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Poor but Warm, Rich but Cold (and Competent): Social Classes in the Stereotype Content Model

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Social class divides worsened during and after the Great Recession; this article documents one cultural feature of this divide, social-class stereotypes, both at the societal level (across nations) and at the individual level (personal beliefs about social-class groups and individuals). The Stereotype Content Model provides the shared theoretical framework focused on perceived warmth and competence of different social classes. In the international data, across cultures, people with high SES (socioeconomic status) are perceived ambivalently as competent but cold, their warmth even lower in more unequal societies. Low-SES people are seen as less competent but warmer, their alleged incompetence exaggerated under high inequality. The exaggerated warmth-competence trade-off helps justify the social-class system, especially under inequality. For personal stereotypes, predictions focus on warmth-competence trade-offs for each social-class target, and these results are most stable for the competent-but-not-so-warm high-SES targets. Consistent with the international results, high-SES people as a group are generally rated as more competent than warm. Similarly, a high-SES individual exemplar is judged as competent but less warm, whereas lower-SES individuals are seen as either more warm than competent or equally as warm as they are competent. Like the society-level data, perceptions of high-SES people are more stable than perceptions of lower-SES people, within these American samples.

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Introduction

Income inequality has gained considerable attention in recent years, and the pertinent literature has pointed out that inequality has been increasing in recent decades. The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), for example,

> has documented in detail the rise in inequality in about two thirds of developed economies between the early 1980s and the financial crisis [Great Recession] of 2008–09 (see OECD, 2008; OECD, 2011). In some countries, including the United States and the United Kingdom, the rise in inequality has been particularly stark .... Emerging and developing economies ... have also not been immune from this trend (ILO, 2015, p. 19).

And the Great Recession only expanded income inequality and social-class divides.

The inequality focus in this article examines both societal and individual perceptions of the top and bottom of the inequality distribution: stereotypes of people viewed as "rich" and "poor."[1] As such, this article aims to contribute to the emerging literature on the social psychology of social class (see, e.g., edited collections on these topics: images of "the poor," Lott & Bullock, 2001; class in educational contexts, Ostrove & Cole, 2003; psychology of privilege, Case, Iuzzini, & Hopkins, 2012; class in interpersonal contexts, Fiske & Markus, 2012; work-life flexibility, Williams, Blair-Loy, & Berdahl, 2013; for SPSSI and *JSI*'s long history of work on poverty, see Bullock, Lott, & Truong, 2011).

Income inequality undermines many social outcomes such as happiness, well-being, and trust (d'Hombres, Weber, & Elia, 2012; Wilkinson & Pickett, 2009), and it impacts individual psychological processes, such as self-enhancement (Loughnan et al., 2011) and stereotypes (Durante et al., 2013). Stereotypes, in particular, are cultural products that support gaps between high- and low-income people (for other cultural expressions that support class divides, see Becker, Kraus, & Rheinschmidt-Same, 2017; Rodriguez-Bailon et al., 2017; Swencionis, Dupree, & Fiske, 2017; Volpato, Andrighetto, & Baldissarri, 2017). The stereotyping literature, although focused extensively on race, ethnicity, and gender, and somewhat less on age and sexual orientation (e.g., Fiske, 1998, 2010), has focused even less on class stereotypes, being especially neglectful of stereotypes about high-SES people (Bullock, Fraser Wyche, & Williams, 2001). The exceptions tend to document stereotypes of incompetence about low-SES people (Bullock et al., 2001; Croizet & Claire, 1998; Darley & Gross, 1983; Russell & Fiske,

[1] In keeping with current conventions, we refer to social class as SES (socioeconomic status) where possible. In referring to stereotypes of "rich" and "poor," those labels report respondents' views.

2008). This article contributes by focusing on stereotypes of both high- and low-SES people, on more than just (in)competence, and at both societal and individual levels.

Our inequality approach, the Stereotype Content Model (SCM; Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, & Xu, 2002) investigates how inequality impacts societal stereotypes across the globe (Cuddy et al., 2009; Durante et al., 2013). The SCM methodology first has participants evaluate the social groups considered most salient in their own society. Some groups, such as "rich people" and "poor people," appear in many societies. Across cultures, high-SES people appear ambivalently competent but cold. Low-SES people universally appear incompetent, but vary on perceived warmth depending on context: ambivalently as warm but lacking competence or univalently as low on both dimensions.

When are low-SES people seen which way? Cross-culturally, different degrees of ambivalence at the societal level link to variations in income inequality at the national level. Ambivalent stereotypes may be a rationale maintaining the status quo by helping disguise the gap between high-SES people and low-SES people within a society (Durante et al., 2013). To camouflage societal inequality, unequal societies may inflate the competence attributed to the high-status group (i.e., high-SES people), and reduce the competence attributed to the low-status groups (i.e., low-SES people). To compensate, low-SES people may be awarded warmth and high-SES people denied it (Judd, James-Hawkins, Yzerbyt, & Kashima, 2005). Besides examining these possibilities at a societal level, another open question is whether these judgments differ when the target is an individual person rather than an abstract social group, because judgments about individuals may be less driven by lay theories about society. Finally, reporting society's SES stereotypes may differ from reporting personal stereotypes.

