

ADVANCES IN GROUP PROCESSES

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ADVANCES IN GROUP PROCESSES VOLUME 34

ADVANCES IN GROUP PROCESSES

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

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PREFACE

Advances in Group Processes is a peer-reviewed annual volume that publishes theoretical analyses, reviews, and theory-based empirical papers on group phenomena. The series adopts a broad conception of “group processes.” This includes work on groups ranging from the very small to the very large, and on classic and contemporary topics such as status, power, trust, justice, conflict, social influence, identity, decision-making, intergroup relations, and social networks. Previous contributors have included scholars from diverse fields including sociology, psychology, political science, economics, business, philosophy, computer science, mathematics, and organizational behavior.

Two years ago, we added an editorial board to the series to broaden the review process and draw upon the expertise of some of the top scholars in the discipline. That board consists of Steve Benard, Jessica Collett, Karen Hegtvedt Michael Hogg, Will Kalkhoff, David Melamed, and Jane Sell. This group of scholars has made the series better and we are grateful for their service, guidance, and advice.

The volume opens with a review of three theoretical research programs that detail the emergence and spread of status beliefs and status value. In “How Status Spreads,” Murray Webster Jr. and Lisa Slattery Walker compare and contrast status construction theory, a formal theory of status value, and the status value theory of power. This work is wholly unique, in that it is the first of its kind to place all three programs under the same evaluative light. The authors give the reader a comprehensive view of how these programs emerge – tracing the roots of such ideas from the 1970s to the latest publications of today. This analysis is a “must read” for students and seasoned researchers interested in the emergence or transfer of status.

The next two papers apply theories of group processes to problems within the criminal justice arena. First, in “Juvenile Delinquency, Criminal Sentiments, and Self-Sentiments: Exploring a Modified Labeling Theory Proposition,” Amy Kroska, James Daniel Lee, and Nicole T. Carr ask if criminal sentiments modify the effect of delinquency labels on self-sentiments. The authors collect survey data from two samples of college students and one sample of delinquent youths enrolled in an aftercare program. Their data indicate that the negative impact of a delinquency label turns critically on how young individuals view that label. Overall, this is the first paper of its kind to test a modified version of labeling theory as it applies to self-esteem and delinquency. The next paper examines how the conveyance of status information – specifically, information conveyed

by expressive or indicative status cues – impacts the distribution of negative rewards. In “Assessing the Impact of Status Information Conveyance on the Distribution of Negative Rewards: A Preliminary Test and Model,” Lisa M. Dilks, Tucker S. McGrimmon, and Shane R. Thye rely on previously published data to investigate how status cues impact negative rewards in the form of sentencing. The authors find that expressive status cues impact negative reward allocations more so than indicative status cues. More importantly, the authors offer up a new graphing procedure for the graph theoretic model of reward expectations theory and they find that this new model displays an improvement of fit relative to the standard model.

The following two papers address issues of how to best model the impact of status characteristics. The first paper addresses the age at which the status value of men and women is maximized in the workplace. In “The Status Value of Age and Gender: Modeling Combined Effects of Diffuse Status Characteristics,” Michael J. Lovaglia, Shane D. Soboroff, Christopher P. Kelley Christabel L. Rogalin, and Jeffrey W. Lucas use a nationally representative survey experiment to determine the age at which status value peaks for men and women. The findings indicate that status value for both men and women peaks around middle age, and the status value for women reaches a maximum earlier than for men. The paper contributes broadly to the areas of status, the complex modeling of multiple status characteristics, and gender discrimination in the workplace. Next, Jennifer McLeer examines the variability we might expect to see around the status characteristics theory parameters m and q in “Measuring the Impact of Status Manipulations using Monte Carlo Simulations.” In short, the paper introduces a method that researchers can use to assess the strength of their status manipulations by comparing them to simulations that use aggregated data from several published meta-analyses. The findings indicate that explicitly manipulated status characteristics generate more distinction in $P(s)$ scores across high- and low-status actors than do implicitly manipulated characteristics. Both papers contribute broadly to refining procedures within the status characteristics research program.

The final four papers address the ways in which individuals perceive cognitive orientation, roles, selves, values, others, and groups. Jeffrey W. Lucas, Carmi Schooler, Marek Posard, and Hsiang-Yuan Ho examine how variations in social network structures produce differences in perceptual and cognitive orientation in “Social Structure and Cognitive Orientation.” They experimentally studied three-person networks that varied the form of exchange before administering a framed-line test. The results indicate that networks that cause the individuals to focus on the more distal parts of the network performed relatively more holistically on the framed-line test. This is an important paper, in that it demonstrates how network structures impact cultural variations in cognitive orientations. Next, Jenny L. Davis and Tony P. Love bring together three central concepts from sociology and psychology in “Self-in-Self, Mind-in-Mind, Heart-in-Heart: The Future of Role-Taking, Perspective Taking and

