

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS AND THE BOUNDS OF
OCCUPATIONAL CHOICE

By

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Abstract

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The purpose of this research is to examine the relationships between race, gender, generation, perceptions of discrimination, and socioeconomic status (SES) of origin and the prestige level of occupational choice. This study finds that the prestige level of occupational choice is significantly related to background factors that are outside of the control of the individual. This suggests that the interaction between race, gender, generation, perceptions of discrimination, and SES of origin may shape the choices that people make, potentially calling into question the extent of control that people have over their occupational choices. This is an important addition to the existing management literature, which emphasizes personal control over outcomes related to occupational ambitions and choice. This suggests that background characteristics place boundaries on the role of personal agency in occupational choice.

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Chapter 1 Introduction

“I must study politics and war that my sons may have liberty to study mathematics and philosophy. My sons ought to study mathematics and philosophy, geography, natural history, naval architecture, navigation, commerce, and agriculture, in order to give their children a right to study painting, poetry, music, architecture, statuary, tapestry, and porcelain” (President John Adams, 1780, as cited in Shapiro, F.R., 2006: p. 5).

The prevailing view of occupations in the management literature rests on the assumption that people are completely free to select an occupation for themselves from among an array of possibilities. A related belief in the American Dream – the possibility for all to attain social mobility – relies on a belief in the ability of individuals to choose occupations that put them on the path to rise above the socioeconomic status into which they were born. However, the literature about social status reproduction – the transmission of social position through generations of a family - refutes this view (Bourdieu, 1996; Doob, C. B., 2013). Parents help to position their children within their own social stratum by providing them with the education, cultural experiences, and social connections relevant to maintaining their position in society (Bourdieu, 1996; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990). This dissertation asks whether people at certain intersections of race, gender, generational cohort, and socioeconomic status of origin are more likely than others to enter occupations with higher levels of prestige. This study also examines the role that beliefs about discrimination play in the prestige level of occupational choice. This chapter defines key constructs related to the

study of occupations and introduces the framework that serves as the basis for this study.

As Meyer, Allen, and Smith (1993) point out, the terms *occupation* and *career*, though often used interchangeably, do not have the same meaning. A person's career consists of a string of occupations that relate to an overarching theme (Meyer, et al., 1993; Schein, 1996). An occupation is a subset of a career. It is a particular job that a person does in the present (Holland, 1973; Meyer, et al., 1993; Schein, 1996). A career consists of the sum of one's occupational experiences over the course of a lifetime (Arthur, Hall & Lawrence, 1989; Grote & Hall, 2013). These experiences may be curated by the individual across a number of organizations, or they may be defined by progression within an organization (Schein, 1996).

For example, a recent college graduate may first work as a computer programmer, writing code. After gaining proficiency, the person may become a systems analyst, interacting with clients in addition to writing code. Finally the person may move into a project management role, leading a team of programmers and systems analysts. Computer programmer, systems analyst, and project manager are each distinct occupations. In this example, one person's movement between these occupations over time forms the basis for a career. A series of occupations performed by one person may not always form part of a cohesive, over-arching career pattern, but they have the potential to do so (Schein, 1996; Rodrigues, Guest, & Budjanovcanin, 2013).

It is important to point out that occupational choice – the actual work that one chooses to perform – is a different construct from occupational preference or ambition – the work that one wishes to perform (Vroom, 1964; Wheeler & Mahoney, 1981). Preference is an attitude (Mitchell & Beach, 1976), while choice is an action.

Most studies in the management literature focus on ambitions - which are often unrelated to actual choices - or occupational outcomes such as career success rather than occupational choice. Studies of occupational ambitions tend to focus on college students, given the availability of student samples to researchers. Studies of occupational outcomes tend to measure career success, which one may experience as the result of working in more than one occupation over the course of adulthood. This dissertation focuses on factors related to the choice of occupation, using occupational prestige as the dependent variable of interest. Occupational prestige is a measure of the level of respect associated with an occupation (Hauser & Warren, 1997).

Current research on occupations and careers emphasizes agency. Research on protean careers, for example, places the individual in the driver's seat along his or her own career path (Briscoe & Hall, 2006; De Vos & Soens, 2008; Hall, 2004). Careers are created and managed by the individual, rather than the organization, according to one's own personal values (Hall, 2004). People who direct their careers according to their own internal values are said to have a protean attitude, which results in benefits like greater personal growth, career

satisfaction, autonomy, and employability (Briscoe & Hall, 2006; De Vos & Soens, 2008; Hall, 2004).

A related example is the notion of the boundaryless career in the modern world of work. Boundaryless careers are those where one is autonomous, rather than reliant on an organization (Inkson, 2006; Sullivan, 1999). Boundaryless career theory describes the greater likelihood that modern workers will experience careers that are not bound by any one organization or that may not take place within any organization at all (Inkson, 2006; Sullivan, 1999).

Like protean careers, boundaryless careers are largely conceptualized as those that are driven by a passion for a particular type of work, where the rewards, such as job satisfaction and pursuit of personal interests, are psychological in nature (Inkson, 2006; Sullivan, Carden, & Martin, 1998). Research on protean and boundaryless careers overlooks the possibility that entry into the kinds of occupations that comprise such careers may be limited. It is likely that most people weigh their interest in an occupation against the likelihood of entering that occupation (Blau, Gustad, Jessor, Parnes & Wilcock, 1956; Ginzberg, Ginsberg, Axelrad & Herma, 1951; Vroom, 1964; Wheeler & Mahoney, 1981). This process involves compromising between one's ideal and one's reality (Wheeler & Mahoney, 1981).

This study begins with a review of the literature about occupational choice, using Blau, et al.'s (1956) seminal conceptual framework. Blau, et al. (1956) suggest that factors such as job availability, preferences, personality, general mental ability, abilities, values, social connections, and socialization may

contribute to occupational choice. Researchers explored these potential factors with varying results. Chapter two will review the literature about these factors, dividing them into discussions of individual characteristics and environmental factors.

Of particular interest is the Blau, et al. (1956) suggestion that SES of origin may relate to the prestige level of occupational choice. SES is positively associated with feeling capable of making occupational choices (Thompson & Subich, 2011), and it may also be associated with actual occupational choices. Kraus, Piff, Mendoza-Denton, Rheinschmidt, and Keltner (2012) expect that SES will be an important factor in future academic inquiry. SES and occupational choice are not studied together (Gottfredson, 1981; Hebson, 2009).

Socioeconomic status (SES) is measured by external criteria, such as education and occupational prestige (Gottfredson, 1981; Heppner & Jung, 2013; Hunt & Ray, 2012; Lapour & Heppner, 2009). Measuring SES is preferable to measuring self-reported social class because social class is a subjective measure. Both wealthy and poor people in the United States tend to inaccurately describe themselves as middle class (Morrin & Motel, 2012). Only seven percent of people in a recent study described themselves as lower class (Morrin & Motel, 2012), while fifteen percent of people are living in poverty (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014). Only two percent of people describe themselves as upper class (Morrin & Motel, 2012), while nine percent are in the upper income bracket (Pew Research Center, 2015).

While Blau et al., (1956) suggest that race and gender may be factors relating to the prestige of occupational choice. SES and race are understudied in the management literature about occupational choice. Moreover, the relationships between these factors and other demographics factors including gender have not been tested. Finally, recent scholarship suggests that one's generational cohort may also relate to occupational expectations and choices (Hess & Jepsen, 2009; Sullivan, Forret, Carraher, & Mainiero, 2009). Chapter three explores what is known about these understudied factors.

This study develops a series of hypotheses about race, gender, and generational cohort, SES of origin, and perceptions of discrimination in relation to occupational choice. Hypotheses about SES of origin and perceptions of discrimination are tested for each racial, gender, and generational sub-group. Studying differences between people provides a nuanced view the nature of these demographics characteristics and occupational choice (Ozbilgin, Beauregard, & Bell, 2011).

Chapter 2 Theoretical Development and Literature Review

This chapter discusses the literature about factors associated with occupational choice. The framework developed by Blau, et al., (1956) lays out a comprehensive set of factors related to occupational choice. These factors include both individual drivers like preferences and abilities, and external factors like job availability and social connections. This chapter reviews research related to factors in the Blau, et al. (1956) framework. Following that, this study reviews the research on SES of origin, perceptions of discrimination, race, gender, generation, and occupational choice will be discussed. These factors form the intended contribution to the current understanding of the ways that individuals choose an occupation.

2.1 Individual Characteristics and Occupational Choice

Theories of occupational choice have been studied since Blau, et al., (1956) published a framework of the factors that may influence occupational decision-making. The framework discusses both individual and environmental factors relating to occupational choice. This review first discusses the individual factors of personal preferences, personality, values, aptitude, and ability in relation to occupational choice. This is followed with a discussion of external factors relating to occupational choice, including job availability, SES, social connections, race, and role socialization.

2.1.1 Preferences and Occupational Choice

Early research about occupations emphasizes interests and preferences, suggesting that people make occupational choices based on the work that they find most interesting (Holland, 1973; Pryor & Taylor, 1986; Rounds, 1990; Strong, 1943). Wheeler and Mahoney (1981) later use the expectancy model to measure the relationship between occupational preferences and choice. The expectancy model measures valence, instrumentality, and expectancy (Vroom, 1964). In occupational terms, this is the belief that the ability to perform a certain type of work will lead a person to achieve the desired outcomes that the person associates with success in an occupation and, over the long term, a career.

Wheeler and Mahoney (1981) find that occupational preference is associated with the valence, or value, that a person associates with the potential outcomes of succeeding in a particular occupation. Both valence and expectancy are associated with actual choice (Wheeler & Mahoney, 1981). When choosing an occupation, people do consider whether they perceive themselves as capable of performing the work that the occupation requires, in addition to considering the potential benefits that they may reap from performing well.

Whether preferences are stable over time (Schein, 1996; Strong, 1943) or change with life experience (Rodriguez, et al., 2013) is a subject of debate. Career preferences are related to stable factors, like race and family background (Rodriguez, et al., 2013), which means that these factors may also relate to actual occupational choice. However, Rodriguez, et al., (2013) also suggest that occupational preferences change with one's circumstances. Holland (1973)

suggests that personality and environmental factors interact to shape work-related behavior. While preferences may appear to be controlled by the individual, the fact that they may change with circumstances and correlate with demographics background characteristics suggest that they are not completely controlled by the individual. These studies raise important questions about the roles that demographic factors and personal circumstances may play in shaping occupational decision sets.

2.1.2 Personality and Occupational Choice

The earliest theories of occupational choice suggest that personality is a primary driver for the types of work that people choose (Holland, 1958, 1973 & 1997; Strong, 1943). Holland describes six types of personalities and their corresponding work environments, which are: realistic, enterprising, conventional, artistic, investigative, and social (Holland, 1973). Vocational choice, in Holland's (1973) view, is the natural result of the instinct to seek out an occupation that is congruent with one's personality. In 1960, Holland published a validation of his Vocational Preference Inventory (VPI), which correlates personality with occupational choice.

Personality is understudied in the literature about occupations, due perhaps to disagreement regarding the nature of personality and how to accurately measure it (Goldberg, 1993; Reed, Bruch, & Haase, 2004; Tokar, Fischer, & Subich, 1998). Holland (1973) suggests that environmental forces like socioeconomic status, family structure, peer influence, and culture create personality. Large-scale studies of identical and fraternal twins, however, suggest

that personality is inborn and resistant to environmental influences (Bouchard & Loehlin, 2001; Pinker, 2002).

In spite of the remaining ambiguity about the roots of personality, researchers developed methods to define and measure it. Among the most prominent is the five-factor model. It is the result of a study of 187 college students whose self-reported personality traits are the basis for a series of factor analyses (Goldberg, 1990). After the students rated themselves on 1431 personality traits, ten different methods of factor analyses yielded the same five personality factors (Goldberg, 1990). These factors are given as openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism (Goldberg, 1990).

Reed, et al., (2004) use this five-factor model of personality, relating it to career exploration for a small sample of college students. They find that highly conscientious students gather more information before making career decisions than other students, while students scoring high on openness gather less (Reed, et al., 2004). Rogers, Creed and Glendon (2008) find that students scoring highly on both conscientious and openness are more likely to engage in career information gathering than students who score low on these traits. The implication is that personality may relate to the amount of thought that people put into their occupational choices.

Certain personality characteristics may relate directly to occupational choice (Larson, Rottinghaus, & Borgen, 2002; Schaub & Tokar, 2005). For example, people who score high on agreeableness tend to prefer social careers, while people scoring high on openness tend to prefer artistic careers (Larson, et al.,

2002; Schaub & Tokar, 2005). In some cases, personality traits do explain a small amount of the variance in occupational choice. However, in most cases personality alone is unrelated to occupational choice (Larson, et al., 2002).

Intellectual abilities, personal interests, and personality may all overlap to predict occupational interests (Ackerman & Beier, 2003; Schaub & Tokar, 2005). Self-efficacy – the belief in one’s ability to successfully perform in specific tasks or circumstances (Bandura, 1977) – may also play a role. In a study of mostly middle to upper class students, Schaub and Tokar (2005) find that the relationship between personality and occupational interests is partially mediated by both learning experiences and sociocognitive mechanisms like self-efficacy and outcome expectations.

2.1.3 Aptitude and Occupational Outcomes

General mental ability (GMA) is the aptitude to acquire knowledge and skills, and it is positively related to both intrinsic and extrinsic occupational success (Judge, Higgins, Thoreson & Barrick, 1999; Judge, Klinger & Simon, 2010; Schmidt & Hunter, 2004). People with higher GMA are more likely to feel satisfied with their jobs (Judge, et al., 1999). They are also more likely to perform well at work and to advance in job levels, although this is truer for some occupations than others (Judge, et al., 2010; Salgado, Anderson, Moscovio, Bertua, de Fruyt & Rolland, 2003; Schmidt & Hunter, 2004).

High GMA is also positively associated with attainment of higher levels of occupational prestige (Judge, et al., 2010). While occupational prestige is associated with investments that people make in their own human capital, people

with higher GMA are more likely than those with lower GMA to benefit from those investments in terms of occupational prestige (Judge, et al., 2010). GMA is a stronger predictor of these outcomes than aptitude for the job (Schmidt & Hunter, 2004). In terms of occupational choice, GMA is not associated with decision-making self-efficacy (Di Fabio & Saklofske, 2014). It is, however, associated with interests in investigative and artistic occupations (Ackerman & Beier, 2003).

