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Is the Desire for Status a Fundamental Human Motive? A Review of the Empirical Literature

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The current review evaluates the *status hypothesis*, which states that that the desire for status is a fundamental motive. *Status* is defined as the respect, admiration, and voluntary deference individuals are afforded by others. It is distinct from related constructs such as power, financial success, and social belongingness. A review of diverse literatures lent support to the status hypothesis: People's subjective well-being, self-esteem, and mental and physical health appear to depend on the level of status they are accorded by others. People engage in a wide range of goal-directed activities to manage their status, aided by myriad cognitive, behavioral, and affective processes; for example, they vigilantly monitor the status dynamics in their social environment, strive to appear socially valuable, prefer and select social environments that offer them higher status, and react strongly when their status is threatened. The desire for status also does not appear to be a mere derivative of the need to belong, as some theorists have speculated. Finally, the importance of status was observed across individuals who differed in culture, gender, age, and personality, supporting the universality of the status motive. Therefore, taken as a whole, the relevant evidence suggests that the desire for status is indeed fundamental.

Keywords: status, respect, rank, desire, motive

The desire for status is a controversial topic. On the one hand, many theorists have argued that the desire for status is a fundamental human motive. Maslow (1943) spoke of an innate desire for "reputation or prestige [defining it as respect or esteem from other people], recognition, attention, importance or appreciation" (p. 382). Evolutionary scholars have proposed that humans evolved the motivation to attain high status because higher status has provided the individual with survival and reproductive benefits throughout evolutionary history (Barkow, 1975; Betzig, 1992; Buss, 2008; Eibl-Eibesfeldt, 1989; Gilbert, 1992; Kenrick, Griskevicius, Neuberg, & Schaller, 2010; Henrich & Gil-White, 2001; Hogan, 1983; Price, Sloman, Gardner, Gilbert, & Rohde, 1994), and because high status promotes fitness in so many social-living species (for a review, see Ellis, 1995).

On the other hand, other scholars have argued that the motive for high status is not fundamental (Leary, Jongman-Sereno, & Diebels, 2014; Sheldon, 2011), and several prominent taxonomies of basic human motives do not include the desire for status (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Epstein, 1990; Fiske, 2003; Murray, 1938; Sheldon, Elliot, Kim, & Kasser, 2001). A few findings also appear to cast doubt on the psychological importance of status: For example, outcomes related to higher status, such as financial success, power, and physical attractiveness, do not strongly predict subjective well-being (SWB) or self-esteem (for reviews, see Diener & Biswas-Diener, 2002; Kahneman, Krueger, Schkade, Schwarz, & Stone, 2006; Niemiec et al., 2009; Ryan et al., 1999; Twenge & Campbell, 2002). Some studies even appear to suggest the desire for status might be a sign of psychological maladjustment rather than constitute a core human motive (Emmons, 1991; Kasser & Ryan, 1993; Nickerson, Schwarz, Diener, & Kahneman, 2003).

Is the desire for status a fundamental human motive? This article addresses this question by reviewing a wide range of studies across social scientific disciplines, including psychology, sociology, anthropology, economics, public health, and organizational behavior. We expected our review to support the status hypothesis for at least two reasons. First, as mentioned above, the status motive appears across social-living species and is likely to have provided survival and reproductive benefits throughout human evolution. Second, even if one eschews evolutionist arguments, the social conditions that exist today are likely to generate a broad and pervasive motivation for status. Status differences appear to emerge in all human social environments (cf. Gruenfeld & Tiedens, 2010; Leavitt, 2005; Parsons, 1940; von Rueden, 2014) and individuals with higher status receive myriad rewards, including positive social attention, enhanced rights and perquisites, influence and control over joint decisions, and better access to scarce resources (Bales, Strodtbeck, Mills, & Roseborough, 1951; Berger, Cohen, & Zelditch, 1972; Blau & Scott, 1962; Henrich & Gil-White, 2001). Therefore, the interpersonal structures and dynamics that pervade social environments are likely to generate a strong intrapersonal force to pursue status.

To set the stage for our literature review, we first define and conceptualize status and distinguish it from related constructs, such as power and financial success. This nomological network analysis helps outline the scope for our review and clarifies why

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some previous empirical findings that appear to contradict the status hypothesis do in fact not refute it. Next, building from several prominent theories of human motivation, we outline the criteria that must be met for a motivation to be considered "fundamental," and from these criteria derive nine specific hypotheses that guide our literature review.

Defining and Conceptualizing *Status*

Definition

Scholars tend to agree that status involves three major components. First, it involves *respect and admiration*, in that individuals afforded high status are held in high regard and esteem by others (Barkow, 1975; Blau, 1964; Benoit-Smullyan, 1944; Henrich & Gil-White, 2001; Leary et al., 2014; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959). Second, status involves *voluntary deference* (Goldhamer & Shils, 1939; Kemper, 1990; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959). People afford higher status to another individual by voluntarily complying with that individual's wishes, desires, and suggestions—a compliance unaccompanied by threat or coercion. This compliance includes according enhanced rights and perquisites, excusing that individual from certain obligations, giving that person privileged access to scarce resources, and generally elevating him or her to a higher social position than one's own (Blau & Scott, 1962; Henrich & Gil-White, 2001; Kemper & Collins, 1990).

Third, people afford higher status to an individual when that individual appears to possess what Leary et al. (2014) have called *perceived instrumental social value*—that is, when the individual seems to possess personal characteristics that will facilitate their own goal accomplishment (Berger et al., 1972; Blau, 1964; Goldhamer & Shils, 1939; Ridgeway, 1984; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959). For example, people afford status to an individual whose advice or assistance they seek, or someone from whom they wish to learn on a broader level (Benoit-Smullyan, 1944; Henrich & Gil-White, 2001). In short, therefore, *status* is defined as the respect, admiration, and voluntary deference an individual is afforded by others, based on that individual's perceived instrumental social value.

This conception of status is also known as "prestige" (e.g., Barkow, 1975; Cheng, Tracy, Foulsham, Kingstone, & Henrich, 2013; Emerson, 1962; Goldhamer & Shils, 1939; Henrich & Gil-White, 2001; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959) or "sociometric status," because it is grounded in social perceptions and evaluations of the individual (Anderson, Kraus, Galinsky, & Keltner, 2012). Indeed, we sometimes use the term *sociometric status* when it is useful to distinguish our focal construct from socioeconomic status (SES).

Why Are Individuals Afforded Higher Status?

Status is conferred as part of a process of social exchange. As mentioned above, people confer status to an individual with the goal of receiving help in accomplishing their own goals (Barkow, 1975; Benoit-Smullyan, 1944; Emerson, 1962; Henrich & Gil-White, 2001; Homans, 1950). For example, in a relationship between Ego and Alter, Ego might believe Alter possesses instrumental social value because she possesses superior expertise or competence, or he might want to learn from Alter and emulate her behaviors, habits, and patterns of activity on a broader level. He might believe she is a particularly skilled public speaker and seek

her advice for an upcoming speech, or he might admire Alter's overall career success and wish to model his own habits and career trajectory after hers. In exchange for her assistance, advice, or the opportunity to learn from her, Ego would confer status to Alter through displays of respect and voluntary deference, and by doing so, make Alter more inclined to help him in return (e.g., Henrich & Gil-White, 2001).

It is important to note that higher status is afforded to individuals who are *perceived* to possess instrumental social value, not necessarily those who *actually* possess it (Leary et al., 2014; Ridgeway, 1984). For example, someone might confer higher status to an individual because that individual projects a high degree of confidence in his skill and ability, even though he is in fact unskilled and incompetent Anderson, Brion, et al. (2012). In short, perceptions of individuals' instrumental social value, not their actual value, drive status conferral.

In general, people will afford higher status to an individual when that individual appears to possess two kinds of personal characteristics. First, that individual must seem to possess *competencies* that are central to the their own primary tasks and challenges (Driskell & Mullen, 1990; Ridgeway, 1987). Second, the individual must appear willing to use his or her competence to help the them (Griskevicius et al., 2009; Ridgeway, 1982; Willer, 2009). As Blau (1964) explained, "To earn the deference as well as the respect of others, it is not enough for an individual to impress them with his outstanding qualities; he must use these abilities for their benefit" (p. 162). The willingness to help is important to the process of status affordance because, again, status inherently a social exchange. People will voluntarily confer status to someone only if there is the possibility of gaining something in return.

The Context Dependence of Status

One important property of status is that it is *contextual*, defined with reference to a particular relationship or group. For example, someone might have high status in her workplace but low status in her family. Status is context dependent in part because the personal characteristics that are perceived as valuable can vary from one social environment to another (Benoit-Smullyan, 1944; Henrich & Gil-White, 2001; Leary et al., 2014). Whereas one group might value intelligence, another might value athletic ability, and still another might value artistic creativity, for example. Local value systems are grounded in and shaped by the critical challenges and tasks people face in that particular setting (Berger et al., 1972; Blau, 1964). Athletic ability is valued in sports teams because it helps those teams accomplish their primary goal of winning games, but it is less valued in teams of engineers because it does not help those teams complete their tasks successfully.

Status Hierarchies in Groups

The process of status conferral is somewhat more nuanced and complex within social groups of three or more individuals than it is within dyads. Generally speaking, the higher the number of group members who confer higher status and voluntarily defer to an individual, the higher the status that individual can be said to possess in the group. Group members might confer status to an individual because that person can contribute to their own personal goals or because he can contribute to the group's shared collective

goals (Ridgeway, 1984). Therefore, it is common for group members to confer higher status to the same individuals (e.g., Bales et al., 1951; Blau, 1964; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959). This is one reason status hierarchies form. That being said, more than one set of personal characteristics might lead to obtaining higher status in a group. Groups typically have multiple collective goals that require different sets of personal characteristics to accomplish, and there can be multiple paths to attaining higher status. For example, group members might attain higher status because they have the task expertise to help solve the group's technical problems or because they have the interpersonal skills to help maintain cohesion among group members (Bales & Slater, 1955; Van Vugt, 2006). In other words, individuals can provide instrumental social value to a group in multiple ways.

The Nomological Network of Status

It is useful to outline how status relates to other similar constructs, or in other words delineate its nomological network (Cronbach & Meehl, 1955). Doing so will clarify how status is linked to other constructs but also how it differs from them, which in turn will help define the scope of our literature review. It will also help us address results from previous studies that appear on the surface to refute the status hypothesis.

Power

Power is defined as the ability to influence others through the control over resources or capacity to punish them (Emerson, 1962; Fiske, 1993; Keltner, Gruenfeld, & Anderson, 2003; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959). Although power and status are conceptually and often empirically related, they also differ in critical ways (cf. Barkow, 1975; Benoit-Smullyan, 1944; Blader & Chen, 2012; Blau, 1964; Emerson, 1962; Fragale, Overbeck, & Neale, 2011; Goldhamer & Shils, 1939; Kemper, 1990; Leary et al., 2014; Magee & Galinsky, 2008; Ridgeway, 1984). First, power is based on the control over tangible resources such as the ability to hire and fire others in a work setting. Status, in contrast, is based on the social perception that an individual possesses personal characteristics that can provide value. Therefore, although both power and status provide individuals with the ability to influence others (i.e., modify others' thoughts, feelings, and behavior), the two constructs have distinct antecedents and provide influence for different reasons.

Second, power grants individuals the ability to force their will upon others and compel acquiescence (Dahl, 1957; Emerson, 1962; French & Raven, 1959; Goldhamer & Shils, 1939; Lewin, 1951). Powerful individuals can influence others despite resistance (Barkow, 1975; Blau, 1964; Kemper, 1990). In contrast, status involves voluntary deference. People willingly confer status to an individual with the aim of receiving assistance, advice, or knowledge from that person (Blau & Scott, 1962; Henrich & Gil-White, 2001). In short, people defer to high-status individuals because they *want* to, but they defer to powerful individuals because they *have* to. This distinction between power and status is likely why individuals with high power but not high status are viewed as less warm (Fragale et al., 2011). Of course, status and power can be associated, as when people who possess valued characteristics are placed in positions of leadership and authority and given control over resources (Blau, 1964). However, individuals can possess one and not the other, such as a work supervisor who acquired his job through nepotism and who is not well respected by his subordinates.

Dominance

Related to the difference between status and power is the distinction between status and dominance. Some scholars have examined dominance as a distinct path to attaining influence (e.g., Cheng, Tracy, Foulsham, Kingstone, & Henrich, 2013; Halevy, Chou, Cohen, & Livingston, 2012; Henrich & Gil-White, 2001). In this line of work, dominance entails "the induction of fear, through intimidation and coercion, to attain or maintain rank and influence" (Cheng et al., 2014, p. 5). Few, if any, scholars have proposed that humans possess a fundamental need to attain influence through fear and intimidation. Further, dominance is quite removed from our conceptualization of status, because it is based upon forced compliance rather than instrumental social value. Therefore, our review focuses on status and excludes studies of dominance.

