

The Activist in All of Us:

Varieties of Action in Attempts to Challenge Status Hierarchies

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System Justification (Jost & Banaji, 1994)

Lower power individuals maladaptively maintain systems that derogate them.

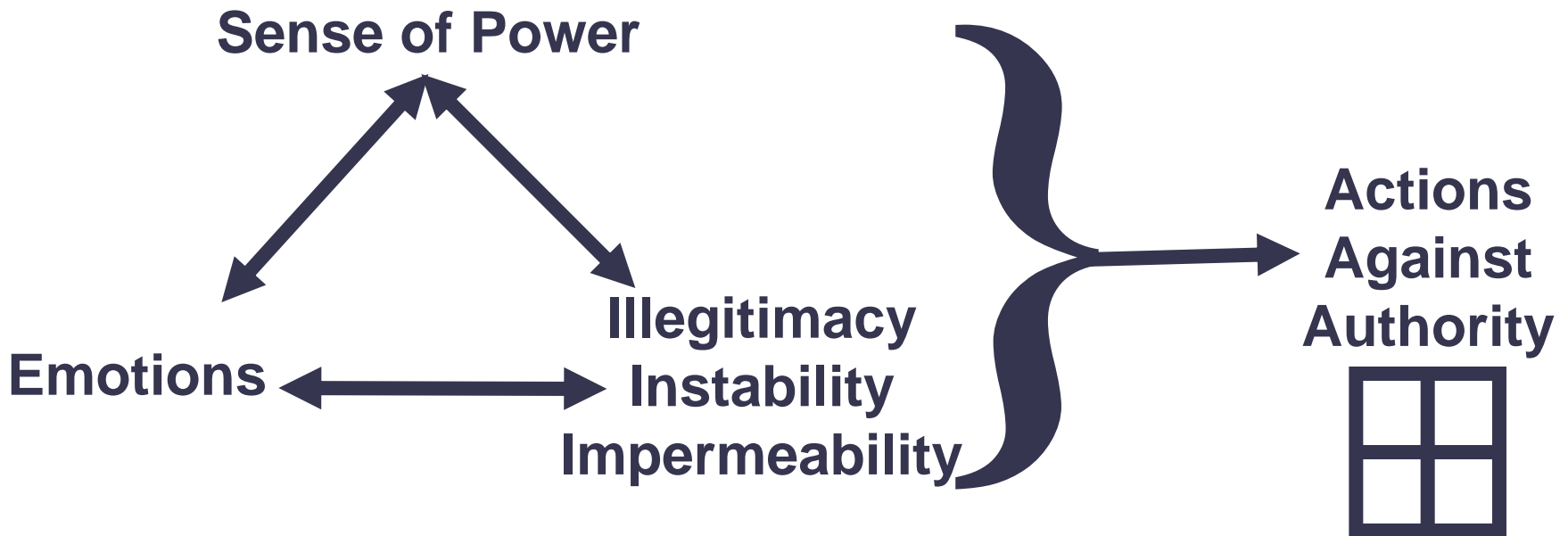
Stereotyping + False Consciousness:

People perpetuate beliefs and categorizations that disadvantage themselves or their group and maintain their disadvantaged position – even self-righteously

“I’m poor but happy – the rich are sad.” (Jost and Kay, 2004)

Model of Action

What factors lead low power individuals to maintain their subordinated position in a hierarchy or attempt to overturn the power hierarchy?



Sense of Power and Action

- **Power activates the Behavioral Approach System (Keltner, Gruenfeld, & Anderson, 2003)**
- **Individuals who possess a sense of power are more likely to take action in general (Galinsky, Gruenfeld, & Magee, 2003).**
Low power individuals primed with high power will be more likely to take action to change their social situation and environmental stimuli that irritate them.
- **In addition, we contend that low power individuals who have a high sense of power will be more likely to act against those in positions of authority over them.**

Emotions and Action

- **Individuals primed with anger as opposed to fear were more likely to act to change their circumstances (Martin, 1993).**
- **Anger is associated with high status (Tiedens, 2001)**
- **Fear and sadness are associated with low status (Tiedens, 2001).**

Identity Theory Factors

Low power individuals will only rebel against power hierarchies when the hierarchy is perceived to exhibit: (Tajfel & Turner, 1986)

- **Illegitimacy** of the hierarchy
- **Instability** of hierarchy to change
- **Impermeability** to individual advancement

