MOBILIZING SOCIAL RESOURCES: Race, Ethnic, and Gender Differences in Social Capital and Persisting Wage Inequalities

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Drawing on a social capital theoretical framework, I examine race, ethnic, and gender wage inequalities. Specifically, I extend past research by analyzing differences in the mobilization of different types of job contacts, what these types of contacts and their level of influence "buy" job seekers in the labor market, and the extent to which differences in social resources explain between-group variations in wages. Four aspects of job contacts are implicated: the race and gender of the job contact, the strength of the relationship between the job seeker and the job contact, and the job contact's influence. Employing the Multi-City Study of Urban Inequality, I find that white men are more likely to mobilize weak, white, male, and influential contacts, those contacts hypothesized to positively impact employment outcomes. Moreover, their greater mobilization of male and influential ties helps to explain a substantial part of their wage advantage over white women and Latinos. However, in many ways, their overall social resource advantage seems somewhat overstated. They reap no advantages over blacks, Latinos, and white women in their use of weak and white ties. Furthermore, results indicate that the benefits of social resources appear largely contingent on the social structural location of job seekers mobilizing them, less on any benefits inherent in different "types" of job contacts.

Traditional sociological explanations of persisting race, ethnic, and gender inequalities in the labor market are theoretically and empirically grounded in contemporary paradigms of social stratification, that is, status attainment research and segmented labor market theory (for a review of the status attainment literature, see Ganzeboom, Treiman, and Ultee 1991; for a review of structural perspectives on inequalities, see Kalleberg and Sorensen 1979). To a lesser extent, discrimination is considered as well (Cross, Kenney, Mell, and Zimmerman 1990; Turner, Fix, and Struyk 1991; Higginbotham and Weber 1999). Thus, when contemplating the causes of relatively low labor force participation, wage and occupational attainment, and upward mobility chances, it is generally thought that blacks have lower levels of education and less labor market experience (Smith 1984; Smith and Welch 1989; O'Neill 1990), that similar disadvantages exist for Latinos with additional barriers resulting from limited English proficiency and citizenship status (Bean and Tienda 1987; Ortiz 1996), and that competing commitments between family

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and work disadvantage women relative to men (Becker 1985; Polachek and Siebert 1993). Moreover, all three groups are also suspected to be disadvantaged by racism and sexism and by their disproportionate concentration in periphery industries in which workers are poorly paid and have few if any opportunities for advancement (Piore 1970; Beck, Horan, and Tolbert 1978). However, explaining gaps in employment outcomes as a function of individual-level ascribed and achieved resources (status attainment and human capital) and the job structures within which they are located (segmented labor market theories) would leave much of the race, ethnic, and gender gap in labor market outcomes unexplained (Granovetter 1981).

Relatively recently, a growing body of research has begun to examine labor market inequalities as a function of differential social capital, generally defined as "the ability of actors to secure benefits by virtue of membership in social networks or other social structures" (Portes 1998, p. 6). Relative to white men, members of minority groups and women are less likely to be embedded in networks of ties who can provide them with opportunities for status, income, and occupational advancement. Specifically, black and Latino job seekers are disadvantaged because they tend to be matched with their jobs by same-race job contacts (Rossi, Berk, Boessel, Eidson, and Groves 1968; Crain 1970; McCall 1972; Rossi, Berk, and Eidson 1974; Mier and Giloth 1985; Falcon 1995; Elliot 1999); women are disadvantaged because they are linked to jobs by other women (Campbell and Rosenfeld 1985; Hanson and Pratt 1991); members of minority groups and women are embedded in networks that lack weak, wide-ranging ties, thereby reducing their likelihood of discovering new opportunities for labor market advancement (Mier and Giloth 1985; Campbell 1988; Kasinitz and Rosenberg 1996); and both groups are embedded in networks that tend to lack influential job ties who can positively impact posthire outcomes (Brass 1985; Campbell and Rosenfeld 1985). Thus, the literature implicates four aspects of job contacts: the race and gender of the job contact, the strength of the relationship between the job seeker and the job contact, and the job contact's influence.

In this article I employ a social capital theoretical framework to examine race, ethnic, and gender wage inequalities. Specifically, I extend past research by addressing the following questions:

1. How do the job contact's characteristics and influence differ by the race, ethnicity, and gender of the job seeker?
2. What do different types of job contacts "buy" job seekers in the labor market?
3. To what extent can differences in contacts' *characteristics* and *influence* explain between-group variations in wages?

SOCIAL CAPITAL

Defining Social Capital

In 1977, Glen Loury published an article in *Women, Minorities, and Employment Discrimination* entitled "A Dynamic Theory of Racial Income Differences" in which he draws from sociological research on intergenerational mobility and inheritance of race to assert that even if we could equalize racial differences in quality and quantity of human capital, and even if we could encourage employers to eliminate their discrimination against blacks, racial inequalities would persist. Criticizing neoclassical theories of

racial income inequality for being too individualistic and for ignoring group processes, he asserted that blacks would continue to be disadvantaged because their low levels of education and earnings would inhibit their children's ability to convert their natural abilities into skills valued by employers and, most important for this article, *blacks generally have poorer connections to the labor market and lack information about job opportunities.* In other words, relative to whites, blacks lack "social capital." Loury used the term social capital to describe the resources *inherent in family and community relations* that are useful for developing cognitive and social skills and necessary for the acquisition of human capital. Thus, Loury implicates social connections in the process of differential access to opportunities and, in doing so, provides a framework within which to better understand race, ethnic, and gender inequalities in the labor market.

To be clear, Loury provided neither the first nor most refined analysis of the concept (Portes 1998). These are usually attributed to Pierre Bourdieu, Ronald Burt, and James Coleman, to name a few. Bourdieu (1985) is usually credited with providing the first systematic discussion.[1] He used the term social capital to describe the resources or profits to which individuals have access as a result of their membership or participation in groups such as families, parties, or associations. For Bourdieu, social capital is the product of the time and energy directed toward a series of material and/or symbolic exchanges among members that help to reproduce social relationships with the conscious or unconscious objective of promoting long-term obligations from which tangible or intangible profits accrue. The profits amassed can be economic, cultural, or symbolic.

Similar to Bourdieu, Burt (1992) explains that trust, obligation, and exchange are necessary for the reproduction of social capital. Unlike Bourdieu, Burt's conceptualization seems fixed in the economic sphere, with the primary emphasis on returns to investments. According to Burt, under conditions of perfect competition, social capital is constant. However, because perfect competition does not exist in such arenas as the marketplace, social capital makes the difference. Burt (1992, p. 10) states:

> Within an acceptable range of needed abilities, there are many people with financial and human capital comparable to your own. Whatever you bring to the production task, there are other people who could do the same job—perhaps not as well in every detail, but probably as well within the tolerances of the people for whom the job is done. Criteria other than financial and human capital are used to narrow the pool down to the individual who gets the opportunity. Those other criteria are social capital. New life is given to the proverb that says success is determined less by what you know than by whom you know.

In other words, in the marketplace, where individuals with similar financial and human capital endowments compete for finite opportunities, the extra edge is given to those who can mobilize contacts with the right resources. According to Burt, these resources are often in the form of information, whether in terms of access, timing, or referrals. Because information does not flow equally to everyone, individuals in a position to capitalize on opportunities are those who have access to personal contacts who can provide valuable information before the average person receives it. This allows connected individuals to exploit opportunities before they become widely known, thereby reducing the pool of likely competitors. Personal contacts may also act as referees, disseminating information about connected individuals in such a way that opportunities become avail-

able without any real effort by the connected individual. Thus, Burt (1992, p. 9) defines social capital as the "friends, colleagues, and more general contacts through whom you receive opportunities to use your financial and human capital."

Coleman's conceptualization of social capital most closely approximates Loury's in terms of the role it plays in the creation of human capital. Like Loury, Coleman argues that resources inherent in family and community relations can have a substantial impact on children's cognitive development. However, his definition of social capital is so vague and all-inclusive as to be somewhat meaningless, both theoretically and empirically. Coleman (1988, p. S98) defines social capital by its function as "a variety of entities with two elements in common: they all consist of some aspect of social structures, and they facilitate certain action of actors—whether persons or corporate actors—within the structure." One is hard-pressed to quantify his concept (Lin, forthcoming). Nonetheless, of particular value is Coleman's discussion of the three forms of social capital: the structures of obligations, expectations, and trustworthiness; norms and effective sanctions of behavior; and information channels. According to Coleman, social capital is transmitted through these three forms. Thus, although their conceptualizations differ somewhat, the four theorists mentioned above all have in common three fundamental aspects: that social capital is a resource, that it inheres in social relations, and that the purpose is to gain additional resources (Lin, forthcoming). Moreover, they each propose that social capital is established and reproduced through social exchanges in which trust is assumed to exist, obligations are created for use in the short or long-term, and information exchange is essential.

