



Class Prejudice

A Literature Review on the Influence of Social Class When Seeking to Get a Job

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Foreword

As a Zambian born-Dutch national, I have been lucky to experience a good and comfortable life in Italy and Europe, but this does not negate the fact that I am a black man in a predominantly white society. As such, I have been exposed to discriminatory behavior through crude and immature comments or assumptions from people, both in social settings as well as professional ones. Although this is not the form of discrimination this paper will discuss, it is still at its core, discrimination. This gives me a bit of a personal connection to this paper as discrimination is something I, as well as many of those close to me, have faced first hand. This was one of the main motivators in writing this paper and I hope it can shed light onto the injustices people face, especially when the injustices are fueled by things that are out of our control, such as skin color, race, or social class. These are things we are born into and not things that we can choose. It was very insightful and eye-opening to conduct this literature review and I am glad I did it on the topic I chose.

I extend my humble thanks and appreciation to my supervisor, Professor Maria Giovanna Devetag, for allowing me to partake in this literature review and for giving me guidance and assistance in order to complete my work successfully. My thanks also go out to my family, friends and peers that supported me throughout my bachelor's and helped me get to this point in my academic career.

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1. Introduction

1.1 General Concept

Discrimination in all shapes, sizes and forms is one of the most prevalent issues in the history of our people. Humans, being creatures of a gregarious nature, tend to seek comfort and safety in those alike to them and subsequently ostracizing those un-alike to them (Tomasello, 2014). This is something that has been in human nature since pre-historic times however, in this current epoch, humans do not solely act upon their natural instincts (Tomasello, 2014). Unfortunately, humans are also nurtured into discriminating others based upon many factors that are either prevalent upon first contact or are less superficial and are discovered through learning their background and upbringing: “Social interactions first lead to a process of categorization among workers ... This process explains how the structure of social interaction draws distinctions between employees due to their socio-demographic characteristics. When interactions occur, employees class others into categories based on observable characteristics” (Jacques & Walkowiak, 2009). Jacques & Walkowiak’s statement towards the idea that people are categorized by their peers and colleagues based on “observable characteristics” is a prime example of how humans, as a species, are not only grouped but seek to be part of groups. This mentality is also supported by Jewel when she says: “Western education contributes to inequality by allowing ‘inherited cultural differences to shape academic achievement and occupational attainment’” (Jewel, 2008). As indicated by Jewel, the preceding quote highlights that there are inherited differences in people, that affect their success in finding and attaining jobs (Jewel 2008; Auer, Bonoli, Fossati & Liechti 2018).

1.2 Determination of Social Classes

The aforementioned inherited differences are part of the foundation of how individuals are assigned into the various social classes. On top of that, Jewel also describes education as a factor in the decision to assign people to certain classes. This is important due to the fact that it demonstrates how people are affected by their upbringing and molded to think in particular ways about particular groups of people, whether that be through a positive or negative lens. Jewel mentions how social classes are determined: A person's class is determined by looking at how much and what types of capital a person has (economic, cultural, social, and symbolic), and how

long the person has held that type of capital (Jewel, 2008). Thus, it dictates that a person's class is much deeper than just how much money they have, which is typically the norm for assessing social class. Although it is an important factor, many other indicators of one's position in society are present. These said indicators will be further explored in the theoretical framework of this paper.

1.3 Social and Scientific Relevance

Explaining the persistence of long-run discriminatory behavior requires an understanding of how employers assess the qualifications of the workers they choose to hire (Jacques & Walkowiak, 2009) as that is where the actual "discrimination" will take place. In today's world, it is a much more concerning issue because of how important the civil and social rights of each and every individual have become, especially in comparison to the grim history of how humans have treated one another (Nandhini, Sindhuja, Paul & Singh, 2020). Thus, any form of discrimination is something that must be addressed and handled with the utmost prudence. This highlights the social and scientific relevance of this study as it this will help shed some light into the way people process information through their interactions with potential employees due to the presence, or absence, of certain indicators of one's class in society. Analysing choices and decisions made by people in positions to hire potential employees will give some insight into why particular types of people with particular backgrounds are chosen over others, despite being of equal competence.

