

ADVANCES IN GROUP PROCESSES

ADVANCES IN GROUP PROCESSES

Series Editors: Shane R. Thye and Edward J. Lawler

Recent Volumes:

- Volume 20: Power and Status – Edited by Shane R. Thye and John Skvoretz
- Volume 21: Theory and Research on Human Emotions – Edited by Jonathan H. Turner
- Volume 22: Social Identification in Groups – Edited by Shane R. Thye and Edward J. Lawler
- Volume 23: Social Psychology of the Workplace – Edited by Shane R. Thye and Edward J. Lawler
- Volume 24: Social Psychology of Gender – Edited by Shelley J. Correll
- Volume 25: Justice – Edited by Karen A. Hegtvedt and Jody Clay-Warner
- Volume 26: Altruism and Prosocial Behavior in Groups – Edited by Shane R. Thye and Edward J. Lawler
- Volume 27: Edited by Shane R. Thye and Edward J. Lawler
- Volume 28: Edited by Shane R. Thye and Edward J. Lawler
- Volume 29: Edited by Will Kalkhoff, Shane R. Thye and Edward J. Lawler
- Volume 30: Thirtieth Anniversary Edition – Edited by Shane R. Thye and Edward J. Lawler
- Volume 31: Edited by Shane R. Thye and Edward J. Lawler
- Volume 32: Edited by Shane R. Thye and Edward J. Lawler
- Volume 33: Edited by Shane R. Thye and Edward J. Lawler
- Volume 34: Edited by Shane R. Thye and Edward J. Lawler
- Volume 35: Edited by Shane R. Thye and Edward J. Lawler

EDITORIAL ADVISORY BOARD

Stephan Bernard
Indiana University, USA

Will Kalkhoff
Kent State University, USA

Jessica Collett
University of Notre Dame, USA

David Melamed
University of South Carolina, USA

Karen Hegtvedt
Emory University, USA

Jane Sell
Texas A&M University, USA

Michael Hogg
Claremont Graduate University, USA

This page intentionally left blank

ADVANCES IN GROUP PROCESSES VOLUME 36

ADVANCES IN GROUP PROCESSES

EDITED BY

SHANE R. THYE

University of South Carolina, USA

EDWARD J. LAWLER

Cornell University, USA



United Kingdom – North America – Japan
India – Malaysia – China

Emerald Publishing Limited
Howard House, Wagon Lane, Bingley BD16 1WA, UK

First edition 2019

Copyright © 2019 Emerald Publishing Limited

Reprints and permissions service

Contact: permissions@emeraldinsight.com

No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, transmitted in any form or by any means electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise without either the prior written permission of the publisher or a licence permitting restricted copying issued in the UK by The Copyright Licensing Agency and in the USA by The Copyright Clearance Center. Any opinions expressed in the chapters are those of the authors. Whilst Emerald makes every effort to ensure the quality and accuracy of its content, Emerald makes no representation implied or otherwise, as to the chapters' suitability and application and disclaims any warranties, express or implied, to their use.

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: 978-1-83867-504-2 (Print)

ISBN: 978-1-83867-503-5 (Online)

ISBN: 978-1-83867-505-9 (Epub)

ISSN: 0882-6145 (Series)



ISOQAR certified
Management System,
awarded to Emerald
for adherence to
Environmental
standard
ISO 14001:2004.

Certificate Number 1985
ISO 14001



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

CONTENTS

<i>List of Contributors</i>	<i>ix</i>
<i>Preface</i>	<i>xi</i>
Understanding the Nature of Status Inequality: Why is it Everywhere? Why Does it Matter?	
<i>Cecilia L. Ridgeway</i>	<i>1</i>
Assessing and Blocking Double Standards for Competence	
<i>Martha Foschi, André Ndobó and Alice Faure</i>	<i>19</i>
Controlling Status Effects of Gender	
<i>Lisa Slattery Walker</i>	<i>47</i>
Social Categorization and Identity Processes in Uncertainty Management: The Role of Intragroup Communication	
<i>Sucharita Belavadi and Michael A. Hogg</i>	<i>61</i>
Self-stigma and the Social Interactions of Mental Health Patients	
<i>Sarah K. Harkness and Amy Kroska</i>	<i>79</i>
Rituals and Solidarity: The Effects of Synchrony and Complementarity on Cooperation	
<i>Yue Liu and Lin Tao</i>	<i>95</i>
Give Them an Inch, and They'll Expect a Mile: The Effects of Authority Leniency on Subordinate Entitlement	
<i>Emily M. Zitek and Verena Krause</i>	<i>117</i>
<i>Index</i>	<i>141</i>

