

**A Pawn in Someone Else's Game?:  
The Cognitive, Motivational, and Paradigmatic Barriers  
to Women's Excelling in Negotiation**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Women's relatively worse performance in negotiation is often cited as an explanation for gender differences in advancement and pay within organizations. We review key findings from the past twenty years of research on gender differences in negotiation. Women do underperform relative to men in negotiation, but only under limited circumstances, which means the performance gap is unlikely due to lesser skills on their part. The barriers between women and negotiation excellence are of three types: cognitive, motivational, and paradigmatic. Cognitive barriers stem from negative stereotypes about women's negotiating abilities. Motivational barriers stem from desire to prevent women negotiators from excelling in a masculine domain. Paradigmatic barriers stem from how negotiation is currently studied. We call for greater attention to motivational barriers and for changes to the negotiation paradigm. Women negotiators are not incompetent, and training them to negotiate more like men is not obviously the solution. In fact, women have greater concern for others than men do, and their cooperativeness elevates collective intelligence and enables ethical behavior. Under a new paradigm of negotiation, the value of these strengths could become more readily apparent. In particular, we advocate for greater attention to long-term relationships, subjective value, and relational capital, all of which may have important economic implications in real world negotiations.

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Women in organizations are succeeding to a lesser degree than men. Women still hold only 5% of CEO positions (Catalyst, 2015), 19% of Board Directorships (Catalyst, 2015) and are estimated to earn only \$0.82 for every dollar paid to men (Hegewisch, Ellis, & Hartmann, 2015). When women are under-represented in high status positions, it becomes more difficult for other women to succeed in the organization (Ibarra, 1992, 1993; Kanter, 1977). The female gender group is seen more negatively in firms with fewer senior women (Ely, 1994) and women's skills go unrecognized (Joshi, 2014)<sup>1</sup>.

Despite similar career aspirations, the trajectories of high-achieving men and women in MBA programs vary in important ways. A recent survey of Harvard Business School alumni showed that women were less likely than men to hold senior management positions, less likely to have people directly reporting to them, and less satisfied with their careers (Ely, Stone, & Ammerman, 2014). Men and women in their sample did not differ in the ambitiousness of their career goals, though women were apparently less able to realize their aspirations.

Gender differences in negotiation performance are commonly invoked as one explanation for disparities in pay and advancement (Amanatullah & Tinsley, 2013a; Bowles & McGinn, 2008; Kulik & Olekalns, 2012; Nadler & Nadler, 1987; Stuhlmacher & Walters, 1999). Negotiation is an important method of distributing scarce resources, such as pay and promotions (Kray & Thompson, 2005). Negotiation skills also determine the division of labor in the home

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<sup>1</sup> We recognize that the term female usually refers to biological sex, whereas the term woman refers to the social meaning of gender. However, we will use these terms interchangeably for the sake of clarity in writing.

(Bowles & McGinn, 2008), which affects the time and psychological resources women can devote to their work (Rothbard & Edwards, 2003). In light of these facts, it is important to understand when and why gender differences in negotiation performance emerge and to understand the impact of negotiation differences on career outcomes. As the introductory quote suggests, until the motives and assumptions that contribute to a gender gap in negotiation performance are fully uncovered, an unacknowledged conflict may exist between women and the bargaining table, as it is currently conceived.

### Overview

To answer these broad questions, we have divided our analysis into five sections. In the first section, we review key findings from two decades of research on gender in negotiation to determine whether and when the playing field is level. In light of recent theoretical and empirical reviews of this research area (Bowles & McGinn, 2008; Mazei et al., 2015; Stuhlmacher & Walters, 1999), our aim is simply to identify areas of consensus around whether a gender gap exists and under what circumstances. To preview this analysis, the evidence suggests that advising and training women to become better negotiators is a necessary but insufficient condition for altering gendered career outcomes. We are not optimistic that negotiating training alone, as it is currently conceptualized, will reduce the gender gaps in pay and advancement.

In the second section, we turn to the question of *why* men's and women's negotiation track records differ. To date, the field has focused largely on cognitive barriers, interpreting gender differences as reflections of predictable biases emerging from gender stereotypes. In this research stream, gender stereotypes are identified and shown to hold women back economically and socially in a self-fulfilling prophecy. While this perspective has advanced our understanding of women's negotiation challenges considerably, to further eradicate barriers to women's career

advancement, negotiation researchers must also acknowledge the motivational and paradigmatic underpinnings of gender differences in negotiation performance. We consider the role of motivated cognition and gendered paradigmatic assumptions in portraying women as players in a negotiation game that they cannot seem to win. By juxtaposing these accounts, we seek to explain why men and women differ in negotiation performance. Our analysis is designed to encourage researchers to consider a broad range of factors that may be preventing women from achieving a proven track record of success in bargaining. Figure 1 summarizes the barriers.

The third section identifies women's strengths as negotiators. Generally, women have greater concern for others than men do, and their cooperativeness elevates collective intelligence and enables ethical behavior. We identify several ways in which women's strengths have not been fully recognized, resulting in an overly pessimistic view of women's negotiating ability. Under the current negotiation paradigm, women's strengths are often portrayed as weaknesses, but unnecessarily so. When considered in the light of a new, more realistic paradigm, women's strengths could shine.

In the fourth section, we consider gender differences in negotiation performance through the lens of relational models (Fiske, 1992). Cumulatively, the evidence suggests an interesting possibility for future research—that different relational models could be applied by women and by the people with whom they negotiate. Although there is insufficient evidence at this point to conclude that the application of different relational models drives gender differences in negotiation performance, we consider this possibility as an important avenue for future research.

In the fifth and final section, we consider how cognitive, motivational, and paradigmatic barriers can be eliminated, leveling the negotiation playing field. We highlight a number of variables known to improve women's outcomes, but many of these factors focus on what women

can do within a system that requires them to be subservient. Consequently, we call for greater attention to what organizations and negotiating counterparts can do to create a context for women to excel at rates comparable to men.

### **Gender Differences in Negotiation Performance**

Negotiations are social interactions in which people mutually allocate scarce resources (cf. Thompson & Hastie, 1990). Because the characteristics associated with success are more closely linked to men than to women, negotiation is considered a masculine domain (Bowles & Kray, 2013). Consistent with this perspective, gender differences in negotiation emerge across multiple dimensions of performance. Below we consider the strength of evidence for gender differences in economic and relational performance. We also consider gender differences in attitudes towards negotiating, which have been theorized to be essential to effective performance across contexts. Finally, we weigh the evidence suggesting women are less likely to initiate negotiations than men are.

#### **Economic Performance**

The most common measure of negotiation performance in the literature is economic, measured either as the dollar value of an agreement or the number of utility points captured in a simulation. There is significant evidence to suggest a robust gender difference in economic performance. When faced with the task of negotiating a favorable deal with another party, men tend to receive better outcomes than women. Two meta-analyses have systematically measured this gender difference (Mazei et al., 2015; Stuhlmacher & Walters, 1999). In the earlier study, the effect sizes were small (Stuhlmacher & Walters, 1999), but in the more recent paper with a larger sample, 59% of the effect sizes were medium to large (Mazei et al., 2015).

At first blush then, it would seem that men are clearly better negotiators than women. Gender differences in negotiation outcomes could emerge simply because men are more skilled in the domain than women. As scientists, we have done our best to consider whether this explanation fits the data. Two factors give us doubt. One factor is the variable nature of the differences. Some relatively modest situational factors attenuate the gender difference in negotiation performance. A number of variables eliminate—and even reverse—men's advantage in negotiation. A second factor is the fact that men and women are treated differently when they negotiate identically. In recent research (Kray, Kennedy, & Van Zant, 2014), negotiators were four times more likely to deceive a female counterpart than a male counterpart. In this context, being deceived led women to enter into relatively more deals under false pretenses. This finding suggests unequal treatment is a legitimate barrier to women's negotiating success.

Women do not always perform worse than men when negotiating, and this implies gender differences in economic outcomes are contextual. Mazei et al.'s (2015) meta-analysis tested for five potential moderators of gender differences in economic performance, and three factors mattered. Women performed as well as men when (1) negotiating on behalf of another person (but not a larger entity), (2) when negotiators were given information about the bargaining range, and (3) when they had experience with negotiation. Notably, the standard for experience was low in that negotiators were considered experienced if they had engaged in at least one prior simulation, had previously taken a class on negotiation, or if they reported having some experience. All MBA students and executives were considered experienced, and when these samples were excluded, experience still mattered. Said differently, engaging in one prior simulation attenuated gender differences in economic outcomes.

Two factors were irrelevant: self-selection into the negotiation and integrative nature of the task. Neither factor moderates gender differences in performance. Considering why women do not perform better than men on integrative negotiations, one possibility is that women are acting cooperatively (showing concern for others) without being assertive (showing concern for the self). In other words, women could be adopting accommodating strategies (not collaborative strategies) more often than men. Accommodating strategies involve premature concession-making, which can drive lower economic outcomes (Curhan, Neale, Ross, & Rosencranz-Engelmann, 2008; Hüffmeier, Freund, Zerres, Backhaus, & Hertel, 2014).

The authors also examined economic outcomes when all moderating factors were favorable to women (i.e., when women were negotiating for another person, had experience, had information about the bargaining range, self-selected into the negotiation, and the task had an integrative component). Under these conditions, men's advantage reversed. Women obtained better economic outcomes than men. Overall, the gender difference in economic outcomes was so variable that the authors concluded that "a single overall true gender difference does not exist" (Mazei et al., 2015: 92).

Additional evidence exists of contextual factors that turn gender differences on and off beyond the aforementioned meta-analysis. No gender difference in economic outcomes emerges when the negotiation domain is feminine (i.e., jewelry) rather than masculine (i.e., motorcycle headlights) (Bear & Babcock, 2012). Similarly, no gender difference emerges when the negotiation is viewed as a learning tool rather than a diagnostic of true ability (Kray, Thompson, & Galinsky, 2001). Under some circumstances, women perform better than men. The gender advantage reverses to favor women when stereotypically feminine traits (e.g., good listening skills) are linked to negotiation success and when stereotypically masculine traits (e.g.,



assertiveness) are linked to poor negotiation outcomes (Kray, Galinsky, & Thompson, 2002).

Additionally, outcomes favor women when gender stereotypes are primed explicitly rather than implicitly, suggesting the motivation to overcome limiting stereotypes is critical to women's negotiation success (Kray et al, 2001).

### **Relational Performance**

Gender differences emerge in perceivers' impressions of men and women negotiators, even when they engage in identical bargaining behaviors. Women are perceived more negatively than men for negotiating on their own behalf (Amanatullah & Tinsley, 2013a; Bowles, Babcock, & Lai, 2007), even when experiments ensure their behavior is identical to men's. In one telling study, Bowles et al. (2007) exposed working adults to a transcript of a conversation between an employer and a male or female job candidate, following the extension of an offer. The candidate either did not negotiate the offer, negotiated using moderate language (e.g., "I would like to be paid at the top of that range"), or negotiated using strong language (e.g., "I think I should be paid at the top of that range. This is really important to me; I think I deserve it."). The male candidate was perceived similarly regardless of whether he negotiated. In contrast, people were less interested in working with the female candidate who negotiated, regardless of whether she asked moderately or strongly for more compensation. They perceived her as less nice and more demanding when she negotiated, suggesting the existence of a double standard whereby women, but not men, must choose between economic gains and positive social perceptions. By using methods that hold constant negotiators' behavior, it becomes clear that gender inequality emerges when men and women use identical bargaining strategies.

### **Attitudes towards Negotiating**

Having a positive attitude towards negotiating is important because gains often accrue to those who are willing to negotiate (Babcock & Laschever, 2003; Gerhart & Rynes, 1991). For instance, higher salaries, larger bonuses, or more stock options may be given only to employees who ask for them, and price breaks may be given to customers who ask. This is true not only at used car lots, but also in contexts such as financial advice and retail stores (Poggi & Kaufman, 2009; Zweig, 2015). Even small gains from negotiation can compound over time. As a result, having a positive attitude about negotiating is likely to be an important predictor of actively participating in the process and, ultimately, performing well as a negotiator.

