

## Power Strategies in Intimate Relationships

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A study was conducted to generate (a) a model of power strategies used in intimate relationships and (b) information regarding the associations between gender, sexual orientation, egalitarianism, and power strategy use. Participants in this study were 200 university students (100 homosexuals and 100 heterosexuals) evenly divided by gender. A two-dimensional model was devised based on the strategies written in open-ended essays. These two dimensions concerned the extent to which the strategies were (a) direct (ranging from direct to indirect) and (b) interactive (ranging from bilateral to unilateral). Gender differences were found only among heterosexuals, with men more likely than women to report using bilateral and direct strategies. The effects of gender among heterosexuals paralleled findings concerning the balance of power in the relationship. That is, people who preferred and perceived themselves as having more power than their partner, such as heterosexual men, were also more likely to use bilateral and direct strategies. No differences in power strategy use were found between homosexuals and heterosexuals. These and other results are interpreted in terms of the two-dimensional model and general gender differences in power.

Research on power in intimate relationships (Cromwell & Olson, 1975; Safilios-Rothschild, 1970) has generally focused on decision making and the balance of power within couples. The present study differs from previous investigations in that it attempts to uncover the dimensions underlying the power strategies used in intimate relationships. In addition, this research investigates some of the associations between gender, egalitarianism, sexual orientation, and power strategies used in intimate relationships.

Recently, Falbo (1977) introduced a two-dimensional model of general power strategies. This model was derived from open-ended essays written on the topic "how I get my way" (Goodchilds, Quadrado, & Raven, Note 1). One potentially important factor omitted from consideration in the original model was

the possible effect of the target of influence on the individual's choice of a power strategy. Although most subjects did not specify a target when writing open-ended essays, those who did indicated that their power strategies varied depending on the target. For example, one young man wrote:

This depends on who I am trying to get it from or with. With my parents, I tell them I want something, then play it cool and eventually get it. With friends, I will fight verbally although not physically for it. With girlfriends, I simply turn the other way, walk off, or whatever the situation demands.

The first goal of this study is to generate a model of power strategies in intimate relationships and to examine the similarity between this new model and the Falbo (1977) two-dimensional model of general power strategies.

A second goal of this research is to investigate the impact of gender and egalitarianism on power strategies used in intimate relationships. Traditional sex roles dictate that men and women should exert influence in different ways, and the literature suggests that men and women sometimes use sex-typed power tactics in dating relationships (Peplau, 1979).

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Sex differences in power strategies have been found within married couples (Kipnis, 1976; Raven, Centers, & Rodrigues, 1975) and mixed-sex pairs of college students in laboratory studies (Johnson, 1978). Although sex role socialization may be one explanation for sex differences in the use of power strategies, power differences between the sexes may also account for these sex differences. Henley (1975) has noted that sex differences in such interpersonal behaviors as touching, self-disclosure, and verbal interruptions often mirror differences between the behavior of high and low power individuals. Thus it may be that men's greater power in relationships is the basis for sex differences in power strategies used in intimate relationships. Since contemporary love relationships vary considerably in the extent to which partners prefer equal power, it is possible to examine the associations between equality and power strategy use. It seems likely that values about power and perceptions of relative power within a relationship affect the choice of power strategies, and this finding may help explain sex differences in power strategy use. This research investigates these possibilities.

To broaden the scope of the model and to examine differences in power strategy use as a function of sexual orientation, both homosexual and heterosexual men and women were included in this study. Homosexual relationships provide an opportunity to examine how men and women exercise power when sex role constraints may not be operative. Whether same-sex couples use strategies more typical of their sex or whether homosexual couples have a different means of influencing each other than heterosexual couples do is unclear. Since little is known about the nature of homosexual relationships (Morin, 1977), it is not possible to make precise predictions about possible similarities or differences between the use of strategies by heterosexuals and homosexuals. To the extent that all men and women in the culture are socialized to adopt sex-typed strategies of influence (cf. Gagnon & Simon, 1973), one might expect sex differences in power strategies rather than differences based on sexual orientation. But to the extent that homosexuals have views about power in relationships that differ from views of hetero-

sexuals (Mannion, 1976), one might expect the power strategies of homosexuals to differ from those of heterosexuals.

## Method

### *Overview*

Data collection and analysis took five steps. First, volunteers were recruited to complete a questionnaire on their romantic/sexual relationships. One item in the questionnaire asked the participants to write an essay on the strategies used with their intimate partner. Second, a code was developed to categorize the strategies found in the power essays. Third, experts generated the data necessary to produce the dimensional model. Fourth, these data underwent multidimensional scaling (MDS) analysis. Fifth, to examine the associations between characteristics of the individuals, their relationships, and power strategy use, a series of regression analyses was performed so that relevant variables could be projected as vectors into the MDS configuration.

