## Basic and Applied Social Psychology

# Framing Social Dominance Orientation and Power in Organizational Context

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# Framing Social Dominance Orientation and Power in Organizational Context

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The present research incorporates both intergroup and interpersonal approaches to power to examine influence tactics in organizations. Both approaches suggest that there should be coordination between supervisors and subordinates in the workplace for the smooth functioning of organizations. Study 1 tested how employees' social dominance orientation corresponds to what interpersonal influence tactics employees view as acceptable for supervisors. Study 2 tested how employees' SDO corresponds to interpersonal influence tactics they would use on subordinates. Complementarily, results showed that the higher participants were on SDO, the more they endorsed harsh tactics as legitimate. Implications for integrating power theories are discussed.

A growing interest in the study of the group-based discrimination and oppression dynamics has outlined the role of power in affecting individuals and group's relationships in many ways. There are two separate arenas in social psychology in which the study of power is central: (a) intergroup relations and (b) organizations. Little theory or research has attempted to integrate these two approaches. Part of the reason that these two arenas have not been well integrated may be that intergroup relations largely operate at the societal or between-societal levels, and organizational relations often concern authority structures for interpersonal relationships.

Social dominance theory (SDT; Sidanius, 1993; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999; Sidanius, Pratto, van Laar, & Levin, 2004) is exceptional in attempting to integrate power vis-à-vis intergroup relations and power vis-à-vis organizations, because SDT postulates and has shown that institutional discrimination is a major means by which groups create and maintain dominance over other groups (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). Further, SDT considers the relationship between different levels of analysis as they pertain to hierarchies. Thus, SDT has addressed how organizations influence intergroup relations within societies, and how people with goals to sustain or disrupt unequal intergroup relations are selected into, rewarded, and enact their values about group inequality through their work in organizations. However, to date this theory has not incorporated insights about interpersonal power, which is also important in the authority structures and operations of organizations. To show how the present research will incorporate the interpersonal approach to power with the intergroup approach to power, we first summarize the relevant insights from SDT and interdependence theory and then explain our integrative view and hypotheses.

SDT recognizes that organizations are the site of institutional discrimination, but this discrimination may either maintain or enhance group-based inequality within societies, or may attenuate it. Following classic organization theory (Holland, 1959), SDT postulates

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that institutions obtain a fit between the organizations' members and the predominant ideologies, values, and agenda of the organization, or a person–environment fit, through several processes (Haley & Sidanius, 2005; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). Experiments and surveys have shown that organizations and potential employees both tend to select one another to have compatible values or orientations for hierarchy enhancement or hierarchy attenuation (Pratto & Espinoza, 2001; Pratto, Stallworth, Sidanius, & Siers, 1997; Sidanius, Pratto, Sinclair, & van Laar, 1996). For example, potential employers tend to select employees who have psychological orientations toward group dominance that are compatible with whether the institution does hierarchy-enhancing or hierarchy-attenuating work, and potential employees also seek employment in institutions that are either hierarchy attenuating or hierarchy enhancing to match their own values for group equality or inequality (Pratto et al., 1997). This confluence of characteristics of employees and characteristics of organizations makes the way that organizations discriminate more systematic (see Haley & Sidanius, 2005, for a review).

The present research extends SDT's analysis of power and organizations further by using SDT to frame how power is used within organizations. Organizational theory suggests that interpersonal power is essential to the smooth functioning of organizations, but none of the existing studies of SDT and organizations have addressed how interpersonal power facilitates organizational processes or reflects other elements of SDT. Aside from the way institutions influence intergroup power in societies at large, many organizations are internally characterized by power relationships. Indeed, disproportions in the use of resources in work organizational settings help to establish power-based relationships characterized by asymmetric roles, like those between supervisors and their subordinates. Power-holders use forms of power and subordinates comply with these forms of power according to different situational and motivational factors (Pierro, Cicero & Raven, 2008; Schwarzwald, Koslowsky & Ochana-Lewin, 2004). Because such processes may also contribute to the smooth functioning of organizations, as well as encapsulating power relations on a microlevel, we argue that considering the dynamics of interpersonal power tactics (Raven & Kruglanski, 1970; Twomey, 1978), as well as aspects of SDT, can help us understand how power pertains to both organizations and intergroup relations. We summarize key aspects of SDT and interpersonal power before stating our hypotheses.