Measuring Social Capital

Consistent with the theorists' focus on information, in the overwhelming majority of stratification research, social capital has been measured in terms of the job contact, the primary conduit for information exchange during the job-matching process. Two aspects of the job contact are important in this regard. The first deals with job contacts' resources, or those assets that job contacts hold as a result of their social structural location. This is related to the composition of individuals' network of ties.[2] Examples of such measures include, but are not limited to, job contacts' occupational prestige (Lin, Vaughn, and Ensel 1981; De Graaf and Flap 1988; Marsden and Hurlbert 1988), power and influence (Corcoran et al., 1980; Marsden and Hurlbert 1988), connection to the firm, and industrial sector (Marsden and Hurlbert 1988). It is hypothesized that the information that job contacts furnish varies greatly depending on where contacts are located in the social structure. Thus, access and mobilization of job contacts differentially located in the social structure should result in variations in employment outcomes. With the exception of job contacts' occupational prestige, which has been found to affect positively the occupational prestige of job seekers, few other social capital measures of this type have been found to impact employment outcomes (Corcoran, Datcher, and Duncan 1980; Marsden and Hurlbert 1988).

In addition to contacts' resources, researchers have also considered how the structure of individuals' networks of ties may impact employment outcomes. Network structure generally refers to the *range* of one's network of ties as indicated by the number of ties one has, the number of different status groups in one's network (network diversity), the proportion of contacts who are intimately tied to each other (redundancy), and the propor-

tion of ties who are weakly tied to an individual (density). It is generally argued that the greater an individual's network range, the greater his or her likelihood to receive information for status and income advancement (Campbell, Marsden, and Hurlbert 1986).

Weak Ties and the SES Contingency

The type of job contact that has received the most research attention as a beneficial source of job information has been the "weak" tie. Very simply, weak ties are those that are socially, emotionally, and often physically distant (Marsden and Campbell 1984). They are acquaintances, friends of friends, people with whom our social lives infrequently overlap. Most importantly, they are bridges to new opportunities and resources, because they provide information that individuals could not obtain through strong ties, such as relatives and close friends. Following homophily/heterophily principles, whereas strong ties tend to link individuals with similar attributes (homophily), weak ties are more likely to function as bridges between dissimilar actors (heterophily), people, and groups offering new and different information, thereby increasing opportunities for mobility (Laumann 1973; Granovetter 1983). As stated by Karen Campbell, Peter Marsden, and Jeanne Hurlbert (1986, p. 98), "Weak ties are valuable neither because they are weak, nor because they are likely to serve as local bridges between otherwise unconnected networks. These structural features are pertinent only because weak ties are more likely than strong ones to link an actor to information that is novel and not otherwise accessible." Thus, when comparing weak and strong tie users of similar social status, the likelihood of being linked to a better job is greater for job seekers using weak contacts than for those matched by strong contacts because weak ties provide better opportunities to access levels in the social structure that are different from their own (Lin, Ensel, and Vaughn 1981).

To date, empirical evidence supporting this hypothesis is scant and has largely been on the level of zero-order associations. Mark Granovetter (1974, 1995) found that job changers matched by weak ties were more likely to land high-prestige jobs. Nan Lin, Walter Ensel, and John Vaughn (1981) discovered that, because job seekers tend to reach up in the social structure when searching for a job, job contacts are typically of higher social status than the job seekers they aid. Moreover, weak ties tend to be of higher prestige than strong ties, a finding supported by Marsden and Hurlbert (1988). Thus, the effect of weak ties on occupational attainment is largely indirect; weak ties tend to lead to higher status contacts, so job seekers matched by weak ties attain higher prestige than those linked by strong ties (Lin, Ensel, and Vaughn 1981). Given more rigorous empirical analysis, however, the tie strength proposition rarely finds support (Bridges and Villemez 1986; Marsden and Hurlbert 1988).

Because Granovetter's job changers were of relatively high socioeconomic status—those occupying professional, managerial, and technical positions—some have argued for a contingency to the value of weak ties: the socioeconomic status of the job seeker. For instance, Granovetter maintains that while high-status job seekers may benefit from weak ties, disadvantaged job seekers probably do not. Citing past studies (Granovetter 1974, 1995; Eriksen and Yancey 1977), Granovetter (1981) contends that individuals of low socioeconomic status are less likely to benefit from weak ties because their weak ties are more likely to be acquaintances of friends and family members occupying simi-

lar positions in the social structure and *not* bridges to new opportunities and resources for labor market mobility and advancement.

Other researchers predict the opposite. Lin, Ensel, and Vaughn (1981) and Lin and Dumin (1986) contend that an interaction exists between an individual's social structural position and returns to the use of weak ties. Relative to high-status job seekers, low-status job seekers will garner greater benefits from the use of weak ties over strong. They reason that high-status individuals are likely to experience a "ceiling effect" that limits the structural advantage that weak ties theoretically provide. As individuals approach this ceiling, their weak ties provide no additional benefits over strong ties because their weak ties are unlikely to provide bridges to those more highly placed in the social structure to facilitate further advancement. Indeed, in this context, they argue that strong ties may actually be more beneficial.

They argue, however, that the ceiling effect does not exist for low-status job seekers. For these individuals, the use of weak ties over strong may provide a substantial benefit because weak ties are more likely than strong ties to provide links to positions that are structurally different and in all likelihood higher, because, for those of low status, most other positions are higher.

To date, few studies have examined this weak tie contingency. To the extent that studies have, they mostly provide evidence negating any contingency (Marsden and Hurlbert 1988). Interestingly, even Lin and colleagues (1981; 1981; 1986) find no evidence that low-status job seekers benefit in ways that high-status job seekers do not, and James Elliot (1999) has found that, although rarely mobilized, weak ties provide no benefit over strong ties or over more formal matching methods among less-educated urban workers.

I argue that, to the extent a socioeconomic status contingency exists, it would be in favor of high-status individuals. First, high-status individuals are more likely to be embedded in networks of contacts rich in weak ties (Homans 1950). According to past research, network range and composition are positively related to SES (Campbell et al. 1986). Specifically, network size, complexity, and diversity are positively associated with an individual's education and family income, and composition measures, such as a contact's mean educational attainment and occupational prestige, also increase with education and income. Thus, whereas high-status individuals are likely embedded in networks that are large, wide-ranging, diverse, and influential, low-status individuals are likely embedded in relatively small, dense, homogeneous networks generally lacking connections to influential others.

Differences in economic pressures and financial security may also affect the extent to which individuals are embedded in networks characterized as predominantly weak or strong (Stack 1974; Lomnitz 1977; Granovetter 1995). In times of emergencies, individuals with ample financial resources can rely on their wealth and are less likely to rely on others to survive financially difficult times. Thus, they can devote more of their time to establishing relationships with those who can broaden their opportunities and experiences (i.e., weak ties). This is less the case for low-status individuals for whom employment insecurity, economic pressures, and everyday problems can result in severe hardship. To protect against the consequences of such events, they surround themselves with close intimate relations, those willing to provide assistance in time of need. Because weak ties have limited utility in this context (a weak tie is not likely to loan you money to pay your overdue utility bill), low-status individuals may not consider weak ties as functionally important and thus may limit their time and energy to networks of reciprocity.

Second, to the extent that high- and low-status individuals are embedded in networks of weak ties, the quality of their weak ties will likely differ. Weak ties are important because they are more likely than strong ties to be bridges to social circles that are different from that in which individuals are already closely tied. Weak ties that provide links to those similarly placed in the social structure are not bridging ties. Only when they allow access to high or higher status individuals can weak ties be considered a social resource.

