

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

Social Class, Social Interaction, and Social
Cognition: An investigation into the relationship
between socioeconomic status and sociality

By

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April 2024

A paper submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Arts
degree in the Master of Arts Program in the Social Sciences

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Abstract

Social class undeniably shapes our worlds: from our health, to our neighborhoods, to our relationships, socioeconomic status (SES) reliably predicts diverging outcomes across a plethora of dimensions. The goal of this article is to ascertain whether SES is also related to our sociality; namely expectations of conversation and social interaction. It is hypothesized that SES is positively related to more optimistic expectations about social interactions, and greater interest in reaching out and connecting with others. In three online survey experiments (N = 789, all preregistered), this relationship is explored by instructing participants to rate their expectations of interactions taking place on a park bench. Across studies, higher SES is modestly correlated with more positive expectations of social engagement, such as greater interest in initiating conversations and less awkwardness anticipated from these interactions. However, the associations between SES and sociality were weak in magnitude and inconsistent across studies. Additionally, they did not appear to be context specific (Experiment 3) nor was optimism unique to social engagement (Experiment 2), highlighting the complexity of this relationship and need for further research to explore these dynamics more deeply.

Keywords: socioeconomic status, sociality, social interaction, social cognition, conversation expectations

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Introduction

Socioeconomic status (SES) and sociality are two fundamental aspects of human social life: an individual's position in society and the quantity and quality of their social interactions have major implications on quality of life. Understanding the relationship between SES and sociality has implications for social and economic mobility, income inequality, and the influence of interpersonal relationships and social class on health. For example, a 2011 study revealed that social relationships and health are more strongly correlated for low SES individuals (Vonneilich et al., 2011). The present study aims to further elucidate the mechanisms that effect the cultivation and maintenance of social relationships by understanding how SES predicts expectations about social interactions.

Given the interdependence and increased need for social support noted in lower SES contexts (Manstead, 2018; Hooker & Algoe, 2022), one might guess that those who are lower SES are, in fact, more social and more likely to engage with others. Contrarily, the higher self-esteem (Twenge & Campbell, 2002; Hayashida et al., 2019; Haught et al., 2015) and greater social acceptance afforded by those higher class (Shehu, 2019; Dijkstra et al., 2004) could also lead one to believe that it is actually those of higher SES who are more social and optimistic about social interactions. While many studies have examined how SES predicts prosocial behavior (Piff et al., 2010), social network composition (Carey & Markus, 2017), and time spent socializing with others (Bianchi & Vohs, 2016), none, to our knowledge, have empirically tested whether SES is related to expectations about social interactions. The present investigation,

therefore, was designed to test the hypothesis that SES positively predicts more optimistic expectations of social interactions, and greater interest in engaging with others.

The Status-Enabled Optimism Hypothesis

There are strong reasons to believe that as SES increases, expectations of social engagement will also become more optimistic, and interest in interaction will increase. Central to this hypothesis is the finding that those who are higher in SES tend to be less pessimistic, with greater dispositional optimism (Robb & Wardle, 2009; Scheier & Carver 1985). Dispositional optimism has been defined as the generalized belief that more good than bad things will occur in one's life (Scheier & Carver 1985). An optimistic view on life also appears to be a relatively stable trait, yielding many positive outcomes across health and behavioral outcomes (Robb & Wardle, 2009; Giltay et al. 2004; Ironson et al. 2005; Lobel et al. 2000; Peterson and Bossio 2001).

Reasons for higher optimism associated with higher class are relatively straight-forward: higher class affords a greater sense of personal control (Kraus et al., 2012), more favorable view of oneself in the eyes of a meritocratic society (Manstead, 2018), less exposure to stressors (Baum, Garofalo, & Yali, 1999), and greater access to resources across nearly every domain. Those of lower social ranking experience greater sustained hardship and are also assumed to be personally responsible for their reduced economic and social standing, rather than victims of an inequitable society (Li & Hu, 2021). It is, therefore, easy to see the direct correlation between life experiences and outlook: experiencing more uncontrollable adversities for which one is held personally responsible leads to a more negative outlook on life. Conversely, having more opportunities and resources for which one feels personally responsible fosters a better outlook on

life. These underpinnings are fundamental to the hypothesis that the same optimistic expectations will be held for social interactions, such that those higher in class will hold more favorable views of potential social engagements compared to their lower SES counterparts.

In addition to increased optimism and reduced pessimism, higher SES similarly predicts enhanced self-esteem (Twenge & Campbell, 2002). Moreover, self-esteem is associated with greater optimism (Heinonen et al., 2005), extraversion (Watson et al., 2002), and complexity and frequency of behavioral patterns that exhibit social engagement and competency (Jonsson, 2006). Taken together, these results suggest that in addition to the buffering effects of improved self-esteem, those who are higher class may also be likely to experience the many benefits that accompany higher self-esteem, such as greater social engagement and extraverted tendencies, all of which support the status-enabled optimism hypothesis.

Finally, it can be argued that those of higher class simply have more positive social experiences they can call upon when making judgments of future interactions. For example, those raised in higher-income households experience more social opportunities and less problematic peer relationships (Patterson et al., 1990). They are additionally predicted to experience greater peer acceptance and less rejection relative to those of lower SES (Hjalmarsson, 2018; Due et al., 2009). Their greater acceptance can be explained, in part, by the presence of economic resources which enable participation in social activities. To that end, studies show that poorer children and adolescents report having fewer friends (Olsson 2007; Sletten 2010), receive less friendship nominations from school peers (Bolger et al. 1995; Hjalmarsson and Mood 2015), and are at a higher risk of social isolation (Hjalmarsson & Mood, 2015). In conclusion, it seems intuitive that given more and better social experiences to draw upon, expectations of future social interactions would be similarly enhanced for those of higher

class, as opposed to lower SES individuals who appear to have a deficit of beneficial experiences to leverage.

The status-enabled optimism hypothesis is suggestive but hardly conclusive. While there are many compelling reasons to believe that those of higher class may have better expectations of social interactions and interest in engaging, several findings suggest that it is actually those of lower SES strata who are more socially competent and relationally motivated.

Possible Exceptions to the Status Optimism Hypothesis

Despite reasons for hypothesizing status-enabled optimism, it is also evident that those of lower-class strata are, across certain dimensions, more socially sensitive and socially competent. For instance, Piff and colleagues (2010) found that across numerous studies, low SES individuals behaved more prosocially and altruistically. They behaved more generously, gave more in charitable donations, and demonstrated more prosocial trust behavior. It has even been found across developmental and cultural contexts that those of lower social rank tend to behave more prosocially (Miller, Kahle, & Hastings, 2015; Chen, Zhu, & Chen, 2013). Much of this altruistic behavior has been ascribed to the pervasive other-oriented focus of low SES individuals (Kraus et al., 2012).

The interdependence noted in low SES contexts can be described as an adaptation to lives defined by greater uncertainty, more stress, more danger, less personal control, and increased vulnerability to the environment and others. Generally speaking, lower SES tends to foster a communal orientation, marked by small, homogeneous, and strongly connected social networks (Carey & Markus, 2017). Since those of higher SES already have the necessary economic resources, increased autonomy and control, and less susceptibility towards others and their

environment, their lives can be characterized by independence and the achievement of individual goals and pursuits. In comparison to low-class, higher-class people tend to have more independent models of self, with social networks that are large, diverse, and loosely connected (Carey & Markus, 2017). Since their focus is more self-oriented, those of higher SES display more disengagement cues such as doodling and checking their phone in experiments testing social attention, compared to those of lower SES who demonstrate more engagement cues like head nodding and laughter (Kraus & Keltner, 2009). Taken together, these results suggest that low SES individuals are more socially attuned, engaged, and reliant on connection than their higher SES counterparts, and may in fact hold better expectations of interaction and interest in engaging with others.

