ONLINE APPENDIX

APPENDIX A: Supplementary Qualitative Evidence

To assess the plausibility of our theorized mechanisms and to boost external validity of our findings, we conducted telephone interviews with hiring managers in 2018. To develop the interviews, we designed a semi-structured protocol and conducted an initial set of interviews with three hiring managers in mid-size health care firms to test and refine the protocol. We then recruited 14 additional hiring managers into the study. The hiring managers were senior executives in organizations that match closely the profile of the fictitious employer used in our experimental studies. To get access to these executives, we searched a comprehensive commercial database (Corporate Affiliations) for mid-size health care firms located in the Midwestern and Western regions of the continental U.S. (excluding California) that employed no fewer than 50 and no more than 1,000 workers. The firms in our sampling frame listed at least one of the 13 NAICS codes in the health care industry and listed at least one senior executive's name and contact information.[1] The search produced 391 potential respondents, but only 282 e-mail addresses were valid (e-mails sent to the rest were undeliverable). Of those e-mailed, 22 responded with interest and 14 ultimately agreed to be interviewed.

Our goal for the interviews was to elicit managers' thoughts—and to understand if indeed there were concerns—about job candidates with high capability. We approached that goal with a four-part interview protocol. First, after introducing the general topic of our research as an "interest in how people look for jobs and how organizations look for workers," we asked a respondent to briefly summarize key characteristics he or she looks for in a job candidate and the most common concerns the respondent has when considering someone for a job. In the next step of the interview, we e-mailed to the respondent one of the two résumé excerpts that were developed for the purposes of the experiments. These résumés summarized qualifications for either an extremely high-capability candidate or a moderately high-capability candidate, like the ones used in the experiments (see Appendix B for an example). We asked the respondent to take a few minutes to look at the qualifications summarized in the résumé and to imagine that the respondent's organization has an opening for a division controller and that a candidate with the

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[1] We used NAICS codes 334510, 423450, 524114, 541219, 621111, 621491, 621511, 621512, 621610, 621999, 811219, 813212, and 923120.

qualifications listed in the résumé is applying to fill that open position. Once the respondent had a chance to study the résumé, we asked for her or his thoughts about the candidate.

In the third step of the interview, we sent the second résumé of the two (we randomized the order across our respondents) and asked the respondent to now imagine that there is not one but two candidates applying to the same position and to share the respondent's thoughts about the second candidate in comparison to the first one. We then asked which of the two candidates would be preferred and why. In the last step of the interview, we asked those respondents who expressed any concern about the extremely high-capability candidate to share with us whether any information about the candidate's motives would alleviate their concern and what kind of information it would have to be. We thus prompted the respondents to list and explicate their concerns related to high-ability job applicants without directly mentioning the topic or priming the respondents with any of our hypothesized mechanisms.

When asked the question "If choosing between these two candidates, which would you be more likely to consider for interviewing and hiring and why?" all 17 respondents expressed concern about the extremely high-capability candidate, stating that they would, at the very least, require additional information about the candidate before further considering him for the job. Many linked the capability of the candidate to the reason they were concerned. Examples of the ways executives discussed these concerns are below:

> Well, that it's a step backwards for them. So, are they really. . . . You know what? You'd have to dig into what their true goals are for their career progression and why they're willing to take a step backwards, to accept that role. (R4, ME)[2]

> Yeah, that does seem like a step back and why they would be applying for the position would be of concern. So yeah, given the experience and the level they've reached, I'd still wanna talk to them and understand why. (R10, EM)

> So that would be my concern as to what is prompting him, he's been in this job for seven years as senior VP, what's prompting them to take a jump of a level down? I would say by looking at he's got good tenure and he's climbed the ladder pretty quickly. But that would be my first question as to why he's looking for a lower level position. (R11, EM)

> Senior Vice President of Finance. I don't know. In our structure, that would be a higher kind of a job than controller. And, why are they looking for a job that is

under what they're currently doing, is a question I would have. Are they overqualified? We get a fair number of that. . . . And I think if someone were making that kind of a job change from a much higher compensated level and responsibility to something lower, they'd have to convince me that there's a real reason why they're doing that. (R12, EM)

Yeah. Well, I guess I would wonder why is he going from the senior VP back to controller? I think I would need more information, more context about why the particular move. (R13, ME)

I mean, wow. We've had this, I've had people that have like a master's and an accounting degree and they've looked at, not quite a billion, but hundreds of millions, and I haven't even actually called them in. It's just, I didn't want to pursue that. (R2, ME)

If a respondent expressed concerns about the candidate, they were asked why they were concerned. Respondents stated that a highly capable candidate would not be motivated to perform well on the job.

I just don't think there would be a fit, that this person would be looking at more global things than we are, but we'd need somebody that's in the nitty-gritty and actually doing a lot of the work. . . . I don't want to have to worry about them coming down to this spot and being motivated to do all this. (R2, ME)

[When a similar candidate applied to our firm,] our concerns was, is this work gonna be too boring for him or too basic because he is used to doing all this high-level stuff and we really need him to be down in the weeds for a while with some low-level stuff? Is it gonna hold his interest? (R3, EM)

When they talk about that they worked at an organization that has one billion in annual revenue, I think they would get bored with us really quick. (R6, EM)

[Will the candidate be] able to step down from where that person currently is to a different type of structure, a corporate structure, and possibly even reporting to someone just as skilled as they are? And how they would handle that, more on an emotional side. I would also be a little bit concerned just with their team dynamic, and could they humble themselves enough to take a step back? Not everyone can do that. (R7, EM)

