We thank Michael Kraus, Anna Luerssen, Danny Heller, and the Self, Identity, and Relationships (SIR) Lab for their comments.

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Serena Chen, Department of Psychology, 3210 Tolman Hall, #1650, University of California, Berkeley, Berkeley, CA 94720-1650; E-mail: serchen@berkeley.edu.

© 2017 Guilford Publications, Inc.

563

THEY LOVE ME, THEY LOVE ME NOT?: SOCIAL POWER SHAPES EXPECTATIONS OF ACCEPTANCE AND CONCERNS ABOUT REJECTION

Serena Chen, Jordan A. Tharp, and Maya M. Kuehn
University of California, Berkeley

Four studies tested the overriding hypothesis that an actor’s high relative to low social power enhances the actor’s expectations of social acceptance, and attenuates his or her concerns about social rejection, from others. Study 1 yielded correlational support for this hypothesis, while Studies 2 and 3 produced causal evidence. Study 3 also suggested that actor-power effects on acceptance expectations and rejection concerns emerge in relation to both opposite-power counterparts and others in general, though the effects tend to be stronger for the former. Finally, Study 4 confirmed that our effects are driven at least partly by an actor’s power, though at times in interaction with the high or low power of potential sources of acceptance/rejection. The present studies extend a growing literature on power’s effects on processes and phenomena related to social acceptance and rejection. We discuss limitations, implications, and future directions.

Keywords: social power, social acceptance, social rejection

For nearly three decades, social psychologists have worked to document the influence of social power on people’s thoughts, feelings, and behaviors across a broad span of domains, including stereotyping, decision making, pro-sociality, goal pursuit, and authenticity (for reviews, see Galinsky, Rucker, & Magee, 2015; Guinote & Chen, in press; Keltner, Gruenfeld, & Anderson, 2003). In recent years, increasing attention has been given to exploring how power shapes cognitions and behaviors related to the fundamental need for belonging (Baumeister & Leary, 1995)—for example, how power shapes people’s responses to social rejection (Kuehn, Chen, & Gordon, 2015; Narayanan, Tai, & Kinias, 2013). Among the most basic cognitions related to assessing one’s belonging status are expectations of being accepted and
concerns about being rejected by others. In the current research, we tested power’s effects on precisely these cognitions, hypothesizing that an actor’s power should boost his or her acceptance expectations and attenuate his or her rejection concerns.

ACCEPTANCE AND REJECTION THROUGH THE LENS OF SOCIAL POWER

Social power is characterized by asymmetric dependence. High power affords resource access and the freedom to pursue opportunities, leaving the powerful relatively independent of their lower-power counterparts. Low power restricts resource access and necessitates navigating constrained environments, making lower-power people dependent on the more powerful (Emerson, 1962; Fiske, 1993; Magee & Smith, 2013). Such asymmetric dependence leads to cognitive, emotional, and behavioral differences between the powerful versus powerless—several of which suggest that power is likely to enhance acceptance expectations and diminish rejection concerns.

In particular, relative to the powerless, the powerful are more attuned to rewards than to threats (Keltner et al., 2003). For example, high-power actors focus more on potentially winning versus losing money by “hitting” in blackjack (Galinsky, Gruenfeld, & Magee, 2003). This elevated reward focus should extend to the social domain, attuning powerful people to social prizes like acceptance. Conversely, their attenuated threat focus implies reduced concern with social threats like rejection.

Relative to low-power actors, the powerful exhibit more optimism (Anderson & Galinsky, 2006), which should foster expectations of positive social outcomes, like acceptance, and lessen concerns about negative social outcomes, like rejection. Moreover, optimism is associated with reduced anxiety and neuroticism (Scheier, Carver, & Bridges, 1994), suggesting that powerful actors may worry less about rejection compared to the less-optimistic powerless. Other work shows that high-power actors expect affiliation, a sign of acceptance, from lower-power partners to a greater degree than the reverse (Magee & Smith, 2013). Meanwhile, low power has been linked to greater affiliative motivation (Case, Conlon, & Maner, 2015), suggesting that lower-power actors are more attuned to and concerned about rejection, a sign that their affiliative needs are not being met. Finally, evidence that high power is associated with less loneliness, which fits the notion that higher-relative to lower-power actors are likely to expect more acceptance and be less worried about rejection (Watyz, Chou, Magee, & Galinsky, 2015).

Preliminary evidence for this hypothesis exists. Dominance and perceptions of acceptance are moderately correlated (Leary, Cottrell, & Phillips, 2001). When mating goals are salient, power increases perceptions and expectations of sexual interest from subordinates (Kunstman & Maner, 2010). Power also breeds “illusions of alliance,” perceptions that group members are more loyal than in reality (Brion & Anderson, 2013). On the rejection side, high-power actors underestimate threatening emotions (e.g., contempt) from lower-power partners (Anderson & Berdahl, 2002). Finally, the powerful often show little regard for social norms (Galinsky,
THE PRESENT RESEARCH

Study 1 examined trait-level relationships between actor power and both acceptance expectations and rejection concerns. Study 2 manipulated role-based power in a visualization paradigm, and measured acceptance expectations and rejection concerns from an opposite-power counterpart. Study 3 employed a mindset power manipulation, and measured our outcome variables either within the original power context, or with respect to others in general. Thus, Study 3 examined whether actor power enhances acceptance expectations and lowers rejection concerns only from lower-power counterparts, or also from others in general. Also, by including a “general others” condition, this study began to address whether our effects lie in high or low actor power, as hypothesized, or simply in the (high or low) power of the potential source of acceptance/rejection. Study 4 directly addressed this by manipulating actor power and the power of the potential source of acceptance/rejection in a fully crossed experimental design.

