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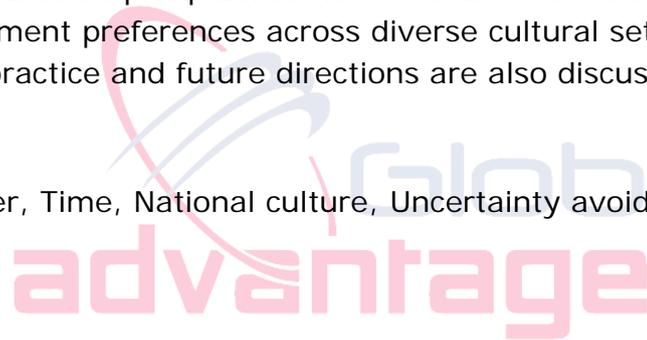
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Power and temporal commitment preference: An investigation in Portugal, Turkey, and the United States

ABSTRACT

The current research explores the impact of power on temporal commitment preference (an individual's preference for shorter or longer time durations for agreements in decision making situations) across three countries: Portugal, Turkey, and the United States. A pilot study (N = 356) established cultural differences in uncertainty avoidance, which was expected to impact choices and behaviors involving power and temporality. The main study (N = 433) investigated the relationship between power and temporal commitment preference. Across all countries, high power individuals preferred shorter temporal commitments than low power individuals. In addition, the U.S. participants preferred longer temporal commitments than either the Portuguese or Turkish participants. We argue that differences in uncertainty avoidance help explain some of the differences in individuals' temporal commitment preferences across diverse cultural settings. Implications for practice and future directions are also discussed.

Keywords: Power, Time, National culture, Uncertainty avoidance.



INTRODUCTION

Power bestows on its holder the capacity to impose his or her will on others, to put pressure on others to do things that help the powerful achieve their objectives (Boulding, 1989; Pfeffer, 1992). Individuals with power control resources and possess skills that are important in organizations, and, consequently, can push for their own objectives, influence plans, determine strategies, and shape outcomes for others (Kipnis, 1976; Ng, 1980). Thus, in organizations, those with power are decision drivers who have the ability to get things done (Mintzberg, 1983). As a result, identifying the power relationship between parties in decision making situations is important because *a priori* assessments of who has or lacks power may help explain the characteristics of decisions (Kim, Pinkley, & Fragale, 2005).

Among the conditions that the powerful can often impose on others are the temporal characteristics of decisions. In the current investigation, we explore one such temporal characteristic: the time duration over which a policy, strategy, agreement, or contract will be binding. Individuals' preferences for a certain time duration over which an agreement will remain in place, referred here as temporal commitment preferences, can have important consequences for organizations, locking decision makers into or out of favorable or unfavorable decisions and potentially affecting broader outcomes such as organizational effectiveness. Although there has been a flurry of research on power and on time in decision-making, the impact of power on temporal commitment preference has not been established.

Temporal choices are also likely to be influenced by the cultural environment that individuals are embedded in. However, little is known regarding the effect of culture on temporality in decision making situations (Armagan, Ferreira, Bonner, & Okhuysen, 2006). Culture serves as a lens to understand, interpret, and navigate the world (e.g., Markus & Kitayama, 1991) and an important driver of values (what is considered important) and means (how to go about fulfilling what is important). In essence, culture constrains, directs, and steers thought and behavior. Although cultures vary on a number of important dimensions, we believe that as an underlying

cultural value, uncertainty avoidance (Dorfman & Howell, 1988; Hofstede, 1980a) is a particularly potent predictor of temporal preferences in decision making.

The present research investigates the influence of power on temporal commitment preference across three separate national cultures: Portugal, Turkey, and the U.S. We selected these three national cultures because they belong to distinct cultural clusters: Portugal to the Latin Europe cluster, Turkey to the Arabic cluster, and the U.S. to the Anglo cluster (see Ashkanasy, Trevor-Roberts, & Earnshaw, 2002; Jesuino, 2002; Kabasakal & Bodur, 2002). We examined the effects of power and national culture on temporal commitment preference in a negotiation because it represents the type of collective mixed-motive decision making that occurs at all levels and types of organizations (Stuhlmacher & Walters, 1999). We first present a pilot study to establish cross-cultural differences in uncertainty avoidance. Then, we present our main study which explores the relationship between power, national culture, and temporal commitment preference.

