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How Are Inconsistencies Between
Status and Ability Resolved?*

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1. <u>Problem</u>.

We usually think of status inconsistency theories as either additive or non-additive: Additive theories explain inconsistency effects as a linear combination of the independent effects of inconsistent status characteristics, non-additive theories explain them as a linear combination of independent effects of inconsistent status characteristics and (or only) an effect of some sort of strain towards consistency. One example of a non-additive theory is Lenski's theory of status crystallization:[1] In Lenski's theory a status inconsistent defines a social situation in terms of one or the other of two inconsistent status characteristics but not both. The definition always maximizes status. Others behave in the same way; that is, they define the situation in terms of <u>their</u> highest status. The consequence is always conflict, produced by the differences in the way the situation is defined. The consequence of conflict is strain, i.e. some sort of individual tension. This strain produces symptoms of stress and pressures either to withdraw from the situation or change it in the direction of consistency. This model fits the available data reasonably well,[2] but a decade ago Duncan pointed out that additive models of the same kind of data fit them equally well and are simpler.[3] No data since that time have been uncovered that offer any compelling reason for rejecting the additive[4] model in favor of the more complicated non-additive model. But the conclusion of this whole line of reasoning has depended on tacitly assuming that the only alternatives are Lenski or the additive model. There are in fact a fair number of alternative non-additive models.^ At least some of these, for example Hughes' theory of status dilemmas (1945), are so different from Lenski's that the evidence bearing on the choice between Lenski and the additive model do not rule them out at all.

The Hughes theory of status dilemmas differs from the Lenski theory of status crystallization in at least three important respects. First, Lenski's theory conceptualizes inconsistency as a property of individuals, Hughes' theory conceptualizes

it as a property of social relations. In the theory of status crystallization, for example, a female professor is inconsistent whether her student is male or female, a black doctor is inconsistent whether his patient is black or white. In the theory of status dilemmas, female students and black patients create no dilemmas.

Second, in the theory of status crystallization inconsistency is a situation-free concept. In the theory of status dilemmas, social relations are carefully situated. It makes a difference, in Hughes' theory, not only who the other is but what the situation requires. Hughes' stock example, the white patient with a black doctor, is faced with a dilemma of choice because he requires treatment. That is, there are specific conditions that activate the characteristics that are inconsistent. It is doubtful, for example, that from an interactionist point of view a female professor poses a problem for the University registrar. Her dilemma, if there is one, occurs in specific kinds of situations, such as classrooms or department meetings.

One important consequence of these first two differences between Hughes and Lenski is that individuals who are never inconsistent in Lenski's theory are sometimes inconsistent in Hughes'. For example, the male student or white patient is never inconsistent in Lenski's theory. More generally, in Hughes' theory anyone can be inconsistent in some circumstances just as anyone (even female professors or black doctors) can be consistent in some circumstances. It is not necessary to insist that Hughes is right and Lenski wrong, only that the difference has an important bearing on the interpretation of evidence about inconsistency effects. Evidence against an inconsistency effect in a population of female professors or black doctors is from the point of view of Lenski's conceptualization of inconsistency a sound reason for rejecting his theory. From the point of view of Hughes' conceptualization of inconsistency, it shows only that it is meaningless to ask questions about female professors or black doctors regardless of who the other is or what the situation requires.

Digressing for a moment, it should be pointed out that the conventional additive model of multi-characteristic status situations conceptualizes status characteristics in the same way that Lenski does—possibly because its argument has been almost wholly with Lenski. But there is no reason to suppose that there is just one kind of additive model, any more than there is to suppose that there is just one kind of non-additive model. For example, an additive interactionist model is perfectly possible, though it would look very different from the bulk of the research of the last decade and require different methods of observation and inference.

A third important difference between Hughes and Lenski is the kind of consistency assumption the two theories make. Both are "balance" theories, in the sense that in both a female professor or black doctor must define their situations in terms of one or the other, but not both, of their inconsistent status characteristics.^ The female professor is either female or professor, the black doctor is either black or doctor. The dilemma, in both theories, stems from the fact that inconsistent status characteristics imply incompatible expectations for the same situation—that the female defer to the male but the student defer to the professor, that the patient defer to the doctor but the black to the white. But the two theories differ in how the dilemma is resolved. In Lenski's theory, the resolution of status inconsistency always maximizes status: All female professors define themselves as professors, their male students all define them as female; all black doctors define themselves as doctors, their white patients all define them as black. Much weaker consistency assumptions are possible. Hughes' theory, for example, assumes nothing about maximizing status. It is in fact largely concerned with how dilemmas are avoided, and assumes nothing at all about how inconsistencies are resolved. To Hughes, dilemmas make interaction problematic, because it becomes doubtful that the meaning one gives to the behavior of others is the meaning they intended, that the other will take what one does in the way it was intended, and

ambiguous whether one should give or expect deference. But he assumes only that the dilemma must be resolved, he has nothing to say about how. A female professor must be either a female or a professor, but some can be female and some professor.

Again, the difference between the two theories has an important bearing on the methods by which inconsistency data are analyzed. Lenski's method was to aggregate Individual reactions to inconsistency. In this, Duncan's method followed Lenski's and the choice between an additive and non-additive model has been based on such aggregate analysis. This seems reasonable enough: A white patient, for example, has only three ways of defining a black doctor. He is either a black, or a doctor, or some combination of the two. If for the moment we accept the white patient's deference behavior as observable grounds for inferring which definition he uses, then he either defers to the same extent that he does to any other doctor, he defers as little as he defers to other blacks, or he defers to the black doctor more than to other blacks but less than to other doctors. If we aggregate evidence over a population of white patients, any evidence that they defer to black doctors more than to other blacks but less than to other doctors is therefore evidence against any strain towards consistency. But this conclusion depends on assuming that all individuals resolve inconsistency in the same way. If some white patients define black doctors as blacks and others define them as doctors, then the aggregate of their deference behavior is again some intermediate value between their deference to doctors and their deference to blacks. The same aggregate value, in other words, is consistent with either an additive or a non-additive model of multi-characteristic status situations. Only the distribution of individual deference behavior will distinguish the two. If white patients define black doctors by combining the effects of both race and occupation, the distribution of their individual deference behavior should be unimodal around the mean value. If white patients define black doctors by

some balance mechanism, that is, by defining their situation in terms of one or the other, but not both status characteristics, but some balance in the direction of their higher status and some in the direction of their lower status, then the distribution of their deference behavior should be bimodal.

Again we do not insist that Hughes is right and Lenski wrong, only that the methods typically used to analyze inconsistency data will not resolve the question. The objection to aggregate analysis, of course, depends on the importance we have tacitly given to the resolution of inconsistency. Most research on status inconsistency, and therefore most research that concerns the additive model of multi-characteristic status situations, is concerned with reactions to conflict, not with the resolution of inconsistency. To the extent that some individuals balance in one direction and others with whom they interact balance in the opposite direction there should be some conflict, even in an interactionist theory. To the extent that there is conflict, there should be signs of tension, withdrawal, pressures to change the situation. It makes no difference how the conflict arose, the aggregate method will detect it. That is, with this kind of dependent variable the value of any measure of an inconsistency effect will be greater for inconsistents than for consistents. It cannot take some intermediate value between consistents of high and consistents of low status, even if they do not maximize status. Nevertheless, the method is insensitive to the processes at work in an interactionist balance theory, even if it is perfectly well-adapted to those implied in Lenski. Of course, Hughes himself was hardly concerned with the resolution of inconsistency and it may seem unfair to object in his name to the aggregate method because it neglects certain possible resolutions of inconsistency. In Hughes, the concept of a status dilemma underlies the emergence of various structural arrangements designed to prevent dilemmas from occurring. Resolution behavior is the least of his concerns. But his assumptions

make it possible to conceive of situations in which a balance mechanism is at work that will not be detected by an aggregate method of analyzing inconsistency data. For example, it will not detect a female professor who defines herself as a professor in a classroom of male students all of whom define themselves as students, even though only a balance mechanism could produce such an effect.

