

Power as Active Self:
From Acquisition to the Expression and Use of Power

Ana Guinote
University College London
Leadership Knowledge Center, Nova School of Business and Economics

Serena Chen
University of California, Berkeley

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RUNNING HEAD: Power as Active Self

Correspondence:
Ana Guinote
Experimental Psychology

University College London
26 Bedford Way
London WC1H 0AP, UK
Email: a.guinote@ucl.ac.uk

Abstract

Over the centuries, philosophers, scientists, policy makers, and the public have raised questions about who ascends to power and how does power affect the person. In this chapter, we review and discuss social-cognitive literature from the last decade or so that examines how dispositions and contextual factors affect the emergence of power, and how having power affects the links between dispositions and behavior. Following a *process-based* perspective that contemplates the cognitive strategies of people in power, we propose a model of power as a magnifier of the active self—that is, the subset of self-knowledge that is active on a moment-to-moment basis. The active self channels attention and action in line with priorities, and plays a key role in action facilitation and goal-directed behavior. The active self is responsive to chronic dispositions, emotions, and current states of the person, as well as to inputs from the environment in a flexible manner. Extant research is integrated based on this model.

Keywords: Social power, dominance, dispositions, personality, trait-behavior consistency

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“The measure of a man is what he does with power” –Plato

Whether in informal social encounters, schools, organizations or nations, social power is ubiquitous. Doctors give advice, teachers mark exams, parents set rules, managers make organizational decisions, sellers and friends persuade and propel actions. Humans, like many other social species, are well-equipped with the ability to enact power asymmetries, and those who desire to dominate are overrepresented in top hierarchical positions. The co-existence of individual differences in desire for power, and legitimized power structures that advance collective goals on the other, gives rise to a number of intriguing questions: What is the interplay between personal attributes of individuals and the emergence of more enduring power structures? Once power is attained, how does it affect the person? Does power corrupt? This chapter will address these questions.

To do so, we will draw primarily from the literatures in social and personality psychology on power, status, social class, and hierarchy, but also in part from relevant bodies of work on leadership in organizations. Throughout, we will highlight the utility of taking a *process-based* approach to understanding the links between power and the person. That is, we take an approach that focuses on the cognitive and motivational underpinnings of power and how they affect the self. Core to this approach is the proposition that power magnifies the working or active self—the subset of the self-concept that is currently active and accessible. Viewing power through the lens of the active self illuminates and brings coherence to wide-ranging theorizing and research on how power is obtained, how it influences cognition, motivation, and behavior, how it is exercised, and how it is maintained.

To preview, the chapter will start with conceptual issues related to power. We will then review literature showing how the attainment of power can be best understood through a

consideration of both personal and situational factors, as well as how these factors interact in dynamic ways. Recognition and exploration of the role of both person and situation influences constitutes a recurring theme throughout this chapter, just as it forms the backbone of the volume as a whole. In this vein, we start from the premise that, in any given moment, multiple influences compete for the control of attention and action selection, and that often the “winner takes all.” That is, the tendencies that have the highest level of activation in a given moment will dominate. For example, in spite of multiple possibilities, people prioritize and choose some courses of action rather than others. Nevertheless, in some circumstances environmental pressures and inclinations of the person conflict with one another, rendering choice more difficult. For example, a charitable person may find herself in a competitive, self-serving environment. Under these circumstances, the dispositions of the person and the situation may inhibit or facilitate each other. This chapter will address how the experience of power alters behavior across different circumstances, starting with the question of how the person and the situation influence behavior, and then the synergies and interactive effects between the two.

After laying out the above conceptual landscape, we will turn to reviewing evidence that power increases initiative, selective processing, and goal focus in line with the active self. By magnifying the active self, power facilitates prioritization of cognitions and behaviors that are contextually relevant. We will argue that power helps manifest not only enduring attitudes, goals, and needs of the person, but also situational goals (e.g., organizational goals, opportunities) that emerge in the immediate context. In this way, our active self approach clearly exemplifies the notion that both person and situational influences matter in any consideration of the impact of power. From there, we will examine how power is used, as well as boundary conditions triggered by objective or subjective threats to power—in both cases highlighting, once again, the interplay of personal and situational factors. Finally, the chapter will finish with a consideration of challenges for future research on power, the person, and the situation.

Concepts and Definitions

Power

The word power stems from Latin (*potere*) and means *to be able* (Heider, 2013). Power has been defined as the ability to produce intended effects in others (Russell, 1938), and as the potential to influence others in psychologically meaningful ways (French & Raven, 1959) through rewards and/or punishments (Fiske, 1993; Keltner, Gruenfeld, & Anderson, 2003). Therefore, individuals can have power even if no behavior changes in others are directly observable. The *psychologically meaningful* ways that power holders affect others include how others feel and think, in addition to behave (Vescio, Snyder, & Butz, 2003). These forms of influence can occur through *soft* means, such as charisma, rewards, and knowledge, or through *harsh* means, such as punishment (Fiske & Berdahl, 2007; Raven, Schwarzwald, & Koslowsky, 1998). These means are used to influence or control another's desired outcomes. Put succinctly, power refers to asymmetric influence and control over desired outcomes of others in relationships. Such asymmetries can exist between people (e.g., in dyads), within groups (e.g., in manager-subordinate roles), or between groups (e.g., between genders, social classes, or ethnic groups; see Keltner et al., 2003).

In today's society, most social structures have legitimized power roles that help coordinate efforts and information, provide direction, and help groups attain their goals. This is the result of evolutionary pressures that facilitated the emergence of power differentials in ancestral environments to deal with group problems, such as issues with group movement, peacekeeping within groups, and intergroup competition (Van Vugt, Hogan, & Kaiser, 2008). Simultaneously, across primate species, subordinates increasingly gained the ability to form alliances and influence how power is exercised (Boehm & Flack, 2010). In humans, these pressures led to the emergence of legitimized power (Maner & Mead, 2010; Parsons, 1963). That is, power became a necessity desired by the collective to advance shared interests (Parsons, 1963), and to be ruled by socially accepted principles and practices. For example, the exercise of power is expected to be based on competence (Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, & Xu, 2002).

Although power is associated with having responsibility (see Sassenberg, Ellemers,

Scheepers, & Scholl, 2014), by giving those who possess it control and freedom from constraints (Overbeck, 2010), power enables holders to act at will and in line with their self-interest (Bass, 2008). Accordingly, power holders, more than other individuals, express themselves in authentic ways and with less care for consequences. This implies that power holders are potentially subject to an array of personal and social goals, depending on the person and immediate situation. In this chapter, we will describe how power holders tend to endorse salient goals, often related to components of the self that are currently active, in a prioritized manner. This tendency makes them capable of assuming power in different contexts, including within and between different power roles—such as when a CEO leaves one organization to lead another. Yet individual differences in traits and other personal attributes, as well as in construals of power, also influence the behavior of power holders. As noted at the outset, in this chapter, we will examine the interplay between personal and situational factors in the experience, use, and consequences of power.

Theories of Power

Several theoretical accounts of power have been proposed, most focused on explaining the ways power affects individuals. The first contemporary theory in this vein, the Power-as-Control model (PAC) (Fiske, 1993), was grounded in insights from models of person perception in the social psychological literature (Fiske & Neuberg, 1990). Fiske and collaborators proposed that, as motivated tacticians, humans manage their limited attentional resources following their needs and motivations. Interdependence between people sufficed as the crucial trigger of social attention (Erber & Fiske, 1984; Fiske, 1993; Fiske & Dépret, 1996). In brief, the theory maintains that people pay close attention to others to the extent that their outcomes are dependent on them in some manner, such as when collaborating on a task or when one is subject to others' evaluations.

Fiske's PAC model was the first to investigate (in humans) and explain a robust phenomenon in power relationships across primate species—namely, the fact that attention moves upwards in social hierarchies. Low rank animals typically pay more attention to their social environment, in particular to high rank conspecifics, compared to high rank animals,

who tend to be more socially inattentive. For instance, in one study male rhesus monkeys sacrificed a rewarding drink for the opportunity to view the faces of high rank monkeys (Deaner, Khera, & Platt, 2005). Applied to the domain of person perception, Fiske and colleagues suggest that, relative to those who lack power, those with power are more likely to employ simplified information-seeking strategies, relying to a greater extent on social stereotypes and paying less attention to the personal attributes of subordinates.

The broad notion that power holders are socially inattentive has received a great deal of support in experimental settings (see Fiske & Dépret, 1996) and in actual managerial contexts (Guinote & Phillips, 2010). For instance, in one study managers in the hotel industry devoted fewer cognitive resources (operationalized as reading time) attending to personal attributes (vs. ethnicity-related stereotypic attributes) of simulated job candidates compared to the subordinate employees in the same organizations (Guinote & Phillips, 2010).

In spite of such evidence linking power to stereotyping, research has identified boundary conditions of this phenomenon (e.g., Overbeck & Park, 2001, 2006; Weick & Guinote, 2008). In particular, power holders have been shown to rely less on stereotypes, and to be socially attentive instead, when others are instrumental for the advancement of their personal or organizational goal (Gruenfeld, Inesi, Magee, & Galinsky, 2008; Overbeck & Park, 2006). The upshot is that power often leads to attentional neglect, but the links between power and social attention are nuanced and situated, and depend on the states and goals of power holders (see Guinote, 2007a). This is an important theme that we will return to time and again in subsequent sections, as similar principles of situational and goal malleability can apply to wide range of judgments and behaviors.