Social Belongingness

Social belongingness reflects the degree to which individuals are accepted and liked by others (Harvey, 1953; Leary et al., 2014; Slater, 1955; Whyte, 1943). Whereas status is a vertical or hierarchical construct in that the process of status conferral involves putting another person in a higher social position than oneself (Blau, 1964), belongingness is a horizontal or nonhierarchical construct. As Hogan (1983) put it, status involves how well one is "getting ahead," whereas belongingness involves how well one is "getting along." The antecedents of status and belongingness also differ. Belongingness stems from what Leary et al. (2014) call *relational value*, or the degree to which a person regards his or her relationship with another as personally valuable. Relational value involves the psychological and emotional importance of a relationship; it is distinct from a person's instrumental usefulness in helping another to accomplish goals. For example, someone might place enormous relational value in her relationship with a friend, without necessarily conferring higher status to that friend. Of course, status and acceptance are often correlated, in that individuals with higher status are often well liked, but individuals can also be well liked but have low status in the group (Blau, 1964), and two individuals with very different levels of status can be equally accepted and integrated in a group (Savin-Williams, 1976).

Socioeconomic Status

SES is defined by a person's income, education, and occupation (Adler et al., 1994), and can be assessed via a bank statement or resume. In contrast, status—that is, sociometric status—involves the level of respect and voluntary deference individuals are afforded by others and is based on social perceptions of instrumental social value. SES and sociometric status can therefore be unrelated if income and education are not associated with instrumental social value in a particular group or relationship. Shepard (1954), for example, studied a university research group where status was unassociated with income and instead "technical prowess was the chief determinant of status" (p. 460).

Nonetheless, SES can be an antecedent or source of sociometric status. Financial success and education are often socially valued (Goldhamer & Shils, 1939) and used to infer a person's competence and intelligence (e.g., Darley & Gross, 1983; Davis & Moore, 1945; Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, & Xu, 2002). For individuals to be afforded higher status by other people on the basis of their income, however, they must have higher income than those other people. Otherwise, if two individuals are equals in income and education level, one individual will not confer higher status to another on the basis of income and education. Even a wealthy individual will not be afforded higher status by someone who is similarly wealthy based on his money alone. Income should thus only contribute to a person's status in her social environment if she has a higher income than others in that social environment—her neighbors, friends, or work colleagues, for example. Indeed, research we review below will focus on individuals' rank in income relative to others in their local environment.

Scope of the Literature Review

With the above nomological network analysis, we can now define the scope conditions of our literature review. In general, we aimed to include studies in our review that involved measures of status or close proxies of status and exclude studies that measured constructs distinct from status, such as power, dominance, social belongingness, and SES (or at least SES when considered at a national level). More specifically, it includes the following:

First, our review includes studies that use peer ratings of status because at its essence, individuals' status "lives" in the minds of others and is grounded in other people's perceptions and evaluations of the individual. Second, it includes studies that measured self-reported status because self-perceptions of status tend to be highly accurate indices of actual status (e.g., Anderson, Srivastava, Beer, Spataro, & Chatman, 2006), a topic on which we elaborate below. Third, it includes studies that measured the respect individuals are accorded by others. Although respect does not compose status by itself—status also involves voluntary deference, for example—respect is a core component of status. Peer ratings of respect and status tend to be highly correlated (e.g., $r = .838$ in Anderson, Kraus, et al., 2012), making measures of respect a strong proxy of status. Fourth, it includes studies that examined peer ratings of emergent leadership. Individuals who are afforded high status tend to be given positions of leadership and to be seen as leaders by others (Blau, 1964); peer ratings of leadership are highly correlated with peer ratings of status (e.g., $r = .804$; Anderson et al., 2006). Fifth, the review includes studies of formal rank within organizational hierarchies. Within organizations, individuals' status is typically strongly tied to their rank in the formal hierarchy, in that those with higher rank tend to be more respected and viewed as providing more value to the organization (Caudill, 1958; Marmot, 2004; Porter, 1961, 1962; Tannenbaum, Kavcic, Rosner, Vianello, & Wieser, 1974). Formal rank in a hierarchy is also associated with power, however, so studies of organizational rank should be interpreted with some caution. Sixth, it includes studies of SES differences among individuals in the same social environment. As stated above, SES can be a source of status when the individual has higher SES than those around him in his social environment. Therefore, local rank in SES can be construed as an antecedent of status. Seventh and finally, the review includes

studies of low-status behavior patterns, or deference, because behaving in low-status ways can be construed as an immediate consequence and strong correlate of status (e.g., Bales et al., 1951; Berger et al., 1972).

Reconciling Previous Findings With the Status Hypothesis

The nomological network analysis above also helps us better understand findings that were cited in the beginning of this article. In particular, we mentioned research that has found a weak link between income and SWB (e.g., Diener & Biswas-Diener, 2002; Kahneman, Krueger, Schkade, Schwarz, & Stone, 2006). However, that work predominantly focused on within-country correlations between income and SWB, making it a poor test of the status hypothesis. A better test, and one we include in our literature review, is whether individuals' SWB is predicted by their status in their local environment, or even their SES relative to others in their local environment.

We also cited studies that have found happiness and well-being to be relatively unaffected by the achievement of extrinsic goals (Niemiec & Ryan, 2009; Deci, Koestner, & Ryan, 1999; Sheldon & Kasser, 1998). However, those studies have tended to combine the attainment of higher status with the achievement of other goals such as financial success, power, and physical attractiveness. By conflating status with these other outcomes, that work leaves unclear whether the attainment of status per se contributes to well-being. It is still possible that in those studies, having higher status boosted happiness even though achieving financial success or being physically attractive did not. Combining all of those outcomes into one aggregate measure might have obfuscated a more nuanced pattern of findings.

Criteria for Establishing a Fundamental Motive

What does it mean to say that a psychological motive is "fundamental"? In other words, what specific criteria must be met for a motive to be considered fundamental as opposed to, say, merely a want or a preference? After all, not all wants are fundamental; a child's desire for ice cream is merely a wish. This criteria question has received much attention (e.g., Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Deci & Ryan, 2000; Fiske, 2003; Leary, 2005; Maslow, 1943; Murray, 1938; Reiss, 2004; Ryan & Deci, 2000; Sheldon, 2011; Sheldon et al., 2001). Although scholars do not fully agree on all of the specific standards one should use to establish a motive as fundamental (cf. Sheldon et al., 2001), four main criteria consistently emerge across different theories.

First, a motivation can be considered fundamental only if the attainment of its associated goals not only affects temporary psychological functioning but also shapes longer term psychological adjustment, well-being, and health (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Ryan & Deci, 2000; Sheldon & Schüler, 2011). In the case of status, therefore, the attainment of high status would need to predict indicators of individuals' global welfare. It would not be enough to show that attaining higher status leads to the temporary experience of positive emotion (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Status would need to also predict chronic and enduring levels of psychological vitality and integrity. Those who possess lower social status—and thus whose status motive is unfulfilled—would need

to exhibit chronic ill effects, such as enduring stress, psychological maladjustment, and decrements in physical health (Leary, 2005; Ryan & Deci, 2000; Sheldon, 2011). If the attainment or lack of status does not predict general well-being and health, then the status motive would be best considered a lower level preference or want.

Second, a fundamental motive must induce a wide range of goal-directed behavior designed to satisfy its associated aims (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Buss, 2008; McClelland, Koestner, & Weinberger, 1989; Murray, 1938; Ryan & Deci, 2000; Reiss, 2004; Sheldon, 2011). This behavior should occur across all kinds of social contexts (Ryan & Deci, 2000) and involve myriad cognitive, motor, and affective processes. This means the motivation to attain higher status should guide cognitive processing, given that "issues of fundamental concern and importance are likely to be the focus of cognitive activity" (Baumeister & Leary, 1995, p. 503). It should energize, direct, and select a variety of actions aimed at attaining higher status or at least maintaining one's current status level (McClelland et al., 1989; Murray, 1938). And it should have strong hedonic consequences, in that the attainment high or low status should be strongly psychologically pleasant or unpleasant, respectively (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Deci & Ryan, 2000; Reiss, 2004; Sheldon et al., 2001).

The third criterion is that a fundamental motive is nonderivative; it serves as an end goal, or a reward or punishment in and of itself (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Deci & Ryan, 2000; Reiss & Havercamp, 1998; Sheldon, 2011). Fundamental motives "concern the deep structure of the human psyche" (Deci & Ryan, 2000, p. 229), and are not downstream byproducts of other motives. For example, a desire for ice cream is a lower level manifestation of the more basic and fundamental hunger drive (Hull, 1943). If the status motive is fundamental, this means the possession of high or low status should predict psychological well-being and health above and beyond—that is, controlling for—the satisfaction of other fundamental motives. It should also stimulate goal-directed behavior above and beyond the effects of those other motives.

On the issue of derivativeness, some theorists have proposed that the desire for status is simply a byproduct the need to belong (Leary et al., 2014; Sheldon, 2011). That is, individuals seek status to satisfy their need to be accepted and liked. Indeed, the need to belong has emerged as a fundamental motive in many theories (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Deci & Ryan, 2000; Fiske, 2003; Maslow, 1943; Murray, 1938; Sheldon, 2011). This alternative hypothesis appears plausible on the surface because belongingness and status are conceptually similar. When people like someone or confer higher status to that person, they are socially attracted to that person, desire closeness to him or her, and evaluate that person more positively (Blau, 1964). We therefore focused on addressing whether the desire for status is a derivative of the need to belong. We paid particularly close attention to whether individuals' status shapes their well-being and adjustment above and beyond their level of social acceptance, as well as whether the desire for status shapes goal-directed behavior independent from belongingness concerns.

Fourth and finally, a motive can be considered fundamental only if it is universal or observed across individuals that differ in culture, age, gender, or personality (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Deci & Ryan, 2000; James, 1890/1950; Maslow, 1943; McDougall, 1926; Reiss & Havercamp, 1998; Sheldon, 2011). A motive

that is only exhibited by a few individuals would not appear to be innate or part of the deep structure of the human psyche. Although the criterion of universality is difficult to fully address with empirical data, studies that show the motive operates across diverse cultures, in both men and women, and across individuals that differ in age and personality help make the case.

Note that this last criterion does not necessitate that all individuals are equally motivated to attain higher status or that the status motive must induce the same kinds of behavior across all individuals. Individuals can differ in the strength of their motives, even fundamental motives, in part because of differences in genetics or early life experiences (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Maslow, 1943; Murray, 1938; Reiss & Havercamp, 1998; Sheldon, 2011). Similarly, individuals can differ in how fundamental motives are expressed (Ryan & Deci, 2000), in part because of cultural specificity in norms and constraints on social behavior (Torelli, Leslie, Stoner, & Puente, 2014). This means the desire for status, even if fundamental, can lead to different status-pursuing behaviors in different social contexts. For example, individuals who seek higher status in many small-scale traditional societies would be wise to improve their hunting skills (von Rueden, 2014), whereas those seeking higher status in a design firm should hone their creativity and brainstorming abilities (Sutton & Hargadon, 1996).

Hypotheses

From the four main criteria above we derive nine specific hypotheses, summarized in Table 1. These hypotheses guide the literature review that follows. The first criterion is that satisfaction of the motive (or lack thereof) should affect longer term psychological adjustment, well-being, and health. To address this criterion, we focused our review on three major facets of well-being: SWB (or happiness), self-esteem, and health (both mental and physical). These three facets of well-being have arguably received the most empirical attention both within the broader psychological literature and within the status literature more specifically. Focusing on these three outcomes thus allows for the most thorough examination of whether the desire for status meets this first criterion. *Hypothesis 1* is that people with higher status enjoy higher SWB than those with lower status, *Hypothesis 2* is that people with higher status have higher self-esteem than those with lower status, and *Hypothesis 3* is that people with lower status experience mental and physical illness more than those with higher status.

The second main criterion is that a fundamental motive should induce a wide range of goal-directed activity, recruiting cognitive, behavioral, and affective processes. We addressed this criterion by testing four additional predictions. *Hypothesis 4* is that people vigilantly monitor status. The pursuit of status should begin with scanning for cues in the social environment that pose opportunities or threats to the goal of high status. People should pay close attention to their own and others' status, to indirect signs and symbols that convey each individual's relative standing, and to information that represents opportunities for status enhancement or indicate threats to their status. *Hypothesis 5* is that people engage in goal-oriented behavior aimed at attaining and maintaining status. For example, they should strive to develop personal characteristics that provide instrumental social value, or at least convey the *image* of possessing valued personal characteristics, given the importance of appearances to status affordance processes. *Hypoth-*

Table 1
Predictions Derived From the Status Hypothesis

Domain	Prediction
Long-term consequences of possessing high or low status	
1. Subjective well-being	People with higher status enjoy higher subjective well-being than those with lower status
2. Self-esteem	People with higher status have higher self-esteem than those with lower status
3. Mental and physical health	People with lower status experience mental and physical illness more than those with higher status
Mechanisms recruited in pursuit of higher status	
4. Vigilant monitoring of status	People pay close attention to status dynamics
5. Goal-directed behavior	People engage in goal-directed behavior to attain and maintain status
6. Preferences	People prefer groups, relationships, and organizations that afford them higher status
7. Reactivity to status threat	People experience strong affective reactions to potential losses in status
Derivativeness and universality	
8. Derivativeness	The effects of status hold up after controlling for belongingness
9. Universality	The desire for status operates across differences in culture, age, and personality

esis 6 is that people favor groups, relationships, and organizations that afford them higher status. If people possess a fundamental desire for status, one should see evidence that they prefer and select social environments in which they can attain higher status over those that provide little chance of achieving high status. For example, they should be more attracted to potential friends, groups, and work organizations in which they would have higher status than ones in which they would have lower status. *Hypothesis 7* is that people have strong affective reactions to any potential threats to their own status (real or imagined). Possessing a fundamental desire for something implies a strong reaction if that something might be taken away. For example, given that people's status is strongly and consistently based on others' perceptions of their competence, people should experience a spike in negative affect when others might view their competence negatively.

