Journal of Personality and Social Psychology:
Personality Processes and Individual Differences

ISSN: 0022-3514

2025, Vol. 128, No. 5, 1226–1242
https://doi.org/10.1037/pspp0000541

Stereotypes and Social Decisions: The Interpersonal Consequences of Socioeconomic Status

Bradley T. Hughes[1, 2], Rachel Jacobson[1], Nicholas O. Rule[2], and Sanjay Srivastava[1]
[1] Department of Psychology, University of Oregon
[2] Department of Psychology, University of Toronto

Perceptions of socioeconomic status (SES) can perpetuate inequality by influencing interpersonal interactions in ways that disadvantage people with low SES. Indeed, lab studies have provided evidence that people can detect others' SES and that they may use this information to apply stereotypes that influence interpersonal decisions. Here, we examine how SES and SES-based stereotypes affect real-world social interactions between people from a socioeconomically diverse population. We used the computer-mediated online round-robin method to facilitate interactions among 297 participants from across the U.S. Participants completed a series of dyadic interactions with other participants in virtual rooms in which they discussed a recent negative consumer experience. After each interaction, they judged the interaction partner's SES, personality traits, and credibility of their consumer experience. Results showed that people perceived SES with moderate accuracy in the interactions, which elicited negative interpersonal stereotypes of low-SES individuals for all 12 of the personality traits measured. People also preferred to affiliate with others with high SES, had more sympathy for them, and found their experiences more credible. SES-based interpersonal stereotypes about personality traits mediated these associations. The perception of SES in real-time interactions thus appears to activate stereotypes that guide social judgments, supporting the hypothesis that interpersonal effects contribute to economic inequality.

Keywords: socioeconomic status, interpersonal perceptions, inequality, personality perception, stereotypes

Supplemental materials: https://doi.org/10.1037/pspp0000541.supp

The American Dream, "work hard and you will get ahead," entails upward social mobility and economic prosperity. For those at the top of society's social and economic hierarchy, who have realized the American dream, achieving economic success might appear possible for everyone; but for individuals at the bottom, significant barriers challenge achieving this dream. The negative effects of insufficient financial and social resources on health (Adler & Stewart, 2010), educational attainment (Reardon, 2018), and access to opportunities (Marmot & Wilkinson, 2005; Sirin, 2005), among others, make it critical to understand the barriers to upward social mobility. Here, we investigate how these broader societal forces manifest in everyday social life by building on growing evidence that socioeconomic status (SES)-based stereotypes are activated during social interactions and lead to differential treatment by others (e.g., Durante & Fiske, 2017; Kraus et al., 2017).

Scholars have postulated that people accurately perceive others' SES during social interactions, biasing how people see and treat one another (Kraus et al., 2017). For example, people lower in SES have fewer educational opportunities (Van de Werfhorst & Mijs, 2010), lower paying jobs (Hauser & Warren, 1997), greater difficulty acquiring loans (Sussman & Shafir, 2012), and worse health outcomes (Adler et al., 1994; Smith, 2007), partly because SES stereotypes alter how loan officers, admissions committees, educators, and health care providers perceive them (Auwarter &

This article was published Online First January 13, 2025.
Lauren J. Human served as action editor.
Bradley T. Hughes https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3799-151X
Rachel Jacobson https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8667-5804
Nicholas O. Rule https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2332-9058
Sanjay Srivastava https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6899-664X
The preregistration for the methods, the R code for analysis, and data are available on Open Science Framework: https://osf.io/yhu4t/. Parts of this work were included in Bradley T. Hughes' dissertation submitted to the University of Oregon (Hughes, 2023). Preliminary results were presented at the 24th annual Society for Personality and Social Psychology conference in 2023, Atlanta, Georgia. The self-report data from this work were used to assess the association between different self-report socioeconomic status indicators and reported in work published by Bradley T. Hughes and Sanjay Srivastava (Hughes et al., 2024). This research was supported by a grant from Oregon Consumer Justice (Grant 4236A0, awarded to Sanjay Srivastava), and a University of Oregon Dissertation Research Fellowship awarded to the first author, Bradley T. Hughes.

Bradley T. Hughes played a lead role in conceptualization, data curation, formal analysis, investigation, methodology, project administration, software, validation, visualization, writing–original draft, and writing–review and editing and an equal role in funding acquisition and resources. Rachel Jacobson played a supporting role in data curation, investigation, validation, visualization, and writing–review and editing. Nicholas O. Rule played a supporting role in visualization and an equal role in supervision and writing–review and editing. Sanjay Srivastava played a supporting role in formal analysis, investigation, visualization, and writing–review and editing and an equal role in conceptualization, funding acquisition, methodology, project administration, resources, and supervision.

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Bradley T. Hughes, Department of Psychology, University of Toronto, 100 Saint George Street, Toronto, ON M5S 3G3, Canada. Email: hughes.bradleyt@gmail.com

Aruguete, 2008; van Ryn & Burke, 2000). To date, however, empirical work has only considered perceptions and decisions in response to stimuli presented on a computer in the lab, leaving the real-world impact of SES in social interactions unknown.

In the present work, we investigated SES's impact in a more ecologically valid context: initial social interactions between real people from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds. Our goal was to determine if effects previously tested with controlled stimuli extend to social interactions, and provide deeper insight into how SES affects every day social interactions. We sought to answer the three primary research questions: (1) Is SES perceived accurately in initial social interactions? (2) Are perceptions of SES associated with biased impressions of personality traits? (3) Do perceptions of SES or the associated stereotypes influence social decisions, such as who to be friends with (affiliation interest) or who to trust (credibility judgments)?

Is SES Perceived Accurately in Social Interactions

SES represents an individual's access to resources and the status afforded by their occupation (Antonoplis, 2023; Diemer et al., 2013; Oakes & Rossi, 2003). A multidimensional psychological construct, SES influences where people live, shop, and work, and also forms an important part of individual identity and of cultural models of the self (Stephens et al., 2014). Accurately perceiving SES requires that targets make relevant cues about their SES perceptually available during an interaction, and that perceivers detect and utilize those cues (Funder, 1995, 2012).

To date, studies of accurate SES perception have only occurred in labs where participants judge the SES of standardized stimuli (e.g., photos of faces, audio of voices, or short videos). Results show that people can guess SES better than chance. For example, participants classified faces as rich or poor with over 60% accuracy (Bjornsdottir & Rule, 2017), classified whether speakers had a college education with 55% accuracy after listening to just seven spoken words (Kraus et al., 2019), and judged SES better than chance from social media photos (Becker et al., 2017) or from watching videos of dyads getting to know each other in a lab (Kraus & Keltner, 2009). These findings collectively suggest that face-to-face interactions contain SES-relevant information. But they leave room for uncertainty about whether SES detection extends to dynamic interpersonal contexts.

First, previous work used scaffolding to ensure the availability of cues, assisting people in detecting and utilizing them. For example, researchers selected faces (Bjornsdottir & Rule, 2017) and voices (Kraus et al., 2019) from the extremes of the SES continuum, accentuating differences and making them easier to detect. The middle class in the United States has shrunk to 50% of the population since 1970 (Pew Research Center, 2015), but 70% identifies as middle class (Martin, 2017), which makes previous findings with extreme stimuli less applicable to everyday social interactions. Second, perceiving SES from isolated stimuli presented on computers in controlled laboratory settings inherently differs from judging SES from a whole person during an interaction, where information about others comes in a complex stream of behavioral information that requires additional effort and attention to parse. Third, interactions could influence SES detection. When people interact, the perceiver influences the target's behavior (Carson, 2019; Leary, 1957) in ways that can influence impressions (Hughes et al., 2021). People might also use impression management strategies to alter the SES cues that they express (Swencionis et al., 2017), potentially reducing the relevance or availability of SES cues and attenuating accuracy (Funder, 1995, 2012). Fourth, overreliance on undergraduates as both perceivers and targets limits the generalizability of previous work. For example, early work on thin-slice SES perceptions employed just seven undergraduate raters from a highly selective university (Kraus & Keltner, 2009), and the work on social media photos used only nine (Becker et al., 2017). These small numbers of unusual individuals may not represent the broader population very well.

To address the limitations of previous work to make inferences about everyday social interaction, we investigate accuracy in the social context of an initial interaction between strangers. If people make accurate inferences about other's SES, then an individual's SES can have real-world interpersonal effects. If SES is not detected accurately during interpersonal interactions, then an individual's actual SES would not impact them. However, perceptions of an individual's SES could still have an effect. Therefore, the more accurate perceivers are in their perceptions of SES, the stronger the potential effects of SES on personality impressions and social outcomes.

Stereotypes of SES

Broadly, *stereotypes* refer to generalized characterizations about the attributes of members of a social group or category (Eagly & Koenig, 2021). The potential for stereotypes to affect people's lives has motivated work on both the effects of stereotypes (e.g., Bodenhausen & Wyer, 1985; Glock & Kleen, 2020) and their content (e.g., Fiske et al., 2002; Koch et al., 2016, 2021). The study of stereotype content uses a standard method of identifying stereotyped social groups and then having participants rate each group's traits to identify stereotyped domains. Prominent models of stereotype content coalesce around two domains: (a) agency/competence, which relates to status, prestige, and power; and (b) communion/warmth, which relates to benevolence, trustworthiness, and cooperativeness (Koch et al., 2021).

For SES, previous work has identified stereotypes for several SES-based groups. People judge "the rich" as cold and competent, and "the poor" as warm and incompetent (Fiske et al., 2002), and both "the working class" and "the middle class" as higher in *competence* and warmth than either "the rich" or "the poor" (Durante et al., 2017). Similar stereotypes emerge when participants rate vignettes about exemplars and SES groups (Durante et al., 2017). Together, this work suggests that the stereotype content of SES groups moves curvilinearly across the SES continuum, but these groups do not align with SES's continuous structure in the United States. Categories such as *rich*, *poor*, and *middle class* include people with a wide range of socioeconomic resources. In fact, most people in the United States identify as middle class (Martin, 2017; Pew Research Center, 2015), suggesting cross-class interactions typically involve people outside of the *rich*/*poor* dichotomy. The large, socioeconomically heterogeneous *middle class* often further divides into *upper* and *lower middle class*, and it seems unlikely that all members of these groups are stereotyped as high in competence and warmth. Determining the SES stereotypes that are applied to individuals requires studying how SES influences impressions of stereotyped traits for individuals across the range of SES, rather than only in extreme or heterogeneous groups.

There is little evidence to support that the stereotypes of "the rich" or "the poor" or others, are applied to individuals. Instead, researchers often assume that social group stereotypes are directly applied to each member of the group, but there are reasons to question this assumption. Impressions of groups and individuals are inherently different and groups vary in perceptions of cohesiveness (Crump et al., 2010). To judge the traits of groups such as "the rich" or "the middle class," people must aggregate across a large number of heterogeneous individuals to judge the trait of a group. Perceptions about common traits of a group are by definition a stereotype but for these stereotypes to affect individuals they must emerge in impressions of their personality traits. To do so, people must first identify a target's SES and then apply SES-based stereotypes in impressions of their personality traits.

Interpersonal Stereotypes

The emergence of social group stereotypes in impressions of individual group members during social interactions is an understudied phenomenon, so there is no standard methodological or analytical approach to assess it. Considering that studies of SES stereotype content have included only a few SES-based groups and a limited number of traits, we did not know what stereotypes to expect in impressions of people across the SES continuum. We used previous work as a starting point to formulate hypotheses, but we anticipated that SES stereotypes would emerge in impressions of additional traits.

