Gender Differences in Negotiation: A Status Characteristics Theory View

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Abstract

In this conceptual article, the basis for status as an antecedent of gender differences in negotiated outcomes is developed. Because of diffuse status characteristics, men are perceived to be of higher status. Two key implications of higher status include greater perceived competence and increased legitimacy of actions that reinforce status. Specifically within a negotiation context, these implications legitimize the ''right'' of higher status parties to offer proposed agreements and to have them viewed as coming from a competent source. Based on our model, we propose that men are better able than women to balance the simultaneous needs to compete and to cooperate in negotiation.

The general conclusion of the literature regarding negotiation and gender is that there is a pattern that men gain greater negotiation outcomes (referring specifically to objective outcomes) than women. A meta-analysis by Stuhlmacher and Walters (1999) reaches this conclusion, primarily focusing on outcomes gained by performance in dividing value. The pattern has also been shown (Miles & LaSalle, 2009) in creating value as well. Although some of these differences can seem small, Babcock and Laschever (2003) note that, with the stakes involved in negotiation, small differences may not be trivial. For example, they point out that differences in negotiated entry-level salaries can be compounded throughout 20 or more years of employment because salary increases are often based on a percentage of current salary.

Some researchers (e.g., Kray & Thompson, 2005; Watson, 1994a, 1994b) have suggested that gender differences in status may be one factor that causes this difference in negotiated outcomes. However, previous research has not provided a detailed explanation of how status operates to bring about this difference. The purpose of this article is to provide that explanation. A model appears in Figure 1; propositions are introduced regarding each linkage in that model.
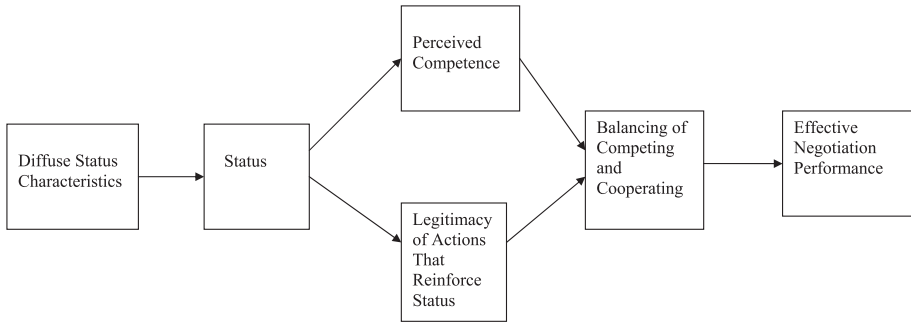
Figure 1. Relationship of status to effective negotiation performance.

Although recent negotiation literature has begun to deal with the conceptual logic for gender-based status differences in negotiation, it has not focused on negotiated outcomes as the criterion variable. Bowles, Babcock, and Lai (2007) hypothesized and found that gender-based status differences can influence propensity to initiate compensation negotiations. The current article is intended to go beyond propensity to negotiate and focus on objective negotiation performance. Its intent is also to provide a broader perspective regarding status in negotiation and to develop a model of the key mechanisms by which status impacts objective negotiation performance.

Our primary theoretical view is that of status characteristics theory (Berger, Fisek, Norman, & Zelditch, 1977). We will begin with an overview of status characteristics theory.

Gender and Status Characteristics Theory

Status characteristics is one element of expectations states theory (Berger, Wagner, & Zelditch, 1985), a broader view which has to do with expectations individuals have for how others will perform. Although much of expectations states research has focused on groups rather than dyads (as is typically the focus in negotiation research), it has also been used to explain gender differences in dyads as well (e.g., Carli, 1989, 1990). (For our purposes, we will refer to dyads; however, we acknowledge that the theoretical basis applies to larger groups.)

According to expectation states theory, dyad members form expectations of how their dyad counterparts will behave. Individuals will behave differently and respond to counterparts differently based on the expectations individuals have for their counterparts. Focusing specifically on status characteristics theory (Berger, Cohen, & Zelditch, 1966, 1972; Berger et al., 1977; Wagner & Berger, 1997), status is one basis for differentiation of expectations. While some amount of status may be derived from information unique to the individual, another significant portion of status is inferred from what Berger and colleagues describe as *diffuse status characteristics*. Diffuse characteristics are general characteristics such as education, gender, occupation, or physical attractiveness that are

broadly associated with status and perceived competence in society. Generally speaking, people have higher status in society if they are male rather than female, physically attractive rather than physically unattractive, and more educated rather than less educated (Carli & Eagly, 1999; Ridgeway & Diekema, 1992). Diffuse status characteristics initiate the first link in the model shown in Figure 1.

