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Prosocial Norm Violations Fuel Power Affordance

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Abstract

The question of what makes people rise to power has long puzzled social scientists. Here we examined the novel hypothesis that power is afforded to individuals who exhibit prosocial norm violations—i.e., breaking rules for the benefit of others. Three experiments using different methods provide support for this idea. Individuals who deliberately ignored a prohibition to tilt a bus chair (Study 1; scenario) or to close a window (Study 2; film clip) were afforded more power than individuals who obeyed the rules, but only when the norm violation benefited others (i.e., by giving them more leg space or fresh air). Study 2 further showed that this effect was mediated by perceived social engagement, which was highest among prosocial norm violators. In Study 3 (face-to-face), a confederate who stole coffee from the experimenter's desk was afforded more power than a confederate who took coffee upon invitation, but only when he also offered coffee to the participant. We discuss implications for hierarchy formation, morality, and social engagement.

Keywords: Power; Norm Violation; Social Engagement Hypothesis

Prosocial Norm Violations Fuel Power Affordance

Power is among the most fundamental and pervasive organizing forces of social life (Keltner, Van Kleef, Chen, & Kraus, 2008; Magee & Galinsky, 2008). According to Bertrand Russell, "the laws of social dynamics are laws which can only be stated in terms of power" (1938, p. 10). Not surprisingly, the question of what makes people rise to power has long been of interest to social scientists (Emerson, 1962; French & Raven, 1959). Classic research has attempted to answer this question by focusing on static features of the individual, such as physical appearance, gender, and ethnicity (e.g., Berger, Cohen, & Zelditch, 1972). More recent theorizing proposes, in contrast, that power affordance is a dynamic process (e.g., Anderson, John, Keltner, & Kring, 2001; Keltner et al., 2008): Individuals are granted power (or not) based on their social behavior. Here we examine the possibility that power is afforded to individuals who are willing to break the rules to benefit their group.

Unconstrained Behavior Signals Power

Power entails the capacity to modify others' states by providing or withholding resources or administering punishments (Keltner, Gruenfeld, & Anderson, 2003) and the capacity to be uninfluenced by others and by "the press of the situation" (Galinsky, Gruenfeld, Magee, Whitson, & Liljenquist, 2008). According to the approach/inhibition theory of power (Keltner et al., 2003), higher-power individuals encounter fewer social constraints and more resource-rich environments. This activates their behavioral approach system and renders them relatively free to behave as they wish. Lower-power individuals experience more social constraints, threats, and punishments. This activates their behavioral inhibition system, which restricts their actions. As a result of their behavioral disinhibition, powerful people are more likely than their less powerful counterparts to act in goal-congruent ways (Galinsky, Gruenfeld, & Magee, 2003), take risks (Anderson & Galinsky, 2006), show approach-related tendencies (Guinote, 2007; Lammers,

Galinsky, Gordijn, & Otten, 2008), act on their dispositional inclinations (Chen, Lee-Chai, & Bargh, 2001) and momentary desires (Van Kleef & Côté, 2007), and ignore situational pressures (Galinsky et al., 2008).

This behavioral disinhibition makes powerful people more likely to exhibit inappropriate behavior. Compared to lower-power individuals, powerful individuals are more likely to interrupt others and invade their personal space (DePaulo & Friedman, 1998); eat with their mouths open and spread crumbs (Keltner et al., 2003); take credit for other people's work (Kipnis, 1972); cheat (Lammers, Stapel, & Galinsky, 2010); treat other people as objects (Gruenfeld, Inesi, Magee, & Galinsky, 2008); fail to take another's perspective (Galinsky, Magee, Inesi, & Gruenfeld, 2006); exhibit poor empathic accuracy (Kraus, Côté, & Keltner, 2010); ignore other people's suffering (Van Kleef et al., 2008); stereotype (Fiske, 1993) and patronize others (Vescio, Gervais, Snyder, & Hoover, 2005); and sexualize and harass low-power women (Bargh et al., 1995). Powerful people also exhibit more aggression (Haney, Banks, & Zimbardo, 1973), and this is deemed relatively acceptable by others (Porath, Overbeck, & Pearson, 2008). In fact, in several European countries the liberty to violate norms without sanction is perceived as a defining feature of the power holder (Mondillon et al., 2005).

People hold rich stereotypes of the behaviors associated with power (Hall, Coats, & LeBeau, 2005; Keltner et al., 2008; Tiedens, Ellsworth, & Mesquita, 2000). Because certain behaviors are believed to be associated with power, the cues themselves may signal power (Berger et al., 1972). A recent study showed that individuals who display greater action orientation are perceived as more powerful because they signal that they have the capacity to act according to their own volition (Magee, 2009)—a freedom that comes with greater power (Galinsky et al., 2003; Keltner et al., 2003). By the same logic, norm violations—behaviors that infringe one or more principles or rules of proper and acceptable behavior (cf. Cialdini & Trost,

1998)—imply power. People who violate norms apparently experience the leeway to do so, suggesting that they have relatively high levels of power that enable them to behave as they please.