We introduce *interpersonal stereotypes* to differentiate between stereotypes of social groups from those applied to individuals perceived to belong to a group. Interpersonal stereotypes are defined as the bias in impressions of an individual's personality traits stemming from their perceived group membership or position in a social hierarchy. Therefore, to determine the interpersonal stereotype content of SES, we examine SES as a continuum and estimate how perceptions of an individual's position in that hierarchy influence perceptions of personality traits. For example, the social group stereotype that people with higher SES are higher in competence would manifest as an interpersonal stereotype, if individuals who are perceived by others as higher in SES are also perceived as higher in competence than they actually are. Because there is no direct connection between previous work on SES-based groups and impressions formed in interpersonal contexts, we do not limit our study of the interpersonal stereotype content of SES to certain traits (i.e., competence, warmth). Instead, we investigate the stereotype content of SES across a wide range of potential domains, including competence and warmth, the Big Five traits, and potential lays stereotypes that SES relates to: trustworthiness, laziness, intelligence, and impulsivity.

Applying stereotypes to groups or individuals requires the presence of impression-activating cues (e.g., Funder, 1995). If SES perception activates SES-based group stereotypes, then these stereotypes should influence impressions of individuals' personality traits—especially early in relationships when individuating information remains scarce (Kenny, 2004). Thus, the association between an individual's SES and others' impressions of their personality should reveal how SES influences perceptions of their traits—the *interpersonal stereotypes* of *SES*, which we aim to determine in the present work.

Stereotypes and Social Decisions

Much of the theory on stereotyping describes a functional process. For instance, social group stereotypes are thought to support the rapid social evaluation of individual group members, with each group-stereotype domain serving a specific social function (e.g., Macrae et al., 1994). Specifically, communion/warmth evaluates others' *intent* to harm versus "get along," whereas agency/competence evaluates others' *ability* to harm or "get ahead" (Abele et al., 2021; Fiske et al., 2002; Hogan, 1983).

Yet, most research has explored the social function of stereotypes outside of social contexts, testing how an imagined or anticipated interaction with a target who explicitly belongs to a group affects a perceiver's attitude or behavior (e.g., Dupree & Fiske, 2019). For example, participants in one study considered an interaction with an imaginary coworker belonging to a high, medium, or low-SES group, selecting the personality traits about themselves that they would like the imagined interaction partner to know (Swencionis & Fiske, 2016). Results showed that participants selected fewer competence-related traits when imagining interacting with low-SES coworkers, leading to the conclusion that people with higher SES "downplay" their competence to match the stereotyped low competence of the imagined low-SES interaction partner.

Although these mental simulations may effectively index one's intention for an interaction, considerable research has noted meaningful gaps between what people say they will do and what they actually do when interacting with others (Bechler et al., 2021; Wicker, 1969). For example, in an early landmark study of stereotypes and discrimination, LaPiere (1934) showed little connection between people's expressed attitudes in "verbal responses to symbolic situations" (p. 230) and the way they treated other people in real social contexts. Understanding the effects of stereotypes in social contexts thus requires studying them in actual interactions.

In the present work, we investigate the effect of SES in interpersonal contexts on two types of social judgments: (a) affiliation interest, deciding with whom to pursue friendships; (b) consumer credibility, deciding who to believe about their negative experiences buying goods or services from a company. Affiliation interest, which involves the selection of potential friends, is particularly susceptible to stereotype-based prejudices. The tendency for individuals to gravitate toward others with similar SES backgrounds is well-documented, as evidenced by studies on college students' friendship preferences and affiliative behaviors (Bahns et al., 2017; Côté et al., 2017; McPherson et al., 2001).

SES can significantly impact social judgments and decisions[1] beyond affiliation, particularly in situations where social or economic resources are at stake. This influence extends to critical areas such as trust, credibility, and belief, which can have far-reaching consequences for individuals across the socioeconomic spectrum. In high-stakes interpersonal interactions like job interviews or important social events, SES-based biases may create substantial barriers to upward social mobility by favoring those with higher SES (Ridgeway & Fisk, 2012). These biases can manifest in subtle ways, potentially

[1] The term judgment can and has been used to describe impressions and perceptions of personality traits. To distinguish between impressions of personality traits and social judgments about credibility and decisions about affiliation, we use the terms impression and perceptions to refer to ratings of personality traits, and the terms judgments or decisions to refer to affiliation interest, sympathy, and credibility ratings.

affecting how candidates are perceived, evaluated, and ultimately selected for opportunities that could significantly improve their economic situation.

The impact of SES is particularly pronounced in consumer contexts, where lower SES individuals face unique challenges and vulnerabilities. With fewer resources at their disposal, these consumers often invest more time and energy in economic decisions and experience heightened stress related to daily expenses (Shafir, 2017). This situation is exacerbated by the fact that companies may more easily exploit lower SES consumers (Jacob et al., 2022). Moreover, existing stereotypes that portray low-SES individuals as less competent (Fiske et al., 2002) can undermine their credibility when recounting negative consumer experiences. This diminished credibility may result in reduced sympathy from others and a lower likelihood of receiving compensation for their grievances. Such outcomes disproportionately affect those with fewer resources, potentially perpetuating and deepening socioeconomic inequalities.

In addition to affiliation and consumer credibility, SES can also affect perceptions of the businesses people are complaining about. Research on customer complaints has scarcely examined the customer's perspective or investigated how individual differences between customers (e.g., SES) affect responses to complaints, instead focusing mostly on effective organizational response (Bell & Luddington, 2006; Davidow, 2003; von Janda et al., 2021) and customer retention (Knox & van Oest, 2014). When a consumer complains to a company or another consumer, they want not just action but also validation (Donoghue & De Klerk, 2009). With other consumers, people might seek sympathy or wish to warn them, which require that others judge the complaint as credible. An individual's SES could affect both their own credibility and the credibility of the offending business, but perhaps in different ways. For example, although the complaints of lower SES individuals may invite skepticism about the *person*, the complaints of similar- or higher SES individuals may invite skepticism about the *business*. In addition to these potential direct impacts of SES, if SES-based interpersonal stereotypes manifest in impressions of personality traits, they could also affect credibility and sympathy indirectly (e.g., low-SES consumers stereotyped as less conscientious seeming less credible). By centering our participants' interactions on consumer experiences, we have the opportunity to test how SES influences judgments of both consumers and businesses.

The Present Study

Despite substantial empirical evidence from the lab studies showing that an individual's SES affects how people are seen and treated by others, little work has investigated these effects in actual social contexts. There have been efforts to synthesize past findings in theoretical work that has identified several paths for SES to influence social interactions in ways that perpetuate inequality. For example, Kraus et al. (2017) proposed that SES stereotypes augment group boundaries, hypothesizing that people's preference to affiliate with others who have similar SES promotes sorting into SES-based groups. Similarly, Durante and Fiske (2017) proposed that SES stereotypes maintain inequality in cross-class encounters by fostering mutual mistrust (Fiske et al., 2012) and influencing interaction goals (Swencionis & Fiske, 2016).

In the present study, we build on previous work (Durante & Fiske, 2017; Kraus et al., 2017) and extend the study of the interpersonal effects of SES and SES-based stereotypes into initial social interactions between strangers. We propose that one way SES influences social outcomes, such as affiliation interest and credibility, is through SES-based interpersonal stereotypes that emerge in impressions of an individual's personality traits and subsequently affect the outcomes. For example, the stereotype content model stereotype that "the poor" are higher in warmth would predict that others would be more interested in affiliating with others who have low SES, because they are stereotyped as higher in warmth. In other words, people would be more interested in affiliating with others perceived to be poor, because they stereotyped them as higher in warmth. This specific indirect effect seems unlikely and highlights the importance of studying interpersonal effects in social contexts.

To study these effects in initial social interactions we use the computer-mediated online round-robin ("see-more"; Hughes & Srivastava, 2024) to facilitate initial social interactions between a sample of U.S. adults. Computer-mediated online round-robin leverages videoconferencing technology to enable us to recruit a sample with diverse socioeconomic backgrounds (cf. the undergraduate participants and targets primarily used in previous SES person perception research). We use a round-robin design, collecting multiple ratings made by and of each participant, and analyze the data with the Social Relations Model (SRM; Kenny, 1994; Kenny & La Voie, 1984). The SRM is a statistical model that uses multiple ratings to make precise estimates of interpersonal effects. With the SRM, we can decompose the variance in impressions of SES to that attributable to the perceiver, the target, and the unique relationship between perceiver and target; calculate self–other agreement; and estimate individual-level effects.

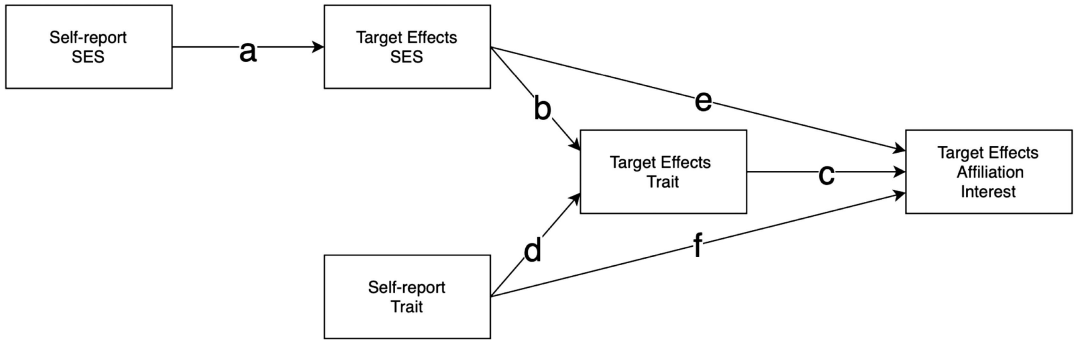
The SRM also provides terminology to effectively describe these effects. Our round-robin design featured dyadic interactions, with each participant having three to five interactions with other participants. The participants in each dyad each rate each other after the interaction, so they are both a perceiver, the person doing the rating, and a target, the person being rated. The focus of this work and the models we use is the target. In addition to decomposing the variance in ratings, the SRM provides estimates of individual level effects for both perceivers and targets, called perceiver effects and target effects. These effects indicate how a perceiver typically rates others, and how a target is typically rated by others, respectively. We use target effects in the analyses below, which are essentially the average rating of a target by others (perceptions of SES), accounting for the targets each being rated by a different set of perceivers.

Analytic Approach

To further detail our theory, we developed a theoretically informed path model of how an individual's SES, target effects of SES (how they are rated by others), and personality traits inform trait perceptions and social decisions (both indicated by target effects) made by others, the interpersonal stereotype model (ISM; Figure 1). Each of our three research questions and the associated hypotheses are represented by individual or compound paths in the model. However, because the coefficients for these effects in the ISM are model-dependent, we estimated direct effects in independent analyses.

Figure 1

The Interpersonal Stereotype Model for the Effect of SES and SES-Based Stereotypes on Affiliation Interest



Note. The analytical model is saturated and includes three additional paths not pictured in the figure for clarity. See Supplemental Material for a figure of the full modes (Supplemental Figure S1). SES = socioeconomic status.

Research Question 1: Is SES Perceived Accurately in Initial Social Interactions?

To test the hypothesis that SES is accurately perceived by others in initial social interactions (Hypothesis 1) we looked at accuracy in interpersonal perceptions of SES in two ways. First, we consider consensus, the extent to which people agreed about which targets were high or low in SES. Indicated by target variance in the SRM variance decomposition (Kenny, 1994), consensus is a necessary but not sufficient condition for accuracy. People can agree about who is high or low in SES without being accurate, which could have consequences unrelated to actual SES, but people who do not agree about who is high or low in SES cannot all be accurate. Next, we estimated accuracy in perceptions of SES as self–other agreement. In the SRM, self–other agreement is the correlation between self-report SES and target effects of SES. Accuracy is represented by *path a* in the ISM. It is important to assess accuracy to determine whether SES-based interpersonal stereotypes and any effects on social outcomes are determined by an individual's actual SES. Greater accuracy would increase the effects of an individual's actual SES on both impressions of personality and judgments of social affiliation and credibility.

Research Question 2: Are Perceptions of SES Associated With Biased Impressions of Personality Traits?