POWER

Power is typically defined as asymmetric control over valuable resources and outcomes within a specific situation and set of social relations (Fiske, 1993; Fiske & Berdahl, 2007; Keltner, Gruenfeld, & Anderson, 2003; Magee & Galinsky, in press; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959). This definition of power implicitly involves both control over and independence from others in obtaining important outcomes (Emerson, 1962). As a mechanism of control and influence, power often involves putting pressure on others, driving others to do the things that will help the powerful accomplish their own objectives (Boulding, 1989; Pfeffer, 1992). Control over resources, and therefore having power, often comes from a structural position, or the role an individual occupies in a formal hierarchy (Brass & Burkhardt, 1993; Kipnis, 1976; Mintzberg, 1983; Ng, 1980). In addition, in decision-making contexts such as negotiation, individuals have power based on the quality of alternatives available to them, referred to as the Best Alternative to a Negotiated Agreement (BATNA) (Fisher & Ury, 1981; Pinkley, Neale & Bennett, 1994). In this paper, we instantiate power in two ways:

alternatives to an agreement (strong vs. weak) in a negotiation and formal role (management representative vs. labor union representative).

Power and Temporal Commitment Preference

To understand the impact of power on temporal commitment preference, a useful lens is the approach/inhibition theory of power proposed by Keltner et al. (2003). According to this theory, high power is related to increased rewards and freedom, and therefore high power tends to activate approach-related tendencies. Conversely, low power is related to increased threat, punishment, and social constraint and therefore low power activates inhibition-related tendencies. Consequently, those with power experience more positive emotion (Anderson & Berdahl, 2002), are more optimistic (Anderson & Galinsky, 2006), take more risks (Anderson & Galinsky, 2006), and are more action-oriented (Galinsky, Gruenfeld, & Magee, 2003).

As a result of approach-related tendencies, high power individuals are likely to feel more optimistic and confident about improving current benefits in future exchanges such as negotiations than low power individuals. Therefore, compared to those who lack power, the powerful may be more likely to prefer agreements with shorter time commitments because these agreements afford the opportunity to improve one's situation sooner rather than later. On the other hand, since powerlessness has been linked to negative affect, inhibition, and perceiving the environment as more threatening (Keltner et al., 2003), we expect that individuals in low power situations prefer to lock into agreements for longer time horizons to benefit from the security inherent in a longer agreement. Because power often emerges from the strength of one's alternatives in negotiations, having a strong alternative to a current negotiation will lead individuals to prefer a relatively short time commitment.

Hypothesis 1: Individuals who possess power in a negotiation (e.g., have a strong BATNA) will prefer shorter temporal commitments than those who lack power (e.g., have a weak BATNA).

Although having a strong or weak BATNA can determine individuals' power, the power that individuals possess can also accrue from the

structural position (hierarchy) of the individual (Brass & Burkhardt, 1993; Kipnis, 1976; Mintzberg, 1983; Ng, 1980). Thus, we expect that those who perceive themselves as occupying more powerful roles in organizations will prefer shorter temporal commitments than those who perceive themselves as occupying less powerful positions. In a labor negotiation setting, the one we use for the scenarios of the current research, an individual representing management may be likely to perceive him or herself as possessing more power than an individual representing the labor union, since the former represents the employer and the latter represents the employees. This is consistent with the notion that the roles occupied by negotiators may represent differential sources of power; for example, previous research suggested that, in job negotiations, recruiters possess more power and are more likely to have an intention to make the first offer than candidates (Magee, Galinsky, & Gruenfeld, 2007). Accordingly, we expect that management representatives will prefer shorter temporal commitments than labor union representatives. Thus, we formally hypothesize a difference across roles in a labor negotiation setting.

