

Rank Differentiation among Adolescent Hierarchies in Romanian State Care

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Abstract: Social hierarchies are diverse and have been widely observed among human societies. The success of dominance hierarchies and dominance-based social interaction has been argued to decline during adolescence. Individuals with high prestige have proven successful among adult groups. However, both prestige and dominance are ubiquitous and co-existent within human groups. This research assesses the success of prestige and dominance interaction among two groups of Romanian children and young adults in state care through ethnographic observation, interviews, and rank-order analysis. The research provides evidence that both prestige and dominance hierarchies are present and successful within the groups. However, contrary to previous research, agonistic dominance and intimidation persisted as a successful route for gaining influence within both groups.

Keywords: Social Hierarchy, Dominance, Prestige, Developmental Hierarchies, Romanian Orphans

Introduction

Since the fall of Nicolae Ceausescu during the Romanian Revolution in 1989, the lives of Romania's orphans have been at the forefront of international broadcasting. Romanian state care provisioning for children and young adults under their protection has developed significantly since the days of Ceausescu. However, the unique psychological and social traits observed within this population can be seen as a legacy of Ceausescu's regime. Scars do not heal quickly, and due to the socio-emotional and nutritional deprivation under which that many orphans grew, uncommon behavioural traits have developed (see Chugani et al. 2001; Eluvathingal et al. 2006; Chrisholm et al. 1995). Through this unconventional development and environment, other socio-emotional tendencies may have also emerged. The present research attempts to understand the ways in which rank differentiation has emerged among adolescent hierarchies in Romanian state care.

Social hierarchies are ubiquitous in human societies, but their diversity has prevented a universal understanding of their nature. Within social psychology, the Dominance-Prestige Model (Henrich and Gil-White 2001) has presented a framework for understanding rank differentiation and explains the ubiquitous nature of status hierarchies through evolutionary implications and motivations. Both prestige and dominance hierarchies may be present and viable ways for individuals to attain rank within a group. However, agonistic interactions, commonly associated with dominance, are generally only accepted and successful within early developmental hierarchies (Savin-Williams 1980) and delinquent groups. The present research attempts to understand why, in some circumstances, behavioural dominance has persisted and is successful even into adulthood. Through the evolutionary logic that hierarchies facilitate other-oriented behavioural tendencies and moral systems, as high status individuals direct and promote norms and values selective within the group (Alexander 1987; Hawley and Geldhof 2012), one could argue that the development of moral systems is culturally dependent. If individuals and groups have had negative experiences of the social world, or developed under deprivation, defective perceptions of the social world may become a leading philosophy within groups and, thus, prosocial or moral behaviour may not be the most successful means in gaining influence, as it is not culturally valued. Results indicate

that behavioural dominance persists as a viable route to rank attainment, even into late adolescence and adulthood.

Magee and Galinsky (2008: 5), explain hierarchy as an “implicit or explicit rank order of individuals or groups with respect to a valued social dimension.” The definition used here, will also include the assertion that individuals of high rank receive greater influence, deference, attention and culturally valued resources than their subordinates (Cheng and Tracy 2014: 3). Hierarchy can be an evolutionarily beneficial form of social organization. Allowing high-ranking individuals greater resource control prevents costly agonistic conflict and allows for effective social cooperation and coordination (Berger et al. 1980; Anderson and Brown 2010; Halevy et al. 2011). Therefore, social rank and status competition is a highly influential proxy within social selection, increasing selective physiological and behavioural traits (Trumble et al 2012; Clutton-Brock and Huchard 2013; Rosvall 2011). There are also a great number of indicators of an individual’s status within a group and their own perception of their position, notably the frequency and way in which an individual smiles at their peers (Ketelaar *et al.* 2012).

Both prestige and dominance permeate many aspects of human sociality. Human evolutionary history indicates that our species has a legacy as primates that often implement behaviourally dominant status acquisition strategies (Henrich and Gil-White 2001; Barkow 1975). However, as social beings, human interaction and survival relies heavily on social learning and cultural transmission of shared knowledge (Henrich and Gil-White 2001; Foley 1997; Van Vugt 2006). Prestige hierarchies have emerged through human reliance on social learning and produce prosocial behaviour. Within prestige hierarchies, rank is attributed to individuals who have culturally valued skills or knowledge and is maintained through group consensus about the competency of the individual (Henrich and Gil-White 2001; Cheng and Tracy 2014; Cheng et al. 2013). It is adaptive for individuals to defer to those viewed as most competent as learning important knowledge and skills from them is low-cost and fitness-maximising and deference buys access and proximity to such individuals (Henrich and Gil-White 2001). Ethnographic studies have produced a multitude of examples of prestige hierarchies, with success and skill in hunting providing a key proxy for competency (Von Rueden, Gurven and Kaplan 2008; Gurven and Von Rueden 2006). However, skill does not always necessitate an increase in rank. A number of personality traits associated with prosociality are central to maintaining an influential position, such as agreeableness, altruism, empathy and trustworthiness (Chen et al. 2013; Cheng et al. 2013; Hawley 1999).