Empathy.” In this piece, the authors focus on the definitions, measures, and interventions of these constructs with particular emphasis on points of overlap and divergence. They note that these conceptualizations vary around two dimensions of importance: the role of affect and cognition and that of self compared to structure. This paper serves to clarify the relationships between these ideas as well anchor them in the context of contemporary sociology and psychology. Also focusing on individual perceptions, Steve Hitlin and Nicole Civettini examine how values change in “The Situated Durability of Values.” They incorporate measures of values in a standardized competition experiment and find that winning, losing, and the status of the perceived competition impact values which are often thought of as stable. The study is groundbreaking, in that it is the first of its kind to link the measurement of values with the expectation states tradition. Finally, in “Perceiving Groups During Computer-Mediated Communication,” Celeste Campos-Castillo examines how computer-mediated interaction impacts perceptions of groupness. More specifically, this paper addresses how computer-mediated communication impacts visual cues that, in turn, impact perceptions of groupness that are exaggerated beyond that impressions of the individuals who comprise the groups. A laboratory study varied the levels of visual cues as well as the status of group members. The results indicate that those in the middle of the status hierarchy and those with the fewest visual cues had the most biased perceptions. The paper should especially interest those in the computer-mediated communication areas where this sort of research is scarce.

Shane R. Thye
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HOW STATUS SPREADS

Murray Webster, Jr. and Lisa Slattery Walker

ABSTRACT

Purpose – To review three theoretical research programs accounting for the spread of status beliefs and their effects on inequality, and to identify similarities and differences in scope and theoretical principles in the three. We describe suggestions for further research that we hope readers may wish to pursue.

Methodology/approach – We summarize recent theory and research, identify areas of overlap and dissimilarity, and show how certain research topics could extend understanding of the processes and make connections among the three programs.

Findings – The three programs were built on ideas first codified more than five decades ago. Those ideas have been the foundation for empirical research and findings from that have been used to develop the theories, improving the range of situations addressed and the precision of predictions. While the programs here address similar issues, each presumes different initial conditions and behavioral outcomes. With some overlap, the programs also address different situations and propose different mechanisms for the spread of status.

Research limitations – Our review of the programs is necessarily incomplete, because work continues on the programs. The analyses and suggestions about important topics to pursue are ours, and others may identify other topics for theoretical and empirical development.

Practical implications – We hope that our interpretations of these programs make them more accessible to interested scholars who will extend the theoretical and empirical bases of the work. The processes described have

implications for the status of immigrant groups, the social position of women, and the value attached to collector's objects. We hope to foster applications of these theories to understand and alleviate some cases of unmerited inequality.

Social implications – The processes involved affect mixed-gender interaction in businesses, hiring biases, anti-immigrant exclusion sentiments, influence and bargaining power of individuals, desirability of certain furniture and clothing styles, ability inferences, and other phenomena. We mention instances where these theories can help to understand processes and to develop interventions to produce desirable outcomes.

Originality/value – No readily accessible summary of these programs and no theoretical comparison of them has yet been developed. Formal theories such as these sometimes seem obscure and we hope to show how they apply to important actual situations. Of course, the interpretations and suggestions in this chapter are our own and the scholars whose work we discuss might interpret the work differently.

Keywords: Status; status beliefs; power; inequality; migrations

Status characteristics, individuals' properties having connotations of social worth and skills, are known to affect estimations of individuals, social structures, interaction patterns, and many other features of social life. Many studies of status use a consistent theoretical framework, the general theory of status characteristics and expectation states, that has been developed and extended since the early 1960s.¹ In this chapter, we describe one branch of the theory that now includes three theoretical research programs. These programs address questions of origins: where does status come from? under what conditions do its effects intensify or attenuate? how does status attach to individuals and objects? and how are status effects intensified, reduced, or shaped for purposes of intervention? Our goals are to outline what these research programs have discovered, to show relationships between them, and to identify promising avenues for further research.

The significance of status value, the prestige attached to certain objects, has been recognized in sociology since Veblen's ([1899] 1953) foundational discussion. Status value also attaches to social groups and to individual characteristics, often having significant consequences for group members and those possessing particular characteristics. Why, for instance, does gender carry connotations of performance skills instead of simply being a descriptive nominal

term? The answer requires understanding processes of socially creating inequality, and of re-creating social inequalities in new settings. Three research programs address different aspects of those questions. We describe them as of this year, with the understanding that the programs continue to develop. There are more than enough interesting and important questions to occupy new researchers and we hope to encourage others to join the investigations.

OUTLINE OF THEORIES OF STATUS CHARACTERISTICS AND EXPECTATION STATES

This theoretical perspective distinguishes two types of status characteristics, specific and diffuse, the former type having a more limited scope than the latter. A characteristic that may be possessed by an individual is a *specific status characteristic C* \equiv

1. It possesses two or more states differentially evaluated in a culture;
2. Each state carries notions of a particular skill.

A characteristic is a *diffuse status characteristic D* \equiv parts (1) and (2) apply and in addition,

3. Each state carries notions of general skills without explicit limit.

So reliably winning (or reliably losing) at poker might be a specific status characteristic, as might be winning the Nobel Prize in Chemistry. They carry presumptions of differential evaluation and give information about likely performance skills of limited scope. However, there usually is no reason to expect that a poker champion or a famous chemist is, for instance, better able to balance a bank account or park a car than someone else with the negative state of those characteristics. Those characteristics are *specific*.