## FRAMING SOCIAL DOMINANCE

Within the broader field of theories of intergroup relations, SDT addresses the question of why hierarchies among groups persist across time in societies with economic surplus (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). SDT views the institutionalization of discrimination and the enculturation of legitimizing ideologies to be key to maintaining group-based hierarchies. One tool that SDT has developed for understanding how much various social policies and practices or ideologies serve to support or maintain hierarchy is to measure groups' and individuals' social dominance orientation (SDO; Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth, & Malle, 1994). SDO indicates how strongly one opposes or tolerates group-based inequality, and it increases among people higher in group positions within their societies (Lee, Pratto, & Johnson, 2011) or organizations (e.g., Guimond, 2006). Research has shown that SDO (Pratto et al., 1994) is a highly useful tool for measuring the commonality in people's endorsement of legitimizing myths (e.g., Sidanius, Pratto, & Bobo, 1996) and discriminatory policy attitudes (e.g., Pratto, Stallworth, & Conway-Lanz, 1999). Because people tend to work in organizations in which other organizational members have similar SDO levels, the fact that they also then are likely to endorse the same ideologies or legitimizing myths is one reason that SDO assortment helps organizations function smoothly.

There are several other reasons that the research literature suggests that SDO is a useful tool for understanding the use of power tactics by individuals in organizations vis-à-vis other organization members. For one, SDO can also be viewed as a motivational "goal-schema" (Duckitt, 2001), through which people became differently motivated within specific intergroup power dynamics to enforce dominance. As different power tactics can establish more or less interpersonal power, SDO may be connected to preferences about different power tactics. Second, to the extent that having people in organizations have mutual understandings of what power tactics they view as appropriate to actors with different organizational power, such as supervisors and subordinates, these views of power tactics also function as a consensual legitimizing myth in reducing conflict within organizations. In other words, if there is coordination between supervisors and subordinates in what power tactics they view as acceptable for different people in the organization, this would be a within-organization enactment of the coordination between dominants and subordinates that SDT describes as "behavioral asymmetry." Third, personality and organizational studies show that people higher on SDO are more hostile, less empathic, and are more punitive than people lower on SDO; Pratto, Sidanius, and Levin (2006) summarized these findings by stating that higher SDO people are "cold, callous, and cruel." This body of work suggests that high SDO people may prefer harsh power tactics and lower SDO people to prefer soft power tactics. Some prior research has shown that SDO relates to power-related concerns in the workplace. Lee-Chai, Chen, and

Chartrand (2001) found that attitudes toward general misuse of power correlated substantially and positively with SDO. Pratto et al. (1997) found that people higher on SDO also desired jobs with high status. Moreover, there is a little research that is consistent with behavioral asymmetry within organizations. Nicol (2009) examined the relationship between Stogdill's (1963) leadership behavior description questionnaire and SDO among Cadets at the Royal Military College of Canada. Nicol (2009) found that SDO correlated negatively with the "Consideration" leadership style, in which the subordinate is considered "friendly, approachable, able to work in a group and able to adapt to others" (p. 658) and also with Tolerance of Uncertainty, and positively with the "Production Emphasis" leadership style, which focuses on subordinates' outputs and on the ability to achieve higher productivity (overtime, working harder, hassling subordinates to get their work done). Son Hing, Bobocel, Zanna and McBride (2007) showed that when high SDO participants played the role of boss and directed high authoritarian participants to behave unethically in a business setting, the work team was more likely to engage their company in unethical practices. This body of findings is promising but not definitive about how SDO pertains to power tactics within organizations. Organizations are an important location in which to study whether SDO pertains to everyday relationships. We now turn to research on interpersonal power in organizations.