The third main criterion is that fundamental motives are not derivative of other motives. This suggests the motivation for status should produce effects independent from other motivational considerations. With our focus on distinguishing the desire for status from the need for social belongingness, *Hypothesis 8* is that effects of possessing or desiring higher status hold up after controlling for attaining or seeking social belongingness.

Finally, the fourth main criterion involved universality. *Hypothesis 9* is that the status motive operates across differences in culture, gender, age, and personality. It is important to reiterate that even if the status motive is universal, this does not require that all individuals desire status to the same degree.

Review of Findings

Subjective Well-Being

SWB comprises three facets: *life satisfaction*, which is a global assessment of all aspects of a person's life (Diener, 1984), as well as *positive affect* and *negative affect* (Andrews & Withey, 1976; Diener, 1984; Myers & Diener, 1995), which refer to the enduring and chronic experiences of positive and negative affective states, respectively (e.g., enthusiasm, fear). In a direct test of *Hypothesis 1*, Anderson, Kraus, et al. (2012) examined status differences among individuals in a diverse range of group contexts, including friendship groups, workplaces, and neighborhood communities. Measuring status via peer ratings (respect, admiration, and who is looked up to by others), self-reports (of similar items), and ascendance to leadership positions, they found that individuals' status in their groups consistently predicted SWB. In fact the association observed was robust with an average standardized coefficient of .45 across studies (Anderson, Kraus, et al., 2012). Furthermore, these effects did not appear to be simply due to belongingness; self-reported status still predicted SWB even after controlling for self-reports of how much individuals felt accepted, included, liked, and welcomed by their fellow group members. In a similar study of adolescent girls, Weisfeld, Bloch, and Bloch (1984) found that individuals ranked more highly as "leaders" by classmates were rated as more cheerful, $r = .475$.[1]

As further evidence, as individuals' status changes over time, their SWB changes accordingly. A longitudinal study that tracked master of business administration (MBA) students during school and then after they graduated and entered the workforce found that many students' status changed as they moved from one group (comprised of classmates) to another (comprised of coworkers; Anderson, Kraus et al., 2012). Status was assessed via self-reports of respect, admiration, social standing, social regard, and how much the individual was looked up to by others. When students' status increased across this major life transition, their SWB rose, but when it decreased, their SWB or correspondingly fell.

The Anderson, Kraus, et al. (2012) studies also found evidence for the causal effects of status: Status was manipulated by asking individuals to imagine interacting with someone who had either a high or a low level of respect, admiration, and influence in their important social groups (based on Kraus, Côté, & Keltner, 2010). Those made to feel higher in status subsequently reported higher SWB than those made to feel lower in status. Moreover, the status manipulation did not affect individuals' sense of social acceptance, ruling out the possibility that the status induction affected SWB simply because it shaped participants' sense of belongingness.

The link between status and SWB does not appear to be unique to any one culture or geographic region. In an incredibly far-reaching study, Tay and Diener (2011) examined the association between the fulfillment of important life goals and SWB in a

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[1] This review excludes studies of children and adolescent groups that use the term *status* to mean peer acceptance and belongingness, because we did not want to confound status with social acceptance. As an example, in Coie, Dodge, and Coppotelli (1982), each child was asked to name three classmates he or she liked most and three he or she liked least. Being liked by many children was referred to as having high status. In contrast, we consider being liked as definitional to social acceptance rather than status.

sample that included more than 60,000 individuals across 123 countries. They found that SWB consistently depended on the degree to which people felt respected by others, which was measured via self-report items asking whether they felt treated with respect by others and proud of something. In fact, the relation between respect and SWB emerged in all geographic regions examined. Relative to the satisfaction of other motives, the attainment of respect was the strongest predictor of long-term positive and negative feelings—even stronger than whether mastery needs or other social needs were met, for example (Tay & Diener, 2011). The relationship between respect and SWB was also independent of the effects of social belongingness, again refuting the alternative explanation that attaining respect boosted SWB simply because it fulfilled the need to belong (Tay & Diener, 2011). In other words, people who felt more respected by others did not enjoy higher SWB simply because they felt more socially accepted by others.

Organizational rank. Research in the organizational behavior literature provides additional evidence for a link between status and SWB. An abundance of studies in that area has shown that employees higher in their organization's hierarchy tend to have higher overall morale (for reviews, see Berger & Cummings, 1979; Cummings & Berger, 1976; Porter & Lawler, 1965). As Herzberg, Mausner, Peterson, and Capwell (1957) argued (as cited in Porter & Lawler, 1965): "One unequivocal fact emerges from the studies of job satisfaction; the higher the level of occupation, the higher the morale (p. 20)" (p. 450). These findings are relevant to our analysis because morale and satisfaction at work are closely correlated with SWB (Bowling, Eschleman, Wang, Kirkendall, & Alarcon, 2010; Nickerson et al., 2003).

The link between organizational rank and morale also emerges across diverse kinds of industries and organizations. Kline and Boyd (1991) found it among managers (categorized as either presidential, vice presidential, or middle managers) in 120 different organizations spanning very diverse industries. It also emerges across diverse national cultures, as Inkeles (1960) found it in six different countries and Tannenbaum et al. (1974) found it in manufacturing plants within five different countries, where they measured organizational rank as the number of people above and below the employees in the formal hierarchy. These findings are particularly interesting because they run counter to the conventional wisdom that as individuals ascend an organization's hierarchy they become increasingly stressed with the pressure of heightened responsibilities. In contrast to that intuition, it seems that as individuals climb the corporate ladder, their morale rises rather than falls.

Local rank in income. As mentioned previously, individuals can be afforded higher status by other people in their social environment when they have higher income than those other people. Consistent with this notion, multiple studies conducted in different countries have found that individuals experience elevated SWB when they enjoy a higher income than others in their local geographic area. For example, a study of "regions" of approximately 5,000 people in England found that individuals who had a higher income than their neighbors had higher life satisfaction (Boyce, Brown, & Moore, 2010). Similar links between local relative income and SWB have been found in studies using various reference groups and measures, including: a study of neighborhoods (e.g., neighboring 200 households) in Denmark that measured individuals' satisfaction with their general economic condi-

tions (Clark, Westergård-Nielsen, & Kristensen, 2009); a study of metropolitan areas in the U.S. that measured general happiness (Hagerty, 2000); a study of geographic areas of roughly 100,000 people in the U.S. that also measured happiness (Luttmer, 2005); a study of U.S. counties that measured life satisfaction (Firebaugh & Schroeder, 2009); and a study of U.S. states that measured happiness (Blanchflower & Oswald, 2004). Each of these studies found that having a higher income than one's neighbors predicts higher SWB. Although some of these studies examined relatively large swaths of people (e.g., U.S. counties). they nonetheless all examined more local social environments than studies that focus on within-country differences in SES.

Local relative unemployment status. Research on unemployment provides similar evidence to the above studies of local rank in income. Specifically, joblessness tends to damage SWB (e.g., Clark, 2003; Clark & Oswald, 1994; Korpi, 1997; Winkelmann, 2009), but appears particularly damaging when individuals are *uniquely* unemployed among the people in their local social environment, such as their friends or neighbors. For example, research by Clark (2003; Clark & Oswald, 1994) has found that joblessness was especially harmful to individuals' SWB when they were surrounded by employed people (as assessed via the regional employment rate, the employment status of the individual's partner, and the employment rate among the other adults living in the same household as the respondent). One interpretation of these findings is that being *uniquely* jobless implies a particularly severe drop in status. Being the only unemployed person in a local community filled with otherwise employed people likely lowers one's status; however, being unemployed alongside many other unemployed people would not necessitate such a severe drop in status. Along similar lines, a study by Goodchilds and Smith (1963) found that the damaging effects of joblessness on SWB tended to be most severe for individuals with the highest level of SES. These results suggest that in the top socioeconomic strata, unemployment might be particularly painful because individuals are surrounded by others with high SES (McPherson & Smith-Lovin, 1987). In their case, unemployment implies a steeper drop in their status vis-à-vis those immediately around them.

Summary. Taken together, the research reviewed in this section provides consistent evidence that individuals' status shapes their SWB. This evidence emerged in studies of all kinds of social contexts, in diverse cultures, using field and laboratory methods, as well as correlational and experimental designs. It also emerged across studies that used different measures of SWB and diverse measures of status.

Self-Esteem

Self-esteem reflects individuals' feelings of self-worth, or their global positive or negative self-evaluation (Rosenberg, 1979). Although self-esteem and SWB are related to each other as facets of overall psychological welfare, it is important to test whether status affects self-esteem in its own right (*Hypothesis 2*). Self-esteem is an independent and critical facet of adjustment. Furthermore, some scholars have called into question whether status affects self-esteem. For example Leary (2005) argued that "the situations that affect self-esteem typically do not involve exerting dominance or status but rather being liked, accepted, or perceived in a socially desirable fashion" (p. 80).

Much direct and indirect evidence suggests that status does shape self-esteem, however. Fournier (2009) found that among students in Grades 7–11, peer ratings of status (i.e., respect, prominence, and influence) predicted self-esteem even after controlling for peer rated likability (i.e., how much others "like hanging out" with the participant) and social support (measured with a 40-item self-report scale). Faunce (1984) similarly found in a cohort of high school seniors that general self-evaluation was correlated ($r = .67$) with status in the class (measured via peer rankings of "status"). They also found that if students' close friends viewed them as high in status, their self-esteem was particularly boosted, consistent with the notion that status in one's more immediate social environment has a stronger impact on self-esteem. The aforementioned study by Weisfeld et al. (1984) also found that adolescent girls ranked more highly by classmates as being leaders were seen as having a more positive self-concept.

As we discuss in more detail below, individuals' self-perceptions of status tend to be highly accurate indices of their actual status (e.g., Anderson et al., 2006). Using self-reports of status within their dormitory (respect, admiration, and esteem), Gruenewald, Kemeny, and Aziz (2006) found that college students' status in their dorm significantly predicted their self-esteem. Similarly, Huo, Binning, and Molina (2010) found that among 1,377 students at two public high schools, self-reported status at school correlated with self-esteem (status was measured by the degree to which individuals felt their school community respected their achievements, valued their opinions and ideas, approved of how they lived their life, thought well of how they conducted themselves, and thought highly of their abilities and talents). This association held up even after controlling for how socially accepted the student felt he or she was (i.e., the degree to which individuals felt that others in the school community liked them, felt warmly toward them, considered them to be a nice person to have around, and didn't like them [reverse-scored]).

Research has also consistently found that a link between self-esteem and the level of respect individuals receive in their face-to-face groups. Smith, Tyler and Huo (2003) reviewed nine different data sets and found positive correlations between respect in groups and self-esteem in all of them, with correlations as high as .47. These data sets stemmed from a variety of group contexts, such as families, sororities, or living cooperatives and included 2,502 observations across studies. Boeckmann and Tyler (2002) also found that survey respondents who reported feeling more respected by other community members (who respected their values, what they had accomplished in their lives, and approved of how they lived their life) reported higher levels of self-esteem.

Leadership status and organizational rank. Of course, because the above evidence is correlational an important question concerns the direction of causality. Does the possession of high or low status actually cause changes in self-esteem? In a particularly relevant set of laboratory studies, Leary, Cottrell, and Phillips (2001) experimentally manipulated peer rated leadership as well as peer acceptance by providing participants false feedback of how many group-mates nominated them to be a leader of their group and how many nominated them to be a member of that group.[2] They found across studies that both peer-based leadership and acceptance independently shaped participants' self-esteem. Moreover, the effect of leadership on self-esteem held up after controlling for participants' reports of how "accepted" they felt by the

other members of the group. Therefore, the self-esteem benefits of being nominated as a leader were not simply due to a heightened sense of belongingness.

