Economic inequality and wealth based stereotyping: A comparison between Kenya and Portugal

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ERASMUS Mundus Joint Master in the Psychology of Global Mobility, Inclusion and Diversity in Society (Global-MINDS)

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I dedicate this work to my mother and my partner. My mother for always believing in me, and my dreams and my partner for being my pillar of strength.

Acknowledgments

Resumo

A desigualdade está a aumentar em muitos países. Da literatura, podemos ver que muita da investigação se tem centrado na forma como as desigualdades de rendimento são prejudiciais tanto a nível individual como social. No entanto, sabe-se pouco sobre as percepções subjectivas da desigualdade e como estas estão relacionadas com os processos e resultados sócio-psicológicos. Para este estudo, concentramo-nos na realização de uma comparação transcultural em dois países (Portugal e Quénia), ambos relativamente desiguais mas diferem significativamente na sua riqueza absoluta. Há muitos factores que determinariam como os indivíduos se vêem a si próprios como sendo semelhantes ou diferentes dos outros. Para este estudo, é feita a hipótese de que os efeitos da percepção da desigualdade nos processos psicológicos seriam mais pronunciados no Quénia do que Portugal. 142 participantes de Portugal e 426 participantes do Quénia responderam a um inquérito online e os resultados do estudo mostraram que quanto maior for o índice de desigualdade de um país, mais forte será a perceção da desigualdade, que também se traduziu em níveis mais baixos de resultados sociais. Verificámos também que os estereótipos de agência e de comunalidade foram atribuídos de forma diferente entre ricos e pobres, sendo os ricos classificados como mais agênticos do que comunais e os pobres classificados como mais comunais do que agênticos, sendo estas relações influenciadas pela percepção da desigualdade. Discutimos as implicações deste estudo à luz do aumento global da desigualdade de rendimentos com a esperança de melhorar as relações sociais entre a população mundial.

Palavras-chave: Percepção da desigualdade, conteúdo estereotipado, grupos de riqueza

Categorias e Códigos de Classificação segundo APA PsycINFO:
3020 Processos de grupo e interpessoais
3040 Perceção e cognição social

Abstract

Income inequality is on the rise in many countries. From the current literature, we can see that a lot of research has focused on how income/economic inequalities are harmful both at the individual and societal level. However, very little is known about the subjective perceptions of inequality and how they are related to socio-psychological processes and outcomes. For this study, we focus on conducting a cross-cultural comparison on two countries (Portugal and Kenya), which are both relatively unequal but differ significantly in their absolute wealth. There are a lot of factors that would determine how individuals see themselves as being similar or different from others. For this study, it is hypothesised that effects of perceived inequality on psychological processes would be more pronounced in Kenya than in Portugal. 142 participants from Portugal and 426 participants from Kenya responded to an online survey and results from the study showed that the higher the inequality index of a country, the stronger the perception of inequality which also translated to lower levels of social outcomes. We also found that stereotypes of agency and communality were assigned differently between the rich and the poor with the rich being rated as more agentic than communal and the poor being rated as more communal than agentic with these relationships being influenced by the perception of inequality in the country. We discuss the implications of this study in light of the global increase in income inequality with the hope of improving social relationships amongst the world population.

Keywords: *Perceived inequality, stereotype content, wealth groups*

Index

Index of Tables

Index of figures

Glossary of acronyms

CEO	Chief Executive Officer
Ksh	Kenyan Shillings
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
SCM	Stereotype Content Model
SES	Social Economic Status
USA	United States of America

Introduction

Economic inequality within a country can be understood as the difference in the level of distribution of economic resources within the society. Economic inequalities tend to affect a wide range of areas of citizen life ranging from economic, social and political aspects (Sarkar et al., 2020). Under the economic aspect, there are differences in income distributions between different groups. Under the social aspects, different groups have differences in wellbeing and physical health as well as access to opportunities. Political inequality is mainly the differences in terms of access to power and public resources within the country. In Kenya, there is evidence of huge gaps in terms of economic, social and political inequalities especially among the rich and the poor, the rural and urban populations as well as among ethnic groups and regions (Muiruri, 2019). Understanding these differences is an important step towards achieving success in bridging the gap in terms of economic inequalities in the country.

In the current global climate, economic inequality is not limited to how income is distributed between social groups but also among members of a similar group. These differences can be seen in how its members perceive and interact with each other. Drivers like stereotypes and intergroup dynamics show how the wealthy and poor perceive each other within a social and economic context.

To better understand how rising economic inequality impacts social life, the present study aims to examine and compare how higher (versus lower) levels of inequality in Kenya and Portugal are related to residents' perceptions of inequality as well as the stereotypes they have of the wealthiest and poorest in society. Particularly as both these countries have had a vastly different historical background, with Portugal being a European country and having participated in the colonization of African countries and Kenya as a sub-Saharan country that was colonized, it could be expected that Portugal would exhibit lower levels of inequality due to its perceived advancement economically in comparison to Kenya, although this is not to say that all colonizing countries have low levels of inequality despite having better economies. However, when we look at the inequality index for Kenya and Portugal, the two countries are quite close to each other. For instance, Kenya scored 40.8 and Portugal scored 35.5 in 2015, (*Gini Index (World Bank Estimate) | Data*, n.d.).

We chose to compare these two countries because despite not being so different in the inequality index, they are quite different economically with Kenya having a total GDP (Gross Domestic Product) of $191.2 billion, $4,509 per capita and a population of 52.6 million, and Portugal having a total GDP of $346.9 billion, $36,471 per capita and a population of 10.3 million, (*Https://Www.Heritage.Org/*, n.d.). We would presume that this could influence the socio-psychological perception of wealth distribution in the countries.

Several studies have argued that the rise of economic inequality has resulted in dividing society as a whole. As a result countries considered unequal have higher levels political polarization, violence and crime as well as lower trust levels and community involvement (Paskov & Dewilde, 2012; Solt, 2008; Wilkinson, Kawachi, & Kennedy, 1998). This however, has not shed deeper insight as to the reason why inequality has a major impact on social ties. The study seeks to examine why the higher level of economic inequality in Kenya and Portugal might encourage wealth based intergroup dynamics and strengthen stereotypes of the wealthy and the poor. Understanding these differences could provide more insight into the need to reduce the economic inequality gaps in the two countries.

CHAPTER 1

Literature review

1.1 Income inequality

In social science, inequalities are classified into two types: inequalities of opportunity and inequalities of outcome. Inequality of opportunity refers to forms of inequality that are inherent in humans, such as race, gender, familial history, and ethnic origin. On the other hand, inequality of outcome and income results from a mix of disparities in opportunity, individual efforts, and ability (Dabla-Norris et al., 2015), which implies they are prevalent in all cultures. They are caused by human behaviour and impact, and their position in society may be affected by humans; that is, the degree of control over their proclivity in a society can be socially determined. As a result, their significance and impact in crises caused by various inequalities are often underestimated; this is apparent from the fact that the majority of social psychological research focuses on opportunity inequality, (Bapuji & Neville, 2015). We could say that outcome inequalities constitute the bedrock of all crises resulting from various types of inequality. As a result, they are unusual in that they are quantifiable.

Income inequality refers to the disparity between people's levels of income. Inequality of income is the fundamental cause of all inequalities. It is the foundation, and therefore the most important of them all, since it serves as a yardstick for assessing various disparities, (Solimano, 2001). However, it has received less attention in social psychological research, despite the fact that it has been on the increase since the 1980s - the world's wealthiest people, the top five hundred earn more than the lowest 10%, four hundred and sixteen million people (Watkins, 2005). Moreover, after the 2008 crisis, when the global economy descended into recession, the divide between wealthy and poor widened even further. In other words, the wealthy get wealthier and the poor become poorer. While it may seem that income inequality has decreased as a result of rising living standards that also affected the poor, the reality is very different. The world is more unequal than it has ever been; thus, income disparity is a pertinent topic.

According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), income is defined as a household's disposable income in a particular year. Income inequality,

which is measured by the Gini coefficient is based on the comparison of cumulative proportions of the population against cumulative proportions of income they receive, and it ranges between 0 in the case of perfect equality and 1 in the case of perfect inequality, (*Inequality - Income Inequality - OECD Data*, n.d.). Income disparity varies considerably across and within countries. Income disparity is found to be greater inside nations than across countries, and to be greater among emerging developing countries than industrialized ones, as measured by the Gini coefficient (Beddoes, 2015).

In some cases, individuals´ perception of inequality can be different from the actual income inequality and citizens may assume that their country is more or less equal than it actually is, (Niehues, 2014). Perceived inequality or subjective inequality, which is the focus of my thesis, is defined as laypeople's perception of these levels of inequality (Hauser & Norton, 2017). Schmalor & Heine, (2021) conducted 2 studies, one among US citizens and a second across 6 different countries to investigate the construct of subjective inequality and how it relates to objective inequality and social outcomes. In the first study among USA citizens, the found that perceived or subjective inequality had small correlations to state-level GINI coefficients which suggested that subjective inequality was only weakly influenced by objective inequality. However, they also found that subjective inequality, just like objective inequality is associated with social outcomes of stress, anxiety, depression, status anxiety and less trust and subjective well-being. In the follow-up second study with participants from the USA, Canada, Britain, Sweden, South Africa and Japan, the outcome was slightly different with the correlations between subjective inequality and objective inequality being larger than they were across the USA states. The assumption was that this was due to the greater variability in economic inequality in the different countries as opposed to just within the USA, (Schmalor & Heine, 2021).