STUDY 1

Study 1 examined the association between trait power and chronic acceptance expectations and rejection concerns. Perceived acceptance (PA) refers to feeling accepted, loved, valued, and supported (Brock, Sarason, Sanghvi, & Gurung, 1998). Fear of negative evaluation (FNE) refers to concern with and fear of unfavorable social judgments (i.e., being rejected; Leary, 1983), tapping into social anxiety (Watson & Friend, 1969). We expected power to be positively associated with perceptions of acceptance, and negatively associated with rejection concerns.

Power and self-esteem are positively associated (Wojciszke & Struzynska-Kujalowicz, 2007), and higher self-esteem is linked to stabler feelings of acceptance and being less threatened by rejection (Nezlek, Kowalski, Leary, Blevins, & Holgate, 2007). Thus, we included a self-esteem measure to address the notion that high-power individuals may report greater acceptance expectations and lower rejection concerns simply due to their higher self-esteem. We also included a mood measure to control for its potential influence.

METHOD

Participants and Procedure

Ninety-five (48 female) participants were recruited via Amazon’s Mechanical Turk (MTurk; Buhrmester, Kwang, & Gosling, 2011). They provided demographics and
completed a series of measures (see below). Across all studies, participants were debriefed and compensated after completing all measures. Additional demographics are reported in Supplemental Materials for all studies.

Measures

Mood. The single-item Self-Assessment Manikin (SAM; Bradley & Lang, 1994) assessed current mood state, on a 9-point scale (range 1–9, M = 6.31, SD = 1.73).

Self-Esteem. The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES; Rosenberg, 1965) assessed trait self-esteem, on a 4-point scale (α = .84, range 2.0–4.0, M = 3.00, SD = 0.43).

Trait Power. The Personal Sense of Power Scale (PSPS; Anderson, John, & Keltner, 2012) assessed trait power, on a 7-point scale (α = .83, range 2.63–6.75, M = 4.68, SD = 0.90).

Fear of Negative Evaluation. The 12-item Brief Fear of Negative Evaluation Scale (BFNE; Leary, 1983) assessed trait rejection concerns. Sample items: “I am afraid that others will not approve of me,” “I often worry that I will say or do the wrong things.” Responses on 5-point Likert scales (1 = Not at all characteristic of me, 5 = Extremely characteristic of me) were reversed when appropriate and averaged (α = .89, range 1.00–4.75, M = 2.92, SD = 0.80).

Perceived Acceptance. Eight items from the Friends subscale of the Perceived Acceptance Scale (PAS; Brock et al., 1998), modified to be about “other people” rather than friends, assessed the trait tendency to perceive acceptance from people in general. Sample items are: “Other people frequently show me that they care about me,” “I often feel left out of things in my relationships with others” (reverse scored). Responses on 5-point Likert scales (1 = Strongly disagree, 5 = Strongly agree) were reversed when appropriate and averaged (α = .75, range 2.25–5.00, M = 3.37, SD = 0.56).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Mood was unrelated to any measure (rs < .11, ps > .32.). Trait power was positively correlated with perceived acceptance, r(89) = .51, p < .001, 95% CI [.34, .65], and negatively correlated with FNE, r(90) = -.40, p < .001, 95% CI [-.56, -.21]. When self-esteem was included as a predictor, power continued to predict greater perceived acceptance and reduced FNE (see Table 1), suggesting these effects are not driven by power’s association with self-esteem, r(90) = .61, p < .001, 95% CI [.46, .72]. Study 1 thus provided correlational support for the hypothesized links between actor power and acceptance expectations and rejection concerns.

STUDY 2

In Study 2, we manipulated actor power via having participants visualize themselves in either a high- or low-power role vis-à-vis an interaction partner. They then completed measures of acceptance expectations and rejection concerns re-
### TABLE 1. Summary of Study 1 Regressions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictors</th>
<th>Perceived Acceptance (acceptance expectations)</th>
<th>Fear of Negative Evaluation (rejection concerns)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>t-value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 1 Power</td>
<td>.28</td>
<td>5.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 2 Power</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>3.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Esteem</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>2.23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Displayed betas are unstandardized. Predictors in Step 2 were entered simultaneously.
garding this partner. We expected high- relative to low-power participants to re-
port greater acceptance expectations and lower rejection concerns.

METHOD

Participants and Procedure

One hundred ten (45 female) MTurk participants filled in demographics and back-
ground measures before receiving the manipulation and completing dependent
measures.

