

Power Distance Belief, Power, and Charitable Giving

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Three studies examine the relation between power distance belief (PDB), the tendency to accept and expect inequalities in society; power, the control one has over valued resources; and charitable giving. Results suggest that the effect of PDB depends on the power held by the donor. In low-PDB contexts, people high (vs. low) in psychological power tend to be more self-focused (vs. other-focused), and this leads them to be less charitable. In high-PDB contexts, however, people high (vs. low) in psychological power tend to be more other-focused (vs. self-focused), and this leads them to be more charitable. The authors also explore several boundary conditions for these relationships and conclude with the implications of these findings.

Keywords: charitable giving, power distance belief, power, self-focus, other-focus

Who is more charitable? Is it those who endorse inequality in society or those who prefer equality? Because charity is usually extended to those that lack resources, one's normative belief in the role of inequality and hierarchy in society should impact the desire to behave charitably toward the less fortunate. For instance, an individual who endorses inequality (i.e., one who is high in power distance belief, or PDB) believes that societal hierarchy is acceptable, even desirable. For this person,

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providing charity to the needy may be viewed as inimical to the goal of preserving important societal hierarchies. In contrast, an individual who endorses equality (i.e., one who is low in PDB) believes that societal equality is important and may therefore be motivated to help the less fortunate (or punish the prosperous) to help foster more equitable outcomes. However, we theorize that PDB's impact on charitable giving is more nuanced and depends on the degree of power perceived by the individual.

More specifically, we argue that in high-PDB contexts, high- (vs. low-) power consumers are more likely to donate because they are more other-focused (Abele and Wojciszke 2007; Roux, Goldsmith, and Bonezzi 2012). However, in low-PDB contexts, we propose that high- (vs. low-) power consumers are less likely to donate (Johnson and Krueger 2006; Piff et al. 2010; van Kleef et al. 2008) because they are more self-focused (Rucker, Dubois, and Galinsky 2011). This inquiry also extends the literature on power that has shown main-effect relationships between power and charitable giving such that those high in power are less charitable (Rucker et al. 2011). We also expand the theorizing to include several key contextual variables that shed light on the underlying mechanisms as well as boundary conditions.

This article makes several theoretical contributions. It is one of the first to examine how PDB interacts with power

to predict charitable giving, thus enriching present theoretical understanding of the nexus between PDB and charitable giving by articulating when high- (vs. low-) PDB individuals are likely to be more charitable. Further, by showing that the interactive effect of power and PDB on charitable giving runs through a focus on self versus others, we shed light on the underlying mechanism and contribute to the literature on self-/other-focus. Finally, we uncover boundary conditions of our effects by identifying factors that influence self-/other-focus, and thus moderate the effect of PDB and power on charitable giving. Whereas the bulk of the literature focuses on an other-focus as the mechanism underlying charitable giving, we identify instances where a self-focus can lead to more giving because of enhanced benefits to the self associated with giving.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Power Distance Belief, Power, and Charitable Giving

Although inequalities in power exist within each society, the degree to which individuals accept inequalities in power varies (Hofstede 2001; Oyserman 2006; Zhang, Winterich, and Mittal 2010). The extent to which individuals accept and endorse inequalities and hierarchies is called power distance belief (PDB) and has traditionally been assessed at the country level (Hofstede 2001). Recent research suggests that PDB also manifests at the individual level and that high- (or low-) PDB tendencies can also be temporarily heightened through priming procedures (Winterich and Zhang 2014; Zhang et al. 2010). PDB is conceptually independent of the observed inequality in a given context and reflects an individual's beliefs about whether inequality is acceptable, not the extent to which it exists.

It is important to note that PDB is conceptually distinct from the construct of psychological power. PDB reflects the extent to which individuals accept inequalities in power

in society, whereas power reflects perceived personal control over valued resources or others (Gao, Winterich, and Zhang 2016; Keltner, Gruenfeld, and Anderson 2003; Rucker, Galinsky, and Dubois 2012). Accordingly, Oyserman (2006, 353) notes that “power distance has to do with the perceptions and responses of those both high and low in power within a particular system.”

In the domain of charitable giving, Winterich and Zhang (2014) found that high- (vs. low-) PDB consumers are less likely to donate to charity because they feel less responsible for the needy. The authors suggest that, since high-PDB consumers believe that everyone should have a “defined” place within the social order, they avoid altering this order (e.g., uplifting the needy by donating to them). Although these findings enhance our knowledge of how PDB affects donation, we suggest that one can obtain a more nuanced understanding by examining the role of individuals' power within the system; that is, we suggest that individual beliefs about inequalities in power and individuals' psychological power interact and thus affect donation.

Hypotheses for Low-PDB Contexts

We propose that, when PDB is low, low- (vs. high-) power consumers are *more* likely to donate to charity because they tend to be more other-focused (vs. self-focused), which refers to the degree to which an individual pays attention to others (oneself) or the needs of others (vs. those of oneself; see table 1). First, research suggests that in low-PDB contexts, low-power individuals often depend on others for coveted resources, attend to others, and are attuned to others' preferences (Rucker et al. 2011). Further, in low-PDB contexts, low-power individuals experience less personal control because their position restricts their access to resources (Johnson and Krueger 2005; Piff et al. 2010), and increases their reliance on others (Piff et al. 2012). Thus, low-power individuals pay more attention to others' needs, thereby increasing their likelihood of

TABLE 1

PREDICTIONS FOR HOW THE INTERACTION BETWEEN PDB AND POWER INFLUENCES CHARITABLE GIVING AND HOW THESE EFFECTS ARE MODERATED BY DIFFERENT FACTORS

	Self- or other-focus	Charitable giving	Reaction to self-/other-focus messages (study 2)	Reaction to public acknowledgment (study 3)
Low power/low PDB	Other-focus	More charitable	A self-focused ad makes them donate less	Public acknowledgment makes them donate less
Low power/high PDB	Self-focus	Less charitable	A self-focused ad makes them donate more	Public acknowledgment makes them donate more
High power/low PDB	Self-focus	Less charitable	A self-focused ad makes them donate more	Public acknowledgment makes them donate more
High power/high PDB	Other-focus	More charitable	A self-focused ad makes them donate less	Public acknowledgment makes them donate less

NOTE.—The shaded areas represent the conditions that lead to more charitable giving.

orienting toward their social environment and enhancing connections with others (Johnson and Krueger 2006; Piff et al. 2010; van Kleef et al. 2008), thus leading them to be more other-focused than their high-status counterparts (Piff et al. 2010). Hence, we propose that in low-PDB contexts, low- (vs. high-) power individuals will be more other-focused.

