

Normatively Speaking: Do Cultural Norms Influence Negotiation, Conflict Management, and Communication?

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Abstract

This paper elaborates a research agenda on cultural norms in communication, negotiation, and conflict management. Our agenda is organized around five questions on negotiation and conflict management, for example: How do culture and norms relate to an individual's propensity to negotiate? Or How do tightness-looseness norms explain negotiators' reactions to norm conformity and norm violation? And three questions on communication, for example: What individual and cultural factors lead negotiators to use miscommunication as an opportunity rather than an obstacle? Or Are there cultural differences in whether and what forms of schmoozing are normative? The present paper is based on three pillars: (a) ideas provided by the think tank participants (full list on website), (b) state of the art research and (c) the authors' perspectives. Our goal is to inspire young, as well as, established researchers to pursue these research streams and increase our understanding about the influence of cultural norms.

In 2017, a top French executive confronted a Middle Eastern business partner who delayed (intentionally) for two days a meeting to negotiate a multimillion contract to set up telecommunications in the partner's country. From the French executive's own cultural perspective delaying, the meeting was disrespectful, but instead of becoming frustrated and calling off the meeting entirely, this French executive sought a cultural explanation for the counterpart's behavior, recognizing that negotiating behaviors are consistent with cultural norms. Cultural norms help us understand, interpret, and tolerate others behavior, that is, foreign, annoying, and could be interpreted as disrespectful.

Norms are social patterns that govern behavior (Morris, Hong, Chiu, & Liu, 2015). A norm is a psychological structure that is shared among members of a group. Norms predispose people to exhibit regular patterns of ideation, emotion, and action (Kashima, 2015), and limit the range of typical or appropriate group behavior and opinions (Dannals & Miller, 2017). Norms are *descriptive* when they refer to what most people do, but *injunctive* when they refer to what most people approve or disapprove (Cialdini, Kallgren, & Reno, 1991). Norms contribute to cultural understanding, as they explain cultural differences above and beyond personal and cultural values (Heine, Lehman, Peng, & Greenholtz, 2002;

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House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman, & Gupta, 2004; Oyserman, Coon, & Kemmelmeier, 2002; Taras, Steel, & Kirkman, 2010; Zou & Leung, 2015). For example, in a study of personal values and descriptive norms with Polish and American participants, descriptive norms for collectivism were higher for Polish participants than for Americans although there were no differences between cultural groups in personal values for collectivism (Zou et al., 2010). Furthermore, descriptive cultural norms, for example, power plays are appropriate, are well established as a unique and meaningful predictor of injunctive culturally normative negotiator behavior, for example, the use of distributive tactics in Japan and Russia (Adair et al., 2004; Brett & Okumura, 1998).

The proposed research agenda identifies five areas to extend what we already know about culture and norms in the realm of negotiation and conflict management. First, we explore norms within honor and face cultures relevant to initiating a negotiation, using negotiation strategy, and distributing resources in order to explain cultural differences in these negotiation behaviors. Second, we explore these same three factors for conflict management. Using the lens of tightness-looseness norms, our third topic examines if and why cultural norm conformity can explain concession patterns in negotiation and when norm violation can actually be beneficial in negotiation. We then turn to communication processes and explore two more future research areas. First, we examine individual differences and cultural norms to explain how and when miscommunication might lead to positive versus negative consequences in negotiation and conflict management. Then, we look at informal relationship building, schmoozing, as an unexplored cultural norm.

Negotiation and Conflict Management

Our research agenda on norms is organized around two main topics that have implications for theory development and practice. Our first topic proposes research on the nature of cultural differences in norms relevant to the practice of negotiation and conflict management across cultures. Our second topic proposes research on the influence of norm conformity and norm violation on negotiation and conflict management. We use two recent perspectives in cultural theory to organize our review of recent research. First, the cultural prototypes: dignity, face, and honor (Leung & Cohen, 2011) and second, the cultural differences in tightness-looseness (Gelfand et al., 2011). Both perspectives provide insights into how cultural norms influence negotiation and conflict management.

