The Heterarchy of Occupational Status: Evidence for Diverse Logics of Prestige in the United States*

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How do people perceive the status hierarchy? Stratification and inequality scholars have tended to assume that everyone perceives the status hierarchy the same way, using a single materialist logic—as a homoarchy. However, an emerging perspective from the study of culture posits that our view of the status hierarchy is shaped by our position within that hierarchy, suggesting that people using multiple, diverse logics—a heterarchy. This study provides the first test of these two frameworks using a classic measure of social status, occupational prestige, and new techniques for measuring and analyzing logics from culture and cognition. To do so, I analyze data from the 2012 General Social Survey module on occupational prestige judgments, which I link to individual-level characteristics from the GSS as well as federal occupation-level data. Results provide strong support for the existence of status heterarchy: I find evidence for at least four distinct ways of constructing the hierarchy of occupations in the United States. Furthermore, which hierarchy a person perceives is a function of their location in social space. I argue that this heterogeneity in perceptions of the status hierarchy entails implications for polarization, anti-elitism, and populism in the contemporary United States.

KEYWORDS: culture and cognition; homoarchy and heterarchy; logics; occupational hierarchies; occupational prestige; status.

INTRODUCTION

Scholars of culture have long been interested in how individuals make decisions or judgments about value, worth, and merit (Lamont 2012; Lamont et al. 2017). While cultural sociologists often focus on the downstream consequences of these value conferrals—for instance, by observing how they can lead to disparate outcomes (e.g., Rivera and Tilcsik 2019)—it is the subfield of culture and cognition which is uniquely suited to examine the cognitive process by which these decisions and judgments are made. The goal of this article is to illuminate the process by which individuals make one of the most fundamental value judgments in society: judgments of *status*, or as Weber (1968) famously defined it, "the social estimation of honor" (932).

As I will demonstrate, much of the sociological literature has tended to assume that all people hold the same view of the status order. From Durkheim's (1912) notion of the *conscience collective* to Parsons's concept of the allocation system (Parsons and Shils 1951), status has often been defined as a singular, commonly held

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notion of who is at the top of the social hierarchy and who is at the bottom. According to this view, the division of labor implies various roles, and every member of society shares a common understanding of how that role should be rewarded. I term this the *homoarchy* perspective, borrowing the concept from anthropology. Bondarenko (2007) defines homoarchy as the organizing principle of a social hierarchy in which "the ordering of the dimensions of society [occur] mainly according to a *single hierarchical tenet*" (pp. 187, emphasis added). Thus, a homoarchy implies that everyone perceives the status order in more or less the same way. As I will demonstrate, the homoarchy perspective persists in much of the contemporary sociological work that concerns itself with status.

This is particularly the case for research involving one of the oldest measures of social status available to social scientists: occupational prestige. Occupational homoarchy implies that there is a single, unifying logic that people use to ascribe worth in a society's division of labor. Nevertheless, an emerging framework from cultural sociology has put forth an alternative perspective—*heterarchy*—that instead predicts that the logic a person uses to order the prestige structure depends on their social position. The heterarchy perspective therefore implies that there are multiple, diverse—perhaps conflicting—logics that people use to assign value to occupations and the people who work in them. Recent work in culture and cognition has proposed methods for operationalizing logics as "shared, internalized cognitive structures, which are fundamentally evaluative in nature" (Valentino 2021:1), as well as outlined methods to measure and assess the presence of a singular versus multiple logics within a population. This article uses the test case of judgments of occupational status to assess whether the contemporary United States is best characterized as a homoarchy or a heterarchy, using this new approach to logics.

CLASSIC WORK ON OCCUPATIONAL PRESTIGE AND THE HOMOARCHY PERSPECTIVE

Occupational prestige began as a way to operationalize Weber's concept of status, and has proven a fundamental tool for measuring social mobility across time and place. Reiss et al. (1961) conducted the first known study of occupational prestige in 1947 by asking a nationally representative sample of survey-takers to rate the prestige of 90 occupations. In that study, as well as its replications in 1964 and 1989, researchers have concluded that there is a general consensus, with negligible differences between social groups, as to how people rate occupations' prestige (Hodge et al. 1964; Nakao and Treas 1994; Stevens and Featherman 1981). This presumption of homoarchy is well encapsulated by Hodge et al. (1964), who wrote:

> The prestige hierarchy of occupations is perhaps the best studied aspect of stratification systems of modern societies. Extensive empirical studies have been undertaken in a variety of nations, socialist and capitalist, developed and underdeveloped. Intensive analyses have been undertaken of results of particular studies searching for the existence of disparate prestige hierarchies held by subgroups within nations. Despite rather extensive searches conducted by a variety of techniques, it appears that occupational-prestige hierarchies are similar from country to country and from subgroup to subgroup within a country. This stability reflects the fundamental but gross similarities among the occupational systems of modern nations. Furthermore, knowledge

about occupations and relatively strong consensus on the relative positions of occupations are widely diffused throughout the populations involved (pp. 286-7).

International comparisons that looked at occupational prestige in other countries including developed countries in Europe and East Asia (Inkeles and Rossi 1956), the Philippines (Tiryakian 1958), China (Lin and Xie 1988), and a meta-analysis of 53 other nations (Treiman 1977) concluded that people tend to rate occupations the same way, regardless of their country of residence. This seemingly invariant prestige structure is often referred to as the Treiman constant, indicative of a view of occupational prestige as both fixed and universal. In his polemic "What's Wrong with Sociology?" James Davis (1994) called the homoarchical nature of prestige "the *only* important empirical discovery of sociology" (180, emphasis original).

Under a framework of homoarchy, people are understood to use a single, unifying logic to assign worth to occupations. What form does that logic take? Many early stratification studies noted the high correlations between an *occupation's pay* and *required level of education* with prestige. Duncan (1961), for instance, found that 83% of prestige is explained by an occupation's mean level of education and income among its incumbents. This led many researchers to conclude that, "prestige scores are 'error-prone' estimates of the socioeconomic attributes of occupations" (Featherman and Hauser 1976:405). More recently, Bukodi et al. (2011) advocated abandoning occupational prestige as a measure in favor of objective occupational characteristics because "respondents do not in fact tend to rate or rank occupations according to their 'prestige', 'social standing', etc., but rather according to a range of associated *job requirements* and *job rewards*" (pp. 626, emphasis original). The single, unifying logic of occupational prestige in the homoarchy framework is what I call a *materialist logic*: the larger an occupation's salary and the greater its educational/training requirement, the more prestigious it is presumed to be.