To address all these questions, we first investigated cross-culturally the moderating role of income inequality on the stereotype of "rich" and "poor" people as groups, using data from 39 samples collected in 27 countries, then followed up with specific exploration of attitudes toward social classes within a particularly unequal country, the United States. In the international study, participants evaluated either one or both target groups on the SCM warmth and competence dimensions, according to their society's point of view. The Gini index measured national income inequality, to see whether it moderates attributing warmth and competence to high-SES and low-SES people.

Our second line of work moves beyond the societal level to determine whether Americans individually report similar views to those they believe society more generally endorses. Three studies collected participants' personal ratings of the warmth and competence of class groups labeled upper-, lower-, and middle-class (Studies 2 and 3) and individual exemplars of those groups (Studies 3 and 4), to compare individual perceptions with societal perceptions.

Study 1: Across Nations, Income Inequality Moderates Stereotype Content about "Rich" and "Poor"

Method

The data collection used the following SCM methodology (Cuddy et al., 2009; Durante et al., 2013; Fiske & Durante, 2016): In each country, a preliminary group-listing study identified relevant social groups in an unconstrained way. Participants (mostly college students) completed a self-administered, open-ended questionnaire listing the most salient social categories of their own society, together with very low-status categories, and their ingroups. Groups mentioned by at least 15% of participants then appeared in that country's main survey questionnaire, which evaluated those groups, according to their society's point of view, on the SCM dimensions: warmth and competence. With few exceptions (Durante et al., 2013), in all countries two items measured each dimension on 5-point scales (1 = *not at all* to 5 = *extremely*). To avoid participant fatigue, when the groups to evaluate were too numerous, the list of groups was split to create two or more versions of the questionnaire. All questionnaires were administered in the nations' local languages.

Samples and Participants

The Durante et al. (2013) database was formed by 37 samples collected in 27 nations. Either "rich," "poor," or both groups were spontaneously mentioned in the majority of the preliminary studies and therefore included in their respective country's main survey questionnaire. More specifically, data for both target groups were available for the following countries (and samples): Australia (two samples, Asian-Australians and European-Australians), Belgium, Canada, Greece, Hong Kong, India, Israel (two samples, Israeli-Jews and Israeli-Arabs), Italy (two samples, students and nonstudents), Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand (two samples, European-New Zealanders and Maori-New Zealanders), Portugal, South Korea, Switzerland (four samples, Swiss-German students, Swiss-Italian students, Swiss-French students, and Swiss-French nonstudents), and Uganda. Bolivia (four different Bolivian universities' campuses), Chile, and Peru rated only the group "poor"; Northern Ireland (two samples, Catholic and Protestant Irish), Spain, and the United States (two samples, students and nonstudents) rated only the group "rich."

To that database, we added new SCM data collected in Finland (Durante, Fiske, Mähönen, & Jasinskaja, 2014), Egypt, Jordan, Turkey, and Pakistan (Durante, Fiske, Gelfand, & Stillwell, 2014); SCM data from Norway were collected independently by Bye, Herrebrøden, Hjetland, Røyset, and Westby (2014), and reanalyzed here. Both "rich" and "poor" groups were evaluated by all

these samples, except for Pakistan, which had listed only the "poor" as a salient group.

To specify further the criterion used to select the samples: We focused on only the labels "the poor" and "the rich," and we did not consider upper-middle or lower/working class. The labels in the data files are translations (made by our collaborators). Because we know neither the original linguistic label nor the common meaning attributed in each country for each specific label, we adopt a restrictive criterion to select the samples, also considering that sometimes both the "poor" (and/or the "rich) and the "working/lower class" (and "upper class") appeared in the same SCM national dataset.

Overall, to generate the data used here, around 1,400 respondents (56.66% female, mean age 25.50) participated in the preliminary group listing study, whereas around 3,400 participants (63.84% female, mean age 23.54) took part in the long survey's phase. Most data were collected in the aftermath of the Great Recession: Of 39 samples, 13 were collected between 2000 and 2007, 4 in 2008, 15 in 2009, and the remaining 7 between 2010 and 2014. Although we cannot evaluate the effects of the Great Recession because we do not have repeated measures from the same countries before and after, that is not the study's purpose. Instead, we record "rich" and "poor" stereotypes, as moderated by income inequality, dynamics that increasingly matter, as the Great Recession has worsened inequality.

Analysis Strategy

Warmth and competence subscale items[2] were averaged, and their means for the groups "rich" and "poor" were selected from each sample. Then, the Gini index[3] measured each nation's income inequality (using Gini as generated by the American Central Intelligence Agency, CIA, 2016). Gini coefficients go from 0 (complete equality) to 100 (complete inequality). Gini coefficients refer to the inequality in income distribution of a specific year and nation, but they are not released annually. Because our data were collected over many years, for each country

[2]Competence was measured as "To what extent do most [national citizens] view members of this group as [competent, capable]?" Warmth was measured as "To what extent do most [national citizens] view members of this group as [warm, well-intentioned]?" (Norwegian data were collected independently (Bye et al., 2014) and reanalyzed for the present work. For the construct warmth the Norwegian items used here were *warm* and *sincere*.) Warmth and competence reliabilities were calculated separately for the two target groups in each sample. For the target group rich: competence, median $\alpha = .70$, warmth, median $\alpha = .52$. For the target group poor: competence, median $\alpha = .66$, warmth, median $\alpha = .52$.