Cultural Norms and Negotiation

Negotiation is a social process by which two or more interdependent parties make decisions, allocate resources, or resolve disputes (Brett, 2014). Conflict is a sharp disagreement or opposition which includes the perceived divergence of interests, or the belief that the parties' aspirations cannot be achieved simultaneously (Pruitt & Rubin, 1986). A dispute begins when one part makes a claim and the other party rejects that claim (Felsteiner, Abel, & Sarat, 1980/1981), it is an open manifestation of conflict. Dealmaking negotiations differ from disputes in at least three aspects (a) goals are not the same (maximizing gains vs. minimizing losses) (b) in disputes emotions are more likely to arise, and (c) alternatives are linked in disputes. We present two research questions about dealmaking negotiation, and two more on conflict management and dispute resolution in the following sections.

Research by Brett and colleagues found cross-cultural variation in descriptive norms for negotiation behavior, for example, Japanese, Chinese, and Russian negotiators reporting it is more appropriate to use distributive strategies (e.g., threats, referring to one's BATNA) than United States, French, or Brazilian negotiators (Brett, et al., 1998). Further research confirmed these culture-based negotiation norms are reflected in actual negotiation behavior such that culturally normative negotiation behavior (e.g., power tactics in Japan vs. direct information exchange in the United States) predicts integrative negotiation outcomes in same-culture negotiation (Adair, Okumura, & Brett, 2001; Adair et al., 2004; Brett &

Okumura, 1998). This early research focused on cultural values (e.g., individualism-collectivism, egalitarianism-hierarchy) and communication norms (i.e., low-high context) to predict culturally normative negotiation strategy, that is, injunctive norms.

Recent research addresses the influence of a different set of cultural norms on the normative use of negotiation strategy. The relatively recent conceptualization of cultural prototypes of dignity, face, and honor (Leung & Cohen, 2011) elucidates culture-based descriptive norms that Aslani, Ramirez-Marin, Semnani-Azad, Brett, and Tinsley (2013) apply to negotiation behavior. *Dignity* is the self-worth conviction that at birth an individual's value in society is equal to that of every other individual (Ayers, 1984). *Face* is the self-worth understanding that an individual's value in society is determined by others' assessments of whether the individual is fulfilling social role obligations (Heine, 2001; Kim & Cohen, 2010). *Honor* is the self-worth belief that an individual's value in society is based on the individual's own assessment of their reputation, that is, what others think of them (Nisbett & Cohen, 1996). In situations of uncertainty or threat, U.S. (dignity) negotiators used more integrative and less distributive negotiation strategies compared to Qatari (honor) or Chinese (face) negotiators (Aslani et al., 2016).

In negotiation dignity, cultural norms are associated with the use of questions and answers (Q&A, a creating value strategy), while face and honor cultural norms are associated with substantiation and offers (S&O, a claiming value strategy; Yao, Ramirez-Marin, Brett, Aslani, & Semnani-Azad, 2017). Consistent with the cultural norms of dignity, face, and honor, a recent paper shows that Q&A strategy helps U.S. negotiators reach creative agreements, but the same strategy is not functionally equivalent in Egypt. This article identifies a strategy based on moral integrity (honor gain) to be positively associated with creative agreements in Egypt (Gelfand et al., 2015). Taken together, the evidence of these papers raises an important question: How do negotiators in face and honor cultures create value?

RQ1: Is there a norm for creating value negotiation strategy in face and honor cultures?

This question needs to be explored in future studies to identify face and honor culture injunctive norms in negotiation as well as cultural norms that might serve as moderators. For example, a recent paper reports a boundary condition (social rewards) for the effect of honor norms on negotiation behavior. Such that when high honor culture participants recall a situation in which they are socially acknowledged, they reduce their competitive aspirations compared to low honor culture participants (Ramirez-Marin & Shafa, 2018).

