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Status inconsistency in groups: How discrepancies between instrumental and expressive status result in symptoms of stress



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ABSTRACT

This study examines whether a mismatch between the positions that individuals hold in different status hierarchies results in symptoms of stress. Prior research has focused on inconsistencies between socioeconomic status dimensions (e.g., education and income) and did not find a significant relation between status inconsistency and stress. In this paper, we build on research on role differentiation and propose to study the effect of inconsistencies between instrumental status and expressive status in group contexts. We hypothesize that people with an inconsistency between these status dimensions experience feelings of uncertainty and frustration in their interactions with others and this manifests in stress-related symptoms. We test this hypothesis with data collected in a medium-sized Dutch childcare organization ($N = 93$). Polynomial regression analysis, visualized in response surface plots, suggests that status inconsistent employees report higher levels of stress.

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1. Introduction

Status is an aspect of social structure that is important to individuals throughout their life-course, affecting the constraints and opportunities they face during their childhood (Dodge, 1983), working life (Bunderson and Reagans, 2011), and their retirement years (Clarke et al., 1984). Many studies have examined the antecedents and consequences of social status, but only a handful of studies have investigated the notion of *status inconsistency*. Conceptually, this refers to a discrepancy between individuals' positions in different status hierarchies that tend to be positively correlated in society at large. More than half a century ago, scholars started to examine whether people who experience such discrepancies also experience social and psychological tensions that result in symptoms of stress (Hughes, 1945; Lenski 1967). Drawing on the stratification dimensions proposed by Weber (i.e., wealth, power, and prestige), a number of studies have investigated how the membership in contradicting socioeconomic status groups (e.g., high income vs. low occupational prestige) affects the subjective stress that individuals experience (for overviews see Stryker and Macke, 1978; Zhang, 2008).

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At first, empirical research supported the prediction that status inconsistency would be associated with heightened stress levels (e.g., Jackson, 1962; Goffman, 1957), but these studies were later criticized for their methodological and statistical validity (Blalock, 1966). Subsequent research was only partially able to resolve these issues (see Whitt, 1983 and Hope, 1975 for overviews of the methodological issues associated with measuring status inconsistency) and could not reproduce previous findings (Hornung, 1977; Brown et al., 1988). Researchers therefore concluded that status inconsistency has no meaningful effect on stress symptoms (e.g., Brown et al., 1988; Hornung, 1977).

Building on research on role differentiation (Burke, 1967; Lewis, 1972; Rees and Segal, 1984; Theodorson, 1957; Turk, 1961), we argue for the retrieval of status inconsistency as a research topic. This revitalization requires important changes in the theoretical conceptualization and empirical assessment of status inconsistency. From a conceptual point of view, we argue that the ranks that individuals hold in the sociometric hierarchies of the groups they are part of during their daily activities are important for their stress-experiences. From a methodological point of view, we suggest polynomial regression analysis and response surface modeling as a novel procedure that enables researchers to avoid the statistical problems that have often ailed earlier studies on status inconsistency.

In what follows, we first synthesize insights from research on role differentiation and status inconsistency and formulate our central hypothesis. Subsequently, we test this hypothesis with data collected among the members of a medium-sized Dutch childcare organization. Our results suggest that in this context, an inconsistency between instrumental and expressive status is indeed associated with higher levels of stress among respondents.

2. Theory

According to status inconsistency theory, conflicting status positions induce strain through two distinct processes (Lanski, 1967; Hughes, 1945). First, inconsistent status positions create uncertainty about individuals' self-image, because they are less able to determine how much value others place upon them. Second, status inconsistency tends to induce feelings of injustice and frustration. People may expect to hold high status in the eyes of others when they rank high in one hierarchy, but they might be viewed as holding low status because of their rank in a second hierarchy. Such situations tend to generate socially unpleasant situations and conflicting social expectations, resulting in symptoms of stress (Jackson, 1962).