[3]Gini coefficients were retrieved from Central Intelligence Agency-The World Factbook, https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/download/index.html, and https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/fields/2172.html, on April 11, 2016.

we matched as well as possible the year of data collection with the year of the Gini coefficient for that country, among those available on the CIA website (2016).

Multilevel linear models (SPSS 23) investigated whether rated warmth and competence of "rich" and "poor" were moderated by income inequality. The model building included (a) running an empty model (i.e., a model with no predictors) to calculate the intraclass correlation coefficient (ICC), which estimates the proportion of the total variance in the outcome that is attributable to differences in level-2 units (i.e., countries) and (b) gradually estimating more complex models, checking improved fit (i.e., –2 log likelihood) after estimating each model (Peugh, 2010, maximum likelihood method). Target groups were dummy coded (0 = *poor*; 1 = *rich*), and Gini coefficients were *z*-standardized.

Results

Competence. The unconstrained model was run, and the ICC was calculated. Results indicated that 14.82% of the total variability in competence was due to variations between countries. In Model 1, target group was entered as a fixed parameter with random intercept, and Model 2 added the Gini index and its interaction with target group as fixed parameters with random intercept. The difference between the –2 log likelihood (–2LL) of Model 1 (8853.49) and Model 2 (8847.23) was significant, $\chi^2(2) = 6.26$, $p = .044$. For predicting competence, the model including the Gini index and its interaction with the target group significantly improved fit to the data.

As expected, the competence attributed to "rich" people was significantly higher than the competence attributed to "poor" people, $F(1, 3392.28) = 2632$, $p < .001$; the Gini index had no direct effect, $F < 1$. Most relevantly, the interaction between income inequality and target group was significant, $F(1, 2894.23) = 5.21$, $p = .023$ (Figure 1a and Table 1): The more inequality, the less competence attributed to low-SES people; competence attributed to high-SES people remained stable.

Warmth. The ICC indicated that 7.06% of the variability in warmth was due to between-country variation.[4] The difference between the –2LL of Model 1 (9217.84) and Model 2 (9210.02) was significant, $\chi^2(2) = 7.82$, $p = .02$. As expected, "poor" people were perceived as warmer than "rich" people, $F(1, 3260.55) = 118.72$, $p < .001$; again, the Gini index did not directly affect the outcome variable ($F < 1$), but the interaction term was significant, $F(1, 2533.97)$

[4]To check the need for multilevel modeling, Model 2 excluded level-2 units (i.e., countries). Comparing the models' –2LL with (9210.02) versus without (9337.27) level-2 units, excluding "country" worsened model fit significantly, $\chi^2(1) = -127.25$, $p < .001$, indicating hierarchical structure.

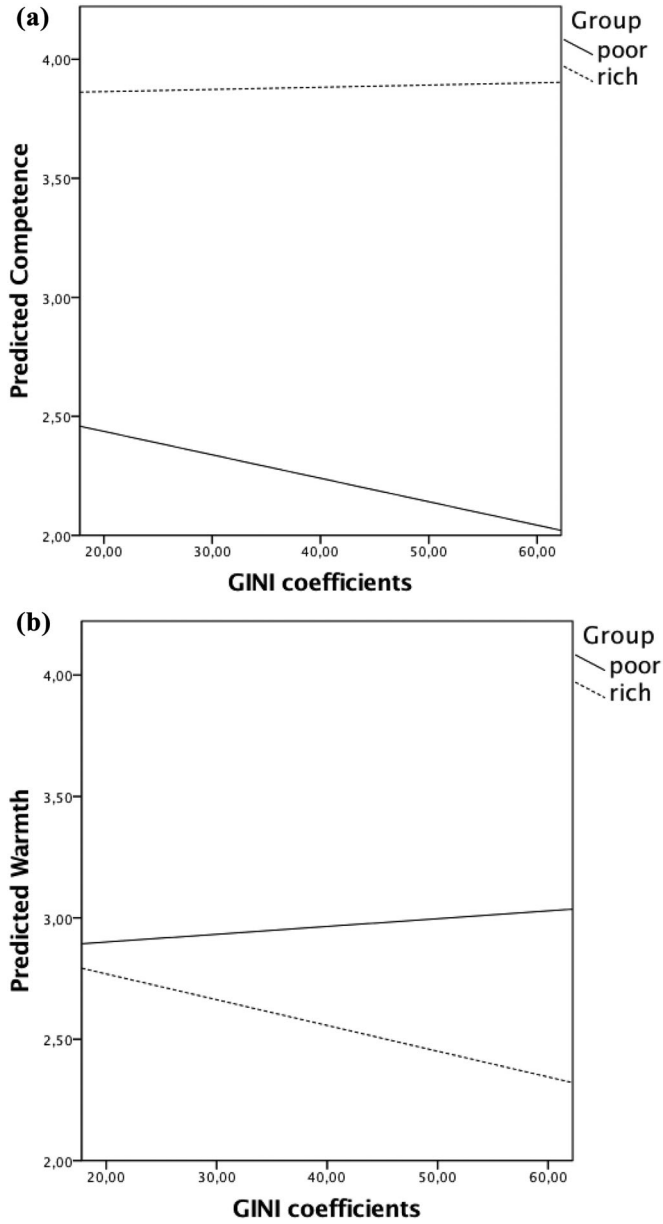

Fig. 1. Interaction of social-class target group and Gini coefficients for (a) competence and (b) warmth, Study 1. Higher Gini indicates more inequality.

