



Review

Power and consumer behavior: How power shapes who and what consumers value

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Abstract

The current paper reviews the concept of power and offers a new architecture for understanding how power guides and shapes consumer behavior. Specifically, we propose that having and lacking power respectively foster agentic and communal orientations that have a transformative impact on perception, cognition, and behavior. These orientations shape both who and what consumers value. New empirical evidence is presented that synthesizes these findings into a parsimonious account of how power alters consumer behavior as a function of both product attributes and recipients. Finally, we discuss future directions to motivate and guide the study of power by consumer psychologists.

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Keywords: Power; Agentic orientation; Communal orientation; Value; Social hierarchy

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Power has long been argued to be a pervasive and fundamental component of social systems and hierarchies. Russell (1938) went as far as to state, “The fundamental concept in social science is Power, in the same sense that Energy is the fundamental concept in physics [...] The laws of social dynamics are laws which can only be stated in terms of power.” The governing effects of power on human behavior have been relentlessly examined in the psychology, organizational behavior, and sociology literatures (see Fiske, 1993; Magee & Galinsky, 2008). Across these literatures, the cumulative evidence suggests that power is an omnipresent force whose tentacles reach out and grasp nearly every situation to guide and ultimately shape human behavior.

Despite the long-recognized value and experimental study of power across the social sciences, the construct of power has been largely absent from efforts to understand consumer behavior. This is somewhat surprising given that different degrees of power exist and can arise in consumers' everyday activities. For example, consumers are often partitioned in the workplace into positions of high (e.g., bosses) and low (e.g., employees) power. Similarly, society's social stratification places consumers in various positions of power based on their economic resources or cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1984). Differences in power can also arise from asymmetric supply and demand, resulting in sellers or consumers engaging in a sales negotiation with differential levels of power. Furthermore, as will be demonstrated, even setting aside structural factors in society that can affect power, differences in power might be activated by architectural features of consumer markets such as advertisements or assortment options. Our basic premise is that all of these differences in power can spill over into how consumers plan their purchase, make decisions, and acquire products and services.

We first introduce the concept of power as a psychological state. Next, we put forth a framework for understanding the

influence of power on behavior. Specifically, we delineate how the broad findings in the power literature can be parsimoniously accounted for by recognizing that high-power states prompt an agentic orientation and low-power states prompt a *communal orientation*. We use this framework to succinctly explain the role of power in shaping who and what consumers value. We then empirically synthesize seemingly contradictory findings into a parsimonious account by presenting a new experiment. Here we introduce a critical distinction between *psychological propensities*, inclinations or tendencies that are naturally triggered by the psychological experience of power and *psychological needs*, which represent power-induced motivations or desires that guide one's preference and often produce compensatory behavior. We suggest that power shapes consumer preferences in a systematic fashion depending on a dynamic interplay between both product type and product recipient. The paper concludes by discussing new opportunities and directions for studying power in consumer behavior.

On the nature of power

Power as a construct

Power has traditionally been defined as asymmetric control over valued resources in social relations (Keltner, Gruenfeld, & Anderson, 2003; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959; see Magee & Galinsky, 2008 for a detailed discussion). Magee and Galinsky (2008) used the words *asymmetric* and *social relations* to capture the relative state of dependence between two parties: the low-power party is dependent upon the high-power party to obtain rewards and avoid punishments (Emerson, 1962). As a result, power is inherently a social construct that typically involves a comparison or interaction between two or more parties. Magee and Galinsky (2008) also used the term *valued* because the resource must be important or consequential to at

least one of the parties. Of course, value is subjectively determined: control over a resource only matters to the extent that at least one party cares about and desires that resource. These resources may include actual monetary resources, ability to reward or legitimate authority, or even intellectual capital, depending on the context and parties involved (see French & Raven, 1959). Importantly, resources are often subjectively determined, in part resulting from individuals' perceptions of these resources and the situation. Thus, power refers to the *perceived* asymmetric control such that one individual has, or feels as if he or she has, more or less control relative to another.

Although this definition represents a broad, encompassing definition of power, others have differentiated power by the specific bases by which this asymmetric control can arise. In their classic treatise on power, French and Raven (1959) suggest that asymmetries in power can arise from five different bases underpinning a relationship: a relation based on coercion, reward, legitimacy, reference, or expertise. Coercive power refers to the ability to get someone to do something against his or her will. Reward power stems from the ability to give or withhold desired objects from others. Expert power is the possession of information that can be shared or withheld from others. Referent power is based on the ability to command the respect and affection of others, what most scholars today call status (Magee & Galinsky, 2008). Finally, legitimate power refers to the ability to administer to another certain feelings of obligation or the notion of responsibility, but many scholars now see legitimacy as a moderating variable — one achieves reward or coercive power or exercises that power either legitimately or not (Lammers, Galinsky, Gordijn, & Otten, 2008). Although this classic perspective provides a means to segment the power construct, the bases described can be viewed as subcomponents fueling the general possession of power as previously defined (i.e., asymmetric control over valued resources in social relations).

More recently, Lammers, Stoker, and Stapel (2009) have distinguished between power over others (i.e., social power) and freedom from others (i.e., personal power). In a series of experiments, the authors argue and provide evidence for the notion that these two types of power can, because of their opposite associations with independence and interdependence, have unique effects on behavior. Both of these terms reflect different facets of the power relationship, but are subsumed by our general definition as a power relationship can arise from either party having or lacking control. Consistent with this perspective, Lammers et al. (2009) reported that both social and personal power correlated with a more general sense of power.

In the present paper, we focus on power as asymmetric control over valued resources in social relations because a) this is both the broadest and most inclusive definition of power, and b) this is how the vast majority of research efforts have studied the construct. Furthermore, as we will discuss, the psychological experience of power does not have to stem from a particular basis, nor does it have to be activated with respect to the social or personal subcomponents. Rather, because of its pervasiveness, individuals can feel a general sense of more or less power due to simple cognitive priming or physical embodiment.

Uniqueness of the power construct

Power can be distinguished from a number of other psychological states that have been studied within consumer behavior and might be seen as overlapping or associated with power. In particular, power is conceptually distinct from consumer mood (Labroo & Rucker, 2010; Pham, 1998; Raghunathan & Pham, 1999), mortality salience (Arndt, Solomon, Kasser, & Sheldon, 2004; Mandel & Smeesters, 2008), personal freedom (Levav & Zhu, 2009), and general uncertainty (e.g., Briñol, Petty, & Tormala, 2004; Tormala, Rucker, & Seger, 2008). There are additional psychological states that can be contrasted against power; however, we selected these constructs as illustrative examples because of their relevance to the consumer literature.

With respect to mood, although power has been proposed to be tightly linked to mood (Keltner et al., 2003), the vast majority of empirical research has found little or no effect of manipulations of power on mood (e.g., Briñol, Petty, Valle, Rucker, & Becerra, 2007; Rucker, Dubois, & Galinsky, 2011a, 2011b; Rucker & Galinsky, 2008; Smith & Trope, 2006). In addition, Rucker et al. (2011a) document that the lack of effects of power on mood is unlikely due to insensitive mood measures. These authors found, within the same experiment, that mood measures were sensitive to a variable known to affect mood (e.g., giving to others, Dunn, Aknin, & Norton, 2008) but were not affected by manipulations of power. Even more importantly, no reported studies on power have found that mood mediates the effects of power on behavior and thought. Although lacking power is generally characterized as more aversive than having power, low power is not tantamount to negative affect or mood. This does not mean that prolonged or extreme states of powerlessness could not produce negative affect, only that it is not the key ingredient for behavioral differences between high and low power to arise.

