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## Power Evokes Reluctance for Group-Relevant Advocacy Among Marginalized Groups

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POWER EVOKES RELUCTANCE FOR GROUP-RELEVANT ADVOCACY  
AMONG MARGINALIZED GROUPS

POWER EVOKES RELUCTANCE FOR GROUP-RELEVANT ADVOCACY  
AMONG MARGINALIZED GROUPS

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Arts in Psychology

By

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Purdue University  
Bachelor of Science in Psychology, 2010

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## **Abstract**

Marginalized groups face difficulties voicing their interests. They are perceived as more self-interested, biased, and excessive for advocacy relative to majority groups. While such accusations are intimidating in their own right, powerful members of marginalized groups may be especially sensitive to reprisals in response to advocacy. The present research highlights the ironic role of power on group-relevant advocacy among marginalized groups; identity-based pressures dissuade advocacy because it is personally costly. An Internet study and one lab study examined the effect of high and low power primes on women's self-reported and actual willingness for group-relevant advocacy. Data support my hypothesis that psychological power evokes reluctance for group-relevant advocacy among marginalized women. Powerful women (but not men) reported less advocacy willingness and avoided opportunities to pursue advocacy when it was relevant to their gender group. These findings speak to the impediment of social progress, considering power within the context of identity threats.

This thesis is approved for recommendation  
to the Graduate Council.

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## **Dedication**

This thesis is dedicated to the memory of Heather Norris, from whom much of my inspiration comes.

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## **Power Evokes Reluctance for Group-Relevant Advocacy Among Marginalized Groups**

*"One of the things I was really concerned about when... verbal attacks began was what kind of message this was going to send to young women... I was worried they would think, 'I should sit down and shut up, because if I speak out, this is what happens' ... I want women to see this as an empowering moment."* – Sandra Fluke (Cameron, 2012)

When U.S. lawmakers put forth legislation that many believed impinged on the health rights of women, a female law student at Georgetown University named Sandra Fluke spoke out for women to an all male panel. The comments of this young woman were met with ridicule, and her motives were questioned (most famously by a conservative talk host who accused her of being a slut and a prostitute). What consequences might this have for members of marginalized groups poised to voice group-relevant concerns? Will they feel reluctant or use the opportunity to pursue group interests? The present research speaks to these questions, highlighting the ironic role of power on group-relevant advocacy among marginalized groups.

People seem largely driven by self-interest (Miller, 1999). We are especially concerned when policies affect us personally, and more willing to take social action in favor of self-benefits (Ratner & Miller, 2001). Yet, self-interest is not always the same as group-interest; a sharp contrast should emerge when group-relevant advocacy is controversial, and therefore costly. Members of marginalized groups with a sense of power, I argue, experience identity-based pressures that push them away from group-relevant advocacy because such action is perceived as threatening and personally costly.

Previous research indicates that the advocacy efforts of minority groups are scrutinized more harshly than majority groups who do the same (O'Brien & Crandall, 2005). Women and

racial minorities may have an intuitive understanding of this identity contingency (“*if* underrepresented, *then* biased”), and they may consider personal costs before acting. Because of their favorable positions, power holders in marginalized groups may be especially sensitive to potential reprisals (e.g., Willis & Guinote, 2011); they may see social costs as too high and distance themselves from advocacy opportunities. The goal of this research is to test this hypothesis. Do powerful members of marginalized groups experience reluctance for group-relevant advocacy?

### **Concerns about Self-Interest, Bias, and Extremism**

Women and racial minorities, when faced with opportunities for group-relevant advocacy, may be apprehensive about potential social costs (e.g., Kaiser & Miller, 2001); they could feel concerned about how others interpret their motives, judge them as fair or biased, or perceive them as excessive. For example, confronters of prejudice who share membership in the stigmatized target group evoke more antagonistic and irritated responses than non-member, majority confronters (Czopp & Monteith, 2003), and they are more likely to be dismissed as complainers (Kaiser & Miller, 2001). Because it is perceived as costly, members of stigmatized groups rarely act on the desire to confront perpetrators of prejudice (Swim & Hyers, 1999; Woodzicka & LaFrance, 2001).

O’Brien and Crandall (2005) found that members of disadvantages groups who advocate for change are perceived as more self-interested than advocacy from members of advantaged groups. In a series of studies, relative group size, status level, and group membership (in- or out-group) of an individual challenging the status quo was independently varied. University of Kansas (KU) students indicated that a representative of a small Canadian province, a lower status nurse, and a Kansas State student were all significantly more self-interested for their group-

relevant advocacy efforts than a representative of a large Canadian province, a higher status doctor, and a fellow KU student. Those seen as more self-interested also tended to be less persuasive and therefore less effective in their advocacy efforts. Hence, members of traditionally disadvantaged groups must brazen potential accusations for their motives; they are increasingly likely to be dismissed as self-interested and biased.

Group-based power, or power resulting from membership in a high-status, majority group, also shapes intergroup perceptions and behavior (Fiske, 1993; Keltner & Robinson, 1996). Members of traditionally disadvantaged groups are often stereotyped, perceived as biased, and exaggerated as extremists when seeking social change (Keltner & Robinson, 1996; Keltner & Robinson, 1997; Robinson & Keltner, 1996). Relying on actual group-power differences between “Traditionalists” (high power group representing the status quo) and “Revisionists” (low power group seeking change) in the Western Canon dispute over the appropriate content and philosophy of a liberal arts education, Keltner and Robinson (1997; see also Robinson & Keltner, 1996) examined the intra- and inter-group judgments of college educators self-identified as Traditionalists or Revisionists. Traditionalists included more men and tenured faculty relative to Revisionists, signifying that Traditionalists represented power and the status quo. As expected, Traditionalists perceived Revisionists to be more extremist and less similar in their curriculum choices than Revisionists; Revisionists were fairly accurate in perceiving Traditionalists but overestimated their own group’s extremism. In reality, these groups reported only modestly different attitudes and a surprisingly high overlap in curriculum selection, illustrating that group-based power biases people’s judgments of low power groups as extremists. Ebenbach and Keltner (1998) collected data further substantiating this claim. Participants first reported their attitudes towards two social issues—the death penalty and military intervention—and

subsequently estimated the average attitudes of their group and the opposing group. As indicated by responses, pro-death penalty and pro-intervention groups were the majority positions.

Whereas minority-status participants tended to underestimate the extremism of the majority-status group, majority-status participants inaccurately inflated the attitudes of the minority-status group.

The findings that traditionally disadvantaged groups, typically smaller, lower-status, and less powerful, are perceived as more self-interested, biased, and extremist highlight reasons why members of marginalized groups might avoid public advocacy. Women and racial minorities may have an intuitive understanding of this identity contingency (“*if* underrepresented, *then* biased”), and consider personal costs before acting (e.g., Kaiser & Miller, 2001; Shelton & Stewart, 2004). Because of their favorable positions, power holders in marginalized groups may be especially sensitive to potential reprisals (e.g., Willis & Guinote, 2011); they may see social costs as too high and distance themselves from advocacy opportunities. Pursuing social change may be hard in general (Eidelman & Crandall, 2009; Eidelman, Crandall, & Pattershall, 2009), and it may be exceptionally difficult for powerful members of marginalized groups.

### **When Power Produces Reluctance**

Power is characterized as a driving construct; it disinhibits and leads to action in a variety of contexts (Galinsky, Magee, & Gruenfeld 2003; Keltner, Guenfeld, & Anderson, 2003; Smith & Bargh, 2008). Interpersonal power and subtle primes of power result in behavioral action (Galinsky et al., 2003; Smith & Bargh, 2008), less perspective taking (Galinsky, Magee, Inesi, & Gruenfeld, 2006), greater expression of opinions and attitudes (Berdahl & Martorana, 2006), more positive affect (Berdahl & Martorana, 2006), and increased risk-taking (Anderson & Galinsky, 2006; Galinsky et al., 2003). Therefore, one might predict power to also increase one’s

willingness for group-relevant advocacy. Under certain conditions, however, power has been shown to lead to less risky, more conservative behavior (Maner et al., 2007). A targeted line of research has begun to ask *when* power inhibits rather than facilitates action.