### *Data Collection*

*Participants.* As part of a larger study of intimate relationships, 434 participants were recruited during 1976 and 1977. Homosexual women were recruited for a study of "lesbian relationships" by advertisements placed in a university newspaper, a feminist student publication, and leaflets distributed at a university campus (see Peplau, Cochran, Rook, & Padesky, 1978). Homosexual men were recruited for a study of "gay men's relationships" by advertisements placed in a university newspaper, leaflets distributed at a university campus, and through a university gay students association (see Peplau & Cochran, in press). Heterosexual men and women were recruited at the same university through classes taught in several academic departments. A total of 127 lesbians, 151 gay men, 90 heterosexual women, and 66 heterosexual men participated in this research by completing a lengthy questionnaire concerning their background, attitudes, and romantic/sexual relationships. Participants who were currently in a romantic relationship answered questions about the partner and their relationship. Participants who were not currently in a relationship answered comparable questions concerning their most recent past romantic relationship.

For the analyses reported here, it was important to have comparable samples of homosexual and heterosexual women and men. To achieve this objective, subsamples of 50 lesbians, 50 gay men, 50 heterosexual women, and 50 heterosexual men (total  $N = 200$ ) were selected from the larger sample. In each subgroup, half the respondents were currently in a relationship, and half were not. To increase comparability, all the individuals in these groups were unmarried white university students with a low proportion of missing data in their responses to the

Table 1  
*Mean Age and Duration of Relationship by  
 Gender and Sexual Orientation*

| Gender | Homosexual |          | Heterosexual |          |
|--------|------------|----------|--------------|----------|
|        | Age        | Duration | Age          | Duration |
| Men    | 22.15      | 12.15    | 21.15        | 12.10    |
| Women  | 23.65      | 19.85    | 22.95        | 20.85    |

*Note.* Duration is presented in months; age, in years.

questionnaire. Because the lesbians were slightly older and reported having longer relationships than gay men, it was decided to select a heterosexual sample that reflected these small differences. That is, heterosexual women were selected to be as similar as possible to lesbians in their mean age and duration of relationship; heterosexual men were selected so that their mean age and relationship durations were similar to those of the gay men. As Table 1 indicates, there were no significant differences in relationship duration within sex between heterosexuals and homosexuals. However, homosexuals were still significantly older,  $F(1, 191) = 3.79, p < .05$ , than heterosexuals ( $M$  difference = .85 years). Overall, women in this sample differed from men in being significantly older,  $F(1, 191) = 13.53, p < .001$ , ( $M$  difference = 2.65 years) and in describing relationships that lasted longer,  $F(1, 191) = 13.08, p < .001$ , ( $M$  difference = 8.20 months). Nonetheless, these differences are quite small relative to those found in previous research comparing heterosexuals and homosexuals (e.g., Saghir & Robins, 1973).

*The questionnaire.* Participants spent approximately 1 hour completing an anonymous questionnaire, either in a small group setting or individually. Slightly different versions of the lengthy questionnaire were administered to lesbians, gay men, and heterosexuals. The first part of the questionnaire concerned participants' backgrounds, including questions about age, race, marital status, and whether or not the person was currently in a romantic/sexual relationship. Also included were several measures of personal attitudes. Pertinent to this study were measures concerning the individual's preferences for power and independence in a love relationship. Two items assessed the importance given (on a 9-point scale) to "having more influence than my partner in our joint decision-making" and "having an egalitarian (equal-power) relationship." A five-item personal autonomy scale (Peplau et al., 1978) assessed the importance that individuals gave to having friends and interests outside their intimate relationship and to enjoying the relationship now rather than insisting on a future commitment.

The second part of the questionnaire focused on a specific romantic/sexual relationship. Individuals described their current relationships or, if they were not in a relationship at present, their most recent past relationship. Throughout the questionnaire, the

symbol (\_\_\_\_) was used to refer to this specific intimate partner. Of particular relevance for this article are questions pertaining to power. To assess participants' power strategies, they were asked to write an open-ended essay describing "how I get (\_\_\_\_) to do what I want" or, for past relationships, "how I got (\_\_\_\_) to do what I wanted." Students also indicated their personal assessment of the overall balance of power (Peplau, 1979) in the relationship on a 5-point scale ranging from "I have much more say" to "we have exactly equal say" to "(\_\_\_\_) has much more say." In addition, students indicated how long the relationship had lasted and rated their personal satisfaction (on a 9-point scale) with the relationship.

### *Coding Power Strategies*

All essays ( $N = 434$ ) were read by six coders, who divided responses into discrete power strategies. Strategies were defined as acts presented by the essay writers as instrumental in getting their way.

