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STATUS CHARACTERISTICS AND EXPECTATION STATES*

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1. Introduction

The emergence of power-prestige orders and the allocation of power and prestige to group members represents a central focus in the study of task oriented groups. Two distinctive sets of findings have emerged from this concern: One line of investigation has demonstrated the development of such orders in groups whose members were initially undifferentiated in status, while the second major line has documented the relationship between prior status differences among group members and the emergent power and prestige order in the group.

It is our purpose to present a theory that explains the way in which prior status factors determine the emergent power-prestige order in the group. The phenomenon itself has been demonstrated repeatedly; the results have been remarkably consistent; but there is not yet a theory that will explain these results. There are, it is true, interpretations that have been applied to one or another particular situation. But one of these interpretations can seldom be extended to any of the other situations in which this same result has been found; no one of them appears as general as the phenomenon itself. We believe that a general formulation that is applicable in all settings where the phenomenon has been observed can be constructed from the knowledge we already have. This formulation would be used to explain the phenomenon in the strict sense that one can derive it from a set of theoretical definitions and assumptions. We believe, too, that when it is constructed, such a theory should extend our knowledge of the phenomenon in two ways: First, by showing its relation to other results, also already

well-known; and second, by suggesting still further results, as yet not in-
vestigated, that we ought to be able to discover if the theory is true.

2. Problem

Bales and his associates (Bales, et al., 1951; Bales, 1953; Bales and
Slater, 1955; Heinecke and Bales, 1953) have shown that task groups whose
members are the same in age, sex, color, education and occupation, (that
is, are initially status equals) tend to develop a stable power and prestige
order. This power-prestige order reflects itself in the ratings of group
members, in the distribution of opportunities to perform, in the distri-
bution of evaluations of member contributions, and in the relative influence
of different members on the final decision of the group. These behaviors
are highly correlated and become stably differentiated; we will refer to them,
taken as a whole, as the observed power and prestige order of a group. The
process of differentiation of power and prestige fluctuates over time and
apparently generates tension and conflict (Heinecke and Bales, 1953; Bales
and Slater, 1955). But once stably differentiated the resultant order
generalizes to many activities of the group; so that, instead of its emerging
anew in every new situation, one may speak of the activation of a prior
power-prestige order. Once activated, this prior order determines in the
new situation the distribution of opportunities to perform, evaluations, and
influence (Harvey, 1953; Sherif, Harvey and White, 1955; Whyte, 1943).

When the members of a task group are not the same in age, or sex, or
occupation, or other institutionalized status factors it is apparently these
factors that determine the power and prestige order that emerges in the group.

In other words, such characteristics, which we will call diffuse status-
characteristics, behave as if they symbolize prior status orders that are
activated in the situation. Thus, studies of jury deliberations have found
that sex and occupational status are associated with choices of jury foreman,
with initiation of interaction, and with influence (Strodtbeck, James and
Hawkins, 1957; Strodtbeck and Mann, 1956). Torrance (1954) demonstrates
associations between Air Force rank and properties of the interaction of
three-man crews, even where crews are composed of members who have no
previous experience together. Hurwitz, Zander and Hymovitch (1953) observe
similar relations between professional prestige and interaction in a con-
ference. The powerful effects of race on power and prestige orders have
been investigated at length by Katz (Katz and Benjamin, 1960; Katz and
Cohen, 1962; Katz, Goldston, and Benjamin, 1958). Caudill has shown the
effects of position in the hospital hierarchy on participation in admini-
strative conferences in a psychiatric hospital (Caudill, 1958; see also
Mishler and Tropp, 1956); and Zander and Cohen the effects of position in the
university hierarchy on simulated committee discussions of students (Zander
and Cohen, 1955). In these groups, the external status characteristics of
group members produce the same result that prior experience interacting with
one another produces in the Bales groups. (For the effects of age, see
Ziller and Exline, 1958.)

A critical fact emerges from comparing the several studies of prior
status factors: The external status characteristic operates not only when
it is directly related to the task of the group, but often even when it has
no obvious or direct bearing on the group's task. While it is not unexpected

that prestigeful mental health specialists would have an impact on groups
discussing mental health problems (Hurwitz et al., 1953), it is somewhat
surprising that Air Force rank should determine interaction in a projective
discussion task (Torrance, 1954). Indeed Torrance shows the same pattern of
results for four different tasks of quite varying degrees of relationship to
the role of Air Force officer.

Our point of departure, then, is the repeated finding:

> When task groups are differentiated with respect to some status
> characteristic external to the task situation, this differentiation
> determines the observed power and prestige order within the group,
> whether or not the external characteristics are related to the
> group task.

