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# Impression formation in asymmetrical power relationships :: does power corrupt absolutely?

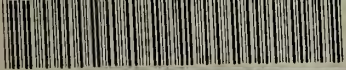
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IMPRESSION FORMATION IN ASYMMETRICAL POWER RELATIONSHIPS:  
DOES POWER CORRUPT ABSOLUTELY?

A Thesis Presented

by

STEPHANIE A. GOODWIN

Submitted to the Graduate School of the  
University of Massachusetts in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

February 1993

Department of Psychology

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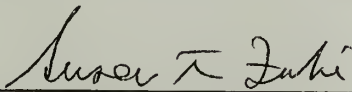
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A Thesis Presented

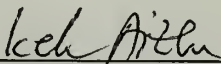
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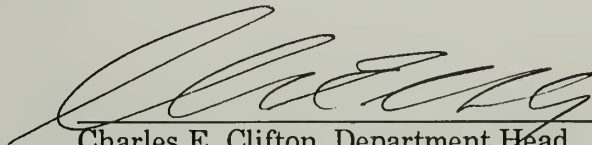
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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

"...it simply is not possible to deal adequately with data which are clearly social psychological without getting involved with matters of power" (Cartwright, 1959).

The present thesis proposes a model of impression formation under asymmetrical interdependence, or power. Asymmetrical power refers to a relationship between two individuals in which one, the powerful person, has control over the outcomes of the other, the subordinate, but not vice versa. Because the person in power is not primarily outcome-dependent upon the subordinate, there is little incentive to invest the extra effort necessary to individuate the subordinate. Some researchers have already suggested this possibility (Beauvois & Dubois, 1988; Leyens, 1983), which also follows from current models of impression formation to be described later. We will thus predict that people with asymmetrical power are likely to use category-based strategies when forming impressions of their subordinates.<sup>1</sup> However, as Figure 1 illustrates, the effects of power are not immutable. Powerful people can be motivated to individuate when internalized values or norms, such as responsibility to outgroup members, become accessible. Making such internal values accessible is predicted to attenuate the effects of power on impression formation and lead to individuating impression formation strategies.

The remainder of this chapter addresses the specific definitions and theories which motivated the present model. First, I will focus on defining power. Next I will review the impression formation literature relevant to the present thesis. Finally, I will address power in terms of one current model of impression formation,

the continuum model, and show how this model provides for alternatives to the usual effects of power.

### Defining Power

Social scientists have long recognized the importance of power in understanding human behavior and interaction. Yet definitions of power have made little progress, and the concept has not been well-integrated into social psychology (for reviews see Deprét & Fiske, in press; Ng, 1981). Aside from a general sense that "power involves influence through coercion" (Hollander, 1985), there appears to be little consensus as to what constitutes power in social situations. Because the present thesis concerns asymmetrical relationships between individuals and how those relationships impact impression formation, a definition of power must address the nature of the relationship between individuals.

Historically, power has been defined by exclusion. Early theorists concluded that power was neither influence, prestige, eminence, competence, ability, nor knowledge, since one could possess one or all of these characteristics without having any power, or vice versa (Bierstedt, 1950). For example, consider an unpopular President who has neither prestige nor competence but who, nevertheless, controls the fate of billions by holding the key to a nuclear arsenal. Ambiguity notwithstanding, these definitions of power also fail to address the relationships between people, but instead focus on the characteristics of the individuals.

Others have approached power in terms of how people gain, or are perceived to gain, their power. French and Raven (1959) defined a typology of five bases of power: legitimate, reward, coercive, referent, and expert. These definitions

distinguish, for example, people who have power because they have knowledge (expert power) and people who have gained power via valid social mechanisms such as elections (legitimate power). Wood (1973) went on to distinguish personal sources of power (e.g., individual qualities) and structural sources of power (e.g., status). Although these distinctions in how people gain and maintain their power are useful, they too fail to address the nature of the relationship between powerful and less powerful individuals.

At this point, it would be tempting to assume the general consensus and define power in terms of social influence, the ability to alter another person's thoughts, feelings, or actions. This definition does, after all, describe the relationship between two individuals; one individual influences the other. Does social power equal social influence? In a recent review of the power literature, Deprét and Fiske (1993) point out that such definitions of power lack heuristic value. Social influence is the general concern of the whole of social psychology; how then can social influence be power?

Instead, in the tradition of Thibaut and Kelley (1953), Deprét and Fiske assert the importance of the relationship, or links, between individuals in a given situation (also see Riley & Fiske, 1991). The key to defining power then lies in characterizing these links between individuals in terms of outcome control. For example, when person A controls the outcomes of person B, then we can say person A has social power over person B. This definition of power meets the proposed criterion of addressing the nature of the relationship between individuals. Moreover, this definition unconfounds social influence and social power. People who have power control the outcomes of others, which in turn, may or may not influence the thoughts, feelings, and actions of those people. Finally, this definition allows the

description of power relationships in terms of symmetry. For example, if both members of a dyad, A and B, control each other's outcomes equally, they share symmetric amounts of power. However, if person A has complete control over person B's outcomes, and person B does not control any outcomes for person A, person A has asymmetrical power over person B. Again, it is the nature of the link between the individuals, in this case the distribution of control, that defines power in social situations. In summary, defining power in terms of outcome control will best suit the current analysis of impression formation because it (1) addresses the nature of the relationship between the people involved, (2) does not confound power with influence, and (3) addresses the relative distribution, or asymmetry, of control in the relationship.

#### Impression Formation: A Brief Review

Impression formation research has recently used models of interdependence to explain how the relationships between individuals influence the ways that people think about one another. Current models of impression formation maintain that categorization is the default mode of impression formation (Brewer, 1988; Fiske & Neuberg, 1990). When we encounter social stimuli, we try to identify them in terms of their category membership. This categorization process is relatively effortless, involving the match between verbal labels or stimulus characteristics (e.g., hair and eye color) and one's pre-existing categories (e.g., race). Once a category label has been accessed, the content of schemas associated with the label may be activated. For example, upon categorizing an alien from outer space as "Martian", schemas associated with aliens from other planets may become accessible (e.g., their physical

characteristics, their temperaments, etc.). A stereotype is a specific type of schema that organizes information about members of socially defined groups of people, for example, men, women, Asians, caucasians, etc. (Fiske & Taylor, 1991). The content of these stereotypes, when activated, can organize and influence perception of a stimulus person.

Categorization does not necessarily imply application of a stereotype. Before a stereotype can be applied, it must be activated and accessible. If the stereotype is undeveloped or weakly accessible, then it is unlikely that its contents will be applied during impression formation. For example, consider John who knows only that Martians are small green hominoids. John may be able accurately to apply the category label "Martian" to little green creatures, but his stereotype is so simple that even if it were to be activated, it is unlikely to influence how he forms an impression of a particular Martian. In contrast, assume that John has read a few science fiction magazines and has a set of expectations about Martians. Upon encountering a Martian, John's stereotype is likely to become more accessible. As a consequence, the information in John's stereotype is likely to affect the way he forms an impression of a particular Martian.

Schema-based impression formation is relatively automatic and involves attending to the information that fits one's expectations about a category member. Continuing the previous example, let's say that John's stereotype depicts Martians as hostile, evil creatures who are trying to take over planet Earth. If John simply relies on these expectations when forming an impression of a Martian, he will attend to information that confirms his expectations (e.g., the Martian's body language was "aggressive"). John would not especially notice information irrelevant to his expectations (e.g., the Martian had three toes). In sum, categorization involves

classifying a target, a process which may then access a schema, often a stereotype, which in turn can guide the interpretation of information to confirm the schema.

People do not always use only their stereotypes when forming impressions (Brewer, 1988; Fiske & Neuberg, 1990; Higgins & Bargh, 1985). Sometimes people try to gather more information when forming impressions; they move beyond mere category-based processing to individuation. Individuation is more effortful, requiring more time and attention to information that goes beyond the initial categorization. Returning to the previous example, John might attend not only to the Martian's aggressive stance, but also to the fact that the creature brought gifts and sounded calm. In this case, John is likely to attempt to make sense of the inconsistent information (e.g., by thinking that because Martians are typically evil, this one may be dissembling).

One key to individuation is motivation. Unless people are motivated to do otherwise, they will rely on their initial categorizations when forming impressions. What motivates people to move beyond categorization? Accuracy goals are particularly good for motivating people to move beyond categorization. Research has indicated that a number of factors can lead to accuracy goals, including accountability, personal values, and interdependence (Fiske & Neuberg, 1990). These motives originate from three primary sources: the target of impression formation (e.g., interdependence), the perceiver (e.g., personal values), or a third party (e.g., accountability).

According to Fiske and Neuberg (1990), when people are motivated to be more accurate, they distinguish the most and least useful data. Information that is consistent with prior expectations is redundant and does not suggest a change in the impression. In contrast, category-inconsistent information is *not* redundant. In fact,



inconsistent information is unusual because it can disconfirm one's prior expectations, suggesting that one might change one's overall expectation. Inconsistent information is therefore more informative and can aid in forming a more accurate impression. Accuracy goals can thus lead to a different type of processing strategy in which the perceiver individuates the target, seeking information that goes beyond the initial content of the schema. The continuum model uniquely discusses relationships between people as a source of accuracy goals hence it is most relevant to the discussion of power relationships.

### Power and Accuracy in the Continuum Model

The continuum model of impression formation (Fiske & Neuberg, 1990) addresses category-based and individuating impression formation strategies, and the motivational factors that lead to each type of strategy. Recall that power is defined in terms of asymmetrical outcome control. Research applying the continuum model to a number of symmetrical outcome-dependent, or interdependent, task situations is therefore of particular significance to the issue of power (for a review see Fiske & Ruscher, 1989; see also Erber & Fiske, 1984; Neuberg & Fiske, 1987; Ruscher & Fiske, 1990). These studies have usually made subjects dependent upon another person's performance in order to gain some reward. According to the continuum model these interdependent situations undermine people's sense of control; people are motivated to gain some sense of prediction and control over their own outcomes. In turn, control motivation leads to accuracy goals in impression formation. Research has supported these ideas in both cooperative and competitive interdependent situations. When people are in symmetrical interdependent

relationships (i.e. when they have equal control over each other's outcomes), they spend more time attending to category-inconsistent information, and they make more dispositional inferences about that inconsistent information, in line with increasing their sense of predictability. They also form more idiosyncratic impressions. These strategies all are assumed to reflect a tendency to individuate.

Adopting an individuation strategy affords people the opportunity to enhance their sense of prediction and control over their own outcomes. Consider a situation in which two students are required to collaborate for a class presentation. Let's assume that one of the students maintains an A average, and the other typically makes C's. It is to each student's advantage to learn as much as possible about how the other will likely perform on the task. Attending to inconsistent information when forming an impression of a target allows a perceiver to better predict the target's behavior because consistent information is redundant with prior expectations but inconsistent information might change expectations. This process allows perceivers to adjust their own behavior to improve the likelihood of gaining a desired outcome. For example, upon learning that the honors student is also rushed and superficial, the C student may decide to carry most of the responsibilities for completing the project in order to increase the probability of receiving a high grade.

In summary, current views of impression formation hold that people tend to use category-based strategies as default impression formation strategies. When people want to predict and control their own outcomes, they tend to move beyond categories and use individuating processes.

## Power and Impression Formation

How does power relate to current theories of impression formation? The continuum model, as previously described, gives three sources for accuracy motivation: the target, the perceiver, and third parties. As stated earlier, when the perceiver is outcome-dependent upon the target, accuracy goals may be activated. According to our definition of power, powerful perceivers are not outcome-dependent on their targets. Therefore, powerful people are likely to use more category-based impression formation strategies, unless the two remaining sources of motivation intervene.

