



First Impressions of Social Class: Face vs. Voice



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Introduction

First impressions are formed everyday when meeting someone for the first time. They have serious real-world implications across occupational, legal and political contexts.¹⁻³ These impressions are often formed from minimal cues, particularly from the face and the voice.⁴ However, little research has been done for the first impressions of social class in multi-modal conditions.



Are first impressions of social class influenced more by faces or voices?



H1: Faces will significantly influence social class ratings.
H2: Voices will significantly influence social class ratings.
H3: Faces will exert a stronger influence than voices.

Method

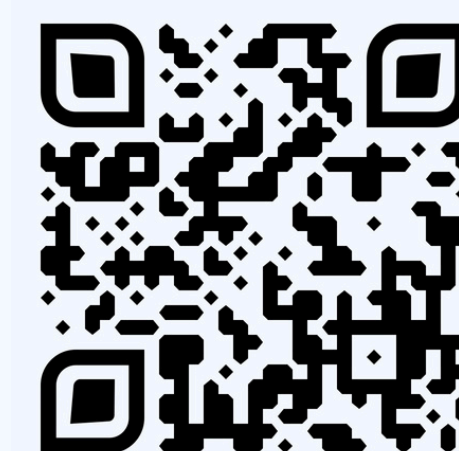
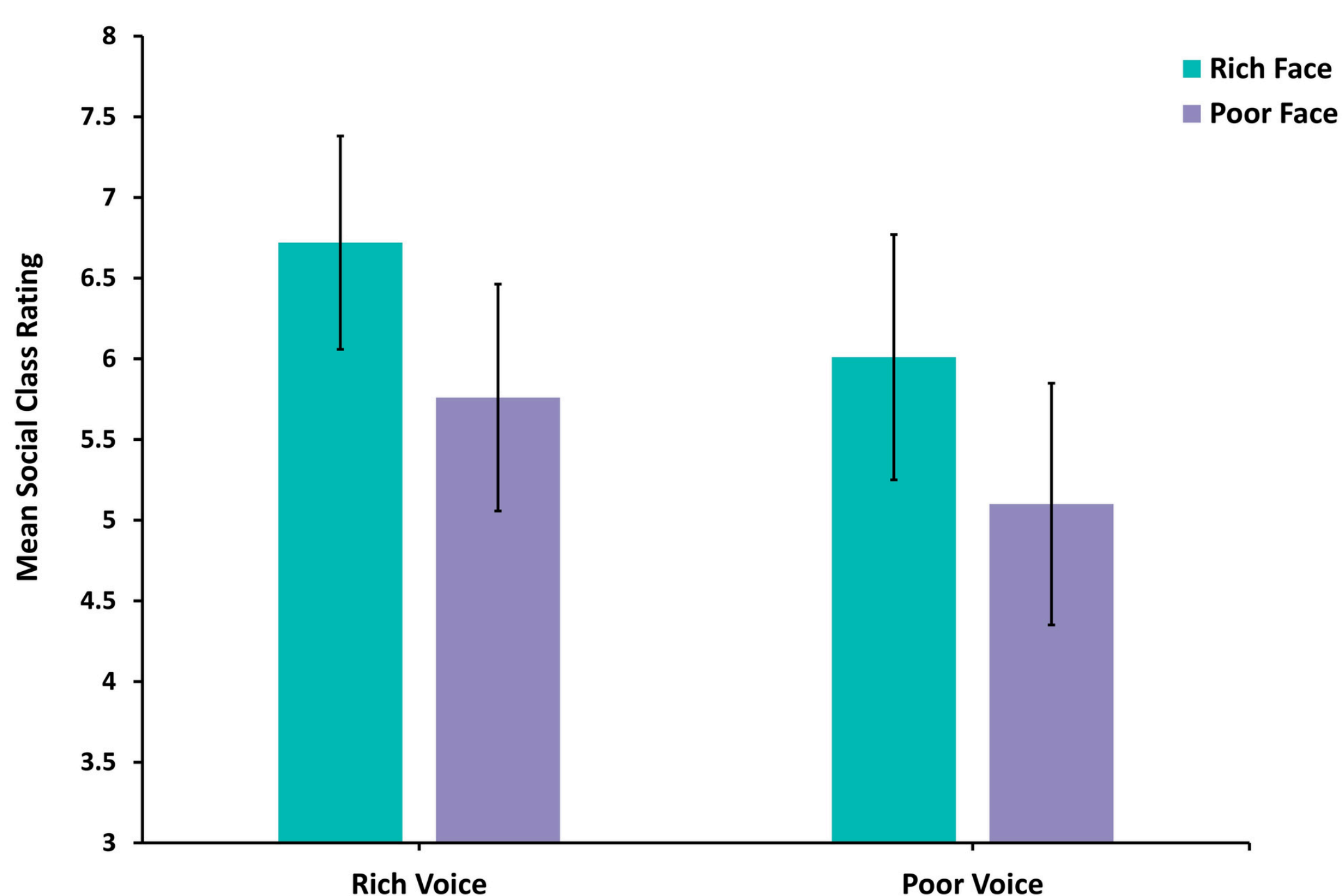
- 100 AI-generated faces and 100 voices from social media pre-rated for perceived Social class.
- Top 15 and bottom 15 for each gender was selected and paired up based on age and gender to form 120 pairs.
- Each participants saw 60 pairs and rated them for perceived social class on a scale of 1-10 (1 Low social class and 10 high social class).
- 157 psychology students
- mean age = 20.06, age range = 18-53
- 134 Females, 19 Males
- 30 White, 7 Black, 10 Asian, 9 Mixed/Other

Results

2 x 2 within subjects ANOVA revealed

- Significant main effects for Face Social Class.
- Significant main effect for Voice Social Class.
- No interaction effect between the face and the voice.

Notably, the face produced a larger effect size ($\eta^2_G = .299$) than the voice ($\eta^2_G = .186$) suggesting it was more influential.



Scan here to hear the voices.



Low Social class



High Social class



Discussion

- Both faces and voices are influential to first impressions of social class.
- But Facial cues had a stronger effect, suggesting they are weighted more heavily than voices.
- Absence of an interaction effect suggests that faces and voices contribute independent of each other.
- Shows how bias and inequality can arise from rapid appearance-based impressions.

1 Menegatti, M., Pireddu, S., Crocetti, E., Moscatelli, S., & Rubini, M. (2021). The Ginevra de' Benci Effect: Competence, Morality, and Attractiveness Inferred From Faces Predict Hiring Decisions for Women. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 12. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.658424>
 2 Todorov, A. (2005). Inferences of Competence from Faces Predict Election Outcomes. *Science*, 308(5728), 1623-1626. <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.1110589>
 3 Wilson, J. P., & Rule, N. O. (2015). Facial Trustworthiness Predicts Extreme Criminal-Sentencing Outcomes. *Psychological Science*, 26(8), 1325-1331. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0956797615590992>
 4 McAleer, P., Todorov, A., & Belin, P. (2014). How Do You Say "Hello"? Personality Impressions from Brief Novel Voices. *PLoS ONE*, 9(3), e90779. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0090779>