AN EXPLORATION OF SOCIAL CLASS: ITS SYMBOLS AND INFLUENCE
ON THE SELECTION PROCESS AND CAREER SUCCESS

by

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DISSERTATION

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my mother, Gertrude Henderson. I miss you more than words can say and I thank you daily for showing me how to be a strong, independent black woman. I pray I am making you proud.

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ABSTRACT

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With a shrinking middle-class population, and an increasing economic divide between the haves and haves not, social class within the United States has become an important topic of conversation in the popular press. Yet, the diversity research in the management literature has largely focused on factors such as race and gender, while the implications of social class for work-related outcomes has remained largely unexplored. In this dissertation, I address this gap by exploring the role of social class in a person's career across three essays. The first essay is a qualitative study in which I identify the signs and perceptions of social class. The results of Essay 1 inform the second essay, a between-subjects experimental design which tests the influence of social class on hiring recommendations in the selection process. For the third essay, a longitudinal study is conducted, which examines the relationship between social class and career success over time.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The American dream is the belief that America is the land of opportunity in which, regardless of where a person starts in life, talent, hard work, and sheer determination are all that are needed to be successful. The term, American dream, was first coined by John T. Adams and defined as a "dream of a land in which life should be better and richer and fuller for every man, with opportunity for each according to his ability or achievement" (Adams, 1931, p. 404). Hence, the attainment of the dream and key to success is largely based on personal merit.

The idea of meritocracy lies at the heart of the American dream, which is rooted in the experiences of immigrants who embarked on a journey to a new nation for the hope of a better life for themselves and their families. America was a means by which people could disengage from and escape the rules of European societies—which were often designed and orchestrated for the advantage of hereditary aristocracies (McNamee & Miller, 2004)—in search of the promise for individual freedom and an opportunity for success, defined as "the attainment of a high income, a prestigious job, [and] economic security" (Hochschild, 1995, p. 15). To be successful and achieve the American dream, the four tenets of success should be followed. These rules consist of asking and answering the following questions:

1. *Who* may pursue the American dream?—everyone regardless of their background and station in life;

2. In *what* does the pursuit consist?—reasonable anticipation of success;

3. *How* does one successfully pursue the dream?—through one's individually controlled behaviors and traits; and

4. *Why* is the pursuit worthy of our deepest commitment?—because true success is associated with virtue (Hochschild, 1995, p. 18).

These tenets have become deeply embedded in the American psyche. As such, regardless of where one's journey in life begins, according to these principles, a person's destination is based solely on his or her merit. From this perspective, those who have the strongest work ethic and the greatest talents and skills will soar through life based on their merit; whereas, those who are lazy and unambitious will flounder due to their lack of effort. Yet, today, many would question whether this American dream ideology is reality or mere fantasy.

The United States and its history are plagued with barriers to this notion of meritocracy. Ownership of wealth, social capital—*who you know*, and cultural capital—*the process of fitting in*, along with racial and sexual discrimination are forms of inequality absent of merit that interfere with the attainment of the American dream (McNamee & Miller, 2004; Perrucci & Wysong, 2008). In the U.S., another form of inequality that is just as prevalent is class inequality. Class inequality is "a structured system of unequal rewards that provides enormous advantages to a small percentage of people in the United States at the expense of the overwhelming majority" (Perrucci & Wysong, 2008, p. 4). The belief that class structure in the United States is permeable helps to justify the inequities of America's class system by continually "denying the effects of social class on life chances" (S. J. Jones, 2003, p. 804). For a system of inequality to work, those who *have* must be able to convince those who *have not* that the distribution of power and economies is fair and just. McNamee and Miller (2004) contend that the American dream's four principles of success actually support such a system of inequality as these tenets rationalize the ideology of meritocracy in the United States (McNamee & Miller, 2004). In other words, if one is to accept the idea of meritocracy, one must believe that the system of inequality is fair because everyone has an equal chance of succeeding, regardless of one's social class.

Thus, in brief, the intent of this dissertation is to explore the role of social class as a system of inequity. First, I will conduct interviews that explore people's thoughts and beliefs about social class. Second, I will investigate the influence of social class in predicting hiring recommendations during the selection process. Lastly, I will examine the individual and structural factors that determine how people develop self-perceptions of their social class and the effects of these perceptions on workplace outcomes such as career success. In the following section, I provide an overview of social class and its importance to the management literature, in addition to detailing the scope and purpose of this dissertation.

Significance of Social Class

Unlike many European societies, the U.S. is a system that is absent of inherited titles and ranks; thus, perpetuating the idea that America is a classless society. However, the tale of class is not so simple; class distinction in America is complex and redefined every generation (Fussell, 1992). Economically, there is a clear divide occurring in the U.S., resulting in a *haves* and *haves not* mentality. The U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey (2013) reports that the national percentage of people living in poverty increased from 12.2% to 15.9% between 2000 and 2012. This equates to 48.8 million people in 2012 in comparison to 33.3 million people in 2000 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013). The U.S. median household net worth of the 10th percentile was -$905 in 2000, but by 2011, this number had dramatically decreased to -$6,029. During the same time period, the wealthiest households in the 90th percentile saw an increase from $569,375 to $630,754 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012). Although, the fervent belief in the American dream prevails, only six percent of children from families at the lowest rung of the socioeconomic ladder are able to move to the highest rung, indicating that a person's economic position is largely influenced by that of his or her parents (Isaacs, 2007, November). How then are the

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disadvantaged from lower socioeconomic backgrounds to compete in a system that makes achieving the American dream so difficult? The inequality is undeniable, resulting in issues such as these being at the forefront of social class research.

Social class has been an integral part of work experiences since ancient Greece and Egypt (Diemer & Ali, 2009). Studies on inequality in the workplace have largely focused on factors such as race, gender, and age, and more recently sexual orientation (e.g., Bell, Özbilgin, Beauregard, & Sürgevil, 2011; Ragins & Cornwell, 2001; Trau, 2015; Volpone & Avery, 2013). As such, studies on class inequality and its effect in the workplace have been minimal with (Brown, Fukunaga, Umemoto, & Wicker, 1996; Liu, Ali, et al., 2004) much of the research to date focusing on its relationship with health and education. For example, research on health found that people from lower socioeconomic backgrounds tend to have increased risk of mortality, unhealthy behaviors, and reduced access to good health care (Adler et al., 1994; Lott, 2012). In other research, Jones (2003) found that class at birth is one of the best predictors of "adult educational and occupational achievement" (p. 804).

In the management literature, scant attention has been given to studying the effects of a person's social class in the workplace. Disciplines such as economics, social psychology, and sociology have been engaged in the class discussion for decades. Because of the growing disparity between the rich and poor, Bullock and Limbert (2003) call for the investigation of more research on social class from both a structural and a psychological perspective.

The scope of this dissertation is to explore social class in the context of middle class America. This dissertation takes the form of three essays, each centered on the concept of social class which is the common factor bridging the studies. Thus, the purpose of this dissertation is to illuminate the perceptions middle-class Americans have about social class and the effect of

social class on human resources and career outcomes. A sequential mixed methods design is used. First, I collect and analyze qualitative data to uncover the markers of social class; findings from the qualitative study are used to inform the design of the quantitative studies. Using this type of mixed methods design provides a more comprehensive view of the social class phenomenon.

The first essay is a qualitative study that aims to answer the question: "What are the cues and/or signals that influence perceptions of social class?" Qualitative data was collected by semi-structured interviews of approximately 20 educated middle class participants born in the United States. The focus of the interviews is to disentangle the social class construct by identifying what social class looks and feels like to everyday Americans. This first study is followed by a second study, an experimental vignette study, which incorporates findings from Essay 1 and addresses the following questions:

1. How do perceptions of an applicant's social class affect an employer's selection decision?

2. Do people show preferential treatment or bias for those they perceive as being from the same or similar class?

Finally, the third essay empirically tests a longitudinal model of the temporal relationship between subjective social class and career success.

This dissertation contributes to the management and social science literature by linking the discussion of social class across psychological, sociological, and organizational disciplines. I uncover the perceptions that people hold about different social class distinctions by engaging in qualitative research. Moreover, the dissertation makes a unique and timely contribution to research on human resource practices and diversity in its exploration of social class as a diversity

characteristic. Lastly, to my knowledge, this research is the first to explore the relationship between subjective aspects of social class and career success.

Historical Overview of Social Class

Early theorists Karl Marx and Max Weber laid much of the groundwork for social class research. Karl Marx, a social theorist, was an early contributor to our understanding of class. He argued that class hierarchy undermined the legitimacy of economic elites and served as a justification for class conflict and revolution (Marx & Fowkes, 1977). Marx often predicted that "the workers of the world will unite and overthrow the rich" (Norton, 2013, p. 125). In making this comment, he argued that the struggle among classes was good for the progression of society and would eventually lead to the demise of capitalism, giving way to socialism. In essence, Marx advocated for a classless society.

In contrast to the work of Marx was the work by German sociologist, Max Weber, a firm proponent in the argument for capitalism. According to Weber (1958), class is created by economic interest and can defined as "any group of persons occupying the same class status" (Weber, 1947, p. 424). He argued that class can be categorized into three types: (a) property class—determined by differentiation of property holdings; (b) acquisition class—determined by opportunity to exploit the market; and (c) social class—plurality of class statuses. This classification can be more adequately referred to as resources, power, and status, respectively. In the U. S., resources and power are the primary dimensions studied by researchers of class and class inequality. For example, in the field of sociology, research on status as a source of inequality is often relegated to a side topic due to a belief that it does not explain inequality as well as do resources and power (Ridgeway, 2014). One exception, French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu examined all three categorizations of class.

Building on Weber's idea of class as motivated by economic interest, Bourdieu (1987) asserted that there are factors at play in the universe which differentiate people as they compete for scarce resources. Bourdieu defines social class in relation to the means of production or economic capital, which led to his identification of four forms of capital: (a) economic capital; (b) cultural capital; (c) social capital; and (d) symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1986, 1987). Economic capital is capital that is directly converted into money and is institutionalized as property rights. Cultural capital refers to the tastes and aesthetics people develop and cultivate over time via informal and formal education (Bourdieu, 2010/1984; Liu, Soleck, Hopps, Dunston, & Pickett, 2004). Social capital is often referred to as the *who you know, not what you know* factor (Liu, Soleck, et al., 2004). Simply, social capital is the gaining of resources through a person's connections and group affiliations. Lastly, symbolic capital suggests the formation of different types of capital once they are legitimized (Bourdieu, 1986, 1987).

Under certain conditions, cultural, social, and symbolic capital can be converted to economic capital, which is considered the primary form of capital. This implies that any form of capital can be quantified, depending on the situation over time. By extension, the conversion of non-economic forms of capital into economic capital gives those of lower economic resources an opportunity to compete with those of higher economic capital. For example, consider a woman who had access to the best schools that afforded her opportunities to network with the elite. In addition, her family groomed her on how to dress for success, be well versed about the arts, as well as use proper etiquette and mannerisms. Upon her college graduation, she then uses these skills and knowledge—cultural capital—to land a lucrative job on Wall Street by making a favorable impression on her future employer. In essence, she converted her cultural capital into economic capital by using her appreciation and accumulation of tastes, works of art, and

academic credentials to increase her economic capital. As such, it is the discovery of these powers or forms of capital that can tilt the advantage in people's favor, allowing them to either move up the hierarchy of classes or exclude themselves from the competition altogether (Bourdieu, 2010/1984). Arguably, such skills and knowledge are harder to attain for the economically disadvantaged.

An important contribution of Bourdieu's that is germane to the study of social class is the idea of habitus which suggests that class is written into people's ways of being (Ridgeway, 2014). Habitus is the values, dispositions, and expectations of social groups that are acquired via life's experiences (Bourdieu, 2010/1984; Karataş-Özkan & Chell). In other words, class habitus is the principle that generates tastes of certain class groups. As such, social class is not solely determined by one's position in regards to his or her economic capital, but also by class habitus (Bourdieu, 2010/1984). Thus, class habitus, "the internalized form of the class condition and of the conditionings" (Bourdieu, 2010/1984, p. 95), refers to a class member's ability to develop certain sensibilities throughout one's life.

Social class is considered one of the most meaningful cultural dimensions in a person's life (Fouad & Brown, 2000; Liu, Ali, et al., 2004). The works of Marx, Weber, and Bourdieu highlight how complex social class is and how it touches everyday lives and experiences. Utilizing the work of these early theorists, researchers in the fields of economics, sociology, psychology, and social psychology have been studying the effects of social class for some time; yet, it remains a poorly understood and under-researched topic in the field of management.

Conceptualization of Social Class and Related Key Terms

Disciplines such as sociology, economics, and psychology have studied the phenomenon of class in a variety of social contexts (Leavitt & Fryberg, 2013). However, given the extensive

research that has been garnered by these disciplines, there has been little integration across the theoretical perspectives offered by each discipline. Leavitt and Fryberg (2013) argue that because of the singular scientific disciplinary focus of social class studies, researchers are left with theoretical and empirical findings that tend to remain within each discipline's own unique area. Accordingly, the conceptualization and measurement of social class are perhaps the most controversial and difficult issues concerning social class research (Oakes & Rossi, 2003). Arguments have been made that in the U.S., the theory behind studies on social class has been remiss in the development of valid empirical measures that address the characteristics of social stratification systems. As a result, the identification of people's placement within such systems oftentimes fails to address why certain aspects of socioeconomic status relate to specific outcomes (Oakes & Rossi, 2003). Moreover, inconsistencies in the theoretical conceptualization and measurement of social class have hampered research, particularly in the management discipline.

The study of social class is plagued with a variety of terms, all of which attempt to describe this phenomenon. Liu and his colleagues (2004) found 448 different words used to describe social class (e.g., social class, social status, socioeconomic status, income, prestige). Researchers following the dogma of Max Weber may prefer the term *class* to refer to the amount of money a person has and the power that economic advantage gives him or her; while others may use the term status to reflect social prestige (Fussell, 1992). Perry and Wallace (2013) define social class as the "identification with a particular economic culture that one is exposed to within his/her environment (e.g., family, school, community)" (p. 82). In yet another definition, social class is as an individual's economic position based on income, educational level, and occupation (Liu, Ali, et al., 2004). Rothman (2002) argues that social class is "a group of

individuals or families who occupy a similar position in the economic system of production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services in industrial societies" (p. 6). Piff, Kraus, Côté, Cheng, and Keltner (2010) consider both the objective and subjective natures of social class and define it as "a multifaceted construct that is rooted in both objective features of material wealth and access to resources as well as in conceptions of socioeconomic status (SES) rank vis-à-vis others in society" (p. 772). As evidenced, the conceptualizations of social class are many. A common theme in these definitions is that social class includes an economic component that distinguishes individuals or groups of individuals from one another. Thus, for the purposes of this dissertation, social class is defined as an individual-level characteristic comprised of material conditions and subjective perceptions of rank in comparison to others. Table 1-1 provides a summary of key terms found in the literature related to the construct of social class.

Social class has a profound effect on people's lives. It has the capacity to shape a myriad of social outcomes, psychological outcomes, physical health, subjective well-being, and aesthetic preferences (Piff et al., 2010). In short, social class shapes people's thoughts, feelings, and actions. In the following section, I discuss the first essay, which explores the signals of social class and their influence on selection decisions.

Chapter 2: Markers of Social Class

"Class is deeply embedded in the recesses of cultural and political conscious. In every crevice of everyday life we find signs of class difference; we are acutely aware that class plays a decisive role in social situations." (Aronowitz, 2003, pp. 30-31)

As its definition implies, social class represents more than material possessions and resources (Kraus, Piff, & Keltner, 2011). Depending on personal experiences as well as psychological and cognitive factors and processes, social class may mean different things to different people (Liu, Soleck, et al., 2004). Kelley and Evans (1995) argue that people's perceptions of class are influenced by both materialistic forces—means of production and authority in the workplace—as well as referent group forces—subjective images of equality among family, friends and coworkers. As people compare themselves to others and form their perceptions of social class, the power of these forces is realized.

In the U.S., a capitalist society, people are often motivated by the accumulation of social class symbols (Liu, Soleck, et al., 2004). Like the definition of social class, symbols of class may vary and hold different meaning to different people. That is, people's expectations, habits, and histories shape these symbols and their meanings, resulting in a multitude of factors and indicators that allow social class to be experienced on a more personal level (Fiske, 2013). This personalization of social class muddies the conceptualization and measurement of the social class, thereby encumbering social class research.

Earlier research on social class predominantly examined social class objectively (e.g., income, educational level, and occupation). However, more recently, subjective measures of social class (i.e., one's personal perspective on social class) are becoming prevalent. For example, research investigating how social class is signaled and stigmatizes individuals of lower social class favors the use of subjective social class measures (Brannon & Markus, 2013; Fiske,

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2013; Kraus & Keltner, 2009). Unfortunately, research examining the implications of objective and subjective perceptions of social class simultaneously is minimal.

In this first essay, I seek to identify the indicators of social class to gain a better understanding of how social class and perceptions of social class influence people's thoughts and actions. Thus, the purpose is to identify a comprehensive list of the indicators of social class that people use when making judgments and/or forming perceptions about a person's social class.

Literature Review

In seeking to explain income disparity in the United States, many Americans attribute inequities to individual differences. The poor and people from lower class backgrounds are often labeled as lazy and lacking motivation; whereas the wealthy and higher class are deemed as hard workers and people of high ability (Bullock & Limbert, 2003). In holding these impressions as truth, structural attributions for poverty (e.g., low wages) and wealth (e.g., inheritance, political pull) are often dismissed. Not surprisingly, European Americans, men, conservatives, and middle and higher income groups tend to favor individualistic attributions (e.g., work ethic) for poverty and wealth; while African Americans, women, liberals, and low income groups tend to endorse structural attributions (Bullock & Limbert, 2003). Consequently, those who believe in a system based on individual attributes and meritocracy further strengthen the ideology of the American dream.

Bourdieu (2010/1984) argued that people begin to learn and acquire class-specific tastes, values, behaviors, and interaction styles as early as their childhood. For example, in children's books on poverty, poor and working-class people are commonly depicted as unemployed or employed in low-wage jobs, and as possessing little education (Chafel, Fitzgibbons, Cutter, & Burke-Weiner, 1997; Leavitt & Fryberg, 2013). As a result, children tend to form a belief system

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that poverty is self-imposed and based on merit when exposed to the images of poverty in these books (Chafel et al., 1997). Indeed, as we mature, our belief system is reinforced as our class-based tastes, behaviors, and styles are cultivated; ultimately, forming the basis by which "people judge and are judged by others" (Rivera, 2015, p. 8). It follows then, that our tastes, behaviors, and styles become material and behavioral symbols or signals of social class used to place value on a person's worthiness.

Material possessions as well as behavioral patterns are signs of social class. Research suggests that people are highly attuned to perceptions of social class symbols (Kraus & Mendes, 2014). Etiquette, conversational skills, and the way a person presents him or herself via their style of dress or speech are learned behaviors and skills that shape how a person is viewed in the world and solidifies his or her place in it (Rivera, 2015). As an illustration, in a study examining sartorial manipulations of social class, Kraus and Mendes (2014) found that male participants dressed in business suits—signaling upper class—displayed higher levels of dominance and testosterone in comparison to subjects wearing sweatpants—signaling lower class. Other indicators of higher social class may include a person's height (i.e., taller people) and drink of choice (e.g., scotch and soda); whereas, signs of lower social class include being overweight, wearing clothing with messages on them, and partaking of beer and sweet alcoholic beverages (Fussell, 1992). Clearly, personal preferences serve as symbols of social class. For instance, class-based differences can be found by observing the type of music a person enjoys or the sports one plays. That is, people from a lower social class may gravitate to games such as basketball, football, volleyball, baseball, scrabble, and canasta; while people from an upper social class may engage more frequently in sports such as golf, tennis, squash, polo, bridge, and backgammon (Fussell, 1992; Rivera, 2015).

From a behavioral perspective, people of lower class are perceived as having less education, being more lazy, irresponsible, and dysfunctional in comparison to those of a higher class (Cozzarelli, Wilkinson, & Tagler, 2001; Leavitt & Fryberg, 2013). The upper-class are often personified as hard workers who do not care about others. This negative perception of the well-to-do is amplified if the person's wealth is inherited (Leavitt & Fryberg, 2013). Yet, people from a higher social class are believed to be very competent and their wealth acts a marker for social prestige (Cheng & Tracy, 2013; Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, & Xu, 2002).

In studying the behaviors related to social class indicators, researchers have also documented face-to-face interactions—verbal cues (e.g., vocal latency) and nonverbal cues (e.g., eye gaze)—and their importance in evaluating another person's social status (Ridgeway, Berger, & Smith, 1985). For example, research on eye gaze—patterns of looking while speaking and listening—suggests that high status members look at lower status members approximately the same amount of time while listening and speaking. However, low status members tend to look more while listening than while speaking when interacting with higher status members (Ellyson, Dovidio, Corson, & Vinicur, 1980; Exline, Ellyson, & Long, 1975). Thus, the patterns of eye gaze people adopt during interactions is largely based on their relative status in any given situation (Ridgeway et al., 1985).

Researchers have also investigated vocal cues in relation to status. Verbal latency refers to the speed or amount of time in which a person verbally responds to a task. Willard and Strodtbeck (1972) asserted that if a person wants to rise in status, he or she must be the first to speak up and become an active participant in the interaction. In an experiment comparing the differences in behavior between high specific status condition (teacher) and low specific status condition (student), Leffler, Gillespie, and Conaty (1982) found that the teachers took up more

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body space, talked more, and tended to have more interruptions than students. In addition, higher status subjects (i.e., teachers) touched and pointed more in comparison to the students they were partnered with. In more recent research on nonverbal behavior and status characteristics, Kraus and Keltner (2009) found that upper class persons interacting with strangers were more likely to display cues of disengagement (e.g., doodling and self-grooming) and fewer displays of engagement (e.g., head nods, eyebrow raises, and laughter) in contrast to lower class individuals. Interestingly, observers of the nonverbal displays of disengagement and engagement accurately predicted SES, suggesting that such cues are signs of social class. Clearly, a broad array of social class signals exists that people may draw on when making judgments about another person. However, much of the research on social class signals to-date relies on physical attributes or in-person observations. What then happens in the absence of face-to-face interactions? Consider the selection process, where there are minimal face-to-face interactions in the initial stages (e.g., résumé review), how is social class signaled?

During the initial phase of the selection process, communication between applicant and employer are often absent of face-to-face interactions, relying primarily on the information conveyed in the applicant's résumé. Unlike research on race, gender, and sexual orientation, which has explored the role of these diverse factors in the selection process, little is known as to how social class and perceptions of social class influence the selection process, particularly prior to an applicant meeting a potential employer in person. Research to-date has been remiss in addressing how social class and signs of social class are used during the selection process. To my knowledge, the recent research by Lauren Rivera is the first to delve into this domain.

Rivera (2012a, 2012b, 2015) investigated the role of social class in the hiring process by conducting a qualitative study focusing exclusively on *elite students* graduating from *elite*

universities looking for *elite jobs* at *elite companies*. She defines elites as "individuals who have 'vastly disproportionate control' over scarce, valued resources that can be used to gain access to material or symbolic advantages in society at large" (Rivera, 2015, p. 290). Through her research, Rivera (2015) sought to understand how and why students from the most elite backgrounds tended to land the highest-paying jobs by examining the judgments employers make. She utilized interviews, observation of recruitment events, and field participation observation of a company's recruitment department to answer these questions. Her findings suggest that the screens and metrics employers used at elite firms—investment banks, management consulting firms, and law firms—are highly correlated with the income and educational level of students' parents. In other words, although hiring decisions may seem to be based on merit, elite firms employ tactics that target applicants who attend elite institutions and whose parents' incomes and backgrounds afford them the opportunity to attend such prestigious universities. For instance, elite firms typically focus their recruitment efforts at three to five elite universities, *core universities*, which many of their new hires attend. These firms, in turn, spend large sums of money and time attracting prospective candidates from these universities via information sessions, recruitment job fairs, as well as reviewing résumés and conducting interviews. In addition to their core universities, elite firms have an additional five to fifteen universities, *target universities*, from which they will consider applicants, although they interview applicants from these universities on a smaller scale (Rivera, 2015).

A college education is often viewed as the great equalizer, a means by which a person can rise above his or her circumstances and attain the American dream. Sadly, Rivera's research highlights the many barriers people face in trying to improve their social class status in pursuit of the American dream. Specifically, her research underscores a system of *elite reproduction* where

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the elite of our society continually and consistently make it harder for outsiders to gain entry, giving way to the systemic discrimination that marginalized people encounter in the U.S. Although this stream of research is noteworthy in its exploration of the role of social class in the hiring process it may not generalize to the job search and selection process experienced by thousands of *non-elite students* graduating from *non-elite universities* in the U.S. (i.e., most college graduates). Thus, one contribution of this dissertation is to enhance our understanding of how social class affects the *non-elites* of our society as they gain entry into the workforce.

As noted earlier, the purpose of essay 1 is to isolate the social indicators people rely on when making judgments of social class. The information gained in this study will be used to develop manipulations for use in essay 2—an experiment that examines the effects of social class signals on selection-related outcomes. Because essay 2 will focus on the evaluation of résumés, which are often the first contact an employer has with a potential employee, this study seeks to identify indicators of social class which might be depicted in a résumé rather than through face-to-face interactions. Thus, by proposing qualitative research for my first study, I hope to capture a common voice about social class signals among a diverse group of people, which can be used as a basis for developing manipulations to be used in essay 2.

Methods

As noted earlier, mixed methods research is being utilized for studies 1 and 2. In this first essay, a qualitative study is used to explore the phenomenon of social class indicators. This two-phase exploratory design is appropriate as the results of the first qualitative method helps to inform the second quantitative method (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2011), an exploratory design is warranted when measures or instruments are not available, variables are unknown, or there is no theory framing the research. Because the

study of social class is complex and there are a myriad of ways to define social class, it is essential to understand how the construct of social class may be manifested in quantitative research. This research design is well suited to answer my research question: "*What are the indicators or signals of social class that result in classification of a person as a certain social class?*" Hence, via semi-structured interviews, I explore the phenomenon of social class and identify its indicators, which are the variables that are tested in the quantitative study that follows to assess the effect of social class on the selection process.

Research Context and Recruitment Process

As the purpose of this research is to ascertain the influence of social class in the hiring process, the sample was drawn from a population of Human Resource professionals and full-time employees with the ability to make hiring decisions (i.e., hiring managers). As such, all participants were expected to hold at minimum, a bachelor's degree and work in mid-level white-collar jobs (e.g., accountants, financial analysts, human resource specialists). Because I am only interested in the context of social class as it pertains to the United States, all participants were required to be U.S. citizens, born in the U.S. Participants reflected a variety of age and racial backgrounds. Lastly, the pool of participants was limited to subjects who perceived themselves as middle class or upper middle class. Self-perceptions of social class were assessed by asking individuals to rate their current social status on a scale ranging from lower-class to upper-class. Personal contacts and networks (e.g., the local chapter of the Society of Human Resource Management) were used to identify and recruit potential interview subjects.

Participants

Twenty participants were interviewed for the study. The participants worked in a variety of industries, such as, steel, finance, technology, and education. All participants either worked in

a human resource related field or oversaw the management of employees, which included the ability to hire employees. The ratio of men to women was even, at ten each. Whites and African-Americans made up 45% of the sample, respectively, and Hispanics comprised 10% of the sample. Much of the sample were between the ages of 36 to 49, with 75% having a Master's degree. The demographic statistics for the study sample are shown in Table 2-1.

Data Collection Process

Semi-structured interviews were used as the main data collection source for the study. In accordance with the Institutional Review Board (IRB), all participants were provided an online informed consent form about their rights as research participants. Acknowledgement of the informed consent was received prior to the interviews. I personally conducted all twenty interviews via telephone. At the beginning of the interview, participants were provided with a brief overview of the study and were asked for their permission to record the interviews. All interviews were digitally recorded for transcription. In addition to recording the interviews, I took notes during each interview. Each interview lasted approximately 45-60 minutes. The interviews covered questions regarding the participants' professional backgrounds, their personal definition, views, thoughts, attitudes, and experiences regarding social class, both lower and higher. In addition, participants were probed about the methodologies used in the selection process, the qualities they look for in résumés, and the indicators of social class within the résumé. The complete interview protocol is shown in Appendix A.

Data Preparation and Analysis

A grounded theory approach was used to develop the coding scheme. This inductive approach entailed allowing the relevant aspects of social class emerge as opposed to testing theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). In the development of the coding scheme, which is an iterative

process, researchers review and dissect the data in detail, then name or assign a code for every incident representing the phenomenon (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The use of inductive coding is advantageous because it allows the researcher to remain open to an interviewee's voice and experience as opposed to developing an a-priori list of codes that may not fit the data.

The interview recordings were transcribed verbatim for all twenty interviews. Using the interview notes, I developed a skeleton codebook of 23 codes. Prior to using any software, two transcripts were selected at random, and three coders, including myself, independently annotated each transcript, and built upon this initial codebook. One of the coders has substantial experience conducting and analyzing qualitative research and has published qualitative research in the field of public health. This researcher served as a guide to the other two coders who were novices to qualitative methodology.

After annotating the transcripts, we met as a group, to discuss the themes and concepts that emerged. I, then, compiled the information captured from the annotated transcripts to develop a preliminary codebook, in which codes were further refined and operationally defined. The Dedoose software was used to analyze the remaining transcripts and code for recurring themes and concepts, starting with the preliminary codebook (Campbell, Quincy, Osserman, & Pedersen, 2013; Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). An advantage of the Dedoose software was that it allowed for multiple coders, which was critical for addressing coder reliability.

At this stage, two coders analyzed and coded the remaining interviews. The crux of this analysis focused on identifying common signals used in developing perceptions about social class during the hiring process. A pretest of the preliminary codebook was conducted by assessing intercoder agreement of three transcripts. According to Miles et al. (2014), "intercoder

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agreement should be within the 85% to 90% range, depending on the size and range of the

coding scheme" (p. 85). A "revised" codebook was developed as discrepancies were discussed

and problems corrected (i.e., codes were added or deleted, and redundant codes merged). Two

coders used the "revised" codebook on the next transcript to be analyzed. This process continued

until an intercoder agreement of 80% was reached. Although Miles et al. (2014) suggest

agreement of at least 85%, after doing the coding and revision process for 3 additional

transcripts, we consistently reached 80%, which was deemed acceptable given the size of the

coding scheme (over 300 codes) that we were working with. At this time, the two coders used

the "final" codebook to analyze all transcripts independently (Campbell et al., 2013). The final

codebook included 359 codes and subcodes (see Appendix B). For the purposes of this

dissertation, I discuss the codes that are most applicable to the focus of the dissertation—the

signals or indicators of social class. After coding the data, I quantified the frequencies of themes

by category using the Dedoose software package. In the following section, the definition of

social class is drawn from summaries and descriptions of the interviewees' definitions, based on

the emergent themes. I will then follow with a discussion of study participants' beliefs and

thoughts about social class signals. The discussion concludes with a review of the findings on

social class indicators as they pertain to résumés, exclusively.

<div align="center">**Results**</div>

Social Class Defined

As mentioned earlier, a major challenge to research on social class is the lack of clarity

about how it is defined. Most researchers recognize economic capital as a primary dimension of

social class (e.g., Bourdieu, 1986, 2010/1984; Liu, Ali, et al., 2004; Perry & Wallace, 2013);

while others include factors such as education and occupation when defining social class. During

the interview process, I intentionally did not define social class for the interviewees as I did not want to influence or bias the interviewees' social class perceptions with my own personal views. Instead, I asked them to define social class and tell me what they think when they hear the term *social class*. As Interviewee I05 noted, "You never defined it [social class], which I thought was interesting. You allowed me to struggle with it, and I was all over the freaking map. But you never defined it … You just kinda used the words, lower [higher] class." Presented in Appendix C is a listing of the study participants, identified by their gender, race, and occupation.

In defining social class, many of the interviewees described social class as a categorization process. For example, a project coordinator at a consulting firm revealed, "I think my definition [of social class] would be how a person is divided in terms of society's opinion based on different variables including salary, experience, as well as accumulation of wealth" [I07]. Likewise, a director of human resources defined social class as "the stratification that we human beings like to do to everything. We like compare ourselves—better or worse—to the rest of the peeps" [I11]. Interviewee I16, a vice president of finance offered the following definition— "social class is breaking up the citizens of a nation into multiple groups based on certain criteria, whether that be income, whether that be the color of their skin, national origin. Something like that, I guess." As evidenced by this sampling of the interviewees' responses, social class is a complex phenomenon that involves grouping people into categories and is largely influenced by societal and individual beliefs. Not unlike social class research, income and education were the most common factors cited in interviewees' social class definitions. In sum, the following themes emerged from the interviewees' definitions of social class: income, education, position in life/career, race, background and associations, access to resources, social

standing, geography or place of residence, position in life/career, and race. For brevity, only themes with four or more remarks are discussed.

