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Negotiating Disciplines: A Model of Integrative Public Relations from a Conflict-Resolution Perspective

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Keywords
integrative public relations, conflict management, integrative negotiation, win-win

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Abstract

This paper investigates potential cross-fertilizations of public relations and conflict management. We first address criticisms of the two-way symmetrical communication model and Excellence theory in the field of public relations in order to highlight how concepts borrowed from negotiation and conflict management scholarship can remedy those concerns. Ultimately, we theorize an integrative public relations model that outlines a conflict-resolution perspective of public relations. Multiple scenarios and contexts in which this model might be applied include: contexts where high value is placed on long-term relationships; processes characterized by repeated, serial exchanges of information and communications between contending parties; conflict scenarios characterized by multiple issues entangled in strongly complex ways; situations where minimal power asymmetry exists between an organization and its publics; contexts characterized by openness to information sharing and exchange; and contexts where a high importance is placed on trust. Finally, a case illustrates how integrative public relations can be leveraged. We conclude with our model's implications for public relations and conflict management.

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Scholars and practitioners often perceive public relations (PR) and negotiation/conflict management (N/CM) as belonging to distinct academic disciplines. The former is grouped with "communication studies" and the latter with "public management studies" due primarily to those fields' separate developments (Oetzel & Ting-Toomey, 2006). In both theory and practice, however, both fields emphasize different aspects of similar and, at times, identical modes of discourse.

Analyzing the content and citation networks of articles published in *Negotiation and Conflict Management Research (NCMR)* between 2008 and 2017, Gross et al. (2019) revealed the ten most frequently used keywords in that publication, in descending order of frequency (Table 1): *negotiation, conflict, culture, emotion, gender, mediation, conflict management, groups, power, and trust* (p. 7).

Table 1

Ten Most Frequently Used Keywords in NCMR's First Decade of Articles

Rank	Keyword	% of Articles
1	Negotiation	35.9
2	Conflict	12.5
3	Culture	9.2
4	Emotion	8.7
5	Gender	8.2
6	Mediation	7.6
7	Conflict management	7.6
8	Groups	6.5
9	Power	6.0
10	Trust	5.4

Note. From "NCMR's first decade: An empirical examination," by M. A. Gross, E. J. Neuman, W. L. Adair, and M. Wallace, 2019, *Negotiation and Conflict Management Research*, *12*(1), p. 7. https://doi.org/10.1111/ncmr.12143

Many of those keywords overlap with keywords commonly found in public relations literature (Gross et al., 2019; Ki et al., 2019). Accordingly, Murphy (1991), Plowman (1998, 2005), and Christen (2004) contended that negotiation/conflict management studies and public relations scholarship could cross-fertilize if they acknowledged common ground. Borrowing from game theory, Murphy explicated symmetrical and asymmetrical communication in order to propose a mixed-motive approach (1991). Following Murphy's work (1991), Plowman (1998) defined conflict as "the notion of perceived incompatibilities" (p. 239) and claimed that conflict management is a public relations activity since public relations deals with stakeholders' differing requests and desires. Plowman et al. (2001) further identified nine conflict resolution strategies in public relations, including contentious, mediated, and cooperative strategies. Christen's (2004) work also pioneered the cross-fertilization of public relations and conflict resolution by emphasizing the importance of power and trust. Additionally, Huang and Bedford (2009) narrowed the scope to crisis communication (in public relations) and conflict styles (in negotiation and conflict management) in order to bridge the conceptual gaps that exist between them. Despite these conceptual advances that have helped bridge the two disciplines, specific guidelines for carrying out conflict resolution principles remain underexplored.

Consequently, we develop a conflict resolution perspective of public relations and use this paper to theorize the concept of "integrative public relations" as well as its implications for negotiation/conflict management and public relations. Here, we specifically advance the theoretical construction of public

relations models from a conflict resolution perspective in order to go beyond traditional managerial, rhetorical, and critical approaches and situate the study of public relations at a higher interdisciplinary level. Moreover, we aim to extend Murphy's (1991) and Plowman's (1998) work by enriching practical and operational knowledge and introducing integrative negotiation concepts involving conflict resolution and operational guidelines. We discuss several necessary conditions for integrative public relations. Finally, we illustrate the practice of integrative public relations using a case and conclude with our model's implications for negotiation/conflict management.

Conflict Management and Public Relations

In the 1960s, Galtung (1969) proposed the ABC triangle of conflict comprising three components: attitude, behavior, and contradiction. Attitude refers to positive and negative emotions contending parties have towards each other; behavior indicates physical or verbal performance during the conflict; and contradiction refers to the "incompatible goals" that often arise in conflict situations (Galtung & Fischer, 2013; Ramsbotham, 2011).

Tracing the impact of the conflict triangle model, Ramsbotham (2011) identified subjective, objective, and structural paradigms of conflict management research. Influenced by psychological science, the subjective paradigm emphasizes approaches that attempt to change the attitude of contending parties from confrontation to cooperation. The objective paradigm, influenced by game theory, focuses on maximization of rational outcomes for each party through negotiation or mediation. The structural paradigm explores the social, political, or cultural structures underlying incompatible goals and posits that such disclosure can lead to conflict transformation and resolution.

Following the emergence of conflict negotiation as a field of study, public relations emerged as an academic field somewhat later, in the late 1970s. By the early 2000s, it had more or less matured into a distinct discipline (Hu et al., 2015). First dominated by systems theory, the field of public relations scholarship was later characterized by multiple competing models, such as management theory (Dozier et al., 1995), rhetorical theory (Heath et al., 2009), and other critical approaches (Pavlik, 1987). Management theory views the primary role of public relations as organizational communication management as well as management of an organization's relationships with public constituents. Rhetorical theory views public relations as a symbolic activity of organizations that consists of communications delivered to public constituents. A more critical perspective idealizes public relations as an activity that serves the interests of constituents (Fitch et al., 2016; Toth & L. A. Grunig, 1993) whose well-being is often undermined by organizational actions.

Taken as a whole, scholarship on conflict management and public relations demonstrates common themes. First, both fields purport to harmonize interests of contending parties (Bercovitch et al., 2008) and build stable, quality relationships over time among them (Plowman et al., 2001). In conflict management, conflict has been regarded as a pervasive aspect of human relationships and communication (Fisher et al., 2011; Kuhn & Poole, 2000). More specifically, conflict and harmony constitute one of the many pairs of opposing tendencies that also characterize organizations. Negotiation then is viewed as a decision-making and joint problem-solving process (Plowman, 2005) framed by numerous practical guidelines that organizations can internalize and operationalize. Likewise, as Heath (2001) noted, public relations is a "relationship-building professional activity that adds value to organizations because it increases the willingness of markets, audiences, and publics to support rather than to oppose their actions" (p. 8). Similarly, adopting the perspective of global public relations, L. A. Grunig et al. (1998) held that public relations practitioners increase organizational effectiveness by helping to build stable, quality relationships over time via conflict management.

Second, both fields emphasize the ethical management of diverse interests and conflicts among contending parties (J. E. Grunig, 1992). For example, public relations theory considers practitioners to be

caretakers of corporate social responsibility for organizations (J. E. Grunig, 1992) who should strive toward an ideal of good corporate citizenship. In the field of conflict management, Lewicki et al. (2011) emphasized the importance of the power-with rather than power-over approach. Both perspectives stress the ethical dimension of professional practice.

Third, public relations and conflict management both emphasize different strategies for dealing with diverse interests and conflicts under different political or cultural contexts (Babbitt & Hampson, 2011; Fitch et al., 2016). Both disciplines emphasize the critical implications of contingency theory (Pang et al., 2010) and integrative solutions (Fisher et al., 2011).

Fourth, both disciplines purport to facilitate effective communication between contending parties and/or across the organizational/stakeholder divide, though public relations, more so than conflict management, tends to emphasize its boundary-spanning role and its ability to interweave an organization's internal and external publics (Huang, 2008). For example, J. E. Grunig (1992) claimed that public relations practitioners span organizational boundaries and perform strategic communication-management duties. On the other hand, negotiation and conflict management scholars do not particularly focus on organizations. A typical negotiation consists of the following characteristics: 1) it involves at least two parties; 2) the parties perceive some kind of conflict; 3) the parties have both diverging and shared interests; 4) the parties aim to achieve an agreement via communication (Baarveld et al., 2015).

Fifth and finally, both disciplines have been subject to similar criticisms. There is yet no consensus over the feasibility, sustainability, or utility of best practices in public relations and mutual-gain approaches in conflict management. Moreover, doubts exist as to whether either field's various models are applicable across different contexts and cultures (Cancel et al., 1997; Thompson et al., 2010).

Identifying synergies between the two fields could mutually enhance the overall effectiveness of their respective models (Babbitt & Hampson, 2011; Oetzel & Ting-Toomey, 2013; Plowman et al., 2001). First, public relations can inform negotiation and conflict management with theories of symbolic interaction and dialogic communication that are critical to the maintenance of stakeholder relationships and conflict resolution.

Second, public relations research can shed light on negotiation and conflict management from an organizational perspective insofar as it systematically investigates the interrelations of an organization's broader relational network. Namely, public relations offers to negotiation and conflict management the idea that organizations are not only sites of constantly contested communicative values and relationships but ought to be regarded as the outgrowth, in institutional form, of "intertwined internal and external communication processes" that constitute the fundamental activity of organizations (Wehmeier & Winkler, 2013, p. 283).

In turn, negotiation/conflict management research provides a foundation for defining, operationalizing, and evaluating a best-fit model of public relations. Of the various approaches to studying conflict management, integrative strategy is often judged the most advantageous conflict management style across various negotiation contexts because it reflects a continuous process of interaction and focuses on non-coercive, win-win solutions (Fisher et al., 2011). In particular, Thompson (1998) defined "integrative negotiation" as "both a process and an outcome of negotiation. Parties to negotiation may engage in behaviors designed to integrate their interests, but there is no guarantee they will reach integrative outcomes. An integrative agreement is a negotiated outcome that leaves no resource unutilized" (p. 47). Public relations would benefit from a better understanding of the utility of conflict negotiation in general, and integrative negotiation in particular.

Theoretical Perspectives for Determining Best Practices in Public Relations

Utilizing bibliometric analysis, Ki et al. (2019) identified Excellence theory as the predominant topic in public relations journals over the past four decades. Excellence theory developed out of pioneering work on relationship management (Huang, 2001), which accounts for Excellence theory's strong emphasis on dynamic equilibrium, responsibility, and interdependence. More importantly, both Excellence theory and relationship management developed from the perspective of two-way symmetrical communication. Therefore, our analysis of two-way symmetrical communication scholarship necessarily entails an analysis of subsequent work on Excellence theory and relationship management.

Below, we review the two-way symmetrical communication model and Excellence theory in order to delineate the outstanding issues or problems that they raise. We highlight issues that require resolution across existing theories before delineating key characteristics of integrative negotiation in theories of conflict resolution and negotiation, with special emphasis on how they illuminate the theorization of our integrative public relations model.

Two-way Symmetrical Communication Model and Excellence Theory

Public relations scholarship began to focus in the 1990s on the need for two-way symmetrical communication between organizations and their constituencies (J. E. Grunig, 1992). J. E. Grunig and Hunt (1984) defined symmetrical communication as communication that is receptive to response. Holism, interdependence, open systems, dynamic equilibrium, equality, autonomy, innovation, and responsibility are all key concepts underlying the symmetrical worldview (J. E. Grunig, 1992). Following the definition of these key principles of two-way symmetrical communication, relationship management (i.e., organization-public relationships, OPRs) became a primary public relations research focus, generating the now widely accepted insight that relationship quality is a key communication outcome (Huang, 2001).

Symmetrical communication, however, was not without its critics. Cancel et al. (1997) critiqued the two-way symmetrical communication model's failure to capture the fluidity and complexity of public relations in the field. Other critics have made similar claims that symmetrical communication is too utopian to be practiced in the real world (Stokes & Rubin, 2010). Murphy (1991) held that symmetrical communication is hard to find in practice and likened the two-way symmetrical communication model to a model of pure cooperation in game theory. Implicit in these criticisms is the claim that both the two-way symmetrical communication model and Excellence theory should make more room for contingency in order to maintain their practical relevance.

Contingency Theory

Cancel et al. (1997) developed contingency theory out of the claim that public relations practice can be described along a continuum from "pure advocacy" to "pure accommodation" (p. 37). Contingency theory identified 87 contingency variables grouped under two clusters: external (such as threats, industry environment, the external public, and issue in question) and internal (specific characteristics of corporations, public relations departments, dominant coalitions, and individuals).

Moreover, contingency theory (Cancel et al., 1999) categorized predisposing variables and situational variables in order to determine the feasibility and utility of different approaches as well as the match between a situation and the corresponding organizational response along the continuum of "pure advocacy" and "pure accommodation." Predisposing variables include "corporation business exposure, public relations access to dominant coalition, dominant coalition's decision power and enlightenment, corporation size, and

individual characteristics of involved persons" (p. 189), whereas situational variables exert their effects in communication between organizations and publics. Situational variables include "urgency of situation, characteristics of external public's claims or requests, characteristics of external public, potential or obvious threats, and potential cost or benefit for a corporation from choosing various stances" (p. 189).

Synthesis

In summary, public relations seeks to reconcile various conflicting interests, values, needs, and wants between and among contending organizations and stakeholders to achieve mutually agreeable solutions that build and maintain long-term, trusting organization-public relationships. The two-way symmetrical communication model and Excellence theory assume a symmetrical worldview in public relations practice. Contingency theory was subsequently developed in response to critics of the two-way symmetrical communication model and Excellence theory who rejected what they viewed as idealized models of public relations.

The following section theorizes "integrative public relations" in response to criticisms of the two-way symmetrical communication and Excellence theory. We argue for conflict resolution and negotiation in general and integrative negotiation in particular as practices crucial for defining, facilitating, and evaluating integrative public relations.

Theorizing Integrative Public Relations via Integrative Negotiation

This section theorizes integrative public relations from a conflict resolution perspective. We consult Thompson's definitions of "integrative negotiation" (1998, p. 47) and J. E. Grunig and Hunt's (1984) definition of public relations and define "integrative public relations" as "both a process and an outcome of public relations. Parties, i.e., organizations and publics, may engage in behaviors designed to integrate their interests. An integrative agreement is a negotiated outcome that leaves no resource unutilized." Our definition of "integrative public relations" as both a process and an outcome reflects a continuous process of interaction and a focus on non-coercive, win-win solutions. An integrative agreement is a negotiated outcome that "leaves no resource unutilized" (Thompson, 1998, p. 47). In other words, integrative public relations, from the perspective of cost reduction rather than revenue generation, is the embodiment of integrative negotiation/conflict management in the context of public relations.

Scholars of conflict resolution have suggested that all bargaining, particularly that involving cross-situational conflict, is properly thought of as integrative because integrative strategies maximize benefit for all parties (Fisher et al., 2011). For this reason, we advocate for the use of integrative public relations capable of maximizing benefit for both organizations and their stakeholders.

In this section, we explicate the extent to which integrative public relations, a model that is borrowed from and extends theories of integrative negotiation, are practical, effective, and sustainable. Theoretical propositions are developed below.

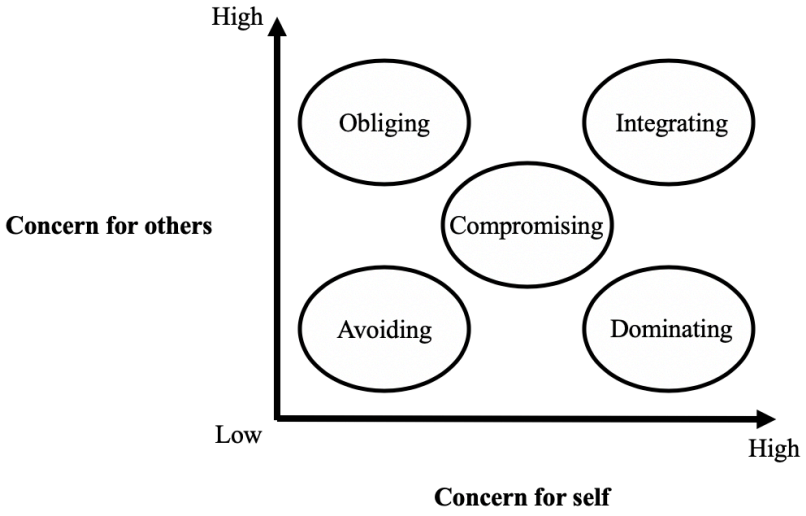
Conflict Orientation: "Concern for Others" as a Necessary Condition for Integrative Negotiation

Worldviews (or schemes) are defined as "large, abstract structures of knowledge that people use to organize what they know and to make sense of new information that comes to them" (J. E. Grunig, 1992, p. 34). A conflict orientation is a worldview that influences how a person responds to situations that consist of disagreements (Friedman et al., 2000). The widely used Rahim (1983) model maintained that people's choice of conflict modes or styles derives from two dimensions: "concern for self" (i.e., attempting to satisfy one's own concerns") and "concern for others" (i.e., attempting to satisfy the other's concerns). The Rahim model

(see Figure 1) also proposed five conflict styles: 1) dominating (high concern for self, low concern for others); 2) integrating (high concern for self and for others); 3) compromising (moderate concern for self and for others); 4) obliging (low concern for self and high concern for others); and 5) avoiding (low concern for self and others) (p. 369).

Figure 1

The Dual-Concern Model



Note. From "A measure of styles of handling interpersonal conflict," by M. A. Rahim, 1983, *Academy of Management journal*, *26*(2), p. 369. https://doi.org/10.5465/255985

Thomas (1992) claimed that these two dimensions of conflict orientation are not mutually exclusive. An individual's attempt to satisfy other people's concerns does not necessarily come at the cost of sacrificing their own concerns, and vice versa. Extending this logic, empirical research supports the utility of "concern for others." A positive relationship exists between "concern for others" and problem solving, and a negative relationship exists between "concern for self" and problem solving (Sorenson et al., 1999).

Mathematically, a sufficient "concern for others" in negotiation could achieve Pareto optimal agreements (those that exhaust all mutual benefits). In other words, one party's gain is not necessarily based on their counterpart's loss if every aspect of a negotiated agreement exhausts the possibilities for joint gains (Raiffa, 1982; Tripp & Sondak, 1992). On the other hand, conflict orientation towards "concern for self" usually returns negative results in a negotiation. Butler (1995) demonstrated that if negotiators strongly pursue their own interests and ignore their opponents' interests, the resulting mistrust causes negotiators to overlook their counterparts' interests repeatedly in a vicious cycle. In a similar vein, "fixed-pie perceptions" describes a mindset in which one's own concerns and concern for others are incompatible, discounting the possibility of mutual benefit altogether. De Dreu et al. (2000) revealed that people with prosocial motives would lean more toward integrative negotiation than egoistically motivated parties. In contrast, nondirectional motivation helps negotiators discover and create more potentially integrative deals.

It should be noted, however, that cultural differences might have an effect on conflict orientation. For example, researchers have widely adopted the concepts of individualism and collectivism to describe the characteristics of a society as well as an individual (Hofstede, 1980). Individualists usually prioritize their own preferences, while collectivists show more concern for others (Hui & Triandis, 1986). R. Kim and Coleman

(2015) also revealed that individuals with collectivist orientation are more likely to adopt integrative conflict strategies compared to those with individualist orientation.

In summary, "concern for others" is a necessary conflict orientation for integrative public relations and has been proven to be practicable, effective, efficient, and rational. Moreover, "concern for others" is conducive to closing the perception gap that exists in the conflict between an organization and its publics (Schwarz, 2008). Proposition 1 is thus posited:

> ***Proposition 1.*** Contending parties' concern for each other increases the possibility of integrative public relations.

Principle: Interest-Based Negotiation

Research typically focuses on three types of negotiation: game theoretic, heuristic, and argumentative (Jennings et al., 2001). Heuristic and game theoretic negotiations, especially zero-sum games, are often viewed as position-based negotiations in which the negotiation is a fixed-pie scenario (Pasquier et al., 2011). In contrast, argumentation-based negotiation emphasizes information exchange and uses interest-based negotiation to dig out underlying interests among contending parties in order to expand the "pie" and increase the likelihood of an agreement (Fisher et al., 2011; Pasquier et al., 2011).

While position-based negotiation emphasizes value claims, interest-based negotiation emphasizes value creation (Fisher et al., 2011; Katz & Pattarini, 2008). Position-based negotiation is distinguished by the development of target and resistance positions prior to negotiation as well as overstatement of opening positions (Fisher et al., 2011; Katz & Pattarini, 2008). There are four main assumptions inherent in position-based negotiation: 1) all pertinent information is "complete and held in common"; 2) all pertinent information is "perfect and correct"; 3) "agent communication and cognitive capabilities are underused"; and 4) "the positions of the agents are statically defined" (Pasquier et al., 2011, pp. 253-254).

On the other hand, interest-based negotiation explores the underlying reasons for conflict and the underlying interests behind negotiation objectives. Therefore, interest-based negotiations and interactions endeavor to create value rather than divide the existing pie (Katz & Pattarini, 2008; Pasquier et al., 2011). Moreover, Katz and Pattarini (2008) argued that, because two-way symmetrical communication requires that parties accommodate each other's interests, interest-based negotiation could operationalize this principle by "shifting focus from tasks and fees to value and trust" (p. 89). In a similar vein, Katz and Pattarini (2008) also claimed that the principles of interest-based negotiation constitute a powerful communication tool that can help organizations build better counselor-client relationships. Therefore, Proposition 2 is proposed:

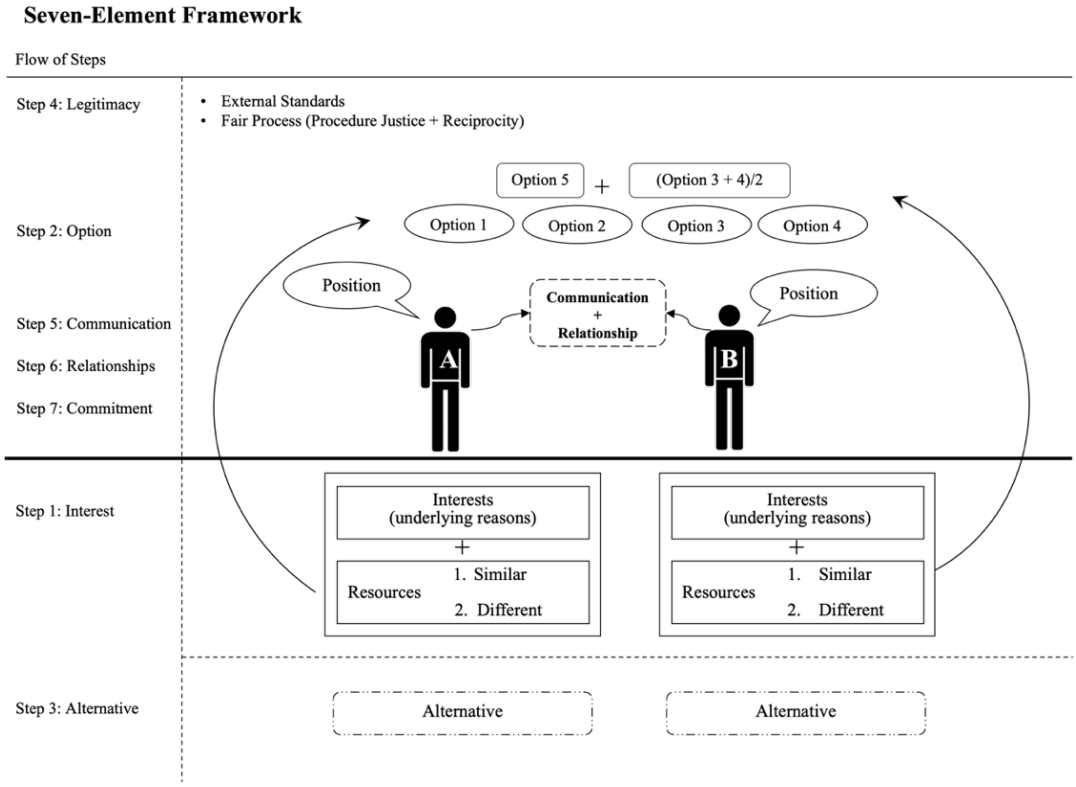
> ***Proposition 2***. Following the principle of interest-based negotiation creates more value space and is more likely to achieve mutual gain.

Feasibility and Practicality of *the Seven-Element Framework*

As mentioned previously, some critics of dominant public relations theories focus on their lack of practicality and detailed implementation guidelines. Therefore, consulting Fisher et al. (2011), we developed *the Seven-Element Framework* (Figure 2) for achieving win-win solutions with interest, options, alternative, legitimacy, communication, relationship, and commitment.

Figure 2

A Framework Conceptualizing the Seven Elements of Integrative Negotiation



The *first step* is to discern position from interest. Interests and alternatives adopted by each side are usually "hidden" and placed "under" the negotiation table. Thus, Pasquier et al. (2011) and Fisher et al. (2011) suggest clarifying and probing for underlying interests as a critical starting point. At this stage, it is important for negotiators to focus on interests and not positions and to put themselves in the other person's shoes, so as to avoid the "*fixed pie*" stereotype and partisan perception problem. Analysis of contending parties' interests and underlying reasons leads to *step 2*, development of possible (creative) options to meet interests on both sides. At this stage, inventory analysis can develop options that combine each side's similar and different resources and/or skills to produce value that maximizes joint gains. Leveraging various resources and skills beyond those needed at the negotiation table helps prevent zero-sum stasis and reveals multiple dimensions of the issue at hand.