Indeed, recent evidence indicates that individuals who violate prevailing norms are perceived as more powerful than those who stick to the rules (Van Kleef, Homan, Finkenauer, Gündemir, & Stamkou, 2011). For instance, people who dropped cigarette ashes on the floor or put their feet on the table were perceived as powerful because their behavior suggested that they were free to act in accordance with their own volition, despite situational constraints. Although this study indicates that norm violations can indeed signal power, it remains unclear whether people are also willing to *afford power* to norm violators. Norm violations may trigger perceptions of power, but people may not necessarily perceive norm violators as worthy of power and grant them power.

In some cases power perceptions and power affordance go hand in hand. For instance, a person who defends her fellow group members against an outside threat is likely to be perceived as powerful (because she shows leadership) and to be afforded power (because she takes care of the group's interests). However, in many cases power perceptions and power affordance are disconnected. It is possible to perceive a person as powerful (e.g., because one knows that the person holds power or because he shows stereotypically powerful behavior) while not being willing to afford (more) power to the person. In a totalitarian regime, people realize that their dictator has power, but not everyone may be happy with this situation. Thus, if they were given the chance, these people probably would not vote for the dictator. Conversely, it is conceivable that power is afforded to someone who does not appear powerful. For instance, people may reward a person for behaving modestly by giving her power (Keltner et al., 2008), even though she did not show stereotypically powerful behavior (in fact, the opposite). Thus, perceiving a

person as powerful and being willing to afford them power are two (partly) independent processes.

Furthermore, it seems unlikely (and perhaps disturbing) that norm violators would always rise to power. The question arises, then, when norm violations are associated with power and when they are not. This investigation addresses these issues. Do people confer power to norm violators, and if so, when? We draw on the social engagement hypothesis (Keltner et al., 2008) to develop the prediction that norm violations inspire power affordance when they benefit one's social group, but not when they harm the group.

The Social Engagement Hypothesis

Whether we look at groups of friends, school classes, fraternities, self-managing teams, street gangs, or sports teams, power hierarchies are seldom fixed—rather, they are negotiated in a dynamic fashion. The reciprocal influence model of power (Keltner et al., 2008) posits that subordinates' capacity to form alliances forces powerful individuals to engage socially and advance the interests of the group, because if they fail to do so their position may be undermined (see also Boehm, 1999; Van Vugt, 2006). Accordingly, the model's *social engagement hypothesis* holds that power is afforded preferentially to those who advance the interests of the group.

Consistent with this hypothesis, studies on hierarchy formation among children revealed that socially dynamic, outgoing children often rose to leadership positions (Savin-Williams, 1976). Likewise, a study among fraternity members showed that power was afforded to socially engaged, playful teasers (Keltner, Young, Heerey, Oemig, & Monarch, 1998). In a longitudinal study of fraternity and sorority members, power affordance was predicted by extraversion, which includes tendencies towards sociability, assertiveness, and positive emotionality (Anderson et al., 2001). Other research showed a positive relationship between perceived generosity and status conferral (Flynn, Reagans, Amanatullah, & Ames, 2006). Similarly, individuals who sacrificed

their own outcomes to contribute to the greater good were bestowed with greater status than individuals who did not contribute as much to the group (Willer, 2009).

Interestingly, support for the social engagement hypothesis stems exclusively from studies of socially accepted traits and behaviors such as extraversion, playfulness, and generosity. This raises the question of whether socially unacceptable behaviors such as norm violations also lead to power affordance as long as they benefit one's social environment. Some norm violations are inherently disruptive, such as carrying on a loud conversation in the movie theater. Other norm violations may actually *benefit* one's social group. A famous example is Robin Hood, the legendary archer who stole from the rich to help the poor. Might such prosocial norm violations promote power affordance?

The Present Research

Combining the social engagement hypothesis with the notion that unconstrained behavior signals power, we hypothesize that individuals who violate norms are afforded more power than individuals who obey the rules, but only when the norm violation is prosocial rather than selfish, that is, when it benefits rather than harms the actor's social environment. We explored this possibility in three studies, employing different norm violations, experimental methods, and measures of power affordance to establish the robustness of the effects. In Study 1, participants read a scenario about a person who violated a rule or not in a way that either benefited or harmed someone else. In Study 2, participants viewed a film clip showing a person who violated a rule (or not) in a way that benefited (or harmed) several other people. In Study 3, participants interacted with a confederate who broke a rule (or not) in a way that benefited the participant or had no consequences for the participant.

