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## Does the Self Conform to the Views of Others?\*

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*The interactionist tenet that we come to see ourselves as others see us has received only inconsistent support throughout its history, in part because of a number of factors that can disrupt the process. In this study we address several elements that have been suggested as important, including which others might be influential, the self's agency in protecting self-views from change, the time frame involved, and the individuals' openness to change. We address these factors using data from newly married couples over a two-year period. Regarding who may be influential, we draw on expectation states theory and hypothesize that views held by the spouse with higher status than the partner will be more likely to influence the partner's self-views. The higher-status spouse also should influence the lower-status spouse's views of the higher-status person. The results are consistent with these expectations. The findings suggest that the scope conditions of EST are broader than initially posited. Perhaps more important, the results reaffirm the idea that social psychological processes maintain the social structural arrangements in which they take place.*

One of the basic tenets of the interactionist perspective in social psychology is that we come to see ourselves as others see us (Kinch 1963). Theoretically, self-knowledge is acquired through the *looking glass* (Cooley 1902), the *process of role-taking* (Mead 1934), or the *reflected appraisal process* (Kinch 1963). All of these processes assume that the views of others influence how individuals see themselves. Early research, however, did not always support this view, often it showed little consistency between our self-views and the views of us

actually held by others (Shrauger and Schoeneman 1979).<sup>1</sup>

The lack of consistency between self-views and the views held by others has been attributed to a number of factors. Most recently, Ichiyama (1993) suggested several influential factors that may be important, including which others might have an effect, the self's agency in protecting self-views, the time frame involved, and individuals' openness to change. In the present study, our examination of these issues focuses on which others are influential and on the self's agency. In the study's design, we also take into account the time frame and individuals' openness to change.

With respect to *which others* might influence self-views, research reveals that individuals whose views are regarded as credible and valuable may have more influence than others on people's views of themselves (Rosenberg 1973). We extend this line

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<sup>1</sup> Because of the early lack of empirical support for the process of reflected appraisals, some observers suggested that this process had been over-emphasized in self-concept development (Felson 1981).

of thought by investigating the effect of status on the relationship between self-views and others' views of us. We anticipate that higher-status individuals' views will be more likely to influence self-views than will those of lower-status individuals. This idea is consistent with expectation states theory, which suggests that in a group, those of a higher status are held in higher esteem, are judged as more competent, and thus are more influential in decision-making than lower status people (Berger et al. 1977). This greater influence should extend to the perceptual level—that is, to self-views.

With respect to the *agency* of the self, we should not assume that the self has little or no influence over others' views (of the self). Individuals may work to change others' views of them to be more consistent with their own self-views (Gecas and Burke 1995; McCall and Simmons 1978). Influence strategies may include a particular self-presentational style (Goffman 1959), "altercasting" (Weinstein and Deutschberger 1963), and the use of accounts (Scott and Lyman 1968) and disclaimers (Hewitt and Stokes 1975). Because we expect that people's self-views will be influenced by higher-status people's views of them, we likewise expect that the self-views of higher-status people will influence lower status people's views of higher-status people.

We investigate the above processes *over time* using a sample of new marriages. Examining marriage during the early years allows time for change in self-views and others' views of the self. Since the self tends to be relatively stable because of various protective mechanisms (Gecas and Burke 1995) and since changes in the self may take time to be incorporated into the self (Burke and Cast 1997), this study takes this delayed effect into account.

In addition, a new marriage provides an important theoretical context for examining influences on self-views because it may be a time during which the self is *open to change*. The self is likely to be open to and to experience change when the social environment is altered substantially, as when one spends more time with a (new) spouse and less time with familiar others such as family members (Harter 1993). Indeed, it has been argued

that the self-concept may change during role transitions, as in adapting to the new roles of husband and wife (Wells and Stryker 1988). During such transitions, individuals may be less certain what to feel or how to act; thus they may be particularly influenced by their spouses' views. Spouses are also likely to be influential because of the amount of time young couples spend together, their open dialogue on personal matters, their respect for each other's opinions, and their receptivity to each other's views as they work to create a shared reality of each other and the relationship (Blumstein 1991). A spouse may be seen as one who can provide insight and guidance into who one is and who one should become.

In summary, we recognize agency in both the person and the other in determining the perceptions of each, and we examine how status affects this process. We do so by studying the first two years of newly formed marriages, a time when the self may be particularly open to change. We anticipate that the spouse with the higher status in the social structure will influence the partner's views more strongly than the partner will influence the higher-status spouse.