In comparison, many social distinctions fit the definition of diffuse status characteristics, often including gender, race, age, and a college diploma. In a culture where men are thought to be more logical, more mechanical, stronger, better able to change a tire, *etc.*, the unspecified limits to inferred skills shown by "*etc.*" means that gender fits the definition of a diffuse status characteristic.

Status characteristics have two general features. First, they carry beliefs, implicit or explicit, of differential social worth, esteem, respect, and prestige. It is socially believed to be better, fortunate, advantageous to possess one state rather than the other. Second, they carry beliefs regarding ability to perform tasks, either of limited scope (specific status characteristics), or without explicit limit (diffuse status characteristics). In task situations individuals having positively evaluated states of status characteristics are likely to be valued by others and to be treated differently than those with the opposite states. As Ridgeway (2014) pointed out, status is a crucial independent force creating and

maintaining inequalities based on race, gender, social class, education, and many other social characteristics.

We hasten to add that all status characteristics are social constructions. Skill inferences are not tested empirically and of course they often would be disconfirmed if they were tested. What matters is that people act *as if* they believe the inferences. Further, a status characteristic in one society may not meet the definition in another society, or even in the same society at a different historical period. Also, the theory permits deriving effective interventions to decrease or to increase status effects settings (e.g., Cohen & Lotan, 1997; Walker, Doerer, & Webster, 2014). The fact that status characteristics are socially constructed invites questions of how they are constructed and how the construction processes could be reversed.

Given that a characteristic meets the definition of either a specific or a diffuse status characteristic, the theory predicts several consequences. In task-focused interaction, people infer task-specific *performance expectations*, roughly equivalent to ability conceptions, from them. Performance expectations have further consequences, including creating unequal interaction patterns and estimations of ability.² This explains, for instance, why jurors are more likely to choose a man as foreperson (Feller, 2010) and men are more likely to be influential in corporate teams (DiTomaso, Post, & Parks-Yancy, 2007).

FIRST PROGRAM: STATUS CONSTRUCTION

Cecilia L. Ridgeway (1991) pioneered this research program and presented the first theory of status construction processes. This work developed ideas from at least three research traditions. The first is Blau's theory (1977; also Skvoretz, 1983) of how the distribution of characteristics, including some nominal characteristic and wealth, affect the likelihood of encountering a person having specified combinations of the two characteristics. The second is the theory of reward expectations (Berger, Fisek, Norman, & Zelditch, 1985; also Cook, 1975 and Fisek & Wagner, 2003), which describes the process of forming performance expectations from known reward levels. The third is a theory of behavior patterns and expectations (Fisek, Berger, & Norman, 1991), which describes how behavior inequalities can lead to inferences of performance expectations. As Ridgeway (1991) emphasized, this theory, as well as the other two theories we outline below, describes sufficient conditions to create status characteristics. In other words, this is not the only way that the process may occur.

Imagine a situation in which gender is strictly a nominal characteristic; that is, it does not carry differential evaluations or performance expectations that would make it a status characteristic. Gender does, however, partition the population into two groups and that partitioning is recognized. Next assume that a second characteristic, wealth, is distributed somewhat unequally across women

and men, with the likelihood of encountering a rich man greater than of encountering a rich woman. The combination of gender and wealth creates a doubly dissimilar interaction. Doubly dissimilar interactions are the engine driving the creation of status inequality. For several reasons, the inequality of wealth difference can be quite small for doubly dissimilar encounters to be effective. Even if only 10% of encounters include a rich male and a poor female, the status construction process can occur from the thousands of interactions that a typical person experiences in a year (Ridgeway & Balkwell, 1997; Ridgeway et al., 2009).

Imagine further that a naïve individual – that is, someone who has not yet formed the status beliefs making gender a status characteristic – encounters a rich man. The reward expectation process is likely to lead to formation of performance expectations consistent with reward levels. Informally, there must be a reason that he is rich; he must be skillful. Absent contradictory information, the reward expectation process leads to formation of performance expectations having the same sign (+ or –) as the reward levels (Cook, 1975; Hysom, 2009). So, our naïve individual may, from this encounter, form high expectations and attach those to the other characteristic male. That would be the formation of status beliefs for gender; it would now function as a status characteristic for that person.

If our focal individual is himself male, those high expectations apply to him. (The same process would apply in reverse for a woman who formed expectations from rewards.) The second stage in diffusion is training other naïve individuals about the status value of gender. If a male who holds high expectations for himself encounters a woman, he is likely to display cues to his (presumed) higher status. For instance, he may take the lead on joint tasks, reject influence if they disagree, speak loudly, and the rest (Berger, Webster, Ridgeway, & Rosenholtz, 1986; Fisek, Berger, & Norman, 1991). People tend to adjust behaviors in complementary ways, so the woman is likely to interact less and assert herself less, speak softly, etc.; that is, to act as if she had lower status than the male co-actor. The differential behaviors can lead to the formation of consistent performance expectations: low self-expectations attached to her gender. Ridgeway, Boyle, Kuipers, and Robinson (1998) and Ridgeway and Erickson (2000) provide confirmation of those and related theoretical predictions.