In contrast, high-power individuals in low-PDB contexts are more self-focused because they are less dependent on others and have the freedom and ability to act and pursue goals they value (Rucker et al. 2011). Thus, these factors may lead high-power people to blame their low-power counterparts for not taking advantage of the opportunities available to improve their lot. Indeed, individuals are less likely to help others if they think others are responsible for negative outcomes such as poverty due to internally controllable factors such as laziness (Skitka and Tetlock 1992). Research conducted in several low-PDB cultures (e.g., United States and Netherlands) confirms that high (vs. low) power leads to a greater focus on the needs of oneself versus those of others (Lammers, Gordijn, and Otten 2008; Piff et al. 2010; Rucker et al. 2011). Research also suggests that high- (low-) power individuals have an agentic (communal) orientation, leading them to give more importance to themselves (others) in decision making (Rucker et al. 2012). These results suggest that high- (vs. low-) power individuals in low-PDB contexts may be more self-focused.

H1: When PDB is low, individuals high in power will be more self-focused (or less other-focused) than those low in power.

Next, we argue that the self-focused (other-focused) tendencies by high- (low-) power consumers in low-PDB contexts will lead them to donate less (more). Other research has shown that when individuals are more other-focused, they tend to be more prosocial (i.e., are more likely to donate to charity; Bagozzi and Moore 1994; Batson 1990; Fisher, Vandenbosch, and Antia 2008). However, previous research on power and charitable giving did not isolate the role of PDB (Piff et al. 2010).

H2: When PDB is low, individuals high in power will be less likely to donate to charity than those low in power.

Hypotheses for High-PDB Contexts

In high-PDB contexts, however, we suggest that people high (vs. low) in power are more likely to donate to charity because they tend to be more other-focused. Handgraaf et al. (2008) found that powerful people are willing to help powerless people if powerless individuals do not have the means or power to subvert existing power structures. In high- (vs. low-) PDB contexts, extreme inequalities are accepted, and it is likely that low-power people might not

have enough power to overturn existing hierarchies. Other research has shown that, when people accept extreme inequalities, powerful people often believe that their power is not justified, which in turn increases their desire to assist needy others (Miron, Branscombe, and Schmitt 2006). Indeed, when people endorse hierarchy, powerful people are more generous to others because those situations activate feelings of stewardship (Tost, Wade-Benzoni, and Johnson 2015; Wade-Benzoni et al. 2008). Tost et al. (2015) suggest that when psychological distance between high- and low-power people increases, high-power people are more sensitive to power asymmetries, thus leading them to be more generous to low-power people.

Relational models theory provides insight into the social rules governing interactions within hierarchies. Rai and Fiske (2011) find that when hierarchies are perceived as natural or legitimate or inevitable, individuals respect rank in social relationships; subordinates are motivated to respect and obey superiors, who in turn are motivated to guide, aid, and protect subordinates. This finding implies that, in high-PDB contexts, high-power people may feel morally obligated to support low-power people because low-power people show them deference and respect. Further, research suggests that tipping is more prevalent in high- (vs. low-) PDB contexts (Lynn, Zinkhan, and Harris 1993; Shamir 1984). If one assumes that people who serve may be lower in status (which has been used as a proxy for power; Rucker et al. 2012) than those being served, at least symbolically (Lynn 2006; Rucker et al. 2012), these findings suggest that, in high-PDB contexts, high- (vs. low-) power consumers may be more generous and more other-focused particularly toward those with fewer resources.

By contrast, we propose that low-power consumers in high-PDB contexts are more self-focused. Although low-power people in high-PDB contexts—like their counterparts in low-PDB contexts—also depend on others for coveted resources, the wide disparities in power in high-PDB settings mean that these people are likely to be severely resource constrained and may need to focus on their own needs for survival. Not surprisingly, Roux et al. (2012) showed that scarcity-related cues intensified an agentic (vs. communal) orientation. Because of extreme inequalities, in high-PDB contexts, low-power people are likely to perceive limited access to resources (i.e., scarcity-related cues) and may be self-focused. Formally:

H3: When PDB is high, individuals high in power will be more other-focused (or less self-focused) than those low in power.

Furthermore, we argue that in high-PDB contexts, the other-focused (self-focused) tendencies by high- (low-) power consumers will lead them to donate more (less). In a modified ultimatum game, Handgraaf et al. (2008) found that when the contexts entail extreme power imbalance, powerful individuals became more prosocial and allocated

more money to their powerless counterparts. Additional research confirms that, in hierarchical contexts, people who live in upper-class neighborhoods are more likely to be altruistic, compared to their counterparts in lower-class neighborhoods (Holland, Silva, and Mace 2012).

Further, low (vs. high) power leads to lower perceptions of control over various types of outcomes (Fast et al. 2009; Galinsky, Rucker, and Magee 2015), and this difference may be amplified in hierarchical contexts. Previous research also suggests that when individuals believe that they cannot influence outcomes (e.g., allocation of monetary outcomes), they are less likely to sacrifice a portion of their benefits to better others' (Choshen-Hillel and Yaniv 2011). It is likely that in high-PDB contexts, where inequalities are endorsed, individuals with low (vs. high) power are less likely to believe that they can change the outcomes of others (Fast et al. 2009), and hence, may be less likely to donate to charity. Collectively, these findings suggest that in high-PDB contexts, low (vs. high) power may result in decreased prosocial behavior because of a focus on the self and may decrease the tendency to donate to charity.