Hypothesis 2: Individuals in high-power roles (e.g., management representative) will prefer shorter temporal commitments than those in low-power roles (e.g., labor union representative).

Uncertainty Avoidance and Temporal Commitment Preference

In addition to the power they possess, individuals' temporal commitment preferences may also depend on the amount of uncertainty they are willing to shoulder. One relevant stream of evidence that provides a link between time and uncertainty is the research on delays in decision outcomes (e.g., Jones & Johnson, 1973; Kahneman & Tversky, 1979; Prelec & Loewenstein, 1991; Shelley, 1994). Delays in the realization of decision outcomes (i.e., time delays) involve uncertainty and consequently more risk. Larger delays naturally carry more uncertainty because unexpected events may occur in the meantime (Keren & Roelofsma, 1995). One way in which individuals can respond to and reduce the uncertainty of future outcomes is by creating contractual agreements, which provide stability for the parties to an agreement. When a contract is binding for a longer period, the uncertainty is lessened for a longer period of time.

One of the dimensions of culture that distinguish individuals' attitude towards ambiguity is uncertainty avoidance, which is the degree to which people in a given culture feel threatened by uncertain and ambiguous situations and seek to avoid them (Dorfman & Howell, 1988; Hofstede 1980b). Cultures low in uncertainty avoidance are open to change, have a propensity to take risks, and tend to accept varying situational demands (Hofstede, 1980a; House, Hanges, Ruiz-Quintanilla, Dorfman, Javidan, & GLOBE associates, 1999). Cultures high in uncertainty avoidance tend to resist change as it threatens stability and brings about uncertainty (Harzing & Hofstede, 1996; Steensma, Marino, & Dickson, 2000).

Uncertainty avoidance is generally associated with a preference for maintaining the status quo and committing to the present situation. For example, Hofstede (1980b) asserted that since individuals high on uncertainty avoidance seek greater career stability, prefer formal rules, and avoid risk, they stay longer in their jobs and have less intention to leave their organizations. In addition, uncertainty avoidance has been linked to increased planning activity (Hofstede, 2001) and the length of planning time horizon (Haiss, 1990). For instance, cultures that are low on uncertainty avoidance tend to prefer more flexible, short-term strategic planning processes (Brock, Barry, & Thomas, 2000). Consistent with the notion that high levels of uncertainty avoidance is associated with maintaining the status quo to a larger degree, increased planning activity (Hofstede, 2001), and long-term planning processes (Brock et al., 2000), we suggest that members of cultures higher on uncertainty avoidance will prefer to commit to longer agreements to minimize the uncertainty of the future.

Hypothesis 3: Individuals in cultures higher in uncertainty avoidance will prefer longer temporal commitments than individuals in cultures lower in uncertainty avoidance.

Power, Uncertainty Avoidance, and Temporal Commitment Preference

The impact of power, whether stemming from a strong alternative to a situation or from a structural role, on temporal commitment preference is likely to be affected by the cultural context in which individuals are

embedded in. Although power stemming from a situation (such as having a strong BATNA) and role (such as occupying a powerful position in the hierarchy) should be negatively related to temporal commitment preference (as spelled out in Hypotheses 1 and 2), we expect these relationships to be stronger for individuals embedded in cultures lower on uncertainty avoidance since these individuals tend to be more accepting of varying situational demands (Hofstede, 1980a; House et al. 1999). In contrast, in those cultures higher on uncertainty avoidance, individuals' desire for longer contracts may override any situation variability caused by differences in power.

Hypothesis 4: National culture will moderate the relationship between power and temporal commitment preference, such that the difference between high and low power on length of temporal commitments will be stronger in lower uncertainty avoidance cultures than in higher uncertainty avoidance cultures.

RESEARCH OVERVIEW

A pilot study was conducted to establish whether there were differences on uncertainty avoidance across Portugal, Turkey, and the U.S. Although such measurement has taken place before (e.g., Hofstede, 1980a; House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman, & Gupta, 2004), our desire was to establish these differences in the specific setting for our research, the undergraduate business classroom. Subsequently, we conducted the main study to test our hypotheses, examining the effect of power and national culture on temporal commitment preference.