Nevertheless, for this study, it is this subjective perception of inequality that we are focused on as it provides some insights into individuals' beliefs and psychological experience regarding the distribution of wealth, income and resources and how they would position themselves and others in regard to the same as well as the associated stereotypes and perceptions since it is a measure at the individual level.

1.2 Portugal vs Kenya

Kenya is a third world country, while Portugal is a European country. Both countries score almost similarly on the GINI index with Kenya scoring 40.8 as of 2015 and Portugal scoring 33.5 as of 2018 (*Gini Index (World Bank Estimate) | Data*, n.d.). When we look at these numbers contextually, the most unequal country in the world (South Africa) has a GINI index of 63 while the most equal country (Faroe Islands) has a GINI index of 22.7, within the regions, Portugal ranks at position 20 out of 27 in the European Union and Kenya ranks at position 19 out of 46 in sub-saharan Africa with the top ranks being most equal.

   Even though there are similar disparities in relative wealth, the two countries are quite different when it comes to their absolute level of wealth as indexed by its Gross Domestic Income (GDP) as we have indicated above. When we also look at the economic freedom of the two countries, which is basically the fundamental right of every human to control his or her own labour and property, Kenya scores at 54.9 (world rank 138) and considered mostly un-free, while Portugal scores at 67.5 (world rank 52) and is considered moderately free, (*Https://Www.Heritage.Org/Index/Ranking*, n.d.). A higher number indicates more economic freedom. In a context where national wealth is low and a relatively large proportion of the population even lives in poverty, it is conceivable that an unequal distribution of income is socio-psychologically more harmful than in a context where the provision of basic needs is generally assured. Hence, wealth disparities in a context of lower levels of wealth are likely to exacerbate the negative effects of income inequality.

      Income inequality in Portugal is largely contributed to by the wage bargaining power for minimum wage for different categories of workers and similarly at the top of the economic pyramid (Cardoso, 1998). In Kenya, studies have been carried out to understand the role of inequality in shaping politics and the economy as well as its influence on the overall distribution of resources in society. Researchers have therefore found that inequality is an important factor in influencing the political power to access and control the state resources (Ilinca et al., 2019). This results in variations in terms of political and socio-economic benefits associated with access to power. On the other hand, there are some extreme cases of rural-urban and gender inequalities. Reports based on the evaluation of Kenyan resources indicate that the top 10 per cent of households in Kenya control 43 per cent of the total income while the bottom 10 per cent control

less than 1 per cent (Maina, 2017). Also, there are inequalities in terms of income and availability of resources across different regions in Kenya.

In Portugal on the other hand, studies indicate that it is one of the most unequal income distribution countries in Europe. Wealthy citizens in the country earn more than five times higher as compared to poor people. Also, there are significant differences in terms of wages and hourly payments for workers between the poor and the rich. The country was critically affected by the 2008 recession from which it did not recover economically as compared to other European countries (Alves, et al., 2020). The economic differences forced poor families to live in unstable economic conditions especially in the urban areas. The inequalities further affect the general wellbeing of the people in terms of health, and access to social facilities, (Alves, et al., 2020). At the same time, there is an unequal distribution of government resources which is highly attributed to the economic inequalities in the country. Teixeira & Loureiro, (2019) notes that different societal cues and economic factors tend to influence the flow of income in society. Social policies, therefore, are needed to reduce poverty and expand the welfare of the people in the state.

1.3 Inequality as a Social Problem

As highlighted by Wilkinson and Pickett (2010), income disparity contributes to a variety of social issues. Unemployment is one of the most prevalent social problems associated with income inequality in all countries. Despite the development of multibillion-dollar businesses in every part of the globe, one of the main issues that remain is unemployment. Numerous individuals lack employment possibilities, which contribute to a high dependence rate. As the dependence rate rises, the individual's quality of life decreases, making the society intolerable to live in (Craig, 2010).

Krishna (2008) concluded that income inequality is not a threat to democracy because it neither hinders nor discourages political participation. He came to this conclusion after conducting extensive research across several third world countries and continents by examining the relationship between social problems and income inequality or, more precisely, the effects of income inequality on the political system. He warned, though, that if the issue is not addressed, it might become a danger in the future. Thus, Krishna regards the relationship between economic disparity and political instability as not being currently strongly correlated, but could be in the future (Krishna, 2008). However, income disparity, according to Acemoglu and Robinson

(2013), is a driving element in political instability since it enables poverty, social issues, and fosters jealousy among individuals. They described the Arab Uprising as a consequence of wealth concentration in the hands of the few, denying the rest of society the chance to live the lives they deserve, and therefore focused their grievances against the political system. Income disparity is also a primary cause of political crises. Although Krishna (2008) relied on empirical evidence to reach this conclusion, it is clear that political instability in terms of revolution are often the consequence of or caused by a situation of vast inequality within a State that has been maintained and left unresolved by the administration (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2013).

Income disparity has been linked to the development of envy and jealousy, thus eroding social trust and cohesiveness. Economically, it has been linked to a decline in investment, limiting access to educational institutions, health care facilities, and financial institutions. Additionally, it has been claimed that it impedes the elimination of poverty in any country (most notably developing nations), but instead perpetuates it (Dabla-Norris et al., 2015). As a result, it is necessary to ascertain the consequences of income disparity.

Socioeconomic disparity has a number of negative consequences for individuals and society as a whole. There has been a rise in crime as the gap between the rich and poor becomes wider. Even the wealthy commit major crime, but believe that their economic or political status exempts them from the law. They are able to commit grave offences because they can easily get their way in the name of wealth or political power (Bor et al., 2017). On the other hand, the less fortunate bear a portion of the burden. They put their health at risk by being more vulnerable to experience violence, which in turn has a major impact on their mental and physical well-being. Additionally, they have limited access to healthcare services and healthy food. They even overlook opportunities for socioeconomic growth.

As a result of these power imbalances, the quality of the social connection between the wealthy and the impoverished has deteriorated over time. Because the affluent tend to see themselves as superior to the poor and the poor tend to serve as servants for the rich, there is a systemic power imbalance which reinforces itself (Bor et al., 2017).

Socioeconomic disparity is usually defined in terms of social classes: upper or affluent, middle class, and lower class. These classes were defined by their professional and educational accomplishments, as well as individuals´ participation in subcultures that define their wealth (Wilkinson & Pickett, 2017). Although we are focusing on Kenya and Portugal in this study,

most psycho-social research in the past has been done in the United States of America and in the United Kingdom. In the U.S.A (which has a GINI Index of 41.4), the upper class is considered to possess considerable professional and educational prowess, as well as a well-established social network. This network is comprised of business connections, and it is thought that corporate elites such as CEOs attained their position via major career milestones rather than through simple inheritance. Socioeconomic disparity in the United States has elicited a wide range of ideas, beliefs, and even conflicts among its people. Others think it is just an imbalanced allocation of resources among the three groups (Wilkinson & Pickett, 2017). In Continental European nations such as the United Kingdom (which has a GINI Index of 35.1), socioeconomic inequality is conceptualized in terms of cultural value and inequality; the two have historically been considered distinct in public policy and academic study. The British culture places a premium on gender, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status when it comes to cultural significance and society. For instance, in terms of social class, the British society sees inequality as an uneven distribution of buying power with the wealthy being able to enjoy a much higher standard of living than the poor (Wilkinson & Pickett, 2017). In terms of race, the United Kingdom has seen cultural value disparity as a problem dating all the way back to colonial days, when the white man was viewed as superior to the black man. As a result, whites had more access to amenities such as better medical treatment and more fruitful settlement sites, while the black man functioned as subjects and slaves, providing labour for white men´s endeavours.

Even though socioeconomic disparity is generally regarded negatively in British society, it is viewed positively in terms of health. With few dissenting views on this subject, the majority of people think that the wealthy are healthier than the poor because they can afford sophisticated medical care for certain diseases (Wilkinson & Pickett, 2017). They can also purchase more nutritious meals compared to the impoverished. It has indeed been empirically found that wealth is related to lower morbidity rate (Hesdorffer & Lee, 2009). Hence, this line of research found that money and health are inextricably linked; that wealth affects health.

People tend to constantly attribute wellbeing and health as well as intelligence to people who have high socioeconomic status. Durante, et al, (2017), conducted a 3 part study with the aim of determining whether perceived competence and warmth stereotypes determine out-group stereotypes as well as if many stereotypes included a mixed ascription of competence and warmth at either high or low levels for both. They conducted the studies by surveying different

groups which included university students and non-students where they were asked to rated different groups with regards to how they perceive their competence and warmth. Some of the groups that the participants were evaluating included housewives, welfare recipients, racial minorities and majorities, religious groups, gender groups, individuals of different sexual orientation, educated people, elderly people, disabled people, professionals and different wealth groups such as the rich, middle class and the poor.

Interesting for our study was that rich people were stereotyped as being more competent but less warm and the poor being stereotyped as less competent and warmer than the rich with this stereotype becoming stronger with greater inequality. In Kenya for instance, poor people are considered to be lazy and substance abusers, (Muiruri, 2019). Such mental images are likely to influence people to distaste welfare policies despite the growing inequalities. For school-going children, they tend to perceive a rich man as more competent as compared to a poor man. Studies indicate that children at very early stages develop a preference for the wealthy groups and use wealth cues to form their preferences towards their peers inferring their competency and popularity, (Shutts et al., 2016).

Beyond the systems of education and the justice systems, the economic inequality within a country tends to shape the stereotypes. Certain professions such as doctors tend to be considered to deserve wealth as compared to untrustworthy others that do not. Different nations with high inequality differences tend to indicate these complicated stereotypes which subjectively justify and stabilize the unequal systems in the society, (Sarkar et al., 2020). Further due to these differences, nations display considerations of the people eligible for government support and those that are not. This tends to affect the overall stability of equality and affects the state of the society in terms of resource distribution. This leads us to the social impact of perception of inequality on how in-groups and out-groups are perceived.