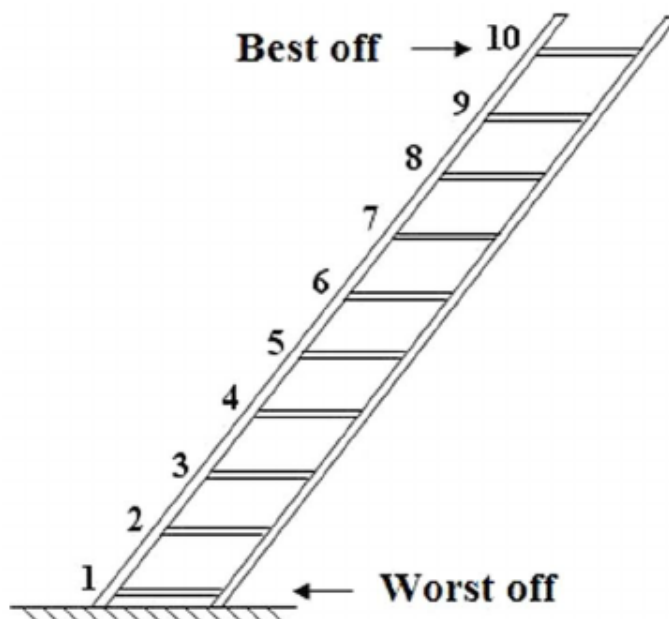
While those of low SES have been shown to behave more prosocially, altruistically, and socially engaged, it is imperative to note the underlying needs driving such behavior. Low SES individuals are more likely to rely on one another for reciprocal aid (Lamont & Lamont, 2009) and thereby benefit differentially from their prosociality. Their relationships, rich in bonding capital, consist of strong, closely knit groups that provide substantial support by fulfilling instrumental needs, such as childcare or transportation. Conversely, high SES individuals leverage social relationships as bridging capital – means by which they can achieve personal goals, self-actualize, and improve their position in society. Due to this, those higher in SES experience greater relational mobility, or opportunities to create new relationships and end old ones (Carey & Markus, 2017; Yuki & Schug, 2012). They are, then, arguably better at starting new relationships and have more opportunities to practice building large networks since their relationships require less intimacy and support (Carey & Markus, 2017, Urry, 2012, Granovetter 1973, Huang & Tausig, 1990, Ajrouch et al., 2005). Ultimately, those of higher class are in a

better position to form loose, heterogenous social networks, and therefore in the context of this study, are expected to hold better expectations of interactions with strangers and greater interest in engaging.

The following studies use the MacArthur Scale of Subjective Social Status as the primary predictor variable. The measure depicts a 10-rung ladder, with those at highest having the most money, the most education, and the most respected jobs, and those at the lowest having the least money, education, and least respected jobs (Adler et al., 1994). Respondents are asked to place themselves on the ladder relative to others in their respective country (Adler et al., 1994; Tan et al., 2020). Subjective measures have been shown to be stronger predictors for various health outcomes, psychological wellbeing, and social behaviors, as well as increased accuracy in capturing social rank (Adler et al., 2000; Zhao et al., 2023, Tan et al., 2020; Singh-Manoux et al., 2005). It is for this reason that this measure was used; however, three additional SES measures were also incorporated to assess SES holistically.

Figure 1.

MacArthur scale of subjective social status



In addition to the MacArthur ladder measure, SES was also subjectively assessed using the single-item measure of perceived SES category (Tan et al., 2020). Measures of perceived SES will typically have respondents rank which social class they belong to, ranging from “poor” to “high class” (Jackman, 1979). Finally, SES was also captured objectively, by assessing their annual household income and educational attainment.

The dynamics underlying real-world thoughts and behaviors surrounding social interaction are undeniably complex and multifaceted. To help understand how SES relates to sociality, three separate experiments and one exploratory analysis was conducted. We assessed whether SES is positively correlated with expectations of social interactions and interest in engaging (Study 1), whether the positive correlation was specific to social interaction or representative of generalized optimism (Study 2), and whether SES differences in conversation expectations are specific to interactions with strangers (Study 3). Lastly, an exploratory analysis sought to discern whether self-esteem moderates the relationship between SES and sociality. Below, Table 1 summarizes the specific dependent variables we will use to assess sociality and the expected results.

Table 1.

Hypotheses	Dependent Variable
SES will be positively related to both one's own interest in engaging with others, and expectation that others will want to engage with them.	Interest (own & other)
SES will be positively related to likelihood to initiate conversation, as well as the expectation that others will initiate a conversation with them.	Likelihood to initiate (own & other)
SES will be positively related to enjoyment and positive mood.	Positive affect (enjoyableness, positive mood)
SES will be negatively related to feelings of awkwardness during an interaction.	Awkwardness
SES will be positively related to feelings of bondedness and likelihood to become friends after an interaction.	Bond & Friendship
SES will be positively related to feelings of commonality.	Commonality

Method (Experiment 1)

Participants

198 participants were recruited using Prolific (N = 198 individuals after exclusions; $M_{age} = 37.6$; 48% Women; 65% White, 8% Black, 6% Hispanic, 8% Asian, 10.5% Mixed).

Procedure

Participants began by providing consent to participate in the research and completing an initial attention check to ensure participant engagement and identify any inattentive respondents. They then reported on four SES measures: highest level of education achieved (7 brackets, 1 = elementary or less, 7 = doctorate degree), annual household income (16 brackets of \$10,000

increments, ranging from below \$10,000 to above \$150,000), and which social class they feel they belong to, ranging from poor to high class. They also rated their own subjective SES by indicating on which rung of a 10-runged ‘social ladder’ they feel they belong to (Adler et al, 1994).

Participants were then asked to imagine that during a free afternoon, they decide to go to the park, where they take a seat on a park bench to do a solitary activity such as reading or scrolling on their phone. We then asked them to imagine that while sitting on the bench, they notice someone else sitting on the bench next to them, and to think about whether or not they should start a conversation with them.

They then read ten questions inquiring about their expectations as they consider initiating a conversation with this person in the park, each answered on a 11-point Likert scale:

1. How interested do you think you would be in talking with this person? (0 = not at all interested, 10 = extremely interested)
2. How likely do you think you would be to initiate a conversation with this person? (0 = not at all likely, 10 = very likely)
3. How interested do you think this person would be in talking with you? (0 = not at all interested, 10 = extremely interested)
4. How likely do you think it is that this person would initiate a conversation with you? (0 = not at all likely, 10 = very likely)
5. How much do you think you would enjoy this conversation? (0 = not at all enjoyable, 10 = extremely enjoyable)
6. How awkward do you think you would feel while having this conversation? (0 = not at all awkward, 10 = very awkward)

7. How much do you think you would have in common with this person? (0 = nothing at all, 10 = an extreme amount)
8. How positive or negative do you think you would feel after having this conversation? (-5 = a lot more negative than usual, 5 = a lot more positive than usual)
9. How strong of a bond do you think you would feel with this person after having this conversation? (0 = weak, like a stranger, 10 = strong, like a new friend)
10. How likely do you think it is that you will become friends with this person after having this conversation? (0 = not at all likely, 10 = very likely)

Following, since prior research has demonstrated that extraverts more accurately predict the benefit of extraverted social behavior compared to introverts (Zelenski et al., 2013), participants completed the 10-item personality inventory (Gosling et al., 2003), to control for this trait in analyses.

Finally, participants reported demographic information on age, gender, English proficiency, and ethnicity. They were also instructed to complete a final attention check to confirm the quality of answers input.

Results

The average annual household income was approximately 6.85 which fell within the \$60,000-\$70,000 range (SD=4.36). The average education level was 4.4 (SD=1.03), which corresponded with “College 1 year to 3 years (some college or technical school)”. The average self-report of social class was 2.37 (SD=0.8), which meant most rated themselves as working

class. Finally, the average ladder-measure report was 4.69 (SD=1.77) out of the 10-rung ladder, so most identified themselves in the middle of the socioeconomic hierarchy.

Again, given that subjective SES has been argued as a more precise measure of social position compared to objective measures (Singh-Manoux, Marmot, & Adler, 2005) the primary predictor variable for this study is the MacArthur Scale of Subjective Social Status, with three other predictors incorporated to assess SES holistically in its relation to sociality.

As the first exploratory step in examining whether SES predicts an individual's expectations related to conversations with strangers, we conducted a pilot study, aimed at exploring the relationship between variables through a correlational analysis. This methodological choice was deliberate, intended to provide an initial appraisal of potential relationships within the data set.

The results of the analysis revealed limited support for our hypotheses across the four SES measures. As shown in Table 2, a statistically significant positive correlation between subjective SES and the presumed likelihood that another person would initiate conversation ('other initiate') ($r = .15, p < .05$) and mood ($r = .15, p < .05$) was found. While these findings corroborated the initial hypotheses positing a positive association between higher SES and both a better mood and an increased expectancy for others to initiate conversation in a park bench setting, the observed correlations were characterized by their limited magnitude. Generally speaking, the pattern of correlations were in the predicted direction across measures, but small and statistically nonsignificant in eight of the ten sociality measures. Consequently, these results did not provide strong support for our hypotheses.

Table 2.