2.1.4 Abilities and Occupational Choice

In addition to GMA, which is an aptitude, abilities are actual task-related knowledge and skills that are developed with experience (Brown & Crace, 1996). Although some research proposes that occupational preference may be associated with one's abilities (Betz & Hackett, 1981; Brown & Crace, 1996; Holland, 1973), this is not supported by empirical research (Barak, 1981; Strong, 1943 & 1955). Scales measuring a wide range of abilities and their relevant interests do not significantly correlate with each other (Barak, 1981). People do not prefer one occupation over another based on their natural aptitudes for certain types of occupations, even though this seems counterintuitive (Barak, 1981; Eccles, Jacobs & Harold, 1990).

Perceived abilities, unlike actual abilities, do correlate with occupational preferences, however, although the effect size of the relationship is small (Barak, 1981; Betz & Hackett, 1981; Eccles, et al., 1990; Lent, Brown & Hackett, 1994; Tracey & Hopkins, 2001; Vroom, 1964). This suggests that most people are not aware of their own aptitudes (Barak, 1981). This may be particularly true of high

school and college-aged adults, which are the samples used in these studies. Since occupational preference is part of the choice process, we can infer that perceived abilities, rather than actual aptitude for a type of occupation, are related to occupational choice. Whether the correlation between actual and perceived abilities increases with age is not empirically tested thus far. Perceived abilities, in general, are understudied in the literature in relation to occupational choice. The reliance on self-perception, and the extent to which self-perceptions are shaped by sociocultural experiences, may relate to the tendency of people to stay in familiar occupations that are associated by society with certain genders, races, and socioeconomic status backgrounds.

People within occupations tend to share similar likes and dislikes (Ackerman & Beier, 2003; Strong, 1955). Using this view, people can make occupational choices based on the similarity of their interests to people in existing occupations (Ackerman & Beier, 2003). Ackerman and Beier (2003) propose that interests, personality, and general mental ability all overlap. For example, measures of crystalized versus fluid intelligence correlate with measures of openness to experience (Ackerman & Beier, 2003). They assert that Holland (1959) is actually a personality measure, applied to occupations (Ackerman & Beier, 2003). They also point out that, among the Holland Themes, realistic and artistic occupations overlap more with GMA than other types of occupations (Ackerman & Beier, 2003).

2.1.5 Values, SES, and Occupational Choice

Values are beliefs or standards that guide behavior (Brown, 2002; Brown & Crace, 1996; Rokeach, 1973). They may develop in relation to the social environment (Brown & Crace, 1996). Values are associated with goal selection, motivation, and behavior (Brown & Crace, 1996). Values may relate to choices made as people prepare to enter the workforce (Brown & Crace, 1996) and may interact with other factors related to occupational choice, including gender and SES (Brown, 2002; Brown & Crace, 1996).

People from low SES backgrounds may also make different types of choices because they value different things. Low SES people are more likely to value fitting in with traditional roles compared to people from higher SES (Kohn, 1989; Kraus, et al., 2012; Liu & Ali, 2005). Stephens, Markus and Townsend (2007) find that people from lower SES prefer conformity over uniqueness and express that in even the most mundane choices, such as their preference for an ordinary ink pen over a unique one. People of lower SES are also more likely than people of higher SES to make choices that are similar to the choices that their peers have made (Kraus, et al., 2012; Stephens, et al., 2007). People from low SES origins are more likely to expect rejection in social situations than people from high SES origins (Kraus, et al., 2012). They are more likely to fear that they will not fit into groups with people from higher SES backgrounds (Kraus et al., 2012). This concern may also make some lower SES people hesitant to pursue occupations where they would be the peers of people from higher SES backgrounds.

Rodrigues, et al. (2013) find that values and needs are considered before abilities when making an occupational choice. They suggest that people order their occupational options in a way that would be consistent with Maslow's (1947) conception of the hierarchy of needs (Rodrigues, et al., 2013). Needs for basic income, job security, and safety would be considered before one would think about whether an occupation is emotionally satisfying (Rodrigues, et al., 2013). Kohn (1989) posits that people of higher SES will be more likely than people of low SES to prioritize intrinsic aspects of a potential occupational when making an occupational choice. These differences in needs may enable people from higher SES origins to consider a wider variety of occupations compared to people from low SES origins.

Most studies find that work-related values do not significantly differ between men and women (Beutell & Brenner, 1986; Brown & Crace, 1996; Walker, Tausky & Oliver, 1982), although some do find significant differences with small effect sizes (Bridges, 1989; de Vaus & McAllister, 1991; Erez, Borochoy & Mannheim, 1989; Rounds, 1990). When gender interacts with race, then significant and larger differences are found (Brown & Crace, 1996). White women value extrinsic measures of occupational attainment more than white men, while the reverse is true between Africa-American women and African-American men (Brown & Crace, 1996; Brenner, Blazini & Greenhaus, 1988). In terms of values and occupational choice, SES and race may be more salient than gender.

2.2 External Factors and Occupational Choice

So far these theories assume that peoples' occupational choices can be made without regard to their environmental context. However, external factors such as job availability may also relate to occupational choice. Job availability changes over time due to consumer demand, technology advancement, the rise and fall of unions, and legal protections. Social connections may also relate to occupational choice, as people seek opportunities through networks of associates. Race and role socialization also relate to occupational decisions.

2.2.1 Job Availability and Occupational Choice

Job availability is obviously related to occupational choice. One could not choose to become a computer programmer in the 1920s, for instance. Jobs as footmen or telegraphers are scarce today. Although research shows that personality and values relate to occupational choice, these tendencies and preferences are limited by the job market.

The most popular college majors in the United States today are in fields of business, healthcare, social sciences, history, psychology, education, biology, and biomedical science (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). The industries with the most projected job openings are in the medical, business, and computer science fields (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014). Jobs with rising demand that require a college degree include registered nurse, accountant, manager, management analyst, marketing researcher, software developer, and computer systems analyst (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014). While the dominance of

business and healthcare majors fits this job outlook, the overrepresentation of the other majors and underrepresentation of computer science majors implies that a large number of people choose their college major based on something other than the demands of the market.

Choice of a college major seems to be associated with preferences. However, actual occupational choice is not closely associated with college major. Only 27 percent of Bachelor's degree holders are employed in an occupation directly related to their field of study (Abel & Deitz, 2014). The other 73 percent are presumably toiling in occupations that they chose because of some combination of financial need and market realities. This does not imply that the chosen occupations are not desirable, but it suggests that external forces are also drivers of occupational choice. In the late 1800s and early 1900s in the United States, workers migrated from rural areas to cities in search of jobs as machines replaced people in farming occupations (Wilson, 2012). As technology replaces jobs in the modern era, shifts in occupational choice will happen again on a large scale.

2.2.2 Social Connections and Occupational Choice

Barone and Mocetti (2016) find evidence of the inter-generational transmission of social status. Occupational fields may change over the generations, but people tend to choose occupations associated with their SES of origin (Barone & Mocetti, 2016). Dribe and Helgertz (2016) find a similar pattern of transmission of SES from paternal grandparents through fathers to sons. Both studies use European data, but this trend may also occur in the United States.

These observations may be attributed to a number of factors, yet the stability of SES across generations in these cases is intriguing. Barone and Mocetti (2016) agree, and they posit that the lack of SES mobility found in their study may relate to intergenerational access to education and social connections.

Social connections are studied in the management literature in relation to occupational outcomes but are not directly studied in relation to the way that people choose their occupations. Social connections link a person to resources through relationships with other people (Campbell, Marsden & Hurlbert, 1986; Lin, 1999b; Seibert, Kraimer & Liden, 2001). Social resources consist of the cumulative wealth, power, and status to which one has access (Campbell, et al., 1986; Lin, Vaughn, & Ensel, 1981; Lin, 1999b). Occupational information and awareness of job opportunities are related to the resources among one's social connections (Granovetter, 1973; Lin, 1999a; Lin, et al., 1981).

Social connections may be either strong or weak. Strong connections include close family members, friends, and co-workers (Granovetter, 1973; Lin, 1999a). Weak connections include neighbors and distant family (Granovetter, 1973; Lin, 1999a). Whether one's connections are mostly strong or weak plays a role in the extent to which one is able to leverage connections to accomplish one's goals (Granovetter, 1973). Having a large number of weak social connections, including connections that do not know each other, gives people more access to information and resources compared to people who have fewer weak social connections (Bian & Ang, 1997; Burt, 1992; Campbell, et al., 1986; Podolny & Baron, 1997; Seibert, et al., 2001). Stronger social connections make a person

less aware of life choices other than one's own (Granovetter, 1973).

2.2.3 SES, Social Connections, and Occupational Information

Access to information about occupations may be more limited among people of low SES origins. People from low SES communities are more likely than those from higher SES communities to have small, tight-knit social groups whose members know each other (Campbell, et al., 1986; Granovetter, 1973; Kleit, 2001). Strong social connections may provide more social support and assistance to each other (Granovetter, 1973). However, that social support may be of limited value when seeking information about occupations. Small, interconnected groups of people are more likely to have redundant information than larger groups of social connections that do not all know each other (Burt, 1997; Kleit, 2001; Seibert, et al., 2001; White & Houseman, 2003).

People of low SES origins are more than twice as likely to use strong ties for job search compared to higher SES people (Campbell, et al., 1986; Evans, 2004; Kleit, 2001). Given their reliance on small, tight-knit social groups and reduced access to information online (Horrigan, 2010), young people of low SES have fewer resources for learning about potential occupations and educational options needed to follow career paths. Weak ties may benefit people of higher SES of origin more than people of low SES of origin (Kleit, 2001; Wegener, 1991). In addition to having greater access to information, people of higher SES of origin are better at accessing and deploying the resources available through their weak ties (Kleit, 2001).

Social connections may also provide people with information about job openings (Seibert et al., 2001). Having a large group of social connections that do not all know each other gives people access to a wider array of opportunities (Seibert et al., 2001). However, the status of one's weak social ties also matters (Seibert et al., 2001). Status is determined by the location of one's ties in the social hierarchy (Ibarra, 1995). High status connections in one's extended network are related to one's ability to translate family and educational background into a high status job (Lin, 1999b; Lin, et al., 1981; Wegener, 1991). This is particularly true if the higher status person knows the lower status person directly, rather than through someone else, and is contacted directly (Bian & Ang, 1997). Simply having access to a high status social connection is related to the likelihood that one will pursue a high status occupation as well (Lin, 1999b). Having a large social network without the presence of high status connections does not provide one with the social resource benefits that a network with at least one high status person would provide (Campbell, et al., 1986). The status of one's social connections is related to one's SES, such that higher SES people have more high status social connections than low SES people (Campbell, et al., 1986). This may have obvious benefits for the occupational options of people who grew up in high SES households.

2.2.4 Race, Social Connections, and Occupational Information

Minorities also tend to have fewer weak social ties and less non-overlapping ties compared to Whites (Ibarra, 1995; Rollins & Valdez, 2006). It may be challenging for minorities to develop broader social connections, given the low

numerical representation of individual minority groups and the tendency for both minorities and Whites to prefer same-race friendships (Carroll & Teo, 1996; Kleit, 2001). Information travels best in networks where people share a social identity (Dodds, Muhamad, & Watts, 2003; McPherson, Smith-Lovin, & Cook, 2001; White & Houseman, 2003). Race is the primary social identity that people share in social groups, followed by other factors like education and occupation (McPherson, et al., 2001). As a result of these tendencies, access to information about occupations and job openings may be uneven between racial groups, resulting in minorities having less access to occupational information than Whites (Brown, 2002; Brown & Minor, 1992; Rollins & Valdez, 2006).

Social connections may limit occupational choice for people of low SES origins and minorities by limiting access information about occupations and job openings. This may play a role in keeping people within their SES of origin by reducing their decision sets.

2.2.5 Role Socialization

Socialization is the means through which people learn to adopt the attitudes and behaviors expected by society (DiRenzo, 1977; Liao & Cai, 1995). Gender role socialization may illuminate the process through which people develop expectations about the roles that they may play. Gender role socialization is a specific form of socialization through which people absorb the gender-appropriate attitudes and behaviors of the culture to which they belong (Liao & Cai, 1995).

Gender role socialization begins at home during early childhood. Family members have the most influence on the gender roles that children adopt (Liao & Cai, 1995; Witt, 1997). They pass along their own beliefs about gender appropriate behavior and dress through their overt actions, as well as their interactions with others in the home (Witt, 1997). The gender role messages that children receive in their homes are then reinforced by peers and teachers when children enter school.

By elementary school, children are already assigning value to their peers based on conformity to gender expectations (Adler, Kess & Adler, 1992). Boys are viewed more positively by their peers when they perceived as tough and have athletic ability (Adler, et al., 1992). Girls, by contrast, are judged based on their appearance and academic success (Adler, et al., 1992). Social skills are important to the popularity of both girls and boys, while only girls are ranked based on the socioeconomic status of their parents (Adler, et al., 1992).

At the time of the Adler, et al., (1992) observational study, girls were still socialized toward conformity with rules and norms while boys were socialized to become autonomous. Socialization of girls differed for a sample of mostly white children from middle and high SES families (Adler, et al., 1992). However, changes in gender socialization are not necessarily happening as quickly among lower SES children (Adler, et al., 1992).

The concept of role socialization also applies to racial groups. Among African American adolescents, mothers spend more time socializing their children about race than fathers do (Brown, Linver & Evans, 2010). They pay particular

attention to teaching their daughters to deal with racism (Brown, et al., 2010; Stevenson, McNeil, Herrero-Taylor & Davis, 2005). They also invest more time teaching their daughters about African American history and having a sense of pride in their ethnicity (Stevenson, et al., 2005). Sons receive significantly less information about their race and ethnicity from their mothers than daughters do (Brown, et al., 2010). Boys, however, are more likely than girls to be taught to deal with racial hostility and injustice (Stevenson, et al., 2005). Thus the content and focus of racial socialization differs by gender.

Although the literature on gender role and racial socialization related to occupational choice is sparse, a few researchers do discuss it. Liao and Cai (1995) generally state that children observe their parents' patterns of work behavior, and these patterns become a template for children's own beliefs about gender and work. By extension, learning by observing parents may also play a role in the types of occupations that people believe are appropriate for their own gender, racial or SES groups. Socialization received in childhood may be malleable to some degree during adulthood (Liao & Cai, 1995). However, the relationship between role socialization experiences in childhood and adult attitudes is strong (Liao & Cai, 1995).

