

When Dispositional and Role Power Fit: Implications for Self-Expression and Self–Other Congruence

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Integrating and extending the literatures on social power and person–environment fit, 4 studies tested the hypothesis that when people’s dispositional beliefs about their capacity to influence others fit their assigned role power, they are more likely to engage in self-expression—that is, behave in line with their states and traits—thereby increasing their likelihood of being perceived by others in a manner congruent with their own self-judgments (i.e., self–other congruence). In Studies 1–3, dispositionally high- and low-power participants were randomly assigned to play a high- or low-power role in an interaction with a confederate. When participants’ dispositional and role power fit (vs. conflicted), they reported greater self-expression (Study 1). Furthermore, under dispositional–role power fit conditions, the confederate’s ratings of participants’ emotional experiences (Study 2) and personality traits (Study 3) were more congruent with participants’ self-reported emotions and traits. Study 4’s results replicated Study 3’s results using an implicit manipulation of power and outside observers’ (rather than a confederate’s) ratings of participants. Implications for research on power and person perception are discussed.

Keywords: social power, person–environment fit, self-expression, self–other congruence, authenticity

Over the past two decades, social power has emerged as a major topic of inquiry among social and personality psychologists (Fiske & Dépret, 1996; Keltner, Gruenfeld, & Anderson, 2003; Keltner, Van Kleef, Chen, & Kraus, 2008; Lee-Chai & Bargh, 2001). For example, power has been linked to particular types of social information processing (e.g., Goodwin, Gubin, Fiske, & Yzerbyt, 2000; Guinote, 2007; Smith & Trope, 2006), emotions (e.g., Dovidio, Ellyson, Keating, Heltman, & Brown, 1988; Langner & Keltner, 2008; Tiedens, Ellsworth, & Mesquita, 2000), and behaviors (e.g., Ellyson & Dovidio, 1985; Galinsky, Gruenfeld, & Magee, 2003). In this article, we focus on the effects of power on people’s tendency to engage in self-expression—that is, to behave in line with their states and traits—and, in turn, the likelihood of self–other congruence—that is, the likelihood of being perceived by others in a manner congruent with these states and traits. Importantly, whereas most research has focused on either dispo-

sitional or situational sources of power, we examined the joint, interactive effects of dispositional and situational power. Drawing on the literature on person–environment (P-E) fit, we propose that people are especially likely to express their states and traits when their dispositional beliefs about their power and the power associated with their current role are compatible or “fit,” resulting in greater self–other congruence.

Social Power and Self-Expression

Social power is widely defined as having influence and control over others’ outcomes (Emerson, 1962; Fiske, 1993; Kipnis, 1972; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959). Such control derives from the ability to grant or withhold valued resources as well as to dispense punishments (Anderson & Berdahl, 2002; Keltner et al., 2003). Research adopting this or closely related conceptualizations has linked power to a diverse set of cognitive, affective, and behavioral consequences (for a review, see Keltner et al., 2003). Most relevant to the present studies are theory and research forging a link between power and people’s expression of their states and traits.

In particular, the central claim of the approach/inhibition theory of power (Keltner et al., 2003) is that high power elicits approach tendencies, whereas low power activates inhibitory ones. Building on this claim, Keltner et al. (2003) argued that, because high power frees people to both pursue rewards and be less vigilant of threats, high power is associated with a greater likelihood of expressing state- and trait-consistent behaviors. Consistent with this, research has shown that people high in dispositional or situational power express their thoughts, feelings, and attitudes more than their low-power counterparts (e.g., Anderson & Berdahl, 2002; Berdahl & Martorana, 2006; Dovidio et al., 1988; Hall & Friedman, 1999; Hecht & LaFrance, 1998; see also Anderson, Keltner, & John,

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2003). High power has also been linked to a greater tendency to act in line with one's goals (Chen, Lee-Chai, & Bargh, 2001; Galinsky et al., 2003, Experiment 2). As a final example, members of high-power groups exhibit more behavioral variability than members of low-power groups, suggesting that high power is associated with being able to act in idiosyncratic ways rather than in ways dictated by group norms and expectations (Guinote, Judd, & Brauer, 2002).

In most of the above studies, as with the majority of recent research on power, power has been operationalized in *either* dispositional *or* situational terms. Examples of power-related dispositions include trait dominance (Mast & Hall, 2003; Operario & Fiske, 2001) and a generalized sense of power (Anderson & Galinsky, 2006), whereas examples of situational power include a person's current role or position vis-à-vis another person (Overbeck & Park, 2001), or physical cues in the environment that prime the concepts of high or low power (Chen et al., 2001). The present studies depart from such research by explicitly focusing on the *joint* effects of dispositional and situational power. More specifically, guided by the literature on P-E fit, we compared conditions in which one's dispositional and situational power fit versus conditions in which there was a lack of fit.

P-E Fit

Across a strikingly broad literature, P-E fit has been conceptualized in terms of the match between people's trait dispositions and work settings (Holland, 1985, 1996) or social roles (Pervin, 1968, 1987; Roberts & Donahue, 1994), their values and organizational cultures (Chatman, 1989), and their ideological beliefs and institutional environments (van Laar, Sidanius, Rabinowitz, & Sinclair, 1999)—to name but a few examples. In the present studies, we conceptualized P-E fit in terms of the fit between people's dispositional beliefs about their capacity to influence others, on the one hand, and the high- and low-power roles they are asked to occupy, on the other hand. We assumed that although people may be drawn to roles that fit their dispositions (e.g., Caspi & Bem, 1990; Haley & Sidanius, 2005; Newcomb, 1943), the realities of life usually dictate that dispositionally high- and low-power people have to assume a mix of high- and low-power roles. To illustrate, a dispositionally high-power graduate student may prefer and sometimes find her- or himself in a high-power role, such as when giving orders to her or his research assistants, but other times this same student is forced to occupy a low-power role, such as when meeting with her or his department chair or faculty advisor. Conversely, a dispositionally low-power son of a corporate magnate might typically shun opportunities to assume positions of power in his father's company, preferring low-power roles that better suit his power-related dispositions, only to find himself thrust into power when his father falls ill. Hence, sometimes our roles fit our power-related dispositions, but other times we find ourselves in roles that result in a lack of dispositional-role power fit.

P-E fit has been associated with a host of consequences, including job satisfaction (Rounds, Dawis, & Lofquist, 1987), organizational commitment (Chatman, 1991), work-related adjustment (Lachterman & Meir, 2004), and academic achievement (van Laar et al., 1999). Especially germane to the present studies is research

by Bettencourt and Sheldon (2001), suggesting a link between P-E fit and self-expression. These researchers hypothesized that social roles offer people the opportunity to satisfy a variety of psychological needs, including autonomy, which was defined in terms of self-reported self-expression. They reasoned that enacting a social role can satisfy autonomy needs to the degree that the dictates and expectations associated with the role correspond to one's personal characteristics. Such correspondence allows people to express themselves—that is, to act in accordance with their personal beliefs and values. Supporting this reasoning, one of their studies found that greater fit between people's self-reported traits, on the one hand (e.g., cooperative), and the traits required by an assigned group role, on the other hand (e.g., moderator role in a group discussion), was associated with higher participant reports of self-expression in the role.

Dispositional-Role Power Fit: Implications for Self-Expression and Self-Other Congruence

The present research extends this prior work on P-E fit and self-expression in several important respects. First, to the best of our knowledge, our studies are the first to examine the effects of *power-related fit* on self-expression. Second, we capitalized on the notion that, although roles usually come with a basic set of requirements, people “improvise and personalize” how they carry out these roles (Bettencourt & Sheldon, 2001, p. 1132). In other words, roles leave room for expressing the self in ways that go beyond their requirements. To illustrate, two bosses may meet the requirements of their role equally, but one boss might be very imaginative—a trait not necessarily linked to the boss role—in her or his problem solving, whereas the other always comes up with very conventional solutions to problems. Hence, we assessed the impact of P-E fit on the expression of self attributes extending beyond the characteristic (i.e., power) forming the basis of fit. Finally, the present studies extend past work by proposing not only that people express their states and traits more under P-E fit circumstances but also that this results in a greater likelihood of self-other congruence (Funder & Colvin, 1997)—that is, a greater likelihood that people will be perceived by others in a manner congruent with their self-reported states and traits.

The present research also advances existing work on social power and self-expression. By explicitly examining the joint, interactive effects of dispositional and situational power, we are proposing that the fit between dispositional and situational power may have qualitatively different effects than would be predicted on the basis of a person's (high or low) level of power alone—the kind of prediction that has been the focus of most past research on power and self-expression (e.g., Chen et al., 2001; Galinsky et al., 2003). Thus, we hypothesize that self-expression and self-other congruence will be greater when there is a match between one's dispositional and role power—regardless of whether this match is based on high levels of both dispositional and role power or low levels of both. This P-E fit hypothesis sits well with growing recognition of Person \times Situation interactions in behavioral expression and coherence (e.g., Mendoza-Denton & Mischel, 2007; Mischel & Shoda, 1995, 2008).

A small number of studies, in fact, offer support for the potential utility of examining the joint impact of power-related aspects of the person and power-related aspects of his or her environment. Specifically, research examining the fit between

people's hierarchy-related beliefs and their institutional environments has shown that grade-point averages and expectations of academic success are higher when college students' antiegalitarian beliefs fit the goals and values underlying their majors (Sidanius, van Laar, Levin, & Sinclair, 2003; van Laar et al., 1999). Along similar lines, students who score high on conservatism fare better in courses that promote hierarchy differences relative to those that do not (Kemmelmeyer, Danielson, & Basten, 2005).