Correlations Between SES and Sociality

SES Measures	Psychological indices of sociality									
	Own Interest	Own Initiate	Other Interest	Other Initiate	Enjoy	Awkward	Common	Friends	Mood	Bond
Subjective SES	.05	.13	.10	.15*	.03	-.09	.12	-.05	.15*	.03
Social Class	.05	.11	.13	.12	.02	.06	.14	-.05	.11	.03
Income	-.002	.03	.04	.06	.02	-.05	.07	-.12	.09	-.01
Education	.04	.02	-.03	-.01	-.01	-.09	.12	-.04	-.04	.04

* $p < .05$.

Additional analyses were done to examine the variables of statistical significance ('other interest' and 'mood'). A bivariate linear regression was conducted to further assess the relationship between the SES ladder measure and the 'other initiate' and 'mood' variables, as depicted in Table 3. The bivariate regression shows again, a statistically significant but weak positive association between SES and one's perception of whether strangers are likely to initiate a conversation with them at the park. The variance explained by SES is also very low at 2.2%, meaning that factors not explained by this model influence perceptions of whether others will initiate conversation. This finding suggested a possible link between higher SES and increased social interaction expectations, potentially reflecting the broader social opportunities and confidence associated with higher socioeconomic positions. However, when extraversion was introduced as a control variable within the multivariate model, the predictive power of SES on this expectation becomes statistically nonsignificant.

Observing mood, which was captured by asking participations how good or bad they thought they would feel after the interaction, the bivariate linear model demonstrates again a statistically significant but weak positive association between SES and mood. However, the

explanatory power of the model is again very low at 2.2%. In the multivariate model, which controlled for extraversion, SES as an independent predictor becomes nonsignificant. Taken together, this shift in effect suggests that extraversion may mediate the relationship between SES and social interaction expectations. Individuals with higher SES are often more extraverted (Luo et al., 2024), which could increase their anticipation of social engagements. Additional analyses seek to discern whether the positive association between SES and mood is specific to social interaction, such that those of higher class expect a greater increase in mood after interaction.

Table 3.

SES Ladder, Other Initiate, & Mood Bivariate and Multivariate Linear Analysis

Variable	Bivariate				Multivariate (controlling for extraversion)					
	b	SE	t	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Adjusted b	Adjusted SE	Adjusted t	R ²	Adjusted R ²
Other Initiate	.207	.098	2.113*	.022	.017	.136	.097	1.401	.086	.077
Mood	0.139	.067	2.102*	.022	.017	.083	.065	1.289	.108	.099

* $p < .05$.

Experiment 2

Our second study examines whether the heightened positive mood reported by individuals of higher SES stems from their engagement in social interaction or reflects a more generalized positive affect associated with elevated social class, irrespective of sociality. We hypothesize that SES will positively predict mood, in this instance feeling more positive, and less negative after social interaction with a stranger, but not before. The positive and negative feelings are computed as difference scores between participants expected emotions after an interaction and prior to interaction in solitude.

Given the limited assessment of mood in Experiment 1, which comprised of a single question assessing mood after a hypothetical interaction scenario, Experiment 2 employs a more comprehensive approach. This involves first asking participants to rate their mood during a solitary period in the park, then after an imagined conversation with a stranger on the park bench. Furthermore, mood assessment is refined to include two separate measures of positive and negative affect, enabling a nuanced examination of the underlying mechanisms driving the observed relationship between SES and mood.

Method (Experiment 2)

Participants

192 participants were recruited using the PIMCO Decision Research Virtual Lab at the Roman Family Center for Decision Research (N = 192 individuals after exclusions; $M_{\text{age}} = 34.7$; 67.7% Women; 47% White, 27% Asian, 12% Black, 3% Hispanic, 4% Mixed). The decision to utilize the virtual lab was based off the notion of improved data quality and subject pool.

Procedure

Participants answered the same questions from Experiment 1, assessing their educational attainment, annual household income, subjective SES, and single-item measure of perceived SES category.

In this iteration, participants then were asked to imagine that during a free afternoon, they visit a park close to where they live, where they again take a seat on a park bench to do a solitary activity such as reading or scrolling on their phone. Next, we ask participants to rate both how positive or negative they believe they would feel about this experience in two separate questions:

1. How positive do you think you would feel about the experience? (-5 = a lot less positive than usual, 5 = a lot more positive than usual)

2. How negative do you think you would feel about the experience? (-5 = a lot less negative than usual, 5 = a lot more negative than usual)

Subsequently, participants were instructed to envision a scenario where, after a brief period, another individual joins them at the opposite end of the park bench. They were prompted to visualize a situation where both parties exchange smiles and nods, and to contemplate the prospect of initiating a conversation with the stranger. Following this scenario, participants were presented with four questions gauging their interest and likelihood to engage, as well as their perception of the stranger's interest and likelihood of engagement.

Next, we prompt them to imagine that they proceed to have a conversation with the stranger for roughly ten minutes. They then read seven questions inquiring about their expectations about how the interaction would make them feel, each answered on an 11-point Likert scale (see Appendix). The exact same questions were used from Experiment 1, with the sole modification being the division of the positive and negative mood inquiries into two distinct questions:

1. How positive do you think you would feel after having this conversation? (-5 = a lot less positive than usual, 5 = a lot more positive than usual)
2. How negative do you think you would feel after having this conversation? (-5 = a lot less negative than usual, 5 = a lot more negative than usual)

Lastly, participants again completed the 10-item personality inventory (Gosling et al., 2003), five demographic questions, and final attention check.

Results

The average annual household income was approximately 7.99 which fell within the \$70,000-\$80,000 range (SD=4.83). The average education level was 5.26 (SD=0.87), which

corresponded with “Bachelor’s degree”. The mean self-report of social class was 2.95 (SD=0.87), which meant most rated themselves as middle class. Finally, the average ladder-measure report was 6.10 (SD=1.82) out of the 10-rung ladder, so most identified themselves in the upper-middle of the socioeconomic hierarchy.

The correlational analysis conducted to explore the relationship between SES and sociality revealed positive correlations amongst eight of the nine sociality measures, ranging from .12 to .26, as shown in Table 3. Notably, those higher in SES were more likely to have positive evaluations about social interactions; characterized by a higher interest in engaging ($r = .17, p < .05$) and initiating conversation ($r = .18, p < .05$), greater feelings of commonality ($r = .26, p < .001$) and bondedness ($r = .17, p < .05$), and increased perceived likelihood that others want to interact with them ($r = .16, p < .05$). SES was negatively correlated with awkwardness ($r = -.20, p < .01$), such that those higher in SES expect to feel less awkward during a conversation with a stranger. In summary, these results yield small to modest correlations across several measures of sociality, revealing that SES is consistently associated with a greater likelihood of anticipating positive outcomes from social interactions, such as increased interest in initiating conversations and expecting the same from others. Therefore, these results support the status-enabled optimism hypothesis.

Interestingly, the strongest correlation observed was 0.26 for perceived commonality with others during an interaction, suggesting a moderate relationship wherein individuals of higher SES strata may feel they share more in common with those they engage with socially. This potentially highlights the ostracizing nature of being lower-class (Petsnik & Vorauer, 2023; Shaw et al., 1999), where those who are a part of lower SES strata tend to feel different from those they may interact with, which can also impede social connection.

Table 3.

Correlations Between SES and Sociality

SES Measures	Psychological indices of sociality								
	Own Interest	Own Initiate	Other Interest	Other Initiate	Enjoy	Awkward	Common	Friends	Bond
Subjective SES	.17*	.18*	.16*	.13	.12	-.20**	.26***	.08	.17*
Social Class	.07	.07	-.01	.02	.11	-.16*	.16*	-.01	.04
Income	-.14	-.13	-.09	-.13	-.04	-.01	.15	-.16*	-.02
Education	-.13	-.03	-.08	-.09	-.13	-.02	-.03	-.06	-.03

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

The findings thus far suggest a small to moderate correlation between SES and sociality, such that those of higher SES hold generally more favorable expectations of social interactions in the context of this study and demonstrate a higher interest in engaging with strangers. To expand upon this, Experiment 2 sought to discern whether the positive association between SES and mood, observed over Experiments 1 and 2, was specific to social interaction. To do this, a difference score was computed by subtracting the post-interaction mood rating from the pre-interaction mood rating, in order to isolate the specific impact of social interaction on mood.