This page intentionally left blank

LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

<i>Sucharita Belavadi</i>	Claremont Graduate University, USA
<i>Alice Faure</i>	University of Nantes, France
<i>Martha Foschi</i>	University of British Columbia, Canada
<i>Sarah K. Harkness</i>	University of Iowa, USA
<i>Michael A. Hogg</i>	Claremont Graduate University, USA
<i>Verena Krause</i>	University College London, UK
<i>Amy Kroska</i>	University of Oklahoma, USA
<i>Yue Liu</i>	University of South Carolina, USA
<i>André Ndobó</i>	University of Nantes, France
<i>Cecilia L. Ridgeway</i>	Stanford University, USA
<i>Lin Tao</i>	Peking University, China
<i>Lisa Slattery Walker</i>	University of North Carolina at Charlotte, USA
<i>Emily M. Zitek</i>	Cornell University, USA

This page intentionally left blank

PREFACE

Advances in Group Processes is a peer-reviewed annual volume that publishes theoretical analyses, reviews, and theory-based empirical chapters 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.

Several years ago, we added an editorial board to the series to broaden the review process and draw upon the collective expertise of some of the top scholars in the discipline. That board consists of Stephan Bernard, Jessica Collett, Joseph Dippong, 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 first three chapters address a topic that is probably familiar to the majority of our readers – social status and its effects. First, Cecilia L. Ridgeway addresses the ubiquitous nature of status in “Understanding the Nature of Status Inequality: Why Is It Everywhere? Why Does It Matter?” As a preview to her book on the same topic, this chapter asserts that status stratification is a cultural invention used to navigate and manage social relations as individuals face nested, competitive interdependencies. The cultural nature of status is a key theme in the argument. Ridgeway argues that the cultural nature of status inequalities allows them to spread widely, be autonomous, and self-reproducing. This preface (and related book) will be a “must read” for scholars interested in race, gender, or class-based inequalities, as well as those interested in social stratification or status inequality more generally. Next, Martha Foschi, André Ndobó, and Alice Faure examine theory and research concerning the double standards phenomenon in “Assessing and Blocking Double Standards for Competence.” Specifically, they examine and assess the findings of the 17 social psychological experiments conducted to date that investigate when stricter standards are applied to people of lower social status. The results from this exhaustive coverage of the literature indicate that stricter standards are often applied to low-status individuals, and that certain factors moderate this relationship while others can even reverse it. They also identify and explore interventions from three research traditions designed to reduce double standards bias. This chapter will interest anyone concerned with double standards of competence, in addition to serving as an excellent reference for any student who is working on a thesis or dissertation in this area. Finally, the third chapter in this trio addresses how to

control and reverse the unwanted status effects of gender. In “Controlling Status Effects of Gender,” Lisa Slattery Walker offers a new theoretically based intervention tactic that focuses on (1) controlling how the task is defined in relation to gender and (2) providing new additional information to the participants that opposes the status disadvantage. The results of a laboratory experiment are supportive. This chapter offers a fresh perspective on what has been a long line of research that deals with status interventions. Individuals interested in gender bias as well as general group processes should find this chapter quite informative.

The next two chapters address issues related to identity and its effects. First, Sucharita Belavadi and Michael A. Hogg review and integrate research from social identity theory and communication science in “Social Categorization and Identity Processes in Uncertainty Management: The Role of Intragroup Communication.” These authors use uncertainty-identity theory to contrast the different understandings of uncertainty and the identity-shaping functions of communication in groups. The authors explore how communications within groups can create and mold a shared reality for participants while simultaneously providing a framework for self-definition. They offer an agenda for future research that will certainly interest social scientists focused on identity formation, small group internal dynamics, and communication sciences. Next, Sarah K. Harkness and Amy Kroska address whether self-stigmatization affects the everyday interactions of people diagnosed with an affective mental health disorder in “Self-Stigma and the Social Interactions of Mental Health Patients.” Using affect control theory (ACT) to guide the analysis, Harkness and Kroska use Interact (a computerized instantiation of ACT) to produce empirically based simulations using data from the Indianapolis Mental Health Study. As predicted, individuals with high levels of self-stigma are affectively more negative than individuals with low self-stigma. The simulations further reveal that individuals are predicted to enact behaviors lower on evaluation, potency, and activity. This chapter promises to further inform scientists and practitioners working with patients who suffer from self-stigmatization.