Income. All but one interviewee defined social class in terms of income, economics or financial standing, either solely or in part. The consensus was that the higher a person's income, then the higher his/her social class is. A sampling of responses follows. Interviewee I11 defined social class as follows:

> Social class in my world is an economic base. So, working class—people who are living hand-to-mouth and then there's a higher level that's probably—see; I'm already saying it's higher – to have a little bit more flexibility with one's income but still living week-to-week and it gradually goes to the point where the upper class don't have to think about what they're buying or how it's going to impact their budget. They just sign on the dotted line with their – what's the platinum card; there's more than platinum – I think it's a black card. [I11]

Similarly, a director of global sourcing at a manufacturing firm referred to social class as "sort of buckets and the thinking of different levels, primarily based on affluence, [which is] levels of income and then, again, discretionary income" [I13]. One interview elaborated on the bucketing of social class into categories, stating:

> I think I would define it as, I guess, impoverished, working class, and upper class. Those are the titles. I guess I would define them as impoverished meaning people that are working or, I guess, not working, but below the poverty line or at the poverty level. Working class I would define as a huge class of people that are everybody else that works up to what I would consider upper class, which would be people, the top 1 percent. The people who make a million dollars a year and higher. That would be upper class to me. [I02]

Education. The majority of those interviewed believed that education was an important dimension of social class. For instance, a senior director chief data officer claimed that socioeconomic factors do not play a role in defining social class. She argued that classism in the U.S. is primarily based on education and is rampant in the business world. She likened this classism to the caste system in India. She states:

The caste system … I believe it's alive and well in the business world. I think it more relates in the US in terms of maybe education. Level of education forces you into a different type of class. I have the luxury of working with a lot of highly educated individuals. I can personally put them into that upper class, so to speak, if you will because they've achieved some level of higher education. However, it doesn't necessarily, in my mind, relate to socioeconomics. [I12]

Yet, unlike this interviewee, approximately half of the interviewees considered education in combination with income to be the defining elements of social class. Like income, the perception is that the higher a person's educational level, then the higher his/her social class is. Interviewee I06, head of industry accounts stated:

Social class is typically defined by a combination of income level and education levels, so people who have middle class; I would probably roughly define as sort of a certain income level combined with a certain educational attainment. Upper middle class would probably be higher levels of income combined with higher levels of education. [I06]

Similarly, a vice president of human resources defined social class as "someone's station in life, where they are from [based on] an economic and educational perspective" [I20].

Background and associations. In addition to income and education, some interviewees suggested that social class is based on a person's background and the environment in which they were raised. As a human resources administrator puts it:

Well, I believe social class is something that we actually grow up with, in a certain environment. We are basically raised within a certain level of what our education is, what our economic standards are, maybe what our educational levels are. I believe that's what defines social class. [I09]

Interviewee I06 argues "that circumstances, more than likely being born into a middle-class family or upper middle-class family is probably the biggest determining factor of you being in that social status when you're an adult more so than life choices." Interviewees also highlighted the importance of social networks, one's social capital, when describing their understanding of what social class is. Specifically, some interviewees proposed that the people with whom a

person engages and associates with dictates his/her social class. Consider the following statement from Interviewee I12:

> I would probably define it as a combination of your background and interests and who each person relates themselves to. Do you associate yourself with a certain group of individuals and are those individuals likeminded? Therefore, are they in that same class as you or do you tend to, as an individual and myself included, look for people that are less similar to you? Then your class is a bit more matrix. That's how I would define it. [I12]

Similarly, a director of client services claimed that social class is "being associated with a group of individuals of like or similar situations with regards to … their upbringing and where they currently are in their life and/or careers" [I14], thus linking a person's network with their current station in life.

Access to Resources. The last major theme emerging from the interviewees responses regarding the definition of social class is access to resources. Several interviewees emphasized that a person's access and exposure to resources are just as important when trying to understand social class and how people are categorized into their respective social class groups. Interviewee I04 articulates the relationship between income and access to opportunity as it relates to person's social class background:

> I think social class is groups of people or people who are grouped based on their financial standing or financial mobility or lack thereof. I think, yeah, when I think of social class, I more so think of money than I do … basically opportunity versus non-opportunity because of the group you were born into or not born into is what makes me think of social class. [I04]

In addition, some interviewees argued that access to resources is in large part influenced or determined by education. Specifically, the type of education a person receives hinges on the availability and access to certain resources. Thus, the prevailing sentiment among some interviewees was that a person with access to a better educational system will have more

opportunities available to him/her, resulting in a higher social class status. Interviewee I19, head

of data science and business analytics, asserts:

> So, to me you have a couple paths. If you want to stick to the terminology, the haves,
> either you get it through, like Donald Trump; you kind of inherit millions of dollars or
> hundreds of millions. Or you have access to an educational system, whether that's based
> on high school where you live which is clearly dictated by what you can afford as far as
> housing. Or if your parents are able to afford the education for you so that you can pay
> your way through if you are not able to get scholarships. So, to me, it's access to
> education and opportunities really. [I19]

Interwoven in the various definitions the interviewees offered were remarks related to

race, geography, as well as a person's social standing or position in life. Yet, the crux of social

class, as defined by the interviewees, resulted in the emergence of these four major themes that

were discussed: income, education, background and associations, and access to resources. Next, I

present my findings of the interviewees' thoughts on social class signals and indicators.

Social Class Indicators

After asking the interviewees' how they define social class, I proceeded to question them

about their views on the indicators of social class. Asking them to define social class was a

critical component to the interviews as I was able to ascertain the interviewees' mindsets and any

predilections they may have had concerning their social class perceptions. Over one hundred

parent codes and subcodes were developed from interviewee' responses regarding social class

signals. I created subcodes for both lower social class (LSC) and higher social class (HSC)

descriptors for each parent code. Although, this may seem to be an excessive number of codes,

the exercise of deciphering and summarizing the voice of the interviewees has been invaluable in

understanding social class signals.

As mentioned earlier, over one hundred codes were created when analyzing responses for

social class indicators. Not surprisingly, education and income were the two most frequent

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indicators of social class referenced by the interviewees. The remaining emerging themes of

social class indicators, in order of frequency of responses, include: exposure and access to

resources, material goods, job type, work effort, appearance, geography or place of residence,

hobbies, race and ethnicity, language, and vacations, respectively.

Income. Many interviewees identified income as a factor that signals social class. Often,

social class perceptions based on income are based on where a person is in life. In other words,

people's social class perceptions are very much centered on their distinct context as influenced

by their social and cultural environment. For example, Interviewee I08 maintains that he, along

with his brothers and sisters were raised with a similar background; yet, their educational

background is different. As he tells it, "they [siblings] totally have a different perspective [of

money] … I know if they think you make over $75,000, hey, you have no worries at all. You're

rich … I can never think that way."

As a visible indicator of social class, interviewees agree that income is typically

displayed by a person's material possessions or purchasing power. For example, Interviewee I04

states:

> I think social class is a reference to money and status or the place that you were born in
> and the resources you have access to. So maybe when a person is from an upper social
> class probably … they have access to things that they need at their fingertips. And they
> can get a job quickly. They have resources. They could be without a job for a while and
> still survive. They can travel. They can give their children the finer things in life and
> everything for their family. And they normally have some type of status in terms of their
> work or the community or financially. [I04]

Thus, she acknowledges that along with one's purchasing power, a positive byproduct of higher

levels of income is that one has access to more resources, which allows for the freedom to do

more and be more.

LSC people were described as not having the same luxuries and freedoms as those from a HSC due to the discrepancy in income. LSC were identified as people who work minimum wage jobs, are underemployed, or receive government assistance such as welfare, with little hope of moving out of their financial situation. Interviewee I19 claimed:

> Either they're [LSC] on welfare or don't have a great paying job so they're the working poor. You're gonna see people who probably make some pretty bad decisions because a lot of times you don't make a lot of money, you don't have the best job, you kind of have to make choices. [I19]

They were as also portrayed as "impoverished, living at the poverty line" [I02] and referred to as the *haves not.* Interviewee I08 noted:

> It seems as if the haves are becoming more affluent, where the have nots are being pushed downward. [When] I say downward, [I] would say people that are in the middle class are now more on the border of poverty … If you're born into poverty, the probability of you getting out of poverty is very low in some areas in some cities. [I08]

> In contrast to the LSC, HSC people consistently depicted as being able to afford things outside of their most basic needs. For example, the ability to afford a nanny to help care for their kids. Moreover, being at a higher income level was said to give a person voice and influence. Interviewee I02 explained:

> Well, I think that some of my observations about social class is that it seems that the top 1 percent seems to have more of an influence on economic structures... Whereas I, I think the working class, they have the voice, but they don't always use it. The upper class tends to have the voice and the money and the influence to make things happen, to change laws, for their own benefit. [I02]

This statement alludes to an inability of the LSC to use their collective voice to affect a change in their circumstances, while spotlighting the lack of altruism of the HSC. Perceptions such as these paint a very gray future for those who fall in the lower social class.

Education. When asked about peoples' thoughts on social class and how people, in general, let others know to which class they belong, education was mentioned as a strong

indicator. Education refers to where a person went to school (i.e., private school, public school, ivy league) and a person's educational level (i.e., number of years of school or number of degrees). People from a lower social class were described as "uneducated" [I11], having a "high school diploma or less" [I02], or a "GED" [I01]. Interviewee I20 describes the LSC as follows:

> They are probably not as well educated … I might say that they're more likely to be a Trump voter – not to put politics in the middle of this – but that they don't have the same kind of access to education, healthcare, etc. … The access they might have to educational opportunities [is] just by virtue of fact of where they live. [They] would probably be more limited or they wouldn't be as high level, as the educational access of somebody in a higher social class might have. [I20]

In describing the HSC, she expounds:

> They've had enough material wealth and comfort, and can afford better educational opportunities, and have access to things that would typically tend to enable them to be more successful in life, in general, in their professional and career life, and their academic studies, and in their capability to achieve whatever kind of self-actualization they might want. [I20]

In sum, people from a higher social class are believed to have an advanced education and be more well-read and eloquent. In his description of the HSC, Interviewee I05 states "I think it's someone that values education as a lifelong journey…and would definitely instill the need for education in their children" [I05].

Interestingly, a recurring theme that occurred, specifically with the African-American interviewees, was the idea of socialization. According to some of these study participants, they were socialized to value the importance of education as a means to a better life and better jobs, regardless of social class status. Interviewee I19 shared his story.

> Growing up, being an African-American male and having had parents who were the first of their, or some of the first, of their families to ever go to college, I was hearing that if you want to make it in life, you need to earn the best grades and be at the top of the class in order to get into the best colleges to get the best jobs. So that was kind of engrained in me growing up. [I19]

Resources. Interviewees continually described social class in terms of *if* and *how* people have access to resources and/or been exposed to resources. There is "the perception [that] social class can create opportunities or take away opportunities from people just because" [I12]. For example, education is seen as a resource that perpetually maintains the divide between social classes and was often linked to this notion of access and exposure. Interviewee [I19] eludes to a cycle that perpetuates the divide between lower and higher social classes. He states, "you hear about the schools that aren't getting the funding. Those are typically the inner-city schools. The suburban schools, again, you're gonna see they probably have access to most tools and resources and better teachers. I mean, it goes on and on." Thus, those who have access to resources was viewed as an indicator of higher social class.

HSC people from a higher social class were described as able to "afford better educational opportunities, and having access to things that would typically tend to enable them to be more successful in life, in general, in their professional [career] life, and in their academic studies" [I20]. Some interviewees argued that the HSC have an easier time in life because of the leverage gained from their family's resources, e.g., obtaining a job "just because their father's golf partner was able to just give it to them without an interview" [I02]. As Interviewee I05 states,

> I think that in our society right now, there are a lot of what I call opportunity hogs. These are middle to upper middle class, well educated people that all hang out together. They all marry each other, and all of their parents were upper middle class. And they just seem to have access to more interviews, job opportunities, and to know where the jobs are than others. [I05]

Consequently, there is a certain level of expectation for these individuals to be successful because "they were born to privilege" [I18] and have access to certain resources, such as education and affluent social networks.

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Conversely, the LSC are perceived as being disadvantaged regarding access and exposure to resources. To take a case in point, even if someone has the knowledge, skills, and abilities to be successful, without that access, this person may be left behind. "You can be the smartest person, but if you just don't have access to the right education, the right schools, hence the right jobs then you're not gonna survive. And then you'll be labeled one of these classes" [I19]. Hence, for those from a lower social class, there is a constant struggle between a "need to survive versus a desire to thrive" [I12]. So, if people are not given the tools they need to thrive, they face more challenges and obstacles, forcing them to make those tough decisions. Interviewee I08 illustrated this dichotomy between the classes using teenage pregnancy as an example.

> Well, you have an exact same scenario of teenage pregnancy. And a working-class couple who's making just three dollars above minimum wage, and they have a teenage daughter who becomes pregnant, that's traumatic to a [working-class] family versus an upper middle-class family that has more access to resources. [I08]

In discussions of how higher social class people use their resources, the responses varied. One respondent argued that because of their experiences and exposure, high social class people "have a more positive outlook on life" and as a result tend to be "more open to volunteerism" and giving back to the less fortunate [I03]. Yet, another argued that they sometimes "exploit the advantages of others and [do] not work to their full potential" [I14].

Material goods. Not surprisingly, many respondents identified material possessions as a primary indicator of social class and suggested that material goods are perhaps the "quickest way to establish whether or not you are of a certain class" [I14]. According to Interviewee I06:

> [There are] many ways we can let people know where we are in the social strata outside of even saying this is how much money I have. School, travel, entertainment choices, book choices, movie choices. I think many of these things go along with social status, intentionally and unintentionally. Those who are striving to appear to be in a higher

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social status and those who are comfortable where they are can use those signals as a way to define themselves. [I06]

Thus, when it comes to material possessions, Interviewee I09 claims, "People brag…People like to show what they've successfully been able to gain or achieve." Material goods that signal HSC may include: driving one or more expensive, luxury cars; attending more elite schools and universities; owning large homes; wearing designer clothing and expensive jewelry; owning memberships to country clubs; being able to live in more expensive neighborhoods and employ people for menial tasks. Whereas, LSC material signals were described as: possessing limited clothing; owning run-down cars, using public transportation; sending kids to public schools; being homeless; and living in an apartment, trailer, tent, or housing project.

Job type. Respondents asserted that a person's job type or career choice also serves as a social class differentiator. When asked, *what, if any, statements or messages do you recall hearing about social class*, Interviewee I11 responded:

> What comes to mind is blue-collar, white-collar, that there's a stratification there and that white-collar is more preferable than blue-collar; and yet, blue-collar are the backbone. So, it's kind of: we need you, but we don't want to be you. [I11]

Thus, in distinguishing between LSC and HSC, people described blue-collar or pink-collar job as indicators of lower social class; whereas, people having white-collar jobs indicated a higher social class. Examples of LSC job types include: service jobs, mechanics, field service technicians, drivers, manufacturing jobs on the factory floor, temporary employees, day laborers, and coal miners. In addition, people who do not have great paying jobs (i.e., those working at or below minimum wage) and those on welfare fell into the LSC category. In contrast, higher social class people were described as "those [who] tend to be our researchers, our professional employees" [I15] such as doctors, lawyers, business executives, and entrepreneurs.

Work effort. People's perceptions of work effort as an indicator of social class resulted in conflicting findings. Society in general seems to envision lower social class individuals as lazy and putting forth very little effort; whereas, higher social class individuals are perceived as hard workers (Bullock & Limbert, 2003). When asked to give an example of someone from a lower social class, Interviewee I09 stated:

> Well, I almost hate to say you put somebody lower. I think you look at people who perhaps have lost their drive and who are homeless, who suffer from perhaps addictions and I think that that definitely puts them low social class status because most are unemployed. Most are struggling probably just with day to day needs, eating, a place to live. I think they've forgotten. They don't feel the drive to maybe go out there and work. They probably had such a low within their own selves or because of circumstances that they're just basically existing. [I09]

However, a few study participants acknowledged that this view of the LSC as lazy and the HSC as hard working is a stereotype. Consider the following statement:

> I think it would go along with the stereotype. I don't know that I believe it, but I think the perception would be that people who are from a higher social class have probably made better life choices and have worked harder to attain what they have. [I06]

Interestingly, two interviewees viewed work effort differently for the upper middle class and upper class. The upper middle class were described as hard workers, who have goals, a strong work ethic, a drive to achieve, and open minds; while, the upper class were depicted as having things handed to them, being born into privilege, and possessing a sense of entitlement, suggesting they do not have to work hard.

Not all interviewees prescribed to this stereotype of the lazy LSC and the hardworking HSC. For instance, some study participants described LSC people as hard workers because they are in a constant struggle for survival and HSC people as lazy because they have had so much handed to them. According to Interviewee I12, "it seems that people that are in the poor category are lazy or not motivated to change. From personal experience, I know that that's not true." In

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direct contrast to the stereotype of lazy LSC, the argument was made that many LSC people are

indeed hard workers, but "they [LSC] work, but they're not making a wage that can help them

live properly as an individual, as a human" [I08]. Such views highlight some of the issues

bandied about in the ongoing debate of raising the minimum wage, currently take place in the

U.S. Another interviewee describes his experience with day laborers:

> There's an area very close to where I live where you can drive down early in the
> morning. I used to head this way to go to the gym in the morning. And [at] 6:00 in the
> morning, there was a certain area that you would pass by, and you would see a bunch of
> day laborers just standing around in a parking lot. You know, there was always this one
> parking lot where there'd be 20 or 30 guys just standing around waiting for some
> contractors to come by to pick them up to do some day labor. And you know, I would
> look at that as a certain class of folks that, you know, maybe they're here legally. Maybe
> they're here illegally. Tending, they're here illegally, but again, probably no medical
> coverage whatsoever making very minimal wages, working their butts off to put food on
> the table. [I13]

Thus, people who advocated that the LSC are hardworking, tended to paint a picture of

the HSC as lazy and unmotivated, claiming "they don't have to work hard for it unless they

themselves have the motivation because society doesn't expect it from them" [I12]. Interviewee

I02 affirms this perception, stating:

> My opinion of people in the upper class is that it's a kind of closed circle of supporters of
> one another. My impression is they don't tend to work as hard for the things that they
> obtain, whether it's the car or if it's a trust fund. [I02]

Competing social class signals such as this exemplify the difficulties researchers encounter in

conceptualizing and measuring social class.

Appearance. For the most part, many of the interviewees felt that a person's outward

appearance was indicative of his/her social class. For example, HSC people were described as

better groomed and having better clothing, including adornments and jewelry. In contrast, LSC

people were described as poorly groomed or dressed, disheveled, dirty-looking, or simply failing

to care about their appearance. For instance, Interviewee I18, a female Hispanic clinical

programs manager, states, "I hate to say it because I don't want to sound like my mother, but things like…green hair or tattoos on the face. Those kinds of things would stand out to me." While others acknowledged "it's not just in what you wear all of the time, but it's just what you say, how you act, how you behave" [I02] that help inform people about a person's social class.

It must be noted that a small segment of the study sample believed that appearance was not in indicator of social class. As Interviewee I16 said, "You can have a poorly groomed person from a lower income class and you can have a poorly groomed person in an upper class. I mean, I don't know that it necessarily is indicative of what class you're in."

Geography. Consider the following questions. *On what side of the city do you live? Are you from an urban versus rural area?* Answers to questions such as these can be helpful in determining a person's social class. As one interviewee puts it while reflecting on his childhood in New Orleans:

> Growing up in the city of New Orleans, we kinda define things as rich and poor, someone who lives in the Garden District or uptown New Orleans or some parts of Metairie would be sort of an upper middle class social strata. And then with certain parts of our city, like the 9th Ward or lower 9th Ward that we definitely looked at as lower on the social scale, both economically and probably the overall education levels of the average person. [I06]

Other examples of geography as a social class indicator includes descriptions of LSC people living in trailers in rural areas or living in areas of a city that are deemed rough (e.g., inner-city projects). In comparison, people from a higher social class were said to live in better or more affluent neighborhoods. Examples of geographic regions indicative of HSC include parts of California, New York City, Martha's Vineyard, and the Hamptons.

Geography is also believed to be a possible impediment to social class mobility (i.e., moving to a higher social class status). To illustrate, "If you're born into poverty, the probability of you getting out of poverty is very low in some areas in some cities" [I08]. Examples given of

U.S. geographic regions largely comprised of LSC people, where there is slow class mobility are the Appalachian region as well as the mountains of Kentucky and West Virginia.

Hobbies. Hobbies or a lack thereof were also introduced social class indicators. Hobbies suggested for people from a lower social class included gambling, drag-racing, watching reality TV, barbequing, NASCAR, as well as fishing and hunting. Interviewee I13 states, "I mean, I know guys at work that are into fishing and hunting, and they're well into the upper class, but for me, it just seems like kind of a rednecky hobby and way to pass time." Additional LSC hobbies included watching TV and playing sports such as basketball and football.

Interestingly, when trying to describe LSC hobbies, several of the interviewees struggled with answering this question. As Interview I03 stated, "I don't usually think about people in lower social classes having hobbies". This belief is in part due to the fact that hobbies are associated with what people can afford to do.

The study sample had a much easier time identifying HSC hobbies. Interviewee I12 described HSC hobbies as "anything that feels luxurious or [is] a non-essential." Examples include: golf, flying airplanes, expensive vacations, participation in the fine arts, gardening, boating, skiing, water sports, rugby, rowing, lacrosse, ice hockey, and anything equestrian. Table 2-2 shows a complete listing of the hobbies identified as social class symbols.

Race and ethnicity. Race and ethnicity were also mentioned a being affiliated with social class. Several of the African-American participants told stories of how their race played a large role in shaping their views on social class; while some of the white participants recognized the advantages yielded to them by their race. Thus, for some interviewees their thoughts on social class were not simply about race only or social class only, but on the intersection between social class and race. Interviewee I02, a black female, recalled:

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I think when I was in college and I went to one of the malls in Atlanta … and I never experienced this before even growing up in Alabama. When I got to Atlanta, one of the women followed me all throughout the store in a non-helpful kind of way, but with a look of I'm expecting you to steal something. That made me very uncomfortable. Eventually I left the store, but that was probably my first experience of it [awareness of social class differences]. It's probably more of the attachment of race and social class. I think her expectation was because my skin color looked a certain way, [the] expectation was that I would steal something. So, I was a part of a lower social class. The truth is that I was right of college and I had a well-paying job. That helped to give me some insight into what society thought of people that look like me and attaching that to a social class. [I02]

Another story, told by a white female, describes an experience during her childhood.

I remember another time – and these are all childhood experiences – we were living in Compton, California in the 60s and we were re-districted from a school that was maybe 50 percent white, 50 percent black to a school that there were seven white kids in the school counting my sister and I. And I knew even then, even though we were clearly in the minority as far as race we had an advantage. Teachers gave us advantages that I don't think all of the students got. It was like; gosh – to know that at 12 years old or 13 years old. [I11]

Another interviewee, a white female, states:

You know what; I'm a little bit of an anti-white American male power. My poor husband takes it on the cheek all of the time. I tell him he's got it easy because he's over 6 feet tall and a white man in America. He's pretty much set for life. He doesn't appreciate that statement. However, I see that to be true at least in the business environment. Whether we want to admit to it or not, there is just a lot of, I think, effort put towards, okay, well this is who should be in charge and this is who should be given things. It's almost like a bias that people don't even realize they have … I definitely see it in business. I see it. [I12]

Language. Language encompasses people's vocabulary and volume of speech. "When a person opens their mouth, I assume that there is a social class. Their language assumes a certain social class" [I04]. For example, "the higher someone is on the class spectrum, their use of the English language is more traditional" [I11]; whereas, those on the lower end of the class spectrum include the "use of more poor English, more euphemisms" [I16] and "being loud" [I06]. Another social class differentiator is a conversation (e.g., conversations about politics). That is, the conversations that people engage in and the degree to which they are informed about

world events are telling signs of their social class. Simply, HSC people are perceived as being more well-informed or worldly.

Vacations. Lastly, the ability to take vacations emerged as another indicator of social class. Moreover, vacations are seen almost exclusively as an indicator of a higher social class and include people's desire to see the world and be exposed to different cultures. HSC would include people who are "able to run off for vacation and just kinda like not [have] a care in the world" [I13]. In contrast, the LSC were described as people who are "saving up and you go to that big thing, to Disneyworld, once a year" [I12].

Other indicators. Other indicators that came out of the interviews, but did not have strong consensus were: association with like others, power, privilege, and philanthropy. Association with like others suggests that people tend to gravitate toward and define themselves in terms of the people who are from a similar social class or background. This includes the networks, clubs, groups, organizations, and associations to which a person belongs.

Regarding power, the HSC are viewed as the holders of power, which influences economic structures through voice, money, and ability to make things happen. Interviewee I02 reflects on this notion, stating:

> I think that some of my observations about social class is that it seems that the top 1 percent seems to have more of an influence on economic structures. I think the working class, the broader group of people, from my observations tend to have more power because they have the numbers. It's just the realization of how they use it and organizing it. Also, I think that they share the brunt or share the weight of some of the costs of the economy. The impoverished people, the bottom class, they just tend to have less power as far as voting and they tend to be the recipient of some of the decisions that are made on their behalf whether they are helpful for that class or not. They seem to be the most unfortunate because they seem not to have as much of a voice. [I02]

The few comments regarding privilege intersected with the observations made about access to resources. Lastly, philanthropy as a signal of social class was associated with HSC and

envisioned as people who are more philanthropic, open to volunteerism, and endeavor to give back to people who are less fortunate.

In the next section, I will close out the discussion of social indicators with a discussion of what and how social class indicators are represented in a résumé.

Social Class Résumé Indicators

In addition to capturing the interviewees' perceptions of social class indicators, I delved a little deeper by asking them how social class is signaled on a résumé. Given that the findings from this study were used to develop study 2, it was important that I assessed and gained clarity as to how social class indicators may appear on a résumé. A résumé is typically limited to a finite set of elements: personal information, an objective, education highlights, work and relevant experience, awards, honors, activities, hobbies, and skills. Hence, a résumé may include all or some combination of these sections. Thus, I asked pointed questions about personal information such as name and geography, education, hobbies, and job types to understand how these résumé section elements may signal an applicant's social class.

Applicant Name. Applicant name is important because research has shown that people make assumptions about an applicant's race based on name (e.g., Bertrand & Mullainathan, 2004), which in turn affects the outcomes of the selection process. Hence, I wanted to understand if people had similar perceptions about names when it comes to social class. Many of the interviewees acknowledged that there are clearly some names that may serve as indicators of one's social class. As Interviewee I03 stated:

> There have been a couple situations where someone may have appeared to be the best qualified on an application, and when I talked to the hiring manager as to why they did not select that person for an interview, they couldn't give me a straight answer, but I knew it was because the person had a name that they either couldn't pronounce or they associated it with someone from a lower income status or from the ghetto or that they just figured would not be a good fit for their organization. [I03]

Interestingly, many of the examples shared, regarding name as a social class indicator, were associated with "ethnic" or "racial" names, particularly for LSC persons. For example, names such as Shanequa, Jackson, Leroy, as well as Latino or Hispanic names were said to personify people of a lower social class. Other examples of LSC included names associated with luxury items (e.g., Mercedes) or those named after an alcohol (e.g., Brandi). In contrast, examples of HSC names were Michael and James (i.e., Anglo-Saxon names), Hubert (i.e., Old English name), and names ending with suffixes (e.g., the III or IV). In Table 2-3, a sampling of quotes is shown. For each interviewee, a pairing of the interviewees' views on applicant names as it pertains to both lower and higher social class is shared.

Applicant Geography. Approximately, two-thirds of the interviewees thought that geographical location as presented by an applicant's address was indicative of social class. Of these respondents, many considered the south and southeast regions of the U.S. as representative of LSC because "they typically score lower on social class, social status, and educational achievement" [I06]. This sentiment was repeated by Interviewee I16, who stated, "the southeast tends to be lower class, less educated, just because statistically that is correct." Another interviewee responded:

> You know, this is the time I'm gonna say yeah. Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Georgia. Automatic…I just associate it with lower class across the board due to the average household income, the public education system, the healthcare system, the politics. [I05]

Other LSC geographic regions mentioned were the Appalachian region as well as the mountains of Kentucky and West Virginia.

For the most part, interviewees associated regions of the north and northeast with HSC. According to Interviewee I09, "I think we tend to look more towards the north. That's where

most of your Ivy League schools are, so I think that's why [I] associate that." Metropolitan areas

such as Chicago, New York, and Boston, as well as parts of northern California resonated with

the interviewees as HSC because of the industries concentrated in these parts of the U.S.

Applicant Education. In analyzing statements about how a job applicant's education

may be indicative of social class, the findings suggest that level or amount of schooling (i.e., 2-

year vs. 4-year) and type of school (i.e., ivy league vs. public) were the predominant

differentiators. Interviewee I12 elaborates:

> I think that if you are – where you went to school could kind of define your social class.
> you can see that based on did you go to a 2-year [school] and then go off to a 4-year
> [school] to finish up your degree. Therefore, you either didn't have the grades to get into
> the 4-year in the first place, that has nothing to do with your social class, and/or you
> couldn't afford the full 4-year commitment or that post-graduate work depending upon
> where you work. You're either taking on substantial loans or you came from a good
> background that you were able to go to school and have that luxury. [I12]

Following this line of thought on the effects of educational costs, Interviewee I08 elaborates:

> You have individuals that can go to college and ones that cannot. That's really the cut
> and dry when it comes to – yes, people of lower class have opportunities to go to college,
> but the percentage is just that lower for various reasons. Income, availability, stability of
> having that support from someone outside of themselves. It's just not there as much. [I08]

Others argued that a degree in itself is a social class qualifier. Interviewee I04 explains it best:

> I believe when people have access to certain types of education that they mostly have had
> either supportive family or they're a hard worker if they typically expose themselves to
> resources that puts them in that social class, a different social class. So, I would say to
> you, No. 1, if you have a degree. That's a social class within itself. Then if you went to –
> if you have a master's degree or a doctorate or a J.D., the post-undergraduate degree.
> That's another class… Because really I feel like what the education means is exposure.
> When you have exposure, exposure gives you opportunities, and opportunities put you in
> a social class that you normally wouldn't have if you didn't – unless you were born into a
> family where there were already resources there for you. You know? [I04]

Closely related to this idea of exposure as it relates to social class and education is

looking at what type of school(s) an applicant attends (i.e., private versus public). Attending

private schools, including ivy league schools, suggests that an applicant is not from a lower

social class. "It's very well-known out in the market what an Ivy League school costs per year and what a public school would cost…It is an indicator [of social class] [I16]." As Interviewee I13 states, "you got an ivy league school listed on there. The first thing you're gonna think of is, you know, this person was maybe upper middle or upper class. Great education, great breed."

For-profit universities are perceived as a social class signal, characterizing people who attend these types of school as LSC. For instance, Interviewee I11 claims, "I have become a bricks-and-mortar snob in terms of education…Meaning that I value an education earned at a traditional university over someone who went to the University of Phoenix." Another study participant states, "I don't view a for-profit degree as highly as I would from a traditional college or university [I01]." The consensus being that the academic rigor is lacking in for-profit schools.

Applicant Job Type. As seen in the previous section on social class indicators, LSC was associated with blue-collar and pink-collar jobs; while, HSC was associated with white-collar jobs. Interviewee I11 emphasizes this point when she says, "It might be whether they have worked in banks and finance, which might be higher class; and blue-collar, meaning manufacturing and retail and restaurant business [indicate] lower class." Thus, jobs that are "lower skills and require lower education" [I06] as well as service jobs (e.g., retail and restaurant) function as indicators of LSC; whereas, jobs that require advanced education (e.g., engineering and accounting) are good indicators of HSC. An interesting take on this idea of lower level jobs as indicators of LSC called for an examination of the applicant's work history. Interviewee I16 asserts:

> You could probably argue that, let's say, that somebody had on their résumé worked all the way through high school, had to work my way through college, had to work my way up the chain, would probably be a leading indicator that they're of a lower social class than someone that didn't have any, zero, work experience until they got out of college. [I16]

Consequently, I also asked the interviewees whether an applicant having an internship was indicative of social class. There was a disparity of views on this topic. Some interviewees did not view having an internship as a strong indicator of social class arguing that internships are "somewhat expected now; irrespective of class" [I12]. Yet, others thought that the way an applicant earned his/her internship may be indicative of social class. Interviewee I02 suggests:

> I would say that someone from a lower-class family could get the same type of internship as somebody from a higher-class family…I do think the way that they go about getting it is what will determine probably more of the class. I think someone from a lower-class family probably would really have to work their butt off more likely than not to prove they were good enough to have that job. Whereas someone else who gets the same job just because their father's golf partner was able to just give it to them without an interview. [I02]

Interviewees who thought internships were indicative of social class believed that it spoke to being from a HSC. Because internships are hard to get and "there aren't as many paid internships anymore, people who can take internships typically have more financial support, whether it's parental or other" [I06]. Also, internships were associated with a "higher-level type of school" [I13], suggesting that some schools have established relationships with their communities and alumni "to make sure that they [the schools] are working with good corporations to get these kids these internships and get them that exposure [I13]."

