

# Power, Emotion, and Judgmental Accuracy in Social Conflict: Motivating the Cognitive Miser

David H. Ebenbach

*Department of Psychology  
University of Wisconsin-Madison*

Dacher Keltner

*Department of Psychology  
University of California-Berkeley*

This investigation examined whether ideological opponents' emotion and relative power in a conflict would influence the accuracy with which they judge their own side's and their opponents' attitudes. Based on accounts linking power and emotion to perceptual vigilance, we proposed that opposing partisans will be prone to stereotype their opponents as extremists, as the result of a heuristic, effort-saving strategy, unless motivated by lower relative power or increased emotion to make more accurate judgments. We predicted that members of powerful groups would judge the views of other groups inaccurately, that all groups would have inaccurate views of less powerful groups, and that high levels of negative emotion with regard to the conflict would be associated with more accurate judgments. Two studies yielded certain findings consistent with these predictions. In Study 1, powerful majority partisans were less accurate judges but more accurately judged than less powerful minority partisans across two social issues. Study 2 focused on two activist groups embroiled in a conflict over status and funding within the university setting, the power being held a Gay Pride group. Consistent with hypotheses, a self-reported sense of power and reduced negative emotion were both associated with reduced judgmental accuracy. Discussion focused on the underlying mechanisms that might account for the effects of power and emotion upon social judgment and the social implications of these asymmetries in judgmental accuracy.

Stereotypes pose significant threats to group relations. Readily formed, stereotypes of other groups lead members of conflicting groups to overlook their shared interests and common ground (Robinson & Keltner, 1996) and to dehumanize one another and rationalize conflict and aggression (Brewer, 1979; Judd & Park, 1979; Tajfel, 1970; Turner, 1983). In this article we examine how between-group power differences and emotion influence the tendency for opposing group members to stereotype each other as extremists.

## STEREOTYPES OF THE OPPOSITION

Members of groups in conflict stereotype each other in simplistic ways. Rather than expending the effort to form more

complex images of one another, members of groups in conflict assume their opponents are immoral (Brewer, 1986), hostile and untrustworthy (Plous, 1985), inhuman and politically extreme (Bar-Tal & Geva, 1986), and ideologically fanatical (Bronfenbrenner, 1961). The tendency for members of opposing groups to form such "images of the enemy" is consistent with the general inclination for social perceivers to act as "cognitive misers," who in the midst of a complex social world engage in heuristic, unsystematic processing to conserve cognitive resources (Fiske & Taylor, 1991).

Previous research has examined whether opposing partisans to social disputes judge their opponents' attitudes accurately or instead stereotype them by exaggerating the extremity of their views (Keltner & Robinson, 1993, 1996; Robinson, Keltner, Ward, & Ross, 1995). It was proposed that opposing partisans act as "naïve realists" in their judgments of their opponents, assuming that they see the world objectively and that others base their judgments on this same "objective"

reality, and they thereby attribute judgments that deviate from their own, such as those of their opponents, to ideological bias and extremism. In studies of the conflicts over abortion, racial violence, the death penalty, and the Western Canon (i.e., the liberal arts curriculum), partisans offered their own attitudes toward issues central to their dispute and estimated the attitudes of typical members of the “other” and their “own” side. Opposing partisans’ actual differences were compared with the differences they perceived to exist between themselves, their own side, and their opponents. Consistent with the naïve realism formulation, opposing partisans consistently exaggerated their opposition’s extremism, their own side’s extremism, the magnitude of their conflict, and their opposition’s ideological biases.

### Motives for Perceptual Accuracy in Intergroup Conflict

Although the tendency to stereotype others is widespread, different social contextual factors motivate individuals to reach more systematic, careful, and accurate social judgments (Devine, Sedikides, & Fuhrman, 1989; Erber & Fiske, 1984; Kruglanski, 1989). For example, researchers have demonstrated that although the tendency to stereotype the out-group may be automatic, an individual’s personal beliefs about prejudicial judgments can motivate him or her to avoid such stereotypes (Devine, 1989). In the context of between-group relations, many such variables should motivate members of certain groups to be more accurate judges of their opponents and the conflict. In this study, we examine how power differences and emotion influence perceptual accuracy within social conflicts.

### Power and Judgmental Accuracy

Power is defined as “the probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out [his or her] own will despite resistance, regardless of the basis on which this probability rests” (Weber, 1947). Power may derive from diverse sources such as support from societal institutions, physical prowess, numerical superiority, or perceived legitimacy. Social conflicts almost always revolve around the negotiation of power with both sides struggling to attain or retain the ability to control its own, and even others’, outcomes in the face of outside resistance.

Recent theory indicates that power affects social attention in ways that predispose powerful individuals to be less accurate judges and less powerful individuals to be less accurately judged. In general, powerful individuals are less dependent on others and therefore are less motivated to pay careful attention to those less dominant (Erber & Fiske, 1984). Less powerful individuals, conversely, must carefully attend to the actions and intentions of others to negotiate relations within a more precarious social environment (e.g., Chance, 1967; Fiske, 1993; Hall, 1990). As social perceivers, therefore,

members of more powerful groups should be more likely to stereotype their opponents, whereas members of less powerful groups should be more motivated to form accurate judgments of their opponents.

The same analysis applies to target effects in social perception. Specifically, high-power individuals are more likely to be the object of others’ careful social attention in order for others to negotiate successful social relations with them, whereas low-power individuals are less likely to be the objects of careful social attention (Chance, 1967). This reasoning implies that as targets of social judgment, members of high-power groups, relative to low-power groups, are less likely to be stereotyped. One might additionally expect, given this line of reasoning, that more of such information should presumably be available about individuals in power because of society’s general tendency to attend to such individuals.

Various studies have yielded results consistent with the proposal that power relates to increased misperception or less careful cognitive processing. Some studies have examined stereotypes concerning the *average* position of the opponents, such as the work by Keltner, Robinson, and colleagues (Keltner & Robinson, 1996; Robinson et al., 1995). On the other hand, other researchers focus instead on perceptions of the *range* of out-group opinions (Mullen & Hu, 1989). Although stereotypes seem to come in a variety of forms, power generally encourages stereotypes of all kinds.

Fiske (see 1993 for a review) has observed that powerful people, by virtue of the fact that their outcomes are not controlled by others, are less likely to make accurate judgments about the attributes of interaction partners than are less powerful people. Power, whether instantiated in the group’s numerical majority status, perceived legitimacy, or membership in a societally dominant group, has been linked to perceptions of in-group and out-group homogeneity (Mullen & Hu, 1989), increased in-group favoritism (Ng & Cram, 1988; Sachdev & Bourhis, 1991) and ideological extremism (Keltner & Robinson, 1996; Robinson et al., 1995), suggesting that power increases biased perception and out-group discrimination. Power also relates to which groups are likely to be judged less accurately: members of both majority and minority groups tend to overestimate the homogeneity of minority groups (Mullen & Hu, 1989), which again is consistent with the possibility that less powerful groups are more likely to be judged inaccurately.

Previous research examined the relationship between power and stereotyping of opponents within the context of the Western Canon dispute, which divides professors of English according to their preferred content of a liberal arts education (Keltner & Robinson, 1996). The authors surveyed the attitudes of “traditionalists,” who tended to be tenured males who preferred the literary status quo and, by most definitions, more powerful, and “revisionists,” who tended to be untenured women interested in changing the literary status quo by incorporating more literary works of minorities and women. As in previous studies, both groups overestimated their opponents’

extremism and the magnitude of their differences. However, consistent with the proposed links between power and judgmental inaccuracy, traditionalists were more likely than revisionists to polarize the conflict, and both sides were more inclined to stereotype revisionists as extremists.