To develop a coding scheme for the power strategies used in intimate relationships, raters attempted to apply two earlier coding schemes (Falbo, 1977; French & Raven, 1959). Each of the individual categories from these earlier schemes was used. If fewer than five instances of any of these categories could be found, the category was not retained in the final list of power strategy categories. Using this criterion, seven power categories were included from previous coding schemes. Two of the six bases of power proposed by French and Raven were used, although considerably altered in meaning. That is, *reward power*, as described by French and Raven, was recast here as *positive affect*. French and Raven's *coercive power* was reflected in the strategy here called *negative affect*. Five of the categories used by Falbo (1977) were also used: *reasoning*, *bargaining*, *hinting*, *persuasion*, and *persistence*.

Strategies that did not fit into the previous coding schemes were examined to find common themes. Strategies were grouped together into a category if the coders could agree that they shared a common meaning and that there were at least five instances of each. For example, "I grow silent and cold," "I leave and go into another room," and "I clam up" were grouped together into the category called *withdrawal*. Six categories were created this way. They were: *withdrawal*, *laissez-faire*, *telling*, *asking*, *stating importance*, and *talking*. The categories of *withdrawal* and *stating importance* represent subsets of the broader categories *negative affect* and *telling*, respectively.

The net result of this procedure was the development of a set of 13 power strategy categories that accounted for 98% of the strategies that occurred in the total sample of essays. Table 2 gives the names, definitions, and examples of these 13 strategies. Of the 200 participants in the subsample, 83% reported using at least 1 power category. The amount of agreement between coders in their use of the power categories was computed by the formula pro-

Table 2  
*Definitions and Examples of the Code Used to Classify the 13 Power Strategies Found in the Power Essays*

| Strategy label     | Definition   | Example  |
|--------------------|--|--|
| Asking             | Agent makes a simple request.  | I ask him to do what I want.   |
| Bargaining         | Agent does something for target if target will reciprocate.          | We usually negotiate something agreeable to both of us. We compromise. |
| Laissez-faire      | Agent takes independent action; does what he/she wants on own.       | We do our own thing. I just do it by myself.                           |
| Negative affect    | Agent expresses negative feelings.                                   | I pout or threaten to cry if I don't get my way.                       |
| Persistence        | Agent continues trying to influence.                                 | I repeatedly remind him of what I want until he gives in.              |
| Persuasion         | Agent literally reports using "persuasion."                          | I try to persuade him my way is right.                                 |
| Positive affect    | Agent expresses positive affect.                                     | I smile a lot. I am especially affectionate.                           |
| Reasoning          | Agent uses reason or logical arguments.                              | I reason with her. I argue my point logically.                         |
| Stating importance | Agent tells target how important the request is.                     | I tell him how important it is to me.                                  |
| Suggesting         | Agent makes suggestions or hints.                                    | I drop hints. I make suggestions.                                      |
| Talking            | Agent literally reports talking or having a discussion with partner. | We talk about it. We discuss our differences and needs.                |
| Telling            | Agent makes a direct statement of desired outcome.                   | I tell her what I want. I state my needs.                              |
| Withdrawal         | Agent withdraws affection, grows silent, becomes cold and distant.   | I clam up. I become silent.  |

vided by Winter (1973). All agreement scores were above .80.

### *Experts' Ratings of Strategies*

Nine experts in the field of power and intimate relationships<sup>1</sup> provided the data necessary for the MDS analysis. They did this by making ratings of similarity. The experts received a description of the study, definitions of the strategies similar to those in Table 2, instructions about the rating task, and a matrix on which to record ratings. The experts rated the similarity between each power strategy and every other strategy on a 10-point scale ranging from 0 to 9, and these ratings were analyzed using a MDS procedure.

To aid in interpreting the MDS dimensions, seven of the experts subsequently rated each strategy on several attributes including: direct/indirect, unilateral/interactive, active/passive, and good/bad. Only seven experts did these ratings, because two of the nine original experts were already familiar with the MDS results and this knowledge might have influenced their attribute ratings. Attribute ratings were made on 7-point semantic differential scales.

### *MDS*

The goal of deriving a model of power strategies was achieved by analyzing the experts' similarity ratings. Specifically, the similarity ratings underwent a nonmetric individual difference model of MDS (alternating least squares scaling, ALSAL; Takane, Young, & deLeeuw, 1977) identical to that described in Falbo (1977). The model of power strategies derived in this study consists of an interpretation of the MDS results.

The MDS results consisted of a configuration of power strategies that graphically represented the experts' combined view of the strategies. Within the configuration, the distance between any two strategies indicated the degree of similarity these strategies were perceived to have. Closeness meant greater similarity. Centered within the configuration

<sup>1</sup>The experts included the authors plus Richard Centers, Jacqueline Goodchilds, Paula Johnson, David Kipnis, George Levinger, and Bertram Raven. An additional expert requested to be anonymous. The MDS results remained basically the same when the experts' ratings were analyzed without the ratings of the two authors.

were the dimensions underlying the experts' perceptions of the strategies. The placement of each strategy relative to the dimensions indicated the extent to which the experts' perception of the strategy was described in terms of these dimensions. More specific information about interpreting dimensions and configurations is presented in the Results section.