As a note, I did inquire as to whether the number of jobs an applicant held signaled social class. Overwhelmingly, the interviewees agreed that the number of jobs did not tell them anything about a person's social class. Interviewee I13 clarified this opinion, stating that the level of jobs has more significance:

> I wouldn't say the number of jobs. I would say maybe though it would be level of those jobs would tell me something about class. I wouldn't necessarily pen or associate number of jobs to a particular class. It would have to also be associated with the different levels of jobs within that. So, if I saw somebody, say, with a bunch of jobs that were either entry level or didn't require a lot of either education or skill, I might associate that with the lower class versus if I saw a guy with "C" level types of jobs on his résumé, it wouldn't

really matter the number whether it was a lot or a few. I would automatically just be associating it with the level of position and the type of position. [I13]

Applicant Hobbies. Many of the examples given regarding hobbies mentioned on résumés that may be indicative of social class aligned with the findings from the previous section on hobbies (see Table 2-2 for a full listing). Several interviewees commented that they do not necessarily think of people from a lower social class as having a hobby. When asked *"what type of hobbies do you associate with people from a lower social class?"* Interviewee I10 replied, "I guess, I don't." In general, hobbies that are easy to access and do not require a great deal of money are viewed as more LSC hobbies. Whereas, hobbies requiring money and travel may be viewed more as HSC hobbies. For instance, Interviewee I02 stated: "If they're low class, I think hobbies are associated with what you can afford to do…But, I do think people in the higher class, like the one percent, have hobbies that are a little bit more expensive." Interviewee I11 shared a tale that equates the size of an athletic ball to social class:

> Oh – there's a funny thing floating on Facebook that directly talks about social class and the size of the athletic ball that they work with. So, basketball and football is lower social status all the way up to golf is highest and then the punch line has something to do with smaller balls. [I11]

Discussion

The purpose of this exploratory qualitative study was to identify indicators of social class for use in the development of experimental manipulations to test the influence of social class on the selection process. The study in Essay 2 manipulates social class using a résumé and a cover letter. Therefore, although the present study covered a great deal of territory regarding social class indicators, the findings suggest that the following factors can be manipulated as signals of social class: applicant name, education, background (i.e., family), associations, and hobbies. In uncovering these markers of social class, I focused on three primary areas of discussion from my

interviews: (a) how social class is defined; (b) what are the indicators of social class; and (c) how is social class signaled on a résumé.

Most of the study participants defined social class, either in part or in whole, in terms of income, education, background and affiliations, and access to resources. In accordance with the literature's conceptualization of social class as an economic hierarchy (e.g., Liu, Ali, et al., 2004; Perry & Wallace, 2013), not surprisingly, income was the most mentioned defining factor, followed closely by education. In addition, some participants strongly believed that social class is defined by one's background (e.g., being born into poverty versus wealth) as well as one's social network. The perception is that people from the same social class tend to associate with others with similar backgrounds and interests. Furthermore, the interviewees linked a person's social network affiliation to access to resources in defining social class. Along the same lines as Brown and his colleagues' (1996) definition of social class as a societal hierarchy that is segmented by power and control, the interviewees asserted that people from a higher social class have access to more resources, which gives them an advantage in influencing the laws and functioning of our democracy.

Like their definitions of social class, income, education, and resources were most frequently mentioned by the interviewees as indicators of social class. Other indicators that resonated with the participants as strong social class indicators included: material possessions, job type, work effort, appearance, geography, hobbies, race and ethnicities, hobbies, and vacations. Not surprisingly, many of these indicators are easily observed, suggesting that people tend to form their perceptions about social class based on factors that are visible to them.

Although these findings were enlightening, given the purpose of this study, I further investigated how social class indicators may be presented and interpreted on a résumé. Given

that a résumé is often the first contact point in the selection process, absent of any visible indicators, it was important to identify factors that were not dependent on physical and/or verbal observations. The findings indicated that résumé sections, such as name, education, background, associations, and hobbies may each hold information regarding the applicant's social class. For example, regarding education, a HSC person was identified as someone who attended private schools and/or ivy league universities; whereas a LSC person was identified by his/her attendance at a community college and/or public schools and universities. In the following essay, I design an experimental study in which each of the following factors are used as manipulations to test whether social class influences the selection process, specifically, likelihood to recommend for an interview and likability.

Chapter 3: The Effects of Social Class on Perceptions of Job Applicants' Suitability for Employment

Although Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits organizations from engaging in unfair practices, such as hiring, firing, and recruiting, based on race, sex, color, religion, and national origin, discrimination in the workplace persists. Both access discrimination—when members from a group are blocked from entering a job or an organization—and treatment discrimination—differences in compensation, rewards, resources, and opportunities for a group's members (Greenhaus, Parasuraman, & Wormley, 1990)—continue to be documented by researchers (e.g., Elvira & Zatzick, 2002; Goldman, Gutek, Stein, & Lewis, 2006). Much of the research on workplace discrimination has focused on racial and gender disparities (e.g., Bertrand & Mullainathan, 2004; Dovidio & Gaertner, 2000; Lyness & Heilman, 2006; Lyness & Judiesch, 2014; Maume, 1999) as well as inequities for lesbians, gays, bisexuals, and transgendered persons (e.g., Bell et al., 2011; King & Cortina, 2010; Ragins & Cornwell, 2001). Yet, little research has examined how people from disadvantaged social classes might also be targets of discrimination in the workplace.

The costs associated with discrimination and its effects can be quite varied, ranging from the financial costs of litigation to negative employee attitudes toward the organization (Goldman et al., 2006). Cox and Blake (1991) suggest that organizations that fail to attract, retain, and utilize a diverse talent pool may be competitively disadvantaged in comparison to other firms. This concept that an organization can gain a competitive advantage through diversity is not novel. In his exploration of the economics of discrimination, Becker (1957) argued that in a competitive free market, discrimination against minorities in hiring would be driven out by competing firms that successfully take advantage of diversity as a profit-gaining opportunity.

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Given the advantages of a diverse workforce for organizations, why does discrimination in the selection process still exist?

Discrimination can occur when organizations hire people based on factors that are not related to work performance (Lee, Pitesa, Thau, & Pillutla, 2015), such as stereotypes, perceptions of a marginalized group's capability, personal experiences, and years of schooling to a name a few (Rivera, 2015). Outside of discernable physical traits (e.g., sex and race), during the selection process, firms typically have limited information about the skills and abilities of job applicants, many of which are not easily directly observed. According to signaling theory, because of the time and costs associated with assessing unobservable characteristics, organizations tend to use easily observable characteristics such as race and/or gender as proxies for the capabilities that predict job performance (Spence, 1973, 2002). In addition, employers typically use information found in résumés (e.g., education level, university attended, and club/organization membership) as a means for determining which applicants are a "fit." To date, research on discriminatory hiring practices has been dominated by investigations of gender and race discrimination, while socioeconomic differences have been given scant attention (Rivera, 2015). As discrimination can be motivated by attitudes (i.e., prejudices), beliefs (i.e., stereotypes), and varying ideologies (e.g., racism, sexism) (Pager & Shepherd, 2008), this study seeks to explore inequities in the selection process fostered by social class attitudes, beliefs, and ideologies. The following section explores how social class may influence the personnel selection process in more detail.

Personnel Selection

From a sociological perspective, personnel selection is a means by which relationships between social classes and social entities are reproduced and modified (Roe, 1998). Personnel

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selection is a critical factor for any organization because it influences one of an organization's major assets, its people. Formally, personnel selection is defined as "an organization's activities aimed at choosing people for the fulfilment of jobs" (Roe, 1998, p. 5). In other words, employers select people they believe best fit a job and its requirements, often with very limited applicant information, by assessing and comparing the hiring manager's impression of the fit between a job applicant and job requirements relative to other applicants. Consequently, these fit perceptions form the basis for judging how successful an applicant is expected to be in the job (Bjerk, 2008). A good match or fit results in positive expectations of the applicant's ability to do the job; whereas, a poor match results in negative expectations of the applicant's potential to perform well (Kulik, Roberson, & Perry, 2007). In forming impressions of job candidate fit, biases and prejudices about group membership often serve as heuristics which are activated by signals or cues perceived to reflect a particular group or class of people (Kulik et al., 2007).

The present research examines how relational demographics and status characteristics influence such selection preferences. This research extends current research in several ways. The extant literature on discrimination in the selection process is largely based on observable characteristics such as race and gender. Yet, in addition to visible characteristics, invisible social characteristics such as religion, sexual orientation, occupation (Clair, Beatty, & MacLean, 2005), and socioeconomic status (S. E. Johnson, Richeson, & Finkel, 2011) are as prevalent and relevant in the workplace. Consequently, employees with invisible social identities and stigmas often find themselves weighing the benefits of revealing their stigmatized identity against the concerns of how others will perceive them (K. P. Jones & King, 2014; Ragins & Cornwell, 2001). They wrestle with the decision as to whether or not to disclose their stigmatized identity (Ragins, 2008). SES is a unique demographic such that people from lower SES backgrounds

have a higher awareness of their difference from their higher SES peers, resulting in stigma sensitivity regarding their fit and a decrease in self-regulatory strength (S. E. Johnson et al., 2011). Thus, this research contributes to the literature by examining the impact of an underexplored variable which is often thought of as less directly observable—social class—in the selection process.

To address this gap in the literature, I draw upon status characteristics theory (SCT) (Berger, Cohen, & Zelditch, 1972; Berger, Fisek, Norman, & Zelditch, 1977) and relational demography theory (RDT) (Tsui & O'Reilly, 1989) to set up competing hypotheses about the effects of social class on recommendations to move forward in the employment process. Utilizing SCT, I argue that a person's social status or class leads to behavioral expectations. I focus on the workplace context and hypothesize that, based on the SCT framework, perceptions of lower social class will lead to lower recommendations to interview than perceptions of higher social class. Drawing from the RDT framework, I test a competing hypothesis that social class similarity between an applicant and hiring manager will lead to a more favorable selection decision, and thus, hiring managers with a lower social class background will prefer applicants with a lower social class. A between-subjects experiment will be used in which participants will be shown résumés of fictitious job applicants who vary by their social class level, and will rate the applicant's likeability and their likelihood of recommending the applicants for an interview. Hence, this research addresses an understudied aspect of workplace discrimination and advances knowledge about social class in organizational settings.

Literature Review

Social class influences "whom we choose as friends, neighbors, spouses, and … new hires" (Rivera, 2015, p. 8). Research suggests that organizations frequently use an applicant's

attributes and the related stereotypes of their broader demographic groups as a means for evaluating their hiring potential (E. V. Hall, 2014) which may negatively impact disadvantaged groups. During the selection phase of the recruitment process, two basic forms of discrimination often occur: disparate impact and disparate treatment (Lindsey, King, McCausland, Jones, & Dunleavy, 2013). Disparate impact occurs when the discrimination is unintentional, such as when a selection measure is used, that unintentionally discriminates against a protected class by selecting a disproportionate number of members of the privileged group relative to the protected, less privileged group. Disparate treatment refers to intentional forms of discrimination that seek to exclude a protected group from entering the workforce or access to higher level positions (Lindsey et al., 2013). As noted earlier, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 makes it illegal for employers to engage in unlawful employment practices, such as decisions about who to hire, fire, or compensate based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. Incidentally, Title VII fails to succinctly define discrimination; yet, it articulates "what is and is not discriminatory under the statute" (Bayer, 1986, p. 775). Given that social class is not a protected group under Title VII, discriminatory practices based on a person's social class are not clearly illegal; however, these practices may result in disparate impact against protected groups when social class is correlated with other characteristics which are covered by Title VII (i.e., race or ethnicity), underscoring the practical importance of engaging in social class research. Thus, a major objective of this research is to investigate the understudied phenomenon of social class as a source of discrimination in the selection process. Specifically, I seek to address the following questions: (a) *how do a hiring manager's perceptions of an applicant's social class affect a person's employability outcomes*? and (b) *do people show preferential treatment for those they perceive as being from the same or similar social class*?

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Much research examined the relationship between race and selection outcomes (e.g., Bertrand & Mullainathan, 2004; Derous, Ryan, & Serlie, 2015; Eriksson & Lagerström, 2012), but little attention has been given to class effects. With respect to income, in the U.S. for 2014, Asians had the highest median household income of $74,297, followed by non-Hispanic Whites with a median household income of $60,256. Hispanic households and Black households trailed significantly with median incomes of $42,491 and $35,398, respectively (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015). Clearly, income and race are highly correlated. Given that measures of social class often include income metrics and the field lacks a uniform and consistent measure for social class, disentangling the effects of race and social class can be difficult (Diemer & Ali, 2009). Therefore, the proposed experiment isolates social class as an independent variable while controlling for racial effects. Although research to-date on social class effects on the selection process has been scant, recent research is helping to fill this gap. Rivera (2012a, 2012b, 2015) conducted a qualitative study focusing on the hiring process for elite students at elite universities searching for jobs at elite firms. In her research, Rivera (2015) found that students with *pedigree*, "a term that employers in elite firms used as shorthand for a job candidate's record of accomplishments" (p. 3), had a significant advantage in landing jobs at elite firms. Her work suggests that social class may lead to the *haves* continued advantage over the *haves-not*. However, more rigorous experimental work is needed to determine whether this association between social class and selection outcomes is truly causal. Moreover, her extant research is limited in its generalizability as it addresses a very narrow employment sector, elite firms. The current study stands to make a significant contribution to the field of management and human resources by seeking to demonstrate a causal relationship between social class and selection outcomes. In the following section, I articulate how both status characteristics theory and

relational demography theory inform research on social class, with an emphasis on the selection process.

Status Characteristics Theory

As with race and gender, social class in the U.S. is often associated with distinct characteristics. Categorical cues, a factor impacting the processing of social class differences, refers to a person's "position outside the group rather than directly to performance within it" (Ridgeway et al., 1985, p. 964). Categorical cues include skin color, age, and less visible signals such as behaviors and factors that are culturally affiliated with specific social groups. These cues or status characteristics each carry very different perceptions. For example, negative perceptions of the poor or lower social classes may include beliefs that they are uneducated, lazy, and socially irresponsible; whereas positive perceptions of lower social classes include that they are capable, loving, and friendly (Cozzarelli et al., 2001). Bourdieu (2010/1984) contends that members of the upper class signal their status by their style of speech, clothing, and tastes in art. For example, persons of higher social class make fewer grammatical mistakes when speaking and tend not to speak with accents. Regarding clothing, people from a higher social class focus less on ensuring they are getting value for their money and display a preference for more stylish and chic clothing. Artistically, in comparison to lower social class people, higher social class people listen to more classical music and are more likely to own a piano and buy furniture from antique dealers as opposed to department stores (Bourdieu, 2010/1984).

Status characteristic theory (Berger et al., 1972; Berger et al., 1977) posits that a target's higher status leads others to have higher expectations for that target's behavior. In the context of personnel selection, SCT suggests that when a job candidate is perceived as being higher in status, hiring managers will have higher expectations for that candidate's future job performance.

As a consequence, status characteristics influence our expectations and beliefs about people (Wagner & Berger, 1997).

A status characteristic is one that differentiates people into "social categories that are associated with differential status value (e.g., males or poor readers are less socially worthy than females or good readers) and with beliefs about the differential performance capacities or individual qualities of people in those categories (e.g., females or good readers are generally more intelligent than males or poor readers)" (Berger, Ridgeway, & Zelditch, 2002, p. 157). Categorization occurs when a person, the perceiver, encounters another person, the target, and categorizes the target into a particular group based on his or her reaction to or impression of the target as well as the target's membership in a stereotyped group (Bodenhausen & Macrae, 1998). These status characteristics can be diffuse, meaning: (a) the discriminating characteristic has no intrinsic meaning; (b) status value is culturally affiliated with the discriminating characteristic; and (c) status symbols of the attributes are associated with the discriminating characteristic (Berger et al., 1977; Berger et al., 2002). Thus, a status characteristic will have status value when cultural beliefs suggest that people possessing a particular characteristic (e.g., upper class status) are more important in society in comparison to those possessing another characteristic (e.g., working class status) (Ridgeway, 1991). As such, these diffuse or external status characteristics influence the expectations people have about another person's ability and competence, regardless of that person's true ability and competence (Lee, Pitesa, Pillutla, & Thau, 2015). Thus, when evaluating job candidates, people use differences in diffuse status characteristics to develop their impressions, expectations, and beliefs about a job candidate (Ridgeway et al., 1985).

B. Anderson, Berger, Cohen, and Zelditch (1966) argue that class distinctions based on status characteristics have several commonalities. First, depending on the distinguishing factor,

different evaluations are formed about people's class status. For example, an office worker is viewed more favorably than a shop worker; and it is perceived better to be white than black. Another shared property of social class distinctions is that membership in a class results in its members being stereotyped simply because of their class membership. Lastly, beliefs held about class groups include beliefs about abilities and attributes in addition to broad and varying conceptualizations such as morality and intellectual capacity (B. Anderson et al., 1966).

A unique feature of status beliefs is that it affords members of the advantaged or higher status groups more respect due to perceptions that they are more competent than those from lower status groups. Status then becomes a source of inequality (Ridgeway, 2014) as it creates a systemic structure of resources and power, whereby status beliefs serve as a type of social reputation—how people generally act and think about the worthiness and competence of one group in comparison to another (Ridgeway & Cornell, 2006; Ridgeway, Li, Erickson, Backor, & Tinkler, 2009). Status beliefs, in turn, are stereotyped as people make generalizations about not just the social differences between individuals engaged in an encounter, but about the worthiness and competence of entire groups of people with the same distinguishing characteristics (Ridgeway & Cornell, 2006).

Research has demonstrated that decision makers use categories and stereotypes when making selection decisions (Kulik et al., 2007). Stereotypes associated with a particular group or category can affect a hiring manager's impression of the applicant by fostering the manager's assumptions that the candidate possesses the classification's attributes (Kulik et al., 2007). Therefore, I argue that the beliefs and attitudes people associate with various levels of social class affect the hiring personnel's impressions of a job applicant, thereby influencing their decision to interview an applicant and the applicant's likability.

Hypothesis 1: An applicant whose status characteristics are perceived as indicating a

higher social class will have a greater likelihood of being recommended for an interview

in comparison to applicants perceived to be from a lower social class.

Hypothesis 2: An applicant whose status characteristics are perceived as indicating a

higher social class will be seen more likeable in comparison to applicants perceived to be

from a lower social class.

Social dominance theory attempts to explain why, as a people, we organize into group-

based hierarchies (Sidanius, Pratto, van Laar, & Levin, 2004). The theory places focus on subtle

forms of group-based oppression, such as classism, sexism, and racism, faced by people every

day because of systemic institutional (e.g., schools and organized religion) and individual

discrimination. Such discrimination and oppression exacerbates the system of inequality by

continuing to give goods such as wealth, power, and health care, to dominant groups; and

subjecting oppressed groups to more dangerous jobs, imprisonment, and premature death

(Sidanius et al., 2004). Consequently, members from dominant groups engage in more acts of

self-interest in comparison to members from less-dominant groups, creating an acceptance and

legitimation of inequality and its related behaviors. Social dominance orientation (SDO) is an

individual difference variable which refers to the "degree of preference for inequality among

social groups" (Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth, & Malle, 1994, p. 741), but research has found

status-based group differences in average SDO. For example, European Americans, a high status

ethnic group, were found to have higher levels of social dominance orientation on average as

compared to lower status ethnic groups (e.g., African-Americans, Latinos, and Hispanics)

(Levin, Sidanius, Rabinowitz, & Federico, 1998; Pratto et al., 1994). In another study examining

discrimination in the selection process, researchers found that recruiters with higher levels of

SDO were less likely to select job candidates who are members of low-status groups (e.g., White female or Black male) in comparison to those low in SDO (Umphress, Simmons, Boswell, & Triana, 2008). It follows then that the hiring manager's social dominance orientation will moderate the relationship between status characteristics and interview recommendations and likability.

Hypothesis 3: The hiring manager's social dominance orientation will moderate the relationship between an applicant's status characteristics (perceived social class) and likelihood of being recommended for an interview, such that the relationship will be stronger for hiring managers with higher SDO and weaker for hiring managers with lower SDO.

Hypothesis 4: The hiring manager's social dominance orientation will moderate the relationship between an applicant's status characteristics (perceived social class) and the applicant's likability, such that the relationship will be stronger for hiring managers with higher SDO.

Relational Demography Theory

Relational demography theory (RDT) refers to the "comparative demographic characteristics of members of dyads or groups who are in a position to engage in regular interactions" (Tsui & O'Reilly, 1989, p. 403). RDT is grounded in Byrne's (1961, 1971) similarity-attraction paradigm and social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Simply, RDT suggests that a person's demographic similarities or dissimilarities in comparison to other organization members may provide additional information about a person's attitudes and behaviors, which may relate to work outcomes.

A probable cause of relational demography is a strong attraction based on similarity in attitudes, values, and experiences (Tsui & O'Reilly, 1989). Consistent with RDT, Tsui and O'Reilly found that dissimilarity between superior and subordinate demographic characteristics—such as age, gender, race, education, company tenure and job tenure—was associated with negative consequences for subordinates. The greater the supervisor-subordinate dissimilarity, the less effective superiors perceived employees to be and the more subordinates experienced role ambiguity (Tsui & O'Reilly, 1989). RDT has been used to study the relationship between similarity in numerous demographic characteristics—race, ethnicity, gender, education, age, geographic variation (i.e., variations in attitudes across geographic regions), marital status and sexual orientation (e.g., Avery, 2003; Bal, Reiss, Rudolph, & Baltes, 2011; Carlsson & Rooth, 2012; Nadler & Kufahl, 2014; Riordan & Shore, 1997; Tsui & O'Reilly, 1989)—and hiring and recruitment outcomes. Although much of the research on RDT implies that these effects occur in the context of interpersonal interactions, Tsui, Egan, and O'Reilly (1992) assert that preferences can be expressed in the absence of social interaction.

Another important aspect of RDT is based on research on social identity theory. According to social identity theory, identities—the physical, social, psychological, and spiritual meanings a person attaches to his or herself as well as the meanings that others attribute to a person (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Gecas, 1982; Ibarra, 1999)—are shaped by people's classifications of themselves and others into social categories (e.g., organizational membership, religious affiliation, age, and social class) (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). Social classification serves two purposes: (a) it segments and orders the social environment, providing individuals with a systematic means for defining others, and (b) it enables individuals to locate or define themselves in that social environment. As a result, people tend to categorize others as being *in-*

group or *out-group* members based on the attributes that are most relevant to them (Tajfel &

Turner, 1979). Furthermore, as people tend to view themselves in a positive light, there is a

tendency to view others that belong to similar categories favorably.

Rivera (2012b) investigated the influence of cultural similarities—shared tastes,

experiences, leisure pursuits, and self-presentation styles (Bourdieu, 2010/1984)—between

employers and job candidates on hiring decisions. In a qualitative study of elite law firms, she

argued that hiring was more than just a process of skills sorting, but also a process of *cultural

matching* between candidates, evaluators, and firms. Thus, in addition to seeking competent

candidates, employers actively search for people who are culturally similar to themselves. Her

findings indicate that concerns about shared culture were highly salient to employers and often

outweighed concerns about productivity (Rivera, 2012b). Another study found that people

exhibited more liking of and preference to hire those with similar attitudes as they were

perceived as being more capable of learning the job and better able to interact with co-workers

(Peters & Terborg, 1975). Hence, I argue that within the framework of RDT, the more similar an

applicant's social class is to that of the hiring decision maker, the more favorable the selection

decision will be for the job applicant.

Hypothesis 5: The greater the similarity in social classes between the job applicant and

the hiring personnel, the greater the likelihood of being recommended for an interview.

Mediating Effect of Person-Job Fit

Person-job (PJ) fit is the fit between a person's characteristics—knowledge, skills,

abilities, needs, and values—and the characteristics of the job and tasks performed (Brkich, Jeffs,

& Carless, 2002; Jansen & Kristof-Brown, 2006; Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, & Johnson, 2005;

Vogel & Feldman, 2009). The influence of PJ fit on selection decisions has been a topic of

interest for many researchers (Cable & Judge, 1997; Higgins & Judge, 2004; Kristof-Brown, 2000). In her study examining the effect of subjective evaluations of PJ fit on the selection process, Kristof-Brown (2000) found that a recruiter's subjective perceptions about a candidate's PJ fit strongly influence hiring recommendations. Higgins and Judge (2004) found that recruiters' perceptions of PJ fit are significantly and positively related to hiring recommendations. Therefore, given the strong predictive nature of PJ fit in the selection process, I hypothesize that PJ fit will mediate the relationship between an applicant's status characteristics and intent to interview recommendations.

> *Hypothesis 6*: Perceived applicant person-job fit will mediate the relationship between an applicant's status characteristics (perceived social class) and the hiring manager's interview recommendations.

Methods

An experimental vignette methodology (EVM) was used for this study. An advantage of EVM is its ability to give researchers the capacity to manipulate and control independent variables while holding extraneous variables constant, thus improving internal and external validity. Using this methodology, participants are presented with "carefully constructed and realistic scenarios to assess dependent variables including intentions, attitudes, and behaviors" (Aguinis & Bradley, 2014, p. 2). Vignettes are typically presented in written form and require participants to make decisions and choices regarding behavioral preferences.

To test the hypotheses, a 2 (social class—lower, upper) x 2 (qualification level of applicant—moderately qualified, highly qualified) x 2 (race—white, black) between-subjects experimental vignette design was used. The independent variable social class was manipulated as high social class versus low social class; qualification level was manipulated as highly qualified

versus marginally qualified; and race was manipulated as Blacks versus Whites. With three

between-subjects independent variables (2 x 2 x 2), 8 vignettes were created for all 8 conditions.

Applicant sex was held constant across all conditions (all were male). The stimulus materials

included a job description of a fictitious entry level Training and Development Specialist

position which was constant across all 8 conditions (see Appendix D) along with a cover letter

and résumé for fictitious job applicants, which contained the manipulations and varied across 8

conditions (see Appendix E for a sample). Each participant reviewed materials for one job

applicant. To collect data on the manipulation checks, dependent variables, mediators, and

individual difference variables, a brief survey was administered to participants after they

reviewed the stimulus materials.

Pilot Studies

Prior to data collection, two pilot studies were conducted to test the social class, race, and

qualification manipulations. Twenty-four students (83.3% white and 66.7% male) from a mid-

Atlantic university in an undergraduate organizational behavior class participated in the first pilot

study. They were given a list of 24 names (e.g., "Hector Lopez", "Daniel Miller", "Darnell

Jackson", "Tremayne Robinson", "D'Angelo Hernandez", and "Cole Baker") and asked to write

what they believed the race of the person to be. The names yielding the highest congruence were

Daniel Miller (100%) for white and Tremayne Robinson (100%) for black. These names were

then tested in pilot study 2.

To assess social class, participants were given a list of 48 hobbies and activities (e.g.,

traveling, bowling, basketball, horseback riding, and reading), derived from the indicators

mentioned in the interviews conducted in Study 1 (Henderson, 2017). They were asked to

indicate the social class level of each activity on a scale of 1-5, where 1=low social class,

3=neutral, and 5=high social class. A sampling of higher social class activities was traveling, playing water polo, wine tasting, and playing the violin; whereas, lower social class activities included watching reality TV, drag racing, and basketball. The participants were also shown a list of 16 universities and colleges (e.g., Harvard University, University of Phoenix, and University of Virginia) and asked to assess the social class signaled by each. Not surprising, universities such as Harvard and Notre Dame were identified as higher social class, while schools such as DeVry University and Piedmont Community College were identified as lower social class.

Next, the students were asked to assume they were hiring for an entry level position on their team, in which all applicants majored in Management and were in their final semester of study. They were then asked to assess how well-qualified an applicant was for this entry level position, using the same list of schools to test for social class as well as a list of grade point averages (GPAs), ranging from 1.55 to 3.85. The schools believed to produce the most qualified applicants included Harvard University, University of Virginia and Northwestern University; whereas, the least qualified applicants attended ITT Technical Institute, Strayer University, and Piedmont Community College. On a scale ranging from 1 (*extremely unqualified*) to 5 (*extremely qualified*), a GPA of 3.85 ($M = 4.96$) tested as the most qualified and 2.60 ($M = 2.67$) tested as marginally qualified. Coursework and work experience were also tested for their relevance to the job position. Examples of relevant coursework include: Principles of Human Resource Management and Human Resource Analytics; while examples of relevant work experience included more than one job and a Human Resources position. Additionally, they were given a list of interests, such as president of the university's SHRM chapter, member of the university's SHRM chapter, volunteering, and study abroad, and asked to rank the interests from most

qualified to least qualified for the position. Being on the Dean's List, president of the university's SHRM chapter, and holding an office in a business fraternity ranked highest.

The results of pilot test 1 were used to formulate cover letters and résumés tested in the second pilot study. The second pilot study consisted of a fictitious job description—held constant across conditions—along with a cover letter and résumé for eight fictitious applicants, based on the 2 (race: black vs. white) x 2 (social class: low vs. high) x 2 (qualification level: marginal vs. high) design. Undergraduate students from two U.S. universities, a mid-Atlantic university ($n = 42$) and a university in the southwest ($n = 47$) were sampled. The sample was approximately 55.6% male, with 52.2% white; 6.7% black; 18.9% Hispanic/Latino; 15.6% Asian; and 6.6% other. The average age of students was 23. Most of the sample correctly identified the race of each applicant: for Blacks, the percentage correct ranged from 64.1% to 83.3% and for Whites, the percentages ranged from 77.4% to 91.4%. The average means for the higher social class manipulations were 4.00 or higher, while average means for the lower social class manipulations were 2.46 or lower. For qualification level, the means for the highly qualified résumés ranged from 4.19 to 4.32, while the marginally qualified résumés had means of 3.22 or lower. Based on these results from the pilot studies, I finalized the stimulus materials for the experiment.

Measures

Each study participant was given a brief job description of a training and development specialist entry level position, which clearly outlined the requirements and skills needed for the job, as shown in Appendix D. The job description was a shortened version of the descriptions found on the O*NET website (O*NET Online, March 2016) and the Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Outlook Handbook Business and Financial Occupations website (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014). In addition, the applicants reviewed a cover letter and résumé that reflected the

applicant's profile and varied by qualification level, social class, and race. The résumés

contained a variety of information, including education, relevant coursework, work experience,

extracurricular activities, and interests. A template of the cover letter is presented in Appendix E

and a sample of the résumés used can be found in Appendix F.

Independent Variables.

Qualification level. The applicants' qualifications were manipulated by varying work

experience, relevant coursework, major (i.e., Management with a Human Resources

concentration or General Studies), interests (e.g., president versus member of university's SHRM

chapter), and grade point average (e.g., Dipboye, Arvey, & Terpstra, 1977). Highly qualified

applicants had a grade point average of 3.85, with relevant past work experience in a human

resources department. Marginally qualified applicants had a grade point average of 2.60, with

minimal relevant work experience. As a manipulation check for qualification level, study

participants were asked, "After reading the job description, cover letter, and résumé, rate the

applicant's qualification level for this position on a scale ranging from 1 (poorly qualified) to 5

(highly qualified)."

Race. Applicant race was manipulated via the applicants' names (e.g., Bertrand &

Mullainathan, 2004; Derous et al., 2015) in addition to membership in either the university

chapter's NAACP or student government association. By manipulating race through the use of

stereotypical Black-sounding and White-sounding names, Bertrand and Mullainathan (2004)

found a significant difference in selection between Black and White applicants. Using research

on demographics by first name and last name, I derived White, Black, and Hispanic,

stereotypical names for the study manipulation (Barry & Harper, 2010; Bertrand &

Mullainathan, 2004; Word, Coleman, Nunziata, & Kominski, n.d.). Based on the results of the

pilot tests, two names were identified as most prototypical—Daniel Miller (i.e., white applicant) and Tremayne Robinson (i.e., black applicant)—and were used to manipulate race. As a manipulation check in the experiment, participants were asked, "Please indicate the race of the applicant" using the following scale: 1=White; 2=African-American/Black; 3=Hispanic; 4=Asian; 5=Other; 6=I Don't Know. Gender was held constant in the résumés. That is, only male applicants were presented in the résumés. Gender was manipulated using the applicants' names as shown in Appendix F.

Social class. The factors used to manipulate social class were identified via the interviews conducted in Study 1 (Henderson, 2017), along with exemplars of high and low social class on these factors. These factors were then pilot tested and chosen based on pilot test results. Social class was manipulated by the text included in résumés and cover letters with the following information: education (e.g., attending private schools versus public schools and/or community college); activities and interests (e.g., equestrian riding versus playing basketball); and parents occupations (e.g., law firm partners versus dishwasher/janitor). In addition, lower social class applicants were given a nickname which was listed on the résumé, (i.e., "Boone" for the white applicant and "Tre" for the black applicant). To test the manipulation of social class, participants were asked, "After reviewing the job applicant material, please indicate the applicant's social class level" using this 5-point Likert scale: 1=lower class; 2=lower middle class; 3=middle class; 4=upper middle class; 5=upper class; 6=I Don't Know.

Dependent variables.

Recommend to interview. Likelihood to recommend to interview was measured using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). The scale consisted of three statements: one item adapted from Uhlmann and Cohen's (2007) hiring evaluation scale:

"I believe the applicant would be successful as a Training and Development Specialist"; and two items adapted from Higgins and Judge (2004): "Overall, I would evaluate this candidate positively" and "I would recommend extending an interview to this applicant." The items are shown in Appendix G. The alpha coefficient is 0.85.

   Likability. Reysen's Likability Scale (Reysen, 2005) was used to measure applicant likability. The scale consisted of five items asking participants to rate their level of agreement, ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). A sample item is "I would like this person as a coworker." Items used to measure likability are shown in Appendix G. The reliability coefficient is 0.85.

   Moderator variable. Social dominance orientation was measured using the Social Dominance Orientation scale (Pratto et al., 1994) (see Appendix G). Participants were asked to rate the degree to which they had positive or negative feelings towards 16 items, using a Likert scale ranging from 1 (*extremely negative*) to 5 (*extremely positive*). Sample items include "Some groups of people are simply inferior to other groups" and "It's probably a good thing that certain groups are at the top and other groups are at the bottom." The construct has good reliability with an alpha coefficient of 0.87.

