

**Slipping Down the Ladder:
The Individual and Social Consequences of Status Loss**

A dissertation by

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Declaration

I certify that the ideas, empirical work and conclusions of this dissertation are solely my own, except where otherwise acknowledged. Studies 1, 2 and 4 have been included in a manuscript co-authored with Stefan Thau and submitted to an academic journal. The copyright of this dissertation rests with the author. Quotation from it is permitted, provided that full acknowledgement is made. This dissertation may not be reproduced without the prior written consent of the author. I warrant that this authorization does not, to the best of my belief, infringe upon the rights of any third party.

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Abstract

In my dissertation I examine people's reactions to an understudied phenomenon, status loss. I suggest that status loss is a challenging experience to overcome and thus, it is likely to diminish some people's willpower (i.e., self-regulation) immediately afterwards. Accordingly, I question *who* in the hierarchy will be able to overcome status loss and self-regulate most effectively immediately afterwards. I suggest that when high status individuals lose status, they experience the event as more threatening, depleting their regulatory resources and impairing their ability to regulate themselves (i.e., self-regulation impairment) on subsequent tasks more than low status individuals. Two vignette and two experimental studies supported this prediction and revealed that relative to low status individuals, high status individuals had a greater need to affirm their self (Study 1), persisted less on tasks (Studies 2 and 3), and were less willing to persist in order to regain their status (Study 4), following status loss. However, self-affirmation restored high status individuals' persistence to complete a task and their willingness to persist to regain their status (Study 4).

The persistence of high status individuals has clear implications for their performance, but I suggest that self-regulation also has a social function. I argue that when high status individuals exhibit effective self-regulation in the aftermath of status loss, they send a reliable signal that they are legitimate, protecting their high standing in the social order. Three experiments revealed that because self-regulation is diagnostic of legitimate status (Study 5), when high status individuals demonstrate effective self-regulation after status loss, it protects perceptions that they are legitimate (Study 6) and perpetuates the behavioural support that legitimises their high status position (Study 7). However, when high status individuals demonstrate self-regulation impairment after

status loss, social audiences will doubt their legitimacy (Study 6) and behave in ways that challenge their high status position (Study 7).

The main contributions of this work are 1) investigating the individual and social consequences of an understudied phenomenon, status loss, 2) challenging traditional models of status which suggest that more status is equated with more resources and therefore better life outcomes, 3) looking beyond the individual consequences of self-regulation impairment and investigating the *social* consequences of self-regulation impairment for high status individuals, and 4) highlighting the central role of self-regulation in status conferral processes. The findings of my thesis suggest that ironically, those who value their status in the hierarchy most (high status individuals) will experience more self-regulation impairment after status loss than those who value their status least (low status individuals), thwarting their ability to regain status in the group. The theoretical and practical implications of this research are discussed.

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Chapter 1 : Introduction

“He that is low need fear no fall.”

-Charlotte Bronte (*The Professor*, p. 4)

Status comes with many advantages like greater support, better health, prominent affiliations and superior opportunities (Adler, Epel, Castellazzo, & Ickovics, 2000; Podolny & Phillips, 1996; Van Der Vegt, Bunderson, & Oosterhof, 2006). Consequently, individuals are motivated to strive for status. The American Dream provides a vivid ideal of status striving: individuals at the bottom of the social ladder - through hard work and determination - move up the social ladder to become respected and admired by others. Social life shows us, however, that people not only earn the respect and admiration of others; they can also lose it. People experience status loss when they lose respect in the eyes of their group members. In organisations this occurs most explicitly when an individual is demoted or moved to a less prestigious position. However, more subtle and prevalent examples of status loss include a journalist receiving less prestigious assignments, or a consultant being put “on the beach” (not assigned to a specific project) for a long period. The phenomenon of status loss is not restricted to those struggling at the bottom of the hierarchy; those at the top of the hierarchy (e.g., the top-ranked fund manager, a star analyst, or an award-winning director) can also experience status loss. Understanding how people regulate themselves after losing status is important, because it will have consequences for their performance and their ability to regain status in the future.

A key feature of social life is that the groups to which people belong are structured into status hierarchies. Status hierarchies are a rank ordering of prestige (Benoit-Smullyan, 1944; Henrich & Gil-White, 2001) and one’s position in the hierarchy is determined by the respect and deferral one receives from others in the

group (Berger, Cohen, & Zelditch, 1972; Weber, 1946). People high in status are respected, admired and highly regarded by others (Anderson, Srivastava, Beer, Spataro, & Chatman, 2006) and consequently receive privileges (e.g., help and support, influence, praise; Berger, Rosenholtz, & Zelditch, 1980; Hollander, 1958; Homans, 1958; Van Der Veegt, et al., 2006). Those low in status enjoy few of these privileges and face being marginalized and subordinated (Jost & Banaji, 1994; Sidanius & Pratto, 1993).

Given the privileges tied to having high status, gaining status is a fundamental goal for individuals (Barkow, 1989; Buss, 2008), and a large body of research has investigated the positive consequences of attaining status (Barkow, 1989; Berger, et al., 1980; Cummins, 2005; Podolny & Phillips, 1996; Singh-Manoux, Adler, & Marmot, 2003; Van Der Veegt, et al., 2006; Weber, 1946). More recently, research has started to examine how people react to the *possibility* of losing status (Bothner, Jeong-han, & Stuart, 2007; Magee & Galinsky, 2008; Pettit & Lount, 2010; Pettit, Yong, & Spataro, 2010; Scheepers & Ellemers, 2005; Scheepers, Ellemers, & Sintemaartensdijk, 2009). Surprisingly though, we know very little about how people behave after status loss has occurred, although it seems to be a common experience of organisational life (Foa, 1971; Goffman, 1969; Hollander, 1958; Owens & Sutton, 1999). Given that individuals have an overwhelming desire to gain status and receive significant advantages when they acquire status, how do they react when they lose it?

In my thesis, I provide an answer to this question by investigating how status loss affects people's self-regulation. Self-regulation is often described as self-control, impulse control or willpower (Baumeister & Tierney, 2011; Heatherton & Baumeister, 1996) and refers to the process by which people initiate, adjust, interrupt, terminate or otherwise alter actions to promote the attainment of personal goals, plans or commonly accepted standards (Baumeister, Heatherton, & Tice, 1993, 1994; Scheier & Carver,

1988). Thus, people are using their self-regulation when they control their emotions, plan ahead, or complete boring or difficult tasks. However, people's capacity to self-regulate is considered a limited resource which can be depleted by challenging experiences (Muraven & Baumeister, 2000). Therefore, after dealing with status loss, some people will be depleted and their ability to regulate themselves will be impaired. The question is *who* is mostly likely to experience self-regulation impairment, and *what* consequences do they face as a result?

The first part of my theoretical model investigates the question of *who* is most likely to experience self-regulation impairment. I argue that, even when the amount of status lost is objectively the same, people's ability to move on and effectively regulate themselves on their activities (e.g., tasks, projects) differs depending on whether they initially occupied a high or a low status position. While more status is generally associated with superior self-regulation (DeWall, Baumeister, Mead, & Vohs, 2011; Lovaglia, Lucas, Houser, Thye, & Markovsky, 1998), I draw on psychological adaptation theory (Helson, 1964) to make the novel theoretical prediction that in the aftermath of status loss, the same privileges that give high status individuals so many advantages over low status individuals will turn them into comparatively poorer self-regulators. Specifically, I suggest that status loss is more threatening for high than for low status individuals, and consequently high status individuals experience greater self-regulation impairment in the aftermath of status loss.

Many dysfunctional behaviours can result from self-regulation impairment including: overeating (Vohs & Heatherton, 2000), excessive drinking (Muraven, Collins, & Neinhuis, 2002), aggression (DeWall, Baumeister, Stillman, & Gailliot, 2007), impulsive overspending (Vohs & Faber, 2007), procrastination (Tice, Bratslavsky, & Baumeister, 2001), and performance and persistence deficits on boring, effortful or

frustrating tasks (Baumeister, Bratslavsky, Muraven, & Tice, 1998; Schmeichel, Vohs, & Baumeister, 2003). Although status loss could impact self-regulation in any of these domains, in this thesis, I focus on the objective and organisationally relevant domain of task performance and examine persistence as an indicator of self-regulation impairment. People's ability to persist after status loss is important because organisational demands do not stop when status loss occurs. People are always in the middle of projects (e.g., tasks, activities; Weick, 1995) and they must continue working on these and other projects even immediately after they experience status loss, which requires persistence. Thus, I investigate how initial status position influences individuals' ability to persist on work tasks after status loss.

Examining high and low status individuals' persistence after status loss begins to address *what* consequences people face as a result of status loss. However, people's self-regulation after status loss may not only have individual (e.g., persistence), but also social (e.g., evaluations and behaviour of relevant others) consequences. In the second part of my theoretical model, I argue that effective self-regulation is a fundamental antecedent to status conferral and therefore, high status individuals' self-regulation impairment after status loss will have consequences for their ability to regain status. Drawing on theories of legitimacy (Tyler, 1997; Zelditch, 2001; Zelditch & Walker, 1984), I predict that displaying effective self-regulation protects the legitimacy of high status individuals after status loss; however, displaying impaired self-regulation provokes social audiences to doubt and challenge the legitimacy of high status individuals after status loss. The extent to which high status individuals can retain their legitimacy after status loss is important because it influences their ability to regain status in the future, and also affects the stability of the hierarchy. While the preponderance of self-regulation literature has focused on the individual consequences

of self-regulation impairment, this part of my theoretical model highlights the potential social consequences of self-regulation impairment.

Taken together my theoretical model highlights the paradoxical role of self-regulation as both an outcome and antecedent to status loss. Those who value their position most in the hierarchy (high status individuals) experience more self-regulation impairment after status loss than those who value their position least (low status individuals) and ironically, this impairment thwarts their ability to regain their high standing in the hierarchy.

Status

Status typically refers to one's position in a social hierarchy, based on the respect he or she has in the eyes of others in the hierarchy (Berger, et al., 1972; Weber, 1946). These social hierarchies structure the groups in which we live and work and one's position (or status) in the structure is conveyed through the patterns of deferral among group members (Bales, 1950; Ridgeway & Berger, 1986; Ridgeway & Correll, 2006). The dominant perspective on status suggests that status hierarchies are developed and maintained because they are functional. Group members defer to those who they perceive to be most competent - those expected to contribute to the group's goals to the greatest extent (Berger, et al., 1972; Ridgeway, 1978; Ridgeway & Diekema, 1989). Theoretically, this gives the most competent members the most influence over the group's activities, which positively impacts the group's ability to adapt and survive in their environment (Bales, 1950; Hare, Borgatta, & Bales, 1955; Parsons & Bales, 1955).

In his seminal studies of group interactions, Bales (1950) describes how functional status hierarchies evolve through group member interaction. He argues that the social structure of groups can be understood as a system of solutions that arise to solve the problems of group interaction. He observed that patterns of deferral and

differential participation among group members evolves from “generalisations” about past activity (i.e., how well a member has performed on past tasks) to form expectations for future activity (i.e., how well they are expected to perform on future tasks). These patterns of deferential behaviour become institutionalised over time because it reduces the tensions that are typically produced by the uncertainty and unpredictability of others’ actions (Bales, 1950). In other words, solidifying these status-based relationships reduces ambiguity about who should listen to whom and coordination becomes less tense and more efficient. These stable patterns of interaction are the foundation of the status hierarchy.

Status, Prestige, Power and Dominance

Across the many decades of research on status, the terms status, prestige, power and dominance are often used interchangeably. This is likely because they are frequently confounded in real life. For example, a group leader may have high status, be prestigious, hold power and be dominant over others in the group. Using these terms interchangeably is problematic, however, because they are not perfectly correlated and each can lead to different outcomes. First, there are times when they do not co-occur. For example, a secretary may have lower status than a manager in the organisational hierarchy, but may have more power in some situations by controlling access to the manager’s superior. Conversely, a university Dean may have a high level of organisational status, but relatively little power in dealings with tenured faculty. Second, there are times when these related concepts might have different, even opposite, outcomes. For example, if a powerful individual threatens his subordinates they are likely to defer to him; whereas, if a high status individual tries to threaten his group members, they are more likely to withdraw their respect.

In the last decade, a significant contribution to the literature has been to theoretically distinguish between status and power (Magee & Galinsky, 2008), and prestige and dominance processes (Henrich & Gil-White, 2001). While status is attained based on respect from others in the hierarchy (Ridgeway & Walker, 1995), power is attained through the control of resources (Blau, 1964). Henrich and Gil-White (2001) make an analogous comparison with prestige and dominance. They suggest that prestige is acquired through freely conferred respect and deferral; whereas, dominance is acquired through force or the threat of force. In this paper, I use status to describe one's rank in a hierarchy based on the respect and deferral one receives from others in that hierarchy and I assume that this respect is freely conferred. As such, I do not distinguish between status and Henrich and Gil-White's definition of prestige. However, I do distinguish status from both power and dominance, since power is based on dependence or control and dominance is based on threat or force.

The Advantages of Status

While the status structure tends to be adaptive for the group as a whole, it is those at the top of the hierarchy who reap the greatest individual benefit. First, the respect and deferral they receive from others in the group has psychological advantages including bolstering self-esteem (Stevens & Price, 1996; Tajfel, 1982; Twenge & Campbell, 2002); and mental wellbeing (Adler, et al., 2000). They are also given "positive privileges" by their group members (Weber, 1946). For example, idiosyncratic credits (Hollander, 1958) are afforded to individuals according to their status; these credits can be used to display behaviour that deviates from the group's expectancies without reprisal. The more status individuals have, the more leeway they are given to behave in ways that contradict the expectancies of the group; this is a positive privilege. Higher status individuals are also more likely to have prominent affiliations. These

affiliations further enhance the respect high status individuals receive because status is transitive and prominent actors transfer some of their status when they engage with others (Podolny, 2005; Podolny & Phillips, 1996). Finally, individuals with higher status tend to have the greatest access to valued resources (Homans, 1961). Therefore, it is in individuals' best interests to acquire status because it is associated with psychological, social and material advantages.

By contrast, those at the bottom of the hierarchy reap the least individual benefit. Lower status individuals tend to receive "negative privileges" (Weber, 1978) including being marginalised and subordinated by their higher ranking counterparts (Jost & Banaji, 1994). They also receive less access to valued resources (Gould, 2002; Homans, 1958). There is also research to suggest being lower in status leads to more negative mental and physical health outcomes such that lower status individuals are more likely than higher status individuals to suffer from physical health issues such as angina, diabetes, and respiratory illness (Singh-Manoux, et al., 2003), and psychological health issues such as depression (Adler, et al., 2000). Thus, given the benefits of having higher status, compared to the costs of having lower status, it behoves individuals to acquire status.

Status, Legitimacy and the Stability of the Hierarchy

The consequences of one's position in the social order are exacerbated by the stability of the hierarchy. From a resource perspective, status is perpetuated because those at the top of the hierarchy are given advantages that effectively widen the gap further between the high and low end of the hierarchy ("Mathew Effect"; Merton, 1968; Podolny, 2005), enabling high status individuals to accumulate more status 'credentials' (e.g., wealth, affiliations, and titles) and solidify their standing in the hierarchy. Therefore, once established, the status order tends to be quite stable (Gould, 2002; Ridgeway, 1978; Ridgeway & Berger, 1986). Importantly, however, this unequal

distribution of resources tends not to be disputed. In fact, both high and low status individuals are apt to justify the status quo of the hierarchy (Jost, Banaji, & Nosek, 2004; Sidanius & Pratto, 1993).

This occurs because in legitimate hierarchies, there is a social consensus that the current social order is desirable, proper or appropriate (Suchman, 1995). This consensus is demonstrated by individuals' judgments and behavioural support for the status order. From a judgment perspective, people believe that high status individuals rightfully deserve respect and deferral (Berger, Fisek, Norman, & Wagner, 1998; Ridgeway & Berger, 1986). From a behavioural perspective, legitimacy is indicated by people deferring to and supporting the directives of high status individuals (Tyler, 1997; Zelditch, 2001; Zelditch & Walker, 1984). In other words, in legitimate hierarchies, members behave in ways that are consistent with the expectations of their status position because they believe things are 'the way they should be' (Homans, 1961; Ridgeway, 1978; Ridgeway & Berger, 1986).

Ridgeway's (Expectation states theory; Ridgeway, 1978; Ridgeway & Berger, 1986) account of conformity in groups explains how status expectations reinforce the stability of status hierarchies. People's status in the group is determined by the expectations others have for their ability to contribute to the group's goals. Accordingly, to improve their status in the group, individuals need to increase their perceived contributions. However, Ridgeway highlights that there are two important stages in the evaluation of group member contributions which reduce the likelihood of substantial movement in the hierarchy: first, group members must attend to the contributory act and second, group members must determine the contribution is competent. Since the performance expectations of higher status individuals are high, members are more likely to attend to their contributions. Lower status individuals on the other hand, need to find

ways to draw attention to their contribution. However, this is problematic because behaviours that would typically be used to increase others' attention (e.g., verbal dominance cues) would be seen as status violations when used by low status individuals and, are therefore likely to be punished rather than rewarded. To add to their challenge, the largest determinant of a contribution being evaluated as competent by group members is the performance expectation already held for the contributor. When group members are expected to be competent, their contributions are evaluated more positively. Therefore, the norms of status-consistent behaviour ensure the stability of the hierarchy. Working together, these resource-based, belief-based and behavioural mechanisms generally reinforce the status order.

Avoiding Status Loss

Given the advantages afforded to those with status and the stability of the social order once established, it is in one's best interests to acquire a high status position. Indeed, it has been suggested that the motivation to strive for status is close to a universal motive (Barkow, 1989; Buss, 2008). The possibility of a decline in one's position, therefore, is threatening. The threat of status loss may even be more influential than an individual's motivation to enhance status (Bothner, et al., 2007; Pettit, et al., 2010).

A recent study of NASCAR participants found that "crowding from below" (lower status competitors threatening to overtake one's position: threat of status loss) resulted in more risky behaviour (i.e., behaviour that leads to car crashes) than "crowding from the top" (the opportunity to overtake one's competitors: status enhancement) (Bothner, et al., 2007). Several experimental studies on prospective status loss have shown that a threat to one's status triggers physiological arousal (Scheepers & Ellemers, 2005; Scheepers, et al., 2009), and prompts people to pay more to avoid the

loss than they would to achieve a status gain (Pettit, et al., 2010). In other words, consistent with theories of loss aversion (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979; Tversky & Kahneman, 1981) a threat to one's status seems to be unpleasant and trigger action to prevent the loss from occurring. However, how people behave after status loss has occurred remains an unaddressed issue. After status loss has occurred, the loss can no longer be prevented and people may not have an immediate opportunity to regain status. Instead, in the aftermath of status loss, individuals must deal with the loss and focus on their other tasks.

Overall, the literature on status explains why it is beneficial to have high status, why it is detrimental to have low status and why individuals want to acquire status. The contributions I aim to make in this paper are to explore how people react to losing status, and given that status loss events happen in a social context and group members are sensitive to changes in the hierarchy, I also investigate the social consequences of these reactions.

Status Loss

This paper investigates the phenomenon of status loss in a group. If someone's position in the informal or formal status hierarchy declines, they suffer a corresponding loss of respect, admiration and regard. This phenomenon is *status loss*. This drop may also be associated with a decline in the valued resources or affiliations associated with their previous position. Status loss can take many forms including: losing a championship or title, losing a higher status partner, or being moved to a less prestigious position at work. For example, imagine a scenario within an academic department where a senior faculty member acquired a position of high status through years of publishing high quality research. Then, for several years he stops publishing papers. While he retains the same formal title, he is respected and deferred to less by his

colleagues and his position in the status hierarchy declines. Such losses in status are likely to have negative psychological, physiological and sometimes material, consequences.

Status loss can be voluntary or intentional. Sometimes individuals are motivated to fulfil a goal (e.g., to learn, to be with one's spouse) that conflicts with the motivation to strive for status. In such cases, individuals may voluntarily take an action that adversely impacts their status. For example, someone might take a lower status job for greater learning and development opportunities; someone might leave a successful business career to stay at home to raise children; or, someone might move to a lower status job in order to relocate to the same city as his or her spouse. These are examples of voluntary or intentional status loss in that the individuals wilfully make choices that (at least in the short term) have a corresponding negative impact on the amount of respect and prestige they receive from others in the group. While interesting, such examples of status loss are outside the scope of this research. In this paper, I focus specifically on reactions to unintended and involuntary losses of status within the group.

Accordingly, status loss can be conceptualized as a specific type of negative event- like a failure, defeat or loss- related to one's position in the hierarchy. However, status loss is distinct from these other negative experiences in several ways. First, unlike many losses and traumas (e.g., loss of a loved one, being the victim of a criminal act), status loss does not have to be permanent; it is possible to regain lost status. Second, unlike many defeats (e.g., losing a football match) status loss may not always involve an identifiable opponent. For example, if one loses membership in a high status group one experiences a loss of status, but would likely not be able to identify a real opponent involved in this loss. Third, status losses do not always involve a material or tangible loss. For example, an individual could lose respect in the eyes of their co-workers for

making an unethical decision (status loss), but still maintain the same formal title, salary and job description. Therefore, status loss is similar to, but can be distinguished from other negative events such as failures, defeats and losses.

Status Loss and Stigma

It is also important to distinguish status loss from stigma. The concept of stigma originated with the Greek practice of branding slaves who were caught after trying to escape. Slaves were branded with the letter “F” and the word for this branding was a stigma (Funk, 1950). Over time, the meaning of stigma was extended to encompass any mark or sign (e.g., physical attributes, character, behaviour) indicating undesirable deviation from the norm. Goffman (1963) stated that stigmas are “deeply discrediting” attributes such as “abominations of the body...blemishes of individual character inferred from a known record of, for example, mental disorder, imprisonment, addiction...and tribal stigma of race, nation, and religion...” (p.4) Research has explored the consequences of being stigmatized and finds that, in general, there are negative psychological consequences such as low self-esteem (Dovidio & Gaertner, 2000; Goffman, 1963). More recent research has also identified diverse ways in which individuals cope with being stigmatised (Kreiner, Ashforth, & Sluss, 2006; Miller & Major, 2000).

In the sense that being stigmatised is a negative event with which one must cope, the concepts of stigma and status loss are closely related. However, whereas status loss describes a *process* whereby one experiences a reduction in respect and prestige, stigma describes undesirable, discrediting *attributes* or qualities which have a multitude of implications (lost respect and prestige likely among them). There are certain situations in which status loss could lead to stigma (e.g., incarceration), however, not all losses in status result in a stigma (e.g., a returning champion losing a football championship).

Similarly, a newly uncovered stigma could lead to status loss (e.g., mental illness), but status loss can also be prompted by a situational cause rather than an undesirable attribute (i.e., stigma) of the individual (e.g., layoffs).

Why Study Status Loss?

As you can see from the examples of status loss mentioned in the section above, status loss is not an unusual occurrence. There are times in people's work and social lives when, for various reasons, they lose respect in the eyes of others in their group. While these are challenging experiences, life tasks do not stop when they occur. Weick (1995) suggests that "People are always in the middle of things...what are they in the middle of? One answer...is 'projects'." (p.45) After a loss of status, individuals need to carry on with their projects and this requires willpower, or self-regulation. For example, imagine that a student is a well-respected member of her study group and is thus, selected by her fellow group members to be the group leader for their course projects. However, after the first project, although she expects to be the leader on the next project, her group members suggest another individual be put in her place. In this situation, the student has lost status, but regardless of how unexpected and threatening this might be, she still has task responsibilities as a member of the project team. If overcoming status loss diminishes her ability to effectively complete her other tasks, this has negative consequences for her performance, and the performance of her group members.

In fact, if the individual who loses status is in a position of authority or power, the consequences can be even more far-reaching. Take the example of an executive who loses the respect of his or her group members. This loss of respect does not necessarily coincide with a change in his or her formal authority and, therefore, he or she is in a position to make decisions and take actions that could have serious consequences for the company and its employees. Thus, how people react to the status losses they experience

has implications not only for their own well-being (e.g., stress) and home life (e.g., relationships with spouse), but also their performance on work tasks (e.g., decisions), and the work tasks of those around them (e.g., colleagues, employees).

The self-regulation impairment high status individuals experience after status loss may also have social consequences. I suggest that willpower is an important prerequisite for high status individuals (e.g., star performers, leaders); thus, high status people who are unable to demonstrate perseverance in the face of a challenging situation (i.e., status loss) may be viewed as undeserving of their position. If high status individuals who experience self-regulation impairment after status loss are viewed as undeserving of status (i.e., illegitimate), this has important implications for their ability to regain status, as well as for the stability of the hierarchy.

Previous Research on Status Loss

Despite the prevalence of status loss and the serious consequences that can result from the experience, the concept has received little theoretical or empirical attention in the social psychological and organisational literatures. Exceptions include at least two studies that have examined antecedents to status loss. One early qualitative study (Segal, 1962), investigated the implications of status contradiction experienced by male nurses. The term status contradiction was coined by Hughes (1945) to describe cases where ascribed status characteristics were at odds with occupational status characteristics. The findings of the study showed that male nurses tended to compare themselves with their male counterparts (i.e., doctors), which was damaging to their perceived prestige and self-esteem. In other words, their participation in a female-dominated profession in the 1960s meant that they experienced a “prestige loss” (i.e., status loss) as they moved from being high status ‘men’ outside work to low status ‘nurses’ at work.

Another study investigated how convictions for white collar crime affected losses of occupational status (Benson, 1984). The author found that convictions did not affect status loss consistently across white collar criminals. Younger and public employees were more likely to experience losses in occupational status; whereas, professionals and licensed individuals were more likely to retain their original occupational status. Consistent with theoretical accounts of status, the results from this study suggest that there are buffering effects of status such that those with higher status are less likely to experience status loss.

One area of research that provides some insight into the consequences of status loss is literature on status contests. As mentioned above, status hierarchies are generally stable (Gould, 2002; Ridgeway & Berger, 1986); however, they are not static. Individuals are driven to enhance their status (Barkow, 1989; Cummins, 2005) and therefore, people jockey for status. Status contests depict situations when a status striving, lower status individual challenges a higher status individual for their position. Bales (1950) describes status striving as, "...any act in which the actor is self-assertive from a position which has the implication of lower status in which he tries to impress the other with his importance...includes attempts to excite, amaze, fascinate...as a means of raising one's own status." (p. 195) Status striving individuals who attempt to take high status positions by force and aggression are likely to be punished (Ridgeway & Diekema, 1989); however, acting in ways that signal one's value to the group in terms of competence (Anderson & Kilduff, 2009b), generosity (Flynn, Reagans, Amanatullah, & Ames, 2006) and commitment (Willer, 2009) to the group can be effective in enhancing one's status (Anderson & Kilduff, 2009a). Where the literature on status contests intersects with status loss, is that the individual who loses the contest experiences a decline in status, or status loss.