The study of the Western Canon dispute yielded findings consistent with the argument linking power and stereotyping, but the findings were limited by the fact that only one conflict was studied and partisans' sense of power within the dispute was not directly measured. In our current studies, we attempted to replicate these findings in the context of different issues and examine power deriving from two different sources—first, being associated with the numerical majority on two issues and, second, receiving institutional support for one's ideological position. We expected more powerful individuals to be less accurate judges and less powerful individuals to be stereotyped as extremists. Furthermore, in Study 2 we add a measure of perceived power to lend more credence to our operationalizations of power.

## Emotion and Judgmental Accuracy

Emotion is also likely to exert important influences upon partisans' judgments within social conflict. Although one might expect that emotion would increase the irrationality of group decision-making bodies thereby setting the stage for poor decisions, more recent conceptual analyses of emotion suggest that those partisans who are highly emotional about a divisive issue may be more motivated to reach accurate, informed judgments than those individuals who feel less emotion about an issue. As Frijda (1988, p. 388) puts it, "emotions exist for the sake of signaling states of the world that have to be responded to," implying that emotions act as cues, which focus the perceiver's attention on relevant aspects of her or his environment.

Negative emotions in particular are believed to motivate the individual to devote attention to the object or cause of the emotion (de Souza, 1990; Keltner, Ellsworth, & Edwards, 1993; Oatley & Johnson-Laird, 1987). Negative emotions, as opposed to more pleasant feelings, warn the individual that the environment is unsafe or threatening thereby inducing perceivers to engage in more thorough, detail-oriented processing of information to help the individual most effectively avoid or eliminate the source of the unpleasant feelings (see Schwarz, 1990, for a review). In fact, studies have shown that people with anxiety disorders tend to devote more attention to threatening stimuli than nondisordered people (Mineka & Sutton, 1992), and the chronic experience of anxiety may predispose anxious individuals to make more accurate judgments about threatening stimuli than less anxious individuals. This analysis would suggest that partisans who experience more intense negative emotion in relation to the conflict may reach more accurate judgments of their opponents, whereas partisans who experience relatively less intense negative emo-

tion would be more prone to perceptual negligence and decreased accuracy in social judgments.<sup>1</sup>

## Goals of This Investigation

Two studies were conducted to test the hypotheses that (a) powerful perceivers will make less accurate social judgments than less powerful perceivers, (b) that all perceivers will stereotype the attitudes of less powerful partisans more than more powerful partisans, and (c) that people expressing high levels of negative emotion with regard to the conflict will make more accurate judgments than those expressing low levels of emotion. Although power is expected to have effects on many types of perceptions of the out-group (e.g., out-group homogeneity, ascribed traits), the focus of this investigation, as in previous research (e.g., Keltner & Robinson, 1996; Robinson et al., 1995) was on the tendency for partisans to incorrectly judge the ideological location of opposing partisans' views.

Study 1 examined whether the power—as defined by the group characteristic of numerical majority—would predict increased stereotyping. Majority status is used as a proxy for power in this study because of its links to the correlates of power and status, including political visibility, control over the content of current debates, and perceived legitimacy due to consensus support. Study 2 examined a real-world conflict at the precise moment at which a liberal organization was given greater status than a conservative group by university authorities.

## STUDY 1

### Majority and Minority Partisans in Ideological Conflict

The aims of the first study were to document the effect of power and emotion on intergroup stereotyping. Power was operationalized as a numerical majority. Although groups in the numerical minority sometimes have power, as in the historical example of whites in South Africa, it is generally true that adhering to or advocating a majority, consensus-sup-

<sup>1</sup>Note that this investigation focuses on emotion, not on mood or other forms of affect, which have been differentiated in terms of their role in social conflict (Bodenhausen, Kramer, & Susser, 1994). Positive and negative moods, or "incidental affect," can be considered diffuse affective states elicited by factors outside the intergroup context without clear antecedent causes and has been associated with biased and inaccurate processing in a variety of studies (e.g., Bodenhausen et al., 1994; Bodenhausen, Sheppard, & Kramer, 1994; and see Forgas, 1995, for a review). On the other hand, specific emotion, or "integral affect," seems to be more restricted in its focus (Schwarz & Clore, 1987), linked to specific reactions to specific groups, and thus less likely to hinder the accuracy of intergroup judgments (Bodenhausen et al., 1994; Forgas, 1995). This investigation will therefore focus on the specific emotions that group members feel about the conflict and the groups involved, and not on mood.

ported position is associated with power, whereas being associated with a minority position comes with less power (Mullen & Hu, 1989; Nemeth, 1986). Interestingly, a group's status as a numerical majority has been linked to increased perceptual biases, such as beliefs in out-group homogeneity (Mullen & Hu, 1989), and the tendency to think convergently (Nemeth, 1986). Students on a college campus (particularly those with strong views, as in the case of the partisans in this investigation) would most likely know the ideological positions of most students on the campus and thus would be aware of the relative popularity (and therefore power) of their own views.

To examine whether a group's numerical majority or minority status relates to increased stereotyping, we examined opposing ideological partisans' judgments of one another's attitudes. Ideological partisans to two controversial political issues offered their views and their judgments of the views of typical partisans on both sides of the disputes. Observer and target effects hypotheses were tested. We predicted that (a) the members of the majority group would be less accurate in judging the attitudes of both sides than members of the minority group, (b) that partisans expressing more emotion would be more accurate than those who expressed less (Observer effect hypotheses), and (c) that both sides would display the least accuracy when judging the minority group positions (Target effect hypothesis). Additional mechanisms that might account for power's effects on judgmental accuracy were also examined. First, researchers have speculated that individuals in power may have a more pronounced need for dominance, conformity, and rigid beliefs, and therefore score higher on measures of authoritarianism (Fiske, 1993), which predicts increased stereotyped beliefs (Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswick, Levinson, & Sanford, 1950), and we examined this proposal. Second, we wanted to determine whether members of both sides would be aware of more information about the more powerful, majority-supported side of the issue simply because they had been incidentally exposed to more information about the powerful group.

## Methods

### Overview

Partisans for the death penalty and foreign military intervention were brought into the laboratory to provide their views on two issues and their thoughts about the views of each side. They then rated the emotions they felt toward both sides and listed the sources of information that informed their attitudes and their estimates of both sides' attitudes. Finally, they completed an authoritarianism scale.

### Participants

We initially contacted 311 students at the University of Wisconsin–Madison (UW–Madison) at random by telephone to identify important social issues for UW–Madison students

and to identify those students who felt strongly about the certain issues. Students were asked to agree or disagree with statements regarding ten social issues, covering state (e.g., "There should be a death penalty in the state of Wisconsin."), national (e.g., "I think all forms of abortion should be illegal."), and international (e.g., "The United States government has a responsibility to intervene militarily in foreign countries for humanitarian purposes.") concerns. These students were also asked to rate the importance of each issue on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (*not at all important*) to 7 (*very important*). From this initial survey, two issues were selected for the main portion of this study according to the satisfaction of two criteria: (a) a majority—at least 55%—of students fell on one side of the issue, and (b) enough participants rated the importance of the issue at 5 or higher out of 7 to ensure the availability of a large pool of potential participants with strong convictions, and, at the same time, allowing us the ability to create two sides of strongly opposed partisans. According to these criteria, two issues were selected: capital punishment and foreign military intervention. Sixty-four participants who rated the importance of both issues as 5 or higher out of 7 were chosen by this method. An additional 54 participants from the next semester's introductory psychology pool were subsequently added to the study. Although these participants were not preselected, they rated the importance of the death penalty and military intervention issues as 5 or higher out of 7 (as did the previous 64 participants). All 118 participants (94 women and 24 men), in return for their participation, received experimental points that could be used as extra credit toward their final grade in the introductory psychology course.