Unfortunately, there is reason to believe that low-status individuals are less likely to have in their networks weak ties that are also bridging ties. To the extent that low-status individuals must contend with overwhelming economic pressures, financial instability, and everyday problems, their relationships may be tenuous with those located higher in the social structure. Higher status individuals have an incentive to maintain social distance from those of lower status, given the potential for drain of important financial, psychological, and emotional resources (Stack 1974). Furthermore, low-status individuals may themselves opt out of relationships with higher status individuals for fear that they may be unable to repay obligations or because they have failed to do so in the past. Thus, among the disadvantaged, weak ties are likely nonbridging ties in that they are similarly placed in the social structure and are not well positioned to offer new and different opportunities for advancement. As a result, high-status individuals who use weak ties over strong are accessing larger numbers of contacts of more diverse backgrounds, interests, occupations, and influence. However, when low-status individuals mobilize weak contacts, they are likely doing so from small, dense, homogeneous networks that lack influential ties, networks that likely inhibit access to people and groups offering new and different information. In this context, weak ties are no better than strong ties for providing access to diverse and influential others, and thus, as Granovetter (1981, p. 208) states, "the information they provide would then not constitute a real broadening of opportunity." Therefore, if socioeconomic status does indeed modify the effect of weak ties on employment outcomes such as wages, I would predict the use of weak ties to be more beneficial to those of higher status.

In sum, past studies have identified different aspects of individuals' network structure and composition as indicators of social capital. To what extent do race, ethnic, and gender differences exist in these respects, and to what extent might persisting inequalities in the labor market be explained by these differences? Findings from previous research suggest that substantial differences do exist, not only in terms of access to social resources such as job contacts but also in terms of the ability to mobilize these resources toward some productive end, such as finding well-paid jobs.

Race Differences in Personal Networks

To date, an extensive literature does not exist on racial differences in the structure and composition of personal networks. However, what is known suggests that they differ significantly. Relative to Latinos and blacks, whites tend to have a larger number of personal contacts, more kin and nonkin, and greater sex diversity, meaning a greater proportion of their ties are of the opposite sex (Marsden 1987). Relative to whites, blacks report stronger ties with neighbors. Blacks have more neighbors, contact them more frequently, and rely on them more heavily for social support (Lee, Campbell, and Miller 1991). Finally, comparing blacks, whites, Mexicans, and Puerto Ricans residing in poor

neighborhoods, a higher proportion of blacks' and whites' networks are composed of educated ties, and a higher proportion of whites' and Mexicans' networks are composed of employed ties (Smith 1997).[3]

Racial and ethnic differences in the structure and composition of personal networks have important implications for persisting labor market inequalities. A substantial minority of blacks and Latinos live in racially and economically segregated neighborhoods in which a significant proportion of residents have unstable connections to the labor market. Not only would it be difficult for job seekers from such communities to access "new" information about jobs generally, it would be highly improbable that their contacts would share information about "good" jobs in particular. Indeed, while previous research has found that disadvantaged white youths garner significantly higher wages when connected to jobs by personal contacts (Korenman and Turner 1996), personal contact use among disadvantaged black and Latino youths offers no significant wage advantage (Falcon 1995; Green, Tigges, and Browne 1995; Korenman and Turner 1996). Moreover, blacks who are embedded in segregated networks are more likely to find poorer paying, racially segregated jobs compared to the jobs of blacks embedded in racially mixed networks (Braddock and McPartland 1987).

Some researchers have also argued that members of minority groups are disadvantaged in the labor market because they lack weak, wide-ranging ties (Mier and Giloth 1985; Campbell 1988; Kasinitz and Rosenberg 1996). For example, to explain the almost total exclusion of black residents from 3,600 private sector, blue-collar jobs in their own community, the Red Hook section of Brooklyn, Philip Kasinitz and Jan Rosenberg (1996) contend that black job seekers lack connections to and references from weak ties—nonblacks and/or noncommunity residents—who might serve as credible gatekeepers on their behalf. Similarly, Robert Mier and Robert Giloth (1985) explain the underrepresentation of Latinos in manufacturing jobs in the Pilsen neighborhood of Chicago, a predominantly Latino community. They find that because employers' primary method of recruitment is through employee referrals, and employees predominantly of Eastern European ancestry tend to refer like-others, Latino residents are consequently shut out of the hiring process. The authors suggest that only through the mobilization of weak ties will Pilsen Latinos be able to access the opportunities in their own community as their strong ties are not linked to jobs in Pilsen. Studies such as these indicate that members of minority groups may indeed benefit from the use of weak over strong ties to advance their labor market prospects. Thus, it appears that the networks of Latinos and blacks generally lack the types of ties essential for providing access to opportunities for labor market advancement.

Gender Differences in Personal Networks

Previous research has shown that while women and men do not differ in terms of the size of their personal contacts (Fischer 1982; Marsden 1987; Moore 1990), other aspects of the structure and composition of their networks do vary. Relative to men's networks, women's are denser and lack occupational range. Women's networks are composed of a higher proportion of kin (Bott 1971; Fischer 1982; Fischer and Oliker 1983; Wellman 1985; Marsden 1987; Moore 1990), more types of kin, and a larger number of neighbors (Moore 1990). Men's networks are composed of significantly more friends, advisors, and

coworkers, even among employed women and men. In addition, their friendship networks tend to be more diverse than those of women (Moore 1990). Analogously, although men and women have virtually the same number of organizational affiliations, the size and types of organizations to which they belong differ substantively. Women tend to belong to smaller organizations devoted to domestic or community affairs while men tend to belong to larger, economically oriented organizations (McPherson and Smith-Lovin 1982).[4]

What consequences arise from gender differences in network structure and composition? Research suggests that women garner lower wage returns than men because they obtain information about jobs from other women (Hanson and Pratt 1991), have networks that are less likely to contain high-status or influential individuals (Brass 1985), and tend to find jobs through nonsearch methods[5] (Campbell and Rosenfeld 1985). Thus, they are routed to female-dominated and sex-segregated occupations (Drentea 1998; Hanson and Pratt 1991), usually resulting in lower wages and fewer advancement opportunities (Baron and Bielby 1984; Bielby and Baron 1984; 1986). Moreover, women's networks have less occupational range than men's, although not significantly less status diversity (Campbell 1988). In sum, women appear less likely than men to be embedded in networks that can provide opportunities for status, income, and occupational advancement. Like members of minority groups, they lack network range and diversity to access and mobilize weak and influential contacts hypothesized to impact positively employment outcomes.

Taken together, these studies suggest that black and Latino job seekers are disadvantaged because they tend to be matched with their jobs by same-race job contacts; women are disadvantaged because they are linked to jobs by other women; members of minority groups and women are embedded in networks that lack weak, wide-ranging ties, thereby reducing their likelihood of discovering new opportunities for labor market advancement; and women and minorities are embedded in networks that tend to lack influential job ties who can positively impact posthire outcomes. Thus, four aspects of job contacts are implicated: the race and gender of the job contact, the strength of the relationship between job seeker and the job contact, and job contact's influence. I extend past research by examining race, ethnic, and gender differences in the mobilization of these different types of job contacts, what these types of contacts and their level of influence "buy" job seekers in the labor market, and the extent to which these social resource differences explain between-group variations in wages. Specifically, I test the following hypotheses:

H1: White men experience greater returns to personal contact use than white women, blacks, or Latinos.

H2: White men are more likely than white women, blacks, or Latinos to mobilize weak, white, male, and influential ties.

H3: The use of weak, white, male, and influential ties confers higher wages among white, black, and Latino men and women.

H4: The wage effects of social resources are modified by the socioeconomic status of the job seeker.

DATA AND METHODS

I employ the Multi-City Study of Urban Inequality (MCSUI), collected in 1992–1994 in four metropolitan areas: Atlanta, Boston, Detroit, and Los Angeles.[6] The MCSUI seeks to improve understanding of issues related to urban inequalities, such as changing labor market dynamics, racial attitudes and stereotypes, and racial residential segregation. It consists of multistage area probability samples of individuals twenty-one years old and older randomly selected from households. Black, Latino, Asian, and low-income households were oversampled. The overall response rates by cities are Atlanta, 75 percent L.A., 68 percent; and Boston, 71.3 percent. Data are weighted to compensate for nonresponse so that weighted counts of persons by age, gender, and race reflect the distribution of the adult population from the 1990 census. In all, 2,781 cases are analyzed:[7] 315 from Atlanta, 1,659 from Los Angeles, and 807 from Boston; by race that is 1,596 whites, 358 blacks and 840 Latinos.[8]

Although not without its limitations, these data have several advantages. First, because they were collected in three major metropolitan areas in three of the four major regions of the country (Northeast, South, West), they represent cities unique in history, economy, geography, and demography. For instance, while the majority of residents residing in Atlanta proper are black (roughly 67 percent), whites are the majority in Boston proper, and whites and Latinos represent the majority in Los Angeles. Second, the data allow links to be made between social resources and labor market outcomes because multiple questions were included concerning job contacts' characteristics, including specific methods of assistance. Third, because blacks and Latinos were oversampled, there are sufficient observations to analyze black-white-Latino differences in social resources in Los Angeles and Boston. Racial comparisons in Atlanta were limited to black-white differences due to the extremely small sample size of Latinos in that city.[9]

Variables

Dependent variables include the natural logarithm of hourly wages,[10] the likelihood of personal contact use, and the use of weak, white, male, and influential ties. The hourly wages measure represents respondents' *current* hourly earnings. To predict hourly wages, I employ four social resource measures: job contact's race, operationalized as white (1) versus nonwhite (0); job contact's gender, operationalized as male (1) versus female (0); and tie strength, operationalized as weak (1) versus strong (0). Individuals' characteristics are employed to predict the likelihood of being matched to a job by a personal contact who is weak, white, male, and influential.