Other work has shown that fit or match between one's baseline level of testosterone—a hormone associated with dominance-seeking behavior—and the status of one's current position has various consequences, such as better cognitive performance (e.g., Josephs, Sellers, Newman, & Mehta, 2006) and lower blood pressure (Newman, Sellers, & Josephs, 2005). For example, low-testosterone individuals did worse on a Graduate Record Examination (GRE) when assigned to a (mismatching) high-status position vis-à-vis a fellow participant relative to when they were in a (matching) low-status position (Josephs et al., 2006). Together, the above studies suggest that the experience of dispositional-role power fit may have unique effects on self-expression and self-other congruence, independent of the approach-related influence of high power on these outcomes that has been shown in prior work (e.g., Keltner et al., 2003).

Overview of Hypotheses and Studies

Across four studies, we tested the overarching hypothesis that when people are in a high- or low-power role that fits their dispositional beliefs about their capacity to influence others, such fit leads them to express a wide array of their states and traits, thus enhancing their likelihood of being perceived by others in a manner congruent with their self-judgments. Conversely, when people are assigned to a role that conflicts with their dispositional beliefs about their capacity to influence others, this conflict should negatively impact self-expression and self-other congruence. Thus, just as a dispositionally high-power graduate student is more apt to express her or his states and traits, and hence to have these states and traits perceived by others, when giving rather than receiving orders, a dispositionally low-power student is more likely to engage in self-expression and to be perceived in a manner congruent with his or her self-judgments when receiving rather than giving orders.

In Studies 1–3, we assessed participants' dispositional power and then randomly assigned them to play a high- or low-power role in an interaction with a confederate, who played the complementary role. Dispositional power was assessed with the Personal Sense of Power scale (Anderson & Galinsky, 2006; Anderson, John, & Keltner, 2007), which taps perceptions of one's capacity to influence others. In Study 1, we examined the impact of dispositional-role power fit on self-reports of self-expression. We then tested the impact of dispositional-role power fit on self-other congruence in Studies 2 and 3—that is, having one's emotional experiences (Study 2) and personality traits (Study 3) judged by others in a manner congruent with one's self-reported emotions and traits. Finally, in Study 4 we once again examined the impact of dispositional-role power fit on self-other congruence but used an implicit manipulation of

role power and relied on the ratings of multiple outside observers rather than a single confederate.

We explicitly hypothesized that dispositional-role power fit effects should emerge on dimensions extending beyond power, the basis of fit in our studies. However, an important caveat is that our ability to observe fit effects on dimensions *related* to the basis of fit may depend on the strength of the role people are asked to play. Roles that are highly structured and defined may function as “strong situations,” or situations that leave little room for behavioral variation (Mischel, 1973; Snyder & Ickes, 1985). Accordingly, such roles should decrease the likelihood of finding fit effects on self-expression and self-other congruence for role-related dispositional dimensions. Conversely, role manipulations that are less structured and constraining may function like “weak situations,” ones that leave room for individual differences to emerge and that therefore allow for the detection of fit effects across a variety of dispositional dimensions, including role-related ones. Hence, a somewhat paradoxical effect is likely to emerge when people's dispositions fit strong roles: There should be a decreased likelihood of obtaining fit effects on self-expression and self-other congruence for dispositional dimensions *related* to the basis of fit, but there should be an increased likelihood of fit effects on dispositional dimensions *unrelated* to the basis of fit. In contrast, when the basis of fit involves a weaker role, fit effects should be detectable for dispositional dimensions related to the basis of fit, and thus self-expression and self-other congruence should be equally high for fit-related and fit-unrelated dispositional dimensions.

The present studies allowed us to address the above ideas. Specifically, we expected that the role-power manipulations of Studies 1–3—which asked participants to engage in a highly structured role-play interaction with a confederate—would function as a strong situation in that they essentially forced all participants, regardless of their standing on power-related dispositions, to behave either as a powerful superior or a powerless subordinate. As such, fit effects on self-expression and self-other congruence specifically for dimensions related to power, the basis of fit, should be harder to observe in these studies. In contrast, we used an implicit role-power manipulation in Study 4, intended to be less constraining and directive. As such, we expected this manipulation to function like a ‘weak’ situation, allowing us to detect fit effects on self-expression and self-other congruence even for dimensions related to power.

Study 1

As an initial step, we aimed in Study 1 to conceptually replicate Bettencourt and Sheldon's (2001, Study 5) finding that self-reports of self-expression are greater to the degree that there is fit between one's dispositions and assigned role, while also extending this initial finding into the realm of power. We hypothesized that self-expression would be greater under dispositional-role power fit conditions (high dispositional/high role, low dispositional/low role) relative to conditions in which dispositional and role power conflicted (high dispositional/low role, low dispositional/high role).

Method

Participants

Ninety undergraduates (67 women, 23 men) enrolled in psychology courses received course credit for their participation.¹ Participants were run individually but were led to believe that the confederate with whom they interacted during the study was another participant.

Procedure

The laboratory room contained two tables, one pushed against a side wall with a single chair facing the wall and the other situated in the center of the room with a chair on either side. The latter table was arranged to resemble an office desk, with one chair facing outward (i.e., where the owner of the desk would typically sit), and the other facing inward (i.e., where someone meeting with the desk owner would sit). The outward-facing chair had armrests and was noticeably larger than the armless, inward-facing one. Upon their arrival, participants were directed to sit at the side table. The experimenter then explained that the study examined “everyday social interactions.” Participants were told that they would first fill out a preinteraction questionnaire and then engage in an interaction with a partner, ostensibly a fellow participant. They were further told that after the interaction, they would fill out another questionnaire. The experimenter then gave participants the preinteraction questionnaire to complete.

Afterward, participants were told that they were randomly assigned to play the role of either the owner of an art gallery (high-power role) or the owner’s assistant (low-power role) in the upcoming interaction (e.g., Hall, Horgan, & Carter, 2002; Mast & Hall, 2004). In the owner-role condition, participants were asked to imagine they were considering the assistant for a promotion and thus would ask the assistant to help them choose some artwork for the gallery as a means of evaluating the assistant’s ideas and judgment about art. Participants were further told that they would be given several pieces of art to evaluate and that their task would be to choose the best one for the gallery using input from their assistant in any way they wished. Finally, owner participants were told they would be given a form to evaluate their assistant after the interaction.

In the assistant-role condition, the experimenter told participants that, as the owner, the other participant was considering them for a promotion and so would ask them to help choose some artwork as a way to evaluate their judgment about art. Assistant participants were then told that they would be given several art pieces to evaluate and that the owner would choose the best one using their input in any way she wished. Finally, the owner would evaluate them after the interaction.

At this point, participants were casually directed to move to the larger chair behind the office desk if assigned to the owner role, and to the smaller chair if in the assistant role. Research has shown that seating position in an office setting can unobtrusively signal high and low power (Chen et al., 2001). The experimenter then brought the alleged other participant into the room and seated her in the chair across from the participant. Deliberately in the presence of both the participant and confederate, the experimenter then turned to the owner (participant or confederate) and said:

As the gallery owner, you are in control of the interaction—so you can direct it in any way you see fit. Afterward, the two of you will be separated and you will evaluate the assistant. You will also have the power to determine whether or not he/she is given a promotion.

To the assistant, the experimenter reiterated: “As the assistant, your goal is to help the owner choose the best piece of art. You should provide whatever input you are asked to provide and do whatever the owner asks you to do.” The experimenter then purposefully handed the owner a book containing the eight pieces of art that were to be discussed and then left the room so the interaction could begin.

The confederate (always the same female research assistant), who was naive to participants’ dispositional power, adhered to a set of guidelines for each role. When playing the assistant, she waited for the participant to initiate the discussion and never gave an opinion until asked for one, at which point she voiced either tentative opinions (e.g., “I’m not sure”) or tended to agree with the participant’s opinions. If the participant asked how she wanted to proceed with the discussion, the confederate deflected the question and put the decision back on the participant (e.g., “I’m not really sure, what do you think is best?”). In contrast, when playing the owner, the confederate always initiated the discussion (e.g., “So, let’s take a look at the paintings”). She also stated confident opinions on each painting before the participant had a chance (e.g., “This painting could definitely work”) and then asked the participant for his or her opinion in a way suggesting he or she was being evaluated (e.g., “So, what would you say about this painting?”). Finally, the confederate was noncommittal in response to the participant’s opinions, neither praising nor derogating them (e.g., “Hmm . . . that’s interesting”).

Lastly, the confederate displayed nonverbal cues that were role consistent. Research indicates that physical expansion conveys dominance, whereas physical constriction signals submissiveness (Tiedens & Fragale, 2003). Thus, the confederate sat with her legs together, hands tucked into her lap, and slouching slightly when in the assistant role, whereas in the owner role, she leaned back in her chair, spread her arms along the armrests of her chair, and propped one ankle up on her other leg so that her knee protruded beyond the edge of her chair.

After 8 min, the experimenter returned and asked the owner which art piece was chosen. The participant and confederate were then each given a postinteraction questionnaire in an envelope. The experimenter assured them that their responses would be kept private from one another and told them to put their questionnaire back into the envelope when they were done to further assuage confidentiality concerns. The participant was then told to remain

¹ Neither the age nor the ethnicity of the participants in this or any of the other studies was recorded. However, the average age of a large sample of participants ($N = 621$) comparable to the samples used in the present studies was 19.86 years old ($SD = 3.49$). The distribution of self-identified ethnicity in this sample was as follows: 1.3% African American/Black, 15.3% Asian American/Asian, 16.3% Chinese, 3.1% Filipino, 2.3% Indian, 4.9% Korean, 1.3% Japanese, .3% Pacific Islander, .3% Pakistani, 3.6% Taiwanese, 2.6% Vietnamese, 30.5% European American/White, 2.1% Eastern European (e.g., Polish, Czech, Slavic), 3.8% Western European (e.g., English, German, Italian, Irish), 2.5% Middle Eastern (e.g., Arab, Persian, Israeli), 2.6% Latino/Hispanic, 4.6% Mexican American/Chicano/a, .2% Cuban American, and .2% Puerto Rican, and 2.1% “other.”

seated, while the confederate was escorted to another room. When the participant was finished with the postinteraction questionnaire, the experimenter debriefed, thanked, and excused him or her.

