# Power and Status in Conflict and Negotiation Research: Introduction to the Special Issue

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**Abstract**

Power and status are central influences in conflict and negotiation: Power structures determine negotiator behavior and conflict dynamics, and status differences can give rise to competition and conflicts between individuals and groups. In the last 50 years, much research attention has been devoted to the study of power and status in the conflict setting. In this introduction to the special issue, we highlight some of the key areas of research in the field thus far, highlighting key debates and dialogues. We then present the four articles in this special issue, explaining how each of these articles contributes to a unique debate in this area. Finally, we close with a discussion of the many exciting future research directions that are opening up around the topics of power and status in negotiation and conflict management research.

Social hierarchy, or the rank ordering of individuals along a valued social dimension, is inherent to social interaction (Tiedens, Unzueta, & Young, 2007). Human beings have an inborn preference for hierarchy (Tiedens & Fragale, 2003) and rely on hierarchical differences to process information and make sense of the social context (Halevy, Chou, & Galinsky, 2011; Keltner, van Kleef, Chen, & Kraus, 2008; Zitek & Tiedens, 2012). Consequently, hierarchical differences have long been included in studies of negotiation and conflict management, and a rich literature has emerged surrounding the study of social hierarchy (for recent reviews, see Anderson & Brown, 2010; Galinsky, Halevy, Chou, & van Kleef, 2012; Halevy et al., 2011; Magee & Galinsky, 2008) and its implications for negotiation and conflict management research.

In this special issue of *Negotiation and Conflict Management Research*, we focus on two key dimensions of social hierarchy that have been the predominant focus of research in this area: Status and power (Magee & Galinsky, 2008). Status is defined as the extent to which one is respected and admired by others, and power is defined as control over socially valued resources (Emerson, 1962; Magee & Galinsky, 2008). Differences in power and status can alter negotiations and conflict processes (e.g., Bacharach & Lawler, 1981; Kim, Pinkley, & Fragale, 2005), and differences in power and status can themselves be points of contention and negotiation (e.g., Bendersky & Hays, 2012; Greer & van Kleef, 2010). In this introduction, we review the role that status and power hierarchies have played in conflict and negotiation research and discuss current dialogues and challenges in the field. After reviewing the relevant literature, we will highlight how the articles in the special issue directly contribute to key areas of research on these topics.

A first key area of research we highlight here is the roles of status and power in understanding the effects of gender in conflicts and negotiation. Although gender may have a substantial impact on negotiation and conflict processes (for a meta-analysis, see Stuhlmacher & Walters, 1999), the relevance of status and power to understanding gender in conflict settings is still relatively underexplored. Two articles in this special issue directly contribute to this research stream. Amanatullah and Tinsley demonstrate that

gender differences in claiming value in negotiations are mitigated when women negotiators have high-status roles. In particular, the financial requests made by women in high-status roles are perceived to be more legitimate than those made by women in low-status roles. The perceived legitimacy of requests made by men does not differ by status roles. In a similar vein, Hong and van der Wijst posit in the second article of this special issue that gender differences in negotiation outcomes are partially attributable to men being socialized to feel more powerful than women do. They examine the differential impact of priming men and women with high power on a distributive negotiation task and find that women's negotiation behavior is affected far more than men's. The authors interpret these differential reactions to experiencing high power as indicating that it activates a male gender role that makes women more assertive in negotiations (e.g., claiming more value and making fewer concessions), whereas it reinforces the negotiation behaviors in which male negotiators already engage. The upshot is that priming female negotiators to feel powerful reduces the gender gap in distributive negotiation outcomes.

A second key research area relates to the universality of the benefits of power for negotiation and conflict management. Although powerful negotiators are often heralded as strong negotiators (e.g., Bacharach & Lawler, 1981), not all powerful parties are able to capitalize on their position. When and why powerful parties are better or worse in capitalizing on their position is a key area of research in this area. In the third article of this special issue, Belkin, Kurtzberg, and Naquin directly address this question by investigating how emotional expression and power interact to determine dominance perceptions in a negotiation and affect individual outcomes. They find that when powerful parties communicate happiness, their perceived dominance levels decrease, as does their ability to claim value in the negotiation.