Evidence for boundary conditions that nullify (Lammers, Galinsky, Gordijn, & Otten, 2008) and even reverse power's action-oriented nature (Maner et al., 2007) indicate that the experience of power is not a universal path to action. Instead, power's disinhibiting effects can be moderated by individual differences in power motivation (i.e., the extent to which one desires power and status) and threats of power or status loss. To garner support for this hypothesis, Maner et al. (2007) paid participants five dollars to complete a study ostensibly investigating spatial ability. Participants completed a 10-item test measuring spatial ability and a leadership questionnaire; staged results provided by the experimenter were used to (randomly) assign participants to a high power or control condition. High-power participants were informed that they, as the manager, would be leading two other participants in a group task, whereas control participants believed everyone would work together as peers (i.e., no power differences). Prior to the group-task, participants were given an opportunity to wager money from their study payment in the hopes of besting their original spatial ability test score (always scored 5/10 correct). For high power participants, the original test score was supposedly used as criteria for assigning them a managerial role; therefore a lower score might be perceived as a threat to their status. As expected, high power participants with power motivation were more conservative in their wagers; they were less risky and more inhibited, presumably to protect their power and status. Selective risk aversion appears to be a strategy for hierarchy maintenance.

The possession of power leads to action when threats are minimal, but costly threats yield inhibition and risk aversion. A similar trend of reluctance might be expected for powerful

members of marginalized groups. Potential social costs could be perceived as higher when advocacy implicates their group as compared to when it does not, resulting in reluctance for group-relevant advocacy and determination for general advocacy. The actions of the powerful are primarily goal-focused (Guinote, 2007b; Guinote, 2010a), and maintaining their privileges is a preferred goal (Willis & Guinote, 2011).

### **Conflicting Goals Between the Powerful and the Group**

According to the Situated Focus Theory of Power (Guinote, 2010a), power promotes more situated responding and goal-relevant behavior. The powerful are more selectively attentive to important aspects of the situation, are better able to prioritize, and respond faster (Guinote, 2007a). These psychological elements of power effectively contribute to goal achievement, though the goals of the powerful and the group are not always aligned. In fact, power-holders have a strong propensity to favor goals that protect their privileges (Willis & Guinote, 2011), and such goals are rarely a priority for the group. The frequent result, for those with power, is a tension between group interests and personal interests.

Investigations of power reveal its capacity to free people from social influences (Galinsky, Magee, Gruenfeld, Whitson, & Liljenquist, 2008). Instead of lending themselves to pro-social or group-serving behavior, powerful individuals tend to act more selfishly (Keltner et al., 2003). Research by Maner and Mead (2010) supports this claim. Participants were assigned to either a control condition (group members as equal peers) or a stable or unstable leadership position (group members as subordinates). Whereas stable leaders were informed that changes in the hierarchy were not possible, unstable leaders were informed that hierarchy changes were possible and contingent on task performance. Participants then completed one of two rounds of a language problem-solving task. The first stage was completed individually and the second stage

was said to be a group task. For unstable leaders, a poor performance in the first round could translate into a change in the current hierarchy. Leaders were given clues of varying quality to distribute between themselves and two (fictitious) group members to boost performance. With payment of \$1 to the group for every correct response, it was in the group's best interest to perform well, and therefore leaders *should* evenly distribute these clues prior to round one. However, not all leaders cooperated in a manner that would maximize group gains; in fact, unstable leaders were more likely to allot themselves the best clues as compared to stable leaders and control participants who behaved more egalitarian. When asked to indicate the reason for their allocation strategy, participants in the unstable leadership condition increasingly admitted that they wished to protect their power and status. Maner and Mead's findings suggest that a discrepancy between the interests of power-holders and their group often concludes in self-serving behaviors among the powerful; they sacrifice group goals to achieve their own ends.

Because power promotes goal pursuit (Guinote, 2007b; Guinote, 2010a), a mismatch between personal and group goals is likely to end with the powerful in pursuit of their own interests, sometimes at the expense of the group (Chen, Lee-Chai, & Bargh, 2001; Maner & Mead, 2010). Similarly, powerful members of marginalized groups might see personal costs of group-relevant advocacy as outweighing the needs of the group because of personal goals to maintain status privileges (e.g., Keltner, Gruenfeld, Galinsky, & Kraus, 2010). This conflict of interest may in turn yield reluctance for group-relevant advocacy with power-holders pursuing personal rather than group goals.

### **Self-Presentation as a Means to Goal Achievement**

The maintenance of power and privileges also requires the maintenance of one's social image (Keltner et al., 2010). As social beings, we are inherently motivated to make positive

impressions (Leary & Kowalski, 1990). People worry about how others might perceive them and frequently adjust their appearance and behavior to create an image they desire. For power-holders, this translates into a necessity to manage the impressions of those whose opinions most matter, that is, the power granting body, whether it be voting Americans in the case of politicians or majority stockholders for CEOs; to these groups they want to appear fair, impartial, and legitimate (Tyler, 2006). To accomplish this personal goal, the powerful may use impression management or self-presentation strategies.

An interesting pattern has been identified in presidential rhetoric across election phases (Tetlock, 1981). Upon taking office, U.S. Presidents have a tendency to increase the complexity of their public statements. Tetlock (1981) argued that these increases in complexity are tactical; those running for office engage in self-presentation to gain the support of the voters and later shift to complex rhetoric to obscure unpopular decisions once they are in power. Support was found for this argument through an analysis of policy statements given by 20<sup>th</sup> Century U.S. Presidents. This analysis compared statements given at pre-election, one month in office, two years in office, and three years in office. As expected, complexity rapidly increased between pre-election and one month postelection but stayed consistent through the third year in office. This sudden rise in rhetoric complexity, as opposed to a gradual rise over time in office, suggests that U.S. Presidents self-present to manage their impressions to the American people.

The powerful might also employ self-presentation strategies that involve acting contrary to their own group's interests (Combs & Keller, 2010; cf. Ratner & Miller, 2001). For example, Eagly, Wood, and Chaiken (1978) confirm that a fictitious mayoral candidate is perceived as more persuasive when his political stance on a controversial city issue was unexpected and in conflict with garnering support from a committee of influential citizens. Acting counter to his

supposed self-interest caused perceivers to believe he was less biased, more sincere, and led to greater opinion change. Combs and Keller (2010) corroborate this claim. In their study, a political candidate's party (Republican, Democrat, Independent) and response (counterattack, praise self, praise opponent) to the harsh comments of a running opponent were varied. Participants thought the political candidate was most trustworthy and garnered more voting consideration when he praised his opponent as compared to praising himself or retaliating.

Significant social benefits are evident for powerful individuals behaving contrary to their group's interests. And because people scrutinize and judge members of minority and stigmatized groups more harshly (O'Brien & Crandall, 2005), acting counter to group interests might be especially beneficial to power-holders of low-status groups. Such action should elevate trustworthiness but also deter accusations of bias and favoritism that could hurt one's social image and privileged status. Notably, this strategy only seems counter to self-interest since it sacrifices group goals and not personal goals.

### **Self-Enhancement and Identity Management**

Individuals who possess power might also identify with groups associated with positive connotations and disidentify with groups associated with negative connotations as an enhancement strategy (Cialdini et al., 1976; Snyder, Lassegard, & Ford, 1986). After all, people care about the implications of their social identities, particularly in certain contexts (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Members of marginalized groups are more mindful of their position (Frable et al., 1990) and feel heightened awareness for social identities that could be cast in a negative light (Branscombe, Ellemers, Spears, & Doosje, 1999). Therefore, powerful individuals who share membership in a marginalized group should be particularly sensitive to social identities that might sully their self-concept. These individuals may react with group disidentification (Ellemers

et al., 1988; Pronin, Steele, & Ross, 2004; Steele & Aronson, 1995) and situation avoidance (Murphy et al., 2007).

Research on how people respond under conditions of social identity threat strengthen the prediction that the powerful will shy away from opportunities for group-relevant advocacy deemed costly. Stereotype threat is a specific type of social identity threat whereby stereotypes are responsible for the contextual devaluation of one's group identity (Steele, 2010). When minorities are under threat of confirming a negative stereotype about their group, they underperform at tasks seen as relevant to the stereotype (Spencer, Steele, & Quinn, 1997; Steele & Aronson, 1995). Exposure to identity threats also evokes group disidentification (Steele & Aronson, 1995) and over time can result in the selective purging of those identities (Pronin et al., 2004). When a particular social identity becomes a threat in a domain we care about, we may react by purging or distancing ourselves from the threatening aspects of this identity. And because the vanguard (i.e., the best and brightest of the group; Steele, 1997) are most sensitive to social identity threats, these findings speak to why powerful members of marginalized groups might experience reluctance to promote a cause when group membership is implicated.

