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Separate, And Not Equal: How the Implicit Links Between Social Class, Race, and Leadership Differentially Impact Evaluations of Women Leaders

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by

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DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

Separate, And Not Equal: How the Implicit Links Between Social Class, Race, and Leadership Differentially Impact Evaluations of Women Leaders

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Much research suggests that Whites are more likely to emerge as leaders than Blacks. However, this research has primarily focused on male leaders. Alternatively, an intersectional approach evaluating racial differences in evaluations of women leaders suggests that Black (vs. White) women have more behavioral leeway to express dominant leader-like behaviors, which are generally proscribed for women. Theoretically, more behavioral leeway to enact dominance should enhance Black women's chances of progressing to senior leadership, but this is inconsistent with demographic patterns of leadership representation in America's workforce. Black women's representation lags far behind White women's, suggesting that Black women experience some yet unaccounted-for barriers in their progression to senior leadership roles. This research uses the model of stereotyping through associated and intersectional categories (MOSAIC) to examine perceived social class background as a potential mechanism that adversely affects evaluations of Black women's fit for senior leadership roles. First, I assess the extent to which social class is a triggered associated category (implicitly linked to race and senior leadership) when evaluating Black (vs. White) women and the implications of this for perceived fit for a leadership role. I also examine whether an intervention can mitigate the

adverse effect of perceived social class in evaluations of Black women's fit for senior leadership roles. Findings are discussed regarding their individual and organizational implications.

Keywords: implicit associations, intersectionality, leader prototypes, social class, stereotyping

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DEDICATION

I am my ancestors' wildest dream.

I dedicate this dissertation to my family members who are no longer with us. While they didn't see this day with me, they are with me in spirit. I thank them for walking in faith, hope, and love. May my life's work keep their vision alive.

TABLE of CONTENTS

APPENDIX

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

"I'm too hood, I'm too ghetto. Y'all told me that all year. But when other people do it, y'all don't say nothing. So this is for the girls that look like me." Angel Reese, LSU Women's Basketball Team Captain

Over the last few decades, there has been an increase in Blacks' educational attainment and participation in the labor force (U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2018; U. S. Census Bureau, 2023). Still, compared to similarly qualified Whites, Blacks remain primarily restricted in entry- to mid-level management positions and are under-represented in the highest levels of organizational leadership (McKinsey & Company, 2021; U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2022). Consistent with this pattern, scholars in a recent review on workplace racioethnic differences suggest that evaluators (e.g., hiring managers) may implicitly prefer White leaders (see Avery et al., 2023 for review). In line with this assertion, correlational (e.g., Chung-Herrera & Lankau, 2005) and experimental (e.g., Petsko & Rosette, 2023; Rosette et al., 2008) studies examining the relationship between race and leadership emergence find that Whites (vs. Blacks) are more likely to be preferred for leadership roles. Further, Black leaders are generally rated less effective than their White counterparts (e.g., Carton & Rosette, 2011; Knight et al., 2003). These important findings come from research that explored evaluations of White (vs. Black) male targets.

However, the intersectionality paradigm, coined by Crenshaw (1989), suggests that individuals with multiple subordinate identities (e.g., Black women) may have different outcomes and experiences than individuals with one subordinate identity (e.g., Black man, White woman). The limited research assuming an intersectional approach to investigate the influence of race and gender on evaluations of leaders has yielded a puzzlingly finding that Black (vs. White) women may have more behavioral leeway to assert themselves in ways consistent with

stereotypical leaders (Livingston et al., 2012; Rosette et al., 2016). Theoretically, relaxed proscriptions of dominance for Black (vs. White) women should afford them an advantage in leadership selection and evaluation contexts. However, Black women continue to be grossly underrepresented relative to White women in the highest levels of organizational leadership (Catalyst, 2020), inconsistent with a leadership advantage for Black women. The path to senior leadership likely entails some other challenge for Black women that dominant behavioral leeway has not neutralized. Hence, theoretical and practical understanding of barriers to Black women's leadership remains incomplete without a better understanding of the challenges Black women face in emerging into leadership roles.

Beyond dominance, the leadership prototype involves various characteristics that may explain sex-based and race-based differences in leader emergence. One critical characteristic that may be particularly relevant for Black (vs. White) women is perceived social class background. Notably, research has found a positive relationship between having higher social class origins and senior leader emergence, controlling for gender, race, region, and age (Ingram & Oh, 2022). Because the stereotypical attributes ascribed to Black (White) people and lower (higher) class people are quite similar (Brown-Iannuzzi et al., 2019; Cuddy et al., 2007; Fiske et al., 2002; Ghavami & Peplau, 2012; Landrine, 1985; Lei & Bodenhausen, 2017), people may perceive that Black (vs. White) women are less capable of adopting the upper-class cultural norms expected of senior leaders. So, although Black women may be given leeway to be dominant, their ascribed lower-class status may limit their progression into higher-status leadership roles. Hence, in evaluating the senior leadership potential of Black (vs. White) women, the implicit link between race and social class may prevent Black women from advancing.

Employing the model of stereotyping through associated and intersectional categories (MOSAIC; Hall et al., 2019), I examine social class background as a mechanism that may limit Black women's access to senior leadership. MOSAIC extends the intersectionality framework

(Crenshaw, 1989) by theoretically explaining how associated categories (e.g., an implicit link between race and social class) emerge and the process by which they shape observers' evaluation standards. In other words, the stereotype content people associate with Black (vs. White) women (i.e., social class) may hinder Black women from being viewed as suitable for senior leadership roles.

This research aims to contribute to race and leadership literature in multiple ways. First, I conduct three implicit association tests (IATs) to examine the degree of similarity in stereotype content among distinct social categories (i.e., race, social class, and leadership). In doing so, I empirically test the implicit link between social class and leadership. While studies suggest that upper-class origin is positively related to senior leader emergence (Ingram & Oh, 2022), this is the first study I am aware of to assess the implicit association between social class and the senior leadership role. Consistent with prior research, I also expect racial group membership to trigger an implicit association with social class, with Black (vs. White) women more likely to be perceived as lower-class (e.g., Brown-Iannuzzi et al., 2017; Brown-Iannuzzi et al., 2019; Landrine, 1985; Lei & Bodenhausen, 2017). Similarly, the stereotype content of the senior leader prototype (i.e., upper-class) is expected to be more similar to class-related stereotypes of White women than Black women.

Next, I consider why race influences perceptions of leadership fit of Black (vs. White) women for first- and senior-level leadership positions. I expect the race-class association to be more salient (and more disqualifying in perceptions of leader fit) at higher levels of the organization. In other words, the race-social class association becomes more activated as the organizational rank increases (e.g., first-level leader versus senior-level leader), the stereotype content that shapes observers' standards used to assess the leadership fit of Black women (compared to White women) may shift, such that Black (vs. White) women will be viewed as less fit for senior leadership roles. Theoretically, this work tests the MOSAIC framework by

explaining how the association of senior leadership with social class impacts the standards used in assessing women's senior leadership fit. This is important because perceptions of leader fit have been found to predict who is selected for an interview or recommended for hire (e.g., Cable & Judge, 1997; Kristof-Brown, 2000; Kristof-Brown et al., 2005; Tsai et al., 2011). Lastly, drawing from Umphress et al. (2008), I adapt an experimental intervention to reduce the effect of race and social class background, especially among those who endorse hierarchy-enhancing ideologies. In doing so, I go beyond examining the adverse effect of social class perceptions in evaluating Black women for senior leadership roles to provide a way for organizations to mitigate its effect.

It is important to highlight that the research presented in this dissertation compares how the stereotype content associated with Black (and White) women shapes the standards used for evaluating women for senior leadership fit. Other women and men of color (e.g., Latinos/Latinas, Asians, and Black men) surely also face challenges in obtaining senior leadership roles. However, for purposes of theoretical specificity, I focus on Black (vs. White) women to challenge a well-established finding within the intersectionality and leadership literature that is counter to what happens in reality regarding Black women's leadership outcomes.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Following is a review of the intersectionality paradigm (Crenshaw, 1989), the MOSAIC (Hall et al., 2019) theoretical framework, and social class in organizations.

Intersectionality

The birth of the intersectionality paradigm may have begun with Sojourner Truth at a Women's Rights Convention in Akron, Ohio, in 1851, where White (and Black) women fought for equal rights. Some men attended the conference to disrupt the meeting with misogynistic counterarguments, claiming that women were too frail, helpless, and weak to participate in political activities. However, Sojourner Truth delivered her now-famous speech, "Ain't I a Woman?". Drawing from her experience as a Black woman in slavery, she contested that she could "outwork," "outeat," and "outlast" any man (Giddings, 1984, p. 54). Truth's narrative highlighted that she could not separate her sex from her race to explain her experiences as a Black woman. Based on the concepts presented in Sojourner's speech, the intersectionality perspective began to appear in Black feminist and critical race theory literature in the 1970s and 1980s (e.g., Bambara, 1970; Beal, 1970; hooks, 1984).

Crenshaw (1989) is credited with coining the term "intersectionality" when she argued for the importance of examining the influence of race and sex concurrently rather than either subordinate category in isolation (Crenshaw, 1989). Her analysis highlighted the court system's inability to adequately address Black women's issues at work because they only accounted for experiences based on racism *or* sexism but did not consider the combined effects of racism *and* sexism. For instance, in the 1976 *DeGraiffenreid* versus *General Motors* case, five Black women sued General Motors for their layoff policy based on seniority. The company did not hire Black women until 1964, so they were the most impacted by layoffs in the 1970s. However, the court argued that Black women were not a protected class. They either had to file their claim based on

sex or race. However, they could not prove that White women or Black men had similar experiences, and the court did not consider that Black women faced unique challenges apart from these groups. Crenshaw's analysis revealed that racial and sexual discrimination conceptualizations were based solely on Black men's and White women's experiences, respectively (Crenshaw, 1989).

While Crenshaw's early conceptualization of intersectionality was limited to two subordinate categories (e.g., categories that lack power and influence, such as being Black and female), the intersectionality paradigm has evolved to include dominant social categories of numerous social groups of varying social status. In their review of intersectionality literature, Rosette et al. (2018) defined intersectionality "*as overlapping social categories, such as race and gender, that are relevant to a specified individual or group's identity and create a unique experience that is separate and apart from its originating categories.*" (p. 3, original text italicized). Intersectionality has become a multidisciplinary topic that is now studied in law (e.g., Crenshaw, 1989; 1991), economics (e.g., Kim, 2002, 2009; Neal, 2004), women studies (e.g., Davis, 2008; McCall, 2005; Purdie-Vaughns & Eibach, 2008; Settles, 2006; Shields, 2008; Yuval-Davis, 2006), applied and social psychology (e.g., Berdahl & Moore, 2006; Bhattacharyya & Berdahl, 2023; Biernat & Sesko, 2013; Cole, 2009; Sesko & Biernat, 2010), sociology (e.g., Acker, 2006, 2012; Browne & Misra, 2003; Choo & Ferree, 2010; Reskin & Padavic, 2006), and management (e.g., Hall et al., 2019; Ponce de Leon & Rosette, 2022; Smith et al., 2019).

Researchers explicitly focusing on the inequalities at the intersection of race and gender have uncovered two unique forms of oppression racial minority women experience: double jeopardy (e.g., Berdahl & Moore, 2006; Kim, 2002, 2009; Rosette & Livingston, 2012; Welsh et al., 2006; Williams, 2014) and invisibility (e.g., Bhattacharyya & Berdahl, 2023; Biernat & Sesko, 2013; Livingston et al., 2012; Purdie-Vaughns & Eibach, 2008; Remedios & Synder, 2018; Sesko & Biernat, 2010, 2018; Settles et al., 2019; Smith et al., 2019; Thomas et al., 2014).

Double jeopardy suggests that racial minority women experience both the racism that same-race minority men encounter and the sexism that White women experience (e.g., Berdahl & Moore, 2006; Cortina et al., 2013; Raver & Nishii, 2010). For example, Berdahl and Moore (2006) found in a survey across five organizations—in three male-dominated and two female-dominated industries—that ethnic minority women (i.e., non-White women) reported experiencing more ethnic and sexual harassment than ethnic minority men and White men and women. Similarly, in a survey conducted by Cortina et al. (2013), they found that women of color, especially Black women, reported more harassment than racial minority men and White men and women in three types of organizations (i.e., municipality, law enforcement, and military). Not only do racial and ethnic minority women report more harassment, but studies have found that under certain circumstances (e.g., organizational failure), Black women leaders were rated more negatively on leader effectiveness than Black men and White men and women (e.g., Rosette & Livingston, 2012).

Conversely, racial minority women may sometimes be more invisible (e.g., easily overlooked; Smith et al., 2019) than racial minority men and White women. Individuals that belong to multiple subordinate categories (e.g., Black and female) may be deemed invisible because they are not prototypical members of the superordinate group (Purdie-Vaughns & Eibach, 2008). The prototypical members of racial minority groups tend to be racial minority men (Ghavami & Peplau, 2012; for an exception, see Galinsky et al., 2013), whereas prototypical members of the woman category are White women (e.g., Coles & Pasek, 2020; Landrine, 1985; Sesko & Biernat, 2010; Zárate & Smith, 1990).

Depending on the circumstances, the invisibility of racial minority women can lead to them experiencing favorable or unfavorable outcomes. For instance, Sesko and Biernat (2010) found, across two experimental studies, that Black women were less memorable (Study 1), and their contributions were less recognized (Study 2) than Black men and White men and women.

However, Biernat and Sesko (2013) found, across two experimental studies, in the context of mixed-sexed teams (Black teams, White teams, mixed-raced teams), Black (relative to White) women were perceived as more competent. In the context of mix-sexed teams, Black women's non-prototypical status as *Black* and *woman* may buffer them from stereotypes of incompetence that White women face (Biernat & Sesko, 2013). These mixed outcomes for Black women suggest we need a more informed understanding of their experiences in leadership attainment.

Perceptions of Leadership Fit of Women

To understand Black women's leadership experiences in organizations, it is important first to discuss how gender stereotypes shape women's ascension to leadership. Gender stereotypes, widely known and shared beliefs about attributes ascribed to women, are persistent and pervasive in society. Although gender stereotypes have waned slightly over the last few decades, especially among women in the United States, they are still quite prevalent (e.g., Brenner et al., 1989; Campbell & Hahl, 2022; Castilla, 2008; Lyness & Heilman, 2006; Manzi & Heilman, 2021; Schein, 2001). Gender stereotypes describe how women do behave (descriptive), how they should behave (prescriptive), and how they should not behave (proscriptive) (Prentice & Carranza, 2002; Rudman et al., 2012). Prescriptive stereotypes involve socially desirable characteristics with positive valence (e.g., Bem, 1974; Prentice & Carranza, 2002), whereas proscriptive stereotypes involve socially undesirable characteristics with negative valence (e.g., Antill et al., 1981; Prentice & Carranza, 2002).

Over the past four decades, scholars have developed several theories (e.g., role congruity theory (RCT); Eagly & Karau, 2002; lack-of-fit model; Heilman, 1983; status incongruity hypothesis (SIH); Rudman et al., 2012) to explain how gender stereotypes limit women's career advancement, resulting in their underrepresentation in leadership roles. The culmination of these theories suggests that the incongruence between stereotypical attributes ascribed to women (e.g., nurturing, warm, caring) and those ascribed to leadership roles (e.g., aggressive, demanding,

dominant) disadvantages women in observers' perceptions of leader fit, potential, and performance. Thus, women vying for leadership roles must overcome barriers set by their stereotypical ascriptions. Even when women do overcome these barriers, they are penalized in compensation, hiring, job promotions, performance evaluations, and salary negotiations (e.g., Amanatullah & Morris, 2010; Heilman, 2001; Heilman et al., 2004; Lyness & Heilman, 2006; Phelan et al., 2008; Rudman, 1998; Rudman et al., 2012; Williams & Tiedens, 2016).

There has been a wealth of research conducted using the theories above. However, findings from this research have mainly been based on White women's experiences assuming generalizability to racial minority women (for an exception, see Rosette et al., 2016). However, scholars have found variability in the application and implication of stereotypes among women based on their race (e.g., Galinsky et al., 2013; Hall et al., 2015; Rosette et al., 2016). Hence, researchers suggest incorporating race (i.e., assuming an intersectional lens) when conducting research assessing women's fit for leadership to help us understand the unique barriers of racial minority women (e.g., Livingston et al., 2012; Rosette et al., 2016; Rosette & Livingston, 2012). In the following section, I provide an overview of how intersectionality has revealed variability of ascribed gender stereotypes to Black (relative to White) women and perceptions of leader fit based on these variations.

Perception of Leader Fit of Black Women

Black (vs. White) women tend to be characterized differently. For instance, Rosette et al. (2016) conducted a free-response survey in which they had participants list adjectives that typically describe subgroups of women based on their race. They then sorted these adjectives into identified stereotype content categories. They found that White (compared to Black) women were more frequently described as being kind, caring, and friendly (communal characteristics), whereas Black (compared to White) women were more frequently described as dominant, resilient, and strong (agentic characteristics). Scholars suggest these stereotypes partly arise

because Black women traditionally have had to work outside of the home in the United States as their income is a major contribution to the household (e.g., Cocchiara et al., 2006; Rosette et al., 2018). Rosette and colleagues' findings reveal that Black (compared to White) women are less prescribed communality and proscribed dominance (e.g., Livingston et al., 2012; Rosette et al., 2016). This means that people may have a lower expectation of Black (relative to White) women to be kind, caring, and friendly. Furthermore, people may be more tolerant of Black (relative to White) women behaving dominantly.

The consequences of this variability of ascribed stereotypes have implications within the context of leadership. For example, Black (compared to White) women are perceived as being more similar to masculine leader prototypes, resulting in them being more likely to be selected for masculine (e.g., competitive, contentious, fierce) leadership roles (e.g., Galinsky et al., 2013) and rated more favorably than White women when they express dominance in a leadership role (e.g., Livingston et al., 2012). Given the evidence from studies suggesting that Black women should be more dominant than White women, one might expect them to emerge into senior leadership roles more than White women. However, in reality, Black women's representation from entry to the C-suite declines more drastically than White women's (e.g., Bloch et al., 2021; Catalyst, 2022; McKinsey & Company, 2022).

As we incorporate the intersection of race and sex in examining women's leadership experiences, new theoretical concepts are needed to explain how evaluative processes result in race-based differences in perceptions of women's suitability for and emergence into leadership roles. Noting the limitations of the intersectionality paradigm, Hall et al. (2019) developed the model of stereotyping through associated and intersectional categories (MOSAIC). The MOSAIC enhances the intersectionality framework's precision and utility in management theory (Hall et al., 2019). In the next section, I will expound upon the MOSAIC.

Model of Stereotyping through Associated and Intersectional Categories (MOSAIC)

The MOSAIC (Hall et al., 2019; reference Figure 1 for an adapted model) theoretical framework suggests that the standards people use to evaluate two somewhat similar targets are shaped by the integrated stereotype content of their shared demographic category (i.e., foundational category), a demographic category in which they differ (i.e., intersectional category), and a demographic category that shares an implicit link to either of the other categories (i.e., associated category). For example, when comparing a Black woman and a White woman, the foundational demographic category is their gender (i.e., woman). The intersectional demographic category is their race (i.e., Black, White). Then the associated demographic category would be some third category that becomes relevant in the evaluation context (e.g., "Black" – as a racial category – is implicitly associated with the "man" category, which may be uniquely relevant in the context of a gendered occupation; Galinsky et al., 2013; Hall et al., 2015). The foundational category's stereotype content (i.e., woman = feminine stereotype content) is either amplified (i.e., more feminine) or diluted (i.e., less feminine) when the foundational, intersectional, and/or associated demographic categories' stereotype content is consistent or inconsistent, respectively. Integrated stereotype content activates the prescribed (*should behave*) and proscribed (*should not behave*) standards perceivers use to evaluate these targets. Based on the relevant standards of the focal evaluation, targets may be advantaged or disadvantaged in evaluation outcomes.

Associated categories are especially germane to leadership evaluations of women of different races. Hall et al. (2019) described four theoretical pathways through which associated categories emerge: stereotype overlap, frequent corepresentation, motivated social construction, and phenotypic similarity. The present research is informed by associations generated via stereotype overlap, frequent corepresentation, and motivated social construction pathway(s). Following, I will elaborate on these in the next section. I do not expound upon the phenotypic

similarity pathway as it is not relevant to the current investigation. Please see Hall et al. (2019) for a detailed description of the phenotypic similarity pathway.

Stereotype overlap. Implicit links between demographic categories frequently occur because the stereotypes associated with Category A are highly consistent with those of Category B. So, recognizing a target is A increases the likelihood that an evaluator will also think of the target as B. For example, Blacks and men share similar masculine stereotype content (e.g., aggressive, assertive, dominant, strong; Galinsky et al., 2013; Ghavami & Peplau, 2012). When evaluating a Black (vs. White) woman, the racial categorization may activate an implicit association with the "man" category due to the masculine nature of the stereotypes associated with being Black (e.g., Galinsky et al., 2013; Hall et al., 2015). Activating the man category may alter evaluations of Black women (e.g., Livingston et al., 2012).

Frequent corepresentation. The frequent corepresentation pathway suggests that associated categories emerge from two or more demographic categories that are repeatedly viewed together in a context (e.g., Whites and leaders; Rosette et al., 2008; Petsko & Rosette, 2023). For example, in the United States, White men are overrepresented in leadership positions. Thus, when people think of leadership, they may perceive that being White (e.g., Petsko & Rosette, 2023) and being a man (e.g., Eagly & Karau, 2002) are indicators of successful leadership.

Motivated social construction. The motivated social construction pathway suggests that a perceiver may implicitly link two or more categories to justify achieving their desired outcomes. For instance, historically, White enslavers' association of Blacks with being less than human may have empowered them to justify chattel slavery and their treatment of Black people (e.g., Goff et al., 2008; Goff et al., 2014; Simms, 2001).

The Role of Implicit Associated Categories in Leadership Evaluations of Women

Within leadership evaluations of women, associated categories are especially germane to the ideas presented in this dissertation. Scholars theorize, and empirical evidence supports, that there is an overlap in the stereotypes ascribed to race and social class (e.g., Brown-Iannuzzi et al., 2019; Brown-Iannuzzi et al., 2017; Kunstman et al., 2016; Landrine, 1985; Lei & Bodenhausen, 2017). Both the category Black and the category lower class are associated with stereotypes such as being incompetent and uneducated. In contrast, Whites and the upper class are associated with stereotypes of being competent and well-educated. Since Whites and individuals from upper-class origins are frequently corepresented in senior leadership positions, stereotypes associated with Whiteness and the upper class may be more pronounced in evaluations of women for senior leadership roles. However, the salience of social class as an implicitly associated category linked to senior leadership has yet to be studied. This is surprising as empirical evidence suggests that social class may be positively related to hiring decisions (Rivera, 2012), leader emergence (e.g., Barling & Weatherhead, 2016), the likelihood of attaining a management position (especially as the organizational rank increases; Ingram & Oh, 2022), earning potential (Laurison & Friedman, 2016), perceptions of leadership effectiveness (Martin et al., 2016), attitudes about seeking power (Belmi & Laurin, 2016), strategic risk-taking (Kish-Gephart & Campbell, 2015), and opportunities to speak up (e.g., Martin & Harrison, 2022). Following, I provide an overview of social class (see Kish-Gephart et al., 2023 for a more in-depth review).