Power can also be conceptually separated from epistemic confidence or doubt. The constructs are related in that having or lacking power can be one antecedent of general confidence or doubt. For example, Briñol et al. (2007) find that increasing one's level of power can produce a feeling of confidence in people (see also Anderson & Galinsky, 2006; Magee, Milliken, & Lurie, 2010). However, one can feel confident or doubtful regardless of any differences in power. For example, a boss may be in a position of power, but feel confident or doubtful about how to best pursue his role or to move a project forward. Indeed, a number of different psychological states or experiences can influence confidence or doubt, such as one's emotions (see Tiedens & Linton, 2001), experiences of regulatory fit (Cesario, Grant, & Higgins, 2004), or experienced ease or difficulty (Haddock, Rothman, Reber, & Schwarz, 1999). Of critical importance, because the construct of power is tied to asymmetry in social relations, we predict that activating power can have unique consequences relative to general states of uncertainty or doubt on who and what people value (Georgesens & Harris, 1998). In addition, more subtle power manipulations have been shown to affect power without affecting confidence (see Dubois, Denton, & Rucker, 2011).

Although states of low power can be construed as a threat (Rucker & Galinsky, 2008, 2009), power also differs from other consumer threats such as mortality salience (Arndt et al., 2004; Mandel & Smeesters, 2008) and threats to one's personal freedom (Levav & Zhu, 2009). In the case of mortality salience, power has in common a shared feature of loss of control; however, that source of control is different. For mortality salience, the loss of control is linked to the end of one's existence (see Arndt et al., 2004). In contrast, a loss of power directly refers to one's relative degree of control over valued resources in social relations. That is, whereas power necessarily involves resource control, it does not necessarily involve fear for one's existence. Conversely, whereas mortality salience involves a threat to one's existence, it could arise in entirely non-social situations (e.g., the fear one will get struck by lightning).

Similarly, although a threat to one's personal freedom also deals with a potential loss of control, personal freedom is distinct from power in several respects (though the idea of personal power more closely resembles this construct). First, although power hierarchies might sometimes threaten one's personal freedom, power differences can exist without a perceived threat to one's personal freedom. For example, an individual lower in the hierarchy may willfully choose, or even prefer, to follow the orders of another individual and thus not view this as a threat. Second, threats to personal freedom or control can arise outside of social situations and therefore outside of power. For example, Levav and Zhu (2009) find that threats to one's freedom can be activated by purely environmental factors (e.g., walking down a narrow grocery aisle) that are not tied to others in any capacity.

Antecedents of power

Various forces give rise to how powerful individuals feel either chronically or during a snapshot of a particular moment of the day. A growing body of research suggests that power differences can arise from a number of structural, cognitive, and physical factors.

Structural factors

The notion that differences in power can arise from structural factors in one's social environment is inherent in early conceptualizations of the power construct. French and Raven's (1959) taxonomy can be linked to the structural bases of power residing in differences ranging from coercion to expertise (see also Bourdieu, 1984, for a distinction between power stemming from asymmetry in economic or cultural capital). Indeed, society is full of hierarchies that create structural differences in power. For example, those lower in socioeconomic status often have less control over resources than those high in socioeconomic status (Bruner & Goodman, 1947). Similarly, individuals who occupy managerial roles at work have more power (Georgeson & Harris, 1998), and report feeling more powerful, than those occupying subordinate roles (Dubois et al., 2011; Kraus & Keltner, in press). Related, the level of autonomy individuals experience in their job (Marmot, 2004) is known to fuel individuals' sense of power.

The existence of hierarchical roles hardly means that power is permanently fixed within an individual. For example, bosses might feel all-powerful when directing employees, but feel relatively powerless when faced with their disobedient teenager. Indeed, due to the multiplicity and diversity of social roles individuals occupy in our society (e.g., as parents, community members, professional occupations), power is not only preceded by stable structural differences, but also shifts based on temporary changes in structure. A state of low or high power can be quickly and simply elicited by assigning individuals to an actual hierarchical role of a boss/employee for a single task (Briñol et al., 2007; Galinsky, Gruenfeld, & Magee, 2003). Similarly, giving people differential control over important resources during a group task can create differences in power (e.g., Anderson & Berdahl, 2002). These simple manipulations reproduce the experience of power found in everyday hierarchical roles in society.

Cognitive factors

Researchers have argued that power not only rests within social relationships, as a property of structural hierarchy, but also that the concept of power is embedded within individuals (Bargh, Raymond, Pryor, & Strack, 1995; Chen, Lee-Chai, & Bargh, 2001; Galinsky et al., 2003) and thus can be cognitively activated. As a consequence, an individual may feel more or less powerful in a situation where there are no structural differences in power present. As one demonstration of cognitive influences on power, Galinsky et al. (2003) find that merely asking participants to write about a time they had or lacked power (i.e., an episodic recall task) influenced participants' experienced power. This episodic recall procedure primes power in a way that is meaningful to participants, but does not change their actual structural relationship. A variant of this manipulation can come from a simple phrase contained in an advertisement (e.g., "Think of a time you had power," Rucker et al., 2011a).

Additional support for the idea that power can be cognitively activated comes from semantic priming. For instance, Smith and Trope (2006) found that unscrambling sentences that contain words related to having (e.g., authority, controls, dominates) or lacking power (e.g., complied, obey, submits) could affect one's sense of power. Similarly, Magee, Galinsky and Gruenfeld (2007) manipulated power by having participants complete word fragments that could only be completed with words related to power (e.g., authority, control, influence), whereas a baseline condition used words of similar length and complexity, dissociated from power (e.g., automobile, trinket, mailbox). These cognitive manipulations provide a strong means of testing hypotheses related to power as they manipulate the psychological state without affecting other factors that might vary in naturally occurring hierarchies (e.g., cognitive load, role expectations, physical resources, differences in education, etc...).

Physical factors

Research has suggested that the physical position of one's body can also influence how powerful individuals feel at a given moment in time. In one experiment, Carney, Cuddy, and

Yap (2010) had participants pose in positions they hypothesized to be associated with having power (i.e., expansive positions with open limbs such as kicking one's feet up on a table) or lacking power (i.e., contractive positions with closed limbs such as sitting in a chair with one's hands in between one's knees). Carney and colleagues (2010) found that "high-power posers" reported feeling significantly more powerful and acted more powerfully than "low-power posers." Similarly, Chen et al. (2001) activated a sense of power by having people sit in a professor's chair.

The interplay of structural, cognitive, and physical factors

Although the psychological underpinnings of power can arise from at least three sources, little work has examined whether and when these sources play out in an interactive fashion. In a notable exception, Huang, Galinsky, Gruenfeld, and Guillory (2011) compared physical antecedents of power (i.e., power poses) to structural (i.e., hierarchical roles) or cognitive (i.e., episodic recall) antecedents of power. Across three experiments, Huang et al. (2011) found that physical antecedents of power were more likely to influence thought and behavior than either social or cognitive antecedents. Furthermore, the authors found that the posture manipulation was more likely to influence implicit measures of power, whereas the social and cognitive manipulations tended to be stronger on a self-reported measure of felt power. The authors are the first to compare these different antecedents of power. In addition, they also raise the interesting question of when different antecedents may be more or less influential.

Manipulated versus measured power

Research measuring people's chronic sense of power has yielded findings consistent with manipulations of power. As one example, Anderson and Galinsky (2006) found that high-power individuals were more optimistic, regardless of whether power was measured (Experiment 1) or manipulated (Experiment 3). And, in an experiment in which power was measured and manipulated (Experiment 2), the authors found that each had independent effects on optimism, with high power producing greater optimism. As will be discussed, research examining how power affected preferences for status also produced similar results whether power was measured or manipulated (Rucker & Galinsky, 2009). However, it is possible that measured and manipulated power might sometimes interact. For example, a state loss of power might be more aversive and uncomfortable for individuals used to having power. Although not related directly to power, research on testosterone (T), a hormone often related to power-seeking (Rivers & Josephs, 2010), demonstrates that a mismatch between power and testosterone level is an uncomfortable experience (Josephs, Sellers, Newman, & Mehta, 2006). Being a high-T individual in a low-power position or a low-T individual in a high-power position creates negative arousal. Thus a mismatch between a sense of power and one's actual power may create a negative psychological state under certain circumstances.