## THEORY

### *The Influence of Others*

One of the most developed theories of influence is expectation states theory (EST) (Berger et al. 1977). Although this theory generally has been applied to traditional task groups, researchers recently have begun to examine how marital interaction is influenced by expectations tied to one's status in the social structure. For example, Stets and others (Stets 1997; Stets and Burke 1996) applied EST in studies of *emotion-based* behavior (negative and positive) in conversations between spouses. Although the EST predictions lacked support, they suggested that this might have been due to the incorrectness of EST theorists' predictions about the use of affective behaviors in interaction.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Although EST predicts that high-status persons are more likely to express negative behavior (for example, hostility) in task groups, Stets' research found that it was lower status married persons who

In the present research we examine perceptions from the viewpoint of the self and the spouse, or what we call *cognitive-based* behavior. We examine the influence of status in determining one's own self-views in marriage and the views of the self held by the other (the spouse). Expectation states researchers have not yet examined this area.

According to EST, people develop *expectations* for one another in interaction by locating each other's status *relative to others* in the social structure (Ridgeway and Walker 1995). We expect better judgments from higher-status people (for example, those higher in education and occupational status) than from lower-status people, given higher-status people's greater success in the social structure. In general, those with higher status will be held in higher esteem in interaction than will lower-status people, will be more likely to assume a position of authority, and will be more likely to wield greater influence because they are seen as more knowledgeable, more perceptive, and more competent. Higher-status individuals will also be more active in the group, and their contributions will be more likely to determine the group's outcomes. Lower-status people will assume a more passive role: They will be more likely to defer to higher-status people's views and even to ask for their opinions rather than offering their own views or attempting to exert their own influence. In this way, external status acts to structure interaction, and the resulting behavior ultimately reinforces the status hierarchy.

Applying these EST assumptions to the current study, we anticipate that the spouse who has higher status (based on education and occupation) will have greater influence on the self-views of the lower-status spouse. The lower-status spouse will tend to defer to the higher-status spouse's view of him or her because the higher-status spouse presumably can make better judgments. Thus, in consid-

expressed such behavior in marriage. Similarly, recent research on emotion-based behavior in task groups found that negative behavior was expressed more strongly by lower-status than by higher status persons (Lovaglia and Houser 1996). These findings across different types of groups suggest that the initial EST assumptions about emotions may be incorrect.

ering which others influence one's self-views, we expect that the higher-status spouse is more likely to influence the self-view of the lower-status spouse than the reverse. In addition, we anticipate that the higher-status spouse is more likely to influence the spouse's view of him or her than the reverse. Thus a person with higher status than his or her spouse will not only be more likely than the lower-status spouse to resist the spouse's influence, but also will be more likely to influence how the lower-status spouse sees him or her. In general, the lower-status spouse will adopt a view of himself or herself and of the higher-status spouse that is congruent with the views held by the higher status spouse.

One might argue that self-views are influenced not only by relative status but also by one's gender: Husbands will have greater influence than wives. Gender may be conceived as a diffuse status characteristic; therefore, when it is activated (as it is, in most encounters), it calls up cultural assumptions that men are more competent than women, given their higher position in the social structure (Ridgeway 1993). Gender thus may affect self-perceptions in marriage: Wives' self-views will be influenced more strongly by their husbands' views of them than the reverse. Similarly, husbands may be more successful at influencing their wives' of them (the husbands) than are wives at influencing their husbands' views of them (the wives). In keeping with research from expectation states theory, because gender signals one's social structural position, women's lower social status may translate into greater deference to (higher-status) men in interaction (Ridgeway 1993). Therefore we also investigate gender as a possible source of influence in these processes.<sup>3</sup>

Because people occupy multiple positions in the social structure, they should possess multiple diffuse status characteristics (Berger et al. 1977). The higher the esteem associated with each status that individuals possess, the more influence they should have

<sup>3</sup> This is not an adequate test of gender as status. To fully test the effects of gender, we would need same-sex groups *and* cross-sex groups.

in interaction. Being male and having a high-level education and occupation confers higher status in our society than being female and having a high-level education and occupation. Thus we expect that husbands with a high-level education and occupation will be more likely to influence their wives' views than the reverse, even when their wives also have a high-level education and occupation. In essence, we are testing the effect of multiple statuses.

Our broad thesis is that a person's status provides a signal to which the other responds to in marriage. One's position in the macro social order generalizes to the micro social order by affecting how interactants influence each other. In this way, social structure is sustained in social interaction by the actors' views and by their actions and reactions that follow from these views.

