

"Gender and conflict resolution and negotiation: What the literature tells us"

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Acknowledgements:

We would like to thank Professor Jane Mansbridge of the Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, for her unwavering intellectual support and friendship throughout this project. She helped make our work on this paper challenging, rewarding, and a great deal of fun.

"Gender and conflict resolution and negotiation: What the literature tells us"

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I. INTRODUCTION

The question of whether and how gender influences conflict resolution and negotiation has received a fair amount of academic attention. Some researchers are attracted to this area of research in response to the fact that "[s]kepticism surrounding women's ability to adopt managerial roles and responsibilities has prevailed since the advent of women within the corporate hierarchy" (Portello & Long, 1994, p. 683). These researchers want to explore and explode the traditional view, long an impediment to women's progress through the managerial ranks, that women are not "as good as men" at handling conflict or at negotiating. Other theorists, taking to heart either traditional cultural stereotypes or the theories of cultural feminists, have sought to explore whether women really do speak in "a different voice" than men when negotiating or handling conflict (Korabik, Baril, & Watson, 1993). Do women communicate differently than men in such situations? Do they behave differently? Do they pursue different outcomes?

This literature review looks at some of the more recent academic research on the links between gender and both negotiation and conflict resolution. It is not an exhaustive study of the literature. Rather, this literature review focuses on empirical work primarily from psychology and management journals: it uses two specific sets of keywords; and it is particularly concerned with adult subjects in non-intimate relationships.

II. METHODOLOGY

The first stage of our research was to perform literature searches in the PsycINFO and Sociofile academic databases. Within each of these two databases, literature searches were done on two topics: "gender and conflict resolution," and "gender and negotiation." This initial search yielded over 350 citations. The "gender and conflict resolution" search yielded an initial total of 89 citations from PsycINFO and 51 from Sociofile. The "gender and negotiation" search yielded 105 citations from PsycINFO and 111 from Sociofile.

Most of these articles came from psychology journals, including journals that focus on issues such as sex roles, personality, counseling, and women's studies. Some articles came from business journals. A smaller number came from legal journals or journals specifically focusing on negotiation or conflict. Our selection of the PsycINFO and Sociofile databases means that our literature searches did not focus on the legal or peace studies literature on gender and conflict resolution and negotiation. Nor did we use an exhaustive set of keywords. We did not use "women and conflict resolution", "women and negotiation", or "women/gender and conflict/ competition/cooperation." Literature provided by a more exhaustive search would no doubt have been illuminating as well.

Our goal, however, was not to be exhaustive, but to do a thorough examination of a defined "wedge" of the literature on these topics.

The second stage was to narrow this pool. We eliminated duplicate articles, articles with non-adult subjects (of high school age or younger), and articles that were fundamentally off-topic (for instance, one article was concerned with "negotiation" as the act of trying to understand new and unfamiliar words). This process narrowed our target to 18 citations from PsycInfo and 24 from Sociofile on "gender and conflict resolution," and 19 citations from PsycInfo and 5 from Sociofile on "gender and negotiation." We read each of these 66 articles thoroughly.

In the third stage, we further narrowed the pool to sources that were quantitatively empirical. This process resulted in a total of 29 studies for inclusion in this analysis—13 on negotiation and 16 on conflict resolution. From the original pool of over 350 citations, we focused on these 29 empirical studies.

III. DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDIES

A. Experimental Subjects

Ten of the 29 studies relied on undergraduate students as subjects. (One of these ten used a sample consisting of 95% undergraduate students and of 5% graduate students. We have classified this study as using undergraduate students.) Three studies used MBA graduate students, four used managers, three used employees, two used a mix of employees and managers, two used business people, and two used other recruited adults. One study looked at workplace grievance procedure outcomes, as well as union representatives. Two studies were meta-analyses.

A few points on the choice of subjects are worth noting here. First, a substantial number of these studies used college undergraduates as experimental subjects. Undergraduates provide a convenient and accessible sample for researchers. However, the use of undergraduates in many of these studies raises the perennial but important question of how readily conclusions about undergraduate students can be transferred to the population at large. This problem did not affect both subject areas equally. Studies on conflict resolution used managers and employees much more frequently than studies on negotiation, which relied more on student samples. Eight of the studies on conflict resolution used employees, managers, or some combination thereof as subjects; by contrast, only one of the studies on negotiation did. To the extent that we are interested in how gender affects conflict resolution and negotiation in the workplace and in other real-life settings, this heavy use of undergraduates points to an important gap in the research on negotiation.