H4: When PDB is high, individuals high in power will be more likely to donate to charity than those low in power.

Boundary Conditions

The crux of our theorizing hinges on the argument that an other-focus (vs. self-focus) activated by the interaction between PDB and power increases charitable giving. To probe this underlying mechanism, we identify two factors that can moderate the interactive effect of PDB and power on charitable giving, such that a self- (vs. other-) focus increases charitable giving. Specifically, we identify two factors that influence self-/other-focus by varying how charities construct their ad messages and propose that a message that shifts one's focus on benefits to the self will make individuals with a self-focus donate more because it fulfills their goal, but will make individuals with an other-focus donate less because it mismatches their inherent other-focus goal. We describe each boundary condition prediction briefly below and in greater detail in the précis to the corresponding study in which it is tested.

Messages Highlighting Self- or Other-Benefits. Prior research on charitable giving identifies two communication strategies (White and Peloza 2009). One approach emphasizes benefits to those helped by the charity (i.e., others), whereas the other approach emphasizes benefits to the donor (i.e., the self). We predicted that when the charity emphasizes benefits to others, low-power people in low-PDB contexts (Piff et al. 2010) and high-power people in high-PDB contexts (Abele and Wojciszke 2007) would be more likely to donate because they are intrinsically more other-focused and the charity fulfills these goals. However,

when the charity emphasizes benefits to the self (i.e., the donor), high-power people in low-PDB contexts (Rucker et al. 2011) and low-power people in high-PDB contexts (Abele and Wojciszke 2007) would be more likely to donate because they are more self-focused and the charity fulfills these goals.

Messages Emphasizing Public Acknowledgment of Donation Behavior. Next, we posit another message-based factor that has been shown to impact self-/other-focus. Charitable organizations sometimes publicly acknowledge donors' contributions (Winterich et al. 2013). We posit that this factor directly manipulates self-focus by shifting the benefits of giving toward the prestige (Harbaugh 1998) and social approval received by the donor (Masclat et al. 2003). Thus, we predict that public acknowledgment of donations will increase donation intentions among self-focused individuals because it matches their orientation, but will reduce donation intentions among other-focused individuals because public acknowledgment is inconsistent with their goals.

Table 1 summarizes the hypotheses and predictions for the boundary conditions tested in three studies. We measured or manipulated all key variables and examined the tendency to donate to charity by measuring donation amount. Following the recommendations of Simmons, Nelson, and Simonsohn (2011), we have ensured that the sample size per cell across the studies is at least 50. Before running analyses, we standardized donation amount for comparison purposes across all three studies.

STUDY 1: PDB, POWER, SELF-/OTHER-FOCUS, AND DONATION

Study 1 was conducted to test the mediating role of self-/other-focus on the interactive effect of PDB and power on charitable giving.

Method

Participants and Design. One hundred seventy-four undergraduate students at Indiana University participated in exchange for partial class credit. This study employed a two-cell (PDB: high vs. low) between-subjects design with power as a continuous measured variable. Participants were randomly assigned to the high- ($N = 85$) or low- ($N = 89$) PDB condition.

Measures and Manipulations. Following Zhang et al. (2010), we manipulated PDB by asking participants to read a statement: "There should be an order of inequality in this world in which everyone has a rightful place; high and low are protected by this order." In the high- (low-) PDB condition, participants were asked to write three reasons in support of (against) this statement. The PDB manipulation was validated by two pretests (see web appendixes A and B for

detailed results). Participants were then shown information about the Habitat for Humanity charity from its website. Thereafter, participants were asked to respond to a question measuring donation amount: "Suppose you have \$100 at your disposal. How much of that would you donate to Habitat for Humanity?" We measured self-/other-focus using a five-item, nine-point scale ($\alpha = .617$; 1 = strongly disagree; 9 = strongly agree) adopted from Woody (1996). A sample item was: "At this time, I am focused on other people" (higher scores on this measure represent greater other-focus; see web appendix D). We measured power using an eight-item, nine-point scale ($\alpha = .861$; 1 = strongly disagree; 9 = strongly agree) adopted from Anderson, John, and Keltner (2012) and used in pretests. A sample item was: "I think I have a great deal of power." The PDB manipulation did not affect the measure of power ($F(1, 172) = .09, p = .77$). Finally, participants provided demographic information and were debriefed. Suspicion measures revealed that no participant reported any suspicion or awareness of our hypotheses.

Results and Discussion

Charitable Giving. Following Spiller et al. (2013), a regression analysis with charitable giving as the dependent variable and (i) perceived power, (ii) a dummy variable for PDB (i.e., low (0) or high (1)), and (iii) their interaction as independent variables revealed a significant main effect of power ($\beta = -.285, SE = .103, t(170) = -2.75, p < .007$), a significant main effect of PDB ($\beta = -2.296, SE = .703, t(170) = -3.27, p < .002$), and a significant two-way interaction between the two ($\beta = .465, SE = .144, t(170) = 3.23, p < .002$). To explore this interaction, we tested the slopes of perceived power in each PDB condition. The slope of perceived power was significant and negative in the low-PDB condition ($\beta = -.285, SE = .103, t(170) = -2.75, p < .007$), suggesting that those high (vs. low) in power donated less. In the high-PDB condition, the slope of perceived power was positive and marginally significant ($\beta = .180, SE = .100, t(170) = 1.79, p = .075$), suggesting that those high (vs. low) in power donated more, supporting hypotheses 2 and 4.

Self-/Other-Focus. Following Spiller et al. (2013), a regression analysis with self/other-focus as the dependent variable and (i) perceived power, (ii) a dummy variable for PDB (i.e., low (0) or high (1)), and (iii) their interaction as independent variables revealed a significant main effect of power ($\beta = -.316, SE = .114, t(170) = -2.77, p < .007$), a significant main effect of PDB ($\beta = -2.634, SE = .777, t(170) = -3.39, p < .001$), and a significant two-way interaction between the two ($\beta = .604, SE = .159, t(170) = 3.79, p < .001$). Next, we tested the slopes of perceived power in each PDB condition. The slope of perceived power was significant and negative in the low-PDB

condition ($\beta = -.316, SE = .114, t(170) = -2.77, p < .007$), suggesting that those high (vs. low) in power are more self-focused (or less other-focused). In the high-PDB condition, the slope of perceived power was positive and significant ($\beta = .287, SE = .111, t(170) = 2.59, p < .011$), suggesting that those high (vs. low) in power are more other-focused (or less self-focused). These findings support hypotheses 1 and 3.