Webster and Hysom (1998) offered a generalization of the creation argument to apply to other situations. First, they proposed that differentiation on an object having what Veblen ([1899] 1953) called status value also could create a status characteristic. Thus, seeing that more boys than girls receive gold stars in math class could lead to status beliefs for the specific status characteristic “mathematics ability.” Second, the interaction process by itself can create and maintain status beliefs. This idea simply separates the effect of the training process described by Ridgeway and Balkwell (1997) from the reward expectations process in Ridgeway’s original theory.

Because mixed-gender interactions are the most common of all mixed-status interactions, the inequality is enacted and reinforced in the many task situations where women and men interact. As noted, the correlation of characteristics can be far from perfect for the creation process to take place, and the training process can likewise involve less-than-perfect coordination of behaviors, but because of the large numbers of interactions, the expectation inequality linked to gender is likely to spread and to be reinforced through everyday activities in task groups.

Finally, Ridgeway and Correll (2006) developed and tested an extension of the theory to understand other aspects of the diffusion process. The extended argument shows that the interaction process described above can spread status beliefs but only when the behavioral patterns are consensually accepted and therefore valid. When the behavioral hierarchy is challenged, its power to create status beliefs is weakened and only variably effective. The argument was tested in an experiment with four-person groups. The groups each had one focal participant who might form status beliefs and three pre-instructed confederates of the experimenter. Two individuals enacted an influence hierarchy (one was assertive and the other was submissive), while a third either supported the hierarchy or challenged it mildly. The two who enacted the hierarchy were regularly associated with a nominal difference, called S2 and Q2. (The difference supposedly reflected their preferences for one style of art over another.)

The group interaction began and the three pre-instructed individuals enacted a hierarchy; one assertive, one submissive, and the third either supporting or challenging the inequality. Following that, the focal person responded to several questionnaire items measuring status beliefs associated with the S2/Q2 distinction. As predicted, when the hierarchy was supported by the third person, and thus was socially validated, status beliefs formed in line with the interaction hierarchy. Even a mild challenge to the inequality, however, disrupted the status creation process. This research documents the status creation process and specifies the interaction process that spreads it and it confirms an extension suggested by Webster and Hysom (1998). It also shows the importance of apparent social validity of inequality. Behavioral inequality that is accepted by a witness is effective at creating status inequality, but without that presumed consensus the power of the hierarchy to create a status characteristic is greatly reduced or destroyed. Importantly, the status beliefs formed applied not only to the specific individuals encountered but also to whole groups distinguished by the categorical distinction. Further, creating status beliefs requires that most people – those disadvantaged as well as those advantaged by the beliefs – accept as a matter of social reality that most people accept the competence differences. Shared consensus about inequality seems to be a condition for creating a status characteristic. Local interactions are the place that status beliefs are created and maintained, but those beliefs require social validation. Challenge disrupts the construction process, thus specifying conditions for how it works and also why interaction sometimes does not create status characteristics.

SECOND PROGRAM: SPREAD OF STATUS VALUE

The second approach does not require differential rewards nor enacted behavioral inequality to create a status characteristic. Here, status spreads from an existing status characteristic to a nominal characteristic. Ridgeway's Status Construction Theory describes how status beliefs arise through regular association with differential resources. The theory of Spread of Status Value describes how status beliefs arise from association with status characteristics and other elements that already have status value. [Berger and Fişek \(2006\)](#) present the theory with some illustrative instances. This theory has four main arguments, described by [Berger et al. \(2014\)](#).

First, status value can spread from states of an existing status characteristic to associated states of a nominal characteristic if the same actor possesses both characteristics. The more relevant the status characteristic is to the immediate task, the greater its contribution to the status value of the nominal characteristic. If several status characteristics are associated with the nominal characteristic, then the more consistent those are (in the sense of being mostly positive or mostly negative), the greater their effect in giving status value to the nominal characteristic. Also, given equal degrees of consistency, the more status characteristics that are involved, the greater their effect in giving status value to the nominal characteristic.

Second, as status value spreads to states of the nominal characteristic, high and low general performance expectations attach to the nominal characteristic.

Third, as the process continues, the connections of performance expectations to the emerging new status characteristic become at least as strong as the connections of expectations to the established status characteristic.

Fourth, if others' behavior validates (confirms, reinforces) the new status characteristic, then it can become a stable diffuse status characteristic for the group. If that happens, it will have the same evaluative beliefs and behavioral effects as previously existing status characteristics.

This theory has been tested and some predictions confirmed by [Walker, Webster, and Bianchi \(2011\)](#). Experimental tests showed that status value could spread from regular association with existing status characteristics, as predicted, and that status value also could spread through referent individuals who possess both nominal characteristics and status characteristics.

Participants were young women recruited for "a study of group interaction," who worked on tasks in dyads. To create a nominal distinction, we used techniques adapted from those that Ridgeway has used. They were asked to indicate preferences for a series of pictures, and those preferences were then said to show that some had a S2-type preference and some had a Q2-type preference.

