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Perspective-taking among the Powerful

Can the powerful take the perspective
of subordinates if they are encouraged to?

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ABSTRACT

In examining what could be done to counteract inequalities in society, the current study has examined whether people with situational power are at all capable of engaging in perspective-taking if they are encouraged to. The main hypothesis was that instructions that encourage perspective-taking will lead to an increase in perspective-taking. The second hypothesis was that this effect of the perspective-taking instructions is attenuated by need for dominance, as people high in need for dominance would be less inclined to take perspective than people low in need for dominance. Participants were asked to assess the suitability of job applicants by watching pitches on video. A context of situational power was created by bogus feedback on their decision-making style and the power to select a participant for an actual job interview. The independent variables were (either neutral or perspective-taking) Instructions and Need for Dominance, measured by a questionnaire (26 items). The dependent variables Perspective-taking was measured by a short questionnaire (10 items). No main effects of Instructions were found on Perspective-taking. Participants did however engage in perspective-taking to a certain amount, which leads to the conclusion that people with situational power are capable of perspective-taking. Besides this, need for dominance was found to decrease scores on some of the perspective-taking scales. These results encourage future studies to examine whether perspective-taking can improve intergroup relations for powerful people and to take need for dominance into account as a possible predictor for when powerful will be less likely to engage in perspective-taking. Before this is done, it is recommended that a separate study will be conducted to further define the concept of need for dominance and to further develop the need for dominance scale. All in all, the outcomes of the current study have contributed to further development of methods to counteract inequalities in society.

Keywords: perspective-taking, power, power differences, intergroup relations, inequality, need for dominance, social dominance orientation

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There are several existing inequalities in our society, as a result of negative intergroup relations or interactions (Hogg, 2013). Consequences of these phenomena have been made apparent in several studies. One example is written about by Çankaya (2012), who reported social categorization, status and prestige, to be connected to proactive police action in the Netherlands, because of efficient working with selection profiles of risk populations. Such intergroup diminishing phenomena can also be found in the context of applying for a job. More specifically, Blommaert and colleagues (2012) reported that negative implicit attitudes towards outgroups negatively affected hiring of applicants that were outgroup compared to ingroup members and implied discrimination. A study within academic context implied gender bias in hiring and reported that a male applicant was rated significantly more competent and hireable than the (identical) female applicant (Moss, Dovidio, Brescoll, Graham, & Handelsman, 2012). An important question therefore is: *What could be done to decrease these differences in our society?*

Prejudice and the other phenomena often come to light when decisions have to be made about people. In the examples mentioned above this would be the decision to detain a suspect, or whether to hire someone for a job or not. What those situations have in common, is that those decisions are made by someone with power - someone with control over the outcome for the other person (Goodwin, Operario, & Fiske, 1998). In other words, these matters concern unequal power relations. For that matter it would be important to look for interventions that effectively decrease the negative phenomena such as stereotyping and prejudice within the context of power differences, with the aim to counteract inequalities in society.

Perspective-taking is such an intervention that has been found effective in improving intergroup behaviour and attitudes, and does not come with the negative side effects that come with some other methods (Hogg, 2013; Galinsky & Moskowitz, 2000; Experiment 1;

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Dovidio, Gaertner, Ufkes, Saguy, & Pearson, 2016; Glasford & Dovidio, 2011). However, to our knowledge, it was not yet examined whether perspective-taking is effective among powerful people as well. That is, powerful people have namely been found to engage less in spontaneous perspective-taking (Galinsky, Magee, Inesi, & Gruenfeld, 2006). For this reason, it should be examined first whether they are inclined to take perspective of less powerful when asked to do so, before examining whether perspective-taking is an effective intervention to decrease for example stereotyping among powerful. The aim of the current study is to examine whether people with situational power are at all capable of perspective-taking, before examining whether the effects of perspective-taking are positive for people with power as well. Ingroup and outgroup differences are not yet of concern in the current study. The research question for the current paper is therefore: *Will the powerful engage in perspective-taking of their subordinates once they are encouraged to do so?*

Perspective-taking

Perspective-taking is a possible approach to improve intergroup relations and is conceptualized as actively imagining others' mental states and subjective experiences, either by imagining yourself in the position of the other; *imagining-other* - or by imagining what the situation is like for the other; *imagining-self* (Todd & Galinsky, 2014). The process through which intergroup relations are thought to be improved, is the increased overlap between mental representations of the self and the other. Perspective-taking has been shown to increase this overlap, meaning people see more of themselves in others and more of the other in themselves. (Davis, Conklin, Smith, & Luce, 1996; Galinsky, Ku, & Wang, 2005; Galinsky & Moskowitz, 2000a). Moreover, perspective-taking would increase sympathy for the person of which the perspective is taken (Batson, 1989).

Several positive effects of perspective-taking that are described in literature represent the improvement of intergroup relations as a result of perspective-taking. Examples of such

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effects are more favourable implicit and explicit intergroup evaluations, stronger approach-oriented action tendencies and positive non-verbal behaviours in intergroup contact, and increased intergroup helping (Todd & Galinsky, 2014). It was also found to decrease stereotyping (Galinsky & Moskowitz, 2000) and to reduce reliance on stereotype maintenance processes (Todd & Galinsky, 2012). At the same time, perspective-taking does not come with some of the unfavourable effects that come with a number of other approaches to improve intergroup relations. Examples of such effects are a rebound effect and reduced recognition of inequities (Hogg, 2013; Galinsky & Moskowitz, 2000; Experiment 1; Dovidio et. al., 2016; Glasford & Dovidio, 2011). On the contrary, perspective-taking is associated with increased acknowledgement of the existence of racial discrimination (Todd, Bodenhausen, & Galinsky, 2012; Todd & Galinsky, 2014) and no stereotype rebound effect (Galinsky & Moskowitz, 2000).

Yet, there are also negative effects found for perspective-taking. Pierce and colleagues (2013) for example, found that the effect of perspective-taking, might be dependent on the relation you have with the person you take the perspective of. They propose that the more positive effects occur in neutral or cooperative contexts, but that it might result in more negative effects when the relation is more competitive, because perspective-taking '*draws attention to conflicting interests and to how a competitor's actions may threaten one's own self-interest.*' (p. 1987).