1.4 Research Question

Furthermore, several scholarly articles and published research papers will be analysed in this literature review in order to find out precisely how much of an impact one's societal class has on their success in getting hired for jobs. To be more precise, the underlying research question that this literature review is striving to answer is the following:

To what extent does one's social class affect an employer's decision in hiring candidates for a job when presented with social class indicators such as speech mannerisms, economic capital, cultural capital, social capital and symbolic capital?

2. Theoretical Framework

The foundation of this literature review is based upon the various indicators of an individual's social class that will be subsequently analysed and discussed. However, prior to any discussions or analyses, it is essential that key terms are defined and elucidated so that the research question may be answered in an explicit manner and to its fullest extent.

2.1 Social Class

First and foremost, “social class”. Understanding what social class means is of the utmost salience as it is one of the roots of this literature review and must be understood to perfection in order to coherently express my arguments towards its indicators and how they affect firm hiring decisions. At first glance, its definition might seem quite elementary however there is a deeper context behind defining social class. After extensive research, most pieces of literature seem to boil it down into two main facets, the objective: “Social class is a multifaceted construct that is rooted in both objective features of material wealth and access to resources” (Piff, Kraus, Côté, Cheng & Keltner, 2010); and the subjective: Social class comprises both...an individual's perceived rank within the social hierarchy...the individual's perceived place within a resource-based hierarchy” (Kraus, Piff & Keltner, 2009). The objective and subjective “features”, or indicators, as I will refer to them, are the criteria used for identifying one's social class. These indicators mentioned in the preceding section are premised on the various types of capital as well as speech mannerisms. The disparity in defining social class makes it a bit challenging to discuss however I will focus primarily on the objective aspects of one's social class. Due to the nature of this literature review, I will not delve deep into the effects of the subjective self-perceptions of social class on job hiring, following the definition by Kraus, Piff and Keltner. This paper is meant to outline and analyse what an employer's cognitive process is when deciding to hire a potential employee or not. The qualitative nature of the subjective facet of social class is based more upon the individual's self-perceived place in society and thus does not have as much impactful salience when looking at it through the eyes of an employer. However, it is not to be written off, as it still does carry some weight in the process of hiring.

2.2 The Indicators of Social Class

The next terms to define are the indicators, firstly, the types of capital; those being economic, cultural, social and symbolic capital.

2.2.1 Economic Capital

To begin with, economic capital is the most rudimentary and easy to understand of the four types of capital. It simply refers to the amount of money and property a person has, as Jewel (2008) says. In other words, it is the value of the tangible and/or monetary assets a person has within their possession. People with higher salaries, bigger houses or a lot of land are examples of what having vast economic capital means (van Aaken, Rost & Seidl, 2022).

2.2.2 Cultural Capital

Next, cultural capital pertains to the idea that capital can be gained through people's upbringings and the factors that shaped their experiences growing up (Granovetter & Swedberg, 2011; Hora, 2019). Other factors of upbringing include a person's education, consumer practices/tastes, religion, personal preferences, etc. (Jewel, 2008). This concept has a more intangible approach with respect to the previous as well as a more subjective view because it can vary quite a bit from person to person.

2.2.3 Social Capital

Social capital is a type of capital that builds upon the idea of cultural capital's intangible nature. Jewel (2008) and van Aaken et al. (2022) describe it as a capital that is attained through one's personal and professional ties with other people; in layman's terms: "It is all about who you know". It is something that can make or break someone's career as in an increasingly connected world, networking is a vital trait to master in order to aid in the success of one's goals (Gulati, Daldin & Wang, 2002). The resources that come from social capital are not as directly impactful as that of something like economic capital but are still paramount in establishing oneself (Hughes, Ireland & Morgan, 2007).