P1: Diffuse status characteristics lead to perceived status.

According to status characteristics theory, higher status individuals are perceived to be more competent than lower status individuals. However, it is unlikely that higher status persons actually are ''across the board'' more competent; the theory makes the point that they are *perceived* to be more competent. Therefore, the performance expectations of dyad counterparts are colored by these perceptions. The expectation in a task-oriented discussion is that discussion contributions of more competent individuals are more valuable than those of less competent individuals. Therefore, higher status individuals are more influential because their inputs are viewed as coming from more competent sources (Ridgeway & Diekema, 1992). Specific to gender and to negotiation, men are higher status than women, and this perception influences the perceived competence—and, therefore, the perceived quality of proposed ideas or proposed agreements—in negotiation.

P2: Greater status causes greater perceived competence.

Two key propositions from status characteristics theory are particularly relevant to negotiation. First, for diffuse characteristics to operate, they must be activated (or made salient). This can occur: (a) by composing a dyad that differs on the diffuse characteristic (e.g., a male-female negotiating dyad), or (b) when the characteristic is defined as relevant to the task (Wagner & Berger, 1997). Negotiation is often viewed as a male domain, and men are often viewed as more effective negotiators (Kray & Thompson, 2005; Walters, Stuhlmacher, & Meyer, 1998). Therefore—though perhaps wrongly—gender is perceived as relevant to the task of negotiation. This conclusion suggests that status differences between men and women will be activated in same-gender dyads because of activation mechanism (b) as well as in mixed-gender dyads because of both activation mechanisms.

Second, the *burden of proof principle* exists (Wagner & Berger, 1997). If a diffuse characteristic is not specifically disassociated from the task, both members of the dyad will behave as if it is relevant to performance. Accordingly, the presumed competence differential emanating from diffuse status characteristics will always ''be applied to every new task and every new situation as a matter of normal interaction unless their inapplicability is demonstrated or justified. The burden is always on showing the nonrelevance of status information'' (Wagner & Berger, 1997, p. 5). Specifically in negotiation, this burden of proof principle implies that, regardless of the particular negotiation context, men will be assumed to be more competent negotiators than women unless the particular context indicates that women are likely to be equally effective negotiators.

Stuhlmacher and Walters (1999) have suggested that the often documented (e.g., Kray & Thompson, 2005) male advantage in negotiation may not exist in traditionally feminine-stereotyped tasks such as negotiating for child care or negotiating with grade school teachers. This suggestion is consistent with the burden of proof principle. It may

be sufficiently clear that, in feminine-stereotyped roles, women are sufficiently justified as not being less competent than men. This suggestion is also consistent with a recent study that has examined negotiation in a feminine-stereotyped role. Based on the above observation by Stuhlmacher and Walters, Miles and LaSalle (2008) constructed a negotiation situation in which a parent was negotiating for child care. Their results found that negotiator gender was not a significant predictor of negotiation performance.

However, the burden of proof principle is a ''guilty until proven innocent'' concept, and men would be assumed to be more competent in gender-neutral roles (e.g., interviewing for a job that is not gender-stereotyped). This assumption occurs because there is no specific evidence that the higher status of men is *inapplicable* to those roles.

The social psychology literature (e.g., Magee & Galinsky, 2008) as well as the negotiation literature (e.g., Watson, 1994b) has recognized that status and power are often correlated, yet are conceptually separate constructs. We move next to a comparison of these two constructs.

Negotiator Status Compared to Negotiator Power

Magee and Galinsky (2008) differentiate status and power as related but distinct constructs. While power relates to control over valuable resources, status is defined by the respect an individual garners from others. Within this article, we view status as being a socially constructed element, and thus, we will adopt the definition of social status put forth by Ridgeway and Walker (1995) as well as by Magee and Galinsky (2008): the extent to which an individual or group is respected or admired by others. Power and status can be reciprocally related, but each element can also be present or absent with or without the other. In negotiation, an individual with high status but little power may be at a disadvantage since the value of that individual's resources carry greater weight than the extent to which that individual is respected. Alternatively, one with high status but low power may be criticized as undeserving of his or her position (Magee & Galinsky, 2008). Status and power are both dynamic, such that one may gain or lose respect of others just as one may gain or lose control over valuable resources. Most often, though, as one's power increases, one's status increases, and *vice versa* (Magee & Galinsky, 2008). Consequently, many studies use power and status interchangeably (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1977).

