

Individual differences in social power: Links with beliefs about emotion and emotion regulation

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Abstract

Objective: People differ in how they regulate their emotions, and how they do so is guided by their beliefs about emotion. We propose that social power—one's perceived influence over others—relates to one's beliefs about emotion and to emotion regulation. More powerful people are characterized as authentic and uninhibited, which should translate to the belief that one *should not have to* control one's emotions and, in turn, less suppression and more acceptance. More powerful people are also characterized as self-efficacious and confident, which should translate to the belief that one *can* control one's emotions and, in turn, more reappraisal and acceptance.

Method: Two preregistered studies using four samples ($N_{total} = 1286$) tested these hypotheses using cross-sectional and longitudinal surveys as well as diaries.

Results: In Study 1, power related to beliefs about emotion and emotion regulation in hypothesized ways. Study 2 also largely supported the hypotheses: The belief that one *should not have to* control one's emotions accounted for the links between power and suppression and acceptance, whereas the belief that one *can* control one's emotions accounted for the link between power and reappraisal.

Conclusion: Power and emotion regulation are interconnected, in part because of their links with beliefs about emotions.

KEYWORDS

acceptance, beliefs about emotion, reappraisal, social power, suppression

1 | INTRODUCTION

Imagine an argument between two people. Both are angry; however, as the argument unfolds, the two people manage their anger differently. While one person embraces their anger and the accompanying behaviors, the other person keeps their anger in check, appearing calm on the outside. What might explain these differences? Beyond variations in the initial emotional experience, people differ in how they regulate—or manage—their emotions (e.g., Gross, 2015; Gross & John, 2003). How people do so is guided by their answers to two fundamental questions (e.g., Ford & Gross, 2019): What *should* I do with

my emotions? And, what *can* I do with my emotions? We propose that individual differences in social power—one's sense of how much influence one has over others—might be linked with how people answer these questions and, in turn, how they regulate their emotions.

1.1 | Emotion regulation and beliefs about emotion

Emotion regulation refers to how individuals manage and influence the emotions they experience and express (Gross & John, 2003). Individuals vary widely in the

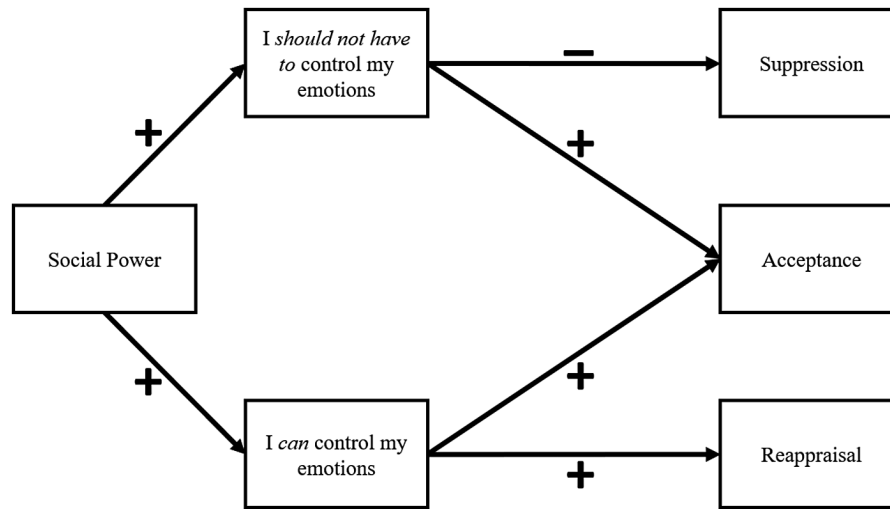


FIGURE 1 Proposed conceptual model. The “+” indicates a positive association between variables and the “-” indicates a negative association between variables

strategies they use to regulate their emotions (e.g., Aldao et al., 2010; Gross, 2015). Two types of emotion regulation are commonly used in everyday life (Gross et al., 2006) and have received much empirical attention (Naragon-Gainey et al., 2017): suppression and reappraisal. Suppression involves inhibiting one’s emotional behavior despite internally experiencing an emotion and is typically associated with worse psychological health and social functioning (Chervonsky & Hunt, 2017; Gross, 2015). Reappraisal involves reframing a situation to alter its emotional impact and is typically associated with greater psychological health and social functioning (Gross & John, 2003). A growing body of literature suggests the importance of another type of emotion regulation: acceptance. Acceptance involves nonjudgmentally experiencing one’s emotions and is typically associated with greater psychological health (Baer et al., 2008; Ford, Lam, et al., 2018). It is worth noting the complex nature of acceptance; although acceptance does not include the explicit goal of changing one’s emotions as emotion-regulation strategies often do (Gross, 2015; Tamir, 2016), it critically shapes the trajectory of one’s emotional experience (Ford, Lam, et al., 2018; Kohl et al., 2012) and was therefore included in the current investigation. Given the well-documented consequences of emotion regulation, researchers have begun to examine why individuals may or may not utilize particular emotion-regulation strategies (Sheppes et al., 2011; Tamir, 2009).

Recent work suggests that the beliefs people hold about emotions influence the emotion-regulation strategies they habitually use. Two fundamental beliefs about emotion are, first, the belief that one *should not have to* control one’s emotions and, second, the belief that one *can* control one’s emotions (for reviews, see Ford & Gross, 2019; Kneeland

et al., 2016). How might these beliefs relate to emotion regulation? Typically, when people consider whether or not they *should* control their emotions, they focus on the appropriateness of the emotional behavior, not the underlying emotional experience (e.g., Matsumoto, 1990). Thus, the belief that one *should not have to* control one’s emotions might relate to emotion-regulation strategies that target emotional behavior (vs. emotional experience). Conversely, when people consider whether or not they *can* control their emotions, they might focus more on the emotional experience because one’s *ability* to regulate emotions might be more pertinent to emotional experiences than emotional behavior. Thus, the belief that one *can* control one’s emotions might relate to emotion-regulation strategies that target emotional experience (vs. emotional behavior). Overall, then, understanding how each of the three emotion-regulation strategies influences emotional behavior and experience provides insights into how they might relate to beliefs about emotion.

Individuals use suppression to conceal their emotional behavior (Gross & John, 2003). Accordingly, as is depicted in Figure 1, the belief that one *should not have to* control one’s emotions should be associated with less suppression. Indeed, several studies suggest that believing one’s emotions *should not* be controlled is associated with less suppression (e.g., Burton & Bonanno, 2016; Goodman et al., 2020; Mauss et al., 2010; Spokas et al., 2009). Reappraisal targets emotional experience by reframing an emotional event (Gross & John, 2003). Accordingly, the belief that one *can* control one’s emotions might be associated with more reappraisal. Consistent with this idea, several studies suggest that believing one *can* control one’s emotions is associated with more reappraisal (De Castella et al., 2013; Ford, Lwi, et al., 2018; Goodman et al., 2020;

Gutentag et al., 2017; Kneeland et al., 2020; Kneeland & Dovidio, 2020; Tamir et al., 2007; Veilleux et al., 2015).

As noted above, acceptance is more complex, because people do not typically have a specific emotion channel in mind when accepting their emotions; accepting one's emotions includes internal emotional experiences as well as outward behavior (Baer et al., 2008). Thus, both the belief that one *should not have to* control one's emotions and the belief that one *can* control one's emotions might be associated with more acceptance. We are unaware of empirical work examining the association between the belief that one *should not have to* control one's emotions and acceptance; however, Luberto et al. (2014) found that believing one *can* control one's emotions was associated with greater acceptance of one's emotions.