Situational power

The question is whether the method of perspective-taking would lead to the aforementioned effects for people with situational power as well. Perspective-taking has been found to be effective in several ways. However, to our knowledge, the effect of a perspective-taking intervention on intergroup relations in the context of power, has been unattended to date. Situational power can be defined as the disproportional ability for someone to control the

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outcomes for another person, in the context of a certain situation or task (Goodwin et. al., 1998; Prabhakaran, Rambow, & Diab, 2012). Powerful individuals have been found to be more objective-oriented or goal-directed, than people in non-power contexts (Guinote, 2017). Decision-making and management of situations often come with the positions of powerful people, for example during the task of leading meetings. Also, powerful people have been found to less attend individualizing information and to less process stereotype-inconsistent information naturally (Brauer & Bourhis, 2006; Fiske, 1993; Goodwin, Gubin, Fiske, & Yzerbyt, 2000; Guinote 2007; Guinote 2017).

These processes among powerful people can be explained to some extent by the position powerful find themselves in and their objective focus. First, powerful have control over outcomes of the situation. They are therefore less dependent on others and can focus on themselves and the task. They do not have the need to individualize subordinates, as much as subordinate people do. Subordinate people depend on the decisions of the powerful and are therefore more motivated to make a precise indication of what the outcome of the situation may be. Therefore they engage in individualizing processes of the person with power. The powerful people, however, do not depend (as much) on the subordinates and therefore have less need to engage in individualizing processes in order to assess the possible outcome (Fiske, 1993; Galinsky et. al., 2006). Second, because powerful are objective-oriented and often have to manage several things in situations, such as leading a meeting, powerful supposedly have *less cognitive resources* to engage in individualizing or other-oriented processes (Fiske, 1993).

Need for Dominance

A third factor that possibly affects whether powerful engage in perspective-taking, is one's Need for Dominance (Fiske, 1993). Need for dominance was defined by the Edwards Personal Preference Schedule as the need to be a leader and influence others (Edwards, 1954).

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In thinking of applying perspective-taking to improve intergroup relations, the desire that one's group is dominant, becomes relevant as well. This is why Social Dominance Orientation (SDO) was also considered as a dimension for need for dominance in the current study. SDO was defined by Pratto and colleagues (1994) as "*a general attitudinal orientation toward intergroup relations, reflecting whether one generally prefers such relations to be equal versus hierarchical [...] and the extent to which one desires that one's ingroup dominates and is superior to outgroups*" (Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth, & Malle, 1994, p. 742). This leaves us with three supposed relevant aspects for the content of the construct of need for dominance. These aspects are the desire to lead others, the desire to influence others and one's social dominance orientation.

The aforementioned processes through which perspective-taking is thought to affect intergroup relations are, among others, increased sympathy towards and self-other overlap with the person of which you take the perspective. It is expected that a higher need for dominance results in more personal distance from the other person and a feeling to standing above the other, instead of experiencing overlap between oneself and the subordinate. It can therefore be expected that people who score high on need for dominance, would resist to engage in perspective-taking as well, even when they are encouraged to, because it may threaten their dominant position. A second possibility is that people with a higher need for dominance *do* engage in perspective-taking, but that it results in a different outcome for intergroup relations. When looking at the factors that may influence the outcome of perspective-taking, as we did before, need for dominance might thus be such a factor to negatively influence the outcome of perspective-taking, because it may lay more focus on a competition context, because perspective-taking might threaten their dominant position, as explained before. For these two reasons, the influence of need for dominance on perspective-

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taking will also be considered as a predictor for engagement in perspective-taking in the current study.

Hypotheses

The above has led to two hypotheses that are being examined in the current study.

H1: Powerful engage more in perspective-taking when perspective-taking is encouraged, as compared to when perspective-taking is not encouraged.

H2: This perspective-taking effect is attenuated by need for dominance, as people high in need for dominance are less inclined to take perspective than people low in need for dominance.

Current study

In the current study, participants were placed in a context in which they had situational power and they were asked to take the perspective of subordinate job applicants. The need for dominance of participants was assessed by three subscales of leadership, SDO dominance and influencing others, derived from factor analyses. After this, participants were given bogus feedback on their decision-making style to encourage a sense of power. Next, they were asked to evaluate job applicants by watching pitches and selecting an applicant for an actual job interview. In one condition, participants were instructed to take an *imagine-other* perspective of the applicants, in the neutral condition, participants received neutral instructions. Then, participants would evaluate the candidates. Lastly, participants completed a short questionnaire to measure their engagement in perspective-taking in the preceding context.

METHOD

Design and participants

The current study consisted of a 1 factorial, Instructions (perspective-taking, neutral) between subjects design, with three Need for Dominance (ND) subscales as continuous independent

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variables. Instructions was experimentally manipulated and participants were evenly and randomly assigned to one of the conditions. Need for Dominance was measured before this manipulation. With the dependent variables being two Perspective-taking (PT) scales and three individual PT items, measured by a short questionnaire.

A total of 148 participants were gathered by approaching Psychology students of the University of Twente and by further convenience sampling. Participants were required to have sufficient understanding of English. Forty-two participants did not complete the study and were excluded. This amount of exclusion could be explained by the fact that participants were registered as a participant as soon as they clicked on the link to the online study, and were therefore registered twice when they visited the online study later to actually participate and complete the study. After this exclusion there were 106 participants left (37 men, 69 women) ranging in age from 18 to 65 years ($M = 23.75$ years, $SD = 8.55$ years). Of these 106 participants, 51.9 % were German, 41.5 % were Dutch, and 6.6 % had a different nationality.

Materials and apparatus

Power context. Though power was not one of the independent variables, people are in general not expected to feel spontaneously powerful. Therefore, a context of situational power was created in all conditions. First, this was established by a bogus feedback procedure. Participants completed a questionnaire to assess their ‘decision-making style’ (similar to Schmid & Amodio, 2016) and then received bogus feedback that they had a ‘Leadership style’, together with a description of this style (see Appendix 1). In reality, participants all received the same result, which was meant to encourage a Sense of Power. The participants were told that they would be assessing pitches of applicants for an actual job and that the researchers were interested in what people with the skills of people like the participant focus on during recruiting procedures.

