The Influence of Power on Emotions Felt for Others

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A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Bachelor of Arts with Honors in Biopsychology, Cognition, and Neuroscience from the University of Michigan
2015

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I would like to thank my mentors PhD candidate Josh Wondra and Dr. Phoebe Ellsworth for their support and guidance throughout this project. Their knowledge was instrumental in the shaping and completion of this project. I would also like to thank the research assistants in my lab for both their insight and help with data collection. Correspondence concerning this paper should be addressed to Gabi Schwartz, 3210 Enclave Court, Baltimore, MD 21208.

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Abstract

Power has been shown to influence empathy and other emotions for others, but little research seeks to understand why this might happen. The present study focuses on how power may influence appraisals of control, which thereby influence emotions felt for others. We primed participants to feel high or low power in dyads. Then each participant read about a target's bad situation. In one condition the situation occurred due to chance circumstances (situational control), and the target expressed sadness. In the other condition a third party was to blame, and the target expressed anger (human agency). We hypothesized high power subjects would make different appraisals of control in the situational control condition, and feel less sad than low power subjects. Therefore they would be less likely to experience empathy compared to low power subjects. We predicted no difference in power on control appraisals in the human agency condition, so high power participants would experience equal or more empathy as low power participants in this condition. We found that low power subjects felt sadder overall across both agency conditions, but found no difference for power and anger. We discuss potential implications of our main effect of power on sadness, as well as discuss directions for future research.

Keywords: Empathy, power, appraisal theory, vicarious emotions

The Influence of Power on Emotions Felt for Others

Power dynamics are apparent in many situations. For example, there is a leader and subordinate role in most professor-student, parent-child, and boss-employee relationships. Most people have experienced feeling high or low power at some point in their lives, and a sense of power over someone else has a distinct feeling. Existing research speculates that this feeling of power can decrease feelings of empathy—feeling the same emotion as someone else (Van Kleef et al., 2008), but not much research has looked to examine why this might be the case. Therefore the present study seeks to understand what might cause high power people to empathize less by examining the influence of power on appraisals of control for others' situations.

Power and Emotions for Others

Power has previously been defined has having control over others' or one's outcomes (Bacharach & Lawler, 1976; Kraus, Piff, Keltner, 2009; Lee & Tiedens, 2001; Magee & Galinsky, 2008). Current researchers have argued feeling high power influences emotions felt for others in a number of ways. One speculation is that feeling powerful might decrease feelings of empathy for others. A study by Van Kleef et al. (2008) looked at how power influences feelings of empathy for others' distressing situations. Participants in face-to-face dyad interactions each shared a distressing story and listened to the other participant's story. Participants rated their emotions both prior to and after the conversation. After the stories they also rated their feelings of power and distress. The experimenters found that high power subjects were less likely to feel distress for the other subjects' distressing stories compared to low power subjects. These data suggest that high power people might experience less empathy for others in distressing situations.

In addition to speculations that feeling high power decreases empathy for others, power may influence the ability to accurately perceive others' emotions, which is sometimes considered to be a part of empathy. A study by Van Kleef, De Dreu, Pietroni & Manstead (2006) examined the effect of power on perceptions of the intensity of others' emotions. They found that high power negotiators perceived their opponent as less angry than low power negotiators despite equal expression of anger across conditions. Another experiment by Galinsky, Magee, Inesi, & Gruenfeld (2006) examined how power influences people's ability to accurately identify others' emotions. Participants were shown images of people expressing happiness, fear, anger, or sadness, and were asked to identify which of the four emotions the image expressed. They found that high power participants made more errors identifying the correct emotions than control participants. The findings in these two studies may support that high power people are less likely to correctly identify both the intensity and type of emotion others are feeling.

Past research found evidence to support the idea that powerful people empathize less and less accurately identify others' emotions, but it does not explain why. One possibility is that powerful people pay less attention to others, which decreases their emotional response for others' emotional experiences. A study by Erber & Fiske (1984) examined the influence of outcome control on attention to others. They found that subjects who were in control of their outcomes to win a prize paid less attention to others compared to subjects that were reliant on a confederate to win the prize. Another study by Goodwin, Gubin, Fiske, & Yzerbyt (2000) looked at the influence of control on attention to others by measuring stereotyping. This is based on research suggesting that applying stereotypes requires paying less attention to others (Fiske, 1993; Fiske & Dépret, 1996). The experiment was framed as occurring in the work place. After being primed for high or low power, participants read a number of scenarios relevant to a workplace

environment and said aloud their responses to the scenarios. The experimenters found that high power subjects paid more attention to stereotype-consistent information in the scenarios than low power subjects did, which may suggest that high power people use stereotypes more than low power people do because it requires paying less attention to others. Therefore, it could be that powerful people are less attentive to others' situations.

