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Relational trustworthiness: How status affects intra-organizational inequality in job autonomy ☆

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ABSTRACT

Recent accounts of trustworthiness have moved away from treating it as a stable, individual-level attribute toward viewing it as a variable situated in a relational context, but have not been formalized or supported empirically. We extend status characteristics theory (SCT) to develop formal propositions about relational trustworthiness. We posit that members of task- and collectively oriented groups (non-consciously) infer three qualities from their relative status that are commonly used to determine an individual's trustworthiness: ability, benevolence, and integrity. We apply our formalization to clarify ambiguities regarding intra-organizational job autonomy inequality, thereby linking SCT to broader disparities rooted in job autonomy. We analyze data from a vignette experiment and the General Social Survey to test incrementally how well our propositions generalize across different settings and populations. Results generally support our proposed links between status and intra-organizational job autonomy. We discuss implications for SCT in understanding broader patterns of inequalities.

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1. Introduction

We constantly make decisions regarding whom to trust. Should I lend my co-worker money for lunch? Should I walk past the stranger loitering in the parking lot? Should I ask for a second opinion on my clinical diagnosis? Trust makes us vulnerable to another's actions. Lending money to a co-worker, for example, puts us at risk of never seeing that money again. In making decisions on whom to trust, we consider the perceived likelihood that the other will minimize our risk, known as a person's trustworthiness. Trustworthiness of an individual (a perception) and trust in the individual (a behavior) are interrelated, yet our conceptualizations of them diverge (Hardin, 2002): on one hand, trust is viewed as an attribute of the relationship that updates with changes to its context; while on the other hand, trustworthiness is treated as a stable attribute of the individual. Not only is this view of trustworthiness contradictory to that of trust, but it is misaligned with the more general finding that our perceptions of individuals vary based on the interpersonal relationship in which they are embedded (Smith and Semin, 2004).

In this paper, we alleviate this discrepancy by presenting a theoretical formalization and empirical support for relational trustworthiness. We extend status characteristics theory (SCT; Berger et al., 1977) to build on recent suggestions that one

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aspect of the relational context – the relative status among actors – predicts trustworthiness (e.g., Cook et al., 2009; Hardin, 2002). SCT is useful here because it is a formal theory with a history of extensions since its original inception (for a review, see Berger and Webster, 2006) and it explains how relative status shapes perceptions. To our knowledge, this is the first paper linking SCT to trustworthiness in interpersonal relations (for exceptions of research examining this link in contexts different from ours, see Campos-Castillo, 2010; Lount and Pettit, 2012).

In addition to resolving discrepancies, our formalization of relational trustworthiness offers two benefits. A trustee's trustworthiness positively predicts his or her job autonomy (Barker, 1993; Das and Teng, 1998; Langfred, 2004), which is the degree of discretion over how to complete one's job tasks (Hackman and Oldham, 1975). A simple extension of our formalization allows us to clarify status-driven mechanisms underlying intra-organizational inequality in the granting and self-reports of job autonomy. Research on relational inequality inside workplaces (e.g., Avent-Holt and Tomaskovic-Devey, 2010, 2012; Choi et al., 2008; Tilly, 1998) suggests that these mechanisms exist, but they remain undefined. An additional incentive is to more explicitly blend insights from local, group interaction outcomes with broader patterns of inequality. While SCT has been linked to other workplace outcomes – such as hiring and starting salary (e.g., Correll et al., 2007) – connecting it to job autonomy draws explicit connections with other, broader patterns of inequality. Job autonomy is often seen as reflective of key (and at times, *the* key) social conditions that perpetuate socio-demographic disparities in "life chances" within arenas such as health (Link et al., 1993; Pugliesi, 1995; Schieman, 2002; Wickrama et al., 1997) and social mobility (Greenhaus et al., 1990; Hout, 1984).

As such, we develop propositions[1] that explain: (1) why relative status shapes trustworthiness; and (2) implications of these relationships for worker's differential job autonomy within organizations. We begin with a background on SCT's description of a group's relational context, drawing on classic links and casting new ones to explain how this shapes impression formation of three qualities of individuals: ability, benevolence, and integrity. These three qualities, in turn, are determinants of trustworthiness (Mayer et al., 1995). We then review the literature documenting how trustworthiness increases job autonomy, identifying mechanisms driving disparities and clarifying when these should manifest. From our propositions, we derived hypotheses and conducted two studies. Study 1 is a vignette experiment where participants are undergraduate students enrolled in a university and Study 2 uses the General Social Survey (GSS). Study 1 tests our proposed mechanisms and Study 2 tests whether workers' self-reports reflect these processes. Across the studies we examine different instances of status in the US, including race, which is understudied in recent research within SCT (see Berger and Webster, 2006) and workplace inequality (Vallas, 2003). The approach allows us to investigate how well the set of propositions generalize across multiple settings and populations, while testing the set incrementally.

2. The relational context of groups

We focus our discussion of relational trustworthiness on task- and collectively oriented groups, because that is SCT's scope, or class of situations to which its predictions apply. Task-orientation refers to the motivation to engage in behavior related directly to successful task completion. Collective-orientation refers to the belief that it is necessary and legitimate to consider everyone's contributions.

SCT posits that the features of a group's relational context that shape (non-consciously) impression formation are salient status characteristics that connote relative status. A status characteristic (SC) is salient when it either differentiates group members or is perceived as culturally relevant to the task or setting. Two SC types may shape inferences: specific and diffuse. A specific SC provides information about members' ability within a small, specific range of tasks and grants higher status to those who possess greater ability. Math, reading, and writing ability are all examples of specific SCs. Diffuse SCs are categorical characteristics of people with at least two states that can be rank-ordered based on widely-held cultural beliefs about the status accorded to a person possessing the state. Related research suggests that these beliefs stem from broader patterns of inequality in the possession of and access to valuable resources (Ridgeway, 1991), thereby linking macro-level structural configurations with the micro-level group context. As an example, gender (in its binary state used commonly in the US) is a diffuse SC (for a recent review, see Ridgeway, 2011). Within the US, men generally earn higher wages and are more likely to possess leadership positions than women. The prevailing culture in the US thus confers greater status to men than women.

Multiple SCs may become salient in a situation, which may not necessarily be consistent in the status they confer onto group members. In the case of a black male interacting with a white female, both race and gender differentiate the two and are salient SCs, but neither member possesses all of the higher status states. Alternatively, expectations may be consistent, as when a white male interacts with a black female, in that the white male is clearly the high status actor. *For semantic simplicity, we will focus solely on situations where SCs consistently favor one actor, P, over a second actor, O*. Here, the size of the status differential between *P* and *O* depends on (Berger et al., 1992; Melamed, 2011): (1) the number of salient SCs; and (2) the magnitude of difference between *P*'s and *O*'s value on a given salient SC.[2]

[1] We treat "propositions" as theoretical statements that summarize prior theory and research, "derivations" as theoretical statements that follow logically from our "propositions," and "hypotheses" as predictions regarding specific empirical observations that originate from either of these types of theoretical statements.