Dominance systems of hierarchy differentiate rank through their direct or indirect use of physical and psychological aggression, coercion and intimidation. Dominance has been broadly observed among non-human primates (Ellis 1995; De Bruya and Cillessen 2006; Varnatta et al 2003; Mazur 1985). Dominant individuals are characterised by their egocentrism, coercive nature and physical superiority to be threatening towards others (Cheng, Tracy and Henrich 2010; Weisfeld 2010; Hawley *et al.* 2007; Pellegrini *et al.* 2010). Behaviourally dominant traits have been observed among humans, such as the tendency to be assertive, aggressive and forceful, produce an image of an individual as being both intimidating and competent, without need to demonstrate skill (Cheng et al. 2013; Anderson and Kilduff 2009). Furthermore, agonistic contests can amount to challenges to leadership in human groups and may become ritualised (Chagnon, 2011; De Wall 1986; Omark, Strayer and Freedman 1980; Mazur 1985).

Social dominance is successful during childhood up to the age of around five or six, and then begins to steadily decline (Boulton, 1996; Wright, Zakriski and Fisher 1996; Hartrup 1996). Throughout early adolescence, children often tolerate and defer to individuals behaving coercively, forcefully, and aggressively (Savin-Williams 1980; Hawley and Gelfhof 2012; Barkow 1975; Strayer and Trudel 1984). It seems that dominance becomes less

attractive within groups throughout development, with pro-social strategies become increasingly viable (Humphrey 1976). This can be explained through a child's social learning of prosocial behaviour and morality through the efforts of their primary socialising agents or caregivers (Hawley and Geldhof 2012; Hawley *et al.* 2002, Hawley 2003). Thus studies of developmental hierarchies in early childhood provide important examples of behavioural dominance, as skills and cognitive awareness of morality are at the early stages of being taught and refined (Eisenberg 2000). Thus, in developmental hierarchies, dominance may become less prominent due to the group's increasing understanding of such cues and the development of emotions regulating behaviour through social learning (Eisenberg *et al.*, 1987, Eisenberg 2000; Nichols 2002). This approach assumes that the development of moral knowledge and emotions facilitate moral action (Hawley and Geldhof, 2012; Crick and Dodge 1994). Thus, individuals within adolescent or adult hierarchies acting in an antisocial manner or having a persisting reliance on agonistic behavioural dominance are imagined to have negative perceptions of the social world or defective moral knowledge, due to their cognitive development or experience of the social world (Crick and Dodge 1994).

Romania and the Social Orphan

The connection between dominance hierarchies, delinquency and marginalization can allow for predictions that individuals and groups within marginalized infant and adolescent groups may be more likely to engage in delinquent subcultures and antisocial behaviour. If an individual or group is not accepted by or successful wider society, they may follow different routes to success. Among children and young adults in Romania, it seems that socio-environmental pressures and developmental issues may cause a tendency toward delinquent behaviour. To understand this tendency, one must have a grasp on the socio-historic position of the social orphan in Romanian.

During communist governance of Romania under Nicolae Ceausecu between 1967 and 1989, many political factors critically effected the treatment and position of children in care. Due to Ceausecu's pro-natalist social policies, the overall birth-rate increased to such a degree that families were unable to support their children (Keil and Andreescu 1999; Soare 2013). The number of children in state care increased considerably, with over sixty-five thousand children placed in orphanages during the period (Ames and Carter 1992). The majority of those in state care were social orphans, forcibly taken by the state, abandoned or given voluntarily to the state by parents (Kligman 1998: 226). It was the belief of many parents that the state could take better care of the children than they could, a mentality that remains apparent among the poor in contemporary Romania (Collins Sullivan 2012). However, state funding of institutions and orphanages was not enough to provide adequate care and, following the overhaul of Ceausecu in 1989, it became public knowledge about the extreme deprivation that those in care were living in (Ward 2011; Dunlop 2013). Throughout this period child neglect and abuse were chronic societal problems and the impact of such treatment indicated that those in care developed a number of distinctive emotional and behavioural patterns (see Chugani *et al.* 2001; see also Chrisholm 1998). The ratio of children to care givers was extremely high, with some during the period stating that each care giver was responsible for around twenty-five to thirty children (Ward 2011: 136). The conditions quoted in media coverage, such as food and clothing shortages, overcrowding and violence between children were mainly of some truth (Ward 2011: 137). In the years subsequent to Ceausecu's overthrow, a large number of lasting changes were made to the state welfare system. The ratio of care givers to children dramatically increased and adequate funding was put in place to provide many daily necessities (Simon *et al.* 2011).