### *The Active Self*

Our second theoretical issue concerns the *active self* and its effect on others' views of the self. Others term this portrait of the self the "self as architect," whereby the self helps shape others' views of him or her (McNulty and Swann 1994).<sup>4</sup> The active self can influence other's views about the self in several ways. First, individuals may choose to associate with those who view them as they view themselves. This is the process of *selective interaction*, which people use as one strategy for self-verification (Swann 1987). By choosing to interact and associate with others who see us as we see ourselves, we confirm or verify our identities.<sup>5</sup>

Indeed, Swann and his colleagues (Swann 1992; Swann, Hixon, and De La Ronde 1992) find that we seek (and become more strongly committed to) a mate who appraises us in a way that is consistent with the way we see ourselves, regardless of

whether this view is positive or negative. If we view ourselves negatively, we will prefer an intimate other who verifies this negative self-view. If we view ourselves positively, we will seek a partner who confirms this positive image. By interacting with those who see us as we see ourselves, we achieve some predictability and sense of control over our environment. Discrepant views tend to reduce this feeling and to generate distress, even marital unhappiness (Burke and Stets 1997; Schafer, Wickrama, and Keith 1996).<sup>6</sup>

A second way in which the self can influence others' views such that they are in line with one's own self-views is through the *display of identity cues* (Swann 1987). Strategies that accomplish this may include one's self-presentational style (Goffman 1959): By displaying identity cues, we tell others who we are and how we are to be treated. In this way we alter others' perceptions of us so as to facilitate consistency between how they see us and how we see ourselves (Swann 1987). This process permits self-verification.

A third way in which the self can influence other's views about the self is through *interpersonal prompts*—that is, interaction strategies that encourage others to behave toward one in a manner that is congruent with one's identity (Swann 1987). This is similar to *altercasting*: acting to elicit self-confirmatory reactions from others (Weinstein and Deutschberger 1963). The consequence of changing others' views (of the self) is to bring self-views and the views of others into congruence. Regardless of which of the above tactics an individual adopts to influence others' views, the self is *active* in constructing others' views of the self.

<sup>6</sup> Other researchers find that we prefer a partner who sees us more favorably than we see ourselves (Murray, Holmes, and Griffin 1996), a result that is consistent with strivings for self-enhancement (Tesser 1988). Murray et al. (1996) speculate on the difference, suggesting that self-verification may occur for highly public attributes such as intelligence and attractiveness (the kind that Swann and colleagues examined) and that self-enhancement may occur for more ambiguous, interpersonal attributes such as kindness and understanding (the kind that Murray and colleagues studied). McNulty and Swann (1994), however, study both public and private attributes, and continue to find self-verification effects.

<sup>4</sup> McNulty and Swann (1994) suggest that this influence involves seeking and finding self-verification in a situation.

<sup>5</sup> This may result in a methodological problem of selection bias that must be ruled out as an explanation for the agreement between self-views and the views of others. By using longitudinal data on married couples, we hold constant any selection bias that might occur.

THEORETICAL MODEL AND HYPOTHESES

To examine the relevance of status and the role of the active self, we estimate the model depicted in Figure 1. The self-views at time 1 ( $t_1$ ), time 2 ( $t_2$ ), and time 3 ( $t_3$ ) represent a person's self-views at the time of his or her marriage, and one and two years later. The spouse's views in time 1, time 2, and time 3 are the views of the person held by the spouse at each point. Therefore, if I am the person, the "self-view" represents my views of myself; the "spouse's view" represents my spouse's view of me. Path a in the model represents the effect of self-views on the spouse's views about the self; path b represents the effect of the spouse's views on the self's views of himself or herself.

Structural error terms (the  $e$  terms in Figure 1) are drawn for each of the endogenous variables to represent unexplained sources of variation. We assume that the error term for self-views is correlated with the error term for the spouse's view both within and across times 2 and 3. These assumed correlations between the disturbance terms mean that variables not included in the present analysis which influence one variable will likely influence the others.

By using longitudinal data on married couples, we hold constant any possible selec-

tion biases. We also can examine changes in self-views over a period of time. In addition, by including the effect of self-views on the views held by the spouse, we can control the impact of the active self as we examine the influence of spouse's view on the self. Finally, by looking at the process under different relative status conditions, we can examine the conditions under which a spouse's view influences the self.

The role of status in the processes outlined above is revealed in the reciprocal effects in the model. We expect that among those couples in which status is similar, each spouse will influence the other's views. Thus the coefficients for paths a and b should differ significantly from zero.