Often, negotiators need to utilize the alternatives (*step 3*) to reveal more possible options. Additionally, external objective standards and a fair process are required for contending parties to persuade each other that they are not being ripped off (*step 4*). Parties also need to communicate with each other during the negotiating process (*step 5*). A good negotiator often asks "why?" "why not?" questions to facilitate information exchange. As mentioned above, interest-based negotiation is more likely to generate mutual gain. Hence, separating people from problems is a key principle for coping with relationship problems (*step 6*). Finally, negotiators should put agreements into action as soon as possible after they are reached (*step 7*).

When conducting negotiations, parties usually emphasize on the final outcome, i.e., *commitment*; however, a successful negotiation is more likely when negotiators understand each other's underlying interests, communicate effectively, explore possible options, and develop strong relationships (Fisher, 1989). This seven-element approach to negotiation has been widely adopted in legal studies (Eckblad, 2020) and

public policy making (Lane, 2021) because it demonstrates the feasibility of achieving desirable outcomes. We therefore propose Proposition 3:

Proposition 3. Integrative public relations is feasible and practical via adoption of interest-based negotiation principles and the seven-element approach to negotiation.

Utility and the Optimal Effectiveness: Long-term, Trustful, and Sustainable Relationship

Scholarship on two-way symmetrical communication and relationship management frequently calls for building and maintaining long-term, trusting organization-public relationships (J. E. Grunig, 1992; L. A. Grunig et al., 1998). Integrative negotiation, also conceived of here as integrative public relations, is among the best methods for achieving "win-win" agreements with lasting outcomes (L. A. Liu, 2014; Sorenson et al., 1999). This goal can be understood via the concept of Pareto efficiency, which refers to situations where "it is not possible, through alterations in the resource allocation, to improve the utility of any member of the defined reference group without loss of utility by some other member (or members)" (Sandler & Smith, 1976, p. 152). Pareto-optimal agreements are those in which no additional joint gains are possible without disequilibrium of previously negotiated gains.

Several mathematical models test these relationships. Raiffa (1982) introduced a method for using a Pareto-efficient frontier to solve negotiation problems by weighing the importance of each issue for the concerned parties and calculating the values of various potential agreements. Tripp and Sondak (1992) later developed a method to measure Pareto efficiency by dividing the number of possible agreements Pareto superior to the reference agreement by the sum of the number of possible agreements Pareto superior to the agreement and the number of possible agreements Pareto inferior to the agreement (p. 291). Moreover, multi-objective optimization theory (Deb, 2001) supports better results in Pareto-optimal agreements (Tripp & Sondak, 1992). These empirical models all suggest that integrative negotiation is the most direct path to negotiating win-win agreements via Pareto efficiency (Tripp & Sondak, 1992).

In principle, when negotiators discover sharable resources and mutual interests, mutually beneficial agreements and integrative solutions become possible. Namely, the utility of an integrative negotiation is assured when Pareto efficiency promises maintenance of high quality, long-term relationships and benefit beyond increased profit (Tripp & Sondak, 1992).

Public relations has traditionally emphasized long-term, trustful relationships, as has the field of negotiation/conflict management. Trust/trustful relationship plays a crucial role throughout the negotiation process, serving as a result, a pre-condition, and even an important element during the negotiation process for successful outcomes (Lewicki & Polin, 2013).

As an independent variable in the negotiation process, the existence of trust between/among parties can simplify the negotiation process and reduce procedural inefficiency (Lewicki & Polin, 2013). In negotiations that involve high trust relationships, the probability of cooperation is higher and fewer resources are wasted (Lindskold et al., 1986). For example, the exchange of information is integral in every negotiation case, and trust can induce information exchange. This in turn contributes to integrative negotiation (Neale & Bazerman, 1992). Second, the negotiation process can build trust/trustful relationships, allowing trust to serve as a dependent variable as well. Butler (1995) indicated that negotiating parties are more willing to exchange information where integrative negotiation is possible, thereby enhancing mutual trust. Trust/trustful relationship can also act as a mediator/moderator during the negotiation process. For instance, M. N. Liu and Wang (2010) revealed that trust mediated the relationship between anger and negotiators' interaction goals.

To conclude, trust/trustful relationship is vital, no matter what role it plays, to integrative negotiation and integrative public relations. Moreover, trust is critical in dynamic contexts defined by repeated, serial rounds of negotiation (Mannix et al., 1995). Negotiators who attach more importance to future interaction

(high concern for others) are more likely to explore integrative solutions than those with short-term goals (high concern for self) (Lewicki et al., 2011). Rubin et al. (1994) found that future-focused orientations fostered a sense of interdependency. This gives rise to Proposition 4:

> ***Proposition 4.*** Integrative public relations is achieved more easily on the basis of trust/trustful relationships, and at the same time can contribute to trustful, long-term relationships (Pareto efficiency) during the conflict resolution process.

Synthesis

Public relations reconciles various conflicting interests between and among stakeholders to build and maintain long-term, trusting organization-public relationships (J. E. Grunig, 2006). As previously mentioned, however, critics have found existing theoretical perspectives unreflective of reality.

The model of integrative public relations outlined here has the potential to resolve these unsettled criticisms. Specifically, "concern for others" suggests a concrete worldview and addresses the "utopian" problem. Interest-based negotiating principles and the *Seven-Element Framework* for achieving win-win solutions provide procedural guidelines and details. Moreover, integrative public relations is an effective approach insofar as it closes the gap between reality and the Pareto-efficient frontier. Integrative public relations can produce win-win agreements and trustful relationships with long-lasting outcomes. W. French et al. (2002) claimed, moreover, that integrative negotiation underlies negotiation ethics. Hence, integrative negotiation provides a path for parties to negotiate more ethically. For example, L. A. Liu (2014) viewed the revision process as a negotiation between authors and reviewers, where integrative negotiation or interest-based negotiation strategies could be applied.

Contingencies for Integrative Public Relations

Does integrative public relations in fact constitute a new model of public relations? To answer that question, it is necessary to determine the relevance of integrative versus distributive negotiation management with respect to public relations practices. Some negotiations are predominantly distributive and have modest value-creating opportunities while other negotiations have substantial value-creating opportunities (Levinger & Rubin, 1994). This section outlines the contextual factors contributing to the conditions for integrative versus distributive negotiation strategies with the goal of shedding light on the transferability of the concept of integrative negotiation to public relations.

Time and Relationship Continuity

Axelrod (1990) claimed that immediate needs for conflict resolution often make integrative solutions impractical. If, however, the deleterious effects of a particular conflict are long-term rather than immediate, then more integrative solutions might be used. The relationship over time of those involved in a conflict is also important to take into consideration. A single time-limited scenario is more difficult to resolve through integrative negotiation than issues in which reputation and long-term relationships matter (Ross, 1980).

Digital public relations' capacity to build and maintain relationships highlights the field's relational nature. The increasing prevalence of digital communication also indicates a gradual epistemological shift in our understanding of relationships. Increasingly digitized public relations practices suggest the profound impact of digital technology on relationship building, particularly on a long-term basis (Taylor & Kent, 2014). Digital technology enables users to engage in two-way, immediate, and timely interaction, suggesting that serial, repeated negotiation could become normative (Nowak et al., 2010). A reasonable conclusion is that integrative public relations may be easier to achieve as more public relations activity takes place online.

Moreover, crisis situations, defined as they are by dynamic contexts and repeated, serial rounds of negotiation, also highlight the importance of integrative public relations. Although crisis response is often perceived as an isolated set of communications, or even a single communication at a fixed point in time, repeated serial negotiations between contending parties (organizations and stakeholders) often occur during crises (Mannix et al., 1995). According to Mannix (1991), people will choose immediate rewards over long-term benefits, even if the reward is relatively small. Similarly, negotiators who often discount future outcomes will fail to notice long-term integrative solutions. Thus, integrative negotiation potentially improves chances for long-term results in public relations (Mannix et al., 1995).

The Number of Participants and the Number of Issues Involved

The relationship between the degree of conflict intensity, number of contending parties, and number of issues is inconclusive. Some scholars have suggested that as the number or size of the parties involved in a conflict increases, it becomes more difficult to reach an agreement due to the need for coordinating more preferences and resources (Kleiboer, 1996). Others have found that an increase in the number of parties augments the availability of additional resources (Levinger & Rubin, 1994), thereby making various pie-expanding, integrative solutions more likely. The odds of attaining a settlement may be enhanced in multiparty and multiple-issue arrangements due to there being "greater opportunities for developing crosscutting pies among the disputants" (Levinger & Rubin, 1994, p. 207).

According to Moloney (2005), public relations is "about giving 'voice' to organizations and groups that hold different values, behave differently, and promote different interests as they seek to maximize advantage in their political economy and civil society" (p. 551). If the discrepancy between the perceptions, values, and behaviors of an organization and its stakeholders is pre-defined in a distributive manner (i.e., a fixed-pie worldview), odds for an integrative solution decrease. However, interest-based negotiation and mutual-gain approaches to negotiation underscore the importance of redefining and reconceiving the nature of conflict from a distributive to an integrative type so as to expand the number of issues, contending parties, discrepant values of risk, priorities, and preferences (Fisher et al., 2011). Such a multitude of discrepant values and perspectives sets the table for greater value creation and option invention through integrative negotiation.

Power and Asymmetrical Relationships

Power balance or lack thereof is a critical issue in all conflict situations. Different scholars have analyzed what we mean when we refer to "power." Bass (1960) divided power into position power and personal power, while J. R. P. French and Raven (1959) taxonomized legitimate, reward, coercive, expert, and referent power.

Most conflict situations involve power asymmetry such as differences in experience, information, or costs (Ross, 1980). Rubin and Zartman's (1995) review of over 20 studies supported the hypothesis that perceptions of equal power among negotiators tend to result in more effective negotiation than perceptions of unequal power. Evidence suggests that an equivalent level of power makes both parties fear escalation and therefore exercise greater care not to antagonize each other (M. N. Liu, 2019). Slight power differentials are generally conducive to problem solving.

Power imbalances, however, make integrative solutions less likely, especially if one party is completely powerless. In such instances, the powerful can ensure a favorable outcome for themselves. For example, Lawler and Bacharach (1987) proved that if party A has coercive power over B, which means A has the ability to punish B, A would tend to adopt damaging tactics in negotiations, which would hinder information exchange and result in less subsequent integration.

While the common view is that punitive actions result from power asymmetry, findings related to this effect are varied (Lawler et al., 1988). Bilateral Deterrence Theory claimed that punitive actions are less often adopted where power imbalances exist, while Conflict Spiral Theory argued that such conditions generate more punitive actions (Lawler et al., 1988).

While power asymmetries persist, the democratic nature of the Internet has empowered public constituencies on the receiving end of public relations messaging. Digital technology is capable of closing the power gap between organizations and their stakeholders. The organization-centric assumptions of public relations research undertaken from the functional perspective are less relevant when the audience for public relations is a massively connected and socially networked collective. As a result, public relations scholarship has witnessed calls for a more balanced research perspective between organization-centric and public-centric research agendas (Kent & Taylor, 2002). This shift has created a more viable context for the adoption of integrative public relations.

The Importance of Trust in Conflict Resolution and Public Relations

Recent studies on conflict resolution and public relations have emphasized trustful relationships (Huang et al., 2020). According to these scholars, trust plays a crucial role throughout the negotiation process as an end result, an important element in the process, and an important a priori condition for successful interaction and negotiation (Lewicki & Polin, 2013). For example, negotiations that involve high trust relationships, prevalent in certain cultures, have a higher probability of cooperation and waste fewer resources (Christen, 2004; Lindskold et al., 1986). Neale and Bazerman (1992) also claimed that building trust and exchanging information is the most important rule of successful negotiation.

Integrative public relations emphasizes information exchange and open communication (Baarveld et al., 2015), two values that hold a great deal of importance in the field of public relations (Huang et al., 2020; Taylor & Kent, 2014). Trust provides these organizations with a foundation for communicating and interacting in a rapidly changing information ecosystem. If the parties involved in an organization-public relationship are willing to share information and communicate transparently, an integrative solution is possible. Mutual trust is therefore a constitutive component of integrative public relations (Neale & Bazerman, 1992). The more trust exists in organization-public relationships, the better the odds that integrative public relations can be achieved.

Case Illustration

In this section, we examine the DiDi Hitch crisis in the Chinese Mainland to illustrate integrative public relations. We conclude with our model's implications for public relations, conflict management, and crisis communication.

A transportation platform like Uber, DiDi is widely used in the Chinese Mainland. It ranked 93th on the Kantar BrandZ Top 100 Most Valuable Global Brands in 2021 (Kantar, 2021). Its services consist of DiDi Express, Premier, Taxi, Hitch, Bus, Designated Driving, Luxe, and others (DiDi, n.d.).

DiDi Hitch is the company's "ride-sharing platform." Passengers can take a ride with a driver headed in the same direction, at a much lower price than using other DiDi services. Drivers typically do not make their primary living by offering DiDi Hitch rides (DiDi, n.d.).

Before 2018, DiDi Hitch was commended for its convenience and novelty. However, in May 2018, a female flight attendant was killed by a DiDi Hitch driver. Not long after, a female passenger was raped and murdered after hailing a DiDi Hitch ride. These two homicides triggered widespread concern over the safety of this service. Because users could choose to display their gender and headshots on the platform, many

feared that criminals might select female passengers on purpose and sexually assault them (Beijing Daily, 2019).

After a year-long suspension of the service, DiDi made an announcement that DiDi Hitch would return to operation in seven select cities in the Chinese Mainland on November 20, 2019. After re-launching operations, DiDi Hitch seemed to have regained the public's trust.

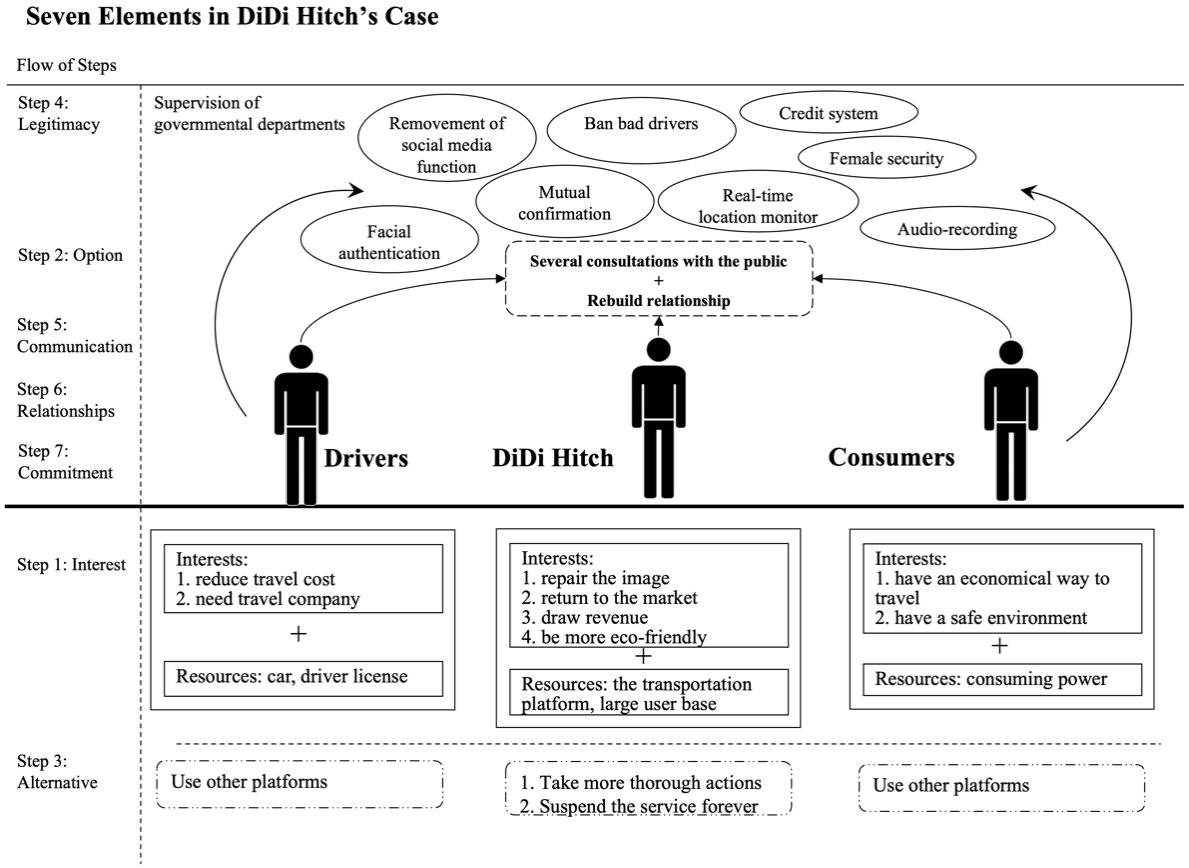
The nature and sources of conflict in the DiDi case can be identified and interpreted from various angles. For example, the main conflict could be viewed from the perspectives of interest (in terms of financial terms, compensation, travel convenience, etc.), relationship (trust), or ideology/value (e.g., human life should not be negotiated or exchanged). When it comes to financial terms, the conflict between DiDi Hitch and its customers seems to be distributive. DiDi Hitch aims to generate the most profit with the least investment, while consumers want to enjoy premium services that include safety and comfort at the lowest price. In other words, optimizing safety entails a larger investment, which may result in a higher price for consumers. However, the fact that both DiDi Hitch and its customers place such a high value on trust opens a space for integrative public relations. DiDi Hitch depends on customers' trust to survive in the market, and customers depend on a trustworthy "ride-sharing platform" for safety and convenience. To conclude, collective perceptions of a conflict should be viewed along a continuum rather than at a fixed point, especially in the context of public relations. By nature, the DiDi Hitch case is not an extreme distributive conflict, nor a purely integrative one. Conflict perception is greatly determined by whether people hold a fixed-pie outlook. However, when public relations managers maintain a perspective of integrative public relations, integrative solutions become possible. In our view, DiDi Hitch's navigation of the crisis embodies integrative public relations (see Figure 3).

First, DiDi Hitch identified the underlying interests of three parties: its own interests as well as those of passengers and drivers (*step 1*). Customers want to save money without sacrificing safety, while drivers hope to reduce some of their own travel costs through this service. DiDi Hitch's interests lie in repairing its image and re-launching service operations. During the one year-suspension, DiDi Hitch re-evaluated its business model, carried out potential safety hazard analysis, and adopted a series of reform measures and public relations communication campaigns (*step 2*), including more than 200 function optimizations covering safety functions, privacy protection, a social credit system, transaction processes, and transparent communication. It should be noted that DiDi Hitch's service optimization was informed by consumer input via Weibo and other official channels. To list just a few examples: face authentication is now required for both passengers and drivers; drivers now have to open the DiDi application in order to track their real-time location and audio for the duration of the trip; drivers with bad reviews can no longer drive for DiDi Hitch; passengers can no longer display their headshot and gender information; drivers and passengers now pick each other, rather than drivers picking passengers; drivers must now select common routes and stick to them; and female security officers now handle complaints related to sexual harassment.

DiDi Hitch did not roll out these mandates simultaneously (*step 3*). They removed passengers' personal information and strengthened safety protections for women in May 2018, but these measures alone could not prevent violent incidents from recurring. Hence, in August 2018, DiDi announced that they would suspend the service indefinitely before re-launching with more thorough safety reforms. Even after re-launching, DiDi Hitch continues to improve service quality. For example, drivers and passengers can only use DiDi Hitch at nighttime when they have gone at least one year without any negative reviews. Governmental supervision (*step 4*) of this reform process helped ensure that the measures were widely perceived as fair and effective.

Figure 3

Seven Elements in DiDi Hitch's Case



Preceding re-launch of the service, DiDi Hitch frequently communicated with the public and announced incremental progress as it was made. This helped repair consumer relationships (*step 5&6*) and ensured a customer base was waiting on re-launch. These actions, which embody integrative public relations, led to a successful re-start of operations (*step 7*).

In summary, the DiDi Hitch case illuminates the descriptive, predictive, and explanatory power of integrative public relations and its related theoretical propositions. The case involved a typically distributive conflict, i.e., one defined by a single issue (whether DiDi Hitch should be suspended), two contending parties (DiDi and consumers), and asymmetrical power (Didi has tremendous power in terms of resources and market capitalization that its customers lack). Moreover, some contingencies also defined this scenario. For example, trust/relationship rebuilding cannot be accomplished overnight. Time is needed to repair an organization's image and organization-public relationships. In addition, the severity of the DiDi Hitch crisis cannot be overstated due to the deaths of two women. It must be acknowledged that the situation was very unfavorable to the company. DiDi Hitch announced that they would not return to the market until their safety issues were solved, indicating that time and trust were constraints in the company's attempts to rehabilitate its image.

DiDi's practice of integrative public relations, however, reconciled the seemingly distributive conflict among interests, values, needs, and wants of the contending parties to achieve mutually agreeable solutions. This led to the successful re-launch of DiDi Hitch. In DiDi Hitch's new business model, drivers and passengers

meet each other's interests and needs for convenience and cost savings, while DiDi Hitch provides the platform that puts them in touch with one another.

Conclusion

This study theorizes the concept of "integrative public relations" and surveys the literature on the two-way symmetrical communication model and Excellence theory, contingency theory, integrative negotiation, interest-based negotiation, and Pareto-optimal agreements.

We extend previous research (Christen, 2004; Murphy, 1991; Plowman et al., 2001) and advance the theorization of public relations models from a conflict resolution perspective, placing them at an interdisciplinary level. We pose integrative public relations (or, interchangeably, integrative negotiation) as a practical way of accounting for contingency in various models of negotiation.

In addition to providing procedural guidelines, we also divide the seven elements of integrative public relations into two parts. Specifically, five of the seven elements (i.e., legitimacy, options, communication, relationships, and commitment) are "above" the negotiation table, while the other two elements (i.e., interests and alternatives) are "under" the table. This provides practitioners with a clearer framework when conducting negotiations as well as a clearer sense of which issues should only be discussed internally with the party they represent.

Integrative public relations is best understood as a kind of integrative negotiation whose characteristics offer the most direct path to negotiating win-win agreements via Pareto efficiency. "Concern for others" is a necessary condition of conflict orientation. Wherever this condition is met, integrative public relations, practiced as a kind of interest-based negotiation, is feasible and practical. Integrative negotiation can close the gap between reality and Pareto efficiency, is ethically grounded, and has great potential in a dynamic context defined by repeated, serial rounds of negotiation.

In addition to "concern for others," the potential for several substantial value-creating opportunities is also often a precondition for integrative solutions. Scenarios that present multiple avenues for value creation are defined by the following features: value placed on long-term relationships; repeated, serial exchanges of information between contending parties; complex entanglement of multiple issues; minimal power asymmetry; openness to information sharing and exchange; and a high importance placed on trust.

By contrast, scenarios with little apparent value-creating opportunity include single, narrowly defined issues; fixed transaction costs; no ongoing relationships; high levels of power asymmetry; asymmetrical and unverifiable information; lack of open communication and information exchange; and lack of trust between contending parties.

Given these seemingly obvious constraints, we emphasize the importance of going beyond "fixed-pie perceptions." To treat for a moment the "single-issue" constraint as a representative problem, value can actually be created by unbundling and adding issues if contending parties can abandon "fixed-pie perception" and adopt a worldview of "concern for others." For example, in a used car negotiation, it seems that price is the only issue between a seller and a buyer. An integrative negotiation, however, can add value by unbundling price from payment method, length of payment, and actual payment. The key is to expand and multiply conceptions of value. Similarly, in negotiations that involve several parties, it becomes easier to more readily exploit differences among different parties in time preferences, risk tolerances, predictive capacity, and efficiencies.

Likewise, in order to make creative and integrative solutions possible, power should also be conceived as relative and dynamic, rather than static (Christen, 2004). As previously mentioned, power asymmetry is common in public relations and conflict scenarios. P. H. Kim et al. (2005), however, challenged the static conception of power by depicting four components of power dynamics, i.e., perceived power, potential power, power tactics, and realized power. On a related note, when dealing with conflicts, both

objective (e.g., resources, power, etc.) and subjective factors (e.g., value, perception, etc.) should be taken into account (Deutsch, 1991). Under conditions of imbalanced power, moving beyond a purely objective orientation and abandoning fixed-power perceptions facilitates integrative negotiation.

We acknowledge that our proposed perspective of integrative public relations is not intended to be "one best practice" in a strict sense. In essence, a range of different solutions for a given negotiation might attain to ideal 'Pareto-optimal agreements.' In such scenarios, one party's gain in a negotiation is not necessarily based on his (or her) counterpart's loss, and every aspect of a negotiated agreement exhausts the possibilities for joint gains.

We also acknowledge that the public relations theories we reviewed cannot fully capture the field, and we did not cover some theories/models such as dialogical communication (Kent & Taylor, 2002), image restoration strategy (Huang et al., 2005), situational crisis communication theory (Coombs, 2007), integrative crisis mapping (Jin et al., 2012), issue management (Jaques, 2009), or situational theory (J. N. Kim & J. E. Grunig, 2011). What we propose as integrative negotiation or integrative public relations should be viewed as a new method for studying public relations through the lens of conflict management rather than as a new model of public relations.

In addition, by theorizing integrative public relations, we set aside any discussion of other conflict styles such as distributive, avoidance, and third-party mediation (Huang & Bedford, 2009) as well as other conflict styles such as unconditional and principled situation (Plowman et al., 2001). This paper also selectively emphasizes several key issues but leaves some equally important concepts, such as "fixed-pie perception," under-elaborated. In addition, while it has limitations, the DiDi Hitch case illuminates the descriptive, predictive, and explanatory power of integrative public relations by demonstrating that integrative public relations is not affected by number of issues (being single or multiple), number of contending parties (two parties or multiple parties), or nature of contending parties (individuals, organizations, stakeholders or in-group or out-group) as long as mutual concern and information sharing enable tradeoffs and win-win outcomes.

