



On causes *and* consequences; a reply to Durkee

Sean Prall^{a,*}, Brooke Scelza^{b,*}

^a University of Missouri, Department of Anthropology, Columbia, MO, USA

^b University of California Los Angeles, Department of Anthropology, Los Angeles, CA, USA

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords
Status

We appreciate Durkee's note of caution regarding our use of causal language in reference to data collected cross-sectionally, and we echo his sentiment that overinterpretation of causal results is one of many pervasive problems in the evolutionary social sciences. Further, we agree that we could have been more careful in our choice of language, such as in the figure caption and table highlighted by Durkee, as to not give the casual reader the sense that we are making causal claims in our paper. As we clearly outline in the introduction (and highlighted in our careful choice of title: “The causes *and* consequences of women's status” (emphasis added)), disentangling causes and effects with these kinds of variables is extremely difficult. We feel that the following, taken verbatim from the introduction (Prall & Scelza, 2023), best represents our paper's objectives in addressing these difficulties, and hope that well-intentioned readers of *Evolution and Human Behavior* will fairly evaluate our paper's findings with these issues in mind:

“We note that interpretations of status and methods of measuring status are numerous, and are often conflated with domains that may result in status, or may be the product of status. For example, socio-economic position and resource access can lead to influence over

others, but leveraging influence can also result in increased socio-economic position (von Rueden & Jaeggi, 2016). Likewise, personality traits, individual expertise in relevant domains, and other performance characteristics can either lead to or magnify status. In this study, we don't intend to disentangle this complexity, but instead we seek to better understand the role of status in women in this community.”

Declaration of Competing Interest

None.

References

- Prall, S. P., & Scelza, B. A. (2023). The causes and consequences of women's status in Himba pastoralists. *Evolution and Human Behavior*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.evolhumbehav.2023.10.002>. S1090513823000880.
- von Rueden, C. R., & Jaeggi, A. V. (2016). Men's status and reproductive success in 33 nonindustrial societies: Effects of subsistence, marriage system, and reproductive strategy. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 113(39), 10824–10829. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1606800113>

* Corresponding authors.

E-mail addresses: sprall@missouri.edu (S. Prall), bscelza@anthro.ucla.edu (B. Scelza).

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.evolhumbehav.2023.12.001>

Received 30 November 2023; Accepted 5 December 2023

Available online 12 December 2023

1090-5138/© 2023 Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.