   Mediator variable. Perceived applicant person-job fit was measured using a 3-item Likert scale ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*completely*) (Kristof-Brown, 2000). Participants were asked to answer questions such as "To what degree does this applicant fit the demands of the job?" The full scale can be found in Appendix G. The reliability coefficient is 0.89.

   Control variables. Affect and social desirability were included as controls.

   Affect. As a control for bias, state affect was assessed by the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS) (Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988). PANAS is a Likert-type scale

consisting of twenty words describing various feelings and emotions, in which participants are asked to indicate the degree—ranging from 1 (*very slightly or not at all*) to 5 (*extremely*)—to which they have experienced each mood in the past few days. Sample emotions are "upset", "inspired", and "nervous". Items are shown in Appendix G. The reliabilities for positive and negative affect were α = 0.89 and α = 0.95, respectively.

Social desirability. The shortened version of the Social Desirability Scale (Reynolds, 1982) was administered to control for social desirability bias. This scale has thirteen items. Participants provide responses on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (*definitely false*) to 5 (*definitely true*). Sample items include: "It is sometimes hard for me to go on with my work if I am not encouraged" and "I am always courteous, even to people who are disagreeable." The full scale is shown in Appendix G. The alpha coefficient was 0.82.

Results

Participants

Participants were recruited from the Cint panel data. The sample population was limited to U.S. born citizens, who were age 25 or older, employed full-time and who had at least two people reporting directly to them. In total, 1,061 observations across the eight conditions were collected, in which twenty-three (2.2%) declined to participate and 595 (56.1%) failed to meet the study criteria or were omitted because they failed to pass two attention checks embedded in the survey. The total number of observations collected was 438 (~55 observations per cell). This data sample was used to test the manipulation checks. Although the race manipulation worked well in the pilot studies, a review of the data for the primary study confirmed that the race manipulation performed poorly. Of the applicants whose manipulation was a black race, only 28 out of 220 responses identified that applicant as black, while 116 identified the applicant as

white. As a result, the race manipulation was dropped from analysis, leaving a test of only a 2 x 2 matrix, social class (i.e., low vs. high) by qualification level (i.e., marginal vs. high). The race that was intended was controlled using a dummy code based on the applicants' cover letters and résumés: 1=White and 0=Black. T-tests were performed on the sample to ensure that the means for the manipulated social class (i.e., 1 = HSC and 0 = LSC) and qualification level (i.e., 1 = highly qualified and 0 = marginally qualified) groups were statistically different. The highly qualified mean score ($M = 4.21$, $SD = 0.86$) was higher than the marginally qualified mean score ($M = 3.92$, $SD = 1.05$), with a statistically significant mean difference of -0.28, 95% CI [0.90, 1.03], $t(436) = -3.09$, $p < .01$. Likewise, the mean for higher social class ($M = 3.98$, $SD = 1.08$) was higher than the lower social class mean ($M = 3.69$, $SD = 1.40$), with a statistically significant mean difference of -0.28, 95% CI [1.17, 1.34], $t(436) = -2.37$, $p < .01$.

Tests of Hypotheses

Prior to testing the assumptions of normality, but after conducting the manipulation checks, 68 observations were removed from the dataset of 438 observations, resulting in a final sample of 370. Fifty-five of the deleted observations indicated that they did not know the applicant's social class. Five observations were removed because participants reported that they were not employed full-time. The remaining eight observations were removed because the participants failed to enter the data correctly. For example, when reporting how long they had worked in their current job, instead of reporting the number of years, they input a calendar year (e.g., 2013).

The final sample of 370 participants was 57.6% male, 66.8% white, and 77.3% married. Approximately 76% of the sample had a Bachelor's degree or higher, with many participants working in human resources, executive or managerial roles, and professional occupations,

14.6%, 41.4%, and 19.5% respectively. Additionally, most of the sample (90.8%) self-identified as middle class or higher. Participants' demographics are shown in Table 3-1.

Means, standard deviations, and correlations were calculated and are shown in Table 3-2. The coefficient alphas are shown on the diagonal and ranged from .82 to .95. Social class was significantly and negatively correlated with likelihood to recommend for an interview ($r = -.13$, $p < .05$) and likeability ($r = -.12$, $p < .05$), which suggests that lower social applicants were more likely to be recommended for an interview and more likeable. Likeability was positively related to qualification level, indicating that more highly qualified applicants were perceived as more likeable ($r = .12$, $p < .05$). The control variables, positive affect, negative affect, and social desirability were each significantly correlated with likelihood to recommend for an interview: $r = .41$, $p < .01$; $r = .23$, $p < .01$; and $r = .22$, $p < .01$, respectively, as well as likeability: $r = .47$, $p < .01$; $r = .31$, $p < .01$; and $r = .26$, $p < .01$, respectively. This indicates that people experiencing more positive emotions were more likely to recommend the applicant for an interview and found the applicant to be more likeable. Likewise, people with a higher propensity to respond in a socially desirable way were more inclined to recommend the applicant for an interview and found him more likeable. Surprisingly, although the correlations were not as strong as those for positive affect, participants with more negative affect were also more likely to recommend the applicant for an interview and perceived him to be more likeable. The dummy coded race manipulation was not significantly correlated to either dependent variable.

To test hypotheses 1 and 2, a 2 x 2 MANCOVA was run with two independent variables (i.e., qualification level and social class), two dependent variables (i.e., likelihood to recommend for an interview and likeability), and four covariates (i.e., positive affect, negative affect, social desirability, and applicant race manipulation, which was dummy coded as 1 = white applicant

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and 0 = black applicant). The combined likelihood to recommend and likeability scores were used to assess the effect of social class in the selection process.

In testing for the assumptions of normality for MANCOVA, I first tested for a linear relationship between each pair of dependent variables for each cell of the design (i.e., four groups) by examining the scatterplot matrix for each. There was a linear relationship between the dependent variables, as assessed by the scatterplots. Next, I tested for multicollinearity. Ideally, the dependent variables should be moderately correlated. There was no evidence of excessive multicollinearity as the correlations for each cell ranged from 0.63 to 0.79 and fell below the threshold of 0.80. An inspection of the boxplots suggests that there were no univariate outliers in the data; but there were five multivariate outliers, as assessed by Mahalanobis distance critical value of 13.82 for two dependent variables. MANOVAs were run with and without these five observations, and there were no significant differences in the results based on whether the outliers were included. Therefore, I retained these observations for all analyses. According to the Shapiro-Wilk's test for normality, both dependent variables—likelihood to recommend for an interview and likeability—were significant for all four cells ($p < .05$), suggesting non-normality. Because MANOVA is considered to be fairly robust regarding deviations from normality with respect to Type I error (Bray & Maxwell, 1985; Hair, Tatham, Anderson, & Black, 2006), I proceeded with running the MANCOVA procedure.

A test for the assumption of equal variances and covariances was conducted using Box's M Test of Equality of Covariance Matrices. Because the test is sensitive, a conservative significance level of .01 or less is suggested (Hair et al., 2006). Using this guideline, the results of Box's M test suggest that the assumption of homogeneity of covariance matrices was not violated ($p = .04$).

The interaction effect between social class and qualification level on the combined

dependent variables was not statistically significant, $F(2, 361) = .97$, $p = .38$, Wilks' $\Lambda = .99$,

partial $\eta^2 = .005$. Because the interaction term was not significant, I then assessed the main

effects of social class and qualification level. The main effect of social class on the combined

dependent variables was statistically significant, $F(2, 361) = 4.37$, $p < .05$, Wilks' $\Lambda = .98$,

partial $\eta^2 = .02$. Although not hypothesized, a main effect of qualification level was found on the

linear combination of dependent variables, $F(2, 361) = 4.42$, $p < .0005$, Wilks' $\Lambda = .98$, partial η^2

$= .02$. These findings suggest that both social class and qualification level influence the linear

combination of likelihood of being recommended for an interview and likeability. The results are

shown in Table 3-3. Univariate tests were performed to determine where the difference in the

means occurred. Significant univariate effects for social class were obtained for likelihood to

recommend for an interview, $F(1, 362) = 7.72$, $p < .05$, partial $\eta^2 = .02$ and for likeability, $F(1,

362) = 6.63$, $p < .05$, partial $\eta^2 = .02$ as shown in Table 3-4. Next, pairwise comparisons of group

means were reviewed to see if lower social class and higher social applicants differed

significantly on the dependent variables as shown in Table 3-5. Lower social class applicants

were more likely to be recommended for an interview (0.21, 95% CI [0.06, 0.37]) than were

higher social class applicants. Similarly, lower social class applicants were viewed as more

likeable (0.17, 95% CI [0.04, 0.31]) than higher social class applicants. A statistically significant

difference was found between marginally qualified and highly applicants on likelihood to

recommend for an interview $F(1, 362) = 7.90$, $p < .05$, partial $\eta^2 = .02$ (see Table 3-4), in which

highly qualified applicants were more likely to receive an interview recommendation (0.22, 95%

CI [0.07, 0.37]) in comparison to marginally qualified applicants as shown in Table 3-5.

In addition, univariates tests were run to examine the combined group mean differences of social class and classification level on likelihood to recommend for an interview and likeability. A statistically significant difference was found between lower social class and higher social class applicants who were marginally qualified on likelihood to recommend, $F(1, 362) = 7.81$, $p < .05$, partial $\eta^2 = .02$ and on likeability, $F(1, 362) = 7.74$, $p < .05$, partial $\eta^2 = .02$. Among marginally qualified candidates, lower social class applicants were more likely to be recommended for an interview (0.30, 95% CI [0.09, 0.52]) than were higher social class applicants as demonstrated in Table 3-6. Similarly, among marginally qualified applicants, lower social class applicants were perceived as more likeable (0.26, 95% CI [0.07, 0.45]) than higher social class applicants. Also, the type of qualification (i.e., marginal versus high) had a statistically significant effect on likelihood to recommend for an interview for higher social class applicants, $F(1, 362) = 8.15$, $p < .05$, partial $\eta^2 = .02$, but not for lower social class applicants. The mean likelihood to recommend for an interview for high social class applicants who were highly qualified was 0.31, 95% CI [0.10, 0.52] greater than for high social class applicants who were marginally qualified. Thus, based on the findings of the univariate main effects for social class no support was found for hypotheses 1 and 2.

To test hypotheses 3 and 4, the moderating effect of social dominance orientation, I ran hierarchical moderated regression with the two dependent variables. The results are shown in Tables 3-7 and 3-8. For both analyses, the data was entered in four Blocks. In Block 1, all control variables were entered. The main effects were entered in Block 2, followed by the two-way interactions in Block 3, and the three-way interaction in Block 4. An examination of the predictors of likelihood to recommend for an interview suggest that both the control variables, positive affect and social desirability, uniquely predicted likelihood to recommend for interview

(see Table 3-7). Specifically, people with more positive affect ($B = .39$, $p < .05$) were more likely to recommend applicants for an interview as were those higher in social desirability ($B = .17$, $p = .02$). Model 2 indicated that social class ($B = -.22$, $p < .05$) was a unique predictor of interview recommendations, such that applicants of lower social class are more likely to be recommended for an interview. Qualification level ($B = .22$, $p < .05$) also uniquely predicted interview recommendations, such that highly qualified applicants were more likely to be recommended. The introduction of the two-way interactions in Model 3, $F(10, 359) = 13.05$, $p < .05$, showed a significant increase in R^2 of approximately 4%, resulting in 27% of the variance explained. The moderating effect of social dominance orientation on the relationship of social class with interview recommendation was significant ($B = .34$, $p < .05$). SDO also moderated the relationship of qualification level with likelihood to recommend for an interview ($B = -.31$, $p < .05$). The simple slopes of the two-way interaction are illustrated in Figures 3-1 and 3-2 per Aiken and West (1991). Figure 3-1 illustrates that participants with high social dominance orientation were more likely to recommend applicants for an interview in comparison to those with low social dominance orientation, but the effect was greater when the applicant was of a higher social class. Figure 3-2 illustrates the likelihood of high social dominance study participants recommending an applicant for an interview weakened as the qualification level increased. The introduction of the 3-way interaction term, SC x QUAL x SDO in Model 4, resulted in a significant change in R^2 ($\Delta R^2 = .01$, $p < .05$), $F(11, 358) = 12.38$, $p < .05$, and the 3-way interaction term was a unique predictor of likelihood to recommend for an interview ($B = .45$, $p < .05$). The simple slopes are depicted in Figure 3-3. Interestingly, in general, applicants perceived to be in a lower social class are more likely to be recommended for an interview for all levels of qualifications and social dominance orientation, except for when the applicant is

perceived to be highly qualified and the perceiver has a higher level of social dominance orientation. Hypothesis 3 was not supported as the interaction is in a different direction than as predicted.

Hierarchical moderated regression was again used to test the moderating effect of social dominance orientation on the relationship between social class and likeability (i.e., hypothesis 4). The results indicate that those with a higher positive affect ($B = .38$, $p < .05$) and higher in social desirability ($B = .13$, $p < .05$) perceived the applicants as more likeable, as shown in Table 3-8. Model 2 accounted for 28% of the variance explained ($\Delta R^2 = .02$, $p < .05$). Social class negatively predicted likeability ($B = -.18$, $p < .05$), indicating that as social class increased, applicants were perceived as less likeable. Qualification level ($B = .07$, $p = .30$) was not associated with ratings of likeability. In examining Model 3, $F(10, 359) = 16.07$, $p < .05$, for the moderating effect of social dominance orientation, the change in R^2 saw a small significant increase of 3% ($p < .05$). Social dominance orientation moderated the relationship between social class and likeability ($B = .24$, $p < .05$) as well as the relationship between qualification level and likeability ($B = -.25$, $p < .05$). The simple slopes of the two-way interactions were graphed per Aiken and West (1991) and are shown in Figures 3-4 and 3-5. Figure 3-4 illustrates that study participants with high social dominance orientation found the applicants to be more likeable in comparison to those with low social dominance orientation, and the effect was greater when the applicant was of a higher social class. Figure 3-5 indicates that the likeability of applicants weakened for high social dominance study participants as the qualification level increased. For likeability, the 3-way interaction term, SC x QUAL x SDO introduced in Model 4 was not significant ($B = .07$, $p = .73$) nor was the change in R^2 ($p = .17$). Hypothesis 4 was not supported as the moderating effect is in an opposite direction than what was predicted.

To test hypotheses 5, I used an interaction term to operationalize social class similarity of the participant and fictitious applicant (Riordan & Wayne, 2008). The interaction term approach examines the actual similarity between a person's demographic characteristic and that same demographic characteristic for a target. In my case, this entailed creating an interaction term by multiplying the participant's self-identified current social class (i.e., 1=lower class; 2=lower middle class; 3=middle class; 4=upper middle class; and 5=upper class) and social class manipulation for the fictitious applicant (i.e., 1=higher social class and 0=lower social class). Hierarchical regression analysis was used to examine the relationship. The first block of the regression consisted of the control variables: positive affect, negative affect, and social desirability. In Block 2, the independent and moderator variables (i.e., participant's current social class level and the fictitious applicant's social class manipulation) were entered and in the final block, the interaction term was entered. The results of the hierarchical regression are presented in Table 3-9. In examining the main effects in Block 2, participants' social class status was not a predictor of likelihood to recommend for an interview ($B = .09$, $p = .06$). However, the applicant's social class was a unique predictor ($B = -.20$, $p < .05$), indicating that the higher the fictitious applicant's social class, the less likely the applicant was to be recommended for an interview. In this model, the addition of the independent variables predicted a small significant increment in the variable of interview recommendation ($\Delta R^2 = .02$, $p = .01$), resulting in 21.5% of the total variance explained. The interaction term introduced in Model 3 was not statistically significant ($B = .04$, $p = .70$). The findings suggest that the demographic similarity between the participants' social class and the manipulated social class of the fictitious applicant was not related to the participant's likelihood to recommend the applicant for an interview. Hence, hypothesis 5 was not supported.

Next, I examined the mediating effect of person-job fit as an explanation for the relationship between social class status and interview recommendations. The Preacher and Hayes macro was used to test the significance of the total (*c*), direct (*c'*), and indirect effects (*ab*) of the independent variable (i.e., social class) and mediator variable (i.e., person-job fit) on the dependent variable (i.e., likelihood to recommend for an interview) (Preacher, Rucker, & Hayes, 2007). A major advantage of the Preacher, Rucker, and Hayes methodology is that it uses bootstrapping to estimate the sampling distribution of indirect effects which are not dependent on any assumptions about the shape of the sampling distribution. Because bootstrapping involves sampling with replacement, the confidence intervals may be slightly different each time it is performed to the same data. In contrast, the Preacher and Hayes macro allows us to form a more complete interpretation of the effects (both direct and indirect) among mediators, independent variables, and dependent variables. Using a bootstrapped sample of 10,000, the 95% bootstrapped confidence intervals indicate that a total CI [-0.36, -0.06] and direct effect CI [-0.23, -0.01] were present. However, there was not an indirect effect of social class on likelihood to recommend for an interview through person-job fit CI [-0.21, 0.02]. Hence, there was no mediation, hypothesis 6 was not supported. Table 3-10 shows the 95% bootstrapped confidence intervals.

Discussion

Social class has been understudied in the management literature and little is known about how it relates to a myriad of variables of interest to organizations, such as job satisfaction, turnover intentions, performance, and hiring practices. The purpose of this study was to contribute to the extant literature on selection practices by examining how an applicant's social class relates to hiring outcomes. Specifically, drawing from status characteristics theory, I sought

to understand whether and how perceptions of an applicant's social class affects his likelihood of moving to the interview stage of the selection process. Secondly, using relational demography theory, I tested whether applicants receive preferential treatment from people with the same social class. To answer these questions, the current study used an employee selection scenario in which the study participants acted as hiring managers.

Status characteristics theory suggests that higher status groups are more respected and favored (Ridgeway & Cornell, 2006; Ridgeway et al., 2009), consistent with the hypothesis that higher class applicants would be seen as more desirable. Yet, my findings did not support this idea. Thus, in answer to the first question, in this study people of a lower social class were more likely to be recommended for an interview or viewed as more likeable in comparison to people from a higher social class, particularly when the qualification level was marginal. These findings may be due to the nature of the sample as well as the context employed in this study. Bullock (1995) asserts that among the middle class, common stereotypes about the poor or lower class persists in which they are viewed as such as lazy, unwilling to work, and lacking interest in education (Ehrenreich, 1987; Sullivan, 1989). She argues that these stereotypes are based on the *culture of poverty* hypothesis, in which the lower class are believed to engage in a cyclical process, in which they pass "defective behaviors, values, and personality traits" (p. 124) to their children. Hence, given that the sample were working professionals who classified themselves as middle class or higher and even assuming these stereotypes hold true, the fact that I portrayed the lower social class applicant in the current study as possessing a college degree may undermine the culture of poverty hypothesis. Thus, the lower social class applicant in this study may not have been perceived as possessing the stigmatized qualities that are often associated with people

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of lower social classes (i.e., lazy, unwilling to work), given the fact that he had overcome some obstacles and obtained a college degree.

In response to the second question, the similarity between study participant's social class and the manipulated social class of the fictitious applicant was not associated with likelihood to recommend for an interview. Given that approximately half of the study sample self-identified as middle class, many of them may not have identified or found commonalities between themselves and either the lower or higher social class applicant. Furthermore, although Tsui et al. (1992) argue that the attraction between similar demographic characteristics can occur outside of social interaction, the lack of human interaction may weaken the similarity-attraction phenomenon. Moreover, because social class is so nuanced and the indicators of social class vary among people (e.g., Henderson, 2017), the social class manipulations may not have been strong enough for study participants to identify with the applicants.

An interaction between social class and social dominance orientation in predicting likelihood to recommend for an interview and likeability was found. In addition, an interactive effect of qualification level with social dominance orientation was found for both dependent variables. People with a high social dominance orientation tended to view applicants more favorably in general and were more likely to recommend them for an interview in comparison to low social dominance oriented people. However, this effect was weakened for low social class applicants. In addition, marginally qualified applicants were perceived as more likeable and likely to be recommended for an interview by people with high social dominance orientation in comparison to low social dominance orientation, yet, the reverse holds for highly qualified applicants. Because SDO focuses on the factors that contribute to group-based oppression (Sidanius et al., 2004), people with a low social dominance orientation have a more egalitarian

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view of the world. Hence, they may have justly and without bias made their assessment of the applicants solely based on their qualifications, resulting in higher likelihood to recommend for an interview and greater likeability for the highly qualified applicants. Moreover, lower social class applicants were more likely to be recommended for an interview in comparison to higher social class applicants except when the applicant was highly qualified and the recommender was high in social dominance orientation, in which case the effect was reversed. This suggest that social class may very well be a source of inequality regarding hiring outcomes (Ridgeway, 2014); but, in the current study the inequity sometimes occurred in a way that lower social class people were favored. Although this is counter to what I hypothesized, this is a positive finding in that it may indicate that lower social class people with a college education are not as disadvantaged in the selection process for many entry level jobs requiring a college degree as one might think, especially when decision makers are low on social dominance orientation. Instead, it appears that when considering candidates who are marginally qualified, hiring managers may be more receptive to people from disadvantaged backgrounds over the highly privileged. This may reflect the fact that achieving even a marginal qualification level suggests an applicant from a low social class has the motivation and ability to better his situation, in spite of having few advantages. In contrast, when an applicant from a high social class background is marginally qualified, this person may be perceived as wasting his privilege rather than making the most of it. It must be noted that given that this was a controlled experiment, these findings are limited to the context of the study, so generalizability is cautioned.

Lastly, social class did uniquely predict likelihood to recommend for an interview, however, person-job fit did not mediate the relationship. Although prior research has found a strong influence of person-job fit on hiring recommendations (e.g., Higgins & Judge, 2004;

Kristof-Brown, 2000), in this study sample person-job fit does not help explain the relationship between social class and likelihood to recommend for an interview.

Practical Implications

A surprising and promising finding was that people from a lower social class were more likeable and likely to be recommended for an interview, particularly in instances where the person of a low social class is deemed to be marginally qualified. This finding may be indicative of the presence of prosocial behaviors, positive social acts that maintain other's well-being and integrity (Brief & Motowidlo, 1986; McNeely & Meglino, 1994) in the selection process, specifically as it relates to social class. Study applicants' preference for lower social class applicants may suggest that people root for the underdog, and may be more likely to give a person from a disadvantaged background— relative to those from more privilege—a chance to grow into a job, especially when that person demonstrates tenacity, self-efficacy, and resilience in an effort to achieve their piece of the American dream. For instance, even though I manipulated qualification level so that one group would be perceived as more highly qualified than the other, all applicants had earned a bachelor's degree and had some work experience. These findings suggest that when people of a lower social class are perceived as defying the odds and doing the hard work required to improve their circumstances, hiring managers may be more willing to give them an opportunity. This was also reflected in qualitative research findings. For example, when Henderson (2017) asked interviewees if social class influenced their hiring decisions, an interviewee stated:

> So, if I see a person that is qualified, and I see another person that is equally as qualified, and if maybe I saw them in two different social classes, one lower, one higher, I would tend to lean toward the one in the lower social class, feeling that we could help this person, you know, get him a good job and maybe get him to that next level, help him or her with their family. As long as I didn't see it as a potential deterrent. … All things

equal, you know, I would lean toward, and it would influence me to lean toward the person in the lower class. (Henderson, 2017)

Thus, being a person of lower social class may not be detrimental to a person's work life and future success if that person has demonstrated a certain level of qualification. Hence, as a society, it is imperative that all Americans work together to ensure that all people, particularly those from a lower social class are given access to quality resources, such as education, so that they may develop the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to fairly compete with those from a higher social class.

In addition, the moderating effect of social dominance orientation suggests that organizations should seek to gain a greater awareness and understanding of how implicit biases influence the selection process. For example, people with high social dominance orientation may subscribe to the stereotypes that lower social class people are lazy, incompetent, and lacking intelligence (Cozzarelli et al., 2001) and higher social class people are hard workers who possess strong leadership attributions (Bourdieu, 2010/1984; Lott & Bullock, 2007). However, some candidates of lower social class may make great employees because they have had to learn skills such as tenacity, resilience, and optimism simply to survive, but they are overlooked because of these biases. Likewise, people with low social dominance orientation may believe that higher social class people have always had things handed to them and lack the skills necessary to perform well in the workforce. For example, when Henderson (2017) asked interviewees to describe someone who personifies higher social class, an interviewee described a colleague as follows:

> There's a colleague of mine who happened to have been at school at some of the best schools in the country, both high school and then under and upper schools. Just he has always been surrounded with a level of academic or professional celebrities, so he doesn't know any different. That is his social class. Interestingly enough, he is probably one of the least motivated people I know. It's so frustrating because you see all of this. I step

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back and look and think what a waste. Very unmotivated professionally. However, has a very different perception of himself. I think things in life were given to him pretty freely and he's probably had a lot of, I think, natural capabilities. However, didn't really push himself to strive for anything other than mediocre. Definitely likes to move on to the next thing if something gets a little too hard. I find it very interesting. He doesn't have to work hard, so he doesn't work hard. (Henderson, 2017)

Hence, views such as this may result in unfavorable consequences for people of higher social class in the hiring process, especially when they do not demonstrate making the most of their privilege by becoming highly qualified.

Thus, organizations must continue to look beyond demographic variables such as social class when hiring employees as there are no absolutes in the behaviors, attitudes, and beliefs for the various social class levels. Hence, to ensure that organizations are being fair and equitable in the hiring process, organizations should engage in structured interviews, which may help to minimize social class biases or prejudices, and are better predictors of actual on-the-job performance (e.g., Campion, Palmer, & Campion, 1997; McCarthy, Van Iddekinge, & Campion, 2010; Schmidt & Hunter, 1998).

Limitations and Future Research

A limitation of this research is the use of an experimental design, which is a tightly controlled methodology for conducting research. Although I manipulated, qualification level, and social class, with gender held constant, and affect and social desirability were controlled, the race manipulation failed. Additionally, experimental designs create fabricated scenarios that may fail to capture behavior as it would manifest in the real world, given one often cannot capture the full complexity of real world hiring situations. For instance, while the current study tapped into the reactions of a single person to a fictitious applicant, in real world hiring situations hiring managers would often have access to a wider array of information on applicants from multiple in-person meetings, and hiring decisions would often involve input from multiple parties rather

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than the judgment of single person. Despite this, the use of a controlled environment in an experimental design with randomization allows one to draw causal inferences which are not possible with correlational approaches (Spector, 1981), which can outweigh the limitations of an artificial situation.

It must be noted that manipulations are only beneficial to experimental designs if they effectively convey the intended variable. Thus, a major limitation of this study was the lack of support for the race manipulation. Though this manipulation tested well in the pilot studies, it failed to work in the experiment. One reason may be that for the second pilot study, each participant reviewed all eight cover letters and résumés (i.e., a within-subjects approach). Consequently, the manipulations for race as well as social class were much easier to discern given contrast effects between multiple résumés. In the primary study, when participants were presented with a single cover letter and résumé, the race manipulation was not as apparent to them. In addition, study participants may have made inferences about the race of the applicant, but chose to ignore it. For instance, although I did not have a comments section for the race manipulation check question, one respondent stated that "race does not matter" regarding the hiring process in the "Other, please specify" text box. Hence, it may be that some hiring managers make a conscious effort to exclude race from their hiring decisions or wish to give the impression that they are not considering race in the selection process. To address this limitation and move this research forward, a stronger race manipulation will need to be devised. Perhaps the addition of a photo with the application material (e.g., by providing access to a linked in profile) will help to make the manipulation more salient. In addition, although the sample statistics for race showed that the sample was representative of the racial groups in the U.S. (U.S.

Census Bureau, 2017), perhaps a more diverse sample should be considered for future studies as the majority of the participants were white.

Another limitation was the strength of the social class manipulation. Although, the t-test suggested that there was a significant difference on the manipulation check item for the high and low social class groups, the results indicated central tendency bias (i.e., middle class), particularly for the lower social class manipulation. Kelley and Evans (1995) found that many Americans, regardless of objective factors such as education and occupation, tend to self-identify as middle class, which may partially explain this finding. Although the cover letter was included to help strengthen the social class manipulation, it relied heavily on the parents' occupations and the types of schools attended (e.g., private versus public) in the applicant's formative years. Perhaps, even when a person's family background suggested a lower class, the fact that the fictitious applicant had earned a college degree suggested that he was no longer among the ranks of a lower social class. In the context of this study, it may have been more appropriate for the manipulation check to ask about the applicant's social class of origin (i.e., his parents' social class) as some study participants may have viewed the applicant's social class and that of his parents' as two distinct entities. For example, in the LSC manipulation the father worked two jobs as a janitor and a dishwasher, but the applicant had recently earned his Bachelor's degree, which may have been perceived as upward social class mobility.

Lastly, I did not define social class for the study participants. As evidenced by the literature, social class lacks a universal definition (e.g., Bourdieu, 1987; Liu, Ali, et al., 2004; Perry & Wallace, 2013). Hence, social class may hold different meanings for various study participants. Future research should consider providing the study participants with a definition of social class for consistency.

Conclusion

This research sought to bring the demographic variable social class to the forefront in management research by attempting to gain an understanding and appreciation for the role that social class plays in the selection process. The results of this study illustrate the difficulty of trying to measure social class. Considering most of the hypotheses did not pan out, the results from this study sample are promising for LSC people in that they are not being unfairly disadvantaged in the hiring process as it relates to this study's context. I believe this study is a good first step in trying to unveil the complexity of social class and how it relates to the management discipline. Next steps will be to work through the limitations mentioned and improve the racial and social class manipulations for subsequent testing.

Chapter 4: Self-Perceptions of Social Class and Career Success: A Bi-directional Analysis

Abstract

This research examines the relationship between self-perceptions of social class with objective and subjective aspects of career success. A bi-directional relationship with a positive feedback loop was hypothesized to explain the relationship between social class and perceptions of one's career success and career outcomes. Using social identity theory, I argue that career success predicts self-perceptions of current social class (i.e., how we see ourselves—extant self, how we would like to see ourselves—desired self, and how we show ourselves to others—presenting self). Using social cognitive theory, I posit that self-perceptions of social class background predicts both objective and subjective aspects of career success.

In the current research, I examine the relationship between subjective social class and career success. Like race, class is socially constructed (Liu, Soleck, et al., 2004) and reflects the inequality inherent in the social systems that surround us (Ridgeway & Cornell, 2006; Weber, 1958). Unlike race, social class is malleable in that people can move from one social class status to another. However, in spite of the dynamic nature of this sociodemographic construct, many researchers continue to approach social class as a "static and unchanging variable" (Bullock & Limbert, 2003, pp. 694-695).

Many Americans aspire to be successful, hoping to achieve the American dream. According to the tenets of success as defined by American society, success is achieved through individually controlled behaviors and traits and is typically defined as having a high income, a high-status job, and economic security (Hochschild, 1995). Such indicators of career success are often also perceived to be associated with social class. For instance, extrinsic career success, which is measured in terms of salary and number of promotions, refers to a job's objectively observable outcomes. Intrinsic career success, which is measured by career satisfaction, refers to a job's inherent factors and is dependent on a person's subjective evaluation of the degree to which he/she meets career goals (Judge, Cable, Boudreau, & Bretz, 1995; Seibert & Kraimer, 2001). Similarly, objective social class is often defined by income, education, and occupation (Liu, Ali, et al., 2004); whereas, subjective measures of social class most often use a person's subjective evaluation of his/her rank within the social hierarchy (Kraus & Keltner, 2013; Kraus, Tan, & Tannenbaum, 2013; Ridgeway & Cornell, 2006). Hence, one must ask, to what extent are social class and career success related? This research attempts to answer that question.

Within the management literature, diversity research has traditionally focused on observable demographic characteristics, such as age, race, and sex, whereas factors like social

class have been relatively unexamined. Research on the relationships of these observable demographic factors and career success is abundant, with numerous studies examining how race (e.g., Alfred, 2001; Ancis & Phillips, 1996; Evans & Cokley, 2008) and gender (e.g., Abele, 2003; P. M. Johnson, 2010; O'Neil, Bilimoria, & Saatcioglu, 2004; Tsui & Gutek, 1984) relate to career outcomes. Social class may be absent from the literature because, unlike race and gender, which are static constructs that are easily defined and measured, social class lacks a universally accepted definition, which contributes to issues with its measurement and inconsistencies in the research. Also, much of the extant social class literature falls within the realms of sociology and social psychology; whereas, research on career success is largely housed in the management discipline. The current research contributes to the management literature by examining social class as it relates to workplace outcomes, specifically focusing on how it relates to career success. Hence, I empirically test the temporal relationship between subjective measures of social class and career success over a 3-month period. To date, to my knowledge, this research is the first to investigate the relationship between social class, specifically, subjective social class and career success.