The Mediating Role of Self-/Other-Focus. We tested the mediated moderation model using the bootstrapping procedure described by Preacher, Rucker, and Hayes (2007). We used model 8 of the PROCESS macro by Hayes (2013). This approach includes procedures that compute a 95% confidence interval (CI) around the indirect effect (i.e., the interactive effect of PDB and power on charitable giving via self-/other-focus). If a CI does not include zero, it indicates mediation. Results revealed that in the high-PDB condition, the CI for the indirect effect of power on charitable giving via self-/other-focus ranged from .004 to .141 ($\beta = .057, SE = .036$), whereas in the low-PDB condition, the CI ranged from $-.142$ to $-.001$ ($\beta = -.063, SE = .037$), providing evidence that the self-/other-focus measure mediated the interactive effect of PDB and power on giving. Finally, the CI of the indirect effect of the highest-order interaction in the entire sample did not include zero (CI: .018 to .264; $\beta = .121, SE = .063$).

Study 1 suggested that PDB and power interact to predict charitable giving. We also found that in the low-PDB context, high- (vs. low-) power individuals were more self-focused and thus were less likely to donate. In the high-PDB context, however, those high (vs. low) in power tended to be more other-focused and thus were more likely to donate. These findings support our theoretical framework, which highlights the mediating role of self-/other-focus as a function of PDB and power. Building on these findings, study 2 experimentally tested the role of self-/other-focus in driving the relationship between power and charitable giving as a function of PDB.

STUDY 2: SELF-/OTHER-FOCUS IN MESSAGE FRAMING

The goal of study 2 was to examine the mediating role of self-/other-focus using ad messages. We propose that, since low-power individuals in low-PDB contexts (Piff et al. 2010) and high-power individuals in high-PDB contexts (Abele and Wojciszke 2007) are more other-focused and more interested in helping others, the ad frame that emphasizes benefits to others of donating to charity will fulfill these groups' motivations of other-focus, and thus will elicit greater response. In contrast, since high-power people in low-PDB contexts (Rucker et al. 2011) and low-power people in high-PDB contexts (Abele and Wojciszke

2007) are intrinsically more self-focused and more interested in the self, the ad frame that highlights the self-benefits of donating to charity will fulfill these groups' self-focus motivations and should elicit a greater response.

Method

Respondents were 296 members of MTurk (36% male, $M_{\text{age}} = 36.3$ years). The study utilized a 2 (ad focus: self-benefits vs. other-benefits) \times 2 (power: high vs. low) between-subjects design with PDB as a continuous measured variable. The procedure was identical to that in study 1 except that we manipulated power and self-/other-focus, and measured PDB. Also, we used a different charity from that in study 1 for generalizability purposes.

Power Prime and PDB Measure. We manipulated power using a procedure validated by Rucker and Galinsky (2008). Respondents were told that they would take part in an event recall study being conducted by the psychology department in our university. Participants in the high-power condition were asked to recall and describe an incident in which they had power over others. Those in the low-power condition were asked to recall and write about an incident in which someone else had power over them. We measured PDB using a nine-item, five-point scale ($\alpha = .640$), anchored by 1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree, validated by Neuliep (2005). A sample item was: "Authority is essential for the efficient running of an organization, classroom, or home" (see web appendix D). Higher scores equal higher PDB.

Self-/Other-Focus Manipulation in the Ads. We manipulated self-/other-focus in the ad using a procedure developed by White and Peloza (2009). Specifically, participants were exposed to an ad for a charity called The Mustard Seed, which helps meet the basic needs of shelter, food, clothing, and acceptance for those experiencing poverty (see the appendix). In the self-focus condition, participants were shown an ad that highlighted how donating to charity benefits oneself (e.g., "Make Yourself Feel Good By Giving"), whereas in the other-focused condition, participants were shown an ad that emphasized how donating to charity benefits others (e.g., "Help Others and Make the Community a Better Place").

Donation. After seeing the ad, participants responded to a question measuring donation amount ("Suppose you have \$100 at your disposal. How much of that would you donate to The Mustard Seed?"). Thereafter, participants completed four seven-point, ad-manipulation-check items, anchored by 1 = not at all, 7 = very much, used by White and Peloza (2009) to assess the effectiveness of the self-/other-focus ad manipulation (the self-focus ad-manipulation-check items, $r = .765$; the other-focus ad-manipulation-check items, $r = .700$; see web appendix D). The power-manipulation-check measures used in pretests (eight

items: $\alpha = .935$; Anderson et al. 2012; see web appendix D) were also administered. The ad focus manipulation ($F(1, 292) = .28, p = .60$) and the interaction between the ad focus and power manipulations ($F(1, 292) = .56, p = .46$) did not affect the PDB measures. The power manipulation marginally affected the PDB measures ($F(1, 292) = 3.15, p = .077$). However, this result is anomalous across the studies we have collected. Next, participants reported demographic information and were debriefed.