Compared to men, women report greater dislike of negotiating (Babcock, Gelfand, Small, & Stayn, 2006; Small, Gelfand, Babcock, & Gettman, 2007) and report lower self-efficacy in doing so (Stevens, Bavetta, & Gist, 1993). Consistent with this attitudinal difference, Kray and Gelfand (2009) found that women felt relief when their first offer was accepted, whereas men felt regret that they had not asked for more, even if it meant a more protracted, back-and-forth negotiation.

Several moderators appear to mitigate this gender difference. In Kray and Gelfand's (2009) research, women's relative aversion to negotiating was eliminated when it was clear that negotiating was expected in a hiring situation, where it would be used to evaluate their suitability for the job at hand. This implies that women's aversion to negotiating reflects their understanding of social expectations rather than innate gender differences. In Small and colleagues' (2007) research, reframing an otherwise identical task as asking rather than negotiating reduced women's negativity towards the task. Women's apparent preference for asking over negotiating may reflect women's greater concerns about politeness. Additionally,

Small et al. (2007) found that priming a sense of power by recalling a time they had control over others (Galinsky, Gruenfeld, & Magee, 2003) improved women's attitude towards negotiating. The results suggest negotiation is a masculine-stereotyped task (Bowles & Kray, 2013). Women dislike the term "negotiate," but not necessarily the behavior. Moreover, when women feel powerful, their attitudes towards the task are similar to men's.

### **Propensity to Negotiate**

Some evidence suggests women are less likely than men to initiate negotiations for greater payment. In a laboratory study, Small et al. (2007) found that 23% of men negotiated for higher payment, compared to 3% of women. In a second laboratory study, cuing participants to the possibility of negotiating their payment exacerbated gender differences in the propensity to do so. Seventeen percent of women negotiated, compared to 59% of men. However, framing the task as asking rather than negotiating led women to be as proactive as men in attempting to gain higher payment.<sup>2</sup>

Similarly, in a field experiment of almost 2,500 job-seekers, women were less likely to negotiate their wages only when there was no explicit statement that wages were negotiable. When it was clear that wages were negotiable, no gender difference in propensity to negotiate

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<sup>2</sup> Though this pattern is entirely consistent with the attitudinal data reported above, we note methodological limitations that restrict the evidentiary value of these findings. A single experimenter with full knowledge of participants' gender coded the propensity to negotiate in real time (D. Small, personal communication, August 28, 2015). Because differentiating complaints and questions from negotiating was left to one person's judgment, it raises questions about whether the coding was reliable and unbiased by gender differences in language use (Lakoff, 1975; Tannen, 1994).

emerged (Leibbrand & List, 2015). These findings suggest an absence of an overall gender difference in propensity to negotiate and instead suggest gender differences are context-specific.

### **Three Explanations for Why Gender Differences Emerge**

If men simply negotiate better and more often than women, why would these patterns emerge? Social expectations clearly matter more for women than men at the bargaining table, and this fact sheds doubt on skill as an explanation for why women underperform in negotiation relative to men. It also suggests that gender differences in negotiation skill are unlikely to account for stubborn and considerable gender differences in pay and advancement. The reasons for gender disparities must be more complex. We consider three possible explanations for women's underperformance in negotiation relative to men. After briefly summarizing each explanation, we review supporting evidence for each account.

The first explanation is cognitive. By this account, bias results from negative descriptive stereotypes of women negotiators. People are cognitive misers who take mental shortcuts in formulating expectations and perceptions of others (Taylor & Fiske, 1978). The negative descriptive stereotypes about women's workplace abilities, including negotiating, create a self-fulfilling prophecy (Merton, 1948), and even small biases can have large cumulative effects over time (Martell, Lane, & Emrich, 1996). In support of the cognitive account, there is significant evidence that negative expectations plague women negotiators and dampen their performance. How, then, can barriers be removed? By the cognitive model, women's negotiating performance should improve if stereotypes are proved wrong. It holds that people seek accurate knowledge and will therefore override their default reliance on negative stereotypes if they see evidence of disconfirming information.

The second explanation is motivational. By this account, perceivers will stolidly deny that women perform well in negotiation. In line with it, much evidence suggests that people will not act as “intuitive scientists” (Kelley, 1971; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986) when evaluating women's negotiation performance. In other words, they may not seek to hold accurate attitudes about women's abilities. Instead, they may act as motivated reasoners who cling to negative stereotypes to satisfy their psychological needs. To uphold these stereotypes, perceivers may evaluate information in a biased fashion to portray women as deficient and negotiators may take action to undermine women's performance.

The third explanation holds that women may not actually underperform at all. Instead, observed differences could reflect the pedagogical tools employed in negotiation research. In line with deconstructionist perspectives on gender (Kray & Thompson, 2005; Putnam & Kolb, 2000), we suggest performance in negotiation is currently defined and measured in ways that privilege masculine characteristics and approaches. The dominant negotiation paradigm may exaggerate gender differences in performance by employing game-like simulations that fail to capture how women are socialized to resolve conflict in the real world. Common role-play simulations differ from real-world negotiations in important ways. Relative to real world negotiations, simulations have relatively trivial stakes, they over-emphasize competition, and are too materialistic, focusing solely on economic value. As such, women's apparent underperformance may be an artifact of a masculine negotiation paradigm.

Below, we review the evidence for these three barriers—cognitive, motivational, and paradigmatic—to women's excelling in negotiation.

### **Cognitive Barriers to Women's Negotiation Performance**

Why, by the cognitive account, do women negotiators underperform relative to men? One reason is the existence of erroneous stereotypes suggesting men are more competent than women (Eagly & Mladinic, 1994; Ridgeway & Smith-Lovin, 1999). Negative stereotypes harm targeted groups because they dampen their aspirations and persistence (Correll, 2004). This is especially true when participants believe a task to be highly diagnostic of their performance in a domain with which they identify strongly (Steele, 1997). For instance, when MBA students believed a negotiation task was diagnostic of their negotiation talent, women expected to claim a lower portion of the resources than men and made less extreme opening offers, whereas no gender differences emerged when the identical negotiation was framed as non-diagnostic of innate ability (Kray et al., 2001).

**Evidence of negative stereotypes about women negotiators.** Women are stereotyped as poor negotiators by men and women alike. People of both genders associate male characteristics with traits of effective negotiators and female characteristics with traits of ineffective negotiators (Kray et al., 2001; Williams & Best, 1982). Specifically, 48% of respondents openly stated that men had the distributive advantage in negotiation (i.e., were better than women at claiming a large portion of the available resources), most often citing men's assertiveness, strength, resistance to compromise, competitive nature, and strong desire not to lose to a woman (Kray et al., 2001).

Reasons for women's advantage were more divergent and less flattering. Only 32% of respondents stated that women had the advantage, and they cited women's emotional intelligence, the tendency for women to be underestimated by others, and men's chivalry toward women as reasons (Kray et al., 2001). Notably, only one of these reasons highlights women's strength. People who believe women are underestimated by others are saying, in essence, that

although they do not believe women are worse negotiators than men, most people do. Similarly, men who act chivalrously toward women aim to serve and protect them (Keen, 1984). Thus, to the extent women have an advantage in negotiation due to chivalry, it is because men let them win. This idea reflects benevolently sexist beliefs that women are in need of men's protection. Benevolent sexism is harmful because it confines women to powerless roles, and it correlates positively with hostile sexism (Glick & Fiske, 1996). To the extent that women win in negotiation because men let them, men are presumed dominant in the domain.

More recently, experimental research has examined the content of gender stereotypes in negotiations. By varying the gender of a negotiating counterpart's name, we found that people expect women to be more easily misled than men (Kray et al., 2014). To understand why, we explored perceptions of competence and warmth. In line with prior research (Eagly, 1997; Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, & Xu, 2002; Prentice & Carranza, 2002), women negotiators were expected to be warmer but less competent than men, and this was true for both male and female respondents. That is, both women and men hold this stereotype of women negotiators. In a mediation analysis, it was women's lower perceived competence (not their higher perceived warmth) that explained why they were perceived to be easier to mislead. In light of these stereotypes, it makes sense that women negotiators would inspire paternalistic attitudes, a hallmark of benevolent sexism (Glick & Fiske, 1996).

Negative expectations of women may be stronger in some negotiation domains than in others. In a recent study, we examined the domains in which women and men were perceived to have a psychological advantage (Kray et al., 2014). People reported whether women or men have an advantage in nine negotiation domains: real estate, automobiles, employment, furniture, merchandise, negotiating over the division of household labor, negotiating with friends and

family, negotiating with landlords/tenants, and negotiating with a romantic partner. Specifically, men were believed to have the advantage in more domains than women. Men were perceived as advantaged in the context of real estate, automobile, employment, and landlord/tenant negotiations. Women were believed to have the advantage only within negotiations over the division of labor in the household, with family and friends, and with a romantic partner. None of these “feminine” contexts directly translate into economic outcomes. Moreover, the stakes were perceived to be much higher for domains in which men had the psychological advantage. In other words, when negotiation skill is important, men are expected to outperform women. These results provide some evidence for negative beliefs about women's negotiating abilities.

Given that women negotiators are negatively stereotyped, why does this matter? It matters largely because negative stereotypes can cause a self-fulfilling prophecy (Merton, 1948). Self-fulfilling prophecies unfold in three steps: Perceivers develop expectations of targets, treat targets differently, and targets react in ways that confirm those expectations, even if the expectations were originally unfounded or wrong (Jussim, 1986). In this way, an originally false proposition—such as that women are poor negotiators—becomes true because people believe it be so. In a classic demonstration of the self-fulfilling prophecy, Word, Zanna, and Cooper (1974) found that White interviewers' negative expectations of Black applicants led them to treat the applicant with greater psychological distance, thus eliciting poorer responses to interview questions among the applicants. Initially false beliefs create a new reality, perpetuating a “reign of error” as perceivers cite the resulting course of events as evidence they were right from the beginning without acknowledging their causal role (Merton, 1948: 195).

**Evidence of negative treatment of women negotiators.** The second step of the self-fulfilling prophecy is differential treatment. Perceivers treat targets differently. In line with this



idea, some evidence suggests that women are treated as if they are worse negotiators. In a field study of car dealers, Ayres and Siegelman (1995) trained men and women negotiators to use identical bargaining strategies. Car dealers quoted significantly higher prices to women than to men. Similarly, Kray et al. (2014) examined lying among MBA students enrolled in a negotiation course. The MBA students were negotiating the Bullard Houses simulation, which concerns a historical property. In this simulation, the seller cares most about preserving tasteful and, ideally, residential, use of the property. In stark contrast to the seller's interests, the buyer wants to use the property to build a commercial, high-rise hotel. Women were again treated worse than men, with buyers lying more to female than to male sellers. With male sellers, buyers were more likely to tell the truth. In contrast, with female sellers, buyers were more likely to tell blatant lies about their intended use of the property (e.g., "it will be residential brownstones"). This research provides clear evidence that women are more likely to face tough distributive tactics, including higher first offers and greater deception. As a result, women could be accorded lower status than men at work, despite identical competence. Status is driven by *perceptions* of relative competence (Anderson & Kilduff, 2009; Anderson, Brion, Moore, & Kennedy, 2012; Anderson & Kennedy, 2012; Kennedy, Anderson, & Moore, 2013). Because resources and rewards accrue to those with higher status (Berger, Cohen, & Zelditch, 1972; Blau, 1964; Griskevicius, Tybur, & Van den Bergh, 2010; Savin-Williams, 1979), these tactics could ultimately affect women's employment negotiations.

In addition to being treated worse, women are judged more negatively for negotiating assertively on their own behalf. Similar to Bowles and colleagues (2007), Amanatullah and Tinsley (2013a) found that women suffered more backlash than men for using assertive

language. Little research has examined behavioral outcomes of backlash in negotiation, but it is known to cause sabotage in other contexts (Rudman & Fairchild, 2004).

Together, these studies' findings are consistent with the first two steps in the self-fulfilling prophecy. People hold more negative expectations for women negotiators and they adjust their behavior on the basis of their counterpart's gender.

#### **Evidence that negative stereotypes undermine women's negotiation performance.**

Gender differences in negotiation performance described earlier could simply be the third step of the self-fulfilling prophecy. In negotiations, underperformance follows naturally from negative beliefs about women's abilities and the competitive tactics that plague women as they negotiate. For instance, in Kray et al. (2014), the deception directed at women negotiators led women to make more deals under false pretenses that did not serve their interests than did men.