From an interactionist perspective, then, Lenski's theory of status crystallization is in trouble for some very good reasons but his is only one of a number of possible non-additive theories and the same reasons do not convincingly dispose of all of them. A choice between additive and non-additive models of multi-characteristic status situations requires some refinements in our methods of observation and inference. In particular, to discount the theory of status dilemmas, the evidence must provide us with (1) information about the relationship in which inconsistency occurs; (2) information about the setting in which this relationship is situated; (3) information about individual resolutions of inconsistency.

There is at least one investigation that satisfies all three criteria and it finds no support at all for a balance or consistency principle. Berger and Fisek (1970) artificially created two specific, task-relevant status characteristics and studied their effect on the distribution of influence in binary-choice, decision-making experiments. Individuals in this experiment deferred markedly to the other if their own status was consistently low and the other was consistently high. They deferred very little if their own status was consistently high and the other was consistently low. But if their status characteristics were inconsistent, they deferred to the other more than the consistently high-low but less than the consistently low-high subjects and the distribution of their individual deference behavior was unimodal around the mean value.^

Thus, the foundation on which the theory of status dilemmas rests, the idea that inconsistent individuals must chose between mutually exclusive alternatives in

defining self and other, does not seem to be supported even where the data are adequate to test it. But the Berger—Fisek experiment does not altogether rule out a strain towards consistency because it tests it for a rather special case. Berger and Fisek reasoned that the strongest possible test of the consistency principle is in situations in which the only status characteristics are all directly relevant to the goals of the individuals in the situation. It is the strongest possible test in the sense that if the consistency principle did work in this situation it would be reasonable to suppose that it worked in any situation in which it was even easier to discount the relevance of some of the status information given the individual. But it does not follow that if the consistency principle fails this test it must fail also in situations where the relevance of some or all of the status characteristics is more readily discounted. It is possible that the structure of this particular situation, because it makes both status characteristics directly relevant, in a sense works against balance or consistency processes that would show themselves where one or both of the inconsistent status characteristics were less directly relevant to the interaction required by the task situation. And so the basic question is still unresolved.

All that we require to resolve it, however, is to relax the conditions that make all inconsistent status characteristics directly relevant to the task situation. That is what we propose to do in the present investigation.

But there are two rather distinct cases to consider. A partially relevant multi-characteristic status situation defines at least one status characteristic as relevant to whatever the situation requires; the other characteristics are neither relevant nor irrelevant. The female professor in the classroom, the black doctor treating a white patient both involve a relevant and a non-relevant status characteristic. The professor's knowledge of her subject is defined by the situation itself as relevant. Her sex is not defined as relevant, but nothing specifically

defines it as irrelevant. The doctor's ability to distinguish measles from chicken pox, to palpate a chest and set a bone, are defined as relevant characteristics by the fact that the other is a patient. That the doctor is black and the patient white is not specifically relevant, even though nothing defines it as irrelevant. The structure of a <u>non-relevant</u> multi-characteristic status situation does not define any of its status characteristics as directly relevant. The female professor in politics or the black doctor on a jury may, because of their status characteristics, have rather special roles to play, but it is not the structure of the situations themselves that defines their status characteristics as relevant.

The partially relevant status situation has some advantages over the non-relevant status situation as a starting point for further investigation of the consistency hypothesis. For one thing, it is more nearly what Hughes had in mind in his theory of status dilemmas. In Hughes' theory, there are two kinds of status characteristics: <u>specifically determining</u> characteristics, which are the technical skills and qualifications of a role—the doctor's MD, knowing the measles, knowing how to set a bone—and <u>auxiliary</u> characteristics, which are any other socially meaningful attributes of the person, such as age, sex, race, religion or social origin. It is the contradiction between a specifically determining and an auxiliary characteristic that creates a status dilemma. The problem of the black doctor is that the other is not only white, he is a patient. There is not only a contradiction, there is something to be done, and what is to be done partially defines what among the individual's status characteristics is relevant. But not only is the partially relevant situation Hughes' situation, and therefore a suitable test of his theory that it creates a dilemma and is resolved by some balance mechanism, it also has certain strategic advantages over the non-relevant situation. The partially relevant situation should facilitate balance. If balance occurs anywhere, it ought to

occur there. The female professor in the classroom has every reason to define

herself as professor; the male student has every reason to define himself as stu-

dent. The situation requires no further definition, there is no real reason for its

< further modification by sex. If, therefore, we do not find balancing in a partially

relevant status situation there is probably little point in pursuing balance fur-

ther. If we do find balance there, we must of course complete the investigation by

studying the non-relevant situation too. But if we take the non-relevant status

situation as our starting point, we must go on to investigate the partially relevant

situation no matter what the outcome.

We therefore pursue the further investigation of the consistency hypothesis

with a study of the resolution of inconsistency in partially relevant status situa-

tions. We report here two experiments in situations in which there is a task to

perform; a subject works as one of a team with another individual; each individual

is characterized by just two status characteristics, one of which is directly rele-

vant to the task, the other of which is a diffuse status characteristic that is

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neither relevant nor irrelevant; and the specific characteristic is inconsistent

with the diffuse characteristic. We want to know whether the subjects combine the

effects of the two characteristics or form a univalent (balanced) status hierarchy.

2. <u>Analysis and conceptualization of the interaction situation</u>.

To facilitate its analysis, we shall reconceptualize the problem in terms of
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a simplified theoretical structure. Although simpler than usually used for analy-

sis of multi-characteristic status situations, and certainly simpler than Hughes'

theory of status dilemmas, we believe this structure contains those elements that

are most important to understanding the process.

We suppose a group containing two or more individuals. The group is viewed

from the perspective of one of these individuals, say p. To simplify discussion of

the group, and with little loss of generality insofar as consistency .is concerned^

we may think of the group as having just one other individual, o. The fact that we
see the situation from the point of view of p may seem to imply that we are con-
cerned with the psychology of the individual actor, but in fact we have no such
interest. On the contrary, we obviously assume an interactionist social psychology.
The characteristics in terms of which actors in the theory are described are rela-
tional, their effects depend almost entirely on the structure of the situation in
which the individual is placed. Nothing at all is assumed about stable components
of personality. If there are such components, nothing in the theory depends on
them. What p-centricity means, to this theory, is that the characteristics describ-
ing p and o are social in origin. There is no intrinsic meaning to sex, race, age,
education, ethnicity, not even to specific skills such as mathematical ability or
perfect pitch. Their significance, their social meaning, is given not in nature but
in society. Their significance may therefore vary from group to group and society
to society. It is this variability that we express in the theory by taking the
point of view of the actors who construct tiie definition of their situation. To
accomplish this purpose with any precision it is necessary to look at the situation
from the point of view of one focal actor, hence the arbitrary chpice of p's point
of view. The behavior of the group as a whole is derived from p's definition of it
by composition. That is, the other, o, is from p's point of view only an object of
orientation. But a simple shift in point of view substitutes o for p. The behavior
of the composition, of course, need not be and often is not the same as the behavior
of any individual member,. and we do not assume that the analysis of the situation
as a whole is derivable simply by adding up individual viewpoints. Our theory
assumes that an individual who believes himself superior and his partner inferior at
a task they perform together will expect more opportunities to perform than his
partner, take more of them, evaluate his partner's contributions as inferior, and
accept few of the other's attempts to influence him. Two such individuals, i.e., two

each of whom assumes he is superior and his partner inferior, are obviously in conflict, a fact not discoverable by studying the situation from the perspective of just one of the individuals in it. A composition begins ^nevertheless, with the behavior of the individual actor in a given, specifiable situation, and the focus of the present investigation is on the situation as seen by the focal actor, p.