1.4 The Stereotype Content Model

In order to discuss how individuals form stereotypes, we need to first understand how individuals categorize themselves in relation to others and how similarly or different they perceive themselves compared to others. We can look at this through the Social Identity approach, integrating the social identity theory and the self-categorization theory (Reid, 1987; Tajfel, 1978; Turner & Tajfel, 1979). An individual's social identity is described as how the individual

perceives themselves based on their membership or feeling of belonging to specific groups that give a particular sense of pride and a source of self-esteem. Examples of these groups could be religious groups, age groups, political groups, gender identity groups, social class group etc., and they would influence the social norms that the person adheres to, providing a sort of blue-print to navigate the social world (Hogg & Reid, 2006). Important for us in this study, would be group categorization based on Social Economic Status (SES). Although SES had not been largely discussed as being and important aspect for identification, Adler et al., (2000) showed that an individual's SES was very important to their self-concepts and identity indicating that those with higher SES attached more importance to their SES position but less importance to their sociocultural identities and vice versa. An individual's SES identity in turn affects their social cognition and attitude where members of a lower social class have a psychological orientation that is motivated to deal with external constraints and threats while upper class members have a psychological orientation that is motivated by internal states such as personal goals and emotions, (Manstead, 2018). We could presume therefore that SES does have an effect on the perception of social outcomes such as social cohesion, national identity or intergroup relationships.

With reference to self-categorization theory (Willer et al., 1989) we find that by adopting the values, social norms, behaviours, attitudes and identity of specific group memberships, this forms the basis of individuals categorizing themselves as belonging to specific in-groups and distinguishing those who belong to the out-groups. These distinctions make it more apparent who are considered similar to or different from the self through social comparisons (Hogg & Reid, 2006) and eventually leads to perceiving the in-group more favourably and perceiving stronger out-group differences leading to negative social consequences, such as social heuristics in the form of stereotypes (Brewer, 2007).

The evaluations of the "others" can be either positive or negative and studies have shown that they can be assessed through two dimensions of judgement and social perception and this is detailed in the Stereotype Content Model (SCM) (Fiske et al., 2002). The SCM focuses specifically on the dimensions of warmth/sociability i.e relationship building and competence/intelligence i.e the ability to attain goals. Different combinations and degrees of these dimensions evoke certain emotions such as envy, pity, disgust, admiration, contempt, etc, that lead to prejudices which in turn influence specific stereotypes. Fiske et al. (2002) studied the

perceptions of different groups and outlined patterns in how the present society assigns stereotype content. For instance, as indicated in figure 1 below, homeless people, welfare recipients and the poor who are associated with contempt or disgust were perceived as being low in both warmth and competence. In-groups and close allies such as Christians, women, middle class individuals and racially white individuals, were commonly associated with admiration and were perceived as being high in both competence and warmth. On the other hand, Asians, Jews, men and the rich were commonly associated with envy and were perceived as being low in warmth but high in competence. The elderly, retarded and disabled were commonly associated with pity and were perceived as being high in warmth but low in competence. Moreover, other racial minorities such as Native American, Hispanics and Blacks, queer and young people were perceived at a medium level of both warmth and competence (Fiske et al., 2002). This provided a basis of how out-groups may be (dis)liked or (dis)respected. Furthermore, these authors theorized and found that perceived social status is associated with perceptions of competence while competition is associated with the perception of warmth. This applies to different wealth groups as well, which is the focus for our study. As indicated in Figure 1 below from the study of Fiske et al., (2002), the poor would be considered more warm than competent and the rich would be considered more competent than warm.

Wayne Leach et al., (2007) proposed and tested an additional dimension of morality i.e honesty and trustworthiness as an extension to the SCM in order to demonstrate its importance, separate from the previous dimensions of warmth and competence, in inter-group evaluations, particularly positive evaluations indicating that morality would be the most important characteristic in positive in-group evaluation. Their study argues that although competence has been used as the basis for positive in-group evaluation, there is little evidence that competence is actually important in positive in-group evaluations and they sought to study the importance of morality to positive evaluations with the argument that without a sense of morality, it would be difficult for members to behave in a way that maximises benefit for themselves and the group, (De Waal, 1996). Wayne Leach et al., (2007) discovered that although morality was not more important than competence in positive in-group evealuation, it was equaly important as competence and sociability, and that morality was not necessary for positive evaluations for out-groups.

Figure 1

Group competence–warmth stereotypes (Fiske et al., 2002, Study 3). Key: Stars indicate cluster centres. H, M, and L, respectively, indicate high, medium, and low; W, warmth; C, competence.
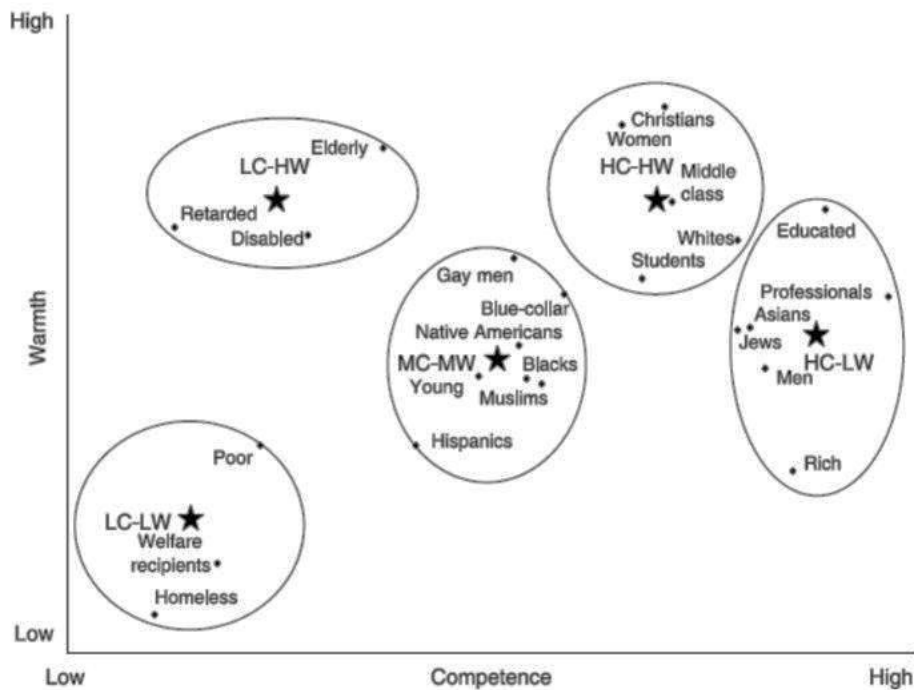
Economic inequality refers to a differentiation into wealth groups which reflects what it means to be either rich or poor. This separation into specific wealth groups forms ingroups and outgroups which eventually leads to the assigning of specific stereotype content to those seen as others. Moreover, when income inequality is higher, people should pay more attention to wealth categorization or social classes and social class stereotypes should become more pronounced, especially in regard to ambivalent stereotypes, as it is the case for the rich (Durante & Fiske, 2017; Heiserman & Simpson, 2021).

For the purpose of this study, we shall be focusing on the dimensions of Agency and Communality as proposed in the Fundamental Content Dimensions, (Abele et al., 2016), where agency is proposed as a combination of competence and assertiveness and communality is proposed as a combination of warmth and morality. As discussed later in the empirical part of

this study, the items of competence and assertiveness were not the only ones used to determine agency not were the items of warmth and morality the only ones used to determine communality, there were additional items to the scale that with a good reliability score. After looking at what has been studies, researched and examined in previous literature, this leads us to our areas of interest and some of the questions that we seek to answer in this study.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

RQ1: Do individuals from Kenya and Portugal differ in their perception of inequality in their country?

Given that Kenya scores higher on the income inequality (GINI Index) than Portugal, it is expected that:

H1: Kenyans will perceive higher inequality in their country compared to Portuguese people.

RQ2: Is perceived inequality associated with negative social outcomes and does individuals' own socio-economic status (SES) moderate this link?

H2: Perceived inequality will be associated with 1) poorer intergroup relations 2) lower social cohesion and 3) lower national identification.

H3: The link between perceived inequality and negative social outcomes varies depending on the individuals' SES.

RQ3: Is perceived inequality associated with the stereotype content of the wealthy and poor?

H4: We hypothesized a two-interaction by expecting that stereotypical evaluations will depend on the target (rich vs poor) and stereotype dimension (agency vs communality). More specifically, we hypothesized that a wealthy person will be perceived as more agentic than a poor person, while a poor person will be perceived as more communal than a rich person.

Given that Kenya scores higher on the income inequality (GINI Index), but lower on GDP than Portugal and that H1 stipulates that Kenya also scores higher on perceived inequality, it is expected that the two-way interaction is exacerbated in the Kenyan sample:

H5: The effect described in H5 will be more accentuated in the country with higher levels of perceived inequality.

Empirical part

2.1 Method

2.1.1 Participants

Data was collected through an online platform, qualtrics by means of an anonymous survey in Portuguese for participants from Portugal and in English for participants from Kenya. Participants in Portugal were mainly from the students' pool at ISCTE- IUL, (92.86%) and some through snowballing, (7.14%). Recruitment of participants in Portugal was done in two phases between October 2020 and December 2020. Participants from the students' pool were offered course credits for their participation. In Kenya, recruitment of participants was mainly through online sources through a recruitment poster that was shared on Instagram stories by a social media influencer. This was also done in two phases in November 2020 and December 2020, and for each post, there was a charge of Ksh 1500 (equivalent to €11.60). Participants were also recruited through family and friends and a few through the assistance of the dean of the psychology department at Kenyatta University where I did my undergraduate studies.