Powerful people may still be motivated either by their internal values, or by accountability to some third party, providing incentives for them to individuate their subordinates. For example, if a personal value to be "fair" is made salient, or if powerful perceivers are concerned that others are judging the quality of decisions about subordinates, they might be motivated to have accuracy goals. Of these two sources of motivation, personal values are likely to be more potent motivators. Personal values are apt to be central to the self (e.g., self-esteem, self-concept). As such, they are likely to motivate accuracy goals in a fairly consistent way. In contrast, accountability to a third party may depend on perceived characteristics of the judge (e.g., personality, authority). Since perceptions of these characteristics may vary considerably, and the perceiver's reactions depend on those perceptions (Tetlock & Boettger, 1989), accountability to a third party may be a less stable source of motivation for accuracy goals.

Limiting our consideration of motivators to personal values, there are many possible alternatives to the usual effects of power. One plausible choice is

responsibility. People who have a sense of responsibility for the impact of their decisions may be motivated to individuate when forming impressions. The officially shared values for responsibility to outgroups in our own culture suggest this possibility. Most modern Western cultures officially hold that people are equal and should be treated fairly, regardless of group membership. Perhaps increasing the accessibility of these shared values of responsibility could motivate powerful people to individuate.

### General Hypotheses

The purpose of the present studies is to explore these issues in an experimental setting. In Study 1, power and accessibility of responsibility values were experimentally manipulated. I hypothesized that: (1) power allows category-based impression formation strategies (main effect), (2) accessing responsibility values makes subjects more likely to individuate (main effect), and (3) responsibility values further moderate power effects, eliminating the difference between low and high power (interaction).

Study 2 addressed implications of individual differences in domains relevant to power and impression formation. In particular, it extended the examination of power in impression formation to individual differences in need for dominance. Individuals high in need for dominance want to control the outcomes of others (in our terms, they want power). Hence, they spontaneously assume the role of powerful person, even when they are not explicitly given it. I anticipated that individuals high in need for dominance would use category-based impression formation strategies, but

as in Study 1, I also predicted that these effects would be moderated by responsibility.

# Theoretical Model

## Power and Social Judgments

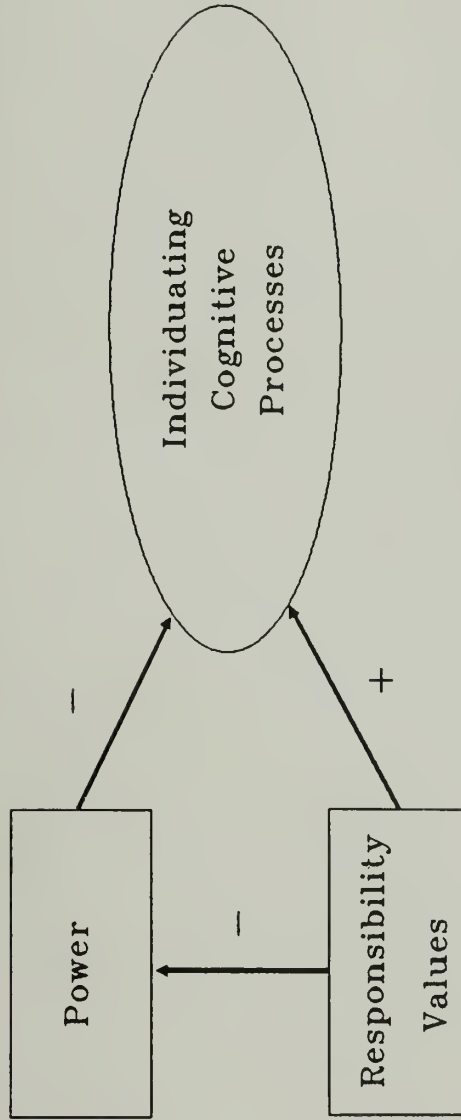


FIGURE 1. Model of the effects of power on social judgments.

## CHAPTER 2

### STUDY 1: SITUATIONAL POWER

#### Overview and Design

The first study asked subjects to make decisions about fictitious job applicants. Subjects were recruited under the pretense of assisting a local consulting firm in the selection of high-school students for an area internship program. Subjects participated in two rating sessions. Pilot testing of this study indicated that the novelty of this task may make subjects somewhat self-conscious or overly concerned with learning the task, which may interfere with the effectiveness of the manipulations. I anticipated that the second session data might provide a more accurate assessment of the effects of power and responsibility in this laboratory setting.

The study employed a 2 (Power) x 2 (Responsibility) between-subjects factorial design. Power was manipulated via subjects' perceived control over selection of students (thirty percent control vs. none). Responsibility, operationalized as accessibility of shared egalitarian values, was manipulated by priming subjects for responsibility to outgroup members. I manipulated target ethnicity (Anglo, Hispanic) and trait consistency (consistent, inconsistent) within subjects as well.

Dependent measures included measures of attention to trait information and the coded content of subjects' verbal responses to this information (e.g., types of attributions, elaborations, etc.). Attention to trait information was measured by

timing subjects' verbal responses to the consistent and inconsistent trait information. In addition, subjects rated each target on several impression related dimensions.

### Patterns of Categorization and Individuation

Specific patterns of attention to information, verbal responses, and impression ratings reflect different types of information processing and consequently different impression formation strategies. The primary distinction between the two major types of processing is manifest in contrasting patterns of attention to inconsistent information. Low attention to inconsistent information is evidence of subjects' using category-based processing. Individuation, on the other hand, is marked by subjects' increasing attention to inconsistent information. Attention to consistent information remains unchanged or decreases when subjects individuate.

With regard to the content of subjects' verbal responses, differences in complexity distinguish the two impression formation strategies. Certain types of verbal responses, such as simple repetition of the information and hedging, reflect less complex or more cursory cognitive processing. These types of responses indicate category-based processing. Other types of responses, such as making dispositional inferences, or linking attributes, reflect more complex, effortful cognitive processing. Dispositional inferences in particular reflect efforts to increase prediction and control. These more complicated types of responses all denote individuating processes.

Finally, differences in subjects' impression ratings also suggest different processing strategies. Research using the interdependence paradigm has indicated that although individuation involves attention to inconsistent information, this does



not mean that subjects' final ratings will necessarily be moderated by attending to this information. Instead, some subjects use the information to disconfirm their categories (thereby individuating), whereas others use it to reinforce their categories (thereby polarizing their responses in the opposite direction). Thus categorization and individuation can be distinguished by the variability across subjects' impression ratings (Ruscher & Fiske, 1990). Low variability in impression ratings indicates initial category-based responses. High variability in ratings indicates idiosyncratic impression formation and hence is associated with individuating strategies.

### Hypotheses

These patterns of categorization and individuation suggest how power and responsibility will affect attention, verbal responses, and impression ratings. Recall the general hypotheses outlined at the end of Chapter 1. Two assumptions underlie these predictions. The first assumption places as baseline the low-power/low-responsibility condition. These subjects were assumed to be minimally involved in the task because they neither have control nor feel particularly responsible for their decisions. In effect, these subjects were assumed to be "going through the motions" with little motivation to attend. As a result, these subjects were not expected to distinguish between consistent and inconsistent information, and hence their dependent measures should not reflect patterns of categorization or individuation. The second assumption is that altering the level of motivation, either by increasing their power or their sense of responsibility, would move them toward a particular impression formation strategy. This assumption underlies the main effects hypothesized for power and responsibility.

### Attention to Trait Information

More specifically, I predicted a main effect for power such that high-power subjects would attend less to category-inconsistent information relative to low-power subjects. I also predicted a main effect for accessibility of responsibility values, such that high-responsibility subjects would attend more to inconsistent information, relative to low-responsibility subjects, regardless of the power manipulation. Finally, I predicted an interaction between power and responsibility such that responsibility would moderate the effects of power on attention. More directly, high-power subjects primed to access responsibility values should individuate, paying more attention to category-inconsistent information than high-power/low-responsibility subjects.

### Verbal Responses

I predicted the same main effects and interaction for power and responsibility with regard to subjects' verbal responses to the trait information. A main effect for power was predicted such that high-power subjects were expected to consider the information in a more cursory fashion and make significantly fewer complex responses (e.g., dispositional inferences) about the trait information. Low-power/low-responsibility subjects were not expected to be involved in the task enough to exhibit any overall differences in verbal response style. Accessibility of responsibility values was expected to increase complex consideration of the information, leading subjects in the high-responsibility condition to make significantly more complex verbal responses. The predicted interaction between power and responsibility was expected to moderate the effects of power on verbal responses. Thus, high-power subjects primed for responsibility were expected to individuate, making more complex verbal responses to the trait information.

## Impression Ratings

Predictions for subjects' impression ratings are somewhat different from the previous hypotheses; these involve predicting variability in the impression ratings. Subjects in the high-power/high-responsibility condition, who were expected to individuate targets, were expected to make significantly more variable impression ratings of the targets, relative to high-power/low-responsibility subjects. While I expected low variability in the remaining three experimental cells, I was unsure about the impression ratings for subjects in the low-power/high-responsibility cell. These subjects could be motivated enough by the responsibility manipulation to individuate, and hence show significant variability in their ratings. In this case there could be a main effect for responsibility with regard to variability in impression ratings. It is important to keep in mind when the analyses are discussed that these last hypotheses are exploratory.

## Method

### Subjects

Sixty-three native English-speaking undergraduates were recruited from introductory psychology courses at the University of Massachusetts. Subjects received extra course credit for their participation in two experimental sessions. All subjects were Anglo-Americans, except for one female Chinese-American whose data were not included in the analyses. In addition, the verbal response data for two subjects were lost due to problems with the recording device. The remaining data for these two subjects were not included in the present analyses.

Of the sixty Anglo subjects for whom there were complete data, 51 cases were included in the final analyses. Data from three subjects in the high-power/low-responsibility condition were not included because the subjects appeared to have been suspicious of the cover story. Additionally, the attention data were screened for possible outliers. Six subjects who had timing scores three standard deviations above or below the mean were considered outliers and excluded from the remaining analyses.

## Materials

### Participant Information Questionnaire

This questionnaire contained a number of demographic questions and a measure of subjects' confidence in their ability to evaluate the applicants. Previous research using the interdependence paradigm has found that when subjects do not feel competent about the task, they do not get invested in the procedure and they tend to be insensitive to the information given to them about the target person (Ruscher & Fiske, 1990). The self-reported measure of competence in this questionnaire served to check for subjects who may have been too uncomfortable with the task to be sensitive to the target information.

### Applicant Folders

Subjects evaluated a total of six applicants. The first four applicants were practice, or non-targets, intended to habituate subjects to the possibly novel task of making decisions about someone else. Each folder contained an application form, six trait information sentences, and a blank impression rating form.

## Application Form

All applicants were female high school seniors applying for generic clerical positions. The application form was adapted from a standard job application and included such items as previous work history, honors and awards, job related skills, and references (see Appendix A). The target's ethnicity was indicated by the target's name and, for Hispanic targets, their affiliation with an ethnic school organization. For example, one Hispanic target was "Juanita Hernandez" who was a member of the Spanish Students Association.

Of the four non-targets, three were Anglos and one was Hispanic.<sup>2</sup> For the last two applicants, the target applicants, order of ethnicity was randomized between the two folders. Two application forms were developed for these two targets. Order of presentation of these two forms was counterbalanced across treatment conditions to account for any order effects.