A Typology of Actions Against Authority

	Overt	Covert
Non-Normative	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Riots, revolutions• Terrorism• Wildcat strike	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Covert Sabotage (computer viruses, defacing property)• Compensatory or justice-motivated theft.
Normative	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Openly discuss grievances• Proxy statements at annual shareholder meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Complain in private with colleagues• Send anonymous e-mail expressing concerns

Overview of First Experiment

2 x 2 Research Design ☒

Power Prime:

High or Low Sense of Power

Legitimacy manipulation:

Legitimate or Illegitimate promotion policy in scenario

Dependant Variable Action ratings:

Exit: psychological and physical

Voice: overt/covert – normative/non-normative ☒

Loyalty: individual mobility

Measured amount of anger

Sense of Power

The phenomenological, subjective experience of power.

Autobiographical recall prime (Galinsky, Gruenfeld & Magee, 2003)

High power:

Recall a particular incident in which **you had power over another individual** or individuals. By power, we mean a situation in which you controlled the ability of another person or persons to get something they wanted, or were in a position to evaluate those individuals. Please describe this situation in which you had power—what happened, how you felt, etc.

Low power:

Recall a particular incident in which **someone else had power over you**. By power, we mean a situation in which someone had control over your ability to get something you wanted, or was in a position to evaluate you. Please describe this situation in which you did not have power—what happened, how you felt, etc.



Scenario

Apex is a 200-person information services and consulting services firm. Apex has been serving a similar client base for 25 years and its profits, size and market have remained relatively stable. You have been an employee of Apex Corporation for 3 years. You are a Service Representative, which means that you supervise Junior Service Representatives and manage accounts. You have reached the highest position you can reach before entering upper management. Your responsibilities differ from those of Senior Managers (one level above you) because Senior Managers make the final decisions concerning hiring and salaries and create and implement initiatives.

The CEO/founder has maintained the same organizational structure and promotion structure since the firm's inception. Individuals are not promoted from within to Senior Manager positions. Instead, he has filled all previous upper level management positions from the outside.

Illegitimacy of the Hierarchy

- Manipulated legitimacy of the hierarchy

Legitimate prior knowledge of the policy and
lack of skills necessary to advance.

Illegitimate no prior knowledge of the policy and
possession of skills necessary to advance.

- Instability of hierarchy to change
(held constant)

- Impermeability to individual advancement
(held constant) (Ellemers, Wilke, & van Knippenberg 1993)



Legitimate Scenario

These hiring decisions and the ability to create and implement new initiatives require astute assessments, accurate performance evaluations, and other sensitive data analytic skills. They require considerable expertise.

The people who have been hired for these positions have had extensive experience with create new initiatives and making hiring decisions in other successful companies. They have extensive credentials that you and Apex's other Service Representatives do not have.

You have thought about these policies and have considered discussing them with others. Yet, you feel and you think that your Service Representative peers seem to feel that you don't have the skills necessary to perform the same duties as Senior Managers.



Illegitimate Scenario

These decisions regarding initiatives and hiring are made by using simple applications of straightforward, well understood decision making techniques. They seem to require no particular expertise.

The people who have been hired for these positions have had no special experience. They seem to have qualifications that are no different from yours. In fact, their selection seems to have been on the basis of the CEO's whim and personal preference more than any real qualifications.

You have thought about these policies and have considered discussing them with others. You feel and you think that your Service Representative peers seem to feel that you have the skills that are needed to perform Senior Managers' duties.

Dependent Variable: Types of Actions

● Voice ☒

- Normative: Send a letter, talk, sign a petition
- Non-Normative: E-mail a virus, delete computer programs
- Overtly
- Covertly

