Agentic-Communal Paradox in Organizations: An Investigation of Gender, Power and Values

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Agentic-Communal Paradox in Organizations: An Investigation of Gender, Power and Values

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Abstract

This study investigated how males and females at different levels of power prioritize values and construe power in professional settings. Two core drivers of human behavior are agency and communion (Rucker, Galinsky & Macgee, 2018). Agency is correlated with masculinity, self-enhancement values and high power whereas communion is correlated with femininity, self-transcendence values and low power (Schwartz & Rubel, 2005, Trapnell & Paulhus, 2012, Rucker, Galinsky & Dubois, 2012). In the workplace, the double bind illustrates tensions between these structural and social roles: professional women walk the line between being perceived as simultaneously communal (consistent with social and structural roles and values) and agentic (consistent with leadership and high-power roles, but inconsistent with social and structural roles) (Eagly & Karau, 2002). Emerging research in organizational leadership, however, supports blending communal and agentic styles for increased effectiveness among both men and women (Kark, Waismel-Manor & Shamir, 2012). Using quantitative ratings, this study examined whether women and men at different levels of organizational power in the workplace self-report agentic-communal paradox or polarity in 1) values and 2) power construal. It was hypothesized that women would exhibit more paradox at higher levels than other groups. Two 2x3 ANOVAs investigated paradox in values and power construal and a series of one-way ANOVAs compared sub-sets of values and power construal with gender and power levels. As hypothesized, results indicated greater agentic-communal paradox in values at the highest levels of power (compared to the

lowest) refuting historical dichotomies. Contrary to predictions, however, these findings were not just among women, but across both genders indicating no difference between men and women. Similarly, when investigating individual values, contrary to predictions, women and men both gave high ratings to self-enhancement values (including power and achievement) potentially reflecting cultural shifts in gendered traits for women in the workplace. Women and men similarly gave high ratings to self-transcendence values (including benevolence) but not universalism. As predicted, however, women rated universalism higher than men, as did low level employees when compared to high-level employees. In addition, those at the lowest levels rated power as less important than those at high levels undergirding previous findings on power motivation. This study extends the literature on gender, values and power through a paradox perspective. In some areas, it shows evidence of traditional masculine-feminine binaries. In others, however, it illuminates deviation from traditional roles of power and gender.

Dedication

      This work is dedicated to my husband, daughter, parents and all of those who have loved me into being.

Acknowledgments

Deep appreciation to my advisors, Dr. Dante Spetter and Dr. Marya Mtshali, for their guidance and support. I would also like to extend my gratitude to Dr. Stephanie McMains for her support on statistical measures.

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Chapter I

Introduction

Despite decades of attention, gender inequality in the workplace continues to be an issue of concern. A 2018 McKinsey study revealed that the U.S. has made almost no progress over the past three years in increasing women's representation in the workplace at any level (Women in the Workplace, 2018). In a study of 279 companies and 64,000 employees, the data show that fewer women than men are hired into entry-level jobs. In addition, representation of women declines further at every subsequent level. Women account for less than a quarter (24%) of senior roles globally, a fifth of all board seats (21.2%), and less than 5% of chief executive officers positions at S&P 500 companies (Catalyst, 2018). Significant research efforts focus on gender, leadership styles and strategies for professional progress. In the organizational leadership literature, agency and communion are commonly evaluated constructs.

Agency and Communion in Leadership

As two core drivers of human behavior, agency and communion are among the most prominent abstract psychological distinctions (Rucker, Galinsky & Mcgee, 2018; Trapnell & Paulhus, 2012). The A&C framework is thought to subsume multiple levels of psychological analysis including values, motivations, behaviors, life goals, and traits. Agency includes traits such as status and power whereas communion includes those of compassion and trust. (Trapnell & Paulhus, 2012). Agentic motives include advancing status and power relative to others, increasing dominance and influence over others and

asserting "positive distinctness" from others. Communal motives include caring about and nurturing others, cooperation, sharing, collaboration and connection. In short, agentic motives are said to be about *getting ahead* and communal motives are about *getting along* (Hogan & Roberts, 2000).

Importantly, the A&C constructs are theoretically orthogonal and androgynous. Emphasis in one area is not seen as restricting development in the other (Wiggins, 1991). Research shows, however, that agency is correlated with masculinity and communion is correlated with femininity (Trapnell & Palhus, 2012). In a study of 2,616 US and Canadian undergraduate students comparing gender role traits to the A&C constructs, the highest correlations between agency and masculinity descriptors were superiority ($r =$ 0.62), status ($r = 0.33$) and power ($r = 0.32$). The highest correlations between communion and feminine descriptors were compassion ($r = 0.46$) and altruism ($r = 0.35$). Each of these correlations can be considered of moderate strength as they fall within the range between 0.3 and 0.7 (Cohen, 1988). Thus, according to this sample, gendered traits moderately hold to agency-communal descriptors.

While data reflects gendered traits and styles, it also shows significant changes over time. Two cross-temporal studies provide additional insight into shifts in gendered traits over five decades. One meta-analysis investigated ratings of gendered traits in the US between 1973 and 2012 (N = 24,801) (Donnelly & Twenge, 2017). Between 1973-1994, college-age women's scores of masculinity (M) increased moderately ($d = 0.50$) with no changes observed on the feminine scale (F) as measured on the Bem Sex Role Inventory (Bem, 1974). Additionally, there was a small, but significant increase in both men's F and M scores during that time period. The second study, covering 1993 to 2012

showed a shift in trends: women's scores of femininity (F) decreased slightly (d = -0.26) while their masculinity scores remained constant. In the same time period, male scores revealed no change in femininity. The authors associate these changes with large sociocultural shifts including women's entry into the workforce and a latter period of relative social calm. Indeed, culture and experience shape beliefs and behaviors about power and values, thus, as culture changes, so may normative beliefs and behaviors (Miyamoto & Wilken, 2010; Mondillion, 2005; Torelli & Shavitt, 2010; Torelli & Shavitt, 2011; and Zhong, Magee, Maddux, & Galinsky, 2006). In summary, while agency and communion still align with traditional roles, research over time reflects shifts as culture changes.

The shift in gendered traits (and potentially in culture) is also reflected in the leadership literature with some evidence of moving beyond the "think manager-think male" paradigm. While still robust, masculine leader stereotypes have declined over recent decades. In a meta-analysis of seven studies examining the extent to which stereotypes of leaders are culturally masculine, results suggest that leadership is still strongly correlated with masculinity (g = .94 where g is a converted version of Cohen's d for small sample bias), however effect sizes have decreased over time suggesting a reduction in the strength of the stereotype (Koenig, Eagly, Mitchell, Ristikari, 2011). In comparison with female dominated organizations, male dominated organizations (e.g. government) continue to show a tendency for males to be perceived as more effective, however that effect size has also diminished. A comparison of meta-analyses shows the effect size decreasing from moderate (d = 0.42) (Eagly, Karau & Makhijani, 1995) to weak (d = 0.12) (Paustian-Underdahl, Walker & Woehr, 2014). Similarly, a meta-

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analysis of 95 studies between 1962 and 2011 shows that while men self-report themselves to be more effective as business leaders than women self-report, other-ratings reflect women as slightly more effective business leaders ($d = -0.12$) (Paustian-Underdahl, Walker & Woehr, 2014). Further, in situations requiring team coordination, female leadership may confer an advantage. Using hierarchical linear modeling, a study of 29 organizations (N = 837) indicates that as team sizes increase and are more functionally diverse, female leadership is positively associated with greater team cohesion ($\gamma = 1.68$) compared to male leadership. Additionally, as teams are more geographically dispersed, female leadership is positively associated with cooperative learning ($\gamma = 0.44$) and participative communication ($\gamma = 0.63$) (Post, 2015). In summary, while leadership still has masculine connotations, insights into gender and leadership evidences shifts and gradations.

In addition to shifting trends in gendered traits, leadership research suggests that combining agentic and communal qualities can benefit both female and male leaders. One study indicates that among male and female leaders, androgyny (a combination of masculine and feminine traits) is more strongly correlated with transformational leadership (which motivates followers to transcend self-interest and exceed performance expectations for a higher collective interest) (Kark, Waismel-Manor & Shamir, 2012). This study from a male-dominated, bureaucratic Israeli bank, included 76 leaders (equally male and female) and 932 employees. Findings indicate that ratings of managers who were perceived as more feminine were more strongly correlated with perception of transformational leadership ($r = 0.33$) than those who were perceived as more masculine ($r = 0.24$). Indeed, top-level women leaders have been rated higher in agency (a

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stereotypically masculine characteristic) than lower level women leaders, but comparable to women at all levels in communal styles (Moor, Cohen & Beeri, 2015). In a study of 20 women leaders using qualitative interview and quantitative self-reports, researchers found that women leaders described themselves as having "gender-balanced personalities" combining both gender-congruent and incongruent personality traits. Interview results reflect a focus on both communal and agentic features in leadership. Communal aspects include sensitive management skills, listening and dialogue whereas agentic aspects include assertiveness, ambition, self-confidence, courage, commitment to hard work and belief in themselves. In quantitative self-report rankings of masculine and feminine traits, these women leaders demonstrated both high levels of agentic and communal traits whereas in comparison, junior women in the study reported high communal traits but lower agentic traits. In sum, research results indicate that both female and male leaders may benefit from exhibiting a combination of agentic and communal traits, and for women, these traits may be exhibited differently at varying organizational levels.