As discussed earlier, the relationship between actual and perceived abilities is tenuous. Part of this disconnection between actual and perceived abilities and job preference relates to gender role socialization in childhood. Parents tend to reward and praise children for performing activities that fulfill gender-related parental expectations (Eccles, et al., 1990). Gender bias may cloud parents'

views of their children's capabilities (Eccles et al., 1990). For example, parents are likely to believe that their sons are better at sports than they really are and to attribute a daughter's struggles with math to her gender (Eccles, et al., 1990). Teachers and peers also may reinforce these perceptions (Eccles, et al., 1990).

Over time, children may absorb gender biases and apply them to themselves. Gender-related perceptual biases on the part of parents are associated with the types of activities that children believe they will excel in and should pursue (Eccles, et al., 1990). The amount of time that children spend mastering a skill relates to whether performance in that skill is rewarded by parents, teachers, and peers (Eccles, et al., 1990).

By the time they reach college age, girls tend to see themselves as weaker in math, science, and technology while boys are likely to see themselves as weaker in English (Correll, 2001 & 2004; Eccles, 1987; Eccles, et al., 1990). Women may therefore limit their occupational choices according to their views of their abilities, which may be influenced by gender biases (Correll, 2001). These gender-related differences in perceived abilities relate to occupational aspirations, as evidenced by choice of college major (Eccles, 1987; Eccles, et al., 1990). Although not researched, similar processes may relate to race, SES, and occupational choice. Parents, teachers, and peers may also share and reinforce beliefs about the types of work that are appropriate or attainable based on biases about race and SES.

Blau et al. (1956) discuss the potential relationships between race, gender, generation, SES, and occupational choice. Generation is discussed as a

potential variable in occupational choice. Younger generations may choose occupations based on observations of the outcomes that the generations before them received for their work (Blau, et al., 1956).

Blau et al., (1956) also propose that occupations that offer greater opportunities for extrinsic and intrinsic success will have higher barriers to entry for women and racial minorities. Research about race and occupational choice does not agree on whether race limits occupational options. Some researchers find that it does (Leung, Ivey & Suzuki, 1994; Gottfredson, 1978). Others find that it does not (Rotberg, Brown & Ware, 1987). Tracey and Hopkins (2001) find that race may moderate the relationships between interests and self-efficacy with occupational choice, but it is not clear whether African-American and Whites are significantly different from each other in the factors related to occupational choice. African-Americans have the lowest correlation between interests and occupational choice and self-efficacy and occupational choice compared to other minority groups in the US (Tracey & Hopkins, 2001). However, Whites do not differ significantly from other racial groups in terms of alignment between interests, perceived self-efficacy and occupational choice (Tracey & Hopkins, 2001). Socioeconomic status may help explain the differing findings between studies on race and occupational choice.

These studies imply little self-determination in the process of finding job satisfaction, accomplishment, and recognition in one's occupation.

Demographics background characteristics like SES of origin relate to the resources available for job information and connections to available jobs. Race,

gender, and generation may also be associated with barriers to entry in occupations that are both internally and externally imposed.

Chapter 3 Hypotheses Development

This chapter develops a set of twelve hypotheses which together detail a model of the relationships between SES of origin, perceptions of discrimination, and background demographic factors in relation to prestige of occupational choice. The demographic factors examined in these hypotheses include race, gender, and generational cohort in addition to SES of origin.

When SES of origin is examined in relation to occupations in other studies, the emphases are on aspirations, rather than actual choice (Heppner & Jung, 2013). While only a few studies measure SES of origin and occupational aspirations, those that do suggest a positive relationship between them (Bigler, Averhart & Liben, 2003; Hannah & Kahn, 1989; Howard, et al., 2010; Majoribanks, 2002; Schoon & Parsons, 2002). Occupational aspirations do not typically match occupational choices (Arbona & Novy, 1991; Flores & O'Brien, 2002; Gottfredson, 1981; Hernandez, Vargas-Lew & Martinez, 1994; Reyes, Kobus & Gillock, 1999). SES of origin may constrain the occupational options that one perceives are available (Blau, et al., 1956; Thompson & Subich, 2011). People from lower SES of origin also see themselves as less capable of performing well in work settings (Hannah & Kahn, 1989). These perceptions about themselves and their options may keep people from making the most appropriate occupational choices for their abilities.

People may tend to choose occupations with prestige levels similar to the prestige levels of the jobs held by their parents, thus replicating socioeconomic

status from one generation to the next (Gottfredson, 2005). People may absorb social stereotypes about the groups to which they belong and apply these stereotypes to themselves (Gottfredson, 1981 & 2005; Hogg & Turner, 1987; Levy, 2009; Sinclair, Hardin & Lowery, 2006). This could lead people to choose occupations associated with their SES of origin.

Differences in values between people of different SES of origin may also relate to the occupational choices that people make. People from higher SES origins tend to value autonomy, personal choice, and uniqueness (Kohn, 1969; Kraus et al., 2013, Stephens et al., 2007). Kohn (1989) suggests that people from higher SES backgrounds are more likely than people of lower SES backgrounds to seek out work that will allow them more autonomy. Occupations that have higher prestige levels also often have higher potential for autonomy.

Even if this relationship is significant, it is not necessarily true that people from low SES of origin are less interested in occupations that allow for autonomy or uniqueness. It is possible that people of low SES of origin view higher prestige jobs, which allow for greater freedom of personal expression and decision making, as less attainable.

3.1 Intersection of SES of Origin With Race

Race and SES may interact with each other to produce varying limitations on the occupational options that people perceive are available to them. However, race and SES are rarely studied together in relation to occupations. SES may be associated with differences in attitudes about one's identity (Shelton & Wilson, 2012). It may also be related to decision-making (Shelton & Wilson, 2012). Race

and SES interact when people consider occupations that fit them. For example, minority college students may differ from white college students in their occupational aspirations (Metz, Fouad, & Ihle-Helledy, 2009; Teng, Morgan & Anderson, 2001). These racial differences are found regardless of SES, although it is important to note that these studies use either children or college students (Metz, et al., 2009; Teng, et al., 2001).

High and low SES African American children differ in their occupational aspirations (Bigler, Averhart & Liben, 2003). While both groups of children value higher status jobs, only higher SES children are likely to aspire to them (Bigler et al., 2003; Gottfredson, 1981, 2005). Older African American children of low SES are less likely to be interested in novel and prestigious occupations compared to older African American children of high SES (Bigler et al., 2003; Howard, et al., 2010). Although white children are not studied in terms of occupational aspirations and SES, these studies suggest that differences within race in actual choice of occupational are possible, based on SES of origin.

SES does appear to be a key component of views on occupations and the type of people who do them. Low SES African American children are significantly more likely than high SES African American children to associate occupational prestige according to race (Bigler et al., 2003) and to aspire to low prestige occupations (Howard, et al., 2011). High SES African American children are more likely than low SES African American children to perceive themselves as having the flexibility to pursue a wide range of occupations. Whether this is true

for adults and relates to actual choices are key questions. Comparing African-American and white adults is also important.

A person may belong to multiple groups with opposing expectations (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Ridgeway & Kricheli-Katz, 2013). When a person faces conflict among their social identities, one identity will be a stronger driver of outcomes than the others (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Hogg & Terry, 2000). Collins (1997) proposes that race is a stronger driver of occupational choice. Ridgeway and Kricheli-Katz (2013) agree with Collins (1997), suggesting that SES is nested within more visible categories like race and gender.

SES may be a stronger driver than race, for example, when people form occupational aspirations, although this relationship may not be the same for occupational choices (Signer & Saldana, 2001; Trusty, Ng & Plata, 2000). Shelton and Wilson (2012) posit that these arguments in the literature about the dominance of race or SES in determining one's outcomes are limiting. Wilson and Shelton (2012) propose that race and SES interact. SES of origin is more likely to relate to the occupational opportunities of African Americans today than it did in the early 1900s (Wilson, 2012). Prior to the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s, SES was not related to occupational attainment for African Americans, but today it is (Wilson, 2012). Differences do exist within SES by race (Wilson, 2012), but the fact that differences exist within race by SES is a relatively recent development. The largest disparities in outcomes between racial groups are likely to be found among people of low SES (Wilson and Shelton, 2012).

Hunt and Ray (2012) propose that SES is the primary predictor of self-reported social class identification for all racial groups, although this relationship is weaker among African Americans surveyed. Race does predict how people see their social class position (Hunt & Ray, 2012) and, by extension, their occupational options. SES may be less salient in relation to perceived occupational possibilities for African Americans when compared to other racial groups (Howard, et al., 2011). For other racial groups, SES is likely to play a stronger role in occupational choices (Howard, et al., 2011). However, these interactions between race and SES of origin in relation to prestige of occupational choice may be different today (Wilson, 2012).

3.2 Stereotyping and Occupational Choice

Hannah and Kahn (1989) find that boys from lower SES backgrounds are less likely to see themselves as capable of performing challenging work. Cognitive biases about one's own status groups may also play a role in the occupational options that people believe they have (Rollins & Valdez, 2006). Self-stereotyping is the process through which a person unconsciously internalizes social stereotypes about the groups to which they belong and applies those stereotypes to themselves (Hogg & Turner, 1987; Levy, 2009; Sinclair, Hardin & Lowery, 2006). People internalize stereotypes about their abilities according to their affiliations with status groups, irrespective of their actual abilities (Correll, 2004; Gottfredson, 1981, 2005; Rollins & Valdez, 2006).

How others perceive a group affects the value that group members associate with themselves (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Rollins & Valdez, 2006; Steele & Aronson, 1995). If a group is perceived positively in society, then members of that group will be more likely to feel good about themselves. The reverse may also be true.

An individual person's status is tied to the status of the groups to which that person belongs (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Ridgeway, 1991; Ridgeway, Backor, Li, Tinkler & Erickson, 2009). Beliefs about others are formed based on social categories and are associated with each status group (Berger, Ridgeway & Zelditch, 2002; Ridgeway, 1991). These beliefs become part of the social norms and expectations (Berger et al., 2002; Ridgeway, 1991). They are rooted in and reinforced by interactions between people of status different backgrounds (Berger et al., 2002). The rewards that a person may receive from society are based on the beliefs that others have about the status of the groups to which a person belongs (Berger, et al., 2002). Higher-status groups may be perceived as more dominant, competitive, and confident than lower status groups (Berger, et al., 2002). When members of a lower-status group internalize these beliefs, they may view themselves with less confidence.

People whose social category is valued more in society may be perceived as being more competent than others (Ridgeway, 1991). For example, type-based biases may lead people to perceive that high SES people are more capable of performing the complex work that tends to be required in high status occupations (Oxoby, 2014; Ridgeway & Fisk, 2012; Ridgeway, 2014). Ridgeway (1991)

explains that this bias may be rooted in the fact that people of lower SES have fewer resources available to them than people of higher SES. Thus they may be perceived as having less to contribute. This bias may also apply to the dominant racial group in a society (Oxoby, 2014).

Perceptions associated with people from different racial groups may relate to beliefs about one's own abilities. Minorities, for example, report seeing themselves as less able to meet the demands of higher status jobs (Bigler, et al., 2003; Howard et al., 2011). Belief in a glass ceiling associated with an occupation also may discourage African-Americans (Rollins & Valdez, 2006) and women from pursuing it. These perceptions relate to the likely outcomes that one expects to receive from one's choices (Cook, Church, Ajanaku, Shadish, Kim & Cohen, 1996; Correll, 2004; Gore & Leuwerke, 2000; Sheu, Lent, Brown, Miller, Hennessey & Duffy, 2009). One is unlikely to pursue an occupation if one believes that success in that occupation is unlikely (Cook, et al., 1996; Gore & Leuwerke, 2000). However, SES is also associated with outcomes (Heppner & Jung, 2013), making minorities from higher SES origins see themselves as more capable of pursuing higher status jobs. Thus SES may relate to occupational ambitions. Whether that translates to actual choice is not clear.

Compared to people from high SES, people from low SES may have a wider gap between their ideal occupation and what they believe is a realistic occupational choice (Cook et al., 1996; Kohn, 1989). People of high SES origins, regardless of race, are more likely than others to aspire to more prestigious occupations. This may relate to these perceptions of competence. Although not

tested empirically, the literature suggests that at each level of SES, people perceive a range of potential occupational choices (Heppner & Jung, 2013; Lapour & Heppner, 2009), and that range may be more constricted for people from lower SES (Gottfredson, 1981, 2005).

Occupational aspirations may be related to the interaction between preferences and perceived feasibility (Gottfredson, 1981; Gottfredson & Becker, 1981; Hannah & Kahn, 1989; Lent et al., 1994; Woods & Hampton, 2010). The fit between a job and one's SES is the first sorting criterion people use to determine their occupational aspirations (Gottfredson 1981, 2005; Hannah & Kahn, 1989). In this view, SES would narrow the scope of one's aspirations.

Hypothesis 1: SES of origin is positively related to the prestige level of occupational choice.

Background characteristics like SES and race should not be the basis for occupational decisions. However, they may be used heuristically because they are more concrete than more relevant criteria like intelligence and personality (Ridgeway & Kricheli-Katz, 2013). Cook, et al. (1996) suggest support for this view, noting that occupational aspirations of high school students from various combinations of race and SES align with the proportions of people of those combinations of race and SES in each occupation type that they studied.

3.3 Discrimination

Fouad and Byars-Winston (1999) find that students who are minorities are no different from white students in relation to occupational prestige aspirations.

However, perceptions of potential discrimination may play a role in differences between aspirations and actual choice of occupation (Fouad & Byars-Winston, 1999). Discrimination is negative treatment due to a person's real or perceived group membership (Hall & Carter, 2006). People within the same group may perceive discrimination differently based on their personal experiences and the strength of their identity with their group (Hall & Carter, 2006).

Some members of minority groups may anticipate facing discrimination in the job market and so may have lower expectations for occupational outcomes (Ng, Schweitzer, & Lyons, 2012). This may relate to the occupational choice (Ng, et al., 2012). Beliefs about discrimination and its relationship to outcomes associated with occupations may relate to the choices that people make.

Hypothesis 2a: Perception of discrimination is negatively related to the prestige level of occupational choice.