2.2.4 Symbolic Capital

Of the previous three types of capital, this one is by far the most intricate and subjective form of capital. Symbolic capital relates to one's prestige and authority (Jewel, 2008). This is not a type of capital that can be learned, it is one that must be earned. In other words, it is someone's

ethos, this is a term of Greek origin that essentially means one's credibility. If a group of people view a person in a certain light that portrays credibility worth following, then they will have solidified their symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1986).

2.3 Speech Mannerisms

Next, to assess the concept of speech mannerisms, I will be basing my inference of its effects on firm hiring on a study by Shi & Lei (2021) on *Lexical Use*. Lexical use concerns the various utterances produced by speakers from different social classes in terms of lexical richness, word length, and word class. It will take into account the contrast between the spontaneous nature of spoken language and the more structured essence of written language (Shi & Lei, 2021).

3. Methods for Finding Literature

As seen by the research question, the aim of this literature review is to discern to what extent the presence of selected indicators of an individual's social class will affect their chances in getting hired for a job. In order to find a sufficient number of scientific articles with relevant information to aid in answering the research question, two search databases were used: Science Direct and Google Scholar. A few different search strings were used in order to obtain the said articles. Firstly, using Science Direct, which was the primary source of information, the search string that proved to be most effective in finding the relevant scientific articles was: "Social AND class AND discrimination". The combination of these search terms supported by the Boolean operator "AND" yielded 52,911 results. This was not the only search string that I used when looking for relevant articles that could aid my paper. Other combinations of terms such as "Social AND rights" (275,643 results), "civil AND rights" (89,599 results), "human AND interaction" (2,263,953 results) and "social AND class AND hiring" (31,725 results), were also used in order to find as much relevant literature as possible that would prove to be beneficial in finding an answer for the research question. The same search strings were used for google scholar as well however when it came to that search engine, it was used primarily as a medium to open articles and papers that were not directly accessible through Science Direct.

3.1 Selection Criteria

The articles were initially selected based on how relevant the title seemed to this literature review; furthermore, a swift read of the abstract as well as a skim through the introduction, methods and results/discussion sections aided in deciding whether or not the articles would be well-suited for this literature review. It is necessary to mention that a few articles were provided to me through my supervisor as a starting point. Some of the literature was also found within the references of the articles originally found through the online data bases and those provided to me by my supervisor. From those articles, several were chosen that all carried out original studies and experiments to measure the effects on the presence of either one or more of the indicators and their likelihood on affecting the chances of being hired for a job.

4. Results

4.1 Study One

The first study, by Sharps and Anderson (2021), found that in the U.S. there is only a 7.5% chance that a child born to parents in the bottom income quintile will reach the top income quintile as an adult. That is a phenomenally low rate of conversion from lower classes to upper classes. Sharps and Anderson (2021) also looked at biases from employers in order to see exactly what they look for when hiring someone for a job interview; biases that stem from a mismatch between their [potential employees] behavior and the values of gateway organizations. It is argued that employers look up to employees who are assertive and self-confident and look down on those who are seen as submissive and who defer to authority (Markus & Kitayama, 2003). Another important factor of this study was the distinction between “disjoint agency” and “conjoint agency”. Disjoint agency refers to character traits that resemble a person who is confident, assertive, self-aware and prepared to take on challenges, whereas on the other hand, conjoint agency refers to character traits that are essentially the polar opposite of those of disjoint agency, thus: submissive to authority, reluctant and insecure. This is important because “prior research has shown that naïve observers mistakenly conflate disjoint agency with competence, and interpret low levels of disjoint agency (e.g., less assertiveness and confidence) as a sign that the person lacks competence and abilities...This would suggest that hiring managers will see individuals from working-class backgrounds as less worthy of hire because they will see those individuals as relatively lower in

competence” (Sharps & Anderson, 2021). The actual experiment itself consisted of 148 participants coming in for a mock interview, thus it is fair to say that that is a sufficient sample size. On top of that, the participants made up a very good mix of all races/ethnicities, genders and social classes; however, those social classes were self-assigned by the participants themselves. It also consisted of a panel of managers assessing independently whether or not they would actually hire the said participants for a job. Finally, there were also 1,505 observers whose role was to assign character attributes to the participants based on their responses and etiquette during the interviews; the observers were blind to the fact that this was an experiment made to see the effects of social class (Sharps & Anderson, 2021). The results of this experiment found that overall, people from the middle and lower classes were higher in conjoint agency however they also found that the managers did view them as less competent than their socially privileged counterparts. This, of course, suggests a positive relationship between social class and chances of getting a job.

