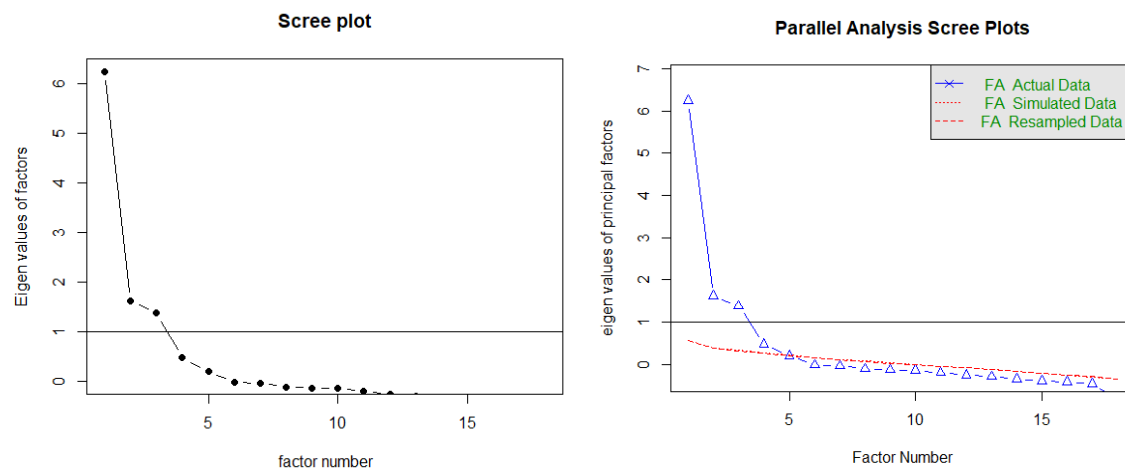
**Table S16**

*Summary of EFA Results for Cisheterosexual Identity Strategies and Related Constructs (N = 291)*

		Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4
Cisheterosexual privilege	1. Cisheterosexual people in the Netherlands have certain advantages because of their sexual orientation and gender identity.	<b>.97</b>	.07	-.01	.00
	2. Compared to LGBTQ people, cisheterosexual people have more opportunities to get a job, get training and get promoted.	<b>.82</b>	-.05	.03	.01
	3. Cisheterosexual people have it easier than LHBTQ people.	<b>.81</b>	.00	.09	-.08
	4. Dutch society promotes cisheterosexual privilege.	<b>.80</b>	.03	.07	.12
Power-cognisance	5. As cisheterosexuals, we have certain advantages in society because of our sexual orientation and gender identity.	<b>.77</b>	.03	-.03	.14
	6. My position on the social ladder is partly due to being cisheterosexual.	<b>.45</b>	-.07	.08	.34
	7. I think critically about how my position as a cisheterosexual inevitably affects my interactions with others.	.07	.06	-.26	<b>.94</b>
	8. I actively reflect on the impact of my privileges as a cisheterosexual person on my interactions.	.05	-.05	-.14	<b>.89</b>
Distancing	9. I prefer to think of myself as a normal person rather than a cisheterosexual person.	.15	<b>.76</b>	.04	-.07
	10. I am just a normal human being, not my sexual orientation or gender identity.	.14	<b>.68</b>	-.10	-.15
	11. I see myself as an individual with a neutral view on things rather than a so-called cisheterosexual person.	.15	<b>.61</b>	-.13	-.15
	12. When it comes to discussion, I strive to stand as an individual, separate from any group interest.	-.02	<b>.48</b>	-.13	-.04
Defence	13. I think we as normal people have the right to defend our lifestyle.	-.19	<b>.74</b>	.13	.18
	14. I think as cisheterosexuals, we have a right to defend our lifestyle.	-.17	<b>.67</b>	.20	.11
	15. We should defend our lifestyle because it is normal, regardless of issues like sexual orientation or gender identity.	-.20	<b>.59</b>	.11	.15
Identity centrality	16. Being cisheterosexual is an important part of my identity.	.10	.04	<b>.99</b>	-.19
	17. Being cisheterosexual is an important part of how I see myself.	.02	-.01	<b>.96</b>	-.15
	18. I often reflect on the fact that I am cisheterosexual.	.07	-.04	<b>.27</b>	.38

*Note.* Bold values indicate item loadings on target factors. Correlations between Factor 1 and Factor 2 was -.53, between Factor 1 and Factor 3 was .03, between Factor 1 and Factor 4 was .48, between Factor 2 and Factor 3 was -.08, between Factor 2 and Factor 4 was -.44, and between Factor 3 and Factor 4 was .47.



**Figure S5**

### Constructs Validation Structural Phase 2: Confirmatory Factor Analyses

Drawing on the resulting scales, we conducted Confirmatory Factor Analyses—CFA—on a second, independent sample to further assess our measures robustness and reliability.

#### Method

##### Participants

Three-hundred and ninety four participants were recruited through Cloudresearch. In preventing duplicated participation, we pre-screened Cloudresearch workers by asking them whether they worked in Prolific. One-hundred and eleven participants indicated to be Prolific workers and therefore were screened out. Also, three participants did not pass the quality check. Moreover, twenty eight participants self-identified otherwise than cisheterosexual. Our final sample amounted to two-hundred fifty three self-identified cisheterosexual participants living in the Netherlands who were fluent in Dutch (60.47 % cis women). Their ages ranged from 17 to 81 years old ( $M = 50.22$ ,  $SD = 15.84$ ), and 87.35% identified as Blank or Wit (i.e., White in Dutch). Their political orientations ranged from left (1) to right (9) ( $M = 5.52$ ,  $SD = 2.08$ ).

##### Measures

Participants indicated their agreement with statements on 9-point scales ranging from “1-Strongly disagree” to “9-Strongly agree”. Higher scores indicate higher endorsement on

the respective construct. Participants' scores were computed by summing their scores across the respective construct's items and dividing by its total number.

We administered the resulting difference evasion and inequality evasion scales as displayed in Table S17. Also, we administered the resulting cisheterosexual identity strategies scale (ten items) as displayed in Table S18.

As with Sample 1, we administered other measures to assess convergent and discriminant validity. These will be accordingly described in the subsection External Validation.

**Table S17**

*Final Items*

Difference Evasion	Inequality Evasion
1. <i>Sexual orientation and gender identity labels make people forget that we are all unique individuals.</i>	5. Compared to cisgender and heterosexual people, LGBTQ people have equal opportunities for employment, on-the-job training and promotion.
2. <i>People lose their individuality when they put labels on their sexual orientation and gender identity.</i>	6. Being part of a sexual or gender identity minority can mean having fewer opportunities at school, at work and in society. (reversed)
3. <i>Lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender are labels that keep LGTBQ people from thinking as individuals.</i>	7. There is sufficient legislation in the Netherlands to protect LGBTQ persons from

<p>4. <i>People who focus a lot on sexual orientation and gender identity forget that we are all just people.</i></p>	<hr/> <p>inequality based on sexual orientation and gender identity.</p>
---	--

Note. Items in *italics* correspond to the three-items short version scale of difference evasion.

**Table S18**

*Cisheterosexual Identity Strategies Scale Final Items*

Defence	1. I think we as normal people have the right to defend our lifestyle.
	2. I think as cisheterosexuals, we have a right to defend our lifestyle.
	3. We should defend our lifestyle because it is normal, regardless of issues like sexual orientation or gender identity.
Distancing	4. I am just a normal human being, not my sexual orientation or gender identity.
	5. I see myself as an individual with a neutral view on things rather than a so-called cisheterosexual person.
	6. When it comes to discussion, I strive to stand as an individual, separate from any group interest.
Power-cognisance	7. Cisheterosexual people in the Netherlands have certain advantages because of their sexual orientation and gender identity.
	8. Compared to LGBTQ people, cisheterosexual people have more opportunities to get a job, get training and get promoted.
	9. Cisheterosexual people have it easier than LHBQT people.
	10. Dutch society promotes cisheterosexual privilege.

**Procedure**

See Main Manuscript, Study 2.

### **Analytical Strategy**

We ran CFA using maximum likelihood estimation with robust standard errors using the *semTools* package (Jorgensen et al., 2022) for R (R Core Team, 2021). We hypothesised two-factors and three-factor as best solutions for the difference and inequality evasion and the cisgender identity strategies scales, respectively.

On the one hand, we compared the hypothesised two-factor model for the difference and inequality evasion scale to an alternative solution of a single factor model (i.e., all items loading onto one factor). In doing so, we sought to show that even though some mixture is reasonable drawing on our very qualitative findings (e.g., by people evading difference and inequality simultaneously and in varying degrees), the proposed two-factor solution distinguishing difference evasion and inequality evasion is empirically more robust.

On the other hand, we compared the hypothesised three-factor model for the cisgender identity strategies to three alternative ones: (1) a single factor model (i.e., all items loading onto one factor), 2. a two-factors model blending Defence + Distancing in contrast to Power-cognisance, and 3. a two-factors model blending Distancing + Power-cognisance in contrast to Defence. In doing so, again, we sought to show that even though some mixture is reasonable (e.g., by people defending and distancing simultaneously), the proposed three-factor solution is empirically more robust.

For the sake of completeness, we ran CFA both in the current sample (i.e., Sample 2) and in Sample 1 (i.e., used to run the Exploratory Factor Analyses).

### **Results**

We present our results in two sections, one describing the findings for the difference and inequality evasion scale, and the second one describing the findings for the cisgender identity strategies scale. Each subsection begins by presenting the respective CFA's results drawing on Sample 2, followed up by the CFA's results drawing on Sample 1.

**CFA Difference and Inequality Evasion**

Primary CFA results on difference evasion and inequality evasion scales are summarised in Table S19. The hypothesised two-factors model showed reasonable goodness of fit in Sample 2,  $\chi^2(13) = 42.07$ ,  $p < .001$ , CFI = .927; TLI = .882; RMSEA = .097, 90% CI [.065, .130]; SRMR = .061, and did it better than the closest alternative one-factor model solution,  $\chi^2(1) = 91.155$ ,  $p < .000$ . Also, all factors' loadings were significant and higher than .50 (see Figure S6). The covariance between Difference Evasion and Inequality Evasion was .46,  $p < .000$ . As for Sample 1, the hypothesised two-factors model showed excellent goodness of fit  $\chi^2(13) = 37.32$ ,  $p < .001$ , CFI = .970; TLI = .952; RMSEA = .080, 90% CI [.051, .111]; SRMR = .052, and all factor loadings were significant and higher than .50. The covariances between Difference and Inequality evasion was .53,  $p < .001$ .

Since the analysis on Sample 2 resulted in TLI and RMSEA indices slightly below and above the most exigent threshold, respectively, we elected to evaluate a three-item short version of the Difference Evasion subscale in both samples while keeping Inequality Evasion intact. In doing so, as for Sample 2, the two-factor model fitted our data and thereby yielded excellent goodness of fit,  $\chi^2(8) = 13.131$ ,  $p = .107$ , CFI = .983; TLI = .968; RMSEA = .052, 90% CI [.000, .100]; SRMR = .043, and all factors' loadings were significant and higher than .50. The covariance between Difference and Inequality Evasion was .46,  $p < .000$ . Regarding Sample 1, the two-factor model yielded robust goodness of fit,  $\chi^2(8) = 26.976$ ,  $p < .01$ , CFI = .970; TLI = .943; RMSEA = .090, 90% CI [.054, .129]; SRMR = .051, and all factors loadings were significant and higher than .60. The covariance between Difference and Inequality Evasion was .53,  $p < .001$ .

These results provide confirmatory evidence for the hypothesised factor structure of difference and inequality evasion encompassing two distinct and interrelated factors.

**CFA Cisheterosexual Identity Strategies**

Primary CFA results on cisheterosexual identity strategies scale are summarised in Table S20. The hypothesised three-factors model showed excellent goodness of fit in Sample 2,  $\chi^2(32) = 72.64$ ,  $p < .000$ , CFI = .956; TLI = .938; RMSEA = .071, 90% CI [.049, .093]; SRMR = .045, and did it better than the closest alternative two-factor model solution (Model 3, Table S20),  $\chi^2(2) = 94.722$ ,  $p < .000$ . Also, all factor loadings were significant and higher than .50 (see Figure S7). The covariance between Defence and Distancing was .48,  $p < .000$ , between Defence and Power-cognisance was -.17,  $p < .05$ , and between Distancing and Power-cognisance was -.25,  $p < .000$ .

As for Sample 1, the hypothesised three-factors model showed excellent goodness of fit  $\chi^2(32) = 50.78$ ,  $p < .05$ , CFI = .988; TLI = .983; RMSEA = .045, 90% CI [.019, .068]; SRMR = .039, and all factor loadings were significant and higher than .60. The covariances between Defence and Distancing was .47,  $p < .000$ , between Defence and Power-cognisance was -.51,  $p < .000$ , and between Distancing and Power-cognisance was -.38,  $p < .000$ .

