

Social Class and Prosocial Behavior: The Moderating Role of Public Versus Private Contexts

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Abstract

Associations between social class and prosocial behavior—defined broadly as action intended to help others—may vary as a function of contextual factors. Three studies examined how making prosocial actions public, versus private, moderates this association. In Study 1, participation in a public prosocial campaign was higher among upper than lower class individuals. In Studies 2 and 3, lower class individuals were more prosocial in a dictator game scenario in private than in public, whereas upper class individuals showed the reverse pattern. Follow-up analyses revealed the importance of reputational concerns for shaping class differences in prosociality: Specifically, higher class individuals reported that pride motivated their prosocial behavior more than lower class individuals, and this association partially accounted for class-based differences in prosociality in public versus private contexts. Together, these results suggest that unique strategies for connecting and relating to others develop based on one's position in the class hierarchy.

Keywords

social class, socioeconomic status, prosocial behavior, emotion

Record levels of economic inequality place significant strain on those at the bottom of the social class hierarchy—with less income, education, and occupation prestige. Individuals contend with environments of scarce resources, in part, by turning to the prosocial behavior of others. Although the United States is among the most prosocial countries when examining charitable donations (Charities Aid Foundation, 2013), a cursory examination of surveys and experiments seems to suggest that those higher in social class engage in lower levels of prosocial behavior than their lower class counterparts (Bureau of Labor and Statistics, 2013; Independent Sector, 2001; Miller, Kahle, & Hastings, 2015; for a review, see Kraus, Piff, Mendoza-Denton, Rheinschmidt, & Keltner, 2012). However, recent evidence calls this relationship into question (Korndorfer, Egloff, & Schmukle, 2015) and suggests that associations between social class and prosocial behavior are complex and multifaceted, shifting according to the type of prosocial behavior and the setting in which it occurs (Trautmann, van de Kuilen, & Zeckhauser, 2013). We designed this research to examine the factors that moderate disparities in prosocial behavior between the haves and have-nots in society.

In particular, we expect the public versus private nature of the social context to moderate associations between social class and prosocial behavior: More specifically, in private contexts where reciprocity is less salient (Rand & Nowak, 2013), prosocial behavior occurs based on factors related to the perceived intentions, suffering, or needs of others (Batson, Duncan,

Akerman, Buckley, & Birch, 1981; Goetz, Keltner, & Simon-Thomas, 2010; Schaller & Cialdini, 1988) or trait-like cooperative tendencies (Rand & Nowak, 2013). Thus, we predict that lower class individuals—who tend to exhibit more cooperative tendencies than upper class individuals in prior research (e.g., Guinote, Cotzia, Sandhu, & Siwa, 2015; Kraus, Côté, & Keltner, 2010; Stellar, Manzo, Kraus, & Keltner, 2012)—will engage in higher rates of prosocial behavior in private relative to public settings. In contrast, public contexts tend to make reputational concerns more salient (Boehm, 2012; Flynn, Reagans, Amantullah, & Ames, 2006; Rand & Nowak, 2013; Sperber & Baumard, 2012), and concerns about reputation and impression management are heightened among upper relative to lower class individuals (Hart & Edelman, 1992; Weininger & Lareau, 2009). Because they can potentially activate reputational concerns, we predict that among upper class individuals, public prosocial contexts will elicit more prosocial behavior than private ones.