Second, almost none of the studies indicated anything about the ethnic or class make-up of the subject pool. While some of the subject pools may be fairly diverse in these respects -- for instance, some of the undergraduate student samples may be heterogeneous, depending on the universities from which they are drawn -- we have no

way of knowing whether this is the case. Much of the current research seems to assume that gender is the only, or the most prominent, dimension along which negotiation or conflict resolution styles may vary. Yet, it is possible that race, ethnicity, class, rural or urban background, or region and the interaction of these variables with gender may well be important in shaping approaches to conflict and negotiation. At present, the research does not enable us to grapple with these questions.

B. Experimental Methods

The studies varied greatly with respect to experimental methods. Nine of the 29 studies relied on self-reports -- subjects used surveys or questionnaires to describe their own approaches to negotiation or conflict resolution. One relied on third-party reporting -- subordinate employees reported on their supervisors' approaches to conflict resolution or negotiation. Four studies drew on field observation, seven used lab observation, and one relied on interviews. Five studies used a combination of methods, typically a combination of lab observation and self-reports. As mentioned earlier, two studies were meta-analyses.

Again, a few points on the methods of gathering data are worth noting. First, a significant number of these studies, particularly in the field of conflict resolution, relied largely or wholly on self-report by subjects. Self-report is not as reliable a measure of actual behavior as third-party reports, field observation, or lab observation; it relies on recall and judgment much more than other methodological approaches. To the extent that it is actual behavior, rather than perceptions of behavior, in which we are interested, this reliance on self-report is problematic. However, self-report may be more appropriate if we are interested in the actors' intentions, motivations, or perceptions.

Some studies used a combination of self-report and other methods. As becomes apparent below, in many of these studies, self-report yielded rather different results from the other methods of research. This suggests the potential shortcomings of self-report, and, more importantly, demonstrates the importance of the distinction between self-perception and actual behavior, a theme to which this review returns later.

Second, the use of laboratory observation also poses potential problems. Unlike field observation, which reports people's behaviors in their natural environments, lab observation relies on constructed and to some extent artificial scenarios of negotiation or conflict resolution. Lab studies can design the problem scenario and instruct subjects in such ways as to limit the behaviors observed and thus bias results. For instance, participants in salary negotiation role plays are sometimes told to negotiate in order to obtain "the highest possible salary" -- an instruction that prevents them from pursuing other objectives that may in reality be important to them, such as better working conditions or professional recognition. If men and women wished to pursue different objectives in their pay negotiations, this kind of experimental set-up would prevent researchers from uncovering such differences.

Finally, almost none of the research relies on post-role-play discussions with subjects, also known as debriefing. This is unfortunate, because at least as helpful as observing

differences in subjects' behavior would be understanding the motivations underlying the differences in their behavior. For instance, if research based on role-plays suggests that women negotiate in as "competitive" a fashion as men do, debriefing would help researchers find out why this is so. It may be that women simply feel as comfortable as men negotiating competitively. Or it may be that women are more likely than men to worry that appearing "soft" during negotiation will lead male opponents to take advantage of them. These differences in motivation have potentially vast implications for this field of research. Yet current research does not allow us to uncover them.

IV. FINDINGS

The following discussion on findings is separated into two broad sections. Part A addresses findings from the literature on gender and conflict resolution. Part B looks at findings from the literature on gender and negotiation. These broad sections, in turn, are divided into sub-sections, each of which discusses a separate theme that emerges from the literature.

Part A: Gender and Conflict Resolution

As the preceding methodological discussion indicates, the literature searches revealed fifteen articles on gender and conflict resolution. Of these fifteen articles, only five are explored in the following discussion. Six of the fifteen articles were less useful to this study because of their topics: three were more concerned with structural discrimination than with conflict resolution, one looked primarily at interpersonal confrontation, one was interested in international rather than sex-based comparisons of conflict resolution styles, and one looked mostly at formal conflict resolution outcomes. Three of the fifteen articles focused on intimate relationships, a subject that this literature review does not address. Finally one of the fifteen articles that we do not discuss defined different styles of conflict management in such a way as to blur together many of the differences in style that this review is interested in exploring.

We explore five main themes: the effect of sex on conflict resolution style, the effect of stereotypic gender roles ("masculine," "feminine," or "androgynous") on conflict resolution style, the effect of managerial rank on conflict resolution style, the effect of sex on others' satisfaction with conflict resolution, and the effect of sex on perceptions of effectiveness at resolving conflict.

1. The Effect of Sex on Conflict Resolution Style

The evidence on the question of whether sex (i.e. being male or female) affects conflict resolution style is mixed. There is mild, qualified support for the view that sex makes some difference; however, there is also support for the counter view that sex makes no difference at all. Significantly, unlike most of the studies in this field, the two studies discussed here relied on field and lab observation, and therefore were particularly instructive.