[2] We are simplifying complex, mathematical formulas that estimate status differential size (see Berger et al., 1992; Melamed, 2011). We gloss over, for example, features of these formulas that model how the contribution of each additional salient SC to the differential size diminishes marginally.

3. Status-based impression formation

The status differential size between *P* and *O* will determine the degree to which *P* perceives[3] qualities in *O* that determine *O*'s trustworthiness: ability, benevolence, and integrity. As our review will show, considerably more research has explicitly demonstrated status effects on ability than the other two perceptions; therefore, our insights about benevolence and integrity are novel. We modify definitions for these qualities from Mayer et al. (1995) model of trust and trustworthiness, which is intended to be general and applicable to multiple trust situations, to fit our task- and collectively setting. While there are additional qualities that derive from status advantage or determine trustworthiness, we restrict our review to these three because the overlap in definitions between the two literatures is conducive for theoretical integration.

Much of SCT research (see Berger and Webster, 2006) focuses on inferences of task competency, which mirrors the concept Mayer et al. (1995) refer to as ability: ''that group of skills, competencies, and characteristics that enable a party to have influence within some specific domain'' (717). Expectations of ability form the basis for observable group behaviors, such as influence over group decisions or performance ratings. The reason why these behaviors privilege a high status group member over a low status one is because members collectively (and implicitly) believe that relative status is positively correlated with ability (e.g., Correll et al., 2007; Kalkhoff and Barnum, 2000).

Given our context, we define members' benevolence as their perceived group-motivation, or interest in helping the group over achieving purely individual interests (see also Ridgeway, 1981, 1982). We treat group-motivation as a specific instance of the benevolence concept that Mayer et al. (1995:718) define as: ''the extent to which a trustee is believed to want to do good *to the trustor,* aside from an egocentric profit motive'' (emphasis in the original). Our collectively oriented setting implies that the trustee and trustor are to some degree benevolent, but we suggest that status colors the *perception* of benevolence. We extrapolate from SCT research that examines group-motivation to infer how status shapes benevolence. Prior research suggests support for the reverse relationship, that benevolence increases status (Ridgeway, 1982; Willer, 2009). Others' conjecture and indirect support imply the direction we propose. For example, some speculate that high status actors are expected to contribute more to a shared resource than low status actors (Simpson et al., 2012). Similarly, Ridgeway's findings (1981: 344–345)suggest that ratings for confederates' benevolence are positively related to the task ability they displayed. To the extent that status signals ability, this implies that status affects benevolence perceptions. However, she has other findings that suggest that benevolence ratings are higher for women than men, going against our proposition, but she speculated that this was due to gender role expectations and not status (Ridgeway, 1981:345). Dissecting status effects on benevolence was not her study's primary purpose; our research therefore offers the first direct test of this relationship.

We equate integrity in our setting with perceived reliability, or performing consistently. Mayer and colleagues define a trustee's integrity as the degree he or she ''adheres to a set of principles that the trustor finds acceptable'' (1995:719). Their definition is composed of two components: personal and moral. Personal integrity captures an individual's consistency between thoughts and behaviors. A trustee's personal integrity alone, however, is insufficient. A member shirking group work who vocalizes a lack of work interest has high personal integrity, but this style of personal integrity is unacceptable to others in our setting. The definition's second component, moral integrity, clarifies that the trustee's personal integrity is acceptable when consistent with the trustor's moral principles. In our setting, what is deemed ''right'' and ''proper'' is adherence to normatively prescribed behavioral patterns associated with one's status in the group (Wagner, 1988). Generally, all members adhere to these expectations and expect others to do so; *perceptions* of violations, however, differ by status. High status violations are often less likely to be noticed than low status violations (Wagner, 1988), in part because the group allots most of its attention to high status actors' task contributions (Ridgeway, 1981). Perceptions of integrity, therefore, are an additional mechanism that sustains status advantage. Indeed, we find that high status actors are often given the ''benefit of the doubt'' (Foschi, 2000). For example, we often attribute good outcomes to their personal actions and bad outcomes to the situation (Giordano, 1983).[4] Again, we offer a novel test directly linking status to integrity.

We arrive at our first proposition in a chain that will link status to job autonomy:

Proposition 1. *As P's status relative to O decreases, P's perception of O's ability, benevolence, and integrity will increase.*

4. Trustworthiness as a relational attribute

Trustworthiness is conceived traditionally as an individual-level, as opposed to a relationship-level, attribute (see for example Barney and Hansen, 1994; Lewis and Weigert, 1985; Tsai and Ghoshal, 1998). The conceptualization stands in contrast to that of trust, which is discussed as a concept anchored in social milieu. For example, the risk in trusting a trustee with whom we have no shared history is mitigated when a well-known third party vouches for the trustee (e.g., Strub and Priest, 1976; Uzzi, 1997). In the absence of direct or indirect knowledge of a specific trustee, trustors may draw on stereotypes to inform trust decisions (e.g., Orbell et al., 1994). A trustee may also signal a shared group identity to facilitate trust (e.g.,

[3] Like Mayer et al. (1995), we focus on perceptions. Future extensions of our paper might compare actual to perceived qualities.

[4] We maintain use of ''ability,'' ''benevolence,'' and ''integrity'' for the rest of the paper because they are broader terms that facilitate theoretical integration of SCT with the Mayer et al. (1995) model.

Brewer, 1981; Suttles, 1968). In the face of these socialized treatments of trust and the positive relationship between a trustee's trustworthiness and trust in the trustee (Colquitt et al., 2007; Hardin, 2002; Lewis and Weigert, 1985; Mayer et al., 1995), the decoupling of trustworthiness from the situation is surprising.

Inferences about trustworthiness imply action (at least, the potential for it), and action does not occur in a vacuum, but is instead situated. Individuals possess enduring attributes (commonly referred as ''personality''), but these interact with a situation to create situational variability in attributes (Smith and Semin, 2004). Put differently, viewing trustworthiness as a relationship-level attribute posits that: (1) who is seen as trustworthy and to what extent is contingent on the situation; and (2) the trustworthiness of any given individual will vary across situations. This updated perspective on trustworthiness is filtering slowly into our discourse (e.g., Hardin, 2002; Cook et al., 2009). Integrating SCT – a well-established theory that researchers have demonstrated can explain situational variation – into this literature will clarify how trustworthiness is variable.

