

Situation or Disposition? Predicting Wise Reasoning across Power Divides and Rejection

Expectations

by

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Abstract

Interpersonal conflict is full of uncertainty. How does one manage this uncertainty adaptively? Wisdom scholars propose wise reasoning is crucial to the successful management of uncertainty, but little work has actually examined the practical implications of this proposition. Adopting an interdependence theory (Kelley & Thibaut, 1978; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959) framework, three studies examined the impact of power divides and rejection sensitivity on people's wise reasoning tendencies in an interpersonal conflict. Participants were randomly assigned a low- or high-power position in a hypothetical workplace conflict that centered on a coworker with unrealistic expectations or who was overly critical. Participants completed measures of wise reasoning (Brienza, Grossmann, & Bobocel, 2016) and rejection sensitivity (Berenson et al., 2009). Results replicated across all three studies: lacking power increased wise reasoning tendencies among participants who were low in rejection sensitivity. For powerholders, being low in rejection sensitivity did not boost their wise reasoning tendencies. The current research suggests that—despite common assumptions that the powerful are highly competent and produce better outcomes—the powerless tend to be wiser reasoners in the domain of interpersonal conflict, unless they are undermined by worry about and expectations of rejection.

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Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to my dear friend Darryl, who passed away mere weeks before I completed it. Words cannot describe how much I will miss him. I also dedicate this thesis to my father, a man of little education but admirable intellect. The summer before I started my masters degree, he told me I was living out his dream for him. He never said kinder words to me.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Social interactions involving conflicting interests (i.e., social conflicts) are full of uncertainty (e.g., Bennett & Cropper, 1990; Nash, McGregor, & Prentice, 2011; Standifer, Lester, Schultz, & Windsor, 2013; Tidd & Friedman, 2002). While people are generally motivated to reduce uncertainty because they find it aversive, their strategies for doing so often lead to various negative outcomes (e.g., Jonas et al., 2014). Within the context of workplace conflict, these maladaptive strategies can have deleterious effects on the parties involved and the organization at large (e.g., de Reuver, 2006; Kolb & Sheppard, 1985; Rubin, Pruitt, & Kim, 1994). Scholars have postulated that successfully managing uncertainty is a central facet of wisdom (e.g., Brugman, 2006; Meacham, 1990). This said, little is known about how one actually goes about managing uncertainty successfully—or wisely—especially within social conflict.

Wise Reasoning

Various intellectual traditions have emerged in the attempt to define the psychological components of wisdom (see Staudinger & Glück, 2011). In their approach to difficult and ill-defined interpersonal situations like social conflict, Neo-Piagetian scholars advocated the development of “post-formal” reasoning strategies that reflect the variability in challenging socio-emotional situations (for a review, see Kallio, 2015). Many subsequent models of wisdom (e.g., Berlin wisdom paradigm; Sternberg’s balance theory; Ardel’s three dimension theory of wisdom; Levenson’s theory of self-transcendence) incorporated some elements of these post-formal reasoning strategies into their theoretical framework (e.g., Ardel, 2003; Baltes & Smith, 2008; Clayton, 1982; Levenson, Jennings, Aldwin, & Shiraishi, 2005; Mickler & Staudinger, 2008; Sternberg, 1998, for reviews, see Bangen, Meeks, & Jeste, 2013; Birren & Svensson,

2005; Grossmann, in press). Despite their variation, these models agree that certain elements of reasoning are central to wise thought and to helping people successfully navigate the inherent uncertainty within difficult life situations.

Over the past few years, Grossmann and colleagues (e.g., Grossmann et al., 2010; Grossmann, Na, Varnum, Kitayama, & Nisbett, 2013) have developed a framework of wise reasoning based on previous models of wisdom (Grossmann, 2016). This framework includes the following components: (a) taking the perspective of the other person(s) in a conflict, (b) taking the perspective of an objective outside party, (c) integration of multiple perspectives through compromise and prioritizing conflict resolution, (d) recognizing and acknowledging the limits of one's knowledge about a particular situation, and (e) understanding that situations change and may play out in multiple ways (Grossmann & Kross, 2014; Kross & Grossmann, 2012). Key findings from the research using this framework include several aspects of situations that promote wise reasoning. These include: (a) a future- (vs. present-) oriented perspective (Huynh, Yang, & Grossmann, 2016), (b) thinking about a friend's (vs. one's own) conflict (Grossmann & Kross, 2014), and (c) using 3rd- (vs. 1st-) person language while reflecting on a specific conflict (Grossmann, Oakes, Gerlach, & Denissen, 2016).

While this body of research has examined aspects of situations that promote or hinder wise reasoning (e.g., Grossmann & Kross, 2014; Kross & Grossmann, 2012), it has not, to date, examined how interdependence (i.e., the dependence of two parties on each other within a situation) contributes to the structure of social conflict and to people's behavior within social conflict. The present work aims to address this void in wisdom-related research.

Interdependence

Theorists of interdependence propose that interactions (I) are best understood as a function of Person A's (A) goals and motivations, Person B's (B) goals and motivations, and the objective properties of the situation (S) within which the interaction occurs (SABI; Kelley, Holmes, Kerr, Reis, Rusbult, & Van Lange, 2003). The SABI model is a useful tool for understanding the dynamics of social interactions, shedding light on when people may be more or less likely to use wise reasoning strategies to resolve social conflicts. Accordingly, to predict the behavior in an interaction between two people in conflict with each other, situational analysts need to identify the features of the situation in which the interaction occurs and the relevant goals and motives of both persons.

Situation Structure

Situation structure “often directly shapes behavior above and beyond the specific goals and motives of interacting individuals” (Van Lange & Balliet, 2014, p. 69). Within the theoretical framework of interdependence (Kelley & Thibaut, 1978; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959), the structure of a situation can be analyzed along six dimensions: degree, mutuality, bases, and temporal structure of dependence, covariation of interests, and informational availability (e.g., Holmes, 2002; Kelley et al., 2003; Van Lange & Balliet, 2014). It is especially important to consider the role of dependence between two interacting people because dependence is the foundation of power (cf. power-dependence theory; Emerson, 1962). That is, the greater Bruno's dependence on Jamal, the greater Jamal's power over Bruno.

Power Divides

Hierarchical power determines who controls valued resources and outcomes (e.g., Fiske, 1993; Keltner, Gruenfeld, & Anderson, 2003), who has the authority to perform certain tasks and when those tasks can be performed, and how organization members are expected to interact

across levels of the hierarchy (Sell, Lovaglia, Mannix, Samuelson, & Wilson, 2004). These structural features of power divides (i.e., differences in relative power) result in role-specific expectations, such that people in relatively low-power positions (i.e., the powerless) are expected to submit to those in relatively high-power positions (i.e., the powerful), while the latter are expected—and rewarded—for asserting their power over the former through dominance (Galinsky, Gruenfeld, & Magee, 2003; Gioia, Donnellon, & Sims, 1989).

Interactions involving power divides produce different experiences across power lines. Those in positions of power experience greater freedom than their relatively powerless counterparts (Keltner et al., 2003). Because those in positions of power are not dependent on the powerless for important resources in the way the latter are dependent on them, the powerful tend to have more opportunities to focus on successfully completing their goals (de Reuver, 2006). This relative independence afforded to the powerful promotes self-interested thinking and decreases the relevance of prosocial regard for the needs and interests of others (Fiske, 2010; Keltner et al., 2003).

In contrast, the powerless lack the social freedom of the powerful and have social constraints (e.g., expectations to uphold social norms, which powerholders are able to violate) placed on them (Keltner et al., 2003). They tend to focus on those in control of their valued outcomes and resources in an effort to develop a sense of control over their own outcomes (Fiske, 1993; Rusbult & Van Lange, 2008; Van Lange & Balliet, 2014). To this end, the powerless pay particular attention to diagnostic (i.e., unexpected or unusual) information about relevant powerholders (Fiske & Berdahl, 2007), process information more deeply and with greater differentiation, and seek out information to a greater extent than powerholders (e.g., Fiske, 1993; Rusbult, 1983). Given their relative lack of control, the powerless tend to rely on

hierarchical role expectancies to provide the much-needed structure they need to predict their outcomes (Sell et al., 2004).

