

Negotiation Contexts: How and Why They Shape Women's and Men's Decision to Negotiate

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Abstract

In the substantial body of research on gender differences in the initiation of negotiation, the findings consistently favor men (Kugler et al., 2018). We propose that this research itself is gendered because negotiation research has traditionally focused on masculine negotiation contexts. In the current study, we replicate the gender effect in initiating negotiations (favoring men) and provide an empirically based selection of “masculine,” “feminine,” and “neutral” negotiation contexts, which can be used for future negotiation research. We show that the negotiation context shapes gender differences such that in specific social contexts, women tend to have even *higher* initiation intentions compared to men. Negotiation contexts generally seem to differ regarding their affordance to negotiate. We offer a possible explanation for gender effects on initiation intentions by uncovering the mediating role of expectancy considerations across all negotiation contexts, especially in masculine contexts, and instrumentality considerations in specific masculine and feminine contexts.

People negotiate in various contexts: for example, to improve their salaries or career opportunities at work, to agree on their next vacation destination with their families, or to get a better price when buying goods (Babcock, Gelfand, Small, & Stayn, 2006; Stuhlmacher & Linnabery, 2013). However, before a negotiation unfolds, it has to be initiated (Reif & Brodbeck, 2014). Whether or not negotiations are initiated can have severe economic and relational consequences for individuals, organizations, and markets (Reif & Brodbeck, 2014). For example, one explanation for the existing gender wage gap is that women initiate fewer negotiations to improve their compensation in comparison to men (Small, Gelfand, Babcock, & Gettman, 2007). Due to the inalienability of initiation for whether negotiation unfolds at all (Reif & Brodbeck, 2014), this article focuses on the initiation of negotiations—the very first behavioral step of a negotiation.

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Research has shown that gender does indeed have a crucial influence on differences in the initiation of negotiations, as well as other aspects of negotiations. Gender differences in negotiations are often studied from the perspective of gender role theory (Eagly, 1987; Wood & Eagly, 2012) or negotiated order theory (Kolb & McGinn, 2009). In general, women initiate fewer negotiations in comparison with men (Kugler, Reif, Kaschner, & Brodbeck, 2018), achieve worse economic outcomes (Mazei et al., 2015; Shan, 2014; Stuhlmacher & Walters, 1999), and negotiate less competitively (Walters, Stuhlmacher, & Meyer, 1998). However, gender differences in (the initiation of) negotiations have also been found to depend on context characteristics: While gender differences increase under certain conditions, they attenuate or disappear under other conditions (Kugler et al., 2018; Mazei et al., 2015).

Traditionally, negotiation research is based on distributive negotiations over compensation (Kolb, 2012; Kray & Thompson, 2005). In reality, negotiations take place in many other contexts, and limiting the study of negotiations to the context of compensation might lead to biased results. Given that negotiation contexts interact with gender and with traditional gender roles, theory and research would greatly benefit from broadening the focus to not only cover classical negotiation contexts but also a wider range of social situations (Bowles & Kray, 2013; Kolb, 2012, 2013).

In this study, we explore (a) diverse negotiation contexts and (b) *how* they influence gender differences in the initiation of negotiation (i.e., moderator variables). In doing so, we build on research that is beginning to uncover the role of situational circumstances as important influences on gender differences in negotiations (Aloni & Desivilya, 2013; Bear, 2011; Bohnet & Greig, 2007; Kolb & Kickul, 2006; Kugler et al., 2018; Miles & LaSalle, 2008). In addition to focusing on diverse negotiation contexts, we (c) address the as yet unanswered question of *why* men and women differ in their likelihood to initiate negotiations (Bear & Babcock, 2012). In this pursuit, we uncover psychological mechanisms underlying gender effects (i.e., mediator variables). Understanding such psychological mechanisms is important for the deduction of concise theoretical and practical implications concerning gender effects in particular negotiation domains.

Gender Differences in the Initiation of Negotiation

A growing body of research on the initiation of negotiation has addressed the question of why people decide to start negotiating. Many studies in this field have focused on intra-individual variables such as gender (Babcock et al., 2006; Eriksson & Sandberg, 2012; Greig, 2008; Schneider, Rodgers, & Bristow, 1999; Small et al., 2007). Kugler et al. (2018) conducted a meta-analysis to summarize existing results and found that overall women have a somewhat-lower propensity to initiate negotiations compared to men.

From a theoretical perspective, gender differences in (the initiation of) negotiations are often explained by gender role theory. Gender role theory proposes that gender differences in negotiations stem from a relative (in)consistency between the gender role and the negotiator role: Whereas the masculine gender role and the negotiator role are “naturally” consistent, the feminine gender role and the negotiator role are “naturally” inconsistent (Bear, 2011; Bear & Babcock, 2012; Eagly & Karau, 2002; Stuhlmacher & Linnabery, 2013). In other words, masculine skills (acting assertively, independently, and rationally) are more consistent with the skills necessary to effectively negotiate than feminine skills (acting emotionally, with concern for others, and passively; Deaux & Lewis, 1984; Kray & Thompson, 2005). Inconsistency between roles decreases and consistency between roles increases the likelihood of initiating negotiations (Bem & Lenney, 1976; Eagly & Karau, 2002; for related work on asymmetrical contextual ambiguity see also Aloni & Desivilya, 2013 and Miles & LaSalle, 2008).

In the following, we will briefly discuss the aforementioned aspects of gender role theory (Eagly, 1987; Wood & Eagly, 2012) relevant for gender differences in the (initiation of) negotiation in more detail. Gender roles can be understood as “a set of expectations and norms that are associated with being a man or a woman” (Bear, 2011, p. 50). Gender roles are different for men and women: The masculine gender

role involves agency, whereas the feminine gender role encompasses communality (Rudman & Glick, 1999). These different gender roles are accompanied by different role expectations for men and women, which become self-reinforcing via descriptive and prescriptive stereotypes (Bear, 2011). People internalize their gender roles and thus form a gender identity (i.e., a sense of themselves as male or female; Wood & Eagly, 2012).

As people behave consistently with their standard for themselves as a man or woman (Carver & Scheier, 2008), masculine and feminine gender identities guide behavior through the process of self-regulation (Moretti & Higgins, 1999; Witt & Wood, 2010; Wood, Christensen, Hebl, & Rothgerber, 1997). Perceiving a match between one's own gender-related behavior and the "gender standard" produces positive emotions and increases self-esteem; perceiving a mismatch produces negative emotions and decreases self-esteem (Bem, 1981; Wood & Eagly, 2012). Behaving consistently with one's gender role is rewarded not only *intra*-personally but also *inter*-personally (Clark & Kashima, 2007). Role—or rather stereotype—violations are penalized in the form of backlash or other negative social reactions (Wood & Eagly, 2012) and thus evoke discomfort (Bosson, Prewitt-Freilino, & Taylor, 2005; Luhaorg & Zivian, 1995).