The most useful research on this question has been done by Papa and Natalie (1989). Their study relied on field observation of 108 employees and managers from a single, large workplace. Papa and Natalie divided the employees and managers into pairs and asked them to discuss an actual issue arising from their workplace – namely, whether their workplace should adopt a process of participatory decision making (PDM). The pairs of subjects were constructed to consist of people who disagreed with one another on this question. Papa and Natalie observed how the subjects used seven different conflict resolution styles in the course of their discussions. The seven conflict resolution styles they catalogued were: bargaining, reasons, friendliness, assertiveness, coalition, appeal to higher authority, and use of sanctions.

The study did find that over time subjects tended to adopt different conflict resolution styles, based on their gender. Thus, male-male dyads used assertiveness and reason consistently over time, which the researchers said accords with gender stereotypes. Female-female dyads tended to use assertiveness and reason at the beginning, which the researchers said does not accord with gender stereotypes. However, the female-female dyads then switched to bargaining, which the researchers said does accord with gender stereotypes, on the assumption that bargaining, negotiation and the exchange of benefits or favors are things women tend to do more. (It is unclear why the researchers consider the use of bargaining to be a feminine strategy; they do not explain this view.) Male-female dyads used reason and bargaining throughout, which the researchers said does accord with gender stereotypes, because the addition of a female to the mix resulted in an increase in the use of bargaining.

However, these findings only point to a small gender effect on conflict resolution style. First, the female-female dyads, like the male-male dyads, began by drawing on assertiveness and reason, though they then switched to bargaining later on in their interactions. This suggests that, at the very least, the effects of gender on conflict resolution style do not manifest themselves consistently over time. Second, in what Papa and Natalie called a departure from gender stereotypes, all of the dyads in the study used friendliness frequently across time. In short, what has traditionally been seen as a "women's" approach to conflict resolution may not necessarily be so.

Indeed, a study by Korabik, Baril, and Watson (1993) backs up the view that gender has no effect on conflict resolution style. Korabik et al. used a mix of experimental methods on their sample of 196 part-time evening MBA students. One of their methods was lab observation, which concluded that there were no differences in conflict resolution styles between males and females. On balance, then, the evidence on this point seems highly mixed.

2. The Effect of Stereotypic Gender Roles on Conflict Resolution Style

There are two broad sets of research on the question of whether gender roles (i.e. whether a person acts in a "masculine," "feminine," or "androgynous" fashion) affect conflict resolution style. The first set of research relies on self-reporting by the subjects themselves (Portello & Long, 1994). The second set of research relies on third-party

reporting, namely subordinate employees filling out questionnaires about their managers (Jurma & Powell, 1994).

a. The effect of self-reported gender roles on conflict resolution style

Portello and Long (1994) studied a pool of 134 female managers and found only limited support for the notion that gender role affects conflict resolution style. They asked their subjects, all female managers, to complete questionnaires describing their personal characteristics. They then classified the subjects as "masculine" if they scored high on "masculine" attributes such as being independent, competitive, or assertive; "feminine" if they scored high on "feminine" attributes such as being emotional, nurturing and sensitive to others; or "androgynous" if they scored high on both sets of attributes.

Portello and Long found that those female managers who scored high on "masculine" attributes were more likely to use the "dominating" style of conflict resolution, which Portello and Long described as "competitive," "persuasive," and "forceful." One obvious problem here is that the independent variable (gender role) is defined in terms (e.g. "competitive") that also appear in the definition of the dependent variable. Portello and Long found in addition that female managers who scored high on "masculine" attributes were less likely to use an "avoidant" style of conflict resolution, which consists of withdrawing from and sidestepping conflict. They noted that this finding accords with gender stereotypes. In a similar vein, those female managers who were defined as "androgynous" were more likely to use an "integrating" style of conflict resolution, which involves negotiating, problem solving, and collaborating. Portello and Long do note, however, that the "integrating" style of conflict resolution was the most frequently reported style overall in their study.

Their study found contrary evidence as well. In particular, female managers who scored high on self-reported "feminine" attributes were not more likely to use compromising, obliging, or avoidant styles of conflict resolution. The researchers noted that this finding does not accord with gender stereotypes. More to the point, it also lends doubt to the view that gender role affects conflict resolution style.

b. The effect of third party-reported gender roles on conflict resolution styles

Jurma and Powell (1994) looked at the conflict resolution styles of 45 male and female managers. They asked employees to describe their managers' personal attributes; these attributes were then used to divide the 45 managers into three gender role categories: "masculine," "feminine," or "androgynous" (i.e. ranking high on both "masculine" and "feminine" attributes). The employees then evaluated their managers' communication behavior in managing conflict. Thus, like Portello and Long (1994), Jurma and Powell used personal characteristics or behavior to define managers' gender roles; they then studied the connections between those gender roles and different conflict resolution styles. Unlike Portello and Long, however, Jurma and Powell drew on a subject pool of both male and female managers. Moreover, they relied on third-party reports, rather than self-reports by managers themselves.