Background Measures. Background measures of state mood ($M = 6.07$, $SD = 1.58$),
trait self-esteem ($\alpha = .94$, $M = 3.02$, $SD = 0.66$), and trait power ($\alpha = .88$, $M = 4.82$, $SD = 1.04$) were collected with the same measures used in Study 1.

Power Manipulation. Participants were asked to visualize being a part of a group
with one team leader and several members. Participants imagined themselves as
either the leader (high actor power) or a group member (low actor power). High
actor-power participants imagined having the ability to direct and evaluate group
members in their assignments, and control the bonus amount they received. Low
actor-power participants imagined they would be directed and evaluated by the
leader, and have their bonus outcome determined by the leader.

The last sentence of the scenario asked participants to imagine they were about
to meet an opposite-power counterpart for the first time (e.g., high actor-power
participants imagined meeting a group member), and then rate their acceptance
expectations and rejection concerns regarding this counterpart (see Supplemental
Materials for the full scenario). Afterward, participants indicated their role as a
manipulation check.

Dependent Measures. Participants rated nine items tapping acceptance expecta-
tions, three of which asked: how smoothly the interaction would go (1 = Extremely
awkwardly, 7 = Extremely smoothly), how nice the other person would be (1 = Not at
all nice, 7 = Extremely nice), and how much the interaction would be like interacting
with a friend (1 = Not at all similar, 7 = Very similar). The remaining six items were
adapted from the Perceived Acceptance Scale (PAS; Brock et al., 1998). A sample
item is “My team member [leader] would show me that they like and care about
me” (1 = Strongly disagree, 7 = Strongly agree). Overall, this nine-item index ($\alpha = .76$)
tapped expectations for a successful interaction—in essence, being accepted by
one’s opposite-power counterpart.

Intermixed with the above were items assessing rejection concerns. Participants
rated their agreement (1 = Strongly disagree, 7 = Strongly agree) with six items based
on the Fear of Negative Evaluation Scale (FNE; Leary, 1983). Sample items are:
“I would be worried that my team member [leader] would notice my shortcom-
ings,” “I would be worried about making a bad impression on my team member
[leader].” Ratings were reversed where appropriate and averaged ($\alpha = .94$).
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Three participants who reported their role wrong were excluded (remaining $N = 107$). High- and low-power participants did not differ on any of the background measures, $t < 1$.

Displayed in Figure 1, high-power participants reported higher acceptance expectations ($M = 4.96$, $SD = 0.71$) than their low-power counterparts ($M = 4.39$, $SD = 0.72$), $t(104) = 4.10$, $p < .001$, $d = .80$, 95% CI [.30, .85]. They also reported lower rejection concerns ($M = 3.37$, $SD = 1.48$) relative to low-power participants ($M = 4.26$, $SD = 1.43$), $t(105) = -3.19$, $p = .002$, $d = .61$, 95% CI [-1.45, -.34]. Study 2 thereby bolstered Study 1’s findings with causal evidence.

STUDY 3

Study 3 participants recalled a time they had or lacked power relative to another person, and then indicated their acceptance expectations and rejection concerns either with regard to the higher- or lower-power counterpart they recalled (power context), or with regard to others in general (general context). We expected to replicate Study 2 in the power context, while the general context allowed us to ascertain whether the hypothesized actor-power effects also emerge in relation to others in general.
METHOD

Participants and Procedure

Two hundred forty-two (102 female) MTurk participants completed demographics and background measures before receiving the manipulation and completing dependent measures and suspicion probes.

Background Measures. Measures of state mood, trait self-esteem ($\alpha = .94$), and trait power ($\alpha = .92$) were collected using the same measures used in prior studies. Participants also completed a rejection sensitivity measure (Downey & Feldman, 1996; $\alpha = .84$), which taps chronic concerns about and vigilance for rejection, along with the Ten-Item Personality Inventory (TIPI; Gosling, Rentfrow, & Swann, 2003), which assesses dispositional agreeableness, extraversion, neuroticism, conscientiousness, and openness ($\alpha$ ranged .54–.84).

Power Manipulation. Participants completed Galinsky et al.’s (2003) recall manipulation of power. Participants in the high actor-power condition recalled and wrote about a time that they had power over someone else, whereas participants in the low actor-power condition recalled and wrote about a time when someone else had power over them. We added the requirement of recalling a recent experience (within the past year) because half of the participants would later be asked about their expectations and concerns within this specific context. Then, participants completed a 9-point single-item mood measure (Bradley & Lang, 1994).