Prior status inconsistency research has focused on social status as a broad, overarching construct based on different aspects of the socioeconomic hierarchy in society at large (Honjo et al., 2014; Winkleby et al., 1992). One problem with this approach is that indicators of socioeconomic status are only proxies of the status that individuals might hold in the eyes of others during social interaction. Personal characteristics that are perceived as valuable and prestigious can vary from one social environment to another (Anderson et al., 2015). Depending on contextual factors, discrepancies between socioeconomic status indicators might be inaccurate as a predictor of status inconsistency, given that other sources of status are more relevant and salient (Leary et al., 2014). For example, researchers in an academic context may predominantly focus on occupational prestige (e.g., academic credentials) as a source of status, whereas entrepreneurs and blue-collar workers may derive status from their income and wealth (cf. Anderson et al., 2012).

While the status hierarchies that matter for interactions in society at large are highly context dependent, there is evidence that the sources of hierarchical differentiation in groups are more robust. A number of studies have shown that groups tend to develop status differentiation along two distinct hierarchies: (1) an *instrumental* hierarchy, in which group members are ranked according to their ability to make contributions to the collective goals of the group, and (2) an *expressive* hierarchy, in which group members are ranked according to the contributions they make to the social integration of the group (Bales and Slater, 1955; Burke, 1967; Lewis, 1972; Rees and Segal, 1984; Slater, 1955; Theodorson, 1957; Turk, 1961). The development of these hierarchies has been assumed to derive from two different needs (cf. Burke, 1967). On the one hand, groups need to coordinate their actions to achieve their goals and this leads to the development of a leadership structure in which group members are ranked according to their ability to contribute to these goals. On the other hand, groups need to deal with the frustration and hostilities that task-focused interactions can create, and this leads to the development of a hierarchy in which group members are ranked according to their sociability and their ability to contribute to the socio-emotional wellbeing of the group.

Early work on role differentiation has assumed that instrumental and expressive hierarchies are inversely related, meaning that those who rank high in the instrumental hierarchy are not those who rank high in the expressive hierarchy (e.g., Bales and Slater, 1955; Slater, 1955). This assumption was based on the notion that the task-directed actions necessary to become a respected leader create tensions among those who are deprived of the possibility to engage in such actions themselves. In this competitive view on group work, the tensions that instrumental leaders create make it difficult for them to also be expressive leaders. Later work (e.g., Burke, 1967; Lewis, 1972; Rees and Segal, 1984; Theodorson, 1957), by contrast, has shown that the two roles are often positively correlated, especially in groups that have a strong task commitment (Turk, 1961; Ellemers et al., 2013; Spears et al., 2005). The assumed reason is that strong task commitment makes it likely that group members appreciate valuable contributions to the task, without experiencing feelings of deprivation, given that such contributions make the group more likely to achieve its goals. In this cooperative view on group work, instrumental leaders have room to socialize with others and to take on also expressive leadership.

Even though instrumental and expressive status tend to be positively correlated (Ellemers et al., 2013; Leary et al., 2014), individuals might nevertheless sometimes experience inconsistency between the two (Rees and Segal, 1984). The literature on work groups suggests that such inconsistency is an important source for work stress, with group members feeling either

'liked but not effective', or 'competent but on their own' (Spears et al., 2005). This notion was first introduced by Blau (1960), who argued that in group settings people are constantly involved in a simultaneous pursuit for both instrumental and expressive status, as they are key to their social acceptance in a group. In line with this reasoning, we argue that both instrumental and expressive status are important for individuals and that people desire to rank similarly on both types of social status. If they fail to do so (i.e., are status inconsistent), they are likely to receive conflicting information about their value for, and their acceptance by, the group, which will lead to stress (Jackson, 1962). Therefore, we hypothesize the following: Group members with a higher level of inconsistency between instrumental and expressive status experience higher levels of stress than group members with a lower level of inconsistency.

Much of the existing research on role differentiation has relied on sociometric measures to assess group members' instrumental and expressive status. Within this body of research, scholars have mostly focused on ratings of professional esteem (indicating instrumental status) and likability (indicating expressive status) (e.g., Turk, 1961; Turk and Turk, 1961), ratings of instrumental and expressive leadership behaviors (e.g., Burke, 1967), or a mixture thereof (e.g., Theodorson, 1957; Slater, 1955). In this article, we use data from a sociometric study conducted in a Dutch childcare organization (see details below) that included measures of professional esteem and likability. Specifically, the study provides measures of respect and liking among organizational members. In line with Leary et al. (2014), we assume that these ratings reflect the instrumental and expressive value that group members place on each other respectively.