### Vectors

The relationships between power strategies and other variables such as gender were examined by projecting these variables as vectors into the MDS configuration. Basically, this was done by performing one multiple regression analysis for each variable under study. In these analyses, each strategy was treated as a case, the specific variable under study was the criterion variable, and the coordinates of the strategies within the configuration were the predictor variables. Therefore, the number of predictor variables was determined by the number of dimensions produced by the MDS analysis.

The  $b$  coefficients produced by these analyses served as the coordinates to locate variables as vectors within the configuration. For example, with a two-dimensional configuration, one would obtain from the regression analysis two  $b$  coefficients (one for each dimension) that would be used as indices of the vector's placement within the configuration. The  $b$  coefficient associated with the first predictor variable would be the vector's coordinate on the first dimension and the  $b$  coefficient associated with the second predictor variable would be the vector's coordinate on the second dimension. Such a vector would be literally projected into the MDS configuration by drawing a line between the point described by these coordinates and the point at which the two dimensions intersect.

The interpretation of the relationship between the vector and the power strategies was based on the placement of the strategies relative to the vector. Each vector represented an ordered sequence of scores ranging from the highest to lowest. An arrow was placed on each vector to indicate the end with the highest scores. Strategies closest to the high end of the vector were associated with high scores on the variable. Similarly, strategies closest to the middle or low end of the vector were associated with the middle to lowest range of scores on this variable.

The strength of the relationships between the configuration and the variable was also determined by the multiple regression analysis. The  $R^2$  produced by each analysis indicated the amount of variance shared between the power strategy configuration and the variable.

In particular, each variable projected as a vector in the configuration underwent a multiple optimal regression analysis (MORALS; Young, deLeeuw, & Takane, 1976) identical to that described by Falbo (1977). All such variables were measured in one of three possible ways. First, the experts' attributes ratings were translated to mean ratings per strategy.

These means were the criterion variables in the regression analyses. Second, when characteristics of the participants and their relationships were continuous variables, the criterion variables were the mean scores of all participants reporting the use of each strategy. Third, when these characteristics are measured at the nominal level, the criterion variables were represented as proportions. For example, the proportion of women (vs. men) and homosexuals (vs. heterosexuals) reporting the use of each strategy served as the criterion variables.

### Results

The results are divided in two parts. First, the results of the MDS analysis are described. Second, the results regarding the associations between characteristics of the participants, their relationships, and power strategies are presented.

#### *Power Strategies and the Configuration*

*Configuration.* The experts' similarity ratings of the 13 power strategies were analyzed by the multidimensional scaling analysis described in the Method section. Solutions based on one, two, and three dimensions were compared in terms of two criteria: the amount of variance accounted for by that solution and the clarity of interpretation of the results. Based on these criteria, the two-dimensional solution appeared preferable; it provided the most readily interpretable solution and accounted for 89% of the variance (compared to 67% for the one-dimensional solution and 94% for the three-dimensional solution). The two-dimensional configuration is presented in Figure 1.

Dimensions were initially labeled by examining the placement of particular power strategies within the MDS space. The horizontal dimension is anchored at one end by indirect ways of influence (e.g., positive and negative affect, hinting, withdrawing) and at the other end by more overt and direct strategies (e.g., asking, telling, talking). Thus the horizontal dimension has been labeled *directness*. The vertical dimension is anchored at one end by interactive strategies (persuasion, bargaining, reasoning, positive affect). At the other end are strategies in which one person takes independent action by simply doing what she or he wants (e.g., laissez-faire, with-