Social Class in Organizations

Drawing from Bourdieu's (1984) theory of capitals, scholars have defined social class as the relative social rankings of people in organizations based on their access to economic, social, and cultural capital (Gray & Kish-Gephart, 2013). Economic capital includes financial resources and tangible assets (e.g., salary and rewards structures). Social capital is resources drawn from an

individual's personal and professional networks. Cultural capital includes three sub-types: embodied, objectified, and institutionalized. Embodied cultural capital refers to the impact of early-life socialization (e.g., from parents) that develop attitudes and ways of thinking and persist throughout a person's lifetime (e.g., Côté, 2011; Kish-Gephart & Campbell, 2015; Martin et al., 2016). Examples include an individual's accent, dialect, disposition, mannerisms, posture, and taste. Objectified capital refers to material objects (e.g., art, car, house) an individual possesses. Institutionalized capital includes symbols representing an individual's cultural competency, such as academic qualifications (e.g., degrees or certifications) (Bourdieu, 1986).

Researchers have used subjective and objective measures to operationalize social class. The subjective measures include one's social identity or habitus (e.g., "How should someone like me act"; Stephens & Townsend, 2013, p. 126) and/or social rank (e.g., "To what extent does the individual believe his or her material resources are elevated or diminished relative to others?"; Kraus et al., 2012, p. 547). The objective measures of social class, based on Bourdieu's (1984, 1986) capitals, include income, occupational prestige, and education. Scholars suggest that income represents people's access to resources and material possessions (e.g., economic capital). Occupational prestige represents people's access to social networks (e.g., social capital). Education represents people's access to cultural knowledge (e.g., cultural capital) (e.g., Ingram & Oh, 2022; Martin & Côté, 2019).

Objective measures can be captured in real-time based on a person's current social class indicators or their parent's information, which is used to capture their social class origins (e.g., Ingram & Oh, 2022). Social class can change over time when a person moves to another social class (upward or downward). Some scholars have theorized, and empirical evidence supports, that as people move from one social class to the next, they learn and adopt the norms, values, and behaviors (e.g., cultural tools) of their new class context (e.g., Ingram & Oh, 2022; Martin & Côté, 2019; Martin & Harrison, 2022). Additionally, accumulating these cultural tools across

different social classes enables people to deploy them as needed to achieve their goals within that context. Yet, other scholars have theorized and found empirical evidence that individuals also have a social class imprint brought about from early childhood socialization processes (e.g., embodied cultural capital; Bourdieu, 1984, 1986), with lasting effects regardless of their current social class status (Côté, 2011; Kish-Gephart & Campbell, 2015; Loignon & Woehr, 2018; Martin et al., 2016; Martin & Harrison, 2022).

Perceptions of a person's social class origins may impede or facilitate their opportunities and shape their workplace experiences (e.g., Ingram & Oh, 2022; Martin & Harris, 2022; Rivera, 2012; Rivera & Tilcsik, 2016). For instance, across three studies—a field study, an archival dataset, and an experiment—Martin and Harrison (2022) found that upward mobility (i.e., lower- to higher- social class) is positively related to voice through self-efficacy; however, upward mobility is negatively related to voice through a manager's solicitation (e.g., manager seeking input from an employee). These findings have real implications for employees transitioning from a lower social class background to a higher social class status. For instance, although upwardly mobile employees may learn the cultural tools (e.g., speaking up in meetings) needed to be successful at higher levels of the organization, their managers may not seek or value their input.

In a qualitative study, Rivera (2012) found that interviewers in elite professional service firms (i.e., investment banks, law firms, management consulting firms) were less likely to recommend hiring someone with cultural capital (e.g., experiences, leisure pursuits, taste) that was different from theirs. Although candidates were described as competent, interviewers valued candidates they believed they could spend long hours with and who shared similar interests outside of work. Interviewers used the candidate's lifestyle markers (e.g., golf, lacrosse, squash) on their resumes to determine who would be a cultural fit in these elite firms.

Although these prior studies provide evidence that a person's social class background may be related to workplace experiences and outcomes, implicit associations between the stereotype content of social class and the leader prototype have yet to be established empirically.

CHAPTER 3

HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

Implicit Associations Among Race, Social Class, and Leadership

Implicitly testing the links between race and leadership, race and social class, and social class and leadership may be especially important in helping us understand the evaluative standards used by evaluators in comparing White (vs. Black) women's leader fit as the organizational hierarchy increases. Following, I theorize how implicit associations between race-senior leaders, race-social class, and social class-senior leaders may occur.

Race as an Implicit Associated Category of the Senior Leader Prototype

The implicit association between race and senior leadership may emerge via the frequent corepresentation of White people in senior leadership roles. In most U.S. organizations, White leaders are frequently corepresented in senior leadership roles (Bloch et al., 2021; Ingram & Oh, 2022; U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2022). Although Whites comprise 60.1% of the U.S. population, they hold 82.2% of leadership positions (U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2022; U. S. Census Bureau, 2022). In the first decade of the 2000s, various studies found that "being White" is cognitively linked to leadership (e.g., Chung-Herrera & Lankau, 2005; Rosette et al., 2008; Sy et al., 2010). For instance, in two experiments, Rosette et al. (2008) found that, after reading an article describing an interview with a leader or a non-leader employee whose race was not given, participants were more likely to report the race of the leader (than the non-leader) as White, regardless of the racial composition of the organization or the industry, suggesting that "being White" is characteristic of leader prototypes. Similarly, across three experiments, Sy et al. (2010) found that although participants perceived an Asian male (vs. White male) engineer, with the same qualifications and experience, as more technically competent, they perceived him as less leader-like.

Notably, the studies above were conducted before Barak Obama, a Black man, was elected President of the United States and before Kamala Harris, a Black woman, was elected Vice President of the United States. In more recent studies replicating the Rosette et al. (2008) experiment, scholars found that, after reading an article describing an interview with a leader (vs. a non-leader employee) whose race was not given, participants were *equally* likely to report the race of the leader (vs. a non-leader employee) as White (e.g., (Study 1) Petsko & Rosette, 2023; (Study 1) Ubaka et al., 2022). These findings raise the question of whether the Whiteness and leadership link has recently waned.

Yet, other recent studies have found that the implicit association between Whiteness and leadership remains (Gündemir et al., 2014; Petsko & Rosette, 2023). Petsko and Rosette (2023) suggest that when participants are directly asked about their racial assumptions (e.g., "What do you think is the race of the target?"), the Whiteness-leadership association may be more challenging to detect due to social desirability concerns. They further suggest that using indirect approaches to assess racial assumptions about leaders may reveal the Whiteness-leadership link. In support of their assertion, Petsko and Rosette (2023) found supporting evidence across two experimental studies (Studies 2 and 3) using indirect approaches assessing whether people presume a leader (vs. non-leader) is White. For example, in Study 2, Petsko and Rosette (2023) indirectly assessed the racial assumption of leaders by conducting a reverse-correlation experiment, which was completed in two phases. In Phase 1, participants were randomly assigned to a leader or follower condition and presented with pairs of Black and White male pictures overlaid with visual noise (e.g., blurry appearance). Participants completed 300 trials of selecting which image was similar to the leader in the leader condition (or a follower in the follower condition). Once the trials were completed, the researchers created aggregated photos of a leader and a follower based on participants' selections, which were used in Phase 2. In Phase 2, a separate set of participants were presented with the aggregated leader and follower photos in

random order and asked to rate the person's race in the image on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = *very Black* to 7 = *very White*). This sample of naïve raters (i.e., unaware the photos were normed as a leader vs. a follower) rated the leader image more White than the follower image.

To conceptually replicate their findings from Study 2, in Study 3, Petsko and Rosette (2023) conducted an experiment using a trait nomination task. Like Study 2, in Study 3, two groups of participants were recruited for separate yet related studies. One set of participants rated a list of characteristics on how stereotypically White they seemed and how positive (vs. negative) they appeared. These same characteristics were used in another experiment in which a different group of participants was randomly assigned to select the characteristics that people in the United States would stereotypically characterize as associated with a leader or a follower. Importantly, participants were unaware that these characteristics were pre-normed based on their association with Whiteness and positive (vs. negative) valence. Participants were then presented with the chosen features and asked to identify the top ten most stereotypic attributes of a leader (vs. follower). Petsko and Rosette (2023) found that leaders were described by attributes rated as stereotypically Whiter and more positive than those used to describe followers. Qualities such as intelligence, ambition, and industriousness were used to describe both leaders and Whites. In contrast, attributes such as low intelligence, yielding, and laziness were used to describe followers. These findings reveal that the implicit link between Whiteness-leadership may be more detectable by indirect methods to assess racial assumptions about leaders due to social desirability effects of direct methods. They also illuminate that there may be more than one theoretical pathway (i.e., frequent corepresentation and stereotype overlap) in which the implicit link between Whiteness-leadership can emerge. Since Whites (vs. Blacks) are more likely to be represented in senior leadership, the prototype of a senior leader may be viewed as White. This leads to the following hypothesis.

Hypothesis 1a: The prototype for the senior leadership role is viewed as White (vs. Black).

Social Class as an Implicit Associated Category of Race

The race-class association may also emerge due to frequent corepresentation. People living in poverty are disproportionately Black, and unusually wealthy people are disproportionately White (Pew Research Center, 2016). Blacks are twice as likely to live in poverty than Whites, whereas White households are 13 times more likely to be wealthy than Black households (Pew Research Center, 2016).

The implicit association between race and social class may also emerge via the stereotype overlap pathway. For instance, Whites tend to be stereotyped as intelligent, educated, competent, and wealthy, whereas Blacks tend to be stereotyped as unintelligent, uneducated, incompetent, and poor (e.g., Ghavami & Peplau, 2012; Landrine, 1985). As for stereotypes of social class, people having a higher social class status are typically stereotyped as being competent and wealthy, while people having a lower social class status are typically stereotyped as incompetent and poor (e.g., Cuddy et al., 2007; Durante & Fiske, 2017; Fiske et al., 2002; Landrine, 1985). Generally, there are similarities between the attributes descriptive of Whites and people with a higher social class status (e.g., competent, wealthy) and similarities between attributes descriptive of Blacks and individuals with a lower social class (e.g., incompetent, poor).

As a result of the similarity in stereotype content between White (Black) and higher (lower) social class status, when a perceiver categorizes a person by their race, the associated social class categories may be activated. That is, when an observer categorizes someone as White, they may more readily categorize them as having a higher (vs. lower) social class status. Similarly, when an observer categorizes someone as being Black, they may more readily categorize them as having a lower (vs. higher) social class status. For instance, Kunstman et al. (2016) conducted an implicit association test in which they had participants racially categorize

poor (vs. wealthy) and Black (vs. White) targets. They found that participants were slower at classifying poor White targets as White than at categorizing poor Black targets as Black. In another study where participants were asked to list the top ten cultural stereotypes of Black and Whites, Blacks were most frequently described as ghetto/unrefined. In contrast, Whites were most frequently described as high-status and rich (Ghavami & Peplau, 2012). These studies support that White (vs. Black) is associated with higher (vs. lower) social class. This leads to the following hypothesis.

Hypothesis 1b: The prototype of an upper-class person is White (vs. Black).

Social Class as an Implicit Associated Category of the Senior Leader Prototype

Like the race-social class association, the link between social class and leadership may emerge due to stereotype overlap. As mentioned, higher social class individuals are typically stereotyped as intelligent, competent, and wealthy, whereas lower social class individuals generally are stereotyped as unintelligent, incompetent, and poor (Cuddy et al., 2007; Durante & Fiske, 2017; Fiske et al., 2002; Landrine, 1985). Leaders are stereotyped as intelligent, ambitious, competent, aggressive, and dominant, whereas followers are stereotyped as unintelligent, uneducated, and yielding (e.g., Petsko & Rosette, 2023). There are more similarities between the attributes associated with leaders and people with higher, rather than lower, social class. In an evaluative context in the workplace, when a perceiver classifies someone as having a higher (vs. lower) social class status, this might activate an association with the leader (vs. follower) category. This may partly explain why scholars have found that having upper-class origins is positively related to who has access to and emerges as a leader in the upper echelons of organizations (Ingram & Oh, 2022). This leads to the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1c: The prototype for the senior leadership role is an upper- (vs. lower/working-) social class background.

Evaluating Women for First-Level Leadership Fit

In this section, I argue that dominance is central to the first-level leader prototype. Hence, in evaluations of women for first-level leadership fit, understanding the dominance proscriptions of women may be essential. Those who are less proscribed dominance may be perceived as being a better fit for a first-level leadership position (e.g., role congruity theory (RCT); Eagly & Karau, 2002; lack-of-fit model; Heilman, 1983; status incongruity hypothesis (SIH); Rudman et al., 2012). In what follows, I explain the less proscribed dominance stereotype content of Black (vs. White) women. Then, using the MOSAIC (Hall et al., 2019) framework, I explain how the process by which Black (vs. White) women's less proscribed dominance (i.e., less feminine) stereotype content informs the standards used in evaluating them for first-level leadership positions. I hypothesize that a Black (vs. a White) woman may be perceived as a better fit for a first-level leadership role due to lower proscriptions of dominance.

Women and The Proscription of Dominance

Scholars have theorized and empirical evidence support that Black (vs. White) women are less proscribed dominance (Livingston et al., 2012; Rosette et al., 2016). For instance, in a free-response study by Rosette et al. (2016), participants were asked to list characteristics (at least three) that typically describe Black and White women. Black (vs. White) women were more frequently described as angry, strong, and dominant. In contrast, White (vs. Black) women were more frequently described as communal (e.g., kind, caring, friendly). Because dominance is more proscribed to White (relative to Black) women, evaluators may exaggerate dominance ratings in the evaluative context of leadership (Rudman et al., 2012). In line with this prior research, the following is hypothesized:

> *Hypothesis 2:* A White woman applicant will be rated higher in dominance than a Black woman applicant.

The Mediating Role of Dominance in Evaluations of Women for First-level Leadership

While leader prototypes may vary by context (e.g., culture, work tasks, managerial level), they also have some consistency in the attributes (e.g., masculinity) (Foti et al., 2008; Lord et al., 2001). Though empirical evidence supports an implicit link between Whiteness and leadership (e.g., Petsko & Rosette, 2023), the strength of this association may be weaker at lower (vs. higher) levels of the organization hierarchy. For example, racial diversity has increased in organizations over the last several decades. This demographic shift has increased the racial diversity of leaders in the lower levels of organizations but has yet to translate to more senior levels. So, the less frequent corepresentation of Whites in lower (vs. higher) leader roles may render Whiteness less central to the leader prototype at the lower level of organizations.

Women's representation in lower-level leadership roles has also increased, yet, masculine characteristics still tend to characterize these positions. First-level leaders supervise small teams, direct work, and coordinate day-to-day activities in support of executive leaders' objectives (U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2020; EEOC, 2006). Leaders may need to know how work is done at lower levels and oversee daily task completion. Thus, dominance (e.g., exerting authority over others; Ma et al., 2022) may be an essential characteristic of the first-level leader prototype. With the salience of dominance in the first-level leader prototype, women with less proscribed dominance may be perceived as a better fit for this role.

The *prescriptive* and *proscriptive* standards used in evaluations of White (vs. Black) women may change depending on the attributes most central to the leader prototype. As mentioned, the MOSAIC framework suggests that people use *prescriptive* and *proscriptive* standards to evaluate targets. In evaluative comparisons of two women, these standards are informed by integrating the stereotype content from the women's foundational (shared category - woman), intersectional (differing category – Black, White), and associated (race implicitly linked to another or multiple categories – depending on the focal evaluation) demographic categories.

The foundational (woman) category's feminine stereotype content is either amplified (i.e., more feminine) or diluted (i.e., less feminine) when the foundational, intersectional, and/or associated demographic categories' stereotype content is consistent or inconsistent, respectively. Integrated stereotype content activates the prescribed (*should behave*) and proscribed (*should not behave*) standards perceivers use to evaluate these women.

In evaluating White and Black women for first-level leadership roles, race-gendered associations may be relevant due to the salience of dominant masculinity being central to the leader prototype. For the White woman, her White race does not activate a gendered associated category, as White women are the baseline for the superordinate woman category (e.g., Galinsky et al., 2013), meaning that when people think of women, they tend to think of White women (e.g., Landrine, 1985; Rosette et al., 2016). Hence, standards used to evaluate White women will be based on the prescriptive feminine stereotype content of the woman category. However, for the Black woman, the intersectional category "Black" may activate an associated category "man" due to the overlapping stereotypes associated with Blacks and men (e.g., Galinsky et al., 2013). Men and Black women are described in masculine terms such as dominant (Ghavami & Peplau, 2012; Rosette et al., 2016). Hence, the feminine prescriptive stereotype content used to shape the templates for evaluating Black women is diluted (i.e., less feminine and less proscribed dominance) due to the integration of masculine stereotype content associated with Blackness.

Thus, in evaluating candidates for first-level leadership roles, the standards used to assess White women will be based on a lower dominance threshold and a higher expectation for communality shaped by the feminine stereotype content. In contrast, the standards used to evaluate Black women will be based on a higher dominance threshold and a lower expectation for communality shaped by the diluted feminine stereotype content. As a result, Black women

may be perceived as a better fit for a first-level leadership position than White women due to being less proscribed dominance. This leads to the following hypotheses (reference Figure 2):

Hypothesis 3: A Black (relative to a White) woman applicant will be perceived as a better fit for a first-level leadership role.

Hypothesis 4: Perceptions of dominance will mediate the relationship between race and leader fit for a first-level leadership role.

Evaluating Women for Senior-Level Leadership Fit

Women and Associations of Race-Social Class-Senior Leaders

Before discussing the role of social class as a mediating mechanism between race and senior-level leadership fit, it is important to revisit the associations between race and social class and social class and leadership. The race-social class and social class-leadership links theorized earlier in the hypothesis development section may be instrumental in explaining evaluations of Black (vs. White) women for senior leadership roles. Categorically, White (Black) is implicitly linked to higher (lower) social class (e.g., Brown-Iannuzzi et al., 2019; Brown-Iannuzzi et al., 2017; Lei & Bodenhausen, 2017). Hence, White (vs. Black) women will be perceived as being from a higher social class background.

Hypothesis 5: A White woman applicant will be perceived as being from a higher social class background than a Black woman applicant.

It was also theorized that the prototype for a senior leadership role is viewed as having an upper-class (vs. lower/working-class) background. People who are viewed as more similar to the senior leader prototype should be perceived as being a better fit for this role (e.g., role congruity theory (RCT); Eagly & Karau, 2002; lack-of-fit model; Heilman, 1983; status incongruity hypothesis (SIH); Rudman et al., 2012). A woman perceived to be from an upper-class (vs. a lower/working-class) background will be viewed as more similar to the senior leader prototype. Thus, leading to the following hypothesis.

Hypothesis 6: A woman applicant perceived to be from a higher social class background will be evaluated as a better fit for a senior leadership role than a woman applicant perceived to be from a lower social class background.

The race-social class and social-class leadership logic just explained will be tested using an experimental causal chain.[1] In the next section, I explain how people's prescriptive and proscriptive standards used in evaluating White and Black women for leadership roles may reverse as the organizational hierarchy increases. As this process is explained, I also theorize social class background as a mediator in explaining the racial differences in evaluating senior leadership fit among women.

The Mediating Role of Social Class in Evaluations of Women for Senior-Leader Fit

As the organizational hierarchy increases, ascriptions of masculinity become more prevalent in the leader role (Cortis et al., 2022; Eagly & Karau, 2002; Koenig et al., 2011). This is partly because men are increasingly overrepresented in leadership positions at higher organizational ranks. Since Black women are more commonly stereotyped in masculine terms (Rosette et al., 2016) than White women, Black women, who are viewed as more masculine and dominant, should theoretically be perceived as a better fit for senior-level leadership positions. In line with this reasoning, an experiment (Galinsky et al., 2013) asked participants to review a Black, White, or Asian woman's application for a masculine described (e.g., competitive, fierce) leadership role. Holding other applicant characteristics constant, the Black woman candidate was more likely to be selected for this masculine leadership position than a White or Asian woman. These findings are at odds with the fact that Whites still represent over 90% of CEOs (Zweigenhaft, 2021).

[1] Note: Hypotheses will be tested using an experimental causal chain. In an experimental causal chain, the IV is manipulated, and the mediator is measured (experiment 1 – Figure 3). Then the mediator is manipulated, and the DV is measured (experiment 2 – reference Figure 4). Mediation is inferred if there is a significant effect of the IV on the mediator and the mediator on the DV. Hence, a hypothesis for mediation is not included above but is discussed in the results.

A plausible explanation is that the enduring race-class association renders Black (vs. White) women less suitable for high-status roles seemingly reserved for upper-class people. When evaluating two targets with at least one shared demographic category, these counterintuitively divergent outcomes may be explained by considering their demographic intersectional and relevant associated categories (Hall et al., 2019). Specifically, Blackness (Whiteness) is implicitly linked to the lower (upper) class (e.g., Brown-Iannuzzi et al., 2019; Brown-Iannuzzi et al., 2017; Kunstman et al., 2016; Lei & Bodenhausen, 2017), and having upper-class origins is positively related to senior leadership emergence (e.g., archival study; Ingram & Oh, 2022). As such, ascribed social class may be an integral part of the senior leader prototype that has yet to be theoretically explained or empirically assessed in examinations of the race-leadership fit relationship among women targets.

Unlike the evaluations at the first level of leadership, in assessments of White and Black women for senior leadership fit, the centrality of the upper class in the senior leader prototype may make race-social class associations more salient. Activating the race-class link may alter the relevant stereotype content of White and Black women and, in turn, inform the prescriptive and proscriptive templates or standards used for comparative evaluations. At lower levels of leadership, the White intersectional category of a White woman may not activate an associated category. However, at a more senior level, the White intersectional category of the White woman may now activate the associated category of the upper class, and the Black intersectional category of the Black woman may activate both the man and lower-class categories.

Coincidentally, social class is gendered due to overlapping stereotypes—the upper class is associated with masculinity, and the lower class is associated with femininity (e.g., Martin & Côté, 2019; feminization of poverty; Pearce, 1978). Specifically, I previously theorized that feminine stereotype content was used to inform standards by which White women are judged for first-level leadership fit. However, the feminine stereotype content associated with White women becomes diluted with the integration of masculine stereotype content associated with the upper class. So, the stereotype content used to inform evaluators' templates would have a lower

prescription of communality and a higher threshold for proscribing dominance in evaluating White women as the leadership level increases. Hence, when the race-social class link guides expectations for women, evaluators would have a lower requirement for White women to be nice and warm (e.g., feminine qualities) and a higher threshold for tolerating dominant behavior from White women. Hence, White women can be relatively more dominant and less communal when class is salient.

Conversely, I theorized that diluted feminine stereotype content was used to inform evaluators' standards in evaluations of Black women for first-level leader fit. However, the diluted feminine stereotype content associated with Black women becomes neutralized with the integration of feminine stereotype content associated with the lower class as the leadership level increases. Thus, at the senior level, evaluators would have a higher expectation of prescribed communality and a lower threshold of proscribed dominance in evaluating Black women when the race-social class link is activated. That is, when class is salient, Black women's dominant behavioral leeway they may have in leadership is neutralized, and they will be subjected to feminine restrictions. Black women will have less leeway to assert themselves in dominant stereotypical leader-like ways and be required to be relatively more communal if they want to be successful. Hence, the social class background of White (Black) women may be a mechanism for differing perceptions of senior leadership fit. This leads to the following hypothesis:

> *Hypothesis 7:* Perceptions of social class background will mediate the relationship between race and leader fit for a senior-level leadership role.