Finally, a third key question investigated concerns the relative effectiveness of hierarchical differences and their effects on individual and group outcomes. Although hierarchies are often heralded as functional structures (Halevy et al., 2011; Keltner et al., 2008), recent research has demonstrated that hierarchies are not universally beneficial (e.g., Greer & van Kleef, 2010). The fourth article in this special issue, by Bollen and Euwema, directly addresses this debate by showing that power differences can cause inequities and dissatisfaction with mediated agreements. The authors find that these negative effects of hierarchy can be minimized when conflict parties begin their negotiation in an online environment, which equalizes participation and information flow to all parties.

Following this introduction and discussion of the four special issue articles, we conclude with a discussion of the directions in which we see the field moving and highlight areas we believe are critical for future research. For example, we highlight the need for future research to disentangle the concepts of power and status to parse out the unique conflict dynamics belonging to each concept (for initial work in this area, see Hays & Bendersky, 2013; Schouten, Greer, van Kleef, & van Knippenberg, 2013; Willer, Youngreen, Troyer, & Lovaglia, 2012). Additionally, we highlight the roles power and status can play in multilevel investigations of negotiation and conflict dynamics, including representative negotiations (see, for example, Aaldering & De Dreu, 2012) and other situations where intergroup and intragroup conflicts may collide. In short, we set forward the proposition that power and status will continue to play pivotal roles in negotiation and conflict management research for years to come. In the following sections, we trace the key developments, dialogues, and challenges concerning status and power in negotiation and conflict management research.

## Status in Negotiation and Conflict Management Research

Those who attain high positions in status hierarchies are given more opportunities to influence and contribute to groups, and their contributions are evaluated more positively (Bales, 1958; Berger, Rosenholtz, & Zelditch, 1980; Magee & Galinsky, 2008). They get paid more (Belliveau, Oreilly, & Wade 1996), have more beneficial task and exchange partners (Hardy & Van Vugt, 2006; Podolny 2005; Thye 2000), and obtain favorable resource allocations (Bales 1958; Bunderson 2003). High ranking individuals are also healthier (Adler et al., 2000; Link & Phelan, 1995), less stressed (Sherman et al., 2012), and have more

mating success (Buss, 2003). At the team level, status hierarchies also can facilitate effective team interactions (Anderson & Brown, 2010; Halevy et al., 2011).

When exploring the implications of status for negotiation and conflict management research, it is critical to note that status only exists in the eyes of others and is voluntarily conferred (Anderson, John, Keltner, & Kring, 2001; Emerson, 1962; Goldhamer & Shils, 1939). This characteristic of status raises two key points. First, status is only relevant to conflict management research to the degree that hierarchical differences are recognized and agreed upon within a social setting. When such status hierarchies do exist, there may be important repercussions for conflict management and negotiation. For example, Curhan and Pentland (2007) determined that the *thin slices* of conversation dynamics associated with negotiator outcomes differed for high- and low-status roles. The proportion of speaking time was associated with individual outcomes for high-status but not for low-status parties, whereas vocal mirroring benefited low-status but not high-status parties. In addition, a growing chorus of research suggests that gender differences in negotiation outcomes are due, at least in part, to status differences between men and women (Amanatullah & Morris, 2010; Bowles, Babcock, & Lai, 2007; Bowles, Babcock, & McGinn, 2005; Kray & Thompson, 2005; Miles & Clenney, 2010). Indeed, the articles in this special issue by Amanatullah and Tinsley and by Hong and van der Wijst speak directly to this topic.

Second, the perceptual basis of status means that status is attained through negotiated processes; in fact, status hierarchies have traditionally been called *negotiated social orders* (Owens & Sutton, 2001; Strauss, Schatzman, Ehrlich, Bucher, & Sabshin, 1963). Thus, negotiations are a central context for status research. Much of the literature on status in negotiations has focused on the cues people use to evaluate each other's relative status and how people signal that they deserve to have high status in the groups to which they belong. Expectations states theory (e.g., Berger, Connor, & Fisek, 1974; Correll & Ridgeway, 2006), for instance, describes how group members allocate status according to expected contributions based on perceptions of each other's relative competence and willingness to contribute to the group task (Anderson & Kilduff, 2009a, 2009b; Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, & Xu, 2002; Tost, 2011). Although some of these expectations are based on non-negotiated individual characteristics, such as gender and race (Ridgeway, 1991; Ridgeway & Smith-Lovin, 1999), individuals also negotiate for high-status attributions when groups first form by behaving assertively and dominantly to convey competence and confidence (Anderson & Kilduff, 2009a, 2009b; Anderson et al., 2001; Bendersky & Shah, 2013; Tiedens & Fragale, 2003). Thus, status negotiations occur as people try to influence others' initial impressions of their expected competence.