In summary, gendered traits and drives are commonly framed as agency and communion, with agency correlating with masculinity and communion correlating with femininity. That said, these correlations are traits are changing over time. Moreover, leadership research reflects benefits and complexities of combining both agentic and communal styles resulting in potentially greater paradox among leaders.

The following sections will outline paradox theory and agentic-communal polarities in values and power. First, paradox theory will be introduced as a frame for investigating polarities in values and construal of power. Next will be a review of a prominent theory of values which is based on agentic-communal tensions. It will include

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findings on values, gender and leadership. Finally, power be discussed in the context of culture and developing constructs that reflect the agentic-communal polarity, specifically how power can be construed as opportunity and/or a responsibility.

Agency, Communion and Paradox

Paradox studies in organizations explore how competing demands can be attended to simultaneously (Smith and Lewis, 2011). They offer a framework for moving beyond simplistic, either-or mental constructions into complexity, diversity and ambiguity (Lewis, 2000). Tensions are the underlying sources of paradox. A paradox can be understood as an individual's mental construction consisting of contradictory and interrelated tendencies that persist over time (Lewis, 2000; Smith and Lewis, 2011). Different from continua or dilemmas, paradoxes are not two sides of a spectrum (with separate opposites), but rather two sides of a coin in relationship with each other. Elements may seem logical in isolation but illogical when considered simultaneously. Generally, paradoxical thinking is driven by the recognition that opposing, interwoven solutions are needed and because no one choice can resolve a tension (Lewis, 2000).

Paradox theory underscores that recognizing and managing paradox benefits organizations. When unmanaged, paradoxical tensions can develop into negative cycles wherein actors become trapped by tensions and further perpetuate them (Lewis, 2000). Productively managing tensions, however, can propel actors beyond cyclical, either-or tensions to rethink perceptions and practices. Those who have a paradox mindset tend to value, accept and feel comfortable with tensions (Lewis, 2000). This enables the ability to see tensions as opportunities, confront them, and search for both/and strategies. Individuals with a paradox mindset have been shown to question existing assumptions

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and explore more effective responses (Luscher & Lewis, 2008). Paradox mindset also increases cognitive and behavioral flexibility, allowing individuals to broaden their perspectives, engage in balanced consideration of a situation and respond with a wide range of actions in diverse situations (Rothman & Melwani, 2018; Denison, Hooijberg & Quinn, 1995).

Paradox research in management and leadership is commonly investigated at the organizational level with relatively few studies at the individual level and fewer still on gender. Organizational themes include exploration and exploitation (Andriopoulos & Lewis, 2009), innovation and structure (Uhl-Bien & Arena, 2017), sustainability and decision-making (Hahn, Preuss, Pinkse & Figge, 2014), business sustainability (Heracleous, Wirtz & Good, 2014), identity, exploration-exploitation and competing goals (Karhu & Ritala, 2017), knowledge creation (Milosevic, Bass & Combs, 2018) and boundary-spanning activities in teams and customer service (Sleep, Bharadwaj & Lam, 2015). Studies on individuals have applied both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. Examples of previous quantitative studies include foci on collaboration and competition (Keller, Lowenstein & Yan, 2017), idealism and pragmatism (Ashforth & Reingen, 2014), organizational ambidexterity (Gibson & Birkinshaw, 2004), and CEO humility and narcissism (Zhang, Ou, Tsui, & Wang, 2017). Scholars have noted the limited research at the level of the individual within organizations (e.g. Schad, Lewis, Raisch & Smith, 2016). This study extends the quantitative literature in this domain on power, gender and values.

Of relevance to the subject, a recent study examined women leaders and agentic-communal paradox in organizations. In interviews with 64 women executives in the U.S.,

researchers identified four pairs of contradictory agentic and communal tensions commonly managed by top-level professional women: demanding and caring, authoritative and participative, self-advocating and other-serving, distant and approachable (Zheng, Surgevil & Kark, 2018). Using an inductive approach, the researchers then identified strategies by which the women navigated situations involving the identified agentic and communal tensions. Themes included the agility to read and respond to differing situations/people, creating win-win solutions, being tough on tasks and caring on people, and reframing personal communal "weaknesses" as strengths. Each of the strategies reflect the leaders' abilities to juxtapose seemingly contradictory tendencies and reframe them in a way that brings them into logical coexistence. Results of this study suggest that instead of leaning toward one style, some women leaders enact a blend of agentic and communal strategies for leadership effectiveness.

The current study extends the individual quantitative research in paradox by including values and power construal. Further, cultural paradigms influence researchers as well as study participants. The way in which researchers frame questions can be a reflection of prevailing cultural norms resulting in shaping a study's results. This study takes an approach that allows for paradoxical results on power construal and gendered value constructs that are in tension with each other.

<div align="center">Agency and Communion in Values</div>

As core drivers of human behavior, agency and communion are widely represented in psychological theories, including values (Rucker, Galinsky & Mcgee, 2018). Values are considered to be motivational, serving as guiding principles in a person or group's life (Schwartz et. al, 2012). While seen as relatively stable, values can change

as one's sense of identity shifts, often spurred by social and life changes such new professional or family roles (Bardi et. al, 2009). In organizations, individuals develop situated identities and undergo a process of sensemaking and "sensebreaking" as they move towards their desired selves based on their professional contexts (Ashforth & Schinoff, n.d.). Ibarra (1999) calls this phenomenon identity scaffolding, a leadership development process in which people adapt to new roles by experimenting with provisional behaviors and identities.

Schwartz' et al. (1992, 2012) theory of values is currently the most prominent taxonomy of individual values and also reflects the agency-communion framework. In Schwartz' theory, nineteen values are organized in a circumplex model based on a motivational continuum signifying polarities and tensions [See Figure 1]. Out of nineteen identified values, the Schwartz et al. (2012) model divides values into four higher order categories. The of the two higher order categories map to the A&C framework: self-enhancement values map to agency and self-transcendence values map to communion (Trapnell & Paulhus, 2012). In the circumplex model, these values are organized on opposite sides of the circumplex. Self-transcendence values include universalism (concern, nature, tolerance) and benevolence (dependability and caring). Self-enhancement values include achievement and power (dominance and resources). See Table 1 below for definitions.

Figure 1

Schwartz' et. al (2012) Circumplex Model of Individual Values

Table 1

*Conceptual Definitions of Self-Transcendence and Self-Enhancement Values in Schwartz'
Theory of Basic Individual Values*

Self-Transcendence Values	Definition
Benevolence	Preservation and enhancement of the welfare of people with whom one is in frequent personal contact
Universalism	Understanding, appreciation, tolerance and protection for the welfare of *all* people and for nature
Self-Enhancement Values	Definition
Power	Social status and prestige, control or dominance over people and resources
Achievement	Personal success through demonstrating competence according to social standards
Schwartz et al., 2012.	

Schwartz' theory suggests that holding opposing values on the continuum can cause internal conflicts leading to both practical and social problems (Schwartz, 2012). According to the theory, therefore, self-transcendence (benevolence and universalism) and self-enhancement (power and achievement) are motivationally opposed (Schwartz, 1992). Values that are in motivational conflict are thought to be difficult to pursue simultaneously. Thus, emphasizing self-transcendence values leads to deemphasizing self-enhancement values, and vice versa (Schwartz & Rubel-Lifschitz, 2009). This conflicting relationship has been borne out in the data. A meta-analysis using data from 10 studies and 104 nations investigated the directions and strength of within-country relationship between self-enhancement and self-transcendence values (Rudnev, Magun & Schwartz, 2018). Supporting Schwartz' theory and model, the regression results showed an inverse relationship (-0.56) between these higher order values. Importantly, this

differentiates Schwartz' theory from the agency-communion theory: Schwartz sees agency and communion as motivationally opposed while the A&C framework views these drives as orthogonal (Wiggins, 1991).

