

## Power and the Objectification of Social Targets

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Objectification has been defined historically as a process of subjugation whereby people, like objects, are treated as means to an end. The authors hypothesized that objectification is a response to social power that involves approaching useful social targets regardless of the value of their other human qualities. Six studies found that under conditions of power, approach toward a social target was driven more by the target's usefulness, defined in terms of the perceiver's goals, than in low-power and baseline conditions. This instrumental response to power, which was linked to the presence of an active goal, was observed using multiple instantiations of power, different measures of approach, a variety of goals, and several types of instrumental and noninstrumental target attributes. Implications for research on the psychology of power, automatic goal pursuit, and self-objectification theory are discussed.

*Keywords:* goals, approach, objectification, social perception, power

The concept of objectification is widely referenced in social analyses, particularly those that emphasize the psychological oppression of one group of people by another more powerful group (Fanon, 1967; Nussbaum, 1999). Objectification is conceived as an instrument of subjugation whereby the needs, interests, and experiences of those with less power are subordinated to those of the powerful, and this facilitates using others as means to an end. Thus, the process of objectification is thought to involve a kind of instrumental fragmentation in social perception, the splitting of a whole person into parts that serve specific goals and functions for the observer.

Marx argued, for example, that under capitalism, workers are valued by their employers, and even come to see themselves, in terms of what they produce and the value of those products to

others. The goal in capitalism is to produce wealth, and workers are valued in this system in terms of those attributes (e.g., skill, productivity) that contribute directly to the creation of wealth (Marx, 1844/1964) more than the qualities that are valued more generally in social life and that define a person's humanity, such as his or her kindness and morality. Similarly, sexual objectification is described as the valuing of another person, typically a woman, on the basis of the utility of her sexual parts or sexual functions, "which are separated out from the rest of her personality and reduced to the status of mere instruments or else regarded as if they were capable of representing her" (Bartky, 1990, p. 26). When a woman is sexually objectified, she is treated as an object containing sexual attributes and is approached, or not, on the basis of her utility as a sex object, independent of other qualities that might make her attractive as a human being (Frederickson & Roberts, 1997) such as her friendliness, her competence, or her similarity to the perceiver (e.g., Byrne, 1971; Newcomb, 1961; Tesser, 1988).

Most writings on the topic of objectification have focused on its consequences for the targets (but see Brooks, 1995) who, because of their relative powerlessness, come to accept and engage in the objectification of themselves, leading to alienation from the self and related psychological and performance consequences (cf. Berger, 1973; Frederickson & Roberts, 1997; Frederickson, Roberts, Noll, Quinn, & Twenge, 1998; Hall & Halberstadt, 1994; Vescio, Gervais, Snyder, & Hoover, 2005; see also Jost & Banaji, 1994). Although writing on self-objectification has helped to define the concept of objectification and to illustrate its consequences, few researchers have examined the psychology of objectification itself and whether power fundamentally alters the way social targets are appraised (for notable exceptions, see Bargh, Raymond, Pryor, & Strack, 1995; Brewer, 1982; Kipnis, 1972, 1976). In this article, we focused on the perceiver's role in the objectification processes and explored the hypothesis that power

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Portions of this research were completed while Deborah H Gruenfeld was a fellow at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences, and portions were presented at the annual meetings of the Society of Experimental and Social Psychology in San Diego, CA, 2005, and the Society of Personality and Social Psychology in Palm Springs, CA, 2006, and New Orleans, LA, 2005. We thank participants in the Stanford Graduate School of Business Behavioral Faculty Brown Bag for their reflections on the ideas presented in this article and Katherine Dover-Taylor, Laura Howland, and Justin Wear for their help with data collection. We are indebted to Joseph E. McGrath (July 17, 1927–April 1, 2007) for his many contributions to the field of social psychology and for inspiring this research by providing a vivid counterexample.

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heightens the tendency to approach social targets as though they were objects, based on how useful they are.

### Definition of Objectification

In the literatures referenced so far, objectification is described as a process that involves viewing people in ways that facilitate using them for personal gain (Bartky, 1990; Frederickson & Roberts, 1997; Nussbaum, 1999). Nussbaum asserted from a philosophical perspective that objectification is essentially defined by the assumption of *instrumentality*: The target is a tool for one's own purpose. Although there are other assumptions associated with objectification—*denial of autonomy* (the target lacks self-determination), *inertness* (the target lacks agency), *fungibility* (the target is interchangeable with others of the same category or type), *violability* (the target lacks boundary integrity can be broken up or broken into), *ownership* (the target is owned, can be bought or sold), and *denial of subjectivity* (the target's experiences are not a concern)—Nussbaum asserted that the instrumentality assumption is most essential to the definition, as it applies to the broadest range of examples, from sexual objectification to Marx's (1844/1964) notion of economic objectification under capitalism, from Kant's view of marriage to slavery (Kant, Heath, & Schneewind, 1997).

Psychologically speaking, to say that a target is instrumental is to say that it is useful vis-à-vis an active goal and that this usefulness makes the target more attractive to those for whom the goal is meaningful (Lewin, 1935; see also Ferguson & Bargh, 2004; Fitzsimons & Shah, 2007). Instrumental attraction should lead to instrumental behavior, such as engaging only with people and things that facilitate completion of the actor's personal goals. Thus, from a psychological perspective, the instrumentality associated with objectification is interesting in that it implies the approach toward, rather than avoidance of, the objectified target. The notion of instrumentality helps to distinguish objectification from other, related constructs, such as dehumanization and stereotyping, both of which tend to be associated with negative appraisals and a desire to distance oneself from the target. By emphasizing the instrumentality associated with objectification, we focused on how, under conditions of power, the criteria for approaching and engaging with other people can shift from an emphasis on target attributes that tend to predict approach independent of the perceiver's goals (e.g., similarity, kindness) to an emphasis on target usefulness, which varies as a function of current goal states.

### Approach Toward Goal-Relevant Objects

In general, people approach objects on the basis of their usefulness. For example, Ferguson and Bargh (2004) found that when actors were pursuing a goal, useful (goal-relevant) objects were evaluated more positively than less useful (goal-irrelevant) objects, and the same objects were evaluated more positively when they were more useful than when they were less useful (see also Ferguson & Bargh, 2004; Ferguson, Hassin, & Bargh, 2007; Fishbach, Shah, & Kruglanski, 2004). Similarly, Fitzsimons and Shah (in press) showed that approach within social relationships is also goal contingent, finding that feelings of closeness and attraction toward friends were based on the extent to which the friends facilitated achieving an active goal. Building on these ideas, we argue that not only can goals affect how social targets are evalu-

ated in the context of ongoing relationships, but goals can influence the appraisal and choice of new relationship partners as well.

In the absence of power, perceivers typically base liking for and attraction toward a social target on criteria such as similarity, kindness, beauty, and intelligence (Ajzen, 1974; Berscheid & Reis, 1998). People tend to think of these qualities as appealing or good in their own right, independent of and transcending the perceiver's idiosyncratic goals (for an alternative interpretation, see Buss & Kenrick, 1998). As perceivers gain power, however, we predict that approach toward social targets is based increasingly on the target's instrumentality. Thus, although we would expect to see both instrumentality and other positive features driving approach toward a social target regardless of the perceiver's power, we propose that instrumentality, as a criterion for approaching social targets, gains emphasis as perceivers gain power.

### Power and Approach Toward Useful Others

We define *power* in terms of its social manifestations (i.e., we refer here to *social power*) as the capacity to influence other individuals through asymmetric control over valuable resources and the ability to administer rewards and punishments (Emerson, 1962; French & Raven, 1959; Keltner, Gruenfeld, & Anderson, 2003; Lewin, 1951). Our hypothesis is inspired by the power-approach theory (Keltner et al., 2003), which presumes that the possession of social power activates approach tendencies, leading to a focus on rewards (as opposed to punishments; Anderson & Berdahl, 2002) and movement toward stimuli that would satisfy an active goal (Keltner et al., 2003). In contrast, low social power is associated with inhibition and movement away from stimuli that are threatening, according to the theory. Research has shown that those with social power do exhibit more goal-directed behavior than those without, including a stronger link between goals and observable behavior, and greater action in pursuit of both chronic and temporary goals under high- versus low-power conditions (Anderson, Keltner, & John, 2003; Cast, 2003; Chen, Lee-Chai, & Bargh, 2001; Galinsky, Gruenfeld, & Magee, 2003). We assume that goal-directed behavior should also characterize the social relationships of the powerful, although such effects have not been demonstrated. Although research has shown that power directs attention toward those features of a target that are most relevant to the goals of the powerful (Overbeck & Park, 2001, 2006; Vescio et al., 2005; Vescio, Snyder, & Butz, 2003), the results of this work do not show that approach necessarily follows attention.