Overall, the highly structured nature of participants' (as well as the confederate's) role in the art-gallery interaction essentially created a "strong situation," one in which all participants were expected to display behaviors consistent with their high- or low-power roles. As such, there was little behavioral variation expected on power-related dispositional dimensions.

Materials

Preinteraction questionnaire. In this questionnaire, participants filled out several filler surveys along with the Personal Sense of Power scale (Anderson & Galinsky, 2006; Anderson et al., 2007). This eight-item scale assesses beliefs regarding one's capacity to influence others (e.g., "I think I have a great deal of power," "If I want to, I get to make the decisions," "My wishes don't carry much weight"). Anderson et al. (2007) found high scale reliabilities ($\alpha > .80$) across numerous samples, whether respondents completed the scale with regard to specific relationships (e.g., relationships at work) or with regard to their relationships in general. In the present studies, participants were asked to think about their relationships in general when rating their level of agreement with each scale item ranging from 1 (*disagree strongly*) to 7 (*agree strongly*). Dispositional power scores were computed by reverse coding the appropriate items and then averaging ratings across all items ($\alpha = .78$). Higher scores correspond to stronger dispositional beliefs in one's capacity to influence others.

Postinteraction questionnaire. To maintain the cover story, participants first responded to one of two yes/no questions, one for owner participants ("Would you give your assistant the promotion?") and the other for assistants ("Do you think you will get the promotion?"). They then rated their agreement with eight role-power manipulation checks ranging from 1 (*disagree strongly*) to 7 (*agree strongly*). These items were modeled after the Personal Sense of Power scale items but were phrased in the past tense (e.g., "I felt I had a great deal of power"), and participants were told to respond to them with respect to the interaction they just had. After reverse coding the appropriate items, the eight items were averaged over to create a manipulation-check composite ($\alpha = .82$).

Interspersed among the manipulation checks were four items tapping self-expression (e.g., "In general, I was able to be myself in my role," "My actions and behaviors did not reflect who I really am"). Finally, participants completed two suspicion probes, one asking whether any of the questions or tasks in the questionnaires were unusual or difficult and the other asking what they thought the study hypotheses were.

Confederate ratings. After the interaction, the confederate rated her agreement with eight items assessing participants' sense of power ranging from 1 (*disagree strongly*) to 7 (*agree strongly*). These items paralleled the eight manipulation-check items, only instead of rating her own power, as participants did (e.g., "I could get my partner to listen to what I said"), the confederate rated each participant's sense of power (e.g., "My partner is someone who can get others to listen to what he/she says"). The appropriate items were reverse coded and then averaged over these eight ratings to create an index representing the confederate's view of participants' dispositional power ($\alpha = .96$).

Results

One participant was excluded because she expressed suspicion regarding the confederate. All analyses reported below were conducted on the remaining sample ($n = 89$). In all studies, preliminary analyses indicated that participant gender did not influence the results; therefore, we do not discuss gender further.² Finally, the regression analyses reported in all studies were simultaneous.

Role-Power Manipulation Check

To assess the adequacy of our role-power manipulation, we regressed manipulation-check composite scores onto dispositional power (standardized Personal Sense of Power scores), role power (0 = low, 1 = high), and the interaction of these variables. Only the role-power effect was significant, with higher ratings of power in the high- relative to the low role-power condition ($\beta = .46, p < .01$). The interaction was not significant ($\beta = .08, p = .52$), indicating that our role-power manipulation was equally effective across levels of dispositional power.

Participant Ratings of Self-Expression

Does dispositional-role power fit breed self-expression? To address this question, we regressed participants' self-expression composite scores onto dispositional power, role power, and their interaction. The role-power effect approached significance ($\beta = .19, p = .06$) but was qualified by the predicted interaction ($\beta = .38, p < .01$). As depicted in Figure 1 (dispositional power was graphed at ± 1 standard deviations in all figures), this interaction reveals a pattern in support of our dispositional-role power fit hypothesis. Dispositionally high-power participants reported greater self-expression when assigned to play a high- relative to low-power role, whereas the opposite was true among dispositionally low-power participants. The simple effect of dispositional power was significant in the high role-power condition ($\beta = .38, p < .05$) but not in the low role-power condition ($\beta = -.20, p = .20$). We discuss this asymmetry in the General Discussion section, but for now we emphasize that the effect was positive in the former condition, and negative in the latter, in line with our hypothesis that fitting roles, be they high or low in power, give rise to greater self-expression than do conflicting roles.

Confederate Ratings of Participants' Dispositional Power

By having the confederate rate participants' dispositional power, we were able to address two issues. First, as we argued at the outset, fit effects on self-expression and self-other congruence should be hard to detect for dispositional dimensions related to the basis of fit—in this case, power—when the basis of fit is manipulated via a strong role. This is because the highly structured and constraining nature of strong roles force all people, regardless of

² We examined the possible role of gender by including gender as a factor in our regression analyses as well as by including gender as a covariate. In neither case was there any evidence of significant gender differences, nor did inclusion of gender in the analyses alter the results substantially. Nonetheless, because the proportion of men in each study sample was relatively low (14%–30%), the lack of gender effects should be interpreted with caution.

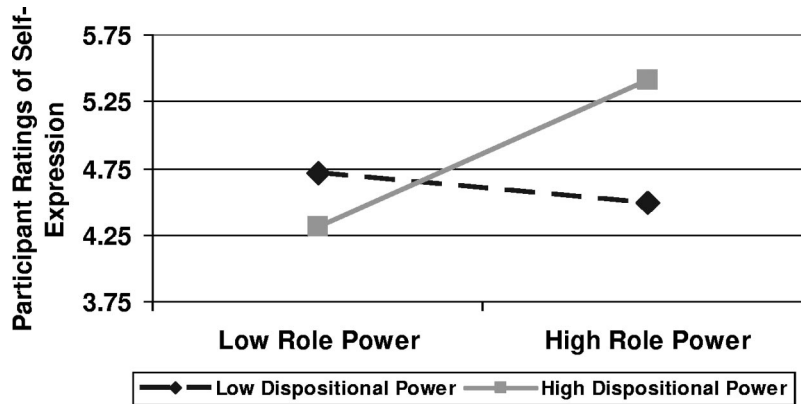


Figure 1. Participant ratings of self-expression as a joint function of dispositional and role power (Study 1). Higher numbers indicate greater self-expression.

their standing on role-related dispositions, to act in a role-consistent manner, thereby masking individual differences on these dispositional dimensions. Applied to Study 1, in which we used a strong role-power manipulation, this argument led us to predict that the confederate should not have been able to discern participants' dispositional power better in the conditions in which dispositional-role power fit versus conflicted.

Second, examining the confederate's ratings of participants' dispositional power allowed us to address a methodological issue. Specifically, if the confederate had been able to discern participants' dispositional power, particularly in fitting conditions, then she could have inadvertently acted toward participants in a way that promoted greater self-reported self-expression in fitting compared with conflicting roles.

We examined whether the confederate was able to discern participants' dispositional power in two ways. First, we regressed the index representing the confederate's view of participants' dispositional power on dispositional power, role power, and their interaction. This analysis yielded no significant effects ($ps > .12$), indicating that the confederates' ratings of participants' power were unrelated to participants' dispositional power. Second, we substituted participants' dispositional power scores with the confederate's ratings of participants' dispositional power in the main regression analyses for self-expression. If the confederate had been able to discern participants' dispositional power, then the confederate ratings of Dispositional Power \times Role Power interaction should have been significant. It was not ($p = .66$). Overall, these results are consistent with our argument about strong roles and, at the same time, diminish the likelihood that the confederate was somehow responsible for the predicted interaction pattern we found for self-expression.

Discussion

In summary, Study 1's results support our hypothesis that feelings of self-expression are greater when people are asked to play a role that fits rather than conflicts with their dispositional beliefs about their capacity to influence others. More important, participants reported greater self-expression under conditions of fit—even when they were playing highly structured power roles. This supports our contention that even when the pull to play a high-

low-power role is strong, when such roles fit with one's dispositions, this allows people to "personalize" the roles to a greater degree. Nevertheless, this study relied on participants' own self-reports of how much they expressed themselves. We improved on this methodology in Study 2 by examining self-other congruence—that is, the degree of agreement between a person's own self-reported qualities and other people's ratings of those qualities.

In Study 2, we hypothesized that there would be greater congruence between participants' self-reported emotions and a confederate's ratings of these emotions when participants' dispositional and role power fit versus conflicted. Because this study focused on emotions, rather than on dispositions, we put aside our argument about the impact of strong versus weak roles on detecting fit effects for fit-related versus fit-unrelated dispositional dimension, returning to it in Study 3.

Study 2

Feelings are thought to be a crucial form of self-expression, as reflected in various cultural idioms (e.g., "wearing your heart on your sleeve"). Similarly, research indicates that people view their private, internal states (e.g., feelings) as more telling of their true selves than their behaviors (Andersen & Ross, 1984; Johnson & Boyd, 1995). Thus, in Study 2 we tested the impact of dispositional-role power fit on the degree to which participants' emotions during an interaction with a confederate were judged by the confederate in a manner congruent with participants' self-reported emotions.

Examining the likelihood of having one's emotions discerned by others is also interesting in light of research on the relation between self-reported emotion and outward expressions of it (e.g., Hecht & LaFrance, 1998; Henley & LaFrance, 1984). For example, some work has shown larger correlations between self-reported positive affect and smiling when people are in high- relative to low-power roles (Hecht & LaFrance, 1998). Although some studies on power and emotion have included measures of both dispositional and situational power (e.g., Mast & Hall, 2003), to our knowledge none have focused on the effect of dispositional-role power fit on whether people's emotions are perceived by others in a manner congruent with self-reported emotions.

