On the determinants and consequences of punishment goals : power, distrust, and rule compliance

Mooijman, M.

Chapter 3
Power, distrust, and the motivation to maintain power

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Trust is often described as a "binding force" in organizations—it connects people and binds them together in a pursuit of collective goals and achievements. For instance, when people trust others to be cooperative, they tend to focus less on fulfilling self-interested goals, and are more likely to comply with rules that promote cooperation (e.g., paying taxes, contributing to group effort; Balliet & Van Lange, 2013; Tam, Hewstone, Kenworthy, & Cairns, 2009; Yamagishi, 2011). Although stimulating trust is thus important for organizations—such as teams, corporations, and societies—previous research has demonstrated that the power differences that are often prevalent within such organizations can increase individual's distrust towards each other. That is, having—versus not having—power over others has been shown to increase individuals' distrust towards others, thereby motivating behavior aimed at preventing others from being uncooperative (e.g., punish them to prevent uncooperative behavior; see Chapter 2; Mooijman et al., 2015). Individuals' power is thus a vital source of distrust within organizations.

But what is the reason why power increases distrust towards others? In the current research, we argue that powerful individuals' distrust can in part be explained by their motivation to maintain power.

Power

Despite the existence of egalitarian forms of organization, the hierarchical organization remains one of the most prevalent (Anderson & Brown, 2012). Central to a hierarchically structured organization is the notion that some individuals have more power than others (e.g., managers having more power than non-managers). Power can be broadly defined as an individual's asymmetric control over valuable resources (Anderson & Brion 2014; Magee & Galinsky, 2008). That is, power entails the ability to reward or punish others by granting or withholding valuable resources (Keltner et al., 2003). Having such power is often beneficial. For instance, power holders can award themselves higher salaries and bonuses (Kipnis et al., 1976), disregard others' desires and feelings (Goodwin et al., 2000; Van Kleef et al., 2006), and focus on pursuing their own instead of others' goals (Galinksy et al., 2003; Guinote, 2007a; Lammers et al., 2011; Maner & Mead, 2010). Furthermore, power boosts people's self-esteem (Wojciszke & Struzynska–Kujalowicz, 2007) and leads them to express more positive—approach related—emotions (e.g., amusement and happiness) and less negative—inhibition related—emotions (e.g., embarrassment and shame; Anderson et al., 2003).

Given the benefits commonly associated with having power, powerful individuals are motivated to maintain their power. Recent research has shown that after individuals obtain a position that enables them to make group decisions (i.e., power), the majority of them tend to choose to maintain their power position, even when delegating this position to others is in the

interest of the group (Fehr et al., 2013). The tendency to maintain a power position was also shown to become stronger when individuals' degree of loss aversion increased, suggesting that power is especially desirable after one obtains it (i.e., a power-endowment effect; Fehr et al., 2013). The notion that powerful individuals aim to maintain power is corroborated by research showing that—when powerful individuals perceive their power to be threatened—they are more likely to create divisions among less powerful individuals in such a way that it prevents them from forming alliances (Case & Maner, 2014). Moreover, powerful individuals pay more attention (and seek proximity) to individuals who they perceive as a threat to their power (Maner & Meader, 2010). Thus, when individuals gain power, they seem motivated to maintain their power.

Distrust and the motivation to maintain power

Distrust involves an expectation of malicious intent (Kramer, 1999). If you distrust others you thus expect them to pursue their own interests rather than yours (Balliet & Van Lange, 2011). Such distrust may in part be a consequence of power holders' motivation to maintain their power over others. The rationale for this follows from the notion that power holders can lose their power by trusting others too much—trusting others to take your interests into account can be considered a form of resource sharing (i.e., power sharing) that entails a risk for power holders to lose resource control (Kramer, 1999; Mayer et al., 1995; Zand, 1997). For instance, managers that trust their employees to comply with organizational rules may fail to take the appropriate actions required to prevent their employees from breaking rules, thereby potentially undermining their own power position. Distrusting employees to comply with organizational rules, however, increases the likelihood that a manager engages in acts that prevent employees from breaking rules (e.g., introducing more monitoring; Lount & Pettit, 2012). This may, in turn, help the manager to maintain power (since a manager's position depends in part on how employees behave).