4.2 Study Two

As mentioned before, lexical use and speech patterns are also part of the indicators of someone’s social class that I chose to analyze. Therefore, the second study I chose to look at focused primarily on the different constituents of speech and their effects on getting hired for a job. This study by Kraus, Torrez, Park & Ghayebi (2019) tested, through a series of meta-studies, a set of three different hypotheses: 1) To what extent people of different social classes could identify “educated” vs. “non-educated” speakers, 2) The extent to which different speech patterns would aid in identifying one’s social class and, 3) How one’s social class would affect their chances in getting a job (Kraus et al. 2019). For the purposes of this literature review, I will be focusing solely on the second and third hypotheses due to the fact that the first is not relevant to answering my research question. Whether a person from a lower/higher social class can identify someone else’s social class is not pertinent to this paper; the other two, however, are germane to my research question.

4.2.1 Study Two: Hypothesis #2

With regards to hypothesis #2, the results of these studies turned out to be quite fascinating. It was found that “the average correlation across all time points revealed a significant positive association between speaker social class and perceiver-judged social class in the speech condition” (Kraus et al. 2019). Where on the contrary, “a negative association emerged in the transcript

condition” (Kraus et al. 2019). This highlights the difference between spoken and written language: when one is speaking, there are many more components that influence somebody’s perception of you such as tone and rhythm. On text, writing is more structured and, of course, it is not as easy to assess the tone or rhythm of the author of the text. Therewithal, Kraus et al. (2019) also deemed that this negative association between transcribed speech and determining social class stems from the fact that in real-life situations, where two people are speaking, more information tends to be revealed about each person’s backgrounds and social class throughout the course of conversation. Overall, these results indicate that linguistic data in speech (e.g., pronunciation, tone, rhythm) provide for accurate inferences of the social class of speakers over and above the written content of the speech (Kraus et al. 2019).

4.2.2 Study Two: Hypothesis #3

As for hypothesis #3, it built off of some data from the preceding hypothesis. In view of the fact that speech and spoken language were much stronger indicators of social class (rather than written text), focus was given to that aspect of the participants’ lexicon: “Because the class-signaling effect was particularly strong for speech we focus our remaining analyses on judgments of the speech of applicants made by perceivers with hiring experience” (Kraus et al. 2019). As a result of the meta-studies executed within the overall study, it was found that there was an explicitly cogent correlation between being part of a higher social class and perceived competency for the faux job. Moreover, Kraus et al. (2019) brought light to the fact that “despite having no information on their actual qualifications, perceivers with hiring experience judged higher social-class applicants as more likely to be competent for the job”. As seen by the antecedent statement, the study isolated any academic and other relevant information about their qualifications for the job about the participants prior to getting a judgment of their [participants] social class, and this still yielded a result suggesting that the perceived social class of a person was positively correlated to job competency. Not to mention, all the foregoing information was ascertained solely through the orthoepy, cacoepy or general diction of the participants.