We consider only the case in which p and o are jointly engaged in the solution of some valued task. A task is any activity that involves the contributions of individuals to the accomplishment of some end that has at least two possible outcomes. The concept, despite the rather special connotations of the word "task" in our society, is therefore a very general one. A task is valued if the possible outcomes are defined as "success" and "failure." Again, these are p-centric concepts: A team of surgeons shares a task. It cannot be assumed that the death of the patient is "failure," however, for there may be no possibility of curing the patient. Not predicting that death is inevitable might well be how a surgeon thinks of failure. What constitutes success or failure, therefore, is not of moment to the theory, providing that something is success and something failure and the behavior of the individuals in the group at least in part determines the outcome. A valued task is collective if the outcome is the joint product of the behavior of the members of the group. The verdict of a jury is a collective outcome, the deliberations of the jury a collective task. There is only one decision representing the jury as a whole. The members of a group performing a task are task-oriented if it matters to them whether they are successful or not, and collectively-oriented if they understand that any individual may adopt the view of any other if by doing so they can assure a correct collective decision. The legitimacy of making use of the contributions of others is an important condition of the investigations we report here. Situations in which individuals are person-oriented, in which they would rather be wrong than "cheat," in which accepting advice is thought to be immoral even if it is likely to be good advice, are outside the scope of our theory.

The theory focuses on four kinds of observable interaction: P and o offer each other action opportunities—a turn of the head that invites a contribution, a question that requires an answer, a nod that suggests continuing to talk. Taking such an opportunity is a performance output—anything that suggests a solution of the task. Reactions to performance outputs are reward actions—praise, agreement, disagreement, antagonism. Finally, a change in the solution accepted by p or o if there is a disagreement is influence. In the present investigation, our attention is focused on the distribution of influence, and what figures as deference in the theory of status dilemmas is here equated with the acceptance or rejection of the influence of others.

These observable behaviors are treated as functions of two unobservable constructs, unit evaluations, which are evaluations of performance outputs, and expectation-states, which are underlying conceptions of the future capacity of individuals in the group to contribute to success at the task. That p believes he is superior to o at the task is an expectation-state; that p therefore judges o's last suggestion as stupid is a unit-evaluation. If p actually expresses this evaluation, disagreeing with o, it is reflected in an overt reward action, but of course a unit evaluation may not be openly expressed. Both unit evaluations and expectation-states are relational concepts. That is, they are evaluations or conceptions of self in relation to another. An individual may be a master chess player, but to characterize fully his expectation-state for any particular situation, we require the further information that the other is also either a master or a tyro. A situation in which p has a great deal of the ability but o is p's equal is distinct from a situation in which p is a master but o is an inferior player. An expectation-state that does not specify who the other is and hot* the self is evaluated relative to that other is a grammatically meaningless expression in the theory. It is of course possible that p does not know how he stands compared to o, and this is a

meaningful expression in the theory. But it is assumed that behavior relative to an undefined other is measurably different from behavior relative to a defined other. In this sense, the definition of the other is still a necessary aspect of any situation accounted for in the theory.

In many social situations, the expectation-states that individuals form for themselves and others are determined not so much by their interaction in the situation itself as by prior beliefs that they bring to the situation. P may believe, because of prior experience in school, that he is a poor athlete. Or p may believe, because o is black, that o is a good athlete. In general, we assume that p and o can be described by a number of characteristics. They may be any sort of attribute whatever—the ability to solve mathematical puzzles, to speak articulately, to play master-class chess, or age, sex, race, education or occupation. A characteristic is a status characteristic if the states of the characteristic (high or low ability, white or black race, 1, 2, ..., 12, 13, ... years of education) are differentially evaluated and give rise to some cognitive conception of the individuals who possess them. It is of course possible that the "higher" state of a characteristic is its negatively evaluated state. There are worlds in which the better the cotton picker, the lower the status. Hence, the state and the value of a state of a status characteristic are distinct concepts in the theory.

Status characteristics can be of two kinds: Specific status characteristics are associated with specific performance expectations. They are beliefs about how an individual possessing a given state of the characteristic will perform in well-defined and specified tasks. Solving mathematical puzzles, playing tennis, picking cotton are specific status characteristics. In each case, the individual is performing some specific action. Diffuse status characteristics are by comparison vague and global in their referents. They are associated with general rather than specific expectation-states: intelligence, athletic prowess, immorality rather than

arithmetic skills, a good serve at tennis, or meaning-insight ability. Host of them,
as a matter of fact, are purely symbolic in significance. They mean nothing in
themselves; their meaning is exhausted in the cognitive and evaluative associations
attached to them. Race, sex, ethnicity mean the evaluations and expectation-states
associated with being black, female, Chicano; they have, of course, a technical mean-
ing, but it plays no part in social relations. Even in the case of characteristics
like education and occupation, however, it is only with their symbolic aspects that
the theory is concerned. The nonsymbolic aspects of these characteristics (for
example, the actual broadening of experience that presumably goes with a college
education) are treated as unimportant in the theory. What the theory abstracts from
diffuse status characteristics is the cognitive and evaluative associations of
which they are the symbolic representation.

 Multi-characteristic status situations are situations in which p and o are
described by two or more status characteristics, whether diffuse or specific. The
situations that interest us are either consistent or inconsistent. A multi-charac-
teristic status situation is consistent if all the individuals in it are consistent.
Individuals are consistent if and only if the states of the status characteristics
they possess all have the same evaluation. If characteristics C and D are two char-
acteristics, socially defined in such a way that the state x of C and state x of D
are positively valued, while x of C and x of D are negatively valued, then individu-
als with states xx and xx are consistent, individuals with xx and xx are inconsis-
tent. Male doctor, male lax-7yer, male professor, white doctor, white lawyer, white
professor are consistent, assuming that these characteristics are socially defined
in the manner conventional in the contemporary United States. Female doctor,
female lawyer, female professor, black doctor, black lawyer, black professor are
inconsistent. It must always be kept in mind, of course, that the evaluations of
such characteristics are p-centric. They depend on the particular cultural

conceptions of the particular society in which the evaluations function, and consistency and inconsistency, like status characteristics, have no meaning apart from these cultural conceptions.

In inconsistent multi-characteristic status situations, individuals have two different bases for forming expectation-states, and the two bases provide contradictory ways of defining the situation. If o has one set of characteristics that are positively valued and another that are negatively valued, p is provided i/ith two kinds of social definition of o. One defines o as the kind of person one listens to, defers to, respects. The other defines o as the kind of person who has little to say, what o says is not worth listening to, and what is listened to commands little respect. There are two ways of forming expectation-states in this kind of situation: P may balance the inconsistent definitions, defining the situation in terms of one or the other of its two possible definitions. The male student may define the female professor as a professor, himself as a student; the white client may define the black lawyer as a lawyer, himself as a client. Or the male student may define the female professor as a female, himself as a male; the white client may define the black lawyer as a black, himself as a white. In other xrords, p forms expectations that correspond to a consistent or univalent definition, reducing inconsistency to a unique balanced structure. Or p may combine the inconsistent definitions, forming an expectation-state that is some average of the two ways of defining the situation. The male student may listen more attentively to the female professor than to other females, but less attentively than to other professors; the white client may respect the advice of the black lawyer more than the advice of other blacks, but less than the advice of other lawyers. Either mechanism "resolves" the inconsistency; that is, either one forms an expectation-state that determines how action opportunities, performance outputs, reward actions, and influence are distributed. The formulation with which we are concerned, in other

words, does not consider tension, conflict, or the reactions they produce; it

focuses only on   i-c=oiution of inconsistency.