Yet, recent evidence has called into question the assumption of homoarchy and the materialist logic. First, several studies find considerable evidence for variation across subgroups in the way occupations are perceived and valued. For instance, Zhou (2005) found that a person's education, race, and gender impact the way they rate an occupation's prestige. Furthermore, Lynn and Ellerbach (2017) showed that a person's level of education influences the degree of consensus they exhibit around occupational prestige, with higher-educated individuals exhibiting greater consensus than less-educated ones. In addition, they demonstrated that higher educated people place more of an emphasis on an occupation's education when assessing its prestige. Most recently, Gauchat and Andrews (2018) examined scientific prestige and credibility related to the occupations of seven "expert" professions such as "economist" and "sociologist," finding that a person's gender, race, and social class shape how they perceive these jobs. Within medical professions specifically, Hinze (1999) finds that some women in medicine, though aware of a "dominant" prestige hierarchy in which "interventionist" specialties like surgery and internal medicine are at the top, resisted this hierarchy. As one female psychiatrist was quoted in that study, "women in medicine tend not to buy into that [view of the hierarchy] as much" (223; see also Jenkins 2020).

Second, recent work has established that a number of other criteria beyond job requirements and rewards are important in shaping how prestigious an occupation is

judged to be. Two studies have established the importance of an occupation's relationship to formal knowledge, authority, and science for its prestige (Gauchat and Andrews 2018; Zhou 2005; see also Hinze 1999). Further work has shown that a job's gender and racial composition (Valentino 2019, 2020) are important factors impacting how prestigious it is rated. Finally, some scholars have also argued for the importance of the division between mental and manual labor (Wrigley 1982), as well as the degree to which a job involves care work (England 2005; Hodges 2020). It seems that the materialist logic is not sufficient for capturing how people make judgments of occupational prestige. We now know that a number of occupational characteristics play a role in how people assign worth to the hierarchy of work; a job's requirements (educational/training requirement) and rewards (pay or salary) matter, but so too do a job's relationship to science/formal knowledge, the degree to which a job is gendered and racialized, as well as the type of labor involved in the job.

In addition to this new crop of evidence challenging the assumptions of occupational homoarchy and the materialist logic, limitations in terms of data and analytic techniques also give reason to question the notion that everyone uses a single, materialist logic—and does so in the same way—to evaluate an occupation's worth. Much of the prior research investigating this process has relied on data from the 20th century. Indeed, the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) conducted occupational prestige modules in 1947, 1964, and 1989, and occupation-level characteristics were often taken from much earlier censuses. Some research on occupational prestige has relied on non-representative samples, and still others analyze aggregate occupational prestige scores that are averaged across entire populations. These shortcomings may have obfuscated the extent to which variations occur within and between societies in terms of occupational prestige. Meanwhile, new approaches and techniques for assessing the potential plurality of hierarchies in terms of logics have emerged in the sociology of culture and cognition.

THE EMERGENCE OF THE HETERARCHY PERSPECTIVE FROM THE SOCIOLOGY OF CULTURE AND COGNITION

In the post-Parsons era, the study of culture has revealed the many ways that means *and* ends can vary within a single society (c.f. DiMaggio 1997; Harding 2007; Lizardo and Strand 2010; Patterson 2014; Swidler 1986, 2001). Cultural sociology has tended to focus its lens on social differences in tastes, preferences, attitudes, and beliefs (Spillman 2002). But what about visions of the status order? Recently, Stark (2011) introduced the concept of heterarchy[2] to sociology to capture the notion of pluralistic hierarchies he observed in three firms, a Hungarian factory, a tech start-up, and a Wall Street hedge fund. He defines heterarchy as the "cognitive ecologies that facilitate the work of reflexive cognition" (18), noting their origins in "multiple evaluative principles" (38). For instance, he observed toolmakers in the transitioning Hungarian nation-state articulated their worth in terms of both justice and skill, reflecting both communist and capitalist logics. For Stark, heterarchy occurs among organizational actors, leading to innovation through Type II cognitive processes.

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[2] As Stark notes, the term heterarchy has origins in the cognitive sciences (2011:29-32).

Heterarchy happens because organizations are subject to multiple institutional realms.

Yet, this concept has yet to be explored at a micro-level, and has not been implemented to investigate heterogeneity in evaluative structures like logics. This is surprising, given the centrality of this topic to cultural sociology. For instance, Lamont (1992, 2000) investigated the different ways that French and Americans of divergent social class backgrounds confer moral worth to various social groups. Sauder (2006) found evidence for historical variation in logics: the basis of prestige among law schools has changed over time as third-party organizations such as U.S. News and World Report rankings become more prominent. In particular, we might suspect that logics of status are not just variable, but are a function of an individual's location within the status order. As Bourdieu famously hypothesized, "people's image of the classification [structure] is a function of their position within it" (1984:473). Despite the burgeoning idea from the sociology of culture and cognition that there are multiple logics of valuation in various domains of social life, no study has fully tested this possibility at a micro-level. Furthermore, no study has inductively assessed the logic(s) of occupational prestige judgments using up-to-date data and tools.[3]

In addition to theoretical insights about how and why heterarchy likely occurs, cultural and cognitive sociology also provides some tools for measuring logics. Given that the field has historically sought to examine how people make evaluations —what kinds of music they like, what kind of art they prefer, etc.—, this has led to a robust debate among scholars about the *organizing principles* behind these evaluations (Lamont 2012). Do people distinguish between "high brow" and "low brow" art forms (Bourdieu 1984)? Or are some people "omnivores"—preferring lots of genres and cuisines, while others are "univores"—preferring only one or two (Johnston and Baumann 2007; Peterson 1992; Peterson and Kern 1996)?

Though often focused on tastes, preferences, and consumption related to art, the media, and other cultural objects, the culture and cognition approach for assessing how people make judgments remains a useful analytic framework for understanding the judgment and decision-making process more generally (Vaisey and Valentino 2018). This is therefore an approach that can be easily applied to the study of judgments of *occupational prestige*. Indeed, a number of recent advances in analytical methods, such as Relational Class Analysis (Goldberg 2011) and Correlational Class Analysis (Boutyline 2017), have enabled finer-grained, inductive investigations of how people make judgments. Rather than simply—and deductively—looking at correlations across or between populations in terms of how they rate occupational prestige, as previous research has tended to do, these new tools enable researchers to examine in greater detail how people perceive prestige.