### Procedure

Participants filled out a survey with three sections. In the first section, participants answered several questions about either capital punishment or military intervention. In the second section, participants answered a similar battery of questions about the issue that was not covered in the first section. The order of issues was counterbalanced across participants. In all cases the final section of the survey packet consisted of Adorno et al.'s right wing authoritarianism (RWA) scale, designed to measure RWA (Adorno et al., 1950). The instructions for the capital punishment and military intervention survey portions were identical. For both issues, participants first indicated their attitudes and estimated the attitudes of both sides, then rated their emotions toward both sides of the issue, and finally provided us sources of their attitudes.

### Attitudes

In both parts (Issue 1 and Issue 2), the first task for the participant was to indicate how much he or she agreed, on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*), with 10 statements about the issue in question. These

items were designed to capture the positions of both sides of each issue. The 10 items from the capital punishment section measured attitudes toward the benefits of a strict justice system (e.g., “Some criminals are so dangerous that they need to be executed for the protection of society.”) and the cruelty of the death penalty (e.g., “Capital punishment is equivalent to any other form of murder.”). The 10 items from the military intervention section assessed attitudes toward the moral basis for the United States’ military involvement in other countries (e.g., “U.S. foreign military intervention is often morally necessary to encourage the development of democracy in those countries.”) and toward the motives of the U.S. government in these interventions (e.g., “The real reason why the United States intervenes in foreign countries is to justify a huge defense budget.”). For both issues, 5 items consistent with the “pro” position and 5 consistent with the “anti” position were provided, in random order, and the 10 items for each issue were collapsed to represent two scales concerned with the favorability of one’s attitudes toward the death penalty ( $\alpha = .85$ ) and military intervention ( $\alpha = .61$ ).

The remainder of this section focuses exclusively on the example of capital punishment. Instructions for the military intervention section were the same.

Following the rating of the 10 statements as described above, participants were told to imagine and estimate the opinions of other people in the study, focusing on the “average” participants holding different attitudes (e.g., average pro-death penalty, anti-military intervention participants, etc.). The estimates were directed toward average members because we were interested in what these partisans thought a typical member they might encounter was like or what the members were like in general. It also allowed us to compare directly their estimates of “average” participants to arithmetic averages provided by the Target partisans themselves. They encountered the following instructions:

When we contacted UW—Madison students in a phone survey, we asked whether they agreed or disagreed with this opinion: “There should be a death penalty in the state of Wisconsin.” Think about the students who agreed with that opinion, who we might call “pro-death penalty students”. These pro-death penalty students will be filling out this questionnaire. We would like you to read the same 10 statements you just considered, and estimate how much the “pro-death penalty” students, on average, would agree with each statement, using the same scale you used.

Participants were given similar instructions to estimate the opinions of the anti-death penalty participants.

### *Self-reported Emotions*

Participants were next presented with nine negative emotion terms: *anger, anxiety, contempt, disgust, distrust, dis-*

*tress, fear, frustration, and resentment* (along with several positive emotions added only to diversify the list, such as *happiness* and *respect*), and asked to indicate how much they felt each emotion toward pro-death penalty participants and toward anti-death penalty participants on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (*I don’t feel this emotion at all*) to 7 (*I feel this emotion very strongly*).

### *Sources of Information*

Participants were next asked to indicate where they had encountered pro-death penalty people and opinions. These questions were designed to determine whether partisans relied on different sources of information to estimate the attitudes of their side versus those of their opponents. Participants listed, in a free-response format, sources of information (e.g., being told to focus on periodicals, television programs, personal contact with partisans, speeches and organizational meetings) for each side of each issue. All participants listed sources of majority positions before listing sources of minority positions.

The instructions for the military intervention portion of the survey were essentially identical. Participants indicated their own opinions on 10 statements and then estimated the opinions of both sides. Then they gave self-reports of emotion, listed their sources of information, and, in a free-response format, expressed their opinions on U. S. military involvement in other countries. In the third and final portion of the survey, all participants filled out Adorno et al.’s RWA scale, designed to measure RWA, a trait characterized by conservatism, rigidity, obedience to authority, adherence to the status quo, and prejudicial attitudes (Adorno et al., 1950).

### *Coding of Sources of Information*

Participants’ lists of information sources were coded for (a) number of sources, (b) detail provided about each source, and (c) number of elaborative statements made. Detail was coded so that very general responses (e.g., “magazines” or “friends”) received 0 points, responses naming the source (e.g., “*Time* magazine” or “my friend Bob”) received 1 point, and responses naming the source and tying the source to a specific event, time, or story (e.g., “*Time* magazine’s May article on Jeffrey Dahmer,” or “My friend Bob, who gave a class presentation on military intervention last week”) received 2 points. An average score was generated for each of the four information categories of interest (publications, television, personal contact, and social gatherings) and the numbers so generated were combined across categories yielding a final possible score ranging from 0 (*no detail*) to 8 (*maximal detail*). Statements were coded as elaborative if instead of simply listing a source, the participant conveyed an opinion about the source (e.g., “I listen to Rush Limbaugh, who seems to be really biased,” or “I went to this great rally against the death penalty.”). To combat possible order effects, when

participants indicated that they used the same sources for both sides, both sides were coded according to the list produced for majority members.

## Results

### Gender Effects

Chi square tests of independence revealed that gender was independent of position on both the death penalty and military intervention in this study;  $\chi^2(1, N = 118) = .012, p > .10$ , and  $\chi^2(1, N = 118) = 1.16, p > .10$ , respectively. Because of the gender imbalance in our sample, gender differences on all of the central variables were examined using two-sample *t* tests. No significant differences emerged for any of the variables concerned with attitudes, attitude estimates, self-reports of emotions, or personality measures, all *ps* > .05.

### Breakdown by Issue

From their responses to the initial phone survey, 70 participants (59.32%) were identified as pro-death penalty (*pro-penalty*), and 48 (40.68%) as anti-death penalty (*anti-penalty*). There were 65 (55.08%) pro-military intervention participants (*pro-intervention*), and the remaining 53 (44.92%) were anti-military intervention (*anti-intervention*). Therefore, the majority opinion among participants was pro-death penalty and pro-military intervention.

### Use of Pure Groups in Analyses

Because our interest was in examining the effects of association with majority/minority positions in general rather than just along one ideological issue, we collapsed across both issues using only Observers who were in the majority on both issues (pro-penalty and pro-intervention, consisting of 35 participants, or 29.66% of the total sample) and Observers in the minority on both issues (anti-penalty and anti-intervention, 18 participants, or 15.25% of the total sample). Note that opinions on these two issues were somewhat independent; the remaining 55.09% of the participants were in the minority on one issue and the majority on the other (either in favor of capital punishment and against military intervention, or against capital punishment and in favor of military intervention). Because we used "pure groups," our analyses were concerned with their total accuracy of judgments across both issues rather than with regard to either issue alone.

### Actual Differences

To determine whether ideological opponents differed in their own attitudes, two-sample *t* tests were conducted. Pro-intervention participants responded to the military intervention items in a more pro-intervention fashion ( $M = 4.64$ ) than

anti-intervention partisans,  $M = 3.92, t(115) = 5.69, p < .0001$ ; and pro-penalty participants responded in a more pro-penalty fashion ( $M = 4.78$ ) on the death penalty items than anti-penalty participants,  $M = 3.43, t(115) = 7.62, p < .0001$ .