While there is plenty of room to expand taxonomies of culturally normative negotiation behaviors as well as our understanding of factors predicting behavioral adjustment in cross-cultural negotiation, our research panel focused on extending this line of research specifically to address cultural norms surrounding (a) the decision whether or not to start a negotiation and (b) the impact of cultural norms on negotiators' outcome perceptions.

Individuals differ in how likely they are to begin a negotiation (Reif & Brodbeck, 2014). Propensity to negotiate is the likelihood of initiating a negotiation (Magee, Galinsky, & Gruenfeld, 2007; Marks & Harold, 2011). Turning to the current literature, we are aware of several individual differences that predict propensity to negotiate, but our understanding of normative influences is quite limited. Individual differences that lead to a greater propensity to negotiate include feeling more (vs. less) powerful (Magee et al., 2007) as do a combination of high perceived ability to initiate the negotiation, as well as beliefs about own negotiation skill (Reif & Brodbeck, 2017). Another study found that propensity to negotiate is related to attachment orientation at the intra- and interpersonal level, such that individuals who were high on attachment avoidance, one's trust in others' willingness and ability to offer support, had a greater propensity to negotiate with an anxious and avoidant counterpart (Bear & Segel-Karpas, 2015).

Beyond individual differences, we ask what norms might tell us about propensity to negotiate. Literature on gender role norms (e.g., expectations that females will behave communally and cooperatively whereas males will behave competitively and assertively), is the starting point for a body of literature

exploring why females are less likely than males to initiate a negotiation (Magee et al., 2007; Small, Gelbard, Babcock, & Gettman, 2007). We only found one study that reported cultural influences on the decision to negotiate. It found an interaction between national culture and risk propensity on the likelihood of initiating a negotiation, such that U.S. participants with a high-risk propensity (i.e., risk-taking norms) had a higher overall propensity to negotiate than Brazilian participants with a high-risk propensity. An important limitation of this study is that it is based on self-report and not on actual initiation of negotiation behavior (Volkema & Fleck, 2012). Given this current literature, it is not clear when individuals from different cultures perceive negotiation as appropriate. More research is needed to understand whether cultural norms facilitate and/or inhibit people from initiating a negotiation.

RQ2: How do culture and norms relate to propensity to negotiate?

There also may be cultural differences in norms for the distribution of resources in negotiation. An early paper provides empirical evidence that in the United States, there is a descriptive norm for self-interest (and problem-solving), whereas in Hong Kong (China), there is a descriptive norm for equality in outcomes (Tinsley & Pillutla, 1998). Indirect evidence from cross-cultural research in social dilemmas suggests the existence of descriptive norms regarding the distribution of resources between the parties, such that participants from dignity and face cultures (Germany, Hong Kong and U.S.) expected the powerful parties to claim less resources compared to honor cultures (Israel; Kopelman, Hardin, Myers, & Tost, 2016). Therefore, negotiators in different cultures might have different expectations about the distribution of the outcomes. For example, in egalitarian cultures, descriptive cultural norms may indicate a 50–50% split (equal distribution of the outcomes), whereas in hierarchical cultures, descriptive cultural norms might indicate 80–20% or 70–30% distribution is appropriate. On the other hand, injunctive cultural norms about how outcomes *should be* distributed (e.g., equally vs. skewed) may also guide negotiators' expectations and goals. Future research should focus on understanding whether a norm for equality has an influence on the distribution of outcomes between negotiators as well as proposing boundary conditions for this effect.

RQ3: How do cultural norms relate to preferences for the distribution of resources in negotiation?