Study 1

Method

Seventy-three participants (53 female; mean age = 20.25, *SD* = 2.11) were randomly assigned to the conditions of a 2 (norm violation vs. control) x 2 (prosocial vs. selfish) design. They read a short scenario about a company outing with a tour bus. In the norm-violation condition, the bus driver asks all passengers to leave the seats in their current positions, because if they are adjusted further up or down they may become stuck. In the control condition, the bus driver requests the passengers not to eat or drink on board of the bus.

The seat of one passenger (the focal actor) is already slightly tilted back. In the prosocial condition, this passenger decides to adjust his seat to an upright position, resulting in more legroom for the person sitting behind him. In the selfish condition, the actor decides to adjust his seat further back, thus restricting the legroom of the person behind him. Participants were shown an illustration of the new situation.

We were interested in participants' perceptions of the actor's legitimate power within the company, that is, perceptions that the actor "has a legitimate right to influence" others, and that others have "an obligation to accept this influence" (French & Raven, 1959, p. 159), both of which are important precursors to power affordance. We used a validated scale by Hinkin and Schriesheim (1989) to measure perceptions of legitimate power: "This person can make others feel... that they have commitments to meet"; "... that they should satisfy their job requirements"; "... that they have responsibilities to fulfill"; "... that they have tasks to accomplish" (1 = *definitely not*, 7 = *definitely*; $\alpha = .85$). The items were embedded in a larger questionnaire to conceal the purpose of the study. We used factual questions to check whether participants had understood the situation ("It was allowed/prohibited to move the bus chairs" and "Moving the chair increased/reduced the legroom of the person behind").

Results and Discussion

All participants answered the manipulation checks correctly. Furthermore, ANOVA yielded

the predicted Norm Violation x Prosociality interaction on ratings of legitimate power, $F(1, 69) = 8.80$, $p = .004$ (there were no significant main effects, both $Fs < 1$, *ns*), which is depicted in Figure 1. Simple-effects analyses revealed that within the selfish condition, power ratings were lower in the norm-violation ($M = 4.13$, $SD = 1.12$) than in the control condition ($M = 4.95$, $SD = 1.19$), $F(1, 69) = 4.89$, $p = .033$. In contrast, in the prosocial condition, power ratings were higher in the norm-violation ($M = 5.06$, $SD = 0.66$) than in the control condition ($M = 4.47$, $SD = 0.93$), $F(1, 69) = 4.46$, $p = .043$.

These results provide initial evidence that prosocial norm violations fuel perceptions of legitimate power, whereas selfish norm violations do not. In Study 2 we aimed to replicate this effect in a different context with a more dynamic norm-violation manipulation and a more direct measure of power affordance. Additionally, we explored whether the effect can be explained in terms of perceived social engagement.

Study 2

Method

The design was the same as in Study 1. Seventy-one participants (57 female; mean age = 20.00, $SD = 1.73$) were randomly assigned to four conditions. They watched a 20 sec. film clip that showed a waiting room with three actors. In each condition, the main (male) actor would stand up after a few seconds to close the window. The implications of this action differed across conditions. In the norm-violation condition, a sign on the window read "Do not touch," meaning that closing the window constituted a norm violation. In the control condition, there was no sign on the window, implying that it was permitted to close the window. In the prosocial condition, the two additional actors were visibly cold (shivering, wearing winter coats), and stopped shivering after the main actor had closed the window. In the selfish condition, the two other actors were visibly warm (fanning themselves, wearing T-shirts), and continued fanning

themselves after the main actor had closed the window.

After watching the film, participants completed a "social impressions" questionnaire, which contained the measure of power affordance: "I would like this person as my boss"; "I would like this person as my political leader"; and "I would give this person a promotion" (1 = *definitely not*, 7 = *definitely*, $\alpha = .75$).[1] The questionnaire also contained a measure of perceived social engagement—the tendency to engage actively in the interests of one's group (Keltner et al., 2008). Participants indicated how social, assertive, helpful, sympathetic, and friendly they found the actor ($\alpha = .89$). Finally, the norm-violation manipulation was checked with one true/false question ("It was prohibited to close the window"), and the prosociality manipulation was checked with two questions ("Closing the window was beneficial [harmful] for others in the room"; $r = -.87$; 1 = *definitely not*, 7 = *definitely*).

Results and Discussion

All participants answered the norm-violation check question correctly. Additionally, the actor's behavior was perceived as more beneficial for the other people in the prosocial ($M = 6.29$, $SD = 0.80$) than in the selfish condition ($M = 2.01$, $SD = 1.55$), $F(1, 67) = 214.56$, $p < .001$. No main effect of norm violation and no interaction emerged (both Fs < 1.59, *ns*). Thus, the manipulations were successful.