### Power and Judgmental Accuracy

We next examined whether majority and minority partisans differed in the predicted directions in the accuracy with which they judged other partisans' attitudes and were judged by other partisans. Following previous research (Robinson et al., 1995), accuracy scores were calculated as the difference between an individual's (Observer's) estimate of one side's (Target's) average views and the average of that side's actual views. The difference scores were constructed so that a positive score indicated that the Observer overestimated the extremity of the Target's views (e.g., judging pro-penalty people as more in favor of capital punishment than they actually were or anti-penalty people as more opposed to capital punishment than they actually were), whereas a negative difference score indicated that the Observer underestimated the extremity of the Target's views, attributing more moderate views than was the case.

We hypothesized that more powerful (majority) members would be less accurate in their judgments of both sides and that both sides would be less accurate in judging the less powerful (minority) side than in judging the more powerful side. A three-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) with Observer (majority, or pro-penalty–pro-intervention, versus minority, or anti-penalty–anti-intervention) and Gender as the between-subjects factors, Target (majority vs. minority) as the within-subjects factor, and accuracy (higher scores indicating less accuracy) as the dependent variable uncovered a marginally significant Observer effect, which indicated that the majority partisans were more likely to exaggerate the extremism of both sides ( $M = 0.82$ ), whereas minority partisans were more likely to underestimate the extremism of both sides,  $M = -0.20, F(1, 41) = 3.47, p = .07$ . Consistent with the hypothesis, a significant Target effect indicated that both majority and minority Observers were inclined to exaggerate the extremism of minority Targets ( $M = 1.01$ ) and not exaggerate the extremism of majority Targets,  $M = -0.06, F(1, 41) = 8.52, p < .01$ . No main effects for gender or interactions with Gender were observed (*ps* > .10). These findings are displayed in Figure 1.

### Emotion

*Differences between groups.* For each of the nine negative emotions, three-way ANOVAs were conducted on the "pure groups" with Observer and Gender as the between-subjects factors, Target as the within-subjects factor, and the degree of emotion experienced as the dependent variable. No differences in emotion between groups were predicted.

**Observer effects.** Significant or marginally significant Observer effects emerged for three emotions, and in each case the effect indicated that more emotion was felt by the low-power individuals than by the high-power individuals. Specifically, minority group partisans, compared to majority group partisans, felt more anger,  $M_s = 6.21$  vs.  $3.94$ ,  $F(1, 49) = 9.48$ ,  $p < .005$ ; contempt,  $5.03$  vs.  $3.93$ ,  $F(1, 48) = 3.38$ ,  $p = .07$ ; and frustration,  $6.24$  vs.  $4.37$ ,  $F(1, 49) = 5.98$ ,  $p < .05$ , toward the groups in the study.

**Target effects.** Significant Target effects emerged for three emotions, in all cases due to the fact that more of the emotion was expressed toward the high-power groups than toward the low-power groups. Specifically, majority partisans, compared to minority partisans, were the targets of more disgust,  $M_s = 4.87$  vs.  $4.13$ ,  $F(1, 49) = 6.27$ ,  $p < .05$ ; and distress,  $4.92$  vs.  $4.02$ ,  $F(1, 49) = 6.69$ ,  $p < .05$ .

**Target-by-Observer interactions.** Analyses of eight of the negative emotions produced Target-by-Observer interactions, all of which revealed the tendency for individuals to indicate feeling more negative emotion toward their opponents than toward their in-group. Specifically, partisans indicated feeling toward their out-group, compared with toward their in-group, more anger,  $F(1, 49) = 5.40$ ,  $p < .05$ ; anxiety,  $F(1, 49) = 6.59$ ,  $p < .05$ ; disgust,  $F(1, 49) = 20.22$ ,  $p < .0001$ ; distress,  $F(1, 49) = 22.33$ ,  $p < .0001$ ; frustration,  $F(1, 49) = 6.81$ ,  $p < .05$ ; and resentment,  $F(1, 49) = 4.70$ ,  $p < .05$ .

**Gender effects.** No significant main effects for Gender were expected or obtained ( $p_s > .05$ ). However, several significant Target-by-Gender interactions emerged. Due to the small number of male participants relative to female participants, however, one must use caution in interpreting these findings. Three negative emotions produced significant

Target-by-Gender interactions. Men expressed more negative emotion toward low-power groups than toward high-power groups in the cases of contempt ( $M_s = 5.20$  vs.  $3.90$ ), distrust ( $M_s = 5.20$  vs.  $4.80$ ), and fear ( $M_s = 5.20$  vs.  $3.20$ ). Women, on the other hand, expressed more negative emotion toward high-power groups than toward low-power groups in the same cases of contempt ( $M_s = 3.83$  vs.  $4.57$ ), distrust ( $M_s = 3.84$  vs.  $5.00$ ), and fear ( $M_s = 4.28$  vs.  $5.26$ , all  $p_s < .05$ ). These findings emerged, we should note, despite the fact that neither male nor female participants were any more likely to belong to a high-power group than to a low-power group although it may still be a power-related finding.

**Emotion and judgmental accuracy.** We hypothesized that negative emotion would be associated with greater accuracy in social judgments. To test this hypothesized relation and to preserve the continuous nature of the emotion scales, we conducted a regression analysis with accuracy as the dependent variable (again, higher scores indicating lower accuracy), and emotion toward both groups (a composite scale of all the negative emotions,  $\alpha = .93$ ), group (majority vs. minority), and the interaction between emotion and group as independent variables. Contrary to the hypothesis, emotion was not a significant predictor of accuracy when entered at the first step,  $F(1, 42) = .01$ ,  $p > .10$ ; and it remained nonsignificant in subsequent steps. When group was entered at the second step, it predicted a significant proportion of variance in accuracy,  $F(1, 41) = 4.17$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $sr^2 = .0923$ . The interaction, entered at the third step, was not significant,  $F(1, 40) = .08$ ,  $p > .10$ .

## Mechanisms

**Individual differences.** Our final hypothesis held that majority members would score higher on a measure of authoritarianism, which predicts prejudicial responses (Adorno et al., 1950). A comparison between majority participants (pro-penalty and pro-intervention) and minority participants (anti-penalty and anti-intervention) revealed that the majority group scored significantly higher ( $M = 3.73$ ) on the RWA scale than the minority group ( $M = 2.94$ ),  $t(50) = 4.09$ ,  $p < .0005$ .

**Sources of information.** To examine whether participants would be aware of more information about majority members than about minority members, we conducted three two-way ANOVAs with Observer (majority vs. minority) as the between-subjects factor and Target (majority vs. minority) as the within-subjects factor on each of three dependent variables (number of sources, detail of sources, and number of elaborative statements). In all three cases, a significant Target effect emerged. In characterizing their information about each side to the two conflicts, partisans discussing majority partisans, compared to minority partisans, listed more sources,  $M = 10.71$  vs.  $8.02$ ,  $F(1, 36) = 36.27$ ,  $p < .0001$ , in greater average detail,  $2.98$  vs.  $2.34$ ,  $F(1, 36) = 7.59$ ,  $p < .05$ .