The Role of Perceptions

Although situations have certain objective properties (such as asymmetric power due to occupying different levels in an organization's hierarchy), people's perceptions do not always align with these properties (Holmes, 2002). As a result, it is important to understand people's perceptions of a situation to understand what their expectations of the situation and their interaction partner's goals and motives will be. For example, Stefano is likely to perceive Amir's relevant goals and motives as self-interested if the conflict between the two offers Amir relative independence while holding Stefano relatively dependent on Amir. Understanding Stefano's perceptions of the situation leads to the logical prediction that his behavior toward Amir will likely be relatively guarded.

When it comes to perceptions of interaction partners and their relevant goals and motives in particular interactions, considerations of prosociality (i.e., consideration of others' needs and interests) are key (Holmes, 2002). If perceptions are skewed and Hilda inaccurately assumes that her partner, Brady, is more self-interested than prosocial, she is likely to make inaccurate predictions about Brady's behavior across a broad range of situations. Sensitivity to cues of rejection forms part of a defensive system that protects people in their interactions with others (Downey, Mougios, Ayduk, London, & Shoda, 2004). While generally socially adaptive, this defensive system can become maladaptive when people form fixed expectations of rejection and indiscriminately apply them to multiple interaction partners across various situations.

Rejection sensitivity causes people to anxiously expect rejection, perceive cues of social rejection where they do not exist, and over-react in response to perceived rejection (Downey &

Feldman, 1996; Downey, Lebolt, Rincon, & Freitas, 1998). High levels of rejection-related anxiety should leave a person particularly sensitive to cues of potential rejection in situations involving competing interests between a partner's self-interest and prosociality (Holmes, 2002). Accordingly, rejection sensitive people should be especially prone to perceiving the possibility of rejection when occupying the relatively powerless position within a power divide.

The Current Studies

In the current studies, I applied interdependence theory (Kelley & Thibaut, 1978; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959) to an examination of how power divides and rejection sensitivity influence the likelihood that two people in conflict with each other will use wise reasoning strategies in their social conflict. Based on my review of the relevant literatures, I arrived at the following hypotheses:

1. Lacking (vs. having) power in an interaction affords (a) greater attention to diagnostic information about the powerful partner (Fiske & Berdahl, 2007), (b) deeper processing and greater differentiation of information, and (c) greater search for information to the powerless partner (e.g., Fiske, 1993; Rusbult, 1983). These behaviors align well with the facets of wise reasoning described earlier. In contrast, having (vs. lacking) power in an interaction affords greater focus on one's own interests instead of prosocial concerns about one's partner (de Reuver, 2006). Focus on the self is antithetical to the taking and integration of perspectives that are integral to wise reasoning. Accordingly, I hypothesize that lacking power will promote greater use of wise reasoning strategies in reflections on a conflict compared to holding power.
2. People with a history of interpersonal rejection may form relatively stable expectations of rejection from multiple interaction partners across various situations (otherwise known as

rejection sensitivity; Downey & Feldman, 1996; Holmes, 2002). Because the goals people pursue in an interaction are largely informed by their expectations of the goals their partner will pursue (Holmes, 2002), stable expectations of rejection are likely to result in people pursuing defensive goals meant to protect themselves. This should result in relatively self-interested focus. Accordingly, I expect people with heightened expectations of rejection by their interaction partner to use wise reasoning strategies to a lesser extent in their reflections than people with weaker expectations of rejection.

3. Initially, I did not have a specific hypothesis about an interaction between power divides and rejection sensitivity. On the one hand, it seemed possible that the effect of rejection sensitivity on wise reasoning would be the same for people, regardless of the power associated with their position. On the other hand, it also seemed possible that rejection sensitivity would impair wise reasoning, but only in the high-power position, because power is associated with having social responsibility (Kruglanski & Stroebe, 2012), and rejection sensitive powerholders might find social responsibility especially aversive in conflict. For the second and third studies, I hypothesized an interaction based on the results of study 1. That is, rejection sensitivity would negatively impact wise reasoning, but only for participants assigned to the low-power position.

In three studies, I examined the impacts of power divides and rejection sensitivity on people's use of wise reasoning strategies in social conflict. Participants were randomly assigned to a high or low-power position in a hypothetical workplace conflict and asked to reflect on how they would think and behave if they were actually in the situation. Participants indicated the extent to which they would use specific wise reasoning strategies and what behaviors they would most likely carry out. Participants also completed a measure assessing their rejection sensitivity either

after (Study 1) or before the power manipulation (Studies 2 & 3). All participants were recruited from MTurk with careful screening to prevent resampling previous participants.

CHAPTER TWO: STUDY 1

The first study was exploratory and tested the impact of holding or lacking power on the use of wise reasoning strategies in two workplace conflicts. Rejection sensitivity was examined as a moderator of power.¹

Method

Participants

I aimed for a sample of 200 U.S. participants who were 18 years old or older, employed full-time, and not self-employed. Of the initial 220 American participants I recruited from Mechanical Turk, 2 completed the survey twice, 2 had the same IP address and completed both surveys at the same time, and 14 did not complete the main dependent variables in the survey. The final sample of 202 U.S. MTurk workers ($M_{\text{age}} = 36.2$ $SD = 10.77$, range: 19-65) was 58.4% female; 72.3% Caucasian, 7.4% Hispanic/Latino; 7.4% African American, 6.4% Asian American, 1.0% Native American, 2.0% other, 7 race unspecified; and 24.3% in a management position (of whom 41.7% worked in lower/entry-level management, 45.8% middle management, 12.5% upper management).

Procedure

Participants were invited to participate in an online survey about workplace conflict if they were 18 years of age or older, employed full-time, and not self-employed. Ineligible individuals were thanked for their interest and informed that they did not meet the eligibility criteria as specified in my study description.

¹ As part of a larger research project, a measure of workplace bullying (not addressed in the present manuscript) was included after measuring wise reasoning and behavioural intentions, but before rejection sensitivity.

After consenting to participate, participants were asked to imagine a hypothetical workplace conflict, then to answer several questions about how they would think and behave in the hypothetical situation, their experiences in their actual workplace, and finally, how they relate to others in general². Finally, participants were debriefed, as well as thanked and paid \$0.50 for their participation.

Manipulation Materials

Participants were randomly assigned to a high- or low-power position within a hypothetical workplace conflict and read the following description of their high- [low-] power position:

Imagine a scenario in which you have worked for a midsized marketing company for several years. You are the supervisor [a member] of a team that has recently been assigned to a new project. As a supervisor, you set [Your team supervisor sets] the agenda for the team, have [has] access to classified information, and in general, receive[s] the credit for your team's accomplishments. Your team members [As a team member, you] are expected to submit to you [your team supervisor] weekly progress reports and requests for access to classified information necessary for their [your] tasks.

Immediately afterward came a description of a hypothetical conflict reflecting typical workplace conflicts that can lead to workplace bullying (Einarsen, Hoel, & Notelaers, 2009). I randomly assigned participants to read one of two conflicts. The first conflict dealt with unrealistic expectations, described as follows in the high- [low-] power condition:

² Questions about participants' experiences in their actual workplace included the measure of workplace bullying, followed by the measure of rejection expectations.

A few weeks into the new project you were assigned to, you notice that one of your team members' [your team supervisor's] expectations of you seem unrealistically high. On several occasions you have been unable to meet these expectations, resulting in conflict between you and your team member [team supervisor]. You think your team member's [team supervisor's] expectations are unfair and decide to talk to your team member [team supervisor] about it.

The second conflict dealt with an overly critical coworker, described as follows in the high-[low-] power condition:

A few weeks into the new project you were assigned to, you notice that one of your team members [your team supervisor] seems overly critical of your work. On several occasions you have felt that your team member's [team supervisor's] criticisms were unwarranted and unfair. The situation is beginning to affect your work, so you decide to talk to your team member [team supervisor] about it.

After reading the conflict description, participants were asked to spend a few minutes thinking about the situation before moving on to the subsequent tasks.