## INTERPERSONAL POWER

Power is not just a unidirectional relationship. In the social influence sense, power is "the ability of one party to change or control the behavior, attitudes, opinions, objectives, needs, and values of another party" (Rahim, 1989, p. 545). This definition does not imply that one party has all the agency, however. Rather, power in organizational contexts not only is due to the power influences managed by leaders over followers (Rahim, 1988) but also depends on the dynamics of subordinates' acceptance and recognition of those influences as the more suitable and acceptable in their supervisors' work relationships. This conception is parallel to SDT's idea of behavioral asymmetry. A leading framework to understand the dynamics involved in interpersonal, organizational power relationships was offered by French and Raven (1959) in their groundbreaking analysis of social power (see Raven & Kruglanski, 1970).

French and Raven (1959; Raven, 1965) distinguished between six different potential power bases (or tactics): "coercive power," "legitimate power," "expert power," "referent power," "reward power," and "informational power." More recently, Raven (1992, 1993, 2001) presented the interpersonal power interaction model (IPIM)

in which he further differentiated the original six bases of power available to an influencing agent and developed a more comprehensive approach to the study of social power. The IPIM taxonomy contains 11 power strategies, derived from a further differentiation of some of the original six bases. Specifically, coercive and reward power, which were usually conceptualized in terms of "impersonal" threats or promises of reward, are now distinguished from "personal" coercion and reward. IPIM further differentiated legitimate power into four categories: (a) "legitimate position power," (b) "legitimate power of reciprocity," (c) "legitimate power of equity," and (d) "legitimate power of dependence (or of responsibility)."

The 11 bases of power included in the Raven's new approach have been subdivided into two more general categories: "soft" and "harsh" tactics (see the Appendix). The Harsh-Soft dimension refers to the differences in the amount of freedom that the target is allowed in choosing whether or not to comply. Harsh tactics are relatively unfriendly, controlling, and coercive. Tactics in the "harsh" category, in which compliance is demanded of others without allowing the target liberty in choosing whether to comply, include personal and impersonal coercion and reward, legitimacy of position, equity, and reciprocity. By contrast, tactics in the "soft" category allow the target to be freer to decide whether to accept the requests of the influencer and include expert, referent, informational power, and legitimacy of dependence.

As previously mentioned, in addition to describing a greater available repertoire of tactics than was previously thought, the IPIM provides a theoretical framework for understanding antecedents of power choice, as well as the effects associated with it. The model considers power choice from two perspectives: the influencing agent and the target. In either case, the process of influence described in the model begins with delineating personality, motivational, and situational factors that are expected to direct the choice of power tactics utilizable (by the influencing agent) and the decision to comply by the target (see reviews by Koslowsky & Schwarzwald, 2001; Raven, 1992; Schwarzwald et al., 2004).

The back-and-forth influencer-target relational nature of influence tactics as identified in the IPIM has a parallel in social dominance theory in its tenet that people in subordinated positions sometimes contribute to their groups' oppression, particularly if there are consensual beliefs about the legitimacy of social practices. The present research tests whether dominants and subordinates in workplace settings show a kind of consensus on how legitimate different influence tactics are. If it is the case that there is a kind of ideological concurrence between supervisors and underlings about what kinds of power tactics are appropriate, this would facilitate the smooth functioning of organizations. To the extent the perceived legitimacy of power tactics corresponds to employees'

tolerance of intergroup hierarchy, then those beliefs are legitimizing myths.