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Two specific psychological processes are likely to explain why upper class individuals will be more prosocial in public versus in private, whereas the reverse is true for lower class individuals. First, although reciprocity and reputation are important for all social living animals (Rand & Nowak, 2013), some evidence suggests that public displays of behavior are used for reputation reasons particularly among upper class populations. Observational studies of child and parent interactions indicate that relatively upper class parents instruct their children to think about how others' perceive their social interactions and to try to stand out and be unique from others (Weininger & Lareau, 2009). Relatively lower class parents, by contrast, instruct their children to blend into their social surroundings and to refrain from behaviors that draw attention to the self (Kusserow, 2004; Lareau, 2011). Upper class contexts—such as schools and publications geared toward elite business—actively teach the importance of establishing positive reputations at work as a mechanism for networking and individual success (e.g., Ibarra, 2016; Casciaro, Gino, & Kouchaki, 2016). Similarly, research on a relatively upper class sample, newly graduated MBAs, finds that publically known prosocial reputations at work are associated with higher peer-rated social status, even after accounting for differences in actual prosocial behavior (Flynn et al., 2006). Together, these studies indicate that reputational concerns are particularly salient and important in upper class contexts and highlight our prediction that upper class individuals may be more prosocial in public versus private contexts, where these concerns are most relevant. In contrast, in public settings, lower class individuals will deemphasize using public behavior for reputation purposes and thus engage in less prosocial behavior in public versus private contexts.

Second, reputational concerns heighten self-evaluative emotions experienced when one lives up to (or falls short of) the expectations of others. When people live up to their own or others' values or ideals, they experience a pleasurable feeling known as pride (Horberg, Kraus, & Keltner, 2013; Tangney, 2012; Tracy, 2010). In this fashion, emotions like pride serve as motivators of future action (e.g., Fiske, 2002). Given their enhanced reputation concerns, we predict that expected pride will motivate prosocial behavior more for upper relative to lower class individuals. Moreover, given that public behaviors are visible and elicit more pride-related judgments that one is living consistently (or not) with others' expectations, we predict that expected pride following prosocial acts will account for the moderation of the social class to prosociality association by social context. Specifically, the reputation concerns of upper class individuals will enhance expected pride, which will motivate greater prosocial behavior in public relative to private contexts. In contrast, because lower class individuals do not expect to feel as much pride when being prosocial, their prosocial behavior in public contexts—where this emotion is most relevant for eliciting prosocial acts—will be diminished relative to private contexts.

Although we are unaware of direct tests of this hypothesis, indirect evidence suggests that upper class individuals use

public prosocial acts to signal their prosocial values: Prosocial spending by higher class individuals is often personally publicized, described in news media, or prominently displayed by the recipient (e.g., Weissmann, 2015). In one notable example, several billionaires signed a public giving pledge to donate a sizable portion of their fortunes to charity (givingpledge.org). In the realm of expensive proenvironment consumer purchases, people tend to buy items (e.g., hybrid cars) that are visibly identified as proenvironment, presumably because such purchases signal proenvironment moral values (Griskevicius, Tybur, & van den Bergh, 2010).

To test our overarching moderation hypothesis, we conducted three studies (although see Supplemental Materials for two additional studies). Since many past examinations of prosocial behavior occur in anonymous settings (Piff et al., 2010) or in surveys that do not account for the public versus private nature of prosociality (Independent Sector, 2001), Study 1 first established that prosocial behavior rates are higher for upper class individuals in an explicitly public setting relative to lower class individuals by examining participation in a campaign to raise awareness about a neurodegenerative disorder. Following this study, Studies 2 and 3 directly tested our moderation hypothesis by examining social class and prosocial behavior in an economic game set in a private or minimally public context.

Importantly, in Study 3, we examined the role of reputation concerns related to networking and expectations of feeling pride following prosocial acts as potential mediators of the proposed public versus private moderation of social class associations with prosocial behavior. We expected that upper class individuals would think more strategically about relationships or would expect to feel proud about their prosocial acts and that these beliefs would explain their preferences for public over private giving contexts relative to lower class individuals.

Study 1

In Study 1, we sought to examine prosocial behavior in a public giving context. We chose to examine participation levels in a public prosocial charity campaign: the amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) ice bucket challenge.

Method

Participants and Procedure

Data were collected from Twitter users who tweeted messages using the tag #ALSicebucketchallenge. ALS is a neurodegenerative disorder that leads to the progressive degeneration of motor neurons in the spinal cord. The ALS ice bucket challenge was a successful funding campaign that has raised more than US\$115 million since August 1, 2014. To participate in the challenge, people post a video on social media of a bucket of ice being dumped on their head. Participants would then encourage others to dump ice on their own head and/or donate to the ALS Association. These videos were tagged with the

hashtag #ALSicebucketchallenge as a way to publically alert others to participation in the funding campaign.