Future studies might re-examine the propositions laid out in this study. For instance, the measurement of "concern for others" should be developed and validated in empirical studies. The seven steps of integrative public relations should also be tested via experiments or interviews. Finally, the effectiveness of integrative public relations should be mathematically tested via the Pareto efficiency model.

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negotiation and conflict management research

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

Negotiation and Conflict Management Research

"Should I Negotiate?" A Model of Negotiation Initiation Considering Psychological Person-Environment Transactions

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Abstract

We qualitatively investigated why employees initiated negotiations with their supervisors to elaborate a theoretical model of negotiation initiation in organizational contexts. Consistent with the model, employees initiated negotiations when they felt negative discrepancy and negative affect and when they believed the negotiation issue had a high valence, the benefits outweighed costs, and their probability of being able to successfully initiate and complete the negotiation was high. Employees did not initiate negotiations if they did not perceive negative discrepancies or negative affect, or if the activating effects of negative discrepancy and negative affect were buffered by negative instrumentality, no expectancy, or low valence. The qualitative results led the model to be systematically extended to a transactional model which includes social, contextual, and intraindividual influences on employees' decisions about whether to negotiate (or not), showing how the negotiation partner, negotiation situation, and negotiators' states and dispositions influence cognitive-motivational antecedents of negotiation initiation.

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Organizations are offering employees increasing opportunities to individually negotiate the terms of their employment, including flexible working hours, career development opportunities, work tasks, and workload reduction (e.g., Liao et al., 2016; Rousseau et al., 2006). If employees want to take advantage of these opportunities, they have to initiate negotiations with their supervisors. Successful negotiations can create high-quality agreements providing social (increased harmony, reduced probability of future conflict), economic (economic prosperity), and self-related (increased feelings of self-efficacy) benefits (De Dreu et al., 2007; Rubin et al., 1994). Consequently, employees who do not initiate negotiations may miss out on important opportunities. On the other hand, unsuccessful negotiations can create poor agreements, conflict, and disharmony, leaving negotiation partners dissatisfied, frustrated, and annoyed (De Dreu et al., 2007). In such cases, it might have been better not to have initiated a negotiation. Thus, the decision on whether or not to initiate a negotiation seems to be complex and depend on various individual, social, and situational factors.

In their model of negotiation initiation, Reif and Brodbeck (2014) proposed a framework for how negotiation initiation proceeds, which involves perceived situational discrepancies, individual affective responses, and cognitive-motivational considerations regarding valence, instrumentality, and expectancy. Although empirical research has tested some of the model's assumptions (e.g., Reif & Brodbeck, 2017; Reif, Kugler, & Brodbeck, 2019; Reif, Kunz, et al., 2019), the full complexity of suggested interrelationships within the negotiation initiation process have not yet been investigated. Moreover, contextual influences and the formation of cognitive considerations in an organizational context have not yet been sufficiently considered.

In this study, we addressed these conceptual and empirical gaps by identifying situational discrepancies employees consider negotiating about with their supervisors; which intrapersonal, social, and situational variables are involved in the decision-making process and the formation of cognitive considerations; and how a complex "interplay" between the negotiator and his/her contextual surroundings leads employees to decide whether or not to initiate negotiations. We chose an organizational context as research setting in order to delve deeper into negotiation topics in organizations and to show how initiative negotiation behavior at work can be theoretically explained. We choose a qualitative research methodology to collect situations in which employees considered negotiating with their supervisors and to probe the reasons that influenced their decision. For coding the interviews, we drew on the variables suggested in Reif and Brodbeck's (2014) model as theoretical framework but also allowed for new categories inductively emerging from our data. This approach enabled us to (a) inductively gain deeper insights into the intrapersonal, social, and situational dynamics involved in the decision of whether or not to negotiate, (b) locate newly identified model components within the model via semantically expressed relationships, and (c) qualitatively explore the model's applicability in an organizational context.

A Model of Negotiation Initiation

Some of the ideas described in this paper were presented at the 50th Congress of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Psychologie, Leipzig, Germany, 2016. The research further draws on a dissertation completed by Julia A. M. Reif at the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universitaet Muenchen. We thank Julia Weiß for her assistance in data collection and Keri Hartman for proofreading our manuscript. We also thank the editor and the reviewers for their helpful, constructive, and concise comments. The research was in parts supported by the "Bayerische Gleichstellungsförderung – Stipendium des Freistaates Bayern zur Förderung der Chancengleichheit für Frauen in Forschung und Lehre" [Bavarian promotion of gender equality - Scholarship of Bavaria to promote equal opportunities for women in research and teaching].

Negotiation initiation can be defined as a person's deliberate decision to begin a negotiation, regardless of whether or not the initiation is successful and the negotiation actually takes place (see Reif & Brodbeck, 2014). In their model of negotiation initiation, Reif and Brodbeck (2014) theoretically explained, why people decide (not) to negotiate. The model draws on two different modes of variables: *cybernetic mechanisms* (discrepancy and affect) and *cognitive considerations* (valence, instrumentality, expectancy): People experiencing *discrepancies* between their current state and a desired state feel unpleasant internal tensions accompanied by *negative affect* such as dissatisfaction or anger, which catalyze behavior and increase people's attempts to reduce the discrepancies (Carver & Scheier, 2019; Diefendorff & Chandler, 2010; Reif & Brodbeck, 2014). This assumption builds on Carver and Scheier's (2019) self-regulatory viewpoint on human behavior: The perception of a discrepancy leads to an "error signal" (Carver & Scheier, 2019, p. 9), which manifests in a subjective, affective response, which is either positive (in case of a positive discrepancy) or negative (in case of a negative discrepancy). The term "cybernetic" (which is also used in the context of mechanical, electronic, or living systems) in this context of human motivation describes a kind of homeostatic control system, which monitors and regulates current conditions against desired conditions in order to keep or reach a condition at an acceptable level (Carver & Scheier, 2019).

Reif and Brodbeck (2014) argued that before initiating actions to reduce discrepancy and negative affect, people evaluate the valence of the negotiation object, the instrumentality of negotiating in terms of costs and benefits, and their expectancy of being successful in the negotiation. *Valence* describes the desirableness, attractiveness, or importance of an object and is a key motivational force directing action towards this object (Van Eerde & Thierry, 1996). *Instrumentality* is defined as an outcome-outcome association, that is, the probability that a certain outcome or accomplishment leads to a second outcome (Van Eerde & Thierry, 1996). Expectancy describes the link between effort and performance, that is, the probability that one can perform a certain activity (Diefendorff & Chandler, 2010), and is a precondition for motivated behavior (Vroom, 1964). This moderated mediation model (affect as mediator; valence, instrumentality, and expectancy as moderators of the relationship between discrepancy/affect and initiation of negotiation) is shown in Figure 1 (solid lines).

Previous research has shown that the perception of a negative discrepancy increased feelings of dissatisfaction, which increased the tendency to initiate negotiations. Expectancy considerations moderated this mediation effect (Reif & Brodbeck, 2017). In the context of gender differences in negotiations, Reif, Kunz, et al. (2019) demonstrated that expectancy and instrumentality were positively related to negotiation initiation.

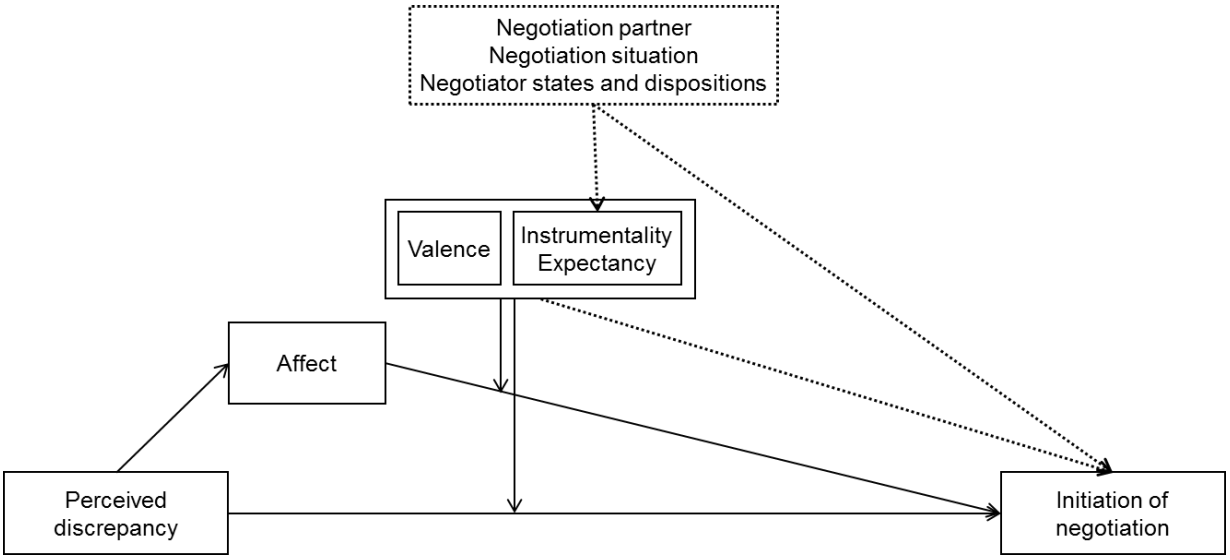
However, previous research has also identified antecedents of negotiation initiation that are not yet explicitly integrated into the model of negotiation initiation. For example, research on negotiation partners and power effects in negotiations has shown that negotiation partners influenced individuals' decision to negotiate (Bowles et al., 2007; Eriksson & Sandberg, 2012; Volkema, 2009) and that powerful people were more likely to initiate negotiations (Kapoutsis et al., 2017; Kapoutsis et al., 2013; Magee et al., 2007). Research on contextual influences has demonstrated that the recognition of negotiation opportunities was positively related to negotiation propensity (Babcock et al., 2006) and that the relationship between expectancy and initiation intentions was shaped by situational framings (Reif, Kugler, & Brodbeck, 2019). Thus, although the general framework of the model of negotiation initiation has been empirically supported, findings on relational and contextual antecedents of negotiation initiation – which, as will be described in the next section, have been identified in organizational contexts as well (e.g., role of negotiation partner and feelings of entitlement) – highlight the need to further extend the model to include transactions between the negotiator and his/her environment.

Initiative Behaviors in Organizational Contexts

Turning next to initiative behaviors at the workplace, such as speaking up, reporting errors, taking charge, or voice behavior, research has identified antecedents in line with assumptions of the model of negotiation initiation, such as cost-benefit considerations (i.e., instrumentality). However, research has also identified antecedents not included in the model, such as the negotiation partner or feelings of entitlement.

Figure 1

A Transactional Model of Negotiation Initiation



Note. Solid lines represent original model components and effects. Dotted lines represent new model components and effects. Evidence for the influence of cybernetic variables (discrepancy, affect) and their combination on the initiation of negotiation was identified in 20% of all 1015 coded statements. Evidence for the direct influence of cognitive considerations (valence, instrumentality, expectancy) on the initiation of negotiation was identified in 32% of all 1015 coded statements. Evidence for the interplay between cybernetic variables and cognitive elements when deciding whether or not to negotiate was identified in 10% of all 1015 coded statements. Evidence for the direct influence of contextual variables (negotiation partner, negotiation situation, negotiator states and dispositions) on the initiation of negotiation was identified in 13% of all 1015 coded statements. Evidence for the combined effects of contextual variables and cognitive considerations (instrumentality and expectancy) was identified in 24% of all 1015 coded statements. In 1% of statements, discrepancy, affect or valence were mentioned in combination with negotiation partner, negotiation situation or the negotiator.

Milliken et al. (2003) found that people associated “speaking up” at the workplace with negative outcomes, such as being labeled or viewed negatively, damaging relationships, retaliation or punishment, or having a negative impact on others. In this way, they investigated concepts similar to instrumentality considerations as formulated in the model of negotiation initiation. Zhao and Olivera (2006) showed that the costs of error reporting at the workplace included, for example, material costs (monetary penalties, suspension, or job loss), damage to one’s personal image, and effort costs (time, cognitive, and physical effort).

Cost-benefit analyses were mentioned as an element of decision-making processes in the context of taking charge (Morrison & Phelps, 1999) and voice behavior (Withey & Cooper, 1989) in organizations.

Regarding voice behavior, Detert and Trevino (2010) discussed the role of the supervisor as negotiation partner in an employee's decision on whether or not to speak up. Employees were particularly likely to feel safe to speak up if they perceived their supervisors as accessible, interested, or open in communication (Edmondson, 1999, 2002), whereas they were afraid to speak up if their supervisors were abrasive, abusive (e.g., insulting, blaming), or ambiguous (e.g., secretive, nonresponsive) (Chen et al., 2015).

In the context of employees' negotiations for idiosyncratic deals, Bal (2018) showed that feelings of entitlement (as one element) influenced employees' decision to negotiate. Similarly, O'Shea and Bush (2002) and Barron (2003) found that the feeling of being worth more, belief that one is qualified enough to request more, or that one is entitled to a higher salary were reasons for initiating negotiations.

Thus, research on initiative behaviors at the workplace has identified similar concepts to those formulated in the model of negotiation initiation (e.g., instrumentality) but also additional concepts (negotiation partner, entitlement) that are not (yet) integrated into the model but would make it more applicable to the organizational setting: As Reif and Brodbeck (2014) argued, the organizational setting might be a fertile ground for validating and further refining the model of negotiation initiation.

Need For a Transactional Model of Negotiation Initiation

In sum, the model of negotiation initiation in its original form (Reif & Brodbeck, 2014) describes an individual's decision process for or against a negotiation from a merely intrapsychic point of view. The antecedents or formation of cognitive-motivational variables which are assumed to be moderator variables in the model are not yet clarified. Considering previous research on the influence of situation and relationship in negotiation situations (e.g., Brett & Thompson, 2016; Elfenbein, 2021), these cognitive variables should vary *intra*individually depending on the (relational) situation and vary *inter*individually depending on dispositions such as personality. The situational, relational, and dispositional influences that may explain this variance have not yet been specified in the model, but could contribute to a deeper understanding of intrapersonal processes (e.g., how a negotiator's considerations of costs and benefits are influenced by power structures or characteristics of negotiation partners) and interpersonal differences (e.g., how a negotiator's expectancy considerations are influenced by the negotiator's personality characteristics) in negotiation situations.

Applying the model to an organizational context offers the opportunity to consider contextual influences such as interpersonal dynamics and thus will allow further developing the model from an intrapsychic model to a transactional model. This extended, transactional model will provide insights into how individual cognitive considerations are formed by specific contextual influences and further clarify the role of dispositions in the initiation process of negotiation. According to a psychological understanding of person-environment transactions (Lazarus & Launier, 1978), these cognitive considerations should neither refer to either the context or the person as the sole determinants, but describe the result of a transactional, dynamic process in which context characteristics and person characteristics are weighed against each other to result in these cognitions. We therefore formulate our research questions:

> ***Research Question 1***. Applicability of Reif and Brodbeck's (2014) model: Can employees' decisions whether or not to initiate negotiations with their supervisors in an organizational context be explained by Reif and Brodbeck's (2014) model?
>
> ***Research Question 2***. Extension of Reif and Brodbeck's (2014) model: Depending on Research Question1, how should Reif and Brodbeck's (2014) model be extended to cover the relational and situational dynamics, as well as individual states and dispositions involved in employees' decisions whether or not to initiate negotiations with their supervisors in an organizational context?

Method

We conducted a qualitative study to explore what topics employees negotiated about with their supervisors and their reasons for (not) initiating negotiations. In doing so, we wanted to inductively gain deeper insights into the intrapersonal, social, and relational dynamics involved in the decision of whether or not to negotiate.

Sample and Sampling

We collected data from 63 employees (57.1% female, mean age = 34.3 years; 92.1% had a university degree; mean tenure = 8.7 years; all subjects were German). Semi-structured face-to-face interviews were conducted with 14 of them. The remaining 49 participants received the interview questions in the form of a questionnaire where they could fill in their open-ended answers (26 received a paper-pencil questionnaire, 23 received an online questionnaire). Using the principle of maximum variation (Miles et al., 2014), we collected a diverse sample in terms of occupations and jobs from different organizations. The maximum variation sampling strategy seemed most useful, as it allowed for heterogeneous sampling encompassing different types of cases, making it possible to capture the variety of this research field. Our sample thus included different industries (among others, 12.7% automotive, 9.5% social service, 7.9% healthcare, 6.4% insurance, 6.4% manufacturing, 6.4% education, 4.8% research, 4.8% service, 4.8% administration), jobs (among others, 25.4% human resources management, 12.7% consulting, 11.1% management, 7.9% education, 6.4% placement, 6.4% research), and educational backgrounds (34.0% economics, 11.3% social work, 11.3% healthcare, 7.6% labor market management, 7.6% pedagogy, 5.7% human resource management, 5.7% cultural science, 3.8% psychology, 3.8% engineering, 9.2% natural sciences, literature, music, philosophy, politics). In the face-to-face interviews, we also obtained information about participants' position: Thirty-six percent had leadership responsibility but answered our questions with regard to their direct supervisors.

We continued conducting face-to-face interviews until no new information was gained, that is, until no new categories emerged from the data. This point of saturation (Bowen, 2008) was reached after 14 interviews (which is in line with research showing that the full range of thematic discovery often occurs within the first twelve interviews, see Guest et al., 2006; and reasonable considering that we coded against a set of preexisting categories). We used open-ended questionnaires for the remaining interviews in order to collect additional evidence on the newly identified constructs, evidence on category patterns, and to balance the gender distribution in the sample. We recruited participants using personal contacts, the e-mail list of a local psychological network, and a master's degree program combining part-time on-the-job training and part-time education. Participation was voluntary and not rewarded monetarily.

Data Collection

The main questions in the interviews and the questionnaire were identical, except for one question which was asked in the interviews only (Table 1, Question 3). The face-to-face interviews were conducted by a student researcher. The interviews took about 60 to 100 minutes and were audio-recorded with the participants' permission. By employing a problem-centered interview style (cf. Witzel & Reiter, 2012), we were able to explore in depth the perspectives, motives, and goals of employees initiating or not initiating negotiations. The questionnaires were distributed by the first author of this study.

Interview Protocol

At the beginning of the face-to-face interviews, the interviewer presented the general content of the research project and collected demographic data. The interviewer assured that the participant's data would be treated confidentially. Two main concerns guided our data collection: First, we aimed to identify situations in which people initiated or did not initiate negotiations with their supervisors. Second, we wanted to explore the reasons and motives for (not) initiating negotiations (see Table 1).

Interview Technique

In accordance with the critical incident technique (Flanagan, 1954), we asked participants to remember a specific situation in which they had initiated a negotiation with their supervisor, to describe this situation in detail, and to remember as many facets as they could. When participants described a situation that fit our definition (an individual's decision to negotiate for advantages, change of circumstances, or any other reason, regardless of whether the initiation is successful and the process actually continues, Reif & Brodbeck, 2014), the interviewer then asked several follow-up questions to delve deeper into *motives* that moved participants towards initiating a negotiation; *processes* within the negotiation initiation phase itself; *facilitating factors* that (would have) helped participants initiate a negotiation in the given situation; and *inhibiting factors*, which (would have) prevented participants from initiating a negotiation. This procedure was also employed and described by Berg et al. (2010). The same series of questions was asked for situations in which participants decided not to initiate a negotiation.

Data Analysis

After transcribing the audio-recorded interviews and handwritten answers from the questionnaires, we started to analyze the data.

Identification of Negotiation Accounts

First, each interview transcript was systematically sifted through to identify accounts of (non-)initiation situations. An account was an employee's story about a (non-)initiation situation, including his or her description, explanation, and interpretation of the situation. Accounts were numbered and labeled either as an initiation situation or a non-initiation situation. To be designated an account, the situations described by the participants had to meet the following criteria: (a) the situation was explicitly labeled as a negotiation, not merely as a discussion or dialogue; (b) the interaction had to take place between the participant (as employee) and his or her supervisor; and (c) the (potential) negotiation had to be initiated by the participant (as employee). All in all, we identified 164 accounts of negotiation situations (110 initiation situations and 54 non-initiation situations), all of which met our criteria and were included in our analysis (which corresponds to an average of 2.6 situations per participant). Of the situations mentioned by men, 73.1% were initiation situations and of situations mentioned by women, 66.1% were initiation situations. The accounts comprised 1103 statements of which 1015 contained information that was coded.

Content Coding and Categorization

Second, we inductively clustered the negotiation situations by negotiation content and categorized the reasons for (not) initiating negotiations. For the latter, we combined deductive and inductive content coding. We derived our general categories from the model of negotiation initiation (Reif & Brodbeck, 2014)

and inductively looked for subcategories that emerged from the data. The deductive categories focused on triggering events, such as situational discrepancies, affective responses, and cognitive-motivational considerations. The coding was conducted by the first author of this study in iterative interaction with the second author. We engaged in several iterations of coding and recoding until we had a stable set of codes. A research assistant who was trained on the categorization system double-coded the data: Interrater reliability, calculated according to the percentage of agreement proposed by Miles et al. (2014), was good (.96).

Table 1

Summary of the Interview Protocol

1. Situations in which a negotiation was initiated
Please recall a situation in which you asked your supervisor if you could talk to him or her. Please tell me more about this conversation. What was it about?
How did you decide to initiate a negotiation with your supervisor? What encouraged you to start a negotiation with your supervisor about this matter? Which arguments spoke against your decision to initiate a negotiation?
2. Situations in which a negotiation was not initiated
Please recall a situation in which you considered asking your supervisor if you could talk to him or her but in the end you did not do so. Please tell me more about this situation. What was it about?
How did you decide not to initiate a negotiation with your supervisor? What kept you from initiating a negotiation with your supervisor? Which arguments would have been in favor of initiating this negotiation?
3. Further (non-)initiation situations [only in face-to-face interviews]
In which further situations did you initiate a negotiation with your supervisor?
In which further situations did you not initiate a negotiation with your supervisor?

Note. The questions were asked verbally in the face-to-face interviews and in written form in the questionnaires.

Patterns of Categories

Third, we investigated patterns of categories to examine the interplay between situational discrepancies, affective responses, cognitive-motivational considerations, and further influencing factors identified with regard to the (non-)initiation of negotiation. To manage this shift from a descriptive to a more conceptual level, we examined and documented based on the transcripts, which categories were reported in combination or weighed against each other within one statement or argumentation structure (Schilling, 2006). In this way, we sought to empirically probe and extend the interplay between the elements posited in the model of negotiation initiation (Reif & Brodbeck, 2014) and newly identified elements.

Results

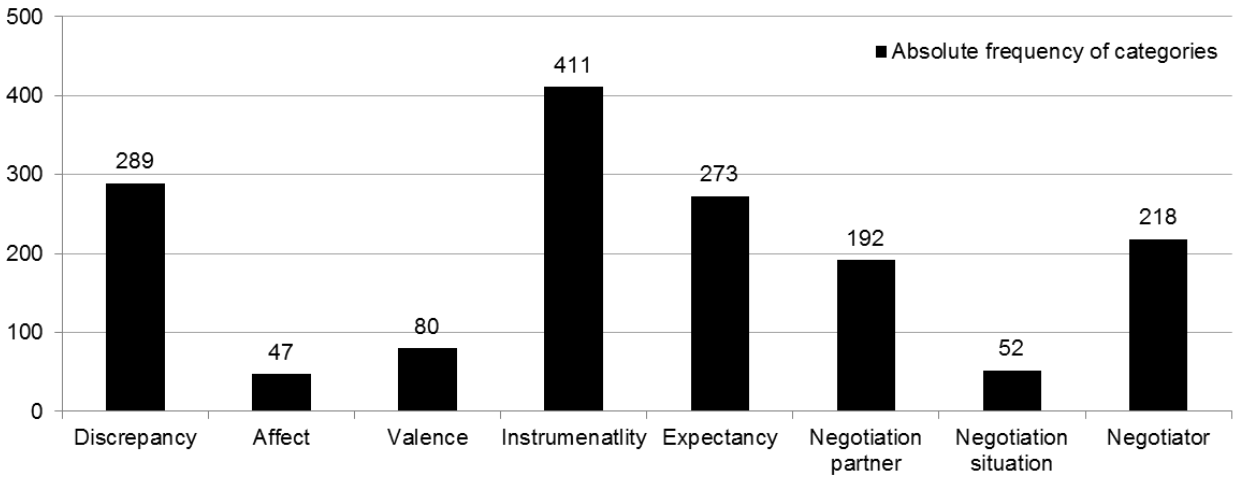
Most employees were able to easily retrieve initiation and non-initiation situations, indicating that they all had experienced negotiation situations with their supervisors. In the following, we will first describe the applicability of Reif and Brodbeck's (2014) model to our data and then describe an extension of their model according to our findings. The results are based on contents and patterns that appeared robustly throughout the data. Categories that turned out to be complex due to their thematic diversity (cf. the categories "discrepancy" and "instrumentality") and categories that showed ambiguous effects (cf. the category "negotiation partner"), are presented in more detail in tables. Quotes were translated in English by the authors.