A drawback to these approaches, however, is that they rely on an examination of the relations between cultural *objects* themselves, rather than between cultural *logics*—that is, the cultural meaning structures (Mohr 1998). Valentino (2021) defines cultural logics as an aspect of personal declarative culture, which are organizing principles of evaluation or judgment. Logics have three parts: (1) a feature, or

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[3] Though see Abbott (1981) for an earlier incarnation.

characteristic of the cultural object being evaluated, (2) a weight, or degree of importance that that particular feature carries in the judgment process, and (3) a valence, or a direction for each weight. This formalization of the concept of logics allows researchers to test hypotheses related to whether logics have changed over time or whether there are multiple logics present within a given population or populations. The present study is especially concerned with the latter question, as homoarchy implies the presence of a single logic of status hierarchy, whereas heterarchy implies the presence of multiple logics of status hierarchy.

To pinpoint the logic(s) of occupational prestige, we need to understand *whether and how people use different (or the same) criteria (i.e., occupational characteristics) when making occupational prestige judgments*. We therefore need (1) a method that enables this type of analysis, as well as (2) recent data on occupational prestige judgments, the people making those judgments, and the characteristics of those occupations. This will then allow us to evaluate whether there is one single logic or whether there are multiple logics for perceiving the occupational hierarchy, as well as what the(se) logic(s) look like in practice.

DATA AND ANALYTIC APPROACH

To test whether the occupational hierarchy is best described as a homoarchy or a heterarchy, I rely on the most recently released NORC module for occupational prestige—and the only one known to have national data on prestige judgments from the 21st century. These data were collected in 2012 as part of the General Social Survey's (GSS) in-person rotating panel (see Smith and Son 2014 for methodological details on the data collection process). The module was intended to facilitate the creation of new occupational prestige scores for each occupation in the GSS, but I obtained the raw prestige ratings from NORC since I am interested in the *process* of how these evaluations are made. For the rating task, GSS respondents ($N = 1,001$) were asked to perform a card-sorting task in which they were provided a ballot of 90 occupations[4] and a "ladder" with nine slots (labeled 1–9) into which they were instructed to place the occupations based on their "social standing," with 1 being the lowest and 9 being the highest. Respondents were informed that they could place as many occupations into a single slot as they saw fit; thus these occupational prestige judgments truly reflect *ratings* rather than *rankings*.

I also link the occupational prestige *raters* to their demographic characteristics in the GSS, which is important for assessing the extent to which a person's logic of occupational prestige is linked to their social position. Social position variables fall into four main categories: (1) *basic demographics* (including gender, race, education level, household income, and age), (2) *work-related factors* (including work status and the job sector of their current occupation), (3) *cultural characteristics* (including religion, religiosity, political views, and political party), and (4) *geographic residence* (including census region and urbanicity). Descriptive statistics for the raters on these variables are presented in Table I below. Continuous variables (education level,

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[4] Respondents were randomly assigned one of twelve ballots, each containing 70 occupations. All respondents were also asked to rate 20 "core" occupations, for a total of 90 occupations per person.

Table I. Demographic Characteristics of Prestige Raters (*N* = 1,001)

Continuous variables	Range	Mean, SD
Education level (years)	0–20	13.738 (2.985)
Household income (dollars, logged in analyses)	0–150,000	58,109.43 (42,652.30)
Age (years)	22–89	51.633 (16.326)
Conservatism (scale)	1–7	4.127 (1.419)

Categorical variables	Categories	Proportion
Gender	Male	.449
	Female	.551
Race	White	.796
	Black	.143
	Hispanic	.026
	Asian	.026
Work status	Working less than full-time (or not at all)	.527
	Working full time	.474
Job sector	Management, Business, Science, and Arts	.362
	Service	.171
	Sales and Office	.245
	Natural Resources, Construction, and Maintenance	.083
	Production, Transportation, and Material Moving	.139
Religion	Protestant	.532
	Catholic	.202
	Jewish	.019
	None	.176
	Other Christian	.045
	Other (not Christian)	.025
Religiosity	Attends once a month or less	.611
	Attends more than once a month	.389
Political party affiliation	Democrat	.494
	Independent	.153
	Republican	.353
Census region	New England	.030
	Middle Atlantic	.107
	East North Central	.190
	West North Central	.063
	South Atlantic	.226
	East South Central	.041
	West South Central	.093
	Mountain	.087
	Pacific	.164
Urbanicity	Rural/suburban	.525
	Urban	.476

household income, age, political views) are presented with ranges, means, and standard deviations, while categorical variables (gender, race, work status, ever worked, current job sector, religion, religiosity, political party, census region, urbanicity) are presented with their categories and proportions.

Equally important to obtaining a national sample of *raters* is obtaining a comprehensive sample of *occupations*. Raters were asked to provide judgments of occupational prestige for a total of 860 occupations, spanning the job titles of the standard occupational classification system (Bureau of Labor Statistics 2018). I then

matched the occupational titles people rated to occupation-level characteristics for each job. I obtained these data from federal sources, attempting to gather occupational characteristics from as close to 2012 as possible. Based on the prior work on factors shown to impact occupational prestige evaluations, I collected data on each occupation's industry (as a proxy for scientificity), level of education/training needed to perform the job (as a measure for occupational requirements), mean pay for incumbents working in that job (as a measure of occupational rewards), percentage of workers who are women (which is dichotomized here as gender-segregated versus gender-integrated, since prior research has found that gender segregated occupations are seen as more prestigious), and percentage of workers who are white. Descriptive statistics for the occupations on these variables are presented in Table II below, as well as the data source from which that variable was taken. Continuous variables (required education/training, pay, and % white) are presented with ranges, means, and standard deviations, while the categorical variables (gender segregation, industry) are presented with their categories and proportions.

To create the mental labor, manual labor, and care work indices, I use variables from the Department of Labor's Occupational Network. This data source includes "work activities" questions in which incumbents of occupations were asked to rate a series of tasks in terms of importance to their job using a Likert scale (1 = not important and 5 = extremely important). For mental and manual labor, I adapted the indicator items from prior work that also investigated the degree of mental and physical intensity of occupations using ONET data (e.g., Acemoglu and Autor 2011; Denning et al. 2019). The Cronbach's alpha for the composite index of mental labor is 0.924, indicating a high level of reliability; for manual labor, the Cronbach's alpha is 0.906, also indicating a high level of reliability. For care work, I based the indicator items off of prior work that classified occupations based on the extent to which they involve face-to-face caring for, developing, coaching, and facilitating the capacities of others (England et al. 2002). For care work, the Cronbach's alpha is 0.902. Indicator items for these three variables are shown in Table III below.