As such, these results provide confirmatory evidence for the hypothesised three-factors model structure of the cisheterosexual identity strategies scale, denoting Defence, Distancing, and Power-cognisance.

**Table S19***Summary of CFA on Difference Evasion and Inequality Evasion*

Sample 1						Sample 2					
	Model Comparison	CFI	TLI	RMSEA	SRMR		Model Comparison	CFI	TLI	RMSEA	SRMR
1. One-factor		.808	.712	.197	.112			.700	.550	.189	.112
2. Two-factors		.970	.952	.080	.052			.927	.882	.097	.061
$\Delta$ regarding Model 1	$\chi^2(1) = 134.45$ $p < .000$						$\chi^2(1) = 91.155$ $p < .000$				
Sample 1 (Short version)						Sample 2 (Short version)					
	Model Comparison	CFI	TLI	RMSEA	SRMR		Model Comparison	CFI	TLI	RMSEA	SRMR
1. One-factor		.772	.620	.234	.114			.704	.506	.202	.108
2. Two-factors		.970	.943	.090	.051			.983	.968	.052	.043
$\Delta$ regarding Model 1	$\chi^2(1) = 125.34$ $p < .000$						$\chi^2(1) = 83.69$ $p < .000$				

**Table S20**

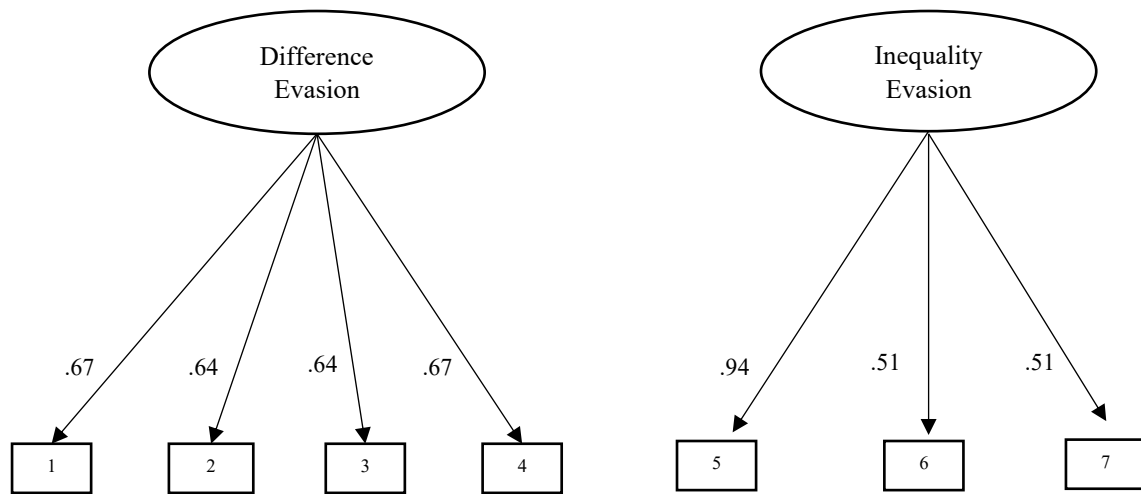
*Summary of CFA on Final Cisheterosexual Identity Strategies Scale*

Sample 1						Sample 2				
	Model Comparison	CFI	TLI	RMSEA	SRMR	Model Comparison	CFI	TLI	RMSEA	SRMR
1. One-factor		.690	.601	.219	.145		.427	.263	.245	.186
2. Two-factors (Distancing + Power)		.857	.811	.151	.120		.777	.705	.155	.139
Δ regarding Model 1	$\chi^2(1) = 261.43$ $p < .000$					$\chi^2(1) = 323.35$ $p < .000$				
3. Two-factors (Defence + Distancing)		.886	.849	.135	.089		.855	.808	.125	.084
Δ regarding Model 1	$\chi^2(1) = 306.16$ $p < .000$					$\chi^2(1) = 394.92$ $p < .000$				
4. Three-factors (Hypothesised)		.988	.983	.045	.039		.956	.938	.071	.045
Δ regarding Model 3	$\chi^2(2) = 161.06$ $p < .000$					$\chi^2(2) = 94.72$ $p < .000$				



**Figure S6**

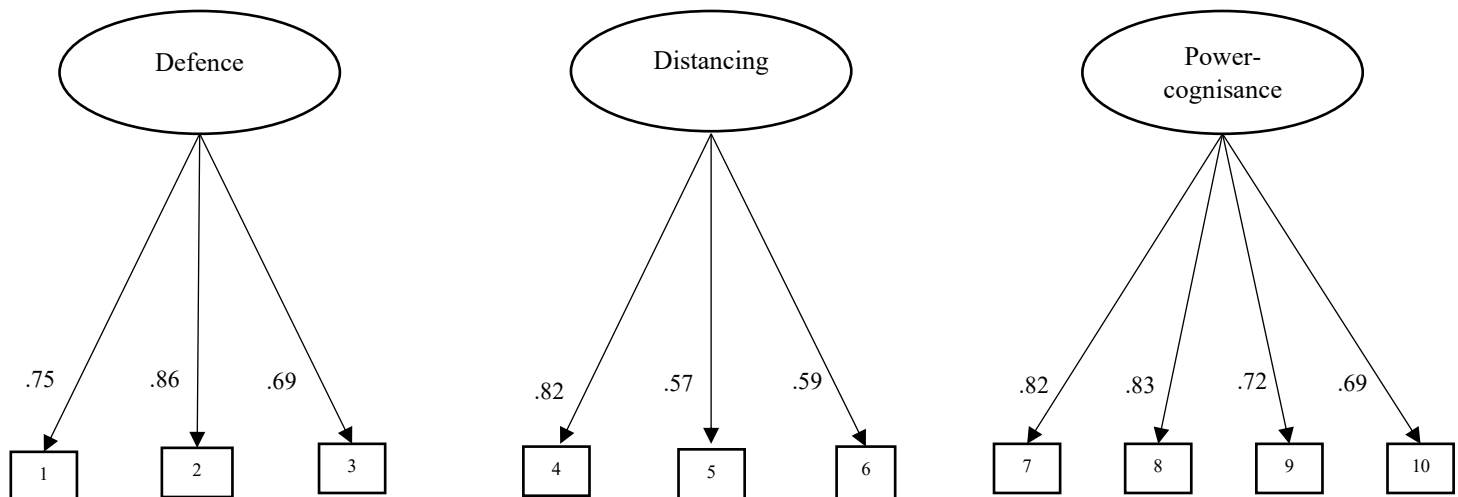
*Factor Loadings of Difference Evasion and Inequality Evasion in Sample 2*



*Note.* Factors were allowed to correlate. Item numbers correspond to item numbers in Table S17.

**Figure S7**

*Factor Loadings of Cisheterosexual Identity Strategies in Sample 2*



*Note.* Factors were allowed to correlate. Item numbers correspond to item numbers in Table S18.

### **Constructs Validation External Phase: Convergent and Discriminant Validity**

In assessing our constructs convergent and discriminant validity, we administered a broad range of ideological and psychological measures to participants comprising Sample 1 and Sample 2. These constructs are expected to covary with our scales in theoretically consistent directions. Constructs' reliabilities reflect calculations using the consolidated dataset pulling together Sample 1 and Sample 2—unless the respective measure was administered only to one of the samples. These constructs will be briefly summarised in the ensuing subsection.

#### ***Procedure and Measures***

Participants indicated their agreement with statements on a 9-point scale ranging from “1 - Strongly disagree” to “9 - Strongly agree” to every scale unless otherwise stated. The following measures were administered to both samples unless otherwise stated. Participants' scores were computed by summing their scores across the respective construct's items and dividing by its total number of items.

We administered the resulting scale consisting in difference evasion (four items;  $\alpha$ : .83) and inequality evasion (three items;  $\alpha$ : .73) as displayed in Table S17. Also, we administered the resulting cisheterosexual identity strategies scale comprising defence with three items (e.g., "I think we cisheterosexuals have the right to defend our lifestyle.";  $\alpha$ : .83), distancing with three items (e.g., "I see myself as an individual with a neutral view on things rather than a so-called cisheterosexual person.";  $\alpha$ : .73), and power-cognisance with four items (e.g., "Cisheterosexual people in the Netherlands have certain advantages because of their sexual orientation and gender identity.";  $\alpha$ : .89) (adapted from the heterosexual privilege subscale; Brownfield et al., 2018).

In assessing general ideological endorsement of inequalities, we measured social dominance orientation as blatant hierarchy-enhancing ideology, seven items (e.g., "Group

equality should not be our main goal";  $\alpha$ : .77) (Ho et al., 2015). Also, we measured meritocratic beliefs as equalising system-justifying ideology ( $\alpha$ : .71) by assessing the subdimension of perceptions of social mobility, four items (e.g., "The Netherlands is an open society in which all individuals can achieve higher status") (McCoy & Major, 2007), and Protestant Work Ethic, three items (e.g., "Anyone willing to work hard has a good chance of succeeding") (Levin et al., 1998). Moreover, in Sample 1, we measured Just World Beliefs, seven items (e.g., "I feel people get what they are entitled to.";  $\alpha$ : .87) (Lipkus, 1991). Lastly, we measured political orientation (i.e., anchored as 1—Left to 9—Right).

In examining ideological endorsement of inequalities related to sexual orientation and gender identity, we measured modern anti-LGBTQ prejudice, twelve items (e.g., "LGBTQ people should stop complaining about the way they are treated in society and just get on with their lives.";  $\alpha$ : .94) (adapted from the modern homonegativity scale, Morrison & Morrison, 2003). In Sample 1, we measured amnesic cisheterosexism, four items (e.g., "Discrimination against LGBTQ people is virtually non-existent in today's Dutch society.";  $\alpha$ : .91) (adapted from the amnesic heterosexism subscale, Walls, 2008).

In exploring ingroup identity dynamics, we measured ingroup identification in two different ways. In Sample 1, we measured cisheterosexual identity centrality, three items (e.g., "Being cisheterosexual is an important part of my identity.";  $\alpha$ : .76) (adapted from the identity centrality subscale, Leach et al., 2008). In Sample 2, we measured cisheterosexual self-stereotyping, two items (e.g., "I have a lot in common with the average cisheterosexual person.";  $\alpha$ : .87) (adapted from the self-stereotyping subscale, Leach et al., 2008).

Lastly, we measured self-reported socioeconomic status by using the MacArthur Scale of Subjective Social Status (Adler et al., 2000). Participants were asked to report where do they situate themselves in the social ladder represented by a single-item scale ranging from 10 – *People with best paid jobs and achieved higher level of education* to 1 – *People*

*with worst paid jobs and achieved lower level of education.* In assessing potential social desirability effects of our measures, in Sample 2, we administered the Marlowe-Crowne scale of 13 items (e.g., “It is sometimes difficult for me to continue with my work if I am not encouraged.”;  $\alpha$ : .69) (Reynolds, 1982). The social desirability scale was anchored in True/False dichotomic responses.

## Results

We pre-registered most of our hypotheses in OSF for the difference and inequality evasion scale here [https://osf.io/zvje4/?view\\_only=22ae275ff5cf4c198cae1cf602586a74](https://osf.io/zvje4/?view_only=22ae275ff5cf4c198cae1cf602586a74), and for the cisheterosexual identity strategies here [https://osf.io/f4jpz/?view\\_only=c136c9ae375840e1bbd1df2fa7a48359](https://osf.io/f4jpz/?view_only=c136c9ae375840e1bbd1df2fa7a48359). As we faced a dearth of specific literature on SOGI regarding our research questions, we formulated some of our hypotheses drawing on ethnic-racial intergroup relations research. Note that we modified our expectations and thereby our hypotheses for assessing difference and inequality evasion external validity upon analysing the data drawn from Sample 1. Hypotheses regarding the cishet identity strategies were not modified between data collection of Sample 1 and Sample 2.

We show the results comprising the whole dataset except when measures were only administered to one of the samples. For the difference and inequality evasion scale, differences in results between the samples will be pointed out accordingly. We begin by presenting the convergent validity results, followed up by the discriminant validity results. In interpreting our results, we will consider a correlation weak from .15, moderate from .25, and as strong from .35 (Gignac & Szodorai, 2016).

