



## Examining the Effects of Power as a Function of Self-Construals and Gender

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*Building on prior work showing that the effects of power depend on the goals that people associate with power (Chen, Lee-Chai, & Bargh, 2001), the present research examined the goals powerholders pursue as a function of their self-construal and gender. An independent self-construal, or a view of the self as separate from others, is associated with the promotion of one's own goals, while an interdependent self-construal, or a view of the self as interconnected with others, entails a focus on others' goals. Because power affords the opportunity to pursue one's current goals, when power is coupled with an independent self-construal, self-interest goals are likely to be enhanced, whereas power combined with an interdependent self-construal should heighten other-oriented goals. In light of research suggesting gender differences in self-construals (e.g., Cross & Madson, 1997a), it was hypothesized that men and women would experience particular combinations of power and self-construals differently, resulting in distinct power-goal effects. Participants read a vignette describing a situation in which their own interests were pitted against another person's interests. The results showed that different combinations of power and self-construals—and the sense of independence or interdependence associated with them—led men and women to pursue similar goals in response to the vignette situation. Overall, these findings represent a first step in examining the joint role of self-construals and gender in determining the effects of power.*

Over the past decade, the topic of social power has captured great interest among social and personality psychologists (e.g., Fiske & Dépret, 1996). Issues involving power are, in fact, pervasive in daily social life—in interactions between bosses and employees, parents and children, and even between friends and between spouses. One issue, familiar to many who have been in more than one situation in which others have held greater power, is the different ways powerholders may behave. For example, some powerholders seem to put their own interests first, guided by the belief that power comes with rewards and privileges, whereas others adhere to the notion that power comes with

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responsibilities. The latter place the interests of others first, even viewing it as their duty to do so.

Research has identified numerous personality and situational factors to explain why power can have such different effects (for a review, see Lee-Chai & Bargh, 2000). By showing that power does not have the same effect on all people nor across all situations, this work suggests the need to take a Person  $\times$  Situation approach, which is the approach we took in the present research to examine the joint role of self-construals and gender in determining power's effects.

Much like work on power, research on self-construals has witnessed major advances in recent decades (e.g., Markus & Cross, 1990; Triandis, 1989). The distinction between independent and interdependent self-construals is among the most widely researched to date (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). An independent self-construal entails defining the self as an autonomous entity, separate from others, whereas an interdependent self-construal refers to viewing the self as bound to and influenced by others. Independent and interdependent self-construals are thought to give rise to distinct forms of cognition, affect, motivation, and behavior. For example, they have been linked to distinct, cross-cultural patterns in self-description (e.g., Cousins, 1989), persuasion (e.g., Han & Shavitt, 1994), and values and preferences (Gardner, Gabriel, & Lee, 1999; Kim & Markus, 1999).

In a recent paper, Cross and Madson (1997a) argued that men in U.S. society are encouraged to develop independent self-construals, whereas U.S. women are socialized to hold interdependent self-construals. The goal of the present research was to integrate Cross and Madson's theorizing on self-construals and gender with prior research on the effects of power. Our main hypothesis was that men and women are likely to experience particular combinations of power and self-construals differently, leading them to respond in distinct ways.

### **Personality and Situational Moderators of the Effects of Social Power**

Recognizing that power is likely to exert a variety of effects, researchers have studied a range of personality and situation variables that moderate its influences. For example, research has shown that men who score highly on the Attraction to Sexual Aggression (ASA) scale (Malamuth, 1989a) tend to hold dominance as a motive in sexual relations (Malamuth, 1986, 1989b; see also Lisak & Roth, 1988). Other research has shown that men who score highly on the Likelihood to Sexually Harass (LSH) scale (Pryor, 1987), which assesses the likelihood of using one's leverage in a situation to take sexual advantage of subordinates (e.g., Pryor, LaVite, & Stoller, 1993; Pryor & Stoller, 1994), mentally associate the concepts of power and sex. Subsequent work has demonstrated the automaticity of this power-sex mental association (Bargh, Raymond, Pryor, & Strack, 1995).

Chen, Lee-Chai, and Bargh (2001) examined relationship orientation as a moderator of power's effects, arguing that power is associated with different goals for individuals with a chronic communal versus exchange orientation (Clark & Mills, 1979). More specifically, they reasoned that, given the "need-based" rule governing communal relationships, whereby members give and receive benefits based on need, communals are likely to view the powerful as being in a position to look out for the less powerful, who are needier. In short, communals are likely to associate power with social-responsibility goals. In contrast, the "tit-for-tat" rule dictating the give and take of benefits in exchange relationships suggests that exchangers are likely to link power with self-interest goals. In the eyes of exchange powerholders, since they

can offer more to the relationship exchange than the less powerful, it is only fair and appropriate for them to focus on pursuing their own needs and interests.

Because of the differing power–goal associations, Chen et al. hypothesized that, when in power, communals and exchangers should respond in distinct, goal-oriented ways. To test this, communals and exchangers were primed with the concept of power, and then given the chance to pursue social-responsibility or self-interest goals. Across several studies, power-primed communals tended to behave in responsible ways, while power-primed exchangers acted more in line with their self-interest. More recent findings bolster the idea that distinct power–goal associations exist for communals and exchangers by showing that the influence of these associations holds, and may even be exacerbated, over an extended period of time (Lee-Chai & Bargh, 2001).

Situational moderators of power's effects have also been studied. For instance, research has examined the effects of temporarily inducing a sense of responsibility on how perceivers in a position of power process social information (Goodwin, Gubin, Fiske, & Yzerbyt, 2000). This work showed that making responsibility concerns salient just prior to exposing participants to information about a target person led participants placed in a position of power to attend more responsibly to stereotype-disconfirming information about the target, as compared to their counterparts for whom responsibility concerns were not made temporarily salient.