Status Contests and Reactions to Status Loss

Evolutionary psychologists have explored these interactions and the physical and psychological consequences of losing a status contest. According to this research, a status contest ends when one individual determines their discomfort or stress from the interaction is not worth the status position (Mazur, 1985). The defeated counterpart experiences a reduction in testosterone, feels disappointed, enacts submissive behaviours to de-escalate the conflict and ideally escapes to reduce their feeling of threat (Gilbert, 2000; Mazur, 1985). Sloman and Gilbert (2000) describe this process of accepting defeat as an *involuntary defeat strategy* (IDS). They suggest this process is adaptive because it reduces the individual's motivation to continue a fruitless struggle, adjusts their aspirations, and increases their readiness to flee or submit (i.e., adjustment to lower status role; Sloman, 2000). In other words, the feelings of disappointment and helplessness triggered by the defeat strategy are negative, but functional in that they lead the individual to accept the defeat and move on from the encounter so that they can pursue other activities. This description depicts a functional reaction to losing a status contest.

However, anecdotal evidence suggests that there is significant variation in the way people react to status loss. For example, after being demoted to a lower status role on an important work project, one individual might move on from the loss of status and devote their energy and attention to performing well on the project; another individual in the same situation might have more difficulty dealing with the loss of status and thus, devote their energy and attention to making themselves feel better leaving little energy or attention to devote to the project. These two examples describe opposite reactions to the same status loss. They demonstrate that what matters is not the objective amount of status lost, but one's subjective experience of that loss. Depending on their subjective

experience there are many different ways that people can react to objectively comparable losses of status. How someone reacts is important because it has significant psychological, performance and status-related consequences.

The question I pose in this research is who in the status hierarchy is likely to react to status loss in the most functional ways. The loss of status is undoubtedly a negative experience for everyone. Hence, the argument I aim to make in this paper is not that the experience is more pleasant (or even less unpleasant) for different members of the group depending on their position in the hierarchy. Instead, I investigate whether, based on their position in the hierarchy, some individuals may be able to regulate themselves more effectively after the loss of status. One theory that addresses differences in individual subjective assessments of objectively comparable losses is prospect theory.

Prospect Theory and Reactions to Status Loss

Prospect theory describes individual preferences for risky choices. Kahneman and Tversky (1979; Tversky & Kahneman, 1981) illustrated through a variety of simple choice paradigms that individuals' preferences for options with objectively equal utility can change depending on the frame of reference. The most well-known property of this model is probably that losses loom larger than gains. In other words, responses to losses will be more extreme than responses to gains. For example, the displeasure of losing a sum of money would be greater than the pleasure of winning the same sum of money. However, another property of the model that could provide insight into status loss is the 'S' shape of the value function. The interpretation of the S shape is that the value of gains decreases as amounts increase (e.g., gaining \$10 between \$10 and \$20 is greater than the same amount from \$110 to \$120) with the same value differences holding for corresponding losses. Thus, an additional loss of \$10 from -\$20 to -\$30 should be more

unpleasant than an additional loss of \$10 from -\$110 to -\$120. The logic here is that a loss of \$10 when you have only lost \$20 already is proportionately higher and therefore feels like more than if one has already lost \$110.

In the context of status loss, one could interpret this to mean that a loss of a set amount of status (e.g., 10 units) would be more significant or unpleasant if it was the first 10 units lost and a less significant or unpleasant if it was the last 10 units lost. There are two issues with applying this logic to the context of status. First, it assumes everyone on the status ladder has the same reference point (e.g., the zero-loss point). However, research on social comparison suggests that individuals' comparison points in the hierarchy vary based on their own position. Higher status individuals may compare themselves across status groups (Wills, 1981), but lower status individuals are more likely to compare themselves to other low status group members (Crocker & Major, 1989). Second, even if one assumes that all members of the hierarchy have the same reference point, it is unclear what behaviour prospect theory would predict. For example, one might argue that if the loss is more unpleasant for high status individuals, these individuals will be more likely than low status individuals to demonstrate great persistence to regain their lost status. However, as I will outline in the next section, drawing on theories of psychological adaptation, the opposite behaviour would be predicted.

Given that hierarchies tend to be stable over time, positions in the hierarchy will develop enduring characteristics. The differences between the characteristics of higher and lower status positions might suggest more clear predictions for how effectively people will be able to regulate themselves after status loss. Therefore, in the next chapter, I discuss how initial status position will influence reactions to status loss.

Chapter 2 : Theoretical Model and Hypotheses

My theoretical model examines the reciprocal relationship between status loss and self-regulation. First, I examine *who* in the hierarchy is in the best position to self-regulate effectively after status loss. I argue that even when the amount of status lost is objectively the same, people's subjective experiences of their own status loss are different depending on their initial positions in the hierarchy. Thus, people's initial status position will influence their self-regulation after status loss. Second, I examine *what* the social consequences are of this self-regulation impairment after status loss. I argue that self-regulation is a fundamental antecedent of status conferral and therefore displays of effective (vs. impaired) self-regulation influence how social audiences evaluate and behave towards high status individuals. In the following section, I present the theoretical model which will be used to examine these questions.

Initial Status Position and Self-Regulation Impairment

In the first part of my theoretical model I examine *who* in the hierarchy is most likely to experience self-regulation impairment after status loss. There are two perspectives that provide insight into how initial status position influences self-regulation after status loss. The first is a positional resource perspective and the second is a psychological adaptation perspective. Both perspectives and their implications for how initial status position influences self-regulation after status loss are included below.

Positional Resource Perspective

The simplest perspective that can be used to predict reactions to status loss would be an economic one. I already mentioned that past theories on status have emphasised the many advantages that come with high status (Berger, et al., 1980; Homans, 1958; Merton, 1968; Weber, 1946). This traditional perspective on status emphasises the tangible (e.g., financial capital) and intangible (e.g., confidence)

resources high status individuals have (Bothner, Kim, & Smith, 2011) and how these resources help them cope better with stress and negative life outcomes compared to low status individuals (Hobfoll, 1989; Kessler, 1979; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; McLeod & Kessler, 1990). Applying this perspective to the context of status loss would suggest that because someone higher in the hierarchy will always have more status resources than someone lower in the hierarchy, high status individuals will be in a better position to self-regulate effectively after experiencing status loss than low status individuals.

This prediction is consistent with several examples from the coping literature that suggest positional resources can help combat negative life experiences. First, research on coping with stressful experiences argues that the more personal resources (e.g., intelligence, education, money) individuals have, the greater their ability to cope with negative experiences and increase their chances of adaptational success (Lazarus, 1966, 1999). It has been suggested that these resources positively influence coping first by increasing the number of coping options an individual has available and then by helping the individual execute the chosen strategy. For example, personal resources “...greatly increase the coping options in almost any stressful transaction; they provide easier and often more effective access to legal, medical, financial, and other professional assistance.” (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984, p.164). Similarly, Hobfoll (1988, 1989) suggested that even intangible status resources (e.g., confidence) can be accumulated, and the surplus of resources can be used to offset future resource losses. In other words, the higher level of positional resources held by higher status individuals should enable more functional reactions to status loss by improving the availability and implementation of coping options.

Second, research suggests that one’s affiliations influence coping. Previous research has shown that people’s ability to cope with negative life experiences is

positively influenced by their social support. Social support provides three main functions that relate to dealing with negative experiences: emotional support (e.g., attachment, reassurance), tangible support (e.g., direct aid such as loans, gifts or services) and informational support (e.g., providing information, advice, feedback; Schaefer, Coyne, & Lazarus, 1981). While access to emotional support is unlikely to vary with social status, the prominent affiliations held by higher status individuals are likely to give them access to superior tangible and informational support. Therefore, to the extent that affiliations are viewed as a positional resource, the prominent affiliations held by higher status individuals might positively influence their reactions to status loss through tangible and informational support.

Taken together, this resource-based model predicts that the positional resources of higher status individuals should result in better self-regulation than low status individuals after status loss. Valued resources conferred with status (e.g., respect) will be greater for those who are higher in the hierarchy. The more individuals have of a resource the more they can “buy” with that resource. Despite a drop in the hierarchy, those with more status should still have more of this resource than those lower in the hierarchy. Therefore, a straightforward resource-based argument suggests that those higher in the hierarchy should be in a better position than any individual lower in the hierarchy, to react to status loss.

While this economic model is parsimonious, however, it neglects that individuals psychologically adapt to the outcomes they receive. As individuals’ respect in the hierarchy increases they adjust their expectations to receiving this respect and they are motivated to incorporate the respect they receive into their self-concept. When the psychological adaptation of the target individual (i.e. the individual who loses status) is integrated into the resource-based model, I find that the same prediction no longer

holds. In fact, taking this perspective, I argue that the process of psychologically adapting to one's position in the hierarchy influences people's ability to regulate themselves after losing status.

Ironically, the same process that provides high status individuals with superior positional resources to "buy" more coping options also prevents these individuals from developing the psychological resources (i.e., expectations, self-concepts) necessary to regulate themselves effectively after status loss. Because individuals adapt to the outcomes they receive, they develop expectations consistent with receiving these outcomes and they are motivated to incorporate these outcomes into their view of the self. The corollary of this argument is that higher status individuals psychologically adapt to acquiring status, and do not develop psychological resources for dealing with status loss. Thus, based on the psychological adaptation perspective, I argue that adaptation of lower status individuals' expectations and identities, based on having less status, should promote better self-regulation after status loss; whereas, the adaptation of higher status individuals' expectations and identities, based on acquiring status, are more likely to promote worse self-regulation after status loss (see Figure 2.1). The process of psychological adaptation and its implications for status loss are discussed next.

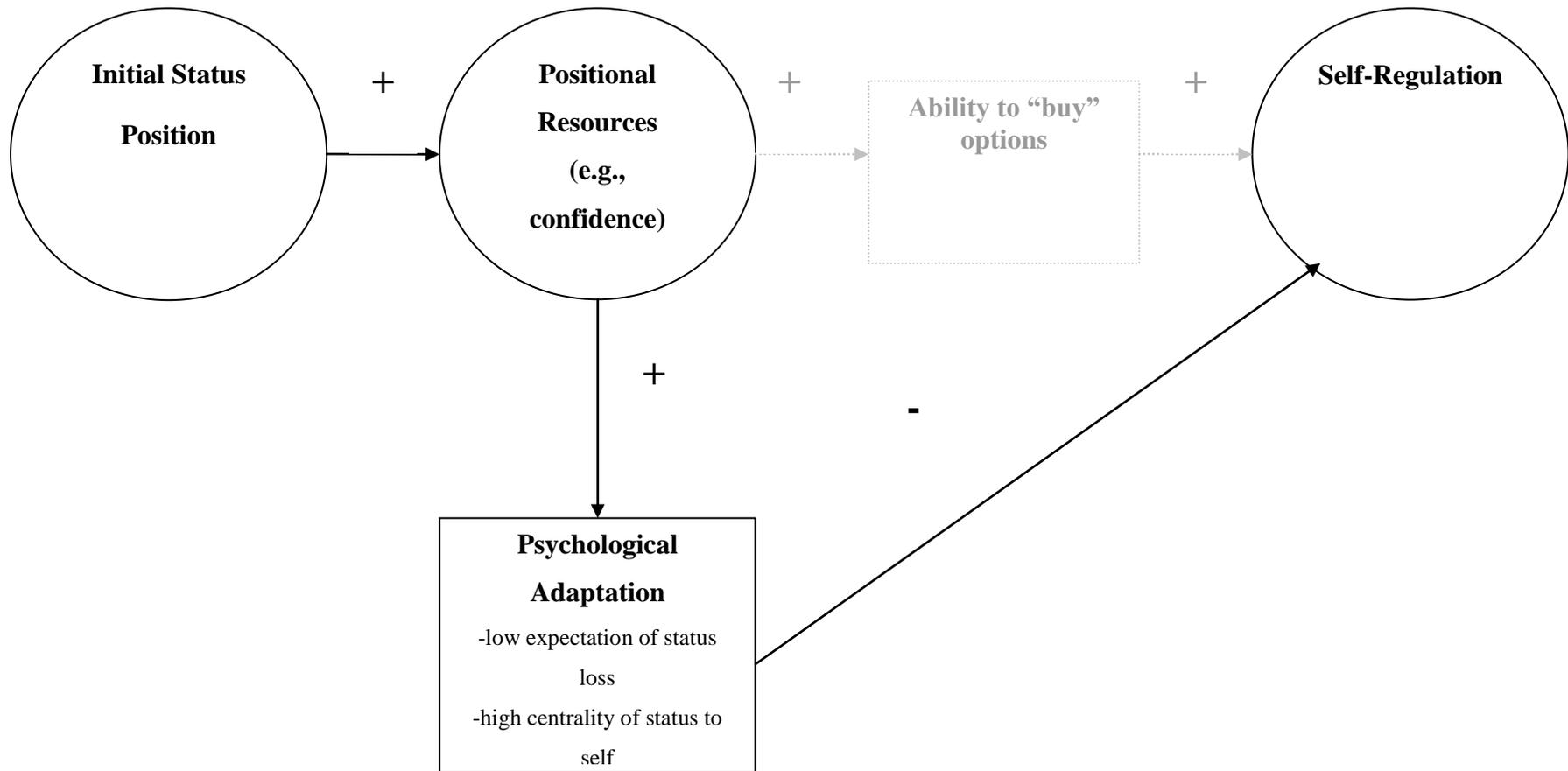


Figure 2.1. The effect of status on self-regulation after status loss (positional resource vs. psychological adaptation perspective).

Psychological Adaptation Perspective

The psychological adaptation perspective suggests that people adjust to the outcomes they receive in their typical environment. The concept of adaptation comes from biology where it refers to adjustment to the conditions under which species must live in order to survive (Helson, 1964). Dobzhansky describes,

The more one studies living beings, the more one is impressed by the wonderfully effective adjustment of their multifarious body structures and functions to their varying ways of life. From the simplest to the most complex, all organisms are constructed to function efficiently in the environment in which they live. (1950, p.32)

From a psychological perspective, this means that while people receive different amounts of status-based resources in accordance with our position, they also psychologically adjust to receiving these positional resources.

In the context of status, because status positions are typically determined quickly (i.e., within several minutes) upon group formation (Fisek & Ofshe, 1970) and given and that once status positions are determined, these positions tend to be maintained (Ridgeway, 1978; Ridgeway & Berger, 1986), people are likely to adapt to the amount of respect and deferral they receive based on their position in the hierarchy. This may occur through cognitive and motivational processes. Through a cognitive process, they adjust their expectations for the amount of respect and deferral they should receive in the future. Through a motivational process, they adjust the extent to which this respect is incorporated as a central part of their self-concept. Based on experimental research showing that status

manipulations influence cognitions and behaviours immediately afterwards (e.g., Ermer, Cosmides, & Tooby, 2008; Van Prooijen, Van den Bos, & Wilke, 2005), I assume that these cognitive and motivational adaptations occur quickly. Individuals who have higher status, therefore, quickly come to expect continued respect and deferral (Berger, et al., 1998) and view their status position as a central part of their self.

For example, elders in the Semai tribe are considered high status members of the group. Because of their perceived wisdom, tribe members defer to them and as a result, the elders come to expect that others listen to and consider their opinions (Dentan, 1979). In other words, based on their experience of receiving respect and deferral, the tribe elders adjust their expectations such that they expect this in future interactions and they view their respected social position as an important part of who they are. Thus, people do not view losses and gains objectively, but through the lens of these adapted expectations and motivated self-concepts. In the section below, I will explain how people psychologically adapt to our level of status through cognitive and motivational processes, and how this influences the experience of threat after status loss.

Expectations

One of the ways people adapt to their position in the hierarchy is through a cognitive process whereby they adjust their expectations for future status conferral. People's *expectations* are a function of their assumptions, beliefs, past experiences, as well as a function of the expectations they perceive others have for them (Atkinson, 1964; Tolman, 1925; Weiner, 1985). Based on their experience, fundamental assumptions of the status hierarchy, and the expectations others in the group have for them, I argue that high

status individuals are more likely than their low status counterparts to expect to receive the continued respect and admiration of their group members.

Initial Status Position and Status Expectations. There are several theoretical reasons to suggest that high status individuals will be more likely than low status individuals to hold expectations consistent with receiving status. First, the expectation states theory of status suggests that individuals' expectations for rewards are interdependent with their status position (Berger, et al., 1998; Cook, 1975). Accordingly, those at the top of the hierarchy should expect a high probability of rewards and expect a low probability of losses. Second, people's expectations are also heavily weighted by their past experiences (Atkinson, 1964; Tolman, 1925) with more recent and vivid experiences holding the most weight (Fiske & Taylor, 2008). The cumulative nature of status and the norms of status-consistent behaviour (discussed in the introduction above) suggest that high status individuals should have many experiences where they receive respect and deferral from their group members and therefore, they are likely to expect to continue receiving affirmations of status in this way. By contrast, low status individuals have experiences of being disadvantaged and subordinated in the hierarchy and as a result are more likely to expect to lose rather than gain status ("depressed entitlement"; Bylsma & Major, 1992; Jost, 1997; Major, McFarlin, & Gagnon, 1984). Finally, group members have elevated expectations for high status individuals. The elevated expectations group members have for high status individuals reinforce the expectations high status individuals have for themselves.

Expectations, cognitive inconsistency and threat. The expectations people hold are important because they provide them a sense of prediction and control over their world

(Fiske & Taylor, 2008). The mental structures that organize this information about concepts, stimuli or events (referred to as “scripts”) are called schemas. Schemas are abstracted from prior experiences (Kahneman & Miller, 1986), and they are useful in that they help people recognise (Smith, Adams, & Schorr, 1978) and remember information (Anderson & Pichert, 1978). They also help people understand and interpret the world around them. When people encounter new information, it is easiest for them to assimilate the data into a pre-existing schema rather than change a schema to account for new information (i.e., “accommodation”). As a result, people are motivated to maintain cognitive consistency (i.e., “cognitive conservatism”; Fiske & Taylor, 1991). This bias towards consistency and resistance to schema change enable people to make sense of and provide a coherent picture of their world (Fiske & Taylor, 1991; Janoff-Bulman, 1992). Thus, adjusting one’s expectations to his/her typical environment is adaptive.

There are times, however, when people are confronted with information that is inconsistent with their expectations. One can try to ignore this information or fit it into the pre-existing schema. However, if people cannot ignore or assimilate the dissident information, they must change their schema. If the new data concerns fundamental assumptions people hold about themselves or their world, this can be a traumatic experience.

Change in these core beliefs threaten an individual’s sense of stability, his or her way of knowing and interacting in the world. The known is familiar and conceptually comfortable; the unknown is threatening. (Janoff-Bulman, 1992, p. 40)

In such cases, accommodating the new information is a psychologically uncomfortable and effortful process. To the extent that one's fundamental assumptions have been questioned in the past, however, the experience of psychological threat is reduced (Burgess & Holmstrom, 1979; Gleser, Green, & Winget 1981; Janoff-Bulman, 1992). Previous research has found, for example, that Israeli soldiers with prior war experience were less likely than those with no experience to exhibit stress reactions in combat (Solomon, Avitzur, & Mikulincer, 1990). The more experienced soldiers held a schema for combat that was more consistent with the reality of the situation and so they were able to draw on pre-existing scripts to understand and react to the situation. In other words, because their *expectations* for the event were more consistent with their experience, this reduced their feelings of stress.

The theory of cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1957) also describes a threat response to cognitive inconsistency. This theory suggests that inconsistencies in individuals' cognitions and observations create a psychologically uncomfortable feeling termed 'dissonance'. For example, an individual who knows smoking causes disease and continues to smoke may experience psychological discomfort because of his actions being inconsistent with his views on smoking. In the case of status loss, an analogous example would be that someone who expects to receive respect and admiration from others is likely to experience dissonance when he/she is disrespected. Experiencing dissonance motivates the individual to reduce dissonance and achieve consonance. This often involves changing one's cognitions to be consistent with the situation, but if this is not possible, one might also avoid the situations and information that could increase dissonance. Therefore, the theory of cognitive dissonance is consistent with the theories of cognitive inconsistency

outlined above, such that if an individual experiences an event that is inconsistent with his views and expectations, this is likely to create psychological discomfort.

A final related argument is presented by Lazarus and Folkman (1984) who have suggested that to the extent that events are more novel and less predictable, they result in higher levels of perceived threat. The novelty of the event is threatening because knowledge about a particular situation helps us make sense of the experience (i.e., determine the meaning and significance of the event). Without direct or vicarious experience of a particular situation, someone may not have the knowledge required to cope with the demands of the event. Along the same lines, events that are more predictable are also less threatening. If people can recognise various signals indicating a particular event is about to occur, they are better able to react to it. One explanation for this is the *preparatory response hypothesis* which suggests that detecting and understanding relevant signals is important because it allows the individual to prepare in some way for the event. To the extent that someone expects a particular event it will be perceived of as less novel and more predictable. Therefore, this perspective suggests that the extent to which individuals *expect* - have experienced and can predict - a particular event will positively influence their ability to make sense of the experience and negatively impact the level of psychological threat they experience. Based on these theoretical arguments, I predict:

Hypothesis 1: Because of the expectations they hold about receiving status, high status individuals will be more likely to experience psychological threat (cognitive inconsistency) after status loss than low status individuals.

Expectations versus entitlement. Given that status is indicated through freely conferred respect and deferral, the possibility of losing status is always present. Low status individuals are free to stop listening to higher status individuals and to defer to other group members instead. For example, if another group member proves to be more competent in addressing the group's goals, group members can choose to confer respect to that individual. Because this is always a possibility, high status individuals should not take their status for granted. In fact, there is evidence to suggest that if high status individuals' act in ways that signal they are entitled to the respect of lower status individuals, or if they try to actively try to exert influence over others, group members will resist and they will effectively lose status (Henrich & Gil-White, 2001). Therefore, higher status individuals are likely aware that status loss is possible.

The fact that they know they *could* lose status, however, is not incongruent with the argument that they do not expect to lose status. These two things are not mutually exclusive. Recall that in this paper *expectations* are defined as being a function of individuals' beliefs, assumptions, past experiences, as well as, the expectations they perceive others to have for them. Although higher status individuals may be aware that the status they receive *could* be taken away, and the prospect of this happening is threatening (Pettit, et al., 2010; Scheepers, et al., 2009), this does not mean that they expect to lose status. This is because status hierarchies are relatively stable and even though low status individuals *could* stop listening to higher status individuals, it is usually not in their best interests to do so.

Based on a functional perspective on status (as described in the status section of this paper), a rank ordering of group members by freely conferred respect evolves out of the group's need to meet their goals. High status individuals are respected most because they

are perceived to contribute to the group's goals to the greatest extent and group members listen to them because it is likely to yield the optimal result for the group. These heightened contribution expectancies persist over time because high status individuals are attended to more (i.e., their contributions are noticed) and as they are already seen to be competent, their contributions are often evaluated more positively (Merton, 1968; Ridgeway, 1978). Given the expectations they hold for higher status members' contributions, it should be in lower status members' best interests to continue deferring to their higher status counterparts.

This contributes to a stable hierarchy. Over time, members adjust their expectations to their circumstances. In a stable hierarchy, status loss is unlikely to be expected by high status individuals unless a threat to their status becomes salient. Such a threat could take the form of a change in environment that could change the type of task the group performs (to a task that the high status individual knows they cannot contribute), or a new member joins the group and others recognise him or her as being more competent than the high status individual. However, in the absence of such cues in their environment that signal a threat of status loss, high status individuals should not expect to lose status.

Status Centrality

A second process through which people adapt to their position in the hierarchy is a motivational one, where they adjust their view of their self, based on the outcomes they receive. An individual's self-concept is a combination of the personal attributes (e.g., capable, competent) and the social identities (e.g., gender, ethnicity) that an individual seeks to present in a given situation (Erez & Earley, 1993). Research suggests that people strive to maintain a positive sense of self (Brockner, 1988; Sedikides, 1993; Sedikides & Strube, 1997; Steele, 1988) and social identities (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). People can

achieve this self-enhancement by carefully selecting which aspect of themselves to incorporate into their self-view. It is in their best interests to incorporate aspects that enhance their view of themselves, giving them the greatest sense of competence and self-worth; and minimize the psychological importance of aspects that negatively impact their view of themselves.

Initial status position and status centrality. Accordingly, people self-enhance by making domains in which they are successful (i.e., those from which they receive respect and admiration) more important to the self and making domains in which they are unsuccessful less important to the self (Sedikides & Strube, 1997). Results from both experimental and field studies provide support for this argument that people determine the self-importance of a particular life domain based on their success in that domain (Hill, Smith, & Lewicki, 1989; Lewicki, 1984; Tesser & Paulhus, 1983). For example, Hill and colleagues (1989) found that those who received the highest grades in a computer class came to assign greater weight to the importance of computer skills over the course of a semester relative to other skills.

In the context of status this means that when defining which aspects of their life are central to who they are, those who have more status in the hierarchy will define their superior position as a relatively more central, or important, component of their self than low status individuals. In other words, when defining which aspects of their life are central to who they are, people make use of aspects that enhance their self-view (e.g., occupying a high status position), and minimize the psychological importance of aspects that negatively impact their self-view (e.g., occupying a low status position). For example, to self-enhance,

a star tennis player should view tennis ability as critically important; whereas, a poor tennis player should minimize the importance of tennis ability to the self.

Consistent with this argument, research from the intergroup relationships literature has found that people identify more strongly with high status than low status groups (Ellemers, Doosje, van Knippenberg, & Wilke, 1992; Ellemers, Kortekaas, & Ouwerkerk, 1999) and incorporate their higher status membership into their self-concept more than lower status memberships (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). There is also evidence to suggest that low status and stigmatized individuals often find ways to minimize the psychological importance of their status position such as disidentifying with the position (Kreiner, et al., 2006), or by emphasizing attributes of themselves that are not included in the status evaluation (Elsbach & Kramer, 1996). Accordingly, I suggest that those who have more status in the hierarchy will define their superior position as a relatively more central component of their self than low status individuals.

Status centrality and self-threat. People are threatened by and react negatively to events that threaten their positive view of their self (e.g., Baumeister, Smart, & Boden, 1996; Campbell & Sedikides, 1999). Any event that challenges, calls into question, or diminishes a person's sense of competence, dignity or self-worth would qualify as a threat to their self (Aquino & Douglas, 2003; Steele, 1988). Based on this definition of self-threat, it seems possible that the experience of status loss could trigger self-threat. However, the amount of self-threat triggered by status loss would depend on the extent to which the individual's status in the hierarchy was integral to his or her general sense of competence, dignity, or self-worth. Making their prestigious position a central part of their self bolsters high status individuals' self-worth, however, it also means that they come to depend more

(than low status individuals) on their status to maintain their positive self-view.

Consequently, for high status individuals losing status is likely to elicit more self-threat after status loss than it would for low status individuals. I predict:

Hypothesis 2: Because of the centrality of status to their self-concept, high status individuals will be more likely to experience self-threat after status loss than low status individuals.

Psychological Adaptation and Reactions to Status Loss

Ironically then, the same outcomes that should provide high status individuals with the resources to cope with status loss (e.g., confidence, self-efficacy) also promote psychological adaptations (i.e., expectations, self-concept) that are more threatened (i.e., cognitive inconsistency, self-threat) by status loss. Higher status individuals who have adjusted their expectations and self-concept to receiving more respect and deferral are likely to find the experience of status loss more threatening than low status individuals who have adjusted their expectations and self-concept to receiving less respect and deferral. Therefore, low status individuals should be able to deal with the status loss with less psychological discomfort and this should promote more functional reactions to status loss.