Although the success of these changes has been largely questioned (Dumling 2004), the current conditions that children in state care live have improved dramatically (Simona et al. 2011). Throughout the region in focus, children in state care live in ‘family cells’ of between six and ten individuals with children of appropriate ages to be viewed as older and younger siblings. These children live in apartments in towns or in newly constructed houses funded by NGOs and charities. The ‘family cells’ have two care givers attached to them on a rotational basis. During the summer months a number of the children live in a summer camp in the neighbouring village, or participate in a summer club in the town, for a period of two to three weeks. The relationship between the children and care givers can be seen as a form of the fictive kinship described by Freed (1963). Children in care would often refer to each other and to care givers through kinship terminology and the apparent formation of consanguinal bonds between unrelated individuals (Dolding 2013).

The fundamental issues that children in state care in contemporary Romania face seem not to be solely institutional, but also social. The social stigma attached to orphans in Romania has been observed throughout fieldwork, as many individuals in the towns and villages where the children lived would not interact with the children. There are a number of cultural factors that account for the difficulty that those in state care face when interacting with the wider Romanian society (Dolding 2013). Orphans were, and to some extent still are, viewed as ‘social problems’ (Dumling 2004). Due to the conditions they faced, many children and young adults in state care developed mental illnesses and were subsequently deemed by Ceausescu as being ‘unproductive’ and were therefore marginalised geographically and socially from the wider society (Kligman 1998). The lack of knowledge and cultural understanding of mental illness seems to have persisted in contemporary Romania. The fraught relationship between the ethnic Roma population in Romania (See Liegeois and Gheorghe, 1995; Carter, 2001; Cretan and Turnock 2009; Romocea, 2004) and the wider society has also caused issues. There are a disproportionately high percentage of ethnic Roma children in state care in Romania and discrimination and marginalisation has been apparent regardless of whether they practice the traditional gypsy lifestyle (Liegeois and Gheorghe, 1995). Contemporary Romanian culture and economic life is largely based around agriculture, and ‘traditional’ views imposed under the communist regime on gender and gender roles are still prevalent (Ellis, 2009). Women within society are still largely idealised as acting in the domestic realm and seem to have a lower status than men in the wider society (Gal and Kligman, 2000; Ellis, 2009; Eglitis, 2000). Furthermore, it seems that in many instances in contemporary Romanian culture, orphans have been subject to stigma and marginalisation. The subculture that has been produced through marginalisation from wider society and the impact of living in care has provided an environment that is distinct to any other population that has been subject to status studies along the lines of the Dominance-Prestige Model.

Research Overview

The primary aims of research were to observe whether dominance hierarchies were most prevalent among adolescent hierarchies in Romanian state care. The groups in focus provide an age range that allows for assessment of status hierarchies among a group where members are aged within the majority of the stages of development. The groups in focus also provide a culture distinct to western societies and that is also marginalised from the wider society. Through testing prestige and dominance hierarchies within such groups, results would provide evidence in support of the Dominance-Prestige model outside of W.E.I.R.D (Western Educated Industrialised Rich and Democratic) countries that are often the focus of similar studies (Henrich, Heine and Norenzayan 2010). The socio-historical factors that have

influenced the situation of children in state care in Romania have developed a subculture that is quite distinct and needs further investigation. Moreover, the purpose of this research is also to observe whether behavioural dominance becomes less prevalent among the older children within the hierarchy, as previous research would suggest, or whether the groups' observed marginalisation and connection to delinquent subcultures causes persistence in agonistic behavioural dominance.

Participants

Thirty-two children and young adults participated in the first part of this study (Group A). The participants ranged between two and nineteen years old, and were temporarily living in a summer-camp compound that was geographically isolated. The average age of the group was thirteen years old. The children were all known to each other; however they lived in separate 'family cells' of between six and ten children throughout the rest of the year. There were twelve adult British volunteers attached to this group who had an interpreter who was aged seventeen, sourced from a nearby school in the region.