In the present research, we examined self-construals as a moderator of power's effects. Why would self-construals act as a moderator? Chen et al.'s (2001) research showed that activating power among communals and exchangers enhanced responses consistent with their chronic goals, and the Goodwin et al. (2000) work showed that making responsibility concerns salient led individuals in a position of power to process information in a manner consistent with their temporarily-elicited goals. Both findings suggest, then, that power affords the opportunity to pursue one's current goals (see also Keltner, Gruenfeld, & Anderson, *in press*). Self-construals may be another source of goals (e.g., Markus & Kitayama, 1991), suggesting that when power is coupled with a given self-construal, the particular goals associated with “the self construal” should be heightened.

### **Goals Associated with Independent and Interdependent Self-Construals**

What goals are associated with different self-construals? Markus and Kitayama (1991) argued that becoming “independent from others” and being able to “express one's unique attributes” (p. 226) are among the major tasks associated with an independent self-construal. Put another way, individuals who view the self in this way are relatively self-oriented, focused on the promotion of their own goals. In contrast, the key tasks associated with an interdependent self-construal are establishing and maintaining connections with important others. To achieve this, individuals who hold such a self-construal find ways to “fit in with relevant others” and to “fulfill and create obligation” (p. 227). Thus, such individuals are mainly attuned to the social context, rather than the self, and aim primarily to promote the goals of important others.

Brewer and Gardner (1996) offered an expanded framework delineating three distinct self-construals and their associated goals. Self-interest is the key motive of what they term the personal self-construal, which maps onto the independent self-construal. The relational self-construal, like the interdependent self-construal, refers to the self in relation to other individuals (e.g., a romantic partner), and its

motivational focus is the interests and needs of these others, rather than one's own. Finally, the collective self-construal refers to the self as a member of a group or collective (e.g., a sorority). When this self-construal is operative, group interests take primacy.

The "inclusion-of-other-in-self" (IOS) approach also suggests a link between self-construals and goals (e.g., Aron, Aron, Tudor, & Nelson, 1991). Research on this approach has shown that close relationships involve incorporating one's partner into the self so that self- and partner-views become merged. As a result, there is a shift in motivational focus from attending simply to one's own interests to those of the included partner as well.

In short, various lines of research suggest links between particular self-construals and particular goals. What goals, then, are powerholders with independent versus interdependent self-construals likely to pursue? Chen et al. (2001) showed that, when in power, communals and exchangers were especially likely to act in accord with their distinct, chronic goals. Being responsive to others' needs is a chronic concern for communals, much as it is for those with an interdependent self-construal. Thus, it stands to reason that, when in power, individuals who hold an interdependent self-construal are especially likely to pursue other-oriented, responsibility goals. Gardner and Seeley (2000) similarly proposed a link between interdependence and benevolent uses of power. In their mainly theoretical piece, they in fact argued that interdependence increases attention to others' goals, consistent with Chen et al., among others (e.g., Markus & Kitayama, 1991).

In contrast, the key concern of exchange-oriented individuals is making sure that they are getting their "fair share"—that they get as much as they give and that others give as much as they take. In essence, exchangers' main obligation is to the self. In this regard, exchange orientation maps onto the independent self-construal, which similarly emphasizes promoting one's own goals. It stands to reason, then, that powerholders with an independent self-construal should be relatively self-oriented and especially likely to pursue self-interest goals. A major aim of the current research was to test the idea that different self-construals—and the sense of independence and interdependence associated with them—are linked to distinct power-goal effects.

### **Power, Self-Construals, and Gender**

In making predictions involving self-construals, we had to consider gender in light of Cross and Madson's (1997a) theorizing on differences in how men and women define the self. They argued that the institutions and practices of U.S. culture encourage men to value separateness and independence, which fosters the development of independent self-construals, whereas women are socialized to seek interconnectedness, which gives rise to interdependent self-views. They proposed that gender differences in self-description, cognition, emotion, and aggression, among other domains, could be understood in terms of gender differences in self-construal.

At first glance, the proposition that men tend to hold independent self-construals seems to suggest that men neither seek nor value interdependence. Commenting on Cross and Madson's theory, though, Baumeister and Sommer (1997) argued that gender differences in interdependence may be more a matter of the type that is sought rather than whether it is desired at all. Building on the idea that there is a fundamental need for belonging (Baumeister & Leary, 1995), they proposed that both men and women seek interdependence, but men tend to be oriented toward larger social spheres, involving groups or collectives, rather than toward one-on-one

bonds. In reply, Cross and Madson (1997b) essentially agreed with this, clarifying that their position was that women are more inclined to develop the intimate, one-on-one bonds often implied by the interdependent self-construal. In line with this, Gabriel and Gardner (1999) showed that women are more attuned to one-on-one, “relational” forms of interdependence, whereas men are focused on “collective” interdependence. For example, they found that men and women described themselves with a similar number of descriptors referring to some form of interdependence, but women emphasized relational descriptors (e.g., “I am the oldest daughter”), while men tended to use collective descriptors (e.g., “I am on the track team”). In sum, then, while the independent self-construal may be especially characteristic of U.S. men, both men and women seek interdependence, but emphasize different forms.

What does this all imply for the role of self-construals in determining power’s effects? Cross and Madson (1997a) referred to men’s desire for power as evidence that they strive to be unique and independent from others. However, Baumeister and Sommer (1997) argued that, contrary to being a way to achieve independence, power actually binds one to those over whom power is held. Thus, striving for power reflects a desire for, rather than avoidance of, interdependence, albeit of a particular form. They proposed further that being in a position of power may be, in fact, a primary way for men to reconcile their desire for independence with their basic need for human connection. The superiority, separateness, and uniqueness that typically come with power satisfies the former desire, while the social bond inherent to having power over others serves the latter need. In reply to this, Cross and Madson (1997b) tended to concur, stating that “the connections achieved by the person who wields power are precisely the kind of connections that do not threaten individuals with an independent self-construal because only the subordinate person must adapt in this ‘one-sided merger’” (p. 52).