At the level of gender, differences in agentic and communal values have been found to be small to moderate. Schwartz & Rubel (2005) based hypothesized differences between males and females on evolutionary and role theories. The underlying rationale is that power and achievement are more important to males because they are cues to females for mate selection. In contrast, they hypothesize that benevolence and universalism are more important to females for the nurturing and welfare of children. The data reflect small gender value differences in alignment with traditional masculine-agency and feminine-communion constructs. In a study across 19 countries (N = 33, 866), respondents' sex predicted value importance at the individual level (Schwartz & Rubel, 2005). On average, women more frequently prioritized benevolence and universalism and men prioritized power and achievement, however there is significant overlap between sexes. Comparing women to men, mean effect sizes were small [benevolence ($d = 0.36$), universalism ($d = 0.25$), power ($d = -0.24$) and achievement ($d = -0.29$)]. Overall, sex accounted for 0 to 3% of the variance in reported importance of these values. Thus, while reported gender differences in values are significant, they are small in this study.

At the organizational level, several studies illuminate the complex relationship between agentic and communal values in the context of leadership. One study reveals that different value priorities predict different types of motivation to lead. The following study's aim was to examine the incremental contribution of personal values (self-

enhancement and self-transcendence) in different types of motivation to lead. In a sample of military personnel (n = 231), results of multiple linear regression analysis reflected a positive relationship between self-enhancement values and two types of motivation to lead (finding pleasure from being a leader, β = 0.25, and feeling a commitment to groups or social norms, β = 0.20), however self-transcendence values had a positive relationship with a third type of motivation to lead (where individuals weigh benefits of leadership for self and others, β = 0.51) (Clemmons & Fields, 2011). The main takeaway for the purpose herein is that the relationship between values and leadership role occupancy is not linear. Both self-enhancement and self-transcendence values can drive leadership, potentially via different motivational pathways. Thus, like Schwartz' theory of values, conceptualizations of power reflect the agency-communion framework. This is evidenced in definitions and construals of power. The next section will explicate this theme further.

Agency and Communion in Power Construal

Over time, definitions of power in the psychological literature have varied. Some works define power as the ability to provide or withhold rewards or punishments (Emerson, 1962; Keltner et al., 2003; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959). Power can also be defined as involving an asymmetric and relative dependence between parties which affords one party greater influence on outcomes (Guinote, 2017; Tost, 2015; Wolfe & Mcginn, 2005). Accordingly, social power, a primary consequence of power, has been defined as influence and control of resources in order to change people's "behaviors, opinions, attitudes, goals, needs, values and all other aspects of a person's psychological field" (French and Raven, 1959). Importantly, this *power over* framework has been

critiqued (Allen, 1998). Scholar and activist Jean Baker Miller defined power as "the capacity to produce change" (Miller, 1991). Each of these definitions of power has slightly different goals (change people, produce change) and sources (resource control, relative dependence), reflecting different conceptualizations. These differences may be an expression of changing time periods. Regardless, power is inherently relational and contextual, existing in different contexts among individuals or groups (Anderson & Berdahl, 2002; Anderson & Brion, 2014, Lee & Tiedens, 2001). Critically, culture moderates schemas, beliefs and goals about power for oneself and for others. This includes beliefs about appropriate uses of power, behaviors associated with power, goals of power, and beliefs about distribution of power (Zhong, Magee, Maddux, & Galinsky, 2006; Torelli & Shavitt, 2010, Miyamoto & Wilken, 2010; and Mondillion, 2005). As cultures change, so do ideas about power.

Power and leadership are intertwined, especially as leadership is often related to formal position or rank in organizations (Tost, 2015). Power motivation, defined as the desire to influence others, has been found to be an important factor in leadership role occupancy related to gender (Schuh et al., 2014). In other words, the desire for power is related to obtaining it. Across four quantitative studies, men consistently reported higher power motivation than women which in turn mediated the link between gender and leadership role occupancy. The studies sampled German participants in two settings: universities (N = 240 and 61) and professional workplaces (N = 382 and 861). The first study of 240 business students successfully confirmed the link between gender differences in power motivation resulting in a moderate effect size ($d = 0.40$) (Cohen, 1988). The additional three studies tested the model of whether power motivation

mediates the relationship between gender and leadership role. Findings were replicated across all studies with effect sizes between men's and women's power motivation consistently of moderate strength ($d = 0.40$, $d = 0.60$, $d = 0.34$, $d = 0.48$) (Cohen, 1988). On average, power motivation accounted for 26% of the total relation between gender and leadership roles. The findings were consistent across studies showing that power motivation was found to mediate the role between gender and leadership role occupancy. The underlying dynamic reflects the double-bind tension women may face in pursuit of leadership roles: embodying communal traits and values while simultaneously displaying agentic power motivation.

As research on power proliferates, understanding of its effects on behavior has broadened. The majority of past research focused on the effects of power construed as opportunity for personal gain in a traditional power over framework (Scholl, Ellemers, Sassenberg & Scheepers, 2015). In this view, high power is associated with opportunity (agency) and low power is associated with responsibility (communalism) (for an overview, see Lee & Tiedens, 2001). More recently, studies have explored power activating other-serving (communal) behaviors. When individuals are other-focused (versus self-focused) power can increase empathic accuracy (Côté et al., 2011), perspective-taking (Hall, Murphy & Mast, 2006) and interpersonal sensitivity (Schmid Mast, Jonas & Hall, 2009). Among those who associate power with social responsibility goals, power elicits other-oriented, responsible behavior whereas for those who link power with self-interest goals, power elicits self-interested behavior (Chen, Lee-Chai & Bargh, 2001). Similarly, powerholders who link power with social responsibility tend to have a communal orientation based on understanding others' needs. In contrast,

powerholders who tend to link power with self-interest goals tend to have an exchange-based agentic orientation (Chen, Lee-Chai & Bargh, 2001). Overall, these study results indicate that powerholders can understand and use power for both agentic and communal purposes, representing a tension. Critically, this differentiation has been noted as a construct limitation in Schwartz' theory of values. Torelli and Shavitt (2010) explicitly indicate that Schwartz' definition of power is a good fit for a self-centered power concept, but does not encompass the goals of power to benefit others. The construct of power construal, however, does address the findings that power can have both agentic and communal motivations.

As discussed, power embodies a central tension: to pursue goals related to personal opportunity and/or to pursue shared goals related to the responsibility of a group (Fiske & Berdahl, 2007). Construal of power represents one aspect of this tension. In relationships involving asymmetrical power, those with higher power have relatively more control over outcomes (both for themselves and others) and therefore greater independence (Guinote, 2007). Those lower in power have relatively less control over outcomes for themselves and others and are therefore more dependent (Sassenberg, Ellemers & Scheepers, 2012). For powerholders, this can result in a simultaneous experience of independence and interdependence (Lee & Tiedens, 2001). Construal of power relates to this dynamic: it refers to how one perceives and exercises power, as an opportunity and/or as a responsibility (Scholl, Ellemers, Sassenberg & Scheepers, 2015). Construing power as an opportunity is related to feeling enabled to achieve desired outcomes that one prioritizes. In contrast, construing power as a responsibility is related to focusing on the need to take care of things or do what is necessary (again for

outcomes benefitting oneself and/or for the common good) (De Wit, Scheepers, Ellemers, Sassenberg & Scholl, 2017; Sassenberg, Ellemers & Scheepers, 2012). In essence, power as opportunity equates to *I get to*, and power as responsibility equates to *I need to*.

Construal of power is a psychological (versus structural) phenomenon (De Wit, Scheepers, Ellemers, Sassenberg & Scholl, 2017). *Structural power* refers to the power an individual or group has over objectively demonstrable valued resources. For example, one's position in a hierarchy, the ability to punish/reward, control over land, money, information, etc. In contrast, *psychological power* is subjective and internal. It has two parts: one's personal sense or perception of power (evaluation of one's ability to influence others) and one's cognitive schemas (unconscious ideas and beliefs) related to power (Tost, 2015). Construal of power is a part of the latter, one's cognitive schemas. Importantly, different individuals can construe the very same task as an opportunity and/or as a responsibility. Further, these constructs are theoretically orthogonal wherein individuals can construe a task as simultaneously an opportunity and a responsibility (De Wit, Scheepers, Ellemers, Sassenberg & Scholl, 2017). While investigation of power and the agency-communion framework are longstanding, construal of power is a relatively new construct. The following studies provide a review of the existing literature.

Power construal is particularly relevant to issues of leadership because it affects how individuals perceive power and whether or not they desire it. The way an individual construes power impacts the attractiveness of pursuing social power (Sassenberg, Ellemers & Scheepers, 2012). Researchers predicted and found that power is more attractive (and lack of power is less attractive) when construed as an opportunity. Across four studies, they tested the impact of power construal on attractiveness of power (N =

76, 94, 72 and 40). Participants primed in high power positions judged themselves in terms of their success or their ethical responsibility. Effect sizes were moderate to strong (0.49 < all ds < 0.68) with all four studies showing that participants were more attracted to power when construed as an opportunity.