The Moderating Role of Social Dominance Orientation

Social dominance theory suggests that human societies organize as group-based social hierarchies in which at least one group enjoys greater social status than others (Pratto et al., 2006). The theory proposes that discrimination and oppression (e.g., classism, ethnocentrism, racism, sexism) result from human tendencies to create, maintain, and recreate group-based hierarchies (Sidanius et al., 2004). Social dominance theory suggests that dominant group

members disproportionately allocate positive social value—food, healthcare, power, wealth—to other dominant group members and negative social value—poor healthcare, underemployment, unfair punishment—to non-dominant group members (Sidanius et al., 2004). Moreover, it posits that group-based discrimination is systemic because social ideologies guide the actions of institutions and individuals (Sidanius et al., 2004). Ideologies are beliefs about the social world and how it should be organized.

Behaviors that align with ideologies based on group-based inequities legitimize discriminatory treatment and the disproportionate allocation of resources. People who endorse ideologies legitimizing group-based inequities tend to desire group-based domination, which is captured by their social dominance orientation (SDO; Pratto et al., 1994). As an individual difference construct, SDO is central to social dominance theory. SDO refers to "one's degree of preference for inequality among social groups" (Pratto et al., 1994, p. 741). Individuals who are higher in SDO tend to support policies and ideologies that are hierarchy-enhancing, while individuals who are lower in SDO tend to support policies and ideologies that are hierarchy-attenuating (Dupree & Torrez, 2021; Dupree et al., 2021; Reynolds et al., 2021; Zhu et al., 2016). For instance, Zhu et al. (2016) found that individuals who strongly endorsed elitist (i.e., higher levels of SDO) ideologies rated researchers from high-status groups (Whites and men) as more credible than researchers from low-status groups (women and minorities); the pattern was reversed for individuals who strongly endorsed egalitarian (i.e., lower levels of SDO) ideologies. Similarly, across four experimental studies, Reynolds et al. (2021) found that elitist ideology moderated the relationship of race with hiring recommendations. That is, individuals who endorsed an elitist ideology were more likely to hire a White candidate than a Black candidate, but this pattern was reversed for evaluators that endorsed an egalitarian ideology.

The pattern that emerged from the studies above aligns well with the motivated social construction theoretical pathway, as explained in MOSAIC (Hall et al., 2019). Motivated social

construction suggests that perceivers may link two or more categories to justify their desired outcomes. Individuals higher (vs. lower) in SDO deliberately want to maintain inequality between groups. Their goal is to maintain racial structures in which Whites are on the top, and Blacks are on the bottom, and they resist policies and practices that would disrupt such frameworks. Hence, people higher (vs. lower) in SDO believe Whites are better for higher-status jobs, while Blacks are better for lower-status jobs (e.g., Dupree & Torrez, 2021; Knight et al., 2003) due to social motivation to maintain the status quo by linking Whiteness with the top and Blackness with the bottom of the organizational hierarchy (Hall et al., 2019).

Relatedly, evaluators' SDO level may influence the strength of dominance and class perceptions of Black women (relative to White women). Individuals lower (vs. higher) in SDO will be less likely to endorse prescribed and proscribed racial and gender stereotypes strongly. Hence, those lower (vs. higher) in SDO may have less of an adverse reaction to a dominant White woman and may rate a White woman more similar to a Black woman in dominance. This leads to the following hypotheses:

First-level leader role:

Hypothesis 8: The effect of race on dominance perceptions will be attenuated among people lower (vs. higher) in SDO.

Hypothesis 9: The indirect effect of race on leadership fit through perceived dominance will be attenuated among people lower (vs. higher) in SDO.

As the organizational rank increases, the race-class association should become more potent, more salient, and more disqualifying for individuals who are socially motivated (i.e., individuals higher in SDO) to protect the interests and resources of higher-status groups (i.e., Whites, the upper class, and senior leaders). The Black-lower class link may become more of a barrier to Black women's career advancement. This may be especially the case among those higher in SDO. This leads to the following hypotheses:

Senior-level leader role:

Hypothesis 10: The effect of race on perceptions of social class background becomes stronger as SDO increases.

Hypothesis 11: The positive effect of perceptions of social class background on leader fit becomes stronger as SDO increases.

An Intervention to Reduce the Effects of Race and SDO on Social Class Background

It has been over 150 years since the end of chattel slavery in the United States, yet the country still grapples with building racially equitable structures and systems. Negative racial attitudes and their discriminatory effects (e.g., lack of diverse senior leadership) remain pervasive (Horowitz et al., 2019). Equitable access to leadership is important because leaders influence individual, organizational, and societal outcomes. While interventions have been developed to increase access to leadership for women in general (e.g., broadening the description of the leader role; Zheng & Muir, 2015), to my knowledge, there has not been an intervention targeted at disrupting the adverse interactive effect of race and SDO on perceptions social class background in evaluations of women leaders. Identifying ways to neutralize implicit associations, such as the one between race and social class, may be essential to providing qualified Black women access to top leadership roles. This may be especially important among people higher in SDO.

Prior intervention experiments have been developed to ameliorate the negative effect of SDO on the selection decisions which favor White (as compared to Black) candidates (e.g., Reynolds et al., 2021; Umphress et al., 2008). For example, Reynolds et al. (2021) developed an experimental intervention that induced a calculative mindset, defined "as a detached, data-driven evaluation of task-relevant information" (p. 627). In a calculative mindset, people are asked to think of themselves as an artificial intelligence program making hyper-rational decisions. Reynolds and colleagues (2021) argued that when people are prompted to make decisions

rationally, they are less likely to use their ideology or beliefs to guide their decision-making process. To condition participants to think rationally, participants were asked to write how an artificial intelligence program named "BEX" would assess a candidate's suitability for an American bank branch manager position and instructed to begin each sentence with "BEX." They were then presented with a profile of a White (or Black) male candidate. Across two experiments using MTurk samples, they found that inducing a calculative mindset eliminated (Study 3) or reduced (Study 4) the effect of higher (vs. lower) SDO in rating a White (compared to a Black) candidate as more suitable for the bank position.

While the Reynolds et al. (2021) intervention is helpful, it requires an individual to decide to mimic an AI program intentionally. Individuals higher in SDO may be resistant to this intervention. However, Umphress et al. (2008) developed an experimental intervention with which individuals higher in SDO might comply. They theorized that people higher (vs. lower) in SDO have high regard and respect for hierarchies and, thus, tend to comply with authority figures. Therefore, if an authority figure directs participants to focus on specific performance criteria, participants higher in SDO would be more likely to select the best-qualified candidate, even if the best-qualified candidate was a lower-status group member.

Across two experimental studies, Umphress et al. (2008) manipulated lower-status group members (a White woman in Study 1 and a Black man in Study 2) to be the best-qualified out of eight candidates. The participants were tasked with rating each of the eight candidates' qualities as potential team members and their intention to select the candidate. They were led to believe that the three candidates with the highest scores would be their teammates in a naval command and control task, in which teams with the highest performance would be rewarded. However, once the participants finished their ratings, the study was done. The participants were then debriefed. The dependent variable in these experiments was the ratings of the manipulated best-qualified lower-status group member candidate. Using undergraduate student samples, Umphress

et al. (2008) tested and found that individuals higher (vs. lower) in SDO were less likely to select the best-qualified candidate from a lower status group (i.e., a White woman (Study 1) and Black man (Study 2)). However, a directive from an authority figure (versus no directive from an authority figure) to use specific job performance indicators (i.e., Leadership Potential Test Score and GPA) in the selection task reduced the negative effect of participant SDO on intent to select a candidate from a lower status group. These findings are consequential because they demonstrate that individuals higher (vs. lower) in SDO are more likely to discriminate against lower-status group members. However, an authority figure's directive to focus on performance criteria in evaluations can ameliorate this tendency, making them more apt to select the best-qualified candidates regardless of their ascribed lower status. Drawing from Umphress and colleagues' (2008) directive from an authority intervention, the following is hypothesized (reference Figure 5):

> *Hypothesis 12:* There will be a three-way interaction effect of race, SDO, and an intervention on the perception of social class background. The stronger effect of race on the perception of social class background as SDO increases will be attenuated for those given a directive to focus on specific criteria compared to those not given a directive.

CHAPTER 4

OVERVIEW OF STUDIES

The four studies presented in this research aim to test the hypothesized relationships presented above. Following is an overview of the four studies, with more details in each section below. In Study 1, participants (n = 890) were recruited from Prolific to participate in one of three (Study 1a, n = 299; Study 1b, n = 300; Study 1c, n = 291) implicit association tests (IATs; Greenwald, 2003). These IATs tested the hypothesized implicit relationships between race-the senior leader prototype (Study 1a), social class-race (Study 1b), and social class-the senior leader prototype (Study 1c),

Across Studies 2 to 4, undergraduate students (n = 545) were recruited from universities in urban areas of the southern United States to participate in between-subjects experimental designs. In these studies, I used a similar scenario in which students were asked to imagine they were a student leader at their university and tasked with evaluating a woman applicant for a position at their university in a Student Affairs organization. In Study 2 (n = 98), I tested hypotheses 2 to 4 and 8 to 9. I posited that a White (vs. Black) woman would be rated higher in dominance (i.e., exaggerated dominance; Rudman et al., 2012) (*Hypothesis 2*). A Black (vs. White) woman would be perceived as a better fit for leadership in a first-level leader role (*Hypothesis 3*), and perceptions of dominance would mediate the relationship between race and first-level leader fit (*Hypothesis 4*). Additionally, I posited that the effect of race on dominance perceptions would be attenuated by people lower (vs. higher) in SDO (*Hypothesis 8*) and that the indirect effect of race on leadership fit would be attenuated by people lower (vs. higher) in SDO (*Hypothesis 9*). I used a measurement of mediation (Spencer et al., 2005) experimental design, in which the independent variable (IV) was manipulated (Race: White, Black), and the mediator (dominance) and the dependent (DV) (leader fit) variables were measured. Using this type of

design, the causality of the effect of the mediator on the dependent variable is inferred by statistical analysis.

Scholars suggest that researchers should consider conducting experimental causal chain studies when the mediator can be easily measured and manipulated (Podsakoff & Podsakoff, 2019; Spencer et al., 2005). An experimental causal chain is conducted in two experiments. In the first experiment, the IV is manipulated, and the mediator is measured. In the second experiment, the mediator is manipulated, and the DV is measured. A significant effect of the IV on the mediator and a significant effect of the mediator on the DV allows researchers to infer more strongly that the effect of the IV on the DV is mediated through the mediator.

In Study 3, I chose to do an experimental causal chain as described by Spencer et al. (2005). I conducted two experiments, Study 3a and Study 3b. In Study 3a (n = 102), I tested hypotheses 5 and 10. I posited that a White (vs. Black) woman applicant would be perceived as being from a higher social background (*Hypothesis 5*) and that as SDO increases, the effect of race on perceptions of social class background would become stronger (*Hypothesis 10)*. In Study 3b (n = 100), I tested hypotheses 6 and 11. I posited that a woman perceived to be from a higher social class background would be evaluated as a better fit for a senior leadership role than a woman applicant perceived to be from a lower social class background (*Hypothesis 6*) and that as SDO increases, the positive effect of social class background on leader fit would become stronger (*Hypothesis 11)*.

Study 4 (n = 245) builds upon Study 3 and statistically tests social class background as a mediator between race and the perception of senior leader fit. Additionally, drawing from Umphress et al. (2008), an intervention (directive from an authority figure vs. no directive from an authority figure) was developed. Hypotheses 5 and 10, from Studies 3a, were tested to see if the results would be replicated. Hypotheses 7 and 12 were also tested. I posited that perceptions of social class background would mediate the relationship between race and leader fit for a

senior-level leadership role (*Hypothesis 7*) and that the stronger effect of race on the perception of social class background as SDO increases would be attenuated for those given a directive to focus on specific criteria (compared to those not given a directive) (*Hypothesis 12*). Reference Table 1 for a summary of the results from the tested hypothesized relationships.

CHAPTER 5

STUDY 1 IMPLICIT ASSOCIATION TESTS

Study 1 received institutional review board approval under protocol # 2022-0403 ("Associations") from the University of Texas at Arlington. This study comprised three survey-software implicit association tests (IATs): (Study 1a) race-leadership level, (Study 1b) social class-race, and (Study 1c) social class-leadership level, meant to test hypotheses 1a to 1c, respectively. Participants for each IAT were recruited from Prolific (www.prolific.co). Once a participant participated in one IAT, their Prolific ID was used as a filter to prevent them from participating in another IAT for this research.

An IAT aims to assess the strength of mental associations of categories through several iterations of timed sorting tasks (Greenwald et al., 2009). The premise behind an IAT is that it takes people less time to sort paired stimuli more strongly associated (e.g., Whites, senior leadership positions) than to sort paired stimuli more weakly associated (e.g., Blacks, senior leadership positions) (reference Lane et al., 2007 for an in-depth review). For example, Whites (vs. Blacks) are often represented in senior leadership roles. In contrast, Blacks (vs. Whites) may be more associated with follower roles. As such, the association between Whites and senior leadership should be stronger than that between Blacks and senior leadership. Similarly, the association between Blacks and followers should be stronger than between Whites and followers. Therefore, when a person is presented with pairings more strongly associated (Whites/senior leaders; Blacks/followers) and asked to sort stimuli (e.g., White faces/Senior leader titles "CFO"; Black faces/Follower titles "Employee") that align with these pairings, they may be able to complete this sorting task in less time than with pairings in the reverse order or that have weaker associations (Whites/followership or Blacks/senior leadership).

Study 1a Method: Race-Leadership Level IAT

Participants and Procedure

A U. S. sample of participants (at least 18 years old) was recruited from Prolific (www.prolific.co) to participate in Study 1a in exchange for $2.00. A total of 305 participants completed Study 1a, of which six were dropped from the analysis due to the excessive speed of their responses (i.e., > 10 *seconds* or over 10% of responses < 300 *milliseconds*). The final sample of 299 was 51.8% female, and participants were primarily White (75.9%; 12.7% Black; 6.0% Hispanic/Latino; 7.0% Asian/Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander; 4.3% Native American/Alaska Native, Biracial, and other). The average age of participants was 45.56 (*SD* = 16.63). Over half (52.2%) of the participants had at least a bachelor's degree, and the sample leaned towards political liberalism (*M* = 4.81, *SD* = 2.95, on an 11-point scale of 1 = *extremely liberal* and 11 = *extremely conservative*).

An IAT was created for Study 1a using the iatgen internet tool (www.iatgen.org) developed by Carpenter et al. (2019). Carpenter et al. (2019) provided materials and tutorials for using the iatgen internet tool on the Open Science Framework (OSF) at https://osf.io/ntd97/. Once the IAT was created, the file was uploaded to Qualtrics (www.qualtrics.com) for use with participants. I added blocks to the Qualtrics survey to collect the participants' demographics (i.e., age, gender, race, education, and political views) and responses to explicit association questions. The participants completed 200 paired timed sorting tasks in which they sorted combinations of pairings of Black-White women's faces and senior-level leader (e.g., "Executive")-first-level leader (e.g., "Front-line Manager") titles. Images of Black (and White) women's faces (between 30 to 40 years old) were obtained from the Chicago Face Database (CFD; Ma et al., 2015). Reference Appendix A for stimuli materials.

Supplemental Explicit Measures

Explicit senior-level leadership-race association

Participants were asked to indicate, "How much do you associate **senior-level leaders** with White women vs. Black women?" The participants responded to this question using a 5-point scale (1 = strongly White women, 2 = somewhat White women, 3 = neither White women nor Black women, 4 = somewhat Black women, 5 = strongly Black women). The scale was reverse-coded for analysis so that higher (lower) scores reflect that the participants associate senior-level leaders more with White women (Black women).

Explicit first-level leadership-race association

Participants were asked to indicate, "How much do you associate **first-level leaders** with White women vs. Black women?" The participants responded to this question using a 5-point scale (1 = strongly White women, 2 = somewhat White women, 3 = neither White women nor Black women, 4 = somewhat Black women, 5 = strongly Black women). The scale was reverse-coded for analysis so that higher (lower) scores reflect that the participants associate first-level leaders more with White women (Black women).

Study 1a Analysis

Once the data collection process was complete in Qualtrics, the data file was transferred to Carpenter et al.'s (2019) iatgen internet tool (www.iatgen.org). Carpenter et al.'s (2019) iatgen internet tool is programmed to automatically clean the data and calculate the D-scores for each participant, following the guidelines described by (Greenwald et al., 2003). The calculated D-scores indicate which condition participants provided faster responses. Positive difference scores represent faster responses to pairings that generally have a stronger association (e.g., White and senior-level leaders; Blacks and first-level leaders), a negative difference score represents faster responses to pairings that typically have a weaker association (e.g., Blacks and senior-level leaders; Whites and first-level leaders), and a zero-difference score represents no response time

differences (e.g., Carpenter et al., 2019; Greenwald et al., 2003). The calculated D-scores were then downloaded from the iatgen tool in a format that could be transferred to SPSS (v. 26) to perform descriptive statistical analysis.

Study 1a Results

Descriptive Statistics

Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics and correlations. The correlations between the IAT D-score and the explicit measures were examined. The IAT D-score does not significantly correlate with either of the explicit measures (e*xplicit senior-level leadership-race association*: $r = .03$, $p = ns$; e*xplicit first-level leadership-race association:* $r = -.03$, $p = ns$). There is a significant negative correlation between the explicit measures ($r = -.14$, $p < .05$).

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis 1a posits that the prototype for the senior leader is viewed as being White (vs. Black). As shown in Table 3, the association of Blacks with senior leaders was slightly stronger than the association of Whites with senior leaders ($M_{D\text{-}score} = -.15$, $SD_{D\text{-}score} = 0.36$, $d = -.41$, significantly differed from zero, $t(298) = -7.08$, $p < .001$, 95% $CI_{D\text{-}score}$ [-.18, -.11]). Participants tended to respond slightly faster to the association of Black and senior leaders than White and senior leaders. Approximately two-thirds (65.9%) of the participants' calculated D-score was negative (see Figure 6 for distribution). Hence, hypothesis 1a was not supported.

Supplemental Analysis with Explicit Measures

As presented in Table 2, for the *explicit senior-level leader-race association,* participants' mean responses were slightly above the mid-point ($M = 3.42$, $SD = .70$). Meaning that when the participants were directly asked about race and senior leadership, they reported that they associate senior-level leaders slightly more with White (vs. Black) women. As for the *explicit first-level leader-race association,* the participants' mean responses ($M = 3.00$, $SD = .65$) suggest they do not associate first-level leaders with either White or Black women.

Study 1a Discussion

The purpose of Study 1a was to assess the implicit association between White (vs. Black) and the senior-level leader prototype. More specifically, I tested hypothesis 1a, which posits that the prototype for the senior leadership role is viewed as White (vs. Black). This hypothesis was not supported, contradicting recent studies using indirect methods with male targets to assess the White-leadership link (e.g., Petsko & Rosette, 2023). However, my findings align with very recent studies employing direct methods (i.e., directly asking participants about racial assumptions of a leader), in which scholars did not find detect a White-leadership link (e.g., (Study 1) Petsko & Rosette, 2023; (Study 1) Ubaka et al., 2022).

However, when participants were directly asked about the link between race and leadership level, they associated senior-level leaders slightly more with White (vs. Black) women. In comparison, they did not explicitly associate first-level leaders with White (or Black) women. This finding could suggest that the implicit association of Whites in senior leadership may be waning, at least in comparisons of White (vs. Black) women. The data in this study was collected summer of 2022, which was after Black women were elected or appointed to several highly visible roles. For instance, Kamala Harris was elected as the U. S. Vice President, Karine Jean-Pierre was appointed as the White House Press Secretary, and Ketanji Brown Jackson was appointed to the United States Supreme Court. These events received significant media and popular press attention, potentially making them highly salient in participants' minds. Also noteworthy is that Black women have taken the lead on social justice issues (Black Lives Matter, MeToo Movement) that have garnered national attention over the last several years. So, the recent "frequent representation" of Black and other women of color in highly visible roles might have somewhat disrupted the implicit link between race and leadership, at least among women. However, because of historical representations of Whites in leadership, when asked directly, participants may have reflected more holistically and historically on who has been and continues

to be represented in leadership. Future research should investigate these differences in explicit and implicit responses further.

Study 1b Method: Social Class-Race IAT

Participants and Procedure

A U. S. sample of participants (at least 18 years old) was recruited from Prolific (www.prolific.co) to participate in Study 1b in exchange for $2.00. A total of 302 participants completed Study 1b, of which two were dropped from the analysis due to the excessive speed of their responses (i.e., > 10 *seconds* or over 10% of responses < 300 *milliseconds*). The final sample of 300 was 48.3% female, and the participants were primarily White (77.0%; 12.0% Black; 7.0% Hispanic/Latino; 6.7% Asian/Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander; 4.3% Native American/Alaska Native, Biracial, and other). The average age of participants was 44.37 (*SD* = 16.11). Over half (52.3%) of the participants had at least a bachelor's degree. In addition, the sample leaned towards political liberalism (*M* = 4.46, *SD* = 2.95, on an 11-point scale of 1 = *extremely liberal* and 11 = *extremely conservative*).

The same procedure was used as described in Study 1a; however, the time sorting task was changed to social class words instead of leader words. The participants completed 200 paired sorting tasks in which they sorted combinations of pairings of words that were indicative of upper/middle-class words (e.g., "Elite") or working/lower-class words (e.g., "Common") and Black-White women's faces (same as Study 1a). Reference Appendix A for stimuli materials.

Supplemental Explicit Measures

Explicit middle/upper-class-race association

Participants were asked to indicate, "How much do you associate the **middle/upper-class** with White women vs. Black women?" using a 5-point scale (1 = strongly White women, 2 = somewhat White women, 3 = neither White women nor Black women, 4 = somewhat Black women, 5 = strongly Black women). The scale was reverse-coded for analysis so that higher

(lower) scores reflect that the participants associate the middle/upper-class more with White women (Black women).

Explicit lower/working-class-race association

Participants were asked to indicate, "How much do you associate the **lower/working-class** with White women vs. Black women?" using a 5-point scale (1 = strongly White women, 2 = somewhat White women, 3 = neither White women nor Black women, 4 = somewhat Black women, 5 = strongly Black women). The scale was reverse-coded for analysis so that higher (lower) scores reflect that the participants associate lower/working-class more with White women (Black women).

Study 1b Analysis

Like Study 1a, the data file from Qualtrics was transferred to Carpenter et al.'s (2019) iatgen internet tool for data cleaning and calculating the D-scores. Positive difference scores represent faster responses to pairings that generally have a stronger association (e.g., Whites and middle/upper-class; Blacks and lower/working-class); a negative difference score represents faster responses to pairings that generally have a weaker association (e.g., Blacks and middle/upper-class; Whites and lower/working-class), and a zero-difference score represents no response time differences (e.g., Carpenter et al., 2019; Greenwald et al., 2003). The calculated D-scores were then downloaded from the iatgen tool in a format that could be transferred to SPSS (v. 26) to perform descriptive statistical analysis.

Study 1b Results

Descriptive Statistics

Table 4 shows the descriptive statistics and correlations. Before testing the hypothesis and doing supplemental analysis, the correlations were reviewed among the implicit and explicit measures. As presented in Table 4, there is a significant positive correlation between the IAT D-score and *explicit middle/upper-class-race association* ($r = .18$, $p < .01$); and a significant

negative correlation between the IAT D-score and *explicit lower/working-class-race association* (r = -.18, p < .01). While the correlations between the D-score and explicit measures are significant, the effect size is relatively small (r ~ .1; per Cohen, 1998). There is a strong negative correlation between the explicit measures (r = -.62, p < .01).