As in Study 1, dispositionally high- and low-power participants were assigned to a high- or low-power role in an interaction with a confederate. Afterward, all participants completed an emotion measure, and the confederate rated each participant on the same measure. Our primary dependent measure was the degree of correspondence or congruence between participants' self-reported emotions and the confederate's ratings of these emotions. We predicted greater congruence between participants' self-reported emotions and the confederate's estimates of them in the conditions in which participants' dispositional and role power fit versus conflicted.

Method

Participants

Seventy-four undergraduates (62 women, 12 men) enrolled in psychology courses received course credit for their participation. Participants were recruited only if they had completed the Personal Sense of Power scale in a large battery of questionnaires administered to all students enrolled in psychology courses at the start of the semester.

Procedure

The procedure closely followed that for Study 1 except for the room setup and the dependent measures. Regarding the room setup, participants were directed to sit at one of two tables facing opposite walls when they first arrived. When the confederate (always the same female research assistant) was shown into the room, she was directed to sit at the other table. If the participant was assigned to the role of art gallery owner (high-power role), the confederate made sure to move her chair over to the participant's chair when the experimenter left the room so that the interaction could begin. Conversely, the confederate signaled the participant to move his or her chair over to her desk when the participant was assigned to the assistant role (low-power role). The remaining procedures were identical to those of Study 1.

Materials

Dispositional power. Dispositional power scores were computed from participants' responses to the Personal Sense of Power scale ($\alpha = .83$), obtained at the start of the semester.

Preinteraction questionnaire. Immediately before the interaction with the confederate, participants completed a premeasure of emotion. This questionnaire contained a mix of 15 positive and negative discrete emotion items. Participants were asked to rate the degree to which they currently felt each emotion using a 9-point Likert scale (0 = *no emotion*, 4 = *moderate emotion*, 8 = *extreme emotion*). The positive emotion items were amusement, happiness, love, desire, and pride ($\alpha = .78$). The negative emotion items were anger, anxiety, contempt, disgust, fear, guilt, sadness, shame, discomfort, and tension ($\alpha = .80$).

Postinteraction questionnaire. Immediately after the interaction with the confederate, participants completed a questionnaire that first asked them to rate their agreement with four role-power manipulation checks (1 = *disagree strongly*, 7 = *agree strongly*), which were modeled after the Personal Sense of Power scale items (e.g., "I can get others to listen to what I say") but referred to the

interaction (e.g., "I could get my partner to listen to what I said"). A manipulation-check composite was created from participants' responses to these items ($\alpha = .73$). Next, participants answered one of two yes/no questions about giving or receiving the promotion, once again to bolster the cover story. Participants were then asked to rate the same positive ($\alpha = .75$) and negative ($\alpha = .83$) emotion items administered before the interaction, now with regard to what they felt during the interaction. Finally, they answered the same two suspicion probes used in Study 1.

Confederate's ratings. After being escorted out of the room at the conclusion of the interaction, the confederate rated how much the participant felt each of the same positive ($\alpha = .67$) and negative ($\alpha = .88$) emotions that the participant himself or herself had rated.

Congruence between participant and confederate ratings. To index the degree to which the confederate perceived participants' emotions in a manner congruent with participants' self-reported emotions, the absolute difference between each participant's and the confederate's ratings on each of the emotion items was computed. An overall index of participant–confederate congruence was then computed by averaging across the absolute differences. Smaller scores indicate less discrepancy between participants' and the confederate's emotion ratings or, in other words, greater self–other congruence.

Results

One participant was excluded because she was suspicious of the confederate. All analyses reported below were conducted on the remaining sample ($n = 73$).

Preinteraction Emotion

We regressed preinteraction positive and negative emotion ratings separately onto dispositional power (standardized Personal Sense of Power scores), role power (0 = low, 1 = high), and their interaction. The results showed that participants' positive and negative emotion before the interaction with the confederate did not differ as a function of dispositional or role power ($ps > .29$). Thus, we do not consider preinteraction emotion further.

Role-Power Manipulation Check

We regressed manipulation-check composite scores onto dispositional power, role power, and their interaction. As intended, role power was a significant predictor ($\beta = .37, p < .01$), with participants assigned to the owner role reporting a greater sense of power during the interaction than those in the assistant role. Neither the dispositional–power effect ($\beta = .12, p = .08$) nor the interaction was significant ($\beta = .11, p = .31$).

Participant–Confederate Congruence Scores

To test our dispositional–role power fit hypothesis, we regressed participant–confederate congruence scores onto dispositional power, role power, and their interaction. Dispositional power was a predictor that approached significance ($\beta = .29, p = .09$) but was qualified by the predicted interaction ($\beta = -.40, p < .05$). As Figure 2 shows, the interaction reflected a crossover pattern in support of our prediction. Specifically, dispositionally high-power

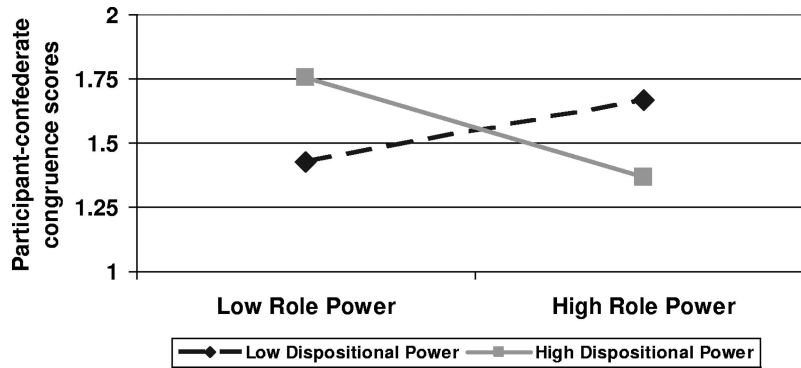


Figure 2. Participant–confederate congruence scores as a joint function of dispositional and role power (Study 2). Lower numbers indicate a greater likelihood that participants self-reported emotions were discerned by the confederate.

participants’ self-reported emotions were more likely to be discerned by the confederate (i.e., smaller scores) when they were owners (high-power role) relative to assistants (low-power role), whereas dispositionally low-power participants showed the opposite pattern, with their emotions more likely to be discerned by the confederate when they were assistants rather than owners.³ These findings provide strong support for the hypothesis that people’s emotional experiences are more likely to be perceived in a manner congruent with their self-reported emotions when they play a role that fits rather than conflicts with their dispositional beliefs about their capacity to influence others. The simple effect of dispositional power approached significance in both the low ($\beta = .26, p = .12$) and high role-power conditions ($\beta = -.30, p = .08$), and was positive in the first case and negative in the latter, as predicted.

It is worth noting that neither participants’ self-reported emotions nor the confederate’s ratings of these emotions differed as a joint function of dispositional and role power. Specifically, analyses regressing participants’ ratings of their emotions during the interaction onto dispositional power, role power, and their interaction did not yield any significant effects ($ps > .18$). Similarly, parallel regression analyses for the confederate’s ratings of participants’ emotions yielded no effects ($ps > .17$). These findings suggest that the locus of our findings does not lie in either participant or confederate ratings alone, but rather in the congruence or correspondence between these ratings, as we have hypothesized.

Discussion

Overall, the significant crossover pattern shown in Figure 2 suggests that dispositional–role power fit is linked not only to self-reported self-expression, as shown in Study 1, but also to self–other congruence, defined in Study 2 as having one’s self-reported emotions discerned by others. When participants were asked to carry out a role that fit his or her dispositional beliefs about their capacity to influence others, the confederate was more able to discern the emotions they reported experiencing, relative to when participants’ dispositional beliefs and role power conflicted.

Study 3

In Study 3, we aimed to conceptually replicate Study 2 by once again examining the link between dispositional–role power fit and

self–other congruence as well as to extend it by assessing the likelihood of having one’s self-reported personality traits discerned by others. In this study, dispositionally high- and low-power participants were once again assigned to play a high- or low-power role in a highly structured interaction with a confederate. To demonstrate the robustness of the fit effect on self–other congruence, we used a different role-play procedure than the art gallery one used in Studies 1 and 2. Before the role-play interaction, participants rated themselves on various trait dimensions. Afterward, the confederate rated each participant on the same trait dimensions. Analogous to Study 2, our primary dependent measure was the congruence between participants’ own trait ratings and confederate estimates of participants’ self-reported traits.

Because we assessed fit effects involving trait dispositions in Study 3, we remind the reader of the argument that highly structured and constraining manipulations of the basis of fit should obscure fit effects on self-expression and self–other congruence precisely for dimensions related to the basis of fit. Study 3 allowed us to test this notion again. Specifically, in this study we explicitly assessed trait dimensions that are not especially related to power, as well as one trait dimension (i.e., Extraversion) that past research has shown is highly correlated with dispositional beliefs about power (Anderson et al., 2007; see also Anderson, John, Keltner, & Krings, 2001). Because the manipulation we used in Study 3, like those used in Studies 1 and 2, created a relatively strong situation—that is, it essentially forced all participants to enact role-consistent behaviors, regardless of their standing on power-related dispositions—individual differences were likely to be masked on power-related dimensions, thereby obscuring the confederate’s ability to discern participants in a self-congruent manner on such

³ We also computed participant–confederate congruence scores for positive and negative emotions separately. Then, to examine whether our predicted fit pattern held for both positive and negative emotions, we reconducted the main regression analysis in Study 2—this time including positive/negative emotion congruence scores as a two-level repeated measures factor. Our critical Dispositional Power \times Role Power interaction remained significant, $F(1, 69) = 7.44, p < .01$, whereas the Dispositional Power \times Role Power \times Positive/Negative Emotion interaction was not, $F(1, 69) = 1.69, p = .20$. In other words, our predicted fit pattern held for both positive and negative emotions.

dimensions. Hence, we did not expect to find the same fit effect on self–other congruence for Extraversion that we expected for the other four trait dimensions.