As mentioned previously, Mayer et al. (1995) identify the three qualities of individuals shaped by relative status – ability, benevolence, and integrity – as determinants of trustworthiness. Researchers have continuously found support for their model using a range of organizational referents, including management (e.g., Albrecht, 2002; Mayer and Davis, 1999; Lapidot et al., 2007), subordinate employees (e.g., Kim et al., 2006), work peers (e.g., Becerra and Gupta, 2003; Yakovleva et al., 2010), and other organizations (e.g, Becerra et al., 2008; Muthusamy et al., 2007). Since these three qualities form the basis by which *P* deems *O* to be trustworthy, it follows that *O*'s trustworthiness is also shaped by the relational context with *P*. Just as differences in which SCs are salient can change *O*'s status ranking from one group to another, so too can these differences lead to changes in *O*'s trustworthiness across groups.

Proposition 2. *The greater O's ability, benevolence, and integrity seem to P, the more trustworthy O will seem to P.*

The logical structure of Propositions 1 and 2 demonstrates formally that trustworthiness is not as stable within individuals as others have discussed and aligns it with the relational approach to trust.[5] The existence of relational trustworthiness implies that outcomes of trustworthiness are also contingent on the relational context, a consequence useful for solving current research problems. We apply our formalization to examine one consequence of trustworthiness, job autonomy, thereby bridging SCT with broader patterns of inequality rooted in this workplace outcome.

5. Application to job autonomy

Job autonomy is generally reported to be greater among men than women (Adler, 1993; Greenhaus et al., 1990; Jaffee, 1989; Pugliesi, 1995) and whites than blacks (Greenhaus et al., 1990). Explanations for these inequalities often cite human capital differences at the individual-level (e.g., Becker, 1985) or sorting processes at the market-level (e.g., Kalleberg et al., 2000). While powerful explanations, they cannot explain why intra-organizational variability still exists.

The relational inequality approach uses organizational demography (Pfeffer, 1983; Reskin et al., 1999) to address this omission. The focus is on the relational context, in that we can only describe an individual as experiencing an impoverished condition if we know that another individual in the same setting is experiencing a relatively better condition. The thesis is consistent with the SCT argument that we can best predict group member outcomes when we know their relative standing in the group. Research in SCT has shown that each of the aforementioned distinctions by which workers stratify on job autonomy (gender, race and ethnicity) operates as an instance of a SC in the US (see Berger and Webster, 2006 for one recent review). In effect, the workplace organization is a type of task- and collectively oriented group (see Scott and Davis, 2007).

Relational inequality draws on Tilly's (1998) assertion that high status actors within an organization may either hoard a resource or exploit low status actors to extract it for themselves. For example, among Australian workers facing technological and bureaucratic forces that threatened job autonomy, high status workers (e.g., those with higher levels of education) were more likely to maintain their autonomy (Choi et al., 2008). High status actors' favorable position legitimates any differential distribution and through perceptions of the situation. However, the claims about the role of perceptions have not been formalized or tested empirically. Applying our theory of relational trustworthiness will clarify how proximate mechanisms drive inequality.

Although it is unclear if employee autonomy in the era of economic restructuring has indeed increased (for one review, see Vallas, 1999), its vividness within managerial discourse has risen in recent decades (Barley and Kunda, 1992; du Gay et al., 1996). Here, the employer's reliance on formal structures is de-emphasized in favor of relying on employees' dispositions. Risk in a situation with less formal structure promotes the emergence of interpersonal trust (Malhotra and Murnighan, 2002; Molm et al., 2000; Sitkin and Roth, 1993), which in turn reduces transaction costs associated with monitoring one another (Dyer and Chu, 2003; Langfred, 2004; Williamson, 1981). As such, we expect decisions about granting autonomy to weigh heavily on managers. In effect, granting a worker job autonomy is an instance of trust in the worker, implicating our status-trustworthiness link.

[5] Trustees likely have a fairly stable notion of how trustworthy they may be, based on their idiosyncratic history of exchanges and interactions with others. Moreover, a specific trustor can have a fairly stable notion of how trustworthy a specific trustee is, based on their shared history. What we are suggesting is that, on average, this generalized conception of the trustworthiness of a trustee gets filtered by salient SCs to determine the trustee's trustworthiness during the *current* group situation. The extent that a status advantage disrupts a perfect correlation between the trustee's generalized trustworthiness and trustworthiness in the current group situation may be affected by additional variables that we gloss over intentionally for this initial, simplified theoretical exposition.

Proposition 3. *The more P perceives O to be trustworthy, the more job autonomy P will grant O.*

With a firm grasp on the supporting theoretical framework, we can derive a claim that fills an additional void in the job autonomy literature. Previous research has documented that perceived job autonomy is lower among low status than high status workers (e.g., Greenhaus et al., 1990; Petrie and Roman, 2004), but the analyses did not consider the relational context. When the relational context was considered as a factor shaping job autonomy, managers – not the workers themselves – were the informants (Choi et al., 2008). Considering the role of the relational context in worker self-reports may explain why researchers sometimes do not find gender or race differences in perceived job autonomy (e.g., Hayward et al., 2000).

SCT posits a consensus in group members' inferences about one another. Not only do high status members believe that they possess better qualities than low status members, but the low status members agree. Self-reports from a low status member, *O*, should reflect their disadvantaged position (Anderson et al., 2006; for an example of when this is not the case and a discussion of consequences that follow, see Anderson et al., 2008). Therefore, we need to consider the relational context when examining self-reports of job autonomy.

Following the logical structure of Propositions 1–3, not only will decreases in the status differential size lead to *P* granting greater job autonomy to *O*, but *O*'s perceived job autonomy should also increase:

Derivation 1: As *P*'s status relative to *O* decreases, the greater *O*'s perceived job autonomy.

Taken together, our propositions link SCT to job autonomy. Others have demonstrated the significance of status for understanding workplace outcomes (e.g., Bianchi et al., 2012; Correll et al., 2007; Ridgeway, 1997, 2011; Troyer, 2003). Our model reinforces this connection, but also offers deeper ties to broader patterns of inequality. Many have suggested that the workplace is a key site for (re)producing broader patterns of inequality (e.g., Reskin et al., 1999; Ridgeway, 1997, 2011). Indeed, any tie to workplace outcomes may serve to buttress claims regarding the importance of SCT for understanding micro- and macro-level ties. However, job autonomy is a key aspect of work that many consider to be crucial for understanding persistent disparities (Greenhaus et al., 1990; Hout, 1984; Link et al., 1993; Pugliesi, 1995; Schieman, 2002; Wickrama et al., 1997). Other characteristics of social institutions in which we are embedded, such as marriage quality (for a review, see Kiecolt-Glaser and Newtonm, 2001), certainly can shape these "life chances." For some (e.g., Wickrama et al., 1997), however, features of one's job are the primary force behind "life chances" that can shape experiences in marriage and other institutions.

Such an extensive chain of logic requires multiple tests built incrementally to support each part of the chain. We conducted two different studies, with the second designed to build on the first. In addition, we assessed how well the propositions are appropriate abstractions of status phenomena across instances of SCs, methods, and populations. We outline study-specific hypotheses after we describe how we instantiated concepts in the propositions.