Here we have an empirical regularity of considerably significance to the
study of stratification, formal organization, and small groups. But the
implications of this regularity have not been recognized to the degree that
they deserve to be because the diverse studies we have reviewed have not
been placed in a properly general theoretical context. What is required
is a general theoretical formulation that, applied in the given conditions,
will explain this regularity. It is our purpose, therefore, to construct
such a theory.

3. Diffuse Status Characteristics

Our first task is to define a diffuse status characteristic. Every
sociologist has some idea of what a status characteristic is, and we do
not want to depart too much from these common ideas. Hughes (1952) may be
taken as representative of some of the most persistent thought on the subject:
he will not accept hair color as a status characteristic because no special

disabilities or special customs differentiate those who are one hair color from those who are another. We therefore have the obvious starting point that in some way states of a status-characteristic are differentiated for purposes of social interaction. Furthermore, he does not believe that status differences are intrinsic to the status characteristic itself; the charac-teristic is, as Hughes suggests, a "symbolic trait", a "brand name", sig-nificant not so much for what it _is_ as for what it stands for. What, we must ask, does it stand for?

What it stands for, unfortunately, is rather a large number of things. Status-characteristics are associated with differences in honor, life-chances, special privileges and immunities, rights before the law, styles of life,... . What is usually thought of as a definition of a status-characteristic, in fact, is a fairly comprehensive theory of the subject. It will be more fruitful, in the long run, to separate out some of these elements, make only some of them part of the definition, and account theoretically for how the others come to be associated with the status-characteristic.[1] We have, of course, a certain degree of freedom in how we choose the properties that are part of the definition, and we can only say that to us those we have chosen seem the most suitable.

What a status-characteristic most obviously stands for is an _evaluation_; one actor, say p, is "better" or "worse" than some other actor, say o. But with respect to what are actors better or worse? There appears to be two answers: _First_, one is better or worse with respect to specific beliefs

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[1] The attachment of goal-objects to states of a status-characteristic, for example, is considered in Zelditch, Berger, and Cohen, 1965.

that are associated with the status-characteristic. Whites think Negroes lazy, rowdy, strong, musical, ... (Johnson, 1944). Having identified who you are from the state you possess of the status-characteristic, this associated system of beliefs says what you are, what valued or disvalued characteristics should be attributed to you. Second judgments of specific capacities, having become associated with states of the status-characteristic, appear to generalize very readily; so that, though we are not certain how the effect comes about, we observe that actors come to be evaluated as wholes. Instead of saying that an actor, say p, is mathematically able, or mechanically able, one says simply that he is able. Instead of saying p has a strict code of sexual conduct, or is very punctilious about social obligations, one says p is moral. Such constructions are much more indefinite, vague, and diffuse, than judgments of specific traits. That a halo develops and becomes associated with states of the status-characteristic captures the idea sufficiently well. Perhaps it is because of such a halo effect that, even though empirical evidence on the point is lacking, the belief is not uncommon that a renowned scientist is ipso facto an expert on political and social affairs.

To define a diffuse status characteristic, therefore, we require the idea of a characteristic, C, which is just any property or attribute of an actor, such as energy, hair color, skin color, mathematical ability.(In this paper we confine ourselves to characteristics with only two states; we do this to simplify development of the theory and do not intend to imply that characteristics must have only two states in order to satisfy our definitions. In the case of characteristics with more than two states, such as hair color, we combine some of them, as: black, not-black.) Characteristics are specific

if they refer to behavior in specific situations--for example, the ability to
write English clearly is specific. Any characteristic may be attributed to an
actor directly, as in the expression,"p writes English clearly", or indirectly,
because an actor has other characteristics, as in the expression,"p is a college
graduate,college graduates write English clearly,therefore p writes English
clearly." If a state of a specific characteristic,say $C(x)$,--where (x) is a
dummy variable referring to some particular state, say a or b--is attributed
to an actor because he has some given state of a second characteristic,say $D(x)$,
we will say that the first characteristic is <u>specifically</u> <u>associated</u> with the
second. In the cases that interest us in this paper there will ordinarily be a
<u>set</u> of such specifically associated states,γ_x. Coates and Pellegrin (1957), for
example, report that a sample of 50 executives tended to associate with the state
"executive" such characteristics as: energy,alertness,initiative,aggressiveness,
ability to manipulate people,ability to assume responsibility,ability to make de-
cisions,foresight,problem-solving ability,tact,poise,determination,and adaptabili
among others. Contrasting themselves with first-line supervisors, the executives
thought themselves higher with respect to each of these abilities. The great
majority of the first-line supervisors, Coates and Pellegrin report, tended
to see much the same differences between themselves and executives. It is
to a set of states of characteristics of this kind that we refer by the set
γ_x; one set, say γ_a, will be associated with the state "executive", while
a second set, say γ_b, will be associated with the state "supervisor".
Though in any given situation only a few elements of the set may be recalled,
and though there may be variability from actor to actor in precisely the
elements recognized, we will often find a core of common elements included

when actors are asked to enumerate a set (by recall) or to decide, from a specific list, whether or not each item on the list belongs to the set (recognition).