Another prominent theory, the approach-inhibition theory of power (Keltner et al., 2003), focuses on how having power affects basic motivational systems, action, and affect. According to this theory, which draws from both personality and social psychology, power activates the behavioral approach system (BAS; see Gray, 1990). This system is typically activated by the experience of rewards, such as sex or food. It enhances the desire to approach rewards and opportunities, and leads to positive affect, optimism, automatic social

cognition, and disinhibited action (Anderson & Berdahl, 2002; Keltner et al., 2003). In contrast, lack of power exposes individuals to threats, which activates the behavioral inhibition system (BIS; Gray, 1990). BIS is an alarm system that responds to threats and punishment and leads to behavioral inhibition and negative affect.

Many of the effects that power has been shown to have on judgment and behavior are consistent with this theory. For example, relative to the powerless, power holders tend to experience positive emotions more often (Berdahl & Martorana, 2006; Langner & Keltner, 2008), are more optimistic and risk seeking (Anderson & Galinsky, 2006; Inesi, 2010), and more readily initiate action (Galinsky, Gruenfeld, & Magee, 2003). Power holders have also been shown to have elevated self-esteem (Wojciszke & Struzynska-Kujalowicz, 2007), and to think others like them and agree with them more than they actually do (Anderson & Berdahl, 2002). Additional evidence compatible with the basic tenets of the approach-inhibition theory of power lies in research showing that power holders speak longer in social interactions and interrupt others more (Guinote, Judd, & Brauer, 2002).

While the approach-inhibition theory examines broad motivational systems triggered by power, the situated focus theory of power (Guinote, 2007a) focuses more closely on the ways power affects cognition and motivation, on a moment-to-moment basis—that is, with a consideration of the person in his or her immediate context, encompassing the influence of environmental inputs as well as current states, needs, and goals of the person. Thus, this theory draws from both personality and social psychology. According to the theory, power affords cognitive flexibility and situated behavior depending on the primary goals and constructs that are accessible in a given context. Consistent with this core theoretical tenet, power holders tend to show more cognitive flexibility (Guinote, 2007b; Overbeck & Park, 2006) and greater behavior variability (Guinote et al., 2002) compared to powerless individuals. Through the lenses of selective and prioritized processing, the theory reconciles seemingly contradictory findings in the power literature. For example, in the stereotyping domain (e.g., Fiske, 1993; Overbeck & Park, 2001), when stereotypes are salient (Fiske & Dépret, 1996), are relevant for power holders' influence strategies (Vescio et al., 2003), or are accessible through

inner states (Weick & Guinote, 2008), power holders construe other individuals primarily through the lens of stereotypes. However, when information about individual traits is relevant to power holders' personal or organizational goals (Gruenfeld et al., 2008; Overbeck & Park, 2006), to their influence strategies (Vescio et al., 2003), or to their inner states (Weick & Guinote, 2008), then power holders rely instead on individuating attributes. The situated focus theory of power reconciles and brings to focus what is common across these situations—a selective focus and prioritization of the goals, needs, or inner states of a person that are active in the immediate situation. This theory is the basis for the notion that power magnifies the active, situated self. In a recent version, this theory has been reconciled with the approach motivation theory of power by incorporating approach motivation (Guinote, in press). Accordingly, power activates a goal driven component of approach motivation rather than a hedonic component. In brief, power energizes (i.e., activates), and increases both wanting and goal seeking.

In addition to the aforementioned theories, a wide range of other conceptions and mechanisms have been proposed to account for the ways power affects individuals, such as increased social distance and abstraction (Lammers, Galinsky, Gordijn, & Otten, 2012; Smith & Trope, 2006), confidence in one's judgments (Brinol, Petty, Valle, Rucker, & Becerra, 2007; Fast, Sivanathan, Mayer, & Galinsky, 2012; Tost, Gino, & Larrick, 2012), feelings of competitiveness (Tost et al., 2012), and enhanced self-esteem (Wojciszke & Struzynska-Kujalowicz, 2007). We suggest that confidence, elevated self-esteem, and the prioritized processing strategies of power holders are necessary given their drive to influence the social environment. More pointedly, these signatures of power may have evolved as the psychological means by which people are able to promptly exercise influence and enact power roles. More broadly, we suggest that, together, approach motivation, confidence, and prioritized situated focus explain how power magnifies the active self. We develop this overriding notion in the sections to follow.

The Acquisition of Power

“In order to obtain and hold power, a man must love it.” -Leo Tolstoy

“The man who desires power as a means has first some other desire, and is then led to wish that he were in a position to achieve it” (Russell, 1938, p. 216).

How and/or among whom is power acquired? In this section we describe theory and research that point to attributes of individuals that make them more likely to acquire power in informal encounters as well as institutions. These factors include biological predispositions and individual differences in dominance (i.e., motivated behaviors aimed at increasing power in relation to others, often in forceful, assertive and confident ways; Buss & Craik, 1980; Wiggins, Phillips, & Trapnell, 1989), other personality traits that afford power (e.g., extraversion), as well as skills and knowledge that can serve the needs and goals of individuals and groups.

Dispositional and Biological Bases of Dominance

In the quest to understand how power differentials emerge, researchers have looked at the personality traits of people in power. Dominance is the trait that has been most closely associated with the acquisition of power. It can be seen in both verbal and non-verbal behaviors (e.g., Wiggins, 1996). For example, dominant individuals speak and interrupt others more, hesitate less, use a more varied speech code, and display expansive postures, occupying more space. Dominant individuals also show more eye contact while speaking compared to listening, whereas submissive people do the opposite (Dittmann, 1972; Dovidio & Ellyson, 1985; Hall, Coats, & LeBeau, 2005; Judge, Bono, Ilies, & Gehardt, 2002; Keltner, Van Kleef, Chen, & Kraus, 2008). During social interactions, dominant individuals tease others more frequently than individuals who are less dominant (Keltner, Young, Heery, Oemig, & Monarch, 1998). People who have a dominant personality are also more active in defining group agendas, and easily form alliances to obtain support (Winter, 1973). These individuals are drawn to occupations where they can exercise institutional power, such as business executive, journalist, teacher, or psychologist (Winter, 2010; see also Stogdill, 1948). It is worth noting that although dominance has been associated with coercive, forceful behavior, defining trait dominance primarily in these behavioral terms has been subject to criticism. An alternative viewpoint is that at the core of dominance is the desire to prevail and

influence others, and this can be attained in multiple ways that include forceful and assertive actions, but also cooperative behaviors (Hawley, 1999). Bullying and overtly coercive behavior are extreme forms of dominance that command influence without social respect (Henrich & Gil-White, 2001). In reality, it is more frequently the case that dominant individuals appear assertive, proactive, and confident, allowing them to attain popularity, even if they are not as liked as individuals who have a high reputation (i.e., status; see Hawley, 1999). This is why dominance is implicated in status attainment, leadership emergence, and more generally social influence (Anderson & Kilduff, 2009; Foti & Hauenstein, 2007; Josephs, Newman, Brown, & Beer, 2003).

Regardless of the precise manifestations of dominance, exerting dominance and attaining power come with effort and energized behavior, often necessitating prompt decision-making and action (see Guinote, in press). Indeed, during interactions that involve social influence, dominant individuals display higher increases in systolic blood and pulse pressure (Gramer & Berner, 2005). This suggests enhanced effort among dominant individuals, a sign of goal-related approach motivation (Guinote, in press).

Dominant individuals not only show more domineering behavior and engagement in social interactions, but are also more apt to perceive social interactions along hierarchical dimensions. This tendency spills over to the use of vertical metaphors and selective attention to stimuli placed in vertical positions (Moeller, Robinson, & Zabelina, 2008). Together, research in this tradition reveals that, for dominant individuals, power relations are chronically accessible, and their aim is to exercise influence over other individuals.

A great deal of research on trait dominance has been concerned with unpacking its biological underpinnings. In nonhuman species, social rank is largely determined by biological attributes, in particular physical strength and hormones. The hormone most closely associated with behaviors intended to assert power is testosterone, a steroid hormone. Correlational studies that assess naturally-occurring testosterone levels, as well as experimental studies that manipulate testosterone levels, reveal that high testosterone is related to dominant behaviors (Rivers & Josephs, 2010). This link can be seen between individuals who vary in trait

dominance and between gender groups. Men exhibit higher levels of testosterone and more dominant behavior compared to women. Moreover, men occupy more high status and power positions in society than women. Women are generally underrepresented in leadership positions, and this difference is disproportionately stronger for top power positions (e.g., CEO level; Adams, Gupta, Haughton, & Leeth, 2007). These gender differences covary with average gender differences in testosterone levels, although there are surely other factors at play.

Testosterone is more closely associated with dominant behavior and implicit measures, such as need for power (*n* Power), than with explicit self-report measures of dominance (Stanton & Schultheiss, 2009). Need for power refers to a typically implicitly measured concern with and desire to have an impact on others, and is related to elevated levels of baseline testosterone as well as with testosterone increases when opportunities to acquire power (Rivers & Josephs, 2010). In contrast, when losing a contest, power-motivated individuals experience an increase in cortisol, a glucocorticoid hormone linked to stress, as well as a decrease in testosterone (Rivers & Josephs, 2010; Sapolsky, 1987).