6. Study 1: Test of status-job autonomy link

We tested hypotheses derived from Propositions 1–3using a vignette experiment. The method improves our ability to form causal explanations over cross-sectional surveys, while also improving control over how research participants interpret questions and situations (Alexander and Becker, 1978). Specific to our situation, vignettes are useful because individuals process the information symbolically (MacKinnon, 1994) and our propositions focus on perceptions.

6.1. Design

Participants first completed a demographics survey, which collected information on their gender, major, age, and race/ethnicity. The vignette scenario followed, which was divided into two parts (see Appendix A for text of vignettes). In the first part, we asked them to imagine being a newly promoted leader in charge of a work team composed of four members. The vice president of the organization asked the new leader to prepare a presentation. To enact SCT's scope conditions, we explained that all team members were motivated to succeed and that contributions from all members were necessary for presentation success. In the second part, participants read about "Taylor,"[6] the team member charged with obtaining information from other organizational units that was necessary to prepare the presentation.

We varied information regarding the team leader and "Taylor" to operationalize status differential size. In light of ongoing debates regarding differences between diffuse and specific SCs in predicting outcomes (e.g., Simpson and Walker, 2002) and how group members process graded differences in status advantage (e.g., Melamed, 2011), we considered that the effect of status differential size may be contingent on SC type. Therefore, we designed four different vignette versions to examine two between-subjects factors, with two treatment levels each (SC type: diffuse vs. specific; status differential size: small vs. large). We used a post-vignette questionnaire to measure our dependent variables.

[6] The name was selected because recent research found it to be gender-neutral (Collett and Childs, 2011). Analyses confirmed that the name was also gender-neutral among our sample and that the perceived gender of "Taylor" was unrelated to any of our outcomes or participants' gender. As a result, we do not adjust estimates for the perceived gender of "Taylor." Others using this name in vignettes (Collett and Childs, 2011) did find the perceived gender of "Taylor" to be related to participants' gender, a point for others thinking about using this name should consider.

6.2. Participants

We recruited participants from two introductory sociology courses[7] at a public, Midwestern university. The study was conducted at the beginning of each course and lasted approximately 15 min. We clarified that their voluntary participation in the study was unrelated to their course. A total of 218 students had complete responses, with the number of participants in each condition ranging from 46 to 63. As is often the case when recruiting in this manner (e.g., Collett and Childs, 2011), we did not initially achieve a balanced design (i.e., equal cell sizes across conditions). To create a balanced design, we dropped randomly selected cases so that the cell sizes for each condition were 46, yielding a total sample size of 184. The results we summarize did not change appreciably when we conducted parallel analyses on the full sample of complete responses that considered the unbalanced design.

Of the 184 participants used in the analysis, 64% were female and 86% were white. The average age was 20 years. The distribution of majors was: 42% in social science, 13% in business, 17% in life and physical sciences, 11% in arts and humanities, and 7% undecided.

6.3. Status differential size manipulation

The participant was always higher status than "Taylor" (i.e., the participant is *P* and "Taylor" is *O*). The diffuse SCs we varied across two conditions were age and education, where higher values generally confer greater status onto actors (Freese and Cohen, 1973; Moore, 1968). In each condition, participants were asked to imagine themselves as a 35-year-old with an M.B.A. Taylor was described as either a 30-year-old with a B.S degree (small status differential) or a 22-year-old with a high school degree (large status differential). The specific SC we varied across two additional conditions was a purported score on a task-relevant test. We described the test as the "Interpersonal Cooperation Test," which gauges how well individuals can coordinate information with others. Participants always scored at the 98th percentile, while "Taylor" scored either at the 74th (small status differential) or the 54th percentile (large status differential).

6.4. Dependent measures

A post-vignette questionnaire measured our outcomes (see Appendix B for wording of items). We measured trustworthiness and its determinants (ability, benevolence, and integrity) with one 7-point Likert scale each. Higher values on the scale indicated greater agreement that "Taylor" possessed the characteristic. We adapted the measures from prior research on trustworthiness and its determinants (e.g., Kollock, 1994; Mayer and Davis, 1999) to fit with the conceptual definitions we developed for this context. We measured the level of autonomy granted to "Taylor" by asking participants to what extent did they think they would have to check up on "Taylor" while the task was being completed. Because control relies on structural influences over another, we wanted to measure the degree to which participants would use their structural authority as team leaders to limit "Taylor's" autonomy. We coded the measure so that higher values indicated greater job autonomy for "Taylor."

6.5. Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1. As the relative difference in age and education or task ability between a team leader (*P*) and focal team member (*O*) decreases, the leader's (*P*'s) perception of the member's (*O*'s) competence, benevolence, and integrity increases.

Hypothesis 2. The greater the team leader's (*P*) perception of a focal team member's (*O*'s) competency, benevolence, and integrity, the more trustworthy the focal member (*O*) will seem to the team leader (*P*).

Hypothesis 3. The more a team leader (*P*) perceives a focal team member (*O*) to be trustworthy, the more job autonomy the team leader (*P*) will grant the focal team member (*O*).

6.6. Results

Table 1 shows that participants generally rated "Taylor" in the moderately high end of all our 7-point scales, with means around a value of 5. As a comparison, the mean for trustworthiness is slightly higher than what Kollock (1994:329) found using a similar 7-point scale. Conversely, job autonomy was in the moderately low end of our 7-point scale, with means around a value of 2.5. A MANOVA showed that there was only a significant main effect of status differential size on our dependent variables, $F(5,176) = 6.43$, $p < .001$ (Wilk's $\lambda = .846$).

The causal relationships we hypothesized among the measures are complex in that outcomes (ability, benevolence, integrity) also serve as predictors for other outcomes (trustworthiness, job autonomy). We used the structural equation modeling

[7] The courses were not significantly related to any of the dependent variables.

Table 1
Study 1 means and standard deviations (SD) of Measures, by status characteristic type and status differential size.

Measure	All		Status characteristic type							
			Diffuse				Specific			
			Status differential size				Status differential size			
			Small		Large		Small		Large	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Job autonomy	2.59	1.27	2.78	1.41	2.33	1.30	2.96	1.30	2.30	.94
Trustworthiness	4.88	1.00	4.91	.98	4.78	1.07	5.00	.94	4.80	1.00
Ability	5.03	.97	5.38	.82	4.78	1.19	5.28	.75	4.67	.87
Benevolence	5.10	1.11	5.07	1.06	5.33	1.25	5.15	1.01	4.87	1.09
Integrity	5.19	1.12	5.37	1.06	5.09	1.23	5.41	.86	4.89	1.25
N	184		46		46		46		46	

Notes: All measures are on a 7-point Likert scale, with higher values indicating greater agreement that the focal team member possesses or should possess the characteristic. A MANOVA revealed that there was only a significant main effect of status differential size, $F(5,176) = 6.43$, $p < .001$ (Wilk's $\lambda = .846$).

package from Stata 12 (StataCorp, 2011) to estimate simultaneously the equations describing these relationships. We used the chi-square test, root mean squared error of approximation (RMSEA), comparative fit index (CFI), and the Tucker-Lewis index (TLI) to assess model fit. We correlated all residual errors between ability, integrity, and benevolence and those between trustworthiness and job autonomy. This unrestricted version of the model not only improves model fit, but also captures unmeasured factors (e.g., individual propensity to trust) that shape these components (see Mayer et al.'s, 1995). Neither the coefficients nor standard errors for the estimates of the paths between variables changed from the restricted to the unrestricted model. Each fit statistic suggests our model fits the data well. Our model's structure, estimated unstandardized coefficients, and fit statistics are depicted in Fig. 1. All reported significance tests are two-tailed ($\alpha = .05$).