In effect, if powerful people pay less attention to others they may be less likely to take the perspective of others, and perspective taking is an important component to experiencing empathy. A study by Galinsky et al. (2006) looked at the effects of power on perspective taking. Participants were primed to feel high or lower power. Then participants were asked to draw the letter "E" on their foreheads to measure their perspective taking. Their results found that high power participants were more likely to draw the "E" in a self-orienting way instead of an other-orienting way compared to low power participants. This might imply that high power people are more focused on their own perspectives than someone else's. If feeling powerful decreases perspective taking for others, then this might decrease their ability to understand others' emotional experiences. As a result, this may decrease their ability to accurately perceive what someone else is feeling, or feel what the other person, feels in a given situation.

Alternatively, it may be that paying less attention to others means powerful people are more likely to self-anchor information, meaning that they use knowledge about themselves when thinking about others' emotional experiences, instead of knowledge about others. An experiment by Galinsky et al. (2006) examined how high versus low power people adjust their perspective on privileged knowledge that a target does not have access to. They found that high power participants were more likely to believe the target knew what they knew, even though there was no way the target knew the information provided to the participant. Another experiment by

Overbeck & Droutman (2012) also examined how power influences information anchoring. Participants rated a number of traits about themselves then did the same for a group or organization they had been a part of. They found the high power participants more frequently classified a trait as descriptive of their group if it was a trait they previously rated as descriptive of themselves, and not descriptive of their group if it was a trait they rated as not descriptive of themselves. This suggests that high power people might be less likely to take into account the same information that the target does when forming an emotional response to the target's situation. By this reasoning, high power people feel less empathy and less accurately perceive others' emotions because they are responding to a different experience from what the target is having.

All of these findings suggest that powerful people feel less for others. If powerful people are less attentive to others they may be less likely to take the perspective of others and consider relevant information, which makes them less likely to feel what others are feeling. These speculations have some merit, but what they do not consider is that feelings of control are associated with feeling powerful. We speculate that feeling in control may effect how powerful people feel emotions for others by influencing how they evaluate other's emotional situations.

Appraisal Theory of Empathy

One theory behind how people feel emotions for others in general is the appraisal theory of empathy. This theory says that different emotions are experienced depending on how someone evaluates (appraises) another's situation (Wondra & Ellsworth, in press). When someone appraises a target's situation the same way as the target does then both people will experience the same emotion—empathy. If someone appraises a target's situation differently than the target does then each person will experience a different emotion. This experience of mismatched

emotions is also known as an empathy failure, but this is not to say that if someone experiences an empathy failure that they feel no emotion (Cikara, Bruneau, & Saxe, 2011). It might be that they feel a different emotion than the target does. How someone appraises another's situation can be influenced by a number of factors, and depending on these factors people may feel empathy for a target or an empathy failure. In essence, certain factors influence one's appraisals of another's situation, and these appraisals influence what emotions people feel.

Appraisal theories of emotion suggest that a control appraisal is one type of appraisal someone can have for oneself or others' situations (Ellsworth & Scherer, 2003; Smith & Ellsworth, 1985; Wondra & Ellsworth, in press). A control appraisal is an evaluation of whether or not someone (either the target or another agent) had control over what happened in a situation. If someone thinks a target's bad situation occurred out of anyone's control, this is considered a situational control appraisal; the circumstances occurred based on situational or chance circumstances. In comparison, if someone thinks a target's bad situation occurred within someone's control this is a human agency appraisal; there is a human agent to blame for what happened in the situation. For example, take a situation where an employee has been working on a big project for work, and a computer crash wipes everything. Evaluating this situation as occurring out of anyone's control would be a situational control appraisal. In contrast, take the same situation, but the employee loses the work because a coworker sabotages the project and sends it to another company. Evaluating this situation as occurring within the control of this coworker is considered a human agency appraisal.

Anger is one emotion that can occur when people appraise a bad situation as within someone's control (Weiner, Graham, & Chandler, 1982). People feel angry when there is an agent other than themselves in control of the bad situation (to blame). In other words anger is a

high control emotion. In contrast, people feel sad when there is no one in control or to blame for a bad situation, so sadness is considered a low control emotion (Ellsworth & Scherer, 2003; Weiner et al., 1982). If high power people feel more in control, then they may be less likely to feel sad since sadness is a low control emotion associated with uncontrollable causes. In comparison, powerful people may be equally or more likely than low power people to feel angry because anger is associated with controllable causes.

