

# EXAMINING SOCIAL CLASS PRIVILEGE AND PERCEIVED CAREER OPTIONS IN ADOLESCENT WHITE WOMEN: A QUALITATIVE STUDY

Anne B. Scott  
Dr. Mary J. Heppner, Dissertation Supervisor

## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine the impact of Social Class Worldview on adolescent women's perceived career options. This qualitative investigation resulted in 10 interviews focused on the lived experience of high-school-age white women of economically privileged backgrounds.

The "Model of Contextual Privilege and Career Selection in Adolescent White Women" emerged from the interview. This model explains the overall process whereby privileged adolescent young women take into account their beliefs about achievement, their experiences, messages from others, and their social class worldview in order to develop a list of occupational possibilities. The Model incorporates four major categorical groups: 1) Social Class Worldview, 2) Shared Perceptions of Achievement and Expectations, 3) Exposure, and 4) Internalizing and Processing Occupational Criteria. Overall, the findings suggest that the perception of career options is the result of a very complicated interplay of cognitive, emotional, and experiential factors.