Ilore precisely, the problem witb which the present investigation is concerned

involves two individuals, p and o, engaged in a valued collective task to which both

are task-oriented. Each possesses some state of a specific status characteristic,

C, that is instrumental to performance of the task, and some state of a diffuse

status characteristic, D, that is neither relevant to the task nor known to be

irrelevant. Both characteristics differentiate the two individuals; that is, if one

has the state x of C, the other has the state x; if one has the state x of D, the

other has the state x. We consider only the case in which the tiro characteristics

are inconsistent, and are concerned with how p forms an expectation-state, given

this inconsistency. We take the observable distribution of influence between p and

o as evidence of the expectation-states they form.

3. Method of investigation.

We take advantage of the fact that the behavior of individuals in forming

expectation-states is well-known: How they distribute influence in collective,

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task-oriented situations has been thoroughly investigated for a number of years.

Our method, therefore, is to define the situation in which ti?o individuals partici-

pate in terms of a specific, task-relevant characteristic, and then introduce an

inconsistent diffuse status characteristic, observing the effects on the distribu-

tion of influence in the performance of an ambiguous, binary-choice, decision-making

task. The task requires individuals to make decisions in two stages—each first

makes an independent choice of what s/he believes to be the correct alternative, s/he

is then allowed to communicate with her/his partner, after which they make a final

choice that determines a joint outcome. It is the difference between initial and

final choices that measures the influence of the other on the subject. In both the

experiments we report here, the task-relevant characteristic is a fictitious ability

called <u>contrast sensitivity</u>. Contrast sensitivity is the ability to judge how much of an area of a slide, divided into small black and white squares, is white. The diffuse status characteristic in both experiments is education.

The theory of status characteristics and expectation-states assumes all diffuse status characteristics have certain important properties in common: that education, for example, behaves like sex, race, occupation, or any other diffuse status characteristic, at least in the ways that matter to the theory. This assumption is justified by previous experiments in which education has had the same effect as race, sex, or military rank on the power-prestige order formed by task groups (Berger, Cohen and Zelditch, 1972; Cohen, Kiker and Kruse, 1969; Cohen, 1972; Freese and Cohen, 1973; Lockheed and Ilall, 1974; Moore, 1968; Zeller and Warnecke, 1973). This effect does not depend on the direct relevance of education to contrast sensitivity; in fact, in past experiments, it has been neither directly relevant nor irrelevant to the contrast sensitivity task.

The basic experiment consists of two phases. In the first phase, the expectation-states of the subjects are manipulated. In the second phase, they jointly perform the experimental task. The manipulation of expectation-states may assign to each subject a state of the specific status characteristic, a state of the diffuse status characteristic, or both. If subjects are to be given a state of the specific characteristic, contrast sensitivity, they are publicly tested for their ability, their scores are read out loud, and the meaning of the scores underlined so that they understand they are either very good at contrast sensitivity tasks while their partners are very poor, or they are very poor while their partners are very good. That their contrast sensitivity is directly relevant to the experimental task in phase two is clear from the close similarity of the slides used to test their ability to the slides used in the performance phase of the experiment. To manipulate the diffuse status characteristic, education, they are told what school

and what level in school each is supposedly at. In each experiment, all subjects

have the same level of schooling. They are seated in cubicles divided by a parti-

tion, and do not see each other. To vary the status of the other, all subjects are

told that one of the two individuals in the experiment has the level of schooling

all of them in fact have, while the other individual in the experiment has either a

higher or lower level of schooling. Each subject assumes that it is the other who

is higher or lower. Thus, in our first experiment, all subjects are junior college

females. They are told that one of them—without specifying which—is a junior col-

lege student, while the other is either a Stanford graduate student or a high school

freshman. Each subject assumes that it is she that is the junior college student

and the other that is the Stanford graduate student or the high school freshman.

In the second phase of the experiment, subjects jointly perform a contrast

sensitivity task. This task involves the visual judgment of a series of twenty-five

slides, each consisting of two rectangular patterns, one above the other, of black

and white squares. On each trial of the experiment, the subject judges which rec-

tangle of the slide contains more white area. Each rectangle in fact consists of

the same number of black and white squares, although the arrangement of the squares

is different. There are, therefore, no right or wrong answers. The probability of

choosing the top rectangle as the correct answer if there is no experimental manipu-

lation of status or ability is approximately .5 for each slide. Nevertheless, sub-

jects are told that there is a correct answer. The order of presentation of the

slides is randomized by selecting a random start for each replicate of the experi-

ment. The order is otherwise fixed.

Although the subjects in the second phase of the experiment work as a team,

they do not actually talk directly to each other. The communication of their choices

is accomplished by an Interaction Control Machine that consists of two consoles, one

in front of each subject, and a master control panel operated by the experimenter. The consoles each have several switches that are operated by the subject to express choices and several lights that inform the subject of the other's choices. The master control panel permits the experimenter to arrange in a prescribed manner the number of disagreements that will occur between the two subjects. If both subjects choose the top rectangle as the correct answer, the Interaction Control Machine will inform each that the other chose the bottom rectangle as correct if the experimental manipulation requires them to disagree. Their final choice, therefore, will require each of them to decide whether s/he is right and her/his partner wrong, or s/he is wrong and her/his partner right.

If the subject's final choice is the same as her/his initial choice, the response is an S-response (for "stay"), and it is assumed that the subject has decided that s/he is right and the other wrong. If the subject's final choice is different from her/his initial choice, the response is an 0-response (for "other"), and it is assumed that the subject has decided that s/he is wrong and the other is right. The probability of an S-response is the measure of the distribution of influence used in the experiment.

In both experiments reported here, the subjects were told that they disagreed 20 times out of the 25 trials of the experiment in its second phase. The agreements were randomly distributed, but in such a way that one agreement appeared in each block of five trials.

Subjects were told that what mattered was their team score, not their individual choices. If two of them made the right choice, they were given a score of 2; if one of them made a right choice and one a wrong choice, they were given a score of 1, if neither made a right choice, they were given a score of 9. At the end of the experiment, they were told that their cumulative team score would be used to evaluate how well they had done.

4. First experiment.

    In experiment I, 44 junior college females were made inconsistent in status
and ability, and then jointly performed a contrast sensitivity task. On completing
phase 1 of the experiment, 20 of them were told that they had very high contrast
sensitivity while their partner had very low contrast sensitivity. As phase 2 began,
the experimenter read to them information from forms they had filled out at the
beginning of phase 1, informing the subjects that one of them was a junior college
student, the other was a graduate student at Stanford. A second group of 24 sub-
jects was told that they had very low contrast sensitivity while their partners had
very high contrast sensitivity. As phase 2 began, these subjects were told that one
of them was a junior college student while the other was a freshman at a nearby
 (and relatively low status) high school. These two inconsistent conditions were
compared with two conditions in which 40 junior college females were tested for
their contrast sensitivity, but told nothing else about themselves. Twenty of them
were told at the end of phase 1 that they were very high in contrast sensitivity
while their partner was very low; 20 were told that they were very low in contrast
sensitivity while their partner was very high. To assure that the educational dif-
ferences in the inconsistency conditions were in fact status characteristics in this
population, two further conditions were run, in both of which only the diffuse
characteristic was manipulated. For these two conditions, there was no test for
contrast sensitivity. The experiment began with phase 2, in which 20 subjects were
told that one of them was a junior college student while the other was a graduate
student at Stanford, and 20 were told that one of them was a junior college student,
the other was a freshman in the same nearby high school used in the inconsistency
condition.