Applicability of Reif and Brodbeck's (2014) Model of Negotiation Initiation

Reif and Brodbeck (2014) assumed that the effect of discrepancy on negotiation initiation is mediated by affect and that this mediation effect is moderated by cognitive considerations (valence, instrumentality, and expectancy). In the following, we first describe our results regarding cybernetic mechanisms (discrepancy, affect) and then regarding cognitive considerations (valence, instrumentality, and expectancy), in initiation situations and non-initiation situations. Figure 2 shows how often the categories were mentioned in our data (multiple mentions per statement were possible).

Figure 2

Absolute Frequency of Categories



Note. Multiple mentions per statement were possible

Cybernetic Mechanisms Affecting Negotiation Initiation: Discrepancy and Affect

One of the most basic reasons for initiating negotiations was the presence of a perceived negative discrepancy. Employees described the perception of a general negative discrepancy as feeling that something was wrong, that an obvious assumption had been violated, or that their input was greater than their output (#1, #2, #10, #11, #49). Discrepancies referred to compensation, personal and career development, working conditions, vacation, tasks, teamwork and leadership, and strategic issues (see Table 2). In many accounts of non-negotiation situations, "no discrepancy" was mentioned as the reason for not initiating a negotiation

which means that employees perceived an adequate input-output ratio. Employees described the perception of no discrepancy as being comfortable or feeling a high level of well-being (#2). For example, their salary was fair (#7, #14), tasks were interesting and provided opportunities for personal development (#14), conflicts with supervisors did not escalate (#1), the supervisor provided a lot of support (#7), and employees thought that processes and systems were transparent (#2).

Regarding affect, negative emotions that made employees initiate a negotiation or think about negotiating included dissatisfaction, injustice, anger, aggression, rage, frustration, or feelings of being hurt (e.g., #15, #39, #45). However, employees also mentioned negative emotions that inhibited them from negotiating, such as fear or a general negative emotionality (#3, #9, #53). Employees reported positive emotions that made them feel like there was no reason to negotiate: They felt satisfied, content, and treated fairly (#8, #10).

In the employees' descriptions there were also combined effects of discrepancy and affect driving or inhibiting negotiation initiation: Employees talked about negative emotional reactions caused by negative discrepancies. For example, they felt aggressive (#1) or hurt (#5) due to conflicts in the team; angry (#13) or frustrated (#8) if the supervisor did not adhere to an agreement; disappointed or dissatisfied (#9) with regard to their salary, working conditions (#45), or roles (#15); frustrated (#5) due to boring tasks; dissatisfied because they did not receive required information (#11); or treated unfairly if they did not receive opportunities for personal development (#2). Perceiving no discrepancy made employees feel satisfied or treated fairly. This was the case, for example, if their salary was adequate (#7, #10) or if processes or decision-making procedures were transparent and comprehensible (#2). Evidence for the influence of cybernetic variables and their combination on the initiation of negotiation was identified in 20% of all 1015 coded statements.

Cognitive Considerations Affecting Negotiation Initiation: Valence, Instrumentality and Expectancy

Regarding valence, employees were prone to initiate a negotiation if the negotiation issue was of high value to them. They attached great significance to the negotiation issue in terms of attractiveness, interestingness, or importance (e.g., #16, #33). Attributing low valance to the negotiation object (low importance or low relevance, no interest) inhibited employees from initiating a negotiation (e.g., #16).

Regarding instrumentality, employees weighed the potential benefits of a negotiation against its potential costs. Moreover, they weighed the potential benefits of avoiding a negotiation against its potential costs. These instrumentality considerations referred to economic outcomes, relational outcomes, and self-related outcomes. A positive instrumentality, that is, assuming positive consequences of negotiating, no costs of negotiating ("It couldn't get any worse", #38), and negative consequences of avoiding a negotiation, encouraged employees to initiate a negotiation, because they thought that negotiating would help them improve their situation (for details see Table 3a). A negative instrumentality, that is, assuming negative consequences of negotiating, no benefits of negotiating, or positive consequences of avoiding a negotiation, inhibited employees from initiating a negotiation and encouraged them to avoid a negotiation, because they thought that negotiating would worsen their situation regarding economic outcomes, relational outcomes, and self-related outcomes (Table 3b). Relational costs were overrepresented compared to economic and self-related risks (e.g., #8, #9, #12).

Regarding expectancy, a high perceived probability of success in initiating a negotiation or in negotiating, a feeling of certainty, and a feeling of self-efficacy facilitated negotiation initiation ("Well, I basically do things specifically regarding negotiations often when I know that it will lead to success; [...] when I have good prospects." #13). By contrast, if employees perceived no chance of success or no probability of achieving their goals, they were less prone to initiate a negotiation. Evidence for the direct influence of cognitive considerations on the initiation of negotiation was identified in 32% of all 1015 coded statements.

Interplay Between Cybernetic Mechanisms and Cognitive Considerations

Besides cybernetic mechanisms and cognitive considerations driving or inhibiting negotiation initiation, employees also mentioned buffering effects of valence, instrumentality, and expectancy when negative discrepancies (and negative affect) were present. For example, employees felt negative discrepancies combined with negative affect and thought about initiating a negotiation. However, due to anticipated negative consequences (e.g., relational costs, economic costs, self-related costs), low expectancy of being successful (uncertainty), or all in all low valence they finally decided against initiating a negotiation, even though the negative discrepancy was still present (e.g., #1, #2, #8). Evidence for the interplay between cybernetic variables and cognitive elements when deciding whether or not to negotiate was identified in 10% of all 1015 coded statements.

Extending Reif and Brodbeck's (2014) Model of Negotiation Initiation

Besides the categories proposed in Reif and Brodbeck's (2014) model, we identified additional contextual categories affecting the initiation of negotiation. Evidence for the direct influence of these contextual variables on the initiation of negotiation was identified in 13% of all 1015 coded statements. In the following, we describe these newly identified categories and their role as antecedents of cognitive considerations.

The Negotiation Partner Affecting Negotiation Initiation

Employees described different aspects related to the negotiation partner that facilitated their decision to initiate a negotiation, including his/her willingness to negotiate or availability. Positive (e.g., agreeableness) as well as negative (e.g., incompetence) negotiation partner characteristics, high (e.g., mutual trust) and poor (e.g., tense relationship) relationship quality, and a negotiation partner's high (e.g., impact) and low (e.g., inexperienced) power and bargaining position drove employees' negotiation initiation (Table 4, left side).

Aspects related to the negotiation partner which inhibited employees' negotiation initiation included positive (e.g., smart) as well as negative (e.g., disagreeable) negotiation partner characteristics, high (e.g., harmony) and poor (e.g., poor relationship) relationship quality, and a negotiation partner's high (e.g., impact) and low (e.g., no authority) power and bargaining position (Table 4, right side). If employees perceived the negotiation partner to be unwilling to negotiate or knew that he/she was barely available, they also tended not to negotiate.

The Negotiation Situation Affecting Negotiation Initiation

If employees had the opportunity to talk to their supervisors in regularly scheduled meetings (e.g., weekly meetings, annual performance reviews), employees were likely to initiate negotiations in these meetings (e.g., #40, #53). Employees also used job interviews to initiate negotiations with their (future) employers. These situations provided a "natural" setting for negotiations. With regard to workload, employees reported initiating negotiations if their current work situation was rather relaxed and they did not face significant time pressure. Employees hesitated to initiate negotiations if the general economic situation was troubling or if the organization was in financial trouble, as they assumed that it was not appropriate to "ask for more" in such situations. Moreover, they refrained from negotiating if the situation was very hectic and stressful (e.g., #37).

Table 2

Examples of Negative Discrepancy

Negative discrepancy driving negotiation initiation: feeling that something is wrong, that an obvious assumption had been violated, or that one's input was greater than one's output	
Contents of negative discrepancy	*Exemplary quotes*
Compensation • salary is too low in general • perceived lack of reward for extra effort • perceived lack of attractive incentives • lack of travel subsidies	*Reward for extra effort:* "I just organized a big conference for my company (…) about the status of the consumer goods industry and I'm wondering now if I should negotiate with my supervisor, who is responsible for it, if I can charge the company for this activity, like how much I would get paid for this, (…) and if I should get paid for it at all." (#8; also see #6, #13, #30, #47)
Personal and career development Feeling to not yet have sufficient knowledge to • accomplish one's tasks properly • qualify for a promotion • take on a job with more responsibilities	*Responsibilities:* "[I would like to develop further and] assume more responsibility, I would also like to do something different, I have already been in this field for ten years and now I'm reaching a point where I have to say a change would be good." (#14; also see #2, #7, #26, #50)
Working conditions • poor physical working environment • poor work-life balance (e.g., overtime) • misfitting working time arrangements • misfitting work location	*Office furniture:* "(…) the buildings are very beautiful, but we have dark offices and I think this is unhealthy, in my opinion this really affects our health. So I would negotiate there. (….) and there was that desk you could raise, but I did not have one, then I negotiated because of my back and my discs." (#4; also see #3, #5, #6, #9, #10, #28, #45)
Vacation • need for permission to take vacation • timing of vacation • duration of vacation • additional vacation	*Vacation timing:* "I had to struggle a little longer to get three weeks off for our honeymoon. (…) It was during peak season – my wedding was at the end of August – and at the end of September I wanted to [take] a trip (…) And (…) then I said to my supervisor: 'I still have so and so many vacation days and I want to remind you that I have to take them'." (#3; also see #46)
Tasks • high workload • too many different tasks • too many, too few or unclear responsibilities • boring tasks	*High workload:* "(…) I had many very difficult and complicated youth welfare cases. I did not see an end and was very stressed so I had a spontaneous talk with my supervisor who was very accommodating and gave me time to talk relatively quickly, and I told him that this is too much for me and I might not be able to do it (…)." (#1; also see #3, #4, #5, #6, #11, #12, #14, #41, #49)
Teamwork and leadership • inappropriate team composition • negative interaction styles in the team • supervisor's poor communication style • supervisor's lack of reliability • not receiving relevant information • not receiving enough career support • lack of participation in important decisions	*Personal conflict with the team leader:* "(…) then there was that morning, it was a Thursday as far as I remember (…) and then I received that rude email and then I read it and the problem was that I felt I had to justify myself. In fact, you had to justify yourself all the time. And then I opened that email and somehow I thought: 'I just can't do it anymore'. And then I thought: 'Okay, either I'm gonna call in sick – er – (…) or I am gonna change something' (…)." (#5; also see #1, #3, #7, #8, #13, #14, #51)
Strategic issues • strategic direction • change management processes	*Strategic issues:* "(…) let's say [my supervisor] is more a gut feeling guy…, often he just doesn't have time for [strategic issues] (…). [We need] a long-term strategy, ah, one that may be beyond our department's limits but, ah, you usually don't get far with him (…), let's say from my point of view he hasn't focused enough attention on it." (#13; also see #9, #27)

Table 3a
Positive Economic, Relational and Self-Related Instrumentality

Positive instrumentality driving negotiation initiation: benefits of negotiation initiation and costs of negotiation avoidance outweigh costs of negotiation initiation and benefits of negotiation avoidance; no costs of negotiation initiation; considerations refer to economic outcomes, relational outcomes and self-related outcomes.

Types of instrumentality	*Exemplary quotes*
Economic benefits of initiating a negotiation • reaching one's goals • changing one's circumstances • reducing one's discrepancies **Economic costs of avoiding a negotiation** • not changing the situation	"In the end I basically knew that you don't get anything in our organization if you don't ask, and if you do ask, you get a surprising amount, (…) you always have to fight for your rights." (#8; also see #11, #33, #42) "Well, if I don't ask for it, then nothing will change (…) in terms of my personal development opportunities" (#8)
Relational benefits of initiating a negotiation • regularizing one's relationship with the negotiation partner • making oneself heard; capturing attention • delineating new perspectives to the negotiation partner • making the negotiation partner aware of an issue • making the negotiation partner reflect • demonstrating one's negotiation ability and performance • impressing the negotiation partner with good arguments • pointing out (personal) limits to the negotiation partner **Relational costs of avoiding a negotiation** • making a fool of oneself • leaving an inconsistent impression • showing weaknesses of one's character	"[Through this negotiation I have satisfied my need] to send a signal, that I basically do not give up so easily, (…) that I can also stand up for my interests and that we can talk to each other on equal footing." (#8) "I just wanted to tell the supervisor: 'Hey, listen to me, I'm not your puppet'!" (#6, also see #10, #11, #41). "I think that avoiding this negotiation would have been a character weakness and I would expect others to also perceive it as such. So, not negotiating would only have exposed me to ridicule" (#8)
Self-related benefits of initiating a negotiation • gaining insights and clarity about one's own situation • having fun when negotiating • achieving satisfaction • positive feelings regarding oneself • challenging oneself; testing one's strengths • boosting one's ego; testing one's worth • self-affirmation; advancing **Self-related costs of avoiding a negotiation** • losing one's self-worth • not being taken seriously • personal breakdown due to an unchanged situation	"Well, [negotiating is] such a challenge. (…) I mean it's not like a competition between me and the boss, but it's like… solving a puzzle. Yes. So when you have to present a project, on the one hand I am doing it because of the project (…), but on the other hand I just want him to say 'yes'; (…) just as I want to solve a riddle or a crossword puzzle, I want him to say 'yes' (…). It's not about my supervisor, it's rather about myself." (#4, also see #1, #8, #10) "(…) then you have the feeling that you're not being taken seriously, that you have been treated like a little schoolboy (…). That really gives me food for thought…" (#2)

Table 3b

Negative Economic, Relational and Self-Related Instrumentality

Negative instrumentality inhibiting negotiation initiation: costs of negotiation initiation and benefits of negotiation avoidance outweigh benefits of negotiation initiation and costs of negotiation avoidance; no benefits of negotiation initiation; considerations refer to economic outcomes, relational outcomes and self-related outcomes.	
Types of instrumentality	*Exemplary quotes*
Economic costs of initiating a negotiation • worsening one's situation • losing one's job and livelihood	"When negotiating, there is always the risk of … well … of losing everything – one's job, and thus one's livelihood." (#10) "[Negotiating] would have been a career ender" (#47)
Economic benefits of avoiding a negotiation • getting the desired job • not being fired	"I do not want to risk my job because of a negotiation" (#12)
Relational costs of initiating a negotiation • leaving a bad impression and conveying a wrong image (e.g., being weak, lazy, demotivated, untrustworthy, selfish, impudent, too ambitious, disagreeable, megalomaniac) • destroying one's (long-term) relationship with the negotiation partner • losing appreciation; losing face	"Well I fear that (…) I might look bad, (…) like someone who always wants to squeeze every last drop out of something; someone who never does anything without wanting something in return, like an unlikable guy" (#8; also see #1, #2, #7, #9, #10, #11, #12, #14, #24, #36, #46).
Relational benefits of avoiding a negotiation • keeping a solid relationship • not initiating or adding fuel to a severe long-term conflict • not having to criticize the negotiation partner • avoiding unnecessary discussions • "keep being Mister Nice Guy"	"Well, I think (…) I like to avoid such conversations. So, surely, this is a form of conflict avoidance for me…" (#12)
Self-related costs of initiating a negotiation • losing one's dignity, lowering one's self-esteem • having to admit that one is unable to cope with a situation • being exposed to one's own (negative) emotionality • inappropriate self-disclosure • wasting personal resources (time, energy)	"Initiating a negotiation conveys the message of a personal weakness" (#8) "In the beginning I thought of [initiating negotiations] as a kind of weakness, – in fact it's not a weakness, but a strength, if you try to change something –, but I thought, my God, now you're surrendering, you can't go on anymore" (#10; also see #2, #3, #5, #6, #7, #12, #32).
Self-related benefits of avoiding a negotiation • not getting annoyed • retaining one's independence • not having to disclose personal matters • not having to face one's weaknesses • saving personal resources	"I wanted to prove to myself that I could handle the situation without help." (#52) "I would avoid a negotiation to protect my own personality" (#17)

Negotiator States and Dispositions Affecting Negotiation Initiation

As reasons for initiating negotiations, employees discussed factors that were related to their specific circumstances. We will call these factors *negotiator states* due to their circumstantial nature. A good standing (due to previous performance or extraordinary commitment) within the organization made it easier for employees to initiate negotiations. Access to relevant information about the negotiation issue as well as social support by significant others also facilitated their decision to initiate a negotiation. These factors (standing within the organization, information, and social support) had a positive influence on their beliefs about entitlement (employees assumed it was legitimate to negotiate), the quality of their arguments, and their perceived bargaining position. Having the feeling that colleagues did not back them inhibited employees to initiate a negotiation. Moreover, not feeling entitled to negotiate, not being properly prepared, or being in a weak bargaining position negatively influenced employees' decision to negotiate (e.g., #42, # 48, #53).

As reasons for initiating negotiations, employees also discussed factors related to their general attitudes or personality characteristics. We will call these factors *negotiator dispositions* due to their rather stable and enduring nature. Employees with a positive attitude towards negotiating said that negotiating was normal behavior (#2), always worth a try (#5), and that they liked negotiating in general (#4). Regarding personality characteristics, employees mentioned to initiate negotiations due to their proactive, open-minded personality (#13). Some employees had a negative attitude towards negotiating and generally disliked negotiating or thought that negotiating was unpleasant (#7). Some employees also said that initiating a negotiation did not fit their personality (#6), was not their style, or that they were not "salesperson type". Not being very spontaneous, but rather procrastinating and introverted were also associated with a lower tendency to negotiate (#7, #11).

Interplay Between Context and Cognitive Considerations

When systematically investigating combinations of categories, we found influences of negotiator's states on negotiator's expectancy and instrumentality considerations: Employees closely related their expectancy (probability of success, feelings of certainty, and self-efficacy) to entitlement, the quality of their arguments, and their bargaining position which in turn were influenced by the negotiator's standing within the organization, social support received by colleagues or friends, and the amount of information available to the negotiator. Employees who thought that their perceived negative discrepancy was not objectively justified (lack of arguments) did not feel entitled to negotiate and felt that initiating a negotiation could impair how supervisors thought about them (relational costs). In contrast, good standing within the organization, for example due to constant high performance, decreased the anticipated negative consequences. The same held for employees who considered themselves to be in a powerful position. These employees thought that their economic risks from initiating a negotiation were limited.

We also identified influences of the negotiation situation on negotiator's expectancy and instrumentality considerations: Employees talked about having a low expectancy due to a general economic crisis (#9) or having no expectancy of success because negotiating would be inappropriate given the current situation (#9). Furthermore, employee feared making a bad impression by initiating a negotiation (relational costs) if the atmosphere was generally positive (#8).

Influences of the negotiation partner on negotiator's instrumentality and expectancy considerations expressed as follows: The negotiation partner's positive/negative characteristics, his/her high/low power or bargaining position, and a high/poor relationship quality had facilitating effects on the decision to negotiate in some cases and inhibiting effects in other cases. These divergent effects depended on the employee's subsequent cognitive considerations, that is, their interpretation of how the negotiation partner aspects

Table 4

Facilitating and Inhibiting Aspects Regarding the Negotiation Partner

Negotiation partner aspects	**driving negotiation initiation:** aspects related to the negotiation partner are in favor of initiating a negotiation		**inhibiting negotiation initiation:** aspects related to the negotiation partner are unfavorable for initiating a negotiation	
	Contents	*Exemplary quotes*	*Contents*	*Exemplary quotes*
Positive characteristics	• agreeable, cooperative • fair, objective	"I assumed that he would play fair" (#8)	• intelligent, smart, competent • tough appearance	"He was a crafty fox and a negotiation would have been unpleasant…" (#8)
Negative characteristics	• incompetent	"I did not think he was particularly competent." (#8)	• disagreeable, impulsive • low expertise	"She easily becomes rude or impolite." (#4)
High quality of relationship	• knowing each other well • mutual trust	"Knowing each other well makes [negotiating] way easier." (#12)	• good, stable relationship • harmony	"We had a very stable relationship, so I did not negotiate." (#1)
Poor quality of relationship	• lack of mutual respect • tense relationship	"I didn't respect her, so it was ok for me to disagree with her." (#8)	• poor, complicated relationship • not knowing each other well • lack of mutual trust	"I feared she wouldn't understand it because she does not know what exactly I do in my daily work." (#49)
High power and bargaining position	• decision-making power • impact • experience	"I really wanted to take the vacation and he had the authority to approve it." (#46)	• impact • authority	"The authority of my boss was a certain barrier, an inhibition threshold…" (#10)
Low power and bargaining position	• young, inexperienced • less powerful, weak position	"He was a weak counterpart" (#8) "I knew he had a problem and didn't know how to solve it." (#6)	• no decision-making power • no administrative responsibility • no authority	"My boss has not been the only decision maker" (#52). "He was new to the company" (#25)
(No) willingness to negotiate	• open, interested • responsive	"I knew he would lend me an ear; he knew our work, he knew the difficult cases." (#1)	• generally unwilling to negotiate • unwilling to negotiate specific topics • not open to criticism	"When he says 'no way'…short and to the point. That's a signal for me that he is completely unwilling." (#14)
(No) availability	• available • has time	"I also need to feel, yes, I'm not stealing his time." (#7)	• not available • too busy	"Well, he is in meetings with other departments a lot, he is rarely there anyway. And when he is there, he usually has something else to do." (#7)

influenced their instrumentality and expectancy in the respective negotiation situation (for details see Figure 3). Evidence for the combined effects of contextual variables and cognitive considerations (instrumentality and expectancy) was identified in 24% of all 1015 coded statements.

Discussion

We qualitatively examined why employees initiated negotiations with their supervisors in organizations. Using a combined deductive and inductive approach, we identified contents and processes that facilitated or inhibited negotiation initiation, while considering the complex transactions between the negotiator and his/her environment.

Applicability of Reif and Brodbeck's (2014) Model (Research Question 1)

In line with the model of negotiation initiation (Reif & Brodbeck, 2014), employees initiated negotiations when they perceived negative discrepancies (e.g., too low salary, poor working environment) and negative activating affect (e.g., dissatisfaction, anger). The combined effects of discrepancy and affect were weighed against cognitive considerations of valence, instrumentality, and expectancy. Employees did not initiate negotiations if they perceived no discrepancies or no negative affect, or if the activating effects of negative discrepancy and negative affect were buffered by negative instrumentality, no expectancy, or low valence. In sum, the elements and relationships postulated in Reif and Brodbeck's (2014) model showed up in negotiation initiations in organizational contexts.

However, we also identified statements in which people only referred to cognitive considerations, that is, they initiated (avoided) negotiations due to high (low) valance, positive (negative) instrumentality, or high (low) expectancy. This direct impact of cognitive considerations on negotiation initiation has not been considered in the model of negotiation initiation so far. We therefore suggest that cognitive considerations of valence, instrumentality, and expectancy can directly influence one's decision to negotiate and accordingly propose the following model extension:

Proposition 1: Considerations of a negotiation issue's valence directly influence one's decision to negotiate: High (low) valance increases (decreases) the tendency to initiate a negotiation.

Proposition 2: Considerations of a negotiation initiation's instrumentality directly influence one's decision to negotiate: A positive instrumentality (self-related, relational, and economic benefits or no costs of negotiating) increases the tendency to initiate a negotiation. A negative instrumentality (self-related, relational, and economic costs or no benefits of negotiating) decreases the tendency to initiate a negotiation.

Proposition 3: Considerations of expectancy directly influence one's decision to negotiate: High (low) expectancy increases (decreases) the tendency to initiate a negotiation.

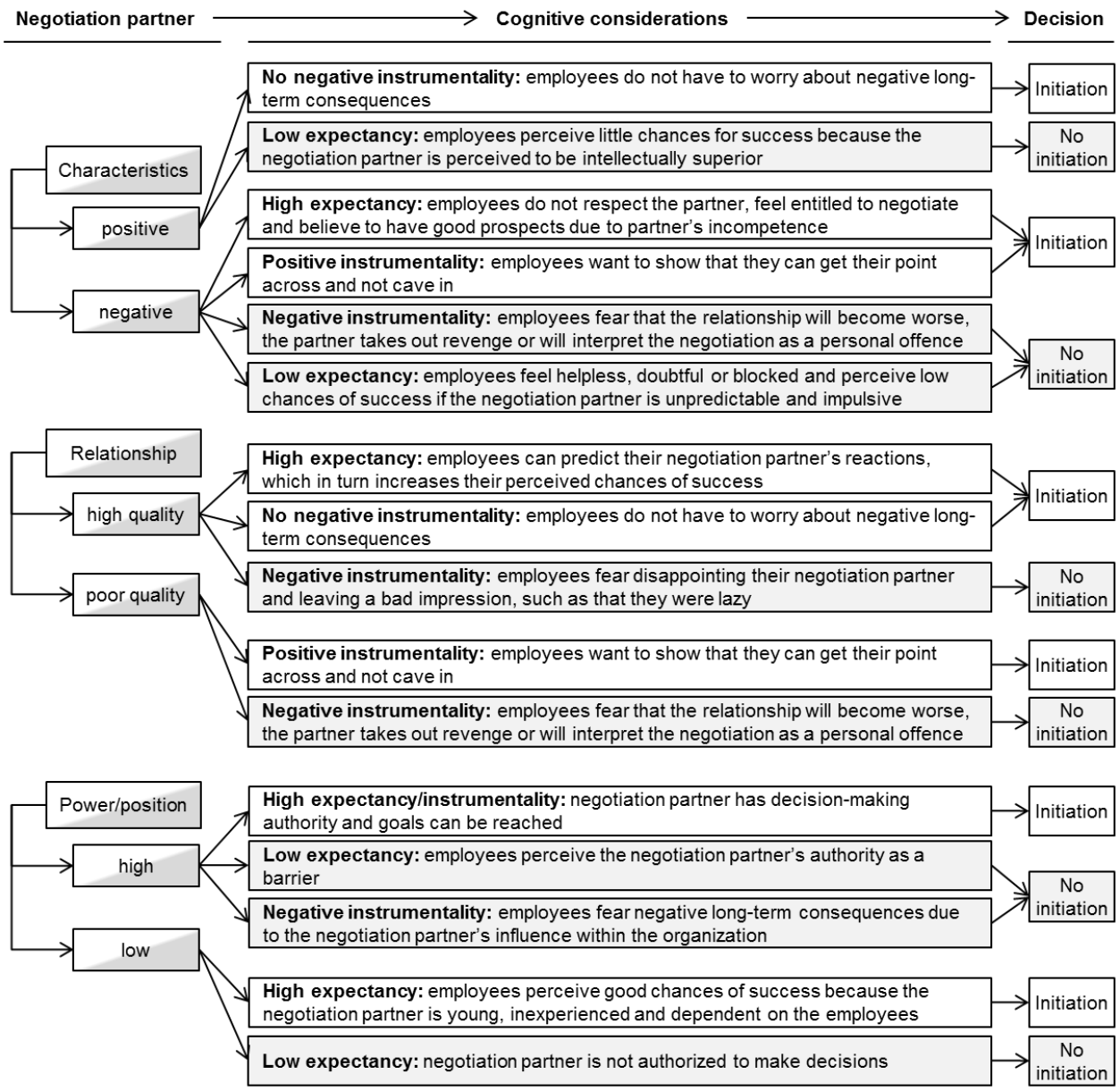
Further Extension of Reif and Brodbeck's (2014) Model (Research Question 2)

Besides cybernetic and cognitive-motivational elements suggested in the original version of Reif and Brodbeck's (2014) model, we identified further contextual influences on negotiation initiations. Aspects related to the negotiation situation and the negotiation partner, as well as the negotiator's states and dispositions were mentioned by employees as reasons for (not) initiating negotiations. We accordingly propose the following model extension:

Proposition 4: Facilitating (inhibiting) aspects of the negotiation partner increase (decrease) the tendency to initiate a negotiation.