Consequences of power: an agentic versus communal perspective of power

Studied primarily outside the domain of consumer behavior, power has been shown to have important and far-reaching consequences related to human action (Galinsky et al., 2003), perceptions of control (Fast, Gruenfeld, Sivanathan, & Galinsky, 2009), perspective taking (Galinsky, Magee, Inesi, & Gruenfeld, 2006) and construal level (Smith & Trope, 2006). Although these findings have been loosely connected, in the present review we argue that the effects of power can be understood by a general tendency for states of relatively high power to foster an *agentic orientation* and states of relatively low power to foster a *communal orientation*. The proposed architecture provides a means to understand one common difference permeating the many effects of power on general human behavior and a lens that we hope may guide future research in the area of power and consumption.

Agentic versus communal orientations

Bakan (1966) introduced the notion of agency and communion as two fundamental modalities that govern human thinking and behavior. Agency refers to the existence of the individual as an agent, and manifests itself in "self-protection, self-assertion and self-expansion" (p. 14–15). One behavioral consequence of agency is the tendency to express dominant acts and avoid submissive acts (Wiggins, 1991). In contrast, communion refers to the sensitivity and participation of an individual in some larger social group (e.g., family, firm, society) and manifests itself in the tendency to consider others in thinking and decision-making. This mode of existence results in greater attention paid to others and a reluctance to act without consideration of others. Each of these ideas can be thought of as different orientations or general approaches to thinking about and interacting with one's environment. We use the terms agentic orientation and communal orientation to refer to each of these modalities. Importantly, we use communal as divorced from any valenced motive toward others. That is, a communal orientation refers to a person's tendency to consider others while thinking or engaged in decision-making, irrespective of their intentions toward others (i.e., bad versus good).

The argument for the link between agentic and communal orientations and power can be tied to the fundamental definition of power. On the one hand, the nature of being higher in the hierarchy means that people are less dependent on others such that individuals have the freedom and ability to act and can pursue the interests and goals that they value. As a consequence, these characteristics likely facilitate and encourage an agentic orientation towards one's environment. On the other hand, being lower in the hierarchy means people are often dependent on others for valuable resources and forces people to attend to and incorporate others to achieve their goals, satisfy their needs, and ultimately enhance their standing in the social hierarchy. Consequently, these characteristics should facilitate and encourage a communal orientation.

Evidence for agentic versus communal orientations

To gauge support for this proposition, we examine key empirical findings in the power literature and their support for our proposed agentic and communal distinctions.

Power, action, and control

A key feature of an agentic orientation, relative to communal orientation, is that it is action oriented and decisive (Abele, 2003). Consistent with our proposed link between high power and an agentic orientation, high power consistently fosters a natural tendency to act among individuals (Galinsky et al., 2003; Magee, Galinsky, & Gruenfeld, 2007). In a representative experiment by Galinsky et al. (2003), participants were randomly assigned to the position of either a subordinate (low power) or manager (high power). Prior to engaging in any actual interaction, however, participants had to play a round of the card game of blackjack. Galinsky et al. (2003) found that those induced into a state of high power were more likely to take action in the form of hitting (i.e., taking another card) than those in a state of low power. In a subsequent experiment, participants completed a task where an electric fan had been strategically placed to blow air into their face. Participants who had recalled a time in which they had power were more likely to spring into action and move the fan.

Agentic orientations, relative to communal orientations, also lead to more dominant than submissive behaviors and increase the use of control (Wiggins, 1991). Consistent with this notion, high-power states lead people to behave as if they have control even in situations where they truly do not. Specifically, Fast et al. (2009) demonstrated that states of high, compared to low, power foster perceptions of illusory control. For example, Fast et al. (2009) manipulated power through episodic recall and found high-power participants were more likely to choose to roll the dice themselves in a game of chance compared to low-power participants. Choosing to roll the die reflects an illusory sense of control as it indicates that the actor believes he or she can personally influence the outcome of the random roll. Additional experiments found high-power states increased one's sense of control. Importantly, these illusory control perceptions mediate the effects of power on action (Fast et al., 2009).

Power and perspective taking

Whereas an agentic orientation tends to be more self-focused, a key element of a communal orientation is an enhanced sensitivity toward others. Consistent with our links between high power and agency and low power and a communal orientation, high-power states have been shown to hinder perspective-taking (Galinsky, Magee, Inesi, & Gruenfeld, 2006; Keltner & Robinson, 1997). Galinsky et al. (2006) found that a state of high-power leads individuals to be more self-oriented and less likely to take the perspective of others. For example, in one experiment, the authors asked participants to draw an E on their forehead. High-power participants, compared to low-power participants, were more likely to draw the E on their forehead as though one was reading it oneself (i.e., self-

oriented), leading to a backward and illegible E from the perspective of another person. In another experiment, high-power participants were less accurate than baseline participants in determining other people's emotional expressions, suggesting an impediment in perspective taking relating to the ability to empathize. Similarly, in research by van Kleef et al. (2008), states of high power led to less emotional responses to another person's suffering (feeling distress at another person's distress) and thus produced less compassion.

The observed link from power to a lack of perspective-taking and empathy also helps explain the increased tendency of the powerful to use stereotypes when evaluating others (Goodwin, Gubin, Fiske, & Yzerbyt, 2000; Fiske, 1993) and the reduced likelihood of using metastereotypes in intergroup situations (Lammers et al., 2008). Metastereotypes concern assessments about an outgroup's perception of the ingroup: "what do I think they think about us." Lammers et al. (2008) found that the powerless, who are motivated to understand how others see them, but not the powerful, engaged in greater metastereotyping.

When the powerful do think about other people, they tend to do so through an agentic lens of how others can serve their own self-interest. Gruenfeld, Inesi, Magee, and Galinsky (2008) found that power increases objectification, leading people to relate to social targets as though they were objects, based on the utility of their goal-relevant attributes. For example, in one study, Gruenfeld et al. (2008) found that both senior executives and MBA students reported greater objectification in their relationships with a subordinate than with a peer. Furthermore, senior executives, arguably more powerful than MBA students, tended to view both relationships with subordinates as well as peers in more instrumental terms. In essence, power increases the tendency to view others through an instrumental lens and focuses one's attention on those aspects of others that serve one's salient interests or goals.

Power and abstract thinking

The link between high power and agentic versus communal orientations also affects how people think. One of the core tenets is that power creates psychological distance from others (Lammers, Galinsky, Gordijn, & Otten, 2011). Psychological distance, itself, is often intertwined with an agentic versus communal focus. Agency makes people focused on goals, which are abstract by nature, whereas a communal focus directs people towards others in their environment, which are more concrete by nature (Abele, Cuddy, Yzerbyt, & Judd, 2008). As a consequence, an agentic focus is likely to foster greater psychological distance than a communal focus. Similarly, differences in psychological distance create the foundation for increased agentic and decreased communal orientations (Lieberman, Trope, & Stephan, 2007; Stephan, Liberman, & Trope, 2011). Consistent with these ideas, Smith and Trope (2006) found that power affects the level of abstraction at which people represent ideas, with high power leading to more abstract thinking than low power. For example, in one experiment, the authors found that participants exposed to a high-power prime, compared to a low-power prime, were more likely to categorize events at a high compared to low level of abstraction. This

power-induced tendency to see the “big picture” has been replicated in a field study by Magee et al. (2010). Specifically, these authors analyzed media statements made in the immediate aftermath of the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the United States, and found government officials described the events in more abstract terms than did volunteers and powerless victims alike.