One strategy employed to help manage social identity threats is situational avoidance. Evading threatening low-status membership should protect one's positive social identity similar to spatial distancing (Eidelman & Biernat, 2003; Snyder et al., 1986). Women and racial minorities experiencing social identity threat feel less comfortable and express a desire to circumvent the threatening situation (Murphy et al., 2007; Purdie-Vaughns et al., 2008). This suggests that those faced with social identity threat may wish to cope by psychologically distancing themselves and/or avoiding threatening situations all together. In terms of group-relevant advocacy, powerful members of marginalized groups might anticipate heightened social

costs and avoid group advocacy opportunities. What these individuals think and feel about an issue could be subjugated by identity management concerns.

### **Power and Individualistic Social Identity Management**

According to proponents of Social Identity Theory, individuals of low-status groups can achieve a positive social identity through individualistic strategies such as social mobility, in which one distances herself from an ingroup or attempts to leave the group, or collective strategies whereby people redefine group elements to be more favorable (social creativity) and even directly change relative group status via social change (Ellemers, van Kippenberg, de Vries, & Wilke, 1988; Jackson, Sullivan, Harnish, & Hodge, 1996; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). The strategy that people employ—individual or collective—largely depends on individual ability and the permeability of group boundaries. Whereas individualistic strategies should be favored when group boundaries are permeable (Ellemers et al., 1988), collectivistic strategies that boost the group as a whole should be favored when group boundaries are impermeable (Jackson et al., 1996).

Naomi Ellemers and colleagues demonstrate this in two experiments (Ellemers et al., 1988). Groups were formed randomly as participants completed a series of individual problem-solving tasks. Bogus feedback was provided indicating that participants' group was either high or low status relative to four other groups and their individual ability was high or low. Additional information specified that group boundaries were permeable (group membership might change after each round) or impermeable (group membership was constant). Participants responded to items measuring the extent to which they identified with their group. Results demonstrated that members of low status groups identified with their ingroup significantly less as compared to those of high status groups, but this tendency was especially strong for high ability individuals

when group boundaries were permeable. High ability individuals also reported a significantly higher probability that they would be reassigned to another group when upward social mobility was possible.

Ellemers and colleagues' findings suggest that high ability members of low-status groups are more likely to use individualistic strategies and distance themselves from membership in low-status groups. Power is marked by optimism in one's abilities (Anderson & Galinsky, 2006), more control in determining outcomes (Fiske, 1993; Keltner et al., 2003), and less perspective taking (Lammers, Galinsky, Gordijn, & Otten, 2008). Conceivably powerful members of low-status groups will act similarly to high ability individuals; they should be increasingly likely to distance themselves from low-status membership and perceive greater opportunity for individual mobility. Again, evidence suggests that individual concerns take precedence over group concerns for the powerful.

### **Overview of the Present Research**

The present research broadly aims to examine how intangible, identity-derived pressures dissuade group-relevant advocacy in the face of marginalization. A particular focus rests on the intersection of social identity and power. Does the experience of power evoke reluctance and inhibit social action for members of traditionally disadvantaged groups and if so, why?

Previous research has revealed an asymmetry in evaluative reactions between majority groups and traditionally disadvantaged groups. Relative to majority groups, low-status and minority groups are perceived as more self-interested, biased, and extremist for championing their group's interests (Keltner & Robinson, 1996; O'Brien & Crandall, 2005). These potential social costs, arguably, create situations that elicit reluctance and inhibition among high power individuals sharing membership in traditionally disadvantaged groups. While power is generally

believed to spawn action (Berdahl & Martorana, 2006; Galinsky et al., 2003; Keltner, Gruenfeld, & Anderson, 2003; Smith & Bargh, 2008), its experience can stall action under threatening, high cost conditions (Maner et al., 2007). This is because power activates goal-relevant behavior rather than merely action (Guinote, 2007b; Guinote, 2010), and the powerful have a propensity to favor goals that sustain their privileges (Willis & Guinote, 2011) even at the expense of group goals (Maner & Mead, 2010). Therefore, for powerful members of marginalized groups, group-relevant advocacy—perceived as costly or threatening—should be subjugated to personal goals of status maintenance. Ironically, those who should be most willing and able (i.e., those with a sense of power and relevance) to support the vested interests of their disadvantaged group, might experience greater reluctance to do so.

The present research explored how the experience of power affects support for group-relevant advocacy among members of traditionally disadvantaged groups. These initial studies focus on women, a traditionally low-status group. In one pilot study conducted over the Internet, male and female participants were primed with high or low power and then presented with under-representativeness cues suggesting the marginalization of women (e.g., Murphy et al., 2007). Participants then read about an issue that implicated men or women and reported their willingness for advocacy. I predicted that marginalized women, but not men, primed with a sense of power would express more reluctance for advocacy when their gender-group was implicated. This study allowed for comparisons between men and women to support the supposition that reluctance for group-relevant advocacy is likely limited to traditionally disadvantaged groups. Modeling this pilot study, I conducted a laboratory experiment to demonstrate that women primed with power actually avoid opportunities for group-relevant behavior.

## Pilot Study

I conducted a pilot study over the Internet to provide initial support for the prediction that power primes would modify low status group members' willingness to advocate on behalf of their group. Female and male participants were primed with high or low power and subsequently asked how willing they would be to publically advocate in favor of a controversial issue, varied to exclusively implicate women or men. I predicted a three-way interaction: women, but not men, primed with high power should report less advocacy willingness when their gender is implicated. Low power primes, in contrast should not evoke reluctance for group-relevant advocacy. The reason for this prediction is that women, as a traditionally low-status group, experience different identity pressures compared to men, a traditionally high-status group. Thus, a Power by Relevance interaction should only appear for women.

## Method

### Participants and Design

One hundred eight participants were recruited over the Internet using Amazon Mechanical Turk (Buhrmester, Kwang, & Gosling, 2011; Paolacci, Chandler, & Ipeirotis, 2010). However, five participants failed to follow instructions and two others provided open-ended comments indicating atypical reasons for their responses (e.g., general social anxiety), leaving 101 participants (53 male, 48 female) for analyses ( $M_{age} = 33.09$ ,  $SD = 12.72$ ). This study employed a 2 (Power: low, high)  $\times$  2 (Advocacy-Relevance: male, female)  $\times$  2 (Participant Gender) between-subjects design.

### Procedure

Participants first completed a recall task developed by Galinsky et al. (2003) to prime high or low power. Participants were randomly assigned to write about a time they possessed

power and control over others (*high power*) or lacked power and were subjected to the control of another (*low power*). Subsequently, they viewed materials adapted from Rater and Miller (2001, Study 3) that described a set of gastrointestinal symptoms ostensibly being studied by researchers at NIH. Depending on the relevance condition, participants read that this medical condition exclusively affected men or women with “one in every seven American men/women” experiencing symptoms within their lifetime. This manipulated whether participants’ gender group was implicated.

The materials went on to state that the development of an enzyme supplement to alleviate these symptoms was underway but would be severely delayed due to proposed budget reallocations being considered by the House Appropriations Committee of the United States Congress. This change was to fund a campaign sponsored by the Department of Transportation to increase seat belt use through a country-wide campaign. The campaign was created to address serious and fatal injuries in car accidents that could be prevented with the use of seat belts. A picture of four male representatives of the House Appropriations Committee, including the current chairman, was included to emphasize the marginalization of women (in fact, 82% of the House Appropriations Committee are men). Other than the inclusion of this picture and a few minor tweaks to the description of the seat belt campaign, there were no substantive changes to the original materials.

Participants then indicated their gender and responded to items on 9-pt. scales (1 = *strongly disagree*; 9 = *strongly agree*, unless otherwise noted) measuring willingness for advocacy (e.g., “I would avoid the opportunity to stand in front of the House Appropriations Committee to advocate against the proposed budget reallocation,” “How willing would you be to publically organize a rally to oppose the proposed budget reallocations?,” 1 = *not at all willing*; 9

= *extremely willing*; 5-items,  $\alpha = .87$ ), the importance of studying these gastrointestinal symptoms (e.g., “Research on these gastrointestinal symptoms is not of high priority” [reverse-scored]; 4 items,  $\alpha = .82$ ), the identity subscale of Luthanen & Crocker’s (1992) collective self-esteem scale (phrased to reflected gender identity;  $\alpha = .76$ ), and the extent to which they believed others would view them as self-interested for advocating (e.g., “If I publicly advocate for the study of the aforementioned gastrointestinal symptoms, I’m afraid that others will interpret my behavior of as self-serving;” 4 items,  $\alpha = .90$ ). A one item manipulation check was used as a measure of issue relevance for each gender group (“To what extent do the gastrointestinal symptoms described earlier affect men versus women?,” 1 = *exclusively affects Men*; 5 = *affects men and women equally*; 9 = *exclusively affects women*).