*Constructs Convergent Validity***Table S21***Constructs' Associations for Convergent Validity*

	Difference Evasion	Inequality Evasion
Sample 1		
Meritocratic beliefs	.40***	.47***
Just World Beliefs	.39***	.37***
Political orientation	.48***	.54***
Modern anti-LGBTQ prejudice	.61***	.65***
Amnesic cisheterosexism	.43***	.70***
Defence strategy	.43***	.50***
Distancing strategy	.52***	
Power-cognisant strategy	-.42***	-.73***
Identity centrality	-.10	
Sample 2		
Meritocratic beliefs	.14*	.31***
Political orientation	.24***	.31***
Modern anti-LGBTQ prejudice	.42***	.53***
Defence strategy	.30***	.29***
Distancing strategy	.31***	
Power-cognisant strategy	-.14*	-.48***
Overall		
Meritocratic beliefs	.32***	.40***
Political orientation	.42***	.41***
Modern anti-LGBTQ prejudice	.54***	.60***
Defence strategy	.42***	.40***
Distancing strategy	.43***	
Power-cognisant strategy	-.28***	-.62***

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

**Table S22***Constructs' Associations for Convergent Validity*

	Cisheterosexual Identity Strategies		
	Defence	Distancing	Power-cognisance
Difference evasion	.42***	.43***	-.28***
Inequality evasion	.40***		-.62***
Meritocratic beliefs	.31***	.16***	-.33***
Just World Beliefs (Sample 1)	.34***	.20***	-.30***
SDO	.14**		-.18***
Modern anti-LGBTQ prejudice	.56***	.34***	-.53***
Amnesic cisheterosexism (Sample 1)	.49***	.34***	-.60***
Political orientation	.46***		-.28***
Identity centrality (Sample 1)	.15**	-.25***	.12**
Self-stereotyping (Sample 2)	.28***	.22***	.04

*Note.* \*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < .001$ . SDO denotes social dominance orientation.

For a summary of correlations for the difference and inequality evasion and cisheterosexual identity strategies scales, see Table S21 and S22, respectively. In line with the notion that meritocratic beliefs underpin individualising appraisals and an oblivious standpoint regarding structural inequalities (McCoy & Major, 2007; Neville et al., 2013; van Dijk et al., 2020), as expected, meritocratic beliefs showed from moderate to strong positive associations with difference evasion and inequality evasion. While these associations were strong in the younger Sample 1, they were barely weak in Sample 2. Also, Just World Beliefs showed similarly strong associations with difference and inequality evasion. As for identity strategies, we expected defence and distancing to show strong and at least moderate associations with meritocratic beliefs, respectively. Only partially supporting our rationale, defence and distancing exhibited moderate and weak positive associations with meritocratic

beliefs, respectively. As expected, meritocratic beliefs showed a negative and moderate relation to power-cognisance.

Right-wing political orientation in the U.S. showed to be associated with higher anti-LGBTQ prejudice (Hoyt et al., 2019b). Consistent with our expectations, political orientation (i.e., anchored as 1—Left to 9—Right) showed a strong positive association with difference and inequality evasion, such that people who were more right-wing were more likely to evade difference and inequality. Mirroring meritocratic beliefs associations, political orientation showed a strong association in the younger Sample 1 while it was only moderate in the older Sample 2. As for identity strategies, on the one hand, we theorised that defence identity strategy would be held more likely by right-wing people, such that political orientation would be strongly and positively related to political orientation. On the other hand, we reasoned that power-cognisant identity strategy would be more likely held by left-wing people, such that political orientation would be negatively and at least moderately associated with power-cognisance. As expected, we found these pattern of results to hold.

Old-fashioned anti-LGBTQ prejudice is characterised by blatant derogation toward LGBTQ people. Modern prejudice, in contrast, can be reflected by cisheterosexual people's principled endorsement of unbiased treatment and formal equality, whereby LGBTQ people's claims for substantive equality are cast as seeking privileged treatment (Morrison & Morrison, 2003). Indeed, modern homonegative prejudice—MHP—in Canada was associated with higher endorsement of Protestant Work Ethic (Katz & Hass, 1988), contemporary racism (Tougas et al., 2004) and sexism (Tougas et al., 1995). Moreover, MHP was associated with rejection of public display of affection (i.e., a proxy of symbolic acceptance) (C. Bishop, 2021). Furthermore, MHP predicted less voting intentions for a gay candidate for mayor (Morrison & Morrison, 2011). Accordingly, those highly endorsing MHP evaluated

more negatively a gay leader than they did a heterosexual male leader counterpart (Morton, 2017).

In assessing the convergent association of modern anti-LGBTQ prejudice with difference evasion and inequality evasion, we adapted the MHP scale to tap into modern prejudice to trans and queer people as well (Morrison & Morrison, 2003). In line with our expectations, modern anti-LGBTQ prejudice was positively and strongly associated with difference and inequality evasion. These patterns were similar across samples. As for cisheterosexual identity strategies, we theorised that defence and distancing would reflect the identity dynamics underlying modern anti-LGBTQ prejudice. On the one hand, defence identity strategy reflects modern anti-LGBTQ prejudice by conveying defensiveness to LGBTQ claims for substantive equality. On the other hand, distancing identity strategy buttresses modern anti-LGBTQ prejudice by conveying individualising appraisals of the self and hindering structural understanding. In contrast, we reasoned that the power-cognisant identity conveys a countering standpoint to the equalising status quo purported by modern anti-LGBTQ prejudice. As such, we expected defence and distancing to exhibit positive and at least moderate associations with modern anti-LGBTQ prejudice. In turn, power-cognisance was expected to show negative and at least a moderate association. As expected, we found these expected relations to hold.

Modern prejudice can also trickle down into considering anti-LGBTQ discrimination and inequality as pertaining to the past. By endorsing unbiased treatment and formal equality, some might wishfully translate this prescriptive norm into a descriptive account of the present. We thereby expected amnesic cisheterosexism (Walls, 2008) to be positively and at least moderately associated with difference and inequality evasion. As expected, we found that amnesic cisheterosexism was positively and strongly associated with both difference and inequality evasion. As for cishet identity strategies, we mirrored the rationale followed when



assessing their associations with modern anti-LGBTQ prejudice. As expected for amnesic cisheterosexism, we found a strong and positive association with defence, a moderate and positive association with distancing , and a strong and negative association with power-cognisance.

Drawing on our qualitative findings and the dominant identity strategies framework (Knowles et al., 2014), we theorised that defence by endorsing cisheterosexual normality would strongly relate to evading difference and inequality. As expected, defence showed a strong positive association with difference evasion and inequality evasion. Distancing identity conveys sameness by individualising appraisals of the self. As such, we theorised distancing would be strongly related to evading difference. As expected, distancing showed a strong and positive association with difference evasion.

Next, we theorised that appraising cisheterosexual status as central to the self-concept would be negatively and at least moderately associated with difference evasion. In contrast to our expectation, identity centrality was not associated with difference evasion—although the relation was in the hypothesised direction. Also, we expected identity centrality to be negatively and at least moderately associated with defence and distancing identity strategies. In contrast to our expectations, defence showed a positive and weak association with identity centrality. As theorised, distancing was negatively and moderately associated with identity centrality. Lastly, power-cognisance showed an expected positive but barely weak association with identity centrality.

Power-cognisant identity reflects cognisance of cisheterosexual privilege and structural, group-based understanding of people's position in society. Thus, we expected that power-cognisance would be negatively and at least moderately associated with evading difference and inequality. As theorised, power-cognisance showed negative, moderate and strong associations with difference and inequality evasion, respectively. Echoing the patterns

observed with meritocratic beliefs and political orientation, power-cognisance showed stronger associations in the younger Sample 1 than in the older Sample 2.

### *Constructs Discriminant Validity*

**Table S23**

*Constructs' Associations for Discriminant Validity*

	Difference Evasion	Inequality Evasion
Sample 1		
SDO	.31***	.31***
Distancing strategy		.33***
Identity centrality		.01
SES	.06	-.05
Sample 2		
SDO	.12	.06
Distancing strategy		.22***
Self-stereotyping	.19**	.19**
SES	-.09	.09
Social desirability	-.06	-.15*
Overall		
SDO	.24***	.20***
Distancing strategy		.28***
SES	-.01	.02

*Note.* \*  $p < .05$  ; \*\*  $p < .01$  ; \*\*\*  $p < .001$ . SDO denotes social dominance orientation. SES denotes self-reported socioeconomic status.

**Table S24***Constructs' Associations for Discriminant Validity*

	Cisheterosexual Identity Strategies		
	Defence	Distancing	Power-cognisance
SDO		.06	
Political orientation		.20***	
Inequality evasion		.28***	
SES	-.02	.04	.06
Social desirability (Sample 2)	-.05	-.08*	.00

*Note.* \*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < .001$ . SDO denotes social dominance orientation. SES denotes self-reported socioeconomic status.

For a summary of correlations for the difference and inequality evasion as well as cisheterosexual identity strategies scales, see Table S23 and S24, respectively. SDO conveys endorsement of hierarchy by blatantly claiming the inherent deservingness of some groups to rule over others (Ho et al., 2015). To our knowledge, no research has assessed the association between SDO and inequality evasion. While SDO as a blatant hierarchy-enhancing ideology has shown to be associated with theoretically sounding antecedents and consequences of difference and inequality evasion (Ho et al., 2015), we expected SDO to correlate no more than moderately with difference and inequality evasion. Overall, SDO was positively but only weakly associated with difference and inequality evasion. Mirroring the associations shown by meritocratic beliefs and political orientation, SDO showed a moderately positive association with difference and inequality evasion in Sample 1 whereas it was not associated in Sample 2 (see Table S23 difference between Samples regarding SDO).

Distancing identity strategy conveys cisheterosexual people's sameness by individualising appraisals of the self. As such, distancing should be at odds with blatantly claiming inherent ingroup deservingness. Consequently, we theorised that distancing would be no more than weakly associated with SDO. As expected, distancing showed no association

with SDO. Moreover, we reasoned that distancing should not translate necessarily into evading inequality. For instance, dominant group members in the U.S. across social identities were prone to acknowledge inequalities despite their dominant group membership going unnoticed to themselves (Pratto & Stewart, 2012). As such, we expected distancing identity to correlate no more than moderately with inequality evasion. Accordingly, we expected that distancing identity would be no more than weakly associated with political orientation. As expected, distancing showed only a moderate positive association with inequality evasion and a weak positive relation to political orientation. These patterns were similar across samples.

As for cisheterosexual people's ingroup identification, we reasoned that the extent to which cisheterosexual status was relevant for people's self-concept would not relate more than weakly to evading inequality. As expected, identity centrality was not associated with inequality evasion. In further assessing our expectations with an alternative but theoretically related measure of ingroup identification, self-stereotyping, we found only weakly positive associations with difference and inequality evasion.

Difference and inequality evasion tightly relate to meritocratic beliefs whereby people's position in society is largely seen as the result of individuals' abilities and effort. In a Western, liberal context where people's sameness is underscored by individualising appraisals, we reasoned this ideological repertoire would be homogeneously distributed across social classes. As such, we theorised people's self-reported socioeconomic—SES—background (Adler et al., 2000) would be no more than weakly associated with difference and inequality evasion. As for identity strategies, we similarly reasoned that how cisheterosexual people related to their dominant SOGI identity would not be associated with their SES. As expected, SES did not show associations neither with difference and inequality evasion nor with cisheterosexual identity strategies. Lastly, neither difference and inequality

evasion nor cisheterosexual identity strategies scales showed more than weak associations with social desirability (Reynolds, 1982).

Therefore, these patterns of results provide support for the external validity of our scales, demonstrating convergent and discriminant associations in theoretically consistent ways with other related and established measures in the field.

## Demographic Correlates

**Table S25**

*Demographics and Contact Difference and Inequality Evasion*

	Difference Evasion	Inequality Evasion
Sample 1		
Age	.02	-.03
Education	-.15*	-.10
Sample 2		
Age	-.01	.04
Education	-.11*	-.12
Contact	-.04	.08
Overall		
Age	.15**	.01
Education	-.19***	-.11**

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

**Table S26**

*Demographics and Contact of Cisheterosexual Identity Strategies*

	Cisheterosexual Identity Strategies		
	Defence	Distancing	Power-cognisance
Age	.21***	.11**	.08
Education	-.22***	.04	.02
Contact	.00	.14	.02

*Note.* \*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < .001$ . Contact was only assessed in Sample 2.