Measures

Wise reasoning. Participants indicated the extent to which they would engage in each of 21 reasoning strategies if they were in the situation, using the State Wisdom Scale (SWS; Brienza, Grossmann, & Bobocel, 2016). This measure consists of five themes of wise reasoning: (a) recognizing the limits of one's knowledge (e.g., "Looked for any extraordinary circumstances before forming my opinion"; $\alpha = .76$), (b) recognition of change and uncertainty (e.g., "Believed the situation could lead to a number of different outcomes"; $\alpha = .83$), (c) recognition of the other

party’s perspective (e.g., “Made an effort to take the other person's perspective”; $\alpha = .89$), (d) integration of multiple perspectives through compromise and prioritization of conflict resolution (e.g., “Tried my best to find a way to accommodate both of us”; $\alpha = .85$), and (e) adopting the perspective of an outsider (e.g., “Tried to see the conflict from the point of view of an uninvolved person”; $\alpha = .91$; for exact wording of items, see Appendix). All items were rated on a 5-point scale (0 = *Not at all*, 4 = *Very much*; see Table 1 for psychometric properties).

Table 1

Psychometric Properties of State Wisdom Scale (SWS)

Subcomponent	N Items	PCA Loading	M (SD)	Component Correlations			
				2	3	4	5
1. Intellectual Humility	4	.80	2.47 (.76)	.57	.49	.58	.50
2. Recognition of Change	4	.79	2.84 (.70)	–	.46	.61	.46
3. Others’ Perspectives	4	.76	2.37 (.85)		–	.49	.58
4. Compromise/Resolution	5	.82	2.98 (.66)			–	.55
5. Outsider’s Perspective	4	.78	2.41 (.90)				–

Note. All correlations are significant at $p < .001$. PCA = Principal components analysis.

In keeping with past research (Grossmann et al., 2013; Grossmann & Kross, 2014), I created composites for each of the five wise reasoning themes and entered these components into a principal component analysis (PCA) with oblimin rotation. A single component emerged, accounting for 62.33% of the variance (eigenvalue: 3.12; see Table 1 for factor loadings). Accordingly, I computed an overall composite score from the five wise reasoning subcomponent composites ($\alpha = .84$, $M = 2.61$, $SD = .61$) and used these scores in my analyses.

Manipulation checks. To confirm the effectiveness of the power manipulation, two items assessed participants’ perception of their hypothetical co-worker’s power and status relative to their own (1 = *Much less*, 5 = *Much more*).

Relationship expectations. Next, participants reported their expectations of the relationship’s quality after confronting their coworker (1 = *Worse*, 2 = *Same or Similar*, 3 =

Better) and whether the conflict would be resolved as a result of confronting their co-worker (1 = *Not resolved*, 2 = *Partially resolved*, 3 = *Resolved*).

Participants' experience of conflict. To control for idiosyncratic experiences of workplace conflict, I asked participants how often they experienced conflict at their own jobs (1 = *Never*, 6 = *Every day*), and how intense the conflicts they experience usually are (1 = *Not at all*, 5 = *Extremely*).

Behavioral intentions. Finally, participants indicated how many of 7 potential behaviors they would engage in if they were actually in the specified hypothetical situation (e.g., “*I would forgive the other person*”; “*I would retaliate against the other person*”). I created count variables for positive (maximum = 3) and negative (maximum = 4) behaviors by tallying how many of each they selected ($M_{Pos} = 2.22$, $SD = 1.13$, $M_{Neg} = .40$, $SD = .70$).

Workplace bullying. Next, participants completed the Negative Acts Questionnaire - Revised (NAQ-R; Hoel, Faragher, Cooper, 2004) about bullying experiences. Analyses involving this measure are not reported as they pertain to a different research question.

Rejection sensitivity. Next, the Rejection Sensitivity Questionnaire (RSQ; Berenson et al., 2009) for adults assessed the extent to which participants had developed stable expectations of rejection in social interactions. This measure features 9 social situations and asks participants to indicate, for each, how worried or anxious they would be about rejection (1 = *Very unconcerned*; 6 = *Very concerned*), and how likely it is that they would be accepted (1 = *Very certain*, 6 = *Very uncertain*). Rejection sensitivity scores were computed by multiplying participants' acceptance expectation (reverse scored) by their rejection expectation for each scenario, then averaging across all 9 scenarios ($M = 9.45$, $SD = 4.49$, range = 1.00 – 30.67, $\alpha = .84$). Possible scores range from 1 to 36, with higher scores indicating greater rejection

sensitivity. Rejection sensitivity scores were similarly distributed to Berenson and colleagues' (2009) initial study testing the validity of this measure ($M = 8.6$, $SD = 3.6$, range = 1.0 – 24.2, $\alpha = .70$).

Subjective SES. Participants clicked on an interactive image of a ladder to indicate the rung corresponding to their perceived SES, relative to other Americans (1 = *lowest SES*, 10 = *highest SES*).

Results

All independent variables were mean centered and all dependent variables checked for normality. Results did not differ across the two types of conflict, so I collapsed across conflict types. Controlling for the frequency and intensity of conflict in participants' actual workplace did not systematically affect the results, so I omitted these covariates from my models.

Manipulation Checks

Measures of participants' perceptions of their hypothetical coworker's power and status—relative to their own—were ordinal in nature. As such, I performed ordinal logistic regressions to test the main effect of the power manipulation.

Relative power. Using a full likelihood ratio test, I compared the proportional odds model with the cumulative odds model for perceptions of relative power; the model met the assumption of proportional odds, $\chi^2(3) = 5.97$, $p = .113$. The manipulation of power was statistically significant, $\chi^2(1) = 100.39$, $p < .001$, such that the odds ratio of participants in a low-power position seeing their hypothetical coworker as relatively higher in power was 106.40 times, 95% CI [42.70, 265.12], that of participants in a high-power position.

Relative status. As with relative power, the model met the assumptions of proportional odds, $\chi^2(9) = 5.38$, $p = .800$, and produced a significant main effect of power, $\chi^2(1) = 69.04$, $p <$

.001. Participants in the low-power position were 17.59 times, 95% *CI* [8.95, 34.60], more likely to perceive their hypothetical coworker as higher in relative status than participants in the high-power position.

Main Analyses

Rejection sensitivity. Because I measured the stability of participants' expectations of rejection at the end of the survey, I tested for effects of the power manipulation on it. I found a main effect of power, such that participants assigned to the low- (vs. high-) power position reported greater expectations of rejection, $F(1, 200) = 116.65, p < .001, \eta^2 = .37$.

Wise reasoning. I first tested the effect of power on overall wise reasoning by itself; it was not significant, $F(1, 200) < .10$. I then ran the hypothesized model with rejection sensitivity as a moderator of power. The main effect of rejection sensitivity was significant: the greater participants' expectations of rejection, the less they engaged in wise reasoning, $\beta = -.02, SE = .01, t(198) = -2.44, p = .016$. More importantly, the hypothesized Power X Rejection Sensitivity interaction emerged, $\beta = .05, SE = .02, t(198) = 2.64, p = .009$.

As can be seen in Figure 1, participants in the low-power position decreased in their use of wise reasoning strategies as their expectations of rejection increased, $\beta = -.05, SE = .01, t(198) = -3.73, p < .001$. Participants' use of wise reasoning strategies in the high-power position was relatively unrelated to the effect of rejection sensitivity, $\beta = .003, SE = .01, t(198) = .18, p = .861$. When comparing participants who had relatively lower rejection sensitivity ($-1 SD$), those assigned to a low-power position used significantly more wise reasoning strategies than those assigned to a high-power position, $\beta = -.27, SE = .12, t(198) = -2.27, p = .024$. However, when comparing participants with relatively higher rejection sensitivity ($+1SD$), no differences emerged across the power divide, $\beta = .18, SE = .12, t(198) = 1.48, p = .140$.

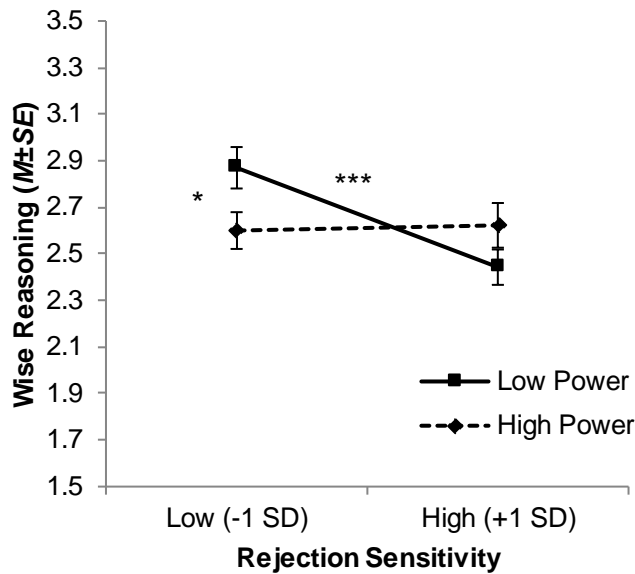


Figure 1. Rejection sensitivity moderates the impact of power on the use of wise reasoning strategies in workplace conflict.