Jurma and Powell found that managers who ranked as "androgynous" were perceived by subordinates as better at handling conflict than managers who ranked as "masculine" or "feminine." Moreover, managers who ranked as "feminine" were rated as having better communication styles in conflict management than managers who ranked as "masculine." These findings lend weight to the suggestion that, at least at the level of other people's perceptions, gender role does affect conflict resolution style.

The Effect of Managerial Rank on Conflict Resolution Style

The question of whether managerial rank affects conflict resolution style is also a thorny one. The literature on gender and conflict resolution yields three seemingly mutually exclusive answers to this question, and, as is discussed later, the literature on gender and negotiation is also ambiguous.

Some of the research suggests that gender differences in conflict resolution styles are in fact wholly accounted for by differences in managerial rank. In other words, there is no gender effect on conflict resolution style: there is only a managerial rank effect. This is one of the findings that emerged from a study by Chusmir and Mills (1989), who used self-reporting to study the conflict resolution styles of 201 managers. Chusmir and Mills found that there was a link between organization level and conflict resolution style: specifically, as organizational level increased, both male and female managers were more likely to report a "competing" style of conflict resolution, and less likely to report an "accommodating" style. More importantly, the researchers found that if hierarchical level was held constant, males and females reported similar conflict resolution styles.

This finding was echoed by Korabik et al. (1993), who relied in part on self-reporting by MBA student subjects. They found that among those MBA students with management experience, males and females reported the same conflict resolution styles. In other words, controlling for level of management experience, there was no gender effect.

Yet these same studies also supported the finding that managerial rank, rather than acting independently, interacts with gender in shaping the conflict resolution styles of managers. Chusmir and Mills (1989) found that although higher organizational level makes both male and female managers more likely to report a competing style of conflict resolution than an accommodating style, this effect is especially pronounced for male managers.

Korabik et al. (1993), also found a connection between rank and gender in the self-reporting portion of their study. They found that although MBA students in the sample who had management experience reported similar conflict resolution styles regardless of gender, those MBA students who lacked management experience did vary along lines of gender. In particular, female managers without management experience reported more integrating, obliging, and compromising styles than did male managers without management experience.

There is, finally, highly tenuous support for the view that managerial rank has no effect at all. Portello and Long (1994)'s assessments of managers' self-reports led them to conclude that organizational level has no effect on conflict resolution style. However, their study, unlike the two other studies that considered managerial rank, was not concerned with the link between actual sex and conflict resolution style. Rather, it focused on the connection between gender role ("masculine," "feminine," or "androgynous") and conflict resolution style, and found, as noted above, that some such connection may exist.

The problem, however, is that gender role and managerial rank may in themselves be related to one another. Higher managerial rank may correlate with the possession of "masculine" traits, either because of selection effects (only women who are "masculine" seek out or are selected for promotion into managerial positions), or because of socialization effects (women who are elevated into managerial positions adopt the "masculine" conflict resolution traits that their environment inculcates in them). The possession of such "masculine" traits, in turn, may be connected to conflict resolution style, as Portello and Long themselves observed. As a result, it seems strained to assert that managerial rank and conflict resolution style are not in themselves related to one another.

On balance, then, the view that managerial rank acts in concert with gender in affecting conflict resolution behavior, and even the stronger view that managerial rank accounts completely for differences in conflict resolution style, both enjoy stronger empirical support than the claim that managerial rank does not matter at all. Yet there is hardly a consensus on this point.

The Effect of Sex on Others' Satisfaction with Conflict Resolution

Although most of the research findings discussed above focus on conflict resolution style, some of the studies from which they emerge also consider the issue of how sex and gender role are related to others' satisfaction with conflict resolution. Jurma and Powell (1994), for instance, who considered the nexus between perceived gender role and conflict resolution style, found that there was indeed a link between perceived gender role and others' satisfaction with conflict resolution. Specifically, employees were more satisfied with their leaders, more satisfied with their tasks, and more "intrinsically" satisfied with those managers they perceived as "androgynous" than with those managers they perceived as either "masculine" or "feminine."

Yet this finding, too, has not gone unchallenged. Papa and Natalie (1989), who relied on field observation rather than on third-party reporting like Jurma and Powell (1994), found no reported satisfaction differences between male-male, female-female, and male-female dyads. To the extent that field observation is a more accurate reflector of reality than third-party reporting, the Papa and Natalie finding that gender does not affect satisfaction may be more convincing. However, in contexts where perceptions rather than behavior matter, the Jurma and Powell finding of higher satisfaction with "androgynous" managers may also be important.