In contrast to prior work, which has emphasized heightened action and attention toward goal-facilitative stimuli, we argue here that responses to power include positive appraisals of goal-relevant targets. As noted earlier, goal pursuit has been shown to automatically activate approach-related evaluations of goal-relevant objects (Ferguson & Bargh, 2004; Ferguson et al., 2007; Fitzsimons & Shah, in press). Therefore, power, to the extent that it increases approach toward an active goal, should increase approach appraisals of instrumental objects, including other people. Because our predictions are derived from a theory that relates power to approach and not to avoidance, we do not explore whether power heightens avoidance of targets as they become less useful or threaten to obstruct goal completion. Rather, we assume that those in power, while showing a heightened sensitivity to the degree of targets' relative instrumentality, are no more sensitive than others

to the degree of noninstrumentality that targets exhibit. We predict that high-power individuals will be more sensitive to target instrumentality than will low-power individuals and, specifically, that those with power will show greater liking for, attraction to, positive evaluations of, and preferences for instrumental social targets, relative to those without power.

Our specific hypothesis that power increases approach toward instrumental others is not inconsistent with previous studies of related topics. An important study by Bargh and colleagues (1995) documented the special case of sexual objectification under power, showing that a female confederate, cast as a subordinate, was more attractive to male participants who both possessed power and had a propensity toward sexual harassment than to those without power or without the chronic harassment goal. Their point, however, was to demonstrate an automatic (nonconscious) power–sex association in men who are likely to sexually harass their subordinates rather than the objectification of and approach toward social targets under power and an active goal more generally.

In summary, the findings reviewed above are consistent with the notion that power affects responses to instrumental others, but our specific claim—that compared with those without power, the powerful are more likely to approach social targets on the basis of their instrumentality—has not been tested before.

### Experiment 1a

In Experiment 1a, we explored whether power produces objectification. We reasoned that managers would objectify their subordinates because the purpose of organizational hierarchy, almost by definition, is to formalize who is allowed to be used as a means to an end, and by whom. Thus, the hierarchical position of the target relative to the respondent was expected to have some impact on the extent to which the respondent objectified the target by viewing the relationship as instrumental. A relationship with a subordinate should be described as more instrumental, we predicted, than a relationship with a peer. However, consistent with our hypotheses, we also predicted that the power of the respondent should affect the tendency to objectify others even when the target was a peer.

To test this idea, we capitalized on a rare opportunity to observe a sample of high-ranking executives, all of whom were among the top three ranking members of their respective organizations' hierarchies. These professionals were nominated and then selected for admission to a competitive executive education program on organization leadership partially based on the power they held in their organizations. We asked these participants about the nature of their professional relationships and then compared their responses with those of master's of business administration (MBA) students who were taking a course with the same content taught by the same professor. We predicted that participants in both groups would report greater objectification in their relationships with a subordinate than in their relationships with a peer. We also predicted that the executives, who have greater power and greater experience with power than the MBA students, would report greater objectification across both types of relationships than MBA students.

## Method

### Participants

Forty-two executives and 37 MBA students participated in the experiment. The executives were participants in a 2-week executive education program on organization leadership. After four class sessions in the program, the professor asked for volunteers to anonymously answer a short questionnaire. The MBA students were enrolled in an organizational behavior class taught by the same professor. After six class sessions, the professor asked for anonymous volunteers to fill out the same questionnaire. No age or gender data were collected on our questionnaires; however, 63% of the executive program participants were women, and the vast majority held the title of either executive director or chief executive, indicating a very high level of power within their organizations. The MBA class was 35% women, and the mean age was 25 years.

### Design and Procedure

Participants were first asked to think about and briefly describe a work relationship. The type of work relationship that they were asked to consider was randomly assigned. In the *subordinate target* condition, they read the following instructions:

Please think of a professional relationship you have, or have had in the past, that is hierarchical. The relationship should be one in which your work partner either reports directly to you or in which you have disproportionate power or control over him/her, or both. Briefly describe your partner, and the nature of your relationship, in the space below.

In the *peer target* condition, participants read the following:

Please think of a professional relationship you have, or have had in the past, that is not hierarchical. The relationship should be one in which you and your work partner do not report directly to one another, nor does one of you have disproportionate power or control over the other. Briefly describe your partner, and the nature of your relationship, in the space below.

After describing the relationship, all participants were asked to report their agreement with a series of statements about their perception of the relationship on a 7-point scale (1 = *disagree strongly*, 4 = *neither agree nor disagree*, 7 = *agree strongly*). The 10 items in this scale correspond to the central features of objectification that we have outlined above. Namely, they reflect the extent to which the relationship and the relationship partner are viewed as instrumental and the extent to which the relationship is viewed as contingent on the current goal state (see the Appendix).

## Results and Discussion

We predicted a main effect for target, and a main effect for respondent power. The 10 scale items were averaged to create an objectification index ( $\alpha = .79$ ), and a 2 (target: subordinate vs. peer)  $\times$  2 (respondent: MBA vs. executive) analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted. Both predictions were supported. Respondents reported greater instrumentality in their relationship with a subordinate ( $M = 4.33$ ,  $SD = 0.90$ ) than with a peer ( $M = 3.76$ ,  $SD = 0.97$ ),  $F(1, 75) = 4.88$ ,  $p = .030$ ,  $\eta^2 = .06$ . In addition,

executives ( $M = 4.47$ ,  $SD = 0.90$ ) reported higher levels of instrumentality in all of their relationships than MBA students ( $M = 3.52$ ,  $SD = 0.81$ ),  $F(1, 75) = 20.37$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = .21$ . The interaction was not significant,  $F(1, 75) = 0.34$ ,  $p = .560$ ,  $\eta^2 = .01$ .

The results of Experiment 1a supported our prediction that power is associated with a tendency to objectify relationship partners in two ways. First, when asked to describe a relationship in their current or former work organizations, both participants in an executive education program and MBA students reported greater instrumentality in their relationship with a subordinate than with a peer. Second, across both target conditions, executives reported greater instrumentality in their relationships than MBA students. Therefore, greater organizational power was associated with greater objectification independent of relationship type.

One nice feature of this experiment is that it draws on data from professionals who, in contrast to undergraduates, have significant experience with power and could report their views on a natural professional relationship. However, because this experiment compared samples who differ on dimensions other than level of power, including average age and gender composition, the conclusions that can be drawn from these findings are limited. One plausible alternative explanation for the greater objectification reported by senior executives is that individuals who ultimately achieve senior levels of management differ in their personalities or motivations from those who merely aspire to senior management. For example, these two samples might differ in their social dominance orientation, which is associated with a preference for hierarchy-enhancing professional roles that benefit elite members compared with oppressed members of society (Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth, & Malle, 1994).

Our reliance on self-reports also potentially limits the conclusions we could draw. It is possible that our respondents described the relationship they considered as they thought they should, based on some kind of lay theory about how people or managers should respond to questions about their work partners. For example, perhaps senior executives assume that they should view work relationships as means to an end, as this might be perceived as especially efficient or indicative of the effective wielding of power, whereas MBA students might subscribe to a different set of norms while in school and therefore be motivated to underreport their objectifying behavior.<sup>1</sup>

We cannot evaluate these possibilities using the data from this experiment alone, but if the differences observed here could be replicated with random assignment to power conditions, this would provide greater credence to our claims. In the studies that follow, we show that power heightens approach on the basis of instrumentality. As is evident later in the present article, the relative willingness to report objectification of high- versus low-power participants cannot explain our subsequent findings.

### Experiment 1b

Experiment 1b was designed primarily to rule out some of the more threatening confounds associated with using participants who are likely to differ as a function of their membership in high- versus low-power populations. Specifically, we wanted to show that participants randomly assigned to high- and low-power conditions would behave similarly to the participants in Experiment 1a

and that the effects of personality differences that might explain sorting into senior-executive versus MBA-student conditions cannot account for the findings.

In Experiment 1b, participants were all drawn from the same population and were randomly assigned to high- and low-power conditions. We activated the experience of power in one task and measured objectification in an ostensibly unrelated task, thereby obviating the impact of differential norms associated with high- versus low power on participants' responses. In addition, we measured social dominance orientation (SDO; Pratto et al., 1994) to determine whether it would have an independent effect on objectification. Because we assume that subordinates are objectified almost by definition, the prediction that power increases objectification of a peer target provides a more conservative test of our hypothesis that power increases the objectification of social targets in general. Thus, using the instructions from Experiment 1a, we asked all participants to think of a relationship with a peer when they completed the Objectification scale.

### Method

#### Participants

Participants were 59 university undergraduates (21 men, 33 women, 5 unspecified) who took part in the experiment in exchange for \$10.<sup>2</sup>

#### Design and Procedure

Participants were randomly assigned to either a *high-power* or a *low-power* condition. Power was manipulated following an experiential prime procedure used by Galinsky and colleagues (2003, Experiments 2 and 3). Participants in the high-power condition read the following instructions:

Please recall a particular incident in which you had power over another individual or individuals. By power, we mean a situation in which you controlled the ability of another person or persons to get something they wanted, or were in a position to evaluate those individuals. Please describe this situation in which you had power—what happened, how you felt, etc.

Those participants in the low-power condition read the following instructions:

Please recall a particular incident in which someone else had power over you. By power, we mean a situation in which someone had control over your ability to get something you wanted, or was in a position to evaluate you. Please describe this situation in which you did not have power—what happened, how you felt, etc.

<sup>1</sup> It is important to note, in evaluating this possibility, that we measured power with respect to participants' jobs outside of the classroom context in which the data were collected. Within each classroom, all participants were at the same organizational level, and power was never explicitly mentioned as being relevant to the research. Thus, it is difficult to see how the concept of power, which was not primed or manipulated in any way between our high- and low-power samples, could account for the effect of respondent power in this case.