**Latent Profile Analysis****Table S27***Latent Profile Analysis: Model Fit Statistics*

Profiles	AIC	AWE	BIC	CLC	KIC	Entropy	BLRT		
							value	df	<i>p</i>
2	4187.25	4281.01	4217.17	4174.32	4197.25	0.540	60.41	2	<.01
<b>3</b>	<b>4152.76</b>	<b>4286.96</b>	<b>4195.51</b>	<b>4134.06</b>	<b>4165.76</b>	<b>0.650</b>	<b>40.49</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>&lt;.01</b>
4	4152.81	4327.83	4208.38	4127.93	4168.81	0.560	5.95	2	.109
5	4158.60	4374.36	4226.99	4127.63	4177.60	0.515	0.21	2	.416
6	4136.35	4392.42	4217.57	4099.72	4158.35	0.684	28.25	2	<.01
7	4138.94	4435.84	4232.98	4096.13	4163.94	0.596	3.41	2	.228

*Note.* Abbreviations: AIC, Akaike information criterion; AWE, approximate weight of evidence; BIC, Bayesian information criterion; CLC, classification likelihood criterion; KIC, Kullback information criterion. The values of fit indices for the retained profile solution are in bold.

**Table S28**

*Pairwise Effect Size Comparisons (Cohen's d)*

	Profiles' Indicators		Advantaged Identity Strategies			Ideological Correlates		
	Difference Evasion	Inequality Evasion	Defence	Distancing	Power-Cognisance	Modern Anti-LGBTQ Prejudice	Meritocratic Beliefs	Social Dominance Orientation
Defenders vs. Evaders	2.07	1.95	0.89	0.94	1.09	1.33	0.55	0.11
Defenders vs. Acknowledgers	6.10	2.58	1.66	1.44	1.63	2.4	1.05	0.75
Evaders vs. Acknowledgers	2.86	0.79	0.96	0.6	0.66	1.24	0.79	0.73

### **Moderation Analysis of Difference Evasion and Inequality Evasion on Meritocratic Beliefs**

To examine whether inequality evasion moderates the relationship between difference evasion and meritocratic beliefs, we conducted a multiple regression analysis, including an interaction term between difference evasion and inequality evasion while controlling for age, political orientation, racial-ethnic background, gender, and education.

Results revealed a significant main effect of difference evasion ( $b = 0.22$ ,  $SE = 0.07$ ,  $t = 3.21$ ,  $p = .001$ ) and inequality evasion ( $b = 0.31$ ,  $SE = 0.07$ ,  $t = 4.30$ ,  $p < .001$ ) on meritocratic beliefs. Importantly, the difference evasion  $\times$  inequality evasion interaction was also significant ( $b = -0.02$ ,  $SE = 0.01$ ,  $t = -2.08$ ,  $p = .038$ ), suggesting that the effect of difference evasion on meritocratic beliefs varies depending on levels of inequality evasion.

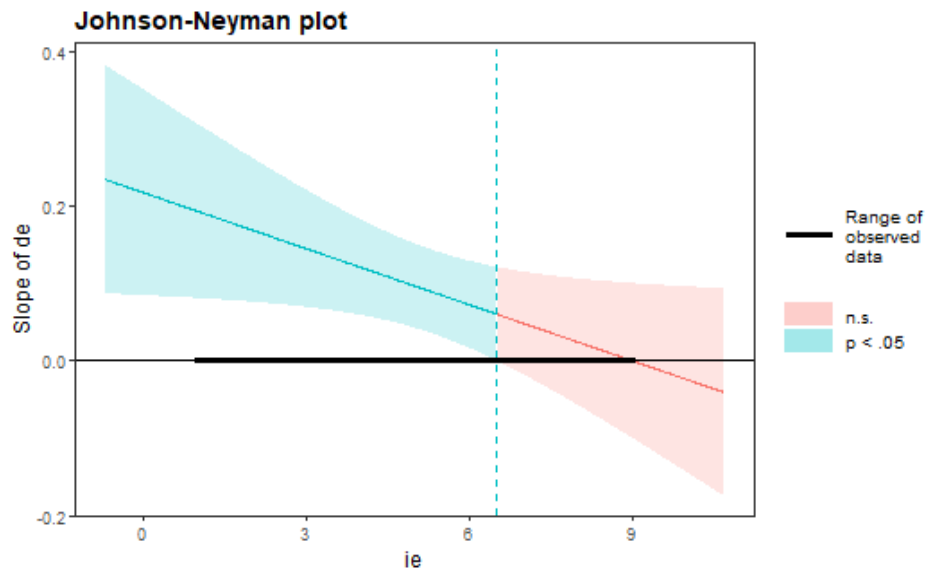
A Johnson-Neyman analysis indicated that difference evasion was a significant positive predictor when inequality evasion was below 6.52 ( $p < .05$ ) but not significant when inequality evasion exceeded 6.52. Figure S8 illustrates the region of significance of difference evasion at different levels of inequality evasion.

A simple slopes analysis further revealed that at low levels of inequality evasion ( $-1$  SD; raw score = 3.70), difference evasion was a significant positive predictor of meritocratic beliefs ( $b = 0.13$ ,  $SE = 0.03$ ,  $t = 3.84$ ,  $p < .001$ ). At mean levels of inequality evasion (raw score = 5.39), difference evasion remained a significant predictor, though the effect was weaker ( $b = 0.09$ ,  $SE = 0.03$ ,  $t = 3.19$ ,  $p = .002$ ). At high levels of inequality evasion ( $+1$  SD; raw score = 7.07), the effect of difference evasion was non-significant ( $b = 0.05$ ,  $SE = 0.03$ ,  $t = 1.39$ ,  $p = .17$ ). Figure S9 illustrates the predicted values of meritocratic beliefs as difference evasion varies per levels of inequality evasion.



**Figure S8**

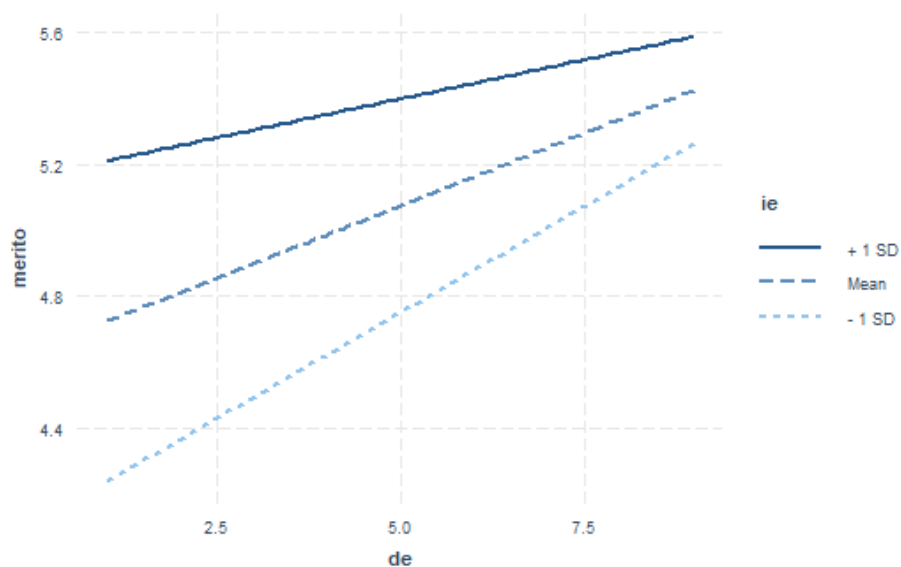
*Region of Significance of Difference Evasion as Inequality Evasion Varies*



*Note.* *de* and *ie* stand for difference and inequality evasion, respectively. n.s. stands for non-significance.

**Figure S9**

*Predicted Values of Meritocratic Beliefs as Difference Evasion Varies per Levels of Inequality Evasion*



*Note.* *de* and *ie* stand for difference and inequality evasion, respectively. SD stands for standard deviation.

Supplementary Materials for Chapter 4

**Inequality framings shape cisheterosexual people's construals of LGBTQ-  
cisheterosexual difference and policy preferences to address inequality**

## Contents

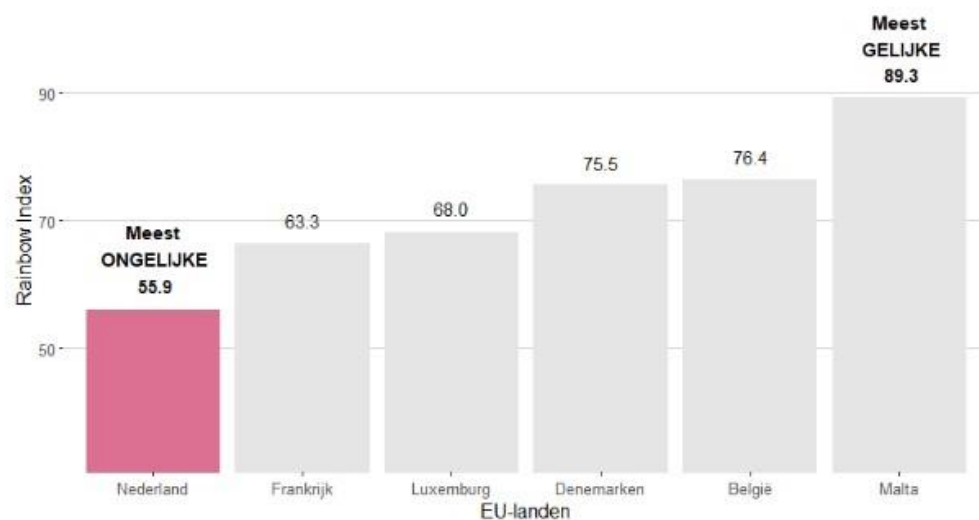
### Constructs Validation

SOGI Inequality Framings.....	268
Validation of Inequality Manipulation.....	270
Policy Preference Scale.....	273
Distancing from the Cisgender Category.....	276
<b>Free-Responses Dictionary.....</b>	<b>282</b>
<b>Automated Detection of Invalid Free-Responses.....</b>	<b>284</b>
<b>Priors Specification in the Bayesian Model.....</b>	<b>286</b>
<b>Preregistered Hypotheses</b>	
Sameness Category.....	287
Meritocratic Beliefs.....	288
<b>Deviations from Preregistration.....</b>	<b>290</b>

## SOGI Inequality Framings

**Figure S1**

*Higher Inequality Framing Presented to Participants*



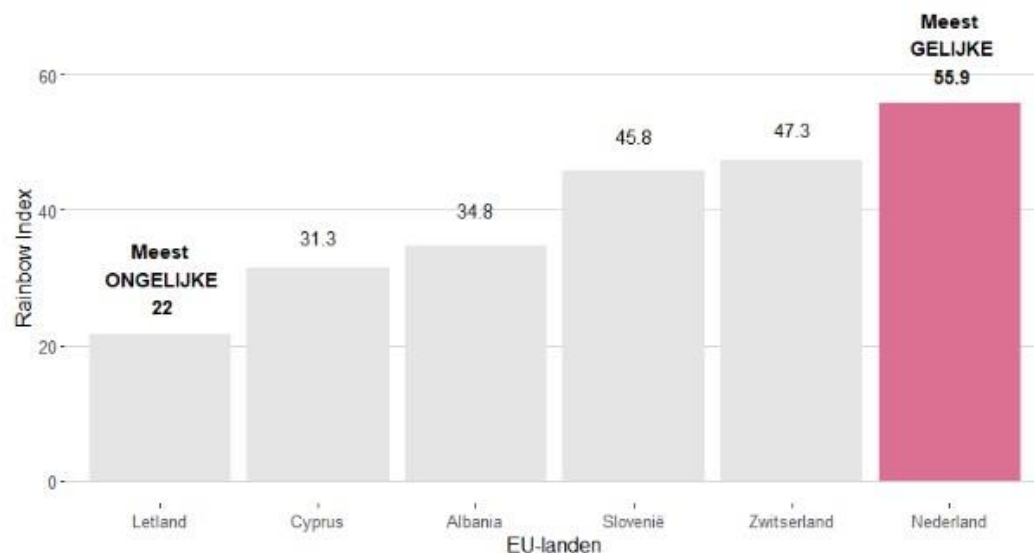
Bij het onderzoek naar de erkenning van de mensenrechten van LHBT+ behaalt Malta een Regenboogindex van 89,3%. Malta komt dan ook naar voren als het meest **GELIJKE** land voor LHBT+'ers. De inzet van Malta om gelijkheid te waarborgen blijkt duidelijk uit het verbod op bekerings therapie en het strikte beleid om haat tegen homo's, lesbiennes, biseksuelen en transgenders aan te pakken. Ook garandeert Malta het ouderschap van transgenders, hoeven transpersonen die geslachtsverandering willen daarvoor geen psychologische goedkeuring te krijgen, en kunnen minderjarige transpersonen hun geslacht laten veranderen volgens wettelijke procedures.