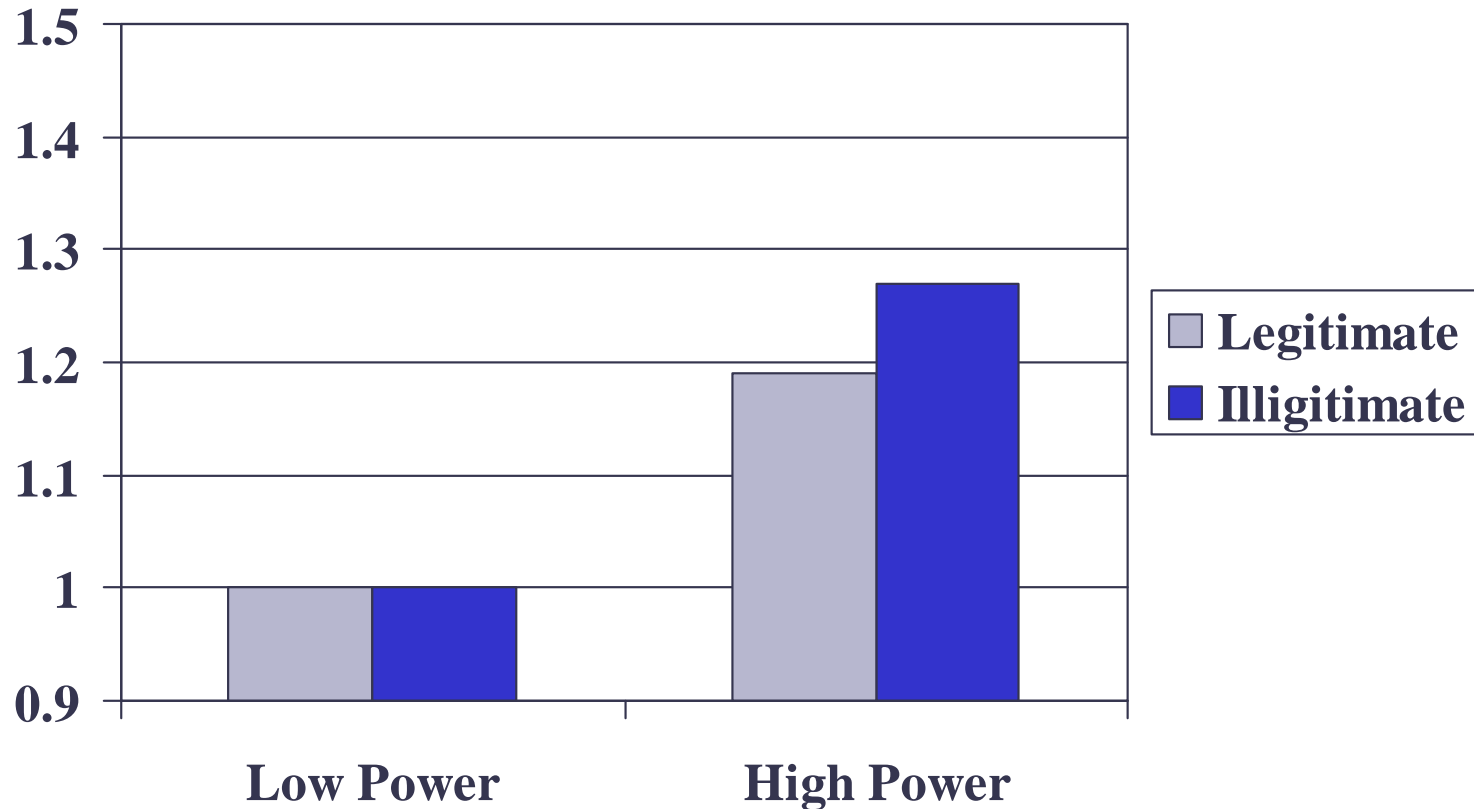
● Exit

- Physical Exit: job search
- Psychological Exit: work slow down

● Loyalty

- Individual Mobility: Stay but seek an exception to the policy for yourself

Power → Overt Non-Normative Actions

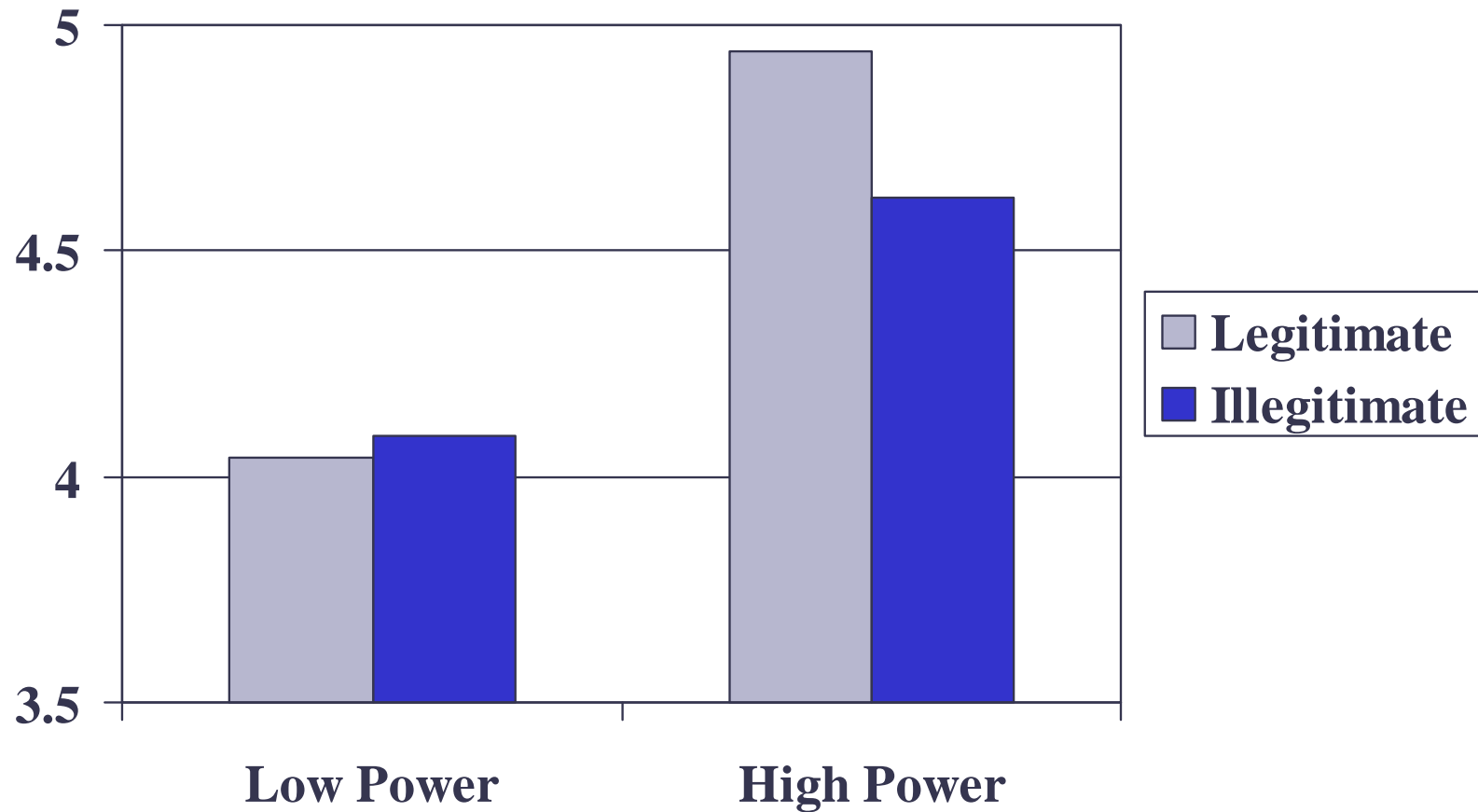


Power: $p = .040$