Literature Review

Subjective Social Class

Traditionally, social class has been measured with objective indicators—occupational position, education, and/or income—of socioeconomic status (SES) (Kraus, Piff, & Keltner, 2009; Oakes & Rossi, 2003). Researchers interested in objective social class typically examine these indicators in isolation or in some combination (Bullock & Limbert, 2003). However, the use of objective indicators in social class research is not without its critics. One criticism is the uncertainty in how these SES metrics combine into a single measure of social class. Also, there

is a lack of consistency in the use of all three of these objective indices as some researchers use other indicators such as power and prestige to measure social class. Hence, social class lacks a coherent and universal conceptualization and measurement. Another factor plaguing social class research is problems with accumulating research examining background metrics (i.e., parent's occupation, education, and income) and current metrics (i.e., participant's occupation, education, and income), which has led to ambiguous findings in the extant literature regarding the effects of social class differences on career outcomes. More specifically, research that uses background SES metrics emphasizes the developmental effects of social class on career outcomes; whereas, research using current SES metrics focuses on the contextual effects of social class on current career behavior and its associated outcomes (Brown et al., 1996; Kraus et al., 2009). Lastly, in their review of social class and work behavior, Brown et al. (1996) found that measures of social class were often used as control variables and investigated as an afterthought, culminating in exploratory research as opposed to explanatory research. Consequently, our understanding of the effects of social class, particularly as they relate to career-related outcomes, is not well-developed. In response to these concerns, more researchers are beginning to incorporate subjective measures of social class into their research (e.g., Adler, Epel, Castellazzo, & Ickovics, 2000; C. Anderson, Kraus, Galinsky, & Keltner, 2012; Brown-Iannuzzi, Lundberg, Kay, & Payne, 2015; Kraus & Keltner, 2009; Operario, Adler, & Williams, 2004; Singh-Manoux, Marmot, & Adler, 2005).

Unlike objective measures of social class, subjective SES measures assess a person's perceived social class rank in relation to others in the social hierarchy. These measures consist of an evaluative ranking, in which social class is characterized by the belief that one class or group is held in higher esteem and is more socially important than others (Ridgeway & Cornell, 2006).

For instance, a person may be asked to identify the social class to which he or she belongs (e.g., lower, working, middle, or upper class) by ranking his or her social class in comparison to others.

One of the first researchers to study subjective social class was Davis (1956), who attempted to develop an instrument for measuring subjective status, "a person's belief about his location in a status order" (p. 154), using status symbols (i.e., photographs of contemporary American living rooms that represented a broad range of social class). Using a sample of 129 Cambridge, Massachusetts housewives, he grouped the women based on their age and their husband's occupations. Each woman was presented with twenty-four photographs and asked to sort the pictures into four piles based on their perceptions of the social standing of the people living in the homes pictured. They were then asked to choose a pile from the four that was closest to their social standing and to further sort the pile into two: (a) those higher than themselves in social standing and (b) those lower than themselves in social standing. He did not develop a measure of social status per se, but by using the women's evaluations of the pictures, he was able to isolate their perceptions of prestige, which he argued is an aspect of social status. Furthermore, by having the women create piles of pictures representing those below and above them, he was able to demonstrate that a person's location in the social hierarchy is largely dependent on how they perceive themselves in relation to others (Davis, 1956).

Now, almost forty years later, sociologists and health researchers have begun to study subjective social class more intensely. These researchers primarily focus on the factors that influence self-perceptions of social class as well as its consequences (e.g., Adler et al., 1994; Adler, Boyce, Chesney, Folkman, & Syme, 1993; Adler et al., 2000; Oakes & Rossi, 2003; Operario et al., 2004; Singh-Manoux, Adler, & Marmot, 2003). For example, in the health

domain, research has found that people's subjective beliefs about their social class had a stronger

relationship with overall health than objective indicators (Adler et al., 2000). Adler and her

colleagues (2000) also found that a composite measure of objective SES using income,

education, and occupation was more strongly related to subjective SES than was each objective

measure separately, suggesting that self-perceptions of social class are driven by all three indices

of objective class. In other research, Singh-Manoux et al. (2003) conducted a study with two

primary purposes: (a) to understand the predictive role of subjective status on health outcomes

(i.e., angina, diabetes, respiratory illness, perceived general health, and depression) and (b) to

understand the factors people use in determining their subjective social status. They found that a

person's self-assessment of his/her social status, using a one-item measure of subjective social

status, was a strong predictor of health outcomes. They also found a high degree of correlation

between objective measures of SES (i.e., occupation, income, and education) and subjective

status was found, indicating that people primarily use socioeconomic factors when evaluating

their subjective social status. Building on this research, Singh-Manoux and his colleagues (2005)

sought to understand which is better at predicting health outcomes, objective measures of SES or

subjective status. Results indicated that although both were predictive of health outcomes, when

entered simultaneously as independent variables, only subjective social status remained

significantly related to health outcomes and changes in health status over time. Taken together,

these findings support the study of subjective social class as a unique construct.

Career Success

Career success is defined as "the positive psychological or work related outcomes or

achievements one has accumulated as a result of one's work experiences" (Judge et al., 1995, p.

486), and includes two categories: (a) objective or extrinsic and (b) subjective or intrinsic. Career

success has been operationalized by a variety of metrics, ranging from number of job promotions to personal well-being (Feldman & Ng, 2007; Ng, Eby, Sorensen, & Feldman, 2005).

Objective career success refers to observable factors, such as pay raises and number of promotions (Feldman & Ng, 2007; D. T. Hall, Lee, Kossek, & Las Heras, 2012; Judge et al., 1995; Seibert, Kraimer, & Liden, 2001). Thus, the more extrinsic rewards people acquire over the course of their career, the more objective career success they are perceived to have. In contrast, subjective career success is intrinsically-driven, defined by how people gauge their achievements as it relates to their job and occupation. Career satisfaction, organizational commitment (Judge et al., 1995), job satisfaction (Feldman & Ng, 2007; D. T. Hall et al., 2012), and human capital value (Stumpf & Tymon, 2012) are a few of the metrics used to measure subjective career success.

In a review of the existing literature on career success, thirty-seven percent (25 out of 68) of the articles explored the interdependence between objective and subjective career success (Arthur, Khapova, & Wilderom, 2005). Studies exploring objective career success as an antecedent of subjective career success found that people's interpretation of their career success is predicted by factors such as income, job level, and/or autonomy. Conversely, research that examined subjective variables as predictors of objective career success was primarily focused on psychological factors such as personality, behaviors, and attitudes. In other research, Ng et al. (2005) conducted a meta-analysis that examined the antecedents of both objective and subjective career success. They identified four predictors: (a) human capital (e.g., educational level, work experience, and political skills); (b) organizational sponsorship (e.g., supervisor support, training and skill development, and organizational resources); (c) socio-demographic status (e.g., age, race, gender, and marital status); and (d) stable individual differences (e.g., locus of control,

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proactivity, and conscientiousness). Noticeably absent from the literature was the sociodemographic construct, social class.

Hence, in the current study I expand current knowledge about career success by examining its relationship with social class. Utilizing a sociocultural framework, I develop hypotheses that test the temporal relationship between career success, both objective and subjective, with subjective social class.

Theory and Hypothesis Development

A sociocultural context is "a socially and historically constructed environment that contains a set of culture-specific ideas, practices, and institutions" (Stephens & Townsend, 2013, p. 126). Social class distinctions are largely based on people's social and cultural environments, which include the resources, ideologies, and institutions to which a person is exposed. Hence, people's unique sociocultural context explains the differences in their social ranking perceptions and hierarchies. Simply, a person's sociocultural context informs who he/she is and how he/she feels, thinks, and acts (Stephens & Townsend, 2013).

The literature on social class disparities is typically framed under one of two models of behavior, the individual model and the structural model (Stephens, Markus, & Fryberg, 2012). The individual model suggests that a person's characteristics—traits, skills, and abilities—are the driving force that guide behavior. These individual characteristics can be the fixed, innate attributes of a person or they can be learned as people interact with their environment (e.g., language skills). As an example, utilizing the individual model, research on inequality suggests that a characteristic such as low self-efficacy may result in behaviors that contribute to social class disparities (Stephens et al., 2012). By contrast, the structural model of behavior maintains that structural conditions (i.e., access to resources) shape behavior indirectly as the self

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materializes within a given situation (Stephens et al., 2012). To illustrate, schools in neighborhoods that lack adequate resources or underpay their teachers relative to well-funded, properly resourced schools see more student disengagement, which further exacerbates the inequities of social class. In short, the degree to which a person has access to resources can greatly deepen the divide in the lives and experiences of those from different social classes.

Building on these models of behavior, Stephens and her colleagues (2012) proposed the sociocultural self model of behavior, which integrates these two approaches by taking into consideration the interdependent effect of individual characteristics and structural conditions on behavior. A critical aspect of the model is *mutual constitution*. Mutual constitution explains how psychological processes, structures, collective meanings, and practices shape each other (Markus & Kitayama, 2003, p. 282). More specifically, mutual constitution suggests that the structures, (i.e., the material resources associated with social hierarchy position and environmental conditions) which constitute the sociocultural contexts (i.e., cultural specific meanings, practices, and institutions) in which people live, shape their actions and psychological tendencies (e.g., perceived control, emotion, attention). In turn, as individuals interact with these sociocultural contexts, they perpetuate or reinforce the structures of these contexts (Markus & Kitayama, 2003, 2010; Stephens et al., 2012). Moreover, the sociocultural perspective takes into consideration how the experiences of a given social class promote culture-specific self-identities and norms of behavior (Stephens & Townsend, 2013). For instance, people from upper class backgrounds, in order to maintain their social class hierarchy, may create barriers to keep out and alienate people that do not belong as they have been socialized to believe that certain domains belong only to them (Ostrove, 2003). In another example, parents from a lower class may teach their children to know their place in the social hierarchy and engage in more altruistic rather than

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agentic behaviors (Stephens et al., 2012). In an ethnographic study including both white and black children, Lareau (2002) found that middle and upper class parents tended to engage their children in extracurricular activities and reasoning in order to nurture their talents; whereas, lower class parents opted for a parenting style that fostered natural growth and tended to use directives instead of reasoning.

In sum, individual and structural conditions "serve to guide people's behavior by systematically shaping how people construe situations" (Stephens et al., 2012, p. 723). Thus, the sociocultural self model of behavior explains: (a) how the interdependent nature of individual and structural conditions influence behavior and (b) how both individual and structural conditions influence our interpretations of a given situation and shape a person's identity.

Social Identity Theory

Social identity theory (SIT) purports that people group themselves and others into various social classifications defined by representative characteristics of the group's members (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). According to SIT, people "identify with social categories partly to enhance self-esteem (Ashforth & Mael, 1989, p. 22)." Ashforth and Mael (1989) argue that this categorization of self and others is largely dependent on a person's comparison of self in relation to others in different categories. This categorization process serves two purposes: (a) it allows people to segment and order their social environments, which gives people the means for defining others, and (b) it allows people to define and identify themselves within their social environment.

In early research on social identity, Rosenberg (1979) argued that the groups, statuses, and categories to which a person belongs "constitute the individual's social identity" (p. 10). He identified six categories of social identity: (a) social statuses—universal bases of social classification and identity in all societies, such as sex, age, family status, stratification position,

and occupation; (b) membership groups—societal divisions based on voluntary association, similar beliefs (e.g., religious groups, interest groups), shared cultures (e.g., French, Italian, etc.), and socially defined categories (e.g., race—White, Black, or Asian); (c) labels (e.g., alcoholic, drug addict, criminal); (d) derived statuses—classifications derived from other statuses, memberships, or labels; (e) social types—classifications based on interests, attitudes, characteristics, or habits; and (f) personal identity—assignment of a unique label, such as name. Thus, for a person to develop their social identity, he/she must be aware of the groups to which he/she belongs as well as the group's meaning and symbolization in the larger society. Simply, people must be conscious of their categorizations in developing their social identity.

According to Rosenberg (1953), class consciousness is an "individual's psychological perception of his own position in the class structure" (p. 23). As such, class consciousness is required as people work to understand how their standing within the social hierarchy informs their identity. Thus, developing a social identity with a class consciousness requires people to be cognizant of:

1. Identifying themselves as a member of their corresponding class based on objective measures;

2. Feeling united with people in the same objective status; and

3. Separating themselves from people in a dissimilar objective status (Rosenberg, 1953, p. 23).

In other words, people must be aware of their objective measures of social class, that is, their economic and social positions within their sociocultural environments when developing their social identity and their self-perceptions of social class. Interestingly, Rosenberg (1953) argued that these same economic and social factors can also distort a person's self-perception of social

class. For instance, people whose objective social class position declines will tend to identify with their past self-image of social class; while those who strive to move from a lower class to a higher class position will more closely identify with their future self-image of social class (Rosenberg, 1953).

To my knowledge, this study represents the first study to explore the relationship between subjective social class and career success. As noted earlier, the existing literature on objective and subjective social class and career success is scant. Early research on social class explored the relationship between both objective and subjective social class and self-esteem, in which they found a moderately stronger positive association for adults in comparison to children, suggesting that social class is more salient for adults (Rosenberg & Pearlin, 1978). The reason being that adults are more likely to perceive their world in terms of their social class status and will be more "alert and sensitive to [their] own and others' social rank" (Rosenberg & Pearlin, 1978, p. 68). Another study investigating the effect of objective social class on self-evaluations (i.e., self-worth, self-efficacy, and self-esteem) found that the effects of social class on self-esteem were largely mediated by occupational conditions such as complexity of work and control over one's job (Gecas & Seff, 1989).

Moreover, an assortment of research has been conducted examining the influence of elements of the self-concept (e.g., self-esteem and self-efficacy) on career success. For instance, Kammeyer-Mueller and his colleagues (2008) performed a 7-year cross-lagged study that examined the bi-directional relationship between objective career success (i.e., education, income, and occupational prestige) and self-esteem. They found that self-esteem was positively related to occupational prestige and income over time; however, no support was found for the reciprocal relationship as self-esteem remained stable (i.e., no temporal effect of career success

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on self-esteem was found). In a longitudinal study spanning nine years, Spurk and Abele (2014) found support for a positive feedback loop between self-efficacy and career success, indicating interdependence.

D. T. Hall and Chandler (2005) argue that "an individual's satisfaction and identity (both subjective measures) are both outcomes of the perception associated with the individual's rank with a company hierarchy or income" (p. 156). Recall, SIT suggests that people categorize themselves based on their perceived similarity to others (Hogg & Terry, 2000). Thus, people self-classify their social class based on perceptions of where they fall in the hierarchy of their sociocultural environment relative to others. Likewise, as people assess their career success in relation to others in their sociocultural context, these assessments form the basis for their perceptions of their social class status. Thus, I hypothesize that a person's career success at Time 1 will be positively and temporally related to social class self-perceptions at Time 2.

Hypothesis 1a: Objective career success (i.e., pay and promotions) will be positively related to subjective social class as measured by self-perceptions of social class rank three months later.

Hypothesis 1b: Subjective career success (i.e., career satisfaction) will be positively related to subjective social class as measured by self-perceptions of social class rank three months later.

Heslin (2005) asserts that measures of subjective career success may be bounded by the various meanings people apply to career success. In the same vain, Ng et al. (2005) cautioned that a failure to consider people's dispositions in predicting subjective career success may result in an "incomplete understanding" (p. 396) of subjective career success. By contrast, measures of objective career success (e.g., pay and number of promotions) are more tangible and indicative

of a person's competency and self-worth (Ng et al., 2005). Thus, in forming their self-perceptions of social class in relation to others, people are more likely to use objective factors such as material goods, cultural capital, and social networks instead of a less discernible factors such as career satisfaction. Hence, because objective measures of career success are more tangible, objective career success will be more salient and have a stronger relationship with subjective social class in comparison to subjective career success.

Hypothesis 1c: Objective career success will have a stronger relationship with subjective social class than will subjective career success with subjective social class.

Social Cognitive Theory

In seeking to understand behaviors, researchers argued that behavior was a function of the person and his/her environment, which suggest that behavior is largely determined by internal causes or forces (e.g., needs and drives) and environmental influences. Bandura (1969, 1971, 1986) argued that a missing component of this behavioral theory was the cognitive functioning of humans. Hence, he developed the social cognitive theory (SCT) (Bandura, 1986), which is a model of reciprocal causation that examines the relationships among behavior, cognitive and personal factors, and environmental influences. SCT argues that a person's behavior is affected by what he/she thinks, believes, and feels (Bandura, 1986, 1989). In sum, people are in control of their own motivators, behaviors, and development. For instance, SCT proposes that human expectations, self-perceptions, and beliefs direct our behaviors. In turn, our expectations, beliefs, and self-perceptions are influenced by our environments via "modeling, instruction, and social persuasion" (Bandura, 1989, p. 3).

Because humans are thinking beings, Bandura (1989) asserts that there are five basic human capabilities through which SCT operates. In short, these five capabilities guide the ways in which people initiate, regulate, and maintain their behavior. They are as follows:

1. Symbolizing—people process visual experiences that serve as guides for future actions;

2. Vicarious (observational) learning—people learn by observing the performance and consequences of others' actions;

3. Forethought—people plan their actions, anticipate consequences, and determine desired level of performance;

4. Self-regulatory—people control their actions by setting internal standards and evaluating their performance against the standards; and

5. Self-reflective—people reflect on their actions and determine how strongly they can accomplish the task at hand (Bandura, 1986, 1989; Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998).

According to the vicarious learning capacity, humans are cognitive beings who learn in one of two ways: (a) direct experience and (b) modeling (Bandura, 1971, 1989). Learning by direct experience suggests that a person's behavior is largely determined by the consequences that follow an action. That is, based on prior experiences, people come to learn that certain actions or behaviors will (a) reward them, (b) have no effect, or (c) punish them. Hence, the anticipated consequences of a person's actions become the drivers of his/her behavior (Bandura, 1971). Learning by modeling, on the other hand, suggests that most behaviors that people display are "learned, either deliberately or inadvertently, through the influence of example" (Bandura, 1971, p. 5), which results in "symbolic representations of modeled activities" (Bandura, 1971, p. 6). Learning by modeling works through four processes: (a) attention—a person must pay heed

to the features of the model's behavior; (b) retention—a person retains the modeled behavior for the long term; (c) reproduction—using the symbolic representations as a guide, the behavior is reproduced depending on the acquisition of required skills; and (d) motivation and reinforcement—learned behaviors are activated into performance dependent on positive incentives (Bandura, 1971).

Self-efficacy. Self-efficacy, which stems from the capacity of self-reflection, is a central component of SCT. Self-efficacy refers to a person's belief that he/she can complete a specific task in a given context (Bandura, 1991; Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998). Stajkovic and Luthans (1998) found that self-efficacy demonstrated a strong positive relationship with performance, such that people with higher self-efficacy have a higher tenacity for pursuing and accomplishing their goals and dreams (Avey, Wernsing, & Luthans, 2008). It follows then, that people with high self-efficacy maintain high levels of motivation, have high expectations for success, and have the innate ability to positively adapt and flourish in the face of challenges (Avey et al., 2008). Stronger self-perceptions of efficacy have been shown to be positively related to career success (Betz, 1992, 1994). Simply, self-efficacy serves as a confidence boosting trigger that can start a person on the road to career success (D. T. Hall & Chandler, 2005). This sentiment was illustrated in Henderson's (2017) qualitative research on social class when one of her study participants described factors that distinguish a HSC person from a LSC person:

> Well, their self-confidence. The power of negotiation. Actually, their expectations. What they not only, let's say, demand but what they expect in their social and their employment contract with us. In other words, they assume that they're worthy of respect and they demand that they be treated with respect. Whereas the [LSC] individuals I spoke about before do not have an expectation of being treated with dignity and respect. (Henderson, 2017)

Hence, people with higher social class may have higher self-efficacy, which enables them to achieve more in terms of career outcomes. Next, I expound on how both direct experience and

learning through modeling serve as vehicles that help explain how people's social class

backgrounds may affect their career outcomes.

Direct experience. According to SCT and direct experience, the educational experiences

of children can have an impact on their outcomes. Consider, that children from different social

class backgrounds experience education differently. For example, working class children receive

a working class education, middle class children receive a middle class education, and upper

class children receive an upper class education, resulting in a system that prepares children from

each class for specific class-based positions and behaviors it is assumed they will occupy in

adulthood (McNamee & Miller, 2004). The end result is that we are left with a disparate

educational system responsible for regenerating inequality among social classes and stifling

opportunities for social class mobility (McNamee & Miller, 2004). Those from a higher social

class are empowered and experience higher levels of self-worth and self-esteem in comparison to

those from a lower social class. For example, in describing a LSC person, a study participated

stated:

> I tend to find that [LSC] people may not have the confidence to believe that they can do
> better. They may not have been exposed to other individuals or situations or opportunities
> to help them believe that they can do better or remove themselves from poverty or the
> lower social class. … It depends on the person's mindset and what they have, the
> opportunities that they are presented with. (Henderson, 2017)

Thus, the more resources a person is exposed to and the higher the quality of those resources can

affect his/her skills, abilities, and confidence, which in turn can affect their career outcomes.

Learning by modeling. Children also learn by modeling the behaviors of their families.

They learn culture-specific behaviors and develop an identity of the self that shapes how they

respond to their social and environmental conditions. For example, some claim that lower class

families engage in a culture of poverty, such that older generations teach deviant behaviors and

negative personality traits to their children (Bullock, 1995). In contrast, middle and upper class families teach their children to thrive in social conditions that are relatively safe and materially unconstrained, thereby increasing their self-efficacy (Stephens, Markus, & Phillips, 2014). Additionally, in comparison to LSC people, HSC people receive more attention (Vaughn & Langlois, 1983; Vaughn & Waters, 1981; Waters, Garber, Gornall, & Vaughn, 1983) and are more likely to be modeled by observers (Shi & Xie, 2012), which leads to positive self-evaluations and higher instances of self-efficacy as they engage in self-reflection.

Moreover, the extent to which behavior is modeled depends on the characteristics of the model, the characteristics of the observer, and the consequences associated with the behavior. For instance, Bandura (1969, 1971, 1986) suggests that people characterized by high status, prestige, and/or power are more influential models in that they affect the behavior of others more than those with a lower standing. He asserts, the "actions of models who have gained some status are more likely to be successful and hence have greater functional value for observers than the behavior of models who possess relatively low vocational, intellectual, and social competencies" (Bandura, 1971, p. 19). Even in cases where there is uncertainty about the consequences of modeled behaviors, observers tend to use the model's characteristics and social class indicators (e.g., material goods, style of dress, and language) as symbols of success to determine if they should model the observed behavior. Furthermore, people learn what is expected of them by observing others and use this information to help them achieve their goals. In the same accord, social factors play a significant role in what a person seeking to model behavior pays attention to. Hence, a model's social status may determine the relative strength of influence on an observer. For example, since people of higher social classes tend to have more economic and social capital (Bourdieu, 1986, 1987) and are deemed more successful (Bullock & Limbert,

2003), people striving to attain a higher social class status with the end goal of career success may be more likely engage in behaviors that they have observed and learned from those who have achieved career success. For example, Krumboltz (1994) claims that when evaluating career success, social learning and expectations of success may be particularly salient for people choosing to remain in professions that hold a long family tradition such as law, medicine, and plumbing. To take a case in point, in a qualitative study exploring the indicators of social class, an interviewee stated:

> You know, wealth and status is more likely to be something that comes through family more so than just about choices. Not to undermine the hard work that people do to become successful … but it's sort of in line with kids who had money had parents who were wealthy in high school. A lot of the same thing applies in the corporate world. Most of the people who are directors, VPs, and managers have families who are upper middle class. It's a broad generalization, but I feel [that] way. (Henderson, 2017)

Using the framework of social cognitive theory, I hypothesize that a person's self-perceptions of his/her social class background at Time 1 will be positively and temporally related to career success, both objective and subjective, at Time 2.

Hypothesis 2a: Subjective social class background will be positively related to objective career success (i.e., pay raises and promotions).

Hypothesis 2b: Subjective social class background will be positively related to subjective career success (i.e., career satisfaction).

Drawing from social identity theory, social cognitive theory and the sociocultural self model of behavior, I investigate the directionality of the temporal relationships between subjective social class and career success. The proposed model is shown in Figure 4-1.

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Methods

Participants

To test my hypotheses, a longitudinal design was used. It consisted of two self-report questionnaires administered to U.S. born citizens who were employed full-time. Qualtrics Panels was used for the data collection, with a 3-month time lag between the collection of time 1 and time 2 data. Eight hundred responses were collected at Time 1 and 210 were collected at Time 2. Seven observations were removed because the participants failed to enter the data correctly. For example, when reporting how long they had worked at their current organization, instead of reporting the number of years, they input a calendar year.

The final sample consisted of 203 participants, with the following demographics: 53.2% female, 83.7% white, and 52.7% married. The average age was 46 years ($SD = 12.27$), with a range from 21 to 69 years. Approximately 42% of the sample's highest level of education was high school or a GED, and 28.6% had a Bachelor's degree or higher. The occupations of the sample varied as follows: 17.2% in executive or managerial roles, 18.7% professional occupations, 19.2% in administrative positions, 12.8% in service roles, 3.4% technicians, 6.4% sales, 6.9% machine operators or assemblers, 3.4% precision production (e.g., construction), and 11.8% other. The mean organizational tenure was 11.5 years ($SD = 9.68$). Most of the sample self-identified as middle class, with 26.6% lower middle class, 49.8% middle class, and 17.7% upper middle class. All participant demographics are shown in Table 4-1.

Two survey instruments were administered 3 months apart to assess the temporal relationship between career satisfaction and self-perceptions of social class. All items included in the survey instrument are shown in Appendix H.

Time 1 and 2 Measures

Subjective social class (self-perceived rank). Participants' current social status rank (Time 1 and Time 2) was measured using the MacArthur Scale of Subjective SES as shown in Appendix H (Adler et al., 2000; Kraus et al., 2013). Participants were asked to envision a ladder with 10 rungs and to rank how they perceived their social status in comparison to others (e.g., American society and work colleagues).

Social class level (self-identified). Participants were also asked to self-identify their current social class status (Time 1 and Time 2) as well as their family's social class background at age 16 (Time 1 only) using the 5-point categorization: 1= *lower class*, 2 = *lower middle class*, 3 = *middle class*, 4 = *upper middle class*, and 5 = *upper class*.

Career Success. Objective career success is most often measured by assessing the number of promotions and amount of salary increases a person receives over a specific time. For this study, promotion rate, corrected for tenure in the organization (e.g., Tsui & Gutek, 1984) and family income were collected. Promotion rate is the ratio of the number of promotions a person received while employed in his or her current organization to his or her organization tenure. Family income was measured using a categorical scale ranging from 1 = *less than $15,000* to 12 = *$150,000 or more*. The full scale is shown in Appendix H.

Subjective career success was measured with the Career Satisfaction Scale (Greenhaus et al., 1990). This measure consists of five items. Sample items include: "I am satisfied with the success I have achieved in my career" and "I am satisfied with the progress I have made toward meeting my goals for advancement." The measure uses a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*. The alpha coefficients were good, with α = 0.94 at both Time 1 and Time 2. Scale items are shown in Appendix H.

Time 1 Only Measures

      Childhood financial circumstances. Participant's subjective childhood financial circumstances was measured using an adapted scale developed by Singh-Manoux et al. (2005) to assess a person's socioeconomic circumstances in childhood. Participants were asked to respond to 4 items based on their recollection of their family's financial circumstances while growing up, using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = *never* to 5 = *always*. Sample items are "Your family relied on hand me downs and donations for clothing" and "Your family had continuing financial problems." Higher scores suggest that a person's family struggled financially while they were growing up. The reliability coefficient was 0.80. Appendix H details the items collected.

      Positive Affect. As a control for bias due to mood, the positive affect scale of the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS) was used (Watson et al., 1988). PANAS is a Likert scale consisting of twenty words describing various feelings and emotions, in which participants are asked to indicate the degree to which they have experienced each mood in the past few days, ranging from 1 = *very slightly or not at all* to 5 = *extremely*. Sample positive emotions are "proud", "inspired", and "determined". The alpha coefficient was 0.93 at both Times 1 and 2. Measurement items are shown in Appendix H.

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Results

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      SPSS v24 was used to calculate the means, standard deviations, and correlations, which are shown in Table 4-2. The reliability coefficients ranged from .80 to .95 and are shown on the diagonal in Table 4-2. A review of the relationships between the career success variables at Time 1 indicates significant positive relationships with self-perceived social class rank at Time 2 (family income: $r = 0.36$, $p < .01$; promotion rate: $r = 0.30$, $p < .01$; career satisfaction: $r = 0.50$,

p < .01) and participant's current social class level (family income: *r* = 0.61, *p* < .01; promotion rate: *r* = 0.20, *p* < .01; career satisfaction: *r* = 0.41, *p* < .01). Significant positive relationships were also found between family social class background at Time 1 and career success at Time 2 (family income: *r* = 0.17, *p* < .05; promotion rate: *r* = 0.19, *p* < .01; career satisfaction: *r* = 0.24, *p* < .01). Moreover, social class background (i.e., social class level at age 16) at Time 1 was significant and positively related to current social class level at Time 2 (*r* = 0.33, *p* < .01), suggesting that the people with higher social class level while growing up tend to have higher present-day social class levels. Significant correlations were not found between family financial circumstances while growing up at Time 1 and career success at Time 2. Additionally, positive affect at Time 1 had a significant positive relationship with all Time 2 variables, except family income.

Hypotheses were tested with path analysis using Mplus v7.3. Path analysis uses bivariate correlations of observed variables to estimate the strength of each of the relationships identified in a model (Hair et al., 2006). Simply, it is a useful tool when there are multiple linear regressions in a model as it allows for relationships to be tested simultaneously.

Path Analysis 1 – Career Success Predicting Subjective Social Class

The first path analysis tested the temporal relationship between career success at Time 1 and subjective social class at Time 2. The model estimates for the hypothesized effects are presented in Table 4-3. The test for objective career success as a predictor indicate that current family income (*β* = 0.29, *p* < .01) and promotion rate (*β* = 0.16, *p* < .01) at Time 1 were significantly and positively related to subjective social class as measured by self-perceptions of social class rank (i.e., the MacArthur ladder scale) at Time 2. That is, higher family incomes and a greater rate of promotions result in people have higher perceptions of their social class in

relation to American society. However, for the dependent variable, current subjective social class level (i.e., 5-point scale ranging from lower class to upper class) at Time 2, only family income ($\beta = 0.56$, $p < .01$) at Time 1 was a unique predictor. Simply, higher social class levels are associated with higher family incomes. Hypothesis 1a is partially supported.

Career satisfaction (i.e., subjective career success) at Time 1 was significantly related to subjective social class at Time 2 as measured by self-perceptions of social class rank (i.e., MacArthur subjective SES scale) ($\beta = 0.28$, $p < .01$) and social class level ($\beta = 0.20$, $p < .01$). Thus, when people are more satisfied with their career, they perceive themselves as a member of a higher social class group, supporting Hypothesis 1b.

The R^2 statistic indicated that 29% of the variance was explained by the model when social class rank—MacArthur subjective SES scale—was the dependent variable, whereas 42% of the variance was explained for the model when social class level was the dependent variable. The full path model with parameter estimates is presented in Figure 4-2. A review of the standardized parameter estimates in the model predicting self-perceptions of social class rank as measured by the MacArthur subjective SES scale suggests that the effect of career satisfaction ($\beta = 0.28$) is comparable to that of family income ($\beta = 0.29$) and greater than the effect of promotion rate ($\beta = 0.16$). For the model predicting social class level, family income had the greatest effect ($\beta = 0.56$), followed by career satisfaction ($\beta = 0.20$) and promotion rate ($\beta = 0.08$). Hence, there was partial support for Hypothesis 1c.

Path Analysis 2 – Subjective Social Class Predicting Career Success

The second path of regressions examined the temporal relationships between family social class background at age 16 (i.e., social class of origin using a 5-point scale ranging from lower class to upper class) and family financial circumstances at age 16 (i.e., 4-point Likert scale

assessing recollection of family's socioeconomic circumstances while growing up) at Time 1

with career success at Time 2. The parameter estimates for the models are shown in Table 4-4. A

diagram of the full path model with parameter estimates is shown in Figure 4-3.

In hypothesis 2a, I investigated the effect of social class background at Time 1 on

objective career success at Time 2. The models using social class background to predict current

family income and promotion rate, respectively, both exhibited a non-significant R^2 (current

family income: $R^2 = 0.03$; promotion rate: $R^2 = 0.05$), suggesting that the variance in current

indicators of objective career success was not well explained by either model. Thus, Hypothesis

2a was not supported.

Approximately 17% of the variance in career satisfaction (i.e., subjective career success)

at Time 2 was predicted by the combination of social class background and financial

circumstances during childhood. Subjective social class background was significantly related to

career satisfaction ($\beta = 0.18$, $p < .01$), which indicates that the higher a person's family's social

class was while growing up, the more likely they are to be satisfied with their careers. Family

financial circumstances at age 16 was not ($\beta = -0.02$, $p = .80$) significantly related to career

satisfaction. Partial support was found for Hypothesis 2b.

Discussion

The purpose of the study was to investigate the temporal relationship between subjective

social class and career success. Specifically, the study sought to better understand: (a) *does*

career success (i.e., objective and subjective) predict a person's perception of his/her social

class? and (b) *does a person's perception of his/her social class background predict current*

career success?

Family income, promotion rate, and career satisfaction each uniquely predicted self-perceptions of social class rank (i.e., MacArthur subjective SES scale) three months later. However, in predicting how a person will classify his/her social class level (i.e., lower class, lower middle class, etc.) three months later, only current family income and career satisfaction were unique predictors. Taken together, these findings suggest that when people experience greater career success, they are more likely to see themselves as a higher social class status three months later.