3. Methods

3.1. Sample and procedure

To test our hypothesis, we used cross-sectional data collected at four departments of a child-care organization in the Netherlands, that were located in different municipalities (department sizes: 19, 40, 19, and 34). All 112 employees were asked to fill in a questionnaire that assessed their work environments, well-being, and social relationships with the coworkers in their own department.¹ Respondents' functional backgrounds varied from supporting staff to social workers and behavioral scientists to managers. In total, 93 employees (84 females) agreed to participate and provided complete information for the variables in the present study.² We have compared respondents and non-respondents on all independent variables and did not find any significant differences (see Appendix A).

An important strength of this multi-source data is that it allowed us to link employees' experienced work stress to peer-ratings of their social status, which arguably provides a more objective assessment of their status in the eyes of others than self-ratings. It also reduces problems associated with common source bias.

3.2. Measures

3.2.1. Work stress

We measured the outcome of interest with a work stress measure from the 'Copenhagen Psychological Questionnaire' (Kristensen et al., 2005), including eight questions that assess how respondents felt in the past four weeks (Cronbach's alpha = 0.85). Example items are 'I have not been able to stand dealing with other people', 'I have eaten for comfort', 'I have lacked initiative', and 'I have felt harassed'. Answers were provided on a five-point scale, running from 'almost never' (1) to 'always' (5). The mean of all eight items was used as a final measure. We report the full set of items in Appendix B.

3.2.2. Instrumental status

We measured instrumental status by asking employees to rate all coworkers in their department on the following question: 'Compared to other coworkers in your department, how much do you respect this person?'. On a scale from one to five, answers ranged from 'much lower than average' (1) to 'much higher than average' (5). We used the average of the scores employees received from their colleagues to measure their instrumental status.

3.2.3. Expressive status

We measured expressive status by asking employees to evaluate their relationships with their coworkers in their department based on the question: 'How would you describe your relationship with this person?'. On a scale from one to five, answers ranged from 'very difficult' (1), 'difficult' (2), 'neither difficult nor friendly' (3), 'friendly' (4) to 'good friend' (5). Similar to our measure of instrumental status, the average of these nominations was used as a measure for expressive status.

¹ Respondents were not asked to assess their relations with employees from other departments, given that members of different departments were not in regular contact with each other during their daily activities.

² The data and materials for this study have been permanently deposited at the University of Groningen, in line the guidelines for data archiving of the Department of Sociology. The data and materials cannot be made publicly available for reasons of confidentiality. For access to the data, please contact the second author.

3.2.4. Control variables

We controlled for a number of additional variables that might be related to work stress. First, as we discuss in more detail below, our models automatically control for the direct effects of both social status dimensions on stress-related symptoms, next to inconsistency between the two dimensions. Our theoretical framework does not yield predictions about the relation between either form of status and stress in isolation of the other dimension. However, it is conceivable that such relations exist. For example, expressive status may lower work stress through higher social support from others (Van der Doef and Maes, 1999), and instrumental status may increase stress due to increased work effort (Cropanzano et al., 1997). Second, we controlled for a number of job characteristics and demographic factors and that have been reported to affect work-related stress. Employees with a higher *formal position* may experience less stress, for example due to improved autonomy and job security (Van der Doef and Maes, 1999). This was measured by asking a subject matter expert to rate each individual's formal position in the organizational hierarchy on scale from 1 (cleaning staff) to 8 (department supervisor), so that higher values indicate higher occupational prestige and responsibility. Employees with longer *organizational tenure* (measured in years) typically experience less stress from more demanding work experiences, so we controlled for this as well (Hunter and Thatcher, 2007). Finally, we included variables for the number of *hours per week* that respondents worked and (female) *gender* (0 = male, 1 = female), because research has shown that these are related to higher work stress (Nelson et al., 2002; Van der Doef and Maes, 1999).