In two conditions, we linked the S2/Q2 distinction to several existing status characteristics, both specific and diffuse. We told the women that people classified S2 were known to be more likely to complete advanced educational

degrees, to move into high prestige jobs, to do well at several kinds of problems (word problems, arithmetic problems, and Sudoku), and to earn high salaries. People classified as Q2 seem to be associated with negative outcomes in those areas. Results showed that status value spread directly from those other status elements to states of the nominal S2/Q2 characteristic.

In the second two conditions, the nominal characteristic was linked to task outcomes through referent individuals. Here, we told participants that previous participants of S2-type had done better at a laboratory test (ranking objects' importance in *Lost on the Moon*; Johnson & Johnson, 2012). In other words, S2-type individuals possessed the positive state of the specific status characteristic associated with success at that task. In this case, the theory predicts and results showed that status value spread through the referent individuals to the S2/Q2 characteristic.

THIRD PROGRAM: STATUS VALUE THEORY OF POWER

The Status Value Theory of Power proposed by Thye (1999, 2000) and developed by Thye, Willer, and Markovsky (2006; Thye & Harrell, 2016) links ideas from theories of exchange and power to theories of status and expectations. We will first describe the new theoretical ideas on diffusion of status value and then show how they link to theories of network power in exchange theories. It will be helpful to keep in mind the difference between *influence*, which is a status process, and *power*, which is governed by structural position and control over rewards. Status relations govern collective interaction, where individuals work together to attain a goal. Power relations govern competition and conflict, where individuals are concerned with their own outcomes. Status influence is consensual: a person accepts influence from another because the influenced person believes that the influential person is better able to help the team achieve their common goal (Ridgeway & Berger, 1986; Willer, Lovaglia, & Markovsky, 1997). Power exercise is conflictual; a person exercises it by overcoming resistance of another person, or by gaining favorable terms in a negotiation.

This third program focuses on how status can spread from an actor to an object, and from an object to an actor. In other words, actors can confer status upon objects, and objects can confer status upon actors. Thus, an object once owned by a high-status person, such as an inkwell owned by Alexander Hamilton, becomes more valuable than if its previous owner were an ordinary person. That occurrence is explained as an instance of the object's acquiring status value from its previous owner.³ Since the overall value of an object combines consummatory value and status value, if status value increases, so does overall value.

The Status Value Theory of Power (Thye, 1999, 2000) adapts ideas on spread of status value from an older theory of distributive justice (Berger et al., 1972). In the new theory, status value can spread from an actor to an object so long as ownership or possession of the object is not seen as random. If only upper level executives may use a certain parking lot, or if the most champion tennis players use a particular brand of racquet, persons and objects connect non-randomly and the parking lot and the tennis rackets acquire status value.

In exchange theories, the value of a resource is central, with possession of more valuable resources conferring advantages, including power, to owners. Valuable possessions give an owner power, which often is measured in negotiation games in networks. In status theories, status confers advantages including influence in team-focused interaction. Status-based influence often is measured while performing collective tasks. Power exercise is unilateral and conflictful: someone tells someone else to do something and the second person acquiesces to avoid loss.

The Status Value Theory of Power was first tested in imaginative bargaining experiments (Thye, 2000). Participants were undergraduate college students who were told that they had scored average at a purported test of unrelated skills. Potential exchange partners were either graduate students who had scored very high at the test or high school students who had scored very low. The diffuse status characteristic educational level and the specific status characteristic test score thus place the actual participant in a low-status position in the first case and in a high-status position in the second.

Next, they played many trials of a bargaining game, at each trial negotiating division of 30 poker chips. Actual participants played with blue chips, the higher status person with purple chips, and the lower-status person with orange chips. The experimenter emphasized that chips had equal (consummatory) value and would be exchanged at the same rate for cash at the end of the experiment. The theory predicts that status value will diffuse from individuals to the chips that they play with; in other words, that chips the graduate student plays with will absorb high-status value while chips the high school student plays with will absorb low-status value. Theoretical predictions rest on the idea that, despite the chips all being equal in consummatory value, total value of purple chips would be greatest, followed by blue, with orange chips worth the least.

Results confirmed theoretical predictions with several different kinds of data. Players said they preferred to exchange with the purple chip person, indicating that they valued receiving purple chips more highly than orange. When negotiations were successfully completed with either potential partner, players received fewer purple chips than orange chips. Questionnaire responses showed that players thought purple chips were more important, and said they tried harder to acquire them during negotiations. These results show that status value diffused to the chips – high-status value from a graduate student's chips and low-status value from a high school student's.

Thye et al. (2006) extended the Status Value Theory of Power, improving its determinacy and range of predictions. They clarify and more precisely specify

how altering the status value of objects can affect power exercise in negotiation. This permits moving from ordinal predictions of effects such as those above, to quantitative predictions. The approach uses numerical predictions of effects of status characteristics and numerical predictions of negotiating power in networks. These authors also show how the mechanisms contribute to maintaining status-based inequalities in society – such as those associated with race, gender, and education – and identify mechanisms that can reduce those inequalities.