When status differences are present in the marriage, we expect that the views of the higher status person will be more likely to influence those of the lower status person than the reverse. This idea should be considered in two ways. First, when a person has higher status than the spouse, his or her self-views should have a greater impact on the spouse's views of the self than the reverse. Because the spouse has a lower status than the person, the spouse's view of the person should have a weaker influence on the person's self-views than when their status is similar. Therefore, in the model, the effect of path a should be greater than the effect of

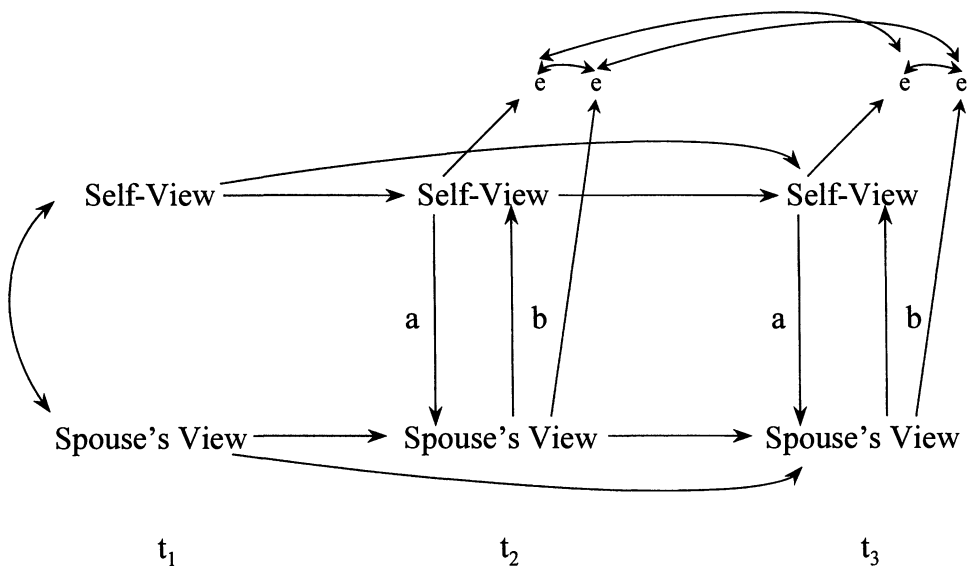


Figure 1. Theoretical Model: Self-View and Spouse's View

path b. Second, when the spouse has higher status than the person, the spouse's views should have a greater influence on the person's self-views than the reverse. Because the person has lower status than the spouse, the person should have less influence on the spouse's view of the person than when they are similar in status. In the model, the effect for path b should be greater than the effect for path a.

We formalize the above expectations with the following two hypotheses:

*Hypothesis 1: When spouses are similar in status, self-views will influence the spouse's views and the spouse's views will influence self-views.*

*Hypothesis 2: When the self has higher status than the spouse, self-views will influence the spouse's views more than the spouse's views will influence self-views. Likewise, when the spouse has higher status than the self, the spouse's views will influence self-views more than self-views will influence the spouse's views.*

Because we do not have data on same-sex couples, it is impossible to test unambiguously for the effects of gender as status. Thus, the results regarding gender must be interpreted cautiously. We can test, however, whether males' influence on females is different from females' influence on males. It is also important to examine whether, in other respects, the model displayed in Figure 1 operates in the same way for men and for women—for example, whether self-views are stable over time for both sexes. In this way we examine whether the processes that we outline in the model are so general as to not vary by gender.

### Analyses

Figure 1 shows a nonrecursive structural model that incorporates correlated errors and lagged stability effects. The model is identified because the lagged variables at time 1 and time 2 are used as instrumental variables for the reciprocal effects in time 2 and time 3.<sup>7</sup> To estimate the full model, we

use the maximum likelihood procedure of AMOS which incorporates information about specification from all of the structural and measurement equations in the model (Arbuckle 1997). This is known as a full-information method; in contrast, in a limited-information method, the model's parameters are estimated one at a time. If we assume that the model is properly specified, full information methods provide estimators with small mean-square errors.

The reciprocal effects of self-views and spouse-views over time are conceptualized as occurring simultaneously and over time, representing cumulative effects.<sup>8</sup> The model is estimated as a six-group comparison.<sup>9</sup> Because perceptions tend to be stable over time, we assume that one's self-view and the spouse's view of the self will be relatively stable from time 1 to time 2 and from time 2 to time 3. These assumptions apply within and across all group comparisons. We also assume that self-views in time 1 will have a significant effect on self-views in time 3 within and across models. Drawing from earlier theoretical and empirical work (Burke and Cast 1997), we include these lag effects to take into account the fact that any changes in self-perceptions which are too large in one year will be "corrected" in the following year. Therefore any oscillations eventually will settle toward a new equilibrium. We conducted analyses before the final

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surement model relating the latent variables of self-views and spouse's views to their underlying indicators of perceptions of intelligence and attractiveness.

<sup>8</sup> Estimating cross-lag effects as well as simultaneous effects creates identification problems. Estimation of only cross-lag effects may not capture any effects if the time between data points is long (Finkel 1995). Although these effects certainly are occurring slowly over time, given the time between data collection points (one year), simultaneous effects capture these relationships most effectively.