Cultural Norms and Conflict Management

While our discussion thus far has focused on transactional negotiation, we raise similar research questions for the context of conflict management. Recall that conflict management refers to the perceived divergence of interests, or the belief that parties' aspirations cannot be achieved simultaneously (Pruitt & Rubin, 1986). The presence of strong emotions and low expectations for agreement in a conflict setting suggests distinct injunctive and descriptive norms for engaging in conflict management across cultures. Research on direct and indirect confrontation provides indirect evidence of the existence of injunctive cultural norms to initiate conflict management (Brett, Behfar, & Sanchez-Burks, 2014). In cultures where direct confrontation is appropriate, people will be more likely to initiate the conflict management process. Beyond culture-based injunctive norms, a multilevel assessment of disputants' conflict orientation and the situation, as proposed by the Culture-based Situational Conflict Model (Ting-Toomey & Oetzel, 2013), can uncover distinct descriptive norms, for example, the finding that Chinese managers take a competitive approach with their PNG employees, who prefer passive resistance and conflict avoidance (Tommy & Oetzel, 2018).

Moreover, documented cultural differences on the likelihood of managers participating as third parties suggest the presence of injunctive cultural norms that dictate when managers should intervene as third parties. For example, North American managers actively engage in conflict management (as third parties) when they perceive (a) that the conflict is not resolvable by the parties or (b) that the managers are themselves incapable of reaching a settlement (Elangovan, 1998). A recent review uses the cultural

prototype model of dignity, face, and honor to outline a research agenda on conflict management behaviors, emotions, and third party intervention (Brett, 2018). In addition, recent research highlights greater differences in intergroup conflict when comparing along geographic north–south than east–west axes, highlighting an alternative comparative lens when examining conflict management norms (Van de Vliert & Conway, 2018).

The literature provides a normative perspective of conflict management as part of the interest, rights, and power model of dispute resolution (Ury, Brett, & Goldberg, 1988). Three seminal papers report empirical evidence of cultural differences on conflict management behaviors (Tinsley, 1998, 2001; Tinsley & Brett, 2001). Differences in conflict resolution suggest the existence of cultural descriptive norms for the use of status and power remarks in Japan, the reference to regulations in Germany, and the use of interests in the United States (Tinsley, 1998, 2001). Another paper suggests descriptive norms in the United States about discussing interests and synthetizing multiple issues, and descriptive norms in Hong Kong China about the concern for collective interests and concern for authority (Tinsley & Brett, 2001). In honor cultures, conflict management is more constructive compared to dignity cultures when members of honor cultures are not insulted (Harinck, Shafa, Ellemers, & Beersma, 2013). People differ across cultures in the extent to which they use interests, rights, and power-based arguments in conflict management.

RQ4: Are there cultural norms for (a) conflict management initiation, and (b) conflict management behaviors?

Norm Conformity and Violation within and Across Cultures

There is empirical evidence of cultural differences in the extent to which people across cultures adhere to social norms. Cultural tightness-looseness refers to the extent to which a culture has strong social norms, and monitoring and sanctioning of deviance from those norms. Tight cultures have strong norms and a low tolerance for deviant behavior loose cultures have weak social norms and a high tolerance of deviant behavior (Gelfand et al., 2011). Therefore, we can expect cultural differences in the extent to which people conform to social norms and the extent to which they tolerate (or sanction) deviant behavior based on injunctive tightness-looseness norms.

Although norms are socially shared standards, recent research suggests that violating a norm can generate positive as well as negative outcomes. Research conducted in the United States and the Netherlands suggests that after a norm violation, negative emotions increase, but so do perceptions of the power of the transgressor (Stamkou, van Kleef, Homan, & Galinsky, 2016). Moreover, U.S. research shows that in an organizational context, norm violations committed by low-ranking individuals are tolerated if this behavior is the result of imitating a high-status norm-violating role model (Bauman, Tost, & Ong, 2016). One study reports cultural variation in responses to incivility such that Korean participants experienced more discomfort compared to British participants when both imagined interacting with someone displaying uncivil behaviors. The authors attributed this effect to norm differences in the prevalence of such behaviors in Korean and the U.K. (Moon, Weick, & Uskul, 2018). A recent study conducted in 19 countries provides insight on the perception of norm violators across cultures: cultural tightness-looseness. Results show that in individualistic cultures, norm violators are perceived as more powerful and evoke less moral outrage, whereas in collectivistic cultures, they are perceived as less powerful and evoke more moral outrage; moreover members of tight cultures are more likely to prefer norm followers as leaders (Stamkou et al., 2018). In other words, tightness norms may predict conformity to descriptive negotiation and conflict management norms within culture. Given tightness norms, we might expect norm conformity to be functional and norm violation to be dysfunctional. There may also be cultural variation in the means by which negotiation and conflict management norms are shared and promoted. But what do tightness-looseness norms predict for cross-cultural negotiation?