To test the hypothesis that an individual's SES biases impressions of their personality traits (Hypothesis 2), we estimate interpersonal stereotypes of SES in personality traits with linear regression models. In each model, the target effects of a personality trait are regressed on the target effects of SES, and the self-report of the trait (mean-centered). The model coefficient for the target effects of SES is an indicator of the interpersonal stereotype for that trait. It is the association between being perceived as high or low in SES and being perceived as high or low in a trait. Including the self-report of the trait in the models makes the estimated interpersonal stereotype for a person with an average level of the trait and represents bias in trait perception. In the ISM, our estimate of interpersonal stereotypes is represented by *path b* and includes *path d*, which if we separated the rest of the model are equivalent to the Truth and Bias model (West & Kenny, 2011); *path d* is the truth, and *path b* is the bias, or in this case, the interpersonal stereotype.

Previous work provides some specific hypotheses about the direction of these effects, at least for competence and warmth. Based on the stereotype content model (Fiske et al., 2002), we will test the hypotheses that individuals with higher SES will be stereotyped as higher in competence and lower warmth, and individuals with lower SES will be stereotyped as lower in competence and higher in warmth. There is also some evidence to suggest a curvilinear association between SES and perceptions of competence and warmth, such that those in the middle will be perceived as higher in competence and warmth (Durante et al., 2017). We will test this hypothesis by creating a quadratic variable for the target effects of SES and adding it to the interpersonal stereotype linear regression models described above. Importantly, work on the stereotype content model has proposed that these are the only domains of social groups stereotypes (Fiske et al., 2002), which predicts that we will not find interpersonal stereotypes in any other unrelated traits (e.g., neuroticism, openness).

Despite this prediction, there is an abundance of evidence that people can and do differentiate other people in more than these two traits during social interactions; for example, the Big Five (Kenny, 1994; Srivastava, 2010) and honest and propriety (Roth & Altmann, 2019). Considering the dearth of research on interpersonal stereotypes, in addition to competence and warmth, we test for interpersonal stereotypes in traits typically studied in interpersonal perception research, Big Five traits (Soto & John, 2017b), honesty and propriety (Thalmayer & Saucier, 2014), and include other potentially stereotyped traits: trustworthiness,[2] laziness, impulsivity, and intelligence.

[2] We acknowledge that trustworthiness is a facet of both agreeableness and warmth, and that these are closely related if not the same construct. However, we included a single-item measure of trustworthiness, because it was not measured in either of the short-form measures of agreeableness and warmth. Additionally, we report the results separately for agreeableness and warmth because of the importance of warmth to the stereotype content literature and our own interest in assessing interpersonal stereotypes with the Big Five.

Research Question 3: Do Perceptions of SES, or the Associated Stereotypes Influence Social Decisions, Such as Who to Be Friends With (Affiliation Interest) or Who to Trust (Credibility Judgments)?

We examine how SES influences social decisions in two ways. First, we use a linear regression models to estimate the total effects of self-report and target effects of SES on affiliation and the consumer experiences outcomes (consumer credibility, sympathy, and business credibility). This is equivalent to adding all of the direct and indirect effects of SES on the outcomes in the ISM. Second, we fit an ISM for each trait for each outcome (48 models) with the lavaan package in R (Version ≥0.6.4; Rosseel, 2012). The compound *path b* × *c* tests the indirect effect of target effects of SES on each outcome, or if the effect of perceptions of SES on affiliation interest are mediated by interpersonal stereotypes of personality traits. We also report the indirect effect of self-report SES on the outcomes through target effects of SES and target effects of traits, *path a* × *b* × *c*. This double-mediated path is similar to the preregistered test of this effect.

Accounting for Multiple Comparisons

There is considerable discussion in what constitutes a family of test and whether or not to correct for multiple comparisons, when tests are not in the same family. In the present work, we conduct a large number of statistical tests and fit many models, but it is unclear how to group these into families and control for multiple comparisons. Instead, to account for the large number of analyses we conducted, a post hoc change to the ISM and the potential for false positive results we raise the threshold for significance across all analyses by lowering alpha. We preregistered $p < .05$ for all analyses, but following the recommendations of Benjamin et al. (2018), we interpret $p < .005$ as "significant"; and $p < .05$ as "suggestive." This change was made at the suggestion of reviewers, and after the analysis was conducted, but is in line with previous work conducted by the authors (see Hughes et al., 2021).

Method

Sampling Plan

The novelty and complexity of the analyses made it difficult to conduct a formal power analysis. Past studies have shown that round-robin designs with just 139 participants consisting of 26 groups of —four to six participants achieved 92.5% power to detect variance components with a 10% standardized effect size (Lashley & Kenny, 1998; Salazar Kämpf et al., 2018). Based on available funding, our goal was to recruit 300 participants. We expected that this much larger sample with similar analyses should have adequate power.

Participants

We recruited a national sample of 351 U.S. participants, 79 round-robin groups, from the Prolific[3] online participant recruitment platform from February 3, 2022, to June 8, 2022. The SRM analyses require groups of four or more participants, so we excluded 19 groups with fewer than four participants. The final sample nearly met our goal and includes 60 groups of four ($k = 21$), five ($k = 21$), or six ($k = 18$) for a total of $N = 297$ participants ($M_{age} = 37$ years, $SD = 13$, range = 18–79; 59% women, 39% men, and 2% nonbinary; 63% White, 12% Black, 11% Asian, 5% Hispanic, and 9% chose either multiple race/ethnicity categories or not to identify). As preregistered, a blinded reviewer inspected the data for irregularities in the individual responses or their distributions but recommended no transformations or further exclusions.

Procedure

We used computer-mediated online round-robin (Hughes & Srivastava, 2024) to facilitate a series of online dyadic interactions among groups of participants in virtual rooms. We posted invitations on Prolific in the morning for interactive sessions scheduled later the same day. Participants completed self-report measures of personality, SES, and demographic information immediately after signing up. They also spent a minimum of 2 min writing about a recent, personal, negative consumer experience that they would be willing to share in conversations with others. Approximately 2 hr prior to the scheduled interactive session, we messaged each participant with a Qualtrics link and instructions on how to join the session.

Participants joined another participant and research assistant (RA) in a virtual room embedded into the Qualtrics survey. RAs greeted the participants as they arrived and asked them to wait quietly until all members of the group had joined or until 5 min past the scheduled time. RAs then provided instructions (including to maximize the video chat window to full screen) and answered participant questions. The instructions were to take turns briefly (<1 min) describing the negative consumer experience they described in the earlier survey and to use the remaining time discussing those experiences. The RA began recording the room and muted their own video and audio, allowing participants to interact dyadically. Because this was an interaction among strangers on the Internet, RAs were not visible to the participants but actively monitored to ensure participant safety. After 5 min, the RAs unmuted their audio and video, advised the participants that the interaction was complete, and advanced them to the survey to provide impressions of their interaction partner. Participants rated their partner's personality, SES, interest in affiliating with them, and impressions of the partner's consumer experience.

Participants then arrived in a second virtual room and received a brief reminder of the task from the RA before interacting with another participant for 5 min. This process repeated until each participant rated every member of the group. For example, in a six-person session, each participant interacted with five other participants; in a five-person session, each participant interacted with four other participants and sat quietly with an RA for the round that they had no interaction partner.

Measures

Descriptive statistics for self- and other reports are reported in Table 1. Descriptive statistics and correlations between SES indicators are reported in Table 2.

[3] To address the goals of the work's funder, we originally planned to recruit a sample of Oregonians through Facebook. Because of low response rates, we changed our recruitment platform to Prolific and changed to targeting a U.S. national sample.

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics and Reliability for Self- and Other-Report Personality

		Self-report			Other-report		
Instrument	Measure	*M*	*SD*	α	*M*	*SD*	α
Big Five+	Agreeableness	3.83	0.83	.57	4.02	0.74	.70
	Conscientiousness	3.50	1.01	.73	3.71	0.85	.75
	Extraversion	3.07	0.93	.63	3.31	0.98	.75
	Honesty/propriety	3.95	0.79	.75	3.96	0.67	.73
	Neuroticism	2.87	1.10	.76	2.5	0.83	.67
	Openness	4.12	0.79	.66	3.56	0.77	.68
Stereotype content	Competence	4.07	0.78	.53	4.07	0.79	.63
	Warmth	4.37	0.62	.61	4.34	0.69	.72
Single-item measures	Impulsivity	2.75	1.26		2.48	1.09	
	Intelligence	4.39	0.73		4.28	0.78	
	Laziness	2.59	1.28		1.96	0.92	
	Trustworthiness	4.65	0.59		4.27	0.75	

Note. Reliability not reported for single-item measures.

Self-Report

Demographics. Participants self-reported their age, gender, and race/ethnicity. For gender, we asked that they select all that apply to woman, man, and "prefer to self-identify," which had an open-ended response option. For race/ethnicity, we asked that they select all that apply to Asian, Black, Latino/Latina, Native American, White, and "Other/would prefer to self-identify," again with an open-ended response option.

SES. Participants self-reported their SES with the MacArthur Scale of Subjective SES (Adler et al., 2000). This measure asks respondents to use a 10-rung ladder to indicate their social standing compared to the rest of the United States in terms of income, education, and employment (see Supplemental Figure S1, for the distributions of self-report and perceived SES).

Educational Attainment. Participants indicated their highest level of educational attainment from the following choices: "did not finish high school," "high school grad, general education diploma," "some college," "associate's degree (2-year college degree)," "bachelor's degree (4-year college degree)," "postgraduate (e.g., master's, PhD, MD)." We transformed these categories into a continuous numeric 1–6 scale for analysis.

Household Income. Respondents indicated household income by selecting one of 10 bins: <$15,000, $15,000–$25,000, $25,000–$35,000, $35,000–$45,000, $45,000–$55,000, $55,000–$65,000, $65,000–$75,000, $75,000–$100,000, $100,000–$125,000, or > $150,000. Though unevenly spaced, we transformed the bins into a continuous numeric 1–10 scale for analysis.

Occupational Prestige. Participants used a drop-down list to select their occupational family from a list of 22 items, and their specific occupation from a list of 1,033 options. The list comprised 1,029 occupations from U.S. Bureau of Labor's O*Net database plus "student," "unemployed," "retired," and "household worker." We assigned each occupation a prestige score based on an index developed and validated by Hughes et al. (2024), which did not include *student*, *unemployed*, *retired*, or *household worker*, resulting in excluding such participants from the occupational prestige analyses.

Personality. Participants self-reported personality by responding to the 15-item Big Five Inventory 2-XS (Soto & John, 2017a, 2017b) along with five honesty and propriety items from the Questionnaire Big Six (Thalmayer & Saucier, 2014). Respondents indicated agreement with each item on a 5-point scale anchored at 1 = *strongly disagree* and 5 = *strongly agree*. We calculated scores by reverse scoring appropriate items and then averaging the items for each domain.

Stereotype Content. We modified the Brief Stereotype Content Scale (Fiske et al., 2002) to measure warmth and competence perceptions of individuals instead of groups. Respondents self-reported warmth and competence by indicating agreement with two items for warmth ("I am someone who: … is warm, … is sincere") and two items for competence ("I am someone who: … is competent, … is confident") using a 5-point scale anchored at 1 = *disagree strongly* and 5 = *agree strongly*. Warmth scores comprised the average of the two warmth items, and competence scores comprised the average of the two competence items.

Other Potential Stereotyped Domains. We also included four face-valid single-item measures of domains that correspond to common stereotypes associated with SES. These items started with the same prompt as the other individual differences items: "I am someone who" followed by: "is lazy," "is impulsive," "is intelligent," or "is trustworthy." Participants self-reported their standing on these four items using a 5-point scale anchored at 1 = *strongly disagree* and 5 = *strongly agree*.

Other-Report

Participants rated each interaction partner's SES, personality, stereotype content domains, and other potential stereotyped domains by adapting all of the self-report items described above for other-report (e.g., "The person I just interacted with is someone who is trustworthy"). One exception: participants only rated others' SES with the adapted MacArthur scale of subjective SES; they did not rate income, educational attainment, or occupational prestige of others.