A correlational analysis was used which first confirmed a positive association between SES and positive mood both prior to engagement ($r = .15$, $p < .05$) and following interaction ($r = .19$, $p < .01$), as characterized in Table 4. Similarly, higher SES also predicted less negative mood after interaction ($r = -.15$, $p < .05$). The difference scores revealed no correlation between mood before and after interaction and subjective SES ($r = .04$, $p = 0.601$ (positive); $r = -.06$, $p = 0.386$ (negative)), meaning that changes in mood after interactions cannot be explained by SES in the context of the present study. Consequently, these results are not consistent with our

hypothesis that SES would positively predict mood after conversation but not before. These results highlight a consistent pattern where SES is positively correlated with better mood states and negatively correlated with worse mood states. However, when it comes to changes in mood triggered specifically by social interactions, SES does not appear to play a significant role. This could suggest that while the overall mood levels are influenced by socioeconomic factors, the immediate emotional impact of a social interaction might be relatively uniform across different SES groups.

Table 4.

Correlations Between SES and Sociality (Mood)

SES Measures	Psychological indices of sociality (mood)					
	Positive (prior)	Positive (after)	Positive (difference score)	Negative (prior)	Negative (after)	Negative (difference score)
Subjective SES	.15*	.19**	.04	-.08	-.15*	-.06
Social Class	.15*	.17*	.03	-.05	-.07	-.02
Income	.05	.07	.04	-.03	.02	-.08
Education	.04	.08	-.10	.02	.12	.09

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

A bivariate linear analysis yielded identical results, depicted in Table 5. To explore these relationships further and adjust for potential confounding factors, we extended the analysis to include extraversion as a control variable in a multivariate regression model. In this case, significant main effects of SES only remained for measurements of perceived awkwardness ($b = -.223$, $t = -2.208$, $p < .05$) and commonality ($b = .221$, $t = 3.158$, $p < .01$). For example, in the

multivariate model, the significant association between SES and one's own interest in engaging observed in the bivariate model ($b = .243$, $t = 2.339$, $p < .05$) became non-significant ($b = .147$, $t = 1.504$, $p = .134$). Similarly, the significant relationship between SES and one's own propensity to initiate conversation ($b = .272$, $t = 2.468$, $p < .05$) also turned nonsignificant upon controlling for extraversion ($b = .154$, $t = 1.532$, $p = .127$). These findings suggest that the initial positive effects of SES on these dimensions of social interest were confounded by individual differences in the trait extraversion. Consequently, the apparent effect of SES on social behaviors may actually be driven by higher extraversion among those with higher SES (Luo et al., 2024).

Plainly put, while SES did display a statistically significant relationship across nine of the fifteen variables, it only remained salient when controlling for extraversion in two cases: when measuring the perceived awkwardness felt by an individual respondent during an interaction with a stranger at the park, in which high SES individuals expected to feel less awkward, and when measuring how much an individual respondent expects to have in common with a stranger, in which higher SES individuals expected to have more in common. Overall, while SES did not predict a positive shift in mood after social interaction as we had anticipated, it did reliably support the status-enabled optimism hypothesis, in that higher SES positively predicted better expectations of social interactions, even when controlling for extraversion in two cases. Given that both Experiments 1 and 2 used scenarios involving a stranger, Experiment 3 aims to determine whether these expectations differ by relationship type. More specifically, whether SES will only be related to expectations of interactions with strangers, but not friends.

Table 5.

Bivariate and Multivariate Linear Analysis – Subjective SES and Sociality

Sociality Variable	Bivariate				Multivariate (controlling for extraversion)			
	b	SE	t	Adjusted R ²	b	SE	t	Adjusted R ²
Own Interest	.243	.104	2.339*	.023	.147	.098	1.504	.160
Own Initiate	.272	.110	2.468*	.026	.154	.101	1.532	.211
Other Interest	.195	.088	2.219*	.020	.126	.085	1.489	.118
Awkward	-.30	.104	-2.878**	.037	-.223	.101	-2.208*	.121
Bond	.230	.099	2.316*	.022	.139	.093	1.485	.157
Common	.253	.068	3.725***	.063	.211	.067	3.158**	.119
Positive Mood - Pre	.145	.068	2.122*	.018	.134	.069	1.944	.016
Positive Mood - Post	.192	.074	2.599*	.029	.136	.072	1.904	.119
Negative Mood - Post	-.173	.084	-2.069*	.017	-.119	.082	-1.448	.082

* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001.

Experiment 3

The previous two studies provide consistent, albeit small to moderate evidence in support of the status-enabled optimism hypothesis, in which those of higher class display more optimistic expectations of social interactions and higher interest in engaging. While Experiment 2 failed to demonstrate that the positive relationship between SES and mood was specific to social interactions, it did yield some evidence that SES may simply be correlated with more positive

evaluations generally. Experiment 3 aims to further test our hypotheses by investigating whether these expectations are specific to interactions with strangers. Namely, we hypothesize that SES is more strongly related to expectations about interactions with strangers than friends.

Method (Experiment 3)

Participants

399 participants were recruited using the PIMCO Decision Research Virtual Lab at the Roman Family Center for Decision Research (N = 399 individuals after exclusions; $M_{age} = 31.67$; 77.4% Women; 49% White, 25% Asian, 8% Black, 6% Hispanic, 12% Mixed).

Procedure

In continuity with Experiments 1 and 2, participants initiated the study by consenting to participation and undergoing an initial attention check. Subsequently, they provided responses to the identical set of four SES metrics, encompassing educational attainment, annual household income, subjective SES, and the single-item measure of perceived SES category (poor, working class, middle class, middle-high class, high class).

Participants proceeded to complete the 10-item personality inventory (Gosling et al., 2003), followed by the administration of Rosenberg's self-esteem scale (Rosenberg, 1965). The inclusion of the self-esteem assessment served a dual purpose: firstly, to introduce an additional control measure, thereby improving the robustness of the experimental design; and secondly, to validate the relationship delineated between subjective SES and sociality in Experiment 2. This validation attempt sought to validate that the observed association attributed to subjective SES was not confounded by respondent self-esteem levels, thereby substantiating the observed linkages with greater confidence.

Experiment 3 utilized a between-participant design, in which respondents were randomly assigned to either the friend (N = 197 individuals) or stranger (N = 202 individuals) condition. The stranger condition used the same design and questions as Experiment 2: participants are asked to imagine that they go to the park during a free afternoon to do a solitary activity and answer two questions assessing mood (how positive or negative they anticipate feeling about this experience). They are then asked to imagine that after a few minutes, another person comes and sits on the other end of the bench, where they each exchange a smile and nod. Four questions assess interest and likelihood to engage. Lastly, participants were prompted to imagine engaging in a conversation with the stranger for an estimated duration of ten minutes, and to express their anticipated affective responses across the same six dimensions as Experiment 2. The inquiry regarding the likelihood of forming a friendship was omitted due to its irrelevancy in the friend condition.

In the friend condition, a parallel protocol was adhered to, where an identical sequence and set of inquiries were administered. The key distinction lay in directing participants to envision that after a few minutes, instead of a stranger, it is a friend of theirs that they notice at the park. Their friend recognizes them, and they each smile and nod at each other. Again, they are asked to consider whether they should start a conversation and answer the same four questions on interest and likelihood to engage. Lastly, they answer the same six questions about how a ten-minute interaction with their friend would make them feel (see Appendix).

Lastly, participants answered the same demographic questions on age, gender, English proficiency, and ethnicity. Experiment 3 added an additional demographic question on sexuality to use in subsequent analyses on individual difference factors potentially affecting sociality. Finally, respondents also answered the same final attention check.

Results

The average annual household income was approximately 7.85 which fell within the \$70,000-\$80,000 range (SD=5.16). The average education level was 5.04 (SD=0.99), which corresponded with “Bachelor’s degree”. The mean self-report of social class was 2.84 (SD=0.90), which meant most rated themselves as middle class. Finally, the average ladder-measure report was 5.84 (SD=1.78) out of the 10-rung ladder, so most identified themselves in the upper-middle of the socioeconomic hierarchy.

We first tested whether Experiment 3 replicated the results from Experiment 2 in interactions with strangers. Table 6 demonstrates the results of the correlational analysis, which revealed no correlation between SES and sociality, with the exception of feelings of commonality ($r = .14, p < .05$). While the latest study did succeed in replicating a confirmation of the hypothesis across this dimension, the result is marked by the limited strength of the association and a notable reduction in the number of measures attaining significance when compared to the previous study. The weak to moderate correlations outlined in Experiments 1 and 2 combined with the null results of Experiment 3 suggest that while SES may be related to sociality, those associations are weak and likely influenced by other factors not explained entirely by social status.