In addition, people are not always satisfied by their positions in group status hierarchies, and some scholars have examined how individuals negotiate changes to their status positions as groups work together over time. This research has identified two primary strategies for attaining high social status: Cooperation (or generosity) and competition (or dominance). Research on the cooperative strategies people employ to enhance their status has focused on generosity and self-sacrifice (Hardy & Van Vugt, 2006; Ridgeway, 1982; Willer, 2009), helpfulness (Bendersky & Shah, 2012; Flynn, 2003; Flynn, Reagans, Amanatullah, & Ames, 2006), and prestige (the sharing of expertise or know-how to gain respect, e.g., Cheng, Tracy, Foulsham, Kingstone, & Henrich, 2013). In addition to research showing that people gain status by behaving in ways that benefit the groups of which they are a part, research has demonstrated that people lose status by failing to live up to their expected contributions to the group (Bendersky & Shah, 2013).

Other research has focused on the competitive strategies people employ to gain status in their groups. For instance, acting dominantly (Anderson & Kilduff, 2009a, 2009b; Cheng et al., 2013; Tiedens & Fragale, 2003) or assertively (Ames & Flynn, 2007; Bendersky & Shah, 2012; Mazur, 1985) projects confidence that peers reward with high-status attributions (Anderson & Kilduff, 2009a, 2009b; Paulhus, 1998). In addition, people may directly challenge others' positions in the hierarchy (Bendersky & Hays, 2012; Greer & van Kleef, 2010; Groysberg, Polzer, & Elfenbein, 2011; Hargadon & Sutton, 1997; Owens & Sutton, 2001; Porath, Overbeck, & Pearson, 2008). Gould (2002, 2003) has argued that

most interpersonal conflicts stem from disagreements about the amount of dominance exerted in social relations.

Although all of these strategies are effective means of negotiating high status, they come with a price. The level of cooperation or competition necessary to change one's status position is so high that it can detract from individual and group performance (Ames & Flynn, 2007; Bendersky & Hays, 2012; Bendersky & Shah, 2012; Groysberg et al., 2011; Huberman, Loch, & Onculer, 2004; Loch, Huberman, & Stout, 2000). To the extent that group members engage in status conflicts, the group's performance is hampered because members restrict their sharing of information in response to the status threats they experience (Bendersky & Hays, 2012) and fail to coordinate their efforts (Kwaadsteniet & van Dijk, 2010). Thus, people's positions in status hierarchies impact their negotiation and conflict processes and outcomes, and people engage in negotiated and contested processes about their positions in status hierarchies.

## Power in Negotiation and Conflict Management Research

Whereas status is rooted in the eye of the beholder and is often seen and studied as an outcome of negotiation, power, or the objective control of resources in a situation, has more often been studied as a structural determinant of negotiation and conflict behaviors and outcomes. Power has been shown to influence a variety of aspects of negotiation and conflict management, including individual negotiation behaviors (e.g., De Dreu & van Kleef, 2004; Magee, Galinsky, & Gruenfeld, 2007), the impact of emotions and affect in negotiations (e.g., van Kleef, De Dreu, Pietroni, & Manstead, 2006; van Kleef et al., 2008; Overbeck, Neale, & Govan, 2010), and dyadic and team-level negotiation and conflict processes (Greer, Caruso, & Jehn, 2011; Greer & van Kleef, 2010; Ronay, Greenaway, Anicich, & Galinsky, 2012).

Having power has long been espoused to benefit individuals in negotiations (e.g., Bacharach & Lawler, 1981). Those with power are more likely to make a first offer, which in turn creates a bargaining advantage (Magee et al., 2007). Power holders also get better allocations of rewards in negotiated agreements (e.g., Kim, 1997; Pinkley, Neale, & Bennett, 1994). In short, having power provides a good position to be in during a negotiation. However, when power hierarchies exist, power holders' positions are not always guaranteed, and the benefits of power may not always come to fruition. For example, low-power holders may attempt to improve their position in the situation to gain more power (Kim et al., 2005), challenging the existing power holders.