The core question addressed in the present research is the relationship between the SDO (Pratto et al., 1994) and the dynamics of power tactics expressed by supervisors and subordinates within organizational contexts. If it is the case that people higher on SDO simply desire to dominate, and as we reviewed earlier, high SDO people tend to be found more often in hierarchy-enhancing organizations, then one should expect the presence of many high SDO to produce considerable interpersonal conflict and turmoil within the organization. However, personal dominance is not what SDO measures; it does not correlate with SDO (Pratto et al., 1994). Instead, using the systems approach of SDT, we posit that to the extent that supervisors and subordinates concur about what kinds of power tactics are legitimate, smooth power relations in the workplace are the likely consequence. But, as SDT's behavioral asymmetry postulate and notion that shared ideologies help coordinate social systems both suggests, there will be complementarity between dominants and subordinates in their beliefs and behaviors. Based on these ideas, we predicted that (a) SDO will positively relate to the likelihood that subordinates will comply with harsh power tactics used by their supervisors (Study 1), and (b) SDO will positively relate to the likelihood that supervisors will use harsh power tactics on their subordinates to gain compliance (Study 2). Together, the two studies allow us to examine whether complementary beliefs and values facilitate hierarchical relationships among employees in organizations.

## STUDY 1: SUBORDINATES' ENDORSEMENT OF POWER COMPLIANCE TACTICS AND SDO

The purpose of Study 1 was to test what power tactics subordinate employees prefer to have used on them by supervisors, and whether their preferences were related to their levels of SDO.

### Method

#### Participants

One hundred thirty-four employees (84 men, 50 women) drawn from an Italian communication company participated in the study on a voluntary basis. Their mean age was 28.30 years ($SD = 4.91$), and 82.1% of participants had a high school degree and 17.9% had a university degree. Participants had spent an average of 2.80 years ($SD = 1.51$) in the company. Participants were included in the study on the basis of having a supervisor within the organization; thus they clearly held subordinate roles.

#### Procedure

Participants filled out a self-administered questionnaire composed by the Social Dominance Orientation Scale followed by a number of filler questionnaires. They then completed a 33-item measure of Compliance with Power Tactics used by supervisors.

*SDO.* The Italian adaptation of the Social Dominance Orientation Scale (Pratto et al., 1994) by Aiello, Chirumbolo, Leone, and Pratto (2005) constitutes a 13-item self-report instrument. Sample items include "Some groups of people are simply inferior to other groups" and "To get ahead in life, it is sometimes necessary to step on other groups." As in the English version, participants' responses were recorded on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). A composite SDO score was computed by summing across responses to each item. In the present study, reliability of the SDO scale was confirmed as very good (Cronbach's $\alpha = .91$).

*Compliance with power tactics.* To assess subordinates' compliance with power tactics used by their supervisor participants responded to the Italian version (Pierro, De Grada, Raven, & Kruglanski, 2004) of the Worker's Format of the Interpersonal Power Inventory (IPI; Raven, Schwarzwald, & Koslowsky, 1998). The IPI format uses a critical-incident type technique where participants are told:

> Often supervisors ask subordinates to do their job somewhat differently. Sometimes subordinate resist doing so or do not follow the supervisor's directions exactly. Other times, they will do exactly as their supervisor requests. We are interested in those situations which lead subordinates to follow the requests of their supervisor.

Participants are presented with 33 statements (e.g., "My supervisor could help me receive special benefits.") representing the 11 tactics of the IPI (three items for each tactic; see the Appendix). Then participants are asked to indicate how likely it is that each descriptive statement constitutes the reason for complying with supervisor's request. Participants rated items from 1 (*definitely not a reason*) to 7 (*definitely a reason*).

Previous research has found that the 11 power bases represent two underlying dimensions (Pierro et al., 2004; Raven et al., 1998; Schwarzwald et al., 2004). Therefore, we averaged the 11 power bases into "harsh" (Impersonal and Personal Reward and Coercion, Legitimacy of Position, Equity and Reciprocity) and "soft" (Information, Expertise, Reference and Legitimacy of Dependence) power tactics. Reliability of these two dimensions was good at $\alpha = .90$ for harsh tactics and $\alpha = .85$ for soft tactics.