Dependent Measures. Participants next encountered one of two sets of dependent variables, reflecting our 2 (actor power: high/low) × 2 (context: power/general) between-subjects design. Half rated their acceptance expectations and rejection concerns regarding the opposite-power counterpart whom they had written about for the power-manipulation task. The other half made these ratings in general. Items across sets were phrased to be parallel to each other, only varying in the target of each sentiment. The six acceptance items were adapted from the Perceived Acceptance Scale (PAS; Brock et al., 1998). Sample items are: “This person showed me that they liked and cared about me” (power context) and “I feel that other people show me that they like and care about me” (general context). The six rejection items were adapted from the Fear of Negative Evaluation Scale (FNE; Leary, 1983). Sample items are: “I was worried about what this person would think of me” (power context) and “I worry about what other people will think of me” (general context). These 12 items were intermixed, and participants responded on 5-point scales (1 = Strongly disagree, 5 = Strongly agree). Responses were reversed where appropriate and averaged, creating scores for acceptance expectations (power context $\alpha = .70$; general context $\alpha = .75$) and rejection concerns (power context $\alpha = .91$; general context $\alpha = .93$). See Supplementary Materials for all items.

Manipulation Checks. Participants then indicated how powerful they felt in the recalled experience on a 5-point scale (1 = Not at all powerful, 5 = Extremely powerful), and when the experience had occurred. Fourteen participants who recalled an experience that occurred more than a year ago were retained to maximize statistical power.

MTurk History. The Galinsky et al. (2003) power manipulation has been used extensively and often via MTurk. Thus, we asked participants to indicate if they
had recently completed a similar power-recall task on MTurk, obtaining the following response frequencies: I have never completed a [task] similar to this ($N = 92$); I have not recently completed a [task] similar to this, but I have in the past ($N = 108$); I have recently completed one [task] similar to this ($N = 29$); I have recently completed two [tasks] similar to this ($N = 2$); I have recently completed three or more [tasks] similar to this ($N = 11$).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To obtain a relatively clean sample without markedly reducing statistical power, we excluded the 13 participants who reported having recently completed two or more similar tasks on MTurk, leaving a sample of $N = 229$ (results look similar without these exclusions). On background measures, condition effects emerged for trait power and neuroticism, but controlling for these variables left the results unchanged.

Manipulation Check. High actor-power participants reported greater power in their recalled experience ($M = 3.19$, $SD = 1.14$) relative to low actor-power participants ($M = 1.42$, $SD = .84$), $F(1, 223) = 175.60$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [1.50, 2.03]. They also reported a better mood ($M = 6.26$, $SD = 1.57$) compared to low actor-power participants ($M = 5.35$, $SD = 2.06$), $F(1, 225) = 14.19$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [.43, 1.39]. When mood was held constant, the results remained intact.

Acceptance Expectations. Acceptance expectations were submitted to a 2 (actor power: high/low) × 2 (context: power/general) analysis of variance (ANOVA). Replicating Study 2, high actor-power participants reported greater acceptance expectations ($M = 3.49$, $SD = .64$) than low actor-power participants ($M = 3.07$, $SD = .81$), $F(1, 225) = 19.61$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .08$, 95% CI [.23, .60] (see Figure 2a). Participants
also reported greater acceptance expectations in general \((M = 3.44, SD = .73)\) than within the recalled power context \((M = 3.14, SD = .76)\), \(F(1, 225) = 9.33, p = .003, \eta^2 = .04, 95\% \text{ CI [-.47, -.10]}\). The interaction was not significant, \(F(1, 225) = 2.29, p = .13, \eta^2 = .009\), but simple effect tests revealed a stronger effect of actor power on acceptance expectations within the power context, \(t(115) = -4.30, p < .001, d = .80, 95\% \text{ CI [-.82, -.30]}\), than in general, \(t(110) = -2.01, p = .047, d = .38, 95\% \text{ CI [-.55, -.004]}\).

Rejection Concerns. Submitting rejection concerns to the same ANOVA, high actor-power participants \((M = 2.61, SD = 1.01)\) reported lower rejection fears relative to their lower actor-power counterparts \((M = 3.33, SD = 1.04)\), \(F(1, 225) = 27.79, p < .001, \eta^2 = .11, 95\% \text{ CI [-.98, -.45]}\). No context effect emerged, \(F < 1\), but a significant interaction did, \(F(1, 225) = 4.87, p = .028, \eta^2 = .019\). Paralleling acceptance expectations, the simple effect of power was stronger within the power context, \(t(115) = 5.87, p < .001, d = 1.09, 95\% \text{ CI [.67, 1.35]}\), than in general, \(t(110) = 1.97, p = .051, d = .37, 95\% \text{ CI [-.002, .83]}\) (see Figure 2b). Overall, Study 3 provided further causal evidence for our hypothesis.

**STUDY 4**

By documenting our key effects in relation to “others in general,” Study 3 fits the view that our effects are due at least partly to the (high or low) power of actors themselves insofar as the power of “general others” is unspecified. However, there remains the possibility that acceptance expectations and rejection concerns are driven by the power of others—for example, perhaps people tend to expect greater acceptance from anyone whom they see as low in power. Disentangling the influence of actor power versus the power of one’s interaction partner(s) is tricky, given that power is an inherently relational construct (i.e., by definition, people possess or lack power in relation to others). Still, we attempted to do this in Study 4 by or-
thogonally manipulating actor and partner power. We reasoned that if our effects are due at least partly to actor power, high actor-power participants should report greater acceptance expectations and lower rejection concerns, regardless of partner power. If our effects are driven solely by the power of the potential source of acceptance/rejection, then acceptance expectations and rejection concerns should be predicted solely by partner power.