<sup>2</sup> Participant age was not recorded.

Participants were given a sheet of paper with 19 lines to complete this task.

After completing the power manipulation, participants completed a number of filler tasks that took approximately 10 min. Next, participants were asked to think about and describe a professional relationship with a peer. They then indicated how they thought about the peer using the same Objectification scale from Experiment 1a. Finally, participants in all conditions completed the SDO scale (Pratto et al., 1994).

### Results and Discussion

There were no effects for gender on any of the independent or dependent variables, so we combined men and women when reporting results.

### Hypothesis Tests

We predicted a main effect of power on respondents' target ratings. We formed an objectification index as in Experiment 1a ( $\alpha = .72$ ). As expected, participants primed with high power described the peer relationship in more objectifying terms ( $M = 3.93$ ,  $SD = 0.89$ ) than did those primed with low power ( $M = 3.57$ ,  $SD = 0.83$ ),  $t(57) = 1.61$ ,  $p = .057$ , one-tailed,  $d = 0.42$ . To examine the independent effects of SDO on respondents' ratings, we regressed the objectification score on power and SDO in the first step and entered the interaction term in the second step. The effect of power was unchanged from the previous test. The effect of SDO and the interaction between power and SDO were not significant ( $\beta = .18$ ),  $t(56) = 1.44$ ,  $p = .157$ ; and ( $\beta = -.23$ ),  $t(55) < 1$ ,  $p = .591$ . There was no difference between the SDO scores of respondents in high- and low-power conditions ( $M = 2.57$ ,  $SD = 0.84$  vs.  $M = 2.55$ ,  $SD = 0.84$ ),  $F(1, 57) = .01$ ,  $p = .991$ ,  $\eta^2 < .01$ .

The results of this experiment corroborate the results of the previous experiment, finding that the experience of power itself led to the objectification of social targets. Across the two studies, power was associated with greater objectification in several ways: Respondents reported objectifying a subordinate more than a peer, respondents with more power in their organizations reported objectifying both subordinate and peer work partners more, and individuals who recalled a time when they had social power reported greater objectification of a peer than respondents who recalled an experience with low power. In Experiments 2–5, we extended these initial findings by invoking different power treatments and different objectification measures. In these subsequent studies, we also activated specific goals to determine whether the effects of power on objectification can be attributed to increases in goal-directed concerns and behaviors.

### Experiment 2

Whereas we examined reports of objectification within ongoing relationships under various power conditions in Experiments 1a-b, we examined how power and the tendency to objectify others might affect the choice of a new relationship partner in Experiment 2. We examined this idea in the context of a hiring decision. In many hiring situations, employers search for job candidates with specific criteria in mind, which presumably reflect the organiza-

tional goals that managers are responsible for implementing. For example, in addition to their training and past experience, potential sales people might be evaluated on the basis of their apparent extroversion, child care providers might be evaluated on the basis of their patience and warmth, and applicants for customer service jobs might be evaluated on their ability to exhibit empathy. However, studies of social perception and hiring indicate that hiring decisions are susceptible to the influence of a host of other factors that are not related to explicit organizational goals (Heilman & Saruwatari, 1979; Jawahar & Mattsson, 2005; Jussim, Coleman, & Lerch, 1987; Uhlmann & Cohen, 2005; Ziegert & Hanges, 2005).

We have argued that power affects approach toward others who are perceived as instrumental for goal completion. Thus, a relatively straightforward prediction is that in a hiring situation, in which social targets are supposed to be evaluated with specific goals and selection criteria in mind, high-power individuals should be more likely than those in low power to act on differences in candidates' goal-related qualifications by selecting the candidate whose attributes best match the hiring criterion. Specifically, we tested whether high-power participants would be more likely than low-power participants to choose the candidate whose traits were most consistent with the hiring goal, regardless of the particular goal content.

### Method

#### Participants

One hundred forty undergraduates (46 men, 81 women, and 13 unspecified) whose mean age was 20.45 years ( $SD = 4.28$ ) participated in the experiment. They were recruited via e-mail as part of an online participant pool and were paid \$10 for their participation.

#### Design and Procedure

Upon arrival at the laboratory, participants were randomly assigned to either a high-power or low-power condition. Participants then received a hiring goal: to find either an *extroverted* or an *introverted* candidate.<sup>3</sup> Thus, we created a 2 (hiring goal: extroverted vs. introverted)  $\times$  2 (power: high vs. low) design.

Participants were seated individually at semiprivate cubicles, and power was manipulated as in Experiment 1b. Next, the experimenter passed out instructions for the hiring task. The instructions for all participants began with the following:

Now we want you to imagine that you are working for a large videogame development company. The company has recently lost its Director of Knowledge Management, and you have been asked to evaluate four candidates who have expressed interest in the job.

Those in the introverted hiring goal condition then read the following:

The Director of Knowledge Management is in charge of cataloguing all files related to the development of the games, including the artwork and the computer programming code. This job is a solitary one—the

<sup>3</sup> The extroversion condition was run at a later date than the introversion condition.

Director of Knowledge Management primarily works alone on a day-to-day basis. In addition, both the artwork and the code are highly proprietary information, and the company would lose its competitive advantage if this information were leaked. For both of these reasons, an important trait to look for in the Director of Knowledge Management is introversion—someone who is introverted and doesn't feel particularly compelled to socialize with others.

In the extroverted hiring goal condition, participants instead read the following description:

The Director of Knowledge Management is in charge of cataloguing all files related to the development of the games, including the artwork and the computer programming code. This job is a social one—the Director of Knowledge Management primarily works with software developers on a day-to-day basis. In addition, both the artwork and the code are admired within the industry, and the company maintains its competitive advantage by publicizing practices at industry meetings and conferences. For both of these reasons, an important trait to look for in the Director of Knowledge Management is extroversion—someone who is extroverted and enjoys spending time talking with others.

Finally, all participants read that they would be learning about and evaluating four candidates and that the company's hiring decision would be based primarily on their own choice.

*Target profiles.* Participants saw information about four targets that appeared originally in Cantor and Mischel's (1977) study of impression formation. The targets were each described with 10 traits (e.g., "Mark is discreet"). These traits were pretested by Cantor and Mischel (1977) for their relation to the concepts "introvert" and "extrovert." In their pretest, participants were asked to rate the extent to which each trait was related to introversion or extroversion using a 4-point scale (0 = *unrelated*, 1 = *slightly related*, 2 = *moderately related*, 3 = *highly related*). The target Mark was designed to be perceived as introverted; he was described using six traits rated moderately introverted in the pretesting phase (e.g., hesitant, unsocial) and four neutral traits unrelated to introversion (e.g., modern). The target Bob was designed to be perceived as extroverted and was described using six moderately extroverted traits (e.g., friendly, energetic) and four neutral traits unrelated to extroversion (e.g., neat). Thus, Mark was the instrumental target in the introverted goal condition, whereas Bob was the instrumental target in the extroverted goal condition. The other two targets, Greg and Tom, were designed as control targets for Mark and Bob, respectively. They were described using 10 neutral traits unrelated to introversion (e.g., observant, for Greg) and 10 neutral traits unrelated to extroversion (e.g., generous, for Tom).

Each trait description was presented on a computer screen for 2 s, followed by a pause of 3 s. Trait descriptions were randomized within target, and target order was randomized. After the participants saw the complete set of traits for all four targets, they were asked to select one of the four targets for the job. This forced-choice question was the dependent measure. To check that the target manipulation was effective, participants were asked to report the extent to which each target was extroverted and introverted (1 = *not at all*, 5 = *extremely*). Finally, participants reported their gender and were paid and dismissed.

## Results and Discussion

There were no effects due to participant gender on any of the dependent variables, so we combined men and women in reporting the results.

### Manipulation Check

We first checked whether the instrumental candidates were distinguishable from the noninstrumental candidates in terms of their introversion–extroversion. We combined ratings of introversion and extroversion for each target to create composite introversion–extroversion scales ( $\alpha_{\text{Bob}} = .85$ ;  $\alpha_{\text{Mark}} = .88$ ;  $\alpha_{\text{Greg}} = .79$ ;  $\alpha_{\text{Tom}} = .85$ ) ranging from 1 to 5, with higher values signifying greater extroversion. To test the effectiveness of our target manipulation, we ran a mixed within- and between-subjects ANOVA. Introversion–extroversion scores for each target were entered as the within-subjects factor, and participant power and goal were entered as the between-subjects factors. As expected, there was a significant effect of target,  $F(1, 136) = 192.48$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = .59$ , such that Bob was seen as extroverted (i.e., not introverted;  $M = 4.29$ ,  $SD = 0.85$ ), Greg and Tom fell in the middle ( $M = 3.15$ ,  $SD = 0.86$  and  $M = 3.11$ ,  $SD = 0.94$ , respectively), and Mark was seen as not extroverted (i.e., introverted;  $M = 1.66$ ,  $SD = 0.95$ ). The only other significant effect in the model was for goal; all participants were seen as more extroverted (less introverted) in the extrovert goal condition compared with the introvert goal condition,  $F(1, 136) = 4.86$ ,  $p = .029$ ,  $\eta^2 = .03$ . These results show that the target instrumentality manipulations worked as intended and that targets could be classified as instrumental (Mark in the introvert goal condition and Bob in the extrovert goal condition), noninstrumental (Greg and Tom), or anti-instrumental (Bob and Mark in the introvert and extrovert goal conditions, respectively).