Figure 3

Effects of Negotiation Partner Aspects on Cognitive Considerations and the Decision Whether or Not to Negotiate



Note. Grey boxes visualize aspects related to non-initiation. White boxes visualize aspects related to initiation.

Proposition 5: Facilitating (inhibiting) aspects of the negotiation situation increase (decrease) the tendency to initiate a negotiation.

Proposition 6: Facilitating (inhibiting) negotiator states and dispositions increase (decrease) the tendency to initiate a negotiation.

Moreover, the narrative data showed how facilitating (inhibiting) aspects of the negotiation partner, the negotiation situation, and the negotiator him- or herself positively (negatively) influenced expectancy and instrumentality considerations (Figure 3). We accordingly propose:

Proposition 7: Facilitating (inhibiting) aspects of the negotiation partner positively (negatively) influence a negotiator's cognitive considerations (expectancy, instrumentality).

Proposition 8: Facilitating (inhibiting) aspects of the negotiation situation positively (negatively) influence a negotiator's cognitive considerations (expectancy, instrumentality).

Proposition 9: Facilitating (inhibiting) negotiator states and dispositions positively (negatively) influence a negotiator's cognitive considerations (expectancy, instrumentality).

Integrating Propositions 4 – 9, we suggest that:

Proposition 10: The effects of the negotiation partner, negotiation situation, and a negotiator's states and dispositions on the negotiator's tendency to initiate a negotiation are mediated by the negotiator's cognitive considerations (expectancy, instrumentality).

This extended version of the model of negotiation initiation which now includes a transaction between a person's intrapsychic processes and his/her contextual surrounding is shown in Figure 1.

Theoretical Contribution

We qualitatively applied the model of negotiation initiation (Reif & Brodbeck, 2014) to an organizational context and demonstrated the existence of all model components and their interactions. Analyzing semantic relationships between categories, we qualitatively identified the direct, mediating, and moderating effects proposed in the model. We also found evidence for the three different types of instrumentality (economic, relational, self-related) regarding negotiation initiation suggested by Reif and Brodbeck (2014).

We extended the model of negotiation initiation (Reif & Brodbeck, 2014) to a transactional model of negotiation initiation by specifying existing variables, adding new variables, and proposing new relationships between variables. *A specification of different contents of discrepancy* broadens our understanding of negotiation issues in organizations and can be used by negotiation researchers when designing new negotiation scenarios or negotiation tasks. By differentiating between activating (dissatisfaction, injustice, anger, aggression, or rage) and deactivating (fear, general negative emotionality or disappointment) types of negative affect, we showed how behavioral activation and behavioral inhibition processes contribute to the decision whether (or not) to initiate a negotiation. The *new variables* 'negotiation partner', 'negotiation situation', and 'negotiator states and dispositions' enrich the model of negotiation initiation by including the (social) context of action as well as intraindividual influences, which are central to negotiation theory and research (Elfenbein, 2021; Gelfand et al., 2006; Reif, Kunz, et al., 2019). We furthermore *derived new relationships* between variables which we formulated in ten propositions: We suggest contextual factors as further direct antecedents of negotiation initiation and as antecedents of cognitive considerations, which makes cognitions (besides their role as moderators) to mediators, that are supposed to have also independent, direct effects on negotiation initiation. By stressing these person x situation contingencies and interpersonal dynamics, we transform the former model of negotiation initiation into a transactional model of negotiation initiation. This transactional model not only looks for determinants of negotiation initiation in the context and the person, but describes cognitive processes in which the contextual and personal characteristics result, mediating the decision behavior.

We also demonstrated that the cognitive-motivational element valence seems to play a unique role in the model of negotiation initiation (compared to instrumentality or expectancy): Neither the negotiation partner nor negotiation situation, negotiator states, or negotiator dispositions influenced employees' estimations of a negotiation issue's valence. Valence seems to be closely related to the nature of the negotiation issue itself and depend on employees' broader, general motives, needs, and values.

In the sense of a content theory of motivation, we presented negotiation content that drove employees' initiation of negotiations. However, we not only listed these content areas, but integrated them with a process perspective that explains negotiation initiation by combining situational and affective discrepancies with cognitive-motivational considerations. By establishing this tie, we went beyond existing taxonomies of negotiation topics in organizational contexts (such as in Babcock et al., 2006; Kolb & Kickul, 2006) and created a bridge to other conceptualizations of and approaches to initiative behavior at the workplace. The new model could thus contribute to a more integrative understanding of, for example, speaking up, reporting errors, taking charge, or voice behavior in organizations.

Practical Implications

From an employer's perspective, if supervisors listen to their employees' concerns and discrepancies, they can collect a great amount of information about potential problems, conflicts, or suggestions for improvements. In this way, supervisors are able to better adapt to their employees' individual needs and prevent future negative discrepancies. To promote negotiation initiation, supervisors could establish suitable communication channels or opportunities for conversation that make it easier for employees to strike up a conversation with them (also see Berg et al., 2010). Furthermore, supervisors could create workplaces where employees feel safe to engage in voice (Edmondson, 2003), demonstrate their openness to employees' speaking up, and convince them that they are interested in their concerns (Milliken et al., 2003). If employees do not have the possibility to speak up, they might react with cynicism and disengagement (Beer & Eisenstat, 2000; Morrison & Milliken, 2000), which can in turn have serious long-term consequences for employees' relationship with the organization (Milliken et al., 2003). Moreover, by not allowing employees to speak up or signalizing that this behavior is inappropriate, organizations risk overlooking weaknesses, errors, or conflicts, and even losing employees.

From an employee's perspective, initiating a negotiation to bargain for personal advantages can have dramatic effects on an employee's outcomes, performance, and satisfaction (Babcock & Laschever, 2009; Kolb & Kickul, 2006). Initiating a negotiation can help one vent one's emotions, decrease dissatisfaction, and set boundaries in interpersonal relationships or with regard to one's workload and working hours. Not initiating negotiations regarding painful negative discrepancies may result in negative psychological and behavioral consequences. Being adequately prepared, having good arguments, or having access to information and knowledge on the negotiation issue may help employees increase the probability of positive outcomes and decrease the occurrence of negative consequences. Our differentiated discussion of discrepancy topics can provide an overview for employees of what other employees have negotiated about in their organizations.

Limitations and Future Research

Most participants in our sample had a university degree which might narrow our sample in terms of participants' socio-economic status. However, our sample was diverse regarding educational backgrounds, industries, and jobs. In accordance with the spreading-of-alternatives effect (Harmon-Jones & Mills, 1999), employees may have tried to talk up the alternative they had chosen (initiating a negotiation or not initiating a negotiation) by emphasizing this alternative's positive characteristics and devaluing the rejected alternative. However, we tried to overcome this bias by asking in-depth questions about facilitating and inhibiting factors in both initiation situations and non-initiation situations. Our data may also be influenced by social desirability bias, which may have caused employees to present themselves in a positively biased way. Consequently, they may have been more likely to report either initiation situations or non-initiation situations, depending on their understanding of what is appropriate behavior. We tried to

overcome this bias by asking all employees about initiation *and* non-initiation situations. Our results may also be biased regarding the negative consequences of (not) initiating negotiations on the relational level because we only interviewed employees. Thus, we did not investigate what supervisors think about employees who initiate negotiations. Future research should consider and integrate different perspectives on negotiation initiation. Considering the negotiation partner's point of view in future research could also contribute to a more balanced, reciprocal understanding of the role of negotiation partners and respective perspectives on each other's behaviors.

Future research should delve deeper into the different paths stated in the model and explore in which situations the respective paths are most influential regarding a person's decision whether or not to negotiate. Following on from this, future research should investigate whether different constellations of initiation motives have different effects on the further negotiation process and choice of negotiation strategies. A promising path for future research is also to quantitatively examine the propositions derived from our qualitative data. Although we gathered a substantial sample of initiation and non-initiation situations, quantitative research with a larger sample of participants is necessary to analyze moderation and mediation effects using appropriate statistical analyses. Future research should also examine concepts that may be related to negotiation initiation in organizations, such as proactivity, personal initiative, job crafting, taking charge, or voice and silence in order to differentiate and integrate these research streams. The extended, transactional version of the model of negotiation initiation could provide a framework for these endeavors.

Conclusion

In addition to the consideration of intrapersonal cybernetic and cognitive processes, the explanation of negotiation initiation and initiative behaviors in organizations requires an understanding of the transactions between the negotiator and his/her situational, relational, and intrapsychic contextual surrounding. The transactional model of negotiation initiation demonstrates these transactions by showing how individual expectancy and instrumentality considerations are shaped by the negotiation partner, the negotiation situation and the negotiator's states and dispositions.

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Negotiation and Conflict Management Research

Short-Term Effects of Authority Concessions to Terrorist Hostage-Takers: Stability and Generalizability of the Concession Effect

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Abstract

Should authorities concede to the demands of terrorist hostage-takers or not? Making this difficult decision requires accurate knowledge of the consequences of each alternative. A prior study suggested that authority concessions to terrorist hostage-takers reduce casualties among the hostages and overall (Mertes et al., 2020). We term this finding the concession effect. However, this previous study investigated relatively old data on exclusively international terrorist hostage-takings. Outdated findings could impair decision–making in life–threatening situations. Thus, we illuminate the stability and generalizability of the concession effect. We analyzed Global Terrorism Database (START, 2019b) data on domestic terrorist hostage-takings that occurred between 1970 and 2018. As hypothesized, we found that authority concessions increased the likelihood of a successfully completed hostage exchange and reduced the number of overall fatalities. Altogether, our findings suggest that the concession effect is a stable phenomenon that generalizes to domestic terrorist hostage-takings.

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In 2015, the militant group Abu Sayyaf abducted hostages from a tourist resort in the southern Philippines. Among the hostages were R. H. and J. R. from Canada as well as K. S. from Norway. R. H. and J. R. were beheaded after authorities refused to pay ransom. By contrast, K. S. was released after authorities met the terrorists' demands (Al Jazeera, 2016). Incidents like these raise a critical question: Is there a reliable relationship between authority concessions and peaceful conflict resolution in terrorist hostage-takings?

Authorities confronted with terrorist hostage-takings face a difficult and highly debated moral dilemma: Should they concede to the terrorists' demands or not (Borger et al., 2014)? Conceding has downsides from a strategic and political standpoint: Paying ransoms can provide terrorists with the financial means to continue their operations (Callimachi, 2014), provoke future attacks (Arin et al., 2019; Brandt et al., 2016), and ascribe legitimacy to the terrorists, their cause, and their means. Yet, although authorities often doubt that terrorists can be trusted to keep their promises (e.g., Bapat, 2006), fulfilling the terrorists' demands may help to save the hostages' lives, which should not be taken lightly (e.g., Schmid & Flemming, 2010).

Notably, Mertes et al. (2020) provided initial insights into the short-term effects of authority concessions in terrorist hostage-takings. In accordance with *social exchange theory* (SET; Blau, 2017; Homans, 1974), they observed that conceding to terrorist hostage-takers' demands reduced casualties among the hostages and in general. We term this finding the *concession effect*. In the present research, we use data from the *Global Terrorism Database* (GTD; START, 2019b) to conduct a generalizability study (or "conceptual replication"; see Hüffmeier et al., 2016; LeBel et al., 2019) with the same constructs and equivalent hypotheses, but differing operationalizations and a different sample (LeBel et al., 2018). Hereby, we test the stability, generalizability, and replicability of the concession effect. Replicability, or rather the lack thereof, has become a growing concern in specific fields, such as psychology and in science overall (e.g., Lilienfeld, 2017; Nelson et al., 2018). Examining the replicability of the concession effect is particularly important because terrorist hostage-takings pose a major threat to innocent people's lives. Thus, it is critical to have reliable knowledge to best inform authorities' decision-making processes.

By examining the generalizability of the concession effect, our study addresses three important limitations of the initial knowledge on this effect: First, Mertes et al. (2020) only examined *international* terrorist hostage-takings (i.e., hostage-takings in which at least two different nationalities were involved). However, domestic terrorist events are estimated to occur about eight times more frequently than international terrorist events (Enders & Sandler, 2011). Thus, it is unclear whether the concession effect actually generalizes to the majority of cases of terrorist events. Considering the potential costs of concessions to terrorist hostage-takers (see above), knowledge—and not just assumptions—about generalizability should guide the decision–making process. Second, the data analyzed by Mertes et al. (2020) were limited to terrorist hostage-takings that occurred between 1983 and 2005. However, terrorism and government responses to terrorism have undergone changes that might be relevant to the concession effect. For example, the average number of fatalities in terrorist attacks has fluctuated over the years (e.g., Masters, 2008; START, 2019b). Moreover, many countries, including the UN members and the G8 countries, have officially committed to no longer pay ransoms (e.g., Borger et al., 2014; UN General Assembly Resolution 2133; 2014). This raises the question of whether the extant knowledge on the concession effect might be outdated. Once again, the key decision of whether or not to concede should be made based on up-to-date data to prevent the worst-case scenario: making concessions that do not, or no longer, help to save lives. Therefore, to examine the generalizability of the concession effect and to address the limitations of the extant knowledge, in the current study, we used data on domestic terrorist hostage-takings that occurred from 1970 up to 2018. Altogether, by illuminating whether the concession effect generalizes to domestic and recent

cases, we advance the knowledge on the consequences of conceding to terrorist hostage-takers, which may inform authority decision–making.

Third, Mertes et al. (2020) used casualty counts (i.e., the number of individuals who died during the incidents) as a proxy for the degree of violence with which hostage situations were resolved. The problem with counting casualties as recorded in terrorism databases, however, is that the exact circumstances of the deaths are mostly unknown. For example, it is unclear whether a person reported dead is a hostage who was executed after failed negotiations or a bystander who was killed during the initial attack on the hostages. Thus, casualties unrelated to the negotiation and the hostage exchange process may bias the results and complicate their interpretation. We extend past research by analyzing the arguably most informative, relevant, and valid criterion variable reporting the core outcome of the hostage situation: the hostages' fate. Thus, in addition to examining the replicability of an analysis using casualty counts, we analyze whether the hostage situation ended specifically with the hostage-takers killing or releasing the hostages. This criterion variable allows for a more focused test and unambiguous interpretation of the effect of authority concessions on the likelihood of peacefully completed hostage exchanges—the key research question in this emerging domain of research (Mertes et al., 2020).

Terrorism and Hostage-Takings

According to the revised academic consensus definition, *terrorism* is "on the one hand [...] a doctrine about the presumed effectiveness of a special form or tactic of fear-generating, coercive political violence and, on the other hand, [...] a conspiratorial practice of calculated, demonstrative, direct violent action without legal or moral restraints, targeting mainly civilians and non-combatants, performed for its propagandistic and psychological effects on various audiences and conflict parties" (Schmid, 2011, pp. 86-87). Schmid (2011) elaborated that acts of terrorism (a) are politically motivated, (b) involve the use or threat of violence, (c) can be carried out by individuals, groups, or international networks, who can act on behalf of or be supported by a state, (d) target civilians or non-combatants who are immediate victims, but typically not the ultimate target, (e) intend to spread fear or intimidate a population or conflict party to achieve favorable outcomes for the terrorists, and (f) are usually part of campaigns that serve long-term goals.

In terrorist *hostage-takings*, terrorists abduct innocent people and threaten to kill them unless authorities fulfill their demands (e.g., ransoms, release of prisoners, or political change; Wilson, 2003). Hostage-takings can be categorized as *kidnappings*, *hijackings*, and *barricade situations* (e.g., Faure & Zartman, 2010). In kidnappings, terrorists abduct the hostages and hold them captive in an unknown location. In hijackings, terrorists take control of an airplane or other means of transportation, making the passengers their hostages. In barricade situations, the terrorists barricade themselves together with the hostages in a known location, typically besieged by authority forces. Hostage-takers are not always terrorists, but sometimes "ordinary" criminals. However, criminal hostage-takings differ from terrorist hostage-takings in several ways: Criminal hostage-takers usually are neither politically motivated nor part of networks or state-sponsored groups. In addition, criminal hostage-takings are typically "standalone" events that serve no superordinate goal other than to receive what was demanded, whereas terrorist hostage-takings typically also involve long-term goals (see above). In this manuscript, we focus on terrorist hostage-takings.

Prior Research on Hostage Situation Outcomes

Few studies have attempted to describe and explain the outcomes of terrorist hostage-takings (Wilson, 2019). Most of these studies treated authority concessions to terrorists as the solution and end point to the hostage-taking situation (e.g., Atkinson et al., 1987; Friedland & Merari, 1992), investigating antecedents of authority concessions or the decision-making process leading to authority concessions. However, it is important to stress that the hostage situation may not be actually resolved when authorities have decided whether or not to concede, but, rather, when the fate of the hostages is decided (i.e., when the hostages have been released or killed). Thus, we focus on the *consequences* of authority concessions below (for the literature on antecedents, see Atkinson et al., 1987; Gaibulloev & Sandler, 2009; Lapan & Sandler, 1988; Sandler & Scott, 1987).

Friedland and Merari (1992) investigated factors associated with violent and non-violent outcomes in hijackings and barricade situations. The authors defined non-violent outcomes as incidents in which either the terrorists surrendered peacefully or the authorities made partial or complete concessions. Due to this confounding, their study cannot clearly speak to the relationship between authority concessions and safe hostage release.

Donohue and Taylor (2003) also investigated hijackings and barricade situations. They coded the actions of both parties in hostage incidents using specific scales, including a scale for the terrorists' hostage release behavior (coded 0 = *retention*, 1 = *release women/children*, 2 = *release some passengers*, 3 = *release all passengers*) and another scale for the authorities' conciliation behavior (coded 0 = *attrition*, 1 = *offers*, 2 = *concessions*, 3 = *allowed escape*). The authors found a small to medium-sized correlation (r = .28) between these scales. However, the scale measuring the authorities' conciliation behavior is described as reflecting "the actions of the authorities in response to the terrorists" (i.e., their hostage release behavior, among others; Donohue & Taylor, 2003, p. 536). Thus, it is unclear whether the significant correlation can be interpreted as evidence that authority concessions led to safe hostage-releases or as evidence that initial releases of hostages made authorities less reluctant to concede. It should also be considered that neither of these studies investigated kidnappings, which are structurally different from hijackings and barricade situations (see above) and make up the majority of hostage situations (START, 2019b).

In his Government Capitulation Model, Corsi (1981) theorized that terrorists would agree to release the hostages unharmed once the government conceded to all demands. However, his empirical analysis of this tenet was restricted to a total of four barricade situations in which government capitulation led to a safe release of the hostages. Thus, the available evidence was clearly limited.

Mertes et al. (2020) investigated the effects of authority concessions on short-term consequences in the form of (hostage) casualties. Analyzing ITERATE data on international terrorist hostage-takings that occurred between 1983 and 2005, they compared (hostage) casualty counts between cases in which the authorities fulfilled none, some, or all of the terrorist hostage-takers' demands. Their results showed that even partial fulfillment reduced the number of hostage casualties, and a complete fulfillment reduced the number of casualties in general. These effects were mediated via reciprocated concessions that the terrorists made to the authorities. This study provided first evidence that terrorist hostage-takers adhere to commitments and even reciprocate concessions to facilitate negotiated agreements.

The research by Mertes et al. (2020), however, was once again limited. First, by focusing on data from the ITERATE database, Mertes et al. (2020) only analyzed international terrorist hostage-takings. This raises questions about the generalizability of their concession effect to purely domestic terrorist hostage situations. This is an important limitation because, according to estimations,

domestic terrorist events occur about eight times more frequently than international terrorist events (Enders & Sandler, 2011). Second, Mertes et al. (2020) analyzed data limited to terrorist hostage-takings from the years 1983 to 2005. This limitation is problematic because the nature of terrorism itself and the procedures of both authorities and terrorist hostage-takers may have changed in recent years. Given the fatal threat that terrorist hostage-takings pose to innocent people, our understanding of the effects of concessions to terrorist hostage-takers should be based on data including recent cases to account for current developments. Third, and especially notably, the criterion variables that Mertes et al. (2020) used (i.e., casualty counts) do not allow for an unambiguous interpretation of their findings. When a person is reported as dead in databases such as the ITERATE, the circumstances of their death are unclear. As a result, it is unknown whether and in how far casualties were related to the outcome of the negotiation process (see above).

Terrorist Hostage-Takings as Situations of Social Exchange

SET does not refer to a single theoretical model but rather to a family of related theories (Blau, 2017; Foa, 1971; Homans, 1974; Mitchell et al., 2012; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959; 1978). The broad scope of the theoretical framework allows for application to a wide variety of situations, such as workplace behavior (e.g., Bishop et al., 2000), religion (Corcoran, 2013), and terrorist hostage-takings (Mertes et al., 2020). Yet, SET was initially not meant to explain the outcomes of "extreme" and violent events. Thus, the SET framework and its boundaries need to be extended to account for terrorist hostage-takings. Given that terrorist hostage-takings constitute a very specific kind of exchange situation, we will explain how we extend SET to terrorist hostage-takings below.

A social exchange takes place when an *actor* (i.e., a party participating in an exchange) seeks to attain resources that another actor controls (Molm et al., 2000). Actors need to participate voluntarily for the exchange to be considered social (Blau, 2017). As Mertes et al. (2020) noted, authorities are not under physical coercion themselves and can choose to engage in an exchange with the hostage-takers or not, even though refusing to engage may have negative consequences. In terrorist hostage-takings, the terrorists seek to gain from an exchange with the authorities. Hostage-exchanges qualify as *negotiated exchanges* (e.g., Molm, 2003). The specific terms under which the actors exchange resources in discrete bilateral transactions are agreed upon in a *negotiation*, which represents an attempt to resolve a conflict through discussion (see Pruitt & Carnevale, 1993). This means that the parties involved in the exchange know what they are expected to contribute and what they can expect in return (Molm, 2003). These negotiations are initiated when terrorists make demands and thereby declare which resources they want to receive in an exchange with the authorities.

Foa (1971) established a taxonomy of exchangeable *resources*, which comprises (a) money, (b) goods, (c) services, (d) information, (e) status, and (f) love. Most of the demands typically made by terrorist hostage-takers can be located in these six categories. These demands typically consist of ransoms, release of (specified or unspecified) political prisoners, safe conduct, publicity, political change, and political recognition (Wilson, 2000; Wilson, 2019). Foa (1971) describes the resources on two dimensions: *concreteness* (i.e., how tangible the resource is) and *particularism* (i.e., how universal the value of the resource is). For example, money classifies as a moderately concrete and highly universal resource because it can be tangible or intangible and its value is independent of who provides it. Love, on the other hand, classifies as low on concreteness and universalism because it is intangible and may be valued coming from a certain source, but not others.

One resource relevant to hostage situations that is not described in Foa's (1971) taxonomy is human life. Please note that we do not, by any means, intend to devalue human life by describing

people (or their lives) as "resources." However, to understand a hostage-taking within the context of SET, it is necessary to define hostages as the resource that terrorists contribute to the exchange (thus, "resource" is a purely technical term that follows from the SET framework). On the dimensions advanced by Foa (1971), hostages differ from any other resource because they are highly concrete and particular: They are valuable to the authorities, but not necessarily to the terrorists. The value that terrorists ascribe to hostages depends on what authorities are willing to concede in order to ensure their safe release. This is reflected in the fact that terrorists almost universally threaten (and often proceed) to kill the hostages if the authorities do not meet their demands. In doing so, they do not only deprive the authorities of the resource, but destroy it entirely. It is noteworthy that although it is not always explicitly demanded (e.g., in the form of political acceptance), status is always part of exchanges with terrorist hostage-takers because accepting terrorists as negotiation partners ascribes legitimacy to their means and cause (Mertes et al., 2020; Toros, 2008). Terrorists may, however, also experience a change in status due to the mere media coverage of hostage-taking events (see also Wilson, 2019).