Results and Discussion

Manipulation Checks. First, the ad manipulations were effective. Participants in the self- (vs. other-) focused ad condition perceived the ad to provide marginally significantly more benefits to themselves ($M_{\text{self-focus}} = 2.92, SD = 1.75, M_{\text{other-focus}} = 2.56, SD = 1.52; F(1, 292) = 3.74, p = .054$). Conversely, participants in the other- (vs. self-) focus ad condition perceived the ad to provide marginally significantly more benefits to others ($M_{\text{self-focus}} = 5.57, SD = 1.34, M_{\text{other-focus}} = 5.84, SD = 1.14; F(1, 292) = 3.40, p = .066$). The power manipulation did not significantly influence either the self-focus scores ($M_{\text{high-power}} = 2.87, SD = 1.75, M_{\text{low-power}} = 2.59, SD = 1.50; F(1, 292) = 2.73, p = .100$) or the other-focus scores ($M_{\text{high-power}} = 5.68, SD = 1.35, M_{\text{low-power}} = 5.75, SD = 1.12; F(1, 292) = .41, p = .52$); for both measures, the two-way interactions between power and ad manipulation were not significant ($ps > .26$). Second, the power manipulation was successful. Participants in the high- (vs. low-) power condition felt more powerful ($M_{\text{high-power}} = 5.06, M_{\text{low-power}} = 3.34; F(1, 292) = 132.89, p < .001$). The effect of the ad manipulation as well as the two-way interaction between power and ad manipulation on the power-manipulation-check measure were not significant (both $ps > .48$).

Charitable Giving. We calculated standardized values of donation amount. A generalized linear model (GLM) on charitable giving revealed the significant three-way interaction between PDB, power, and self-/other-focus ad ($F(1, 288) = 13.80, p < .001$). The power and self-/other-focus ad interaction was significant ($F(1, 288) = 13.45; p < .001$). No other effects were significant ($ps > .52$).

To examine the three-way interaction further, we followed the procedure suggested by Fitzsimons (2008) and Spiller et al. (2013) and split the data into two groups based on the ad condition: self-focused and other-focused. In both ad conditions, separate regressions were conducted on charitable giving with (i) measured PDB, (ii) a dummy variable for power (i.e., low (0) or high (1)), and (iii) their interaction as independent variables. In the other-focused ad condition, we expected to replicate the findings of study 1 because the charity ad in that study was geared toward helping others. However, in the self-focused ad condition,

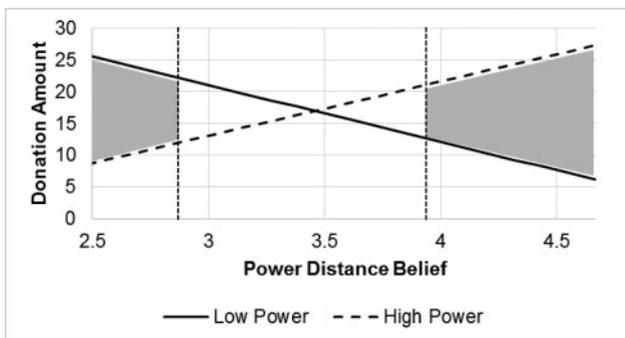
we expected the reverse pattern of results. The data supported these expectations.

First, in the other-focused ad condition ($N = 154$; within this condition, $N = 68$ in the low-power condition; $N = 86$ in the high-power condition), the analyses revealed significant main effects of power ($\beta = -2.544$, $SE = .989$, $t(150) = -2.57$, $p < .012$), a marginal effect of PDB ($\beta = -.376$, $SE = .215$, $t(150) = -1.75$, $p = .082$), and a significant two-way interaction between the two ($\beta = .736$, $SE = .280$, $t(149) = 2.63$, $p < .010$; see figure 1). To identify the range of values of PDB for which the simple effect of power was significant, we used the Johnson-Neyman technique (i.e., floodlight analysis; Spiller et al. 2013). This analysis revealed that there was a significant negative effect of power on donation amount for participants whose PDB scores were less than 2.838 ($b_{JN} = -.456$, $SE = .231$, $p = .05$), suggesting that, when PDB is low, those high (vs. low) in power were willing to donate less. In contrast, there was a significant positive effect of power on donation amount for participants with PDB greater than 3.967 ($b_{JN} = .375$, $SE = .190$, $p = .05$), suggesting that, when PDB is high, those high (vs. low) in power were willing to donate more.

Next, in the self-focused ad condition ($N = 142$; within this condition, $N = 73$ in the low-power condition; $N = 69$ in the high-power condition), the analyses revealed significant main effects of power ($\beta = 3.613$, $SE = 1.385$, $t(138) = 2.61$, $p < .010$) and PDB ($\beta = .602$, $SE = .298$, $t(138) = 2.02$, $p < .046$), and a significant two-way interaction between the two ($\beta = -1.023$, $SE = .389$, $t(137) = -2.63$, $p < .010$; see figure 2). The Johnson-Neyman technique (floodlight analysis) revealed that there was a significant positive

FIGURE 1

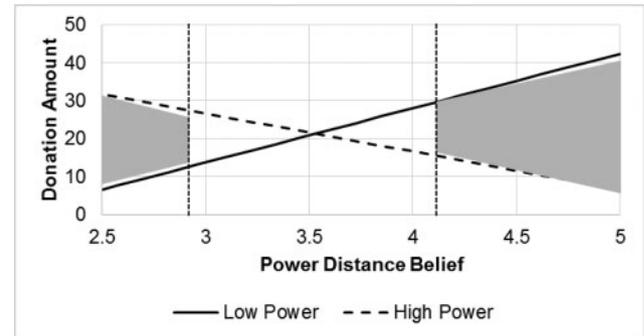
THE MODERATING ROLE OF POWER ON THE EFFECT OF PDB ON CHARITABLE GIVING IN THE OTHER-FOCUS AD CONDITION IN STUDY 2



NOTE.—PDB is a continuous variable. The figure shows the region of significance of the simple effect of power at different levels of PDB such that there is a significant negative effect of power when PDB is less than 2.838 or a significant positive effect of power when PDB is higher than 3.967. Actual donation amounts are reported for illustrative purposes.