Pilot Study

Method

Participants and Procedures

Three hundred and sixty-five business undergraduate students majoring in business administration participated in this study. These students were enrolled in universities in Portugal (N= 154), Turkey (N= 117), and the U.S. (N= 85). To assess cultural differences across the three countries, we used Dorfman and Howell's (1988) five-item uncertainty avoidance scale, anchored at 1 (strongly disagree) and 7 (strongly agree)

(e.g., Clugston, Howell & Dorfman, 2000; Dorfman & Howell, 1988). A sample item asked respondents to report the extent to which they believed “it is important to have job requirements and instructions spelled out in detail so that employees always know what they are expected to do.” The questionnaire that included the scale was originally written in English and then was translated to and back-translated from Portuguese and Turkish by two bilingual members of the research team.

RESULTS

We subjected the responses to principal factor analysis to establish the adequacy of the scale. Four items loaded on one factor, with a fifth loading poorly (.38). This item was excluded from subsequent analysis. We averaged the responses of the remaining four items to create an uncertainty avoidance score ($\alpha = .74$). Using ANOVA we found a significant difference on uncertainty avoidance across countries, $F(2,355) = 4.03, p < .05$. The Turks ($M = 5.53, SD = .93$) were the least uncertainty avoidant whereas the U.S. participants were the most uncertainty avoidant ($M = 5.87, SD = .93$). The score for the Portuguese was in between the U.S. participants and the Turks ($M = 5.74, SD = .76$). The Portugal and Turkey samples differed significantly ($t(353) = 1.98, p < .05$), as did the Turkey and the U.S. ($t(353) = 2.74, p < .01$). There was no statistical difference between Portugal and the U.S. ($t(353) = -1.10, n.s.$). Having established a baseline difference in uncertainty avoidance across the three cultures of interest, we proceeded with our main study.

Main Study

Method

Participants and Design

433 undergraduate business students enrolled in universities in Portugal ($N = 190$, mean age = 25.3 (sd. = 4.84), 139 women (74%)), Turkey ($N = 103$, mean age = 21.57 (sd = 1.48), 40 women (39%)), and the U.S. ($N = 140$, mean age = 23.5 (sd = 2.27), 47 women (34%)) participated in this experiment. These students were a separate sample of participants from those who participated in the pilot study. The design was a 2 (Power: high vs. low) x 2 (Role: management vs. labor union

representative) x 3 (Country: Portugal, Turkey, U.S.) between-subjects design.

Materials and Procedure

This study involved preparation for a labor negotiation between a management and a labor union representative. We selected a labor negotiation scenario because it provides a setting that could be understood by all participants: in all three national cultures, labor unions play an important role in conversations about business, and thus our subjects would be expected to have some familiarity with the issues presented. The materials were originally written in English and then translated into Portuguese and Turkish by two native speaking members of the research team. Each translation was discussed with another bilingual speaker and inconsistencies were resolved. The materials were then back-translated from Portuguese and Turkish by two bilingual members of the research team. Participants in all countries were asked to assume the role of a management or of a labor union representative of a medium-sized firm with a unionized workforce. The negotiation involved a contract between the labor union and management that had just expired and thus bargaining for a new contract was about to begin. In the materials, participants were told that they had multiple issues to negotiate on (e.g. salary, bonuses, sick leave, vacation time, medical insurance, and the length of the contract).

Manipulations

Role was manipulated in the materials by assigning participants to either represent management or the labor union. Power was manipulated by informing participants about the strength of their alternatives. Specifically, half of the participants read that the pool of potential employees had decreased making it difficult for managers to hire new employees if no agreement was reached with the union representative (management low power) but making finding alternative jobs easy for workers (labor high power). Half of the participants read that the pool of potential employees had increased making it easy for managers to hire new employees (management high power) but making finding alternative jobs difficult for workers (labor low power). This manipulation uses a BATNA to manipulate

power in a negotiation setting (Pinkley et al., 1994, Magee et al., 2007). If the negotiator has an attractive BATNA, then he or she is less dependent on the outcome of the particular negotiation because he or she can do well elsewhere (Sondak & Bazerman, 1991). Power was coded as high power (1) and low power (0). Role was coded as management representative (1) or labor union representative (0). Country was coded for each of the three countries, as Portugal (1), Turkey (2), and the U.S. (3).