The relationship between power and negotiation has received recent attention in the literature (e.g., Kim, Pinkley, & Fragale, 2005; Magee, Galinsky, & Gruenfeld, 2007; Wolfe & McGinn, 2005). When an imbalance of power exists, the relatively higher power party is likely to have greater negotiated outcomes compared to the lower power party. Wolfe and McGinn (2005) empirically found that parties that perceived relatively equal power with each other tended to achieve greater integrativeness than parties who perceived a large power differential. Furthermore, Magee et al. (2007) found that higher power individuals tend to initiate negotiation, are twice as likely to make the first offer, and ultimately experience more satisfactory outcomes than the lower power party. Individuals with more power tend to exhibit more proactive behaviors in competitive situations (Magee et al., 2007). This is in sharp contrast to studies that indicate that

"low-status individuals have less to lose by initiating competitive interaction, suggesting that the powerful will be more conservative in their action" (Magee et al., 2007, p. 202).

Kim et al. (2005) proposed an integrative model that decoupled power into four components: potential power, perceived power, power tactics, and realized power. The authors propose that the use of either conciliatory or hostile negotiation tactics is based on relative power between the parties. When relative power is equal, conciliatory tactics are often used; however, when one party is perceived as possessing greater power, the more powerful party may rely on pressuring the other party through demands, threats, or intimidation. Thus, we believe that individuals with higher power and higher status may be more aggressive than and less concerned for the outcomes of the lower power and lower status party.

When looking at gender and power in negotiation, Ely and Padavic (2007) found that organizational norms and practices often signaled acceptance of gender roles. Thus, power for men and women is dictated by an organization's acceptance or rejection of traditional gender roles and an adherence to masculine or feminine behaviors. Organizations that frown upon men negotiating parental leave are likely to embrace more traditional gender roles; thus, men in that organization are likely to hold greater power as long as they adhere to traditional masculine roles. Olekalns and Kulik (in press) argue that alternatives are a source of power in negotiations, and the greater the number of alternatives one has, the greater his or her power. However, the authors state that women are less likely to recognize or generate alternatives in negotiations; thus, women are likely to exercise less power than men in negotiations.

Kim et al.'s (2005) propositions regarding power and the use of pressure or aggressive tactics suggest that a broader discussion of competing versus cooperating is warranted. That discussion is developed in the following section.

Competing and Cooperating in Negotiation

As shown in Figure 1, we propose that the influence status has on negotiation performance operates through its ability to influence the effective balancing of competing and cooperating. Before introducing P3 from Figure 1—legitimacy of actions that reinforce status—we will discuss that balance.

At a basic level, negotiation requires a degree of cooperation and a degree of competition (Lax & Sebenius, 1986; Pruitt & Rubin, 1986). To reach a joint agreement, some level of cooperation is necessary; however, to promote individual interests, competition is also necessary. Lax and Sebenius (1986) describe the simultaneous demands of cooperation and competition as the *negotiator's dilemma*. These two demands cannot be separated within the negotiation process because they are *inextricably entwined*. As they cannot be separated and compartmentalized, negotiation is an ongoing dilemma of when to utilize the tactics and strategies of cooperation and of competition.

Negotiation has been characterized (Riley, 2001, p. 20) as a "dance" of these cooperative and competitive elements. If cooperation and competition are indeed inextricably entwined, then the negotiator who can "dance" fluidly between these two negotiation elements should have one key advantage. Recent research (Adair & Brett, 2005) has

supported a four-stage sequence of stages in negotiation (relational positioning, identifying the problem, generating solutions, and reaching agreement). Adair and Brett assert that—for optimal effectiveness—each stage requires a different balance of competing and cooperating. Their findings support our thesis that the balance of competing and cooperating should be fluid throughout a negotiation conversation.

Negotiation calls upon negotiators to be effective in both dividing value and creating value (Lax & Sebenius, 1986; Walton & McKersie, 1965). In dividing value, effective negotiators seek to acquire a larger share of the available resources; in creating value, effective negotiators seek to structure a deal that increases the amount of resources to be divided.