Interdependence theory (as a part of the broader SET framework) can be used to theorize how actors adapt their behavior as a result of the experiences they make in social interactions (Thibaut & Kelley, 1959; 1978). This requires an understanding of the situation and the actors. In the context of interdependence theory, terrorist hostage-takings are characterized by high levels of interdependence. For the terrorists to get what they demand, the authorities must concede. For the authorities to recover the hostages safely, the terrorists must let the hostages go unharmed. Thus, both parties can only achieve their goals through an exchange (see also Sandler & Scott, 1987). This exchange typically takes place in a sequential process in which the authorities have to concede first, which leaves room for the terrorists to hold up their end of the bargain or not. Both parties know about their interdependence and the opportunities that will be made available or eliminated through their actions. However, they do not know about the other party's motives (e.g., the terrorists do not know whether the authorities maintain negotiations to prepare for a military strike and the authorities do not know whether the terrorists intend to kill the hostages for publicity). Due to the way the terrorists acquire the resources they bring to the exchange (i.e., the hostages; see above), the interests of both parties cannot be aligned. By taking hostages, terrorists violently and wrongfully acquire resources in order to coerce authorities into participating in an exchange.

Interdependence theory assumes that behavioral adaptations are the result of experienced gratification and satisfaction (or the lack thereof). Although both parties can achieve their goals by exchanging resources with each other, only the hostage-takers stand to gain from the exchange, whereas the authorities incur a net loss (Mertes et al., 2020). Thus, after a successful hostage exchange, terrorists are more likely to experience satisfaction and to engage in more hostage-takings with these or other authorities in the future (see also Arin et al., 2019; Brandt et al., 2016). By contrast, authorities are unlikely to experience any satisfaction and, thus, will not seek to exchange with these (or other) hostage-takers again unless the hostage-takers' actions make it necessary (i.e., if they take hostages again). The same principle can be applied to other outcomes of hostage exchanges: When authorities refuse to concede, terrorists may adapt their behavior to reduce the frequency with which they engage in hostage-takings because they experience less or no satisfaction (see also Brandt et al., 2016). When authorities concede, but the terrorists kill the hostages anyway, authorities may adapt their behavior to no longer concede to these or any other terrorist hostage-takers.

In turn, a key proposition in SET is that actors choose to perform those actions that promise the highest likelihood of maximizing the value that they receive (Emerson, 1976; Homans, 1974). Following this notion, Mertes et al. (2020) argued that the most rational course of action for terrorist hostage-takers would be to release the hostages after their demands have been fulfilled. Killing the

hostages upon having their demands fulfilled could yield short-term benefits, such as publicity to intimidate a broader audience (see also Schmid, 2011), but doing so could also decrease their chances of authorities conceding to future demands and additionally make them the target of military action (see also Bapat, 2006; Pronin et al., 2006). Conversely, releasing the hostages could contribute to the terrorists' reputation as reliable negotiators, so that authorities might become less reluctant to engage in future exchanges. Based on this theoretical rationale, making concessions is proposed to lead terrorist hostage-takers to release the hostages safely—a mechanism that should overall lead to more completed exchanges with fewer casualties as compared to when no concessions are made.

H1. Authority concessions to terrorist demands are negatively linked to the likelihood of the hostage-situation ending with the hostages being killed (rather than released).

H2. Authority concessions to terrorist demands are negatively linked to the number of fatalities in a hostage-situation.

Method

Below, we report how we determined our sample size, all data exclusions, and all measures (Simmons et al., 2012).

Preregistration

This study was preregistered at the Open Science Foundation (http://osf.io). The preregistration is accessible under https://osf.io/r4aun. All deviations from the preregistration are disclosed. To follow Mertes et al.'s (2020) approach as closely as possible, we originally included a preregistered hypothesis stating a negative relationship between authority concessions and property damages in the hostage-taking situation. However, the GTD, just like the ITERATE (Mickolus et al., 2006) as used by Mertes et al. (2020), offers insufficient data on property damages to enable meaningful statistical analyses. This was not known at the time of the preregistration. Thus, for the sake of conciseness, we dropped this hypothesis and all related reasoning from the manuscript.

We also initially preregistered a second study, which aimed to extend the findings by Mertes et al. (2020) using the rest of the data available in the ITERATE database (1968-1982). This preregistration is accessible under https://osf.io/wyt3e. However, due to differences in the data structure between the 1968-1977 and 1978-1982 segments of the ITERATE, which were unknown at the time of preregistration, we could not process the data to enable a combined analysis. Both segments yielded insufficient cases for meaningful statistical analysis when analyzed separately. Consequently, we did not conduct this planned second study.

Data Source

We used data from the GTD (START, 2019b), a database that has been used in many studies since its establishment (e.g., Findley & Young, 2012; Freytag et al., 2011).[1] In the GTD's definition, a terrorist attack is "the threatened or actual use of illegal force and violence by a non-state actor to attain a political, economic, religious, or social goal through fear, coercion, or intimidation" (START, 2019a; pp. 10-11). For an event to be recorded in GTD, it has to be intentional, entail some level of violence or immediate threat of violence, and the perpetrators must be sub-national (i.e., groups

[1] A comprehensive list of publications using GTD data can be accessed as per https://www.start.umd.edu/.

within states) actors. Furthermore, at least two of the following three criteria must apply: (a) The act must be aimed at attaining a political, economic, religious, or social goal; (b) there must be evidence of an intention to coerce, intimidate, or convey some other message to a larger audience than the immediate victims; (c) the act must be outside of the context of legitimate warfare activities. Events not matching at least two of these three criteria are still recorded in the database, but flagged accordingly. Thus, as the GTD's working definition of terrorism shares most of its attributes with the revised academic consensus definition (see above; Schmid, 2011), the GTD appears to represent a suitable database for examining our hypotheses.

Data in the GTD stem from publicly available, unclassified sources such as media articles, electronic news archives, existing datasets, books, journals, and legal documents (START, 2019a). Inclusion in the database requires events to be reported by at least one high-quality source. The GTD defines such high-quality sources as "those that are independent (free of influence from the government, political perpetrators, or corporations), those that routinely report externally verifiable content, and those that are primary rather than secondary" (START, 2019a; p. 9). In total, the GTD lists 192,212 terrorist events that occurred between 1970 and 2018. In the GTD, data on terrorist demands and authority concessions are restricted to ransoms. No other demands (e.g., release of prisoners, publicity) are systematically recorded, and authority concessions to such demands are not documented.

Sample

To maximize statistical power, we included all available data matching the following inclusion criteria: First, we only included hostage-related events (i.e., kidnappings, hijackings, and barricade situations). The GTD uses three different variables to determine terrorist incident types: "*attack type 1*," "*attack type 2*," and "*attack type 3*." Attack types are sorted in a hierarchical classification (i.e., highest to lowest priority): (a) assassination, (b) hijacking, (c) kidnapping, (d) barricade incident, (e) bombing/explosion, (f) armed assault, (g) unarmed assault, (h) facility/infrastructure attack, and (i) unknown. In cases where multiple attack types apply, the attack type with the highest priority is recorded as attack type 1, the one with the second highest priority is recorded as attack type 2, and so forth. As only assassinations are higher in priority than the three kinds of hostage-related events, a hostage-related attack type is bound to appear on either attack type 1 or attack type 2 at the latest. Thus, we included all cases that were recorded as hostage-related events on either of these variables (i.e., attack type 1 and 2).

Second, we only included cases in which it is clear that the hostage-taking was a terrorist act. The GTD includes the variable "*doubt terrorism proper?*" to record potential uncertainty as to whether an incident meets the necessary criteria for clear classification as terrorist acts (see the Data Source section above). Third, we only included logistically "successful" hostage-takings, in which the terrorists managed to take at least one hostage. Fourth, we included only cases in which the hostage-takers made ransom demands (see the Authority concessions section below).

Fifth, we included only domestic terrorist hostage-takings. The GTD records whether hostage-takings are domestic or international in four different variables: (a) "*International (logistical)*" records whether the perpetrators crossed a border to carry out the attack; (b) "*international (ideological)*" records if the perpetrator group attacked a target of a different nationality or not; (c) "*international (miscellaneous)*" records whether the incident was international on either the logistical or the ideological dimension, but does not require specific information on which nations were involved; (d) "*international (any of the above)*" records whether the incident was logistically, ideologically, or miscellaneously international. Notably, due to similarities in the data collection procedures for both

the GTD and the ITERATE database, international cases are likely to be included in both databases. Thus, we refrained from using international cases to ensure independence of samples between the current study and the study by Mertes et al. (2020) that used the ITERATE database. Specifically, we used the "international (any of the above)"-variable (see above) for excluding international cases because its definition of internationality is as liberal as the ITERATE's working definition of internationality, which states that at least two different nationalities must be involved (see also Mertes et al., 2020).

Our approach to the GTD data yielded $N = 403$ incidents. However, due to missing data on the criterion, predictor, and control variables, none of our analyses below features all of these 403 cases. Thus, to be fully transparent in our reporting, we describe (a) the number of valid cases available for each variable (see Table 1) and (b) the number of cases with which each analysis was conducted (see Tables 2, 3, and 4).

Variables

If not stated otherwise, data were used and analyzed as recorded in the GTD. We describe all recordings and transformations applied to the data below.

Fatalities

This variable records the total number of individuals who died during the hostage-taking incident (see also Young, 2019). We used this variable to conduct the closest possible replication of the analysis provided by Mertes et al. (2020) in a different context: domestic terrorist-hostage takings. The number of fatalities as recorded in the GTD is equivalent to the number of casualties as recorded in the ITERATE used by Mertes et al. (2020).

Hostage Situation Outcome

The GTD provides the variable "*kidnapping/hostage outcome*," which records the fate of the hostages. In its original form, values on this variable represent the following outcomes: 1 = *attempted rescue*, 2 = *hostage(s) released by perpetrators*, 3 = *hostage(s) escaped (not during rescue attempt)*, 4 = *hostage(s) killed (not during rescue attempt)*, 5 = *successful rescue*, 6 = *combination*, 7 = *unknown*. We recoded this variable into a new, dichotomous variable with the following values: 0 = *hostage(s) killed (not during rescue attempt)* and 1 = *hostage(s) released by perpetrators*. On this new variable, all other categories from the original variable were coded as missing information. This allows us to provide a neat test of the effect of authority concessions on the likelihood of a completed hostage exchange.

This variable has several advantages over casualty/fatality counts (see the Fatalities section above). The variable "fatalities" records the number of lives lost during the terrorist hostage-taking irrespective of the exact circumstances of death. Thus, it is unclear (a) how many of the reported fatalities were hostages, (b) when they died, and (c) whether they were killed by the hostage-takers because of failed negotiations. These uncertainties clearly complicate the interpretation of findings with regard to the hypothesized concession effect. However, the variable "hostage situation outcome" clarifies these issues and, thus, allows for unambiguous interpretations because (a) it describes the fate of the hostages, (b) it describes how the hostage situations ended, and (c) it only records outcomes that can be directly attributed to the actions of the hostage-takers. This makes the "hostage situation outcome" arguably the most informative and specific criterion variable for examining the concession effect.

Authority Concessions

We calculated the degree to which the authorities fulfilled the terrorists' ransom demands by dividing the "*total ransom amount paid (in USD)*" by the "*total ransom amount demanded (in USD)*." We multiplied the result by 100 so that numbers can be interpreted as percentages. We excluded cases in which ransom demands were recorded as $0. These implausible demands likely result from the GTD's data recording approach: When there are conflicting reports and no ransom amount is backed by a majority of independent sources, the lowest reported figure is recorded (START, 2019a). This operationalization of authority concessions differs from the operationalization used by Mertes et al. (2020). In their study, authority concessions were operationalized as a nominal variable recording whether the terrorists received none of their demands, some of their demands (i.e., more than nothing but less than everything), or all of their demands. Our operationalization only accounts for ransom demands, but allows for a more fine-grained analysis.

Control Measures

Following Mertes et al.'s (2020) procedure, we included several variables that might influence the outcome of a hostage-taking situation as potential control variables.

Year

This variable records the year in which the hostage-taking was initiated. We included the year because of the possibility that the outcomes of terrorist incidents change over time. For example, the average number of fatalities (per incident) in terrorist attacks has fluctuated over time (Masters, 2008; START, 2019b).

Total Duration in Hours

This variable records the total duration of the incident in hours. We calculated this variable by multiplying the "*days of kidnapping/hostage incident*" by 24 and adding the "*hours of kidnapping/hostage incident*" to the resulting product. A longer duration might affect the outcome of the hostage-taking situation: For example, Gaibulloev and Sandler (2009) found longer incident durations to be positively associated with negotiation "success" (i.e., the authorities fulfilling the terrorists' demands). Terrorists might experience increasing pressure to act on deadlines set during the negotiations, whereas authorities might face bad press when hostage-takings endure.

Number of Hostages

This variable records the total number of individuals who were successfully taken hostage. In situations with a higher number of hostages, more lives are at stake. As a result, the authorities may be under higher pressure to fulfill the terrorists' demands (e.g., Gaibulloev & Sandler, 2009). This, in turn, could influence the outcomes of the hostage-takings.

Number of Perpetrators

This variable records the number of perpetrators who were part of the attack force. The higher the number of parties involved in a team, the more individual interests need to be integrated (see also

Thompson, 2009). Consequently, larger teams might require more communication and coordination to find consensus (see also Thompson, 2009), which could lower the likelihood of reaching an agreement. Another consideration is that trust in an opposing team is determined by the amount of trust in the opposing team's leadership or in the least trusted member (Naquin & Kurtzberg, 2009; see also Hüffmeier et al., 2019). A greater number of terrorists in the attack team might thus increase the likelihood of having a team member that is perceived as untrustworthy, thereby decreasing the overall level of trust. As a result, authorities might become more hesitant to make concessions (see Bapat, 2006).

Results

Table 1 shows descriptive statistics and intercorrelations for all variables of this study.

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis 1

Hypothesis 1 stated that authority concessions to terrorist demands would be negatively linked to the likelihood that the hostage situation ends with the hostages being killed (vs. released) by the perpetrators. To test this hypothesis, we conducted a logistic regression analysis with the hostage situation outcome as the binary criterion variable and authority concessions as the metric predictor (n = 71). Please note that due to the way the hostage situation outcome variable is coded, we tested for a positive relationship between authority concessions and hostage releases rather than a negative relationship between authority concessions and hostage executions. The results are presented in Table 2, Model 1. The model was superior to the null-model, omnibus-test: $\chi^2(1) = 9.68$, $p = .002$. Following Nagelkerke's R^2, the model explained 20.2 percent of variance, which constitutes a medium-to-large sized effect. Our finding showed that authority concessions had a significant influence in the hypothesized direction: The higher the degree of demand fulfillment, the higher was the likelihood of the hostages being released rather than killed by the perpetrators. The effect size e^b is the odds ratio, which indicates how the likelihood of the hostages being released safely changes when the degree of demand fulfillment increases by one percent.

An odds ratio greater than 1 indicates that the likelihood increases, whereas an odds ratio smaller than 1 indicates that the likelihood decreases. The deviation of the odds ratio from the value one can be interpreted as a percentage change in the likelihood. For this analysis, we find that a one-percent increase in demand fulfillment increases the likelihood of a safe hostage release by 2.4 percent. This finding supports Hypothesis 1.

Hypothesis 2

Hypothesis 2 stated that authority concessions to terrorist demands would be negatively linked to the number of fatalities in a hostage-situation. As the number of fatalities is available as count data, we conducted a negative binomial regression analysis with the number of fatalities as the criterion variable and authority concessions as a metric predictor (n = 121). The results are presented in Table 3, Model 1. The omnibus-test showed that the model was superior to the null-model, $\chi^2(1) = 3.89$, $p = .049$. Authority concessions were a significant predictor of fatalities: The higher the degree of demand fulfillment, the fewer people were killed during the incident. The odds ratio indicates that

a one-percent increase in demand fulfillment reduces the likelihood of a fatality occurring by one percent.2 This finding supports Hypothesis 2.

Sensitivity Analyses

We conducted a series of sensitivity analyses to test the robustness of our findings. For instance, the results regarding fatalities described above might be driven by influential cases (i.e., hostage-takings situations with high numbers of fatalities). To address this issue, we dichotomized the number of fatalities (0 = *there were no fatalities*; 1 = *there was at least one fatality*) to test the robustness of the analysis of Hypothesis 2 presented above. We ran a logistic regression analysis using this dichotomized variable as the criterion variable and authority concessions as the predictor (n = 121; see Table 4). The model was superior to the null model, omnibus-Test: $\chi^2(1) = 6.36$, $p = .012$. Following Nagelkerke's R^2, the model explained 7.4 percent of variance, which constitutes a small-to-medium sized effect. The results showed that authority concessions were a significant predictor of fatalities: The higher the degree of demand fulfillment, the lower the likelihood of a hostage-taking resulting in at least one (vs. no) fatalities. A one-percent increase in demand fulfillment decreased the likelihood that there was at least one fatality by 1.3 percent. This finding, again, supports Hypothesis 2.

Control Variables

As recommended by Becker (2005), we used significant intercorrelations to identify potentially relevant control variables. As can be seen in Table 1, we found a significant positive correlation between the year in which the incident took place and the hostage situation outcome. We also found significant positive correlations between both the number of hostages as well as perpetrators and the number of fatalities. Thus, we reran the analyses testing Hypotheses 1 and 2 including these variables.

Hostage Situation Outcome

Rerunning the logistic regression with the hostage situation outcome as the criterion variable and authority concessions as the predictor including the year as a control variable showed similar results (n = 71; see Table 2, Model 2). The model was superior to the null-model, omnibus-test: $\chi^2(2) = 10.03$, $p = .007$. Following Nagelkerke's R^2, the model explained 20.9 percent of variance, which constitutes a medium-to-large sized effect. Authority concessions again had a significant influence in the hypothesized direction. A one-percent increase in demand fulfillment increased the likelihood of a safe hostage release by 2.5 percent. The control variable year had no influence on the likelihood of completed hostage exchange. This finding suggests that the concession effect generalizes to cases more recent than 2005 (cf. Mertes et al., 2020) and provides additional support for Hypothesis 1.

[2] As can be seen in Table 3, Model 1, both ends of the 95% confidence interval for the odds ratio are below the value 1. Thus, our findings show an actual decrease in the likelihood of fatalities by one percent when the degree of demand fulfilment increases by one percent.

Table 1

Means, Standard Deviations, Sample Sizes, and Intercorrelations of All Variables

				Intercorrelations					
		n	*M* (*SD*)	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	IV Authority concessions	134	33.82						
			(45.71)						
2	DV Hostage situation outcome	208	0.84	.35					
			(0.37)	.003					
3	DV Number of individuals killed	319	0.51	-.16	-.64				
			(1.48)	.082	< .001				
4	Year	403	1999.86	-.37	.17	-.05			
			(16.35)	< .001	.014	.350			
5	Number of hostages	398	10.73	-.06	.10	.27	-.08		
			(65.55)	.473	.170	< .001	.094		
6	Number of perpetrators	134	10.77	-.20	-.06	.34	-.05	.06	
			(17.68)	.151	.621	< .001	.562	.469	
7	Total duration of the incident	70	775.10	-.35	.04	.10	-.06	-.11	-.51
			(1856.60)	.107	.769	.401	.615	.366	.009

Note. *p*-values under the respective intercorrelations.

Table 2

Logistic Regression of the Hostage Situation Outcome on Authority Concessions (Model 1), Controlling for Year (Model 2)

	Model 1 (n = 71)		Model 2 (n = 71)	
Variable	b	e^b	b	e^b
Constant	0.66		-22.30	
	(0.36)		(39.05)	
Authority concessions	0.02*	1.024	0.03*	1.025
	(0.01)	[1.006; 1.043]	(0.01)	[1.006; 1.044]
Year			0.01	1.012
			(0.02)	[0.974; 1.051]

Note. * p < .05. Standard errors in parentheses. 95% confidence intervals of odds ratios in brackets. Model 1: Cox and Snell R^2 = .127, Nagelkerke's R^2 = .202. Model 2: Cox and Snell R^2 = .132, Nagelkerke's R^2 = .209.

Table 3

Negative Binomial Regression of Fatalities on Authority Concessions (Model 1), Controlling for the Number of Perpetrators and Number of Hostages (Model 2)

	Model 1 (n = 121)		Model 2 (n = 47)	
Variable	b	e^b	b	e^b
Constant	-0.34	0.714	-1.12	0.327
	(0.24)	[0.447; 1.140]	(0.75)	[0.075; 1.417]
Authority concessions	-0.01*	0.990	-0.04	0.964
	(0.01)	[0.981; 0.999]	0.02	[0.923; 1.006]
Number of perpetrators			0.10	1.100
			(0.08)	[0.950; 1.274]
Number of hostages			0.00	1.001
			(0.00)	[0.997; 1.006]

Note. * p < .05. Standard errors in parentheses. 95% confidence intervals in brackets. Dispersion coefficients and their 95% confidence intervals indicated that negative binomial regression was better suited to account for overdispersion in the count data than Poisson regression.

Table 4

Logistic Regression of Fatalities (Dichotomized) on Authority Concessions (Sensitivity Analysis)

Variable	*b*	SE	Wald-$\chi^2(1)$	*p*	e^b	e^b 95% CI
Constant	-0.64	0.24	7.13	.008		
Authority concessions	-0.01	0.01	5.44	.020	0.987	[0.977; 0.998]

Note. n = 121. Cox and Snell R^2 = .051, Nagelkerke's R^2 = .074

Fatalities

When we added the number of hostages and the number of perpetrators as control variables to the negative binomial regression of fatalities on authority concessions, the number of resulting cases dropped from n = 121 to n = 47 due to missing values on the included control variables, which results in reduced statistical power. In this model, neither authority concessions nor any of the included control variables had a significant influence on the number of fatalities (see Table 3, Model 2). As already mentioned, this result may well be due to the low power for this analysis: At least descriptively, the coefficient for authority concessions became even *larger* without being significant when including the control variables. Nevertheless, this finding does not support Hypothesis 2.

Discussion

We analyzed data from the GTD (START, 2019b) to illuminate the stability and generalizability of the concession effect (Mertes et al., 2020). In accordance with our hypothesis, we found that authority concessions were negatively linked to the likelihood that the terrorists killed the hostages (rather than releasing them). A one percent increase in demand fulfillment lead to a 2.4 percent higher likelihood of safe hostage-release. Importantly, this finding was robust and observed even when we controlled for the year in which the hostage-taking took place. We further found that authority concessions were negatively linked to the number of fatalities, such that a one percent increase in demand fulfillment reduced likelihood of fatalities by one percent. This finding was confirmed in a sensitivity analysis testing the effect of authority concessions on the likelihood of having any fatalities (vs. no fatalities), yet it was not found when controlling for the number of hostages and number of perpetrators. The latter analysis is, however, compromised by low statistical power resulting from missing data.

Theoretical Implications

Given that this study is a replication and extension of Mertes et al.'s (2020) original study, we discuss the theoretical implications of our work in two steps. First, we use a comparative lens and discuss theoretical implications that arise from replicating and extending Mertes et al.'s (2020) study. Second, we discuss implications based on our extension of the SET as the theoretical framework guiding this research.

Using a different dataset, our results were in line with Mertes et al.'s (2020) findings showing that authority concessions to terrorist hostage-takers lead to fewer fatalities in hostage-taking situations. However, our study advances the knowledge beyond the results by Mertes et al. (2020), because in our study, authority concessions were operationalized as the degree of demand fulfillment as a percentage, based on exact reported amounts of ransom money demanded by terrorists and paid by authorities. Although our data were restricted to ransoms and could not consider other demands (e.g., release of prisoners, publicity),

as these demands are not included in the GTD, this operationalization allowed for a more fine-grained analysis of the concession effect than could be obtained with the operationalization as used by Mertes et al. (2020). In their study, authority concessions were recorded in broader categories (i.e., terrorists received either nothing, something, or everything they demanded). We found that a one percent increase in demand fulfillment reduced likelihood of fatalities by one percent.

This effect size is smaller than the effect size found by Mertes et al. (2020), who reported that in hostage-takings where all terrorist demands were fulfilled the incident rate for casualties was only two percent of the incident rate for casualties in hostage-takings where no demands are fulfilled. When some demands were fulfilled, the incident rate was 29.21 times higher than when all demands are fulfilled. It is likely that Mertes et al.'s (2020) found stronger effects because the ITERATE data they analyzed includes different types of demands, whereas the GTD data we analyzed only includes ransom demands. Although our data did not allow for a meaningful statistical analysis of some control variables (i.e., the number of perpetrators and the number of hostages), the finding that authority concessions lead to fewer casualties was confirmed in a sensitivity analysis in which all cases with at least one casualty were treated as equivalent. This lends support to our hypothesis stating that authority concessions lead to fewer fatalities and the concession effect.

We further advanced the knowledge by testing the effect of authority concessions on the likelihood of a completed exchange with the hostage-takers, which is arguably the most informative criterion variable in this context. Mertes et al. (2020) used the number of casualties (in total and among those who they presumed to be hostages) as the criterion variable to investigate the short-term effects of authority concessions. Yet, as we explained above, casualty counts only allow for ambiguous interpretations of their findings because the circumstances of the recorded deaths are unclear. In other words, it is not known if those reported dead were actually hostages and if they were executed after failed negotiations between authorities and hostage-takers. Thus, other casualties (e.g., bystanders killed during the attack on the hostages or fighters on either side who died during potential shootouts) might have biased the results. By testing the effect of authority concessions on the hostage situation outcome, however, we addressed this ambiguity and provided first unambiguous evidence for the concession effect. We found a medium-to-large sized effect showing that a higher degree of demand fulfillment led to a higher likelihood that the perpetrators released (vs. killed) the hostages, which remained robust when we controlled for the year in which the incident took place. This finding supports the concession effect and provides the needed unambiguous evidence for a key proposition within our theoretical rationale as derived from SET: That terrorist hostage-takers complete the hostage exchange once they have received authority concessions (Emerson, 1976; Homans, 1974).