3.3. Analytical procedure

To test the relationship of instrumental status and expressive status with stress-related symptoms, we used polynomial regression analysis (Edwards and Parry, 1993; Edwards and Cable, 2009). This allowed us to investigate the relationship among these three variables by examining linear and curvilinear effects of the two status variables on work stress, and to depict these effects by means of graphical visualization.

Earlier studies have used difference scores as a measure of status inconsistency (i.e., $|\text{status 1} - \text{status 2}|$). However, one problem with this approach is that such scores do not allow researchers to properly distinguish between linear and nonlinear effects of status inconsistency, and thus to assess whether inconsistencies in either direction (i.e., status 1 > status 2 vs. status 1 < status 2) affect stress-related symptoms similarly (see Edwards and Parry, 1993 for a complete overview of the problems that are associated with using difference scores). Polynomial regression is a more appropriate method when examining inconsistency hypotheses (Jordan et al., 2013). This method involves estimating a second-order polynomial (i.e., a model that includes quadratic terms for the main independent variables and for their two-way interaction) with stress as the outcome variable (Z) and instrumental (X) and expressive (Y) status as the independent variables. The polynomial equation, without control variables, is

$$Z = b_0 + b_1X + b_2Y + b_3X^2 + b_4Y^2 + b_5XY + \epsilon$$

where b_0 is the intercept, b_1 and b_2 are the parameter estimates for the main effects of the different status dimensions, b_3 and b_4 are the parameter estimates for the quadratic effects of each status dimension, b_5 is the parameter estimate for the interaction between the two status dimensions, and ϵ is a residual error term.

A surface representing a theoretically idealized status inconsistency effect is shown in Fig. 1. On the floor of the figure are two conceptual reference lines: (1) the status consistency line, along which both status variables are maximally consistent, and (2) the status inconsistency line, along which instrumental and expressive status are becoming more inconsistent as the deviation from the consistency line becomes larger. These reference lines underscore two key features of the surface, and offer a means to assess whether the polynomial regression results support an inconsistency effect (cf. Edwards and Cable, 2009). First, the lowest point of the surface is flat along the consistency line, such that the level of stress is the same regardless of whether instrumental and expressive status are low or high in absolute terms. Second, the surface is curved upward along the inconsistency line, such that stress increases when instrumental and expressive status differ from each other in either direction.

As can be seen in Fig. 1, we expect that inconsistency in either direction has similar consequences for work stress, but polynomial regression models can also identify asymmetrical inconsistency effects (i.e., deviations from the consistency line are weaker, completely absent, or even negative in one specific direction; see Hope, 1975). We use response surface analysis to examine these possible outcomes (cf. Edwards and Cable, 2009). More specifically, for both the status consistency and the inconsistency line, the surface features are determined by the *slope* and the *curvature* found along these lines. In Fig. 1, the consistency line is defined by a slope ($b_1 + b_2$; the sum of both status estimates) and curvature ($b_3 + b_4 + b_5$; the sum of the quadratic terms and the two-way interaction) that both equal 0. To identify the curvature along the inconsistency line, which we expect to be positive and significant (i.e., our main hypothesis), we calculate the $b_3 - b_5 + b_4$. If the combination of these parameter estimates is significantly larger than 0, status inconsistency is positively associated with stress. To examine whether the inconsistency effect is similar in both directions from the consistency line, we subtract b_2 from b_1 . If the resulting magnitude is significantly larger (smaller) than zero, this indicates that status inconsistency to the advantage of instrumental (expressive) status has a stronger effect on work stress than an inconsistency in the opposite direction. We assessed the significance of these combinations of regression coefficients by means of bootstrapping (Edwards and Cable, 2009; Jordan