The Effect of Sex on Perceptions of Effectiveness at Resolving Conflict

The Korabik et al. study (1993) considered an additional question of interest: whether gender affects perceptions of effectiveness at handling conflict. One of the methods this study used was third-party reports by MBA students about their leaders during conflict resolution sessions. They reported that, in general, they considered leaders who adopted "obliging" styles of conflict resolution to be more effective than leaders who adopted "dominant" styles of conflict resolution. However, there were important differences in perceptions of effectiveness along lines of gender. Among leaders who used "dominant" conflict resolution styles, females were rated as less effective than males. Among leaders who used "obliging" conflict resolution styles, males were rated as less effective than females.

Since this is a question that none of the other studies addressed, it is unclear whether other researchers are in agreement with these findings. At the very least, however, these findings do confirm that particular traits are seen as more attractive in women than in men, and vice versa. These findings also stress the importance that perception plays in the area of conflict resolution -- a theme to which we return later.

Part B: Gender and Negotiation

We reviewed fourteen studies on gender and negotiation. This discussion focuses on thirteen of the fourteen studies, as one (Griffith 1988) was more concerned with personality traits than gender. The discussion is organized under four themes which mirror the themes in the previous section on gender and conflict resolution: the effect of sex on negotiation behavior and outcomes, the effect of self-expectations on negotiation behavior and outcomes, the effect of perceptions of and expectations about others on negotiation behavior and outcomes, and the effect of rank or power on negotiating behavior.

The Effect of Sex on Negotiation Behavior and Outcomes

Like the literature on gender and conflict resolution, the literature on gender and negotiation reveals little consensus on the question of whether sex is an important determinant of conflict resolution or negotiation style. Some studies have found that sex is a significant factor.

Halpern and Parks (1996) engaged 50 undergraduates in a low-conflict negotiation role-play about the building of a playground. The students role-played community members who were interested in building the playground and who had to decide how much money should be allocated to the playground. The researchers specifically chose a low-conflict negotiation in which both negotiators were on the same side and shared a common goal because that situation would not provide strong adversarial or economic cues, would

encourage solidarity between negotiators, and has no right answer. They used single sex dyads to negotiate because they hypothesized that gender might affect behavior.

Halpern and Parks looked at both outcomes and processes. Regarding outcomes, they found that female dyads allocated less money for the playground than did male dyads. After reviewing audiotapes of the negotiations, Halpern and Parks also concluded that the male and female dyads had very different negotiation processes and styles. Males and females held different perspectives: the males focused on liability issues, which were less salient to females, and the females were concerned about community groups such as senior citizens, while the males were not. Halpern and Parks found that females emphasized interpersonal concerns more than males did. Finally, although both males and females were seldom confrontational, males tended to use humor confrontationally.

Heen (1996) asked 19 professional men and women from seven countries who were participating in a five day Harvard Law School course on negotiation to discuss what conflict meant to them and whether they perceived that men and women negotiated differently. The group was divided into two single-sex groups. The conclusions to which each group came were similar, but the processes each group used to answer the questions were different. Both the all-female and the all-male groups believed that men and women negotiate differently. Both groups perceived females as being more concerned with process and men as being more concerned with results. In their process, the women formed a circle and immediately engaged each other in exploration, asking lots of questions in an attempt to come to consensus. The men began by writing answers; they then compiled a list of their thoughts and did not ask each other any questions. One should not generalize from such a small sample; however, Heen's study, taken together with the study by Halpern and Parks (1996), suggests that single-sex interactions may heighten sex differences in negotiation style.

Neu, Graham, and Gilly (1988) looked at the processes and outcomes of negotiation role-plays between 162 business people acting as either retailers or wholesalers. They studied both outcomes (level of profit, satisfaction, and time spent negotiation) and processes (strategies, interpersonal attraction, and interpersonal orientation). They found some differences along gender lines: men made higher profits in the negotiations, and they tended to ask more questions, disclose more about themselves, and more frequently invoke the power of their companies by using the word "we." (Note that some of these differences—asking questions and disclosing more about themselves—could be interpreted as stereotypically more "female". The finding that men asked more questions directly contradicts that of Heen (1996).)

Neu et al. divided their sample into two groups. They used only questionnaire data for one group but supplemented that with observational measures for the second group. They noted that there were more gender differences in the group that was observed than in the group that only completed questionnaire data. Surveillance seemed to increase gender differences. (This finding, presumably deriving from the effect of surveillance per se, contrasts with the more usual finding, noted below, that the method of self-report increases the likelihood of finding gender differences.) However, Neu et al. found that

there were no gender differences in the subjects' satisfaction levels with their negotiation experiences. They concluded that gender only weakly influences buyer-seller negotiations.

Smeltzer and Watson (1986) studied gender differences in communication during negotiations. They asked a sample of 72 MBA students to participate in contract negotiation role-plays between union and management representatives. They found that the women tended to use more disclaimers and interruptions than the men did; however, the men were more successful in their interruptions. There was no difference between the genders with respect to the use of tag questions.