While construing power as responsibility does have communal benefits, it can also imply a sense of burden for powerholders (Scholl et al., 2018). In previous work, power has been shown to decrease the stress response and increase powerholders' perception of resources to meet challenges (Akinola & Mendes, 2014; Mehta & Josephs, 2010; and Scheepers, de Wit, Ellemers & Sassenberg, 2012). During demanding situations, however, construing power as responsibility (versus opportunity) can increase the powerholder's experience of threat (as opposed to a positive challenge). Across four studies (N = 304, 135, 81 and 54) researchers compared threat-challenge responses among individuals primed with power (high and low) and power construal (responsibility and opportunity) (Scholl et al., 2018). In each study participants anticipated performing tasks (investment predictions, solving a test, and delivering a speech) and level of threat-challenge was measured. Results indicate that participants in high power conditions who construed power as opportunity appeared more challenged and less threatened (M = 0.88, SD = 2.18) whereas those who construed power as a responsibility who reported more threat than challenge (M = 0.28, SD = 1.87, η_p^2 = 010). The reverse was true for the low power condition. Here participants felt more threatened when construing power as opportunity (M = 0.26, SD = 1.90) compared to responsibility (M = 0.97, SD = 2.22, η_p^2 = 0.015). These results were replicated across two additional studies one of which used cardiovascular reactivity as a measure of relative threat-challenge. A meta-analysis across

all three studies evaluated the effects of power as responsibility (vs. opportunity) in high

power conditions on measures of relative threat-challenge. The effects were significant

with effect sizes between $0.22 \leq r \leq 0.27$ (small to moderate in magnitude) across

outcomes indicating that construal of power affects powerholders' experience of stress.

Thus, as power increases and the more one views power as a responsibility, the more one

experiences difficult situations as threats with the accompanying stress response.

Other studies on power construal offer insight into perspective-taking, advice-

taking and fairness. One series of studies focuses on whether adopting another person's

perspective guides focus on perceived responsibility when in a high (vs. low) power

position (Scholl, Sassenberg, Scheepers, Ellemers & De Wit, 2017). In the first

experiments ($N = 76$) researchers primed participants with high power and a self- or

other-focus, and then investigated what aspects of power participants focused on in a

hypothetical scenario (responsibility or opportunity) across high and low power

conditions. Results from a mixed model ANOVA and follow-up comparisons showed

that individuals primed with other-focus had higher perceived responsibility ($M = 6.99$,

$SD = 1.28$) compared to a self-focus ($M = 6.36$, $SD = 1.12$). The second experiment ($N = 85$), set up similarly to the first, confirmed that when primed with an other-focus, high

power participants felt more responsibility ($M = 6.57$, $SD = 0.84$) than low-power

participants ($M = 5.13$, $SD = 0.97$), $\eta_p^2 = 0.21$, $MD = 1.44$. Importantly, focus on self vs.

other affected felt responsibility in low (vs. high) power conditions, but had only

marginal effects on one's perception of opportunities to pursue goals ($M_{other-focus} = 6.30$,

SD, 1.12; $M_{self-focus} = 6.69$, $SD = 0.90$). Taken together, the findings from this study

demonstrate that individuals in high and low power conditions may construe power

differently after taking a self- versus other-focus. Further, a self- versus other-focus may

not affect perceived opportunity, representing potentially orthogonal constructs.

A second series of studies examined the effect of power construal on advice-

taking (De Wit, Scheepers, Ellemers, Sassenberg & Scholl, 2017). Across three studies

[two field (N = 103 and 217), one experimental (N = 75)], construal of power was either

measured or primed and tendency to take advice was assessed. In the first study, findings

from hierarchical regression analysis demonstrate that supervisors with a high sense of

power are less likely to take advice when they tend to construe power as an opportunity

(vs. responsibility) (B = -0.40). In the second study, participants were asked to estimate

costs on material goods. They were then primed with power construal (as opportunity or

responsibility) and had the opportunity to revise their estimates based on an expert's

advice. As predicted, a one-way ANOVA showed construal of power to have a

significant effect on advice-taking. Further analysis revealed that the tendency to take

advice was higher in the responsibility condition than in the opportunity and control

conditions (d = 0.43, a medium effect size). This replicates the findings of Study 1 where

construal of power as responsibility increased advice-taking. In the third study, power

was again primed and pairs of individuals completed estimation tasks as high power and

low power positions. One-way ANOVA analyses again revealed that the tendency to take

advice was significantly higher in the responsibility condition than in the opportunity and

control conditions [$t(69)$ = 3.22, p = .002)]. Finally, a meta-analysis across all three

studies revealed a significant effect of high power as responsibility versus high power as

opportunity on advice-taking (MD = 0.45). It total, the results of these studies suggest

that construal of power has a moderate effect on a powerholder's inclination to take advice.

A third study examined individuals' construal of power (influence or responsibility), construal-level mindset (abstract or concrete thinking) and distributive fairness (Wang, Sun & Li, 2015). Employees at an adult school of continuing education (N = 80) in China were randomly assigned to one of two power construal groups (influence or responsibility) and primed with words relating to their group. They were also evaluated for their construal-level mindset (which measures psychological distance from a situation in terms of abstractness or concreteness). Participants were then asked to hypothetically distribute valued resources (public land) to others. Results showed that those in the responsibility group displayed fairer resource distribution ($r = 0.337$). In addition, construal-level mindset was found to be a cognitive mediator for fairness of land distribution. This indicates that participants in the responsibility condition thought more abstractly about the situation than those in the influence condition which was related to fairer distribution outcomes. In general, this study aligns with previous findings on the relationship between construal of power and communal outcomes. It also provides a critical insight on how construal-level mindset may act as a mediator to influence outcomes.

Overall, power has been shown to reflect both agentic and communal drives. Construal of power is a construct that shows how these orientations relate to advice-taking, self- and other-focus as well as a powerholders experience of stress and desire for power.

Power, Gender, Values and Power Construal

Bringing all of the pieces together, no research to date combines the factors of power construal and values with structural power and gender, but two significant studies provide insights. One large-scale study evidences differences between genders as structural power increases in the workplace (Davies, Broekema, Nordling & Furnham, 2017). This study does not include power construal, but it does incorporate gender, values and structural power as variables. The results suggest that women at the highest levels of power report different values than those of their male counterparts. Outcomes of this large (N = 7,571), quantitative study indicate that women and men differ significantly on motive and value scales with differences increasing at senior levels. In general, women score moderately higher than men on self-transcendence values (Altruism, $d = 0.4$). Similarly, men reported to be more motivated by agentic values (Commerce, $d > 0.5$). At mid-level power, women and men both showed strong support for Power, but that effect diminished at higher levels. Contrary to expectations, at the highest leadership levels, gender differences increased. Effect sizes increased for women valuing Altruism ($d = -0.53$) and men valuing Power ($d = .68$) and Commerce ($d = 0.83$). Gender differences at this level were greater than in the general population. The study concludes that women at all levels "retain a set of values and preferences, consistent with gender roles, which are distinct from those of their male peers." Of note, among all women, the value of Security decreased as power level increased, suggesting greater comfort with personal and professional risk-taking. The findings of this study are important because they suggest that power and traditionally feminine values can be embodied simultaneously. Further,

this study implies that high-power women more than men may exhibit a paradoxical perspective on values as they move up the organizational hierarchy.

Another study had similar results measuring values in an Italian sample (N = 4,533) at different political levels (national politicians, local politicians, activists and citizens) (Francescato, Mebane & Vecchione, 2017). ANCOVA analyses were performed on gender, level of involvement, political orientation and Schwartz' (2003) four higher order values: self-enhancement, self-transcendence, openness to change and conservation. Results support the hypotheses that females at all levels of political involvement score higher in self-transcendence and openness to change values although differences were small ($\eta^2 = .012$). No significant gender differences are shown for self-enhancement values. Overall, these two studies give evidence of small to moderate gender differences at increasing levels of power. While strong in sample size and analysis, the drawback of these two studies is that neither is based in the US (one in London and one in Italy). With a dearth of research combining the constructs of power, values and gender, there is room for additional exploration in this area.

Study Aims and Hypotheses

This study investigated how males and females at different organizational levels prioritize values and construe power in professional settings. Based on previous findings, the hypotheses of the study were as follows:

The first set of hypotheses focused on values. Hypothesis 1a included paradox in values by gender & power level, specifically as power level increased for women, self-enhancement and self-transcendence values would reflect greater equality in priority

(reflecting greater paradox). As power level increased for men, reported paradox in values would remain consistent. Hypothesis 1b included values & gender. Specifically, in the self-transcending values category (made up of universalism and benevolence), women would rate these values higher than men. In the self-enhancement values category (made up of power and achievement), men would rate them these values higher than women. Hypothesis 1c included values & power level. Specifically, in the self-transcending values category (made up of universalism and benevolence), lower power individuals would rate these values higher than high power individuals. In the self-enhancement values category (made up of power and achievement), high power individuals would rate these values higher than lower power individuals.