Hypothesis 2b: Race is related to perception of discrimination and the prestige level of occupational choice, such that for African-American respondents perceptions of discrimination will be negatively related to the prestige level of occupational choice.

Discrimination may also relate to occupational choice for women. Watts, Frame, Moffett, Van Hein and Hein (2015) find that girls are aware of barriers they may face in the pursuit of occupational success. Girls who are aware of

discrimination are more likely than those who are less aware of discrimination to aspire to occupations that are typically associated with men (Pahike, Bigler, & Green, 2010). One study finds that girls are not concerned about facing discrimination at work (Pahike, et al., 2010), while another finds that concerns about barriers to success may negatively relate to prestige of career aspirations (Watts, et al., 2015).

The literature about gender and occupational aspirations finds conflicting results (Howard, et al., 2010). Some studies find that girls have higher occupational aspirations compared to boys (Ashby & Schoon, 2010; Howard, et al., 2010; Mau & Bikos, 2000; Perry, Przybsz, & Al-Sheikh, 2009; Schoon & Polek, 2011; Watts, Frame, Moffett, Van Hein & Hein, 2015). Others find no gender differences in the prestige level of occupational aspirations between boys and girls (Howard, et al., 2010; Chang, Chen, Greenberger, Dooley, & Heckhausen, 2006; Powers & Wojtkiewicz, 2004). For African-American women, self-efficacy and personal preferences are less important to occupational choice than beliefs about the pros and cons of a pursuing a prestigious occupation (Scheuermann, Tokar, & Hall, 2014).

Hypothesis 2c: Gender is related to perception of discrimination and the prestige level of occupational choice, such that for female respondents perceptions of discrimination will be positively related to the prestige level of occupational choice.

Hypothesis 2d: Gender and race are related to perception of discrimination and the prestige level of occupational choice, such that for African-American female respondents perceptions of discrimination will be negatively related to the prestige level of occupational choice.

3.4 Gender, SES, and Occupational Choice

Gender and SES of origin may interact to positively relate to the prestige level of occupational choice (Ashby & Schoon, 2010). Girls that have higher self-efficacy about career decisions also are more likely to aspire to occupations that do not conform to gender stereotypes (Gushue & Whitson, 2006). Given this relationship between self-efficacy with both gender and SES of origin, it is not surprising that higher SES of origin is positively related to prestige level of occupational aspirations for high school girls (Ashby & Schoon, 2010; Hannah & Kahn, 1989). Higher SES of origin girls are more likely than low SES of origin girls to express interest in fields that are dominated by males (Hannah & Kahn, 1989). It is expected that this relationship will remain true once women make actual occupational choices. Women may actually choose lower prestige occupations, regardless of aspirations, due to reduced opportunities in both education and the workplace (Schoon & Polek, 2011).

Hypothesis 3a: Women will have lower prestige levels of occupational choice compared to men.

Hypothesis 3b: Among women, SES of origin is positively related to prestige level of occupational choice.

3.5 Generational Differences and Occupational Choice

Generations are defined as groups of people growing up during the same span of time in the same culture (Lyons & Kuron, 2014). Growing up in the same cultural and historical place lends each generational group a collective disposition, which serves as a prism through which experiences are interpreted and decisions are made (Lyons & Kuron, 2014). This chapter begins with a section discussing differences between generational cohorts in their views of occupations and their overall preferences about work. Then the Millennial generation - now the largest in the United States (Fry, 2015) and most recent to enter the work force - is discussed separately. Differences within the Millennial cohort along SES, racial, and gender lines are discussed. Individual differences are expected within each generational cohort, but the purpose of this section is to identify trends that may relate to occupational choice for each group.

The generational cohorts of interest in this study are the four that still are still widely represented in the United States adult population. Although consensus about the birth years that define the boundaries of each generation is not reached, this study uses the time frames developed in the Strauss-Howe generation theory (Howe & Strauss, 2000; Strauss & Howe, 1991). Adult Millennials are born between 1982 and 1998 and represent twenty-three percent of the United States population (Fry, 2015; Howe & Strauss, 2000; Strauss and Howe, 1991; U.S. Census Bureau, 2017). Generation X is born between 1961 and 1981 and represents twenty percent of the United States population (Fry, 2015; Howe & Strauss, 2000; Strauss & Howe, 1991; U.S. Census Bureau,

2017). The Baby Boomers are born between 1943 and 1960 and represent twenty-three percent of the United States population (Fry, 2015; Howe & Strauss, 2000; Strauss & Howe, 1991; U.S. Census Bureau, 2017).

The Pre-World War II Generation comprises people who were born between 1925 and 1942 (Howe & Strauss, 2000; Strauss & Howe, 1991). They represent nine percent of the adult United States population (Fry, 2015; U.S. Census Bureau, 2017). Although their numbers are smaller than the other comparison groups, they serve as an important reference point as the only living generational cohort whose entire membership chose occupations and navigated through the world of work prior to the Civil Rights movement.

Research suggests that views about work and occupational preferences vary by generational cohort. For example, Millennials are less likely than Generation X employees to value receiving extrinsic rewards for performance (Hess & Jepson, 2009), preferring time with family over monetary gains (Hurst & Good, 2009). The Pre-World War II Generation values money less than both the Baby Boomers and Generation X (Hansen & Leuty, 2011). Generation X, while valuing money less than Baby Boomers, do value money more than Millennials (O'Connor, 2015). This suggests that Baby Boomers value money more than the other generational cohorts. Millennials and the Pre-World War II Generation value money less than Generation X and Baby Boomers. This is in line with the finding that emphasis on money associated with work was at its highest in the

1990s (Lyons & Kuron, 2014), when Baby Boomers were in their prime working years.

The Pre-World War II Generation respondents are more likely, however, to value high status occupations than either Baby Boomers or Generation X respondents (Hansen & Leuty, 2011; Lyons & Kuron, 2014). Generation X workers are more likely than Millennial workers to value high status occupations (Lyons & Kuron, 2014; O'Connor, 2015). Millennials, by contrast, care more about the nature of the work itself and the opportunities provided to develop skills (Lub, Bal, Blomme, & Schalk, 2016). Millennials may also view choosing an occupation as merely a rite of passage into adulthood (O'Connor, 2015).

Generation X employees place greater value on work-life balance than Baby Boomers (Sullivan, et al., 2009). Millennials also expect work-life balance (Ng & Gossett, 2013; O'Connor, 2015). Lyons and Kuron (2014) find that emphasis on work-life balance increased between generations, becoming more important over time. Sullivan et al., (2009) suggest that Generation X may pursue less prestigious occupations than baby Boomers as a result of placing greater emphasis on work-life balance. This may also be the case for Millennial adults, for whom higher value placed on work-life balance and lower value placed on extrinsic rewards may combine to lead them to choose less prestigious occupations.

Hypothesis 4a: Generation is related to the prestige level of occupational choice, such that Millennial respondents will be less likely to choose

higher prestige occupations than Generation X, Baby Boomer, and Pre-World War II Generation respondents.

Hypothesis 4b: Generation is related to the prestige level of occupational choice, such that Generation X respondents will be less likely to choose higher prestige occupations than Baby Boomer and Pre-World War II Generation respondents.

Millennials care about working for organizations that value diversity and inclusion (Ng, & Gossett, 2013). They also want to work in occupations that allow them to make a difference in society (Ng & Gossett, 2013; O'Connor, 2015; Price, McGillis-Hall, Angus, & Peter, 2013). Occupations that demand a lot of time, are not reputed for inclusion of diverse workers, and do not have an obvious connection to doing good may be less desirable to Millennials.

3.5.1 Generation, SES, and race

While Millennials share values in common with each other, they differ along racial lines in the weight that they place on their values. African American Millennials are more likely to want an occupation that allows them to contribute to society, compared to white Millennials (Ng, Schweitzer, & Lyons, 2010). African-American Millennials are also more likely than white Millennials to want a job that allows them to develop their abilities (Ng, Schweitzer, & Lyons, 2010). Millennials, as a group, value diversity and inclusion at work, but this is more

important to African-American Millennials than to white Millennials (Ng, Schweitzer, & Lyons, 2010).

African-American Millennials are more likely than white Millennials to value a strong work ethic (Alcorn, 2017). Although African American Millennials believe race issues are a challenge in the United States today, they are more likely to believe in the American Dream and their own ability to achieve their goals compared to white Millennial respondents (Alcorn, 2017). White Millennials express less desire than African-American Millennials to attain either intrinsic or extrinsic occupational success (Alcorn, 2017). African-American Millennials expect to earn higher salaries compared to the expectations of white Millennials (Ng, Scheitzer & Lyons, 2010). Some of the overarching differences in value placed on extrinsic occupational success between Millennials and other generations may be driven by differences in the perspectives of African-American and white Millennials.

Alcorn (2017) proposes that differences between African-American and white Millennials may relate to the SES of origin of the respondents. Although this is not measured directly in their study, Alcorn (2017) points out that white Millennials are more likely than African-Americans to have parents with at least a Bachelor's degree and less likely to have low SES of origin. Alcorn (2017) speculates that white Millennials may be less ambitious than African-American Millennials because they are already content. In line with that view, white Millennials are more likely than African-American Millennials to say that they are already living the American Dream (Alcorn, 2017).

During the period between 1982 and 1992, when the respondents in this sample were raised, poverty in the United States hovered between twelve and fifteen percent of the overall population (Poverty in the United States, 2017). Poor white children comprised ten to fourteen percent of all poor children while poor African-American children comprised forty-three to forty-seven percent of all poor children (U.S. Census Bureau, 2016). It is important to point out that while African-American children are disproportionately more likely than white children to have a low SES of origin, poverty is not the predominant experience among African-American children. If SES of origin is a factor in the difference in ambitions and work ethic between African-American and white Millennials, then it is also likely to differ between African-American Millennials of different SES of origin backgrounds. Although SES of origin is expected to positively relate to prestige of occupational choice, among Millennials in general and African-American Millennials specifically, this relationship is expected to be the opposite.

Hypothesis 5a: Among Millennials, SES of origin is negatively related to the prestige level of occupational choice such that lower SES of origin Millennials will choose higher prestige occupations than higher SES of origin Millennials.

Hypothesis 5b: Among Millennials, race will be positively related to the prestige level of occupational choice such that African-American Millennials will choose higher prestige occupations than white Millennials.

African-American and white Millennials are more similar to each other than to either Asian or Hispanic Millennials in the greater value both groups place on finding occupations that allow for flexible work schedules and challenging work (Alcorn, 2017). On these points, both African-American and white Millennials fit into the larger narrative about Millennial occupational values.

3.5.2 Generation, perceptions of discrimination, and race

African-American and white Millennials tend to perceive racial discrimination differently as well, which could relate to differences in outlook about occupations. Sixty-eight percent of African American Millennials see racism as a serious issue, while only thirty-three percent of white Millennials do (Cohen, 2011). Thirty-five percent of African-American Millennials say that they have personally experienced some form of discrimination, while only fourteen percent of white Millennials have (Waters, 2010). Sixty-one percent of African-American Millennials agreed that discrimination makes it difficult for young African-Americans to succeed (Cohen, 2011). Only forty-three percent of white Millennial respondents agreed that discrimination makes it difficult for young African-Americans to succeed (Cohen, 2011). African-American Millennials clearly differ from white Millennials in terms of their life experiences with discrimination and their views on the impact it may have on their future occupational prospects. Given the challenges that African-American Millennials perceive, it may seem counterintuitive that they report more optimistic and ambitious attitudes than white Millennials.

One potential explanation for this difference is racial socialization. Racial socialization is the process of transmitting values from one generation to the next (Waters, 2010). Views about race and discrimination are key elements of racial socialization (Stevenson, et al., 2005; Waters, 2010). Seventy-eight percent of African-American Millennials report being taught by the people who raised them about stereotypes and discrimination (Waters, 2010). This socialization may be positive, to the extent that it prepares people to react with determination and ambition to setbacks (Sanders, 1997; Stevenson, et al., 2005; Waters, 2010). Awareness of potential discrimination may increase the drive to succeed (Sanders, 1997; Stevenson, et al., 2005; Waters, 2010), which could lead to increased success.

Hypothesis 6: Among Millennials, perceptions of discrimination relate to the prestige level of occupational choice such that African-American Millennials will choose higher prestige occupations than white Millennials.

Based on the literature, SES of origin is expected to relate positively to prestige level of occupational choice. Perceptions of discrimination are expected to relate negatively to occupational choice. The racial backgrounds of respondents are expected to interact with SES of origin and perceptions of discrimination, resulting in different prestige levels of occupational choice between racial groups. Generational cohort is also expected to interact with SES of origin and perceptions of discrimination. However, it is expected to act as a

contingency that makes these expected relationships different for Millennials than for preceding generational cohorts. A model of these expected relationships is depicted in Figure 3-1 below.