Characteristics are _evaluated_ if one state is positively and one negatively valued. If it is better to be smart than dumb, then intelligence is valued. Because we arbitrarily limit ourselves to characteristics having just two states, we also use in this paper only two values: positive and negative. A state and its value must be kept distinct, since it is possible to negatively value the higher state of a characteristic. High aggressiveness may be negatively valued; so may high ability at manual labor.

For each state of a characteristic, actors hold _expectations_, beliefs about how actors with a given state of a given characteristic will behave in an appropriate situation. (An expectation, of course, is a disposition concept, showing itself only if activated in a suitable setting.) An actor who has high mathematical ability (a state of a characteristic) should perform well in a task-situation that involves formal proofs (an expectation). A belief that, _whatever_ the situation, the actor, in general can be expected to do well is a _general expectation state_, GES(x). This idea is crucial to our notion of a _diffuse_ status characteristic.

Definition 1. A characteristic D is a _diffuse status characteristic_ in situation S if and only if:
1. the states of D are differentially evaluated, and
2. to each state, x, of D there corresponds a different set Γ_x of specifically associated states of characteristics, and
3. to each state, x, of D there corresponds a different general expectation state, GES(x).

Social class, following this definition, is a diffuse status characteristic

in a community if the white-collar class is thought, _ipso_ _facto_, to be more
worthy, smarter, more moral, more industrious, more energetic, than the blue-
collar class, and in fact altogether superior in almost every way that counts
in the community.

In this paper, we might note, our concern is with status-characteristics
that are <u>external</u> to the situation, in the sense that they are brought in
from some other setting. Typically D is a status-characteristic in a larger
system of which the immediate situation is some subsystem. Thus Air Force
rank in Torrance's investigations is external to the experimental task
situation; sex and occupation in Strodtbeck's jury studies are status-
characteristics in the larger society.

4. <u>Activation of the Diffuse Status Characteristic</u>

That in some situation D is significant to p depends on his thinking
of himself and others as more than just male and female, black and white,
white collar and blue collar; for D to be significant, p must think of certain
specific and generalized traits, associated with D, as belonging to the
actors in that situation. In other words, his <u>beliefs</u> about D must come in-
to play. When this happens when p attributes Γ_x and GES(x) to those in S
who possess the state D(x), we will say that D is <u>activated</u> in S. But acti-
vation of D is not an inevitable fact. There are certainly situations where
D does not in this sense become significant to p, so that it is an important
theoretical problem to understand when D becomes significant. Our next task,
therefore, is state the conditions activating D.

Four conditions appear to be important. Three of these have to do with

the task and interaction conditions of situation S, while the fourth has to
do with the initial status conditions. Hereafter we will take the four to-
gether as defining what we mean when we use the expression "the situation S."
We formulate these conditions from the point of view of one individual, p,
who is regarded as the actor in our theory; he has as objects of orientation
both himself and one other actor, o. While our theory will account for the
behavior of more than two actors, two are sufficient to develop our theo-
retical ideas.

First, we assume that p and o are required to perform a valued, collective
task, T. In our present formulation the task has just two outcomes, T(a) and
T(b). By saying the task is valued, we mean that p defines achieving one of
these outcomes as "success" and the other as "failure." We suppose through-
out that p is committed to succeeding. By saying that the task is collective
we mean that interaction of p and o is required to solve the task. We are not
speaking simply of the kind of situation in which p and o may interact more
or less for social purposes, but largely in ways that are non-task-relevant;
we require that they interact as part of the task itself. For in that case
p must take the relative capacities of himself and o into account as part
of the problem of defining the task situation.

Second, we assume that the task T requires the ability C, in the sense
that one state of C increases the likelihood that p achieves outcome T(x)
while the other state of C decreases the likelihood that p achieves T(x).
A characteristic satisfying this condition is instrumental to T; if not
instrumental, it is independent of T. We will assume throughout that the
state of C that is instrumental to the positively evaluated state of T is

itself positively evaluated, while the state of C that is instrumental to
the negatively evaluated state of T is negatively evaluated. For example:
if proper patient care is the valued task outcome in a hospital, and high
clinical competence increases the likelihood that patients are given proper
care, then we assume that high clinical competence is positively evaluated
while low clinical competence is negatively evaluated. To simplify our
problem we assume that the task T requires only a single, uni-dimensional
ability . Though the studies from which we take our point of departure mostly
involve complex tasks, requiring a variety of different performance abilities,
analyzing these tasks into their components is a theoretical problem in its
own right, one that we do not investigate here. The single ability instrumental
to T is called a specific performance characteristic in S; associated with
it will be specific performance expectations (SPE), beliefs about who will
do well and who poorly at task T (see page 7). In other words, an actor who
possesses the high state of C will be expected to do well in a task situation
in which this characteristic is instrumental;that is, a high SPE will be
held for him in S. An actor who possesses the low state of C will be ex-
pected to do poorly in this task situation; that is, a low SPE will be held
for him in S. Because of this correspondence between C and SPE we will speik
of them interchangeably in what follows.