More evidence corroborating the role of power motivation in explaining the power-distrust relationship comes from research demonstrating that individuals distrust others more when they are less willing to risk losing their resources to these others (Das & Teng, 2004), and that this distrust often explains why individuals take actions to prevent resource loss (i.e., do not give others access to their resources; Lount & Pettit, 2012). Similarly, economists frequently define trust as involving the risk of losing resources to others (e.g., Berg et al., 1995). Since power holders have, by definition, more resources to lose to others than non-power holders, we propose that the motivation to maintain resource control (i.e., power) explains at least in part why power fosters a distrustful mindset (consistent with Thomas Hobbes' notion that individuals should distrust each other to prevent exploitation; Hobbes, 1651/1988). If our reasoning is

correct then, (a) occupying a high (versus low) power position should increase distrust towards others through increasing the motivation to maintain this power position, (b) individuals with a high (versus low) motivation to maintain power should distrust others more when they occupy a position of power, and (c) occupying a stable power position should attenuate the power-distrust link (to the extent that a stable power position fulfills the motivation to maintain power; see Maner & Mead, 2010).

Overview of current research

We tested these predictions in three experiments. Our first aim in Experiment 3.1 was to replicate our finding from Chapter 2 that power fosters distrust. Our second aim was to test whether power (high versus low) affects distrust through affecting the desire to maintain one's (high- or low-power) position. In Experiment 3.2, we measured how important participants considered obtaining a position of power and tested its interactive effect with the power position that we assigned participants to (i.e., leader versus subordinate). As such, we could test whether the power-distrust link is especially strong for those with a high (versus low) motivation for power. Finally, in Experiment 3.3, we investigated how the stability of participants' power position affected their trust. Consistent with previous research (Maner & Mead 2010), we reasoned that having a stable (versus unstable) power position fulfills the motivation to maintain power, thereby attenuating the power-distrust link (i.e., making individuals less distrustful towards others).

Consistent with recommendations of Simmons et al., (2011), we ensured that each condition had around 30 participants (Experiment 3.1), or more (i.e., more than 45 in Experiments 3.2 and 3.3; cf. Simmons et al., 2013). Unless indicated otherwise, all measured variables were assessed on seven-point scales on which participants could indicate their level of agreement (1 = *disagree completely*, 7 = *agree completely*). All participants provided informed consent and were debriefed, compensated, and thanked for their participation.

Experiment 3.1

In Experiment 3.1, we investigated the extent to which having high (versus low) power affects the trust that individuals have in others. We further investigated how this power-trust link is affected by individuals' motivation to maintain power. Consistent with the conceptualization of power as *control* over critical resources (Magee & Galinsky, 2008), we manipulated the extent to which individuals controlled a large (high power) compared to small (low power) amount of money that they give to others (cf. reward power; see Anderson et al., 2003). We further measured both individuals' motivation to keep control over these resources and their trust in

others. If the power-distrust link is explained by power holders' motivation to maintain power, then having high (versus low) power should increase the motivation to maintain power and subsequently foster distrust in others.

Method

Participants and design. Ninety-seven Dutch university students (77 females; M_{age} = 20.75 years, SD_{age} = 2.28) participated in exchange for €2 and were randomly assigned to either the high-power or low-power condition.

Procedure. Participants were informed that they were part of a five-person group consisting of four "workers" and one "leader". Four group members would be able to earn up to an extra €20 by finding correct words in a scrambled-letter task, whereas the fifth group member would be assigned as the group leader. This group leader could control (part) of the €20 that the other group members could earn. Crucially, group members had to self-report to the group leader the number of correct words they found. The group leader would then be able to reward the group members on the basis of that information. The rule was that group members would be rewarded €0.10 for each correctly found word, but that group leaders could deviate from this rule at their own discretion.