One line of research that has investigated the contingent effects of power in interpersonal negotiations has looked at the role of emotions in helping or hurting power holders to maintain their position and to effectively negotiate and resolve conflicts. Research in this area has shown that anger, in particular, can help high-power but not low-power negotiators extract larger concessions from their opponents (van Kleef et al., 2006; Lelieveld, Van Dijk, Van Beest, & van Kleef, 2012; Wang, Northcraft, & van Kleef, 2012). Several explanations have been given for this outcome. Overbeck et al. (2010) found that anger helps high-power but not low-power negotiators to feel more focused and assertive and to claim more value in the negotiation. Lelieveld et al. (2012) found that anger from high-power counterparts elicited fear in low-power counterparts and thereby resulted in larger concessions. Although the combination of power and anger appears to be a potent force in negotiations, recent research suggests that there may be a price: Low-power negotiators facing an angry high-power negotiator may give in on a particular issue, but then they may be inclined to engage in other forms of covert retaliation (Wang et al., 2012). Other emotions and affective states have also been investigated in relation to power and negotiation. For instance, whereas expressed disappointment was not found to be affected by the power of the negotiator expressing the emotion (Wang et al., 2012), positive affect has been found to have a much more positive effect on joint outcomes when held by a high-power rather than a low-power negotiator (Anderson & Thompson, 2004).

At the dyadic and team levels of analysis, power also impacts negotiation and conflict management processes and outcomes. In negotiation research, a continued debate has existed over whether power differences between high- and low-power partners facilitate or harm conflict resolution. Support has been found for both sides of this debate—power differences or imbalances have been shown to both benefit joint outcomes (Komorita, Sheposh, & Braver, 1968; Roloff, Tutzauer, & Dailey, 1989; Sondak & Bazerman, 1991; Tedeschi, Bonoma, & Novinson, 1970) and harm joint outcomes (Giebels, De Dreu, & Van de Vliert, 2000; Mannix, 1993; Mannix & Neale, 1993; McAlister, Bazerman, & Fader, 1986; McClintock, Messick, Kuhlman, & Campos, 1973; Pinkley et al., 1994; Sheposh & Gallo, 1973; Wolfe & McGinn, 2005). On the positive side, power differences can provide a heuristic to guide conflict resolution (Keltner et al., 2008), facilitating coordination among negotiating parties (Halevy et al., 2011) and efficiency of conflict resolution (Dwyer & Walker, 1981). However, on the negative side, in certain contexts, power differences can also provide a source of inequity and threat, prompting higher degrees of competitive behavior (De Dreu, 2005; Lawler, 1992), coalition formation (Mannix, 1993), and power struggles (Greer & van Kleef, 2010). Similar mixed support for the benefits versus detriments of power dispersion has been found in the literature on intragroup conflict. Ronay et al. (2012) found that power hierarchy reduces conflicts in teams and improves team performance, whereas others have found that power hierarchy reduces information sharing more broadly and harms team performance (Tost, Gino, & Larrick, 2012). Together, these findings suggest that power differences are a double-edged sword for dyads and teams and their conflict and negotiation processes.

To understand when and why power differences and hierarchy may help or hurt teams, a recent line of research has arisen. For example, Halevy et al. (2011) developed a theory that suggests hierarchies are most effective when teams are interdependent, the hierarchy is legitimate, and the different bases of social hierarchy (power, status, etc.) are in alignment. In initial support of this theory, Ronay et al. (2012) found that power differences are most positive for team performance and the least likely to cause intra-team conflicts in interdependent tasks. In a related line of research, Greer and van Kleef (2010) found that the effects of hierarchy on conflict resolution depend on the overall power level of negotiating parties. When parties generally have a high level of power (i.e., between a CEO and a CFO, or between two parties with already high but slightly different BATNAs), power differences increase intrateam power struggles and decrease joint outcomes in a negotiation task and conflict resolution in a team task setting. In contrast, in low-power settings (i.e., power differences in a factory-line team or between negotiators with both low but slightly different BATNAs), hierarchy was found to serve as a useful heuristic for conflict resolution, facilitating joint outcomes and team conflict management effectiveness. Thus, several factors, including team interdependence and team power level, may determine the degree to which power differences help or hurt dyad and team effectiveness during conflicts and negotiations.