Third, we assume that p has not assigned specific states of C to himsef
or o, nor has such an assignment been provided in situation S.

Fourth, we assume that p and o possess different states of a single
external status characteristic D. (Most studies deal with situations in

which several status factors operate simultaneously. For example, in the Torrance experiment both rank and crew position (pilot, navigator, gunner) appear to affect the interaction. The fact that these two status factors are not perfectly correlated, [i.e., some navigators have higher rank than the pilots in their crews] may account for some of the anomalies in Torrance's data. Rather than concern ourselves at this time with questions of congruence among many status factors, we restrict our focus to situations where only one prior status factor differentiates group members.)

Now: because p is committed to success, and success requires him to act together with o, there will be a good deal of pressure on p to discover, and fairly rapidly, their relative abilities at the task. If he cares to do well, he will want to profit by the suggestions of an "able" co-worker but not be misled by the suggestions of the "unable". Of course he has no prior experience with o. But the status characteristic D can be regarded as something like such prior experience, for embodied in its states is a set of beliefs about actors. If we assume that p believes in the association of γ_x and GES(x) with D(x); and if p does not know the abilities of o, but he does know, say, that o is an enlisted man, while p himself is an officer and p believes that officers are more "able"; then, we argue, he will come to believe that p himself is more able. Our first assumption, therefore is,

Assumption 1. (Activation). D is activated in task-situation S if T is a valued, collective task, and D is a basis of discrimination between p and o in S.

We would like to underline two points. On the one hand, assumption 1

describes the types of situations in which we expect to find D activated;
or equivalently, it states that if D is not activated in S, then the task
in S is either not valued or not collective, or D is not a basis of discri-
mination in S. On the other hand, assumption 1' does not <u>preclude</u> the possi-
bility that D will be activated given a different set of task and status con-
ditions in S. For example, it is not <u>impossible</u> that D becomes activated in
Bales' laboratory situation, where all members are alike in prior status.[2]

As a result of the first step in our argument, then, if we recall how
the term activation is used we have a situation S in which p, because he
possesses, say, D(a), has attributed to himself some specific and general
traits $[\gamma_a$ and GES(a)]; and has attributed to o a different set of specific
and general traits $[\gamma_b$ and GES(b)] because he possesses D(b). These traits
and general expectations are now significant to him in his interaction with
o in S.

Now, if the states of C(the characteristic instrumental in S) have al-
ready been specifically associated with states of D; if, that is, C(x) is
understood to be a member of γ_x; then p should know, when D is activated,

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[2]We believe that it may be possible, eventually, to extend our formulation
to situations in which members are not differentiated on a prior status factor.
If D is activated in such a setting, the condition of prior status equality
would conflict with the emergence of a differentiated status order within the
group. This should create tension and "status struggles." In this connection,
it is interesting to note that the tension and conflict associated with the
emergence of the status order in the Bales groups (Heinicke and Bales, 1953;
Bales and Slater, 1955) is not found when the group members are initially
differentiated (Hurwitz <u>et al.</u>, 1953). We may speculate that this tension is
a consequence of pressures to differentiate in the group conflicting with
initial expectations of equality among the group members. (See the definition
of balance below. We are saying that imbalance is created if members are alike
in prior status and made to differ in power and prestige in the group.

which state of C to attribute to himself and which state of C to attribute
to o. For example: Zander and Cohen (1955) instructed groups of students
to simulate committees charged by the vice-president of their university
with the task of disposing of a gift to be used for student welfare. They
identified two participants to the other students as a "Dean" and a "Fresh-
man", though the two did not themselves know that they had been described in
this way. We regard it as quite reasonable to suppose that, whatever one
might call the instrumental characteristic in this situation, one state of C
(specifically, the high state) is already associated with "Deans" while the
other state (the low state) is already associated with "Freshman." Given
that D is activated in this situation, we then argue that the students, there-
fore, assign the high state of C to the participant identified as a "Dean"
and the low state to the participant identified as "Freshman." And in fact,
Zander and Cohen found, after 10 minutes of committee discussion, that the
"Deans " and "Freshmen" reported they were regarded quite differently by
the other students: the Dean, more than the Freshman, found the group in-
terested in his ideas and ready to agree with them.)