Power and physiological consequences

Power has also been linked to physiological differences consistent with a disposition towards an agentic versus communal orientation. For example, work by Carney et al. (2010) on physical posturing (i.e. ‘posing’) has demonstrated that relative to their own pre–post baseline, individuals in a high-power pose exhibited an increase in testosterone (T), whereas individuals in a low-power pose exhibited a decrease in testosterone. In addition, individuals in a high-power pose exhibited a decrease in cortisol (C), whereas individuals in a low-power pose exhibited an increase in cortisol. This combination of high T and low C is important because these factors may be linked to the physiological readiness of the body for agentic versus communal orientations and thus why the powerful show illusions of control and spring forward into action so often.

In summary, the effects of power on taking action, illusory control, perspective taking, abstract thinking, and physiology are all consistent with our proposition that power influences behavior by focusing individuals on one of two fundamental modalities: agentic versus communal orientations. Although these findings might be used to draw implications for consumer behavior, there has been a dearth of efforts to explicitly, systematically, and experimentally study power in consumer behavior. We turn to initial efforts to fill this void by using our agentic versus communal perspective to map out how power shapes both who and what consumers value.

In the heart of this article, we examine two lines of research that focus on how power shapes *who* consumers value (i.e., their willingness to spend on themselves versus others) and *what* consumers value (i.e., the types of products they desire). These two research streams both represent the first major thrusts into the study of power in consumption, and reveal an opportunity to synthesize what could be viewed as potentially inconsistent findings.

How power shapes who consumers value

A fundamental aspect of consumer behavior is that purchases are sometimes bought for oneself and sometimes for others. Indeed, the giving of gifts to others is one prevalent means of communicating the importance and value of others (Sherry, 1983). Based on our agentic versus communal perspective of power, we propose that power should shape how consumers value the self versus others. The agentic orientation of high power should lead individuals to place greater weight and value on the self, thereby increasing their willingness to spend on themselves over others. In contrast, the communal nature of low power should increase individuals’ dependence on others and thereby increase the value of others and their willingness to spend on others.

Consistent with an agentic-communal perspective on power, high-power individuals do act as if the self is more valuable compared to low-power individuals. Within organizations, high-power individuals evaluate themselves more favorably than low-power individuals (Georgeson & Harris, 1998), and in the classic Stanford prison experiment, participants in a position of high power (guards) behaved as if they were more important than individuals in a position of low power (prisoners; see Zimbardo, 1973). Furthermore, work by Rucker and colleagues (2011a) found that participants in a high-power condition reported higher levels of self-importance, relative to participants in a baseline or low-power condition, which did not differ from one another. In contrast, participants in a low-power condition reported greater dependence on others relative to participants in a baseline or high-power condition, which did not differ from one another. These findings suggest that power can foster agentic versus communal orientations, and that states of low and high power can do so in a unique fashion relative to baseline.

Two streams of recent research, one using experimental manipulations of power, and another measuring enduring differences in power tied to socioeconomic status, have asked the question of how power affects consumers’ behavior as a function of *who* they are buying for and provide evidence in the consumer domain that is consistent with our proposed notion of agentic versus communal perspective on power.

Power and spending on self and others

According to an agentic and communal perspective on power, high-power states should make the self more focal and thus more valuable, whereas low-power states should shift attention and value to others. Consistent with this idea, Rucker, and colleagues (2011a) induced participants into a low- or high-power state through a hierarchical role task and asked participants to put together an assortment of chocolates for either themselves or another person at a cost of five cents per chocolate. When purchasing for others, low-power participants purchased three times as many chocolates as high-power participants. In contrast, when purchasing for oneself, high-power participants purchased twice as many chocolates than low-power participants. An additional experiment replicated this finding and found that differences in self-importance mediated differences in spending on the self, whereas differences in dependence on others mediated differences in spending on others.

Power and the value of one's possessions

Differences in agentic and communal orientations have also recently been shown to manifest in the value people ascribe to their possessions versus the possessions of others. Specifically, as states of high power are associated with a greater value of the self relative to others, Dubois et al. (2011) hypothesized that high-power individuals would ascribe *more* value to possessions they owned. In contrast, given that states of low power are associated with a greater value of others relative to the self, the

authors proposed that this might actually lead low-power individuals to place *less* value on possessions they owned.

Dubois et al. (2011) tested this hypothesis by manipulating power through episodic recall. Participants were then presented with a pen and asked to rate the pen's monetary value. Half of the participants did so, whereas the remaining participants were first told that the pen was for them to keep (i.e., it was their pen). When participants had been given the pen to keep (i.e., it was their own possession), Dubois et al. (2011) found that, relative to baseline conditions, high-power participants indicated the pen was of greater value. In contrast, low-power participants indicated the pen was of less value relative to baseline condition. Importantly, no effects emerged when participants were asked to evaluate the same pen when they did not own it. Thus, because power affects how valuable the self or others are perceived to be, it not only affects consumers' willingness to spend on the self or others (Rucker et al., 2011a), but it also spills over onto the value ascribed to possessions of oneself and others.

Socioeconomic status and the value of oneself and others

As previously noted, socioeconomic status is one deep-seeded structural basis for feelings of power or powerlessness. In particular, socioeconomic status reflects a very real difference in control over economic resources relative to others (French & Raven, 1959; Henry, 2005). Piff, Kraus, Côté, Cheng, and Keltner (2010) examined the implications of differences in relative class on how consumers spent their resources on themselves and others in a dictator game. The authors found that participants allocated significantly less resources to others as their relative position in the social hierarchy increased, suggesting less concern with others as found in Rucker et al. (2011a). Additional experiments found that merely making participants feel low or high in socioeconomic status had similar effects on their behavior, including their willingness to give to charities: low socioeconomic status led to greater giving to others. These results are also consistent with research by Banerjee and Duflo (2007) that suggests even poor individuals in underdeveloped countries spend a higher proportion of their resources on socially consumed goods such as weddings or small presents to the community, relative to wealthier individuals. Thus, socioeconomic status, one structural antecedent of power, converges on the findings offered by manipulations of power in a manner consistent with our agentic versus communal perspective on power.

How power shapes what consumers value

A critical question in consumer behavior centers on understanding what product attributes are desired by consumers and what factors affect the amount they are willing to pay for a product or an attribute. For example, past research has found that consumers' desire and willingness to pay for objects can depend on whether objects are hedonic or utilitarian in nature (Dhar & Wertenbroch, 2000; Snyder & DeBono, 1985) or are advertised with the use of peripheral heuristics or central arguments (Petty, Cacioppo, & Schumann, 1983).

Given powerlessness is generally an aversive state that consumers seek to alleviate, Rucker and Galinsky (2008) reasoned that a state of powerlessness would lead consumers to exhibit a stronger preference for acquiring and displaying status-related goods because status is one means of conveying one's relative place in the social hierarchy (see French & Raven, 1959; Magee & Galinsky, 2008). Based on our proposed communal orientation of low-power states, individuals may think of consumption as a means of achieving standing in the eyes of others through the acquisition of status objects (Veblen, 1899; Wicklund & Gollwitzer, 1982). In contrast, based on our proposed agentic orientation of high-power states, individuals should be less interested in objects for the sake of status. Instead, they should focus on, and attach greater value to, items that are self-expressive or cater to their personal needs and goals.

Powerlessness and the desire to acquire and display status

In the first effort to examine how power affects consumers' desire for different types of products, Rucker and Galinsky (2008) studied the systematic influence of power on consumers' preference for status-related versus non-status-related products. Rucker and Galinsky (2008) found that power-induced differences through episodic recall significantly affected consumers' willingness to pay for products as a function of product status. When products had no association to status, power had no significant effect on participants' willingness to pay. In contrast, when products had an association to status, low-power participants were willing to pay more for objects associated with status compared to high-power and baseline participants.