Thus, for men in U.S. culture, who seek independence, being in a position of power may be, like collective interdependence, a valued and acceptable form of social connection. Consistent with this, Gabriel and Gardner (1999) drew a link between power and collective independence in suggesting that many of the behaviors that Cross and Madson viewed as evidence that men strive to maintain their independence—such as seeking power and status rather than closeness and intimacy—may actually reflect an orientation toward collective interdependence. That is, power and status hierarchies often arise in groups or collectives, motivating group members to seek power as one means of securing the collective bond (see also Baumeister & Sommer, 1997).

## The Present Research

The Chen et al. (2001) research suggests that when individuals experience a combined sense of power and interdependence, such as when communals were primed with power, social-responsibility goals are elicited, in line with the other-oriented focus of the interdependent self-construal (see also Gardner & Seeley, 2000). If men and women seek interdependence in distinct social spheres (e.g., Baumeister & Sommer, 1997), this suggests that there are gender differences in the circumstances that create the joint sense of power and interdependence that brings out other-oriented, responsible uses of power. The present research was designed to test this hypothesis.

Specifically, participants read a vignette asking them to imagine that they worked at an advertising agency. We manipulated power by indicating that they were of

higher or equal power vis-à-vis another character in the vignette. To manipulate self-construal, we told participants to imagine that they viewed themselves as either interconnected with, or separate from, others at the agency. We then confronted them with a situation in which their own interests were pitted against the interests of the other vignette character, and assessed the extent to which they responded to this situation in a self-interested or socially-responsible manner toward this character.

Our main hypothesis was that power should elicit socially-responsible responses whenever the circumstances elicited a combined sense of power and interdependence. For women, we expected responsibility concerns to be strongest when they were in a position of power and saw themselves as interconnected with the other vignette character—that is, sharing a relational bond, which is the form of interdependence they tend to value and seek. For women in power, viewing the self as relationally interdependent should set into motion other-oriented, responsibility goals, and power allows them to pursue these goals.

In contrast, we predicted that men placed in a position of power would experience the joint sense of power and interdependence that gives rise to socially-responsible behavior—regardless of self-construal. We hypothesized that having power, in and of itself, should elicit a sense of interdependence for men because it involves sharing a bond with others over whom power is held, while at the same time preserving a degree of independence and uniqueness (Baumeister & Sommer, 1997). Thus, like collective forms of interdependence, to which men are especially attuned (Gabriel & Gardner, 1999), power allows men to avoid intimate, relational bonds and thus to maintain a sense of separateness, while nonetheless satisfying basic belongingness needs.

## Method

### *Participants*

One hundred and seventy-three students (86 men, 87 women) were recruited from various locations on a large university campus. About equal numbers of men and women were randomly assigned to one of four conditions (high power/independent or interdependent self-construal, equal power/independent or interdependent self-construal) in a  $2 \times 2 \times 2$  (Power  $\times$  Self-Construal  $\times$  Gender) between-subjects design.

### *Procedure*

Students were approached by an experimenter who introduced himself or herself as an undergraduate research assistant of a psychology professor. The experimenter offered students candy in exchange for filling out a questionnaire. Once a student agreed to participate, he or she was given a questionnaire, and assured of the confidentiality of his or her responses. The experimenter, who was blind to condition, then moved far enough away so that participants would not feel too closely monitored, but stayed near enough to answer any questions. The experimenter tried to solicit an equal number of men and women, and to approach students who were sitting alone so as to minimize distraction. Participants were told not to talk to anyone during the 10 to 15 minutes it took to fill out the questionnaire. Upon completing the questionnaire, participants were thanked and debriefed.

### *Questionnaire*

In the questionnaire, participants first read a vignette. Participants in the high-power condition read a vignette asking them to imagine that they were the head executive of an advertising agency, whereas equal-power participants read that they were employees at the agency. Participants in the independent self-construal condition read: “At the agency, you tend to view yourself as independent or separate from your assistants” (high power) or “...co-workers” (equal power). Those in the interdependent self-construal condition read: “At the agency, you tend to view yourself as interconnected with your assistants” (high power) or “...co-workers” (equal power). For all participants, the work atmosphere at the agency was described as generally pleasant.

Immediately after the power and self-construal information, the vignette continued with the following:

Each December, your agency conducts a large-scale survey on consumer behavior during the holiday season in order to find out which of the advertising techniques used in the previous months was the most effective. Each year, the first phase of the project involves conducting an initial 25 hours of pilot surveys. The surveys are easy and straightforward, but somewhat tedious, to conduct.

In the high-power condition, the vignette ended with the following:

Chris is the assistant who is assigned to this survey project. One Friday in late November, you find out that the 25 hours of surveys need to be completed before Monday, which means they need to be done over the weekend.

In contrast, for participants in the equal-power condition, the vignette concluded with the following:

You and Chris, a co-worker, have been assigned to this survey project. One Friday in late November, you find out that the 25 hours of surveys need to be completed before Monday, which means they need to be done over the weekend.

### *Dependent Measures*

#### **Work Allocations**

After reading the vignette, participants were asked to write a number between 0 and 25 for themselves and for Chris to indicate how they would divide up the 25 hours of survey work between them. The surveys were described as tedious so that conducting them would be seen as work rather than as an enjoyable task, and as simple to conduct so that skill would not be a factor. The vignette also indicated that the work needed to be done over the weekend so as to clearly pit participants' own interests against Chris's interests. Finally, an odd number of hours of work was chosen so that participants would be forced to tilt their allocations in favor of either themselves or Chris. Our goal was to ensure that participants' work allocations could serve as a measure of the degree to which they were looking out for their own

interests versus acting more responsibly by looking out for the interests of Chris, their subordinate (high-power condition) or co-worker (equal-power condition).