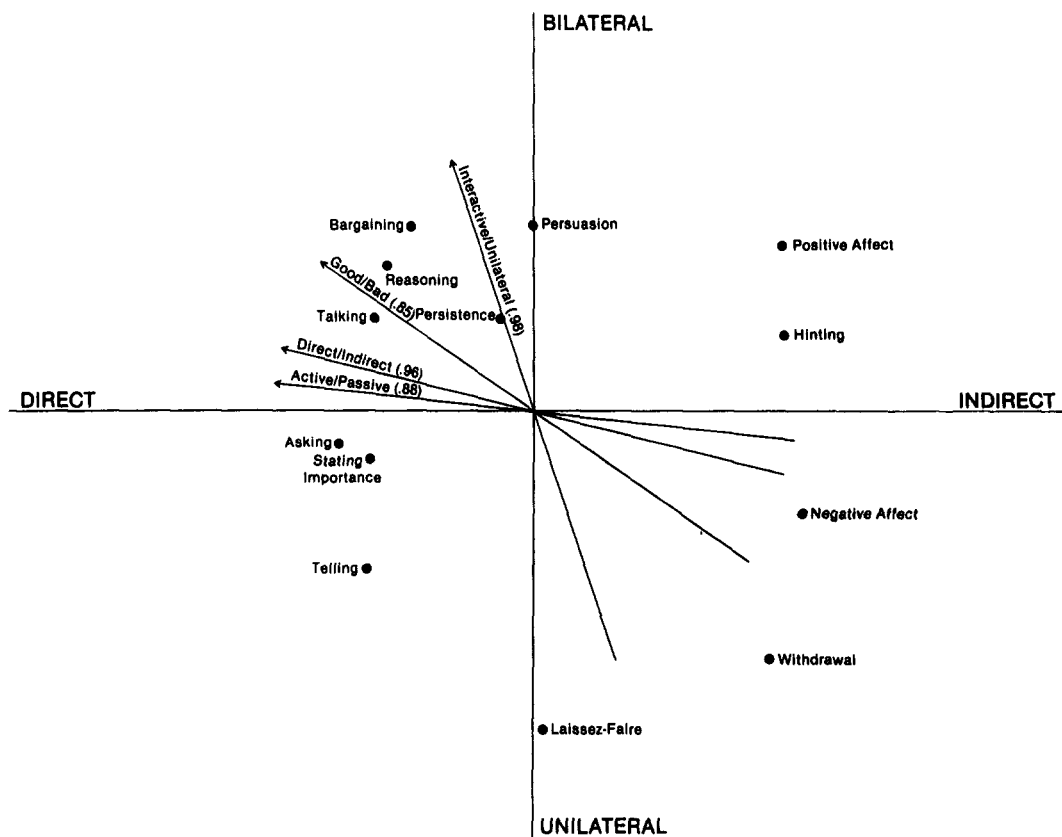


Figure 1. Power strategy configuration and four vectors representing attribute ratings of seven experts. (All vectors share a significant amount of variance with the configuration.)

drawing, telling). This dimension appears to reflect whether a strategy is unilateral versus bilateral. Therefore, the dimension is labeled *bilaterality*.

*Supporting analysis.* Figure 1 presents the vectors representing the experts' attribute ratings. All four attribute vectors shared a significant amount of variance with the configuration.

The placement and direction of vectors confirm the interpretation of the power strategy configuration presented above. As shown in Figure 1, vectors representing directness ( $R^2 = .96$ ) and activity ( $R^2 = .88$ ) are extremely close together and lie closest to and in the same direction as the directness dimension. These vectors indicate that strategies such as talking, asking, and telling are similar in that

they are perceived by the seven experts as extremely direct and active. Strategies near the opposite end of the vectors, such as hinting and positive and negative affect, are perceived as extremely indirect and passive. The vector representing the degree to which the strategies are perceived as interactive ( $R^2 = .98$ ) lies closest to, and in the same direction as, the bilaterality dimension. This means that strategies near the bilateral end, such as bargaining, are rated as highly interactive. Strategies at the other end of this dimension, such as laissez-faire, are rated as highly unilateral.

The fourth attribute rating, good/bad ( $R^2 = .85$ ), provides additional information about the two-dimensional configuration. The placement of this vector indicates that direct and