If low-power states foster a desire for status-related objects to signal individuals place in the social hierarchy to others, consistent with a communal orientation, then individuals should be more interested in having status objects that will be seen by others. Indeed, Rucker and Galinsky (2009) found that low-power participants indicated an explicit preference for a more visible and larger logo on a high-end piece of clothing than high-power participants. In additional work, Dubois, Rucker, and Galinsky (in press) find that individuals are more likely to prefer objects associated with greater status when those objects are publicly, as opposed to privately, consumed. Therefore, low power not only fosters a desire for status objects, but also encourages conspicuous displays to facilitate the recognition of status by others.

Work on ethnic differences in conspicuous consumption also supports this model. Regardless of income, Blacks spend approximately 32% more of their disposable income than Whites on "visible goods" (e.g., cars, jewelry, clothing; Charles, Hurst, & Roussanov, 2009). Charles and colleagues explained their striking findings, using the same logic as Rucker and Galinsky (2008), as evidence that minorities attempt to compensate for lower social status by either acquiring status goods, or goods that increase their visibility vis-à-vis the community. Their status-seeking account dovetails with the

hypothesis that status objects provide a means of psychologically restoring one's standing in the social hierarchy.

Recent work by Shavitt and colleagues suggests that this status-seeking account might be most prevalent among those with a vertical individualism cultural orientation. Specifically, Wong and Shavitt (2010) had participants read scenarios that involved being disrespected by a low-rank (e.g., hotel receptionist) or a high-rank (e.g., hotel vice president) individual. Participants disrespected by a low-rank individual scored higher on projective measures assessing fear of power loss. Wong and Shavitt suggested that those with a vertical individualism orientation might accept poor treatment from an individual high in the social hierarchy, whose authority they would recognize and accept, but feel threatened when it came from an individual lower in the social hierarchy who had no right to disrespect them. Consistent with the notion that low power produces a desire for status, the authors also found that participants disrespected by a low-rank individual (i.e., participants with a fear of power loss) indicated a higher willingness to pay for status products, but not for non-status products (see also Koo, Wong, & Shavitt, 2011).

Powerlessness and distortion of monetary value

Classic research in psychology has found that economically deprived 10-year olds represent and perceive monetary objects (i.e., coins) as physically larger than economically privileged 10-year olds (Bruner & Goodman, 1947). Bruner and Goodman discuss these findings as an enhancement of the size of the object in relation to the value participants ascribe to it. Because money is of greater value to economically deprived children, these children view it as physically larger. These findings can also be understood by chronic and long-seeded structural differences in power between the groups with respect to control over monetary resources. Specifically, for the powerless, money is a critical resource to obtaining status-related objects as well as a general representation of one's status to others in society.

To test a power interpretation, Dubois, Rucker, and Galinsky (2010) examined whether momentary shifts in one's psychological state of power could produce the same representational distortions observed in poor and rich children. This paradigm has the advantage of holding constant all other factors that may have differed in the upbringing of Bruner and Goodman's wealthy and poor 10-year old children. In one experiment, participants induced into a low- or high-power state via a recall task were subsequently asked to draw as accurately as possible a quarter placed in their hand. Although everyone was instructed to draw the quarter as accurately as possible, low-power participants drew the quarter significantly larger than high-power participants. These findings demonstrate that a temporary state of power in and of itself was enough to replicate the classic findings of Bruner and Goodman (1947).

Dubois et al. (2010) provided further evidence for this systematic distortion by demonstrating that participants distorted size in accordance with value. Specifically, participants were asked to draw a poker chip that was worth \$1, \$10, or \$100. All poker chips were of identical size. Although high-

power participants drew the poker chips of equal size regardless of value, low-power participants drew the objects larger in correspondence with their value (i.e., \$100 was drawn larger than \$10 which was drawn larger than \$1). In a final experiment, the authors found that when monetary value was inversely related to size (i.e., smaller viewed as more valuable) low power led people to draw valued objects smaller, not larger. This latter finding suggests lacking power leads people to distort objects in the direction of their value. And within the realm of consumer products, recent work by Dubois et al. (in press) find that states of powerlessness lead consumers to prefer larger objects when larger is associated with greater value (e.g., televisions), but to seek out smaller objects when smaller is generally of greater value (e.g., cell phones). Taken together, the powerless want to acquire and display status to others, consistent with their communal orientation that increases their sensitivity to their social environment; when status is positively associated with size, then they seek out objects that are bigger and larger, but when status is negatively associated with size, then the powerless seek out objects that are smaller.

Status as a salve for powerlessness

A powerlessness-induced compensatory model of consumption proposes that the acquisition of status can increase one's felt sense of power. Rucker et al. (2011b) examined this proposition by testing whether the acquisition of a status object could mend one's broken sense of power. Rucker et al. (2011b) induced participants into a low- or high-power state and then gave them a pen that had been advertised in terms of either status or performance. Prior to receiving the pen, individuals in the low-power condition reported feeling less powerful than high-power participants. However, after the pen had been physically received, low-power participants felt more powerful when given the pen associated with status, but not when the pen was associated with quality, see Table 1. Thus, physically acquiring an object associated with status successfully restored individuals' lost sense of power.

The desire to acquire should also be particularly strong for those who most desire power. That is, for those whose power is typically high, temporarily lacking power would presumably be the most aversive. Indeed, Rucker et al. (2011b) found that individuals in a state of low-power desired high-status objects more than individuals placed in a high-power state, but this effect was strongest for individuals with a high generalized sense of power (i.e., chronic power, see Anderson & Galinsky, 2006). For those with a low generalized sense of power, the lack of power was deprived of its sting and the motivation to compensate was slackened. This finding represents one of the only demonstrated interactions between chronic and state power. Of course, there is also the interesting possibility that individuals high in chronic power might be more resilient to weaker or more subtle power threats. Indeed, it remains plausible that states of high power allow consumers to buffer to a point, but once that buffer is broken the need to reestablish power reemerges even stronger.

Table 1

Consumers' Participants reported feelings of power (7-point scales anchored at: not powerful–powerful, with higher numbers indicating greater power) before and after being given a pen associated with status or not as found by Rucker et al. (2011b).

	Product association with status	
	Not associated with status	Associated with status
Pre-reception		
High power	5.73	5.60
Low power	3.20	3.33
Post-reception		
High power	5.46	5.86
Low power	3.26	5.40

Power and preference for performance

Although the bulk of past research has focused on how low power fosters a desire for status-related products, states of high power also have a role in the type of products valued by consumers. Specifically, based on an agentic orientation, high-power states should lead individuals to value products that directly relate to their own needs or goals. Consistent with this notion, Rucker and Galinsky (2009) proposed that a state of high power would lead individuals to value objects that are superior in quality or performance because such products would benefit the individual directly. In contrast, as observed in the original work by Rucker and Galinsky (2008), these individuals should be less concerned with status because status is about esteem in the eyes of others and less about one's own particular needs.

To test this hypothesis, Rucker and Galinsky (2009) had low- and high-power participants generate slogans for a BMW. Independent coders examined participants' slogans and classified the slogans with respect to whether they emphasized status or performance aspects of the car. Consistent with earlier findings, low-power participants tended to focus their slogans more on status (e.g., "Prestige, it's yours."). However, among high-power participants, there was a stronger emphasis on performance (e.g., "Experience a smooth ride."). In another experiment, incorporating a non-power baseline, Rucker and Galinsky (2009) examined how participants evaluated a product advertised in terms of either status or performance. When the product was advertised in terms of having status, low-power participants reported more favorable attitudes than both high-power and baseline participants. However, when the advertisement framed the pen in terms of having superior performance, high-power participants evaluated the pen more favorably than low-power and baseline participants. Similar results were also obtained when power was measured via a generalized sense of power (Anderson & Galinsky, 2006).

These studies establish that consumption motives are not absent in the powerful. Rather, they are directed towards utilitarian features, ones that will directly enhance their own experience with the object. This is consistent with our proposition that a key outcome of a high-power state is an agentic orientation whereby individuals focus on their own needs and desires.