FIGURE 2

THE MODERATING ROLE OF POWER ON THE EFFECT OF PDB ON CHARITABLE GIVING IN THE SELF-FOCUS AD CONDITION IN STUDY 2



NOTE.—PDB is a continuous variable. The figure shows the region of significance of the simple effect of power at different levels of PDB such that there is a significant positive effect of power when PDB is less than 2.983, but a significant negative effect of power when PDB is higher than 4.098. Actual donation amounts are reported for illustrative purposes.

effect of power on donation amount when PDB was less than 2.983 ($b_{JN} = .560$, $SE = .283$, $p = .05$), suggesting that when PDB was low, those high (vs. low) in power were willing to donate more. In contrast, there was a significant negative effect of power on donation amount when PDB was greater than 4.098 ($b_{JN} = -.581$, $SE = .294$, $p = .05$), suggesting that when PDB was high, those high (vs. low) in power were willing to donate less.

In study 2, we provide further evidence in support of the mediating role of self/other-focus using an experimental approach. Consistent with our predictions, when the ad focused on others, low- (vs. high-) power individuals in low-PDB contexts and high- (vs. low-) power individuals in high-PDB contexts were willing to donate more. However, when the ad focused on the self, high- (vs. low-) power individuals in low-PDB contexts and low- (vs. high-) power individuals in high-PDB contexts were willing to donate more.

STUDY 3: PUBLIC ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF DONATIONS

Study 3 examined another boundary condition of the proposed effect of PDB and power on charitable giving by manipulating whether the charitable organization publicly acknowledges donations. Charities often publicly acknowledge donors' contributions because previous research has shown that donors are willing to donate more in the future if their contribution to the charities is publicly known, since public acknowledgment increases social incentives

related to self-benefits (e.g., prestige [Harbaugh 1998] or social approval [Masclot et al. 2003]).

Based on the positive effect of public acknowledgments on fulfilling self-benefits, we posit that for high-power individuals in low-PDB contexts and low-power individuals in high-PDB contexts, public acknowledgment of their donation will lead them to donate more because it may increase self-benefits (e.g., an increase in perceived power via respect or recognition from others; Magee and Galinsky 2008) by fulfilling their intrinsic goals and values (Ratner and Kahn 2002). We further propose that when the donation is publicly acknowledged, high-power people in high-PDB contexts and low-power people in low-PDB contexts, by contrast, will donate less. Since these individuals are other-focused and intrinsically motivated to help others, public acknowledgment, which heightens extrinsic rewards to the self, will be inconsistent with their internally held beliefs or attitudes. Those inconsistencies are likely to be aversive (Gibbons 1990; Goukens, Dewitte, and Warlop 2009) and lead these individuals to reduce donations because they want to engage in behaviors congruent with their internal values (Beaman et al. 1979; Duval, Duval, and Mulilis 1992).

Method

Respondents were 618 members of MTurk (42.9% male, $M_{\text{age}} = 35.1$ years). This study employed a two-cell (public acknowledgment: present vs. absent) between-subjects design with power and PDB as continuous measured variables. Participants were randomly assigned to either the public acknowledgment or control condition.

All participants were shown descriptions of the Habitat for Humanity charity. In the public acknowledgment condition, participants were told, “If you decide to donate to this charity, your name will be publicly acknowledged in the Habitat for Humanity’s website. That is, your name will be displayed on the website to acknowledge your contribution to the charity.” Participants in the control condition were not shown this notice. Subsequently, all participants responded to a question measuring donation amount (“Suppose you have \$100 at your disposal. How much of that would you donate to Habitat for Humanity?”). Thereafter, participants completed the five-item, seven-point PDB scale developed by Yoo, Donthu, and Lenartowicz (2011) and used in Winterich and Zhang (2014; $\alpha = .871$; 1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree; see web appendix D). We measured power using the same scale used in study 1 (eight items: $\alpha = .904$; Anderson et al. 2012). The public acknowledgment manipulation did not influence PDB measures ($F(1, 616) = .47, p = .50$) and power measures ($F(1, 616) = .82, p = .37$). Finally, participants reported demographic information and were debriefed.

Results and Discussion

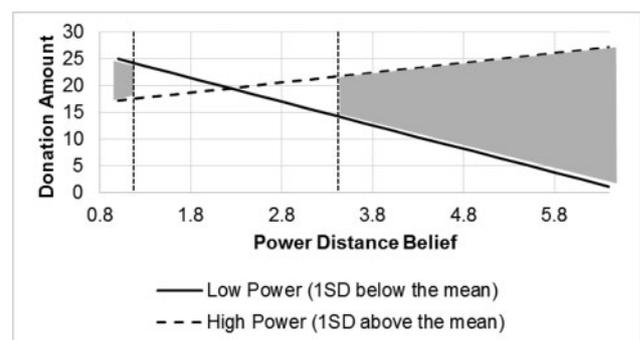
An ANOVA on charitable giving revealed the significant three-way interaction between PDB, power, and public acknowledgment ($F(1, 610) = 26.56, p < .001$). In addition, the two-way interactions between power and public acknowledgment ($F(1, 610) = 26.83, p < .001$), and between PDB and public acknowledgment ($F(1, 610) = 25.48, p < .001$), were significant. The main effect of public acknowledgment was significant ($F(1, 610) = 25.83, p < .001$; $M_{\text{public}} = -.031, SD = .97, M_{\text{control}} = .033, SD = 1.03$) and the main effect of power was marginally significant ($F(1, 610) = 3.20, p = .074$). No other effects were significant ($ps > .20$).

To examine the three-way interaction further, we followed the procedure suggested by Fitzsimons (2008) and Spiller et al. (2013) and split the data into two groups based on the public acknowledgment condition: public acknowledgment and control. In both conditions, separate regressions were conducted on charitable giving with (i) measured PDB, (ii) measured power, and (iii) their interaction as independent variables. In the control condition, we expected to replicate the findings of our previous studies. However, in the public acknowledgment condition, we expected the reverse pattern of results. The data supported these expectations.