Table 1. ML Fixed Effects Coefficients. Competence and Warmth Regressed on Target Group, Gini Coefficient and Target Group × Gini Coefficient

	b	SE *b*	95% CI
Competence			
Target group	−1.60	0.03	−1.66, −1.54
Gini	0.01	0.06	−0.11, 0.12
Gini x Target group	−0.09	0.04	−0.16, −0.01
Warmth			
Target group	0.36	0.03	0.29, 0.42
Gini	−0.09	0.05	−0.19, 0.02
Gini x Target group	0.11	0.04	0.03, 0.19

$= 7.83$, $p = .005$. As income inequality increased, "rich" people were colder, but "poor" people were stable (Figure 1b and Table 1).

Discussion

Income inequality did moderate stereotypes of competence and warmth for "rich" and "poor" people. But, unexpectedly, income inequality affected the attribution of competence only for the low-status group: the more inequality, the less competence. Inequality costs low-income people their respect. Under inequality, attributed warmth instead penalized high-SES people. Besides high-SES people feeling insecure about their high rank (when it is precarious; Jetten, Mols, Healy Spears, & Postmes, 2017), they may also notice that they are not liked or trusted.

Consistent with Durante et al.'s (2013) findings, the stereotype contents of the two target groups are more ambivalent in more unequal societies. High-SES people were evaluated as competent but colder, and low-SES people as less competent but still warm, in relatively unequal countries. Thus, to camouflage societal inequality, the low-status group seems to be further penalized on the status-relevant dimension (competence), but it is compensated (Judd et al., 2005) on the status-irrelevant dimension (warmth), which is instead the penalized dimension for the high-status group.

These findings suggest why low-SES people move from the contemptible (low-competence, low-warmth) to the paternalized (low-competence, high-warmth) cells of the SCM map in different countries. Low-SES people being perceived as even less competent in more unequal countries suggests victim-blaming. More unequal countries reinforce the status = competence system: People get what they deserve, and people are low SES because they are not competent. Compensation being stronger in more unequal societies fits ambivalence as rationalizing the prevailing social system: Groups may be socially appreciated on

either of two dimensions of social perception, and this could reduce their will to challenge the status quo (Durante et al., 2013; Kay et al., 2007). Overall, this study not only provides cross-culturally shared images of low- and high-SES people, but also highlights income inequality's role, affirming how stereotypes justify the status quo.

Limitations. Participants were often students, so perhaps mostly middle class, although they rate groups according to their society's view, and prior studies do not differ much when they use a representative sample (Cuddy, Fiske, & Glick, 2007) or when people rate their own group or others do (Cuddy et al., 2009). People know where their group stands.

The stimuli were limited to the two commonly mentioned social-class targets, so they do not take account of subtypes by ethnicity (labels such as poor Whites, poor Blacks) or other specificities (labels such as welfare recipients, unemployed, or uneducated) as in previous SCM research. Also, the study ranged from small to large *n* by nation, so additional countries' ratings of "rich" and "poor" would be useful, despite the consistent results so far.

These data are limited to single time points for each country, so they do not reflect changing inequality. Moreover, they do not show psychological mechanisms by which inequality and polarized stereotypes operate. Finally, participants report on society's views, so they are silent on individual endorsement of the stereotypes. Studies 2–4 do provide those data, within the American context.

Studies 2–4: Individual Stereotypes about Low-SES People and High-SES People

To complement our understanding of how more and less equal societies view lower and higher SES, the second line of work examined whether people individually report similar personal stereotypes about social classes, both as collective and individual targets. The societal results could have reflected lay theories but not apply to individuals' own opinions about groups and individuals of different classes. In all three studies, participants volunteered on Amazon's Mechanical Turk, whose workers come close to representing the American population's social-class distribution, which shows a lot of inequality. Between subjects, participants rated the warmth and competence of upper-, lower-, and middle-class groups (Studies 2 and 3) and individual exemplars of those groups (Studies 3 and 4).

Study 2: Individual Ratings of Social-Class Groups

Method. The three studies had similar methods.

Participants. Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk) gathered 95 responses in November 2012, well after the worst of the Great Recession. After screening

out 7 incomplete responses, 88 remained: 61% female, median age 30, and median household income $25,001–$35,000; 43% identified as low income or working class, 43% as middle class, and 6% as upper-middle class. Approximately 75% reported being White or Caucasian, 7% Black or African-American, 10% Asian, 10% Hispanic or Latino/a, 0% Native American, and 0% "other." Median political orientation (0 = *extremely liberal* to 100 = *extremely conservative*) was 29.5 for social issues, 41 for economic issues, and 39 overall.

Materials and procedure. The Qualtrics-hosted survey excluded past participants in related studies. Besides some irrelevant measures (available from the authors), participants were randomly assigned to rate either "lower-class people," "middle-class people," or "upper-class people," as a generalized group, assessing warmth and competence (1 = *not at all;* 7 = *extremely*).