The theory incorporates ideas on spread of status value and influence with ideas from a theory of bargaining and power in networks, and provides some connections between those two different theories. Status theories predict interaction effects through the intervening variable of performance expectation states. These are expectations for Self (E_S) and expectations for the Other person (E_O). Influence behavior then is a function of expectation advantage ($E_S - E_O$), for specified interactants, and allows predicting the relative amount of influence between any pair of interactants (S and O).

The theory of bargaining and power (Emanuelson, 2013; Willer, 1999; Willer & Markovsky, 1993) predicts power exercise in negotiation as a function of expected gain from successful negotiation and each person's resistance to accepting unprofitable offers. In a network, the more bargaining partners the structure offers an individual, the greater the power s/he has in negotiating. This theory uses the idea of resistance to a proposed offer, which is a function of the maximum that could be negotiated, the minimum (usually zero) reward if no agreement is reached, and the actual offer. Theoretically, two actors will agree in negotiation when their resistances to each other's offers are equal.

Resistance to offers is a function of the payoff offered by another actor in negotiation, the most that actor S could hope for, and the payoff if they do not agree on their negotiation (usually, zero). More precisely, let RS be the resistance of individual S; let PS be the payoff offered by another actor O; let PS_{max} be the best payoff outcome that S could attain (usually the total rewards under negotiation); and let PS_{con} be the payoff if they do not agree (zero). Then actor S's resistance is predicted as follows:

$$RS = \frac{PS_{max} - PS}{PS - PS_{con}}$$

The resistance of the negotiating partner O is calculated in the same way. Finally, the theory predicts that negotiated agreements will be reached at the point where their resistances are equal.

To connect the two theoretical perspectives, Thye (1999) proposed incorporating expectation advantage of status theories into the resistance equations of Elementary Theory. One new idea is that a given negotiation outcome is more valuable if the offer comes from a high-status person than from a low-status person. Thye et al. (2006) carried out the calculations. This improves the

determinacy of the Status Value Theory of Power and explicitly links ideas from status theories to the theory of bargaining and power.

Experimental tests with a similar bargaining situation as above (Thye, 2000) found three significant outcomes:

- Higher status participants gained more points in negotiation than lower status. This replicates earlier results (Thye, 2000) with a different participant population.
- Higher status participants were considered more competent. This shows effects of status generalization from diffuse and specific status characteristics.
- High-status participants bargained more successfully than low-status participants. This shows effects of expectation advantage as part of the resistance equations.

A fourth hypothesis, that high-status participants would reveal greater aspirations for profit than low-status participants, was not confirmed. This is important for understanding the mechanism by which status confers influence in bargaining. It is not that high-status individuals generally force others to give more rewards and power; rather, high-status individuals are allowed and assisted to get rewards and power by lower status negotiators. We cannot know the motivations of individuals (beyond what they might be willing to tell in questionnaires or interviews), but in this situation, the benefits to high status seem to have been conferred by others, not demanded by the beneficiaries. The structure of the situation, not individual propensities of actors, determines the outcomes.

Thye and Harrell (2016) continued theoretical development along with experimental tests, exploring two more ideas in status theories. The first is that multiple like-signed status characteristics have greater effect on expectations than a single characteristic, and the second idea is that multiple rewards have greater effect on expectations than a single reward. Because expectation advantages are incorporated into the resistance equations of the negotiation and power theory, someone with multiple status advantages is expected to do considerably better at the negotiations. The authors note that such situations include an African American woman trading in her car and negotiating prices with a white male salesperson.

New theoretical developments here include extensions for multiple status characteristics and multiple rewards and assessing whether expectations affect competitive exchange situations as they do cooperative task situations. Experiments used the situation developed by Thye (2000) with modifications to assess the new theoretical developments. The subject populations and historical periods differed, so replication of earlier results is valuable.

In conditions creating multiple status characteristics, participants were said to differ on age and education: the partner was either a 15-year-old in high school or 22-year-old graduate student. Conditions crossed single resource

(blue chips for all players) with multiple (purple, blue, and orange chips); and single status (test score) or multiple statuses (test score, age, education). Questionnaires asked participants to report status value of the chips and status and expectations formed for themselves and the others.

Findings replicate results from earlier experiments, show the predicted effects of multiple characteristics on expectations and power, and clarify the mechanism by which status affects power. A single status characteristic had effects, and multiple characteristics and rewards had greater effects. Questionnaires show that the mechanism affecting diffusion is status value, not performance expectations. That is, participants reported valuing purple chips more, but the expectations they formed were affected only by the partner's status and rewards and not by the colors of the chips.

While results confirmed all the hypotheses, behavioral effects were weaker than in the previous experiments. The investigators hypothesized that the status characteristics used here, age and education, might carry less status value for the new population. Status characteristics are all social constructions and whether a given characteristic carries status value always is an empirical question.

The investigators switched from age and education to race and gender for the second experiments. These were otherwise identical to the first ones. A baseline condition equates participants on test scores, gender, race, and chip color. In a second condition, white males negotiated with African American females after consistent test scores were announced. A third condition adds different color chips.