Yue Liu and Lin Tao empirically examine a Durkheimian solution to the problem of social cooperation in “Rituals and Solidarity: The Effects of Synchrony and Complementarity on Cooperation.” Using a laboratory experiment they asked subjects to perform either synchronous, complimentary, or uncoordinated drumming. Participants were then asked to play a five-round public goods dilemma. The results indicate more cooperation under conditions of synchronous and complimentary behavior, and that this effect is partially mediated by feelings of groupness. These findings are in line with many current theories of solidarity and cohesion and add growing support to the importance of emotions and perceptions in producing cooperation. This work should interest scholars who study solidarity, cohesion, emotion, and the problem of social order more generally.

The final chapter in the series addresses what potentially could be a serious problem in the workplace. Emily M. Zitek and Verena Krause explore how subordinates may develop a sense of entitlement in “Give Them an Inch and

They'll Expect a Mile: The Effects of Authority Leniency on Subordinate Entitlement." They explore the conditions under which employees gain a sense of entitlement after being treated leniently by an authority figure. Specifically, they put forth 11 propositions related to the effects of an authority figure's lenient treatment of subordinates. From a very practical perspective they assert that entitlement is not inevitable and offer advice for how authority figures may be lenient without inspiring a sense of entitlement in those they oversee. This chapter will interest not only academic types interested in authority, leadership, governance, and the like, but also anyone in a position of power who is responsible for the oversight of employees.

Shane R. Thye and Edward J. Lawler

This page intentionally left blank

UNDERSTANDING THE NATURE OF STATUS INEQUALITY: WHY IS IT EVERYWHERE? WHY DOES IT MATTER? ☆

Cecilia L. Ridgeway

ABSTRACT

Status, which is based on differences in esteem and honor, is an ancient and universal form of inequality which nevertheless interpenetrates modern institutions and organizations. Given its ubiquity and significance, we need to better understand the basic nature of status as a form of inequality. I argue that status hierarchies are a cultural invention to organize and manage social relations in a fundamental human condition: cooperative interdependence to achieve valued goals with nested competitive interdependence to maximize individual outcomes in the effort. I consider this claim in relation to both evolutionary arguments and empirical evidence. Evidence suggests that the cultural schema of status is two-fold, consisting of a deeply learned basic norm of status allocation and a set of more explicit, variable, and changing common knowledge status beliefs that people draw on to coordinate judgments about who or what is more deserving of higher status. The cultural nature of status allows people to spread it widely to social phenomena (e.g., firms in a business field) well beyond its origins in interpersonal hierarchies. In particular, I argue, the association of status with social difference groups (e.g., race, gender, class-as-culture) gives inequalities based on those

☆ This chapter is based on a forthcoming book titled, *Status: Why is it Everywhere? Why Does it Matter?* which is under contract by the Russell Sage Foundation. I thank the Russell Sage Foundation and the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences for their fellowship support during which this book project was developed.

difference groups an autonomous, independent capacity to reproduce themselves through interpersonal status processes.

Keywords: Status hierarchies; inequality; cultural schemas; norms; interdependence; status beliefs

Most social scientists are familiar with Max Weber's ([1918] 1968) famous delineation of resources, power, and status as distinct bases of inequality in modern societies. Control over resources, including money, and access to positions of power in organizations that produce and distribute resources are closely related processes that provide the material representation of inequality in society (Tilly, 1998). Social status is rather different. Status is based on differences in esteem, honor, and respect (Berger, Rosenholtz, & Zelditch, 1980; Weber ([1918] 1968). It is an apparently ancient and universal form of inequality that nevertheless interpenetrates modern institutions and organizations (Espeland & Sauder, 2016; Van Vugt & Tybur, 2016). We see status literally everywhere, not only in evaluative rankings of individuals but also in rankings of the significant groups we are associated with and the objects we surround ourselves with.