Results and discussion. We present warmth, competence, and their trade-off separately.

Warmth. An analysis of variance found a significant effect of target status on ratings of warmth, $F(2, 85) = 13.74$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2_p = .24$. The "upper class" was rated as significantly less warm ($M = 3.41$, $SD = 1.12$) than both the "lower-class" ($M = 4.41$, $SD = 1.01$) ($p < .05$) and the "middle-class" ($M = 4.73$, $SD = 0.87$) ($p < .05$) groups, who did not significantly differ (Figure 2).

Competence. The parallel analysis of variance found a significant effect of target status on rated competence, $F(2, 85) = 6.86$, $p = .002$, $\eta^2_p = .14$, but the pattern differed from rated warmth. The middle-class group was rated significantly more competent ($M = 4.97$, $SD = 0.81$) than the lower-class ($M = 4.07$, $SD = 1.22$) ($p < .05$) or the upper-class ($M = 4.00$, $SD = 1.19$) ($p < .05$) groups (Figure 2).

Trade-offs. The trade-offs operated as expected for the higher SES group: "Upper-class" people are rated as more competent than warm, though "lower-class" people are rated as only slightly more warm than competent (Figure 2), as in the international data describing "rich" and "poor" people from the perspective of society. A mixed-factorial analysis of variance using a Greenhouse-Geisser correction with target class as the between-subjects variable and warmth/competence as a within-subjects variable found a significant interaction between the two factors, $F(2.000, 85.000) = 4.10$, $p = .02$, $\eta^2_p = .09$. Analysis of simple effects found a marginal difference for ratings of the upper-class group, who were rated less warm ($M = 3.41$, $SD = 1.12$) than competent ($M = 4.00$, $SD = 1.28$) ($p = .07$). Within judgments of the lower-class group, ratings of warmth ($M = 4.41$, $SD = 1.02$) did not significantly differ from ratings of competence ($M = 4.07$,

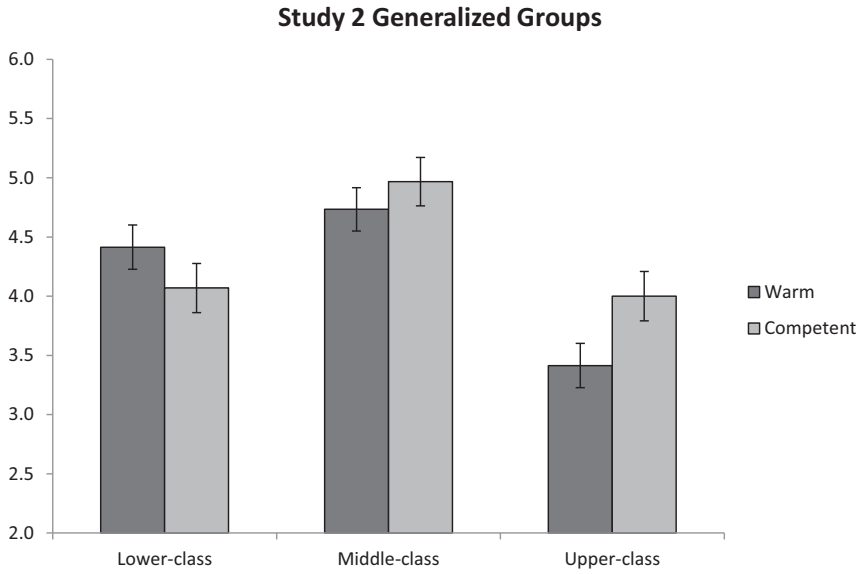

Fig. 2. Warmth and competence ratings of social-class groups, Study 2. Ratings range 1–7.

$SD = 1.22$). In this study, the middle-class group was rated equally warm ($M = 4.73$, $SD = 0.87$) and competent ($M = 4.97$, $SD = 0.81$).

Summary. Like the international society-level data, individual judgments reflect American stereotypes of high-SES people as less warm than other classes, and as more competent than warm.

Study 3: Individual Ratings of Social-Class Groups and Exemplars

Study 3 aimed to replicate Study 2's individual perspectives on social-class groups, and to examine whether they extend to individual judgments of individual exemplars, as well as groups, of different social classes.

Method. Study 3 measured personal ratings of social classes as represented both by individual exemplars and generalized groups, again between subjects.

Participants. MTurk recorded 311 responses in January 2013. After screening out incomplete responses and past participants, 292 remained: 50.7% female, median age 31, and median household income $25,001–$35,000. Ethnicity, class, and political distributions resembled Study 2.

Materials and procedure. The Qualtrics-hosted survey randomly assigned condition. In the exemplar condition, participants evaluated "John," described prototypically as upper class ("John makes $3,000,000 each year. He owns a vacation home in Hawaii, has a private yacht, and owns three expensive sports cars."), middle class ("John has a full-time job that pays an average salary. He owns his own home, but still has a sizable mortgage. He drives a 5-year-old car that he bought second-hand."), working class ("John has a job in the manufacturing industry and makes minimum wage. He rents a small house in a low-income neighborhood. He recently got a 15-year-old station wagon that he bought from a neighbor."), or lower class ("John has been homeless for the past 3 years and is currently staying in a shelter. He rarely has enough money for food and sometimes will dig through trash cans to find something to eat."). In the generalized group condition, participants simply evaluated "[group]-class people." In both conditions, participants rated the warmth and competence of the target individual or group. Participants also completed other measures (available upon request).