All data were collected using Python, Version 2.7.3, a freely available open-source programming language. We collected data for the present study via Twython, the Twitter interface for python (McGrath, 2012; Ritter, Hernandez, & Preston, 2013). In September 2014, we sampled unique Twitter profiles of users who had published tweets using the hashtag #ALSicebucketchallenge. Using this methodology, we sampled 5,000 unique Twitter profiles. Of these profiles, ones that did not represent actual people (i.e., companies, school, or other organizations) or ones that did not explicitly self-report occupation information were removed, leaving a final sample of 3,982 unique Twitter profiles. The sample size was chosen because we set a goal to complete manual occupation coding of the Twitter profiles by the end of the 2014–2015 academic year and sought to maintain the coder's quality of life.

Using a 9-point scale of occupational prestige developed by Hollingshead (1975), a trained coder determined each user's occupational status. This scale sorts occupations into nine categories based on ascending levels of income earned, education required, and job autonomy (Hollingshead, 1975; Oakes & Rossi, 2003). Before applying the occupation codes, the coder and first author worked to update the job titles and occupations for each category to modern standards as in prior research (Oakes & Rossi, 2003).

The trained coder, blind to the hypotheses of the study, estimated the occupation status of each of the 3,982 unique Twitter users, and these occupation codes were then compared to 200 codes completed by the first author. The coder and the first author showed a high degree of consistency in coding occupations ($r = .80, p < .01$). The mean occupation code for the Twitter sample was 7.24, which is the occupation code of managers, computer programmers, and K-12 teachers.

We used these occupation codes to demarcate the social class of Twitter users. Because participation on Twitter and in the ALS challenge requires access to social media, we expected the Twitter population to be skewed toward higher social class individuals. To account, in part, for the population demographics, we compared estimates of social class for participants in the ALS challenge to surveys of Twitter user demographics collected by the Pew Research Center (2010). We demarcated the social class of Twitter users separately based on education and annual income (Kraus & Stephens, 2012). For education, we coded occupation scores of "6" or less—a category including dental hygienists, retail sales managers, medical technicians, and members of the armed forces—as occupations requiring a high school degree ($n = 510$). Occupation scores of "7" through "9"—categories including K-12 teachers, computer programmers, doctors, lawyers, professors, and high-level managers in business and technology—were coded as requiring a 4-year college degree or higher ($n = 3,472$). For annual income, we used a salary estimation website (www.glassdoor.com) to categorize occupations as below or above the median national income ($Mdn = US\$52,250$; www.census.gov). This method

also resulted in users with an occupation of "6" or lower (e.g., medical technicians earn US\$38,463 annually) as having below median income occupations.

Results

We predicted that relatively upper class Twitter users would engage in more public prosocial behaviors, such as publically sending tweets about the #ALSicebucketchallenge, than relatively lower class ones. Our coding scheme revealed that among #ALSicebucketchallenge users, only 12.8% came from lower class backgrounds, whereas the remaining 87.2% came from relatively upper class backgrounds. To test our central hypothesis, we examined the proportion of upper and lower class #ALSicebucketchallenge users to demographic trends on Twitter (Pew Research, 2010). We dichotomized Twitter demographics for social class as lower or higher if surveyed participants reported income below (51.46%) or above (48.54%) the median census income level (www.census.gov) and based on whether participants had graduated from high school (37.55%) versus attended some college (62.45%) as their highest level of education completed.

We used a χ^2 test of independence for this analysis: If social class does not relate to public prosocial behavior, then #ALSicebucketchallenge users will be equivalent in social class to Twitter demographic trends. For both the education, $\chi^2(1) = 24.71, p < .01$, and income analyses, $\chi^2(1) = 57.78, p < .01$, we found evidence suggesting that social class relates to prosocial behavior in the #ALSicebucketchallenge—with a much higher proportion of people tweeting about the ALS challenge from higher social class occupations than from lower ones (see Figure 1).