6.6.1. Test of hypothesis 1

The results depicted in Fig. 1 partially support Hypothesis 1, which predicts ability, benevolence, and integrity will be greater in the small than in the large status differential condition. All three coefficients were in the expected direction, but only those for ability ($b = .60$, $p < .001$) and integrity ($b = .40$, $p < .05$) were statistically significant. The result for ability replicates previous research in SCT that assesses the status-ability link (the most recent research includes Correll et al., 2007; Kalkhoff and Barnum, 2000; Walker et al., 2011), while the result for integrity is a novel finding. The insignificant coefficient for benevolence is surprising, given prior scholarship suggesting an association (Simpson et al., 2012). We detail in the discussion how future research may illuminate this finding.

We had no hypothesis on whether the SC type would moderate the effects of status differential size. We tested for moderating effects and found that status differential effects were not conditioned by SC type, suggesting that the graded status differences are comparable between the two SCT types. The finding is interesting, as we might reasonably expect for our participants to strongly associate with "Taylor" in the condition where "Taylor" is a 22-year-old with a high school degree. Here, "Taylor's" characteristics closely resemble those in our sample, and demographic similarities between trustee and trustor increase trust (e.g., Brewer, 1981). The lack of a significant moderating effect of SC type speaks to the strength of the status process.

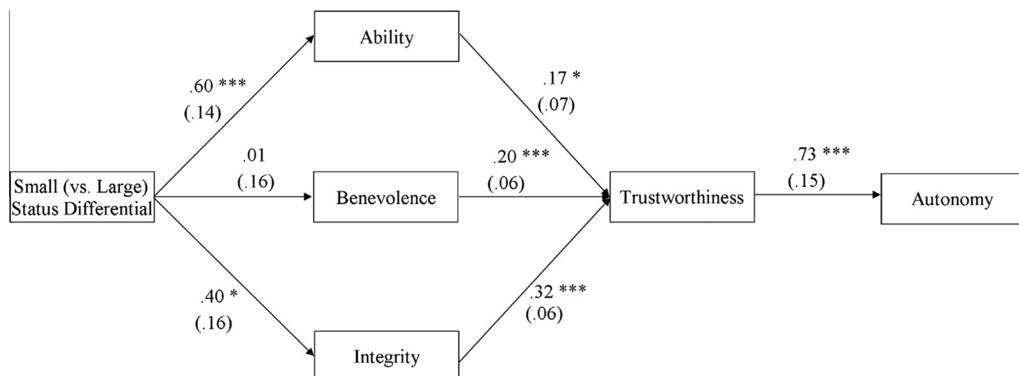

Fig. 1. Study 1 unstandardized coefficients (and standard errors) describing the relationship of status differential size and job autonomy of focal team member ($N = 184$) * $p < .05$; *** $p < .001$, two-tailed test. *Notes*: Type of status characteristic (diffuse vs. specific) did not moderate any relationship described in table. The residual errors are correlated between ability, benevolence, integrity and between trustworthiness and job autonomy. Fit indices: RMSEA = .056; CFI = .992; $\chi^2 = 6.341$, $p = .175$.

6.6.2. Test of hypothesis 2

We found support for Hypothesis 2, which states that ability, benevolence, and integrity are positively associated with trustworthiness. The coefficients for ability ($b = .17$, $p < .05$), benevolence ($b = .20$, $p < .001$), and integrity ($b = .32$, $p < .001$) were statistically significant. This is consistent with prior research documenting that these three determine trustworthiness (Mayer et al., 1995). In addition, the indirect effect of the status differential size on trustworthiness is statistically significant ($b = .23$, $p < .05$), showing that status shapes trustworthiness and that an individual's trustworthiness is contingent on the relational context.

6.6.3. Test of hypothesis 3

We tested the link between the trustworthiness of ''Taylor'' and the degree of job autonomy granted. We found a significant positive association between trustworthiness and the degree of autonomy granted to ''Taylor'' ($b = .73$, $p < .001$). Taken together with the tests for Hypothesis 1 and 2, status differential size has a statistically significant indirect effect on job autonomy ($b = .17$, $p < .05$), a relationship implied in the literature on relational inequality in the workplace, but never dissected previously.

6.7. Discussion

Study 1 shows that the relational context – the status hierarchy – shapes trustworthiness and job autonomy. The results are consistent with the aforementioned research that workers who possess devalued statuses in the US experience lower job autonomy than those who possess more valued statuses. Study 1 points to the subjective mechanisms – ability and integrity – driving these patterns from a superior's perspective. The findings replicate known consequences of status (ability), while also revealing a novel mechanism that undergirds the durability of status advantage (integrity) that is consistent with prior research (Foschi, 2000).

We expected to find that status shapes benevolence, given prior research hinting at it (Ridgeway, 1981; Simpson et al., 2012) and suggesting the reverse relationship (Ridgeway, 1982; Willer, 2009). The null finding incites the need to examine closely when status shapes benevolence, both to advance our model of relational trustworthiness and that of others striving to use status to explain benevolence (e.g., Simpson et al., 2012). We offer three possibilities that future research may address to enrich our understanding of if and when status shapes benevolence. The first two possibilities consider that the reason why benevolence was not attributed to status was because our study did not make it salient. Unlike the other two determinants of trustworthiness, a modicum of benevolence is implied in our collectively oriented setting. Indeed, Table 1 shows that ratings for ''Taylor's'' benevolence are moderately high and similar in magnitude to ratings for the other two trustworthiness determinants. Unlike the other two determinants, however, it does not vary with status, suggesting extra steps may be needed to make it salient and connected to status. The third possibility we consider suggests interesting insights regarding how well status processes generalize across SC types.