    Basically, we want to distinguish a balancing from a combining resolution of
the inconsistent status situations. But there are a number of possible ways of

balancing inconsistent situations. One is to balance in the direction of the

specific status characteristic, contrast sensitivity. That is, all individuals

might define the situation in terms of contrast sensitivity whether they have a high

or a low state of the characteristic. This result, in fact, could occur for two

rather different reasons: Because the situation is already well-defined in terms of

contrast sensitivity before phase 2 of the experiment begins, there may be no need

for further definition of the situation. It could well be the case that a diffuse,

and presumably non-relevant, status characteristic is used to define a situation only

because there is no more relevant definition. If a more relevant, more direct defi-

nition is available, this may remove the pressure to further define the situation,

and reduce or eliminate the effect of the diffuse status characteristic. In the

language of the theory of status characteristics and expectation-states, the diffuse

status characteristic would not be activated. Alternatively, it is possible that

the diffuse characteristic is activated—that is, the evaluations and expectations

associated with the states of the characteristic are attributed to the particular

individual—but the relevance of the specific characteristic in the situation is so

clear a consequence of the structure of the social situation that all individuals

define the situation according to the specific status characteristic, contrast sen-

sitivity, whether their own state of the characteristic is high or low. Classrooms,

in other words, may so clearly define what is appropriate in them that male students,

are not affected by the fact that their professor is female, even if they in fact

believe she is less knowledgeable than other professors simply because she is

female. In either case, if subjects balance in the direction constrained by the

structure of the task situation, we should find that the probability of an

S-response (P(S)) for subjects with high contrast sensitivity should equal the P(S)

for subjects with high contrast sensitivity but low educational status. The P(S)

for subjects with low contrast sensitivity should equal the P(S) for subjects with low contrast sensitivity but high educational status. To assure that this effect is not simply due to the fact that educational status is meaningless in the population from which the subjects are drawn, we must also find that the P(S) for subjects with high educational status exceeds that for subjects with low educational status.

To have a compact *way* of expressing expectation-states for use in compressing the experiment's results, it will be useful to introduce a simple notation at this point. The conventional notation for expectation-states assigns a positive or negative sign, or an II or L letter for high and low states of any characteristic—meaning the positively or negatively-valued states. An individual's expectation-state is represented by an ordered pair of these signs or letters, first position for self and second position for other. Thus, HL would represent an individual who had high contrast sensitivity relative to another who had low contrast sensitivity. If there are two status characteristics, the situation is represented by an ordered pair of ordered pairs, the first pair giving the states of both characteristics for self, the second giving the states of both characteristics for other. In the present investigation, in which one characteristic is diffuse and the other specific, we will use the first position for each individual to represent the diffuse characteristic, and the second to represent the specific characteristic. A diffuse status characteristic is further identified by a cap over the representation of its state, in order to distinguish it from a specific status characteristic when one or the other of the two is not defined. Thus, $\hat{H}L$-$\hat{L}H$ might be a male student of a female professor, $\hat{H}L$ a male-female relation, $\hat{L}\hat{H}$ a student-professor relation. Or II$\hat{L}$-L$\hat{II}$ might be, as in the present experiment, an individual whose educational status is high but whose contrast sensitivity is low, relative to another whose educational status is low but whose contrast sensitivity is high. HL in this experiment represents an individual whose educational status is higher than her partner's, LH represents an individual whose contrast sensitivity is lower than her partner's.

If inconsistent subjects balance in such a way as to define the situation in the direction constrained by its structure, we should therefore find that

(1)

$$HL = LII-HL > HL-LI1 = LH$$

$$\overset{N}{HL} > \overset{A}{LH}$$

A second possibility is that all individuals balance in such a way as to define the situation in terms of their higher status. While this result is on present evidence implausible, it is possible that the failure to define inconsistency from an interactionist perspective is so crippling that *we* have failed to observe a Lenski effect when in fact it is there. If individuals do regularly balance in this manner, we should find that

(2)

$$HL-LH = HL$$

$$LH-HL = HL$$

$$HL > \overset{N}{LH}$$

In principle, there is a third possibility: All individuals might balance in the direction of the diffuse status characteristic. This might happen if education were a "master trait" in the Hughes sense of the term, that is, if it were of such overwhelming significance in the larger society that it dominated any other characteristic. But in the present investigation, we neglect this possibility, because nothing in our previous research lends much credence to it.

Finally, if some individuals balance in the direction of the directly relevant characteristic, contrast sensitivity, while others balance in the direction of their educational status, we should find that inconsistents have a P(S) that is less than that of subjects with high contrast sensitivity, but more than that of

subjects with low contrast sensitivity. Whether inconsistents with high contrast
sensitivity but low education differ from inconsistents with low contrast sensitiv-
ity but high education depends on the relative strengths of the specific and diffuse
status characteristics, about which we have almost nothing to say. If anything,
however, we would expect the specific status characteristic to be stronger than the
diffuse status characteristic. Hence, we should find that

(3)
$$\begin{cases} \text{HL} > \text{LH-HL} > \text{HL-£H} > \text{LH} \\ \\ \overset{\wedge}{\text{HL}} > \text{LH} \end{cases}$$

A result like (3) of course is consistent with a combining hierarchy as well
as balance. That is, (3) is what we would observe if the expectation-states that
each individual formed were a linear combination of the independent effects of edu-
cation and contrast sensitivity. What distinguishes the two results is the distri-
bution of P(S) around the means of the two inconsistency conditions. If all sub-
jects balance, but some balance in the direction of their contrast sensitivity and
some in the direction of their education, the distribution of P(S) should bebimodal.
If the subjects combine inconsistent status characteristics, the distribution of
P(S) should be unimodal around the mean.

A total of 140 subjects took part in the experiment. They were recruited on
a volunteer basis and paid for their participation. Of the 140 subjects who took
part in the experiment, 16 were eliminated from analysis of the results for violat-
ing one or more of the initial conditions of the experiment, as determined by post-
experimental interviews. Twelve subjects were eliminated because they were suspi-
cious that the manipulations of the experiment were deceptions. Subjects were
counted suspicious only if they said that they had discounted the instructions in
their behavior during the experiment. Those who were suspicious <u>after</u> the fact

but claimed that they had not altered their experimental behavior were included in the analysis. One subject was eliminated because she was a member of a visible minority group, which became apparent to her partner during the experiment. Three subjects were eliminated because they failed to understand some part of the instructions. A total of 124 subjects was therefore available for analysis.

The basic data of the experiment are shown in Table 1—the mean, variance and proportion (of the 20 critical, or disagreement, trials of the experiment) of S-responses by condition. Table 2 shows the Mann-Whitney test statistics for the comparisons that are necessary in evaluating the results of the experiment. The frequency distributions of S-responses for the contrast sensitivity and inconsistency conditions of the experiment are shoxra in Table 3.

(Table 1 about here)

First, note that subjects who believe their partner is a high school freshman are significantly less likely to defer to their partner's judgment than subjects who believe their partner is a Stanford graduate student (rows 1 and 2 of Table 1). This is not in itself news. The difference between the two proportions, 14%, is about the same as that obtained in earlier experiments. But this difference is sufficiently large to make it reasonable to draw conclusions from the inconsistency conditions. It cannot be argued that a failure to find a combining effect is due to failure to manipulate the diffuse status characteristic.

(Table 2 about here)

But the data of the experiment do not provide a decisive answer to the question of balancing vs. combining. Two balance models do seem clearly ruled out: First, there is no Lenski effect here. If all subjects balanced so as to maximize their status, those subjects who had low education but high contrast sensitivity

(the LH-HL subjects) would have a P(S) equal to those who had high contrast

sensitivity (the HL subjects). But a Mann-Whitney U test shows that the difference

between the two (.85-.79, from rows 3 and 5 of Table 1) is statistically signifi-

cant. Those subjects who had high education but low contrast sensitivity (the HL-LH

subjects) should have a P(S) equal to those who have high education (the HL sub-

jects). But the difference between these two conditions (.67-.37, from rows 1 and

4 of Table 1) is one of the largest in the experiment.

Second, it seems reasonable to rule out the weaker Hughes' effect also.