Study 2

In Study 2, participant prosocial behavior was measured directly using a version of the dictator game (Camerer & Thaler, 1995; Piff et al., 2010) and set in either a public or private context following the measure of demographic variables related to social class. Unlike Study 1, which only examines public prosocial tendencies, Study 2 directly assesses our social class and prosocial behavior moderation hypothesis and does so using actual prosocial behavior.

Method

Participants were 706 adults from the United States recruited through Amazon's Mechanical Turk (MTurk) website. Power calculations for interaction effects are imprecise because it is unclear if the moderator will attenuate or flip the relationship between the two variables of interest (Simonsohn, 2014). Despite this, we chose a large target sample size ($n = 700$) that more than triples the sample size of prior lab studies examining social class and prosocial behavior (Piff et al., 2010) as is the current recommendation (Simonsohn, 2014). All participant data were included in analyses except in the specific cases,

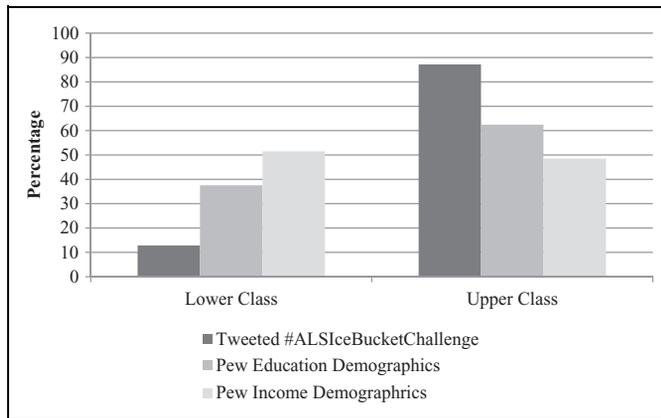


Figure 1. The percentage of Twitter users who publically sent tweets raising awareness for amyotrophic lateral sclerosis as a function of occupation required education and annual income compared to estimates of Twitter user education and annual income collected from the Pew Research Center (2010).

where individual participant responses were missing. We made no data exclusions across all reported studies.

Participants played a version of the dictator game (Camerer & Thaler, 1995; Forsythe, Horowitz, Savin, & Sefton, 1994; Fowler & Kam, 2007; Piff et al., 2010)—a single-trial economic game measure of generosity—allocating between 0 and 10 of their tickets for a lottery to an anonymous MTurk worker taking the survey at a later time. Prior to this game, participants were assigned to a public or private experimental condition. In the public condition, participants entered their name and current city information and were instructed that their gift to their partner would be accompanied by this identifying information. In the private condition, participants were instructed that their gift would be anonymous.

Participants filled out measures of social class that included a seven category measure of annual income (1) <US\$20,000, (2) US\$20,001–40,000, (3) US\$40,001–60,000, (4) US\$60,001–80,000, (5) US\$80,001–100,000, (6) US\$100,001–120,000, (7) >US\$120,000 ($M = 2.77$, $SD = 1.56$); a 3-item measure of educational attainment: (1) high school graduation or less, (2) college education, (3) postgraduate degree ($M = 1.65$, $SD = 0.65$); and a measure of subjective social class rank, wherein participants assessed their social class position in society on a 10-rung ladder representing ascending levels of income, education, and occupation status ($M = 4.87$, $SD = 1.71$). The median income was between US\$20,001 and US\$40,000. As in prior research (Kraus & Keltner, 2009), a composite social class measure was computed as an average of standardized income and educational attainment ($M = -0.00$, $SD = 0.77$).

Participants then proceeded to give 0–10 raffle tickets to their anonymous partner. Across conditions, participants gave about two tickets during the dictator game ($M = 1.82$).