It is of course possible that the relation of D to C has come to be
already known, but what is known is that they are not associated. Instead
of being specifically associated, we will say that they are specifically
dissociated. (Dissociated states are not simply states between which actors
see no particular reason to assume a connection; they are explicitly defined
by social beliefs to be independent.) If a "Dean" and a "Freshman" were to
play basketball with a group of students, probably the athletic ability re-
quired would be explicitly understood, on the basis of prior knowledge or

belief, to be independent of the status-characteristic. In that case we assume that, even if activated in S, p would not feel D was a basis for attributing states of C to himself and o, and no effect of D would be observed in the situation.

5. Relevance of D to C when C is not specifically associated with D

No one seems to have thought it peculiarly remarkable, or worth singling out for special emphasis, that not only will D determine the power-prestige order of ad hoc as well as organized groups; it will have this effect even when C has not been previously associated with D. It is of course sufficiently significant in itself that, even though they have never previously met, mental hygiene specialists of relatively low prestige should defer to those of relatively high prestige in discussing mental hygiene problems (Hurwitz, et al., 1953). But it is more remarkable still that gunners will defer to pilots when their task is to construct a projective story. It is difficult to see what bearing Air Force rank has on ability to weave a story about a card with an ambiguous picture on it; nevertheless the pilot will have more influence than the gunner on the crew's story (Torrance, 1954).

The theory we have developed in Sections 3 and 4 will not explain this fact. What we have so far is: γ_x is associated with D(x) (Definition 1); under certain conditions D is activated in S, so that γ_x is attributed to that actor in S who possesses D(x) (Assumption 1); in S, C is instrumental to T (given); so that if C is a member of the set γ_x p will have attributed one state of C to himself and another state of C to o on the basis of their states of D. (That this determines the power-prestige order in S has not yet

been shown; it will be shown in Section 6.) This explains how states of C are assigned only where C is a member of γ_x.

It is sometimes possible to argue that, although C is not specifically associated with D it is still _similar_ to characteristics that are. Torrance, for example, used as one of his tasks the estimation of the number of dots scattered on a card. Though not among the skills usually required of Air Force officers, it might appear to them as like some skill (map reading, perhaps) that _is_ part of their training. One can therefore say that C(x) becomes linked to D(x) because it is similar to a characteristic that is in γ_x.

But this argument lacks force when the task is to construct a projective story, and something much stronger is required than the similarity argument. Somehow p sees D as relevant even where C is _not_ similar to characteristics in γ_x. By _relevance_ here we mean that p believes two characteristics correspon in some way. He will feel that the two are in some way or for some reason related. This might be either because he _anticipates_ a state of one, knowing the state of the other; or because he feels that there _ought_ to be some particular state of one, given the other. Perhaps p believes that if o is articulate, he probably is intelligent; or that if o is intelligent, he ought to be (even if he is not) well off. We do not require that p believe in any particular correspondence; it is enought that he believes there ought to be one. (If p understands there to be a specific correspondence of state D(x) with state C(x) we will speak of _strict_ relevance, as distinct from relevance in a more general sense.) But how does D become relevant to C if C has never before been specifically associated with it?

It is in cases of this kind that the general expectation state appears
to be important. There is, of course, still that pressure on p to assess
the relative abilities of himself and o at the task; there is still the
feeling that status differences are significant. Furthermore, having acti-
vated D, p has attributed to himself and o, not only those characteristics
in $\mathcal{J}_x$, but GES(x) as well. P has no reason to suppose that C is any ex-
ception to the past experience he believes to be embodied in GES, because C
is not specifically dissociated from D. And there is no other basis for
inferring abilities of p and o in S. Faced, in short, with pressure to
predict behavior and only one basis from which to do so, we believe that the
burden of proof is on p to show that GES, and therefore D, is not relevant
to C.

Assumption 2. (Burden of Proof). If C has not been previously associated
with or dissociated from D, and D is activated in S, and D is the only
basis discriminating p and o, then D will become relevant to C.

It seems natural to suppose now that D is relevant to C, that p will
attribute states of C to himself and o in such a way that the positive state
of C is assigned to the actor who has the positive state of D, while the nega-
tive state of C is assigned to the actor who has the negative state of D.
We will call such an assignment of states balanced.

To prepare for a more exact definition of balance, we require the idea
of a relational unit. Note that the elements of our theory, so far, are
the actors, p and o; various states of characteristics, C(x) and D(x); the
outcomes of the task, T(x); and the expectation states, SPE(x) and GES(x).
Between pairs of elements there are basically three kinds of relations: we

have talked, for example, (1) of C(x) being _instrumental_ to T(x); (2) of D(x)

being _possessed_ by p, or of C(x) being _attributed_ to p, which is the same

thing; and (3) of C(x) being _associated_ with D(x) or of D(x) being _relevant_

to C(x), again similar, since _strict_ _relevance_ is equivalent to _specific_

association. We will call _any_ pair of elements between which there is _any_

of these three relations a _relational_ _unit_. Then,

Definition 2.1. (Balance). A relational unit is _balanced_ if and only
if its elements have the same evaluation.