Other forms of dyadic and team power structures may also have direct implications for conflicts and negotiations. For example, Greer et al. (2011) investigated the effect of team power levels (i.e., management teams vs. lower levels teams in the organization) on team conflict dynamics. In two field studies, they found that teams with high levels of power are inclined to have higher levels of destructive team conflicts than lower power teams. Other recent research also offers support for this finding as well: Ronay et al. (2012) found that teams with power differences, rather than power similarities (i.e., all high-power members or all low-power members), have fewer status conflicts and better performance than teams with all high-power members. Thus, research suggests that power, in a variety of forms and structures, has the potential to influence dyadic and team negotiation and conflict management processes.

Finally, power has also been shown to be a key to understanding intergroup conflicts and multiparty negotiations. When groups are engaged in a conflict, power differences between the groups can shape intergroup perceptions and conflict experiences, including creating asymmetrical perceptions of contentious behaviors during the intergroup conflict (Nauta, de Vries, & Wjngaard, 2001). When mediators represent conflicting groups, the power of the third party mediator has been shown to influence the behavior of the conflicting groups, including eliciting concession making to gain the favor of the

powerful mediator (e.g., Harris & Carnevale, 1990). Similarly, the power of the parties represented may also influence their relationship with the mediator as well: Parties with high power in relation to the mediator are more accepting of the mediator, less concerned about appearing strong toward the mediator, and display less contentious behavior (e.g., Welton & Pruitt, 1987). Power can thus play a pivotal role in multifaceted intergroup conflicts and multiparty negotiations.

# Overview of Special Issue

The four articles in the special issue contribute to the ongoing dialogues surrounding the roles of power and status in negotiation and conflict management research. Namely, the articles in this special issue contribute to the debates on gender and status differences in negotiation (Amanatullah & Tinsley) and on gender and power differences in negotiation (Hong & van der Wijst), the use of power and anger in interpersonal negotiations (Belkin et al.), and the role of power differences in mediated conflicts (Bollen & Euwema).

## Summary of Special Issue Articles

In the first article of this special issue, Amanatullah and Tinsley propose and find that status mitigates the gender decrement in distributive negotiation outcomes (i.e., resource claiming). The authors explore whether the backlash effect—where female negotiators are socially punished for violating the gender stereotype that women are communal rather than agentic (Rudman, 1998; Rudman & Glick, 1999)—can be mitigated when female negotiators hold high-status roles. Amanatullah and Tinsley's theoretical argument is that the backlash effect for female negotiators could be due to women being seen as relatively low-status actors compared to males, which makes it socially acceptable for women to receive fewer resources. The authors posit that if female negotiators' requests could be endowed with more social legitimacy, it would no longer be socially acceptable for women to receive fewer resources.

They test their propositions in two experiments in which male or female negotiators make a financial request in a business negotiation scenario. The achieved status of the negotiator is manipulated based on his or her junior or senior position in the company he or she is representing in the negotiation. Whereas women with low achieved status experience both financial and social penalties relative to men in the same status positions, women with high achieved status receive the same rewards for their financial requests without incurring social repercussions as high-status men receive. These effects are mediated by the perceived legitimacy of the resource request.

These results contribute to the discourse about gender differences in distributive negotiation outcomes and to research on the backlash effect, in particular. Amanatullah and Tinsley's research suggests that past research documenting backlash effects for female negotiators were made in the absence of any signals of achieved status. By distinguishing ascribed and achieved status, the authors start to untangle the knotty and consequential social problem of women being unwilling or unable to assert their interests in a variety of social situations. This research suggests that interventions that endow women's agentic actions with social legitimacy could potentially reduce the risks of backlash beyond distributive negotiation situations.

Second, Hong and van der Wijst explore the role of the psychological experience of power in gender differences in distributive negotiations. The authors frame their study in terms of social role theory (Eagly, 1987) and the approach or inhibition theory of power (Keltner, Gruenfeld, & Anderson, 2003). Based on social role theory, the authors posit that distributive negotiations make male gender roles highly salient, which gives men an advantage over women in these situations. The behaviors associated with male negotiators, such as making aggressive opening offers and few concessions, are consistent with the behaviors of negotiators who have been primed to feel powerful in other research (Galinsky, Gruenfeld, & Magee, 2003) because the psychological experience of power makes individuals more goal directed and

increases their likelihood of acting assertively to reach their goals. Thus, the authors hypothesize that priming men and women with high power should impact their negotiating behaviors differently: Essentially the psychological experience of having high power should make women negotiate more like men do, thereby reducing the gender gap in distributive negotiation processes and outcomes.