Our key predictions were that women would allocate more work to themselves, and less work to Chris, in the high-power, interdependent self-construal condition—the circumstances most likely to elicit in women a joint sense of power and interdependence, thereby giving rise to socially-responsible behavior. In contrast, we expected men to experience a sense of interdependence simply by virtue of being in a position of power, and thus predicted high-power men would make fairly responsible work allocations across self-construal conditions.

### **Reasons Behind Work Allocations**

After indicating their work allocations, participants were presented with 5 blanks on which they were asked to provide up to 5 reasons for these allocations, which provided an additional measure of whether participants' allocations were made in the service of self-interest or social-responsibility goals. Five categories of reasons were identified based on our a priori expectations regarding the motives behind participants' allocations in each condition, along with a preliminary examination of the overall pool of reasons provided. Examples of reasons from each category are shown in Table 1.

The first category captured reasons referring to the idea that power comes with rewards or privileges (Power Has Rewards)—in short, that power means being able to put one's own interests first. The second category was for reasons referring to the idea that power comes with responsibilities and accountability (Power Has Responsibilities)—that is, being in a position of power means having to look out for interests beyond one's own. Overall, we expected high-power participants to spontaneously offer more reasons in these first two categories than equal-power participants, and that the reasons offered from these categories would generally correspond to whether participants made self-interested or socially-responsible work allocations.

**TABLE 1** Reason Categories

Category	Examples
Power Has Rewards	“Some privilege for being head executive.” “He’s the assistant, so he should do more.”
Power Has Responsibilities	“Because I am the executive, I would feel responsible to do the other half.” “As head executive, in the end it’s my responsibility.”
Equity	“It is only fair.” “Coworkers should assume equal responsibility.”
Personality Characteristic	“I’d take slightly more because I am nice.” “I gave myself one hour less because I am selfish like that.”
Concern for Chris	“I took some myself, however, because I felt bad destroying his weekend.” “Chris would be mad and I wouldn’t want to promote a bad atmosphere.”

The third category encompassed reasons referring to fairness or equity concerns (Equity). Because many of these reasons rested on the fact that the participant and Chris were co-workers with equal power, we expected equal-power participants to spontaneously list more of these reasons than high-power participants.

A fourth category was for reasons referring to participants' own personality characteristics (Personality). Because such reasons involve referring to the self, participants in the independent self-construal condition might be expected to offer them more than those in the interdependent condition, who should be generally less focused on the self. Finally, a fifth category captured reasons expressing concern with Chris's interests and reactions (Concern for Chris). Because these reasons reflect a focus on Chris rather than the self, participants in the interdependent condition might be expected to offer more of these than would those in the independent condition, because the former condition should, in general, engender a greater focus on others' needs and interests.

### ***Manipulation Checks***

Next, participants rated how powerful their position at the agency was on a 9-point, Likert-type scale (1 = not much at all, 9 = a great deal). To measure perceptions of interdependence as a function of power and self-construal condition, we then had participants respond to Aron, Aron, and Smollan's (1992) Inclusion-of-Other-in-Self (IOS) measure. This single-item measure is comprised of 7 pairs of circles, with the 2 circles in each pair representing the self and another person. In the first pair, the circles are non-overlapping, conveying that the self and the other person are viewed as separate from one another. The degree of overlap increases steadily over the remaining circle pairs, corresponding to increases in the extent to which the self and other are seen as interconnected. The 7th pair overlaps almost entirely. Participants were asked to indicate the pair that best represented how they viewed themselves in relation to Chris.

### ***Perceptions of the Vignette***

Finally, participants rated how much skill was needed to do the survey work, how enjoyable the work was, and how tight the time constraints to complete the work were. We expected skill ratings to be at most moderate, enjoyment ratings to be low, and ratings of the time constraints to be high, with the latter included to verify that participants were aware that the work needed to be done over the weekend. All of these ratings were made on 9-point, Likert-type scales (1 = not much at all, 9 = a great deal).

## **Results**

Seventeen participants were excluded because they did not take the questionnaire seriously (i.e., talked to friends while doing the questionnaire or had substantial missing data). These participants were distributed fairly evenly across conditions. The analyses below were based on the remaining 156 participants (78 men, 78 women).

### ***Manipulation Checks***

#### ***Power***

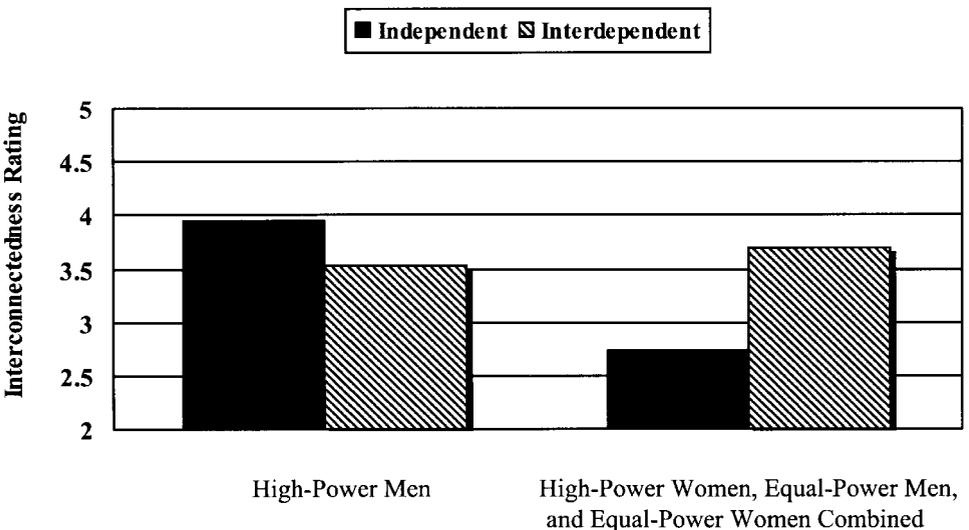
Participants' ratings of the powerfulness of their position in the agency were examined in a  $2 \times 2 \times 2$  (Power  $\times$  Self-Construal  $\times$  Gender) analysis of variance

(ANOVA). As expected, high-power participants rated their power in the agency significantly higher ( $M = 7.10$ ) than equal-power participants ( $M = 5.48$ ),  $F(1, 147) = 43.18$ ,  $p < .01$ .<sup>1</sup> No other effects were significant.