If p possesses state D(a), p and D(a) are a relational unit; if D(a)

is relevant to C(a), they form a second relational unit. If, in the latter

unit, D(a) and C(a) are both positively or both negatively evaluated, the

unit is balanced. The unit is _imbalanced_ if, for example, D(a) is positively

evaluated while C(a) is negatively evaluated.

We will call the whole _set_ of relational units in S the _status_ _structure_

of S; though of course it is the status structure viewed solely from p's per-

spective.

Definition 2.2. A status structure in S is balanced if and only if every re-
lational unit in it is balanced.

Why should p assign states of C that are balanced with D? Why not

imagine him assigning a negative state of C to o, even if he attributes to

o a positive state of D? Would not the enlisted man welcome the possibility

that, at least in projective story telling, the officer is not more competent

than he? But such an imbalanced assignment of states would pose a problem

for p; his beliefs about o based on GES would conflict with his beliefs

about o based on C. We believe that p will assign states of C to himself and o in such a way that he does not generate such conflicts.

Assumption 3. (Assignment). If D is relevant to C, p will assign states of C to himself and o that are balanced with states of D.

6. The Observable Distribution of Power and Prestige

We must now show that assignment of states of C determines the distribution of participation and influence in the group. We may think of each actor--recalling that they must act together to solve the problem they face-- having certain action opportunities, as when p is asked a question by o, or is simply given a chance to talk by the fact that o stops talking. Given the opportunity to act, we may then thinking of each actor making some contribution to the discussion, which we will call a performance output. A performance output will be evaluated, both by one's self and by others--that is, there will be a unit evaluation[3]; and, finally, on the basis of such an evaluation, p might change his views or stay with his original ideas-- that is, he might or might not be influenced. The distribution of all these, taken together, we have called the observable power and prestige order.

It will be recalled that certain uniformities in the distribution of observable power and prestige are regularly found. First, power and prestige are always unequally distributed; second, there is a high intercorrelation of the components of the order; third, differences in power and prestige are

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[3]Unit, here, refers to evaluation of a single task contribution as distinct from evaluation of abilities in general, or of states of D.

highly correlated with influence over the group's final decision. (Aside

from already cited work of Bales and his associates, see particularly

Strodtbeck, 1951; and Strodtbeck, 1953.)

A parsimonious way to account for these regularities is to regard each

component of the observed power-prestige order as a direct function of specific

performance expectation states. In this formulation the SPE's are thought of

as hypothetical entities, typically unobservable, that are used to explain

various observable behaviors (Berger and Snell, 1961). For example: suppose

p   is an actor who holds a low performance expectation for himself and a

high performance expectation for o with respect to the characteristic C which

is instrumental in situation S. And suppose that p is committed to success

at T, in the sense that, however obtained, he desires the correct answer.[4]

Caring to do well, and believing that o is more likely to have the good ideas

than himself, p will give o more action opportunities, make fewer performance

outputs himself, evaluate his own outputs less favorably and o's more favorably.

will make fewer attempts to influence o and yield to more attempts of o to

influence him, than will a second p who holds a high performance expectation

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[4]We must distinguish a person-oriented situation, a situation in which p
wants to do well himself, from a task-oriented situation, a situation in which
p desires that eventually the best answer is given to a problem. Taking per-
haps an extreme case, a doctor will desire that his patient get well, and will
take whatever good ideas he can get from any source to accomplish this end;
although on a test, however good or bad his ideas, he will want them to come
only from himself. Here we are concerned with task-, not person-oriented,
situations.

for self and low for other.

Assumption 4. (Basic Expectation Assumption). If C is instrumental to T, and if specific performance expectations for C are attributed by p to himself and o, the observed power-prestige order is a direct function of the specific performance expectations.

We do not mean to imply by assumption 4 that the relationship between

SPE and the observed power-prestige order goes in only one direction; for

the process by which specific performances are built up and broken down de-

pends, in turn, on events in the observed interaction process (see Berger

and Snell, 1961, and for an application to status-characteristics, Berger,

Cohen, Conner, and Zelditch, 1965).

7. Coincidence of the Status-characteristic and the Observed Power-Prestige Order

We are to explain the often repeated finding that an external status

characteristic coincides with the observed distribution of power and prestige

within task groups. We regard certain initial conditions as given, namely:

(1) P and o perform together a task, T, one outcome of which p regards as "success", the other as "failure".