A main effect of prosociality indicated that power affordance was higher in the prosocial ($M = 4.43$, $SD = 1.04$) than in the selfish condition ($M = 3.03$, $SD = 1.00$), $F(1, 67) = 37.44$, $p < .001$. No main effect of norm violation emerged ($F < 1$, *ns*). Importantly, there was a significant Norm Violation x Prosociality interaction on power affordance, $F(1, 67) = 7.59$, $p = .008$ (see Figure 2). Within the selfish condition, power affordance was somewhat lower in the norm-violation ($M = 2.76$, $SD = 1.05$) than in the control condition ($M = 3.31$, $SD = 0.89$), $F(1, 67) = 2.79$, $p = .099$. Within the prosocial condition, in contrast, power affordance was significantly higher in the

norm-violation (M = 4.83, SD = 0.93) than in the control condition (M = 4.10, SD = 1.03), F(1, 67) = 4.96, p = .029.

We found a similar Norm Violation x Prosociality interaction on perceived social engagement, F(1, 67) = 7.36, p = .008. Participants perceived the actor as more socially engaged in the prosocial norm-violation (M = 5.43, SD = 0.71) than in the prosocial control condition (M = 4.57, SD = 1.10), F(1, 67) = 8.66, p = .004, whereas there was no significant difference in the selfish condition (norm violation: M = 3.10, SD = 0.76; control: M = 3.36, SD = 0.79), F(1, 67) = .82, p = .37. When we entered norm violation, prosociality, and social engagement in a regression analysis to predict power affordance, social engagement emerged as the only significant predictor (β = .58, t = 4.72, p < .001), and the original Norm Violation x Prosociality interaction was reduced to non-significance (β = .22, t = 1.52, p = .13). A Sobel test showed that the indirect path was significant (z = 2.35, p = .019). Thus, perceived social engagement fully mediated the Norm Violation x Prosociality interaction on power affordance.

One might wonder whether these effects of prosocial norm violations are specific to perceptions of social engagement and subsequent power affordance or whether they generalize to perceptions of other positive characteristics. In the latter case, our effects could be part of a more general halo effect. Although it is difficult to rule this out definitively, as this would require examining a large amount of positive characteristics, the data of Study 2 allow us to inspect several positive characteristics, namely expertise, capability, and skill. We found no significant interactions between norm violation and prosociality on these items (all Fs < .59, ps > .45), which renders an interpretation in terms of a halo effect less plausible.[2]

A potential limitation of Studies 1 and 2 is that we cannot disentangle whether selfish norm violations reduced power affordance because they *did not benefit* other people or because they *harmed* other people. To examine this question, we compared prosocial norm violations to

inconsequential norm violations in Study 3. If the negative effect of selfish norm violations in Studies 1 and 2 was driven by their harmfulness, we should observe no difference between the norm-violation and the control condition when the behavior is inconsequential rather than harmful in Study 3. Additionally, to further establish the robustness and generalizability of our findings, we explored whether the effect also occurs in face-to-face settings, where participants are themselves part of the situation. Thus, we examined whether participants would confer power upon a norm violator depending on whether they themselves benefited from the norm violation.

Study 3

Method

Fifty-one participants (39 female; mean age = 20.94 years, *SD* = 3.27) were randomly assigned to the conditions of a 2 (norm violation vs. control) by 2 (prosocial vs. inconsequential) experimental design. Participants received instructions that they would play a computerized board game with another participant, who was in fact a confederate. Participants learned that before playing the game they would complete a number of questionnaires. There was a desk in the room that clearly belonged to the experimenter, with a computer, piles of questionnaires, pencils, administrative paperwork, and a coffee pot with some plastic cups. In the control condition the experimenter pointed to the coffee pot on his desk and said that the participants could take coffee if they wanted. In the norm-violation condition the experimenter did not invite participants to take coffee. Then the experimenter left the room. Shortly thereafter, the confederate stood up, walked to the experimenter's desk, and picked up the coffee pot. In the prosocial condition, he asked if the participant cared for a cup of coffee, and if so, poured both of them a cup. In the inconsequential condition the confederate got coffee for himself without offering coffee to the participant.

Then the experimenter returned and participants completed questionnaires in separate

cubicles, including a four-item power affordance scale that was specially designed for the present context. Participants rated to what extent they would let the other person "influence the game"; "control their outcomes"; "have power over them"; and whether they would "depend on the other participant" (1 = *definitely not*, 7 = *definitely*; $\alpha = .64$). Finally, participants indicated on 7-point scales whether they thought it was permitted to take coffee (norm violation check) and whether the other participant had offered them a cup of coffee (prosociality check).