Pruitt and colleagues (Pruitt, 1983; Pruitt & Kim, 2004; Pruitt & Rubin, 1986) point out that, in the negotiator's dilemma of when to engage in competition and when to engage in cooperation, cooperative behavior can be dysfunctional if negotiators do not have a high resistance to yielding. Absent a high resistance to yielding, cooperative negotiators are more likely to make concessions without doing the due diligence to discover the possible configurations of an agreement that would increase created value. Lax and Sebenius (1986) suggest that the inextricable bonding of cooperation and competition produces a functional tension that encourages this due diligence. Without such a tension, resistance to yielding is lower.

A Status Perspective on Competing and Cooperating

Meeker and Weitzel-O'Neill (1977) speak directly to status and the "dance" between competing and cooperating. Although they did not deal specifically with negotiation per se, their analysis is quite applicable. In any task-oriented group, there is a mix of both competition and cooperation. Individuals making valuable contributions to the task are helping the group accomplish its task while simultaneously enhancing their own prestige. Therefore, it is possible that the intent of a particular contribution may be more for one purpose or the other—competition or cooperation. Specific to negotiation, a counterpart may suggest a possible agreement that is presented as beneficial for cooperation when the proposal is truly being presented to gain a competitive benefit. Therefore, when deciding how much credence to give proposed ideas, information, or agreements, negotiators consider whether the proposal is made based on cooperative or competitive motives.

Status consistency theory (Sampson, 1963, 1969) states that status external to the group (e.g., diffuse status) establishes legitimacy of status within the group. It is appropriate for individuals who have external status to engage in behaviors that build status; however, it is inappropriate for individuals with low external status to engage in the same behaviors. Magee and Galinsky (2008) state that "individuals' status characteristics may bear some relationship to their ability to make valuable contributions to a group's tasks" (p. 360). Alternatively, those characteristics may only be loosely related to the individuals' contribution ability; previous task performance along with professional and personal demographic characteristics aid the group in conferring status to the individuals, which determines their place in the social hierarchy. Furthermore, once this hierarchy has been established, it is very difficult and often not desirable for even low

power, low status individuals to disrupt the status quo. The self-reinforcing nature of power and status in hierarchies illustrates why those with high power and status create opportunities to obtain even greater power and status; however, the lower-ranking individuals will invest in the hierarchy's continuation to satisfy their need for order and stability despite their lower power and status (Magee & Galinsky, 2008).

Therefore, in negotiation, it is legitimately acceptable for men to make proposals which simultaneously are competitive (i.e., benefit self) and cooperative (i.e., benefit counterpart). Even if purely intended for the purpose of cooperation, the proposal—if accepted—will enhance the status of the negotiator. Behaviors which reinforce the higher status are legitimate. By contrast, the exact same proposal, coming from a woman is less acceptable because lower status individuals do not have the ''legitimate right'' to seek higher status. Ridgeway and Berger (1986, p. 606) claim that this difference is not simply an expectation of what will occur; it is *normative*—''which makes behavior incongruent with those positions [of lower status] an event that is not merely unexpected but also one that should not happen.''

Empirical evidence from group contexts generally supports status consistency theory (Ridgeway, 1982; Wahrman & Pugh, 1974). Lower status individuals cannot achieve the same amount of influence as higher status individuals can achieve. Assertive, confident behavior in attempts to influence others is accepted from men as being legitimate; assertive, confident influence attempts from women have questionable legitimacy and are less accepted (Carli & Eagly, 1999).

Therefore, a different standard applies in making negotiation proposals. For women, there must be a belief by the counterpart either that she is solely cooperatively motivated or that enhancing her status is legitimate. For men, there is no requirement of sole motivation because enhancing status is legitimate (Meeker & Weitzel-O'Neill, 1977).

In summary, gender operates as a diffuse status characteristic in negotiation. Behaviors, ideas, and proposals that involve both benefit to self and benefit to counterpart are more readily accepted from men than that are from women. Negotiation involves the inextricably entwined elements of cooperation and competition. Higher status legitimizes the ''right'' to engage in actions and make proposals that simultaneously cooperate and compete; lower status creates a perception that such actions are illegitimate.

P3: Higher status gives a negotiator legitimacy of actions that reinforce status.