### Self-Construal

We expected gender differences in participants' ratings of how separate or interconnected they saw themselves in relation to Chris using Aron et al.'s (1992) IOS measure. High-power women were expected to rate themselves as more interconnected with Chris in the interdependent self-construal condition compared to the independent self-construal condition, and the same was expected for equal-power men and women, given that power differences were not salient for them. In contrast, we expected high-power men to report a high degree of interconnectedness across self-construal conditions, reflecting our hypothesis that being bound to others by virtue of having power over them fits male notions of interdependence.

To test these precise predictions, we compared the self-construal effect for high-power men to the average of this effect for high-power women, equal-power men, and equal-power women combined. More specifically, we examined participants' interconnectedness (IOS) ratings in a  $2 \times 2$  between-subjects ANOVA, with self-construal (independent vs. interdependent) as one factor, and high-power men versus the other conditions combined as the other factor. This analysis yielded several effects (see Figure 1 for means). First, there was a condition effect,  $F(1, 152) = 4.56$ ,  $p < .05$ , indicating that, overall, high-power men ( $M = 3.74$ ) reported greater interconnectedness than the other conditions combined ( $M = 3.22$ ). However, this effect was qualified by a 2-way interaction  $F(1, 152) = 7.97$ ,  $p < .01$ . Follow-up comparisons showed that whereas all other combinations of power and gender led participants to report greater interconnectedness with Chris in the interdependent condition ( $M = 3.70$ ) relative to independent



**FIGURE 1** Mean ratings on Aron, Aron, and Smollan's (1992) IOS measure. Higher ratings correspond to viewing the self and Chris as more interconnected.

( $M = 2.74$ ) condition,  $F(1, 152) = 14.91$ ,  $p < .01$ , high-power men reported a comparably high degree of interconnectedness in the independent ( $M = 3.95$ ) and interdependent ( $M = 3.53$ ) conditions ( $F < 1.1$ ). Taken as a whole, these results are consistent with the expected gender differences in perceptions of interconnectedness with Chris.

### *Perceptions of Vignette*

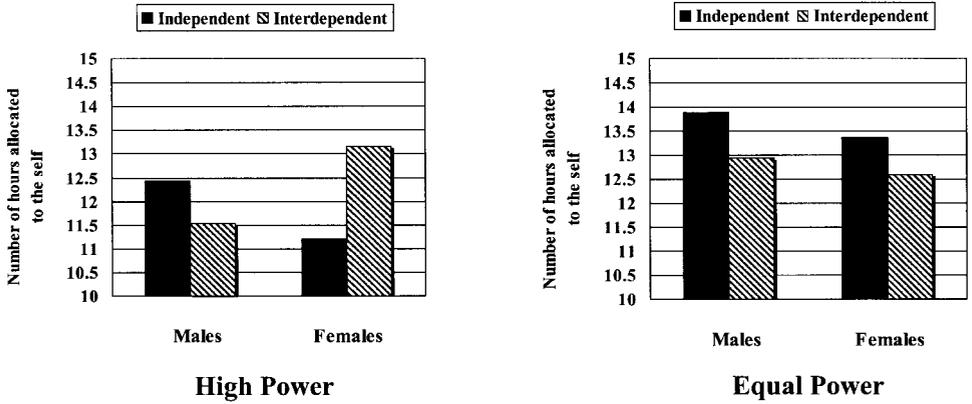
Separate  $2 \times 2 \times 2$  (Power  $\times$  Self-Construal  $\times$  Gender) ANOVAs were conducted for ratings of how enjoyable the survey work was, for the skill needed to do the work, and for how tight the time constraints were. As expected, neither the analysis for enjoyableness or skill produced any significant effects and, overall, enjoyable ratings were low ( $M = 2.61$ ) and skill ratings were moderate ( $M = 4.28$ ). Although an unexpected Power  $\times$  Gender interaction was found for time constraints,  $F(1, 147) = 5.71$ ,  $p < .05$ , the 3-way interaction was not significant, suggesting that the 2-way interaction cannot explain our predicted three-way pattern for work allocations (see below).<sup>2</sup> Moreover, the means for all eight conditions were above the midpoint ( $< 6$ ), suggesting that participants generally saw the time constraints to be tight, as we intended.

### *Work Allocations*

Because the number of hours of survey work participants allocated to themselves and to Chris always summed to 25, analyses of both numbers would be redundant. Thus, only the number of hours allocated to the self was analyzed in a  $2 \times 2 \times 2$  (Power  $\times$  Self-Construal  $\times$  Gender) ANOVA, which yielded several effects. First, there was a power effect, with high-power participants agreeing to fewer hours of work ( $M = 12.08$ ) than equal-power participants ( $M = 13.20$ ),  $F(1, 148) = 10.83$ ,  $p < .01$ . There was also a significant Self-Construal  $\times$  Gender interaction,  $F(1, 148) = 4.92$ ,  $p < .05$ , and Power  $\times$  Relation interaction,  $F(1, 148) = 4.09$ ,  $p < .05$ . Both, however, were qualified by a three-way interaction,  $F(1, 148) = 3.88$ ,  $p = .05$ . Figure 2 displays the means from all conditions.