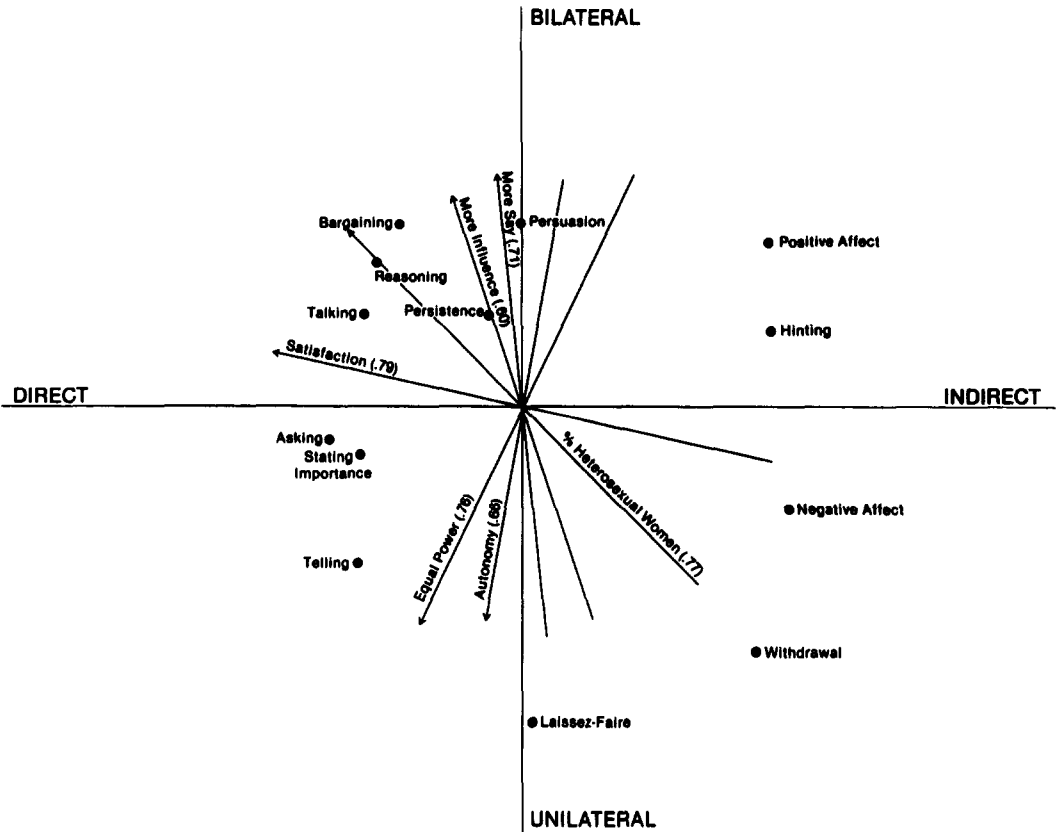


Figure 2. Power strategy configuration and six vectors representing characteristics of the participants and their relationships. (The multidimensional scaling configuration is identical to that presented in Figure 1. All vectors share a significant amount of variance with the configuration.)

bilateral strategies are regarded by the experts as good, whereas indirect and unilateral strategies are seen as bad.

#### *Characteristics of Participants and Their Relationships*

A major goal of the research is to examine associations between gender, egalitarianism, sexual orientation, and the use of power strategies in intimate relationships. Figure 2 portrays the vectors representing these characteristics of the participants and their relationship. Note that the basic power strategy configuration is the same in both Figures 1 and 2; only the vectors differ. The placement of these vectors indicates the association between the variable (as represented by a vector) and reported power strategy use. By

drawing the shortest line between a strategy and the vector, one locates the point on the vector that represents that strategy. By doing this for all strategies on the same vector, one can examine the relationship between the vector and power strategy use. The strategies closest to the high end of the vector are more likely to be used by people scoring high on this variable. Similarly, the strategies found in the middle or end of the vector are more likely to be used by people scoring in the middle or end, respectively, of the variable. This interpretation is possible because the scores generating the vectors are from the same sample that generated the power strategies.

*Gender and sexual orientation.* To test for gender differences, the proportion of women (vs. men) reporting each strategy was examined. This analysis was done separately for

the two sexual orientation groups. As shown in Figure 2, only one gender vector, which represents heterosexuals, had a statistically significant relationship ( $R^2 = .77$ ) with the configuration. As placed, this vector (*% heterosexual women*) indicates that the strategies reported by heterosexual men and women differ in that men are more likely to report using bilateral and direct strategies, whereas women are more likely to report using unilateral and indirect strategies. A similar vector that represents the proportion of female (vs. male) homosexuals reporting each strategy did not share a significant amount of variance with the configuration ( $R^2 = .23$ ). Therefore, it is not portrayed here because its location in the configuration is of questionable accuracy. This finding indicates that lesbians and gay men did not differ significantly from each other in the types of strategies they reported using.

To test the idea that homosexuality per se is associated with the use of strategies in intimate relationships that differ from those used by heterosexuals, a multiple optimal regression analysis was performed on the proportion of homosexuals (vs. heterosexuals) reporting each strategy. Since the results were not significant ( $R^2 = .46$ ), the variable is not projected as a vector in Figure 2. This finding means that homosexuals did not differ significantly from heterosexuals in the types of strategies they reported using in intimate relationships.

*Egalitarianism.* Other analyses examined personal preferences concerning power in intimate relationships. Two oppositely worded items concerned the importance to the person of having equal power (vector labeled *equal power*) and of having greater influence than the partner (vector labeled *more influence*). As shown in Figure 2, these vectors had significant and complementary relationships to the power strategy configuration. People who gave great importance to equality of power between intimate partners ( $R^2 = .76$ ) were more likely to report using unilateral strategies; people who deemphasized the importance of equal power were more likely to report using bilateral strategies. In similar fashion, people who gave little importance to having more influence than their partner ( $R^2$

$= .60$ ) used such unilateral strategies as *laissez-faire* and *withdrawal*, whereas people who preferred having relatively greater personal influence used such bilateral strategies as *bargaining*, *persuasion*, and *reasoning*.