Table 2
Descriptive Statistics and Correlations Among Self-Report Indicators of SES

Indicator	*M*	*SD*	1	2	3	4
1. SES	5.03	1.72	—			
2. Educational attainment	4.22	1.35	.45 [.36, .54]	—		
3. Income	5.49	2.92	.55 [.47, .63]	.40 [.31, .50]	—	
4. Occupational prestige	54.15	13.12	.27 [.13, .39]	.40 [.27, .51]	.29 [.15, .41]	—

Note. Values in brackets indicate the 95% confidence interval for each correlation. All correlations are significant at $p < .001$. SES = socioeconomic status.

Social Decisions and Judgments

Interest in Affiliation. This five-item scale assesses interest in affiliating with a previously unknown interaction partner (Tackman & Srivastava, 2016). Participants indicated their agreement or disagreement with each item (e.g., "I like this person," "I would enjoy spending time with this person") from 1 (*disagree strongly*) to 7 (*agree strongly*), averaged into a single score ($M = 3.98$, $SD = 0.87$, $\alpha = .93$).

Credibility of Consumer Complaints. Participants responded to six items assessing judgments and attitudes directly related to their interaction partner's consumer experience. In two consumer-related measures, we assessed *credibility of the person* as the average of the items "I believe this person's story" and "I think I got an incomplete or inaccurate story" (reversed) rated on a 5-point scale from 1 = *disagree strongly* to 5 = *agree strongly* ($M = 4.59$, $SD = 0.71$, $\alpha = .66$), and *sympathy* toward the other's experience with the single item "I sympathize with this person," rated on a 5-point scale from 1 = *disagree strongly* to 5 = agree strongly. We also assessed attitudes toward the business described in the consumer complaint with two items: *net promoter score* (Reichheld, 2003),[4] which asked participants to rate "How likely is it that you would recommend the product or company this person just told you about to a friend or colleague?" on a scale from 0 = *not at all likely* to 10 = *extremely likely*; and *business credibility*, which was the average of two items, "I would be willing to patronize the business this person described" and "I would tell other people to avoid this business" (reversed), both rated on a 5-point scale from 1 = *disagree strongly* to 5 = *agree strongly* ($M = 2.53$, $SD = 1.15$, $\alpha = .64$).

Transparency and Openness

This study was determined exempt by the University of Oregon Research Compliance Services (Study Title: Consequences of Socioeconomic Stereotypes; Study ID: STUDY00000195). We report how we determined our sample size, all data exclusions, and follow recomended Journal Article Reporting Standards (Appelbaum et al., 2018). Prior to analyzing the data, we preregistered the method, materials, sampling plan, exclusion criteria, and analysis plan, as well as the hypotheses outlined above on the Open Science Framework (https://osf.io/ptuv6). De-identified data and the code used for analyses are also available on Open Science Framework. We report all measures, manipulations, and data exclusions relevant to the present research questions.[5] Additional variables collected in the study, to answer different research questions, can be found in the study codebook on the Open Science Framework.

Correlations between the self-report indicators of SES from this study (income, educational attainment, occupational prestige) were previously reported in work on occupational prestige by the first and last author (Hughes et al., 2024).

Based on reviewer feedback, we updated the ISM to include target effects of SES between SES and target effects of a trait. This improved the model in a couple of ways. It added an important intermediary variable between SES and the target effects of the trait, and by adding this, an estimate of interpersonal stereotypes was included in the model. The addition of target effects of SES to the model increased the effect size of the indirect path considerably because of the shared method variance between target effects of SES and traits. The preregistered indirect path between self-report SES and the outcomes is still in the models, and reported below, but it is a double-mediated indirect effect. To accommodate these changes, we have updated and simplified the numbering of hypotheses from the preregistration, so the numbers in the preregistration and this article are not aligned.

Results

To test accuracy and consensus in SES perceptions, we estimated the SRM (Kenny, 1994; Kenny & La Voie, 1984) using the TripleR package (Version 1.5.4; Schönbrodt et al., 2012) in the R programming language (Version 4.2.1; R Core Team, 2022). We estimated separate models for subjective SES, interest in affiliation, sympathy, credibility of the consumer, the two business credibility judgments, and each of the 12 personality domains. The model outputs include the parameter estimates used to test consensus and we extracted perceiver and target effects to use in subsequent analyses. We included self-report in the data, so the output from the models also included self–other agreement.

Accuracy and Consensus in Interpersonal Perceptions of SES

Our first research question was the accuracy of perceptions of SES in initial social interaction. Results showed that during initial social interactions people reached moderate consensus about who was high and low in SES, target variance = 16% of total variance, in line with consensus for many of the personality traits (see Supplemental Table S1). Self–other agreement from the SRM, represented by *path a* in the ISM, indicated that people judged each other's SES with moderate accuracy, $r = .31$, $t(236) = 5.02$, $p < .001$.

Interpersonal Stereotype Content of SES

To test the hypothesis that an individual's SES biases others' impressions of their personality, we estimated *interpersonal stereotypes* of SES (i.e., how SES relates to stereotypes of people's personality traits) for the Big Five, honesty-propriety, warmth, competence, and the four other stereotyped traits. Results showed interpersonal stereotypes emerged in each of the 12 personality traits we measured (Table 3). The interpersonal stereotypes of SES consistently favored people with higher SES, and the effects were substantial, with standardized effect sizes ranging in absolute value from .21 to .60. This pattern of results supports the general hypothesis that an individual's SES biases others' impressions of their personality traits but suggest the interpersonal stereotype of SES is global, rather than trait specific; people with higher SES have more socially desirable personality traits.

[4] Although net promoter scores are sometimes analyzed in categorical bins in business applications, we used the actual continuous ratings.

[5] We preregistered additional analyses to test the effect of congruence between a perceiver's and a target's SES on affiliation interest and consumer credibility. We originally planned to report them in this work, but based on the editors and a reviewer's suggestion, we removed them from the article. There was some but not overwhelming evidence of congruence. Given the importance of this research question, we decided to report the results of these analyses with data from other sources to provide a more thorough treatment of the research question.

Table 3

Interpersonal Stereotype Content of SES: The Association Between Perceptions of SES and Perceptions of Traits Accounting for Target's Self-Reported Traits

Instrument	Measure	*b*	95% CI	β
Big Five+	Agreeableness	0.11	[0.05, 0.17]	.21
	Conscientiousness	0.37	[0.31, 0.42]	.60
	Extraversion	0.30	[0.20, 0.40]	.31
	Honesty/propriety	0.12	[0.08, 0.17]	.32
	Neuroticism	−0.27	[−0.33, −0.21]	−.44
	Openness	0.28	[0.21, 0.34]	.45
Stereotype content	Competence	0.32	[0.26, 0.38]	.51
	Warmth	0.14	[0.09, 0.20]	.28
Singe-item measures	Impulsivity	−0.21	[−0.29, −0.13]	−.30
	Intelligence	0.30	[0.25, 0.35]	.54
	Laziness	−0.29	[−0.36, −0.22]	−.44
	Trustworthiness	0.17	[0.11, 0.22]	.33

Note. $df = (1, 295)$. All *b* values are significant at $p < .001$. SES = socioeconomic status; CI = confidence interval.

These results do not support the specific hypotheses from the stereotype content literature. We did not find the ambivalent competence and warmth stereotypes predicted by the stereotype content model. Instead, people with higher SES were stereotyped as higher in both.[6] The ubiquity and strength of these stereotypes (combined with their direction toward social desirability), however, raised the possibility that people simply rated others positively in both personality traits and SES. We explored this by replacing target effects of SES in the models with each of the self-report indicators of SES measures (i.e., subjective SES, educational attainment, income, occupational prestige). The results were in the same direction but smaller in magnitude than the preregistered ones with perceived SES (Supplemental Table S2).[7]

SES and Social Decisions

How Self-Reported and Perceived SES Relate to Affiliation Interest and Consumer Credibility

The linear regression models used to estimate total effects showed that self-report SES was associated with affiliation interest, but not the consumer-related outcomes of sympathy and credibility (Table 4). Target effects of SES were significantly related to affiliation interest, sympathy, and consumer credibility. Perceptions of a target's SES were more strongly related to the outcomes than their actual SES. The results for the business-related judgments did not reveal any significant association between SES or target effects of SES and the business-related judgments, so we do not report indirect effects for these outcomes in the following analysis.

How SES-Based Stereotypes Mediate Social Decisions

Next, we estimated an ISM (Figure 1) for each trait and outcome to test whether SES-based interpersonal stereotypes mediate the association between a target being perceived as high or low in SES (target effects) and affiliation interest, consumer credibility, and sympathy. Results showed that the interpersonal stereotypes of each trait we measured, with the exception of laziness, mediated the effect of SES on affiliation (Table 5, *path* $b \times c$). In general, people expressed greater affiliation interest toward others with higher SES, because they stereotyped them as having more socially desirable traits. Because we updated the model from our preregistration, we also report the double-mediated *extended stereotype effect* from self-report SES to affiliation interest (*path* $a \times b \times c$), which is more in line with our preregistered test. The double-mediated effects for affiliation were considerably smaller, but were in the same direction and remained significant, except in agreeableness where the effect was suggestive. The positive direction of these indirect effects indicates that like interpersonal stereotypes, they consistently advantaged people with higher SES.

The ISMs for consumer credibility (Table 6) and sympathy (Table 7) did not reveal the same consistent indirect of interpersonal stereotypes across traits. They did, however, show that SES influences consumer credibility and sympathy through interpersonal stereotype of SES in several traits, and that the traits and size of effects were relatively consistent for both of these judgments about others' consumer experiences. Much like affiliation interest, the effects of these stereotypes universally benefited people with higher SES. Their stories of negative consumer experience were judged as more credible and elicited more sympathy from others, because they were stereotyped as higher in conscientiousness, competence, warmth, openness, intelligence, and lower in neuroticism.

Considered together, the findings from these models show that a target's SES biases impression of their personality and how they are treated by others in ways that consistently favor people with higher SES. Moreover, SES and the associated interpersonal stereotypes have important real-world effects on affiliation interest, how credible people's consumer experiences are judged, and how much sympathy they receive from others.

Discussion

In this study, we investigated the impact of SES on initial social interactions by testing a conceptual model and several associated research questions. Our results were consistent with our conceptual model and supported each hypothesis within the model. This pattern of results suggests that an individual's SES influences how they are perceived and treated by others. Central to individual's actual SES influencing social interactions is accurate perception. Our data supported that SES is perceived accurately in initial social interactions—people judged SES with moderate accuracy after a 5-min initial interaction.

We also examined how perceptions of SES influence impressions of 12 personality traits. In contrast to SES-based group stereotypes (Fiske et al., 2002), we found that SES biased impressions of each trait, and that this bias was in the socially desirable direction for people with higher SES. This finding suggests that SES is associated with a globally positive stereotype for individuals with higher SES.

[6] Exploratory analyses showed small but significant quadratic associations for competence ($\beta = -.09$, $p = .048$), neuroticism ($\beta = .12$, $p = .013$), openness ($\beta = -.12$, $p = .020$), and intelligence ($\beta = -.11$, $p = .026$) distinct from the *U*-shaped pattern predicted by Durante and Fiske (2017).

[7] Statistically adjusting for a general positivity factor in trait ratings showed interpersonal stereotypes of SES can be loosely organized in two domains, traits broadly related to conscientiousness and traits broadly related to agreeableness (Supplemental Table S8). Higher SES individuals benefit from stereotypes in both domains but more from stereotypes related to conscientiousness than from stereotypes related to agreeableness (see Supplemental Material for details).