Ter vergelijking: Nederland haalt slechts een Regenboogindex van 55,9%. Daarmee is Nederland van alle vergeleken landen het meest **ONGELIJKE** land voor LHBT+'ers. In tegenstelling tot Malta staat Nederland bekerings therapie toe en ontbreekt een alomvattend beleid om haat op grond van seksuele geaardheid en genderidentiteit aan te pakken. Ook erkent Nederland het ouderschap van transgenders niet, moeten transpersonen psychologische toestemming krijgen voor een geslachtsverandering en kunnen minderjarige transpersonen hun geslacht niet laten veranderen.

Nederland's Regenboogindex wordt weerspiegeld in het volgende citaat van een Nederlandse geïnterviewde: "Ik ervaar veel discriminatie in de trans gezondheidszorg. Zoals psychologen die proberen een machtspositie over mij in te nemen. Dat ik niet de gezondheidszorg krijg die ik nodig heb tenzij ik mezelf verneder voor deze dokter, is, zou ik zeggen, discriminatie. Maar het is volkomen legaal. Dus we zien het niet als discriminatie."

**Figure S2**

*Lower Inequality Framing Presented to Participants*



Zoals uit deze grafiek blijkt, haalt Letland een Regenboogindex van 22%. Letland is daarmee het meest **ONGELIJKE** land voor LHBT+-mensen. Om je een idee te geven van wat dit betekent: er bestaat in Letland geen nationaal plan om ongelijkheid op grond van seksuele geaardheid en genderidentiteit aan te pakken. Ook wordt discriminatie van intersekse personen niet bestraft. Bovendien is het huwelijk tussen personen van hetzelfde geslacht verboden. Paren van hetzelfde geslacht kunnen dan ook geen kinderen adopteren. Ten slotte moeten transpersonen een geslachtsverandering ondergaan voordat zij hun wettelijk geslacht kunnen veranderen.

De wetgeving en het beleid van Nederland zijn aanzienlijk gelijk. Nederland heeft namelijk de hoogste Regenboogindex, met een waarde van 55,9%. Nederland is dus het meest **GELIJKE** van deze landen voor LHBT+-mensen. In tegenstelling tot Letland bestaat er in Nederland een nationaal plan om ongelijkheid op grond van seksuele geaardheid en genderidentiteit aan te pakken. Ook wordt discriminatie van intersekse personen bestraft. Bovendien wordt het huwelijk tussen personen van hetzelfde geslacht erkend door de wet. Daardoor kunnen paren van hetzelfde geslacht kinderen adopteren. Ten slotte kunnen transpersonen hun wettelijk geslacht veranderen zonder eerst ingrepen tot geslachtsverandering te ondergaan.

Het volgende citaat van een Nederlandse geïnterviewde weerspiegelt deze bevinding: "Wij denken dat ons homo-zijn of transgender-zijn deel uitmaakt van ons leven. We hebben hier in Nederland een zekere vrijheid bereikt. En we schamen ons niet. En voelen ons niet bedreigd. Ja. Zo zie ik het leven graag. Het is alsof we accepteren wie we zijn en andere mensen respecteren dat."

### **Validation of Inequality Manipulation**

Following experimental construct validity standards (Chester & Lasko, 2021), we pre-validated our experimental manipulation of SOGI inequality. In this section, we show evidence for the SOGI inequality manipulation's content, discriminant, and convergent validity, as well as for the manipulation check's convergent validity and empirical distinguishability from related constructs.

### **Method**

#### **Participants**

203 participants from Prolific were recruited (82 cisgender women, 108 cisgender men, 1 non-binary, and 12 people who selected other; 199 heterosexual people and 4 LGBTQ people; 82% self-identified as white;  $M_{\text{age}} = 29.09$ ,  $SD_{\text{age}} = 9.10$ , range = 18-71 years old;  $M_{\text{political}} = 4.09$  [1 Left-wing – 9 Right-wing],  $SD_{\text{political}} = 1.67$ , range = 1-9).

#### **Procedure and Measures**

After providing consent to partake, participants were introduced to the Rainbow Index 2023 as a proxy for SOGI inequality. The Rainbow Index by the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, and Intersex Association (ILGA-Europe, 2023) annually ranks European countries on their protection of LGBTQ people's human rights. Higher scores reflect stronger protection. In 2023, the Netherlands scored 55.9 out of 100.

We manipulated perceptions of SOGI inequality by randomly assigning participants to a higher inequality framing or to a lower inequality framing. These framings compared the Netherlands' position in the Rainbow Index to other European countries that were either better ranked (higher inequality framing) or worse ranked (lower inequality framing). Participants under higher inequality (lower inequality) were told that the Netherlands is more unequal for LGBTQ people than France, Luxembourg, Denmark, Belgium, and Malta (is more equal for LGBTQ people than Switzerland, Slovenia, Albania, Cyprus, and Latvia).

Thereafter, participants were asked to report their assessment of SOGI inequality in the Netherlands (three items,  $\alpha = .81$ , e.g., “In general, how small or big do you think the inequality between cisheterosexual and LGBT+ people is in the Netherlands?”, adapted from Peters et al., 2022).

Next, participants were asked to complete measures of power evasion (four items,  $\alpha = .79$ , e.g., “Discrimination against LGBT+ people may have been an issue in the past but is not a major problem today.” adapted from Neville et al., 2000) and to report their assessment of socioeconomic inequality (Peters et al., 2022) (three items,  $\alpha = .73$ , e.g., “In your opinion, how small or large is the wealth gap between the poorest and wealthiest people in the Netherlands?”) All items were measured on a scale from 1 (very small-completely disagree) to 9 (very large-completely agree).

Lastly, participants were asked to fill in their age, ethnic-racial group membership, sexual orientation, gender identity, and political orientation in social (i.e., “What is your political stance (left-right) on social issues, e.g., immigration, same-sex marriage, abortion?”) and economic issues (i.e., “What is your political stance (left-right) on economic issues, e.g., social services, government spending, tax cuts?”) ( $r_{\text{political economic vs social}} = .73$ ).

## Results

### Experimental Manipulation Construct Validity

#### *Content Validity: Assessment of SOGI Inequality*

Giving credence to the manipulation’s content validity, a Welch’s t-test showed that participants in the Higher Inequality condition ( $M = 4.357$ ) reported greater SOGI inequality than those in the Lower Inequality condition ( $M = 3.576$ ),  $t(200.91) = 3.595$ ,  $p < .001$ , 95% CI [0.352, 1.209], Cohen’s  $d = 0.505$ .

***Convergent Validity: Power Evasion***

Giving credence to the manipulation's convergent validity, Welch's t-test showed that participants in the Higher Inequality condition ( $M = 4.413$ ) exhibited significantly lower power evasion than those in the Lower Inequality condition ( $M = 4.907$ ),  $t(200.91) = -2.106$ ,  $p = 0.036$ , 95% CI  $[-0.957, -0.031]$ , Cohen's  $d$ : 0.295.

***Discriminant Validity: Assessment of Socioeconomic Inequality***

Giving credence to the manipulation's discriminant validity, a Welch's t-test showed no significant difference between participants' reported socioeconomic inequality in the Higher Inequality condition ( $M = 7.110$ ) and those in the Lower Inequality condition ( $M = 6.984$ ),  $t(200.95) = 0.690$ ,  $p = 0.491$ , 95% CI  $[-0.235, 0.487]$ , Cohen's  $d = 0.097$ .

**Manipulation Check Construct Validity**

***Convergent Validity: Power Evasion***

Giving credence to the convergent validity between the assessment of SOGI inequality and power evasion, a Pearson correlation analysis revealed a significant negative relationship ( $r = -0.623$ ,  $p < .001$ , 95% CI  $[-0.701, -0.531]$ ). This thus suggests that assessing greater SOGI inequality was strongly associated with lower levels of power evasion.

***Empirical Distinction***

Giving credence to the empirical distinguishability between the assessment of SOGI inequality and power evasion, a Chi-square difference test confirmed that the two-factor model (latent factor 1: reported SOGI inequality + latent factor 2: power evasion) fitted the data significantly better than the single-factor model (all items loaded onto a single latent factor) ( $\Delta\chi^2 [df = 1] = 52.58$ ,  $p < .001$ ).



### Validation of Policy Preference Scale

Following the scale validation procedure outlined by Klebl and Jetten (2024), six SOGI policy pairs were pre-validated (see Table S1). This process confirmed that, as a group, structural-level policies (compared to individual-level policies) were viewed as being more strongly oriented toward structural change, more effective at reducing inequality, having a greater societal impact, and being considered less feasible to implement quickly. Participants viewed structural- and individual-level policies similarly in their focus on individual-level behavior.

### Method

#### Participants

44 participants living in the Netherlands were recruited from Prolific (13 women, 29 men, 2 non-binary; 32 heterosexuals, 12 LGBTQ;  $M_{\text{age}} = 29.45$ ,  $SD_{\text{age}} = 8.91$ ; range = 18-53 years old;  $M_{\text{political}} = 3.25$  [1 Left-wing – 7 Right-wing],  $SD_{\text{political}} = 1.49$ , range = 1-6.5).

#### Procedure and Measures

Upon providing consent to partake, participants were asked to rate the extent to which each of the 12 policies (randomized) were aimed at individual-level behavior (“Please indicate the degree to which the policy is aimed at individual-level behavior”), were aimed at structural change (“Please indicate the degree to which the policy is aimed at structural change”), would be effective in reducing inequality (“Please indicate the degree to which the policy will be effective in reducing inequality”), would affect society as a whole (“Please indicate the degree to which the policy will affect society as a whole”), and could be implemented quickly (“Please indicate the degree to which the policy can be implemented quickly”). All items were measured on a scale from 1 (*not at all*) to 6 (*very much*).

Lastly, participants were asked to fill in their gender identity, sexual orientation, age, and their political orientation in social (i.e., “What is your political stance (left-right) on

social issues, e.g., immigration, same-sex marriage, abortion?") and economic issues (i.e., "What is your political stance (left-right) on economic issues, e.g., social services, government spending, tax cuts?") ( $r_{\text{political social vs economic}} = .68$ ).

### Analytical Strategy

To compare participants' perceptions of structural- and individual-level policies, composite scores were computed for each policy type by averaging the items' scores representing each measured dimension. Paired-sample t-tests compared composite scores for structural- and individual-level policies across each dimension, with Cohen's  $d$  calculated to assess effect sizes.

### Results

Structural policies were viewed as more strongly aimed at structural change ( $M = 3.94$ ,  $SD = 0.98$ ) than the individual-level policies ( $M = 3.10$ ,  $SD = 0.85$ ),  $t(43) = 6.30$ ,  $p < .001$ , 95% CI[0.57, 1.09],  $d = 1.38$ .

Structural policies were viewed as aimed at individual-behavior ( $M = 2.98$ ,  $SD = 0.88$ ) similarly to individual-level policies ( $M = 3.17$ ,  $SD = 0.78$ ),  $t(43) = -1.63$ ,  $p = .111$ , 95% CI[-0.42, 0.04],  $d = 0.35$ .

Structural policies were viewed as more strongly effective at reducing inequality ( $M = 3.03$ ,  $SD = 0.96$ ) than the individual-level policies ( $M = 2.67$ ,  $SD = 0.84$ ),  $t(43) = 3.87$ ,  $p < .001$ , 95% CI[0.18, 0.56],  $d = 0.83$ .

Structural policies were viewed as more strongly affecting society as a whole ( $M = 3.58$ ,  $SD = 0.86$ ) than the individual-level policies ( $M = 2.80$ ,  $SD = 0.82$ ),  $t(43) = 6.65$ ,  $p < .001$ , 95% CI[0.54, 1.02],  $d = 1.42$ .

Structural policies were viewed as slower to be implemented ( $M = 2.76$ ,  $SD = 1.04$ ) than individual-level policies ( $M = 4.03$ ,  $SD = 0.81$ ),  $t(43) = -10.76$ ,  $p < .001$ , 95% CI[-1.51, -1.03],  $d = 2.29$ .

**Table S1***Policy Pairs*

	Individual-level policies	Structural-level policies
Pair 1	Run a campaign to reduce individuals' prejudice against LGBT+ people (e.g. Love is Love stickers in major cities).	Require schools to introduce education programs on LGBT+ rights and sexual and gender diversity to reduce prejudice.
Pair 2	Run programs to give all people in the Netherlands more insight into mental health problems of LGBT+ people.	Significantly increase mental health funding for LGBT+ people.
Pair 3	Promoting in the media to respect LGBT+ people by not sharing people's sexual orientation and gender identity without their consent.	Establish permanent committees for diversity, equality and inclusion (DEI) in all institutions to identify and address deficiencies in policies, practices and culture on LGBT+ inclusion.
Pair 4	Launch a major campaign to expose discriminatory comments or behavior against LGBT+ people.	Establish a Ministry of Equality to provide material support, networking and advocacy opportunities for LGBT+ people.
Pair 5	Encouraging employers and colleagues to gather information about the experiences of LGBT+ people through a major campaign.	Introduce diversity quotas to promote the recruitment and career development of LGBT+ people within organisations.
Pair 6	Campaign for civil servants to raise awareness of the inequalities faced by LGBT+ people.	Commission state-sponsored annual monitoring of LGBT+ equality and inclusion in the country to identify areas for improvement and implement policies to address deficiencies.