Despite its ubiquity, status is often treated as side topic by social scientists interested in inequality, both because it is a little different in nature than the material processes of power and resources and because it is often assumed to be less consequential for life outcomes. I have argued that the relative failure to take status seriously is a major mistake if we want to understand how inequality actually works in a contemporary society like the United States (Ridgeway, 2014).

At the micro level, we will never understand the fundamental human motivations that enter into the struggle for precedence that lies behind inequality if we don't take into account how much people care about their sense of being *valued*, relative to others, by the groups and communities to which they belong – this is status. Organizational behavior scholar, Cameron Anderson, and his colleagues (2015) recently concluded, based on an extensive review of social science evidence, that the desire for status is a fundamental human motive which affects not only short-term but also long-term well-being and health, motivates a wide range of behavior, and is apparent across all human cultures. For instance, a long tradition of research on social identity theory has demonstrated that people's desire for valued group identities which enhance their status and self-esteem is a powerful motivator for intergroup dynamics (Hogg, 2018; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). In keeping with this evidence of the strength of status as a motivator, research shows that feeling disrespected in a social relation is a powerful trigger for anger and even aggression (Anderson, Hildreth, & Howland, 2015). Perceptions of honor and threats to honor have been shown to be factors in outright violence in some types of cultural contexts (see, for instance, Mosquera, 2013).

If you doubt the importance of status for people's behavior, consider the 2016 US presidential election. There is plausible evidence to suggest that at least some of the anger that fueled support for Trump among white working class and white "heartland" voters stemmed from the symbolic status insult these people felt as a result of the increasing cultural hegemony of "urban elites" and

changing racial and gender dynamics (Cramer, 2016; Hochschild, 2016; Mutz, 2018). Following Blumer (1958), Bobo (1999) argues that a great deal of racial prejudice can be explained by perceived threats to a person's "sense of group position" in society. As social psychological research associated with intergroup threat theory has shown, symbolic status threats to one's sense of group position are often as powerful in driving intergroup attitudes as are realistic material threats such as economic competition (Stephan, Ybarra, & Rios, 2015).

At a more macro level, status is important because it plays a powerful role in constructing and reproducing inequality based on membership in social difference groups such as gender, race, and class-as-culture. In fact, I have argued that it is status that gives systems of inequality based on social differences like gender and race an autonomous, independent capacity to reproduce themselves – that is to reproduce themselves on the basis of race and gender itself, not just on the basis of average group differences in control of power and resources (Ridgeway, 2011, 2014). This process occurs through *status beliefs* which I will discuss in greater detail shortly. But for now, my point is that given its power and importance, we need to better understand the basic nature of status as fundamental form of inequality. And in particular, we need to understand how the nature of status inequality allows status to spread virtually everywhere in society.

In this chapter, I make a brief case, via argument and just a modest sprinkling of evidence, for what I claim status is at root and for what the implications of that are. This case and the evidence for it is presented in greater detail in a forthcoming book (Ridgeway, *Forthcoming*). My claim, in brief, is that status hierarchies are a *human cultural invention* to manage social situations that are characterized by cooperative interdependence to achieve valued goals and competitive interdependence to maximize individual outcomes. Status is everywhere partly because these situations are fundamental to the human condition.

People have to cooperate with others to get most of what they want and need in life from the basics of survival to what it takes to make them happy. But this deep cooperative interdependence has nested within it an inherent competitive tension. When people coordinate their efforts, questions necessarily arise about the terms on which their relationship will be conducted and how the spoils of their joint efforts will be divided. Who will be the center of attention? According to whose will and judgments will joint actions be determined and what costs must each endure? Everybody has an unavoidable interest in forming cooperative endeavors but everybody also has an interest in maximizing what they get from those endeavors. I argue that status is, at root, a sociocultural schema or blueprint for organizing social relations in order to manage this basic tension and produce collective outcomes.

The social theorist, William Sewell (1992), has argued that social structures have a dual nature, consisting on the one hand of a cultural schema for enacting the structure and on the other hand, of the material distribution of behaviors and resources that result from that enactment. The cultural schema of status is a structural schema in this sense. It is a set of deeply learned, taken-for-granted cultural rules that people use to organize their behavior with others in a manner

that produces a status hierarchy – that is, a behavioral ranking in esteem demonstrated through deference, prominence and, typically, influence over collective decisions. As people draw on the familiar, if implicit, cultural schema of status to organize the many shared endeavors that they engage in through their relationships with others, status pervades social life from the interpersonal to the organizational.