At least three of the aforementioned moderators support the cognitive account. One reason it could matter whether the negotiation is framed as diagnostic of ability (Kray et al., 2001) or as a feminine domain (Bear & Babcock, 2012; Kray et al., 2002) is that these cues trigger stereotype threat (Steele & Aronson, 1995). The findings in each of these studies are consistent with the idea that stereotypes, rather than ability, predict women's negotiation underperformance.

Additionally, Walters, Stuhlmacher, & Meyer (1998) found greater gender differences when negotiators competed against a real rather than simulated counterpart. Presumably, the real counterpart was able to convey expectations and treatment that the simulated counterpart was not. Similarly, Stuhlmacher and Walter (1999) found that gender differences were larger in face-to-face interactions than in other mediums. These findings suggest women negotiators are treated differently from men, negatively impacting women's relative performance.

**Implications of the cognitive account for women's negotiation success and career advancement.** Women's underperformance in negotiation could reflect an over-reliance on stereotypes. Stereotypes lead women to be treated differently from men at the bargaining table. By this account, stereotypes about how women behave in negotiation have tremendous explanatory power. Overall, the self-fulfilling prophecy provides a compelling explanation of why women could underperform relative to men in negotiation contexts, and the data support this explanation quite well. By this account, if negative stereotypes about women's negotiating abilities are eradicated, women's performance in negotiation and, ultimately their career outcomes, should improve. In practical terms, this account implies that women should defy the stereotype by acting like men if they want equal pay and career advancement.

### **Motivational Barriers to Women's Negotiation Performance**

“To stave off anomie, alienation, and even existential despair, intuitive theologians need to believe that the prevailing accountability and social control regime is not arbitrary but rather flows naturally from an authority that transcends accidents of history or whims of dominant groups.” (Tetlock, 2002: 453)

If women negotiators provide clear evidence of their abilities, would people update their beliefs and treat women similarly to men? Unfortunately, it is unlikely. Apart from descriptive stereotypes, women are held back at the bargaining table and in their careers through motivated reasoning, which is the tendency to change how information is accessed and evaluated in order to reach a desired conclusion (Kunda, 1987, 1990).

By this motivational account, believing that women are poor negotiators serves valuable psychological functions. It is one way to resolve the apparent conflict between needing to believe in a just world (Lerner, 1980) and women's inferior career outcomes. Women's relatively poor economic outcomes are not unfair to the extent that women are performing worse in some critical aspect of work, such as negotiation. Moreover, because men dominate the current gender

system (Ridgeway & Correll, 2004), women's negotiation success may be resisted to the degree that it is perceived to come at men's expense. Stereotypes vary across cultures because people are motivated to believe men possess whichever qualities are most culturally valued (e.g., individualism in the U.S. or collectivism in Korea) (Cuddy, Wolf, Glick, Crotty, Chong, & Norton, in press).

This motivational explanation differs from the cognitive account by supposing that stereotypes will be difficult to dispel and concomitant pay gaps will be difficult to eliminate because the current reality reflects a desired reality. In addition to preventing belief in a just world, evidence of women's negotiating prowess could threaten men's social status and masculinity, thus motivating defensive strategies to keep women "in their place." The desire to justify existing social arrangements motivates people to downplay unfairness toward women and minorities (Proudfoot & Kay, 2014), and endorsing stereotypes about women negotiators is one way to do so (Laurin, Kay, & Shepherd, 2011). Therefore, more than disconfirming information about women's abilities is necessary to bring about gender equality.

Long ago, Merton (1948: 202) suggested that people do not welcome evidence that disconfirms negative stereotypes about disadvantaged groups because social positions warrant personal achievement. That is, achievement by lower status groups is not always viewed positively. Merton (1948: 201) uses the term 'moral alchemy' to refer to the way a virtue is transmuted into a vice when exhibited by an out-group member—for example, whereas assertive behavior is heralded when exhibited by men, it is viewed as horrendous when exhibited by women (Bowles et al., 2007). Moral alchemy helps to justify and preserve the existing social structure, and gender stereotypes have long been known to have this prescriptive flavor (Burgess & Borgida, 1999; Heilman, 2001; Prentice & Carranza, 2002).

Below, we review evidence for motivated reasoning's role in perpetuating gender stereotypes. We discuss distinct reasons for motivated reasoning by men and women. Then, we consider potential outcomes of motivated reasoning. Unfortunately, little direct evidence exists for these processes within the negotiation domain because this perspective has not received much attention among negotiation scholars to date. However, absent a reason to believe motivational processes work differently in the negotiation context than in other social spheres, we can have reasonable confidence that these more general insights shed light on negotiation processes.

**Evidence for motivated gender stereotypes.** Researchers have long known that those who stereotype do not always act as intuitive scientists (Kelley, 1971; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986; Tetlock, 2002) who seek knowledge to understand and predict the world more accurately (Fein & Spencer, 1997; Gonsalkorale, Carlisle, & von Hippel, 2007). Instead, stereotypes often reflect desired beliefs, not honest assessments of the facts. Stereotypes are desirable to the extent that they help people to see the world the way they would like to—for instance, by defending their advantaged position in society (Lippmann, 1922: 95). Gender stereotypes are especially helpful in this regard (Brandt, 2011; Burgess & Borgida, 1999; Heilman, 2001; Prentice & Carranza, 2002).

First, gender stereotypes satisfy a fundamental need to believe the world is fair (Furnham, 2003; Lerner, 1980). This belief is beneficial because it implies that outcomes are predictable and largely controllable. To perceive the world otherwise is unbearably threatening (Lerner & Miller, 1978; Lerner, 1980). Women control fewer resources and command less status than men across societies (Buss, 1989; Connell, 1995; Williams & Best, 1990), and they are paid less than men for doing the same types of work (Hegewisch et al., 2015). In absence of a justification, these facts bespeak unfairness. Negative stereotypes about women's negotiating abilities are

therefore appealing. If women negotiate poorly, then their relatively worse outcomes can be viewed as fair.

Second, gender stereotypes help to justify traditional male-female relations (Jost & Banaji, 1994; Jost & Kay, 2005). Prototypical stereotypes of men as agentic and women as communal make men and women seem well-suited for traditional roles as provider and nurturer, respectively (Jackman, 1994). In fact, women identify as highly with agentic traits as men do, and the gender difference emerges only for communal traits (Twenge, 1997). Nevertheless, lay theories assume people high on communal traits must be low on agentic traits (Glick & Fiske, 1996).

**Evidence for men's motivated reasoning.** In light of their status advantage (Ridgeway & Correll, 2004), men have more reason than women to rationalize the existing social order, and the data show they typically do so. For instance, men agree more than women with statements like, "In general, relations between men and women are fair" and "The division of labor in the family generally operates as it should" (Jost & Kay, 2005). In the same vein, men were more likely than women to endorse the idea that biological differences (i.e., innate academic deficiencies on the part of women) explain why women are under-represented on math, science, and engineering faculty (Brescoll, Uhlmann, & Newman, 2013). Further attesting to men's investment in the status quo, only men show higher blood pressure when discussing changes in gender relations (Scheepers, Ellemers, & Sintemaartensdijk, 2009). In sum, men are especially motivated to believe the status quo is fair.

Men's tendencies to justify the existing system grow even stronger when the need to prove masculinity is activated (Kray, Howland, Russell, & Jackman, 2015), and negotiation has masculinity implications (Kray & Haselhuhn, 2012). Negotiation is linked to economic

achievement and performance at work, and both are ways men's masculinity is validated in the modern world (Brescoll, Uhlmann, Moss-Racusin, & Sarnell, 2012; Pleck, 1981). Because negotiation puts masculinity at risk, men may be highly threatened by the prospect of "losing" to a woman negotiator. Her success could emasculate him, whereas another man's success may not. Masculinity is hard won (Gilmore, 1990), easily lost, and must be proven through public actions (Vandello & Bosson, 2013). In contrast, womanhood is seen as biological (Vandello, Bosson, Cohen, Burnaford, & Weaver, 2008). Performing better than women in negotiation could therefore be integral to proving and maintaining one's manhood.

What does this mean for men negotiators' behavior? Generally, men do not respond positively to threats to their masculinity (Willer, Rogalin, Conlon, & Wojnowicz, 2013). One common response is aggression, which reduces negative affect following a masculinity threat (Bosson, Vandello, Burnaford, Weaver, & Wasti, 2009). More than women, men view situations as calling for aggressive acts (Bosson & Vandello, 2011; Weaver, Vandello, Bosson, & Burnaford, 2010). In negotiation, aggression may take the form of more extreme demands. For instance, in one recent study, men demanded higher salaries from a female than male hiring manager (Netchaeva, Kouchaki, & Sheppard, in press). An implicit measure of threat explained the result. Unethical behavior is another common response. When men perceive masculinity to be at stake, they report a greater inclination to use unethical tactics to gain an advantage, whereas women do not show this tendency (Kray & Haselhuhn, 2012).

Negotiation could also be seen as a status contest. Men's current status advantage means they have more to lose than women. The prospect of losing status is highly threatening (Marr & Thau, 2014; Pettit, Yong, & Spataro, 2010; Scheepers & Ellemers, 2005). To protect their status advantage, people reconstruct the meaning of merit (Uhlmann & Cohen, 2005). For instance,

men (but not women) charged with selecting a candidate for the job of police chief rated education as more important when the male candidate possessed this characteristic than when he did not. Similarly, women (but not men) charged with selecting a candidate for the job of women's studies professor rated academic credentials as more important when the female candidate possessed them than when she did not. Worse yet, people harass women they see as threatening to their own status (Berdahl, 2007a, 2007b).

Because so little research has attended to the gender composition of negotiating dyads (Kray & Thompson, 2005), little evidence can address if and how men attempt to negate women's negotiation performance. Yet by this logic, evidence of women's negotiation skill will be especially unwelcome to men. Rather than revising their stereotypes, men will be motivated to prove their relative competence at negotiation and thus, their masculinity, through aggressive and unethical tactics. Men might be expected to share less information and adopt more competitive tactics in negotiations with women.

Some evidence does show that men are harder on women than they are on other men. Joshi (2014) examined perceptions of expertise—the degree to which someone has the ability to make high quality contributions to the team—within science and engineering teams (a male-dominated setting). She found that women's expertise was appreciated only by women, not by men. Male evaluators rated male targets higher than female targets regardless of actual expertise. Moreover, men (especially those who identify highly with their gender) rated more educated women as having *less* expertise than less educated women. And when men's status advantage is greater, these motivated tendencies are stronger. For instance, one study found that men with wives who were not employed viewed the presence of women in the workplace less favorably



and were more likely to deny qualified women the opportunity for promotion, relative to men with employed wives (Desai, Chugh, & Brief, 2014).

Motivated biases may be at play even in research on gender and negotiation. First, an astute observer may note that most of the research on this topic has been conducted by women scientists. Is this evidence of motivated denial of gender differences by men? Perhaps one reason why gender differences persist at the bargaining table is that only a minority of professional academics appears interested in understanding and resolving them. Women scholars who study this topic run the risk of being seen as engaging in self-interested and politically-motivated behavior, yet this critique is almost never leveled at men who choose *not* to study this topic. Second, asymmetric interest in this topic may extend to who cites gender in negotiation research. If gender is viewed as a "women's issue," then it is reasonable to suspect that research in this area will be under-cited relative to research that is perceived to generalize across both genders, thus dis-incentivizing researchers from studying the topic.

**Evidence for women's motivated reasoning.** Like men, women may engage in motivated reasoning surrounding gender stereotypes, albeit for slightly different reasons. One reason is that women have system justification motives. People generally seek to believe the social order is fair, legitimate, and even inevitable, even when they are disadvantaged by it (Jost, Banaji, & Nosek, 2004; Jost & Hunyady, 2003). Doing so is psychologically beneficial, as it buffers individuals from the stress of a meaningless, uncontrollable social context (Jost et al., 2004; Jost & Hunyady, 2003). One part of the existing social context is the current gender hierarchy, in which men rank higher than women. Both men and women attempt to justify this arrangement. For instance, women across 19 countries were at least as likely as men to endorse

benevolently sexist statements (i.e., statements that are positive but restrict women to traditional, male-dependent roles) (Glick et al., 2000).