It is worth noting that one could argue that the more people believe they *should not have to* control their emotions, the less likely they should be to use all emotion-regulation strategies (excluding acceptance). However, emotion-regulation strategies differ not just in whether an emotion is regulated but also in which channel is regulated (e.g., behavior vs. experience), thus leading to the predictions we outlined above.

1.2 | Social power, beliefs about emotion, and emotion regulation

While we are starting to understand the critical role that beliefs about emotion play in emotion regulation, we know little about individual characteristics that are linked with and might give rise to these beliefs. We propose that individual differences in social power might crucially involve individuals' beliefs about emotion, because social power consistently affords people particular experiences that should shape and be shaped by their beliefs (for a review, see Galinsky et al., 2012)—including beliefs about what they should and can do with their emotions.

Greater social power is characterized by less inhibition such that high-power individuals typically do not have to control themselves even when violating social norms (Keltner et al., 2003; van Kleef et al., 2011). For example, greater social power has been linked with more hostile behaviors (Keltner et al., 2001). Furthermore, social power affords and is characterized by greater authenticity (i.e., acting in accordance with one's values, goals, or traits; Kernis & Goldman, 2006), such that high-power individuals tend to remain true to themselves across situations (Gan et al., 2018; Kifer et al., 2013; Kraus et al., 2011). The combination of less inhibition and greater authenticity might translate into the belief that one *should not have to* control one's emotions. This belief may, in turn, predict less suppression and greater acceptance.

Power also affords and is characterized by the ability to take action and act with greater confidence (Galinsky et al., 2003; Min & Kim, 2013; Pike & Galinsky, 2019), both of which might translate to the belief that one *can* control one's emotions. Such beliefs may, in turn, predict greater reappraisal and acceptance. See Figure 1 for the proposed theoretical model.

Little work has focused directly on the link between social power and emotion regulation, with a small handful of exceptions. While we are unaware of work examining the link between power and acceptance, four studies have examined the association between power and suppression and one study has examined the association between power and reappraisal. Using survey and daily diary approaches, the studies consistently found that greater power was associated with less suppression (Catterson et al., 2017; Leach & Weick, 2020; Petkanopoulou et al., 2012; Pilch et al., 2018). Furthermore, one study found that greater power was associated with more reappraisal (Leach & Weick, 2020). These studies provide an important initial look at the link between power and emotion regulation. The present research expanded on this work by examining the links between individual differences in social power and three emotion-regulation strategies (i.e., suppression, reappraisal, and acceptance) across two studies using four samples, as well as the role of beliefs about emotions in these associations.

1.3 | The present research

The present research examined two questions regarding social power and emotion regulation: (1) Is social power associated with emotion regulation; (2) Do beliefs about emotion account for the links between social power and emotion regulation? For the first question, as shown in Figure 1, we predicted based on theorizing and some empirical evidence that social power would be associated with less suppression, more reappraisal, and more acceptance. For the second question, we predicted that beliefs about emotion would account for the links between power and emotion regulation. Specifically, as shown in Figure 1, we predicted based on theorizing and some empirical evidence that social power would be positively associated with the belief that one *should not have to* control one's emotions which would, in turn, be negatively associated with suppression and positively associated with acceptance. We further predicted that social power would be positively associated with the belief that one *can* control one's emotions which would, in turn, be positively associated with reappraisal and acceptance. We tested these predictions across two studies using four samples. In Study 1, student and community participants from Samples 1–3 ($N = 1013$)

completed cross-sectional surveys to assess social power, beliefs about emotion, and habitual emotion regulation. In Study 2, participants from Sample 4 ($N = 273$) completed short-term longitudinal assessments that captured the three variables sequentially in time: First, a survey assessing social power, second, a survey assessing beliefs about emotion, and third, 10 days of daily diaries to assess emotion regulation in response to the most stressful event of the day. The current research has several key strengths.

First, we investigated how social power relates to three common and consequential emotion-regulation strategies (i.e., suppression, reappraisal, and acceptance), thereby offering a more comprehensive understanding of how power relates to emotion regulation relative to extant research. Furthermore, to ensure that the observed relationships were unique to each strategy, we examined how each strategy related to social power while accounting for the other two strategies.

Second, we examined two core beliefs about emotion as possible mechanisms for the predicted associations in Study 2: people's beliefs regarding whether they *should have to* control their emotions and their beliefs regarding whether they *can* control their emotions. Although the theoretical importance of these two beliefs about emotion is compelling, empirical evidence is sparse (Ford & Gross, 2019). Our research is one of the first to simultaneously examine both beliefs' links with emotion regulation and an individual difference (i.e., social power) that might relate to these beliefs. In our models addressing whether beliefs about emotion account for the links between power and emotion regulation, we accounted for both emotion beliefs to assess their unique effects. For example, when examining whether the belief that one *should not have to* control one's emotions accounted for the link between power and suppression, we included the belief that one *can* control one's emotion in the model.

Third, to test the robustness of observed effects, we ruled out potential confounding variables. Specifically, we ruled out potential effects of subjective socioeconomic status given the possible conflation of power and socioeconomic status. Additionally, we ruled out the effects of demographic factors given previous work suggests that gender, ethnicity, and age are associated with power (Pratto & Espinoza, 2001) and emotion regulation (Gross & John, 2003; Schirda et al., 2016).

Fourth, we examined our hypotheses in four samples with varied demographics to understand if our results generalize across diverse individuals. Specifically, we tested whether demographic variables (gender, ethnicity, and age) moderated the links between power and emotion regulation because one's sense of power might conceivably play out differently in people of different genders, ethnicities, and ages (cf., Torelli et al., 2020). In addition, we

examined the type of power motivation as a moderator because people can pursue power in different ways, including through a "coalition-building approach" or a "ruthless self-advancement approach" (Zuroff et al., 2010). The coalition-building approach involves working collaboratively with others, whereas the ruthless self-advancement approach involves putting one's own interests above others. In turn, the type of power motivation people have in mind when they report on their sense of power might influence the links between power and emotion regulation.

Fifth, Study 2 built upon Study 1 in several ways. In Study 2, participants completed short-term longitudinal assessments that captured the hypothesized predictor (social power), mediator (beliefs about emotion), and outcome (emotion regulation) sequentially: First, a survey assessing social power, second, a survey assessing beliefs about emotion, and, third, 10 days of daily diaries to assess emotion regulation in response to the most stressful event of the day. The sequential assessment allowed for a test of mediation (Maxwell & Cole, 2007). In addition, the assessment of emotion regulation in response to the day's most stressful event reduced common method variance (cf., Lindell & Whitney, 2001) and recall bias (cf., Solhan et al., 2009) and increased the ecological validity of the findings.

Finally, hypotheses and analyses for Study 1's Samples 2 and 3, as well as for Study 2 were preregistered¹ (Study 1's Sample 2: <https://aspredicted.org/blind.php?x=86q8s2>; Study 1's Sample 3: <https://aspredicted.org/blind.php?x=37m49z>; Study 2: https://aspredicted.org/KRG_6BG). Additionally, data and code for each sample are available online: <https://osf.io/kmgd5/>. Taken together, our methods provided strong tests of our preregistered hypotheses.