### Candidate Selection

We predicted a Power  $\times$  Target Instrumentality interaction on participants' choices, expecting the preference for instrumental over noninstrumental candidates to be greater in high-power than in low-power conditions. An examination of participants' choices revealed that the anti-instrumental targets were each chosen by only a single participant in each goal condition, so we collapsed across the noninstrumental and anti-instrumental target conditions for the purpose of statistical analysis. We ran a log-linear analysis comparing the choice of instrumental candidates (Mark = 1 for the introverted hiring goal, Bob = 1 for the extroverted hiring goal) with the choice of noninstrumental candidates (Bob, Greg, and Tom = 0 in the introverted goal condition and Mark, Greg, and Tom = 0 in the extroverted hiring goal condition), with hiring goal and power as factors. Consistent with these predictions, only the predicted two-way interaction between power and target instrumentality was significant,  $\chi^2(1, N = 140) = 6.45$ ,  $p = .011$ ,  $\Phi = .21$ . More important, this effect was not moderated by hiring goal,  $\chi^2(1, N = 140) = 0.03$ ,  $p = .861$ ,  $\Phi = .02$ . Regardless of hiring goal, 72% ( $n = 52$ ) of high-power participants selected the instrumental candidate compared with only 52% ( $n = 35$ ) of low-power participants (see Table 1 for frequencies). High-power participants

Table 1  
*Count of Participants who Selected Goal-Consistent and Inconsistent Candidates by Participant Power and Goal Conditions*

Perceiver	Introvert goal		Extrovert goal		Total
	Goal consistent	Goal inconsistent	Goal consistent	Goal inconsistent	
High power	29	13	23	7	72
Low power	19	20	16	13	68
Total	48	33	39	20	140

were more likely than low-power participants to select the applicant whose attributes matched the goal.

The fact that low-power participants chose the instrumental candidate only half of the time, particularly in the context of a hiring scenario, raises an interesting question: What other goals or target features affect respondents' appraisals of instrumental and noninstrumental targets? Research on impression formation, and on the determinants of interpersonal attraction, has identified a number of factors that reliably affect approach regardless of perceivers' goals. The design of Experiment 2 precludes exploration of these issues; however, Experiments 3, 4, and 5 address this question directly. Experiment 2 demonstrated that the approach tendencies of participants in power are more responsive to a single goal than those of participants in low power when evaluating multiple targets. In the next experiment, we sought to examine the relative impact of two concurrent goals on approach toward a single target that was instrumental for one goal but not the other.

### Experiment 3

Male participants were recruited for an experiment ostensibly about organizational tasks and assigned to high- and low-power roles (i.e., boss or subordinate). We gave all participants a performance goal and implicitly primed some participants with an additional goal related to sex. The target was only moderately competent, so she was not instrumental for the performance goal. However, she was highly attractive, making her instrumental for the sex goal. We predicted that when both goals were active, participants in high power would exhibit greater approach toward the target than those in low power, because the goal for which she was instrumental (sex) would affect high-power participants' appraisals more than low-power participants' appraisals.

### Method

#### Participants

Forty-eight university students and staff were recruited for Experiment 3 from an online research pool and the student union. All participants were men, their average age was 21.98 years ( $SD = 2.54$ ), and they were paid either \$10 or \$20 for completing the experiment.<sup>4</sup>

#### Design and Procedure

Participants were randomly assigned to condition in a 2 (power: high vs. low)  $\times$  2 (goal: performance vs. sex + performance) between-subjects factorial design.

While waiting for the experiment to begin, participants were observed by one of two experimenters. Experimenter 1 paced the room, looking closely at each participant and taking notes on a sheet of paper. He did not communicate with any of the participants. Upon leaving the room, Experimenter 1 gave the paper containing the notes to Experimenter 2. Experimenter 2 thanked Experimenter 1, who was not involved in the remainder of the experiment, and then told participants that she was ready to begin the experiment.

*Power manipulation.* Experimenter 2 told participants that for the first business simulation, individuals would be assigned to boss–subordinate pairs using the notes of Experimenter 1, who had been observing their nonverbal behavior. Citing ostensible research that “has demonstrated a link between nonverbal behavior and ascendance to leadership roles,” Experimenter 2 acted as though she was using Experimenter 1's notes to assign participants to either the boss (high-power) or subordinate (low-power) role.

To reinforce the power manipulation, participants were told that at the end of the experiment, each boss–subordinate pair would complete a list of short pretests for other researchers in the school. While seated individually in semiprivate cubicles, participants were handed a list of fake pretests, each with its expected duration in minutes, adapted from Chen et al. (2001). The “bosses” were then asked to divide the pretests as they wished between themselves and their subordinates. “Subordinates” were asked to imagine what their boss might pick, while cognizant of the fact that they, as subordinates, would be completing the remaining tasks. Experimenter 2 then collected the sheets and announced that the pretests would be assigned as dictated by the bosses at the end of the experiment.

At no time were the participants told who their partner would be. When the group contained an odd number, the experimenter reported that she would assign multiple unspecified subordinates to a single, unspecified boss but that subordinates would not be able to share the tasks.

*Goal manipulations.* After assignment to power conditions, participants were asked to complete a word search puzzle, ostensibly to clear their minds. Developed by Mussweiler and Förster (2000), the puzzle was designed to prime the concept of sex and sex-related goals (for evidence that such primes can activate related goals, see Förster, Liberman, & Friedman, 2007). In the sex-prime condition, participants searched for 12 words, 6 containing sexual innuendo (*stiff, wet, bed, skin, feel, and sweat*) and 6 neutral (*newspaper, clock, bread, radio, board, and roof*). In the other condition, participants searched for 12 neutral words, including the 6 listed above.

Participants were asked to find and circle each of the words on their respective lists within a block of letters. When all had completed the task, the experimenter asked them to go back through the list and make sure all of their words were circled. Thus, despite variance in the time it took participants to complete

<sup>4</sup> These different pay rates reflect changes in the availability of students on campus during the period of data collection. We analyzed the effect of “payment amount” as a main effect and interacting with all of our dependent variables, and there were no significant effects. We therefore collapsed over this factor in the reported analyses.

the word search, all participants reviewed the list of words again before moving on to the next task.

Finally, all participants were told to imagine they needed to choose a partner for a complex analytical task. We assumed that this instruction would activate a performance goal for all participants. Thus, two goals were activated concurrently for participants in the sex + performance goal condition, whereas a single goal was activated for participants in the performance goal condition.

*Partner appraisal task.* Participants were told that they would choose their partner for the analytic task from a series of resumes and photographs of undergraduates at their own university. Specifically, they would be asked to report their desire to work with each candidate. In reality, they only saw one resume and accompanying photo for a woman who was, based on pilot data, perceived as only moderately competent but highly attractive.<sup>5</sup> Thus, she was more instrumental for the sex goal than for the performance goal.

The target stimuli were presented on a computer screen. The photograph was taken by a research assistant who was blind to the purpose of the experiment and was asked to photograph a number of young women, showing their heads and upper torsos, in local shopping districts. The resume contained information about the target's SAT scores (680 verbal, 600 math), high school and college grade point averages (3.76 and 3.62, respectively), two summer work experiences (at a camp and a home decorating store), two extracurricular activities (one athletic, one community service), and a list of three hobbies/interests (running, volunteering, and soccer).

After viewing the resume and photo together, participants were asked "To what extent would you like to work with this person on the analytic task?" They answered using a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*a great deal*). Participants were then debriefed, paid, and dismissed.

### Results and Discussion

We predicted an interaction between power and goal condition, such that approach toward the target would be more influenced by her instrumentality under high-power than under low-power conditions. To test this prediction, we analyzed participants' desire to work with the target in a 2 (power: high vs. low)  $\times$  2 (goal: performance vs. sex + performance) between-subjects ANOVA. The predicted interaction was significant,  $F(1, 44) = 4.28, p = .045, \eta^2 = .09$ , although the pattern of means was somewhat unexpected. High-power participants showed a slight preference for working with the target when she was instrumental ( $M = 4.18, SD = 0.87$ ) versus not ( $M = 3.67, SD = 0.99$ ),  $t(44) = 1.25, p = .109$ , one-tailed,  $d = 0.38$ , and unexpectedly, low-power participants showed the opposite preference ( $M = 3.33, SD = 1.23$  and  $M = 4.00, SD = 0.82$ , for instrumental and noninstrumental targets, respectively),  $t(44) = -1.69, p = .099, d = 0.51$ . More important, however, when the target was instrumental (in the sex + performance goal condition), high-power participants reported a greater desire to work with her than did low-power participants,  $t(44) = 2.06, p = .046, d = 0.78$ . When the target was not instrumental (in the performance-only goal condition), there was no difference between high- and low-power participants' desire to work with her,  $t(44) < 1, p = .404, d = 0.36$ .