Method

Participants

Seventy-one undergraduates (50 women, 21 men) enrolled in psychology courses received course credit for their participation. All had completed the Personal Sense of Power scale in a large battery of questionnaires given to all psychology students at the start of the semester. Participants were run individually and were led to believe the confederate was a fellow participant.

Procedure

The setup of the laboratory room was similar to that of Study 1. When participants arrived, they were seated at the side table. Participants were then told the study examined “everyday social interactions” and that they would fill out questionnaires before and after an interaction with ostensibly another participant. After completing the preinteraction questionnaire, participants were told that their interaction would take the form of an interview for acceptance into a coed fraternity. Participants were randomly assigned to play the role of either the interviewer (high-power role) or the applicant (low-power role) in the upcoming interview (e.g., Hecht & LaFrance, 1998; Operario & Fiske, 2001). Analogous to Study 1’s procedure using the art gallery roles, if assigned to the interviewer role, participants were directed to move to the larger chair behind the desk; if assigned to the applicant role, they moved to the smaller chair.

In the interviewer-role condition, the experimenter then said: “Please take the next few minutes to prepare any questions you may want to ask. Remember that you have control over the situation, so you can direct the interview any way you want.” Interviewer participants were given time to prepare because pilot testing showed that these participants might feel at a loss if immediately thrown into the interview, thus undermining the role-power manipulation. After 5 min, the experimenter returned and told the participant that she was going to let the applicant in so that they could start the interview. In contrast, when the participant was assigned to the applicant role, the experimenter said:

Since you’re done filling out your questionnaire, I need to check up on your interviewer. For the past few minutes she has been preparing some questions to ask you during the interview. When I come back, I’m going to let your interviewer in so she can start the interview.

The experimenter then went to retrieve the confederate (always the same female research assistant), directing her to sit in the chair across from the participant. With the participant and confederate seated, the experimenter reminded the interviewer that he or she was interviewing the applicant for acceptance into a coed fraternity. The interviewer was also told that he or she would indicate a decision on acceptance at the end of the interview. The applicant was instructed to answer any questions the interviewer should ask.

When the confederate played the role of the interviewer, she entered the room with a list of questions, handwritten so as to appear as if she had just generated them. The list included ques-

tions about the applicant’s education, interests, and strengths, and ones such as “If you had to organize a social event, what would you plan?” When the confederate was the applicant, she truthfully answered whatever questions the interviewer participant asked—with two exceptions. Namely, if the participant asked her year in school, she said she was a freshman, and if asked what course she needed credit for, she indicated introduction to psychology (to emphasize her nonadvanced class standing). Because participants ranged from first-years to seniors, it was important that the confederate did not reveal her actual standing as a junior, so as not to undermine her low-power, applicant role. Finally, the confederate adhered to the same guidelines described in Study 1 with regard to her nonverbal behavior.

The experimenter left the room for 8 min so the interview could be conducted. Upon returning, she reminded the participant and the confederate that they would both need to fill out a postinteraction questionnaire. The remainder of the procedure paralleled that of the prior studies.

In this study, the specific roles that participants played were altered from art gallery owner versus assistant (used in Studies 1 and 2) to interviewer versus applicant to ensure that the observed effects were not due to one specific role-power manipulation. Despite this change in roles, Study 3’s role-play instructions were similar to those used in the previous studies in terms of their highly scripted and constraining nature. In other words, it was anticipated that Study 3’s role-power manipulation would similarly function as a strong situation, obscuring fit effects for dispositional dimensions related to power (i.e., Extraversion), but not for power-unrelated dimensions.

Materials

Dispositional power. Dispositional power scores were computed from participants’ responses to the Personal Sense of Power scale ($\alpha = .80$).

Preinteraction questionnaire. Participants’ self-reported traits were assessed with the 44-item Big Five Inventory (BFI; John & Srivastava, 1999). This measure has five subscales: Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness to Experience, Conscientiousness, and Agreeableness. Each subscale consists of 8–10 items. The statement “I see myself as someone who . . .” was followed by the 44 items. Participants rated their agreement with each item using a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (*disagree strongly*) to 5 (*agree strongly*). Reliabilities for the five subscales were adequate (α s > .74).

Postinteraction questionnaire. After the interview, participants rated their agreement with five role-power manipulation checks (1 = *disagree strongly*, 7 = *agree strongly*). These items were based on the Personal Sense of Power scale items but were prefaced with the phrase “In the interview with my partner . . .” A manipulation-check composite was created from participants’ responses to these five items ($\alpha = .56$). Analogous to Studies 1 and 2, participants then answered one of two yes/no questions (“Would you accept the applicant into the fraternity?” and “Do you think you would be accepted into the fraternity?”), depending on their role assignment. Finally, participants answered the same two suspicion probes used previously.

Confederate’s ratings. After being escorted to a separate room, the confederate rated the participant on the same 44 BFI items on which participants rated themselves before the interview.

The items were preceded by the statement “I see my partner as someone who . . .” The confederate used the same 5-point rating scale as participants. The confederate’s ratings for each of the BFI subscales showed high reliability ($\alpha > .87$).

Congruence between participant and confederate ratings. To index the degree to which the confederate perceived participants’ traits in a manner congruent with participants’ self-reported traits on the BFI, for each participant the absolute difference between his or her average rating on each of the five BFI subscales and the confederate’s average rating of him or her on each subscale was first computed. Consistent with prior research (Anderson et al., 2007; see also Anderson et al., 2001), participants’ Extraversion scores were highly correlated with their Personal Sense of Power scores ($r = .46, p < .01$). This correlation was significantly greater than the correlation between an aggregate of the other four BFI dimensions and Personal Sense of Power scores ($r = .08; p < .05$). Given our hypothesis that fit effects should be obscured on dimensions related to power because of the strong role-power manipulation used here, a test to determine whether the results for Extraversion differed from the results for the four nonpower-related BFI dimensions (Agreeableness, Openness to Experience, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism) was conducted. To do so, two participant–confederate congruence scores were created—one reflecting the Extraversion absolute difference score alone and the other reflecting an average of the absolute difference scores for the other four BFI dimensions. Smaller participant–confederate congruence scores indicate less discrepancy between participants’ own BFI ratings and the confederate’s BFI ratings of participants—in other words, greater self–other congruence.

Results

No participants expressed suspicion regarding the confederate. However, one male participant was excluded because he joked about the interview throughout the interaction with the confederate. All analyses reported below were conducted on the remaining sample ($n = 70$).

Role-Power Manipulation Check

We regressed manipulation-check composite scores onto dispositional power (standardized Personal Sense of Power scores), role power (0 = low, 1 = high), and their interaction. Both main effects were significant, indicating higher ratings of power in high- relative to low-power roles ($\beta = .35, p < .01$) and among dispositionally high- relative to low-power participants ($\beta = .29, p < .05$). The interaction was not significant ($\beta = .20, p = .15$).

Participant–Confederate Congruence Scores

To test our dispositional-role power fit hypothesis, we first regressed participant–confederate congruence scores (excluding Extraversion) onto dispositional power, role power, and their interaction. Neither main effect was significant ($ts < 1.16$), but the hypothesized interaction was ($\beta = -.38, p < .05$). As shown in Figure 3, the interaction reflects a crossover pattern in line with our fit prediction. Specifically, high dispositional power was linked to greater self–other congruence (i.e., smaller participant–confederate scores) in the interviewer than the applicant role, whereas low dispositional power was associated with greater self–other congruence in the applicant role compared with the interviewer one. Although the simple effect of dispositional power was significant in the interviewer role ($\beta = -.35, p < .05$) and not in the applicant role ($\beta = .20, p = .24$), the effect ran in opposing directions in the two role-power conditions, as predicted.

To support our strategy of aggregating participant–confederate congruence scores across all of the BFI dimensions except Extraversion (i.e., across all nonpower-related dimensions), we reconducted the above regression analysis but this time included BFI Dimension as a four-level repeated measures factor representing the four nonpower-related BFI dimensions. The results showed that our critical Dispositional Power \times Role Power interaction remained significant, $F(1, 66) = 5.63, p < .05$, whereas the Dispositional Power \times Role Power \times BFI Dimension interaction was not, $F(3, 198) = 0.24, p = .86$. The lack of a significant three-way interaction indicates that our predicted Dispositional

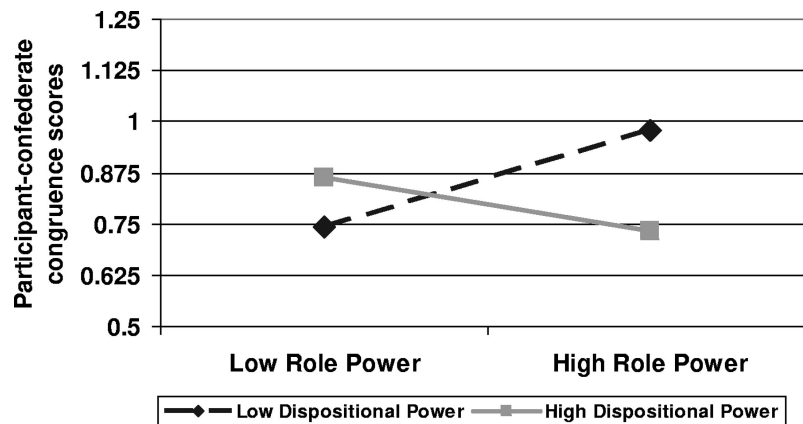


Figure 3. Participant–confederate congruence scores as a joint function of dispositional and role power (Study 3). Lower numbers indicate a greater likelihood that participants’ self-reported personality traits were discerned by the confederate.

Power \times Role Power interaction pattern did not differ significantly across the four BFI dimensions included in our key dependent measure, thus supporting our strategy of aggregating across them.