Furthermore, our research addressed two important limitations of the extant knowledge on the concession effect: Mertes et al. (2020) analyzed only international incidents because internationality was an inclusion criterion for terrorist acts to be recorded in the database they used (ITERATE; Mickolus et al., 2006). However, international events appear to constitute only a small fraction of the entirety of terrorist hostage-takings, as domestic terrorist events are estimated to greatly outnumber international cases (Enders & Sandler, 2011). Further, Mertes et al. (2020) only analyzed data on terrorist hostage-takings that occurred between 1983 and 2005. However, terrorism not only remained a major societal issue, but it has also undergone significant changes. For example, the violence of terrorist attacks as measured by casualties have consistently changed (Masters, 2008; START, 2019b), and many nations have officially adopted the no-concessions policy since 2005 (e.g., Borger et al., 2014; UN General Assembly Resolution 2133, 2014). In light of the significant consequences that both the decision to concede and the decision not to concede to terrorist hostage-takers can have, authority decision-making should ideally be informed by research based on up-to-date and most relevant and informative data (i.e., the most recent data on domestic events when making a decision regarding such an event). Therefore, we investigated domestic terrorist hostage-takings from a time

period (i.e., 1970–2018) that is more than twice as long as in the initial study (Mertes et al., 2020). Our findings are the first to suggest that time and internationality can be ruled out as boundary conditions of the concession effect: The concession effect is a time-consistent phenomenon that generalizes to domestic events.

Using SET to explain the outcomes of terrorist hostage-takings requires a definition and specification of the hostage-taking situation within the terminology of SET. The specifications we made extend SET by adding to Foa's (1971) taxonomy of exchangeable resources. This taxonomy accounts for most of the resources, both symbolic and concrete, that are typically transferred from one party to another in hostage exchanges (e.g., money, goods). The hostages and human life in general, however, are not part of in Foa's (1971) taxonomy. The hostages play a key role in exchanges between terrorists and authorities: They constitute the terrorists' only contribution to the exchange and differ from any other resource with regard to their degrees of particularism and concreteness (Foa, 1971). Hostages are highly valuable to the authorities, but their worth to the terrorists depends on what authorities are willing to concede for their safe release. Our findings show that SET can be used to explain exchanges of resources not originally defined in the theoretical framework. This underscores the adaptability of SET for an application in the extreme situation of terrorist hostage takings.

Both studies on the concessions effect, ours and Mertes et al.'s (2020), also speak to literature outside of SET. As Mertes et al. (2020) noted, the concession effect adds to the literature on terrorist rationality by showing that terrorists act in accordance with the rationality proposition in SET (Emerson, 1976; Homans, 1974): They maximize their long-term value by releasing the hostages once concessions are received. In the past, terrorist rationality has been called into question based on the false assumptions that terrorists are generally afflicted by psychological disorders and thus unable to behave rationally (e.g., Silke, 1998). Although neither ours nor Mertes et al.'s (2020) study speak directly to terrorist mental health, the shared findings add to a stream of literature suggesting rational decision making among terrorists (e.g., Corner & Gill, 2015; Gill et al., 2014).

Our findings further support the broader idea that parties involved in violent encounters play by certain rules (i.e., reciprocity; Gouldner, 1960) despite the fact that even engaging in these encounters violates a variety of other rules, norms, or laws.[3] Taking hostages and extorting others for ransom is universally outlawed and, of course, morally unacceptable. Authorities involved in terrorist hostage-takings are often the declared enemies of the terrorists holding the hostages and the hostage-takings themselves are often only small operations in ongoing campaigns against authorities (see also Schmid, 2011). Betraying authorities and killing hostages after receiving ransoms might even yield short-term or long-term benefits in the form of publicity for intimidation or an increase in status with the terrorists' followers. Yet, both studies investigating the concession effect (i.e., Mertes et al., 2020, and our study) find that terrorists adhere to their commitments and release the hostages upon receiving concessions. There are other examples demonstrating that there is frequently "order" or rules in otherwise highly violent encounters that violate many norms: Soccer hooligans often abide by an honor code, prescribing how fights are to be initiated (i.e., what constitutes a proper challenge) and which weapons are permitted in brawls (Leeson et al., 2012). Similarly, the principle of medical neutrality, which states that parties should not interfere with medical services in violent conflicts (Geneva Convention for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded and Sick in Armed Forces in the Field, 1949), is often upheld even though attacks on enemy medical facilities could yield tactical advantages in warfare. Our findings suggest that certain social norms, such as the norm of reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960), which states that people should repay others for what they have received,

[3] We thank an anonymous reviewer for encouraging us to think in this direction.

might govern people's behavior even in extreme situations that are characterized by strong transgressions of other norms. Further investigations into this phenomenon could increase our understanding of the dynamics in violent encounters.

Practical Implications

Whether or not authorities should concede to terrorist hostage-takers' demands is a sensitive and difficult decision. Although conceding to terrorists can have positive short-term effects, as we showed here (see also Mertes et al., 2020), doing so can prove harmful in the long run (e.g., Borger et al., 2014; Brandt et al., 2016; Callimachi, 2014). Therefore, authorities facing terrorist demands have to assess the benefits *and* costs that are associated with the decision to make concessions. Terrorist hostage-takings may meaningfully differ on a multitude of dimensions that should be considered when making such a decision (Gaibulloev & Sandler, 2009): Has the terrorist group been involved in other hostage-takings, and are they known for adhering to their commitments? Are other options available (e.g., attempting a rescue)? Given this variety of factors, it is not sensible to postulate universal action recommendations for authorities and policy makers based on our findings.

Thus, we focus on providing only tentative practical implications that should be viewed in concert with additional considerations (see above) and that may or may not be usable for authorities that need to make a decision in a hostage-taking situation with potentially unique characteristics. Our study provided vital evidence for the generalizability and replicability of the concession effect (Mertes et al., 2020). However, typically, the decision whether or not to concede to terrorist demands is understood as a moral dilemma under uncertainty. Bapat (2006) argued that authorities often hesitate to negotiate or concede because they do not trust terrorists to keep their promises. Our study speaks to this uncertainty as it showed that authority concessions to terrorist hostage-takers led to more completed hostage exchanges. Thus, authorities facing terrorist demands may consider conceding a viable strategy to save lives, especially in situations in which other options, such as rescue attempts, are not available or in which the costs for conceding are manageable (e.g., when the terrorists' demands are low). Our work further suggests that the concession effect generalizes to recent and domestic cases of terrorist hostage-takings. Consequently, authorities may consider concessions to be viable in these situations, which were not investigated in the original study by Mertes et al. (2020).

We also want to stress the role of status as a resource that is always part of hostage exchanges, even if it is not specifically demanded by the terrorists (e.g., in the form of political recognition). It has been argued that accepting terrorists as negotiation partners ascribes legitimacy to the terrorists and their means (e.g., Bapat, 2006; Toros, 2008). However, ascribed legitimacy as an outcome of terrorist hostage-takings is difficult to measure, and the immediate (and tangible negative) consequences of ascribing legitimacy to terrorists are unclear. Terrorist hostage-takers may also receive status as a result of publicity from mere media coverage (see also Wilson, 2019). This may help them to intimidate the public, undermine public support of the authorities (e.g., Knowlton, 2014), and find new recruits and supporters. Nevertheless, authorities may be well-advised to be aware of the omnipresence of status approval as a risk in hostage situations and should take measures to reduce this risk accordingly, for instance by negotiating or conceding in secret (e.g., Callimachi, 2014; Faure & Zartman, 2010).

Limitations

Our study has two limitations that result from the database we used. First, due to the sources from which databases on terrorist events draw, missing data is a common issue. This affected our study in different ways. Just like Mertes et al. (2020), we had to drop our preregistered hypothesis regarding the effect

of authority concessions on property damages because there were too few cases in which data on property damages were recorded. This is likely due to the fact that property damages are rarely a priority in the news coverage that terrorist hostage-takings receive. Second, although 403 cases matched our inclusion criteria (see the Sample section above), case numbers dropped considerably within the analyses. Missing data on the control variables specifically prevented us from conducting a more robust and informative sensitivity analysis for Hypothesis 2 when controlling for the number of perpetrators and the number of hostages.

A second limitation concerns the data structure of the GTD, in particular, how terrorist demands and authority concessions are recorded. In the GTD, information on terrorist demands and authority concessions is restricted to ransoms. Thus, the database does not incorporate data on other important demands that occur frequently in terrorist hostage-takings, such as the release of (specified or unspecified) prisoners, publicity, or means of travel for safe passage (Wilson, 2000; 2003). As a result, data in the GTD provides incomplete accounts of the exchange situations that happened and does not allow for tests of SET beyond the exchanges of ransom money for hostages.

However, we argue that this is not particularly problematic for our interpretation of the concession effect because the ITERATE database, which Mertes et al. (2020) used in their original study, included other demands than those for ransoms, and these authors found converging results, such that a higher degree of demand fulfillment led to fewer casualties among the hostages and in general. Thus, our study and the original work by Mertes et al. (2020) complement each other in this regard. Furthermore, as we discussed above, the higher level of detail in the GTD data (i.e., the exact amounts of ransoms demanded by the terrorists and paid by the authorities) allowed us to analyze how additional percentages of demand fulfillment affect the likelihood of successful hostage exchanges and fatalities, which expands our knowledge of the concession effect.

Future Research

Although the value of the databases available to terrorism researchers and the insights they can provide cannot be overstated, the limitations we discussed reveal that available data on terrorist events are not perfect. With regard to future investigations into the concession effect and how SET can help to understand terrorist hostage situations, different improvements are desirable. First, in order to fully understand how different resources may affect the success of an exchange in terrorist hostage situations, more detailed data on terrorist demands (i.e., what was demanded?) and authority concessions (i.e., what was conceded?) are needed. This information would enable investigations into potential determinants of successful hostage exchanges. For example, Wilson (2000) found that certain combinations of demands occurred more frequently than others and suggested that such insights might be used to predict the outcomes of hostage events. Second, more detailed accounts of the course of events during hostage situations would be valuable because such information would allow the field to gain a deeper understanding of the dynamics in hostage negotiation processes and interpret findings more clearly. As we explained above, casualty/fatality counts may bias interpretations because fatalities might be unrelated to the hostage negotiation outcome. Recorded accounts detailing, for example, when and how hostages died or escaped, or when certain concessions were made, would reduce such ambiguities.

Another important avenue for future research lies within further investigations into the antecedents of completed hostage exchanges. A factor that should be investigated as an antecedent of completed hostage exchanges is the terrorist groups' reputation (e.g., Akcinaroglu & Tokdemir, 2018). Some groups, like the Abu Sayyaf militants mentioned in the opening paragraph, have turned kidnapping for ransoms into a profitable business model (e.g., Whaley, 2016). They might have been able to do so because of the consistency in their exchange behavior. Such consistency is important for terrorists because once they have shown erratic exchange behavior (e.g., by killing hostages after ransom was paid), they become

untrustworthy as negotiators and authorities should become less likely to engage in future exchanges. However, if authorities are more likely to negotiate with terrorists who have shown consistent and reliable exchange behavior in the past, it would be important to test whether the outcomes of earlier exchanges with a terrorist group have predictive value for the outcomes of later exchanges with that group. This research could help prevent authorities from making high-stakes decisions based on misinformed assumptions.

Discussing status as an omnipresent resource in hostage exchanges raises the question about popular support for terrorist groups as another potential predictor and outcome of terrorist exchange behavior (e.g., Bhattacharya, 2017). Supporters often provide terrorists with money, goods, and shelter, but they can also show support by tolerating the groups' activities or displaying passive consent (Paul, 2009). Support towards terrorist groups might affect the exchange behavior of terrorist hostage-takers in important ways. Highly supported groups might not engage in hostage-takings as often as groups experiencing less support because they are less dependent on the resources that a hostage exchange might grant them. In turn, this could mean that such groups are less dependent on coming to an agreement with the authorities, leading them to engage in more assertive negotiation strategies that might jeopardize an agreement and the hostages' lives. However, it is also conceivable that highly supported terrorist groups are more likely to release hostages after receiving concessions because their supporters might not agree with the violence of irrational exchange behavior. Terrorists not implementing agreements might lose their support, just as governments might lose popular support for conceding to terrorists (see also Brandt et al., 2016; Mertes et al., 2020). Thus, the degree of support a terrorist group receives might affect—and be affected by—that group's exchange behavior. Investigating popular support towards terrorist groups could thus provide valuable insights into a potential antecedent and consequence of hostage exchanges.

A third interesting avenue for future research would be to investigate the influence of cultural aspects, such as individualism/collectivism (Triandis, 2018) or cultural tightness/looseness, on terrorist exchange behavior. Relative to loose cultures, tighter cultures are, for instance, characterized by stronger norms and lower tolerance for violations of these norms (Gelfand et al., 2011). Social exchanges depend on adherence to certain norms, such as the norm of reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960). Thus, perpetrators from tighter cultures (vs. looser cultures) might be more inclined to adhere to their commitments in hostage negotiations.

Conclusion

Our study extends social exchange theory and broadens the knowledge about the concession effect. Addressing important limitations of past research, we showed that authority concessions can lead to more completed hostage exchanges and fewer fatalities in domestic terrorist hostage-takings, although the results on the latter variable were not fully consistent across our analyses. These findings provide evidence that authorities confronted with terrorist demands can use to make informed decisions that could save hostages' lives.

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negotiation and conflict management research

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How Do Buddhist Monks Frame Conflict? A Buddhist Approach to Paradox

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Abstract

Paradox theory proposes that some conflicts need not be mitigated or eliminated because conflicts can help people create synergy. In organizational studies, the concept of a paradox is typically theorized as a unique response to conflicts. Such a conceptualization allows organizational scholars to investigate how a paradox is manifested in one's decision-making. Deviating from the existing literature, this study develops an alternative approach to a paradox, particularly from a Buddhist perspective. To this end, I conducted a three-month ethnographic fieldwork in a Korean Buddhist temple that allowed me to investigate how Buddhist monks frame conflicts, dualities, and tensions that are central to Buddhist philosophy. While living and working closely with Buddhist monks, I found that the monks try to make sense of conflicts by deconstructing cognitive boundaries between opposing elements of conflicts, which, they believe, unconsciously cause tension in their minds. By theorizing this Buddhist perspective, this study contributes to individual-level paradox research.

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The world is full of conflicts, dualities, and tension (Poole & Van de Ven, 1989; Schad et al., 2016). The central thesis of a paradox suggests that the conflicts need not be feared or reviled, but rather should be embraced because the opposing elements of a conflict can "inform and define one another, tied in a web of eternal mutuality" (Schad et al., 2016, p. 6). Organizational scholars opting for a paradox perspective argue that contradicting elements that seemingly appear to operate independently are actually tightly connected and co-evolve interdependently (Lewis, 2000; Putnam et al., 2016). Therefore, the interrelated elements of a conflict can "exist simultaneously and persist over time" (Smith & Lewis, 2011, p. 382).

While most organizational paradox studies anchor on an organizational or macro-institutional level of analysis (Putnam et al., 2016; Schad et al., 2016), a body of individual-level studies has investigated how managers embrace conflicts among different populations within an organization (Besharov, 2014; Jarzabkowski & Sillince, 2007 Jarzabkowski & Sillince, 2007; Smith, 2014 Smith, 2014; Waldman & Bowen, 2016; Zhang et al., 2015; Zimmermann et al., 2018). These studies documented how individuals are willing to live with conflicts, and even use them to create synergy in their organizational settings.

Despite this surge in the literature, there is little research that investigates the cognitive mechanisms of a paradox. Existing studies tend to focus on the differences among individual responses to conflicts (Lewis, 2000; Lewis & Smith, 2014). Because of the focus on the differences, little attention has been paid to the cognitive process of how individuals make sense of conflicts, cope with them, and finally convert them to paradoxes. Filling this gap requires research into one's mindset, mentality, or cognitive framing of conflicts, which still remains largely underexplored.

The Buddhist context could offer fresh insight into this question. To empirically immerse myself in the Buddhist context, I conducted ethnographic fieldwork in a Korean Buddhist temple (hereinafter, H-Temple) for three months. I tried to understand how Buddhist monks view, experience, and tackle conflicts while digging deeper into the potential cognitive mechanisms they use to address conflicts. Such a deep immersion allowed me to use informal conversations and dialogs with the monks and explore theoretical insights into paradoxes from a Buddhist perspective.

The findings reveal that H-Temple monks seek to deconstruct the cognitive boundaries of a conflict's opposing elements. They do so by questioning the ontological realities of separate categories, which I call boundary-destroying work. This boundary-destroying work decomposes the biased meanings, concepts, values, and moralities that inadvertently and unconsciously create linguistic boundaries in our mind, such as 'you and I,' 'success and failure,' 'better and worse,' 'business value and religious value,' and 'sacred and secular.' Based on this conceptualization, I developed the idea of Sunyata (Śūnyatā in Pāḷi) as a Buddhist approach to paradox.

The findings of this study contribute to individual-level paradox research in three ways. First, they show that paradox is essentially a cognitive process of how one mindfully detaches oneself from bias, prejudice, and attachment to a particular concept or meaning. Vince and Broussine (1996, p. 6) observed that "attachments provide individuals with a basic frame for meaning and relatedness." They argued that conflicts are reinforced through cognitive attachment to one of two contradicting elements. Aligned with this research, this study, by revealing Buddhist monks' worldview, shows how individuals can detach themselves from sources of conflicts that they mindlessly follow. Second, this study sheds light on the importance of boundaries in paradox research (Ashforth et al., 2000; Lamont & Molnár, 2002). Scholars argue that creating clear cognitive boundaries helps people reduce conflicts, for example, between work and family (Rothbard et al., 2005), and personal identity and vocational identity (Kreiner et al., 2006). However, this study suggests that building boundaries may inadvertently create unnecessarily fine lines that discourage people from negotiating, integrating, and reconciling the contradictory elements of a conflict. Third, this study integrates paradox research with the concept of mindfulness, which has only recently received organizational scholars' attention (e.g., Kudesia, 2019). Integrating mindfulness into

paradox research enriches the study of individual-level paradox by explaining how a self-reflection process can help reframe conflicts.

This study begins with a review of the paradox literature. I narrow down the literature review to individual-level paradox research because this study focuses on cognition at the individual level. I then describe the methods and explain why H-Temple is a useful setting for this research. The findings are presented through a series of dialogs and ethnographic tales (Van Maanen, 2011). Finally, I explore Buddhist monks' worldview on conflicts and interrelate them with the notion of mindfulness.

Theoretical Background

Paradox as a Unique Response to Conflict

Organizational scholars have long investigated individuals' responses to conflicts (Jarzabkowski, & Lê, 2017; Lewis, 2000; Lewis & Smith, 2014; Miron-Spektor et al., 2018; Zhang et al., 2015). The literature suggests that some managers may be able to realize potential synergies from contradictions and thus willing to accept them, whereas others may just want to avoid or simply ignore them (Hahn et al., 2014). This implies that there are different reactions among individuals. A compelling research question here is how individuals make sense of conflicts and handle them in their own organizational settings.

Three distinct streams are prominent in this research area. The first stream aims to theorize people's reactions to conflicts. For example, Lewis (2000) conceptualized six defensive and three proactive tactics used to respond to conflicts. Extending Lewis's work (2000), Lewis and Smith (2014) explicitly differentiated a strategic response from a defensive response. They argued that those strategically reacting to conflicts may likely embrace them as a source of potential synergy and creativity (i.e., a paradox). Other scholars have developed relevant constructs e.g., paradoxical mindset (Miron-Spektor et al., 2018) to theorize a paradox as a unique response to conflicts.

Drawing upon the abovementioned theoretical works, the second stream of research particularly examines senior managers' paradoxical mindset, given that leaders are more frequently positioned to tackle contradicting demands in an organization (Miron-Spektor et al., 2018; Smith & Tushman, 2005). In the Chinese context, Zhang et al. (2015) coined a term, a paradoxical leader behavior, in which people with different values are coordinated effectively. Waldman and Bowen (2016) also conceptualized the notion of paradox-savvy leader, referring to someone capable of not only embracing conflicts for themselves but also of helping others with different identities to create new meanings from contradictory elements of conflicts. This line of research allows organizational scholars to examine the interactive dynamics between structure and cognition and between leaders' sensegiving and employees' reactions (e.g., Besharov, 2014; Gümüsay et al., 2020).

The third stream of research investigates whether people's reactions to conflicts change over time. It emphasizes the possibility that a paradox is something from which one can learn and develop. For example, Jarzabkowski et al. (2013) examined how individuals address contradicting demands from the market and public spaces by shifting their responses toward conflicts in organizing, belonging, and performing. In their model, individuals initially use defensive responses to conflicts, but they actively engage in and ultimately accept conflicts over time. The authors developed a specific term, "adjusting," defined as "recognition that the needs of both parties were important and interdependent, and thus that both had to be achieved" (Jarzabkowski et al., 2013, p. 254). Similarly, Lüscher and Lewis's (2008) action research documented how the authors' interventions shifted managers' approach to conflicts related to organizational change and stability from a logical and rational approach to an intricate and paradoxical one, by allowing the managers to learn the value of accepting the opposing elements of conflicts.

Altogether, there have been three important implications of individual-level paradox studies. First,

some people are willing to engage in conflicts and embrace them in their organizational lives as being paradoxical, whereas others are unwilling to do so or simply ignore the conflicts. Second, the role of organizational leaders tends to be paradoxical, in that it involves coordination of contradictory organizational values, goals, and identities, as well as management of conflicts for themselves. Third, people may be able to learn to shift their reactions to conflicts from defensive to proactive. An overarching insight into these implications is that a paradox represents individuals' cognitive capacity that enables them to capture the interdependencies of contradictory elements and subsequently accept them to create synergy. These studies highlight how people differently react to conflicts, which is explained by the propensity of people to hold a paradoxical mindset (Hahn et al., 2014; Miron-Spektor et al., 2018).

Gap in the Individual-Level Paradox Literature: Paradox as a Cognitive Process

Prior studies have theorized different responses to handling conflicts. However, owing to the skewed attention toward the different styles, reactions, strategies, and tactics among individuals' responses to conflicts, there is little research that explores the cognitive mechanisms related to paradoxical mindset. This is especially relevant to the current debate on the ontology and epistemology of a paradox (Hahn & Knight, 2021; Smith & Tracey, 2016; Schad & Bansal, 2018; Raisch et al., 2018). If paradox is something cognitively constructed and not 'out there' to be discovered, it is important to know how paradox is constructed in one's mind and how it can persist in one's everyday life. This requires researchers to explore the cognitive mechanisms of a paradox, rather than theorizing the differences among reactions to conflicts.

While organizational-level research has extensively investigated the question by documenting structural processes in detail (e.g., Jay, 2013; Smith & Besharov, 2019), scholars have paid relatively little attention to the individual-level cognitive mechanisms. More research is needed to grasp the detailed process involved in the cognitive construction of paradox. Broadly, the cognition literature has long suggested that managers make decisions neither in a complete vacuum nor with full information and contextual data (Stubbart, 1989), but that they develop a set of mental templates for decision-making (Walsh, 1995). The mental template "reflects intuition and cognitive constructions of decision-makers" (Porac et al., 1989, p. 398). Within the paradox literature, Sharma and Bansal (2017) proposed that paradoxes are constructed in one's mind with the emergence of new mental templates.

I assume that the mental templates in the Buddhist context are unique because of the Buddhist meditation practice that trains Buddhist monks to develop a holistic worldview of conflicts. In the Buddhist meditative tradition, phenomena are assumed to arise from multiple, intertwined conditions and causes, which is often expressed in the dependent co-arising or dependent origination theory. The theory represents complex, interconnected relationships among individual phenomena or attributes, rather than sequential causal chains between phenomena (Macy, 1991). In fact, a number of theoretical works suggest that Buddhism's central theses can be useful in reframing a dynamic view of dualities and contradictions that are core to the paradox theory (e.g., Husgafvel, 2018). Meanwhile, organizational scholars have also investigated how Eastern philosophy e.g., Daoism can be linked to paradox research in various organizational contexts (Chen, 2008; Fang, 2012; Li, 2012). Building on some of these studies, I explore a Buddhist way of mental representation that may help people reshape contradicting elements of conflicts.

Method

Research Site

To investigate the conflict between spirituality and secularity that Buddhist monks confront in their

daily lives, I conducted anthropological fieldwork in H-Temple for three months, from May to July 2015. H-Temple is one of the largest and most ancient temples in Korea. It was established approximately 1,300 years ago and has achieved the Chong-Lim status.[1] The Chong-Lim status is highly regarded in Korean Buddhist society because of its strict requirements for ordainment, systematic education, and long history. Among the 940 registered Korean temples in 2013, only eight have achieved the Chong-Lim status.