* $p < .05$. *** $p < .001$.

To better understand which components of wise reasoning were driving the overall effects, I ran the model for each of the subcomponents of wise reasoning (see Table 2). Significant Power X Rejection Sensitivity interactions emerged for three of the five subcomponents.

Taking the other party's perspective. Examining the significant Power X Rejection sensitivity interaction revealed that participants in the low-power position took their hypothetical partner's perspective less as a function of increasing rejection sensitivity, $\beta = -.07$, $SE = .02$, $t(198) = -3.86$, $p < .001$. For participants in the high-power position, taking the other party's perspective was relatively unrelated to rejection sensitivity, $\beta = -.004$, $SE = .02$, $t(198) = -.20$, $p = .843$. At relatively low levels of rejection sensitivity ($-1SD$), high- and low-power positions did not differ significantly, $\beta = -.21$, $SE = .17$, $t(198) = -1.26$, $p = .211$, but at relatively high levels ($+1SD$), participants in the low- (vs. high-) power position were significantly less likely to take their hypothetical partner's perspective, $\beta = .37$, $SE = .17$, $t(198) = 2.22$, $p = .028$.

Table 2

SWS Subcomponents Results (Study 1)

	<i>B</i> (<i>SE</i>)	<i>t</i>	95% CI	
			Lower	Upper
Other				
Power	.08 (.12)	.71	-.15	.31
Reject	-.04 (.01)	-2.80**	-.06	-.01
Power*Reject	.07 (.03)	2.45*	.01	.12
Change				
Power	-.11 (.10)	-1.06	-.30	.09
Reject	-.01 (.01)	-1.04	-.03	.01
Power*Reject	.03 (.02)	1.53	-.01	.08
Limits				
Power	-.22 (.11)	-2.00*	-.43	-.00
Reject	-.02 (.01)	-2.00*	-.05	.00
Power*Reject	.02 (.02)	.61	-.03	.06
Integration				
Power	-.03 (.09)	-.31	-.21	.16
Reject	-.02 (.01)	-1.43	-.04	.01
Power*Reject	.04 (.02)	1.99*	.00	.08
Outsider				
Power	.04 (.12)	.33	-.20	.29
Reject	-.03 (.01)	-2.04*	-.06	-.00
Power*Reject	.10 (.03)	3.46**	.04	.15

Note. Other = Taking the other party's perspective; Change = Recognizing change in the world; Limits = Acknowledging one's limits of knowledge; Integration = Perspective integration via compromise and prioritizing conflict resolution; Outsider = Taking an outsider's perspective; Power = Power manipulation (mean-centered); Reject = Rejection sensitivity.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Taking an outsider's perspective. Replicating previous patterns, taking an outsider's perspective in the high-power position was relatively unrelated to rejection sensitivity, $\beta = .02$, $SE = .02$, $t(198) = 1.01$, $p = .314$, while in the low-power position participants adopted an outsider's perspective significantly less as a function of increasing rejection sensitivity, $\beta = -.08$, $SE = .02$, $t(198) = -4.03$, $p < .001$. The degree to which an outsider's perspective was adopted in the low- and high-power positions differed at both relatively low ($-1SD$) and high ($+1SD$) levels of rejection sensitivity. Participants in the low- (vs. high-) power position considered an

outsider's perspective more when they had relatively lower rejection sensitivity, $\beta = -.39$, $SE = .17$, $t(198) = -2.24$, $p = .026$, whereas they were significantly less likely to consider an outsider's perspective when they had relatively high rejection sensitivity, $\beta = .47$, $SE = .18$, $t(198) = 2.66$, $p = .008$.

Perspective integration. Participants' integration of multiple perspectives in the high-power position was relatively unrelated to their rejection sensitivity, $\beta = .01$, $SE = .02$, $t(198) = .40$, $p = .687$, whereas in the low-power position, perspective integration declined as a function of increasing rejection sensitivity, $\beta = -.04$, $SE = .01$, $t(198) = -2.51$, $p = .013$. Despite the significant decline in perspective integration in the low-power position, the low- and high-power positions did not differ significantly at either relatively low ($-1 SD$) or high ($+1 SD$) rejection sensitivity, $\beta = -.22$, $SE = .13$, $t(198) = -1.65$, $p = .102$, and $\beta = .16$, $SE = .13$, $t(198) = 1.18$, $p = .239$, respectively.

Relationship Expectations

As with the manipulation checks, I performed ordinal logistic regressions to examine participants' expectations of their relationship with their hypothetical coworkers as a function of confronting the coworker regarding the conflict.

Future relationship quality. A full likelihood ratio test demonstrated that the model met the assumptions of proportional odds, $\chi^2(3) = 4.29$, $p = .231$. A main effect of power, $\chi^2(1) = 6.28$, $p = .012$, demonstrated that participants in the low-power position were 2.60 times, 95% CI [1.23, 5.52], more likely than participants in the high-power position to believe the relationship with their hypothetical coworker would *stay the same* or *not* improve as a result of confronting their coworker about the ongoing conflict. Neither the main effect of rejection sensitivity nor the interaction between it and power were significant, all χ^2 s $< .60$, *ns*.

Conflict resolution. A full likelihood ratio test demonstrated that the model met the assumptions of proportional odds, $\chi^2(3) = 2.06, p = .560$. However, neither the main effects of power or rejection sensitivity, nor their interaction, were significant, all χ^2 s $< 2.05, ns$.

Discussion

The results of the initial study suggest that the experience of having or lacking power has important implications for interpersonal conflict. Lacking power increased wise reasoning tendencies among participants low in rejection sensitivity. In contrast, low rejection sensitivity was not associated with an increase in wise reasoning tendencies for participants in the high-power position. These differences were especially evident for the wise reasoning subcomponents of taking an outsider's perspective and integrating multiple perspectives, whereas the simple effects for taking the other party's perspective did not neatly match the overall pattern. For the latter, lacking power decreased the tendency to take the other party's perspective among participants high in rejection sensitivity. At low rejection sensitivity, low- and high-power participants did not differ from each other.

CHAPTER THREE: STUDY 2

In Study 1, I measured rejection sensitivity at the end of the survey and the power manipulation significantly affected participants' scores. As such, the two are not truly independent of each other and the result should be interpreted with caution. To address this shortcoming, in Study 2, I measured rejection sensitivity at the beginning of the study to determine whether baseline scores produce similar results. Because the interaction that emerged in Study 1 was exploratory, I sought to replicate it here.

Methods

Participants

I aimed for a similar sample size as in Study 1 ($N = 200$ U.S. participants) and kept the same qualification criteria. Of the initial 219 American participants I recruited from MTurk, 13 did not complete the main dependent variables in the survey. I removed them for a final sample of 206 U.S. MTurk workers ($M_{\text{age}} = 33.3$, $SD = 9.83$, range: 19-70) that was 46.8% female; 81.1% Caucasian, 4.9% Hispanic/Latino; 6.3% African American, 5.8% Asian American, .5% Native American, 1.5% other; and 31.2% in a management position (of which 33.3% were in lower/entry-level management, 52.4% in middle management, and 14.3% in upper management).

Procedure

Participants were recruited the same way as in Study 1. Unlike Study 1, the current participants completed the measure of rejection sensitivity at the beginning of the study. The rest of the procedure remained the same, save the exclusion of the NAQ.

Measures

Two new covariates were added to assess participants' motivation to meet with their hypothetical coworker ($M = 4.49, SD = 1.34$) and their perceived importance of the meeting ($M = 5.24, SD = .94$); both were scored on a 7-item scale (0 = *Not at all*, 6 = *Extremely*). With the exception of wise reasoning, the remaining measures were identical to Study 1.