These findings support our general hypothesis that power sensitizes people to the instrumentality of prospective relationship partners and increases approach toward instrumental others. We found that when respondents had concurrent sex and performance goals, high-power males were more interested in working with a female target who was not very instrumental for task-performance purposes but who was instrumental for sexual purposes, than low-power males.

Our main hypothesis—that the approach ratings of high-power participants would show greater sensitivity to target instrumentality than those of low-power participants—was generally supported in the experiment. However, the pattern of results was not entirely consistent with our theory. Most notably, approach in the low-power performance-goal condition was unexpectedly high, which is difficult to explain in terms of objectification. It is possible, for example, that low-power men looking for a work partner to fulfill a performance goal feel less entitled to be choosy than those in high power, which would indicate lower standards, as opposed to greater desire per se. In the next experiment, we manipulated the target's features to help isolate how power affects preferences for instrumental versus noninstrumental targets.

### Experiment 4

The determinants of interpersonal liking and attraction have been well investigated, and one of the most important predictors of approach is similarity (Byrne, 1971; Newcomb, 1961; Tesser, 1988). In the absence of power, people tend to dislike dissimilar others, relative to those who are similar (Berscheid & Reis, 1998). However, we predict that when perceivers have power, dislike for a dissimilar target will be tempered more by his or her instrumentality, relative to baseline conditions.

We assigned undergraduate participants to conditions in which they either had power or did not, activated a single goal (to socialize), and asked them to report their liking for another undergraduate who was described as dissimilar to the participant, and either instrumental (highly social) or not (antisocial). We expected that, even though the target was described as having unattractive characteristics (i.e., being dissimilar), high-power participants would still be more likely to approach him when he was instrumental (i.e., sociability) than baseline participants.

### Method

#### Participants

Fifty-one undergraduates participated in the experiment (17 men and 34 women). They were recruited from an online study pool.

<sup>5</sup> Seventeen male undergraduates rated the competence of the individual described in the resume relative to other undergraduates at their university on a 7-point scale (1 = *not at all*, 4 = *somewhat*, 7 = *extremely*). The mean rating was 4.24 ( $SD = 1.44$ ), indicating she was perceived as moderately competent. A different group of 37 male undergraduates rated how "beautiful" and "sexy" the target in the photograph was, relative to 11 other women photographed for prospective use in the experiment. On a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*extremely*), the target received the highest mean ratings on both beautiful ( $M = 3.92, SD = 0.80$ ) and sexy ( $M = 3.89, SD = 0.81$ ). The mean beautiful rating for the other 11 targets combined was ( $M = 2.67, SD = 0.39$ ), and the mean sexy rating for the other 11 targets combined was ( $M = 2.48, SD = 0.41$ ).

For this experiment, participants' mean age was 19.58 years old ( $SD = 1.21$ ). They were paid with a \$5 amazon.com gift certificate.

### *Design and Procedure*

The experiment was a 2 (perceiver: high power vs. baseline)  $\times$  2 (target: social vs. antisocial) between-subjects design. Participants were assigned to perceiver conditions and then asked to form judgments of a dissimilar target who was either highly social or antisocial, which made him instrumental or noninstrumental, respectively, with regard to a sociability goal.

Because the experiment was conducted online, participants completed it while seated at their own computers. Eligible members of the participant pool received an e-mail inviting them to participate in an online experiment called "Recall plus Pretests," comprising a series of unrelated studies, including recall tasks and interpersonal judgments. Those who were interested clicked on a link that led them to our Web site, where they were again informed that they would be working on a series of unrelated tasks. On the next screen, a large number of small dots appeared, and participants were asked to estimate how many there were (for a similar procedure, see Diehl, 1990). They were told that the manner in which they make such estimates is related to other personality traits, but one type is no better than the other. After clicking to the next screen, they were randomly assigned to receive either the "underestimator" or the "overestimator" feedback.

Next, participants were asked to recall a personal experience, specifically, a time in which they had power (high-power perceiver condition), or the last time they went to the grocery store (baseline perceiver condition). The instructions in the high-power condition were the same as those in Experiments 1b and 2. In the baseline condition, participants were told: "Please recall the last time you went to the grocery store. *Please choose one experience in particular to reflect upon.* Take some time to visualize this experience: events, feelings, thoughts, etc."

The next task was introduced as a word game, in which participants were to rearrange scrambled words to create grammatically correct sentences (Srull & Wyer, 1979). Specifically, participants made grammatical four-word sentences out of 16 sets of five jumbled words. Of the 16 phrases, 10 contained words related to socializing, such as *play*, *meet*, and *acquaint*. This task was designed to prime the concept of sociability and to activate a sociability goal (Fitzsimons & Shah, in press).

Having completed the goal activation task, participants were told that they would receive some information about a variety of individuals and would be asked to provide judgments of them. In reality, each participant only saw one target, who was characterized as either (a) highly sociable, and a dot overestimator; (b) highly sociable, and a dot underestimator; (c) not sociable, and a dot overestimator; (d) not sociable, and a dot underestimator. All participants were told that the target was an undergraduate at their own university and that he estimated dots in a manner opposite to their own, which was the basis for his dissimilarity. Target descriptions appeared as follows:

#### *(Over/Underestimator, Social)*

Eric is an over- [under-] estimator on the dot estimation task. In terms of social activities . . . Eric is very active. In fact, he is a party

promoter (advertises upcoming parties to people on campus). Eric hopes to study abroad at some point.

#### *(Over/Underestimator, Antisocial)*

Eric is an over- [under-] estimator on the dot estimation task. In terms of social activities . . . Eric tends to avoid big parties. Eric hopes to study abroad at some point.

The social/antisocial targets provided our manipulation of instrumentality, defined in terms of the sociability goal.

After reading the target description, participants responded to three questions designed to measure approach toward the target: How much do you like Eric? (1 = *not at all*, 5 = *a great deal*), how good do you feel about Eric, and how much would you want to be friends with Eric? (both anchored at 1 = *not at all* and 5 = *extremely*). These were followed by two manipulation check questions. Participants were asked to rate the extent to which the target was social and antisocial (1 = *not at all*, 5 = *extremely*). Finally, participants completed a set of demographic questions before seeing a screen that thanked, debriefed, and told them that their gift certificate would arrive shortly via e-mail.

### *Results and Discussion*

There were no effects due to participant gender on any of the dependent variables, so we combined men and women in reporting the results.

#### *Manipulation Checks*

To confirm that the social target was seen as more social than the antisocial target, we combined the social and antisocial (reverse-coded) variables to create a composite sociability variable ( $\alpha = .94$ ) and submitted the composite to a 2 (perceiver: high power vs. baseline perceiver)  $\times$  2 (target: social vs. antisocial target) between-subjects ANOVA. There was a significant main effect due to target sociability,  $F(1, 47) = 211.72, p < .001, \eta^2 = .82$ . The social target ( $M = 4.74, SD = 0.39$ ) was perceived as more social than the antisocial target ( $M = 2.61, SD = 0.62$ ). All other main effects and interactions were not statistically significant. Thus, the target sociability manipulation appears to have worked as we intended.

#### *Hypothesis Tests*

We predicted an interaction between perceiver power and target sociability on approach toward the dissimilar target, such that target instrumentality would affect ratings more in the high-power condition than in the baseline condition. To test this prediction, we averaged the three measures of liking to create an approach composite score ( $\alpha = .84$ ), which we submitted to a 2 (perceiver power)  $\times$  (target sociability) between-subjects ANOVA. The two-way interaction emerged,  $F(1, 47) = 3.99, p = .052, \eta^2 = .08$ , and the pattern of means is consistent with our expectations. High-power participants exhibited significantly more approach toward the social (i.e., instrumental) target ( $M = 3.64, SD = 0.77$ ) than the antisocial (i.e., noninstrumental) target ( $M = 2.88, SD = 0.64$ ),  $t(47) = 2.52, p = .015, d = 1.04$ . In contrast, instrumentality did not affect approach toward the dissimilar target in the baseline condition,  $t(47) = 0.03, p = .977, d = 0.02$  ( $M = 3.26, SD = 0.64$

and  $M = 3.25$ ,  $SD = 0.61$  for the antisocial and social targets, respectively).

These findings provide support for the notion that under conditions of power, appraisals of social targets are based more on instrumentality, defined in terms of an active goal, than under baseline conditions. The similarity-attraction principle is widely accepted as a key determinant of approach in first encounters, yet the instrumentality of a dissimilar target affected how participants in power felt about him. Under baseline conditions, in contrast, instrumentality did not affect liking for a dissimilar target. It is interesting to note that, unexpectedly, high-power perceivers also liked the antisocial (i.e., anti-instrumental) target slightly less than baseline perceivers,  $F(1, 20) = 1.85$ ,  $p = .189$ ,  $\eta^2 = .09$ , suggesting that power might heighten avoidance responses to non- or anti-instrumental targets as well as heighten approach responses to those who are instrumental.

One limitation of this experiment, in terms of our ability to draw more general conclusions about the relative impact of targets' instrumental versus noninstrumental features under high-power and baseline conditions, is that we only examined the effect of target sociability on liking for a dissimilar target. It is possible that power affects the importance of sociability, relative to other target features, in predicting approach, rather than the importance of target instrumentality per se. In addition, dissimilarity is only one of many possible human attributes that should affect approach toward a target independent of instrumentality. So, it is possible that the results obtained here reflect an effect of power on responses to target similarity, rather than noninstrumental attractiveness per se. In the final experiment, we address these limitations by orthogonally manipulating power, goals, and alternative sources of target attractiveness.