Since norms for use of negotiation strategy vary with culture, intercultural negotiations make it more likely for negotiation strategies to mismatch. Research on mental models in negotiation shows that mismatches are particularly strong in intercultural negotiations (Liu, Friedman, Barry, Gelfand, & Zhang, 2012). Other studies that found a strategic mismatch between intercultural negotiators also found that intercultural negotiators created less value compared to intracultural negotiators when using the same research protocol (Adair & Brett, 2005; Adler & Graham, 1989; Lügger, Geiger, Neun, & Backhaus, 2015). Cultural tightness-looseness may help explain which negotiators adapt when there is a strategic mismatch. In tight cultures, expectations for strategic behavior are likely to be more uniform; therefore, individuals can accurately anticipate the counterpart's strategic behavior. On the other hand, in loose cultures, expectations for strategic behavior are likely to be less uniform; therefore, individuals may have difficulty anticipating the counterpart's strategic behavior. Thus, negotiators from loose cultures are likely than negotiators from tight cultures to be more flexible in their choice of strategic behavior and more likely to adapt to the counterpart when strategies mismatch. The role of tightness-looseness in intercultural negotiation has not been studied so far. Additionally, new studies are needed to understand when and why negotiators perceive strategic mismatch as a norm violation and whether they use it to their advantage.

RQ5: How do tightness-looseness norms explain negotiators' reactions to norm conformity and norm violation?

Communication Processes

Communication serves both an instrumental and a relational function. However, when negotiators are not "on the same page," that is, when they cannot accurately convey their tangible needs and relationship intentions, outcomes and relationships can be harmed. Clear, unimpeded communication is challenging in cross-cultural negotiation, where negotiators typically have distinct negotiation schemas (Adair, Taylor, & Tinsley, 2009; Liu et al., 2012) and scripts (Adair et al., 2001; Brett & Okumura, 1998; Liu, 2018), that can result in misunderstanding. Communication quality differences in inter- and intracultural negotiation suggest that accurately communicating needs and intentions is more challenging in intercultural negotiations (Liu, Chua, & Stahl, 2010; Liu, Zhu, & Cionea, 2016). In part, the challenge occurs, as in the opening example, because norms governing politeness and other aspects of communication put negotiators from different cultures at risk of violating their counterparts' expectations about social interactions. In the following sections, we first address the topic of surface-level miscommunication and ask whether it always has negative consequences. We then turn to one specific example of relationship building that may leave cross-cultural negotiators vulnerable to miscommunication—schmoozing—and explore the role of rapport in effective communication for cross-cultural negotiators. In the following sections, we identify three research questions that we hope will further our understanding of the relationship between cultural norms and communication in negotiation.

Miscommunication: Better Deals and Stronger Relationships?

Even defining miscommunication in negotiation is challenging. It could mean simple misunderstandings that arise because of different accents, the (mis)use of idiomatic speech that constitute surface-level errors and do not represent fundamental differences in negotiators' goals and interests. But miscommunication can also refer to deeper misunderstandings, such as a negotiator misreading a highly competitive counterpart's strategic friendliness as genuine. In general, we define surface-level miscommunication as a simple lack of understanding leading to confusion and requests to clarify. We define deep-level miscommunication as misinterpretation of a counterpart's motives and intention inciting feelings of suspicion and doubt. Although miscommunication due to accents or idiomatic speech is often readily identified

and so tolerated or acted upon to promote deeper understanding, it is possible that even such basic differences may cause deeper tensions that sabotage trust in negotiation. For example, the French negotiator in the opening example may have interpreted the three day wait as a strategic power gambit. We know that display of negative emotion and power moves convey social information that can create feelings of hostility toward one's counterpart and decrease chances of reaching a deal (Friedman et al., 2004; Kopelman, Rosette, & Thompson, 2006). At our research incubator, we discussed how to measure miscommunication and got curious about factors that influence the interpretation and impact of surface-level miscommunication.