As I have argued, the homoarchy and heterarchy perspectives imply different *logics* of occupational prestige. The homoarchy perspective predicts that everyone evaluates prestige the same way, following a materialist logic. The heterarchy perspective predicts that there are multiple logics, potentially including—but not limited to—a materialist logic. In particular, we need a method to capture *systematic variation* in the way people perceive the occupational status hierarchy based on the way they use particular feature(s) of occupations in their judgments. Latent Class Regression (LCR) is an analytic technique well suited for inductively uncovering these different patterns. LCR groups people into latent classes based on how similar they are in terms of regression coefficients related to an outcome (Vermunt and Magidson 2016). These regression coefficients are, in this case, the weights and valences of occupational characteristics (the variables from Table II) in a person-specific regression that specifies how they make occupational prestige judgments. The LCR model simultaneously estimates both those weights and valences *as well as* a person's likelihood of membership in a given class, based on their person-level characteristics like social position (in this case, the variables from Table I). The outcome modeled is within-person standardized occupation ratings, thus eliminating any differences

Table II. Characteristics of Occupations and Data Source ($N = 860$)

Continuous variables	Source	Description	Range	Mean, SD
Required education/training	ONET 2012	"Job zone" (index of Specific Vocational Preparation and degree)	1–5	2.846 (1.051)
Pay	Bureau of Labor Statistics 2012	Mean pay in $1,000s	18.72–230.54	52.375 (29.441)
Racial composition	ACES EEO 2006–2010	% white	41.3–95.2	74.706 (9.246)
Mental labor	ONET 2012	See Table III	−3.413–1.958	0 (1)
Manual labor	ONET 2012	See Table III	−1.908–2.532	0 (1)
Care work	ONET 2012	See Table III	−2.969–3.146	0 (1)

Categorical variables	Source	Description	Categories	Proportion
Gender segregation	ACES EEO 2006–2010	Segregated if < 20% female or > 75% female	Segregated	.446
			Integrated	.554
Industry	2012 North American Industry Classification System	Proxy for scientificity	Management	.094
			Business and Financial Operations	.046
			Computer and Mathematical	.022
			Architecture and Engineering	.028
			Life, Physical, and Social Science	.034
			Community and Social Service	.015
			Legal	.007
			Education, Training, and Library	.022
			Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media	.039
			Healthcare Practitioners and Technical	.051
			Healthcare Support	.017
			Protective Service	.034
			Food Preparation and Serving Related	.022
			Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance	.009
			Personal Care and Service	.040
			Sales and Related	.044
			Office and Administrative Support	.087
			Farming, Fishing, and Forestry	.025
			Construction and Extraction	.062
			Installation, Maintenance, and Repair	.059
			Production	.157
			Transportation and Material Moving	.078
			Military	.007

Table III. Indices for Type of Labor

Variable	Items
Mental labor	Getting information
	Estimating the quantifiable characteristics of products, events, or information
	Judging the qualities of things, services, or people
	Processing information
	Evaluating information to determine compliance with standards
	Analyzing data or information
	Making decisions and solving problems
	Thinking creatively
	Updating and using relevant knowledge
	Developing objectives and strategies
	Interpreting the meaning of information for others
Manual labor	Performing general physical activities
	Handling and moving objects
	Controlling machines and processes
	Operating vehicles, mechanized devices, or equipment
	Drafting, laying out, and specifying technical devices, parts, and equipment
	Repairing and maintaining mechanical equipment
	Repairing and maintaining electronic equipment
Care work	Establishing and maintaining interpersonal relationships
	Assisting and caring for others
	Resolving conflicts and negotiating with others
	Developing and building teams
	Training and teaching others
	Guiding, directing, and motivating subordinates
	Coaching and developing others
	Provide consultation and advice to others

between raters in terms of scale usage. I also standardize continuous occupational variables for ease of comparison. Additionally, all models include ballot fixed effects to account for any benchmarking based on the particular slate of occupations a respondent was asked to rate. Missing data are handled using full information maximum likelihood.

The principal way I adjudicate between the homoarchy and heterarchy perspectives is by comparing model fit between a one-class model solution—one that presumes that everyone follows a single logic when making prestige judgments—and solutions with more than one class. I rely on the parsimonious Bayesian Information Criterion (BIC) to assess model fit (Raftery 1995). After a close examination of the resultant logic(s) from the best-fitting model, I then use the posterior probabilities of class membership to investigate the extent to which social position shapes the logic a person uses for perceiving occupational prestige.

FINDINGS

I begin by assessing the number of logics that best fit the occupational prestige ratings from the 1,001 GSS respondents. I fit a series of models ranging in class size from one to eight. As shown in Fig. 1, a solution with more than one class is always better-fitting, strong evidence in favor of the heterarchy perspective. Since smaller BIC values indicate a better fitting model, we can see that model fit markedly
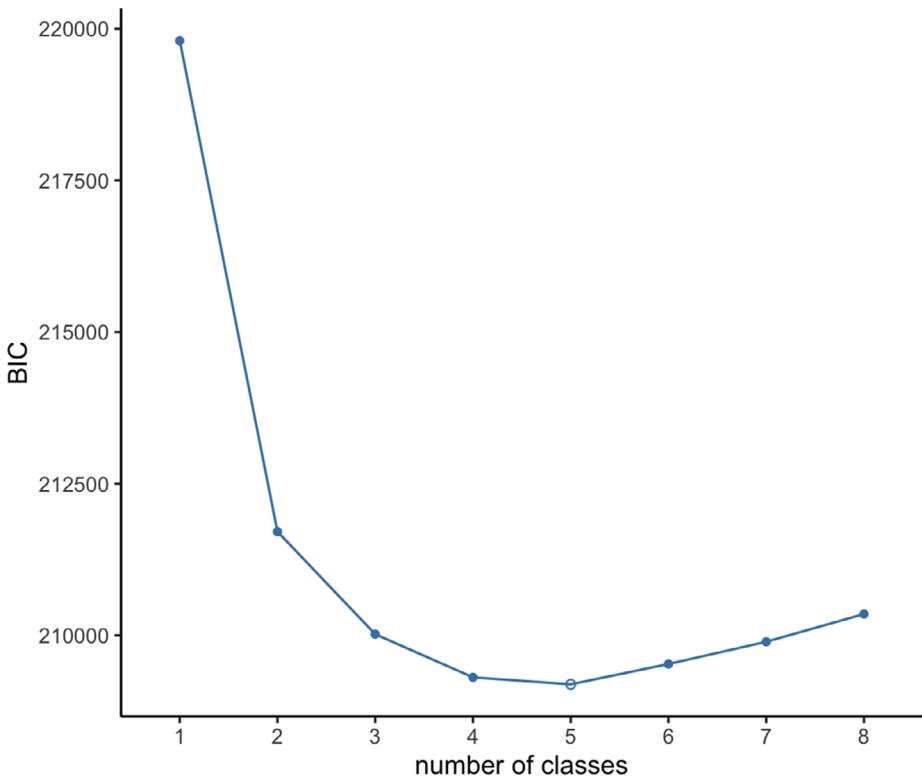
Fig. 1. Model fit for single-logic (homoarchy) and multiple-logic (heterarchy) hierarchies of occupational prestige judgments.