The Dance

A key element of this article's logical framework is the premise that men are able to dance more fluidly than women between cooperating and competing. However, to this point, we have only developed the argument that men will be more effective at competing. Some researchers (e.g., Olekalns & Kulik, in press; Rubin & Brown, 1975) have suggested that men are more able than women to shift between competitive and cooperative strategies. Why would men be more apt than women to shift strategically between cooperation and competition in a negotiation setting? We propose that this difference is not an ability; it is a constraint dictated by status. Because of higher status,

men enjoy a broader array of acceptable possible behaviors than women. Behaviors that compete and cooperate are included in that array.

This proposition is parallel to the findings of Magee et al. (2007) that higher power individuals tend to exhibit more proactive behaviors in competitive situations. Men often have higher power than women (Ely & Padavic, 2007) and, therefore, have fewer constraints in moving between cooperative and competitive behaviors. The proposition is also consistent with Kim et al.'s (2005) proposition that, in situations of power differentials (compared to equal power), the stronger party is more likely than the weaker party to apply aggressive tactics.

Although this effect has received little attention in the negotiation literature, it has been specifically examined in the leadership literature. In reviewing the empirical evidence regarding leadership, Rudman and Glick (1999) conclude that an asymmetry exists in that the range of acceptable and even counter-stereotypical behaviors is broader for men than for women. With leadership being a stereotypically male domain, men enjoy higher status than do women in that domain (Carli & Eagly, 1999), thus imparting a privilege to men for increased latitude in how one operates within the domain.

Additionally, Eagly, Makhijani, and Klonsky (1992) suggest that the implied motives of men as leaders when stepping outside the male gender expectations are different than the implied motives of women for stepping outside the female gender expectations. Women acting in the expected male agentic manner (independent, masterful, and assertive) raises the issue of questionable motives (in the case of leadership, enhancing one's personal power and status), whereas men acting in the expected female communal manner (emotional, passive, and relationship-oriented) is less likely to raise the issue of questionable motives.

We propose a parallel asymmetrical effect in negotiation. As with leadership, negotiation is viewed as a stereotypically male domain (Walters et al., 1998), and we propose that the status imparted by this "ownership" provides men increased latitude in how they operate within the domain. Negotiation behavior inconsistent with gender expectations will be perceived more negatively for women than for men because negotiation is a male domain. In the domain of negotiation, agentic behavior is consistent with competing and a resistance to yielding, whereas communal behavior is consistent with cooperating. Olekalns and Kulik (in press) posit that women who violate gender roles in negotiation by acting more aggressively and competitively can erode their ability to influence the other party in the negotiation; this reduced ability often results in poorer economic and social outcomes for the woman. Men behaving cooperatively are less likely to be viewed as having questionable motives than women behaving competitively.

This logic is consistent with results of a recent set of studies (Miles & LaSalle, 2009). Their studies found that male–male dyads create more value in mixed motive negotiations than female–female dyads. The authors suggest that this finding may be counterintuitive to some people because the stereotype of women negotiators is that they are more cooperative than men and because cooperation is important to creating value. Although both of those assumptions are correct (Walters et al., 1998), the second one is too simplistic (cf., Fry, Firestone, & Williams, 1983). Yes, cooperation is critical to creating value, but only in the context of a balance between cooperation and competition. A strategic balance is more possible for men to enact because higher status provides more latitude of action.

One key element of the Miles and LaSalle's (2009) set of studies is that they found the pattern of male–male dyads creating greater value across contrasting situations. In one situation, a zoo representative is attempting to hire an actor for a set of promotional advertisements. In the second situation, they used the ''Vacation Plans'' case (Thompson & DeHarpport, 2008). In this situation, two friends are negotiating the plans of a vacation together (e.g., destination, mode of transportation, timing of the trip). An observer might suggest that the results in the first situation were influenced by power rather than by diffuse status characteristics. However, there are no power differences in the vacation planning situation, and the same pattern of male–male dyads creating more value than female–female dyads occurred. These findings are consistent with the claim that status can predict negotiation performance independent of power differences (Magee & Galinsky, 2008; Magee et al., 2007).