My argument so far leads to two more questions. First, of course, if status is a cultural schema of behavioral rules, what are the rules? But second, is it not controversial to claim that status is cultural in nature, given the arguments about the evolutionary roots of dominance and hierarchy among higher primates, plausibly including people (Cheng & Tracy, 2014; Van Vugt & Tybur, 2016)? What is the evidence that status is a set of common knowledge normative rules shared as group culture?

I will start by briefly considering the evolutionary question because it creates a foundation for considering the “what are the rules” question. After that I will turn to some modest evidence in support of the claim that there are shared rules of status. Rules, of course, can be recognized not only through their enactment but their enforcement. Next, I will discuss the implications of the cultural schema account of status for the spread of status and for the nature of the consensus that governs the status hierarchy. I will also briefly consider the relationship between the cultural schema account of status and expectation states and status characteristics theory’s well documented account of interpersonal status processes (Berger & Webster, 2018). Finally, but importantly, I will address how the nature of status as a cultural schema lies behind its role in reproducing inequality based on social difference groups.

EVOLVED HIERARCHY OR CULTURAL SCHEMA?

There is a long tradition of arguing that rank ordered deference relations among humans are an evolutionary residue of our primate heritage and, beneath it all, based on *dominance*, which is control through threat of force (Cheng and Tracy, 2014; Mazur, 2005). Basically, dominance is intimidation – “defer or else.” Dominance does occur in interpersonal relations and can sometimes be implicated in deference relations (Mazur, 2005; Van Vugt & Tybur, 2016). Perhaps reflecting this, evidence suggests that people and social groups differ in their social dominance orientation, which is the extent to which they endorse dominance and hierarchy in social relations (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999).

There is a great deal of evidence, however, that in many, perhaps most, rank order relations among people, precedence is given freely, say through esteem, rather than taken by threat (Anderson & Willer, 2014). For instance, why did people defer to Steven Hawking in his wheelchair? To accommodate this evidence, evolutionary theorists have more recently posited that people have also evolved a second source of deference relations, based on *prestige* (Henrich & Gil-White, 2001). The idea is that we have evolved a response to offer esteem to others with superior “information goods” because this increases our chance of getting closer to them and learning their superior skills and information. Based

on these arguments, [Cheng and Tracy \(2014\)](#) argue that everyday status relations are merely a joint product of evolved dominance and prestige responses.

I argue, however, that there is a key flaw here. All evolutionary arguments about hierarchy formation are about the establishment of dyadic ranks based on differences among the contestants that affect individual fitness. But how are these dyadic ranks assembled into a shared hierarchy in a group of three or more, as most goal-oriented human groups are? A long tradition of research by Ivan Chase and his colleagues, using experiments and other evidence, has shown that even in simple animals like fish, individual differences, while predictive, cannot fully account for the hierarchies that emerge in groups larger than a dyad. Chase points to contingent behavior processes among three or more individuals as the final determinative factor ([Chase, 1980](#); [Chase & Lindquist, 2016](#)).

This means that the formation of hierarchies in groups of three or more has a substantial element of contingency that depends on social dynamics among the larger group of individuals. I argue that the sensitivity of hierarchy formation to contingent dynamics creates a critical social space in which cultural norms for status and deference can emerge. In simple dyads one person may reflexively defer to another based on admiration or fear, but in a larger group, she may react differently. And even if she does not react differently, the ultimate consequences of her deference for the hierarchy will depend on the contingent reactions of other members.

The contingent uncertainty in hierarchy formation creates the opportunity for the emergence of norms regulating patterns of deference and status. But it is the interdependent interests of group members in who ends up high status that actually motivates the emergence of norms. Under goal interdependence, who ends up high status in the group affects all members' interests. As a result, whatever status the members egoistically desire for themselves, they are likely to want *others* in the group to defer those *others* who appear most able and willing to contribute to the collective effort. This is what will maximize success at the goal and the shared benefits that flow in varying degrees to all members from that success ([Ridgeway & Diekema, 1989](#)). This interdependence of interests means that members are likely to pressure others to defer to other members on the basis of expected value to the group. But the consequence is that, by the same token, these members will be faced with pressure from others to defer on this basis themselves. In this way, as [Horne \(2004\)](#) has shown, such an interdependence of exchange interests gives rise to group norms that members enforce. Here it creates implicit *norms for deference on the basis of perceived value to the group's goal efforts*.