improves between a single-logic model and the multiple-logic models. A BIC difference of greater than 10 is considered "very strong evidence" in favor of the model with the smaller BIC value (Raftery 1995:139). The differences observed between the one-class model and all multi-class models exceed 8,000. Overall, the best fitting model is a five-class solution, indicating that there are five unique logics of occupational prestige.

What do these five logics look like? Table IV below shows how the criteria (weights and valences) of the occupational characteristics are used in each of the five logics.

Firstly, we can see that there is substantial variation in terms of whether—and how—these occupational characteristics are used in the prestige judgment process. The Wald test for equality of coefficients across the classes is significant for all criteria, with the exception of care work, indicating that these criteria have significantly different weights and/or valences across classes.

Let us begin by assessing the two key criteria that make up the *materialist* logic: occupational requirements (education/training) and rewards (mean pay). Logics one, two, and three place large relative importance on occupational requirements and pay, though logic two places greater weight on education relative to all other

Table IV. Criteria Across Logics

Criterion	Logic 1	Logic 2	Logic 3	Logic 4	Logic 5	Wald test
Occupation's required education/training	.105*** (.015)	.233*** (.016)	.163*** (.017)	.082** (.027)	−.218*** (.030)	189.140***
Occupation's mean pay	.243*** (.016)	.276*** (.017)	.342*** (.019)	.010 (.023)	−.247*** (.024)	580.616***
% white in occupation	.010 (.007)	.047*** (.008)	.053*** (.011)	−.012 (.011)	−.007 (.020)	37.747***
Gender segregation	.087*** (.014)	.022 (.014)	.095*** (.017)	.115*** (.024)	−.086 (.044)	30.173***
Mental labor	.103*** (.012)	.101*** (.011)	.108*** (.019)	.020 (.020)	−.104*** (.032)	54.252***
Manual labor	−.022 (.017)	−.098*** (.014)	.044 (.026)	.099*** (.022)	.094*** (.033)	98.067***
Care work	−.018 (.011)	−.013 (.011)	.020 (.015)	.002 (.021)	.021 (.030)	2.195
R^2	.256	.513	.489	.058	.366	

Note: N = 992.
*$p < .05$,
**$p < .01$,
***$p < .001$ (two-tailed tests). Robust standard errors shown in parentheses.

logics, and logic three places greater weight on pay relative to all other logics. Logic four relies only slightly on an occupation's level of education/training, and does not rely on an occupation's pay. Logic five places a large relative importance on occupational requirements and pay, but in a *negative* way, such that the more an occupation pays or the higher degree or training required, the lower in prestige it is judged to be.

Next, I turn to the non-materialist criteria that reflect how gendered and racialized an occupation is: its proportion of white workers and whether or not it is gender-segregated. Logic one rewards more gender-segregated jobs, but does not rely on an occupation's racial composition. Logic two, meanwhile, rewards occupations with more white workers, but does not rely on an occupation's gender segregation. By contrast, logic three attends to both criteria, rewarding jobs with more white incumbents and gender-segregated jobs. Logic four offers the greatest prestige reward for gender-segregated work, but does not rely on a job's racial composition. Logic five does not rely on either.

I next consider the role of type of work in the judgment process. Logics one, two, and three all see mentally intensive occupations as higher in prestige. Logic four does not reward occupations that involve mental labor, and logic five actually penalizes occupations which are mentally intensive. Logics one and three do not use the degree of manual intensity in their prestige judgments, while logic two sees physically intense occupations as *less* prestigious. Logics four and five, however reward manually intensive occupations with prestige. The extent to which an occupation involves care work is not a salient part of the judgment process for any of the logics.

We can also see from the variation among classes in terms of their R-squared: some classes' judgment process is well-described by these occupational criteria, and others are not. Logics two and three are relatively well explained by these criteria, with 51.3% and 48.9% of variation in ratings explained by these occupational characteristics, respectively. Logic five is also relatively well explained, with 36.6% of ratings accounted for by these criteria. Logic one is somewhat less well described by these criteria, with 25.6% of variance in ratings explained. The occupational prestige judgment process of those using logic four, on the other hand, is *not* very well captured by occupational requirements, rewards, industry, and gender and racial composition, with only 5.8% of variation in prestige explained by any of these characteristics.

In addition to these criteria, different logics also rewarded industries differently, as indicated by the significant Wald test of equality (1949.504, $p < .001$). Table V below shows the hierarchy of industry for each of the five logics.

We can see in Table V that logic one rewards "helping" industries like the military; education, training, library; and healthcare occupations with the most prestige, and is least rewarding of service jobs as well as occupations in the sales industry and management jobs, with building and grounds cleaning and maintenance at the bottom. Logic two also privileges the military and education, training, and library industries, but industries involving arts and architecture are also higher in this logic's hierarchy relative to logic one; moreover, logic two rewards the legal industry more than any other logic. Logic three is characterized at the top of its hierarchy by occupations that are relatively high in cultural capital (e.g., arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media; education, training, library; architecture and engineering),