Power manipulation. To determine the leadership position, all participants filled out the Management Assessment Inventory scale (MAI; see Stouten, De Cremer & Van Dijk, 2005). This is a bogus scale consisting of 26 items measuring leadership style (e.g., "a leader should be able to command respect"). Allegedly on the basis of participants' scores on this scale, all participants learned that they were assigned to the group leader position (participants were informed that they scored comparatively "high" on this scale). Participants in the high-power condition were then informed that they controlled €17.50 that they could allocate, whereas participants in the low-power condition were informed that they controlled €2.50 that they could allocate. That is, as group leaders, participants could fully determine how this money was allocated to the other group members (but they could not allocate any money to themselves and the money would only be relevant within the experiment; they would thus not be able to keep the remaining money for themselves or give it to others after the experiment). Participants were told that the money not controlled by them (€2.50 or €17.50, depending on condition) was controlled by the experimenter, who would use it to allocate it to the other group members. This manipulation is consistent with the conceptualization of power as control over valuable resources (see Magee & Galinsky, 2008). Thus, high power entailed more control over critical resources (i.e., money) than low power.

Motivation for maintaining power. Participants then indicated to what extent they were motivated to maintain their power on the following item, "I want to maintain the power I currently have".

Distrust. Participants further indicated the extent to which they distrusted the other group members to report the correct number of words. Note that group members could try to gain more money from the group leader through lying about the number of words they found (i.e., reporting a higher number of words). Thus through lying, group members could undermine the group leader's reward power (i.e., the group leader could reward group members less accurately), and undermine the reward-rules of the experiment. Four items were framed positively (i.e., trust) and four items were phrased negatively (i.e., distrust). Trust items included the following, "group members can be trusted", "group members will be honest when self-reporting", "group members are not inclined to lie", and "I think group members are trustworthy". Distrust items included the following, "group members cannot be trusted", "group members will be dishonest when self-reporting", "group members are inclined to lie", and "I think group members are untrustworthy". These four trust items were reverse coded and averaged with the four distrust items to form an eight-item distrust scale ($\alpha = .87$).

Power manipulation check. To verify the power manipulation, participants' sense of power was measured on a five-item scale. Items included the following, "I feel powerful", "I feel in control of others", "Others depend on me", "I think I have power over others", and "I feel influential" ($\alpha = .87$). Confirming the validity of the power manipulation, high-power leaders felt more powerful ($M = 5.39$, $SD = 0.92$) than low-power leaders ($M = 3.58$, $SD = 1.17$; $t[95] = 8.50$, $p < .001$, $d = 1.75$).

Results

Confirming our predictions, high-power leaders were both more motivated to stay in power ($M = 4.96$, $SD = 1.21$) than low-power leaders ($M = 4.44$, $SD = 1.52$; $t[95] = 1.88$, $p = .063$, $d = 0.39$) and more likely to distrust workers ($M = 4.36$, $SD = 1.12$) than low-power leaders ($M = 3.85$, $SD = 1.14$; $t[95] = 2.23$, $p = .028$, $d = 0.46$). Motivation to maintain power was positively correlated with distrust ($r = .46$, $p < .001$) and a bootstrapping analysis using 5,000 resamples (Hayes & Preacher, 2011) demonstrated that the motivation to maintain power mediated the effect of power on distrust (95% CI = [0.01, 0.024]). Moreover, the significant effect of power on distrust ($\beta = .22$, $t = 2.23$, $p = .028$) was reduced to non-significance ($\beta = .14$, $t = 1.53$, $p = .13$) when power motivation (which in itself still positively predicted distrust, $\beta = .43$, $t = 4.71$, $p < .001$) was added to the model.

Discussion

These results replicate our previous finding that power increases distrust in others (see Chapter 2). Results from Experiment 3.1 also extend these previous findings by demonstrating that this power-distrust link can be explained by power holders' motivation to maintain their power over others. Although consistent with our conceptualization of power, the power manipulation used in Experiment 3.1 did not enable group leaders to punish group members for rule-breaking behavior. In Experiment 3.2, we addressed this shortcoming while providing additional support for the idea that the power-distrust relationship can be partly explained as a means to maintain power.