Present Study

Existing research has not bridged the gap in the literature to look at the influence of power on appraisals of control. Therefore the present study examines how feeling powerful may influence emotions felt for others by measuring appraisals of control and feelings of anger and sadness. Based on existing literature, we believe that high power people are more likely to appraise another's bad situation that occurs out of anyone's control as within someone's control. Since powerful people feel more in control of their outcomes they may be more likely to feel there is someone to blame for a bad situation, either the target or a third party, even if it occurs out of anyone's control. Therefore they would be more likely to feel angry because anger occurs in situations where there is someone or something to blame (Weiner et al., 1982). The target, on the other hand, that does not feel this sense of control, would appraise this bad situation as happening out of anyone's control. Therefore the target feels sad because the target does not think anyone is to blame. We are suggesting that these mismatched appraisals of control are responsible for why powerful people are less likely to empathize with a target in a bad situation that happens out of anyone's control. We believe that low power people feel the same sense of low control as the target does in the situation, so they more likely to appraise the target's situation the same way that the target does. This means they are more likely to empathize with

the target. Additionally, we are also suggesting that there would be no difference in power on control appraisals in a bad situation that occurs within someone's control. Since there is a clear agent to blame for the bad outcome, high power and low power people would both feel angry in the same way that the target does. This means powerful people would be just as likely or more likely to experience empathy as low power people in a bad situation with an agent to blame.

We primed participants to feel high or low power then presented them with a target's bad situation that occurred either out of the target's control (situational control condition) or occurred within the control of a third party (human agency condition). After participants read the situation, we measured their emotions of sadness and anger, perceptions of the target's emotions, as well as appraisals of control. To examine if high power participants were more likely to blame someone—either the target or a third party—in the situational control condition, we measured participants' appraisals of situational control (no one responsible for what happened), target agency control (target responsible for what happened), and third party agency control (third party responsible for what happened). We hypothesized that high power participants in the situational control condition would feel less sad than low power participants, thus experiencing an empathy failure. We also predicted high power participants in the situational control condition would appraise the situation as within the control of either the target or a third party, meaning they would appraise the uncontrollable situation as within an someone's control. We also hypothesized that high power participants in the human agency condition would feel equally angry or angrier than low power participants, meaning high power participants would experience as much or more empathy than low power participants in the human agency condition.

Method

Overview

This study was framed as examining workplace behavior and the investigation of company hiring procedures for a bogus company called Fly For All. Participants were primed to feel high or low power then they individually read an email about an emotional situation. We investigated responses to the email through a survey. The study had a 2 (Power: high or low) x 2 (Agency: situational control or human agency) between-subjects factorial design. The power manipulation was run in dyads where the high power participant (who acted as a boss) directed the low power participant (who acted as an entry-level job candidate) how to do a task. Agency was manipulated by an email, which was about a bad workplace situation that occurred either out of anyone's control (situational control) or was someone's fault (human agency). Both participants in a dyad read the same email for consistency.

Participants

There were 110 participants in 55 Dyads. Participants were University of Michigan undergraduate students who received introductory psychology course credit or $8 for their participation. There were 27 dyads in the situational control condition and 28 in the human agency condition. Eight participants with incomplete responses, suspected knowledge of the purpose of the study, or who knew the other participant in the dyad were excluded from analyses. Sixty-six percent of participants were female and 33% were male. The average age of participants was 18.59 years old (*SD* = .74). Seventy-eight participants identified as white (70.9%), 27 Asian (24.5%), 6 as Black/African American (5.45%), 5 Middle Eastern (4.45%), 2 Latino (1.81%), and 1 Native American (1%).

Procedure

Participants were asked to wait in separate locations for the study to avoid contact before participating. The researcher retrieved participants individually and put them in separate rooms until the experiment began.

Participants were told the study was looking at psychology in the workplace. They were told a company called Fly For All had asked the psychology department to work with them to test the effectiveness of the company's hiring procedures. Participants were told there would be two tasks for them to complete, but the second task would be explained first to save time in the study. In reality explaining the second task before the first at the beginning of the session was done to decrease the amount of time between the power priming and agency manipulation. Participants were told the second task would measure emotional intelligence, which would include reading an allegedly real email from a Fly For All employee about an emotional workplace situation (the agency manipulation), and the first task would be an instruction-giving task (the power manipulation).

Participants were told the first task they would begin with was looking at how well a prospective entry-level employee can take directions from a boss. They were told they would be role-playing with the other participant where one person would be the boss (high power) and the other would be the prospective entry-level candidate (low power). Participants were given a bogus leadership questionnaire in order to accurately assign each participant to a role (see Appendix B). In reality roles were randomly assigned before the session.

After the questionnaires were collected and allegedly compared, the researcher told each participant their role in separate rooms. The boss participant (high power) was given directions first. The boss was told to direct the entry-level candidate (the other participant) to make a Lego block formation from a picture (see Appendix B) with a given set of Legos, and the candidate

(low power) was not allowed to see the picture. The boss had the freedom to direct the candidate on how to make the formation in any way the boss saw fit, and the boss could ask the researcher questions at any time.

The researcher then went to the entry-level candidate participant's (low power) room to give instructions. The researcher began by saying the participant was better fit for the entry-level candidate position. The candidate was told the other participant would be acting as the boss and would be giving directions on how to create a Lego formation, but the candidate would not be able to see a visual of the formation. The candidate was also told that the boss would be giving a candid evaluation of the candidate's performance after the session, and no questions could be asked of the researcher during the task.