In sum, women who initiate negotiations act against their gender role expectations, experience negative emotions as well as decreased self-esteem, and need to fear backlash. Consistent with past research, we propose that women have a lower propensity to initiate negotiations compared to men (*Hypothesis 1*).

Negotiation Contexts Moderate Gender Differences in the Initiation of Negotiation

Gender differences in negotiations can be influenced by contextual characteristics such as the negotiation topic (Bear, 2011; Demoulin & Teixeira, 2016), the number of competitors in the negotiation setting (Hanek, Garcia, & Tor, 2016), or cues (in)consistent with the negotiator's gender role (Bear & Babcock, 2017). A meta-analysis (Mazei et al., 2015) showed that gender differences in negotiation outcomes favoring men could be reduced when negotiators were experienced, when they were informed about the bargaining range, or when they negotiated on behalf of others (Amanatullah & Morris, 2010; Bowles, Babcock, & McGinn, 2005). Similarly, gender differences in *initiating* negotiations vary depending on the context. A meta-analysis (Kugler et al., 2018) showed that women were more likely to initiate negotiations when the situation was clearly labeled as negotiation and when cues within the negotiation situation were consistent with the feminine gender role.

The contextual influence on gender differences can be explained by gender role theory: (a) When the relative inconsistency between the feminine and negotiator roles is decreased (e.g., by offering feminine cues within the negotiation situation), the gender difference decreases; and (b) when taking on the negotiator role is expected from both men and women (e.g., when the situational ambiguity regarding the appropriateness of negotiating is low rather than high), the gender difference is lower than in ambiguous situations (Bear, 2011; Bear & Babcock, 2012; Eagly & Karau, 2002; Stuhlmacher & Linnabery, 2013).

In sum, different negotiation contexts may imply different situational affordances for men versus women (Aloni & Desivilya, 2013; Miles & LaSalle, 2008). By affordances, we mean the potential of different negotiation contexts to evoke different sets of psychological responses (i.e., intentions to negotiate) in men and women (Kitayama, Mesquita, & Karasawa, 2006). Affordances are "subtly, but consistently present in many ordinary daily practices and pervasive ideas, beliefs, and assumptions" (Kitayama et al., 2006, p. 900).

Although research has found evidence for the influence of broad contextual characteristics on the initiation of negotiation (Kugler et al., 2018), the concrete contexts in which women versus men typically initiate negotiations have not yet been explored. Thus, we investigate in which concrete contexts men and women typically do or do not initiate negotiations (*Exploratory Question*) and propose that

negotiation contexts differ regarding their affordance to negotiate (i.e., people are more likely to negotiate in some contexts than in others, *Hypothesis 2*). Accordingly, we also propose that gender differences in the initiation of negotiation vary depending on the negotiation context (*Hypothesis 3*).

Cognitions Mediate Gender Differences in the Initiation of Negotiation

The decision of whether or not to negotiate is related to cognitive-motivational considerations, which include expectancy considerations and instrumentality considerations (Reif & Brodbeck, 2014, 2017). Expectancy (i.e., one's confidence about what one is capable of doing, Reif & Brodbeck, 2014) includes feelings of certainty or efficacy and can be a driving force behind initiating behavior (Reif & Brodbeck, 2014; Wigfield & Eccles, 2000). Expectancy might be gendered: Research shows that women tend to be less confident than men (Watson & Hoffman, 1996) and have less self-efficacy regarding their negotiation ability (Stevens, Bavetta, & Gist, 1993). Thus, a possible explanation for gender differences in the initiation of negotiation may lie in gendered expectancy considerations. Gender may be associated with different task-specific competency beliefs, which vary as a function of the fit between the context and one's gender role (Jacobs, Lanza, Osgood, Eccles, & Wigfield, 2002). As negotiation is typically seen as a masculine context (Bear, 2011; Kray & Thompson, 2005; Kray, Thompson, & Galinsky, 2001), women might have lower competency beliefs, which go along with less confidence in negotiation situations (Miles & LaSalle, 2008).

Instrumentality (i.e., the perceived utility of initiating a negotiation or the perceived association between initiating negotiations and reaching valued outcomes, Reif & Brodbeck, 2014) is another force driving initiative behavior. A person's decision whether or not to negotiate depends on the anticipated consequences of negotiating (Kong, Tuncel, & McLean Parks, 2011). Anticipated consequences can include economic and social outcomes. As Bowles, Babcock, and Lai (2007) suggest, the anticipated social costs of an initiated negotiation influence people's decision of whether or not to negotiate. Women who initiate negotiations and thus act assertively risk social backlash because they violate their feminine gender role (Amanatullah & Tinsley, 2013a, 2013b; Stuhlmacher & Linnabery, 2013). As negotiation is typically seen as a masculine domain, women might "feel social pressure to adhere to the female role and display gender-consistent behavior" (Mazei et al., 2015, p. 86). This assumption is further underlined by Stuhlmacher, Citera, and Willis (2007), who meta-analytically showed that when social pressure is reduced (e.g., in virtual negotiation settings), women's behavior in negotiations becomes more hostile and competitive.

In summation, we propose that gender influences negotiation-related cognitions. More specifically, men have higher expectancy considerations or confidence in being able to successfully negotiate in comparison with women (*Hypothesis 4a*) and higher instrumentality considerations or utility perceptions of initiating negotiations (*Hypothesis 4b*), which in turn influence their intention to initiate a negotiation.

Overview of Studies

To test our exploratory question and hypotheses, we conducted two studies. In Study 1, we explored in which contexts people typically initiate negotiations and in which situations they consider negotiating but do not actually begin a negotiation (*Exploratory Question*). In Study 2, we tested whether women had lower initiation intentions compared to men (*Hypothesis 1*), whether negotiation contexts differed regarding their affordance to negotiate (*Hypothesis 2*), and whether the gender difference depended on the negotiation context (*Hypothesis 3*, moderation analysis). In addition, we tested whether different cognitive considerations among men and women explained the differences in initiation intentions (*Hypotheses 4a* and *4b*, mediation analyses).