## Trait Information

The trait information sentences were presented on postmarked postcards addressed to the experimenter. Subjects were told that the comments on these cards had been written by employees who had worked with the students in the previous year. The experimenter allegedly told the co-workers to mail them anonymously in order to get the co-workers to respond freely. The twelve traits (half Anglo, half Hispanic) were pretested and found to be uniquely representative of stereotypes for Anglos and Hispanics(see Appendix B).<sup>3</sup> The twelve traits were divided into four groups, with three Anglo and three Hispanic traits in each group. As a result, each trait group contained three consistent and three inconsistent traits; consistency was dependent upon the actual target race (see Appendix C). These trait groups were

randomized within subjects across the two rating sessions and counterbalanced to prevent order effects.

### Impression Rating Form

The impression rating form, or Candidate Rating Questionnaire (CRQ), is an eight-item scale designed to assess subjects' perceptions of applicants' likability, competence, and skill (see Appendix D). The final item asks subjects to indicate how much they believe the applicant should be retained in the program. Each item was composed of a question (e.g., "To what extent would you be excited to work with the candidate?") followed by a six-inch blank line. Subjects indicated their responses to each question by marking an "X" on the line (e.g., "Not at all excited....Extremely excited"). This technique was employed in an attempt to deter subjects from recalling their ratings of earlier targets and inhibit their ability to establish anchors on which to base later ratings.

### The Humanitarian-Egalitarian Values Scale

Subjects in the high-responsibility condition were primed for responsibility to outgroup members with the Humanitarian-Egalitarian Values Scale (Katz & Haas, 1988). This ten-item scale was specifically developed to prime people to be responsible to outgroup members (see Appendix D). In the present study, one item was dropped on the basis that its content might make subjects suspicious about the true nature of the study.<sup>4</sup>

## Session Two Materials

As mentioned above, subjects returned to the laboratory for a second rating session five to ten days after their first session. The stimulus materials for the second rating session were identical to those of the first session with a few alterations intended to reduce recognition. The applicant names and identification numbers were changed, and the trait sentences were rephrased so as to maintain their meaning while using the same traits as in Session One.

### Subject Recruitment and the Cover Story

A confederate posing as a representative of a local consulting firm telephoned students who expressed an interest during a classroom recruiting effort. The confederate explained that the consulting firm was under contract with a local city to assist in personnel-related decisions. Due to the current economic crunch, the city had decided to reduce a number of public service programs, including an internship program for high school students. The consulting firm was interested in getting opinions from college students about the applicants for the internship program. Interested students were scheduled to come to the lab for two applicant rating sessions. The second session was always scheduled five to ten days after the first session.

### Session One Procedure

An experimenter, posing as a representative of the consulting firm, greeted subjects and escorted them to a small laboratory room. The room was arranged to

look like an office. Subjects were seated at an empty table and given an information letter, typed on company letterhead. The letter reiterated the information subjects were given when recruited, reminding them of the alleged purpose of their participation. Subjects were told that they would be asked to review and evaluate several high school students' applications for the internship program.

Upon giving written consent<sup>5</sup>, subjects completed the Participant Information Questionnaire and read an additional information sheet. This information sheet included the power manipulation. Subjects in the low-power condition read:

Your decisions will not affect our decisions about which students to retain in the program. We are interested in learning your opinions about the student applicants because we believe that your opinions could shed some light on better ways to evaluate applicants for such positions.

In contrast, subjects in the high power condition were told that their evaluations would:

...play a major role in determining whether or not each student will be retained in the program. Your overall evaluation of each applicant will be entered into a statistical equation and will account for 30% of the final decision to retain the student or not.

As subjects were reading these materials, the experimenter placed a stack of applicant folders on the table in front of the subject. Next the experimenter explained the contents of a sample applicant folder. Subjects were shown blank materials and instructed as to the proper way to mark their responses on the CRQ.

At this point, the experimenter explained to subjects that the firm was also interested in their reactions to the materials and how they came up with their decisions about the applicants. Subjects were asked to "think aloud" while they reviewed each applicant folder. Subjects were told that their responses would be



audio-recorded as it would be too difficult for the experimenter to take dictation from their responses.

The experimenter requested that subjects read aloud any information on the application form that seemed important to them for any reason and to indicate why they thought the information was important. Subjects were also instructed to read aloud the trait sentence postcards and, upon reading each card, to say aloud whatever came to mind about the card as it pertained to the applicant. The experimenter emphasized the importance of responding to each card.<sup>6</sup>

After the experimenter explained how to operate the recording device, subjects in the high-responsibility condition completed the Humanitarian-Egalitarian Values Scale. The experimenter told these subjects that:

There is some research to indicate that people with a high sense of responsibility are more suited for this task. As an aside to our job here today, we are collecting some data on this. You might say we're killing two birds with one stone while we have you here. If you don't mind, just fill out this brief questionnaire and we'll get started.

All subjects were reminded again of their control over the selection of the students (thirtypercent of the decision or none) prior to reviewing the applicants. When subjects had completed the sixth application, which was the second target application, the experimenter called time and stopped the subjects from evaluating the remaining folders. Before leaving, subjects were reminded of their second appointment, asked to maintain confidentiality, and dismissed from the laboratory.

## Session Two Procedure

When subjects arrived for the second rating session they were briefly reminded of the cover story, asked to sign a second consent form, and then re-read the power manipulation form. The experimenter briefly reviewed the think-aloud directions, demonstrating with the sample folder. Under the pretense that their original answers had been misplaced, subjects in the high-responsibility condition were again asked to complete the Humanitarian-Egalitarian Values Scale prior to evaluating the applicants. As in session one, the experimenter interrupted subjects once they had completed the final target folder.

After subjects completed the evaluations, they answered a final questionnaire which included a few items to check the credibility of the cover story and the effectiveness of the responsibility manipulation. Subjects were then carefully debriefed. Because subjects were not told the true purpose of the study prior to giving consent, they were given the option to remove any materials that they had provided. The experimenter gave special attention to assuring that subjects were not negatively effected by the deception. Finally, subjects were given credit for participation.

### Analyses

Unfortunately, there were significant problems with the subjects' Day 2 data. Subjects were very suspicious the second time they arrived at the laboratory to make the evaluations. All but a few subjects recognized the Day 2 materials as those of the first day. They did not always realize that the names were changed; but they

frequently commented that they were sure they had "done this one before." For this reason, I decided not to analyze the Day 2 data. All analyses in the following section refer only to subjects' performance on the first day of evaluations.

### Attention Measures

Subjects' audio-recorded verbal responses were transcribed and then timed to the hundredth of a second. The timing data were submitted to a mixed-design ANOVA, with power and responsibility as the between-subjects independent variables, and with target ethnicity and trait consistency as within-subjects variables. This analysis yielded two significant two-way interactions, but no main effects.

First, as Figure 2 indicates, the analysis revealed the predicted two-way interaction between power and responsibility,  $F(1,47)=5.07, p=.02$ . In the low responsibility conditions, power decreased overall attention to the targets, as predicted. But priming responsibility reversed this effect. As expected, responsibility moderated the effects of power, making the powerful more attentive. However, we had predicted that responsibility would equalize the two power conditions. Instead, there was one anomalous cell, high-responsibility/low-power; I will return to this later.

A second two-way interaction occurred between power and target ethnicity (Figure 3), such that subjects who had power attended significantly more to the ingroup (Anglo) targets than did their low-power counterparts,  $F(1,47)=4.25, p=.04$ . Relative differences in attention to Hispanic versus Anglo targets were not significant for either the low-power ( $t(26)=1.25, p>.05$ ) or the high-power group

( $t(25) = -1.68, p > .05$ ). However the significant increase in attention to the Anglo targets may indicate an ingroup bias under high power.

Contrary to the hypotheses, there were no effects for trait consistency. Subjects did not differentiate between category-consistent and -inconsistent information.

Yet these data still somewhat support the idea that power undermines overall attention during impression formation. Under low responsibility, having power reduces attention. On the surface, this decrease in attention contradicts a basic premise of the continuum model. According to the model, subjects in the baseline condition, low-power/low-responsibility, should default to categorization processes, and hence should have the same attention pattern as subjects in the high-power/low-responsibility condition. Why then do these baseline (low-low) subjects have higher attention scores than the subjects who are given power but no responsibility manipulation? Subjects in the baseline condition may be categorizing targets; their attention scores were significantly lower than subjects who were presumably individuating (high-high). Given the fact that subjects are in an experimental setting and have been handed the materials by the alleged consultant, there is demand to pay some attention to the materials, even in the baseline condition. When subjects are given power, however, their attention to the materials drops below the baseline condition. Thus, subjects with power may be categorizing even more than subjects in the baseline condition.

The interaction between power and responsibility was qualified by an ingroup bias. Subjects' attention to the Anglo target was significantly higher when they had power to control the target's outcomes. Attention to Hispanic targets did not change

when subjects were given power, further supporting the possibility of an ingroup bias.

### Verbal Response Measures

Subjects' verbal responses to trait information were carefully transcribed. Judges, blind to condition and target ethnicity, coded the sentences according to a previously established coding scheme (Ruscher & Fiske, 1990). Responses were coded into seven discrete categories: matching attribute to attribute, dispositional inferences, elaborations, evaluations, hedging, no comment, repetition, and dispositional elaborations (Table 1). Judges cross-coded scores for thirty-six responses. These scores were submitted to a test of inter-rater reliability which revealed no significant difference in the judges' coding. Kappa coefficients ranged from  $Kappa=.71$  for dispositional inferences to  $Kappa=.91$  for evaluations, with a median  $Kappa=.81$ .

Next, the judges tallied the coded responses for each subject according to category response types, target ethnicity, and the type of trait sentence (consistent, inconsistent). For example, each subject had a score for the number of dispositional responses made about inconsistent information for each target. Descriptive analyses of these scores revealed that fewer than ten percent of the responses fell into the following categories: attribute matching, repetition, dispositional elaborations, and no comment. The tallied scores for the four remaining categories were submitted to a mixed-design ANOVA, again using power and responsibility as the between-subjects independent variables, with target ethnicity and trait consistency as within-subjects variables. These analyses revealed no significant results to indicate that any single

type of response was responsible for the attention data results. There were however several negativity effects (Table 2). The design of the study crossed ethnicity with trait consistency to unconfound trait consistency and trait valence. So, for Hispanic targets, the inconsistent information was positive, and vice versa for Anglo targets. The ethnicity x consistency effects indicate a negativity bias, such that subjects not only hedged more, but also made more evaluations, more elaborations, and more dispositional attributions in response to negative information.

### Impression Ratings

Subjects' responses to the eight impression rating items were measured to the tenth of an inch. These scores were submitted to a factor analysis using varimax rotation that indicated a single factor solution accounting for 26.46% of the variance. The item scores were then summed for each target and submitted to Levene's test for homogeneity of variance.

For Hispanic targets the homogeneity analysis revealed no effects for power, responsibility, or the interaction between the two. Subjects' overall impression ratings of Hispanic targets were about equally variable in all conditions ( $\bar{\sigma}^2 = 42.49$ ).

Analysis of the variability of subjects' overall impression ratings of Anglo targets, however, revealed a significant interaction between power and responsibility,  $F(1,52) = 4.69$ ,  $p = .03$ . High power decreased the variability in subjects' ratings ( $\bar{\sigma}^2 = 37.33$ ), as compared to subjects in the low-power conditions ( $\bar{\sigma}^2 = 45.81$ ). Responsibility however, is moderating this effect. While subjects in the high-power/low-responsibility condition had the least variable ratings ( $\sigma^2 = 16.83$ ), high-power subjects who received the responsibility manipulation had the most variable

ratings( $\sigma^2=57.84$ ). These homogeneity effects precluded submitting these scores to ANOVA.