Illegitimacy: $p = .708$

Interaction: $p = .708$

Power → Physical Exit

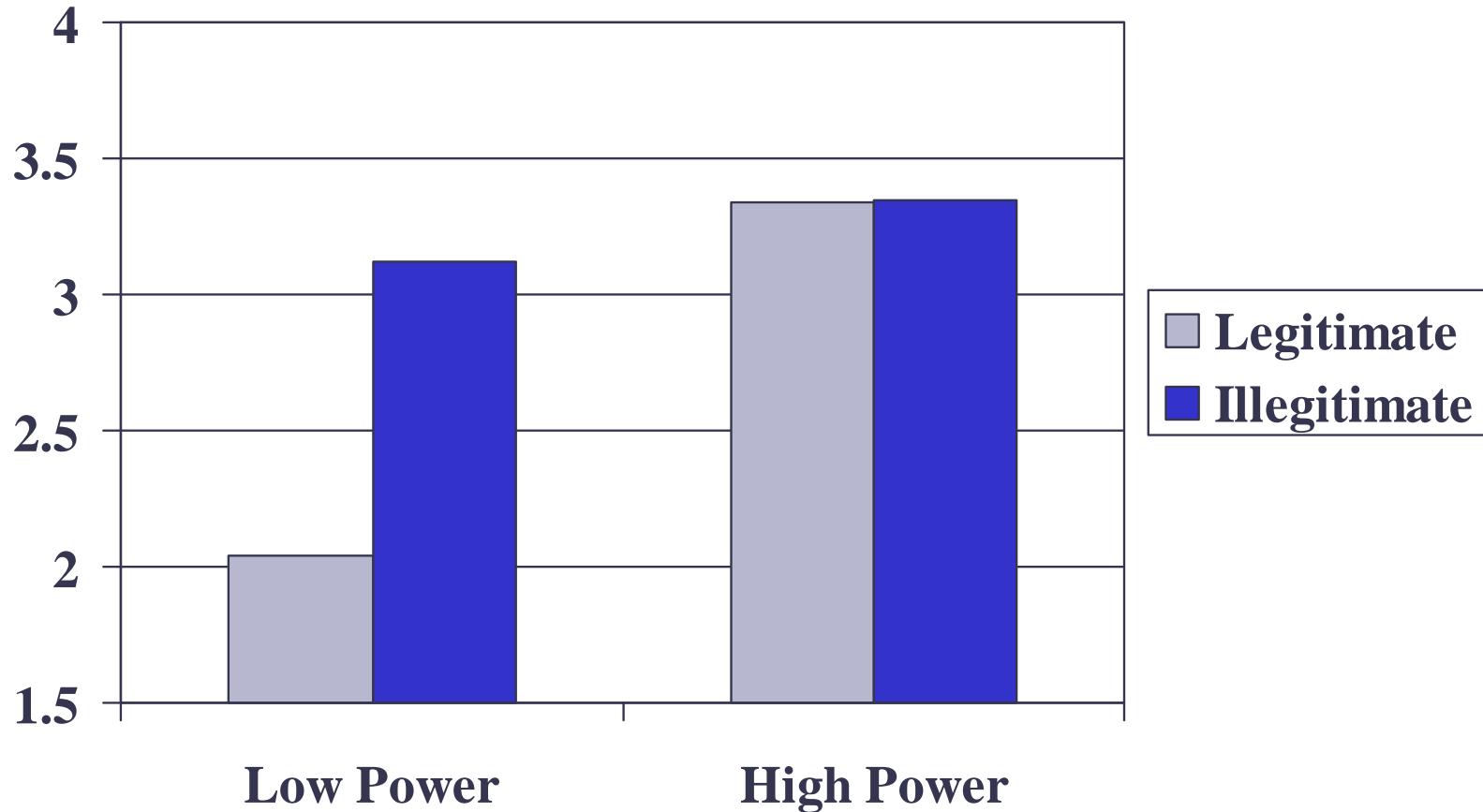


Power: $p = .058$

Illegitimacy: $p = .713$

Interaction: $p = .611$

Power → Individual Mobility

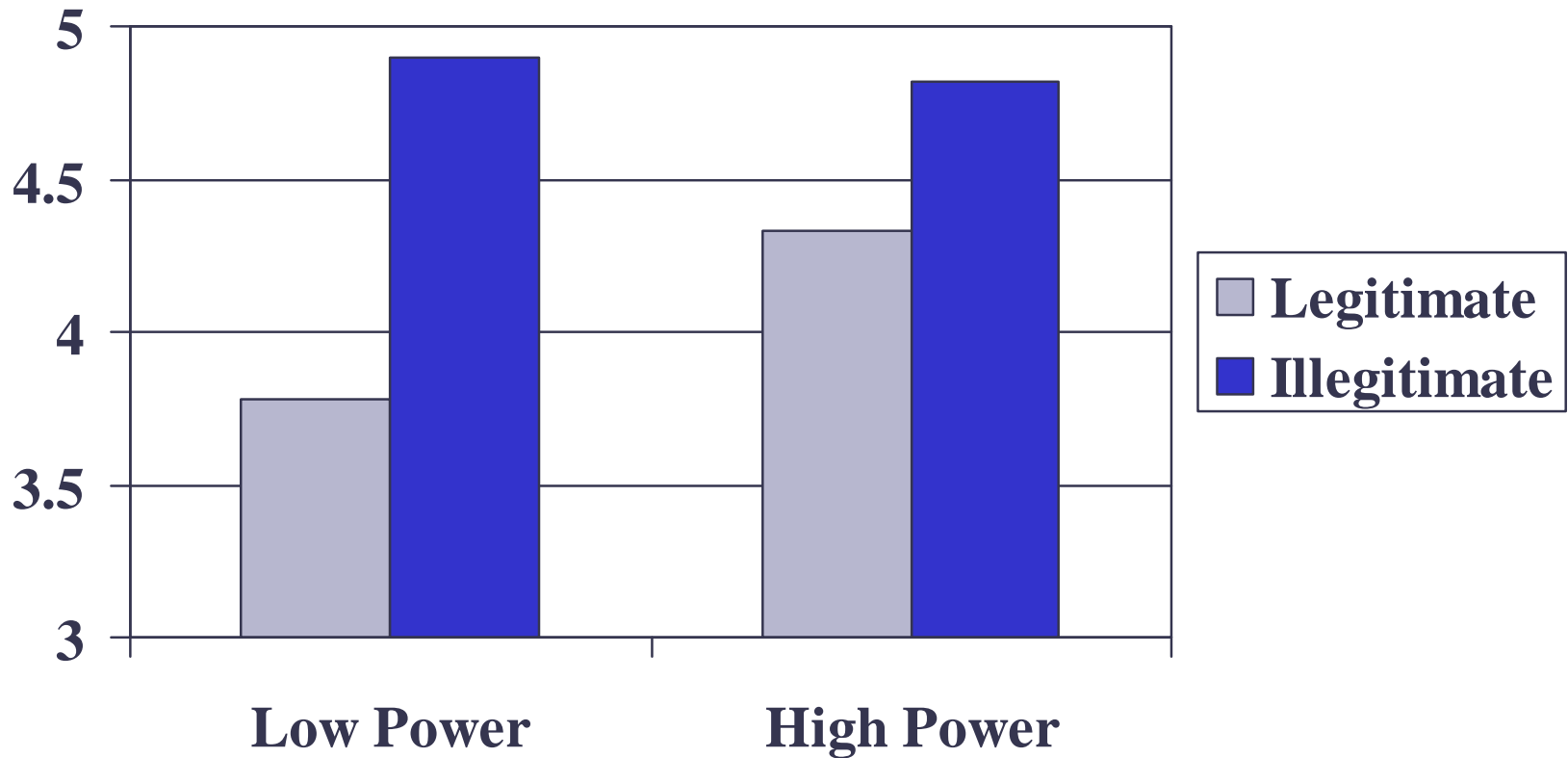


Power: $p = .045$

Illegitimacy: $p = .149$