Focusing first on the high-power conditions, a  $2 \times 2$  (Self-Construal  $\times$  Gender) ANOVA for high-power participants yielded only a two-way interaction,  $F(1, 75) = 5.25$ ,  $p < .05$ . Follow-up comparisons showed that high-power women allocated less work to themselves in the independent ( $M = 11.20$ ) compared to the interdependent condition ( $M = 13.16$ ),  $F(1, 75) = 4.87$ ,  $p < .05$ . In contrast, the work allocations of high-power men did not differ across self-construal conditions,  $F < 1.1$ , and fell in between those of high-power women in the two self-construal conditions (independent,  $M = 12.43$ ; interdependent  $M = 11.53$ ).

For equal-power participants, we reasoned that, given their equal, coworker status with Chris, they would be fairly evenhanded in their work allocations. Because participants were not able to divide the work hours exactly in half, if anything, one might have expected a bias in favor of the self (i.e., fewer hours allocated to the self) in the independent relative to the interdependent condition given the greater focus on one's own interests associated with an independent self-construal. However, a  $2 \times 2$  (Self-Construal  $\times$  Gender) ANOVA for the equal-power conditions yielded a self-construal effect,  $F(1, 73) = 10.65$ ,  $p < .01$ , indicating that equal-power men and women allocated somewhat less work to themselves in the interdependent condition



**FIGURE 2** Mean number of hours of survey work allocated to the self. A higher number of hours corresponds to more socially-responsible behavior and, conversely, a lower number corresponds to more self-interested behavior.

( $M = 12.78$ ) compared to the independent condition ( $M = 13.63$ ). No other effects were significant.

Before offering possible accounts for this unexpected self-construal effect, it is useful to ask whether there is any indication that, despite this unexpected finding, equal-power participants were trying to be evenhanded. An examination of the reasons these participants gave for their work allocations, which are described below, reveals quite clearly that they were in fact attempting to be “fair” in their allocations. Although it appears, then, that similar reasons fueled the work allocations of equal-power participants regardless of self-construal, those in the independent condition still took on slightly more of the work themselves than did those in the interdependent condition. One possibility is that this allowed equal-power, independent participants to appear generous, which would be a self-serving maneuver, at very minimal cost to themselves since the difference in the number of hours allocated to the self versus Chris was, on average, less than 1 hour.

### *Reasons Behind the Work Allocations*

Two independent judges, blind to experimental condition, classified two thirds (66%) of all of the reasons offered into one of the five categories in Table 1. Intercoder reliability was 77% and disagreements were resolved through discussion. The remaining third of the reasons was classified by one of the coders. Table 1’s categories captured 95% of all reasons, with 5% deemed uncodeable (e.g., due to illegibility). The number of reasons listed ranged from one to six, with an average of 2.47 reasons. Given this average, we focused on just the first two reasons listed by each participant; these reasons can be seen as participants’ most accessible ones, and thus arguably the reasons most likely behind their allocations. Analyses including all of the reasons yielded findings similar to analyses of just the first two, but the latter provided a sharper picture.

### **Power-Has-Rewards Reasons**

Not surprisingly, not one equal-power participant listed any of these reasons, all of which refer to being in a position of power. Thus, we conducted a  $2 \times 2$

(Self-Construal  $\times$  Gender) ANOVA to examine the number of these reasons offered by high-power participants only. This analysis yielded a self-construal effect,  $F(1, 75) = 7.15$ ,  $p < .01$ , indicating more of these reasons in the independent ( $M = 0.78$ ) compared to interdependent ( $M = 0.37$ ) condition. This effect was qualified, though, by a two-way interaction,  $F(1, 75) = 4.44$ ,  $p < .05$ . Follow-up comparisons showed that, in line with their work allocations, high-power women were more likely to refer to the idea that power has rewards in the independent ( $M = 0.90$ ) compared to the interdependent condition ( $M = 0.16$ ),  $F(1, 75) = 11.30$ ,  $p < .01$ . In contrast, high-power men gave a similarly moderate number of these reasons in the independent ( $M = 0.67$ ) and interdependent conditions ( $M = 0.58$ ),  $F < 1$ .

### **Power-Has-Responsibilities Reasons**

Because equal-power participants did not offer any of these power-related reasons, we once again conducted a  $2 \times 2$  (Self-Construal  $\times$  Gender) ANOVA for the number of such reasons offered by high-power participants only. This analysis yielded a self-construal effect, with more power-has-responsibilities reasons in the interdependent ( $M = 1.16$ ) compared to independent ( $M = 0.51$ ) condition,  $F(1, 75) = 19.21$ ,  $p < .01$ . This effect was qualified by a two-way interaction  $F(1, 75) = 6.05$ ,  $p < .05$ . Cohering with their work allocations, high-power, interdependent women gave more of these reasons ( $M = 1.32$ ) than did high-power, independent women ( $M = 0.30$ ),  $F(1, 75) = 23.11$ ,  $p < .01$ . High-power men, on the other hand, offered a similarly high number of these reasons in the independent ( $M = 0.71$ ) and interdependent ( $M = 1.00$ ) conditions,  $F < 2$ , in line with their fairly responsible work allocations across self-construal conditions.

### **Equity Reasons**

The number of reasons referring to fairness or equity was examined in a  $2 \times 2 \times 2$  (Power  $\times$  Self-Construal  $\times$  Gender) ANOVA, which yielded a power effect,  $F(1, 148) = 99.03$ ,  $p < .01$ . On average, equal-power participants ( $M = 1.06$ ) offered five times more of these reasons than high-power participants ( $M = 0.18$ ). This strong tendency for equal-power participants to refer to fairness or equity supports our interpretation that their allocations reflected, by and large, their attempts to be evenhanded. However, there was also a Power  $\times$  Self-Construal interaction,  $F(1, 148) = 5.63$ ,  $p < .05$ , indicating that, in addition to listing far more equity reasons than high-power participants, equal-power participants listed more of these reasons in the interdependent ( $M = 1.23$ ) compared to independent condition ( $M = 0.89$ ),  $F(1, 73) = 4.88$ ,  $p < .05$ . This finding will be discussed below (see results for Personality reasons). High-power participants listed few equity reasons overall ( $M = 0.18$ ), and thus, not surprisingly, did not differ across self-construal conditions ( $F < 1$ ).