It is worth noting that this account of status as based on cultural norms for deference does not imply that evolved responses play no role in status hierarchies. Indeed, it seems likely that emergence of cultural norms for status occurs on top of a platform of evolved responses. This is especially the case if these evolved responses include not only sensitivity to rank relations but also, following theories of cultural evolution, the capacity for social learning which allows culture to develop ([Boyd & Richerson, 1985](#)). But my point here is that the rules of the governing normative schema of status relations are not finally

determined by evolved responses but, rather, develop at the cultural level through contingent social relations.

A NORMATIVE SCHEMA FOR STATUS ALLOCATION

There is an overwhelming evidence that interpersonal status hierarchies grant deference and influence to group members in proportion to their *perceived value* to the collective effort (Anderson & Willer, 2014; Correll & Ridgeway, 2003; Magee & Galinsky, 2008). This is what I call the *basic norm* of status, which I argue is deeply learned, taken-for-granted cultural knowledge for most people. The norm is a means by which the group exercises some control over a would-be dominator who threatens to take over the group without contributing to the shared endeavor. In a study of status among MBA students, Anderson and colleagues (2006) showed that students who tried to claim higher status than their peers felt was justified by their value to the team were isolated and disliked. In an earlier study of my own, I found that when a group member attempted to seize influence through dominance that was not backed up by competence, other members turned on the dominator and rejected him or her (Ridgeway & Diekema, 1989). These studies demonstrate that people enforce the basic status norm with sanctions against violators and do so spontaneously.

The basic status norm manages dominators through carrots as well as sticks. By offering esteem and influence for expected contributions to the group effort, the norm incentivizes dominators and others to funnel their energetic assertiveness and aspirations into the best efforts they can offer on the group's behalf (Anderson & Willer, 2014; Willer, 2009). In addition to managing the dominator, by granting influence over group decisions in proportion to the perceived value of members' contributions, the basic status norm also provides a system for weighing and combining individual contributions into a collective line of action which is an aid to goal attainment. For this reason, Anderson and Willer (2014) argue that interpersonal status hierarchies are a boundedly functional organizational solution to the problems of cooperative interdependence to achieve shared goals. Functionality is "bounded" because status is granted for *perceived* value and perceptions can be biased or strategically manipulated.

I argue, however, that the basic status norm is not all there is to the cultural schema of status. The expectation the norm creates for deference to others on the basis of perceived value to the group immediately confronts the individual member with a second question. How can she figure out what her fellow members will take to be the signs of greater or lesser value to the group? In Western societies, value to the group is typically understood as perceived goal-related *competence* along with effort (Anderson & Willer, 2014; Berger & Webster, 2018). I argue that people solve this coordination problem by developing shared cultural *status beliefs* about the attributes and behaviors that indicate higher or lower levels of status worthiness and types of competence. Many of the most important consequences of status as a form of inequality derive from these shared status beliefs.

Experiments I have conducted show that people form shared status beliefs about the indicators of worthiness and competence quite easily (Ridgeway, Backor, Li, Tinkler, & Erickson, 2009). Other evidence shows that such beliefs are widespread in US culture. Research shows that status beliefs form central elements in the widely held cultural stereotypes of all the major groups by which inequality is patterned in the United States, including race, gender, class, education, and occupation (Cuddy, Fiske, & Glick, 2007; Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, & Xu, 2009). We also have status beliefs linking assertive, agentic behavior with greater status and competence (Conway, Pizzamiglio, & Mount, 1996). These same studies show that status beliefs are recognized by people as “common knowledge” in that they are presumed to be the beliefs of “most people” (Fiske, 2011). In that way, status beliefs serve as ready bases for coordinating judgments of value to the group (Chwe, 2001).