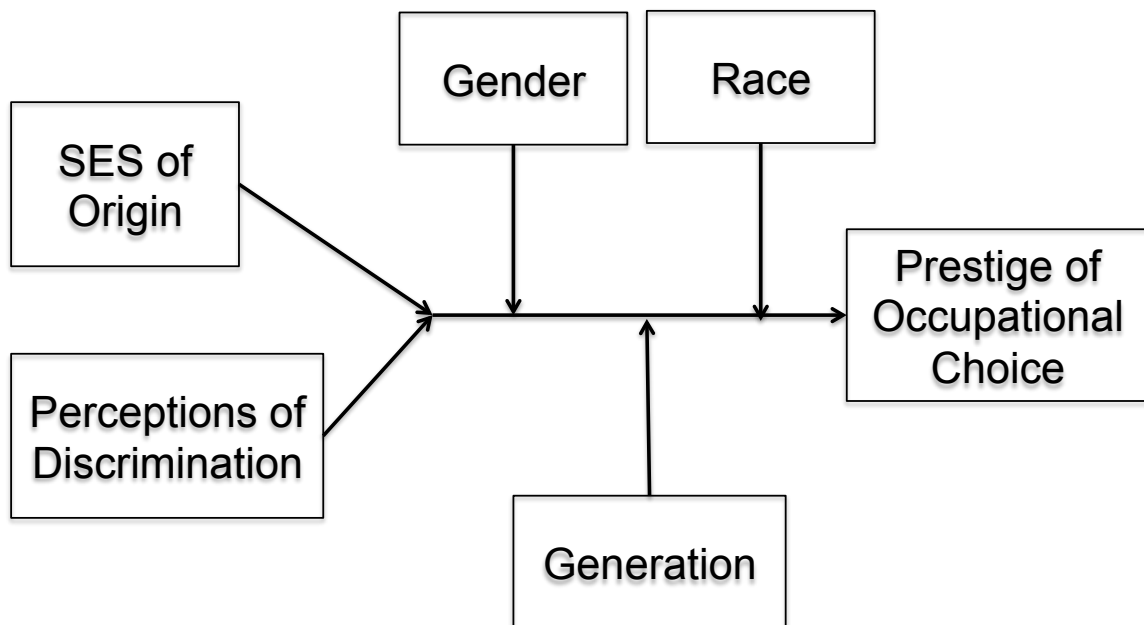


Figure 3-1 Understudied Factors Related to Prestige of Occupational Choice

The full model proposes that SES of origin is positively related to prestige of occupational choice, and perceptions of discrimination are negatively related to prestige of occupational choice. The full model also proposes that race, generation, and gender interact with SES of origin and perceptions of discrimination in their relationships to occupational choice, resulting in different levels of occupational prestige related to sub-group membership. Women are expected to have lower occupational prestige compared to men, although the positive relationship between SES of origin and prestige level of occupational

choice is still expected to apply to women. Perceptions of discrimination are expected to negatively relate to prestige of occupational choice for African-Americans but be positively related to it for women. The relationship between perceptions of discrimination and prestige level of occupational choice is expected to be negative for African-American women. Generation is expected to relate to the prestige level of occupational choice in that Millennials and Generation X are each expected to choose lower prestige occupations compared to previous generations. SES of origin is proposed to have an inverse relationship with prestige level of occupational choice, with low SES serving as a motivating factor driving higher occupational prestige. Perceptions of discrimination are proposed to relate positively instead of negatively to prestige level of occupational choice, leading African-American Millennials to choose higher prestige occupations compared to white Millennials.

Chapter 4 Qualitative Research and Results

4.1 Qualitative Methods

A pilot study consisting of semi-structured interviews was conducted with twenty diverse participants. Each participant answered questions about the occupational and educational backgrounds of themselves and their parents. They also responded to questions about why they chose their occupations, describing factors related to their choices.

The ten African-American respondents include six women and four men. Five have lower-range SES origins, four have mid-range SES origins, and one has upper-range SES origins. They work a variety of industries, including computer programming, education, fitness instruction, human resource management, consulting, and project management. Two are Millennials, three are Generation X, four are Baby Boomers, and one is in the Pre-World War II Generation.

Ten white respondents include five women and five men. Four have lower-range SES origins, five have mid-range SES origins, and one has upper-range SES origins. They work in a range of industries, including education, engineering, finance, information technology, land surveying, management, office administration, and technical services. Two are Millennials, six are Generation X, one is a Baby Boomer, and one is in the Pre-World War II Generation.

The mean occupational prestige score for the African-Americans in this sample is sixty-two, which is higher than both the mean of sixty-one for the overall qualitative sample and the mean of sixty for white participants in this

sample. Mean occupational prestige scores for all sub-groups in this sample are notably higher than for the corresponding groups in the quantitative sample. Mean occupational prestige scores are fifty-nine for participants from lower SES of origin, sixty-one for participants from middle-range SES of origin, and 74 for participants of higher SES of origin.

Respondents were recruited using the snowball sampling method which, as Rubin and Babbie (2010) note, is useful for accessing members of the population that would otherwise be difficult to reach through conventional means. This study sought to interview employed male and female participants representing African American and white racial backgrounds from lower, middle, and upper SES.

In line with the benefit of conducting qualitative interviews suggested by Lapan, Quartaroli and Riemer (2012), the purpose of these interviews was to gather rich information about the hypothesized relationships. The questions asked of each respondent are in Appendix A. Each respondent was asked to answer each of the prepared questions, but allowances were made for respondents to provide information beyond what was asked. The questions explored the significant findings in more depth.

Each respondent was assured that their identifying information was separated from their responses. Interviews were conducted one-on-one. Each interview lasted from fifteen to twenty minutes.

4.2 Qualitative Results

As Braun and Clarke (2006) suggest, the interview transcripts were read to identify key themes based on patterns of responses given by respondents. A deductive approach was taken to place themes in the context of existing theory. Responses are then categorized to shed light on key questions of this study. The interviews show what motivated respondents from different races, SES of origin, and generations to choose their occupations.

4.2.1. SES and Occupational Choice

“I was into computers my entire life. As I got older I just kind of knew whatever this led to was going to be my profession in the future.”

Looking at the match between aspirations and actual occupational choice, only two participants are employed in the jobs that they anticipated. Some differences stand out. Participants from lower SES backgrounds varied in terms of the prestige level of their occupational aspirations. Two aspired to low prestige occupations. Both entered those occupations, though one was unable to continue due to health reasons. Two had no specific aspirations. One works in a middle prestige occupation while the other works in a lower prestige occupation, yet both said that they think of their occupations as callings. While three participants from lower SES of origin aspired to middle prestige occupations, only two are employed in middle prestige jobs. One aspired to a high prestige occupation but works in a low prestige occupation.

Three of the four participants from middle SES backgrounds aspired to middle prestige occupations. One aspired to a lower prestige occupation. Only one of the middle and higher SES of origin participants works in an occupation that exactly matches the aspirational occupation. All four respondents from middle SES origins ended up working in middle prestige occupations. The two respondents from higher SES of origin both aspired to and now work in high prestige occupations.

“In high school there was never a counselor - there was never anyone - that said you know there's ways that if your family can't afford to send you to college, we can figure that out. You know if you're in a certain bracket, which we were very low income, I probably could've gone to school. But no one ever – it's like, just get out and get a job. Just get out of high school and get a good job. That was pretty much the whole sentiment I guess in our area.”

Financial constraints and availability of occupational opportunities are cited most often by participants from lower SES backgrounds as reasons for selecting and remaining in an occupation. Only one participant from a mid-level SES background mentioned financial considerations as a constraint. While only five of the participants from lower SES backgrounds mentioned interest or ability as a driver for remaining in their current occupation, all of the participants from middle and higher SES backgrounds discussed it. Only three of the lower SES participants said they got into their occupation through friends or family while all but one of the middle SES participants said that they did.

Taken together, the prestige of occupational choice is more predictable for people of middle and higher SES origins in this sample. Aspirations and prestige level of occupational choices are in line with the SES of origin for those of middle and higher SES. Among the people of lower SES origin, the prestige level of occupational choice is mixed.

4.2.2 Discrimination and Occupational Choice

“I sort of knew what I would be doing because I had to do what was available to me as an African-American person in the Deep South.”

Only two of the twenty participants mentioned perceptions of discrimination in relation to occupational choice. Both participants are African-American females. One is a member of the Pre-World War II Generation, and the other is a Baby Boomer. The Pre-World War II Generation participant described being truly limited to one or two occupational choices while the other discussed feeling limited but discovering that her occupational choices were not limited. Both participants reported staying in the same occupational field throughout their careers but ascending to higher prestige positions than anticipated. No other African-American or female participants discussed feeling limited by discrimination based on social identities.

4.2.3 Race and Occupational Choice

The relationship between race and prestige of occupational choice was mixed in this interview sample. Among the African American participants, three did not mention having specific aspirations before choosing an occupation. Seven

aspired to middle or high prestige occupations. All but one works in a middle to high prestige occupation. One is in a lower prestige occupation by choice after years working in a middle prestige occupation.

Three of the white participants had low prestige occupational aspirations, one had higher occupational prestige aspirations, and the others had middle prestige occupational aspirations. Two of the three with lower prestige aspirations chose low prestige occupations while one pursued a middle prestige occupation. One with high prestige aspirations works in a high prestige occupation. Two of the participants with middle prestige aspirations work in lower prestige occupations.

One African-American participant said financial constraints limited occupational choice while four white participants mentioned it. One African-American and three white participants said physical or academic abilities limited their occupational choices. Eight African-American and three white participants did not discuss feeling constrained in their occupational choice.

“Once I got into it, there wasn’t anything else really that ever crossed my mind. I’d say even now, if I ever went back to school, my goal would still be to go back and work in the same business that I’m in.”

Five African-American and seven white participants cite ability and interest as motivations for choosing and continuing in their occupations of choice. Three white respondents said job availability motivated them to remain in their chosen occupations while no African-American participants did. Three African-American participants see their occupations as callings, though none aspired to their

chosen occupations at the outset. None of the white respondents viewed their occupational choices as callings.

4.2.4. Generation and Occupational Choice

Analyses of the interviews suggest that younger generations aspire to higher prestige occupations and see more opportunities than the older interviewees. The Pre-World War II Generation respondent initially had no specific occupational aspiration but pursued the occupation that was available. Gender and race are cited as constraints on occupational choice when the respondent was entering the work force. Nevertheless, the respondent discussed steps taken to develop and advance to a high prestige level with the chosen occupational industry. The respondent mentioned ability, interest, and the potential to contribute positively to the community as motivations to grow in the occupation.

Among the five Baby Boomer respondents, one started with no specific occupational aspirations, worked in a middle prestige occupation, and chose a more fulfilling lower prestige occupation later in life. One aspired to a lower prestige occupation because of low initial expectations related to race and gender, but after positive experiences in college chose an occupation and rose to a high level of prestige in that line of work. One had aspirations for a specific middle prestige occupation and followed a career in the same type of occupation with a slightly different focus. One had aspirations for a high prestige occupation and reached those aspirations. One Baby Boomer participant mentioned being constrained in occupational choice by ability. All discussed choosing an occupation based on alignment with abilities and interest.

All but two of the ten Generation X participants aspired to middle or high prestige occupations. Of those, all but one work in middle or high prestige occupations. Three mention financial constraints on occupational choice. Three discuss physical and academic abilities as factors impeding their original aspirations. The rest do not mention constraints at all. Two of the three discussing financial constraints chose occupations based on availability. The rest focused on interest and abilities.

Four of the participants are Millennials. One aspired to and is working in a high prestige occupation. Two aimed for a middle prestige occupation. One of them is working in a lower prestige occupation but is close to completing the education required to pursue the occupation originally desired. One planned initially on working in a lower prestige occupation but is in a middle prestige occupation now. Three of the four discussed financial constraints related to their occupational choices.

Table 4-1 Participant Characteristics

Participant ID	SES of Origin	Race	Gender	Generation	Prestige of Occupational Choice
1	low	white	female	Millennial	65
2	low	white	male	Generation X	51
3	low	white	female	Generation X	36
4	low	white	male	Baby Boomer	69
5	low	white	male	Generation X	68
6	low	white	female	Generation X	46
7	low	African-American	female	Pre-World War II	64
8	low	African-American	male	Baby Boomer	37
9	low	African-American	male	Baby Boomer	73
10	low	African-American	female	Generation X	61
11	low	African-American	male	Baby Boomer	74
12	middle	white	male	Millennial	51
13	middle	white	male	Generation X	74
14	middle	white	female	Generation X	65
15	middle	African-American	female	Generation X	54
16	middle	African-American	female	Baby Boomer	73
17	middle	African-American	female	Millennial	54
18	middle	African-American	male	Generation X	54
19	high	white	female	Generation X	74
20	high	African-American	female	Millennial	74

4.3 Summary

Within this sample, the pattern of outcomes interviewees experienced are in line with what one would expect, based on the results of the quantitative study. Interviewees generally chose occupations with prestige levels that relate to their SES of origin. This is particularly true of middle and upper SES of origin participants. Lower SES of origin participants in this sample varied in terms of the prestige level of their occupational choices. Some climbed to higher SES as adults, and others did not.

Participants from low SES of origin discussed financial constraints preventing them from seeking out the education and skill development required to pursue the occupations that they wanted to do. This limitation is not discussed in the management literature about occupational choice. However, for lower SES of

origin participants, financial realities appear to place particularly strong boundaries on occupational choice.

In line with the management literature, perceived abilities and occupational choice did factor into occupational choices in this study. This is especially true of participants from middle and upper SES of origin. Research suggests that this association between perceived abilities and occupational choice has a small effect size (Barak, 1981; Betz & Hackett, 1981; Eccles, et al., 1990; Lent, Brown & Hackett, 1994; Tracey & Hopkins, 2001; Vroom, 1964). This study finds that abilities and interests are top-of-mind when participants from middle and upper SES origins consider why they chose their occupation. It may be that, having developed skills related to their occupation, they perceive themselves in hindsight as having possessed those abilities from the beginning. The potential relationship between SES of origin, perceived abilities, and occupational choice warrants further study.

Only two participants mention perceptions of discrimination as a factor in occupational choice. For one it drove the choice of occupation. For the other, it did not because she received mentoring from a college professor who encouraged her to choose an occupation that even thirty years later does not employ representative numbers of women and minorities relevant to their proportion of the United States population. She thought she would be limited by gender and race, but she was not.

No pattern emerges among African-American participants in this sample in terms of prestige level of occupational choice. However, it is notable that most

African-American participants did not mention constraints related to the choices of occupations. Instead, those that rose to a higher SES than the one in which they were raised shared stories about ambition, hard work, and determination. Several mentioned that they knew that success would not be a given, so they planned from an early age to strive more than their white peers. Although the quantitative study finds a negative relationship between African-American racial background and prestige of occupation, African-Americans that were upwardly socially mobile also need additional study.

In this sample, more than half of the white participants discussed choosing their occupation because a social connection helped them find a job, and the job was a fit. None of the African-American participants mentioned finding a job through social connections, which is in line with the management literature. Several African-American participants implied that they chose their occupation while in college, though it is unclear whether the university itself assisted with job placement.

4.4 Limitations

Despite efforts to recruit participants from a broad range of occupations, the mean prestige levels of occupational choice for this sample are higher than for the quantitative sample. The experiences of this sample in the workplace may be different than for the average person in the quantitative sample. The fact that the African-American participants who discussed limitations on their occupational choices due to perceptions about discrimination framed it in positive terms may also relate to interviewer characteristics. The interviewer is not only white but

also personally unknown to the participants. The small sample size and use of a snowball sampling method are also limitations of this qualitative study. However, participants did suggest ways in which people from different SES of origin and racial backgrounds view the process of choosing an occupation.