## Results and Discussion

### Manipulation Check

Following Galinsky and colleagues (2003), two coders blind to conditions scored participants’ narrative responses for the experience of power ( $r = .85, p < .001$ ). Participants in the high power condition expressed having greater power ( $M = 6.60, SD = 0.88$ ) than those in the low power condition ( $M = 3.45, SD = 0.88$ ),  $t(104) = 18.40, p < .001$ .

Success of the gender-relevance manipulation was also confirmed via a one-sample  $t$ -test. Whereas participants in the male-relevant condition indicated that the gastrointestinal symptoms affected men significantly more ( $M = 2.42, SD = 1.79$ ) relative to the gender-neutral midpoint of the scale,  $t(52) = 10.50, p < .001$ , those in the female-relevant condition judged the gastrointestinal symptoms to affect women significantly more ( $M = 7.23, SD = 1.78$ ) compared to the scale midpoint,  $t(47) = 8.69, p < .001$ .

## Advocacy

Advocacy data were analyzed in a 2 (Power)  $\times$  2 (Relevance)  $\times$  2 (Gender) ANOVA. The predicted three-way interaction was significant,  $F(1, 93) = 3.93, p = .05, \eta^2 = .04$  (see Figure 1). Separate analyses were then computed for men and women. Data from female participants indicated a significant Power  $\times$  Relevance interaction,  $F(1, 44) = 10.20, p = .003, \eta^2 = .19$ . Critically, women primed with high power were significantly *less* willing to take action in opposition to the proposed budget reallocation when advocacy implicated their gender group ( $M = 2.84, SD = 1.36$ ) relative to when it implicated men ( $M = 4.28, SD = 1.69$ ),  $F(1, 44) = 4.05, p = .05, \eta^2 = .08$ . Women primed with low power, in contrast, were significantly more willing to advocate against budget reallocation when it implicated their gender group ( $M = 4.55, SD = 1.93$ ) than when it implicated men ( $M = 3.00, SD = 1.35$ ),  $F(1, 44) = 6.57, p < .015, \eta^2 = .13$ . Finally, low power women were significantly more willing than high power women to take action against budget reallocation that implicated their gender group,  $F(1, 44) = 6.49, p < .015, \eta^2 = .13$ . Among men, advocacy was unaffected by power, advocacy-relevance, or their interaction ( $F_s < 1$ ), providing further evidence for the hypothesis that power evokes advocacy reluctance among members of marginalized groups.

A significant Power  $\times$  Implication interaction was also observed,  $F(1, 93) = 3.93, p = .05, \eta^2 = .04$ . Overall, when advocacy was female-relevant, low power participants responded with a marginally greater advocacy against reallocation ( $M = 4.72, SD = 1.99$ ) as compared to participants primed with high power ( $M = 4.11, SD = 1.68$ ),  $F(1, 93) = 3.09, p = .08, \eta^2 = .03$ . The reverse trend, though not significant, occurred when advocacy was male-relevant: high power primes produced greater advocacy willingness ( $M = 4.52, SD = 1.94$ ). No main effects for power or relevance on advocacy emerged,  $F_s < 1$ . However, participant gender yielded a

significant main effect  $F(1, 93) = 11.10, p < .001, \eta^2 = .11$ . Men expressed a significantly greater willingness for advocacy against the budget reallocation ( $M = 4.93, SD = 1.88$ ) than did women ( $M = 3.65, SD = 1.73$ ). This is not surprising since the marginalization of women was constant across all conditions.

Support was found for the prediction that power evokes reluctance in members of underrepresented groups faced with an opportunity for group-relevant advocacy. When women primed with power were presented with an issue that directly implicated their gender group, they reported less advocacy willingness even though it would benefit their group. Men, in contrast, did not report any reluctance and indicated an overall greater tendency to approach advocacy, irrespective of which gender was implicated. For high power women, but not men, to feel advocacy reluctance suggests that this effect may be specific to marginalized groups.

### **Anticipated Social Costs**

A three-way ANOVA was conducted to analyze the extent to which participants' were concerned with being perceived as self-interested and biased. No main effects for power, advocacy-relevance, or gender resulted. However, a significant Gender  $\times$  Relevance interaction was observed,  $F(1, 93) = 5.51, p = .02, \eta^2 = .06$ . Women in the female-relevant condition expressed significantly greater concern ( $M = 3.77, SD = 1.64$ ) than did women in the male-relevant condition ( $M = 2.92, SD = 1.49$ ),  $F(1, 44) = 4.28, p < .05, \eta^2 = .09$ . Men's evaluative concerns did not differ between the female-relevant ( $M = 4.01, SD = 1.36$ ) and male-relevant ( $M = 4.45, SD = 1.27$ ) conditions. This suggests that only women showed a reliable change in their concerns of being judged as self-interested and biased. In the eyes of female participants, group-relevant advocacy seems to have greater social costs.

## **Attitudes and Group Identity**

ANOVAs were computed for participants' attitudes and group identity; no main effects or interactions were found,  $F_s < 1$ . Attitudes and gender-identity were unable to account for why power primes might evoke reluctance for group-relevant advocacy.

## **Thesis Study**

The abovementioned pilot data provide initial evidence that power evokes reluctance and powerlessness stirs eagerness in members of underrepresented groups faced with opportunities for group-relevant advocacy. However, it remains unclear if women primed with power actually avoid opportunities for such social action; these data only speak to self-reported intentions. The primary goal of my thesis research is to demonstrate that the psychological experience of power does evoke reluctance in women who are actually positioned for group-relevant advocacy.

Another unresolved issue concerns the precise mediating process responsible for this effect. The available pilot data provide clues, but no distinct mediator has been identified. A second goal of this research was to measure several possible mediators to elucidate why powerful members of marginalized groups might feel reluctant to engage in group-relevant advocacy. Three primary explanations will be examined within the context of goal achievement. Measurement of these potential mediators will allow for statistical tests to determine why women primed with power are hesitant to publically advocate for group-relevant issues.

First and foremost, powerful members of low-status groups may perceive and anticipate heightened social costs. Evaluative reprisals (e.g., Kaiser & Miller, 2001), or the extent to which one believes she may be judged as self-interested and biased, could encourage public self-presentation to sidestep costs associated with group-relevant advocacy (Kowalski, 1996; Leary & Kowalski, 1990). Because low-status groups receive heightened scrutiny for group-serving

action (Keltner & Robinson, 1996; O'Brien & Crandall, 2005) and power-holders experience reluctance when costs are high (Maner et al., 2007), this image management account postulates that powerful members of marginalized groups feel heightened evaluation apprehension, thereby motivating avoidance of group-relevant advocacy. A test of this account includes the measurement of explicit image management motives, perceived social costs for advocacy, and state evaluation apprehension.

A second possible explanation centers on status maintenance. The experience of power activates selective processing of goal-relevant information (Guinote, 2007b), favoritism towards goals that protect privileges (Willis & Guinote, 2011), and pursuit of personal goals even at the expense of the group (Maner & Mead, 2010). To ward off potential threats, the powerful could conceivably act counter to group-interests (Combs & Keller, 2010; Eagly et al., 1978), become risk averse (Maner et al., 2007), or avoid the situation all together (Murphy et al., 2007; Purdie-Vaughns et al., 2008). Such reactions would be in service to sustaining one's actual or legitimized sense of status, which contrasts with the image management account in regards to why behavior is modified—social image versus status-based privileges. In the following study, explicit motives related to sustaining a legitimized sense of status were measured to evaluate the merit of this status management account.

Finally, it is necessary to explore an identity management account. People are motivated to achieve a positive social identity (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), and pursue that goal through individualistic or collectivistic strategies (Eidelman & Biernat, 2003; Ellemers et al., 1988; Jackson et al., 1996). Because membership in a low-status group negatively affects social identity, members of these groups are particularly motivated to seek identity enhancement (Ellemers et al., 1988; Jackson et al., 1996; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). However, individual ability

and the permeability of group boundaries are important determinants of whether individualistic or collective strategies are employed (Ellemers et al., 1988). When categorization into a more elite group seems possible, members of low-status groups pursue social mobility by distancing themselves from the low-status group, and this is especially likely among high ability individuals (Ellemers et al., 1988). Power, strongly associated with goal achievement (Guinote, 2007b, 2010) optimism (Anderson & Galinsky, 2006), and poor perspective taking (Galinsky et al., 2006), may promote individualistic identity management strategies because they do not require group support. If so, I would predict high power members of marginalized groups to disidentify from their group and pursue individual interests while sacrificing group interests. Explicit identity management motives, gender-identity importance, identification with women, and endorsement of individual and collective mobility strategies were measured to assess this account.