<sup>9</sup> Figure 1 is a simplified version of the processes we investigate. To address the possible effects of multiple statuses as well, we compared six groups: a high-status female self with a low-status male spouse, an equal-status female self with an equal-status male spouse, a low-status female self with a high-status male spouse, a high-status male self with a low-status female spouse, an equal-status male self with an equal-status female spouse, and a low-status male self with a high-status female spouse. When we found no significant differences between groups, the final estimate of effect were constrained to be equal.

<sup>7</sup> For simplicity, Figure 1 does not show the mea-

model to ensure that the equality constraints did not significantly alter the fit of the model. With regard to hypothesized relationships between self-views and spouse's views, we tested coefficients across models for equality; if no differences were found, they were constrained to be equal.

## METHOD

### *Sample*

The data for this research come from a longitudinal study of marital roles that investigated marital dynamics in the first two years of marriage (Tallman, Burke, and Gecas 1995). The sample was drawn from marriage registration records in 1991 and 1992 in two mid-sized communities in Washington State. Of the 1,295 couples recorded in the marriage registry during this period, 574 met the criteria for involvement: Both spouses were over age 18, were marrying for the first time, and had no children living with them. Each data collection period involved a 90-minute face-to-face interview, four one-week daily diaries kept at four-week intervals by each respondent, and a 15-minute videotaping of couples' conversations as they worked to solve areas of disagreement previously acknowledged by them. The data for the present analysis are based on information collected from the face-to-face interviews in each year.

Of the 574 couples eligible for participation, 286 completed all data collection processes in the first round. These couples do not differ significantly from first-married couples, nationally. For example, their mean ages resemble those of individuals marrying for the first time (24 for women and 26 for men) (Vital Statistics 1987), and their mean educational levels are similar to those of women and men marrying for the first time ("some college") (Vital Statistics 1987). Nationally, first-married persons are 85 percent white and 13 percent other minorities (Vital Statistics 1987). The current sample contains 89 percent whites, 3 percent blacks (under-representing blacks nationally), and 9 percent other minorities (over-representing Asians and Hispanics nationally). This sample reflects the racial distribution of Washington State (World Almanac 1992).

Attrition from the first year to the second year was 15 percent with an additional 4.2 percent attrition from the second year to the third.<sup>10</sup> Couples who dropped out of the study after the first or second year were more likely to be young ( $p < .01$ ), less highly educated ( $p < .01$ ), and of lower socioeconomic status ( $p < .05$ ). Because of missing values on some of the variables, the data for the present analysis are based on 199 of the 207 couples who completed all three years of the study, or 398 individuals and their spouses.

### *Measures*

*Self-view.* The self-view and the spouse's view in time 1, time 2, and time 3 are measured with ratings on two items: intelligence and attractiveness. These dimensions of the self have been used in past research on the self-concept (Felson 1981, 1985; Pelham and Swann 1989; Swann De La Ronde, and Hixon 1994) and are dimensions on which individuals are likely to evaluate themselves (Gordon 1968). They are more objective, highly public attributes that are less ambiguous than abstract, interpersonal qualities (Murray et al. 1996). Both intelligence and attractiveness capture the evaluative dimension of meaning.

For each year, respondents rated themselves and their spouses on intelligence and attractiveness, using a scale from 0 (low) to 100 (high). Because the distribution of responses was negatively skewed, with most individuals rating themselves and their spouses very positively, we used a boxcox transformation to remove the skew and normalize the distribution of responses on these variables (Greene 1990). The self-views and spouse's views in each year are indicated by the measures of perceived intelligence and perceived attractiveness using structural equation modeling. We discuss the measurement model below.

*Status.* Status was indicated with measures of education and occupational status. Education was coded by years of education.

<sup>10</sup> These figures do not include the 13 couples who were separated or divorced after the first year or the 16 couples who were separated or divorced after the second year.

Occupational status was coded according to the Socioeconomic Index (SEI) (Stevens and Cho 1985). Education and the SEI score were each standardized (mean of 0 and variance of 1) and then summed: A high score represents high status.

We then categorized individuals as to their relative status in the marriage. The self was categorized as having a higher status than the spouse if the self's status score was greater than that of the spouse in all three years ( $N = 126$  individuals: 71 males and 55 females). The spouse was categorized as having a higher status than the self if the spouse's status score was greater than the self's status score in all three years ( $N = 126$  individuals: 55 males and 71 females). Couples in which status was higher for one spouse in one year and for the other spouse in another year or in which their status was equal were categorized as having similar status ( $N = 146$  individuals: 73 males and 73 females).<sup>11</sup>

## RESULTS

Table 1 displays the means, standard deviations, and correlations among the items underlying the variables shown in Figure 1. We find that in each year, individuals rate themselves more positively on intelligence than on attractiveness ( $p < .05$ ).<sup>12</sup> In Table 1 we also see that the spouse's view of the self is more positive than the person's self-view ( $p < .05$ ). This is consistent with other research that finds that individuals see their spouses more positively than their spouses see themselves (Murray et al. 1996).<sup>13</sup>

<sup>11</sup> The relationship between gender and status group was not significant (chi-square = 4.06,  $df = 2$ , ns).