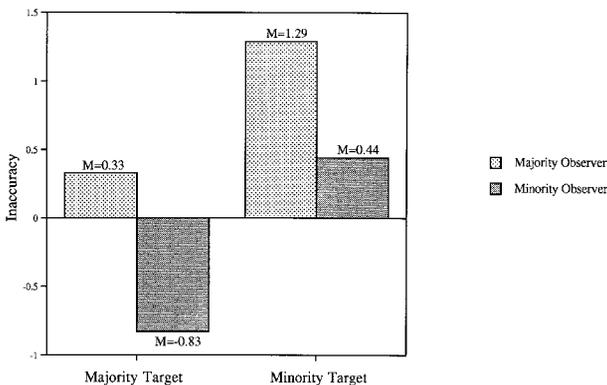


FIGURE 1 Inaccuracy in minority and majority judgments of minority and majority partisans (Study 1). Observer effect:  $F(1, 41) = 4.37$ ,  $p = .07$ ; target effect:  $F(1, 41) = 8.52$ ,  $p < .05$ .

.01, and also listed more elaborative statements, 2.23 vs. 1.26,  $F(1, 36) = 11.25, p < .005$ . (See Table 1.)

## Discussion

To examine whether power relates to increased misperception in ideological disputes, we compared majority and minority group members' estimates of the two sides' attitudes in relation to two social issues. Consistent with the notion that low-power, minority group members would be more motivated social perceivers than high-power, majority group members, a trend suggested that minority members were more accurate in judging the two sides' attitudes. Furthermore, a regression analysis suggested that once emotion was partialled out, association with a majority group did, in fact, predict inaccuracy. Similar reasoning led us to expect that both groups would stereotype the attitudes of minority members as extremist, which indeed proved to be the case.

Further analyses explored the potential mechanisms that would account for the relations between power and inaccuracy in social judgments. Although negative emotion did not relate directly to increased accuracy as we had expected, group differences in negative emotion were consistent with the idea that negative emotion may motivate more accurate social judgment. Specifically, minority group observers, who tended to be more accurate judges, expressed more anger, contempt, and frustration than their counterparts. Furthermore, both sides expressed more disgust, distress, and shame toward the majority partisans, who were judged more accurately, although these findings are qualified by interactions. We also explored informational and individual difference accounts of the tendency to stereotype opponents as extremist. As expected, both sides listed more elaborative statements and more sources, in greater detail, about the majority than about the minority partisans. We should note, however, that all participants listed sources for majority members before minority members, which leaves open the possibility that this finding is due to an order effect rather than a target effect. Finally, majority participants scored higher on a measure of authoritarian personality than their less powerful opponents.

### Limitations of This Study

Several limitations of this study motivated the design of Study 2. First, although numerical majority tends to be asso-

ciated with increased power (Mullen & Hu, 1989; Nemeth, 1986), our conclusions must be regarded as tentative because participants did not actually indicate their sense of relative power in the debate. Second, aggression was confounded with numerical majority in that partisans associated with the majority positions, pro-death penalty and pro-military intervention, endorsed views that are somewhat more violent or aggressive than those of the minority group partisans. Therefore, whether our minority partisans are responding directly to the power or to the aggressive stance of their opponents is unclear.

This confounding variable is also quite relevant to the interpretation of our findings concerning individual differences because the issue-dependent aggressive nature of these individuals could very possibly explain the differences in authoritarian personalities discovered here. This is especially plausible when one considers that the scale contained, for example, the item "Capital punishment should be completely abolished (reverse scored)." Because of the confounding of ideological aggression with power, the differences on Adorno et al.'s scale should be interpreted with caution. Additionally, power was, in this investigation, confounded with political conservatism (something also tapped, in its extreme form, by authoritarianism), although notably similar findings with liberal majorities have been found in previous research (Robinson et al., 1995). Nevertheless, Study 2 was conducted, in part, to replicate these findings by examining issues that do not confound aggression or conservatism with power.

## STUDY 2

### Intergroup Perceptions in a Real-World Conflict

Study 2 addressed some of the limitations of the Study 1 and extend the findings from Study 1 to the study of a conflict involving active, politically charged groups. We decided, in opportunistic fashion, to study a current campus conflict between a gay rights activist group and a Christian evangelical group. In the fall of 1995, The gay rights group accused the Evangelical group of disseminating hate literature during Gay Pride week, of propagating racist, sexist, and homophobic ideas in their meetings and of physically assaulting a gay student who had attended one of their meetings. The conflict escalated and received considerable media attention when the Evangelical group requested and received, by a small majority

TABLE 1  
Sources of Information (Study 1)

Target	Number of Sources		Amount of Detail		Number of Elaborative Statements	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Majority	10.71	3.93	2.98	1.30	2.24	1.77
Minority	8.02	7.78	2.34	1.39	1.26	1.26

Note. For each measure, the difference between majority and minority targets is significant at the .01 level.

of the student organization vote, funds from the student government. After vigorous protests from the Gay Pride group, including the complaint that the Evangelical group contained only a minority of students and should thus be ineligible for student government funds, the Evangelical group was denied both funds and student organization status in a unilateral decision by the director of the student organization office. Because of the successful campaign and because the university had accorded legitimate status to the Gay Pride group and not the Evangelical group, the Gay Pride group was selected as the high-power group and the Evangelical group as the low-power group. (Note, however, that these designations are in the context of this particular conflict and relative to this specific opponent only.)

With regard to other limitations in the Study 1, perceived power was measured directly, and the more powerful group, in this case, was associated with less aggression than was the less powerful group (the accusations of assault, as noted above, were against the low-power Evangelical group). Within the context of this dispute, we hypothesized that (a) the more powerful Gay Pride group would display less accuracy than the less powerful Evangelical group in estimating the two sides' attitudes, (b) both groups would display greater accuracy in judging the attitudes of the Gay Pride group, and (c) higher levels of negative emotion would predict greater perceptual accuracy.

## Method

### Overview

Participants were asked to fill out a survey at their own leisure. Participants described their views on the conflict in an unconstrained format and rated their agreement with items related specifically to the conflict and to larger issues such as homosexuality and free speech. They also indicated the emotion they felt toward each side and rated their agreement with statements designed to assess their subjective feelings of power in the conflict.

### Participants

After contacting the leaders of both organizations by phone and attending meetings to ask for the help of interested members, 15 participants were solicited from the Evangelical group (8 men and 7 women) and 14 from the Gay Pride group (10 men and 4 women), for a total sample size of 29. All participants received \$5 for their participation.

### Procedure

Participants first wrote an essay describing their views on the conflict (e.g., why it had occurred and escalated, and what had actually happened). Participants then indicated their opin-

ions about four specific events or issues regarding the conflict. These items concerned whether participants agreed, on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*), that (a) a gay student had been beaten up by the Evangelical group (an accusation on whose accuracy no facts at all were available), (b) the Evangelical group had been in violation of student government rules, (c) the gay rights group had caused the Evangelical group to lose its organization status, and (d) the gay rights group had used unreliable information to inflame the conflict. Following these ratings, participants were asked to estimate, on the same 7-point scale, the opinions of the "average member" of each group concerning these four specific issues. Participants then indicated their opinions (on a 7-point scale) regarding more philosophical issues relevant to the conflict, which sampled from two domains. First, attitudes toward religion were assessed with six items (e.g., "The world would be a much better place if everyone were truly religious," and "There should be a strict separation between church and state."). Second, attitudes toward homosexuality were assessed with four items (e.g., "A person's sexual life is his or her own business and nobody else has the right to condemn that person for it," and "Public institutions are not tolerant enough toward homosexuals."). For the religious items  $\alpha = .81$ , and for the items regarding homosexuality  $\alpha = .89$ .