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis 1b posits that the prototype for a middle/upper-class person is viewed as White (vs. Black). When people think of a middle/upper-class person's race, they are more likely to think of the person as White (vs. Black). As shown in Table 3, there was no significant difference in the participants' response times to pairings of middle/upper-class text with White women's faces than pairing of middle/upper-class text with Black women's faces (($M_{D\text{-}score}$ = -.04, $SD_{D\text{-}score}$ = .41, d = -.09, not significantly different from zero, t(299) = -1.56, p = *ns*, 95% $CI_{D\text{-}score}$ [-.08, .01]). Although the effect was not significant, the negative mean D-score suggested a trend of Black women being more associated with the middle/upper class than White women. Over half of the participants (54.3%) implicitly associated Black (vs. White) women with middle/upper class (see Figure 7 for the distribution). Therefore, hypothesis 1b was not supported.

Supplemental Analysis with Explicit Measures

As presented in Table 4, for the *explicit middle/upper-class-race association*, participants' mean responses were somewhat above the mid-point (M = 3.69, SD = .73). Meaning that when the participants were directly asked about the association of the middle/upper-class and race, they reported that they associate the middle/upper class slightly more with White (vs. Black) women. As for the *explicit lower/working-class-race association*, the participants' mean responses (M = 2.58, SD = .68) suggest they somewhat associate lower/working-class Black (vs. White) women.

Study 1b Discussion

The goal of Study 1b was to test the association between social class and race. Hypothesis 1b posits that the prototype for a middle/upper-class person is viewed as White (vs. Black). The participants did not respond significantly faster to the White (vs. Black) and middle/upper-class conditions. Suggesting that they did not implicitly associate a middle/upper-class person with a White (or a Black) woman. However, the trend revealed that participants responded slightly faster to the Black (vs. White) and middle/upper-class conditions, albeit nonsignificant. Yet, when the participants were directly asked about the association of social class and race, they responded that they somewhat associate White (vs. Black) women with the middle/upper class. In contrast, when asked about the association of race and the lower/working class, the pattern was reversed.

Study 1c Method: Social Class and Leadership Level IAT

Participants and Procedure

A U. S. sample of participants (at least 18 years old) was recruited from Prolific (www.prolific.co) to participate in Study 1c in exchange for $2.00. A total of 302 participants were recruited to participate in Study 1c, of which 11 were dropped from the analysis due to the excessive speed of their responses (i.e., > 10 *seconds* or over 10% of responses < 300 *milliseconds*). The final sample of 291 was 52.2% female, and the participants were primarily White (75.6%; 12.7% Black; 6.2% Hispanic/Latino; 6.1% Asian/Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander; 5.5% Native American/Alaska Native, Biracial, and other). The average age of the participants was 46.02 (*SD* = 16.43). Over half (55.5%) of the participants had at least a bachelor's degree. In addition, the sample leaned towards political liberalism (*M* = 4.83, *SD* = 2.87, on an 11-point scale of 1 = *extremely liberal* and 11 = *extremely conservative*).

The same procedure from Studies 1a and 1b was used in Study 1c. However, in Study 1c, participants sorted titles of leaders who were either senior leaders (e.g., "Executive") or first-level leaders (e.g., "Front-line Manager") to be paired with words that were indicative of class –

either upper/middle-class words (e.g., “Elite”) or working/lower-class words (e.g., “Common”). The same stimuli (leader words in Study 1a; social class words in Study 1b) were used in Study 1c. Reference Appendix A for Stimuli materials.

Supplemental Explicit Measures

Explicit middle/upper class-leader association

Participants were asked to indicate, “How much do you associate the **middle/upper class** with senior-level leaders vs. first-level leaders?” The participants responded to this question using a 5-point scale (1 = strongly senior-level leaders, 2 = somewhat senior-level leaders, 3 = neither senior-level leaders nor first-level leaders, 4 = somewhat first-level leaders, 5 = strongly first-level leaders). The scale was reverse-coded for analysis so that higher (lower) scores reflect that the participants associate the middle/upper-class more with senior-level leaders (first-level leaders).

Explicit lower/working class-leader association

Participants were asked to indicate, “How much do you associate the **lower/working class** with senior-level leaders vs. first-level leaders?” The participants responded to this question using a 5-point scale (1 = strongly senior-level leaders, 2 = somewhat senior-level leaders, 3 = neither senior-level leaders nor first-level leaders, 4 = somewhat first-level leaders, 5 = strongly first-level leaders). The scale was reverse-coded for analysis so that higher (lower) scores reflect that the participants associate the lower/working-class more with senior-level leaders (first-level leaders).

Study 1c Analysis

As in Studies 1a and 1b, the data from Qualtrics was transferred to Carpenter et al.’s (2019) iatgen internet tool for data cleaning and calculating the D-scores. Positive difference scores represent faster responses to pairings that generally have a stronger association (e.g., Senior-level leaders and middle/upper-class; First-level leaders and lower/working-class), a

negative difference score represents faster responses to pairings that generally have a weaker association (e.g., First-level leaders and middle/upper-class; Senior-level leaders and lower/working-class), and a zero-difference score represents no response time differences (e.g., Carpenter et al., 2019; Greenwald et al., 2003). The calculated D-scores were then downloaded from the iatgen tool in a format that could be transferred to SPSS (v. 26) to perform descriptive statistical analysis.

Study 1c Results

Descriptive Statistics

Table 5 shows the descriptive statistics and correlations. As with the prior IAT studies, the correlations among the IAT D-scores and explicit measures were examined before testing the hypothesis and supplemental analysis. The IAT D-score significantly and positively correlates with the explicit middle/upper class-leader association (r = .16, $p < .01$), albeit this is a relatively small effect size ($r \sim .1$; per Cohen, 1998). The D-score does not significantly correlate with the lower/working class-leader association ($r = -.08$, $p = ns$). The explicit measures strongly and negatively correlate ($r = -.54$, $p < .01$).

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis 1c posits that the prototype for the senior leadership role is viewed as having a middle/upper- (vs. lower/working-) social class background. Participants tended to respond significantly faster to associations of the middle/upper class with senior-level leaders than to associations of the lower/working class with senior-level leaders ($M_{D\text{-}score} = 0.87$, $SD_{D\text{-}score} = 0.37$, $d = 2.34$, $t(290) = 39.84$, $p < .001$, 95% $CI_{D\text{-}score}$ [.83, .91]; see Table 3). Over ninety percent (97.3%) of the participants' calculated D-score was positive (see Figure 8 for the distribution). Hence, hypothesis 1c was supported.

Supplemental Analysis with Explicit Measures

As shown in Table 5, for the *explicit middle/upper class-leader association*, participants' mean responses were somewhat above the mid-point (M = 3.60, SD = 1.20), suggesting they do associate the middle/upper class with senior leaders. As for the *explicit lower/working class-leader association*, the participants' mean responses (M = 2.21, SD = .97) suggest they are somewhat more likely to associate the lower/working-class more with first-level leaders.

Study 1c Discussion

The aim of Study 1c was to test the association between social class and leadership. Specifically, this study tested hypothesis 1c, which posits that the prototype for the senior leadership role is viewed as having a middle/upper- (vs. lower/working-) social class background. Participants implicitly and explicitly associated the middle/upper class with senior leadership. Importantly, this finding reveals that a higher social class is an attribute of the senior leader prototype. As the organizational rank increases, social class may become more of a qualifier of who has access to leadership. According to leader categorization theory (LCT; Lord et al., 1982, 1984), those most similar to leader prototypes are more likely to be classified as a leader (vs. non-leader). Hence, those perceived as having a lower (vs. higher) social class background may be more likely classified as a non-leader (vs. leader).

CHAPTER 6

STUDY 2 FIRST-LEVEL LEADER (EXPERIMENT)

Participants and Procedure

Study 2 received institutional review board approval under protocol # 2022-0551 ("Leader Selections") from the University of Texas at Arlington. In Study 2, 106 undergraduate students from two public universities in the United States' southern region participated virtually in a between-subjects experiment in exchange for extra credit. Eight students failed the manipulation check and were omitted, so the final sample included 98 students. The participants' average age was 21.91 years (*SD* = 5.25), and 52.0% were female. The racial-ethnic demographics of participants were 52.0% Hispanic/Latino, 48.0% White, 21.4% Asian, 8.2% Black/African American, 4.1% American Indian/Alaska Native, 2.0% Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and 4.1% biracial, other, or chose not to identify. Of this student sample, 12.2% were first years, 13.3% were second years, 39.8% were third years, and 34.7% were in their 4th year or more of college. The sample leaned slightly towards liberalism (*M* = 4.80, *SD* = 1.89, on a 10-point scale of 1 = *extremely liberal* and 10 = *extremely conservative*), and participants' perceived social class background at age 16 was on the mid-range of the social class status ladder (*M* = 4.97, *SD* = 1.6, on a 10-point scale of 1 = *lowest status* and 10 = *highest status*). Most participants (80.6%) grew up in a two-parent/caregiver household, of which the majority reported that both their primary (81.6%) and secondary (56.1%) parent/caregiver were employed.

Participants were randomly assigned to one of two conditions (Race: White = 0, Black = 1) in a between-subjects experiment. The participants were told that the study was about how leaders are selected. Before the start of the experimental scenario, participants were made aware that the next button was set on a delay to ensure they carefully read over the study materials. The participants were then instructed to imagine they were a leader of a student organization at their university. As a student leader, they were asked to evaluate applicants for a managerial role in

the university's student affairs organization. They were first tasked with reviewing the student affairs organizational chart (reference Appendix B) and a description of a first-level leader role (Assistant Director of Student Activities; reference Appendix C). They were then told that either Ebony Washington (Black condition) or Amy Becker (White condition) had applied for the Assistant Director of Student Activities position, and they were presented with her resume (reference Appendix D). The names of the candidates were chosen from Gaddis (2017) to signal the applicant's race. For the participants' reference, they were again provided with the student affairs organizational chart and the Assistant Director of Student Activities job description. They were asked to take a few minutes to carefully review Ebony Washington's (or Amy Becker's) resume and supplemental information. Next, they continued with the scenario and read that they decided to Google Ebony Washington (Amy Becker) to see what other information they could find that might help their evaluation. Then, Ebony's (Amy's) LinkedIn profile popped up. The participants were presented with a photo of Ebony (Amy) and her profile. In addition to the applicant's name, photos of the applicant were used to manipulate race. The photos used in this study were obtained from the Chicago Face Database (CFD) (www.chicagofaces.org; Ma et al., 2015). CFD includes photos of men and women from various races and ethnicities, ages 17 to 65, and subjective norming data is provided for each photo (Ma et al., 2015). Pre-tested pictures for this study were chosen based on race probability (e.g., ranging from 0 to 1, with numbers closer to 1 representing a higher probability of being rated the actual race of the model in the photo), age ranging from 30 to 40 years old, attractiveness, dominance, and happiness ratings. A graphic designer photo-shopped the photos to dress the women in business suits and everyday make-up. Photos of each applicant are included in Appendix E. After reviewing Ebony's (Amy's) LinkedIn profile, participants responded to study measures and a manipulation check.

Measures

Unless otherwise specified, a 7-point Likert scale (1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*) was used to measure the items on each scale. Items were averaged to form scale scores. All measures are shown in Appendix G.

Social Dominance Orientation (SDO)

SDO was measured using Pratto et al.'s (1994) 16-item scale. Participants responded to statements on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = *very negative* to 7 = *very positive*). Example items include, "Some groups of people are simply inferior to other groups," "In getting what you want, it is sometimes necessary to use force against other groups," and "It's OK if some groups have more of a chance in life than others" (α = .91).

Perceived Dominance

Perceived dominance was measured using Ma et al.'s (2022) five-item dominant-agency scale. Participants indicated their level of agreement that each item was characteristic of [Ebony Washington] or [Amy Becker]. Items have an adjective or behavior along with its definition. Items include "Aggressive: Vigorously commanding over others," "Dominant: Exerting authority over others," "Controlling: Determining the behaviors of others," "Forceful: Characterized as vigorous strength," and "Manipulative: Affecting the behavior of others for one's own purpose" (α = .88).

Leader Fit

Leader fit was assessed using items adapted from Kristof-Brown's (2000) three-item person-job fit scale and two items used by Sy et al. (2010). Example items include, "I am confident this applicant is qualified for the job," "Overall employees will think this candidate is qualified," and "This job is a good fit for [Ebony Washington] or [Amy Becker]" (α = .93).

Additional Measures

Recommendation to Interview

The recommendation to interview was assessed using two items adapted from Higgins and Judge (2004) and one item adapted from Uhlmann and Cohen (2007). Items included were, "Overall, I would evaluate this candidate positively," I would recommend extending an interview to this applicant," and "I believe the applicant would be successful as an Assistant Director of Student Activities" ($\alpha = .88$).

Salary Recommendation

Participants' salary recommendation was assessed by asking, "If she is hired, please recommend a starting salary for [Ebony Washington] or [Amy Becker]." Participants' salary recommendations were captured using a sliding scale from $45,000 to $60,000 (Salary range listed on the Assistant Director of Student Activities job description in Appendix C).

Candidate Ratings (Likeable, Competence, Hireability)

Likeable (three items), competence (two items), and hireability (three items) were assessed using adapted measures from Rudman et al. (2012). Example items include, "I like this candidate" (Likeability: $\alpha = .82$), "Applicant strikes me as competent" (Competent: $r = .67$), and "I would personally hire this candidate" (Hireability: $\alpha = .81$).

Study 2 Analysis

Analyses were conducted using SPSS (v. 26). Missing data were addressed by listwise deletion, the default in SPSS. Listwise deletion removes cases missing values in the specified variables included in the analysis. Hierarchical regression analysis was used to examine the relationship among race, SDO, dominance, and leader fit. A series of regression steps were conducted using race as the independent variable, SDO (mean-centered) as the moderator, and perceptions of dominance and leader fit as the dependent variables. Hayes PROCESS macro (Hayes, 2013) models 4 and 7 were used to test for mediation and moderated mediation,

respectively. To construct a bias-corrected 95% confidence interval (CI) around the indirect effects, 5,000 bootstrapping iterations were used (Preacher & Hayes, 2008).

Study 2 Results

Manipulation Check

The race manipulation check was assessed by asking participants to indicate the race/ethnicity of [Ebony Washington] or [Amy Becker] using the following scale: 1 = White, 2 = Black or African American, 3 = American Indian or Alaska Native, 4 = Asian, 5 = Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, 6 = Hispanic or Latina. One participant in the Black (Ebony Washington) condition failed the manipulation check, as did seven participants in the White (Amy Becker) condition. These participants were dropped from the study analysis. The final sample included (n = 50) in the Black condition and (n = 48) in the White condition.

Descriptive Statistics

Provided in Table 6 are the descriptive statistics, correlations, and reliabilities for Study 2 variables. Before testing Study 2's hypotheses, the correlations between the predictor and dependent variables were examined. As shown in Table 6, White is coded as zero, and Black is coded as one. Race is not significantly correlated with perceptions of dominance (r = -.07, p = *ns*) or leader fit (r = -.03, p = *ns*). SDO is also not significantly correlated with perceptions of dominance (r = .20, p = *ns*); however, it is significantly and negatively correlated with perceptions of leader fit (r = -.24, $p < .05$). There is also a strong negative correlation between perceptions of dominance and leader fit (r = -.27, $p < .01$).

Hypotheses Testing

Hierarchical regression analysis was used to test hypotheses 2, 3, and 8. Hypothesis 2 posits that a White woman applicant will be rated higher in dominance than a Black woman applicant (e.g., exaggerated dominance ratings for a White woman applicant; Rudman et al., 2012). Table 7 shows no significant difference in participants' perceptions of dominance for the

Black (vs. White) woman candidate (β = -.07, *p* = *ns*). Thus, hypothesis 2 was not supported. Hypothesis 3 posits that a Black (relative to a White) woman applicant will be perceived as a better fit for a first-level leadership role. Table 7 shows no significant difference in perceptions of leader fit for the White (v. Black) woman applicant (β = -.03, *p* = *ns*). Therefore, hypothesis 3 was not supported. Hypothesis 8 posits that the effect of race on dominance perceptions will be attenuated among people lower (vs. higher) in SDO. The interactive effect of race and SDO on perceptions of dominance was not significant (β = -.00, *p* = *ns*; Reference Table 7). Therefore, hypothesis 8 was not supported.

Hypotheses 4 and 9 were tested using the Hayes PROCESS macro (Hayes, 2013), models 4 (mediation), and 7 (moderated mediation), respectively. The 95% CIs of the indirect effects were constructed using 5,000 bootstrap iterations (Preacher & Hayes, 2008). Hypothesis 4 posits that perceptions of dominance will mediate the relationship between race and leader fit for a first-level leadership role. The indirect effect of race on leader fit through dominance was not significant (IE = .04, 95% CI = [-.07, .19]; reference Table 8). Hence, hypothesis 4 was not supported. Hypothesis 9 posits that the indirect effect of race on leadership fit will be attenuated among people lower (vs. higher) in SDO. Since the prior hypotheses were not supported, as expected, hypothesis 9 was not supported either ((Lower SDO: IE = .05, 95% CI = [-.09, .20]; Higher SDO: IE = .06, 95% CI = [-.08, .25]).

Supplemental Analysis with Additional Measures

A MANOVA was conducted to examine the mean differences for recommendation to interview, recommended salary, likeability, perceived competence, and hireability between the Black and White woman applicant. The MANOVA indicated there were no significant racial differences (F (5, 92) = .61, $p < ns$, Hotelling's T^2 = .03, partial η^2 = .03) in participants' recommendation to interview (Black woman: M = 5.91, SD = .98 | White woman: M = 6.13, SD = .69), salary recommendation (Black woman: M = $52,139, SD = $3,929 | White woman: M =

$53,087 *SD* = $3,945), likeability (Black woman: *M* = 5.62, *SD* = .98 | White woman: *M* = 5.83, *SD* = .79), perceived competence (Black woman: *M* = 5.95, *SD* = .93 | White woman: *M* = 6.05, *SD* = .75), or hireability (Black woman: *M* = 5.75, *SD* = .80 | White woman: *M* = 5.80, *SD* = .81).

Study 2 Discussion

The aim of Study 2 was to examine the influence of a woman's race on perceptions of leadership fit for a first-level position. A Black (vs. White) woman applicant was hypothesized to be perceived as a better fit for a first-level leadership position, and this relationship was expected to be mediated by dominance proscription. It was also hypothesized that this relationship would be attenuated for people lower (vs. higher) on SDO. The hypothesized relationships were not significant. There was no significant difference in perceptions of a Black (or a White) woman's leadership fit at lower levels of the organizational hierarchy. Although Black women may not have to overcome the barrier of dominance proscription in being assessed for first-level leadership, they may face other obstacles, such as being a competitive threat. As for White women, much research has documented the barriers they face in accessing leadership (e.g., role congruity theory (RCT); Eagly & Karau, 2002; lack-of-fit model; Heilman, 1983; status incongruity hypothesis (SIH); Rudman et al., 2012).

CHAPTER 7

STUDY 3 SENIOR-LEVEL LEADER (EXPERIMENTAL CAUSAL CHAIN)

Study 3 uses an experimental causal chain to examine perceptions of leader fit for a senior-level leadership position. An experimental causal chain includes two experiments and is preferred when the mediator variable can be easily measured and manipulated (Spencer et al., 2005). Scholars have noted the need for leadership studies to use an experimental causal chain approach to understand causal relationships better (Podsakoff & Podsakoff, 2019). Study 3 comprises two experiments (Studies 3a and 3b). Both studies received institutional review board approval under protocol # 2022-0551 ("Leader Selections") from the University of Texas at Arlington. In the first study, the independent variable (race –Study 3a) is manipulated, SDO is a moderator, and the mediator is measured (perceived social class background). In the second study (Study 3b), the mediator is manipulated (perceived social class background), SDO is a moderator, and the dependent variable (leader fit) is measured. Manipulating the independent variable and mediator in separate studies allows for strong causal inferences of the IV's effect on the mediator and the mediator's effect on the DV, supporting a fully mediated model.

Study 3a Senior-Level Leadership Path (Manipulating Race – Independent Variable)

Participants and Procedure

In Study 3a, 107 undergraduate students from two public universities in an urban area of the southern United States participated virtually in a between-subjects experiment in exchange for extra credit. Five students failed the manipulation check and were omitted, so the final sample included 102 students. The participants' average age was 22.30 years (*SD* = 5.47), and 61.8% were female. Participants were 44.1% Hispanic/Latino, 39.2% White, 25.5% Asian, 11.8% Black/African American, 1.0% American Indian/Alaska Native, and 7.8% biracial, other, and chose not to identify. Of this student sample, 14.7% were first years, 13.7% were second years, 41.2% were third years, and 30.4% were in their 4th year or more of college. The sample

leaned slightly towards political liberalism (M = 4.51, *SD* = 1.75, on a 10-point scale of 1 = *extremely liberal* and 10 = *extremely conservative*), and perceived social class background at age 16 was on the lower to mid-range of the social class status ladder (*M* = 4.69, *SD* = 1.8, on a 10-point scale of 1 = *lowest status* and 10 = *highest status*). Most participants (75.5%) grew up in a two-parent household, of which the majority reported that their primary (72.5%) and secondary (57.8%) parent/caregiver were employed.

The procedure for Study 3a was the same as Study 2, except for the rank of the position. Participants were randomly assigned to one of two conditions (Race: White = 0, Black = 1) in a between-subjects experiment. They were tasked with evaluating a Black (or White) woman applicant for a Vice President of Student Affairs position. They were told that the study was about how leaders are selected. Before the experimental scenario began, the participants were informed that the next button was delayed to ensure they read the study materials carefully. The participants were instructed to imagine they were a leader of a student organization at their university. As a student leader, they were asked to evaluate applicants for managerial roles in the student affairs organization. They first reviewed the student affairs organizational chart (Appendix B) and then the senior-level leader role job description (Vice President of Student Affairs; reference Appendix C). They were then told that either Ebony Washington (Black condition) or Amy Becker (White condition) applied for the Vice President of Student Affairs position and were presented with her resume (reference Appendix D) along with the student affairs organizational chart and the job description for the Vice President of Student Affairs again as a reference. They were asked to take a few minutes to review Ebony Washington's (or Amy Becker's) resume and supplemental information. Next, they were told that they decided to Google Ebony Washington (or Amy Becker) to see what other information they could find about her that might help them in their evaluation. Then, Ebony's (Amy's) LinkedIn profile popped up, which included a photo of Ebony (Amy) and her profile. After reviewing Ebony's (Amy's)

LinkedIn profile, participants responded to the study's measures and manipulation check. The photos used in Study 3a were the same as in Study 2 (reference Appendix E).

Measures

Unless otherwise specified, a 7-point Likert scale (1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*) was used to measure the items on each scale. Items were averaged to form scale scores. All measures are shown in Appendix G.

Perceived Social Class Background (Perceived Social Class Rank)

Perceived social class background was measured using the MacArthur Scale of Subjective SES (Adler et al., 2000). Participants were asked to imagine a 10-rung ladder representing where people stand in American society. At the top of the ladder are the people who are best off—those who have the most money, most education, and the best jobs. At the bottom are the people who are worst off—who have the least money, least education and the worst job or no job. Participants were then asked to indicate where they thought [Ebony Washington or Amy Becker] household status was on this ladder when she was 16, with 1 representing the lowest rung and 10 representing the highest rung.

Social dominance orientation (SDO)

Participants completed the same 16-item SDO measure from Pratto et al. (1994) used in Study 2 (α = .90).

Additional Measures

Recommendation to Interview

The recommendation to interview was assessed using the same two items adapted from Higgins and Judge (2004) and one item adapted from Uhlmann and Cohen (2007) used in Study 2 (α = .84).

Salary Recommendation

Participants' salary recommendation was assessed by asking, "If she is hired, please recommend a starting salary for [Ebony Washington] or [Amy Becker]." Participants' salary recommendations were captured using a sliding scale from $122,000 to $183,000 (Salary range listed on the Vice President of Student Affairs job description in Appendix C).