There were 142 participants that responded to the survey in Portugal and 426 participants that responded to the survey in Kenya. Participants in Kenya took 21.73 minutes (median) to complete the survey while participants from Portugal took 22.14 minutes (median). The median score is here reported as it is not influenced by the outliers in the data. An independent sample t-test indicated that there was no significant difference between participants in Kenya and Portugal in how long it took them to complete the survey, $t(230)=0.189$, $p=0.85$. Responses that did not meet the attention checks requirements, in the form of specific questions in the survey that required specific set answers, from both countries were not considered in the final data set, as well as responses with a lot of missing data and residency of less than 10 years from both the Kenya and Portugal datasets. There were 2 participants from Kenya and 4 participants from Portugal who did not meet the residency requirements. All participants in the final data set were either nationals of or had residency in the respective country for more than 10 years in order to ensure an accurate analysis of the social demographics of each country.

The final data set had 126 participants from Portugal with 86.51% female and 12.70% male and an average age of 21.62 years *(SD = 6.40)*. The final data set from Kenya included 106 participants with 68.87% female and 31.13% male with an average age of 22.97 years (*SD* = 4.21) . A chi square test indicated that participants in Portugal and Kenya differed in gender distribution, x^2(2, *N*=232) =12.34, *p*=0.002. It may therefore be important to control for the effect of gender in the main analysis. However, an independent sample t-test indicated that participants from both Portugal and Kenya were comparable in age, *t*(228)=-1.85, *p*=0.066.

With regards to the socio-economic status (SES), participants ranked themselves with reference to the general population in their own country on a scale of 1 (The worst) to 10 (The best) based on income, education and occupation. In both countries, most participants indicated being from a more average SES background, (*M*$_{Portugal}$ = 5.77, *SD*$_{Portugal}$ = 1.22; *M*$_{Kenya}$ = 5.51, *SD*$_{Kenya}$ = 1.46). An independent sample t-test did not indicate any significant difference between the two samples (?) in how participants ranked their socio-economic status, *t*(229)=1.45, *p*=0.149. The education variable was different in the Portuguese and Kenyan data with the Portuguese data having 4 response categories starting from high school education to a doctorate degree while the Kenyan data had 8 categories starting from no formal education to a doctorate degree. A new variable was created for both countries with 0 indicating no university degree and 1 indicating university degree. Looking at the education level of the participants, as indicated in Table 1.1, most participants from both countries had either completed a university degree or were undergraduate students. A chi square test was run using this variable and the results indicated that participants from Portugal and Kenya were comparable in their education level, x^2(1, *N*=231) =0.87, *p*=0.414.

With regards to political orientation, on a scale of 1 to 7, with 1 being extreme left wing or liberal and 7 being extreme right wing or conservative, participants from both countries, on average indicated to being moderately liberal, (*M*$_{Portugal}$ = 3.08, *SD*$_{Portugal}$ = 1.32; *M*$_{Kenya}$ = 3.03, *SD*$_{Kenya}$ = 1.91). On a similar scale, participants also indicated their political beliefs with regards to social issues and similarly to the political orientation variable, participants indicated being moderately liberal, (*M*$_{Portugal}$ = 3.48, *SD*$_{Portugal}$ = 1.47; *M*$_{Kenya}$ = 3.34, *SD*$_{Kenya}$ = 1.92). An independent sample t-test showed that participants from both countries were comparable in their political orientation, *t*(181.87)=0.233, *p*=0.816, and their political beliefs, *t*(194.65)=0.616, *p*=0.538.

Even though, the Survey was conducted in Portuguese for participants in Portugal and English for those from Kenya, participants were also asked to indicate their native language. For Portugal, one participant indicated Creole and one participant indicated English as the native language while the rest all indicated Portuguese. In Kenya, most participants indicated their tribal language. This is common in Kenya where native language refers to the tribal language. The official languages in Kenya are however English and Kiswahili and some participants indicated these as their native language as shown in Table 1.2 below. Yet, the official language of education instruction in Kenya is English.

Table 1. 1

Distribution of Education Data

Education level	Portugal (%)	Kenya (%)
High School	13.5	9.5
Undergraduate	81.0	83.8
Master's Degree	5.6	4.8
Doctoral Degree	0	1.9

Table 1. 2

Native Language Distribution in Kenya

Kenya	
Language	**Percentage (%)**
Kikuyu	29.20
Kiswahili	11.30
Kamba	11.30
English	9.30
Luhya	8.40
Luo	6.60
Kalenjin	4.70
Kisii	4.70
Meru	4.70

Kipsigis	1.90
English and Kiswahili	1.80
Nandi	0.90
Luhya and Kamba	0.90
Bantu	0.90
N/A	2.70

2.1.2 Materials and Procedure

The research is a correlational study that was conducted through an online administered survey on Qualtrics. At the beginning of the survey, participants were presented with an information sheet that included contact details of the researcher, freedom of withdrawal from the study, what would be involved and the risks if any, data confidentiality and details of the ethics clearance. This was followed by a screening question to confirm the residency of the participant. As mentioned above, only responses from participants with more than 10 years residency were included in the final dataset.

In the first section of the questionnaire, participants answered a question to measure their perception of inequality in their home country. In the next section, participants answered questions to measure stereotype content followed by questions to measure entitativity for the top and bottom 5% wealth groups. This was then followed by questions to measure the perception of comparative fit for the different wealth groups. Participants were presented with the top and bottom 5% wealth groups in a randomised manner.

Participants then answered questions to measure intergroup relations and social cohesion within the rich and poor as well as about individuals´ own identification with their country. The final section contained some demographic questions for participants to indicate their social economic status this was measured by self-ranking on a scale of 1 (The worst) to 10 (The best) based on income, education and occupation ; level of education, gender, political orientation, age, native language and the duration of their residency in the country.

For the purpose of the current study, descriptive statistics are reported for all measures, yet only the measures related to the hypotheses are included in the main analyses.

2.1.3 Perception of inequality

Participants were asked to think of 100 citizens of their own country and indicate how many of these 100 people they think could be classified as "very poor", "poor", "average in wealth", "wealthy", "very wealthy." They would then allocate the number to each of these 5 categories. These responses will be used to produce a perceived inequality index with scores ranging from 0 to 1 with a higher score indicating a greater level of perceived inequality. The formula for computing this index was obtained from the cross-cultural project leader and is included in the appendix. This is similar to the conceptualization of the Gini Index, yet instead of an index reflecting the real inequality in terms of income, the score here reflects the participants' perception of their society in terms of the proportion of poor and wealthy.

2.1.4 Stereotype content

Participants were presented with two tasks measuring stereotype content: A free text response and a trait rating task. They were introduced to two target individuals: one wealthy individual (presumably from the top 5%) and one poor individual (presumably from the bottom 5%) in a randomized manner (i.e. the wealthy person first followed by the poor person or vice versa). For each target, participants were asked to describe what they thought each individual is like in terms of both agency and communality. They provided their responses on a 7 point likert scale (1= "Strongly no" to 7= "Strongly yes") on how well they agreed with each statement relating to the different items. The communality dimension was measured by items related to perceived morality (5 items; sincere, honest, righteous, trustworthy and respectful), perceived friendliness (5 items; kind, friendly, warm, likeable and helpful) and perceived moral values (5 items; caring, fair, loyal, respectful and pure). The agency dimension was measured by items related to how competent the target person was perceived (5 items; intelligent, competent, efficient, skillful and capable) and how assertive the target person was perceived (5 items; ambitious, assertive, superiority feeling, confident and purposeful), (Abele et al., 2016; Haidt, 2007). Composite scores were then created by averaging the items belonging to a specific dimension if they showed satisfactory reliability.

To determine the reliability of the scales, a Cronbach,'s alpha was calculated for each measure for both the rich and poor perception items, as well as the combined agency items and combined communality items for both the Portugal and Kenya data. As shown in Table 2.1

below, the Cronbach's alpha for the overarching dimensions of agency and communality for both the rich and the poor in Kenya and Portugal were 0.70, which is the minimum acceptable level as indicated by the general rule of thumb by George & Mallery, (2010).

2.1.5 Wealth categorization.

This was measured with two constructs: *Comparative fit* and *Entitativity.* Comparative fit is conceptualized as the belief that all rich are similar to each other and different from the poor, and vice versa. To measure comparative fit, participants were asked to evaluate the intra-group similarity (i.e. to what extent are people from the top 5 % similar to one another or bottom 5% similar to one another?) as well as intergroup similarity (i.e. how similar do you think that people in the top 5% are to people in the bottom 5%?) on identical 7-point Likert scales (1 = Very different to 7 = Very similar). Comparative fit was calculated by averaging the two ratings of intra-group similarity for the top and bottom 5% and dividing it by the rating of intergroup similarity. Higher values on this measure reflect greater comparative fit.

Entitativity is conceptualized as the perceived homogeneity or groupness among category members, (Gaertner & Schopler, 1998). We measured participants' perceptions of the entitativity of the top (rich) and bottom (poor) 5% using 10 items from the scale of Blanchard et al., (2020) . Participants were asked to rate the extent to which they see people within the top 5% and bottom 5% as an entity (i.e. I see people within the top 5% as a unit, I see people within the top 5% as a group e.t.c) and similarly for the bottom 5%. All the responses were indicated on a 7-point scale (1 = Strongly disagree to 7 = Strongly agree). Two composite scores were computed by averaging items about entitatvity perceptions for both the poor and the rich. A higher score would mean that the wealth group is seen more as an entity. For the purpose of this study however, we did not analyse these variables further.