Table 4
Total Effects of SES on Social Outcomes

SES indicator	Outcome	*b*	95% CI	β	*F*	R^2
Perceived SES	Interest in affiliation	0.27*	[0.20, 0.34]	.41	60.39	.17
	Credibility of person	0.12*	[0.07, 0.17]	.26	21.49	.07
	Sympathy	0.10*	[0.05, 0.16]	.20	12.75	.04
	Credibility of business	0.01	[−0.10, 0.12]	.01	0.02	.00
	Net promoter score	0.10	[−0.16, 0.36]	.04	0.55	.00
Self-report SES	Interest in affiliation	0.05*	[0.02, 0.08]	.20	12.77	.04
	Credibility of person	0.01	[−0.01, 0.03]	.07	1.27	.00
	Sympathy	0.01	[−0.01, 0.04]	.07	1.35	.00
	Credibility of business	0.01	[−0.03, 0.05]	.03	0.24	.00
	Net promoter score	0.07	[−0.03, 0.18]	.09	2.08	.01

Note. $df = (1, 295)$. SES = socioeconomic status; CI = confidence interval.
* $p < .005$.

Additionally, we tested if SES and its associated interpersonal stereotypes influenced social decisions. The results showed: (a) An individual's SES is associated with others' affiliation interest, judgments about consumer credibility, and feelings of sympathy; (b) The effects of SES on the social outcomes were mediated by the application of interpersonal stereotypes of SES.

Overall, our results highlight the significance of an individual's SES in shaping both the initial impressions and subsequent decisions made by others during social interactions. By examining these dynamics within real-world interactions among individuals from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds, we extend understanding of the interpersonal effects of SES beyond laboratory settings. The ecological validity of the present work supports the generality of these results, underscoring the influence of SES on perceptions and judgments made in everyday social encounters.

Interpersonal Perceptions of SES

SES's impact on interpersonal perceptions and social decisions depends on its visibility and subsequent accurate perception. The present work extended evidence of accurate SES perception from lab-based stimuli (e.g., Bjornsdottir & Rule, 2017; Kraus et al., 2019) to initial social interactions between real people. People using information from separate, independent interactions agreed about who was high and low in SES, and perceived others' SES relatively accurately. Relevant SES cues are thus available, detected, and utilized by perceivers during initial interpersonal interactions (see Funder, 1995).

Using an interpersonal approach has the advantage of providing greater fidelity in measuring the accuracy of SES perceptions. Collecting multiple interpersonal perceptions of SES and personality allowed us to compare the accuracy of SES perceptions with the accuracy of personality perceptions. Interpersonal SES perceptions achieved greater accuracy than 10 of the 12 personality traits (see Supplemental Table S1) and showed similar accuracy as the remaining two traits (competence and extraversion—the trait most accurately perceived by others; Albright et al., 1988; Beer & Watson, 2008; Borkenau et al., 2004; Carney et al., 2007; Funder & Colvin, 1988; Kenny et al., 1994). The visibility and salience of traits, such as extraversion, lends them high accuracy (Funder &

Table 5
Standardized Parameter Estimates for the Interpersonal Stereotype Model With SES and Affiliation Interest

Personality trait	Stereotype effect $b \times c$	Extended stereotype effect $a \times b \times c$	SES accuracy *a*	Interpersonal stereotype *b*	TE trait/TE outcome *c*	Trait accuracy *d*	TE SES/TE outcome *e*	Trait/TE outcome *f*
Agreeableness	.11**	.03*	.27***	.19**	.59***	.10	.27***	−.03
Conscientiousness	.28***	.08***	.28***	.59***	.48***	.15***	.10	−.06
Extraversion	.14***	.04***	.28***	.31***	.44***	.32***	.25***	−.01
Honesty/propriety	.09***	.03**	.28***	.30***	.29***	.16**	.30***	−.03
Neuroticism	.17***	.05***	.27***	−.41***	−.42***	.18***	.22***	.11*
Openness	.25***	.07***	.28***	.44***	.57***	.12*	.13*	−.00
Competence	.30***	.08***	.27***	.50***	.61***	.21***	.08	−.03
Warmth	.18***	.05***	.28***	.26***	.71***	.11*	.20***	−.01
Intelligence	.29***	.08***	.28***	.51***	.56***	.02[a]	.10	.05
Impulsivity	.01	.00	.28***	−.28***	−.04	.18***	.38***	.03
Laziness	.14***	.04***	.28***	−.42***	−.33***	.17**	.24***	.01
Trustworthiness	.18***	.05***	.28***	.32***	.56***	.09	.20***	.02

Note. Additional paths were included in the model (see Supplemental Figure S1 and Table S5). SES = socioeconomic status; TE = target effects.
[a] Self–other agreement does not reflect accuracy in perceptions of intelligence. People systematically over- and underestimate their own intelligence, which means self-report is not a good criterion for accuracy.
* $p < .05$. ** $p < .005$. *** $p < .001$.

Table 6

Standardized Parameter Estimates for the Interpersonal Stereotype Model With SES and Credibility of the Consumer

Personality trait	Stereotype effect $b \times c$	Extended stereotype effect $a \times b \times c$	SES accuracy a	Interpersonal stereotype b	TE trait/TE outcome c	Trait accuracy d	TE SES/TE outcome e	Trait/TE outcome f
Agreeableness	.06*	.01*	.27***	.19**	.29***	.10	.21***	−.01
Conscientiousness	.21***	.06***	.28***	.59***	.35***	.15***	.06	−.04
Extraversion	.03	.01	.28***	.31***	.11	.32***	.23***	.04
Honesty/propriety	.05	.02	.28***	.30***	.18*	.16**	.21**	−.01
Neuroticism	.09**	.03*	.27***	−.41***	−.23**	.18***	.17**	.02
Openness	.15***	.04	.28***	.44***	.34***	.12*	.11*	−.08
Competence	.18***	.05**	.27***	.50***	.35***	.21***	.09	−.09
Warmth	.09***	.03**	.28***	.26***	.35***	.11*	.17**	.01
Intelligence	.25***	.07***	.28***	.51***	.48***	.02[a]	.02	−.04
Impulsivity	.01	.00	.28***	−.28***	−.05	.18***	.25***	−.02
Laziness	.07*	.02*	.28***	.42***	−.17*	.17**	.19**	−.02
Trustworthiness	.09**	.03**	.28***	.32***	.28***	.09	.17**	.02

Note. Additional paths were included in the model (see Supplemental Figure S1 and Table S6). SES = socioeconomic status; TE = target effects.
[a] Self–other agreement does not reflect accuracy in perceptions of intelligence. People systematically over- and underestimate their own intelligence, which means self-report is not a good criterion for accuracy.
* $p < .05$. ** $p < .005$. *** $p < .001$.

Colvin, 1988); the parallel result here thus suggests that SES may enjoy similar visibility and social salience.

Visibility plays an important role in stereotype perception (Kenny, 2004; Quinn, 2006). The present and past findings suggest that SES is a visible identity (Camacho et al., 2020; Quinn et al., 2020). Moreover, multiple cues in different channels seem to drive SES's visibility. Given that negative interpersonal stereotypes ubiquitously applied to people with lower SES, understanding how to manage others' impressions by obscuring or hiding visible SES cues might allow individuals to mitigate the negative social impact of low SES. For example, because clothing can conceal SES cues (Kraus & Mendes, 2014; Oh et al., 2020), uniform dress at work or school might reduce the SES cues available from clothing, obfuscating SES's legibility as a path to reducing prejudice and discrimination. Future research might thus examine whether environments that equilibrate class by reducing the visibility of SES (such as at schools that require uniforms; Bodine, 2003; Jones et al., 2020) exhibit more cross-class connections.

Moreover, in these and other contexts, people may also actively employ impression management strategies to hide or alter others' impressions of their SES (Pitcan et al., 2018; Swencionis et al., 2017). For example, individuals could attempt to moderate their SES to match interaction partners in order to avoid conflict, fit into the majority group, or navigate the customs of a different culture (Stephens et al., 2014). This effectiveness of such efforts might depend on whether these behavioral affectations can overcome the visibility of SES from a wide range of observable and behavioral cues. Such concealment may be especially difficult when there is a large mismatch between an individual's SES and the SES of the majority group or in contexts that highlight group boundaries. For

Table 7

Standardized Parameter Estimates for the Interpersonal Stereotype Model With SES and Sympathy

Personality trait	Stereotype effect $b \times c$	Extended stereotype effect $a \times b \times c$	SES accuracy a	Interpersonal stereotype b	TE trait/TE outcome c	Trait accuracy d	TE SES/TE outcome e	Trait/TE outcome f
Agreeableness	.08*	.02*	.27***	.19**	.41***	.10	.12	−.03
Conscientiousness	.19***	.05***	.28***	.59***	.33***	.15***	.01	−.09
Extraversion	.08**	.02*	.28***	.31***	.25***	.32***	.12	−.08
Honesty/propriety	.09**	.03*	.28***	.30***	.31***	.16**	.10	−.00
Neuroticism	.09*	.02*	.27***	−.41***	−.21**	.18***	.11	.04
Openness	.16***	.05***	.28***	.44***	.36***	.12*	.04	−.12*
Competence	.16***	.04**	.27***	.50***	.32***	.21***	.04	−.08
Warmth	.13***	.04**	.28***	.26***	.48***	.11*	.07	.00
Intelligence	.21***	.06***	.28***	.51***	.40***	.02[a]	−.00	−.04
Impulsivity	.03	.01	.28***	−.28***	−.10	.18***	.18*	.04
Laziness	.06	.02	.28***	−.42***	−.13*	.17**	.15*	.06
Trustworthiness	.13***	.04**	.28***	.32***	.41***	.09	.07	−.00

Note. Additional paths were included in the model (see Supplemental Figure S1, Table S7). SES = socioeconomic status; TE = target effects.
[a] Self–other agreement does not reflect accuracy in perceptions of intelligence. People systematically over- and underestimate their own intelligence, which means self-report is not a good criterion for accuracy.
* $p < .05$. ** $p < .005$. *** $p < .001$.

example, someone with low SES might struggle to pass as high in SES at a charity gala and someone with high SES may fail to convince others that they are low SES at a dive bar.

Interpersonal Stereotype Content of SES

Stereotype content typically consists of people's impressions about a group (e.g., "the rich" are cold and competent; Durante et al., 2017; Fiske et al., 2002). Here, we introduced interpersonal stereotypes and tested an analytical framework for examining if and how social group stereotypes manifest in impressions of individuals. We found that an individual's position in society's social and economic hierarchy biased impressions of their Big Five traits, competence, warmth, and other traits after an initial social interaction. This bias benefited people with higher SES without exception; they were perceived to have higher levels of socially desirable traits. This aligns with work on implicit stereotypes (pro-high-SES/anti-low-SES implicit bias; Connor et al., 2021) and with theories of intergroup relations. For example, in social dominance theory (Sidanius & Pratto, 2001), high-status groups maintain their position in the social hierarchy through "legitimizing myths" that commend high-status groups (e.g., the rich) and denigrate low-status groups (e.g., the poor). Just-world theory (Lerner, 1980) and system justification theory (Jost et al., 2004) make related arguments: individuals seek to maintain the status quo, thereby viewing high-status groups as worthy of their privilege and low-status groups as deserving their inferior position.

For SES, the present work shows that people apply different stereotypes to individuals they perceive as having higher or lower SES than they do to SES-based groups (e.g., "the rich," "the poor"; Fiske et al., 2002). Given the widespread adoption of the stereotype content model, it is thus important to consider how to reconcile the present findings with previous work on SES- or social class-based stereotypes. One possibility is that the extreme SES groups used in previous work might not adequately characterize SES stereotypes in a society with a continuous socioeconomic hierarchy. Although people understand socioeconomic categories and may even identify as upper, lower, or middle class, they may not perceive other people this way. Indeed, unlike other perceptually ambiguous groups (e.g., sexual orientation, political affiliation, and religion; Tskhay & Rule, 2013), people typically do not explicitly self-organize by SES into clubs or interest groups.