Testosterone levels depend on power challenges but also on the individuals' experiences of threats. According to the dual-hormone hypothesis (Mehta & Josephs, 2010), the effects of testosterone on dominant behavior depend on levels of cortisol. Testosterone predicts dominant behavior only among individuals who have low levels of cortisol. This hypothesis has received support in experimental studies (Mehta & Josephs, 2010) and recently in correlational evidence (Kandasamy et al., 2014; Sherman, Lerner, Josephs, Renshon, & Gross, 2015). Managers with high testosterone and low cortisol levels occupy the highest authority positions in organizations (Sherman et al., 2015). Such findings suggest that testosterone and the enactment of power are susceptible to contextual influences.

A study focusing on London city bank traders (Coates & Herbert, 2008), a professional group with high levels of power, found that on days when traders had higher levels of testosterone, they took more risks when trading and had higher returns compared to days when

their testosterone levels were below their median (Coates & Herbert, 2008). Furthermore, variance in profits led to increased cortisol responses. Cortisol, in turn, decreases risk taking in experimental studies.

Further evidence in line with the dual-hormone hypothesis can be found in research on social anxiety. Testosterone levels tend to decrease after defeat (Josephs et al., 2003; Mehta, Jones, & Josephs, 2008; Stanton & Schultheiss, 2009). However, this tendency is stronger for individuals (especially men) who experience social anxiety and therefore have elevated cortisol levels during social situations, compared to non-anxious individuals (Maner, Miller, Schmidt, & Eckel, 2008). This finding is consistent with the notion that factors that increase psychological stress, and therefore cortisol, can decrease testosterone.

Beyond psychological predispositions and hormonal underpinnings of dominance, research points out that physical appearance predicts the likelihood of acquiring power. Power is associated with height and verticality (i.e., uprightness; Giessner & Schubert, 2007; Schubert, 2005). This can be seen in a variety of contexts, including in spatial representations of organizational structure and in interpersonal differences in height. People with higher income (Judge & Cable, 2004), and those in authority positions at work (Gawley, Perks, & Curtis, 2009) tend to be taller than average. Being tall can also afford power in political contests. Among U.S. presidential candidates, those who are taller are twice as likely to win the elections (Mehta et al., 2008).

Blaker, Rompa, Dessing, Vriend, and Herschberg (2013) have argued that the association between height and power occurs because height has been a predictor of people's dominance, fitness, and health in human evolution. To test the links between height and power, Blaker et al. manipulated the height of targets presented in photographs, and asked participants to estimate the extent to which the targets looked like leaders and to rate how dominant, healthy, and intelligent they were. Tall male and female targets were seen as more leader-like than short targets, and this occurred because taller targets were perceived as more dominant and

intelligent. These findings support the notion that height predicts perceptions of power in humans. Furthermore, they show that this occurs via perceived competence, supporting the notion that power is afforded to individuals who appear to have competencies to help solve social problems, as we will discuss in further depth below.

Personality and Skills

As suggested above, trait dominance is arguably the disposition that has been most consistently linked to the acquisition of power. Trait dominance has tended to be examined separately, but it is widely considered to be part of the broader personality dimension of extraversion (Wiggins, 1979). However, extraversion has facets that are independent of the desire to dominate, and these facets may themselves play a role in determining who acquires power. A number of still other traits and dispositions—including skills and motives—also play a role in power acquisition.

Research examining the link between personality and the acquisition of power has often relied on the Big Five model of personality, which specifies five major dimensions of personality: extraversion, neuroticism, openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness (Goldberg, 1990; McCrae & John, 1992). Taken as a whole, this work suggests that extraversion is positively associated with power attainment, whereas neuroticism tends to be negatively related (see Judge, Piccolo, & Kosalka, 2009). For example, across a variety of real-world social groups, higher extraversion predicted peer-rated social status attainment over time among both men and women, whereas neuroticism was negatively related to status attainment among men, and these effects were independent of any effects of physical attractiveness (Anderson, John, Keltner, & Kring, 2001). Even though status, or the prestige and reputation that individuals enjoy in a given social setting, differs from power, both are manifestations of social hierarchy and often go hand in hand (Blader & Chen, 2012).

In the context of online social networks, research has shown that people who rate themselves higher in extraversion are judged to be higher in social status by unacquainted raters who viewed their profile information. As another example, the extraversion levels of a group

of women assessed at age 21 in the 1960s, before they entered the work force, predicted their level of status attainment in their work lives at age 52 (George, Helson, & John, 2011).

Evidence from an extensive literature on leadership provides further support for a link between extroversion and the acquisition of power—the latter defined in this literature in terms of leadership emergence. In this large body of work, there has been a long tradition of taking a trait approach to understanding not only leadership emergence, but also leadership perception and effectiveness (Zaccaro, 2012). This approach is not without its critics and controversies (Day & Zaccaro, 2007; Judge et al., 2009; Zaccaro, 2007), but the evidence is substantial enough to suggest that certain traits, attributes, and abilities—especially extraversion—are positively associated with the likelihood of emerging as a leader. For example, Taggar et al. (1999) demonstrated links between both low neuroticism and high extraversion to leadership emergence. Watson and Clark's (1997) findings also suggest a clear link between extraversion and leadership emergence. In a meta-analytic review of research on traits and leadership, Judge and colleagues (Judge, Bono, Ilies, & Gerhardt, 2002) concluded that the strength and consistency of the association between extraversion and both leadership emergence and leadership effectiveness are particularly high (see also Colbert, Judge, Choi, & Gang, 2012).

There is some evidence for links between the other Big Five dimensions—conscientiousness, agreeableness, and openness—and the acquisition of power. For example, in their meta-analysis Judge et al. (2002) found some evidence for associations between conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness on the one hand, and leadership emergence and effectiveness on the other. Although such data tend to be more mixed or nuanced, they nonetheless suggest the need to consider more than just extraversion in examining the link between personality traits and power.

The leadership literature has revealed several other personal attributes that are likely linked to the acquisition of power. For example, researchers have argued that cognitive ability, such as intelligence, should be linked to leadership emergence (Bass & Stogdill, 1990; Lord, Vader, & Alliger, 1986). Consistent with this, Atwater et al. (Atwater, Dionne, Avolio, Camobreco, & Lau, 1999) followed a group of cadets at a military college over a 4-year

period and found that cognitive ability assessed in the first year predicted the likelihood of assuming a leadership position in the fourth year. It is worth noting, though, that a meta-analysis found that the links between intelligence and leadership emergence are relatively weak ($r = .27$; Judge, Colbert, & Ilies, 2004), even though those who *appear intelligent* in face-to-face interactions more readily attain power ($r = .60$). Judge and colleagues point out that “it is possible [...] that leadership status is afforded to those who effectively manage a reputation for intelligence” (p. 548).

In more recent work, researchers have shown that the expression of compassion and contempt (e.g., more compassion, less contempt) is associated with being rated as a leader by others in part because people associate these emotions with intelligence (Melwani, Mueller, & Overbeck, 2012). Another personal attribute that may be linked to leadership is empathy. Kellett, Humphrey, and Sleeth (2006) found that, over and above cognitive ability, people who were rated by their peers in small-group settings as higher in empathy were also rated as higher in leadership. In a similar vein, Ames, Maissen, and Brockner (2012) showed that listening behaviors (e.g., listening frequently) are linked to being rated higher in influence (e.g., ability to persuade others and build coalitions) by work colleagues. Along somewhat related lines, Flynn and colleagues found that individuals who score high in self-monitoring—a personality disposition that is associated with being more attuned to and accurate about status dynamics and the status implications of one’s own and others’ behaviors—were more apt to be granted status in the eyes of their peers (Flynn, Reagans, Amanatullah, & Ames, 2006). It is worth noting that findings like these focus on tendencies that covary with the acquisition or rise to power, and do not necessarily imply that, once in power, people will continue to demonstrate the same tendencies.

Shedding further light on the links between particular attributes, such as extroversion and dominance, on the one hand, and leadership emergence on the other, is research that attempts to unpack the mechanisms underlying these links (Anderson & Kilduff, 2009; Cheng, Tracy, Foulsham, & Kingstone, & Henrich, 2013; Dinh & Lord, 2012). A recurring theme in this research is that certain traits may be linked to leadership emergence via the association

between these traits and the enactment of behaviors designed or perceived to facilitate a group's success. In other words, power is afforded to those who do or are perceived as being able to facilitate the group's success. Indeed, various well-known theories of leadership (e.g., Fielder's contingency theory of leadership; Fiedler, 1964) are grounded in this basic assumption. In this vein, Colbert et al. (2012) found that the links between both self- and observer-rated personality and peer-rated leadership were mediated by a composite of peer-rated contributions to group success (e.g., idea generation). Anderson and Kilduff (2009) found that trait dominance leads to status attainment because it promotes perceptions of one's ability to competently serve the group. Whether or not people engage in behaviors that facilitate group success in an explicitly strategic manner undoubtedly varies across people and situations. For example, among individuals who have a strong desire for power, such behaviors may be enacted quite strategically, even showing a time course whereby group success and concerns are prioritized prior to acquiring power, but replaced by more self-interested behaviors once power has been achieved (Keltner, Gruenfeld, Galinsky, & Kraus, 2010).