Table 6.

Correlations Between Subjective SES and Sociality

SES Measures	Psychological indices of sociality								
	Own Interest	Own Initiate	Other Interest	Other Initiate	Enjoy	Awkward	Common	Friends	Bond
Subjective SES	.001	.005	-.0004	-.021	.097	-.11	.14*	0.065	0.092

* $p < .05$

The primary methodological approach employed in Experiment 3 is an Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression analysis. This statistical technique was chosen due to its robustness in estimating the linear relationships between the dependent variables and one or more independent variables. Here, the key independent variable is SES, measured by the MacArthur Scale of Subjective Social Status (SES ladder). In this regression, the SES ladder score was included as a continuous variable to capture the main effects of socioeconomic status. A categorical variable representing the interaction context (friend or stranger) was included to test the hypothesis that the impact of SES varies by social context. An interaction term between SES and the interaction context was included to explicitly test for differential effects of SES across contexts. For each dependent variable, an OLS regression model was constructed. The models included the main effects of SES and the interaction context, as well as their interaction term.

The hypothesis posited that SES would be more strongly related to participants' expectations about having conversations in the stranger condition compared to the friend condition, as evidenced by significant interaction effects between SES and conversation target. The regression results for the various outcome variables, however, provide limited support for this hypothesis (see Appendix, Table 1. and Figure 1.).

The hypothesis that SES is more strongly related to participants' expectations about having a conversation in the stranger condition than in the friend condition is not supported by the data. None of the interaction terms were statistically significant, indicating that the effect of SES on interaction expectations does not significantly differ between talking to strangers and friends, at least within the limitations of this dataset. There were some outcomes where the interaction term showed marginal effects, such as one's own propensity to initiate conversation ($b = -0.28$, $t = -1.83$, $p = 0.069$). However, these findings do not robustly support the hypothesis,

as the evidence of a stronger relationship in the stranger condition compared to the friend condition is not consistent or strong across most outcomes.

This outcome suggests that either SES does not vary its influence based on the social context as hypothesized, or that the effects, if present, are too subtle to be detected with the current sample size or measurement approach. The same analyses were conducted for the other three SES measures (income, education, and social class), in which all three also failed to display significance for the interaction term. Taken together, these results demonstrate that the context of interaction (friend vs. stranger) may not significantly alter dynamics observed between SES and social interactions. While a small to moderate positive relationship has been identified between SES and sociality across all three studies, namely feelings of commonality, Experiment 3 demonstrated that expectations do not seem to vary based on relationship type.

Exploratory Analyses: The Interaction Effect of Self-Esteem on SES and Sociality

Experiment 3 incorporated Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale to assess if self-esteem could potentially confound the relationship between subjective SES and sociality. Experiments 1, 2, and 3 revealed no significant effects of objective SES (annual household income and education) on social behavior, raising questions about other potential influences on how individuals perceive their social standing. This led to further exploration of how self-esteem might also moderate the impact of SES on social interactions.

This final exploratory analysis aims to discern whether self-esteem exerts a differential predictive influence on social behaviors among individuals of varying SES. The guiding hypothesis proposes that self-esteem exerts a greater influence on the social behavior of individuals with lower SES compared to those with higher SES. Grounded in Leary's Sociometer

Theory (2012), this study theorizes that individuals with lower SES, frequently facing increased instances of rejection, diminished self-efficacy, and heightened dependence on social support due to their precarious economic standing, will exhibit a more pronounced impact of self-esteem on their social engagement. In contrast, individuals of higher SES are theorized to benefit from a protective buffer associated with their status, which may mitigate the influence of self-esteem on their social behaviors due to a lesser reliance on social networks for fulfilling instrumental needs.

Results

Participants scored an average of 29 out of 40 possible points ($SD = 5.73$), meaning the average respondent had moderately high self-esteem. Self-esteem was positively correlated with participants conversation expectations, with the exception of perceived awkwardness ($r = -.22$, $p < .01$ (stranger condition); $r = -.25$, $p < .001$ (friend condition)) and the negative difference scores ($r = -.19$, $p < .01$ (stranger condition); $r = -.15$, $p < .05$ (friend condition)), meaning those with higher self-esteem expect to feel less awkward during interactions (both with strangers and friends) and less negative mood following interactions. Correlations range from weak to moderately strong associations, as outlined in Table 7. Furthermore, self-esteem was also positively correlated with all measures of SES, in alignment with previous literature (Twenge & Campbell, 2002; Bradley & Corwyn, 2002), and demonstrated in Table 8.

Table 7.

Correlations Between Self-Esteem and Sociality

Sociality Variable	Pearson Correlation (r)	95% Confidence Interval	Significance
Stranger Condition			
Own Initiate	.25***	[0.117, 0.376]	Significant
Own Interest	.21**	[0.076, 0.340]	Significant
Other Initiate	.14*	[0.001, 0.272]	Significant
Other Interest	.20**	[0.067, 0.332]	Significant
Enjoy	.17*	[0.037, 0.305]	Significant
Awkward	-.22**	[-0.350, -0.088]	Significant
Common	.26***	[0.122, 0.380]	Significant
Bond	.16*	[0.020, 0.289]	Significant
Positive Post	0.14*	[0.003, 0.274]	Significant
Negative Post	-0.14	[-0.269, 0.002]	Not Significant
Positive Difference Score	-.04	[-0.177, 0.098]	Not Significant
Negative Difference Score	-.19**	[-0.319, -0.052]	Significant
Friend Condition			
Own Initiate (F)	.26***	[0.123, 0.384]	Significant
Own Interest (F)	.17*	[0.031, 0.302]	Significant
Other Initiate (F)	.21**	[0.069, 0.337]	Significant
Other Interest (F)	.26***	[0.127, 0.388]	Significant
Enjoy (F)	.16*	[0.022, 0.294]	Significant
Awkward (F)	-.25***	[-0.374, -0.111]	Significant
Common (F)	.18*	[0.037, 0.308]	Significant
Bond (F)	.09	[-0.046, 0.231]	Not Significant
Positive Post (F)	0.11	[-0.025, 0.251]	Not Significant
Negative Post (F)	-0.12	[-0.255, 0.021]	Not Significant
Positive Difference Score (F)	.04	[-0.101, 0.178]	Not Significant
Negative Difference Score (F)	-.15*	[-0.286, -0.013]	Significant

* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001.

Table 8.

Correlations Between SES and Self-Esteem

SES Variable	Pearson Correlation (r)	95% Confidence Interval	Significance
SES Ladder	0.28***	[0.190, 0.371]	Significant
Income	0.12*	[0.009, 0.222]	Significant
Education	0.15**	[0.053, 0.245]	Significant
Social Class	0.17**	[0.070, 0.261]	Significant

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

In sum, these associations raise the question of whether self-esteem has the same effect on social behavior across SES strata. While it was initially theorized that those low in self-esteem and low in SES would experience a larger decline in social behavior compared to those of low self-esteem, high SES, results suggest that self-esteem's effect on social behavior was actually less pronounced in higher SES groups than in lower SES groups.

An ordinary least squares (OLS) regression analysis was conducted to assess whether the SES, self-esteem interaction would be predictive of sociality. Here, the key independent variable is SES, measured by the MacArthur Scale of Subjective Social Status (SES ladder). In this regression, the SES ladder score was included as a continuous variable to capture the main effects of socioeconomic status. Self-esteem was treated as a binary variable in which self-esteem scores were divided based on the mean score of the sample ($\bar{x} = 29$ points out of 40 possible points). Those whose scores fell in the lower half of the distribution were categorized as having low self-esteem, while those in the upper half were categorized as having high self-esteem. An interaction term between SES and the self-esteem binary was included to explicitly test whether the effect of self-esteem on sociality varies by SES level. For each dependent variable, an OLS regression model was constructed. The models included the main effects of

SES and self-esteem, as well as their interaction term. Additionally, extraversion was added as a potential confounder, given its likely influence on both self-esteem and social behavior.