The relationship between adaptation and functional reactions to negative experiences has been highlighted in research on the *negative adaptation hypothesis* (Thau, Aquino, & Bommer, 2008). Derived from Helson's (1964) theory of psychological

adaptation, the authors suggest that exposure to aversive experiences should enhance adaptation to mistreatment. The argument is that one's experiences of mistreatment influence one's expectations about how well or badly one should be treated by institutional authorities in the future (Davidson & Friedman, 1998). This is because people use their past experiences as anchors for evaluating future outcomes (Kahneman, Slovic, & Tversky, 1982; Van den Bos, Lind, Vermunt, & Wilke, 1997). Thus, individuals who have negative experiences in the past will come to expect such experiences and then evaluate them less negatively in the future. The authors argue that these lowered expectations and evaluations allow people to adapt to such experiences more effectively. The analogous argument I make in this research is that as a result of psychologically adapting their status position, low status individuals are less likely find status loss inconsistent with their expectations and threatening to the self-view. These cognitive and motivational adaptation processes enable them to react to status loss in more functional ways.

Threat and Self-Regulation

Past research suggests that high status individuals are typically better self-regulators than low status individuals. Because of the intangible resources (e.g., confidence; Frank, 1985) held by high status individuals, high status individuals often have greater self-efficacy (Gecas & Seff, 1989) which typically enhances their motivation and performance (Felson, 1984; Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998). In fact, hierarchical position has been found to positively influence self-regulation on challenging work tasks (DeWall, et al., 2011) and high inter-group status has been associated with performance on tests that require persistence (Lovaglia, et al., 1998). Therefore, under conditions of no status loss, we might expect high status individuals to self-regulate more effectively than low status individuals.

However, as a consequence of the increased threat high status individuals experience after status loss (Hypothesis 1 and Hypothesis 2), I suggest that high status individuals will be more likely than low status individuals to experience self-regulation impairment after status loss. There are at least two reasons why high status individuals might experience self-regulation impairment. First, if high status individuals experience more psychological threat from cognitive inconsistency (Hypothesis 1), this heightens physiological arousal (Festinger, 1957). Arousal has important implications for self-regulation because arousal tends to be inversely related to attention; high levels of arousal restrict an individual's attentional field (Easterbrook, 1959; Kahneman, 1973). At low levels of threat this narrowing of the attentional field can actually improve self-regulation by reducing distracting extraneous information. However, at high levels of threat it causes task relevant information to be ignored (Easterbrook, 1959; Kahneman, 1973). As a result, information-processing is impaired and performance is likely to suffer (Gellatly & Meyer, 1992; Humphreys & Revelle, 1984; Wilder & Shapiro, 1989). Therefore, individuals who experience high levels of arousal are likely to experience impaired ability to regulate themselves on subsequent tasks.

Second, if high status individuals experience more self-threat after status loss (Hypothesis 2) they are likely to experience more self-regulation impairment than low status individuals. This is because experiencing self-threat triggers a need to protect the self (e.g., to justify, to assign blame); the greater the centrality of the threatened aspect to the self, the greater the self-threat and the stronger the motivation to self-protect (Crocker & Wolfe, 2001; Sedikides, in press). If high status individuals view their status as a more relevant part of their self than low status individuals, they will experience a stronger

motivation to self-protect after status loss. Although self-protection strategies are beneficial in that they help restore a positive view of the self, they also deplete self-regulatory capacities (Crocker & Park, 2004; Sedikides, in press) which is likely to have consequences for self-regulation on subsequent tasks.

According to the regulatory depletion model (Muraven & Baumeister, 2000), if individuals need to self-regulate in one situation (e.g., by using attention, effort, and willpower to protect their self), they deplete their capacity to effectively regulate in a situation immediately afterwards, which constitutes a self-regulation impairment (Baumeister, Heatherton, & Tice, 1994; Heatherton & Baumeister, 1996). One drastic example of this process is that when people are threatened by thoughts of dying (which triggers self-protection), they perform poorly on subsequent tasks requiring persistence (Gailliot, Schmeichel, & Baumeister, 2006). The relationship between self-threat and impaired self-regulation implies that individuals who experience more self-threat as a result of status loss will be less able to regulate their performance on subsequent tasks. Therefore, the main prediction I make in this thesis is that high status individuals (who I suggested would experience more threat after status loss than their low status counterparts) will be more likely to experience self-regulation impairment immediately after losing status than low status individuals (see Figure 2.2). Consequently,

Hypothesis 3: High status individuals will experience more self-regulation impairment (reduced persistence) immediately after status loss than low status individuals.

Hypothesis 4a: High status individuals' experience of self-regulation impairment (reduced persistence) will be mediated by psychological threat (cognitive inconsistency).

Hypothesis 4b: High status individuals' experience of self-regulation impairment (reduced persistence) will be mediated by self-threat.

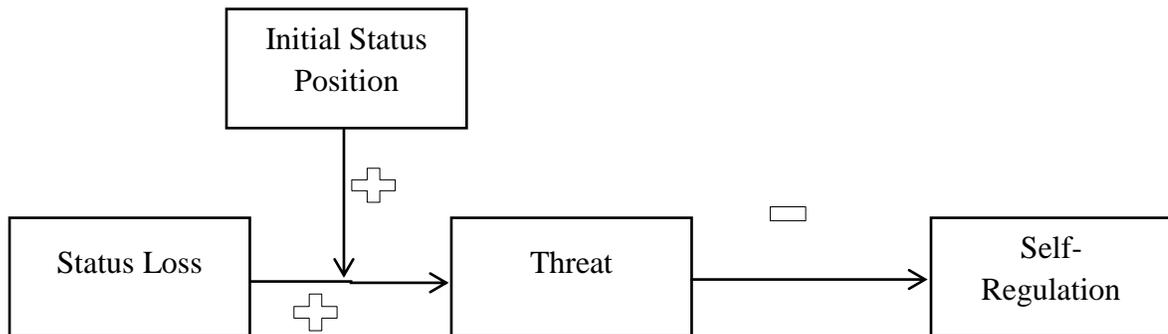


Figure 2.2. The individual consequences of status loss.

The Social Consequences of Status Loss for High Status Individuals

In the previous section (see Initial Status Position and Self-Regulation Impairment), I developed hypotheses suggesting that high status individuals will experience status loss as more threatening than low status individuals (Hypotheses 1 and 2) and as a result, they will have more difficulty self-regulating in the immediate aftermath of status loss (Hypotheses 3, 4a and 4b). This theory provides the foundation of my theoretical model. It addresses the question of *who* in the status hierarchy has the most difficulty self-regulating after status loss, and in doing so, it also starts to address *what* consequences people are likely to face as a result of status loss, namely reduced persistence. However, the self-regulation impairment that high status individuals experience after status loss may not only have individual performance implications (i.e., reduced persistence), but also social consequences. Specifically, the extent to which high status individuals display self-regulation after status loss may influence how they are subsequently evaluated and treated by their group members.

Who Deserves Status?

As mentioned in the introduction (Chapter 1), a key feature of social life is that groups are structured by status hierarchies, and benefits accrue to those at the top of these hierarchies (Adler, et al., 2000; Podolny & Phillips, 1996; Van Der Vegt, et al., 2006). While this presents problems for *individuals* in terms of how they should self-enhance given their position in the hierarchy (see previous section on Status Centrality), it also presents a fundamental problem for *groups* in terms of how they decide who is awarded high status. In other words, groups need to determine which members are most deserving of the privileges of status.

This problem is an important one for groups to resolve because the most respected, admired and regarded group members (i.e., high status individuals; Anderson et al., 2006) will have the most influence over the group's processes (Berger et al., 1972), they will disproportionately contribute to the group's outcomes, and their actions will be heavily copied by other group members (Henrich & Gil-White, 2001). Consequently, if the group confers status to the individuals who are most worthy of these rewards and responsibilities (e.g., the most competent group members), this should have a positive effect on the group's processes, outcomes and the behaviour of other group members. However, if the group mistakenly confers status to individuals who are not worthy of these rewards and responsibilities (e.g., incompetent group members), this will have a negative impact on the group's processes, outcomes and the behaviour of other group members. Thus, conferring status to undeserving group members could threaten the success and survival of the group.

Accordingly, groups must determine on what basis status should be awarded to ensure that the most deserving members receive the most status. In this section, I will describe how self-regulation is used as a diagnostic criterion to make this status conferral decision. Specifically, I will suggest that displays of effective self-regulation signal that an individual is deserving of status in the group, whereas, displays of impaired self-regulation signal that an individual is undeserving of status. By illustrating the role of self-regulation in status conferral, I demonstrate how self-regulation has not only an intra-individual (see section on Initial Status Position and Self-Regulation), but also a social function.

This is relevant to my investigation of the consequences of status loss because the first part of my theoretical model suggested that high status individuals (i.e., group members who have been conferred the most status in the group) are also the most likely to

experience impaired self-regulation in the aftermath of status loss. If status loss negatively impacts the self-regulation of high status individuals, this will not only have implications for their individual performance (e.g., reduced persistence), but also for how they are evaluated and treated by relevant others (e.g., group members, organisational members, other status-conferring groups; referred to hereafter as “social audiences”). Therefore, high status individuals who display impaired self-regulation (e.g., reduced persistence) in the face of a challenging situation (i.e., status loss) may be viewed by social audiences as undeserving of their high standing in the group.

Whether or not high status individuals are viewed as deserving of their status after status loss is important because it will influence their ability to regain status in the future. Status loss is not always permanent and it is often possible for high status individuals to retain their standing in some way. For example, people can informally lose status (i.e., lose the respect of their group members), but regain this respect over time in the eyes of their group members. Alternatively, people can experience a formal status loss (e.g., loss of a title, demotion) in a group, but manage to retain their informal status (i.e., the respect they have in the eyes of their group members). People might also do something that causes them to lose respect in the eyes of their group members (e.g., the members of their project team), but does not affect their status in the eyes of another relevant social audience (e.g., the members of their department). In these ways, status loss is not always global or permanent, and there may be ways for high status individuals to retain or regain their high standing after status loss. However, whether or not they can regain status will critically depend on how they are evaluated and treated by relevant social audiences.

In sum, for a high status individual to retain or regain status they need to reinforce the view that they are deserving of status. In other words, the relevant social audience needs to perceive that the high status individual's status position is, in fact, legitimate. Thus, if high status individuals who experience self-regulation impairment after status loss are viewed as undeserving of status (i.e., illegitimate), this has important implications for their ability to regain status. Moreover, by thwarting their ability to regain their lost status, high status individuals' impaired self-regulation could also undermine the stability of the hierarchy. These arguments are developed in the next section.

Status Loss and Perceptions of Legitimacy

A growing body of research suggests that people typically view a high status individual's status position as legitimate. This is because people's default view seems to be that the existing social order is 'how things should be' (Berger & Zelditch, 1998; Gould, 2002; Jost & Banaji, 1994; Ridgeway & Berger, 1986; Zelditch, 2001). Theories such as 'system justification theory' (Jost & Banaji, 1994) and 'belief in a just world' (Lerner, 1980) explain that people seek to find ways to rationalize the status quo. For people to come to view a social order as illegitimate, something must happen that prompts them to question and scrutinise those who enjoy the most respect and esteem (Mills, 1940; Thomas, Walker, & Zelditch, 1986). Tost (2011) proposed that events that violate expectations act as "jolts", triggering a re-evaluation of legitimacy judgments. The status loss of a high status individual may be such an event because it violates people's expectations about the stability of the social order (Zelditch & Floyd, 1998).

As mentioned in the previous chapter, because of the privileges that accrue to high status individuals, status is generally thought to be self-perpetuating (Merton, 1968) and

high status individuals in particular are expected to maintain their social standing. If a high status individual loses status, it violates this expectation. This “jolt” is then likely to prompt social audiences to re-evaluate their legitimacy judgments because events that violate the expectations of a social audience are salient, demanding attention and explanation (Clary & Tesser, 1983; Fiske, 1980; Hastie, 1984).

Accordingly, I assume that the status loss of a high status individual will generally act as a “jolt” and prompt social audiences to scrutinise the high status individual’s actions and re-evaluate the individual’s legitimacy. However, I argue that status loss will not automatically reverse people’s legitimacy judgments and their behavioural support for high status individuals. As mentioned above, people want to believe that the current social order is justified, so they would be highly motivated to justify their past support for a high status individual. Indeed, system justification theory suggests that even when there are personal and situational incentives to call into question the social order, people are strongly motivated to justify and maintain their beliefs that the social order is indeed legitimate (Jost, et al., 2004; Jost & Burgess, 2000; Jost, Pelham, & Carvallo, 2002).

People only revise their strongly held beliefs if they are confronted with compelling evidence that disconfirms the core of their belief (Gurwitz & Dodge, 1977; Hewstone, Hopkins, & Routh, 1992; Weber & Crocker, 1983). Therefore, for a high status individual to be viewed as undeserving of status after status loss, social audiences need evidence that is highly diagnostic of the high status individual lacking the competence expected of high status individuals. I suggest that a lack of self-regulation (i.e., self-regulation impairment) provides this evidence. The paradoxical implication of this argument is that those individuals who have the greatest expectations of maintaining their status and who ascribe

the most importance to their status (i.e., high status individuals), will be least likely to regain their status.

Self-Regulation as a Fundamental Antecedent to Status

Every day, people are challenged by situations that require willpower in order to meet the demands of the situation they are facing. Controlling one's temper, working on a project well in advance of a deadline, or persisting to solve a difficult or boring task at work are all instances that require individuals to adjust their behaviour to be consistent with the demands of the situation (Baumeister, et al., 1993; Scheier & Carver, 1988). As discussed in Chapter 1, if one is unable to meet these demands, one may experience self-regulation impairment unleashing aggression (DeWall, et al., 2007), procrastination (Tice, et al., 2001), and performance and persistence deficits on effortful or frustrating tasks (Baumeister, et al., 1998; Schmeichel, et al., 2003). Consequently, the ability to control and regulate the self is intimately related to competence.

Although there may be specific individual characteristics (e.g., physical strength, agreeableness) that can be used to determine competence in some situations, these same characteristics may be poor indicators of competence in other situations. For example, physical strength may be a good predictor of competence in a military team, but a poor predictor of competence in a decision-making exercise. Similarly, agreeableness may be a good predictor of competence in a cooperative task, but a poor predictor of competence in inter-group negotiation. Unlike these other characteristics, however, self-regulation is predictive of competence across a broad range of situations.

Those who are able to self-regulate effectively have superior academic performance (Tangney, Baumeister, & Boone, 2004), perform better on cognitive tasks (Baumeister, et

al., 1998; Schmeichel, et al., 2003), present themselves more effectively (Vohs, Baumeister, & Ciarocco, 2005), are more ethical (Gino, Schweitzer, Mead, & Ariely, 2011) and less dishonest (Mead, Baumeister, Gino, Schweitzer, & Ariely, 2009) than those whose self-regulation is impaired. Because competence requires producing effective, goal-oriented behaviour on demand (Rhodewalt & Vohs, 2005), social audiences are likely to attribute competence to those who demonstrate they can effectively regulate their self.

There is also some evidence from past research suggesting that behaviours that require self-regulation promote status conferral. For example, Lord's Leadership Categorization Theory suggests that people view leaders as more effective to the extent that they demonstrate prototypical leadership traits by engaging in behaviours such that require self-regulation such as "emphasizing goals", "coordinating groups", and "proposing solutions" (Lord, Foti & De Vader, 1984). However, some of the prototypical behaviours examined are unrelated to self-regulation or could be considered regulatory failures (e.g., "talks frequently"; Vohs, Baumeister, & Ciarocco, 2005). Thus, confirming evidence that demonstrations of self-regulation lead to status conferral is required.

Based on a functionalist perspective on status where the highest status is conferred to the most competent members (see Chapter 1), if the exercise of self-regulation triggers competence attributions, those who display self-regulation should be conferred with more status from social audiences. Thus, self-regulation should be a fundamental antecedent to status.

Hypothesis 5: Individuals who display self-regulation (versus self-regulation impairment) will be conferred more status because they are seen as more competent.

Hypothesis 5 then provides the foundation for the main prediction of the second part

of my theoretical model. As outlined in the first part of my theoretical model, despite their superior self-regulation under normal conditions (DeWall, et al., 2011), high status individuals are particularly susceptible to self-regulation impairment after status loss (Hypotheses 3, 4a and 4b). As a result, some (and perhaps only a few) high status individuals will effectively self-regulate after losing status, and others will experience self-regulation impairment.

Because demonstrations of self-regulation lead to status conferral (Hypothesis 5), high status individuals who can overcome the regulatory challenge of status loss and display effective self-regulation send a reliable signal that they are truly deserving of status. However, those who display self-regulation impairment after status loss send exactly the opposite signal. This leads to the main prediction that observing a high status individual's successful self-regulation after status loss should lead social audiences to infer that he/she is competent and truly deserving of status; however, observing a high status individual's self-regulation impairment after status loss should lead social audiences to infer that the high status individual lacks competence and thus, is truly undeserving of status. These relationships are depicted in Figure 2.3.

Hypothesis 6: Status loss will negatively affect perceptions of a high status individual's legitimacy because social audiences will attribute less competence to the high status individual, but only when the high status individual displays self-regulation impairment (versus effective self-regulation) in the aftermath of status loss.

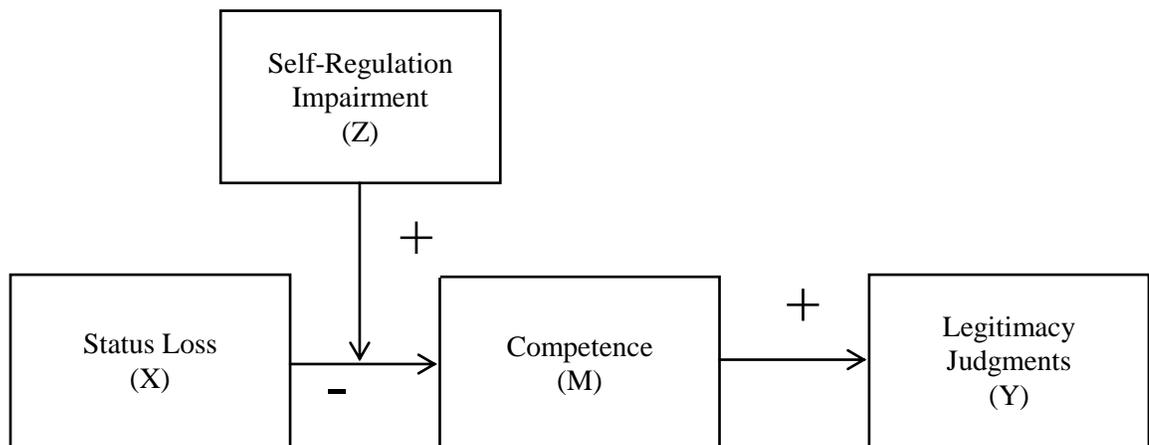


Figure 2.3. How status loss influences legitimacy judgments through competence attributions depending on self-regulation.

Status Legitimacy and Hierarchy Stability

The argument that high status individuals who display impaired self-regulation after status loss will be viewed as undeserving of status (illegitimate) implies that they will be unable to retain or regain their high standing in the group. However, the corollary of their inability to regain status is that this may create the opportunity for change in the hierarchy. Specifically, lower status individuals may be motivated by this to withdraw their support for the social order and jockey for a higher status position.

Typically, low status individuals demonstrate their support for the social order by deferring to the directives of high status individuals (Walker, Thomas, & Zelditch, 1986; Weber, 1946). Deferral and other kinds of submissive behaviour towards high status individuals is usually automatic as long as the social order is seen to be legitimate (Mazur, 1973). However, if group members have reasons to believe that the social order is not legitimate (e.g., a high status member is undeserving of their status position) they may refuse to defer to the direction of high status individuals and even challenge them.

For example, Gamson, Fireman and Rytina (1982) examined how the erosion of legitimacy influenced noncompliance in a group of oil executives. They found that as the number of subordinates questioning the legitimacy of a consultant increased, the less likely they were to comply with the consultant's directives. This is important because a high rate of noncompliance by a large proportion of subordinates has the potential to destabilise an existing social order (Zelditch & Floyd, 1998). Given that status position is determined by freely conferred respect and deferral, if low status individuals stop deferring to high status individuals, those at the top of the hierarchy will lose their privileged position in the social order, creating instability in the social order.

If the diagnosticity of self-regulation impairment for illegitimacy overwhelms the conformity pressures to defer to high status individuals, when high status individuals display self-regulation impairment, status loss will reduce low status individuals' willingness to defer and increase their status-challenging behaviour. However, when high status individuals demonstrate effective self-regulation, status loss should not affect low status individuals' status-challenging behaviour.

Hypothesis 7: Status loss will increase status-challenging behaviour because status loss reduces low status individuals' willingness to defer, but only when high status individuals display self-regulation impairment (versus effective self-regulation) in the aftermath of status loss.

Together with the predictions regarding the individual consequences of status loss (Hypotheses 1-4b), these hypotheses lead to the following theoretical model (Figure 2.4).

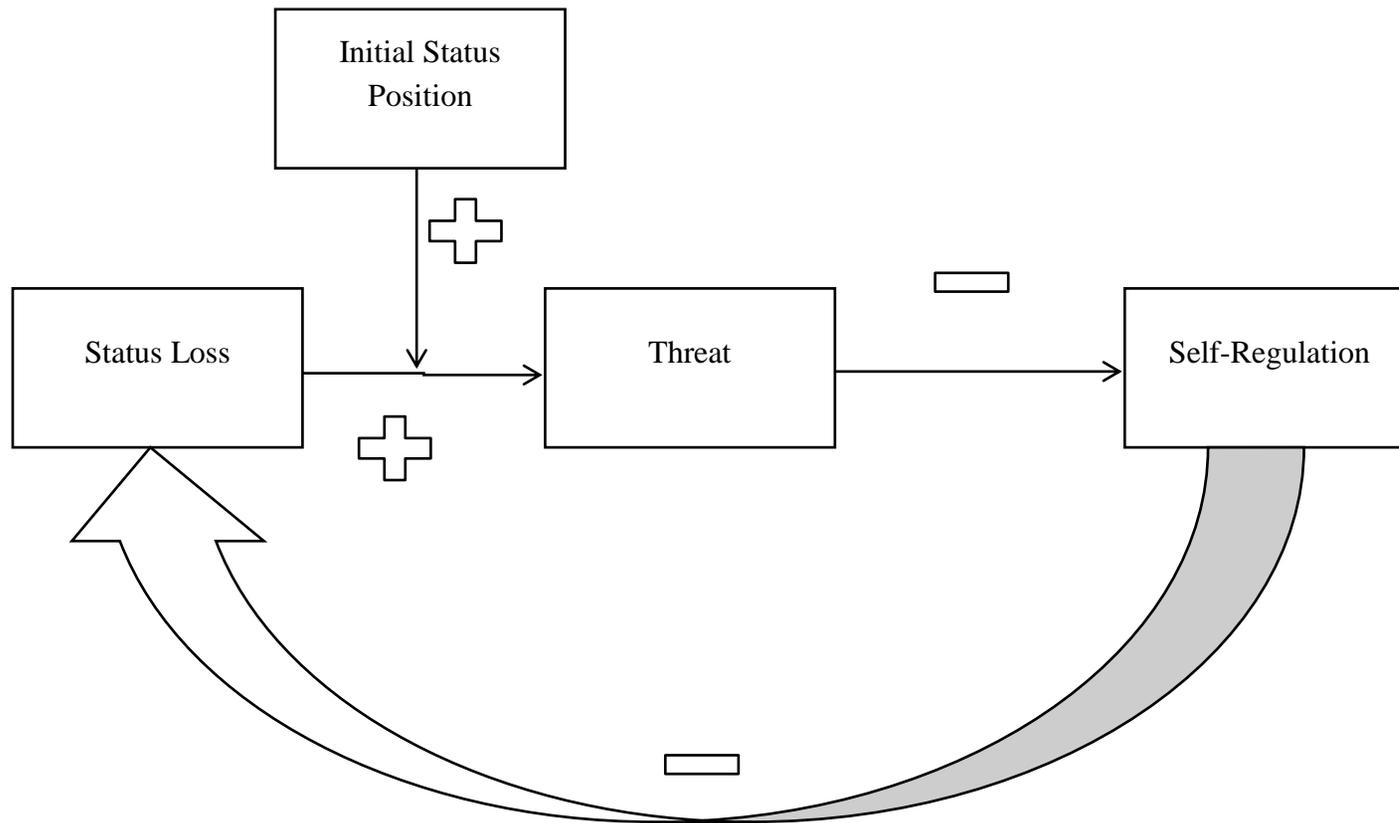


Figure 2.4. A theoretical model of status loss and self-regulation.

Overview of Empirical Studies

In the next two chapters of this thesis, I present studies to address each of the perspectives in my theoretical model. First I investigated *who* in the status hierarchy would be able to regulate themselves most effectively after status loss (Hypotheses 1-4). Then I examined the social consequences of this self-regulation impairment for high status individuals (Hypotheses 5-7).

Chapter 3 includes two vignette and two experimental studies investigating how initial position in the status hierarchy influences self-regulation after status loss. In Study 1, I used a vignette methodology to investigate whether high status individuals experience more cognitive inconsistency (Hypothesis 1) and self-threat after status loss than low status individuals (Hypothesis 2). In Study 2, I used a similar vignette methodology to investigate how initial status position influenced persistence on a problem-solving task after losing status (Hypothesis 3) and to what extent this relationship could be explained by cognitive inconsistency (Hypothesis 4a) and the importance of the status position to the self (Hypothesis 4b). In Study 3, I conducted a high involvement experiment to replicate the support for Hypothesis 3 in a more realistic group setting. Finally, in Study 4, I extended the findings of the previous three studies by directly testing the mediation hypothesis (Hypothesis 4b) via a moderation-of-process design (Spencer, Zanna, & Fong, 2005) in a group-based experiment. Specifically, I examined whether the opportunity to affirm their status would influence high status individuals' ability or willingness to persist.

In order to make fair comparisons between high and low status individuals in this first set of studies it was important that the magnitude of the status loss experienced was objectively comparable. Accordingly, I demonstrate the objective comparability of the loss in two ways. First, in each of the aforementioned studies, I used quantifiable

measurements of status and manipulated status loss so that the loss experienced by high and low status individuals was comparable in quantity (i.e., dropping one organizational position, dropping 24 places in a ranking system, gaining and losing one title, losing 50% of their respect points). Second, to confirm that the manipulations were not only numerically equivalent, but were also perceived to be equivalent, I included manipulation checks to determine whether high and low status individuals perceived the losses to be of the same magnitude. My theory suggests that despite *objectively* experiencing the same status loss in these studies, the *subjective* experience of losing status will be different because high status individuals will experience the same loss as more inconsistent with their expectations and more meaningful to their self.