Pruitt, Carnevale, Forcey and van Slyck (1988) asked 80 male and 80 female undergraduate students to participate in a buyer-seller negotiation. (They also studied the effect of surveillance and the gender of the observer on the negotiator's behavior. We discuss this aspect of their study later in the section on the effect of expectations about others on negotiation behavior.) Pruitt et al. found that there were no main effects or interactions involving the gender of the negotiator; in short, the gender of the negotiator made no difference. They did find, however, that when women were engaged in face-to-face bargaining where communication was possible (rather than, for instance, bargaining through a computer with an invisible partner), they tended to behave less competitively than men did.

Finally, Walters, Stumacher, and Meyer (1998) conducted a meta-analysis of 62 empirical studies looking at gender and competitive behavior in dyadic bargaining interactions. This meta-analysis assessed subjects' approaches to handling conflict along a two-dimension model that focused on "cooperation" and "assertiveness." They found that, overall, women tended to behave slightly more cooperatively than men did. This difference was more pronounced where the subjects were negotiating under "non-contingent" conditions than under "contingent" conditions. Under a non-contingent negotiation strategy, the "person" (sometimes a computer) with whom a subject is negotiating does not respond to the subject in a way that is contingent on what the subject has just done. This contrasts with the contingent conditions, under which the respondent does respond based on what he or she has just experienced. In contingent conditions, a strategy such as tit-for-tat lets cooperation in round one provoke the negotiating partner to cooperate in round two, resulting in gains for both. Men were more likely to cooperate in contingent situations than in non-contingent situations. That is, they cooperated when it would allow them to maximize their gains. In non-contingent situations, when cooperation has a lower payoff, women were somewhat more likely to behave cooperatively than men were. It should be noted that the difference in style the authors found was "slight," and was influenced by such considerations as what negotiation strategies respondents were using and whether direct communication was a part of the negotiation process. At the very least, this meta-analysis suggests that a number of factors mediate between gender and negotiation behavior.

The studies by Halpern and Parks (1996), Neu et al. (1988), Pruitt et al. (1988), and Smeltzer and Watson (1986) point to potentially important gender differences in

negotiation communication practices. However, there is no support in the literature for the view that gender affects satisfaction levels with negotiation, and there is only slight support for the view that women are more accommodating when negotiating than men are. The gender differences in negotiation that researchers have found are related to such factors as communication and choices of negotiation strategy. In short, the picture is ambiguous.

The Effect of Sex on Self-Expectations during Negotiation

Quite apart from the question of gender-based differences in negotiation behavior, an important issue for many researchers has been the effect of gender on self-expectations during negotiation. Here, the evidence is much clearer. Simply put, gender has a considerable and consistent influence on the self-expectations of negotiators.

Kaman and Hartel (1994) asked 238 undergraduate business students to indicate their pay expectations and anticipated negotiation strategies for a specific management trainee job. They found that men anticipated using more "active" negotiation strategies than women anticipated using. By "active," the researchers meant such strategies as finding out what has been offered by an employer in the past, being firm in asking for a specific salary, asking for more than the employer is expected to offer, mentioning other job offers, or discussing what other employees have been paid.

Stevens, Bavetta, and Gist (1993) studied sixty MBA students who were trained in negotiation and then received supplemental training in either goal setting or self-management. The researchers found that after negotiation training alone, women set lower salary goals for themselves and also negotiated lower salaries than men did. The supplemental goal setting training did not reduce this gender difference in salary. Both men and women increased their salaries after taking the goal setting training, but women still had lower expectations for themselves than men, and men still negotiated significantly higher salaries than women. The self-management training, by contrast, did reduce the difference in males' and females' negotiated salaries. The women who took the self-management training showed a greater increase in salary than men who took the self-management training.

The findings from these two studies (Kaman & Hartel, 1994 and Stevens et al., 1993) underscore the importance of self-expectation for negotiation, and, more importantly, the potential importance of gender for self-expectation. The study by Stevens et al., which was conducted on people with similar levels of training negotiation, most effectively highlights the importance of gender on self-expectations.

Some researchers have concluded that gender affects only self-expectations and not negotiation behavior. Watson (1994) analyzed eight studies on negotiation and concluded that gender did not affect negotiation behavior or outcomes, but did affect participants' feelings. Women felt less confident when negotiating, and, even when they displayed the same negotiation behavior as men, felt less successful than the men did. In a later study of forty managers in a simulated game, Watson and Hoffman (1996) found that that

women and men did not differ in the behavioral outcomes they achieved during negotiation, but the women felt less confident and less satisfied than the men.

Taken together, these studies suggest a clear link between gender and self-expectation -- a fact that may or may not be linked to negotiation behavior, but is important in its own right.