In this article, job contact's influence is operationalized differently than in previous research. In past studies, job contacts were determined to have influence if they had used their position to help job seekers get jobs. These studies generally found no net effect of influential ties on employment outcomes such as hourly wages (Corcoran et al. 1980; Marsden and Hurlbert 1988), suggesting that, on the whole, having an influential contact does little if anything to improve earnings over having a noninfluential contact. Usually missing from such analyses, however, is *how* personal contacts assist in the matching process. While some contacts assist by informing job seekers of open positions, others act as references, talk to the employer on the job seeker's behalf, and some contacts are actually in the position to hire job seekers. Each of these methods suggests something differ-

ent about job seekers' social resources in terms of the level of influence their contacts wield on their behalf and the amount of earnings job seekers can garner as a result.

Drawing from James Coverdill's (1998) theoretical discussion of the effect of personal contact use on posthire outcomes, I suggest that the ways in which personal contacts assist in the matching process are significantly correlated with the amount and quality of information job seekers receive about different aspects of the workplace, the level of social integration job seekers achieve, and the extent to which personal contacts are strategically placed in the firm. Moreover, to the extent that these factors are correlated, the personal contact's method of assistance affects earnings attainment.

I start with the assumption that the contact's method of assistance indicates a job seeker's differential access to social resources and suggests a hierarchical ordering of assistance based on the likely effect each method of assistance has on earnings. Within this hierarchy, hiring contacts are seen as the most influential of personal contacts. Not only are they well positioned to supply reliable information about characteristics of the job, but they can also help new workers learn their tasks and become integrated into the culture of the workplace more quickly. Furthermore, contacts with hiring authority are strategically placed within the firm to shape future earnings directly.

Hiring contacts are followed by contacts who talk to employers on a job seeker's behalf because these contacts are able to supply information about different aspects of the workplace and can potentially affect on-the-job experiences by assisting new hires to learn job tasks more quickly and to become integrated into the social groups and culture of the workplace. Their ability and willingness to function in this role is indicated by their willingness to talk to employers on a job seeker's behalf. However, unlike hiring contacts, contacts who talk to employers are probably not strategically placed within firms to affect earnings directly.

Telling job seekers about job opportunities is probably the least effective method of assistance in terms of positively affecting earnings. While such a contact may provide reliable information about different aspects of the workplace, such limited involvement in the job-matching process suggests that these contacts are not likely to shape on-the-job experiences either because they don't have the power to do so or because they choose not to. Thus, in this schema, job seekers with the most influential contacts, and therefore predicted to garner the highest wages, are those hired by their contacts. With this in mind, I operationalize the influential job contact as a hiring contact (1) versus other methods of assistance (0).

For clarification about the survey questions used to create these variables, respondents were asked if they found their last or present job through friends or relatives, other people, newspaper ads, or some other way. Those who reported being linked to their jobs by friends, relatives, or other people are defined as personal contact users. All others are classified as nonpersonal contact users. Personal contact use is coded 1 if respondents were linked to their last or present jobs by a contact, and 0 if not.

The survey also asked respondents about their relationship to the one person who most directly helped them get their last or current job. Response categories included relative, friend, acquaintance, and someone else. Job contacts described as relatives or friends are categorized as strong ties, while those described as acquaintances or someone else are categorized as weak ties. Although this is not the most accurate tie strength indicator (Marsden and Campbell 1984), it is consistent with that used in similar studies. Job contacts' race and gender were determined by asking, "Was this person white, black/African American, Hispanic, or Asian?" and "Was this person a man or a woman?" To

determine method of assistance, respondents were asked, "What was the main way this person helped you?" Assistance categories included (1) told me about job, (2) hired me, (3) talked to employer about me, (4) gave me a reference, and (5) other.

Control variables included age, age (in quadratic form), gender, race, education, English fluency, U.S. citizenship, previous experience, tenure, firm size, occupation, and city. Education is measured using two dummy indicators: high school dropout and high school diploma/GED; postsecondary degree is the reference group. English fluency (1 = speaks English well) is entered to control for the higher likelihood of personal contact use in the job-matching process among those with limited English fluency. Moreover, given the importance of citizenship status for Latinos in the labor market, U.S. citizenship is also taken into consideration. The natural logarithm of firm size is entered to control for the higher likelihood of personal contact use among workers in smaller firms. However, because of the significant number of cases missing firm size information (90), an indicator variable is entered representing whether or not respondents are missing a valid value for this measure. Dummy indicators are also included for occupation and city of residence. Controls are included for whether respondents lived in Atlanta and Boston, with Los Angeles as the reference, as well as for occupation in managerial positions (1 = manager, 0 = else).

I also control for previous experience. This addition reflects a need to account for new entrants to the labor market or to a job type, those more likely to rely on personal contacts to make a transition. To determine previous experience, respondents were asked if they had any previous experience in the type of job currently held, before they were hired, excluding schooling. If they reported affirmatively, they were then asked how much experience they had gained. In these analyses, I entered previous experience as an indicator variable instead of the more popularly applied measure entered in quadratic form because, in assessing the impact of previous experience on the likelihood of personal contact use or its effect on wage outcomes in the context of personal contact use, we gain more information by knowing whether they had had previous experience than by the average rate of return for each unit of pre-employer work experience held. Thus, dummy indicators are entered for respondents having previous experience in a similar job type before they were hired (1 = yes).

Finally, controls for tenure in the firm are included in analyses predicting hourly wages. This is an important addition for two reasons. First, the MCSUI does not collect data on entry-level wages, so earnings are not comparable across respondents. To account for the likelihood that those with longer tenure earn higher wages, controls for tenure in the firm are included. Second, tenure in the firm also acts as a proxy for when the job search took place, thus controlling for the different labor market conditions experienced by those who searched for employment five years ago compared to those who searched fifteen to twenty-five years ago, for instance. Thus, I can say with relative certainty that the wage effects of contacts' characteristics and influence are net of important demographic and human capital characteristics.

RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 displays the means and standard deviations of measures used in the analyses and provides a sketch of the population to which findings can be generalized. Consider the

TABLE 1. DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF VARIABLES IN THE ANALYSES

	Pooled Mean (N = 2781)	Standard Deviation	Range	Means-Contact Users (N = 1511)	Standard Deviation	Range
Hourly wage (Ln)	2.26	.54	.73–5.18	2.19	.55	.73–5.18
Age	34.55	10.42	21–72	33.85	9.94	21–70
Age (squared)	1302.17	824.20	441–5184	1244.42	767.43	441–4900
White men	.29		0–1	.28		0–1
White women	.28		0–1	.22		0–1
Black men	.06		0–1	.05		0–1
Black women	.07		0–1	.05		0–1
Latino men	.17		0–1	.24		0–1
Latinas	.13		0–1	.16		0–1
Dropout	.17		0–1	.22		0–1
High school graduate	.38		0–1	.36		0–1
Postsecondary degree	.45		0–1	.42		0–1
English fluency	.82		0–1	.74		0–1
U.S. citizenship	.76		0–1	.69		0–1
Previous experience	.57		0–1	.54		0–1
Tenure (in months)	37.92	48.19	0–420	36.19	45.99	0–420
Firm size (Ln)	3.73	2.09	0–9.21	3.62	2.03	0–9.21
Firm missing dummy	.05		0–1	.06		0–1
Managerial	.28		0–1	.26		0–1
Technical	.32		0–1	.28		0–1
Service	.15		0–1	.16		0–1
Farming	.01		0–1	.01		0–1
Craft	.08		0–1	.08		0–1
Operator	.16		0–1	.21		0–1
Los Angeles	.60		0–1	.67		0–1
Atlanta	.11		0–1	.11		0–1
Boston	.29		0–1	.21		0–1
Personal contact use	.54		0–1	1.00		0–1
Weak tie	—		—	0.20		0–1
White contact	—		—	0.49		0–1
Male contact	—		—	0.59		0–1
Influential tie	—		—	0.12		0–1

pooled sample, those matched with their jobs by formal and informal means. The mean age of respondents is approximately thirty-five. Fifty-seven percent are white, 13 percent are black, and 30 percent are Latino.[11] At least 83 percent have a high school diploma, 82 percent are fluent in English, 76 percent are U.S. citizens,[12] and 57 percent reported having had previous experience in a similar job type. Finally, among the pooled sample, 54 percent were matched to their jobs by personal contacts.