Simple misunderstandings can create moments of humor that generate positive affect and reduce social distance. Humor that is consistent with politeness norms, for example, jokes about one's own cultural stereotypes or incongruity, can defuse tensions in cross-cultural negotiations (Brett, 2014; Brown & Levinson, 1987; Scollon & Scollon, 1995; Vuorela, 2005). Negotiators with high cultural intelligence, an individual's ability to function and manage effectively in cross-cultural interactions (Earley & Ang, 2003), may see the humor in their own mispronunciations or struggle to use idiomatic speech and may display tolerance and patience in trying to understand the other negotiator, by nature of their response may parlay the miscommunication into relationship building (Brislin, Worthley, & MacNab, 2006). Yet, in the same set of circumstances, negotiators without awareness of cultural differences or with low cultural intelligence may feel embarrassment and frustration as they struggle to understand each other, especially if they are laughed at (Brislin et al., 2006). Thus, our first research question asks what factors lead cross-cultural negotiators to react to surface-level miscommunication with humor versus shame.

RQ6: What individual and cultural characteristics predispose negotiators to see humor rather than harm in surface level miscommunication; to respond with positive rather than negative emotions?

Negative Consequences of Miscommunication

Shame and embarrassment are negative emotions that may result from miscommunication and can create tensions that start a downward spiral of increasing social distance (Brett, 2018). From a relationship perspective, miscommunication has the potential to weaken a relationship simply because it stalls the progress of the negotiation or cause deeper relationship rifts because it generates negative attributions that call into question the other person's intentions. Ren and Grey have identified relationship rupture as particularly pernicious in cross-cultural negotiation, as communication norms may dictate very different repair strategies (Ren & Gray, 2009). Thus, a breakdown in the negotiation and the relationship are potential negative consequences of miscommunication in cross-cultural negotiation.

More proximal are negotiators' strategic responses to a miscommunication. Within face and honor cultures in particular negotiators may feel they are losing status and respect as the communication process unravels. As noted above, negative emotions may take the form of shame for negotiators from both honor and face cultures, but the subsequent normative behavior diverges, with honor negotiators responding with defensive strategies and face negotiators responding with concessions. Both normative responses however lead to lost opportunity for joint gains (Aslani et al., 2016).

Positive Consequences of Miscommunication

One potential benefit of miscommunication in negotiation due to cultural differences may be that it creates opportunities to redirect the negotiation process. More generally, disruptions to the negotiation process, such as offering new information or suggesting a different perspective, mark turning points that create opportunities to redirect the negotiation process (Druckman & Olekalns, 2013). Recommended strategies to redirect following disruption include short pauses that may subtly change the dynamic (Kolb, 2004) or process interventions that strategically redirect to a more constructive process (Brett, Shapiro, & Lytle, 1998). Efforts to rectify miscommunication create a naturally occurring process

intervention. For example, an attempt to resolve a miscommunication may involve revisiting or reframing agreements without seeming to retreat from previous positions and without the accompanying loss of face. Another example is using humor, as Brett shared the example of a French colleague who did not understand her American counterpart's LOE term; once "Lack of Efficiency" was explained, the French colleague introduced another acronym, LOU that the team came to adopt as lack of understanding for cross-cultural communication challenges (Brett, 2014, p. 137).