Sixteen children and young adults, ranging between five and nineteen years old participated in the second part of this study (Group B). The average age within the group was fourteen years old. Group B were also known to each other and comprised of three separate 'family cells'. However their summer club was in the center of the town and they slept in their homes each night, rather than at the club. Three British volunteers attached to this group were also adults and alongside them was a translator aged sixteen from a nearby school.

Method

Self-administered questionnaires were distributed among volunteers attached to Group A. The anonymity of the responses allowed the subjects to provide their feelings about sensitive issues, such as gender equality and ethnicity (Bernard 2011). The questionnaires focus was on the volunteers' views on how Groups A and B differentiated rank. Similar to Hammel (1962) subjects were asked to order the five people with the highest rank in Groups A and B from one to five, with one being the highest and five being the lowest.

The respondents were also asked to rank-order seven factors that affect individual rank within status hierarchies. These factors were ranked one to seven, with one being the most important factor and seven the least. The factors assessed were: age; physical strength and fitness; what the individual owns; ethnicity; gender; intellectual skill and ability; and demands the most attention from adults and volunteers. Intellectual skill and ability is typically connected with prestige hierarchies. Other factors were associated with dominance (physical Strength and fitness, gender). The remaining factors were connected to both prestige and dominance hierarchies on differing levels (age, ethnicity, what the individuals own; demands the most attention from adults).

Interview questions were focussed on rank differentiation among the group of volunteers attached to Group A and the judgements that volunteers made about their own social hierarchies in comparison to the hierarchies present in Group A. The questions asked in the interviews reflected those presented in the questionnaires. The volunteers were asked to assess which two members of their group were of the highest in-group status and explain the reasons for such elevated status. During the interviews volunteers were questioned about who helped most with domestic tasks and confidently presented their own ideas to the group; with whom the majority of their time in Romania was spent; and were also asked to rank-

order the factors affecting status in their culture. These factors were the same as those presented in the questionnaires and permitted a cross-cultural comparison. The open-ended questions allowed the individuals being interviewed to be probed about factors that influence rank and further understanding of the reasoning behind their judgements. Due to there only being three volunteers attached to Group B, interviews were not conducted.

Limitations

The environment that the groups were in-- in summer camps and clubs--was not a fully natural social environment. This could have altered the behaviour within both Group A and Group B, as their homogenous groups had expanded. The individuals were also presented with outsiders whom they had never met before and their status hierarchies and rankings may have altered. This would call for further study of the groups in different environments, such as during recreational time that with peers and time in ‘family cells’. There were also issues caused by the language barrier between the researcher, volunteers and Groups A and B. Conversations in Group A and Group B could only be understood through interpreters and when the interpreters explained situations. The use of more quantitative and empirical methods may have also provided significant and valuable results.

Results

Results of the self-administered questionnaires, when analysed alongside participant observation data, indicated volunteers perceived there to be both prestige and dominance hierarchies present among individuals in Groups A and B. As Table 1 and Table 2 display, both volunteer groups believed there to be a clear single male leader, a group trait that is atypical of dominance hierarchies. This does not alone imply that the groups’ hierarchies were dominance hierarchies. However, when combined with observations made through participant observation, both results indicate that behavioural dominance was prevalent and successful within the groups. Additionally, results of rank-ordering factors associated to status infer that volunteers regarded their socially valued traits to be unlike those of Groups A and B.

Tables 1 and 2 depict rank-ordering results from volunteer assessment. Child A had a mean result of 1.00, being viewed unanimously as being the highest status individual within Group A. The same result is apparent in Table 2, with Child F having a mean result of 1.00. Both individuals were 19 years old, the oldest males in their respective groups.

Table 1: Showing the results of rank-ordering of the five individuals with the highest status in Group A. N represents the number of responses.

Subject	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Child A	1.00	13	.000
Child B	1.62	13	2.022
Child C	1.69	13	1.974
Child D	2.46	13	1.664
Child E	2.31	13	1.702
Total	1.82	65	1.685

Table 2: Showing the results of rank-ordering of the five individuals with the highest status in Group B. N represents the number of responses.

Subject	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Child F	1.0000	3	.00000
Child G	2.0000	3	.00000
Child H	3.3333	3	.57735
Child I	4.5000	2	.70711
Total	2.5455	11	1.36848

As Table 3 indicates, factors typically associated with dominance, such as physical strength and fitness and gender, were valued slightly higher than those associated with prestige, for example intelligence. However, results shown in Table 3 do not clearly indicate that behaviourally dominant characteristics are most successful, only when paired with observations made through open-ended questions and during participant observation, can one viably make assumptions about the success of behavioural dominance. Age was shown in Figure 3 to be the most important factor in status acquisition, followed by physical strength and fitness. Gender was viewed as the third most important factor, followed by intelligence, which was ranked fourth. Material possessions were ranked fifth and demands of the individual for attention sixth.