Misalignment of group and individual stereotypes might also illuminate differences between how people stereotype groups versus individuals. People could apply different stereotypes, because they serve different functions or means to accomplish the same goal. For example, people might denigrate "the poor" as incompetent to help rationalize supporting policies that limit social welfare programs but denigrate a low-SES individual as incompetent to justify denying those training opportunities at work. Likewise, people might stereotype "the rich" as cold and competent to rationalize supporting policies to regulate businesses but stereotype a high-SES individual as more capable to justify recruiting them to help achieve a desired outcome, such as maintaining or gaining resources. Further research should determine whether stereotypes applied to groups versus individuals indeed serve different functions or return distinct results.

Studying how perceived group membership influences impressions of individuals is an important next step in identifying how stereotypes affect individuals' everyday lives. Here, we examined how SES stereotypes affect impressions, social attitudes, and behaviors in interactions between real (cf. hypothetical) individuals and showed that an individual's SES influences the way they are seen and treated by others in initial interactions. Importantly, we included two key steps in the process of stereotyping individuals mostly assumed in previous work: (a) determining whether the target belongs to the group (Martinez, 2023) and (b) assessing whether the stereotypes of the group manifest in impressions of the member. Future work can apply this framework to investigate if other social group stereotypes emerge in impressions of individual members as interpersonal stereotypes.

SES and Social Decisions

Broadly, the present results directly support components of Kraus et al.'s (2017) framework for the perpetuation of inequality: People accurately formed SES impressions, applied interpersonal stereotypes based on SES, and then expressed affiliation interest differently according to SES. Importantly, the present work advances Kraus et al.'s framework by identifying and testing interpersonal stereotypes as a mechanism through which SES perpetuates inequality.

Across SES levels, people showed more interest in affiliating with others with higher SES. Social relationships with higher SES others might be preferred, because they offer potential resource sharing and networking opportunities. Relationships with higher SES others relate to greater economic mobility (Chetty et al., 2022a, 2022b), so for people with lower SES seeking these relationships represents an adaptive strategy for moving up the SES hierarchy. It also suggests that people with higher SES are perceived as an opportunity rather than a threat to lower SES individuals, which aligns with our finding of globally positive stereotype content for people with higher SES. However, because everyone wants to affiliate with people higher in the hierarchy, lower SES individuals might struggle to develop relationships with higher SES individuals who have more options, akin to the mating markets of romantic partner selection (Luo, 2017).

In addition to affecting social connections, we identified another potential context for the perpetuation of inequality: consumer experiences. After telling others about a recent negative consumer experience, people with lower SES seemed less credible and received less sympathy—associations statistically mediated by SES stereotypes. This could have real-world consequences for people with lower SES, who cannot afford to absorb the loss of receiving a faulty good or service, rendering each purchase and negative consumer experience more consequential. Despite the potential for greater harm, people with lower SES also received less sympathy for their experience. The stereotypes associated with perceptions of lower SES might provide insight into these judgments: Perceivers stereotyped lower SES targets as less competent and conscientiousness, perhaps blaming them for their negative experiences.

These pernicious stereotypes of consumers notwithstanding, we found that the SES of consumers and associated stereotypes did not affect how complaints influenced judgments about the business. Considering the widespread application of SES stereotypes in impressions between consumers, these stereotypes also likely influence how company representatives treat them. Not addressing differential treatment of consumers based on SES could cause companies to lose a large group of consumers whose individual buying power may be limited but together represent a large portion of potential customers. Developing effective training and policies to

reduce the impact of SES stereotypes on consumer treatment could improve word-of-mouth marketing and encourage fair outcomes.

The Social Functions of SES and SES-Based Stereotypes

Accurately perceiving SES from social information (e.g., Bjornsdottir & Rule, 2017; Kraus et al., 2019) and in social interactions (the current work) suggests that SES perceptions serve important social functions (Zebrowitz & Collins, 1997). For instance, accurate SES perceptions could improve relationship quality because misrepresenting or misunderstanding one's social status impairs social acceptance (Anderson et al., 2006). Thus, understanding one's own position in the SES status hierarchy and conveying this honestly (whether deliberately or through incidental cues) might aid relationship-building. Testing how concealing and expressing SES influences social acceptance and affiliation interest in future research may help to establish the prosocial utility of accurate SES perception.

Likewise, because SES fundamentally indicates the resources available to an individual, accurately perceiving who possesses resources may confer survival benefits on those who can ally themselves with such persons. Such functional thinking may explain why people dismiss, diminish, and even dehumanize low-SES individuals (Loughnan et al., 2014), who may essentially prove less useful by virtue of having less to offer. Such uselessness emerges in several of the stereotypes implied here: that low-SES individuals lack both the motivation (e.g., they are lazy) and capability (e.g., they are incompetent) to effect outcomes.

Yet, SES constitutes more than mere resource possession—it often accords social status (Anderson & Willer, 2014; Hughes et al., 2024). Functionalist approaches to social status argue that status hierarchies in groups and organizations facilitate groups' well-being by reducing intergroup conflict and motivating self-sacrifice for the collective good (Anderson & Willer, 2014; Willer, 2009). Thus, accurate SES perception from limited information might influence brief status assessments (e.g., Macrae et al., 1994) that help to avert interpersonal conflict. However, assigning status based on SES risks reinforcing the existing hierarchical structure. For example, people often attain higher SES without merit (e.g., inheritances), potentially reducing the collective gains that could accrue from greater mobility between ranks in the status hierarchy (Imbroscio, 2016). Anderson and Willer (2014) thus proposed a bounded functionalist approach, whereby people strive to form functional hierarchies by allocating status based on perceived social value. Such efforts often fail, however, because status is often not accorded individuals based on merit, competence, or performance but instead based on unrelated characteristics such as SES, gender, or race.

Limitations and Future Directions

The present work extends the study of SES perceptions and stereotypes from lab-created stimuli and imagined interactions to real initial social interactions between strangers. This represents a significant advance toward understanding how SES affects interpersonal relations in the real world. Despite the many similarities between the real interactions in this study and the spontaneous real-world interactions that they intended to simulate; they also meaningfully differ in several ways that may limit the findings' generalizability.

For example, participants only interacted in one specific context, the discussion of negative consumer experiences. This context is representative of potential spontaneous interactions with strangers, but it could also influence the effects of SES. Future work should examine these effects across different contexts and populations. In addition, the online format of the study represents a relatively new means of interacting for most people, despite the widespread adoption of interacting via online platforms introduced by the COVID-19 pandemic. Although these differ from spontaneous interactions, they also resemble other real-world contexts (e.g., work meetings, job interviews, online speed-dating).

Moreover, the study's online nature not only introduced a less natural means of meeting, its diverse national sample might also render the interactions unrepresentative of most people's typical experiences. Specifically, propinquity tends to promote homophily by constraining people to interacting with those in their local environment, who typically share many of their own characteristics (Nahemow & Lawton, 1975; Small & Adler, 2019). Here, participants might have interacted with individuals not just from different social groups, but also from different geographic areas. This experience might have departed radically from the modal experiences of some participants and potentially could have altered how they behaved relative to their usual interpersonal style.

Although the national sample of participants we recruited had a wide range of identities (some with multiple stereotyped identities), this feature may provide a remarkable note that participants detected SES within this variability; indeed, we did not accentuate SES or separate it from other identities as in earlier SES-perception research. This diversity also limited our ability to test differences based on demography, however. For example, because we lacked enough participants from each self-reported racial group, we could not test how SES and race interact to elicit stereotypes. The strong association between race and SES in the United States (American Psychological Association, 2017) suggests that these identities combine or interact in ways that influence stereotype application (Petsko et al., 2022). Future work should address how simultaneously processing different identity combinations contributes to SES detection and to the activation and application of SES stereotypes. Likewise, although exploratory analyses revealed no systematic differences in the interpersonal stereotype content of SES between men and women (Supplemental Table S2), this should not preclude future work testing whether SES-based interpersonal stereotypes vary by gender in other contexts, such as professional interactions.

Similarly, connecting people across diverse places and identities also constrained the anticipated probability that the participants would meet again or develop relationships, perhaps altering their social goals, hampering motivation to establish rapport, and leading them to express less interest in future affiliations with the interaction partner. Yet, these conditions might similarly apply to many interactions occurring within a large city, where feelings of anonymity tend to dominate (Milgram, 1970).

Indeed, much like a chance meeting in a library, coffee shop, or social gathering, the interactions studied here featured two people meeting for the first time and having a brief low-stakes conversation. During the interaction, the RA muted their audio and video but remained in the room—visibly present to the participants throughout the interaction. Although this equates to aromantic online dating with a chaperone, it also approximates people's daily encounters with strangers in public. Similarly, providing participants with a conversation topic, asking them to prepare in advance by thinking and writing about their negative consumer experience, and giving them a loose

structure for the interaction (all features generally uncommon to interactions in daily life) partially constrain the work's ecological validity.

Conversely, participating from their home or chosen space supplied access to additional cues from environmental information than a chance interaction usually provides. Although we asked participants to join the study with a plain background, most had visible personal items in the background. Indeed, some people participated from their kitchen table or other areas of their home that included information in the background environment that perceivers could use to inform their impressions. Environmental socioeconomic information (Olson et al., 2011) or socioeconomic behavioral residue (Gosling et al., 2002) might have therefore supported (or undermined) accuracy by providing extrapersonal cues. The consumer experiences themselves could have also contained clues about SES, though most conversation topics would contain some SES cues. Thus, although we relinquished the tight experimental control featured in previous work (e.g., Bjornsdottir & Rule, 2017) to favor ascertaining the role of SES in social interactions, future work could apply similar methods to disentangle the unique contributions of person, background, and story to SES detection.

Finally, the ISM assumes one causal pattern, that a target's actual SES affects perceptions of SES first, which perceivers then generalize to personality traits. But we cannot rule out that SES affects perceptions of personality first, which are then generalized to SES. That would be a different mechanism. However, the broader conclusion that SES affects real-world outcomes via stereotypes does not depend on the order of the mediating perceptions.

Conclusion

The ubiquitous and strong influence of SES on personality impressions and social decisions paints a bleak outlook for reducing the interpersonal perpetuation of inequality. The personality, error, residual, stereotype, opinion, and norm model of interpersonal perception provides some hope with its proposition that individuating information replaces stereotype information after a small number of observations (Kenny, 2004). Thus, SES stereotypes might attenuate in longer or after multiple interactions, reducing the effect on social decisions. Answering this question will require additional work examining how interaction length and relationship length influence the application of SES stereotypes. Understanding the stereotypes people apply to others during interactions and how they change over time will critically inform how to stem the interpersonal perpetuation of inequality.

References

Abele, A. E., Ellemers, N., Fiske, S. T., Koch, A., & Yzerbyt, V. (2021). Navigating the social world: Toward an integrated framework for evaluating self, individuals, and groups. *Psychological Review*, *128*(2), 290–314. https://doi.org/10.1037/rev0000262

Adler, N. E., Boyce, T., Chesney, M. A., Cohen, S., Folkman, S., Kahn, R. L., & Syme, S. L. (1994). Socioeconomic status and health. The challenge of the gradient. *American Psychologist*, *49*(1), 15–24. https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.49.1.15

Adler, N. E., Epel, E. S., Castellazzo, G., & Ickovics, J. R. (2000). Relationship of subjective and objective social status with psychological and physiological functioning: Preliminary data in healthy white women. *Health Psychology*, *19*(6), 586–592. https://doi.org/10.1037/0278-6133.19.6.586

Adler, N. E., & Stewart, J. (2010). Health disparities across the lifespan: Meaning, methods, and mechanisms. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, *1186*(1), 5–23. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1749-6632.2009.05337.x

Albright, L., Kenny, D. A., & Malloy, T. E. (1988). Consensus in personality judgments at zero acquaintance. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *55*(3), 387–395. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.55.3.387

American Psychological Association. (2017). *Ethnic and racial minorities & socioeconomic status*. https://www.apa.org/pi/ses/resources/publications/minorities.