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Secondly, power was manipulated by control over outcomes. The participants were told that they are recruiting an applicant for an actual job and that their judgement and that of other participants with the same profile would result in an invitation for either one of the two applicants to an actual job interview. The instructions and motivation behind the study that was provided to participants can be found together with the bogus feedback in Appendix 1.

Sense of power. To assess the sense of power that participants experienced, five items were used. All items were answered on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree). An exploratory factor analysis was conducted on these five items for Sense of power (extraction method: principal axis factoring with oblique rotation). This analysis indicated one factor that explained 45.7% of the variance (Eigenvalues > 1; factor loadings > .70) and consisted of four items (i.e. '*I determined who was invited for the interview and who was not.*' ; $\alpha = .65$). The fifth item did not load on this factor (factor loading = .04; '*I depended on the applicants.*') and was excluded from further analyses.

Need for Dominance. Multiple items were drafted to measure the construct Need for Dominance, based on the definition and aspects to Need for Dominance that were mentioned earlier, namely with aspects of leadership and influencing others, and SDO. These items were made up of ten items from the SDO scale, eight items of the dominance scale by Buss and Craik (1980), that were modified to represent a *need* or desire for dominance, and eight items that were drafted to represent the need or desire for leading and influencing others. All items were answered on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree).

An exploratory factor analysis was conducted on all the 26 items for Need for Dominance (i.e. '*Others disappoint me when they don't follow my instructions.*' ; extraction method: principal axis factoring with oblique rotation). Criteria to address items to factors were factor loadings > 0.5 and if an item loaded on multiple factors, it would be addressed to the factor with the greatest loading. The factor analysis indicated eight factors (Eigenvalues >

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1). Based on the elbow principle four factors could be indicated in the scree plot. However, the fifth factor seemed to represent an important aspect of the initially set concept of Need for Dominance (influencing others), therefore the fifth factor was also considered. Factor 4 (consisting of two items) was hard to label in relation to the initial conceptualization of Need for Dominance. Therefore it was decided not to include this factor as a variable for further analyses. Factor 2 and 3 both seemed to stem from the SDO items and the factors represented the two subscales that the SDO scale consist of, namely anti-egalitarianism (opposition to equality between groups) and dominance (the preference for actively oppressing subordinate groups; Ho et. al., 2015). Because dominance better fits the concept of ND, factor 2 (SDO anti-egalitarianism) was eliminated from the measure of Need for Dominance to ensure the validity of the scale. So finally three factors were found that were also in compliance with the initial concept of Need for Dominance. Factor 1, 'Leadership', consisted of eight items indicating tendencies to lead others (i.e. *'I take the lead in organizing projects.'*; $\alpha = .85$). Factor 3, 'SDO Dominance', consisted of three items indicating force against others (i.e. *'In getting what you want, it is sometimes necessary to use force against other groups.'* ; $\alpha = .65$). Factor 5, 'Influencing others', consisted of three items on influencing others (i.e. *'Others are persuaded by me to accept my opinion.'* ; $\alpha = .68$). Factor 1, 3 and 5 accounted for 35.5% of the variance. The items for these three scales can be found in Appendix 2.

Perspective-taking manipulation. Participants were randomly assigned to either the condition with neutral or with perspective-taking encouraging Instructions. For participants in the perspective-taking condition, perspective-taking was manipulated by an *imagine-other* strategy, by instructions that were stated before and during the pitch videos. This instruction is based on the conceptualization of perspective-taking: *"Try to place yourself in the position of the applicant when listening to the pitch. Imagine what the applicant is thinking of and feeling about the job. What is it like to be her? How suitable do you find the applicant for the*

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job?”(Todd & Galinsky, 2014). In the neutral condition, participants receive the following instructions: “*Listen actively to the applicant. What is she saying? How suitable do you find the applicant for the job?*”.

Vacancy and pitches. The vacancy for a job as Junior Advisor at ALTEX (a bogus job and company), that the applicants supposedly applied for, was shown to the participants. Participants were shown two different pitches that lasted between 60 and 90 seconds each. The pitches were recorded on video with two female actors. The vacancy and the pitches can be found in Appendix 3.

Perspective-taking measure. For measuring the engagement in Perspective-taking, 13 items were used (see Appendix 2 for all items): five items on willingness to take perspective, five on actual perspective-taking (similar to, Todd, Bodenhausen, Richeson, & Galinsky, 2011) and three on self-other overlap (based on Galinsky, Ku, Wang, 2005). An exploratory factor analysis was conducted on the 13 items for Perspective-taking (i.e. ‘*I tried to imagine what the applicants must be thinking.*’; extraction method: principal axis factoring with oblique rotation). The analysis indicated five factors (Eigenvalues > 1). Based on the elbow principle three factors could be indicated in the scree plot. However, again, an additional factor well fit the initially set concept of Perspective-taking engagement and therefore this factor was also considered. Thus, four factors were found that accounted for 54.3% of the variance. Factor 1, consisting of three items (‘Willingness to understand’; i.e. ‘*I tried to imagine what the applicants must be feeling.*’; $\alpha = .64$), Factor 2 (‘Willingness emotional involvement’; i.e. ‘*I aimed to stay objective.*’; $\alpha = .55$) Factor 3, consisting of two items (‘Commonalities with subordinate’; i.e. ‘*Me and the applicants have similar interests.*’; $\alpha = .65$) and Factor 4 (‘Perspective-taking actions’; i.e. ‘*I sympathized with the applicants.*’; $\alpha = .51$). Factor 2 and 4 were eliminated because of their poor reliability. Yet, the items from factor 4 were taken into account as individual variables, because the content of these items

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represents the actual Perspective-taking actions. These perspective-taking actions are of particular interest to the current study, therefore they were individually taken into account for further analyses. These items were: *'I sympathized with the applicants.'*; *'I can relate to the situation that the applicants were in.'*; *'I understood how the applicants felt about the job.'*

Perspective-taking manipulation check. To check whether participants had noticed the either neutral or perspective-taking Instructions, participants were asked to indicate the instructions they received before the pitches, by choosing one of three options (*Before each applicant, I was instructed to... 'Imagine the position of the applicant'; 'Listen actively to the applicant'; 'Take time to come to a judgement of the applicant.'*). The first corresponded to the perspective-taking Instructions, the second to the neutral Instructions and the third to neither of the Instructions. Secondly, the perspective-taking manipulation was also checked for by the dependent variable of perspective-taking, namely the Perspective-taking scales. If perspective-taking Instructions would significantly increase Perspective-taking, the manipulation would be found to be effective.