Chapter 5 Quantitative Research and Results

Building on the qualitative results, this study examines the background variables associated with prestige of occupational choice using a broad, nationally representative sample of Americans. This chapter describes the data, procedures, sample, variables, and types of analyses used.

5.1 Quantitative Methods

Current theories about occupational choice are rooted in studies of mostly white and middle class people (Heppner & Jung, 2013). In particular, studies about race, SES of origin, generations, and prestige level of occupational choice tend to survey college students, who may differ from their non-college-bound peers. Lent, et al. (1994) point out the limitations of the widespread use of college students in studies of occupations. For example, it is particularly difficult to learn about the factors leading to occupational choice for people from low SES origins using college student samples exclusively. The use of college student samples also restricts researchers to gathering data about occupational intentions rather than actual choices (Lent, et al., 1994). Metz, et al., (2009) find that occupational aspirations are unlikely to translate to actual choices because the availability of jobs in the market does not match the aspirations that students have.

This study addresses these issues by using a diverse sample of working adults, rather than sampling college students. The sample for this study includes African-American and white respondents from all levels of SES backgrounds and four current generational cohorts. This study uses data from the General Social

Survey (GSS) because it provides access to a broader sample of working adults representing combinations of racial, generational, gender, and SES backgrounds that are unlikely to be available among other potential samples.

Launched in 1972, the GSS is an ongoing full-probability national sociological survey. It asks a series of questions that remain the same for every administration, as well as including questions that are asked for only one or two administrations (Beveridge, A, n.d.). Questions that are repeated over time allow researchers to observe trends (Beveridge, A., n.d.). These strengths are additional reasons that this survey is chosen to investigate the hypotheses in this study.

5.1.1 Data and Procedure

The GSS is administered by the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) at the University of Chicago. It is the second most-cited database among social sciences publications, with over 27,000 citations (NORC, 2016). All variables of interest, including control variables, are asked every year between 2000 and 2010.

5.1.2 Sample

Full-probability sampling is used to select participants that are English-speaking, non-institutionalized adults residing in the United States (Davis & Smith, 1991; “General Social Survey – 1990”, n.d.). NORC strives to survey 2000 to 3000 respondents per year (“General Social Survey – 1990”, n.d.). The response rate varies by year. This study tests the hypotheses associated with

each model using data gathered from the 2000 to 2010 GSS. This range of years includes all four generational cohorts of interest – Millennials, Generation X, Baby Boomers, and the Pre-World War II Generation - and contains the most recent data available for all variables.

The full sample used for this study includes 14,712 respondents. Of these, only 5166 answered all of the questions for the variables used in the full model. Fourteen percent are African-American, and eighty-six percent are white. Forty-six percent of the sample is male, and fifty-four percent is female. Seventeen percent are Millennials, forty-two percent are Generation X, twenty-nine percent are Baby Boomers, and twelve percent are in the Pre-World War II Generation.

The mean occupational prestige score for the overall sample is forty-four out of a possible range of seventeen to eighty-six. Forty-four is also the mean occupational prestige score for both men and women. The mean occupational prestige score for African-American respondents is forty-one and white respondents is forty-four. Mean occupational prestige scores are thirty-eight for Millennials, forty-four for Generation X, forty-six for Baby Boomers, and forty-five for the Pre-World War II Generation.

Sub-group analyses are also conducted for men (n=2391), women (n=2774), African-Americans (n=634), Whites (n=4532), older generations (n=1716), younger generations (n=3472), Millennials (n=979), older African-Americans (n=199), younger African-Americans (n=433), older Whites (n=1616), and younger Whites (n=3038). When analyzing older and younger generations, the data for the Pre-World War II Generation and Baby Boomers are combined.

When analyzing younger generations, the data for the Generation X and Millennial generations are combined.

5.1.3 Dependent Variable

Prestige of Occupational Choice is measured by the respondents' self-reported occupational types, which are coded into prestige scores. The prestige scores in this sample were calculated by the GSS in 1989, using common occupation titles within the job categories in the 1980 U.S. Census (Nako & Treas, 1990). To generate the rankings, fifteen hundred participants were randomly assigned to groups and then each group ranked a combined total of seven hundred forty occupations (Nako & Treas, 1990). Every group ranked the same forty occupations, and then each group ranked seventy occupations that were uniquely assigned to the group (Nako & Treas, 1990). Occupations were ranked in order of perceived occupational prestige (Nako & Treas, 1990). The rankings submitted by each participant were then converted to scores ranging from zero for the lowest-ranked occupation to 100 for the highest-ranked occupation (Nako & Treas, 1990). The scores from all participants for each occupation were averaged to produce the final occupational prestige score (Nako & Treas, 1990). Two groups of participants only ranked the forty occupations common to all groups, and their rankings were tested to see if participants of different racial backgrounds perceived occupational prestige differently (Nako & Treas, 1990). No significant differences were found between racial groups related to the ranking of occupational prestige (Nako & Treas, 1990).

This sample contains occupations with prestige scores ranging from seventeen to eighty-six. For example, prestige scores for garbage collectors are 17, retail sales clerks are 29, social workers are 52, registered nurses are 66, architects are 71, and doctors are 82. This is similar to previous researchers, who measured occupational choice using self-reports of occupation, which were also assigned prestige scores (Gottfredson, 1978; Leung, Ivey & Suzuki, 1994).

5.1.4 Independent Variables

SES of Origin is measured with four variables measuring the education level and occupational prestige of the respondent's mother and father. Each respondent is asked to give their "mother's (substitute mother's) degree" and their father's (substitute father's) degree" where the choices include "little high school", "high school", "junior college", "bachelor", and "graduate". Each respondent is also asked about the occupation and industry of the mother and father, which the GSS codes into an occupational prestige score. Occupational prestige scores in the data set for this study range from seventeen to eighty-six and are coded according to the U.S. Census guidelines.

Gender is measured with a variable that dummy codes each respondent as either male or female. Female is the referent group.

Race is based on each respondent's self-reported primary racial identification of either African-American or white. The variable is dummy-coded with African-American as the referent group. Hispanic and Asian respondents are omitted

from this study because the GSS race variable that is available from 2000 through 2010 codes respondents only as “black”, “white”, and “other”.

Perceptions of Discrimination are measured with a one item with dichotomous yes or no response choice asked yearly in the GSS from 1988 to 2014.

Respondents are asked, “On the average (Negroes/Blacks/African-Americans) have worse jobs, income, and housing than white people. Do you think these differences are mainly due to discrimination?”

Generation is measured using data from a single item asking for the respondent’s year of birth. Respondents are dummy coded into generation bands corresponding to the four generations that are adults between the 1994 and 2010 surveys. The years and names of these generations are assigned according to the typology developed by Howe and Strauss (2000) and Strauss and Howe (1991). Respondents who came of age – defined as reaching sixteen years old - between 1900 and 1949 comprise the Pre-World War II Generation. Baby Boomers include respondents who came of age between 1950 and 1969. Respondents who came of age between 1970 and 1989 are assigned to Generation X. Respondents who came of age between 1990 and 2008 are assigned to the Millennial generation. Millennials are the referent group for the dummy-coded generational cohort variables.

5.1.5 Control Variables

Size of place where the respondent lives and region where the respondent lives are controlled because employment in higher prestige occupations may

positively correlate with living in larger cities and certain regions of the United States (Chetty, Hendren, Kline & Saez, 2014). *Size of place where respondent lives* is coded as “city”, “suburb”, “small town” or “country”. *Region where the respondent lives* is measured with an item asking what in region the interview is conducted.

Southerner Versus Other Regions is a variable that is calculated by creating two categories of the *region where the respondent lives* variable – one for people from the South, and another for people from other regions. This is done because views about discrimination and race may have regional differences.

Marital Status is controlled because it may correlate with gender. Respondents are asked “Are you currently--married, widowed, divorced, separated, or have you never been married?”

Work Status is controlled because it may correlate with occupational prestige. Respondents are asked, “Last week were you working full time, part time, going to school, keeping house, or what?” Responses are coded as either working full-time, working part-time, temporarily not working/laid off, retired, or other.

Education level of the respondent is controlled because it may correlate with the prestige level of occupational choice. Respondents are asked if the highest level of education they have completed is less than high school, high school, junior college, a bachelor’s degree or a graduate degree.

5.1.6 Method of Analysis

The full model proposes that race and generation moderate the positive relationship between SES of origin and the prestige level of occupational choice.

Millennial respondents are expected to choose significantly lower prestige occupations compared to Generation X, Baby Boomers, and the Pre-World War II Generation. Generation X is expected to have significantly lower prestige occupations than Baby Boomers and the Pre-World War II Generation. Within the Millennial cohort, lower SES of origin Millennials in general and lower SES of origin African-American Millennials specifically are expected to choose significantly higher prestige occupations. Within this cohort, generation is expected to moderate the way in which low SES Millennials aspire to higher prestige careers.

The full model also proposes that race and generation moderate the negative relationship between perceptions of racial discrimination and prestige level of occupational choice. Perceptions of racial discrimination are more likely to negatively relate to prestige level of occupational choice for African-American respondents. Generation is also proposed as a moderator that may help to explain why African-American Millennials aspire to higher prestige occupations, in contrast with the overall model.

The hypotheses associated with these models are tested with multiple linear regression. Multiple regression is able to accommodate both categorical and numerical independent variables with a continuous dependent variable (Field, 2009). Multiple regression is selected as the appropriate statistical test because the independent variables are either categorical or ordinal; the covariates include categorical, ordinal, and continuous variables; and the dependent variable is continuous.

Moderation is tested using sub-group analyses (Higgins & Greene, 2011; Yusuf, Wittes, Probstfield, & Tyroler, 1991). Sub-group analyses for racial, gender, and generational groups in relation to SES of origin, perceptions of discrimination, and prestige level of occupational choice are conducted to see which variables in the model are significant for each group. This approach allows for inferences not only about potential relationships of between the independent and dependent variables but about how these relationships may operate depending on sub-group membership. Since the hypotheses are directional, one-tailed p-values are used to interpret the results.

5.2 Results

The multiple regression results indicate that the full model with prestige of occupational choice as the dependent variable and SES of origin, perceptions of discrimination, race, gender, and generation is a good fit with the data $F(25, 5166)=98.109, p < .001$. The full model explains 32% of the variance in prestige level of occupational choice. All of the independent variables are significantly associated with prestige level of occupational choice. Variance inflation factors are all in the acceptable range. Table 5-1 below gives means, standard deviations, and correlations for the variables in the model.

Table 5-1 Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

Variables	Mean	S.D.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1 R's Prestige Level of Occupational Choice	44.6	13.89													
2 Father's education level	2.22	1.221	.172**												
3 Father's occupational prestige score	44.3	13.06	.170**	.581**											
4 Mother's education level	2.24	1.1	.155**	.546**	.395**										
5 Mother's occupational prestige score	42	14.03	.158**	.395**	.355**	.597**									
6 Race	0.12	0.329	-.092**	-.129**	-.146**	-.094**	-.089**								
7 Gender	0.54	0.499	0.016	-.032*	-.047**	-.063**	-0.02	.057**							
8 Millennials	0.57	1.176	-.162**	.142**	.070**	.193**	.154**	-0.02	-.046**						
9 Generation X	0.96	0.999	.067**	.125**	.073**	.071**	.031*	.023*	0.01	-.467**					
10 Baby Boomer Generation	0.27	0.445	.064**	-.193**	-.100**	-.174**	-.120**	-0.006	0.005	-.296**	-.590**				
11 Pre-World War II generation	0.05	0.226	0.005	-.144**	-.083**	-.150**	-.097**	-0.012	.046**	-.116**	-.231**	-.146**			
12 Agrees African-Americans worse off due to discrimination	0.35	0.478	-.064**	-0.01	-0.02	0.015	0.007	.229**	.076**	0.001	-0.02	0.007	.028*		
13 Agrees African-Americans worse off due to less in-born ability	0.08	0.266	-.066**	-.102**	-.057**	-.071**	-.064**	.039**	-0.01	-0.02	-.058**	.047**	.075**	-0.008	
14 Agrees African-Americans worse off due to unequal chances in education	0.46	0.498	.069**	.122**	.106**	.104**	.080**	.061**	.035**	-0.02	0.006	-0	0.013	.300**	0.009

one-tailed p-values
 * p < .05
 ** p < .01
 *** p < .001

Measures of SES of origin are all significantly and positively associated with prestige level of occupational choice, in support of hypothesis 1. In the full model, the father's occupation ($b = .052$, $p < .001$) is positively related to the prestige level of the respondent's occupation. The direction of the relationship is the same for the prestige level of the mother's occupation ($b = .044$, $p < .01$). Parental education is not significantly related to the prestige level of one's occupational choice in the full sample.

Perceptions of discrimination are significantly and negatively ($b = -1.41$, $p < .001$) related to the prestige level of occupational choice in the full sample, in support of hypothesis 2a. This is also true for the respondents in the African-American sub-group ($b = -1.78$, $p < .05$), as shown in Table 5-5 in the appendix, in support of hypothesis 2b. Perceptions of discrimination are also significantly and

negatively ($b = -.937$, $p < .05$) associated with the prestige level of occupational choice for women, contrary to hypothesis 2c, as shown in Table 5-4 in the appendix. Although not hypothesized, perceptions of discrimination are also significantly and negatively related to the prestige level of occupational choice for Whites ($b = -1.333$, $p < .001$) and men ($b = -1.975$, $p < .001$).

Race is significantly related to the prestige level of occupational choice in the full sample, with African-American respondents less likely to be employed in higher prestige occupations compared to white respondents ($b = -1.625$, $p < .01$). Race is not significant in the model for women, so the interaction between race and perceptions of discrimination is not significant for African-American women, contrary to hypothesis 2d.

Although women are expected to have lower occupational prestige than men, the opposite is found in the full model. Being a woman is significantly and positively ($b = 1.145$, $p < .001$) related to prestige level of occupational choice, contrary to hypothesis 3a. Although not specifically hypothesized, this positive relationship between being a woman and prestige level of occupational choice is true for both African-Americans ($b = 4.513$, $p < .001$) and Whites ($b = .802$, $p < .05$). It is also significant and positive for Older African-Americans ($b = 4.419$, $p < .01$), Younger African-Americans ($b = 3.894$, $p < .001$), and Younger Whites ($b = 1.029$, $p < .01$). Older Whites and Millennials are the only sub-groups for which the relationship between gender and prestige level of occupational choice is not significant.