2.1.6 Perception of positive intergroup relations

This construct was measured by different aspects that include participants' perceptions of levels of trust (*i.e.* There is trust between the top and bottom 5%), perception of competition (*i.e.* There is a lot of competition between the top and bottom 5%), perception of co-operation (*i.e.* There is a lot of co-operation between the top and bottom 5%) and the perception of positivity of relations between wealthy and poor groups within their country (*i.e.* There is a positive relationship between the top and bottom 5%). Participants responded to a 7-item scale when

answering these questions (1 = Strongly disagree to 7 = Strongly agree). The Cronbach´s alpha with all 4 items included was 0.59 for the Portugal data and 0.37 for the Kenya data. Since this value was low, with the item measuring perception of competition omitted, the Cronbach's alpha improved to 0.71 for the Portugal data and 0.67 for the Kenya data. A composite score was then computed by averaging the other 3 items, with higher scores indicating a good relationship between the top and bottom wealth groups.

2.1.7 Social cohesion

In addition, participants also responded to the 5-item social cohesion scale (*i.e.* There is a sense of solidarity in [Portugal/Kenya], People in [Portugal/Kenya] have a lot in common, There is a sense of unity between people in [Portugal/Kenya], People in [Portugal/Kenya] are on the same wavelength, There is a sense of cohesion between people in [Portugal/Kenya]) with a 7-point Likert response scale (1 = Strongly disagree to 7 = Strongly agree). Cronbach´s alpha was 0.81 for the Portugal data and 0.85 for the Kenya data. A composite score was computed by averaging these items with higher scores indicating a perception of high social cohesion in the country.

2.1.8 Identification with society.

We also measured the extent to which participants identify with their country using 4 items *(i.e.* I feel committed to [Portugal/Kenya], I am glad to be a part of [Portugal/Kenya], Being a citizen of [Portugal/Kenya] is an important part of how I see myself, I identify with being a citizen of [Portugal/Kenya]). They provided their response on 7-point Likert scale response (1 Strongly disagree to 7 Strongly agree) with Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.81 for the Portugal data and 0.89 for the Kenya data. A composite score was computed with higher values indicating a strong national identity.

Table 2. 1

Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients

Target	Stereotype dimension	Number of Items	Portugal	Kenya
Poor	Moral	5	0.84	0.85
	Friendly	5	0.9	0.82
	Competent	5	0.89	0.85
	Assertive	5	0.71	0.78
	Values	5	0.81	0.83
	Agency	10	0.87	0.88
	Communality	15	0.92	0.93
Rich	Moral	5	0.83	0.89
	Friendly	5	0.83	0.84
	Competent	5	0.87	0.88
	Assertive	5	0.74	0.7
	Values	5	0.77	0.88
	Agency	10	0.85	0.88
	Communality	15	0.89	0.93
	Intergroup relations	4	0.59	0.37
	Social Cohesion	5	0.81	0.85
	Identity	4	0.81	0.89

2.2 Results

2.2.1 Descriptive Analyses and Correlations

I ran descriptive statistics for the measures of the different stereotypes assigned to the different wealth groups in Portugal and Kenya as well as group perception and intergroup relations measures. As indicated in Table 3.2 below, it seems that participants from both countries assigned stereotypes very similarly to the different wealth groups. Independent sample t-tests showed that there were only significant differences in stereotypes of morality and assertiveness for the poor with Portugal rating higher than Kenya for morality but rating lower than Kenya for assertiveness, there were significant differences in most stereotypes of the rich except for the stereotype of assertiveness with Portugal giving higher ratings compared to Kenya. Because the stereotype sub dimensions tapping into agency or communality respectively were highly correlated (minimum $r = 0.396$ for poor agency items, $= 0.319$ for poor communality items, $= 0.263$ for rich agency items and $= 0.295$ for rich communality items at $p < 0.01$), the following analyses were conducted on these overarching dimensions.

Table 3. 1

Descriptive statistics for measures of stereotype content, group perceptions and intergroup relations assigned to different wealth groups in Portugal and Kenya

| | | t-test statistics | | | | | | |
| | | Portugal | | Kenya | | | | |
Target	**Item**	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*df*	*p*
Poor	Moral	4.88	0.92	4.46	1.17	3.01	229	0.003
	Friendly	5	1	4.83	1.13	1.16	229	0.248
	Competent	4.81	1.1	4.85	1.19	-0.39	229	0.696
	Assertive	3.41	0.87	3.79	1.19	-2.82	228	0.005
	Values	4.5	0.97	4.43	1.08	0.47	228	0.637
Rich	Moral	4.22	0.95	3.19	1.27	7.02	230	<0.001
	Friendly	4.25	0.95	3.8	1.21	3.2	230	0.002
	Competent	5.52	0.83	4.92	1.25	4.35	229	0.001
	Assertive	5.76	0.72	5.7	0.9	0.6	229	0.552
	Values	3.76	0.88	2.86	1.24	6.5	230	<0.001
	Intergroup relations	2.37	0.95	1.96	1.02	-0.79	230	0.429
	Social Cohesion	4.39	0.91	3.59	1.31	5.4	230	<0.001
	Identity	5.24	1.12	5.02	1.6	1.27	230	0.205
	Perceived inequality	0.2	0.05	0.26	0.04	-10.01	230	<0.001

Table 3. 2

Correlation Coefficients For Study Variables

Country	Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Kenya	1. Socio-economic Status (SES)	_								
	2. sub_gini	0.018	_							
	3. socialCh	0.036	-0.151	_						
	4. identity	0.113	-0.125	.414**	_					
	5. intgroup	-0.055	0.072	.224*	0.113	_				
	6. poor_communality	0.041	-0.011	0.167	0.15	-0.106	_			
	7. poor_agency	-0.044	0.068	0.133	0.144	-.215*	.449**	_		
	8. rich_communality	0.084	0.085	0.054	0.001	.272**	-.236*	0.008	_	
	9. rich_agency	0.097	-0.016	0.021	0.058	0.002	-0.052	-.335**	.278**	_
Portugal	1. Social Economic Status (SES)	_								
	2. sub_gini	-0.09	_							

Country	Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
	3. socialCh	-0.003	-0.015	_						
	4. identity	0.121	-0.016	.373**	_					
	5. intgroup	-0.014	.206*	0.057	0.054	_				
	6. poor_communality	-0.165	0.159	.209*	0.018	.241**	_			
	7. poor_agency	-.219*	.199*	0.088	-0.076	.225*	.612**	_		
	8. rich_communality	0.021	-0.03	.244**	.176*	.365**	.196*	0.131	_	
	9. rich_agency	0.114	0.026	.253**	.192*	0.02	.202*	-0.169	0.13	_

Note. **p. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed), *p. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Using an independent sample t-test to test the first hypothesis (H1), it was found that Kenyans perceived higher inequality in their country (*M*= 0.26, SD= 0.04) compared to Portuguese people (*M*=0.20, *SD*=0.05), *t*(230)= -10.01 , *p*< 0.001. This confirms our first hypothesis (Table 3.1).

For the pooled data, we found a medium to small correlation between perceived inequality and social cohesion, *r* = -0.248, *p* ≤ .01, as well as between perceived inequality and intergroup relations, *r* = 0.152, *p* ≤ .05. However, the correlation between perception of inequality and national identity was not significant, *r* = -0.103, *p* > .05

To test the third hypothesis, we ran a simple moderation (Model 1) using Hayes Process (1000 bootstrap samples with centered predictors) and as indicated in Table 4.1 and 4.2, we found a significant main effect perceived inequality on social cohesion but we did not find any significant moderation effect of SES on the relationship between perceived inequality and social cohesion, we also found a significant main effect of perceived inequality on intergroup relations but similarly no moderation effect of SES on the relationship between perceived inequality and intergroup relations. Although there was not significant correlation between perceived inequality and national identity, we also ran a similar moderation analysis and we did not find any significant main effect of perceived inequality or moderation of SES on the relationship between perceived inequality and national identity as indicated in Table 4.3 below. We therefore reject the third hypothesis.

Table 4. 1

Moderation of SES on the relationship between perceived inequality and social cohesion

Model	b	SE	t	p	95% CI Lower	Upper
Constant	4.014	0.076	53.184	0.000	3.865	4.162
Perceived Inequality	-5.566	1.402	-3.971	0.000	-8.328	-2.804
SES	0.027	0.057	0.472	0.637	-0.085	0.138
Perceived Inequality X SES	-0.757	1.076	-0.703	0.483	-2.878	1.364

Note. R^2= 0.07

Table 4. 2

Moderation of SES on the relationship between perceived inequality and intergroup relations

Model	b	SE	t	p	95% CI Lower	Upper
Constant	2.531	0.595	42.552	0.000	2.413	2.648
Perceived Inequality	2.334	1.105	2.113	0.036	0.158	4.511
SES	-0.018	0.045	-0.412	0.681	-0.106	0.069
Perceived Inequality X SES	0.399	0.848	0.470	0.639	-0.273	2.070

Note. $R^2 = 0.02$

Table 4. 3

Moderation of SES on the relationship between perceived inequality and national identity