For the sample of personal contact users, the means are very similar to those of the pooled sample. However, personal contact users are on average younger, less educated, and less fluent in English. They are also comprised of a higher proportion of Latinos, are less likely to be U.S. citizens, have fewer months of tenure at the firm, have fewer members in professional or technical occupations, and are more likely to reside in Los Angeles than those in the pooled sample (due in large part to the Latino population). One-fifth

TABLE 2. ODDS RATIOS OF PERSONAL CONTACT USE REGRESSED ON INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERISTICS (N = 2781)

Independent Variables	Exp(β)
Race and gender (reference: white men)	
White women	.702***
Black men	.585**
Black women	.583**
Latino men	1.809***
Latinas	1.007
Age	1.018
Age (squared)	1.000
Educational attainment (reference: postsecondary degree)	
Dropout	.903
High school graduate	.898
English fluency	.429***
U.S. citizenship	1.199
Previous experience	.777**
City (reference: Los Angeles)	
Atlanta	1.105
Boston	.546***
Constant	1.034*
−2 Log likelihood	3561.941
χ^2	272.019
Degrees of freedom	14

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

were job matched by a weak tie, 49 percent by a white contact, 59 percent by a male tie, and 12 percent by an influential contact.

The Odds and Wage Effects of Personal Contact Use

Displayed in Table 2 are the odds ratios of personal contact use regressed on individual characteristics. I find that relative to white men, white women and blacks are significantly less likely to have been job matched by personal contacts, whereas Latino men have a significantly higher likelihood, net of controls for educational attainment and English fluency. Given the higher likelihood of personal contact use among white men (with the exception of Latino men), are white men also advantaged in their returns to personal contact use relative to white women, blacks, and Latinos? To address this question, I estimate three models of wage attainment for the pooled sample. The first model represents the base model including only controls. The second model adds to the first the effect of personal contact use. The third model estimates the effect of personal contact use as well as the interaction between personal contact use and race/gender. The purpose of these estimates is to determine the extent to which personal contact use accounts for any part of wage differentials between white men and white women, blacks, and Latinos.

Results presented in Table 3 indicate the following: Although white men are advan-

TABLE 3. OLS COEFFICIENTS OF HOURLY WAGES (LN) ON PERSONAL CONTACT USE, POOLED SAMPLE (N = 2,781)

Independent Variables	Model 1 β	Model 2 β	Model 3 β
Personal contact used		−.063 (.017)***	−.094 (.029)**
White women * personal contact used			.143 (.042)**
Black men * personal contact used			.107 (.072)
Black women * personal contact used			.048 (.068)
Latino men * personal contact used			−.060 (.054)
Latinas * personal contact used			−.113 (.055)*
Race and gender (reference: white men)			
White women	−.159 (.021)***	−.165 (.021)***	−.229 (.029)***
Black men	−.077 (.037)*	−.085 (.037)*	−.137 (.050)**
Black women	−.276 (.035)***	−.284 (.035)***	−.308 (.047)***
Latino men	−.135 (.032)***	−.127 (.032)***	−.089 (.050)+
Latinas	−.320 (.034)***	−.320 (.034)***	−.256 (.046)***
Age	.028 (.005)***	.028 (.005)***	.028 (.005)***
Age (squared)	−.000 (.000)***	−.000 (.000)***	−.000 (.000)***
Educational attainment (reference: postsecondary degree)			
Dropout	−.327 (.029)***	−.329 (.029)***	−.323 (.029)***
High school graduate	−.141 (.019)***	−.143 (.019)***	−.142 (.019)***
English fluency	.204 (.038)***	.193 (.038)***	.181 (.038)***
U.S. citizenship	−.015 (.032)	−.013 (.032)	−.019 (.032)
Previous experience	.113 (.017)***	.109 (.017)***	.105 (.017)***
Tenure (in months)	.002 (.000)***	.002 (.000)***	.002 (.000)***
Firm size	.016 (.004)***	.015 (.004)***	.015 (.004)***
Firm missing dummy	−.051 (.038)	−.049 (.038)	−.042 (.038)
Managerial (reference: other occupations)	.215 (.020)***	.214 (.020)***	.211 (.020)***
City (reference: Los Angeles)			
Atlanta	−.078 (.028)**	−.076 (.028)**	−.081 (.028)**
Boston	−.011 (.020)	−.020 (.021)	−.019 (.021)
Constant	1.488***	1.540***	1.576***
Degrees of freedom	18	19	24
Adjusted R^2	.413	.416	.421

+ p < .10, * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001.

taged over white women and blacks in the extent of personal contact use, they are not advantaged in their rates of returns to personal contact use. From model 1 we see that, net of controls, white men have an approximately 16 percent wage advantage over white women, 7 percent advantage over black men, 28 percent advantage over black women, 13 percent advantage over Latino men, and 32 percent advantage over Latinas. If white men experience wage advantages because of their greater personal contact use, then we would expect the coefficients for being nonwhite and/or nonmale to decline with the inclusion of personal contact use and social resource indicators. However, with the introduction of personal contact use in model 2, for which there is a six-point wage disadvantage, the coefficients for being a white woman, black, and Latino hardly change.

With the inclusion of the interaction terms in model 3, interesting findings emerge. First, the wage effects of personal contact use vary by race and gender. As indicated by the coefficient for personal contact used, white men and Latinas who use personal contacts earn roughly 9 percent and 11 percent less than those formally matched, respectively. However, among white women, the returns to personal contact use are positive. White women matched by personal contacts garner approximately 14 percent higher wages over their formally matched counterparts.

Second, the coefficient for being a white woman increases by approximately 7 percentage points (from −.16 to −.23), and that for being a black man and woman increases by approximately 6 and 3 percentage points, respectively, over model 1 (from −.07 to −.13 and −.28 to −.31). These greater effects indicate that the race and gender wage advantage experienced by white, male, personal contact users is lower than that of the wage advantage experienced by white men formally matched with their jobs. While formally matched white men earn roughly 23 percent more than their white, female counterparts, those matched by informal contacts earn just 9 percent more (−.23 + .14).

The declining effects for Latinos indicate the opposite relationship. The coefficient for being a Latino male declines to marginality from models 1 to 3, and that for being a Latina declines as well, by approximately 6 percentage points. This indicates that the wage advantage of white men over Latinos declines after accounting for personal contact use. More importantly, it suggests that the wage differential is greater between white male and Latino personal contact users than between white males and Latinos formally job matched. Thus, while formally matched Latinas earn approximately 26 percent less than their white, male counterparts, those employing informal ties garner almost 37 percent lower wages (−.26 + −.11).

The Odds and Wage Effects of Social Resource Indicators

Do white, male, job seekers have higher odds of being job matched by contacts with the characteristics and influence hypothesized to lead to better labor market advancement? To determine differential access to social resource indicators, I conducted logistic regression procedures to predict the likelihood among personal contact users of being job matched by a weak tie, a white contact, a male tie, and an influential tie. Results, displayed in Table 4, provide convincing evidence to support hypothesis 2, that white men are more likely than white women, blacks, and Latinos to access and mobilize each social resource indicator. Black women and Latinos have significantly lower odds of being job matched by a weak tie than do white men (65, 63, and 47 percent lower, respectively). Not surprisingly, white men are far more likely to be linked to their jobs by white contacts than are blacks and Latinos.