In fact, as suggested in an earlier section, wide-ranging theory and research have explored the notion that people vary in how much they value and strive for power, and the implications of such variations for who actually attains power. Some of this work has explained the link between personal attributes, such as trait dominance, and the acquisition of power in terms of the desire for power (Winter, 1973). That is, some personality attributes may promote ascendance to powerful positions and roles precisely because they are associated with valuing and striving for power.

Relevant here is the large literature on implicit power motives (*n* Power) (McClelland, 1985; Schultheiss, 2008; Steele, 1973; Winter, 1973), briefly noted above. Most research on *n* Power has focused on the implicit assessment of these motives, whether through projective tests or biological markers (for a review, see Stanton & Schultheiss, 2009), but studies have also linked levels of *n* Power to outcomes related to the acquisition of power, including the likelihood of being successful in managerial positions (e.g., McClelland & Boyatzis, 1982),

being judged by others as being competent and influential (Schultheiss & Brunstein, 2002), and being seen as “great” leaders (e.g., Winter, 1987). In a related vein, research on the “Hope for Power”, which taps an approach-motivated desire for power, suggests that higher scores on a measure of this desire are linked to a higher likelihood of holding executive positions in one’s organization (Harms, Roberts, & Wood, 2007).

Situational Contingencies

The diverse literatures reviewed in the previous section clearly indicate that there are a good number of personality traits, skills, and motives that, on average, facilitate the acquisition of power and influence in informal and organizational settings. At the same time, there is growing evidence that whether or not a given attribute actually leads to the attainment of power can hinge on particular situational characteristics or constraints—in other words, power acquisition often depends on an interaction of person and situational influences.

In a particularly straightforward demonstration of this possibility, Lawless DesJardins and colleagues examined the association between personality traits such as extraversion and status attainment across different kinds of hierarchies, noting that the vast majority of research on personality and power acquisition failed to take into account variations in the social context (Lawless DesJardins, Srivastava, Kufner, & Back, 2015; see also Grant, Gino, & Hofmann, 2011). Across two studies, these researchers had individuals engage in either competitive or affiliative interactions in informal, small-group settings, after which group members rated each other on attained status in the group. The key findings of this research were that extraversion predicted status attainment regardless of the competitive or affiliative nature of the group interaction. In contrast, being high in agreeableness was linked to status attainment only in the context of affiliative interactions, presumably because this personality dimension facilitates the group only when the group interaction is affiliation-focused. In short, the link between some personality traits (e.g., agreeableness) and status may be moderated by situational features.

Other research in this vein has focused on the moderating role of more macro-level features of the situation. For example, one study looked at the relationship between personality

traits and the attainment of influence in two different types of organizational cultures—one in which work often occurred in groups and teamwork was highly valued, and other in which the culture encouraged working alone and teamwork is not particularly valued (Anderson, Spataro, & Flynn, 2008). The researchers assessed the personality traits of employees at two actual firms characterized by these two different organizational cultures and had the employees rate a subset of their coworkers on how much influence they exerted in decisions at the workplace. The results revealed a clear moderating role for organizational culture: extraversion was associated with higher influence in the organizational culture focused on teamwork than in the other organization whereas the reverse was true for conscientiousness, which predicted influence more strongly in the work-alone culture than the teamwork one. These person x situation effects emerged over and above variations in formal authority, key demographic variables (e.g., gender and SES), and even job performance.

In a conceptually similar vein, de Waal-Andrews, Gregg, and Lammers (2015) examined the potential moderating role of hierarchy type in the relationship between agentic versus communal behavioral tendencies and the attainment of status. They distinguished between dominance-based hierarchies, wherein “status is grabbed,” and prestige-based hierarchies, wherein “status is granted.” Across both laboratory and field settings, the researchers found evidence that agentic behavioral tendencies facilitate the attainment of status regardless of the type of hierarchy in which the behaviors are expressed, whereas communal behavioral tendencies promote status in prestige-based hierarchies and diminish it in dominance-based ones. Overall, such findings clearly indicate that to obtain a fuller and more precise understanding of how traits, dispositions, skills, and motives promote or detract from the acquisition of power, one needs to consider the nature of the situation at hand.

How Power Affects the Person

“One of the things about powerful people is they have the ability to make it look easy.” -Ice-T

Thus far, we have focused on theory and research that speak to individual and situational factors that are linked to the acquisition of power. We now turn to the question of how having power *changes* individuals and their behavior. To preview, theory and research in

this vein suggest that the mere fact of having power alters the ways people make judgments, act, and pursue goals. Whether intrinsically driven by the desire to dominate or externally prompted by power roles, power first and foremost orients individuals toward having an impact in the social environment. Such an impact depends on the prompt exercise of influence. As we describe in the sections below, a great deal of the research in this area has taken a process-based, rather than content-focused, approach to understanding how power affects people.

Fast Decision Making and Action

To signal competence and exercise influence, power holders need to exhibit prompt decisions and actions. People who are decisive—that is, have the ability to make prompt decisions with no hesitation—are perceived as having more power compared to those who are not decisive. To illustrate, in an investigation of desired attributes in a prime minister by British members of the parliament, more than three quarters of the 158 members of the parliament who took part in this study considered decisiveness as the most important trait in a head of state, whereas only 32% rated honesty as important (Allen et al., 2015). Such links between power and decisiveness can be seen not only in people's expectations of decisiveness in those who hold power, but also in power holders' actual behavior (for a review see Guinote, in press). For instance, when making decisions about a course of action, power holders are faster compared to individuals who do not have power (Guinote, 2007c).

Power holders also take initiative more often during social interactions, and express their opinions more in these contexts (Anderson & Berdahl, 2002; Guinote et al., 2002). For example, one study revealed that during negotiations participants assigned to a high power condition were twice as likely to initiate the negotiation compared to their less powerful counterparts (Magee, Galinsky, & Gruenfeld, 2007). This tendency is associated with enhanced self-confidence (Brinol et al., 2007; Fast et al., 2012), a pillar of the experience of power. Consistent with the tendency for the powerful to take initiative is theory and research indicating that power is associated with independence and self-sufficiency (e.g., Fiske, 1993; Lammers et al., 2012; Lee & Tiedens, 2001)

To make fast decisions power holders often rely on accessible information, in particular, experiential information (Guinote, 2010; Weick & Guinote, 2008). Experiential information, such as feelings of familiarity and bodily experiences, can inform judgment in addition to the declarative information that is brought to mind (Schwarz et al., 1991). People with power use more experiential information across various domains, such as eating (Guinote, 2010; Kunstman, Smith, & Maner, 2014) and reasoning (i.e., cognitive experiences; Weick & Guinote, 2008). These findings will be discussed in more depth later.

Other work has shown that power holders have a heightened readiness to take action across a variety of situations (Galinsky et al., 2003; Keltner et al., 2003). Put simply, they are often “on the go” and are attuned to what is called for on a moment-to-moment basis. Baumeister and colleagues (Baumeister, Chesner, Senders, & Tice, 1988) were the first to experimentally demonstrate this in a simulated emergency situation. Participants were assigned to a subordinate or a leader role, and were then exposed to an alleged emergency (a choking fit) that occurred during a structured group interaction. Power holders were more likely to help the victim, overcoming the common passive bystander response, compared to subordinates. Along analogous lines, Galinsky et al. (2003) proposed more recently that power leads to action regardless of the situation. For example, in one study participants were primed with power and subsequently exposed to an annoying stimulus (an annoying fan). The experimenter recorded whether participants moved the fan away. As expected, power-primed participants were more likely to move the fan away compared to participants who were not primed with power.

Not only does power lead to action, but recent work also suggests that the actions of power holders in turn often affect the judgments they make. Specifically, power increases the tendency to use information stemming from motor simulations in the construal of judgments (Wolfin & Guinote, 2015). To illustrate, Wolfin and Guinote asked participants in one study to recall a past event in which they had power over someone or someone had power over them, or they recalled what they did ‘yesterday’ (control condition). Participants were then subjected to a training of their extra-ocular muscles by keeping the eyes on a fixation cross and moving the head following horizontal and vertical trajectories. They then watched video clips that displayed dot

movements that they trained, or not trained, to see, and indicated how pleasant each dot movement was. Participants in the high power condition reported linking the dot movements that they were trained to see more than the dot movements that they were not trained to see. This was not the case for participants in the control and low power conditions.

In addition to trusting experiential information to guide their behavior and form impressions about objects, power holders rely on the self when thinking about others—that is, they self-anchor. Overbeck and Droutman (Overbeck & Droutman, 2013) found that participants in a powerful condition relied more on their affective states when judging ambiguous emotional expressions of other people. In a related vein, power holders also tend to use their own traits as a reference when describing the traits of other people compared to less powerful individuals.

In summary, power energizes people. It accelerates the processes of decision making and action. Compared to other individuals, power holders tend to be more decisive and confident, which breeds social esteem and support. Power holders also tend to rely more on accessible knowledge, including chronically accessible knowledge related to the self, as well as inner experiences that occur on a moment-to-moment basis. In the next section, we will focus in more detail on processes linked to the pursuit of goals.