## **Method**

### **Participants and Design**

One hundred female undergraduates at the University of Arkansas were recruited for a study purportedly about campus health policies. Participants were randomly assigned to one of four conditions in a 2 (Power: high, low)  $\times$  2 (Advocacy-Relevance: gender, control) between-subjects experiment, described below. Five participants expressed suspicion and their data were excluded from analyses.

### **Procedure**

Participants were run individually. A male experimenter led participants to a lab room containing a digital camcorder mounted on 72" tripod, and introduced the research as consisting of two unrelated parts. The first portion was described as an investigation of personal narratives.

The second portion required participants to make a video statement about one of several campus issues. To begin, participants completed an individual difference measure of power motivation (Maner et al., 2007;  $\alpha = .86$ ) and then wrote in detail about a personal experience to prime power or powerlessness (Galinsky et al., 2003; see Appendix A). Specifically, participants were instructed to recall and write about a particular incident in which they had power and control over others (*high power*) or were subject to the power and control of another (*low power*).

Next, participants read about two possible, controversial changes to the campus health center supposedly being considered by an all-male committee of University administrators (a picture of this four-member committee was included to emphasize the marginalization of women as an underrepresented group). The first of these issues always concerned health insurance payments for college students at the University of Arkansas, whereas the other issue concerned the implementation of a heart health program varied to help women specifically (*gender condition*) or University of Arkansas students generally (*control condition*; see Appendix B).

Participants were asked to indicate their preference for which of the two video statements they wanted to advocate for on an official-looking form and to then complete a questionnaire packet (described below) with items measuring the reasons for their preference, anticipated social costs, state evaluation apprehension, identity management, and endorsement of individual and collective mobility strategies. This questionnaire also contained manipulation checks for the extent that each issue implicated participants' own gender, racial, and age groups.

At the end of the experiment, the experimenter probed participants for suspicion via funnel debriefing; no video recording task occurred. They were thanked and then dismissed.

## Advocacy

Advocacy was measured via what appeared to be an official campus health center form asking participants to indicate their age, gender, student status, and preference to support one of the two issues being considered (see Appendix C); preference responses were to influence which issue they would make a video statement about. Participants responded to three items on a 9-pt scale averaged to form an index of advocacy willingness ( $\alpha = .95$ ): “For which issue would you prefer to make a video statement?,” “How much do you prefer speaking about Issue #1 versus Issue #2?,” and “Which issue would you rather speak to the committee about?” (1 = *definitely Issue #1*; 9 = *definitely Issue #2*). The second issue always represented the target issue, experimentally varied to implicate women specifically or university students generally. Participants also selected one of the two issues in response to a forced-choice item.

## Open-Ended Rationale

Participants provided rationale for their advocacy preferences in two open-ended responses. They described their reasons why one issue was more preferred and why the other less preferred (see Appendix D). All responses were coded for concerns about appearing fair and biased, concerns about the well-being of women, worries about appearing self-interested, and consideration of personal benefits on 1 (*not at all*) to 9 (*very much*) Likert-type scales.<sup>1</sup>

## Explicit Motives

Participants responded to a series of items describing motives possibly influencing their advocacy preference (see Appendix E). Among several filler reasons (e.g., “To what extent did you care about being persuasive,” “To what extent did you care about doing a good job”), these items targeted three explanatory accounts: (1) *image management* (e.g., “To what extent did you care about creating a desired social image?,” 4-items,  $\alpha = .85$ ); (2) *status management* (e.g., “To

what extent did you care about maintaining a sense of independence?,” “To what extent did you care about maintaining a sense of prestige?;” 4-items,  $\alpha = .85$ ); and (3) *identity management* (e.g., “To what extent did you care about maintaining a desirable self-concept?;” 3-items,  $\alpha = .79$ ). All responses were made using a 9-pt scale (1 = *very little*; 9 = *very much*).

### **Anticipated Social Costs**

Regardless of which issue was preferred, participants indicated the extent to which the committee of University administrators would perceive them as “self-interested,” “self-serving,” “fair” (reverse-scored), “biased,” “impartial,” “extremist,” and a “complainer” and a “troublemaker” for advocating for each issue using a 9-pt scale (1 = *very little*; 9 = *very much*). These items were averaged to form an index of anticipated social costs ( $\alpha = .88$ ; Appendix F).

### **State Evaluation Apprehension**

To gauge concerns about being perceived in a negative or undesirable light, participants also completed four items measuring state evaluation apprehension using a 9-pt scale (1 = *strongly disagree*; 9 = *strongly agree*). Items were combined to form an evaluation apprehension index ( $\alpha = .90$ ; see Appendix G): “At this moment, I’m worried about what others will think of me,” “Currently, the sort of impression I’m making on others concerns me,” “Right now, the thought of being evaluated makes me anxious,” and “At this moment, I’m nervous about how others might perceive me.”

### **Identity Management**

Participants completed the identity subscale of Luthanen and Crocker’s (1992) collective self-esteem scale ( $\alpha = .74$ ; see Appendix H). This subscale is composed of four items that were rephrased to gauge participants’ gender identity: “Overall, my membership in my gender group has very little to do with how I feel about myself” (reverse-scored), “The gender group I belong

to is an important reflection of who I am,” “The gender group I belong to is unimportant to my sense of what kind of person I am” (reverse-scored), “In general, belonging to my gender group is an important part of my self-image” (1 = *strongly disagree*; 9 = *strongly agree*).

A measure of perceived similarity to one’s gender group was also administered (e.g., Jackson et al., 1996). Using a 9-pt scale (1 = *strongly disagree*; 9 = *strongly agree*), participants indicated how similar they are to members of their gender group (“I am similar to other members of my gender group,” “I enjoy the same things that typical members of my gender group enjoy,” “I see myself as very different from typical members of my gender group” [reverse-scored],” “My interests are similar to those of the average member of my gender group,” “My personal beliefs are different from typical members of my gender group;”  $\alpha = .82$ ; see Appendix I). As argued by Jackson et al. (1996), perceiving the self as less similar to an ingroup when membership could be seen as threatening is a form of identity management whereby an individual creates psychological distance between the self and group membership.

### **Individual and Collective Mobility**

Participants responded to measures of individual mobility with group undermining consequences and collective mobility adapted from Derks, van Laar, and Ellemers (2009; see Appendix I). Agreement with “I am willing to work in an organization that devalues women compared to men, as long as I’m not personally affected by this,” “I am willing to act in a less feminine way if that would improve my opportunities within an organization,” and “I think it is important to attain a position within an organization individually, even if this is at the expense of other women” on a 9-pt scales (1 = *strongly disagree*; 9 = *strongly agree*) made up the group undermining individual mobility index ( $\alpha = .61$ ) and agreement with “I think it is important that women support each other while striving for a high position on the labor market,” “women have

the highest chance of gaining equal status differences together,” “I am not that interested in the position of women in general on the labor market” (reverse-scored), “If I worked in an organization I would agree to be a mentor for young female employees, to help them realize their ambitions,” and “If I worked in an organization I would participate in an investigative committee that examines the salary differences between men and women” made up the collective mobility index ( $\alpha = .69$ ).

## Results and Discussion

### Manipulation Check

A 2 (Power)  $\times$  2 (Relevance) ANOVA assessed participants’ perceptions of the extent to which the target issue concerning implementation of a heart health program at the university health center affected women. This analysis produced a main effect of implication,  $F(1, 88) = 65.79, p < .001, \eta^2 = .43$ , with participants in the gender-relevant condition judging the target issue as affecting women more ( $M = 7.51, SD = 2.01$ ) than participants in the control condition ( $M = 3.69, SD = 2.46$ ).<sup>2</sup> There was no main effect of power nor was an interaction present.