4.3 Study Three

The third and final study that was reviewed was conducted in order to assess the hiring process in technology companies. 36 “evaluators”, as they were referred to, from companies such as Google, Amazon, Microsoft and Facebook were interviewed in order to find out what it was

they were looking for in potential interns. Essentially, it came down to three different selection criteria: industrial fit, organizational fit and individual fit. Chua & Mazmanian (2020) describe industrial fit as the technical skills needed to work and succeed in the tech industry. Organizational fit is described as having the values and culture that align with those of the respective organization (Google, Microsoft etc.). Individual fit is seen as how well the applicants, as people, relate to the interviewers themselves. Respectively, the organizational and individual fits both fall under the wings of cultural and social capital. In this study, their initial goal was not to analyze the effects of social class background on hiring decisions but as a consequence of their results, they did find correlations between the two variables. Chua & Mazmanian (2020) placed heavy emphasis on the importance of social capital: knowing people and networking oneself. Scholars have contended that knowing cultural insiders at a firm—such as friends, classmates, or family members—is pivotal in gaining access to knowledge about the firm’s norms and values (Chua & Mazmanian, 2020). It is also important to highlight the fact that Chua & Mazmanian came to find that being of a higher social class does give more opportunity to getting jobs: “In the context of securing employment, prior research found that applicants from class-privileged upbringing largely focus on connecting with professionals at recruitment events. By contrast, less privileged applicants generally emphasize their academic achievements and technical interview performances. As such, scholars have asserted that class-privileged applicants’ greater stress on extracurricular involvement could give them an advantage over their less-privileged counterparts in having the connections needed to access helpful information and support for the interview process” (Chua & Mazmanian, 2020). The preceding quote from their study is a prime example of the benefits of having a multitude of capital types. They highlight that being competent for the job is not the sole, deciding factor in interviews, but that people from a higher social class who have more access to resources that, in turn, give them more capital, and in this case social capital, are more likely to succeed in their endeavors.

As for lexical use, they found that class-privileged applicants appear to be better able to access the knowledge needed to demonstrate desirable cultural signals in their oral communication and written materials (Chua & Mazmanian, 2020). Class privilege does not just help in capital types, but the ability to express themselves in a manner that is more appealing to interviewers through verbal and written communication is another benefit that was found in this study, in other words, lexical use was deemed an important indicator as well.

5. Discussion

All things considered, the results of this literature review, based on the experimental studies that were chosen, provided clear and concise insight into the effects of the chosen indicators on hiring intention. Overall, it can be concluded that there is, in fact, a positive relationship between one's chances at getting a job and the social class that they belong to, meaning: the higher their social class, the higher their chances are at getting a job. A big part of the reason as to why this is the case, according to Sharps and Anderson's (2021) analysis, is that politicians and policy makers are centralized on the idea that the lack of education for the lower classes leads them to remain in their respective classes. The preceding claims can also be supported by Bourdieu's idea of the types of capital that it takes in order to ascend to higher classes in society. With more education, one can get better jobs, and subsequently, better salaries, which in turn, raises their economic capital. Economic capital, of course, being one of the four capital types that aids in determining an individual's class in society (Jewel, 2008). It is not to be argued with that education is a principal factor in earning a better place in society, however, it is not the sole factor that outlines a person's life (Sharps & Anderson, 2021).

Other factors that fall under the wings of economic and cultural capital is that social class background correlated with the panel's hiring decisions, indicating that participants from working-class backgrounds were viewed as less worthy of hire. More specifically, there was a marginal correlation with the aggregate index of social class background, and significant correlations with household income growing up and father's education (Sharps & Anderson, 2021). As seen by the results of their study, there was a correlation between one's economic status and the perception of their social class by those deciding whether or not they would hire the applicants. These aforementioned perceptions were altered based on what class they were deemed to be, but on the contrary, it was also found that the mother's income status was not correlated to the perceived social class. This is an interesting finding that could use some more research in order to unveil why exactly a father's income was a factor and that of the mother was not. This could be an issue of the perception of gender roles and discrimination or prejudice based on sex.

The lack of clarity between one's competence for a job and their social class was an interesting find, but also not so unexpected. This is a cardinal piece of information with regards to the goal of answering the research question. This is because it highlights the fact that based on the

judgement of character, or in other words, an applicant's symbolic capital, hirers will view applicants in a biased light that leads to a potentially clouded view when assessing their competencies for a said job. However, Sharps and Anderson (2021) gauge that there are myriad reasons for this. Children of working-class families face impediments in their material resources (economic capital), education (cultural/economic capital), and social networks (social capital), just to name a few. The lack of access to resources and capitals can create barriers for people of lower classes to ascend into the perceived higher ranks of society. Although it was one of the indicators, symbolic capital was the one that was studied in the least depth, when compared with the other types of capital. By saying so, it is not my intention to undermine the importance of its value when managers are hiring for jobs, however it could use some more in-depth research.