Wise reasoning. Due to an error, an older 20-item version of the SWS (Brienza et al., 2016) was used in this survey, affecting the structure of two subcomponents. Recognition of change and uncertainty had 5 instead of 4 items, and integrating multiple perspectives via compromise and prioritizing resolution had 3 instead of 4 items. I calculated the 5 subscale composites as in Study 1, with the noted exceptions to the two subscales just mentioned (see Table 3 for psychometric properties). Each of the composites loaded strongly onto a single latent factor in a PCA with oblimin rotation, accounting for 55.07% of the variance (eigenvalue: 2.75; see Table 3 for factor loadings). I computed an overall composite score using the 5 subscale composites ($\alpha = .78, M = 2.76, SD = .49$), and used this overall composite in the analyses.

Table 3

Psychometric Properties of the 20-Item SWS (Study 2)

Subcomponent	N Items	α	PCA Loading	M (SD)	Component Correlations			
					2	3	4	5
1. Intellectual Humility	4	.61	.76	2.66 (.61)	.41	.54	.42	.43
2. Recognition of Change	5	.78	.77	2.90 (.62)	–	.48	.59	.35
3. Others' Perspectives	4	.76	.77	2.75 (.61)		–	.45	.37
4. Compromise/Resolution	3	.64	.76	3.08 (.61)			–	.33
5. Outsider's Perspective	4	.83	.65	2.43 (.88)				–

Note. All correlations are significant at $p < .001$. PCA = Principal components analysis.

Results

All independent variables were mean centered and the distributions of all dependent variables were checked for normality. Conflict type did not systematically moderate the effect of power in the analyses, but it did significantly interact with power on several variables.

Accordingly, I collapsed across conflict type where it was not significant and report analyses without it. Where significant, I report analyses with conflict type in the model.

Manipulation Checks

Relative power. The model met the assumption of proportional odds, $\chi^2(3) = 2.25, p = .522$, revealing a significant effect of power, $\chi^2(1) = 93.52, p < .001$. The odds ratio of participants in the low-power position seeing their hypothetical coworker as relatively higher in power was 148.37 times, 95% CI [53.86, 408.73], that of participants in the high-power position.

Relative status. The model met the assumptions of proportional odds, $\chi^2(12) = 7.84, p = .798$, and produced a significant main effect of power, $\chi^2(1) = 63.49, p < .001$. Participants in the low-power position were 14.35 times, 95% CI [7.45, 27.63], more likely to perceive their hypothetical coworker as higher in relative status than participants in the high-power position.

Main Analyses

Rejection sensitivity. Rejection sensitivity did not vary by power condition, $F(1, 204) < .12$.

Wise reasoning. The 3-way interaction was marginally significant, $\beta = .08, SE = .04, t(198) = 1.94, p = .054$ (see Figure 2), so I tested the interaction for each conflict type separately. The Power X Rejection Sensitivity interaction was not significant for the conflict involving an overly critical coworker, $t > -1.00$. For the conflict involving a coworker with unrealistic expectations, participants randomly assigned to the low- (vs. high-) power position tended to report using more wise reasoning strategies when they had relatively lower ($-1SD$) rejection sensitivity, $\beta = -.36, SE = .14, t(99) = -2.60, p = .011$. Among participants with relatively higher ($+1SD$) rejection sensitivity, this difference was not present, $\beta = .06, SE = .14, t(99) = .43, p = .666$. Explaining this asymmetric pattern of results, participants in the low-power position

showed a significant decrease in their use of wise reasoning strategies as a function of increasing rejection sensitivity, $\beta = -.04$, $SE = .02$, $t(99) = -2.33$, $p = .022$, whereas participants in the high-power position showed no effect of rejection sensitivity on their use of wise reasoning strategies, $\beta = .02$, $SE = .02$, $t(99) = .82$, $p = .417$.

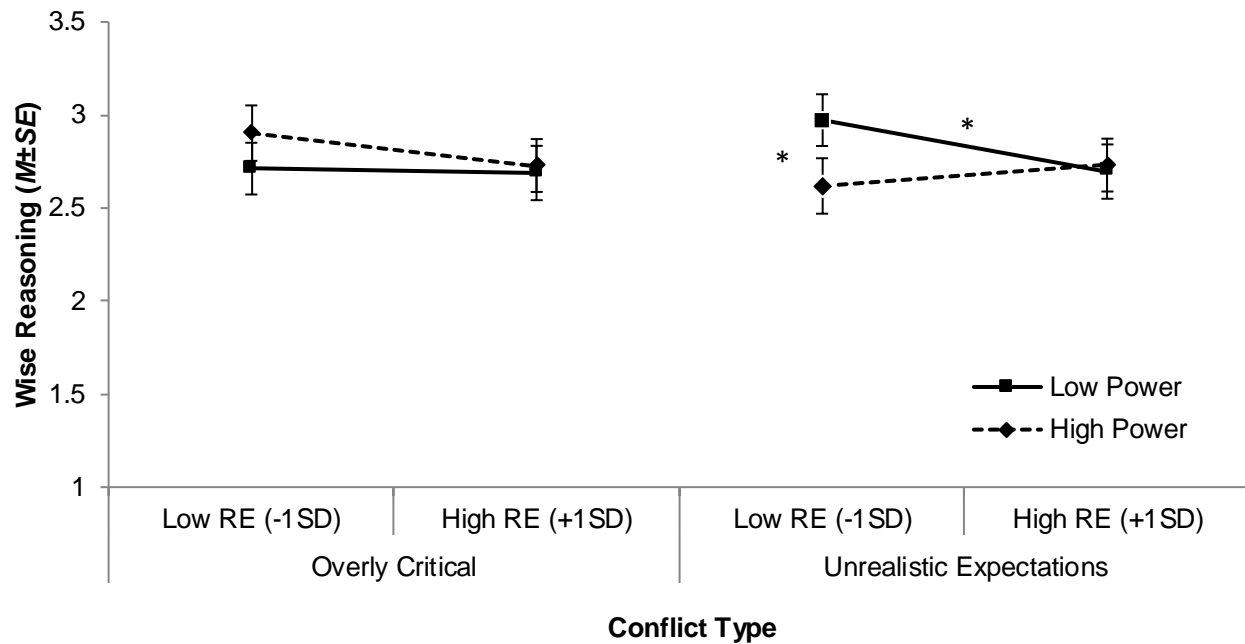


Figure 2. Three-way Power X Conflict Type X Rejection Sensitivity interaction predicting wise reasoning. RE = Rejection Sensitivity.

I ran the full model for each of the subscales of wise reasoning. The 3-way Power X Conflict Type X Rejection Sensitivity interaction was significant for only recognition of change and uncertainty. However, the Power X Rejection Sensitivity interaction was not significant for either conflict type (see Table 4).

In accordance with the results for global wise reasoning, I also examined the Power X Rejection Sensitivity interaction for each of the conflict types separately (see Table 4). The Power X Rejection Sensitivity interaction was significant for the integration of multiple perspectives, but only among participants assigned to the unrealistic expectations conflict.

Perspective integration. Among participants with low (-1SD) rejection sensitivity, the low-power position was associated with greater integration of multiple perspectives, $B = -.61$, $SE = .17$, $t(99) = -3.67$, $p < .001$. No differences as a function of power emerged among participants with high (+1SD) rejection sensitivity, $t(99) > -1.00$. The low-power position marginally increased perspective integration among participants low in rejection sensitivity, $B = -.04$, $SE = .02$, $t(99) = -1.80$, $p = .075$, whereas the high-power position did not produce a significant difference as a function of rejection sensitivity, $B = .04$, $SE = .02$, $t(99) = 1.52$, $p = .131$.