### **Personality Reasons**

We reasoned that independent participants would tend to mention reasons referring to their own personality characteristics more than interdependent participants, given the greater focus on the self associated with the independent self-construal. A  $2 \times 2 \times 2$  (Power  $\times$  Self-Construal  $\times$  Gender) ANOVA for the number of personality reasons showed that independent participants ( $M = 0.36$ ) did in fact refer more to their personality than interdependent participants ( $M = 0.14$ ),  $F(1, 148) = 11.65$ ,  $p < .01$ , and also that equal-power participants ( $M < 0.48$ ) did so more than high-power participants ( $M = 0.03$ ),  $F(1, 148) = 46.55$ ,  $p < .01$ .

A Power  $\times$  Self-Construal interaction, however, indicated that the self-construal effect held mainly among equal-power participants (independent,  $M = 0.70$ ; interdependent,  $M = 0.25$ ). High-power participants gave few to none of these reasons overall (independent,  $M = 0.03$ ; interdependent,  $M = 0.03$ ),  $F(1, 148) = 11.79$ ,  $p < .01$ , which is likely attributable to their focus on power-related reasons (i.e., Power-Has-Rewards and Power-Has-Responsibilities reasons), rather than reasons having nothing to do with their position.

Taken as a whole, equal-power participants' reasoning paints a sensible picture. Although they were more likely overall to explain their work allocations in terms of fairness or equity than were high-power participants, those in the independent condition also referred to their own personality characteristics, implying a focus on the self, whereas those in the interdependent condition simply emphasized fairness and equity, which implies a greater focus on others—in this case, on what would be fair to Chris, their coworker.

### **Concern-for-Chris Reasons**

A  $2 \times 2 \times 2$  (Power  $\times$  Self-Construal  $\times$  Gender) ANOVA examining these reasons yielded no reliable effects (all  $F_s < 2.1$ ). Although one might have expected more of these reasons from interdependent than independent participants, because the former group was presumably more other-focused, it is possible that such a difference was obscured by the low number of such reasons offered overall ( $M = 0.20$ ).

## **Discussion**

While various lines of research have identified a number of moderating variables of the effects of power, to our knowledge, the present study is the first to jointly examine self-construals and gender as moderators. We took a Person  $\times$  Situation approach, like Chen et al. (2001), who conceptualized the effects of situational power in terms of the distinct goals that different people associate with power. Their studies showed that situational power elicits other-oriented, responsible behavior among individuals who associate power with social-responsibility goals, and self-interested behavior among those who link power with self-interest goals. The present findings extend this research on power-goal effects by demonstrating that the goals people associate with power, and thus are particularly likely to pursue when in a position of power, depend jointly on their self-construal and gender.

Several bodies of work suggest that self-construals are associated with particular goals (e.g., Markus & Kitayama, 1991). We reasoned that power should enhance the tendency for individuals to pursue the particular goals associated with their self-construal because power generally affords the opportunity to pursue one's current goals (e.g., Keltner et al., in press). Our main hypothesis was that when power is combined with a view of the self as interdependent, individuals should be especially likely to pursue other-oriented, responsibility goals.

In proposing self-construals as a moderator of power-goal effects, we had to consider the role of gender in light of recent work on gender differences in self-construals (Cross & Madson, 1997a; Gabriel & Gardner, 1999; see also Baumeister & Sommer, 1997). Because this work suggests that there are gender differences in the value placed on independence and in the forms of interdependence that are typically sought, we reasoned that men and women would experience particular combinations of power and self-construals differently, resulting in distinct power-goal effects.

Participants' work allocations largely supported our predictions. For women, responsibility goals prevailed when power and a view of the self as relationally interdependent were combined, whereas self-interests took hold when power was coupled with an independent self-view. High-power women's reasoning mapped directly onto their work allocations, with an emphasis on power having rewards in the independent condition, and power having responsibilities in the interdependent condition.

In contrast, high-power men not only made comparable work allocations across self-construal conditions, but also tended to make moderately responsible allocations. These findings are generally in line with our hypothesis that being in a position of power, in and of itself, is likely to constitute an acceptable form of interdependence for men, leading them to use their power in fairly responsible ways. Just as men tend to seek collective forms of interdependence (Gabriel & Gardner, 1999), which allow them to satisfy basic belongingness needs while avoiding intimate, one-on-one bonds that may threaten their independence (see Baumeister & Sommers, 1997), they may view being in a position of power as a circumstance in which they can simultaneously enjoy a state of connectedness and the sense of separateness and uniqueness that comes with power.

It is important to acknowledge that high-power men's work allocations were not as socially responsible as those of high-power, interdependent women (i.e., they did not allocate as many hours to themselves). Thus, one could argue that although high-power men's work allocations did not differ across self-construal conditions, as anticipated, their allocations did not in fact reflect the heightening of responsibility concerns that we hypothesize occurs when individuals experience a combined sense of power and interdependence. However, high-power men's interconnectedness ratings indicate that these men clearly saw themselves as interdependent in the vignette situation—across self-construal conditions. Moreover, the reasons high-power men offered for their work allocations indicate that responsibility concerns were indeed quite salient, as they tended to emphasize that power comes with responsibilities more so than with rewards, and did so comparably across self-construal conditions. In sum, taken as a whole, the data support our view that, for men, being in a position of power is one circumstance that may elicit the joint sense of power and interdependence that heightens responsibility concerns.