Another interesting fact is that social capital seemed to be the least relevant in some managers' hiring decisions. The study by Sharps and Anderson (2021) came to find that social class background did not correlate with attributions of fit or with attributions of warmth...(e.g., small talk before the interview began that might include discussion of interests, hobbies, etc.)...Nonetheless, these null relationships are important because they suggest that the link between social class background and attributions of disjoint agency were not driven by perceptions of fit or warmth, or in other words, there was no strong correlation between their hiring decisions and one's social capital. Chua & Mazmanian (2020), on the other hand, found it to be one of the most important types of capital when being interviewed for a job. This is also due to the fact that knowing someone on the inside aids the interviewee in gaining knowledge on the values the company expects from its employees, therefor pre-emptively preparing the job-seeker's degree of "organizational fit". The ability to demonstrate organizational fit often comes down to whom applicants know. According to evaluators, one way to tell if a candidate might fit with the organization is whether a current employee at the company is willing to vouch for the candidate (Chua & Mazmanian, 2020; Hora, 2019). The findings that support the importance of the role of social capital in attaining a job are intriguing because of the fact that depending on one's social capital, this can have an influence on their symbolic capital. To put it in other words, having social capital gives an advantage by giving interviewees credibility (symbolic capital) and, in the case of the evaluators from this study, a better organizational fit.

To summarize, it is interesting to see how one's social capital can complement their symbolic capital. It is also fascinating to see how the two different studies by Sharps & Anderson

and Chua & Mazmanian assess and value the role and weight of social capital in firm hiring practices. The juxtaposing views that they have provide a lot of insight into the results of their respective studies and how they both give me more information towards the goal of answering the research question.

Subsequently, lexical use was an important factor in determining whether someone would be competent for a particular job or not, as seen by the information in the results section of this paper. There are both objective and subjective aspects to analyzing social class and each of them are key to understanding their respective effects on hiring decisions. “Both ‘objective’ (e.g., income, education) and ‘subjective’ (self-perceived social class rank) components of social class can be somewhat distinct from each other and have independent effects on individuals’ behavior” (Sharps & Anderson, 2021). The fact that they both affect the behavior of applicants shows that all of the indicators affect the way people present themselves, their mannerisms and their speech patterns. These indices emphasize the idea to the reader that social class is a multi-faceted concept that varies from person to person.

Sharps and Anderson (2021) also briefly looked at the way lexical use affects a person’s perceived disjoint agency. These three subsequent indicators were used by hiring managers in order to determine the social class of the participants: 1) had a confident and factual *vocal tone*, as compared to an uncertain and wavering vocal tone, 2) had consistent, well-paced, and *fluent speech*, as compared to tripping over his or her words and seeming to hesitate, stutter, or use filler words, 3) *spoke loudly*, as compared to quietly. As seen by the foregoing statement, tone, fluency and volume were all very important components in determining someone’s social class and thereupon, influencing the managers’ decision in hiring or not.

Kraus et al. (2019) go into more detail when it comes to analyzing lexical use. As seen by their results, language is one of the most important factors in determining social class, it is one of the first and foremost means of getting an idea of who a person is and where they might be from (geographically, but more important, socially). Language constitutes a means of asserting one’s identity or one’s distinctiveness from others (Jaspal, 2009). The nature of speech however is amply different from that of written language; utterances, gestures, tone, volume and many other characteristics of spoken language aid in conveying the messages people seek to deliver when conversing. Even as I am writing this literature review, I can easily reflect upon how dissimilar