The Effect of Expectations about Others on Negotiation Behavior and Outcomes

The review of the literature on gender and conflict resolution in the first part of this paper points to an important connection between perceptions of others and conflict resolution styles. This theme also appears in the literature on gender and negotiation. A number of studies showed that while actual differences in negotiation behavior between the two sexes may or may not exist, gender-based expectations about others are important for negotiation. Expectations tap into ideas of gender-role socialization and stereotype, and can have a profound effect on negotiation behavior and outcomes.

As we have already noted, Heen (1996) found that male and female professionals believe that men and women negotiate differently. In that study, women were thought to be relational and more concerned with process. Men were seen as concerned with outcomes.

King, Miles, and Kniska (1991) had 125 undergraduate students engage in computerized prisoners' dilemma games in which some of the subjects were told the sex of their opponents while others were not. The prisoners' dilemma participants used one of three standard prisoners' dilemma strategies (competitive, cooperative, or tit-for-tat). Subjects faced with opponents using competitive strategies were three times more likely to assume their opponents were male than were subjects faced with opponents using other strategies. In short, entirely independent of the actual genders of the negotiators, expectations and stereotypes influenced the subjects' perceptions.

Matheson (1991) found similar results in a study of 105 undergraduate students involved in computer-mediated negotiations. Some of the subjects were given information about the sex of their negotiation partners, and others were not. In reality, the computers themselves were "doing" the negotiation, and were programmed to be "firm but fair" when negotiating with the subjects. If told the sex of their partners, female subjects were told that their partners were female and male subjects were told that their partners were male. When the subjects were not provided with information about the sex of the persons with whom they were negotiating, most assumed that their competitors were male, and there were no gender differences in the subjects' expectations about their negotiating partners. Yet this was not the case when the subjects were told the sex of their partners. Females who were told they were negotiating with other females expected their negotiating partners to be fairer, i.e. more cooperative and less exploitative, than males who were told that they were negotiating with other males and than both males and females who were not told the gender of their negotiation partners.

Pruitt et al. (1988) found that negotiators engaged in more gender-stereotyped behavior (i.e. men acted more contentiously, women acted more cooperatively) when they were competing against known opponents with known genders than when they were competing against opponents (actually computers) whose genders were unknown to them. Again, this points to the importance of perception and expectation in shaping negotiation behavior.

One of the most interesting components of Pruitt et al.'s study examines the link between gender-based expectation and negotiation behavior generally. Specifically, Pruitt et al. looked at the effects on negotiation behavior of two different phenomena: being watched during negotiation, and having a "constituent" (someone on whose behalf one negotiates). Pruitt et al. studied the effects on negotiation behavior of the sex of the negotiator's observers and constituents.

With respect to surveillance during negotiation, the researchers found that negotiators (both male and female) who were watched acted in accord with their own gender-based stereotypes about how their observers would behave in a negotiation situation. In other words, surveillance by males tended to make negotiations more contentious and negotiation outcomes more unequal, while surveillance by females tended to make negotiations less contentious and outcomes more equal.

With respect to "constituents," negotiators acted differently based on the constituents' sex, even when those constituents were not watching them negotiate. Negotiators (both male and female) who were negotiating "on behalf of" female constituents were more contentious than negotiators acting on behalf of male constituents. Taken together with the previous findings on surveillance, this means that negotiating on behalf of women made negotiators fight harder, but negotiating in front of women made negotiators fight nicer (Pruitt et al., 1988).

The findings of Pruitt et al. about the effect of surveillance is consistent with that of Neu et al. reported earlier. Neu et al. did not use a gendered other as a witness; they used a tape recorder. But both Pruitt et al. (1988) and Neu et al. (1988) found that gender differences were affected by surveillance.

In sum, the research suggests that gender-based expectations greatly influence one's own negotiation behavior, as well as perceptions of and expectations about others' negotiation behavior. Female subjects who know they will negotiate with other females expect their negotiation partners to be cooperative; in a similar vein, subjects who are negotiating with partners using competitive strategies assume those partners to be male. The sex of negotiators' constituents and observers also affects negotiators' conduct.

The Effect of Rank or Power on Negotiation Behavior

Researchers in the field of gender and negotiation, like researchers in the field of conflict resolution and gender, have sought to understand the link between power and negotiation style. Such power often manifests itself in the form of managerial rank, as it typically did in the studies discussed in Part A on conflict resolution style. However, power often attaches to individual encounters or situations as well. In the view of some researchers, such power explains much, if not all, of the differences in individuals' choices of negotiation strategies.

For instance, Watson and Hoffman (1996) considered the role of power in shaping the negotiation styles of 80 practicing managers of different levels of organizational power who participated in a simulated negotiation. They found that high-ranking managers tended to be more cooperative, while lower-ranking managers tended to be more competitive. These results come as a surprise, given our tendency to think that higher organizational rank often correlates with more, rather than less, competitive styles of negotiation. (The study by Chusmir and Mills (1989) described in Part A reinforces this traditional view.)