This pattern fits the expectation that subjects with high power would form less individuated and idiosyncratic impressions unless they were given the responsibility manipulation, at least for Anglo targets. However, we did not anticipate variability in impressions to differ by ethnicity. It is plausible that the aforementioned ingroup attention bias is related to these differences in impression variability.

### Other Measures and Analyses

Just prior to debriefing, subjects were asked to evaluate their own accuracy in performing the job selection task, the helpfulness of the trait information, and how responsible they felt. Analyses of these data revealed no significant group effects. Even though the responsibility manipulation interacted with the power manipulation to influence subjects' overall attention and variability of impression ratings, subjects reported feeling equally responsible for their evaluations regardless of the responsibility manipulation. Given the other results, it is possible that subjects simply responded in a socially acceptable way to this manipulation check question; their responses leaned toward the upper end of the scale ( $\bar{X}=7.19$ ,  $sd=2.29$ ).

### Summary and Conclusion

As predicted, power and responsibility had a significant impact on the impression formation strategies employed by subjects who entered into this job

selection task. Under low responsibility, subjects who were given control over the outcomes of the targets paid less attention to information than subjects who did not believe they had any control over the outcomes, as predicted. This effect was moderated by the responsibility manipulation, but not precisely as expected. High-power subjects did attend more to target information when responsibility values had been primed than when they were not primed. But low-power/high-responsibility subjects attended far less than expected. High-power/low-responsibility subjects tended to make the least individuated, least variable impression ratings, but only for Anglo targets. Subjects made more individuated, variable impression ratings when given the responsibility manipulation, especially when they also had high power.

The pattern of results suggests that power and responsibility are important determinants of impression formation strategies. However, contrary to expectations, subjects did not discriminate between consistent and inconsistent information when attending to the targets. Therefore, the full criteria for categorization and individuation were not met. There are two plausible explanations for this non-result. Subjects could have failed to discriminate between the two types of information simply because the sentences were not clearly category-consistent or -inconsistent given the context of the job evaluation situation. In other words, while the traits used in the sentences were pretested to be uniquely consistent or inconsistent with stereotypes of the two ethnic groups, the sentences may have implied connotations which decreased the distinction between the two groups. To determine if this was the case, a post-test survey of the sentences was conducted. Eighteen undergraduates were asked to rate how well the twelve sentences fit "our cultural stereotypes" of Anglo and Hispanic people. A between-subjects design was employed, such that half of the subjects rated the sentences for Anglos and half of the subjects



rated the sentences for Hispanics. Ratings for each sentence were analyzed using a between groups t-test. The results indicate that, except for one item, subjects were able to accurately determine which trait sentences were consistent and inconsistent with the two ethnic groups ( $p < .05$ ). Subjects failed to distinguish between groups only for the "radical" trait sentence. Since this is an unusual trait to mention in a work context it is not surprising that subjects had difficulty interpreting this one.

Another possibility is that poorly developed stereotypes were responsible for the present results. Many students in this area of the country are relatively underexposed to Hispanic people. In fact, their low salience status in the immediate community was a key criterion for choosing Hispanics to be the outgroup targets. I believed subjects would be less suspicious of the experimental situation and, hence, would be less likely to behave in a "politically correct" manner if a less salient outgroup was chosen. Unfortunately, this also meant that, on average, subjects may have had less developed and less rigid stereotypes for this particular outgroup. As mentioned before, the continuum model maintains that the stereotype must be accessible to influence impression formation.

Individual differences in factors related to the development and maintenance of stereotypes should predict when people distinguish between consistent and inconsistent information about a low salience outgroup member. People who are relatively high on such dimensions as authoritarianism, dogmatism, dominance, cognitive rigidity, and racism should be more likely to distinguish between category consistent and inconsistent information, when compared to people who are low on these dimensions. Addressing this issue was one purpose of Study 2.

Returning to the attention measure analyses, the mean for the low-power/high-responsibility cell was not as predicted. Instead of increasing attention,

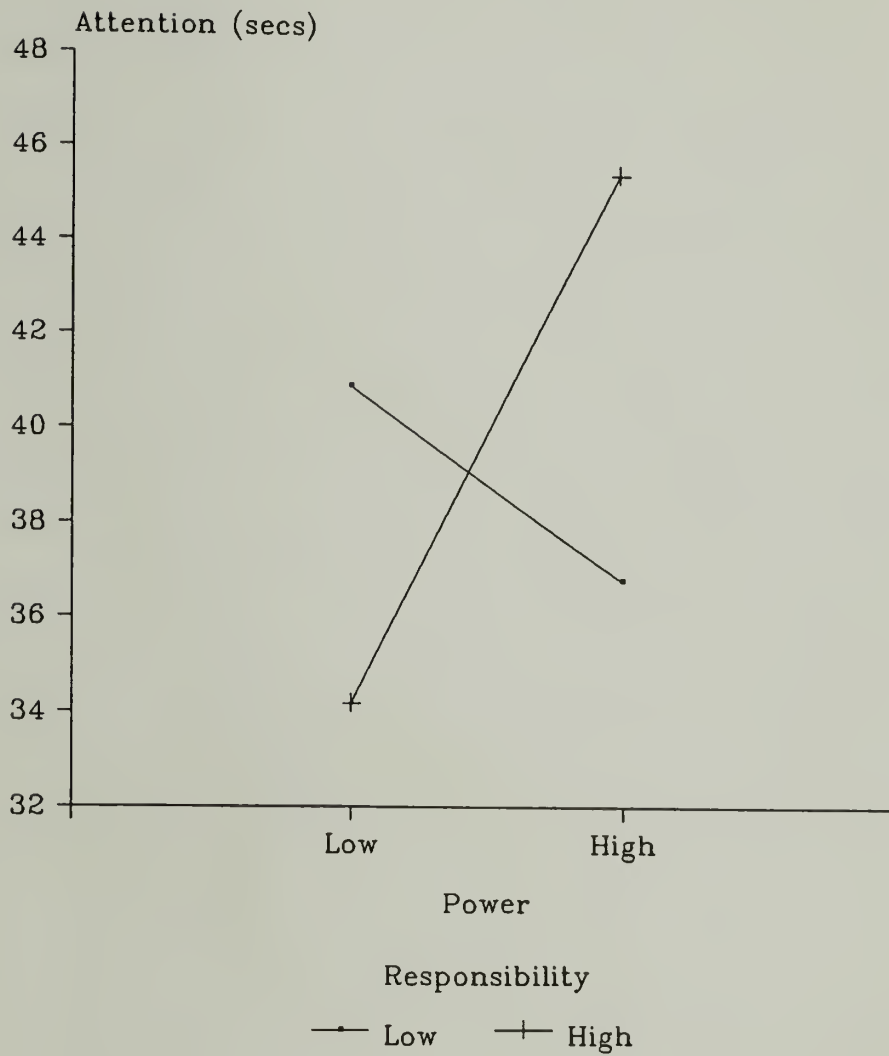
responsibility led low-power subjects to pay less attention to target information. At present there is no explanation for this result. One can speculate, however, about the relationship between the concepts of power and responsibility. Recall that there was an interaction between power and responsibility, but no main effects for these variables. So, power without responsibility leads to categorization, and power with responsibility motivates subjects to individuate, as predicted. However, this does not necessitate the same relationship between the two concepts in the absence of power.

It is possible that without power, i.e., without control, having responsibility has a different meaning for subjects and hence precipitates very different motivations. For example, if you are forming an impression of someone and know that your evaluations can have no impact on the outcomes for that person, feeling responsible could actually be aversive. Let's assume you find out something about the targets of your evaluations that leads you to form a positive impression. Feeling responsible connotes a desire to act, in this example, perhaps a desire to act on their behalf to help them gain their just rewards. Wanting to act and not being able to may result in dissonance. To resolve this dissonance, one need only do one thing: stop paying attention to the persons being evaluated. The less you know about a person, the less aversive it would be to make an evaluation that you know will have no impact. In other words, it could be that the subjects in the study who had no power were motivated to be responsible by the responsibility manipulation, but being unable to control the situation, they "gave up" and stopped paying attention to the targets.

Before moving on to Study 2, there is a noteworthy problem with the design of the present study. I failed to create a fully comparable control for the manipulation of shared values of responsibility. Since subjects in the low-

responsibility condition neither completed a questionnaire nor received any instructions about what kind of person was suited for the task, it is not possible to conclude definitely that the responsibility manipulation was actually responsible for the observed effects. There could have been something about the directions given to high-responsibility subjects that changed how they attended to target information. There is no way to address this problem in the present analyses. Steps were taken to correct for this potential confound in the second study (as well as in a follow-up being conducted this semester).

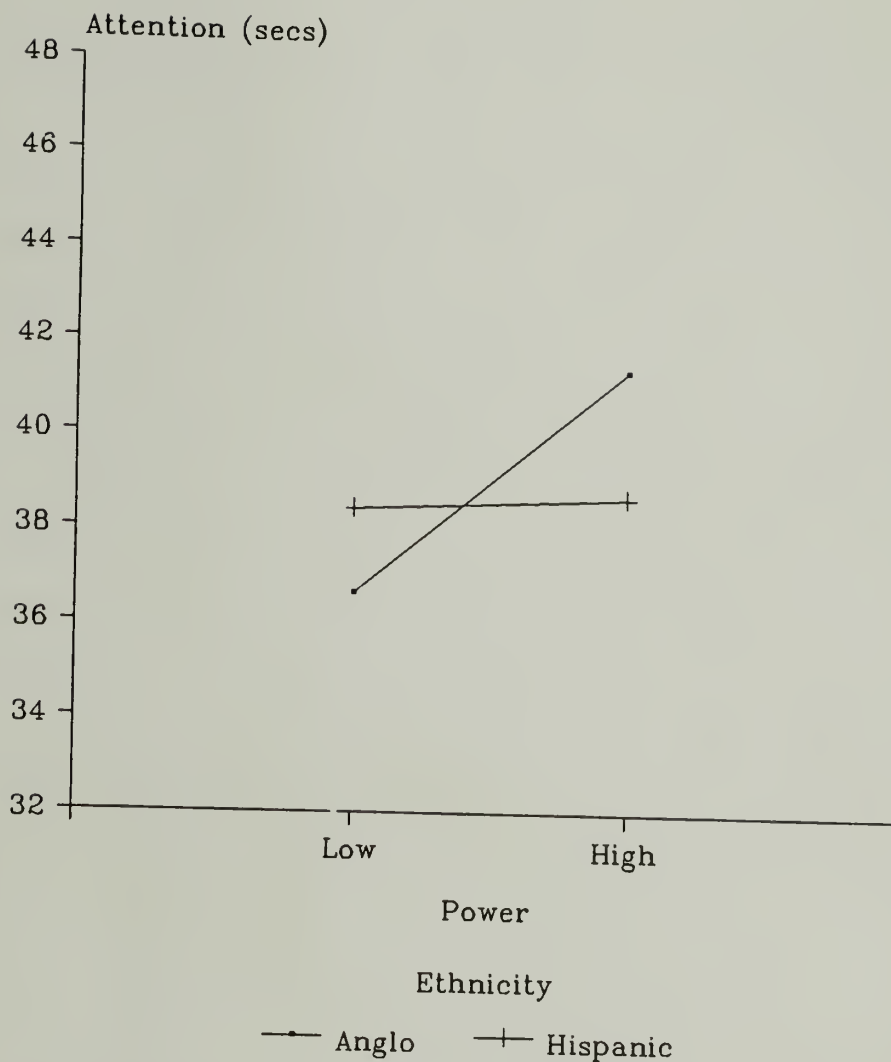
# Attention to Trait Information Power x Responsibility Interaction



$F(1,47)=5.07, p<.05$

FIGURE 2: Study 1 - Overall attention to information by power and responsibility.