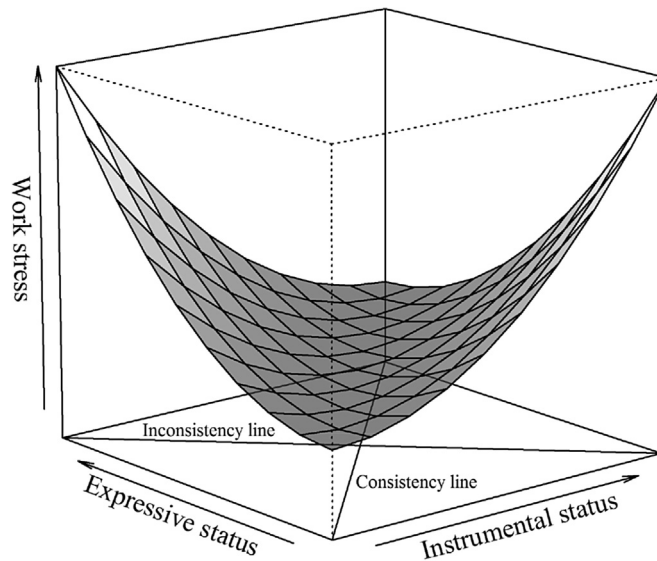


Fig. 1. Hypothetical response surface representing an inconsistency effect for instrumental and expressive status.

Note: The response surface shows a theoretically idealized relation between the different status dimensions and work stress based on our hypothesis. The shading of the surface indicates the value of the variable work stress, with darker/brighter colors indicating lower/higher values.

et al., 2013) and visualized these results in a response surface plot to conclude whether the data supports our hypothesis. Prior to these analyses, the status measures were centered on their grand mean (Dalal and Zickar, 2012).

Our parameter estimates are based on an ordinary least squares (OLS) regression model with fixed effects. Given that respondents were part of different departments, the data had a nested structure (i.e., individuals nested within departments), that might have biased the standard errors in our analysis (Hox et al., 2010).³ To assess whether this might be a problem, we estimated the intraclass correlation coefficient (ICC) for our dependent variable. The ICC was with <0.01 very small, suggesting that our fixed effects approach is likely to yield unbiased results.

4. Results

4.1. Descriptive statistics and correlations

Table 1 provides an overview of the descriptive results and correlations. Instrumental and expressive status were highly correlated ($r = 0.67$; $p < 0.05$), but they were not related to work stress. Similarly, none of the control variables correlated with work stress. Interestingly, gender was negatively related to instrumental status ($r = -0.23$; $p < 0.05$), but not to expressive status ($r = -0.08$; *ns*). This suggests that in our sample gender is differentially related to the two forms of status, as we discuss in more detail in the discussion section.

4.2. Hypothesis testing

The residuals of our models complied with the assumptions of OLS regression, which underlines the appropriateness of the chosen models (Neter et al., 1996). Table 2 reports the parameter estimates for the models, which indicate that after controlling for all other variables, adding the quadratic effects and the two-way interaction related to the two forms of status explained an additional 8 percent of the variance in work stress (ΔR^2 adj. = 0.08, $p < 0.05$).

After estimating the models, we used the regression coefficients to create a response surface and estimated the strength and significance of the hypothesized inconsistency effect. In Fig. 2, the response surface is plotted in a three-dimensional graph, next to the observed values of work stress in our sample. To test the significance of the hypothesized effects, we first estimated the full regression equation using 10,000 bootstrap samples. The resulting estimates were used to calculate confidence intervals for the response surface equations (cf. Edwards and Cable, 2009). Table 3 reports the results of this procedure. The curvature along the inconsistency line was positive and significant (b instrumental² – b instrumental * expressive + b expressive² = 16.77, $p < 0.05$). Along the same line, the slope was also significant (b instrumental – b expressive = –2.17, $p < 0.05$). Together, this indicates that inconsistencies in either direction are associated with heightened stress, but the effect is stronger in one direction (i.e., when instrumental status < expressive status). This is illustrated in Fig. 2

³ We thank an anonymous reviewer for pointing this out.

Table 1
Descriptive statistics and correlations.