The leadership literature more broadly provides ample evidence for a link between leadership and self-esteem. Multiple reviews in the leadership literature have found that individuals identified by others as leaders have higher self-esteem (Buss, 2008; Stogdill, 1948, 1974). Ensari, Riggio, Christian, and Carslaw (2011) also found that leadership emergence predicted a measure that combined self-esteem and self-efficacy. Self-confidence, which is closely associated with self-esteem, has been linked to leadership in multiple studies: Richardson and Hanawalt (1943, 1952) found across multiple samples that individuals in positions of leadership had higher self-confidence than individuals not in positions of leadership. Drake (1944) found that peer ratings of "leadership" correlated strongly ($r = .59$) with peer ratings of self-confidence. Smith and Foti (1998) also found that in laboratory groups, individuals had higher generalized self-efficacy when they were rated by others as exhibiting leadership (using the Generalized Leadership Impression scale, Cronshaw & Lord, 1987) and ranked highly in others' preferences for being the group's leader.

In other organizational research, Smith and Cable's (2011) study of 435 managers and executives from the United States and the United Kingdom found a positive relationship between self-reported perceptions of status (e.g., status, respect, and prominence in the organization) and core self-evaluations ($r = .44$), a variable that included self-esteem. Finally, the aforementioned study by Tannenbaum et al. (1974) found that hierarchical rank in industrial plants correlated strongly with a measure of psychological adjustment that included self-esteem.

Socioeconomic status. Above, we cited research suggesting that a higher income can boost SWB but that it only tends to do so when it enhances a person's status. A similar pattern emerges from the literature on self-esteem. Specifically, a large meta-analysis by Twenge and Campbell (2002) that examined 446 separate samples and involved more than 300,000 participants concluded that SES has a small average effect on self-esteem ($r = .08$). However, elevated SES boosts self-esteem when it "is an indicator of status within social groups," supporting what they call a *social indicator model* (Twenge & Campbell, 2002, p. 60). For example, they found that the importance of SES for women's self-esteem has increased over time, consistent with the notion that as women have entered the workforce, their SES has become more of a source of their status.

Summary. The research reviewed in this section suggests status affects individuals' self-esteem in addition to their SWB. Across multiple studies and in diverse kinds of group contexts, individuals with higher status enjoyed higher self-esteem than did those lower in status. Further, the effects of status on self-esteem held up even after controlling for social acceptance. Therefore, above and beyond whether a person was well liked and integrated, their status affected their overall feelings of self-worth. Indirect evidence for the link between status and self-esteem also came from research showing that individuals enjoyed higher self-esteem

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[2] The researchers called the leadership manipulation "dominance," but because it involved false feedback about leadership nominations by fellow group members, it serves well as a proxy for status.

when they were respected by others in their groups, were rated by peers as a leader, and had higher organizational rank. Finally, when SES does impact self-esteem it appears to do so because it affects the individuals' status.

Health

Perhaps the strongest test of the status hypothesis is whether the possession of low status impacts health (*Hypothesis 3*). If so, this would suggest that failing to satisfy the desire for status produces consequences that extend beyond decreased levels of happiness and dampened feelings of self-worth. It would suggest that status motive is powerful enough that when it is thwarted, individuals begin to suffer from psychological and physical pathology.

Indeed, multiple studies suggest that individuals who are accorded low status by others become prone to a range of mental and physical illnesses. Furthermore, the effects of possessing low status appear to be independent from the effects of being low in SES and independent from a lack of social acceptance or belongingness. Most of the research that has documented these effects has used the "community ladder" measure (e.g., Goodman et al., 2001), which presents respondents with a 10-rung ladder and the following instructions: "Think of this ladder as representing where people stand in their communities. People define community in different ways; please define it in whatever way is most meaningful to you. At the top of the ladder are the people who have the highest standing in their community. At the bottom are the people who have the lowest standing in their community. Where would you place yourself on this ladder?"[3]

The community ladder serves well as an index of status. First, when presented with the community ladder, the vast majority of respondents tend to define their community in terms of their local social environment, such as their neighborhood, religious group, friends, or workplace (Snibbe, Stewart, & Adler, 2007). Therefore, respondents are reporting on the status they are accorded by others in their social environment. Second, as mentioned above, self-perceptions of status tend to be accurate measures of actual status (e.g., Anderson et al., 2006). Third, respondents tend to base their community ladder self-ratings on the degree to which they contribute to others around them (Snibbe et al., 2007), consistent with the idea of status being grounded in one's instrumental social value.

Research using this community ladder measure has consistently found that low status is correlated with higher levels of mental and physical illness. Specifically, individuals with lower status in their community experience more depression (Cooper et al., 2010; Euteneuer, Mills, Rief, Ziegler, & Dimsdale, 2012; Goodman et al., 2001; Gruenewald et al., 2006; John, de Castro, Martin, Duran, & Takeuchi, 2012; Subramanyam et al., 2012), and chronic anxiety and stress (Cooper et al., 2010; Finkelstein, Kubzansky & Goodman, 2006; Ghaed & Gallo, 2007; Gruenewald et al., 2006; John et al., 2012) compared with individuals with higher status in the community. For example, status in one's community accounted for an additional 9.5% of the variance in depressive symptoms above and beyond important demographic predictors such as age, gender, and race (Goodman et al., 2001).

Individuals with lower status in their community also exhibit poorer cardiovascular health and are more likely to show physiological risk factors associated with cardiovascular disease (e.g.,

Cooper et al., 2010; Euteneuer et al., 2012; Ghaed & Gallo, 2007). For example, Euteneuer et al. (2012) found evidence in 94 healthy participants for a link between status in one's community (measured via the community ladder index) and chronic overactivation of the sympathetic nervous system. Lower status individuals even appear to be more vulnerable to viral infections. In one study, S. Cohen (1999) exposed 106 participants to a rhinovirus (RV23) and followed them in quarantine for 5 days. Individuals lower in status in their community were more susceptible to developing a respiratory infection than those higher in status.

Above, we described research showing that income and SES tend to have little effect on SWB and self-esteem (unless relative income and SES are assessed at the local level). In contrast to those findings, SES does have a direct and significant impact on mental and physical health (e.g., Adler et al., 1994). Therefore, one alternative explanation for the findings reviewed in this section is that SES might serve as a third variable: being low in SES might lead individuals to be accorded lower status in their community, and it might lead individuals to experience poorer health. However, in every study that controlled for SES, the effects of sociometric status, that is, status as measured by the community ladder, remained significant (Cooper et al., 2010; Euteneuer et al., 2012; Finkelstein et al., 2006; Ghaed & Gallo, 2007; Goodman et al., 2001; John et al., 2012; Subramanyam et al., 2012). Consequently, the effects of sociometric status do not seem to be due to SES. Rather, both SES and sociometric status in one's community independently predict health outcomes.

Another alternative explanation to the correlations between status and health outcomes is that behavioral health habits might serve as a third variable. For example, individuals who eat poorly and smoke might tend to be relegated to the bottom of their community's status hierarchy and also have poorer health. However, the effects of individuals' status within their community on their health held up in every study that controlled for behavioral health habits as well, including diet, smoking, sleep efficiency, alcohol consumption, exercise, and body mass index (S. Cohen, 1999; Cooper et al., 2010; Euteneuer et al., 2012; Ghaed & Gallo, 2007). Therefore, those low in status in the community did not experience worse health simply because they had less healthy behavioral habits (also see Reitzel, Nguyen, Strong, Wetter, & McNeill, 2013). Instead, low status seemed uniquely harmful to health.

Finally, one might question whether individuals lower in their community's status hierarchy were more prone to illness simply because they were less socially accepted by others. However, in the aforementioned study by Fournier (2009), peer ratings of status (i.e., respect, prominence, and influence) predicted depression

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[3] Adler et al. (2000) also developed another ladder measure in which the ladder represents SES, and asks respondents to rank themselves in terms of their money, education, and occupation relative to all fellow citizens in their country. We do not include studies that use that measure for two reasons. First, that measure asks people to base their ladder ranking on their SES rather than their sociometric status, or the respect, admiration, and voluntary deference individuals are afforded by others in their social environment. Second, it asks participants to rank themselves relative to others in their entire country, rather than relative to those within their more immediate social environment. Adler et al. developed the community ladder measure specifically to measure (sociometric) status rather than SES.

even after controlling for peer-rated likability (i.e., how much others "like hanging out" with the participant) and controlling for social support (measured with a 40-item self-report scale). Therefore, the link between status on health held up above and beyond the effects of belongingness.

Leadership status and organizational rank. Organizational behavior research provides further evidence for the effects of low status on health. The aforementioned study by Tannenbaum et al. (1974) found that individuals with lower hierarchical rank in an industrial plant experienced poorer psychological adjustment, including higher rates of depression. Those individuals also experienced a higher incidence of peptic ulcers. For example, first-line supervisors (who were low in the hierarchy) experienced an average of 1.1 day per month from stomach pain, whereas those near the top of the organization appeared almost ulcer free.

Cortisol is an important hormone associated with psychological, physiological, and physical health functioning, in that prolonged cortisol activation is linked to numerous biological and health effects (e.g., Dickerson & Kemeny, 2004). Moreover, the cortisol system is activated when goals of primary importance are threatened (Blascovich & Tomaka, 1996; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). A study by Sherman et al. (2012) examined employees of the federal government and members of the military, such as Army colonels, and found that those who ranked lower in their organizational hierarchy exhibited higher levels of cortisol and anxiety than did those higher up on the ladder. Therefore, leaders (as measured according to whether the individual managed other people, the number of people the individual had supervised, and whether the individual was given leadership responsibilities) exhibited lower baseline levels of cortisol.

Ellis (1994) reviewed 165 studies on status and health and found that in all but four of the studies reviewed, lower status was associated with worse health, including shorter lifespans. Some of the studies reviewed by Ellis focused on occupational status however, blurring the line between SES and sociometric status, and should therefore be interpreted with caution.

Low-status behavior. Social rank theory (Gilbert, 1992; Price et al., 1994) suggests that many psychological illnesses, such as depression are part of an evolved "internal inhibitory system" that becomes activated when individuals possess lower social status (Gilbert, Allan, & Trent, 1995, p. 743). For example, it is thought that individuals become depressed to mentally withdraw from the competition for higher status in their social environment. Studies that have tested this theory have consistently found that individuals who behave in ways associated with low social status—that is, those who behave deferentially in their interactions with others—tend to exhibit a range of psychological disorders. For example, individuals who behave more deferentially experienced more depression (Aderka, Weisman, Shahar, & Gilboa-Schechtman, 2009; Allan & Gilbert, 1997; Arrindell et al., 1994; Gilbert, 2000; Gilbert & Allan, 1998; Gilbert et al., 1995; Irons & Gilbert, 2005; Zuroff, Fournier, & Moskowitz, 2007), chronic anxiety (Aderka et al., 2009; Allan & Gilbert, 1997; Arrindell et al., 1994), chronic shame (Cheung, Gilbert, & Irons, 2004; Gilbert, 2000), obsessive–compulsive disorder, paranoid ideation, and psychoticism (Allan & Gilbert, 1997; Horowitz, Rosenberg, Baer, Ureño, & Villaseñor, 1988). These studies typically use a self-report measure that gauges respondents' agreement with 16 statements such as "I agree that I'm wrong even if know I'm right" (Gilbert & Allan, 1994).

Summary. Evidence from multiple research literatures suggests that low status contributes to poor health. People with low status in their community exhibit higher rates of psychological disturbances, such as depression and anxiety, and experience physical health problems, such as higher blood pressure and a greater susceptibility to infectious disease. Proxies of low status, such as lower organizational rank and the tendency to behave in deferential ways, were also linked to mental and physical illness. Taken together, the reviewed evidence suggests that being accorded low status by others not only damages SWB and self-esteem, it also promotes psychological and physical pathology.

Cognition: Vigilant Monitoring of Status

So far, we have focused on examining the long-term consequences of possessing high or low status, evaluating whether those with higher status enjoy elevated SWB and self-esteem, and whether those with lower status experienced more mental and physical illness. In this and the sections that follow, we turn our attention to the cognitive, behavioral, and affective mechanisms that would be recruited by a fundamental status motive. We first review evidence that people vigilantly monitor the status dynamics in their social environment (*Hypothesis 4*), as the pursuit of higher status presumably begins with monitoring cues in the social environment that indicate one's own and others' status, as well as opportunities or threats to one's status.

Attention to symbols of status. Anecdotal and empirical evidence suggests people attend to, and become preoccupied with, even the subtlest indicators of status. Symbols as seemingly insignificant as slight differences in the amount of orange juice given to siblings (Frank, 1985), the decor in a person's office (Dean, 1976), or negligible differences in clothing (Roethlisberger & Dickson, 1939) can become objects of concern because they are decoded as markers of status. Carolyn and Muzafer Sherif (as cited in Thibaut & Kelley, 1959) observed how vice presidents in one company all started together with identical offices that included a one-pen desk set. One vice president shortly moved to a two-pen set, and within four days all vice presidents had worked their way up to three-pen sets. This anecdote speaks not only to the measures people take to signal their high status (a topic to which we return below), but also to the close attention they pay to status symbols.