As the above example illustrates, a related positive consequence of miscommunication and its surrounding ambiguity is that they also encourage clarifying conversation. As negotiators strive to better understand each other, they expand their information search and information sharing strategies in ways that support the identification of mutually beneficial solutions (Liu et al., 2010). Thus, by generating ambiguity, miscommunication may indirectly lead negotiators to adopt a problem-solving approach. Negotiators require flexibility to take advantage of the opportunities created by miscommunication. Such flexibility can result in, a looser communication pattern, one that does not lock negotiators into defensive and competitive exchanges (see Brett, Shapiro, and Lytle (1998), Putnam and Jones (1982) for a similar idea in negotiations generally).

Beyond flexibility, negotiators may successfully weather a miscommunication mishap by engaging in prosocial sensemaking. Developed to explain how individuals and groups can improve following trauma, research on prosocial and resourceful sensemaking shows that displays of empathy and compassion following interpersonal transgressions foster forgiveness (Finkel, Rusbult, Kumashiro, & Hannon, 2002; Grant, Dutton, & Rosso, 2008; Wright & Manning, 2004). Importantly, prosocial sensemaking moves individuals away from self-conscious emotions such as shame—which increase social distance (Maitlis, Vogus, & Lawrence, 2013) and toward feelings of gratitude that may foster empathy and perspective taking. Heaphy (2017), for example, shows that mediators encourage perspective taking by disputants when they develop empathic accounts of a dispute. Likewise, listening, meaningful participation, and respect are similar prosocial sensemaking strategies for effective cross-cultural negotiation and teamwork (Brett, 2014).

We know that in loose Western cultures, perspective taking, which is a form of sensemaking that involves actively considering a counterpart's alternatives, goals, etc., increases negotiators' capacity to identify hidden agreements and helps them to avoid impasses (Galinsky, Maddux, Gilin, & White, 2008; Trotschel, Huffmeier, Loschelder, Schwartz, & Gollwitzer, 2011). In cross-cultural negotiations, the ability to engage in cultural perspective taking, or considering a counterpart's culturally normative negotiation strategies, benefits the perspective-taker (Lee, Adair, & Seo, 2013). Drawing on the sensemaking literature suggests that, in the longer term, perspective taking and prosocial sensemaking may increase empathy and lead to the development of a shared identity and a shared schema for the negotiation (see McGinn and Keros (2003) for a discussion of shared schema) and strengthen the negotiating relationship.

RQ7: What individual and cultural factors lead negotiators to use miscommunication as an opportunity rather than an obstacle; to move the negotiation forward on an integrative rather than distributive path?

Schmoozing: The Relationship Fast-Track?

The quality of negotiators' relationships is critical to how negotiations develop and to their outcomes and may vary systematically with culture. In particular, in some cultures, strong positive relationships between negotiators—for example, characterized by rapport, a sense of harmony, and mutual understanding (Bronstein, Nelson, Livnat, & Ben-Ari, 2012)—are central to negotiators' willingness to engage in problem-solving negotiation. Curhan and colleagues propose that rapport not only supports problem-solving behaviors but also spills over to affect the outcomes of subsequent negotiations (Curhan, Elfenbein, & Kilduff, 2009). Rapport has been shown to improve both social and economic outcomes in

face-to-face and online negotiations, with positive relational effects lasting up to one week postnegotiation (Drolet & Morris, 2000; Morris, Nadler, Kurtzberg, & Thompson, 2002; Nadler, 2004). The rapport problem-solving link may be evident in a variety of relational cultures (Earley, 1997), but rapport may not be a necessary predecessor in all cultures, with some Westerners reporting that if the deal works, the relationship will follow (Brett, 2014). A question for researchers is what cultural factors determine whether rapport is necessary to develop the relational bonds that underpin cooperation and problem-solving in negotiations.