Procedure

Participants first received an overview of the complete study. Participants were told that the aim of the study was to gain insight in how people with various decision-making styles go about recruiting in hiring procedures. They were told that they would first be taking a short questionnaire on their decision-making style, that they would be asked about selecting job applicants and that it should take about 35 minutes to complete the study. Participants then received an informed consent form (see Appendix 4).

Second, participants were asked to take a questionnaire to assess their decision-making style. In fact, they took the Need for Dominance questionnaire. Afterwards, participants received bogus feedback that they have a 'Leadership style', to encourage a sense of power (similar to Schmid & Amodio, 2016). They were told that the researchers have a special

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interest in people with this particular style and that they were therefore asked to evaluate *actual* applicants to a vacancy for ‘Junior Advisor’ at a company called ‘ALTEX’. They were told that their evaluation would lead to inviting one of the applicants to a job interview (see ‘Power manipulation’). After the feedback, the participant read the vacancy. Participants then received instructions prior to and above the video of both applicants, that were either neutral or encouraging perspective-taking, depending on the condition they were in (see; perspective-taking manipulation). Following these pitches, participants were asked to select the applicant that they found the most capable for the job and were asked to support this choice with a short motivation.

After the evaluation, participants were asked to answer some additional questions. First they answered the 13 Perspective-taking items, then the Perspective-taking manipulation check question, and lastly the five power context items. After this, the participant received the debriefing of the study, in which the actual purpose of the study was explained (see Appendix 5). If the participant wishes, the researcher will send the results of the study afterwards.

RESULTS

An overview of the data’s descriptives and correlations can be found in Table 1, for Instructions and the scales for Need for Dominance, Perspective-taking and Sense of Power. There was no significant correlation between the Perspective-taking variables and Sense of Power, except for one positive correlation between (PT) ‘*I can relate to the situation the applicants were in.*’ and Sense of Power. This means that higher scores on this PT variable was correlated to a higher Sense of Power.

It was first examined whether the manipulation of the perspective-taking Instructions was noticed by participants and whether it caused an increase in Perspective-taking. After this, five regression analyses were conducted to analyse the main effect of the Instructions and

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the three Need for Dominance (centred) variables, and the three interaction effects between the Instructions and each of the three Need for Dominance variables on the Perspective-taking variables (i.e. the two Perspective-taking subscales and the three individual Perspective-taking items).

Table 1. Minimum (Min), maximum (Max) and mean (M) scores of variables, with their standard deviations (SD) and correlations.

	N	Min	Max	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	106					-	.25*	-.03	.30**	-.07	-.02	-.07	.12	.04	.15
2	106	2	7	4.80	1.19		-	.23*	.52**	.08	.31*	-.02	.20*	.10	.18
3	106	2	7	5.13	1.07			-	.24*	.09	.11	-.31**	-.10	-.11	-.02
4	106	2	7	4.92	0.89				-	.10	.07	-.11	.18	.16	.04
5	106	2	6	4.56	0.91					-	.07	.10	.13	.27**	.02
6	106	1	7	3.56	1.14						-	.10	.20*	.11	.06
7	106	2	7	4.70	0.99							-	.30**	.23*	-.11
8	106	2	7	4.67	0.96								-	.26**	.23*
9	106	1	6	4.11	1.07									-	-.02
10	106	1.5	6	4.17	1.11										-

Note: 1. Instructions 2. (ND) 'Leadership', 3. (ND) 'SDO dominance' 4. (ND) 'Influencing others' 5. (PT) 'Willingness to understand' 6. (PT) 'Commonalities with subordinates' 7. (PT) 'I sympathized with the applicants.' 8. (PT) 'I can relate to the situation the applicants were in.' 9. (PT) 'I understood how the applicants felt about the job.' 10. 'Sense of Power'

* $p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.01$

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Manipulation check of Instructions. The manipulation check consisted of a question about the instructions and the measure of Perspective-taking. In choosing what option best represented the instructions they received before the pitches, 35 participants (33.0% of the participants) chose the wrong option. Twenty-eight of those participants were in the perspective-taking condition (52.8% of the participants in the perspective-taking condition). Further, the regression analyses also showed no main effect of Instructions on one of the Perspective-taking variables. Despite absence of strong support for the perspective-taking manipulation, participants with this error were not excluded from further analyses for three reasons. First, the error does not necessarily mean the instructions were not followed. It could be that participants did notice the instructions and tried to follow them, but that they did not remember the specific instructions that clearly and simply thought one of the other statements best represented the instructions. Second, the fact that no effect of the Instructions on Perspective-taking was found, could be because participants did follow the Instructions, but that the Instructions did not affect how much participants engaged in Perspective-taking. A lack of an effect does not support the manipulation, but also does not invalidate it. And third, even if it would be considered to excluded these participants just to be sure, a significant amount of the data could not be used.

Perspective-taking. Five regression analyses were conducted to analyse the main effect of the Instructions (centred) variable, and the three interaction effects between the Instructions and each of the three Need for Dominance variables on the Perspective-taking variables (i.e. the two Perspective-taking subscales and the three individual Perspective-taking items). This resulted into four significant models, with one significant interaction effect on one of the Perspective-taking dependent variables.

No significant model was found on (PT) 'Willingness to understand' and none of the predictors was found to significantly affect the score on 'Willingness to understand' ($R^2 = -$

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.02, $p = .60$, all $\beta < 0.05$, all $p > .28$). This means there was no main effect of Instructions or interaction effect between Instructions and the Need for Dominance variables found on 'Willingness to understand'. This goes against the expectations of Hypothesis 1 and Hypothesis 2, that did predict a main effect of Instructions and interaction effects between Instructions and the ND variables on (PT) 'Willingness to understand'.

When (PT) 'Commonalities with subordinates' was predicted, the overall model fit of the explained variance was $R^2 = 0.067$ ($p = .05$). There was no main effect found of Instructions or an interaction effect between Instructions and the Need for Dominance variables on 'Commonalities with subordinates' (all $\beta < .28$, all $p > .28$). This goes against the expectations of Hypothesis 1 and Hypothesis 2, that did predict a main effect of Instructions and interaction effects between Instructions and the ND variables on (PT) 'Commonalities with subordinates'.