Analyses were conducted across all twelve outcome variables used in Experiment 3, and confirmation for the hypothesis was found under the ‘own’ and ‘other interest’ conditions, which asked participants:

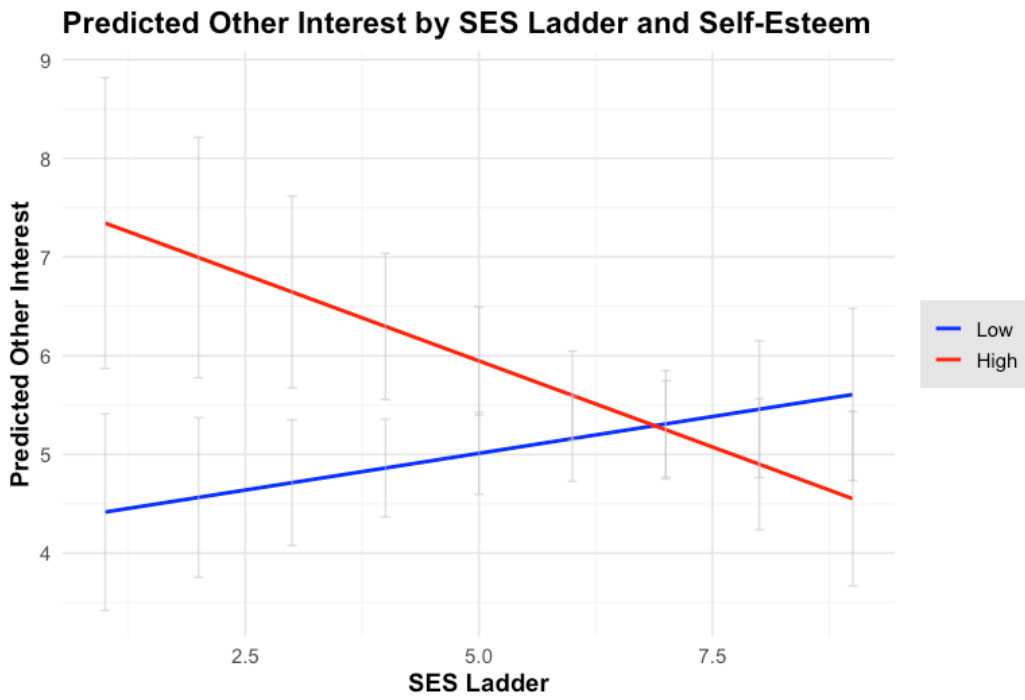
1. How interested do you think this person would be in talking with you?
2. How interested do you think you would be in talking with this person?

The findings from the first model revealed that self-esteem has a significant and positive effect on assumptions of how interested others would be in engaging (‘other interest’), indicating that individuals with higher self-esteem tend to believe others will be more interested in interacting with them ($b = 3.426, p < 0.01$). Extraversion also had a positive influence ($b = 0.376, p < 0.01$), suggesting that more extraverted individuals are likely to hold this belief as well. Crucially, a significant interaction between SES and self-esteem was noted, suggesting that the relationship between self-esteem and ‘other interest’ varies with SES levels ($b = -0.498, p < 0.01$). The negative interaction term demonstrates that as SES increases, the positive relationship between self-esteem and ‘other interest’ weakens, as shown in Figure 2 and Table 9.

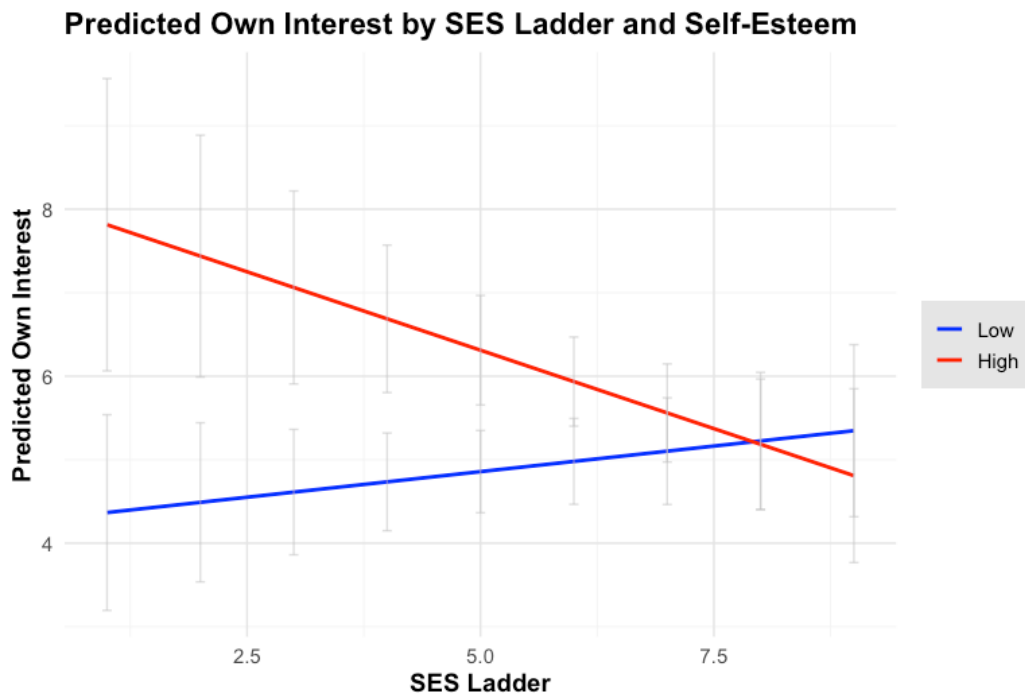
Parallel outcomes were observed in the second model, with self-esteem significantly and positively impacting one’s own interest in engaging with a stranger (‘own interest’) emphasizing self-esteem's role in social engagement ($b = 4.053, p < 0.01$). Again, extraversion was associated positively with ‘own interest’ ($b = 0.389, p < 0.05$), reinforcing the concept that extraverted individuals are inclined towards social activities. The interaction between SES and self-esteem was also significant ($b = -0.507, p < 0.05$), further highlighting the differing effect of self-esteem across SES strata.

Figure 2.

Regression Analyses of SES Self-Esteem Interaction Effect on Sociality



$p < .01$



$p < .05$

Table 9.

Regression Analyses of Subjective SES and Self-Esteem Interaction on Sociality

Predictor	b	SE	t	b	SE	t
	Other Interest			Own Interest		
SES Ladder	0.150	0.106	1.402	0.118	0.125	0.948
Self-esteem	3.426	1.066	3.213**	4.053	1.255	3.230**
(High vs Low)						
Extraversion	0.376	0.132	2.851**	0.389	0.155	2.504*
Interaction	-0.498	0.174	-2.869**	-0.507	0.204	-2.482*
Term						

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Despite the significant findings, the adjusted R-squared values for ‘other interest’ (adjusted $R^2 = 8.7\%$) and ‘own interest’ (adjusted $R^2 = 10.5\%$) indicate that the models account for only a moderate proportion of the variance in the two measures examined. This highlights the likelihood of other factors contributing to the explained variance in social behaviors and the need for their inclusion in future research models.

Overall, these unprecedented effects observed in the data point to the possibility that self-esteem plays a more consequential role in the social behaviors of individuals lower on the SES ladder when examining one’s own interest in engaging with strangers and perceived interest of others in engaging with them. This effect persists even after accounting for the influence of extraversion, a trait commonly associated with social behavior. The interaction between SES and self-esteem suggests that lower SES individuals may rely more on self-perception in social contexts due to less social buffering provided by higher SES.

It is imperative to note that these effects were unexpectedly found within this dataset. Future studies should seek to replicate this finding before it can be considered reliably indicative of social behavior. This analysis opens the door to future investigations on the variables that mediate or moderate how SES affects social behavior. While the effect of SES on sociality appears potentially small and nuanced, additional factors such as extraversion or self-esteem can help in understanding the many ways that social class can affect social behavior via its effects on numerous other individual difference factors. This analysis additionally raises interesting questions around self-esteem and social success. Endless studies have found that those of higher self-esteem do better in life across a plethora of dimensions, including relational and social success (Orth & Robins, 2022; Harris & Orth, 2019; Pyszczynski et al., 2004; Mossman & Ziller, 1968; Rosenberg et al., 1995; Yelsma & Yelsma, (1998); de Bruyn & van den Boom; 2005). This finding suggests that perhaps it is those of lower social class whose social success is more reliant on self-esteem, while those of higher class are afforded greater social capital through their heightened social status, which weakens the effect of self-esteem on social behavior.