Results and Discussion

There was a main effect of the norm-violation manipulation on the accompanying manipulation check: Participants in the control condition thought that taking coffee was more allowed ($M = 6.95$, $SD = 0.22$) than did participants in the norm-violation condition ($M = 4.55$, $SD = 1.63$), $F(1, 47) = 31.24$, $p < .001$. No other effects emerged. There was also a main effect of the prosociality manipulation on the associated check: Participants in the prosocial condition scored higher on this check ($M = 6.56$, $SD = 1.19$) than did those in the inconsequential condition ($M = 1.24$, $SD = 1.20$), $F(1, 47) = 247.11$, $p < .001$. No other effects emerged.

ANOVA revealed a significant main effect of norm violation on power affordance, $F(1, 47) = 4.68$, $p = .037$. Participants in the norm-violation condition conferred more power upon the confederate ($M = 4.18$, $SD = 0.79$) than participants in the control condition ($M = 3.76$, $SD = 0.78$). The effect was qualified by the predicted interaction with prosociality, $F(1, 47) = 7.48$, $p = .01$ (see Figure 3). Within the prosocial condition, norm violation ($M = 4.79$, $SD = 0.53$) inspired more power affordance than no violation ($M = 3.63$, $SD = 0.73$), $F(1, 47) = 11.53$, $p = .002$. Within the inconsequential condition there was no significant difference (violation: $M = 3.83$, $SD = 0.71$ vs. control: $M = 3.97$, $SD = 0.85$), $F(1, 47) = 0.17$, *ns*.

These results indicate that the effects of prosocial norm violations on power affordance generalize to face-to-face interaction. Furthermore, they suggest that selfish norm violations do

not undermine power as long as they do not harm other individuals. Finally, this study indicates that acting prosocially does not necessarily result in power affordance. The confederate who fetched coffee for the participants was not afforded power when taking coffee was allowed, but only when taking coffee was not allowed. A possible explanation for this finding is that some prosocial behaviors (in this case fetching coffee) are associated with lower status. Interestingly, such behaviors may fuel power affordance when they go against the rules.

General Discussion

We adopted a new, social approach to the age-old question of how people climb social hierarchies. Building on prior evidence that unconstrained behavior signals power (Magee, 2009; Van Kleef et al., 2011) and recent theorizing that power is afforded to individuals who engage in the interests of the group (Keltner et al., 2008), we argued and showed that prosocial (but not selfish) norm violations lead to power affordance. This effect emerged both when participants were uninvolved observers (Studies 1 and 2) and when they were involved in the situation and face-to-face with the norm violator (Study 3). Additional analyses revealed that individuals who break the rules to benefit their group are perceived as socially engaged, which makes them deserving of power.

Previous research suggested that norm violators are perceived as more powerful than individuals who live by the rules (Van Kleef et al., 2011), but it was unclear whether norm violations also influence power *affordance*. The present findings indicate, perhaps reassuringly, that power is afforded only to those individuals who violate norms in a way that benefits others. Individuals who broke the rules at the expense of others were afforded *less* power than those who obeyed the rules. Together, the two sets of studies suggest that norm violations may lead to *perceptions* of power irrespective of their social consequences. However, norm violations only inspire power *affordance* when they benefit rather than harm other people.

Study 3 allowed us to explore this emerging hypothesis. This study included two adjectives measuring defining characteristics of the experience and exercise of power: "strong" and "active" (e.g., Galinsky et al., 2003). We found main effects of norm violation on both items (active: $F[1, 47] = 14.52$, $p < .001$; strong: $F[1, 47] = 7.80$, $p = .008$), but no interaction between norm violation and prosociality (active: $F[1, 47] = 1.33$, $p = .26$; strong: $F[1, 47] = .63$, $p = .43$). These data support the idea that norm violations may fuel perceptions of power irrespective of their social consequences, whereas only prosocial norm violations lead to power affordance.

Because the behavior of the focal actors in our studies was identical across conditions, we can rule out contaminating influences of nonverbal power cues such as expansiveness and head tilt (Hall et al., 2005), which may have been at play in prior research (Van Kleef et al., 2011). In fact, Study 1 showed that a person who ignored a prohibition to move a bus chair was granted more power when he moved the chair forward (thus constricting himself and providing the person behind with more room) than when he moved the chair backward (thus expanding his posture and taking space from the person behind), further underscoring the validity of the effect.

Our findings inform the reciprocal influence model of social power, and the social engagement hypothesis in particular (Keltner et al., 2008). So far, support for the hypothesis stemmed exclusively from studies of socially accepted traits and behaviors such as extraversion, playfulness, and generosity. Our findings indicate that behavior that is discouraged by social norms can also inspire power affordance, provided that the rule-breaking behavior has positive consequences for others. In fact, such norm violations led to *more* power affordance than prosocial behavior that did not constitute a norm violation.