Building on this set of studies, in Chapter 4, I examine the social consequences of status loss for high status individuals. I present three experimental studies that investigate how high status individuals' self-regulation impacts the status judgments and status-challenging behaviour of social audiences after status loss. In Study 5, I verified that individuals who demonstrate effective (versus impaired) self-regulation are conferred more status because they are viewed as more competent (Hypothesis 5). This study provides the empirical basis for testing my main predictions in Study 6 and 7. In these studies I examine how social audiences react to the status loss of leaders. Leaders are typically considered to occupy high status positions within task groups and past research on status is often operationalised through leadership roles (e.g., leader vs. subordinate; Brescoll, Dawson, & Uhlmann, 2010; de Kwaadsteniet & van Dijk, 2010; Michener & Tausig, 1971). In Study 6, I tested whether effective self-regulation provides a buffering effect on status loss such that losing status negatively impacts perceptions of a leader's legitimacy because the leader is seen as less competent, but only when the leader demonstrates self-regulation impairment (versus effective self-

regulation) after status loss (Hypothesis 6). Then building on this study, in Study 7, I designed a computer-mediated group experiment to examine whether self-regulation buffers the effect of a leader's status loss on the status-challenging behaviour of subordinates. I examined whether a leader's status loss lowers subordinate's willingness to defer to the leader's directives, causing them to engage in behaviours that challenge the leader's position, but only when the leader displays self-regulation impairment (versus effective self-regulation) after status loss (Hypothesis 7).

Chapter 3 : Individual Consequences of Status Loss Experiments

Study 1

Study 1 tested the first part of my theoretical model by investigating how initial status position influences the experience of threat in the immediate aftermath of status loss (Hypotheses 1 and 2). I chose an indirect approach to assess threat because previous research has shown that high status individuals are reluctant to admit feeling threatened (Scheepers & Ellemers, 2005; Scheepers, et al., 2009). For example, Scheepers and colleagues (2009) found that, unlike low status individuals, when high status individuals were threatened, they did not report experiencing threat, even though physiological measures revealed that they were, in fact, experiencing a threat response. My hypotheses suggest that high status individuals are more likely to experience threat because of how their status influences their expectations and self-concepts. Accordingly, I selected a rumination measure as an indicator of cognitive inconsistency (Jonas, Diehl, & Brömer, 1997) and self-affirmation measures as an indicator of self-threat (Kumashiro & Sedikides, 2005; Leary, Tambor, Terdal, & Downs, 1995; Sherman & Cohen, 2006).

Research on cognitive dissonance suggests that individuals experiencing cognitive inconsistency will engage in selective elaboration to reduce that inconsistency (Festinger, 1957; Jonas, et al., 1997; Nordgren, van Harreveld, & van der Pligt, 2006). Consequently, individuals who are attempting to resolve cognitive inconsistencies will ruminate about the threatened domain. Thus, if high status individuals experience more threat from cognitive inconsistency after status loss (Hypothesis 1), they will ruminate more about the threatened domain than low status individuals. If, on the other hand, high status individuals are less affected by status loss (i.e., because of their superior

coping resources, as suggested by the positional resources perspective), they should engage in less rumination than low status individuals after status loss.

Self-affirmation theory suggests that, when people experience a self-threat, they are motivated to engage in self-affirmation processes to restore their positive self-view (Sherman & Cohen, 2006; Sherman & Hartson, 2011; Steele, 1988). Self-affirmation includes actions such as reflecting on important aspects of one's life irrelevant to the threat or engaging with family and friends. Accordingly, if high status individuals experience more threat after status loss because of status' importance to their self-concept (Hypothesis 2), they should experience a greater motivation to affirm their feelings of self-worth and self-respect than lower status individuals. If on the other hand, high status individuals do not feel threatened by status loss because they still have more resources than others (i.e., as emphasised by the positional resources perspective on status), they should be less motivated to self-affirm after losing status than low status individuals. Based on my theoretical model, I predicted that after status loss, high status individuals would experience more rumination in the threatened domain and would have a greater need to affirm than low status individuals.

Participants and Procedure

One-hundred and eighty-seven full and part-time employed individuals (102 females, mean age 36.64, $SD = 8.47$), recruited through an online data collection service, were randomly assigned to a 2 (initial status position: high vs. low) X 2 (status loss: status loss vs. no status loss) between-participant design. Participants learned that they would complete two ostensibly unrelated studies. In the "first study", they read a scenario, imagining they were the focal character, and answered a series of filler questions. In the "second study", under the guise of completing a survey of their "preferences for products and experiences", they indicated their need for affirmation. In

exchange for completing the survey, participants received points that they could use for future online purchases.

Status manipulation. Consistent with previous research that has manipulated participant status through work-based scenarios (Bowles & Gelfand, 2010; Sheets & Braver, 1999; Van Prooijen, Van den Bos, & Wilke, 2005), participants imagined working at a consulting company as a Senior Consultant (high status) or as a Senior Analyst (low status). Participants read that they had been promoted into this position six months earlier and though the promotion was in title only, seniority was important because it means more respect in the eyes of the Partners and other consultants, and it also came with special privileges (e.g., being deferred to in meetings). Participants were asked to think about their position at the consulting company and to describe how it would feel to be a Senior Consultant [Analyst]. Thus, consistent with classic indicators of status (Berger, et al., 1972; Hollander, 1958) organisational position (Senior Consultant vs. Senior Analyst) manipulated initial status position. The scenario used for this study is reported in Appendix 3.1.

Status loss manipulation. Participants in the status loss condition were instructed to imagine that they had been called into the boardroom for their performance review, seated across from the review committee, and told by the Managing Partner at the firm that they had not met the requirements for a Senior Consultant [Senior Analyst] and they would be demoted to a Junior Consultant [Junior Analyst]. Participants were asked to describe how they would feel in this situation. Thus, the demotion from Senior Consultant to Junior Consultant (high status) or from Senior Analyst to Junior Analyst (low status) constituted the manipulation of status loss.

After answering several filler items, participants completed the rumination and need for affirmation measures described below.

Measures

Rumination. One of the ways individuals attempt to resolve cognitive inconsistency is through rumination (Festinger, 1957; Jonas, et al., 1997; Nordgren, et al., 2006). Accordingly, after reading the scenario and completing the filler items, participants were asked to complete a thought-listing exercise. Participants read that “Before going on to the next study, we would like you to complete a thought-listing exercise. Please type anything that comes to mind.” Participants entered their thoughts into an essay-length text box. The context of participants’ responses was coded for work and performance-related rumination. Two rumination variables were created with this data. First, a binary variable was created to indicate whether or not participants engaged in work and performance-related rumination; responses were coded as ‘1’ if they included work or performance-related thoughts and were coded as ‘0’ if they did not include work or performance-related thoughts. Second, a variable corresponding to the length (number of words) of work and performance related rumination was also created.

Need for affirmation. One of the ways individuals can affirm their positive sense of self to reduce self-threat is through their social affiliations (Kumashiro & Sedikides, 2005; Leary, et al., 1995; Sherman & Cohen, 2006). Accordingly, after completing the thought-listing exercise, participants read that they would complete a “second study” on their “preferences and willingness to pay for certain goods and experiences”. They were asked to report a close relationship partner (e.g., spouse, parent, friend), who makes them feel respected and worthy. Next, participants were instructed that they had £100 to bid on a variety of different products and experiences (to ensure that participants did not perceive different financial constraints based on the status

manipulation in the “first study”). I then assessed participants’ need for affirmation using three measures.

First, participants reported the maximum amount they would be willing to pay to spend time with the close relationship partner they reported (£0-100). Second, participants read that a phone call could cost up to £10 and indicated the maximum percentage of the total possible price they were willing to pay to speak with the close relationship partner they reported (1 = 10%, 12 = 120%). Third, participants were asked to indicate, “based on how they felt right now”, how much they wanted to “spend time with” and “be close to” the close relationship partner they reported (1 = *not at all*, 7 = *very much*). Participants then learned that there were no additional questions about their preferences or willingness to pay for any other goods or experiences. Finally, I thanked, debriefed and compensated the participants. I standardized and summed the three measures of need for affirmation into a need for affirmation index ($\alpha = .77$).

Manipulation checks. To verify that the status and status loss manipulations would have the intended effects, I conducted a pretest on a separate sample of 30 full and part-time employed individuals (18 females, mean age 33.07, $SD = 6.15$). After reading the scenario and describing how they would feel in this situation, participants indicated the extent to which they felt like they had low status at the beginning of the scenario (initial status position; 1 = *not at all*, 7 = *very much*) and the extent to which they felt they lost status in the scenario (status loss; 1 = *not at all*, 7 = *very much*). Those in the low status condition indicated they felt they had lower status ($M = 2.85$, $SD = 1.41$) than those in the high status condition ($M = 1.82$, $SD = .88$), $F(1, 28) = 5.97$, $p = .02$, $\eta^2 = .18$. Those in the status loss condition felt like they lost more status ($M = 6.69$, $SD = .63$) than those in the no status loss condition ($M = 2.25$, $SD = 1.77$). Also, high ($M = 4.31$, $SD = 2.91$) and low status ($M = 4.15$, $SD = 2.34$) participants did not differ in

the extent to which they felt they had lost status, $F(1, 27) = .03, p = ns$. These results indicate that the initial status position and status loss manipulations had the intended effects.

Results and Discussion

Rumination. A binary logistic regression revealed there no significant main or interaction effects of initial status position and status loss on whether or not participants engaged in work-relation rumination (dummy variable), $\beta < .85, p > .10$. However, I also examined the influence of initial status position and status loss on the *amount* (number of words) of work-related rumination in which participants engaged. A univariate ANOVA revealed a marginally significant main effect of initial status position, $F(1, 183) = 3.31, p = .07, \eta^2 = .01$, and no significant main effect of status loss ($F = .4, p > .10$) or two-way interaction between initial status position and status loss on the amount of work-relation rumination, $F(1, 183) = 1.75, p = .19^1$.

Nevertheless, I used planned comparisons to investigate the pattern of the interaction and found the predicted pattern among the conditions (see Figure 3.1). Most notably, although there was no difference between high ($M = 2.42, SD = 6.43$) and low status ($M = 1.86, SD = 6.89$) individuals' rumination under conditions of no status loss, $F(1, 183) = 0.11, p > .10$, there was a significant difference between high and low status individuals' rumination under conditions of status loss, $F(1, 183) = 5.60, p = .02$, such that high status individuals who lost status, ruminated more about their work and performance ($M = 4.66, SD = 10.76$) than low status individuals who lost status ($M = 1.06, SD = 3.51$). This result provides some support for Hypothesis 1 that high status

¹ I excluded four outliers (2% of sample) that exerted an unusual influence on the regression based on studentised residuals which were greater than three in absolute value (Baltagi, 2002). This same diagnostic was used consistently across all studies in this dissertation.

individuals are experiencing more threat due to cognitive inconsistency than low status individuals.

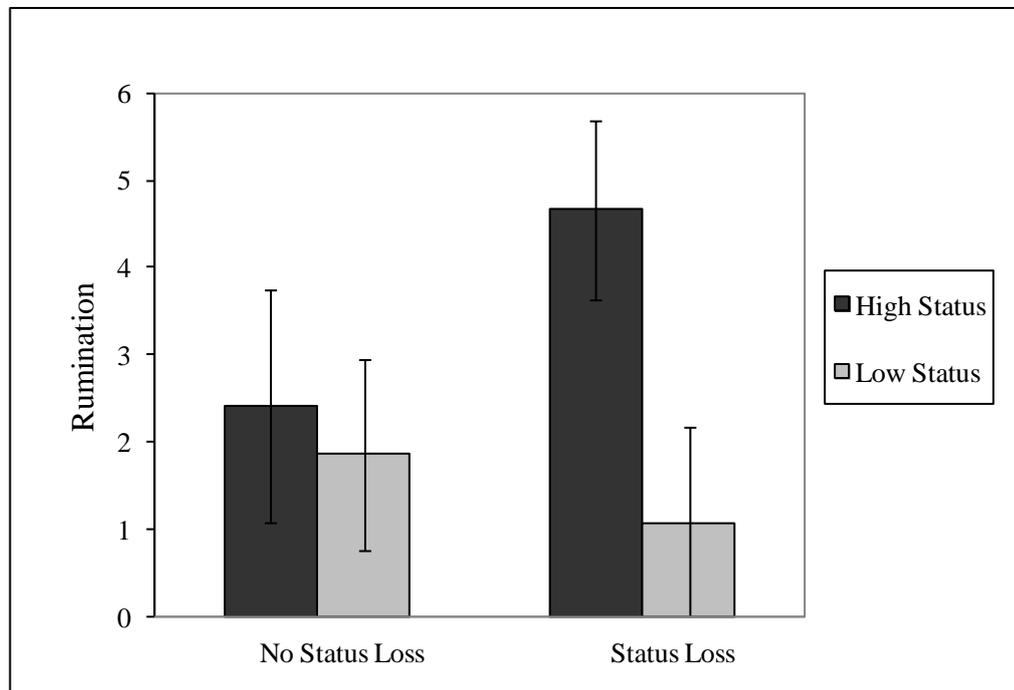


Figure 3.1. Rumination by initial status position (high vs. low status) and status loss (status loss vs. no status loss) in Study 1.

Need for affirmation. A univariate ANOVA revealed there were no main effects of initial status position or status loss on need for affirmation ($F_s < .5, p > .10$). However, I found a significant two-way interaction between initial status position and status loss on need for affirmation, $F(1, 183) = 5.81, p = .02, \eta^2 = .03$. Planned comparisons were conducted to determine the pattern of results (Figure 3.2).

The comparisons revealed that high status ($M = -.51, SD = 2.96$) and low status ($M = -.15, SD = 2.70$) participants who did not experience status loss did not significantly differ in their need for affirmation, $F(1, 183) = 1.45, p > .10$. However, consistent with Hypothesis 2, I found that high status participants who lost status reported a greater need for affirmation ($M = .61, SD = 2.15$) than both low status

participants who lost status ($M = -.49, SD = 2.11$), $F(1, 183) = 5.51, p = .02$, and high status participants who did not lose status ($M = -.51, SD = 2.96$), $F(1, 183) = 4.28, p = .04$. Low status participants who lost status did not differ in their need for affirmation from low status participants who did not lose status, $F(1, 183) = 1.81, p > .10$.

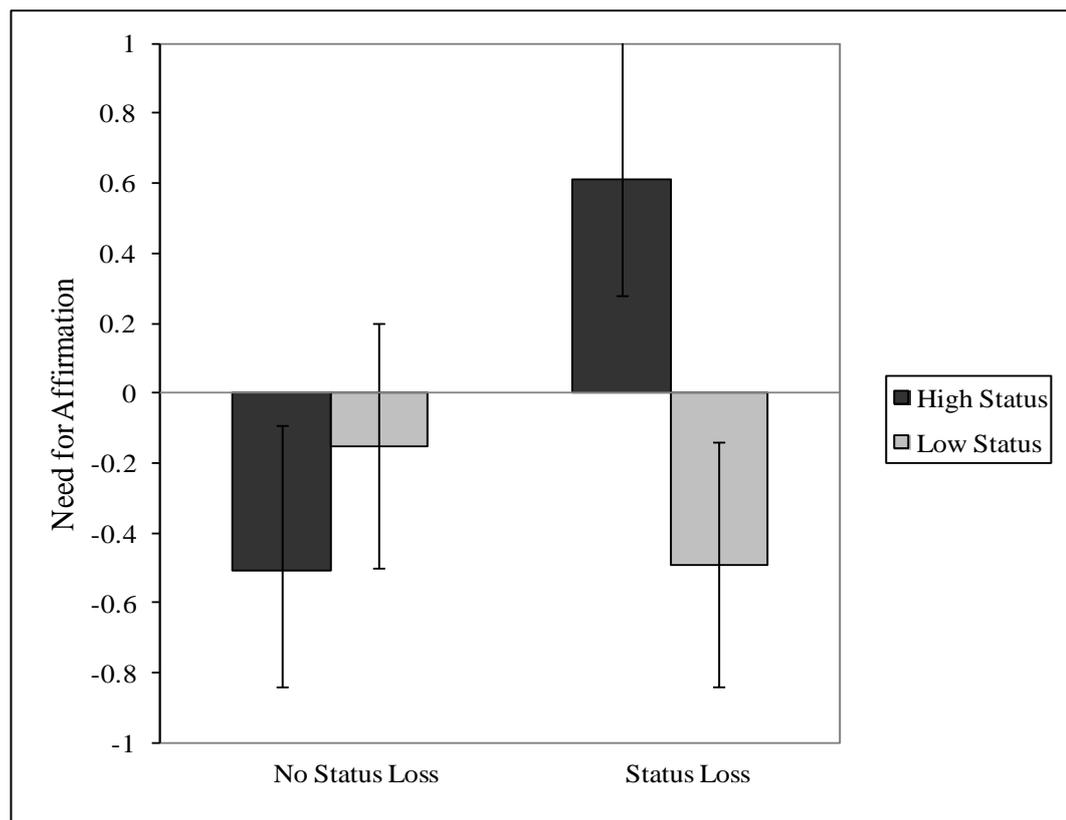


Figure 3.2. Need for affirmation by initial status position (high vs. low status) and status loss (status loss vs. no status loss) in Study 1.

The results of Study 1 suggest that, although participants objectively experienced the same amount of status loss, after losing status, high status individuals engaged in more rumination and were more motivated to affirm their sense of self-worth and self-respect than low status individuals. These results are consistent with

Hypotheses 1 and 2 that status loss triggers more threat in high status individuals than their low status counterparts.

Study 2

In Study 1, I found initial evidence for the prediction that high status individuals experience more threat after status loss than low status individuals. Study 2 built on these findings and tested the main prediction (Hypothesis 3) that compared to low status individuals, high status individuals would have more trouble effectively regulating their self after status loss. Further, I examined the expectations and status centrality of participants before status loss to determine whether the relationship between initial status position and impaired self-regulation could be explained by people's pre-status loss expectations and their tendency to view their status position as more central to their self. The logic here was that because cognitive inconsistency produces arousal and self-threat occurs when a central view about the self is put in jeopardy (Baumeister, et al., 1996; Campbell & Sedikides, 1999), individuals who have expectations that are inconsistent with status loss, or those who see their status position as more central to the self, should experience more threat than those who have expectations that are more consistent with status loss and who consider their status position as less central to the self.

Therefore, I examined whether pre-status loss expectations (Hypothesis 4a) and status centrality (Hypothesis 4b) mediate the relationship between initial status position and self-regulation impairment. Specifically, I examined whether after status loss, high status individuals would persist less on a problem-solving task than low status individuals and whether this effect could be explained by their expectations and centrality of the status position to the self.

Participants and Procedure

Fifty-eight participants (39 females, mean age 22.84, $SD = 5.37$) from a university-affiliated participant pool were randomly assigned to a one factor (initial

status position: high vs. low) between-participant design. Participants read a scenario, imagining themselves as the focal character, answered questions about their expectations, the centrality of their status position and completed an abilities test.

Status manipulation. Similar to the manipulation in Study 1, in the first part of the scenario, participants imagined being a Sales Associate at a major pharmaceutical company, Chemco. Participants read that each year, Chemco publishes an Annual Sales Associate Rankings as an indicator of Associate quality and competence and that,

“An Associate’s ranking determines the amount of respect and deferral he or she receives from co-workers. Therefore, those at the top of the rankings receive more respect, are listened to more, and are deferred to by co-workers. Whereas, those at the bottom of the rankings receive little respect, are not listened to and are expected to defer to others.”

Participants read that for the past three years, they have been ranked 1st (high status) or 75th (low status) out of 100 in the Annual Sales Associate Rankings. Thus, participants’ initial status position (high status vs. low status) was manipulated by their initial rank in the analyst rankings (1st vs. 75th). The full scenario is reported in Appendix 3.2.

Status loss. After answering questions about their expectations for this year’s ranking and the centrality of their status position (measures described below), participants read the second part of the scenario which indicated that when they arrived at work that day they found out they dropped 24 places in this year’s rankings. All participants dropped the same number of rankings (high status condition: 1st to 25th; low status condition: 75th to 100th). To reinforce the manipulation, participants were asked to describe how they would feel about their drop in the rankings.

Measures

Expectation to maintain status. After reading the first part of the scenario and imagining how they would think and feel about their initial position in the rankings, participants indicated their expectations for status maintenance. They read that this year's ranking came out that day and they indicated to what extent they expected their ranking to stay the same on a seven-point Likert scale (1 = *not at all*, 7 = *very much*).

Centrality of status. After reading the first part of the scenario and imagining how they would think and feel about their initial position in the rankings, participants indicated the centrality of their status position to the self. Participants reported the extent to which they thought they would derive their sense of competence, self-respect and self-worth ($\alpha = .95$) from their position in the Associate Rankings (1 = *not at all*, 7 = *very much*).

Persistence. After reading the second part of the scenario, participants attempted a complex problem-solving task called Raven Advanced Progressive Matrices. The Raven test is a measure of cognitive ability used in previous empirical studies (McKay, Doverspike, Bowen-Hilton, & Martin, 2002; Regner et al., 2010). It requires participants to look at a group of shapes and determine from a group of pictures which shape is missing from the group. Participants were presented with 10 problems and read, "You can exit the task when you have solved the puzzles, decided to stop trying to solve the puzzles, or given up." The matrices are complex and finding solutions requires a high level of cognitive effort, so depleted individuals are likely to quit the task before attempting to solve all the matrices. I assessed persistence by examining how many matrices participants attempted before quitting the task. In previous research, high status participants answered more questions successfully than low status participants on this test (Lovaglia, et al., 1998); however, we predicted that

because of the threat they experience after status loss (shown in Study 1), high status participants would actually attempt fewer questions than low status participants immediately after status loss. A sample problem from this test is included in Appendix 3.3.

Manipulation checks. To verify that the manipulations would have the intended effects, I conducted a pretest on a separate sample of 28 participants (15 females, mean age 27.15, $SD = 8.10$), recruited through a university-affiliated research pool. After reading the first part of the scenario, participants reported the extent to which they felt like they had low status. I found that those in the low status condition indicated they felt they had lower status ($M = 5.71$, $SD = 1.20$) than those in the high status condition ($M = 2.79$, $SD = 1.92$), $F(1, 26) = 23.22$, $p = .001$ $\eta^2 = .47$. After reading the second part of the scenario, participants indicated the extent to which they felt their status in the rankings had decreased. This manipulation check indicated that high status ($M = 5.29$, $SD = 1.86$) and low status ($M = 6.14$, $SD = 1.70$) did not differ in the extent to which they felt their status had decreased, $F(1, 26) = 1.62$, $p > .10$, and the amount of status loss participants experienced was greater than the mean of the scale $t(27) = 5.03$, $p = .001$. These results indicate that the initial status position and status loss manipulations had the intended effects.

Results and Discussion

Main effect analysis. An ANOVA (see Figure 3.3 for graph of means) revealed that after status loss, low status participants attempted more questions on the problem-solving task ($M = 9.41$, $SD = 1.21$) than high status participants ($M = 8.50$, $SD = 2.33$), $F(1, 55) = 3.48$, $p = .07$ $\eta^2 = .06$. This provides some support for Hypothesis 3 and suggests that high status individuals have more difficulty regulating themselves after status loss than low status individuals.

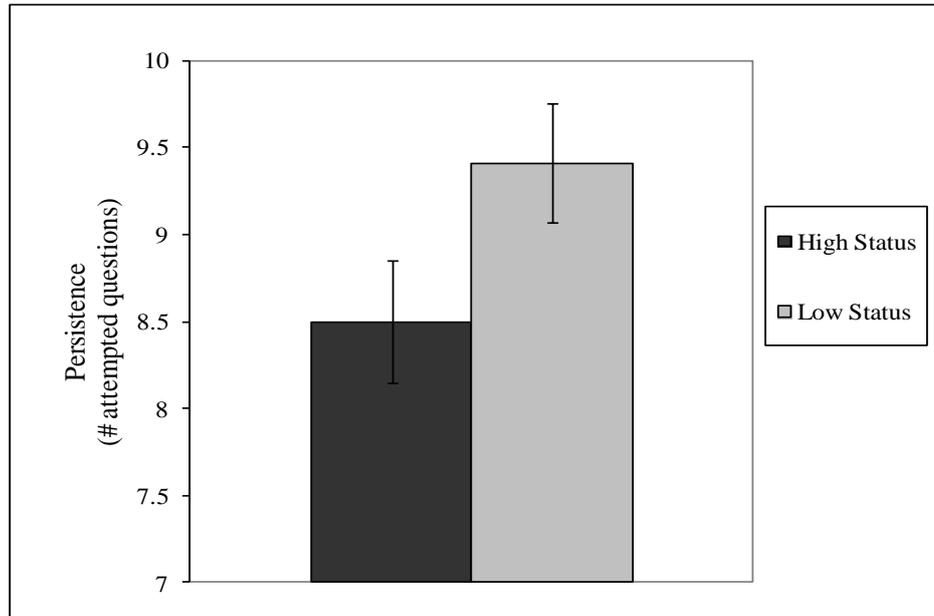


Figure 3.3. Persistence (# of questions attempted) on a problem-solving task after status loss by initial status position (high vs. low status) in Study 2.

Mediation analysis. My theory suggests that high status individuals experience more problems self-regulating after status loss because their expectations are inconsistent with status loss and they view their status position as a more important part of their self; thus, they are more threatened when they lose status. To test this explanation, I calculated the indirect effects of initial status position on performance through both participants' expectations of maintaining status and the centrality of the status position to the self. Following procedures recommended by Preacher and Hayes' (2008) I used a bootstrapping technique to test the initial status position → expectations, status centrality → performance indirect effect. This technique calculates point estimates and bias-corrected confidence intervals for the indirect effects of each potential mediator. A statistically significant indirect effect at a $p < .05$ level is indicated when the 95% confidence interval of the indirect effect does not include zero.

There was a significant positive effect of initial status position on both participants expectations of status maintenance ($b = 1.39, t = 3.04, p = .004$), and the centrality of status to the self ($b = 2.10, t = 5.05, p < .001$). There was no significant effect of expectations on persistence ($b = .05, t = .35, p > .10$) and no significant indirect effect of initial status position on persistence through expectations of status maintenance ($P = .07, 95\% \text{ CI} = -.24, .68$). Thus, Hypothesis 4a was not supported.

However, there was a significant negative effect of centrality of status to the self on persistence ($b = -.34, t = -1.99, p = .05$) and there was a negative indirect effect² of initial status position on persistence through increased centrality of status to the self ($P = -.66, 95\% \text{ CI} = -1.30, -.01$). Thus, Hypothesis 4b was supported. These findings show that high status individuals' lesser persistence can be explained by their tendency to view their status position as a more important part of their self. These analyses are displayed in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1

Indirect Effect of Status on Persistence through Status Centrality in Study 2

Path	b	se	CI	R ²
Status → persistence	-.91	.49	-1.90, .07	.06
Status → status centrality	2.10	.42	1.26, 2.93***	.32
Status → status centrality → persistence	-.66	.33	-1.30, -.01*	.13

^a n = 57.

^t p < .10

* p < .05

** p < .01

*** p < .001

Two-tailed tests.

² Indirect effects were calculated using 1000 bootstrapped re-samples with replacement.

The results of Study 2 suggest that high status individuals experience more difficulty self-regulating immediately after status loss than low status individuals, and that this effect can be explained by high status individuals' tendency to assign greater importance to their status position before status loss than low status individuals. In sum, these results support Hypothesis 3 and 4b, but not Hypothesis 4a. This suggests that high status individuals' status centrality fully explains the relationship between initial status position and self-regulation impairment.