2 | STUDY 1

2.1 | Method

2.1.1 | Participants

Participants were drawn from three US samples. Sample characteristics are summarized in Table 1. Sample 1 was exploratory, so we collected as much data as possible during one semester. Sample sizes for Samples 2 and 3 were based on power considerations to detect the smallest effects observed in Sample 1.² Sample 1 consisted of 456 US undergraduates after removing individuals who did not complete the survey or who failed 2 or more of the 8 attention checks in the survey ($n = 102$) and who had little response variation (i.e., put the same answer for 90% of the 7-point Likert scale items; $n = 4$). We had 99% power to detect the smallest effect of $r = 0.20$ in Sample 1. Sample 2 consisted of 187 US undergraduates after removing individuals who

TABLE 1 Demographic characteristics of the four samples

| | US undergraduates (Study 1, Sample 1) | US undergraduates (Study 1, Sample 2) | US Mturk adults (Study 1, Sample 3) | US undergraduates (Study 2, Sample 4) |
|---------------------|--|--|--|--|
| Sample size | 456 | 187 | 370 | 273 |
| % Women | 69 | 71 | 44 | 77 |
| Age | | | | |
| Mean (SD) | 20.4 (2.1) | 20.7 (2.3) | 35.4 (9.9) | 20.4 (3.4) |
| Range | 18–35 | 18–34 | 20–78 | 18–50 |
| Ethnicity | | | | |
| % African American | 2 | 1 | 10 | 1 |
| % Asian American | 45 | 48 | 4 | 42 |
| % East Asian | 9 | 10 | 1 | 9 |
| % European American | 33 | 26 | 77 | 21 |
| % Latinx | 15 | 15 | 5 | 14 |
| % Middle Eastern | 3 | 5 | <1 | 3 |
| % Native American | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| % Not listed above | 5 | 5 | 1 | 8 |

did not complete the survey or who failed 2 or more of the 8 attention checks in the survey ($n = 43$) and who had little response variation (i.e., put the same answer for 90% of the 7-point Likert scale items; $n = 3$) yielding 79% power to detect an effect of $r = 0.20$. Sample 3 consisted of 370 US-born workers from Amazon's Mechanical Turk ("MTurk") after removing individuals who failed 1 or more of the 3 attention checks throughout the survey ($n = 27$). Additionally, we had participants complete four "cultural check" items (Turkprime, 2018) to verify the US citizenship participation requirement (Bai, 2018). Specifically, we asked participants to name the following objects (depicted in photos): license plate, ladybug, Jell-O, and diaper. Participants were removed if they did not use the American-English idiom to refer to the items ($n = 102$). Sample 3 yielded 97% power to detect an effect of $r = 0.20$.

2.1.2 | Procedure

The authors' Institutional Review Board approved the study procedures (protocol ID: 2012-08-4593). This is the first manuscript to report results using data from each of these samples. Participants completed online surveys to assess their demographics (e.g., gender and socioeconomic status), social power, beliefs about emotion, and habitual emotion regulation.

2.1.3 | Measures

In all three samples, after reporting their demographics, participants completed self-report measures assessing

social power, emotion regulation, and type of power motivation. In Samples 2 and 3, participants also completed self-report measures assessing beliefs about emotion. For each multi-item scale, we averaged across the items to create a single composite score. Descriptive statistics and internal consistencies are shown in Table 2. See Tables S1–S3 in the Supporting Information for the zero-order correlations between the key study variables. The citations included after each measure indicate each measure's validation research.

2.1.3.1 | Social power

Participants completed the 8-item Sense of Power Scale (Anderson et al., 2012) which focuses on the control and influence they generally have in their relationships with others. An example item is, "I think I have a great deal of power" and participants responded on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).

2.1.3.2 | Emotion regulation

To measure suppression (four items) and reappraisal (six items), participants completed the Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (ERQ; Gross & John, 2003). An example of a suppression item is, "I control my emotions by not expressing them." An example of a reappraisal item is, "I control my emotions by changing the way I think about the situation I'm in." Participants responded on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).

To measure acceptance (eight items), participants completed the non-judge subscale of the Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (Baer et al., 2006). A reverse-scored example item is, "I tell myself I shouldn't be feeling the way I'm feeling." Participants responded on a scale

TABLE 2 Descriptive statistics of key variables for Study 1

| | US undergraduates (Sample 1) | | US undergraduates (Sample 2) | | US Mturk adults (Sample 3) | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------|----------|------------------------------|----------|----------------------------|----------|
| | Mean (SD) | α | Mean (SD) | α | Mean (SD) | α |
| Social power (1–7) | 4.95 (0.88) | 0.87 | 4.76 (0.87) | 0.85 | 4.75 (1.32) | 0.94 |
| <i>Emotion regulation</i> | | | | | | |
| Suppression (1–7) | 3.86 (1.24) | 0.79 | 3.98 (1.21) | 0.77 | 3.77 (1.51) | 0.84 |
| Reappraisal (1–7) | 4.90 (1.04) | 0.88 | 4.74 (1.04) | 0.88 | 5.10 (1.27) | 0.92 |
| Acceptance (1–5) | 3.00 (0.78) | 0.90 | 3.03 (0.78) | 0.9 | 3.59 (1.05) | 0.96 |
| <i>Emotion beliefs</i> | | | | | | |
| I should not have to control (1–7) | – | – | 4.37 (0.80) | 0.7 | 4.49 (1.27) | 0.87 |
| I can control (1–7) | – | – | 4.64 (0.91) | 0.85 | 5.09 (1.34) | 0.93 |
| <i>Type of power motivation</i> | | | | | | |
| Coalition-building (1–4) | 3.52 (0.43) | 0.83 | 3.54 (0.44) | 0.84 | 3.28 (0.49) | 0.81 |
| Ruthless self-advancement (1–4) | 2.35 (0.62) | 0.75 | 2.37 (0.62) | 0.75 | 2.22 (0.62) | 0.72 |
| Socioeconomic status (1–10) | 6.23 (1.67) | – | 6.41 (1.52) | – | 4.56 (1.50) | – |

Note: Parentheses after the measure indicate scale ranges. Dashes indicate the variable was not measured in that sample or the descriptive statistic is not applicable for that measure. α = Cronbach's alpha.

from 1 (never or very rarely true) to 5 (very often or always true).

2.1.3.3 | Beliefs about emotion

We assessed two beliefs about emotion. First, participants answered six items to measure the extent to which they believe they *should not have to control* their emotions (Mauss et al., 2010). A reverse-scored example item is, “*I should control my emotions more.*” Second, participants answered six items to measure the extent to which they believe they *can control* their emotions (Tamir et al., 2007). An example item is, “*If I want to, I can change the emotions that I have.*” Participants responded on scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).

2.1.3.4 | Socioeconomic status

Participants completed the MacArthur Scale of Subjective Social Status (Adler et al., 2000) with 1 representing individuals with the lowest standing in the United States and 10 representing individuals with the highest standing.

2.1.3.5 | Type of power motivation

To measure how individuals might be motivated to gain or maintain power, participants completed the coalition-building (seven items) and ruthless self-advancement (five items) subscales of the Rank Styles with Peers Questionnaire (Zuroff et al., 2010). An example of coalition-building is, “*I value teamwork.*” An example of ruthless self-advancement is, “*I will do whatever it takes to get ahead.*” Participants responded on a scale from 1 (unlike me) to 4 (like me). This questionnaire also includes dominant leadership, which involves assuming leadership

roles in an assertive manner. We did not have predictions for the dominant leadership approach, and thus did not collect those data.