	Mean (SD)	Range	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Organizational tenure	8.84 (7.84)	0.00–30.00	0.35*	0.13	–0.11	0.43*	0.30*	–0.03
2. Formal position	4.01 (1.66)	1.00–8.00		0.18	–0.26*	0.44*	0.02	–0.04
3. Hours per week	24.82 (8.52)	3.00–38.00			–0.16	0.18	0.06	0.14
4. Gender (M = 0, F = 1)	0.90 (0.30)	0.00–1.00				–0.23*	–0.08	–0.09
5. Instrumental status	3.25 (0.23)	2.78–3.80					0.67*	–0.14
6. Expressive status	3.39 (0.23)	2.92–4.06						0.00
7. Work stress	1.97 (0.68)	1.00–3.75						

Note: $N = 93$. * $p < 0.05$ (two-tailed).

Table 2
Regression results of work stress on instrumental and expressive status.

Variable	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	<i>b</i>	SE	<i>b</i>	SE	<i>b</i>	SE
Intercept	2.01*	0.38	1.78*	0.40	1.49*	0.39
Organizational tenure	0.00	0.01	0.00	0.01	0.01	0.01
Formal position	–0.04	0.05	0.03	0.05	0.01	0.05
Hours per week	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01
Gender (M = 0, F = 1)	–0.21	0.25	–0.27	0.25	–0.02	0.25
Instrumental Status (b_1)			–1.15*	0.52	–1.42*	0.55
Expressive Status (b_2)			0.68	0.45	0.75	0.52
Instrumental Status ² (b_3)					2.86	2.08
Expressive Status ² (b_4)					5.03*	1.69
Inst. × Exp. Status (b_5)					–8.88*	3.06
R^2 (adj.)	0.00		0.02		0.10	
ΔR^2 (adj.)			0.02		0.08*	

Note: $N = 93$. Coefficients are unstandardized. * $p < 0.05$ (two-tailed).

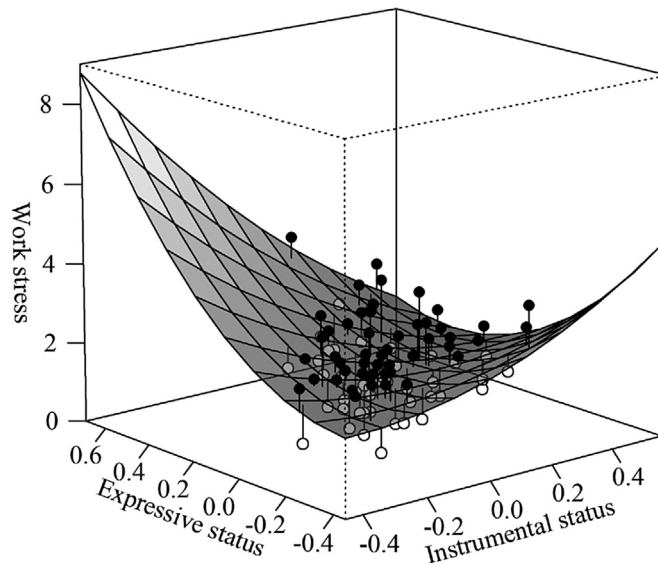


Fig. 2. Response surface relating instrumental and expressive status to work stress.

Note: The response surface shows the predicted value of the variable work stress as a function of expressive status and instrumental status, based on the regression coefficients of the OLS regression model shown in Table 2 (Model 3). For plotting the surface, all interval variables that are not shown are fixed at their grand means shown in Table 1; the value of the variable gender is fixed at 1 (i.e., female). The shading of the surface indicates the predicted value of the variable work stress, with darker/brighter colors indicating lower/higher values. The points show the observed values of the variable work stress for each respondent. Black colored points indicate positive residuals (i.e., the observed value is higher than predicted) and white colored points indicate negative residuals (i.e., the observed value is lower than predicted).

by the fact that the curvature in the response surface is steeper in the direction in which the score for expressive status is higher than the score for instrumental status than in the opposite direction. Furthermore, none of the coefficients along the status consistency line were significant. Hence, status inconsistency significantly increased stress, whereas status consistent respondents were not affected by their positions in the work groups' instrumental and expressive status hierarchies.

Table 3
Response surface features for the relationship between work stress, instrumental status and expressive status.