Anderson, C., Srivastava, S., Beer, J. S., Spataro, S. E., & Chatman, J. A. (2006). Knowing your place: Self-perceptions of status in face-to-face groups. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *91*(6), 1094–1110. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.91.6.1094

Anderson, C., & Willer, R. (2014). Do status hierarchies benefit groups? A bounded functionalist account of status. In J. T. Cheng, J. L. Tracy, & C. Anderson (Eds.), *The psychology of social status* (pp. 47–70). Springer Science + Business Media. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4939-0867-7_3

Antonoplis, S. (2023). Studying socioeconomic status: Conceptual problems and an alternative path forward. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, *18*(2), 275–292. https://doi.org/10.1177/17456916221093615

Appelbaum, M., Cooper, H., Kline, R. B., Mayo-Wilson, E., Nezu, A. M., & Rao, S. M. (2018). Journal article reporting standards for quantitative research in psychology: The APA Publications and Communications Board task force report. *American Psychologist*, *73*(1), 3–25. https://doi.org/10.1037/amp0000191

Auwarter, A. E., & Aruguete, M. S. (2008). Effects of student gender and socioeconomic status on teacher perceptions. *The Journal of Educational Research*, *101*(4), 242–246. https://doi.org/10.3200/JOER.101.4.243-246

Bahns, A. J., Crandall, C. S., Gillath, O., & Preacher, K. J. (2017). Similarity in relationships as niche construction: Choice, stability, and influence within dyads in a free choice environment. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *112*(2), 329–355. https://doi.org/10.1037/pspp0000088

Bechler, C. J., Tormala, Z. L., & Rucker, D. D. (2021). The attitude–behavior relationship revisited. *Psychological Science*, *32*(8), 1285–1297. https://doi.org/10.1177/0956797621995206

Becker, J. C., Kraus, M. W., & Rheinschmidt-Same, M. (2017). Cultural expressions of social class and their implications for group-related beliefs and behaviors. *Journal of Social Issues*, *73*(1), 158–174. https://doi.org/10.1111/josi.12209

Beer, A., & Watson, D. (2008). Personality judgment at zero acquaintance: Agreement, assumed similarity, and implicit simplicity. *Journal of Personality Assessment*, *90*(3), 250–260. https://doi.org/10.1080/00223890701884970

Bell, S. J., & Luddington, J. A. (2006). Coping with customer complaints. *Journal of Service Research*, *8*(3), 221–233. https://doi.org/10.1177/1094670505283785

Benjamin, D. J., Berger, J. O., Johannesson, M., Nosek, B. A., Wagenmakers, E. J., Berk, R., Bollen, K. A., Brembs, B., Brown, L., Camerer, C., Cesarini, D., Chambers, C. D., Clyde, M., Cook, T. D., De Boeck, P., Dienes, Z., Dreber, A., Easwaran, K., Efferson, C., … Johnson, V. E. (2018). Redefine statistical significance. *Nature Human Behaviour*, *2*(1), 6–10. https://doi.org/10.1038/s41562-017-0189-z

Bjornsdottir, R. T., & Rule, N. O. (2017). The visibility of social class from facial cues. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *113*(4), 530–546. https://doi.org/10.1037/pspa0000091

Bodenhausen, G. V., & Wyer, R. S., Jr. (1985). Effects of stereotypes on decision making and information-processing strategies. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *48*(2), 267–282. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.48.2.267

Bodine, A. (2003). School uniforms, academic achievement, and uses of research. *The Journal of Educational Research*, *97*(2), 67–71. https://doi.org/10.1080/00220670309597509

Borkenau, P., Mauer, N., Riemann, R., Spinath, F. M., & Angleitner, A. (2004). Thin slices of behavior as cues of personality and intelligence. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *86*(4), 599–614. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.86.4.599

Camacho, G., Reinka, M. A., & Quinn, D. M. (2020). Disclosure and concealment of stigmatized identities. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, *31*, 28–32. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2019.07.031

Carney, D. R., Colvin, C. R., & Hall, J. A. (2007). A thin slice perspective on the accuracy of first impressions. *Journal of Research in Personality*, *41*(5), 1054–1072. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrp.2007.01.004

Carson, R. C. (2019). *Interaction concepts of personality*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429025136

Chetty, R., Jackson, M. O., Kuchler, T., Stroebel, J., Hendren, N., Fluegge, R. B., Gong, S., Gonzalez, F., Grondin, A., Jacob, M., Johnston, D., Koenen, M., Laguna-Muggenburg, E., Mudekereza, F., Rutter, T., Thor, N., Townsend, W., Zhang, R., Bailey, M., … Wernerfelt, N. (2022a). Social capital I: Measurement and associations with economic mobility. *Nature*, *608*(7921), 108–121. https://doi.org/10.1038/s41586-022-04996-4

Chetty, R., Jackson, M. O., Kuchler, T., Stroebel, J., Hendren, N., Fluegge, R. B., Gong, S., Gonzalez, F., Grondin, A., Jacob, M., Johnston, D., Koenen, M., Laguna-Muggenburg, E., Mudekereza, F., Rutter, T., Thor, N., Townsend, W., Zhang, R., Bailey, M., … Wernerfelt, N. (2022b). Social capital II: Determinants of economic connectedness. *Nature*, *608*(7921), 122–134. https://doi.org/10.1038/s41586-022-04997-3

Connor, P., Varney, J., Keltner, D., & Chen, S. (2021). Social class competence stereotypes are amplified by socially signaled economic inequality. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *47*(1), 89–105. https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167220916640

Côté, S., Kraus, M. W., Carpenter, N. C., Piff, P. K., Beermann, U., & Keltner, D. (2017). Social affiliation in same-class and cross-class interactions. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*, *146*(2), 269–285. https://doi.org/10.1037/xge0000258

Crump, S. A., Hamilton, D. L., Sherman, S. J., Lickel, B., & Thakkar, V. (2010). Group entitativity and similarity: Their differing patterns in perceptions of groups. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, *40*(7), 1212–1230. https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.716

Davidow, M. (2003). Organizational responses to customer complaints: What works and what doesn't. *Journal of Service Research*, *5*(3), 225–250. https://doi.org/10.1177/1094670502238917

Diemer, M. A., Mistry, R. S., Wadsworth, M. E., López, I., & Reimers, F. (2013). Best practices in conceptualizing and measuring social class in psychological research. *Analyses of Social Issues and Public Policy*, *13*(1), 77–113. https://doi.org/10.1111/asap.12001

Donoghue, S., & De Klerk, H. M. (2009). The right to be heard and to be understood: A conceptual framework for consumer protection in emerging economies. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, *33*(4), 456–467. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1470-6431.2009.00773.x

Dupree, C. H., & Fiske, S. T. (2019). Self-presentation in interracial settings: The competence downshift by White liberals. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *117*(3), 579–604. https://doi.org/10.1037/pspi0000166

Durante, F., & Fiske, S. T. (2017). How social-class stereotypes maintain inequality. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, *18*, 43–48. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2017.07.033

Durante, F., Tablante, C. B., & Fiske, S. T. (2017). Poor but warm, rich but cold (and competent): Social classes in the stereotype content model. *Journal of Social Issues*, *73*(1), 138–157. https://doi.org/10.1111/josi.12208

Eagly, A. H., & Koenig, A. M. (2021). The vicious cycle linking stereotypes and social roles. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, *30*(4), 343–350. https://doi.org/10.1177/09637214211013775

Fiske, S. T., Cuddy, A. J. C., Glick, P., & Xu, J. (2002). A model of (often mixed) stereotype content: Competence and warmth respectively follow from perceived status and competition. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *82*(6), 878–902. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.82.6.878

Fiske, S. T., Moya, M., Russell, A. M., & Bearns, C. (2012). The secret handshake: Trust in cross-class encounters. In S. T. Fiske & H. R. Markus (Eds.), *Facing social class: How societal rank influences interaction* (pp. 234–251). Russell Sage Foundation.

Funder, D. C. (1995). On the accuracy of personality judgment: A realistic approach. *Psychological Review*, *102*(4), 652–670. https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-295X.102.4.652

Funder, D. C. (2012). Accurate personality judgment. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, *21*(3), 177–182. https://doi.org/10.1177/0963721412445309

Funder, D. C., & Colvin, C. R. (1988). Friends and strangers: Acquaintanceship, agreement, and the accuracy of personality judgment. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *55*(1), 149–158. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.55.1.149

Glock, S., & Kleen, H. (2020). Preservice teachers' attitudes, attributions, and stereotypes: Exploring the disadvantages of students from families with low socioeconomic status. *Studies in Educational Evaluation*, *67*, Article 100929. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.stueduc.2020.100929

Gosling, S. D., Ko, S. J., Mannarelli, T., & Morris, M. E. (2002). A room with a cue: Personality judgments based on offices and bedrooms. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *82*(3), 379–398. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.82.3.379

Hauser, R. M., & Warren, J. R. (1997). Socioeconomic indexes for occupations: A review, update, and critique. *Sociological Methodology*, *27*(1), 177–298. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9531.271028

Hogan, R. (1983). A socioanalytic theory of personality. In M. M. Page (Ed.), *1982 Nebraska symposium on motivation* (pp. 55–89). University of Nebraska Press.

Hughes, B. T. (2023). *Stereotypes and social decisions: The interpersonal consequences of socioeconomic status* [Doctoral dissertation, University of Oregon]. https://scholarsbank.uoregon.edu/server/api/core/bitstreams/bf6e4158-7050-49c8-b2a8-6cc8f070a8a7/content

Hughes, B. T., Flournoy, J. C., & Srivastava, S. (2021). Is perceived similarity more than assumed similarity? An interpersonal path to seeing similarity between self and others. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *121*(1), 184–200. https://doi.org/10.1037/pspp0000369

Hughes, B. T., & Srivastava, S. (2024). The computer mediated online round robin (CMORR): An online method for studying impressions and social interactions. *Social Psychological & Personality Science*, *15*(8), 994–1007. https://doi.org/10.1177/19485506241247871

Hughes, B. T., Srivastava, S., Leszko, M., & Condon, D. M. (2024). Occupational prestige: The status component of socioeconomic status. *Collabra: Psychology*, *10*(1), Article 92882. https://doi.org/10.1525/collabra.92882

Imbroscio, D. (2016). Urban policy as meritocracy: A critique. *Journal of Urban Affairs*, *38*(1), 79–104. https://doi.org/10.1111/juaf.12262

Jacob, J., Vieites, Y., Goldszmidt, R., & Andrade, E. B. (2022). Expected socioeconomic-status-based discrimination reduces price sensitivity among the poor. *Journal of Marketing Research*, *59*(6), 1083–1100. https://doi.org/10.1177/00222437221097100

Jones, A. B., Richardson, M. J., Jensen, B. T., & Whiting, E. F. (2020). Perceptions of school uniforms in relation to socioeconomic statuses. *RMLE Online: Research in Middle Level Education*, *43*(6), 1–13. https://doi.org/10.1080/19404476.2020.1759298

Jost, J. T., Banaji, M. R., & Nosek, B. A. (2004). A decade of system justification theory: Accumulated evidence of conscious and unconscious bolstering of the status quo. *Political Psychology*, *25*(6), 881–919. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9221.2004.00402.x

Kenny, D. A. (1994). *Interpersonal perception: A social relations analysis* (Vol. xvii). Guilford Press.