Our logic is also consistent with recent empirical evidence regarding a *backlash effect* in negotiation. This effect has previously been developed in the leadership literature. Leadership is viewed as an arena where men are more effective than women. However, if women—recognizing this male advantage—engage in a behavior pattern more consistent with a male stereotype (e.g., assertive, confident, dominant), they are viewed negatively for having violated the female stereotype. They are viewed as less likeable (Rudman & Glick, 2001). Reduced likeability results in more resistance from others (Carli, 2001). Kulik and Olekalns (2009) propose that, in an effort to establish likeability in salary negotiations, women will have a tendency to accept lesser economic outcomes, offer more concessions, and accept the first salary offer presented by the employer. One recent set of studies (Amanatullah & Morris, 2010) has examined the backlash effect in negotiation. Results show that, in conditions of self-advocacy, women negotiators anticipate that assertiveness will result in backlash, leading them to use fewer competing tactics and—in turn—to obtain fewer negotiated outcomes. These findings are consistent with our tenet that women have barriers to apply a balance of competitive and cooperative behaviors in negotiation that men do not encounter.

In summary, men should be able to shift more effectively than women between the inextricably entwined negotiation elements of competing and cooperating. Higher status imparts more latitude of action. Agentic behavior from men is expected while communal behavior is not particularly viewed as having suspect motives. For women, communal behavior is expected, but agentic behavior is viewed as a possible attempt to enhance status. Men have the unfettered option of shifting between cooperation and competition as they see fit while maintaining a high resistance to yielding. Women incur normative constraints in competition and in maintaining a high resistance to yielding. These constraints reduce their options of shifting effectively between cooperation and competition. Greater perceived competence results in less resistance when a focal negotiator engages in competitive behavior. This lesser resistance also provides more degrees of freedom in application of competitive and cooperative actions.

P4: Perceived competence provides greater ability to balance competition and cooperation in negotiation.

P5: Legitimacy of actions that reinforce status provides greater ability to balance competition and cooperation in negotiation.

P6: Optimum balancing of competition and cooperation leads to more effective negotiation performance.

Implications and Directions for Future Research

Consistent with recent research on gender and negotiation (e.g., Bowles, Babcock, & McGinn, 2005; Kray, Thompson, & Galinsky, 2001), we propose that gender differences in negotiated outcomes are caused by contextual variables. These contextual variables include perceptions of status, which provide greater perceived competence and greater legitimacy to status-reinforcing actions. In the dance of simultaneously competing and cooperating in negotiation, men—as the higher status group—have more success and less resistance when they apply a broader gamut of tactics and strategies.

This article highlights four directions for future research. First, status of negotiators may be helpful in re-examining findings from previous research. For example, Ayres and Siegelman's (1995) findings that women and black automobile buyers receive less attractive price offers from automobile dealers than white men may be partially caused by the status accorded in society based on race and gender. According to Ayres and Siegelman, the root cause of this offer behavior may not be possible to explain with a single theory. Although the study authors did not raise the possibility of status, we posit that status is quite likely to be a key part of the explanation.

Second, as implied in the previous paragraph, differential status of negotiators can be attributed to a number of diffuse status characteristics that go beyond gender. Some of these may include race, education, nationality, age, and profession. Figure 1 is intentionally not specific to gender. It is applicable to any status differences that emanate from diffuse status characteristics. Examining possible effects of other diffuse status characteristics on negotiation may be a fruitful avenue of future research. A key element of this endeavor will be to determine if the diffuse status characteristic implies competence only or implies both competence and legitimacy of enhancing one's status.

One key difference between gender and other status characteristics is that of society's commonly held stereotype of the effective negotiator. While men are viewed as more effective negotiators than women, such may not be the case for other diffuse status characteristics. For example, it is not anticipated that society holds a clearly defined expectation regarding which group may be the better negotiator regarding age or education. The implications of no predetermined expectation would need to be addressed in that line of research. Also, while gender is dichotomous, other diffuse status characteristics have more than two categories (e.g., profession) or are continuous (e.g., age), adding more degrees of complexity.

The relational demography literature has discussed the likelihood that any specific trait will have relatively greater influence on the perceptions of others. Relational demography suggests that individuals are more attracted to relationships with persons who possess demographic characteristics similar to those of the individual (Tsui, Egan,

& O'Reilly, 1992). Greater similarity on observable demographic characteristics will lead to greater liking, trust, and cooperation (Swann, Polzer, Seyle, & Ko, 2004). Observable variables (e.g., gender or age) are often categorized (Riordan, 2000) as readily-apparent or surface-level attributes as compared to underlying, deep-level attributes (knowledge, skills, ability, values and beliefs). Harrison and colleagues (Harrison, Price, & Bell, 1998; Harrison, Price, Gavin, & Florey, 2002) have emphasized that the effects of diversity emanating from surface-level characteristics are moderated by time and diminish as parties have opportunities to interact and discover deep-level characteristics. At that point, the deep-level characteristics emerge as more relevant to interactions. We anticipate that this pattern is likely to exist in negotiation—gender as an indication of status will become less relevant over time and other, less observable characteristics, such as education, skills, and abilities will dictate status.