The second set of hypotheses focused on power construal. Hypothesis 2a included paradox in power construal by power level & gender. Specifically, at lower levels, it was predicted that both men and women would construe power less paradoxically (women more as a responsibility and men more as an opportunity). At higher levels, gender differences would increase, with women more than men construing power paradoxically (as both a responsibility and an opportunity). Hypothesis 2b included power construal & gender. It was predicted that women would construe power more as a responsibility whereas men would construe power more as an opportunity. Hypothesis 2c included power construal & power level. Specifically, at higher levels of power, individuals would construe power more as a responsibility. At lower levels of power, individuals would construe power more as an opportunity.

Significance of Study

This study extends the current findings on values, gender and power in organizations. It explores gender differences in leadership and potential paradox in core motivations (agency and communion) at different levels of power. It seeks to disentangle historical dichotomies of traditionally feminine values/low power and traditionally masculine values/high power. It also contributes to the relatively new research on construal of power: First, it approaches power construal through the lens of gender. And methodologically, instead of priming individuals to construe power a certain way (as much of the research currently does), it examines self-reported orientations.

Chapter II

Method

In preparation for analysis, a target range of participants was identified,

appropriate measures were selected and the procedure for data collection and analysis

was put in place.

Participants

This study sampled US-based individuals in professional workplaces. The target

sample was 250-385 participants based on a 5% margin of error and 90-95% confidence

level. Efforts were made to balance gender and collect a wide variety of organizational

levels. Participants were not offered compensation for participation in the survey. To

protect confidentiality, participation was anonymous. Individual information and

identities were not collected via survey mechanisms.

Measures

This study collected basic demographic data and utilized questionnaires with

Likert-style scales for individual values and construal of power. Measure and comparison

of paradox was based on previous studies as stated below.

Demographic Data

The survey requested responses for *gender (*female, male, gender nonbinary) and

age (in ten-year ranges between 20 and 80). It also collected data on power level for

which organizational role or position was as a proxy for power level (Tost, 2015) and was

broken down into three categories: leadership (Directors, VPs and above), management

and non-management based on Davies, Broekema, Nordling & Furnham (2017).

Values Measures

Measures of individual values were based on the Schwartz et. al (2012) theory of

basic individual values. Analyses support the discrimination and order of 19 basic

individual values organized in a circumplex fashion on a motivational continuum. [The

values and sub-types are: self-direction (autonomy of thought and action), stimulation

(excitement, novelty and challenge), hedonism (pleasure), achievement (competence and

performance), power (three subtypes: dominance over people, dominance over resources,

prestige), security (personal and societal), conformity (interpersonal and social), tradition

(preserving customs and humility), benevolence (caring and dependability), and

universalism (tolerance, societal concern, protecting nature).] This study based methods

off of Borg, Bardi & Schwartz (2017) which utilized the most recent version of the

Schwartz Value Survey (Schwartz, Sagiv, & Boehnke, 2000). Participants were asked to

assess 10 basic values as a guiding principle in their life on a scale ranging from 0 (not

important) to 10 (of extreme importance), with an additional score of -1 (opposed to my

values). The scores for basic values were computed as the average score across all the

items that compose each value. The current study utilized the same method using only the

higher order factors of self-enhancement values (including achievement and power) and

self-transcendence values (including universalism and benevolence) on a scale of 0 to 10.

Based on Gollan and Witte (2014), Schwartz' circumplex (circular continuum) model of

values is applicable 1) for within person (intraindividual) values conflicts and 2) across

cultures. The sample size was more than 50,000 individuals across 17 European countries. Findings support the usage of this model to represent within person value compatibilities and conflicts. (See Appendix A for complete list of values organized in higher orders.) Items include Self-Enhancement Values [Power: Social status and prestige, control or dominance over people and resources (authority, social power, wealth, preserving my public image) and Achievement: Personal success through demonstrating competence according to social standards (ambitious, successful, capable, influential)] as well as Self-Transcendence Values [Benevolence: Preservation and enhancement of the welfare of people with whom one is in frequent personal contact (helpful, honest, forgiving, loyal, responsible) and Universalism: Understanding, appreciation, tolerance and protection for the welfare of all people and for nature (equality, social justice, wisdom, broad-minded, protecting the environment, unity with nature, a world of beauty)].

Construal of Power Measures

Measures of power construal were taken from De Wit, Scheepers, Ellemers, Sassenberg & Scholl (2017). In their study, individuals were told to "think about the power that their position provided" and then asked to indicate their general agreement to three statements on bipolar 7-point scales (see below) on construal of power as opportunity (on the low end of the scale) and as responsibility (on the high end of the scale). Words were italicized to emphasize differences between statements. A midpoint score reflected equal salience between opportunity and responsibility. In the present study, the measures of opportunity and responsibility were separated to allow for paradoxical responses (as opposed to a midpoint score reflecting equal salience) and the

scales were 0 to 10. The wording was used per the original items from De Wit, et al. (2017). Participants ranked their agreement/disagreement with statements such as the following: "I tend to see my power in terms of the *responsibilities/opportunities* to influence others;" "I tend to see my power at work in terms of the *obligations/possibilities* to make decisions;" "I tend to see my power at work in terms of the *responsibilities/opportunities* to achieve certain goals." Notably, this study employed one change: it unpaired the responsibility/opportunity scales so that they were shown as individual instead of bipolar scales. The intention here was to allow for better measures of paradox versus polarity.

Paradox Measures

Studies on paradoxical thinking in individuals have applied both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. This study utilized quantitative data and analysis based on Gibson & Birkinshaw (2004) which measured paradox as "simultaneous endorsement of polarities." In the present study, the scales measured paradox in: 1) self-enhancement and 2) self-transcendence values and construal of power as 1) responsibility and 2) opportunity. Here, separate scales were developed for paradoxical items and data was collected from responses to Likert-style scales. Measures of paradox were then calculated by subtracting one mean from another and taking the absolute value, with numbers closer to zero representing higher paradox, and numbers closer to 10 representing lower paradox.

Procedure

The protocol for data collection occurred online. Afterward, responses were filtered and computed for statistical analysis.

Data Collection

All data was collected via online survey using Qualtrics. Potential participants were contacted via personal connections using email, LinkedIn and Facebook. Individuals were contacted for participation in the study via email and posts. The content asked individuals to participate in a short survey about general priorities and leadership in the workplace. Participants were told that the survey will take about 5 minutes to complete and informed that response options were multiple choice and ratings. They were also advised that responses were voluntary and anonymous, collected by an independent third party and any results of the study will be reported in aggregate. Participants were able complete the survey from their phone, work or home device. The emails and posts contained a link to click through to the Qualtrics survey. Informed consent was offered on the first page of the survey. It included the main purpose of the research, expected duration, description of the procedures, statement of confidentiality, the option to opt out at any time, and researcher contact information. Participants who did not want to complete the study session could opt out or close their browser window at any time.

Data Analysis

A total of 300 participants' data was collected. From the total sample, thirty-three participants were excluded: thirty-one for incomplete responses and two for reporting

issues (e.g. scoring all answers as "1"). The remaining sample consisted of 267 individuals. To calculate scores for higher order values categories, ratings of power and achievement were averaged to compute self-enhancement scores and ratings of benevolence and universalism were averaged to compute self-transcendence scores. To calculate the measures of paradox, the absolute value of the difference between self-enhancing and self-transcendence score was calculated for each individual. Similarly, for construal of power, items measuring power as a responsibility were averaged for an aggregate score. The same was done for items measuring power as an opportunity. Again, to calculate the measures of paradox in power construal, the absolute value of the difference between scores for responsibility and opportunity was calculated for each individual. For interpretation, the higher the number value, the lower the paradox it represented and vice versa.

Chapter III

Results

In this chapter, details on the final participant sample are provided as well as results of statistical analysis. Analysis consisted of two 2 x 3 ANOVAs to measure paradox and several one-way ANOVAs to investigate underlying trends in the data.

Demographics

The final sample consisted of 267 respondents (74% female and 26% male). The demographic details on Organizational Level, Organization Type and Age Distribution are shown in Table the following tables.

Table 2

Number, Percentage and Gender of Participants by Organizational Level

Organizational Level	All Participants	Female	Male
Director, VP & Above	161 (60%)	111 (69%)	50 (31%)
Manager	58 (22%)	46 (79%)	12 (21%)
Non-manager	48 (18%)	41 (85%)	7 (15%)
Total	267		

Table 3

Participants by Organization Type

Organization Type	Participants	%
Academic	17	6
Corporate	136	51
Government	29	11
Military	4	2
Nonprofit	46	17
Other	35	13
Total	267	

Table 4

Participants by Age Bracket

Age Bracket	Participants	%
20-29	7	3%
30-39	39	15%
40-49	153	17%
50-59	46	17%
60-69	17	6%
70-79	5	2%

Values

Analysis of values began with comparisons of paradox ratings with gender and power level. Next, gender and levels were compared with categories of values and individual values.