Table 4

SWS Subcomponents Results by Conflict Type (Study 2)

	Overly Critical				Unrealistic Expectations			
	<i>B (SE)</i>	<i>t</i>	95% CI		<i>B (SE)</i>	<i>t</i>	95% CI	
			L	U			L	U
Other								
Power	.25 (.13)	2.03*	.01	.50	.05 (.11)	.47	-.17	.27
Reject	-.01 (.02)	-.61	-.05	.03	-.03 (.02)	-2.12*	-.06	-.00
Power*Reject	-.03 (.04)	-.69	-.10	.05	.05 (.03)	1.63	-.01	.11
Change								
Power	.11 (.12)	.93	-.13	.35	-.27 (.12)	-2.15*	-.51	-.02
Reject	-.03 (.02)	-1.55	-.07	.01	-.01 (.02)	-.73	-.05	.02
Power*Reject	-.05 (.04)	-1.33	-.12	.02	.07 (.03)	2.04	.00	.13
Limits								
Power	.07 (.12)	.55	-.18	.32	-.04 (.12)	-.36	-.28	.19
Reject	.001 (.02)	.06	-.04	.04	-.02 (.02)	-1.49	-.06	.01
Power*Reject	.02 (.04)	.52	-.06	.10	.05 (.03)	1.42	-.02	.11
Integration								
Power	.11 (.12)	.90	-.13	.34	-.35 (.12)	-3.02**	-.58	-.12
Reject	-.02 (.02)	-1.15	-.06	.02	-.001 (.02)	-.05	-.03	.03
Power*Reject	.03 (.04)	.73	-.05	.10	.07 (.03)	2.33*	.01	.14
Outsider								
Power	.03 (.18)	.19	-.31	.38	-.20 (.18)	-1.09	-.55	.16
Reject	-.01 (.03)	-.44	-.07	.04	.01 (.02)	.35	-.04	.06
Power*Reject	-.08 (.05)	-1.43	-.19	.03	.04 (.05)	.87	-.05	.14

Note. L = Lower Bound; U = Upper Bound; Other = Taking the other party's perspective; Change = Recognizing change in the world; Limits = Acknowledging one's limits of knowledge; Integration = Perspective integration via compromise and prioritizing conflict resolution;

Outsider = Taking an outsider's perspective; Power = Power manipulation (mean-centered);
Reject = Rejection Sensitivity.
† $p < .10$. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Relationship Expectations

Future relationship quality. The model met the assumptions of proportional odds, $\chi^2(3) = 2.57, p = .463$, and a marginally significant main effect of power, $\chi^2(1) = 3.35, p = .067$ demonstrated that participants in the low-power position were 1.64 times, 95% CI [.97, 2.78], more likely than participants in the high-power position to believe the relationship with their hypothetical coworker would *stay the same* or *not improve* as a result of confronting the coworker about the conflict. The main effect of rejection sensitivity and the Power X Rejection sensitivity interaction were not significant, $\chi^2s < 1.20, ns$.

Conflict resolution. The model met the assumptions of proportional odds, $\chi^2(3) = 6.61, p = .085$, and the main effect of power was significant, $\chi^2(1) = 4.47, p = .034$. Participants in the low-power position were 1.83 times, 95% CI [1.04, 3.21], more likely to believe the conflict with their coworker would be either *partially* or *not resolved*. Neither rejection sensitivity nor its interaction with power were significant, both $\chi^2s < 2.65, ns$.

Discussion

Study 2 replicated the main results of Study 1. Rejection sensitivity, once again, negatively impacted the use of wise reasoning strategies, but only for participants randomly assigned to the low-power position. It could be the case that, because our sample (as in Study 1) comprises largely full-time employees who occupy low levels within their organizational hierarchy, participants in the high-power position do not have a working model for conflict interactions in such a position. I address this potential confound in Study 3.

CHAPTER FOUR: STUDY 3

After Studies 1 and 2 revealed an interactive effect of power and rejection sensitivity shaping the use of wise reasoning strategies in general population samples, Study 3 tested whether these effects would replicate in a specialized sample of largely mid-level managers. I chose managers because they occupy a unique place in the social hierarchy of organizations. Their role places them in a position of fluctuating relative power depending on their interaction partner: powerful with a team member below them versus powerless with their own supervisor. Accordingly, this sample should provide a better indication of whether the effects of power divides and rejection sensitivity are truly situationally based—as suggested by the first two studies—or whether occupying an actual workplace position of power inoculates one against the tendency for rejection sensitivity to undercut wise reasoning when powerless.

Participants

I recruited a sample of 100 U.S. MTurk workers who indicated that they were employed as managers in their actual workplaces. One participant withdrew his or her data³, leaving a final sample of 99 managers ($M_{\text{age}} = 35.01$, $SD = 11.10$, range = 19-70) that were 48.5% female; 81.8% Caucasian, 7.1% Hispanic/Latino, 4.0% African American, 3.0% Asian American, 2.0% Native American, 2.0% other; and of which 25.3% were in lower/entry-level management, 57.6% in middle management, and 17.2% in upper management.

Procedure

³ This person replied “No, do not use my data” to the question, “*Can you think of any reason why I shouldn’t use your responses to these questions in my analyses (e.g., you were tired or distracted when you were answering the questions, or you didn’t read the instructions carefully, so your answers may not be accurate)?*” Participants were assured that responses would not affect remuneration.

The procedure mirrored Studies 1 and 2, with the exception that in the current study, participants were asked to write down up to 5 goals they had for the meeting with their hypothetical coworker and rate the importance of each goal.

Measures

The measures duplicated those in Study 2, except that I used the current version of the SWS (Brienza et al., 2016), as in Study 1 (see Table 5 for psychometric properties). As in the previous studies, all 5 wise reasoning subscale composites loaded onto one latent factor (Eigenvalue = 2.80) and explained 56.03% of the variance. I computed an overall wise reasoning composite score from the 5 subscale composites for my analyses.

Table 5

Psychometric Properties of SWS (Study 3)

Subcomponent	N Items	α	PCA		Component Correlations			
			Loading	M (SD)	2	3	4	5
1. Intellectual Humility	4	.61	.70	2.66 (.61)	.35	.39	.49	.42
2. Recognition of Change	4	.75	.74	2.90 (.62)	–	.45	.58	.36
3. Others' Perspectives	4	.83	.76	2.75 (.61)		–	.54	.45
4. Compromise/Resolution	5	.83	.83	3.08 (.61)			–	.44
5. Outsider's Perspective	4	.88	.70	2.43 (.88)				–

Note. All correlations are significant at $p < .001$. PCA = Principal components analysis.

Goals. Participants were asked to think about the meeting with their coworker and to briefly write down their goals or reasons for having the meeting with their coworker. Participants had space to list 5 goals, but were told they only needed to list as many as they thought they would have for this kind of meeting. Participants listed 3.73 goals, $SD = 1.41$, on average.

After listing their goals for the meeting, participants rated the importance of each goal on a separate page⁴. Ratings were provided on a 7-point scale (1 = *Not at all important*, 7 = *Extremely important*). I weighted participants' goal importance values by calculating the mean of

⁴ Goals were auto-filled into the importance questions to avoid inaccurate memory recall.

each participant's importance ratings and multiplying it by the proportion of the 5 possible goals each participant completed ($M_{\text{Weighted}} = 4.59, SD = 1.83$).

Results

I mean-centered all the independent variables, computed the interaction terms using these mean-centered variables, and checked the distributions of the dependent variables for normality.

Manipulation Checks

Relative power. The model met the assumption of proportional odds, $\chi^2(3) = 1.87, p = .600$. A significant effect of power revealed, $\chi^2(1) = 45.95, p < .001$, such that the odds ratio of participants in the low-power position seeing their hypothetical coworker as relatively higher in power was 168.68 times, 95% CI [38.29, 742.97], that of participants in the high-power condition.

Relative status. Unlike relative power, the model did not meet the assumptions of proportional odds, $\chi^2(3) = 9.63, p = .022$. I opted to analyze relative status using a multinomial logistic regression mode (Laerd Statistics, 2016). A likelihood ratio test showed that power significantly predicted relative status, $\chi^2(4) = 36.63, p < .001$. Recall that status was measured on a 5-point scale (1 = *Much less*, 5 = *Much more*) and that the question was worded, "Does the other person have *more* social status than you?" According, I set the first category (*Much less*) as the comparison category and examined the effect of power on comparisons of each of the remaining 4 categories against the first.