In a simulation about negotiating the price of a house, Hong and van der Wijst primed half of their male and female research subjects to feel psychologically powerful and then measured subjects' first offers and final offers while negotiating with a confederate. Their results show that when not primed with power, men made more aggressive first and final offers than women did, but there were no differences between men's and women's first or final offers when the subjects had been primed to feel powerful. Thus, priming women to feel powerful mitigated the gender gap observed in the control condition. These results suggest techniques that women can use to prepare for distributive negotiations to offset their social disadvantages in those contexts. By thinking about a time when she had power, a woman can put herself in a psychological state in which she is motivated to approach her goals assertively in an upcoming negotiation. The implication is that other power-priming techniques, such as holding an expansive body posture prior to a negotiation (Carney, Cuddy, & Yap, 2010), may have similarly beneficial effects for female negotiators. This study also suggests an avenue for future research on how negotiating counterparts react to more assertive, powerful female negotiators to determine whether their behavior incurs a backlash effect (Rudman, 1998; Rudman & Glick, 1999) that undermines the potential benefits of the women's power priming.

Third, Belkin, Kurtzberg, and Naquin contribute to the literature on the interaction of emotional expression and power in negotiation research. They examine the interactive relationship between emotional expression (anger vs. happiness) and actual resource control (power) on perceived dominance and on individual negotiation outcomes. They conduct a negotiation study in the laboratory using the New Recruit Case (Neale, 1997). Power is manipulated based on alternatives, or a lack thereof, to a negotiated agreement. Emotional expression is manipulated by asking participants to recall a time they felt happy or angry and to express this emotion during the negotiation process.

These researchers find that expressed anger increases one's perceived dominance and individual gains in the negotiation, regardless of one's resource power. However, expressed happiness is found to be contingent on resource control. Interestingly, high-power negotiators who expressed happiness are perceived as less dominant and have worse individual outcomes. This finding was the opposite for low-power negotiators: Low-power negotiators who display happiness actually increase their individual outcomes.

These findings offer intriguing insights for the literature on power and emotions in negotiation. First, perceived dominance is identified as a key mechanism by which anger exerts its effects in negotiations. Given that dominance is a key pathway to power in organizations (Cheng et al., 2013), this finding offers an insightful perspective on anger as a tool of social influence to climb organizational hierarchies. Second, they contribute to our understanding of the interaction of power and emotional expression—they show that happiness may be a dangerous emotion to express when in power because it can lower one's perceived dominance and ability to achieve individual gains in negotiations. This finding suggests that not all emotions are equally suited to be shown by those in power, which leads to new questions about the congruency of different forms of emotional expression with power positions.

Finally, Bollen and Euwema provide insightful contributions to our understanding of power differences in the mediation context and to knowledge on the salience of effects of power hierarchies more generally. They propose that low-power parties, as compared to high-power parties, experience less satisfaction with the mediation process and outcome but only when the mediated interactions take place face-to-face. The authors suggest that when an online intake is used at the start of the mediation process, the uncertainty and fear experienced by low-power parties will be reduced and the effects of hierarchical differences on mediation satisfaction will be mitigated.

These researchers test these ideas in a study of parties who recently completed mediation trajectories for hierarchical labor conflicts. Half of the cases used e-supported mediation in which an initial online

intake was used, and the other cases were conducted entirely face-to-face. Following mediation settlement, participants completed a survey about their perceptions of the mediation process. Results show that high-power parties experience higher satisfaction with the mediation and outcome but only in cases conducted entirely face-to-face. For cases that utilized e-supported mediation, the effects of hierarchical differences on mediation satisfaction disappear.

This finding suggests an important pathway to reassure low-power conflict parties and enhance their satisfaction with the mediation process. Allowing an online intake equalizes initial information sharing and provides both parties with information on the other side. In a face-to-face intake, the low-power parties may not have had as much ability to communicate or voice their concerns given the constraints power differences can place on communication (Tost et al., 2012). However, online media that equalize participation and reduce the potential nonverbal dynamics that may impede the communication and satisfaction of low party members may mitigate the negative effects of power differences on successful conflict resolution. This conclusion provides important insight into the dynamics of power and mediation and suggests future research pathways for research on power hierarchies more broadly. For example, researchers could examine whether online communications may also have the potential to mitigate other negative effects of social hierarchy (e.g., contentious behavior, De Dreu, 1995; Lawler, 1992; or coalition formation, Mannix, 1993).