This conclusion points to a new mechanism through which social and organizational hierarchies are reinforced (cf. Keltner et al., 2008; Magee & Galinsky, 2008; Tiedens, 2001). The powerful are more likely to violate norms (Bargh et al., 1995; Haney et al., 1973; Kipnis, 1972).

When these norm violations entail benefits for others, norm violators are afforded more power, which further liberates their behavior (Galinsky et al., 2003; Keltner et al., 2003) and makes future norm violations more likely. This self-reinforcing cycle of norm violations and power affordance may play a role in the emergence and perpetuation of a multitude of undesired social and organizational behaviors. If organization members who break the rules in ways that benefit others are afforded power, their increased standing may promote further norm violations and immoral behavior, which may or may not be prosocial (e.g., fraud, sexual harassment). Thus, an employee who engages in counterproductive work behavior to get back at an unfair manager may earn increased standing among the employees, which may engender more rebellion.

Similar mechanisms may play a role in societal misdemeanors such as hooliganism and rioting. Among hooligans and street gangs, norm violations (e.g., violence, vandalism) are often seen as status enhancing (Sijtsema, Veenstra, Lindenberg, & Salmivalli, 2009). As hooligans attain higher status and feel more powerful in their group, behavioral liberation may promote more violence. Our findings suggest that these effects may be amplified when the violence benefits the ingroup (e.g., when it is directed toward a rivaling group or a disrespected government).

In this context, it is important to note that our studies focused on relatively mild norm violations. Ethical concerns prevent studying severe norm violations in the lab. Consequently, cautiousness is warranted when generalizing our findings to other types of norm violation, such as sexual harassment or fraud. Our findings indicate that the effects of mild norm violations are robust. We observed the effect for different norm violations (ignoring a prohibition to move a bus chair or close a window, stealing coffee), using different methods (scenario, film clip, face-to-face interaction) and different measures of power affordance. Future research should clarify whether the effect generalizes to harsher norm violations.

Another issue concerns the relationship between prosociality and norm violation. Our manipulation checks revealed no effects of prosociality on the norm violation measures (or vice versa), suggesting that the manipulations were orthogonal. Yet, there may be situations in which the two are correlated. For instance, in collectivistic cultures that put a premium on group-oriented behavior, selfish behaviors may be perceived as more norm violating in their own right, compared to individualistic cultures such as the United States or the Netherlands (where the studies were conducted). Future research could examine the relationship between norm violation and prosociality across cultures and explore, more generally, how culture shapes responses to norm violators.

Several other questions remain unanswered by our studies. One question is how the processes of prosocial norm violation and power affordance uncovered here unfold over time. For instance, what happens when a person repeatedly exhibits prosocial norm-violating behavior? Do the repeated transgressions reinforce the effect or will they backfire at some point? Another question is whether individuals who enjoy elevated power due to prosocial norm violations will be motivated to ensure that future norm violations also benefit others, or whether they will break the rules in an indiscriminate fashion, with no regard for the social consequences for others. The existing literature suggests that such individuals may be sanctioned and lose their power position (Anderson, Srivastava, Beer, Spataro, & Chatman, 2006; Keltner et al., 2008), but the contingencies of such dynamics have yet to be identified.

Finally, it would be interesting to explore whether members of some groups (e.g., higher status groups) are more likely to get away with norm violations than members of other (e.g., lower status) groups. Examining these questions will further illuminate the social dynamics that make individuals rise to power or fall from grace.

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Notes

[1] Participants answered questions about all three actors. We found no effects on power affordance for the passive actors.

[2] Additional evidence comes from Studies 1 and 3. In Study 1, we administered the same items as in Study 2, none of which showed a significant interaction (all Fs < .47, ps > .49). In Study 3, we included *resourceful*, *patient*, and *easygoing*, and again there were no significant effects (all Fs < .42, ps > .52).

Figure 1. Ratings of legitimate power as a function of norm violation (tilting a bus chair despite explicit prohibition vs. without prohibition) and prosociality (increasing vs. limiting another person's leg space) in Study 1