Third, because negotiation is an interaction between multiple (often two) parties, reciprocal causality needs to be tested empirically. Our definition of status—the extent to which an individual or group is respected or admired by others—does not specifically address whether focal negotiators act because of the status they believe they have or whether counterparts, recognizing the status of focal negotiators, change their own behavior. For example, will a low-status focal negotiator be less assertive because of status or will the counterpart, recognizing the focal negotiator's status, be more assertive? Although the definition does not explicitly address this question, we believe that status effects manifest through both mechanisms. This position is consistent with status characteristics theory. As the theory relates to negotiation, focal negotiators act because of their diffuse status characteristics and their concerns that a backlash effect could be triggered if they violate the expected role. Likewise, counterparts act (a) on expectations that the focal negotiators will behave consistent with their status, and (b) through resistance if focal negotiators do not behave consistent with their status.

Both of these sources of counterpart actions are parallel to the gender and leadership literature. A third source is specific to the negotiation literature. As negotiation has an element of competition, counterparts can see weakness as an opportunity. Therefore, concern over a potential backlash puts women negotiators at a disadvantage and counterparts may attempt to exploit that disadvantage.

Fourth, future research may find it informative to look at specific elements of the negotiation process. For example, offer and counter-offer behaviors are critical to outcomes. When negotiators can approximate the bargaining zone, they gain an advantage by being proactive and making the first offer (Galinsky & Mussweiler, 2001). One key advantage is that of anchoring. Interesting research questions include the issue of whether higher status negotiators—because of perceived competence and latitude of action—are more successful in anchoring than lower status individuals. Will higher status individuals make fewer concessions between their opening offer and the final agreement, illustrating a greater resistance to yielding? Will higher status individuals make more ambitious opening offers? This possibility seems quite plausible because ambitious offers are indicative of competing, which is more acceptable from higher status individuals.

A more general framework for looking at specific elements in the negotiation process is to incorporate Adair and Brett's (2005) model of negotiation as a sequence of four steps,

with each step necessitating a different balance of competing and cooperating. Such an investigation could be particularly interesting in light of findings by Moskowitz, Suh, and Desauliniers (1994). Using the constructs of agentic and communal behaviors and an event-sampling methodology, these authors found that the frequency of agentic behaviors was not different by gender. However, there was a difference in the frequency of communal behavior. Women were more communal than men; women were more communal with other women than with men, and women were more communal in same-gender dyads than were men in same-gender dyads. Although this study did not address negotiation specifically, it does have implications for the four-stage model of negotiation. If there are often gender differences in negotiated outcomes (Stuhlmacher & Walters, 1999), yet no gender differences in frequency of agentic behavior, does this mean that women are less strategic about the appropriate balance of competing and cooperating in some of the individual four stages (e.g., that peak competitive behavior comes at a stage that renders it sub-optimal at influencing outcomes)? Alternatively, it may mean that their agentic behavior is less effective because, based on status differences, their agentic behavior meets with greater resistance. If women engage in more communal behavior than men, how is that communal behavior distributed over the four stages? Adair and Brett note that there have been negotiation sequence models proposed that have two and three stages (e.g., Putnam & Jones, 1982); in the extreme, it may be that each gender is more prone toward models with different stages or different numbers of stages.

In summary, a more fine-grained analysis of when competing and cooperating behaviors occur in the negotiation process and whether that pattern varies by gender would be a helpful next step. The Adair and Brett (2005) model of four stages seems helpful as the framework for such an investigation.

Conclusion

Status characteristics theory is a useful conceptual basis for explaining some of the gender differences in negotiated outcomes. Status provides greater perceived competence and more latitude of action, and the combination of those two factors provides the ability to move less impeded between the tactics and strategies of competition and cooperation that are needed for effective negotiation. In addition to being an issue concerning gender, status can emanate from other sources, and negotiation research may benefit from considering other sources of status as well.

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