### Experiment 5

A key feature of our objectification hypothesis is that under conditions of power, the desire to approach others depends more on the perceiver's goals than what we would expect under baseline conditions in which power differences are not salient. To build on our earlier findings, we attempted to replicate the patterns already observed using new goals, a different operationalization of goal contingency, and a new operationalization of noninstrumental target attractiveness. We asked participants in high-power and baseline conditions, with or without a performance goal, to report their feelings about an ostensible work partner who was always competent and also either kind or unkind. In general, we expected that participants would show greater approach toward the work partner in the performance goal condition (in which he was instrumental), and when he was kind rather than unkind (Ajzen, 1974). However, we expected the effects of target instrumentality to be greater under high-power than baseline conditions.

In addition, we sought to examine the impact of an active versus a completed (and thus inactive) goal on approach by high-power participants. Ferguson and Bargh (2004) showed that instrumental objects were liked less after the relevant goal was completed (and the objects were no longer instrumental) than while it was still active (and the objects were still instrumental). This pattern of effects using people, as opposed to object targets, would be somewhat surprising because typically, one feels appreciation and gratitude toward other people who provide assistance in goal comple-

tion (Ames, Flynn, & Weber, 2004). Presumably, appreciation and gratitude would increase, rather than decrease, liking for the helpful person. However, Kipnis (1972) provided evidence that, when perceivers have power, these kinds of goal-contingent devaluations can in fact occur. Participants in Kipnis's organizational simulations were assigned to a manager's role and ostensibly supervised a group of subordinates (whom they never met face-to-face) over a period of days. When offered an opportunity to meet their subordinates for refreshments after the experiment was completed, participants who had played the role of manager in the power condition (i.e., who were given institutional means of rewarding and punishing their employees) expressed less interest than managers in the no-power condition (i.e., who had to rely on their powers of persuasion to influence their employees). In contrast, *during* the task, managers with power had made *more* attempts to communicate with subordinates compared with managers with less power (Kipnis, 1972). Kipnis interpreted this finding as evidence of a devaluation of subordinates after they had been influenced, but it is also consistent with our hypothesis: Power increased approach toward subordinates when those subordinates were instrumental for an active performance goal, but it decreased approach toward subordinates when they were no longer instrumental because the performance goal was inactive.

### Method

#### Participants

One hundred seventy-six adults (121 women, 54 men, and 1 unidentified), who were 32.56 ( $SD = 10.89$ ) years old on average, were recruited from an online study pool advertised via e-mail to participants across the United States. They were paid for their participation with a \$5 gift certificate to Amazon.com.

#### Design and Procedure

The experiment was a 2 (perceiver: high power vs. baseline)  $\times$  2 (goal: performance vs. no performance)  $\times$  2 (target: kind vs. unkind) between-subjects design. Participants in high-power or baseline conditions learned about the behavior of an ostensible work partner who was always competent, either kind or unkind, and either instrumental (in the performance goal condition) or not instrumental (in the no-performance goal condition) with regard to their chances of winning a lottery. Approach toward the target was measured after one round of trivia questions and before an ostensible second round to ensure that the goal in the performance condition was active. As in Experiment 4, participants completed the experiment online at their own computers. Upon accessing the Web site, participants learned that they would complete some tasks with a partner. The partner was identified as another randomly selected participant in the experiment. First, participants were asked to share information with their partner by describing their day before arriving at the experiment. After writing about their own day, they clicked to a new screen, where they were shown the ostensible partner's response to the same request.

In both the kind and unkind target conditions, participants read a story about how the target had seen a handicapped person struggling to get out of a van in the Starbucks parking lot. Both targets reported recognizing that the person was really handi-

capped, implying that he did not appear dangerous, but the kind target stopped and offered help, whereas the unkind target was dismissive. Following are the two paragraphs containing the kindness manipulation.

*(Kind Target Condition)*

I helped him by moving the step to just the right spot, then offered my arm, and he leant on me and climbed out. Then he kept thanking me over and over, telling me how kind I was and how he had been sitting there for like 10 minutes calling out for help and no one wanted to help him. So I felt good about having stopped to help him.

*(Unkind Target Condition)*

In my head I was like “not me, man, you are creeping me out and I need my coffee!” and I kept on walking. He kept talking as I walked by, whining about how he needed help and no one wanted to help him. I glanced over quickly . . . but I kept going, acting like I was in a big hurry. I mean, I don’t know why I should have to help him.

After reading the description of their ostensible partner’s day, participants were told that they would complete the next two tasks alone. First they answered a question unrelated to our hypotheses, designed to separate the kindness manipulation from the power manipulation: “Which of the following best describes where you live?” Possible responses were urban area, suburban area, rural area, and other. Next, participants were given instructions to produce a “brief writing sample,” which contained the *perceiver power* manipulation. Specifically, they were asked to complete the “recall a time” tasks used in Experiment 4 to assign participants to high-power and baseline conditions.

Finally, participants were introduced to a second “partner” task that involved a trivia test with two rounds of 10 items. They were asked to spend at least 3 min on each round. They were instructed as follows:

*(Performance Goal Condition)*

For every trivia question *you or your partner* answers correctly, you will receive one lottery ticket. For example, if you get 3 right and your partner got 3 right, you will receive 6 lottery tickets. At the end of the study (in about a week), we will select one ticket for a lottery to win a \$50 gift certificate to amazon.com.

*NOTE!!* You are not competing with your partner in any way. Your partner is not part of this lottery. Therefore, he or she can only be useful to you.

*(No-Performance Goal Condition)*

You have been assigned to simply look over the trivia items. We are not interested in the number you get correct—just your thoughts about the items. Therefore, there is no need for you to answer the questions. Your partner, however, has been assigned to actually answer the questions. Afterward, the two of you will share your experiences.

In the performance and no-performance goal conditions, participants were presented next with 10 moderately difficult trivia questions (“Round 1”), learning afterward that their partner was competent: He or she had answered 9 out of 10 questions correctly. In addition, participants in the performance goal condition were

told that, as a result of their partner’s performance, they would have nine extra lottery tickets added to the number they earned by answering questions correctly. In the no-performance goal condition, there was no mention of personal gain on the basis of the partner’s performance.

While anticipating going on to “Round 2” of trivia questions, all participants then completed four measures of approach toward the partner. They were asked to report on 5-point scales (1 = *not at all*, 5 = *a great deal*) the extent to which they (a) like, (b) dislike (reverse scored), (c) would like to meet, and (d) would want to be friends with their partner. These questions served as the dependent measures.

Three manipulation check questions followed on similar 5-point scales. To check the effectiveness of the goal manipulation, participants were asked to report the helpfulness of their ostensible partner and to check the effectiveness of the target kindness manipulation they were asked to rate the partner’s kindness and unkindness. Finally, participants reported demographic information and learned the experiment had ended. They were debriefed and told they would receive their \$5 gift certificate via e-mail. Furthermore, those in the performance goal condition were told that although there would be no Round 2, all participants would have 20 tickets entered into a lottery for an additional \$50 amazon.com gift certificate.

*Results and Discussion*

Preliminary analyses revealed no statistically significant main effects or interactions involving participant gender, so we combined men and women in all remaining analyses.

*Manipulation Checks*

To test the effectiveness of the target kindness manipulation, we combined the kind and unkind (reverse coded) ratings ( $\alpha = .91$ ) and submitted them to a 2 (high power vs. baseline perceiver)  $\times$  2 (performance vs. no performance goal)  $\times$  2 (kind vs. unkind target) between-subjects ANOVA. There was a significant main effect due to target kindness,  $F(1, 125) = 155.46, p < .001, \eta^2 = .55$ . The kind target ( $M = 4.09, SD = 0.77$ ) was perceived as more kind than the unkind target ( $M = 2.21, SD = 0.91$ ). All other main effects and interactions were not statistically significant. Thus, the target kindness manipulation appears to have worked as we intended.

We conducted a similar 2  $\times$  2  $\times$  2 ANOVA to compare the target helpfulness ratings. The expected significant main effect of the performance goal manipulation emerged: Participants with a performance goal rated their ostensible partner more helpful ( $M = 4.37, SD = 1.03$ ) than did those in the no-performance goal condition ( $M = 3.62, SD = 1.33$ ),  $F(1, 124) = 19.65, p < .001, \eta^2 = .14$ . There was also an unexpected significant main effect due to target kindness,  $F(1, 124) = 5.22, p = .024, \eta^2 = .04$ , which was qualified by two 2-way interactions. A significant Power Prime  $\times$  Target interaction,  $F(1, 124) = 6.91, p = .010, \eta^2 = .05$ , revealed that baseline participants’ ratings of helpfulness depended on the kindness of the target ( $M_K = 4.44, SD_K = 0.96$  vs.  $M_U = 3.76, SD_U = 1.40$ ), whereas high-power participants’ ratings did not ( $M_K = 4.00, SD_K = 1.15$  vs.  $M_U = 4.10, SD_U = 1.22$ ). Also, a significant Performance Goal  $\times$  Target interaction,

$F(1, 124) = 4.06, p = .046, \eta^2 = .03$ , revealed that, for participants without a performance goal, helpfulness ratings depended on the kindness of the target ( $M_K = 4.03, SD_K = 1.19$  vs.  $M_U = 3.09, SD_U = 1.35$ ), whereas the ratings by participants with a performance goal did not ( $M_K = 4.41, SD_K = 0.93$  vs.  $M_U = 4.33, SD_U = 1.11$ ). These results illustrate that ratings of targets' helpfulness depend not only on observers' goals, as the manipulation was intended, but also on observers' power and qualities of the target, in ways that are consistent with our hypotheses.