Results and discussion. We present warmth, competence, and their trade-off separately.

Warmth. An ANOVA testing the effects of target class and target construal level (individual vs. group) on rated warmth found a significant main effect of target class, $F(3, 282) = 4.13$, $p = .007$, $\eta^2_p = .04$. Both upper-class targets were rated as significantly less warm ($M = 3.49$, $SD = 1.17$) than the other three target types ($p < .05$), who did not differ from each other: lower class ($M = 3.96$, $SD = 1.16$), working class ($M = 4.09$, $SD = 0.99$), and middle class ($M = 3.91$, $SD = 1.13$). Target class and construal level did not interact significantly (Figures 3a and 3b). This study's warmth main effect disfavoring upper-class targets (both exemplars and groups) replicates Study 2 (groups only).

Additionally, a to-be-expected main effect of level of construal, $F(1, 282) = 21.69$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2_p = .07$, showed, across conditions, individual exemplars were rated as warmer ($M = 4.16$, $SD = 0.97$) than social-class groups ($M = 3.58$, $SD = 1.20$); this fits the person-positivity effect (Sears, 1983).

Competence. A parallel ANOVA on ratings of competence found no significant main effect of target-group class, but a significant effect of level of construal, $F(1, 284) = 17.96$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2_p = .06$, as well as a significant interaction between the two, $F(3, 284) = 3.79$, $p = .011$, $\eta^2_p = .04$ (see Figures 3a and 3b). The effect of target class on ratings of competence depended on the level of consideration. Ratings of the individual exemplar followed past work, linking class and competence, with a positive relationship between target class and perceived competence. At the group level, all classes were seen as similarly competent (except the working class, which showed a small bonus). This study's competence

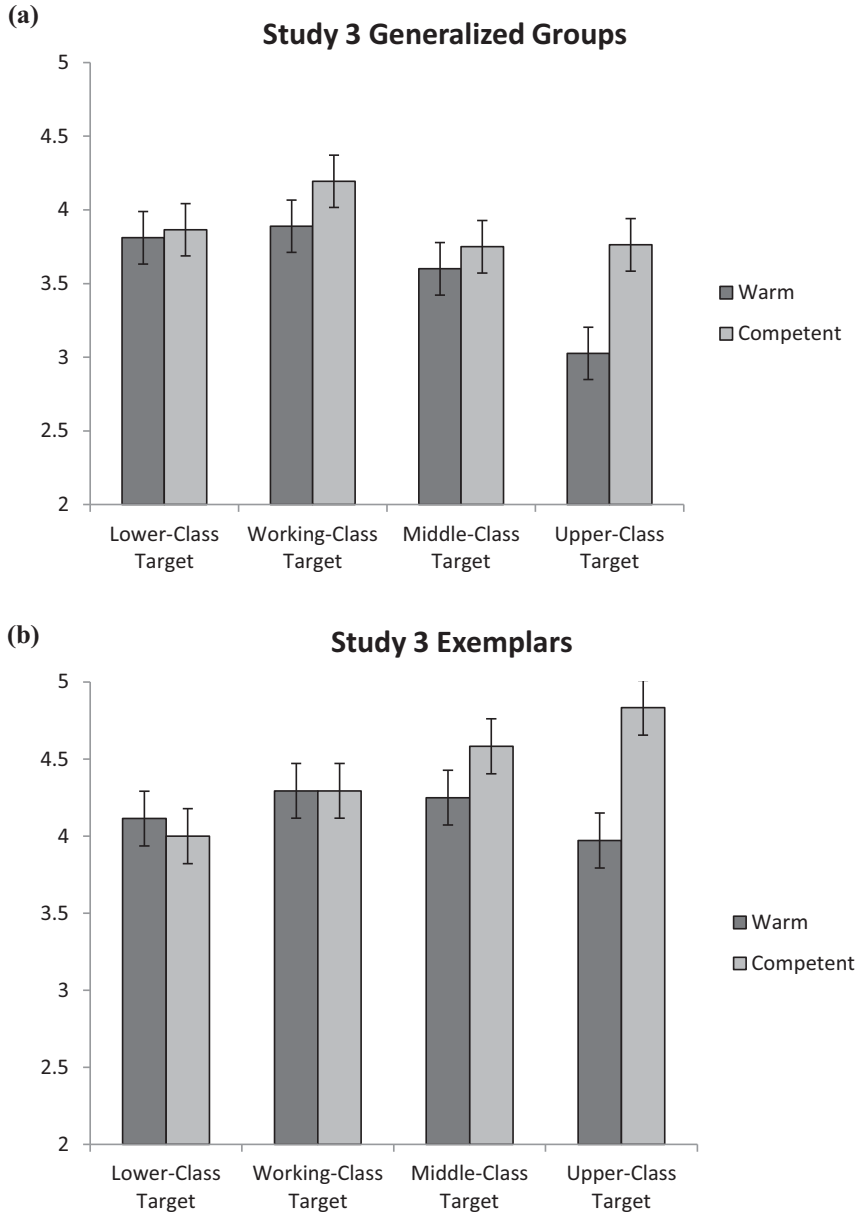

Fig. 3. Warmth and competence ratings of (a) social-class groups and (b) exemplars, according to individual opinion, Study 3. Ratings range 1–7.

main effect favored upper-class exemplars, but Study 2 (groups only) and the group-level here did not.