METHOD

Participants and Procedure

Two hundred seventy-one (130 female) participants were recruited via MTurk. Participants filled in demographics and background measures before receiving the manipulation and completing dependent measures.

Background Measures. Background measures of trait self-esteem (α = .92, M = 3.09, SD = 0.63) and trait power (α = .89, M = 4.74, SD = 1.14) were collected with the same measures used in Study 1.

Power Manipulation. As in Study 2, participants visualized being a part of a group with one team leader and several members—as either the leader (high actor power) or a group member (low actor power). The Study 2 manipulation was expanded upon by having participants imagine they were about to meet either an opposite-power counterpart (i.e., high actor-power participants imagined meeting a group member from their group, whereas low actor-power participants imagined meeting the leader of their group), or an equal-power counterpart (i.e., low-actor power participants imagined meeting a group member from the other group, whereas high-actor power participants imagined meeting the team leader for the other group) for the first time (see Supplemental Materials for the full scenario). They then rated their acceptance expectations and rejection concerns regarding this counterpart, as well as manipulation checks of their role and who dispenses the bonus.

Dependent Measures. The dependent variables were acceptance expectations and rejection concerns in relation to the imagined interaction partner, using the same items used in Study 2 (acceptance expectations; α = .86, M = 4.99, SD = 0.84; rejection concerns, α = .94, M = 3.90, SD = 1.44).

1. For Study 4, we had to allow the “in-group” versus “out-group” status of the anticipated interaction partner to covary with the opposite-power versus equal-power condition to which participants were assigned because it was not possible to instantiate an equal-power condition with an in-group member for high actor-power participants since there is only one team leader per group. We judged this to be largely unproblematic since any plausible hypotheses related to in-group/out-group status (e.g., people may generally expect more acceptance from in-group compared to out-group members) would be separate from our focal predictions. Still, for interested readers, we analyzed our two main dependent variables as a function of in-group/out-group status rather than as a function of actor and partner power. There was a significant in-group/out-group effect for rejection concerns (in-group, M = 4.09; out-group, M = 3.49), t(250) = -3.33, p = .001, 95% CI [-.95, -.24], but not for acceptance expectations (in-group, M = 4.85; out-group, M = 4.76), t(250) = -0.81, p = .42, 95% CI [-.31, .13].
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Nineteen participants who missed the role or both manipulation checks were excluded (remaining $N = 252$; results look similar when these participants were included). High- and low actor-power participants did not differ on any of the background measures, $t < 1.00$.

Acceptance Expectations. A $2 \times 2$ ANOVA yielded an actor-power main effect. Replicating previous findings, high-power participants reported greater acceptance expectations ($M = 4.90$, $SD = 0.80$) than low-power participants ($M = 4.69$, $SD = 0.91$), $F(1, 251) = 5.25$, $p = .023$, $\eta^2 = .021$, 95% CI [.03, .46]. Neither the partner power, $F(1, 251) = 0.67$, $p = .42$, $\eta^2 = .003$, nor the interaction was significant, $F(1, 251) = 2.85$, $p = .09$, $\eta^2 = .011$, although the latter was marginal (see Figure 3a).

Rejection Concerns. A similar $2 \times 2$ ANOVA for rejection concerns did not yield an actor-power effect, although high actor-power participants ($M = 3.68$, $SD = 1.39$) did report directionally lower rejection fears compared to low actor-power participants ($M = 3.91$, $SD = 1.52$), $F(1, 251) = 269$, $p = .102$, $\eta^2 = .011$. There was also no partner-power effect, $F(1, 251) = 1.80$, $p = .18$, $\eta^2 = .007$, countering any notion that the power of a potential source of acceptance/rejection is the main driver behind our hypothesized effects. However, a significant interaction did emerge, $F(1, 251) = 6.26$, $p = .013$, $\eta^2 = .025$ (see Figure 3b). The simple effect of actor power (high, $M = 3.48$; low, $M = 4.31$) was significant in the high partner-power condition, $t(121.22) = 3.11$, $p = .002$, $d = 0.55$, 95% CI [.30, .1.36], but not in the low partner-power one (high, $M = 3.89$; low, $M = 3.51$), $t(115.27) = -1.59$, $p = .11$, $d = 0.28$, 95% CI [-.86, .09].
Overall, Study 4 provided further evidence for the role of actor power on acceptance expectations; regardless of the power of the partner, participants in a high actor-power role expected greater acceptance from the partner than those in a low actor-power role. The pattern was different, though, for rejection concerns, wherein the hypothesized actor-power effect was only significant when partner power was high. The means show that this effect was driven by low actor-power participants’ reporting particularly pronounced concerns about rejection from a high-power partner. Regardless, however, the results for rejection concerns do not support the notion that our effects are driven simply by the power of one’s interaction partner.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Across four studies, we found evidence indicating that actor power enhances acceptance expectations, and that this effect is fairly robust, emerging in relation to opposite-power counterparts as well as others in general, and not hinging on the power of the potential source of acceptance. The majority of the studies also supported our hypothesis that higher relative to lower actor power diminishes concerns about rejection, although Study 4 yielded evidence that this effect can at times hinge on the power of the potential source of rejection.
Overall, these findings advance a small literature on power and social acceptance and rejection. Recent research, for example, shows that power lessens negative emotional and self-esteem reactions to rejection (Kuehn et al., 2015), and prompts efforts to seek social connection after rejection (Narayanan, Tai, & Kinias, 2013). The current findings cohere with these findings in suggesting, broadly speaking, that the powerful tend to fare well in the social realm—insofar as they tend to feel accepted, don’t fret as much about rejection, and when rejection does happen, they respond emotionally and behaviorally with a “thick skin.” Our work may also shed more light on the recent finding suggesting that power reduces loneliness because it reduces belonging needs (Waytz et al., 2015). These findings are readily interpreted through the lens of the current results: loneliness and belonging needs may be low among the powerful precisely because they tend to expect acceptance and worry little about rejection.