Interaction: $p = .151$

Illegitimacy → Overt Normative Actions

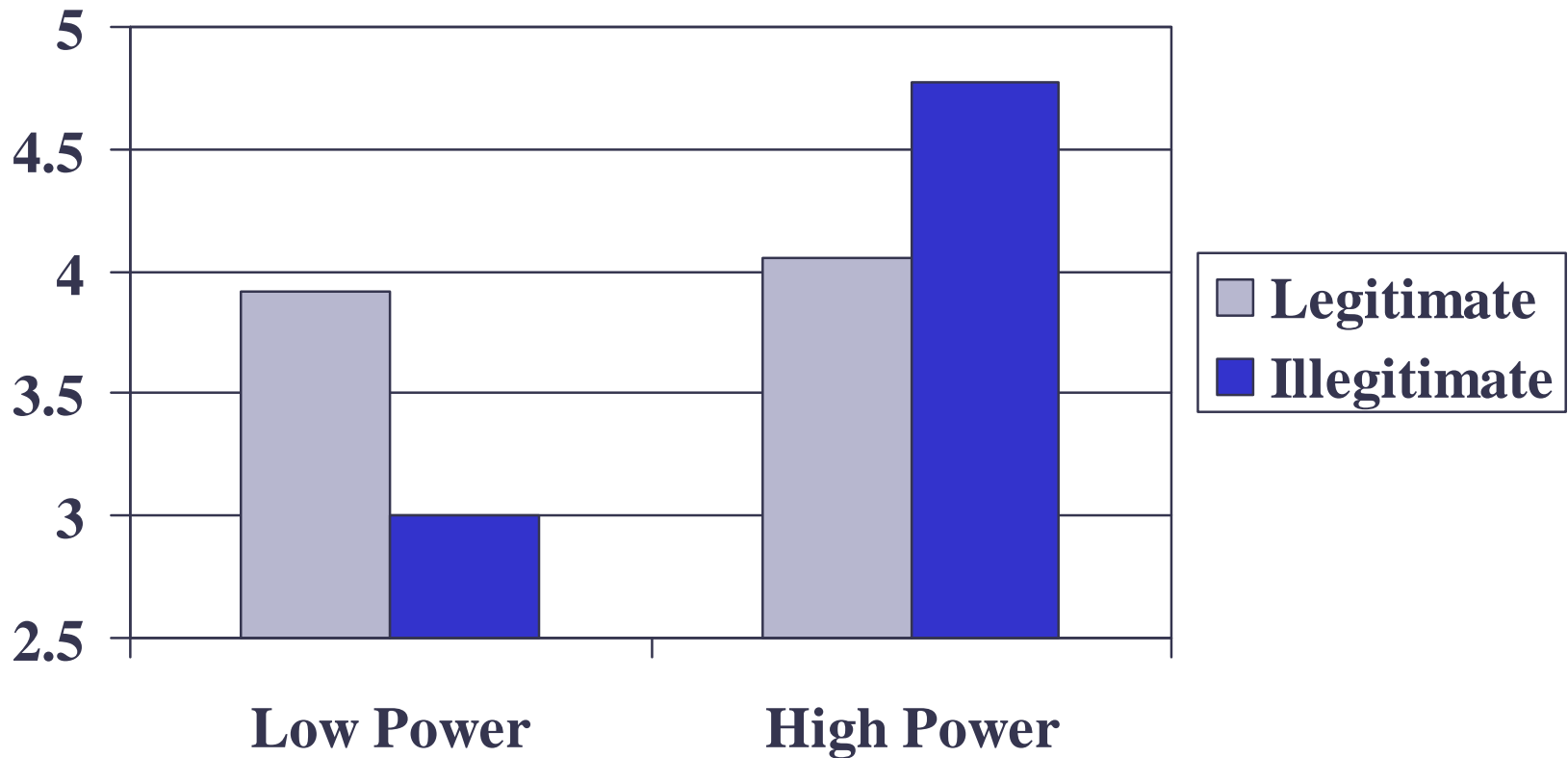


Power: $p = .544$

Illegitimacy: $p = .046$

Interaction: $p = .426$

Power → Anger



Power: $p = .064$

Illegitimacy: $p = .836$

Interaction: $p = .115$

Anger and Action