Rapport can be expressed nonverbally, and observers can accurately predict the outcome of a negotiation based on the extent to which negotiators' posture and gestures are similar, as well as the extent to which their facial expressions convey compatibility (Drolet & Morris, 2000). Negotiators' sense that they have rapport with their partners is also influenced by verbal cues such as expressions of positivity and coordination, and displays of mutual attention (Bronstein et al., 2012). Yet these cues take time to develop and rely on negotiators to monitor social communications while they are also trying to negotiate the issues. Given the importance of rapport in negotiations, we might then ask whether there is an alternative path to building relationships than verbal and nonverbal communication once the negotiation has begun. This question is especially relevant in light of findings that the "thin slices" of behavior in the first 5 minutes of negotiation, including conversational engagement and vocal mirroring, are predictive of final outcomes (Curhan & Pentland, 2007).

"Schmoozing," the use of small talk as a social lubricant to build rapport, has emerged as a front runner for the rapid development of relationships at the start of a negotiation. Mislin, Campagna, and Bottom (2011) identify small talk as critical to the willingness to take risks in contracting negotiations. Strategies such as flattering the other negotiator, sharing personal information, or identifying similarities, and mimicking the other person's verbal and nonverbal behaviors have all been suggested as means of establishing rapport early in a negotiation (Tickle-Degnen & Rosenthal, 1987). Analyses of interpersonal communication, for example, show that mimicry (linguistic matching) leads to more positive evaluations of speakers (Romero, Swaab, Uzzi, & Galinsky, 2015) and perceived social closeness (Giles & Coupland, 1991). One investigation of schmoozing showed that individuals who shared personal information over the telephone before an email negotiation obtained better outcomes than those who did not (Morris et al., 2002). Yet not all schmoozing is created equal. Shaughnessy, Mislin, and Hentschel (2015), for example, demonstrate that male negotiators gain greater social (likeability, cooperativeness) and economic (personal gains) benefits from small talk than female negotiators. There is also evidence that the effectiveness of some forms of schmoozing is culturally bounded. For example, referencing nonwork roles as a means of building rapport in job interviews results in negative evaluations of United States but not Indian job candidates in a within culture context (Uhlmann, Heaphy, Ashford, Zhu, & Sanchez-Burks, 2013).

Uhlmann et al. (2013) finding hints that cultural norms influence the extent to which schmoozing builds relationships, at least in the form of small talk. In some cultures, bringing the right gift to a negotiation counterpart may be the most effective path to rapport. Schmoozing may mean talking about the weather in some cultures, talking about one's shared personal networks in others. We suggest that there may be cultural differences in whether—and what kind of—schmoozing is perceived as authentic or inauthentic. That is to say, negotiators are likely to make judgments about whether a counterpart is offering information in a genuine attempt to establish common ground and build rapport or whether they are offering information strategically to gain advantage. We know relatively little about how schmoozing is perceived within cultures and what information same-culture negotiators use to determine whether schmoozing is authentic or instrumental. We know even less about cultural differences in the function and assessment of schmoozing on negotiation process and outcomes. The possibility that there are cultural differences in how schmoozing is perceived raises interesting questions to be pursued in future research. Given the prevailing wisdom that this strategy is a shortcut to

developing rapport in negotiations, we urge researchers to start mapping cultural differences in schmoozing.

RQ8: Are there cultural differences in whether and what forms of schmoozing are normative? In cross-cultural negotiations, can culturally non-normative schmoozing cause offence?

Final Thoughts

In sum, our research agenda proposes questions to address current gaps in the literature of cultural norms in negotiation, conflict management, and communication. In negotiation, our questions address the influence on cultural norms on strategy, propensity to negotiate, and preferences for outcome distribution. In conflict management, our question addresses cultural norms about when and how to manage conflict. With these questions, our goal is to better understand cultural dynamics and help negotiators reach integrative agreements and manage conflict effectively across cultures. We include a question about cultural norms regarding the adherence to norms (norm conformity and norm violation) and how it applies to negotiation. In communication, our questions address cultural norms on humor, the possible advantages of miscommunication and cultural norms on “schmoozing” across cultures. The goal of this set of research questions is to contribute to our understanding of which communication processes are appropriate in different cultures as well as how to benefit from the naturally occurring miscommunication processes. We hope our literature review and proposed set of research questions will inspire culture scholars to pursue research in this fascinating field.

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