Power significantly predicted participants' likelihood to choose either the 4th (*More*) or 5th (*Much more*) categories, compared to the 1st (*Much less*) category. Specifically, participants randomly assigned to the high-power position were 60.00 times, 95% CI [2.91, 1236.63], less likely to say their hypothetical coworker had relatively *more* status (i.e., 4th category) than they

did, and 24.00 times, 95% CI [1.11, 518.58], less likely to rate their hypothetical coworker as having *much more* (i.e., 5th category) status than them: $B = 4.09$, $SE = 1.54$, Wald's $\chi^2(1) = 7.03$, $p = .008$, and $B = 3.18$, $SE = 1.57$, $\chi^2(1) = 4.11$, $p = .043$, respectively.

When I ran these analyses with the 5th category (i.e., *Much more*) as the reference category, I found corresponding results for participants randomly assigned the low-power position. That is, these participants were 23.81 times, 95% CI [1.11, 500.00], less likely than their high-power counterparts to rate their hypothetical coworker as having *much less* (i.e., 1st category) status than them, 15.87 times, 95% CI [1.45, 166.67], less likely to indicate their hypothetical coworker had *less* (i.e., 2nd category) status than them, and 16.95 times, 95% CI [1.96, 142.86], less likely to indicate their hypothetical coworker had the *same or similar* status as them: $B = -3.18$, $SE = 1.57$, $\chi^2(1) = 4.11$, $p = .043$; $B = -2.77$, $SE = 1.23$, $\chi^2(1) = 5.13$, $p = .024$; and, $B = -2.83$, $SE = 1.10$, $\chi^2(1) = 6.61$, $p = .010$, respectively. Taken together, these results demonstrate that the manipulation of power significantly impacted participants' perceptions of their hypothetical coworker's status as expected.

Main Analyses

Rejection Sensitivity. Rejection sensitivity did not differ by power, $F < .05$, *ns*.

Wise reasoning. A main effect of rejection sensitivity emerged: the more participants expected rejection from others, the less they used wise reasoning strategies, $\beta = -.05$, $SE = .01$, $t(95) = -3.78$, $p < .001$. The hypothesized Power X Rejection Sensitivity interaction was marginally significant, $\beta = .05$, $SE = .03$, $t(95) = 1.78$, $p = .078$.

As can be seen in Figure 3, among participants with relatively lower ($-1SD$) rejection sensitivity, those who lacked power used significantly more wise reasoning strategies than those who held power, $\beta = -.28$, $SE = .13$, $t(95) = -2.06$, $p = .042$. However, among participants with

relatively higher (+1SD) rejection sensitivity, the power divide did not significantly affect participants' use of wise reasoning strategies, $\beta = .06$, $SE = .13$, $t(95) = .46$, $p = .645$. As in Studies 1 and 2, the lack of power was associated with increasing use of wise reasoning tendencies as participants decreased in rejection sensitivity, $\beta = -.08$, $SE = .02$, $t(95) = -3.97$, $p < .001$, while rejection sensitivity was not associated with the use of wise reasoning strategies among participants who held power, $\beta = -.03$, $SE = .02$, $t(95) = -1.38$, $p = .170$.

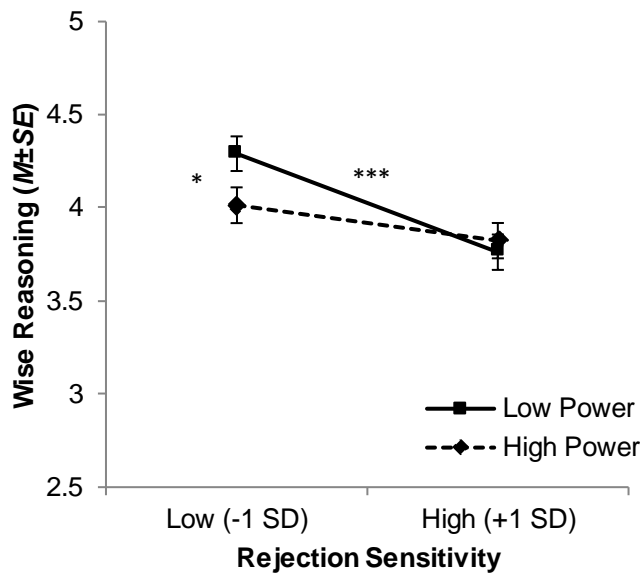


Figure 3. Rejection sensitivity moderates the impact of power on the use of wise reasoning strategies.

* $p < .05$. *** $p < .001$.

As in Studies 1 and 2, I reran the full model for all 5 subcomponents of wise reasoning (see Table 6). The 2-way Power X Rejection sensitivity interaction was significant only for perspective integration. At relatively low (-1SD) rejection sensitivity, participants in the low-power position integrated perspectives to a greater extent than their high-power counterparts, $\beta = -.37$, $SE = .15$, $t(95) = -2.52$, $p = .013$, but these differences were not present at relatively high (+1SD) rejection sensitivity, $\beta = .08$, $SE = .15$, $t(95) = .52$, $p = .602$. Mirroring previous interaction patterns, participants' integration of perspectives in the low-power position increased as a function of decreasing rejection sensitivity, $\beta = -.11$, $SE = .02$, $t(95) = -5.16$, $p < .001$.

Unlike previous interaction patterns for wise reasoning variables, participants' integration of perspectives also increased in the high-power position as a function of decreasing rejection sensitivity, $\beta = -.05$, $SE = .02$, $t(95) = -2.03$, $p = .046$.

Table 6

SWS Subcomponents Results (Study 3)

	<i>B (SE)</i>	<i>t</i>	95% CI	
			Lower	Upper
Other				
Power	.14 (.13)	1.08	-.12	.40
Reject	-.07 (.02)	-3.46**	-.11	-.03
Power*Reject	.06 (.04)	1.56	-.02	.14
Change				
Power	-.08 (.12)	-.68	-.31	.15
Reject	-.04 (.02)	-2.27*	-.07	-.01
Power*Reject	.02 (.03)	.64	-.05	.09
Limits				
Power	-.23 (.13)	-1.80†	-.48	.02
Reject	-.03 (.02)	-1.56	-.07	.01
Power*Reject	.03 (.04)	.72	-.05	.10
Integration				
Power	-.15 (.10)	-1.42	-.35	.06
Reject	-.08 (.02)	-5.07***	-.11	-.05
Power*Reject	-.07 (.03)	2.15*	.01	.13
Outsider				
Power	-.22 (.18)	-1.27	-.57	.13
Reject	-.05 (.03)	-1.99*	-.10	.00
Power*Reject	.08 (.05)	1.42	-.03	.18

Note. Other = Taking the other party's perspective; Change = Recognizing change in the world; Limits = Acknowledging one's limits of knowledge; Integration = Perspective integration via compromise and prioritizing conflict resolution; Outsider = Taking an outsider's perspective; Power = Power manipulation (mean-centered); Reject = Rejection sensitivity.

† $p < .08$. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Goal Importance. A marginally significant main effect of power emerged such that participants randomly assigned to the high (vs. low) power position rated their goals as somewhat more important, $\beta = .67$, $SE = .35$, $t(95) = 1.93$, $p = .057$, 95% CI [-0.02, 1.36]. I also

found a significant effect of rejection sensitivity, $\beta = -.17$, $SE = .05$, $t(95) = -3.32$, $p = .001$, 95% CI [-.27, -.07]. The lower participants' rejection sensitivity, the more important they rated their goals for their meeting with their hypothetical coworker. The interaction was not significant, $t < 1.15$, *ns*.

Relationship Expectations

Future relationship quality. The model met the assumptions of proportional odds, $\chi^2(3) = 1.21$, $p = .750$. However, no significant effects emerged for power, rejection sensitivity, or their interaction, all $\chi^2s < 1.35$, *ns*.

Conflict resolution. The model met the assumptions of proportional odds, $\chi^2(3) = 2.17$, $p = .538$. The Power X Rejection sensitivity interaction was marginally significant, $\beta = -.24$, $SE = .14$, $\chi^2(1) = 3.05$, $p = .081$.

Rejection sensitivity did not affect participants' expectations of conflict resolution in the high-power position, $B = -.13$, $SE = .09$, $\chi^2(1) = 2.20$, $p = .138$. In contrast, participants in the low-power position were 1.45 times, 95% CI [1.18, 1.79], less likely to expect partial to total conflict resolution as a function of incremental increases in rejection sensitivity, $B = -.37$, $SE = .11$, $\chi^2(1) = 12.01$, $p = .001$. Power did not significantly affect participants' conflict resolution expectations at either relatively low (-1SD) or high (+1SD) levels of rejection sensitivity: $\chi^2 < 1.00$, *ns*, and $B = -.96$, $SE = .59$, $\chi^2(1) = 2.60$, $p = .107$, respectively.