# Future Directions

Power and status are likely to be central components of negotiation and conflict management research in the years to come. Although we have highlighted here the rich history of power and status in negotiation and conflict research as well as current trends in the area as illustrated by the articles in this special issue, many key questions remain.

One key area of research concerns the interrelations between power and status in conflict settings. Research thus far has primarily examined these constructs in isolation (for exceptions, see Fast, Halevy, & Galinsky, 2012; Fragale, Overbeck, & Neale, 2011; Hays & Bendersky, 2013; Schouten et al., 2013; Willer et al., 2012), yet in social settings, both power and status are likely to simultaneously influence interactions in conflicts and negotiations. Research would benefit from looking at the joint effects of power and status and especially what happens in the presence of power and no status, and vice versa. For instance, Hays and Bendersky (2013) have shown that as inequality in status hierarchies increases, group members are motivated to challenge the hierarchy in efforts to move up, whereas increasing inequality in power hierarchies suppresses challenges to the hierarchy. The more group members challenge the hierarchy, the worse groups perform. In organizations with differences in both power and status, the more congruent status and power are with each other the less detrimental are status inequalities. Additionally, research would benefit from investigating how conflicts about power versus conflicts about status differ from one another. Initial research on the topic suggests that status conflicts tend to occur in public settings and involve attempts at ingratiation and impression management, whereas power conflicts happen in private settings and involve the formation of backroom coalitions and alliances (Schouten et al., 2013). This comparison suggests that there is still much to be understood about the different roles status and power may play in shaping conflict and negotiation behavior.

Another key area of research hinges on the multilevel dynamics of power and status in conflict and negotiating settings. In this special issue, Amanatullah and Tinsley highlight how status may ameliorate intergroup differences in conflict settings, and Bollen and Euwema highlight how intergroup power differences may impact mediation success. Many conflict settings involve multiple levels of analysis, and power and status are likely to play a key role in understanding the dynamics of these settings. For example, Aaldering and De Dreu (2012) found that in representative negotiations in intergroup conflicts, intragroup status differences can shape interpersonal negotiation behavior during the representative

negotiation. Many other such questions are possible when considering power and status in conflicts spanning across levels of analysis.

Finally, scholars could learn from studying the processes of status and power negotiations in different contexts and cultures. Status markers in different societies may dramatically differ; for example, spending in funerals is highly regarded as a way to seek status in China, but this action is not so much the case in the United States (Brown, Bulte, & Zhang, 2011). Cross-cultural differences in workplace organizations are also pervasive (Gelfand, Erez, & Aycan, 2007), with distinct ritualized interactions around status differences, such as bowing, exchanging business cards, and making or avoiding eye contact. However, little is known about how status hierarchies are negotiated in mixed-culture groups, where the norms of acceptable status seeking behaviors may vary considerably.

Another context that is ripe for studying status and power hierarchy negotiations is in cross-functional teams, where the relative contribution of members with very different kinds of expertise is hard to determine. Future research could consider the processes by which status-valued metrics are negotiated in teams as is the relative value of an agreed-upon metric. Thus, as rich a history as there is in considering status and power in negotiation and conflict management research, there is a great deal more to learn.

## Conclusion

Social hierarchies are shaped by the contested negotiation among individuals to gain and maintain power and status to pursue their interests. For example, organizational members may attempt to change the social hierarchy, or their position in it, to gain leverage over others and to obtain valued resources. Relatedly, when challenged in such situations, organizational members may draw on their own sources of power and status to protect their own resources from others. Thus, power and status may be the resources over which conflicts and negotiations occur, and they may be the input that shapes the processes by which conflicts and negotiations unfold. Despite this fundamental relevance to conflict situations, much still remains to be learned about these dynamic hierarchy contests and the associated roles of power and status in conflict and negotiation. By exploring the role of power and status and their dynamic contest in situations of conflict and negotiation, researchers may be able to better understand the fundamental nature and dynamics of negotiation and conflict and their influence on individual, group, organizational, and societal outcomes.

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