After completing the dictator game, participants were asked to recall their experimental condition as a manipulation check and were debriefed about the hypotheses of the study. When prompted by the experiment, a majority of participants (77%)

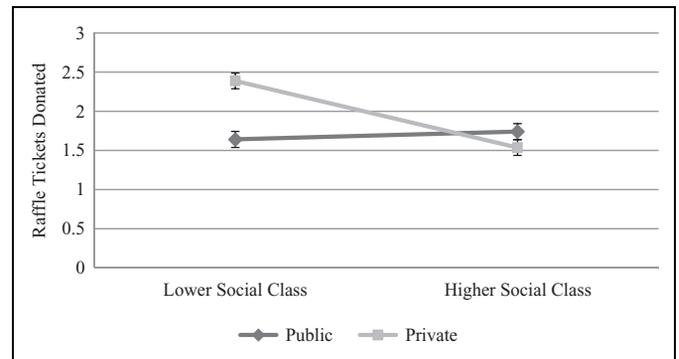


Figure 2. Number of raffle tickets allocated to a partner as a function of prosocial context and participant objective social class, plotted one standard deviation above and below the mean. Error bars indicate standard errors around the mean.

recalled their experimental condition correctly as either public or private, indicating the overall success of the manipulation ($\chi^2 = 188.88$, $p < .01$). Amazon.com gift cards were distributed based on a raffle drawing after the completion of the study.

Results

We expected that lower class individuals would be more prosocial in public versus private, and we expected this pattern to reverse for upper class individuals. To test this prediction, we conducted a linear regression with objective social class, *public* (coded as 1) or *private* (coded as -1) prosocial context, and their interaction predicting dictator game allocations. The analysis yielded parameter estimates for social class, $\beta = -.07$, $t(676) = -1.79$, $p = .07$; prosocial context, $\beta = -.05$, $t(676) = -1.30$, $p = .19$; and a significant interaction that aligned with our central predictions, $\beta = .09$, $t(676) = 2.27$, $p = .02$, 95% confidence interval (CI) [.01, .16]. Examination of the simple effects at one standard deviation above and below the mean for social class revealed that lower class individuals gave significantly more in private than in public, $\beta = -.43$, $t(676) = -4.06$, $p < .001$. In contrast, upper class individuals gave more in public than in private, although this latter relationship did not reach statistical significance, $\beta = .05$, $t(676) = 0.48$, *ns* (see Figure 2).

Additional simple slopes revealed that lower class individuals gave away more raffle tickets than upper class individuals in private, $\beta = -.37$, $t(676) = -3.66$, $p < .01$, replicating past work showing negative associations between social class and private prosocial behavior in a dictator game (Piff et al., 2010). In contrast, in the public context, upper class individuals gave slightly more raffle tickets away than their lower class counterparts, $\beta = .10$, $t(676) = 1.01$, *ns*, although this difference was not significant.

Study 3

In Study 3, we sought to replicate the overall interaction between social class, prosocial behavior, and giving context

and to explore whether reputational concerns explain the social class prosocial behavior moderation hypothesis. Our methods were identical to the prior study except in this study, to enhance statistical power, participants gave in both public and private contexts in counterbalanced order. We also examined social class differences among a more extreme group of upper class individuals than in the prior studies—a sample of elite MBA students at a private east coast university. All study materials, analysis plans, and sample size targets were preregistered prior to data collection (<https://osf.io/w79jt/>).

Method

Participants were 202 adults recruited from MTurk and 161 MBA students from Yale University in the United States. Our sample size goal was 200 for each group, but we fell short in the MBA recruitment due to end of semester student commitments. We chose to focus on MTurk and MBA samples to better examine the extreme ends of the social class spectrum. For instance, whereas in our past study the mean income was 2.77, equivalent to approximately US\$40,000 annually based on our scale, MBA graduates from Yale University in 2015 earn starting base salaries at approximately US\$120,000 not including US\$34,616 of additional bonuses and incentives (<http://som.yale.edu/programs/mba/careers/employment-report>)—a level of income not typically observed in MTurk samples. Thus, MBA students, with their income and pursuit of an advanced degree, represent a particularly high social class group not typically captured in the online crowdsourcing studies.