Stereotypes of women as less competent than men generally help to justify existing social arrangements. In support of this idea, Jost and Kay (2005) found that women system justified less than men did in a control condition, but equally to men after being exposed to complementary stereotypes of men as agentic and women as communal. Similarly, one study found that people generated stereotypes to explain a gendered division of labor, presumably to help themselves see the arrangement as rational, fair, natural and even inevitable (Hoffman & Hurst, 1990). Because negative stereotypes serve this function, people are likely to relinquish them reluctantly.

Women may prefer to internalize negative stereotypes about themselves in order to avoid acknowledging discrimination as a source of their problems at work. Even women who readily acknowledge that gender discrimination exists in general are loath to admit that they themselves have been targets of this negative treatment. For example, although working women were quick to recognize discrimination against women more broadly, they denied having been personally targeted (Crosby, 1984). Yet statistical analyses revealed an unjustifiable gender gap in their salaries (Crosby, 1984). Consistent with the notion that women often internalize stereotypes, women pay themselves less for identical work (Major, McFarlin, & Gagnon, 1984).

**Outcomes of motivated reasoning.** What strategies might be used to defend the social order against those who disconfirm complementary gender stereotypes? We have mentioned a few strategies specific to protecting masculinity and social status. More broadly, one strategy is to invoke essentialist explanations for gender differences (Brescoll et al., 2013). Essentialism assumes that category members have unobservable, immutable characteristics that distinguish

them from non-category members (Atran, 1987; Hamilton, Sherman, & Rodgers, 2004).

Essentialist explanations often refer to biological causes (Bem, 1993; Haslam & Whelan, 2008).

For instance, the idea of women having a biological clock often mitigates the threat of young women's ambition. People may feel less threatened by a young woman's successful career if they believe her biology will eventually call her back to a traditional role as mother.

Another strategy is to punish those threatening the social order. When people believe the societal order is under threat, they adopt a prosecutorial mindset marked by moral outrage, negative character attributions, and punishment goals (Rucker, Polifroni, Tetlock, & Scott, 2004; Tetlock, 2002; Tetlock et al., 2007). Supporting the idea that people target agentic women with a prosecutorial mindset, greater moral outrage is expressed toward power-seeking women than power-seeking men (Okimoto & Brescoll, 2010), and social punishments for agentic behavior are exacerbated when perceivers believe the system is under threat (Rudman, Moss-Racusin, Phelan, & Nauts, 2012). Previously, we summarized findings that agentic women are targets of negative character attributions, harassment, and sabotage (Berdahl, 2007a, 2007b; Bowles et al., 2007; Rudman, 1998; Rudman & Fairchild, 2004; Rudman & Glick, 2001; Rudman & Phelan, 2008). Each of these findings is consistent with the motivational account. Especially supportive is the fact that people perceived their sabotage as helping to maintain cultural stereotypes.

By requiring women to meet feminine ideals, people prevent women from expressing powerful emotions, such as anger, which increase negotiators' economic performance (Van Kleef, De Dreu, & Manstead, 2004). Anger could be viewed as threatening because it disconfirms complementary stereotypes. Whereas angry men are accorded status (Tiedens, 2001), angry women are viewed as out of control (Brescoll & Uhlmann, 2008). Anger is a powerful emotion and a woman's expression of it may signal that she does not know her place in

the social hierarchy. The bias against angry women may further compound women's negotiating disadvantage.

**Implications of the motivational account for women's negotiation success and career advancement.** In light of this evidence for motivated reasoning placing women at a distinct disadvantage, it is unlikely that women's struggles in negotiation will subside even when their skills are equal to or greater than men's. Upon encountering a strong woman negotiator, it is unlikely that people will actually recognize and appreciate her abilities. When it is clear that women and men negotiate with similar levels of competence, one less reason exists for women's relative disadvantage in terms of leadership positions and pay. The legitimacy of the existing system of allocating benefits in work organizations will be called into question, and men's status advantage and masculinity are at stake. As a result, aggressive, competitive behavior may be leveled at women who negotiate well. Rather than revising stereotypes to reflect reality more accurately, people may find ways to reduce women's performance to fit with their epistemic framework.

### **Paradigmatic Barriers to Women's Negotiation Performance**

So far, we have reviewed evidence that women are underperforming in negotiation relative to men and focused on two possible explanations—namely, the vicious cycle enacted by negative stereotypes and a desire on the part of both women and men to refute their abilities. To this point, we have taken for granted that current ways of conceptualizing negotiation and measuring performance within it are correct and objective. But is this true?

In fact, the current conceptualization of negotiation privileges masculine characteristics (Bowles & Kray, 2013), including assertiveness, self-interest, and rationality. A host of studies support this characterization. For instance, when gender-neutral characteristics are ascribed to

effective negotiators, men outperform women (Kray et al., 2001). Even when the negotiation domain is feminine, the gender difference merely disappears; women do not outperform men (Bear & Babcock, 2012).

By privileging masculine characteristics, the current negotiation paradigm highlights men's strengths and hides those of women. If negotiation were studied using more realistic methods, women's strengths could be more salient and relevant. Over time, research programs' assumptions are often altered to make them more realistic (Lakatos, 1970), and we believe it is time for negotiation scholars to follow suit.

What, then, should change? First, let us take stock of how negotiation research has proceeded. To date, most of it has been conducted in the classroom or laboratory. Few field studies of negotiation have taken place (for exceptions, see Curhan, Elfenbein, & Kilduff, 2009, Bowles, Babcock, & McGinn, 2005; Gerhart & Rynes, 1991). Students who elect to take negotiations courses form the vast majority of samples, including our own studies. Many of these courses are at the MBA-level, where the gender representation is skewed toward men. As a result, gender differences may be magnified relative to many real world contexts. When women are in the numerical minority, they are more likely to be perceived in stereotypical terms (Kanter, 1977; Taylor & Fiske, 1978).

Of course, negotiation researchers have good reasons to focus on these contexts. One reason is that negotiation simulations allow researchers a great deal of control. By assigning men and women to the same negotiator role, simulations allow researchers to rule out alternative explanations for gender differences in behavior, such as structural differences in bargaining position (e.g., availability of alternative offers). A second reason is that researchers have strong incentives to publish as many papers as possible (Nelson, Simmons, & Simonsohn, 2012). Data

from student negotiators is readily available, and using these data makes sense. However, in light of the dearth of negotiation research conducted in the field, it is unclear if simulation-based differences can generalize to women at work. For instance, in contrast to laboratory research (Small et al., 2007), studies of actual salary negotiations among MBA students seeking jobs have not found evidence of gender differences in propensity to negotiate (Gerhart & Rynes, 1991) or in economic and subjective value accrued through negotiating their job offers (Curhan et al., 2009). Comparing the type of negotiation that takes place in the classroom to those in real world contexts highlights some important differences.

Relative to real world negotiations, simulations are much more like games. As such, simulations have at least four qualities that distinguish them from real world negotiations: 1) low stakes; 2) normalization of competitive tactics; 3) short-term relationships; and 4) materialism (i.e., prioritization of economic value, to the exclusion of relational capital and subjective value). We examine the implications of each characteristic for gender in negotiations, in turn.

**Low stakes.** What is at stake in a negotiation simulation? Usually, reputations among classmates are the maximum stakes. Because individuals' reputations are only loosely related to their histories of behavior in the MBA classroom (Anderson & Shirako, 2008), even reputation may not vary much by negotiators' behavior. Conversely, real world negotiations can put entire careers at stake—and thus, economic outcomes, social relationships, and personal identity. For example, buyers at department stores (e.g., Bloomingdales) often work closely with one or two key suppliers (e.g., Estee Lauder). As they negotiate, buyers know the terms will affect their subsequent promotions and have a lasting economic impact for years to come. Agreements in one year often form the starting point for subsequent years' negotiations.

With lower stakes, behavior in negotiation simulations is likely to be more variable than in the real world. To the extent that women engage in uncomfortable behavioral strategies, such as refusing to yield, at similar levels to men when the stakes are high but not low, the gender difference in negotiation performance could be overstated by existing research. In support of this idea, prior research found directional evidence of weaker gender differences when incentives were present (Walters et al., 1998).

**Normalization of competitive tactics.** Like other games, negotiation simulations emphasize competition. The point of playing a game is to win, and the tendency to refer to simulation partners as “opponents” or “adversaries” no doubt encourages competitive motives in the classroom and laboratory even further. In contrast, in real life negotiations, parties often come to the bargaining table to resolve a problem or to make a mutually beneficial deal. For instance, private equity and venture capital investors offer funding to companies that need capital to grow in exchange for ownership in the business. The terms of the investment are set through negotiation, but it is not a purely competitive interaction. The negotiation typically initiates a long-term collaboration and an unfair deal would undermine the required sense of partnership. The deal is designed to benefit both parties. In this context and others, competition is not necessarily at the forefront of negotiators' minds. In support of this idea, Neale and Northcraft (1986) found that experienced negotiators viewed negotiation as an integrative and collaborative process. Whereas simulations are competitive games, real-world negotiations often involve collaboration and problem-solving.

To the extent that simulations focus too exclusively on competitive behavior, women may be more uncomfortable with simulations than with real world negotiations. Women enter into competitions less readily than men (Niederle & Vesterlund, 2011), and mixed-gender

competitive contexts bolster men's, but not women's, performance (Gneezy, Niederle, & Rustichini, 2003). The additional competitive pressures of the game-like context may undermine women's performance when competing against men. Therefore, if simulations emphasize competition relatively more than do real life negotiations, simulations would again overstate the gender difference in negotiation performance.

**Short-term relationships.** Most often, negotiations are studied as one-shot interactions. Typically, students interact with one another and then do not negotiate together again. Some simulations describe the potential for an ongoing relationship, but even then, students are imagining this potential; it does not truly exist. In reality, their negotiation partners and roles change week-to-week. Although the students have a long-term social network, their relationships are largely divorced from their negotiation behavior, particularly over time. In most subsequent interactions, the students are independent, not interdependent.

In contrast, real world negotiators are interdependent after the agreement is formed. They must work together to carry out the terms of the deal and they may work together again subsequently. For instance, following salary negotiations, MBA students must work with their employers. Following merger and acquisition negotiations, executives at the acquiring company must collaborate with those at the target company. It is at the implementation stage that most mergers fail (Salk, 1994).

When relationships are longer-term, qualities that create goodwill between negotiators are valuable. As we will discuss in greater depth, women have such qualities. More than men, women continue to trust following missteps (Haselhuhn, Kennedy, Kray, Van Zant, & Schweitzer, 2014) and they value relationships in negotiations (Kray & Gelfand, 2009). Once



again, the simulation context may overstate men's advantage in negotiation—in this case, by under-valuing qualities that build strong relationships.

**Materialism.** Negotiation simulations often focus solely on economic value. After the negotiation, students receive information about the price or points they achieved relative to those achieved by other negotiators. Typically, perceptions of relational capital and subjective value are not measured and no feedback is given regarding them.

Relational capital is a dyadic construct. It describes mutual liking, trust, knowledge, and commitment to an ongoing relationship between two people (Curhan et al., 2008; Gelfand, Major, Raver, Nishi, & O'Brien, 2006; De Clercq & Sapienza, 2006; Gelfand et al., 2006). Subjective value is an individual-level construct. It measures a person's satisfaction with the instrumental outcome, the self, the negotiation process, and the relationship (Curhan, Elfenbein, & Xu, 2006). Relational capital and subjective value are valuable in themselves, and they may have important consequences in real world contexts. For instance, over time, subjective value predicts job satisfaction and turnover better than economic outcomes (Curhan et al., 2009).

In real world negotiations, relational capital and subjective value could affect subsequent business opportunities. For instance, in real estate, reputations for deceit and nastiness carry substantial costs over time, as repeat business and referrals comprise 64% of experienced agents' business activity (National Association of Realtors, 2015). Economic gains achieved in sleazy ways are liabilities because agents work in tightly networked communities and trustworthiness and reputation are cited as the most important factors influencing selection of an agent (National Association of Realtors, 2013). Similarly, in industrial business-to-business sales, people often choose to do business with those they know and like. Sellers develop close relationships with purchasing agents, entertaining them and their families. The development of relational capital is

as critical to sellers' ongoing success as their ability to claim economic value for their organization.