Synthesizing how power affects who and what consumers value

To date, research on power and consumer behavior has shown that power can shape both who and what consumers value. Furthermore, both sets of findings are consistent with our argument that high power fosters an agentic orientation among consumers whereas low power fosters a communal orientation. However, an interesting and important question that arises from these two independent lines of research concerns the interaction of product attributes and product recipient. Specifically, past research on how power shapes who consumers value focused exclusively on non-status objects, whereas past research examining how power shapes what consumers value has focused on status and non-status objects. How is consumers' behavior shaped when they purchase high-status objects for either themselves or others?

Rucker et al. (2011a) allude to the possibility that what consumers focus on might play an important role. In particular, they find that for products unassociated with status, when the recipient of the purchase is not made explicit, there is no effect of power on participants' spending. This finding suggests that, even if consumers were to assume they would be the recipient, it may still be necessary to explicitly make this fact salient so their focus is on the self and not, for example, on product attributes or other features of the environment. This could well explain why Rucker and Galinsky (2008) did not find any differences in spending among non-status products — in this work, Rucker and Galinsky never made it clear to participants who would receive the product, which may have led participants to focus on the product attributes, as opposed to the relative value of the self, when making their purchase decision. This interpretation suggests a possible interaction between product status and purchase recipient but to date these factors have never been empirically crossed.

Psychological propensities of power versus psychological needs of power

We propose that prior effects of power can be driven by either the psychological propensities of power or the psychological needs created by power. By *psychological propensities* we mean inclinations or tendencies that are naturally triggered by the psychological experience of power. For example, as previously summarized, states of power can trigger one's propensity to act (Galinsky et al., 2003), one's sense of confidence (Briñol et al., 2007), and one's optimism (Anderson & Galinsky, 2006). These can be thought of as action tendencies or natural orientations and direct outputs arising from the agentic versus communal orientation of low and high-power states respectively that require little or no cognitive intervention or higher-order thought. Thus, regardless of the context, or the specific product being viewed, when psychological propensities are at play, the effect of power should be the same. For example, the psychology of power to foster action (Galinsky et al., 2003) should lead to quicker decisions, regardless of characteristics of the product, when psychological propensities are at play.

By *psychological needs* we mean a motivation or desire that shapes and guides one's preference for particular outcomes, experiences, or objects. In contrast to psychological propensities that should influence behavior in a rather direct and similar fashion across contexts, the activation of a psychological need should lead to more specific biases that resonate with or stem from the need and will often aim at addressing that need. Psychological needs shape consumers' behavior as a function of whether engaging in the behavior addresses and resolves a need state. Whereas a focus on the propensity of power should lead to similar behaviors regardless of the context at play, the activation of a psychological need should lead to more specific responses. Of course, when psychological needs are activated, the means by which they are achieved will still be influenced by the agentic versus communal orientation of high- versus low-power states.

Looking at past research, one means of reconciling the findings of Rucker and Galinsky (2008) with Rucker et al. (2011a) is through the idea that the value of the self or other is a natural result of a power state, whereas consumers' response to status stems from the psychological needs associated with low power. Specifically, consumers' value of the self or other seems to arise out of the power state itself. A state of high power has a general propensity to increase the value of the self but having low power naturally leads people to increase the value of others. It is not a feature of the product or context that is important, but the natural tendency of power to shape the value of the self or other that spills over into how consumers behave, provided the target of a purchase is salient. In contrast, the response of low-power consumers to status goods appears to arise from a need or desire to compensate for one's lack of power by acquiring a sense of power through conspicuous consumption. As a result, product features are fundamental with respect to how consumers behave, relative to the psychological propensity of power.

We suggest that when psychological needs are activated and consumers have the motivation and ability to act upon them, the psychological needs can overwhelm the psychological propensities of power. For example, if a product has a connotation with status, the psychological needs of the low-power (i.e., the need to restore power) may override their general propensity to value others over the self. Here, the value of the high-status product to satisfy one's need becomes focal and overwhelms the natural propensity of power. Overall we predict that the effects of power on behavior depend on whether propensities or needs are focal to consumers. Importantly, this distinction can be used as one means to reconcile the findings of Rucker and Galinsky (2008) with those of Rucker et al. (2011a).

Products lacking an association to status: dominance of psychological propensities

In the case of products that lack an association with status, we suggest that psychological needs erupting from power states will not be met by acquiring the product and therefore should be less focal to consumers. As a consequence, we believe the primary influence should tend to be the psychological propensities of power. Because the agentic orientation of high

power produces a greater natural emphasis on and value of the self, we would expect to replicate Rucker et al. (2011a). Specifically, for products explicitly purchased for oneself, high-power participants would likely spend more than low-power participants. For products explicitly purchased for others, low-power participants would likely spend more than high-power participants due to the powerlessness-induced communal orientation.

Products possessing an association to status: dominance of psychological needs

In the case of high-status products, we predict that the strong connotations of status to hierarchy (Magee & Galinsky, 2008) will lead consumers to focus more on whether or not status fits their own psychological needs and this will overwhelm the psychological propensity of power. As a result, we expect that the value of self versus other becomes relatively less important. In these cases, the focal aspect to consumers will be whether or not the product meets their psychological needs. And, the focus on such an element should play out differentially as a function of whether the purchase is for oneself or another.

For high-status products to be purchased for oneself, we anticipate that low-power participants will spend more than high-power participants. This should occur because the psychological propensity of power for the powerless to value others more should be overwhelmed by consumers' own assessment of the value of status. Similarly, for the powerful their propensity to value the self could be overridden by their assessment that status is of little value to them — when their focus is on the hierarchical implications, they do not spend more because they do not need to buy status (Rucker & Galinsky, 2008, 2009). Consequently, low-power participants should value a status object more for the self than high-power participants, replicating the findings of Rucker and Galinsky (2008, 2009).

For high-status products to be purchased for others, we again anticipate status should make consumers' own psychological needs focal. As a consequence, this focus should again override the psychological propensities of power. Because the purchase of a status gift for another does little for either low- or high-power individuals, we anticipated that there would be no differences in amount spent on a status product for another individual.

In summary, for products *unrelated* to status, lacking power will lead to more spending on others but having power will lead to more spending on oneself. For products associated with status, a state of low power will lead to more spending on oneself than a state of high power; however, we anticipate no effect of power on spending for others. To provide the first empirical test of manipulating both product status and the intended purchase recipient within the same experimental design, we conducted a new experiment that we next present the results of.

Experiment: power and who versus what consumers value

A total of 321 participants (154 males, Mean Age=32.53, SD=11.20) from a national online pool were randomly assigned

to conditions in a 3 (Power: low, high, baseline) \times 2 (Purchase Recipient: self, other) \times 2 (Product Status: low, high) \times 2 (Category: Chocolate, Restaurant) between-participants design.

Participants received an advertisement for either chocolate or a restaurant. The ad copy manipulated power by either stating “Remember a Time You Felt Powerless?” or “Remember a Time You Felt Powerful?” and manipulated status by featuring a product pre-tested to be either low (i.e., a pizza parlor, Hershey’s Kisses) or high (i.e., a fine French restaurant, Godiva Gems) in status. Finally, to manipulate the *intended recipient*, the copy ended with the statement “A Perfect Gift to Give Yourself” or, “A Perfect Gift to Give Others,” (adapted from Rucker et al., 2011a, Experiment 5). After reading the advertisement, participants were asked how much they would like to spend in dollars for the advertised product (i.e., how much for a bag of chocolates or for a dinner at the restaurant). The product category (chocolate, restaurant) results were similar across levels of the independent variable and therefore we collapsed across this dimension (see Table 2 for means by product type).