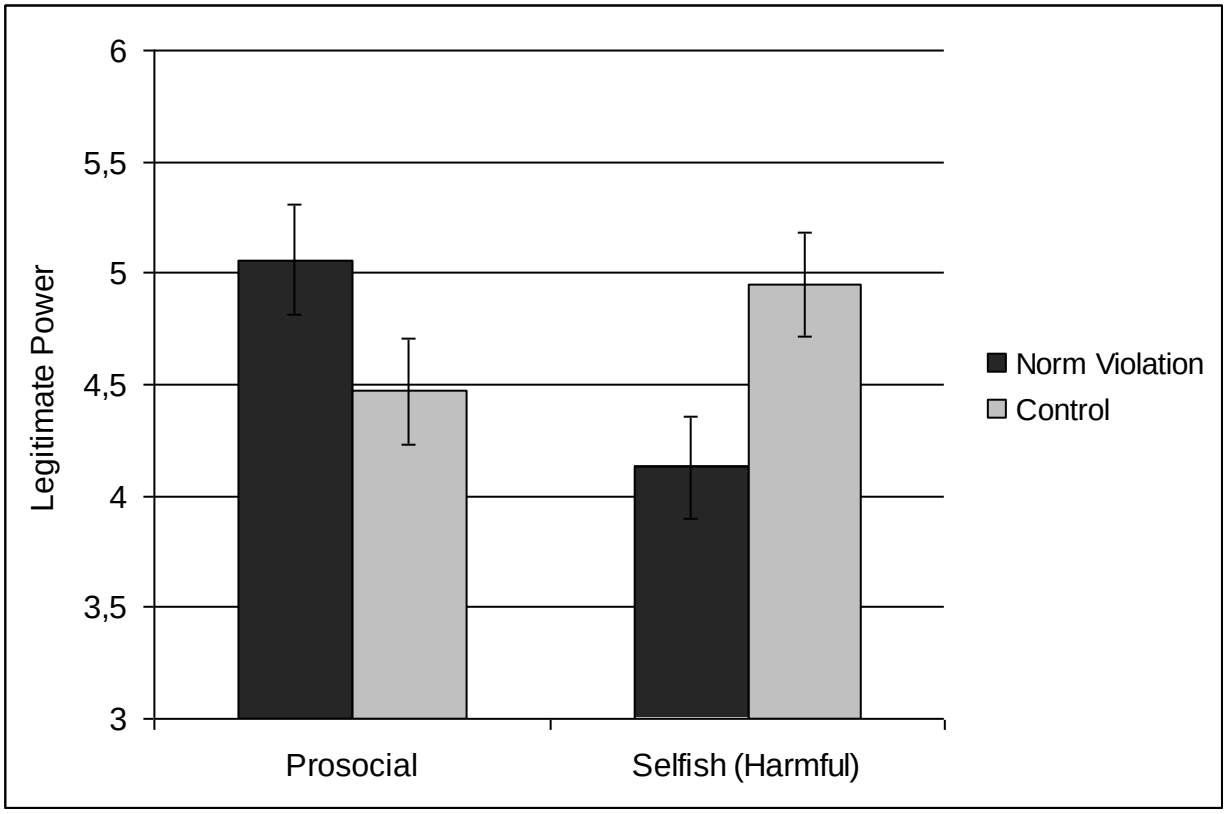

Figure 2. Power affordance as a function of norm violation (closing a window despite explicit prohibition vs. without prohibition) and prosociality (helping others who were cold vs. harming others who were hot) in Study 2