Our focus on perceptions led us to using a vignette, yet, the first possibility we consider is that this decision may have unintentionally swayed our results because the vignette method may not have made ''Taylor's'' benevolence salient. Few studies compare vignettes systematically to other methods, but we draw on one exception to interpret results. Collett and Childs (2011) found that in a situation where participants received less than half of the assets that were to be divided between themselves and a partner, those in a laboratory experiment (where their partner was purportedly present in another room) rated their partner less positively than those who simply read a vignette about the situation. The authors suggest that these differences occurred because the situation was less salient for participants reading the vignette. In their study, the situation involves competing self-interests that can result in a loss to participants. This has parallels with our study's situation, where ratings of partner benevolence are about making assessments of competing interests: the partner's self-interest vs. group-interest. Here, the partner favoring his or her self-interest over group-interest would result in a loss of the partner's contributions to the group, of which the participant is a part. Therefore, merely reading about the task situation may have made the potential for a loss to the participant less salient (and thereby be less likely to be attributed to status) than what would have occurred in a laboratory. Similarly, others (Campos-Castillo and Hitlin, 2013) posit that the purported presence of another may be related to benevolence.

Despite the similarities between our study and that of Collett and Childs (2011), there is one distinction that leads us to consider a second possibility. In our study and theirs, participants read about a partner, but only in their study did participants learn about the outcome of their interaction with the partner. Collett and Childs (2011) designed exchange outcomes specifically to spur participants into making attributions (by having participants receive less than half the assets). The methodological differences they found only manifested in these post-outcome impressions. Therefore, it may be that only interaction outcomes that spur attributions incite individuals to make links with benevolence. Ridgeway (1982:85) suggests this when clarifying the contexts where demonstrations of benevolence lead to status attainment: ''Motivation… is only likely to be questioned and assessed when the task contribution and influence attempt is beyond that expected from the member.'' Thus, a second possibility is that status only shapes benevolence when group expectations are not met because these situations are more likely to incite attributions. Perhaps updating participants about ''Taylor's'' success or failure at completing the task may spur a connection between status and benevolence.

A third possibility incites an interesting discussion of the different status processes that may emerge from diffuse and specific SCs. It may be that only low status members consider the benevolence of high status members when status

Table 2
Weighted means (standard deviations) and percentages (frequencies) for study 2 measures. *Source*: 2006 and 2010 General Social Survey.

% White	83.9	(170)
% Self-reported job autonomy	87.6	(177)
% Female	45.1	(105)
% Married	55.9	(99)
Mean age in years	43.8	(12.7)
% Working part-time	12.7	(24)
Mean number of years at job	8.3	(9.1)
Mean job prestige	45.5	(12.9)
Mean respondent's education in years	14.4	(2.3)
Mean father's education in years	12.1	(4.1)
Mean mother's education in years	12.2	(3.4)
Mean respondent's annual income (in thousands of dollars)	38,073	(15,359)
Mean job satisfaction	3.3	(0.7)
% Survey year 2010	59.1	(132)
N	211	

advantage is based on a specific SC because it precludes them from making effective assessments of the high status members' ability. Consider, for example, a "real-world" instance of this situation when patients interact with physicians. Medical expertise is a salient specific SC, yet difficult to ascertain by the low status patient. As a result, patients often use physicians' socio-emotional behavior, rather than task ability, to rate quality of care received (Buller and Buller, 1987; Roberts and Aruguete, 2000). Benevolence, therefore, may become important when ability is difficult to ascertain by a low status actor. Additional support for this possibility comes from Ridgeway's (1981) study, which suggests that confederates displaying high ability are rated more benevolent than those displaying low ability. Unfortunately, our data only include ratings from high status members and cannot inform this line of thought. It is clear, however, that this is a fruitful line of research regarding how well status processes generalize across types of SCs. It suggests the need to continue to examine different SCs, a need we consider in the design of Study 2.

7. Study 2: test of status-perceived job autonomy link

SCT posits further that there is a collective consensus in inferences about group members' qualities, which suggests that status shapes worker reports of their own job autonomy (Derivation 1). Study 2 provides an additional test of our claims and extends previous research on job autonomy, using self-reports from the GSS of working adults in the US. In other words, whereas in Study 1 we focused on *P*'s subjective reports, in Study 2 we focused on *O*'s subjective reports. Study 2 also offers an opportunity to examine race as a SC, which is rarely investigated in recent SCT research (see Berger and Webster, 2006).

7.1. Data

The GSS is a nationally representative sample of non-institutionalized adults in the US who are 18 years of age or older. The National Opinion Research Center has conducted the survey yearly from 1972 to 1994 and on a bi-annual basis since 1994. It consists of core questions asked each year and special topic modules introduced on particular years, such as the Quality of Worklife[8] (QWL) module in the years 2002, 2006, and 2010. The National Institution for Occupational Safety and Health developed the module to understand worker well-being. The module consists of 76 questions, of which two questions (concerning job autonomy and job satisfaction) are relevant to our test. The remaining variables come from the larger set of core questions asked at each data collection.

7.2. Sample

We restricted the analytic sample to only those working respondents (excluding the self-employed) who were given an opportunity to respond to the QWL questions as well as the question we use to gauge status (described shortly). These two sets of questions were only asked during years 2006 and 2010. The number of respondents who fit our criteria for an analytic sample was 395. Of those, 375 respondents completed the job autonomy item. After listwise deletion based on our control variables, our analytic sample included 211 respondents. We confirmed that the mean job autonomy did not significantly change after listwise deletion. Table 2 summarizes the characteristics of our analytic sample for our measures of interest.

[8] For more information on the QWL module, see the website: http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/stress/qwlquest.html.

7.3. Job autonomy measure

We use the one question in the QWL module that is related most directly to our definition of job autonomy, which asks participants to indicate how well the following statement represents their work: "I am given a lot of freedom to decide how to do my own work" (for similar usage of this measure, see Yang and Guy, 2006). Respondents indicated if the statement was: (1) very true, (2) somewhat true, (3) not too true, (4) not at all true. Data were skewed in that respondents tended to state that the statement was "very" or "somewhat" true. We dichotomized the variable so that respondents who reported that the statement was "very true" or "somewhat true" received a value of 1, and a 0 otherwise. A value of 1 thus indicates perceiving that one holds a job that affords autonomy, and a value of 0 indicates otherwise.

7.4. Status measure

In 2006 and 2010, the GSS asked working respondents to state if the racial composition of their workplace was: (1) all white, (2) mostly white, (3) half white-black, (4) mostly black, or (5) all black. This subjective measure matches our emphasis on perceptions. We take racial composition to indicate the average frequency a respondent would interact with workers of the other race (Reskin et al., 1999), thus the average (perceived) frequency race will be a salient SC. Race as a salient SC would not occur in the first or last category, disqualifying those respondents from analysis. Focusing on those who responded "mostly white" would produce the best results that generalize to the US population, since most people work in these settings (Reskin et al., 1999). However, this is not the most direct test of our claims as the situation causes race to be a salient SC more often for blacks than whites, thus giving greater weight to the status effects for blacks in estimates. We are most interested in testing if claims about relative status generalize across samples and settings, as opposed to forming estimates that generalize from a sample to a specific population. An analogous reasoning can be used to disqualify respondents who reported working in "mostly black" workplaces from analysis. We therefore focused on just those who reported working in settings with a "half white-black" composition to equalize the average frequency race is a salient SC for the two race groups.