In these environments, women may excel because they approach negotiation with more complex goals than do men. Specifically, women value the economic aspects of the deal at levels similar to men's, but they place greater value on relationships with their negotiating partners than men do (Kray & Gelfand, 2009). For women's goals and outcomes to be understood, negotiation researchers must attend to subjective and relational outcomes.

**Implications of the paradigmatic account for women's negotiation success and career advancement.** Negotiation is currently studied using game-like simulations. As described by French (1985: 482), Gilligan (1982) believed that games are characteristic of boys', not girls', learning. Whereas boys learn through games, which have clear winners and losers, girls learn through play, which does not have such a competitive focus.

To the extent that negotiation simulations are contexts where men feel more comfortable than women, the simulations may create gender differences in negotiation performance, and yet they would be artifacts of how negotiation is studied. Moreover, these games systematically differ from real world negotiation contexts where long-term relationships and collaborative problem-solving are valued. In such contexts, women's strengths may be more readily apparent. A great deal of evidence shows that women possess skills valuable in negotiation contexts that more closely resemble real-world conditions.

### **Recognizing Women's Strengths**

“Only when the original assumption is questioned and a new definition of the situation introduced, does the consequent flow of events give the lie to the assumption. Only then does the belief no longer father the reality.” (Merton, 1948: 197)

To date, negotiation researchers have paid short shrift to women's strengths. Women are characterized as the disadvantaged gender at the bargaining table. We ask: Is it necessary for women negotiators to be negatively stereotyped? In fact, women are widely recognized to possess unique strengths (Eagly, Gartzia, & Carli, 2013). For instance, a recent survey of 64,000 people across the globe indicated that two-thirds of respondents agree that the world would be a better place if men thought more like women (Gerzema & D'Antonio, 2013). In line with this perception, we propose that negative stereotypes about women negotiators can in fact be easily regenerated to emphasize their strengths within the negotiation context. It is not necessary for women's strengths in negotiation to remain hidden and unappreciated.

Instead, stereotypes about women negotiators can be regenerated. Stereotype regeneration changes the valence of people's beliefs, with positive stereotypes about women negotiators substituting for negative stereotypes. Kray et al. (2002: 390) noted that many traits linked to effective negotiation (e.g., verbal ability, listening skill, and expressiveness) are in fact feminine. It is thus possible to link female gender with negotiating success, not failure. When prototypically feminine qualities were linked with success at negotiation (Kray et al, 2002), women set higher goals for themselves and outperformed men.

To initiate this process, we highlight a variety of ways that women excel in negotiation. Specifically, researchers have documented that women are highly concerned about others (i.e., more cooperative). As a result, women elevate collective intelligence in groups and model ethical behavior. By redefining what success looks like in negotiations, each of these supposed liabilities could be converted into an asset (cf. Galinsky, Wang, Whitson, Anicich, Hugenberg, & Bodenhausen, 2013). Figure 2 presents one possible theoretical model of women's strengths and their implications for negotiation outcomes.

### **Women's Cooperativeness**

For some time, researchers have known that women conceptualize themselves in terms of their relationships more than men do (Cross, Bacon, & Morris, 2000; Cross & Madson, 1997). In other words, women feel fundamentally connected to, not independent from, others. This is true even in business contexts. Recently, we examined identities among business school alumni (Kennedy, Kray, & Ku, 2015) using a modified version of Allport, Vernon, and Lindzey's Scale of Values (1960). The five basic values included the theoretical person whose major pursuit is the discovery of truth, the economic person who is interested in that which is useful, the aesthetic person who looks for form and harmony in the world, the social person who values others and is altruistic and interested in others, and the political person who seeks power, influence, and to be well-known. Although both men and women ranked the economic person as most characteristic of their identities, men and women differed in their ranking of the social person. That is, businesswomen identified more highly than businessmen with being altruistic and interested in others. No other gender differences emerged. It is also true across contexts. Relative to men's, women's sense of connection to others changes less across egalitarian and hierarchical contexts (Curhan et al., 2008).

For negotiators, a strong sense of connection to others has been predicted to alter cognition, emotion, and motivation (Gelfand et al., 2006). Most relevant to our discussion, it has been proposed to motivate negotiators to develop and preserve relationships and to help others achieve their goals.

In fact, women are more cooperative than men when negotiating. Cooperativeness is often defined as having a high level of concern for the other party's outcomes (Pruitt, 1983; Walters et al., 1998). In a meta-analysis (Walters et al., 1998), women engaged in fewer

competitive behaviors demonstrating low concern for the other party's interests than did men. The finding was based on behavioral, not self-reported, differences. Likewise, in Anderson and Shirako's (2008) study of MBA students, women were more likely to develop reputations as cooperative negotiators and less likely to develop reputations as selfish negotiators, relative to men.

Cooperativeness is often portrayed as a vice, relative to competitiveness. For example, women's reluctance to compete against men has been cited as one possible explanation for gender differences in pay and advancement (Niederle & Vesterlund, 2008). Similarly, extraversion and agreeableness, two traits related to sociability, are liabilities in distributive negotiation (Barry & Friedman, 1998). Taken to the extreme, cooperativeness becomes unmitigated communion, a state marked by excessive concern with others' needs (Helgeson & Fritz, 1998) and associated with low self-esteem, psychological distress, and worse physical health (Fritz & Helgeson, 1998). Negotiators high in unmitigated communion—one potential measure of concern for others (cf. Haselhuhn et al., 2014)—are prone to relational accommodation (Amanatullah et al., 2008). Relational accommodation is a state marked by poor economic outcomes but high relational capital between negotiators (Curhan et al., 2008). In the same vein, many researchers have found lower joint value in negotiation dyads marked by stronger relationships (Curhan et al., 2008; Liu, Friedman, & Hong, 2012; Tenbrunsel, Wade-Benzoni, Moag, & Bazerman, 1999; Thompson, Peterson, & Brodt, 1996). For instance, romantically involved couples reached worse negotiation outcomes than mixed-sex dyads of strangers, who had less concern for maintaining harmonious relations (Fry, Firestone, & Williams, 1986).

However, cooperation is usually an asset in interdependent contexts, as highlighted by the dual-concern model (Blake & Mouton, 1979; Carnevale & Pruitt, 1992; Pruitt & Carnevale, 1993). By this model, collaborative strategies marked by high other-concern and high self-concern (i.e., both cooperation and assertiveness) create value by increasing the exchange of information about underlying interests and the discovery of creative solutions that satisfy both parties' interests efficiently. We consider a number of strengths on the part of women that could result from their greater cooperativeness. By doing so, we hope to further highlight women's strengths at the bargaining table, and the value of cooperativeness relative to competitiveness in negotiation.

### **Potential Consequences of Women's Cooperativeness**

**Collective intelligence.** Women enhance collective intelligence, which is a group's ability to perform well on a wide variety of tasks, including negotiation (Woolley, Chabris, Pentland, Hashmi, & Malone, 2010). Groups with greater proportions of females had greater collective intelligence in Woolley et al.'s studies (2010) because they encouraged greater turn-taking and social sensitivity in these groups. Collective intelligence is one area of excellence for women, in negotiations and other contexts.

It is worth considering why women's positive impact on collective intelligence in negotiating dyads is under-appreciated. We propose one possibility related to the current paradigm. Because the paradigm normalizes competitive tactics, negotiators may not recognize the value of turn-taking and social sensitivity within the negotiating dyad. Even if these behaviors increase joint value, negotiators may see those who encourage it as at odds with the prototype of an excellent negotiator. In other words, negotiators hold faulty mental models that

glorify competitive behavior, and women's behavior does not match these faulty models of excellence.

**Ethical standards.** A second area of excellence for women is ethics. Gender differences in ethical behavior consistently emerge. Women often have higher ethical standards than men (for a meta-analysis, see Franke, Crown, & Spake, 1997). As early as adolescence, females are less willing to rationalize unethical behavior; they morally disengage less than males (Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara, & Pastorelli, 1996). When faced with decisions trading off ethical values for money or social status, women report greater moral reservations and moral outrage than men at the prospect of sacrificing ethical values (Kennedy & Kray, 2013). Women across countries are more concerned than men about harm, fairness, and purity, three important moral foundations (Graham et al., 2009).

Ethical differences extend into the negotiation domain as well. Women perceive ethically questionable negotiation tactics as less appropriate than men do (Lewicki & Robinson, 1998; Robinson, Lewicki, & Donahue, 2000). Tactics such as making false promises, attacking an opponent's network, or deceiving a counterpart to obtain better negotiation outcomes seem more inappropriate to women than to men. Notably, no gender difference emerges for traditional competitive bargaining (Robinson et al., 2000), meaning these ethical differences did not reflect a tendency for women to negotiate less competitively than men. Similarly, Kray and Haselhuhn (2012) found that men negotiators had more lenient and motivationally-biased ethical standards. Relative to women, men were likely to lower their ethical standards when doing so would benefit their economic outcomes.

Women's ethical strength not only goes unappreciated, but even appears to be a weakness under the current negotiation paradigm. Men treat ethical standards as roadblocks to optimal

negotiation outcomes (Kray & Haselhuhn, 2012), and to date, the assumption has gone unquestioned. Likewise, since morality has long been considered its own reward, gender differences can be viewed as women forfeiting some degree of economic performance in negotiation for loftier and more sacred values. In other words, women are poorer negotiators, but better human beings.

An alternative perspective is that by forfeiting ethical standards, negotiators are in essence cheating. Just as athletes who take steroids are seen not as excellent athletes, but as cheaters, negotiators who forfeit ethical standards to maximize economic value could be seen not as excellent negotiators, but as cheaters seeking cheap shortcuts rather than true excellence. People often define performance as including both process and outcome. In a wide set of arenas—from sports to education—the process by which outcomes are obtained is seen as important. When considering students who copy classmates' exams or athletes who take steroids, people recognize that seemingly high performance obtained by illegitimate methods should not actually be deemed performance at all. Unethical behavior in most arenas is not a route to high performance, but a misunderstanding of what it means to perform. By this perspective, women's ethics are integral to negotiation performance. Because they have high ethical standards, women therefore have the potential to be excellent negotiators.

This alternative view of the role of ethics in negotiation is obscured by the current emphasis on economic outcomes. Maximizing economic value is the dominant way of understanding negotiation performance (Thompson, Wang, & Gunia, 2010), but it is not the only way, and perhaps not the wisest way, to understand negotiators' performance. Just as biking as fast as possible is not the true purpose of cyclists and receiving "A"s is not the true purpose of students, claiming maximum economic value is not obviously the true purpose of negotiators.



Articulating the purpose of any activity is difficult, no doubt, but through practice with the correct process, an intuitive understanding can emerge and subsequently guide behavior.

Negotiation's purpose could be seen as astutely resolving conflict in a way that maximizes joint economic resources, subjective value, and relational outcomes.

Morality has implications for subjective value because people often ask, "What kind of person do I claim to be in my relations to particular others, and what types of decisions would be compatible with this image of who I am?" (McGraw & Tetlock, 2005: 2). Rather than being amoral activities that speak only to the transaction at hand, the types of offers negotiators make and accept have lingering implications for the type of person they are and the types of relations they have with others. For negotiators, upholding their principles is an important driver of their satisfaction with themselves following the negotiation (Curhan et al., 2006). To the extent that women uphold their principles better than men, their negotiation skills may result in lasting satisfaction with their relationships and commitment to their work organizations (Curhan et al., 2009; Kennedy & Kray, 2013).

Morality also has implications for relational capital. Scholars have argued that morality enables the formation of groups and communities (Durkheim, 1915/1965; Haidt, 2007). Thus, women's high ethical standards could enable negotiators to enjoy more relational capital in negotiation. In fact, we have some data on the relation between one type of ethical behavior—deception—and non-economic outcomes in our MBA classrooms. Consistent with the idea that immorality impedes relational capital, when deception was present in a dyadic interaction, negotiators reported lower relational capital within the interaction (Van Zant, Kray, & Kennedy, 2015). This was true even among negotiators who did not realize they had been deceived, and

among the deceivers themselves. In fact, deceptive negotiators believed their counterpart was less trustworthy than did honest negotiators.