Experiment 3.2

In Experiment 3.2, we first measured the extent to which individuals considered occupying a power position personally important. If the motivation to maintain power explains why power increases distrust, then powerful individuals who consider having a power position important (high-power motivation) should distrust others more than individuals who do not (low-power motivation; cf. Case & Maner, 2014; Maner & Mead, 2010). Furthermore, we used a power manipulation that entailed the possibility to punish others for untrustworthy behavior (cf. influence; Keltner et al., 2003). Although power and influence are conceptually distinct (i.e., others can decide to not comply with a power holder's request; Anderson & Brion, 2014), power holders often have influence over others through the possibility to punish them for their rule-breaking behavior. In Experiment 3.2 we therefore used a power manipulation that included the possibility for power holders to punish others.

Method

Participants and design. A total of 174 Dutch university students (111 females*;* M_{age} = 20.72 years, SD_{age} = 2.31) participated in exchange for €2 and were randomly assigned to the high-power or low-power condition. Prior to the power manipulation, we measured the extent to which participants considered obtaining such a power position important.

Procedure. Participants were informed that they would observe a six-person group. These group members could take resources out of a common resource pool for their own benefit (cf. social dilemma game; Molenmaker et al., 2014; Van Lange et al., 2013). Participants learned that they could harvest from a common resource of 300 chips, each worth €0.10. Each individual group member could take between 0 and 60 chips from this resource and chips that were left were multiplied by two and divided equally among the group members. This way, taking chips from the common resource only benefitted individual group members, whereas leaving chips in

the common pool benefitted the entire group (Van Lange et al., 2013). This social dilemma game can be used to measure the extent to which group members trust others to cooperate and leave chips in the common resource pool, while also manipulating the power that group members have in the game (Mooijman et al., 2015; Mulder et al., 2006). Indeed, it was further explained to participants that they—or another participant—would be assigned to a role that entailed either full control or no control over the common resource, respectively. That is, it was explained to all participants that having power entailed having full control over the chips in the common resource pool but that it was either themselves (high-power condition) or a different participant that was given this resource control (low-power condition). Both participants in the high-power condition and the low-power condition would observe the choices made by the other group members in terms of numbers of chips harvested, but only participants in the high-power condition could ultimately reallocate the chips among the group members (and thus punish group members for uncooperative behavior). It was explained to all participants that they would play multiple social dilemma game rounds, in which power positions would be reassigned to participants before every new round. In reality, the experiment stopped after one social dilemma game round.

Importance of power position. Participants indicated whether they considered it personally important to acquire such a power position (yes, no). Forty-five participants (30.6%) considered it personally important to acquire such a power position, whereas one hundred-and-two participants did not (69.4%). Participants were then randomly assigned to either the high-power or no-power condition.

Distrust. Participants indicated the extent to which they distrusted the other group members to refrain from taking chips from the common resource pool. Consistent with Experiment 3.1, four items were framed positively (i.e., trust) and four items were phrased negatively (i.e., distrust). Trust items referred to the following, "group members can be trusted", "group members will further the interest of the group", "group members are willing to forego their self-interest", and "group members are inclined to pursue group interests". Distrust items included the following, "group members cannot be trusted", "group members are not willing to forego their self-interest", "group members consider self-interest more important than group interest", and "group members will take as many chips from the resource pool as possible". The four trust items were reverse coded and averaged with the four distrust items to form an eight-item distrust scale ($\alpha = .93$).

Power manipulation check. To verify the power manipulation, participants' sense of power was measured on a four-item scale. Items referred to the following, "I feel powerful", "I feel in control of others", "Others depend on me", and "I think I have power over others" ($\alpha =$

.82). Confirming the validity of the power manipulation, participants felt more powerful in the high-power condition (M = 4.96, SD = 0.79) compared to the control condition (M = 2.33, SD = 0.79; F[1, 143] = 356.33, p < .001, η^2_p = .71). No significant main effect of power importance or interaction effect between power motivation and the power manipulation was found (F[1, 143] = 0.58, p = .45, η^2_p = .00; F[1, 143] = 1.26, p = .26, η^2_p = .01).