Predicting the likelihood of using a male job contact, I find lower odds of male contact use, not only among all groups of women but among black and Latino men as well. The odds of being job matched by male contacts are lower by 88 percent for white women, 92 percent for black women, and 96 percent for Latinas, respectively, compared to white men. Moreover, the odds of using a male job contact are also significantly lower among black and Latino men who have 62 percent and 46 percent lower odds than white men, respectively. Given societal norms, it may not be surprising that women are far less likely to employ male job contacts than are white men. However, that black and

TABLE 4. ODDS RATIOS OF RESOURCE MEASURES REGRESSED ON INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERISTICS AMONG PERSONAL CONTACT USERS (N = 1511)

Independent Variables	Weak Tie Exp(β)	White Contact Exp(β)	Male Tie Exp(β)	Influential Tie Exp(β)
Race and gender (reference: white men)				
White women	1.047	1.120	.121***	.402***
Black men	.585	.016***	.369***	.253**
Black women	.349**	.016***	.081***	.290**
Latino men	.316***	.050***	.501**	.226***
Latinas	.452**	.052***	.035***	.169***
Age	.861***	.846**	1.037	.962
Age (squared)	1.002***	1.002**	1.000	1.001
Educational attainment (reference: postsecondary degree)				
Dropout	.861	.455**	1.579*	.610
High school graduate	.520***	.664*	1.902***	1.598*
English fluency	2.046*	1.978*	.540*	1.474
U.S. Citizenship	.539*	1.519	.615+	.818
Previous experience	1.182	.597**	.780*	1.900***
City (reference: Los Angeles)				
Atlanta	.792	1.649+	.835	1.210
Boston	.859	.959	1.106	1.176
Constant	1.622+	4.342***	1.5314+	−1.911+
−2 Log likelihood	1399.711	1117.169	1603.222	944.944
χ^2	97.225	977.193	439.275	144.101
Degrees of freedom	14	14	14	14

+ $p < .10$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Latino men are significantly less likely to employ male ties is noteworthy and warrants further discussion.

Consistent with my hypotheses, white men are also significantly more likely to have been matched with their jobs by influential ties, or those hiring them for the position, than are white women, blacks, and Latinos. The odds of using an influential tie are approximately 60 percent lower for white women, 74 percent lower for black men, 71 percent lower for black women, 77 percent lower for Latino men, and 82 percent lower for Latinas. The next step in these analyses is to determine whether, and the extent to which, their greater access and mobilization of weak, white, male, and influential contacts affects wage differentials.

Table 5 displays results of hourly wages regressed on social resource indicators among personal contact users. This analysis is used to determine the differential effects of weak, white, male, and influential ties for white women, blacks, and Latinos, relative to white men. Four models are presented. The first estimates only the effect of demographic, human capital, job characteristics, and location controls on wages. Model 2 adds to the base model social resource indicators, and model 3 incorporates interactions between

TABLE 5. OLS COEFFICIENTS OF HOURLY WAGES (LN) REGRESSED ON SOCIAL RESOURCE INDICATORS AMONG PERSONAL CONTACT USERS (N = 1,511)

Independent Variables	Model 1 β	Model 2 β	Model 3 β	Model 4 β
Race and gender (reference: white men)				
White women	−.083 (.031)**	−.034 (.032)	−.225 (.095)*	−.023 (.032)
Black men	−.013 (.054)	.043 (.058)	.280 (.109)*	.040 (.058)
Black women	−.249 (.051)***	.170 (.057)**	−.192 (.084)*	−.172 (.057)**
Latino men	−.113 (.040)**	−.060 (.044)	−.219 (.083)**	−.068 (.044)
Latinas	−.335 (.045)***	−.246 (.051)***	−.267 (.077)**	−.251 (.051)***
Social resource indicators				
Weak tie (reference: strong tie)		.049 (.028)+	−.030 (.046)	.063 (.033)
White tie (reference: nonwhite tie)		.022 (.032)	−.027 (.058)	.010 (.032)
Male tie (reference: female tie)		.070 (.025)**	.045 (.051)	.067 (.025)**
Influential tie (reference: other methods of assistance)		.168 (.035)***	.247 (.049)***	.116 (.044)**
Interactions: SES * social resources				
High SES * Weak tie				.134 (.058)*
High SES * Influential tie				.144 (.071)*
Interactions: Race and gender * social resources				
Moderating effect of weak ties compared to white men				
White women * Weak tie			.145 (.068)*	
Black men * Weak tie			.431 (.141)**	
Black women * Weak tie			−.069 (.158)	
Latino men * Weak tie			.150 (.084)+	
Latinas * Weak tie			.040 (.087)	
Moderating effect of white ties compared to white men				
White women * white tie			.105 (.090)	
Black men * white tie			−.372 (.174)*	
Black women * white tie			.132 (.169)	
Latino men * white tie			.137 (.086)	
Latinas * white tie			.016 (.102)	
Moderating effect of male ties compared to white men				
White women * Male tie			.174 (.070)*	
Black men * Male tie			−.442 (.114)***	
Black women * Male tie			−.045 (.116)	
Latino men * Male tie			.126 (.078)	
Latinas * Male tie			−.065 (.077)	
Moderating effect of influential ties compared to white men				
White women * Influential tie			−.035 (.088)	
Black men * Influential tie			−.373 (.189)*	
Black women * Influential tie			−.298 (.174)+	
Latino men * Influential tie			−.263 (.116)*	
Latinas * Influential tie			−.315 (.161)+	
Constant	1.440***	1.268***	1.306***	1.298***
Degrees of freedom	18	22	42	24
Adjusted R^2	.450	.462	.482	.465

Notes: Standard errors in parentheses. Controls are included for age, age^2, educational attainment, English fluency, citizenship, previous work experience, tenure, firm size, occupation, and city of residence.
+ $p < .10$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

race and gender membership and social resource mobilization. Finally, to test the hypothesis that returns to social resources are modified by socioeconomic status, model 4 adds to model 2 the multiplicative effects of respondents' SES and social resources.

From model 1 we learn that, net of age, human capital, job characteristics, and city of residence, white men's wages are roughly 8 percent higher than white women's, 25 percent greater than black women's, 12 percent higher than Latino men's, and 34 percent greater than Latinas'. No net wage gap was found between black and white men job matched by informal ties.

Model 2 estimates the additive effects of social resource indicators. While no net effects are found for the use of white contacts, and weak tie users garner a marginal 4 percent wage advantage, those employing male job ties gain almost 7 percent higher wages, and influential ties result in an impressive 17 percent wage advantage.[13] Moreover, with the inclusion of these social capital indicators, white men's wage advantage over white women and Latino men disappears, and their advantage over Latinas declines by 7 percentage points.

With the incorporation of interaction terms in model 3, the differential effects of social resource indicators become evident for each race and gender group.[14] Partial support is found for that aspect of hypothesis 3 concerned with weak tie use. Results indicate the positive net wage effects of weak ties among white women and black men. White women matched by weak ties earn roughly 15 percent higher wages, while the advantages for black males are approximately 43 percent. Latino men matched by weak ties earn roughly 15 percent more as well. However, this finding is of marginal significance.

For both white women and black men, the use of weak over strong ties is indicative of higher social structural location. In descriptive analyses not shown here, I found that, among black men, 59 percent of weak tie users have associate's degrees or higher, but only 35 percent of strong tie users reported the same. In addition, while 68 percent of weak tie users work in professional occupations, only 16 percent of strong tie users do. Likewise, among white women, while almost three-quarters of weak tie users reported having some type of postsecondary degree, only 57 percent of strong tie users have such degrees. However, because regression analyses control for educational and occupational attainment, these positive effects of weak tie use exist over and above such considerations. Among white and Latino men, similar relationships were found between college and occupational attainment on the one hand and weak tie use on the other. However, among Latinos, the relationships are much less impressive, and those for white men appear to be driven by influential tie use. Thus, it appears that among those of high socioeconomic status, weak ties do lead to better outcomes.

Receiving limited support is that aspect of hypothesis 3 dealing with the wage effects of white versus nonwhite ties. No net effects are found for the use of white job contacts for whites, black women, and Latinas. Although of marginal significance, Latino men appear to benefit from the use of white contacts. Those who did earned roughly 15 percent higher wages than job seekers matched by nonwhite contacts. The negative effect of having used a white contact for black men (again, refer to model 3) was unexpected. Indeed, the roughly 38 percent lower wages of black men job matched by white ties is quite high and strong. However, given that the substantial effects of female tie use among black men are encompassed in the coefficient for being a black male, the relative earnings of black men job matched by white ties, net of other social resource indicators, are meager by comparison. By summing the coefficient for being a black male with that

for the interaction between being a black male and using a white tie, I find that black men matched by white ties earn approximately 10 percent less than white men matched by white ties (.28 + −.38).