Study 1

As part of a larger project on the topic of initiating negotiations, we administered an online questionnaire to 1,306 students at a large German university. The questionnaire included two separate parts which served several purposes. In the first part of the questionnaire, we investigated students' experiences negotiating examination grades, which was quantitatively analyzed (moderation effect of subjective initiation ability on the link between satisfaction and initiation of negotiation) and published by Reif and Brodbeck (2017). In the second part of the questionnaire, students were asked via open-ended questions about contexts in which they had decided (not) to negotiate in the past. For the purpose of Study 1 regarding negotiation contexts, we qualitatively analyzed the answers to the open-ended questions in order to investigate in which contexts men versus women did or did not initiate negotiations.

Method

Sample

After excluding individuals who did not continue on after the first part of the questionnaire, who did not fully answer the open-ended questions (e.g., wrote only few incoherent words), or continued to discuss their experiences negotiating university grades (i.e., first part of the questionnaire), the final dataset for Study 1 consisted of $n = 421$ students (62% female). Participants were 24.24 years old on average ($SD = 4.19$, $Min = 18$, $Max = 48$), had different educational backgrounds, and were predominantly German (92%).

Data Collection

The link to the online questionnaire was sent via email to students at a large university in Germany, who had agreed to receive emails via a specific mailing list. As an incentive to participate, participants could take part in a lottery in which three winners each received 100 euros.

We included two open-ended questions that were analyzed for the purpose of this study. First, participants were asked to describe contexts in which they usually initiated negotiations ("In which typical situations do you usually initiate negotiations?"; Question 1). Second, participants were asked to name situations in which they usually considered negotiating but ultimately did not initiate a negotiation ("In which typical situations have you taken a negotiation into consideration, but ultimately did not initiate it?"; Question 2).

By doing so, we gathered a variety of written comments describing contexts in which participants usually negotiated and contexts in which participants usually thought about negotiating but ultimately decided not to negotiate. Responses ranged from single words (e.g., "money," "clothes," and "job") to phrases (e.g., "larger orders to lower prices") up to short texts or even whole paragraphs describing concrete contextual characteristics (e.g., "negotiation with the landlord about reducing the amount of rent due to mice in an old building"). In addition to writing about negotiation *situations*, participants also mentioned *topics* about which they had (or had not) negotiated. As participants often used a topic in order to describe a situation (e.g., "in the supermarket about prices"), we did not distinguish between situations and topics but used the integrative term "*negotiation context*" in our analyses to represent both.

Content Coding and Categorization System

Based on the answers to Question 1, we created a categorization system using standard practices for qualitative data analysis (cf. Miles & Huberman, 1994). In sum, we formed inductive categories that always remained close to the participants' actual answers (Stemler, 2001; Taylor-Powell & Renner, 2003) by following Mayring's (2000) stage model: In a first step, participants' answers were dissected into singular units of meaning, labeled "statements." In an iterative process involving two independent coders (both

of whom were authors of this study), all answers to Question 1 were assigned to categories (such as negotiating about products, negotiating about prices, and negotiating about rents). The categories were defined and refined to optimally reflect the content of the statements. The two independent coders discussed the categories in order to cross-validate and align the categories' definitions. Then, the categories were deductively applied to Question 2. All statements generated by Question 2 could be categorized using the categorization system.

Interrater reliability, calculated according to the percentage of agreement proposed by Miles and Huberman (1994), was high (percentage of agreement: 98% for Question 1 and 98% for Question 2. All discrepancies were resolved after discussion between the two raters).

Results

Descriptive Statistics

Out of a total of 421 participants (all participants read Question 1 first and then Question 2; participants were not required to answer the questions), 337 described an average number of 1.95 contexts ($SD = 1.10$) in which they typically initiated negotiations (Question 1), and 222 participants mentioned an average number of 1.27 contexts ($SD = 0.56$) in which they had considered negotiating but ultimately did not initiate a negotiation (Question 2).

Categories

The content analysis resulted in 13 contexts in which a negotiation was initiated and/or considered, but ultimately not initiated (we were able to categorize all answers to Question 1 and all answers to Question 2 using the same categorization system of 13 contexts). The following contexts which were either negotiated or considered for negotiation are described below in alphabetic order.

- (1) *Compensation*: The main topics in the context of compensation negotiation were a salary increase or compensation for extra work. Due to the high relative frequency of such statements as well as their pervasiveness in research on gender differences, compensation formed a separate category and was not subsumed under the category *Job*.
- (2) *Contracts*: Participants mentioned negotiating about contract conditions, for example, purchase contracts or phone contracts.
- (3) *Finances*: This category includes further monetary negotiation topics, for example, financial support from one's parents, fees, or debts. As these statements were not related to concrete products, services, or institutions, they formed a separate category.
- (4) *Job*: This category contains negotiations at the workplace (including internships or side jobs), for example, about working hours, career opportunities, or allocation of tasks.
- (5) *Leisure*: Typical statements included negotiations about leisure activities or holidays.
- (6) *Market*: Participants mentioned flea markets, markets without fixed prices, or markets abroad (such as bazaars) as negotiation contexts.
- (7) *Mutual living*: Statements in this category described negotiations with neighbors or roommates in a shared apartment, especially about domestic work.
- (8) *Products and Prices*: Participants mentioned negotiating about discounts for defective articles or second-hand products as well as about the price of specific products, for example, cars, clothes, or electronic devices.
- (9) *Public Institution*: Besides negotiations with the police, teachers, or other authorities, participants also described negotiations about smoking areas and other political or legal issues, for example, in court.
- (10) *Rent*: Participants mentioned negotiations with their landlord about the amount of rent.
- (11) *Service*: Statements in this category focused on negotiations about defective services, for example, at restaurants, the hairdresser, or an auto service shop.

- (12) *Social Environment*: This negotiation context was characterized by negotiations with friends and family, for example, with siblings or parents, or with partners and spouses.
- (13) *Store*: This category included statements referring to negotiations at department stores, supermarkets, or other specific stores such as clothing stores and electronics stores. As participants only mentioned the type of store but did not further specify the negotiation object or content (i.e., they did not name specific products or prices), these statements formed a separate category and were not included in the category *Products and Prices*.

Discussion of Study 1

In Study 1, we explored the contexts in which women and men typically did (or did not) initiate negotiations. We found that negotiations were considered and initiated across a variety of different contexts: people negotiated in public institutions, at their jobs, about contracts, rents, and compensation, in markets, stores, and private social settings, about products and their prices, services, finances, leisure issues, and about household chores. Thus, people do not only negotiate about compensation issues in professional contexts or in purchasing settings, which are classic paradigms in negotiation research, but also consider negotiating and actually negotiate in the public and private sphere.