The researcher then brought the candidate into the room with the boss and asked the participants to begin the task. The researcher sat on the same side of the room as the boss to reinforce the power manipulation by appearing to be an ally to the boss. The researcher also took bogus notes during the session to appear to be evaluating the task. Note that the power manipulation task was piloted separately with a small sample to ensure the power manipulation had worked. Data supported that boss participants (high power) did feel more powerful than entry-level participants (low power).

After completion of the Lego formation, participants were told to move on to the emotional intelligence task. The room for the power manipulation had one computer in it with the email for the emotional intelligence task facing downward on the keyboard, which is where the high power participant did the task. The low power participant was told to go back into the previous room in order to complete the emotional intelligence task, and the researcher handed this participant the email before the participant went back into the room. The email was about an

employee who had lost a large amount of work on a project due to either computer complications (situational control) or a coworker that had sabotaged the employee's work (human agency) (see Appendix C).

After both participants read the email they completed a survey on the computer (see Appendix D). The survey started by asking questions to measure participants' emotions. We focused on measuring the participants' feelings of sadness and anger as well as measuring their appraisals of situational control and human agency control.

To measure sadness we asked how down and how sad the participants felt, and to measure anger we asked how angry and how mad the participants felt. Both were measured on a scale of 0 (not at all) to 4 (extremely). We also asked participants to rate perceived sadness and anger of the person who wrote the email (the target). Then the survey asked questions about the participants' control appraisals about the target's situation. We asked 3 questions to measure the participants' appraisals of situational control about the situation: "How much do you feel that circumstances beyond anyone's control were responsible for what happened?", "How much do you feel that the situation was out of anyone's control?", and "How much do you feel that no one had the power to do anything about the situation?" We asked 2 questions to measure their appraisals of target agency, "How much do you feel that the person who wrote the e-mail had the power to do something about the situation?" and "How much do you feel that the person who wrote the e-mail was responsible for what happened?" We also asked 2 questions to measure their appraisals of third party agency, "How much do you feel that someone aside from the person who wrote the e-mail was responsible for what happened?" and "How much do you feel that someone aside from the person who wrote the e-mail had the power to do something about

the situation?" All appraisal questions were measured on a scale of 0 (not at all) to 4 (extremely). These responses were the dependent variables used for data analysis.

After completion of the survey all participants were fully probed for suspicion and debriefed.

Results

We predicted that high power participants would be less likely to feel sad than low power participants in the situational control condition (where the bad situation was due to computer problems and the target felt sad). We also predicted that there would be no difference in anger for high power and low power participants in the human agency condition (where the bad situation was due to another person and the target felt angry). To test our predictions we focused on subjects' own emotions of sadness and anger, their perception of the target's sadness and anger, and the subjects' appraisals of situational control (no one to blame), third party control (third party to blame, and target agency control (the target to blame) for the bad situation they read about. We averaged the results of emotions "sad" and "down" to analyze sadness, and "angry" and "mad" to analyze anger. We also averaged correlated control appraisal results for situational control and third party agency appraisals. The questions that measured target agency were weakly correlated, so they were analyzed separately.

Manipulation Checks

We used t-tests for manipulation checks to evaluate subjects' perceptions of the feelings of the target in the agency manipulation emails. We measured perceived sadness and perceived anger to test our hypotheses. As predicted, subjects in the situational control condition perceived the target to be sadder ($M = 2.19$, $SD = .24$) than in the human agency condition ($M = 1.48$, $SD = .39$, $t\,[52] = 8.02$, $p < .001$). Additionally as predicted, subjects in the human agency condition

perceived the target to feel angrier (M = 2.36, SD = .13) than participants in the situational control condition. (M = 1.41, SD = .41, t [52] = 11.23, p < .001).

Subjects' Own Emotions

Figure 1 displays the means and standard errors for subjects' sadness by condition. As predicted, subjects felt sadder in the situational control condition (M = 2.69, SD = .73) than in the human agency condition (M = 1.94, SD = .60, t [53] = 4.22, p < .001). Additionally, we found a main effect of power on sadness. Subjects felt sadder in the low power condition (M = 2.53, SD = 1.00) than in the high power condition (M = 2.09, SD = 1.15, t [53] = 2.11, p = .04). There was no interaction of power and agency on sadness, t [53] = .65, p = .52.

Figure 2 displays the means and standard errors for subjects' anger by condition. As predicted, subjects felt angrier in the human agency condition (M = 2.53, SD = .72) than in the situational control condition (M =1.69, SD = .62, t [53] = 4.63, p < .001). There was no main effect of power condition on emotion, t [53] = .99, p = .32. There was no interaction of power and agency on anger, t [53] = .11, p = .91.