Paradox in Values by Gender and Power Level (Hypothesis 1a)

A 2 x 3 ANOVA was used to compare paradox ratings for the two factors of gender (male vs female) and power level (non-manager, manager and Director and above). Figure 2 illustrates the means for paradox in values for each of the factors and levels. Results showed borderline significance for the main effect of power level on paradox in values, $F(2, 261) = 2.251$, $p = .05$. Post-hoc analysis using Tukey's HSD test revealed a significant difference between the lowest level of organizational power (non-manager) and the highest levels (Director, VP and above), CI 0.196 and 1.515, $p < .01$. The observed mean difference of 0.855 shows that there was a greater paradox in values at the highest levels of power within the participants' organization ($M_{directorabove} = 2.363$) compared to those at the lowest level of power ($M_{non-manager} = 3.219$). Contrary to predictions, however, no significant difference was found for the main effect of gender on paradox in values, $p = .41$, $F(2, 261)$, $p > .05$. Finally, there was no interaction between gender and power level $F(2, 261) = 0.334$, $p = .716$.

Values & Gender (Hypothesis 1b)

To compare values and gender, several one-way ANOVAs were conducted to investigate higher-order value categories as well as individual values. The first set of analyses compared gender with the higher order value category of self-transcendence and then the individual values that make up the category (universalism and benevolence). The second set of analyses compared gender with the higher order category of self-enhancement values and then the individual values that make up that category (power and achievement).

Figure 2

Means of Paradox in Values by Gender and Level
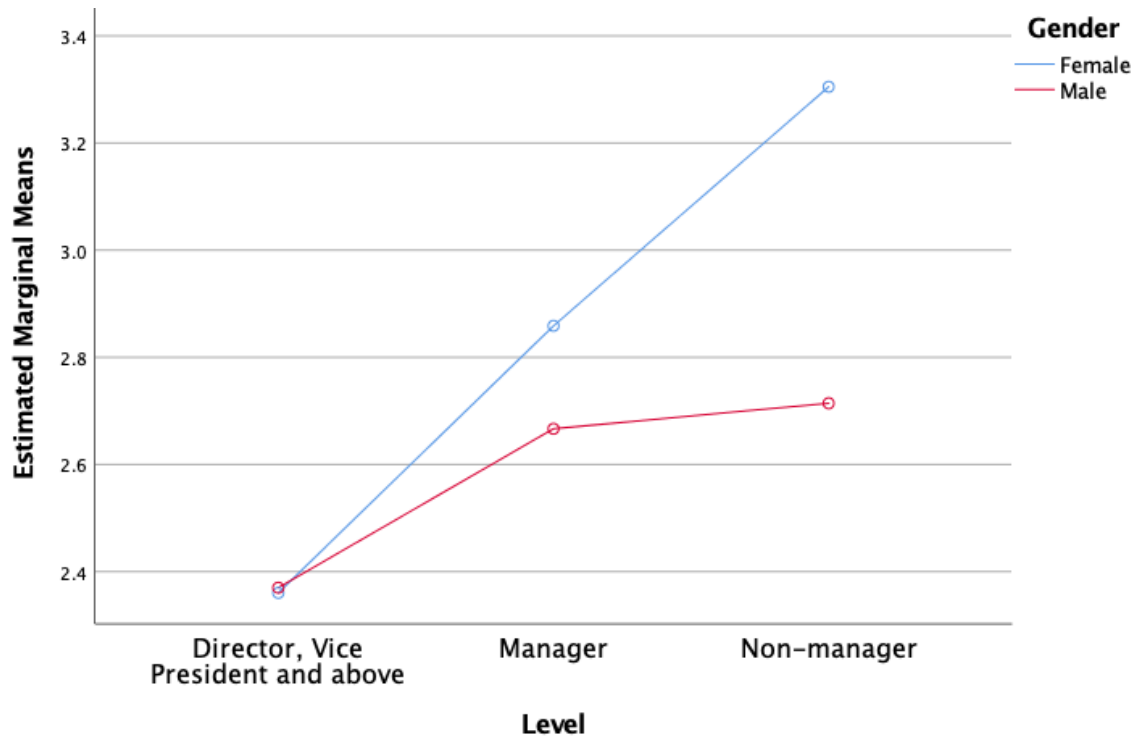
Comparing gender (female vs. male) and ratings of self-transcendence values resulted in a significant difference (M_{female} = 8.69, *CI*, 8.52, 8.86; M_{male} = 8.312, *CI*, 8.02, 8.61), *p* = 0.031, $F(1, 265)$ = 4.695. Women rated self-transcendence values more highly than men, with an observed mean difference of .378. Looking more deeply at the two values that make up the self-transcendence category (benevolence and universalism) suggests that the gender difference is driven by universalism. A one-way ANOVA investigating the effect of gender (female vs. male) on ratings of universalism resulted in significantly higher ratings from women (M_{female}= 8.40, *CI*, 8.17, 8.64) than from men (M_{male}= 7.77, *SD* = 1.77, *CI*, 7.38, 8.16), $F(1, 265)$ = 7.6, *p* < .01. The observed mean

difference (0.63) shows that women rated universalism more highly than men did. In contrast, results of a one-way ANOVA indicate that there was no significant gender difference in ratings in the single value of benevolence, $F(1, 265) = 0.425$, $p = 0.515$.

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to investigate the relationship between gender (female vs. male) and ratings of self-enhancement values. As predicted, ratings of self-enhancement values did not significantly differ between men and women, $F(1, 265) = 0.07$, $p > .05$. Looking more deeply at the category of self-enhancement values (made up of power and achievement), a one-way ANOVA was conducted to investigate the influence of gender (female vs. male) on the single value of power. No significant difference was found, $F(1, 267) = .151$, $p = .70$. Similarly, no significant results were found in comparing gender and ratings of achievement $F(1, 265) = .151$, $p = .99$.

Values and Power Level (Hypothesis 1c)

Similar to gender, several one-way ANOVAs were conducted to explore values and power level, first at the higher order level and then by individual value. The first set of analyses compared organizational level with the higher order value category of self-transcendence and then the individual values that make up the category (universalism and benevolence). The second set of analyses compared organizational level with the higher order category of self-enhancement values and then the individual values that make up that category (power and achievement).

The first one-way ANOVA compared the category of self-transcendence values and organizational levels (non-manager, manager and Director and above). Results did

not reflect significance for the main effect of power level on ratings of self-transcendence values, $F(2, 264) = 2.554$, $p = .08$.

Two additional ANOVAs examined the values that make up the higher order category of self-transcendence values (universalism and benevolence). The first investigated benevolence and organizational level (non-manager, manager and Director and above). Results approached significance for the main effect of power level on ratings of benevolence, $F(2, 264) = 2.986$, $p = .051$, but post hoc analysis did not reveal any significant differences in levels.

The second investigated universalism and power level (non-manager, manager and Director and above). Results revealed a significant difference for the main effect power level on ratings of universalism, $F(2, 264) = 3.086$, $p < .05$. Post-hoc analysis using Tukey's HSD test showed a significant difference between the lowest level of organizational power (non-manager) and the highest levels (Director, VP and above), CI .03 and 1.32, $p < .01$. The observed mean difference of 0.68 shows that those at lower power levels rated universalism higher than those at the highest levels. ($M_{\text{non-manager}} = 8.750$, $M_{\text{directorabove}} = 8.075$).

Values related to self-enhancement were investigated next. A one-way ANOVA compared the category of self-enhancement values and organizational level (non-manager, manager and Director and above). Results revealed a significant difference for the main effect of power level on ratings of self-enhancement values, $F(2, 264) = 4.422$, $p < .05$. Post-hoc analysis using Tukey's HSD test showed a significant difference between lowest level of organizational power (non-manager) and the highest levels (Director, VP and above), CI .146 and 1.169, $p = .032$. The observed mean difference of

0.66 shows that those at higher power levels rated self-enhancement values higher than those at the lower levels. ($M_{directorabove}$ = 6.49, $M_{non-manager}$ = 5.83).

Two follow-up ANOVAs examined the values that make up the higher order category of self-enhancement values (power and achievement). The first compared organizational level (non-manager, manager and Director and above) and ratings of power. Results approached significance for the main effect of power level on ratings of power, $F(2, 264)$ = 2.997, p = .05. Post-hoc analysis using Tukey's HSD test revealed a significant difference between lowest level of organizational power (non-manager) and the highest levels (Director, VP and above), CI .02 and 1.65, p < .05. The observed mean difference of 0.84 shows that those at higher power levels rated power higher than those at lower levels. ($M_{directorabove}$ = 4.92, $M_{non-manager}$ = 4.08).