Motivation for maintaining position. Lastly, to verify that participants who considered it personally important (compared to not important) to acquire a group leader position would be more motivated to maintain this position throughout the experiment, we measured their motivation to maintain their position with the following item, "I like to maintain the current position throughout the experiment".

Results

Motivation for maintaining position. A univariate analysis of variance with power position (high, low) and power importance (yes, no) as independent variables, and power motivation as dependent variable yielded a significant main effect of power position (F[1, 143] = 120.95, p < .001, η^2_p = .46) and a significant two-way interaction between the power manipulation and power importance (F[1, 143] = 6.14, p = .014, η^2_p = .04), but no significant main effect of power importance (F[1, 143] = 0.17, p = .89, η^2_p = .00). Participants in the high-power position who considered it personally important to acquire power were more motivated to maintain their high power position (M = 5.85, SD = 1.49) than participants who did not consider acquiring power important (M = 4.96, SD = 1.58; t[71] = 2.17, p = .033, d = 0.52). Power importance did not matter for participants in the low-power position (M = 2.64, SD = 1.32; M = 2.78, SD = 1.21, respectively; t[72] = 0.44, p = .66, d = 0.10).

Distrust. A univariate analysis of variance with power position (high, low) and power importance (yes, no) as independent variables, and distrust as dependent variable demonstrated a significant main effect of power (F[1, 143] = 4.01, p = .047, η^2_p = .04) and a significant two-way interaction between power position and power importance (F[1, 143] = 5.47, p = .021, η^2_p = .04), but no significant main effect of power importance (F[1, 143] = 0.58, p = .49, η^2_p = .00). As shown in Figure 3.1, occupying a high-power position increased distrust for those high in power importance (t[43] = 2.49, p = .017, d = 0.76), but not for those low in power importance (t[100] = 0.31, p = .76, d = 0.01).

Mediation analysis. A moderated mediation analysis with 5,000 resamples (see Hayes & Preacher, 2011) demonstrated that participants' motivation to maintain their (high) power position mediated the interaction between the (high, low) power position that participants occupied and how important (yes, no) they considered obtaining this power position (95% CI =

[0.02, 0.41]). That is, the motivation to maintain power explained (in part) why (high versus low) power increased distrust for individuals who considered acquiring the power position important (95% CI = [0.09, 0.10]) but not for participants who did not consider acquiring the high-power position important (95% CI = [-0.85, 0.09]).

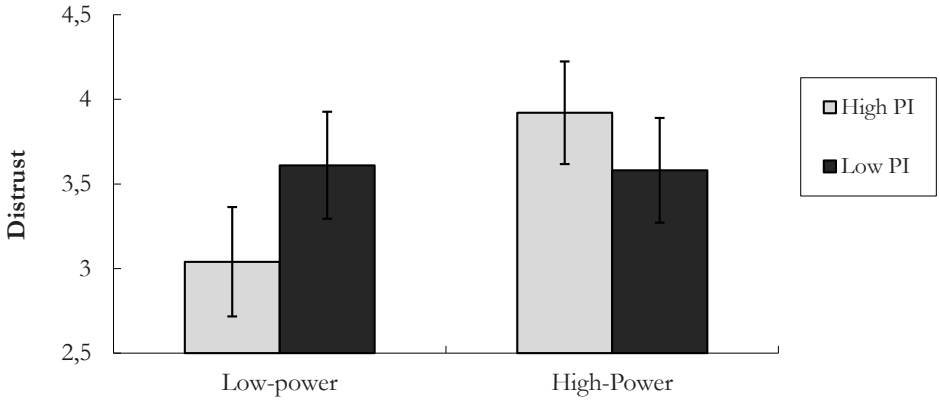

Figure 3.1. Distrust as a function of power and power importance for Experiment 3.2. Error bars indicate standard errors.