If you're overqualified, you could get bored, or you may not see any upside. (R8, ME)

Another closely related justification for the concern about capability expressed by the respondents had to do with flight risk—i.e., the candidate pursuing options outside of the given employer in the near future:

[Will they] stay before they're going back to a billion-dollar company? (R1, EM)

> I don't want it to be a temporary spot until they can find the same level or better than they had before. (R2, ME)

> I would wonder why they're moving. . . . I'd wanna explore their reasons for moving, so I would understand whether they're gonna be stable with us or whether they just are looking for a . . . bridge employment until they get the job that they really want. . . . If you're gonna be here for one year, or two years and leave, you don't really care about us. So, why should I work with you? (R6, EM)

> And, of course, the fear is, and the common knowledge in our organization, is if you hire someone who is overqualified, they won't stay, because they're not making what they need to, the pay is inadequate, and they're really just kind of doing that as a place marker until they find something somewhere else that's better. (R12, EM)

Overall, the interviews with executives indicated that the concerns about high-capability job candidates we have outlined here are realistic. The mechanisms through which we theorize that these concerns operate are plausible and consistent with our experimental results.

APPENDIX B: Experiment Manipulation Tool—Job Candidate Profile Example

Please review the following profile taken from a social media site. It might take a moment for the profile to load. You will be asked to answer some questions below the profile and on the next page.

Analyst - Investment Banking Division at Merrill Lynch
New York, New York | Financial Services

Previous	UBS
Education	Cornell University

📄 Summary

• Created LBO financing model to support $1.5 billion M&A transaction
• Led team of 10 direct reports to assess investment opportunities and build pitch-books supporting North American deals
• Participated in all stages of capital raising process for $1 billion in common stock, preferred stock, and bond offerings

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📄 Experience

Analyst - Investment Banking Division
Merrill Lynch
August 2011 – Present (4 years 2 months) | New York, NY

• Created LBO financing model to support $1.5 billion M&A transaction
• Developed financial valuation models and analyzed investment opportunities in the healthcare sector
• Led team of 10 direct reports to assess investment opportunities and build pitch-books supporting North American deals

Summer Intern
UBS
June 2010 – August 2010 (3 months) | New York, NY

• Performed financial analysis via pro forma cash flow models
• Participated in all stages of capital raising process for $1 billion in common stock, preferred stock, and bond offerings

🎓 Education

Cornell University
Bachelor of Science (B.S.), Applied Economics and Management, Concentration: Finance
2007 – 2011

Study 1

APPENDIX C: Decision to Interview Candidate as an Outcome

While the outcome variable in the primary analysis is the likelihood to offer a job, we also assessed the likelihood to extend an interview, and we provide the results here. For Study 1, we find that extremely high-capability candidates were less likely to receive interviews, using a Wilcoxon sign-rank test ($z = -2.404$, $p < .01$) and a t-test (t = 1.91, $p = .058$, two-tailed test). With clustered standard errors on participants to account for within-participant variance, we found a significant, negative relationship between the capability manipulation ($\beta c = -.393$, $p = .006$) and likelihood of an interview. We then regressed perceptions of commitment on the capability manipulation, also clustering on participants, and found a significant negative effect ($\beta a = -1.262$, $p < .001$). Finally, we regressed the likelihood of an offer on both the capability manipulation ($\beta c' = .253$, $p = .242$) and perceptions of commitment ($\beta b = .463$, $p < .001$). The Sobel test is significant ($\beta = -.646$, $p < .001$). Our results hold for Study 1 with the interview variable.

For Study 2, in the neutral-commitment conditions, the moderately high-capability candidate (N = 54, mean = 5.5, S.D. = 1.67) was more likely to receive an interview offer (t = 2.53, $p = .013$) than the extremely high-capability candidate (N = 53, mean = 4.6, S.D. = 2.12). In the high-commitment conditions, the extremely high-capability candidate (N = 53, mean = 6.28, S.D. = 1.29) was more likely to receive an interview offer (t = -3.11, $p = .002$) than the moderately high-capability candidate (N = 54, mean = 5.5, S.D. = 1.29). Our results hold for Study 2 with the interview variable.

Finally, we ran analyses for Studies 3a and 3b similar to what is in the paper, but we substituted offer with interview as the outcome. For Study 3a, the two-way ANOVA on interview shows that the organizationally oriented motives manipulation had a significant effect ($F(1,224) = 12.51$, $p = .05$) on the likelihood of an interview. The contrast shows that for the extremely high-capability condition, the organizationally oriented motives manipulation had a positive effect (contrast = .77, t = 2.3, $p < .05$) on the likelihood of an interview. Mediation analysis shows there is a significant indirect effect (B = 1.05, $p < .001$, 95% CI: .487, 1.622) for the extremely high-capability candidates, going through perceptions of commitment, on the likelihood of interview.

For Study 3b, we performed a two-way ANOVA on the likelihood of an interview, finding that neither manipulation nor the interaction was significant. The contrasts performed in

the study were also insignificant. When controlling for perceived capability and in the extremely high-capability condition, however, the indirect effect of the rejected outside offers manipulation on interview, going through commitment, is significant (B = 1.01, $p < .001$, 95% CI: .479, 1.588). Our results thus generally hold for Study 3.

Taken as a whole, using the likelihood of receiving an interview as the dependent variable, we confirm hypotheses 1a, 1b, 2, and 3. While this is interesting, our theorizing is primarily on the selection stage of the analysis, albeit interview selection is also consistent empirically with our argument.