Table 3: Showing the results of the rank order of factors influencing individual status within Group A and Group B. N represents the number of responses.

Status Factor	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
age	1.4375	16	.72744
physical Strength and fitness	2.5000	16	.81650
Possessions that Individuals own	4.9375	16	1.73085
ethnicity	6.0625	16	1.06262
gender	3.0000	16	1.36626
intelligence	4.6875	16	1.57982
demands most attention	5.3125	16	1.25000
Total	3.9911	112	1.99773

One of the most important results made from ranking factors influential to status was the difference in perception that volunteers had on their own social values compared to those of Groups A and B. Unlike results shown in Table 3, Table 4 shows that volunteers accredited intelligence as the most influential factor in status, and physical strength the least important factor. Table 4 also demonstrates that ownership of socially valued material culture was more influential within their groups than gender and closely followed the influence of age. Demands the most attention from adults was removed as the volunteers were of a similar age and were post-adolescent. Further explanation of the results produced by rank-ordering was attained through self-administered questionnaires being distributed to the volunteers.

Table 4: *Showing the results of the rank-ordering of the factors that influence individual status among the volunteers. N represents the number of responses*

Subject	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Age	2.6667	9	.70711
Physical Strength and Fitness	4.1111	9	1.05409
Possessions that Individuals Own	2.8889	9	1.69148
Gender	4.0000	9	.86603
Intelligence	1.3333	9	.50000
Total	3.0000	45	1.43019

Data collected from the self-administered questionnaires expanded on the reasoning behind the volunteer choices during the rank-ordering of the individuals within Groups A and B. Results from questionnaires indicated that volunteers believed that dominance-based traits of the individuals led to their elevated status.

Age, gender, and physical strength were often referred to as being the most important factors for the volunteers' choices. Many responses noted-- using their own terminology-- that "influence" within and "dominance" over the group came alongside an individual's greater physical strength. A great number of the volunteers noted that individuals with higher status exercised their influence through fear of physical and verbal repercussions, with a number of incidences of physical aggression by the higher status individuals reported during the volunteers' time with the groups. All volunteers attached to Group B inferred that Child G's status was mainly due to the occasional presence of her boyfriend, who was older and "stronger" than other members of the group and often conducted acts of verbal and physical intimidation towards older and younger males in Group B. The majority of volunteers believed that the elevated status of individuals in Group A and Group B was reflected in their status among the volunteers. However, this view was not unanimous. A number of volunteers believed that individuals possessing higher status did not spend as much of their time with volunteers as individuals with a lower status. Yet it was noted that when higher status individuals did spend time with volunteers, they "dominated" and "controlled" decision-making in a number of incidences and commandeered the attention of volunteers when they willed. One volunteer stated that during these discussions the higher status individuals "overruled the desires of both the other children and volunteers".

Nevertheless, the influence of prosocial characteristics was also noted by the volunteers. A number of responses stated that older and more influential individuals were seen as role models by those of a lower status within the group. It was also repeatedly mentioned that individuals with higher status were "respected" by their peers, due to their skills in parkour and football. In some instances, volunteers noted that individuals of elevated status acted as "secondary care givers", providing emotional and physical enrichment to younger members of the group. This would infer that both prestige and dominance were important within hierarchies, as with parents, the role given to care givers often necessitates reasonable levels of perceived competence and fear. Child F and Child G in Group B were mentioned by all three volunteers attached to the group as being respected for their ownership of sought-after possessions, both having mobile phones and smoking, causing them to be viewed as 'cool' by their peers.

Informal Individual Interviews

Volunteers attached to Group A were asked what constituted a good leader and what influenced their compliance with what their group's leadership willed during semi-structured interviews. With reference to their interactions with the assigned leader of their group, volunteers often noted that individuals were more successful when they possessed the 'big five' personality traits of a leader, namely conscientiousness, agreeableness, extraversion, emotional stability or confidence, and conscientiousness (see Judge and Bono 2000). The title of 'team leader' was also viewed as being influential to the way in which the individual acted and the way that the remainder of volunteers perceived them. It was noted that the position as team leader denoted a higher degree of responsibility during tasks and that the individual possessing such title was viewed as competent within the role by the group. The majority of volunteers recognized that the knowledge of the formally assigned leader, through their previous experience and training, was highly important to their compliance. The intelligence of the leader was often quoted as being the most important factor in their elevated status, as the group relied on their knowledge on certain matters to perform tasks successfully. It should be noted that two of the volunteers expressed that their compliance with leadership was also due to their fear of social repercussions within the group if they did not openly cooperate. This indicates that a level of fear was present within the volunteer group. However this fear was not due to agonistic interactions with those of higher status. It was, rather, an internalised fear of being viewed as antisocial within their peer group, and not acting within their culturally valued domain. Many volunteers chose to follow the orders of their leader as they believed that what was asked of them was fair and correct. Moreover, it was the consensus of the group that prosocial qualities were the chief means in which the status of individuals was elevated.