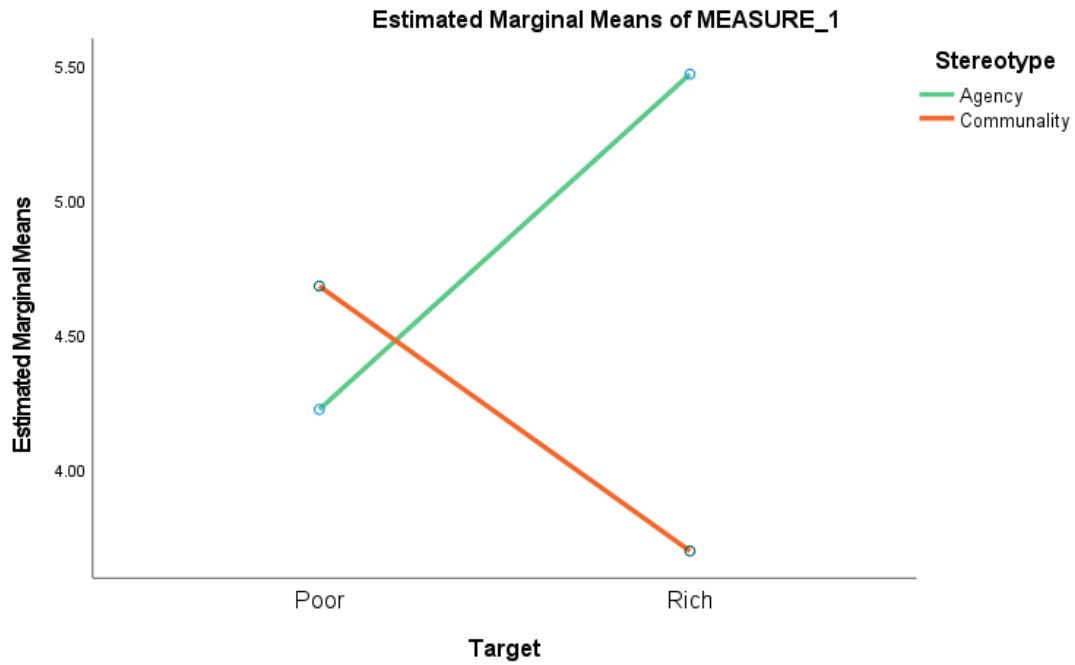| Model	b	SE	t	p	95% CI Lower	Upper
Constant	5.136	0.089	57.473	<0.001	4.960	5.312
Perceived Inequality	-2.452	1.660	-1.478	0.141	-5.723	0.818
SES	0.117	0.067	1.749	0.082	-0.015	0.249
Perceived Inequality X SES	-0.122	1.274	-0.096	0.924	-2.633	2.389

Note. $R^2 = 0.02$

2.2.2 Mixed Ancova

In order to test the fourth and fifth hypothesis, I ran a 2x2x2 mixed ANCOVA analysis with gender as a control variable to understand how stereotypes related to the dimensions agency and communality are assigned to the rich and the poor in Portugal and in Kenya. Although our data violated the assumption of homogeneity of variance, at the recommendation of Stevens (1996, p. 249) who says that the assumption of homogeneity is fairly flexible if the samples are similar at a minimum ratio of 1.5, we can still run the analysis since our samples are fairly similar with a ratio of 1.2. The main effect of gender, or the interaction effects of gender with target and stereotype dimensions were not significant, all with $p >.05$. I therefore concluded that the differences in gender between Portugal and Kenya did not have a significant effect on our test model.

 The main effect of stereotype was found to be significant, $F(1,227) = 5.47$, $p = .02$, $\eta_\rho^2 = .024$, the main effect of country was significant, $F(1,227) = 13.94$, $p<.001$, $\eta_\rho^2 = .058$, but the main effect of target was not significant, $F(1,227) = 2$, $p =0.158$, $\eta_\rho^2 = .009$.

The three two-way interaction effects were all significant. There was a significant interaction of stereotype and target, $F(1,227) = 10.71$, $p = 0.001$, $\eta_\rho^2 = .045$. This confirms our fourth hypothesis that stereotype content is assigned significantly different between the rich and the poor, with the rich being rated more agentic than communal and the poor being rated more communal than agentic. As we can also see from Figure 2 below, there is a greater difference in the ratings between the dimensions of agency and communality   for the rich compared to the poor which tells us that the two dimensions could be seen as diversely different for the rich, but quite close for the poor.

Figure 2

*Stereotype Content As Assigned To The Rich And The Poor*

Estimated Marginal Means of MEASURE_1

There was also a significant interaction between stereotype and country, $F(1,227) = 34.45$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta_\rho^2 = .132$, which tells us that there is a significant difference between Portugal and Kenya in how stereotypes of agency and communality are assigned in general. As can be seen in Figure 3, the difference between agency and communality ratings is more pronounced in Kenya compared to Portugal and we can also see that the ratings for the stereotype of agency are quite similar for both countries compared to the ratings for the stereotype of communality We can conclude that perceiving higher inequality in the country leads to lower rating of agency and communality for both the rich and the poor.

Figure 3

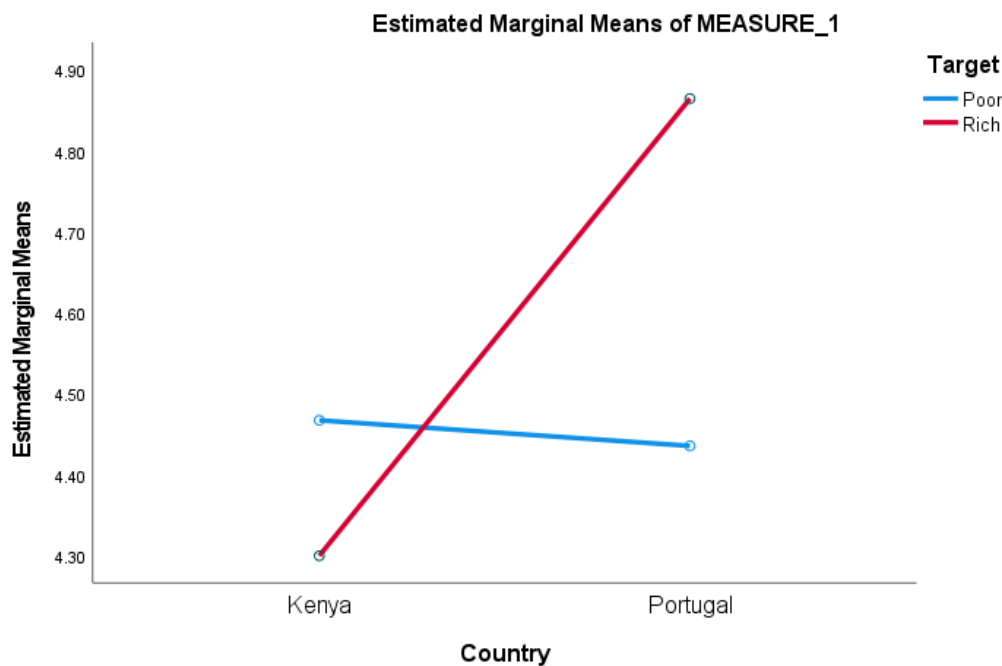*Stereotype Content As Assigned In Portugal vs Kenya*
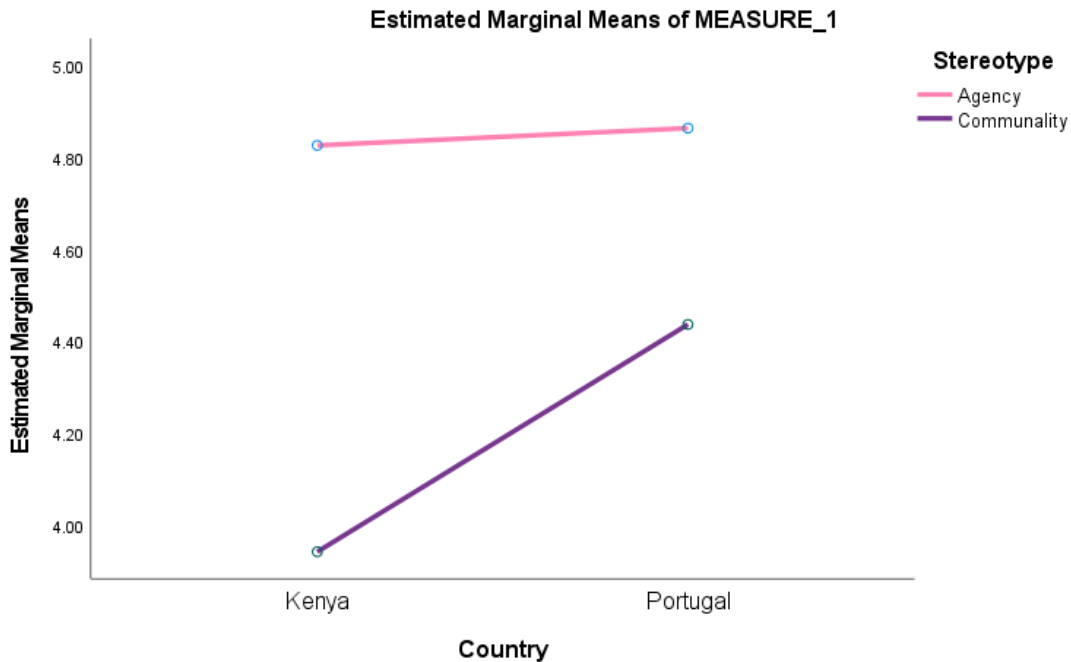
Covariates appearing in the model are evaluated at the following values: What is your gender? = 1.79

Finally, there was a significant interaction between target and country, $F(1,227) = 10.71$, $p = 0.001$, $\eta_\rho^2 = .045$, which tells us that how the Portuguese assign stereotype content between the rich and poor is significantly different to Kenyans. We can see in Figure 4 below that the rich and the poor are perceived quite similarly stereotypically in Kenya compared to Portugal where the difference between the rich and the poor was significantly larger and we can also see that the poor are rated higher than the rich in Kenya while it is the reverse in Portugal where the rich are rated higher than the poor.