When (PT) '*I can relate to the situation that the applicants were in.*' was predicted, there was no significant model found ($R^2 = .04$, $p = .14$). There was no main effect found of Instructions or an interaction effect between Instructions and the Need for Dominance variables on '*I can relate to the situation that the applicants were in.*' (all $\beta < .43$, all $p > .11$). This goes against the expectations of Hypothesis 1 and Hypothesis 2, that did predict a main effect of Instructions and interaction effects between Instructions and the ND variables on (PT) '*I can relate to the situation that the applicants were in.*'.

When (PT) '*I sympathized with the applicants.*' was predicted, the overall fit of the model was $R^2 = 0.07$ ($p = .04$). There was no main effect found of Instructions or an interaction effect between Instructions and the Need for Dominance variables on '*I sympathized with the applicants.*' (all $\beta < .33$, all $p > .13$). This goes against the expectations of Hypothesis 1 and Hypothesis 2, that did predict a main effect of Instructions and

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interaction effects between Instructions and the ND variables on (PT) '*I sympathized with the applicants.*'.

When (PT) '*I understood how the applicants felt about the job.*' was predicted, the overall fit of the model was $R^2 = .07$ ($p = .05$). There was no main effect of Instructions on (PT) '*I understood how the applicants felt about the job.*', which goes against the expectation of Hypothesis 1. The interaction effect between (ND) 'Influencing others' and Instructions on (PT) '*I understood how the applicants felt about the job.*' was found to be a significant predictor ($\beta = .340$, $p = .005$) and can be seen in Figure 1. The figure shows that participants with lower scores on 'Influencing others' agreed more with the statement '*I understood how the applicants felt about the job.*' when they received neutral Instructions as compared to perspective-taking Instructions. Furthermore it shows that this effect was reversed for people with higher scores on 'Influencing others'. These participants agreed less with the statement when they received neutral Instructions and more when they received perspective-taking Instructions. This goes against the expectation of Hypotheses 2, that predicted the interaction between Instructions and a higher Need for Dominance would result in lower engagement in Perspective-taking as compared to lower Need for Dominance when perspective-taking instructions were given.

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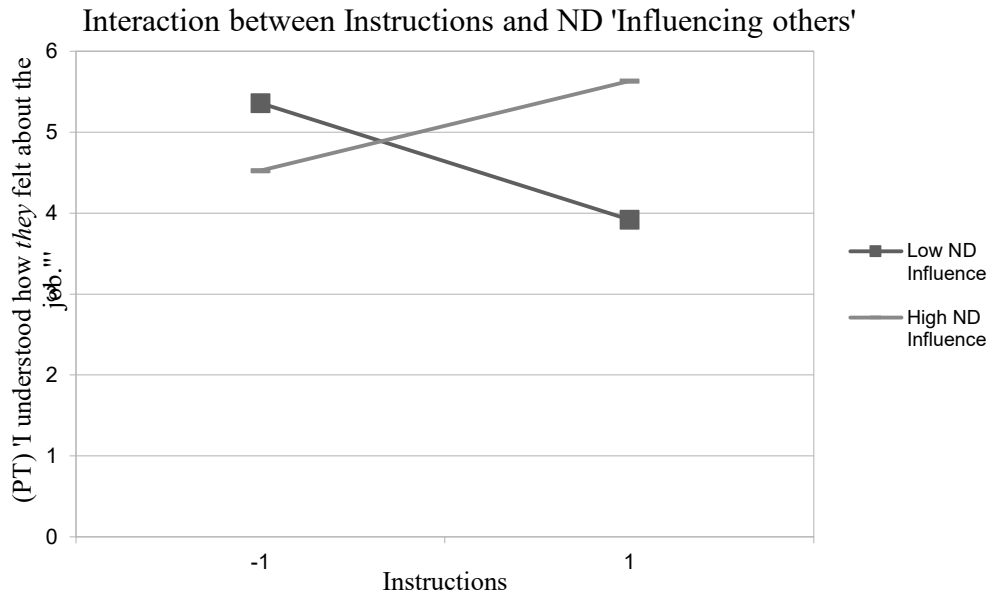


Figure 1. The interaction effect between Instructions and ND 'Influencing others' on (PT) 'I understood how the applicants felt about the job.' With the two Instructions conditions (-1 = Neutral, 1 = Perspective-taking) and ND 'Influencing others' (Low = -1 SD, High = +1 SD).

In addition to the main effects of Instructions on the PT variables, the main effects of Need for Dominance on the PT variables were examined and four main effects of Need for Dominance variables on the PT variables were found. When predicting (PT) 'Commonalities with subordinates, (ND) 'Leadership' ($\beta = .381, p = .001$) was a significant predictor. This indicates that participants with higher scores on 'Leadership', also scored higher on experiencing 'Commonalities with subordinates'. The other two ND variables were not significant predictors (all $\beta < .11$, all $p > .44$). When predicting (PT) 'I can relate to the situation that the applicants were in.', none of the ND variables were significant predictors (all $\beta < .20$, all $p > .15$). When predicting (PT) 'I sympathized with the applicants.', none of the ND variables were significant predictors. (ND) SDO dominance ($\beta = -.316, p = .003$) was a significant predictor. This indicates that participants that scored higher on 'SDO dominance', agreed less with the statement 'I sympathized with the applicants.'. The other two ND variables were no significant predictors (all $\beta < .19$, all $p > .22$). When predicting

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(PT) '*I understood how applicants felt about the job.*', (ND) 'Influencing others' was a significant predictor ($\beta = .246, p = .048$). This indicates that participants with a higher score on 'Influencing others' agreed more with the statement '*I understood how applicants felt about the job.*' The other two ND variables were no significant predictor (all $\beta < .08$, all $p > .36$).

What the results additionally show is a considerable amount of Sense of Power ($M = 4.17, SD = 1.11$). Moreover, there is a lack of a significant negative correlation between Sense of Power and the Perspective-taking variables, to indicate that a higher Sense of Power was not related to lower engagement in Perspective-taking.