General Discussion

Results indicate that both prestige and dominance hierarchies were present within Groups A and B. This is important, as conflicting theoretical perspectives within status studies have argued that groups differentiate status through either competency perception or conflict (or dominance), not both avenues (see Berger et al. 1972; Buss and Duntley 2006). Thus, the results provide evidence in support of the Dominance-Prestige Model (Henrich and Gil-White 2001). It was observed through the interaction between volunteers and children in state care that dominance hierarchies were in operation within the groups; yet the influence of prestige was shown to be largely underrepresented by other methods of research. The minority of children noted as having elevated status were observed by informants as acting prosocially and being respected by others within the groups. Nevertheless, in a number of instances, agonistic behavioural dominance was recorded

The Impact of Age, Gender and Ethnicity

Throughout participant observation the role of ethnicity was observed as being substantially larger than quoted by the volunteers. The majority of the individuals with elevated status were of white-Romanian or Hungarian origin, not Roma/Gypsy. One informer noted that a child with darker skin was often taunted and given a derogatory nickname due to his dark skin colour. This could be viewed as a reflection of the prejudice of wider society towards Roma/Gypsies in the country. It was observed during a local town festival that there was some stratification within the connected workforce through ethnicity.

The majority of groups and individuals selling goods in stalls, making public announcements and taking part in staged dancing were of white-Romanian or Hungarian ethnicity. Individuals partaking in undesirable and menial tasks, such as maintaining sanitation in the public bathrooms and general tidying, were all Roma/Gypsy.

Alongside ethnicity, gender was also important in differentiating status within Groups A and B. Child G is the only girl perceived as being high status. During participant observation it was noted that roles were gendered, with women performing the majority of the domestic tasks, such as setting the tables for meals and food preparation, while men had few domestic responsibilities. The status ascribed to Child G was explained by all volunteers attached to Group B as being largely due to the presence of her boyfriend, who was older than all members of the group and often spent his time stood outside of the summer club interacting with the group. Child G's boyfriend, on a number of occasions, intimidated the males in Group B and Child G's confidence was exaggerated with her knowledge of his presence. Thus one could argue that Child G's status was bolstered by the presence of an older male who had contact with the group. This could also be said for Child E, an adolescent male in Group A noted as having elevated status, as Child A was his brother and the oldest and most influential male in the group. The remainder of the individuals of elevated status were not genetically related. Moreover, as postulated by Hays (2013) and contradictory to the finding of Cheng et al. (2013), males within both groups were most likely to prefer the use of power tactics or agnostic behavioural dominance, and were, thus more highly reported as having high status within the groups. This would, furthermore, indicate the presence of dominance hierarchies within the groups.

All individuals present in Tables 1 and 2 were the oldest members of their groups. With age, other factors associated with social status acquisition are increased, such as physical strength and fitness, intelligence and access to greater material possessions. Therefore, this result was expected in either status acquisition strategy. The influence of individuals in Group A who were feared by their peers was much greater than those who were respected. However, in Group B, Child F was respected and no agonistic interaction between Child F and his peers was reported. Contrariwise to this, others with elevated status within the group often gave aggressive 'reminders' to peers of their power. Nonetheless, Child F was more highly assimilated into wider Romanian society. He had upheld a job in a neighbouring city and was driven to succeed through socially approved modes of interaction regardless of the challenges he faced, which has been observed as being typical of genuine pride (Williams and DeSteno 2008). Therefore, it could be argued that the recorded behavioural difference between Child F and the other individuals within Groups A and B may be due to his enculturation of the social values of those outside of the group. Unlike previous conclusions (Savin-Williams 1980), this factor may be more influential to his prosocial behaviour than his age since Child A, who was still relatively marginalised by wider society, was the same age as Child F in his respective group but maintained influence through intimidation and coercion. This was reported in all other influential individuals within both groups, all of whom were over the age of fourteen. Furthermore, this would cause one to conclude that, due to the marginalisation of the majority of the individuals within the groups, dominance hierarchies persisted, regardless of age.