We submitted willingness-to-pay to a 2 (Power: low, high) \times 2 (Purchase Recipient: self, other) \times 2 (Product Status: low, high) ANOVA. There was a significant 3-way interaction between power, product status, and intended recipient, $F(1, 313)=6.57, p=.01, \eta_p^2=.04$ see Fig. 1. Among *non-status products*, there was a significant power \times recipient interaction, $F(1, 313)=11.06, p<.01, \eta_p^2=.10$. When the intended recipient was oneself, high-power participants indicated willing to spend more compared to both baseline, $F(313)=3.91, p=.02, \eta_p^2=.02$ and low-power participants $F(313)=4.85, p<.01, \eta_p^2=.03$, but baseline and low-power participants did not differ in the amount they were willing to spend, $p>.5$. When the intended recipient was another person, however, this pattern reversed with low-power participants indicating they were willing to spend more compared to both baseline, $F(313)=4.14, p<.01, \eta_p^2=.02$ and high-power participants, $F(313)=4.97, p<.01, \eta_p^2=.03$ with these latter two groups not differing from one another, $p>.5$. Thus, among non-status products, the results reported by Rucker and colleagues (2011a) were replicated and fit the predictions of the *propensities of power*.

Turning to the results among the *status products*, there was also a significant power \times recipient interaction but the form of the interaction differed from the non-status products, $F(1, 313)=4.21, p=.02, \eta_p^2=.02$. When the intended recipient was the self, low-power participants reported willing to spend more than both baseline, $F(313)=4.10, p=.01, \eta_p^2=.02$ and high-power participants, $F(313)=3.90, p=.03, \eta_p^2=.02$, which did not differ from one another, $p>.7$, conceptually replicating the findings of Rucker and Galinsky (2008). This finding also suggests that when status associations were present, the psychological needs of power proved to be a stronger governing force than the psychological propensities of power. Similarly, when the intended recipient was another person, there were no observed differences in the amount individuals were willing to spend, $p>.4$, also consistent with the psychological propensities of power being overwhelmed by how a product fits with consumers’ psychological needs.

These findings provide the first evidence consistent with the idea that both psychological propensities and psychological

Table 2

Amount participants were willing to spend in dollars as a function of their power, status of the product, and intended recipient (means by product type).

	Power		
	Low power	Baseline	High power
Amount willing to spend for chocolates			
Status purchase for self	\$10.50	\$5.61	\$5.72
Status purchase for other	\$7.08	\$7.74	\$6.82
Non-status purchase for self	\$4.24	\$5.97	\$8.02
Non-status purchase for other	\$8.25	\$6.25	\$4.78
Amount willing to spend for restaurant			
Status purchase for self	\$21.20	\$12.45	\$13.30
Status purchase for other	\$16.70	\$17.51	\$15.74
Non-status purchase for self	\$10.85	\$14.35	\$19.91
Non-status purchase for other	\$19.95	\$14.70	\$11.20

needs of power can operate in guiding consumers’ willingness-to-pay. When products were not associated with status, we replicated work on the effects of power on purchases for the self and other (i.e., Rucker et al., 2011a), consistent with the idea consumers behave in accordance with the psychological propensities of power. However, when products were associated with status, the specific psychological needs of low- and high-power participants, with respect to the value of status, was primary and we saw evidence of compensatory consumption (Rucker & Galinsky, 2008, 2009).

These results do not eliminate the possibility that the psychological propensity of power to affect the value of self and other might sometimes be reflected among status products. Indeed, situational factors may affect the influence of the psychological propensities of power versus the psychological needs of power. We explore this possibility in our proposed future directions.

Power and consumer behavior: new opportunities and future directions

The present review has defined the construct of power, introduced an overarching architecture based on agentic versus communal orientations, highlighted the distinction between power activating a psychological propensity versus creating a psychological need, and synthesized recent work on how power

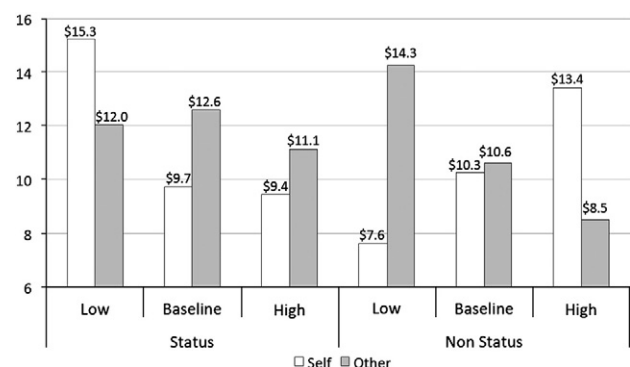


Fig. 1. Consumers’ purchase intentions as a function of their power, status of the product, and intended recipient (collapsed across products).

drives consumer behavior by shaping who and what consumers value. A final goal of this review is to stimulate new work by consumer psychologists. With this objective in mind, we outline several areas stemming from this review that we believe would be of immense value for the study of power in the consumer domain.

Power and agentic and communal orientations: new directions in consumer behavior

One important direction for future research is to understand other processes associated with power and how they can inform consumption. The proposed architecture that high- and low-power create agentic and communal orientations respectively is not only useful to organize past research findings, but also for motivating new hypotheses in the power literature.

As one example, agentic characteristics appear to relate to competence, whereas communal characteristics appear to relate to warmth (e.g., Cuddy, Fiske, & Glick, 2008). One untested implication of this set of relations is that individuals in a state of high power may seek out, prefer, and respond to competence-based persuasive messages whereas those lacking power will be lured by appeals brimming with warmth. As a result, powerful consumers might prefer giving to a charity advertising its competence, but powerless consumers might prefer giving to a charity advertising its warmth. Thus, the association between power and agentic versus communal orientations can serve as a foundation in testing new hypotheses.

Other effects of power may also affect what types of persuasive messages people find attractive. Given the finding that power leads to greater levels of abstraction compared to states of low power (Smith & Trope, 2006), the powerful may prefer abstract to concrete claims. Similarly, given the known ability of the powerless to empathize with others, low-power individuals may be drawn to advertisements that highlight the plights of the downtrodden (e.g., starving children). This might explain why low-status individuals give more to charity (Piff et al., 2010). Although the greater propensity of low-power individuals to empathize with others is a process that remains unexamined within the consumer literature, it is likely to have clear implications in the consumer domain.

Another important domain in which the agentic versus communal orientation might shed light on human behavior is social network formation and sustainability, and the transmission of information through and across people (see also Lee & Tiedens, 2001). First, with respect to network formation and sustainability, one could hypothesize that an agentic orientation leads the powerful to form larger and more malleable networks, best suited to optimally serve and adapt to the goals of the powerful. In contrast, the powerless might form smaller and more rigid networks, because these networks would easily allow them to compare to and get feedback from others.

Agentic and communal orientations versus outcomes

Although we believe that agentic versus communal orientations are tightly connected to high versus low-power states, this does not mean that all outcomes by the powerful inevitably

favor the self or that all behaviors by the powerless are necessarily beneficial to others. That is, power-induced agentic and communal orientations can still foster very diverse behaviors.

As an example, consider the finding that high power leads individuals to pursue their own goals. If an individual's goal is to naturally be other oriented, then having power may enhance this goal, leading to more, not less, other-oriented behavior. Indeed, consistent with this notion Chen et al. (2001) found that power led communally oriented individuals to become more generous. This finding is consistent with the idea that high-power accentuates one's own goals; when those goals are naturally communal in nature, possessing power can actually promote generous outcomes (see also Torrelli & Shavitt, 2010).

Similarly, although not examined empirically, it seems plausible that the communal orientation of low-power states may ironically lead powerless people to behave in less communal ways. Consistent with this notion, Kim and McGill (2011) found that the powerless prefer reducing their interactions with human-like items (e.g., anthropomorphized slot-machine) when these items can control the outcome (e.g., giving money). As another example, consider the finding that lacking power can foster a desire for status as a means to rise in the hierarchy (Rucker & Galinsky, 2008, 2009). Again, the communal orientation explains why individuals would look for status as it affords power through others. However, in seeking status individuals may seek to associate with groups that explicitly afford status, but in doing so distance themselves from groups that do not afford status or lower their status.