2.2 | Results

2.2.1 | Question 1: Is social power associated with emotion regulation?

To address Question 1, we examined the associations between power and emotion regulation (i.e., suppression, reappraisal, and acceptance) in two United States (US) undergraduate samples and one sample of US-born adults. Analyses for Sample 1 were exploratory, whereas analyses for Samples 2 and 3 were preregistered and confirmatory.

First, we examined the relationships between power and each emotion-regulation strategy (see Table 3 for all statistics reported in this section unless otherwise noted). As predicted and preregistered for Samples 2 and 3, power was negatively related to suppression and positively related to reappraisal and acceptance in all samples. The effects in the undergraduate samples (Samples 1 and 2) were all small-to-medium in size and the effects in the MTurk sample (Sample 3) were large-to-very-large in size (Funder & Ozer, 2019).

Next, to examine the unique effect of each emotion-regulation strategy, we computed residual scores for each strategy that accounted for shared variance with the other two strategies. The pattern of results remained in all samples. All effect sizes across the three samples ranged from small to medium when controlling for the other two strategies.

TABLE 3 Standardized regression coefficients for associations between power and emotion regulation for Study 1

| | US undergraduates (Sample 1) | US undergraduates (Sample 2) | US Mturk adults (Sample 3) |
|--|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <i>Bivariate regression</i> | | | |
| Suppression | -0.23 [-0.32, -0.14] | -0.21 [-0.36, -0.07] | -0.29 [-0.39, -0.20] |
| Reappraisal | 0.26 [0.17, 0.34] | 0.18 [0.03, 0.32] | 0.46 [0.37, 0.55] |
| Acceptance | 0.20 [0.11, 0.29] | 0.24 [0.10, 0.38] | 0.41 [0.31, 0.50] |
| <i>Controlling for the other two emotion-regulation strategies</i> | | | |
| Suppression | -0.22 [-0.31, -0.13] | -0.20 [-0.34, -0.06] | -0.16 [-0.26, -0.06] |
| Reappraisal | 0.27 [0.18, 0.35] | 0.18 [0.04, 0.32] | 0.34 [0.25, 0.44] |
| Acceptance | 0.10 [0.01, 0.19] | 0.15 [0.01, 0.30] | 0.19 [0.09, 0.29] |
| <i>Controlling for subjective socioeconomic status</i> | | | |
| Suppression | -0.21 [-0.31, -0.12] | -0.24 [-0.39, -0.09] | -0.33 [-0.44, -0.22] |
| Reappraisal | 0.25 [0.15, 0.35] | 0.18 [0.02, 0.34] | 0.47 [0.37, 0.57] |
| Acceptance | 0.21 [0.11, 0.31] | 0.27 [0.12, 0.41] | 0.44 [0.33, 0.54] |
| <i>Controlling for gender</i> | | | |
| Suppression | -0.25 [-0.34, -0.16] | -0.20 [-0.34, -0.06] | -0.30 [-0.39, -0.20] |
| Reappraisal | 0.25 [0.16, 0.34] | 0.17 [0.03, 0.31] | 0.46 [0.37, 0.55] |
| Acceptance | 0.22 [0.13, 0.31] | 0.24 [0.09, 0.38] | 0.40 [0.30, 0.49] |
| <i>Controlling for ethnicity</i> | | | |
| Suppression | -0.21 [-0.31, -0.10] | -0.25 [-0.42, -0.07] | -0.28 [-0.38, -0.18] |
| Reappraisal | 0.25 [0.15, 0.35] | 0.18 [0.01, 0.35] | 0.47 [0.38, 0.56] |
| Acceptance | 0.19 [0.09, 0.30] | 0.21 [0.05, 0.37] | 0.40 [0.30, 0.49] |
| <i>Controlling for age</i> | | | |
| Suppression | - | - | -0.28 [-0.38, -0.19] |
| Reappraisal | - | - | 0.45 [0.36, 0.54] |
| Acceptance | - | - | 0.40 [0.30, 0.49] |

Note: Bolded values indicate significance at the 5% level. Brackets contain 95% confidence intervals. For the models including ethnicity in Samples 1 and 2, we only examined participants who identified as European Americans ($n_{\text{Sample1}} = 152$; $n_{\text{Sample2}} = 49$) or Asian Americans ($n_{\text{Sample1}} = 189$; $n_{\text{Sample2}} = 82$) given these were the largest two groups and given previous research has specifically found differences in emotion regulation between these groups. In Sample 3, participants mainly identified as European Americans, so we examined European Americans ($n = 284$) versus participants in the remaining categories ($n = 84$).

Further, to account for potential confounds, we conducted the linear regression analyses while controlling for subjective socioeconomic status, gender, ethnicity, and age as preregistered in Samples 2 and 3. To understand how these factors might differentially diminish the unique effect of power and emotion regulation, we tested each confounding variable separately. In all samples, power remained a significant predictor of suppression, reappraisal, and acceptance.

Additionally, to examine the generality of the effects, we examined gender, ethnicity, age, and type of power motivation (coalition-building vs. ruthless self-advancement), as moderators. Age was examined as a moderator only in Sample 3 because Samples 1 and 2 consisted of young adults. As indicated in Table S4 in the Supporting Information, none of the moderators consistently moderated the relationship between power and emotion regulation.

Finally, to ensure that the findings for acceptance held in Samples 1, 2, and 3 when examining the items focused specifically on accepting *emotions* (vs. accepting thoughts), we ran analyses for the three items that specifically assess the acceptance of emotions. Tables S5 and S6 in the Supporting Information show that these results were comparable to those for the broader acceptance measure.

2.2.2 | Question 2: Do beliefs about emotion account for the links between social power and emotion regulation?

To address Question 2, we used zero-order correlations to test associations among power, emotion regulation, and beliefs about emotion, and partial correlations to test whether beliefs about emotion accounted for variance shared between social power and emotion regulation in two samples. Although we cannot infer mediation from correlational data, we can test the possibility of a mediating relationship by examining correlations and partial correlations among the measures.

To test unique associations of each belief, we examined whether each belief about emotion accounted for variance shared between power and emotion regulation while including the other belief about emotion as a control variable. Table S7 in the Supporting Information shows the partial correlations without controlling for the other belief; the results are comparable.

Table 4 shows the zero-order correlations and the partial correlations between power, emotion regulation, and beliefs about emotion. Across both samples, the zero-order correlations showed that people with a greater sense of power also reported lower use of suppression and greater

use of reappraisal and acceptance. Additionally, people with a greater sense of power tended to believe that they *should not have to* control their emotions and this belief was associated with lower suppression and greater acceptance (but not reappraisal). Finally, people with a greater sense of power tended to believe that they *can* control their emotions and this belief was associated with greater reappraisal and acceptance (but not suppression). The partial correlations showed that the relationships between power and each emotion regulation strategy were weaker or null after accounting for the beliefs about emotion; thus, beliefs about emotion accounted for variance shared between power and emotion regulation.

We again ensured that the findings for acceptance held when examining only items focused specifically on accepting emotions (vs. thoughts). Table S8 in the Supporting Information indicates that the results for the emotion-focused acceptance measure were comparable to those for the broader acceptance measure.

2.3 | Study 1 discussion

We asked two questions in Study 1. First, is social power associated with emotion regulation? Indeed, power was consistently and robustly associated with less suppression and more reappraisal and acceptance. The links between power and emotion regulation held when controlling for socioeconomic status, gender, ethnicity, and age, and were not consistently moderated by gender, ethnicity, age, or type of power motivation.