(2) The characteristic C is instrumental to T, with that state of C which is instrumental to "success" positively evaluated and that state of C which is instrumental to "failure" negatively evaluated.

(3) P has not, initially, assigned states of C to himself or o.

(4) P possesses one state of D while o possesses another state of D.

(5) There is no basis other than D differentiating p from o.

We must now distinguish two cases. In one the characteristic C is

among those already specifically associated with D. (We will assume for this

case that it is the high state of C that is associated with the positively

evaluated state of D and the low state of C is associated with the negatively

evaluated state of D.) In the other the characteristic is neither specifically

associated with nor dissociated from D.

In the first case: Because p is committed to doing well (given) and

must work together with o to complete task T (given), creating some pressure

on p to assign states of C; and because D discriminates p from o (given),

offering a basis for judging his own abilities relative to o; D is activated

in S (assumption 1). If D is activated in S, p attributes γ_x and GES(x),

both of which are associated with D(x) (definition 1), to himself and o

according to their respective states D(x) and (definition of activation).

If C(x) is a member of γ_x (given) it is among the traits attributed. If

C is instrumental to T (given), and expectation states SPE, corresponding

to states of C, are attributed to p and o,then the observed power-prestige

order is a direct function of the SPE (assumption 4). If the observed power

and prestige order is a function of SPE, and SPE has been assigned in such

a way that the high state of SPE is associated with the positively evaluated

state of D (given), then the observed power-prestige order coincides with D.

For example: Caudill found, in a consecutive sequence of 63 conferences

on a ward of a small psychiatric hospital, that the head of the hospital

talked more than the chief resident, the chief resident more than the five

residents, the most passive resident more than the supervisor of nurses, the

nursing supervisor more than the charge nurse, the charge nurse more than

the staff nurse, and the ancillary personnel (an occupational therapist and

two social workers) about the same as the nurses. By dividing the 63 sessions

into three periods of 21 sessions each, and comparing the order of participation

in each period, Caudill shows that this order is quite stable over the whole sequence of sessions (Caudill, 1958, Chapter 10). If, within the group of residents, we order the five according to participation this order too is found to be very stable, and to have a high correlation with evaluations of their clinical competence by senior staff members (Caudill, 1958, p. 251). Evidently clinical competence is the characteristic instrumental in the morning rounds; we may reason too, that this characteristic is specifically associated with position in the hospital hierarchy, as it was found to be with the individual residents.

In the second case: Because p is committed to doing well (given) and must work together with o to complete the task (given), creating some pressure on p to assign states of C; and because D differentiates p from o (given), offering one basis for judging his own abilities relative to o; D is activated in S (assumption 1). If D is activated in S, p attributes γ_x and GES(x), which are both associated with D(x) (definition 1), to himself and o according to their respective states of D(x) (definition of activation). If C(x) is not a member of γ_x (given), because it is not dissociated from D (given) and because there is no other basis for assigning states of C in S (given), D is seen by p to be relevant to C (assumption 2). If D is relevant to C, p assigns the positive state of C to whoever has the positive state of D and the negative state of C to whoever has the negative state of D (definition 2 and assumption 3). If C is instrumental to T (given), and SPE, corresponding to C has been attributed to p and o, then the observed power-prestige order is a direct function of SPE (assumption 4). If the observed power-prestige order is a function of SPE and SPE is balanced with D, the observed power-prestige order coincides with D.

Torrance's observations of B-26 crews involved in a projective story task, in which pilots, navigators, and gunners influenced a group story in order of hierarchical position in the crew, is a fairly clean example of this second, burden of proof process. But consider also Strodtbeck's mock juries, in which sex (Strodtbeck and Mann, 1956) and occupation (Strodtbeck, James, and Hawkins, 1957) determine participation, influence, and election as foreman. It does not appear reasonable to argue that a specific ability instrumental to the task, which presumably required discussion of legal evidence, was associated with sex, or with any occupation except possibly the law. It is more reasonable to argue that general expectations about intellectual capacities, reasoning abilities, and thought processes were associate with the two status-characteristics.

8. Summary and Discussion

Our purpose has been to explain the repeatedly demonstrated finding that external status differences among members of a task group determine the distribution of power and prestige within the group. This phenomenon has been observed in ad hoc as well as organized groups; it has been observed even when the task situation is not related to specific behavior commonly associated with prior status differences.

We have defined the external status characteristic, D, as a characteristic with three properties: (1) its states are differentially evaluated; (2) they are associated with other, specific, traits, such as mathematical ability, or punctuality, or cleanliness; and (3) they are associated with more vague,

more unspecific, or more general traits, such as "ability", or "morality".
Because of the last property we call such characteristics "diffuse".