### **Validation of Distancing from the Cisgender Category**

To assess the construct validity of distancing from the cisgender category, we examined convergent validity in relation to ideological and demographic differences between distancing and non-distancing participants (see Table S2 for mean differences, Welch's t-test results, and effect sizes). Additionally, we examined the incremental validity of distancing from the cisgender category in predicting difference evasion and policy preference—the two key outcomes under study (see Tables S3 and S4 for hierarchical regression statistics).

#### **Analytical Strategy**

The analysis was conducted on the Study 1 and Study 2 samples, which were merged for variables shared across both studies (policy preference, difference evasion, inequality evasion, political orientation, and age). Variables unique to Study 2 were analyzed separately, including power-cognisance (four items; e.g., "Cisheterosexual people in the Netherlands have certain advantages because of their sexual orientation and gender identity.";  $\alpha = .86$ , adapted from Brownfield et al., 2018) and meritocratic beliefs, conceptualized as a system-justifying ideology ( $\alpha = .72$ ). The latter included social mobility beliefs (four items; e.g., "The Netherlands is an open society in which all individuals can achieve higher status") from McCoy & Major (2007) and the Protestant Work Ethic (three items; e.g., "If people work hard, they almost always get what they want") from Levin et al. (1998).

To assess convergent validity, Welch's t-tests were conducted to compare standardized scores across groups, accounting for unequal variances and sample sizes (Non-Distancing: 2140; Distancing: 221). Effect sizes were estimated using Hedges'  $g$  to account for group size imbalances.

To assess incremental validity, we conducted hierarchical multiple regression analyses predicting difference evasion and policy preference. In each analysis, Model 1 included political orientation, inequality evasion, age, and ethnicity as predictors. Model 2

added distancing status (0 = Non-Distancing, 1 = Distancing) to test whether distancing from the cisgender category explained unique variance beyond ideological and demographic factors. Model comparisons ( $\Delta R^2$  and F-tests) were used to determine whether distancing status significantly improved predictive power.

## Results

### Convergent Validity

In line with the convergent validity of distancing from the cisgender category, distancing participants showed significantly greater support for individual-level policy solutions (indicating lower support for structural-level policy), as well as greater difference evasion, inequality evasion, and a more right-leaning political orientation—each with a small effect size. Additionally, those distancing exhibited significantly lower power-cognisance than non-distancing participants, with a medium effect size. No significant differences emerged in age or meritocratic beliefs.

**Table S2**

*Mean Differences, Welch's t-Tests, and Effect Sizes by Distancing Status*

Variable	Mean Distancing	Mean Not Distancing	t(df)	p	95% CI (LL, UL)	Hedges' g	95% CI Hedges' g (LL, UL)
Policy Preference	-0.27	0.03	3.86 (259.08)	<.001***	0.14, 0.44	0.29	0.16, 0.43
Difference Evasion	0.15	-0.02	-2.30 (262.05)	.022*	-0.32, -0.02	0.17	0.31, -0.03
Inequality Evasion	0.27	-0.03	-3.70 (254.09)	<.001***	-0.45, -0.14	0.3	0.44, -0.16
Political Orientation	0.19	-0.02	-3.10 (272.44)	.002**	-0.34, -0.08	0.21	0.35, -0.07
Age	-0.11	0.01	1.70 (269.74)	.090	-0.02, 0.25	0.12	0.02, 0.26
Power-Cognisance	-0.51	0.05	6.61 (197.66)	<.001***	0.39, 0.73	0.57	0.41, 0.73

Meritocratic Beliefs	0.13	-0.01	-1.62 (193.31)	.107	-0.33, 0.03	0.15	0.31, 0.01
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### Incremental Validity

In line with the incremental validity of distancing from the cisgender category, hierarchical regression analyses demonstrated that distancing status explained unique variance in both difference evasion and policy preference—after accounting for political orientation, inequality evasion, age, and ethnicity.

For difference evasion, adding distancing status to a model including political orientation, inequality evasion, age, and ethnicity significantly improved model fit ( $\Delta R^2 = .002, p = .033$ ), with distancing participants exhibiting greater difference evasion ( $\beta = .15, p = .033$ ).

For policy preference, adding distancing status significantly increased explained variance ( $\Delta R^2 = .003, p = .003$ ), with distancing participants supporting individual-level over structural-level policy solutions ( $\beta = -0.20, p = .003$ ).

**Table S3**

*Hierarchical Multiple Regression Predicting Difference Evasion*

	$\Delta R^2$	$\beta$	SE	t	p
<i>Step 1</i>	0.083				
Political Orientation		0.247	0.02	12.38	<.001
Inequality Evasion		-0.055	0.02	-2.75	0.006
Age		0.151	0.02	7.6	<.001
Ethnicity (Other)		0.09	0.071	1.27	0.203
Ethnicity (Indonesian-Dutch)		0.242	0.111	2.19	0.029
Ethnicity (Moroccan-Dutch)		0.287	0.14	2.04	0.041

# SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS CHAPTER 4

Ethnicity (Surinamese- Dutch)	0.064	0.121	0.53	0.597
Ethnicity (Turkish- Dutch)	0.366	0.152	2.42	0.016
Ethnicity (Antillean- Dutch)	0.324	0.171	1.89	0.058
<i>Step 2</i>	0.002*			.036
Political Orientation	0.244	0.019	12.241	<.001
Inequality Evasion	-0.058	0.019	-2.905	0.004
Age	0.153	0.019	7.667	<.001
Ethnicity (Other)	0.078	0.071	1.100	0.271
Ethnicity (Indonesian- Dutch)	0.238	0.111	2.148	0.032
Ethnicity (Moroccan- Dutch)	0.284	0.140	2.024	0.043
Ethnicity (Surinamese- Dutch)	0.071	0.121	0.584	0.559
Ethnicity (Turkish- Dutch)	0.368	0.151	2.429	0.015
Ethnicity (Antillean- Dutch)	0.305	0.171	1.778	0.075
Distancing (Yes)	0.146	0.069	2.138	0.033

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**Table S4***Hierarchical Multiple Regression Predicting Policy Preference*

	$\Delta R^2$	$\beta$	SE	t	p
<i>Step 1</i>	0.091				
Political Orientation		-0.044	0.02	-2.17	0.029
Difference Evasion		0.004	0.021	0.225	0.822
Inequality Evasion		-0.296	0.02	-14.93	<.001
Age		0.015	0.02	0.74	0.462
Ethnicity (Other)		-0.006	0.071	-0.08	0.938
Ethnicity (Indonesian-Dutch)		0.119	0.111	1.08	0.281
Ethnicity (Moroccan-Dutch)		0.187	0.14	1.34	0.181
Ethnicity (Surinamese-Dutch)		0.05	0.121	0.42	0.677
Ethnicity (Turkish-Dutch)		-0.039	0.151	-0.26	0.794
Ethnicity (Antillean-Dutch)		-0.193	0.171	-1.132	0.258
<i>Step 2</i>					
Political Orientation		-0.042	0.020	-2.035	0.042
Difference Evasion		0.007	0.021	0.354	0.723
Inequality Evasion		-0.292	0.020	-14.681	<.001
Age		0.013	0.020	0.629	0.530
Ethnicity (Other)		0.011	0.071	0.152	0.879
Ethnicity (Indonesian-Dutch)		0.124	0.110	1.127	0.260
Ethnicity (Moroccan-Dutch)		0.190	0.140	1.365	0.173



# SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS CHAPTER 4

Ethnicity (Surinamese- Dutch)	0.041	0.120	0.341	0.733
Ethnicity (Turkish- Dutch)	-0.042	0.151	-0.281	0.779
Ethnicity (Antillean- Dutch)	-0.167	0.171	-0.981	0.327
Distancing (Yes)	-0.200	0.068	-2.939	0.003

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### Free-Responses Dictionary

The first author manually revised a random subset of 15% free-response descriptions and constructed a dictionary of SOGI categories and sameness categories (see Table S2). Free-responses employing both SOGI and sameness were collapsed into a single factor variable along with those only employing SOGI.

**Table S2**

*Dictionary*

SOGI	Sameness
lesbisch	normal
homoseksueel	normaal
gay	standaard
trans	gemiddeld
transgend	gemideld
non binair	gemiddelde
homo	standard
homoseksuel	typisch
queer	doorsne
lgbt	doorsnee
lhb	neutraal
lgb	neutral
lhbtq	neutrale
lhbt	
lhbti	
lhbtqi	
homoseksualiteit	
geaardheid	
orientati	

---

oriëntatie

orientatie

geslachtsidentiteit

genderidentiteit

seksualiteit

---

### Automated Detection of Invalid Free-Responses

To systematically identify and remove invalid responses, we employed the Python-based tool developed by Yeung & Fernandes (2022; [GitHub Repository](#)). The detection was performed using Google Colab, following the authors' recommended settings.

We trained the classifier on 450 manually coded responses by the first author. A free-response was deemed invalid when it was non-sensical or did not address the task of describing the character (see Table S3). Responses flagged as invalid by the classifier were manually reviewed before removal. Manually coded responses and machine-learning classifier outputs can be accessed at

[https://osf.io/2mfjy/?view\\_only=01445eb536834ec683f7509fbd6320e3](https://osf.io/2mfjy/?view_only=01445eb536834ec683f7509fbd6320e3).

In Study 1, 5.86% ( $N = 33$ ) of self-related free responses and 5.15% ( $N = 29$ ) of character-related free responses were excluded based on these criteria. The final dataset comprised 530 valid self-related responses and 534 valid character-related responses, totaling 563 responses.

In Study 2, 12.77% ( $N = 141$ ) of self-related free responses and 1.28% ( $N = 23$ ) of character-related free responses were excluded. The final dataset included 1659 valid self-related responses and 1777 valid character-related responses, totaling 1800 responses.

**Table S3**

*Examples of Invalid and Valid Free-Responses*

Invalid	Valid
Geen idee jsjwnskdiskwnsndksosisj	Ik denk dat Willem is net als ieder ander persoon.
ben sterk de melk de jongen voor jou niet voor mij de jongen voor mij de melk niet de melk de melk niet melk de melk de vrouw drinkt melk de melk drinkt de u De kinderen spelen in de boert beurt de beurt de beurt ptotoepwwwwe wu Ik	Ik denk dat willem gewoon een normaal persoon is die zijn eigen leven leidt. Hij werkt, doet zijn ding en heeft zijn eigen leven met zijn gezin en familie.
ik moet naar t ziekenhuis... ik ben tegen mn kaak getrapt door een ezel lolik moet naar t	Familiemens, passie, cis, vind het lekker om te ontbijten met cornflakes en eet graag broccoli

ziekenhuis... ik ben tegen mn kaak getrapt door een ezel lolik moet naar t ziekenhuis... ik ben tegen mn kaak getrapt door een ezel lolik moet naar t ziekenhuis... ik ben tegen mn kaak getrapt door een ezel lolik moet naar t ziekenhuis... ik ben tegen mn kaak getrapt door een ezel lol	als avondeten. Vind zijn moeder heel erg belangrijk samen met zijn hond
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### Priors Specification in the Bayesian Model

We specified empirically informed normal priors based on robust regression estimates, and weakly informative priors for variance parameters (see Table S2). The full Bayesian model specification can be accessed at [https://osf.io/kgxdy/?view\\_only=296058fca8284c72a7c50ae77ece05a3](https://osf.io/kgxdy/?view_only=296058fca8284c72a7c50ae77ece05a3).

**Table S4**  
*Priors for Moderated Mediation Model*

Parameter	Prior	Estimate ( $\mu$ )	Std. Error ( $\sigma$ )
<b>Mediator Model</b>			
Intercept	Normal(0.085, 0.07)	0.085	0.07
distancing_Yes	Normal(-0.218, 0.221)	-0.218	0.221
framing_higher inequality	Normal(-0.250, 0.092)	-0.250	0.092
Interaction: distancing_Yes x higher_inequality	Normal(0.740, 0.300)	0.740	0.300
std_political	Normal(0.1719, 0.0438)	0.172	0.044
<b>Outcome Model</b>			
Intercept	Normal(-0.067, 0.070)	-0.067	0.070
std_inequality_evasion	Normal(-0.045, 0.069)	-0.045	0.069
Interaction: std_inequality_evasion × framing_higher inequality × distancing_Yes	Normal(0.461, 0.286)	0.461	0.286
std_political	Normal(0.2604, 0.0442)	0.260	0.044
<b>Variance Priors</b>			
Residual Variance (std_inequality_evasion)	Student-t(3, 0, 2.5)		
Residual Variance (std difference evasion)	Student-t(3, 0, 2.5)		

### Preregistered Hypotheses

#### Sameness Category (Study 2)

***H1. Cisheterosexual people will employ sameness categories more likely than expected when under higher inequality and describing the cisheterosexual character.***

A chi-square test was conducted between spontaneous reference to sameness categories and experimental conditions. Inequality framing and character conditions were collapsed into a single factor variable with six levels reflecting each combination.