### Advocacy

A 2 (Power)  $\times$  2 (Relevance) ANOVA revealed a significant interaction for advocacy,  $F(1, 89) = 4.32, p < .05, \eta^2 = .05$  (see Figure 2).<sup>3</sup> I predicted that participants primed with high, but not low, power would be less willing to advocate for the target issue when it implicated women; a simple effects test confirmed this prediction,  $F(1, 89) = 3.85, p = .05, \eta^2 = .04$ . Participants primed with high power indicated significantly less desire to advocate in favor of an issue when it directly affected their own gender group ( $M = 2.38, SD = 1.39$ ) than when not ( $M = 3.58, SD = 2.38$ ). Moreover, participants primed with high power were significantly less willing ( $M = 2.38, SD = 1.39$ ) than those primed with low power ( $M = 3.91, SD = 2.13$ ) to advocate in

favor an issue concerning women's health,  $F(1, 89) = 6.47, p < .02, \eta^2 = .07$ . Although low power primed participants were more willing to advocate in favor of the target issue when it affected women ( $M = 3.91, SD = 2.13$ ) compared to the control condition ( $M = 3.32, SD = 2.22$ ), this difference was not significant,  $p = .33$ . No main effects of power ( $p > .14$ ) or relevance ( $p = .48$ ) were observed.

Dichotomous advocacy preferences were analyzed using binary logistic regression with the predicted Power  $\times$  Relevance interaction term entered in Step 1 and power (0 = *low power*, 1 = *high power*) and relevance (0 = *control*, 1 = *gender*) entered in Step 2 of the model. The predicted Power  $\times$  Implication interaction was marginally significant,  $b = -1.85, SE = 1.06, \text{Wald } \chi^2 = 3.05, p = .08$ ; power ( $p > .67$ ) and relevance ( $p > .80$ ) were not significant predictors of advocacy. Participants primed with high power were less likely to approach the target issue when it implicated their gender group (4%) compared to the control condition (21%). Conversely, low power primed participants were slightly more likely to approach the target issue when it implicated their gender group (30%) compared to the control condition (26%). This overall interaction trend reflects a tendency for participants primed with power to shy away from opportunities for group-relevant advocacy.

### **Open-ended Rationale**

Participants were asked to describe reasons and factors affecting their advocacy preferences. Coding for concerns about fairness and bias was submitted to an ANOVA revealing a significant main effect of relevance,  $F(1, 91) = 5.24, p < .03, \eta^2 = .05$ . Participants reported greater concerns about fairness and bias when advocacy was specifically relevant to their gender ( $M = 5.65, SD = 1.58$ ) as opposed to when in the control condition ( $M = 4.93, SD = 1.45$ ). No effects for power or its interaction with relevance were observed,  $F_s < 1$ . Thus, group-relevant

advocacy was determined to be more costly. ANOVAs were also computed for coding of participants' concern about the well-being of women, worries about appearing self-interested, and consideration of personal benefits. These analyses produced no reliable effects,  $ps > .21$ .

### **Explicit Motives**

Endorsement of image, status, and identity management motives were measured in an attempt to appraise three accounts for group-advocacy reluctance from power primes. ANOVAs were computed for each motive index revealing a marginally significant main effect of power on image management,  $F(1, 86) = 3.07, p < .09, \eta^2 = .03$ ; low power primes resulted in a marginal increase in endorsing image management motives ( $M = 6.83, SD = 1.41$ ) compared to high power primes ( $M = 6.28, SD = 1.67$ ). No other main effects or interactions reached significance,  $F_s < 1$ .

The lack of effects on explicit motives is not surprising, however. Nisbett and Wilson (1977) famously contend that the ability to access reasons behind our intentions is limited and contingent on the perceived salience and plausibility of a stimulus evoking a response. Priming by definition is subtle, and accurate introspection into the psychological states created from high and low power primes may be unlikely. Therefore, it is plausible that participants were unable to report their motivations.

### **Anticipated Social Costs**

Anticipated social costs for advocacy were predicted to increase when the target issue implicated participants' gender group, especially for those primed with power. An ANOVA offered some support for this prediction. The Power  $\times$  Implication interaction did not reach significance,  $p = .32$ , but there was a significant main effect for relevance,  $F(1, 87) = 8.37, p < .01, \eta^2 = .09$ , whereby participants believed they would be judged as more self-interested, more

biased, less fair, and more extreme for gender-relevant ( $M = 4.32, SD = 1.72$ ) as opposed to general advocacy efforts ( $M = 3.34, SD = 1.39$ ). These data indicate that gender-relevant advocacy was considered to be more costly.

A significant main effect was also observed for power,  $F(1, 87) = 4.27, p < .05, \eta^2 = .05$ ; overall, low power primes increased anticipated social costs ( $M = 4.20, SD = 1.55$ ) relative to high power primes ( $M = 3.47, SD = 1.65$ ). Consistent with past research, low power individuals tend to focus more on threats (Keltner et al., 2003).

### **State Evaluation Apprehension**

A Power by Implication ANOVA assessed participants' state evaluation apprehension. This analysis yielded no effects of power ( $p > .45$ ) or relevance ( $p > .94$ ), but did produce a marginally significant Power  $\times$  Relevance interaction,  $F(1, 90) = 2.85, p = .095, \eta^2 = .03$ . Whereas participants primed with high power tended to experience more state evaluation apprehension in the gender-relevant condition ( $M = 5.30, SD = 2.28$ ) as compared to the control condition ( $M = 4.58, SD = 1.81$ ), participants primed with low power tended to experience less state evaluation apprehension when in the gender-relevant condition ( $M = 4.88, SD = 2.38$ ) compared to the condition ( $M = 5.66, SD = 1.98$ ).

### **Identity Management**

Identity management was examined via Luthanen and Crocker's (1992) identification subscale (adapted to apply to gender) and perceived (dis)similarity with one's gender group. An ANOVA was computed and revealed no effects of power, implication, or their interaction on gender identification,  $F_s < 1$ . However, an ANOVA yielded a significant Power  $\times$  Implication interaction on perceived similarity,  $F(1, 90) = 6.37, p < .02, \eta^2 = .07$ , but no main effects of power or implication,  $F_s < 1$ . Simple effects tests probed this interaction further. Participants

primed with high power described themselves as *less* similar to members of their gender group when in the *gender* condition ( $M = 5.78, SD = 1.65$ ) relative to those in the *control* condition ( $M = 6.73, SD = 1.32$ ),  $F(1, 90) = 5.11, p < .03, \eta^2 = .05$ . Moreover, in the gender-relevant condition, high power primes also led to perceptions of less similarity ( $M = 5.78, SD = 1.65$ ) compared to low power primes ( $M = 6.65, SD = 1.51$ ),  $F(1, 90) = 4.46, p < .04, \eta^2 = .05$ . Although not significant, low power primes increased similarity with members of one's gender group in the gender-relevant condition ( $M = 6.65, SD = 1.51$ ) relative to those in the control condition ( $M = 6.11, SD = 1.23$ ),  $F(1, 89) = 1.69, p < .20, \eta^2 = .02$ . These data illustrate a tendency for women primed with high power to psychologically distance themselves from their gender group when gender-relevant advocacy was possible. Because there was no main effect for power, however, it appears that this distancing was in response to identity pressures elicited by group relevance.

### **Individual and Collective Mobility**

Endorsement of individual mobility with group undermining consequences was subjected to an ANOVA. This analysis revealed a significant effect of power,  $F(1, 89) = 7.49, p < .01, \eta^2 = .08$ , and a marginally significant effect of relevance,  $F(1, 89) = 3.12, p < .09, \eta^2 = .03$ . However, these effects were qualified by a significant Power  $\times$  Relevance interaction,  $F(1, 89) = 6.32, p < .02, \eta^2 = .07$ . Simple effects tests indicated that primes of high power resulted in greater individual mobility at the expense of other women when advocacy was gender-relevant ( $M = 3.60, SD = 1.46$ ) than when not ( $M = 2.39, SD = 1.02$ ),  $F(1, 89) = 8.88, p < .01, \eta^2 = .09$ ; no differences were observed for participants primed with low power between the gender-relevant ( $M = 3.67, SD = 1.43$ ) and control ( $M = 3.88, SD = 1.51$ ) conditions,  $F < 1$ .

An ANOVA assessing collective mobility endorsement produced no effects for power ( $p > .84$ ), relevance ( $p = .68$ ), or their interaction ( $p > .28$ ). While participants did not differ in their endorsement of collective mobility, those in the gender-relevant condition primed with high power found greater appeal in individual mobility strategies at the expense of women as a whole.

