
Research Digest

In each issue, *Negotiation Journal* publishes research digests to disseminate some of the most recent research findings in our field. We have attempted to communicate technical research in a manner that would reach the diverse readership of *Negotiation Journal*. We hope that we have accomplished this goal and that you find the information useful — both in terms of keeping up with the latest findings and consulting articles of particular interest. We look forward to receiving feedback from our readers about the value of this section as well as ideas on how the digests can be improved. We also welcome suggestions for articles (from any peer-reviewed journal) on negotiation and related topics to be summarized in future issues. Feel free to drop us a line at the *Journal* from time to time. We thank Kim Wright for preparing this issue's digests.

Daniel Druckman and Nancy J. Waters

Did It Work?

Negotiation teachers and experimentalists may be unsettled by Rudolph Vetschera's finding that students and lab subjects do not necessarily follow the scripts they have been given in simulations. In some cases, in fact, they may flip the preferences stated in the text. Thus, they may regard the deals they strike as successes although the formal scoring system rates them as failures.

Vetschera's research analyzes the influence of characteristics of utility functions on outcomes in negotiations supported by negotiation support systems. His research was designed to study the effects of negotiator preferences on negotiation outcomes. His analysis shows that a number of subjects had utility functions that contradicted the attributes described in the case description.

Is this cause for alarm? While the results indicate potential problems in experimental negotiation research, it also conveys that even those who "misinterpreted" the case description still correctly encoded their (incorrect) preferences.

Source: Vetschera, R. 2006. Preference structures of negotiators and negotiation outcomes. *Group Decision and Negotiation* 15: 111-125.

Key words: negotiation, negotiation support systems, negotiation outcomes.

Quality, Quantity, and Cooperation

What people intend is not what they necessarily do; at least that's one implication of some recent research conducted by a team of Taiwanese and Canadian researchers. In analyzing two-person electronic negotiation, they found that people who perceived themselves as cooperative actually made fewer offers than those who saw themselves as more competitive.

By analyzing electronic negotiations, the researchers were able to improve their understanding of negotiation strategies, behaviors, and outcomes. They divided negotiators into two clusters: cooperative and noncooperative. The results showed that negotiators with a less cooperative strategy submit more offers but offer fewer messages. Negotiators with a more cooperative strategy may send fewer offers, but they work with more messages.

These findings suggest that those who view themselves as cooperative engage in more attempts at persuasion. These negotiators also feel that they have more control over the negotiations and express more satisfaction with the outcome and with their performance. More importantly, perhaps, the proportion of negotiations that reach an agreement is higher in the cooperative cluster.

Source: Lai, H., H. Doong, C. Kao, and G. Kersten. 2006. Negotiators' communication, perception of their counterparts, and performance in dyadic e-negotiations. *Group Decision and Negotiation* 15: 429–447.

Key words: negotiation, electronic negotiation, cooperation, competition.

Taking Advantage of Relationships

Advances in negotiation theory have ranged in recent years from the development of formal decision-making tools to add rigor to the formulation of strategy to the identification of the biases and traps that can hamper personal judgment during the negotiation process. But many scholars have argued that this research has been too focused on the individual negotiator and that concentrating on a single party diverts our attention from a negotiation's more relational aspects.

Michele Gelfand and her colleagues have attempted to correct this imbalance with a distinctively relational negotiation construct, relational self-construal (RSC) and negotiation. RSC provides a framework for information to be filtered, processed, and remembered in a manner that increases focus on connectedness to others. The researchers associate the components of RSC — relational cognition, relational emotion, and relational motivation — with specific psychological processes wherein

relationships, and not one's personal attributes, provide the critical framework in decision making.

Their research model identifies when and how relational issues manifest in negotiations and attempts to begin to address criticisms of "arelativity" in negotiation theory and research. This model also has the potential to enhance negotiation training by showing trainers how to be aware of the costs and benefits of various relational dynamics in negotiations.

Source: Gelfand, M. J., V. Major, J. L. Raver, L. H. Nishii, and K. O'Brien. 2006. Negotiating relationally: The dynamics of the relational self in negotiations. *Academy of Management Review* 31: 427-451.

Key words: negotiation, negotiation theory, relationships.

Legal Rulings versus Negotiated Settlements

We often think of litigation and negotiation as distinctive paths. Yes, each practice informs the other when parties "bargain in the shadow of the law," but ultimately parties must choose one or the other option. Todd Allee and Paul Huth argue that sometimes negotiated agreements make legal rulings more feasible, especially when leaders are seeking "political cover." And the presence of negotiations can be a necessary condition for parties to achieve a legal settlement of an issue.

Allee and Huth utilized a data set containing detailed information on state claims to disputed territories over a seventy-six-year period. They chose territorial disputes because they can often linger for many years and, in the process, offer both parties considerable opportunities to explore various avenues for resolution.

They found that leaders will forgo voluntarily negotiated concessions and turn to legal rulings when they expect that the concessions would be met by domestic political opposition. But *both* sides must face an equally high cost of concession to make the legal settlement preferable to a negotiated agreement. Thus, certain domestic political conditions can be expected to compel leaders to prefer a third-party legal decision to a negotiated agreement.

Source: Allee, T. L. and P. K. Huth. 2006. Legitimizing dispute settlement: International legal rulings as domestic political cover. *American Political Science Review* 100: 219-234.

Key words: negotiated agreements, settlement, litigation, territorial disputes.

How an Offer Becomes an Outcome

Researchers have long studied concession patterns in single-use transactions. Vivi Nastase has extended this research to multi-issue cases by mining data through Inspire, an online system used by educators around the world. She found that even in these more complex cases, where package offers are exchanged, early patterns are predictive of final outcomes.

Nastase analyzed 3,063 negotiations conducted with Inspire. These cases have a fixed number of issues to discuss (such as price and payment options) and a small fixed number of possible values for each issue. Inspire gives users an evaluation of their position at the negotiation table for each offer exchanged.

The negotiations were grouped into three classes: successful (agreement reached), one-sided (one negotiator not responsive), and failed (no agreement). Nastase used features of concession curves (plots of offers over time) to predict negotiation outcomes. Machine learning techniques were used in four experiments to choose those features of the curves that best distinguish between the different outcomes. The results show that certain concession curve features are highly indicative of the negotiation outcome. The author concludes that this multicase analysis can be useful in analyzing paired negotiators and how they respond to one another.

Source: Nastase, V. 2006. Concession curve analysis for Inspire negotiations. *Group Decision and Negotiation* 15: 185-193.

Key words: negotiation, concessions.