However, there were several limitations of Study 2. First, participants only imagined (rather than experienced) initially being in a high or low status position. It is possible that it was easier for participants to imagine being in the top-ranked position than being in the 75th position and the differences in vividness could be an alternate explanation for high status individuals feeling a higher status centrality and subsequent experiencing more regulatory failures. Second, the losses of status in Studies 1 and 2 are potentially confounded with negative performance feedback. In other words, it is unclear whether people's reactions are to the negative performance feedback generally, or status loss specifically. Third, both the affirmation measures in Study 1 and the measure of self-centrality in Study 2 were self-report measures which depend on participants understanding, accurately assessing, and reporting these psychological experiences. I designed Studies 3 and 4 to address these limitations.

Study 3

Studies 1 and 2 provided initial support for my theoretical model. The findings of these studies suggested that high status individuals experience more threat and subsequently more self-regulation impairment than low status individuals after status loss. The purpose of Study 3 was to constructively replicate support for my main hypothesis (Hypothesis 3) in a more realistic, group experiment. Thus, I designed a high-involvement group experiment to investigate whether high status individuals experience more difficulty persisting on a task after status loss than low status individuals who have experienced an objectively comparable loss of status. Also, to control for the potential influence of negative performance feedback, participants received both false performance feedback (controlled across conditions) and status feedback. Therefore, any difference in reactions between high and low status individuals should be attributable to status loss and not negative performance feedback.

Participants and Overview of Procedure

Eighty-two participants (45 females, mean age 26.16, SD = 8.92) from a university-affiliated participant pool completed a high involvement group experiment with a 2 (initial status position: high vs. low) X 2 (status loss: status loss vs. no status loss) between-participant design. Participants were randomly assigned to a four-person group, which included two confederates. In the three main parts of the experiment, participants: (1) engaged in a get-to-know-you discussion and received a status role ostensibly based on their group members' ratings (initial status position manipulation), (2) completed a face-to-face group decision-making task in their status roles and received feedback both on their performance (controlled across conditions) and on their status in the group (status loss manipulation), and (3) worked independently on a word search task (persistence measure) and completed a short survey with manipulation

checks and demographic questions. Upon completion, participants were debriefed, thanked, and compensated.

Procedure

Participants arrived at the lab and were randomly assigned a coloured nametag (red or blue). At the same time, two confederates also arrived and received coloured nametags (yellow and green). Unbeknownst to participants the colour of their nametag signalled their status condition to the confederates (red = high status, blue = low status). The four group members were seated in a room together and engaged in a get-to-know-you discussion for five minutes.

Confederates: Creating the hierarchy. The confederates were trained actors who were instructed to play a particular character and behave towards the other group members in ways that would facilitate the emergence of the predetermined status hierarchy (highest status to lowest status: red, yellow, blue, green) during the get-to-know-you discussion. The male confederate's character (green) was a struggling musician who was often unemployed and worked in a bar. The female confederate's character (yellow) was a top biology student at a local university who enjoyed reading and playing the cello. The male confederate was trained to be the lowest status member of the group by appearing somewhat disengaged and generally giving short, monosyllabic answers to direct questions. The female confederate was trained to be a high (but not the highest) status group member by listening to others, asking people questions about themselves, and speaking clearly and competently.

The confederates were blind to the hypotheses of the study, but were instructed to adjust their behaviour in each group so that the participant who received the red nametag (high status condition) would feel like the most respected member of the group

(e.g., the most competent and well-liked), and the participant who received the blue nametag (low status condition) would feel like a less respected member of the group (e.g., less competent, less well-liked).

Respect points and status roles: The status manipulation. After the five-minute get-to-know-you discussion, participants rated each other to determine the roles for the group decision-making task. Participants turned to individual desks facing away from each other and completed their rating form. The rating form asked participants to distribute 10 respect points among their group members based on "...the amount of respect, admiration and regard you have for your group members". They read that they must allocate all 10 points and that they cannot allocate any to themselves. Participants were reassured that the forms were confidential and only the experimenter would see how they rated each other. The experimenter then collected the rating forms and left the room to "calculate the respect point results and assign the group roles".

In the meantime, participants read about the roles for the group task. Participants read that there were four roles for the group task (Chairman of the Board, Director of Academics, Program Manager or Administrator) and the roles would be determined by the number of respect points each member received from the group such that "the group member with the highest number of respect points will be given the title of Chairman of the Board...and the group member with the lowest number of respect points will be given the title of Administrator." Accordingly, participants read that,

The most prestigious position is the Chairman of the Board. The Chairman of the Board is the most respected, admired and highly regarded member of the group. This role is awarded to the group member who the group believes

contributes the most value to the group. The Chairman of the Board will have the most knowledge and should be listened and deferred to.

The least prestigious position is the Administrator. The Administrator is the least respected, admired and highly regarded member of the group. This role is given to the group member who is believed to contribute little value to the group. The Administrator has little knowledge relevant to the task and should only listen and take notes.

The experimenter returned after five minutes and informed the group members of the results, "...Red, you received the highest number of respect points, so you will be given the title of Chairman of the Board...Blue, you received the second lowest number of respect points, so you will be given the title of Program Manager..." Each group member received a place card with their role title and a package of materials for the group decision-making task. Therefore, participants' status-based role for the task (high status: Chairman of the Board vs. low status: Program Manager) -- based on the number of respect points they ostensibly received from their group members -- constituted the manipulation of initial status position.

Group decision-making task: Increasing involvement in status roles. After receiving their status-based roles and task materials, the group had 15 minutes to complete the group decision-making task, "Who will be the Next President of Bewise College?" (adapted from Johnson & Johnson, 2009). The exercise required the group to discuss which of the candidates described in their materials was best suited for the position of President at Bewise College. Each group member had different amounts and types of information commensurate with their position and this information needed to be shared to make the correct hiring decision; however, for the purpose of this

experiment, it was not important that they come to the correct decision, it was only important that they become involved in their status roles. Accordingly, the experimenter instructed participants that they need not come to a final decision in the allotted time, but it was important that they have a group discussion and that they immerse themselves in their role and try to behave as if they actually were in this position.

Redistributing respect points and rating performance: Constructing feedback. After 15 minutes, the experimenter came back and told participants they would complete the rest of the group study over the computer. In reality the remainder of participants' interactions with the group was pre-programmed. Once at the computer, participants completed three tasks. First, participants answered several questions about their perceived status in the group (initial status position manipulation check). Second, participants had the opportunity to redistribute their 10 respect points among their group members based on their interaction with them during the group task. They viewed their previous distribution on the screen and were instructed to enter the same or new allocations in the fields below (the points had to sum to 10 and participants were not able to award any points to themselves). Finally, participants rated their group members' performance in the task ("How well do you think each group member performed in the group task?"; 1 = *not at all well*, 4 = *somewhat well*, 7 = *to extremely well*).

After redistributing their respect points and rating the performance of their group members, participants were redirected to a holding screen for 21 seconds. This screen instructed them to wait while their group members submitted their ratings. This holding page was intended to make it more realistic that their feedback would be based on the ratings of their group members.

Status and performance feedback: The status loss manipulation. Participants then received two pieces of feedback. First, participants all received the same performance ratings (regardless of condition) to ensure that status loss would not be confounded with negative performance feedback. Participants all received the feedback that, “After the group task you received an average performance score from your group members of 4.67 out of 7”. Thus, participants in all conditions received the same performance feedback.

Second, participants received feedback about maintaining (no status loss) or losing (status loss) status in the group. Participants read that because their group members had the opportunity to redistribute their respect points, they may have won or lost respect points after the face-to-face group task. Participants read that “If you won more respect points than another group member, you may receive a more prestigious title. If you lost more respect points than another group member you may lose your title.”

After a seven second holding page which indicated that results were being generated, participants saw a bar graph where the coloured bars (red, yellow, blue, and green) corresponded to the respect point results of each group member relative to others. In the no status loss [status loss] conditions participants saw a bar graph that indicated they were now in the same status position [lower status position] in terms of the percentage of respect points they had received relative to their group members. For example, participants in the high status (red), no status loss condition saw a bar graph showing that the red group member was still higher than the yellow, blue and green group members; whereas, participants in the high status, status loss condition saw a bar graph showing that the red group member was now lower than the yellow group member, but still higher than the blue and green group members. The bar graphs for each condition are presented in Appendix 3.4

To ensure participants understood the implications of the bar graph, text underneath the graph in the low status/high status, no status loss [status loss] condition read, “After the group task you...Maintained your [Lost] respect points. Based on this result you will...Keep [Lose] your title. You will remain [drop from] the Program Manager/the Chairman of the Board [to the Administrator/to the Director of Academics].

After the status loss manipulation, participants completed an individual task (persistence measure), manipulation checks, a suspicion question and demographic questions. These measures are explained below.

Measures

Persistence. Participants read that they would have up to ten minutes to work on a word search puzzle. Participants viewed the word search puzzle on the computer screen and were instructed to type words they found into a text box below the puzzle. Participants read that, “You may go to the next page when you have found all the words, decided to stop trying to find the words, or given up.” The amount of time participants spent on the word search puzzle (in seconds) constituted the measure of persistence. On average participants spent 408.39 seconds (6.81 minutes) on the puzzle.

Initial status position manipulation check. After the group task (before the status loss manipulation), participants responded to three items about the extent to which they felt like they “had high status”, “were respected” and “were highly regarded” in the group ($\alpha = .84$) on a seven-point scale (1 = *not at all*, 7 = *very much*).

Status loss manipulation check. At the end of the study (after the individual task), participants responded to two questions about their experience of status loss including, “To what extent do you feel like your status in the group decreased after the face-to-face group task?” and “How much status do you feel like you lost after the face-

to-face group task” ($\alpha = .84$) on seven-point scales (1 = *not at all*, 7 = *very much* and 1 = *none*, 7 = *a lot*, respectively).

Suspicion. Participants were asked whether they were suspicious of anything during the experiment. Participants wrote open-ended responses which were coded for suspicion. Responses indicating disbelief about the status or status loss manipulations were coded as suspicious. Nine participants who indicated suspicion were excluded from the main analyses, leaving 73 participants in the sample³.

Results and Discussion

Manipulation checks. I conducted ANOVAs to determine the effectiveness of the initial status position and status loss manipulations. First, I found that participants in the low status condition felt they had lower status in the group ($M = 4.14$, $SD = 1.09$) before the status loss manipulation than participants in the high status condition ($M = 5.48$, $SD = 1.09$), $F(1,71) = 27.37$, $p = .001$, $\eta^2 = .28$. By examining the participants’ respect point allocations, I also confirmed that participants conferred more status on the high status confederate (Yellow: $M = 3.94$, $SD = 1.02$) than the low status confederate (Green: $M = 2.75$, $SD = .95$), $t(72) = 5.92$, $p = .001$.

Second, I found participants in the status loss conditions ($M = 4.11$, $SD = 1.46$) felt they lost more status than those in the no status loss conditions ($M = 2.39$, $SD = 1.40$). $F(1,71) = 26.21$, $p = .001$, $\eta^2 = .27$. However, high ($M = 3.13$, $SD = 1.45$) and low ($M = 3.40$, $SD = 1.86$) status participants did not differ in the amount of status loss they reported experiencing, $F(1,71) = .46$, $p > .10$. These results indicate that the initial status position and status loss manipulations had the intended effects.

³ I re-ran all main analyses with these nine participants included and this did not change the significance of the results.

Persistence. Although there were no main effects of initial status position or status loss, nor an interaction effect on performance ($ps > .05$), time spent on the word search puzzle was associated with higher performance (i.e., finding more, $\beta = .38$, $t = 3.46$, $p = .001$, $R^2 = .14$, and longer words, $\beta = .49$, $t = 4.69$, $p = .001$, $R^2 = .24$), thus, I controlled for performance in these analyses. To test the hypothesis about the influence of initial status position and status loss on persistence, I conducted an ANOVA and found no significant main effects for initial status position or status loss ($F_s < .4$, $ps > .05$). As predicted, however, I did find a significant two-way interaction of initial status position and status loss on persistence, $F(1,67) = 7.73$, $p = .01$, $\eta^2 = .10$. I conducted planned comparisons to determine the pattern of results (see Figure 3.4).

Planned comparisons revealed that high status ($M = 445.17$, $SE = 28.36$) and low status ($M = 383.34$, $SD = 28.03$) participants who did not experience status loss did not differ in their persistence, $F(1, 67) = 2.40$, $p > .10$. However, consistent with Hypothesis 3, I found that high status participants who lost status persisted less ($M = 353.12$, $SE = 28.55$) than both low status participants who lost status ($M = 449.63$, $SE = 27.37$), $F(1, 67) = 5.88$, $p = .02$, and high status participants who did not lose status ($M = 445.17$, $SE = 28.36$), $F(1, 67) = 5.11$, $p = .03$. Low status participants who lost versus did not lose status did not differ significantly in their persistence, $F(1, 67) = 2.85$, $p > .05$.

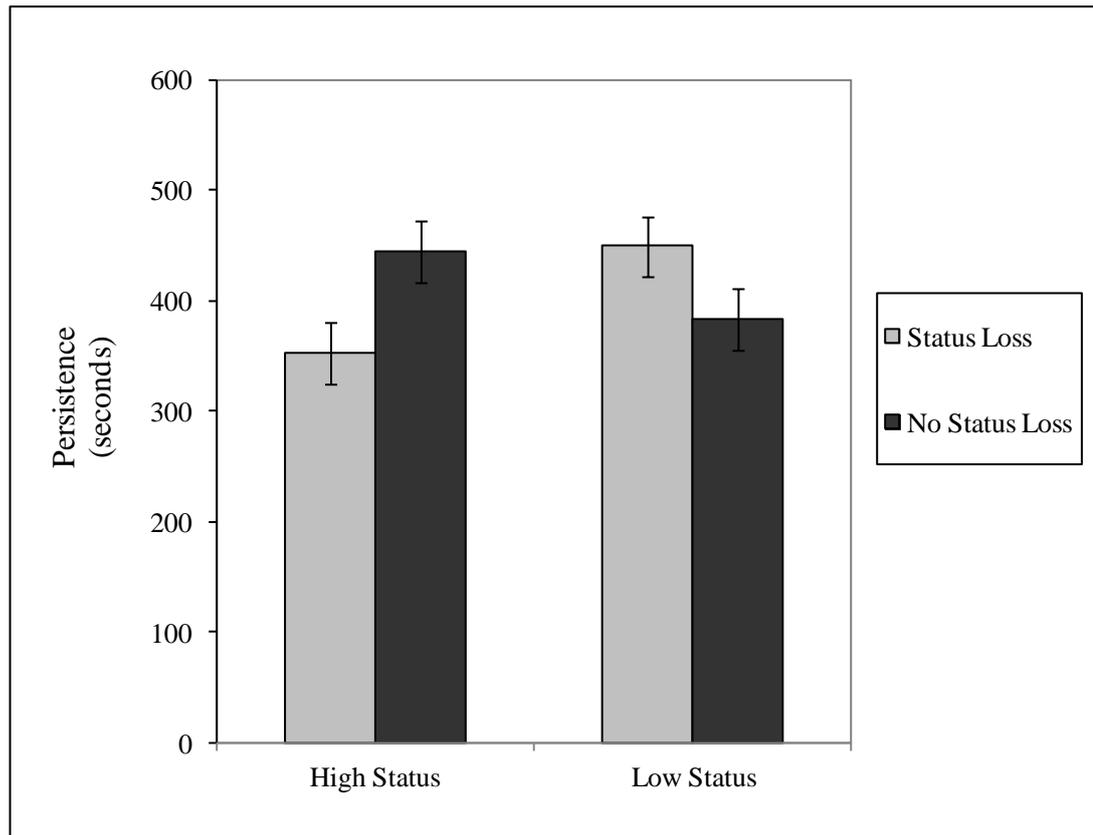


Figure 3.4. Persistence (in seconds) on a word search puzzle by initial status position (high vs. low status) and status loss (status loss vs. no status loss) in Study 3.

Overall, these results provide support for Hypothesis 3 and suggest that status loss is more disruptive to high than low status individuals' ability to self-regulate. Specifically, while losing status did not influence the persistence of low status individuals, losing status significantly reduced the persistence of high status individuals. In fact, after losing status, high status individuals had more difficulty persisting than low status individuals who had lost a comparable amount of status. This result is particularly important because performance feedback was controlled across status maintenance and status loss conditions, suggesting that reactions to status loss are not simply reactions to poor performance. Despite performing well, losing the respect of one's group members can derail one's persistence. This result supports my theoretical model.

However, there are still two main limitations of this study that needed to be addressed in an additional experiment. First, because performance on the word search puzzle in the present study was unrelated to future status, it is possible that the self-regulation impairment observed in this study was actually an intentional strategy used by high status individuals to conserve cognitive resources for tasks that could help them regain status in the future. Also, the design of this study did not enable me to examine the proposed mechanism. Therefore, I was not able to address the limitation raised in the discussion of Study 2 that self-threat in the first two studies was assessed via self-report measures which are subject to reporting biases. Study 4 was designed to address these two issues.

Study 4

Study 1 showed that losing status triggers more rumination (cognitive inconsistency) and a greater need for affirmation (self-threat) in high status individuals than in low status individuals (Hypotheses 1 and 2). In Study 2, I found high status individuals' persisted less after status loss than low status individuals (Hypothesis 3), which was explained by their tendency to assign greater importance to their initial status position before status loss (Hypothesis 4b). Study 3 constructively replicated the main result from Study 2 (Hypothesis 3) in a high involvement group experiment where participants actually experienced their status position and status loss. Study 4 was designed to build on these findings and address the limitations of the previous studies in two main ways.

First, I included an additional dependent variable to assess the willingness of participants to engage in a task that would help them regain status. The purpose of this measure was to determine whether the reduced persistence observed in Study 3 could be part of an intentional strategy to conserve cognitive resources rather than self-regulation impairment. Second, I used a moderation-of-process design to test the proposed mechanism (Hypothesis 4b) which does not rely on self-report measures of the proposed mediator.

A moderation-of-process design involves experimentally manipulating the mediating psychological process and examining whether it moderates the main effect; a significant moderation provides evidence of mediation (Spencer, et al., 2005). A moderation-of-process design is preferable to the traditional method of testing mediation if the proposed mediator is a psychological process that is not easily measured (e.g., self-threat). Manipulating the mediating process eliminates participant biases (e.g., accuracy, impression management) in self-reporting constructs. Thus, if the

inability to persist is a regulatory impairment caused by self-threat, I should find that having the opportunity to self-affirm (which protects against threats to the self; Steele, 1988) should make high status individuals persist more compared to when they have not had the opportunity to affirm, but it should not affect low status individuals' persistence.

Participants and Procedure

Seventy-six participants (44 females, mean age 24.39, SD = 8.08) from a university-affiliated participant pool completed a simulated, computer-mediated group study with a 2 (initial status position: high vs. low) X 2 (self-affirmation: affirmation vs. no affirmation) between-participant design. Participants engaged in a group argument task and experienced losing status from either a low or high status position in the group. After losing status, half of the participants were given the opportunity to self-affirm, then, all participants attempted a word generation task, and finally, participants indicated whether they would be willing to persist to regain their status. After completing the study, participants were debriefed, thanked, and compensated.

Participants came to the laboratory in groups of four, and were each seated in front of a computer in different rooms. Before starting the task, participants were invited to send (via computer) an introductory message to their group members, and subsequently viewed introductory messages from each of their group members (e.g., "Hello Group :) Looking forward to working with you!!"). Next, participants chose a topic and had four minutes to write a persuasive argument on that topic. Participants then viewed the arguments written by their group members and were instructed to determine how much they respected each group member "based on their argument and what they knew about them so far." They were instructed to allocate 10 "respect points" among their group members (they had to allocate all 10 points and they could not give

points to themselves). In reality, the responses of the other three group members were pre-programmed.

Status manipulation. Participants read that they would receive 0 to 30 respect points from their group. A graph containing pre-programmed, false-feedback was generated on their screen to display the proportion of respect points they had received from their group relative to the average number of respect points their group members received (manipulating initial status position in the group). Participants in the high status condition saw a graph indicating they had more respect points than the average group member and the message “You won the most respect points of any group member! Congratulations!” Participants in the low status condition saw a graph indicating they had fewer respect points than the average group member and the message “You won fewer respect points than your group members.” These graphs are presented in Appendix 3.5.

Status loss. Next, participants completed a second round of the argument task, after which they were instructed that they could keep their allocation of respect points to their group members the same as in the first round, or they could re-distribute their respect points by “taking points from one group member to give to another.” Since all group members had this option, participants read that this meant they could win or lose respect points from the first round. Participants in both high and low status conditions saw a graph and message indicating that they had lost 50% of their respect points from the first round of the task. These graphs are presented in Appendix 3.6.

Affirmation manipulation. Consistent with the measure of affirmation I used in Study 1, I manipulated affirmation by having participants write about a valued personal relationship (for similar manipulations see: Cohen, Aronson, & Steele, 2000;

Kumashiro & Sedikides, 2005). Participants in the affirmation condition were asked to think about a specific relationship they have with someone who makes them feel respected and worthy. They were asked to describe this relationship (e.g., what is your relationship to this person? how do they make you feel? why are they important to you). In the no affirmation condition, participants were asked to describe their last trip to the grocery store.

Measures

Persistence. Previous studies have operationalised self-regulation through a variety of word-based tasks that require persistence (e.g., word generation, anagrams; Ackerman, Goldstein, Shapiro, & Bargh, 2009; Sommer & Baumeister, 2002). Following these studies Study 3 instructed participants to generate a list of adjectives to *describe* the *taste* of chocolate chip cookies. They were told to list as many adjectives as they could (up to 15 words) and then move on to the next part of the study. Responses that described the taste of the cookies (e.g., crispy, bitter, sugary) were coded as 1, and responses that did not comply with the criteria outlined in the instructions (i.e., words that were not *descriptive* such as nice, good, or were not descriptive of the *taste* such as round, brown, spotty) and empty word fields were coded as 0. I summed these word scores to create an overall score measuring participants' persistence in generating descriptive words ranging from 0 (*low persistence*) to 15 (*high persistence*).

Persistence to regain status. The possibility remained that lower persistence on an unrelated work task after status loss was not a regulatory impairment (as implied by my theory), but is a functional strategy enabling individuals to save their cognitive resources for tasks that could help them regain their status. To address this concern, I constructed two items to assess the extent to which participants would be willing to persist if it would help them regain their status. I asked participants, "Would you like

another opportunity to increase the number of respect points you received?” and “Do you want to write one more argument to try to improve the amount of respect you received in the group?” ($\alpha = .91$) and participants responded on a seven-point scale (1 = *not at all*, 7 = *very much*).

Manipulation checks. To verify the status and status loss manipulations had the intended effects, I asked participants to indicate the extent to which they felt like they had low status after the first argument (initial status position; 1 = *not at all*, 7 = *very much*) and the extent to which they felt their status decreased after the second argument (status loss; 1 = *not at all*, 7 = *very much*). Finally, participants were asked what they thought the study was about. Participants who indicated disbelief about the status or status loss manipulations were coded as suspicious. Two participants who indicated suspicion were excluded from the main analyses, leaving 73 participants in the sample⁴.

Results and Discussion

Manipulation checks. I conducted ANOVAs to determine the effectiveness of the manipulations. First, I found that participants in the low status condition felt they had lower status in the group ($M = 4.67$, $SD = 1.53$) after the first argument (before the status loss manipulation) than participants in the high status condition ($M = 3.27$, $SD = 1.61$), $F(1,71) = 14.41$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .17$. Second, low ($M = 5.11$, $SD = 2.04$) and high ($M = 4.38$, $SD = 1.95$) status participants did not differ in the amount of status loss they experienced, $F(1, 71) = 2.46$, $p > .10$, and the amount of status loss participants experienced was significantly greater than the mean (4) of the scale $t(75) = 3.14$, $p = .002$. This indicates that the manipulations had the intended effects.

⁴ I re-ran all analyses with these two participants included and this did not change the significance of the results.

Persistence. I conducted an ANOVA with status and affirmation as factors and the number of descriptive words as the dependent variable to determine the effect of initial status position and affirmation on participants' performance on the word generation task. The model was significant $F(1, 69) = 2.93, p = .04, \eta^2 = .11$. There was no main effect of status on the number of words generated, $F(1, 69) = .19, p > .10$, however, there was a main effect of affirmation on the number of words generated such that affirmed participants generated more words ($M = 6.32, SD = 3.60$) than non-affirmed participants ($M = 4.89, SD = 2.19$), $F(1, 69) = 4.22, p = .04, \eta^2 = .06$. As expected, I also found the predicted two-way interaction between status and affirmation, $F(1, 69) = 4.22, p = .04, \eta^2 = .06$. I conducted planned comparisons to determine the pattern of results (see Figure 3.5).

As predicted by Hypothesis 4b, when high status participants had the opportunity to affirm themselves, they persisted significantly more after status loss ($M = 7.16, SD = 4.34$) than when they did not have the opportunity to affirm ($M = 4.33, SD = 1.75$), $F(1, 69) = 4.61, p = .04, \eta^2 = .06$. However, there was no difference in persistence between low status participants who had the opportunity to affirm after status loss ($M = 5.44, SD = 2.43$) and low status participants who did not have the opportunity to affirm ($M = 5.44, SD = 2.48$), $F(1, 69) < .001, p > .10$.

These results suggest that high status individuals experienced more self-threat after status loss than their low status counterparts, and having the opportunity to self-affirm (protect against self-threat) restored their ability to self-regulate. Without the opportunity to affirm, high status individuals also manifested a non-significant tendency to persist less ($M = 4.33, SD = 1.75$) than low status individuals ($M = 5.44, SD = 2.48$), $F(1, 69) = 1.53, p = .26$. In sum, these results provide some support for my theoretical model that high (compared to low) status individuals experience more self-threat and

regulatory failures after status loss, but that the opportunity to reduce self-threat (via self-affirmation) restores their ability to self-regulate.

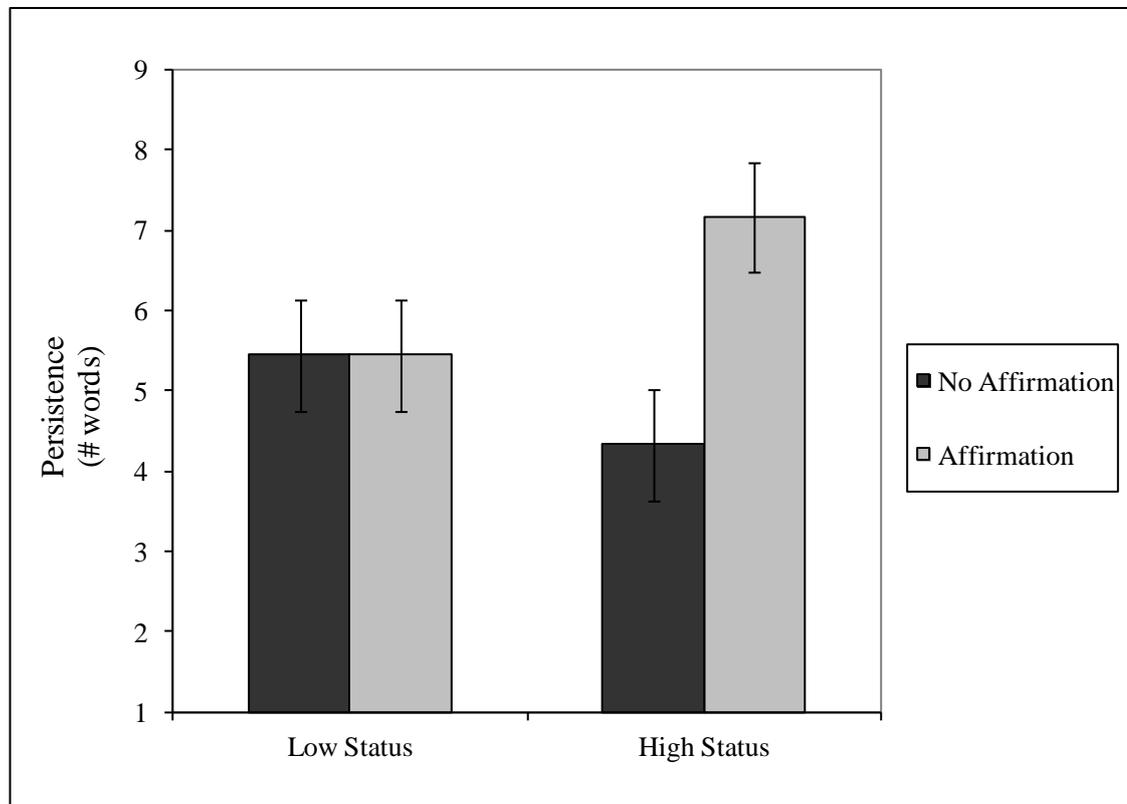


Figure 3.5. Persistence on a word generation task by initial status position (high vs. low status) and affirmation (affirmation vs. no affirmation) in Study 4.