<sup>12</sup> This difference may exist because attractiveness, in contrast to ability, is defined in terms of others' reactions; Thus, to be attractive is to be attractive *to others* (Felson 1985). People may feel that they are competent to identify their level of intelligence, given "objective" measures such as performance on tests or success at problem solving. When evaluating attractiveness, however, people may be unclear about public opinion and thus may be more conservative in their evaluation.

<sup>13</sup> This may also be due to modesty on the part of the self or to the fact that these are newly married couples in which each person's views of the other may still be particularly favorable.

Correlations among the items in Table 1 suggest a certain degree of stability in self-views and in others' views of the self. One's rating of his or her own intelligence or the spouse's intelligence at time 1 is correlated significantly with intelligence ratings at times 2 and 3. The same pattern holds for attractiveness. This is an indication of the stability of views about the self over time. We also see that intelligence and attractiveness are related significantly to each other in each year; this evaluative commonality is indexed by the combined items.

In the analysis of the measurement portion of the structural equation model, we found no differences in the item weights between the models for husbands and for wives for their self-views (chi-square = 10.30,  $df = 6$ , ns) and for their spouse's views (chi-square = 9.00,  $df = 6$ , ns). Also, we found no significant differences in the measurement models over the three years for their self-views (chi-square = 6.40,  $df = 4$ , ns) or their spouse's views (chi-square = 6.20,  $df = 4$ , ns). Thus the analysis shows that we are measuring the same concept across time, and for both husbands and wives.<sup>14</sup>

In Table 2 we present the final standardized estimates of the reciprocal effects of self-views and spouse's views under the different status conditions. Before discussing these results, we turn to the results on gender. We first tested whether the effects of men on women were different than the effects of women on men. If a difference exists, it may be that men's higher status in the social structure translates into greater influence over self-perceptions in marriage than possessed by women, but it may also be the result of greater receptivity on the part of women; this alternative hypothesis cannot be refuted. Controlling for status (education and occupation), we found no significant difference between the effects of males on females and the effects of females on males (chi-square = 5.90,  $df = 2$ , ns). We next tested the effect of multiple status characteristics. The combination of possessing higher status (education and occupation) and being male did not have a greater influence over self-

<sup>14</sup> Results pertaining to the measurement model are available on request.





perceptions in marriage than did possessing higher status and being female (chi-square = 1.30,  $df = 1$ , ns).

Finally, we tested whether the model shown in Figure 1 was general enough that processes did not vary by gender. Overall, we found no significant gender effects (chi-square = 42.70,  $df = 30$ , ns). The effect of self-views over time and across groups was the same for men and for women (chi-square = 6.80,  $df = 5$ , ns) with one exception: In the similar-status group, the effect of self-views at time 1 on self-views at time 2 was different for men and for women (chi-square = 9.50,  $df = 1$ ,  $p < .01$ ). The effect of the spouse's view over time and across groups, however, did not differ by gender (chi-square = 7.30,  $df = 6$ , ns). The effect of self-views at time 1 influencing self-views at time 3 was also the same for men and for women across groups (chi-square = 2.20,  $df = 3$ , ns). Also, the effect of the spouse's view at time 1 influencing the spouse's view at time 3 did not differ by gender (chi-square = 3.50,  $df = 3$ , ns). Finally, the expected status group differences (in terms of the effects of the self-views on the spouse's view and the effects of the spouse's view on self-views) did not vary by gender (chi-square = 13.40,  $df = 12$ , ns).<sup>15</sup> Given these results, we pooled the effects for men and women, producing one overall model.

In the overall model, we first tested assumptions about the equality of the stability coefficients over time and across groups. The effects of the self-views from time 1 to time 2 are the same as the self-views from time 2 to time 3 within each status comparison (chi-square = .80,  $df = 3$ , ns) and across status comparison groups (chi-square = 3.40,  $df = 3$ , ns). The effects of the spouse's view from time 1 to time 2 are the same as the spouse's view from time 2 to time 3 within each status comparison group (chi-square = 4.00,  $df = 2$ , ns) with one exception: In the similar status group, the effect from time 1 to time 2 is slightly stronger ( $\beta = .59$ ,  $p$

$< .05$ ) than from time 2 to time 3 ( $\beta = .48$ ,  $p < .05$ ) (chi-square = 8.50,  $df = 1$ ,  $p < .01$ ). With this exception, the effects of the spouse's view across time are similar across status comparison groups (chi-square = 1.00,  $df = 2$ , ns). Thus, with the equality constraints, we find in Table 2 that the self-view in one year influences the self-view in the next year ( $\beta = .59$ ,  $p < .05$ ). This is also found for the stability effects of the spouse's views.