Power and Goal Pursuit

Powerful people are more goal oriented and generally more successful at attaining their goals independently of the resources that they have at their disposal (DeWall, Baumeister, Mead, & Vohs, 2011; Guinote, 2007c; Overbeck & Park, 2006; Whitson et al., 2013). Indeed, although power facilitates reliance on accessible knowledge, as we have discussed, a closer examination of the links between power and cognition shows that power holders are also capable of effortful information processing strategies directed at the attainment of desired outcomes. In other words, power holders deploy effort in a strategic way. Consistent with this notion, a series of studies showed that power holders generally do not engage in extensive thought *prior* to initiating a course of action. For example, unlike participants who do not have power, power holders generally did not ask questions, such as “what would happen if...”

(Scholl & Sassenberg, 2015). This was especially the case when the benefits of thought for action were ambiguous. On the other hand, when it was beneficial to think about their courses of action, power holders engaged in prefactual thought.

Evidence suggests that rather than being merely oriented towards seeking rewards, power increases goal-related approach motivation (Guinote, in press). Guinote proposed that power energizes individuals and activates the *wanting* rather than the *liking* (i.e., hedonic) systems of approach motivation (Berridge, 2007; see also Guinote, in press), which involve prompt action control strategies (see Galinsky et al., 2003), and may include delay of gratification (Joshi & Fast, 2013) and higher-order cognitive abilities at the service of goals (Egan & Hirt, 2014; Guinote, 2007b; Schmid, Kleiman, & Amodio, 2015).

The goal-focused state of power holders triggers a cascade of downstream effects on attention, memory, and action selection that facilitate goal pursuit and achievement. During goal striving, information that aids goal pursuit comes to mind more easily (i.e., is more accessible) for power holders than for powerless individuals (Slabu & Guinote, 2010). Power holders also pay more attention to goal-relevant than goal-irrelevant information (Guinote 2007b; Overbeck & Park, 2001; Smith & Trope, 2006), more readily seek opportunities to pursue their goals (Guinote, 2007c), pay less attention to constraints to goal attainment (Whitson et al., 2013), and are more flexible in the means they use to pursue goals (Guinote, 2008). Power holders also have a greater ability to be creative (Duguid & Goncalo, 2015; Galinsky, Magee, Gruenfeld, Whitson, & Liljenquist, 2008; Gervais, Guinote, Allen, & Slabu, 2013), which they use when it aids goal pursuit (Gervais et al., 2013). After goal completion, powerful people readily decrease the accessibility of their accomplished goal, whereas this is not the case for powerless people (Slabu & Guinote, 2010).

Neural studies have shown that power holders have better cognitive control (Harada, Bridge, & Chiao, 2012; Schmid et al., 2015). Specifically, Schmid and colleagues found that power facilitates the link between conflict detection and the implementation of action. Other studies found that power holders are better at orienting their attention to desired

locations in the field (Slabu, Guinote, & Wilkinson, 2013), are less vigilant, and made better use of orienting cues in the environment to help them control attention compared to powerless individuals (Willis, Rodríguez-Bailón, & Lupiáñez, 2011).

Power also enhances performance in some tasks. A great deal of evidence shows that power holders are better at persuading others and at attaining goals that are dependent on the cooperation of other individuals in interpersonal interactions (Dunbar et al., 2012) and in negotiations (Magee et al., 2007). For example, in equal power dyadic interactions that simulated hiring decisions, dominant individuals more frequently hired their desired candidates than did non-dominant individuals (Dunbar et al., 2012). In negotiation contexts, power holders were more likely to make the first offer, and in doing so they made better bargains than other individuals (Magee et al., 2007). Power holders performed better in visual rotation tasks (Nissan, Shapira, & Liberman, 2015) and math tasks (Harada et al., 2012). Power can even benefit the performance of low status individuals. For example, women under perform in math tasks due to concerns regarding confirming their stereotype (i.e., stereotype threat). However, making women feel powerful helped them overcome the detrimental effects of stereotype threat (Van Loo & Rydell, 2013).

The superior ability of power holders emerges particularly when the stakes or pressure are high (Kang, Galinsky, Kray, & Shirako, 2015). For example, in social evaluative contexts individuals with power performed better than individuals who do not have power (Schmid & Schmid Mast, 2013). This effect occurred because power holders had less concerns with negative social evaluations and less stress, which was consistent with their decreased physiological arousal. In the context of job interviews, a high-stakes situation, participants primed with power attained better outcomes than power neutral participants (Lammers, Dubois, Rucker, & Galinsky, 2013).

The better performance of power holders is aided to a great extent by their strategies of attention and action selection (Guinote, 2007b; Schmid et al., 2015). As discussed above, power holders attend to information selectively, distinguishing better what is goal relevant from what is not goal relevant (Guinote, 2008; Overbeck & Park, 2001). Similarly, given the myriad

of goals that are pursued in a single day, people with power choose to prioritize and pursue one goal at a time (Guinote, 2007b). For example, Cai and Guinote (2016) assigned participants to a powerful or a powerless role and gave them three tasks to complete (simple math, geometric, and picture naming tasks) in whatever manner they wanted to. Unknown to participants, the number of switches across the tasks was counted. Frequent switching indicates a multitasking strategy, whereas doing one task at a time reflects a serial strategy. Powerless participants preferred to multitask, whereas those with power completed the tasks serially. This behavior was mediated by increased prioritization among the powerful.

Prioritization allows powerful people to more readily attain the goals that they deem important. Overall, power holders prioritize and show a selective and focused mindset in line with salient goals. Power holders increased initiative and selective information processing strategies are core underlying mechanisms that explain why power magnifies the active self—the topic of the next several sections.

Power as Active Self

Thus far we have seen that both dispositional and situational factors can influence the ways power holders think and act. At the same time, power energizes individuals and endows them with self-regulatory skills that help them advance their goals. One set of questions that arises is how can these influences be integrated and how do they operate on a moment-to-moment basis? How can power holders respond flexibly across contexts? The notion of the active self helps shed light on these questions.

Active Self From Chronic Dispositions

The theory and evidence described in the preceding sections suggesting that power enhances prioritization, initiative, and goal pursuit lay the groundwork for the notion that power magnifies the active self. The crux of this active self viewpoint is that power facilitates selective focus on what is currently important and, relatedly, self-expression—that is, the expression of one's currently salient thoughts, emotions, goals, and values. Indeed, as mentioned earlier on, having power increases confidence (Briñol et al., 2007; Fast et al., 2012; Tost et al., 2012), self-esteem (Wojciszke & Struzynska-Kujalowicz, 2007), and social distance (Smith & Trope,

2006; Lammers et al., 2012) — all of which should also help set the stage for self-expression.

What does the self-expression of power holders look like? We argue that power leads to expression of the active self—that is, it promotes self-expression in line with accessible constructs. Thus, just as power breeds prioritization and selectivity when it comes to social perception, it also encourages less extensive, fast processing, and reliance on accessible constructs when it comes to the self. This perspective finds support in longstanding views on the self-concept (James, 1890; Markus, 1977; Markus & Wurf, 1987). Although the self is often assumed to be, and referred to and treated as, a stable, enduring entity, the role of the self-concept in everyday, moment-to-moment functioning suggests otherwise. That is, ample evidence indicates that the nature of the self-concept shifts across contexts, demonstrating predictable and adaptive malleability in its content. Thus, rather than a single, monolithic self-concept, the self-concept is more appropriately viewed as a “working self-concept” (Markus & Nurius, 1986)—made up of the particular subset of an individual’s overall pool of self-knowledge that is currently active. In short, the working self-concept is defined by whatever self-knowledge is currently accessible and occupying working memory.

The accessibility of a construct can emanate from multiple sources: from chronic accessibility, which characterizes enduring, frequently activated dispositions including values, goals, and preferences, as well as from temporary accessibility, such as the accessibility of a construct that is momentarily heightened by salient situational cues or goals. In this section, we review evidence pertaining to the notion that power enhances the expression of chronically accessible dispositions, values, goals, and preferences. In the following section, we describe circumstances under which people may not behave in accord with their chronic dispositions, but are nonetheless acting in line with the active self—that is, with the principles of accessibility and the working self-concept.

Power holders’ regular priorities are linked to habits, dispositions, and chronic goals of the person (Bargh & Raymond, 1995; Chen et al., 2001), as well as to goals that derive from the experience of power, such as maintaining power or influencing others (see Jost & Banaji, 1994; Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth, & Malle, 1994; Vescio, Snyder, & Butz, 2003). These

constructs are chronically active. By default, then, these chronic constructs make up the current, active self, thereby leading power holders to act in line with their enduring priorities and dispositions. In an early demonstration of this, Chen and colleagues showed that power heightens cognition and behavior in line with people's chronic relationship goals (Chen et al., 2001). Specifically, they found that communally-oriented individuals—who prioritize the needs and interests of their relationship partners—engage in more socially-responsible forms of behavior when put in a position of power, whereas their more exchange-oriented counterparts—who prioritize adherence to a tit-for-tat rule in the giving and receiving of benefits in relationships—exhibit more self-interested behavioral tendencies when in power.