Following these ratings, participants were asked to estimate the opinions of the "average member" of each group concerning these philosophical issues. Participants then indicated to what degree they experienced nine negative emotions toward each group as a whole, as well as two positive emotions added to diversify the list: *anger, anxiety, contempt, disgust, distrust, distress, fear, frustration, pride, resentment, and respect*. Participants used a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (*I don't feel this emotion at all*) to 7 (*I feel this emotion very strongly*). The negative emotions were collapsed into a single scale (nine items,  $\alpha = .78$ ). Finally, participants rated the relative power of each group on four items (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*). Participants rated each group in terms of whether it (a) has been able to achieve its agenda at UW—Madison, (b) has been represented fairly in the local media, (c) has the power to make sure its interests are heard, and (d) has been favored by the university. For the four items assessing the power of the Gay Pride group  $\alpha = .59$  and for the four items assessing the power of the Evangelical group  $\alpha = .55$ .

## Results

We predicted that the more powerful group (Gay Pride) would be less accurate in all judgments than the less powerful group (Evangelical) and that both sides would be less accurate in estimating the views of the less powerful group. Additionally, we hypothesized that increased emotion would be related to increased accuracy.

### Manipulation Check

An ANOVA was run to confirm the assumption that the Gay Pride group felt more powerful than the Evangelical group in the context of their conflict. For each participant, items assessing the perceived power of one's own group were combined into a single score, and items assessing the perceived power of the other group were combined and subtracted from the first score. Possible scores ranged from -24 to 24. Thus, positive scores indicated that partisans perceived their own group to be more powerful than the other group, and negative scores indicated that they perceived the other group to be more powerful. An ANOVA with group and gender as between-subjects variables and relative power as the dependent variable revealed that, as expected, the Gay Pride group felt more powerful ( $M = 1.12$ ) than the Evangelical group ( $M = -2.90$ ),  $F(1, 20) = 53.63$ ,  $p < .0001$ . The tests for the Evangelical group's relative power score,  $t(11) = -10.04$ , and for the Gay Pride group's relative power score,  $t(11) = 3.025$ , revealed that both were significantly different from 0 ( $ps < .05$ ). The main effects for gender and the interaction were both nonsignificant ( $ps > .05$ ).

### Actual Differences

To assess actual differences between the groups on issue-specific items and the philosophical items, multiple univariate ANOVAs were conducted, with group (Gay Pride vs. Evangelical groups) and gender as between-subjects factors and the attitude composites as the dependent variables. The two groups disagreed significantly on most of the specific conflict-relevant issues. The Gay Pride group was more likely than the Evangelical group to think that members of the Evangelical group had beaten up a gay student ( $Ms = 4.54$  vs. 1.21),  $F(1, 23) = 40.11$ ,  $p < .0001$ , that the Evangelical group had violated student government rules ( $Ms = 6.39$  vs. 3.79),  $F(1, 23) = 15.21$ ,  $p < .001$ , and they were less likely to agree that they, the Gay Pride group, had relied on unreliable information to inflame the conflict ( $Ms = 3.38$  vs. 6.36),  $F(1, 23) = 25.35$ ,  $p < .0001$ . No differences were found in the groups' tendency to think that the Gay Pride group had caused the Evangelical group to lose its student organization status ( $M_{\text{GayPride}} = 3.77$ ,  $M_{\text{Evang}} = 4.43$ ,  $p > .10$ ).

The two groups also differed in their general philosophical attitudes relevant to the conflict. The Gay Pride group, compared to the Evangelical group, reported less favorable attitudes toward religion ( $Ms = 1.96$  vs. 4.68),  $F(1, 23) = 58.62$ ,  $p < .0001$ , and more favorable attitudes toward homosexuality ( $Ms = 6.73$  vs. 3.30),  $F(1, 23) = 66.46$ ,  $p < .0001$ . These findings are displayed in Figure 2.

### Power and Judgmental Accuracy

To test the hypothesized relations between power and judgmental accuracy, difference scores were created by taking

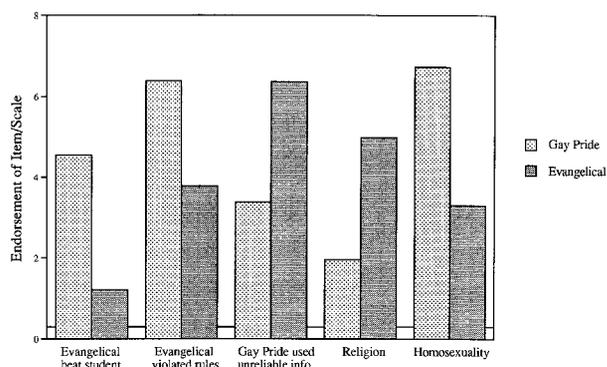


FIGURE 2 Opinion differences on issues relevant to the conflict (Study 2).

the absolute difference between the actual average attitudes of the Target group and each participant's estimate of that group's average attitude. Thus, larger scores on this measure indicate greater inaccuracy. ANOVAs were conducted, with group (Gay Pride vs. Evangelical) and gender as between-subjects factors and Target as the within-subjects factor, and inaccuracy as the dependent variable. We predicted that the Gay Pride group, as the more powerful group, would be more inaccurate than the Evangelical group in judging the two sides' attitudes and that both groups would judge the Evangelical group less accurately.

Significant effects were found for only two of the four issue-specific items. In responding to the item concerning whether the Evangelical group had beaten up a gay student, a significant interaction indicated that each side was less accurate in estimating its opponents' views ( $M_{\text{GayPride}} = 1.49$ ,  $M_{\text{Evang}} = 1.63$ ) than they were at estimating their own group's views ( $M_{\text{GayPride}} = 1.05$ ,  $M_{\text{Evang}} = 0.21$ ),  $F(1, 21) = 10.00$ ,  $p < .005$ . In responding to whether the Evangelical group had violated the rules, the predicted Target effect emerged with both sides estimating the Evangelical group's views on this issue less accurately than the Gay Pride group's views ( $Ms = 2.33$  vs. 0.92),  $F(1, 21) = 123.53$ ,  $p < .0001$ . This was accompanied by a significant group by Target interaction, such that the Target effect, surprisingly, was much stronger in the Evangelical group ( $M = 2.79$  vs. 0.70) than in the Gay Pride group,  $Ms = 1.87$  vs. 1.13,  $F(1, 21) = 28.53$ ,  $p < .0001$ , indicating that the greater inaccuracy toward the Evangelical group was largely to be found in Evangelical partisans' estimates. No significant differences were found on the item regarding the responsibility of the Gay Pride group for reducing the status of the Evangelical group ( $ps > .05$ ), or the item regarding the degree to which the Gay Pride group used unreliable information to inflame the conflict ( $ps > .05$ ).

Similar analyses yielded significant effects for both philosophical issues. Contrary to predictions, both sides were less accurate in estimating the more powerful Gay Pride group's attitudes toward religion ( $M = 0.94$ ) than in estimating the

religious attitudes of the Evangelical group ( $M = 0.58$ ),  $F(1, 21) = 5.72$ ,  $p < .05$ . Consistent with predictions, both sides judged the Evangelical group's attitudes toward homosexuality less accurately ( $M = 1.52$ ) than those of the Gay Pride group ( $M = 0.24$ ),  $F(1, 21) = 84.69$ ,  $p < .0001$ . No significant Observer effects were found.