First, in the control condition ($N = 298$), the analyses revealed significant main effects of power ($\beta = -.239, SE = .099, t(294) = -2.42, p < .016$) and PDB ($\beta = -.554, SE = .178, t(294) = -3.11, p < .002$), and a significant interaction between the two ($\beta = .107, SE = .037, t(294) = 2.93, p < .004$; see figure 3). The Johnson-Neyman technique revealed

FIGURE 3

THE MODERATING ROLE OF POWER ON THE EFFECT OF PDB ON CHARITABLE GIVING IN THE CONTROL CONDITION IN STUDY 3



NOTE.—PDB is a continuous variable and power is a continuous variable. Low power represents -1 SD from the mean (4.70) and high power represents $+1$ SD from the mean (4.70). The figure shows the region of significance of the simple effect of power at different levels of PDB such that there is a marginally significant negative effect of power when PDB is 1.00 or a significant positive effect of power when PDB is higher than 3.464. Actual donation amounts are reported for illustrative purposes.

that there was a marginally significant negative effect of power on donation amount for participants who had the lowest level of PDB, 1.00 ($b_{JN} = -.132$, $SE = .071$, $p = .062$), suggesting that, when PDB is low, those high (vs. low) in power were willing to donate less. In contrast, there was a significant positive effect of power on donation amount for participants with PDB greater than 3.464 ($b_{JN} = .132$, $SE = .067$, $p = .05$), suggesting that when PDB is high, those high (vs. low) in power were willing to donate more.

Next, in the public acknowledgment condition ($N = 320$), the analyses revealed significant main effects of power ($\beta = .492$, $SE = .100$, $t(316) = 4.91$, $p < .001$) and PDB ($\beta = .771$, $SE = .191$, $t(316) = 4.04$, $p < .001$), and a significant two-way interaction between the two ($\beta = -.178$, $SE = .041$, $t(316) = -4.34$, $p < .001$; see figure 4). The Johnson-Neyman technique revealed a significant positive effect of power on donation amount when PDB was less than 2.256 ($b_{JN} = .092$, $SE = .047$, $p = .05$), suggesting that when PDB was low, those high (vs. low) in power were willing to donate more. In contrast, there was a significant negative effect of power on donation amount when PDB was greater than 3.602 ($b_{JN} = -.147$, $SE = .075$, $p = .05$), suggesting that when PDB was high, those high (vs. low) in power were willing to donate less.

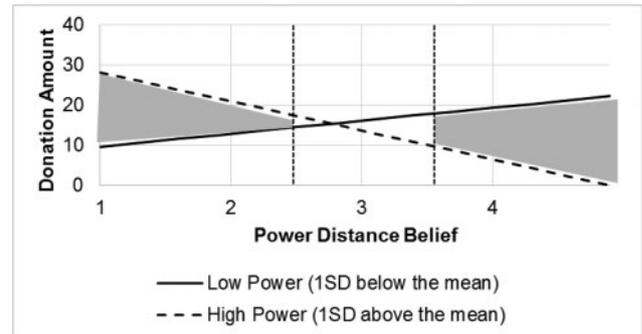
In study 3, we provide evidence of the moderating role of public acknowledgment. As predicted, in the control condition, the interactive effect of power and PDB on charitable giving obtained in previous studies was replicated. In contrast, in the public acknowledgment condition, the proposed effect of power and PDB on charitable giving was reversed such that high- (vs. low-) power individuals in high-PDB contexts and low- (vs. high-) power individuals in low-PDB contexts were likely to donate less because public acknowledgment of their donation is not consistent with their other-focused beliefs; rather, it aligns with the self-focused beliefs of low-power individuals in high-PDB contexts and high-power individuals in low-PDB contexts.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Collectively, three studies support our theorizing regarding the interplay of PDB and power on charitable giving. Study 1 showed that in low-PDB contexts, power negatively predicts charitable giving, whereas in high-PDB contexts, power positively predicts charitable giving, and that this effect is mediated by a self- versus other-focus. Study 2 showed that for each level of PDB, self- (other-) focused ads were more effective to individuals with self-focus (other-focus) and thus led to greater charitable giving. Study 3 showed the moderating role of public acknowledgment such that individuals with self-focus (high-power people in low-PDB contexts, low-power people in high-PDB contexts) donated more than those with other-focus (low-power people in low-PDB contexts, high-power people in

FIGURE 4

THE MODERATING ROLE OF POWER ON THE EFFECT OF PDB ON CHARITABLE GIVING IN THE PUBLIC ACKNOWLEDGMENT CONDITION IN STUDY 3



NOTE.—PDB is a continuous variable and power is a continuous variable. Low power represents -1 SD from the mean (4.78) and high power represents $+1$ SD from the mean (4.78). The figure shows the region of significance of the simple effect of power at different levels of PDB such that there is a significant positive effect of power when PDB is less than 2.256 or a significant negative effect of power when PDB is higher than 3.602. Actual donation amounts are reported for illustrative purposes.

high-PDB contexts) when their donation was publicly acknowledged. Further, in another study (which is not reported in the current article, though it is available from the authors), we replicated our findings in a cross-national context (India vs. United States). Importantly, our findings were robust to multiple operationalizations of PDB, power, and self-/other-focus, and for a variety of charities. Previous research has examined charitable behavior from the lens of both PDB and power separately, but not jointly. By integrating these streams of research, our research provides insights and contributions unavailable to either perspective alone.

Theoretical Contributions and Managerial Implications

Our findings offer contributions to the PDB, power, and self-/other-focus literatures. The current research is one of the first to demonstrate how PDB interacts with psychological power, a construct of burgeoning importance in consumer research, and thus contributes to the recent literature examining the critical role played by PDB in consumer behavior. Further, by measuring and manipulating PDB, we also show that this cultural value orientation can be fruitfully studied at the individual level.

Although considerable previous research has examined national differences in charitable giving (Charities Aid Foundation 2010), limited research has systematically explored the role of culture (for exceptions, see Winterich and Barone 2011; Winterich and Zhang 2014). Our research fills this gap by providing a framework for how PDB affects charitable giving. Indeed, our research not

only isolates the role of PDB in charitable giving, but also provides a more nuanced understanding by showing that the effect of PDB on charitable giving depends on the donors' perceived power. We also contribute to theory by showing that the interactive effect of PDB and power on charitable giving is driven by a self-/other-focus mechanism.