Discussion

Study 3 replicated the main results of Studies 1 and 2. When thinking about a workplace conflict, lacking power increased wise reasoning tendencies among participants low in rejection sensitivity. In contrast, holding power did not change wise reasoning tendencies as a function of rejection sensitivity.

CHAPTER FIVE: GENERAL DISCUSSION

Across three studies, power divides and rejection sensitivity interactively predicted the use of wise reasoning strategies in workplace conflict. Lacking power increased wise reasoning tendencies among participants low in rejection sensitivity. Holding power was not associated with changes in wise reasoning tendencies, regardless of how sensitive participants were to rejection.

When exploring which aspects of wise reasoning drove these results, the only consistent pattern to emerge across studies was a similar interaction pattern predicting participants' integration of multiple perspectives via compromise and prioritizing conflict resolution. Less consistent patterns also emerged for the two perspective-taking subscales. Similar main effects of power in Studies 2 and 3, and rejection expectation in Studies 1 and 2, were found for taking the other party's perspective. For adopting an outsider's perspective, a similar main effect of rejection sensitivity emerged in Studies 1 and 3. These inconsistent results at the subcomponents level of wise reasoning are consistent with emerging evidence that wise reasoning "is highly variable and subject to situational contingencies" (Grossmann et al., 2016, pp.611). Accordingly, the individual components of wise reasoning may vary considerably and show little evidence of a consistent pattern across multiple studies, while the intersection of all five components displays a consistent effect of overall wise reasoning, as seen in the current studies.

The current research focused on the impact of power on wise reasoning, but what about status? After all, research on status differences sometimes produces similar results to research on power differences (e.g., Grossmann & Varnum, 2011; Kraus, Côté, Keltner, 2010; Kraus & Keltner, 2013). However, these similarities do not mean the two are synonymous. In their review, Fiske, Dupree, Nicolas, and Swencionis (2016, p. 44) define power as "asymmetrical

control over resources” and status as “social prestige.” They highlight several studies outlining the independence of power and status (e.g., Blader & Chen, 2012), but also point out that the two are “typically correlated features of the human condition” (Fiske et al., 2016, p. 44). Relevant to the current studies, hierarchical power is formally built into the situational structure of organizations, whereas status is inferred (Fiske, 2010). As such, I focused on power in the current studies while acknowledging that in practice the two are often correlated (Fiske et al., 2016).

The SABI model specifies that interaction behavior is a function of situational structure and the goals and motives of the interacting parties (Holmes, 2002; Kelley et al., 2003). In the current studies, participants were asked to imagine a conflict situated in a workplace, involving an interaction partner with relatively more or less power, and with little to no information about their interaction partner’s goals or motives. Accordingly, the situational structure participants imagined themselves in varied as a function of the hierarchical position to which they were randomly assigned.

Participants assigned to the low-power position imagined a situation in which partner control was high and dependence was non-mutual (i.e., they were highly dependent on their interaction partner, but their partner was largely independent). These situational contingencies made considerations of their partner’s prosociality (vs. self-interestedness) highly relevant and, by extension, led people with increasing expectations of interpersonal rejection to use wise reasoning strategies to a lesser extent.

In contrast, the high-power position was characterized by relatively high actor control and relative independence (in which the participant was largely independent of the interaction partner while the latter was highly dependent on the participant). Notably, subordinate-initiated

conflict lies in direct contrast to the submissiveness expected of their hierarchical role (de Reuver, 2006). Because they lack the resources to pose a large threat to those in power over them (de Reuver, 2006), these subordinates are not treated as seriously, but superiors are still expected—in keeping with their hierarchical role—to respond by reasserting their dominance over the subordinate (Watson, 1982). As a function of this situational affordance, participants in the high-power role should be focused on their own interests. To the extent that this focus reflects the successful achievement of their goals (de Reuver, 2006), concerns of rejection by an interaction partner should remain largely irrelevant. In the current studies, high-power participants' use of wise reasoning strategies remained relatively stable and were not undermined by their general rejection sensitivity.

The current studies support interdependence theory's claim that situations give rise to behavior above and beyond goals and motivations (Van Lange & Balliet, 2014). All three studies provide converging evidence that the power divides produced by hierarchical situational structure interact with individuals' expectations of rejection to predict people's use of wise reasoning strategies in workplace conflict. Whereas participants' expectations of rejection were similarly distributed across the high- and low-power positions in Studies 2 and 3, these personal dispositions were primarily relevant for the powerless. In the current studies, failure to consider both situational structure and people's goals and motives would lead to the mistaken conclusion that power divides do not impact the use of wise reasoning strategies.

The current work is not without its limitations. All three studies relied on MTurk samples rather than participants recruited from specific workplaces. As such, I cannot be absolutely confident that participants represented their employment and position authentically. Additionally, this work relies on hypothetical scenarios in which participants imagined a conflict

and how they would reason about it if it were real. Future work should attempt to replicate these results within actual workplaces to increase ecological validity. In the current studies, I reason, in line with interdependence theory, that rejection sensitivity does not impact participants in the high-power position because the situation structure for them makes concerns of re-establishing their power more relevant than concerns of rejection, but future work should formally test this hypothesis. Lastly, this work focuses on a specific instantiation of power in a setting where the implications of power are generally well defined. As such, it is unclear whether similar results would be found in situations with less clearly defined power divides (e.g., between members of majority and minority groups). Future work should attempt to extend the domain of power divides to increase the generalizability—or to demarcate the boundaries—of the current findings.

The current studies explored two conflict scenarios and found few systematic differences between the two. Future studies should broaden the scope of conflict scenarios examined to see whether the current results generalize across types of conflict (e.g., ideological differences; outright verbal hostility) or are specific to certain classes of conflict. Additionally, future work might examine situations in which expectations of rejection are not relevant to people in low-power positions.

Lastly, the current studies suggest that holding power may impede the benefits to wise reasoning tendencies of having low rejection sensitivity. It would be useful to explore whether, and to what extent, it is possible to increase powerful people's use of wise reasoning strategies when their rejection sensitivity is also low.

Conclusion

In the current studies, people who lacked (vs. held) power tended to be wiser reasoners when they were lower in rejection sensitivity. In contrast, those who held power did not

demonstrate increases in wise reasoning as a function of lower rejection sensitivity. This is rather surprising given the typical assumption that people in powerful positions are highly competent and produce better outcomes. At least where interpersonal conflict is concerned, it seems that low- (vs. high-) power can lead to better outcomes, except when undermined by rejection sensitivity.

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Appendix A

Table 7

State Wisdom Scale (Brienza et al., 2016)

5 Subscales and Items of SWS
<i>Take other person's perspective</i>
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Put myself in the other person's shoes.2. Think about what the other person and I might have in common.3. Make an effort to take the other person's perspective.4. Take time to consider the other person's opinions on the matter before coming to a conclusion.
<i>Recognize change and uncertainty</i>
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Look for different solutions as the situation evolves.2. Consider alternative solutions as I learn about the conflict.3. Believe the situation could lead to a number of different outcomes.4. Think the situation could unfold in many different ways.
<i>Acknowledge limits of knowledge</i>
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Double-check whether my opinion on the situation might be incorrect.2. Consider whether the other person's opinions might be correct.3. Look for any extraordinary circumstances before forming my opinion.4. Behave as if there may be some information to which I do not have access.
<i>Perspective integration via compromise and prioritizing conflict resolution</i>
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Try my best to find a way to accommodate both of us.2. Though it may not be possible, search for a solution that could result in both of us being satisfied.3. Consider first whether a compromise is possible in resolving the situation.4. View it as very important that we resolve the situation.5. Try to anticipate how the conflict might be resolved.
<i>Take outsider's perspective</i>
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Wonder what I would think if I were somebody else considering the situation.2. Try to see the conflict from the point of view of an uninvolved person.3. Ask myself what other people might think or feel if they were considering the conflict.4. Think about whether an outside person might have a different opinion from mine about the situation.

Note: Items are scored on a 5-point scale (0 = *Not at all*, 4 = *Very much*).