Trade-offs. A mixed factorial ANOVA with a Greenhouse-Geisser correction using target status and construal level as between-subjects factors and warmth/competence as a within-subjects factor found a significant interaction between target class and evaluations of warmth versus competence $F(3.000, 284.000) = 9.28, p < .001, \eta^2_p = .09$. There were no other significant interactions. Simple effects analysis collapsing across construal levels showed no significant difference between rated warmth and competence in lower-class (warmth, $M = 3.96$, $SD = 1.16$; competence $M = 3.93$, $SD = 1.14$) or working-class (warmth, $M = 4.09$, $SD = 0.99$; competence $M = 4.24$, $SD = 0.98$) targets, but middle-class and upper-class targets were rated as significantly more competent (middle class, $M = 4.14$, $SD = 1.14$; upper class, $M = 4.28$, $SD = 1.21$) than they were warm (middle class, $M = 3.91$, $SD = 1.13$; upper class, $M = 3.49$, $SD = 1.17$) ($p < .05$). This difference was largest for the upper-class targets; as in Study 2's group ratings, the ratings of the upper class, here regardless of construal level, show a compensation effect, with both the group and the individual rated more competent than warm.

Summary. Upper-class targets are consistently viewed as less warm than other social classes. Construal level as an individual or as an abstract group did not moderate the warmth disadvantage for the upper-class targets. However, only the individual exemplar showed a competence advantage for the upper class, but that could be an artifact of information in the concrete description used. Study 2 and the group condition of this study showed no competence gain for the upper class. The warmth decrement for upper-class targets does appear reliable in these individual reports, as in Study 2.

Nevertheless, the compensation effect appeared only for the upper-class targets—more competent than warm. As in Study 2 (personal opinions) and in the international data, judging from society's perspective, high-SES people are perceived ambivalently as competent but cold.

Inclusion of working-class targets made no difference to these comparisons of the top and bottom of the class distribution. Hence, Study 4 includes only lower-, middle-, and upper-class exemplars, to demonstrate that the warmth effects replicate for exemplars, as a robustness check.

Study 4: Individual Ratings of Social-Class Exemplars

Method. Participants rated only exemplars in this study.

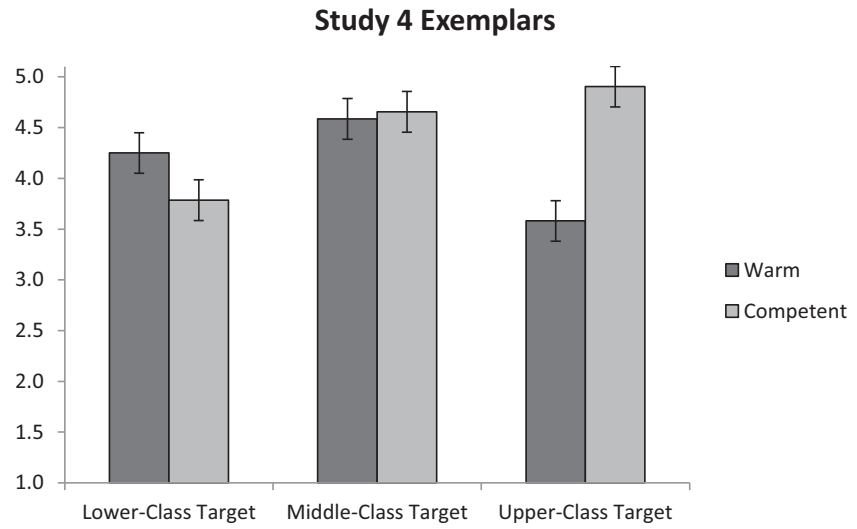

Fig. 4. Warmth and competence ratings of individual social-class exemplars, Study 4. Ratings range 1–7.

Participants. MTurk collected 98 responses in November 2012. After screening out incomplete and repeat responses, 88 remained: 58% female, median age 31, and median household income $35,001–50,000. Other demographics resembled the previous studies.

Materials and procedure. In the Qualtrics-hosted survey, after an instruction-reading check, participants were asked to imagine "John," described (between subjects) by Study 3's upper-class, middle-class, or lower-class exemplar. To strengthen the manipulation, participants were asked to imagine that this target was someone that they know in real life, and then to write a few sentences about what he would be like. Next, participants rated him on warmth and competence, and filled out other dependent measures (available on request).

Results and discussion. Again we present, separately, warmth, competence, and their trade-off.

Warmth. As before, an ANOVA found a significant main effect of target class on rated warmth, $F(2, 85) = 7.15$, $p = .001$, $\eta^2_{\mathrm{p}} = .14$. Pairwise comparisons showed the upper-class target as significantly less warm ($M = 3.58$, $SD = 1.12$) than the lower-class target ($M = 4.25$, $SD = 0.97$) ($p < .05$) and middle-class target ($M = 4.59$, $SD = 0.73$) ($p < .05$), who did not significantly differ (Figure 4).