Participants entered the survey individually and were instructed that the study assessed attitudes about giving. Participants then filled out several survey measures indicating their attitudes about giving and some of their motivations for giving, which we return to in our exploration of mechanisms. Following these questions, participants played two dictator game scenarios as in the prior study in counterbalanced order (order did not alter any results). In both, the participants were playing in a raffle for additional prizes at Amazon.com of US\$100, and they were playing against someone else in the United States. Participants were then permitted the option of giving some of their 10 raffle tickets to an anonymous experiment partner either anonymously ($M = 1.81$, $SD = 2.54$) or with their name and current city partially identified ($M = 1.89$, $SD = 2.57$). Following this dictator game, participants were debriefed about the hypothesis of the study, participants were compensated for taking part in the survey, and Amazon.com gift-cards were awarded to four participants at random for winning the raffle drawing.

Prior to the dictator game, we assessed several potential mediators of the social class and prosocial behavior moderation hypothesis using 7-point Likert-type scales (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*; see Supplemental Materials for specific items and reliability estimates). These potential mediators included how much people engage in social networking behavior for personal gain at work (Ferris et al., 2005) and how much prosocial behavior is motivated by feelings of pride,

compassion, and overall negative affectivity, positive attitudes toward charitable organizations (Sargeant, West, & Ford, 2001), religiosity (Saslow et al., 2013), and items assessing participant expectations that prosocial behavior would enhance personal growth, ease the pain of others, and promote helping norms. These mediation analyses were exploratory.

Individual assessments of personal and parental education and income were also calculated for participants in the current sample using the same measures as in Study 2. These metrics were used to validate social class differences between MTurk and MBA participants.

Results

We first sought to determine whether our MTurk and MBA samples were indeed different in terms of social class. We subjected individual education, parental education, and household income to an independent samples t -test. All t -tests showed significant differences on social class between MTurk and MBA participants, such that MBAs were higher in social class than MTurk participants, $t(355)$ ranged from 6.56 to 18.30, all $ps < .001$. These results suggest that social class differences emerged between our two samples. The MTurk sample had a higher proportion of White participants ($n = 158$) than the MBA sample ($n = 88$), $\chi^2(1) = 19.80$, $p < .001$, but race was not associated with any outcome variables or mediators, and controlling for race did not shift any results reported here. The samples did not differ in terms of gender $t(355) = -1.14$, $p = .26$.

We tested the social class and prosocial behavior moderation hypothesis by examining a 2 (social class) \times 2 (giving context) mixed analysis of variance (ANOVA) with public versus private prosocial context as the within subjects factor. The ANOVA yielded no significant effects of giving context, $F(1, 361) = 2.30$, $p = .13$, or social class, $F(1, 361) = 0.44$, $p = .51$, but did yield a significant interaction aligning with our predictions, $F(1, 361) = 12.05$, $p = .001$ (see Figure 3). Specifically, a paired sample t -test revealed that lower class individuals gave more in the private than the public context, $t(201) = -2.15$, $p = .03$, $D_{\text{Repeated}} = -.16$ (Morris & DeShon, 2002), whereas upper class individuals did the reverse $t(160) = 2.59$, $p = .01$, $D_{\text{Repeated}} = .21$. An analysis comparing public versus private behavior via difference score revealed this same pattern—lower class individuals gave more in private ($M = -0.14$, $SD = 0.95$), whereas upper class individuals gave more when in public ($M = 0.37$, $SD = 1.80$), $t(361) = 3.47$, $p = .001$, Cohen's $d = .37$.

We also explored social class differences in attitudes and motivations toward prosociality, which revealed several group differences as well as associations with prosocial behavior (see Table 1): Upper class participants were more interested in social networking, expected to feel more pride when being prosocial, were more religious, expected to feel more negative affect when giving, and expected that prosocial behavior would ease more pain and foster helping norms more than lower class individuals. Upper and lower class participants did not differ in