Next, consistent with our expectation that our hypothesized fit effect should not emerge for Extraversion (a power-related dimension) given the strong role-power manipulation used in this study, we reconducted our main regression analysis once again including BFI dimension as a repeated measures factor, but this time as a two-level repeated measures factor comparing Extraversion with an aggregate of the four other BFI dimensions. This analysis yielded a significant Dispositional Power \times Role Power \times BFI Dimension interaction, $F(1, 66) = 4.69, p < .05$, indicating that our critical Dispositional Power \times Role Power interaction did in fact differ significantly for Extraversion compared with the other four BFI dimensions. Indeed, whereas the means for the aggregate of the other four BFI dimensions reflected a fit pattern, as shown in Figure 3, the means for Extraversion did not. That Extraversion differed from the other BFI dimensions supports our argument that self–other congruence on fit-related dimensions will be low when strong roles are involved, as was the case in this study.

Finally, we examined the possibility that our predicted fit effect may have reflected participants' or the confederate's BFI ratings alone, rather than the congruence between them. To do so, we regressed each set of ratings (excluding Extraversion) on dispositional power, role power, and their interaction. The analyses showed no evidence of a fit pattern (i.e., no Dispositional \times Role Power interaction) for either participant or confederate ratings ($ps > .17$ for the interaction), suggesting that our hypothesized fit effect did in fact reflect the congruence or correspondence between participants' and the confederate's ratings.

Discussion

In summary, Study 3 conceptually replicated yet extended Study 2's findings into the realm of personality traits. When participants' dispositional beliefs about their capacity to influence others fit their assigned role power, they were especially likely to have their personality traits discerned by the confederate. Moreover, we found evidence consistent with our argument that in a strong situation—in this case, created by a strong role-power manipulation—fit effects are likely to be obscured on dimensions related to the basis of fit—in this case, Extraversion. By this logic, we should be able to find fit effects on Extraversion given a weaker, more subtle role-power manipulation. We were able to test this idea in Study 4.

Study 4

Study 4 had several aims. First, the confederate in Studies 1–3 was naive to participants' dispositional power but, due to the role-play procedures that were used (i.e., the confederate played the complementary role to participants' role), was not naive to participants' role power. In addition, the confederate in each study had some basic awareness of the general hypothesis under investigation. Thus, a reader may wonder whether the confederate could have somehow brought about the predicted results. We think it unlikely that the confederates' awareness of participants' role power and the general hypothesis could account for the predicted Dispositional Power \times Role Power pattern found in all three

studies given their lack of awareness of participants' dispositional power, which Study 1 showed the confederate was not able to discern. Still, in this final study, we took measures to rule out any account based on confederates' awareness. Specifically, rather than role-play procedures, we used an implicit role-power priming manipulation. In addition, we videotaped participants' behavior while in high- and low-power roles and then had independent coders who were naive to both participants' dispositional and role power, as well as to the study hypothesis, rate participants on the same trait dimensions examined in Study 3. To assess whether dispositional-role power fit increases self–other congruence, we examined the congruence between the naive coders' ratings of participants' traits and participants' own trait ratings.

Using a different role-power manipulation from the ones used in Studies 1–3, and relying on the ratings of outside observers rather than those of a confederate who took part in the role-power manipulation, served a second aim of Study 4—namely, to further demonstrate the generality and robustness of the effect of fit on self–other congruence. Third and finally, by using a subtle, implicit role-power manipulation, we were able to test the latter half of the argument that whereas strong roles should interfere with fit effects on role-related dimensions because they tend to force the enactment of role-consistent behaviors, relatively weak roles should not have this interfering effect. Consistent with the former half of this argument, in Study 3, in which a strong role-power manipulation was used, our hypothesized fit effect on self–other congruence did not emerge for Extraversion, a dimension related to power. In the present study, our relatively weak role-power manipulation suggests that our hypothesized fit effect should emerge across all Big Five dimensions—including the one most related to power (i.e., Extraversion).

Method

Participants

Eighty-eight undergraduates (57 women, 31 men) enrolled in psychology courses received course credit for their participation. Participants were run individually.

Procedure

Upon the participant's arrival at the laboratory room, he or she was greeted by a female experimenter and then asked to sign a consent form. This form explained that the study would entail filling out a variety of different questionnaires, as well as completing a task that would be videotaped. After the participant signed the consent form, the experimenter gave him or her a set of prevideotaping questionnaires to complete and then left the room.

The experimenter returned approximately 8 min later, deliberately appearing somewhat distracted and distressed. She collected the prevideotaping questionnaires and then stated the following (based largely on procedures used in Chen et al., 2001): "It turns out that there was some kind of scheduling conflict, and we're getting kicked out of this room. But I found an alternative room we can use—a professor's office upstairs." To avoid unstructured conversation with the participant that might inadvertently affect the study, the experimenter then provided detailed directions to the upstairs office, making sure to direct participants to take the elevator and telling them that she

would meet them upstairs in a moment. The experimenter took the stairs rather than the elevator and met the participant in front of the professor's office.

As in prior research (Chen et al., 2001), the professor's office was a real professor's office located in a row of professors' offices. The office interior had the typical features one would expect to find in a professor's office, including shelves filled with books and a desk with a cushy professor's chair on the side facing the door and a more meager chair for students and other visitors on the other side.

The experimenter knocked and then cautiously opened the office door, as if she were unaccustomed to the office and unsure what to expect, and then entered the office before the participant. The experimenter then casually directed participants to sit in either the professor's (high role power) or student's (low role power) chair, depending on the role-power condition to which each participant was randomly assigned. Across several studies, Chen et al. (2001) demonstrated that sitting in a professor's chair in a professor's office serves to unobtrusively prime power-related concepts more so than sitting in the student's chair in the office. For example, these researchers showed that participants completed more word fragments with power-related words when seated in the professor's chair relative to the student's. As in Chen et al., the experimenter in the present study left the participant alone in the office for a few minutes to allow him or her to take in the office surroundings and his or her seating position.

The experimenter then returned with a digital camcorder and a mini tripod. The experimenter set the camera up while explaining what the next task, a videotaping task, entailed. To subtly enhance the role-power priming manipulation, for the high role-power condition, the experimenter placed the camera on the student's chair, angling it slightly upward toward the participant sitting in the professor's chair. In contrast, for the low role-power condition, the camera was placed on a table right next to the professor's chair, angled slightly downward toward the participant. Thus, participants in the professor's chair talked downward to the camera, whereas participants in the student's chair had to talk upward to the camera.

The experimenter informed participants that their task was to talk about themselves for 4 min while being videotaped. It was emphasized that participants could talk about anything that they wished, as long as it was about themselves. The experimenter then left the room to give the participant 3 min of preparation time before starting the videotaping. After 3 min, the experimenter returned and pressed the camera's record button and left once again. After 4 min of videotaping, the experimenter returned and shut off the camera, turning it away from the participant to verify that it was no longer taping. Following this, the participant filled out a short postvideotaping questionnaire and then was debriefed, thanked, and excused. In summary, although participants' seating position and the placement of the camera subtly primed role power, this role was nevertheless unconstrained either by experimenter instructions on how to behave or by a confederate acting in a complementary role.

Materials

Prevideotaping questionnaires. Prior to the videotaping task, while still seated in the initial laboratory room (vs. in the professor's office), participants completed the Personal Sense of Power

scale, as in prior studies. Dispositional power scores were computed from participants' responses to this scale ($\alpha = .84$).

Participants also rated their personality traits using the 10-item Personality Inventory (TIPI; Gosling, Rentfrow, & Swann, 2003). The TIPI is a shortened version of the BFI, which was used in Study 3. It is composed of 10 pairs of trait descriptors, 2 for each of the Big Five dimensions. For example, the trait descriptor pairs for Neuroticism are "anxious, easily upset" and "calm, emotionally stable" (reverse scored). Respondents are asked to rate how much they see themselves as each trait pair ("I see myself as . . .") using a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*disagree strongly*) to 7 (*agree strongly*). Responses to the TIPI converge with other Big Five measures in terms of self, observer, and peer reports, match the patterns of external correlates of other Big Five measures, and show adequate test-retest reliability (for further scale information, see Gosling et al., 2003).

Postvideotaping questionnaire. After the videotaping task, participants completed demographic items and the same two suspicion probes used in previous studies.

Independent coders' ratings. Three undergraduate research assistants coded each participant's 4-min video clip using the same 10 TIPI dimensions on which participants rated themselves. These coders were naive to the hypothesis as well as to participants' dispositional power scores. In addition, because we used an unobtrusive role-power priming manipulation (i.e., seating position in a professor's office), rather than explicit role-play procedures, the coders were not aware of our interest in role power.

The coders watched each participant's video clip in its entirety to form a general, overall impression of the participant and then indicated how much they thought each TIPI trait descriptor pair described the participant (1 = *disagree strongly*, 7 = *agree strongly*). Coding reliabilities for the 10 items were adequate (α ranged from .65 to .86), with an average alpha of .76.

Congruence between participant and coder ratings. To assess the degree of congruence between participants' own and the coders' TIPI ratings, we first averaged across participants' and coders' ratings for each of the two TIPI items representing each of the Big Five dimensions (as in Gosling et al., 2003). Then, for each participant, we computed the absolute difference between his or her average rating on each of the Big Five dimensions and the average of the three coders' ratings of him or her on each dimension. We then created two separate composite difference scores—one averaging across all five BFI dimensions and one excluding Extraversion. These composite participant-coder congruence scores represent the degree to which the coders' ratings of participants' personality traits corresponded with participants' prevideotaping TIPI ratings (across all five or four of the five BFI dimensions). Smaller scores indicate less discrepancy between participants' and coders' trait ratings or, in other words, greater self-other congruence. By creating composite scores with and without excluding Extraversion, we were able to evaluate whether Extraversion patterned differently than the other BFI dimensions, as in Study 3, or whether Extraversion patterned similarly to the other dimensions, as we anticipated due to the weaker, implicit role-power manipulation used in the present study.