Study 2

Given that Study 1 was qualitative and exploratory, we intended to quantitatively test our hypotheses in Study 2. We conducted two sets of analyses for Study 2. First, we tested the influence of negotiation contexts (identified in Study 1) on men's and women's initiation intentions. We expected to find that, (a) in general, men have a higher propensity to initiate negotiations compared to women (*Hypothesis 1*), (b) negotiation contexts differ regarding their affordances (*Hypothesis 2*), and that (c) gender differences vary depending on context (*Hypothesis 3*).

Second, we explored whether gender effects in the initiation of negotiations were mediated by cognitive-motivational considerations. In other words, we tested the mediating role of cognitive-motivational considerations, expecting men to have higher expectancy considerations (*Hypothesis 4a*) and instrumentality considerations (*Hypothesis 4b*) in negotiation situations in comparison with women, which in turn influence their intentions to negotiate. We tested Hypotheses 4a and 4b across all negotiation contexts using a composite measure because "each person's motivational tendencies are best predicted by the entire pool of (...) affordances he or she is exposed to over many different types of situations" (Kitayama et al., 2006, p. 901). However, in order to account for contextual variations, we also tested Hypotheses 4a and 4b in masculine versus feminine contexts separately.

Method

We developed an online questionnaire in which we asked specific questions about each negotiation context identified in Study 1.

Sample

We recruited 443 participants through social and career networks as well as graduate courses at two large universities in Germany. As an incentive, participants were able to participate in a lottery in which two winners received 25 euros each. Eighty-five participants were excluded from further analyses because they did not answer questions regarding at least one negotiation context. The resulting sample consisted of 358 participants (63% female) ranging in age from 17 to 80 years ($M = 27.59$; $SD = 10.60$). The majority of participants were German (96%). Of the participants, 61% were students and 31% were employees.

Participants were diverse with respect to their educational background (28% psychology, 22% economics, 10% natural sciences, 9% education, 6% medicine, 4% media and communication science, 4% law, 3% pedagogy, 3% linguistics, 13% others).

Measurement

Independent Variables. Participants answered an online questionnaire with a 2×13 (gender as between-subjects factor: male vs. female; negotiation context as within-subjects factor: 13 different contexts) mixed design. The questionnaire listed all 13 negotiation contexts identified in Study 1 illustrated with examples (for details see Study 1, description of categories). As the 13 negotiation contexts identified with a student sample in Study 1 covered a broad mix of different negotiation situations, including both work-related and non-work-related situations, we assumed that these 13 contexts were also applicable to the mixed sample of Study 2, which included both students and employees. The order of the presented negotiation contexts was randomized.

Dependent Variable: Intention to Initiate a Negotiation. Participants were asked to imagine themselves in the respective negotiation context and indicate the probability (7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = *certainly not* to 7 = *definitely*) that they would *initiate a negotiation* in that context ("Would you negotiate in this context?"). This question was answered by all participants for each negotiation context.

To test our mediation hypotheses (*Hypotheses 4a and 4b*), we computed the mean for each person across all 13 contexts. Thus, our dependent variable for the mediation analyses was a composite measure across all 13 contexts. Cronbach's alpha for this composite measure was $\alpha = .71$.

Mediating Variables: Expectancy Considerations and Instrumentality Considerations. Participants were asked to indicate their *expectancy considerations* (7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = *totally disagree* to 7 = *totally agree*) for each negotiation context ("I would feel confident that I can handle a negotiation in this context"). The item regarding expectancy considerations was based on Vroom's (1964) VIE Theory, which defines expectancy as the subjectively perceived probability of an action or effort leading to an outcome or performance and can be interpreted as one's confidence about what one is capable of doing (Reif & Brodbeck, 2014).

Participants also indicated their *instrumentality considerations* (7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = *totally disagree* to 7 = *totally agree*) for each negotiation context ("In this situation, I can benefit from negotiating"). This item was also based on Vroom's (1964) VIE Theory, which defines instrumentality as the probability that a certain outcome will lead to a second outcome (Van Eerde & Thierry, 1996).

The questions about expectancy and instrumentality considerations were answered by all participants for each negotiation context. To test our mediation hypotheses (*Hypotheses 4a and 4b*), we computed the mean for each person and mediating variable across all 13 contexts. Thus, our mediator variables were composite measures across all 13 contexts. Cronbach's alpha was $\alpha = .81$ for the expectancy composite measure and $\alpha = .69$ for the instrumentality composite measure.

Analyses

Our first set of analyses addressed the proposed main effects of gender (*Hypothesis 1*) and negotiation context (*Hypothesis 2*) on intention to initiate a negotiation as well as the interaction between gender and negotiation context (*Hypothesis 3*). For the first set of analyses, the negotiation contexts were not combined into a composite measure but were analyzed as "repeated measures"—that is, as a within-subjects factor with 13 levels—because each participant indicated his or her negotiation intentions ("Would you negotiate in this context?") for each of the 13 negotiation contexts. Gender was included as a between-subjects factor. Thus, we used a mixed ANOVA to test the proposed effects.

Table 1
Study 2: Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Intention to initiate a negotiation (overall)	5.11	0.68	(.71)									
2. Intention to initiate a negotiation (masculine contexts)	4.55	1.06	.84**	(.65)								
3. Intention to initiate a negotiation (feminine context)	6.13	1.31	.32**	.05	—							
4. Expectancy (overall)	4.66	0.87	.79**	.74**	.14**	(.81)						
5. Expectancy (masculine contexts)	3.91	1.26	.68**	.82**	-.01	.89**	(.79)					
6. Expectancy (feminine context)	6.03	1.26	.38**	.17**	.65**	.37**	.14**	—				
7. Instrumentality (overall)	5.22	0.65	.71**	.59**	.26**	.58**	.47**	.35**	(.69)			
8. Instrumentality (masculine contexts)	4.79	1.01	.61**	.73**	.05	.53**	.60**	.15**	.82**	(.62)		
9. Instrumentality (feminine context)	6.01	1.30	.28**	.04	.73**	.15**	.00	.57**	.41**	.11*	—	
10. Gender	1.63	.483	-.16**	-.28**	.16**	-.23**	-.30**	.10	-.05	-.14**	.19**	—

Note. ** $p < .01$. * $p < .05$, two-tailed. Reliabilities are shown along the diagonal in parentheses.