# Attention to Trait Information Power x Ethnicity Interaction



$F(1,47)=4.25, p<.05$

FIGURE 3: Study 1 - Overall attention to information by power and target ethnicity.

Table 1. Categories for content coding of verbal responses.

Coding Category	Defined
Matching Attributes	Information matched to prior attribute of the target: e.g., "That doesn't fit with an educated person."
Dispositional Inference	Statement about the target's traits, preferences, etc: e.g., "She's the kind of person who likes to be organized."
Elaborations	Inference or explanation of the trait, or who said it: e.g., "That sounds like [the author] didn't like her."
Dispositional Elaborations	Elaborations that have some indication of dispositional inference, but unclear: e.g., "That comment shows lack of confidence."
Evaluations	Evaluation of trait without interpretation: e.g., "That's good."
Hedging	Filler comments, speech stumbles not directed at anything particular: e.g. "uh..the-that.."
No Comment	Subject makes or says "no comment"
Repetition	Repeat or paraphrase trait or sentence.

Table 2. ANOVA Results: Consistency x ethnicity effects for verbal responses in Study 1.

Coding Category	F (1,52)	p
Hedging	15.86	<.01
Dispositional Inferences	4.79	<.05
Elaborations	17.77	<.001
Evaluations	27.57	<.001

## CHAPTER 3

### STUDY 2: DOMINANCE

#### Overview and Design

Study 1 manipulated power situationally by altering subjects' beliefs in how much control they had over the hiring decisions. In the real world there are often situations that are not clearly defined in terms of who has how much power over whom. Often, people do not know exactly how much control they have. An example of this occurs in academic settings when graduate students are asked to evaluate new faculty applying to their departments. It is clear that the students have some control, or else they would not be polled. However, it is unclear how much influence their evaluations will have or how they would otherwise impact the hiring decision. Ambiguous power situations afford the opportunity for individuals to impose their own expectations about controlling outcomes. It is here that individual differences in how people perceive their own power may impact the impression formation process. One purpose of Study 2 was to explore how these individual differences might influence the strategies people use when forming impressions.

As mentioned in regard to the findings of Study 1, a second purpose of Study 2 was to address the possibility that individual differences in the development and maintenance of stereotypes might influence when people are able to discriminate between category-consistent and -inconsistent information when forming an impression. If people are unable to distinguish between the two types of information it will be hard to determine if people are individuating or categorizing when they form an impression.



One potential individual difference is particularly relevant to the issue of power and impression formation; namely the trait analog for situational power, need for dominance. Surprisingly little research has addressed the issue of dominance in impression formation (Battistich, Assor, Messe, & Aronoff, 1985). Much of the research exploring personality variables in the context of person perception has focused on variables related to the authoritarian personality (Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswick, Levinson, & Sanford, 1950; Allport, 1954), and dogmatism (Robbins, 1974; Taylor & Dunnette, 1974). From these studies we know that dogmatic subjects form impressions much more quickly than do non-dogmatic subjects (Taylor & Dunnette, 1974) and that they take in less information before passing judgment (Robbins, 1974). As for dominance, we only know that dominance interacts with target status when perceivers rate targets (Battistich et al., 1985). High-status individuals rate high-status targets less favorably than they do low-status targets, and low-dominance individuals do exactly the opposite. To date, there is no research addressing the effects of need for dominance on the strategies that people use when forming impressions of less powerful others.

How will need for dominance affect the impression formation process?

Burger and Cooper (1979) assert that personality variables only impact impression formation when the perceiver has an investment (e.g., is outcome dependent, or implicates one's self-esteem) in the interaction with the target. In other words, people need investment to activate these aspects of the self-concept in a way that influences the impression formation process. According to this perspective, people with asymmetrical power, who are not at all outcome dependent, would not be influenced by need for dominance.

Nevertheless, I will argue that while people with power do not have outcomes dependent upon the targets of their decisions, the situation is of great personal relevance to the dominance trait dimension, so much so that it will indeed impact the impression formation strategies that they choose. If this is the case, high-dominance individuals will behave as though they have power, even when they have been given no specific control over decisions. As a result, high-dominance individuals should be predisposed to use category-based modes of impression formation. In contrast, low-dominance individuals, interpreting situations as though they have no control over outcomes, should not assume control in ambiguous situations and should be more likely to use more individuating impression formation strategies.

In Study 2, subjects were preselected on the basis of individual differences in need for dominance and participated in the same job selection task described in Study 1. Responsibility was manipulated using the same technique as in Study 1, with the addition of a control questionnaire. Also, the phrasing used by the experimenter to introduce the manipulation was altered (as detailed later).

The study involved a 2 (Need for Dominance: high vs. low) x 2 (Responsibility: high vs. low) between-subjects factorial design. As in Study 1, target ethnicity and trait consistency were manipulated within-subjects.

Hypotheses were the same as Study 1, with need for dominance mimicking power in this study. Regarding the attention measures, I expected main effects for dominance and responsibility, as well as an interaction between the two variables. People high in need for dominance should be more likely to use category-based modes of impression formation, but this effect should be moderated by accessibility of responsibility to outgroup members. High need-for-dominance subjects should spend less time attending to category-inconsistent information than low-dominance

subjects. Subjects who receive the high-responsibility manipulation, however, should spend more time attending to category-inconsistent information, relative to subjects who receive the control responsibility manipulation, regardless of their dominance group. Again, the effects of dominance were expected to be moderated by responsibility such that high -dominance subjects would attend more to inconsistent information when given the high-responsibility manipulation.

Subjects' verbal responses were again expected to reflect levels of processing consistent with individuation and categorization depending upon subjects' need for dominance and the responsibility manipulation. High-dominance subjects should make fewer dispositional inferences than low-dominance subjects, unless they receive the high-responsibility manipulation.

Impression ratings were also expected to respond as predicted for Study 1 with high-dominance subjects making less variable ratings of outgroup members. Responsibility also was expected to increase variability in subjects' ratings of targets.

## Method

### Subjects

Sixty-four native English-speaking undergraduates were recruited from introductory psychology courses at the University of Massachusetts. Subjects received extra course credit for their participation.

All subjects participated in a mandatory pre-testing session at the beginning of the semester. During this pretesting session students completed the Dominance Scale of the California Psychological Inventory, CPI, (Gough, 1969; see Appendix E)

and the Modern Racism Scale, MRS (McConahay, 1983; see Appendix F). The CPI Dominance-Scale is a thirty-six item measure designed to assess individual differences in need for dominance. The scale has shown adequate reliability ( $\alpha = .79$ ) in previous research and has been validated on a number of diverse samples (Gough, 1987). Students who scored in the upper and lower 30% on the CPI Dominance Scale were eligible for participation in this study. The MRS is a thirty-two item scale designed to assess racism in a non-threatening way. I intended to use subjects' scores on the MRS in the analyses to control for individual differences in racism.<sup>7</sup>

Of the original sixty-four participants in the study, data for eight subjects were dropped before analysis. Data for three subjects were incomplete due to a malfunctioning of the audio-recording equipment. Data for four subjects were dropped because the subjects indicated unusual suspicion about the cover story. Three of these subjects were from the high-dominance sample, one from the low-dominance sample. Finally, screening the subjects' responses to the high-responsibility manipulation questionnaire indicated that one subject scored more than three standard deviations below the mean on this questionnaire. Since it is likely that the manipulation did not work on this subject, that subject's scores were also removed from the data set. The resulting data set included fifty-six subjects, 15 men and 41 women, distributed in equal proportions among the groups.

### Procedure

The cover story, recruiting, and experimental procedures followed those of Study 1 with a few exceptions: First, subjects participated in only one rating session, evaluating six applicants, as in the first session of Study 1.

Second, there was no manipulation of power, as this study was concerned with individual differences in need for dominance. Instead, all subjects were told that the firm was "interested in their opinions in order to get ideas for better ways to evaluate high school students for intern positions." This manipulation was similar to the low-power manipulation in Study 1, except that here subjects were not given any further indication as to how their responses might be used in the selection process. This situation was intended to be fairly ambiguous with regard to amount of control over outcomes and thus allows us to attribute differences in impression formation strategies due to individual differences in need for dominance.

Third, the responsibility manipulation was corrected to eliminate the confound of Study 1. Subjects in both responsibility conditions answered a questionnaire. Subjects in the high-responsibility condition completed the Humanitarian-Egalitarian Values Scale as in Study 1. Subjects in the low-responsibility condition completed a filler questionnaire containing an equal number of irrelevant statements that subjects were asked to endorse on a 6-point scale (e.g., "There is not enough emphasis on the arts in our education system"; see Appendix G). As mentioned before, the way that the questionnaire was introduced was also altered, in order to reduce possible demand characteristics. The experimenter introduced the questionnaire as an afterthought, expressing a look of surprise at having "forgotten" to give subjects the questionnaire before explaining the procedures. All subjects, regardless of condition, were told that the questionnaire was a part of another unrelated study. The studies were allegedly combined in order to fill the time quota necessary for subjects to receive two full credits for participation. Subjects were asked if they would mind completing the questionnaire before they began their evaluations, supposedly because the experimenter did not

want them to run out of time to complete it. All subjects agreed and completed the questionnaire at this point in the procedure. Upon completing the target ratings, subjects were asked to complete a short questionnaire that included manipulation checks. Subjects were then carefully debriefed and given credit for their participation.

## Analyses

### Attention Measures

Subjects' verbal responses to the target trait information were timed and entered into a mixed design ANOVA, as in Study 1. The analysis generated the predicted two-way interaction (Figure 4) between dominance and consistency of information,  $F(1,52)=3.92$ ,  $p=.05$ , with the predicted pattern. For low-dominance subjects, attention to consistent and inconsistent information was equivalent,  $t(28)=-.37$ ,  $p>.10$ , but high-dominance subjects focused significantly more on the category-confirming consistent information,  $t(26)=2.72$ ,  $p<.01$ .

Additionally, there was a two-way interaction between Target Ethnicity and Consistency such that subjects spent more time attending to negative information,  $F(1,52)=18.23$ ,  $p=.00$ . Contrary to expectations, the responsibility manipulation had no effect on subjects' attention to trait information. Unlike Study 1, there was no interaction between responsibility and dominance, the dispositional power manipulation in this study. It is possible that the responsibility manipulation was too weak to override extreme individual differences in dominance.

## Verbal Response Measures

Subjects' verbal responses were transcribed and coded as in Study 1.<sup>6</sup>

Initial analyses indicated that fewer than 10% of the responses fell into the following coding categories: attribute matching, repetition, and dispositional elaborations. These categories were not considered in the remaining analyses.

Correlational analyses revealed that the driving force behind the attention data appears to be subjects' elaborations about trait information,  $r = .64$ ,  $p < .001$ . There was a significant interaction between dominance and consistency of information for the number of elaborations subjects made about the information (Figure 5),  $F(1,52) = 5.54$ ,  $p = .02$ . High-dominance subjects elaborated more about consistent information (e.g., in response to the trait "loud" one subject replied "they should ask her to be quiet"), while low-dominance subjects did not show a difference in elaboration responses to these two types of information.