I argue, then, that our cultural schema for status is two-fold. We have a taken-for-granted but fundamental basic status norm that we learn from experience and pass on to others through our behavior. We combine this deeper, more implicit normative rule with a more explicit, variable, and historically changing set of shared cultural status beliefs that we use to anticipate what others will see as “better,” more competent, and valuable in various situations. We can think of the basic status norm as the social grammar of status relations and status beliefs as the contextually varying vocabulary people use to enact that grammar to create status hierarchies in different situations. It is through the combination of a shared basic status norm and shared status beliefs that people are able to quickly form status hierarchies in the real time of interaction, as evidence has long shown they do (Bales, 1950). Because status hierarchies work through a combination of status beliefs, which are typically shared at the macro level of a broader community or society, and an application of those beliefs at the micro-level of social relations among actors, status is inherently a multilevel form of inequality (Ridgeway & Nakagawa, 2014).

SOME MODEST EVIDENCE

In sum, I am arguing that status is, at root, a cultural schema that we use to enact status hierarchies in situations in which we are cooperatively interdependent with others to achieve valued outcomes. It may be laid on evolutionary residues but it is not reducible to them. So what is the evidence for this claim? I have already mentioned two studies that show people acting as though they are following a cultural rule in status relations by sanctioning group members who break the rule (Anderson, Srivastava, Beer, Spataro, & Chatman, 2006; Ridgeway & Diekema, 1989). Now I would like to offer a little more supportive data from a recent experiment I conducted with Sandra Nakagawa (Ridgeway & Nakagawa, 2017).

In this experiment, which was conducted for another purpose, a lower status member of a work team disagrees with a higher status member’s task choice. The basic status norm says that in this situation the lower status member, who is presumed to be less competent, should agree to defer to the presumably more competent higher status member’s views. In the study, two higher status

participants are asked how they would view the low status member in this situation if the low status member either agreed to go along the higher status member’s choice for the group decision (deferred as expected) or stuck to his or her own opinion (resisted). In one case, the disagreement is with the *other* high status member of the team. In the second case it is with *self*.

If the participants are following a *norm* for status, of course they should react with greater approval for deference than resistance. But crucially, they should react with *similarly greater* approval for deference to the *other* high status member as for deference to self. The figures below show the results for deference and resistance to the Other (Fig. 1) and to the Self (Fig. 2). Our purpose here is to make global comparisons between the overall patterns of approval of the low status member, shown as perceptions of the member as respected, reasonable, and cooperative, when deference or resistance is to another high status member or to self. For clarity, the figures below present a simplified version of the equivalent figures (Figures 2 and 3) in Ridgeway and Nakagawa (2017).

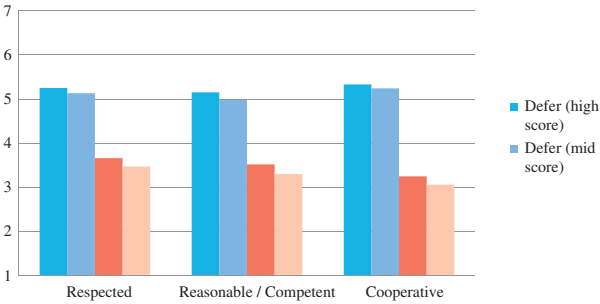


Fig. 1. “How you would see X (Low Scorer)?”: In a Disagreement with Other Member.

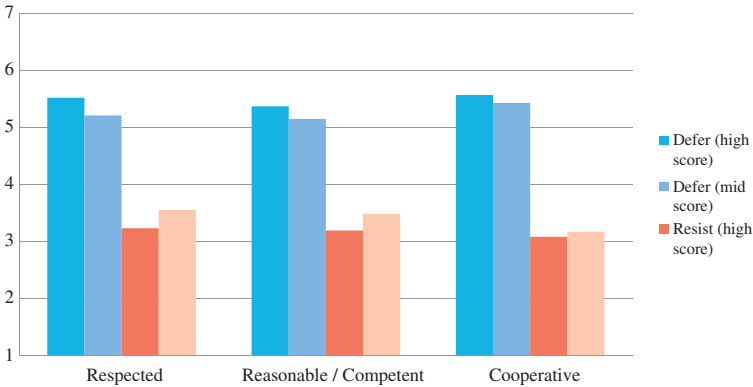


Fig. 2. “How you would see X (Low Scorer)?”: In a Disagreement with Self.