People are also highly sensitive to others' displays of emotion that serve as signs of status. As background, the experience and display of pride appears to be uniquely associated with high status and behaviors that facilitate the attainment of higher status, whereas the experience and display of shame is associated with low status and its associated behaviors (Steckler & Tracy, 2014; Tiedens, Ellsworth, & Mesquita, 2000). Individuals tend to display more pride, in particular "authentic pride," when they have behaved in ways that promote higher status, such as accomplishing a socially valued outcome (Belsky, Domitrovich, & Crnic, 1997; Tracy & Matsumoto, 2008).

A range of studies suggests that individuals readily and even automatically pick up on these emotions as markers of status. In a study by Tiedens et al. (2000), participants categorized characters in a hypothetical vignette who displayed pride following a positive outcome as executives and categorized characters displaying appreciation as assistants. Shariff and Tracy (2009) gave participants an implicit association test (IAT), and found that they exhibited

implicit associations between photographs of pride expressions and words associated with high status (e.g., prestigious), and between photographs of shame expressions and words associated with low status (e.g., unimportant). Shariff, Tracy, and Markusoff (2012) used a similar method and even found that displays of pride and shame in photographs overrode other contextual cues of high or low status, such as a shirt that said "captain" or "waterboy." Tracy, Shariff, Zhao, and Henrich (2013) also used a similar method and found that these implicit associations emerged even among Fijian villagers living in a traditional, small-scale society.

Accuracy in perceiving status differences. As further evidence that people pay close attention to status, studies show that individuals are highly accurate perceivers of others' status. Within face-to-face groups, individuals' perceptions of each member's status correlate strongly with those individuals' actual status levels (e.g., Anderson, Ames, & Gosling, 2008; Anderson, John, Keltner & Kring, 2001; Anderson et al., 2006; Bendersky & Shah, 2013; Cheng, Tracy, & Henrich, 2010; Flynn, 2003; Fournier, 2009; Kennedy, Anderson, & Moore, 2013; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959). Otherwise stated, individuals' perceptions of each member's status corresponds closely to that other member's overall average peer-rated status (e.g., respect, contributions, demonstrated ability, influence, and leadership; Anderson et al., 2006, Study 2). Furthermore, this accuracy emerges quickly, even after one short laboratory session (e.g., Anderson et al., 2008), which suggests people very quickly detect and encode status differences among others. These findings are particularly interesting because achieving accurate perceptions of status hierarchies in groups would seem particularly challenging; status differences among individuals are informal, implicit, and rarely explicitly acknowledged by the group (Berger et al., 1972).

Indeed, people appear highly accurate in perceiving hierarchical structures more broadly. Mast and Hall (2004) took candid photographs of 96 coworkers interacting with each other in pairs. They cut the two coworkers out of the photograph and placed them against a white background. Even in the absence of any contextual cues, such as a large desk or plaques on the wall, observers who looked at these photographs were exceedingly accurate in estimating who had higher rank in their organizational hierarchy ($r = .73$). In research by Zitek and Tiedens (2012), individuals cognitively processed hierarchies more quickly and readily than nonhierarchical social structures. For example, in one of their studies, participants learned a set of relationships that represented a hierarchy more quickly than they learned a set of relationships that represented friendships. These findings provide further evidence that people are highly motivated to determine differences in status.

Accuracy in self-perceptions of status. If accurately perceiving informal status differences among others seems challenging, perceiving one's own status accurately seems doubly difficult. Much research has found that self-perceptions are biased and overly positive on a wide variety of socially desirable dimensions (for reviews see Alicke & Govorun, 2005; Taylor & Brown, 1988). Yet in spite of those general biases, individuals tend to have highly accurate perceptions of their own status. In the aforementioned studies (Anderson et al., 2001, 2006, 2008)they found high self–peer agreement on status with average correlations between self- and peer-rated status in one article of $r = .50$ (Anderson et al., 2006). The aforementioned study by Fournier (2009) similarly found high self–peer agreement on status perceptions among stu-

dents in Grades 7–11 ($r = .51$). In fact, self–peer agreement in status perceptions was as strong as peer–peer agreement in these studies, indicating that self-perceptions were as good an indicator of an individual's status as any peer's perception (Anderson et al., 2006).[4]

Attention to the fairness of one's treatment. Much research has shown that people are extremely sensitive to the fairness with which they are treated, for example to whether their outcomes are equitable relative to those of others, the processes by which outcomes are distributed, and whether they are given a voice in important decisions (for reviews, see Lind & Tyler, 1988; Tyler & Blader, 2000; Tyler & Lind, 1992). This intense concern over fairness likely arises for multiple reasons. One interesting possibility, however, is that it arises in part from people's motivation to monitor their place in the status order.

Many scholars in the justice and fairness literatures have argued that people use the fairness with which they are treated as a signal of their own status in the group (Folger & Skarlicki, 1998; Huo et al., 2010; Lind & Tyler, 1988; Smith, Tyler, Huo, Ortiz & Lind, 1998; Tepper, Eisenbach, Kirby, & Potter, 1998; Tyler & Blader, 2000; Tyler & Lind, 1992). When people are treated fairly by their group, they infer that they have high status in the group, and when they are treated unfairly, they infer that they have low status in the group (e.g., see the *group value model*; Lind & Tyler, 1988; Tyler & Blader, 2000; Tyler & Lind, 1992; Tyler & Schuller, 1990). Therefore, people's preoccupation, some might even say obsession, with fairness might stem in part from individuals' need to know their status vis-à-vis others.

Summary. The research reviewed in this section supports the argument that people vigilantly monitor status dynamics in their social environment. People pay close attention to signs of their own and other' status, such as others' emotional expressions and the fairness with which they are treated, and they perceive others' and their own status highly accurately—even though status in groups is implicit and informal, and even though people possess a broader tendency to view themselves in inaccurate and overly positive ways.

Behavior: The Pursuit of Status

We next turn to the behavioral mechanisms that would be recruited by a fundamental desire for status. As stated above, for a motive to be fundamental it must produce a wide range of goal-directed behavior (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; McClelland et al., 1989; Murray, 1938; Ryan & Deci, 2000; Sheldon, 2011). This suggests people should engage in a variety of actions aimed at attaining higher status or maintaining their current status level (*Hypothesis 5*). Our conception of status suggests that individuals are afforded higher status when they are perceived to possess instrumental social value—that is, when they are seen as possess-

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[4] We do not mean to imply that on dimensions for which individuals exhibit low self-perceptual accuracy, those dimensions are somehow less important than status. For example, an individual might care a great deal about whether he is trusted by others yet be highly inaccurate in estimating others' trust in him. In a case such as this, his inaccuracy might be due to a lack of valid cues that indicate others' trust in him, rather than a lack of concern about their trust. In status perceptions, we believe the high level of accuracy in self-perceptions probably stems from both a strong concern about one's status and the availability of valid indicators of one's status.

ing personal characteristics that can help others accomplish their own goals. Accordingly, as we review below, people appear to pursue higher status by working to increase their actual instrumental social value, such as by becoming more competent or behaving more generously to others, or by projecting the *image* of instrumental social value, regardless of the value they actually possess. Furthermore, because low status involves engaging on deferential behavior toward others, people also sometimes refrain from deference when trying to protect and maintain their current level of status.

Providing instrumental social value. Shepard's (1954) observational study of a university research group found that group members strived to attain higher status by exerting extra effort to acquire more technical knowledge and stronger ability to solve complex problems. Similarly, Sutton and Hargadon (1996) studied a design firm and noted that there were "marked status differences between [the designers], distinctions based largely on technical ability and on using it to help others" (p. 705). The designers thus invested extra time trying to generate creative ideas and hone their innovative abilities in order to enhance their status in the eyes of others. Kilduff and colleagues' research on rivalry also suggests that status competition drives effort and improved task performance: When participants were asked to recall a competitor toward whom they felt rivalry, they reported being more concerned about their relative status (e.g., "I strive to have higher status than this person"; Kilduff, Galinsky, Gallo, & Reade, 2012). In turn, the researchers found that feelings of rivalry motivate people to exert more effort to beat their opponent; for example, basketball teams worked harder on defense and blocked more shots when playing a rival than a nonrival (Kilduff, Elfenbein, & Staw, 2010).

One could also interpret findings in related research streams through the lens of the status hypothesis. For example, studies of Tesser's (1988) Self Evaluation Maintenance model have found that people work harder and perform better when their friends have previously outperformed them in school or on a laboratory task—especially when they people personally invested in that specific task domain. One possible explanation for this effect is that people feel a sense of status competition when their friend outperforms them, and thus might work harder in order to protect their relative status. Similarly, classic studies of social facilitation have shown that people exert more effort and perform at a higher level when completing tasks in front of an audience than when working alone, at least for tasks at which they are well practiced (Zajonc, 1965). This audience effect appears to be driven partly by concerns over social evaluations of their competence (e.g., Bond, 1982; Cottrell, Wack, Sekerak, & Rittle, 1968), suggesting status concerns might be at play here as well.

As stated above, people will only confer status to an individual if they believe that individual might help them achieve their own goals in return. Individuals are therefore afforded status when they appear to possess valued characteristics *and* when they appear willing to use those characteristics to help others (e.g., Blau, 1964; Ridgeway, 1982). The importance of other-orientation to status affordance thus suggests one way in which individuals can pursue higher status: by behaving generously or in collectively minded ways. Doing so would signal to others that they are willing to make self-sacrifices to help and assist others.

Indeed, much evidence suggests that the desire for status promotes giving and self-sacrificial behavior. Many tribes in the Pacific Northwest Coast engage in the ritual of potlatching, wherein tribal chiefs compete to give away their possessions to achieve respect and prestige (Eibl-Eibesfeldt, 1989). Laboratory studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of generosity as a strategy for gaining status: Hardy and Van Vugt (2006) as well as Willer (2009) found that in laboratory social dilemma games, participants who contributed more to the group fund and took less from it attained higher status as measured by peer ratings of respect, prestige, honor, and leadership nominations. Furthermore, participants seemed aware on some level of this effect and took advantage of it. They gave more to the group when their contributions were public than when they were private. Therefore, it appears that the desire for status promotes generous behavior particularly in contexts when such behavior might bolster one's status.

A field study of MBA students by Flynn, Reagans, Amanatullah, and Ames (2006) also found that individuals who desired higher status more strongly (i.e., those who scored higher in self-monitoring) were more generous with fellow classmates, providing others more help and advice. Specifically, self-monitors were rated by others as willing to help when needed and nominated more often as sources of advice. Furthermore, as in the aforementioned laboratory studies, these MBA students' generosity paid off, in that it effectively garnered them higher peer ratings of status in their cohort.

Griskevicius, Tybur, and Van den Bergh (2010) provided further direct evidence that status concerns spur self-sacrificial actions. They aimed to understand the reasons why people buy environmentally friendly products even when those products are often more expensive and/or less effective than other products. As they report, the number one reason people bought a hybrid Toyota Prius, for example, is that it "makes a statement about me." Indeed, people rated others who bought environmentally friendly products as nicer, more caring, and more altruistic (Griskevicius et al., 2010). In one study the researchers experimentally boosted participants' desire for status by asking them to imagine that they had just started a job in which they had the opportunity to "move up" the company's hierarchy and attain higher status by being promoted. They asked participants in a control condition to imagine that they had lost a ticket to an upcoming concert but then had eventually found it. The researchers found that participants whose desire for status had been experimentally heightened were more likely to choose environmentally friendly products over better performing, more luxurious products, compared with control participants.

It is important to note here again that the personal characteristics that are socially valued and that lead to status attainment can vary across social contexts. For example, Fragale (2006) found that being more agentic (i.e., competent) was relatively more important to attaining status in groups whose members worked independently, but that being communal was relatively more important to attaining status in groups whose members worked interdependently. Similarly, Torelli et al. (2014) found that competence is relatively more important to status attainment in individualistic cultures than it is in collectivistic cultures, whereas the reverse is true for warmth (i.e., generosity and kindness).

This implies that ways in which individuals signal their instrumental social value should thus depend on what, exactly, is locally valued. Indeed, Torelli et al. (2014) found when people in the

United States—an individualistic culture—were asked to think about the behaviors they enacted to attain status (i.e., "to gain respect and admiration and to be highly regarded by their supervisor") they reported trying to convey the impression of competence more than people in Latin American countries, such as displaying awards they have won for task accomplishments. In contrast, people in Latin American countries—which are more collectivistic—reported trying to convey the impression of warmth, such as volunteering outside their working hours to help their coworkers with personal issues. We return to this notion that individuals pursue status in different ways, depending on what is locally valued, below.