Measure

Our main dependent measure was the preferred contract length which reflected participants' temporal commitment preferences. We asked participants their preference for the duration of the contract on a scale from one year to seven years.

Manipulation Check

As a manipulation check, we asked participants who they thought had more power in this negotiation: management or the labor union on a 1 to 7 scale (1 = management has more power, 4 = management and labor union have equal power, 7 = labor union has more power). These were recorded on a 1 (management/labor union has less power) to 7 (management/labor union has more power) scale to capture participants' perceived power.

RESULTS

Manipulation check. We submitted the manipulation check to a 2 (Power: high vs. low) x 2 (Role: management vs. labor union representative) between-subjects ANOVA. The main effect of power was significant ($F(1,433) = 165.59, p < .01$). In particular, high power participants reported that their group had more power ($M = 5.08, SD = 1.47$) and the low power participants recognized they were in a less powerful situation ($M = 3.30, SD = 1.47$). Because we predicted that participants in the management and labor roles would perceive themselves as having more or less power on the basis of their role, we also tested for this effect, which was also significant ($F(1,433) = 14.20, p < .01$), with management representatives perceiving they had more power ($M = 4.43,$

$SD = 1.70$) than labor union representatives ($M = 3.95$, $SD = 1.71$). The interaction between power and role was not significant ($F(1,433) = .01$, ns).

Hypotheses tests. To test our hypotheses, we submitted contract length to a 2 (Power: high vs. low) x 2 (Role: management vs. labor union representative) x 3 (Country: Portugal, Turkey, U.S.) between-subjects ANOVA. Hypothesis 1 predicted that power stemming from BATNA would produce a shorter temporal commitment preference. The results of the analysis of variance showed a significant effect for power, $F(1, 433) = 6.24$, $p = .013$. High power participants preferred a shorter temporal commitment ($M = 3.07$, $SD = 1.73$) than low power participants ($M = 3.42$, $SD = 1.70$), supporting Hypothesis 1. Hypothesis 2 suggested that the manager role would prefer a shorter temporal commitment preference than the union role. The role condition (i.e., individual's role as a management or as a labor union representative) had a significant effect on contract length, $F(1, 433) = 9.56$, $p = .002$, where management representatives preferred a shorter contract length ($M = 3.0$, $SD = 1.70$) than did labor union representatives ($M = 3.48$, $SD = 1.70$). Thus, Hypothesis 2 was also supported.

Hypothesis 3 predicted that individuals in higher uncertainty avoidance cultures would prefer longer temporal commitments than individuals in cultures low in uncertainty avoidance. We found a significant effect for country, $F(2, 433) = 15.76$, $p = .00$. In particular, participants in the U.S. ($M = 3.88$, $SD = 1.70$) preferred longer temporal commitments (i.e., longer contract length) than the Turkish participants ($M = 2.99$, $SD = 1.90$), who preferred longer temporal commitments than the Portuguese ($M = 2.92$, $SD = 1.50$). The U.S. participants preferred longer contracts lengths than the Turkish ($t(430) = 4.11$, $p = .00$) and the Portuguese participants ($t(430) = 5.20$, $p = .00$). However, there was no significant difference between Portuguese and Turkish participants ($t(430) = -0.37$, ns). The mean contract lengths across the three countries are shown in the Figure. The finding that the U.S. participants prefer longer temporal commitments than the Turkish participants is consistent with the finding from the pilot study showing that the U.S. participants score higher on uncertainty avoidance than the Turkish participants. However, even though we found no

differences between the U.S. and Portugal on uncertainty avoidance in the pilot study, the U.S. participants preferred longer contracts than the Portuguese. Therefore, Hypothesis 3 was supported for the U.S. and Turkey, but not for Portugal.