### Approach Ratings

We predicted a main effect of target kindness; a main effect of goal; and a three-way interaction of target, goal, and perceiver power, on approach ratings because we expected target instrumentality to moderate the effect of kindness more under high-power than baseline conditions. We created an approach index by averaging the like, dislike (reverse scored), desire to meet, and desire to be friends ratings ( $\alpha = .91$ ) and submitted this index to a 2 (perceiver: high power vs. baseline)  $\times$  2 (goal: performance vs. no performance)  $\times$  2 (target: kind vs. unkind) between-subjects ANOVA. Significant main effects of performance goal,  $F(1, 125) = 4.51, p = .036, \eta^2 = .04$ , and target kindness,  $F(1, 125) = 45.19, p < .001, \eta^2 = .27$ , emerged. As expected, participants were more attracted to the kind target ( $M = 3.86, SD = 0.75$ ) than the unkind target ( $M = 2.79, SD = 1.12$ ), and they were more attracted to the target under performance goal ( $M = 3.38, SD = 1.03$ ) than no-performance goal ( $M = 3.21, SD = 1.19$ ) conditions.

In addition, the predicted three-way interaction was significant,  $F(1, 125) = 3.91, p = .050, \eta^2 = .03$ . The means and results of cell-by-cell contrasts are presented in Table 2, and they clearly support our hypothesis. In the high-power condition, participants' reported greater attraction to the kind versus unkind target in the no-performance goal condition ( $M = 3.76, SD = 0.83$  and  $M = 2.33, SD = 1.06$  for kind and unkind conditions, respectively), but they were indifferent between the kind and unkind target in the performance goal condition ( $M = 3.74, SD = 0.65$  and  $M = 3.46, SD = 1.06$  for kind and unkind conditions, respectively). In the baseline condition, participants reported greater attraction to the kind than to the unkind target, regardless of their goal. There were no other significant effects in this analysis ( $ps > .1$ ).

### Inactive Performance Goal

We hypothesized also that because power drives approach toward social targets only when they are instrumental, high-power

participants would exhibit less approach toward the target after performance was completed than while it was ongoing. To test this possibility, we ran two additional inactive performance goal conditions: a high-power, kind target, inactive performance goal condition; and a high-power, unkind target, inactive performance goal condition. High-power participants in these two conditions followed exactly the same procedures described in the previous performance goal conditions, with one exception. They were told the trivia test consisted of a single round of 10 questions, and they rated their partner after completing it.

To test our hypothesis, we used a 3 (goal: no performance vs. performance vs. inactive performance)  $\times$  2 (target: kind vs. unkind) ANOVA to examine the determinants of high-power respondents' approach ratings. Consistent with our predictions, the two-way interaction was significant,  $F(2, 98) = 3.36, p = .039, \eta^2 = .06$ . With an inactive performance goal, approach ratings by high-power participants were statistically indistinguishable from ratings by high-power participants with no performance goal at all. Approach toward the kind target was greater than approach toward the unkind target in both goal conditions ( $M_K = 3.76, SD_K = 0.83$  vs.  $M_U = 2.33, SD_U = 1.06$  for the no-goal condition and  $M_K = 3.84, SD_K = 0.76$  vs.  $M_U = 2.78, SD_U = 1.03$  for the inactive goal condition). It was only when the performance goal was active for high-power perceivers that they displayed instrumental approach toward the unkind target ( $M_K = 3.74, SD_K = 0.65$  vs.  $M_U = 3.46, SD_U = 1.06$ , as reported above).

These findings replicate those of our previous experiments, showing that relative to baseline and low-power conditions, approach by participants with power is based more on target instrumentality. Here, high-power respondents were more sensitive to variations in target instrumentality than to variations in target kindness, whereas baseline respondents were more sensitive to variations in target kindness than to variations in target instrumentality. Thus, via objectification, power seems to alter the criteria used to evaluate and approach social targets.

This experiment hints at the possibility, suggested by Kipnis (1976) and consistent with our theory, that power also changes how others are perceived once they are no longer useful. In the high-power condition, attraction toward a competent target was lower when the task was completed, rendering the performance goal inactive, than when the task was ongoing and the goal was still active, even though the target was equally helpful in both conditions. This suggests that objectification under power might make people especially opportunistic, leading them to discard

Table 2

Mean Ratings of Attraction to Kind Versus to Unkind Target by Perceiver Power and Goal Conditions

Perceiver	Mean attraction rating		SD		Sample size	
	Kind	Unkind	Kind	Unkind	Kind	Unkind
Baseline						
No goal	3.85 <sub>a,c</sub>	2.55 <sub>b</sub>	0.94	1.15	18	11
Performance goal	4.08 <sub>a</sub>	2.62 <sub>b</sub>	0.56	1.01	17	26
High power						
No goal	3.76 <sub>a,c</sub>	2.33 <sub>b</sub>	0.83	1.06	12	12
Performance goal	3.74 <sub>a,c</sub>	3.46 <sub>c</sub>	0.65	1.06	18	19
Inactive performance goal	3.84 <sub>a,c</sub>	2.78 <sub>b</sub>	0.76	1.03	23	20

Note. Means with different subscripts are different at  $p < .05$ .

helpful relationship partners when personal goals change and the partners are no longer instrumental.

### General Discussion

We defined objectification as a response to power that involves approaching social targets more when they are useful in terms of an active goal, regardless of the value of their other human qualities. We hypothesized that this focus on instrumentality, as a criterion for approaching social targets, gains emphasis as perceivers gain power. Six studies supported this prediction: High-power perceivers were more attracted to targets' usefulness, defined in terms of the perceiver's goals, than were perceivers in low-power and baseline conditions. We demonstrated these effects using multiple instantiations of power, a variety of goals, several types of instrumental and noninstrumental target attributes, and different measures of approach.

In Experiments 1a–b, we used a survey to show that objectification is associated with power. We assessed the relative impact of two potential sources of power that might affect the tendency to objectify others: the power of the respondent and the power of the target. Participants in high- and low-power positions (naturally occurring, and then randomly assigned) described an actual work relationship with either a subordinate or with a peer and then reported the extent to which they viewed the relationship in an instrumental manner. Across these studies, respondents reported greater objectification in their relationships with subordinates than with peers, but high-power individuals reported higher levels of peer objectification as well.

In Experiment 2, we examined the effects of power on objectification in a hiring scenario. We found that, when choosing among job candidates, high-power participants, regardless of their specific goal, were more likely to select the instrumental candidate over less instrumental candidates than were low-power participants. Thus, objectification under power improved candidate selection ability. Experiments 3–4 looked at the effects of power on approach responses either by manipulating goals, such that the target was useful under only one goal condition, or by manipulating the target characteristics, such that only one type of target was useful for the goal. Experiment 3 demonstrated sexual objectification of a moderately competent female prospective work partner by men assigned to the role of boss. When participants had concurrent sex and performance goals, those in the high-power condition were more interested in working with a female target who was instrumental for sexual purposes than were those in the low-power condition. In Experiment 4, we showed that for undergraduates primed with a sociability goal, liking for a dissimilar target depended more on his instrumentality (i.e., sociability) in high-power than in baseline conditions. In summary, these studies suggest that power fundamentally alters how targets are perceived: Power increases instrumental appraisal and approach.

Experiment 5 was designed to build on these findings, as it assessed the independent effects of participants' power and their goals, as well as targets' instrumental and noninstrumental attributes, on approach. Participants considered an ostensible work partner who was competent and either kind or unkind. Consistent with previous studies of attraction in the absence of power, participants in the baseline condition exhibited greater approach toward the kind target than the unkind target. This was also true for

high-power participants who did not have a performance goal or when the performance goal was no longer active. However, the possession of power combined with an active performance goal increased participants' desire to interact with the unkind but competent target. Across the studies, power led to objectification, defined as the tendency to approach social targets based more on how useful they are than on the value of their less useful attributes.

### *Implications for Research on the Psychology of Power*

The present findings contribute to the power literature in a number of important ways. They are most directly relevant to the power-approach theory (Keltner et al., 2003), which asserts that power activates an approach orientation, directing attention toward rewards and opportunities and enabling action in pursuit of those outcomes. There are a number of studies that document attention to rewards and action orientation in response to power (Anderson & Berdahl, 2002; Anderson & Galinsky, 2006; Galinsky et al., 2003) but relatively few that have explored the social consequences of these tendencies. Our work extends previous findings by showing that a focus on rewards, opportunities, and related goals under power conditions can lead to seeing people as instruments for goal attainment and approaching others on the basis of their utility. In this light, Bargh et al.'s (1995) finding that power increases attractiveness of a female subordinate, but only for those with a chronic sexual harassment goal, can be understood as a classic example of objectification by the powerful.