Projecting the image of instrumental social value. Individuals are afforded higher status when they are *perceived* to provide instrumental social value, regardless of whether in fact they do (e.g., Berger et al., 1972). Therefore, above and beyond the tendency to work hard, perform better, and behave more generously, we should see evidence that people strive to manage their *impression* of instrumental social value. Indeed, much research has documented this tendency (for a review, see Leary et al., 2014). In terms of projecting the image of competence, the self-presentation literature has widely documented the propensity for people to "self-promote," or to signal their competence to others by publicly portraying their abilities in disproportionately positive ways, highlighting their skills and downplaying weaknesses, and taking credit for successes while blaming others for failure (Baumeister, 1982; Leary & Kowalski, 1990; Schlenker, 2012; Schlenker & Pontari, 2000). Although it is theoretically possible that self-promotion behavior is spurred by the desire to be liked and accepted, research has shown that peer-rated competence is more strongly tied to status (e.g., $r = .718$ in Anderson, Brion, et al., 2012) than it is to liking (e.g., $r = .234$ in Anderson & Brion, 2014). Therefore, self-promotion behavior is likely to be at least in part driven by status concerns. Moreover, research by Godfrey, Jones, and Lord (1986) suggests that self-promotion is separate from the desire to be liked: In their laboratory study, participants who were instructed to make an interaction partner like them tended to agree with their partner's ideas, nod and smile more, and give more compliments (as coded from videotape of the conversation; Godfrey et al., 1986). In other words, participants who strived to be liked engaged in ingratiation behavior rather than self-promotion.

Individuals even appear to form overconfident perceptions of their own competence in order to appear more competent to others. As background, much work has shown that overconfident individuals, or individuals who believe they are more competent than they actually are, tend to be perceived by others as more competent (Anderson, Brion, Moore, & Kennedy, 2012; Anderson & Kilduff, 2009; Kennedy et al., 2013; McNulty & Swann, 1994; Paulhus & Harms, 2004), and in turn, to be accorded higher status (as measured by peer ratings of respect and admiration, influence, leadership and contributions; Anderson, Brion, et al., 2012; Kennedy et al., 2013). Accordingly, the desire for status has been shown to engender overconfident beliefs. Anderson, Brion, et al. (2012) experimentally boosted participants' desire for status using the same methods as in Griskevicius et al. (2009). Participants in the status-motive condition were more overconfident than control participants, rating themselves more highly on skills that would garner high status in that business context (e.g., critical thinking skills).

It is worth noting that the desire for higher status appears to boost overconfidence specifically on skills that are locally perceived to provide instrumental social value, but not necessarily on other skills. For example, in the aforementioned study by Anderson, Brion, et al. (2012), participants whose desire for attaining higher status had been experimentally boosted rated themselves more highly on skills that would garner high status in that business context (e.g., intelligence, ability to work in teams), but not on skills unrelated to high status attainment in that context (e.g., athletics, artistic skills). Similar evidence stems from cross-cultural research suggesting that the specific dimensions on which individuals are overconfident depend on what is locally valued in that culture; for example, people in individualistic cultures tend to overestimate their ability to lead, whereas those in collectivistic cultures tend to overestimate their ability to listen (Sedikides, Gaertner, & Toguchi, 2003; Sedikides, Gaertner, & Vevea, 2005). This cross-cultural variation is consistent with the notion that people will tend to be selectively overconfident in the specific abilities that will garner them higher status in their particular social environment.

In addition to striving to appear competent, people also aim to look generous. We mentioned earlier research on laboratory social dilemma games, in which people tended to give more generously when their contribution was public than when it was private (Barclay & Willer, 2007; Fehr & Fischbacher, 2003; Milinski, Semmann, & Krambeck, 2002a, 2002b; Milinski, Semmann, Krambeck, & Marotzke, 2006; Nowak & Sigmund, 1998). These results dovetail with studies reviewed by Baumeister (1982), which found that people also give more to charities (e.g., Satow, 1975) and are more helpful to those in immediate danger (e.g., Gottlieb & Carver, 1980) when they believe their behavior is public. Similarly, the aforementioned study by Griskevicius et al. (2010) found that people were more likely to make "green" purchases in a public setting, such as in a store, than when shopping in a private online setting. Taken together, these findings suggest that the desire for status might instill a motivation to appear generous more than a motivation to actually be generous.

Finally, as mentioned previously, in some contexts having more money than others can lead to higher status. For example, Nelissen and Meijers (2011) asked participants to rate individuals in photographs who wore a luxury brand shirt or a nearly identical shirt of a nonluxury brand. Participants rated targets with the luxury brand shirt as more respected and employable. Wealth might contribute to status because it serves as a "diffuse status characteristic," similar to age or gender (Berger, Rosenholtz, & Zelditch, 1980), leading people to infer competence (see Fiske et al., 2002). Accordingly, people strive to signal to others that they are financially successful, regardless of whether or not they are. In his *Theory of the Leisure Class*, Veblen (1899/2007) coined the phrase "conspicuous consumption" to refer to his observation that people often purchase goods with the primary purpose of signaling wealth (also see Bagwell & Bernheim, 1996; Hopkins & Kornienko, 2004; Ireland, 1994; Rucker & Galinsky, 2009; Sivanathan & Pettit, 2010). Since then, studies have documented conspicuous consumption across diverse cultures (Eastman, Fredenberger, Campbell, & Calvert, 1997). Carr and Vignoles (2011), for example, asked participants to list 10 possessions and rate each for its value as a status symbol. When asked to choose five of those possessions to discuss with another participant in an upcoming

interaction, participants disproportionately chose the possessions that conveyed high status.

Conspicuous consumption is even observed in many small-scale traditional societies that are now part of a market economy. For example, among the Tsimane', an indigenous Amazonian hunter–gatherer group, men who earn more money through work or sales of produce devote a greater percentage of their income to the purchase of conspicuous leisure items, such as watches and radios (von Rueden, 2014). Again, however, the degree to which individuals engage in conspicuous consumption depends on what is valued in their specific social context. Kim and Drolet (2009) found Asian Americans preferred brand name or luxury products over generic products to a greater degree than European Americans and that this preference was driven by concerns over social status, as measured by self-report (i.e., "I want others to respect my social status" and "I care about social status").

Refraining from lower status behaviors. A third behavioral strategy that emerges from the literature is that people at times protect their status by refraining from actions that might place them in a lower status position. Again, our conception of status is that it is part of a social exchange process that involves conferring respect and deference in exchange for help in the form of advice or assistance. This suggests that seeking help is associated with lower status. Accordingly, research has found that one way in which people protect their status is by refusing to ask others for help (Blau, 1964; Flynn et al., 2006). For example, in the aforementioned study by Flynn et al. (2006), high self-monitors, who reported a stronger desire for status (e.g., "I want my peers to respect me and hold me in high esteem"), reported seeking help from fewer of their MBA classmates than did low self-monitors. Even studies of schoolchildren have found that those who prioritize social status (e.g., "It is important to me to belong to the popular group at school") over other goals report avoiding seeking help at school ("I don't ask questions in class, even when I don't understand the lesson"; Ryan, Hicks, & Midgley, 1997). Consistent with this general notion, in the aforementioned study by Godfrey et al. (1986), individuals trying to appear more competent avoided complimenting others.

According higher status to another person is also associated with conforming to that other person's ideas, opinions, and attitudes (e.g., Henrich & Gil-White, 2001). This suggests another possible status-protection behavior: avoiding the appearance of conformity. Indeed, research in self-presentation has long shown that people try to avoid appearing to conform to others' opinions (for a review, see Baumeister, 1982). For example, Braver, Linder, Corwin, and Cialdini (1977) found individuals yielded less to a persuasive speech if they were in the presence of a third-party observer than when they were alone, suggesting they wanted to appear more resolute and less conforming in front of that observer. More recently, Nolan, Schultz, Cialdini, Goldstein and Griskevicius (2008) found California state residents were hesitant to admit their energy-saving behavior was shaped by their neighbors' energy-saving behavior, even though that kind of social influence actually had the strongest effect on saving behavior of all the factors studied.

Like so many status-pursuing behaviors mentioned above, it would seem unlikely that the refusal to appear conforming stems from the need to belong. Similarity is essential to the formation and maintenance of social bonds (for reviews, see Berscheid &

Walster, 1983; Byrne, 1971). People tend to be more attracted to others who are similar to them, and they tend to distance themselves from people who are different from them. The need to belong, therefore, seems to encourage conformity rather than nonconformity (Baumeister & Leary, 1995).

Summary. People appear to engage in a wide range of behaviors aimed at attaining higher status or avoiding status loss. First, they work to actually provide more instrumental social value, by putting forth more work, performing better, and contributing more generously to others. Second, they work to project the public image of instrumental social value, by engaging in impression management behavior, forming overly confident self-perceptions of their ability, and engaging in conspicuous consumption, for example. Third, they refrain from actions that might lead to status loss, such as asking for assistance or publicly conforming to others' opinions.

Situation Selection: Preferring Environments That Afford Higher Status

The status hypothesis suggests that people prefer social environments that offer them higher levels of status (*Hypothesis 6*). For example, all else being equal, they should be attracted to potential friends, groups, and communities in which they would have higher status than ones in which they would have lower status. The greater the degree that status concerns factor into their preferences for various social environments, the stronger the evidence would be that the desire for status is a fundamental driver of behavior.

Positional goods. Status is based on how one's characteristics compare to those of others. Individuals achieve higher status not when they possess valued characteristics on an absolute level (e.g., intelligence), but when they possess more of those characteristics than others (i.e., are more intelligent than those around them). Accordingly, it appears that the lure of higher status leads people to prefer outcome distributions in which they are relatively higher than others, even if it means everyone—including themselves—is worse off on an absolute level. Economics research on "positional goods" has long found that people often show a preference for having more of some good relative to other people, such as a higher salary than others, even if it means everyone will have less absolute money (Alpizar, Carlsson, & Johansson-Stenman, 2005; Clark, Frijters, & Shields, 2008; Johansson-Stenman, Carlsson, & Daruvala, 2002; Solnick & Hemenway, 1998). For example, people preferred to be relatively more attractive than others, even if it meant that they would be less attractive on an absolute level (Solnick & Hemenway, 1998).

Furthermore, so-called "positional goods" tend to be those that are highly visible and can signal one's status to others, such as a higher income and a more valuable car, rather than less visible goods that are unassociated with status, such as the safety of one's car or the quantity of one's leisure time (Carlsson, Johansson-Stenman, & Martinsson, 2007; Frank, 1985, 1999). For example, in Solnick and Hemenway (1998), people showed more positional concerns, or a preference for a higher relative amount of a good instead of an absolute amount, for goods such as attractiveness, praise from their supervisor, and intelligence. All of these characteristics are associated with higher status (e.g., Anderson et al., 2001). People showed the least positional concerns over the amount of vacation time they had. Similarly, in Solnick and

Hemenway (2005), people showed more positional concerns over their income and home size than they did for their health and safety. These findings suggest that the desire for higher status leads people to be more concerned about their outcomes *relative to others*.

Selection of roles. The motivation for status also appears to lead people to prefer roles that will afford them higher status. In a survey of 1,500 office workers, seven out of 10 said they would forego a raise for a higher status job title (Ezard, 2000). For example, file clerks preferred receiving the title "data storage specialists" over receiving a raise. Why was the title preferred over money? The majority of those surveyed believed that other people judged them based on their job title (Ezard, 2000). Anderson, Willer, Kilduff, and Brown (2012) found in one study that 88% participants preferred to have the first- or second-highest rank in a status hierarchy in a laboratory task group; in another study they found that 55% participants preferred being at or near the top of their status hierarchy within their real-world extant groups (e.g., workplace, volunteer group, sports team).

It is important to note that some studies have found a subset of individuals to prefer lower status rank in a group. For example, Smith, Wigboldus, and Dijksterhuis (2008), as well as Mast, Hall, and Schmid (2010), found that a subset of individuals preferred lower power roles that also came with lower status (e.g., an assistant in an art gallery rather than the gallery owner). Similarly, in one of the aforementioned studies by Anderson, Willer, et al. (2012), some participants preferred a status rank lower than near the top of the hierarchy. At first blush this result seems to suggest that some people prefer lower over higher status, which in turn would suggest the desire for status is an individual difference variable rather than a universal motive. However, later studies in the article by Anderson, Willer, et al. (2012) help explain this finding: They found that although individuals generally preferred a higher status rank in teams, individuals opted for a lower status rank when they believed the group expected them to do so. Therefore, individuals did not appear to prefer lower rank, but instead opted for such a position because they believed the group obliged them to.

Commitment to a group. When individuals are afforded higher status in a group they tend to become more committed to that group and less likely to leave it. In a laboratory study, Willer (2009) led randomly selected individuals to believe that their laboratory group accorded them high status (i.e., higher ratings on "respected," "prestigious," and "honorable") and led other individuals to believe their group accorded them low status. As was predicted, those in the high-status condition reported being more identified with their group and viewed the group more positively (e.g., seeing it as more cohesive) than those in the low-status condition.

Using a very similar procedure, Kennedy and Anderson (2014) found that those who believed their group members nominated them to be a leader reported being more identified and connected to their group, valued their membership in the group more, and believed that the group's successes were their successes. Indirect evidence also comes from a study by Sleebos, Ellemers, and de Gilder (2006), who found that when participants were randomly assigned feedback that they were respected (rather than disrespected) by fellow group members for their past achievements or cooperative behavior, they became more affectively committed to

the group, reporting they felt more "at home" with their fellow group members.