If deception is discovered, it could also lead to future conflict, long-lasting hatred, termination of the relationship, and even subsequent sabotage. For example, real estate agents may avoid showing properties listed by agents who deceived them in an earlier transaction. Some investment banks rescind job offers given to those who passed arduous interview processes if they fail to disclose minor infractions incurred in youth (e.g., citations for possessing alcohol) prior to their background check. Lying about one's current salary to a new employer can result in termination (Schultz, 2010).

By attending to economic outcomes too closely, the current negotiation paradigm conceals and rationalizes the poison left behind by unethical behavior. It obscures the possibility that ethical behavior in negotiation could enable better outcomes in the long-term by enhancing the quality of negotiators' interactions and how positively they feel about themselves.

### **Economic Implications**

Will relational capital translate into better or worse economic outcomes for women negotiators? Discussing relational accommodation, Curhan et al. (2008: 203) considered whether a trade-off between economic and relational goals is necessary, and concluded that it is not:

Is it possible to maximize economic outcomes and still promote relational capital? The answer, of course, is yes. Across both studies, there were no significant correlations in either direction between joint points and joint relational capital. All other things being equal, positive economic outcomes should tend to promote positive relationships between the relevant parties, and vice versa.

Providing further evidence, all-female dyads in Curhan et al.'s (2008) study realized more, not less, joint gain under the egalitarian condition that incited higher relational capital. Similarly, in a later study, the authors (Curhan et al., 2010) found a positive relation between subjective value at one time point and economic value at a later point. Moreover, one study examined the impact of concern for relationships in a real world context, where relationships could be long-term. In a field experiment, Cron, Gilly, Graham, and Slocum (2009) looked at pricing decisions by over 500 veterinarians. Women veterinarians exhibited greater concern for relationships than men veterinarians in the sample, and this led to more compassionate pricing. Relative to men, women set lower prices to care for an elderly widow's pet; no gender differences emerged in pricing for the pet of a young professional. Although lower pricing was associated with lower income, concern for relationships was positively associated with income. The authors concluded that the relation between prices, income, and relational concern were complex. They speculated that women's focus on customer relationships could increase long-term income stability and profitability due to customer retention and referrals. Relational capital may function similarly in negotiations.

By what mechanisms might the relational capital and subjective value created by women negotiators translate into economic value? One possibility is that they could help women negotiators to avoid impasse (Thompson et al., 2010) and distributive spirals of negative emotions, negative perceptions of counterparts, intentions to cooperate less in the future (O'Connor & Arnold, 2001). A second possibility is that they could improve women's alternatives (i.e., BATNAs) and thus, their leverage. In the real world, negotiators can select their partners. Subjective value enables long-term interactions (Curhan et al., 2006). Consequently, women negotiators may be able to find willing negotiation partners more readily over time

(Glick & Croson, 2001; Milinski, Semmann, & Krambeck, 2002). A third possibility is that they deter counterparts' competitive tactics. By developing a positive reputation, cooperative negotiators are better able to capitalize on their expertise (Tinsley, O'Connor, & Sullivan, 2002).

To summarize, real world negotiations do not end when an agreement is reached. Instead, negotiators must obtain compliance with the agreement and set the groundwork for future interactions. When negotiators are plagued by resentment following an agreement, they may refuse to comply with the agreement or avoid future interactions. By avoiding these outcomes, women negotiators may achieve positive economic results in the long-term (Gelfand et al., 2006).

### **Implications for Women's Negotiation Success and Career Advancement**

Women excel at cooperative behavior, enhance collective intelligence, and model high ethical standards. As a result, they are likely to be appealing exchange partners, but their strengths languish under the current negotiation paradigm. These strengths are too often viewed as irrelevant or even as impediments to claiming economic value. We suggest this view of women's strengths further highlights the ways the current negotiation paradigm is impoverished, and negotiation performance is misspecified.

Women's strengths promote relational capital and subjective value, which are valuable in themselves and for long-term outcomes. When people leave negotiations without any sense of relational capital or satisfaction, it seems a missed opportunity, rather than a normal state of affairs. To claim economic value without building relational capital could reasonably be seen as crude and unsophisticated—more akin to an altercation between primitive adversaries than an ideal method of modern conflict resolution.

To allow for a fuller, fairer picture of gender differences in negotiation performance to emerge, the definition of negotiation success must change. Until researchers and teachers of negotiations vocally advocate for the value of a feminine approach to negotiating, however, women's considerable strengths will remain underappreciated.

### **Broader Implications of a Negotiation Paradigm Shift**

We have argued that the existing negotiation paradigm is too focused on short-term relationships, competitive tactics, and materialistic outcomes. We advocate for changing the negotiation paradigm to examine longer-term exchanges where relationships matter because this would give women's strengths a fair chance to shine, and thus provide a better test of whether women and men truly differ in negotiation performance.

Notably, these changes would also help to ground negotiation research more firmly in reality. Each of the problems we highlight poses a threat to the validity of negotiation research more generally. Strategies that enable value to be claimed in short-term, competitive interactions could be counterproductive in longer-term interactions with the potential for gains from cooperation. Negotiation is fundamentally a form of social exchange. As stated by Bottom, Hollow, Miller, Mislin, and Whitford (2006: 32) in their discussion of social exchange, "The psychological system that underpins exchange has a number of facets, including acute abilities to detect cheating, the emotional system of liking and disliking that supports the formation of friendships...and moralistic aggression as a response to cheating." Most critical transactions involve close relationships (Baker, 1984; DiMaggio & Louch, 1998; McGinn & Keros, 2002; Uzzi, 1997, 1999). To truly understand negotiation, interactions must be examined over time, with full attention to not only economic outcomes, but also the resulting perceptions, goodwill (or lack thereof), intentions, and tactics brought to subsequent interactions. Qualitative studies

could help describe the approaches people use to resolve conflict in real life, and how these approaches develop with experience.

### **Gender Differences through the Lens of Relational Models: A Fourth Explanation?**

As an avenue for future research, we suggest that researchers consider gender differences in negotiation through the lens of relational models (Fiske, 1991, 1992). To date, negotiation researchers have not attended to relational models, so there is not sufficient evidence to conclude that relational models provide a fourth explanation for gender differences in negotiation performance. Nevertheless, we consider it a promising possibility.

The negotiation paradigm reflects an assumption that market-pricing provides the appropriate relational model for negotiations. Within market-pricing domains, people make decisions using ratios (Fiske & Tetlock, 1997) and they aim for high levels of profit (McGraw & Tetlock, 2005). That is, what people give is directly proportional to what they receive, and people seek a fair rate of return for their contributions (Haslam & Fiske, 1999). Exchange continues so long as benefits exceed costs (Rai & Fiske, 2011). For instance, people exchange the money they earn at work for food. Both trading labor for money and trading money for food are market-pricing transactions. In the context of such market-pricing interactions, the current negotiation paradigm portrays women as relatively poor performers. Women seem to be less adept at garnering fair returns on their investments. Other explanations are possible, however, when alternative relational models are considered.

Market-pricing is only one of four elementary models that guide human relationships (Fiske, 1991). People often employ multiple relational models within the context of one relationship (Fiske, 1991; Goldman, 1993). There is no reason to think, then, that market-pricing is the only type of norm applied to negotiation. Market-pricing norms do fit with the dominant

model of negotiation. Many popular tactics (e.g., labeling concessions and defining reciprocity) are designed to ensure participants receive a fair return on their contributions. Still, other relational models may be at play.

**Do people apply authority-ranking norms to negotiations with women?** Much of the ill treatment directed at women in market-pricing contexts, in the workplace or when they negotiate, could be seen as an attempt to establish authority-ranking relations over them. Within authority-ranking domains, one person largely dictates the terms of the exchange, while the other loyally defers to gain protection and guidance (Haslam & Fiske, 1999; Rai & Fiske, 2011). Higher rank confers privileges and rights that lower-ranking individuals do not have. Those in dominant positions can hand down decisions unilaterally. With regard to material items, high-ranking people are entitled to more and better things, often taking as they wish from subordinates (Fiske, 1992; Rai & Fiske, 2011). Although authorities have some obligation to protect and guide lower-ranking individuals, aggression has often been seen as an acceptable response to insubordination (Fiske, 1992; Rai & Fiske, 2011). Even sexual harassment has been traced to “uppity” women not knowing their place in the gender hierarchy (Berdahl, 2007b).

Authority-ranking norms often govern relations between genders in traditional societies (Fiske, 1992). To the extent that women negotiators are targets of attempts to establish them as subordinates within authority-ranking relationships, they may be vulnerable to exploitation in negotiation. For instance, negotiators may attempt to exploit women by making more extreme demands (cf. Ayres & Siegelman, 1995) and fewer concessions than they would with men because women are seen as entitled to less. Indeed, women report lower entitlement than men do (Major, McFarlin, & Gagnon, 1984). It is difficult to challenge the fairness of authority-ranking exchanges because they specify only an ordinal ranking; intervals and ratios make little sense.

What is a fair division of resources among people of different ranks is unspecified by the relational model. In summary, it could be people's attempts to subordinate women negotiators rather than women's behavior per se that lead women negotiators to fare worse than men negotiators. Authority-ranking norms, not market-pricing norms, may be at play in negotiations, to women's detriment.

**Do women apply communal sharing and equality matching norms to negotiations?**

Another possibility is that women and men apply different relational models to negotiation, and gender differences in outcomes reflect these tendencies. People often disagree over which relational model to apply (Connelly & Folger, 2004; Fiske & Tetlock, 1997; Whitehead, 1993). Just as people of varying political orientations are expected to prefer certain models (Graham, Haidt, & Nosek, 2009; Fiske & Tetlock, 1997), so too could people of different genders. Gender differences emerge in many domains, from ethical reasoning (Gilligan, 1982) to stress responses (Taylor et al., 2000), and it is not unreasonable to expect gender differences in preferred approaches to allocating scarce resources.

We would expect that women in the current day more naturally gravitate toward communal sharing and equality matching arrangements. In domains guided by communal-sharing norms, people are divided into in-group and out-group members. In-group members freely give and take from a shared pool of resources, whereas out-group members are excluded entirely (Fiske & Tetlock, 1997). For instance, access to food or money within an immediate family may be given freely to family members without any expectation of repayment. Gender socialization emphasizes communal sharing behavior for women (Bakan, 1966; Eagly, 1987; Eagly & Steffen, 1984). Women are socialized to give freely and avoid demanding too much (Bowles et al., 2007), unless they are making demands on behalf of others (Amanatullah &



Morris, 2010; Amantuallah & Tinsley, 2013a). Therefore, women may be more inclined than men to apply communal sharing norms to negotiation.

Women may also gravitate toward equality-matching, as they report greater concern for fairness (Graham et al., 2009; Kennedy et al., 2015) and less endorsement of hierarchy than men do (Adams & Funk, 2012; Graham et al., 2009; Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth, & Malle, 1994). Consistent with this norm, women MBA students enrolled in a negotiations course report caring more about developing a reputation as fair-minded negotiators than their male counterparts (Kennedy et al., 2015). Being fair, rather than powerful, shrewd, or rational, is most consistent with equality-matching norms. By equality-matching norms, people aim to make equal contributions and withdrawals (Haslam & Fiske, 1999), and exchange continues so long as treatment is considered equal over a reasonably long period. Reciprocity in-kind is vital. For instance, people may repay friends who host a dinner party with an expensive bottle of wine or by hosting those friends subsequently (Fiske & Tetlock, 1997). It would not be appropriate to pay for the food one ate at the party; the favor must be returned in-kind. To the extent that women gravitate more readily toward equality-matching norms than men do, women may make concessions to promote equal sharing of the resource pool and expect others to reciprocate equally.

Negotiating purely in a market-pricing fashion is very likely a masculine approach. Men have long thrived in contexts marked by market-pricing norms, and they receive better treatment than women in these contexts, such as when purchasing cars (Ayres & Siegelman, 1995) and being paid for their work (Correll, Benard, & Paik, 2007; Kilbourne, England, Farkas, Beron, & Weir, 1994). In the process of making exchanges, men are targets of unethical behavior such as deception less often than women (Kray et al., 2014), and they can succeed without being

disliked, harassed, and sabotaged whereas women often cannot (Amanatullah & Tinsley, 2013a; Berdahl, 2007b; Bowles et al., 2007; Rudman & Fairchild, 2004). Because it is easier for men than women to receive fair treatment in market-pricing contexts, men could more readily adopt market-pricing norms for exchange.