Hypothesis 4 suggested that national culture moderates the relationship between power, stemming from BATNA or role, and temporal commitment preference. However, national culture did not moderate the relationship between power from BATNA and temporal commitment preference ($F(2, 433) = 1.71, ns$) or between power from role and temporal commitment preference ($F(2, 433) = .66, ns$). Therefore, Hypothesis 4 was not supported.

DISCUSSION

The current research is the first to examine the relationship between power and temporal commitment preference, with the results generally supporting our predictions. Power, both defined in terms of strength of alternatives and role (management vs. union representative) led negotiators to prefer a shorter contract length. Thus, power led to a preference for shorter time commitments. In addition, based on cross-national differences in uncertainty avoidance, negotiators in the U.S., which scored higher on uncertainty avoidance than Turkey, preferred longer contract lengths than those in Turkey (and Portugal). However, power and nationality did not interact. Thus, the effect of power on time commitment preferences was constant across countries.

The current research provides a number of important contributions to the existing literature. Our first contribution is to the literature on power. Our findings highlight the importance of power by showing how those with power, whether their power comes from having a strong alternative or from occupying a powerful role, exhibit a preference for shorter time horizons in their agreements. This finding is consistent with the approach/inhibition theory of power, which suggests that when individuals are in positions of power they psychologically experience increased rewards and freedom, whereas those without power see the environment as more threatening and less rewarding (Keltner et al., 2003). We also contribute to the literature on

power by examining the impact of power in multiple cultural settings simultaneously. Although theory and research on power has grown over the years (Keltner et al., 2003), the study of power has mostly focused on the U.S.; therefore, it is increasingly important to examine the role of power in diverse cultural settings to test the robustness of current theories while also opening up possible avenues for new research.

It is important to note that, in addition to power and national culture, a number of other factors may also play a role in explaining individuals' temporal commitment preferences, including previous relationship history, expectations of change in power relationship in the future, and desire to build a relationship with the other party. While we singled out the effects of power and national culture on temporal commitment preference, we encourage future research to examine other factors that are likely to influence individuals' temporal commitment preferences. Examining a full range of factors in addition to the ones presented in the current research can lead to a development of a complete model of temporal preferences in decision making.

Another contribution of this work is to the literature on cross-cultural organizational behavior given our measurement of a cultural attribute (i.e., uncertainty avoidance) in specific subcultures of interest (i.e., business students). Our work identifies a discrepancy between current and previous findings (i.e., see Ashkanasy et al., 2002, Jesuino, 2002, and Kabasakal & Bodur, 2002 for findings of project GLOBE; Hofstede, 1980a) vis-à-vis cultural values of the Portuguese, Americans, and the Turks. Specifically, some of our measures of these values, and the relative ordering across the three countries on those constructs, are different from earlier research¹. Although it would be tempting to dismiss such a discrepancy as a mere

¹ In summary form, the discrepancy is as follows. On uncertainty avoidance, we found that the U.S. participants scored higher than the Turkish participants but the same as the Portuguese participants, who scored higher than the Turkish participants. On the other hand, the findings of project GLOBE rated Turkey higher on uncertainty avoidance than Portugal, which was rated higher than the U.S. (see Ashkanasy et al., 2002, Jesuino, 2002 and Kabasakal & Bodur, 2002 for "should be" findings of project GLOBE). In contrast, Hofstede's (1980a) work rated Portugal as more uncertainty avoidant than Turkey. It is important to note that the comparisons across countries reported by project Globe (House et al., 2004) and Hofstede (1980a) are mean value comparisons rather than statistical ones.

empirical error, we believe that our work instead points to the importance of measuring cultural values in the specific population or sub-population of interest rather than readily assuming the immediate relevance of previous research findings of cultural values. Therefore, we encourage researchers to study the cultural characteristics of sub-cultures when the theoretical and/or empirical approach they take demands them to do so.