Lastly, this finding can be useful in examining normative behavior across SES strata. For example, it can be seen in the graphics depicted in Figure 2 that high-self-esteem, high SES respondents are predicted to be considerably less sociable than high self-esteem, low SES respondents. I theorize that this further elucidates the difference in relational function and salience across class lines, and what behavior is viewed as desirable when interacting with strangers in public. If self-esteem is a meter assessing one's social acceptance (Leary, 2012), and those of higher self-esteem, higher SES are predicted to be about half as likely as someone of high self-esteem, low class to be interested in engaging with strangers on a park bench, then it can be proposed that behavior that would increase social acceptance in one context would not in

another. Put plainly, greater interest and willingness to engage with a stranger in public may yield positive results and greater social success for those in lower class contexts, meanwhile, it could make one appear weird, out of the norm, or even a public nuisance in a higher-class context where people are more likely to keep to themselves. This can additionally explain why, even when those born to lower class break into higher-class settings (colleges, affluent neighborhoods), they can fail to thrive and acclimate despite acquiring the necessary resources (DeAngelis, 2022; DeLuca et al., 2019; Fiske & Markus, 2012).

Discussion & Conclusion

This thesis sought to explore how individuals of differing SES predict and experience social interactions. The investigation was comprised of three experiments and one exploratory analysis, each building upon the last to unravel the complexities of this relationship.

Experiment 1 provided an initial understanding, revealing weak correlations between SES and sociality outcomes. Only the ‘other initiate’ and ‘mood’ outcomes demonstrated notable associations, suggesting that while individuals with higher SES might anticipate others are more interested in engaging with them, as well as increased mood, these assumptions have limited implications for actual social behavior. Experiment 2 extended these findings, showing a general positive affect associated with higher SES but not one specifically tied to social interactions. Interestingly, the elevated mood of higher SES individuals appeared consistent, regardless of social engagement.

Experiment 3 tested whether these expectations differed between interactions with strangers versus friends. The lack of significant differences suggests that individuals' SES does not uniquely alter expectations based on social context. This finding contradicts the proposed

hypothesis and calls into question the predictive power of SES on social behavior in varying contexts.

The more interesting question to now ask is whether SES does not play a substantively significant role in the way we interact. This study is not able to conclusively make such a claim. Our research faced significant limitations, notably the reliance on hypothetical scenarios which may not reflect real-life behavior, thoughts, and actions accurately. For instance, higher SES respondents may indicate in our survey they are more likely to approach a stranger, but in actuality, may actually be less likely than lower SES individuals. This would highlight perhaps a social desirability bias, or falsified optimistic view of one's own behavior that isn't mirrored in real-life conduct.

Past research has demonstrated that money fosters self-sufficiency and reduces interest in others to such an extent that it has been explicitly identified as a factor that impedes sociality (Bianchi & Vohs, 2016). Furthermore, higher household income is associated with less time spent socializing and more time spent alone (Bianchi & Vohs, 2016). Additionally, wealthier individuals are more likely to disengage from social interactions (Kraus & Keltner, 2009) and exhibit less compassion toward people in distress (Stellar et al., 2012). Thus, while higher SES may increase dispositional optimism (Robb & Wardle, 2009; Scheier & Carver, 1985), which enhances expectations of social interactions, it may not actually be indicative of real-life social behavior. This discrepancy helps explain why mood was not specifically linked to sociality in Experiment 2; individuals of higher SES were simply more optimistic in their expectations, extending beyond the realm of social interactions.

Future research should strive for more ecologically valid methodologies, such as lab or field experiments, as well as qualitative interviews or ethnographic methods, to understand the

true extent of SES's influence on social behaviors. They should additionally aim to test sociality differences among classes within different contexts (at work, a party, networking event, restaurant, bar, within the home), and by manipulating the apparent class of the 'stranger', to further understand how class shapes with whom and how we socialize. It is essential to explore these dynamics across diverse contexts and consider individual differences, such as self-esteem, which this study highlighted as a potential moderator in the relationship between SES and sociality.

In conclusion, while the hypothesized strong relationship between SES and sociality was not robustly supported, this research contributes to the field by emphasizing the complexity of social interactions and the need to consider a multitude of factors, including self-esteem and extraversion, in understanding the full picture of social behavior across socioeconomic strata.

Appendix

Experiments 1, 2, and 3:

3. How interested do you think YOU would be in talking with this person? (0 = not at all interested, 10 = extremely interested)
4. How likely do you think YOU would be to initiate a conversation with this person? (0 = not at all likely, 10 = very likely)
5. How interested do you think THIS PERSON would be in talking with you? (0 = not at all interested, 10 = extremely interested)
6. How likely do you think it is that THIS PERSON would initiate a conversation with you? (0 = not at all likely, 10 = very likely)
7. How much do you think you would enjoy this conversation? (0 = not at all enjoyable, 10 = extremely enjoyable)
8. How awkward do you think YOU would feel while having this conversation? (0 = not at all awkward, 10 = very awkward)
9. How much do you think YOU would have in common with this person? (0 = nothing at all, 10 = an extreme amount)
10. How positive do YOU think you would feel after having this conversation? (-5 = a lot less positive than usual, 5 = a lot more positive than usual)
11. How negative do YOU think you would feel after having this conversation? (-5 = a lot more negative than usual, 5 = a lot less negative than usual)
12. How strong of a bond do you think YOU would feel with this person after having this conversation? (0 = weak, like a stranger, 10 = strong, like a new friend)

13. How likely do you think it is that YOU will become friends with this person after having this conversation? (0 = not at all likely, 10 = very likely)

Experiments 2 and 3:

Inclusion of mood assessment during a solitary period in the park, to measure changes in mood before and after social interaction.

3. How positive do YOU think you would feel about the experience? (-5 = a lot less positive than usual, 5 = a lot more positive than usual)
4. How negative do YOU think you would feel about the experience? (-5 = a lot less negative than usual, 5 = a lot more negative than usual)

Table 1.

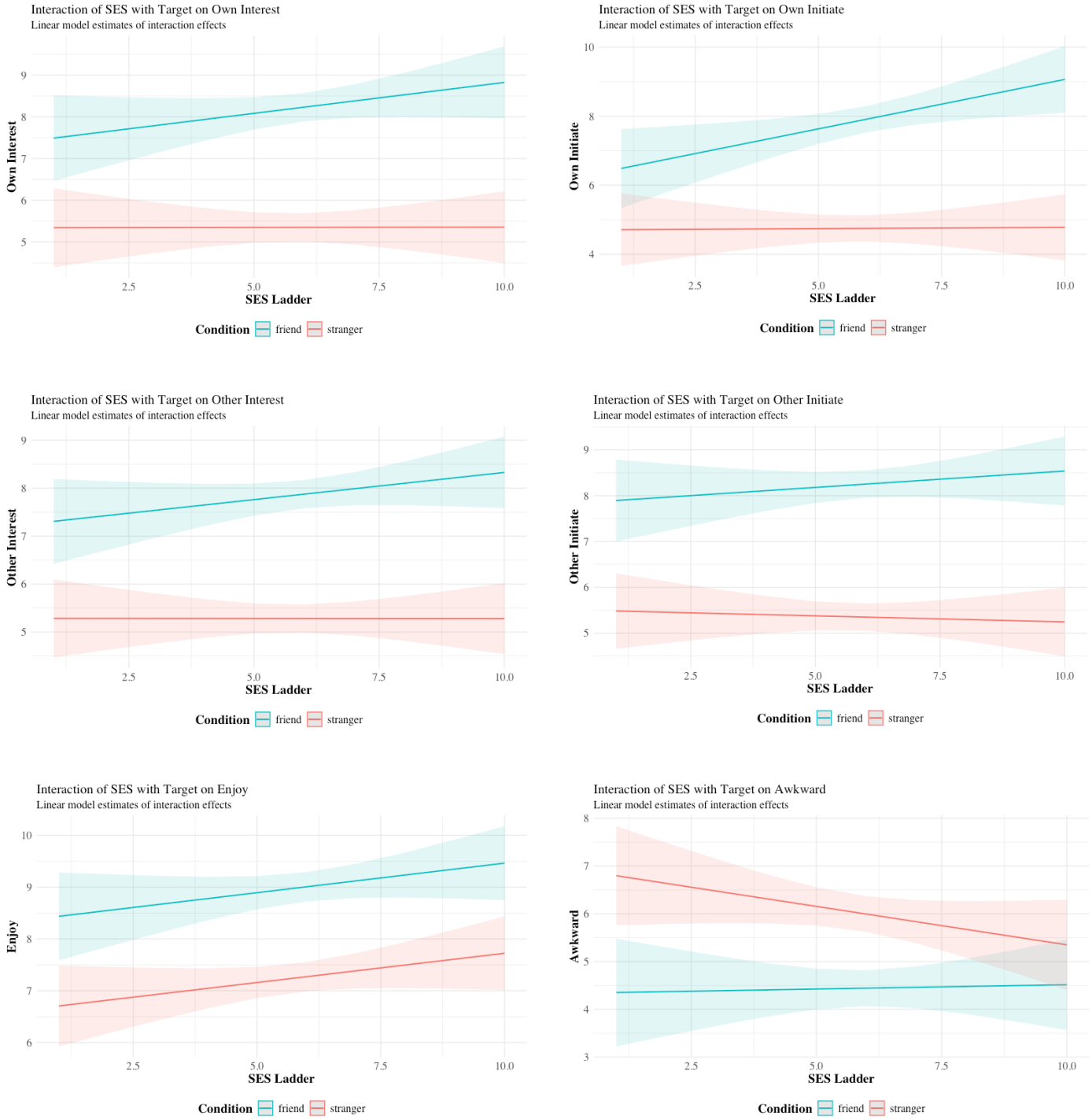
Regression Analyses of Subjective SES and Sociality by Conversation Target – Experiment 3