## Emotion

**Differences between groups.** ANOVAs were conducted, with group and gender as between-subjects factors, the targets of emotion (Evangelical vs. Gay Pride) as the within-subjects factor, and the negative emotion composite as dependent variables. The analysis of the negative emotion composite yielded a marginally significant group effect, such that the Gay Pride partisans rated feeling more negative emotion ( $M = 3.16$ ) than the Evangelical group ( $M = 2.41$ ),  $F(1, 22) = 4.03$ ,  $p = .057$ . In addition, both sides reported feeling more negative emotion toward the Evangelical group ( $M = 3.26$ ) than toward the Gay Pride group ( $M = 2.31$ ),  $F(1, 22) = 18.06$ ,  $p < .0005$ , although this effect was qualified by a significant group by Target interaction, with partisans reporting more negative emotion toward the opponent group ( $M_{\text{GayPride}} = 4.70$ ,  $M_{\text{Evang}} = 3.01$ ) than toward their own group,  $M_{\text{GayPride}} = 1.61$ ,  $M_{\text{Evang}} = 1.81$ ,  $F(1, 22) = 93.26$ ,  $p < .0001$ .

## Power, emotion, and accuracy in social judgment.

Assessments of subjective feelings of power allowed us to clarify the relationship between power, emotion, and the accuracy of social judgment. To operationalize inaccuracy, absolute value difference scores were calculated between the partisan's estimates of an average group member's views on the items in a given domain (conflict-, religion-, and homosexuality-related items representing the three domains of judgment) and the actual average views of that group. An average inaccuracy score was created for each domain, collapsing across the items in that domain and across the Target groups. Toward this end, three simultaneous regression analyses were conducted to predict level of inaccuracy in the three relevant domains (conflict-, religion-, and homosexuality-related items), each with three independent variables: (a) negative emotions toward both groups, (b) the relative power scale score defined above, and (c) the interaction between these two. The regression equation as a whole was significant,  $R^2 = .4089$ ,  $F(3, 18) = 4.15$ ,  $p < .05$ . Consistent with our two main hypotheses, negative emotions accounted for a significant proportion of total variance in inaccuracy,  $sr^2 = .1649$ ,  $F(1, 18) = 7.26$ ,  $p < .05$ , as did power,  $sr^2 = .1835$ ,  $F(1, 18) = 8.08$ ,  $p < .05$ . Negative emotion was, as predicted, negatively related to inaccuracy whereas power was, as predicted, positively associated with inaccuracy. A significant interaction,  $sr^2 = .2036$ ,  $F(1, 18) = 6.20$ ,  $p < .05$ , was also found, and Figure 3 presents the regression lines predicted by this interaction. This figure reveals that, at low levels of negative emotion the

relationship between power and inaccuracy was positive, and at high levels of negative emotion the relationship between power and inaccuracy was slightly negative. At high levels of power, emotion seems to lead to greater accuracy, but at low levels of power, emotion has little bearing on accuracy. In examining the judgmental accuracy with which views on religion and on homosexuality were estimated, neither the regression equations nor the contributions of any of the independent variables were significant ( $ps > .05$ ).

## Discussion

As the result of direct action taken by a Gay Pride group relative to an Evangelical group with which it was in conflict, the university afforded increased status to the Gay Pride group, which members of both groups acknowledged. As in previous research, partisans expressed different attitudes and levels of emotion and they consistently overestimated their differences. Our first hypothesis, that the powerful Gay Pride group would display lower levels of accuracy in judging the two sides' attitudes, was not supported. Across the two groups, however, participants' self-rated sense of power was indeed related to decreased judgmental accuracy. The power-related Target hypothesis, that the less powerful, Evangelical partisans would be judged by both sides in more stereotypical, extremist fashion, met with partial confirmation and contradiction. In the cases of conflict-specific items and items concerning homosexuality, the less powerful group was seen less accurately; concerning the groups' views on religion, the more powerful Gay Pride group was seen less accurately. This may have been because the Evangelical group's position on religion was very clear because their views were fairly extreme. This could also explain why greater perceptual inaccuracy was displayed in estimating the Evangelical group's views on homosexuality. The Gay Pride group's views, again, were patently clear. Because this was a real conflict involving

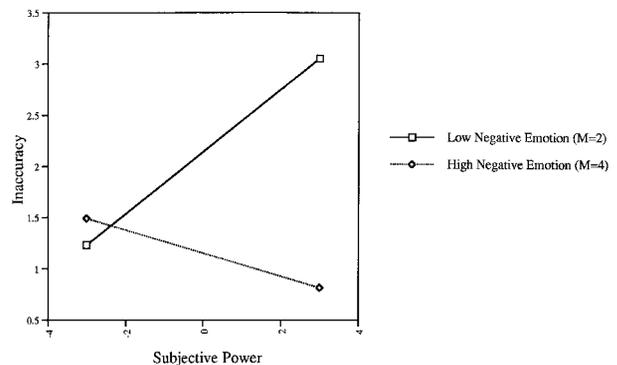


FIGURE 3 Interaction between power and negative emotion in predicting inaccuracy (Study 2).

real activists, the groups were quite extreme on some issues, and this may have clouded our results by making it easier for partisans to accurately judge the views of the groups on these issues.

Unlike the emotion findings from Study 1, Study 2 offered no clear evidence that the less powerful group tended to feel more negative emotion than the more powerful group and that both groups tended to express more negative emotion toward the more powerful group than toward the less powerful group. The interaction obtained most directly supports the sensible conclusion that each group tended to favor emotionally the in-group and derogate the out-group.

The regression analysis conducted on the conflict-specific items yielded the expected relation between power, negative emotion, and the accuracy with which partisans estimate other partisans' attitudes. Consistent with the hypothesis, more powerful partisans were less accurate, and people expressing more negative emotion were more accurate. Perhaps more interestingly, an interaction between these two variables indicated that partisans who perceived themselves to be more powerful were less accurate than those who felt themselves to be less powerful—but only when these powerful partisans reported low levels of negative emotion. When they reported moderate levels of negative emotion, power was unrelated to accuracy, and when they expressed high levels of emotion, power was actually related to greater accuracy. What accounts for this finding?

Partisans who feel little negative emotion with regard to the conflict are presumably less engaged and interested in the conflict, and power gives them the comfort and security that allows them to ignore their opponents (and perhaps even the entire conflict), thereby leading to decreases in accuracy as power increases. However, partisans who are experiencing high levels of negative emotion are probably quite invested in the issue at hand, and thus may view power as an opportunity to become more involved in the issue or conflict that so interests them and may possibly be able to use their power to obtain greater access to sources of information about the conflict (e.g., media reports, a larger network of constituents), thereby leading to increases in accuracy as power increases.

In contrast, emotion seemed to make little difference in the accuracy of the social judgments made by low-power partisans who displayed moderate levels of accuracy regardless of their expressed negative emotion. Unlike high-power individuals, the outcomes of low-power individuals are dependent on the actions of high-power individuals and thus do not have the option to disengage in the conflict altogether by relying on their power to protect them. Furthermore, low-power individuals do not have access to the resources of power that would allow them to become more engaged in the conflict. Therefore, regardless of the level of emotion motivating them, we can expect less powerful people to maintain a fairly constant level of attention and accuracy as found in this study.

## DISCUSSION

The results of these two studies offer initial evidence indicating that power and negative emotion relate to judgmental inaccuracy in social conflicts. Partisans' group power over its opponent, whether measured by majority status or by perceived feelings of power, predicted decreased accuracy in judging the attitudes of the other group. Study 1 and, to some degree, Study 2 produced evidence that both sides tended to stereotype the less powerful group as extremist. Furthermore, emotion seemed to play a role both in judgmental inaccuracy and group dynamics in general. In Study 1, emotion, on its own, failed to predict accuracy in social judgments, but was associated with the more accurate position of low power. In Study 2, emotion directly predicted increased accuracy in social judgments and seemed to moderate the effects of power on judgmental accuracy.