In a more recent set of studies, Guinote, Weick, and Cai (2012) showed that in the absence of any temporarily activated constructs, power leads people to act in ways consistent with their chronic dispositions. For example, relative to when placed in a low-power role, participants placed in a high-power role interpreted an ambiguous social target in line with a chronically accessible trait construct and employed strategies in an economic game in line with their chronic (prosocial or proself) values. The basic finding—namely, that power can magnify the chronically active self—has been conceptually replicated numerous times across a broad range of chronically accessible constructs and behaviors (e.g., Cote et al., 2011; Gordon & Chen, 2013; Schmid Mast, Jonas, & Hall, 2009). Moreover, power holders tend to characterize their self-concepts as being more consistent across contexts, suggesting that power is also associated with the phenomenological experience of behaving in line with chronic priorities, dispositions, concerns, and forth regardless of the context (Kraus, Chen, & Keltner, 2011; see also Kifer, Heller, Perunovic, & Galinsky, 2013).

Active Self From the Immediate Context

The influence of chronic dispositions and priorities can be dampened in the presence of salient cues in the immediate context, as in classic trait construct priming studies wherein participants who vary in their chronically accessible constructs are induced to interpret a target person in line with a trait construct whose accessibility has been momentarily heightened via some kind of priming task (e.g., Higgins, Rholes, & Jones, 1977; Srull & Wyer, 1977). Whether

or not power magnifies the expression of chronic dispositions and goals may similarly hinge on situational influences. The studies by Guinote et al. (2012), mentioned above, offer a particularly straightforward demonstration of this. Recall that Guinote et al. found that power magnifies the expression of the chronically active self in the absence of alternative active constructs. However, they also showed that when an alternative construct is made temporarily salient, power holders' behavioral tendencies were no longer guided by their chronic dispositions and concerns—that is, the temporary activation of the alternative construct and chronic influences cancelled each other out, leading to no differences between powerful and powerless participants. This fits the argument that power facilitates the active self, whether this active self reflects chronically accessible constructs or constructs that have been rendered accessible in the immediate context (e.g., Inesi, Lee, & Rios, 2014; Wisse & Rus, 2012).

Other situational, momentary influences on the active self—and therefore the nature of power's effects on the expression of this self—include momentary subjective feelings and experiences, such as the experienced ease of retrieving examples from memory or bodily states such as hunger or fatigue. As referred to in prior sections, research suggests that, by virtue of their higher reliance on default, automatic processes, power holders' judgments and behaviors tend to be more influenced by such subjective experiences, regardless of the nature of their chronic dispositions, preferences, and goals. For example, recall that Weick and Guinote (2008) demonstrated that high power is associated with stronger reliance on the subjective experience of ease of retrieval compared to low power. That is, they were more influenced than their low-power counterparts by the ease or difficulty of retrieving examples, thereby rendering judgments that reflected their subjective experience rather than declarative knowledge. In another study focused on the bodily state of hunger, Guinote (2010) had participants engage in a supposed taste study, and found that power holders ate more or less food depending on their level of hunger, whereas the hunger levels of the less powerful did not predict their eating behavior.

Even the basic notion that power facilitates action (Galinsky et al., 2003), described in earlier sections, can be modified by situational factors. For example, Galinsky and colleagues

found that when facing a dilemma that gave participants the opportunity to give their resources to a common good (a public dilemma), those who had been previously primed with power gave more resources than participants who had been primed with lack of power. However, when given an opportunity to take resources from a common good (a commons dilemma), those who felt powerful took more resources than those who felt powerless. That is, power holders acted in more selfish or prosocial ways depending on the task at hand. As another example of situational moderators of basic power effects described in prior sections, Overbeck and Park (2006) found that when organizational goals/culture emphasized a focus on product, participants in powerful roles focused less on individuating attributes of employees compared to when the goals/culture of the organization were more “person-centered.” In other words, while power holders may often act in line with their enduring tendencies and preferences, it is clear that they can also show considerable flexibility and behavior variability depending on relevant situational cues or circumstances. This social psychological characterization of power holders is one that leadership scholars generally share (Dinh & Lord, 2012), and is a core assumption of the situated focus theory of power (Guinote, 2007a, 2010).

There are still other ways that situational factors may alter the magnifying effect of power on the expression of chronic priorities, values, goals, and dispositions. In particular, research suggests that situational cues or structural features can synergize with or “fit” with one’s chronic dispositions and preferences, paving the way for the expression of the chronic self. Alternatively, the situation can represent a lack of fit or a mismatch of sorts with one’s chronic self, resulting in the suppression of one’s chronic tendencies. For example, Chen, Langer, and Mendoza-Denton (2009) found that when people’s chronic beliefs about their capacity to influence others fit their assigned role power, they are more likely to engage in self-expression—that is, behave in line with their states and traits—thereby increasing their likelihood of being perceived by others in a manner congruent with their own self-judgments.

It is worth noting here that fit or lack of fit between chronic dispositions and situational circumstances can have effects that extend beyond the likelihood of expression of the chronic self. For example, research has shown that fit or match between one’s baseline level of

testosterone—a hormone associated with dominance-seeking behavior, as noted earlier—and the status of one's current position has various consequences, including better cognitive performance (e.g., Josephs, Sellers, Newman, & Mehta, 2006) and lower blood pressure (Newman, Sellers, & Josephs, 2005). Other work focused on the fit or lack thereof between people's hierarchy-related beliefs and their institutional environments has shown that grade-point averages and expectations of academic success are higher when college students' antiegalitarian beliefs fit the goals and values underlying their majors (Sidanius, Van Laar, Levin, & Sinclair, 2003; Van Laar et al., 1999). Along similar lines, students who score high on conservatism fare better in courses that promote hierarchy differences relative to those that do not (Kimmelmeier, Danielson, & Basten, 2005).

The Uses of Power

In describing the varied ways that power affects the person—along with the enduring as well as momentary, situational factors that can be at play—we have already begun to see how power can be used. Namely, power holders often wield their power in ways that are compatible with and further their chronic and/or situationally salient goals and preferences. In this section, we continue our discussion of how power is used, but zero in on the question of whether power is used in corrupt, self-interested ways or in more benevolent, prosocial ways. In keeping with the theme of this chapter, we highlight possible person and situational influences at play in the shaping of how power is used, ending with a discussion of one particular class of situational factors that influences the use of power—threats to the stability or legitimacy of one's power.

Corrupt or Benevolent Uses of Power?

Conventional wisdom, stereotypes about leaders and other power brokers, media reports, and so forth all suggest that power holders tend to use power for corrupt, self-serving ends. Supporting this impression, in a classic paper on the very question of whether power corrupts, Kipnis (1972) found that having power was associated with an increase in attempts to exert influence over the less powerful, and with the devaluation of the less powerful in terms of their ability and worth. Meta-analytic findings that emerged a few decades later told a

similar story in its conclusion that, as power levels increase, performance evaluations for oneself become more positive, whereas evaluations for others' performance become more negative (Georgesesen & Harris, 1998). In the years since, there continue to be no shortage of real-world examples of corrupt, self-serving behavior on the part of power holders.

Do prevailing beliefs about the corruptive effects of power, and the scientific and real-world evidence that support this viewpoint, imply that power *always* corrupts? Or, does the use of power for corrupt versus benevolent ends fit the overriding theme of this chapter—that is, the use of power hinges on a range of enduring personal factors, as well as immediate, situational influences? In this section, we look at the evidence for whether power is used in self-serving or prosocial ways, ultimately concluding that the power-as-active-self approach we have used as an organizing framework for this chapter also provides a useful way to understand and predict how power is used.

Power often corrupts. It would not be unreasonable for one to view the early findings by Kipnis and others suggesting that power breeds self-serving judgments of oneself relative to others as just the tip of the iceberg in terms of evidence that power corrupts. Indeed, researchers have since linked higher relative to lower power to a very broad range of corrupt, self-interested behaviors. Power (and/or related constructs such as dominance) can increase stereotyping (Operario & Fiske, 2001), implicit prejudice (Guinote, Willis, & Martellotta, 2010; Petra C Schmid & Amodio, 2016), and dehumanization of outgroups (Lammers & Stapel, 2011). Higher social class, which often comes hand in hand with higher power, leads to unethical behavior, such as a greater likelihood of cheating, lying, and unethical decision-making (Piff, Stancato, Cote, Mendoza-Denton, & Keltner, 2012), as well as less charitable giving and helpfulness (Piff, Kraus, Cote, Cheng, & Keltner, 2010). More recent findings pinpoint that the effects of social class on more self-interested and less prosocial behaviors appear to be driven by power and that power leads to unethical tendencies precisely when these tendencies are also self-beneficial (Dubois, Rucker, & Galinsky, 2015). High power is also associated with greater consumer spending on the self versus others (Rucker, Dubois, & Galinsky, 2011). In a related vein, power has been linked to a greater likelihood of violating

social norms (Van Kleef, Homan, Finkenauer, Gundemir, & Stamkou, 2011), and such behavioral tendencies actually serve to bolster the power of norm violators in the eyes of others.