Table 1 shows that the 1H-HL subjects are clearly affected by the fact that they

have low education, even though they are superior at the contrast sensitivity task.

(Table 3 about here)

The distribution of S-responses for this condition (in Table 3, column 2) shows

that they are combining education and contrast sensitivity into a single linear

function, not dividing into two populations, one of which balances in the direction

of higher ability, the other in the direction of diffuse status. The variance of

LH-IIL distribution is not significantly different from the variance of the HL dis-

tribution (Table 1, from rows 3 and 5), and the shape of the two distributions

(columns 1 and 2 in Table 3) is very nearly the same. A Kolmogorov-Smimov test of

the differences between these two distributions, adjusted for their difference in

location, will show no significant difference between them. But combining, although

consistent with the behavior of the LH-HL subjects, is not consistent with the

behavior of the HL-LII subjects. Those subjects who had high education but low con-

trast sensitivity—those subjects who were told that they had very low ability at

this task but whose partner was only a high school freshman—had a P(S) exactly equal

to the low ability subjects (.37 = .37, from rows 4 and 6 of Table 1). They do not

seem to have been at all affected by the lower status of their partner.

Thus, higher ability subjects were considerably affected by the fact that the partner was a graduate student, but lower ability subjects were not affected by the fact that their partner was only a high school freshman.

5. Second experiment

It is quite possible that subjects who believe they are inferior behave differently than subjects who believe they are superior, but we are reluctant to accept this explanation of the result of experiment I. On grounds of simplicity alone, it is unsatisfactory. But even if we are willing to live with a complicated model, the result is still anomalous. The usual argument is that low ability subjects are different because they are ego-protective. But if any subjects are protecting their egos, it should be high ability subjects who balance and low ability subjects who combine. Because we find the opposite effect, we consider the possibility that some artifact of the experiment's technique explains its peculiar result before accepting it at face-value.

A careful study of the post-session interviews and a close examination of the technique of the experiment suggests four possible artifcats. Three have to do with extraneous sources of variation that may have operated in the experiment, which, even if constant across its six conditions, may have had differential effects on the two inconsistency conditions. One of these extraneous sources of variation might explain how subjects in the LH-HL condition (in which the other is incompetent but a Stanford graduate student) might be constrained to combine inconsistent status characteristics, even though the natural tendency is to balance. Two might explain how subjects in the HL-LH condition (in which the other is exceptionally competent but only a high school freshman) might behave as if they balance, even though the natural tendency is to combine inconsistent status characteristics.

The first of these extraneous sources of variation is the fact that all subjects came to the Stanford Laboratory for Social Research to participate in the experiment. It is possible that the context of the experiment had different effects

on the salience of different states of the diffuse status characteristic. The fact
that the experiment was at Stanford, that the experimenter was some sort of Stanford
functionary, may have made "Stanford graduate student" salient without making "high
school freshman" salient to the same degree. If that were true, we would have

$$(4) \qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad L\hat{H}\text{-}HL$$

for the $L\hat{H}$-$\hat{H}L$ condition, but for the $H\hat{L}$-$L\hat{H}$ condition, we would have only

$$(5) \qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad LH.$$

One could well argue that (4) does not satisfy the most important initial condition
of the experiment, partial relevance; that in (4), both the diffuse and the specific
status characteristic are made relevant by the structure of the experimental situa-
tion, and that is why they combine. If this argument is correct, we get balancing
in the only condition that is partially relevant, and combining only where the struc-
ture of the situation wholly constrains the way in which the characteristics come to
be related.

A second extraneous source of variation is that all of the subjects are
females. Not that females behave differently than males: If they do, that still
will not explain why LH-HL subjects behave differently than HL-LH subjects, because
both are female. But post-session interviews with the subjects uncovered some who
thought their partners were male—possibly because the experiment was conducted at
Stanford, which at one time had a sex ratio of 3:1 in favor of males, possibly
because the lower status was a high school "freshman," which to some subjects may
literally have meant a male. We found no evidence that there were more subjects who
thought their partners male in the HL-LH condition, but even if the number were the
same for both inconsistency conditions, the effect on them would be different. In
the L$\hat{H}$-$\hat{H}L$ condition, we would have

(6) $\quad\quad\quad\quad\quad\quad\quad\quad\quad\quad\quad \hat{L}\hat{I}I\hat{L}-H\hat{L}H$

(where sex is in the third position, counting from the left), but in the HL-LH condition, we would have

(7) $\quad\quad\quad\quad\quad\quad\quad\quad\quad\quad$ HLL-LHH.

In (6), sex reinforces education; in (7), it has the opposite effect. Thus, in one inconsistency condition, the extraneous characteristic cancels the effect of the status manipulation and reinforces the effect of the ability manipulation. In the other, it reinforces the manipulation of status and works against the manipulation of ability. If this argument is correct, we get combining in both the HL-LH and the LH-HL conditions; but in the HL-LH condition, the effect of one diffuse status characteristic cancels the effect of the other, making it appear as if subjects balanced in the direction of the specific status characteristic.

A third extraneous source of variation is that all the subjects are junior college students. Past experience with junior college subjects (male or female) in the Bay Area suggests that many have a general image of themselves as inferior, often because they have tried to get into four-year colleges and not been admitted. The experiment could well have failed to free what was taking place in the experiment from the subjects' past experiences, and therefore allowed low self-esteem to have an effect.[10] If it did, even if our technique failed to the same extent in all conditions, the effect on the two inconsistency conditions would be different. In the $\hat{L}\hat{H}$-HL condition, we would have

(8) $\quad\quad\quad\quad\quad\quad\quad\quad\quad\quad$ LHL-IILH

(where self-esteem, italicized, is in third position), but in the HL-LH condition, we would have

(9)   HLL-LHH.

That is, the effect would be to reinforce the low ability manipulation but counteract

the high ability manipulation. In previous expectation experiments, the effect of

generalized self-esteem has never been strong enough to alter the basic processes at

work. But even if implausible, the possibility must be taken into account. Again,

if this factor is at work, the effect is to make a combining process in the HL-LH

condition appear as if it were a balancing process.

     A fourth, possible artifactual explanation has nothing to do with extraneous

sources of variation, but like the sex and self-esteem variables, it would explain

why HL-LH subjects balanced when the natural tendency in partially relevant status

situations is to combine inconsistent characteristics. It is possible that the

higher and lower states of the diffuse characteristic, education, were not equidis-

tant from the subject. That is, the social distance between a junior college stu-

dent and a Stanford graduate student is probably greater than the distance between a

junior college student and a high school freshman. If the strength of combining

depends on the status distance between self and other, the distance between junior

college student and high school freshman may not have been sufficient to produce an

observable effect. Or more exactly, the technique of the experiment may have been

insensitive to an effect that was actually there.

     It does not really matter which of the four explanations is correct if we can

honestly come to some conclusion about how individuals resolve inconsistency. It

does not really matter, for example, that it was low self-esteem rather than the

assumption that the other was male that explains why subjects did not combine if we

can decide that in fact they combine. Therefore, if we can think of a way to do it,

there is no serious objection to confounding all four factors in a single experiment,

i.e., removing all four artifacts at the same time.

That is what we do in our second experiment: We remove all four artifacts at the same time,, in a way that should tell us whether subjects in partially relevant status situations balance or combine inconsistent status characteristics. The experiment exactly replicates the IIL-LH condition of experiment I, except that it uses subjects from a population of male Stanford freshmen instead of female junior college students. Because the subjects are male, if they do assume that their partners are female, the effect will reinforce rather than cancel the effect of education— and probably they are less likely to assume that the others are female. Because they are Stanford students, they probably have a higher level of self-esteem than the junior college students did. Because the other is still a high school freshman, the status distance from self to other is probably greater than in experiment I. But because the other has no heightened salience in a Stanford laboratory, there should be no contextual effect in experiment II, which is important in maintaining the partial relevance that the experiment requires.