Discussion

Experiment 3.2 replicates the finding from Experiment 3.1 that power increases distrust in others (see Chapter 2; Mooijman et al., 2015). Results from Experiment 3.2 also provide additional evidence for the role of the motivation to maintain power. Participants who considered acquiring a power position important (versus not important), and occupied this power position, became more motivated to maintain their power position, and in turn became more distrustful. These findings thus affirm that the effects of power on distrust are in part explained by individual's motivation to maintain a high-power position. Although consistent with our predictions, the measurement of power motivation was relatively indirect and the distribution of participants was unevenly distributed over the two power-importance response options (yes, no). We addressed these issues in Experiment 3.3. If the power-distrust link is explained by power holders' motivation to maintain power, then fulfilling this motivation should attenuate the extent to which power fosters distrust. In Experiment 3.3, we addressed this by directly manipulating power stability. Manipulations of power stability have been used extensively in previous research to fulfill (or exacerbate) behavior aimed at maintaining power (Anderson & Galinsky, 2006; Case & Maner, 2014; Ellemers, Wilke, & Van Knippenberg, 1993; Maner & Mead, 2010). Indeed,

individuals tend to be less afraid of losing their power when their power position is stable compared to unstable. This decreases behavior from power holders that is aimed at maintaining power.

Experiment 3.3

In Experiment 3.3, we manipulated the stability of participants' power position. If the power-distrust relationship is in part explained by power holders' motivation to maintain power, then fulfilling the motivation to maintain power should attenuate the power-distrust link. Indeed, being certain about maintaining one's (high) power position should attenuate actions aimed at maintaining power—that is, decrease distrust towards others. Finding evidence for this conjecture would suggest that creating stable power positions could weaken the extent to which power increases distrust.

Method

Participants and design. Sixty-two Dutch university students (37 females*;* M_{age} = 22.53 years, SD_{age} = 2.88) participated in exchange for €2 and were randomly assigned to either the stable or unstable power position condition.

Procedure. As in Experiment 3.2, all participants were given control over the allocation of resources in the same social dilemma game (i.e., all participants occupied a high-power position). It was explained to them that they would play multiple social dilemma game rounds.

Power stability. Consistent with previous research on power stability (Maner & Mead, 2010), half of the participants were informed that their power position could randomly change throughout the experiment (i.e., was unstable), whereas the other half of the participants were informed that their power position could not change throughout the experiment (i.e., was stable). To verify this stability manipulation, perceived stability was measured on a three-item scale. That is, "my position seems unstable", "I feel uncertain about my position", and "my position might change throughout the experiment" (α = .64). Confirming the validity of our manipulation, participants felt that their position was more unstable in the unstable power condition (M = 5.71, SD = 0.81) compared to the stable power condition (M = 5.16, SD = 1.21; t[60] = 2.01, p = .040, d = 0.52).

Distrust. Participants indicated the extent to which they distrusted the other group members to refrain from taking chips from the common resource pool on a three-item scale. Items included, "group members cannot be trusted", "group members will not further the interest of the group", and "group members are not willing to forego their self-interest" (α = .91).

Results and discussion

Consistent with our predictions, participants in the unstable power condition distrusted others more (M = 4.44, SD = 1.14) than participants in the stable power condition (M = 3.72, SD = 1.58; t[60] = 2.06, p = .044, d = 0.53).

Discussion

These results provide additional evidence for the hypothesis that the effect of power on distrust is explained by the motivation to maintain this power. Indeed, consistent with the idea that stable power positions decrease the likelihood that individuals engage in behavior aimed at maintaining power (Case & Maner, 2014), these results demonstrate that having a stable (versus unstable) power position attenuated the power-distrust link.

General Discussion

Although promoting trust is vital for powerful individuals such as managers, previous research has demonstrated that power fosters distrust in others (see Chapter 2). In the current research, we investigated the psychological process that underlies this power-distrust link. In three experiments, we demonstrated that, (a) having high (versus low) power increased distrust through increasing the motivation to maintain power, (b) individuals with a high (versus low) motivation to stay in power distrusted others more when they occupied a position of power, and (c) occupying a stable (versus unstable) power position attenuated the power-distrust link. Together, these studies provide converging support for the hypothesis that power increases distrust in part because of power holders' motivation to maintain power.