All in all, the results show no support for Hypothesis 1 which predicted that perspective-taking Instructions would positively affect the engagement in Perspective-taking. Instead, there was no support found that Instructions directly affected engagement in Perspective-taking. There was little support for Hypothesis 2 which predicted that perspective-taking Instructions would positively affect engagement in Perspective-taking, unless there was higher Need for Dominance. The three interactions between Instructions and the three Need for Dominance variables did not affect the engagement in Perspective-taking, except for one. The interaction between 'Influencing others' and Instructions affected '*I understood how the applicants felt about the job.*', but in the opposite direction of what was expected according to Hypothesis 2. Additional results did indicate some of the Need for Dominance variables to directly affect some of the PT variables. And there was a considerable Sense of Power reported by participants which was not negatively correlated to Perspective-taking.

A final note to make, is that all adjusted R^2 scores are below 0.1, meaning that all of the models explained under 10% of the variability of the response data around the mean of the regression model.

DISCUSSION

The aim of the current study was to examine whether people with situational power were able to engage in perspective-taking if they were encouraged to. It was expected that perspective-taking instructions would increase engagement in perspective-taking, but that this effect would occur to a lesser extent when someone showed a higher need for dominance.

Results and implications. The results showed that perspective-taking instructions increased the effect of someone's need to influence others on how much participants reported to understand how the job applicants felt about the job. However, against expectations, the perspective-taking instructions did not directly affect the engagement in perspective-taking. While there was no effect of the perspective-taking instructions, there was considerable engagement in perspective-taking. It is possible that there was no increase in perspective-taking due to the instructions, because the amount of perspective-taking was considerably high already. Which means there was no lack of perspective-taking, despite the considerable scores for sense of power by the participants. Referring to the research question, this would lead to the conclusion that for the power context of the current study and the accompanied sense of power, there are contexts in which people with situational power *can* engage in perspective-taking. This is also supported by the absence of a negative relation between sense of power and neither one of the perspective-taking variables, which shows no support that a higher sense of power would be related to less engagement in perspective-taking. This is contradictory to what was reported earlier by Galinsky and colleagues (2006) who reported less engagement in spontaneous perspective-taking by the powerful. It could be possible that people with situational power engage *less* in perspective-taking than people without this sense of power, but that does not necessarily indicate a *lack* of perspective-taking for those with situational power. Furthermore, it is possible that different effects occur for different contexts

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of power. The people in the current study did report a sense of power, yet the control they got and the role they were for the short run. It is possible that different effects occur for people who are more used to a sense of power because of their daily jobs, for example managers. However, for now, the current study indicates that there are contexts of power in which people with situational power do report to engage in perspective-taking.

There were no main effects hypothesized for need for dominance on perspective-taking, but some effects were found. However, these effects were not unequivocal. There was no clear variable of need for dominance that affects all perspective-taking variables, or one perspective-taking variable that is affected by all need for dominance variables. Participants with a higher need to lead others, reported more commonalities between themselves and the applicants. And need to influence others increased reported understanding of how applicants felt about the job. This is both contrary to the prediction that the need to lead others and the need to influence others would lead to less engagement in perspective-taking. Social Dominance Orientation (SDO) dominance decreased how much participants reported to sympathize with the applicants, which corresponds to the expectation that need for dominance decreases the effects of perspective-taking instructions on engagement in perspective-taking - in this case the reported actual perspective-taking. While there is also a lack of effects between some of the need for dominance variables and the perspective-taking variables, these results seem to imply that the dominance dimension of need for dominance could be better at predicting less engagement in perspective-taking among the powerful, as compared to the leadership and influencing others dimensions.

Strengths and limitations. A valuable outcome of the current study is that it indicates that people with situational power can engage in perspective-taking, or at least within the context of the current study. This is especially valuable because of its societal application. It supports the idea that perspective-taking may also improve intergroup relations within power contexts.

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Earlier studies that did not consider power differences, reported several positive outcomes of perspective-taking on intergroup relations such as increased intergroup helping (Todd & Galinsky, 2014) and reduced reliance on stereotype maintenance processes (Todd & Galinsky, 2012). However, in some cases more negative outcomes resulted from perspective-taking. As mentioned before, this might occur for example for relations that are more of a competitive nature (Pierce et. al., 2013). It was said that perspective-taking might cause people to focus more on conflicting interests or how the other person might threaten the person's own position (Pierce et. al., 2013). Similar effects are reasonably expected for contexts in which the person with power is less sure of its powerful position or feels as if the other threatens their dominant position, which is the case for example for people with a higher social dominance orientation (Pratto et. al., 1994; Ho et. al., 2015). The current study has modestly indicated the dominance aspect of need for dominance as another possible factor that might negatively influence the effect of a perspective-taking intervention on interacting with (outgroup) subordinates. For decreasing inequalities in society, it is especially relevant to improve intergroup relations for contexts of power differences, because especially the decisions made by people with power, about other people with less power, could result in either equal or unequal treatment. For example, a manager has the power to decide whether to hire an applicant or not, which could result into either hiring an employee with another ethnical background (Blommaert et. al., 2012). If the aforementioned positive effects of perspective-taking would occur for power contexts as well, this would have considerable implications for diminishing existing inequalities in society. However, as mentioned before, engaging in perspective-taking can also result in more negative intergroup relations

Moreover, in predicting what may or may not make perspective-taking successful for the powerful, this study has pointed out people's need for dominance as a possible predictor for when people with situational power might not be willing to engage in perspective-taking.

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This can contribute to the success of predicting when powerful people will be likely to engage in perspective-taking of powerful people in future studies.

While the current study is a positive contribution towards improving intergroup relations, in- and outgroup differences were not taken into consideration. This was left out, because the purpose was to examine whether perspective-taking in itself was possible for powerful people. Yet, the reason to examine whether powerful can take perspective, is for the purpose of establishing whether perspective-taking could be an effective method to improve intergroup differences. For societal application it would therefore be especially relevant to determine whether powerful can take perspective of outgroup members as well. Moreover, it is possible that different effects will occur for perspective-taking of outgroup subordinates. For example, need for dominance could become a stronger predictor for engagement in perspective-taking, because people higher in this orientation focus more on group differences and remaining a dominant position compared to other groups (Pratto et. al., 1994; Pratto & Stewart, 2012).