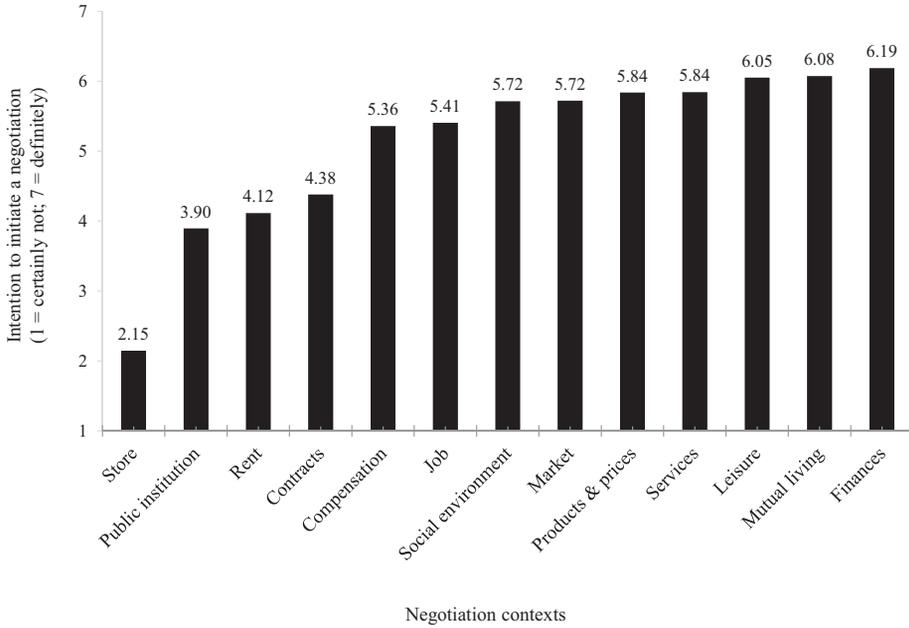


Figure 1. Study 2: Average intention to initiate a negotiation in different negotiation contexts.

Table 2

Study 2: Means, Standard Deviations, and Post hoc t-tests of Gender Differences in the Intention to Initiate a Negotiation in Different Contexts

Context	Mean (SD) men	Mean (SD) women	Mean (SD) total	t	df	p
Public institution	4.35 (1.91)	3.44 (1.79)	3.78 (1.88)	4.52*	356	<.001
Contracts	4.71 (1.69)	4.05 (1.68)	4.29 (1.71)	3.60*	356	<.001
Compensation	5.63 (1.55)	5.09 (1.41)	5.29 (1.48)	3.35*	356	.001
Job	5.64 (1.22)	5.18 (1.35)	5.35 (1.32)	3.22*	356	.001
Rent	4.39 (1.74)	3.85 (1.68)	4.04 (1.72)	2.90*	356	.004
Store	2.33 (1.38)	1.96 (1.12)	2.10 (1.23)	2.64	230, 789†	.009
Market	5.89 (1.40)	5.56 (1.50)	5.68 (1.47)	2.05	356	.041
Service	5.91 (1.18)	5.78 (1.31)	5.83 (1.26)	0.95	356	.345
Finances	6.24 (1.02)	6.13 (1.12)	6.17 (1.09)	0.92	356	.357
Products & prices	5.74 (1.32)	5.93 (1.17)	5.86 (1.23)	-1.38	249, 477†	.169
Social environment	5.57 (1.47)	5.86 (1.35)	5.75 (1.41)	-1.92	356	.055
Leisure	5.91 (1.32)	6.19 (1.19)	6.09 (1.25)	-2.11	356	.036
Mutual living	5.86 (1.45)	6.30 (1.19)	6.13 (1.31)	-2.96*	233, 277†	.003

Notes. Post hoc t-tests were conducted with Bonferroni-Holm correction for multiple comparisons.

*Significant after Bonferroni-Holm correction. N (men) = 132; N (women) = 226.

†Because of a significant result in the Levene test, heterogeneity of variances had to be assumed; accordingly, two different degrees of freedom are shown for this result.

The second set of analyses addressed the mediating effects of cognitive-motivational considerations for the gender-initiating negotiation relationship. For the mediation analyses, we used composite measures of intention to initiate a negotiation, expectancy considerations, and instrumentality considerations (mean values across all 13 negotiation contexts). However, to delve deeper into the proposed mediation

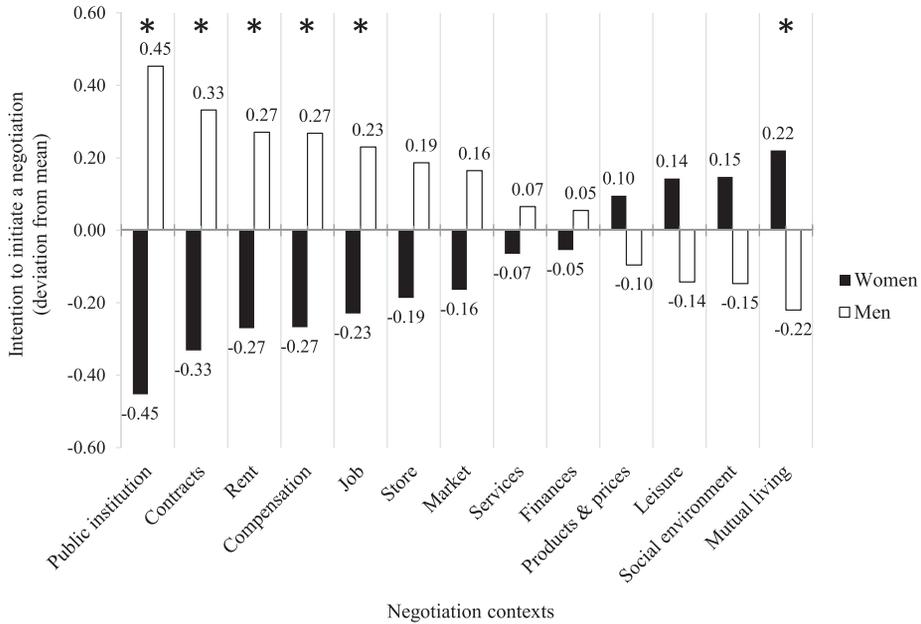


Figure 2. Study 2: Men’s and women’s initiation intentions in different negotiation contexts. Note. The overall mean for each negotiation topic is shown as zero. Bars show the average difference of men and women from the overall mean. Positive values indicate higher initiation intentions compared to the average, and negative values indicate lower initiation intentions compared to the average. *The gender difference (comparing men vs. women) was significant ($p < .05$) using the Bonferroni-Holm correction procedure.