Diffuse status characteristics are activated in situations in which:
(1) some actors, say p and o, are required to act together to complete a
task; (2) p, from whose viewpoint we regard the situation, values the task,
in the sense that one of its outcomes is regarded by him as "success" and he
cares to succeed; (3) p believes that a specific characteristic, C, is in-
strumental to success at the task, and positively evaluates that state of C
which is instrumental to the "successful" outcome; but (4) p does not know
which states of C should be assigned to himself or o; and (5) p sees only
one basis with respect to which he and o differ, namely he and o possess
different states of D. In such situations, we believe there is pressure on
p to assign states of C, as part of the desire to do well at the task; but
there is only one basis for inferring anything about himself relative to o,
namely the characteristic D, which embodies conventional social beliefs about
actors. We assert that these social beliefs embodied in D serve the same
purpose in interaction that would be served if the actors had had previous
experience with each other.

If C is among the characteristics already associated in p's mind with
D, p will attribute the state $C(x)$ to the actor who has the state $D(x)$.
Associated with $C(x)$, in turn, are performance expectations, beliefs about
how actors with the state $C(x)$ will behave in specific situations; for ex-
ample, that persons with mathematical ability will perform well in situations
involving mathematical tasks. If what p wants is to see the group achieve
the best outcome expectations associated with $C(x)$ will become a basis on

which action opportunities, performance outputs, evaluations of performance outputs, and influence, which together make up the observable power and prestige order, are distributed between p and o.

If C is not among the characteristics already associated in p's mind with D, p nevertheless regards D as relevant to C if C has not already been dissociated from D and if he finds no other basis for assessing the relative abilities of himself and o. What this expresses is the generalizing potential of that vague and global judgment that we have claimed is also associated with D. If D is relevant to C, p assigns states of C to himself and o in such a way that they balance D--that is, in such a way that the state of C assigned to p and o has the same evaluation as the state of D possessed by p and o. Now expectations associated with $C(x)$ become the basis on which action opportunities, performance outputs, evaluations of performance outputs, and influence are distributed between p and o.

In either case, whether or not C is specifically associated with D, unless C is specifically dissociated we will find that the observed distribution of power and prestige will, as a result of the states of C assigned to p and o, coincide with the external status characteristic.

One advantage of the formulation we have just summarized is that it provides a rigorous basis for the explanation and codification of results from quite diverse settings that all bear on essentially the same phenomenon. But it has also the advantage that it points to which lines of further investigation are likely to prove important. One, for example, would be to investigate situations in which balanced assignment, assumed in this paper, could not or did not occur. This would be the case if two status-characteristi

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were activated that were imbalanced with each other. Under what conditions

could this occur? If it occurs, how will p and o assign states of C? No

assignment of states of C will balance the status structure. One possibility

is that p assigns C in balance with D_i while o assigns C in balance with D_j,

creating an expectation conflict in S. Very possibly too, action opportunities,

unit evaluations, and influence would be either more equally distributed or

more unstably distributed. In any case, the key place occupied in our formu-

lation by the concept of balance suggests that further exploration of this

idea should be particularly fruitful.[5] Another particularly fruitful line

of investigation, one strangely neglected so far, would be to explore further

the conditions in which a status-characteristic is activated. We assume in

this paper that D is activated if it discriminates between p and o. Suppose

it does not? How will it be activated in status-homogeneous groups? If this

question is answered we believe that our formulation can be extended to ex-

plain the "status struggle" observed in Bales' groups. If members of a group

are initially undifferentiated in status, but task conditions force differenti-

ation of the observed power and prestige order, then the actors are imbalanced.

Hence they should be tense, and there should be conflict (see Zelditch,

Berger, and Cohen, 1965). If, however, they are initially differentiated this

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[5] We have confined ourselves in this paper to just those assumptions and
definitions necessary to explain the status-interaction effect. More elaborate
development of the balance idea will be found in Zelditch, Berger, and Cohen,
1965.

should not be observed. (Contrast, for example, Bales and Slater, 1955 with

Hurwitz, et al., 1953.) Finally, our formulation has a third advantage; it

points to apparently very different phenomena, in themselves well-enough known,

that are a function of the same kind of assignment process as the distribution

of influence in a small group. We believe this to be the case, for example,

with the process by which an occupation is assigned to a place in the status

hierarchy of a complex formal organization. Levels in the hierarchy, such

as manager, supervisor, and worker, levels that are known to be differentially

evaluated, can be called the status classes of the organization. A "job" can

be thought of as a set of task-outcomes, and hence as a set of states of

characteristics. The status classes behave like diffuse status-characteristics,

as the literature of the subject clearly shows, and the assignment of a job

to such a class appears to obey the balance assumption that we have used to

account for assignment of states of C in small group, task settings. (This

is explored in Zelditch, Berger, and Cohen, 1965, and Berger, Cohen, and

Zelditch, 1965.)