my written language is from my spoken language, not to mention that this is also an academic paper whereas people, in their day-to-day lives, tend to not speak in such an academic fashion. Thus, when interviewing people for jobs, or looking at job applications, Kraus et al. (2019) could easily identify how spoken language is immensely more accurate as an indicator at identifying social class than its written counterpart. “In France, teachers must use ‘university’ language, the abstract and detached language of the upper-class... By using the language of the dominant class, the teacher encourages the belief that this language is the proper language, thus reproducing the dominant class's language and culture in her students. This teaching causes students to recognize the legitimacy of the dominant culture, but to also see the illegitimacy of their own subordinated culture. Thus, students come to view an upper-class way of speaking as "proper" and more literal or colorful language employed as ‘vulgar’” (Jewel, 2008). By looking at this quote from Jewel, one can see that she supports the claims that a more proper way of speaking is seen as the upper-class way of speaking. Instilling these ideas into young people establishes a clear-cut boundary between the lower and upper classes by means of language and lexical use. It also enhances the idea of subjective perceptions of social classes as it highlights their place in society based on how they talk and subsequently enforces the idea that that is where they belong. This can be seen as detrimental to the psychology of younger minds; if they are segregated by class from a relatively young age and subconsciously told to stay in their place. Any barriers or inhibitors that prevent someone from ascending or changing social class should not be coming from an institution that is meant to help people grow and learn. Jewel’s previous claims of this being a sort of systematic issue in educational institutions is also supported by the following statement: “schools evaluate children based on their familiarity with the culture of the dominant class (or cultural capital), thus penalizing lower-class students. Extensive vocabulary, wide-ranging cultural references, and command of high culture are valued by the school system and students from higher social backgrounds are exposed to this class culture at home. Lower-class children remain under the spell of the dominant class culture. They blame themselves for their failure, and consequently drop out or sort themselves into lower prestige educational tracks (Lamont, Pendergrass & Pachucki, 2015). Lamont et al. (2015) base their claims off of works by Pierre Bourdieu and they suggest that systematic discrimination in educational systems is a big factor in keeping people, from a young age, in the social class they were born into. This can mean that through the objective indicators of class, it reinforces the said students’ subjective indicators of their perceived social class and they

subsequently keep themselves in those classes and therefore they tend to not find as much success in life. According to Côté (2011), in psychology, social class is widely accepted to be one of the most important contributors to a more successful life. Instead, people who are bound to lower social classes might seek trade related or manual labor jobs rather than aspiring to be lawyers, doctors or any “higher class jobs”.

Moreover, another interesting finding that bears mentioning came from a study by Côté (2011) which found that employees with high economic dependency [lower class people] exhibit more involvement with work... and stronger associations between their salary and their well-being... and between their commitment to the organization and their job performance. This provides evidence and insight into the idea that although, lower class people are generally seen as less competent for jobs as their higher class counterparts, their commitments and willingness to work harder, better and more efficiently for their organizations is more prominent than higher class people. This is due to the dependency of the job for the people of the lower classes, should they fail at their job, they might not be able to afford rent and thus will have no place to stay for the month. Whereas, should someone who is from a high social class fail at their job, they have quite a comfortable safety net to fall back on, figuratively speaking. This ties in nicely with what Chua & Mazmanian (2020) found in their research: people of lower social classes tend to rely more on their technical skills and academic achievements when looking for jobs. In this case, the lower class citizens must be working efficiently and to their best capacity in order to maintain a stable life with adequate housing, sufficient food and any other necessities life may demand from people. This all highlights that potentially better employees are not chosen for jobs because of their lack of competencies but because of their social class.