Family income had a stronger relationship with perceptions of current social class level ($r = .61$) in comparison to the MacArthur Subjective SES scale ($r = .36$) as evidenced by their correlations. This was an unexpected finding. Given that the MacArthur scale specifically asks people to rank themselves relative to American society in terms of money, education, and jobs and I did not define social class for the participants, the social class scale may be more subjective. That is, study participants may have used their own definition of social class when responding to this question, which may have tapped more into their income as a factor, at the exclusion of education and occupation. In a qualitative study that asked people to define social class, 19 of the 20 participants defined it in terms of economic factors, either solely or in part (Henderson, 2017). Hence, the strength of subjectivity for each of these measures may depend on the focal point. In other words, the MacArthur scale is subject to how people see themselves in relation to others, whereas the social class scale is subject to how people see themselves in general.

Also of note, is the fact that subjective career success (i.e., career satisfaction) had a stronger relationship with subjective social class three months later when people were asked to rank themselves in relation to American society in comparison to when they indicated their

social class levels. This may suggest that when people assess their career satisfaction as well as their social class, they may look to other people's careers to gauge their success. Simply, their perceptions of other people's success may be a metric they use when evaluating their career satisfaction. For instance, Festinger's (1954) social comparison theory suggests that people are driven to evaluate their beliefs and abilities in relation to others' beliefs and abilities. Kelley and Evans (1995) assert that people's perceptions of class are influenced by referent group forces, which includes subjective images of equality among family, friends and coworkers. In research examining health outcomes, Wolff, Subramanian, Acevedo-Garcia, Weber, and Kawachi (2010) found that other-referent subjective social status had a strong relationship with self-rated health. Similarly, in his research examining the roles of other-referent versus self-referent success criteria, Heslin (2005) found that other-referent success criteria explained a significant portion of the variance in overall career success.

In addressing the second question, a person's family social class level background (i.e., at age 16) was a significant unique predictor of both objective and subjective career success (i.e., current family income, promotion rate, and career satisfaction). These findings align with research that suggests a person's background may be an influential factor in their workplace behaviors (Côté, 2011) and decision making style (Kish-Gephart & Campbell, 2015).

However, childhood financial conditions were not related to any of the career success measures (i.e., family income, promotion rate, and career satisfaction). The inconsistent findings regarding social class background and family financial circumstances is curious, considering these two variables were negatively correlated. A higher score on financial circumstances suggests that a person's family struggled financially while growing up. Hence, people with a higher social class background reported fewer struggles with finances while they were growing

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up, as one would expect. The inconsistency in the results for the subjective family social class background variable relative to the variable assessing family financial circumstances as a child suggests that there are some important differences in these constructs, and that there is more to conceptualizing and measuring social class than only financial circumstances. This suggests the importance of using social class measures that capture the full range of factors that are considered relevant to social class (e.g., education and occupation).

Support of the hypotheses, that people with higher social class backgrounds were more likely to be satisfied with their career (i.e., hypothesis 2b) and people with more objective indicators of career success (i.e., hypothesis 1a) and with higher career satisfaction (i.e., hypothesis 1b) perceive themselves as having a higher current social class suggests that the relationship between social class and career success might involve a positive feedback loop. That is, people with a higher social class background are set up for greater objective career success and more career satisfaction, and this career success and satisfaction foster a sense that they are currently of a high social class. In sum, this study demonstrated that subjective social class background has important implications for employees' career satisfaction. The American dream may very well be a myth for some, specifically for LSC children, who tend to be less satisfied with their careers as they move into adulthood and in turn, experience less success.

Practical Implications

This research suggests that the higher someone's social class level while growing up, the more likely they are to be satisfied with their family income, promotion rate, and career as an adult, while there was no effect for childhood financial conditions. The implication here is that the experiences of LSC and HSC children differ while growing up and these differences may determine the trajectory of their future career success. For example, HSC children may be

socialized to value education, which results in greater career success. In contrast, a quality education may not be emphasized for LSC children, which culminates into lower pay and a slower promotion rate, years later as an adult.

To balance the playing field between lower and higher social classes, programs and interventions targeted for LSC children that build excitement and interest about learning, while increasing their confidence need to be implemented. A way to accomplish this is to equip teachers with the tools and knowledge needed to support LSC children and help them break away from the negative stereotypes such as laziness and incompetence. This can be done via diversity and inclusion training that delves deeply into the cultural differences among the social classes, educates teachers on the circumstances and experiences of LSC people, and makes them aware of their own implicit biases regarding social class. Additionally, mentoring programs can be established as early as grade school, in which LSC students are paired with college students so they may begin to realize and envision what may be possible. These mentoring relationships can be designed for the long term, in which the relationship stays in place as the mentor progresses into the workforce and the mentee progresses into college. Similarly, organizations can establish mentoring programs, in which employers are paired with LSC college students that seeks to groom them as future potential employees.

The development of free community outreach programs that target lower income communities may be another option. These programs would give lower social class adults the interpersonal skills needed to be more competitive in the workplace. Examples would include sessions on business etiquette, negotiating pay and raises, and conflict resolution. A benefit of practices such as these is that they would create a larger and stronger applicant pool for

employers while giving people of lower social classes the confidence and freedom to set their own course to success.

Also, more universities and state agencies need to leverage their resources to make higher education a viable option for all. Programs such as Stanford University's policy ("Stanford Financial Aid," 2017, August 10) and New York's scholarship for students attending CUNY or SUNY colleges ("Tuition-free degree program: The Excelsior Scholarship," 2017, August 10), which make tuition free for parents with an income less than $125,000 are exemplars. Additionally, educational policies and practices that provide people from lower social classes the opportunities to achieve their career goals by making them more self-sufficient and less dependent on government funds such as welfare are needed. Increased educational funding that provides more funds to underrepresented neighborhoods would be a good first step.

Limitations and Future Research

While this research provides initial support for a positive feedback loop to explain the relationship between career success and subjective social class, further investigation into the causal effects of these relationships may be more fruitful. For example, when examining the effect of social class on career success, an interesting avenue for future research would be to examine the mediating effects of stereotype threat for people of lower social classes (i.e., stereotypes of laziness, uneducated, and incompetent) and the moderating effect of childhood socialization experiences. This would entail an examination of how the cultures, beliefs, and attitudes people learn, not only as children but in the workplace, affect their behaviors.

Another limiting factor is the length of time that was used between the two data collections. Three months may not be a sufficient enough time to see changes in career success. Hence, future research should consider a longitudinal study of greater length, with a time lag of

at minimum 12 months. A longer length of time between data collection would also allow for cross-lagged examination of the data to occur to assess whether subjective social class or career success is truly more effective in predicting the other.

Last, most of this sample consisted of middle-class full-time employed adults. As a result, the voice of the lower and working class are absent from this research, as are the voices of people in extremely high social class groups. Future studies should consider a more diverse population where there is more diversity of social classes among participants being studied.

Conclusion

Research on social class in the management discipline is truly unchartered territory. Given the discussions taken place in the U.S. regarding social class disparities. The time is now to engage in scholarly research that seeks to explore the influence of social class within the workplace. This research serves as an initial contribution into this phenomenon. My hope is to leverage this work by investigating the impact of social class on other workplace behaviors and attitudes.

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Table 1-1

Social Class and Related Key Terminology

Key Term	Study	Definition
Class	(Weber, 1947, pg. 424)	Any group of persons occupying the same class status.
Status	(Ridgeway and Cornell, 2006, pg. 431)	Form of inequality based on differences in social esteem and respect that, in turn, yield influence.
Social Class	(Perry & Wallace, 2013, pg. 82)	Identification with a particular economic culture that one is exposed to within his/her environment.
	(Bourdieu, 1986, 1987, 2010)	Determined by economic capital and class habitus.
	(Rothman, 2002, pg. 6)	Group of individuals or families who occupy a similar position in the economic system of production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services in industrial societies.
	(Brown, Fukunaga, Umemoto, & Wicker, 1996, pg. 159)	Status hierarchy associated with levels and types of economic resources, social valuation, and access to societal control and influence, with no one dimension being sufficient to reliably indicate social class.
	(Piff, Kraus, Côté, Cheng, & Keltner, 2010, p. 772)	Social class is a multifaceted construct that is rooted in both objective features of material wealth and access to resources as well as in conceptions of socioeconomic status (SES) rank vis-a`-vis others in society.
	(Liu, Ali, Soleck, Hopps, Dunston, & Pickett, 2004, pg. 8)	An individual's position within an economic hierarchy that is determined by his or her income, education level, and occupation; the individual is also aware of his or her place in the economic hierarchy and of others who may share a similar position (Liu, 2001).
Socioeconomic Status	(Twenge and Campbell, 2002, pg. 59)	The individual's, parent's, or family's income, education, and occupation, or any combination. Any measure of an individual's (or their parents' or family's) educational attainment, occupational status, income, or any combination.
	(Liu, Ali, Soleck, Hopps, Dunston, & Pickett, 2004, pg. 8)	A person's perceived place in an economic hierarchy based on subjective indices such as prestige, lifestyle, and control of resources.
	(Dutton & Levine, 1989, p. 30)	A composite measure that typically incorporates economic status, measured by income; social status, measured by education; and work status, measured by occupation.
	(Oakes and Rossi, 2003, pg. 775)	Differential access (realized and potential) to desired resources.
	(Hauser & Warren, 1997, pg. 2)	Shorthand expression for variables that characterize the placement of persons, families, households, census tracts, or other aggregates with respect to the capacity to create or consume goods that are valued in our society.
Classism	(Lott, 2002, pg. 101)	Results from unequal class privilege and power.
	(Bullock, 1995, pg. 119)	Network of attitudes, beliefs, behaviors, and institutional practices that maintain and legitimatize class-based power differences that privilege middle-and higher-income groups at the expense of the poor and working class.
	(Lott, 2012, pg. 654)	*Institutional classism* is the maintenance and reinforcement of low status by social institutions that present barriers to increase the difficulty of accessing resources. *Interpersonal classism* is characterized by prejudice, discrimination, and the development of negative stereotypes known as stereotype threat.

Table 2-1

Interviewee Demographic Statistics

Demographics	*n*	*%*
Gender		
Female	10	50.0
Male	10	50.0
Race		
White	9	45.0
African-American	9	45.0
Hispanic	2	10.0
Highest Educational Level		
Some College	1	5.0
Bachelor	3	15.0
Master	15	75.0
Doctorate	1	5.0
Social Class		
Lower Middle	1	5.0
Middle	8	40.0
Upper Middle	11	55.0
Age Range		
30-35	1	5.0
36-39	3	15.0
40-45	4	20.0
46-49	6	30.0
50-55	1	5.0
56-59	1	5.0
60-65	4	20.0

Table 2-2

Résumé Hobbies by Social Class Level

Lower Social Class Hobbies	Higher Social Class Hobbies
Baseball	Boating, sailing
Basketball	Engagement with arts, drama, and music
Drag racing	Equestrian activities
Drinking cheap liquor	Field polo
Fishing	Flying airplanes
Football	Gardening
Free community sports and activities	Golf
Going to the library	Ice hockey
Hunting	Lacrosse
Reading	Philanthropy (volunteering)
Spending time and meals with family	Rugby
Video games	Skiing
Watching TV (including reality TV)	Squash
	Tennis
	Traveling
	Visiting museums
	Water polo
	Yachting

Table 2-3

Sample Quotes of Lower versus Higher Social Class Names

Lower Social Class Names	Higher Social Class Names
You know, I think the stereotype would probably be a more ethnic name. So, I know that a lot of African-Americans, I mean there have been tons of studies done. If your name is Shanequa or Jackson or Leroy or something like that, you're less likely to get hired. You know, you can probably say the same about some Latino names and probably in a previous generation, you could say the same for maybe Irish or Italian names. I think quote unquote, ethnic groups; typically face the brunt of that type of discrimination. [black male, head of industry accounts]	*You know, typically your average German or British sounding name goes with the folks more typically more so in power or more likely to get a pass.* [black male, head of industry accounts]
Anything with the apostrophe, and I grew up in the south, so if it's from my region where I grew up and where the folks that I went to school with, a lot of the folks that struggled and were socioeconomically in a lower class tended to have a hyphenated name. It almost always started with a D. [white female, senior director chief data officer]	*Anglo-Saxon names. You've got your Michael's, your James's, anything with a third or something behind it. You can just hear the Irish Catholic names. Which should denote high working or middle class, but that's not exactly what it does in the professional world these days. I see a lot of these Anglo-Saxon names that are WASP and that puts it into a dimension of upper social class.* [white female, senior director chief data officer]
Yes, I can be honest on that one. When I see a name that I cannot pronounce because it has apostrophes and other euphemisms in it, that's usually an indicator of someone, in my opinion, of a lower social class. Okay? And that may just be the way I was raised. I don't know. But just being completely open and honest, I mean, Laquisha and all these others, you just say I don't even know how to pronounce this. When your parents are trying to be cute and that's wonderful but does that impact the person's ability to be hired into a professional job? I don't know. I would say probably yes. But is that an indicator of social class? In my opinion, yes. [white male, VP of finance]	*But normally it's Old English names. Hubert or something like that where you say that's an unusual name.* [white male, VP of finance]
This is gonna sound awful, but as you were asking that question, the first thing that sprung to mine would be somebody with a Hispanic type name I would maybe think was lower class. I feel awful even saying that, but you said be honest during this process. [white male, global sourcing director]	*So, the name, Whitney, just sprung into my head, probably because we have a woman at work with the name of Whitney that I talked to not too long ago. I've always thought to myself what a very kind of tipping-the-nose-up kind of name. That was very waspy and you know, parents belong to the tennis club and all that sort of thing.* [white male, global sourcing director]
So you can assume based on someone's name if they have a very, which people will refer to as ethnic name, which typically means Black or minority. Black Americans or Americans that they're a lower social class. That's what people typically believe. [black female, proposal manager]	*You have a name that is more European, in a sense, you are assumed to be of another social class. That you have a more exposed social class.* [black female, proposal manager]
If I get a typical stripper name, then I am probably – that is gonna be the first sign. If I get a Bubba, that is – or something like that. That's – I got nothing else to base it on other than their name, unfortunately it is gonna give me the perception that this is maybe not the best fit for what we're trying to do. [white male, director of client services]	*I mean a good example is our neighbor down here and he goes by Chad, but his real name is Chadwick. I mean, again, if I know nothing else, but if I'm coming up against a Chadwick or an Ashton or a Grayson or I mean something like that, I mean the natural inclination for me is gonna be ew, or if I come up against a third or a junior or something like that, as sad as it is and again, I've got nothing else to base it on except for their name, it's going to maybe stick in my – now, I don't necessarily know whether or not I change my behaviors because of that, I don't think I do, but it does stick in my head that name that says, oh, okay, that's a stripper name, or wow, that's a Chadwick, I wonder where he's from, I wonder if he – who he, who he is related to, that type of thing.* [white male, director of client services]

Table 3-1

Study Participants Demographics

Demographics	*n*	*%*	Demographics	*n*	*%*
Gender			**Occupation**		
Female	157	42.4%	Human Resources (HR)	54	14.6%
Male	213	57.6%	Executive, Admiminstrative, & Managerial	153	41.4%
Race			Professional (e.g., engineer, architect)	72	19.5%
Caucasian / White	247	66.8%	Technicians (e.g., lab technician)	21	5.7%
African American / Black	39	10.5%	Administrative, clerical	13	3.5%
Hispanic / Latino(a)	47	12.7%	Sales	13	3.5%
Asian	30	8.1%	Service	11	3.0%
Native American	2	0.5%	Precision production, repair (e.g., construction)	2	0.5%
Other	5	1.4%	Machine operators, assemblers, inspectors	2	0.5%
Highest Educational Level			Other	29	7.8%
Less than high school	1	0.3%	**Income**		
High School / GED	8	2.2%	Less than $15,000	3	0.8%
Some college	29	7.8%	$15,000 - $24,999	2	0.5%
Associates or technical degree	17	4.6%	$25,000 - $34,999	12	3.2%
Bachelor's degree	166	44.9%	$35,000 - $44,999	17	4.6%
Master's degree	112	30.3%	$45,000 - $54,999	19	5.1%
Doctorate (PhD/MD/JD)	37	10.0%	$55,000 - $64,999	28	7.6%
Marital Status			$65,000 - $74,999	36	9.7%
Married	286	77.3%	$75,000 - $84,999	57	15.4%
Single	71	19.2%	$85,000 - $99,999	56	15.1%
Divorced	10	2.7%	$100,000 - $124,999	47	12.7%
Widowed	3	0.8%	$125,000 - $149,999	42	11.4%
Current Social Class Status			$150,000 or more	51	13.8%
Lower class	10	2.7%			
Lower middle class	24	6.5%			
Middle class	179	48.4%			
Upper middle class	137	37.0%			
Upper class	20	5.4%			

n = 370

Table 3-2

Means, Standard Deviations, Correlations, and Reliabilities

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Positive Affect	3.81	0.82	(.89)									
2. Negative Affect	2.02	1.14	0.31**	(.95)								
3. Social Desirability	3.23	0.73	0.17**	0.64**	(.82)							
4. Social Class Manipulation	0.52	0.50	-0.02	0.04	0.01	(--)						
5. Qualification Level Manipulation	0.50	0.50	-0.04	0.05	0.04	0.03	(--)					
6. Race	0.50	0.50	0.02	0.04	0.04	0.02	-0.01	(--)				
7. Interview	4.06	0.83	0.41**	0.23**	0.22**	-0.13*	0.12*	0.01	(.85)			
8. Likeability	3.94	0.75	0.47**	0.31**	0.26**	-0.12*	0.04	-0.02	0.73**	(.85)		
9. Social Dominance Orientation	2.37	0.70	0.16**	0.54**	0.47**	0.05	0.07	-0.08	.018**	0.23**	(.87)	
10. Person-job Fit	3.84	0.96	0.49**	0.32**	0.22**	-0.07	0.10	0.01	0.78**	0.74**	0.30**	(.89)

$N = 370$; Social Class Manipulation: 1 = high, 0 = low; Qualification Level: 1 = high, 0 = marginal; Race dummy code: 1 = white, 0 = black

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 3-3

Multivariate Tests on Likelihood to Recommend for an Interview and Likeability

Effect	Wilks' Lambda	F	df	Error df	p	η^2
Intercept	0.81	43.47*	2	361	0.00	0.19
Race	0.99	0.73	2	361	0.49	0.00
Positive Affect	0.81	43.33*	2	361	0.00	0.19
Negative Affect	0.99	2.37	2	361	0.10	0.01
Social Desirabiliy	0.99	2.70	2	361	0.07	0.02
Social Class	0.98	4.37*	2	361	0.01	0.02
Qualification Level	0.98	4.42*	2	361	0.01	0.02
SC x QUAL interaction	0.99	0.98	2	361	0.38	0.01

Note: $N = 370$; SC = social class; QUAL = qualification level;
* $p < .05$.

Table 3-4

Univariate Tests on Likelihood to Recommend for an Interview and Likeability

Dependent Variable	Social Class					Qualification Level				
	F	*df*	Error *df*	*p*	η^2	F	*df*	Error *df*	*p*	η^2
Recommend for Interview	7.72*	1	362	0.01	0.02	7.90*	1	362	0.01	0.02
Likeability	6.63*	1	362	0.01	0.02	1.12	1	362	0.29	0.00

Note: $N = 370$;

* $p < .05$.

Table 3-5

Pairwise Comparisons of Main Effects

	Social Class				Qualification Level		
	Mean	95%			Mean	95%	
	Difference	Confidence			Difference	Confidence	
Dependent Variable	**(LSC - HSC)**	*LCL*	*UCL*		**(HQ - MQ)**	*LCL*	*UCL*
Recommend for Interview	0.21*	0.06	0.37		0.22*	0.07	0.37
Likeability	0.17*	0.04	0.31		0.07	-0.06	0.20

* $p < .05$.

Table 3-6

Pairwise Comparisons of Interaction Effects

Dependent Variable	Social Class				Qualification Level			
	Qualification Level	Mean Difference (LSC - HSC)	95% Confidence *LCL*	*UCL*	Social Class	Mean Difference (HQ - MQ)	95% Confidence *LCL*	*UCL*
Recommend for Interview	Marginally Qualified	0.30*	0.09	0.52	Lower Social Class	0.13	-0.09	0.35
	Highly Qualified	0.12	-0.09	0.34	Higher Social Class	0.31*	0.10	0.52
Likeability	Marginally Qualified	0.26*	0.08	0.45	Lower Social Class	-0.02	-0.21	0.17
	Highly Qualified	0.08	-0.11	0.27	Higher Social Class	0.16	-0.02	0.35

* $p < .05$.

Table 3-7

Hierarchical Regression Analysis for Social Class, Qualification Level, and Social Dominance Predicting Likelihood to Recommend for an Interview

Predictor	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3			Model 4		
	B	s.e.	*β*	*B*	s.e.	*β*	*B*	s.e.	*β*	*B*	s.e.	*β*
Constant	2.02*	0.26		1.94*	0.27		2.02*	0.32		1.75*	0.34	
Race	0.00	0.08	0.00	0.01	0.08	0.01	0.04	0.08	0.02	0.04	0.08	0.02
Positive Affect	0.39*	0.05	0.38	0.39*	0.05	0.38	0.40*	0.05	0.39	0.40*	0.05	0.39
Negative Affect	0.01	0.05	0.02	0.00	0.05	0.00	-0.01	0.05	-0.01	-0.02	0.05	-0.02
Social Desirabiliy	0.17*	0.07	0.14	0.15*	0.07	0.13	0.13*	0.07	0.12	0.14*	0.07	0.12
Social Class				-0.22*	0.08	-0.13	-1.09*	0.27	-0.66	-0.58	0.36	-0.35
Qualification Level				0.22*	0.08	0.13	0.85*	0.28	0.51	1.38*	0.37	0.83
Social Dominance				0.07	0.07	0.06	0.06	0.10	0.05	0.17	0.11	0.14
SC x QUAL interaction							0.17	0.15	0.09	-0.91	0.53	-0.48
SC x SDO interaction							0.34*	0.11	0.53	0.12	0.15	0.18
QUAL x SDO interaction							-0.31*	0.11	-0.48	-0.54*	0.15	-0.84
SC x QUAL x SDO interaction										0.45*	0.22	0.63
F		21.69*			15.22*			13.05*			12.38*	
ΔR^2					0.04*			0.04*			0.01*	
R^2		0.19			0.23			0.27			0.28	
N		370			370			370			370	

Note: SC = social class; QUAL = qualification level; SDO = social dominance orientation

* $p < .05$

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Table 3-8

Hierarchical Regression Analysis for Social Class, Qualification Level, and Social Dominance Predicting Likeability

Predictor	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3			Model 4		
	B	s.e.	*β*	*B*	s.e.	*β*	*B*	s.e.	*β*	*B*	s.e.	*β*
Constant	1.95*	0.22		1.93*	0.24		1.96*	0.28		1.92*	0.30	
Race	-0.07	0.07	-0.04	-0.05	0.07	-0.04	-0.03	0.07	-0.02	-0.03	0.07	-0.02
Positive Affect	0.38*	0.04	0.42	0.38*	0.04	0.41	0.39*	0.04	0.42	0.39*	0.04	0.42
Negative Affect	0.07	0.04	0.11	0.06	0.04	0.09	0.05	0.04	0.08	0.05	0.04	0.08
Social Desirabiliy	0.13*	0.06	0.13	0.11	0.06	0.11	0.10	0.06	0.10	0.10	0.06	0.10
Social Class				-0.18*	0.07	-0.12	-0.82*	0.24	-0.54	-0.75*	0.32	-0.50
Qualification Level				0.07	0.07	0.05	0.57*	0.24	0.38	0.65	0.33	0.43
Social Dominance				0.07	0.06	0.06	0.08	0.09	0.07	0.09	0.10	0.09
SC x QUAL interaction							0.18	0.13	0.11	0.02	0.47	0.01
SC x SDO interaction							0.24*	0.09	0.41	0.20	0.13	0.35
QUAL x SDO interaction							-0.25*	0.10	-0.44	-0.29*	0.14	-0.49
SC x QUAL x SDO interaction										0.07	0.19	0.10
F		32.37*			20.11*			16.07*			14.58*	
ΔR^2					0.02*			0.03*			0.00	
R^2		0.26			0.28			0.31			0.31	
N		370			370			370			370	

Note: SC = social class; QUAL = qualification level; SDO = social dominance orientation

* $p < .05$

Table 3-9

Hierarchical Regression Analysis for Social Class Relational Differences Predicting Likelihood to Recommend for an Interview

Predictor	Mean	SD	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3		
			B	s.e.	β	*B*	s.e.	β	*B*	s.e.	β
Constant			2.02*	0.26		1.85*	0.31		1.92*	0.35	
Race	0.50	0.50	0.00	0.08	0.00	0.00	0.08	0.00	0.00	0.08	0.00
Positive Affect	3.81	0.82	0.39*	0.05	0.38	0.37*	0.05	0.36	0.37*	0.05	0.36
Negative Affect	2.02	1.14	0.01	0.05	0.02	0.02	0.05	0.03	0.02	0.05	0.03
Social Desirabiliy	3.23	0.73	0.17*	0.07	0.14	0.17*	0.07	0.14	0.17*	0.07	0.14
Participant Current SC	3.36	0.80				0.09	0.05	0.09	0.07	0.07	0.07
SC Manipulation	0.52	0.50				-0.20*	0.08	-0.12	-0.33	0.34	-0.20
Part SC x SC Manipulation	1.73	1.76							0.04	0.10	0.08
F			21.69*			16.60*			14.22*		
ΔR^2						0.02*			0.00		
R^2			0.19			0.22			0.22		
N			370			370			370		

Note: Participant Current SC: 1 = lower, 2 = lower middle, 3 = middle, 4 = upper middle, 5 = upper;

SC Manipulation: 0 = lower SC; 1 = higher SC

* $p < .05$

Table 3-10

Total, Direct, and Indirect Effects of Mediation Analysis

Mediator: PJ_Fit IV: Social Class DV: Likelihood to Recommend	Effect	LLCI	ULCI
Total Effect	-0.21*	-0.36	-0.06
Direct Effect	-0.12*	-0.23	-0.01
Indirect Effect	-0.09	-0.21	0.02

*p < .05.

Table 4-1

Study Participants Demographics

Demographics	*n*	*%*	Demographics	*n*	*%*
Gender			**Social Class Status at Time 1**		
Female	108	53.2%	Lower class	9	4.4%
Male	95	46.8%	Lower middle class	54	26.6%
Race			Middle class	101	49.8%
Caucasian / White	170	83.7%	Upper middle class	36	17.7%
African American / Black	10	4.9%	Upper class	3	1.5%
Hispanic / Latino(a)	15	7.4%	**Occupation at Time 1**		
Asian	2	1.0%	Executive, Admiminstrative, & Managerial	35	17.2%
Native American	3	1.5%	Professional (e.g., engineer, architect)	38	18.7%
Other	3	1.5%	Technicians (e.g., lab technician)	7	3.4%
Highest Educational Level			Administrative, clerical	39	19.2%
Less than high school	2	1.0%	Sales	13	6.4%
High School / GED	85	41.9%	Service	26	12.8%
Some college	38	18.7%	Precision production, repair (e.g., construction)	7	3.4%
Associates or technical degree	20	9.9%	Machine operators, assemblers, inspectors	14	6.9%
Bachelor's degree	41	20.2%	Other	24	11.8%
Master's degree	12	5.9%	**Individual Income at Time 1**		
Doctorate (PhD/MD/JD)	5	2.5%	Less than $10,000	2	1.0%
Marital Status			$10,000 - $14,999	3	1.5%
Married	107	52.7%	$15,000 - $24,999	27	13.3%
Single	59	29.1%	$25,000 - $34,999	30	14.8%
Divorced	33	16.3%	$35,000 - $49,999	41	20.2%
Widowed	4	2.0%	$50,000 - $64,999	32	15.8%
			$65,000 - $74,999	14	6.9%
			$75,000 - $99,999	22	10.8%
			$100,000 or more	32	15.8%

N = 203

Table 4-2

Means, Standard Deviations, Correlations, and Reliabilities

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Positive Affect - T1	3.35	0.87	(.93)									
2. Current Family Income - T1	6.32	3.17	0.07	(--)								
3. Promotion Rate - T1	0.22	0.30	0.21**	0.06	(--)							
4. Career Satisfaction - T1	3.56	1.01	0.46**	0.30**	0.21**	(.94)						
5. SC Background Age 16 - T1	2.85	0.86	0.18**	0.18**	0.15*	0.28**	(--)					
6. Childhood Financial Conditions - T1	1.81	0.94	0.10	-0.05	0.12	-0.01	-0.27**	(.80)				
7. Current Family Income - T2	6.59	3.19	0.07	0.89**	0.08	0.30**	0.17*	-0.04	(--)			
8. Promotion Rate - T2	0.25	0.39	0.15*	0.11	0.62**	0.23**	0.19**	0.09	0.10	(--)		
9. Career Satisfaction - T2	3.52	1.02	0.46**	0.32**	0.18**	0.69**	0.24**	0.00	0.28**	0.16*	(.95)	
10. Self-Perception SC Rank - T2	6.11	1.89	0.42**	0.36**	0.30**	0.50**	0.24**	0.12	0.38**	0.22**	0.53**	(--)
11. Participant Current SC Level - T2	2.77	0.78	0.22**	0.61**	0.20**	0.41**	0.33**	0.00	0.60**	0.18**	0.47**	0.52**

$N = 203$; SC Level: 1 = lower, 2 = lower middle, 3 = middle, 4 = upper middle, 5 = upper; SC Rank: MacArthur Subjective SES Scale

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*   Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 4-3

Path 1 Regression Analysis: Career Success Predicting Subjective Social Class

Predictor	Self-Perception SC Rank - T2			Social Class Level - T2		
	Unstandardized	Standardized		Unstandardized	Standardized	
	β	β	t	β	β	t
Positive Affect - T1	0.43	0.22	3.27**	0.07	0.08	1.31
Family Income - T1	0.17	0.29	4.95**	0.14	0.56	11.77**
Promotion Rate - T1	0.73	0.16	2.61**	0.15	0.08	1.40
Career Satisfaction - T1	0.49	0.28	4.20**	0.15	0.20	3.30**
R^2		0.29**			0.42**	

Note: ** $p < .01$. Social Class Level: 1 = lower, 2 = lower middle, 3 = middle, 4 = upper middle, 5 = upper;
SC Rank: MacArthur Subjective SES Scale

Table 4-4

Path 2 Regression Analyses: Subjective Social Class Predicting Career Success

Predictor	Family Income - T2			Promotion Rate - T2			Career Satisfaction - T2		
	Unstandardized β	Standardized β	t	Unstandardized β	Standardized β	t	Unstandardized β	Standardized β	t
Positive Affect - T1	0.05	0.02	0.21	0.06	0.11	1.55	0.42	0.37	6.00**
SC Level Background, Age 16 - T1	0.60	0.16	2.24*	0.12	0.21	3.02**	0.22	0.18	2.64**
Childhood Financial Conditions - T1	-0.12	-0.04	-0.56	0.03	0.07	1.00	-0.02	-0.02	-0.25
R^2	0.03			0.05			0.17**		