Table V. Industry Rankings by Logic

Rank	Logic 1	Logic 2	Logic 3	Logic 4	Logic 5
1	Military	Military	Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media	Education, Training, and Library	Management
2	Education, Training, and Library	Education, Training, and Library	Education, Training, and Library	Healthcare Practitioners and Technical	Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance
3	Healthcare Support	Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media	Architecture and Engineering	Military	Sales and Related
4	Healthcare Practitioners and Technical	Architecture and Engineering	Life, Physical, and Social Science	Architecture and Engineering	Business and Financial Operations
5	Life, Physical, and Social Science	Healthcare Practitioners and Technical	Community and Social Service	Protective Service	Computer and Mathematical
6	Protective Service	Life, Physical, and Social Science	Computer and Mathematical	Healthcare Support	Office and Administrative Support
7	Community and Social Service	Legal	Healthcare Support	Life, Physical, and Social Science	Production
8	Architecture and Engineering	Protective Service	Healthcare Practitioners and Technical	Community and Social Service	Farming, Fishing, and Forestry
9	Legal	Community and Social Service	Protective Service	Transportation and Material Moving	Personal Care and Service
10	Computer and Mathematical	Healthcare Support	Legal	Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance	Legal
11	Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media	Computer and Mathematical	Farming, Fishing, and Forestry	Food Preparation and Serving Related	Food Preparation and Serving Related
12	Office and Administrative Support	Food Preparation and Serving Related	Office and Administrative Support	Computer and Mathematical	Construction and Extraction
13	Transportation and Material Moving	Business and Financial Operations	Business and Financial Operations	Office and Administrative Support	Installation, Maintenance, and Repair
14	Installation, Maintenance, and Repair	Farming, Fishing, and Forestry	Personal Care and Service	Construction and Extraction	Transportation and Material Moving

Table V. (Continued)

Rank	Logic 1	Logic 2	Logic 3	Logic 4	Logic 5
15	Farming, Fishing, and Forestry	Personal Care and Service	Food Preparation and Serving Related	Farming, Fishing, and Forestry	Life, Physical, and Social Science
16	Food Preparation and Serving Related	Production	Transportation and Material Moving	Management	Community and Social Service
17	Business and Financial Operations	Installation, Maintenance, and Repair	Production	Production	Healthcare Support
18	Construction and Extraction	Office and Administrative Support	Construction and Extraction	Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media	Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media
19	Production	Transportation and Material Moving	Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance	Personal Care and Service	Education, Training, and Library
20	Personal Care and Service	Construction and Extraction	Sales and Related	Business and Financial Operations	Healthcare Practitioners and Technical
21	Management	Management	Installation, Maintenance, and Repair	Installation, Maintenance, and Repair	Architecture and Engineering
22	Sales and Related	Sales and Related	Management	Legal	Protective Service
23	Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance	Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance	Military	Sales and Related	Military

with service jobs, the military, and typically blue collar jobs at the bottom (e.g., installation, maintenance, and repair; construction and extraction; building and grounds cleaning and maintenance).

Like logic one, logic four also rewards "helping" industries like healthcare; education, training, library; and military, but also places some traditional blue collar-type jobs, like protective service and transportation and material moving toward the top of its hierarchy. At the bottom of its hierarchy are some traditional white collar-type jobs: sales and related, legal, and business and financial operations. Finally, logic five places some traditional blue collar jobs as well as white collar jobs at its apex, such as building and grounds cleaning and maintenance, management, and sales, while at the bottom are military; protective service; and architecture and engineering.

We can describe the similarities/differences between all five logics by examining a handful of occupations in particular to see where they fall in each hierarchy. First I will consider a typical, white collar profession: "lawyer." For logics one, two, and three, lawyer is a very prestigious job, falling in the 96th, 98th, and 94th percentile of their hierarchies, respectively. For logics four and five, however, lawyer is a job very low in social standing, in the 15th and 8th percentiles, respectively. Next, I will consider an occupation in the arts sector: "musician in a symphony orchestra." For logic one, this is a somewhat prestigious occupation, falling at the 74th percentile of their hierarchy. For logic two, it is seen as more prestigious (90th percentile), while it is the highest percentile for logic three (92nd percentile) relative to all other logics. For logic four, musician is a middling occupation in terms of prestige, at the 66th percentile, while for logic five it is toward the bottom at the 17th percentile. Lastly, let us consider a typical working class occupation which has been the subject of much recent political debate: "coal miner." For logic one, coal miner ranks toward the middle of their hierarchy at the 44th percentile. For logics two and three, coal miner is further down the hierarchy, at the 30th and 29th percentiles, respectively. Yet for logic four, coal miner is considered a very prestigious job, in the 90th percentile for this group. For logic five, however, it is also a middling occupation in terms of prestige.

Having now explored the particular contours of the hierarchy of each logic in greater detail, we are better able to characterize them. Logic one can be described as a *traditionalist* logic that valorizes helping jobs and those with moral authority, as well as gender-segregated occupations and mentally intensive jobs. Logic two can be described as a *white collar* logic that valorizes professional occupations, relying the most on education/training relative to other logics, as well as occupations with more white workers, and mentally intensive occupations—penalizing manually intensive ones. Logic three can be described as a *cultural capitalist* logic that rewards occupations that involve art, creativity, and other cultural components. This logic rewards occupations that are more likely to be held by white workers that are gender-segregated, and are mentally intensive. Logic four can be described as a *blue collar* logic that valorizes occupations that are not necessarily high paying but which, nonetheless, are common and attainable professions and jobs characterized by their gender segregation and physical intensity. Finally, logic five can be described as an

inverted logic that represents an upside-down image of the traditional materialist logic, as it devalues jobs with the highest requirements and rewards.[5]

What is the distribution of raters into logics, and, most importantly, who uses which logic? I turn now to class membership as defined by a GSS respondent's posterior probability. This probability is a calculation of each rater's likelihood of belonging to a given class, and I therefore sort raters into classes based on the highest class of probability assigned to them by the best-fitting LCR model. Out of the 13 covariates tested among the four categories, seven varied significantly between classes at the $p < .05$ level, suggesting that these are important characteristics, which uniquely define class membership.[6] Table VI below reports Wald chi-square tests and results for covariates across logics.

Proportions are presented for categorical variables, and means are presented for continuous ones. Only covariates which varied significantly are shown in Table VI—there were no significant differences in terms of work status, job sector, political party, political views, religiosity, or urbanicity across classes, suggesting that these factors do not shape the logic of occupational prestige a rater uses. The *traditionalist* logic is the most commonly used, with 37.1% employing it. The *white collar* logic is also relatively common, with 26.1% of users. The *cultural capitalist* logic is fairly common, with 18.4% percent of users. The *blue collar* logic was slightly less common, at 15.3%. The *inverted* logic was comparatively rare, with only 3% of users.[7]

In terms of race, we can see that the *traditionalist* logic is held by more Black, Hispanic, and Asian raters, whereas the *cultural capitalist* logic is held by more white raters compared to other logics. As for gender, the *blue collar* logic has a majority of men, while the other four logics are majority female. Unsurprisingly, the *white collar* logic has the highest mean level of education and earnings relative to all other logics, and the *blue collar* logic has the lowest. Similarly, *white collar* logic users have the highest income of all groups, while *blue collar* logic users have the lowest mean income. Those espousing the *blue collar* logic are also the oldest raters, whereas those espousing the *white collar* logic are the youngest on average.