Appraisals

We used planned contrasts to examine the effects of power and agency manipulations on participants' control appraisals. To evaluate our hypothesis we focused on appraisals of situational control, third party agency, and target agency. The results show that participants in the situational control condition were more likely to appraise the situation as out of anyone's control (M = 3.31, SD = .73) compared to the human agency condition (M = 1.84, SD = .61, t [53] = 8.11, p < .001). There was no main effect of power on situational control appraisals, t [53] = 1.12, p = .27. There was no interaction of power and agency on situational control appraisals, t (53) = 1.55, p = .13.

Our results show that participants in the human agency condition were more likely to appraise the situation as within the target's control (M = 2.73 SD = .80) than participants in the situation control condition (M = 2.19, SD = .64, t [51] = 2.75, p = .0083). There was no main effect of power on target agency appraisals, t (51) = .70, p = .49. There was no interaction of power and agency on target agency appraisals, t (51) = 1.5, p = .14. Our results also show that participants in the human agency condition were more likely to appraise the situation within the control of a third party (M = 3.79, SD = .54) than participants in the situational control condition (M = 1.41, SD = .42). There was no main effect of power on third party agency appraisals, t (52) = 1.1, p = .28. There was no interaction of power and agency on third party agency appraisals, t (52) = .87, p = .39. These data support the prediction that participants in the human agency condition were more likely to blame an agent for the bad outcome than participants in the situational control condition.

Discussion

The present study hypothesized that feeling powerful influences appraisals of control and thus emotions felt for others. In order to examine this hypothesis we primed participants to feel high or low power. Then participants read an email about a bad situation that happened to someone else (the target) that was either someone else's fault (human agency condition) or no one's fault (situational control condition). After reading this email participants took a survey, which measured participants' own emotions, their perceptions of the target's emotions, and their appraisals of situational control, target agency control, and third party agency control.

Our results show that there was a main effect of power on subjects' sadness; high power subjects felt less sad than low power subjects across agency conditions. This is consistent with existing speculations high power people have a decreased emotional response to others (Galinsky

et al, 2006, Van Kleef et al., 2006; Van Kleef et al., 2008). However, there was no main effect of power on anger, which could mean one of two things. The first possibility is that both high power and low power subjects did not experience anger in either agency condition. The second is that both high and low power subjects experienced anger equally across agency conditions. Our results deny the first possibility because we found that subjects felt sadder in the situational control condition and angrier in the human agency condition. If this first possibility were true, then subjects would not have expressed anger in either condition. Therefore the second possibility seems likely, suggesting that high power subjects did not feel angrier in either agency condition. These results do not support our prediction that high power subjects would feel angrier than low power subjects in the situational control condition. Additionally, these do not provide evidence to support existing speculations that feeling powerful decreases emotional attention to others (Erber & Fiske, 1984).

Our results also show that subjects made accurate appraisals of control for the target in both agency conditions. Subjects in the human agency condition were more likely to report that there was someone responsible for what happened in the bad situation (either the target or a third party) than subjects in the situational control condition. While subjects in the situation control condition were more likely to report the situation occurred out of anyone's control compared to participants in the human agency condition. These data do not provide evidence that power influences appraisals of control. This does not support our hypothesis that high power subjects are more likely to appraise a target's situation as within someone's control, meaning there is someone to blame, even if there is no agent to blame.

While these data do not provide evidence to support our hypothesis, they also do not provide evidence to support existing speculations that feeling powerful decreases perspective

taking for others (Galinsky et al., 2006). In each agency condition, high and low power participants made the same appraisals for who was responsible for the outcome in the target's situation. Galinsky et al. (2006) argue that high power people may be less likely to have the same emotional response as someone else because they are less likely to take this person's perspective. In their study they did not have participants evaluate another's bad situation. Rather, they looked at participants' perspective taking after doing a resource allocation task where subjects allocated lottery tickets to another participant. Therefore, it may be that feeling powerful is less likely to influence perspective taking when that power is unrelated to the target. In comparison, feeling powerful may be more likely to influence perspective taking when people feel powerful in relation to the target.

As well as these appraisal findings, our results on subjects' perceptions of the target's emotions do not provide evidence to support the argument that feeling powerful decreases accurate emotion perception. Galinsky et al. (2006) argues that powerful people are less accurate at perceiving others' emotions, but our results show that subjects across power conditions accurately perceived the emotions expressed by the target in both agency conditions. A difference between the present study and the study by Galinsky et al. (2006) is that subjects in our study read about another's emotional situation, but subjects in the study by Galinsky et al. (2006) viewed images of emotions being expressed. Therefore it may be that power does not influence emotion perception for a situation someone reads about. Rather it may be that power is more likely to influence emotion perception for a target that someone can see.

Our results also do not provide evidence for the speculation that high power people are less likely to empathize with others (Van Kleef et al., 2008). Our data show that subjects in the situational control condition–where the target felt sad—felt sadder than subjects in the human

agency condition—where the target felt angry. Therefore we found no evidence that high power subjects empathized less with the target in either agency condition. This could potentially be attributed to whom the target was that subjects evaluated in each study. In the study by Van Kleef et al. (2008), subjects evaluated a distressing story they heard as told by another participant sitting in front of them. In the present study, subjects evaluated a bad situation they read about without seeing or hearing anything from a real person. Therefore it may be that power is more likely to decrease empathy for others when powerful people can see and hear the target explain the bad situation.