We also tested whether the lag effects (effects from time 1 to time 3 representing additional effects of time 1 on time 3 over and above the effects through time 2) were equal across status groups. The effects of the self-views from time 1 to time 3 are the same across status comparison groups (chi-square = 1.00,  $df = 2$ , ns); this holds for the spouse's view as well (chi-square = 1.00,  $df = 2$ , ns). Thus the stability coefficients over time and across groups do not differ significantly and can be constrained to be equal in the final model without significantly altering the fit of the model. With the equality constraints, Table 2 shows that the self-view at time 1 influences the self-view at time 3 ( $\beta = .19$ ,  $p < .05$ ); this is also true for the spouse's view.

Our two hypotheses address the role of status in self-perceptions. First, for spouses with similar statuses, we expected that self-views would influence the spouse's view (of the self) and that the spouse's view would influence self-views (Hypothesis 1). We find support for this hypothesis and also find no significant difference between the effects of self-views on the spouse's views and the effects of the spouse's views on self-views (chi-square = .03,  $df = 1$ , ns). Thus the relationship between self-views and the spouse's views in equal-status couples is not only reciprocal but equal ( $\beta = .08$ ,  $p < .05$  in Table 2).

We also find support for the expectation that the person with the higher status in the marriage will have more influence over the other's views than will the person of lower status ( $\beta = .12$ ,  $p < .05$ ) (Hypothesis 2). Specifically, when the self has higher status, self-views influence the spouse's views more strongly than the spouse's views influence self-views. When the spouse has higher sta-

<sup>15</sup> In all of these tests for gender differences, status (as indicated by occupation and education) is held constant. Because, in general, there are more high-status men than high-status women, gender and status may have been confounded in other tests in the literature.

Table 2. Standardized Estimates of Status on Self-View and Spouse's View<sup>a,b</sup>

Independent Variables	Dependent Variables			
	Self-View <sub>2</sub>	Self-View <sub>3</sub>	Spouse's View <sub>2</sub>	Spouse's View <sub>3</sub>
<b>Similar Status (N = 146)</b>				
Self-view <sub>1</sub>	.59* <sup>c</sup>	.19*		
Self-view <sub>2</sub>		.59*	.08*	
Self-view <sub>3</sub>				.08*
Spouse's view <sub>1</sub>			.59*	.19*
Spouse's view <sub>2</sub>	.08*			.49* <sup>d</sup>
Spouse's view <sub>3</sub>		.08*		
<b>Self Higher Status (N = 126)</b>				
Self-view <sub>1</sub>	.59*	.19*		
Self-view <sub>2</sub>		.59*	.12*	
Self-view <sub>3</sub>				.12*
Spouse's view <sub>1</sub>			.59*	.19*
Spouse's view <sub>2</sub>	.00			.59*
Spouse's view <sub>3</sub>		.00		
<b>Spouse Higher Status (N = 126)</b>				
Self-view <sub>1</sub>	.59*	.19*		
Self-view <sub>2</sub>		.59*	.00	
Self-view <sub>3</sub>				.00
Spouse's view <sub>1</sub>			.59*	.19*
Spouse's view <sub>2</sub>	.12*			.59*
Spouse's view <sub>3</sub>		.12*		

GFI: chi-square = 72.30, df = 66,  $p = .28$ \*  $p < .05$ <sup>a</sup> Shaded areas contain the effects of spouses on each other. Nonshaded areas are the stability coefficients.<sup>b</sup> Effects from time 1 to time 2 and time 2 to time 3 are constrained to be equal across gender within and across stability groups, except for time 2 to time 3 for spouse's views among those of similar status.<sup>c</sup> In similar-status couples, this coefficient is stronger for females (beta = .78) than in all other groups.<sup>d</sup> This coefficient for males and for females is weaker than for all other groups (beta = .59).

tus, the spouse's views influence self-views more strongly than self-views influence the spouse's views. Furthermore, as shown in Table 2, when the self has higher status than the spouse, the spouse does not influence the person's self-views (beta = .00, ns), but when the spouse has higher status than the self, the spouse influences the person's self-views (beta = .12,  $p < .05$ ). Overall the final model fits the data well (chi-square = 72.30, df = 66,  $p = .28$ ).