Analyses of dispositional inferences likewise revealed a marginal interaction between dominance and consistency of information,  $F(1,52) = 3.34$ ,  $p = .07$ . This effect was not in the predicted direction. Whereas I anticipated high-dominance subjects to make fewer dispositional inferences, the reverse pattern occurred. High-dominance subjects made more dispositional inferences (e.g., in response to the trait "loud," one subject replied "she likes to talk"), and they made them about inconsistent trait information, while low-dominance subjects made more dispositional inferences about consistent trait information.

This analysis also revealed a three-way interaction (Figure 6) between dominance, responsibility, and trait consistency for number of dispositional inferences,  $F(1,52) = 5.71$ ,  $p = .02$ . Under low responsibility, high-dominance subjects

made more dispositional attributions about inconsistent trait information, while low-dominance subjects made more dispositional attributions to consistent trait information. Under high responsibility, this effect was dramatically different; both high- and low-dominance subjects made more dispositional attributions about inconsistent information, but low-dominance subjects made more dispositional attributions overall, relative to high-dominance subjects. As mentioned above, these results contradict what was predicted according to the Continuum Model. According to the model, individuals who are confirming their categories by attending to category-consistent information, as the high-dominance subjects were doing, should make fewer dispositional inferences. In an effort to understand what the present results meant about the way subjects were processing the information, I went back to the dispositional responses and divided them into groups for further examination. Although the number of dispositional responses was too small to submit to further statistical analysis, examination of the types of specific comments made by these subjects suggests that high-dominance subjects may have been moderating the negativity of information when evaluating negative information for the ingroup target, but exaggerating the negativity of information for outgroup targets. For example, in response to the trait "emotional" for the Hispanic target, one high-dominance low-responsibility subject replied "she may be a whiner." In response to the same trait about the Anglo target, one subject responded "she may be too young." In addition, subjects' responses to inconsistent information for Anglo targets tended to include a number of modifying adjectives that moderated the negativity of the trait information (e.g., "a little irresponsible", "she seems to be sensitive"). These modifiers were not as prevalent in responses to consistent (negative) information about Hispanic targets, but they did appear in response to inconsistent (positive)



information about Hispanic targets (e.g., "I guess she's respectful," "looks like she's ambitious"). In the future, I plan to develop a coding category to more adequately capture this potential difference in subjects' responses.

Finally, analysis of the number of evaluations of the trait information revealed a significant three-way interaction between dominance, responsibility, and consistency of information (Figure 7),  $F(1,52)=4.03$ ,  $p<.04$ . Under low responsibility, low-dominance subjects were more evaluative, especially of inconsistent trait information. High-dominance subjects did not make many evaluative responses under low responsibility nor did they differentiate between types of trait information. As with the elaborative responses, however, this pattern reversed under high responsibility. Low-dominance subjects became much less evaluative when given the high-responsibility manipulation, whereas high-dominance subjects became more evaluative, especially of inconsistent target information. This finding may indicate that responsibility means different things to low-dominance individuals compared to high-dominance individuals.

### Impression Ratings

Subjects' impression ratings were measured and analyzed as in Study 1. The ratings were factor analyzed as before. The analysis revealed that these individual items did not load on any one factor in any theoretically meaningful way. Since these items did not appear to contribute to a single factor, I decided to analyze each item separately, in contrast to summing the items as in Study 1. I submitted the item ratings for each target individually to Levene's test for homogeneity of variance.

The pattern of results was consistent with the predictions regarding idiosyncratic impression formation.

### Hispanic Target Ratings

For Hispanic targets, the analyses revealed two significant differences in the variability of subjects' ratings. First, for the ratings of how "irritating" subjects found the target, there was a main effect for power,  $F(1,52)=4.17, p<.05$ , and a main effect for responsibility,  $F(1,52)=11.53, p<.001$ . When subjects had low power, they made more variable ratings on this item. Subjects also made more variable ratings when they were given the high responsibility manipulation. Subjects in the high-dominance low-responsibility condition had the least variability in their ratings.

Second, variability in subjects' ratings of the targets' "skill" level differed significantly by dominance group,  $F(1,52)=4.66, p<.05$ . Low-dominance subjects had more variable ratings than high-dominance subjects. Subjects' ratings on this item were most variable when they were in the high-dominance high-responsibility condition.

These findings are consistent with previous research and indicate a pattern of individuation associated with more idiosyncratic ratings. High-dominance subjects tended to rate Hispanic subjects in less idiosyncratic ways, with responsibility increasing variability in ratings as predicted.

### Anglo Target Ratings

The homogeneity of variance analyses produced similar patterns of idiosyncratic impression formation for Anglo targets, with two significant effects. Again, the variability of subjects' ratings of how "irritating" they found the target

were significantly influenced by dominance,  $F(1,52)=3.84, p<.05$ . Low-dominance subjects made more variable ratings than high-dominance subjects. Subjects' ratings of the Anglo target's "competence" were significantly influenced by the responsibility manipulation such that high-responsibility subjects made more variable ratings of target competence,  $F(1,52)=6.31, p<.01$ .

These findings are again consistent with the expectations that dominance and responsibility influence the variability of impressions, reflecting patterns of individuation and categorization. When subjects were expected to use category-based impression formation strategies about the Anglo target, they also tended to make less variable impression ratings of the target.

#### Other Measures

Subjects again were asked to complete a series of short questions prior to debriefing. Since responsibility failed to influence the attention measure, it is not surprising that the manipulation check for responsibility failed to reach significance. Once again, there were no differences in subjects' ratings of how helpful they found the trait information or how accurate their ratings were.

#### Summary and Conclusion

As predicted, individual differences in need for dominance influenced how subjects attended to and processed information about others in ambiguous power situations. However, responsibility did not moderate the effect. In this study, high-dominance subjects were more likely to adopt category-based attention processes

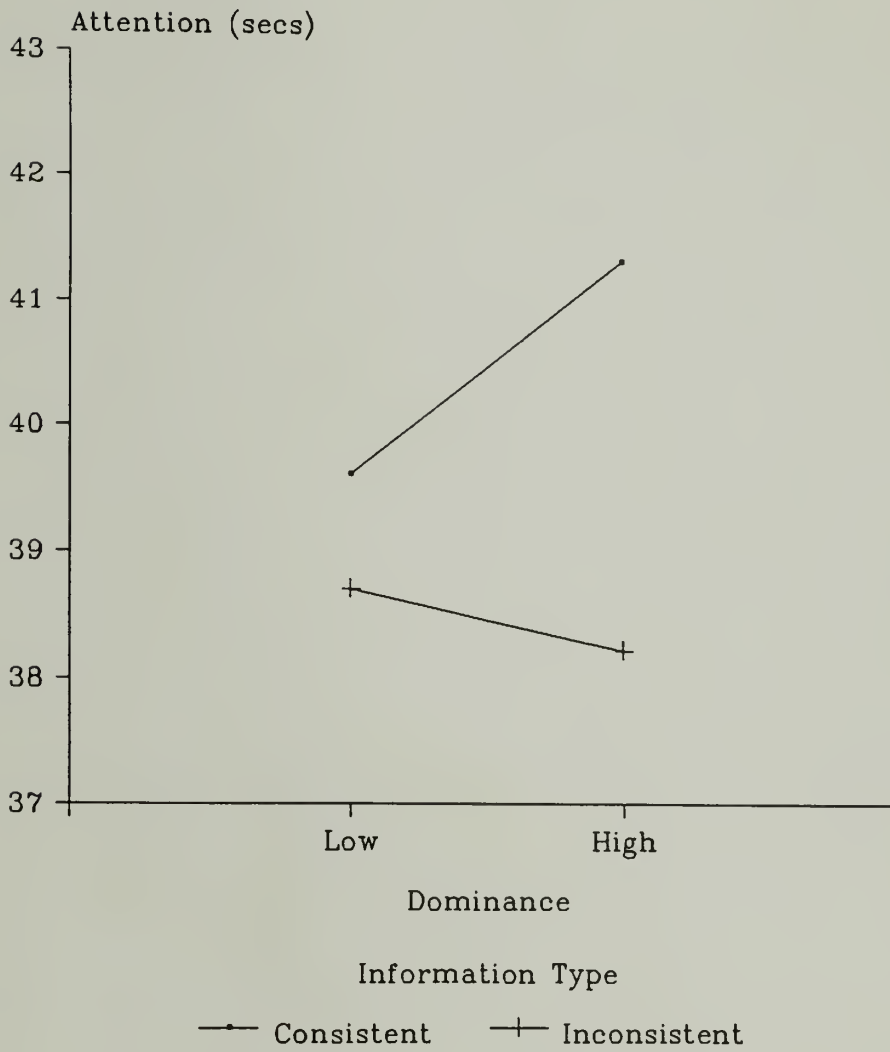
when forming impressions, attending to category-confirming consistent information about targets. In contrast, low-dominance subjects did not attend more to either consistent or inconsistent trait information when evaluating targets. One could hypothesize that low-dominance subjects were merely uninvolved and hence, they did not distinguish because they were only attending to the stimuli minimally. If this were the case, one would expect low-dominance subjects to pay less attention overall to target information than high-dominance subjects, when in fact there were no differences in overall attention between the two groups. This leaves one to speculate that low-dominance subjects may have in fact had less developed stereotypes, or else they were less willing to apply their stereotypes. In either case, it is important that high-dominance subjects had no problem distinguishing between the two types of information.

Perhaps the most startling findings of this experiment were related to subjects' verbal responses about target trait information. Previous research has consistently found that dispositional inference responses are associated with individuating attentional strategies. In other words, people pay attention to inconsistent information, and they make dispositional inferences about that information. I found the opposite. In this study, high-dominance subjects, who were attending more to consistent information, were more likely to make dispositional inferences about the inconsistent trait information. At present there is no clear explanation for this finding, although, as mentioned before, it is possible that subjects made dispositional inferences that allowed them to confirm their expectations about targets.

Subjects' impression ratings were more variable under conditions reflecting individuation. Overall, high-dominance subjects tended to make less idiosyncratic

ratings of targets. Priming subjects for responsibility values tended to increase variability in target ratings. However, it is disappointing that subjects' ratings did not load on a single factor, preventing interpretation of subjects' overall impression ratings as in Study 1. In the future it will be important to try and replicate this pattern of results to determine its reliability.