Our findings also contribute to the power literature. High power has often been shown to lead to an agentic orientation that promotes selfish outcomes (Rucker et al. 2012). Power researchers have also identified several moderators of such effects (e.g., relationship orientation [Chen, Lee-Chai, and Bargh 2001], an individual's goals [DeMarree, Briñol, and Petty 2014], and personal status [Rucker et al. 2012]). The current research contributes to extant work in power by identifying a new theoretical moderator, PDB, which has not been examined in previous power research. That is, we demonstrate that high-power individuals can also act in the interest of others (Torelli and Shavitt 2010) and show that when PDB is high, high power leads to a relative increase in charitable giving. These results suggest that power can promote both selfish and prosocial outcomes through a variety of mechanisms.

Previous research conducted in a low-PDB context shows that power leads to less prosocial behavior (Rucker et al. 2011). We replicate this finding, both by measuring and manipulating PDB. However, we found the reverse in high-PDB contexts. Similarly, previous research suggests that people are less likely to donate to charity when PDB is high (vs. low) because people in low-PDB contexts feel responsible toward people in need (i.e., a main-effect relationship; Winterich and Zhang 2014). We extend this knowledge by showing that respondents' psychological power moderates this relationship. In high-PDB contexts, power is positively associated with charitable giving, whereas in low-PDB contexts, power is negatively associated with charitable giving. We also showed that the interactive effect of PDB and power on giving is mediated by self-/other-focus, whereas the main effect of PDB on giving is mediated by perceived responsibility (see study 4 in web appendix E). In other words, we replicate Winterich and Zhang's findings among low-power consumers, but reverse the effect among high-power consumers. Indeed, it is likely that Winterich and Zhang's participants, who were primarily undergraduate students or MTurk workers, perceived themselves to be relatively low (rather than high) in power. Moreover, going by the 80/20 rule, whereby 20% of the population controls 80% of the power (Pareto 1971; Reed 2001), one may argue that a random sample of people—as in Winterich and Zhang's studies—is more likely to have low-power, rather than high-power, participants. Thus, we provide a more nuanced understanding of the role of PDB on charitable giving.

Our research also contributes to the literature on charitable giving that examines whether self- or other-benefit appeals are more effective. Some research suggests that self-

benefit appeals are more effective (Holmes, Miller, and Lerner 2002) because people are generally interested in enhancing their well-being (Wilson 2000), while other research suggests that other-benefit appeals are more effective because they enhance empathy (Batson 1990; Fisher et al. 2008). White and Peloza (2009) found that self-benefits (other-benefits) were more effective when the donation context minimized (heightened) public self-image concerns. Our research broadens existing research by identifying two new antecedents (i.e., consumers' perceived power and PDB) that jointly influence self- or other-focus, and by showing that self-benefit appeals are more effective for low-PDB consumers with high power and high-PDB consumers with low power, and other-benefit appeals are more effective for low-PDB consumers with low power and high-PDB consumers with high power.

Managers should understand both PDB and power of the donor to optimize the nature of the appeal. Specifically, when individuals endorse equality in society (i.e., low-PDB contexts), the less powerful they are, the greater intent to donate they show. However, when individuals endorse inequalities (i.e., high-PDB contexts), the more powerful they are, the greater intent to donate they show. Managers should also be aware that when targeting high-power individuals in high-PDB settings or low-power individuals in low-PDB settings, they should emphasize benefits to others (vs. the self) in their messages. However, while targeting low-power individuals in high-PDB settings or high-power individuals in low-PDB settings, their messages should emphasize benefits to the self (vs. others).

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

Extant research (Hofstede 1984; Oyserman 2006; Winterich and Zhang 2014) has conceptualized PDB as the extent to which people accept and endorse inequality, rather than the extent to which they view and observe inequality in practice. Researchers have recently examined how observed inequality influences charitable giving (Côté, House, and Willer 2015; DeCelles and Norton 2016) and demonstrated conflicting findings. For example, DeCelles and Norton (2016) found that when the inequality is salient, economy-class passengers engage in more air-rage behaviors than do business-class passengers. If we assume that high-power people are more likely to travel in business class and relatively low-power people are more likely to travel in economy class, this finding implies that when inequalities are salient, low-power people are more self-focused than high-power people. These findings are consistent with the findings of the current research. In contrast, Côté et al. (2015) found that higher-income individuals are less generous when inequalities are relatively high. These findings imply that when inequalities are salient, high-power people are more self-focused than low-power people. Future research should devote greater attention to the role played by observance of inequalities on

charitable behavior, and attempt to reconcile these seemingly disparate findings.

DATA COLLECTION INFORMATION

All three authors supervised the collection of data for study 1 (November 2015) by research assistants at the

Behavioral Lab at Indiana University. The first author analyzed these data under the guidance of the second author. The first author collected data for study 2 (August 2014), study 3 (October 2015), and study 4 (November 2015) in web appendix E, and the pretests in web appendixes A and B (August 2014) via MTurk. The first author analyzed these data under the guidance of the second and the third authors.

APPENDIX

ADS USED IN STUDY 2



THE MUSTARD SEED

Give Yourself Satisfaction and Enjoy Meeting with New People [DONATE NOW](#)

BUILDING COMMUNITY, GROWING HOPE, SUPPORTING CHANGE

The Mustard Seed helps meet the basic needs of shelter, food, clothing and acceptance for men and women experiencing poverty, and works with them to find sustainable housing and employment.

Make Yourself Feel Good By Giving!

STAY CONNECTED! • [SIGN UP FOR NEWSLETTER](#) [t](#) [v](#) [f](#)



THE MUSTARD SEED

Help the Less Fortunate [DONATE NOW](#)

BUILDING COMMUNITY, GROWING HOPE, SUPPORTING CHANGE

The Mustard Seed helps meet the basic needs of shelter, food, clothing and acceptance for men and women experiencing poverty, and works with them to find sustainable housing and employment.

Help Others and Make the Community a Better Place

STAY CONNECTED! • [SIGN UP FOR NEWSLETTER](#) [t](#) [v](#) [f](#)

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