Competence. A parallel ANOVA again found a significant main effect of target class on rated competence, $F(2, 85) = 12.46$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2_p = .23$. Pairwise comparisons showed the lower-class target was rated as significantly less competent ($M = 3.79$, $SD = 1.07$) than the middle-class target ($M = 4.66$, $SD = 0.86$) ($p < .05$), or upper-class target ($M = 4.90$, $SD = 0.75$) ($p < .05$), who did not significantly differ from each other. Study 3's exemplar condition favored high-SES individuals. Relatively, high-SES exemplars seem more competent than low-SES exemplars in both studies, but the (dis)advantage differs with regard to middle-class exemplars.

Trade-offs. A mixed factorial ANOVA with a Greenhouse-Geisser correction using target status as a between-subjects factor and warmth/competence as a within-subjects factor again found a significant interaction between target status and evaluations of warmth versus competence $F(2.000, 85.000) = 20.19$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2_p = .32$. Simple effects analysis showed no significant difference between rated warmth and competence in lower-class (warmth $M = 3.96$, $SD = 1.16$; competence $M = 3.93$, $SD = 1.14$) or middle-class (warmth $M = 4.59$, $SD = 0.73$; competence $M = 4.66$, $SD = 0.86$) targets, but again the upper-class exemplar was rated as significantly more competent ($M = 4.90$, $SD = 0.75$) than warm ($M = 3.58$, $SD = 1.34$) ($p < 05$). As in Study 3, the warmth-competence trade-off again occurs for competent but cold upper-class people. Stimulus material effects cannot be ruled out, but the pattern of results for high-SES people appears to be reliable.

Summary and discussion of experimental Studies 2–4. To simplify, we group the two studies (2 and 3) measuring perceptions of social-class groups and the (overlapping) two (3 and 4) measuring perceptions of individuals. Trade-off results are parallel.

Consistent with the previous international results, high-SES people are generally rated as more competent than warm (Figures 2 and 3a). Similarly, when participants are rating social-class exemplars (individuals; see Figures 3b and 4), they judge an upper-class target as highly competent but less warm, whereas the middle- and lower-class targets are seen as either more warm than competent or equally as warm as they are competent. This closely reflects the patterns seen in the international SCM study reported here, where participants indicated the stereotypes commonly held in their societies. Like the SCM data, too, participants' own views of class-based categories see upper class as about as competent as middle class. But in general, lower-SES targets appear less competent than higher-SES targets.

Like the society-level data, perceptions of high-SES people are more stable than perceptions of low-SES people, even holding nationality constant, within these American samples. In two of the four cases, low-SES targets are rated

as more warm than competent, and in two cases, equally warm and competent. Middle-class targets fall between lower- and higher-class targets.

Viewed another way, the higher class as a group is rated equally competent to the lower class, but much less warm (Figures 2 and 3a). The higher-class exemplar, however, is rated as more competent than the lower-class exemplar, and as either much less warm (Figure 3b) or equally warm (Figure 4). However, SCM predictions focus on warmth-competence trade-offs for each social-class target, and these results are most stable for the competent-but-not-so-warm upper-class targets.

Limitations. Although Studies 2–4 essentially replicate the society-level data of Study 1, they have their own limitations. The stimuli are impoverished. Although the exemplar stimuli go beyond mere labels ("rich," "poor"), they are hypothetical. The exemplar stimuli moreover may have confounded specifics of the descriptions with the class manipulations, despite pretesting. In particular, the exemplars may confound class with valence, the lower-SES descriptions seeming more negative. Future research should more thoroughly separate valence from class, though warmth ratings equaled or favored the lower-SES exemplars, which suggests that negativity was not the operative mechanism.

Admittedly, the ratings have no real consequences. Perhaps evaluating lower-SES people for real benefits or employment would recognize their competence more than these ratings do, but prior research suggests otherwise (Lott & Bullock, 2001).

General Discussion

Higher-SES people generally appear cold but competent, whereas low-SES people tend to rate as warmer but less competent than upper-class targets. This pattern holds for rating society's views, especially under inequality, as well as partially for individuals' own beliefs. For personal views, the pattern is stronger for rating exemplars compared to abstract groups. When participants give their own attitudes, instead of society's views, they may rate all class groups as similarly competent.

Broader implications of societal and exemplar stereotypes suggest interpersonally awkward cross-class interaction, where each side expects the other to hold an ambivalent stereotype, creating a dysfunctional dynamic (Swencionis et al., 2017), which could matter in workplace, school, or neighborhood encounters. Moving up a level, public policies, schools, organizations, and neighborhoods may track people according to social-class stereotypes, excluding low-SES people as less competent and meritorious. Most gateway institutions use ascribed competence as a metric, so first-generation college students, for example, have an

uphill battle (e.g., Batruch, Autin, & Butera, 2017; Jury et al., 2017). Officially debunking such class stereotypes would facilitate equity.

Finally, societies may use social-class stereotypes to justify income inequality: High-SES people appear more competent than warm, so they deserve their status, but other social classes can be placated with their own compensated warmth advantage, not useful for societal privileges that matter.

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