As with the full model and other sub-groups, SES of origin is positively and significantly ($b = .045$, $p < .01$) related to prestige level of occupational choice for women, in support of hypothesis 3b. In the full model, the occupational prestige of both parents positively relates to occupational prestige of the respondent. For women, only the mother's occupational prestige is significant in the model.

The strength of the positive significant relationship between generation and prestige level of occupational choice in the full model decreases with each successive generation in the model, as shown by the standardized Betas in Table 5-2 below. Therefore hypotheses 4a and 4b are supported. Among Millennial respondents, SES of origin is positively and significantly related to the prestige level of occupational choice ($b = .134$, $p < .001$). Unlike older generations and the full sample, this relationship is related to the mother's occupational prestige alone. For older generation respondents, the father's occupational prestige ($b = .107$, $p < .001$) is positively related to the prestige of occupational choice, and the father's education is negatively associated with the prestige level of occupational choice ($b = -.754$, $p < .05$). Contrary to hypothesis 5a, this study suggests that SES of origin and prestige level of occupational choice are not inversely related for Millennials.

Race is not significantly related to the prestige level of occupational choice for Millennials, contrary to hypotheses 5b and 6. Millennials and women are the only sub-groups for whom race is not a significant factor in the model. This could change over time, but this finding may represent a potentially important shift.

Although not hypothesized, the results of sub-group analyses suggest racial and generational differences in the role that parents play in the prestige level of one's occupational choice. For African-Americans, the education level of both the father ($b= 1.865, p<.001$) and the mother ($b= 1.39, p< .05$) are positively and significantly related to prestige level of occupational choice while the prestige of the parents' occupations are not significant. This is the opposite of the result for the full sample, where parental occupational prestige is significant and positive.

For younger generation African-American respondents the father's education ($b=2.698, p< .001$) is positively related to prestige level of occupational choice, and the father's occupational prestige is negatively related ($b= -0.84, p< .05$) to the respondent's prestige level of occupational choice. Although not hypothesized, the younger African-American subgroup is the only one where respondents who report that they have unequal chances in education are positively associated with prestige level of occupational choice ($b= 2.295, p< .05$).

For younger white respondents, like the full sample, the prestige levels of the father's ($b=.053, p< .01$) and mother's ($b=.064, p< .001$) occupations are positively associated with the prestige of one's own occupational choice. Parental education is not significant for younger white participants. Unlike younger African-Americans, perceptions of discrimination are negatively associated with prestige level of occupational choice ($b= -1.86, p< .001$) while the belief that African-Americans have lower attainment due to natural ability is positively related to prestige level of occupational choice ($b= 1.953, p< .05$) for younger

Whites. The belief that lower attainment for African-Americans is also significant for older African-Americans, but it is negatively correlated with prestige level of occupational choice ($b = -7.131, p < .001$).

Table 5-2 Regression Analyses

Variables	Unstandardized Coefficients B	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta
Prestige level of occupational choice ($N = 5166$)			
Father's education level	-0.076	0.182	-0.007
Father's occupational prestige score	0.052***	0.015	0.049
Mother's education level	0.154	0.198	0.013
Mother's occupational prestige score	0.044***	0.014	0.045
Race	-1.625***	0.52	-0.039
Gender	1.145***	0.336	0.042
Pre-World War II generation	2.999**	1.037	0.046
Baby Boomer Generation	2.213***	0.575	0.071
Generation X	1.153***	0.24	0.084
Agrees African-Americans worse off due to discrimination	-1.410***	0.36	-0.049
Agrees African-Americans worse off due to less in-born ability	0.726	0.607	0.014
Agrees African-Americans worse off due to unequal chances in education	-0.133	0.343	-0.005
F(25, 5166)=98.109			
$\Delta r^2 = .064$ for the model after control variables			
one-tailed p-values			
* $p < .05$			
** $p < .01$			
*** $p < .001$			

5.3 Limitations

There are several important limitations to these analyses that should be considered. First, the data are cross-sectional. This study does not measure occupational changes that may occur throughout the lifespan of respondents. Second, these data do not measure when the parents of the respondents earned their highest educational degree and entered their occupation, so it is not possible to discern whether those measures were in place during the formative years of the respondents. Third, the marital status of the parents of respondents is also not included in this study. The shift in emphases from fathers' occupations to mothers' for Whites, and from mothers' educational attainment to fathers' for

African-Americans, may reflect recent changes in the structure and composition of nuclear families in the United States. Future research should gather data about the educational attainment, occupation, and marital status of the parents during the childhoods of respondents.

Fourth, the use of self-reported data is also a limitation. Responses to questions about views on African-Americans, for example, may be subject to social desirability bias (Podsakoff & Organ, 1986), which occurs when survey respondents give answers that they think will make a positive impression with the interviewer. Common method variance is also sometimes a concern with using the same self-reported survey data for both the independent and dependent variables. To address this, the Harman Single-Factor Test (Harman, 1960; Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee & Podsakoff, 2003; Podsakoff & Organ, 1986) is performed. The results indicate that the variables, when loaded onto a single factor, explain only eighteen percent of the variance in the model. This is well below the cut-off of fifty percent for this test, which suggests that variance in the data is related to the variables of interest rather than to the way that they are measured (Bagozzi & Yi, 1991).

Finally, the occupational prestige measures used in the GSS data may also be limiting, as occupational prestige changes over time. Lawyers, for example, may have lower prestige today compared to previous decades as unemployment and underemployment among law school graduates becomes more common. Occupations associated with the technology industry, by contrast, may have higher prestige today than when they were originally rated. This may partly

explain the lower prestige scores of Millennial respondents compared to previous generations. Comparison of generations is limited because age may influence occupational prestige. Future studies may explore how people make occupational choices throughout their life spans.

Chapter 6 Discussion

This study finds that SES of origin plays an important role in the level of prestige of one's occupational choice. This relationship is true for the full sample and for all sub-groups that are analyzed. It is an important discovery for the management literature because it has the potential to modify the current view of occupational choice as a largely self-directed undertaking. Personal characteristics like personality, GMA, and abilities are acknowledged in the review of previous studies, but these aspects may be malleable (Dweck & Leggett, 1988). Job availability and social networks are also discussed in the literature review, although these factors are also associated with SES of origin. In addition to identifying the role of SES of origin in occupational choice, this study also highlights the role of other demographics characteristics.

Generation is significantly related to the prestige level of occupational choice. The relationship between prestige level of occupational choice is stronger for the Pre-World War II generation, Baby Boomers, and Generation X compared to Millennials. Although Millennials have lower occupational prestige than preceding generations, it is unclear at this date whether that relationship will remain true as Millennials age. Future studies should compare each generation at the same age ranges to see if significant differences in prestige of occupational choice are found for each generation at the beginning, middle, and end of their careers. New ratings of occupational prestige should be completed and validated to reflect changes in occupational types and perceptions since the 1980s.

Gender is significantly positively related to prestige level of occupational choice for women in the full sample and across all sub-groups except older Whites and Millennials. Race is significantly and negatively associated with prestige level of occupational choice for every sub-group except Millennials and women. These findings may be related to low occupational prestige scores of African-American men compared to African-American women and Whites among Baby Boomers and Generation X. Figure 6-1 below shows the trends in mean occupational prestige scores by race and gender across the generations in this study.

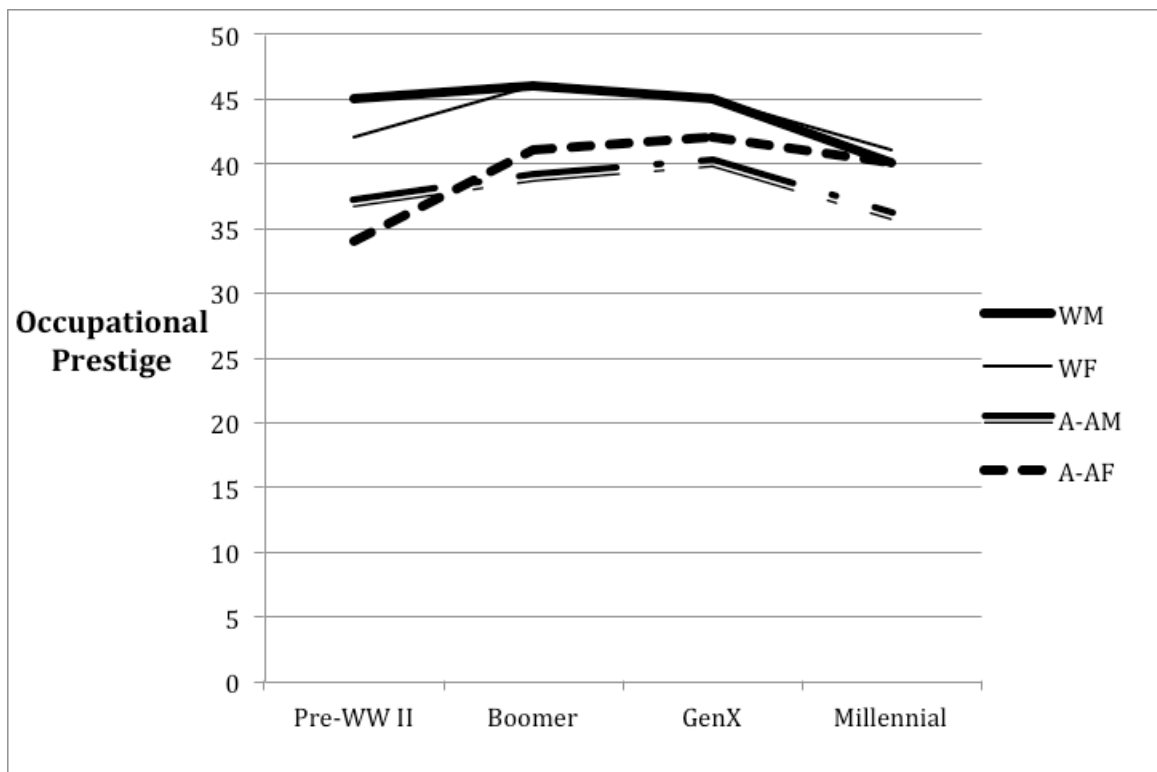


Figure 6-1 Mean Occupational Prestige By Gender, Race, and Generation

Although mean occupational prestige scores for white women, white men, and African-American women are converging over time, the mean for African-

American men is at an all-time low among Millennials. This convergence may explain the lack of a significant relationship between gender, race, and prestige level of occupational choice for women and Millennials. While mean occupational prestige for African-American men is low, African-American Millennial women appear to be closing the occupational prestige gap. This may change as Millennials age, but if it does not, it has critical implications for African-American men and their families.

The results for African-American respondents suggest a shift over time from the importance of the mother's background to the father's background in relation to the occupational prestige choices of their children. For African-American respondents, the educational attainments of the parents are the only factors related to the prestige level of one's own occupational choices. For younger African-Americans, however, only the father's educational attainment is positively related to the prestige of one's own occupational choice. The implication is that, unlike white respondents, African-American respondents are not yet settled into multi-generational occupational prestige patterns.

For the younger African-American subsample, the father's occupational prestige is negatively related to the prestige of one's occupational choice. Younger African-Americans who believe that access to education explains the attainment of African-Americans are more likely to choose higher prestige occupations. Possibly these respondents experienced the advantages of a good education and recognize its value. Education is key to social mobility and maintenance (Bourdieu, 1996; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990), so this may be why it

matters more for African-Americans than for Whites as the process of social stratification unfolds for African-Americans in the United States.

Older generation African-Americans were socialized when education in the United States was still racially segregated, so it is not surprising that some respondents held negative views about their own abilities. Beliefs about one's abilities relate to the goals that people set for themselves and the motivation that they have to achieve them (Dweck, Mangels, & Good, 2004), which explains the negative relationship between perceived ability and occupational choice for older generation African-Americans. The fact that this is not a significant factor in the prestige level of occupational choice for younger African-American respondents may represent an important shift in perceptions.

Views about the abilities of African-Americans are not significant for younger African-Americans but are for younger Whites, which, along with the direction of the relationship, is a shift compared to older generations. This change seems to bode well for the self-perceptions of younger African-Americans. For younger Whites, having lower occupational prestige is associated with the belief that African-American attainment is related to discrimination. This may be a reflection of the views of these younger white respondents about their own occupational prestige levels.

These findings are in line with the literature on locus of control, which encompasses beliefs about how much control one believes one has over the forces that affect one's circumstances (Rotter, 1966). People who have an internal locus of control believe that they have the free will to act and the ability to

influence their performance and, by extension, their outcomes (Rotter, 1954; Bandura, 1986). People with an external locus of control believe that outside forces that they cannot control determine their fate (Rotter, 1954). The fact that perceptions of discrimination are negatively associated with prestige level of occupational choice for men, women, African-Americans, and Whites suggests a universal belief that applies to one's own choices. This is an important contribution of this study, given the contradictory literature about the role of perceptions of discrimination in occupational aspirations and choices. Future research should consider the role of locus of control in occupational choice.

The findings suggest that occupational aspirations and choices often do not correlate due in large part to the role that demographics background characteristics play. Although this study uses the word "choice" throughout in relation to the prestige level of one's occupation, the results of this study raise important questions about the extent to which people control their occupational choices. Immutable background characteristics like SES of origin, race, gender, and generational cohort are understudied in relation to occupational choice. This study adds the literature about occupational choice by measuring the contribution of demographic variables to the prestige of occupational choice. The findings suggest that SES of origin places a boundary on the prestige level of occupational choice, regardless of race, gender, or generation. This matters because the existing literature – which is largely based on studies of highly educated white males at prestigious universities – emphasizes a view where people have complete agency over occupational choices. This dissertation

demonstrates that these processes may operate within a larger context of personal demographic factors. This work suggests that people do have agency, but within a range that relates to their combination of SES of origin, perceptions of discrimination, race, gender, and generation.

Appendix A

Qualitative Interview Questions

Demographic Data

I am going to ask you a series of questions about you and your parents' backgrounds. You may opt out of any question if you feel uncomfortable responding. Please ask for clarification if there is anything that you do not understand.