Limitations

While we found some significant results, the present study may have had limitations that could have affected our findings. One limitation is that we did not have a very large sample size, but we are continuing to collect data for further analysis. A larger sample size and further analysis could reinforce our existing findings, or shed light on new results. There were some trends in the data that could be nearing statistical significance, so a larger sample size might be able to clarify these results.

One other limitation to the present study is that our procedure may not have reinforced the power manipulation all the way through until the end of the experiment. Results from pilot testing showed that the boss participants (high power) felt more powerful than the entry-level candidate participants (low power), but this pilot study did not include a second task after the power manipulation. It may be that feelings of high and low power decreased once participants read the agency manipulation email.

While our results do not provide evidence to support existing literature that speculates feeling powerful decreases one's emotional response for others, our methods largely differed

from the studies that found evidence to support these speculations. As a result, it may be that we did not find evidence to support these arguments because our methods were not measuring the same variables used in these studies.

Future Research

In order to examine if differences in our methods affected our results, future research should use similar methods from prior research to manipulate the independent variables of power and agency. Evidence to support the argument that powerful people pay less attention to others is based on studies where the subjects see or heard the target they evaluated. As a result, future research should further examine how power might influence attention to others depending on if someone can see or hear the target compared to if someone reads about the target's situation. In our study subjects read about the target's bad situation they evaluated, but in other prior research, subjects saw or heard emotional expression from the target they evaluated (Galinsky et al, 2006; Van Kleef et al. 2008). Therefore it may be powerful people are more likely to feel less for others if they see or hear about a bad situation in comparison to if they read about it.

Future studies should look at how different types of power relationships might influence emotions for others. The present study only examined a power relationship where the high power person felt powerful for unrelated reasons to the target; subjects' power was separate from their relationship to the target they read about in the email. In comparison, studies should use power relationships where the subject feels powerful in relation to the target they are evaluating. Perhaps high power people feel empathy for someone else within a relationship, but this effect is not found when the person does not feel powerful in relation to the target. Therefore research should examine if these two types of power influence emotions for others in different ways.

Also given the main effect we found for power on sadness, future research should further examine the influence of power on low control versus high control emotions. It may be that power is more likely to influence low control emotions, or more likely to have an effect on other high control emotions besides anger. Therefore future studies could test the influence of power on different low control emotions like luck, fear, or pity as well as other high control emotions like pride to see if the results differ from what we found (Ellsworth & Scherer, 1985). Depending on these findings, this may shed light on why we found evidence to support that power influences sadness, a low control emotion, but it did not influence anger, a high control emotion.

Conclusion

This study is the first study to provide an alternative explanation for why high power people may be less likely to empathize with others by bridging the gap between power and emotions for others by examining appraisals of control (Van Kleef et al., 2008; Wondra & Ellsworth, in press). We found evidence to support that feeling powerful might decrease feelings of sadness in any situation, but other results did not provide evidence to support that power influences anger or appraisals of control. Therefore we did not find evidence to support our hypothesis that feeling powerful increases anger for others in bad situations that occur out of anyone's control. Additionally we did not find evidence to support that powerful people are more likely to blame someone in a situation that occurs out of anyone's control.

Though our results did not support our hypothesis, they also did not provide evidence to support for the existing speculation that powerful people empathize less because powerful people pay less attention to others. Therefore this may suggest that future research will find another alternative explanation for why powerful people may be less likely to empathize with others.

Feeling emotions for others occurs all the time, and feeling high or low power manifests itself in numerous circumstances from the classroom to the office. Providing insight on how power can influence emotions for others is important for better how powerful people might react differently to others' emotional situations, as well as power dynamics broadly.

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Appendix A

Leadership Questionnaire

1) Please circle how many leadership experiences have you had whether they be in employment situations, school clubs, sports teams, etc.

0 1-2 3-4 4-5 6-7 8+

2) What leadership experience are you most proud of? Please explain in 2-3 sentences.