In a pioneering book, Frank (1985) argued that work organizations help keep their most talented employees from leaving by providing those individuals with high status. Talent retention is a critical issue in organizations because the most skilled and competent individuals often have many opportunities to join other, better firms. Yet the psychological rewards associated by being a big fish in a small pond keep those individuals from quitting. Frank (1985) provided evidence that intrafirm wage profiles are much flatter than standard economic theory would predict, in that the least productive workers are paid more than they should be and the most productive workers are paid less than they should be, based on what each contributes to the firm. This pattern emerges because the most productive individuals are willing to forego a higher salary in order to maintain their high-status position. Otherwise, if they left to work at another organization where they might be paid more, they might lose their high relative standing and the psychological rewards that come with it.

In a more direct test of Frank's (1985) argument, Yap, Galinsky, and Anderson (2014) asked participants whether they would prefer to work for a middle-status organization in which one's profession is high in status or to work for a high-status organization in which one's profession has only moderate status. Across multiple studies people overwhelmingly preferred the former, or to be a big fish in a small pond. Yap et al. (2014) also found that participants who reported having higher status and prestige within their organization had a higher proportion of Facebook friends who were their coworkers, again suggesting that they were more connected and bonded to their organization.

Summary. The research reviewed in this section provided evidence that people prefer social environments that afford them higher status. People preferred hypothetical environments in which they had more of various goods than others, even if they would have lower absolute levels of those goods, they appeared more attracted to friends, groups, roles, and organizations that offered them higher status, and they were more committed to groups in which they had high status.

Affect: Reactions to Status Threats

If the desire for status is fundamental, people should exhibit a strong emotional reaction when they face the possibility of losing status, or what we will call a status threat (*Hypothesis 7*). For example, given that respect is core to status, people should react strongly when they feel disrespected by others. An intense emotional response would comprise part of an adaptive defense system: Functionalist accounts of affect (e.g., Keltner & Gross, 1999; Levenson, 1999) suggest that emotions are recruited when the individual is confronted with significant threats or opportunities. If, on the other hand, people can freely gain or lose status with cool indifference, then the status hypothesis would take a significant blow.

Anger, aggression, and violence. Much research suggests that feeling disrespected by others provokes strong anger: Miller (2001) reviewed the literature on disrespect and concluded that "the perception that one has been treated disrespectfully is widely recognized as a common, perhaps the most common, source of anger" (p. 532). In fact, people who feel disrespected often respond

aggressively and violently (e.g., Bettencourt & Miller, 1996). Violent reactions are particularly likely when the act of disrespect, such as an insult, is delivered publicly rather than privately (Miller, 2001). This finding is consistent with the notion that public insults represent a more significant status threat (see also D. Cohen, Nisbett, Bowdle, & Schwarz, 1996). A review by Felson (1978) similarly concluded that people were more likely to behave aggressively in a conflict if that conflict was public rather than private.

Griskevicius et al. (2009) provided direct evidence that the desire for status incites aggression in the face of a status threat. They experimentally boosted the desire for status in participants using the priming manipulation mentioned above (Griskevicius et al., 2010). Participants were then asked how they would respond if they were at a party and someone of their same sex carelessly spilled a drink on them and did not apologize. Participants whose desire for status had been boosted said they would aggress against that person in response, either physically or indirectly (e.g., by gossiping about the person), more than did participants in the control condition.

Status threats can even provoke aggression at extreme levels. Wilson and Daly's (1985) large-scale investigation of inner city crime in Detroit concluded that status threats were the most common catalyst of homicidal conflicts between men. In their study, the prototypical conflict that ended in homicide began with seemingly trivial origins, such as an argument over access to a pool table. Yet these seemingly petty arguments had important status implications because they represented a perceived status threat (Wilson & Daly, 1985). Given the evidence we reviewed above indicating how vigilantly people monitor status, it perhaps should come as no surprise that people examined in that study were so sensitive to what might objectively appear to be a minor slight.

Of course, an aggressive reaction in the face of potential status loss might be more than simply an emotional response. People might also aggress to proactively defend their status. In some contexts, physical strength and toughness are socially valued personal characteristics and can lead to high status (D. Cohen et al., 1996). Physically formidable individuals are accorded higher status in part because they are seen as providing instrumental social value—as being more capable of managing group members, policing destructive behavior, and dealing with outside groups assertively (Lukaszewski, Simmons, Anderson, & Roney, 2015).

One crucial situation that can feel like a test of one's strength is an interpersonal confrontation. Individuals who are viewed as standing up for themselves during a confrontation or after being insulted can be viewed as exhibiting toughness, whereas individuals who back down and retreat can be perceived as weak (D. Cohen et al., 1996; Miller, 2001; Wilson & Daly, 1985). Accordingly, when individuals were asked to recall the last time they engaged in an act of aggression, a considerable portion (48.3% of men and 45.3% of women), indicated that status/reputation concerns were the primary reason they aggressed (Griskevicius et al., 2009).

Consistent with this notion, status concerns are more likely to spur violent acts in social environments that value toughness than in those that do not—for example, in cultures of honor like the American South, where "small disputes become contests for reputation and social status" (D. Cohen et al., 1996, p. 946). In one study, D. Cohen et al. (1996) had a research confederate physically bump into male participants and call them an "asshole." Southern participants responded with more anger, physical dominance and assertiveness as well as greater increases in testosterone and cortisol than did northerners. Nisbett (1993) also found that homicide rates in the United States are highest in the American South. These findings again speak to the importance of understanding what is locally valued in a given social environment: strength and toughness are more valued in the American South than in the North, and therefore, Southerners strive harder to prove their toughness to others as a way of protecting their status.

Similarly, status concerns appear to promote physical aggression among men more than women. The abovementioned work by Wilson and Daly (1985) and by D. Cohen et al. (1996) focused on men only. Griskevicius et al. (2009) also found that men were far more likely than women to engage in direct aggression (e.g., face-to-face confrontation) than women; women in contrast were more likely to engage in indirect aggression (e.g., social exclusion). These findings make sense in light of the status hypothesis because generally speaking, physical strength and toughness are more valued in men than in women; for example, tall and physically formidable men are seen as better able to manage group processes but the same attribution is not made for larger women (Lukaszewski et al., 2015). Indeed, men generally react more strongly when they might appear physically weak or fail to live up to norms of masculinity (Willer, Rogalin, Conlon, & Wojnowicz, 2013).

Stress. Given that status is so closely associated with social perceptions of competence (Driskell & Mullen, 1990), one would expect people to react strongly when their competence might be viewed negatively by others. Much research supports this prediction. Classic studies of social facilitation have long shown that individuals perform worse on difficult and unfamiliar tasks when in front of an audience than when alone (Zajonc, 1965) and that these audience effects are due to concerns of being negatively evaluated (e.g., Bond, 1982; Cottrell et al., 1968). Indeed, a Gallup poll famously found that public speaking is intensely stressful, in that people fear it more than almost any other event (Gallup, 2001).

Social-evaluative threat involves the possibility of being negatively evaluated by others (e.g., Kemeny, Gruenewald, & Dickerson, 2004). Dickerson and Kemeny's (2004) sweeping meta-analysis of 208 studies found that contexts with social-evaluative threat produced the largest cortisol responses among participants than any other threat studied, indicating the strongest stress response. In fact the cortisol responses in those contexts were more than three times stronger than they were in conditions without a social-evaluative component, such as completing a difficult cognitive test privately, watching a stress-inducing film, or being exposed to loud noises at random intervals (the average Cohen's $d = 0.92$, a very large effect). Rohleder, Beulen, Chen, Wolf, and Kirschbaum (2007) replicated these effects in a naturalistic study of competitive ballroom dancers and found even more robust effects than those observed in the laboratory. These studies thus suggest that the possibility of appearing incompetent to others, whether strangers or colleagues, evokes powerful stress responses.

An alternative explanation for the above findings is that participants in those studies feared social rejection and that their concerns for belongingness, not concerns about status, drove their cortisol responses. However, the vast majority of studies in Dick-

erson and Kemeny's (2004) review used public tests of competence, such as performing a mental arithmetic task in front of an audience where the chances of failure were high. And being perceived by others as incompetent is strongly and consistently tied to lower status (e.g., Driskell & Mullen, 1990). In contrast, it is unclear whether appearing incompetent leads to social rejection. For example, studies have found that individuals perceived as less competent can be liked *more* than individuals who seem highly competent (Holtgraves & Srull, 1989; Powers & Zuroff, 1988). People also tend to seek out others as friends who are similar to them in cognitive ability, rather than others who are superior to them (for a review, see McPherson, Smith-Lovin, & Cook, 2001). Therefore, it would seem likely that status threat plays an important role in people's reactions in these social-evaluative contexts.

High-status individuals' reactivity. Studies conducted in quite disparate research streams have converged on a somewhat ironic finding: Although high-status individuals enjoy lower baseline levels of negative affect and stress, they seem to respond to acute status threats more intensely than others. For example, Gruenewald et al. (2006) placed participants in a context of social-evaluative threat in which they would complete challenging speech and mental arithmetic tasks in front of others. The researchers then measured participants' stress response to this task via the hormone cortisol. They found that individuals with higher self-reported status in their dormitory (e.g., they reported being more "respected," "esteemed," and "admired" by others) showed the greatest physiological response to this social-evaluative threat. In a similar study, Hellhammer, Buchtal, Gutberlet, and Kirschbaum (1997) examined army recruits during the first 6 weeks of boot camp, putting them through a similar social-evaluative task as described above. Similar to the above results, recruits higher in the peer-rated hierarchy[5] showed larger cortisol responses to the task than did others. Indirect evidence also stems from a field study of professional baseball players: Marr and Thau (2014) found that players' performance suffered after experiencing a threat to their status in the league (i.e., a loss in a salary arbitration hearing), suggesting that increases in stress hampered their subsequent performance. However, this decrease in performance was significantly worse for players who were higher in status originally, that is, those players who had been voted to play in the most All-Star Games and to win the most individual awards (e.g., Gold Glove Award).

Why would high-status individuals react more strongly to status threats? One possibility is that when individuals attain higher levels of status, they come to value status even more. In other words, the achievement of status might intensify the desire for status rather than alleviate it. As evidence, Blader and Chen (2012) assigned randomly selected participants to a high-status role in a negotiation by telling them,

> You are quite well known in the industry as a high-status individual. You are one of the most respected people in the industry. People really hold you in high regard, and you have a great deal of esteem from others.

These high-status participants became more concerned about being accorded status by their counterpart than did control participants, reporting that it was particularly important to them that their negotiation opponent show respect for them during the negotiation. Individuals accorded higher status also become more likely to

behave in ways that garner high status (Blader & Chen, 2012). For example, in a study by Willer (2009), participants played an initial round of social dilemma games ostensibly with other participants in a laboratory group. After initial rounds of the game, some randomly selected participants were told that fellow members of their group found them highly prestigious and honorable, and others were told that their fellow group members found them only moderately so. Participants then played a second round of social dilemma games. Willer (2009) found that participants in the high-status condition increased their contributions to the group fund after being accorded high status, compared with those in the moderate-status condition, who decreased their contributions to the group after being accorded middling status. Pettit, Yong, and Spataro (2010) also found that people place more weight on the prospect of losing status than they value possible gains in status; they are willing to pay more to avoid status losses than to achieve status gains and to put forth more effort to prevent status losses as opposed to status gains. Taken together, these findings suggest that as individuals attain higher status, they become that much more concerned about potential status losses, and therefore react even more strongly to potential status threats than do others.

Summary. The research reviewed in this section provides evidence that status threats produce intense emotional responses. People react with anger, and sometimes aggression and violence, when they feel disrespected or are insulted in a public setting. Aggressive responses are particularly likely when such behaviors might ostensibly mitigate the status threat, which speaks again to the behaviors in which people engage to manage their status. People also exhibit strong physiological reactions when others might view their competence negatively, a context that involves the potential for status loss. Finally, it appears that high-status individuals react most intensely to status threats, consistent with the notion that they have more status to lose than others and come to care about status more as they gain more of it.

Derivativeness

A motive cannot be considered fundamental if it is derivative of other motives. In the case of the desire for status, of particular concern is social belongingness (Leary et al., 2014; Sheldon, 2011). Specifically, an alternative explanation to the status hypothesis is that people might seek higher status in order to gain more liking and social acceptance. This argument might seem plausible on the surface, given that both status and social acceptance involve positive social evaluations and a desire for increased closeness among others. Therefore, in this section we examine whether the effects of possessing or desiring higher status hold up after controlling for achieving or wanting social belongingness (*Hypothesis 8*).

One way to examine whether the desire for status is a derivative of the need to belong is to examine whether the possession of high status boosts psychological adjustment and health above and beyond the effects of being socially accepted. If the effects of possessing high status on well-being disappear after controlling for social acceptance, this would suggest that having high status

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[5] Participants were asked to rank others on the "dominance positions within the social hierarchy," but it was not clear whether participants' rankings were based on dominance or status.

provides no additional psychological benefit above and beyond social acceptance. Once people feel fully accepted by others, they gain nothing from having high status. However, if the possession of high status does enhance well-being even after controlling for social acceptance, this would suggest high status provides additional psychological benefits that extend beyond being socially accepted. Said another way, individuals' welfare would then be a function of their social acceptance *and* social status.