Response surface features			
Status inconsistency line		Status consistency line	
Slope ($b1 - b2$)	Curvature ($b3 - b5 + b4$)	Slope ($b1 + b2$)	Curvature ($b3 + b4 + b5$)
-2.17*	16.77*	-0.67	-0.99

Note: The significance of the response surface features was determined through bootstrapped confidence intervals (10,000 iterations).

* $p < 0.05$ (two-tailed).

To illustrate the magnitude of the effects that we have found, it is helpful to compare the predicted stress levels of hypothetical respondents. We assume a female respondent who has average values on all other control variables. If this individual would have status scores similar to the most status consistent respondent in the survey, her predicted value of work stress would be about 1.61. If she would have status scores similar to the most status inconsistent respondent in the direction of expressive status (i.e., expressive status > instrumental status), her predicted value of work stress would be about 3.21. Finally, if she would have status scores similar to the most status inconsistent respondent in the direction of instrumental status (i.e., expressive status < instrumental status), her predicted value of work stress would be about 1.66. Given the minimal and maximal stress levels that we observed (1 and 3.75 respectively), this illustrates that status inconsistency potentially has a considerable effect on work stress.

5. Discussion

Over the last decades, the notion of status inconsistency has received little attention in empirical research. Our study aimed to revitalize the concept as a predictor of stress-related symptoms. Our results demonstrate that our reconceptualization of status inconsistency is indeed an important predictor of work stress, and our findings make a number of additional contributions to the literature.

First, our results extend status inconsistency theory by demonstrating that status inconsistency, based on the instrumental and expressive value people have in the work groups they are part of, is an important predictor of work stress. Prior research, by contrast, has focused on socioeconomic statuses and concluded that these were unrelated to psychological stress. Hence, it appears that status inconsistency research would benefit from moving away from its predominant focus on socioeconomic statuses and considering sociometric status indicators within smaller, yet more meaningful, group settings.

Second, this study demonstrates that polynomial regression analysis, in combination with response surface modeling, offers a useful approach to examine status inconsistency. Future studies can make use of this procedure to overcome the methodological issues that are associated with status inconsistency. One advantage of the polynomial regression procedure is that it allows for a comprehensive statistical and visual inspection of the impact of status inconsistencies, and in particular to assess whether inconsistencies in different directions (i.e., instrumental status < expressive status and *vice versa*) have a similar impact on stress-related symptoms. While our results suggest that inconsistencies in either direction are related to stress, our results also suggest that this effect is stronger for individuals who receive less instrumental than expressive status.

One explanation for the asymmetry in the consequences of status inconsistencies might lie in the workplace setting studied here. Individuals typically strive for both instrumental and expressive status in work-related settings (Van der Doef and Maes, 1999; Cropanzano et al., 1997). However, attaining instrumental status is more closely related to the primary purpose of membership in work groups (cf. Bunderson and Reagans, 2011) whereas expressive status can be achieved in wide variety of social settings (Blau, 1960). Hence, individuals with more expressive than instrumental status may find it more difficult to compensate for the latter in other social settings, thereby reducing their ability to deal with the stressful experience of status inconsistency at work.

Third, this study contributes to research on role differentiation. Earlier research on this subject has mostly focused on the conditions under which groups develop consistent or inconsistent hierarchies in terms of instrumental and expressive leadership. Our work shows that the experience of incongruence between these hierarchies at the individual level might have important consequence for group members' subjective wellbeing. An intriguing future research direction would be to study the ways in which individuals cope with the stress that status inconsistency can create. On the one hand, one might expect that those who have high status on one dimension, but low status on the other, will engage in behaviors that enhance their status on the latter dimension. On the other hand, the experience of stress might impair their functioning in the group and thereby reduce their status on the dimension on which they score high.

Fourth, our study also sheds light on the relationship between group-level and societal social status. Common gender stereotypes hold that women are lower on instrumental leadership skills and higher on emotional warmth than men, but women are also often expected to perform better in care-related activities (Ridgeway, 2011). Our results suggest that even in the female-typed context of the childcare organization that we have studied here, the status disadvantage that women face in society at large in terms of attributed instrumental abilities might affect the status that they attain in their immediate daily interactions with others. Future research on role differentiation might thus benefit from controlling for characteristics that

have status value in society at large, when exploring the ways in which individuals attain status on different role dimensions. However, given that gender was not in the focus of our analysis, we leave it to future research to explore this link more closely.