The perceived balance of power (vector labeled *more say*) was also significantly related to the strategy configuration ( $R^2 = .71$ ). Individuals who reported having relatively greater power than their partner in their relationship were likely to report using bilateral power strategies. This is quite similar to the pattern found for the vector representing preferences for having more influence in which people who preferred to have greater influence than their partner also reported using bilateral strategies.

*Other characteristics.* The questionnaire included a five-item scale assessing the extent to which individuals personally valued autonomy and independence in intimate relationships. The *autonomy* vector shared a significant amount of variance with the power strategy configuration ( $R^2 = .66$ ). The placement of this vector indicates that people who prefer intimate relationships in which the partners are relatively independent are more likely to report using unilateral strategies; people who deemphasize personal autonomy are more likely to report using bilateral strategies. This finding provides further confirmation for designating the vertical dimension as representing bilaterality.

The questionnaire also included a measure of the individual's personal satisfaction with the relationship. As indicated by the vector *satisfaction* ( $R^2 = .79$ ), personal satisfaction is significantly associated with use of direct power strategies. Individuals who are satisfied with their relationships are likely to use such direct tactics as *asking*, whereas less satisfied individuals are likely to use more indirect strategies, such as *hinting*.

Three variables were considered to determine whether the model derived here could account for the range of participants' ages and relationship durations in the sample, as well as to determine if the model could account equally well for power strategies in an ongoing versus ended relationship. These three variables underwent multiple optimal regression analysis yielding the following results: age



$R^2 = .42$ , duration  $R^2 = .44$ , and currentness  $R^2 = .35$ . Since these results did not reach significance, they are not portrayed as vectors in Figure 2. These findings mean that none of these characteristics significantly differentiated participants in terms of their power strategy use in intimate relationships. This suggests that the initial age and duration differences between gender and sexual orientation groups do not significantly alter the relationships among gender, sexual orientation, and power strategy use.

*Other analyses.* To clarify the gender, egalitarianism, and sexual orientation results, five two-way analyses of variance were conducted. In these, the two independent variables were gender and sexual orientation, and the dependent variables were the participants' scores on the variables measuring preferences for and perceptions of having more influence, preferences for having equal influence, satisfaction, and autonomy.

No significant differences were found among the four groups in their satisfaction with their intimate relationships. But differences were found in participants' preferences for personal autonomy and egalitarianism in relationships, and in their perceptions of the actual balance of power in relationships. In general, these results lend credence to the notion that gender differences in power strategy use may reflect gender differences in preferences and perceptions of power.

Specifically, our results indicate that women placed greater value on autonomy than did men,  $F(1, 194) = 12.20$ ,  $p < .001$ , by showing greater preference for combining an intimate relationship with independent friends and activities. Women showed a greater preference than men did for having equal power in a relationship,  $F(1, 194) = 31.78$ ,  $p < .001$ , and they deemphasized the importance of having greater power than their partner,  $F(1, 194) = 10.20$ ,  $p < .002$ . Consistent with this gender difference in power preferences, women were also more likely to report that their relationship had an egalitarian (versus one-sided) balance of power,  $F(1, 194) = 3.91$ ,  $p < .05$ .

Two significant differences associated with sexual orientation were also found. Heterosexuals scored higher than homosexuals on preference for having relatively greater per-

sonal power,  $F(1, 194) = 6.14$ ,  $p < .01$ , and for perceptions of actually having somewhat greater power than their partner,  $F(1, 194) = 8.39$ ,  $p < .004$ . Homosexuals and heterosexuals did not differ in the importance given to having equal power in a relationship, nor in their preference for personal autonomy.

Finally, no interaction effects were found for gender and sexual orientation in any of the five dependent variables.

## Discussion

The study generated a two-dimensional model of power strategies in intimate relationships. According to this model, the two dimensions along which power strategies vary are labeled *directness* and *bilaterality*. These labels were confirmed by the placement of vectors representing the experts' ratings of the directness and interactiveness of the strategies. The directness dimension has, at the direct end, strategies such as asking the target and talking to the target about the desired goal and, at the indirect end, strategies such as hinting and putting the target in a good mood. This dimension is most strongly associated with satisfaction in the relationship; greater satisfaction is related to the use of direct strategies. The bilaterality dimension has, at the bilateral end, strategies such as persuasion and, at the unilateral end, strategies such as doing what you want anyway. This dimension is most strongly related to preferences for personal independence in intimate relationships. A stronger preference for independence is related to the use of unilateral strategies.

Further, because vectors representing age and relationship currentness and duration failed to share a significant amount of variance with the configuration, the two-dimensional model presented here accounts equally well for current and past relationships and for the range of ages and relationship durations represented in this sample.

A major goal of the present study was to identify associations between gender, sexual orientation, egalitarianism, and power strategy use in intimate relationships. Only among heterosexuals did the gender of the participants have a significant impact on the power strategies reportedly used in intimate rela-

tionships. Male heterosexuals were more likely to report using bilateral and direct strategies. In contrast, female heterosexuals were more likely to report using unilateral and indirect strategies.