Kenny, D. A. (2004). PERSON: A general model of interpersonal perception. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, *8*(3), 265–280. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327957pspr0803_3

Kenny, D. A., Albright, L., Malloy, T. E., & Kashy, D. A. (1994). Consensus in interpersonal perception: Acquaintance and the big five. *Psychological Bulletin*, *116*(2), 245–258. https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.116.2.245

Kenny, D. A., & La Voie, L. (1984). The social relations model. In L. Berkowitz (Ed.), *Advances in experimental social psychology* (Vol. 18, pp. 141–182). Academic Press. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0065-2601(08)60144-6

Knox, G., & van Oest, R. (2014). Customer complaints and recovery effectiveness: A customer base approach. *Journal of Marketing*, *78*(5), 42–57. https://doi.org/10.1509/jm.12.0317

Koch, A., Imhoff, R., Dotsch, R., Unkelbach, C., & Alves, H. (2016). The ABC of stereotypes about groups: Agency/socioeconomic success, conservative–progressive beliefs, and communion. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *110*(5), 675–709. https://doi.org/10.1037/pspa0000046

Koch, A., Yzerbyt, V., Abele, A., Ellemers, N., & Fiske, S. T. (2021). Chapter one—Social evaluation: Comparing models across interpersonal, intragroup, intergroup, several-group, and many-group contexts. In B. Gawronski (Ed.), *Advances in experimental social psychology* (Vol. 63, pp. 1–68). Academic Press. https://doi.org/10.1016/bs.aesp.2020.11.001

Kraus, M. W., & Keltner, D. (2009). Signs of socioeconomic status: A thin-slicing approach. *Psychological Science*, *20*(1), 99–106. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9280.2008.02251.x

Kraus, M. W., & Mendes, W. B. (2014). Sartorial symbols of social class elicit class-consistent behavioral and physiological responses: A dyadic approach. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*, *143*(6), 2330–2340. https://doi.org/10.1037/xge0000023

Kraus, M. W., Park, J. W., & Tan, J. J. X. (2017). Signs of social class: The experience of economic inequality in everyday life. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, *12*(3), 422–435. https://doi.org/10.1177/1745691616673192

Kraus, M. W., Torrez, B., Park, J. W., & Ghayebi, F. (2019). Evidence for the reproduction of social class in brief speech. *PNAS Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, *116*(46), 22998–23003. https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1900500116

LaPiere, R. T. (1934). Attitudes vs. actions. *Social Forces*, *13*(2), 230–237. https://doi.org/10.2307/2570339

Lashley, B. R., & Kenny, D. A. (1998). Power estimation in social relations analyses. *Psychological Methods*, *3*(3), 328–338. https://doi.org/10.1037/1082-989X.3.3.328

Leary, T. (1957). *Interpersonal diagnosis of personality; a functional theory and methodology for personality evaluation* (Vol. xv). Ronald Press.

Lerner, M. J. (1980). The belief in a just world. In M. J. Lerner (Ed.), *The belief in a just world: A fundamental delusion* (pp. 9–30). Springer US. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4899-0448-5_2

Loughnan, S., Haslam, N., Sutton, R. M., & Spencer, B. (2014). Dehumanization and social class. *Social Psychology*, *45*(1), 54–61. https://doi.org/10.1027/1864-9335/a000159

Luo, S. (2017). Assortative mating and couple similarity: Patterns, mechanisms, and consequences. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, *11*(8), Article e12337. https://doi.org/10.1111/spc3.12337

Macrae, C. N., Milne, A. B., & Bodenhausen, G. V. (1994). Stereotypes as energy-saving devices: A peek inside the cognitive toolbox. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *66*(1), 37–47. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.66.1.37

Marmot, M., & Wilkinson, R. (Eds.). (2005). *Social determinants of health*. Oup Oxford. https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198565895.001.0001

Martin, E. M. (2017). 84% of Americans agree on the one factor that defines the middle class. *CNBC*. https://www.cnbc.com/2017/10/18/majority-of-americans-agree-that-income-defines-the-middle-class.html

Martinez, J. E. (2023). Facecraft: Race reification in psychological research with faces. *Perspectives on Psychological Science: A Journal of the Association for Psychological Science*, Advance online publication. https://doi.org/10.1177/17456916231194953

McPherson, M., Smith-Lovin, L., & Cook, J. M. (2001). Birds of a feather: Homophily in social networks. *Annual Review of Sociology*, *27*(1), 415–444. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.soc.27.1.415

Milgram, S. (1970). The experience of living in cities: A psychological analysis. In F. F. Korten, S. W. Cook, & J. I. Lacey (Eds.), *Psychology and the problems of society* (pp. 152–173). American Psychological Association. https://doi.org/10.1037/10042-011

Nahemow, L., & Lawton, M. P. (1975). Similarity and propinquity in friendship formation. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *32*(2), 205–213. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.32.2.205

Oakes, J. M., & Rossi, P. H. (2003). The measurement of SES in health research: Current practice and steps toward a new approach. *Social Science & Medicine*, *56*(4), 769–784. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0277-9536(02)00073-4

Oh, D., Shafir, E., & Todorov, A. (2020). Economic status cues from clothes affect perceived competence from faces. *Nature Human Behaviour*, *4*(3), 287–293. https://doi.org/10.1038/s41562-019-0782-4

Olson, K. R., Dweck, C. S., Spelke, E. S., & Banaji, M. R. (2011). Children's responses to group-based inequalities: Perpetuation and rectification. *Social Cognition*, *29*(3), 270–287. https://doi.org/10.1521/soco.2011.29.3.270

Petsko, C. D., Rosette, A. S., & Bodenhausen, G. V. (2022). Through the looking glass: A lens-based account of intersectional stereotyping. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *123*(4), 763–787. https://doi.org/10.1037/pspi0000382

Pew Research Center. (2015). *The American middle class is losing ground*. https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2015/12/09/the-american-middle-class-is-losing-ground/

Pitcan, M., Marwick, A. E., & Boyd, D. (2018). Performing a vanilla self: Respectability politics, social class, and the digital world. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, *23*(3), 163–179. https://doi.org/10.1093/jcmc/zmy008

Quinn, D. M. (2006). Concealable versus conspicuous stigmatized identities. In S. Levin & C. Van Laar (Eds.), *Stigma and group inequality* (pp. 97–118). Psychology Press.

Quinn, D. M., Camacho, G., Pan-Weisz, B., & Williams, M. K. (2020). Visible and concealable stigmatized identities and mental health: Experiences of racial discrimination and anticipated stigma. *Stigma and Health*, *5*(4), 488–491. https://doi.org/10.1037/sah0000210

R Core Team. (2022). *R: A language and environment for statistical computing*. R Foundation for Statistical Computing. https://www.R-project.org/

Reardon, S. F. (2018). The widening academic achievement gap between the rich and the poor. In D. B. Grusky & J. Hill (Eds.), *Inequality in the 21st century* (1st ed., pp. 177–189). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429499821-33

Reichheld, F. F. (2003). The one number you need to grow. *Harvard Business Review*, *81*(12), 46–54.

Ridgeway, C. L., & Fisk, S. R. (2012). Class rules, status dynamics, and "gateway" interactions. In S. T. Fiske & H. R. Markus (Eds.), *Facing social class: How societal rank influences interaction* (pp. 131–151). Russell Sage Foundation.

Rosseel, Y. (2012). lavaan: An R package for structural equation modeling. *Journal of Statistical Software*, *48*(2), 1–36. https://doi.org/10.18637/jss.v048.i02

Roth, M., & Altmann, T. (2019). A multi-informant study of the influence of targets' and perceivers' social desirability on self-other agreement in ratings of the HEXACO personality dimensions. *Journal of Research in Personality*, *78*, 138–147. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrp.2018.11.008

Salazar Kämpf, M., Liebermann, H., Kerschreiter, R., Krause, S., Nestler, S., & Schmukle, S. C. (2018). Disentangling the sources of mimicry: Social relations analyses of the link between mimicry and liking. *Psychological Science*, *29*(1), 131–138. https://doi.org/10.1177/0956797617727121

Schönbrodt, F. D., Back, M. D., & Schmukle, S. C. (2012). TripleR: An R package for social relations analyses based on round-robin designs. *Behavior Research Methods*, *44*(2), 455–470. https://doi.org/10.3758/s13428-011-0150-4

Shafir, E. (2017). Decisions in poverty contexts. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, *18*, 131–136. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2017.08.026

Sidanius, J., & Pratto, F. (2001). *Social dominance: An intergroup theory of social hierarchy and oppression*. Cambridge University Press.

Sirin, S. R. (2005). Socioeconomic status and academic achievement: A meta-analytic review of research. *Review of Educational Research*, *75*(3), 417–453. https://doi.org/10.3102/00346543075003417

Small, M. L., & Adler, L. (2019). The role of space in the formation of social ties. *Annual Review of Sociology*, *45*(1), 111–132. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-soc-073018-022707

Smith, J. P. (2007). The impact of socioeconomic status on health over the life-course. *The Journal of Human Resources*, *XLII*(4), 739–764. https://doi.org/10.3368/jhr.XLII.4.739

Soto, C. J., & John, O. P. (2017a). Short and extra-short forms of the Big Five Inventory–2: The BFI-2-S and BFI-2-XS. *Journal of Research in Personality*, *68*, 69–81. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrp.2017.02.004

Soto, C. J., & John, O. P. (2017b). The next Big Five Inventory (BFI-2): Developing and assessing a hierarchical model with 15 facets to enhance bandwidth, fidelity, and predictive power. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *113*(1), 117–143. https://doi.org/10.1037/pspp0000096

Srivastava, S. (2010). The five-factor model describes the structure of social perceptions. *Psychological Inquiry*, *21*(1), 69–75. https://doi.org/10.1080/10478401003648815

Stephens, N. M., Markus, H. R., & Phillips, L. T. (2014). Social class culture cycles: How three gateway contexts shape selves and fuel inequality. *Annual Review of Psychology*, *65*(1), 611–634. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-psych-010213-115143

Sussman, A. B., & Shafir, E. (2012). On assets and debt in the psychology of perceived wealth. *Psychological Science*, *23*(1), 101–108. https://doi.org/10.1177/0956797611421484

Swencionis, J. K., Dupree, C. H., & Fiske, S. T. (2017). Warmth-competence tradeoffs in impression management across race and social-class divides. *Journal of Social Issues*, *73*(1), 175–191. https://doi.org/10.1111/josi.12210

Swencionis, J. K., & Fiske, S. T. (2016). Promote up, ingratiate down: Status comparisons drive warmth-competence tradeoffs in impression management. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, *64*, 27–34. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2016.01.004

Tackman, A. M., & Srivastava, S. (2016). Social responses to expressive suppression: The role of personality judgments. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *110*(4), 574–591. https://doi.org/10.1037/pspp0000053

Thalmayer, A. G., & Saucier, G. (2014). The Questionnaire Big Six in 26 nations: Developing cross-culturally applicable Big Six, Big Five and Big Two Inventories. *European Journal of Personality*, *28*(5), 482–496. https://doi.org/10.1002/per.1969

Tskhay, K. O., & Rule, N. O. (2013). Accuracy in categorizing perceptually ambiguous groups: A review and meta-analysis. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, *17*(1), 72–86. https://doi.org/10.1177/1088868312461308

Van de Werfhorst, H. G., & Mijs, J. J. (2010). Achievement inequality and the institutional structure of educational systems: A comparative perspective. *Annual Review of Sociology*, *36*(1), 407–428. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.soc.012809.102538

van Ryn, M., & Burke, J. (2000). The effect of patient race and socio-economic status on physicians' perceptions of patients. *Social Science & Medicine*, *50*(6), 813–828. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0277-9536(99)00338-X

von Janda, S., Polthier, A., & Kuester, S. (2021). Do they see the signs? Organizational response behavior to customer complaint messages. *Journal of Business Research*, *137*, 116–127. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2021.08.017

West, T. V., & Kenny, D. A. (2011). The truth and bias model of judgment. *Psychological Review*, *118*(2), 357–378. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0022936

Wicker, A. W. (1969). Attitudes versus Actions: The relationship of verbal and overt behavioral responses to attitude objects. *Journal of Social Issues*, *25*(4), 41–78. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4560.1969.tb00619.x

Willer, R. (2009). Groups reward individual sacrifice: The status solution to the collective action problem. *American Sociological Review*, *74*(1), 23–43. https://doi.org/10.1177/000312240907400102

Zebrowitz, L. A., & Collins, M. A. (1997). Accurate social perceptionss at zero acquaintance: The affordances of a Gibsonian approach. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, *1*(3), 204–223. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327957pspr0103_2

Received April 10, 2024
Revision received October 23, 2024
Accepted October 28, 2024 ■