Candidate Ratings (Likeable, Competence, Hireability)

Likeable (three-items; $\alpha = .80$), competence (two-items; $r = .71$), and hireability (three-items; $\alpha = .83$) were assessed using measures adapted from Rudman et al. (2012) as described in Study 2.

Study 3a Analysis

Analyses were conducted using SPSS (v. 26). Missing data were addressed using listwise deletion as described in Study 2. Hierarchical regression analysis was used to examine the relationship among race, SDO, and social class background. A series of regression steps were conducted using race as the independent variable, SDO (mean-centered) as the moderator, and social class background as the dependent variable.

Study 3a Results

Manipulation Check

Like Study 2, to assess whether the race manipulation was successful, participants were asked to indicate the race/ethnicity of [Ebony Washington or Amy Becker] using the following scale: 1 = White, 2 = Black or African American, 3 American Indian or Alaska Native, 4 = Asian, 5 = Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, 6 = Hispanic or Latina. Two participants in the Black (Ebony Washington) condition failed the manipulation check, and three in the White (Amy Becker) condition failed. These participants were dropped from the analysis. The final sample included ($n = 50$) in the Black condition and ($n = 52$) in the White condition.

Descriptive Statistics

Presented in Table 9 are the descriptive statistics, correlations, and reliabilities for Study 3a variables. Before testing the hypotheses, the correlations between the predictor and dependent variables were examined. As shown in Table 9, White is coded as zero, and Black is coded as one. There is a significant negative correlation between race and perception of social class background (r = -.23, p < .05). So, as social class background increases, it is more associated with the White (vs. Black) woman. The correlation between SDO and perception of social class background is not significant (r = .10, p = *ns*).

Hypotheses Testing

Hierarchical regression analysis was used to test hypotheses 5 and 10. Hypothesis 5 posits that a White woman applicant will be perceived as being from a higher social class background than a Black woman applicant. There was a significant difference in the participants' perception of social class background (β = -.23, p < .05; reference Table 10). A t-test (t(100) = 2.33, p < .05) indicated that a White woman applicant (M = 6.63, SD = 1.67) was perceived as being from a higher social class background than the Black woman applicant (M = 5.84, SD = 1.71). Therefore, hypothesis 5 was supported. Hypothesis 10 posits that the effect of race on perceptions of social class background becomes stronger as SDO increases. The interaction effect was not significant (β = .04, p = *ns*; reference Table 10).

Supplemental Analysis with Additional Measures

A MANOVA was conducted with the additional measures. The results indicated that there is a significant difference (F (5, 96) = 2.86, p < .05, Hotelling's T^2 = .15, partial η^2 = .13); however, upon examining the individual variables, the only significant result was in the recommendation to hire (F (1, 100) = 4.38, p < .05, partial η^2 = .04). Participants were more likely to recommend that the Black woman applicant (M = 6.03, SD = .83) be hired than the White woman applicant (M = 5.66, SD = .97). There were no significant differences between a

Black (and White) woman applicant in recommendations to interview (Black woman: *M* = 6.17, *SD* = .75 | White woman: *M* = 5.92, *SD* = .91), salary (Black woman: *M* = $149,945, *SD* = $16,242 | White woman: *M* = $146,564, *SD* = $12,936), likeability (Black woman: *M* = 5.83, *SD* = .85 | White woman: *M* = 5.65, *SD* = .89), or perceived competence (Black woman: *M* = 5.93, *SD* = 1.17 | White woman: *M* = 5.96, *SD* = .94).

Study 3b Senior-Level Leadership Path (Manipulating Social Class Background)

Participants and Procedure

In study 3b, 163 undergraduate students from three public and one private university in the southern United States participated virtually in a between-subjects experiment in exchange for extra credit. Sixty-three students failed the attention checks, so the final sample included 100 students. The participants' average age was 23.45 years (*SD* = 5.54), and 69.0% were female. The racial-ethnic demographics of the participants were 57.0% White, 41.0% Hispanic/Latino, 13.0% Asian, 9.0% Black/African American, 3.0% Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, 2.0% American Indian/Alaska Native, and 5.0% biracial, other, or chose not to identify. Of this sample, 6.0% were first years, 12.0% were second years, 43.0% were third years, and 39.0% were in the 4th year or more of college. Participants were politically moderate (*M* = 5.01, *SD* = 1.89, on a 10-point scale of 1 = *extremely liberal* and 10 = *extremely conservative*), and their perceived social class background at age 16 was slightly below the mid-range of the social class status ladder (*M* = 4.86, *SD* = 1.9, on a 10-point scale of 1 = *lowest status* and 10 = *highest status*). Most participants (68.0%) grew up in a two-parent household, of which the majority reported that their primary (70.0%) and secondary (54.0%) parent/caregiver were employed.

Participants were randomly assigned to one of two conditions (Social Class Background: Lower/Working class = 0, Middle/Upper-class = 1) in a between-subjects experiment and were told that this study was about how leaders are selected. As in the prior experiments, before the start of the scenario, participants were made aware that the next button on the screen was set on a

delay to ensure they carefully read over the materials. As in Study 3a, the participants were asked to imagine they were a leader of a student organization at their university. As a student leader, they were asked to evaluate applicants for managerial roles in the student affairs organization. They were tasked with reviewing the student affairs organizational chart (see Appendix B) and a senior leadership role job description (Vice President of Student Affairs—same as Study 3a; reference Appendix C). They were then told that a woman, M. J. Smith, had applied for the Vice President of Student Affairs position, and they were presented with her resume (reference Appendix F). The University Student Affairs organizational chart and job description were also presented again for participants' reference. They were asked to review M. J. Smith's resume and the supplemental information. They were also informed that they would be asked questions about M. J. Smith's education, experience, and hobbies.

In an effort not to signal the woman applicant's race, only her initials and last name were provided on the resume across social class conditions. However, to manipulate social class background across the two conditions, the applicant's education (e.g., "Southern Methodist University (SMU)" – middle/upper-class; "Texas A&M Commerce" – lower/working-class, work location (e.g., "Texas Christian University (TCU)" – middle/upper-class, "University of Texas at Tyler" – lower/working class), activities & interests (e.g., "President, National Association of Student Personnel Administrators" – middle/upper-class, "Member, Association of Student Personnel Administrators (Local Chapter)" – lower/working class), and hobbies (e.g., "Traveling and Yachting" – middle/upper-class, "Intramural sports at the local YMCA" – lower/working class) differed (e.g., Henderson, 2017). In addition, each applicant's resume mentioned an award that signified whether they were a legacy student in the middle/upper-class condition (****University Legacy Award** - *awarded to a family member of an influential SMU alumni*) or a first-generation student in the lower/working-class condition (****University First*

*Generation Scholarship Award***). After reviewing the applicant's resume, the participants responded to Study 3b's measures and manipulation check.

Measures

Unless otherwise specified, a 7-point Likert-type response scale (1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*) was used to measure the items in each scale. The items were averaged to form overall scales. The complete list of all measures is shown in Appendix G.

Social Dominance Orientation (SDO)

Participants completed the same 16-item SDO measure from Pratto et al. (1994) described in Study 2 (α = .93).

Leader fit

Leader fit was assessed using Kristof-Brown's (2000) three-item person-job fit scale and two items used in Sy et al. (2010) as described in Study 2 (α = .96).

Additional Measures

Recommendation to Interview

The recommendation to interview was assessed using the same two items adapted from Higgins and Judge (2004) and one item adapted from Uhlmann and Cohen (2007) as described in Study 2 (α = .86).

Salary Recommendation

Participants' salary recommendation was assessed by asking, "If she is hired, please recommend a starting salary for M. J. Smith. Like Study 3a, participants' salary recommendations were captured using a sliding scale from $122,000 to $183,000 (The salary range listed on the Vice President of Student Affairs job description in Appendix C).

Candidate Ratings (Likeable, Competence, Hireability)

Likeable (three items; α = .77), competence (two items; r = .51), and hireability (three items; α = .86) were assessed using the adapted measures from Rudman et al. (2012) as described in Study 2.

Study 3b Analysis

Analyses were conducted using SPSS (v. 26). Missing data were addressed using listwise deletion as described in Study 2. Hierarchical regression analysis was used to examine the relationship among social class background, SDO, and leader fit. A series of regression steps were conducted using social class background as the independent variable, SDO (mean-centered) as the moderator, and leader fit as the dependent variable.

Study 3b Results

Manipulation Check

The MacArthur Scale of Subjective SES (Adler et al., 2000) was used as a manipulation check for the social class background manipulation. Notably, the MacArthur Scale of Subjective SES (Adler et al., 2000) was used to evaluate social class background (perceived social class rank) as the dependent variable in Study 3a. Participants were asked to imagine a 10-rung ladder representing where people stand in American society. At the top of the ladder are the people who are best off—those who have the most money, most education, and the best jobs. At the bottom are the people who are worst off—who have the least money, least education and the worst job or no job. Participants were then asked to indicate where they thought M. J. Smith's household status was on this ladder when she was 16, with 1 representing the lowest rung and 10 representing the highest rung. A t-test ($t(98) = -5.26$, $p < .01$) indicated that ratings in the middle/upper-class background condition ($M = 7.40$, $SD = 1.64$) were significantly higher than the ratings in the lower/working class background condition ($M = 5.73$, $SD = 1.54$). The effect size was somewhat small, with a Cohen's d of .27 (Cohen, 1998). Therefore, the manipulation

was successful. The final sample included (n = 52) in the middle/upper-class condition and (n = 48) in the lower/working-class condition.

Descriptive Statistics

Table 11 shows the descriptive statistics, correlations, and reliabilities for Study 3b variables. The correlations between the predictor and dependent variables were examined before testing the hypotheses. As shown in Table 11, lower/working social class background is coded as zero, and middle/upper social class background is coded as one. Social class background is not significantly correlated with the perception of leader fit (r = .14, p = *ns*), nor is SDO (r = -.13, p = *ns*).

Hypotheses Testing

Hierarchical regression analysis was used to test hypotheses 6 and 11. Hypothesis 6 posits that a woman candidate perceived to be from a higher social class background will be viewed as a better fit for a senior leadership role than a woman candidate perceived to be from a lower social class background. Table 12 shows no significant difference in the participants' perception of leader fit (β = .14, p = *ns*). Therefore, hypothesis 6 was not supported; however, the non-significant trend was in the hypothesized direction. The woman applicant with a middle/upper-class background received was rated higher in leader fit (M = 5.93, SD = .90) than the woman applicant with a lower/working-class background (M = 5.65, SD = 1.15).

Hypothesis 11 posits that the positive effect of perceptions of social class background on leader fit becomes stronger as SDO increases. The interaction was significant (β = .33, p < .05; R^2 = .09, p < .05; ΔR^2 = .05, p < .05; reference Table 12). A simple slopes analysis was conducted (reference Figure 9). At higher levels of SDO, there is a significant positive effect of social class background on the perception of leader fit (higher SDO: b = .78, SE = .46, t-value = 2.69, p < .01), but the effect is nonsignificant for lower levels of SDO (lower SDO: b = -.12, SE = .28, t-value = -.40, p = *ns*). Individuals higher on SDO rated a woman perceived as having a

middle/upper-class background higher in leadership fit than a woman perceived as having a lower/working-class background. There was no significant difference in perception of leader fit based on a woman's perceived social class background from individuals lower on SDO.

Supplemental Analysis with Additional Measures

A MANOVA was conducted to assess social class differences in participants' ratings for a recommendation for an interview, salary, likeability, competence, and hireability. Findings reveal that there were no significant differences (F (5, 94) = 1.09, $p < ns$, Hotelling's T^2 = .06, partial η^2 = .06) in rating for recommendation to interview (middle/upper-class: M = 6.04, SD = .84 | lower/working-class: M = 5.90, SD = .83), salary (middle/upper-class: M = $147,387, SD = $14,797 | lower/working-class: M = $143,780, SD = $16,612), likeability (middle/upper-class: M = 5.79, SD = .84 | lower/working-class: M = 5.69, SD = .75), competence (middle/upper-class: M = 6.17, SD = .79 | lower/working-class: M = 5.86, SD = .82), and hireability (middle/upper-class: M = 5.81, SD = .90 | lower/working-class: M = 5.62, SD = 1.00).

Study 3 Discussion

Study 3a established that a White woman applicant is perceived as coming from a higher social class background than a Black woman applicant. However, the effect of race on perceived social class background did not significantly differ as a function of participants' SDO. Study 3b revealed that there was not a significant main effect of social class on leader fit perceptions. Individuals with higher SDO perceive that having a higher social class background is a better fit for senior leadership than having a lower-class background. In contrast, individuals lower in SDO had similar perceptions of leader fit regardless of social class background. In Study 4, an intervention is developed to mitigate the adverse interactive effect of social class background (due to race) and SDO on perceptions of senior leader fit.

CHAPTER 8

STUDY 4 SENIOR-LEVEL LEADER (INTERVENTION EXPERIMENT)

Participants and Procedure

Study 4 received institutional review board approval under protocol #2023-0208 ("Leader Selections") from the University of Texas at Arlington. In Study 4, undergraduate students from a university in the United States' southern region participated virtually in the between-subjects experiment for extra credit. Participants were randomly assigned to one of four conditions based on (Race: Black vs. White) and (Message: Directive vs. Non-directive). To be eligible to earn extra credit, the participants were required to complete Phase 1 and Phase 2 of this study, which were separated by approximately one week. They were informed that this study was about how leaders are selected in both parts.

A total of 251 participants completed the two phases of this study. Six students failed the race manipulation check and were omitted. The final sample included 245 students; the average age was 23.44 years (*SD* = 8.36), and 55.0% were female. The racial-ethnic demographics were 40.0% White, 38.4% Hispanic/Latino, 25.7% Asian, 12.2% Black/African American, 1.6% American Indian/Alaska Native, and 6.1% Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, biracial, other, or chose not to identify. Of this student sample, 12.2% were first years, 18.0% were second years, 39.2% were third years, and 30.7% were in their 4th year or more of college. The participants' political ideology on average was moderate (*M* = 5.09, *SD* = 1.72, on a 10-point scale of 1 = *extremely liberal* and 10 = *extremely conservative*), and their perceived social class background at age 16 was slightly below the mid-range of the social class status ladder (*M* = 4.82, *SD* = 1.9, on a 10-point scale of 1 = *lowest status* and 10 = *highest status*). Most participants (77.6%) grew up in a two-parent household, of which the majority reported that their primary (77.1%) and secondary (51.8%) parent/caregiver were employed.

In Phase 1, participants completed measures on SDO and demographics (age, race, gender, education, social class background, and political ideology). Participants also provided an identification code comprising their first and last name initials and birthdate [MMDDYY] (e.g., MW102793). The provided identification code matched participants' data gathered in Phase 1 with those gathered in Phase 2. Approximately one week after Phase 1, a link was sent to those who completed Phase 1 to participate in Phase 2 of this study.

In Phase 2, participants were randomly assigned to one of the four conditions: race (Black = 1 or White = 0) and message (Directive = 1 or Non-directive = 0). As in the prior experiments, the same experimental scenario was administered in which participants were asked to imagine they were a leader of a student organization at their university. As a student leader, they liaised between their student organization and the student affairs leadership team. This requires them to meet and work with student affairs leadership several times throughout the semester to get approval for and implement student activities and initiatives across campus. Since they frequently interact with student affairs, they are asked to provide feedback on applicants for managerial roles within student affairs as part of the search process.

Next, the participants were informed that the Student Affairs Vice President position was open and that they were asked to be on the search committee. Unlike the prior experiments, the participants then received an email from the University President that either gave a directive message on how to evaluate the applicant (i.e., match qualifications with job requirements) or a non-directive message about sharing their general thoughts about the applicant (i.e., we would like to know your opinion). See the text below for the directive and non-directive messages. Differences between the two conditions are bolded.

Directive Condition:

> *Thank you for serving on the Vice President of Student Affairs search committee. You are tasked with identifying the ideal candidate.* ***We expect you to give your final assessment of the following applicant based on the match between their work experiences and skills with the job description.***
>
> *T. L. Smith*
> *University President*

Non-Directive Condition:

> *Thank you for serving on the Vice President of Student Affairs search committee. You are tasked with identifying the ideal candidate.* ***Since you will often interact with the Vice President, we value your input. We would like to know your opinion of the following applicant.***
>
> *T. L. Smith*
> *University President*

Next, the participants were presented with the Vice President of Student Affairs job description and asked to take a few minutes to review it (Appendix C). Then, they were informed that a woman named [Ebony Washington or Amy Becker] had applied for the Vice President of Student Affairs position. They were presented with her resume (Appendix D) and asked to take a few minutes to review it. The job description and message were shown again for the participant's reference. They were then told that they decided to Google the applicant [Ebony Washington or Amy Becker] to see what other information they could find about her that might help with their evaluation. The applicant's LinkedIn profile, including her photo, popped up (Appendix E). The applicant photos were obtained from the Chicago Face Database (CFD; Ma et al., 2015), and their names were derived from Gaddis (2017), as in Studies 2 and 3a. After reviewing the applicant's profile, the participants responded to the measures and manipulation checks.

Measures (Phase 1)

Unless otherwise specified, a 7-point Likert-type response scale (1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*) was used to measure the items in each scale. The items were averaged to form overall scales. All measures are shown in Appendix G.

Social Dominance Orientation (SDO)

Participants completed the same 16-item SDO measure from Pratto et al. (1994) administered in Studies 2, 3a, and 3b (α = .89).

Measures (Phase 2)

Unless otherwise specified, a 7-point Likert-type response scale (1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*) was used to measure the items in each scale. The items were averaged to form overall scales. All measures are shown in Appendix G.

Perceived Social Class Background (Perceived Social Class Rank)

The identical MacArthur Scale of Subjective SES (Adler et al., 2000) administered in Studies 3a and 3b was used to assess participants' perception of Ebony Washington's or Amy Becker's social class background at 16.

Leader Fit

Leader fit was assessed using the same Kristof-Brown's (2000) three-item person-job fit scale and two items used in Sy et al. (2010) administered in Studies 2 and 3b (α = .91).

Additional Measures

Recommend to Interview

Recommend to interview was assessed using the same two items adapted from Higgins and Judge (2004) and one item adapted from Uhlmann and Cohen (2007) administered Studies 2, 3a, and 3b (α = .86).

Salary Recommendation

Participants' salary recommendation was assessed by asking the same question from Study 3a, "If she is hired, please recommend a starting salary for Ebony Washington or Amy Becker. Participants' salary recommendations were captured using a sliding scale from $122,000 to $183,000 (The salary range listed on the Vice President of Student Affairs job description in Appendix C).

Candidate Ratings (Likeable, Competence, Hireability)

Likeable (three items; $\alpha = .78$), competence (two items; $r = .46$, $p < .01$), and hireability (three items; $\alpha = .79$) were assessed using the same adapted measures from Rudman et al. (2012) administered Studies 2, 3a, and 3b.

Study 4 Analysis

Analyses were conducted using SPSS (v. 26). Missing data were addressed using listwise deletion as described in Study 2. Hierarchical regression analysis was used to examine the relationship among race, SDO (mean-centered), message manipulation, and social class background. Hayes PROCESS macro (Hayes, 2013) model 4 was used to test for mediation of social class background between race and leadership fit. To construct a bias-corrected 95% confidence interval (CI) around the indirect effects, 5,000 bootstrapping iterations were used (Preacher & Hayes, 2008).

Study 4 Results

Manipulation Checks

Race Manipulation Check

As in Studies 2 and 3a, participants were asked to indicate the race/ethnicity of [Ebony Washington] or [Amy Becker] using the following scale: 1 = White, 2 = Black or African American, 3 = American Indian or Alaska Native, 4 = Asian, 5 = Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, 6 = Hispanic or Latina. Two participants in the Black (Ebony Washington) condition failed the manipulation check, and four in the White (Amy Becker) condition failed. These participants were dropped from the Study analysis. The final sample included ($n = 125$) in the Black condition and ($n = 120$) in the White condition.

Message Manipulation Check

To assess whether the message manipulation was successful, participants were asked to respond to the following two items: “I received an email that told me to assess the applicant

based on the match between their work experiences and skills with the job description," and "I received an email that did not provide direction on how to assess the applicant." The second item was reversed-coded, and both were averaged to create a scale (r = .31, p < .01). Higher scores reflect that the participant received a directive on evaluating the applicant. A t-test indicated that the manipulation was successful, $t(243)$ = -3.57, p < .05. The effect size was medium, with a Cohen's d of .45 (Cohen, 1998). Participants in the directive condition (M = 5.53, SD = 1.28) were more likely to agree that they received instructions on how to evaluate the applicant than those in the non-directive condition (M = 4.90, SD = 1.45).

Descriptive Statistics

Table 13 shows the descriptive statistics, correlations, and reliabilities for Study 4 variables. The correlations between independent (race), moderators (SDO and message manipulation), and dependent (perception of social class background and leader fit) variables were examined before testing the hypotheses. Race (White = 0, Black = 1) significantly and negatively correlates with the perception of social class background (r = -.22, p < .01). Participants were more likely to perceive a White woman candidate as having a higher social class background than the Black woman candidate. Perception of leader fit does not correlate with race (r = -.07, p = *ns*), the perception of social class background (r = .09, p = *ns*), or the message manipulation (Non-directive = 0, Directive = 1; r = .04, p = *ns*); however, it significantly and negatively correlates SDO (r = -.29, p < .01).

Hypotheses Testing

Hierarchical regression analysis was used to test hypotheses 5, 10, and 12, and Hayes PROCESS Macro (Hayes, 2013) model 4 was used to test Hypothesis 7. Hypothesis 5 posits that a White woman applicant will be perceived as being from a higher social class background than a Black woman applicant. As presented in Table 14, there was a significant difference in the participants' perception of social class background (β = -.22, p < .01). A t-test ($t(243)$ = 3.52, p <

.01) indicated that a White woman applicant (*M* = 6.82, *SD* = 1.50) was perceived as being from a higher social class background than the Black woman applicant (*M* = 6.16, *SD* = 1.43). Therefore, hypothesis 5 was supported. Hypothesis 5 was also supported in Study 3a. Hypothesis 10 posits that the effect of race on perceptions of social class background becomes stronger as SDO increases. There were no significant differences in the participants' perception of social class background (β = .02, *p* = *ns*; reference Table 14). Therefore, like Study 3a, hypothesis 10 was not supported. Hypothesis 12 posits that the stronger effect of race on the perception of social class background as SDO increases will be attenuated for those given (vs. not given) a directive to focus on specific criteria by a person in authority. As presented in step 7 of Table 14, the three-way interaction between the perception of race, SDO, and the message manipulation on the perception of social class background was not significant (β = .15, *p* = *ns*). Therefore, hypothesis 12 was not supported.

Hayes PROCESS macro (Hayes, 2013) model 4 was used to test hypothesis 7. The 95% CIs of the indirect effects were constructed using 5,000 bootstrap iterations (Preacher & Hayes, 2008). Hypothesis 7 posits that perceptions of social class background will mediate the relationship between race and leader fit for a senior-level leadership role. The indirect effect of race on leader fit through social class background was not significant (IE = -.04, 95% CI = [-.12, .03]; reference Table 15).

Supplemental Analysis with Additional Measures

A MANOVA was conducted with the additional measures. The results indicated there were no significant differences (*F* (5, 239) = .47, *p* < *ns*, Hotelling's T^2 = .01, partial η^2 = .01) between a Black (and White) woman applicant in recommendations to interview (Black woman: *M* = 6.44, *SD* = .79 | White woman: *M* = 6.51, *SD* = .67), salary (Black woman: *M* = $147,607, *SD* = $15,600 | White woman: *M* = $146,327, *SD* = $13,741), likeability (Black woman: *M* = 5.85, *SD* = .86 | White woman: *M* = 5.91, *SD* = .87), perceived competence (Black woman: *M* =

6.11, *SD* = .83 | White woman: *M* = 6.15, *SD* = .82), or recommendation to hire ((Black woman: *M* = 6.01, *SD* = .77 | White woman: *M* = 6.01, *SD* = .87).