Second, do beliefs about emotion account for the links between social power and emotion regulation? The belief that one *should not have to* control one's emotions accounted for variance shared between power and suppression and acceptance, whereas the belief that one *can* control one's emotions accounted for variance shared between power and reappraisal and acceptance. Overall, these correlational relationships provide preliminary evidence that mediation is possible and future research is needed that tests mediation using longitudinal data. Study 2 was designed to address these concerns.

3 | STUDY 2

A key limitation of Study 1 was the use of cross-sectional data to address Question 2: Do beliefs about emotion account for the links between social power and emotion regulation? In Study 2, we collected short-term longitudinal data that assessed the three variables separately and sequentially in time to better address this question. Furthermore, we assessed emotion regulation using

TABLE 4 Pearson's correlations and partial correlations between power, emotion regulation, and beliefs about emotion controlling for the other belief

| | US undergraduates (Sample 2) | | US MTurk adults (Sample 3) | |
|--|---------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------|
| | Zero-order correlation | Partial correlation | Zero-order correlation | Partial correlation |
| Suppression | | | | |
| Power and suppression | −0.21 | −0.13 | −0.29 | −0.09 |
| Power and beliefs (<i>should not</i>) | 0.24 | 0.17 | 0.33 | 0.13 |
| Power and beliefs (<i>can</i>) | 0.22 | 0.22 | 0.48 | 0.41 |
| Beliefs (<i>should not</i>) and suppression | −0.40 | −0.37 | −0.62 | −0.57 |
| Beliefs (<i>can</i>) and suppression | −0.02 | 0.02 | −0.26 | −0.04 |
| Reappraisal | | | | |
| Power and reappraisal | 0.18 | 0.09 | 0.46 | 0.22 |
| Power and beliefs (<i>should not</i>) | 0.24 | 0.24 | 0.33 | 0.19 |
| Power and beliefs (<i>can</i>) | 0.22 | 0.16 | 0.48 | 0.26 |
| Beliefs (<i>should not</i>) and reappraisal | 0.03 | −0.01 | 0.29 | 0.10 |
| Beliefs (<i>can</i>) and reappraisal | 0.43 | 0.41 | 0.60 | 0.47 |
| Acceptance | | | | |
| Power and acceptance | 0.24 | 0.11 | 0.41 | 0.15 |
| Power and beliefs (<i>should not</i>) | 0.24 | 0.20 | 0.33 | 0.15 |
| Power and beliefs (<i>can</i>) | 0.22 | 0.16 | 0.48 | 0.33 |
| Beliefs (<i>should not</i>) and acceptance | 0.27 | 0.25 | 0.46 | 0.34 |
| Beliefs (<i>can</i>) and acceptance | 0.40 | 0.38 | 0.50 | 0.35 |

Note: *Should not* refers to the belief that one *should not have to* control one's emotions. *Can* refers to the belief that one *can* control one's emotions. Partial correlations reflect associations between power and each strategy controlling for both beliefs at once, power and beliefs controlling for each strategy, and beliefs and each strategy controlling for power. In all associations between beliefs and another variable, the other type of belief is controlled for. Bolded values indicate significance at the 5% level.

daily diaries that referenced the day's most stressful event. This approach has three key strengths relative to assessing habitual emotion regulation. First, it reduced common method variance, because power and beliefs about emotion were assessed using a different method (i.e., survey) than the daily diary method (cf., Lindell & Whitney, 2001). Second, it reduced recall bias, because participants reported on their emotion regulation in response to a single event rather than attempting to average across several events (cf., Solhan et al., 2009). Third, it increased ecological validity, because participants reported on their use of emotion regulation in everyday life.

3.1 | Method

3.1.1 | Participants

The authors' Institutional Review Board approved the study procedures (protocol ID: 2012-08-4593). This is the first manuscript to report results using data from this study. We collected data from as many students as possible within a specified timeframe. Sample characteristics are summarized in Table 1. Study 2 consisted of 273 US undergraduates after removing participants who did not pass the attention check in the first survey ($n = 7$).

3.1.2 | Procedure

Participants completed online surveys at three different points in time. The first survey measured habitual social power and was available to participants for 2 weeks at the beginning of the fall 2021 semester. The day after the first survey closed, participants were invited to complete a second survey that measured beliefs about emotions and was available for 9 days. The day after the second survey closed, participants completed 10 days of daily diary surveys. The daily diary surveys were sent out at 7 p.m. PST each evening and the survey link expired at 6 a.m. the following day. On average, participants completed 8 out of the 10 diaries. Using an approach similar to Ford, Lam, et al. (2018), participants reported on the most stressful event of their day and how they regulated their emotions in response to this stressful event. Specifically, participants were given the following instructions: “Please consider the most stressful event that happened to you today, no matter how small.” Then, participants were prompted to “continue to consider the most stressful event you wrote about” and then rated their emotion regulation during the event (see Measures).

3.1.3 | Measures

See Table S9 in the Supporting Information for the zero-order correlations between the key study variables.

3.1.3.1 | Social power

Participants completed the same 8 items as in Study 1 ($\alpha = 0.86$). On a 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree) scale, the average was 4.64 ($SD = 0.90$).

3.1.3.2 | Beliefs about emotion

To measure the belief that one *should not have to* control one's emotions, participants completed the same six items as in Study 1 ($\alpha = 0.78$). On a 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree) scale, the average was 4.44 ($SD = 0.98$). To measure the belief that one *can* control one's emotions, participants completed the same six items as in Study 1 ($\alpha = 0.88$). On a 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree) scale, the average was 4.73 ($SD = 1.03$).

3.1.3.3 | Emotion regulation

Daily emotion-regulation items were closely based on habitual emotion-regulation items. To reduce participant burden, we formed shorter scales with face- and content-valid items. To measure daily suppression in response to the stressful event, we averaged across the following two items for each day ($\alpha = 0.72$ – 0.83): “I kept my emotions to

myself.” “I did not express my emotions.” On a 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree) scale, the average across the sample was 4.02 ($SD = 1.12$).

To measure daily reappraisal in response to a stressful event, we averaged across the following three items for each day ($\alpha = 0.77$ – 0.89): “I changed the way I thought about the situation to feel less negative emotion.” “I changed the way I thought about the situation to feel more positive emotion.” “I thought about the situation in a way that helped me stay calm.” On a 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree) scale, the average across the sample was 3.97 ($SD = 1.06$).

To measure daily acceptance in response to a stressful event, we averaged across the following three items for each day ($\alpha = 0.56$ – 0.70): “I told myself I shouldn't be feeling the way I was feeling (R).” “I accepted my feelings as a natural response to the situation.” “I thought my emotions were bad or inappropriate (R).” On a 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree) scale, the average was 5.22 ($SD = 0.81$).

3.1.3.4 | Socioeconomic Status

Participants completed the same measure as in Study 1. On a 1 (lowest standing) to 10 (highest standing) scale, the average was 6.08 ($SD = 1.74$).

3.2 | Results

3.2.1 | Question 1: Is social power associated with emotion regulation?

To examine the between-person associations between trait power and daily emotion regulation (suppression, reappraisal, and acceptance), we conducted multilevel models with random intercepts by participant using the “R” (version 4.1.1) package “nlme” (version 3.1.152), as well as the “effectsize” package (version 0.4.5) to standardize the multilevel estimates.