A second shortcoming of the current study is the questionable reliability for the perspective-taking scales, which implies a lower consistency of results across items within those scales. This makes it harder to draw reliable conclusions from the results. While items were used from scales that were estimated to be reliable in earlier studies, there was poor to questionable inter-reliability of the different perspective-taking scales. This was also the reason that the factor of ‘emotional involvement’ was not taken into account in further analyses, which is regretful because Need for Dominance was thought to specifically affect willingness to engage in forms of perspective-taking.

Future research. Three main recommendations can be made as a result of the current study. The first main recommendation would be to examine the effect of perspective-taking on intergroup-relations, for situations in which there are power differences. As was argued

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many times before, in order to work towards decreasing inequalities in society, it is especially relevant to determine what interventions are effective in improving intergroup relations for powerful people. The current study seems to confirm that in some power contexts, it is at least possible to engage in perspective-taking. Future studies should examine whether perspective-taking among powerful positively affects intergroup relations. In order to assess whether perspective-taking is an effective intervention to improve intergroup relations and thereby decrease societal inequalities within contexts of power differences, it is recommended that future studies examine the effect of perspective-taking on intergroup relations and what the influence might be of need for dominance. Additionally, it is possible that whether the effects are positive or negative are also dependent on whether the context is framed in a more cooperative manner (in which the other is seen as someone to reach your goal with together), or in a more competitive manner (in which one has to defend their own powerful position) (Pierce et. al., 2013). The powerful in these studies would have to take perspective of outgroup subordinates, as this may cause different effects of perspective-taking and taking perspective of outgroup subordinates would be especially relevant for the societal application of the perspective-taking intervention. These studies would also serve to indicate whether the capability to engage in perspective-taking, also transfers to other contexts of power, and especially whether it transfers to people who are more used to a sense of power on a daily basis (and thus less short term than in the current study). It is therefore recommended that future studies include participants who are more used to a sense of power on a daily basis, such as managers.

Secondly, since need for dominance was indicated to predict engagement in perspective-taking, it would be recommended to take the construct into consideration in future studies on the effect of perspective-taking by powerful as well. The need for dominance scale in the current study created for the purpose of this study and the set dimensions were

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confirmed in analysis. Yet, there was no extensive process for determining the dimensions of the concept of need for dominance and for validating the scale. Therefore, the construct of need for dominance demands a study that is merely focussed on its development, before it is used again as a measure for these studies. This is needed in order to establish a clearer definition of the concept and its dimensions, and in order to develop a valid and reliable scale that corresponds to this concept. Earlier it was mentioned that especially the dominance dimension of need for dominance might be a good predictor for engagement in perspective-taking. The exploration of the construct of need for dominance might build on this and add the group based dominance items from the SDO scale, modified to an interpersonal level.

Thirdly, returning to the theoretical explanation for why people with situational power would engage less in perspective-taking, one of the underlying reasons is that they are simply too cognitively occupied with tasks related to their position to have cognitive capacity left to take the perspective of their subordinates (Fiske 1993). This gives rise to the question whether perspective-taking could decrease performance for people with situational power. This would namely imply that perspective-taking decreases task performance and may therefore be a reason against encouraging perspective-taking among those in positions with situational power. Future studies on the effect of perspective-taking on intergroup relations should therefore also consider the effect of perspective-taking on task performance.

CONCLUSION

Altogether, the current study implies that people with situational power can take perspective of their subordinates. Also, need for dominance was pointed out as a possible predictor that could keep powerful people from perspective-taking. This encourages future studies to examine the effect of perspective-taking on intergroup relations in situations that entail power differences and to take into account the effect of people's need for dominance. To ensure the

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value of the construct in future studies, further exploration of the construct need for dominance and further development of a reliable and valid scale for the construct are desired.

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APPENDIX 1: Bogus feedback and instructions

Decision-making style**Result: Leadership style**

The questionnaire has evaluated you to have a so called leadership style. This style represents people who are found adequate to take effective decisions, both deliberately, as well as intuitively or on an instinctive basis.

Previous studies have already provided us with more knowledge about people with this leadership style, therefore we don't need to ask more detailed questions about this style and can skip ahead to the assignment. Specifically, for people with a leadership style, previous studies have already indicated that these people are likely to take effective decisions, also when it comes to the selection of hypothetical applicants for hypothetical companies.

People with this style are therefore, hypothetically, adequate to pre-select applicants for actual job interviews and could take away the burden of this time consuming task for employers. Yet, until now this has not been applied to real life contexts, with real cases and real decisions to make. The current study will function as a trial, to explore whether such a preselection process would turn out positively for companies and whether this could turn out to be a functional way of preselection in hiring procedures.

The University of Twente has found ALTEX consultancy prepared to engage in this trial of preselection. ALTEX is a company that specializes in giving advice to municipalities about complex issues in the social domain and manages projects that are focused on improving society, by working in the roles of researcher, advisor and project leader. They also often hire graduated students and currently look to hire a new Junior Advisor.

ALTEX has agreed to take the advice of participants with the leadership decision-making style in deciding who will be invited for an interview. You will thus influence who is invited, however you don't decide on the actual hiring of applicants.

For this trial, we found two former students of the University of Twente prepared to take part in this trial. They are both looking for a job and want to become the new Junior Advisor at ALTEX. In the role of recruiter, you will be assessing the suitability of these two candidates for this job and decide who should and who shouldn't be invited for an interview.

The two applicants have each prepared a pitch that you will listen to. Based on your judgement, you select one applicant who you find most suitable for the job. Before the pitches, you can read the job description and demands.

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APPENDIX 2: Scales for Need for Dominance, Perspective-taking, Sense of Power

Need for Dominance*Leadership*

I take charge of things during meetings.

I take the lead in organizing projects.

I set goals for groups I'm in.

At the start of a game, I assign roles and get the process going.

I like to instruct others what they should do.

I direct where conversations are heading towards.

When I get lost with a group of people during a trip, I am the one to decide which directions to take.

In groups, I take the initiative to talk about certain topics.

SDO dominance

In getting what you want, it is sometimes necessary to use force against other groups.

Others disappoint me when they don't follow my instructions / when they don't take my advice.

To get ahead in life, it is sometimes necessary to step on other groups.

Influencing others

Others are persuaded by me to accept my opinion on issues.

I can persuade people to do something they did not want to do.

I want to make an impact on others.

Perspective-taking*Willingness to understand*

I tried to imagine what the applicants must be feeling.