This design, of course, is focused more on explaining away the balance result in the HL-LH condition of experiment I than the combining result in the LH-HL condition. There are three reasons for this: First, we had begun by believing that individuals in partially relevant status situations would balance, on the assumption that an already xjell-defined situation would eliminate pressure to use a diffuse status characteristic in defining it. It therefore seemed to us important at the time to put the burden of proof on the balance principle rather than combining. Second, it was in any case true that almost all of the artifacts we could think of explained why subjects in the HL-LH condition balanced when they should have combined, rather than why subjects in the LH-HL condition combined when they should have balanced. Third, replicating the ilL-LH condition does permit an indirect inference about the contextual effect that might have induced subjects in the LH-HL condition to combine when they would otherwise balance. There are three ways in

which a contextual effect could be eliminated: We could replicate the experiment, except for a shift in its diffuse status characteristic, choosing an alternative that would not interact with the Stanford setting—for example, race. We could replicate the experiment, except for a shift in its setting, choosing an alternative that would not interact with the diffuse status characteristic—for example, by moving the laboratory to the junior college from which the subjects were drawn. Or we could replicate the HL-LH condition, in which we assume there is no contextual effect. From the first two, if we found a balancing effect after relaxing the structural constraints created by the context, we would conclude that individuals in partially relevant, inconsistent status situations balance, and we found combining in the LH-HL condition of experiment I only because it made both characteristics salient and relevant. If we found combining, we would have to give up this argument. From the third, if we are willing to assume that all balance-inducing artifacts have in fact been eliminated, if we find combining, we must conclude that combining in the LH-HL condition was not due to any special structural constraint; if we find balancing, we must conclude that the combining result in the LH-

fiL condition was due only to the constraining effect of its context. This third line of reasoning seems to us justified. If it is, replication of the HL-LH condition is obviously the most economical choice of the three, because it deals at the same time with the other three factors we want to eliminate.

We assume from previous experience with the population that the diffuse status characteristic is meaningful in it, and we therefore do not repeat the HL condition. Experiment II does, however, require a baseline condition, i.e., a replication of the LH condition, to which to compare the HL-LH condition. In both conditions, the subjects are Stanford male freshmen. In the LH condition, all subjects are told that they have poor contrast sensitivity. In the HL-LH condition,

after they are told their contrast sensitivity scores, they are told that one of them

is from Stanford and the other is a freshman from the same nearby high school used in

the manipulation of diffuse status in experiment I. If the underlying process at

work in partially relevant status situations is the formation of a combining hier-

archy, we should find that the HL-LH condition has a higher P(S) than the LH condi-

tion. If the underlying process is the formation of a balanced, univalent hierarchy,

then we should find that the IIL-LH condition has a P(S) equal to that of the LH

condition.

(Table 4 about here)

The results of experiment II show that the balancing mechanism at work in the

IIL-LH condition of the first experiment was most probably an artifact of the exper-

iment's technique. The experimental results are shown in Tables 4 and 5. Only 20

subjects were run in this experiment—we stopped when the conclusion seemed suffici-

ently clear. None of the subjects violated the initial conditions of the experiment:

That is, no one was suspicious, no one was a member of a visible minority group that

became evident to another subject in the course of the experiment, no one misunder-

stood the instructions. This in itself may seem sufficiently unusual to cast doubt

on the results of the experiment, but the difference between the LH and HL-LII condi-

tions of experiment II is likely to have occurred by chance only once in 20

experiments.

We therefore conclude that

(Table 5 about here)

there is no status dilemma. In a partially relevant status situation, if individuals

are inconsistent, the hierarchy they form is simply a linear combination of the inde-

pendent effects of the inconsistent status characteristics. Our experiments, of

course, are insensitive to awkwardness, tension, the sense that a situation is problematic. But if it is reasonable to draw inferences about status dilemmas from the way in which inconsistency is resolved, and it is agreed that status characteristics are general, that they have important properties in common simply because they are status characteristics, then experiments I and II taken together imply that a female professor is neither a female nor a professor, she is some combination of the two; a black doctor is neither a black nor a doctor, he is a black doctor. Male students are neither males nor students, they are male students; white patients are neither whites nor patients, they are white patients. Male students defer to the judgment of female professors more than they do to other females but less than they do to other professors. White patients defer to the judgment of black doctors more than they do to other blacks but less than they do to other doctors. It is, of course, possible that if one of the individuals in the situation does not accept the legitimacy of a characteristic that determines the behavior of an other, there will be conflict—for example, if the female professor does not believe that females are less competent than males. But if the characteristics, though inconsistent, have the same meaning to both p and o, there does not seem to be anything problematic about their interaction.

6. <u>Conclusion</u>.

We do not claim to have the final answer to the consistency problem. Experiment II did not replicate all conditions of experiment I, the number of subjects was small, we did not investigate the combination of two completely non-relevant status characteristics. But our tentative judgment at this state of our research is that in a partially-defined multi-characteristic status situation, those whose status and ability are inconsistent combine the two into a single linear-additive status order. We found no Lenski effect: Subjects in experiment I who had high ability but low status had a lower probability of an S-response than those who had only high ability;

subjects who had high status but low ability had a lower probability of an S-response than those who had high status. We found no Hughes effect: The distributions of the probability of an S-response around the mean value were unimodal for all the inconsistent conditions in both experiments. The fact that the situation was already well-defined by ability, and status therefore unnecessary to its definition, did not seem to induce balance: That those who had high status but low ability had a probability of an S-response equal to those who had only low ability in the first experiment proved to be an artifact of the experiment's technique. This result did not replicate in the second experiment. Subjects who had high status but low ability had a higher probability of an S-response than those who had only low ability.

It would be a mistake to suppose that a linear-additive effect in the present experiments implies that there is no such thing as status inconsistency. Aside from the fact that the results of our two experiments are themselves tentative, the theoretical analysis guiding them implies at least two conditions that would create something like the classic inconsistency effect.

First, note that for conflict-free interaction, the status characteristics defining a situation must have the same meaning to both p and o. If sex has a different meaning for a female professor than it has for a male student, their interaction may be problematic. If the female professor, for example, questions the legitimacy of sex as a status characteristic—not only in the classroom, but generally— while for the male student it has its conventional significance, the one will define self and other as 1IL, while the other xjill define self and other as HL-LH. The consequence should be a status struggle. The result of the present experiments is that individuals combine all the characteristics that legitimately define the situation for them. This does not imply that their interaction is conflict-free because it does not generalize in any straightforward way to the composition of two or more

actors in the same situation. What it implies is that any characteristics in which p believes <u>outside</u> a given setting will combine with those that are relevant in the setting—that much is perfectly general. But the combining of inconsistent characteristics would create conflict if p and o differed in what they conceived appropriate to combine. This may be less a question of consistency than consensus, but nevertheless the kind of conflict inconsistency research often claims to find may be of this kind. In any case, it is obviously a mistake to write it off as nonexistent at this stage of research.

Second, note that throughout we have been concerned with status consistency, not distributive justice. We follow Homans (1961, Ch. 12) in distinguishing them: Status consistency is a matter of the relation between the meanings of two or more status characteristics; justice is a matter of the relation between the meaning of a status characteristic and a goal-object (or reward). Some "status characteristics" that traditionally find a place in the consistency literature are either intrinsically or symbolically rewards—income, for example. "Rich" and "poor" may imply cognitive and evaluative aspects of individuals who are rich and poor, but they also are states of a goal-object, wealth. The subject of distributive justice has been as confused as the subject of status inconsistency, but the outcome of the most recent work on it confirms that there is a justice effect (Cook, 1975). Given a clear frame of reference defining the meaning of a reward and a clear definition of an individual's expectation-state, unjust allocation of a reward does create pressure to change the structure of the situation. In other words, under certain easily specifiable conditions there is_ an inconsistency effect, and they are fairly common conditions.