Results again confirm predictions of the status-power theory, and race and gender had much greater effect here than did age and education. The white male participants formed much more strongly differentiated expectations for themselves and their African American female partners than had been the case when the status characteristics were age and education. Status value and competence expectations also affected power exercise, thus confirming theoretical predictions and showing that status and expectations are the mechanisms producing interpersonal inequality in this situation.

Harkness (2017) further developed and tested the theory to assess whether status value could spread from one object to a second object. Experimental tests are elaborations of the design that Thye developed. First, actors of known differentiated status are linked to different states of a nominal object, differently colored poker chips. Participants interact with those partners, as in Thye's experiments, and results again showed that status value has spread from interactants to the chip colors.

In a second phase of the experiment, participants are assigned a new partner of unknown status but of known S2/Q2 preference style. Poker chips are again distributed, and the colors are said to reflect the S2/Q2 preferences. In this phase the chip colors are randomized so that sometimes S2 is linked to purple and sometimes it is linked to orange; this dissociates the chip colors from the

statuses of the phase 1 partner. The question is whether interaction with the new partner will be affected by his or her connection to the chip color's status value that was acquired in the first phase.

Status value of the chip colors did indeed spread to the new partners. That is, the chip color linked to a high-status partner in phase 1 transferred some of its status value to the S2/Q2 characteristics possessed in phase 2, and S2/Q2 then affected interaction through the status value it had acquired. This is shown both by questionnaire measures asking about the (status) value of the chips and by bargaining behavioral measures.

COMPARISONS, WHAT WE KNOW, NEXT STEPS

The Status Construction and Spread of Status Value theories are concerned with how a differentiated nominal characteristic N that is possessed by actors can acquire socially shared status beliefs that transform N into a diffuse status characteristic D. The theories describe different routes and mechanisms to that outcome. They are not competing theories, however, because they start from different initial conditions. Status Construction applies if the states of N are regularly associated with different states of a valued resource. Spread of Status Value applies if the states of N are regularly associated with states of an existing status characteristic. After either process has attached status beliefs to N, the processes described in both theories may spread the new characteristic's status value. For both approaches, the outcome is the creation of a new, differentially evaluated status characteristic having social beliefs of inferiority/superiority, desirability, and performance capabilities.

The Status Value Theory of Power shows that objects can acquire status value from persons, and that persons can acquire status from objects. Additionally, it relaxes the collective orientation scope condition of the above two theories, so that its predictions can apply to competitive bargaining situations.

Status Construction Theory can apply in *de novo* situations where no status characteristic exists as yet, and it explains how a nominal characteristic can acquire the differential prestige and performance expectations that transform the nominal characteristic into a status characteristic. In initial encounters, status value is created from resource differences if those are regularly linked to different states of the nominal characteristic. Once that initial process occurs, individuals who have formed status beliefs can train others about the characteristic through interaction processes.

One of the intriguing applications of Status Construction Theory is to the genesis of the gender status characteristic. Simple hunting and gathering societies may not yet have developed the status beliefs that contemporary societies attach to gender and thus would show approximate gender status equality.

With the agricultural revolution and accumulation of wealth, if someone noticed (or even if someone imagined) that men seemed to have more resources than women, that would be sufficient to trigger the status construction process.

At present, gender and many other characteristics are already status characteristics, but new characteristics also are acquiring status value through this process. Chinese, for instance, may not have initially had any status beliefs attached to their ethnicity when they began migrating to Malaysia early in the 20th century. At present, the immigrants possess greater wealth than the native Malay population (China Daily, 2012; Forbes, 2014). We might therefore expect that the ethnicities also have acquired unequal statuses, and that Chinese–Malay interactions would be marked by effects of status difference.

Spread of Status Value theory (Berger & Fişek, 2006) describes a mechanism by which status spreads from an existing status characteristic to an unevaluated nominal characteristic. Those authors noted that such situations include the migrations from Eastern Europe and the Middle East to Western Europe. Those immigrants tend to have lower education, income, and occupational prestige than the native population. Since those have status value, that can spread to attach low status to their ethnicity. Once that occurs, problems of discrimination and other forms of racism are likely to become significant.

In comparison to Status Construction theory, the Spread of Status Value theory does not require resource differences among the groups. It does, however, require differences on some already recognized status characteristics. Likewise, the interaction process in Status Construction theory is not a part of this theory. If individuals or groups are distinguished by some salient status characteristic, which might include wealth or income, that will be sufficient for status to spread from the existing characteristics to the initially unevaluated characteristic.

Status Construction theory can account for the creation of a new status characteristic even when no other status characteristic exists or is salient, so long as a resource difference is associated with some nominal characteristic. Spread of Status Value theory can account for the creation of a new status characteristic when no resource difference is apparent but an existing status characteristic is regularly associated with some nominal characteristic. Most natural situations will meet the initial conditions for both processes – resource difference and existing status characteristics – but for theory development it is helpful to remember that they deal with different initial conditions.

Interaction to spread emerging status value does not appear in the Spread of Status Value theory, though its influence is not precluded. A related theory, the behavior-status theory (Fişek et al., 1991) accounts for how behavior can influence status and expectations, so both of those theories account for the spread of status beliefs through biased interaction.