The application of different relational models does have implications for economic performance. It is seen as less appropriate to pursue profit maximization goals in the context of communal sharing, equality matching, and authority-ranking relations than within market-pricing domains (McGraw & Tetlock, 2005). If women exhibit a greater propensity to negotiate when the task is framed as asking rather than negotiating (Small et al., 2007), then this may imply they are operating outside of a market-pricing model, which implies making demands and threatening impasse if demands are not met. Asking implies a relatively cooperative framing of the task.

If women negotiators do apply norms of communal sharing and equality matching to a greater extent than men, it is critical to examine negotiations with long-term relationships. These norms make economic sense only within ongoing relationships, where people have time to make contributions to a shared resource pool or to pay back what was given to them. The complete absence of research examining gender differences within the context of long-term negotiations has already been noted. Only when this issue is addressed can researchers begin to describe whether market-pricing norms are the best model for negotiations.

Certain contexts may exacerbate gender differences in preferred relational models. In negotiation, women often behave differently than men only when there is ambiguity about what behavior is appropriate (Bowles et al., 2005; Kennedy et al., 2015; Kray & Gelfand, 2009; Mazei et al., 2015; Miles & LaSalle, 2008). Mixed-gender interactions could be more uncertain than same-gender interactions (Goncalo, Chatman, Duguid, & Kennedy, 2014). Consequently, it

could be that within mixed-sex relationships, women apply communal sharing but men apply authority ranking.

Qualitative studies could help to understand the true point of view and motives of women, and those who interact with them, in negotiation. Rather than examining a pre-packaged negotiation context within a simulation, researchers could adopt more open-ended approaches to understanding conflict resolution in everyday life.

### **How Can Barriers between Women and Negotiating Excellence Be Removed?**

What can be done to remove these barriers to women's performance in negotiation? In the popular press, women leaders have recently generated some ideas. For instance, Sheryl Sandberg (2013), COO of Facebook, has recommended that women "lean in"—that is, strengthen their ambition and commitment. Applied to negotiation, this approach could mean actively defying stereotypes that form the basis for cognitive barriers (cf. Babcock & Laschever, 2003). In contrast, Ann-Marie Slaughter (2012) recommends that career tracks be adjusted to support women's needs. This idea is more consistent with our notion that the negotiation paradigm should change. In line with this approach, Ellen Pao eradicated salary negotiations at Reddit during her short tenure as CEO (Sillers, 2015). As researchers, we would like to contribute some additional alternatives.

In reviewing factors that attenuate biases against women negotiators, we were struck by two limitations. First, relatively little research has explored correctives that could be instituted by organizations or society. We believe such solutions are fairer than are solutions that require women to bear the burden of responsibility for their disadvantaged situation. Organizational and societal solutions have received less attention to date from researchers than individual-level solutions. Second, the manipulations used in research do not easily extrapolate to organizational

settings. For instance, there are interesting findings regarding an egalitarian culture (Curhan et al., 2008) and making women's achieved status apparent (Amanatullah & Tinsley, 2013b). Yet what it means to establish these factors at real-world bargaining tables is unclear. Researchers could significantly advance the field of negotiation research by translating these manipulations into interventions with organizational relevance.

Consequently, we mostly explore correctives that could feasibly be adopted by women negotiators. These solutions have been found effective by researchers and may help to empower women who wish to take control of their situations. By reviewing these solutions, we do not mean to imply that women are responsible for their worse negotiating outcomes. Our aim is to enable greater agency on women's part as they seek to overcome disadvantages generated by their structural position in the gender hierarchy.

### **Correctives for Cognitive Barriers**

Removing cognitive barriers is about reducing the use of stereotypes about women negotiators. To achieve this outcome, it helps to see negotiating ability as malleable (thus discounting the predictive validity of stereotypes), to raise awareness of how discretion enables implicit bias to be expressed, and to focus on superordinate identities. We will discuss each factor, in turn.

**Adopt growth mindsets.** To reduce reliance on disadvantaging stereotypes, it helps to instill the belief that effective negotiating is a product of hard work rather than innate talent. One type of implicit theory, a growth mindset, captures this idea.

Implicit theories are assumptions people hold regarding the malleability of attributes such as intelligence and personality (Dweck, 1986). Fixed mindsets (i.e., entity theories) reflect the assumption abilities do not change much, whereas growth mindsets (i.e., incremental theories)

reflect the assumption abilities can be consciously and intentionally developed. In the context of negotiation, entity theorists believe that good negotiators are born, whereas incremental theorists believe that good negotiators develop through practice (Kray & Haselhuhn, 2007).

Growth mindsets lead to better outcomes in negotiation. Kray and Haselhuhn (2007) found that negotiators who were induced to hold an incremental theory outperformed negotiators holding the entity theory. This held true for women and men alike, suggesting the implicit theory overrides stable gender differences in predicting negotiation performance. By enabling negotiators to persist in the face of obstacles, a growth mindset boosted performance. Comprehensive examinations of personality as a predictor of negotiation performance (Elfenbein, 2015; Sharma, Bottom, & Elfenbein, 2013) found that implicit negotiation theories emerge as one of the few robust predictors of performance.

Implicit theories also lead to more accurate social perception (Haselhuhn, Kray, Schweitzer, & Kennedy, 2015). When perceivers hold growth mindsets, they rely on stereotypes to a lesser degree and are more receptive to disconfirming information (Plaks, Grant, & Dweck, 2005). Thus, negotiators who hold negative expectations of women's performance are more likely to revise these expectations in the face of contradictory evidence if they hold growth mindsets.

**Raise awareness of how discretion enables implicit bias.** Organizations could raise awareness of how discretion enables implicit bias, particularly when negotiations are most common (e.g., at hiring, prior to annual reviews, and when contracts with employees, customers, and suppliers are open for renewal). Emphasizing the discretion available to decision-makers is especially helpful. Highlighting discretion reduces implicit bias relative to emphasizing meritocracy, which is a common organizational norm.

The widely-supported notion of meritocracy states that people should receive positions and rewards according to their abilities, not their demographic characteristics (Scully, 1997; Young, 1994). Despite the importance of this idea, it does not always act as a safeguard against discriminatory behavior. Instead, norms of meritocracy inadvertently enable people to act on their stereotypes. In an experiment, Castilla and Benard (2010) manipulated whether an organization emphasized meritocracy. In the meritocracy condition, participants read that the organization's core values were that employees were to be rewarded fairly and equitably, with raises based on their performance and promotions going to those who deserve them. In the non-meritocratic condition, participants read that the organization's core values required people to be evaluated regularly, with raises, bonuses, and promotions at their manager's discretion. Then, participants evaluated a number of candidate profiles, with names indicating gender. In the non-meritocratic condition, the female candidate was perceived to deserve a higher raise than the male candidate, possibly because people over-corrected for potential bias against women. In stark contrast, under meritocracy, the male candidate was perceived to deserve a higher raise than the female. Meritocracy may have enabled discrimination by promoting feelings of objectivity, which enhance overt discrimination by biasing hiring evaluations (Uhlmann & Cohen, 2007). Self-perceived objectivity allows perceivers to act on stereotypes about social groups (Castilla & Benard, 2010). Moreover, endorsing meritocracy may lead people to believe they have established themselves as non-prejudiced, enabling discrimination (Monin & Miller, 2001). Therefore, decision-makers must self-correct for their biases, especially when organizational leaders espouse meritocracy.

**Focus on superordinate identities.** To avoid stereotyping women, negotiators could find and focus on an identity shared with the female counterpart (i.e., a superordinate identity).

Studying this factor, Kray et al. (2001) manipulated whether a gender-based or superordinate identity was salient to negotiators. In one condition, student negotiators read that men and women differed in terms of their performance on the task, highlighting the relevance of a gender-identity. In another condition, student negotiators read that people in competitive academic environments generally tended to do well, highlighting the relevance of a superordinate identity shared by both negotiators. Mixed-gender dyads created more value when a superordinate rather than gendered identity was salient. The superordinate identity seemed to level the playing field. It reduced perceptions of male advantage in negotiation and encouraged cooperative behavior.

### **Correctives for Motivational Barriers**

Removing motivational barriers is about reducing the threat posed by women's success. To do this, it is helpful for negotiators to self-affirm prior to a negotiation and to advocate for women. In addition, negotiators can adopt less-threatening interpersonal styles, although we will discuss our reservations about this approach.

**Instill norms to minimize identity threat.** To reduce the threat posed by skillful women negotiators, interventions from the self-affirmation literature could be helpful. Self-affirmation theory states that people want to regard themselves positively, and to do so, they draw on success in multiple domains (Steele, 1988; Steele, Spencer, & Lynch, 1993). To reduce threat, an intervention must focus on a specific aspect of identity unrelated to the domain of threat (Sherman & Cohen, 2006). Thus, by recalling a time they acted fairly or were creative (Stone, Whitehead, Schmader, & Focella, 2011), negotiators could diminish the threat posed by women who negotiate well. In addition, writing about a cherished personal value reduces bias following threat (Rudman, Dohn, & Fairchild, 2007), and describing an important group membership operates similarly (McGregor, Haji, & Kang, 2008). When negotiators feel less

threatened, they may be less prejudiced against women negotiators (Fein & Spencer, 1997) and be more open to evidence of women's negotiating skills (Correll, Spencer, & Zanna, 2004; Sherman & Cohen, 2002). Possibly by enhancing certainty in one's identity, these interventions minimize identity threat (Sherman & Cohen, 2006).

There are multiple ways to apply these findings. Negotiators who strive to be fair could engage in a self-affirmation activity prior to negotiating with a woman. By doing so, negotiators could avoid turning it into a dominance contest in which they must win at all costs. In addition, organizations could institute self-affirmation rituals before pay and promotion decisions are made. For example, the year-end bonuses of analysts and associates at investment banks are often approved through a meeting of those senior to them in the group. Although some bonuses at some investment banks are entirely driven by numerical ratings, many banks have a more subjective, discussion-oriented process. At the start of such meetings, the group could begin with a self-affirmation exercise. Although it might seem unusual, the exercise would enable decision-makers to be more responsive to evidence of performance, less reliant on stereotypes, and less invested in their own psychological needs. If this helps to eliminate the pay gap, women may need to negotiate less than they do currently. One catch is that the purpose of these exercises may need to be camouflaged (Sherman & Cohen, 2006).

**Advocate for other women.** Women could advocate for each other, individually or collectively. As proposed by Tinsley, Cheldelin, Schneider, and Amanatullah, (2009), women could take turns advocating for each other's promotions or salary increases, or they could frame their requests as helping with the cause of gender equity. By doing so, negotiators frame their requests as supporting others rather than serving purely their own interests. Amanatullah and Tinsley's (2013a) findings suggest this could help women achieve better financial outcomes



while avoiding labels of dominance and entitlement, which are masculine proscriptions that incur especially intense backlash when exhibited by women (Prentice & Carranza, 2002).

Yet to the extent women are seen as upsetting the gender hierarchy, they may encounter resistance, even when acting as a group. It may require a clear majority, involving men too. If a majority of women and men in organizations take up the cause of gender equity, collective advocacy could work by making change to the gender hierarchy seem inevitable. When change seems inevitable, people are inclined to rationalize it rather than resist it (Laurin, Kay & Fitzsimons, 2012). Conversely, without a majority involved, the strategy of collective advocacy is risky. Advocating for equal pay and promotions could disrupt system justification motives and be seen as threatening. If change is viewed as avoidable, people may support gender discrimination more than they otherwise would (Laurin et al., 2012).

**Display non-threatening interpersonal styles.** Another strategy for women negotiators is to adopt a non-threatening interpersonal style. Certain behaviors demonstrate conformity to gender prescriptions and acceptance of the current gender hierarchy. By adopting styles that convey these messages, women may be able to negotiate for themselves without triggering threat.

First, women could frame their own negotiations as driven by the needs of others. Sheryl Sandberg (2013) recommended this behavior, suggesting people make requests using the term *we* instead of *I*. Similarly, Tinsley et al. (2009) recommended citing family needs and security as a justification for salary requests and highlighting how resources requested help one's team or organization. Doing so has at least two effects beneficial for women's performance: avoiding backlash and diminishing fear of social sanctions that can dampen women's ambition and assertiveness. Framing negotiation as other-advocacy reduces backlash because people expect

women to negotiate assertively when they do so on behalf of others (Amanatullah & Tinsley, 2013a). That is, assertiveness is prescribed for other-advocates. Supporting this notion, women lawyers are rated as more assertive than men lawyers, but they are still judged positively (Schneider, Tinsley, Cheldelin, & Amanatullah, 2010).