Since we could only account for saliency based on two states of the race characteristic, black and white, we focused our analysis on respondents whose self-reported race was black or white and created a binary variable with black respondents as the reference group (1 = white, 0 = black). Taken together with our focus on half white-black workplaces, a status differential is advantageous for whites and disadvantageous for blacks. A positive and significant regression coefficient for the race variable would thus confirm that status advantage confers perceived job autonomy, controlling for all other relevant variables.

7.5. Control measures

We included indicators of respondents' demographic background and workplace characteristics. Those with lower socio-economic status (SES) often do not get the same opportunities in the work place as their high SES counterparts (e.g., Schieman, 2002). We included father's and mother's years of education, and respondents' annual income (logged) and years of education. We adjusted for how often respondents were exposed to race as a salient SC in the workplace with full-time work status (1 = part-time, 0 = full-time). We included occupational prestige to adjust estimates for the fact that some occupations afford greater job autonomy than others. We also control for additional demographic variables: gender (1 = female, 0 = male), age (in years), current marital status (1 = married, 0 = not married), and job tenure (years). Lastly, we controlled for job satisfaction, as this can bias perceptions of autonomy (Fried and Ferris, 1987). From the QWL survey, we reverse-recoded a four-point job satisfaction measure, with higher values indicating greater satisfaction.

7.6. Hypothesis

Hypothesis 4. Of the respondents (*O*) who report working in a setting that is composed of equal numbers of blacks and whites, whites will be more likely to perceive job autonomy than blacks.

7.7. Test of hypothesis 4

We used a binary logit regression to predict respondents' job autonomy based on their relative status and adjusted estimates with our controls. We employed sampling weights to adjust for the complex survey design of the GSS (see Davis et al., 2008). We used two-tailed *t*-tests with an alpha-level of .05. Results in Table 3 show that white respondents were more likely to agree that their job provided autonomy than black respondents ($b = 1.22$, $p < .05$). The only other significant predictor was job satisfaction. As respondents' job satisfaction increased, so did their agreement that their job afforded autonomy ($b = 1.26$, $p < .001$), consistent with previous research (e.g., Fried and Ferris, 1987). The results support Hypothesis 4.

7.8. Discussion

The results of the Hypothesis 4 test suggest that a status advantage confers job autonomy perceptions. Whites were more likely to agree that their job afforded autonomy than blacks. This supports Derivation 1, which connects status to perceived

Table 3
Study 2 weighted binary logit (*b*) and standard errors (SE) predicting self-reported job autonomy in workplaces reported to be composed of equal numbers of blacks and whites. *Source*: 2006 and 2010 General Social Survey.

	b	SE
White (vs. black) respondent	1.22*	.56
Female (vs. male) respondent	.15	.46
Married (vs. not married)	−.28	.50
Age in years	.05	.10
Age^2	−.01	.01
Working part-time (vs. full-time)	.53	.85
Number of years at job	−.02	.04
Job prestige	.03	.02
Respondent's education in years	−.09	.12
Father's education in years	−.07	.07
Mother's education in years	.01	.07
Respondent's logged annual income	−.62	.33
Job satisfaction	1.26***	.32
Survey year 2010 (vs. 2006)	−.05	.45
N	211	

* $p < .05$, two-tailed test.
*** $p < .001$, two-tailed test.

job autonomy, and is consistent with Study 1 results. It also suggests that considering a worker's relative status in a workplace setting and self-reports will help clarify when race inequalities in job autonomy manifest.

Although these data are cross-sectional and lack the variables needed to establish support for our proposed links between status and job autonomy, the results from Study 1 inform the findings. The mechanisms identified in Study 1 imply that (holding all else constant) white respondents are viewed as possessing greater ability and integrity than black respondents, and therefore deemed more trustworthy. Greater trustworthiness, in turn, leads to greater levels of job autonomy for whites. The employees' self-reports in the GSS data reflect the decision-making processes demonstrated by participants who took on the role of team leaders in Study 1. This is consistent with SCT, which states that there is a consensus among group members regarding their relative qualities.

This extension of SCT into the realm of job autonomy is mutually beneficial for SCT and the job autonomy literature. The links we developed between status and job autonomy define the subjective substrates of intra-organizational inequality in job autonomy, something that has merely been hinted at in previous research (e.g., Avent-Holt and Tomaskovic-Devey, 2010, 2012; Choi et al., 2008; Tilly, 1998). This research contributes to our growing understanding of how status pervades workplace outcomes (e.g., Bianchi et al., 2012; Correll et al., 2007; Ridgeway, 1997, 2011; Troyer, 2003), while forging deeper ties to broader patterns of inequality. Job autonomy, as we described earlier, is often considered to be reflective of social conditions that shape "life chances." The links we proposed here, therefore, help clarify how broader patterns of inequality are rooted in group interaction.

Finally, the findings address a void in recent SCT and workplace research, which generally overlook race. Considering diverse axes of differentiation is crucial for understanding how well claims generalize across different situations. Some have suggested, for instance, that race-based trust operates differently from gender-based because US segregation is more severe by race than gender (Simpson et al., 2007). Reintroducing race into these two research areas, therefore, advances our ability to capture a more complete picture of social life.

8. General discussion and conclusion

We developed a set of interrelated propositions to formalize relational trustworthiness and explain how relative status shapes impressions that contribute to intra-organizational inequality in job autonomy. We proposed that status affects the extent that group members are deemed to possess benevolence, integrity, and ability. These three qualities are known to shape trustworthiness, which in turn affects job autonomy. With two different studies, we found support for most of our claims. In Study 1, we found that ability and integrity mediated the links between relative status, trustworthiness, and job autonomy, but benevolence did not. Study 2 confirmed the link between status and job autonomy using workers' self-reports from the GSS. In workplace settings reported to be equal in numbers of black and white employees, whites were more likely to perceive job autonomy than blacks.

Our research contributes to the dialogue that treats trustworthiness strictly as an individual-level attribute. This conception stood in contrast to that of trust, which was linked to the relational context. We showed that a focal team member's ("Taylor") trustworthiness can vary based on the relational context, a notion suggested by others, yet, untested until now. Previous theoretical (Campos-Castillo, 2010) and empirical (Lount and Pettit, 2012) papers suggested a similar association between status and trustworthiness, but in different contexts. The burgeoning profile of research in this area is beginning to suggest a clear and useful association between the two concepts.

In our research, the association offered a useful solution to existing omissions and debates in the job autonomy literature. First, research in relational inequality implied that status drives workplace inequality because it shaped perceptions

(Avent-Holt and Tomaskovic-Devey, 2010; Choi et al., 2008; Tilly, 1998); our paper unpacks this process. Second, job autonomy research fell short of offering clear support for racial differences (for example, see Hayward et al., 2000). We offer a clarification that these race differences are more likely to manifest in research that considers the local status stratification of the workplace.