Data Sources

Participant Observation

The participant observations were the primary data sources of this study. To observe the monks' day-to-day life closely, I tried to immerse myself completely into the monastic life and donned the monks' attire as a gesture of my stay as a novice monastic at H-Temple. To record my observations, I carried around a notebook and documented important events, stories, and tactics that monks used to deal with conflicts. I summarized observations made during my monastic life in a diary around 8 pm to 10 pm every evening. A brief description of the daily schedule is presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Example of My Daily Schedule at H-Temple

Time	Activity
3:30 a.m. – 4:00 a.m.	Waking up
4:00 a.m. – 5:30 a.m.	Morning worship in the main worship hall
5:30 a.m. – 6:30 a.m.	Breakfast at the multi-purpose Buddha Hall
6:30 a.m. – 7:00 a.m.	Cleaning of a big garden in the temple
7:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.	Morning tea with Monk H
9:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon	Work or meditation with monks in and out of the temple
12:00 noon – 12:30 p.m.	Lunch at the multi-purpose Buddha Hall
12:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.	Work or meditation with monks in and out of the temple
5:00 p.m. – 5:20 p.m.	Dinner at the multi-purpose Buddha Hall
5:20 p.m. – 6:20 p.m.	Walking around the mountain
6:20 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.	Talking with monks for research development
9:00 p.m.	Going to bed

In-Depth Interviews and Informal Conversations

I also conducted 29 formal interviews with monks. Among the 62 monks in the temple, only 29 monks consented to be interviewed. Most interviews were conducted in the monks' rooms where I made tea together with the monks, drank it extremely slowly, and washed teacups. The process of making tea allowed the opportunity to start a conversation. After trust had been established, the interviews were long and friendly. Unplanned informal conversations also revealed dee insights into the emotions, stress, and frustrations of the conflicts experienced by these monks. To capture their experience, I noted not only

[1] In Chinese characters, *Chong* (叢) refers to being total or complete, and *Lim* (林) means forest.

what was spoken but also recorded the non-verbal actions and periods of silence, as these non-actions also convey information about the monks' knowledge, values, belief systems, and attitudes.

Archival Documents

Two types of archival documents were analyzed in this study. First, the historical records of H-Temple were used. H-Temple has set up a museum to display its cultural assets and records, which is governed by an independent committee. With the help of the museum's curator, I was granted access to H-Temple's historical records. comprised H-Temple's written history, prior master monks' writings, and a few photographs. Second, I supplemented the omission of voice and text records by collecting the monks' meditation diaries. Most monks wrote about their meditation progress upon entering ordainment. Some of them elaborated on the details of their daily experiences and intense meditation progress. I collected three diaries and photocopied 183 pages of narrative text from the diaries (single-spaced notes).

Data Analysis

During the data analysis process, I repeatedly iterated between field data and relevant literature to develop a grounded theory of the Buddhist approach to a paradox (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Van Maanen, 2011). Field researchers have long suggested that the aim of a grounded theory could be either to reveal differences among multiple research participants (or cases) or to capture commonalities that may be transferable to other settings (Eisenhardt, 1989; Suddaby, 2006). The aim of this study was the second one, because I was interested in theorizing what we can call "Buddhistic". Accordingly, all the field data were analyzed to capture a unique mentality commonly reflected in the data from the 29 H-Temple monks.

Theorizing a paradox from the perspective of Buddhist monks was, however, challenging since much of the data were non-verbal and often highly esoteric. In other words, the use of traditional approaches to text analysis was not useful. For this reason, I shifted my analytical approach from a positivistic traditional text-based analysis to a more interpretive one (Vaara et al., 2016). In this empirical setting, it is important to know how meanings, often highly implicit and complex, are constructed through both linguistic and non-linguistic communicative tools. It is an interpretive approach that directs researchers' attention to various forms of communication that "play a central role in the social construction of organizational reality" (Vaara et al., 2016, p. 505). Thus, instead of reducing a vast array of evidence to axiomatic codes, I tried to offer a think description of the narratives by weaving my experiences with the monks' stories.

Specifically, I attempted to capture the sources of conflicts, tension, and dualities that H-Temple monks face in their monastic lives. Over time, I found that the conflicts they experience emanate from two sources: boundary-drawing to perceive the world and unconscious perception of linguistic contradictions. These findings motivated me to investigate the other aspect of the data—the monks' worldview of conflicts. The worldview emerged, as I focused on how monks deconstructed cognitive boundaries generated by their everyday language use.

Results

Overview

The Buddhist meditation practice is an intellectual and solitary journey to see the world without any bias and attachment. Other aspects of life, such as material well-being, mental well-being, friends and family, and even missionary work, are miscellaneous issues that are neither urgent nor salient in the life of

Buddhist monks. They spend their meditative activities aiming to solve a single question, and it is this single question that anchors them in this world.

Since meditation is a core practice in Buddhist organizations, I initially wanted to understand why monks practice meditation and how it relates to the conflict they face at the intersection of spirituality and secularity. In the early stages of the fieldwork, I mostly talked with Monk S, Monk H, and other senior H-temple monks about this issue. Yet, I often failed to understand what exactly the monks were trying to achieve and why their pursuit of finding answers would even lead them to abandon their secular life and family. It turned out that the difference in my worldview and the monks' worldview was so large that understanding their mentality was highly challenging.

Owing to such problems, I decided to participate in focused meditation at H-Temple to acquire novice knowledge of meditation and to demonstrate my sincerity to the monks. Because I could not fully follow the monks' meditation schedule, I partially shadowed them and practiced meditation only in the afternoon. After a week, I joined H-Temple Master Monk B's meditation program at the Seoul Medication Center for 10 days.

As they became aware of my participation in the meditation program, three senior monks and two junior monks at H-Temple agreed to speak to me. I also spoke to seven senior monks who had been introducing meditation to people. These senior monks shared their meditation diaries with me. The data exposed two sources of conflicts confronted by H-Temple monks: boundary-drawing to perceive the world and unconscious perception of linguistic contradictions. Table 2 offers selective quotes from conversations with the monks and their meditation diaries.

Table 2

Selected Evidence of Conflicts Monks Confront in Their Monastic Lives

Types of tension	Selected evidence
Boundary-drawing to perceive the world	**Informal interview quotes (I)** "We need to draw boundaries to perceive what we want to see from what we do not want to see. This is the essential source of conflicts." "We must build a boundary between physical elements. This is a natural process to cognize external things. Yet, the problem is that we create unnecessary boundaries that create dualities, which inevitably generates conflicts."
	Monk meditation diary (D) "Why do people think that they are different from each other? At the end of the day, we are the same species." "That's right. I am distinguishing humans from other species. That is another boundary I make." "So much separation is out there, and so many boundaries dwell in my mind. Living without separation rather gives me wisdom and freedom."

	Conversation (C) "There is only one teaching that there is only one open oneness. However, we all are born to separate things to sense things. The separations create all the ethics, justice, and values, which in turn create all the conflicts people suffer. Now, I realize that it is our nature to separate this world." "All conflicts actually rise from the fact that we build boundaries between ourselves and all the others. We never understand how closely we and the other things are connected."
	Observation (O) "The teaching [non-separation] is very simple. Indeed, it is hard to live with it. I hope all of you will at least try however. See things as they are, before you make meanings in your mind. Don't make meanings." [Anonymous monk A1 preaching in a public space]
Unconscious perception of linguistic contradictions	**Informal interview quotes (I)** "Why are there so many conflicts? That is because of the language we use. We separate 'you' and 'I' by creating the words 'you' and 'I'." "What I realize through this life is that we suffer so much from unnecessary things that we create by ourselves. All our thoughts and ideas are not real. It is merely created by language."
	Monk meditation diary (D) "When I say 'I' and when I think of 'I,' 'non-I' is created. How can I know myself without saying and thinking of 'I'? How can I think about something without using language?" "It is ironic that learning happens only through language. But, language always creates bias." "I should have kept a child's mindset that does not separate 'right' from 'wrong.' Children indeed don't separate people and fight for values."
	Observation (O) "How are biases created by language? I caution that we all should be careful about speaking and thinking. Language delivers our message, but it unconsciously creates misunderstandings." [Anonymous monk A2 preaching in a public space] There was only silence between the ethnographer and an anonymous monk in a 20-minute interview. [Anonymous monk A3 preaching in a public space]

Boundary-Drawing to Perceive the World

H-Temple monks believe that conflicts are cognitively constructed in one's mind. According to them, people unconsciously draw boundaries to perceive the external world and then infuse opposite meanings to the two differentiated elements. This process occurs when people habitually infuse meanings to the natural world, which inevitably distorts the natural world into a social one. Zerubavel (1993, p. 5) described that "we transform the natural world into a social one by carving out of it mental chunks we then treat as if they were discrete, totally detached from their surroundings." H-Temple monks claim that this boundary-making process creates conflicts. From the Buddhist perspective, the drawn boundaries even cause attachment to one side and then generate suffering (Rāhula, 1974). In this study, I found that one of the reasons H-Temple monks meditate is to deconstruct such boundaries that are firmly embedded in human nature.

Early on in the fieldwork, I wanted to know how conflicts and Buddhism are related. A conversation with a senior H-Temple monk forced me to rethink the question. What he offered to me was important evidence about the monks' worldview, which related to how Buddhist monks make sense of physical entities.

Monk A: We are meditating in a temple, but that does not mean that we abandon our life as a human. Our bodies live in this world. We eat, drink, feel, and see. We get sick as well. We also see the secular world and worry about people's suffering.
Me: Why, then, do you not get out of the monastery [to help people]? Why do you stay here?
Monk A: Why should I do so?
Me: [pause] I mean why do you not share what you have realized with people?
Monk A: Why should I do so?
Me: Your realization can guide people, whether it is about spiritual value, liberalization, love, or anything good. Do you not want to share it with other people? I am curious why you stay here all the time.
Monk A: Do you think Mother Teresa is a good person?
Me: Yes.
Monk A: Why?
Me: Because she devoted her entire life to helping others.
Monk A: Why is helping others a good deed?
Me: [pause] Because through that, she helped others live in a better world.
Monk A: Yes, but what makes you think that it [helping others] is good?
Me: [silence]
Monk A: Feelings, logic, emotions, whatever your philosophy is, it is void. Morality is socially invented; therefore, it is void. Why should you be sad when your mother dies? Is it not a natural process? Why is life always better than death? Why should you be sad knowing very well that everybody will die someday?
Me: [being provocative] That does not make sense to me. Also, your comparison between death and life is different from the case of Mother Teresa. We have a natural inclination to help others, don't we? What then is the difference between humans and animals, stones, and trees?
Monk A: Stones and trees do not move, think, and feel. However, we do. That is the difference. This is the source of the agony and tragedy that we face.

Other conversations with H-Temple monks followed a similar pattern. Although the conversations were often too esoteric to analyze, there was one common salient aspect. The monks rejected what they

sensed through the outside world because they believed that human senses, logic, and other human-invented epistemologies, including morality and value, are essentially unreliable. They seemed to challenge, through their meditation practice, the physical entities that people see, smell, and taste. Through the meditation practice, H-Temple monks became skeptical of the outside world. They tried to discard prior knowledge and experience.

Another important conversation that I had in H-Temple supports this interpretation. H-Temple monks tended to see the secular world as an enormous desire-based system in which desire governs human behavior. Yet, they thought of the Buddhist monastery as an organizational system that could offer a setting where they could escape from desire. Monk D wrote in his diary: "If the ultimate aim of human beings is happiness, then what is happiness? People say that it is the satisfaction of the five senses. It is satisfaction of desire … But, that is not true. The satisfaction of desire causes attachment and suffering." This note motivated me to explore the relationship between human desire and the secular world. To further discuss the concern, I went to meet Monk G, who had been meditating for more than a decade.

> **Monk G:** Desire is really an ironic thing. It brings happiness but also makes human beings fall into suffering. Once, you fall into this swamp, others start to look like competitors who desire what you think should have been yours. If all people think that way, the world out there [secular society] will become an arena of constant struggle where people only follow their desires. However, the sad thing is that people do not realize that desire is the source of suffering.

Meanwhile, an anonymous H-Temple monk wrote:

> All organisms crave their survival. They hunt only when they are hungry. However, humans are different. A human's craving never stops. … The thing that sustains human society is not only the craving for survival, but also craving for obtaining something more. The craving plays the role of an engine in moving human civilization forward, but ultimately leads to destruction.

H-Temple monks explained that human desire gives rise to hedonism, and is the ultimate source of conflict. It separates one from the others (e.g., 'you' and 'them') by building boundaries against them.

One day, Senior Monk V narrated a story to me to elucidate this point further. He introduced me to a particular meditation technique called void sight meditation. The void sight meditation aims to reduce sexual desires. More than 1,000 years ago, ancient Buddhist monks in South Asia focused on the dead body of a young woman for a very long time. As her flesh decomposed, bugs started inhabiting the body, and it gave a foul smell. These negative images associated with a woman got implanted in the monks' minds. In addition, through a repetitive thought experiment, the monks imagined a disfigured woman whose breast was placed on her forehead and her eyes were on her abdomen. This visualization motivated the monks to question why people respond sexually to a certain shape of a woman's body, face, or breast. Senior Monk V said:

> **Monk V:** Some tribal men sexually respond to obese women, long-necked women, or women with big ears. We should question why we automatically react to a particular shape of a woman's body. Why does cognition automatically connect our sexual desires to a certain body shape? And, since when?

Eventually, ancient monks asked themselves why they responded sexually to a certain shape of a woman's body or a young woman's naked body. According to the void sight meditation, the body is just a random collection and assemblage of body parts. This thought experiment shows that even sexual desires

are externally driven. The monks believe that there is no such thing as an aesthetically perfect body shape. Senior Monk A commented on void sight meditation as follows:

> **Monk A:** In fact, void sight meditation is a very old style of meditation practice to realize that there is no separation, and there is no (physical) reality constructed by your five senses. If you realize why there is no physical separation, you will see that your conception of language creates separations like forehead and hair [pointing to his own forehead and hair]. It is what you have learned, which separates the world from yourself.

Four hundred years ago, René Descartes, a French philosopher, undertook a thought experiment. He concluded that his being cannot be challenged because he is the one thinking. However, H-Temple monks even challenge their very existence. They argue that their physical selves are defined by unstable human senses. I discussed René Descartes with Monk C.

> **Monk C:** There are numerous comments about him (René Descartes), but what he found through his thought experiment was 'ego.' He realized that the ego exists against the world. He believed that the ego is essentially different from the world. However, we do not try to differentiate the ego from the world. By being skeptical about the world, we can also be skeptical about the self, our body, or whatever defines ourselves. Finally, we aim to see that the self [pointing at himself] who is thinking and talking to you is not even a true reality that we want to see as a being.

According to Monk C, the boundary between the human body (or being) and the external world is not drawn. Monk C noted that the boundary creates a worldview that drives humans to exploit the world.

Unconscious Perception of Linguistic Contradictions

Not only do H-Temple monks try to avoid drawing cognitive boundaries in their mind, but they also question *linguistic boundaries* defined in this study as linguistic demarcations that separate normative values, such as the notions of justice from injustice, rightness from wrongness, and morality from amorality, which are all conceptualized by human language. They further claim that conflicts in many cases are merely rhetoric that people unconsciously communicate by building the linguistic boundaries. Empirically, just as the H-Temple monks deconstruct a woman's body in their imagination, they also deconstruct people's everyday use of language.

For example, in the third month of the fieldwork, I was informed that I could have an extremely rare opportunity to meet H-Temple's venerable Monk Y. I was told that in the presence of Monk Y, I must not speak, but wait for the monk to speak first. One day, Monk S finally set up a meeting with Monk Y, and I was given about 20 minutes with the monk in his room. However, in the meeting, Monk Y did not speak, and I also remained silent. The meeting ended without any conversation, and the only observation I made was that Monk Y's movements were extremely slow and he behaved as if I was not present in the room. As no conversation took place, there was no text (language) to analyze.

Over time, I came to realize that language is not necessary to know each other. Monk Y probably wanted to teach that the omission of language can allow us to know each other in a better way. I tried to understand the meaning of the silence by talking to Monk H. He immediately smiled and provided an insight into linguistic separations in our conversation.

> **Monk H:** What do you study?
> **Me:** I am studying business.

Monk H: So, you study how to make more money?
Me: Actually, it is the opposite. I am studying how to create a good firm. Many people are interested in the research area.
Monk H: [Silence] Then, why are there so many bad firms?
Me: [pause] That is why I am here. I am studying sustainability. That is, I want to answer how to maintain material well-being for the next generation.
Monk H: Is the sustainability you are talking about possible only if human civilization collapses?

During the conversation, I learned that Monk H stripped values that people superimpose on things. For Monk H, sustainability was only a human-invented concept, which was exclusively based on human rationality, sense, love, and morality. Sustainability is defined as a form of development that "meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987, p. 43). Management scholars assume that sustainability or sustainable development is preferable to unsustainability. Yet, the monk pointed out that the concept of sustainability is merely a linguistically constructed concept.

Monk B similarly elaborated that "if other organisms, such as animals, plants, and insects could speak, they may not want to coexist with human." Related to the meaning of sustainability, Monk K and I discussed the reality of the world. Monk K commented, "Imagine the world is merely a reflection. What you see, feel, smell, and touch are not real, but merely a reflection of something that you linguistically speak of which does not actually exist." Finally, he asked me, "what is the sustainability?"

In the meantime, Monk N told me that "people construct unnecessary values through the language they use, whether it is scientific or the language of everyday use." As such, H-Temple monks aim to rid themselves of bias and meanings that surface through language. For example, whether sustainability is valid compared with non-sustainability is not even an important question. Mindless engagement with this question just results in unnecessary attachment and obsession with human survival, sacrificing other species and natural environment.

A set of H-Temple scholarly monks I interviewed claimed that epistemology determines ontology. The language people use may help them communicate differences in what they see, but those differences are also imposed on reality. The monks sought to strip away cognitive constructions that included different meanings and interpretations of reality. One anonymous H-Temple monk asked, "Why should I pursue sexual desire, appetite, money, and long life?" He said that one could ask this question differently: "Why should I pursue friendship, asceticism, social good, and morality?" He consistently denied the separation between these contradictory words and between the opposite meanings behind the words.

Both Monk H and Monk V described how language creates two opposite meanings that unconsciously generate dualities, tension, and conflicts. People construct words that separate such as 'justice' from 'injustice', 'you' from 'me', 'love' from 'hate', and 'morality' from 'immorality'. Language creates such categories. These categories assign positive or negative values to concepts, ideas, or thoughts. H-Temple monks try to escape from this cognitive process and dissolve such boundaries by not drawing them in the first place.

At some point, I observed that some of the monks at H-Temple want to return to their childhood. They were trying to learn how to cognize the world without linguistically separating objects and ideas. Monk C finished his conversation with me by saying that:

Monk C: The deeper people empty their minds, the more they can embrace others. I think we try to remove all colors we have and finally want to make our mind purely transparent. Once it becomes transparent, we have the power to embrace other colors without any bias.

Eventually, I became curious to know what the monks thought about the conflict between the temples' business activities (e.g., tourism) and meditation practices (e.g., silence), which are critical for the temple's growth and survival. Fortunately, I was able to attend a lecture by H-Temple's revered meditation monk, Monk J. I was surprised to see that his face lacked any expression. After the lecture, I had a rare opportunity to talk to Monk J.

Me: I felt that your voice was monotonous and slightly passionless. I mean it was very calm. Were you also doing meditation as you preached?
Monk J: Monks are respected by the community. However, monks are also human beings. Like many other people, monks also want to build a reputation. They love their work (preaching and lectures) may want to be popular. This is obsession, which is a poison. How can you avoid that? Do not infuse whatever you think meaningful into what you are doing. If you completely detach yourself from it, you will be free. You will no longer feel that you need to gain a reputation to spread Buddha's teaching.
Me: From my observations, I think that some monks have created a boundary between Buddhism and business. Indeed, I realize that it is difficult to engage in both at the same time.
Monk J: Do not try to think that Buddhism and business are valuable. Do not infuse your meaning or value with these ideas. Do exactly the opposite. You can see no difference among Buddhism, business, and any other thing. See an object without any bias. It is you who draws a line.

Monk J explained that doing something without passion does not mean doing nothing. I realized that H-Temple monks try not to see contradictions arising from conflicts between Buddhism and business because they avoid assigning any positive or negative meanings that linguistically frame what business and Buddhism represent.

Discussion

In this study, I explored how Buddhist monks view, experience, and make sense of conflicts. By deeply immersing myself into the monks' day-to-day monastic life, I found that Buddhist monks critically rethink existing concepts, ideas, notions, and values that, they believe, inevitably contribute to the formation of conflicts in our mind. In this section, I interpret the findings, using the notion of mindfulness, and then describe the study's contributions to paradox research.

Buddhist Mindfulness Approach to a Paradox

The findings of this study show that H-temple monks deconstruct cognitive boundaries between the opposing elements of conflicts. Their narratives describe that these opposing elements stem from separations, particularly when people perceive physical entities and unconsciously use language to depict them. The monks try to deconstruct these cognitive boundaries by being mindful of their perception and language. They believe that the boundaries create unnecessary attachments to certain objects, concepts, ideologies, and moralities. Without these boundaries, there is no separation, and without separation, there is no conflict. There is only an empty space.

These findings, along with my interpretation, now direct us to investigate a potential mechanism of how the monks' meditation practices are linked to their boundary-destroying works (Ashforth et al., 2000; Barrett & Oborn, 2010; Lamont & Molnár, 2002). In pursuing this linkage, I integrate the findings with the notion of mindfulness, given that mindfulness is a core concept in Buddhism, which has been practiced and advanced over the last 2,500 years (Anālayo, 2019a, 2019b; Purser & Milillo, 2015; Weick & Putnam,

2006). In Buddhist monastic community, the notion of mindfulness is often identical to meditation practice (Anālayo, 2019b). Although the aim of meditation differs, practicing meditation essentially means being mindful to how our mind works, and further how the mind captures the external world (Anālayo, 2019b). It is typically understood that the ultimate aim of all meditation techniques is to be aware of a state of mind and the external world without any bias (Rāhula, 1974).

In academia, cognitive psychologists define mindfulness as a data-interpretation process that enables people to sense, interpret, and organize mindfully external data such as environmental incidents, events, and changes (Langer, 1989; Langer et al., 1978; Langer & Moldoveanu, 2000). Mindfulness refers to individuals' cognitive capacities used to polish the meanings they assign to their experiences (Fiol & O'Connor, 2003; Kudesia, 2019). A key theoretical concern here is the role of the conceptual categories in assigning meanings. In day-to-day lives, people create conceptual categories to encode, interpret, and organize all sensory experiences to give particular meanings to their experiences (Langer & Moldavian, 2000). The linguistically created conceptual categories then enable people to decide which categories they use to interpret the raw data. The filtered data are then categorized as 'clean or dirty,' 'good or bad,' 'right or wrong,' 'safe or dangerous,' 'us or them,' 'justice or injustice,' and so forth.

While mindfulness research from this Western perspective claims that making such conceptual categories helps people to process external data quickly, the perspective of H-Temple monks offers a similar-yet-opposing view. H-Temple monks view conceptual categories as inadvertently creating biases. H-Temple Monk L mentioned, "If you finally remove all the boundaries and separations in your mind, what remains is just a big circle. It is empty. There is nothing you can conceptualize and assign meanings and values to." This suggests that to be completely mindful of conflicts, people may even need to dismantle the existing conceptual categories they have unconsciously built, accumulated, and reinforced over time.

In Buddhist monks' communities, the boundary-deconstructing works are conceptualized as *Sunyata* (*Suññatā* in Pāḷi). While Sunyata is translated to mean nothingness, emptiness, and vacuity in the academic community, Buddhist monks define it as a mental state known as liberalization, enlightenment, or *Nirvana* (*Nibbāna* in Pāḷi) (Rāhula, 1974). It is a worldview that gives us the ability to shape their world without bias. Figure 1 presents the Buddhist symbol that graphically represents emptiness—no separation and no boundary.

Figure 1

Symbol of Buddhist Sunyata: Emptiness

Contributions and Implications

In this study, I explored the Buddhist context to show how meditation helps people address conflicts with mindfulness. The findings show that Buddhist monks redefine the particular meanings, concepts, and values attached to elements of conflicts that people mindlessly attend to, recognize, and interpret using their own conceptual categories. As below, I further articulate how these findings can specifically contribute to the paradox literature.

Individual-level paradox research has investigated how individuals manage, react to, and experience conflicts (Putnam et al., 2016). The studies reveal individuals' multiple responses to conflicts (Lewis, 2000). In doing so, scholars theorize a paradox as a unique response to conflict. They argue that managers who comfortably embrace conflicts may have a paradoxical mindset (Miron-Spektor et al., 2018) and use paradoxical frames (Hahn et al., 2014). However, owing to the skewed attention to the different reactions among individuals, little research has explored the cognitive mechanisms of how paradoxical mindsets work; that is, how a paradox is constructed in one's mind.

This study contributes to the abovementioned area of inquiry. The findings reveal that meditation practice may play a significant role in removing firmly rooted conceptual categories that people build to access external data. While the conceptual categories are useful, they inadvertently and unconsciously create biases to particular meanings and values. This study suggests that Buddhist meditative mindfulness is an important cognitive process. It helps people deconstruct a specific set of concepts, notions, and meanings created by the conceptual categories they often mindlessly attach to their organizational life.

Conclusion

Conflicts are omnipresent in organizational life. Individuals have different aims, desires, and value systems that inevitably create conflicts, contests, and bruising politics in various organizational settings (Ashforth & Reingen, 2014; Glynn, 2000). This study illuminates the role of mindfulness and develops the notion of Sunyata in reframing the nature of conflicts people face in day-to-day organizational life. By exploring Buddhist monks' worldview, it suggests that rethinking linguistic separations manifested in our daily language use helps us remove cognitive boundaries that are deeply built in our minds and thereby eliminate the opposing elements of conflicts.

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