Power has also been linked to more actual acts of infidelity, as well as to greater intentions to engage in infidelity in the future (Lammers, Stoker, Jordan, Pollmann, & Stapel, 2011). In the context of close relationships, power leads to less sacrifice of one's own interests versus the interests of relationship partners (Righetti et al., 2015). Wiltermuth and Flynn (2013) have linked power to enhanced moral clarity—or holding firm views on what counts as an ethical violation—which in turn predicts harsher punishment of transgressors. Psychological and behavioral tendencies associated with power have also been linked to more corrupt and less benevolent behavior. For example, power breeds greater approach motivation (Keltner et al., 2003; Kilduff & Galinsky, 2013; Lammers, Stoker, & Stapel, 2010), which is associated with more egocentric anchoring and less taking into account of others' perspectives (Sassenrath, Sassenberg, & Scholl, 2014). Bodily postures associated with higher power (e.g., body expansiveness) have been linked to greater dishonesty (Yap, Wazlawek, Lucas, Cuddy, & Carney, 2013).

At first glance, it would be easy to conclude from the above examples that power is indeed a corruptive force. And yet, a consideration of the power-as-active-self perspective—that power incites responses that reflect the currently active self—offers another interpretation. To the degree that most people's default, chronic response is to serve the self (DeWall, Baumeister, Gailliot, & Maner, 2008; Joosten, van Dijke, van Hiel, De Cremer, 2015; Kelley & Thibaut, 1978) power tends to corrupt, encouraging self-interested rather than benevolent, other-oriented responding. However, people vary in their predisposition for egocentric biases and the contexts in which they exercise power. By the same token, to the extent that chronic, automatic goals and preferences, and/or to the extent that situational factors render automatic selfish impulses inappropriate, irrelevant, or detrimental, power need not lead to corrupt, self-serving tendencies. Supporting this viewpoint is a rapidly growing body of evidence demonstrating that whether power is used toward corrupt or benevolent ends depends on the person—namely, on the power holders' enduring goals, values, dispositions, and beliefs. These

personal inclinations can propel individuals to use power as an opportunity to acquire advantages for the self or as tool to serve collective goals (Chen et al., 2001; Sassenberg, Ellemers, & Scheepers, 2012). We turn to some key examples of such evidence below.

Person influences on the use of power. Consistent with a power-as-active-self perspective, power is often used in ways that serve the chronically active self, regardless of whose interests are being most served. An early example of this is the Chen et al. (2001) studies described earlier showing that chronically communally-oriented individuals used power in socially responsible ways, whereas chronically exchange-oriented individuals wielded their power in ways that served their own interests. Along similar lines, Schmidt Mast, Jonas, and Hall (2009) found that people whose default leadership style was empathic (vs. egoistic) showed greater interpersonal sensitivity when placed in a position of power or when primed with power, while Cote et al. (2011) showed that power enhances empathic accuracy among those high but not low in dispositional prosocial orientation.

Similar conclusions about the role of chronic dispositions in shaping the use of power have been drawn in the leadership literature (for a review, Williams, 2014). For example, researchers have shown that whether leaders behave in ways that benefit the group or themselves hinges on the nature of their “leadership effectiveness beliefs,” whether they hold the chronic belief that leaders’ role is to benefit the collective or the self (Rus, Van Knippenberg, & Wisse, 2010). Work by Sassenberg and colleagues similarly points to the crucial role of chronic beliefs about power (Sassenberg et al., 2012; Sassenberg, Ellemers, Scheepers, & Scholl, 2014). They argue that people vary in whether they construe power as a responsibility, leading to a focus on the implications of one’s behavior for others, versus construing power as an opportunity, leading to a focus on the attainment of one’s own goals. Power is used with the group’s needs or one’s own gain in mind accordingly.

Also demonstrating person influences on the use of power is recent research in the leadership field showing that leadership corruption depends on endogenous levels of testosterone. More specifically, corrupt, antisocial decisions in an experimental game were found to be highest when individuals were high in both leader power and testosterone

(Bendahan, Zehnder, Pralong, & Antonakis, 2015).

Yet another example, this one coming from work on leadership, lies in studies conducted by Wisse and Rus (2012) demonstrating the joint influence of leader power and leader self-concept on self-interested forms of behavior. Most relevant to the foregoing discussion, one of these studies found that leaders who chronically tend to construe themselves as very independent exhibit more self-interested behavior, particularly when the power associated with their leadership role is high. In contrast, leaders who chronically view themselves in more collective, group-oriented terms showed less self-interested behavior with increasing power.

Turning to the domain of power and sexualized behavior, Kunstman and Maner (2011) found that power increased perceptions of subordinates' sexual interest, as well as heightened sexualized behavior toward subordinates, specifically among sexually unrestricted individuals—that is, individuals with chronically active mating goals. Earlier work showed that men who score highly on scales designed to assess respondents' baseline likelihood to sexually harass or aggress, possess an automatic mental association between the concepts of power and sex (Bargh, Raymond, Pryor, & Strack, 1995). Moreover, when primed with power-related stimuli relative to neutral stimuli, such men were male participants were rated a female confederate as more physically attractive.

Overall, such findings fit the basic prediction from the power-as-active-self perspective that power often facilitates responses that follow from power holders' default, chronic goals, dispositions, values, and preferences—so long as such chronic tendencies are not supplanted by temporarily salient alternative goals, values, and preferences by virtue of opportunities or demands in the immediate situation. When such situational factors come into play, power continues to reflect the active self, but this self is characterized and guided by immediate concerns and preferences.

Situational influences on the use of power. In an early demonstration of the influence of situational factors on whether power is used to serve corrupt or benevolent ends, Goodstadt and Kipnis (1970) assigned participants to the role of supervisor of a group of simulated

workers. The degree to which supervisors responded to worker problems in corrupt ways (e.g., using coercive techniques, withholding rewards) depended on the nature of the problem at hand; problems with worker discipline led to more corruption than problems of worker incompetence.

Directly illustrative of the power-as-active-self perspective is the research reviewed earlier by Guinote et al. (2012). Recall that these studies demonstrated, broadly speaking that chronic tendencies hold sway in the absence of the activation of any alternative constructs, but are supplanted with responses that are consistent with momentarily activated alternatives. Pertaining to the question of how power is used, several studies in this program of research showed that levels of prosocial responding (e.g., charitable preferences, the use of cooperative vs. competitive strategies in an economics game) were more likely to reflect chronic proself or prosocial dispositions under conditions of high relative to low power, but not when dispositions countering participants' chronic tendencies were primed (e.g., proself orientation among prosocial participants).

Other researchers have similarly established the interplay of person and situational factors in shaping the corrupt versus benevolent use of power, sometimes demonstrating their joint impact. For example, Maner and Mead (2010) examined whether leaders use their power in the service of group-oriented or selfish goals. They found that instability in the power hierarchy, a situational factor, combined with high levels of dominance motivation, a person factor, led people to prioritize their own selfish goals over the goals of the group. On the other hand, these researchers also showed that such corrupt, self-interested tendencies could be overridden when a rival outgroup entered the picture.

The above studies point to one category of situational factors that has received considerable attention in studies of how power is wielded—namely, when the situation introduces or involves some kind of threat. Threats can include uncertainties associated with one's power, such as the calling into the question of the legitimacy of one's position of power or the highlighting of the instability of one's power, but can also include more general threats such as punishment, uncertainty, lack of control, or mortality salience. In general, threats

activate the behavioral inhibition system (Jeffrey Alan Gray & McNaughton, 2003; Jonas et al., 2014), which signals the presence of danger to the individual and immediately activates processes associated with anxiety.

Animal studies suggest that high rank animals are particularly sensitive to threats to their power (Sapolsky, 2005), which is a common occurrence in unstable hierarchies, characterized by higher competition for power and resources. In unstable hierarchies, low rank animals try to ascend and frequently challenge power holders. These power struggles are observed in many species and the outcome of such struggles hinges on the competitors' relative potential to hold resources (Parker, 1974). Humans show a similar pattern of reactivity to power threats. Evidence stems from observations of illegitimate (Lammers, et al., 2008; Rodriguez-Bailon, Moya, & Yzerbyt, 2000) and unstable hierarchies (Jordan, Sivanathan, & Galinsky, 2011), as well as differences in perceived power (Bugental, Lyon, Krantz, Cortez, & Krantz, 1997), and perceived competence (Fast & Chen, 2009).

For example, research has shown that when power is illegitimate—that is, when it is perceived as unfair—power positions are questioned, and power holders experience a decrease in their sense of control (Lammers et al., 2008; Willis, Guinote, & Rodriguez-Bailon, 2010). This is a reason why leaders in organizations are less efficient when power is illegitimate (Pfeffer, 1992; Yukl, 1989). In fact, the beneficial effects that power has on positive outlook and agency no longer occur when hierarchies are illegitimate, suggesting a severing of the link between power and pursuit of chronic goals, values, and preferences under such conditions. Indeed, rather than being approach motivated, illegitimate power holders show an activation of the behavioral inhibition system. In this vein, Lammers et al. demonstrated that illegitimate power holders were less reward-oriented and more risk-averse than their subordinates. In contrast, subordinates saw an opportunity to acquire control in an illegitimate hierarchy, and showed approach motivation. Similar observations have been made in organizational contexts. When power is illegitimate, employees become more aggressive and deviant, showing a tendency to sabotage (Greenberg, 1993; Tepper et al., 2009).