I already discussed the possibility that negative performance consequences experienced by high status individuals may not be self-regulatory failures, but could be part of a functional strategy to restore status. By expending less effort on tasks which are not directly related to status achievement, high status individuals may conserve their regulatory resources for tasks that can help them regain their high status. To address this alternative explanation, I investigated participants' willingness to engage in additional tasks to regain their status. If the lack of persistence found in my studies is part of a functional strategy to conserve resources for regaining status, participants should persist when this behaviour is presented as a means to regain status.

Persistence to regain status. I conducted an ANOVA with status and affirmation as factors and the persistence ratings as the dependent variable to determine the effect of initial status position and affirmation on participant's willingness to persist to regain status. The model was significant $F(1, 68) = 2.82, p = .05, \eta^2 = .11$. As expected, I found a significant two-way interaction between status and affirmation, $F(1, 68) = 5.94, p = .02, \eta^2 = .08$. There were no significant main effects ($F_s < 2.67, p_s > .05$). I conducted planned comparisons to determine the pattern of the interaction (Figure 3.6).

Consistent with Hypothesis 4b and the results of the word generation task, high status participants who had the opportunity to affirm were significantly more willing to persist to regain status after status loss ($M = 3.79, SD = 1.92$) than high status participants who did not have the opportunity to affirm ($M = 2.56, SD = 1.46$), $F(1,68) = 3.66, p = .06$. There was no difference in the willingness to persist to regain status after status loss between low status participants who had the opportunity to affirm ($M = 3.42, SD = 2.17$) and those who did not have the opportunity to affirm ($M = 4.44, SD = 2.23$), $F(1, 68) = 2.37, p > .10$. I also fully replicated the findings from Study 3, providing additional support for Hypothesis 3, that when participants did not have the opportunity to affirm, high status participants were less willing to persist to regain status after status loss ($M = 2.56, SD = 1.46$) compared to their low status counterparts ($M = 4.44, SD = 2.23$), $F(1,68) = 8.04, p = .006$.

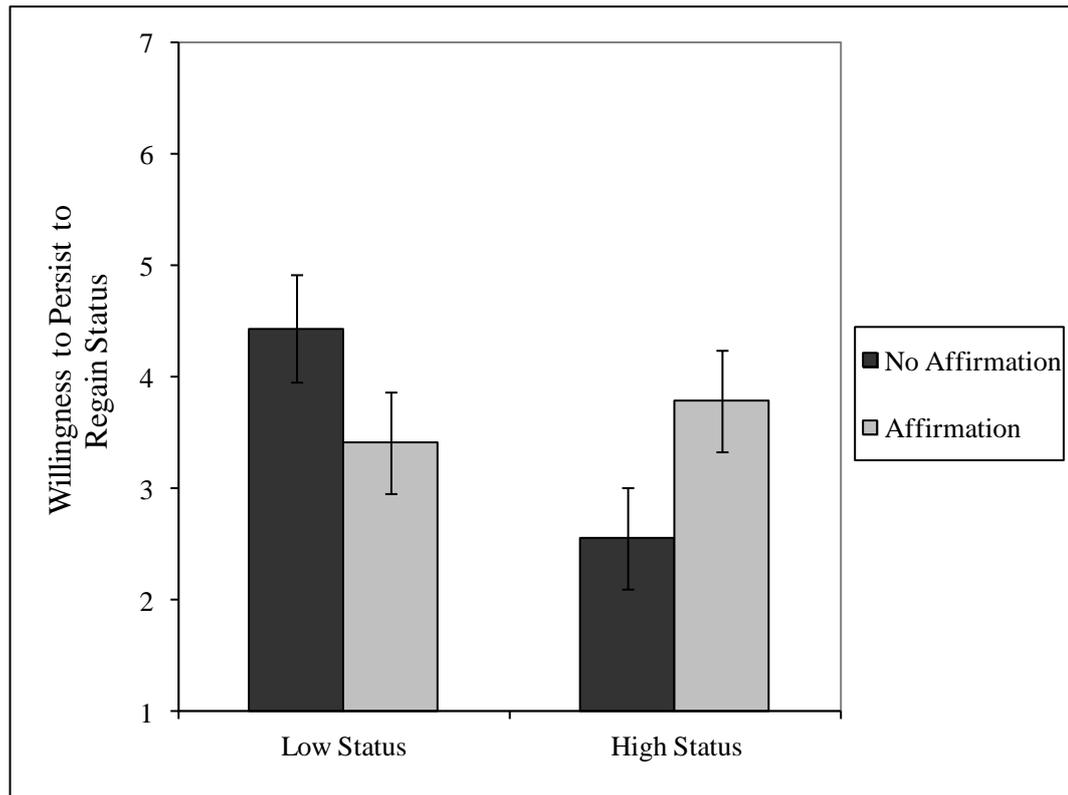


Figure 3.6. Participants' willingness to persist in order to regain status, by initial status position (high vs. low status), and affirmation (affirmation vs. no affirmation) in Study 4.

These results provide full support for Hypothesis 4b and suggest that high status individuals' lack of persistence is not a functional strategy to conserve resources for regaining status, but is indicative of self-regulation impairment they experience when they lose status and experience threat.

In sum, the elimination of self-regulation impairment when high status individuals have an opportunity to self-affirm suggests that the regulatory impairment caused by status loss occurs as a consequence of self-threat triggered by losing status (cf. Spencer et al., 2005).

Discussion

The studies presented in Chapter 3 (Studies 1-4) investigated the individual consequences of status loss and specifically examined how initial status position

influences self-regulatory reactions to status loss. Whereas much of the status literature has focused on the many advantages associated with being respected and admired, I suggest that there is a cost to receiving these benefits. High status individuals, such as star performers, receive more respect than their low status counterparts, however, they may also come to depend on the respect they receive to maintain a positive view of themselves. Consequently, when high status individuals lose status, they experience it as more threatening and this impairs their ability to regulate themselves in the immediate aftermath of status loss.

Four studies using different methodologies (vignette, experiment), manipulations of status (organisational position, rank, status role, respect received from group members) and manipulations of status loss (demotion, decrease in rankings, title loss, amount of respect lost) supported my theoretical model. Specifically, I found that after status loss, high status individuals had a greater need for affirmation (Study 1), answered fewer questions on a problem-solving task (Study 2), spent less time on a word search task (Study 3), persisted less on a word generation task and were less willing to complete additional tasks to regain status (Study 4) than low status individuals. Further, I found evidence to suggest that the diminished persistence experienced by high status individuals could be explained by self-threat (Studies 1, 2 and 4) and that having the opportunity to affirm their sense of self-worth increased high status individuals' ability and willingness to persist (Study 4).

In sum, these studies suggest that high status individuals experience status loss as more self-threatening than their low status counterparts, and because of this, they are more likely to experience self-regulation impairment immediately after losing status.

Conclusion

These findings illustrate an important individual consequence of status loss, namely, impaired self-regulation (i.e., reduced persistence) on subsequent tasks. Status loss is a challenging experience; because people have limited regulatory resources, some people will exhaust their resources dealing with status loss and have little left for self-regulating on subsequent tasks. My findings suggest that the extent to which people experience impaired self-regulation after status loss crucially depends on their initial position in the status hierarchy. High status people find the loss of status more threatening than low status people and consequently, have more difficulty self-regulating on tasks in the immediate aftermath of status loss. In an organisational setting, the impairment of individuals' self-regulation will impact their own performance (e.g., neglect or quit tasks, overlook errors), as well as the performance of those with whom their work is interdependent. However, as proposed in my theoretical model, I suggest that high status individuals' impaired self-regulation will also have social consequences. These consequences are investigated in the next chapter.

Chapter 4 : The Social Consequences of Status Loss Experiments

Overview

As suggested in my theoretical model, the self-regulation impairment high status individuals experience after status loss is likely to have not only individual performance consequences (e.g., reduced persistence), but also social consequences (e.g., negative evaluations from relevant others). This is because self-regulation is a fundamental facilitator of status; high status individuals are typically superior self-regulators (DeWall, et al., 2011) and those who are able to display willpower in the face of challenges should conversely, be viewed as deserving of the greatest respect, admiration and regard (i.e., they should be conferred more status). This means, however, that high status individuals who fail to demonstrate effective self-regulation after a challenging event like status loss are likely to be viewed as *undeserving* of their status position. Therefore, this chapter investigates the social consequences of status loss for high status individuals. First, I verify that demonstrations of effective self-regulation facilitate status conferral (Hypothesis 5). Then, in Studies 6 and 7 and examine how high status individuals' demonstrations of self-regulation protect evaluations of their legitimacy after status loss (Hypothesis 6) and prevent challenges to their high status position after status loss (Hypothesis 7).

Study 5

Study 5 was designed to confirm that self-regulation is a fundamental facilitator of status, by examining whether displays of effective self-regulation promote status conferral (Hypothesis 5). Specifically, I tested whether an individual who displays effective self-regulation would be seen as more competent and would therefore be conferred more status than an individual who displays impaired self-regulation.

Participants and Procedure

Thirty-seven individuals (19 females, mean age 26.39 years, $SD = 8.07$) from a university-affiliated participant pool completed a study on “evaluations of individual and group performance”. The sample included both students (57%) and non-students (43%) and 65% of participants were employed part or full-time. The sample included 22% Caucasian British, American or European, 19% Asian, and 27% African participants. Participants were randomly assigned to a successful self-regulation or self-regulation impairment condition. Participants watched a three minute video of an individual completing a task and then answered questions about their perceptions and evaluations of the individual.

Self-regulation manipulation. Consistent with previous research (Vohs & Heatherton, 2000) and the studies in Chapter 3 conceptualizing self-regulation impairment as reduced persistence, I manipulated self-regulation by showing a video of an individual persisting (or not persisting) on a difficult problem-solving task. Participants read that they would watch an individual completing a task who had received the instruction: “You have 10 minutes to work on the problems in front of you. If you either finish, or have tried as hard as you can and give up trying to solve the problems, you can read the magazines to your left for the remaining time.” Participants watched a three minute video of the individual (the video showed the desk and hands of

the individual, but not his face to avoid attributions made about his appearance) working on the task. In the *successful self-regulation condition*, the video showed the individual working persistently on the problem set for three minutes. In the *self-regulation impairment condition*, the video showed the individual attempting the first page of problems for one minute, but then pushing the problem set aside and flipping through the Men's Health and People magazines.

Measures

Self-regulation manipulation check. To verify the videos manipulated self-regulation (effective self-regulation versus self-regulation impairment), I asked participants to indicate the extent to which the individual in the video demonstrated self-control and self-restraint (1 = *not at all* to 7 = *very much*). These two items were averaged ($\alpha = .90$).

Competence attributions. I assessed attributions about the target participant's competence using Brescoll and Uhlmann's (2008) two-item scale. Participants rated the target participant on the trait dimensions of competent-incompetent and knowledgeable-ignorant, using 11-point trait semantic differential scales. Scores were reversed and the two items were averaged to create a scale of competence attributions ($\alpha = .94$).

Status conferral judgments. I measured status conferral judgments with three items adapted from Fragale (2006). Participants rated the extent to which they "would recommend the individual to be the group leader," "thought the individual should have status in the group," and "thought the individual should receive respect from other members of the group" (1 = *not at all* to 7 = *very much*). These three items were averaged ($\alpha = .93$).

Status conferral behaviour. To assess the extent to which the target participant actually conferred status, participants were asked to imagine that they had 100 points to

distribute among three people (the person they just watched in the video and two other people they would allegedly be required to assess). Participants read that the points indicated the respect and admiration they have for the person in the video. Participants reported how many of their 100 “respect points” they would allocate to the individual they just watched in the video (from 0 to 100 points).

After submitting the amount of respect points for the individual shown in the first video, participants were told that they would not evaluate anyone else. They were then debriefed, compensated (£10), and dismissed.

Results

Manipulation check. The results of the manipulation check indicated that the self-regulation manipulation was successful. Participants saw the individual in the successful self-regulation video as demonstrating more effective self-regulation ($M = 5.19$, $SD = 1.45$) than the individual in the self-regulation impairment video ($M = 2.18$, $SD = 1.25$), $F(1, 35) = 46.04$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .57$.

Analysis. The assumption that self-regulation triggers competence attributions that result in increased status conferral implies a positive indirect effect of self-regulation on status conferral judgments through competence attributions. To estimate the strength and significance of this indirect effect, I followed Preacher and Hayes (2004) and simultaneously estimated two regressions. First, I regressed competence attributions (the mediator, M) on self-regulation (the independent variable, X). Next, I regressed status conferral (dependent variable, Y) on self-regulation (independent variable, X) and competence attributions (mediator, M). The indirect effect P of self-regulation on status conferral through competence attributions is defined as the product of the $X \rightarrow M$ path (a_1) and the $M \rightarrow Y$ path (b_1) or a_1b_1 (Preacher & Hayes, 2004). Because these product terms are often not normally distributed and conventional

significant tests assume a normal distribution, I used a bootstrapping technique with 1000 resamples to obtain bias-corrected parameter estimates and associated 95 % confidence intervals. When these confidence intervals do not contain zero, the indirect effect is statistically significant at $p < .05$. I conducted this analysis for each of the two dependent measures of status conferral (judgments and behaviour). I present the results of these analyses in Table 4.1.

Status conferral judgments. In the regression model involving competence as the dependent variable, I found a significant positive effect of self-regulation on competence ($a_1 = 4.55, p = .001$). In the regression model involving status conferral judgments as the dependent variable, there was a marginally significant effect of self-regulation on status conferral judgments ($c' = .55, p = .09$), and a significant and positive effect of competence attributions on status conferral judgments ($b_1 = .50, p = .001$). Calculating the indirect effect ($a_1 b_1$) I found that consistent with my assumption, there was a positive and significant effect of self-regulation on status conferral judgments through competence attributions ($P = 2.28, 95\% \text{ CI} = 1.50, 3.38$).

Status conferral behaviour. In the regression model involving status conferral behaviour as the dependent variable, there was no statistically significant direct effect of self-regulation on status conferral behaviour ($c' = .57, p = .94$). There was, however, a significant positive effect of competence attributions on status conferral behaviour ($b_1 = 3.46, p = .01$). As expected, the indirect effect ($a_1 b_1$) of self-regulation on status conferral behaviour through competence attributions was also positive and significant ($P = 15.74, 95\% \text{ CI} = 5.81, 28.77$).

Table 4.1

Effect of Self-Regulation on Status Conferral through Competence in Study 5

Variable	Competence Attributions		Status Conferral Judgments		Status Conferral Behavior	
	<i>b</i>	95% CI	<i>b</i>	95% CI	<i>b</i>	95% CI
Self-regulation	2.03	3.27, 5.83***	.55	-.09, 1.20	.57	-15.01, 16.16
Competence attributions	--	--	.50	.39, .61***	3.46	.88, 6.04**
<i>F</i>	45.64***		115.85***		7.64**	
<i>R</i> ²	.55		.87		.31	

* $p < .05$.** $p < .01$.*** $p < .001$.

Study 5 confirms that people attribute greater competence to individuals who display successful self-regulation (versus self-regulation impairment) and as a result they are seen as more deserving of status. These results are consistent with Hypothesis 5 and suggest that the demonstration of successful self-regulation (versus self-regulation impairment) is diagnostic of legitimate status.

Study 6

Given that those who display more effective self-regulation are conferred more status (Study 5), Study 6 was designed to test whether the status loss of high status individuals will negatively influence judgments about the legitimacy of their status because they will be viewed as incompetent, but only when they display impaired self-regulation (versus successful self-regulation) after status loss (Hypothesis 6). Therefore, I conducted an experiment where I examined whether displaying self-regulation would buffer the potentially negative consequences of a leader's status loss on social audiences' judgments about the leader's competence and legitimacy.

Participants and Procedure

One hundred and eight individuals (61 females, mean age 25.4 years, $SD = 7.01$) from a university-affiliated participant pool reported to the laboratory to complete a study on "social evaluations of individuals in groups". The sample included both students (73%) and non-students (27%) and 52% of participants were employed part or full-time. The sample included 37% Caucasian British, American or European, 32% Asian, and 17% African participants. Participants were randomly assigned to a 2 (status loss versus no status loss) X 2 (self-regulation versus self-regulation impairment) between-subjects design.

Participants were seated in front of a computer and read a four-page report about an individual who had allegedly previously completed a group study in the laboratory (the "target participant"). The report included (1) information about the target participant, (2) information about the tasks he/she previously completed, and (3) information about his/her performance on those tasks.

First, the report included specific information about the target participant including demographic information (gender and ethnicity were redacted) and the target

participant's scores on a "Leadership Assessment Test" (used in de Kwaadsteniet & van Dijk, 2010 to allocate status) and "Problem Solving Test". This information was ostensibly collected in a pre-study survey. Participants saw that based on the target participant's Leadership Assessment Test and Problem Solving Test scores he/she was assigned to be the leader of the group at the beginning of the first task.

Second, the report contained an overview of the group tasks completed by the target participant. Participants read a summary of each of the three tasks that the target participant completed in the alleged group study. Task 1 was a computer-mediated group problem solving task, Task 2 was a face-to-face group problem-solving task and Task 3 was an independent problem solving task in a group setting. Participants learned that for each group member to receive a £2 bonus in the alleged study, they needed to successfully complete all three tasks.

Finally, the report also included descriptive information about the group's performance on each task (e.g., "completed problem-solving task in 17 minutes"), and indicated that the group successfully completed the first two tasks. All of the aforementioned information (target participant information, task information, task performance information) was consistent across study conditions. The four-page report used for this study is included in Appendix 4.1.

Status loss manipulation. The only information in the summary report (Appendix 4.1) that differed between conditions was one word ("Yes" vs. "No") which indicated whether or not the target participant had been demoted by his/her group members. The report explained that after Task 2 (i.e., the face-to-face group problem solving task), group members had the opportunity to either keep or demote their group leader (i.e., the target participant). In a table summarising the group's performance for Task 2, participants saw the entry "Group leader demoted?" Thus, status loss was

manipulated by whether or not the group leader was demoted (“Yes” = status loss, “No” = no status loss).

Self-regulation manipulation. The summary report indicated that Task 3 was an independent problem-solving task. Participants read that the target participant had received the instruction: “You have 10 minutes to work on the problems in front of you. If you either finish, or have tried as hard as you can and give up trying to solve the problems, you can read the magazines to your left for the remaining time.” Participants were instructed to watch a three minute video of the target participant performing Task 3. As in Study 5, the video in the successful self-regulation [impaired self-regulation] condition showed the individual working persistently [attempting the task but pushing it aside to read magazines].

Measures

Competence attributions. Competence attributions were assessed using the same two items from Study 1 (in this study, $\alpha = .90$).

Status legitimacy judgments. Judgments about the target participant’s legitimacy were measured with three items constructed to reflect the definition of legitimacy. Participants rated the extent to which they thought the target participant’s original status position in the group was legitimate, appropriate, and justified (1 = *not at all* to 7 = *very much*) ($\alpha = .86$).

Results

Analysis. Hypothesis 6 predicted that status loss will negatively affect legitimacy judgments because others will perceive the high status individual as less competent, but only when the high status individual displays self-regulation impairment (versus successful self-regulation) in the aftermath of status loss. This prediction would be supported if I were to find a negative and significant indirect effect of status loss on

judgments about status legitimacy through competence attributions when the leader exhibits self-regulation impairment. If self-regulation buffers against the negative implications of status loss, then when the leader demonstrates effective self-regulation, there should be no (or at least a comparatively weaker negative) indirect effect of status loss on legitimacy judgments.

To test Hypothesis 6, I followed procedures to test for moderated mediation in which the indirect effect of status loss on legitimacy judgments through competence attributions is moderated by self-regulation (Edwards & Lambert, 2007; Preacher, Rucker, & Hayes, 2007). Accordingly, I simultaneously estimated two regression models. First, I regressed competence (the mediator, M) on status loss (the independent variable, X), self-regulation (the moderator, Z) and the interaction between status loss and self-regulation (XZ). Second, I regressed status legitimacy (the dependent variable, Y) on status loss (X), self-regulation (Z), the interaction between status loss and self-regulation (XZ), and competence attributions (M). The conditional indirect effect P is defined as the product of the $M \rightarrow Y$ path (b_1) and the sum of the $X \rightarrow M$ path (a_1) and the $XZ \rightarrow M$ paths (a_3) or $b_1(a_1 + a_3Z)$ where the indirect effect depends on self-regulation (Z) to the extent that the interaction coefficient (a_3) departs from zero.

Hypothesis test. In the regression model involving competence as the dependent variable, I found a significant negative effect of status loss on competence ($a_1 = -1.40, p = .005$) and a significant positive effect of self-regulation on competence ($a_2 = 2.03, p = .001$). I also found a significant status loss by self-regulation interaction effect on competence ($a_3 = 1.48, p = .03$). In the regression model involving status legitimacy as the dependent variable, there were no significant effects of status loss ($c'_1 = -.16, p = .59$), self-regulation ($c'_2 = .02, p = .94$), or the interaction between status loss and self-regulation ($c'_3 = -.17, p = .67$) on legitimacy judgments. However, as predicted, there

was a significant positive effect of competence attributions on legitimacy judgments ($b_1 = .41, p = .001$). These results are presented in Table 4.2.

Next, I calculated the indirect effect ($b_1(a_1 + a_3Z)$) at high (successful self-regulation = 1) and low (self-regulation impairment = 0) levels of the moderator (Z). As predicted by Hypothesis 6, I found a negative and significant indirect effect of status loss on status legitimacy through attributions of competence when self-regulation was low ($P = -.57, 95\% \text{ CI} = -1.06, -.19$). However, there was no significant indirect effect of status loss on status legitimacy when self-regulation was high ($P = .03, 95\% \text{ CI} = -.37, .44$). The difference between these two indirect effects was significant ($\Delta P = .60, 95\% \text{ CI} = .02, 1.20$). Thus, when the leader displays effective self-regulation, status loss does not affect legitimacy judgments. However, when the leader displays self-regulation impairment, status loss negatively influences legitimacy judgments because the individual is not seen as competent.

Table 4.2

Effect of Status Loss and Self-Regulation on Legitimacy Judgments

Variable	Competence Attributions		Legitimacy Judgments	
	<i>b</i>	95% CI	<i>b</i>	95% CI
Status loss	-1.40	-2.33, -.46**	-.16	-.74, .42
Self-regulation	2.03	1.08, 2.97***	.02	-.59, .63
Status loss x self-regulation	1.48	.17, 2.78*	-.17	-.98, .63
Competence attributions	--	--	.41	.29, .52***
<i>F</i>	25.27***		20.41***	
<i>R</i> ²	.43		.45	

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .01$.

*** $p < .001$.

Discussion

The results of Study 6 show that status loss undermines legitimacy judgments when the high status individuals fail to demonstrate willpower after status loss because social audiences infer that the individual is not competent enough to be deserving of status. However, exhibiting successful self-regulation protects high status individuals from the negative social consequences of status loss; status loss did not affect competence attributions and legitimacy when the leader displayed successful self-regulation after status loss. These results are consistent with Hypothesis 6 that self-regulation influences competence attributions and legitimacy judgments in the aftermath of status loss.

However, there are two main limitations of this study. First, I used the evaluations of a social audience who were not members of the same group as the leader to determine when status loss influences legitimacy judgments. I did this because the legitimacy judgments of independent audiences influence the social validation process that leads to consensus about legitimacy within groups. Taking the example from a senior consultant who is taken off a prestigious project, the judgments of independent social audiences (e.g., organisational members) will likely influence and converge with the judgments of social audiences within the group (e.g., group members). At the same time, however, I realise that it is possible that independent social audiences are less invested in an existing social order and may therefore be quicker to withdraw their endorsement from high status individuals, compared to an audience who shares group membership with the high status individual. Perhaps group members would feel greater system-justification pressures than an independent audience and so my predictions may not generalise to situations in which participants are members of the same group as the leader who lost status.

Moreover, while I examined legitimacy judgments in Study 6, I do not know whether I would find similar effects on *behaviours* that legitimise high status individuals. Specifically, my theoretical model suggests that when the leader demonstrates self-regulation impairment after status loss, low status individuals will both doubt and challenge the existing social order. I assume that the same evaluative process that reduces legitimacy judgments will also lead to behaviour that challenges (rather than legitimises) the social order. However, it is possible that while the combination of status loss and self-regulation impairment lowers legitimacy perceptions, it fails to affect legitimising behaviour. People generally experience strong social pressures to conform to leaders' directives (Milgram, 1974), and despite doubts about the legitimacy of the social order, these conformity pressures may inhibit their willingness to actively challenge the social order.

Thus, a more comprehensive test of my model requires determining whether status loss provokes status-challenging behaviours when the leader demonstrates self-regulation impairment after status loss. Study 7 was designed to address these limitations.

Study 7

In Study 6, I found that demonstrating successful self-regulation protected high status individual's legitimacy after status loss, while self-regulation impairment lead to reduced legitimacy judgments after status loss. Given that endorsement of the social order typically involves both legitimacy judgments and legitimising behaviours (Zelditch, 2001), Study 7 examined the effects of status loss on status-challenging behaviour from subordinates. Specifically, I tested whether low status members would be less willing to defer to the directives of a high status group member and more likely to engage in status-challenging behaviour when the high status group member shows self-regulation impairment after status loss.

Typically, low status individuals demonstrate their support for the social order by deferring to the directives of high status individuals (Walker, et al., 1986; Weber, 1946). Deferral and other kinds of submissive behaviour towards high status individuals is usually automatic as long as the social order is seen to be legitimate (Mazur, 1973). However, if group members have reasons to believe that the social order is not legitimate (e.g., a high status group member is not deserving of their status), they may refuse to defer to the direction of high status individuals and may even challenge them.

Therefore, if the diagnosticity of self-regulation impairment for illegitimacy overwhelms the conformity pressures to defer to high status individuals, I should find that when high status group members fail to control their self, status loss will reduce low status group members' willingness to defer and increase their status-challenging behaviour; however, when high status group members demonstrate effective self-regulation, status loss should not affect low status individuals' status-challenging behaviour (Hypothesis 7).