Results

No participant reported any awareness of our role-power-priming manipulation, nor of our interest in power more broadly. However, we excluded 10 participants because they reported some general suspicion about the room change in their responses to the suspicion probes (e.g., “I’m not sure, but switching rooms seemed to be part of the experiment”). Five additional participants had to be excluded because their video clips were accidentally taped over ($n = 2$) or they refused to be videotaped ($n = 3$). All analyses reported below were conducted on the remaining sample ($n = 73$).

To test our dispositional-role power fit hypothesis, we first regressed participant-coder congruence scores, including all five BFI dimensions, onto dispositional power, role power, and their interaction. We focused on all five BFI dimensions in this initial analysis due to our expectation that our hypothesized fit effect should emerge across all dimensions, even power-related ones such as Extraversion. Neither the dispositional power nor role power effect was significant ($ps > .92$) in this analysis, but the predicted interaction was ($\beta = -.27, p < .05$). As Figure 4 shows, the interaction reflected a crossover pattern in support of our prediction. Namely, naive coders rated dispositionally high-power participants in a manner more congruent with participants’ self-reported personality traits (i.e., smaller participant-coder scores) when they were seated in the professor’s chair (high role power) relative to the student’s chair (low role power), whereas the opposite pattern was true for dispositionally low-power participants, with the coders rating them in a manner more congruent with their self-reported personalities when they were seated in the low role-power student’s chair relative to the high role-power professor’s chair. The simple effect of dispositional power approached significance in the high role-power condition ($\beta = -.30, p = .06$) and not in the low role-power one ($\beta = .24, p = .17$), but once again the simple effects ran in opposing directions in the two role-power priming conditions, as predicted.

To evaluate the appropriateness of aggregating across all five BFI dimensions—that is, of including Extraversion in our key dependent measure—we conducted an analysis parallel to one of the analyses we reported in Study 3 that included BFI dimension

as a repeated measures factor. This regression included dispositional power, role power, and BFI dimension as a two-level repeated measures factor comparing Extraversion with an aggregate of the other four BFI dimensions, along with all the relevant interaction terms. As expected, unlike in Study 3, the Dispositional Power \times Role Power \times BFI Dimension interaction was not significant in this analysis ($p > .37$), indicating that Extraversion did not pattern significantly differently from the other four BFI dimensions, in line with our argument about the relatively weak role-power manipulation used in this study. Indeed, our critical Dispositional Power \times Role Power interaction was nearly identical when the composite participant-coder congruence score included Extraversion (as reported above) compared with when it did not ($\beta = -.28, p < .05$).

Finally, analogous to the analyses done in Studies 2 and 3, to rule out the possibility that the predicted interaction reflected participants’ or the coders’ TIPI ratings alone, we regressed each set of ratings on dispositional power, role power, and their interaction. These analyses revealed no evidence of a fit pattern (i.e., no Dispositional \times Role Power interaction) for either participant or coder ratings ($ps > .74$ for the interaction). Thus, these additional analyses rule out the notion that the locus of this study’s key finding lies in either participant or coder ratings alone, rather than in the congruence between these ratings.

Discussion

In summary, Study 4’s findings addressed a methodological issue and at the same time replicated and extended the self-other congruence results of Studies 2 and 3 by using a different role-power manipulation and by relying on the ratings of multiple outside observers rather than a single confederate. Moreover, Study 4 provided further support for our argument that the effect of fit on self-expression and self-other congruence is not likely to occur on dispositional dimensions related to highly structured and constraining manipulations of the basis of fit, but when the manipulation is weaker, fit effects should emerge for both fit-related and fit-unrelated dimensions. Consistent with this, in Study 4, in which a relatively weak role-power manipulation was used, we

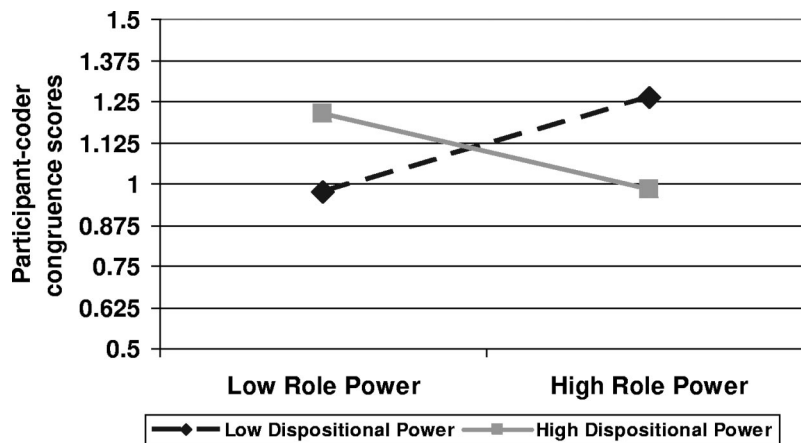


Figure 4. Participant-coder congruence scores as a joint function of dispositional and role power (Study 4). Lower numbers indicate a greater likelihood that participants self-reported personality traits were discerned by independent coders.

demonstrated fit effects on self–other congruence across trait dimensions, including one related to power (i.e., Extraversion).

General Discussion

Integrating the literatures on social power and P-E fit in a novel manner, we examined in the present studies the impact of fit between power-related aspects of the person and power-related aspects of the environment on self-expression and, in turn, the likelihood of self–other congruence—that is, of being judged by others in a manner congruent with one’s self-reported states and traits. Our central hypothesis was that when people are asked to play a high- or low-power role that fits rather than conflicts with their dispositional beliefs about their capacity to influence others, they are more apt to express a wide array of their states and traits, thereby boosting their likelihood of being perceived in a self-congruent manner across these states and traits.

As an initial step, Study 1 demonstrated that dispositional-role power fit was linked to higher reports of self-expression. Support for our self–other congruence hypothesis was found in Study 2. More specifically, when participants were randomly assigned to carry out a high- or low-power role that fit rather than conflicted with their dispositional beliefs about their capacity to influence others, the confederate was more likely to discern their self-reported emotional experiences during the interaction. Study 3 documented the generality of the effect of dispositional-role power fit on self–other congruence by linking such fit to having one’s self-reported personality traits discerned by others. Finally, Study 4 replicated the results of the previous two studies using an implicit manipulation of role power and outside observers’ ratings of participants rather than a single confederate’s ratings.

Extending the Literature on Person–Environment Fit

The P-E fit literature suggests that fit (or lack thereof) between aspects of the person and aspects of his or her environment has significant consequences, influencing outcomes such as job satisfaction, career stability, and academic achievement (for a review, see Walsh, Craik, & Price, 1992). Most pertinent to the present studies, research has also forged a link between P-E fit and self-expression. Specifically, Bettencourt and Sheldon (2001) found that reports of self-expression are greater to the degree that one’s social role fits one’s dispositions, because fitting roles give people the freedom and flexibility to act in accord with their “inner selves.”

The present results cohere with this prior work, but extend it in several respects. First, we examined power as the basis of P-E fit. In doing so, our studies join a small but growing body of research on the effects of fit between power-related aspects of people and their environments (e.g., Josephs et al., 2006; van Laar et al., 1999). However, ours are the first to demonstrate the impact of power-based fit on not only self-expression but also self–other congruence.

Second, across studies, we assessed an array of emotions and traits, suggesting that the impact of fit extends to dimensions of the self that go beyond the characteristic (i.e., power) forming the basis of P-E fit. Such findings are consistent with the idea that people “personalize” their roles when carrying them out, expressing who they are in ways that go beyond role-related norms and

requirements. In fact, our findings suggest that at times the effect of dispositional-role power fit may actually be obscured precisely on dimensions *related* to power. Specifically, in highly structured situations—in our case, created by a strong role-power manipulation—the role may essentially function as a “strong situation” (Mischel, 1973; Snyder & Ickes, 1985), obscuring individual differences and therefore interfering with people’s ability to discern what others are “like” on dimensions closely related to their roles. In other words, because strong roles, whether manipulated or naturally occurring, force all people, regardless of their dispositions, to enact role-consistent behaviors, it is difficult to find fit effects on self-expression and self–other congruence on role-related dimensions. Consistent with this reasoning, we did not find fit effects on dimensions related to power in either Study 1 or Study 3—both of which used a strong role-power manipulation. In contrast, weaker roles, whether manipulated or naturally occurring, should be less likely to mask individual differences on dispositional dimensions relevant to the role at hand, therefore leaving room for the emergence of fit effects on self-expression and self–other congruence on these dimensions. Consistent with this, in Study 4, in which a subtle, implicit role-power manipulation was used, we found our hypothesized fit effect on self–other congruence across all dimensions, including one related to power (i.e., Extraversion).

Extending the Literature on the Link Between Social Power and Self-Expression

The approach/inhibition model of power (Keltner et al., 2003), noted earlier, predicts that high power is associated with rewards and freedom, and hence elicits approach-related tendencies. In contrast, low power enhances sensitivity to threat and social constraint, and thus activates inhibition-related tendencies. As we described at the outset, some research suggests that such power-related approach and inhibition tendencies may manifest themselves in differing degrees of self-expression, with high power linked to a general tendency to express one’s states and traits and low power associated with a diminished tendency to do so (e.g., Anderson & Berdahl, 2002; Chen et al., 2001; Hecht & LaFrance, 1998). How do our results relate to such findings and, more generally, the predictions that follow from the approach/inhibition model?

Although approach-related tendencies associated with high power may contribute to self-expression (whereas inhibition-related tendencies associated with low power may impede it), we have proposed that the fit between dispositional and situational power may have qualitatively different effects than would be predicted on the basis of a person’s (high or low) level of power alone. In other words, self-expression and self-congruent perception by others may not always be a simple function of high or low levels of dispositional or role power, but rather may be a function of the match between one’s dispositional and role power. Although significant or marginally significant main effects of dispositional and/or role power emerged in some of our studies, the most stable and consistent effect was the significant Dispositional \times Role Power interaction that we observed in every one of our studies. As such, our results conform to a P-E fit formulation rather than an approach/inhibition one, whereby the relation between dispositional and role power, not just their combined levels, matters

(Kimmelmeier et al., 2005; Sidanius et al., 2003; van Laar et al., 1999). Although more research is needed before firm conclusions can be reached, at a minimum the present studies point to the importance of considering interactive effects of different sources of power. In this regard, our findings are consistent with Person \times Situation conceptualizations of behavior (e.g., English & Chen, 2007; Fournier, Moskowitz, & Zuroff, 2008; Mendoza-Denton & Mischel, 2007; Mischel & Shoda, 1995). Of course, P-E fit and approach/inhibition perspectives need not be mutually exclusive—under certain circumstances, main effects for dispositional and role power may occur alongside their interactive ones.