Discovering factors that shape acceptance expectations and rejection concerns is an important pursuit in light of substantial evidence indicating that the degree to which people expect to be accepted and fear being rejected has an enormous influence on their subsequent behavior and outcomes (Darley & Gross, 1983; Downey & Feldman, 1996; Snyder & Swann, 1978). Much of this work has focused on identifying particular groups of people who tend to harbor positive or negative acceptance expectations and rejection concerns (e.g., low self-esteem individuals; individuals high in rejection sensitivity). Our findings document the impact of an omnipresent social-structural variable—power—on these core social cognitions. The current findings may also shed new light on various power-related differences. For example, the higher acceptance expectations and dampened rejection fears of the powerful may help account for their greater risk taking (Anderson & Galinsky, 2006). On another note, our findings may illuminate a key pathway by which power hierarchies are reinforced: expectations often give rise to reality, implying that the powerful may invite actual acceptance simply by expecting to receive it (Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1966).

In a different vein, Study 3’s results raise the possibility that power’s effects on acceptance expectations and rejection concerns are especially strong when assessed within the context wherein the power differentials exist. This in turn raises the question of whether other effects of power vary in strength within versus beyond the power context. Some researchers have begun to tackle this broader question (e.g., Fragale, Overbeck, & Neale, 2011; Magee & Smith, 2013), articulating hypotheses about when power’s effects should carry over to other contexts, but more attention is needed on this front.

Study 4 attempted to disentangle actor and partner power effects so as to rule out the possibility that the hypothesized effects are driven simply by perceptions of other people’s power, rather than one’s own power. More broadly, though, these studies suggest the need to consider whether other effects in the broad literature
on power may reside in actor power, partner power, or some combination of the two. Much of the literature on power assumes, implicitly or explicitly, that effects are driven by actor power. And yet, power is an inherently relational construct, suggesting the need to incorporate partner power into our understanding of power’s effects on social life.

It is important to acknowledge caveats and limitations of the present research, as well as the future directions they suggest. First, we have couched our findings in terms of high actor power, but one could frame them in terms of low actor power reducing acceptance expectancies and increasing rejection concerns. The findings for rejection concerns in Study 4, in particular, point to the possibility that, at least at times, low power may be the driver of power’s effects on acceptance and rejection cognitions. Of course, future research is needed to ascertain more definitively whether the present phenomena are driven by both high and low actor power, as we have assumed, or the circumstances under which high or low actor power may be especially influential. Studies that include a neutral condition (neither high nor low actor power, or a moderate degree of actor power) would be useful in this regard.

Second, our findings could simply reflect the social reality of the powerful: more often than not, the powerful probably receive more acceptance and less rejection than the powerless, as it is usually advantageous to express liking toward the person who controls your outcomes. However, research has shown that greater power and dominance are associated with overestimating liking and underestimating threatening emotions from a partner, compared to the partner’s reports of liking and emotions (Anderson & Berdahl, 2002, Study 2), suggesting our effects may reflect biased perception. Future work could explore the (in)accuracy of the cognitions documented in the present work, and their potential downstream consequences (cf. Brion & Anderson, 2013). In a somewhat related vein, it might also be interesting to explore how genuine people perceive others’ acceptance to be. That is, one could expect acceptance, but doubt its sincerity. Research by Inesi and colleagues showing that high-power individuals view lower-power individuals’ acts of generosity toward them cynically, as being instrumental in nature (Inesi, Gruenfeld, & Galinsky, 2012), raise the possibility that high actor-power individuals may tend to hold higher expectations of acceptance, but do not necessarily believe in the sincerity of the acceptance.