More generally, anxiety blocks the effects of power on approach motivation and

agency. Anxiety activates the behavioral inhibition system, and leads to hypervigilance to threats (Bar-Haim, Lamy, & Glickman, 2005; Gray, 1990; Jonas et al., 2014). Therefore, when individuals with high trait anxiety hold power, they easily perceive threats to their power (Maner, Gaillot, Menzel, & Kunstman, 2012). These individuals are risk averse, and less reward seeking compared to non-anxious power holders. Other findings show that socially anxious individuals who see their dominance as threatened respond with decreased testosterone levels, indicating that these individuals are more prone to respond with subordination when their power is threatened (Maner et al., 2008). Overall, these results are consistent with the dual-hormone hypothesis (Mehta & Josephs, 2010) mentioned earlier, which states that the influence of testosterone on dominant behavior depends on levels of cortisol, which is associated with psychological stress.

Threats to power also affect the ways individuals form impressions of others. In one study, Rodriguez-Bailon, Moya, and Yzerbyt (2000) assigned participants to a power role, and either informed them that they were assigned based on the scores of a questionnaire designed to identify their skills as leaders (legitimate condition), or that they were randomly assigned to the power role (illegitimate condition). Subsequently, participants formed impressions of math students based on descriptions that entailed stereotype-consistent and -inconsistent information of positive and negative valence. Illegitimate power holders paid more attention to negative stereotype-inconsistent information compared to their legitimate counterparts. Thus, illegitimate power holders seemed to weigh negative attributes of subordinates more heavily, a self-serving strategy insofar as doing so presumably helps them maintain their superiority and assert their power.

Not only objective properties of social relationships but also subjective perceptions of power can be threatening. Individuals who have power, such as teachers and parents, but doubt their ability to exercise influence and control experience high levels of stress (Bugental, 2010; Bugental, Blue & Cruzcosa, 1989). These individuals tend to assert their power, using more coercive means, as a way to compensate for their perceived lack of power. The role of subjective perceptions of power was first examined by Kipnis and colleagues (Goodstadt &

Kipnis, 1970; Goodstadt & Hjelle, 1973). They showed that people in authority positions who had the lowest levels of perceived control over others used more formal power means and coercion compared to power holders who had higher perceptions of control (see also Raven & Kruglanski, 1970). Along similar lines, individuals who have power but feel incompetent in the domain of power are more prone to aggressive reactions. Studies measuring people's level of authority in the work place, as well as studies that manipulated power in the laboratory, documented heightened aggression in power holders who felt that they lacked competence (Fast & Chen, 2009; see also Fast, Halevy, & Galinsky, 2012).

In summary, the power-as-active-self perspective maintains that how power is used—whether for self-interested and corrupt versus other-oriented and benevolent ends—hinges on the nature of the active self. Because the active self is shaped by stable, enduring dispositions values, preferences, or goals, and such chronic tendencies often prioritize the self over others, power is often used in a corrupt manner. But situational factors alone or combination with person factors can lead to benevolent uses of power.

Summary and Broader Implications

In this chapter, we drew primarily from the literatures on social and personality psychology, but also from relevant bodies of scholarship on leadership, to characterize the oftentimes complex interplay between person and situational factors in understanding the acquisition, influence, expression, and uses of social power. In doing so, we have emphasized a process-based approach to understanding the links between power and the person, one that puts the spotlight on the cognitive and motivational underpinnings of power. More pointedly, we described and elaborated on a perspective that is grounded in the notion that power magnifies the active self, which refers to the subset of the self-concept that is currently active or accessible, whether due to chronic or temporary influences.

An overarching aim was to demonstrate that viewing power through the lens of the construct of the active self illuminates and brings coherence to wide-ranging theorizing and research on how power is obtained, how it influences cognition, motivation, and behavior, and how it is exercised. In particular, the power-as-active-self perspective combines the situated

focus theory of power (Guinote, 2007a, 2010), which highlights the notion of prioritization of salient goals, needs or affordances, and the approach inhibition theory of power (Keltner et al., 2003), which emphasizes action facilitation and positive affect. While approach motivation contributes to the understanding of self-expression among the powerful, the situated focus theory of power points to the selective direction of judgment and behavior considering the salient goals and situational affordances of powerful people. Together, these perspectives have been conceptualized in terms of a goal-related approach motivation model of power (Guinote, in press), which claims that power energizes people and increases wanting and seeking salient goals.

In more concrete terms, we began the chapter by first reviewing some basic conceptual issues and theories of power. From there, we delved into the intriguing topic of how power is acquired. To understand the attainment of power, one needs to consider both personal and situational factors—as well as how they may interact in dynamic ways. The range of potential personal factors is broad, including, for example, trait dominance and dominance-related biological proclivities, personality traits such as extraversion, group-serving skills, and contextual factors. At the same time, growing research shows that whether personal factors actually lead to power attainment can hinge on situational factors as basic as the nature, emphasis, or organization of the hierarchy in question (Anderson et al., 2008; Lawless Desjardins et al., 2015). For example, some personality traits may be linked to acquiring power in organizations that emphasize working alone versus teamwork, whereas for other traits, the opposite may be the case. Thus organizational culture and type of tasks associated with power call for different qualities in power holders.

Once power is attained, the question of how it influences the person has captured enormous attention. We have focused on what we see as converging evidence for several basic cognitive and motivational influences of power on the person. We reviewed research that shows that power prompts fast decision making and action, both requiring and bolstering the confidence of power holders in themselves and of those whom they lead in them. In doing so, we proposed a new understanding of the links between the self and cognitive processes.

Power also promotes the prioritization of salient goals (Guinote, 2007, in press), a process that goes hand in hand with the operation of the active self. Goals can exist at different hierarchical levels, from superordinate goals (e.g., to become a psychologist) to specific sub- goals (e.g., to pass an exam; Kruglanski et al., 2002). Goals and the active self are both cognitive knowledge structures dynamically related with linkages and feedback loops. Both are related to chronic knowledge structures, states of the person and contextual inputs that influence individuals in a top-down manner. The active self generates or re-enacts concrete goals. For example, when one is in a work mode and work-related facets of the self are active, work goals involving projects and tasks, such as writing a report or remembering to return a call, can more easily be activated. At the same time, incidental work goals triggered by the environment (e.g., receiving an email notification) can contribute to activate the work self, through associative cognitive processes. These propositions are broadly consistent with goal-related cognitive architectures that encompass high-level symbolic representations and lower-level means (e.g., soar; Laird, 2008).

Power facilitates the prioritization of salient goals, as well as cognitions and behaviors that are chronically active or relevant in context, thereby increasing success at attaining these goals. The more selective information processing strategies of people in power during goal striving contribute to maintain the active self, shielding it against interference, while power holders' increased approach motivation and self-expression magnify the behavior expression of the active self.

Importantly, the nature of the active self is shaped by both chronic dispositions as well as temporary, immediate situational influences. Because dispositions, values and enduring attitudes are by definition chronically accessible they more readily guided judgment and action of people in power. This implies that most frequently people in power will respond in ways that are consistent with their dispositions, values or attitudes. Similarly, goals linked to power roles are recurrent and can frequently guide people in power (see Guinote, in press). Thus, just as one must consider the person and situation to understand the acquisition of power, how

power influences cognition, motivation, and behavior can hinge on both enduring person factors as well as more immediate circumstances and contingencies.

Finally, we reviewed the evidence on how power is used, addressing the question of whether power tends to be used for corrupt or benevolent ends. Keeping with our power-as-active-self perspective, we argued that whether power is used for corrupt or benevolent ends is determined in large part by the nature of the active self. If the active self is characterized by values, goals, and dispositions that hew toward self-interested, corrupt ends, then power, in magnifying the active self, will indeed corrupt. But when the active self instead reflects values, goals, dispositions that focus on benevolent, socially responsible ends, then power will be used in benevolent ways. Frequent inclinations of the self are triggered by chronic goals associated with dispositions and specific power roles. Of course situational factors—such as situational goals and objective threats to one’s power—certainly can contribute to the nature of the active self, slanting concerns and priorities in more self-interested or benevolent directions and leading, in turn, to more corrupt or benevolent uses of power accordingly. In short, viewing power through the lens of the active self encompasses a consideration of both person and situational factors—as well as the potential interplay between them—in attempting to understand how power is acquired, how it influences the person, and how it is used.

In closing, it is important to acknowledge that, in spite of the evidence gathered over the last 15 or so years, numerous questions remain unanswered. First, even though power is a relational phenomenon, most research has been carried out with individual paradigms. More research is needed to understand the links between power, dispositions, and the situation in actual relational contexts. For example, the use of rotation paradigms that vary the constitution of groups and situations would be a particularly useful next step for illuminating the contributions of the person and the situation to the psychology and consequences of power. More broadly, future studies need to consider dispositional and situational influences within the same study. The cultural context of future research is also important. Most studies on power have been conducted in Western cultures. It remains unknown how the links between power, the person, and the situation operate in Eastern, more collectivistic cultures, where the

pressure to respond to the social context is higher. In sum, while extant research has clearly begun to reveal the complexities in understanding power and its person and situational underpinnings, many important pathways of inquiry remain.

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