Study 4 Discussion

The purpose of Study 4 was to test an intervention that was predicted to attenuate the strong positive effect of race on the perception of social class background as SDO increases. Drawing from Umphress et al. (2008), participants were either given a directive from an authority figure (i.e., University President) to focus on an applicant's qualifications or not given a directive (i.e., asked their opinion of the applicant). The three-way interaction of race, SDO, and intervention on the perception of the social class background was not significant. However, there was a significant main effect of race on the perception of social class background. The White (vs. Black) woman candidate was perceived as having a significantly higher social class background. Unlike Umphress et al. (2008), a directive by an authority figure to focus on specific criteria was not effective in this present study. One possibility for the difference in findings is that participants in this study were given a broad directive from an authority figure to focus on a match between an applicant's qualifications and the job requirements, whereas Umphress et al.'s (2008) directive from an authority asked participants to focus on more specific performance criteria (i.e., GPA, leadership aptitude score). Another possibility is that in Umphress et al.'s (2008) study, participants believed they were selecting teammates for an activity in which they would be financially rewarded based on the team's performance. Participants were incentivized to pick team members that would help them achieve their objectives. Further experimentation should be conducted in which the directive is more specific. In addition, future research might consider if incentivizing evaluators affects their assessment of leader fit when given a directive.

CHAPTER 9

GENERAL DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Research suggests evaluators may prefer Whites in leadership roles (see Avery et al., 2023 review; Knight et al., 2003; Petsko & Rosette, 2023; Rosette et al., 2008; Sy et al., 2019), but this research has primarily examined male targets. However, research using the intersectionality perspective (Crenshaw, 1989) to study race- and gender-based differences in leadership emergence has revealed a puzzling finding inconsistent with macro-level patterns. Black (vs. White) women are given more leeway to be dominant and assert themselves in ways consistent with stereotypical masculine leader prototypes (e.g., Livingston et al., 2012; Rosette et al., 2016). Theoretically, Black (vs. White) women's dominant behavioral leeway suggests they should be perceived as a better fit and ultimately more likely to be selected for senior leadership positions. Yet, in reality, White (not Black) women are more likely to be selected for top leadership roles. The inconsistency between research and reality suggests that other race-specific barriers overpower Black women's proscribed dominance leeway as the organizational hierarchy increases.

Drawing from the model of stereotyping through associated and intersectional categories (MOSAIC; Hall et al., 2019), this present research investigated why race influences leader fit perceptions of Black (vs. White) women for first- (and senior-) level leadership roles. I theorized that dominance is central to the first-level leader prototype. However, social class background becomes a more salient leadership attribute as the organizational rank increases. Since Black women are less proscribed dominance, I posited that Black (vs. White) women would be perceived to be a better fit for first-level leadership roles and that perceptions of dominance would mediate this relationship. However, as White women are more likely to be perceived as having higher social class origins, I also posited that a White (vs. Black) woman would be

perceived to be a better fit for senior leadership and that perceptions of social class background would mediate this relationship.

This research also examined how the extent of one's beliefs about group-based inequities (social dominance orientation (SDO); Pratto et al., 1994) moderates the relationship between race, dominance, social class background, and perceptions of leader fit. More specifically, I argued that perceivers lower (vs. higher) in SDO might not strongly endorse gender and racial stereotypes. Hence, they may rate a Black and White woman similarly in dominance ratings and perceptions of first-level leader fit. However, at more senior levels of leadership, those higher (vs. lower) in SDO might strongly perceive that Whites (not Blacks) have higher social class origins and are the best match for senior leadership. Lastly, drawing from Umphress et al. (2008), I adapted their directive from an authority figure intervention. I hypothesized that the stronger effect of race on the perception of social class background as SDO increases would be attenuated for those given a directive to focus on specific criteria compared to those not given a directive.

The hypothesized relationships were largely unsupported across four studies (Study 1 – three implicit association tests; Studies 2 to 4 – experiments) (see Table 1). However, an implicit association test revealed a significant association between the middle/upper class and senior leadership (*Hypothesis 1c*). Additionally, results from the experimental causal chain revealed that a White (vs. Black) woman candidate is viewed as having a higher-class background (*Hypothesis 5*) and that the positive effect of perceptions of social class background on leader fit becomes stronger as SDO increases (*Hypothesis 11*). These significant findings offer insights into future directions of inquiry, as discussed further below.

Theoretical Implications and Future Directions

This present research provides evidence both implicitly (i.e., an IAT) and explicitly (i.e., directly asked) that people characterize the middle/upper-class (vs. lower/working class) as an

attribute of the senior leader prototype. Prior leadership theories (e.g., leadership categorization theory (LCT); Lord et al., 1982, 1984; lack-of-fit model; Heilman, 1983; SIH, Rudman et al., 2012) have primarily focused on race ("being White"; Rosette et al., 2008; Petsko & Rosette; 2023) and agentic attributes (e.g., competence, dominance) as characteristics of the leader prototype. However, this is the first study I am aware of that theoretically and empirically tests the association of social class with the senior leader prototype. Compared to other characteristics (e.g., race, gender), it is still unclear if having a higher social class background is more central to the senior-level leader prototype than other characteristics. Future research should examine how much variance of the senior leader prototype is explained by social class background.

Notably, the association between social class and leadership may partly explain why people from higher class origins are more likely to be given opportunities to speak up (e.g., Martin & Harrison, 2022) and emerge as senior leaders (e.g., Ingram & Oh, 2022). In this research, participants higher (vs. lower) in SDO perceived a woman from a higher (vs. lower) social class background as more of a fit for senior leadership. When participants were directly asked about race-social class associations, they associated the middle/upper class more with White (vs. Black). Similarly, when race was manipulated in two experiments, the White (vs. Black) woman was perceived to be from a significantly higher social class background. Together, these findings provide evidence that White (vs. Black) women are perceived as being from a higher social class. While the studies presented did not find significant racial differences in senior leader fit perceptions, macro-level patterns reveal that White (not Black) women are more likely to progress to higher levels of leadership. So, in reality, Blackness' association with the lower class may hinder Black women's progression into top leadership positions. Evaluators may perceive that Black (vs. White) women may not understand the higher class norms and thus cannot perform well at senior levels of the organization. Future research should examine how

and under what conditions race-class associations influence the leadership selection of Black women and other women of color.

Lastly, although I theorized racial differences in leadership fit perceptions of White (vs. Black) women based on the organization rank, I did not directly test this due to the study design limitations. I primarily focused on testing the mechanisms (dominance for first-level leadership and social class for senior-level leadership) to explain why there would be racial differences in evaluations at each level of leadership. Nevertheless, the results reveal that race and leadership level are associated with social class. These findings suggest that multiple intersectional and associated categories may be acting simultaneously. For example, suppose a White (vs. Black) woman senior leader is being evaluated for an executive position. The White woman's race and title might activate upper-class associated categories. According to MOSAIC, evaluators' standards used in the evaluation of the White woman will be shaped by the integration of feminine (foundational category), masculine (race-upper-class associated category), and masculine (senior leader-upper class associated category). The stereotype content of the White woman might be double-diluted feminine. For the Black woman, her Black race might activate man and lower class associated categories and her title might activate the upper class associated category. MOSAIC would suggest that evaluators' standards used in the evaluation of the Black woman will be shaped by the integration of feminine (foundational category), masculine (race-man associated category), feminine (race-lower class associated category), and masculine (senior leader-upper-class associated category) stereotype content. The stereotype content of the Black woman might be diluted feminine. Thus, in evaluative comparisons, evaluators may have an even higher tolerance for dominance and lower expectation for communality from a White (vs. Black) woman. As the organization increases, evaluators will be even more accepting of dominance and have less of an expectation of nice and friendly behavior of a White (vs. a Black) woman. Future research should consider extending MOSAIC (Hall et al., 2019) by testing the

interaction of race and leadership level on leadership fit perceptions of women. This might provide insights into how multiple intersectional and associated categories simultaneously affect evaluations of women leaders.

Practical Implications

The research presented highlights the association between middle/upper-class and senior leadership. Research suggests, and empirical evidence supports, that those most similar to leader prototypes are more likely to be categorized as a leader (vs. non-leader) (e.g., Lord et al., 1982; Lord et al., 1984; Rosette et al., 2008). Thus, evaluators may be more apt to classify Black women, and perhaps other women of color, as a non-leader (vs. a leader) due to the association of their race with the lower-class link and the upper-class association with senior leadership roles. Importantly, perceptions of leader fit may predict who is recommended for an interview or hire (Cable & Judge, 1997; Kristoff-Brown, 2000; Tsai et al., 2011). As such, the findings have practical implications for organizations. One way evaluators may assess leadership fit is by examining social class markers on candidate resumes (e.g., name, school, leisure activities; Henderson, 2017; Rivera et al., 2012). Organizations that remove such indicators from candidates' resumes may help evaluators focus on the fit between candidates' core competencies and the job requirements.

Alternatively, organizations could train their evaluators (e.g., hiring managers, HR managers) to be aware of the pro-middle/upper-class and senior leadership link and potential outcomes in leader-fit perceptions. A training framework that could be potentially useful is the prejudice habit-breaking framework developed by Devine and colleagues (e.g., Devine et al., 2012). The model suggests implicit associations are similar to deeply ingrained habits learned through socialization. Thus, the prejudice habit-breaking framework posits that implicit associations can be broken through the combination of 1) making people aware of the bias in which the context is activated, 2) concern for the consequences of that bias, and 3) applying

strategies to reduce the bias. Devine et al. (2012) conducted a three-month longitudinal experimental study in which they developed an education (e.g., formation and consequences of implicit biases) and training (e.g., implicit bias strategies – envision counter stereotypical exemplars) intervention. Participants in the intervention group (relative to participants in the non-intervention group) showed a significantly greater reduction in implicit racial bias.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

While this research offers insights into theoretical and practical implications, it also has limitations that should be addressed in future research. First, in line with prior research (e.g., Livingston et al., 2012; Rosette et al., 2016), it was theorized that Black (vs. White) women have dominance leeway. However, counter to prior research, there were no significant explicit differences in dominance ratings. Additionally, there were no significant differences in perceptions of first-level leader fit. One possibility for these findings is that unlike prior studies (e.g., Rosette et al., 2016), participants were asked about *their* level of agreement that dominance was characteristic of a Black (or White) woman candidate. In contrast, in prior research, participants were asked about *society's* stereotypes or *people's* perceptions of Black (and White) women (Ghavami & Peplau, 2012; Landrine et al., 1985; Rosette et al., 2016). For example, Ghavami and Peplau (2012) asked participants to list cultural stereotypes describing social groups (e.g., White women, Black women) that people generally hold about these groups, not based on the participants' personal beliefs. Notably, the participants in the present study attend universities that allow them to interact more frequently with people from different racial backgrounds. Having interactions with people from different racial backgrounds may reduce the societal stereotypical dominant proscription of Black (and White) women. Scholars have theorized, and empirical evidence supports, that having cross-racial friendships can change a person's beliefs about race in society as well as increase perspective-taking (e.g., Gurin, 1999; Pettigrew, 1997, 1998; Ragins & Ehrhardt, 2021). Future research might consider testing how

frequent interactions (vs. less frequent interactions) with racially dissimilar others might influence dominance proscription evaluations.

Secondly, this research tests the MOSAIC theoretical framework in the context of evaluating women for first- (and senior-) level leadership. It was theorized that at the first level of leadership, race-gender links are salient; however, the emergence of class in the senior leader prototype may increase the prominence of the race-class association of Black (and White) women in leadership evaluations. It was hypothesized that the prototype for a middle/upper-class person is viewed as White (vs. Black). However, an implicit association test showed no significant differences in class perceptions between Black and White women. One possibility for the nonsignificant finding with the race-class IAT is that the photos obtained from the Chicago Face Database (CFD; Ma et al., 2015) were images of Black and White women in grey t-shirts. Given their casual presentation, the women in the photos could appear to have a lower-class status regardless of their race. Future research should consider using other indirect methods to capture participants' actual mental images (e.g., reverse-correlation method; Brown-Iannuzzi et al., 2017; Petsko & Rosette, 2023) of higher (vs. lower) social class images.

Furthermore, prior research has theorized that cultural capital may impede individuals from accessing leadership (e.g., Ellersgaard et al., 2013; Fitzsimmons & Callahan, 2020; Ingram & Oh, 2022). Similarly, the present research theorized that the Blackness-lower social class background link hinders Black women's leadership progression. It was argued that evaluators would perceive a Black (v. White) woman applicant as unfamiliar with upper-class norms and, therefore, unable to perform well in a senior leadership position. Upper-class norms are learned during early life socialization (i.e., cultural capital). The present research measured perceptions of one's social class status in childhood but did not directly measure cultural capital. Currently, no validated scale directly measures cultural capital. Future research should consider developing a cultural capital measure. Additionally, this research measured the perception of leader fit as the

dependent variable. Perceptions of leader fit may predict who gets selected for an interview or is recommended for hire (e.g., Cable & Judge, 1997; Kristof-Brown, 2000; Kristof-Brown et al., 2005; Rivera, 2012). In the present research, participants were not required to make a selection or hiring decision; however, this should be captured in future research.

Lastly, future research is needed to examine if findings from the experiments generalize in a real-world context. Participants were undergraduate students (Studies 2 to 4) who may have little experience in the hiring process. To overcome this limitation, a realistic scenario was used where student leaders are called upon to provide feedback on candidates within student affairs organizations. Moreover, while undergraduates may not be hiring managers, they are socialized by the same race and social class stereotypes that could influence organizational decision-makers. However, future research should consider using a field study with a non-student sample, such as human resource managers, who are often responsible for making interview and hiring decisions.

Conclusion

Black women's representation in the labor force is expected to increase by 9.3% over the next decade (Catalyst, 2021). Having access to leadership can be personally and professionally fulfilling for this growing population in the labor force. Notably, Black women are more likely to report intentions to leave their organizations (Catalyst, 2021) than any other group of women, suggesting their professional desires may not be fulfilled in the status quo workplace. Black women afforded equal access to senior leadership positions may be more committed to their employers. Thus, from a workforce sustainability perspective, it is important to study the race-specific obstacles that Black women face in accessing senior leadership within organizations.

This research examined why Black (vs. White) women have behavioral leeway to act as leaders yet are less likely to ascend the corporate ranks. In doing so, I theoretically explained and found evidence supporting an implicit association between the middle/upper class and the senior

leadership prototype. Additionally, this research tested the MOSAIC (Hall et al., 2019) framework by theorizing that the race-class link becomes more pronounced when evaluating Black (vs. White) women for senior leadership. Furthermore, I argued that integrating stereotype content from race-social class associations may alter evaluators' standards used in evaluations of White (vs. Black) women for senior leadership, rendering Black women less of a fit for senior leadership roles. An experimental causal chain revealed that Black (vs. White) women are perceived as having a lowering social class background (Study 3a); and that women from a lower social class background (vs. higher social class background) are perceived as a better fit for a senior leadership position, especially among those higher (vs. lower) in SDO (Study 3b). The research presented is an essential first step in unraveling the counterintuitive finding of Black women's dominance leeway and lack of representation in senior leadership.

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Table 1

Summary of Hypothesized Results

Hypotheses #	**Hypotheses**	**Study #**	**Result**
Hypothesis 1a	The prototype for the senior leadership role is viewed as White (vs. Black).	1a	Not supported
Hypothesis 1b	The prototype for a middle/upper-class person is viewed as White (vs. Black).	1b	Not supported
Hypothesis 1c	The prototype for the senior leadership role is viewed as having a middle/upper- (vs. lower/working-) social class background.	1c	Supported
Hypothesis 2	A White woman applicant will be rated higher in dominance than a Black woman applicant.	2	Not supported
Hypothesis 3	A Black (relative to a White) woman applicant will be perceived as a better fit for a first-level leadership role.	2	Not supported
Hypothesis 4	Perceptions of dominance will mediate the relationship between race and leader fit for a first-level leadership role.	2	Not supported
Hypothesis 5	A White woman applicant will be perceived as being from a higher social class background than a Black woman applicant.	3a, 4	Supported
Hypothesis 6	A woman applicant perceived to be from a higher social class background will be evaluated as a better fit for a senior leadership role than a woman applicant perceived to be from a lower social class background.	3b	Not supported
Hypothesis 7	Perceptions of social class background will mediate the relationship between race and leader fit for a senior-level leadership role.	4	Not supported
Hypothesis 8	The effect of race on dominance perceptions will be attenuated among people lower (vs. higher) in SDO.	2	Not supported
Hypothesis 9	The indirect effect of race on leadership fit will be attenuated among people lower (vs. higher) in SDO.	2	Not supported
Hypothesis 10	The effect of race on perceptions of social class background becomes stronger as SDO increases.	3a, 4	Not supported
Hypothesis 11	The positive effect of perceptions of social class background on leader fit becomes stronger as SDO increases.	3b	Supported
Hypothesis 12	There will be a three-way interaction effect of race, SDO, and an intervention on the perception of social class background. The stronger effect of race on the perception of social class background as SDO increases will be attenuated for those given a directive to focus on specific criteria compared to those not given a directive.	4	Not supported

Table 2

Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations (IAT – Study 1a)

Variables	*M*	*SD*	1	2	3
1. Explicit senior-level leadership-race association	3.42	0.70	(-)		
2. Explicit first-level leadership-race association	3.00	0.65	-.14*	(-)	
3. D-score	-0.15	0.36	.03	-.03	(-)

Note. N = 299. Explicit senior-level leadership-race association (reverse-coded), 1 = *strongly Black women* to 5 = *strongly White women*. Explicit first-level leadership-race association (reverse-coded), 1 = *strongly Black women* to 5 = *strongly White women*.

*$p < .05$.

**$p < .01$.

Table 3

Implicit Association Test (IAT) results from Study 1a to Study 1c

IAT	*n*	*M*	*SD*	95% CI	*t*	*d*	α
(1a) Race-Leadership Level	299	-0.15	0.36	[-.18, -.11]	-7.08**	-0.41	0.82
(1b) Social Class-Race	300	-0.04	0.41	[-.08, .01]	-1.56	-0.09	0.84
(1c) Social Class-Leadership Level	291	0.87	0.37	[.83, .91]	39.84**	2.34	0.87

*$p < .05$.

**$p < .01$.

Table 4

Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations (IAT – Study 1b)

Variables	*M*	*SD*	1	2	3
1. Explicit middle/upper-class-race association	3.69	0.73	(-)		
2. Explicit lower/working-class-race association	2.58	0.68	-.62**	(-)	
3. D-score	-0.04	0.41	.18**	-.18**	(-)

Note. N = 300. Explicit middle/upper class-race association (reverse-coded), 1 = *strongly Black women* to 5 = *strongly White women*.

Explicit lower/working class-race association(reverse-coded), 1 = *strongly Black women* to 5 = *strongly White women.*

*$p < .05$.

**$p < .01$.

Table 5

Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations (IAT – Study 1c)

Variables	*M*	*SD*	1	2	3
1. Explicit middle/upper class-leader association	3.60	1.20	(-)		
2. Explicit lower/working class-leader association	2.21	0.97	-0.54**	(-)	
3. D-score	0.87	0.37	.16**	-0.08	(-)

Note. N = 291. Explicit middle/upper class-leader association (reverse-coded), 1 = *strongly first-level leader* to 5 = *strongly senior-level leader*. Explicit lower/working class-leader association (reverse-coded), 1 = *strongly first-level leader* to 5 = *strongly senior-level leader*.

*$p < .05$.

**$p < .01$.

Table 6

Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations for Study 2 (First-Level Leader)

Variables	*M*	*SD*	1	2	3	4
1. Applicant race	0.51	0.50	–			
2. Participant SDO	2.43	1.00	.15	(.91)		
3. Perception of dominance	3.12	1.30	-.07	.20	(.88)	
4. Perception of leader fit	5.89	0.84	-.03	-.24*	-.27**	(.93)

Note. N = 98. Reliabilities are included along the diagonal. Applicant race is coded as 0 = White, 1 = Black.

*$p < .05$.

**$p < .01$.

Table 7

Regression Analysis (Study 2 – Hypotheses 2, 3, and 8)

	Perception of Dominance			Perception of Leader Fit
	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 1
Applicant Race (AR)	-.07 (.26)	-.10 (.26)	-.10 (.26)	-.03 (.17)
SDO (centered)		.21* (.13)	.22 (.19)	
AR × SDO (centered)			-.00 (.27)	
R^2	.01	.05	.05	.00
ΔR^2		.04*	.00	

Note. N = 98. Applicant race is coded as 0 = White, 1 = Black. Standardized beta coefficients are reported. Standard errors are reported in the parentheses.

*$p < .05$.

**$p < .01$.

Table 8

Bootstrap Analysis of the Indirect Effect of Race on Leader Fit of a First-Level Leader Role (Study 2 - Hypothesis 4)

	Coefficient	95% CI
Direct and indirect effects of applicant race on leader fit		
Race → Leader fit	-.15	[-.45, .20]
Race → Dominance → Leader fit	.04	[-.07, .19]

Note. $N = 97$. Standardized coefficients are reported. CI = confidence interval.

*$p < .05$.

**$p < .01$.

Table 9

Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations for Study 3a (Senior-Level Leader)

Variables	*M*	*SD*	1	2	3
1. Applicant race	0.49	0.50	–		
2. Participant SDO	2.43	0.95	.07	(.90)	
3. Perception of social class background	6.25	1.73	-.23*	.10	–

Note. N = 102. Reliabilities are included along the diagonal. Applicant race is coded as 0 = White, 1 = Black.

*$p < .05$.

**$p < .01$.

Table 10

Regression Analysis (Study 3a – Hypotheses 5 and 10) (Senior-Level Leader)

	Perception of Social Class Background		
	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
Applicant Race (AR)	-.23* (.33)	-.24* (.34)	-.24* (.34)
SDO (centered)		.12 (.18)	.09 (.27)
AR × SDO (centered)			.04 (.36)
R^2	.05*	.07*	.07
ΔR^2		.01	.00

Note. N = 102. Applicant race is coded as 0 = White, 1 = Black. Standardized beta coefficients are reported. Standard errors are reported in the parentheses.

*$p < .05$.

**$p < .01$.

Table 11

Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations for Study 3b (Senior-Level Leader)

Variables	*M*	*SD*	1	2	3
1. Perception of social class background	0.52	0.50	–		
2. Participant SDO	2.41	1.03	.14	(.93)	
3. Perception of leader fit	5.80	1.03	.14	-.13	(.96)

Note. $N = 100$. Reliabilities are included along the diagonal. Perception of social class background is coded as 0 = lower/working-class, 1 = middle/upper-class.

*$p < .05$.

**$p < .01$.

Table 12

Regression Analysis (Study 3b – Hypotheses 6 and 11) (Senior-Level Leader)

	Perception of Leader Fit		
	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
Perception of social class background	.14 (.21)	.16 (.21)	.16 (.20)
SDO (centered)		-.15 (.10)	-.40 **(.15)
Perception of social class background × SDO (centered)			.33* (.20)
R^2	.02	.04	.09*
ΔR^2		.02	.05*

Note. N = 100. Perception of social class background is coded as 0 = lower/working-class, 1 = middle/upper-class.

Standardized beta coefficients are reported. Standard errors are reported in the parentheses.

*$p < .05$.