Third, our studies are best viewed as a first step, offering fairly robust evidence for power’s impact on acceptance expectations and rejection concerns, but leaving questions of underlying mechanisms unanswered. Finally, none of our studies actually put participants in high versus low positions of power. Future studies could use a power manipulation that does this, although we would anticipate similar findings given the large literature showing that the kinds of manipulations we relied on yield the same results as more involved power manipulations.
REFERENCES


SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS

INFORMATION ABOUT EXCLUSIONS

We have fully disclosed the number of collected observations across all four studies. Attention-check items were included in all studies. We did not exclude anyone based on their (inaccurate) responses to these checks because the results looked similar, if not nearly identical, with and without excluding these participants. Study 1 had no exclusions at all. In Study 2 we excluded people who missed the manipulation checks, as reported. In Study 3, we excluded based on prior experience with the power manipulation we used, as reported. And in Study 4, we excluded based on missing the role only or both manipulation checks, as reported.

INFORMATION ABOUT SAMPLE SIZE DETERMINATION AND DATA-COLLECTION STOPPING RULE

The data for Study 1 were collected in 2011, and we did not follow any particular rules or guidelines for either sample size determination or data-collection stopping. For Studies 2 through 4, we were guided by prevailing norms for social-psychological studies and their associated effect sizes and aimed for 50–60 participants per condition. For each of these studies, we stopped data collection when we reached this sample target.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Study 1: 43 participants identified themselves as European American, 35 Asian American or East Asian, 10 Indian or South Asian, 2 Latino/a, 1 African American, 1 Native American; 2 indicated they were of “other” ethnicities, and 1 did not indicate ethnicity. Age ranged from 19–65 years (M = 35).

Study 2: 86 participants identified themselves as European American, 9 Asian American or East Asian, 4 Latino/a, 3 African American; 7 identified with multiple ethnicities, and 1 identified his/her ethnicity as “other.” Age ranged from 19–65 years (M = 30).

Study 3: 163 participants identified themselves as European American, 25 Asian American or East Asian, 18 Latino/a, 17 African American; 17 identified with multiple ethnicities, and 2 identified his/her ethnicity as “other.” Age ranged from 19–64 years (M = 31).

Study 4: 174 participants identified themselves as European American, 41 Asian American or East Asian, 25 African American, 10 Latino/a, 9 Native American, 2 Middle Eastern, and 10 identified their ethnicity as “other.” Age ranged from 20–77 years (M = 35).

STUDY 2 SCENARIOS

High Power. You are part of a project with a group of colleagues. The group is organized such that there is one team leader and several team members—you are the Team Leader, and are in charge of the project. This project is pretty large in scale and will last for a couple
of months, and there are a number of steps that your team must complete to move toward your final product.

Each week, you will assign tasks to your team members—you get to choose who is assigned to what portion of the project. Additionally, the team members will send their materials to you at the end of each week, so you can check on their progress to ensure that everyone is pulling their weight. As Team Leader, your only real role for this project is keeping everyone on track—you don’t have additional duties for the project beyond management.

At the end of the project, if your team does well on the project, your group will receive a bonus that you as Team Leader will be able to split up between team members (including yourself). Thus, if someone isn’t contributing to the project, you will have the ability to withhold bonus money from them at the end of the project.

Imagine that you are about to meet with one of your team members for the first time, and that you don’t know each other well yet.

### STUDY 3 Dependent Measure Items, Tailored to Context

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Power context</th>
<th>General context</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Instructions</strong></td>
<td>We want you to think now about your relationships and social experiences in general. To what extent are the following statements true for you right now, at this moment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We want you to continue thinking back to the situation you recalled and answer the following questions, to best of your ability, about how you perceived and felt about the other person who you had power over [who held power over you] in that particular situation. To what extent would you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FNE Items</strong></td>
<td><em>reverse-coded items.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was worried about what this person would think of me.</td>
<td>I worry about what other people will think of me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was worried about making a bad impression on this person.</td>
<td>I worry about making a bad impression on others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was afraid that this person would not approve of me.</td>
<td>I am afraid that others will not approve of me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was worried that this person would notice my shortcomings.</td>
<td>I am afraid of other people noticing my shortcomings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was worried about saying or doing the wrong things with this person.</td>
<td>I worry that I say or do the wrong things.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being judged by this person would NOT have had a strong effect on me.*</td>
<td>When someone is judging me, it does NOT have a strong effect on me.*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PA Items</strong></td>
<td><em>reverse-coded items.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I felt important in the eyes of this person.</td>
<td>I feel I am important in the eyes of the people around me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This person was sensitive to my needs.</td>
<td>I feel other people are sensitive to my needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This person didn’t understand where I was coming from.*</td>
<td>I feel that other people don’t understand where I’m coming from.*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This person showed me that they liked and cared about me.</td>
<td>I feel that other people show me that they like and care about me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I wondered if this person likes me.*</td>
<td>I wonder if other people like me.*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I expected this person to trust me to make my own decisions.</td>
<td>I feel that other people trust me to make my own decisions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Items were presented with PA and FNE items intermixed. *reverse-coded items.
Low Power. You are part of a project with a group of colleagues. The group is organized such that there is one team leader and several team members—you are a team member, and you report to your team leader. This project is pretty large in scale and will last for a couple of months, and there are a number of steps that your team must complete to move toward your final product.