In partial support to H1, cisheterosexual participants were more likely than expected to employ sameness categories when in higher inequality and describing the cisheterosexual character—98 out of the 288 spontaneous reference to sameness categories (34.0%), exceeding the expected count of 69.69. As the standardized residual (0.340) did not exceed the conventional threshold of  $\pm 1.96$  for statistical significance, this specific deviation did not significantly contribute to the overall association between spontaneous reference to sameness categories and experimental conditions ( $\chi^2(5) = 41.79, p < .001$ ).

***H2. As difference evasion increases under higher inequality (vs lower equality vs control), stressing sameness will be more likely than expected.***

This preregistered hypothesis is no longer viable, as difference evasion does not directly increase under higher inequality.

***H3. As difference evasion increases under higher inequality (vs lower equality vs control), stressing sameness will predict preference for individual-level policies.***

This preregistered hypothesis is no longer viable, as difference evasion does not directly increase under higher inequality.

**Meritocratic Beliefs (Study 2)*****H4. Meritocratic beliefs will be positively associated with difference evasion.***

We conducted a Pearson correlation and a robust regression to examine the relationship between meritocratic beliefs and difference evasion. The robust regression included interactions with inequality framing to control for potential variations by experimental condition while also controlling for political orientation, age, inequality evasion, dissociating status, and ethnicity. The reference categories were Control for inequality framing and white Dutch for ethnicity.

**Pearson Correlation.**

In line with H4, the correlational analysis revealed that meritocratic beliefs were weakly and significantly associated with difference evasion ( $r = .10, p < .001$ ).

**Robust Multiple Regression.**

In line with H4, meritocratic beliefs positively predicted difference evasion ( $\beta = 0.137, SE = 0.043, z = 3.21, p < .001$ ).

Political orientation ( $\beta = 0.241, p < .001$ ) and age ( $\beta = 0.163, p < .001$ ) were the strongest positive predictors, while inequality evasion was negatively associated with difference evasion ( $\beta = -0.100, p < .001$ ). Dissociating status showed a marginally significant effect ( $\beta = 0.154, p = .058$ ).

The meritocratic beliefs  $\times$  Higher Inequality interaction was not significant ( $\beta = -0.040, p = .47$ ). In contrast, the meritocratic beliefs  $\times$  Lower Inequality interaction was marginally significant ( $\beta = -0.103, p = .081$ ). This suggests that meritocratic beliefs exhibited a slightly weaker association with difference evasion when the Netherlands was framed as more equal than other European countries compared to the Control condition.



***H5. Meritocratic beliefs will be positively associated with individual-level policy preference (i.e., meritocratic beliefs will be negatively associated with structural-level policy preference).***

We conducted a Pearson correlation and a robust regression to examine the relationship between meritocratic beliefs and policy preference. The robust regression included interactions with inequality framing to control for potential variations by experimental condition while also controlling for political orientation, age, inequality evasion, dissociating status, and ethnicity. The reference categories were Control for inequality framing and white Dutch for ethnicity.

**Pearson Correlation.**

In line with H5, meritocratic beliefs were positively associated with individual-level policy preference and negatively associated with structural-level policy ( $r = -0.12, p < .001$ ), indicating that individuals endorsing stronger meritocratic beliefs were less likely to support structural policy and more likely to support individual-level policy.

**Robust Multiple Regression.**

In partial support of H5, meritocratic beliefs were negatively but marginally significantly associated with policy preference ( $\beta = -0.066, SE = 0.040, z = -1.67, p = .095$ ).

Among the covariates, inequality evasion was the only predictor that remained significant, showing a negative association with policy preference ( $\beta = -0.299, p < .001$ ),

The meritocratic beliefs  $\times$  Higher Inequality interaction approached significance ( $\beta = 0.093, p = .075$ ), suggesting that the negative association between meritocratic beliefs and policy preference might be weaker under Higher Inequality compared to the Control condition. The meritocratic beliefs  $\times$  Low SOGI inequality interaction was not significant ( $\beta = -0.043, p = .43$ ).

## **Deviations from preregistration**

### **Study 1**

Study 1 preregistration link:

[https://osf.io/bxusd?view\\_only=09a7d71a8f65475ba07f12f029671e58](https://osf.io/bxusd?view_only=09a7d71a8f65475ba07f12f029671e58)

### ***Data Exclusions***

We specified that participants had to be at least 18 years old and Dutch nationals to be included. However, we retained participants aged 16 to 18 years old ( $N = 11$ ) and those who were not Dutch but resided in the Netherlands ( $N = 11$ ), as their inclusion aligned with the guidelines set by the Ethics Committee and ensures the study preserve valuable data from individuals who meaningfully engaged with the survey regardless of their nationality.

### ***Transformations***

We planned to manually code participants' free-response descriptions to operationalize social category use. Instead, we employed computational text analysis using the *quanteda* package (Benoit et al., 2018), which allowed for full replicability and minimized potential biases introduced by manual coding.

### ***Statistical Models***

We outlined a series of independent ANOVA tests to assess our hypotheses. However, we opted for a more robust analytical approach that accounts for complex interactions and covariates.

For hypotheses examining difference evasion as the outcome, we conducted robust regressions incorporating interaction terms between political orientation, distancing status, and inequality condition, while controlling for ethnicity and age.

For hypotheses assessing policy preferences as the outcome, we conducted robust regressions including interaction terms between difference evasion, inequality evasion,

distancing status, inequality condition, and character's identity condition, controlling for political orientation, ethnicity, and age.

This revised approach strengthens our analysis in two key ways:

1. Accounting for potential confounders – By controlling for demographic variables and interaction effects, we obtain a more nuanced understanding of how variables interplay.
2. Expanding hypothesis testing – By explicitly modeling distancing status and inequality evasion as predictors within interaction models, we refine our investigation of their roles in shaping difference evasion and policy preferences.

### **Study 2**

Study 2 preregistration link:

[https://osf.io/7kqw5/?view\\_only=e20a3a1351664b37b80b29ebfa599458](https://osf.io/7kqw5/?view_only=e20a3a1351664b37b80b29ebfa599458)

### ***Data Exclusions***

We specified the exclusion of participants who provided low-quality responses to either of the two free-response items (i.e., empty or uninterpretable responses). However, we retained participants whose responses were deemed low-quality for analyses where difference evasion was assessed using the scale-based measure. Additionally, empty responses were not automatically categorized as low-quality because some participants may have chosen not to provide an explicit response despite engaging meaningfully with the survey.

### ***Statistical Models***

We planned to analyze our hypotheses using Bonferroni-corrected two-sided Welch's t-tests (H1 in preregistration), Chi-squared tests (H2 in preregistration), Multinomial regression (H3 in preregistration), and (robust) regression (H4 in preregistration), with political orientation controlled as a covariate for H3 and H4. In contrast, we followed the same analytical strategy as in Study 1 drawing on the reasons stated above.

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**"So you're just a normal person. Just like me?"**

**Difference Evasion in Managing an Advantaged Identity and Legitimising Inequality**

Liberal societies claim to value equality and diversity, yet they are increasingly unequal and resistant to difference. In her documentary *Wit is ook een kleur* (2016), Dutch filmmaker Sunny Bergman explores this duality by examining why liberal white Dutch people react strongly to discussions about race and how this relates to their own whiteness. As engaging with social categories invites individuals to situate themselves in relation to their group's position (Oakes, 2001), employing these categories allows those advantaged to pinpoint inequality and to legitimise or question their place within it. However, white people in Bergman's documentary often evaded racial categories, arguing that the use of racial categories may legitimise inequality—a widespread trope in liberal societies. This evasion also prevented them from situating themselves in relation to their whiteness, rendering their structural advantage inconspicuous. This dissertation examines whether and how downplaying the use of social categories may obscure inequality by enabling advantaged groups to blur their position. I did so by addressing the question of how advantaged group members in liberal settings construe social categories as they manage their advantaged social identity—shaping whether they legitimise or question inequality in turn.

After WWII, social categories were increasingly framed as obstacles to individual equality, prompting equalising efforts that encouraged the blurring of social categories (Whyte, 2019). While some disadvantaged groups thereafter gained legal status comparable to those advantaged, socioeconomic inequalities have widened over the same period (Chancel et al., 2022). To address this intersection of equalising efforts and widening inequalities, I examined two intergroup settings where equalising outlooks have taken deep root in the Netherlands: the ethnic-racial setting, on the one hand, and the sexual orientation and gender

identity (SOGI) setting, on the other hand. I drew on social-psychological research suggesting that advantaged group members may shield themselves from recognising their structural advantage by invoking individual equality as they navigate these intergroup contexts. This can take the form of difference evasion (e.g., "I don't see colour/sexual orientation and gender identity, I see people") and inequality evasion (e.g., "Black/LGBTQ people are not disadvantaged anymore") (Awad & Jackson, 2016; Smith & Shin, 2014). However, whether and how these forms of evasion systematically relate to how advantaged individuals manage their standing—and, in turn, intersect with legitimising or questioning inequality—remains empirically unexamined.

To address this gap, Chapters 2 and 3 adopted a person-centred approach—where subgroups of individuals served as the unit of analysis (Osborne & Sibley, 2017)—and identified profiles of white and cisheterosexual people based on their construals of intergroup differences and intergroup inequality. Identifying these profiles allowed us to examine whether they distinguished how their members managed structural advantage, as well as their ideological correlates regarding current day inequalities. I did so by first conducting qualitative interviews, followed by validating measures with quantitative surveys according to established standards (Flake et al., 2017). Replicating previous work (Mekawi et al., 2020), we identified profiles of *defenders* (high difference evasion alongside high inequality evasion), *evaders* (mid-to-high difference evasion alongside low-to-mid inequality evasion), and *acknowledgers* (low-to-mid levels of both).

Drawing from self-categorisation theory (Oakes, 2001), I found that acknowledging difference (low difference evasion) prompted individuals to construe themselves and others as members of social groups—recognising the role of social categories in shaping people's lives. Thus, when advantaged group members acknowledged both difference and inequality—the *acknowledgers* profile—they were more likely to attribute inequality to

external, relatively stable constraints (e.g., group-based historical advantage) rather than to internal characteristics such as inherent deservingness to rule over others, merit, or talent (Vasilyeva & Lombrozo, 2020). In doing so, acknowledgers favoured structural construals of inequality and adopted power-cognisance to manage their standing (Goren & Plaut, 2012).

In contrast, when advantaged group members evaded difference—even while acknowledging inequality—they dispensed with situating themselves in relation to their group's standing. Evading difference thus related to dilute inequality into an individual matter, if acknowledged at all. As such, defenders and evaders favoured internalist construals of inequality by attributing people's standing to factors internal to themselves, such as inherent deservingness to rule over others, merit, or talent (Hussak & Cimpian, 2015). In turn, some strongly identified with their advantaged status and/or primarily distanced themselves from it by emphasising their individuality instead (Knowles et al., 2014).

Chapters 2 and 3 provide evidence of the role of difference evasion in legitimising inequalities. In doing so, they challenge the notion that equates prejudice and anti-egalitarianism with categorisation, while associating non-prejudice and egalitarianism with downplaying categorisation—echoing long-standing critiques within the discipline (Billig, 1985; Hopkins et al., 1997; Oakes, 2001; Reicher & Hopkins, 2001). Indeed, as liberal societies often frame social standing as a reflection of individual effort and talent (McCoy & Major, 2007), evading difference—rather than emphasising categorisation—may serve as a key coping mechanism for advantaged individuals to dispel the threat of being seen as structurally advantaged beneficiaries of non-meritocratic perks (Knowles et al., 2014). In two preregistered, high-powered experiments, Chapter 4 tested this idea by assessing the causal relation between inequality framings (high vs. low vs. control) and difference evasion in the SOGI context. In particular, it examined how individual differences among cisheterosexual people (e.g., political orientation, advantaged identity strategies) shape difference evasion and

their preferences for structural- versus individual-level policies (e.g., enhancing the socioeconomic position of LGBTQ people vs. implementing awareness campaigns).