I tried to realize what the applicants were thinking.

I wanted to understand what the applicants were experiencing.

Commonalities with subordinate

Me and the applicants have similar interests.

Me and the applicants have professional skills in common.

Individual items

I sympathized with the applicants.

I can relate to the situation that the applicants were in.

I understood how the applicants felt about the job.

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Sense of Power

The applicants depended on my judgment.

I controlled the outcome.

I determined who was invited for an interview and who was not.

I stood above the applicants.

APPENDIX 3: Vacancy and pitches

Vacancy

ALTEX consultancy has the following focus, demands and wishes for the candidate for the position of Junior Advisor.

About ALTEX

ALTEX is specialized in consulting municipalities about complex issues in the social domain and manages projects that are focused on improving society, in the roles of researcher, advisor and project leader.

Job description

We are looking for a flexible Junior Advisor for our fast growing team. The function offers opportunities for exponential growth within the organization.

The Junior Advisor would have to ...

- ... support main consultants in client projects
- ... develop financial and operational analyses and procedures
- ... execute administrative tasks on a time sensitive basis
- ... monitor various company aspects.
- ... present solutions and recommendations to clients and other interested parties.
- ... assist during executive work.
- ... identify a client's needs and develop future plans.
- ... work together with client teams to execute plans to make tremendous financial results.
- ... report status of projects to internal and external team members.

Key demands...

- Months of experience in business, consultancy and supporting plans for project management or demonstrable insight in that field
- Excellent analytical abilities and experience in financial modelling
- Strong engagement and work ethic: sense of responsibility and ability to work on a time sensitive basis
- Verbal and written communication in English

Pitches

Note: the actors may have slightly deviated from the text.

Pitch 1

My name is Marleen Leemveld and I'm applying for the position of Junior Advisor at ALTEX. I am currently 23 years old, and I just graduated from my master of Public Administration, with a special focus on policy networks and innovation.

Next to the theoretical insights and skills that I acquired during my studies, I have developed some particular capacities in my year as chairman from the study association Sirius. I was responsible for the organization of two big events.; Learned to remain an overview in executing several tasks, also when the work asks for great flexibility. ; And I engaged in contact with many parties: students, companies, teachers - aiming to understand the different perspectives and interests and bring those together.

I expect these experiences and insights to contribute in making me a suitable candidate for the position of Junior Advisor. I see myself as a hard worker, used to working with others and with the vision to deliver results. Results that, when working for ALTEX, will hopefully contribute to a better functioning society. While admitting that I don't know everything yet, I think I have the starting tools to become a valuable Junior Advisor and hope to continue learning at ALTEX.

Thank you for listening and I hope to see you at the job interview.

Pitch 2

My name is Nine Altema and I want to become the new Junior Advisor for ALTEX consultancy. Half a year ago I finished my master in Public Administration at the University of Twente and have continued working at Hengelo municipality where I did my internship. Now that this opportunity to watch processes at the micro level has ended, I want to start work on bigger projects.

I look for a job with an *impact* on society. From what I have learned about ALTEX, you are engaged in projects with a direct influence on processes within society, such as the guidance of former unemployed in finding and maintaining of jobs. I want to contribute to results with such meaning. And I believe that my experience with working for Hengelo will help me in the position as Junior Advisor because I can relate to the working environment of the municipalities we have to collaborate with.

All in all, I would say that I'm a dedicated worker, with eye for detail, who is not afraid to make hours and work hard. With the eye on the goal of making a positive impact on society. And that I'm the Junior Advisor that ALTEX is looking for. I hope to explain my motivation, skills and qualities further at a job interview.

Thank you for your attention.

APPENDIX 4: Briefing and informed consent

Dear participant,

Thank you for engaging in the current study of the University of Twente, about selection styles in job application procedures.

There are certain jobs and vacancies for which many people apply (for example for the position of therapist). Because there are so many applications, the selection of applicants in this first round of selection has appeared to be a very time consuming task for employers.

Although recruiters do already take on this task in some cases, the department of Psychology is looking to gain more insight in how selection can be done more effectively. The current study is focused on exploring a new approach to selecting applicants: selection by people with particular decision-making styles that could be of help in the stage of pre-selecting applicants for an interview.

This is done by examining how people with these various styles function in selection procedures. This could mean that people with effective selection styles could eventually take on the role of recruiter in future selection procedures and that companies would be able to outsource this time consuming task with trust to recruiters with particular decision-making styles.

In the current study we therefore want to assess your decision-making style and ask you questions about selecting job applicants. The study should take about 35 minutes to complete.

Thank you in advance for participating.

Informed consent

'I hereby declare that I have been informed in a manner which is clear to me about the content of the current questionnaire, as described on the aforementioned page. I agree of my own free will to participate in this study. I reserve the right to withdraw this consent without the need to give any reason and I am aware that I may withdraw from the study at any time. My results will be treated confidentially and anonymously. My personal data will not be disclosed to third parties without my explicit permission.

If I request further information about the research, now or in the future, I may contact Chantal van Veluwen (c.vanveluwen@student.utwente.nl).'

☐ I agree

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APPENDIX 5: Debriefing

For both conditions: Instructions - neutral and perspective-taking

The study has now come to an end. Thank you for your participation!

The current study was focused on studying perspective-taking among people with situational power. You were placed in a condition of situational power, by having the power to decide over the chances of the two applicants. The feedback you received on your personal style was not legitimate, but served to support a sense of control and power.

ALTEX consultancy is not an existing company and the applicants were not applying for an actual job. We measured levels of need for dominance, willingness to take perspective of the applicants and capability to do so. There were two conditions, namely one with perspective-taking instructions and one with neutral instructions. You took part in the perspective-taking (/neutral) condition.

Until now, research has found that people with power have more focus on their tasks and less on subordinate people they interact with, which can have several consequences. Perspective-taking has been found to contradict certain negative effects such as stereotyping, but, to our knowledge, it has not been addressed yet whether people with power are capable to take perspective when they are encouraged to do so. Whether this is possible, is what we hope to find out after the current study. We hypothesized that people with higher need for dominance would be less willing and less successful in perspective-taking.

In order not to influence the results of any future participants to this study, we want to ask you not to discuss the nature of the study with others.

If you have any questions about this study or if you would like to receive the eventual results of this study, you can contact:

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