
Special Section: Gender in Negotiation

Introduction

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Gender has become one of the hottest areas of negotiation research and teaching in recent years. The topic has received increasing media attention, and negotiation students and executive education participants more frequently request that educators address the topic of gender dynamics at the bargaining table.

Our aim in presenting the collection of articles in this special issue of *Negotiation Journal* is to provide a resource for negotiation teachers, trainers, and practitioners interested in the latest developments in the study of gender in negotiation, and also to offer an introduction to the field for scholars and students interested in conducting research on the topic.

The collection includes review articles suitable for use in negotiation courses and training programs (see Hannah Riley Bowles and Kathleen McGinn on gender in job negotiations; Catherine Eckel, Angela de Oliveira, and Philip Grossman on gender and cooperation; and Muriel Niederle and Lise Vesterlund on gender differences in competition). It also provides a sampling of empirical articles representative of the diverse methods in this area of research (see Rachel Croson, Melanie Marks, and Jessica Snyder's coordination experiment, and Fiona Greig's field study on negotiation and

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career advancement). Finally, the collection also introduces new areas of investigation with implications for gender in negotiation (see Tanya Rosenblat on the beauty premium in negotiation and Laura Kray and Connon Locke on flirtation).

Perhaps the most important development in the study of gender in negotiation in the past ten years has been the movement from studying gender as a “personality” variable to examining “gender in context.” Male and female negotiators sometimes fulfill the sex stereotypic expectations that men will be more competitive bargainers and claim a greater portion of the pie than women, but people’s gender is *not* a consistent predictor of their negotiating behavior or performance. As illustrated in the current collection of articles, what recent research has shown is that gender effects on negotiation are contingent on situational factors that make gender more or less relevant, salient, and influential. The articles in this collection also demonstrate that some of those situations in which gender effects do arise have important economic and career implications.

We have organized the articles in three sections around the following topics: defining the negotiating table, interacting at the negotiating table, and leaving the negotiating table.

The articles in the first section on *Defining the Table* highlight how relationships *away* from the bargaining table — often ignored in negotiation research — influence gender effects on negotiation *at* the bargaining table. For instance, Bowles and McGinn review research on gender in job negotiations and argue that gender effects on negotiations with employers cannot be understood in isolation from the effects of gender in household bargaining. They describe research findings on the situational factors that moderate gender effects on job negotiations, including the degree of ambiguity about what is available for negotiation, the salience of sex stereotypes about how men and women will and should behave in job negotiations, gender differences in pay expectations, and gender ideology with regard to the division of household labor.

In the same section, Croson, Marks, and Snyder present the results of a laboratory experiment in which they found that gender effects on group coordination varied depending on group members’ outside relationships (i.e., belonging to a sorority/fraternity). For instance, they found that women’s group coordination improved when they belonged to a shared identity group whereas men’s worsened.

The articles in the second section on *Interacting at the Table* present research on how one’s own gender and the gender of one’s counterpart can influence negotiation-related behaviors, such as economic cooperation and the propensity to compete. Eckel, de Oliveira, and Grossman review the literature on how gender influences altruism and cooperation in bargaining-related decisions. The research that they review found that gender effects vary substantially and depend less reliably on the gender of the decision

maker than on situational factors, such as whether the behavior is public or private (e.g., women seem to be more generous than men in public but not in private). These studies have indicated that gender differences in behavior are often a response to sex stereotypical expectations that cause women and men to feel that they must comply with some implicit norm (e.g., women are expected to care more about others and be more generous than men).

Niederle and Vesterlund review the results of three experiments on gender and competition that indicated that women are more prone to compete in same-sex than in mixed-sex situations. In one of these studies, they found that a quota-type affirmative action intervention motivated women to compete, in part because they perceived themselves to be competing more with other women than with men.

Rosenblat presents a study from a new line of research on the “beauty premium” in negotiation. She found that the combined verbal and physical attractiveness of one’s counterpart had a greater positive influence on women’s than on men’s generosity, and proposes new research directions for illuminating the effects of physical attractiveness and gender on negotiation.

Kray and Locke present the results of two studies on perceptions of flirtation in negotiation. They found that trained negotiators tend to dismiss the effectiveness of flirtation as a negotiation strategy but that study participants perceived more flirtatious negotiators to be more likable, if less authentic. They discuss directions for future research, including whether women are more likely to be perceived, for good or bad, as more flirtatious than men.

Our final section on *Leaving the Table* explores the implications of gender differences in the propensity to negotiate. We include one article in this section by Greig, which presents the results of her field study of the career consequences of gender differences in the propensity to negotiate. She conducted her study in a large financial institution by collecting behavioral measures of the propensity to negotiate. She then combined those behavioral data with additional survey data and human resources records to show that women’s lower propensity to negotiate (as compared to men’s) helped explain why women in this organization seemed to be riding a “slow elevator” when trying to advance up the ranks.

Taken together, these articles give readers a sense of the diversity of methodologies and paradigms that have been used to study gender in negotiation. Croson, Marks, Snyder, Eckel, de Oliveira, Grossman, Niederle, Vesterlund, and Rosenblat — all experimental economists — use highly controlled, abstract games with anonymous interactions. Bowles and McGinn present the results of research based on field surveys and interviews as well as psychological and economic experiments. As with Kray and Locke’s second study, most of the psychological experiments reviewed

by Bowles and McGinn invite study participants to engage in simulated real-life negotiation scenarios, such as salary discussions or business deals. The participants generally engage in face-to-face negotiations with one another or evaluate the behavior of videotaped negotiators. Greig combines different approaches, matching up survey, archival, and behavioral data to measure the impact of gender differences in negotiation on career advancement within an actual organization.

This collection provides a snapshot of a growing body of research, some of which is naturally more mature than others. Certain articles in the collection have clear prescriptive implications, while others offer additional exciting questions rather than conclusions. We hope that the insights of this work will be useful to negotiation practitioners, teachers, and students, and that the open questions will stir readers' curiosity and research ambitions. Perhaps, most importantly, we hope that this work will whet readers' appetites to talk and learn more about the complex and important implications of gender for negotiation.

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