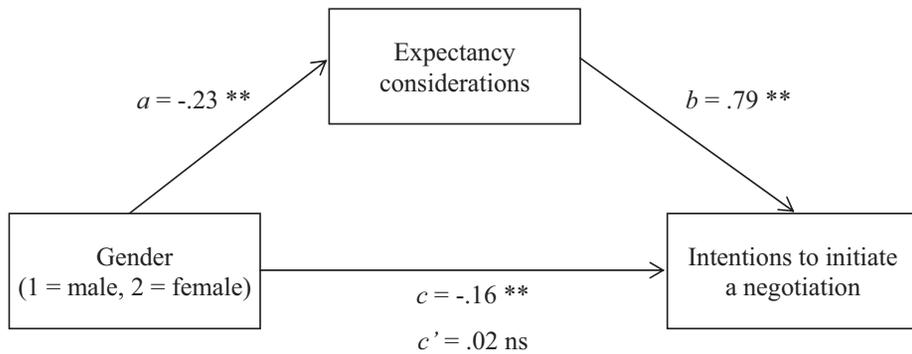


Figure 3. Study 2: Mediation effect of gender on intentions to initiate a negotiation via expectancy considerations (across all contexts). Note. Standardized regression coefficients (β) are shown. ** $p < .01$, ns = not significant.

effects and to account for contextual variations, we also tested our mediation hypotheses split by context, that is, in masculine versus feminine contexts (whether a context was masculine or feminine was determined based on the first set of analyses). We used multiple regressions to test the proposed mediation effects and bootstrapping to test the significance of the indirect effects.

We statistically controlled for age in both sets of analyses as previous research has identified changes in female and male traits over time (Diekmann & Eagly, 2000; Twenge, 1997).

Results

Means, standard deviations, correlations, and reliabilities of all variables included in the study are shown in Table 1.

Test of Main Effects and Interaction Effects

First, we conducted a mixed ANOVA with gender as between-subjects factor and the 13 negotiation contexts as within-subjects factor. (Age as control variable did not significantly influence the intention to negotiate: $F(1, 355) = 3.36, p = .069, \eta^2_{\text{part}} = .01$.) The results showed a significant main effect for gender, $F(1, 355) = 7.48, p = .007, \eta^2_{\text{part}} = .02$, with men having slightly but significantly higher intentions to initiate negotiations ($M = 5.24, SD = .06$) than women ($M = 5.03, SD = .04$). This result supports *Hypothesis 1*, which predicted that men would have a higher propensity to negotiate in general (across a variety of contexts) compared to women. This result also replicates existing research on gender differences in initiating negotiations (Kugler et al., 2018).

The results also revealed a significant main effect of negotiation context on the intention to negotiate, $F(9.56, 3394.3) = 50.44, p < .001, \eta^2_{\text{part}} = .12$, showing that the negotiation contexts differed significantly with respect to how much they evoke negotiation intentions (*Hypothesis 2*, Figure 1). For the contexts *finances*, *mutual living*, and *leisure*, participants indicated high intentions to initiate a negotiation, while the context *store* was associated with the lowest intention to initiate a negotiation.

The interaction effect of gender and negotiation context on intention to negotiate was also significant, $F(9.56, 3394.3) = 7.64, p < .001, \eta^2_{\text{part}} = .02$, supporting *Hypothesis 3*. Men exhibited higher intentions to initiate negotiations compared to women in the contexts *public institution*, *contract*, *compensation*, *job*, and *rent*. Women showed higher initiation intentions compared to men in the context *mutual living* (Table 2 and Figure 2).

Test of Mediation Effects

A second set of analyses addressed the mediating role of cognitive-motivational considerations in the gender—initiating negotiations relationship, following the procedure for mediation analyses suggested by Hayes (2015). Given that we hypothesized two mediators, we conducted two separate mediation analyses, one for *expectancy considerations* and one for *instrumentality considerations*, each with gender (1 = male, 2 = female) as the independent variable and *initiation intentions* as the dependent variable.

Expectancy considerations significantly mediated the relationship between gender and intention to initiate negotiations across all contexts because the 95% confidence interval for the indirect effect did not include zero (95% CI [-0.334; -0.112]). The total effect of gender ($\beta = -.14, p = .007$) on intention to initiate negotiations was reduced and left non-significant ($\beta = .02, p = .608$) when taking expectancy considerations into account, which were significantly related to initiation intentions ($\beta = .81, p < .001$ without gender included; $\beta = .81, p < .001$ with gender included). Moreover, gender also predicted expectancy considerations with women having lower expectancy considerations than men ($\beta = -.20, p < .001$). (Age as control variable was significantly positively related to intentions to negotiate ($\beta = .12, p = .030$) and to expectancy considerations ($\beta = .24, p < .001$.) These results confirm *Hypothesis 4a* by showing that gender differences in initiation intentions were mediated by expectancy considerations (Figure 3).

Instrumentality considerations did not mediate the relationship between gender and initiation intentions across all contexts because the 95% confidence interval for the indirect effect included zero (95% CI [-0.146; 0.065]; total effect of gender on initiation intentions: $\beta = -.14, p = .007$; effect of gender on initiation intentions with mediator included: $\beta = -.12, p = .002$; effect of instrumentality considerations on initiation intentions: $\beta = .71, p < .001$ without gender included; $\beta = .70, p < .001$ with gender included; effect of gender on instrumentality considerations: $\beta = -.04, p = .474$). (Age as control

variable was significantly positively related to intentions to negotiate ($\beta = .12, p = .030$) but not to instrumentality considerations ($\beta = .10, p = .071$). Thus, *Hypothesis 4b* was not supported.

To delve deeper into the proposed mediation effects and to account for contextual variations, we tested our mediation hypotheses split by context—that is, in masculine versus feminine contexts. Contexts were categorized as masculine when men had indicated to have higher intentions to initiate negotiations than women; contexts were categorized as feminine when women had indicated to have higher intentions to initiate negotiations than men (see “Test of Main Effects and Interaction Effects” section). We identified five masculine contexts (*public institution, contracts, rent, compensation, and job*) and one feminine context (*mutual living*).

To conduct the mediation analysis separately for masculine and feminine contexts, we combined participants' answers regarding their initiation intentions (dependent variable, Cronbach's alpha $\alpha = .65$) as well as expectancy (Cronbach's alpha $\alpha = .79$) and instrumentality (Cronbach's alpha $\alpha = .62$) considerations (mediator variables) across the five masculine contexts using the mean. Given that we had uncovered only one feminine context in our study, no answers had to be combined. Please note that the remaining seven *neutral* contexts were not included in the split analyses.