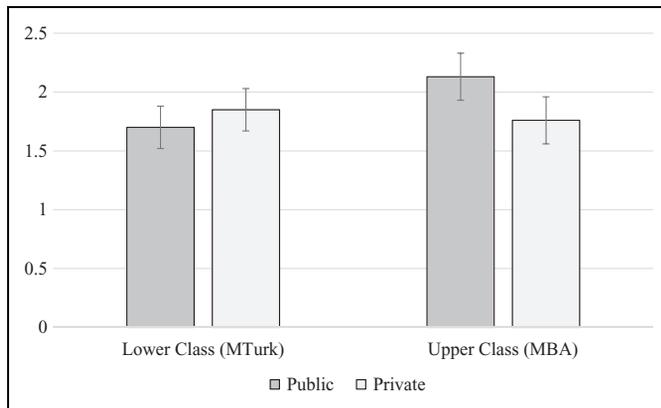


Figure 3. Number of raffle tickets allocated to a partner as a function of prosocial context and participant social class, the bars on the left represent donations from lower class (MTurk) individuals, whereas the bars on the right represent donations from upper class (MBA) individuals. Error bars indicate standard errors around the mean.

reports of expected compassion when being prosocial, did not differ in attitudes toward charitable organizations, and did not expect to experience more personal growth from giving. We return to the compassion, religion, and negative affect outcomes in the general discussion.

To explore mechanisms explaining our moderation hypothesis, we examined correlations with the difference score between public and private prosocial behavior (see Table 1). When examining the difference between public and private prosocial behavior, only composites for social networking and expected pride following prosocial behavior significantly predicted increased prosociality in the public versus private context. Attitudes toward charity, expected compassion, and expectations to ease pain, to grow, and to influence helping norms were associated with total prosociality. Based on these findings, we conducted a mediated moderation path analysis with social class as the predictor, prosocial behavior differences between public and private context as the outcome, and both networking and expected pride as the mediators (e.g., Bauer, Preacher, & Gil, 2006).

In the separate analysis for networking, the original social class (coded as “-1” for *lower class* and “1” for *upper class*) association with being more prosocial in public than in private, $\beta = .18$, $t(356) = 3.39$, $p = .001$, was reduced, $\beta = .16$, $t(355) = 2.82$, $p = .005$, when accounting for the relationship between social class and networking, $\beta = .33$, $t(356) = 6.55$, $p < .001$, although the relationship between networking and prosocial behavior context differences became nonsignificant, $\beta = .07$, $t(355) = 1.18$, $p = .24$. The 95% CI of the indirect effect of social class on prosocial behavior through networking was not significant using 2,000 resamples 95% CI [-0.005, .09].

In the analysis of expected pride, the original social class association with being more prosocial in public than in private was reduced, $\beta = .14$, $t(360) = 2.66$, $p = .008$, when accounting for the relationship between social class and expected pride, $\beta = .31$, $t(361) = 6.08$, $p < .001$, and the relationship between expected pride and greater prosocial behavior in public than in

private, $\beta = .12$, $t(360) = 2.18$, $p = .03$. The 95% CI of the indirect effect of social class on greater prosocial behavior in public versus private through expected pride was significant using 2,000 resamples 95% CI [.01, .13]. Overall, these mediation analyses provide support for our theorizing about reputation and indicate upper class individuals behave more prosocially in public than in private partly because of class differences in expected feelings of pride following prosocial actions.

General Discussion

Although several large-scale surveys of giving (Bureau of Labor and Statistics, 2013; Independent Sector, 2001) and laboratory experiments suggest that lower class individuals engage in higher rates of prosocial behavior than their upper class counterparts (Miller et al., 2015; Piff, Côté, Kraus, Cheng, & Keltner, 2010; cf. Trautmann et al., 2013), much of this prior work focused on prosocial behavior in anonymous settings or average reports of donations across a variety of contexts. The data reported in the present research represent some of the first to suggest that subtle changes in social context can shift differences in prosocial behavior among social classes. Across studies, using observed participation in a prosocial campaign or actual prosocial behavior in an economic game, upper class individuals were more prosocial in public versus private, whereas the reverse was true for lower class individuals. These differences appear to arise from reputational concerns: Whereas lower class individuals exhibited greater prosocial behavior in private than in public contexts, upper class individuals’ tendency to expect pride following prosocial acts predicted a tendency to favor public over private prosociality. Together, these data highlight the complex motivations that elicit prosocial behavior and the importance of the social context in determining the direction and strength of association between social class and prosociality.