Chapter 4 implements a novel manipulation of inequality framings based on the actual position of the Netherlands in the Rainbow Index, which ranks European countries according to their legal protection of LGBTQ people (ILGA-Europe, 2023). This approach yielded four key findings. First, inequality framings did not directly impact difference evasion or policy preferences. Second, higher inequality framing may increase difference evasion when participants distance themselves from their advantaged, cisgender status. Third, participants preferred individual-level policies (vs structural-level ones) as they assessed inequality to be lower and evaded difference. Lastly, individuals who employed SOGI categories under higher inequality preferred individual-level policies (vs structural-level ones) when they distanced from their cisgender status or described a queer character while evading difference. Together, these findings highlight that the outcomes of mobilising social categories hinge on the interplay of contextual (inequality) and dispositional (identity strategies) factors.

This dissertation concludes by elaborating on the implications of acknowledging difference in knowledge- and policy-making. It then pinpoints the limitations of online non-representative surveys and the rarified nature of inequality manipulations, underscoring the potential of representative longitudinal surveys and the need to enhance the ecological validity of inequality manipulations. Indeed, when advantaged group members evaded difference, they were prone to circumventing their structural advantage and, in turn, evading inequality—meaningfully echoing Bergman’s documentary. In contrast, acknowledging difference made advantaged group members more likely to recognise their structurally advantaged position and, consequently, better positioned to foster substantive equality. Thus, this dissertation highlights the key role of difference evasion in distinguishing between formal and substantive egalitarianism among advantaged group members.

**"Dus je bent gewoon een normaal persoon. Net als ik?"**

**Het ontwijken van verschil in het omgaan met een bevoorrechte identiteit en het  
legitimeren van ongelijkheid**

Liberaal samenlevingen beweren gelijkheid en diversiteit te waarderen, maar worden tegelijkertijd steeds ongelijker en vertonen weerstand tegen het waarnemen van verschil. In haar documentaire *Wit is ook een kleur* (2016) onderzoekt de Nederlandse filmmaker Sunny Bergman deze dualiteit door te analyseren waarom liberale witte Nederlanders sterk reageren op discussies over etniciteit en hoe dit verband houdt met hun eigen witheid. Wanneer mensen sociale categorieën gebruiken, positioneren individuen zichzelf in relatie tot de positie van hun groep (Oakes, 2001). Dit gebruik stelt bevoordeelden in staat ongelijkheid te lokaliseren en hun plaats daarin te legitimeren of in twijfel te trekken. In Bergmans documentaire ontweken witte mensen echter vaak etnische categorieën en beweerden zij dat het gebruik ervan ongelijkheid zou kunnen legitimeren—een wijdverbreid motief in liberale samenlevingen. Deze ontwijking verhinderde hen ook zichzelf in relatie tot hun witheid te positioneren, waardoor hun structurele voordeel onopvallend bleef. Dit proefschrift onderzoekt of en hoe het minimaliseren van sociale categorieën ongelijkheid verhult door bevoordeelde groepen in staat te stellen hun positie te vervagen. Dit deden we door te vragen hoe leden van bevoordeelde groepen in liberale contexten sociale categorieën begrijpen terwijl ze omgaan met hun bevoorrechte sociale identiteit—en hoe dit bepaalt of ze ongelijkheid legitimeren of in twijfel trekken.

Na de Tweede Wereldoorlog werden sociale categorieën steeds vaker geframed als obstakels voor individuele gelijkheid, wat leidde tot inspanningen die het vervagen ervan aanmoedigden (Whyte, 2019). Hoewel sommige benadeelde groepen sindsdien een juridische status hebben verworven die vergelijkbaar is met die van bevoordeelden, zijn

sociaaleconomische ongelijkheden in dezelfde periode toegenomen (Chancel et al., 2022).

Om deze combinatie van gelijkmakende inspanningen en toenemende ongelijkheden te analyseren, onderzochten we twee intergroepscontexten waarin deze gelijkmakende denkbeelden diepgeworteld zijn in Nederland: de etnische context enerzijds en de context van seksuele oriëntatie en genderidentiteit (SOGI) anderzijds. We baseerden ons op sociaalpsychologisch onderzoek dat suggereert dat bevoordeelde groepsleden hun structurele voordeel kunnen negeren door een beroep te doen op individuele gelijkheid wanneer ze zich in deze intergroepscontexten begeven. Dit kan de vorm aannemen van het ontwijken van verschil (bijv. "Ik zie geen kleur/seksuele oriëntatie en genderidentiteit, ik zie mensen") en het ontwijken van ongelijkheid (bijv. "Zwarte/LHBTQ-mensen zijn niet langer benadeeld") (Awad & Jackson, 2016; Smith & Shin, 2014). Echter, of en hoe deze vormen van ontwijking systematisch verband houden met de manier bevoordeelde individuen met hun positie omgaan—en vervolgens samenhangen met het legitimeren of in twijfel trekken van ongelijkheid—is empirisch niet onderzocht.

Om deze kennislacune aan te pakken, hanteerden we in Hoofdstukken 2 en 3 een persoonsgerichte benadering—waarbij subgroepen van individuen de analyse-eenheid vormden (Osborne & Sibley, 2017)—en identificeerden we profielen van witte en cisheteroseksuele mensen op basis van hun interpretaties van intergroepsverschillen en intergroepsongelijkheid. Door deze profielen te identificeren, konden we nagaan hoe hun leden omgaan met hun structurele voordeel, evenals in hun ideologische verbanden met betrekking tot hedendaagse ongelijkheden. Dit deden we eerst via kwalitatieve interviews en vervolgens door de meetinstrumenten te valideren met kwantitatieve enquêtes volgens vastgestelde normen (Flake et al., 2017). Voortbouwend op eerder onderzoek (Mekawi et al., 2020) identificeerden we profielen van verdedigers (hoge verschilontwijking samen met hoge ongelijkheidsontwijking), ontwijkers (gemiddelde tot hoge verschilontwijking samen met

lage tot gemiddelde ongelijkheidsontwikking) en erkenners (lage tot gemiddelde niveaus van beide).

Op basis van de zelf-categorisatietheorie (Oakes, 2001) ontdekten we dat het erkennen van verschil (lage verschilontwikking) ertoe leidde dat individuen zichzelf en anderen als leden van sociale groepen beschouwden—waardoor zij de rol van sociale categorieën in het vormgeven van levensomstandigheden erkenden. Dus wanneer bevoordeelde groepsleden zowel verschil als ongelijkheid erkenden—het erkennersprofiel—waren ze eerder geneigd ongelijkheid toe te schrijven aan externe, relatief stabiele beperkingen (bijv. historisch groepsvoordeel) in plaats van aan interne kenmerken zoals inherente geschiktheid om over anderen te heersen, verdienste of talent (Vasilyeva & Lombrozo, 2020). Door dit te doen, gaven erkenners de voorkeur aan structurele interpretaties van ongelijkheid en namen ze een machtsbewuste houding aan bij het omgaan met hun positie (Goren & Plaut, 2012).

Echter, wanneer bevoordeelde groepsleden verschil ontweken—zelfs terwijl ze ongelijkheid erkenden—lieten ze na zichzelf te positioneren in relatie tot de positie van hun groep. Verschilontwikking hield dus verband met het reduceren van ongelijkheid tot een individuele kwestie, als die überhaupt werd erkend. Als zodanig gaven verdedigers en ontwijkers de voorkeur aan internalistische interpretaties van ongelijkheid door de sociale positie van mensen toe te schrijven aan interne factoren zoals inherente geschiktheid om over anderen te heersen, verdienste of talent (Hussak & Cimpian, 2015). Deze mensen distantieerden zich voornamelijk van hun bevoordeelde groep door hun individualiteit te benadrukken (Knowles et al., 2014).

Hoofdstukken 2 en 3 bieden bewijs voor de rol van verschilontwikking in het legitimeren van ongelijkheden. Daarmee dagen ze de opvatting uit die vooroordelen en anti-egalitarisme gelijkstelt aan categorisatie, terwijl niet-bevooroordeeldheid en egalitarisme worden geassocieerd met het minimaliseren van categorisatie—een echo van langdurige

kritieken binnen de discipline (Billig, 1985; Hopkins et al., 1997; Oakes, 2001; Reicher & Hopkins, 2001). Inderdaad, aangezien liberale samenlevingen sociale positie vaak framen als een weerspiegeling van individuele inspanning en talent (McCoy & Major, 2007), kan verschilontwikking—eerder dan het benadrukken van categorisatie—voor bevoordeelde individuen een cruciaal mechanisme vormen om de dreiging af te wenden van het worden gezien als structureel bevoordeelde begunstigden van niet-meritocratische voordelen (Knowles et al., 2014).

In twee vooraf geregistreerde experimenten testte Hoofdstuk 4 dit idee door de causale relatie te onderzoeken tussen ongelijkheidsframes (hoog vs. laag vs. controle) en verschilontwikking in de SOGI-context. Dit hoofdstuk implementeerde een nieuwe manipulatie van ongelijkheidsframes op basis van de werkelijke positie van Nederland in de *Rainbow Index*, die Europese landen rangschikt op basis van hun juridische bescherming van LGBTQ-mensen (ILGA-Europe, 2023). Deze aanpak leverde vier kernbevindingen op. Ten eerste hadden ongelijkheidsframes geen directe invloed op verschilontwikking of beleidsvoorkeuren. Ten tweede kon een hogere ongelijkheidsscore verschilontwikking vergroten wanneer deelnemers zich distantieerden van hun bevoorrechte, cisgenderstatus. Ten derde gaven deelnemers de voorkeur aan beleid op individueel niveau wanneer zij ongelijkheid als lager inschatten en verschil ontweken. Tot slot gaven individuen die SOGI-categorieën gebruikten onder hoge ongelijkheid de voorkeur aan beleid op individueel niveau wanneer ze zich distantieerden van hun cisgenderstatus of een queer personage beschreven, terwijl ze tegelijkertijd verschil ontweken. Samen benadrukken deze bevindingen dat de effecten van het mobiliseren van sociale categorieën afhangen van de wisselwerking tussen contextuele (ongelijkheid) en dispositionele (identiteitsstrategieën) factoren.

Dit proefschrift sluit af met een bespreking van de implicaties van het erkennen van verschil in kennis- en beleidsvorming. Vervolgens worden de beperkingen van online niet-



representatieve enquêtes en de kunstmatige aard van ongelijkheidsmanipulaties benoemd, waarbij het potentieel van representatieve longitudinale enquêtes en de noodzaak om de ecologische validiteit van ongelijkheidsmanipulaties te verbeteren, wordt onderstreept. Inderdaad, wanneer bevoordeelde groepsleden verschil ontweken, waren ze geneigd hun structurele voordeel te omzeilen en daarmee ongelijkheid te ontwijken—een betekenisvolle echo van Bergmans documentaire. Daarentegen maakte het erkennen van verschil bevoordeelde groepsleden eerder geneigd hun structureel bevoordeelde positie te erkennen, waardoor ze beter in staat waren substantiële gelijkheid te bevorderen. Zo benadrukt dit proefschrift de sleutelrol van verschilontwikking in het onderscheid tussen formeel en substantieel egalitarisme onder bevoordeelde groepen.

## **Contributions to Empirical Chapters**

### **Chapter 2**

Cáceres Quezada, E., Kende, J., Boiger, M., Hickson, H., Hitschfel, C., & Doosje, B. (under review). How white people manage the wait of the past: The role of advantaged identity strategies in linking colonialism to current racial inequality.

ECQ was responsible for funding acquisition. ECQ spearheaded the conception and design in collaboration with JK, MB, and BD. ECQ spearheaded the qualitative data production, analysis, and interpretation in collaboration with HH and CH. ECQ undertook the quantitative data production, analysis, and interpretation. ECQ drafted the article and revised it critically for important intellectual content in collaboration with JK and BD. MB provided feedback on editing. JK, MB, and BD carried out supervision.

### **Chapter 3**

Cáceres Quezada, E., Doosje, B., Fernández Sabatés, P., Boiger, M., & Kende, J. (revised & resubmitted, under review). Cisheterosexual people in post-closeted times: The role of evading difference in managing an advantaged identity and legitimising inequality.

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## **Chapter 4**

Cáceres Quezada, E., Doosje, B., & Kende, J. (in preparation). Inequality framings shape cisheterosexual people's construals of LGBTQ-cisheterosexual difference and policy preferences to address inequality.

ECQ was responsible for funding acquisition. ECQ spearheaded the conception and design in collaboration with BD and JK. ECQ undertook the quantitative data production, analysis, and interpretation. ECQ drafted the article and revised it critically for important intellectual content in collaboration with BD and JK. BD and JK carried out supervision.