Anger correlated with

- **Overt Non-Normative Actions**

$r = .271$ $p = .042$

- **Physical Exit**

$r = .314$ $p = .017$

Fear and Covert Actions

Fear correlated with

- **Covert Non-Normative Actions**

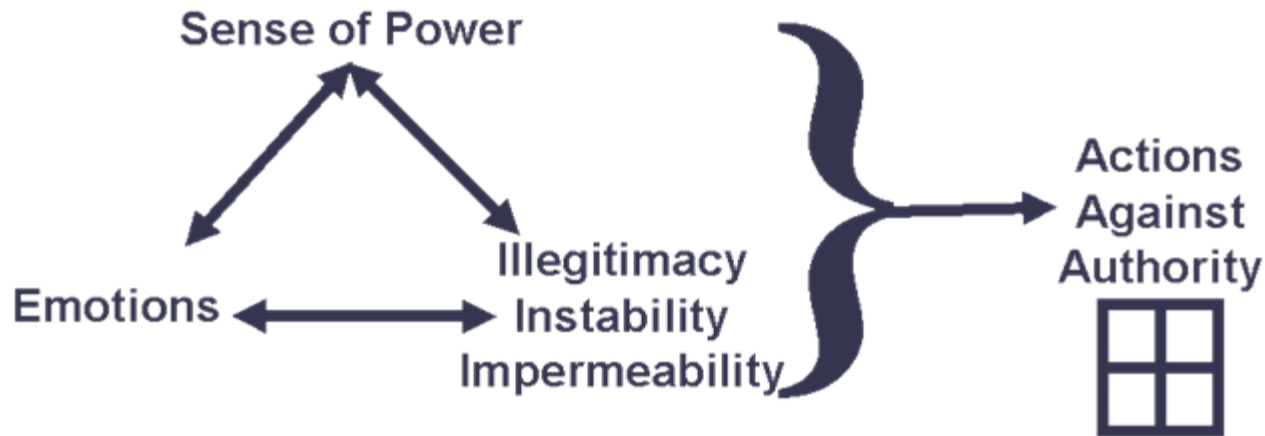
$r = .355$ $p = .007$

- **Covert Normative Actions**

$r = .309$ $p = .019$

Conclusion

- **Integrative model of action against authority**



- **Power predicts Overt Non-Normative actions and anger**
- **Illegitimacy predicts Overt Normative actions**
- **Anger correlated with Non-Normative actions**
- **Fear correlated with Covert actions**