Participants and Procedure

Ninety-two individuals (51 females, mean age 27.38 years, $SD = 8.43$) completed a group study for £10. The sample included both students (67%) and non-students (33%) and 52% of participants were employed part or full-time. The sample included 25% Caucasian British, American or European, 31% Asian, 22% African participants. Participants were randomly allocated to 2 (status loss versus no status loss) X 2 (self-regulation versus self-regulation impairment) between-subjects design.

Participants completed a computer-mediated group task with two other participants (in reality the comments and responses of the other two participants were pre-programmed), one of whom was assigned to lead the group. The study had three main parts. In Part 1, participants read a summary report and watched a video of the leader's performance in the "first part of the study". In Part 2, participants read the case for the group task. In Part 3, participants reported the extent to which they intended to defer to the leader's directives in the group task and were given the opportunity to support or challenge initiatives put forward by the leader.

Participants came to the laboratory in groups of three and were taken to separate rooms and seated in front of the computer. They read that they would complete a group task over the computer with two other participants, one of whom allegedly completed the first part of the study the week before. The participant who completed the first part of the study was assigned to be the leader for the current group task. In order to reinforce the cover story, participants were asked to log on to the computer and indicate whether they had completed the first part of the study the week before (if participants mistakenly indicated they had completed the first part of the study, they saw an error message that said "Error: our records indicate you did not complete the first study in this research series").

Participants then completed Part 1 of the study. They read the summary report of their leader's performance in the first part of the study (the same report as Study 1; see Appendix 4.1) and watched the video of the leader completing the independent part of the previous study (the same video as in the Studies 5 and 6).

Status loss manipulation. As in Study 2, status loss was manipulated in the participant report. The report indicated whether the leader was demoted ("Yes" = status loss, "No" = no status loss) after the second task.

Self-regulation manipulation. Self-regulation was manipulated through the same video used in the previous studies showing either the individual working persistently (effective self-regulation), or attempting the task but pushing it aside to read magazines (self-regulation impairment).

After reading the report and watching the video, participants logged on to the interactive part of the group study and were instructed that they would need to wait for their other group members to log on before they could start the group task. While waiting for their group members to log on, participants completed Part 2. Participants read a hard copy of the group exercise ("The Furniture Factory"; Johnson & Johnson, 2009). This exercise is included as Appendix 4.1.

After four minutes, the screen indicated that all three group members had logged on. Participants sent an introductory message to their group members and received pre-programmed introductory messages from each of their two group members ("Hi everyone! It looks like I'm the leader today. I'm a university student and I work part-time." And "Hi! My name is Alex. I speak four languages and I have a master's degree in biology. On weekends I play guitar in a band.").

After introducing themselves to their group members, participants were directed again to the group exercise. The furniture factory exercise describes a furniture

manufacturing company in a small town that recognises a need to diversify their business, but is concerned about resistance from the workers. The President of the company suggests five options for how to approach the workers about the needed changes. The group's task is to rank the five options in terms of their effectiveness in bringing about the desired changes with the least resistance from the workers (1 = *most effective*, 5 = *least effective*). Participants took a few minutes to think about the best way to approach this exercise as a group.

Participants then completed Part 3 of the study. Participants reported how they intended to behave in the group task (i.e., the extent to which they intended to defer to the leader's directives). Finally, participants had the opportunity to support or challenge the leader's directives. The leader sent three directives for how the group should go about completing the task, including: (1) "Each of you should come up with arguments about the pros and cons of each option and try to persuade me", (2) "Each of you should rank the options and I will decide from those rankings how I should rank the final submission", (3) "We should rank option B 1st and rank option D 5th". After reading these directives, participants had the opportunity to suggest up to three of their own initiatives which would be sent to their group members. Finally, participants submitted their rankings for the task. Participants were debriefed, thanked and compensated (£10).

Measures

Willingness to defer. After thinking about the best way to accomplish the group task, participants indicated their willingness to defer in the group task. Participants rated the extent to which they intended to adopt five deferral behaviours adapted from Moskowitz (1994) including: "Do not express disagreement when I think it", "Give in", "Do not state my own views", "Avoid taking the lead or being responsible", "Do not

say what is on my mind” (1 = *not at all*, 7 = *very much*). The five items were averaged ($\alpha=.74$).

Status-challenging behaviour. The extent to which participant’s engaged in status-challenging behaviour was determined by two independent raters (blind to the hypotheses of the study) who evaluated the initiatives the participants proposed after reading the leader’s initiatives. Presenting initiatives that contradicted the initiatives set forth by the leader would be considered challenging the leader’s high status position in the group (i.e., their status-based authority). The raters evaluated the extent to which the participant made suggestions that challenged (versus agreed with or supported) the authority of the leader (1 = *not at all* to 7 = *very much*). Participants who did not suggest initiatives, or who made suggestions that were consistent with the leader’s initiatives (e.g., “Everyone submits their suggestions for the rankings and explains why each choice is in a particular position and then the leader can discuss it with the others in the group and come to a final decision.”, “none”) scored low on the challenging behaviour scale of the raters (1-2); whereas, participants who suggested initiatives that contradicted the leader’s initiatives (e.g., “Group leader should come up with a suggestion to a ranking to be commented on by GM2 and GM3”, “we should all get involved in the decision making”.) were scored as high on the challenging behaviour scale used by the raters (6-7). I averaged the evaluations of the two raters ($\alpha = .74$).

Results and Discussion

Analysis. Hypothesis 7 predicted that status loss provokes status-challenging behaviour because it reduces low status group members’ willingness to defer, but only when the leader displays self-regulation impairment in the aftermath of status loss. This implies a positive indirect effect of status loss on status-challenging behaviour through a reduced willingness to defer when the leader exhibits self-regulation impairment and no

(or a weaker positive) effect of status loss on status-challenging behaviour when the leader demonstrates self-regulation. As in Study 6, this prediction is depicted by a moderated mediation model. Thus, I analysed the data in the same manner as in Study 6 and present the results of the regressions in Table 4.3.

Hypothesis test. In the regression model involving willingness to defer as the dependent variable, I found a negative and marginally significant effect of status loss on willingness to defer ($a_1 = -.46, p = .06$) and a significant negative effect of self-regulation on willingness to defer ($a_2 = -.53, p = .03$). I also found a significant status loss x self-regulation interaction effect on willingness to defer ($a_3 = .80, p = .02$). In the regression model involving status-challenging behaviour as the dependent variable, there was no significant effect of status loss ($c'_1 = .10, p = .82$), or the interaction between status loss and self-regulation ($c'_3 = -.07, p = .91$) on status-challenging behaviour. However, there was a positive effect of self-regulation on status-challenging behaviour ($c'_2 = .96, p = .03$), and a marginally significant positive effect of willingness to defer on status-challenging behaviour ($b_1 = -.33, p = .07$).

Using the same procedure as Study 6, I next tested Hypothesis 7 by calculating the indirect effect ($b_1(a_1 + a_3Z)$) at high (successful self-regulation = 1) and low (self-regulation impairment = 0) levels of the moderator (Z). I found there was a significant and positive indirect effect of status loss on challenging behaviour through a reduced willingness to defer when self-regulation was low (self-regulation impairment: $P = .15$, 95% CI = .003, .58). However, there was no significant indirect effect of status loss on status legitimacy when self-regulation was high (successful self-regulation: $P = -.11$, 95% CI = -.43, .02). The difference between these two indirect effects was significant ($\Delta P = -.27$, 95% CI = -.81, -.01).

Table 4.3

Effect of Status Loss and Self-Regulation on Legitimising Behaviour

Variable	Willingness to Defer		Status-Challenging Behavior	
	<i>b</i>	95% CI	<i>b</i>	95% CI
Status loss	-.46	-.94, .02 ^t	-.19	-.99, .62
Self-regulation	-.53	-1.01, -.05*	.58	-.23, 1.39
Status loss x self-regulation	.80	.12, 1.48*	.41	-.74, 1.55
Willingness to defer	--	--	-.35	-.69, -.01*
<i>F</i>		1.91		3.05*
<i>R</i> ²		.06		.12

* $p < .05$.** $p < .01$.*** $p < .001$.

The results of Study 7 show that status loss provokes challenges to the social order by reducing low status group members' willingness to defer when the leader demonstrates impaired self-regulation. However, exhibiting successful self-regulation protects the leader from challenges to their position after status loss.

Discussion

Although past research emphasises the self-perpetuating nature of status (Merton, 1968) and the stability of the social order (Zelditch, 2001), the reality is that those at the top of the hierarchy can lose status. How they behave after status loss is important because it may influence their ability to regain status in the future, creating the potential for instability in the social order. In this chapter I investigated the social consequences of status loss for high status individuals. Specifically, I examined how displays of self-regulation influence a high status individual's legitimacy after status loss. I suggested

that the status loss of high status individuals will not always evoke negative reactions from social audiences. Instead, I argued that the status loss of high status individuals prompts social audiences to scrutinise the high status individuals' behaviour to determine whether they are legitimately occupying their position. To the extent that high status individuals demonstrate effective self-regulation in the aftermath of status loss, their legitimacy will be unaffected by status loss. However, if high status individuals display self-regulation impairment after status loss, they will be viewed as undeserving of status and will face more challenges to their status position than if they had not lost status.

Three studies investigated how displays of effective self-regulation (versus self-regulation impairment) influence legitimacy in the aftermath of status loss. Because social audiences tend to confer more status to those who display effective self-regulation (Study 5), Study 6 and 7 examined how self-regulation displays might buffer high status individual from negative social consequences after status loss. My findings showed that status loss negatively impacted legitimacy judgments of leaders who displayed self-regulation impairment after status loss, but that, status loss did not cause any negative social consequences for the leader's legitimacy when the leader effectively displayed self-regulation after status loss. Study 7 extended these findings by investigating whether displays of self-regulation would affect behavioural support for high status individuals after status loss. My findings suggest that leaders who display self-regulation impairment in the aftermath of status loss may create instability in the social order. Status loss decreased group members' willingness to defer and thus, increased the extent to which they challenged the leader's directives, but only when the leader displayed self-regulation impairment in the aftermath of status loss.

In sum, these results illustrate how the self-regulation impairment high status individuals experience after status loss can prevent them from regaining their status and thus, can undermine the stability of the hierarchy. In doing so, I highlight the critical role of self-regulation in legitimisation processes in groups and organisations.

Conclusion

In this chapter I investigated the social consequences of status loss for high status individuals. In three experimental studies I found that because self-regulation leads to status conferral, when high status individuals display effective self-regulation they protect their legitimacy after status loss; however when they display self-regulation impairment after status loss, they cause relevant social audiences to doubt their legitimacy and challenge their high standing in the social order. These findings illustrate the downstream consequences of high status individuals' lack of persistence after status loss: preventing high status individuals from regaining status and undermining the stability of the social order. They also highlight the central role of self-regulation in social processes such as status maintenance and legitimisation.

Chapter 5 : General Discussion

A vast literature emphasises that people are fundamentally motivated to strive for status because of the many advantages that come from having status and the disadvantages associated with having little status. However, we know little about how people react to losing status, despite the fact that it is a common occurrence in social life. Scholars publish fewer influential articles, journalists receive less prestigious assignments, consultants are put on the beach; there are many situations in which people experience a loss in the amount of respect they receive from their group members, and this constitutes status loss. In this thesis, I suggested that status loss is a challenging experience that is likely to interfere with some people's ability to exert willpower its aftermath. Thus, I developed and tested a theoretical model that examined *who* would be the most likely to experience self-regulation impairment after status loss and *what* individual and social consequences they would experience as a result.

By examining these questions, I highlight the problems individuals and groups must resolve to navigate status hierarchies in groups. On one hand, *individuals* must figure out how to self-enhance given their status position in the hierarchy. Accordingly, I suggest that high status individuals generally make their status position a more important part of their self than will low status individuals. The unintended consequence of this solution, however, is that high status individuals will be more threatened by the loss of status than low status individuals and will have trouble self-regulating in the aftermath of status loss. On the other hand, *groups* face the problem of determining who in the group should receive high status. Accordingly, I suggest that groups use self-regulation as a diagnostic criterion to make status conferral decisions. The consequence of this is that high status individuals who display impaired self-regulation after status loss will be viewed as undeserving of their status position. As a result, high status

individuals who display impaired self-regulation after status loss will have difficulty regaining their high standing and may undermine the stability of the hierarchy.

The results of seven studies largely supported my hypotheses. First, in terms of *who* would be the most likely to experience self-regulation impairment, my findings indicated that high status individuals had more trouble self-regulating after status loss than low status individuals (Studies 2 and 3: Hypothesis 3 supported). Further, this relationship was most consistently explained by high status individuals viewing their status as a more important part of their self and thus, experiencing more self-threat after status loss than low status individuals (Studies 1 and 2: Hypothesis 1b supported; Studies 2 and 4: Hypothesis 4b supported).

The findings in this first set of studies started to address *what* consequences people experience as a result of status loss (e.g., reduced persistence); however, I proposed that high status individuals might also experience social consequences as a result of their regulatory impairment. Because self-regulation is a fundamental antecedent to status conferral (Study 5: Hypothesis 5 supported), I found that high status individuals who displayed self-regulation impairment were evaluated as less deserving of their status (Study 6: Hypothesis 6 supported) and were challenged by lower status group members after status loss (Study 7: Hypothesis 7 supported); however, high status individuals who displayed effective self-regulation were protected from these negative social judgments (Study 6: Hypothesis 6 supported) and behavioural challenges (Study 7: Hypothesis 7 supported) after status loss.

Theoretical Implications

My thesis makes several contributions to the literatures on status, legitimacy and self-regulation. First, this research contributes to the literature on status by examining the understudied phenomenon of status loss. Although a few recent empirical papers

have examined the consequences of prospective losses of status (Bothner, et al., 2007; Pettit, et al., 2010; Scheepers, et al., 2009), to my knowledge, this is the first series of studies investigating how people behave after they have lost status. Although losing status is arguably a challenging experience for everybody, some people find it more difficult to overcome than others and are thus, less able to regulate themselves effectively in the aftermath of status loss. My studies suggest that high status individuals are more likely to experience self-regulation impairment in response to status loss than low status individuals, except if they are given an opportunity to affirm their sense of self.

These findings challenge the traditional model of status where more status is equated with greater resources and thus, better outcomes. According to the traditional perspectives on status (i.e., positional-resources perspective), the material, psychological and social privileges associated with status should facilitate high status individuals' resilience in the face of negative life events (Hobfoll, 1989; Kessler, 1979; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; McLeod & Kessler, 1990). However, this research suggests at least one type of negative life event (i.e., status loss) where more status resources are a liability. My findings suggest that high status individuals depend more on their status for their positive sense of self, making status loss more threatening for them than for their low status counterparts. Thus, despite their superior resources, high status individuals experience more dysfunctional reactions (i.e., self-regulation failures) to status loss. This raises the question: is more status always better? Individuals have a fervent drive to acquire status, but there may be some situations in which having less status actually leads to more functional outcomes (Frank, 1985).

By investigating people's persistence after status loss, this research also contributes to the literature on self-regulation. It is intuitive that high status individuals

(e.g., high ranking executives, star performers) should be effective self-regulators, and there is empirical evidence supporting this view (DeWall, et al., 2011; Lovaglia, et al., 1998). If status hierarchies are functional and based on the respect individuals receive from their group members (Bales, 1950; Berger, et al., 1972), the members who receive the most status should be those who demonstrate perseverance in the face of challenges (i.e., are able to self-regulate). Consistent with this intuition, recent research found that high status individuals (i.e., leaders) self-regulated more effectively on important work tasks than their low status counterparts (DeWall, et al., 2011). The current research contributes to this literature by examining a situation in which the positive relationship between status and self-regulation is reversed. Specifically, I find that after losing status, low status individuals self-regulate more effectively on work tasks than high status individuals.

This research contributes to the literature on legitimacy by investigating the social consequences of status loss. Legitimation is considered to be a key factor in explaining social order, but we have a relatively poor understanding of the micro-level processes causing legitimation (Bendersky & Hays, in press; Tost, 2011). My research fills this gap by showing that social audiences consider self-regulation as a diagnostic criterion to decide whether others are deserving of respect and deferral. I suggest that the display of self-regulation provides evidence of competence across a variety of domains (e.g., perseverance, academic performance, honesty, ethicality) and conversely, the display of self-regulation impairment provides evidence of incompetence across a variety of domains (e.g., performance and persistence deficits, dishonesty, unethical behaviour). Incompetence is highly undesirable in a high status individual whose actions will be heavily copied by others (Henrich & Gil-White, 2001). Accordingly, I

find that self-regulation impairment is a strong diagnostic criterion that an individual is *not* deserving of status in the group.

This also highlights the central role of self-regulation in social processes. While the research on self-regulation has predominantly focused on the individual consequences (see Hagger, Wood, Stiff, & Chatzisarantis, 2010; Steel, 2007), these studies also underscore the social consequences of self-regulation impairment. My studies show that self-regulation is an important driver of status and legitimisation processes in groups. Social audiences react to self-regulation impairment in predictable ways (e.g., making negative attributions about competence) which influence their evaluations and behaviours towards group members. This contributes to a more thorough understanding of the social functions of self-regulation (Righetti & Finkenauer, 2011).

Finally, the current findings also contribute to an emerging area of research on the dynamic nature of status hierarchies (Bendersky & Hays, in press). Historically, the literature on status has viewed status hierarchies as stable and one's position in the social order as fixed (Berger & Zelditch, 1998; Gould, 2002). Indeed, research on system justification theory has contributed greatly to our understanding of why hierarchies are typically stable by documenting how and why people justify status quo (Jost, et al., 2004; Jost & Burgess, 2000; Jost, et al., 2002). However, we see in social life that despite the remarkable stability of status hierarchies, people still gain and lose status. This thesis takes the perspective that status hierarchies are dynamic and investigates when status loss may create instability in the social order. By documenting when and how the status loss of a high status individual prompts doubts and challenges to the social order, these findings start to provide insight into how otherwise stable status hierarchies may change.

Practical Implications

This research makes several practical contributions for understanding status loss in organisations. First, these findings suggest that high status individuals are more likely to experience impaired persistence after losing status than their low status counterparts. Ironically, in organisations, high status individuals (e.g., star performers, high ranking executives) are probably also less likely to admit or show that they are feeling threatened. This may not only exacerbate the depletion and subsequent self-regulation impairment they experience, but it also makes it less likely that others (co-workers, clients, shareholders) will recognise they are impaired. As a result, underperformance, bad decisions and errors made in the immediate aftermath of status loss may not be noticed until they have had detrimental and potentially irreversible consequences. However, the results of Study 4 do give reason for optimism. Thinking about a significant relationship that makes one feel respected and worthy can restore the ability to persist. This finding is consistent with research on compensatory self-inflation (Baumeister & Jones, 1978; Greenberg & Pyszczynski, 1985) which shows that individuals can compensate for threats to their self by drawing on self-esteem from another domain. Thus, from a practical perspective, there are simple, inexpensive ways to mitigate the potential negative consequences of status loss.

Finding ways to mitigate the negative consequences of status loss will be particularly important for high status individuals to regain their status in the future. This research demonstrates that status loss itself does not cause high status individuals to lose their legitimacy; instead, how high status individuals regulate themselves in the aftermath of status loss will determine how others evaluate and behave towards them (i.e., whether the evaluations and behaviours of others will legitimise their high standing in the social order, or not). High status individuals who display effective self-regulation

will not experience negative social consequences from status loss; whereas, high status individuals who display self-regulation impairment after status loss trigger social audiences to doubt and challenge their high standing.

Because of the task-based focus of my empirical contexts, these findings apply well to high status individuals in traditional work environments (e.g., project teams at a consulting company). However, there is reason to believe these findings may be especially relevant for individuals in non-traditional industries like politics and entertainment. First, the status loss of high status individuals is arguably more prevalent in these industries, making an understanding of the consequences of status loss particularly relevant. Second, the behaviour of high status people is also likely to be more visible to social audiences in these domains, potentially enhancing the impact of their behaviour after status loss on legitimacy. Therefore, how high status politicians and movie stars behave after losing status may be particularly important for the trajectory of their careers.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

In testing my predictions about who would have most difficulty overcoming status loss, I chose to examine people at the top versus people close to the bottom of the hierarchy. Because the majority of research on status emphasises the rewards that accumulate at the top of the hierarchy, demonstrating that those at the very top of the hierarchy (e.g., star performers) – who have the greatest surplus of tangible and intangible resources (Bothner, et al., 2011) - are susceptible to self-regulation failures after status loss provides a strong test of my theory. I chose people close to the bottom of the hierarchy as a comparison group because individuals may be averse to being at the very bottom of the hierarchy ("last place aversion"; Kuziemko, Buell, Reich, & Norton, 2011), and thus, this creates a conservative test of my theory.

However, since previous research has shown that proximity to a standard (e.g., being near the top or the bottom) can intensify behaviour (e.g., increase competitive behavior; Garcia & Tor, 2007; Garcia, Tor, & Gonzalez, 2006), it is also possible that the behavioural effects found in these studies would not generalise to those closer to the middle of the hierarchy. For instance, the positive relationship between status position and the centrality of status to the self may not be linear, but may increase substantially towards the top of the hierarchy. In this case, high status individuals who are not close to the top of the hierarchy might not experience such extreme self-regulation impairment. Future research should investigate the boundary conditions of the relationship between initial status position and self-regulation impairment after status loss.

For several reasons, I chose experimental methods for testing my theoretical model. As a first test of this theory, it was critical to establish the causal chain from initial status position to self-regulation impairment and from self-regulation impairment to legitimacy judgments/behaviours, in the aftermath of status loss, and using experimental methodology enabled me to test causal predictions. Moreover, in order to make comparisons of the consequences of status loss for high and low status individuals, I needed to ensure (to the best of my ability) that the objective loss in rank would be comparable. In a controlled setting, I was able to manipulate the amount of status lost (e.g., using the same number of ranks or the same percentage of respect points) and use manipulation checks to confirm that the amount of status loss was perceived to be equivalent by participants. One additional benefit of the experimental approach was being able to control for potentially confounding variables (e.g., wealth, power) that often co-occur with status in more naturalistic settings. Finally, to test this theory, I needed to assess behavioural differences in self-regulation immediately after status loss

which would have been biased by several factors (e.g., timing of assessment, accuracy of self-report) in field settings. Now that I have established the phenomenon in a controlled setting, it is important to examine future research questions generated by these findings in more naturalistic contexts.

In particular, examining status loss in naturalistic settings would allow for an investigation of how status acquisition influences reactions to status loss. My research assumes that people typically acquire status early in group formation and accordingly, in my studies participants' status positions are acquired quickly before status loss. However, one might argue that the speed with which status is acquired in these experiments does not allow enough time for high status individuals' positional resources (which might buffer the loss) to develop. Past research studies indicate that intangible resources such as self-efficacy can be acquired quickly after experimental manipulations of status in the laboratory (Lovaglia, Lucas, Houser, Thye, & Markovsky, 1998). However, by examining status loss in more naturalistic settings, future research could examine how the length of time someone has held a status position influences their reactions to status loss.

Related to this issue, it is possible that past experiences with status loss might influence people's reactions to losing status. Although status hierarchies are generally stable, there are exceptions and it is possible for people to have a history of previous status loss in their group, or in previous groups. This is most likely to occur in fast-moving, volatile settings (e.g., entrepreneurship, new technologies) where the competencies required of group members change more frequently. In these situations, an individual who is respected a great deal for their contributions one day could find themselves unable to contribute the next. As a consequence, even high status individuals in these settings are likely to have experienced status loss in the past. Consequently, it is

unlikely that high status individuals in these settings would psychologically adapt to their high standing in the same way as is predicted by my theoretical model - i.e., holding expectations that are inconsistent with status loss and coming to view status as an important part of their self - because they have had to adjust to losing status in the past. Thus, my theoretical model may not apply in environments where status is less stable.

Another potential avenue for future research is to extend the scope of self-regulation impairment measures. In these studies, I examined only one indicator of self-regulation impairment -- impaired persistence. However, there are many other indicators of regulatory impairment that would be relevant to status loss in a work context (e.g., retaliation, helping behaviours); future research would benefit from understanding how status loss influences these types of regulatory failures, and how these regulatory failures might influence subsequent legitimacy judgments. I expect that status loss would impact different indicators of regulatory impairment after status loss in similar ways. For example, high status individuals are probably less likely to engage in helping behaviours (which require self-regulation) in the immediate aftermath of status loss than their low status counterparts. It is also possible to extend the scope of self-regulation measures by investigating behaviours that occur outside of the context in which the status loss occurred. Possibly, those who experience status loss at work may have trouble self-regulating outside work and may, for example, engage in negative health behaviours like problem-drinking or overeating.

There may also be other factors that moderate the status loss, self-regulation relationship (e.g., previous status loss, status centrality). I argue that initial status position influences self-regulation after status loss because status position influences the extent to which individuals define their status as a central part of their self and the more

central status is to the self, the more threatening it is to the self to lose status. However, there will be individual variation to the extent that both high and low status individuals view status as a central component of their self. For example, some individuals might view their personal relationships as more central to their self than their status, and this could attenuate the consequences of status loss. This would also be consistent with research by Kasser and Ryan (1996) showing that individuals who view social relationships as more psychologically central to their self (i.e., those for whom significant relationships would normally be more salient) generally experience less distress and greater well-being in daily life. Exploring moderators is a fruitful starting point for future research.

These findings also generate a number of interesting and unanswered research questions on legitimisation processes in organisations. First, I find that demonstrations of effective self-regulation (e.g., persistence) buffer negative social responses to a high status individual's status loss because they protect positive attributions about the high status individual's competence. That attributions of competence would influence legitimacy judgments is consistent with an instrumental perspective on legitimacy which predicts that entities are judged to be legitimate when they promote the material interests of the individual (Hollander & Julian, 1970; Tyler, 1997). However, taking a relational or moral perspective on legitimacy (Tyler & Lind, 1992), it is possible that some demonstrations of effective self-regulation (e.g., honesty, ethicality) might also influence social reactions by addressing relational or moral, as well as instrumental concerns. Overt displays of honesty or ethicality in an experimental context might seem contrived and raise suspicion (which is one reason why I manipulated demonstrations of persistence in our studies). However, to the extent that individuals can effectively display honest or ethical behaviour after status loss in real-life, these demonstrations of

effective self-regulation might influence social reactions through relational or moral judgments (e.g., trustworthiness; Righetti & Finkenauer, 2011) rather than instrumental judgments (e.g., competence).

Finally, the studies presented in Chapter 4 of this thesis document social reactions to status loss from a micro-level perspective. As such, I examine individual-level legitimation responses (i.e., “propriety”; Dornbusch & Scott, 1975) and draw conclusions about the potential for this to create instability in the social order. However, in order for the instability triggered by these reactions to lead to real change in the hierarchy, there must be a general consensus at a collective level that the social order is illegitimate. The results of Study 7 (where participants openly challenge the directives of the group leader) seem to indicate that the demonstration of self-regulation impairment promotes the emergence of a social consensus about the high status individual’s illegitimacy, however, examining how the instability created by these individual judgments produces real changes in the hierarchy would be a fruitful avenue for future research.