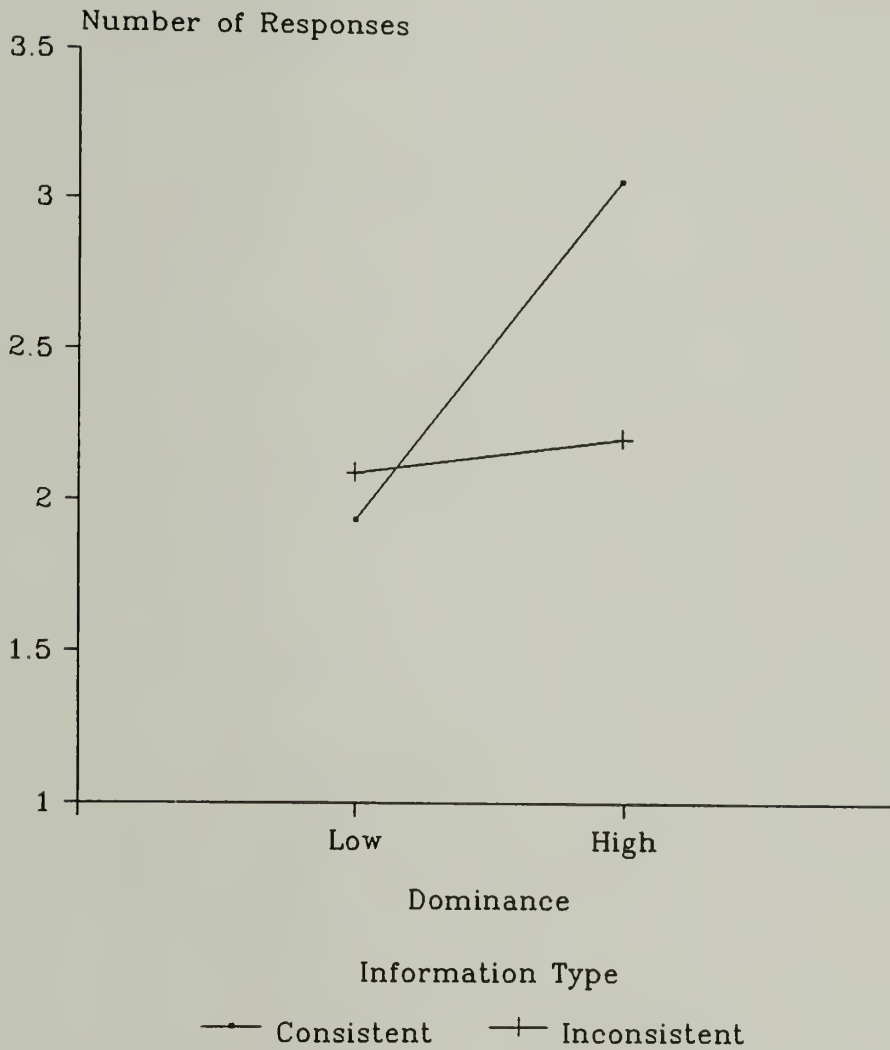
# Attention to Trait Information Dominance x Consistency Interaction



$F(1,52)=3.92, p<.05$

FIGURE 4: Study 2 - Attention to information by dominance and trait consistency.

# Elaboration Responses to Traits Dominance x Consistency Interaction

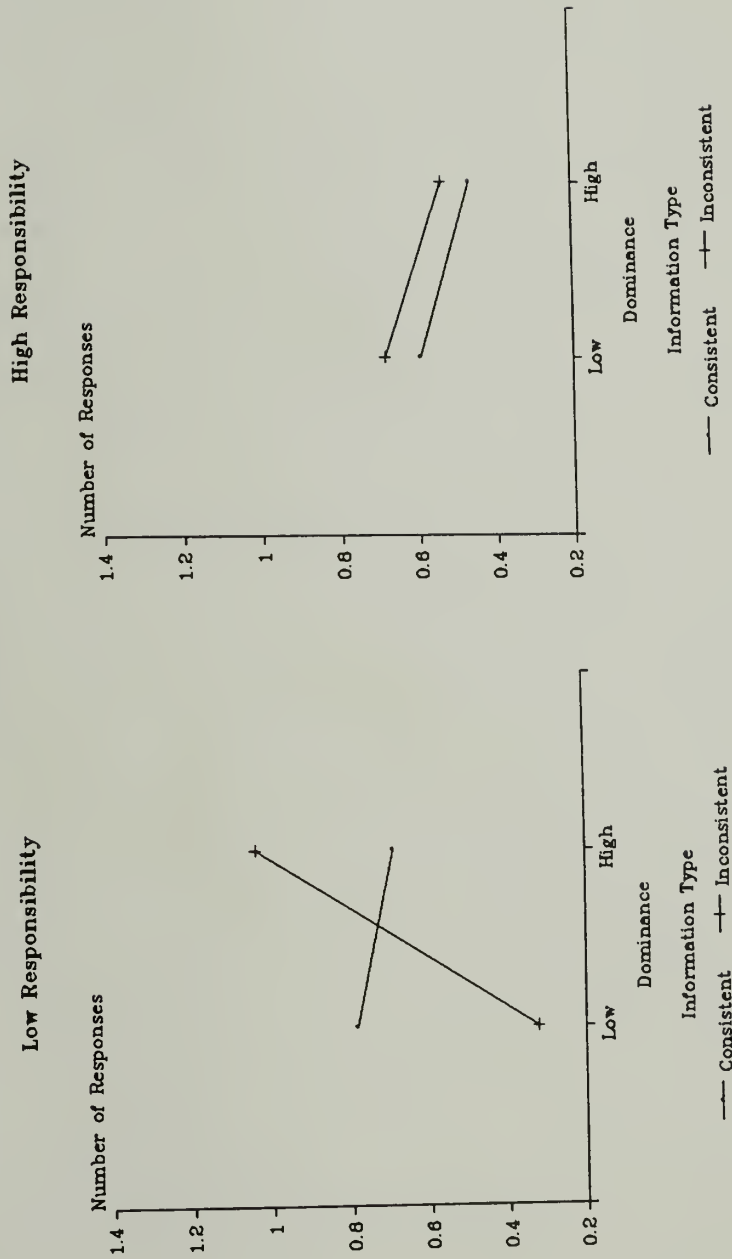


$F(1,53)=5.54, p<.05$

FIGURE 5: Study 2 - Number of elaborative responses by dominance and trait consistency.

# Dispositional Inference Responses

## Dominance x Responsibility x Consistency

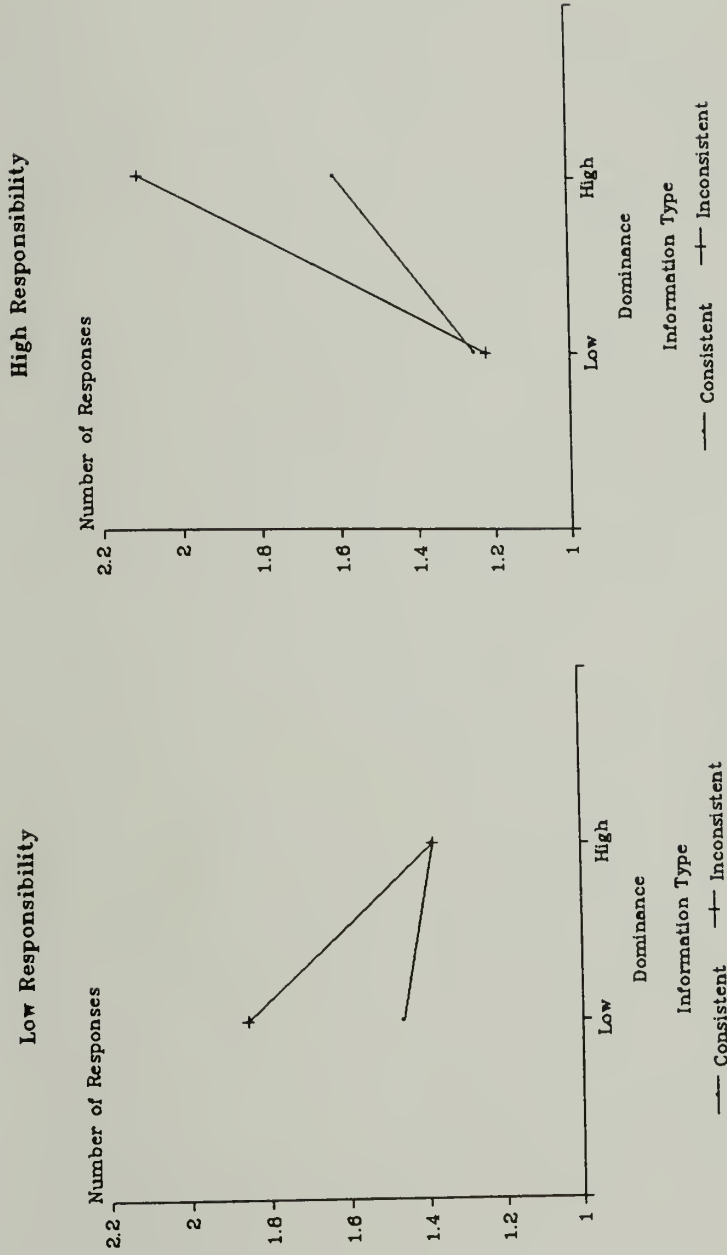


F(1,53)=3.72, p<.05

FIGURE 6: Study 2 - Number of dispositional responses by dominance, responsibility, and trait consistency.



## Evaluation Responses Dominance x Responsibility x Consistency



$F(1,53)=4.03, p<.05$

FIGURE 7: Study 2 - Number of evaluative responses by dominance, responsibility, and trait consistency.

## CHAPTER 4

### CONCLUDING REMARKS

Taken together, the results of these two studies indicate that power, whether real (Study 1) or desired (Study 2) has a significant influence on how people attend to and process information about others. Responsibility also plays an important role in the process, moderating the effects of at least situational power as in Study 1. The fact that the responsibility manipulation did not replicate across the two studies is something of a concern since Study 2 attempted to rule out a possible confound in this manipulation in Study 1. This problem is presently being addressed in a follow-up study. Assuming the responsibility manipulation works in this follow-up study, one can conclude that the null results of Study 2 were due to the powerful influence of the extreme individual differences between the two dominance groups.

The attention results, on the other hand, did behave mostly as expected across the two studies. In the first study, the situational manipulation of power interacted with responsibility to influence subjects' overall attention to trait information. However, there was one problematic cell: low-power/high-responsibility. As discussed following the results of Study 1, subjects in this cell were not expected to decrease attention. It is possible that responsibility has a different meaning for subjects who have no control over targets' outcomes. The analyses of subjects' verbal responses in Study 2 suggest that low-dominance subjects become less evaluative but make more dispositional inferences under high responsibility. The reverse was true for high-dominance subjects. This hints at the possibility that there may be different social rules for making these judgments, given different amounts of power, real or perceived. The theory of social judgment would support the notion that different

roles, such as power and status roles, imply different sets of rules for making social judgments (Leyens, 1983). Again, the follow-up study will attempt to clarify this issue. In any case, the findings in the other three conditions were as predicted, and, the main effect for power was found in Study 2 via the dispositional manipulation of subjects' perceptions of power.

Study 2 indicates that dispositional manipulations of power have a strong impact on impression formation as well. The fact that so many situations involve ambiguous definitions of control confirms the importance of these findings. For example, consider how personnel directors pass on "recommendations" of potential employees to department heads for further consideration. If the personnel directors are high-dominance they may assume they have more influence over the decision, and they may employ category-based impression formation strategies. If so, the likely result would be a "sifting" of the applicant pool that would remove stereotyped applicants. The point is, high-dominance individuals use more category-based processes when forming impressions in ambiguous power situations. To the extent that these individuals also possess the characteristics necessary to achieve power roles, they may be over-represented in high power positions. If the effects of dominance and power compound each other, the result may be the over-application and misuse of stereotypes in decision making by these individuals.

In conclusion, the studies described above begin to illuminate the picture of how power works to influence impression formation. There are, however, still many questions left unanswered about the role of power in impression formation. Future studies will need to address the possibility that situational and dispositional manipulations may interact to heighten the apparent effects of power, as well as the

possibility that responsibility may have different meanings for people depending on their power roles.