3) List 3 characteristics of a good leader

_____

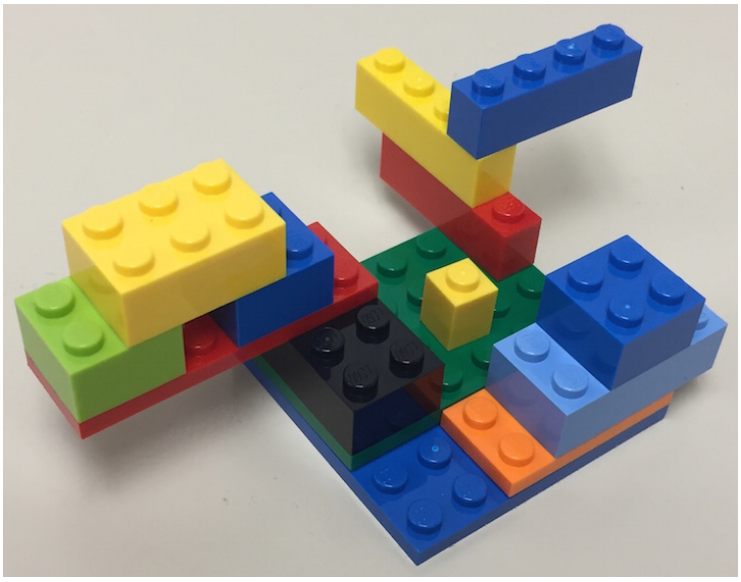
_____

_____

Note: Please open the door when you have finished the questionnaire so the experimenter knows that you have finished.

Appendix B

Lego formation used in power manipulation



Appendix C

Situational Control Email

Hey,

I don't have a ton of time, so I'll call you later, but something happened that I haven't been able to stop thinking about all day and I really need to tell someone.

I've been working on a marketing project for months and I lost it all yesterday. I feel like I'm going to cry.

I went to turn on my computer yesterday morning and it was dead. The hard drive crashed, but I thought it would be okay because I had everything on my flash drive. I couldn't find the flash drive anywhere, but I just assumed I'd left it at home and I'd look for it when I got back. When I got home last night I saw that all the clocks on everything had reset, so the power must've gone out during the day. My flash drive was plugged into my computer and when the power went on it surged and fried it. Everything is gone.

I feel like I'm going to burst into tears. It's due in two days, so I don't know what I'm going to do. I'm having a pretty hard time holding myself together here at work.

I'll call you later,
Sam

Human Agency Email

Hey,

I don't have a ton of time, so I'll call you later, but something happened that I haven't been able to stop thinking about all day and I really need to tell someone.

I've been working on a marketing project for months with Lewis and he ruined it. I haven't said anything to him because I feel like I'm going to punch him in the face if I see him.

So yesterday I was putting the final parts of the project together for our new campaign, and I was doing some last minute research when I happened to stumble upon a new campaign announcement for [competitor company] with the exact same slogan and other details as ours. Lewis is the only other person with access to all of the information to the project, so he definitely sent it to someone at [competitor company]. It's the only way they could have gotten the idea. Plus, I just found out he's leaving Fly for All to work somewhere else, so this is probably how he got the job.

I'm fuming. It's due in two days, so I don't know what I'm going to do. I'm having a pretty hard time keeping calm here at work.

I'll call you later,
Sam

Appendix D

Emotional Intelligence Survey

Welcome to the study. After you read the e-mail, please press the arrow to begin the survey.

After reading the email, how much do you feel each of the following right now?

	Not at all 0	Somewhat 1	Moderately 2	Very much 3	Extremely 4
Happy	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Sympathetic	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Angry	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Compassionate	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Interested	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Disgusted	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Mad	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Anxious	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Proud	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Down	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Worried	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Frustrated	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Sad	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Powerful	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

How much did the person who wrote the e-mail feel each of the following?

	Not at all 0	Somewhat 1	Moderately 2	Very much 3	Extremely 4
Happy	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Shocked	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Hopeful	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Angry	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Angry at self	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Interested	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Powerful	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Disgusted	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Mad	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Curious	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Afraid	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Grateful	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Confused	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Proud	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Surprised	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Amused	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Down	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Worried	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Frustrated	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Sad	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Embarrassed	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Guilty	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Answer the following questions about the situation that was described in the e-mail.

How much do you feel that the person who wrote the e-mail was responsible for what happened?

❍ Not at all 0
❍ Somewhat 1
❍ Moderately 2
❍ Very much 3
❍ Extremely 4

How much do you feel that someone aside from the person who wrote the e-mail was responsible for what happened?

- ❍ Not at all 0
- ❍ Somewhat 1
- ❍ Moderately 2
- ❍ Very much 3
- ❍ Extremely 4

How much do you feel that circumstances beyond anyone's control are responsible for what happened?

- ❍ Not at all 0
- ❍ Somewhat 1
- ❍ Moderately 2
- ❍ Very much 3
- ❍ Extremely 4

How much do you feel that the person who wrote the e-mail had the power to do something about the situation?

- ❍ Not at all 0
- ❍ Somewhat 1
- ❍ Moderately 2
- ❍ Very much 3
- ❍ Extremely 4

How much do you feel that someone aside from the person who wrote the e-mail had the power to do something about the situation?

- ❍ Not at all 0
- ❍ Somewhat 1
- ❍ Moderately 2
- ❍ Very much 3
- ❍ Extremely 4

How much do you feel that no one had the power to do anything about the situation?

- ❍ Not at all 0
- ❍ Somewhat 1
- ❍ Moderately 2
- ❍ Very much 3
- ❍ Extremely 4

How much do you feel that the situation was out of anyone's control?