TABLE 1
Descriptive Statistics and Correlations Between Variables by Study

|  | M | SD | 1 | 2 | 3 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Study 1 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. SDO | 2.03 | 1.19 | (.91) |  |  |
| 2. Hard tactics | 3.51 | 1.08 | .19* | (.90) |  |
| 3. Soft tactics | 4.17 | 1.05 | .01 | .54*** | (.85) |
| Study 2 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. SDO | 2.15 | .77 | (.72) |  |  |
| 2. Hard tactics | 2.87 | 1.10 | .38*** | (.92) |  |
| 3. Soft tactics | 4.11 | 1.00 | .19* | .64*** | (.81) |

*Note.* SDO = social dominance orientation. Cronbach's alpha is in parentheses.
*$p < .05$. ***$p < .001$.

## Results

A within-subjects analysis of variance, with type of power tactic as repeated measure, indicated that participants were significantly more likely to describe themselves as responsive to the soft tactics rather than to the hard tactics ($M = 4.17$, $SD = 1.05$ vs. $M = 3.51$, $SD = 1.08$), $F(1,133) = 55.45$, $p < .001$, $\eta_\mathrm{p}^2 = .29$, replicating prior studies (Pierro et al., 2004; Raven et al., 1998). A summary of descriptive statistics and zero-order correlations between the present variables are given in Table 1.

To test H1, that subordinates' likely compliance with harsh power tactics would relate to their SDO levels, we conducted two separate multiple regression analyses. These regressed harsh and soft power tactics on SDO, statistically controlling for the alternative tactic and for participants' gender, age and educational level. As summarized in Table 2, results show that compliance to the harsh tactics (controlling for soft tactics and for demographic characteristics) were positively and significantly related to SDO participants score ($\beta = .17$, $p < .01$).

TABLE 2
Results of Multiple Regressions on Approval of Power Tactics
(Against Subordinates; Study 1) or by Supervisors (Study 2),
by Study

|  | Study 1 | | Study 2 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | Harsh | Soft | Harsh | Soft |
| Predictors | β | β | β | β |
| SDO | .17* | .07 | .26** | .07 |
| Hard tactics | — | .57*** | — | .66*** |
| Soft tactics | .58*** | — | .57*** | — |
| Participant gender | −.05 | .08 | −.02 | −.06 |
| Participant age | .11 | −.16* | .14* | −.04 |
| Participant education level | −.17* | .24** |  |  |

*Note.* Participants' education level was not entered in Study 2 because all participants were medical doctors. SDO = social dominance orientation.
*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .0001$.

Reported likely compliance to soft tactics (controlling for harsh tactics and for demographic characteristics) was not significantly related to SDO ($\beta = –.07$, *ns*).

## Discussion

Even though the results demonstrate a general preference for soft tactics, we found that subordinates in the workplace indicate a higher likelihood of compliance with their supervisor's use of harsh tactics to the extent they were higher on SDO. This implies that when supervisors use harsh influence tactics, because subordinates will comply with them, such tactics will seem effective, at least for a subset of their subordinates. This positive feedback may lead supervisors to use harsh tactics more often. Such compliance with the nonpreferred but more socially differentiating tactics would reinforce the hierarchy between supervisors and their subordinates within the organization. In essence, endorsement of harsh tactics may function like a hierarchy-enhancing myth within the organization because it coordinates action to maintain or even exaggerate hierarchy within the organization.

High SDO subordinates accepting harsh tactics in power relationships with their supervisors indicate that, in the language of SDT, they are not relegated to mere "objects of oppression." Rather, they actively sustain the power asymmetry (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). If subordinates comply with harsh power tactics, their actions may serve to reinforce not only the social legitimacy but also the effectiveness of harsh compliance tactics to enforce the hierarchy at in the workplace.

## STUDY 2: SUPERVISORS' ENDORSEMENT OF POWER COMPLIANCE TACTICS AND SDO

The purpose of Study 2 was to examine the relation between SDO and reported likely use of the same power tactics as in Study 1 among employees who have supervisory roles. Further, Study 2 used a different organizational context.

## Method

### Participants

A set of 95 Italian hospital physicians (53 men, 42 women) participated in the study on a voluntary basis. Their mean age was of 48.40 years ($SD = 6.74$). All participants held supervisory positions within the hospital.