Finally, a one-way ANOVA investigated the organizational level (non-manager, manager and Director and above) and ratings of achievement. Results approached significance for the main effect of power level on ratings of achievement, $F(2, 264)$ = 4.563, p = .01. Post-hoc analysis using Tukey's HSD test revealed a significant difference between middle level of organizational power (manager) and the highest levels (Director, VP and above), CI .02 and 1.65, p < .05. The observed mean difference of 0.84 shows that those at higher power levels rated achievement higher than those at mid-level. ($M_{directorabove}$ = 8.06, $M_{manager}$ = 7.36). Interestingly, the mean for the lowest level ($M_{non-manager}$ = 7.58) was higher than that of the mid-level managers. While the differences in these two groups is not significantly different, the direction of the means is unexpected.

Power Construal

Analysis of power construal began with evaluating comparisons of paradox with gender and power level. Next gender and levels were compared with ratings of power as a responsibility and as an opportunity.

Paradox in Power Construal by Gender & Power Level (Hypothesis 2a)

For the second hypothesis related to paradox, 2 x 3 ANOVA was conducted to compare ratings of paradox in construal of power between two factors: gender (male vs female) and power (non-manager, manager and director and above). Figure 3 displays the Estimated Marginal Means of paradox of power construal for each of the factors and levels. Results reflected no statistical significance for either of the main effects. The main effect of gender on paradox in power construal resulted in no statistically significant difference, $F(1, 261) = .19$ and $p = .89$. Likewise, the main effect of level on paradox in power construal resulted in no statistically significant difference $F(2, 261) = .621$, $p = .538$. Similarly, there was no interaction between level and gender, $F(2, 261) = .014$, $p = .986$.

Power Construal and Gender (Hypothesis 2b)

As with the values section, underlying data was explored for power construal and gender. Two one-way ANOVAs compared ratings of power construed as a responsibility and as an opportunity. Results of showed no significant difference between females and males in construing power as a responsibility, $p = 0.05$, $F(1, 265) = .231$, $p = .631$. Similarly, results of a one-way ANOVA showed no significant difference between females and males in construing power as an opportunity, $F(1, 265) = 0.231$, $p = .556$.

Figure 3

Means of Paradox in Power Construal by Gender and Level by Gender
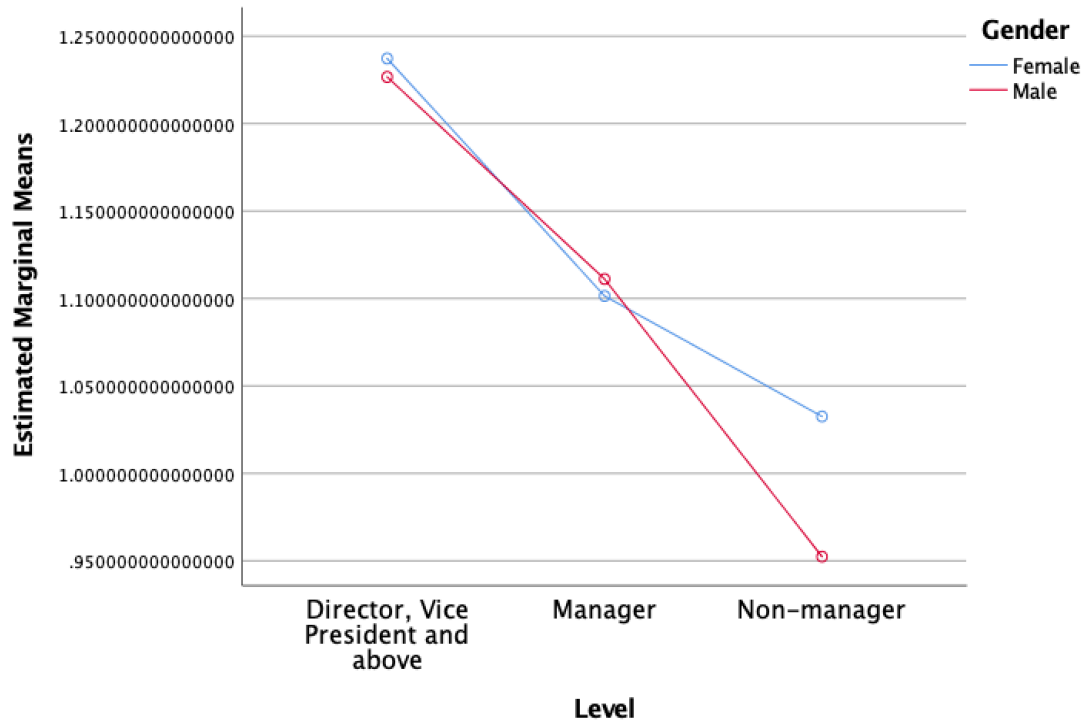
Power Construal and Power Level (Hypothesis 2c)

The final analyses investigated power level and ratings of power construed as a responsibility and as an opportunity. Results of a one-way ANOVA showed no significant difference among power levels in construing power as a responsibility, $F(2, 264) = 1.440$, $p = .239$. Similarly, results of a one-way ANOVA showed no significant differences among power levels in construing power as an opportunity, $F(2, 264) = 1.224$, $p = .296$.

Chapter IV

Discussion

The primary aim of this study was to examine potential paradox in how males and females prioritize values and perceive power at different levels in professional settings. Paradox theory allows investigation of elements in tension seeking to move beyond oppositional simplicity towards both-and solutions. In this context, paradox was framed as two central, but often competing drives in human nature: agency and communion. In turn, agency and communion were investigated as two types of polarities: self-reported values (self-enhancement and self-transcendence) and construal of power (as an opportunity and as a responsibility). Additional analysis of ratings of values and power construal by gender and power level provided deeper insight on drivers of differences and similarities in groups.

Values

Analysis of values began with investigation of paradox and was followed by individual values by gender and power level. To begin, this study compared ratings of paradox in how males and females prioritize values at different organizational levels. As predicted (Hypothesis 1a), main effect findings did support a difference in power levels with greater paradox in values at the highest levels of power compared to those at the lowest level of power. The results indicated greater paradox in values among Directors and above compared to non-managers. This means that, on average, individuals at lower levels were more likely to exhibit polarities in their ratings of values, rating self-enhancement high and self-transcendence as low, or vice versa. In contrast, those at

higher levels rated values more paradoxically. It should be noted, however, that the mean difference between groups was relatively modest. Further, while the results are consistent with hypothesis on power level, a gender difference was anticipated, but not found. Instead, paradox increased as power level increased, but among all participants and not just women. This unexpected result bears further investigation in the future. Deeper insights into power level and gender differences are offered in the following paragraphs when individual values are discussed.

Finally, several methodological issues potentially affecting outcomes were sample size, selection and calculation of paradox. Critically, the size of one group (male, non-managers) was small (n = 7). This prevented proper analysis when evaluating level and gender simultaneously. In addition, this sample was skewed in the population that it represented. Given its limited demographic and geographic range, it may reflect locally situated mindsets and culture. Lastly, the method for computing paradox by taking the absolute value of the difference between means was novel. This procedure would benefit from further validation. As a result, the result of the first hypothesis leaves us with potential insight but also further questions. The following sections offer more detail on gender differences that the paradox measures did not reflect.

Values and gender were investigated (Hypothesis 1b) followed by values and power levels (Hypothesis 1c). While Hypothesis 1a revealed no difference in paradox levels between genders, additional analyses on values revealed underlying gender differences in values. As hypothesized in Hypothesis 1b, women rated self-transcendence values higher than men, and that gender difference was driven by universalism (not by benevolence for which there was no significant difference). While the mean difference

for universalism was relatively modest, these results are consistent previous studies in the greater population reflecting traditionally gendered traits (Schwartz & Rubel, 2005). In comparing males and females on self-enhancement values, contrary to expectations, no significant differences were found for either the higher order category or for the lower order values of power and achievement. On average, females and males rated them similarly. These findings are inconsistent with large studies on traditionally gendered values in which self-enhancement correlates with masculinity (Schwartz & Rubel, 2005) however they are consistent with findings on professional or political groups (Francescato, Mebane & Vecchione, 2017). Further, this finding is consistent with cross-temporal studies on gendered traits (Donnelly & Twenge, 2017) in which women's self-ratings of traditionally masculine traits are increasing. Importantly, this sample, which includes high-level, professional women, may deviate from traditional trends. Thus, it is possible that professionals may exhibit different trends in values from the broader population.