1. What is your gender?
2. What generation do you belong to - for example, Baby Boomer, Gen X, Millennial? (If unsure, what year were you born?)
3. What best describes your racial background?
4. What is the highest level of education that you completed?
5. Thinking about the place where you grew up, would it be best described as rural, suburban, or city?
6. What is the highest level of education that your mother completed (e.g. some high school, high school, some college, bachelor's degree, etc.)?
7. When you were growing up, if your mother worked outside of the home, what did she do for a living?
8. What industry did your mother work in?
9. Thinking about the place where your mother grew up, would it be best described as rural, suburban, or city?
10. What the highest level of education that your father completed (e.g. some high school, high school, some college, bachelor's degree, etc.)?

11. When you were growing up, if your father worked outside of the home, what did he do for a living?
12. What industry did your father work in?
13. Thinking about the place where your father grew up, would it be best described as rural, suburban, or city?

Research Questions

I am going to ask you a series of questions about your career experiences. You may opt out of any question if you feel uncomfortable responding. Please ask for clarification if there is anything that you do not understand.

1. When you were a teenager, what did you imagine yourself doing for a living?
2. What was it that appealed to you about that line of work?
3. Did you have access to the education or skill development that you needed to do the type of work that you wanted to do?
4. What are you doing for a living today?
5. What industry are you working in?
6. How long have you been working as a [state the job title they gave]?
7. How did you decide to become a [state the job title they gave]?
8. What is it about being a [state the job title they gave] that appeals to you?
9. Do you feel that your work is something that you were meant to do?
 - a. [If yes] How do you know that?

10. Do you feel that your line of work defines you [probe]?
11. Do you feel that your line of work allows you to make a meaningful contribution, such as to a team, an organization, or society?
 - a. [If yes] How does it let you contribute?
12. Have you changed career fields over the course of your adult life?
 - a. [If yes] What prompted the change?
 - b. [If yes] Is the change better for you [probe]?
13. Do you feel that you have control over the direction of your career?
 - a. [If not] What do you think is driving your career path?
14. Do you feel that your work challenges you?
 - a. [If yes] In what way?

These are all the questions I have for you. Thank you for participating.

Appendix B

Quantitative Interview Questions From the General Social Survey

Quantitative Survey Questions Used From the General Social Survey

Dependent Variable	
Prestige of Occupational Choice	Self-reported occupation, coded into prestige scores from 17 to 86 according to the U.S. Census guidelines
Independent Variables	
SES of Origin	
Father's Education	Father's (substitute father's) degree: little high school, high school, junior college, bachelor's degree, or graduate degree
Mother's Education	Mother's (substitute mother's) degree: little high school, high school, junior college, bachelor's degree, or graduate degree
Father's Occupational Prestige	Reported occupational types, coded into prestige scores from 17 to 86 according to the U.S. Census guidelines
Mother's Occupational Prestige	Reported occupational types, coded into prestige scores from 17 to 86 according to the U.S. Census guidelines
Gender	Male or female
Race	African-American or white
Perceptions of Discrimination	On the average (Negroes/Blacks/African-Americans) have worse jobs, income, and housing than white people. Do you think these differences are mainly:
Discrimination	Due to discrimination?
Ability	Because (Negroes/Blacks/African-Americans) have less inborn ability to learn?
Education	Because (Negroes/Blacks/African-Americans) don't have the chance for education that it takes to rise out of poverty?
Generation	Used data from a single item asking for the respondent's year of birth to code into generations
Pre-World War II	Came of age between 1900 and 1949
Baby Boomers	Came of age between 1950 and 1969
Generation X	Came of age between 1970 and 1989
Millennials	Came of age between 1990 and 2008
Control Variables	
Size of Place	Coded as city, small town, suburb, or country
Southerner vs. Other Region	Coded as living or not living in the South
Marital Status	Are you currently--married, widowed, divorced, separated, or have you never been married
Work Status	Last week were you working full time, part time, going to school, keeping house, or what?
Education	Highest level of education completed: less than high school, high school, junior college, a bachelor's degree or a graduate degree

Appendix C

Regression Analyses For Sub-Groups

Table 5-3 Regression Analyses For Men

Variables	Unstandardized Coefficients B	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta
Prestige level of occupational choice (<i>N</i> = 2391)	31.824	1.48	
Father's education level	-0.273	0.268	-0.025
Father's occupational prestige score	0.101***	0.023	0.095
Mother's education level	0.55*	0.279	0.046
Mother's occupational prestige score	0.045*	0.022	0.044
Race	-2.792***	0.831	-0.06
Pre-World War II generation	3.526*	1.664	0.048
Baby Boomer Generation	1.688*	0.839	0.053
Generation X	0.674*	0.343	0.048
Agrees African-Americans worse off due to discrimination	-1.975***	0.535	-0.066
Agrees African-Americans worse off due to less in-born ability	0.813	0.879	0.016
Agrees African-Americans worse off due to unequal chances in education	-0.015	0.504	-0.001
F(24, 2391)=51.81			
$\Delta r^2 = .069$ for the model after control variables			
one-tailed p-values			
* <i>p</i> < .05			
** <i>p</i> < .01			
*** <i>p</i> < .001			

Table 5-4 Regression Analyses For Women

Variables	Unstandardized Coefficients B	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta
Prestige level of occupational choice (<i>N</i> = 2774)	30.222	1.521	
Father's education level	0.044	0.247	0.004
Father's occupational prestige score	0.019	0.02	0.019
Mother's education level	-0.243	0.282	-0.019
Mother's occupational prestige score	0.045**	0.019	0.048
Race	-1.007	0.678	-0.026
Pre-World War II generation	3.263**	1.339	0.054
Baby Boomer Generation	3.041***	0.792	0.099
Generation X	1.702***	0.338	0.125
Agrees African-Americans worse off due to discrimination	-0.937*	0.488	-0.034
Agrees African-Americans worse off due to less in-born ability	0.668	0.84	0.013
Agrees African-Americans worse off due to unequal chances in education	-0.259	0.47	-0.009
F(24, 2774)=53.429			
$\Delta r^2 = .061$ for the model after control variables			
one-tailed p-values			
* <i>p</i> < .05			
** <i>p</i> < .01			
*** <i>p</i> < .001			

Table 5-5 Regression Analyses For African-Americans

Variables	Unstandardized Coefficients B	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta
Prestige level of occupational choice (N = 634)	29.949	3.42	
Father's education level	1.865***	0.598	0.134
Father's occupational prestige score	-0.053	0.04	-0.05
Mother's education level	1.39*	0.639	0.108
Mother's occupational prestige score	-0.064	0.042	-0.068
Gender	4.513***	0.957	0.161
Pre-World War II generation	-3.118	2.968	-0.047
Baby Boomer Generation	1.27	1.694	0.042
Generation X	0.623	0.673	0.046
Agrees African-Americans worse off due to discrimination	-1.78*	0.986	-0.063
Agrees African-Americans worse off due to less in-born ability	0.222	1.528	0.005
Agrees African-Americans worse off due to unequal chances in education	1.248	0.977	0.046
F(24, 634)=14.177			
$\Delta r^2 = .123$ for the model after control variables			
one-tailed p-values			
* p < .05			
** p < .01			
*** p < .001			

Table 5-6 Regression Analyses For Whites

Variables	Unstandardized Coefficients B	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta
Prestige level of occupational choice (N = 4532)	31.056	1.122	
Father's education level	-0.277	0.192	-0.025
Father's occupational prestige score	0.069***	0.016	0.066
Mother's education level	-0.007	0.208	-0.001
Mother's occupational prestige score	0.055***	0.015	0.056
Gender	0.802*	0.36	0.029
Pre-World War II generation	3.753***	1.106	0.057
Baby Boomer Generation	2.24***	0.611	0.072
Generation X	1.21***	0.257	0.088
Agrees African-Americans worse off due to discrimination	-1.333***	0.387	-0.045
Agrees African-Americans worse off due to less in-born ability	0.733	0.661	0.014
Agrees African-Americans worse off due to unequal chances in education	-0.427	0.368	-0.015
F(24, 4532)=90.495			
$\Delta r^2 = .058$ for the model after control variables			
one-tailed p-values			
* p < .05			
** p < .01			
*** p < .001			

Table 5-7 Regression Analyses For Older African-Americans

Variables	Unstandardized		Standardized
	Coefficients B	Std. Error	Coefficients Beta
Prestige level of occupational choice (N = 199)	32.263	5.158	
Father's education level	-2.284*	1.326	-0.137
Father's occupational prestige score	0.17*	0.091	0.128
Mother's education level	3.803**	1.309	0.253
Mother's occupational prestige score	-0.223**	0.085	-0.212
Gender	4.419**	1.827	0.148
Agrees African-Americans worse off due to discrimination	-1.532	1.845	-0.048
Agrees African-Americans worse off due to less in-born ability	-7.131**	2.747	-0.155
Agrees African-Americans worse off due to unequal chances in education	0.128	1.727	0.004
F(21, 199)=8.302			
$\Delta r^2 = .176$ for the model after control variables			
one-tailed p-values			
* p < .05			
** p < .01			
*** p < .001			

Table 5-8 Regression Analyses For Younger African-Americans

Variables	Unstandardized		Standardized
	Coefficients B	Std. Error	Coefficients Beta
Prestige level of occupational choice (N = 433)	29.735	4.164	
Father's education level	2.698***	0.676	0.196
Father's occupational prestige score	-0.084*	0.046	-0.084
Mother's education level	0.516	0.746	0.04
Mother's occupational prestige score	-0.021	0.049	-0.022
Gender	3.894***	1.179	0.144
Agrees African-Americans worse off due to discrimination	-1.346	1.176	-0.05
Agrees African-Americans worse off due to less in-born ability	2.836	1.795	0.066
Agrees African-Americans worse off due to unequal chances in education	2.295*	1.185	0.087
F(21, 433)=10.224			
$\Delta r^2 = .153$ for the model after control variables			
one-tailed p-values			
* p < .05			
** p < .01			
*** p < .001			

Table 5-9 Regression Analyses For Older Whites

Variables	Unstandardized Coefficients B	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta
Prestige level of occupational choice (<i>N</i> = 1516)	34.031	1.799	
Father's education level	-0.609	0.375	-0.047
Father's occupational prestige score	0.101***	0.031	0.086
Mother's education level	0.28	0.408	0.02
Mother's occupational prestige score	0.007	0.028	0.007
Gender	0.862	0.64	0.031
Agrees African-Americans worse off due to discrimination	-0.989	0.693	-0.034
Agrees African-Americans worse off due to less in-born ability	-1.529	0.987	-0.034
Agrees African-Americans worse off due to unequal chances in education	-0.632	0.658	-0.023
F(21, 1516)=31.384			
$\Delta r^2 = .072$ for the model after control variables			
one-tailed p-values			
* $p < .05$			
** $p < .01$			
*** $p < .001$			

Table 5-10 Regression Analyses For Younger Whites

Variables	Unstandardized Coefficients B	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta
Prestige level of occupational choice (<i>N</i> = 3038)	32.995	1.229	
Father's education level	-0.222	0.224	-0.02
Father's occupational prestige score	0.053**	0.019	0.052
Mother's education level	-0.017	0.245	-0.001
Mother's occupational prestige score	0.064***	0.018	0.066
Gender	1.029**	0.438	0.037
Agrees African-Americans worse off due to discrimination	-1.86***	0.469	-0.062
Agrees African-Americans worse off due to less in-born ability	1.953*	0.873	0.034
Agrees African-Americans worse off due to unequal chances in education	-0.089	0.447	-0.003
F(21, 3038)=71.61			
$\Delta r^2 = .065$ for the model after control variables			
one-tailed p-values			
* $p < .05$			
** $p < .01$			
*** $p < .001$			

Table 5-11 Regression Analyses For Older Generations: Pre-World War II and Baby Boomers

Variables	Unstandardized		Standardized
	Coefficients B	Std. Error	Coefficients Beta
Prestige level of occupational choice (N = 1716)	33.697	1.677	
Father's education level	-0.754*	0.359	-0.057
Father's occupational prestige score	0.107***	0.029	0.09
Mother's education level	0.596	0.388	0.042
Mother's occupational prestige score	-0.009	0.026	-0.009
Race	-2.386**	0.943	-0.056
Gender	1.181*	0.597	0.042
Agrees African-Americans worse off due to discrimination	-1.388*	0.645	-0.048
Agrees African-Americans worse off due to less in-born ability	-2.388**	0.924	-0.053
Agrees African-Americans worse off due to unequal chances in education	-0.586	0.612	-0.021
F(22, 1716)=37.758			
$\Delta r^2 = .089$ for the model after control variables			
one-tailed p-values			
* p < .05			
** p < .01			
*** p < .001			

Table 5-12 Regression Analyses For Younger Generations: Generation X and Millennials

Variables	Unstandardized		Standardized
	Coefficients B	Std. Error	Coefficients Beta
Prestige level of occupational choice (N = 3472)	32.969	1.17	
Father's education level	0.093	0.211	0.008
Father's occupational prestige score	0.028	0.018	0.028
Mother's education level	0.052	0.233	0.004
Mother's occupational prestige score	0.054***	0.017	0.057
Race	-1.531**	0.634	-0.037
Gender	1.282***	0.41	0.047
Agrees African-Americans worse off due to discrimination	-1.71***	0.436	-0.059
Agrees African-Americans worse off due to less in-born ability	2.367**	0.788	0.043
Agrees African-Americans worse off due to unequal chances in education	0.236	0.417	0.009
F(22, 3472)=74.979			
$\Delta r^2 = .072$ for the model after control variables			
one-tailed p-values			
* p < .05			
** p < .01			
*** p < .001			

Table 5-13 Regression Analyses For Millennials

Variables	Unstandardized		Standardized
	Coefficients B	Std. Error	Coefficients Beta
Prestige level of occupational choice (<i>N</i> = 979)	29.974	1.9	
Father's education level	-0.539	0.389	-0.053
Father's occupational prestige score	0.026	0.031	0.03
Mother's education level	-0.264	0.414	-0.025
Mother's occupational prestige score	0.134***	0.029	0.159
Race	-1.806	1.215	-0.044
Gender	0.575	0.738	0.023
Agrees African-Americans worse off due to discrimination	-2.397***	0.763	-0.091
Agrees African-Americans worse off due to less in-born ability	6.502***	1.387	0.132
Agrees African-Americans worse off due to unequal chances in education	0.218	0.749	0.009
F(22, 979)=17.864			
$\Delta r^2 = .061$ for the model after control variables			
one-tailed p-values			
* $p < .05$			
** $p < .01$			
*** $p < .001$			

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