## DISCUSSION

The interactionist perspective in social psychology includes the basic tenet that we come to see ourselves as others see us (Kinch 1963). The mixed evidence on this proposition, however, has led researchers to consider the conditions under which this is more likely to occur. We have investigated which others are influential and have examined the agency of the self in affecting the

views of others, but our study has also taken into account the time frame involved and individual's openness to change. Using expectation states theory, we hypothesized that persons of lower status would defer to the views and judgments about them made by those of higher status. Furthermore, we assumed that individuals are not merely passive objects of socialization but agents who act to create contexts in which their identities are verified (McCall and Simmons 1978; Swann et al. 1992). Individuals do this in part by changing others' perceptions of them. Our results suggest that these hypotheses are supported simultaneously and conditionally.

The self is formulated, is maintained, and is subject to change in an ongoing interpersonal context. The results suggest that one's relative status alters these processes somewhat. Each person's self-views are influenced by the spouse's views of him or her unless the spouse is of lower status. In addition, each person's self-views influence

the spouse's views of him or her unless the person is of lower status than the spouse. When spouses have a higher status than their partners, they influence not only their partner's self-views, but also their partner's views of them. Spouses with a lower status in the marriage have less influence on the self-view of their higher status counterparts or on how their higher-status counterparts view them.<sup>16</sup>

We found an unanticipated pattern in the results. Although higher-status spouses have more influence on their lower-status partners ( $\beta = .12, p < .05$ ) than the reverse ( $\beta = .00, ns$ ), this effect does not differ significantly from the effect of similar-status spouses on each other ( $\beta = .08, p < .05$ ). Therefore higher-status spouses do not have more influence on self-views in the early years of marriage; it appears instead that lower-status spouses simply have less influence than equal- and higher-status spouses. The lower-status persons are anomalous in this respect: It appears that others (or at least the higher-status spouses) do not attend to them. Viewed in another way, the higher-status spouse is able to resist any possible influence of the lower-status partner on his or her self-views. Higher-status spouses define the situation simply by refusing the influence of partners who are of lower status. This suggests that the success of altering, or the ability to "cast" another into a particular role, may depend on interaction partners' relative status: A person of high status may refuse the other's influence.

These results suggest that persons with higher status influence not only task-oriented judgments in interaction but also judg-

ments related to central perceptions of individuals. The effects of status appear to occur not simply for external (task) judgments, in which the reference is outside the self, but also for internal (self) judgments. Previous research was unable to support EST predictions about emotion-based behavior in marriage (Stets 1997; Stets and Burke 1996); yet, when we examine perceptions in the marriage, or what we term cognitive-based behavior, the EST assumptions are supported. Insofar as we have found support for EST predictions in the face of unconventional circumstances (for example, we have tested it among individuals who have a history of interaction, and the judgment is internal to the group's functioning), our results suggest that the scope conditions of EST may be broader than initially posited and therefore may imply an increase in the potential utility of EST.

Given the EST assumptions, additional investigation (which we could not conduct adequately here) is required for the effect of gender as status on self-views and spouse's views. Although we found no significant differences between men and women, our results should be interpreted cautiously because we could not adequately assess the effects of gender. If men are more likely to influence the views of the other (controlling for the other's gender), this would be another instance of a more general pattern in which individuals' status position influences not only social structural processes but also social psychological processes.

The results also have implications for newly married couples' happiness and stability. Insofar as the processes discussed here are related to self-verification and result in couples agreeing with each other so that each can verify self-views, individual and marital well-being should result (Burke and Stets 1997). Higher-status people may be more likely to experience self-verification, given their greater influence, and thus should be more likely to report individual and marital well-being in these newly formed marriages.

In general, our findings illustrate the impact of social structure on basic social psychological processes and reaffirm the idea that analyses of these micro processes

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<sup>16</sup> We examined the effect of status after controlling for other factors that also might influence self-views in marriage. For example, spouses who are better able to role-take—that is, to imaginatively adopt the spouse's view—might be more likely to adopt the spouse's view as their own (Burke and Cast 1997). In addition, more trusting and more deeply committed people should see the spouse's views as credible and valuable, and thus may be more strongly influenced by the spouse's views than those who are less trusting or less fully committed to their marriage. Controlling for role-taking, trust, and commitment did not alter the effects of status on self-views. (These results are available on request.)

cannot ignore the place in the social system where they occur (Stryker 1980). Our findings also illustrate how social psychological processes often support, strengthen, and reaffirm social structural arrangements. A married couple is embedded in the larger social structure; each person's relative status in the marriage affects the degree to which the individual influences the spouse's self-views and the spouse's view of him or her. Acceptance of the higher-status person's view of self and other by the lower-status person (and the lack of reciprocal acceptance) is a deference reaction that reaffirms the higher-status person's position, but it may also create a reality based on the views of those with high status, and thus may maintain their position. In this way, changes in views of self and other are influenced by the individuals' positions and movement in the social structure, into and out of positions of status and power.

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