Should one conclude, then, that men in positions of power will always behave responsibly? Our answer is a definitive no. More specifically, we do not mean to imply that all positions of power will elicit feelings of interdependence in men. Other situational and personality variables may come into play, such as variations in the strength of belongingness and independence needs, which could render power to be a more or less acceptable social bond, or more or less likely to elicit feelings of interdependence. Our argument, then, is that power can, in situations like the one described in our vignette, arouse a sense of interdependence in men—because it can simultaneously address belongingness needs (Baumeister & Leary, 1995) and the independence that U.S. men are socialized to value and seek (Cross & Madson, 1997a)—and in this way give rise to responsible behavior.

#### *A Befitting Merger: Power and Self-Construals*

In our view, studying relations between power and self-construals makes sense from several perspectives. Among them, both constructs are inherently social—power involves relationships between the powerful and powerless, and self-construals speak

to if and how the self is related to others—rendering it likely that both play an important role in social behavior. Indeed, a growing body of work has linked both power (e.g., Keltner et al., in press) and self-construals (e.g., Markus & Kitayama, 1991) to a range of cognitive, affective, motivational, and behavioral antecedents and consequences. In addition, both constructs are amenable to study using well-established, social-cognitive techniques, which enables empirical tests of the underlying mechanisms linked to each, and allows for using the same language to understand these mechanisms. For example, various researchers have used priming techniques to examine the effects of power (e.g., Chen et al., 2001) and self-construals (e.g., Trafimow, Triandis, & Goto, 1991), and the language of knowledge accessibility to conceptualize these effects. In these regards, continued research exploring the merger between power and self-construals would seem useful and warranted.

### *Power and Gender*

The present results also speak to a varied literature linking power and gender. For example, Carli and her colleagues have studied relations between gender, power, and language use (e.g., Carli, 1990), as well as gender differences in one's influenceability (e.g., Eagly & Carli, 1981) and ability to influence (e.g., Carli, 1989, 1999; see also Howard, Blumstein, & Schwartz, 1986; Johnson, 1976). Others have explored the role of gender and power on nonverbal behaviors such as facial expressions (e.g., Hall & Friedman, 1999; LaFrance & Hecht, 1999). In yet another domain, Stewart, Winter, and their colleagues have focused on gender differences in the power motive and in how this motive is behaviorally expressed (e.g., Stewart & Winter, 1974, 1976; Winter, 1988).

In an influential meta-analysis, Eagly and Johnson (1990) reviewed the literature on gender differences in leadership styles. While there was some evidence for gender differences, a key finding of this quantitative synthesis was that the context or setting (e.g., organizational vs. laboratory) in which leadership styles were assessed was an important moderator of these differences. The authors interpreted their results in terms of social role theory (Eagly, 1987), a framework which explains gender differences in terms of the distribution of roles (e.g., high vs. low status) occupied by men and women in a given society.

The present data suggest that self-construals may also help explain gender differences in, in this case, the effects of power. Although there is evidence for gender differences in self-construal (e.g., Gabriel & Gardner, 1999), examining power's effects as a function of different self-construals—and the sense of independence or interdependence associated with them—rather than gender, offers a more proximal determinant of these effects. It also leaves room for men and women to act similarly or differently across different positions of power, depending on the sense of independence or interdependence aroused by a given position. Of course, we do not mean to imply that gender no longer matters when it comes to predicting the role of self-construals in power's effects. Our findings clearly suggest that distinct circumstances lead men and women to experience the self as interdependent—in a way that elicits the other-oriented focus associated with an interdependent self-construal.

### *Limitations and Future Directions*

It is important to acknowledge that the present research represents only a first step in exploring potential relations between power, self-construals, and gender. An obvious

limitation of this work is the vignette methodology we used to test our predictions. It would be useful, of course, to further substantiate our findings with research in which men and women, induced to hold varying self-construals, are actually placed in a position of power and faced with a situation in which their own interests are pitted against those of others.

On a more conceptual level, it would also be useful to conduct research in which participants must choose between their own interests or those of an important group or collective, rather than another person, as in all of the current study's conditions. In all likelihood, high-power, interdependent women in the present study made more responsible work allocations than high-power, independent women because the vignette conveyed a situation of relational interdependence (i.e., a one-on-one bond with Chris), which is precisely the form of interdependence emphasized among U.S. women (Gabriel & Gardner, 1999). On the other hand, men tend to be more attuned to collective forms of interdependence, suggesting that if high-power men had been asked to allocate work between themselves and a group or collective, they may have responded even more responsibly. In such a situation, both power and the collective nature of the bond should arouse feelings of interdependence in men, resulting in the heightening of responsibility concerns. Indeed, the fact that high-power men were asked to allocate work between themselves and Chris, implying a relational bond, may help explain why work allocations were not as socially responsible as those of high-power, interdependent women, despite the feelings of interconnectedness they reported across self-construal conditions.

Finally, it is worth stating that we do not conclude from our findings that self-construals and gender moderate the effects of power across all or even most contexts. Instead, we speculate that at times the moderating impact of one variable may override the other, or some other variable may diminish the moderating effect of both. For instance, powerholders whose positions come with well-established expectations and requirements are likely to act in accord with prevailing norms—regardless of self-construal or gender. Or, as another example, some power relationships (e.g., between parent and child) may lead both men and women in the more powerful position to act similarly, despite gender differences in the forms of interdependence that are typically valued and sought. Nonetheless, we contend that the present data demonstrate that, at least under some circumstances, the effects of power do depend on a joint function of one's self-construal and gender. And, on a broader level, they underscore the importance of taking a Person  $\times$  Situation approach to understanding power's effects—one that recognizes that whether power has positive or negative effects is likely to depend on complex, yet systematic, combinations of variables inherent to particular individuals as well as ones that arise in particular situations.

## Notes

1. One participant did not respond to this item and was not included in this analysis.
2. One participant did not respond to this item and was not included in this analysis.

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