The results of the four separate mediation analyses (i.e., expectancy as a mediator in masculine contexts, expectancy as a mediator in the feminine context, instrumentality as a mediator in masculine contexts, and instrumentality as a mediator in the feminine context) are summarized in Table 3. (Age as control variable was significantly negatively related to negotiation intentions ($\beta = -.13, p = .013$) but not to expectancy considerations ($\beta = -.03, p = .567$) and instrumentality considerations ($\beta = -.09, p = .081$) in the feminine context. In masculine contexts, age as control variable was significantly positively related to negotiation intentions ($\beta = .19, p < .001$), to expectancy considerations ($\beta = .30, p < .001$), and to instrumentality considerations ($\beta = .16, p = .002$.) Expectancy considerations mediated the effect of gender on initiation intentions in masculine contexts, but not in the feminine context. Instrumentality considerations mediated the effect of gender on initiation intentions in both the feminine context and the masculine contexts.

Discussion of Study 2

We found that men had higher intentions to initiate negotiations compared to women, and that negotiation contexts differed regarding their affordance to negotiate. Exploring the different contexts in more detail, we found that men had higher intentions to initiate negotiations than women in the contexts *public institution, contract, compensation, job, and rent*. Women had higher intentions to initiate negotiations than men in the context *mutual living*.

In addition, we found that gender differences were mediated by expectancy considerations across all contexts. Contrary to our assumption, instrumentality considerations did not mediate the relationship between gender and intention to initiate negotiations across all negotiation contexts. Further analyses showed that women's higher intentions to initiate negotiations in a feminine context could be explained by their assumption that negotiating in this context is beneficial (instrumental), but not by their expectancy considerations. In the feminine context specified herein, women might perceive fewer costs such as social backlash and more benefits of initiating negotiations. By contrast, men might see negotiations in this feminine context as less useful and thus exhibit a lower intention to initiate negotiations compared to women. However, perceived negotiation ability (i.e., expectancy considerations) did not explain women's higher and men's lower intentions to initiate negotiations in a feminine context. In feminine contexts, gender does not seem to be related to one's expectancy considerations. Although the effect of gender on initiation intentions in the feminine context was positive (pointing to higher expectancy considerations for women in feminine contexts), it was not statistically significant, indicating that both men and women felt equally able to negotiate in this feminine context.

Table 3
 Study 2: Effect of Gender on Initiation Intentions, Mediated by Expectancy Considerations/Instrumentality Considerations in Masculine/Feminine Contexts

Mediator/context	a	b	c	c'	Indirect effect CI	Interpretation
Expectancy/masculine contexts	$\beta = -.26; p < .001$	$\beta = .82; p < .001$	$\beta = -.26; p < .001$	$\beta = -.05; p = .140$	[-0.66; -0.30]	Mediation
Expectancy/feminine context	$\beta = .10; p = .060$	$\beta = .64; p < .001$	$\beta = .15; p = .005$	$\beta = .09; p = .036$	[-0.003; 0.36]	No mediation
Instrumentality/masculine contexts	$\beta = -.12; p = .019$	$\beta = .69; p < .001$	$\beta = -.26; p < .001$	$\beta = -.18; p < .001$	[-0.34; -0.03]	Mediation
Instrumentality/feminine context	$\beta = .18; p < .001$	$\beta = .72; p < .001$	$\beta = .15; p = .005$	$\beta = .02; p = .518$	[0.14; 0.58]	Mediation

Note. a = path from independent variable to mediator; b = path from mediator to dependent variable when independent variable is also included in the model; c = path from independent variable to dependent variable; c' = path from independent variable to dependent variable when mediator is also included in the model. Number of bootstrap samples = 5,000.

Further analyses also showed that women's lower intentions to initiate negotiations in masculine contexts could be explained by their lower confidence in their ability to handle a negotiation in these contexts (low expectancy) as well as by their anticipation that negotiating in these contexts was less beneficial (low instrumentality), perhaps because women anticipated backlash. Men, in contrast, felt able to handle negotiations in masculine contexts (high expectancy) and also might have seen negotiations in masculine contexts as an opportunity to increase their profit (high instrumentality).

General Discussion

The study of gender in negotiations has a long tradition. However, recent research has highlighted the need to extend the focus of negotiation research to include the initiation of negotiation (Reif & Brodbeck, 2014), to study negotiations in more gender-neutral contexts (Kolb, 2012), to delve deeper into situational and contextual moderators of gender effects in negotiations (Bowles & Kray, 2013), and to uncover mechanisms underlying situational effects on gender differences (Bear & Babcock, 2012). We contributed to this research agenda by focusing on the initiation of negotiation and were able to replicate the gender effect in initiating negotiations across diverse contexts (favoring men). These contexts not only included purchasing, compensation, career, or legal issues, as primarily focused on in previous research (Kugler et al., 2018; Stuhlmacher & Walters, 1999), but covered a wider range of different situations including leisure, the social environment, and mutual living. Our research suggests that the gender effect in initiating negotiations can be generalized across a diverse set of contexts.

We also showed that different negotiation contexts have different "gendered natures" that might be the result of social constructions, belief systems, or cultural patterns (Kolb & McGinn, 2009), resulting in different affordances for men versus women. Negotiation contexts shaped gender differences in the following respects: Women had higher intentions to initiate negotiations than men in the context *mutual living*. Such negotiations might result in favorable outcomes for women (e.g., fair division of chores), however, not necessarily in monetary terms. Compared to women, men appeared to be more prone to interpret negotiation contexts associated with (long-term) economic benefits, such as more favorable conditions in contracts, lower rents, or higher compensation, as opportunities to ask for more. Given these findings, studying gender in negotiations in the 21st century not only requires broadening the range of issues examined but also "reconsider[ing] what constitutes an agreement or a good outcome" (Kolb, 2013, p. 258). Following Kolb's (2012) claim to use more gender-neutral contexts in studying negotiations, we identified *markets, stores, private social settings, products and their prices, services, finances, and leisure issues* as "gender-neutral" contexts.

We ranked the 13 diverse negotiation contexts identified according to their negotiation affordance. The contexts *finances, mutual living, and leisure* were associated with a high intention to initiate a negotiation (across gender), while *store* and *public institution* were the contexts with the lowest intentions to initiate a negotiation (across gender), by a significant margin. Babcock et al. (2006) identified similar negotiation topics such as household chores, prices, or relationship issues. However, Babcock et al. (2006) reported the number of days that had passed since a negotiation in each category had been initiated. That is, what they reported is more a measure of frequency of occurrence ("How often do these negotiations occur?"). In this respect, we expand upon previous research by quantifying the level of affordance regarding negotiation initiations for a diverse set of negotiation contexts ("Does a specific context stimulate negotiations?"). Future research could build on these affordance values and establish a scaling system for the "difficulty" of diverse negotiation contexts (ranging from high to low) in general and separately for men and women. Quantifying negotiation contexts' affordance values would also support longitudinal and cross-cultural research on gender differences in negotiations by enabling standardized comparisons across time and culture.