- ❍ Not at all 0
- ❍ Somewhat 1
- ❍ Moderately 2
- ❍ Very much 3
- ❍ Extremely 4

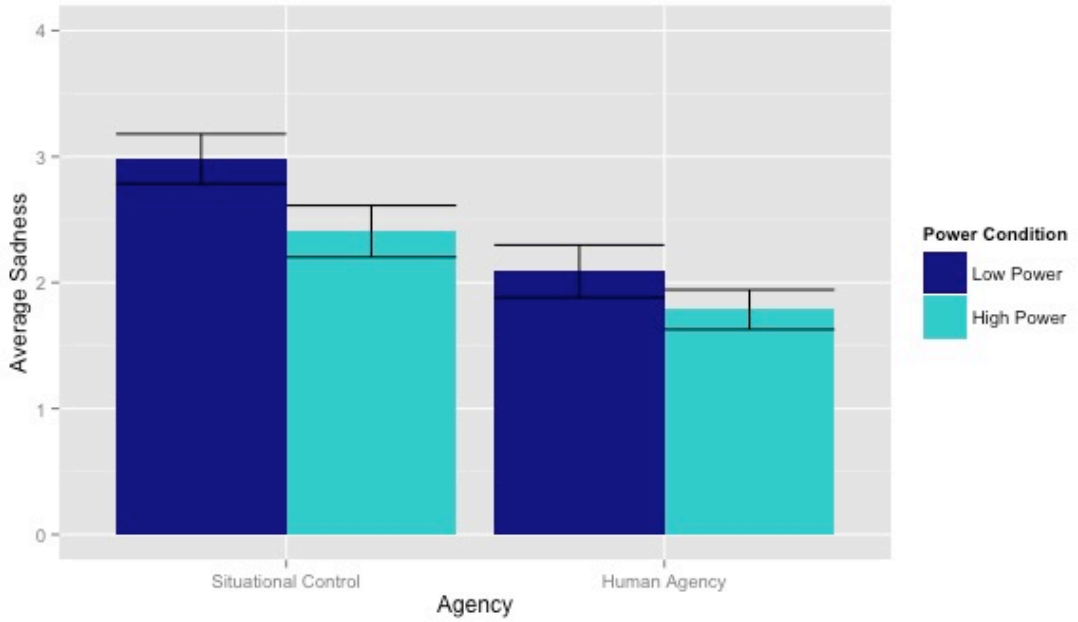


Figure 1. This graph presents participants' average sadness rated on a scale from 0 (not at all) to 4 (extremely) by agency and power condition.

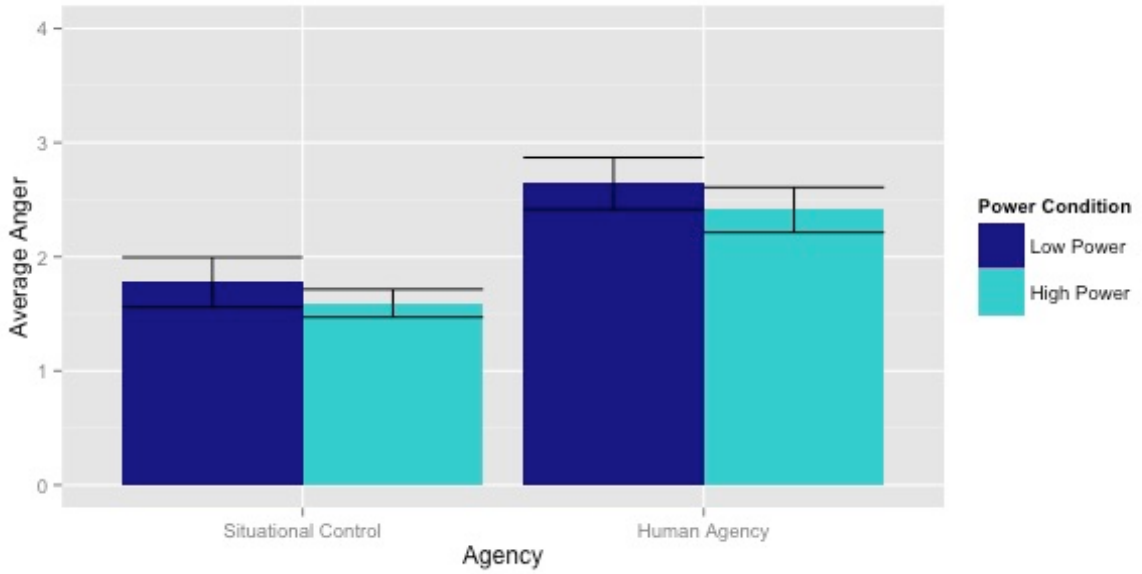


Figure 2. This graph presents participants' average feelings of anger rated on a scale from 0 (not at all) to 4 (extremely) by agency and power condition.