Additionally, when negotiating on others' behalf, women do not fear social sanctions (Amanatullah & Morris, 2010) to the extent they do when negotiating on their own behalf (Bowles et al., 2007; Small et al., 2007). Without fear of social sanctions, women can set ambitious targets and embrace the high level of self-concern necessary for obtaining good outcomes (Pruitt & Carnevale, 1993). Women's economic outcomes do not differ from those of men when negotiating on behalf of others (Amanatullah & Morris, 2010; Bowles et al., 2005).

A second strategy involves employing negotiating tactics that may minimize threat to one's counterpart. One approach is to employ feminine charm, an interpersonal style that combines friendliness and flirtation in a way that increases compliance with requests by making interaction partners feel good (Kray, Locke, & Van Zant, 2012). It resolves the dilemma that women face between competition and cooperation by simultaneously signaling concern for the self (via flirtation) and concern for the other (via friendliness). Flirtation increases likeability from its target, if not neutral observers (Kray & Locke, 2008). In the MBA classroom, self-reported use of social charm predicted higher effectiveness ratings from their negotiating counterparts for women, but not men (Kray et al., 2012). After manipulating the use of feminine charm (via body language, playfulness, and flattery) in a scenario study over the sale of a used car, women who used it achieved better economic outcomes with men relative to women who used a more neutral style. When deployed as a tactic in a face-to-face negotiation, feminine charm led to more value creation, although all of the additional value went to their male

negotiating counterparts. Perhaps women using this formula were perceived as too friendly. More work is needed to understand the intricacies of this delicate negotiating tactic.

Notably, instrumental flirting is not necessarily as common for women as it is for men. Men endorse the notion that sex is exchanged for resources (sexual economics theory) more strongly than women do (Rudman & Fetterolf, 2014). Additionally, men are higher than women in the propensity to flirt, and men flirt across a wider variety of contexts and for more varied reasons (Kray, 2015). Individual differences in the propensity to flirt may operate differently from feminine charm as a one-off negotiating tactic. It has been said that "flirting is fine, but to be a flirt is not" (Phillips, 1996). The distinction between flirting and being a flirt is likely to be more treacherous for women than it is for men. As such, more work is needed to understand when this technique levels the playing field, and caution should be exercised in its deployment.

A third strategy is to *indirectly* communicate dissatisfaction with an offer received and resistance to concessions. Indirect influence attempts use negative body language (e.g., slumping, arms crossed), negative tones of voice (e.g., sarcasm, disappointment), and negative emotional displays (e.g., frustration and annoyance) to convey dissatisfaction. Bowles and Flynn (2010) found that women negotiators adopted more indirect styles of influence with men negotiators than with other women, even after accounting for the counterpart's competitiveness. Women used as many direct influence attempts (persuasion, demands, and refusing to move from one's position) as men. However, they also used *more* indirect influence attempts. Women's indirect influence reduced (but did not eliminate) the gender gap in economic outcomes. Indirect influence could therefore be one way to improve economic outcomes in negotiation without being perceived as challenging to the gender hierarchy.

These solutions work within the existing system. They are strategies women could use today. However, they allow bias against women negotiators to stand. Only women have to use “we” instead of “I.” Indirect communication is demanded of people who lack power and status (Lips, 1991). Flirting hides women's influence under a coy and submissive veneer. By requiring women to act in a subservient fashion to get their needs met, these solutions essentially maintain the gender status quo. They do not challenge the long-standing view that it is illegitimate for women to directly state their needs (Johnson, 1976). These strategies benefit individual women and might help women gain in terms of pay and promotions over time. However, relative to other strategies, such approaches could be seen as less admirable because they do not promote the cause of women generally.

### **Correctives for Paradigmatic Barriers**

We have discussed the negotiation paradigm extensively in a prior section, so we will revisit it only briefly here by identifying a few additional steps that researchers could take to advance our science.

**Diversify research samples.** Removing paradigmatic barriers requires examining expert negotiators in more realistic negotiation contexts. This means moving beyond the comforts and convenience of the lab into the field to examine how experienced negotiators approach this complex form of social interaction. Research contexts should have higher financial stakes, less emphasis on competition, and longer-term relationships at risk. In addition to economic outcomes, relational capital and subjective value should be explored. Currently, there is not enough research to know whether the portrait of gender differences in negotiation will change when paradigmatic barriers are removed.

**Broaden the definition of what constitutes negotiation.** Removing paradigmatic barriers may also require us to question our own assumptions about how people actually negotiate outside of the laboratory. Specifically, is negotiation truly an everyday activity in the strict sense? Or is this popular sentiment an overreach? Negotiation scholars make this claim, and it is possible that most working adults occasionally need to negotiate a formal contract. However, the negotiation role-plays comprising the bulk of our understanding of this activity are not likely an accurate representation of everyday negotiations. Even in business, people in interdependent relationships may resolve their conflicts loosely, with concessions repaid over time, rather than through a direct exchange where concessions are immediately paid back. Moreover, is negotiation really a series of assertive demands? Or are indirect statements just as effective at initiating conversations, and more effective at saving face for the person confronted? In light of gender differences in language use (Lakoff, 1975; Tannen, 1994), more research is needed to determine whether men and women truly differ in the propensity to negotiate (Small et al., 2007), as opposed to how they communicate about negotiating. Negotiation scholars would be wise to consider how functional politeness rituals (i.e., Goffman, 1967) may cause us to overlook effective forms negotiated exchange. To move beyond a gendered conceptualization of negotiation, we may need to revise our understanding of the frequency and style of excellent negotiation in the real world.

**Examine moderators of perceiver-driven gender bias.** Recent literature reviews make clear that gender differences in negotiation performance are not a fait accompli. To the degree that women garner lower returns on their investment in the negotiation process, we have more evidence to suggest it is driven by the motives, beliefs, and actions of their counterparts than it is a problem originating in women's stubborn inaction and ineffectiveness. To this end, researchers

are called to identify the personalities of negotiating counterparts that put women at greatest risk for discrimination. Rather than assuming everyone is equally vulnerable to mistreating women negotiators, we may find that gender bias is moderated by perceivers' individual differences in ambivalent sexism (Glick & Fiske, 1996), social dominance orientation (Pratto et al., 1994), and precarious manhood (Vandello et al., 2008), to name a few possibilities. By taking the spotlight off of women negotiators' purported (though elusive) deficiencies and shining it instead on those who create barriers for them, we avoid blaming the victim and begin to identify factors that are more significant sources of gender inequality.

### **Conclusion**

Research on gender emphasizes persistent, multifaceted barriers preventing women from achieving equal career success as men. Each of these factors is relevant to negotiations, yet the field has focused largely on cognitive drivers to date. By considering the motivational and paradigmatic drivers of gender differences, a more comprehensive picture will emerge as to what it will take to truly level the playing field in negotiations.

Motivational barriers highlight the importance of negotiators' attitudes and intentions toward women counterparts. Just as the implied message to women in organizations seems to be, "We can't keep you out, but we can make you want to leave" (Lips, 1991: 177), the message to women negotiators seems to be, "We can't stop you from negotiating, but we can undermine your outcomes." To the extent that women face worse intentions, we are not optimistic that negotiating training alone, as it is currently conceptualized, will reduce the gender gaps in pay and advancement. Negotiations are about control over resources, which is fundamentally a power game. Until women are granted status equal to men, women's underperformance, or undermining, at the bargaining table is virtually assured.

Paradigmatic barriers highlight the importance of studying negotiation differently. Real world negotiations are not the low stakes, hyper-competitive, short-term, materialistic games portrayed in classroom simulations. Instead, real world negotiations have higher stakes, are more collaborative, and involve longer-term relationships. In them, relational capital and subjective value matter immensely. By simulating these conditions more accurately, researchers could enhance the validity of their research and possibly unveil a very different portrait of women's negotiating abilities. Under real world conditions, women's strengths may shine, and ultimately help to undermine cognitive barriers to their performance.

In light of the multifaceted barriers women face, we believe it is not in women's interest to continue to play the "catch up" game at the bargaining table, trying to become more like men. Training women to be more like men hides the ways in which women have unique strengths. Instead, women's advancement in the workplace will accelerate by cultivating a strong, positive social identity of women as astute negotiators. True confidence comes from authenticity, and the way negotiation is currently understood does not permit women to behave authentically and be successful at the same time. It is time to begin this dialogue in earnest.

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**FIGURE 1**  
**SUMMARY OF BARRIERS AND POTENTIAL CORRECTIVES**

	<b>Cognitive Barriers</b>	<b>Motivational Barriers</b>	<b>Paradigmatic Barriers</b>	<b>Relational Frames</b>
<b>Source of Barrier</b>	Negative descriptive stereotypes about women negotiators’ abilities	A motivated desire to believe that women are poor negotiators, even when evidence disproves this notion <u>Shared by both genders:</u> 1) Just world beliefs 2) Desire to justify women’s subordinate positions at work and in society <u>Men only:</u> 3) Threatened masculinity 4) Desire to avoid status loss	Current ways of conceptualizing and studying negotiation overstate gender differences  Exclusive focus on student samples in classroom simulations <u>Paradigm is marked by:</u> 1) Low stakes 2) Normalization of competitive tactics 3) Short-term relationships 4) Materialism	The assumption that only market-pricing frames are applied to negotiation  <u>Other possibilities:</u> 1) Women negotiators are targets of attempts to establish them as subordinates within authority-ranking relationships 2) Women apply equality matching and communal sharing frames to negotiations
<b>Consequences for Women Negotiators</b>	Lower aspirations and persistence  Differential treatment by counterparts	Evidence of women’s negotiating competence met with: Aggressive or unethical negotiating behavior Complementary gender stereotypes Essentialist explanations for gender differences Moral outrage/backlash	Stereotypical perception of women negotiators  Discomfort with negotiation simulations that does not generalize to real world conditions  Cooperativeness is undervalued  Ability to create relational capital and subjective value is under-studied and under-appreciated	Women could be vulnerable to exploitation, and expected to accept less generous offers  Women may aim for egalitarian outcomes, with offers and concessions driven by concerns for equality  Women may allow counterparts longer time-frames to reciprocate concessions

	<b>Cognitive Barriers</b>	<b>Motivational Barriers</b>	<b>Paradigmatic Barriers</b>	<b>Relational Frames</b>
<b>Supporting Evidence in the Negotiation Context</b>	<p>Gender differences emerge only when the negotiation is framed as diagnostic</p> <p>Women negotiators are viewed as easier to mislead</p> <p>Women are targets of higher opening offers and greater deception</p> <p>Gender differences are larger in face-to-face interactions and against real counterparts</p> <p>Regenerating stereotypes eliminates gender differences in performance</p>	<p>Women superiors (but not team members) evoke threat and are met with more extreme negotiating demands</p>	<p>Gender differences in propensity to negotiate do not emerge among MBAs negotiating their salaries</p> <p>Meta-analytical evidence shows that incentives reduce the size of gender differences</p>	<p>None to date</p>
<b>Potential Correctives</b>	<p>Adopt growth mindsets (i.e., believe negotiating skills are malleable)</p> <p>Raise awareness of how discretion enables decision-makers’ to express their implicit biases</p> <p>Focus on superordinate (i.e., shared) identities</p>	<p>Instill norms to minimize identity threat</p> <p>Advocate for other women</p> <p>Display non-threatening interpersonal styles</p>	<p>Examine gender in contexts with higher stakes and longer-term relationships</p> <p>Attend to relational capital and subjective value</p> <p>Diversify research samples to include experienced, professional negotiators</p> <p>Broaden the definition of negotiation to examine its true frequency and forms</p> <p>Shift attention to factors that put women’s outcomes at risk (e.g., factors that predict biased behavior by counterparts)</p>	<p>Conduct qualitative studies to understand how negotiators approach their interactions</p> <p>Examine women’s approaches to offers and concessions in contexts where concessions can be repaid over time</p>

**FIGURE 2**  
**POSSIBLE MODEL OF WOMEN NEGOTIATORS' STRENGTHS**