Watson (1994) conducted a meta-analysis on the subject of power, gender, and negotiation style. Watson focused on the eight articles that tested both gender and power and examined actual rather than self-reported behavior. She concluded that power, not gender, predicts cooperativeness in negotiations. Five of the eight studies found that gender and power affected each other. Significantly, though, the five studies indicated various kinds of interaction between the two. Two articles found that having strong situational power leads men, but not women, to behave in "more competitive" ways. One article found the reverse effect -- that power increased women's dominating behavior -- but Watson notes that these results may be less reliable because the researchers had to rely on a subject group consisting of women with unusually high self-esteem and men with unusually low self-esteem. Finally, two studies found that powerlessness affected men differently than women: men in low-power situations adopted a "soft competition" approach, whereby they stated their position and offered logical reasons to support it, while women did not.

In sum, Watson (1994) concludes that situational power appears to be a better predictor of negotiation behavior and outcomes than does gender. There is support for the view that higher power nurtures more cooperative negotiation styles. There is also some suggestion that these effects may apply more to men than to women and that lack of power affects men and women differently.

V. CONCLUSION

A number of points emerge from our review of the literature. First, the question of whether gender affects conflict resolution and negotiation behavior cannot be clearly answered by the present empirical research.

Second, there is a potentially vast difference between behavior and expectations. The research is at best divided on the question of whether men and women behave differently during negotiation and conflict resolution; however, there is ample and clear evidence that they do expect one another to behave differently. Gender-based stereotypes and perceptions abound, and ultimately this may be even more important than the finding that actual behavior differences are minimal or non-existent. This difference in expectations may be what drives observed behavioral differences.

Third, there is a sharp disjunction between findings based on lab or field observation, on the one hand, and findings based on self-report, on the other. Studies that used self-report were more likely to find gender differences in behavior. Papa and Natale (1989), who relied on field observation, found at most a mild link between sex and conflict resolution style; they also reported some findings that clearly contradict the notion that sex affects conflict resolution behavior. Likewise, when they conducted a lab observation study, Korabik et al. (1993) found no differences between men's and women's conflict resolution styles. Yet researchers who relied on self-reporting tended to find that sex differences were important: consider Kaman and Hartel (1994), or even the self-reporting portion of the Korabik et al. study, which found more gender-based differences than the lab observation component of the study. This methodological difference is related to the previous point about expectations and self-expectations. It would seem that people expect themselves to act in particular ways based on their sex, and voice these expectations in their self-reports, while studies based on lab and field observations usually do not bear out these expectations.

Fourth, and related, is the observation is that self-reports of gender differences may more accurately reflect some forms of behavior in the field, whereas in a laboratory experiment, the nature of the game or the instructions may decrease gender differences. For example, a lab exercise that tells participants to earn as much money as possible may encourage women to be more competitive than they would be if they were just told to negotiate a contract.

Fifth, how gender affects behavior may be influenced by the gender composition of the workgroup. Heen (1996) and Parks and Halpern (1996) used same-sex groups and found more gender differences than other studies.

Sixth, the literature reviewed in this paper -- both on gender and conflict resolution, and on gender and negotiation -- uncovers mixed findings on the question of how, if at all, power and role interact with gender and affect behavior. Some of the research suggests that gender difference is wholly accounted for by differences in managerial rank. Other studies suggest that managerial rank interacts with gender; even this research, however, is ambiguous. Some findings show that higher rank indicates more competitive conflict resolution or negotiation styles, and some findings show precisely the opposite. Moreover, some of the research in this second category implies that power and gender interact more for men than for women, or that lack of power affects women and men differently. Some studies indicate that managerial rank has no effect at all, but as discussed above, these studies may fall victim to socialization or selection effects, and

therefore are less reliable. The only thing that seems clear is that power is a crucial, and not yet fully understood, ingredient in the mix of gender and conflict resolution and negotiation styles.

Finally, our review of the literature points to a number of methodological issues. In order for the research on gender and conflict resolution and negotiation to be more generalizable, we need studies that use adults as participants rather than college or graduate students. Such samples should include a wide range of respondents from different classes, races, ethnicities, rural/urban backgrounds, etc.. Results could then be generalized to broader populations and researchers would be able to explore the interaction between these variables and gender. It is important to have more studies that use field observations of behavior. Laboratory studies are convenient, but the constrictions of the lab and the design of the experiment can limit spontaneity, bias interactions, and constrict behaviors. It is useful to compare self-reports with observed behaviors and third-party observations, as self-reports often conform more with gender-role expectations than do experimenter observations. Finally, post-experiment discussion and debriefing, not present in most of these studies, could help elucidate the complexity and multi-faceted variables that affect expectations, behavior, and interactions.

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