Implications

The present research makes several contributions to the literature on power and trust. First, it provides an understanding why power increases distrust. Previous research has demonstrated that having power can increase an individual's distrust towards others (Mooijman et al., 2015) but has provided little evidence as to what explains this power-distrust link. The current research provides support for the notion that power holders distrust others (partially) to maintain their own power. This suggests that powerful individuals in an organization (e.g., managers) may approach others in a more distrustful manner to maintain power. This might seem at odds with research that has documented how the psychological state of status that is often associated with a hierarchical position can increase interpersonal trust (Lount & Pettit, 2012). Importantly, although power and status often go together, they are conceptually distinct

(Magee & Galinsky, 2008). Power refers to asymmetric control over resources, whereas status refers to the respect and admiration that one has in the eyes of others. Experiment 3.1 manipulated power between conditions while keeping status differences between these conditions to a minimum (i.e., all participants were leaders). The present research therefore suggests that power affects interpersonal trust differently than status. This observation is consistent with recent research suggesting that power often has different, and even opposing, psychological effects than status (Blader & Chen, 2012).

Second, the current research broadens our understanding of distrust by demonstrating why power increases distrust. Although trust and hierarchy have been much studied topics (Kramer, 1999), few studies have investigated how power holders (dis)trust others. The present research suggests why an organizational hierarchy may create distrust through its power holders. As such, we are—to our knowledge—the first to demonstrate why power fosters distrust. These results have implications for attempts to promote interpersonal trust in organizations and societies. For instance, attempts to promote organizational trust may fail when those who aim to promote them (e.g., managers) tend to distrust others (e.g., employees) in the organization. Indeed, given the influence of power holders in setting exemplary behavior (Mayer, Kuenzi, Greenbaum, Bardes, & Salvador, 2009) and the negative effects associated with interpersonal distrust (e.g., decreased liking, increased tendency for unethical behavior; see Chapter 3; Mulder et al., 2006), power holders' distrust is potentially problematic (e.g., communicates and spreads distrust throughout an organization or society). The current research suggests that attenuating power holders' fear of losing their power may help alleviate some of the negative effects of power on distrust.

Limitations and Future Directions

Whereas the current research provides converging support for our hypotheses, there are several possible limitations to address. For instance, we measured (trust) expectations about others' behavior instead of measuring actual trust-related behaviors (e.g., sharing money with others; see Berg et al., 1995). Although the two are highly correlated (Lount & Pettit, 2012), future research could use the trust game to investigate the effects of power on trust-related behaviors. In the current experiments, power holders were also relatively independent from others (cf. the definition of power; Magee & Galinsky, 2008). However, power holders are in real life often also dependent on their subordinates (e.g., politicians relying on citizens' votes) or higher-ranked officials (e.g., an assistant professor relying on a full professor) for maintaining their power.

Future research could investigate how these two types of dependence affect the power-distrust link. Being dependent on someone else for maintaining one's power may for instance foster trust towards this person, especially for those individuals who are highly motivated to maintain power (consistent with research on system-justification showing that being dependent on others increases the motivation to view these others more positively; Van der Toorn et al., 2015). Indeed, on the basis of the current research, it may be fruitful to investigate ways of making power holders more dependent on others. Moreover, future research could also investigate how to effectively eliminate the power-distrust link. For instance, future research could focus on how power holders' identification with a relevant organization affects their distrust (cf. Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000).

Conclusion

We presented three experiments that examined the power-distrust in more detail. Using different manipulations of power and measurements of power motivation, we consistently observed that distrust increased as a function of the motivation to maintain power. The motivation to maintain power thus explained in part why power holders distrust others. In doing so, the current work broadens our knowledge about power and trust. It also suggests practical implications for managers, leaders, and policy-makers about why their power can make them distrustful about others' intentions.