Our work contributes also to the growing body of literature on power and social perception (e.g., Fiske, 1993; Goodwin, Gubin, Fiske, & Yzerbyt, 2000; Overbeck & Park, 2001, 2006; Smith & Trope, 2006; Vescio et al., 2005, 2003), which has tended to emphasize social attention and information processing rather than approach outcomes. Consistent with that work, we show here that the effects of power on approach are driven by responsiveness to an active goal (e.g., Overbeck & Park, 2006; Vescio et al., 2005). However, our emphasis on positive feelings toward objectified targets clearly distinguishes our work from studies that emphasize stereotyping and discrimination, for example. By showing that power increases approach toward instrumental others, we begin to get a richer picture of the social life of power, which includes drawing closer to others when doing so is useful.

As noted earlier, we did not explore whether power also heightens avoidance reactions to targets who are anti-instrumental, possessing characteristics that might undermine, thwart, or obstruct completion of a goal. Although it is not entirely consistent with the power-approach theory, there was a trend in Experiment 4 suggesting that avoidance might also be affected by power. There, in addition to showing greater approach toward the instrumental target, high-power participants with a sociability goal were slightly less attracted to the antisocial target than baseline participants. Future research should examine the relative symmetry of these effects.

### *Implications for Research on Automatic Goal Pursuit*

As noted earlier, previous work has shown that objects are liked more when they are instrumental than when they are not (Ferguson & Bargh, 2004; Ferguson et al., 2007; Fishbach et al., 2004). The studies reported here are among the first to demonstrate that the

same psychological processes apply to people (see also Fitzsimons & Shah, in press). In addition, ours is the first demonstration we know of in which power moderates the evaluative consequences of goal activation, at least as they pertain to social targets, and to show that the effects of criteria that usually predict attraction toward others are moderated by instrumentality for those in power.

It is interesting to note that we only observed effects of instrumentality in response to power, and not in baseline conditions. The effect of instrumentality in the baseline conditions raises questions about the relative impact of instrumental concerns versus other noninstrumental criteria (e.g., similarity and kindness) on approach toward new relationship partners in the absence of power. Future research should explore other variables that tip the balance between instrumental and noninstrumental criteria as the basis of attraction.

### *Implications for Research on Objectification*

Our research contributes to the objectification literature, first, by explicitly documenting the important role of power in the tendency to objectify others, and second, by showing how specific goals drive the content of objectifying perceptions and behaviors. The results of Experiment 3 are especially important in this regard. That is, the desire of male participants to work with a sexually instrumental female target who was not particularly useful for performance objectives was not an automatic response to power; rather, the manifestation of objectification depended on the presence of a sex goal (see also Bargh et al., 1995). Similarly, having sex on one's mind was not enough to lead male participants to prefer an attractive female for a complex analytical task. Participants did not act on their goal unless they were also powerful.

This finding demonstrates one of the more dysfunctional consequences of objectification: It can lead a person with power to view a prospective coworker as someone who can fulfill personal sexual goals (Rudman & Borgida, 1995). Although we did not measure the consequences of these objectifying perceptions for the targets, research on sexual objectification illustrates a variety of negative psychological effects of self-objectification by women when they are sexually objectified by men (Frederickson & Roberts, 1997; Frederickson et al., 1998).

It is important also to acknowledge that objectification is a phenomenon that extends beyond the sexual realm. Our research shows that instrumentality as a key aspect of objectification can take many forms, that people can be seen as tools to be used for a wide variety of goals, and that both men and women are equally capable of instrumental approach and appraisal when in power. Viewing objectification as a broad phenomenon raises a number of questions about assumptions in the objectification literature that are often taken for granted.

For example, the objectification of social targets is usually discussed primarily in terms of its negative consequences (e.g., Frederickson et al., 1998; Marx, 1844/1964; Nussbaum, 1999). However, Experiment 2 illuminated what can be seen as a potentially positive side of objectification and its relationship to power. To the extent that power enables decision makers to approach job candidates on the basis of their qualifications most relevant to organizational goals, rather than on the basis of the attractiveness of attributes that are not relevant to organizational goals (such as age, race, gender, and nationality), objectification by those in

power might actually improve organizational efficiency while simultaneously enhancing meritocratic justice.

It is striking to compare this account of the positive side of objectification with the negative accounts inherent in the self-objectification literature, which tend to emphasize the consequences of sexual objectification for women (e.g., Frederickson & Roberts, 1997; but see Martins, Tiggemann, & Kirkbride, 2007). Whether objectification based on all goals and all target attributes leads inevitably to self-objectification and creates the same kinds of psychological fall-out that emerges among women who are sexually objectified is an interesting question for future research.

Our broad perspective on the meaning of objectification also allows us to evaluate the possibility that seeing oneself in terms of others' goals—that is, self-objectifying—is not necessarily damaging. To the extent that social ties are a critical determinant of social (Andersen & Chen, 2002; Baumeister & Leary, 1995) and economic success (Baker, 2000; Burt, 2000), the ability to make oneself instrumental, especially to powerful individuals, might be a key avenue for upward mobility. Moreover, the psychic costs associated with self-objectifying under these circumstances might depend on the nature of the target's own goals. When the attributes that make an individual instrumental for others are not the same attributes that are instrumental for one's own goals, self-objectification seems more likely to lead to alienation from the self and its damaging psychological consequences. But what about when others respond to the same attributes in us that are instrumental for our own purposes? Could this be related to self-actualization? These questions provide interesting fodder for future research.

Finally, it is important to emphasize that the instrumentality associated with objectification is only one of a number of assumptions associated with objectifying behavior (Nussbaum, 1999). We assumed that objectification, to the extent that it is associated with power, begins with approach based on instrumentality, and that this was an important starting point to shed light on the meaning of objectification, which is often treated as synonymous with dehumanization and stereotyping. As noted earlier, Nussbaum's (1999) philosophical assumptions include a number of other target attributions, which undoubtedly have important psychological consequences that we—like a blind person trying to understand an elephant—have failed to capture in this work. There is still much to learn about objectification, its manifestations, and how it defines relationships between those with power and their partners.

### *Is Objectification a Corrupting Force of Power?*

It seems important to consider the implications of our findings for the question of whether power corrupts. We often assume that power inherently activates self-serving goals in the power holder (e.g., Kipnis, 1976), but in some studies, this assumption is not borne out (e.g., the present Experiment 2; see also Chen et al., 2001; Galinsky et al., 2003, Experiment 3). Perhaps the issue is finding ways to engage power holders more fully in the meaning and responsibilities associated with their organizational roles (see also Overbeck & Park, 2006), as opposed to concerns with self-promotion, self-protection, or self-enhancement.

With regard to the morality of objectification itself, there are some additional questions to ponder. We argued earlier that to some extent, objectification is a normative and functional concomitant

itant of social hierarchy. In work organizations as in animal communities, superiors are expected to use subordinates as instruments for the completion of goals, and many of the goals that provide benefit for the power holder are also good for the community as a whole (de Waal, 1982). This process becomes less appropriate, and perhaps more intriguing, when hierarchy members overgeneralize in their objectification. For example, when a superior delegates professional tasks to someone who is not a direct report (e.g., in Experiment 1b), or when a supervisor delegates personal chores to, or pursues his own personal desires with, a professional subordinate (e.g., Experiment 3), objectification begins to take on a different flavor. These issues related to the appropriateness of instrumental thinking in some situations but not in others and of objectification of some targets but not of others, although already at the forefront of research on power and on goals (Ferguson & Bargh, 2004), would benefit from further consideration as research on objectification develops.

### Conclusion

In this research, we have focused on the role of power in one key aspect of objectification: The instrumental appraisal of and approach toward other people who could be useful for the power holder. To know whether a powerful person will approach a target, one needs to know the power holder's goals and the target's talents. For power holders, the world is viewed through an instrumental lens, and approach is directed toward those individuals who populate the useful parts of the landscape. Our results suggest that power not only channels its possessor's energy toward goal completion but also targets and attempts to harness the energy of useful others. Thus, power appears to be a great facilitator of goal pursuit through a combination of intrapersonal and interpersonal processes. The nature of the power holder's goals and interpersonal relationships ultimately determine how power is harnessed and what is accomplished in the end.

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## Appendix

## Objectification Scale

1. I think more about what this person can do for me than what I can do for him/her.
2. I tend to contact this person only when I need something from him/her.
3. I am interested in this person's feelings because I want to be close with him/her. (R)
4. I try to motivate him/her to do things that will help me succeed.
5. The relationship is important to me because it helps me accomplish my goals.
6. This person is very useful to me.
7. My relationship with this person is based on how much I enjoy our relationship, rather than how productive our relationship is. (R)
8. If the nature of my job (or his/her job) changed and this person wasn't helpful anymore, the relationship probably wouldn't continue.
9. Someone else with the same skill set could become equally important to me.
10. I really like this person a lot even though s/he is not all that useful to me. (R)

(R) = reverse-scored item

Received April 11, 2006  
Revision received October 16, 2007  
Accepted October 18, 2007 ■