Note: * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$. SC = social class: 1 = lower, 2 = lower middle, 3 = middle, 4 = upper middle, 5 = upper; SES = socioeconomic
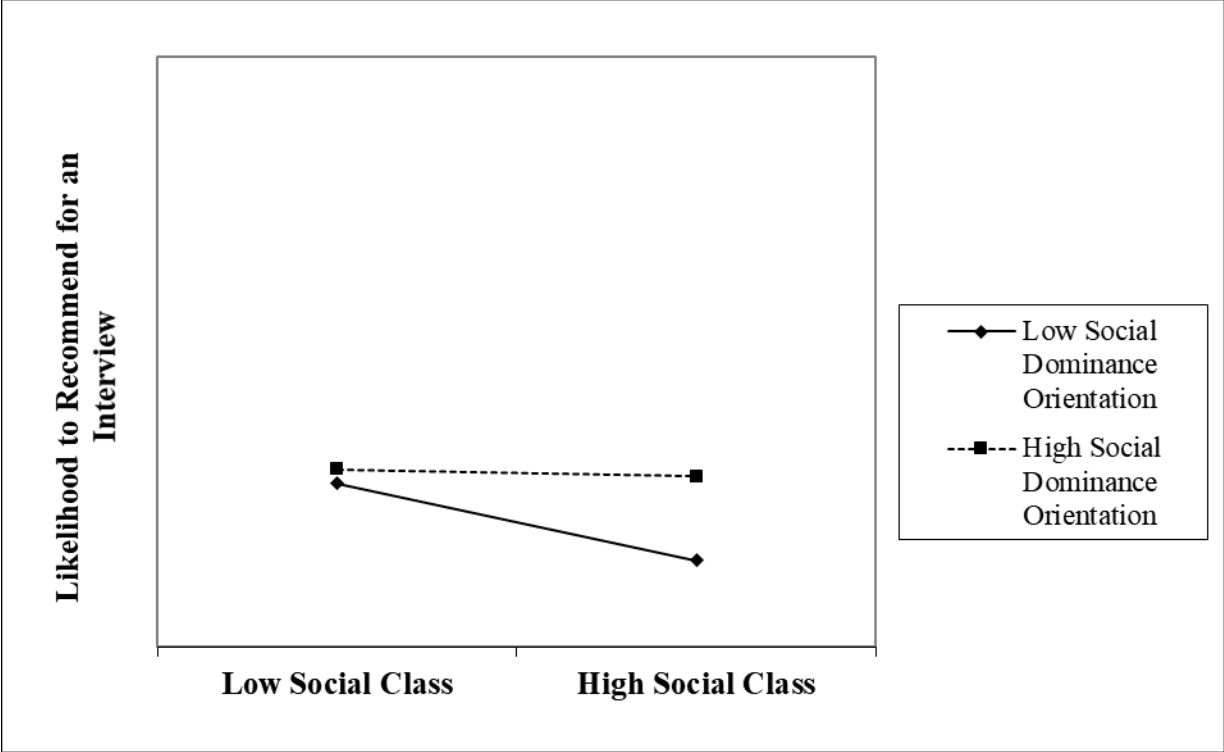
Figure 3-1. The two-way interaction of social class and social dominance orientation on likelihood to recommend for an interview.
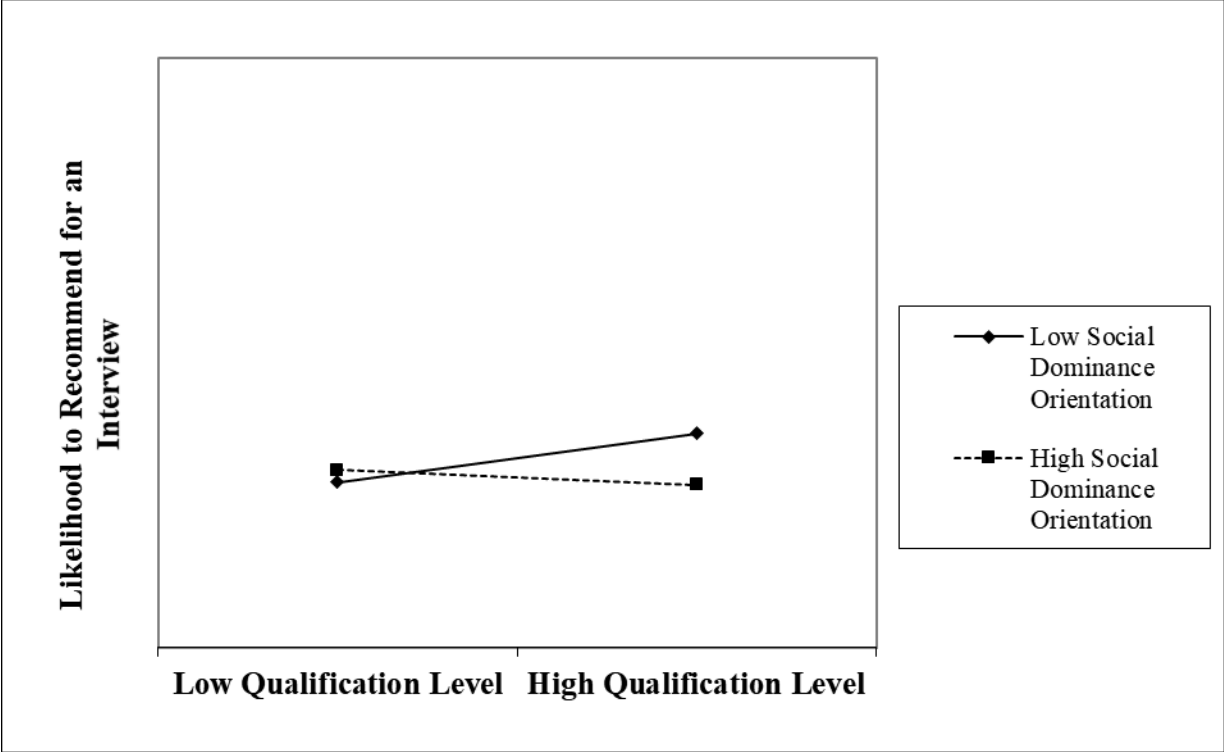
Figure 3-2. The two-way interaction of qualification level and social dominance orientation on likelihood to recommend for an interview.
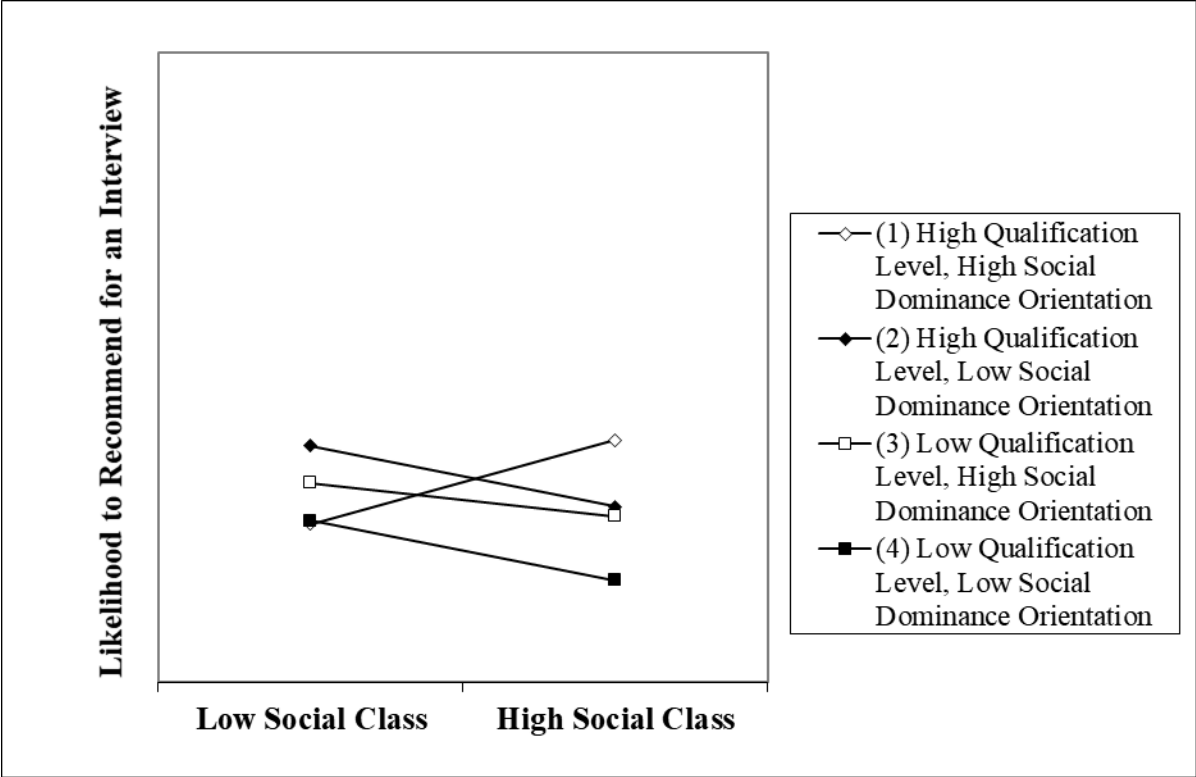
Figure 3-3: The 3-way interaction of social class, qualification level, and social dominance orientation on likelihood to recommend for an interview.
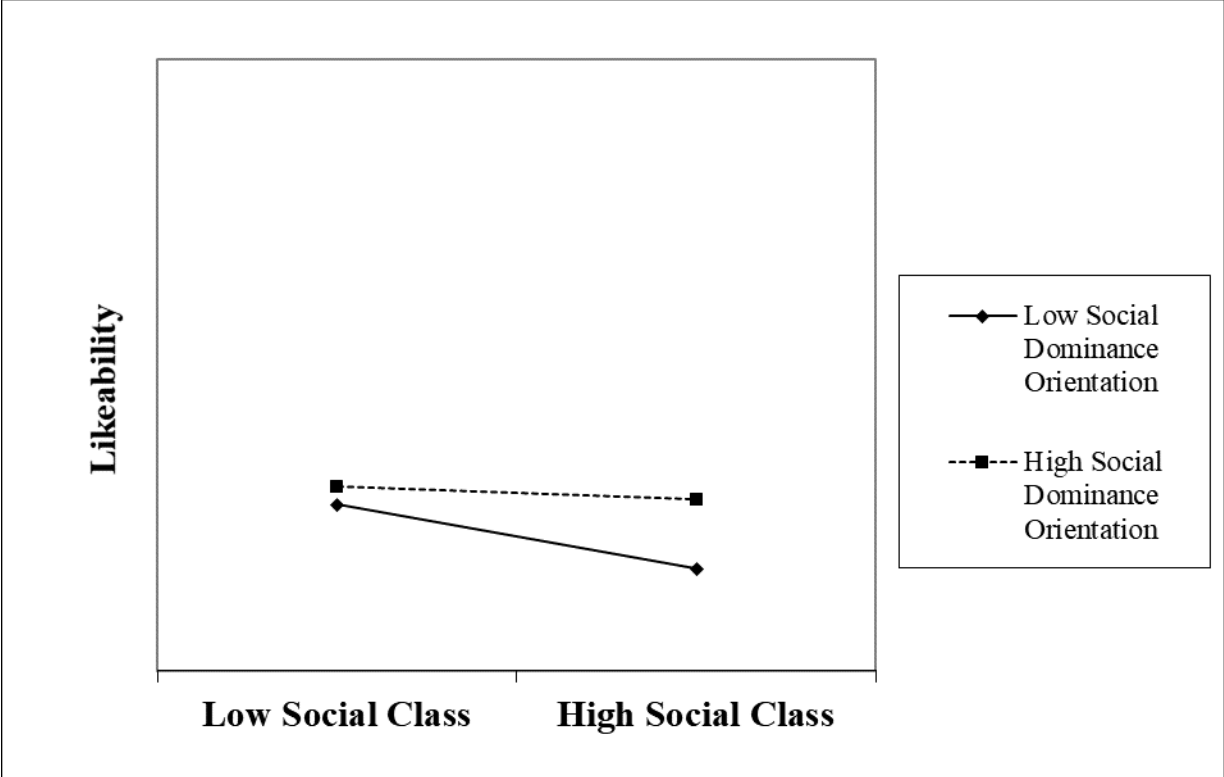
Figure 3-4: The 2-way interaction of social class and social dominance orientation on likeability.
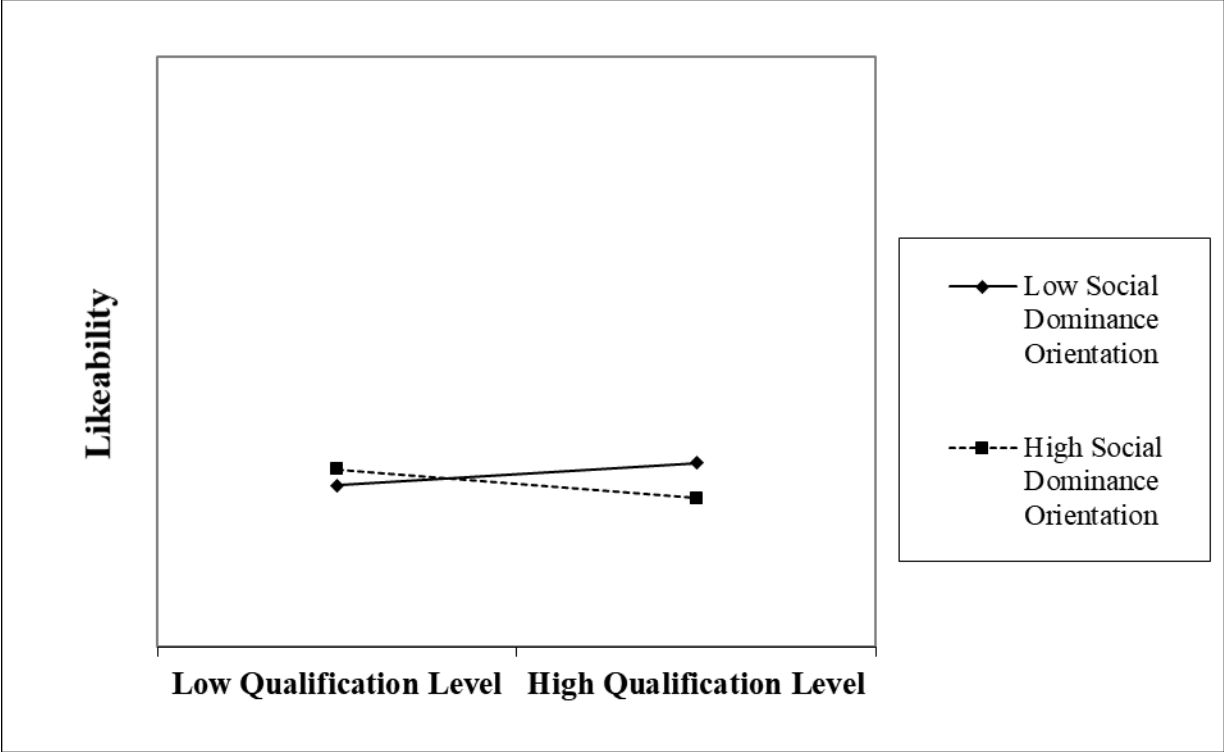
Figure 3-5: The 2-way interaction of qualification level and social dominance orientation on likeability.
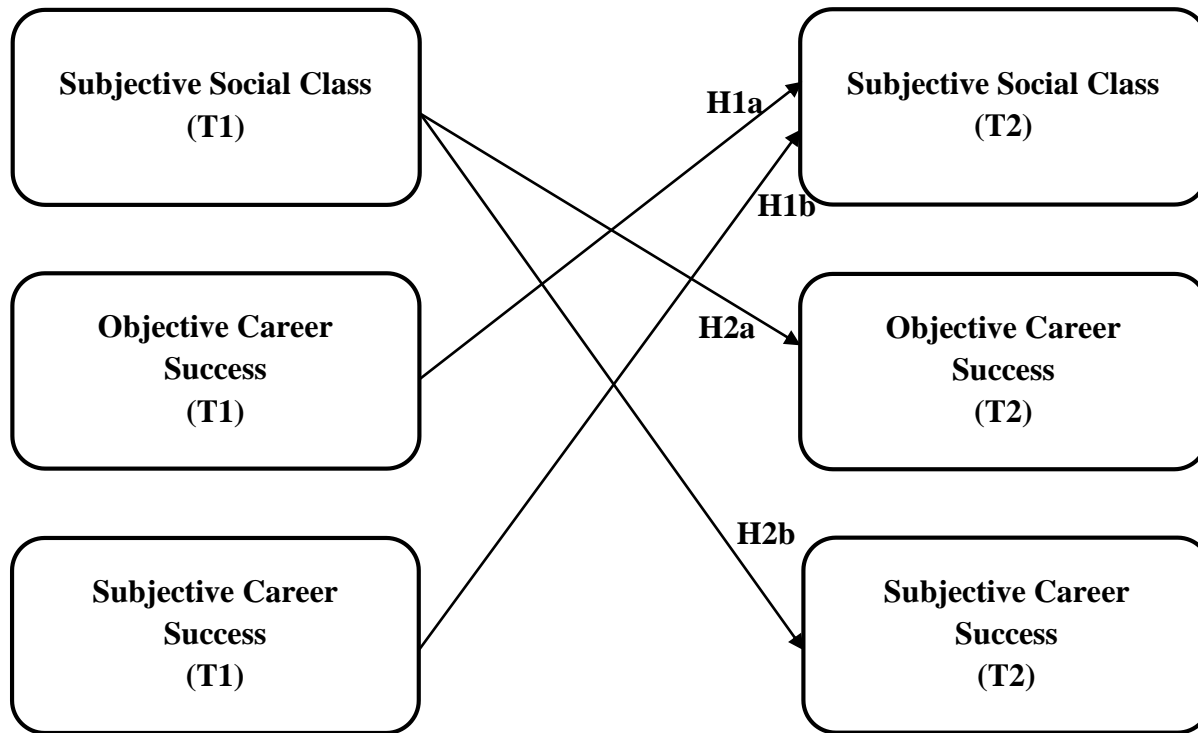
Figure 4-1. Hypothesized Model of Subjective Social Class and Career Success
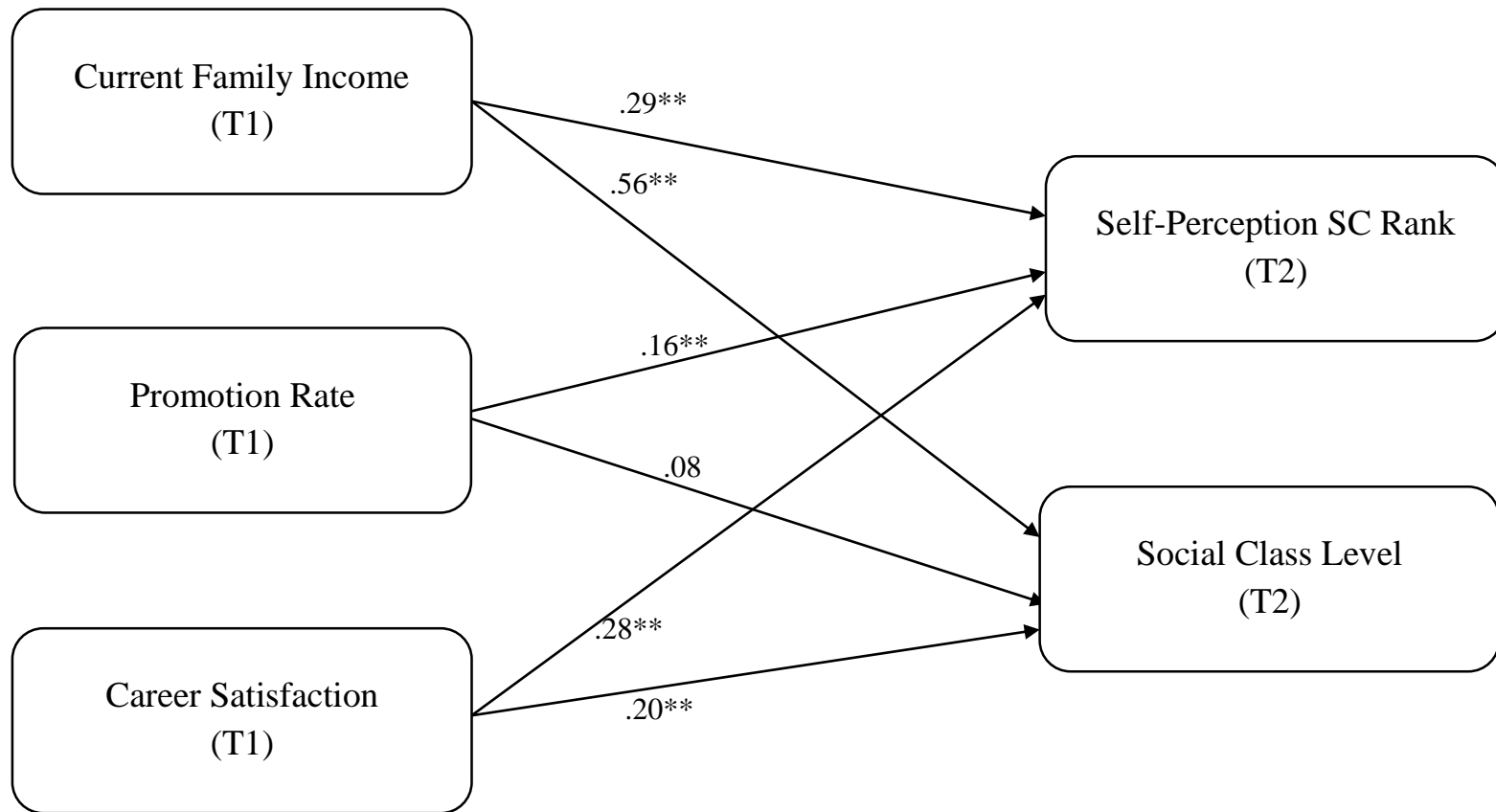
Figure 4-2. Path analysis diagram of career success predicting subjective social class. Standardized coefficients are reported. Control variables are not displayed.
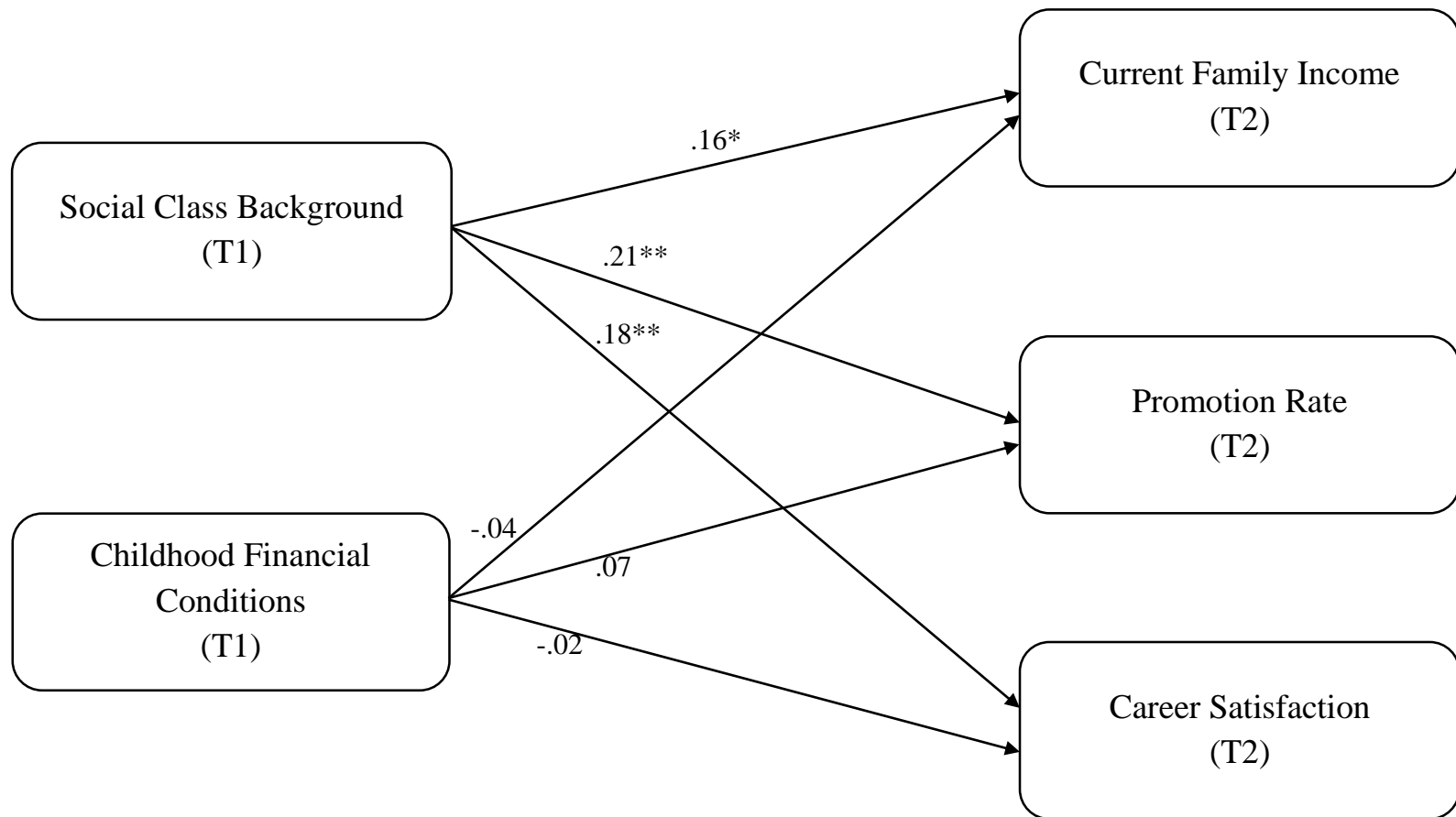
* *p* < .05. ** *p* < .01.

Figure 4-3. Path analysis diagram of subjective social class while growing up predicting career success. Standardized coefficients are reported. Control variables are not displayed.

* *p* < .05. ** *p* < .01.

Markers of Social Class Interview Protocol

Date: Click here to enter a date.   **Interviewer:** Click here to enter text.
Time: Click here to enter text.   **Interviewee:** Click here to enter text.
Location: Click here to enter text.   **Informed Consent Given:** Click here to enter text.

Welcome Script / Briefing:

TURN ON RECORDER

Welcome and thank you for your participation today. My name is Demetria Henderson and I am a doctoral student at the University of Texas at Arlington conducting this research on the Markers of Social Class in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Management.

The interview should take approximately 45 to 60 minutes and will include questions regarding your experiences, attitudes, and behaviors in regards to social class, in addition to questions about your professional and biological background. The purpose of this study is to increase our understanding of social class and how it affects people in the workplace.

I would like your permission to record this interview, so I may accurately document the information you share. If at any time during the interview you wish to discontinue the use of the recorder or the interview itself, please feel free to let me know. All of your responses are confidential.

At this time I would like to remind you of your written consent to participate in this study. The informed consent will be kept under lock and key, separate from your reported responses. The results will be reported with other participants' responses and no one will be able to identify you by your responses.
Note: Prior to interview, participants will be emailed a link to an online informed consent document via Qualtrics in which they will have acknowledged their consent.

Your participation in this interview is completely voluntary. If at any time you need to stop, take a break, or go back to a previous question, please let me know. You may also stop participating at any time without consequence. I want to remind you that it's fine if there is any question you don't want to answer, just let me know. It's important that you feel comfortable. There are no right or wrong answers. Remember I am going to record the interview so I can refer to your comments later. We can also stop the interview at any time.

Do you have any questions or concerns before we begin? Then with your permission we will begin the interview.

I. Professional/Work Background

1) What is your current job title?

2) How long have you been in this position?

3) Can you describe your job to me?

   a) *Probe:* Is this a leadership or management position, that is, do you have people reporting directly to you?
   b) *Probe:* If yes, how many?

4) How did you become interested in your field?

5) In your role, do you have the power to hire?

Thank you. The next set of questions are about social class. Again, it's important that you feel comfortable being honest as there are no right, wrong, or offensive answers. I am interested in you true feelings and thoughts.

II. Social Class Questions

6) When you hear the term "social class", what comes to your mind?

7) If you were to define social class, how would you define it?

8) What if any statements or messages do you recall hearing about social class?

   a) *Probe:* Where did they come from? In other words, from whom did you hear these messages?
   b) *Probe:* What about statements or messages about the rich or poor?
      i. *Probe:* From whom did you hear these messages?

9) Please give me an example of someone who is of low social class.

   a) *Probe:* What does this look like?
   b) *Probe:* What are the behaviors, attitudes, signs?
   c) *Probe:* Do you think your friends have a different perception, if so please explain?
      i. *Probe:* What about your family?
      ii. *Probe:* Your community?
      iii. *Probe:* Society?

10) Likewise, please give me an example of someone who is of upper or higher social class.

   a) *Probe:* What does this look like?

b) *Probe:* What are the behaviors, attitudes, signs?
c) *Probe:* Do you think your friends have a different perception, if so please explain?
   i. *Probe:* What about your family?
   ii. *Probe:* Your community?
   iii. *Probe:* Society?

11) Now, I would like for you to think back and tell me about a particular incident or incidents that first made you aware of class differences?

a) *Probe:* Was this a personal experience or did you observe it?
b) *Probe:* Who was involved?
c) *Probe:* What was the outcome of this incident?
   i. *Probe:* Positive versus negative

d) How did this experience influence you at the time?
   i. *Probe:* Emotionally?
   ii. *Probe:* Physically?
   iii. *Probe:* Cognitively (thought processes)?

e) How does this experience/incident influence you today?
   i. *Probe:* In your personal life?
      (a) Engagement with others, perceptions of others
   ii. *Probe:* In your professional life?
      (a) Engagement with others, perceptions of others

f) What did you learn about social class from this experience?

12) Thinking about class, lower, middle, and upper, how do you think people let others know what class they belong to?

13) How do you let people know your class rank?

Thanks. The next few questions are about the hiring process you or your organization use when making personnel selection decisions. **[Skip to section III.9, if participant does not have hiring ability.]**

III. <u>Résumé Questions</u> [Will only be asked if person has ability to hire on the job]

14) If there is an opening on your team, can you describe the hiring process to me?
   a) *Probe:* Do you write the job description or does someone in your HR department handle this?

15) Do the resumes of potential candidates come directly to you or does someone else filter resumes before you see them?

16) So, once the resume is in your hand, what is the first thing you look for/at?

a) *Probe:* What would be a high ranking for you in regard to **[subject response]**? Why?
b) *Probe:* What would be a low ranking for you in regard to **[subject response]**? Why?

17) What are some indications on a resume that show a person has good:
   a) *Probe:* Leadership skills?
   b) *Probe:* Time management skills?
   c) *Probe:* Work ethic?
   d) *Probe:* Professionalism?

18) How much time do you typically spend evaluating a resume?

19) What mistakes do you typically see in resumes?

20) Do you have the final say as to whether or not an applicant will proceed to the interview stage?

[Everyone will be asked this set of questions]
Thinking about items that you may typically find on a resume:

21) What kind of name sounds low class to you?
   a) *Probe:* High class?

22) How, if at all, do you feel a person's education reflects what their social class may be?
   a) *Probe:* What about the school they graduate from?
      i. *Probe:* High school?
      ii. *Probe:* Community college?
      iii. *Probe:* 4-yr public university/college?
      iv. *Probe:* Ivy league college?

23) What geographic locations (e.g., north, south, Midwest, etc.) do you associate with low social class?
   a) *Probe:* High class?

24) What type of hobbies do you associate with low social class?
   a) *Probe:* What about high social class?

25) Please describe for me how each of the following items may be associated with someone's class?
   a) *Probe:* Applicant jobs
      i. *Probe:* Number of jobs
      ii. *Probe:* Types of jobs
   b) *Probe:* Applicant internships

26) How do you feel social class or the social class perceptions of applicants affects your hiring decisions?

27) Are there any items I did not mention that you can think are also signals or signs of a person's social class?

Thank you. We are almost done. This last section simply asks a few demographic questions.

IV.   **Demographic Questions**

28) What is your race?

29) What is your sex?

30) How old are you?

31) What is your highest level of education?
   a) *Probe:* At what school?

32) Did you grow up in a rural or urban environment?

33) Did you grow up in a single parent/caregiver or two parent/caregiver household?

34) Based on your definition of social class:
   a) How would you rank your family's social class level while growing up (age 16)?
      (a) ☐ Lower/working class
      (b) ☐ Lower middle class
      (c) ☐ Middle class
      (d) ☐ Upper middle class
      (e) ☐ Upper class
   b) How would you rank your current social class level?
      (a) ☐ Lower/working class
      (b) ☐ Lower middle class
      (c) ☐ Middle class
      (d) ☐ Upper middle class
      (e) ☐ Upper class
35) What do you do for fun, what sort of extracurricular activities do you engage in?

V.   **Interviewee Comments**
Thank you so much for sharing your opinions and experiences with me today. This information is very helpful and informative. This concludes all the questions I have for you. Is there anything that I did not ask that I should have asked regarding social class?

Note: If participant wishes to discontinue study, ask if they would be willing to share why.