**$p < .01$.

Table 13

Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations for Study 4 (Intervention Study)

Variables	*M*	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5
1. Applicant race	0.51	0.50	–				
2. Perception of social class background	6.48	1.49	-.22**	–			
3. Perceptions of leader fit	6.04	0.80	-.07	.09	(.91)		
4. Participant SDO	2.51	0.95	.03	.09	-.29**	(.89)	
5. Message manipulation	0.48	0.50	-.03	-.13*	.04	.03	–

Note. N = 245. Reliabilities are included along the diagonal. Applicant race is coded as 0 = White, 1 = Black. Message manipulation is coded as 0 = Non-Directive, 1 = Directive.

*$p < .05$.

**$p < .01$.

Table 14

Regression Analysis (Study 4 – Hypotheses 5, 10, and 12)

	Perception of Social Class Background						
	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Step 5	Step 6	Step7
Applicant Race (AR)	-.22** (.19)	-.22** (.19)	-.23** (.19)	-.23** (.19)	-.33** (.26)	-.32** (.26)	-.33** (.26)
SDO (centered)		.10 (.10)	.10 (.10)	.10 (.14)	.11 (.14)	.07 (.18)	.15 (.20)
Message			-.14* (.19)	-.14* (.19)	-.24** (.27)	-.24** (.27)	-.25** (.27)
Applicant Race (AR) × SDO (centered)				.02 (.20)	.01 (.20)	.01 (.20)	-.01 (.30)
Applicant Race (AR) × Message					.18 (.37)	.18 (.37)	.18 (.37)
SDO (centered) × Message						.05 (.20)	-.06 (.28)
Applicant Race (AR) × SDO (centered) × Message							.15 (.39)
R^2	.05**	.06**	.08**	.08**	.09**	.09**	.09**
ΔR^2		.01	.02*	.00	.01	.00	.00

Note. N = 245. Standardized beta coefficients are reported. Standard errors are reported in the parentheses. Applicant race is coded as 0 = White, 1 = Black. Message manipulation is coded as 0 = Non-Directive, 1 = Directive.

*$p < .05$.

**$p < .01$.

Table 15

Bootstrap Analysis of the Indirect Effect of Race on Leader Fit of a Senior-Level Leader Role (Study 4 - Hypothesis 7)

	Coefficient	95% CI
Direct and indirect effects of applicant race on leader fit		
Race → Leader fit	-.10	[-.29, .12]
Race → Social class background → Leader fit	-.04	[-.12, .03]

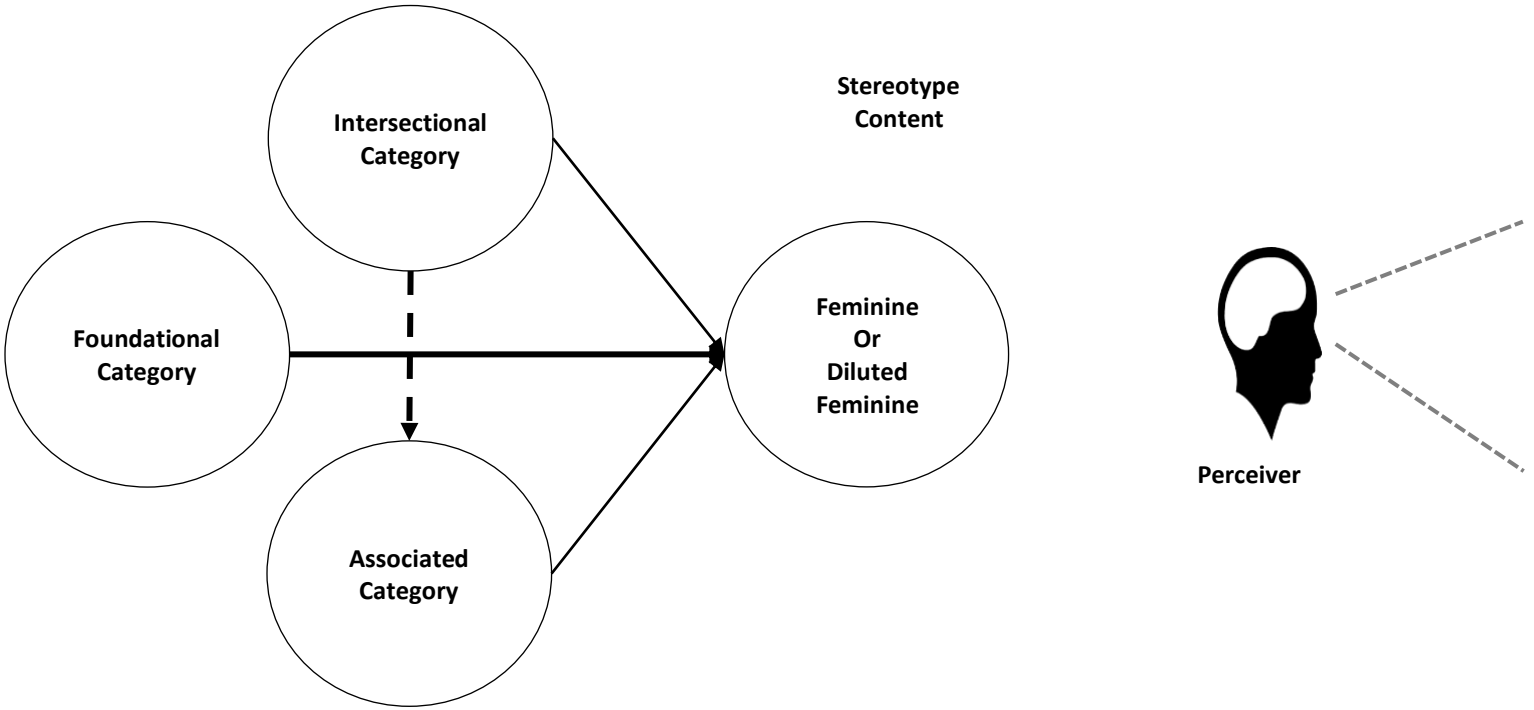
Note. $N = 245$. Standardized coefficients are reported. CI = confidence interval.

*$p < .05$.

**$p < .01$.

Figure 1

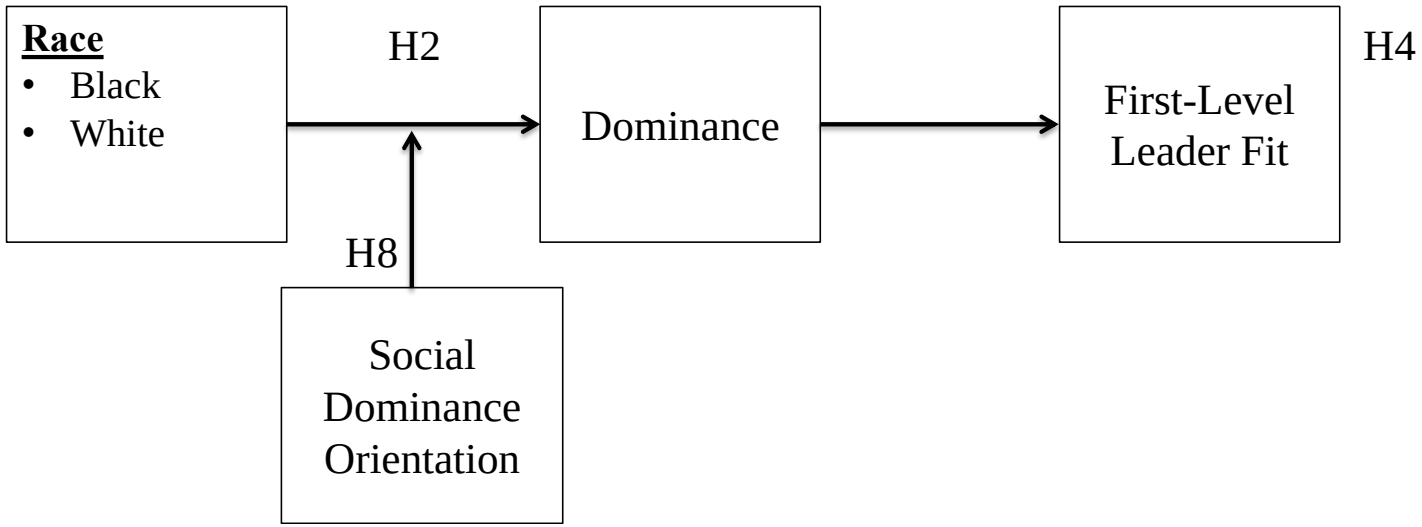
MOSAIC Theoretical Framework



Comparative evaluations of Black (and White) women leaders Model of Stereotyping Associated and Intersectional Categories (adapted from Hall et al., 2019, p. 652)

Figure 2

Proposed Theoretical Model (First-Level Leader)



Note. Not included, but tested, in the above picture are the links for the direct and indirect effects of race on first-level fit. Hypothesis 3: Direct effect of race on first-level leader fit. Hypothesis 9: Indirect effect of race on first-level leader fit.

Figure 3

Proposed Theoretical Model (Study 3a Senior-Level Leader)

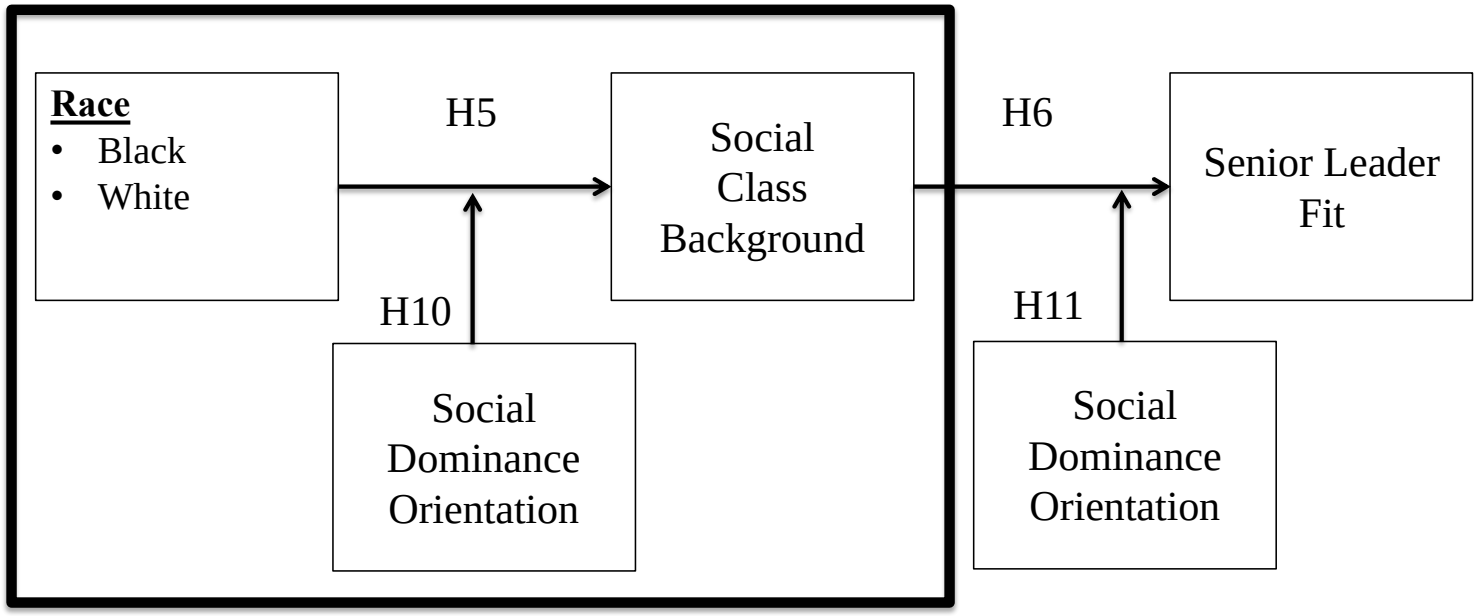


Figure 4

Proposed Theoretical Model (Study 3b Senior-Level Leader)

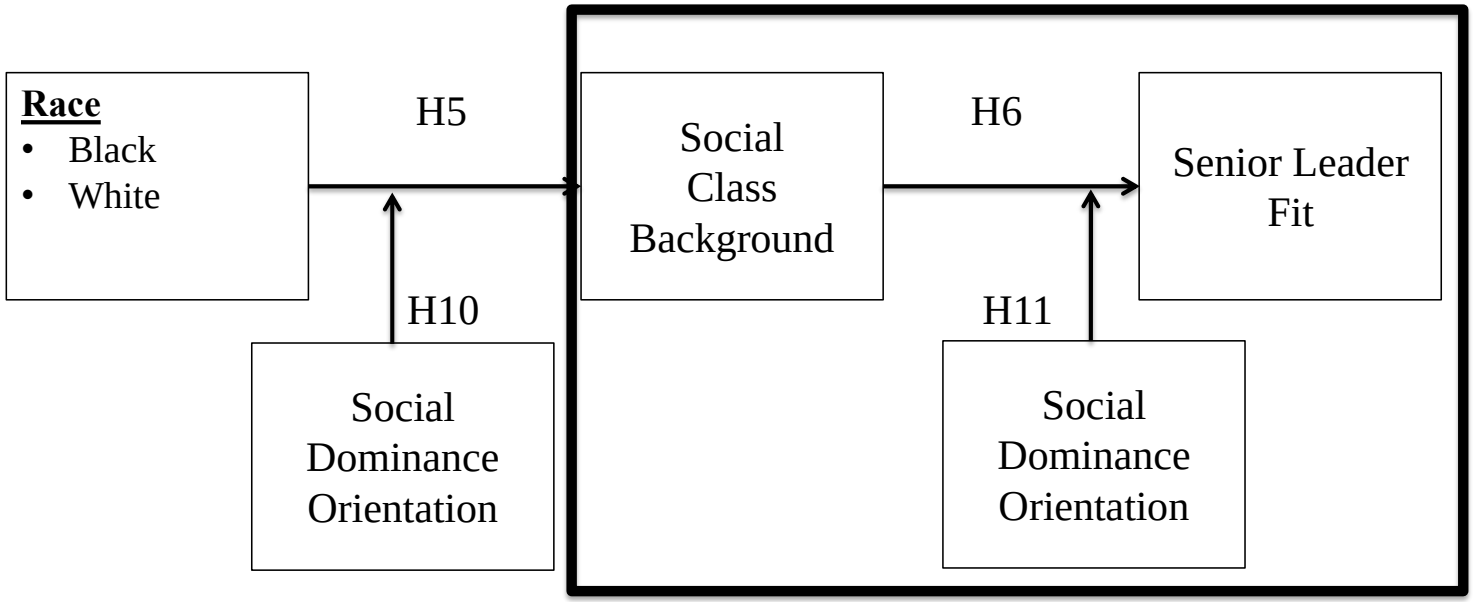
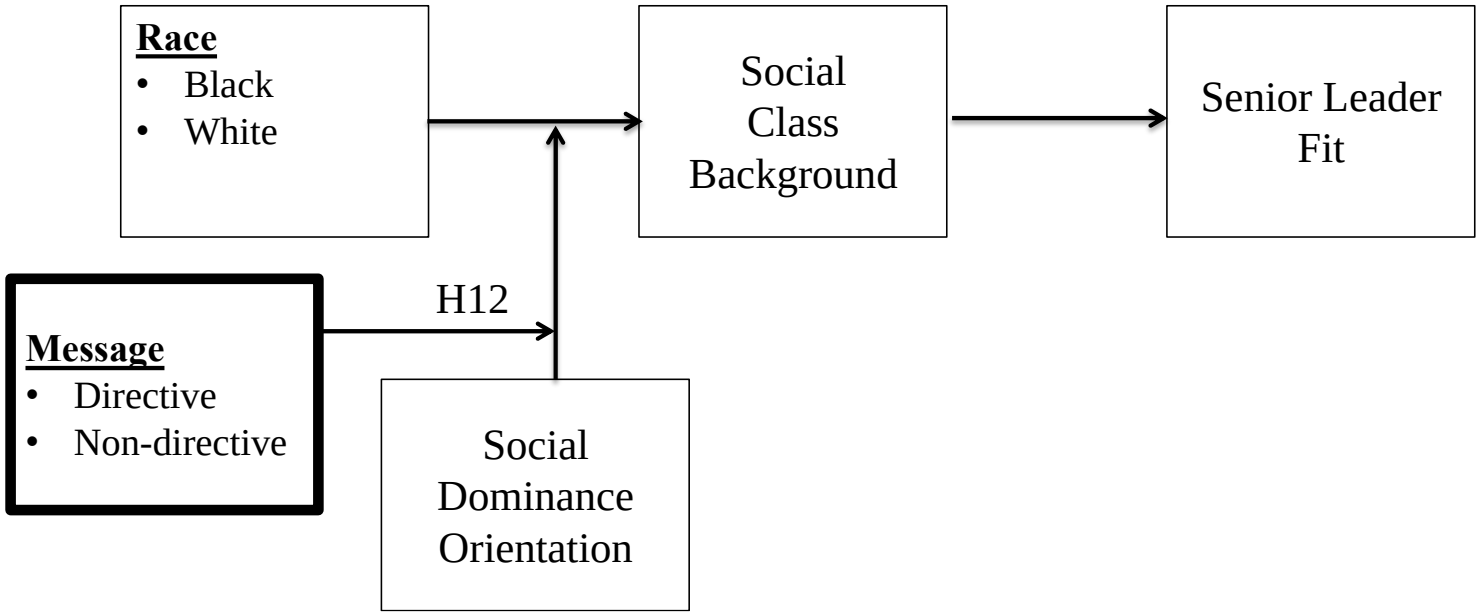


Figure 5

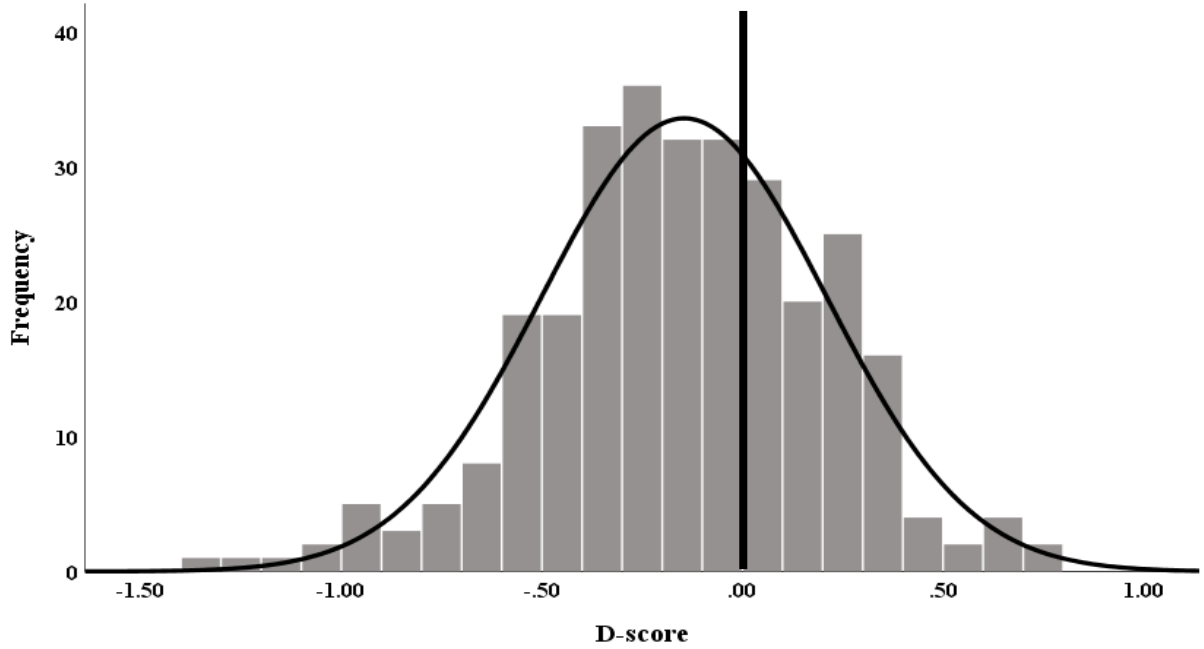
Proposed Theoretical Model (Study 4 Senior-Level Leader)



Note. Not included, but tested, in the above picture is the indirect effect of race on senior leader fit. Hypothesis 7: Indirect effect of race on senior leader fit.

Figure 6

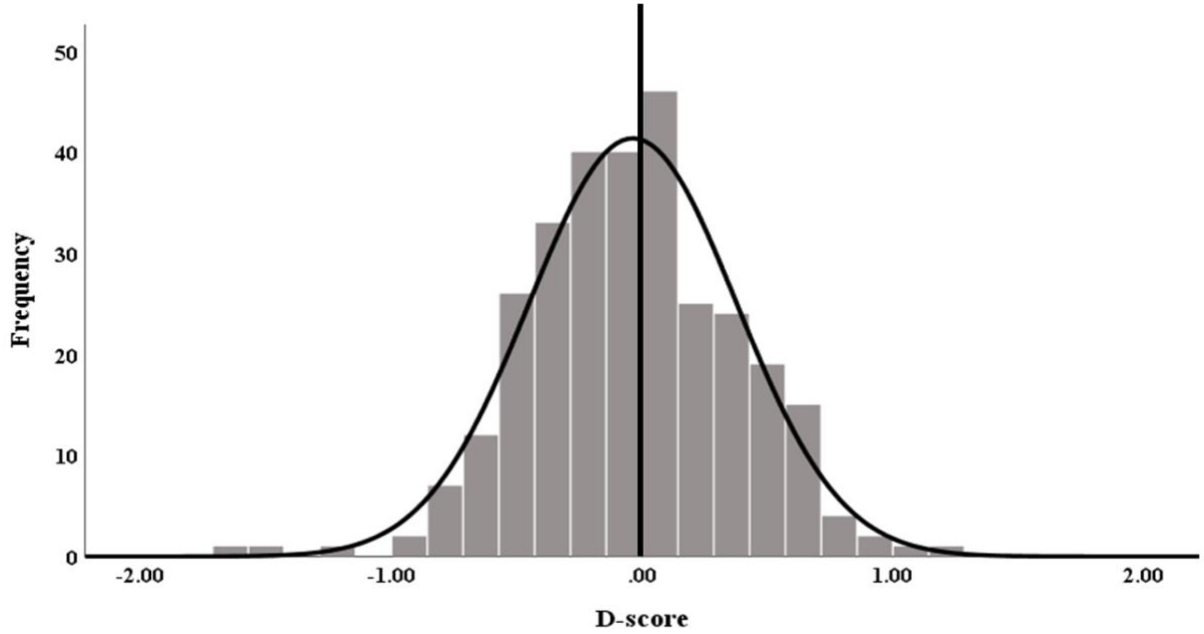
D-score Distribution for IAT Study 1a (Race-Leadership Level)



Note. The majority of the sample (65.9%) had a negative (< 0; i.e., Black and senior-level leader).