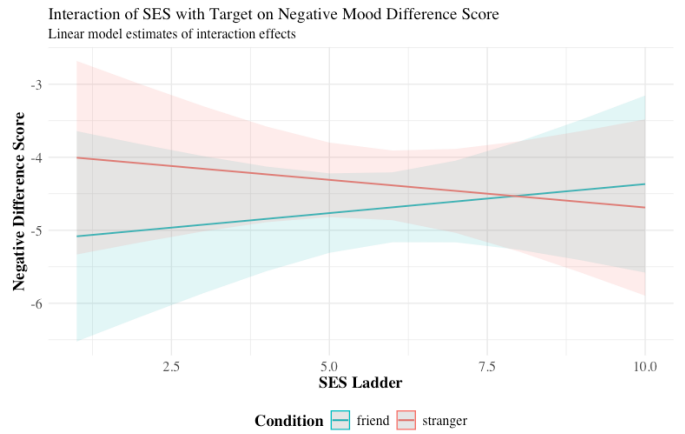
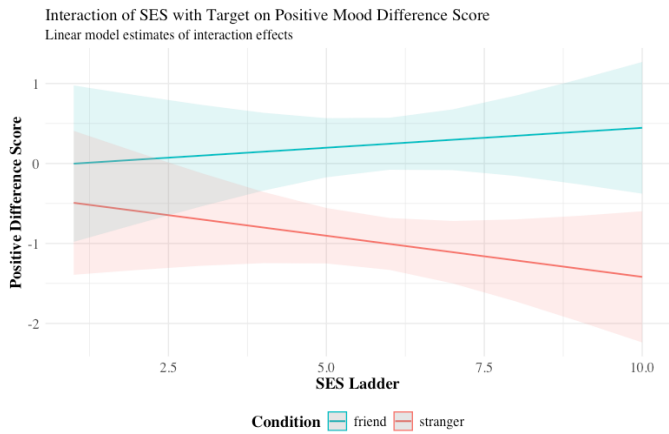
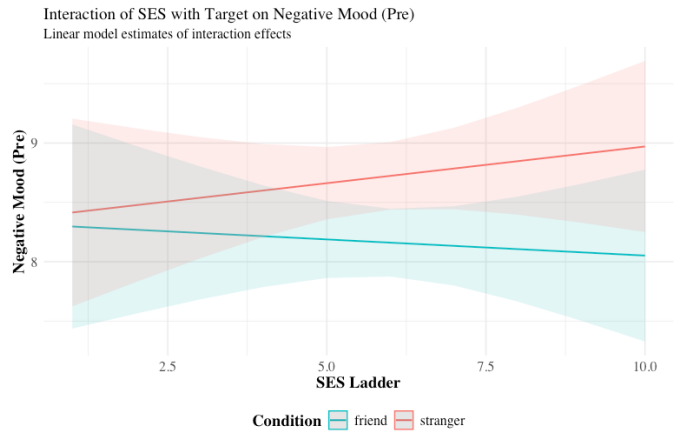
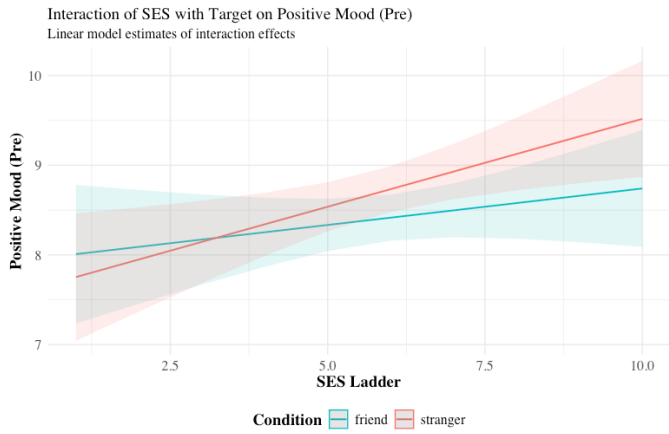
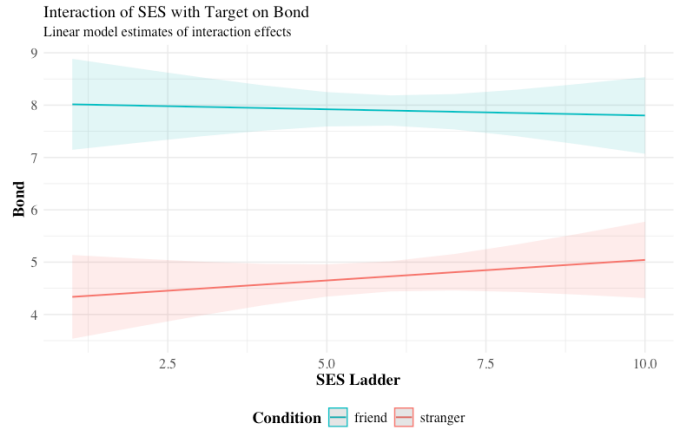
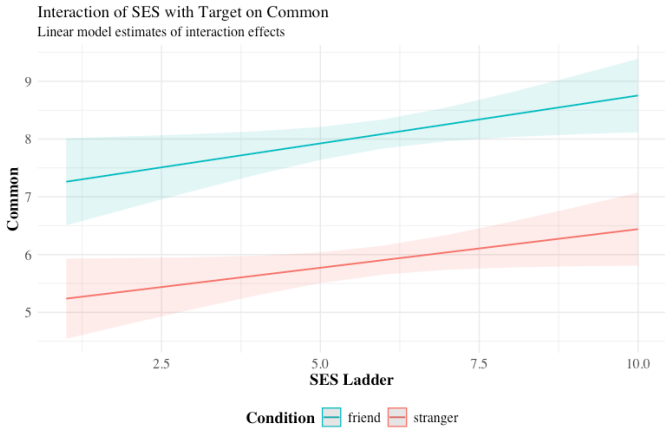
Sociality Variable	SES Ladder (b, SE, t)	Target - Stranger (b, SE, t)	Interaction Term (b, SE, t)	Adj. R²
Own Initiate	.29 (.11), 2.59*	-1.49 (.93), -1.60	-.28 (.15), -1.83	.259
Own Interest	.15 (.10), 1.49	-2.00 (.84), -2.39*	-.15 (.14), -1.07	.259
Other Interest	.11 (0.09), 1.32	-1.91 (.72), -2.64**	-.11 (.12), -0.96	.275
Other Initiate	.07 (0.09), 0.83	-2.31 (.73), -3.16**	-.10 (.12), -0.82	.316
Enjoy	.11 (0.08), 1.39	-1.73 (.69), -2.49*	-.001 (.11), -0.01	.163
Awkward	.02 (0.11), 0.17	2.62 (.92), 2.85**	-.18 (.15), -1.19	.081
Common	.17 (0.07), 2.27*	-1.99 (.62), -3.23**	-.03 (.10), -0.32	.285
Bond	-.02 (0.08), -0.28	-3.78 (.71), -5.32***	.10 (.12), 0.88	.374
Positive Difference	.05 (0.09), 0.53	-0.34 (.80), -0.42	-.15 (.13), -1.17	.062
Negative Difference	.08 (0.14), 0.57	1.23 (1.18), 1.05	-.16 (.19), -0.81	-.0037
Positive Pre	.08 (0.07), 1.09	-0.37 (.63), -0.59	.11 (.10), 1.11	.020
Negative Pre	-.03 (0.08), -0.33	0.03 (.70), 0.04	.09 (.12), .77	.012

* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001.

Figure 1.

Plotted Regression Analyses of SES and Sociality by Conversation Target – Experiment 3





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