Study 2 offered a possible explanation for gender differences in the initiation of negotiation, which adds to existing research about mediators of gender differences in the propensity to negotiate, such as

nervousness (Bowles et al., 2007) or recognition of opportunities (Babcock et al., 2006). Our results enrich negotiation theory by offering a more differentiated view on further, theoretically derived explanatory mechanisms for gender differences that vary by negotiation context—that is, expectancy and instrumentality considerations. Study 2 showed that expectancy considerations mediated the effect of gender on initiation intentions across all negotiation contexts. Men and women differed in their expectancy considerations, that is, their level of confidence in potential negotiation situations (with men having higher expectancy considerations), which in turn influenced their intention to (or not to) negotiate. However, when broken down into masculine and feminine contexts (not including neutral contexts), expectancy only mediated gender effects in masculine contexts but not in feminine contexts. Men seem to hold higher expectancy considerations than women in masculine contexts, but at the same time, not significantly lower expectancy considerations than women in feminine contexts. With respect to expectancy considerations, a feminine context might not be as gender role-inconsistent for men as a masculine context is for women.

Contrary to our assumption, instrumentality considerations did not mediate the effect of gender on initiation intentions across the 13 negotiation contexts. Men and women did not differ in their instrumentality considerations, that is, their perceived benefit of initiating a negotiation. This result suggests that men and women equally recognize the instrumental value of negotiations across a broad set of negotiation contexts. However, when broken down into masculine and feminine contexts (not considering neutral contexts), the mediation effect appeared in the expected direction. Men turned out to hold lower instrumentality considerations than women in the feminine negotiation context, whereas women had lower instrumentality considerations than men in masculine negotiation contexts. A possible explanation for this finding is that men might not perceive as much benefit from negotiating about relational issues (such as matters of mutual living) as women because they might focus primarily on economic outcomes (Curhan, Neale, Ross, & Rosencranz-Engelmann, 2008). Another explanation is that men (analogously to women in masculine contexts) fear backlash when negotiating in feminine contexts, as they would violate their masculine gender role (Moss-Racusin, Phelan, & Rudman, 2010). Thus, with respect to instrumentality considerations, a feminine context might be as gender role-inconsistent for men as a masculine context for women.

The findings of our mediation analyses expand upon previous research by showing that gender role (in)consistency (Kugler et al., 2018) or asymmetrical contextual ambiguity (Miles & LaSalle, 2008) turns out to be more complex when delving more deeply into men's and women's cognitive considerations in feminine and masculine negotiation contexts. Asymmetrical contextual ambiguity might be applicable for instrumentality considerations in that men have higher instrumentality considerations in masculine contexts and women have higher instrumentality considerations in feminine contexts. However, asymmetrical contextual ambiguity might not hold for expectancy considerations: Men have higher expectancy considerations in masculine contexts; however, in feminine contexts, gender is not significantly related to expectancy considerations.

Practical Implications

Our results are practically relevant, as expectancy considerations might be changeable by improving one's negotiation ability. Gathering relevant information prior to the negotiation could help women improve their arguments and thus their negotiating position. Moreover, women can be trained to deal with stereotypes and structural ambiguity and encouraged to test the boundaries of negotiability by attempting to negotiate in various feminine, neutral, and masculine contexts of daily life. The explicit activation of stereotypes can even lead to stereotype reactance, that is, the tendency to behave inconsistently with stereotypes and therefore not only increase women's negotiation performance (Kray, Galinsky, & Thompson, 2002; Kray et al., 2001), but also their propensity to initiate negotiations. As such, gender effects can be further attenuated by systematic negotiation trainings or preparation prior to

negotiating. However, changing instrumentality considerations might be more difficult. As long as women (and men) have to fear (or think they have to fear) social backlash when negotiating in masculine (feminine) contexts, they will probably refrain from negotiations in these contexts, and refraining might bring about financial and career-related (relational) costs. Focusing likewise on men's and women's costs and benefits in masculine and feminine contexts might prevent one from putting the burden to change on one gender.

Limitations and Future Research

Future research should further qualitatively explore the negotiation contexts identified in this study by conducting interviews in order to broaden our understanding of structural differences between the contexts. An in-depth structural analysis of negotiation contexts could help to identify further *moderators* of gender differences which could be tested, for example, by using different situational framings in experimental studies (Small et al., 2007).

Moreover, future research should identify further cognitive *mediating* mechanisms that can account for gender differences in initiating negotiations, such as estimations of valence (Reif & Brodbeck, 2014). Men and women may also place value on different things. Whereas men value pay, money, benefits, power, authority, and status at the workplace significantly more than women, topics such as friends, relationships, recognition, respect, communication, fairness, equity, teams, collaboration, family, and home are more valued by women than by men (Peterson, 2004). As traditional negotiations involve the distribution of economic resources (compensation and benefits, purchasing/selling, career-related issues, Kolb, 2012; Kray & Thompson, 2005; Stuhlmacher & Walters, 1999), men might be more likely to enter such negotiations given that they more strongly value the potential (economic) outcomes compared to women.

Another important aspect that has to be considered while interpreting the results is the influence of the negotiation partner's gender on the propensity to negotiate in specific contexts as a potentially confounding variable. For example, the finding that women are more likely than men to negotiate in the context of *mutual living* could be confounded with the fact that women may be more likely to negotiate with other women in this situation, that is, with female roommates. Future research should therefore systematically investigate the influence of the partner's gender not only on negotiation performance (Kray & Thompson, 2005), but specifically on the initiation phase of negotiations.

Future research should also account for the limitations of our study by using reliable multi-item measurements for expectancy and instrumentality considerations (some values for Cronbach's alpha were found to be below the value of $\alpha = .70$), including heterogeneous samples, measuring mediator and dependent variables more distinctly and at different points of time, and experimentally observing real initiation behavior in different negotiation contexts. The gendered nature of negotiation contexts as identified in our work could be further validated by using external, explicit ratings of the contexts' masculinity versus femininity. Moreover, further typically masculine, feminine, and neutral negotiation contexts could be identified to test the generalizability of our findings and to examine whether one gender is systematically (dis)advantaged compared to the other in particular social or economic negotiation contexts.

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