The wage effects of male contact use are significant only among white women and black men. Thus, the data provide only partial support for that aspect of hypothesis 3. White women job-matched by male ties garner 18 percent higher wages than their counterparts using female ties. Thus, relative to the 23 percent wage differential between white men and women job matched by female ties, white men matched by male ties have only a 5 percent wage advantage over their female counterparts (−.23 + .18).

Among black men, those matched by male ties earn approximately 44 percent lower wages than those otherwise matched. Consequently, relative to white men using male ties, male contact use puts black men at a 16 percent disadvantage (.28 + −.44). This strong and large negative effect of male contact use among black males warrants further examination. In descriptive analyses not shown here, the data indicated that black men matched with their jobs by female contacts are more likely than those using male ties to have a postsecondary degree (42 percent vs. 37 percent) and employment in professional occupations (36 percent vs. 19 percent). Thus, black men job matched by female ties reflect individuals of higher socioeconomic status than those job matched by male contacts.[15]

Finally, although white men appear to garner substantially higher wages when matched by influential ties, blacks and Latinos appear to do significantly less well. While white men job matched by influential ties earn roughly 25 percent more than those linked by other matching methods (refer to coefficient for influential tie, Table 5, model 3), black men earn approximately 37 percent less (refer to coefficient for black men * influential tie, model 3), black women garner 30 percent lower wages, Latino men obtain 26 percent lower wages, and Latinas garner 32 percent less. Indeed, among those matched by influential contacts, the wage disadvantage relative to white men increases to 9 percent for black men (.28 + −.37), 50 percent for black women (−.20 + −.30), 47 percent for Latino men (−.22 + −.25), and 59 percent for Latinas (−.27 + −.32). The effects for blacks are of marginal significance.

Differential wage effects of influential contact use, however, may be less a function of having a contact who can act on a job seeker's behalf to positively affect employment outcomes than they are a function of differences in the social structural location of a job seeker mobilizing hiring ties. Again, I point to descriptive analyses not shown here. Among white men, a significantly higher percentage of those using influential ties reported having a postsecondary degree (69 percent vs. 58 percent) and professional occupations (63 percent vs. 34 percent) than those whose contacts aided in other ways; the latter pattern was found among white woman as well (60 percent vs. 36 percent). However, blacks and Latinos using hiring ties are less likely to have college degrees and to work in professional occupations than those whose contacts aided in other ways. Hence, among whites, the use of hiring ties appears to be positively related to socioeconomic status, whereas among blacks and Latinos the relationship is reversed.

Given hypotheses that suggest a contingency to social resources dependent on socioeconomic status, and given the descriptive results discussed here indicating the modifying effect of SES on social resources returns, I estimate the wage effects of social resource indicators as well as interactions between socioeconomic status and social resources.[16] In model 4, I employ only the social resource measures, weak and influential ties, as these

represent the indicators most implicated in discussions of SES and social resource interactions.[17] I find that SES modifies the wage effects of social resources.[18] Among low-to-mid SES workers, no net effects of weak ties are found. However, for those of high status, the effect of weak over strong ties is significant as those matched by weak ties garner roughly 13 percent higher wages than those matched by strong ties.

SES also modifies the wage effects of influential tie use. As indicated by the coefficient for influential tie, among the low-to-mid SES workers, those matched by influential ties garner roughly 12 percent higher wages than those who used noninfluential contacts. However, among high SES workers, those using influential contacts earned approximately 14 percent higher wages, over and above the relative wage advantage that low-to-mid SES workers experience. In other words, high SES workers matched to their jobs by influential contacts earn roughly 26 percent higher wages than low-mid SES workers matched by noninfluential ties. Therefore, evidence supports hypothesis 4, that returns to the use of weak and influential ties are modified by the socioeconomic status of job seekers mobilizing them.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study extends previous research in three substantive ways. First, I extend past research by investigating race, ethnic, and gender differences in job contacts' characteristics and influence, what different types of job contacts "buy" job seekers in the labor market, and the extent to which these differences in social resources explain between-group variations in wages. I find that the odds of personal contact use are significantly greater for white men than for either white women or blacks, but significantly lower than for Latino men. However, the higher likelihood of personal contact use among white men does not appear to advantage them in the labor market over white women and blacks. Instead, it appears that not only do informally matched white men average significantly lower wages than their formally matched counterparts, but their wage advantage over white women and blacks is substantially less than the wage advantage that formally matched white men experience over their white female and black counterparts.

Conversely, Latinos' greater reliance on informal ties has disadvantaged them relative to white men. Indeed, compared to white men, their wage disadvantage appears greater among personal contact users relative to the wage disadvantage experienced by formally matched white men over Latinos. Thus, because of their greater mobilization of ties that result in dramatically lower returns, Latinos represent the only group for which personal contact use explains part of the wage differential with white men.

Among personal contact users, white men are more likely to mobilize ties deemed to affect positive employment outcomes. Moreover, differences in social resource mobilization help to explain a substantial part of wage differentials. Not only are their odds of using weak, white, male, and influential ties significantly greater than their black, Latino, and female counterparts, but in some cases, they experience wage advantages as a result. For instance, the following findings are noteworthy. First, social resource differentials help to explain a substantial part of the wage differential between white men and Latinos. Second, controls for male job contact use substantially close the wage gap between white men and white women. Third, white men matched by influential ties benefit in ways that other race-ethnic-gender groups do not. Thus, it appears that Latino job seekers are disadvantaged by same-ethnicity job contacts, that women are disadvantaged by

their use of female contacts, and that white men experience labor market advantages because of their greater access to influential ties.

Given these findings, however, the overall advantages to mobilizing personal contacts generally, and weak, white, male, and influential ties specifically, seem somewhat overstated. It appears that not only do informally matched white men average significantly lower wages than their formally matched counterparts, but their relative wage advantage over white women and blacks is substantially lower than the wage advantage that formally matched white men experience. Their greater mobilization of weak and male ties, coupled with their generally lower rates of return to these social resources, help to erode some of their wage advantage, particularly over white women and to a lesser extent over black men as well.

Second, this article extends previous research by offering an alternative measure of the influential tie. In past studies, the influential tie was operationalized in terms of whether or not the job contact used his or her influence or position to help the respondent get a job. These studies have generally found no net effect of influential tie use on wages. I argue that, by ignoring *how* the contact may have aided in the matching process, researchers could not determine the extent to which job seekers were actually mobilizing and benefiting from their social resources. These distinctions are important, given that different methods of assistance suggest something different about the level of influence their contacts can or will wield on their behalf and the amount of earnings job seekers garner as a result. Thus, hiring contacts are seen as the most influential of personal contacts. Not only are they well positioned to supply reliable information about job characteristics, they can help new workers learn their tasks and become integrated into the workplace culture more quickly. Furthermore, contacts with the authority to hire are strategically placed within the firm to shape earnings directly. Measured in terms of whether they hired the jobseeker or not, influential contacts are found to affect wages positively and profoundly, especially among white men and white women. Thus, as an indicator of social capital, this measure is very promising and deserves further attention.

Third, this study also indicates that the *value* of social resources, or the rate of return for their use, is contingent upon the social structural location of those mobilizing them. In other words, benefits are not constant across social status. While those of high socioeconomic status benefit from the use of weak over strong ties, low-to-mid status job seekers do not. In addition, although both status groups benefit from the use of influential ties, the relative returns to high-status individuals far exceed that of their more disadvantaged counterparts.

These findings are consistent with Granovetter's argument that the use of weak ties does not provide the same benefit to individuals of low socioeconomic status that it does for those of high SES. Granovetter suggests that, whereas weak ties appear to act as bridges to better opportunities and resources among those located higher in the social structure, for low-to-mid SES individuals, weak ties appear only to provide access to opportunities that are no better than they might have gotten through strong ties. Thus, the use of weak ties is beneficial for high-status black men and white women but inconsequential for low-status black and Latino women. Essentially, although the ties for each are weak, they differ significantly in the opportunities they provide.

Drawing on Campbell, Marsden, and Hurlbert (1986), I append Granovetter's proposition and contend that the weak ties of low-status individuals are ineffective at bridg-

ing dissimilar actors and broadening opportunities because these ties are being mobilized from small, dense, homogeneous networks that lack influential ties, networks that likely inhibit access to people and groups offering new and different information. Because of data limitations, however, I am not able to examine this issue more closely. Future research should address this contingency in order to better understand the impact on earnings and other employment outcomes of social resource measures, especially as they relate to race, ethnic, and gender inequalities in the labor market.