New effects of power in new decision making contexts

A second means to broaden our understanding of power and consumer behavior is to look at how other consumer contexts could be used to inform our study of power. For example, to date, most research has focused primarily on consumers' willingness to pay or attitudes as the core dependent variables. However, consumer psychologists are interested in a number of other phenomena such as consumer choice, categorization, endowment, the spreading of word-of-mouth communications, response to pricing and promotion, and consumer–brand relationships, to name but a few topics. Each of these contexts represents an opportunity for new exploration of the role of power in consumer behavior with a potentially unbounded number of questions. For example, power may help explain consumer categorization through the known effects of power on level of abstraction. This may have important implications to how brand extensions are viewed (Maoz & Tybout, 2002; Meyers-Levy & Tybout, 1989).

Consider two other classic effects in consumer psychology: the endowment effect (Thaler, 1980) and the devaluation effect (Brendl, Markman, & Messner, 2003; Markman & Brendl, 2005). Power may shed light on both of these effects in important ways. The study reported earlier by Dubois et al. (2011) suggests that power might moderate the endowment effect as this research found that low-power participants ascribed less value to their possessions than baseline conditions,

but high-power participants ascribed greater value to their possessions. Thus, the endowment effect might be particularly likely to occur for the powerful.

Although, the devaluation effect has not been studied with respect to power, it may also be moderated by power. In particular, the devaluation effect reflects a situation where objects that are not relevant to a focal need (e.g., food) lead to a devaluation of products unrelated to the need (e.g., clothing). On the one hand, given high power can provoke a sense of confidence, high-power individuals may find specific needs less pressing, thereby fortifying them against both valuation and devaluation. On the other hand, given that high power focuses on one's own goals, it is possible that high-power states would actually be more likely to show stronger valuation and devaluation effects compared to the powerless. Thus, this paradigm represents a novel opportunity to test these competing hypotheses, and thereby shed light on the role of power in valuation and devaluation.

Although power has sometimes been shown to have identical effects on hypothetical and actual behavior (e.g., Dubois et al., 2011; Rucker et al., 2011a), there might be cases in which the nature of the behavior matters. Indeed, from the perspective of construal level theory, consumers are likely to think concretely about non-hypothetical choices and to think abstractly about hypothetical choices. This may sometimes lead to preference reversals because different types of information might be weighted differently as a function of construal level. For example, past research has shown that desirability has been associated with more abstract construals and feasibility with more concrete construals (Liberman & Trope, 1998). Although power can affect construal level, it would be empirically possible to manipulate construal level independently from power (i.e., make both low- and high-power participants think in an abstract or concrete fashion). Given that the agentic nature of high-power states focus people on their own goals (Galinsky et al., 2003; Guinote, 2007), this could lead high-power individuals to place greater weight on information related to feasibility under low levels of construal but information related to desirability under high levels of construal.

As a recent example of how power can be used to offer insights into a new consumption context, Inesi et al. (in press) have explored the relation between power and assortment size, or the amount of choice consumers have. They proposed that because both power and choice satisfy the fundamental need for *personal control* (the belief that events are influenced by and contingent upon one's own behavior and not upon fate, circumstances, other people, or uncontrollable physical forces; Rotter, 1966), depriving consumers of choice could increase their desire for power and depriving consumers of power could increase their desire for choice. In support of this hypothesis, the authors found that depriving individuals of choice led to stronger preferences for future jobs associated with power. Conversely, depriving individuals of power led to stronger preferences for larger assortments (i.e., more choice) over smaller assortments. In short, depriving individuals of one source of control (i.e., power) led to a greater preference for the other source of control (i.e., choice). This work sheds light on a

construct studied heavily in the consumer literature, choice (e.g., Bettman, Luce, & Payne, 1998; Botti & McGill, 2011; Dhar, Nowlin, & Sherman, 2000; Dhar & Simonson, 2003), but also uses it to better understand power by recognizing a new antecedent of a desire for power as well as a new consequence of power in the desire for choice. As noted, there are a number of additional consumer contexts for which the role of power could be studied.

Manifestations of power in the consumer domain

Perhaps one reason for the past lack of research on power in consumer behavior is that it is hard for some to imagine how states of power could have value for practitioners or consumers. Whereas power in organizations can often be detected based on how organizations are structured, predicting when consumers are powerful or powerless might seem too herculean of a task. Indeed, initial forays into the study of power tended to use manipulations that were refined in terms of hypothesis testing (e.g., episodic recall, Rucker & Galinsky, 2008; hierarchical roles, Rucker & Galinsky, 2009), but could be argued to be difficult to translate into practice.

We believe this concern can be addressed by enlarging the nomological net of power to not only understand the consequences of power but also to understand antecedents of power in consumer behavior. Initial examples have already begun to emerge that suggest power can be operationalized in ways that should be of interest to practitioners. For example, both in the new experiment reported here and by Rucker and colleagues (2011a, experiment 5) power was manipulated merely by the copy embedded within the advertisement. In addition, Koo et al. (2011) have found that power can be manipulated by whether people imagine going up or down an escalator such that people imagining riding up an escalator feel more powerful than consumers imagining going down an escalator. Work in progress by Dubois et al. (2011) suggests that people who occupy managerial versus employee roles at work can be used to segment consumers into positions of high and low power based on their actual roles. And, as already noted, the physical postures of consumers can affect how powerful they feel (Carney et al., 2010; Huang et al., 2011). Posture is observable and potentially controllable. For example, salespeople may make their pitch while the consumer is seated in a comfy chair when they want to stress performance but in a more constricted posture when the pitch involves status.

These examples provide evidence of the pervasiveness of the antecedents of power in consumer behavior, and make clear the importance of studying the construct for consumer psychologists.

Psychological propensities associated with power versus psychological needs

In addition to providing an architecture based on agentic and communal orientations, the present paper introduces the idea that effects within each orientation can be categorized as either a psychological propensity associated with the state or a psychological need motivated by the state. As noted, psychological

propensities refer to the natural tendencies associated with power, whereas psychological needs refer to motivational states. We have suggested they may differ in a critical way — psychological propensities could exert similar effects across a variety of consumer situations and products, whereas psychological needs could lead to much more specific patterns of behavior. For example, the psychological propensity of the powerless to hesitate (Galinsky et al., 2003) should increase the amount of time low-power consumers spend on making a decision, regardless of product status, whereas the psychological needs of the powerless should lead them to be willing to pay more only for products associated with status (Rucker & Galinsky, 2008).

Understanding when consumer behavior is driven by the psychological propensities versus the psychological needs of power is an open question. The experiment presented in this paper suggests that objects that are tuned to the psychological needs of power might, at least at times, completely suppress or overwhelm the effect of power-induced psychological propensities. However, an important direction for future research is to test for other moderator variables that can shift consumers' attention to the propensities versus needs associated with psychological power. One such possibility is tied to the level of thought or elaboration at the time of a purchase decision. It is well known that people can process information and make decisions in an effortful versus non-effortful manner (Petty & Wegener, 1998). Given the notion that psychological propensities are natural associations that ebb from a state of high or low power, propensities might be more likely to operate when consumers are processing or attending to information at a peripheral level. In contrast, attending to the more specific implications of a purchase, especially how that purchase fits one's own needs, may occur under greater levels of thought or elaboration. Systematically manipulating the degree of thought accompanying a particular behavior or action might be a crucial moderator.

Coda

Although viewed to be a critical catalyst in human behavior, the study of power in consumer psychology has, until recently, been largely neglected. The present review has sought to introduce consumer psychologists to the concept of power, provide a new architecture for its study based on agentic versus communal orientations, synthesize emerging evidence of the role of power in consumer behavior, and pave the way for future research into the area. We hope the present work will be taken as a call to action among consumer psychologists to both investigate psychological power and to use the platform of consumer behavior to make unique contributions to the study of power.

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