### Procedure

As in Study 1, participants filled out a self-administered questionnaire composed of the Social Dominance

Orientation Scale followed by a number of filler questionnaires. They then completed the 33-item measure of Power Tactics used by supervisors.

*SDO.*    Participants answered the same Italian version of the SDO Scale used in Study 1. The reliability of the SDO Scale was satisfactory (Cronbach's $\alpha = .72$).

*Usage of power tactics.*    To examine supervisor usage of power tactics we used the IPI usage scale, Supervisor's Format, developed by Schwarzwald et al. (2004). This usage format is an adapted version of the original IPI used in Study 1 and employs the same critical-incident type technique. Participants were told (differences from Study 1 instructions are italicized):

> Often supervisors ask subordinates to do their job somewhat differently. Sometimes subordinate resist doing so or do not follow the supervisor's directions exactly. Other times, they will do exactly as their supervisor requests. *We are interested in examining what behaviors supervisors use for gaining compliance.*

Afterward, participants are presented with adapted 33 statements (e.g., "I remind the worker that I can help him/her receive special benefits if he/she complies") representing the 11 tactics delineated in the IPI (three for each tactic, see the Appendix). Other than in Study 1, in this version a respondent was asked to indicate how often he or she applies the particular tactic described in the statement. The response alternatives here ranged from 1 (*very rarely*) to 7 (*very often*).

As in Study 1, we combined the 11 power tactics into "Harsh" tactics (Impersonal and Personal Reward and Coercion, Legitimacy of Position, Equity and Reciprocity) and "Soft" tactics (Information, Expertise, Reference and Legitimacy of Dependence). Reliability of this two dimensions was satisfactory ($\alpha = .92$ and .81, respectively).

### Results

Consistent with Study 1, a within-subjects analysis of variance yielded a significant main effect reflecting supervisors' general preference for the "soft" power tactics over the "hard" tactics ($M = 4.11$, $SD = 1.10$ vs. $M = 2.87$, $SD = 1.00$), $F(1, 94) = 180.76$, $p < .001$, $\eta_{p}^{2} = .66$. A summary of descriptive statistics and zero-order correlations between the present variables are given in Table 1 (bottom panel).

Two separate multiple regression analyses examined the relation of social dominance orientation to each type of power tactics, statistically controlling for the alternative tactics and for gender and age (see Table 2). Results showed that use of harsh tactics (controlling for soft

tactics and for demographic characteristics) were positively and significantly related to SDO participants score ($\beta = .26$, $p < .001$), whereas the usage of soft tactics (controlling for harsh tactics and for demographic characteristics) were not significantly related to SDO ($\beta = -.07$, *ns*).

### Discussion

Study 2 found, as did Study 1, that participants generally preferred soft tactics to harsh tactics. In that regard, and inasmuch as Study 1's participants were subordinates within their organization (a telecommunications company) and Study 2's participants were supervisors within their organization (a hospital), soft tactics appear to be more normatively accepted. These tactics seem likely to convey more interpersonal respect and prompt less resentment between supervisors and subordinates, so this coordination also can be seen as helping the smooth functioning of organizations. Nonetheless, as predicted by H2, Study 2 also found that participants' preference for using harsh tactics to manage the asymmetrical power relationship with their subordinates increased as supervisors' SDO levels increased.

### GENERAL DISCUSSION

Although many dominance relationships may contain tensions between those attempting to dominate and those who are being dominated, both intergroup and interpersonal theories of power argue that dominance relationships are maintained in part by the coordination and cooperation between dominants and subordinates. According to SDT, this should especially occur when the hierarchical relationship is mutually perceived as legitimate and when there are consensual ideologies that lead people to complementary relationships in the hierarchy. At the interpersonal level, one should expect more coordination and cooperation and less conflict if supervisors and subordinates agree on what power tactics are preferred and legitimate.