The Status Value Theory of Power accounts for the spread of status value among actors through intermediate objects that themselves acquired status value from possession by actors. This theory does not have the scope limitation

of collective orientation, which both the preceding theories do have. Thus, Status Value Theory of Power extends the scope to cases of conflictual, self-maximizing interaction. It makes use of ideas in Network Exchange Theory or NET (Willer, 1999) on how negotiated exchanges are affected by power, and adds status value to the NET model for predicting power.

As noted, the Status Value Theory of Power has wider scope than Status Construction or Spread of Status Value theories. It also identifies a new mechanism for status to spread, by diffusion from actors to objects and from objects to actors. That spread depends on regular association of particular objects with particular status characteristics, and it also requires that there be some reason for the association. Without such a reason, the theory predicts that the association of status and object will not become salient and so the diffusion process will not occur. Whether this restriction is needed or whether mere association (without a known reason for the association) is sufficient could be assessed in future research.

The content of status value that spreads in the Status Value Theory of Power has been only partially specified to date. Intuitively, it is understandable that prestige could attach to an object so that, for instance, a purple poker chip becomes more prestigious than an orange one, and if those different colored chips are then given to another person, the prestige would diffuse to the new owner. What is less obvious is how performance expectations travel from the first person to the poker chip, to the second person. It makes no sense to say that a poker chip acquires performance expectations, so the expectations must be created for the new owner when s/he takes possession, perhaps by status generalization. To assess the mechanism for creating performance expectations from prestige, we would want to specify conditions and then test whether status generalization or some other process actually occurs.

Table 1 shows some comparisons of the three theories in terms of initial conditions, theoretical mechanisms, and behavioral outcomes.

One suggestion for development that is apparent in Table 1 is to investigate behavioral outcomes of status construction and spread of status value processes in competitive tasks. Status theories long have taken collective orientation as a scope condition for seeing their effects and collective orientation is needed for the creation of a new status characteristic. However, effects of any status characteristic might also be seen in certain kinds of competitive situations, as research on the Status Value Theory of Power has shown. It would be worthwhile to discover the classes of situations in which status can affect behavior, both those that are task focused and collectively oriented and those in which one or both of those conditions are not met.

A related issue for the Status Value Theory of Power concerns limits on the spread of status value in competitive situations. In the simplest case, if someone possesses many objects having status value, that should lead to high expectations and power. But that process may presume legitimacy; that is, the possessor of status-valued objects deserves them. Absent some legitimating process, it

Table 1. Some Comparisons of Three Theories on Acquisition of Status.

Initial Information	Explanatory Theory	Theoretical Outcomes	Behavioral Outcomes in Cooperative Tasks	Behavioral Outcomes in Competitive Tasks
N linked to differential reward outcomes	Status Construction	N acquires status value, becomes a diffuse status characteristic	Affects influence, prestige, participation, perceived skill at a new task	
N linked to existing Ds or Cs	Spread of Status Value	N acquires status value, becomes a diffuse status characteristic	Affects influence, prestige, participation, perceived skill at a new task	
Object X linked to high-status person or Y linked to low-status person	Status Value Theory of Power	Object X acquires high-status value; Object Y acquires low-status value		Actors prefer object X to Y
Object X or Y possessed by an actor	Status Value Theory of Power	The actor acquires high- or low-status value from the object	Affects influence, prestige, participation, perceived skill at a new task	Actors acquire high or low power from X or Y and that affects negotiation power and winnings

seems likely that other processes, including envy, resentment, or hostility, might be triggered. In cooperative situations, such complications seem less likely to occur, but in competition, they might be quite important. Understanding when status value leads to power and when it creates additional, sometimes counter-vailing processes, seems valuable.

In summary, the creation and spread of status are important mechanisms that create and maintain inequalities of many sorts in societies. From the sustained work of several scholars over the past quarter century, we have good understandings of many of the mechanisms involved in the process.⁴ These theories are fruitful, in the sense of clarifying new theoretical tasks and empirical tests. We hope to contribute to their growth through our review of the theorists' ideas and existing empirical support.

NOTES

1. Berger, Fisek, Norman, and Zelditch (1977) present the basic general theory, and Berger, Wagner, and Webster (2014) describe many of its contemporary branches. An introduction is available in Webster and Walker (2016), and Webster (2003) describes some of the history of theoretical development.

2. This description simplifies the actual process, which is more conditional and precise; please see references noted previously for a more adequate account.

3. Distinguishing status value from consummatory value traces to Veblen's ([1899] 1953) discussion of conspicuous consumption. Status value distinguishes aged filet mignon from a fast food hamburger. Although their nutritional (consummatory) values are approximately equal, the filet has greater status value. Observers are more impressed to see someone order the filet than the burger, and a diner may well feel greater satisfaction and even self-worth.

4. Although it is beyond the scope of this review to describe applications of these theories to control undesirable inequalities, others have applied theories of status processes for practical purposes in schools (Cohen & Lotan, 1997), naturalistic task groups (Goar & Sell, 2005), business organizations (DiTomaso, Post, & Parks-Yancy 2007), and other settings.

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