First, we examined the relationships between power and each emotion-regulation strategy. Power was negatively related to suppression ($\beta = -0.09$ [95% CI: $-0.17, -0.01$]) and positively related to reappraisal ($\beta = 0.14$ [95% CI: $0.06, 0.23$]) and acceptance ($\beta = 0.18$ [95% CI: $0.10, 0.27$]). The effects were all small in size (Funder & Ozer, 2019).

Further, to account for potential confounds, we conducted the linear regression analyses while separately controlling for subjective socioeconomic status, gender, and ethnicity as preregistered. To understand how these factors might differentially diminish the unique effect of power and emotion regulation, we tested each confounding variable separately. When controlling for subjective

socioeconomic status, power was negatively, but not significantly, related to suppression ($\beta = -0.07$ [95% CI: $-0.16, 0.01$]) and positively related to reappraisal ($\beta = 0.13$ [95% CI: $0.04, 0.22$]) and acceptance ($\beta = 0.18$ [95% CI: $0.09, 0.26$]). When controlling for gender, power was negatively related to suppression ($\beta = -0.09$ [95% CI: $-0.18, -0.01$]) and positively related to reappraisal ($\beta = 0.13$ [95% CI: $0.04, 0.22$]) and acceptance ($\beta = 0.18$ [95% CI: $0.10, 0.27$]). For the models including ethnicity, we only examined participants who were identified as European Americans ($n = 57$) or Asian Americans ($n = 114$), given these were the largest two groups and given previous research has specifically found differences in emotion regulation between these groups. When controlling for ethnicity, power was negatively, but not significantly, related to suppression ($\beta = -0.08$ [95% CI: $-0.18, 0.02$]), positively, but not significantly, related to reappraisal ($\beta = 0.10$ [95% CI: $-0.02, 0.21$]) and positively related to acceptance ($\beta = 0.22$ [95% CI: $0.11, 0.32$]).

3.2.2 | Question 2: Do beliefs about emotion account for the links between social power and emotion regulation?

To address Question 2, given both the hypothesized predictor (social power) and mediator (beliefs about emotion) were measured at Level 2 (between-person), we averaged across each participant's diary entries to form one score per participant for each emotion-regulation strategy. This score was then used as the outcome variable in the analysis. We used the "psych" package (version 1.8.12; Revelle, 2015) within the statistical program "R" (version 4.1.1). We examined whether each belief about emotion statistically mediated the relationships between power and emotion regulation while including the other belief about emotion as a control variable in the model, given we were interested in unique associations of each belief. Table S10 in the Supporting Information shows the analyses without controlling for the other belief; the results are comparable. We tested the significance of each indirect effect using bootstrapping procedures. Average standardized indirect effects, as well as corresponding confidence intervals, were computed from 5000 bootstrapped samples.

Figure 2 shows the standardized slope estimates for the predicted pathways. Power was associated with the belief that one *should not have to* control one's emotions such that people with a greater sense of power tended to believe that they *should not have to* control their emotions, which in turn was associated with lower suppression and greater acceptance. The belief that one *should not have to* control one's emotions fully statistically mediated the relationship

between power and suppression (indirect effect = -0.07 [95% CI: $-0.13, -0.03$]). Furthermore, the belief that one *should not have to* control one's emotions partially statistically mediated the relationship between power and acceptance (indirect effect = 0.06 [95% CI: $0.02, 0.11$]). This belief did not statistically mediate the relationship between power and reappraisal (indirect effect = 0.01 [95% CI: $-0.02, 0.06$]).

Power was also associated with the belief that one *can* control one's emotions such that people with a greater sense of power tended to believe that they *can* control their emotions, which in turn was associated with greater reappraisal. The belief that one *can* control one's emotions partially statistically mediated the relationship between power and reappraisal (indirect effect = 0.07 [95% CI: $0.02, 0.14$]). This belief did not statistically mediate the relationships between power and suppression (indirect effect = 0.03 [95% CI: $-0.03, 0.08$]) or acceptance (indirect effect = 0.04 [95% CI: $-0.01, 0.10$]).

3.3 | Study 2 discussion

In Study 2, we addressed the same two questions as in Study 1 with a different study design. First, is social power associated with emotion regulation? Indeed, power was associated with less suppression and more reappraisal and acceptance in response to daily stressful life events; however, these effects were smaller in size than in Study 1 and, unlike in Study 1, some of the associations were not robust when controlling for socioeconomic status, gender, and ethnicity. Specifically, power was not associated with suppression when accounting for socioeconomic status and power was not associated with suppression or reappraisal when controlling for ethnicity (European American vs. Asian American).

Second, do beliefs about emotion account for the links between social power and emotion regulation? With the relevant three variables measured sequentially, the belief that one *should not have to* control one's emotions statistically mediated the relationships between power, suppression, and acceptance (but not reappraisal), whereas the belief that one *can* control one's emotions statistically mediated the relationship between power and reappraisal (but not suppression and acceptance).

4 | GENERAL DISCUSSION

Social power is tightly interrelated with and shapes behavior, cognition, and affect (for reviews, see Guinote, 2017; Keltner et al., 2003). Yet, very little research has examined the links between power and emotion regulation. Given