6. Conclusion

All-in-all, it is quite fair to say that perceived and actual social class of people are quite quintessential on how likely they are to get a job. The various studies that were audited for this literature review generally provided empirical evidence through qualitative and quantitative data, supporting the hypothesis that being of a certain social class can indeed affect an individual's chances at getting a job. Moreover, the indicators chosen to analyze seemed to be correlated with a person's likeliness in being hired for a job. Economic capital was the most prevalent of the capitals and most easily identifiable without much background knowledge of the candidates. This type of capital, at first glance, may seem like the most important in establishing someone's social class, but taking a more insightful glance into the other types of capital, it is evident that they are quite important as well, with a slight exception to symbolic capital. Cultural capital and social capital, according to the research, both played pertinent roles in how a candidate for a job's social class was perceived. Symbolic capital's gravity primarily comes from its ties to social capital and thus it could be argued that it is not as important of an indicator as one might think. Symbolic capital as an independent indicator is not an easy facet to develop unless the said candidate has already established themselves in the working world and developed a sense of credibility in the eyes of employers.

When it comes to the importance of lexical use, it was found that this is one of the most appurtenant indicators of social class. Being that people need to communicate in order to carry out even the most basic of tasks, verbal communication in a job interview can create a perception of the background and upbringing of candidate, in the employer's eyes of course. This can happen in almost an instant and can thus be deemed as a key indicator in determining perceived social class. These aforementioned indicators do not mean that a candidate is any less competent for a job position, however they have the potential to engender an employer's prejudice towards the abilities of their job candidates. This is, of course, not a just method of valuating someone's caliber for a job.

6.1 Limitations

During the course of this literature review, there were indeed some limitations that, under different conditions, would be controlled. The internet is a deep and intricate source of information, however there is a lot of bias within it. When searching for potential publications to use for the

literature review, it is easy to get drawn into articles that tend to favor my predisposed ideas on the research question. By saying this I mean to say that on the internet, it is easy to find information supporting what you want and thus this can be a limitation as it can have some bias in the results that are eventually found. Another limitation is that I did not conduct an empirical investigation of my own for the literature review. Doing so would give first hand data on the effects of the indicators of social class and job hiring chances. One final limitation is the fact that people choose potential employees based on a much wider criteria of selection than just social class. Other variables such as race, ethnicity, gender and sex, just to name a few, could have a vast impact on whether or not they are chosen for jobs. In the studies that were reviewed, these were variables that were not necessarily controlled.

6.2 Recommendations

As for recommendations for future research, symbolic capital was a type of capital that could be further explored. There was not much information or data on that specific indicator and although it was deemed to be the least impactful from the four types capital, it still does have an effect on firm hiring. Also, the literature that was reviewed were all based on information and studies about countries residing in the global north sector of our world, thus for further research it would be quite riveting to see how countries from other parts in the world handle the idea of social class in firm hiring. Countries perhaps from the global south or even more specifically, from India as the caste system is something that has been deep-rooted in their culture. It would be an interesting case to look at in more depth and compare with the ideals of the western worlds. Another interesting finding was in the analysis by Sharps & Anderson (2021), where they found a correlation between a job candidate's perceived social class and their father's income. On the other side of the spectrum, there was no significant correlation between the respective job candidate's perceived social class and their mother's income. These incongruous results would yield an interesting study as to what the roles of gender might have to play in this situation; further research on this would be enlightening. Finally, as mentioned in the preceding limitations section, a good recommendation for a more detailed and precise study would be to include an original empirical investigation.

6.3 Final Comments

The world is becoming increasingly more aware of issues regarding discrimination of all types, this includes people's social class and upbringing. It is a very particular issue because just as something such as one's race/ethnicity, it is not something that is chosen but something that people need to deal with. Despite all the obstacles people of lower social classes face when trying to ascend past the socially constructed barriers that exist due to a variety of factors that range from how much money a person has all the way to one's self-manifestation of where they belong in society, it is not just to base judgments on a person's capabilities for a job because of their upbringings. A person can be more catered to a job because of their personal characteristics but should people of different social classes have the same qualifications, their social class should not be the determining factor in whether or not they get the job. This is a mentality that humans need to work on so that we may progress, grow and learn as a species. Only when people learn to not be prejudiced based on something as relatively insignificant as one's social class, then can we take the next step forward in the fight against discrimination; this not only applies to class discrimination but all manners of discrimination.

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