Finally, our research also has implications for the emerging stream of research on social status in organizations (Bunderson and Reagans, 2011), as well as the literature on the relation between social status and stress (Ursache et al., 2015). While Bacharach et al. (1993) already theorized that status inconsistency can be an important predictor for work-related stress, there is surprisingly little empirical research in this area (see Biron and de Reuver, 2013). With the present study, we contribute to this stream of research by illustrating that status inconsistency is a unique and important concept that critically affects employees' work stress.

While this study has several methodological strengths, some limitations should be noted. First, the small sample size may be a source of concern, even though our study was specifically aimed at smaller group settings and the response rate was comparatively high (i.e., 83%). Nevertheless, future research might benefit from corroborating the present results in larger samples. In particular, future studies might benefit from including data from work teams in different organizational contexts, as this would make it possible to control for contextual factors that might impinge on the stress that employees experience. For example, we know from personal experience with the members of the organization that there was a strong commitment among employees to deliver the best care possible. In other organizational contexts, there might be more variation in the task focus among staff members. This might render their instrumental status generally less important for their subjective well-being than their expressive status, so that inconsistencies between the two would matter less.

Second, our data have the advantage that they enable us to minimize problems with common source bias by combining the status ratings of others with respondents' self-reports of stress. Yet, our measures do not enable us to assess whether respondents were personally aware of the any status inconsistency. Future research might address this issue by also asking respondents about their self-perceived status position in both hierarchies (cf. Blocker and Riedesel, 1978). We expect that self-perceptions and the perceptions of others will be strongly correlated, given that during their daily interactions with other members of their groups individuals will have ample opportunity to learn about what others think about their status in the two hierarchies.

Taken together, the present research suggests that the concept of status inconsistency has meaningful effects for stress-related outcomes in group contexts. As such, we hope that the theory and results presented here offer a promising agenda for future research on status inconsistency.

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APPENDIX A

In this appendix, we report the results of a comparison of respondents and non-respondents on all independent variables. The data pertaining to control variables were provided by the organization in which we conducted our study. Given that respondents rated each member of their department in terms of instrumental status and expressive status, we also have scores for non-respondents available. Note that three employees had to be excluded from this rating procedure, given that they had joined the respective department too recently to be included in the roster.

Table A1 provides an overview of the differences between respondents and non-respondents. Non-respondents had on average slightly more organizational tenure, lower formal positions, worked fewer hours, were more often male, and had slightly lower instrumental and expressive status than respondents. However, none of these differences were significant.

Table A1

Comparison of means between respondents and non-respondents

	Mean R (SD)	Mean NR (SD)	T	DF
1. Organizational tenure	8.84 (7.84)	11.56 (10.30)	-1.090	22.457
2. Formal position	4.01 (0.66)	3.68 (0.63)	0.790	26.205
3. Hours per week	24.81 (8.51)	22.94 (10.86)	0.706	22.729
4. Gender (M = 0, F = 1)	0.90 (0.29)	0.84 (0.37)	0.669	22.854
5. Instrumental status	3.25 (0.23)	3.11 (0.24)	2.048	18.351
6. Expressive status	3.39 (0.22)	3.24 (0.23)	1.905	17.142

Note: $N = 93$ for respondents (R) and $N = 19$ for non-respondents (NR) ($N = 16$ for non-respondents (NR) in the cases of instrumental status and expressive status). None of the comparisons were significant at conventional significance levels.

APPENDIX B

Work stress measure

Source: Kristensen et al. (2005).

Please consider each of the following statements and indicate how well the descriptions fit your situation during the past 4 weeks:

1. I have not wanted to speak with anyone/have been withdrawn.
2. I have not been able to stand dealing with other people.
3. I have not had the time to relax or enjoy myself.
4. I have found it difficult to be happy.
5. I have eaten for comfort.
6. I have been a bit touchy.
7. I have lacked initiative.
8. I have felt harassed.

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