Multiple studies reviewed above can address this criterion because they measured or manipulated both status and social acceptance. In all of those studies, the evidence suggests that the desire for status is not merely a derivative of the need to belong. Specifically, even after controlling for social acceptance, status was found to predict SWB (Anderson, Kraus, et al., 2012; Tay & Diener, 2011), self-esteem (Fournier, 2009; Huo et al., 2010; Leary et al., 2001), as well as depression (Fournier, 2009). These effects emerged in correlational field studies in addition to laboratory studies in which status and social acceptance were both experimentally manipulated.

As further evidence that the desire for status not derivative of the need to belong, people engage in all kinds of behaviors that appear specifically aimed at attaining or maintaining status and that do not seem easily explained by a belongingness account. For example, as mentioned previously, the widespread practice of self-promotion in which people strive to portray their competence in positive ways to others appears to be driven by the desire for status. Godfrey et al. (1986) found that individuals aiming to be liked did not self-promote, and that those who self-promoted were not more liked. Similarly, in a study by Powers and Zuroff (1988), participants rated a confederate who was self-enhancing more as being more competent but also as less socially attractive. Anderson, Brion, et al. (2012) found that the desire for status, but not the need to belong, predicted people's overconfidence in their abilities (overconfidence being an effective means of gaining status).

People also appear to engage in behaviors that would enhance their status even at the risk of damaging their social acceptance. For example, Blau (1964), Flynn et al. (2006), and Ryan et al. (1997) all found that people sought to avoid losing status by refusing to ask others for help, even though asking others for assistance can engender liking (Jecker & Landy, 1969). People also try to avoid the appearance of conformity to others' opinions when wanting to appear competent (Baumeister, 1982), even though conformity and similarity increases liking (Berscheid & Walster, 1983). Finally, people often prefer possessing a higher level of some good relative to other people, such as a higher salary than others (e.g., Solnick & Hemenway, 1998). Yet differences in salary increase social distance: Survey results from faculty members across a variety of academic institutions found a significant negative correlation between salary dispersion in a department and the amount of collaborative research that was conducted among faculty members within that department (Pfeffer & Langton, 1993).

In sum, the relevant evidence suggests that the desire for status is not simply a derivative of the need to belong. Rather, the status motive appears to be an end in and of itself. This is not meant to imply that the motivation for status supersedes or is somehow higher in priority than the need to belong. Rather, the desire for status appears separate and distinct from the need to belong.

Universality

The fourth and final criterion that must be met for a motive to be considered fundamental is that it must be universal, or operate across individuals that differ in culture, gender, and age, for example (*Hypothesis 9*). Starting with gender, there was little evidence in the research reviewed that the status motive operates differently in men and women. There were some exceptions to this pattern (e.g., Huo et al., 2010), but a gender difference found in one study tended not to replicate in other studies that examined the same hypothesis. For example, although some have argued that men care about status more than women (Buss, 1999), a recent study by Hays (2013) suggested the opposite. The status motive also seems to be present across a variety of age groups; for example a number of studies have found effects of status in adolescent and even youth populations in addition to adults (e.g., Huo et al., 2010; Faunce, 1984; Fournier, 2009; Weisfeld et al., 1984; Ryan et al., 1997).

Cross-cultural research on status, as with cross-cultural research in most literatures, tends to be scant. However, the evidence that does exist suggests the status motive is pancultural. For example, the importance of status to well-being appears similar across cultures: Tay and Diener (2011) found that the degree to which people felt respected by others consistently predicted SWB across 123 countries that were extraordinarily diverse. In other studies, organizational rank was found to predict satisfaction in the United States, Italy, Germany, the former Soviet Union, Norway, Sweden, Austria, Israel, and the former Yugoslavia (Inkeles, 1960; Tannenbaum et al., 1974). Local rank in income was also found to predict SWB in the United States, Denmark, and England (Boyce et al., 2010; Clark et al., 2009; Hagerty, 2000).

Further, although the specific behaviors used may differ as a function of local values, people appear to engage in the pursuit of higher status across cultures. For example the study by Torelli et al. (2014) found people in the United States pursue higher status by emphasizing competence, whereas Latin Americans emphasize generosity. In both cultures, however, people pursue high status by behaving in socially valued ways. In economically developed countries as well as in small-scale traditional societies, people pursue high status through generosity (Eibl-Eibesfeldt, 1989) or by developing socially valued skills (e.g., hunting or in medicine; von Rueden, 2014). Conspicuous consumption appears to occur across cultures, including Western and Eastern cultures (Kim & Drolet, 2009) as well as in small-scale traditional societies (von Rueden, 2014), although the degree to which people engage in this behavior as a means to attain high status depends on the social value placed on wealth and material possessions (Kim & Drolet, 2009).

Summary, Conclusions, and Future Directions

Our primary aim in this review was to evaluate whether the desire for status is a fundamental motive. In short, the existing empirical evidence appears to support this status hypothesis. We reviewed diverse literatures across social scientific disciplines to address four main criteria that must be met to establish a motive as fundamental: First, the evidence we reviewed suggests that people's level of status affects their psychological adjustment and well-being. People with higher status in their groups, relationships,

or organizations enjoyed higher levels of positive affect, life satisfaction, and self-esteem, whereas those lower in status experienced more negative affect, depression and anxiety, and physical health outcomes, such as higher blood pressure and a greater susceptibility to infection.

Second, wide-ranging evidence suggests people engage in goal-directed behavior designed to attain or maintain high status. People pay very close attention to status dynamics and engage in myriad actions aimed at achieving higher status, such as working to develop more expertise and competence and managing their public image of generosity; they also prefer and select social environments that afford them higher status. When their status is threatened, people react very strongly with anger, anxiety, and sometimes even aggression and violence.

Third, the evidence reviewed suggests the desire for status is not derivative of the need to belong. In every study that controlled for individuals' level of social acceptance in their relationships and groups, their level of status in those social contexts was still found to predict SWB, self-esteem, and health. Further, people were found to engage in behaviors that appear uniquely designed to manage or increase their status, rather than their social acceptance—they self-promote, avoid complimenting others and asking others for help and assistance, and avoid the appearance of conformity, for example.

Finally, the desire for status appears to operate across individuals. Although the literature that addresses the universality criterion is less abundant (in particular, cross-cultural research), the evidence that does exist suggests that status concerns are universal, operating in both men and women and in individuals in diverse cultures. Although the means through which individuals pursue higher status might differ and depend on what is locally valued, the pursuit of status and the importance of status to well-being held up across individuals.

Recognizing the status motive as fundamental can provide considerable utility. As was evident in the literature review, it can help integrate findings from disparate research areas that otherwise seem unrelated to each other—findings from research on organizations, the self, aggression and violence, emotion, health, neuroendocrinology, happiness, and judgment and decision-making, for example. A status account can also provide deeper explanations of existing findings in these areas. For example, as mentioned above, a status motive might help explain why people self-promote (Baumeister, 1984), why social-evaluative threat is so stressful, why people prefer higher outcomes relative to others even if it means possessing a lower absolute outcome (Tversky & Griffin, 1991), and why people can be more threatened by their friends' success than by the success of strangers (Tesser, 1988). Some findings that have perplexed scholars might also be better understood with a status account. For example, many studies have shown that as the average level of income in a country increases over time, that country's average level of happiness does not rise accordingly (e.g., Diener & Biswas-Diener, 2002; Diener, Sandvik, Seidlitz, & Diener, 1993; Easterlin, 1974, 1995; Frank, 1999). This finding makes sense through the lens of the status hypothesis: If a country's average level of income increases, then people's incomes will tend to rise along with the income levels of others around them—their neighbors, friends, and coworkers, for example—leaving their status (and thus happiness) unchanged.

The current review also highlighted a number of fruitful avenues for future research. First, it is important to better understand why and when the desire for status will promote prosocial versus antisocial behavior. According to functionalist accounts of status, status hierarchies serve as an incentive system, spurring all group members to provide more value to the group through self-sacrifice and contributions to the collective welfare (Blau & Scott, 1962; Davis & Moore, 1945; Griskevicius et al., 2010; Willer, 2009). As Thibaut and Kelley (1959) argued in their classic treatise on social groups, "An important social function of the status hierarchy is that it provides a set of rewards for members who contribute to the group and incentives to spur others to do likewise" (p. 232). Consistent with these functionalist accounts, we reviewed studies showing that the desire for status can promote hard work, generosity, self-sacrifice, and helpfulness toward others—all behaviors that contribute to the collective good. However, we also reviewed studies showing that the desire for status can promote a range of less prosocial and even antisocial behavior, including overcompetitiveness, overconfidence in one's abilities, conspicuous consumption, and aggression and violence. These findings are consistent with the conventional wisdom that the pursuit of status is vain, selfish, and destructive (de Botton, 2004) and with religious doctrines that encourage people to avoid the pursuit of high status because doing so promotes less moral behavior (Russell, 2003; Tamari, 1997). It is thus important to understand the personal, contextual, and cultural factors that lead individuals to pursue status through productive rather than destructive channels. Are there certain personality traits that lead people to pursue status through dysfunctional paths? Are there particular value systems or cultural norms that fail to encourage individuals to direct their status-seeking behaviors through more positive avenues?

On a related note, it is worthwhile to examine whether and how the desire for status relates to the dominance path to influence that was mentioned in the first section of the paper. An increasing number of scholars have begun to examine prestige and dominance as two distinct paths to attaining influence (e.g., Cheng et al., 2013; Halevy et al., 2012; Henrich & Gil-White, 2001). In this area of research, prestige is isomorphic to status, whereas dominance entails the attempt to attain rank and influence through inducing fear, intimidating, and coercing others (Cheng & Tracy, 2014). Whether dominance actually leads to influence is hotly debated, and many findings have refuted the dominance hypothesis (see Carli, LaFleur, & Loeber, 1995; Driskell, Olmstead, & Salas, 1993; Ridgeway, 1987; Ridgeway & Diekema, 1989). Nonetheless, it is possible that for some individuals, their desire status causes them to behave in intimidating and aggressive ways, even if such tactics will fail to garner them much respect and admiration. It is also possible that some individuals pursue the dominance path to higher rank because of their inability to achieve higher status. That is, they might turn to dominance because of their failure to attain prestige. These and related questions require attention.

Second, it is important to better understand individual differences in the strength of the status motive. If status provides the individual with social, psychological, and material benefits, why do some individuals desire it more than others? Are differences in status motives related to physiological markers, such as baseline testosterone levels (Josephs, Sellers, Newman, & Mehta, 2006; Mazur & Booth, 1998), early life experiences, or genetic differ-

ences? Do individuals regulate their desire for status in response to social-contextual constraints? For example, it is possible that in contexts in which the attainment of high status is extremely unlikely, individuals might out of self-defense begin to desire status less (Anderson, Willer, et al., 2012). Culture undoubtedly plays a role as well, in that the desire for status has been observed across diverse cultures, but to varying degrees. For example, Huberman, Loch, and Önçüler (2004) found that individuals in five different countries were willing to sacrifice monetary gain for status (in the form of applause), but that the degree to which people were willing to do so depended on the country. Hays's (2013) finding that women preferred higher status roles more than men did also suggests demographic factors play a role as well.

Third, future research should address why the desire for status is observed across individuals if the need for power is not. The power motive is construed primarily as an individual difference variable, in that some people desire higher power and others actively avoid power (McClelland, 1985; Winter, 1988; Winter & Stewart, 1977), whereas the current literature review suggests that the desire for status operates in individuals that differ in sex, culture, age, and personality. Why would the motives for status and power differ in this way? After all, having high power provides many of the same benefits as high status, such as access to scarce resources, more social influence, and elevated positive affect (Keltner et al., 2003). One possibility is that status itself is a more socially valued goal. To achieve the admiration and respect of others is itself perhaps a more socially lauded outcome than is achieving the ability to force one's will upon others. Another possibility is that status is more stable than power and thus provides a more reliable and enduring basis of social rewards (e.g., Tiedens, 2001). This notion is somewhat counterintuitive, given that status is based on social perceptions, which would seem somewhat fluid and ephemeral. However, research suggests that when people want a high-power individual to lose his power, they form coalitions to depose him (Keltner, Van Kleef, Chen, & Kraus, 2008; Ridgeway & Diekema, 1989). However, as has been stated above, individuals voluntarily confer status to individuals because they want to.

In conclusion, a broad-ranging review of empirical evidence supported the hypothesis that people possess a fundamental desire for status. The status hypothesis already shows great promise as an overarching theoretical account that ties together disparate literatures, generates novel hypotheses, and sheds light on behaviors that neither a belongingness nor an economics-based account can explain. Hogan and Hogan (1991) argued almost a quarter century ago that "although status considerations are ubiquitous and consequential, psychologists have tended to avoid this topic" (p. 137). Since their article was written, the intellectual tide has turned, with more scholars recognizing the importance of status as an explanatory concept. We hope this review helps further promote research on this vitally important topic.

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