### Coordination Between Supervisors and Subordinates Within Organizations

In the present research, we examined whether in fact supervisors (Study 2) and subordinates (Study 1) within workplaces concur on the legitimacy of power tactics that supervisors use and subordinates accept. We found that both subordinates and supervisors agree that soft tactics are more legitimate than harsh tactics but that people in both positions accepted the legitimacy of harsh influence tactics the higher they were on SDO. These results show a high degree of coordination and

complementarity in workplace power tactics between supervisors and subordinates, which, as SDT argues, likely helps to sustain their dominance–subordinate relationship. A question for future organizational research is whether there are any settings, such as industries or cultures or particular organizations, in which harsh tactics are understood to be more normative. Further, studies that examine organizations in far more detail could reveal whether this coordination is simply due to the organizational members' preexisting qualities, or whether communication of the organizational culture, its standard operating procedures, merit procedures, practices, and the like, help to coordinate their members around hierarchy maintenance or hierarchy attenuation.

In addition, we note that there was a stronger relationship of endorsement of harsh tactics and SDO among supervisors (Study 2) than among subordinates (Study 1). Such findings are consistent with the concept of ideological asymmetry (e.g., Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). That is, SDO appears to facilitate the ideology of legitimate harsh supervisory hierarchy more strongly for people in dominant than in subordinate positions. However, given that the two studies differed in several other ways, including participants' ages and the industry of the participants, this finding is only suggestive and not a definitive test of ideological asymmetry regarding power tactics. Future research in which supervisors and subordinates are measured within the same workplace, and their general rank and particular dyadic relationships are measured, would provide a more definitive test of ideological asymmetry regarding power tactics.

It is also possible that the complementary findings regarding acceptance of power tactics among both supervisors and underlings may translate into behavioral asymmetry. That is, if supervisors enact, and underlings comply, with harsh tactics, that would serve to reinforce the hierarchical nature of their relationships within the organization. As implied by both SDT for groups and interdependence theory (Thibaut & Kelley, 1959) for dyadic relations, cooperation between more and less powerful agents can prevent or reduce conflict between them. Such cooperation in domination may make the functioning of the organization smoother.

Our results imply that this would especially be the case regarding harsh tactics for employees who are relatively high on SDO. This effect may have been facilitated because the two organizations we studied are somewhat hierarchy enhancing, or clearly not hierarchy attenuating. It is important that similar studies be conducted in clearly hierarchy-attenuating organizations to see if their low SDO employees also concur about use of soft power tactics. Indeed, organizational theory and SDT both predict that even hierarchy-attenuating organizations will have shared ideologies and coordination among their members. It may be that different kinds of norms and power

tactics or other organizational behavior are what the members of hierarchy-attenuating organizations coordinate. Further investigating these issues in a variety of industries and cultures may identify the generality or boundary conditions for the effects.

We do not wish to overlook, however, the relative preference for harsh influence tactics among high SDO versus low SDO employees. Indeed, such tactics are less respectful and more coercive than alternative methods, and such characterizations are compatible with personality research about people relatively high on SDO (e.g., Pratto et al., 2006). In contrast, preference for soft power tactics was consensual and unrelated to participants' SDO levels.

## Limitations and Future Studies

One limitation of our studies is that SDO and approval of compliance tactics were measured at the same point in time. This might be partly responsible for the high correlations between SDO and harsh tactics, but the fact that there was no relation between SDO and approval of soft tactics, although support for them did vary, mitigates this concern. Further, the two studies asked about compliance from two different points of view, and the results converged in a complimentary way. This again is hard to reconcile with the alternative explanation that results are due to measures being gathered in the same setting.

As previously mentioned, our studies are limited in the use of separate organizational settings for subordinates (Study 1) and supervisors (Study 2). A study using dyads of supervisors and subordinates in the same setting would deepen future research and would allow the possibility of using other raters and using peer ratings. Another intriguing but unanswered question is on how people perceive the effectiveness of their actions for "the other party." For instance, do supervisors think harsh tactics are embraced (and shared) by their subordinates? How accurate are their perceptions? Examining both the endorsement and metaperceptions about power tactics can be done considering supervisors and subordinates from a dyadic perspective (see Schwarzwald et al., 2004). In addition, given that authoritarian submission complements SDO (Altemeyer, 1996), measuring employees' authoritarian may be useful (but see Nicol, 2009). Further research could also expand the scope of the kinds of organizations studied, particular to compare hierarchy-enhancing and hierarchy-attenuating and mixed organizations.