For the factors of values and power level (Hypothesis 1c), no significant differences were found for ratings of higher order self-transcendence values, but differences in lower order universalism were found. The hypothesis that higher levels of power would place less priority on self-transcendence values was not supported. This is in contrast to the traditional binary found in previous studies showing low power correlating with traditionally feminine values (Rucker & Galinsky, 2012). When the lower order value of benevolence was investigated, again no difference was found. Only universalism reflected a difference: those at lower power levels rated universalism higher than those at the highest levels, which supported Hypothesis 1c. Benevolence, by the

definition used here, focuses on enhancing the welfare of those with whom one is in frequent personal contact. Universalism, in contrast, is more related to protection, equality and social justice for all people. At lower levels of power, universalism may be more of a priority because it benefits those with the least power.

For the higher order category of self-enhancing values, as expected, those at higher power (Directors and above) levels rated this category of values higher than those at the lowest levels (non-managers). Similarly, those at higher power levels rated power higher than those at the lowest level. These results are in line with Hypothesis 1c that high level groups would prioritize power-related values. Ratings of achievement, however, did not differ significantly among groups, suggesting that power drove the differences in self-enhancing values between levels. This supports previous studies findings that power motivation mediates leadership occupancy roles (Schuh et al., 2014).

In summary for values overall, results for paradox in values supported the hypothesis that as power level increased so would paradox, but did not support the hypothesis that women would exhibit greater paradox than men at higher levels. When investigating values, women tended to rate self-transcendence values higher than men, specifically universalism, as did all individuals at lower levels of power. At the same time, women and men rated self-enhancement values (power and achievement) similarly. This outcome is consistent with the double bind theory where women must exhibit both high and low power values simultaneously, but also leave questions about the unexpected findings on values of males at high levels.

Power Construal

The second major section of this study investigated construal of power among males and females at different levels of organizational power. It examined paradox in power construal as well as ratings of power as a responsibility and an opportunity between genders and among power levels. Based on the non-significant findings overall, the results will be discussed in aggregate.

Analysis began with paradox in power construal between levels and genders and then continued by investigating power as a responsibility and opportunity among levels and genders. Contrary to Hypothesis 1a, findings reflected no statistical significance for either of the main effects or an interactive effect. This was also true for ratings of power construed as responsibility/opportunity compared to gender and power level (Hypotheses 1b and c). Across all groups and models, no significant differences were found. It is possible that individuals, on average, do not think differently about power based on their gender or power level. That said, three methodological issues should be considered. The first is the survey wording and the second is research approach. For the purposes of this study, in order to capture paradox, the original survey was modified. Instead of asking participants to rate their response on a polarized spectrum, it broke the poles into two questions allowing participants to simultaneously rank two poles high and/or low. While sound in theory, in practice it may have made the survey seemingly duplicative and confusing. Looking at the raw data, most individuals consistently rated power as both a responsibility and opportunity, with little variation and few extremes. Thus, the survey questions may not have been clear and modifications may have muddied participants' understanding. Beyond the survey wording itself, previous studies have used priming to

elicit differences in power construal. Without priming, participants may not have been inclined to indicate a difference. Finally, as mentioned earlier, the method for computing paradox by taking the absolute value of the difference between means was novel. This procedure would benefit from further validation. Ultimately, while there results showed no differences in power construal between genders and among power levels, it is also possible that the present methodology did not register existing differences in power construal.

General Discussion

This study was undertaken to investigate how women and men at different organizational levels prioritize values and think about power. Through these constructs, it sought to identify paradox mindset in two central drivers of human motivation: agency and communion, with agency traditionally correlated with masculinity and high power and communion traditionally correlated with femininity and low power. Overall, the findings indicate that greater paradox in values is exhibited at the highest levels (compared to the lowest). Findings of paradox were not just among women as hypothesized, but among both men and women. Paradox mindset is emphasized as beneficial in organizations, allowing individuals to rethink perceptions and practices and manage tensions effectively. It is conceivable, therefore, that higher level leaders would exhibit greater paradox mindset.

Looking in greater detail at comparisons of values with genders and power levels, women and men both gave high ratings to higher order self-enhancement values (including power and achievement), potentially reflecting cultural shifts in gendered traits over time, especially among professionals (Donnelly & Twenge, 2017). They also both

gave similarly high ratings to self-transcendence values (including benevolence), but not to universalism. These findings stand in contrast with previous studies where women at all levels, including those in high power positions rated self-transcending values slightly higher than men did (Davies, Broekema, Nordling, & Furnham, 2017; Francescato, Mebane & Vecchione, 2017). From a cultural identity perspective, this suggests that both men and women who prioritize traditionally gendered values need not jettison their values. Rather, as Ibarra (1999) suggests, leadership development is a process of identity scaffolding in which there may be expansion of values and agility to choose appropriate actions based on context.

Finally, in this study, women rated universalism higher than men, as did low-level employees when compared to high-level employees. This extends the literature and calls for additional research on universalism as a potential factor in the low power/femininity combination. In addition, those at the lowest levels rated power as less important than those at high levels. These findings undergird previous literature on power motivation as a mediator of leadership role occupancy. Reflected here are underlying aspects of the double bind for women leaders: in inhabiting both high power (structural) and low power (social) roles simultaneously, women contend with valuing both universalism and power, two values traditionally in tension with one another. More broadly, outcomes indicate that individuals in low power positions, regardless of gender, may be managing conflicting the values of universalism and power.

Lastly, the results on paradox in power construal indicate that no differences exist among genders and power levels. Similarly, when comparing gender and power level differences in rating power as a responsibility/opportunity, the data yielded no significant

differences. Again, survey methodology likely caused confusion among participants. In the context of previous findings, this is the only study available on power construal, gender and organizational level. It is conceivable that this study has been done previously, also with non-significant results, and hence has not been published. Questions remain in this area.

<div align="center">Limitations and Future Directions</div>

This study has several limitations including its sample, construct limitations and methodology. First, the sample size is smaller than ideal resulting in questionable validity of overall results. Further, groups within the sample (gender and power levels) were not proportionate. In particular, the male, non-manager group was extremely small. The complete sample was also geographically condensed to the Washington, DC area participant outreach lacked ethnic and racial diversity. In addition, the methodology is quantitative which leaves out the richness of data received in qualitative studies. Nor was the methodology experimental and therefore would reveal no causative associations. In terms of specific constructs, the proposed study only measures external power and not personal sense of power. This is a significant drawback as structural power and personal sense of power do not necessarily correlate and this may be a missed opportunity to investigate this relationship. Finally, this study did not prime participants for power construal. Most (but not all) studies have primed participants to view power as either responsibility or opportunity as a state, not trait so it may not be dependable as a factor.

Further research is needed in several areas. First, there is substantial room for additional insight on paradox mindset, especially among higher level leaders. Are those

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with paradox mindset selected for leadership? Or does leadership help develop paradox mindset? Additionally, qualitative research would add dimension to findings.

Next, results here suggest that men and women at top levels may similarly prioritize self-transcendence and self-enhancement values. Previous studies have examined women leaders' experience navigating the double bind (social low power and positional high power) and agentic-communal tensions (Zheng, Surgevil & Kark, 2018). That said, little if any research has been done on whether high-level men also experience agentic and communal tensions. Following this, further study of values at different power level and in different groups would benefit and extend this body of work. Additionally, based on the findings herein, future studies could specifically focus on universalism and its relationship with levels of power. While quantitative values research is useful in identifying broad relationships, more specific and qualitative research can illuminate inner workings. Certain aspects or expressions of values may be associated with both high and low power and these have yet to be illuminated. Finally, future studies with stronger methodology could investigate gender and power level differences in power construal. This remains a compelling and open area of inquiry.

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Appendix 1. Definitions of Schwartz' Values

(Schwartz, Sagiv, & Boehnke, 2000)

Openness to change

- Self-Direction: Independent thought and action—choosing, creating, exploring (creativity, freedom, independent, choosing own goals, curious).

- Stimulation: Excitement, novelty and challenge in life (daring, a varied life, an exciting life).

Self-enhancement

- Hedonism: Pleasure or sensuous gratification for oneself (pleasure, enjoying life, self-indulgent).

- Achievement: Personal success through demonstrating competence according to social standards (ambitious, successful, capable, influential).

- Power: Social status and prestige, control or dominance over people and resources (authority, wealth, preserving my public image).

Conservation

- Security: Safety, harmony, and stability of society, of relationships, and of self (family security, national security, social order, clean, reciprocation of favors).

- Conformity: Restraint of actions, inclinations, and impulses likely to upset or harm others and violate social expectations or norms (self-discipline, politeness, honoring parents or elders, obedience).

- Tradition: Respect, commitment, and acceptance of the customs and ideas that one's culture or religion provides (devout, respect for tradition, humble, moderate).

Self-transcendence

- Benevolence: Preserving and enhancing the welfare of those with whom one is in frequent personal contact (helpful, honest, forgiving, loyal, responsible).

- Universalism: Understanding, appreciation, tolerance, and protection for the welfare of all people and for nature (equality, social justice, wisdom, broad-minded, protecting the environment, unity with nature, a world of beauty).