Together these findings are consistent with previous research and theory that proposes that group members will stereotype each other unless motivated not to do so (Fiske & Taylor, 1991). Power seems to increase the social perceiver's disinclination to pay careful attention to others and to reach accurate judgments about them (Fiske, 1993). Emotion, on the other hand, seems to be motivating, and by focusing the perceiver on the emotion-provoking aspects of his or her environment, can help him or her make more accurate judgments about the people and groups around them (Schwarz, 1990). As the observed interaction between power and emotion in Study 2 demonstrates, these variables of power and emotion exert more complex influences when considered together, and this finding has proven to be replicable (Ebenbach & Keltner, 1997).

### Emotion and Accuracy in Social Judgments

The explanation forwarded here for the emotion findings, based on previous literature suggesting that affect motivates the individual to attend more carefully to her or his environment (e.g., de Souza, 1990; Keltner et al., 1993; Oatley & Johnson-Laird, 1987; Schwarz, 1990), emphasizes the perceptual focusing of emotion. However, another possibility is that such emotion encourages accuracy by decreasing the self-enhancement motive, which can lead people to harbor unrealistically positive illusions of themselves or their in-group. Most people tend to hold irrationally high opinions of themselves relative to others (Taylor & Brown, 1988), and this may contribute to out-group derogation. On the other hand, depressives, for example, seem to make more accurate judgments of their own qualities relative to others (e.g., Brown, 1986), and this suggests a different possible channel through which negative emotion might enhance accuracy by removing illusions rather than by intensifying a perceiver's attentional focus on the out-group.

## Other Motivational Forces to Accuracy in Social Judgments

We must note, too, that factors other than power and emotion can motivate the social perceiver to strive for judgmental accuracy, such as attitude importance (cf. Zuwerink & Devine, 1996), issue involvement (Petty & Cacioppo, 1984), commitment to fairness (Adams, 1965), or to nonprejudiced views (Devine, 1989). In fact, the tendency to engage in stereotyping might best be reversed by the adoption of rigorous nonprejudiced standards, in which one attempts to strive for egalitarianism by suppressing automatically activated stereotypes in favor of more careful processing (Devine, 1989). Future studies should examine the role of these motivating variables and others in social conflict; for example, encouraging powerful individuals to adopt standards of fairness or judgmental accuracy might indeed lead them to make more accurate intergroup judgments.

## Nonmotivational Forces to Accuracy in Social Judgments

Obviously, the accuracy of social judgments is also affected by factors that are not motivational in nature. Careful processing and judgmental accuracy have been found to be affected by a variety of cognitive factors, including the amount of cognitive load a person is experiencing (Macrae, Milne, & Bodenhausen, 1994). Similarly, powerful people can be “attentionally overburdened” because of their positions of authority over others and thus may experience too much cognitive load to carefully process incoming information (Fiske, 1993). Future research should attempt to uncover more of the nonmotivational aspects of power’s effects on social judgment and to differentiate them clearly from motivational aspects.

## Implications for Group Dynamics

The findings from the current investigation have important implications for group dynamics and change in social disputes. For example, the tendency for members of powerful groups to assess inaccurately their opponents and the views of their constituency, as well as to attribute stereotypical positions to others might reduce their credibility and respect and, because they are misassessing their competition, increase the chances of a loss of power. Examples of this process abound: political parties suffer surprising defeats after having previously gained comprehensive power, business leaders misestimate markets and shareholder views, and cultural figures stereotype culture’s prevailing interests.

Additionally, whether the findings regarding negative emotion offer a more optimistic picture of intergroup relations

is unclear. Although negative emotion may help social perceivers assess more accurately the attributes of out-group members, research indicates that the development of mutually beneficial agreements depends to some degree on the experience of positive emotion in group members (Carnevale & Isen, 1986). Thus, while negative emotion may play a role in individuals’ sound judgments of the conflict and its participants, it may not be as helpful in bringing about a resolution of that conflict. Successful intergroup negotiations are most likely to depend on both accurate judgments and positive emotions between groups, and future research should attempt to discover how both could be encouraged simultaneously.

## Connections to Other Domains of Judgment and Behavior

The documented relations between power and decreased judgmental accuracy in intergroup contexts relate to recent studies of social-moral judgments. Powerful people in the workplace may pay so little attention to the feelings of underlings that they inaccurately judge their sexually harassing behavior as harmless (Bargh, Raymond, Pryor, & Strack, 1995; Fiske, 1993). In cross-gender conversations, societally imposed power differences favoring men seem to make men less likely to pay attention to women than vice versa (Derber, 1979). Finally, white men, who tend to hold power in society, were more likely to underestimate the seriousness of environmental threats than white women and men and women of color (Flynn, Slovic, & Mertz, 1994). We believe that power-based misperceptions shape diverse social interactions, from informal personal encounters to between-group conflicts, and deserve further attention.

## Limitations of This Investigation

The correlational nature of the current investigation leaves open many possible interpretations of these findings. Because power was not experimentally assigned to the groups that were studied here, confounding variables (e.g., ideological extremism) may have produced the obtained results. For example, our dominant groups (majority in Study 1, Gay Pride in Study 2) may have felt insecure or threatened in their current status and this might have been what caused them to rely more on stereotyped social judgments (Ng & Cram, 1988). Worth noting, however, is that the scale used in Study 2 to assess feelings of power, consisting of items such as “[this group] has the power to make sure its interests are heard,” most likely also assessed feelings of confidence in the group’s agency, and thus would tend to indicate power without insecurity.

Our research also did not directly examine the origins of power’s effects on social judgments. Although the experience of power decreases one’s inclination to make accurate judg-

ments, as we have suggested, individual differences possibly may have produced the differences in judgmental accuracy. The experience of power may lead fairly accurate social judges to lapse in their attentiveness to others, or, conversely, powerful groups may tend to attract people who are habitually prone to inaccurate, stereotyped judgments. Although our findings for authoritarianism were confounded with ideological conservatism in Study 1, we may yet demonstrate more clearly that people with prejudicial personality styles are attracted to power. In the future, experimental manipulation of power (e.g., by assigning one side control over outcomes for both or by framing the situation so that it seems that one side has more popular support than the other) will be necessary to establish fully the causal links between power and judgmental inaccuracy.

### Directions for Future Research

Future research should aim to directly examine the mechanisms that account for the effects of power and emotion on judgmental accuracy. Many such mechanisms, including motivation, attention, and outcome dependency, for example, were not measured directly in this study. The role of these mechanisms could be more closely investigated by studying the changes that occur in a conflict and its partisans when power threatens to change hands; for example, a longitudinal study across an election could address both incumbents' and challengers' varying levels of security, emotion, and relative power, all of which should relate to judgmental accuracy (Ng & Cram, 1988).

One final issue presents itself for further investigation. What form of power is most influential in the genesis of power's effects on judgmental accuracy? In one study, we considered minority versus majority status groups, assuming that consensus is a robust form of power in society. However, sometimes, as in Study 2, power is associated with the group that has institutional support rather than with the larger group. Finally, societal norms are sometimes responsible for giving the mainstay of power to certain groups, such as men, or whites. These, of course, are only a few of the many possible sources of power (French & Raven, 1959).

As power's effects on social judgments are explored, comparing the role of these forms of power in social judgment will be of paramount importance. Future studies should examine the forms of power by examining variables related to power, such as class, socioeconomic status, and racial majority/minority status, for example. Because these variables are tied into social power and are built into many of our most intractable social conflicts (e.g., over affirmative action), considering what part they play in the processes outlined in this article will be essential, as will isolating these forms of power through experimental manipulation. As our understanding of the various aspects of power grows, so too will our understanding of the conflicts that power pervades.

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