Figure 4

Perception of The Rich vs The Poor In Portugal vs Kenya

The three way interaction between target, stereotype and country was not significant, $F(1,227) = 002$, $p = 0.9$, $r < .001$. I can therefore reject the fifth hypothesis, the pattern of assigning specific stereotype content to the rich and the poor is not significantly different between Portugal and Kenya.

CHAPTER 3

Discussions

3.1 Key Findings

When we look at the GINI Index of Kenya and Portugal, Kenya has a slightly higher index of 40.8 as of 2015 than Portugal with an index of 33.5 as of 2018 (*Gini Index (World Bank Estimate) | Data*, n.d.), however we do not know if this number reflects a significant difference in the perceived level of inequality between the two countries. From our analysis, we were able to find that the perception of inequality does follow the same direction with Kenyans perceiving higher inequality in their country compared to the Portuguese, with this difference being significant. This could be attributed to the fact that Portugal not only has a greater GPD than Kenya, it also has more economic freedom.

We did find a difference between Kenya and Portugal in the assigning of stereotypes of agency and communality, the higher the perception of inequality, the lower the ratings for both stereotypes of agency and communality, there was also a greater difference in Kenya in the assigning of stereotype of communality compared to the stereotype of agency while the difference was lower in Portugal. This is in line with what we find in literature, when income inequality is higher, people tend to pay more attention to wealth categorization or social classes and social class stereotypes become more pronounced, (Durante & Fiske, 2017; Heiserman & Simpson, 2021).

We also found a difference between the two countries in how stereotypes are assigned to the rich versus the poor, there was a greater difference in ratings for the rich vs the poor in Portugal compared to Kenya. Interestingly, we found more difference in how stereotype content for the rich was assigned with participants from Portugal giving higher scores for the rich than participants from Kenya did, comparatively to how stereotype content for the poor was scored.

We were also able to confirm that in general, despite the country, stereotype content is assigned significantly differently for different wealth groups, with the rich being found to be more agentic than communal and the poor being found to be more communal than agentic, with a greater difference between agency and communality for the rich compared to the poor. This was in line with the findings of the three part study conducted by Durante, et al, (2017), where

they found that out-groups are assigned a unique combination of stereotypes of warmth and competence which reflects on the stereotypes of agency and communality assigned to these groups.

We were also keen to find out if the perception of inequality is directly related to the social outcomes of social cohesion, intergroup relations and national identity. We did find a small to medium negative correlation between perceived inequality and social cohesion as well as with intergroup relations. However, there was no significant moderation of SES.

From our findings, we could make an informed conclusion that perception of inequality affects how stereotype content is assigned. We could also conclude that having distinct wealth groups in our societies does not contribute to a harmonious society due to the negative impact on social cohesion and intergroup relations which is the same for those at higher or lower levels of socio-economic income. Societies that are more equal economically could be more harmonious as wealth categorization would not be a key factor in viewing in-groups vs out-groups as being socially different from each other. Additionally, we could also conclude that there would be less social cohesion and weaker intergroup relations in Kenya compared to Portugal.

However, we did not find conclusive evidence that the pattern of assigning specific stereotype content to either the rich or the poor could be influenced by the perception of inequality as we did not find a significant three-way interaction effect for the three factors of stereotype, target and country.

3.2 Limitations and future directions

There were a few challenges and limitations especially during the data collection phase. While there was support for the data collection in Portugal through the research assistance of my supervisor, the data collection in Kenya was slightly more challenging. With the target participants being University students during the global pandemic, most universities were closed in Kenya and it was not easy reaching large groups of students simultaneously and not being physically present in the country posed an additional challenge in being able to convey the expectations for the data collection coherently to online sourced participants. This led to a lot of the data collected from Kenya being unusable in the final analysis and eventually we were not able to reach the targeted number of participants.

Additionally, since the participants for this study were mainly university students from both countries, contextually their social economic status would be very similar. This may have

influenced or limited their perceptions towards different wealth groups in a very similar manner. Studies have shown that the Social Economic Status (SES) of an individual has an impact on the emotional intelligence of the individual, such as in interpreting the emotional state of others, (Schmalor & Heine, 2021a). For instance, individuals of higher SES with more resources available to them, would be more independent and less likely to interact with individuals from other social classes, therefore making them less capable of interpreting social cues in order to judge the emotional context of others, (Kraus et al., 2009). It may therefore be important in exploring this study further to include participants from diverse social classes in order to understand how these difference influence the assigning of stereotype content to the in-groups compared to the out-groups as well as the differences in perception of inequality. For future studies, it could be important to further test the interaction of social economic status on the relationship between the perception of inequality and social outcomes with samples of more diverse social economic backgrounds.

Within the scope of this study, we were unable to further test the influence of wealth categorization (entitativity and comparative fit) on the relationship between perceived inequality and the assigning of stereotype content. Wealth categorization, specifically entitativity is conceptualized as the perception of homogeneity among different groups (Gaertner & Schopler, 1998). It would be interesting to further test how this perception influences how stereotype content is assigned to different wealth groups as well as if it has an impact on the relationship between perception of inequality and the assigning of stereotype content. As indicated in Figure 5 below, I would hypothesize that the more different economic groups view themselves as an entity; they would assign stereotype content of the rich and the poor more pronounced with this relationship being stronger with higher perceived inequality

Figure 5

Conceptual model of the study
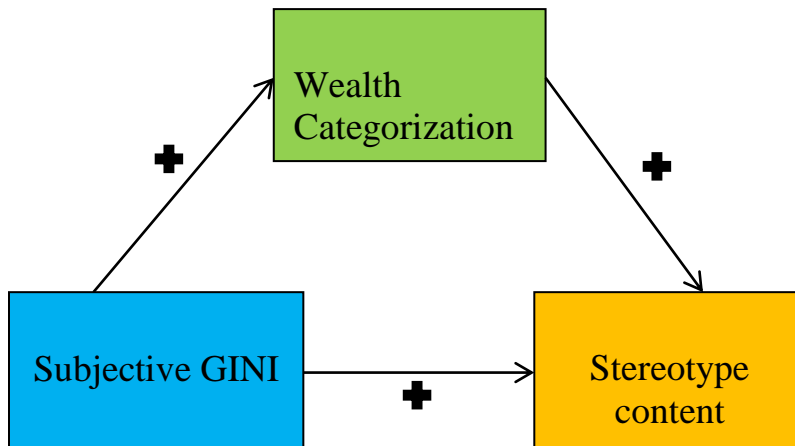
An additional aspect that could add to this study would be conducting a qualitative study to test participants' perception of inequality. A qualitative study would be able to provide a a different perspective as it directly incorporates the human experience and the researcher would also be able to assess and understand the attitudes of participants which would be key in a study that seeks to understand assigning of stereotype content and social outcomes involved.

With regards to the demographic of the study, it would be imperative to also study countries that are vastly different with regards to the inequality index as this would give a different perspective for the perceptions of economic inequality and how that would relate to stereotype content assigned to wealth groups and the related social outcomes as well. It would also be interesting to study countries that are similar in their inequality index but different in other social inequalities such as racial or ethnic inequalities in order to understand what impact social inequalities would have in the perception of inequality and how that would in turn translate to other social outcomes.

3.3 Conclusions

From existing literature, we find that stereotype content is assigned differently to different categories of people depending on who we consider to be part of our in-groups versus those in the out-groups. Through this study we have found that inequality, and especially the perception of inequality, provides for wealth being a fitting reason for categorizing people as either being similar or different to ourselves and therefore in turn influencing some specific stereotype content that we hold towards people of different wealth groups.

If we work towards more economically equal societies, not only objectively, but also subjectively by ensuring that the members of the society do feel more or less equal especially with regards to accessibility of resources and opportunities, this would lead to a more harmonious society. Where there is harmony, we would expect more willingness of people to work together and share knowledge which could in turn result to more economic growth reducing further the objective economic inequality. Further exploration of this study would go a long way in helping societies understand better possible strains in social relationships between different wealth groups and could be extremely important for policy makers in coming up with laws and policies that work equally well for the different wealth groups with an aim at creating more homogeneous societies.

The study of the perceptions towards inequality is a great addition to the field of social psychology and it would be interesting to explore how much more our perceptions on inequality influence other aspects of socialization and identity such as freedoms of identity or attitudes towards power and governance.

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Appendix A- e-Card

RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS WANTED

- Are you Kenyan or do you currently live in Kenya?
- Are you a university student, recent graduate or undergraduate?
- Are you above 18 years?

If so, we would like your help in participating in a study on group identity and intergroup relations.

Study Title: Economic Inequality and Wealth Based Stereotyping

Find the study **HERE**

Or copy paste this link to the browser
https://uqpsych.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_1GrVoY5Jc4WQWNL
For more information you can reach me on
gracewmuoka@gmail.com

Appendix B – Questionnaire

Note to collaborators

- I've included 4 attention checks in this survey highlighted in blue. There are 2 checks for target's wealth group that need to be translated and was not included in the original document I sent you earlier.
- This document includes survey questions for you to translate into your country's native language.
- You will notice that each question is assigned a number in red. When you translate the survey in another document, please order the questions according to its number and also put in the number in front of each question.
- For each question please put in your country's name in the space provided (*i.e.* [country's name])
- In the demographic questions (last section of the survey), some items might need changing to suit a particular system in your country (*e.g.* education and political orientation). If this is the case, please let me know via email before completing the translation.
- Once you translated the survey, I will input the translated questions into Qualtrics and send you the link to the survey.
- Once you receive the link, please preview the survey and make sure there are no mistakes before distributing it to participants.
- If you have any questions, feel free to reach out to me at any time.