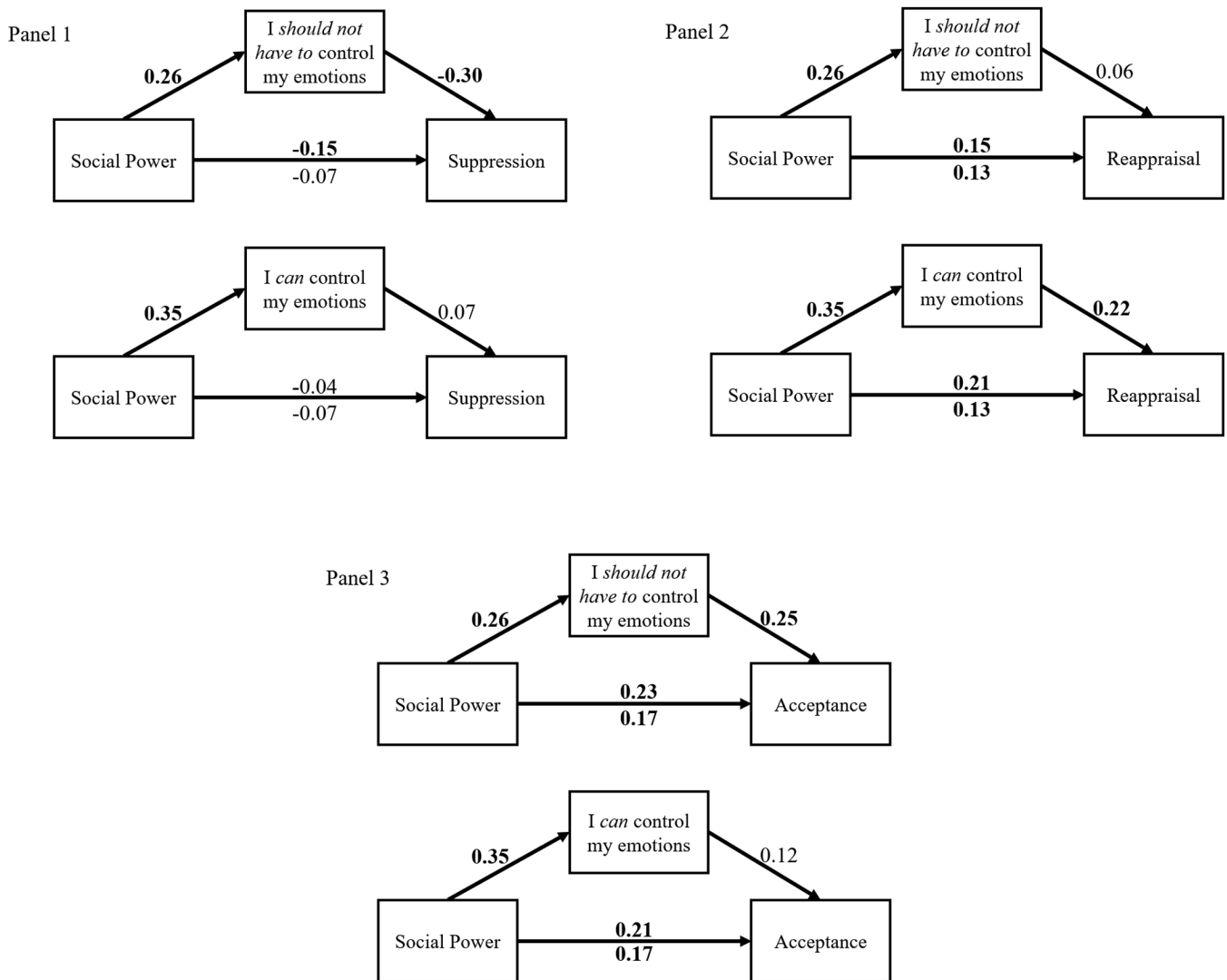


FIGURE 2 (a–c) paths for the mediation analyses for Study 2. Panel 1 shows results for suppression, Panel 2 for reappraisal, and Panel 3 for acceptance. The results for *I should not have to control my emotions* account for the belief that *I can control my emotions* and vice versa. Bolded values indicate significance at the 5% level

the potentially pervasive associations between power and emotion regulation as well as important implications of emotion regulation for people's well-being (e.g., Gross & John, 2003), social functioning (e.g., Chervonsky & Hunt, 2017), and health (e.g., DeSteno et al., 2013), the current research examined the link between power and emotion regulation. Across two studies (with three samples ($N = 1013$) in Study 1 and one sample ($N = 273$) in Study 2), power was associated with less suppression, more reappraisal, and more acceptance. Additionally, short-term longitudinal data from Study 2 suggested that the belief that one *should not have to control* one's at least partially accounted for the links between power, suppression, and acceptance (but not reappraisal), whereas the belief that one *can control* one's emotions partially accounted for the link between power and reappraisal (but not suppression and acceptance).

There were two noteworthy differences in results across studies. In Study 1's Samples 1–3, which measured all variables at one time point and with surveys, the links between power and emotion regulation were generally larger in size (r s ranged from 0.18 to 0.46) and held when controlling for socioeconomic status, gender, ethnicity, and age. In Study 2, which measured variables sequentially and included diary measures of emotion regulation versus surveys for power and beliefs, the links between power and emotion regulation were generally smaller in size (β s ranged from 0.09 to 0.18). Although most associations held when controlling for potential confounds, power was not associated with suppression when accounting for socioeconomic status and power was not associated with suppression or reappraisal when controlling for ethnicity (European American vs. Asian American). Effect sizes were likely weaker due to the separation in

time and the fact that different assessment methods were used. It is also possible there are situational moderators that weaken associations when examining emotion regulation in daily life.

Additionally, results from Study 1's Samples 1–3 supported our preregistered hypotheses regarding power, beliefs about emotion, and emotion regulation such that the belief that one *should not have to* control one's emotions accounted for variance shared between power, suppression, and acceptance (but not reappraisal), whereas the belief that one *can* control one's accounted for variance shared between power, reappraisal, and acceptance (but not suppression). Study 2's short-term longitudinal design largely replicated Study 1's findings focused on power, beliefs about emotion, and emotion regulation with the exception of one link: the belief that one *can* control one's emotion was not associated with acceptance in response to stressful life events. However, the effect was in the predicted direction and thus replication is an important next step to better understanding the reliability of this effect.

The current research contributes to our understanding of the links between social power and emotion regulation in several ways. First, whereas initial research has begun to elucidate the relationship between power and suppression (Catterson et al., 2017; Petkanopoulou et al., 2012; Pilch et al., 2018) and reappraisal (Leach & Weick, 2020), we measured three different emotion-regulation strategies (i.e., suppression, reappraisal, and acceptance) to gain a more comprehensive understanding of how power relates to emotion regulation. Second, to the best of our knowledge, this research is one of the first to empirically examine why power might relate to emotion regulation. Third, the fact that we accounted for potential confounds and moderators and included multiple diverse samples as well as measurement types speaks to the robustness and reliability of our effects.

4.1 | Power and emotion regulation

Results addressing Question 1—Is social power associated with emotion regulation?—align with and shed light on existing theory and research in multiple ways.

At the broadest level, our results highlight the importance of bridging the literatures on power and emotion regulation. Emotion regulation is a highly social process in that we often regulate our experience and expression of emotion in the presence of others (e.g., Butler & Gross, 2009). Although the study of emotion regulation has started to embrace this idea by studying emotion regulation during social interactions (cf., Butler & Randall, 2013; Impett et al., 2012; Peters et al., 2014; Zaki & Williams, 2013), these studies typically have not

addressed underlying power dynamics. The current work suggests that social power is, at the very least, associated with emotion regulation and thus should be considered when examining when and why individuals utilize certain emotion-regulation strategies in social contexts.

Considering existing theoretical models, our findings fit in with assertions outlined in the approach–inhibition theory of power (Keltner et al., 2003), which is one of the more prominent theoretical models in the power literature. This theory suggests that higher power focuses one's attention toward rewards and leads to more disinhibition and authenticity, whereas lower power focuses one's attention toward threats and leads to more inhibition. Our findings—specifically linking higher power to beliefs that *one should not have to* control one's emotions as well as to lower suppression and higher acceptance—map onto the idea that higher-power individuals are more disinhibited than lower-power individuals, including in the realm of emotion regulation.

Additionally, a large body of work suggests that power is associated with self-efficacy and confidence (cf., Galinsky et al., 2012). Our findings—specifically linking higher (vs. lower) power to beliefs that one *can* control one's emotions as well as to higher acceptance and reappraisal—map onto the idea that higher-power individuals feel more self-efficacious than lower-power individuals, including in the realm of emotion regulation.

Perhaps unexpectedly, type of power motivation (coalition-building vs. ruthless self-advancement) did not moderate the associations between power and emotion regulation. Thus, when considering individual differences in power and emotion regulation, it appears that the way in which people pursue power does not influence these associations. Our focus on individual differences could potentially explain why we did not see a significant moderation by type of power motivation. It is possible that these effects are more apparent in specific interpersonal contexts when there is a clear power hierarchy (e.g., a workplace) and a person is either motivated to maintain their current level of power or to obtain more power. Future research might explore these effects in relation to power motivations within interpersonal contexts.