Connections to the Person Perception Literature

In addition to extending the P-E fit and power literatures, the present findings speak to the person perception literature—in particular, work by Funder and colleagues on the congruence or agreement between others' judgments and self-judgments of personality (Funder, 1995, 2003; Funder & Colvin, 1997). Funder's realistic accuracy model (RAM) specifies the various steps that are required in order for perceivers to make accurate personality judgments, defined as perceivers' judgments of individuals that are congruent with individuals' own self-judgments. The present findings are particularly pertinent to the first step of this model. This first step specifies that the individual being judged needs to act in a way that is relevant—that is, produced by and thereby diagnostic of—the personality trait being judged. Our results suggest that P-E fit may make this first step toward accurate personality judgments more likely to happen. The RAM also points to four moderators of congruence between perceivers' judgments and self-judgments of personality: good judge, good target, good trait, and good information. Our findings speak most directly to the idea that *good targets*—defined as targets who are easy to judge—increase self-other congruence. Specifically, our results suggest that P-E fit is one circumstance that enhances the ease with which a target can be judged and, accordingly, increases the accuracy of personality judgment.

Mediating Processes

What are the underlying processes that account for our fit findings? In their work on the negative effects of a lack of fit or match between people's baseline testosterone levels and the status of their current position, Josephs et al. (2006) proposed that matching roles may buffer people against negative outcomes because they allow people to remain within their "status comfort zones" (p. 1001). Stated differently, people may experience roles that fit their testosterone levels (or, in our case, dispositional power levels) as more comfortable and familiar. Such subjective feelings of role comfort/familiarity may in turn breed a variety of positive outcomes, such as enabling people to perform better on cognitive tests (e.g., GRE exam) or allowing people to express themselves. As an initial exploration of the possibility that subjective feelings of role comfort/familiarity may mediate the impact of dispositional-role power fit on self-expression, in Study 1 we included several items assessing participants' feelings of comfort and familiarity with their assigned role—for example, "I felt comfortable in my role" and "I am not accustomed to being in the role I had to play" (reverse coded).

To first examine whether dispositional role-power fit was associated with feelings of comfort/familiarity, we regressed a composite of the role comfort/familiarity items ($\alpha = .85$) onto dispositional power, role power, and their interaction. The role-power effect was significant ($\beta = .21, p < .05$) but was qualified by an interaction ($\beta = .43, p < .01$). High-power participants reported more comfort/familiarity when assigned to the high- relative to low-power role, whereas the opposite tendency was seen among dispositionally low-power participants. Next, to test whether role comfort/familiarity accounts for the effect of dispositional role-power fit on self-expression that we found in Study 1, we first established that role comfort/familiarity was positively associated with self-expression ($\beta = .66, p < .01$). We then regressed self-expression scores onto dispositional power, role power, their interaction, and standardized role comfort/familiarity scores. The Dispositional \times Role Power interaction was no longer significant ($\beta = .11, t < 1, p = .33$), whereas role comfort/familiarity remained a significant predictor of self-expression ($\beta = .62, p < .01$), suggesting that the latter mediated the effect of dispositional-role power fit on self-expression. A Sobel test confirmed this finding ($Z = 3.00, p < .01$).

These additional data in Study 1 are consistent with the notion that subjective feelings of role comfort/familiarity mediated the effect of dispositional-role power fit on self-expression. However, because we only assessed role comfort/familiarity in Study 1, these results should be viewed with caution. Indeed, other possible mediators exist. For example, one possible candidate is self-regulatory resources. Recent work indicates that having to present the self in a manner that conflicts with one's chronic, familiar way of presenting the self is taxing, depleting the pool of resources people have left over for subsequent self-regulatory tasks (Vohs, Baumeister, & Ciarocco, 2005). For example, after presenting themselves in a gender-inconsistent manner in an initial task, men and women performed worse on a subsequent self-regulatory task. Applied to the present studies, being forced to play a role (e.g., high-power role) that conflicts with one's chronic dispositions (e.g., low dispositional power) should deplete self-regulatory resources. As a result, people should exhibit default or automatic self-presentational tendencies. Wide-ranging research suggests that people have an automatic tendency to present the self favorably rather than accurately (e.g., Greenwald & Banaji, 1995; Paulhus & Levitt, 1987; Pelham, Carvallo, & Jones, 2005). This implies that if self-regulatory depletion does indeed occur when one's role conflicts with one's dispositional power, then such depletion should in turn be linked to not only lower self-expression but also lower self-other congruence. These are hypotheses that await examination.

Caveats and Future Directions

Low-power versus high-power roles. Although we found the predicted crossover interaction pattern across all four studies, the simple effect of dispositional power was stronger in the high-power role condition than in the low-power role in three of the studies (Studies 1, 3, and 4). Why might this have occurred? One explanation may lie in the fact that although our role-power manipulation (in Studies 1–3) led participants assigned to the high-power role to report a significantly higher sense of power than those assigned to the low-power role, inspection of the means

on the manipulation-check composites reveals that participants in the low-power role did not feel as low in power ($M_s = 5.08, 4.92,$ and 5.08 in Studies 1, 2, and 3, respectively) as participants in the high-power role felt high in power ($M_s = 5.82, 5.65,$ and 5.61 ; ratings were made on a scale ranging from 1 to 7). This suggests that the low-power role may not have conflicted as much with dispositionally high-power participants' beliefs about their capacity to influence others as the high-power role conflicted with dispositionally low-power participants' beliefs. Conversely, low-power roles may not have fit dispositionally low-power participants as well as high-power roles fit dispositionally high-power participants. To the extent that either or both of the above were the case, it would be more difficult to capture a significant fit (or misfit) effect among participants assigned to the low-power role. Of course, that we were able to find the predicted crossover pattern across four studies suggests that our low role-power manipulations were at least moderately effective.

Another possible explanation lies in the realities of the average person's role experience. Most people ascend to powerful roles only after spending time in low-power ones. This implies that low-power roles, because people have more practice at them, are more comfortable and familiar than high-power ones. As such, self-expression and self-other congruence may be less likely to be disrupted among dispositionally high-power people in mismatching but relatively practiced low-power roles, compared with dispositionally low-power people in mismatching and relatively unpracticed high-power roles. Of course, the weaker fit effect found in low- relative to high-power roles in Studies 1, 3 and 4 may be specific to our participant sample, which was composed of undergraduates who presumably have, on average, more experience with low-power than high-power roles. This speculation seems especially relevant to Study 3's low-power role—being an applicant for a campus organization—which is a role that many of our undergraduate participants are likely to have at least some if not considerable experience with, regardless of their dispositional power. Had participants with fairly balanced histories of experience with high- and low-power roles been examined, equally strong fit effects may have emerged across the two role conditions—a possibility that awaits explicit testing.

Culture. Another caveat has to do with the generally Western perspective we have taken on self-expression. Implicit to this perspective is the assumption that individuals have stable selves that are consistent across different contexts and roles. Thus, to express the self is to express stable, enduring aspects of the self. Yet, considerable research suggests there are cross-cultural differences in the nature of the self-concept (e.g., Markus & Kitayama, 1991) as well as in how stability and consistency in the self-concept are defined (e.g., English & Chen, 2007), and in the meaning ascribed to self-concept stability and consistency (e.g., Kashima et al., 2004). For example, there is evidence that East Asians may define the self in more context- and role-specific terms than do Westerners (e.g., Cousins, 1989; Kanagawa, Cross, & Markus, 2001). Future research is needed to examine the implications of such cross-cultural differences for the present set of findings. For instance, for some individuals, self-expression under dispositional-role power fit circumstances may be derived more from being able to act in line with context-specific rather than stable self-aspects.

Downstream consequences. Finally, future work might examine the downstream intrapersonal and interpersonal consequences of the effects of dispositional-role power fit on self-expression and self-other congruence. For example, in terms of intrapersonal consequences, Bettencourt and Sheldon (2001) argued that the self-expression that fitting roles enable satisfies the psychological need for autonomy. More broadly, both self-expression (Sheldon, Ryan, Rawsthorne, & Hardi, 1997) and self-other congruence (Swann & Pelham, 2002b) have been linked to the concept of *authenticity*, which generally refers to acting in accord with one's personal beliefs, values, and qualities. In turn, feelings of authenticity have been linked to higher subjective well-being (e.g., Sheldon et al., 1997). Applied to the present studies, this suggests that when a person's dispositional and role power fit, the higher self-expression and self-other congruence that ensue may foster greater well-being.

In terms of interpersonal consequences, research on self-verification theory indicates that being verified by others—that is, perceived in a manner consistent with one's preexisting self-views—has positive relationship implications. For instance, spouses report greater intimacy to the degree they verify one another's self-views (Swann, De La Ronde, & Hixon, 1994), and college roommates report greater interest in remaining roommates to the degree they verify each others' important self-views (Swann & Pelham, 2002a). This suggests that when people occupy roles that fit their power-related dispositions, the self-other congruence that results may breed more positive interactions, leading them to nurture these role relationships. On the flip side, mis-fitting roles might have negative consequences, such as when the failure to be perceived in a manner congruent with self-judgments leads individuals with low power-related dispositions to shun high-power roles, thereby sustaining existing power hierarchies. Overall, more work is needed to examine the full spectrum of psychological, behavioral, and interpersonal consequences of dispositional-role power fit.

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