Figure 7

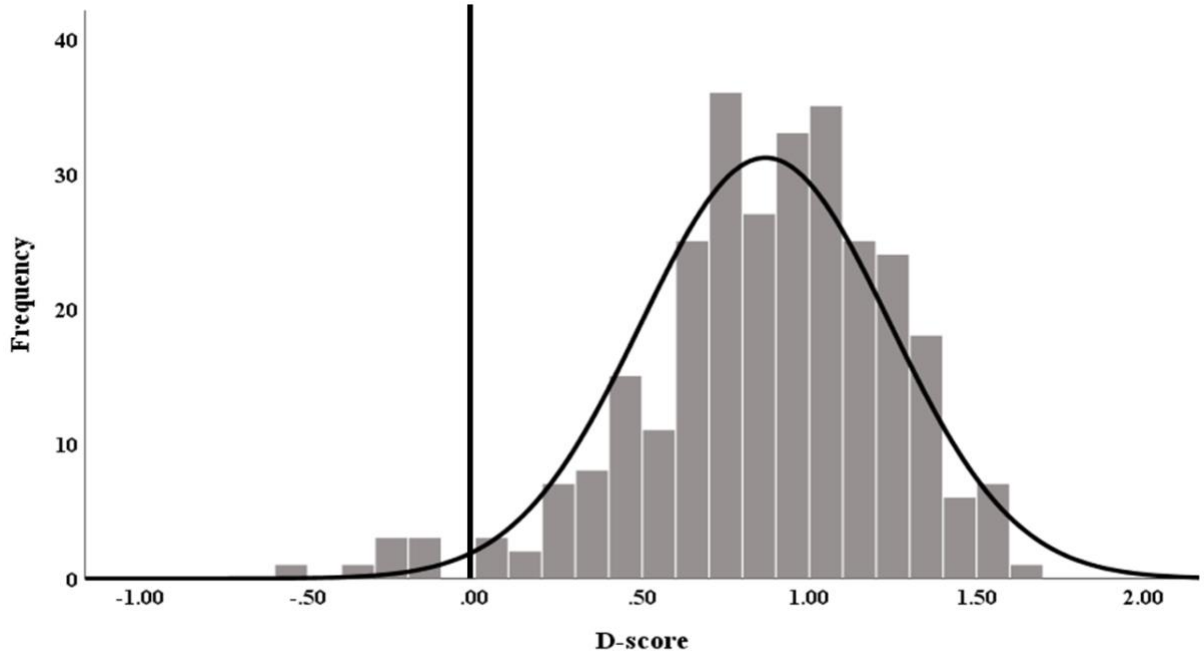
D-score Distribution for IAT Study 1b (Social Class-Race)



Note. Over half of the sample (54.3%) had a negative (< 0; i.e., Black and middle/upper-class).

Figure 8

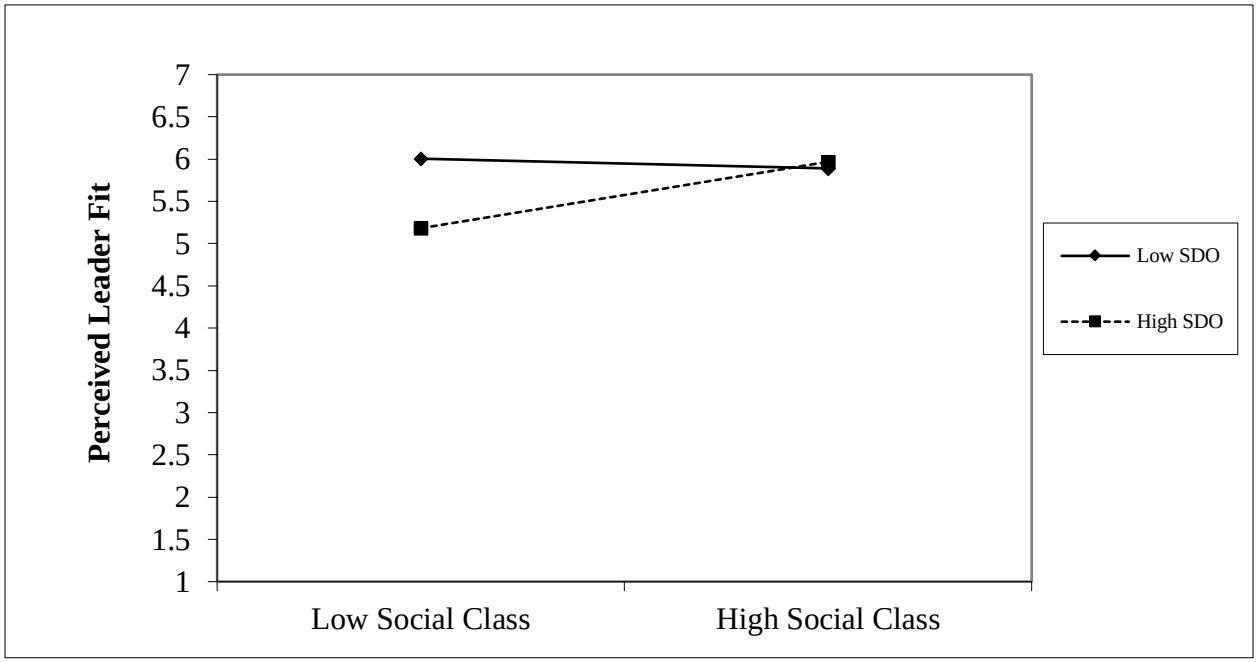
D-score Distribution for IAT Study 1c (Social Class-Leadership Level)



Note. The majority of the sample (97.3%) had a positive (> 0; i.e., senior-level leader and middle/upper-class association).

Figure 9

Interaction Between Social Class Background and SDO on Leader Fit (Study 3b)



Note. $N = 100$.

Appendix A

Stimuli for IAT used in Study 1

Senior-level leader: Executive, C-Suite, Senior Vice President, Vice President, CEO, CFO, CIO

First-level leader: Frontline manager, Functional manager, Supervisor, Department head, First line manager, Assistant manager, General manager

Lower class: Common, Inferior, Low born, Low class, Plain, Simple, Working class

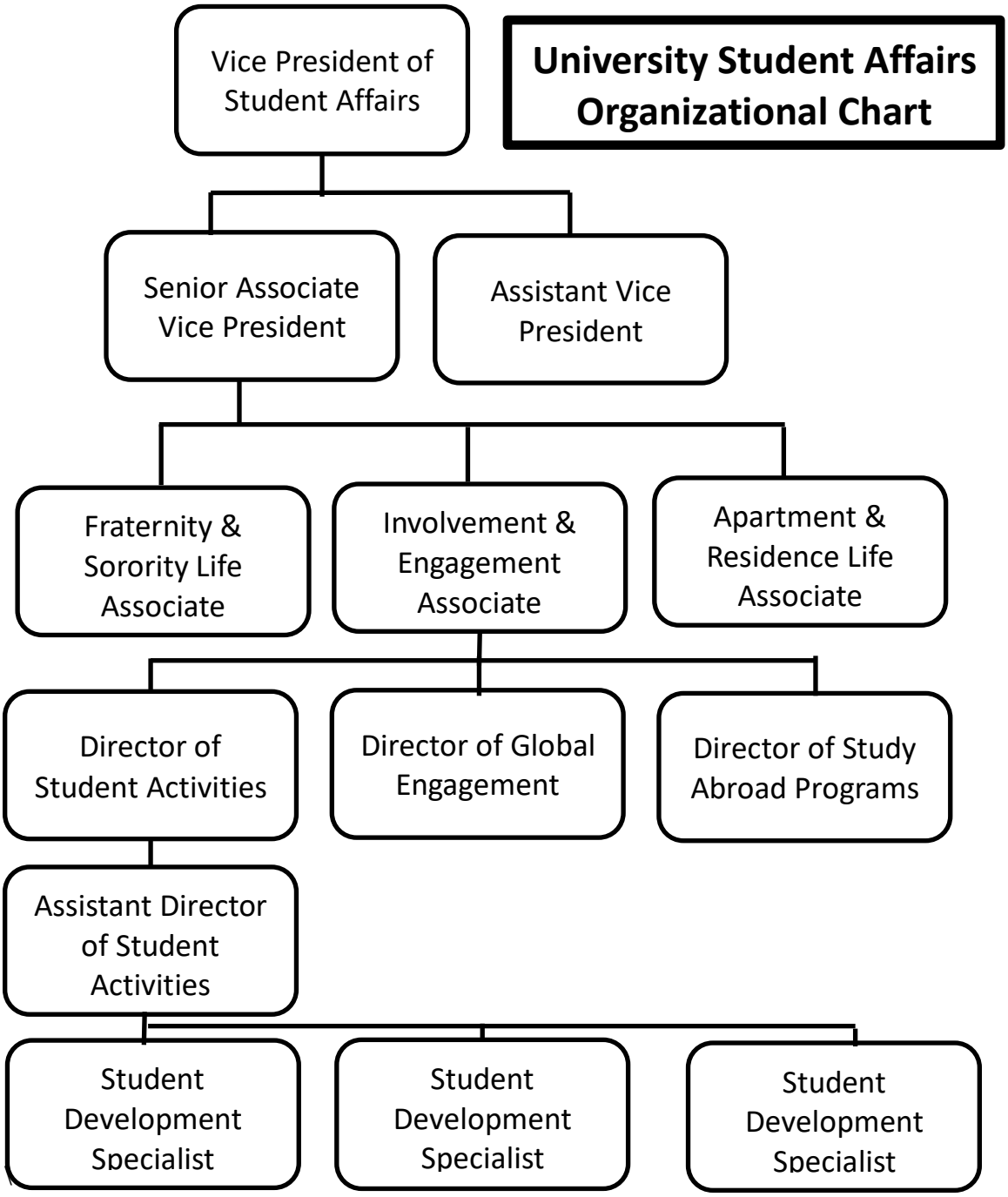
Upper-class/Middle class: Elite, Highbred, Privileged, Prominent, Upper-crust, Wellborn, Well-educated

Black women faces

White women faces

Appendix B

University Student Affairs Organizational Chart



Appendix C

Job Descriptions

Vice President of Student Affairs

General summary: The Vice President of Student Affairs requires an individual that is a transformational leader who has a strong commitment to enhancing the student experience, fostering student success, and cultivating and nurturing community engagement. The successful candidate must work collaboratively with campus departments, colleges, schools, and community leaders to ensure all students have a successful and rewarding experience. This position reports directly to the President of the university and serves as a member of the President's leadership team.

The **Vice President of Student Affairs** is responsible for:

- Leading and effectively managing a complex student affairs division on a large university campus.
- Working in a fast paced, data driven, cross collaborative environment.
- Maintaining the existing successful student programs and developing new programs to meet the changing needs of students in areas such as student conduct, student governance, residential life, career services, student health services, counseling/mental health, international education, student activities and organizations, and student leadership.
- Creating a welcoming and vibrant community among students including undergraduate and graduate students.
- Being knowledgeable and at the forefront of current thinking regarding issues and trends in higher education, with a specific focus on student affairs.
- Developing and implementing a strategic plan with an overarching mission to be one of the nation's leading universities—centered around students, at the forefront of teaching and research, and engaged with the community.
- Maintaining a visible and impactful profile both on campus and with external constituents.
- Fostering effective collaborative partnerships with faculty, academic departments, staff, senior administrators, parents, and students to provide a seamless holistic learning environment that blends the classroom and out-of-classroom experience.
- Effectively managing a complex annual operating budget of over $21 million with emphasis on strict internal controls and operational efficiencies.
- Ensuring compliance with the university's policies and state and federal laws and regulations including assisting with campus-wide crisis/emergency response and providing support for students and families in emergency situations.

QUALIFICATIONS

- Minimum of five years of progressive leadership experience in a comprehensive public or private institution of higher education
- Highest level of personal integrity
- Well-developed interpersonal and management skills
- Excellent written and oral communication skills
- Demonstrated experience working with a diverse population
- Prefer Ph.D., Ed.D., or terminal degree in higher education administration, student personnel or other appropriate and relevant field

SALARY RANGE: $122,000 to $183,000

Assistant Director of Student Activities

General summary: The Assistant Director of Student Activities assists the Director of Student Activities in directing and managing student activities, including community service week, welcome week programs, parents' weekend, and homecoming. The Assistant Director will work with various University community members to build successful relationships and community activities. The Assistant Director will also participate in leadership development and oversee other departmental programs, including supervising Student Development Specialists.

The **Assistant Director of Student Activities** is responsible for:

- Oversee daily operations of programs and activities sponsored by various component areas of Student Activities.
- Attend events to oversee activities and ensure details are handled as planned.
- Supervise Student Development Specialists including meeting weekly, conducting annual performance review, and approving absence report.
- Attend weekly meetings with student groups, executive boards and individuals and provide feedback to members. Serve as an advisor to student groups.
- Responsible for the development, implementation, and enforcement of departmental and University policies and procedures.
- Supervise compensated students including student directors.
- Implement safety and security measures for student representatives when organizing and working campus events, traveling, and projects.
- Develop and oversee assessment efforts related to the Student Activities department.
- Represent the University to various constituencies and at professional conferences.
- Cultivate community partnerships with university events and programs.
- Serve on University committees.
- Perform duties as assigned.

QUALIFICATIONS

- Minimum of two years of experience in a collegiate setting (graduate assistantship considered equivalent to one year of experience)
- Able to demonstrate effective problem solving and conflict resolution
- Strong interpersonal skills
- Excellent written and oral communication skills
- Demonstrated experience working with a diverse population
- Supervisory and budgetary skills necessary
- Knowledge of and experience working with Microsoft Office, Adobe Creative Suite web site content management software

SALARY RANGE: $45,000 to $60,000

Appendix D

Resumes Signaling Race

Vice President of Student Affairs Applicant

[EBONY WASHINGTON] or [AMY BECKER]

Email: [fname.lname]@school.edu LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/in/[initials]

EXECUTIVE PROFILE

Highly skilled and student-centered individual seeking a senior level position in higher education administration. Extensive experience in student affairs.

SKILL HIGHLIGHTS

- Leadership Development/ Communication
- Assessment and student learning outcomes
- Student Engagement and high impact practices
- Counseling and Problem Solving
- Budgeting and Planning

WORK EXPERIENCE

Associate Vice President of Student Affairs

2017 - present

- Lead the Division of Student Affairs which includes fraternity and sorority life, apartment & residential life, involvement & engagement, experiential learning, and career development.
- Serve as an expert in and advocate of educational needs and development needs of students.
- Prepare budgets for approval, including those for funding or implementation of programs.
- Organize and direct plans of the division
- Provide guidance and leadership for the Student Engagement Committee, which includes assessing and approving 4 year student engagement plans

Involvement and Engagement Associate Director

2011 - 2017

- Supervise the involvement and engagement team
- Plan, administer, and control budgets, maintain financial records, and produce financial reports.
- Represent institutions at community and campus events and in meetings with other institution personnel.
- Prepare reports on academic or institutional data.

Director of Student Activities Affairs

2005 - 2011

- Led assessment efforts related to the Student Activities department
- Planned and promoted sporting events and social, cultural, and recreational activities.
- Administered and controlled budget, maintained financial records, and produced financial reports.

EDUCATION

Ph.D., Education
Masters of Arts, Education
Bachelor of Science, Education

ACTIVITIES & INTERESTS

- President, National Association of Student Personnel Administrators
- Member, Association of College Unions International

Assistant Director of Student Activities Applicant

[EBONY WASHINGTON] or [AMY BECKER]

Email: [fname.lname]@school.edu LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/in/[initials]

EXECUTIVE PROFILE

Highly knowledgeable and skilled student development specialist seeking to advance in leadership within student affairs.

SKILL HIGHLIGHTS

- Excellent oral and written communication skills
- Strong collaboration with students and coworkers
- Great interpersonal and listening skills
- Student engagement and high impact practices
- Counseling and Problem Solving
- Extensive experiences with MS Office and Adobe Creative Suite

WORK EXPERIENCE

Student Development Specialist
2019 - present

- Provide counseling to students to ensure successful academic performance, retention, and graduation.
- Develop training programs for students and monitor outcomes.
- Assist with planning and serving at university wide educational campaigns.
- Attend meetings with school administrators to assess educational programs.

Youth Development Coordinator
Summer 2017, 2018

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

EDUCATION

Masters of Arts, Education
Bachelor of Science, Education

ACTIVITIES & INTERESTS

- Member, National Association of Student Personnel Administrators
- Member, Association of College Unions International

Appendix E

Photos of Applicants

Ebony Washington

Amy Becker

Appendix F

Resumes Signaling Social Class

Middle/Upper-Class Resume (Study 3b)

M. J. SMITH

8145 Hummingbird Circle | Highland Park, TX 75391
Email: smithmj@yahoo.com Cell: 469-494-6891

EXECUTIVE PROFILE

Highly skilled, student-centered, and results-oriented individual seeking a senior-level position in higher education administration. Extensive experience in student affairs.

EDUCATION

Ph.D., Education, May 2017
Southern Methodist University (SMU), Dallas, TX
Master of Arts, Education, May 2011
Southern Methodist University (SMU), Dallas, TX
Bachelor of Science, Education, May 2007
Southern Methodist University (SMU), Dallas, TX
*****University Legacy Award** (Awarded to a family member of an influential SMU alum)***

SKILL HIGHLIGHTS

- Leadership Development/ Communication
- Assessment and student learning outcomes
- Student Engagement and high impact practices
- Counseling and Problem Solving
- Budgeting and Planning

WORK EXPERIENCE

Associate Vice President of Student Affairs Fort Worth, TX
Texas Christian University
2017 – present

- Lead the Division of Student Affairs which includes fraternity and sorority life, apartment & residential life, involvement & engagement, experiential learning, and career development
- Serve as an expert in and advocate of educational needs and development needs of students
- Prepare budgets for approval, including those for funding or implementation of programs
- Organize and direct plans of the division
- Provide guidance and leadership for the Student Engagement Committee, which includes assessing and approving 4 year student engagement plans

Involvement and Engagement Associate Director Dallas, TX
Southern Methodist University (SMU)
2011 – 2017

- Supervised the involvement and engagement team
- Planned, administered, and controlled budgets, maintained financial records, and produced financial reports
- Represented the institution at community and campus events and in meetings with other institution personnel
- Prepared reports on academic or institutional data

ACTIVITIES & INTERESTS

- President, National Association of Student Personnel Administrators
- Vice President, Association of College Unions International
- Philanthropic Activities Committee Chair, National Organization for Women

HOBBIES

- Playing Golf and Tennis
- Traveling and Yachting
- Equestrian activities

Lower/Working-Class Resume (Study 3b)

M. J. SMITH

8145 Hummingbird Circle | Tyler, TX 75713
Email: smithmj@yahoo.com Cell: 430-494-6891

EXECUTIVE PROFILE

Highly skilled, student-centered, and results-oriented individual seeking a senior-level position in higher education administration. Extensive experience in student affairs.

EDUCATION

Ph.D., Education, May 2017
Texas A&M University at Commerce
Master of Science, Education, May 2011
Texas A&M University at Commerce
Bachelor of Science, Education, May 2007
Texas A&M University at Commerce
****University First Generation Scholarship Award*****
Associate of Science: Education, May 2005
Paris Junior College, Paris, TX

SKILL HIGHLIGHTS

- Leadership Development/ Communication
- Assessment and student learning outcomes
- Student Engagement and high impact practices
- Counseling and Problem Solving
- Budgeting and Planning

WORK EXPERIENCE

Associate Vice President of Student Affairs Tyler, TX
University of Texas at Tyler
2017 – present

- Lead the Division of Student Affairs which includes fraternity and sorority life, apartment & residential life, involvement & engagement, experiential learning, and career development
- Serve as an expert in and advocate of educational needs and development needs of students
- Prepare budgets for approval, including those for funding or implementation of programs
- Organize and direct plans of the division
- Provide guidance and leadership for the Student Engagement Committee, which includes assessing and approving 4 year student engagement plans

Involvement and Engagement Associate Director Commerce, TX
Texas A&M University at Commerce
2011 – 2017

- Supervised the involvement and engagement team
- Planned, administered, and controlled budgets, maintained financial records, and produced financial reports
- Represented the institution at community and campus events and in meetings with other institution personnel
- Prepared reports on academic or institutional data

ACTIVITIES & INTERESTS

- Member, Association of Student Personnel Administrators (Local Chapter)
- Member, Association of College Unions International (Local Chapter)
- Participating in community service activities (e.g., deliver meals on wheels, local food bank)

HOBBIES

- Intramural sports at the local YMCA
- Reading, visiting the local library

Appendix G

Measures Used in Studies

Social dominance orientation (SDO) *(Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth, & Malle, 1994*)

1. Some groups of people are simply inferior to other groups.
2. In getting what you want, it is sometimes necessary to use force against other groups.
3. It's OK if some groups have more of a chance in life than others.
4. To get ahead in life, it is sometimes necessary to step on other groups.
5. If certain groups stayed in their place, we would have fewer problems.
6. It's probably a good thing that certain groups are at the top and other groups are at the bottom.
7. Inferior groups should stay in their place.
8. Sometimes other groups must be kept in their place.
9. It would be good if groups could be equal. (reverse-code)
10. Group equality should be our ideal. (reverse-code)
11. All groups should be given an equal chance in life. (reverse-code)
12. We should do what we can to equalize conditions for different groups. (reverse-code)
13. Increased social equality. (reverse-code)
14. We would have fewer problems if we treated people more equally. (reverse-code)
15. We should strive to make incomes as equal as possible. (reverse-code)
16. No one group should dominate in society. (reverse-code)

Dominance (bolded items 12 to 16) *(Ma, Rosette, & Koval, 2022)*

1. Status-seeking: Reaching a higher standing relative to others
2. Aspire to be leader: A desire to move upwards or higher than others
3. Ambitious: Strong desire to achieve something or get ahead of others
4. Willing to take stand
5. Self-assured: Having a firm belief in one's abilities
6. Self-efficacy: Belief in one's capabilities
7. Conviction: Possessing certainty or steadfast belief
8. Independent: Not relying on others
9. Self-reliant: Relying on oneself
10. Individualistic: Showing individuality in behavior and thoughts
11. Self-direction: Follows one's own thought or action
12. **Aggressive: Vigorously commanding over others**
13. **Dominant: Exerting authority over others**
14. **Controlling: Determining the behavior of others**
15. **Forceful: Characterized as vigorous strength**
16. **Manipulative: Affecting the behavior of others for one's own purposes**
17. Active: Characterized by energetic work
18. Dedicated: Wholly committed to an end
19. Task oriented: To focus on getting the job done
20. Hardworking: Working with diligence
21. Competent: Sufficiently qualified
22. Capable: Having ability to complete a task efficiently
23. Intelligent: Possessing sound knowledge

24. Skillful (having skills): Possessing proficiency in relevant areas
25. Masterful: Possessing an in depth understanding of pertinent tasks

MacArthur Scale (Subjective SES or Social Rank) *(Adler, Epel, Castellazzo, & Ickovics, 2000)*

Adapted:

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

Leader fit (Perceived Applicant P-J Fit) *(Kristof-Brown, 2000)*

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

Leader fit (Perceived Race-Occupation Fit) *(Sy, Shore, Strauss, Shore, Tram, Whiteley, & Ikeda-Muromachi, 2010)*

4. This job is a good fit for [Insert Name].
5. [Insert Name] is a good match for this job.

Likeability *(Rudman, Moss-Racusin, Phelan, & Nauts, 2012)*

1. How much did you like the applicant?
2. Is this person someone you want to get to know better?
3. Would the applicant be popular with colleagues?"

Competence *(Rudman, Moss-Racusin, Phelan, & Nauts, 2012)*

1. Did the applicant strike you as competent?
2. How likely is it that the applicant has the necessary skills for this job?

Hireability *(Rudman, Moss-Racusin, Phelan, & Nauts, 2012)*

Adapted Items:

1. Would you choose to interview the candidate?
2. Would you personally hire the candidate?
3. How likely is it that the candidate will be hired?

Recommend to interview *(Higgins & Judge, 2004; Uhlmann, E. L., & Cohen, G. L. (2007)*

1. I believe the applicant would be successful as an [Assistant Director Student Activities] or [Vice President of Student Affairs].
2. Overall, I would evaluate this candidate positively.
3. I would recommend extending an interview to this applicant.

Salary recommendation

Participants were presented with a sliding scale with the salary range for either the Vice President of Student Affairs ($122,000 to $183,000) or the Assistant Director of Student Activities ($45,000 to $60,000). Participants were asked to recommend a starting salary for the candidate if hired. The participants will be able to move the sliding ruler to the position of the scale of the salary selected.