Each week, you will be assigned tasks by your team leader—the leader gets to choose who is assigned to what portion of the project. Additionally, you will send your completed materials to the team leader at the end of each week, so the leader can check on the group members’ progress to ensure that everyone is pulling their weight. As a team member, your role for this project is to complete the duties assigned to you and to stay on track with the schedule set by the team leader.

At the end of the project, if your team does well on the project, your group will receive a bonus that the team leader will be able to split up between team members (including the leader). Thus, if you aren’t contributing to the project, the leader will have the ability to withhold bonus money from you at the end of the project.

Imagine that you are about to meet with your team leader for the first time, and that you don’t know each other well yet.

STUDY 4 SCENARIOS

Low Actor/Low Partner Condition. Imagine you work at a medium-sized company. The department that you work in is made up of three smaller units. Each unit is made up of a Team Leader and a group of Team Members who report to the leader.

Imagine you are a Team Member for one of the units, and are currently working on a large project. This project will last for a couple of months, and there are a number of steps that your team must complete to move toward your final product.

Each week, your Team Leader assigns tasks to you and the other Team Members—the leader chooses who is assigned to what portion of the project. Additionally, Team Members send their materials to the Team Leader at the end of each week, so the leader can check on team members’ progress to ensure that everyone is pulling their weight. As a Team Member, your role for this project is to complete the duties assigned to you and to stay on track with the schedule set by the Team Leader.

At the end of the project, if your team does well on the project, your group will receive a bonus that your Team Leader gets to split up among team members (including the leader). Thus, if someone isn’t contributing to the project, the leader has the ability to withhold bonus money from them at the end of the project.

Keeping in mind the above, we would now like you to visualize a particular scenario. Imagine that you are about to meet with a team member from one of the other two units in your department for the first time. This is the first time you will be meeting face-to-face with this person, so you don’t know each other well yet.

Low Actor/High Partner Condition. Imagine you work at a medium-sized company. The department that you work in is made up of three smaller units. Each unit is made up of a Team Leader and a group of Team Members who report to the leader.
Imagine you work at a medium-sized company. The department that you work in is made up of three smaller units. Each unit is made up of a Team Leader and a group of Team Members who report to the leader.

Imagine you are the Team Leader for one of the units, and are currently overseeing a large project. This project will last for a couple of months, and there are a number of steps that your team must complete to move toward your final product.

Each week, you assign tasks to your Team Members—you choose who is assigned to what portion of the project. Additionally, the Team Members send their materials to you at the end of each week, so you can check on their progress to ensure that everyone is pulling their weight. As Team Leader, your main role for this project is keeping everyone on track.

At the end of the project, if your team does well on the project, your group will receive a bonus that you as Team Leader get to split up among Team Members (including yourself). Thus, if someone isn’t contributing to the project, you have the ability to withhold bonus money from them at the end of the project.

Keeping in mind the above, we would now like you to visualize a particular scenario. Imagine that you are about to meet with one of your Team Members for the first time. This is the first time you will be meeting face-to-face with this person, so you don’t know each other well yet.

*High Actor/Low Partner Condition.* Imagine you work at a medium-sized company. The department that you work in is made up of three smaller units. Each unit is made up of a Team Leader and a group of Team Members who report to the leader.

Imagine you are the Team Leader for one of the units, and are currently overseeing a large project. This project will last for a couple of months, and there are a number of steps that your team must complete to move toward your final product.

Each week, you assign tasks to your Team Members—you choose who is assigned to what portion of the project. Additionally, the Team Members send their materials to you at the end of each week, so you can check on their progress to ensure that everyone is pulling their weight. As Team Leader, your main role for this project is keeping everyone on track.

At the end of the project, if your team does well on the project, your group will receive a bonus that you as Team Leader get to split up among Team Members (including yourself). Thus, if someone isn’t contributing to the project, you have the ability to withhold bonus money from them at the end of the project.

Keeping in mind the above, we would now like you to visualize a particular scenario. Imagine that you are about to meet with one of your Team Members for the first time. This is the first time you will be meeting face-to-face with this person, so you don’t know each other well yet.

*High Actor/High Partner Condition.* Imagine you work at a medium-sized company. The department that you work in is made up of three smaller units. Each unit is made up of a Team Leader and a group of Team Members who report to the leader.

Imagine you are the Team Leader for one of the units, and are currently overseeing a large project. This project will last for a couple of months, and there are a number of steps that your team must complete to move toward your final product.

Each week, you assign tasks to your Team Members—you choose who is assigned to what portion of the project. Additionally, the Team Members send their materials to you at the end of each week, so you can check on their progress to ensure that everyone is pulling their weight. As Team Leader, your main role for this project is keeping everyone on track.
At the end of the project, if your team does well on the project, your group will receive a bonus that you as Team Leader get to split up among Team Members (including yourself). Thus, if someone isn’t contributing to the project, you have the ability to withhold bonus money from them at the end of the project.

Keeping in mind the above, we would now like you to visualize a particular scenario. Imagine that you are about to meet with the team leader from one of the other two units in your department. This is the first time you will be meeting face-to-face with this person, so you don’t know each other well yet.