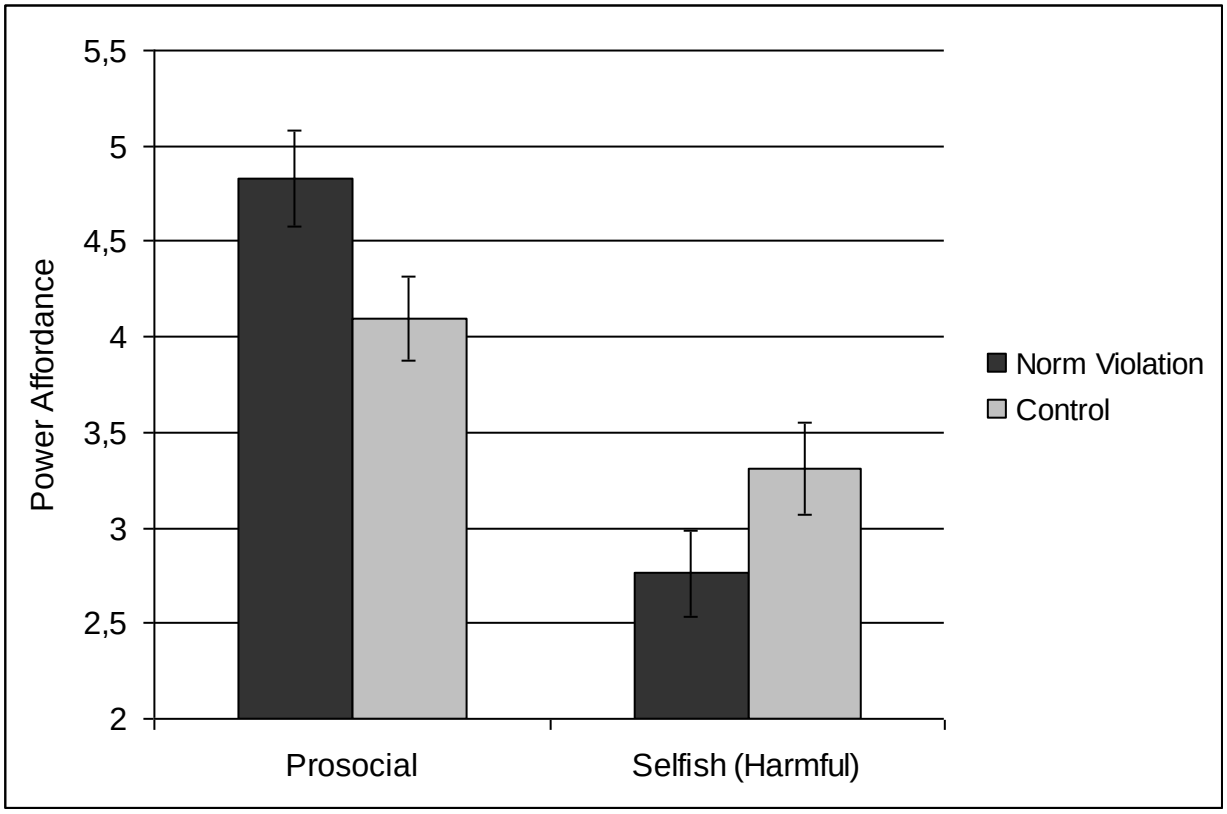
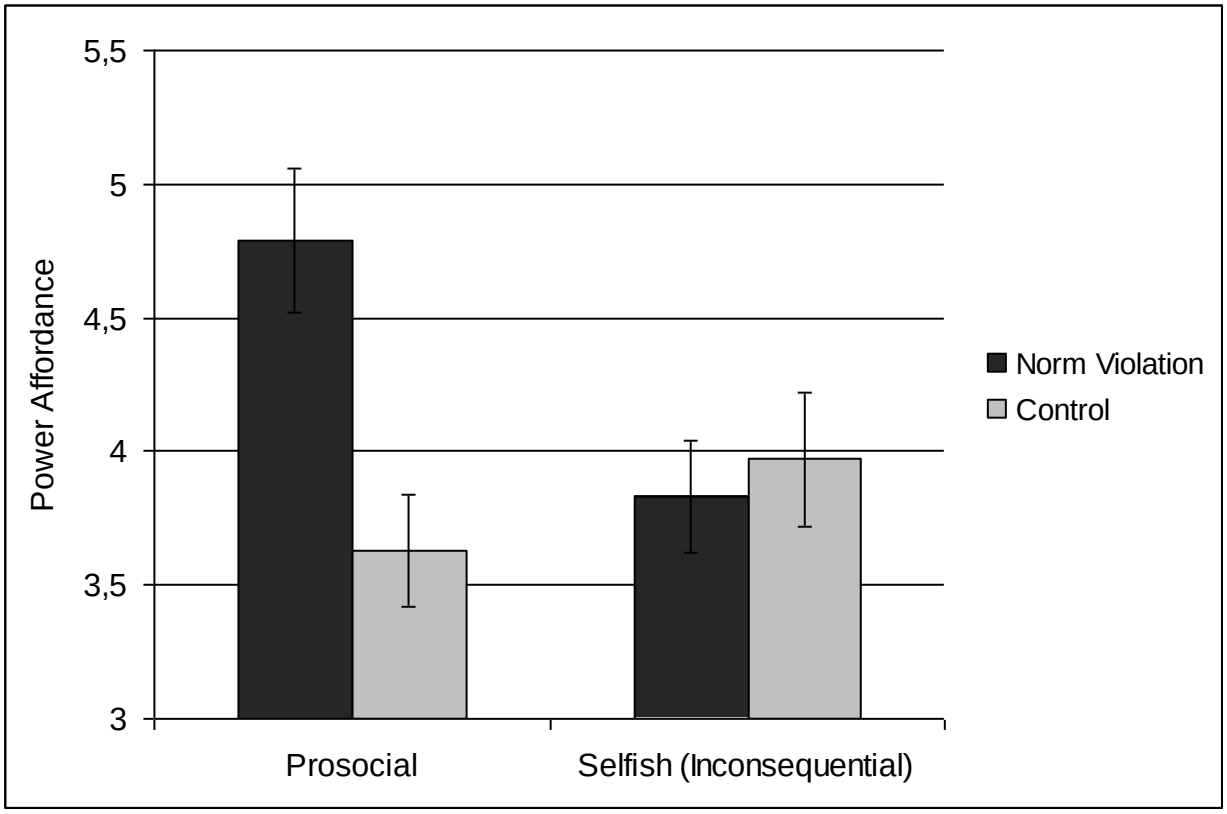
Figure 3. Power affordance as a function of norm violation (stealing coffee vs. taking coffee upon invitation) and prosociality (offering coffee to another person vs. keeping coffee for self) in Study 3