Our revised conceptualization of trustworthiness extends SCT, which had not been linked formally or empirically to trustworthiness, in four ways. First, the extension suggests impressions that underlie group behaviors that researchers in the SCT tradition observe. For example, a common finding is that status increases a group member's influence over group decisions (Berger and Webster, 2006). Taking a suggestion offered by a group member places the group at risk of not meeting its goal. Allowing someone to influence the group, therefore, can be conceptualized as an act of trust based on the person's trustworthiness. Second, our model allowed us to link SCT to the job autonomy literature, opening the possibility to connect status-driven group outcomes more explicitly to broader patterns of inequality. This is crucial for not only our understanding of the links between micro- and macro-levels, but also for extending the reach of SCT beyond the laboratory setting. Third, our findings also highlight important considerations about how well status processes generalize across instances of SCs. Study 1 lends further support that individuals can indeed discriminate graded differences in status advantage (see Melamed, 2011). Study 2 was one of only a few instances in the SCT literature where race was interrogated as a SC, while also meeting calls in the workplace literature to reinvigorate the study of race (Vallas, 2003). Fourth, the lack of a significant relationship between status and benevolence revealed an interesting avenue of research that may enlighten potential differences between SCs.

Beyond the avenues of research implied directly from our results, there are additional ones that would extend our theoretical model. For example, organizations are central forces in (re)creating the saliency of not only the usual suspects by which populations stratify – such as gender, race/ethnicity, and education (Avent-Holt and Tomaskovic-Devey, 2010, 2012; Ridgeway, 1997) – but also new bases of differentiation that are specific to the local work context (Bianchi et al., 2012; Troyer, 2003). The SCs that guide impressions and their effects on outcomes likely differ across organizations. Initial support for this claim comes from research documenting that different gender politics between US and Japanese organizations yield different patterns of gender inequality in wages (Avent-Holt and Tomaskovic-Devey, 2012). This suggests an interesting, multi-level extension of our model that improves predictions.

We adopted multiple studies in part to addresses methodological limitations, but a few still remain. First, it is possible that perceiving job autonomy among whites in Study 2 caused perceptions of equal racial composition in the workplace (selection bias); perceiving equality in workplace composition may be an effort to legitimize job autonomy. The distribution of responses to the workplace composition variable corresponds well with known objective indicators (Reskin et al., 1999), suggesting that perceptions reflect objective circumstances. Nonetheless, we cannot draw clear conclusions about causality from these cross-sectional data. Second, we cannot be certain that our stated mechanisms produced Study 2 patterns. We need complete information regarding respondents' relative status on other SCs to isolate race effects, such as the racial composition of supervisor-subordinate dyads. Third, the internal validity of responses from undergraduate students to a vignette that describes a business setting is suspect (for one discussion, see Collett and Childs, 2008). A reasonable assumption is that most undergraduate students in our sample were unfamiliar with the setting, diminishing the vignette's capacity to inspire the symbolic representation of the situation we intended. All three methodological limitations preclude us from making firm conclusions; we can, however, offer informed claims based on the consistency of results between our studies. The empirical record our model spawns will be the ultimate test of our propositions.

Despite these limitations, our research addresses important considerations across status, trustworthiness, and job autonomy literatures. These contributions are useful for unpacking the mechanisms underlying the durability of workplace inequality. If low status workers are granted less job autonomy, then their contributions are less likely to be attributed to their dispositions. The result is that they may rarely receive opportunities to display their abilities and improve their standing relative to others, thus affirming the initial (mis)perception of them. Moreover, group members' relative standing is a collective accomplishment. Low status workers may be in agreement about their qualities relative to others, making interventions difficult to implement. Successful interventions must therefore alter perceptions for both low and high status workers (see for example, Cohen and Roper, 1972) to disrupt status-driven inequalities. Steps toward understanding the mechanisms and potential remedies implied in this paper as they relate to job autonomy will help deepen our understanding about the micro-level roots of broader patterns of inequality.

Appendix A. Wording of Study 1 vignettes and text variation, by condition

A.1. The situation

For the next few minutes, imagine that you are [insert Text 1] employee of the Acme Office Furniture. You have been promoted and transferred to a different regional office after [insert Text 2]. You are the new leader of a work team that consists of four individuals.

A senior Vice President has contacted you concerning a presentation they want your team to give to the company's Strategic Steering Committee that is made up of three board directors and two senior vice presidents. This presentation will address current organizational strategy, performance, and future markets into which the organization may venture. The presentation will take place five weeks from today (see Table A1).

Table A1
Text variation, by status characteristic type and status differential size.

	Status characteristic type			
	Diffuse		Specific	
	Small	Large	Small	Large
Text 1	A 35-year-old		An	
Text 2	Receiving your master's degree in business administration (M.B.A.) from the nation's top business school		Scoring in the 98th percentile on the company's Interpersonal Cooperation Test. This means that you scored higher than 98% of the employees and are likely really good, compared to other employees, at coordinating information with others	
Text 3	Is 30 years of age and has a Bachelor of Science (B.S.) degree	Is 22 years of age and has a high school degree	Scored at the 74th percentile on the company's Interpersonal Cooperation Test. This means that Taylor scored higher than 74% of other employees	Scored at the 54th percentile on the company's Interpersonal Cooperation Test. This means that Taylor scored higher than 54% of other employees

The presentation will require considerable work on behalf of your team members. Each of you is motivated to work together to achieve the team's goals. You and your team members will coordinate with other teams across the company in different locations and prepare this information for the strategic analysis. The information that your team will be requesting from the other teams will also require great effort on the other team's part. The information needs to be finalized within two weeks so that your team may do the strategic analysis required for the presentation. You will divide the assignments between your team members and provide an outline for their task(s).

A.2. The task

Taylor is one of your team members. Taylor [insert Text 3]. Taylor will be in charge of coordinating with the other teams to obtain information necessary to complete the presentation. The information must be obtained within two weeks for the team to successfully complete the presentation. You will provide an outline for Taylor to follow in the task.

Appendix B. Wording of Study 1 post-vignette questionnaire items

Measure	Questionnaire Item	Anchors on 7-point Likert Scale
Ability	How competent do you believe this member to be?	Not competent, Very competent
Benevolence	How group-oriented, not self-interested, do you believe this member to be?	Not group-oriented, Very group-oriented
Integrity	Do you believe this member to be reliable?	Not reliable, Very reliable
Trustworthiness	How trustworthy do you believe this member to be?	Not trustworthy, Very trustworthy
Job autonomy[a]	How likely will you have to conduct a check-up to make certain this member is making progress toward task completion?	Not likely, Very likely

[a] Item was reverse-coded in the analysis.

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