Appendix B

Coding Dictionary

Code	Definition
Definition of SC	Participant's personal definition of SC. Specifically, responses to the question of how they define SC. In addition, any other comments that elaborate or clarify their definition of SC should be captured with this code and subcodes
SC_Def: Income	SC defined in terms of income, economic or financial situation
SC_Def: Mobility	SC defined in terms of moving from one class to another
SC_Def: Position in Life	SC defined in terms of a person's current position in life
SC_Def: Position in Career	SC defined in terms of a person's current position in his/her career
SC_Def: Race	SC or social class differences defined in terms of race
SC_Def: Social Standing	SC defined in terms of social standing; lineage (i.e., passage from one generation to the next)
SC_Def: Associate with Like Others	SC defined in terms of people tending to associate with others that are similar to them in some fashion
SC_Def: Social Class vs Class	Participant defines social class and class differently
SC_Def: Background and Interests	SC defined in terms of a person's background, interests, and/or experiences.
SC_Def: Resources / Exposure	SC defined in terms of the amount (lack) of resources a person has available to him/her, or the amount (lack) of exposure a person has had; i.e., how these factors relate to upbringing
SC_Def: Geography / Residence	Description of SC defined in terms of where a person lives; his/her neighborhood and/or geographic location
SC_Def: Education	SC defined in terms of educational level (how much education or the types of schools attended)
SC_Def: Caste System / Categorization	SC defined in terms of categories
Indicators and/or Thoughts of SC	Description of the indicators/attributes and/or thoughts of SC and the ways in which people may signal their SC via these indicators
SC_Indicator Appearance	Description of how a person's outward appearance signals their SC
LSC_Ind_Appearance	Description of how a person's outward appearance signals their LSC
HSC_Ind_Appearance	Description of how a person's outward appearance signals their HSC
SC_Indicator Association with Like Others	Description of the tendency of people to associate with others from a similar class and/or background
LSC_Ind_Associate_with_Like_Others	Description of the tendency of LSC people to associate with others from a LSC background
HSC_Ind_Associate_with_Like_Others	Description of the tendency of HSC people to associate with others from a HSC background
SC_Indicator Education	Level (amount) of education signals SC
LSC_Ind_Education	People having no more than a high school diploma or GED and/or the type of school a person attends (e.g., public vs. private) signals LSC

HSC_Ind_Education	People who have earned a professional degree, typically gone beyond a Bachelors; not first generation college graduate or attends same college as parents/grandparents; and/or the type of school a person attends (e.g., public vs private) signals HSC
SC_Indicator Employment	Employment status signals SC
LSC_Ind_Employment	Unemployed or underemployed signals LSC
HSC_Ind_Employment	Gainfully employed signals HSC
SC_Indicator Government Asistance	Receipt of government assistance signals SC
LSC_Ind_Govt_Asst	Receipt of government assistance, such as welfare, signals LSC
HSC_Ind_Govt_Asst	Receipt of government assistance, such as corporate tax breaks, signals HSC
SC_Indicator Groups/Orgs	Membership in certain groups or organizations signals SC
LSC_Ind_Groups/Orgs	Lack of membership in certain groups or organizations
HSC_Ind_Groups/Orgs	Membership in exclusive clubs or organizations, sitting on boards signal HSC
SC_Indicator Work Effort	The amount of work effort a person puts forth signals SC
LSC_Ind_Hard_Worker	Hard worker, someone who works to fullest potential
HSC_Ind_Hard_Worker	Hard worker, someone who works to fullest potential
LSC_Ind_Lazy_Worker	Lazy worker or someone failing to work to fullest potential
HSC_Ind_Lazy_Worker	Lazy worker or someone failing to work to fullest potential
SC_Indicator Hobbies	Types of hobbies a person enjoys signals SC
LSC_Ind_Hobbies: NA	Describes LSC as not having the time or resources to have hobbies
LSC_Ind_Hobbies	Description of hobbies that people from a LSC engage in
HSC_Ind_Hobbies	Description of hobbies that people from a HSC engage in. These are things that feel luxurious or non-essential
SC_Indicator Home Ownership	Home ownership signals of SC
LSC_Ind_Home_Ownership	Living in a housing project, trailers, or does not own a home signals LSC
HSC_Ind_Home_Ownership	Owns home, typically large (4 or more bedrooms) signals HSC
SC_Indicator Income	Income, financials, economics
LSC_Ind_Income	Lack of a steady income or no income or retirement savings signal LSC
LSC_Ind_Income -- Preference to be paid in Cash (lack of bank accounts)	
HSC_Ind_Income	Having a steady income, retirement accounts, savings accounts signal HSC
SC_Indicator Inherit Class	Description of how people are born into or inherit their SC
LSC_Ind_Inherit_Class	Description of how LSC people are born into or inherit their SC
HSC_Ind_Inherit_Class	Description of how HSC people are born into or inherit their SC
SC_Indicator Language	Description of how the way in which a person speaks portrays their SC
LSC_Ind_Language	Poor English (verbal) and/or language skills signal LSC
HSC_Ind_Language	Good English (verbal) and language skills signal HSC
SC_Indicator Mask	Description of how people may hide or mask their current SC and/or portray another SC
LSC_Ind_Mask	Description of how people may hide or mask their current LSC and/or portray another SC
HSC_Ind_Mask	Description of how people may hide or mask their current HSC and/or portray another SC

SC_Indicator Material Goods	Description of possessions or material goods (e.g., cars, jewelry) as signals of SC
LSC_Ind_Material Goods	Description of how people from a LSC use material goods to portray their SC
HSC_Ind_Material Goods	Description of how people from a HSC use material goods to portray their SC
SC_Indicator Maturity	Description of how a person's level of maturity signals SC
LSC_Ind_Maturity	Description of how a person's level of maturity signals LSC
HSC_Ind_Maturity	Description of how a person's level of maturity signals HSC
SC_Indicator Philanthropy	Description of how philanthropic and altruistic behaviors, e.g., donating money or volunteering time, signal SC
LSC_Ind_Philanthropy	Description of how philanthropic and altruistic behaviors (or lack thereof), e.g., donating money or volunteering time, signal LSC
HSC_Ind_Philanthropy	Description of how philanthropic and altruistic behaviors, e.g., donating money or volunteering time, signal HSC
SC_Indicator Risk Taking	Level of risk a person is comfortable with or usually takes signals SC
LSC_Ind_Risk_Taking	Tendency of people from a LSC to not take many risks
HSC_Ind_Risk_Taking	Tendency of people from a HSC to take more risks
SC_Indicator Tolerance	Description of the amount of tolerance, open- or closed-mindedness a person displays signals SC (e.g., very black or white)
LSC_Ind_Tolerance	Description of the amount of tolerance, open- or closed-mindedness a person displays signals LSC (e.g., very black or white)
HSC_Ind_Tolerance	Description of the amount of tolerance, open- or closed-mindedness a person displays signals HSC (e.g., very black or white)
SC_Indicator Vacation	Whether or not a person has the ability to take vacations signals SC
LSC_Ind_Vacation	Inability to go on vacations signals LSC
HSC_Ind_Vacation	Taking vacations, vacationing in elite places signal HSC, e.g., Martha's Vineyard, Hamptons
SC_Indicator Power	Possession or lack of power signals SC
LSC_Ind_Power	Having little to no power signals LSC
HSC_Ind_Power	Having large amounts of power signal HSC
SC_Indicator Gender	Gender as an indicator of SC
LSC_Ind_Gender	Gender, specifically as a signal of LSC
HSC_Ind_Gender	Gender, specifically as a signal of HSC
SC_Indicator Social Network	The breadth and depth of a person's social network signals SC
LSC_Ind_Social Network	A small social network, limited diversity in one's social network signals LSC
HSC_Ind_Social Network	Large social network that is very broad and encompasses people from diverse backgrounds signals HSC
SC_Indicator Intelligence	Description of how a person's intelligence signals SC (this is distinct from education and/or the amount of education a person has)
LSC_Ind_Intelligence	Description of intelligence as a signal of LSC
HSC_Ind_Intelligence	Description of how intelligence signals HSC

SC_Indicator Caste System / SC Categorization (Levels)	The presence of a caste system as an indicator of social class and/or categorization of SC by level
SC_Indicator Exposure and/or Resources	The amount of (lack of) exposure and/or resources a person has available ot them signals SC; includes use/non-use of resources
HSC_Ind_Exposure & Resources	Having a vision and being exposed to something better, having resources and opportunities available signal HSC
LSC_Ind_Exposure & Resources	Having a lack vision or not being exposed to something better or not having access to resources and/or opportunities signal LSC
Use/Non-Use of Exposure/Resources	Description of people who use or fail to use resources and opportunities available to them, regardless of high or low SC
SC_Indicator Race / Ethnicity	A person's race/ethnicity signals SC
LSC_Ind_Race	Race, specifically as a signal of LSC
HSC_Ind_Race	Race, specifically as a signal of HSC
SC_Indicator Agressive/Passive Behavior	Description of a person's behavior is an indicator of SC
LSC_Ind_Agressive	Agressive or violent behaviors indicate LSC
HSC_Ind_Passive / Level-headed	Description of passive or level-headed behavior serves as an indicator of HSC
HSC_Ind_Aggressive	
SC_Indicator Politics	Political views and/or active involvement with politics signal SC
LSC_Ind_Politics	Political views and/or not actively engaged in politics or the political system signal LSC
HSC_Ind_Politics	Political views and/or active engagement in the political system signal HSC
SC_Indicator Type of Jobs / Experiences	Type of job, profession, choice of career, entrepreneurship, experiences signal SC
LSC_Ind_Type_Jobs	Tendency of LSC to have blue/pink collar jobs
HSC_Ind_Type_Jobs	Tendency of HSC to have professional jobs, jobs requiring a degree
SC_Indicator Professionalism/Casualness	Description of a person's professionalism and/or casualness signals SC
LSC_Ind_Professionalism	Description of a person becoming overly familiar and casual in a professional setting signals LSC, i.e., too soon or unwarranted
HSC_Ind_Professionalism	Description of a person behaving in a professional manner indicates HSC
SC_Indicator Confidence	A person's confidence level signals SC
HSC_Ind_Confidence	Displays of high confidence signal HSC
LSC_Ind_Confidence	Lower levels of confidence signal LSC
SC_Indicator Privilege / Advantage	Description of privilege or benefits received as an advantage over others as an indicator of SC
HSC_Ind_Privilege	Description of people having privilege serves as a signal of HSC, including description of expectation that because of privilege there is more likelihood or expectation of success
LSC_Ind_Privilege	Description of people without privilege signals LSC, includes description of having to struggle or lower expectations due to lack of privilege
SC_Indicator Geography and/or Residence	Geography or place of residence may be an indicator of SC, e.g., rural, vs. suburban, inner city, neighborhood

LSC_Ind_Geography	Living in a housing project, trailers, or does not own a home signals LSC
HSC_Ind_Geography	Living in a gated community, wealthier parts of a city signal HSC
SC_Indicator Fam_Num_Children	Family composition, that is, the number of children one has or does not have in addition to one's marital status signals SC:
LSC_Ind_Fam_Num_Children	Family composition, that is, having 2 or more children and being unwed signals LSC
HSC_Ind_Fam_Num_Children	Family composition, that is, having a small number of children, typically married signals HSC
SC_Indicator Health Care	Description of health care, be it access, lack of access, nutrition choices, etc. signal SC
SC_Indicator Mobility	Description of a person's desire or lack thereof to move from one social class to another
SC_Indicator Thoughtful and Conscious Deliberation of Lifestyle Choices	Description of a person who carefully considers and weighs the choices in front of him/her before making a decision (e.g., buying a car, having a baby)
SC_Indicator Upbringing or Background	A person's background or upbringing is an indicator of their social class
SC_Indicator Knowledge of Social Graces/Etiquette and/or World Events	Description of a person's knowledge (or lack of knowledge) about social graces and/or world events.
SC_Indicator First Generation Americans (Immigrants)	
Résumé SC Indicators	Description of how various items on a résumé function as indicators of social class
Résumé SC Indicators: Education	Description of how a job applicant's educational information shared on résumé indicates a person's social class
Res_SC_Ind_Educ: Ivy League Universities	Attending an Ivy League university functions as a social class indicator (HSC)
Res_SC_Ind_Educ: NA	Education on a resume is not applicable as an indicator of SC
Res_SC_Ind_Educ: Amount of Schooling / 2 yr vs 4 yr	Attending a 2 yr (community college) vs a 4yr (college or university) signals SC; the amount of schooling a person has (e.g., associate vs. bachelors vs. masters)
Res_SC_Ind_Educ: For-Profit Universities	Attending a for-profit university functions as a social class indicator (LSC); including online only vs. traditional, brick-and-mortar school
Res_SC_Ind_Educ: Public vs Private	Whether an applicant attends a public or private school may signal SC
Résumé SC Indicators: Names	Description of how a job applicant's name (birth name) shared on résumé indicates a person's social class
Res_LSC_Names	Names that are hard to pronounce, stripper names, redneck, ethnic names
Res_HSC_Names	Names with suffixes; WASPY names
Res_SC_Ind_Names: Culture_Ethnic_Race	An applicant's name may clue participant in on his/her culture and/or ethnic group and/or race which may function as social class indicators
Res_SC_Ind_Names: NA	Applicant names on a resume are not applicable as an indicator of SC
Résumé SC Indicators: Geography	Description of how a job applicant's geographic location shared on résumé indicates a person's social class
Res_SC_Ind_Geo: NA	US geographical region is not a strong indicator of SC

Res_SC_Ind_Geo: Lower	US geographical regions that indicate LSC
Res_SC_Ind_Geo: Higher	US geographical regions that indicate HSC
Résumé SC Indicators: Hobbies	Description of how a job applicant's hobbies or extracurricular activities shared on résumé indicates a person's social class
Res_SC_Ind_Hobbies: NA	
Res_SC_Ind_Hobbies: Lower	Description of hobbies that LSC people engage in
Res_SC_Ind_Hobbies: Higher	Description of hobbies that HSC people engage in
Résumé SC Indicators: Number of Jobs	Description of how a job applicant's number of jobs shared on résumé indicates social class
Res_SC_Ind_JobNum: NA	No conclusion drawn about an applicant's SC based on the number of jobs he/she has held
Résumé SC Indicators: Types of Jobs	Description of how the types of jobs a job applicant shares on résumé indicates social class
Res_SC_Ind_JobType: Lower	Description of how the types of jobs a job applicant shares on résumé indicates LSC
Res_SC_Ind_JobType: Higher	Description of how the types of jobs a job applicant shares on résumé indicates HSC
Res_SC_Ind_JobType: NA	Types of jobs an applicant has held is not applicable as an indicator of SC
Res_SC_Ind_JobType: Upward progression from one job to the next	Progression across various jobs is an indicator of SC
Résumé SC Indicators: Internships	Description of how having held an internship indicates social class
Res_SC_Ind_Intern: NA	No conclusion drawn about an applicant's SC based on whether or not he/she has had an internship
Res_SC_Ind_Intern: Lower	Description of how having held an internship indicates LSC
Res_SC_Ind_Intern: Higher	Description of how having held an internship indicates HSC
Resume SC Indicators: Travel and International Exposure	Description of how a job applicant's exposure to extensive travel and/or international experiences shared on a resume signals SC
Res_SC_Ind_Travel_Exposure: NA	Travel and international exposure is not applicable as a sign of SC
Résumé First Item Reviewed	Description of the résumé component(s) that a person initially focuses on
Selection_Process_Overview	Description of the hiring or selection process used in his/her organization
Job_Description_Development_Process	Description of how organization develops the job description
Perceptions of SC on Hiring Decision	Description of how perception's of an applicant's SC effects hiring decisions

Appendix C

Interview ID Descriptors

ID	RACE	GENDER	AGE GROUP	JOB TITLE
I01	African-American	Female	46-49	Medicare and Marketing Manager
I02	African-American	Female	40-45	Senior Finance Manager
I03	African-American	Female	50-55	Human Resources Director
I04	African-American	Female	30-35	Proposal Manager
I05	African-American	Male	56-59	President, Manufacturing Industry
I06	African-American	Male	46-49	Head of Industry Accounts
I07	African-American	Male	46-49	Project Coordinator Manager
I08	African-American	Male	46-49	Senior Risk Officer
I09	Caucasian	Female	60-65	Human Resources/Office Administrator
I10	Caucasian	Female	40-45	Director, Global Executive Talent Acquisition
I11	Caucasian	Female	60-65	Director of Human Resources & Title IX Coordinator
I12	Caucasian	Female	36-39	Senior Director Chief Data Officer
I13	Caucasian	Male	46-49	Global Sourcing Director
I14	Caucasian	Male	40-45	Director of Client Services
I15	Caucasian	Male	60-65	Associate Director, University Research Institute
I16	Caucasian	Male	36-39	Vice President, Finance
I17	Hispanic	Male	36-39	Product Manager
I18	Hispanic	Female	40-45	Clinical Programs Manager
I19	African-American	Male	46-49	Head of Data Science and Business Analytics
I20	Caucasian	Female	60-65	Vice President, Human Resources of America's and Marketing

Job Description

D&H Consulting, Inc.

Position: Training & Development Specialist

GENERAL SUMMARY: Design and conduct training and development programs to improve individual and organizational performance as part of the Leadership Development team. May analyze training needs. Approximately 25% travel is required.

JOB DUTIES:
- Assess training needs through surveys, interviews with employees, focus groups, or consultation with managers, instructors, or customers.
- Design, plan, organize, or direct orientation and training programs for employees or customers.
- Facilitate training programs to help workers maintain or improve job skills.
- Present information using a variety of instructional techniques, such as role playing, simulations, team exercises, group discussions, videos, or lectures.
- Obtain, organize, or develop training procedure manuals, guides, or course materials, such as handouts or visual materials.
- Evaluate modes of training delivery, such as in-person or virtual to optimize training effectiveness and training costs.
- Attend meetings or seminars to obtain information for use in training programs or to inform management of training program status.

QUALIFICATIONS & EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS:
- Bachelor's degree or equivalent.
- Knowledge of principles and methods for training and development.
- Strong communication skills: speaking, writing, and active listening.
- Ability to establish and maintain interpersonal relationships.

PREFERRED QUALIFICATIONS & SKILLS:
- Bachelor's degree in Human Resource Management.
- Experience working in human resource department or training and/or teaching others.
- Knowledge of the measurement of training effects.
- Knowledge of business and management principles involved in strategic planning, resource allocation, human resources modeling, leadership technique, production methods, and coordination of people and resources.
- Knowledge of principles and procedures for personnel recruitment, selection, training, compensation and benefits, labor relations, negotiations, and personnel information systems.
- Thinking creatively.

Cover Letter Template

APPLICANT NAME (white vs. black)
APPLICANT ADDRESS

May 2, 2017

Ms. Diana Hill
D&H Consulting, Inc.
Fort Worth, TX 76155

Dear Ms. Hill:

I am writing in response to your advertisement for the Training and Development Specialist position at D&H Consulting, Inc. I am a graduating senior at the UNIVERSITY. I have maintained a GPA of XX, while pursuing a degree in MAJOR. [*I have taken business courses to prepare me for this position, including Principles of Management and Principles of Human Resource Management.*] / [*I have taken business courses to prepare me for this position, including Principles of Management, Strategic Human Resource Management, Training and Employee Development, Program Evaluation in Human Resource Management, and Human Resource Analytics.*]

I have had the opportunity to attend some [of the best private] / [good] schools in the [country] / [state of XX], including LIST OF SCHOOLS. [*I have competed nationally in equestrian show jumping competitions, have traveled extensively in Europe, and studied in London for a year during high school.*] / [*Beginning one's education at a community college and transferring to a 4-year university can be daunting. However, after graduating from community college, I was awarded the University First Generation Scholarship Award to attend 4-YR SCHOOL, as I am the first in my family to attend college.*] The [outstanding] / [leave blank] institutions I have attended and these diverse experiences taught me the benefits of collegiality and building interpersonal relationships. As such, I adapt easily to new situations and people.

[*Both my father and mother have demanding jobs as partners at law firms, and have taught me the value of a work ethic. Their dedication to hard work and the pride they show in their jobs is something I strive to emulate in everything I do. Over the past two years, I have worked as a part-time JOB for one of my father's golf partners at EMPLOYER.*] / [*Both my father and mother have demanding work schedules, and have taught me the value of a work ethic. My father works two jobs as a dishwasher and janitor, while my mother works in a school cafeteria full-time and cleans houses on nights and weekends. Their dedication to hard work and the pride they show in their jobs is something I strive to emulate in everything I do. It is their example that pushed me to apply for the part-time position as a JOB at EMPLOYER, which I learned about from one of my UNIVERSITY professors.*] The tenacity I learned from my parents has allowed me to grow and learn new skills in this position. As such, I have been able to hone my speaking, writing, and active listening skills by communicating with customers and employees, [*handling complaints, and disseminating company information*] / [*and assisting with HR functions, such as employee orientation programs, benefits workshops, and recruiting activities*].

Enclosed is a résumé that outlines my unique qualifications for the position of Training and Development Specialist. I appreciate your consideration and look forward to hearing from you. I can be contacted at PHONE NUMBER, EMAIL ADDRESS, or at the above address.

Sincerely,

APPLICANT NAME (with or without nickname)

ENCLOSURE

Sample Résumé

Tremayne Robinson
8145 Hummingbird Circle | New Haven, CT 06514
Email: robinsontremayne@yahoo.com   Cell: 203-494-6891

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Science: General Studies, May 2017
>University of New Haven, West Haven, CT, Aug 2014 – May 2017
>GPA: 2.60

Princeton University, Princeton, NJ, Sep 2012 – Jun 2013
Phillips Exeter Academy, Exeter, NH, May 2012
>Junior year abroad in London

RELEVANT COURSEWORK

• Principles of Management	• Principles of Human Resource Management
• Introduction to Sociology	• Introduction to Industrial Organization Psychology

WORK EXPERIENCE

Office Assistant (part-time)   Aug 2014 - present
KG Accounting Firm, Inc.   New Haven, CT
- Operate office machines, such as photocopiers and scanners, facsimile machines, voice mail systems, and personal computers.
- Answer telephones, direct calls, and take messages.
- Maintain and update filing, inventory, mailing, and database systems, either manually or using a computer.
- Communicate with customers and employees to answer questions, disseminate or explain information, take orders, and address complaints.
- Open, sort, and route incoming mail, answer correspondence, and prepare outgoing mail.
- Compile, copy, sort, and file records of office activities, business transactions, and other activities.

ACTIVITIES & INTERESTS

- Member, Society of Human Resource Management (SHRM) University Chapter
- Member, NAACP University Chapter
- Volunteer Teacher, Community After-school Horseback Riding Program
- Playing the violin, scuba diving, equestrian show jumping, and international travel

Daniel Miller

4329 Iberia Circle | Chicago, IL 60618
Email: dbm1111@yahoo.com   Cell: 773-494-8111

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Science: Management, Human Resources Concentration, June 2017
   Northwestern University, Evanston, IL
   Minor: Industrial Organizational Psychology
   GPA: 3.85; Dean's List
Phillips Exeter Academy, Exeter, NH, May 2013
   Junior year abroad in London

RELEVANT COURSEWORK

• Principles of Management
• Recruiting, Selection, and Placement
• Training and Employee Development
• Strategic Human Resource Management
• Human Resource Analytics

• Principles of Human Resource Management
• Program Evaluation in Human Resource Managemen
• Introduction to Employee Benefits
• Introduction to Industrial Organization Psychology
• Managing Diversity in Organizations

WORK EXPERIENCE

Human Resources Assistant (part-time)   Jan 2015 - present
KSG Consulting   Chicago, IL
- Assist with employee orientation programs and act as substitute in presenting information on organization history.
- Co-present benefits workshop for existing employees and new hires.
- Assist the HR team with posting positions, sourcing resumes, scheduling interviews, and conducting initial phone screenings.
- Participate in college recruiting events to represent the company and identify potential candidates.
- Demonstrate discretion, integrity, fair-mindedness, and a persuasive, congenial personality.
- Provide administrative support to HR managers, including, calendar management, organizing travel and events, completing expense reports, and submitting service requests.
- Answer phones, distribute mail, print/copy documents, order supplies, and set up meetings including conference lines/ video conferences.

Youth Development Coordinator   Summer 2016
YMCA   Chicago, IL
- Provided quality customer service and ensured a safe and fun environment for members, volunteers, and participants.
- Assisted Director in planning curriculum, and coordinating and promoting Youth, Teen and Family programming.
- Worked hands-on in programs, activities and special events as needed.
- Assisted with the implementation and delivery of department training and meeting coordination.

Busser   Summers 2014, 2015
Elgin Country Club   Elgin, IL
- Served ice water, coffee, rolls, or butter to patrons.
- Maintained adequate supplies of items such as clean linens, silverware, glassware, dishes, or trays.
- Cleaned and polished counters, shelves, walls, furniture, or equipment in food service areas or other areas of restaurants and mop or vacuum floors.

ACTIVITIES & INTERESTS

- President, Society of Human Resource Management (SHRM) University Chapter
- Member, Student Government Association
- Volunteer Instructor, Community After-school Horseback Riding Program
- Playing the violin, scuba diving, equestrian show jumping, and international travel

Daniel "Boone" Miller
1449 Oregon Trail | Richmond, VA 23219
Email: danielboone@yahoo.com   Cell: 804-394-8131

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Science: General Studies, May 2017
> University of Phoenix Richmond-Virginia Beach Campus, Glen Allen, VA
> GPA: 2.60

Associate of Science: General Studies, May 2015
> Reynolds Community College, Richmond, VA

Thomas Jefferson High School, Richmond, VA, May 2013

RELEVANT COURSEWORK

• Principles of Management   • Principles of Human Resource Management
• Introduction to Sociology   • Introduction to Industrial Organization Psycholog

WORK EXPERIENCE

Office Assistant (part-time)   Aug 2014 - present
AP Accounting Firm, Inc.   Richmond, VA

- Operate office machines, such as photocopiers and scanners, facsimile machines, voice mail systems, and personal computers.
- Answer telephones, direct calls, and take messages.
- Maintain and update filing, inventory, mailing, and database systems, either manually or using a computer.
- Communicate with customers and employees to answer questions, disseminate or explain information, take orders, and address complaints.
- Open, sort, and route incoming mail, answer correspondence, and prepare outgoing mail.
- Compile, copy, sort, and file records of office activities, business transactions, and other activities.

ACTIVITIES & INTERESTS

- Member, Society of Human Resource Management (SHRM) University Chapter
- Member, Student Government Association
- Volunteer Coach, Community Little League Basketball
- Playing basketball, listening to rap music

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Daniel "Boone" Miller

119 Chestnut Street | Charlottesville, VA 22901
Email: dboone@yahoo.com   Cell: 434-494-7110

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EDUCATION

Bachelor of Science: Management, Human Resources Concentration, May 2017
> University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA
> University First Generation Scholarship Award
> GPA: 3.85; Dean's List

Associate of Science: General Studies, May 2015
> Piedmont Virginia Community College, Charlottesville, VA

Charlottesville High School, Charlottesville, VA, May 2013

RELEVANT COURSEWORK

• Principles of Management	• Principles of Human Resource Management
• Recruiting, Selection, and Placement	• Program Evaluation in Human Resource Managemen
• Training and Employee Development	• Introduction to Employee Benefits
• Strategic Human Resource Management	• Introduction to Industrial Organization Psychology
• Human Resource Analytics	• Managing Diversity in Organizations

WORK EXPERIENCE

Human Resources Assistant (part-time)   Jan 2015 - present
Peters Consulting Group   Charlottesville, VA
- Assist with employee orientation programs and act as substitute in presenting information on organization history.
- Co-present benefits workshop for existing employees and new hires.
- Assist the HR team with posting positions, sourcing resumes, scheduling interviews, and conducting initial phone screenings.
- Participate in college recruiting events to represent the company and identify potential candidates.
- Demonstrate discretion, integrity, fair-mindedness, and a persuasive, congenial personality.
- Provide administrative support to HR managers, including, calendar management, organizing travel and events, completing expense reports, and submitting service requests.
- Answer phones, distribute mail, print/copy documents, order supplies, and set up meetings including conference lines/ video conferences.

Youth Development Coordinator   Summer 2016
YMCA   Charlottesville, VA
- Provided quality customer service and ensured a safe and fun environment for members, volunteers, and participants.
- Assisted Director in planning curriculum, and coordinating and promoting Youth, Teen and Family programming.
- Worked hands-on in programs, activities and special events as needed.
- Assisted with the implementation and delivery of department training and meeting coordination.

Busser   Summers 2014, 2015
Denny's Restaurant   Charlottesville, VA
- Served ice water, coffee, rolls, or butter to patrons.
- Maintained adequate supplies of items such as clean linens, silverware, glassware, dishes, or trays.
- Cleaned and polished counters, shelves, walls, furniture, or equipment in food service areas or other areas of restaurants and mop or vacuum floors.

ACTIVITIES & INTERESTS
- President, Society of Human Resource Management (SHRM) University Chapter
- Member, Student Government Association
- Volunteer Coach, Community Little League Basketball Program
- Playing basketball, listening to rap music

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Essay 2 Measurement Constructs

❖ **DEPENDENT VARIABLES**
➢ **Recommendation to Interview**
Citation: Uhlmann, E. L., & Cohen, G. L. (2007). "I think it, therefore it's true": Effects of self-perceived objectivity on hiring discrimination. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes, 104*(2), 207-223. doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.obhdp.2007.07.001

Higgins, C. A., & Judge, T. A. (2004). The effect of applicant influence tactics on recruiter perceptions of fit and hiring recommendations: A field study. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 89*(4), 622-632.

Items:
1. I believe the applicant would be successful as a Training and Development Specialist.
2. Overall, I would evaluate this candidate positively.
3. I would recommend extending an interview to this applicant.

➢ **Likability Scale**
Citation: Adapted from Reysen, S. (2005). Construction of a new scale: The Reysen likability scale. *Social Behavior and Personality, 33*(2), 201-208. doi:10.2224/sbp.2005.33.2.201

Items:
1. This person is likeable.
2. I would like this person as a coworker.
3. I would like to be friends with this person.
4. This person is similar to me.
5. This person is knowledgeable.

❖ **MODERATOR**
➢ **Social Dominance Scale**
Citations: Pratto, F., Sidanius, J., Stallworth, L. M., & Malle, B. F. (1994). Social dominance orientation: A personality variable predicting social and political attitudes. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 67*(4), 741-763.

Items:
1. Some groups of people are simply inferior to other groups.
2. In getting what you want, it is sometimes necessary to use force against other groups.
3. It's OK if some groups have more of a chance in life than others.
4. To get ahead in life, it is sometimes necessary to step on other groups.
5. If certain groups stayed in their place, we would have fewer problems.
6. It's probably a good thing that certain groups are at the top and other groups are at the bottom.
7. Inferior groups should stay in their place.

8. Sometimes other groups must be kept in their place.
9. It would be good if groups could be equal. (RC)
10. Group equality should be our ideal. (RC)
11. All groups should be given an equal chance in life. (RC)
12. We should do what we can to equalize conditions for different groups. (RC)
13. Increased social equality. (RC)
14. We should have fewer problems if we treated people more equally. (RC)
15. We should strive to make incomes as equal as possible. (RC)
16. No one group should dominate in society. (RC)

❖ **MEDIATOR**
➢ **Perceived Applicant P-J Fit**
Citation: Kristof-Brown, A. L. (2000). Perceived applicant fit: Distinguishing between recruiters' perceptions of person-job and person-organization fit. *Personnel Psychology, 53*(3), 643-671. doi:10.1111/j.1744-6570.2000.tb00217.x

Items:
1. To what degree does this applicant fit the demands of the job?
2. To what extent will other employees think this candidate is qualified to do this job?
3. How confident are you that this applicant is qualified for this job?

❖ **CONTROL VARIABLES**
➢ **Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS)**
Citation:
Watson, D., Clark, L. A., & Tellegen, A. 1988. Development and validation of brief measures of positive and negative affect: The PANAS scales. ***Journal of Personality and Social Psychology***, 54(6): 1063-1070.

Items:

1. Interested	2. Irritable
3. Distressed	4. Alert
5. Excited	6. Ashamed
7. Upset	8. Inspired
9. Strong	10. Nervous
11. Guilty	12. Determined
13. Scared	14. Attentive
15. Hostile	16. Jittery
17. Enthusiastic	18. Active
19. Proud	20. Afraid

➢ **Marlowe-Crowne Shortened Social Desirability Scale**
Citation:
Crowne, D. P., & Marlowe, D. 1960. A new scale of social desirability independent of psychopathology. *Journal of Consulting Psychology*, 24(4): 349-354.
Reynolds, W. M. 1982. Development of reliable and valid short forms of the Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale. *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 38(1): 119-125.

Items:
1. It is sometimes hard for me to go on with my work if I am not encouraged.
2. I sometimes feel resentful when I don't get my way.
3. On a few occasions, I have given up doing something because I thought too little of my ability.
4. There have been times when I felt like rebelling against people in authority even thought I knew they were right.
5. No matter who I'm talking to, I'm always a good listener.
6. There have been occasions when I took advantage of someone.
7. I'm always willing to admit it when I make a mistake.
8. I sometimes try to get even rather than forgive and forget.
9. I am always courteous, even to people who are disagreeable.
10. I have never been irked when people expressed ideas very different from my own.
11. There have been times when I was quite jealous of the good fortune of others.
12. I am sometimes irritated by people who ask favors of me.
13. I have never deliberately said something that hurt someone's feelings.

Appendix H

Essay 3 Measurement Constructs

❖ **Time 1 and 2**
  ➢ **MacArthur Scale**
    Citation: (Adler, N. E., Epel, E. S., Castellazzo, G., & Ickovics, J. R., 2000) and (Singh-Manoux, A., Adler, N. E., & Marmot, M. G., 2003).

    Adapted Item:
    Imagine a ladder representing where people stand in American society. At the top of the ladder are the people who are best off—those who have the most money, most education and the best jobs. At the bottom are the people who are worst off—who have the least money, least education and the worst job or no job. The higher up you are on this ladder, the closer you are to people at the very top and the lower you are, the closer you to the bottom. Where would you put yourself on the ladder currently? Please indicate where you think you stand on the ladder by circling your answer, with 1 representing the lowest rung and 10 representing the highest rung.

  ➢ **Career Satisfaction**
    Citation: (Greenhaus, J. H., Parasuraman, S., & Wormley, W. M., 1990).
    Items:
    1. I am satisfied with the success I have achieved in my career.
    2. I am satisfied with the progress I have made toward meeting my overall career goals.
    3. I am satisfied with the progress I have made toward meeting my goals for income.
    4. I am satisfied with the progress I have made toward meeting my goals for advancement.
    5. I am satisfied with the progress I have made toward meeting my goals for the development of new skills.

  ➢ **Family Income Categories**
    ♦ <= $15,000
    ♦ $15,001 - $25,000
    ♦ $25,001 - $35,000
    ♦ $35,001 - $45,000
    ♦ $45,001 - $55,000
    ♦ $55,001 - $65,000
    ♦ $65,001 - $75,000
    ♦ $75,001 - $85,000
    ♦ $85,001 - $100,000
    ♦ $100,001 - $125,000
    ♦ $125,001 - $150,000
    ♦ > $150,000

❖ **Time 1 Only**
  ➢ **Family Background Subjective Social Class**
    Citation: Singh-Manoux, A., Marmot, M. G., & Adler, N. E. 2005. Does subjective social status predict health and change in health status better than objective status? *Psychosomatic Medicine*, 67(6): 855-861.
    Adapted Items:
    1. Your father and/or mother were unemployed when they wanted to be working.
    2. Your family had continuing financial problems.
    3. Your family relied on hand me downs and donations for clothing.
    4. Your family could not afford reliable transportation.

  ➢ **Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS)**
    Citation: (Watson, D., Clark, L. A., & Tellegen, A., 1988)
    Items:
    1. Interested
    2. Distressed
    3. Excited
    4. Upset
    5. Strong
    6. Guilty
    7. Scared
    8. Hostile
    9. Enthusiastic
    10. Proud
    11. Irritable
    12. Alert
    13. Ashamed
    14. Inspired
    15. Nervous
    16. Determined
    17. Attentive
    18. Jittery
    19. Active
    20. Afraid