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[5] I conducted supplementary tests to evaluate whether the GSS respondents using the *inverted logic* were potentially confused, purposely answering incorrectly, and/or the result of interviewer error. In fact, when constructing the latest GSS prestige scores, these respondents' ratings were likely tossed out, as Smith and Son (2014) concluded that a subset of individuals who rated what they considered low-prestige occupations the highest must have erroneously performed the card-sorting task. However, I found little evidence for such mistakes among this group. *Inverted* logic-using respondents were rated higher than *traditionalist*- and *blue collar*-logic users in terms of their comprehension of the survey by their GSS interviewers. Furthermore, *inverted* logic-using respondents were rated as more friendly and interested by the GSS interviewer during the interview than were *traditionalist* logic users, *cultural capitalist* logic users, and *blue collar* logic users. Finally, respondents using the *inverted* logic were not confined to one "bad" GSS interviewer. There were 18 total GSS interviewers for these respondents, and no interviewer conducted interviews with more than 4 respondents from this group. Although this group represents only 3.1% of the sample, I have no principled reason to remove them from the data. Nevertheless, some caution is clearly warranted in interpreting the results for this set of respondents.

[6] Ballot was also significantly different across logics, indicating that the particular slate of occupations that a rater received shaped prestige judgments as well. These results are not shown to conserve space.

[7] Nine raters (slightly less than 1% of the sample) rated every occupation identically – as a flat (non-) hierarchy. Those raters were excluded from these analyses, but could also be considered a separate and unique logic. Their extreme scarcity, however, means this perception of the occupational hierarchy is likely exceedingly rare, and I therefore refrain from discussing it here.

Table VI. Covariates Across Logics

Covariate	Wald chi-square	Traditionalist	White collar	Cultural capitalist	Blue collar	Inverted
White	21,763.1***	.710	.830	.889	.790	.871
Black		.203	.111	.056	.161	.097
Hispanic		.040	.012	.017	.028	.032
Asian		.030	.047	.016	.000	.000
Female	15.6**	.559	.617	.550	.392	.677
Male		.442	.383	.450	.609	.323
Mean education (years)	30.8***	12.754	15.296	14.336	12.451	12.750
Income (dollars)	18.8***	34,430	56,495	44,395	18,135	25,610
Mean age	11.6*	51.155	49.169	52.134	57.147	49.196
Catholic	80.2***	.237	.181	.186	.171	.162
Protestant		.540	.500	.494	.553	.677
Other Christian		.061	.032	.044	.041	.000
Jewish		.007	.043	.025	.000	.032
Other (not Christian)		.029	.039	.011	.009	.000
None		.120	.196	.234	.219	.129
New England	202.2***	.007	.058	.039	.022	.032
Middle Atlantic		.102	.130	.101	.061	.226
East North Central		.182	.124	.168	.345	.161
West North Central		.083	.051	.076	.038	.000
South Atlantic		.209	.268	.227	.227	.065
East South Central		.047	.051	.016	.345	.129
West South Central		.111	.066	.057	.102	.258
Mountain		.099	.108	.091	.033	.032
Pacific		.162	.143	.224	.150	.096
Proportion of sample		.371	.261	.184	.153	.031

Note: N = 992.
*p < .05,
**p < .01,
***p < .001 (two-tailed tests).

As for religion, the *cultural capitalist* logic has the most raters who do not subscribe to a particular religion, while the *traditionalist* logic has the most religiously identified raters. Finally, there is substantial variation geographically in terms of how the region in which a person lives in shapes their logic. The *cultural capitalist* logic in particular enjoys greater usage among the East and West coasts, while the *blue collar* logic is more likely to be used from those among the Midwest and Gulf Coast states. We can therefore conclude that a person's social position—in particular their race, gender, education, income, age, religion, and geographic region—shapes which logic they are most likely to use when perceiving the occupational hierarchy.

DISCUSSION

This study's primary aim was to assess whether the occupational hierarchy in the United States is best described as a homoarchy—a hierarchy organized by a singular principle in which occupations are valued based on their requirements and rewards—or as a heterarchy—a hierarchy organized by multiple principles in which

different people use various evaluation criteria, and in different ways, to accord prestige. Using 2012 data of nationally representative judgments of occupational prestige linked to federal occupation-level data, I tested these two frameworks using an inductive analytic technique well suited for measuring and analyzing logics. The results provided strong support for the heterarchy perspective: the best-fitting model is one in which there are *multiple* logics of evaluation at work in the occupational prestige judgment process, not just a single logic. Moreover, I found that which logic a person uses in the occupational prestige judgment process is a function of their social position, echoing Bourdieu's insight that "people's image of the classification [structure] is a function of their position within it" (1984:473).

While the stratification literature has tended to presume that occupational prestige is the result of a materialist logic in which jobs with the highest requirements and rewards reap the greatest prestige, I did not find evidence that contemporary Americans employ this logic. Instead, I found that people tend to make prestige judgments through either a *traditionalist* logic, a *white collar* logic, a *cultural capitalist* logic, a *blue collar* logic, or (perhaps) an *inverted* logic. The *traditionalist* logic rewards helping industries like the military, educational sectors, or health care jobs, and is the most common logic in the sample. Its adherents are the most likely to be ethnoracial minorities, and are the most religiously identified relative to other logic users. The *white collar* logic rewards education the most relative to other logics, and places professional industries at the top of its hierarchy, while placing manually intensive occupations at the bottom of its hierarchy. The judgment process of *white collar*-logic users is the best-explained by these occupational criteria, relative to all other logics. Its adherents are the most well-educated, the highest earning, and the youngest, comparatively.

The *cultural capitalist* logic valorizes occupations in the arts sector, and those with high educational requirements, and—relative to other logics—occupations that pay well, as well as gender-segregated jobs and those with fewer minorities. It places occupations which correspond to those in Florida's (2002) creative class at the top of its hierarchy. People who employ this logic tend to be white and are less likely to identify with a religion. They are the most likely relative to other groups to live on the East or West Coast.