1. **Response scales** *Please translate the following:*

1 Strongly no	2	No	3	Somewhat no	4	Neutral	5	Somewhat yes	6	Yes	7	Strongly Yes

1 Strongly disagree	2	Disagree	3	More or less disagree	4	Neutral	5	More or less agree	6	Agree	7	Strongly agree

1 Very different	2		3		4	Neutral	5		6		7	Very Similar

2. Welcome to this study!

This study aims to explore your **thoughts and perceptions about** [country name]. We are interested in your actual experiences as well as your thoughts about other citizens in [country name]. There will be 3 different parts to this study. Firstly, we will ask you about how you perceive [country name] as a society. Next, you will be asked to imagine meeting someone very wealthy from the top 5% of your country and someone very poor from the bottom 5%. Subsequently, you will be asked to describe those interactions. Lastly, we will ask you about the relationship between different groups in [country]. Please take your time to answer each part truthfully.

3. To start off, we would like you to think about people in [insert name of your country]. Imagine if [name of country] only consists of **100 citizens. In your view, how many of these 100 people would be classified as "very poor", "poor", "average in wealth", "wealthy", "very wealthy"?**

Please provide an estimate of the number of people in each box. Please make sure that the total estimate adds up to 100 people.

Very poor	
Poor	
Average in wealth	
Wealthy	
Very wealthy	
Total	

4. In the last section, we asked you to divide your country into 5 different wealth groups, from the very poor to the very wealthy. This time, we would like you to think about your country in even more detail. In particular, we will be asking you about the very poorest members of your country – people who are in the **bottom 5%** in terms of their wealth. We will also be asking you about the wealthiest members of your country – people who are in the **top 5%** in terms of their wealth. In what follows, we will ask you to reflect on the bottom 5% as well as the top 5%.

5. Now, we would like you to imagine that one day you meet Ben [or insert typical male name if English is not the main language]. He is from **the bottom 5%** of [country]. What do you think he is like as a person? (e.g. specific traits, mood or temperament he might have). Please provide your answer in 4-5 sentences.

5.1 Is Ben from the top or bottom 5%?

A   Top 5%   B   Bottom 5%   3   I don't know

6. In this section, we have provided a list of attributes and traits. <u>Please indicate the extent to which you think</u> **Ben** [or insert typical male name if English is not the main language] <u>would possess each of the attributes.</u>

1. I think he is *Warm*

2. I think he is *Likeable*

3. I think he is *Friendly*

4. I think he is *Helpful*

5. I think he is *Kind*

6. I think he is *Respectful*

7. I think he is *Righteous*

8. I think he is *Honest*

9. I think he is *Sincere*

10. I think he is *Trustworthy*

11. I think he is *Competent*

12. I think he is *Intelligent*

13. I think he is *Skilful*

14. I think he is *Capable*

15. I think he is *Efficient*

16. I think he is *Ambitious*

17. I think he is *Confident*

18. I think he is *Someone who feels superior*

19. I think he is *Assertive*

20. I think he is *Purposeful*

21. I think he is *A loyal person who will stand with others*

22. I think he is *A respectful person who will uphold traditions and authority*

23. I think he is *A person who is physically and spiritually pure*

24. I think he is *A caring person who cherishes and protects others*

25. I think he is *A fair person who never cheat or break the rules*

26. I think he is A…this is a control question, please select strongly no

7. Now from what you know about [country], please indicate the extent to which you agree with these statements about people in the **bottom 5%.** Please shade in the circle.

1. I see people within the bottom 5% as a unit.

2. I see people within the bottom 5% as a group.

3. People within the bottom 5% feel like a group to me.

4. People within the bottom 5% are alike.

5. People within the bottom 5% have similar attitudes.

6. People within the bottom 5% have similar values.

7. People within the bottom 5% see things much in the same way.

8. People within the bottom 5% share a common goal.

9. People within the bottom 5% strive for the same things.

10. People within the bottom 5% want to achieve the same goals.

8. Now, we would like you to imagine that one day you meet Chris [or insert typical male name if English is not the main language]. He is from **the top 5%** of [country]. What do you think he is like as a person? (e.g. specific traits, mood or temperament he might have). Please provide your answer in 4-5 sentences.

8.1 Is Chris from the top or bottom 5%?

    A   Top 5%   B   Bottom 5%   3   I don't know

9. In this section, we have provided a list of attributes and traits. <u>Please indicate the extent to which you think **Chris**</u> [or insert typical male name if English is not the main language] <u>would possess each of the attributes.</u>

1. I think he is *Warm*

2. I think he is *Likeable*

3. I think he is *Friendly*

4. I think he is *Helpful*

5. I think he is *Kind*

6. I think he is *Respectful*

7. I think he is *Righteous*

8. I think he is *Honest*

9. I think he is *Sincere*

10. I think he is *Trustworthy*

11. I think he is *Competent*

12. I think he is *Intelligent*

13. I think he is *Skilful*

14. I think he is *Capable*

15. I think he is *Efficient*

16. I think he is *Ambitious*

17. I think he is *Confident*

18. I think he is *Someone who feels superior*

19. I think he is *Assertive*

20. I think he is *Purposeful*

21. I think he is *A loyal person who will stand with others*

22. I think he is *A respectful person who will uphold traditions and authority*

23. I think he is *A person who is physically and spiritually pure*

24. I think he is *A caring person who cherishes and protects others*

25. I think he is *A fair person who never cheat or break the rules*

26. I think he is A…this is a control question, please select strongly no

10. Now from what you know about [country], please indicate the extent to which you agree with these statements about people in the **top 5%.**

1. I see people within the top 5% as a unit.

2. I see people within the top 5% as a group.

3. People within the top 5% feel like a group to me.

4. People within the top 5% are alike.

5. People within the top 5% have similar attitudes.

6. People within the top 5% have similar values.

7. People within the top 5% see things much in the same way.

8. People within the top 5% share a common goal.

9. People within the top 5% strive for the same things.

10. People within the top 5% want to achieve the same goals.

11. From what you know about [country], please answer the following questions.

1. Thinking only about people **within** the **bottom 5%**: how similar do you think that people **within** the **bottom 5%** are to one another?

2. Thinking only about people **within** the **top 5%**: how similar do you think that people **within** the **top 5%** are to one another?

3. Thinking about people in the **top and bottom 5%:** How similar do you think that people in the **top 5%** are to people in the **bottom 5%?**
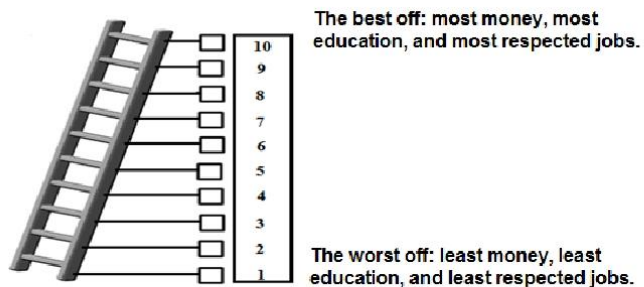
12. We are almost at the end of the study. From what you know about [country], please rate the extent to which you agree with the following statements.

1. The relationship between the people in the top and bottom 5% is positive.

2. People from the top and bottom 5% trust one another.

3. There is a lot of co-operation between the top and bottom 5%.

4. There is a lot of competition between the top and bottom 5%.

5. There is a sense of solidarity in [country].

6. People in [country] have a lot in common.

7. There is a sense of unity between people in [country].

8. People in [country] are on the same wavelength.

9. There is a sense of cohesion between people in [country].

10. I feel committed to [country].

11. I am glad to be a part of [country].

12. Being a citizen of [country] is an important part of how I see myself.

13. I identify with being a citizen of [country].

13. We are now at the end of the study. Lastly, please take your time to truthfully answer the following demographic questions about yourself.

1. Please think of this ladder with 10 rungs as representing people with different levels of income, education, and occupational status in the [country]. People at the top of the ladder are those who earn the most amount of money, have the best education and job, whereas people at the bottom of the ladder are those who earn the least amount of money, have the worst education and job (or potentially no job).

   Where would you place yourself on this ladder relative to others in your country? (Please tick in the box next to the scale below).

   The best off: most money, most education, and most respected jobs.

   10
   9
   8
   7
   6
   5
   4
   3
   2
   1

   The worst off: least money, least education, and least respected jobs.

2. Please indicate the highest level of education you have completed (or are currently undertaking).

   A   Highschool   B   Bachelor degree   C   Master's degree   D   PhD or Doctoral degree

3. What is your gender?

   A   Male   B   Female   C   Unspecified

4. What is your political orientation?

   1   Left Wing   2   3   4   Neutral   5   6   7   Right Wing

   1   Very Liberal   2   3   4   Neutral   5   6   7   Very Conservative

5. Please specify your age.

   [   ] Years

6. What is your native language?

   [   ]

7. How long have you resided in your country?

   A   Less than 1 year   B   1-5 years   C   5-10 years   D   More than 10 years

Appendix C – Subjective GINI calculation

Note for users
To calculate subjective Gini
Step 1: Input the raw data on the yellow area (fifth-bottom = the poorest fifth, first-top = the wealthiest fifth)
Step 2: Automatically fill the cells of "total inequality", "correction", and "Gini", then you will get the Gini
version 1.0
updated 2018-09-12
created by Zhechen Wang (zhechen.wang@uq.net.au)

No	Fifth_bottom	Fourth	Third	Second	First_top	total equality	correction	Gini
Example	90	5	0	0	5	6250	5087.5	0.18600000000