Finally, it is interesting to explore the possibility of bidirectional relationships such that more adaptive emotion regulation (less suppression, more reappraisal, and more acceptance) might contribute to greater social power. Some work has shown that individuals who act at will, even when the behaviors violate social norms, are perceived as having more power relative to those who do not act at will (van Kleef et al., 2011). Thus, using less suppression and more acceptance might allow one to be perceived as acting at will and, in turn, lead to perceptions of higher

power. Another intriguing possibility is that the use of reappraisal may lead to smarter instrumental emotion regulation (i.e., regulating to obtain delayed rather than immediate goals; Tamir, 2016; Tamir & Ford, 2012) and, in turn, greater power.

4.2 | Social power, beliefs about emotion, and emotion regulation

Next, we consider how the results addressing Question 2—Do beliefs about emotion account for the links between social power and emotion regulation?—align with and advance existing theory and research.

Although not the main focus of this research, our findings build on theorizing that beliefs about emotion play an important role in emotion regulation (Ford & Gross, 2019). Existing work has found that the belief that one *should not have to* control one's emotion was associated with less suppression (Burton & Bonanno, 2016; Goodman et al., 2020; Mauss et al., 2010; Spokas et al., 2009), whereas the belief that one *can* control one's emotion was associated with greater reappraisal (De Castella et al., 2013; Ford, Lwi, et al., 2018; Goodman et al., 2020; Gutentag et al., 2017; Kneeland & Dovidio, 2020; Tamir et al., 2007; Veilleux et al., 2015). Given that suppression focuses on inhibiting emotional behavior, whereas reappraisal focuses on changing emotional experience, these initial studies suggest that beliefs about emotion might relate to specific emotion-regulation strategies based on which emotional channel (i.e., emotional behavior vs. emotional experience) the strategy targets. The current research found that the belief that one *should not have to* control one's emotions was associated with less suppression and more acceptance (but not reappraisal) and that the belief that one *can* control one's emotions was associated with more acceptance and reappraisal (but not suppression). Thus, our findings provide further support that these beliefs differentially relate to emotion-regulation strategies based on which emotional channel they target. Importantly, our studies are the first to show that acceptance relates to both beliefs, which strengthens the above theorizing since acceptance involves nonjudgmentally experiencing an emotion *and* behaving in ways that align with that emotion. Interestingly, acceptance in response to stressful life events was not significantly associated with the belief that one *can* control one's emotions; however, the effect was in the predicted direction and thus replication will help clarify the reliability of this effect.

Additionally, previous studies have typically focused on understanding one belief about emotion at a time

(e.g., Kneeland et al., 2020; Mauss et al., 2010); however, we examined *both* fundamental beliefs about emotion simultaneously and therefore were able to understand how each one is uniquely associated with emotion regulation. This is particularly important given the two beliefs were positively associated with one another in two of our samples ($r_{sample2} = 0.04$, $r_{sample3} = 0.30$, $r_{sample4} = 0.19$). Indeed, as noted above, the belief that one *should not have to* control one's emotion and the belief that one *can* control one's emotions were differentially associated with emotion regulation. These results highlight the importance of further understanding how emotion regulation might be influenced by multiple beliefs about emotion.

Given the novelty of beliefs about emotion, we know very little about the characteristics that contribute to these beliefs and thus we do not yet have the best understanding of how to modify these beliefs. This is an important issue because beliefs about emotion have been linked with clinical outcomes (e.g., Tamir et al., 2007; Veilleux et al., 2015) and thus understanding how to modify these beliefs would have broader implications for mental health. The current research suggests that social power might crucially involve one's beliefs about emotions. Specifically, we found that social power was positively associated with the belief that one *should not have to* control one's emotions and the belief that one *can* control one's emotions. Though our work cannot determine causality, future research should examine if increasing one's sense of social power across one's relationships might lead to changes in one's beliefs about emotion.

4.3 | Limitations and future directions

Several limitations and directions for future research seem particularly important to note. First, we utilized a correlational approach to examine individual differences in power and emotion regulation. The current research was a crucial first step in building a fundamental understanding of the nature of these associations; however, we cannot make conclusions about causality. Accordingly, future research might manipulate power to understand whether power causally leads to certain beliefs about emotion and the use of certain emotion-regulation strategies and on manipulating emotion regulation to understand whether emotion regulation causally contributes to beliefs about emotion and sense of power.

Second, although our samples were diverse in many ways and thus allowed us to test multiple factors that might influence the generalizability of the observed effects, our participants were all from the United States.

Previous work suggests that the patterns we observed might not extend to participants living in other countries. For example, Pilch et al. (2018) examined the link between social hierarchy and suppression in a Polish sample and found that being higher in social hierarchy predicted greater suppression. Thus, applying a cross-cultural lens to the current research questions will be an important next step.

Third, we focused on individual differences in power and emotion regulation in general and in response to daily stressful events. While there is value and validity to this approach (e.g., Fleeson & Galagher, 2009), we cannot speak to how social power and emotion regulation play out in different contexts and situations. A fruitful future direction might involve employing daily-diary or experience-sampling methods to examine the role that situational power (i.e., one's sense of power in a given social context or relationship; Anderson et al., 2012) plays for emotion regulation in daily life. Power differences in the workplace, for example, might reveal different associations between power and emotion regulation than power differences in a romantic relationship.

Finally, while our research focused on three important emotion-regulation strategies (i.e., suppression, reappraisal, and acceptance), future work might examine how power relates to other, less-studied emotion-regulation strategies (cf., Naragon-Gainey et al., 2017). One strategy that seems particularly relevant to power is situation selection, which involves choosing to engage or not engage in certain situations based on the potential emotional consequences. One could imagine that higher-power individuals would have more freedom and flexibility to choose which situations they engage in compared to lower-power individuals.

4.4 | Conclusion

The present research marries two ubiquitous and highly consequential psychological processes that have been drastically understudied in conjunction—social power and emotion regulation. To our knowledge, this work is the most comprehensive to date on power and emotion regulation, examining the relationships between power and three emotion-regulation strategies. Across four samples studied with surveys and daily diaries, individual differences in power were associated with the habitual use of less suppression, more reappraisal, and more acceptance. Additionally, in Study 2, the belief that one *should not have to* control one's emotions at least partially accounted for the links between power, suppression, and acceptance, whereas the belief that one *can* control one's emotions partially accounted for the link

between power and reappraisal. Overall, results suggest that social power and emotion regulation are interconnected in part, because of their links with beliefs about emotions.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

All authors conceived of the presented ideas, developed the theory, discussed the results, and contributed to the final manuscript. F.K.Z. and J.A.T. carried out analyses.

ETHICS STATEMENT

The authors' Institutional Review Board approved all study procedures (protocol ID: 2012-08-4593).

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ENDNOTES

¹ We preregistered hypotheses for Question 1 in Sample 2, and we preregistered hypotheses for Questions 1 and 2 in Samples 3 and 4. We deviated in one way from the preregistrations: We preregistered mediation analyses to test hypotheses for Question 2 in Study 1. However, given the limitations of cross-sectional mediation analyses (Maxwell & Cole, 2007), we decided to use zero-order and partial correlations which are more appropriate for cross-sectional data. Additionally, in one case, we present analyses in the Supporting Information instead of the main text. Specifically, the preregistration for Sample 2 includes three additional variables (i.e., rumination, situation selection, and beliefs that others can control their emotions). We report analyses for these three additional variables in Sample 2 in Table S2 of the Supporting Information instead of the main text, because they were exploratory and not included in the theoretical model presented in Figure 1.

² In the sample size section for Sample 2 preregistration, we noted there were no previous findings in the literature. Therefore, our estimates of the smallest effect size were based on our own Sample 1 in Study 1.

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