### **Correlations Among Study Variables**

Correlations among study variables are provided in Table 1. Tables 2 – 5 break down linear relationships by experimental condition. Overall, fairness and bias concerns produced a significant negative relationship with advocacy willingness; the more concerned participants were, the less willing they were to advocate in favor of the target issue. Fairness/bias concerns were positively related to participants' perceived relevance of gender for advocacy (manipulation check), which in turn possessed a positive linear relationship with anticipated social costs. This is consistent with an identity threat perspective whereby the relevance of one's group identity is related to perceived threats.

Interestingly, strength of gender identity was only highly predictive of willingness for gender-relevant advocacy among high power primed women. As the self-reported importance of membership in one's gender identity rose, so did the willingness for gender-relevant advocacy. While caution should be exercised with correlational observations, these data hint that strength of group identity plays a role in moderating power's effects on group-relevant advocacy.

### **Mediation Analyses**

The above analyses are suggestive of several possible mediators of the Power  $\times$  Relevance interaction on advocacy willingness, namely fairness and bias concerns, anticipated social costs, state evaluation apprehension, individual mobility, and distancing the self from one's gender group. Because this research is focused on high and not low power, distinct

mediation models for were computed for high and low power participants; my goal was to account for gender-relevance's effect on advocacy among high power primed participants. I subjected each variable to a series of regression analyses to determine whether they were able to account for the indirect of gender-relevance on advocacy at each level of the power priming condition.

Of the aforementioned variables, only fairness and bias concerns met the requisites for establishing causal mediation (see Baron & Kenny, 1986; Judd & Kenny, 1998). Figure 3 depicts the mediation models for high and low power primed participants. For high power participants, relevance was a significant predictor of advocacy,  $\beta = -.30$ ,  $t(44) = 2.07$ ,  $p < .05$ , and fairness/bias concerns,  $\beta = .32$ ,  $t(44) = 2.21$ ,  $p < .04$ . Moreover, fairness/bias concerns predicted advocacy,  $\beta = -.46$ ,  $t(44) = 3.45$ ,  $p = .001$ . Simultaneously regressing relevance and fairness/bias concerns on advocacy dropped relevance to non-significance,  $\beta = -.17$ ,  $t(43) = 1.20$ ,  $p > .23$ , while fairness/bias concerns remained a significant predictor,  $\beta = -.41$ ,  $t(43) = 2.91$ ,  $p = .006$ . This drop in beta for relevance was marginally significant, Sobel test  $Z = 1.86$ ,  $p = .06$ , thereby providing evidence that participants' concerns about fairness and bias partially mediated reluctance for group-relevant advocacy among participants primed with high power.<sup>4</sup> No mediation was apparent for low power primed participants.

It is not clear why concern about fairness and bias is a conditional mediator. Perhaps this variable only suppresses group-relevant advocacy for individuals primed with a powerful mindset, whereas an unidentified variable promotes group-relevant advocacy for those primed with powerlessness. This initial evidence is modest at best and leaves open further questions about the process.

## General Discussion

In a pilot study and one experiment, female participants perceived greater social costs from group-relevant advocacy and were more reluctant to pursue such opportunities when primed with power. These women were also more likely to psychologically distance themselves from their gender group and increasingly endorsed individual mobility strategies at the expense of women as a whole. Pursuing group-interests is recognized as more costly and threatening for marginalized groups, and this threat corresponds to forgoing advocacy opportunities when possessing a sense of power. This is somewhat ironic, however, since those with a sense of power might be expected to feel more compelled to mount group-relevant advocacy (e.g., Keltner et al., 2003; Galinsky et al., 2003). While power propels attainment of contextually relevant goals (Guinote, 2008, 2010a), group-interests are distinguishable from personal-interests (Maner & Mead, 2010).

My data extend previous findings suggesting that people not only perceive group promoting behavior from low-status and minority groups as more biased (Keltner & Robinson, 1996; O'Brien & Crandall, 2005), but that members of these groups understand this contingency and anticipate social costs. Group members with a powerful and more individualistic mindset should see few personal benefits to offset social costs associated with group-relevant advocacy. When relative costs are personally high, it is tempting to ignore group interests rather than take action. The result, for power holders, is an identity-based threat discouraging group-relevant advocacy.

These findings join a growing literature demonstrating that behavior in service to the group is not guaranteed from group membership, especially among low-status, marginalized, and stigmatized groups (Ellemers et al., 2002; Jost & Banaji, 1994; Jost et al., 2004; Sears & Funk,

1991). Evidence for the psychological process responsible for power's inhibitory effect on gender-relevant advocacy was sought by measuring anticipated social costs, concerns about fairness/bias, state evaluation apprehension, group identification, and endorsement of individual and collective mobility. While modest support for partial mediation was found for fairness and bias concerns, the precise mechanism is indeterminate. However, important details suggest that identity pressures are at the epicenter. Threatening identity pressures can push us in unwanted directions that impede social progress.

### **An Identity Threat Perspective on Social Power**

Social power has largely been considered a mindset that promotes action (Galinsky et al., 2003; Keltner et al., 2003). The present research considers power through the lens of an identity threat perspective. Contingent on context, a social identity may be viewed as burdensome, hazardous, and therefore threatening to the self (Ellemers et al., 2002; Steele, Spencer, & Aronson, 2002). Since members of marginalized groups are perceived as more self-interested, biased, and extremist for asserting their groups' interests (O'Brien & Crandall, 2005; Keltner & Robinson, 1996), it is no surprise that my female participants reliably anticipated more social costs when advocacy was gender-relevant. Power, however, seems to alter strategies for alleviating identity threat in ways that obstruct group interests.

Several characteristics of identity threat are discernible. First and foremost, reluctance for advocacy only appeared when group membership was relevant. When group-interests should have increased advocacy (Miller, 1999; Ratner & Miller, 2001), power produced reluctance for marginalized groups; general advocacy and group-irrelevant advocacy were unaffected by power. Moreover, a positive relationship was observed between gender relevance and anticipated social costs—the more relevant female participants believed their gender to be, the more social

costs they believed would accompany advocacy. When group membership is or might become relevant, members of marginalized, low-status, and stigmatized groups engage in heightened vigilance (Frable, Blackstone, & Scherbaum, 1990; Murphy, Steele, & Gross, 2007) and experience increased physiological arousal (Murphy et al., 2007). Contextual cues activated concerns about one's social identity and the probability of devaluation (Steele et al., 2002).

Another marker of identity threat surrounds group status and representation (Inzlicht & Ben-Zeev, 2000; Murphy et al., 2007; Steele et al., 2002). Whereas women, a low-status and marginalized group, avoided group-relevant advocacy when under the influence of power, men, a high-status group, did not shy away from or feel worried about group-relevant advocacy (Pilot Study). It is likely that no threat was perceived from a male identity for the reasons that men felt over-represented and the probability of devaluation was low. Under these circumstances, no identity pressures emerged.

The present studies also reveal consequences that correspond to identity threat, namely with regard to avoidance, psychological distancing, and individual mobility. Opportunities for group-irrelevant and sometimes group-relevant advocacy were provided, though women primed with power opted to avoid group-relevant opportunities. Consistently, research on social identity threat demonstrates that women and racial minorities show less interest in domains and opportunities associated with cues signaling possible identity devaluation (Davies et al., 2005; Murphy et al., 2007; Purdie-Vaughns, Steele, Davies, Dittmann, & Crosby, 2008). Additional strategies include emphasizing group heterogeneity and weakening group affiliation through individual rather than collective mobility (Ellemers et al., 2002). Under identity duress, power primed women psychologically distanced themselves from their gender group and were more

likely to endorse individual mobility strategies undermining group well-being. Describing themselves as more atypical women, they seem to leave their group psychologically.

The aforementioned findings speak to social identity concerns whereby threatening situations are avoided and jeopardizing identities are purged and detached. For those presently enjoying a sense of power at an individual level, categorization in a low-status or marginalized group incurs personal costs. Activating power directs action towards alleviating threats, even at the expense of group interests.

### **Impediment of Social Progress**

Many issues primarily afflicting low-status and minority communities are controversial on the national political stage. Affirmative action policies, for example, draw criticism from the White majority that sees racism as a zero-sum game (Norton & Sommers, 2011). Voicing support for policies and programs aiding one's stigmatized or marginalized group has a propensity to spur accusations of self-interest and bias (O'Brien & Crandall, 2005). As noted, the present studies demonstrate that these individuals are not only aware of impending social costs, but also that a sense of power dissuades them from pursuing group-relevant advocacy. As a consequence, those best situated to promote their disadvantaged groups' interests shy away from opportunities, thereby impeding social progress and maintaining the status quo.