Several limitations of the studies should be mentioned. First, participants in the current samples were recruited from or self-selected into online samples or University MBA samples, and in Study 1, we have no way to gauge how much prosocial behavior individuals engaged in during the ALS challenge—although we did take steps to account for demographic trends in usage of online social media. The results of Study 1 in particular may only apply to class differences among Whites since ALS is a disorder that is less commonly diagnosed in ethnically diverse populations (Rechtman, Jordan, Wagner, Horton, & Kaye, 2014). The extent that these findings hold up in situations where helping behavior is more costly to the self—rather than involving raffle tickets or tweets—or where reputation stakes are higher, represents an important area of future research. As well, it would be premature to generalize these results to domains of unethical behavior, as the motives to help and harm people are likely to be distinct (Trautman et al., 2013).

It is interesting to speculate about how social class shapes the nature of relationship patterns. For example, relatively upper and lower class individuals may respond to relationship

Table 1. Mean Differences in Prosocial Behavior Attitudes and Motivations as a Function of Social Class and Correlations With the Difference Between Public and Private Prosocial Behavior—With Higher Scores Indicating Greater Public Prosocial Behavior—And the Sum Total of Prosocial Behavior Across Dictator Game Trials.

	Upper Class	Lower Class	t Value	p Value	R (Difference)	R (Sum)
Networking	4.95 (0.93)	4.14 (1.29)	6.55*	<.001	.12*	.08
Charity attitudes	5.07 (0.79)	4.91 (1.07)	1.60	.11	-.01	.14*
Religiosity	3.59 (1.80)	3.02 (1.88)	2.89*	.004	.04	.08
Easing pain	5.92 (0.91)	5.47 (1.24)	3.86*	<.001	.06	.12*
Growth	5.42 (1.32)	5.35 (1.36)	0.52	.60	.09	.15*
Helping norms	4.78 (1.45)	4.44 (1.48)	2.14*	.03	.05	.14*
Pride	5.75 (0.74)	5.21 (0.93)	6.08*	<.001	.16*	.09
Compassion	6.17 (1.13)	6.07 (1.17)	0.84	.40	-.01	.14*
Negative affect	3.75 (0.72)	3.57 (0.88)	2.01*	.05	-.04	-.01

*p < .05.

needs for different reasons: Lower class individuals may be more motivated by the avoidance of threat and suffering, whereas upper class individuals may be more motivated by public reputation concerns. Recent evidence suggesting that upper class individuals spend more time socializing with friends than with neighbors or family members than lower class individuals seems to support this possibility (Bianchi & Vohs, 2016).

Interestingly, upper and lower class individuals both expected compassion to motivate their prosocial behavior. This finding potentially clarifies associations between social class and compassion in other research (Stellar et al., 2012)—it suggests that lower class individuals experience more compassion in response to suffering than upper class individuals, although all people, regardless of social class, expect compassion to elicit prosocial acts (Goetz et al., 2010). It was also noteworthy that religious differences did not motivate differential class-based giving patterns, given theorizing that the religiosity of lower class individuals would explain these patterns (Kraus et al., 2012). Although both samples were below the midpoint in religiosity, perhaps our upper class sample was particularly religious in Study 3, and the role of religion requires further scrutiny. Finally, across all self-reported affect, upper class individuals reported that negative affect motivated their prosocial behavior more than lower class individuals. This finding is replicated in the supplemental analyses and suggests, more broadly, that negative emotions might be an effective way to elicit giving among the wealthy.

Charitable giving has a rich tradition in American society. Understanding the ways that individuals can enhance their own giving, especially among those with the highest capacity to give, represents an important area of research—for prosocial behavior among the most fortunate has the capacity to effect the greatest amount of good.

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Supplemental Material

The online data supplements are available at <http://spps.sagepub.com/supplemental>.

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