## ENDNOTES

1. Other factors in the environment (e.g., time constraints, low accountability for decisions) may contribute to this effect, reducing the resources or motivation necessary to individuate.
2. The order of presentation by ethnicity for the non-target applicants was stable across conditions: Anglo, Anglo, Hispanic, Anglo.
3. These traits were generated by Robert Schatz during the spring semester of the 1990 academic year. Twenty undergraduate psychology students indicated on a 7 point Likert scale which traits they believed were part of traditional stereotypes for Anglos and for Puerto Ricans. Traits were chosen on the basis of between-groups within-subjects contrasts between the group means for each race. Appendix B contains the group means and significance levels for each of the traits included in the present studies.
4. I was able to receive a copy of the original factor analysis of the scale from the authors. This analysis indicated that, of the ten original items on the scale, the deleted item had the lowest factor loading.
5. Subjects signed a consent form that was distorted so as not to reveal the true nature of the study. Upon completion of the study they signed a second consent form and were informed that they could remove their data from the pool if they felt uncomfortable with the deception. No subject expressed feeling uncomfortable with the procedures; in fact, many reported enjoying the study because it was unique compared to others in which they had participated.
6. In previous research using the interdependence paradigm it has proven difficult to get any responses from subjects unless they are specifically instructed to verbalize about each trait sentence. Subjects otherwise tend to feel uncomfortable about speaking aloud into the audio-recording device which inhibits them from responding. I do not believe this presents a problem with the timing data as previous studies have successfully used this technique.
7. It was, in fact not necessary to control for these differences. However it is interesting to note that there was no correlation between subjects' scores on the MRS and their CPI dominance scores,  $r=.08$ ,  $p>.05$ .
8. Although only one judge coded the responses for this study, a second judge previously trained to use the coding scheme cross-coded 36 responses. These responses were analyzed for inter-rater reliability and revealed no significant difference between the two judges ratings. Kappa coefficients ranged from Kappa=.62 for elaborations to Kappa=.93 for evaluations.

# APPENDIX A: SAMPLE APPLICATION FORM

## APPLICATION FOR EMPLOYMENT STUDENT INTERN PROGRAM City of Springfield, MA

**RECD NOV 28 1991**

PLEASE TYPE. FILL IN ALL BLANKS COMPLETELY.

Today's Date: 11 / 20 / 91

**PERSONAL**

Name: <u>Hernandez,</u>	<u>Juanita</u>	<u>Maria</u>
Last	First	Middle
Address: <u>186 Talmadge Dr.</u> <u>Springfield, MA</u> <u>01101</u>		
No./Street	City, State	Zip
Soc. Sec. No.: <u>432 - 79 - 8092</u>	Home Phone: <u>( 413 ) 737 - 9099</u>	

**EDUCATION**

	Area of Study	Years Completed	Name of School
High School		3	Central High School
Other			

**PRIOR WORK EXPERIENCE**

List the last three positions held, beginning with the most recent employer. Include any volunteer work or military service.

Employer/Phone Number	Job Title	From	To	Hours/Week
1. City of Springfield	Student Intern	6/91	9/91	20
Responsibilities: I was responsible for filing and typing/word processing.				
2. International House of Pancakes	Waitress	5/20/90	5/2/91	15-20
Responsibilities: In addition to waiting tables, I operated the cash register and closed up on the weekends.				
3.				
Responsibilities:				

**HONORS AND AWARDS**

Please list any honors or awards you have received, including scholarships and memberships in honor societies.

All City Chorus 1990, All State Chorus-Finalist 1990, Choir Treasurer, 1989-90

Spanish Students Association-Secretary, 1989-Present

**EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

Please list below any hobbies and/or other activities in which you participate. I am the lead soprano in my school

choir. I have had the lead in two high school musical productions and I enjoy acting.

**APPLICANT SKILLS INVENTORY**

Please check only those skills which you feel you have gained through prior work experience and/or education.

**CLERICAL**

Typing

minimum speed 59 (wpm)

Other

- Shorthand
- Bookkeeping
- Accounting
- Editing/Proofing
- Filing
- Maintaining Payroll/Personnel Records
- Medical Records

Office Machines

- Adding machine
- Mimeo/Ditto
- Word Processor
- Switchboard/PBX

Library

- Cataloguing
- Library Research
- Reference
- Records Management

**DATA PROCESSING/COMPUTING**

Packages

- Report Generators
- Graphics
- Word Processing
- Business Packages

Hardware-Micros

- Apple
- TRS-80
- Wang
- IBM PC

**LANGUAGE SKILLS**

Please list any foreign languages and indicate your proficiency by checking the appropriate box(es). If English is a second language, please include it also.

Language	Read	Write	Speak
1. Spanish	X	X	X
2. English	X	X	X

**PERSONAL REFERENCES (exclude former employers and relatives)**

Name	Phone Number	Occupation	Yrs. Known
1. William Randall	737-5990	Insurance Salesman	12
2. Alice Gaines	789-9321	Choir Director	3
3. Edward Abbott	736-4375	Artist/Teacher	9

All answers to the foregoing questions are true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief. It is understood that any false statements will be sufficient reason for my dismissal from the service of the City of Springfield. I authorize investigation of any or all statements contained in this application.

SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT \_\_\_\_\_

APPENDIX B: MEAN TRAIT RATINGS BY ETHNIC GROUP

MEANS

<u>Trait</u>	<u>Anglo</u>	<u>Puerto Rican</u>	<u>p value</u> <sup>1</sup>
Ambitious	5.60	2.95	.0000
Educated	5.85	2.85	.0000
Efficient	5.10	2.70	.0000
Good manners	4.85	2.80	.0000
Industrious	5.55	3.40	.0000
Neat	4.55	2.70	.0001
Emotional	3.60	5.30	.0010
Feels inferior	2.55	4.10	.0025
Ignorant	3.60	5.10	.0074
Loud	4.70	5.80	.0074
Radical	2.85	4.20	.0050
Unreliable	3.10	4.30	.0050

---

<sup>1</sup> These significance values are based on within-groups t-contrasts between the group means. They are not adjusted for multiple contrasts and therefore are somewhat biased.



APPENDIX C: TRAIT GROUP COMBINATIONS

GROUP A

<u>Anglo</u>	<u>Hispanic</u>
Ambitious	Emotional
Educated	Loud
Good manners	Unreliable

GROUP B

<u>Anglo</u>	<u>Hispanic</u>
Industrious	Feels inferior
Efficient	Ignorant
Neat	Radical

GROUP C

<u>Anglo</u>	<u>Hispanic</u>
Ambitious	Feels inferior
Educated	Ignorant
Good manners	Radical

GROUP D

<u>Anglo</u>	<u>Hispanic</u>
Industrious	Emotional
Efficient	Loud
Neat	Unreliable

## APPENDIX D: HUMANITARIAN/EGALITARIAN VALUES SCALE

Subjects responded to the following items using a six-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree."

1. One should be kind to all people.
2. One should find ways to help others less fortunate than oneself.
3. A person should be concerned about the well-being of others.
4. There should be equality for everyone-because we are all human beings.
5. Those who are unable to provide for their basic human needs should be helped by others.
6. A good society is one in which people feel responsible for one another.
7. Everyone should have an equal chance and an equal say in most things.
8. Acting to protect the rights and interests of other members of the community is a major obligation for all persons.
9. Prosperous nations have a moral obligation to share some of their wealth with poor nations.

## APPENDIX E: CALIFORNIA PSYCHOLOGICAL INVENTORY DOMINANCE

### SCALE

Subjects were instructed to respond as to whether or not they agreed with each item, i.e., true or false.

1. I doubt whether I would make a good leader.
2. I think I would enjoy having authority over other people.
3. I find it hard to keep my mind on a task or job.
4. When in a group of people I have trouble thinking of the right things to talk about.
5. Every citizen should take the time to find out about national affairs, even if it means giving up some personal pleasures.
6. I am certainly lacking in self-confidence.
7. When I work on a committee I like to take charge of things.
8. If given the chance I would make a good leader of people.
9. Sometimes at elections i vote for candidate about whom I know very little.
10. When prices are high you can't blame people for getting all they can while the getting is good.
11. In school I found it very hard to talk before the class.
12. I am a better talker than a listener.
13. We should cut down on our use of oil, if necessary, so that there will be plenty left for the people fifty or a hundred years from now.
14. When the community makes a decision, it is up to a person to help carry it out even if he or she had been against it.

15. I would rather have people dislike me than look down on me.
16. I must admit I try to see what others think before I take a stand.
17. People should not have to pay taxes for the schools if they do not have children.
18. In a group, I usually take the responsibility for getting people introduced.
19. I would be willing to describe myself as a pretty "strong" personality.
20. I must admit I am a pretty fair talker.
21. I have strong political opinions.
22. I think I am usually a leader in my group.
23. I seem to do things that I regret more often than other people do.
24. Disobedience to any government is never justified.
25. I enjoy planning things, and deciding what each person should do.
26. I would rather not have very much responsibility for other people.
27. I usually have to stop and think before I act even in trifling matters.
28. It is pretty easy for people to win arguments with me.
29. I have not lived the right kind of life.
30. I have a natural talent for influencing people.
31. I like to give orders and get things moving.
32. I am embarrassed with people I do not know well.
33. I'm not the type to be a political leader.
34. People seem naturally to turn to me when decisions have to be made.
35. I dislike having to talk in front of a group of people.
36. I have more trouble concentrating than others seem to have.

## APPENDIX F: MODERN RACISM SCALE

Subjects responded to the following items using a five-point scale ranging from "disagree strongly" to "agree strongly."

1. Our society would have fewer problems if people had less leisure time.
2. I would oppose a constitutional amendment aimed at ridding the country of pornography and sexual immorality.
3. In a democratic society, the opinion of the majority should always prevail.
4. Race is one factor in determining intelligence.
5. I favor laws that permit anyone to rent or purchase housing even when the person offering the property for sale or rent does not wish to rent or sell it to that type of person.
6. Sex education should be taught in the public school systems of the United States.
7. It is easy to understand the anger of minorities in America.
8. Women aren't safe anymore on the streets at night in my neighborhood.
9. Over the past few years, minorities have gotten more economically than they deserve.
10. I am opposed to the United States maintaining formal diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China.
11. A distaste for work usually reflects a weakness of character.
12. Over the past few years, the government and news media have shown more respect for minorities than they deserve.
13. I favor open or fair housing laws.
14. The United States Senate should not enter arms limitation negotiations with Russia.

15. I would favor a constitutional amendment to permit non-sectarian prayers and religious services in the public schools.
16. Some groups are getting too demanding in their push for equal rights.
17. Generally speaking, I favor full racial integration.
18. I favor ratification of the ERA (Equal Rights Amendment) to the United States Constitution.
19. I favor a strong build-up of U.S. defense capabilities.
20. Minorities have more influence upon school desegregation plans than they ought to have.
21. It was wrong for the United States Supreme Court to outlaw segregation in its 1954 decision.
22. It is wrong for a woman to ask a man out on a date.
23. The United States Senate did the right thing when it passed the Reagan economic package.
24. Discrimination against minorities is no longer a problem in the United States.
25. It is easy to understand the anger of women in America.
26. Busing elementary school children to schools in other parts of the city or suburbs only harms their education.
27. Most of the people on welfare need it and could not get along without it.
28. Interracial marriages are generally a bad idea.
29. In a divorce, the woman should always receive custody of the children.
30. If a black family with about the same level of income and education as I have moved next door, I would mind it a great deal.
31. Streets aren't safe these days without a policeman around.
32. An all-out nuclear war is probably inevitable within my lifetime.

APPENDIX G: LOW RESPONSIBILITY CONDITION QUESTIONNAIRE-STUDY 2

1. Our society would have fewer problems if people had less leisure time.
2. In a democratic society, the opinion of the majority should always prevail.
3. Women aren't safe anymore on the streets at night in my neighborhood.
4. I favor ratification of the ERA (Equal Rights Amendment) to the United States  
Constitution.
5. I favor a strong build-up of U.S. defense capabilities.
6. Most of the people on welfare need it and could not get along without it.
7. In a divorce, the woman should always receive custody of the children.
8. An all-out nuclear war is probably inevitable within my lifetime.
9. The United States Senate did the right thing when it passed the Reagan economic  
package.

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