The work we present here also contributes to the literature on decision making. By identifying individuals' temporal preferences as one facet of the decision making process, we expand on the range of phenomena at the intersection of decision making and time (Albert, 1995; Eisenhardt, 1989). Earlier research has considered, for example, the idea that decisions have a "period of maturation," during which the effects of a given choice become evident (Albert, 1995). However, the notion that periods during which a decision is relevant can be fixed as an a priori characteristic in the decision making process has received less attention. Agreements bind individuals to specific outcomes for a period of time. Thus, individuals' preferences for longer or shorter temporal durations can have significant implications for organizations by binding organizations to beneficial or costly decisions. Given that our results show that differences in power can affect preferences for longer and shorter periods for a decision, this is an area that deserves further attention.

This paper contributes to the literature on time by introducing the notion of temporal commitment preference and examining it as a dependent variable. Often, time and temporal characteristics are treated as independent variables (for instance, through the use of deadlines), and although researchers have emphasized their influence, they have largely ignored their role as products of human activity (e.g., Benson & Beach, 1996; Harinck & De Dreu, 2004; Moore, 2004; Mosterd & Rutte, 2000; Okhuysen, Galinsky, & Uptigrove, 2003; Stuhlmacher & Champagne, 2000). However, considering temporal characteristics from multiple angles allows for a more complete understanding of their role in understanding human behavior. Thus, we encourage future research to consider time and temporal characteristics as outcomes of interest rather than only as predictors of other phenomena.

We also contribute to the literature on time by incorporating national culture into our examination of temporal phenomena. This is critical as earlier research has emphasized that time is culturally bound (Armagan et al., 2006; Foster 1992; Hall, 1959, 1983; Hall & Hall, 1990). For example, our results showed that individuals in the U.S. preferred longer temporal commitments on agreements than individuals in Turkey. This result is consistent with higher uncertainty avoidance scores for the U.S. than for Turkey in the pilot study. Somewhat unexpectedly, the Portuguese exhibited a preference for shorter temporal commitments than individuals in the U.S. and Turkey even though the Portuguese did not differ in uncertainty avoidance from individuals in the U.S. and were more uncertainty avoidant than the Turks. This finding suggests that uncertainty avoidance may not fully capture underlying differences in temporal preferences across cultures. Instead, other national environment factors may operate simultaneously during decision making. These factors include elements such as economy (e.g., economic stability, unemployment rate), legal systems (e.g., labor protection laws), and culture (e.g., long term orientation, future orientation) (Armagan et al., 2006). Together with our findings, future research may benefit from an understanding of the influence of these factors on individuals' temporal preferences in decision making situations.

With regards to implications for practice, our results suggest that identifying power differences, especially in collective decision making contexts like negotiation, may benefit parties by allowing them to anticipate temporal preferences of their opponents and to take precautions to mitigate potential conflict. For the powerless, one such precaution may be to include the length of the agreement or contract as an item in the negotiation, making it an explicit part of the decision process. This can ensure that parties discuss the length of the agreement and strike a deal on this issue rather than the powerless simply agreeing to the terms of the powerful. Additionally, our work suggests that it is important for negotiators to identify cultural differences when dealing with negotiators from other countries since these differences may bear on parties' temporal preferences. For example, an Anglo cluster negotiator, such as a U.S. negotiator, may be likely to prefer longer agreements than an Arabic cluster negotiator, such as

a Turkish negotiator, who may be likely to prefer longer agreements than a Latin Europe cluster negotiator such as a Portuguese negotiator. Bringing length of agreement into the negotiation as an explicit item may be helpful in these instances as well.

CONCLUSION

Across three cultural contexts, we established that power and temporal preferences are closely related. Power, as a basic force in social relationships (Fiske, 1993), led negotiators to prefer shorter time commitments on agreements. Thus, it is not surprising that several decades ago, Russell (1938) observed that “the fundamental concept in social science is Power, in the same sense in which Energy is the fundamental concept in physics” (p. 10). It is our hope that this article will motivate future research on the impact of power on time preferences both in intra- and inter-cultural contexts.



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Figure. Mean contract length, by power and role conditions, across countries (Main Study).