Note further that gender differences among heterosexuals parallel the experts' good/bad ratings. This suggests that strategies used by male heterosexuals would be regarded as better than those used by female heterosexuals. Rather than simply indicating a bias, the experts' good/bad assessment of the strategies is supported by the additional finding that the use of primarily direct, but also bilateral, strategies is associated with greater satisfaction in the relationship.

The gender differences found among heterosexuals do not entirely fit into the results and conclusions of previous research (Johnson, 1978; Kipnis, 1976; Raven, Centers, & Rodrigues, 1975). Although previous research results and theory have agreed that women are more likely than men to use indirect strategies, the finding here that women are also more likely to use unilateral strategies is new. Perhaps the present results can be best explained in terms of power differences between heterosexual men and women. It is argued here that because men expect compliance to their influence attempts, they use bilateral and direct strategies. Conversely, because women anticipate noncompliance, they are more likely than men to report in their essays the use of unilateral strategies. Unilateral strategies do not require the partner's cooperation. Support for this interpretation comes from the fact that men in this sample were more likely than women to perceive themselves as having greater power than their intimate partner. Thus men perceived themselves to be influencing their partner from a position of relative strength, whereas women perceived themselves to be influencing their partner from a weaker or subordinate position. Note that bilateral and direct strategies are used not only by men but also by people who prefer and perceive themselves as having greater power than their partner.

To investigate this interpretation further, the essays were examined to see in what context unilateral strategies, such as *laissez-faire*, were used. This investigation supported the notion that unilateral strategies are used

when the goal is important and noncompliance is expected. For example, one woman wrote, "If what I want to do is more important and we can do it together, we do it, and vice versa. If not, we do whatever we want to do separately." Another woman wrote, "I'm straightforward. If he doesn't want to do what I want to do, I usually do it without him!"

Homosexuality was not associated with a distinctive pattern of power use in intimate relationships, nor was there an interaction of gender and sexual orientation in strategy use. Counter to the stereotype that homosexuals engage in cross-sex behavior, lesbians did not resemble heterosexual men in power use, nor did gay men show a pattern similar to that of heterosexual women. Overall, lesbians did not differ significantly from gay men in the types of strategies they reported using.

The results of this study indicate that the two-dimensional model of power strategies presented by Falbo (1977) is not completely descriptive of power strategies used in a specific intimate relationship. Although the two dimensions presented here bear a strong resemblance to those reported by Falbo (1977), only one of the two dimensions is so similar that it has the same label, directness. Nonetheless, the other dimension, bilaterality, is similar to the rational/nonrational dimension presented by Falbo (1977). Some strategies at the rational end of Falbo's model are identical to those at the bilateral end, for example, reasoning, bargaining, and persuasion. Strategies at the nonrational end of the Falbo model are similar to those at the unilateral end, with similar strategies receiving different labels, for example, evasion versus withdrawal, assertion versus telling.

Despite this similarity, the bilaterality dimension was labeled differently because the terms *bilateral/unilateral* appear to reflect the content of the present list of strategies better than the label *rationality*. The list of strategies in the present configuration differs somewhat from the earlier list in that new strategies, not found in the Falbo (1977) model (e.g., *laissez-faire*, stating importance), were added, and old strategies appearing in this earlier model (e.g., expertise, thought manipulation) were omitted. The difference between the present and earlier lists reflects the altered

content of the power essays, which in turn may be due in part to the fact that the essays reported in this study concerned power strategies used with a specific intimate partner, whereas the essays reported by Falbo (1977) were written in response to a more general question: How I get my way.

In summary, this study demonstrated that the Falbo (1977) two-dimensional model of power strategies does not completely describe the power strategies used with a specific target, in this case, an intimate partner. However, the differences between the present model and the previous one reflect an alteration in the kinds of strategies found in the configurations, rather than a total rearrangement of the strategies within the configuration. It is expected that similar changes in the model would take place whenever the target of the power strategy is changed. For example, since it is likely that the array of strategies used to influence an employer would differ somewhat from that used with an intimate partner, a model devised to describe the power strategies used with employers would probably have dimensions somewhat different from those of the present or previous model. It is argued here that this flexibility is a strength of the present approach rather than a weakness. Models for specific purposes can be devised that maintain a measurable resemblance to the more general model (Falbo, 1977) but also reflect the specific targets and agents of a given power situation. Furthermore, such models provide a framework for interpreting the associations between power strategy use and characteristics of the agent and target.

#### Reference Note

1. Goodchilds, J. D., Quadrado, C., & Raven, B. H. *Getting one's way: Self-reported influence strategies*. Paper presented at the meeting of the Western Psychological Association, Sacramento, Calif., April 1975.

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