## Conclusion

The present research has identified a new and potentially important new connection between power between groups and power as enacted in organizations by integrating considerations of SDT and the interpersonal

dependence model. We found that both underlings and supervisors preferred soft tactics as a means for supervisors to exert power over underlings, but members of both roles who were higher in SDO felt that harsh tactics were more legitimate. In this regard, power is not enacted as a kind of absolute control. Rather, consistent with interdependence theory's suppositions about people and consistent with SDT, members in hierarchy-enhancing work environments who where high in SDO "actively participate in and contribute to their own subordination" (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999, p. 43), and they actively are engaged in the maintenance of social hierarchies. In complement, the hierarchy-enhancing contexts we studied appear to encourage the preference in high SDO (vs. low SDO) bosses toward using harsh tactics, resulting in greater consensus across role position. Subsequent investigations are needed, as outlined, to replicate and extend these patterns. Such research may deepen our understanding of hierarchies within organizations and within societies.

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## APPENDIX
## REPRESENTATIVE ITEMS OF THE INTERPERSONAL POWER INVENTORY (PIERRO ET AL., 2004; RAVEN, SCHWARZWALD, & KOSLOWSKY, 1998)

### "Subordinate" Form

### "HARD" STRATEGIES

1. *Reward/Impersonal power*: My supervisor's actions could help me get a promotion."
2. *Reward/Personal power*: "I liked my supervisor, and his/her approval was important to me."
3. *Coercive/impersonal power*: "My supervisor could make it more difficult for me to get a promotion."
4. *Coercive/personal power*: "Just knowing that I was on the bad side of the supervisor would have upset me."
5. *Legitimate/position power*: "As a subordinate, I had an obligation to do as my supervisor said."
6. *Legitimate/equity*: "I had made some mistakes and, therefore, felt that I owed this to him/her."
7. *Legitimate/reciprocity*: "For past considerations I had received, I felt obliged to comply."

### "SOFT" STRATEGIES

8. *Legitimate/Dependence*: "I realized that a supervisor needs assistance and cooperation from those working with him/her."

9. *Referent power*: "I saw my supervisor as someone I could identify with."
10. *Expert power*: "My supervisor probably knew the best way to do the job."
11. *Informational power*: "Once it was pointed out, I could see why the change was necessary."

### "Supervisor" Form

### "HARD" STRATEGIES

1. *Reward/Impersonal power*: "I reminded the worker that I can help him/her to get a promotion."
2. *Reward/Personal power:* "I reminded the worker that I would show my approval if he/she complies."
3. *Coercive/Impersonal power*: "I reminded the worker that I can make more difficult for him/her to get a promotion."
4. *Coercive/Personal power:* "I reminded the worker that I would show my disapproval if he/she did not complies."
5. *Legitimate/Position power:* "I reminded the worker that, as a subordinate, he/she had an obligation to do as I said."
6. *Legitimate/Equity*: "I reminded the worker that he/she had made some mistakes and therefore that he/she owed this to me."
7. *Legitimate/Reciprocity*: "I reminded the worker that, for past considerations he/she received, he/she should feel obliged to comply."

### "SOFT" STRATEGIES

8. *Legitimate/Dependence*: "I reminded the worker that I need assistance and cooperation from those working with me."
9. *Referent power*: "I am telling the worker that since we belong to the same group, he/she should acquiesce to my requests."
10. *Expert power*: "I reminded the worker that I probably know the best way to do the job."
11. *Informational power*: "I provided the worker with good reasons to change his/her approach the job."

*Note*. The IPI has two main forms ("supervisor" and "subordinate") with 11 power strategies comprising three items each. Examples from the "Subordinate" and "Supervisor" forms are provided above.