Physical Aggression and 'Reminders' of Power

Throughout the study, agonistic interaction was reportedly successfully utilised by individuals of higher status in both groups to gain and maintain influence. High status individuals were not expected to help with domestic chores and had disproportionate control over group recreational and material resources. As Kettelar *et al.* (2012) suggested,

individuals of elevated statuses did not frequently smile at their peers or volunteers. Male individuals within both groups challenged male volunteers to an arm wrestling contest. Success within these contests would cause others to respect and defer to an individual. Physical strength was significantly important in the hierarchy, and male aggression was bolstered by the ideals and socialisation of the groups (as explained by Pellegrini et al., 1999). A translator explained that if an individual was to lose a game that was indicative of physical strength they would be “viewed as weak, looked down upon by their peers and often told that they were not allowed to continue playing the games for the foreseeable future”. Child A always won the contests in Group A, however in Group B there was no clear winner. Fear of physical repercussion was reportedly the most crucial element in ensuring compliance of subordinate members of the groups. If an individual lower in rank was using an item desired by high status individuals, they relinquished their rights over the item whenever it was willed. On a number of occasions Child A, Child B and Child G gave other members ‘reminders’ of their power through intimidation and physical aggression. In one instance, Child G acquired a mobile phone from Child I through violent physical and verbal aggression. Moreover, her success over Child I would be expected as she was higher in the social hierarchy and, as previous literature has suggested, would have a greater monopoly over resources. It was consensus among the group that Child B had an extremely poor relationship with his peers due to his aggressive behaviour and “bullying attitude” towards them. This behaviour was never recorded towards Child A. Regardless of Child B’s poor rapport within the group, he was ranked second only to Child A for his influence within the group. As suggested in the previous literature (Cheng et al. 2013; Hawley 1999; Weisfeld 2010; Keltner, Gruenfeld and Anderson 2003; Strayer and Strayer 1976; Hawley 2007; Cillessen and Mayeux 2004), this form of individual success would be expected within dominance hierarchies and thus conclusions can be made that dominance hierarchies were extant and efficacious within Group A.

Influence and Activities

The control that high status individuals with behaviourally dominant traits had over the groups was also present during whole-group activities and would suggest that dominance hierarchies were important in status differentiation. In correlation with results from volunteer questionnaires, those of higher status did not always join activities, but when they did, they took control of any decisions made. While playing football in Group A informers noted that Child A had command over participation. Females were not allowed to take part and those who were deemed “weak” or “unskilled” were not selected into the teams. If the ball was kicked away from the field, subordinate individuals were expected to retrieve it. Group participation in other activities that volunteers had organised in Groups A and B was dependent on the involvement of higher status individuals. On a number of occasions, if Child A, Child C or Child G did not want to take part in the activities, others within the groups would follow their lead and refuse to join. The influence of Child G within Group B was also substantial. If she did not want to participate, she would prevent activities through coercion and verbal aggression towards peers. As with football, Child A controlled who took part in card games played in Group A. Females within the group were, again, barred from participating. Moreover, the desires of volunteers were overruled by demands from high status individuals in both groups. Even when challenges were made by volunteers to the rulings of Child A, members of the group who were told that they could not join would still not attempt involvement. Unlike what has been suggested as being typical in prestige-based hierarchies (Henrich and Gil-White 2001; Cheng, Tracy and Henrich 2010) individuals within the groups did not attempt to build strong, positive relationships with each other. They were

attempting to secure dominion over material possessions and ensure that their egocentric desires were met through anti-social and agonistic means.

The Influence of Prosociality and Prestige

Skills within areas valued by the groups were valued highly by all individuals. A child who was not present in the rank-order (whom will be referred to as Child J) was observed as being highly influential in Group B. His peers were noted to respect his artistic skills, strength and ability at parkour. Child J also created a positive relationship with volunteers and was liked by all members of the group. Throughout the study, Child C was observed interacting with younger and subordinate individuals in Group A. Volunteers stated that he had a good rapport with the majority of group and few incidences of physical or verbal aggression were witnessed. The willing conformity of those subordinate in the group to defer to Child C and J were noted as being due to respect. Child E spent the majority of his time alongside Child C and was also noted by the volunteers for his caring approach towards younger children within the group. He took the lead in times of crisis, whereas Child A showed no intention to find solutions to group problems. For example, during a fight between two individuals within Group A, Child E was the only person to intervene. Upon his presence the two children ceased fighting without Child E's physical involvement. Child F was authoritative and his orders obeyed by peers, yet no incidences of physical aggression were observed. Furthermore this form of prosocial interaction was observed as being a viable route for influence within both groups.