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NOTES

1. For an interesting discussion of the origins of the term social capital see Borgatti (1998). This article is a compilation of e-mail exchanges among SOCNET listserv members.

2. Network composition refers to the social position of the job seeker's ties as indicated by their occupational standing and educational attainment.

3. A more extensive literature exists that compares the personal networks of different classes of urban blacks (Oliver 1988; Wacquant and Wilson 1989; Fernandez and Harris 1992; Smith 1995; Hurlbert, Beggs, and Haines 1998; Tigges, Browne, and Green 1998). These studies have generally found that, relative to the network structure and composition of nonpoor and working poor blacks, those of the nonworking poor place them at greater risk of social isolation and militate against finding employment, especially *good* jobs. The most disadvantaged urban blacks are less likely than those in the "mainstream" to have a best friend, partner, spouse, or discussion partner (Wacquant and Wilson 1989; Tigges et al. 1998), and their networks tend to be composed of strong, redundant, dense, and multistranded ties that are kin-based and spatially concentrated in their neighborhoods (Oliver 1988; Fernandez and Harris 1992; Smith 1995). Moreover, nonworking poor blacks or those residing in high- or extreme-poverty neighborhoods are less likely to have educated or employed social ties (Wacquant and Wilson 1989; Smith 1995; Tigges et al. 1998).

4. While some have suggested that gender differences in personal networks are a function of women's preferences for kinship-based ties and men's preference for ties outside the home, evidence supporting a structural perspective is persuasive, indicating that family and work-related characteristics explain much of the gender variation in network composition (Fischer and Oliker 1983; Moore 1990).

5. Finding employment through the "not searching" mode appears to be a proxy for job matching through personal contacts. As Granovetter (1995, p. 145) explains, "In GAJ, 82.5 percent of nonsearchers found their jobs through personal contacts, compared to 45.4 percent of searchers. . . . Thus, finding a job without a search may be a close proxy for finding a job through personal contacts—not surprising, since jobs that 'fall into your lap' are unlikely to do so without some personal intermediary."

6. Because the Detroit survey did not address issues of job contacts' characteristics, it was excluded.

7. Although the sample size of the dataset is 7,074 (excluding Detroit), I analyzed 2,781 cases. A significant proportion of cases were excluded due to skip patterns in the survey and missing

data. Specifically, respondents were asked if they had looked for work in the last thirty days. If they replied negatively, they were asked when they last looked for work. In addition to retired respondents, those who reported that they had not looked for work in six years or more were not asked questions about job search, such as whether they were aided by personal job contacts and about job contacts' characteristics. These exclusions represent 3,677 cases, including 922 who are retired, 2,262 who had not looked for work in six or more years (of which 80 percent were currently employed), and 493 who reported never having searched (of which 44 percent were currently employed). In other words, cases lost due to skip patterns in the survey account for approximately 81 percent of excluded cases. Also excluded from analyses were Asians, American Indians, and respondents specified as other because their numbers were too small to conduct reliable analyses.

8. For clarity, when discussing "Latinos," I refer to both Latino men and women, when discussing "Latinas," I refer only to Latino women, and when discussing "Latino men," I refer only to Latino men.

9. To determine whether examining only black-white differences in Atlanta and black-white-Latino differences in Los Angeles and Boston introduced any methodological issues, I also examined these relationships with the following samples: First, I examined black-white differences in all three cities; second, I examined black-white-Latino differences in only Los Angeles and Boston; third, I included Latinos in Atlanta and conducted analyses on blacks, whites, and Latinos in all three cities. The results for all analyses did not differ substantively from those reported here. These results will be provided upon request.

10. Flagged by MCSUI investigators for possible data entry error were cases for which the computed wage was less than two dollars an hour or greater than fifty dollars an hour and unreasonable based on respondent's occupation were. These cases were omitted from analyses.

11. It should be noted that Boston Latinos differ significantly from Los Angeles Latinos. Roughly 60 percent of Boston Latinos report that they are from the Caribbean (47 percent Puerto Rican, 11 percent Dominican, and 2.2 percent Cuban), and a majority also reports U.S. citizenship (73.9 percent). However, the bulk of Latinos in Los Angeles report that they are Mexican or Mexican American (68 percent), and only 33 percent report U.S. citizenship. Because of these differences, Boston and Los Angeles Latinos may also differ in terms of their use of social resources. To examine this possibility, I investigated differences between these two groups in the mobilization of personal contacts and weak, white, male, and influential ties. I found no significant differences in this regard. However, when I examined differences by citizenship, I found that a greater proportion of noncitizens used a personal contact to find their job, fewer reported the use of a white contact, and a higher percentage reported the use of a male job contact. Because of this bivariate association, I also considered including as a control respondents' citizenship status. However, I found that, for the most part, it did not affect the odds of personal contact use, did not impact hourly wages, or substantively change the odds of mobilizing white or influential ties. Net citizenship effects were found for the likelihood of mobilizing a weak tie and a male tie. In both instances, having U.S. citizenship increased the odds of using a weak tie and a male tie. However, given that citizenship status has little impact in the majority of analyses, it is excluded for parsimony's sake.

12. Those designated as citizens are those born in the U.S. as well as those who obtained citizenship after immigrating.

13. In analyses not shown here, I found that controls for having an influential contact diminish the already weak, marginal effect of weak ties. While the use of weak and influential ties is positively related (with higher proportions of weak tie users being job matched by influential ties than strong tie users), there is little concern that the effects of having an influential tie are confounding weak tie use. A Pearson correlation of .09 ($p < .001$) and high collinearity tolerance statistics indicate that multicollinearity is not at issue here. However, the positive relationship between these two concepts supports the strength-of-weak-ties hypothesis in that it suggests that those mobilizing influential ties are very likely mobilizing weak ties.

14. Care should be taken when interpreting the meaning of these interaction coefficients. The coefficients for race and gender membership, such as being Latina or a black male, for example, represent wage differentials between white men and their other race and gender counterparts, among those matched to their jobs by strong, nonwhite, female, and noninfluential ties. Hence, among those using such ties, white women earn 23 percent lower wages and black men 28 percent more than their white male counterparts. Coefficients for interactions between race and gender membership and social resource measures indicate the modifying effect of using that particular social resource for that particular group. Thus, the beta coefficient for the interaction between being a white woman and using a weak tie (.14) indicates that, among white women, weak tie users garners 14 percent higher wages. When we add this coefficient to the coefficient for being a white woman (−.23), we obtain the advantage of weak tie use for white males over white females (≈9 percent).

15. Given that prior research has not found higher sex diversity in the personal networks of blacks generally or black men in particular, the finding that black men are substantially more likely than white men to mobilize female contacts for job finding is counterintuitive. One-third of black men found their jobs through female contacts compared to less than one-fifth of white. However, as Kasinitz and Rosenberg (1996) point out, this may suggest a preference among black males for typically female office jobs because they offer the comforts and prestige of white-collar employment that cannot be found in more male-dominated positions. Alternatively, this finding may indicate a perception among black males that occupations typically occupied by women hold more or better opportunities, as their greater returns to female contact use indicates, than more masculine jobs, such as those in construction, in which black men have historically been excluded (Waldinger 1996). Still another possibility is that, as black women represent nearly two-thirds of black college graduates, educated black men seeking employment may have to rely more heavily on their female counterparts during their job search. Future research should examine whether individual preferences or structural factors are at the root of black men's greater utilization of female job contacts for job finding.

16. SES is operationalized by interacting occupational and educational attainment. Those having high SES membership are those coded 1 for being in managerial or professional occupations *and* those having a postsecondary degree. Thus, the interactions present in model 4 are three-way interactions of manager* college* weak-tie-use and manager* college* influential-tie-use but can be interpreted as the modifying effect of socioeconomic status on the returns to social resources.

17. In analyses not presented here, I regressed hourly wages on interactions between SES and social resource indicators, white tie and male tie. These findings were not statistically significant; nor did they change the substantive findings reported in model 4, Table 5. Given the lack of discussion in the literature surrounding these interactions, the general lack of descriptive results suggesting a modifying effect of SES on these social resource indicators and, finally, the lack of any net effect in regression analyses, for parsimony's sake, they are not presented here.

18. Given the high SES/weak tie interaction, the coefficient for weak tie use represents the effect of using a weak tie over a strong tie for those low-to-middle SES (or those not in managerial/professional positions and/or with less than a postsecondary degree).

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