Conclusion

This thesis developed and tested a theoretical model of reactions to status loss. I suggested that because it is a challenging experience, status loss is likely to diminish some people’s ability to exert willpower (i.e., self-regulation) in the aftermath of the loss. Accordingly, I investigated *who* in the hierarchy would have the most difficulty self-regulating after status loss and *what* individual and social consequences they would experience as a result.

Across seven experimental studies, my findings showed that high status individuals experience status loss as more threatening than low status individuals and thus, have more difficulty regulating themselves in the immediate aftermath of status

loss. This means that high status individuals (e.g., star performers, leaders) are more likely than their low status counterparts to make mistakes, overlook important information and neglect work demands immediately after losing status.

Moreover, high status individuals' impaired self-regulation also has social consequences. High status individuals who were able to display successful self-regulation after status loss protected the view that they were truly deserving of status; however, high status individuals who were unable to display successful self-regulation (i.e., displayed impaired self-regulation) after status loss provoked doubts and challenges to their high status position. The ironic implication of these findings, is that those who value their status most (i.e., high status individuals) are also most likely to react to status loss in ways that reduce their chances of regaining status.

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Appendix 3.1: Study 1 Demotion Scenario

Part 1

This first part of this scenario was used to manipulate initial status position and status loss. Participants in the high status [low status] condition read:

Imagine that you are a Senior Consultant [Senior Analyst] at a large consulting company.

You were promoted into this role six months ago. This promotion was in title only (there was no salary increase), but more senior titles are important because they are an indicator of a consultant's competence. More senior consultants receive more respect in the eyes of the Partners and other consultants. Seniority also comes with privileges including: being asked to consult on prestigious projects, being deferred to in meetings, being able to choose which projects to join, and having more autonomy over one's working hours.

It is now December and all employees are going through annual performance reviews. These reviews are important because the result of this review determines possibilities for promotion, bonuses and additional work privileges. The company believes in transparency, so at the end of the review period, the "Annual Performance Report" (each employee's review score and any title changes) are posted online and sent to all employees via email from the Managing Partner.

Your annual performance review is today.

Part 2

This second part of this scenario was used to manipulate status loss. Participants in the high status, status loss [low status, status loss] condition read:

Imagine that you have now been called into the boardroom for your performance review. You are seated at a large table with members of the review committee sitting

across from you (consultants of various levels – analysts, consultants, and partners – who reviewed your performance this year). The Managing Partner at the firm clears his throat and says,

"We will just cut to the chase. Unfortunately, we have an unusual situation here. The review committee has determined that you have not satisfactorily met the requirements for a Senior Consultant [Senior Analyst]. As a result, the recommendation from the committee is that you are demoted to Junior Consultant [Junior Analyst]."

You immediately think of the Annual Performance Report which will be sent out this week. You realise this demotion will not only have a significant impact on the respect you receive from your co-workers, clients and friends, but it also means you will lose your seniority privileges at work.

Appendix 3.2: Study 2 Sales Rankings Scenario

Participants in the high status [low status] condition read,

Part 1

Imagine you are a sales associate working for a major Pharmaceutical company, Chemco.

One of the key success indicators for a sales associate at Chemco is the company's annual Sales Associate Rankings. The rankings are published every year and are perceived to be an indicator of an associate's quality and competence. The rankings are based on both objective criteria such as the amount of sales made (in dollars), and the number of new clients developed by the associate, as well as subjective criteria including co-worker, supervisor and client ratings of the associate. The rankings are published in the top industry magazine and posted online.

An Associate's ranking determines the amount of respect and deferral he or she receives from co-workers. Therefore, those at the top of the rankings receive more respect, are listened to more, and are deferred to by co-workers. Whereas, those at the bottom of the rankings receive little respect, are not listened to and are expected to defer to others.

For the last three years, you have been ranked 1st [75th] out of 100 Sales Associates...

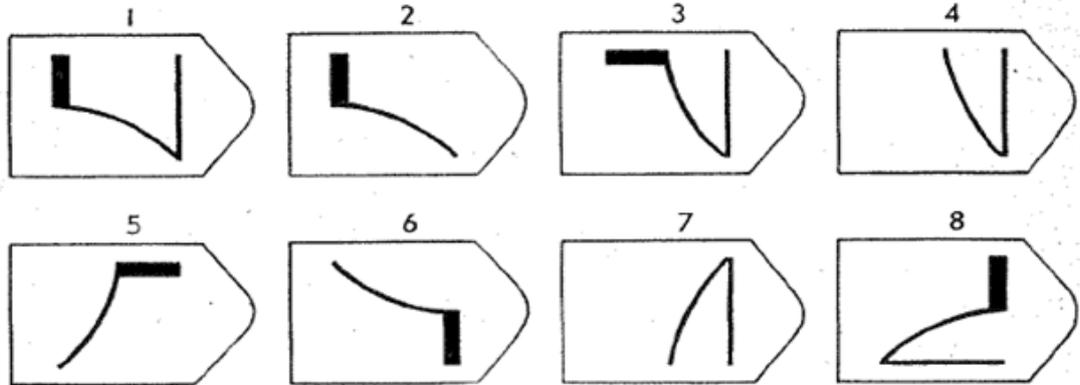
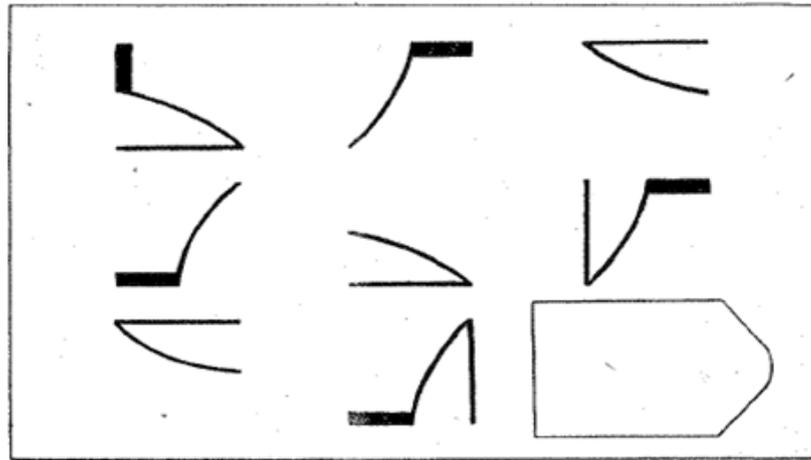
Part 2

...When you arrive at work today, your colleague tells you that you have dropped twenty-five places in the Sales Associate Rankings from 1st to 25th [75th to 100th].

Appendix 3.3: Sample Problem from the Raven Advanced Progressive Matrices

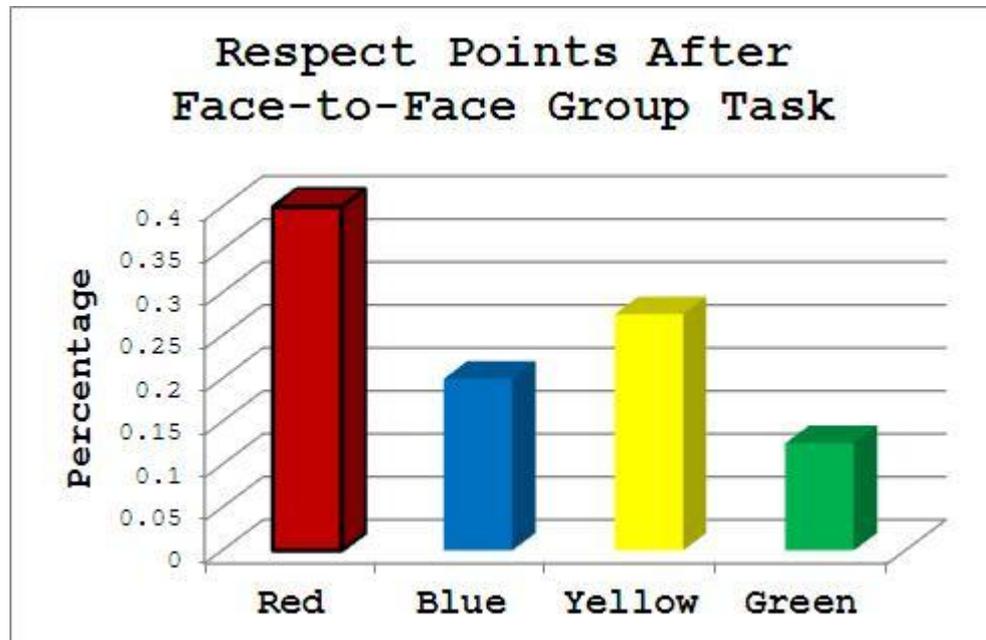
Question 1

There is one shape missing from the box and you have to choose the missing shape out of the 8 possible shapes that appear below the box.

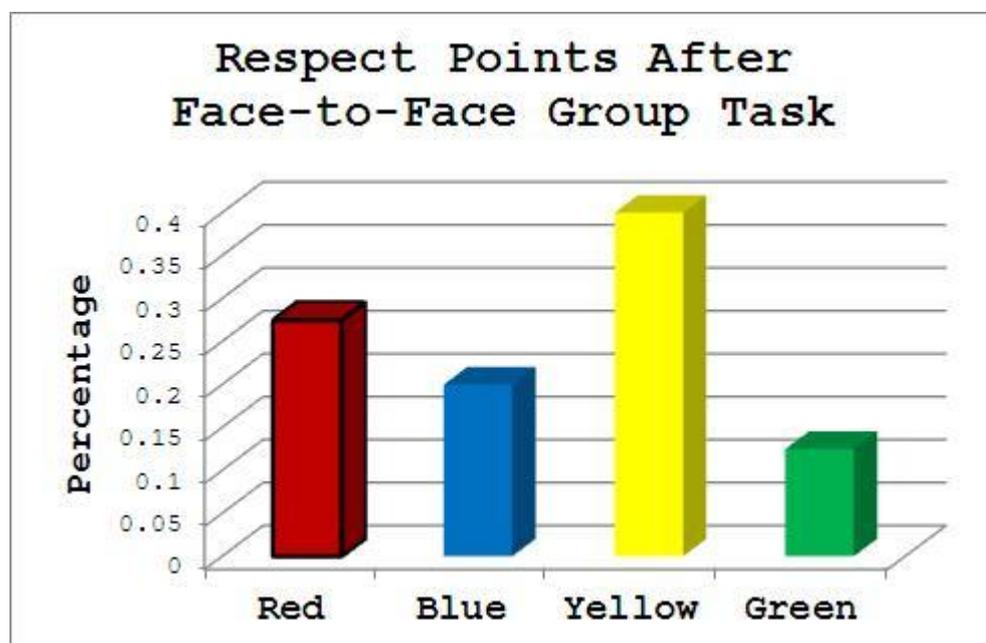


Appendix 3.4: Graphs Viewed by Participants to Manipulate Status Loss

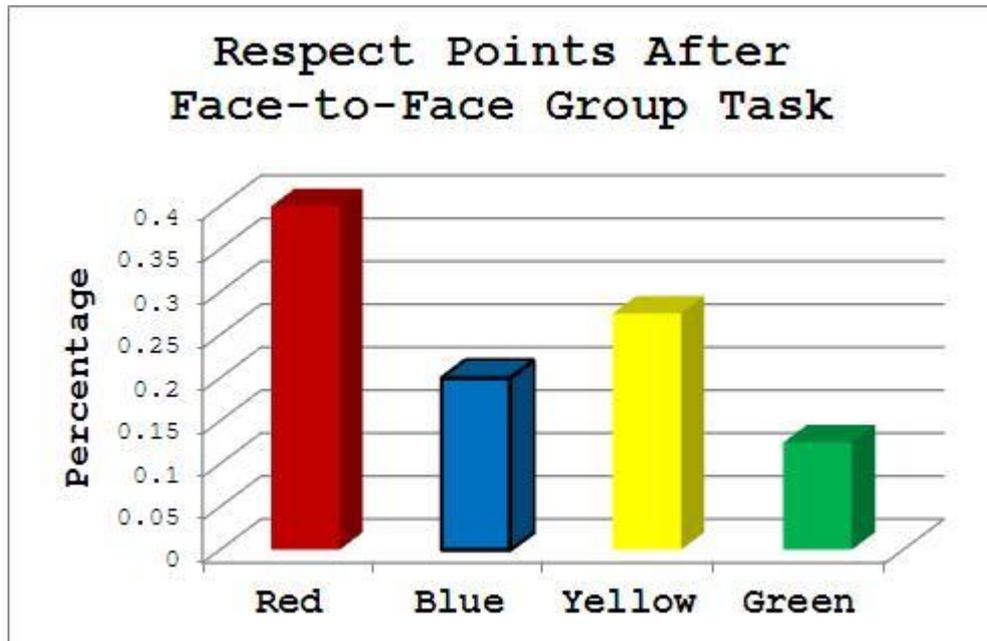
High Status, No Status Loss Condition



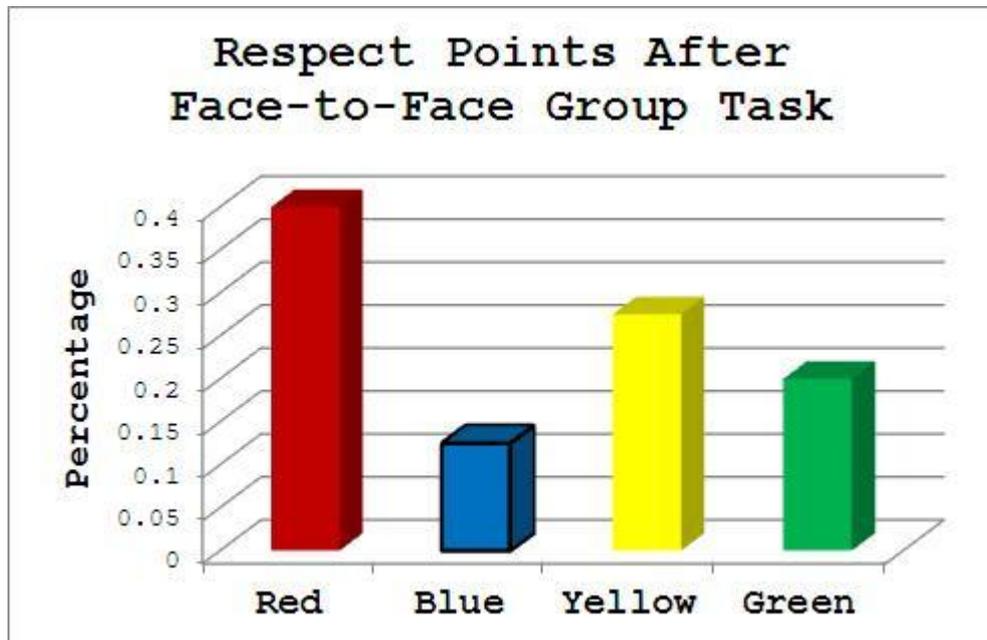
High Status, Status Loss Condition



Low Status, No Status Loss Condition

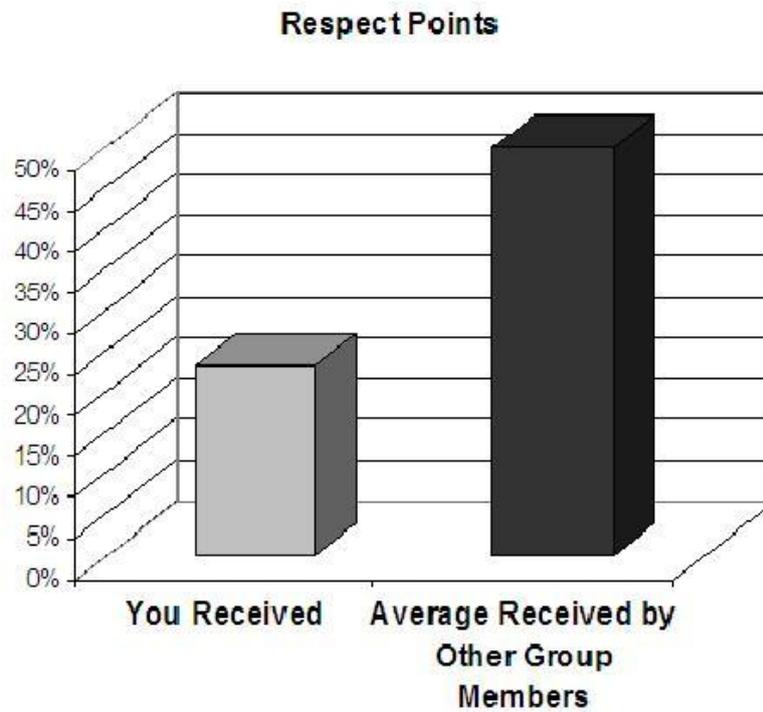


Low Status, Status Loss Condition

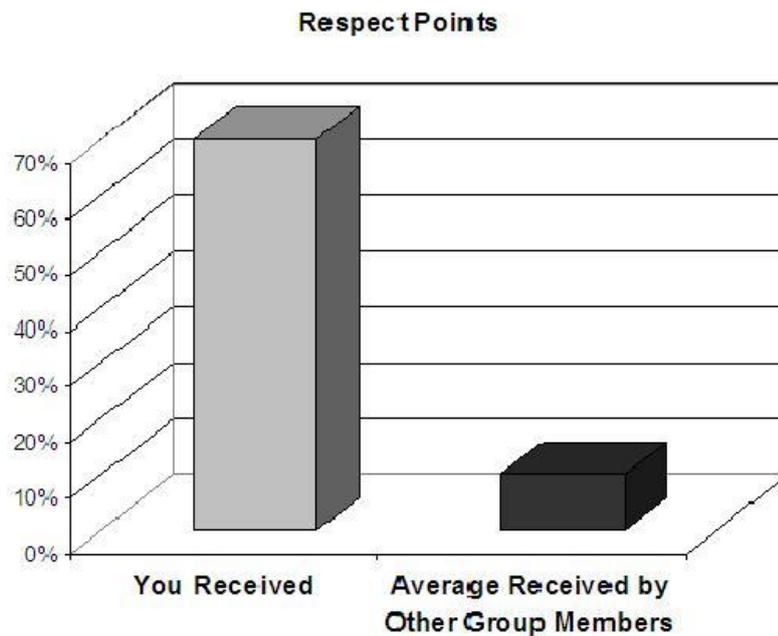


Appendix 3.5: Graphs Viewed by Participants to Manipulate Status Loss

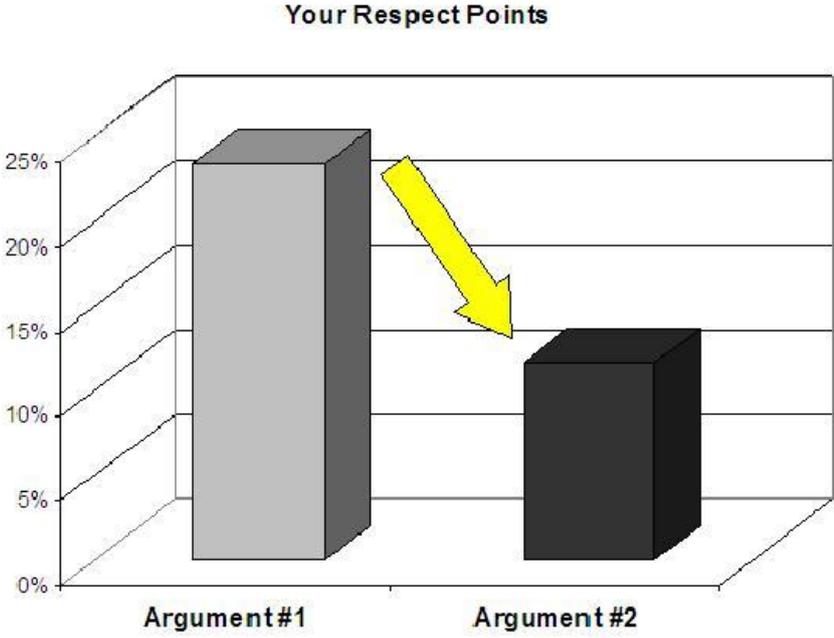
Low status condition



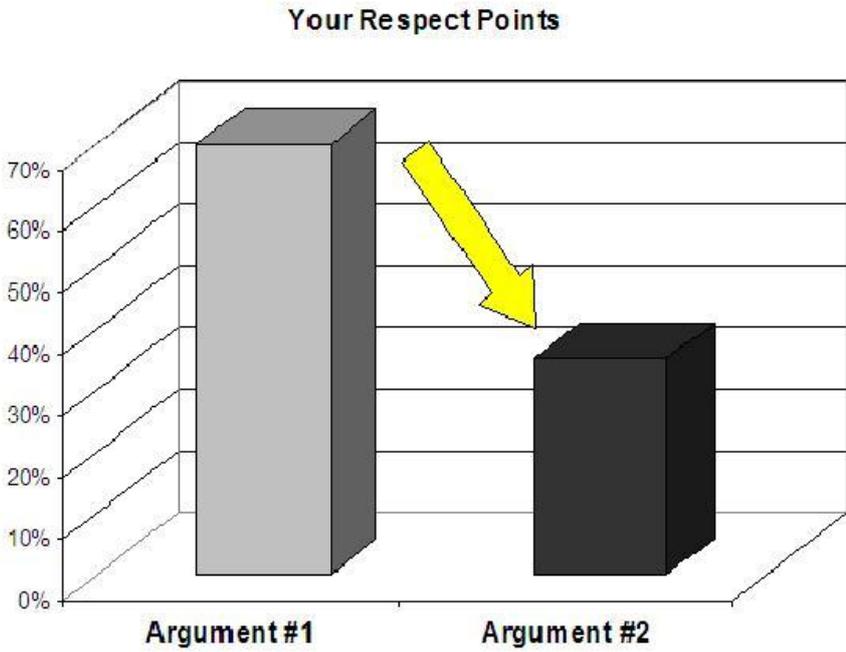
High status condition

**Appendix 3.6: Graphs Viewed by Participants to Manipulate Status Loss**

Low status, status loss



High status, status loss



Appendix 4.1: Target Participant Summary Report

IMPORTANT: FOLLOWING THIS COVER PAGE, THERE ARE 4 PAGES IN THIS REPORT.

Page 1- About the study and Pre-study survey results

Page 2- Task 1 information and results

Page 3- Task 2 information and results

Page 4- Task 3 information and results

PLEASE READ ALL FOUR PAGES BEFORE MOVING ON TO THE NEXT PART OF THE STUDY.

Participant Summary Report (PAGE 1)

About the Study:

1. Before coming to the lab, participants completed a pre-study survey which included: demographics, a leadership assessment test (LAT) and a problem-solving test (PST).
2. Next, participants came to the lab and completed a three-task group study in groups of 4.
3. In this three-task group study, participants were instructed to work together to complete each task.
4. Groups that successfully completed all three group tasks received a bonus of £2 for each group member (participants were told about this bonus at the beginning of the first task).
5. Results from each task can be found in the tables.

Pre-Study Survey Results:

Pre-Study	
Participant ID	23
Age	21
Gender	■
Ethnicity	■■■■■
Student	Yes
Education	Some college/university
Work	Part-time
LAT Score	35 / 40
PST Score	60 / 75

Participant Summary Report (PAGE 2)

Task 1: Computer-mediated group problem-solving task

In Task 1, participants were seated in front of a computer, in separate rooms, to complete the first task. A group leader was assigned based on the results of the pre-study LAT and PST scores (the group member with the highest combined score was assigned as the group leader).

In this task, participants:

1. Sent/received introductory messages.
2. Groups received instructions for the first problem-solving task.
3. Group members submitted ideas/suggestions to solve the problem.
4. The group leader then submitted the final answer to the experimenter.

Task 1 Results

Task 1	
Participant ID: 23	
Group leader?	Yes
Introductory Message	Hi everyone! It looks like I'm the group leader. Let's do this together and get our £2! :-)
Task 1 Completed?	Yes

Participant Summary Report (PAGE 3)

Task 2: Face-to-face group problem-solving task

After successfully completing task 1, group members were still on track to receive their bonuses.

In Task 2, participants were brought into the upstairs room to meet each other face-to-face and to complete the second group task. The experimenter gave participants instructions for the second problem-solving task. The group leader was instructed to lead the group in coming up with a solution and to submit the solution to the experimenter.

At the end of the task, participants completed individual surveys about their experience so far and were asked to either keep their current group leader, or demote their group leader (and nominate another member to be group leader).

Task 2 Results

Task 2	
Task time	17 minutes
Task 2 Completed?	Yes
Group leader demoted?	No

Participant Summary Report (PAGE 4)

Task 3: Independent problem-solving group task

After successfully completing task 1 and task 2, group members were still on track to receive their bonuses.

In task 3, group members were sent back to separate rooms and were asked to complete the group task, independently. This individual task consisted of 10 problems.

Each group member was seated at a desk with the problem set and a stack of magazines (*People, The Economist, Men's Health, Time, New Scientist, Marie Claire*).

Each group member received the instruction:

“You have 10 minutes to work on the problems in front of you. If you either finish, or have tried as hard as you can and give up trying to solve the problems, you can read the magazines to your left for the remaining time.”

Appendix 4.2: Furniture Factory Exercise

Lazy-Days Manufacturing Company is located in a small northern town. This small, family-owned business manufactures school furniture. Because of the opportunities for work available in a larger town located about 50 miles away, Lazy-Days must attract whomever it can and train them to do the job. Most of the 400 workers are women and young people just out of high school. Lazy-Days also hires some physically and mentally disabled adults as part of a special community program.

Until now, Lazy-Days has manufactured school furniture, but because of a fall in the economy, management has recognised a dire need to diversify its manufacturing capabilities. After a study of the market, they decided to add showroom display cases as a new product. If well made, this line will bring increased income and security to Lazy-Days Manufacturing.

Because of the difficulties in getting new workers, particularly trained ones, Lazy-Days would like to divert current personnel to the new jobs. However, the current workers are set in their ways and are highly resistant to and suspicious of changes at work. The last time changes were needed, workers demanded higher wages and threatened to unionized, and a few key people quit. If the new line is successful, Lazy-Days could raise wages, but that is not possible under current conditions. Available income must be used to help purchase the new equipment and finance necessary remodelling to accommodate it.

Michael Days, president of Lazy-Days, has listed several ways of approaching workers about the needed changes. He has asked you to decide which alternative to use.

As a group, your task is to rank these alternatives from 1 to 5 in terms of their effectiveness in bringing about the desired changes with the least resistance from the workers. Number 1 would be the most effective, 2 the next most effective, and so

on through 5, the least effective. Remember, your decision can make the difference between the success and failure of Lazy-Days Manufacturing Company.

If your group comes up with the correct ranking for this exercise, each group member will receive bonus compensation of £1.

- a. Mr. Days would send a memo to all employees telling them about the needed changes. He would then make the changes and lay off any employees who did not comply.
- b. Mr. Days would meet with small groups of employees, explaining the need for the changes and the reasoning behind them. He then would ask everyone to help in designing and implementing the new jobs.
- c. Mr. Days would meet with the large groups of employees. He would enthusiastically describe the needed changes and present multicoloured charts and film clips to make his points dramatically and forcefully. He would then implement the changes.
- d. Mr. Days would send a memo to all employees explaining the need for the changes and asking them to go along with the changes for the good of the company.
- e. Mr. Days would meet with large groups of employees, explaining the need for the changes and the reasoning behind them. He then would have the employees select representatives to work with him in designing and implementing the new jobs.