Priming a powerful mindset blunts perspective-taking with others' perspectives largely occluded from consideration (Galinsky et al., 2006). This may cause them to focus on personal costs rather than group benefits. And since people consider personal costs prior to standing up for their group (Kaiser & Miller, 2001; Shelton & Stewart, 2004), psychologically activating power may alter cost/benefit analyses. For example, members of disadvantaged groups are less willing to support affirmative action when their attention is directed towards costs over benefits

(Ellemers, Scheepers, & Popa, 2010). Power may accentuate costs associated with group-relevant advocacy that outweigh personal benefits.

As noted, psychological bifurcation of one's group affiliation and a heightened appeal for individual mobility should contribute to status quo maintenance. Participation in collective action is greater for those who more strongly identify with their group (Klandermans, 2002; Simon et al., 1998). Therefore, psychologically distancing from one's group should be associated with less willingness to take social action on behalf of group interests. An appeal for individual mobility, by definition, involves improving one's situation by leaving a less desirable group (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). When identity threats loom, less committed members of marginalized groups seek self-affirmation and movement to a more attractive group (Ellemers et al., 2002).

Finally, an interesting aspect of social identity threat is motivated accentuation and diminishment of perceived bias against one's group. According to Steele and colleagues (2002), members of low-status, stigmatized, or marginalized groups have an increased propensity to curb evidence of discrimination in contexts or domains with which they desire belonging and identification. A female politician, for instance, may overlook low representation of her group in high levels of government to the extent she aspires to be a politician. For members of marginalized groups with a sense of power, acting in opposition to group-interests may be individually beneficial in the short-term.

### **Limitations and Considerations**

I believe power evokes reluctance for and avoidance of group-relevant advocacy among low-status, marginalized groups; the present research tested this hypothesis within the context of gender. Theoretically, membership in any group that is contextually marginalized should yield consistent results. Group-relevant advocacy should not seem threatening if the audience mostly

shared group membership. Social identity is salient when in the minority (Inzlicht & Ben-Zeev, 2000; McGuire, McGuire, Child, & Fujioka, 1978; Murphy et al., 2007). As Steele (2010) notes, once group representation reaches “critical mass,” identity pressures dissolve. Still, future investigations would benefit from demonstrating this effect in the context race, or perhaps through manipulating group status in a minimal group paradigm.

The present research focused on controversial issues implicating membership in a low-status and contextually marginalized group, namely women. It is probable that less controversial and more familiar issues would not yield advocacy hesitance. Breast cancer awareness, for example, has become a highly visible and culturally accepted priority; women voicing such concerns are unlikely to feel identity pressures and a powerful mindset may boost rather than hinder advocacy. A strong commitment to one’s group membership may also moderate power’s effect on advocacy. When a group’s value is threatened, strong identifiers should be motivated to support and affirm their group (Ellemers et al., 2002).

Finally, power was primed and not relationally or hierarchically manipulated. While these studies are unable to ascertain with certitude that this is conditional to priming, power hierarchically defined should produce the similar results. Power is largely symbolic in nature (Parsons, 1963), and an abundance of research reveals priming and hierarchical manipulations of power converge producing parallel effects on cognition, affect, and behavior (Galinsky et al., 2003; Galinsky, Magee, Gruenfeld, Whitson, & Liljenquist, 2008; Guinote, 2010b). I maintain that it is a sense of power that matters; psychologically activating power should correspond to power grounded in social relationships with regard to reluctance for group-relevant advocacy.

### **Concluding Remarks**

Possessing a sense of power evokes reluctance for group-relevant advocacy among marginalized groups. The evidence put forth is consistent with a social identity threat perspective indicating that disinclinations arise when a group identity could be cast in a negative light. This is moderated by one's mindset; whereas power inhibits group-relevant advocacy, powerlessness tends to encourage it. My findings suggest that this may contribute to the impediment of social progress whereby those best situated to defend their groups' interests feel looming identity pressures that dissuade advocacy efforts.

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### Footnotes

<sup>1</sup> One research assistant, blind to conditions and hypotheses, coded open-responses. A second coder is currently coding for reliability.

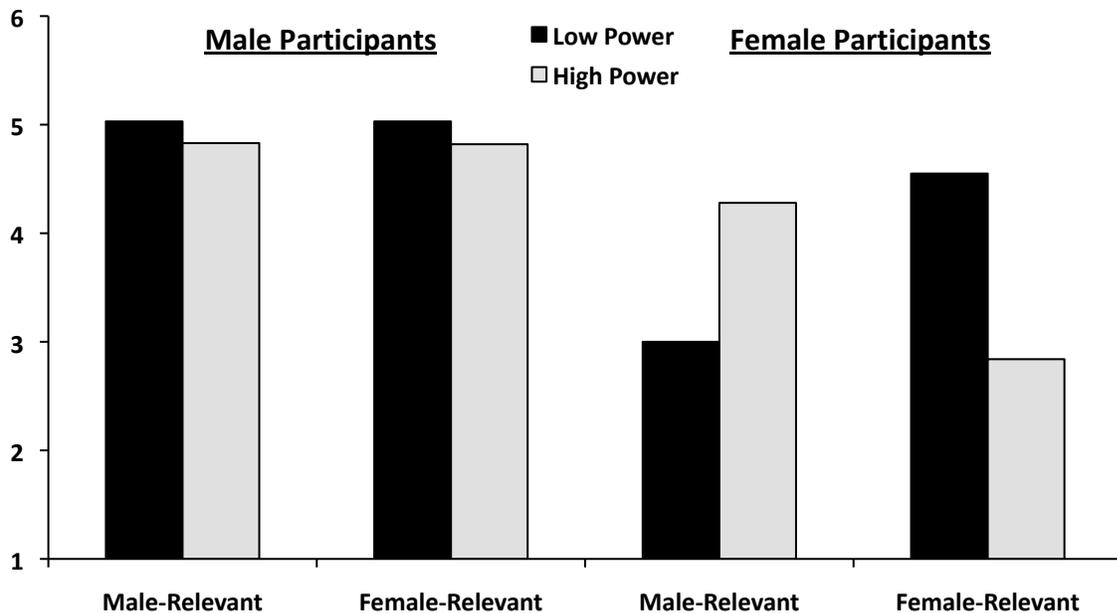
<sup>2</sup> Several participants did not respond to all of the items in the questionnaire packet. Therefore analyses varied with regard to within-subjects degrees of freedom.

<sup>3</sup> Two statistical outliers were removed from this analysis.

<sup>4</sup> The same conclusion was reached via Model 3 of Preacher, Rucker, and Hayes' (2007) moderated mediation macro for SPSS.

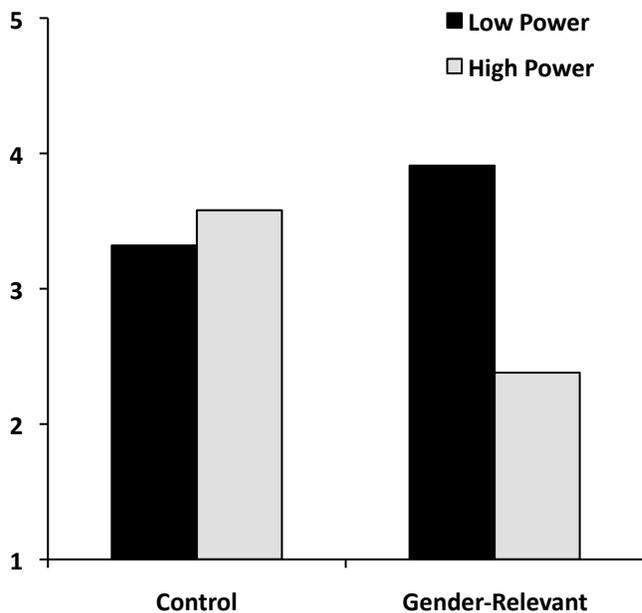
**Figure 1**

*Willingness to advocate as a function of gender, power, and gender implication (Pilot Study).*



**Figure 2**

*Advocacy preference for the target issue as a function of power and implication (Thesis Study).*



**Figure 3**

*Mediational analysis, Thesis Study: Fairness/bias concerns as mediator of the effect of gender-relevance on advocacy willingness at each level of high and low power primes, respectively.*

*Parenthetical values indicate the direct effect of gender-relevance on advocacy willingness.*

*\* $p < .05$ , \*\*\* $p = .001$ .*