What the present experiments do, therefore, is narrow and limit the scope of the inconsistency effect, not reject it altogether. From the point of view of a given individual, taking account only of p's status characteristic, individuals

define self and other by combining all the status information that is meaningful in the setting in which interaction is situated. There seems to be nothing problematic about multiple status characteristics in themselves. If the status characteristics are culturally defined in the same way for the other, the interaction of p and o should not be problematic either.

This result should be quite general: That is, it should apply to any characr teristic of individuals that implies cognitive and evaluative conceptions of them, whether age, sex, occupation, race, ethnicity, or any other characteristic that sat- isfies the definition of a status characteristic. If the reasoning that led us to choose a partially relevant status situation as a starting place is correct, the same principle should extend to completely non-relevant structures. Two diffuse status characteristics, neither of which is directly relevant to any activity required by the status situation, should also combine—sex and occupation in a jury room, for example. If the linear-additive hierarchy extends to this kind of structure, then the combining principle does not depend on whether a status characteristic is speci- fic or diffuse. It should apply to status characteristics of any kind, from arith- metic skills to occupational prestige, subject only to the condition that they are not defined by culturally accepted convention as irrelevant. Finally, the fact that the effect is linear and additive implies that the combining mechanism extends quite straightforwardly to any number of characteristics. If two are additive, nothing stands in the way of extending the principle to three, four, five or more characteristics.

FOOTNOTES

1. See Lenski, 1954, for Lenski's earliest argument that there is a nonadditive as
   well as additive effect in multi-characteristic status situations. Lenski, 1956,
   attempts to explain this effect and extend the argument. Not until Lenski, 1966,
   is it clear how much the argument depends on assuming that all individuals maxi-
   mize status. Tests of the theory by Lenski or his students include Goffman,
   1957; Jackson, 1962; Jackson and Burke, 1965; and Lenski, 1967.

2. That is, we prefer an additive model because it is simpler, not because the data
   prove the nonadditive model false. Throughout, we assume the reader is familiar
   with the literature challenging Lenski's methods of observation and inference,
   i.e., the literature on the "identification problem" in research on consistency
   and mobility. For the reader who is not, see particularly Blalock, 1966;
   Blalock, 1967a; Blalock, 1967b; and Blalock, 1967c. Also, see Mitchell, 1964,
   which is the first published criticism of the identifiability of consistency
   models; Lenski's reply, Lenski, 1964; and Hyman, 1966.

3. Duncan, 1966, was concerned largely with mobility effects, but he pointed out
   that the problem of inferring such effects was more general and extended to con-
   sistency effects. He proposed identifying mobility and consistency effects with
   the behavior of the residual variance after estimating an additive model. This
   method is applied in Hodge, 1970; Hodge and Siegel, 1970; Jackson and Burke, 1965;
   Jackson and Curtis, 1972; Laumann and Segal, 1971; Segal and Knoke, 1971; Segal,
   Segal and Knoke, 1970; and Treiman, 1964.

4. See the references cited in note 3. The only one to find evidence of a consis-
   tency effect by Duncan-Blalock methods is Jackson and Burke, 1965, but the effect
   fails to replicate in Jackson and Curtis, 1972. Jackson and Curtis is the most
   thorough and complete of these investigations.

5. For example, see Benoit-Smullyan, 1944; Geschwender,. 1967; Romans, 1953 and
    Homans, 1961; Hughes, 1945; Kimberly, 1966; Sampson, 1963; Zelditch and
    Anderson, 1966.

6. A "balance" theory is any theory in which the individual elements may take on
    two or more mutually exclusive values, and systems of such elements are stable
    if and only if univalent elements combine and elements of distinct value segre-
    gate. Although it refers to a wider class of theories (for example, to cogni-
    tive and sentiment as well as status structures), we use the term here simply as
    a synonym for consistency, congruence, equilibration, and crystallization as
    they are used in the context of multi-characteristic status structures.

7. Tress has replicated this experiment with the same result. See Tress, 1971.
    Berger, Fisek and Crosbie, 1970, extend the result further.

8. We do not attempt here a complete exposition of the theory of status character-
    istics and expectation states (Berger, Cohen and Zelditch, 1966; 1972), which
    provides the concepts used here to analyze multi-characteristic status situa-
    tions. The most recent and compact statement of the theory in its most general
    form can be found in Berger, Conner and Fisek, 1974.

9. See, for example, Moore, 1968; Berger and Conner, 1969; Berger, Cohen and
    Zelditch, 1972; and the series of experiments reported in Berger, Conner and
    Fisek, 1974.

10. This is not a very plausible idea, but nevertheless must be taken into account.
    The technique of expectation-states experiments requires randomly assigning sub-
    jects to conditions in which they are either very good at a task at which their
    partner is poor, or poor at a task at which their partner is very good. But
    most subjects come into the laboratory with a good deal of prior personal exper-
    ience that makes it difficult to create the required initial conditions. It is
    difficult to persuade subjects who did poorly in math at school that they have

superior mathematical ability, or to persuade subjects who did well in math at school that they have poor mathematical ability, even where one needs only to convince them of their ability or inability relative to a stranger. Expectation-states experiments therefore create artificial, unfamiliar abilities like "contrast sensitivity" or "meaning insight ability" with which subjects have had no prior personal experience. This tends to free the behavior of the subject not only from prior experience with specific abilities but also tends to reduce the effects of more general conceptions of self-esteem.

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Table 1. Proportion, mean number of S-responses, and variances
    for female junior college subjects in experiment I.

	Condition	N	S-Responses		
			Proportion	Mean	Variance
1.	A IIL	20	.67	13.4	13.6
2.	/S LH	20	.53	10.7	14.0
3.	A ∧ LH–HL	20	.79	15.7	5.8
4.	A ⋗ HL–LII	24	.37	7.4	13.7
5.	HL	20	.85	17.0	5.0
6.	LH	20	.37	7.4	11.5

Table 2. Mann-Whitney U statistics for differences between
conditions in experiment Æ.

	Conditions Compared	Test Statistics		
		U		
1.	HL vs. LH	97.5	2.77	.003
2.	HL vs. LH-HL	160.5	1.87	.03
3.	LH-HL vs. HL-LH	19.5	5.20	< .0001
4.	LH vs. HL-LH	196.0	0.11	.46

Number of S-responses	HL	a a LH-HL	a a HL-LH	LH
0				
1				
2			x	
3			xxx	xx
4			x	xxxx
5				xx
6			xxxxx	x
7			xx	xx
8				x v
9			xxx	x
10			xx	xxx
11		x		x
12		xx		x
13	xxx	xxx		xx
14		x	xxx	
15	xxx	xxx		
16	x	xx		
17	xx	xxxxxxx		
18	xxxxx	xxx		
19	xxxxx	x		
20	x	x		

Table 4. Proportion, mean number of S-responses, and variances
for male college students in experiment II.*

| | | | S-responses | | |
Condition	N	Proportion	Mean	Variance
1. HL-LH	**10**	.44	8.9	2.5
2. LH	**10**	.34	**6.8**	14.1

 The Mann-Whitney U test for the difference between the HL-LH and LH conditions
shows that a U as small as 27.5 would occur by chance with a probability of about
.05.   (The critical value for the 5% level of significance is actually 27.)

Table 5. Frequency distribution of the number of S-responses per subject by condition in experiment II.

Number of S-responses	LH	HL-LH[A][A]
0		
1	x	
2		
3		
4	x	
5	xx	
6		x
7		x x
8	x	xx
9	xx	x
10	xx	xxxx
11		x
12		
13		
14		
15		
16		
17		
18		
19		
20		