The *blue collar* logic relies only slightly on an occupation's education to determine its prestige, and not at all on its pay. In this view, the top of the hierarchy is made up of occupations that are more gender-segregated, and occupations that are manually intensive, like coal miners. It is the least well defined logic out of the four in terms of the variance explained by these occupational criteria, suggesting it may either reflect a general lack of consensus about occupational prestige for those using it (Lynn and Ellerbach 2017), or that it may simply be less organized by these classification principles compared to other logics (Boutyline and Vaisey 2017). Adherents of this logic are the most likely to be men compared to all other logics, and are the oldest. They are the lowest in terms of education and earnings. They are also more likely than users of other logics to live in the Midwest and the Gulf Coast states. This logic resembles the valuation of manual labor—as opposed to mental labor—that Willis (1977) found in his study among the working class "lads" of countercultural England.

Finally, the *inverted logic* accords prestige to occupations with the lowest education and pay. The "inversion" of the materialist criteria may be suggestive of a resistance to the "conventional" hierarchy, like that found among women in Hinze's (1999) study of the medical professions. However, this logic may also be the artifact of some unobserved data collection or data entry error—although I could not find evidence of such error in the GSS data. As it stands, this logic is very small, around 3% of the sample.

Overall, then, we see that there is some resemblance between the *traditionalist*, *white collar*, and *cultural capitalist* logics to the materialist logic. All of these logics *do* positively reward occupations with prestige when there are high educational/training requirements and pay, just as the materialist logic was presumed to operate. Nevertheless, they *also* rely on non-materialist criteria to assess where occupations fit in the hierarchy, such as a job's gender composition, racial composition, and type of labor (in general, a valorization of mental labor and a denigration of manual labor). Yet the *blue collar* logic contrasts sharply with the materialist logic, eschewing the criterion of pay completely. It also *rewards* manually intensive work with prestige. This logic is used by 15.3% of respondents, suggesting that this is not an uncommon view of how the division of labor should be valued in the United States.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

What does occupational heterarchy mean for a society? Stark (2011) argues that multiple logics of evaluation within an organization do not, in fact, lead to conflict, but instead provide a vital source of innovation and entrepreneurial moments for firms. This may be the case at the meso-level, but at the mico-level, theorists have argued that the presence of multiple logics of evaluation may invite *classification struggles*. These are conflicts to define whose logic determines the distribution of status and power within a society (Bourdieu 1984; Lamont 1992). Incommensurability around visions of how status is (and should be) conferred to individuals may precede political polarization and fractious political movements. These findings demonstrate that a nontrivial segment of the American population eschews a status hierarchy valorizing those with high paying and mentally intensive jobs in favor of one valorizing manual work and blue collar industries. This may be evidence of the cognitive underpinnings of populism, which scholars define as "an anti-elite and pro-people moral logic and institutional suspicion" (Bonikowski 2016:11). Future work should therefore examine the extent to which these logics of occupational prestige have changed over time and whether they have paralleled popular nationalist sentiments (Bonikowski and DiMaggio 2016), as well as the degree to which these logics are related to (lack of) trust in institutions, such as the government, corporations, banks, and universities, in addition to civic behavior such as voting and volunteering.

For work on inequality and stratification, the presence of an occupational heterarchy suggests that inequality is reproduced in the U.S. partly because different people view—and navigate—the status hierarchy differently, depending on their social position. It is not so much that the less-advantaged in society develop *amor*

fati (resigning themselves to their fate), as Bourdieu (1984:243) presumed, since a person's own occupation does not shape their view of the status hierarchy. Instead, inequality likely occurs in part because people are pursuing different *ends* altogether, with different ideas of what those ends *mean*.[8] Future work is needed to parse out the sources of these different meanings. Social learning mechanisms likely play a key role in the formation of these worldviews. Given the elements of class membership which predict logics in the American population, I expect that class- (Lareau 2011; Stephens et al. 2014), race- (Brown and Lesane-Brown 2006), gender- (Stockard 2006), and religious-based (Keskinturk 2021) socialization, as well as cohort replacement (Kiley and Vaisey 2020; Vaisey and Lizardo 2016) play key roles. Furthermore, media effects may amplify and reinforce these sources of socialization, particularly when it comes to messages about the meaning of occupations, social standing, and moral worth derived from work (cf. Boutyline et al. 2020; Massoni 2004).

Specific to the concept of occupational prestige, researchers should acknowledge the fact that prestige ratings are likely *not* widely shared measures of subjective social standing. A particular occupation conveys an entirely different meaning to different people, depending on their social background. As I have shown, a lawyer is seen as a very honorable occupation to someone who holds the *white collar* logic, but is considered thoroughly deplorable to someone who holds the *blue collar* logic; yet a coal miner is seen as a very honorable occupation to someone under the *blue collar* logic and a very low-prestige occupation to someone under the *cultural capitalist* logic.

For scholars of culture and cognition, these analyses demonstrate the utility of a logics approach for measuring and identifying heterogeneity in evaluation and beliefs about worth, merit, and status. Logics are an aspect of personal, declarative culture (Lizardo 2017; Valentino 2021), and represent a potential new dimension to the notion of a "worldview" (Geertz 1957). Given that worldviews shape attitudes and behaviors, it is plausible that different conceptions of the status hierarchy likely shape extrapolitical attitudes and behaviors as well (Vaisey 2009). It is therefore fundamental for researchers in this subfield to chart their distribution within the population, particularly when these aspects of culture fall along demographic lines and are linked to other types of culture and action, as I have shown here. Furthermore, this article has refined the cognitive bases of the concept of *heterarchy*. While prior work on heterarchy focused exclusively on reflexive cognition which takes place at the meso-level among organizational actors, this article has demonstrated that heterarchy occurs at the micro-level, outside of organizational settings, and likely reflects a mix of both Type I and Type II cognitive processes. We can no longer assume that the occupational hierarchy mirrors social scientists' classificatory logic —a logic that places highly educated, scientific occupations such as our own at the top. Indeed, the answer to the question, "what is a good job?" depends, in fact, on a person's own social position, and we social scientists are no exception to this heterarchy.

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8 *Amor fati* can also look like homophily – preferences for those similar to oneself –, but implies a change in aspirations or tastes over time (viz., a downward adjustment). Further research using longitudinal data is needed to disentangle these two potential pathways.

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