Material Possessions

Possession of socially valued material culture seemed to have a large impact on the status of individuals in and Groups A and B. In the rank-ordering of factors that were influential on status, material possessions were placed only fifth (see Table 3). However, participant observation indicated that this factor was much more significant than rank-ordering indicated. When asked about the Groups' values on material culture, an informer who was native Hungarian and had worked with the groups for a prolonged period, stated that "the individuals respect possessions, the admire things and look up to those who have them [high value items]". High status individuals in both groups owned mobile phones and constantly asked to play on items of technology that volunteers had brought. Child J and Child F seemed to have the most valuable personal possessions, having expensive smart phones and clothing that they had bought, unlike the other individuals who wore donated clothing. Nevertheless, the majority of the higher status individuals seemed to gain influence through agonistic interaction. Material possessions did influence rank, but not a significantly as factors previously discussed.

Volunteer Choices and Participant Observation

The discrepancies discussed between results of participant observation and of other research methods employed can be explained by a number of reasons. When asked which children volunteers spent the most time with, it was reported that the majority of their time was spent with low status individuals. However, conclusions drawn from participant observation infer that the majority of volunteers had in fact spent most time with children of elevated status. This inconsistency may have unconsciously been made by volunteers in an attempt to retain their own influence and agency while in Groups A and B. As the volunteers indicated that they did not appreciate anti-social behaviour, they may have subconsciously

selected memories of times in which they were in control over the activities. In reality, individuals of high status domineered their time and controlled activities that they had attempted to organize. When high status individuals demanded attention, albeit in intermittent periods; they were always successful in obtaining it. Therefore, during rank-ordering, the children that demanded the most attention were actually those of the highest status.

The Social Environment, Marginalisation and Dominance

Overall, the findings of this research have produced reliable data that is consistent with and expands upon previous literature. However, results indicate that within both Groups A and B agonistic interactions is at the forefront of gaining and maintaining influence. Both groups do consist of individuals appropriately aged to accept and defer to openly aggressive and coercive others (Hawley 1999). Yet older individuals, at stages where open aggression and coercion are not usually accepted (Hawley 1999; Savin-Williams 1980), defer to other individuals who act in such an anti-social manner. It could be concluded, could be the social environment of the groups. Prosociality and the development of moral behaviours have been suggested as products of social processes and influenced by high status members of hierarchies (Alexander 1987; Hawley and Geldhof 2012; Hawley 1999; Oatley 2000; Bennett and Gillingham 1991; Parkinson, Fischer and Manstead 2005). Thus, morality and prosociality seem do be culturally dependent. The removal of a stable primary socializing agent and negative previous experiences of the majority of individuals within groups A and B of the social world may cause a different perception of this world. As noted during participant observation, opportunities for financial development and employment for individuals in both groups is extremely limited and a number of individuals filter into delinquent groups once they have left state care. Moreover, it seems that the persisting agonistic dominance observed within both groups is valued within the culture, as it is with the delinquent groups that a number of individuals may later join.

Such an acceptance of agonistic and anti-social behaviour within the groups can be further viewed as a product of the social environment, as the status of individuals in Groups A and B is not reflected when they are outside of their groups. An alteration in the demeanour of Child A was addressed by informers during the study. While volunteers were at a festival in the local town with Child A he was particularly subdued, conducted himself in a manner of shyness and followed the lead of the volunteers. It seems that Child A had little to no influence in wider society contrary to his position in Group A. On the other hand, while at the festival, volunteers viewed Child F as having a good rapport with his peers in that environment, describing him as the “ringleader” of the group that were dancing. As previously mentioned, Child A, unlike all other members of both groups, was more integrated into wider society, with his behaviour and values being reflective of this.

Concluding Thoughts and Future Directions

This research provides evidence in support of the Dominance-Prestige Model (Henrich and Gil-White 2001) in a culture that has not previously been studied in this area. The findings indicate that within the groups studied, behavioural dominance persisted and was successful even into later adolescence. It seems that morality and prosocial behaviour are culturally determined, and in certain circumstance, may not develop due to a group’s previous experience and perception of the social world. Therefore, if a developmental hierarchy has strong links to a delinquent hierarchy, similarities between the two may be observable and agonistic dominance persisting into adulthood. Future directions for research

would be to provide more empirical evidence for understanding social hierarchy among the population. It would also be valuable for future research to aid in better understanding the relationship that prestige, dominance and social rank have with positions within social networks.

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